CIVIC EXCELLENCE: CITIZEN VIRTUE AND
CONTEMPORARY LIBERAL DEMOCRATIC COMMUNITY

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by

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Abstract

by

Angela Wentz Faulconer

In this dissertation I seek to answer the question, “What are the virtues of the excellent citizen in a liberal democracy?” This question is important on three levels. First, if civic virtue is as important to the perpetuation of liberal democratic community as neo-liberal and communitarian thinkers have argued, then curiosity alone should motivate us. Second, if projects to foster the virtues are critical, then we must understand the virtues in order to foster them effectively and appropriately. Third, those who wish to attain greater excellence in citizenship need to know what the virtues are so that they may pursue them.

In Chapters One and Two, I argue that current accounts of civic virtue are deficient because they fail to explore its basis, nature, and constituents. To better understand civic virtue, we must explore specific citizen virtues. To fulfill this aim, we require a citizen virtue catalog structured by an explanatory framework that is anchored in the role-based nature of citizen virtue. Such a framework provides the rationale for determining which virtues should be included in the catalog and which should not as well as a basis for comparing competing catalogs. As the role of citizen is to assist his state,
the citizen virtues are those qualities that enable the citizen to assist the state in achieving its aims—in protecting, promoting, and realizing the liberal democratic ideals (namely, freedom, equality, self-government, collective cooperation, and stability).

In the remaining chapters, I survey neo-liberal accounts of citizen virtue proposed by Richard Dagger, William Galston, David Jones, Mark Kingwell, Stephen Macedo, and Thomas Spragens, Jr. I apply the Chapter Two framework to assess the virtue candidates they propose. These chapters share a common format but differ in focus. Chapter Three takes up the citizen virtues that treat political community: cooperation, participation, vigilance, deliberative excellence, and obedience to law. Chapter Four, the liberal citizen virtues: allegiance to liberal democratic community, tolerance, and respect for rights. And Chapter Five, the citizen virtues relating to self-governance: autonomy, responsibility, and restraint. Chapter Six concludes.
To my parents, R. Trent and Deleyne Wentz, who are excellent citizens.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Malaise of Entitlement</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Socioeconomic Class Divisions</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.13 Conclusion to Challenge-Focused Inquiry</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.14 Three Further Conditions for Citizen Virtues</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriate to Time, Place, and Historical Context</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatible with Non-Negotiable Political Ideals</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reasonable Achievability</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15 Conclusion</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE—COMMUNITY CITIZEN VIRTUES</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Introduction</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Families of Citizen Virtue</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Cooperation: Survey</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Cooperation: Application and Analysis</td>
<td>86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Participation: Survey</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.6 Participation: Application and Analysis</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope of Participation</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purpose of Participation</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Actual Participation vs. Civic Mindedness</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation and Reasonable Achievability</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.7 Vigilance: Survey</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.8 Vigilance: Application and Analysis</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Self-Reliance</td>
<td>118</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Vigilance</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.9 Deliberative Excellence: Survey</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.10 Deliberative Excellence: Application and Analysis</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11 Obedience to Law: Survey</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12 Obedience to Law: Application and Analysis</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.13 Conclusion</td>
<td>152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER FOUR—LIBERAL CITIZEN VIRTUES</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Allegiance to Liberal Democratic Community: Survey</td>
<td>154</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Allegiance to Liberal Democratic Community: Application and Analysis</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegiance to Community Principles vs. Allegiance to Liberal Principles</td>
<td>156</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allegiance to Principles vs. Allegiance to Institutions</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specificity</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Tolerance: Survey</td>
<td>172</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What to Tolerate</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why to Tolerate</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to Tolerate</td>
<td>175</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude Toward Others’ Positions</td>
<td>177</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.4 Tolerance: Application and Analysis ........................................ 179
    What to Tolerate .................................................. 179
    Why to Tolerate .................................................. 181
    How to Tolerate .................................................. 183
4.5 Respect for Rights: Survey ............................................. 187
4.6 Respect for Rights: Application and Analysis .......................... 191
    Rights Percipience: Capacities as Virtues? ........................ 191
    Positive Respect .................................................. 199
4.7 Conclusion .......................................................... 209

CHAPTER FIVE—SELF-GOVERNANCE CITIZEN VIRTUES .............................. 211
5.1 Autonomy: Survey .................................................. 211
5.2 Autonomy: Application and Analysis .................................. 214
5.3 Responsibility: Survey ............................................. 226
5.4 Responsibility: Application and Analysis .......................... 228
    Taking Responsibility ............................................ 230
    Accountability for Breaking the Law ................................ 232
    Accountability for Failing to Fulfill Role Requirements .......... 234
    Being Responsible ............................................... 240
5.5 Restraint: Survey .................................................. 250
5.6 Restraint: Application and Analysis ................................ 253
    Restraint in Expectation of Government-Provided Services ....... 253
    Restraint in Expectation of Governmental Performance .......... 256
5.7 Conclusion .......................................................... 263

CHAPTER SIX—CONCLUSION .................................................. 265
6.1 Why This Inquiry Was Needed .......................................... 265
6.2 What I Did to Meet the Need ......................................... 266
    The Nature of the Excellent Citizen ................................ 268
6.3 What This Inquiry Has Accomplished ................................ 271
    Formulation of Explanatory Framework a Significant Advance .... 272
    Formulation of Citizen Virtue Catalog a Significant Advance .... 278
    Intellectual Curiosity Requires It ................................ 278
    Projects to Foster the Virtues Require It ........................ 279
    Intersection of This Inquiry with Contemporary Political Theory .. 287
    Relationship Between Neo-Liberals and Communitarians .......... 288
    Sandel and the Communitarians .................................. 290
    Neo-Liberals ......................................................... 291
6.4 Conclusion .......................................................... 295

APPENDIX—THE FOCUS THINKERS AND THEIR VIRTUE CATALOGS .................. 297
1.1 Richard Dagger ....................................................... 297
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Dagger’s Catalog</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 William Galston</td>
<td>299</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Galston’s Catalog</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 David Jones</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 Jones’ Catalog</td>
<td>302</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 Mark Kingwell</td>
<td>303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 Kingwell’s Catalog</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9 Stephen Macedo</td>
<td>304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10 Macedo’s Catalog</td>
<td>305</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11 Thomas A. Spragens, Jr.</td>
<td>307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.12 Spragens’ Catalog</td>
<td>309</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

WORKS CITED .................................................... 312
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INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation I seek to answer the question, “What are the virtues of the excellent citizen in a liberal democracy?” This question is important on three levels. First, if the citizen virtues are as important to the perpetuation of liberal democratic community as neo-liberal and communitarian thinkers have argued, then curiosity alone should motivate us. Second, if projects to foster the virtues are critical, then we must understand the virtues in order to foster them effectively and appropriately. Third, those who see greater excellence in citizenship as an important goal for themselves and their families need to know what the virtues are so that they may pursue them.

In my survey of the relevant work in philosophy and political theory, I found that civic virtue is frequently mentioned. However, what is not often mentioned is civic virtue’s basis, its nature, or its constituents. I focus on citizen virtue (a key subset of civic virtue) in order to answer some of these questions. I do this by constructing a citizen virtue catalog structured by an explanatory framework. The framework provides the rationale for determining which virtues should be included in the catalog and which should not as well as a basis for comparing competing catalogs (something most contemporary accounts lack). I suggest that the role-based nature of citizen virtue provides the best anchor for this framework. The citizen’s role is to assist his state; therefore, the citizen
virtues are those qualities that enable the citizen to assist the state in achieving its aims—in protecting, promoting, and realizing the liberal democratic ideals.

In Chapter One I explain why we should seek to perpetuate liberal democratic community and why civic virtue is crucial to this effort. I also explain why it is important that we discuss specific citizen virtues rather than simply discussing civic virtue in general.

In Chapter Two I argue that current accounts of citizen virtue are deficient. I then explore the elements common to any satisfactory account and suggest a framework against which we can measure existing accounts and upon which we can build a new, superior (yet still preliminary), account of citizen virtue.

In the remaining chapters, I survey neo-liberal accounts of citizen virtue proposed by Richard Dagger, William Galston, David Jones, Mark Kingwell, Stephen Macedo, and Thomas Spragens, Jr. I apply the Chapter Two framework to assess which of the virtue candidates they propose (and more significantly, which versions of those virtues) merits a place in the virtue catalog. These chapters share a common format but differ in focus. Chapter Three takes up the citizen virtues that treat political community: cooperation, participation, vigilance, deliberative excellence, and obedience to law. Chapter Four the liberal citizen virtues: allegiance to liberal democratic community, tolerance, and respect for rights. And Chapter Five the citizen virtues relating to self-governance: autonomy, responsibility, and restraint. Finally, I conclude with Chapter Six, which reviews why this inquiry was needed and what contribution it makes to current work in philosophy and political theory.
CHAPTER ONE

CITIZEN VIRTUE: IMPERATIVE YET IMPERILED

The question central to this dissertation is “What are the virtues of the excellent citizen in a liberal democracy?” Before I can pursue this question further, I must address three issues. First, I will explain why liberal democracy should be taken as our context. Second, I will show that citizen virtue\(^1\) is essential to the preservation of liberal democracy. Finally, I will argue that inquiry into specific citizen virtues is imperative.

1.1 Liberal Democracy as Context

One obvious answer to the question of why liberal democracy should be taken as our context is that liberal democracy is our context. I begin where I am—with the United States in mind as a model,\(^2\) a society neither perfectly liberal, nor perfectly democratic,

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\(^1\) I use “citizen virtue” to indicate a more narrow compass than “civic virtue,” a term often taken to include virtues relevant to the executive, legislative, and judicial roles that I can’t consider here. Galston, Kingwell, Macedo, and Wolgast are among those who make the case for some type of leadership virtues. There is good reason to believe that other roles in political life also require unique virtues. The virtues appropriate to journalists and educators are especially worthy of further study and these two hardly exhaust the possibilities. For instance, see Annette Baier’s intriguing piece regarding the virtues of the excellent resident alien.

\(^2\) Most of the points I make in this dissertation could also be applied to other modern liberal democracies (Germany, Canada, Great Britain, Japan).
although a serviceable model of both. But I do not end by calling for any other type or species of society or for major change in our institutions.

I do not do so because I make three assumptions: First, there are no plausible alternatives. No change in our form of government is possible, practically speaking. Second, there are no preferable alternatives. The alternatives to our form of government are inferior. Third, our form of government is worth preserving. Our current form of government has much to recommend it.

First, there are no plausible alternatives in the sense that hopes of revolutionizing our institutions are utopian. Even if a large number of us could agree on some preferred alternative, there would be little practical chance of implementation. Indeed, although it is the communitarians who are most often taken to task as thinkers who call for an ideal that is in practical terms unrealizable, key communitarian figures like Alasdair MacIntyre and Charles Taylor concede that they expect no significant changes to our institutions. Despite their criticisms of individualist liberalism and the culture of capitalism, both see the failure of communism and the collapse of Marxism as telling for the fortunes of liberal democracy. Taylor has said, “Others cherish the hope that we might be able to do without the bureaucratic state. It is now evident that these hopes are illusory” (109-110). And MacIntyre says that he does “not see any prospects of overthrowing the dominant social order” (Inquiry 252). Additionally, one “now see[s] no tolerable alternative set of political and economic structures which could be brought into place to replace the structures of advanced capitalism” (After Virtue 262).³

³ All subsequent MacIntyre citations are from After Virtue.
Second, not only are there no plausible alternatives before us, there are also no preferable ones. Even if it were possible to change things, no attractive alternatives to our way of life and government are on the horizon. There just aren’t any alternatives worth preferring on the table. When Marxism fell dead as a live political option with the collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall, nothing arose to take its place. In practical terms only the ideal of liberal democracy, whatever its warts, remains.

Third, our form of government is worth preserving. Even as we realize that significant change to our government and way of life is unlikely and that there are no preferable alternatives in any case, it is worth noting that this realization isn’t cause for deep regret. Indeed, although communitarians and others have correctly pointed out that there is much in our liberal democracies to criticize, we must not forget that there is also much in them that is worthy of praise.

Only the truly stubborn and willfully blind can deny that we have made true progress. Liberal democracy brings with it advances that most of us would be terribly reluctant to trade for past ways of life whatever their advantages. Liberal democracy is not simply the least awful alternative, the one which we got stuck with. Whatever one’s opinion on the alleged problems of a rights-centered culture, the protections that we have been able to afford to the freedoms of speech, press, and assembly are accomplishments of which we are justly proud. Universal suffrage and property ownership as well as gender and racial equality (in principle if not yet perfect in practice) also belong in this category. Most of us are more than glad to live in a society where the choice of what to study, which occupation to follow, where to live, what to believe, and when and whom to marry
is up to us. We correctly see great merit in the recognition of the importance of individual life projects.4

1.2 Civic Virtue Essential for the Perpetuation of Political Community

If we believe that liberal democracy is the best form of government available and if we also believe that it is a form of government worth preserving, then we should seek to preserve and perpetuate it. That said, we must ask to what degree the traditions of liberal democracy are self-perpetuating. After all, if as I have argued, liberal democracy is ascendant and there are no plausible challengers on the horizon, then why need we make any effort to preserve it? By what is it threatened?

The best responses to this question center around the observation that as time passes governmental regimes drift from their founding principles. Liberal democracies are principally threatened not by outside challengers, but by themselves. Three causes of regime failure evince this entropy effect and evidence the citizen virtue imperative. The first is corrupt institutions. The second is overzealous regard for some liberal democratic principles at the cost of others. The third concerns the most basic way in which a regime can fail: by falling short of its ideals. I will discuss each of these in turn.

Institutional Corruption

The first cause of regime failure is corrupt institutions. The institutions that make liberal democracy possible become corrupted and then corrupt in turn the liberal democratic communities that they serve. Alasdair MacIntyre’s work on institutions and

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4 Cf., Charles Taylor’s account of the positive aspects of modernity’s individualism (2).
the practices they support remind us that the success of liberal democratic community depends upon virtue. Because liberal democratic community is impossible apart from its institutions, the nature of institutions has critical repercussions for the practice of liberal democracy. MacIntyre observes that institutions “characteristically” deal in external goods (194). External goods are things like money, power and fame, goods such that if one person has more, others will necessarily have less (190). It is because institutions are involved with “acquiring money and other material goods,” because they are “structured in terms of power and status,” and because they “distribute money, power and status as rewards” that they are able to sustain liberal democratic community (194). It is our government’s control of money, power, and status that allows it to carry out the functions of liberal democratic government and which therefore makes liberal democratic community possible.

The problem is that while the external goods of money, power and status allow governmental institutions to make political community possible, they also foster “acquisitiveness” and “competitiveness,” forces that corrupt institutions (and often the individuals whose lives are bound up in them) (MacIntyre 194). MacIntyre’s thesis here is common sense: wherever money, power and status are concentrated, the temptation towards abuse climbs. Some will give in. Ultimately the institutions that foster liberal democratic community also foster corruption; liberal democratic community itself then becomes corrupted. This is why the virtues are so essential (194). The virtues sustain the integrity of the community against the corruption engendered by its own supporting institutions (195).
We cannot have government, in this case, liberal democracy, without governmental institutions. Governmental institutions make liberal democracy possible. But governmental institutions also corrupt us. As power corrupts presidents and money corrupts our legislatures, each of us is open to corruption as well: as we vote NIMBY on necessary federal projects, support the legislator who secures funding for the projects that will benefit us but that are not in the national interest, and request government services that we are unwilling to pay for, we too become corrupted. We too require the virtues. Liberal democracy may lack plausible challengers, but it is not self-perpetuating. It must rely on institutions. Because it relies on institutions, its citizens require the virtues.

**Overzealous Attention to Some Ideals at the Expense of the Others**

The second peril facing the liberal democratic state is the temptation to allow an overzealous regard for some liberal democratic principles to result in the overshadowing of others. Peter Berkowitz’s reading of Aristotle’s *Politics* offers an intriguing diagnosis of the danger liberal democracy faces (175-178). Aristotle argues that governmental regimes form citizens after their own image (175). What the citizen desires and expects from his government is shaped by the “dominant tendencies” (177) of that regime. Being formed in the “image” of a regime means that the citizen often develops “immoderate enthusiasm” for its “guiding principle” (177).

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5 William Galston also cites Aristotle in order to introduce similar ideas. In discussing Aristotle’s *Politics*, he observes, “If a community is notably imperfect, citizens who shape themselves in its image and devote themselves to its service will undergo a kind of moral deformation” (*Liberal Purposes* 218). All subsequent citations of Galston refer to *Liberal Purposes* unless otherwise specified.
This may not immediately strike one as troubling if the system under consideration is one with admirable ideals—for example, a free liberal democracy rather than an oppressive totalitarian government. After all, it is easy to see that the citizen formed after the image of a flawed regime may well end up a very flawed sort of citizen. However, it is less obvious, yet still true, that the citizen formed after the image of a system with worthy ideals may also be flawed.

Immoderate enthusiasm—even for admirable ideals—is dangerous because it results in the neglect or betrayal of other ideals, ideals of political community that we can’t afford to neglect. The tension between these ideals means that both in the regimes we admire, and in those we don’t, allowing the dominant tendencies of the regime to dictate one’s conduct typically distorts citizen behavior in ways incompatible with excellence and incompatible with the regime’s health and longevity. What may have been an estimable principle at the regime’s conception then becomes vice in the behavior of its citizens.

Consider the liberal democratic state. As citizens, we are formed in its image. Our expectations and desires are shaped by the liberal democratic milieu in which we live. One aspect of that milieu is the privileged and preeminent position that the principles of freedom and equality enjoy. Look at our nation’s enthusiasm for the protection of personal rights (of which we are justly proud) and the resultant increasingly litigious character of our society (which is nothing to be proud of). As another example, consider that the ideal of freedom becomes vice in its citizens’ characters if the freedom to do as one chooses is exercised only to pursue instant gratification while longer-term interests are neglected. The ideal of equality becomes vice when the legitimate demands of merit are
ignored and individual difference is quashed in its pursuit. The very principles that
distinguish liberal democracy as an ideal we hope to pursue threaten its efficiency,
effectiveness, and stability when taken too far.

Aims that are not balanced by competing interests and principles that are left
unchecked by complementary ideals divert a political community from the path of
excellence. Aristotle’s argument that citizens are formed in the image of their regimes
means that liberal democratic citizens are vulnerable to embracing extremes where
freedom and equality are concerned. Such extremes ultimately spell ruin for liberal
democratic political community.

One might take issue with this line of reasoning by arguing that it distorts the
nature of liberal democratic ideals. One could contend that the responsibility required for
self-government is as much a part of the liberal democratic ideal as is protecting the
freedom to do whatever one chooses. Ideally, the citizen would manifest this
responsibility by eschewing instant gratification in favor of longer term interests. But this
argument misses the point. The point is not that liberal democratic government is
threatened because equality, freedom or responsibility are such bad and dangerous ideals.

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6 The last two examples were inspired by Peter Berkowitz who observes that
democratic stability relies on citizens who can defer gratification “in the interest of long-
term benefits” (despite the “democratic inclination to do what one pleases”) and who can
“resist the democratic tendency to extend the ideal of equality to absolutely all spheres of
human life in defiance of the legitimate claims of merit” (177).

7 My use of both “the liberal democratic ideal” and “liberal democratic ideals” is
deliberate. Together the liberal democratic ideals (those I identify in Chapter Two and
possibly others) compose the liberal democratic ideal. In Chapter Two, I will identify five
liberal democratic ideals: freedom, equality, self-government, cooperation for the common
good, and stability.
The point is that valuing one of these ideals in a way that tends to the neglect or betrayal of the other ideals (aims that characterize effective political community) means the deterioration and perhaps the ultimate destruction of the community in question.

Because the dominant tendencies of any regime tend to distort the character of its citizenry over time, liberal democratic government is not self-perpetuating. It does not naturally produce citizens with the qualities of character it requires. If the liberal democratic state required citizens who were excellent in one dimension only, for example, if a zealous commitment to personal liberty sufficed, then a different conclusion would be in order. However, as things stand, when liberal democratic government produces citizens devoted to one aspect of the liberal democratic ideal, but blind or apathetic to others, it actually sows the seeds of its own destruction. Liberal democracy is a threat to itself. This is why the liberal democratic state needs virtuous citizens. Liberal democratic community requires citizens whose behavior reflects the liberal democratic ideal, not in one aspect only, but in its entirety. The excellent citizen’s civic character is complex, reflecting the complex requirements of sustaining a liberal democratic community. The excellent citizen is not one who excels at the virtues of respect or tolerance only, but one whose character reflects all the guiding ideals of the community in which he lives, one who

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8 I cannot adequately defend here the assumption that liberal democratic community’s success depends upon keeping its ideals in balance. Suffice it to say that while I find this premise convincing, others would find it quite controversial. For example, Stephen Macedo frequently refers to the liberal’s supreme commitment to “liberal justice,” a commitment that apparently trumps other ideals (254-55).
does not allow a strong commitment to one or two ideals to misshape his commitment to
the others.⁹

**Falling Short of Community Ideals**

The third cause of regime failure concerns the most basic way in which a regime
can fail: by falling short of its ideals. The virtues are necessary for attaining our liberal
democratic ideals because they embody them. In other words, the expectation that
citizens will act in certain ways is part of the liberal democratic ideal itself. When citizens
do not act in those ways, the regime does not realize its ideals. Without a broadly
virtuous citizenry, it is impossible to attain liberal democratic ideals.

Self-government is a liberal democratic ideal that provides a good example of this.
In a way that other forms of government may not, a democratic government rests on its
citizens. There can be no government by the people unless the people are willing to
participate. No cleverly designed procedures can simulate a willingness to go and vote.
Some might argue that this is not so: We could adopt the Australian or Brazilian example
and require that citizens vote, fining or otherwise sanctioning those who choose not to.

⁹ One might ask whether the exercise of citizen virtue doesn’t allow for more
diversity than is suggested here. In other words, why assume that excellent citizens are all
excellent in the same way? Couldn’t a complex liberal democratic political community be
made up of morally simple citizens—citizens who excelled at one or two or a handful of
virtues rather than all of them?

This suggestion has merit. Certainly it is important that any definition of
excellence for liberal democratic communities allow for individual differences of ability
and interest. Surely it is appropriate for the gifted orator to devote the greater portion of
his time to the deliberative sphere, while another citizen with a critical bent devotes the
lion’s share of his time to vigilance and public watchdoggery. Nonetheless, there are some
qualities of character and some minimum levels of behavior that we expect from every
citizen worthy of the appellation “excellent.” Such qualities of character are essential to
performing the citizen role, regardless of one’s special gifts or interests.
But a compulsory voting scheme alone cannot answer the demands of self-government. We may be able to compel people to vote, but can we compel them to inform themselves? Can we compel them to form opinions or to act on those opinions by campaigning, donating money or writing letters? We cannot. Government can compel citizens to vote, but only citizens exercising the citizen virtues can enable their regime to achieve the ideal of self-government.

When citizens cease to vote or inform themselves and generally take no interest in or action on political matters, their regime falls short of self-government as a liberal democratic ideal. If the regime often falls far short of its ideals, it soon ceases to be liberal and democratic. The expectation that citizens will behave in certain civically positive ways—not because they are compelled, but of their own will and volition—is built in to each of the liberal democratic ideals. Liberal democratic government requires virtuous citizens because by its own definition of success, it fails when its citizens lack the virtues.

In this section I have argued that liberal democratic regimes require the virtues. The maladies that threaten liberal democracy differ, but they result in the same outcome and respond to the same treatment. The outcome is a weakened or failed liberal democratic community. The treatment is a sufficient number of citizens who possess and exercise the citizen virtues.

1.3 Why Discuss Specific Citizen Virtues?

Because citizen virtue is essential to sustaining liberal democratic community, and because liberal democracy is a form of political community worth preserving, we should,
where possible and appropriate, strive to foster the citizen virtues within ourselves and others. Discussions of virtue-fostering projects in the scholarly literature most often center on two fronts: the education of children in our schools and the role of voluntary associations in civil society. These are important topics. It is natural to consider voluntary associations and education when we begin to talk about citizen virtue because these are the most obvious avenues to the encouragement of citizen virtue and they are the only avenues in which government will likely have much ability to affect the amount or type of civic virtue its citizens have.

There are important questions that must be asked and answered regarding the proper limits to this sort of encouragement. These questions find their focus in the liberal democratic ideal of freedom which requires that all citizens be able to pursue their individual life projects and free to follow their varied understandings of the good.\(^{10}\) From a practical point of view these questions are inescapable, because if we accept the premise that we should do what we can to foster the citizen virtues, these questions inevitably arise as we try to understand what it is we can do when we “do what we can” to foster the virtues. We need to know what it is possible to do to foster the virtues, what it is appropriate to do (given our commitment to certain essential freedoms), and what it will be effective to do.

But these questions, important as they unquestionably are, neglect another question, at least as important, which must also be asked: “What is civic virtue? What are

\(^{10}\) This freedom is subject to necessary limits in order to protect the liberty of others, of course.
the virtues of the excellent citizen in a liberal democracy?”

While many have championed civic virtue in general and the importance of cultivating citizen virtue in particular, the question of what citizen virtue actually comprises, the notion of what the term includes, has received surprisingly little analysis. This lack of attention is a serious oversight. The citizen virtues bear their own study. They demand their own focus in the discussion for several reasons:

First, from a theoretical standpoint, the need to cultivate citizen virtue isn’t something we can talk about together sensibly until we share a picture of what it is we’re talking about cultivating. Plausible accounts of what it is to be an excellent citizen differ in both substance and scope. In any given discussion, there is no reason to assume that one’s interlocutors share the same understanding of citizen virtue as oneself. While there are a few virtues which most of us could agree to, others are more controversial. Before we can take up the question of how schools and voluntary associations should go about fostering citizen virtues these controversies must receive our attention. Some of our differences on the virtues can be resolved through thoughtful public dialogue. Of others, it is important simply that we recognize them for the controversial questions that they are, in order that we don’t assume consensus where none exists.

Second, from a practical standpoint, unless and until we have a clear understanding of what virtues we’re trying to encourage in schools or voluntary associations, it is impossible to take concrete and effective steps to promote them. Children cannot be

11 Also, it’s worth observing that until this question is answered, the foregoing questions (regarding what is possible, what is appropriate, and what is effective in fostering the virtues) cannot be answered satisfactorily either.
taught the virtues of deliberative excellence if their teacher doesn’t have an adequate grasp of what it is.

Third, we are hampered as individuals and as families in achieving the goal of citizen virtue when we aren’t sure what constitutes it. To the extent that the citizen virtues can be cultivated by individuals, i.e., that it is possible to steer oneself consciously towards citizen excellence, we must know what that path looks like so that we may follow it.

The question: “What are the virtues of the excellent citizen in a liberal democracy?” is an important one because if we wish to discuss citizen virtue with one another, we must have the same concept in mind (or at least be able to locate our differences). If we plan to foster the virtues, we must be clear as to what they are. Perhaps most importantly, if we are going to look at our own lives and make a commitment to excellence in citizenship, we must have a clear sense of what it is we are striving towards.

In preparing to address the question: “What are the virtues of the excellent citizen in a liberal democracy?” I have discussed three things. First, I explained why liberal democracy should be taken as the context in which this question is asked. Next, I showed that civic virtue is essential to the perpetuation of liberal democracy. Finally, I argued that inquiry into the specific virtues that comprise excellent citizenship is imperative.
1.4 Two Claims Concerning Citizen Virtue

Before turning to the central question of the dissertation, I must make two assumptions regarding citizen virtue explicit. First, citizen virtue is not ahistorical. Second, no catalog of citizen virtues is likely to be exhaustive.

Citizen Virtue Not Ahistorical

There is an important difference between the question “What are virtues of the excellent citizen?” and the question “What are the virtues of the excellent citizen in a liberal democracy?” The fact that my focus is the latter question betrays my belief that citizen virtue is not ahistorical. On the contrary, it is rooted in times, places, and forms of government. What would have been excellent citizenship for the ancient Greek is likely not the same as excellent citizenship today. Indeed, one imagines that even then what was excellent citizenship for the Athenian was quite different than excellent citizenship for the Spartan. This is not to say that there are not many similarities between good citizenship in different states across the ages, but just to say that citizen virtue is not unchanging and unaffected by differences in culture, governmental institutions and ideologies, national history and so forth.¹²

¹² This is not to deny the value of history in evaluating contemporary conceptions of civic virtue. A solid grounding in the historical elements of civic virtue contributes a window on the evolution of our views about citizen virtue. It gives us a sense of context so that we better understand the issues at stake, and a source of wisdom as we attempt to comprehend this form of human excellence while standing on the shoulders of giants. I regret that the necessarily narrow purview of dissertation writing does not allow me to include a historical consideration of citizenship and citizen virtue. For historical work on citizenship, see Michael Schudson; for historical work on citizen virtue, see Peter Berkowitz.
To see why citizen virtue’s historical character is significant, consider Michael Sandel’s book, *Democracy’s Discontent*. In this book, Sandel argues powerfully for the importance of crafting citizens who are able to rule themselves, citizens with the character traits necessary for participation in self-government. He contends that a “formative politics,” a “politics that cultivates in citizens the qualities of character self-government requires” is essential (6). He makes a convincing case that the formative project we lost sight of forty or fifty years ago should be restored. But he does not explain which qualities of character, which civic virtues, it is that we should be fostering. This is an important failing, not just for the reasons I argued earlier (see §1.3), but also because Sandel’s own narrative of change shows that it is unlikely that civic virtue would be the same in Jefferson’s day and in our own. Citizen virtues are personal qualities that serve to sustain political community from the things which threaten it, both from within and from without. But over the past two hundred years, much has changed: our economy, our population, the size of government, and the services government is expected to provide.

This means that the forces that threatened political community in Jefferson’s age differ from the forces that threaten political community today. Our opportunities also differ from those of Jefferson’s. Because both our challenges and our opportunities are different, the virtues that citizens must employ to meet those challenges and to take advantage of those opportunities are different. While we may grant to Sandel that a large part of citizen virtue is the qualities of character that self-government requires, and while it can be agreed that the *ability* to be self-governing has retained its value from Jefferson’s day to our own, we must recognize that the *qualities necessary* for being self-governing
have changed as our institutions have changed, as the world has changed, and as we the
people have changed.

**No Catalog of Citizen Virtues Is Exhaustive**

The claim that no catalog of citizen virtues is likely to be exhaustive is not a logical
claim but a practical one. There are many citizen virtues and many ways of describing
them. For example, if we survey the virtues that even a small sample of authors such as
Richard Dagger, William Galston, Amy Gutmann, Daniel Kemmis, Stephen Macedo, John
Rawls, Michael Sandel, and Thomas Spragens, have mentioned, the list is unwieldy; see
figure 1.
mutually respectful • respectful of other’s rights to choose their own ends • respectful of individual rights
• mutually respectful of differences of opinion • broadly sympathetic • treats fellow citizens as equals •
offers equality of respect • tolerant of different opinions and beliefs (including but not limited to religion)
• reasonable • fair • fairplaying • willing to meet others halfway • willing to compromise • cooperative •
willing to cooperate with others on political terms that everyone can publicly accept • active • active in
the community • honest • trusting • just • hopeful • civil • courageous • law-abiding • loyal • nonviolent •
opposed to hypocrisy • able to deliberate • able to participate in social reproduction • willing to speak •
willing to listen • disposed to and capable of engaging in public discourse • self-controlled • self-
restrained • self-transcending • moderate in demands • independent • autonomously self-developing •
self-critically reflective • has the capacity to choose own ends • values autonomy • willing to experiment •
willing to try and to accept new things • appreciative of inherited social ideals • cherishes civic memory •
remembers • attached to his fellow liberal citizens • altruistic in regard for fellow liberal citizens •
concerned for the whole • morally bonded with the community whose fate is at stake • devoted to the
common good as the appropriate goal of political life • has a sense of belonging • appreciative of
procedures and forms • knowledgeable about public affairs • accepts the discipline of reason • developed
in his capability to make political judgments • capable of discerning the talent and character of
candidates for public office • capable of evaluating the performance of incumbents • capable of discerning
the rights of others

Figure 1
A Selection of the Citizen Virtues Proposed By
Contemporary Political Theorists
The list can be pared down, of course. For example, suppose that we organize the most often mentioned candidates for citizen virtue into categories concerning the citizen’s attitude, motivations, skills and abilities, and qualities of character:

1. Attitude: mutual respect towards others in the community, willingness to compromise

2. Motivation: loyalty to the community and its sustaining institutions, commitment to the common good, retains civic memory

3. Skills: knowledge of public affairs, skill in political judgment, ability/openness to dialogue

4. Qualities of Character: honest, just, courageous, independent, self-restrained

At first glance, these categories seem to cover all the bases and the entries within each category seem to distill some of the most important characteristics of excellent citizenship. But compare this list with the longer one on which I based it. There are some obvious omissions: the virtue of nonviolence, the virtue of being appreciative of procedures and forms, and the virtue of being willing to try and accept new things. One might explain these omissions with a wave of the hand: “These are really very odd candidates for citizen virtue and not often mentioned.” Nonetheless, each claims the allegiance of at least one prominent political theorist.

Look also at some of the more common sound-alike virtues that I grouped together at the beginning of the list: mutually respectful, respectful of other’s rights to choose their own ends, respectful of individual rights, mutually respectful of differences of opinion, broadly sympathetic, treats fellow citizens as equals, offers equality of respect, and tolerant of different opinions and beliefs (including but not limited to religion).
Although these virtues are related, the claim that they are all captured under one term, “mutual respect,” can’t be supported.

One might conclude that there are three varieties of respect here: the excellent citizen respects the rights of others, respects the differing opinions of others, and respects the choosing of one’s own ends. But the list doesn’t stop with three varieties of respect: is it clear that respecting one’s fellow citizens in these ways is the same as treating them as equals? Tolerance is also related to respect, yet not the same. This shows two things: First, there are always legitimate candidates for citizen virtue yet to be considered. We must be prepared to assess them. Second, widely accepted candidates for citizen virtue are seldom the unitary concepts they appear to be.

The fact that no catalog of citizen virtues is likely to be exhaustive makes identifying and defending the citizen virtues more difficult. For one thing, the task is never finished. For another, since one can’t name all the citizen virtues, it isn’t necessarily the case that when Thinker A defends a list of virtues that differs from Thinker B’s list of virtues, we can assume that there is serious disagreement between Thinkers A and B as to the nature of citizen virtue or as to what virtues are citizen virtues. Indeed, it is possible that they do not disagree at all. When thinkers do consider specific citizen virtues, they can’t discuss every virtue, so they typically discuss one or two or a handful of them. We naturally direct the spotlight at either the virtues highlighted by our own political tradition (e.g., liberal, libertarian, communitarian, etc.) or at the virtues regarding which there is the most controversy.
Of course, this is not to say that comparing different thinkers’ takes on citizen virtue (an exercise which occupies a large portion of each of Chapters Three, Four and Five) is pointless. We can learn much about a given thinker from the citizen virtues he or she chooses to spotlight. More significantly, the differences and similarities between the thinkers’ treatments of a single virtue can teach us much about the virtue itself.\(^\text{13}\)

### 1.5 Sources to Consider

Although the candidates for citizen virtue are inexhaustible, the sources of discussion about specific citizen virtue candidates are not. As discussed above, although many thinkers mention civic virtue, and many champion its contemporary importance, surprisingly few take up and consider (as opposed to merely listing) the specific citizen virtues which comprise it. Fortunately, in seeking to identify the virtues of the excellent citizen in our society, we need not start with a completely blank page. Three sources of thought regarding specific citizen virtues present themselves as possibilities:

1) Civic republicans/communitarians (for example, Michael Sandel):

Communitarians have been the strongest champions of citizen virtue in the course of attacking liberal neutrality, proceduralism, and atomistic individualism. They are the best source for arguments regarding the importance of civic virtue in general. Unfortunately, communitarian accounts which deal with specific citizen virtues are few in number and sparse in detail. Some material can be gleaned from communitarian conclusions regarding the demands of self-government.

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\(^{13}\) For an example of this, see the discussion of William Galston and Mark Kingwell’s divergent views of respect near the beginning of Chapter Three.
2) Writers on voluntary associations and civil society (for example, Amy Gutmann): These thinkers are not principally interested in specific citizen virtues, but occasionally discuss the virtues in order to address their inculcation in schools and voluntary associations.

3) Neo-liberals (for example, William Galston): Neo-liberals locate themselves firmly within the liberal tradition, yet reject the liberalism of neutrality. By arguing for the existence of liberal virtues, neo-liberals defend liberalism against the criticism that it is too thin to preserve liberal democratic government. Neo-liberals thus emerge as the best source for thought on specific citizen virtues.

1.6 Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced the question that motivates this dissertation: “What are the virtues of the excellent citizen in a liberal democracy?” I showed that citizen virtue is imperative to the perpetuation of political community and argued further that inquiry into the specific virtues that comprise citizen virtue is essential. I argued that the content of citizen virtue depends upon its historical and social context, and concluded that it is appropriate to accept liberal democracy as our context. I also observed that the roster of potential citizen virtues is inexhaustible. Finally, I discussed three potential sources of insight into specific citizen virtues and determined that neo-liberal thought provides the best point of origin for discussing the nature of the liberal democratic citizen’s virtues.
CHAPTER TWO

CITIZEN VIRTUES: CONSTRUCTING A SATISFACTORY ACCOUNT

Citizen virtue is imperative, yet imperiled. We can’t hope to recognize fully the
dangers it faces, nor adequately lament its diminution, nor do much to act on its decline,
until we frame a satisfactory account of what citizen virtue is and what specific virtues
comprise it. A satisfactory account is necessary both for satisfying our intellectual
curiosity and for preparing us to pursue projects to foster the virtues. In this chapter I will
explore what would constitute a satisfactory account of citizen virtue and work towards
the construction of such an account.

2.1 What Would Constitute a Satisfactory Account?

The problem with contemporary work in philosophy and political theory is not that
no one knows what citizen virtue is or what virtuous behavior looks like. It is not that no
one has written about civic virtue or even about specific citizen virtues (although much
work remains to be done in this area). The problem is that the accounts that have been
offered thus far have been offered without sufficient regard to what would constitute a
satisfactory account of citizen virtue: what such an account would look like and what
elements would comprise it.
To avoid the failings of previous accounts, it is prudent to attend to the meta-aspects of offering a satisfactory account of citizen virtue. That is, rather than beginning with a question such as, “To what extent must a citizen participate politically?” I will begin by reflecting on the reasons for seeking an account of citizen virtue and consider how best to satisfy the needs that inspire the inquiry. Generally, two desires motivate the quest for an account of citizen virtue. First, intellectual curiosity, our desire for comprehension: We construct accounts so that we can better grasp concepts—in this case, citizen virtue and the specific virtues that comprise it. Second, our desire to see whether and to understand how change is possible: How can we foster the virtues? What can individuals, groups, and governments do to see that excellence in citizenship increases?

An account must include two critical elements in order to meet these objectives: a virtue catalog and an explanatory framework. To understand the nature of citizen virtue, we must understand the several virtues which comprise it. Therefore, we must construct a catalog of the citizen virtues. However, merely listing the virtues is insufficient. An explanatory framework that defines, defends, and delimits the virtues must structure the list. The virtue catalog’s explanatory framework is the element that transforms a mere list of virtues into a full-fledged account of citizen virtue, an account that suggest direction for virtue-fostering projects. The explanatory framework allows us to assess which qualities we should recognize as virtues and enables us to judge between competing accounts of citizen virtue.
2.2 Shortcomings of Contemporary Accounts of Citizen Virtue

One of the principal reasons that contemporary work on the citizen virtues falls short is because even in the few cases where thinkers offer a catalog (rather than a list) of specific citizen virtues, there is typically no explicit explanatory framework to back it. Such accounts offer no means for assessing whether a quality proposed as a virtue should actually be recognized as a virtue, and no yardstick for judging between accounts of citizen virtue.

An account that offers no means for assessing whether a quality proposed as a virtue actually qualifies as a virtue is a problem. I argued in Chapter One that no catalog of citizen virtues is likely to be exhaustive. This suggests that regardless of how carefully we initially construct a virtue catalog, there are always likely to be legitimate citizen virtues that aren’t yet included. I also argued in Chapter One that citizen virtue is not ahistorical. This means that as times change, the qualities of character we recognize as virtues will also need to change. Both of these points suggest that it is essential that we have some way of deciding which virtue candidates we will regard as citizen virtues and which candidates should be tossed on the refuse heap of formerly promising, yet discarded good ideas.

It is also a problem if an account suggests no way of judging between competing catalogs of virtue. Although many of the virtues mentioned by different thinkers show clear family resemblances, the differences between their catalogs of citizen virtue are real.¹

¹ I discuss the notion of family resemblance as it applies to citizen virtues in more detail at the beginning of Chapter Three.
Surface agreement conceals disagreement on the details. The fact that there are real differences between these accounts suggests that some catalogs of citizen virtue are likely superior, others likely inferior. But contemporary accounts offer no yardstick for adjudicating between them. Without such a yardstick, there is no way of judging that one thinker’s picture of citizen virtue is more accurate, more satisfactory, more helpful, or preferable in some regard to another’s. We are left without any justification for adopting one catalog or account over another, because there are no criteria to which to appeal.

As for the other element of a satisfactory account of citizen virtue, I term the virtue catalog a “catalog” in order to emphasize that it should not be merely a list of citizen virtues (e.g., loyalty, cooperation, tolerance . . .), but also an exploration of each virtue term’s extension. I argued in Chapter One that thinkers too often call for civic virtue without giving attention to the specific virtues of citizenship that give civic virtue its shape. But even when specific virtues are mentioned it is too often just that—a mention—in the form of a list of virtues that the thinker identifies as citizen virtues. This will not do. In the environment of sound-alike virtues and superficial agreement that characterizes discussion of civic virtue, careful demarcation of each term’s extension is critical. For example, is “loyalty” loyalty to one’s country or loyalty to one’s fellows? We can’t be sure that we agree on loyalty until we can differentiate between different types of loyalty. This means that merely listing “loyalty” as one of the citizen virtues does not pass muster. To include it in the catalog appropriately, one must clearly delimit its extension, explaining which type of loyalty he intends.
2.3 An Explanatory Framework for Citizen Virtue

The explanatory framework describes and defends the basis upon which the virtue catalog is built and defended. It explains why the catalog has the shape it does, why this set of virtues is included while that set is not. For example, the rationale for identifying one set of qualities as citizen virtues rather than another might be something along the lines of, “This catalog includes those qualities of character that best promote the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity.” When stated as a question, such a rationale becomes a tool for catalog-building: “Which qualities of character will best promote the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity?”

The explanatory framework defends the basis upon which the catalog is built by explaining how the answer to the question it poses defines excellent citizenship. When the virtue catalog’s composition is tied to a given set of ideals, as in the example here, defending it will take the form of explaining how the named ideals relate to citizenship and why they should be thought to define excellent citizenship. For example, if one wished to defend a liberty/equality/fraternity framework for a given account of citizen virtue, he would argue that promoting liberty, equality, and fraternity constitutes excellent citizenship.

In justifying the virtues that are part of its own catalog (“These traits better promote liberty, equality, and fraternity”) this explanation of the virtue catalog’s construction provides a yardstick for comparing competing accounts of virtue and for

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2 The liberty/equality/fraternity framework is just an example for purposes of illustration. I will introduce my favored explanatory framework shortly.
assessing whether qualities proposed as virtues should be recognized as virtues. For example: the liberty/equality/fraternity framework allows one to claim that Account A is superior to Account B because Account A’s virtue catalog better promotes liberty, equality and fraternity. Of course, Account B might suggest a different explanatory framework altogether. For example, “These virtues are the qualities most likely to ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty for ourselves and our posterity.”

In this case, the argument for preferring one account of virtue over the other hinges on which framework is the more defensible as a basis for citizen virtue: liberty/equality/fraternity or tranquility/defense/welfare/liberty. The explanatory framework also allows one to assess new or as yet unconsidered candidates for citizen virtue. For example, under the liberty/equality/fraternity framework one would assess courage as a candidate for citizen virtue by asking, “Does it promote liberty, equality, and fraternity?”

2.4 Merely Complete Accounts Inadequate

I have suggested that contemporary accounts of citizen virtue are unsatisfactory principally because they are incomplete; they lack explanatory frameworks. Any account that includes a virtue catalog shaped by an explanatory framework can escape that criticism. However, answering the central question of this dissertation successively requires not just a complete account of citizen virtue, but a satisfactory one. Not only is a

\[3\] Namely, “What are the virtues of the excellent citizen in a contemporary liberal democracy?”
satisfactory account complete (because it includes an explanatory framework that explains
the rationale behind the catalog’s construction, allows one to assess whether new
candidates for virtue merit a place in the virtue catalog, and enables one to judge between
competing catalogs), the explanatory framework that structures it is appropriate and
convincing.  

The same holds true of the virtue catalog. A satisfactory account of citizen virtue
does not offer just any list of virtues, it offers a catalog of carefully chosen virtues that
allow the actor to excel in the role of citizen. Most of the remainder of this chapter
explores the requirements that mark a virtue as being of this type. Before turning to that
discussion, however, it is appropriate to ask on what grounds the explanatory framework
that structures a satisfactory virtue catalog is to be founded. Where can we find an
adequate yardstick for judging between accounts and assessing virtue candidates or on
what basis should we construct one? On what grounds can we argue that one virtue
catalog is preferable to another? What is an appropriate and convincing rationale for
recognizing some character traits as citizen virtues and not others? In answer to these
questions, I shall argue that the role-based nature of citizen virtue suggests the basis for
the rationale we seek.

2.5 Citizen Virtues Are Role-Based Virtues

In order to understand the citizen virtues it is imperative that we understand their
role-based character. The virtues achieve their significance within the context of the

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4 In other words, any old explanatory framework will not suffice. A satisfactory
account requires a good (appropriate and convincing) explanatory framework.
citizen role; it is the function those traits perform within the role that defines them as virtues. Citizen virtues are those qualities that allow citizens to attain excellence in the role of citizen. So an alternate way of formulating the question “What are the citizen virtues?” is to ask “Which qualities allow a person to attain excellence in the citizen role?” This means that in order to identify the qualities that are the citizen virtues, we must understand the role of citizen.

To understand a role, we must understand its aim or function and the context within which it functions. It is obvious that one cannot understand a role without knowing the nature of the role. Imagine an actor told to prepare for a play but not told whether he is to play the king or the peasant! In the same way, when one seeks to identify certain character traits as virtues, one needs to know which type of virtues he is trying to identify: virtues simpliciter, citizen virtues, presidential virtues, etc. But just knowing which role is in question is insufficient. Just as an actor seeks to understand his character’s function in the story in order to play his part well, to understand what excellence in the citizen role will look like we must understand the citizen’s function in his political community. We must understand what it is that the citizen achieves if he excels in his role; we must understand the aims of citizenship.

A thorough understanding of the citizen role requires not only knowing the aims of citizenship, but also having a grasp of the context in which the citizen will either achieve or fall short of his aims. To extend the drama analogy further, if an actor knows only that he is to play the part of king, he is inadequately prepared for his part. He must know whether he is to play King Arthur in Camelot or the King of Siam in The King and I, or
King Lear in *King Lear*. An excellent performance in one of these plays is not interchangeable with excellent performance in the others. Role-based virtues are the same in this respect. Such virtues are not necessarily interchangeable between roles because what each role requires of the individual is different: Excellence as a politician differs from excellence as a police officer and excellence as a police officer differs from excellence as a parent. The nature of excellence as a citizen differs not just from the nature of excellence in these roles, but as the role of citizen differs between differing political communities. In the pages that follow, I will first take up the issue of context and then consider the aims of citizenship.

### 2.6 Context of the Citizen Role

Citizenship is context-specific. The type of government under which a citizen functions—its history, its animating ideals, its time and place—and the milieu in which citizen and government are set—peace or war, plenty or scarcity, leader on the world stage or one of the led—give the citizen role its fundamental shape. The role of citizen differs under different regimes because what is required to sustain and promote those regimes differs.

As I suggested in Chapter One, an ancient Spartan would have had a very different conception of the role of citizenship than the ancient Athenian; they both would have had a very different conception of citizenship than our own. It’s also the case that excellent citizenship demands different things of a United States citizen than it does of a French citizen—even contemporary liberal democracies both express and fall short of the liberal
democratic ideal in different ways. Different interpretations and expressions of the liberal democratic ideal will mean different conceptions of excellent citizenship. Different conceptions of citizenship (in addition to the differing histories and settings of political communities) will require different virtues of the citizen who strives for excellence. As we consider the question, “What are the virtues of the excellent citizen in a contemporary liberal democracy?” clarity concerning the nature of the liberal democracy we have in mind is crucial. We can’t know what the virtues are until we know what excellence in the role is. We can’t know what excellence in the role is until we understand the role. And we can’t understand the role until we know its context.

5 For an example of how contemporary liberal democracies may differ in the virtues they require of their citizens, consider how most European countries provide much more than does the United States in the way of health, unemployment and retirement benefits. This greater provision of benefits means that less may be required of those citizens in terms of self-reliance and self-discipline. There may be less urgency in making insurance arrangements and financial plans for hard times and retirement. However, more may be required of these same citizens in other respects. The wider distribution of public resources may increase the importance of responsible and honest use of public programs.

6 If it is true that conceptions of excellent citizenship differ among contemporary liberal democracies, then there are some questions regarding the citizen virtues that can only be answered accurately if the context of the liberal democracy in question is closely specified, even to the point of specifying a particular political community (such as the United States rather than France). Naturally, the quest for role specificity can be taken too far. We will have difficulty talking to each other about citizenship if we specify the citizen role in too much detail. For example, “Citizenship in the suburbs of Providence, Rhode Island, during the summer of 1960.” Certainly much (most?) of what is important to be said about citizenship can be observed at a higher level of generality, covering many communities and time periods. However, the present trend in the literature is to err on the side of hyper-generality: Civic virtue is mentioned with a broad wave of the hand to indicate that the term encompasses all facets of civic virtue across centuries of history. Against this background, the danger of hyper-specificity isn’t a pressing problem.
2.7 Aim of the Citizen Role

The other thing we must comprehend in order to understand the role is its aim or function. Because the aim of the role of citizen is to assist her political community in achieving its aims, the aims of citizenship are inextricably intertwined with the ideals of the liberal democratic community in question. This means that we can’t fully understand the aims of citizenship until we have a reasonably good conception of the aims of the liberal democratic state. Just as a person who came upon a carburetor and wondered what function it was supposed to fulfill wouldn’t be able to answer that question satisfactorily until he came to understand it as a component in a larger machine (the automobile), the function or aims of citizenship won’t be clear until we see citizenship as part of the larger liberal democratic picture. This is true not only because the role of citizen is meaningless apart from political community (just as the carburetor is of no utility apart from the combustion engine), but also because the aims of citizenship are defined by the aims or ideals of the liberal democratic state. We can’t know whether a citizen is successfully assisting his state in achieving its aims until we know what the liberal democratic state aims at.

2.8 Liberal Democratic Ideals

I will attempt a necessarily partial and preliminary exploration of these aims by considering the liberal democratic state in terms of its three namesake attributes: it is liberal, it is democratic, and it is a state. An extended argument for why the aims I am
about to identify are our liberal democratic ideals\textsuperscript{7} rather than others needs to be made, but since this is at least a dissertation-length topic in itself, I do not make it here.\textsuperscript{8}

The conversation about the aims and ideals of liberal democratic government is and must be a continuing one. However, while achieving consensus on the nature of our ideals may not yet be possible, consideration of citizen virtue cannot be postponed until it is. It is therefore important to press forward with whatever limited agreement on our ideals is possible. Fortunately, the topic of what government should strive for is one concerning which many thinkers have exerted considerable intellectual effort over the past several centuries, and so a few basic ideas about what the liberal democratic state aims for are commonly shared, even if not universally recognized.

The first namesake attribute of the liberal democratic state is that it is “liberal.” It is liberal because it acknowledges “the natural freedom and equality of all.”\textsuperscript{9} The ideals of freedom and equality are realized in a community where all citizens are free to act as full moral agents and to pursue the good as they desire (although constrained by others’ freedom to pursue the good) and where all citizens are recognized as equal in the eyes of

\textsuperscript{7} I use “aims” and “ideals” interchangeably in the pages that follow.

\textsuperscript{8} The topic of what governments should aim at, and specifically of what a liberal democratic community should aim at, is a huge one, one that has already been the focus of many books, articles, and dissertations. Therefore, I have chosen to bracket the fundamental question of what our liberal ideals are in order to focus on the citizen virtues themselves. Ultimately, my questions about the virtues can’t be answered without making assumptions about what it is that political community should aim at, but this is an unsurprising limitation given the finite nature of my project.

\textsuperscript{9} I borrow this phrase from Peter Berkowitz, who refers to “the natural freedom and equality of all human beings” as “the fundamental premise of liberalism” (xiii).
the law and in light of the dignity they share as persons and citizens. The political community that realizes these ideals achieves recognition of the freedom and equality of all, both by its people and in its institutions. In such a state, all are treated as full equal moral agents.

“Democratic” is the second namesake attribute of the liberal democratic state. It suggests that self-government is one of the goods at which liberal democratic government aims, and indeed, self-government is one of liberal democracy’s highest ideals. As a democracy, excellence in the liberal democratic state is the achievement of self-government by the people: Citizens govern themselves, rather than having government imposed on them from the outside. The good of self-government is a boon to both the government and the governed. The burdens of self-government demand excellence from citizens; citizens become excellent as they respond to these demands. The nation that achieves the ideal of self-government is a government uniquely situated to meet the needs of its people.

The third attribute of the liberal democratic state is that it is a “state,” or a political community which we are discussing. Excellence in this community aspect of the liberal democratic state takes two forms: cooperation for the common good and stability. Collective cooperation for the common good allows us to reap the benefits of being governed, of being part of a political community. It allows us to accomplish as a community what we could never accomplish alone as individuals. Cooperation for the

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10 Michael Sandel offers an extended treatment of self-government and why we should value it in his book *Democracy’s Discontent.*
common good offers the promise of synergy: A group’s contributions to the general welfare combine to create something much greater than individual contributions summed.

Stability is necessary to secure the rule of law against anarchy and to secure the benefits of cooperation for the common good (things like roads, educational systems, perhaps welfare) both now and for the future. Without stability, none of the other goods of the liberal democratic state matter. If we are self-governing today, but not self-governing tomorrow, there is some sense in which we are not really self-governing today. If we can’t be reasonably sure our governmental institutions will be similar to today’s tomorrow, we have no reason to cooperate. If our governmental institutions aren’t similar today to what they will be tomorrow, the fruits of our cooperation are unlikely to endure. We’ve not made true progress if freedom and equality are recognized only for a day. Stability ensures that advances towards our other ideals will last.

One might ask why it is important to reach agreement on our liberal democratic ideals; others will question to what extent it is possible. In the battle-weary landscape of political theory, can groups as diverse as Rawlsian liberals and Sandelian communitarians reach consensus? I believe they can—although the compass of that consensus is limited. Our liberal democratic ideals are a description of the type of political community we desire. Pluralism among such conceptions regarding what a desirable political community is is a fact. Liberal and communitarian conceptions of the liberal democratic ideals differ because the groups desire different things from political community. Hopes of universal

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11 In his introduction to Political Liberalism, John Rawls acknowledges stability as a concept crucial to political philosophy and notes that the necessity of offering a convincing account of stability motivated the book’s writing.
agreement on one picture of political community are vain. Nonetheless, although liberals and communitarians may have different priorities when considering what is desirable in political community, both accept the ideal of liberal democratic community.

This means that liberals can acknowledge democratic self-government as a worthy goal, while communitarians can recognize the merit of liberal freedom (e.g., freedom to choose one’s spouse, occupation, religious beliefs) and equal treatment before the law. Both groups can settle on the goals common to all political community: stability (so that gains in other areas are not lost) and collective cooperation for the common good (to benefit from living together in community). This shared commitment to liberal democracy means some measure of agreement on our ideals is possible. There are many shared beliefs regarding what constitutes a desirable political community.

The reason for seeking this type of agreement (limited though it is) is that it allows us to move forward on common projects. Living in a pluralistic liberal democratic community makes finding a common basis upon which to proceed essential. I may not be able to convert the majority of my peers to my point of view (and thus the political community in which I live may always fall short of the one I desire), but I can join with others to make my community better by identifying what we agree on and implementing as much of our shared vision as possible. This is important from a citizen virtue perspective, because without some agreement on what the citizen virtues are, community projects to foster them are doomed.

A principal motivation for this account is to seek an explanatory framework that can provide a more objective basis for our claims about the virtues. As I shall argue in the
section that follows, such a basis is found when we argue that a given virtue better enables the citizen to assist his state in attaining its aims. However, if these aims (the liberal democratic ideals), are not shared, then this strategy fails. Without some measure of agreement on our ideals we lose the basis for a more objective grounding upon which to anchor our claims about the virtues. Arguments that trait X is or isn’t properly recognized as a virtue and claims that account Y is superior to account Z cannot be sustained. Lacking such a basis, community conversation about the citizen virtues (and how to foster them) cannot progress.

2.9 A Role-Based Rationale for the Virtue Catalog

If stability, cooperation for the common good, self-government, freedom, and equality are the aims of liberal democratic government and achieving them is its function, then the role of the liberal democratic citizen is to assist her political community in attaining these ideals. This understanding of the citizen’s role suggests both a rationale for constructing one’s own virtue catalog and a yardstick for judging the catalogs promoted by others. To evaluate a virtue candidate we ask: “Will this trait enable the citizen to assist her community in attaining one or more of these ideals?” To test a virtue catalog we ask: “Does this catalog of virtues enable the citizen to assist her community in attaining each of these ideals?” And finally, to compare virtue catalogs with each other we ask, “Which catalog better enables the citizen to assist her community in attaining these ideals?”
2.10 Role-Based Inquiry Essential, Yet Insufficient

Formulating a yardstick of this sort for judging both virtue candidates and accounts of citizen virtue represents significant progress towards answering the central question of this dissertation. We are closer to having an answer to “What are the virtues of the excellent citizen in a contemporary liberal democracy?” because we have criteria to compare virtue candidates against. We are closer to constructing a satisfactory account of citizen virtue, because we have an explanatory framework with which to structure and defend the virtue catalog.

Inquiry into the role-based nature of citizen virtue teaches three things: First, citizen virtues are those qualities of character that enable us to succeed in the citizen role. Second, the aims of the liberal democratic state dictate what the nature of success in the citizen role is. Third, citizen virtues are those qualities that enable the citizen to assist the state in achieving its aims—in protecting, promoting, and realizing liberal democratic ideals. In this chapter I have identified five such ideals: stability, cooperation for the common good, self-government, equality, and freedom. These ideals focus our quest for a catalog of citizen virtues. They remind us that constructing a catalog of citizen virtues is not a question of asking, “What are some admirable traits that have something to do with living in community?” or, “Which virtues have something to say about politics?” Rather, in constructing a virtue catalog and building an account of citizen virtue, we must ask, “Which qualities of character will allow me, the citizen, to assist my political community in attaining its aims? What is my part in seeing that my government moves towards these ideals?”
Despite the progress that being able to formulate these questions represents, two issues suggest that work remains to be done. First, the aims of the liberal democratic state are not specific enough to do the work required of them: a) to prescribe the content of our virtue catalog and b) to aid us in judging between rival virtue catalogs. Second, the virtues required for excellent citizenship in an imperfectly liberal, imperfectly democratic state like our own differ from the virtues required for excellent citizenship in a perfect one. Citizen virtues must enable the citizen to assist her community in attaining its ideals within the context of that community. Considering those ideals apart from this context distorts the resultant picture of the virtues.

The first problem is that the liberal democratic ideals I’ve identified thus far are not specific enough to do the work they need to do. How the citizen should go about assisting his political community in attaining its ideals is not fully specified by liberal democratic ideals that themselves require further specification. One way of explaining the difficulty is that while we now have a yard or meterstick, we lack a micrometer. Identifying the broad outlines of our liberal democratic ideals makes it possible to judge in a general way what belongs or doesn’t belong in the catalog of citizen virtues, but finer specifications may yet elude us. For instance, exactly what does the ideal of self-government demand? If participation is a virtue, exactly how much and what type of willingness to participate is required in order to excel?

Often the best answer to the question of what liberal democratic ideals demand comes as we consider the traits of character generally accepted as citizen virtues. Although it is the aims of liberal democracy that determine which traits are citizen
For example, consideration of the traits of tolerance and respect (which are widely recognized as citizen virtues) teaches us that the ideal of freedom must be understood as an ideal of limited freedom. This means that arriving at a more complete picture of liberal democratic ideals in a way that also advances our store of knowledge regarding citizen virtue is a demand not easily met.

When it comes to explicating the virtues, the relationship between our liberal democratic ideals and the citizen virtues is thus a stumbling block. Citizen virtues are the qualities of character that allow the citizen to fulfill her role. The fact that the citizen’s role is to assist her state in attaining its aims means that it is the aims or ideals of liberal democracy that determine which virtues are citizen virtues. Given the role-based nature of citizen virtue, we naturally look to the aims of liberal democracy in order to identify the citizen virtues.

Unfortunately, it is our intuitions about the virtues that typically constitute one of the best sources of insight on the nature of our liberal democratic ideals. As we attempt to formulate our ideals, the most telling clue that we have gotten them wrong is a conflict with our strongly held intuitions concerning the nature of excellent citizenship. This doesn’t mean that the relationship between the virtues and our ideals is a circular one.

While our liberal democratic aims determine the citizen virtues, the virtues don’t

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12 For example, consideration of the traits of tolerance and respect (which are widely recognized as citizen virtues) teaches us that the ideal of freedom must be understood as an ideal of limited freedom. The virtues of tolerance and respect do not abolish personal freedom—rather they protect it—but they insist on limits when one person’s freedom threatens others’ freedom. If a citizen’s conception of his pursuit of the good consists of committing as many hate crimes as possible, his freedom to pursue his vision of the good should be limited.
determine our liberal democratic aims. If our society had a generally accepted and fully specified picture of its liberal democratic ideals, that picture would be an essential reference in constructing a catalog of citizen virtues. However, given that our societal picture of the liberal democratic ideals is still evolving and incomplete, there is as much incentive to make our citizen virtues explicit in order to better comprehend our liberal democratic ideals as there is to carefully formulate our ideals in order to better recognize the citizen virtues.

The mutual dependence between our comprehension of our liberal democratic ideals and our understanding of the citizen virtues is frustrating for those who would attempt to learn more about the citizen virtues by exploring their role-based nature. However, their conceptual dependence typifies the nature of human reasoning on topics like this one. Citizen virtue and liberal democratic ideals are but two strands in a web of interdependent concepts. This conceptual web means that search for a foundation upon which a virtue catalog can be built is a chimera. Hope for a mathematical-style proof to show us what the citizen virtues are is misplaced.

However, this is not to say that there is no value in seeking a basis for claims regarding citizen virtue. I argued at the outset of this chapter that the lack of such a basis and the absence of attempts to find one is a principal way in which previous accounts of citizen virtue have failed. The proponent of a virtue catalog ought to have a basis for his claims; he should be able to cite and defend criteria according to which some qualities of character are included in the catalog and others are excluded.
Recognizing this, we must moderate our expectations regarding the sort of justification available. Whatever basis is available for claims regarding citizen virtue won’t have the compulsion of modus ponens behind it. We must build a case rather than do a proof. The construction and defense of a virtue catalog is a “process of mutual adjustment” between our ideals of liberal democratic government and our intuitions about what it is to be a virtuous citizen. The justification of a conception of citizen virtue “is a matter of the mutual support of many considerations, of everything fitting together into one coherent view” (Rawls, *Theory*, 7n, 20-21\(^{13}\)). Our ideals of government must be amended if they suggest virtues we are unwilling to accept; a virtue candidate will have to be rejected if it does not support ideals of government that we are unwilling to amend.\(^{14}\)

The second issue with the approach sketched thus far is that there are other factors in addition to liberal democratic ideals that shape the role of citizen. The citizen virtues cannot be derived from our ideals alone. Attending solely to our ideals results in a citizen virtue catalog adapted to life in an ideal liberal democratic society, but “ideal” does not describe our own communities. Excellent citizenship under conditions where liberal

\(^{13}\) Rawls makes his comments regarding “mutual adjustment” and “mutual support” in a different context—his discussion of principles of justice and what he later refers to as “reflective equilibrium.” However, these words are relevant here because they perfectly describe the construction of a catalog of citizen virtue.

\(^{14}\) I modeled this sentence after the Nelson Goodman formula from *Fact, Fiction and Forecast* where he discusses induction and the laws of probability: “A rule is amended if it yields an inference we are unwilling to accept; an inference is rejected if it violates a rule we are unwilling to amend” (64).
I am indebted to Peter Berkowitz for his suggestion that the need for virtue under ideal and less than ideal circumstances differs (25-26).

Since we do not have the option of living in an ideal liberal democratic state, the relevant context for this inquiry (ideal vs. actual) is clear. We want to know what the virtues are so that we can foster them in ourselves and others, preserving and perpetuating our liberal democratic way of life. The questions that motivate this dissertation are “How can I be a better citizen?” “What shall I teach my children?” And “How can I encourage better citizenship in my peers?” These questions must be answered in the context of a society that falls short of its ideals, not in a vacuum free from the problems that plague our political communities. Asking what the citizen virtues are isn’t simply an exercise in arcane academic theory, it is a question that ordinary citizens of every background must grapple with as they seek to improve their governments and themselves. We cannot be apathetic towards the question of how we, our children, and our neighbors will come to live the virtues. Liberal democracy needs the virtues and our neither perfectly liberal, nor perfectly democratic society needs them all the more.

Since it is flawed (perhaps broken) systems of government under which we, our children, and our neighbors reside, it is the virtues appropriate to such citizenship that demand our greatest attention. This isn’t to say that discussion of liberal democratic ideals

15 I am indebted to Peter Berkowitz for his suggestion that the need for virtue under ideal and less than ideal circumstances differs (25-26).

16 This is true regardless of whether (and to what extent) we conclude that it is appropriate for the government or even voluntary associations to attempt to intervene and influence citizens toward better citizenship.
doesn’t have its place as well—it must—because otherwise we are blind to what we strive for. Behind the thesis that liberal democratic government requires the virtues is the suggestion that if more citizens lived the virtues, we would have a more ideal liberal democratic government. Citizen virtue is the answer to the question of what citizens can do to move their government from the government they have to the government they desire. We must remember that the context of our role as citizens is not perfect but imperfect liberal democracy; the virtues we identify must be adapted to the context of our citizenship.

2.11 Imperfect Liberal Democracy

I have argued that to understand citizen virtue we must begin by exploring its role-based nature. In order to identify virtues appropriate to a given role, we must understand that role, its aims and context. This dissertation’s focus is the role of citizen. The context of the citizen role is imperfect liberal democracy, the aim is to assist one’s political community in achieving its aims. The aims of liberal democratic community—freedom, equality, self-government, stability, and collective cooperation for the common good—therefore shape the citizen virtues.

While this line of inquiry provides important insights, I have argued that attempting to derive the citizen virtues from liberal democratic ideals alone is a mistake. This approach suffers from two difficulties. First, although we now have a broad picture of what a satisfactory virtue catalog would look like (such a catalog would enable the citizen to assist her state in promoting, protecting and realizing the ideals of freedom, equality,
self-government, cooperation, and stability), because there is no generally accepted, completely specified account of liberal democratic ideals, the specifics are less clear than what constructing a satisfactory account of the virtues requires. Second, the focus on liberal democratic ideals raises the danger that in contemplating the ideal, we will stray from considering the real. We must not forget that a less than perfectly liberal, less than perfectly democratic state is the context to which our virtues must be adapted.

What can be done to address these concerns? Both difficulties point to the need to further specify the context of the citizen role. Where the initial step in constructing a satisfactory account of citizen virtue is top down (moving from liberal democratic ideals to citizen virtues and then to life in the community), further progress may require a bottom up approach, moving from life in the community to the citizen virtues, and ultimately to further insight about our liberal democratic ideals. To craft a virtue catalog appropriate to the needs of a liberal democracy that falls short of its ideals, we must consider life in a less than perfect liberal democratic community. What challenges do such communities face? What virtues can ameliorate such challenges?

2.12 Challenges Facing Contemporary Liberal Democracies

To show how moving from the bottom up can aid us in constructing a citizen virtue catalog, I will consider five different challenges facing liberal democratic political communities: Low voter turnout, government inefficiency, hate crime, the entitlement state, and growing socioeconomic division.\textsuperscript{17} I will ask two questions of each of these

\textsuperscript{17} Obviously, this is just a selection of the problems faced by liberal democratic communities.
problems: First, what liberal democratic ideals does the problem challenge? In other words, why is the phenomenon a problem? Second, which citizen virtue would ameliorate (improve if not solve) this problem if more citizens acquired it?

Note that turning to the actual problems faced by contemporary political communities is not a turning away from role-based inquiry into citizen virtue. It is only when we recognize the role-based nature of citizen virtue that examining political community’s challenges becomes an effective approach to identifying citizen virtues. On this approach, we begin with problems diagnosed in terms of the liberal democratic aims they challenge. We identify solutions by considering how citizens, in their roles as citizens, can ameliorate these problems.

**Low Voter Turnout**

I will first consider the challenge of low voter turnout. The liberal democratic ideal most directly challenged by low voter turnout is self-government. Low voter turnout threatens the representative character of our political system and thereby challenges self-government. In a representative democracy, if citizens are to govern themselves, they must vote for representatives. As citizens of all ideologies cease voting, both the will of the majority and the cry of the minority become harder to discern. When enough citizens stop voting, the voice of the people is silenced. When the people can no longer be heard, the people are no longer directing their government and self-government ceases.

Failing to vote is a rejection of the ideal of self-government and the responsibility that accompanies that ideal. Failing to vote also threatens the ideal of cooperation for the common good, because such cooperation is the means to the end of self-government.
When citizens don’t vote, they do not carry that part of the “civic burden”\textsuperscript{18} with their peers. When too many citizens act in this way, the community as a whole becomes less able to reap the benefits of cooperation and therefore less able to reap the benefits of political community. The basis for accepting the social contract and being bound by the restrictions of government begins to disappear. Hence one who fails to vote also threatens the ideal of stability.

So, what to do? Of the maladies mentioned here, low voter turnout is the one that responds best to the citizen virtue prescription.\textsuperscript{19} In order for their communities to realize the ideal of self-government, citizens must be willing to support the mechanisms of self-government, including elections and the processes that lead up to elections. In other words, excellent citizens manifest the virtue of participation. Many liberals are at great pains to emphasize the point that the citizen need not participate in his political community (for example, see Galston 225; Macedo 254). But this dissertation’s focus is not what the citizen must do, but what she should do. The citizen cannot hope to excel in her role as citizen, promoting self-government and protecting against threats to it, without

\textsuperscript{18} A term I borrow from Richard Dagger.

\textsuperscript{19} If the problem is that people aren’t voting, the citizen’s decision to act (vote) directly addresses the crux of the problem. While the citizen can’t solve the problem himself, he can take action in such a way that if everyone acted as he did there would no longer be a problem. Other problems that challenge political community are less directly amenable to solution through an increase in citizen virtue. For example, a citizen’s excellent behavior can do nothing to increase a limited pool of resources. If there is a severe water shortage, the citizen can take steps to moderate his usage. If others do as he does, this may ease the crisis, but it doesn’t actually eliminate the problem the way participating does when it is a lack of political participation that is the problem.
Although the non-specificity of this involvement requirement allows for substantial variation in practice (the excellent citizen might choose to support her favored candidate and the system by which candidates are elected either by sending a small donation or by spending all her evenings and weekends knocking on doors, canvassing the neighborhood for support) it is nonetheless a demanding interpretation of participation. See the latter part of this chapter for additional arguments to justify such strong demands.

Other virtues that help to ameliorate the problem of low voter turnout are allegiance to liberal democratic community and cooperation. Cooperation and participation are closely related. When the excellent citizen cooperates, he carries his share of the civic burden. In this sense, political participation is simply a specialized type of cooperation because the task of selecting and electing competent, worthy representatives to run the government is perhaps the heaviest civic burden of all.

Allegiance to liberal democratic community ameliorates the problem of low voter turnout by motivating citizens to participate. The citizen with a strong sense of civic
membership sees himself as a member of a community—one player among many who strive for the same goal. Many votes are needed to ensure a strong self-governing democracy. Although each person has only one vote, the excellent citizen with a sense of membership in his community sees himself as part of something bigger than himself and this helps him to view his single vote as important. In conjunction with many others, it will fill a ballot box and decide an election.

**Inefficient Government**

Inefficient government represents another challenge for liberal democracy. It threatens liberal democracy’s aim to expand the freedom of its citizens to pursue the good. Governmental waste squanders the resources of the people. Resources are not directed where they should be and the government’s services to its people are consequently not what they could be. Waste and inefficiency have three negative effects on citizens’ freedom to pursue the good: First, government is less able to *promote* freedom to pursue the good by subsidizing healthcare or sponsoring initiatives such as greater access to education, libraries, parks, and recreational opportunities. Second, the government is hampered in its ability to *protect* citizens’ freedom. Waste means fewer resources for funding military and police forces, forces that protect citizens from outside interference with their freedom. It also means less money for funding regulatory commissions and the agencies that monitor the safety of the food we eat and the cars we drive, items instrumental to most individuals’ pursuit of the good. Third, the citizen has less freedom to pursue the good insofar as his quest for it requires financial resources or leisure
time—hours in which he need not work for the purpose of financially supporting his
government.

Which virtues, if manifested by more citizens, could ameliorate the problem of
governmental inefficiency? Vigilance is one obvious answer. Someone needs to mind the
store and in government by the people that someone ultimately has to be the people
themselves. The citizen must carefully screen candidates for office: Is this person
competent to perform the office he seeks? Is this a person of character, someone that I
can trust with this important stewardship? The citizen must also monitor the candidate’s
behavior once elected. Finally, the citizen must monitor not only candidates and officials,
but also government itself, including its associated agencies and bureaucratic structures.

Of course, in most cases, the citizen will monitor his government not through
direct oversight or investigation, but by reliance on the news media through their political
analysis, investigative reporting, election coverage, etc. This means that the citizen must
also adopt a critical stance towards his sources of information. He must ask where what
he’s hearing is coming from and what interests might be influencing what he hears. In
addition to monitoring his government through the news media, the citizen will naturally
scrutinize his own dealings with government. When he encounters inefficiency, waste or
corruption, he must make it public. This is where the deliberative excellence virtues come
in. The excellent citizen will be ready to explain and defend his positions to others. If he
discovers corrupt leaders or learns of inefficient government programs, he will share what
he knows.
Hate Crime

Hate crime is another problem facing contemporary liberal democratic communities. I will first consider how hate crime as hate crime challenges the ideal of equality. Then I will consider how hate crime as hate crime challenges our ideals of freedom, cooperation for the common good, and stability. Let’s first consider how hate crime challenges the ideal of equality. Our liberal democratic ideals teach us that as citizens we all share in the dignity of being human and in the dignity of being citizens of a liberal democratic state. When crime targeting others based on their religion, their race, their gender or their sexual orientation is common within a given community, it suggests that citizens who differ from others in these ways are perceived as inferior rather than equal by that community, as somehow lacking in the dual dignities of personhood and citizenship that rightly pertain to all. Hate crime is a societal problem; it indicts the society that fosters it as well as the individual who commits it.

Of course, an entire society need not be held guilty for every aberrant individual’s expression of hatred. Criminals must ultimately be held responsible for their own actions. Further, it doesn’t seem right to charge a whole society with the full extent of a heinous criminal or madman’s crimes (consider the Jeffrey Dahmer case). However, insofar as the criminal grows to adulthood in a society where the seeds of what he does later are planted by popularly accepted literature, music, movies, video games and websites, or where others’ words, actions and attitudes suggest that some group is inferior to others and less deserving of dignity, then that society is tarred by the crime as well. Such a society falls far short of the liberal democratic ideal of equality.
Another reason that hate crime challenges our liberal democratic ideals is because hate crime is crime. Any society in which crime (regardless of the religion, gender or ethnicity of the victim) is common is one in which the liberal democratic ideals of cooperation for the common good, stability, and freedom to pursue the good are severely challenged. First, consider cooperation. Cooperation requires trust, but crime results in citizens who are frightened and suspicious. As crime rises, cooperation decreases. Trust breaks down. It is difficult for the citizen to do much in service to her community if she feels she must hide behind barred windows and deadbolted doors. If she doesn’t perceive her peers as fellow citizens with good intentions and doesn’t feel safe unless armed, then her interaction with other citizens will necessarily be strained.

Hate crime also undermines the ideal of stability. Community life succeeds because we all give up the freedom to act in ways that are not conducive to life in community in order to reap the benefits of life in community. This type of non-community conducive behavior is typically codified in and prohibited by our laws. When a significant number of citizens choose to break these laws the benefits of community life are diminished for everyone. If enough citizens break the law, and community life therefore grows less attractive, the remaining citizens will then have less incentive to refrain from engaging in proscribed behaviors. Ultimately, the continued existence of the community itself is threatened because the motivation for living in community with others evaporates.

The final ideal threatened by hate crime is freedom to pursue the good. Criminal behavior is typically prohibited simply because it interferes with others’ freedom. When a
victim is deprived of life, property, or physical dignity, his ability to pursue the good is often impaired or destroyed.

I have explained that hate crime is a serious problem for liberal democratic communities in that it threatens several of our highest ideals. Fortunately, as with the challenge of low-voter turnout, because it is citizen behavior that results in the challenge of hate crime, a change in citizen behavior also offers the solution. Which citizen virtues, if exercised by a greater number of citizens, might be able to ameliorate the challenge posed by hate crime? Allegiance to liberal democratic community, respect, tolerance, and obedience to law provide the best hope. When enough citizens manifest these virtues, hate crime dwindles. As hate, hate crime is a lack of tolerance regarding others’ beliefs and the choices they make based on those beliefs. As crime, it is disobedience to law, a violation of others’ rights. But the excellent citizen, a person who possesses and manifests the citizen virtues, is loyal to liberal democratic principles and institutions. The citizen loyal to liberal democratic principles respects others and tolerates their beliefs. The citizen loyal to liberal democratic institutions obeys the law.

I will consider the virtue of obedience to law first. It has obvious application to the challenge of hate crime. Simply put, if all citizens obeyed the law, there would be no crime. Of course, it is difficult to imagine a liberal democratic society in which every citizen obeyed the law. However, as humans we are profoundly shaped by our peers, both by their examples and by the prospect of their acceptance or rejection. This means both that crime breeds crime and that obedience breeds obedience. When more citizens obey the law, transgressing it seems more serious. If not backed by a culture of crime, the lone
outlaw has no social support network to suggest that his actions are acceptable and no one to shield him from those who would enforce the law. So, as more citizens choose to obey the law, the level of crime decreases not just because more citizens are obeying the law, but also because the increased level of obedience itself leads more citizens to obey.

The virtues of tolerance and respect for rights also have direct application to the challenge of hate crime. Like obedience to law, the utility of tolerance is fairly obvious. Simply put, tolerance takes the “hate” out of hate crime. Citizens who are tolerant of others do not commit hate crimes. However, mere passivity towards others is insufficient. It is not enough simply to tolerate; it is not enough to show passive respect for the rights of others. Allegiance to liberal democratic principles demands more than restraint that is limited to avoiding the violation of others’ rights; it requires active concern for others based on the recognition of their dignity as persons and citizens. Understood in this way, allegiance to liberal democratic community and the respect which stems from it require that we intervene on behalf of others in order to protect their rights. This respect could take the form of physical intervention, as the citizen actually intercedes in an assault, or it could take the form of public persuasion, as the citizen strives to share his vision of the dignity of each human person with others. If widely manifest, active respect of this type could do much to diffuse the challenge of hate crime.

21 For arguments justifying this claim, see my discussions of respect, particularly positive respect, in §3.2 and §4.5-6.
The Malaise of Entitlement

Entitlement is another challenge to the ideals of liberal democracy. By “entitlement,” I mean the malaise promoted by the belief that one is entitled to government aid and services of all sorts, without reference to accompanying responsibility. This “the government ought to take care of this” dependent attitude may be directed towards many parts of life. It can affect a single individual or spread to affect many members of a society.

When the expectation of entitlement is shared by many in a community, it is a challenge to the liberal democratic ideals of stability and self-government. Self-government suffers because the dependent attitude nourished by this sense of entitlement makes citizens both unwilling and unfit to rule themselves. They are unfit because they are unable to defer immediate gratification in favor of long-term goals. They are unwilling because they are waiting for someone else to do the work that political community requires. Stability also suffers as those who look for their government to do and provide what their government cannot afford to do and provide drain resources from their state. Money and manpower must come from somewhere. When citizens insist on additional services, money and manpower must be diverted from more necessary programs or paid for out of others’ pockets. High taxation and impaired essential community services may not lead to revolution overnight, but neither do they conduce to stability. Citizens who vote and premise their political actions principally upon the criterion of their own short-term gratification threaten the long-term solvency and stability of their political communities.
Virtues that ameliorate the malaise of entitlement include restraint and responsibility. The virtue of restraint leads the citizen to moderate his demands for government services and to be willing to pay for the programs he demands. The virtue of responsibility leads the citizen to be economically and politically independent. The excellent citizen recognizes that he is responsible for his own economic welfare and general well-being. He looks to his government for provision of those resources for which political communities are established and for which they are better equipped to provide: things like roads, schools, utilities, and law enforcement.

The excellent citizen’s independence need not take the form of survivalism or an undue focus on self-sufficiency. In most cases, it doesn’t make sense for individual citizens to take their own garbage to the dump, even if they are able. However, the excellent citizen does not passively sit back and wait while others arrange for such services to be provided. Although he differentiates between the resources and programs he expects his government to provide and those parts of his life that he will strive to take care of himself, he recognizes that his responsibility, even for government-provided essential services, does not end with this determination. The shape his responsibility takes will vary with the situation, but the excellent citizen ensures that he carries his portion of the civic burden, be it through the payment of taxes, voting, serving on the city council, or taking part in public deliberations about the provision of necessary services. He turns to the government to provide other services only as necessity demands.
Socioeconomic Class Divisions

Growing socioeconomic class divisions represent another challenge for liberal democracy. The ideal most directly challenged by growing class divisions is cooperation for the common good.\textsuperscript{22} Cooperation is hampered by social division in two ways: first, as a result of physical and social isolation, it becomes more difficult; Second, for economic reasons and as a consequence of that physical and social isolation, citizens perceive it as less desirable. Cooperation becomes more difficult as the physical and social space between classes increases. Physical isolation results as different classes withdraw into different neighborhoods and communities. Gates and distance separate citizens from each other and endanger the common commerce between them. They no longer walk in the same neighborhoods, shop at the same grocery stores, or exercise their dogs at the same parks.

Physical isolation leads to social isolation. Citizens who live in separate locales socialize separately. They attend different churches, different neighborhood or town meetings, and their children attend different schools. If they belong to the PTA, they belong to different PTAs. If they belong to a civic club, they belong to different civic clubs. The people they spend time with are like themselves; those who are unlike themselves they spend little time with. The community with which the citizen feels solidarity shrinks as economic conditions dictate area of residence and area of residence

\textsuperscript{22} Socioeconomic division also threatens the ideals of equality, stability, and self-government. It threatens equality because isolation between social classes often breeds hostility. Citizens may come to look on others as not quite equal or as a lot less than equal. Power concentrated in the hands of the elite threatens self-government and stability.
dictates spheres of activity. Physical and social isolation make cooperation more taxing, because cooperation is born of people sharing common projects and coming together. Physical and social isolation discourage this from happening spontaneously.

Class divisions also diminish citizens’ desire to cooperate with each other. People come to see economic differences as important barriers between themselves and others. It is not just the physical isolation of not naturally coming into contact, it is that coming together with those of other socioeconomic groups begins to seem foreign. People stop recognizing the similarities they share with others as persons regardless of social class. Citizens may find that they speak different languages (literally and metaphorically) than other citizens. Citizens with less education may feel less comfortable with a deliberative approach to government and more educated citizens may not be patient with the disadvantaged citizen’s participation. The divergent experiences consequent upon their different positions on the economic ladder result in differing concerns and obscure their shared goals. Differences that result from differing economic levels combine with the consequences of the physical and social isolation mentioned above to make citizens feel very far removed from one another. The sense of solidarity with one’s peers is lost, because they are no longer one’s peers. Citizens are less able to come together for united action. The synergy provided by social contract is lost.

The challenges faced by liberal democratic communities are amenable to citizen virtue solutions in varying degrees. Of the challenges mentioned here, socioeconomic division is the problem at the furthest end of the spectrum from low voter turnout. More so than with the other challenges I canvass here, the fact of socioeconomic division is
likely to result in reduced exercise of the citizen virtues rather than reduced exercise of the virtues resulting in the fact of socioeconomic division. The link between socioeconomic division and virtue operates in both directions, however. Just as significant socioeconomic division can lead to unequal educational opportunities and unequal educational attainments, unequal educational opportunities lead to greater socioeconomic division. Just as a comparative lack of socioeconomic division in a society can result in greater levels of educational parity, greater levels of educational parity can result in a society less socioeconomically divided. Even the challenge of socioeconomic division can be ameliorated (although likely not left behind) by exercise of the citizen virtues.

The virtue best adapted to the challenge of socioeconomic division is positive respect, manifested in the form of concern for the material conditions that support others’ freedom. This type of concern would lead the excellent citizen to consider the physical circumstances that make freedom possible, and to vote and act accordingly. Supporting the delivery of a certain standard of food, shelter, healthcare and education to those in need could certainly have a positive impact on socioeconomic division. When the excellent citizen chooses to pay for government services that are of no direct or immediate benefit to herself (such as the education of others’ children), she helps to level the playing field.

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23 I owe this perspective to Richard Dagger. See the discussion of autonomy in Chapter Five for more on Dagger’s views.

24 I shall explore these issues at greater length in Chapter Four as part of my discussion of positive respect (in the respect for rights family of virtues). For now, I must observe that whether this understanding of excellence should be built in to the citizen role is controversial. Depending upon our ideals we may see intervening to enhance the material conditions that support other’s freedom as properly the province of government or of superior citizens, not rank and file (yet still excellent) citizens. Recognizing a trait
such as this one as a virtue is to include it in what the citizen role requires. Such a move calls for caution.

Other virtues that might ameliorate socioeconomic division are also controversial. One might suggest that the excellent citizen shows the virtue of restraint by not seeking excessive wealth. (For example, Thomas Spragens argues that the excellent citizen doesn’t demand more than his share of honor, wealth, or power (224)). The excellent citizen might devote careful thought to the appropriate ratio between the compensation of the CEO and that of her lowest paid employee. If the “haves” in a society choose restraint for the benefit of the “have-nots,” socioeconomic divisions can be narrowed, at least to a degree. Differences in honor, wealth, and power are inevitable. However, at least in terms of wealth it seems appropriate to ask what the multiple should be, especially when it can be argued that so many fall short of a minimum threshold. Again, as with concern for the material conditions that support others’ freedom, interpreting this variety of restraint as a virtue means building it in to what the citizen role requires. If we view this type of restraint as a virtue, then the wealth of many business leaders would leave them ineligible for nomination as excellent citizens despite their significant philanthropy and/or other contributions to community. As a society we must consider our ideals and think about what kind of wealth is or is not compatible with good citizenship.

2.13 Conclusion to Challenge-Focused Inquiry

In the third part of Chapter Two, I suggested that exploring a community’s challenges aids us in identifying the virtues appropriate to its context. Nonetheless, a focus on community challenges doesn’t suggest that a role-based inquiry into the virtues is any less essential. Exploration of the community’s challenges is effective as a tool for identifying virtues only when we understand the role-based character of citizen virtue. This means diagnosing problems in terms of the liberal democratic ideals they challenge and identifying solutions by asking which qualities the citizen needs in order to achieve success in his role.

To show how this would work, I modeled a challenge-focused approach to citizen virtue by describing five problems facing contemporary liberal democratic communities: Low voter turnout, inefficient government, hate crime, the malaise of entitlement, and
socioeconomic class divisions. I showed how each of these problems challenge one or
more of our liberal democratic ideals. I then identified some virtues that, manifest by
enough citizens, would help to ameliorate these challenges: willingness to participate in
the political process, willingness to cooperate, vigilance, deliberative excellence, allegiance
to liberal democratic community, respect, tolerance, obedience to law, restraint,
responsibility, and concern for others’ autonomy.

### 2.14 Three Further Conditions for Citizen Virtues

I must formalize three additional criteria before taking a closer look at the specific
citizen virtues that are the focus of the chapters to follow. For a virtue catalog to be
satisfactory, each virtue in the catalog must: a) be appropriate to the time and place in
question, b) be compatible with our non-negotiable political ideals, and c) show reasonable
achievability. I will briefly review the first two (previously introduced) criteria before
focusing on the reasonable achievability criterion at greater length.25

**Appropriate to Time, Place, and Historical Context**

The first criterion that each virtue candidate must satisfy is that it be suited to
achieving excellence in the time and place under question. This requirement stems from
the role-based nature of citizen virtue and the changing nature of what it is to be a citizen.

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25 For more background on the “appropriate to time and place” criterion see the
end of Chapter One where I argue that the citizen virtues are not ahistorical. See also the
beginning of Chapter Two where I argue for the importance of understanding a role’s
context in order to identify the nature of excellence within that role. For more
background on the “compatible with our non-negotiable ideals” criterion see §2.10 where
I argue that we must reject virtue candidates in conflict with non-negotiable political
ideals.
Citizen virtues are dispositions of character that allow a person to excel in the role of citizen. But, as I argued above, the role of citizen varies with time, place, and historical context. Therefore, when one crafts an account of citizen virtue in a contemporary liberal democracy, the virtues in the virtue catalog must be appropriate to contemporary liberal democracy, to our time and place. If the virtue is more appropriate to Athenian society in the fifth century B.C. than to our own, then it must be rejected.

**Compatible with Non-Negotiable Political Ideals**

The second criterion that each virtue candidate must satisfy is that it be compatible with our non-negotiable political ideals.26 I have argued that the attempt to identify citizen virtues in a liberal democracy is closely interconnected with the quest to discover the nature of our liberal democratic ideals. While our ideals determine what the citizen virtues are, close attention to the qualities we regard as citizen virtues can teach us much about our ideals. As I suggested earlier in this chapter: “Our ideals of government must be amended if they suggest virtues we are unwilling to accept; a virtue candidate will have to be rejected if it does not support ideals of government that we are unwilling to amend” (See n14, §2.10). If those principles that we identify as our ideals of government suggest citizen virtues that don’t match our intuitions about citizen virtue, this gives us reason to suspect that we have not yet accurately identified our ideals. If a virtue candidate neither protects nor promotes any of the liberal democratic ideals that we are unwilling to give up,

26 Because citizen virtues are qualities that enable the citizen to aid his community in protecting, promoting, and realizing the community’s ideals, a satisfactory virtue candidate will go beyond just being compatible with one (or more) of these ideals—it will lead to the protection and promotion of that ideal. At the same time, it will at minimum be compatible with all of the other non-negotiable ideals.
we must set that quality of character aside as irrelevant to the virtue catalog. In a satisfactory catalog, each virtue will be compatible with any liberal democratic ideals that are non-negotiable for us.27

Reasonable Achievability

The third criterion that each virtue candidate must satisfy is that it be reasonably achievable. To understand the reasonable achievability (RA) criterion, one must begin by understanding what it is not: Reasonable achievability is not a matter of whether it is reasonable to require a certain type or level of behavior from citizens. Rather, it is a question of whether the citizen striving for excellence in citizenship can reasonably achieve the standard under discussion. This distinction is essential because what a liberal democratic government may reasonably ask of its citizens—and remain liberal—may differ markedly from what the citizen ought to ask of himself.28

The RA criterion requires that any satisfactory account of citizen virtue meet two conditions: First, its virtue catalog must include only virtues which are attainable by citizens of average ability, opportunity, and circumstance. Second, under normal circumstances, a citizen need not forsake peers, family, or other important personal pursuits to accomplish what the virtue catalog requires. In other words, a satisfactory

27 The ideals I identify above (stability, cooperation for the common good, self-government, freedom, and equality) are examples of ideals that should qualify as non-negotiable for those committed to liberal democracy.

28 The disposition to participate is one of the best examples of something a liberal community may not be able to ask of its citizens, but that citizens who are committed to an enduring liberal democracy should require of themselves. See my comments on participation in §2.12 and in §3.5-6.
account of citizen virtue ensures that the qualities required for the attainment of excellent citizenship are both possible and reasonable for virtually every citizen.\(^{29}\)

I will begin by arguing that the RA criterion’s first condition is justified and then raise some important qualifications to clarify its scope further. The first condition of the RA criterion requires that only virtues attainable by those of average ability, opportunity, and circumstance have place in the virtue catalog. Any account of citizen virtue that requires above average intelligence, the skills of a champion debater, or extended schooling on government or economics is flawed. To advocate a catalog containing virtues outside the ordinary citizen’s reach is to miss the nature of the citizen role in the democratic state. If a democratic regime is to meet with success, it is ultimately the masses who must achieve it. Citizenship is the province of the ordinary person, the person of average ability, opportunity, and circumstance. A conception of citizenship that demands the extraordinary excludes ordinary citizens. Such a conception is therefore unacceptable because it is not in harmony with the ideal of self-government. A community that hopes to realize democratic ideals must revise or reject any conception of citizenship that puts successful performance of the citizen role beyond the ordinary citizen’s reach.

It is important to qualify the first aspect of the RA criterion by noting that liberal democratic community may require a few extraordinary citizens in order to succeed.\(^{30}\)

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\(^{29}\) There are some—for example, those with profound physical or mental impairments—who qualify for the protections of citizenship yet cannot function at the basic levels that even a reasonably achievable standard of citizenship requires. Hence, excellence in citizenship must be reasonably achievable for most citizens, that is, for the citizen of average ability, opportunity, and circumstance.

\(^{30}\) Elsewhere I refer to such citizens as “superior citizens.”
regime may require skills or abilities that the ordinary citizen does not possess if it is to flourish. For example, a liberal democratic community may require communicative abilities of a certain workable standard from the majority of its citizens, yet at the same time require a few citizens with extraordinary communicative abilities to motivate and inspire the others. Progress towards liberal democratic ideals takes a Martin Luther King, Jr., as well as the hundreds of thousands of more ordinary folk who hear his message and choose to make it their own.

Although the liberal democratic citizen’s burdens are heavy, he need not carry the burden of liberal democracy’s success or failure solely on his own shoulders. Other citizens will have skills he does not have. Others may have the interest in pursuing political life that he lacks. In addition, the citizen virtue catalog need not contain every element necessary to the promotion and protection of liberal democratic community. The citizen virtue catalog is a catalog of the virtues that citizens must possess if liberal democracy is to succeed. But there are many other contributors to the success of a liberal democratic community—judges, legislators, executives, journalists. Each of these roles has its own associated virtues.

A second important qualification to RA’s first condition is that restricting the virtue catalog to virtues attainable by citizens of average ability is not a denial of the utility of education, communicative skills, and intelligence for fulfilling the basic functions of citizenship. While it is essential to craft a conception of citizenship that remains open to ordinary individuals, it is at the same time imperative that our discussions of citizenship
reflect the real and rather weighty demands of the citizen role under a liberal democratic regime.

Because citizen virtues are those qualities conducive to successful performance of the citizen role, the question of what constitutes excellent citizenship is not a purely subjective one. Some qualities of character aid the citizen in fulfilling his role; others do not. The only criterion relevant to the question of whether a given virtue candidate should be accounted an actual virtue is how well or how poorly that quality of character assists the citizen in the performance of her role. If a certain level of intelligence, education or communicative ability is genuinely requisite to the successful performance of the citizen role, then it is appropriate for a certain standard of intelligence, education, or communicative ability to be included among the characteristics of the excellent citizen.

The RA criterion’s second condition requires that excellent citizenship be compatible with other pursuits. The fact that this is liberal democratic citizenship means that the citizen must be free to pursue the good as she understands it. These pursuits may pull the citizen in directions other than that of the political life. While it is not possible to ignore the demands of citizenship and still be accounted a good citizen, in most cases the citizen should be able to balance good citizenship with being a good parent or child, a good Christian, Jew, or Muslim, a good employee, or a good human being.31

31 This condition is tricky because there are some interesting and obvious exceptions. For example, what one’s country might demand of him as a whistleblower or in times of war is difficult to harmonize with other pursuits—especially with a life that balances several not fully compatible goods.
The RA criterion points to two possible traps for accounts of citizen virtue. An account may fail by demanding either too much or too little from the citizen. Those accounts that demand too much are not reasonably achievable; those accounts that demand too little are inadequate to the preservation and promotion of liberal democratic community. We seek Goldilocks’ porridge: an account of citizen virtue neither too weak nor too strong. Although Goldilocks sought porridge that was neither too hot nor too cold, it was the too hot porridge that was her greater danger. Among contemporary accounts of citizen virtue, I believe inadequate (too weak) accounts pose the greater danger. Therefore, I will discuss the difficulty with unreasonable (too strong) accounts briefly before examining the shortcomings of inadequate accounts at greater length.

Unreasonable accounts, accounts that are too strong, fail to satisfy the RA criterion. Accounts that fail RA’s first condition demand skills, abilities, or educational levels that the ordinary citizen does not possess, disenfranchising the average citizen. Accounts that fail RA’s second condition demand more energy, time and attention than will accommodate the citizen’s opportunity to pursue his own vision of the good.

I will first discuss accounts that are too strong according to RA’s second condition. Such accounts demand civic engagement to a degree that may be incompatible with the citizen’s other pursuits. Because many citizens do not perceive the good life to be the political life, when civic pressures force them to define themselves as political animals they are no longer free to pursue the good as they see fit. Such accounts threaten the liberal part of liberal democracy as a result of the constraints they place on freedom. On the other hand, accounts unreasonable according to RA’s first condition are flawed
because they threaten liberal democracy: Not only must liberal democracies make the citizen role accessible to those with average abilities in order to be accounted democratic, but because the masses are in large part the mechanism a liberal democracy relies on to accomplish its ends, democracies must peg their aims to a level achievable by the masses.

A threat to either the liberal or the democratic identity of liberal democratic community is highly serious. Those of us who are committed to the premise that liberal democratic government is the best form of government available do not believe that the citizen or his community wins when liberalism is sacrificed for democracy, democracy for liberalism, or community for either of these aims. Given the academy’s current focus on liberalism, of the two threats, concern for the individual’s freedom to pursue the good typically garners the greater attention. Unfortunately, it is this well-founded concern for individual freedom that motivates some to forward weak, and therefore inadequate, accounts of citizen virtue.

Out of a concern for the individual’s freedom to pursue the good, some would set the standard for excellent citizenship quite low, making it easily attainable, so that most citizens could achieve it without too much effort. This is pleasantly democratic: “We’re all good citizens.” However, to succeed, liberal democracy requires that the bar be set high. While there are many advantages to our form of government, relatively light demands on the citizen is not one of them. When liberal democracy functions well it is the best form of government available. But for it to function well over the long haul its citizens must be willing to carry relatively heavy civic burdens. If they are not, it will cease to be liberal, or it will cease to be democratic, or both. Liberal democratic ideals are
threatened when too many citizens abdicate their roles, failing to recognize the community responsibilities that accompany the form of government they enjoy.

If good citizenship is essential to liberal democracy, and if we look at our liberal democratic form of government and find it lacking, then there is a good possibility that as citizens we need to turn around and look at ourselves when we wonder what it lacks. If the virtues are essential for liberal democratic government to endure, then we cannot hope to fix what needs fixing, sustain what should be sustained, nor promote what ought to be promoted, if we choose to define the virtues so as to ensure that most of us can congratulate ourselves on having already attained excellent citizenship.

In this dissertation, I argue for a robust and demanding picture of citizen virtue that can at the same time satisfy the RA criterion. Some will reject this move, observing that the weightier the demands of excellence, the more the individual’s freedom is circumscribed. Such thinkers will conclude that a conception of liberal democratic community in which the excellent citizen must abridge his pursuit of the good in favor of civic errands is not sufficiently liberal.

There are two ways of tackling the first of these concerns regarding freedom. The first avenue of response observes that an account of citizen virtue has no coercive power in itself. The second explains the folly of revising the virtues in favor of liberalism’s commitment to individual freedom. To begin with the first avenue of response: No citizen is forced by an account of citizenship to change who he is or what he does. Compliance is

32 Political participation of all sorts provides the most obvious example of civic errands.
strictly voluntary. Insofar as the citizen virtues are not encoded in law, the citizen is free to ignore the demands of excellence, free to choose a path other than that of citizen virtue. However, he cannot do so and remain an excellent citizen. He cannot fail to cooperate with others and still be said to excel at cooperation.

On this view, a civically demanding conception of liberal democracy does not make the excellent citizen less free. The excellent citizen’s virtues are her dispositions and therefore part of her picture of the good life. Because the notion that one should bear one’s share of the civic burdens is built into this picture, her freedom is not circumscribed by conceptions of citizen virtue that require a considerable extent of citizen involvement. The less-than-excellent citizen is not less free either: he does not adopt the civically demanding dispositions and therefore his pursuit of the good is not limited by them.

The second avenue of response is to observe that it doesn’t make sense to “dumb down” the virtues out of respect for liberalism’s commitment to individual freedom. There are two reasons for this. First, the nature of excellence is not up to us. We cannot lower the bar for excellence, because we don’t set the standard of excellence at all. To achieve excellent citizenship is to excel in the role of citizen. Excelling in the role of citizen means aiding one’s government in protecting and promoting liberal democratic ideals. Citizen virtues are the dispositions of character that allow the citizen to do this. It is possible to choose to adopt a form of government that doesn’t aim for liberal democratic ideals, but it is not possible to change which dispositions promote and protect the liberal democratic ideals. Put otherwise: we can’t dumb down the virtues. For example, if cooperation is truly a disposition that protects or promotes liberal democratic
ideals, then we can’t conclude that cooperation is not a virtue simply because its demands are in tension with an individual’s life projects. Instead, we must explore to what extent these tensions can be balanced and to what extent they must simply be accepted.

The second reason that it doesn’t make sense to dumb down the virtues is that even were we able to set the standard of excellence by fiat, it wouldn’t make sense to sacrifice the other liberal democratic aims in favor of freedom due to the interdependence of these aims. Without the support of the other liberal democratic ideals, personal freedom either would not survive or could not be enjoyed. The ideals of stability and self-government evidence this thesis. Weakening the demands of cooperation, for example, would undermine stability, a foolish thing to do out of concern for freedom, because freedom cannot endure apart from stability. Weakening the demands of cooperation would also undermine self-government, which would cause the citizen committed to liberal democracy to find his freedom less meaningful—if he did not lose it all together.

As to the second concern mentioned above, that a demanding account of citizen virtue is not sufficiently liberal: A community need not guarantee complete freedom to pursue one’s own vision of the good in order to be accounted a liberal community. If that were the basis for the designation “liberal,” no community could qualify, because enjoying the benefits of life in community means giving up complete freedom. No, all government is restrictive to one degree or another. No one can sensibly argue that liberal government isn’t compatible with restrictions on the individual’s freedom. The real question at hand, since the freedom of any individual living in community will be abridged, is “To what degree?”
Does “not sufficiently liberal” imply that a government which constrains its citizens’ freedom to this degree (the degree necessary for attaining liberal democratic ideals) is not worth preserving? I argue that the conception of liberal democratic government implicit in the virtues I will defend in Chapters Three, Four, and Five is worth preserving. The demanding account of citizen virtue I describe throughout the remainder of this dissertation is sufficiently liberal; it offers a vision of government superior to the alternatives. Consider, for example, a Hobbesian state of nature in which the individual’s freedom is not restricted: Life is “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short” (76). On the other hand, too many restrictions on freedom might well lead to de Tocqueville’s nanny state which “does not tyrannize, . . . [but] compresses, enervates, extinguishes and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd” (318-19).

Although they occupy opposite extremes, both political environments are unacceptable. Hobbes’ state of nature reminds us of why stability and cooperation for the common good merit their places on our list of prized political ideals. The omnipresent specter of De Tocqueville’s nanny state reminds us why the ideal of self-government has also attained that position. Appropriately tuned liberal democracy is this century’s answer to both Hobbes’ and de Tocqueville’s nightmare visions. The Goldilocks porridge of government is the community as liberal as possible given the constraints necessary to its success.

A conception of citizen virtue is sufficiently liberal if it is a) consistent with the attainment of other key governmental ideals and b) allows for individual pursuit of the
Because of freedom’s interdependence with our other ideals, I do not believe it is possible to sustain an argument for privileging freedom in such a way as to displace the other ideals’ importance. This is not to suggest that freedom is less important than the other ideals or even to make the claim that it is not, perhaps, more important than they are in some sense. However, since freedom cannot exist or is not as valuable apart from these other ideals, they cannot be displaced by it.

For as long as we are not willing to sacrifice our other ideals in the name of individual freedoms, such a regime cannot be made more liberal.

2.15 Conclusion

This chapter has four principal sections. I began by arguing that current accounts of citizen virtue are unsatisfactory. To be satisfactory, an account of citizen virtue must include a catalog of citizen virtues structured by an explanatory framework that explains the rationale behind the catalog’s construction, allows one to assess whether new candidates for virtue merit a place in the virtue catalog, and enables one to judge between competing catalogs. Currently available accounts don’t meet this requirement.

Next, I suggested that attention to the role-based nature of citizen virtue is requisite for constructing a satisfactory explanatory framework. I then observed that liberal democratic ideals (upon which my explanatory framework is built because they determine the aims of the citizen role) are not specific enough to do the work required of

33 Because of freedom’s interdependence with our other ideals, I do not believe it is possible to sustain an argument for privileging freedom in such a way as to displace the other ideals’ importance. This is not to suggest that freedom is less important than the other ideals or even to make the claim that it is not, perhaps, more important than they are in some sense. However, since freedom cannot exist or is not as valuable apart from these other ideals, they cannot be displaced by it.
them: to prescribe the content of our virtue catalog and to aid us in judging between rival virtue catalogs.

In the third section of the chapter I explored how taking a bottom up focus (moving from life in the community and its problems to the citizen virtues) rather than a top down focus (moving from liberal democratic ideals to citizen virtues and then to life in the community) can help to further specify the context of the citizen role. To illustrate this approach, I considered a sample of some of the challenges facing liberal democracies and suggested some citizen virtues that might help to ameliorate these challenges.

Finally, in the last section of the chapter, I considered three further criteria that all candidates for citizen virtue must satisfy. This led to a consideration of the tension between the demands of liberal democracy and the freedom of the individual citizen. I concluded that a government is sufficiently liberal if it is as liberal as possible given the constraint that it be consistent with the attainment of other key governmental ideals.
CHAPTER THREE

COMMUNITY CITIZEN VIRTUES

3.1 Introduction

Much of the most interesting work in contemporary political philosophy revolves around the notion of citizenship. In the context of these discussions, the term “civic virtue” is bandied about rather casually. Given the important place that civic virtue occupies in a number of theories, it is striking that specific citizen virtues (rather than civic or citizen virtue in general) have not received more focused study. Why? Is it because we already have a serviceable picture of civic virtue and people share the same vision already? Or is it because there is so little agreement on the details of civic virtue that it is easier to bracket consideration of specific virtues in order to move the discussion forward in other ways? These opposing possibilities each suggest part of the truth. In the following three chapters, I will show that there is a surprising amount of consensus regarding several families of citizen virtue. At the same time, I will argue that the significant differences within these families demand further attention and reward careful scrutiny.

In Chapter Two I suggested that an examination of some of the challenges facing contemporary liberal democratic communities can help us to specify the citizen role more closely and thereby identify the virtues essential to success in that role. However, it is also
important to recognize that in seeking to assemble a satisfactory catalog of virtues we need not reinvent the wheel. Because a foundation for citizen virtue after the fashion of mathematical proof is impossible, directing Cartesian-style doubt towards previous work on citizen virtue is inappropriate and unnecessary. However, it is both appropriate and essential that we critically engage such accounts.¹

At the beginning of Chapter Two, I argued that current accounts of citizen virtue are unsatisfactory. However, although contemporary accounts of citizen virtue do fall short at the account level, they nonetheless offer valuable insights into the citizen virtues. Surveying such accounts allows us to identify the areas of consensus upon which to anchor a new catalog and to identify the key questions around which further discussion should revolve. The explanatory framework developed in Chapter Two² makes it possible to judge between competing notions of citizen virtue.

In the chapters that follow, I will survey six contemporary accounts of citizen virtue. I will apply the Chapter Two framework to evaluate the relative merits of these

¹ The Chapter Two framework should shape this examination: Is the account complete? Is it satisfactory? That is, does the account offer an explanatory framework that explains the rationale behind the catalog’s construction, allows one to assess whether new candidates for virtue merit a place in the virtue catalog, and enables one to judge between competing catalogs? Is the virtue catalog itself satisfactory? Are each of the virtues in the catalog appropriate to their context? If the cataloged virtues were to be adopted by most citizens within a community, would those citizens be prepared to assist their community in attaining its ideals? Do the cataloged virtues cohere with our other strongly held intuitions about the virtues and with our liberal democratic ideals? Is each virtue appropriate to the context of the community in which the citizen performs his role? Are they reasonably achievable for the citizen of average ability, opportunity, and circumstance? Is the catalog taken as a whole reasonably achievable for the citizen of average ability who does not define the good he pursues in terms of the political?

² Hereafter, “the Chapter Two framework.”
accounts and to shape construction of my own preliminary citizen virtue catalog. I focus on these accounts (proposed by Richard Dagger, William Galston, David Jones, Mark Kingwell, Stephen Macedo, and Thomas Spragens, Jr.) because they are the most explicit and complete accounts of citizen virtue available. They do not represent the full spectrum of political views. For example, none of the thinkers who propose the accounts could truly be termed a communitarian. I believe that communitarians could embrace most of the virtues discussed in these chapters, but this is nevertheless a survey of liberal accounts of citizen virtue. In fact, given that many liberals abjure discussion of human excellence because they espouse some version of liberal neutrality, this survey is best termed a survey of neo-liberal accounts of citizen virtue.

Each of the focus thinkers discusses between six and fourteen personal qualities he believes to be citizen virtues. Each list is unique, reflecting the diverse perspectives and

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3 This is not to suggest that their accounts are either fully complete or fully explicit. A complete account would be one that covered every civic virtue. (In Chapter One, I explained why, practically speaking, a fully complete account of civic virtue is probably not possible). A fully explicit account would be one in which each of the virtues were named, described, and situated in relation to each of the other virtues.

4 Hereafter, the “focus thinkers.”

5 All the focus thinkers are influenced (to greater and lesser degrees) by civic republicanism, although Galston and Macedo might be reluctant to acknowledge this influence. Both are anxious to argue that the citizen virtues they describe follow from the requirements (Galston) or flow from the nature (Macedo) of liberalism. However, if these thinkers are not directly influenced by civic republicans, they are indirectly influenced as they attempt to situate their views in the space between liberalisms of neutrality (views that reject claims about the nature of human excellence as illiberal) and civic republican ideals.

6 Given liberalism’s dominance of the contemporary political landscape, the limited scope of this survey requires little apology.
goals that motivate the accounts. Nonetheless, although there is no list of citizen virtues to which all the focus thinkers would agree, nor one explanation of any given citizen virtue that they could all accept, their accounts achieve a surprising degree of consensus. This apparent consensus is what discourages greater consideration of specific citizen virtues. After all, if an understanding of specific citizen virtues is widely shared there is no need to delve further. But we do need to look more closely at specific citizen virtues, because although the appearance of consensus reflects real agreement, it is limited agreement. The similarities between the accounts are at least as important for their status as a basis from which to begin asking questions as they are for the limited consensus that they represent.

3.2 Families of Citizen Virtue

To better understand which questions need to be asked, it is helpful to consider the nature of the thinkers’ agreement in terms of family resemblance. Grouping the virtues into families emphasizes the similarities between their accounts and, at the same time, reinforces their differences. The respect for rights family of citizen virtue provides an example of how limited agreement can serve as the basis for richer discussion: Both Galston and Kingwell propose virtues they name “respect.” but because of their very different explanations of this virtue, their virtue candidates are best thought of as distinct members of the same (respect) family. Both Galston and Kingwell consider the ability to discern others’ rights an important element of respect. This is the family resemblance that binds their views together. But where Galston’s focus is private and passive as he stresses the restraint necessary to refrain from violating the rights of others, Kingwell emphasizes
that we must assertively demand respect for our own rights. While this may be only a
difference in emphasis, it is an important one. Prima facie, Galston’s citizen is civically
virtuous (in terms of respect, at least) if he stays home and does nothing, while Kingwell’s
citizen is required to be in court, on the streets protesting, or at the very least, writing a
letter to the editor, to merit the same encomium. It is this divergence between the two
accounts that demands that we classify the two virtues as different members of the same
family.

What Kingwell and Galston agree on is significant. First, both identify “respect” as
a virtue. The first step toward an adequate discussion of citizen virtue is to agree on
which virtues are under discussion. Second, Galston and Kingwell agree on essential
elements of respect (e.g., the importance of the ability to discern others’ rights); their
agreement is not trivial and their shared views provide a point of departure for further
discussion. However, their differences are just as instructive (e.g., Galston’s emphasis on
private respect versus Kingwell’s emphasis on public respect) as are their similarities.
Their accounts of respect have different intentions and emphases and different
repercussions for the life of the excellent citizen. In considering these differences, we can
enrich our understanding of the virtue in question. It may be that someone who initially
holds a Galstonian notion of respect will, after considering a family of respect-related
virtues, choose to augment it with elements from Kingwell’s picture. Or it may be that a
Galstonian would choose to argue that, in a liberal society, private respect is a more
appropriate virtue to encourage than is Kingwell’s public respect. Whatever the case, if
our public discussions and private deliberations concerning citizen virtue are to be meaningful, these arguments are not just worth having—they must be had.

I have identified eleven families of citizen virtue into which the focus thinkers’ proposed virtues can be arranged: autonomy, cooperation, deliberative excellence, allegiance to liberal democratic community, obedience to law, participation, respect for rights, responsibility, restraint, and vigilance. To structure the discussion, I will divide these eleven virtue families into three categories: community citizen virtues, liberal citizen virtues, and self-governance citizen virtues.

Community citizen virtues are the focus of Chapter Three. The community category includes those virtues that treat the excellent citizen’s role in her community: cooperation, participation, deliberative excellence, vigilance, and obedience to law.

3.3 Cooperation: Survey

The excellent citizen coordinates with others to accomplish civic tasks, reciprocating the good he receives through others’ cooperation.

The focus thinkers who discuss the cooperation family of virtues are Dagger, Jones, and Spragens. Two areas of agreement stand out: First, the idea that cooperation is essential to the health of the liberal democratic state. Second, the idea that cooperation is conditioned, always predicated on whether the citizen can reasonably expect others to act

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7 Each focus thinker does not propose a member for every family.

8 It is helpful to remember that these categories are artificial and therefore may be misleading. For example, a sound case can be made for including the obedience to law family under any of the three categories.
in a similar manner. The thinkers’ differences regarding cooperation center on the question of scope: Is the excellent citizen’s cooperation limited to the obligatory or does it extend to non-obligatory cooperative endeavors as well?

The first axis of agreement is that cooperation is vital to the health of liberal democracy. A basic level of cooperation in which most citizens willingly obey the law, tolerate others and respect their rights is the only defense against anarchy. The liberal state demands tolerance; the democratic state requires respect for rights. The thinkers agree that the citizen must cooperate to the point that he fulfills his obligations under the law. However, some would argue that a broader conception of cooperation—one not limited simply to the fulfillment of one’s civic obligations—is also vital. As Thomas Spragens puts it, “If the public good is to be served, someone must serve it” (229). While no one is obligated to run for public office or to campaign for someone who does, a flourishing democracy requires these examples of cooperation and many others.

The second axis of agreement centers on the idea that civic virtue demands only “conditioned” cooperation. Conditioned cooperation is cooperation predicated on the expectation of others’ reciprocation. The idea is that the excellent citizen need only cooperate if others in his society are also cooperating. Although the focus thinkers envision the excellent citizen giving much to her community and often putting the public good above her own convenience, they do not see this sort of sacrifice as an analogue to Christian charity (Spragens 228). For example, Dagger’s republican liberalism doesn’t ask the citizen to be a “sucker” (112, 218); Spragens’ civic liberalism doesn’t ask the citizen to be a “chump” (228).
On this view, the excellent citizen’s reciprocation of others’ cooperation is global in scale. In other words, the excellent citizen doesn’t reciprocate on a tit-for-tat basis. Although the excellent citizen benefits from the actions of particular citizens (not everyone cooperates and not everyone’s cooperation positively impacts him) he does not respond by limiting his “altruism” (Dagger 197) to any particular person or group. Cooperation is not conditional in this respect. If the citizen benefits from the fact that a great many others obey the law, he obeys the law. This cooperation is meant to benefit not just the citizens whose cooperation benefitted him, but the community of which he is a part.

The issue of scope is the factor that distinguishes these accounts of cooperation from each other. Some thinkers, like Jones, view cooperation’s scope as quite limited. For example, on Jones’ view, the excellent citizen “reciprocates” the good he receives through others’ “civic conscientiousness” (86). Civic conscientiousness has a much narrower purview than one might at first assume from the name of it. For Jones, civic conscientiousness is limited to the fulfillment of civic obligations: this includes things like obeying the law, respecting others’ rights, and fidelity to public office (86).

Other thinkers, like Dagger and Spragens, allow a much broader scope for cooperation. On their view, cooperation is not limited to fulfilling specific obligations; rather, it extends to “doing one’s part” for one’s community (Spragens 229) and carrying a “fair share of the burdens of the civic enterprise” (Dagger 197). If each of us fulfilled only our obligations, much that liberal democracy needs to have done would have to go undone. Although Dagger and Spragens agree that the excellent citizen’s cooperation is not limited to his obligations, the focus of Dagger’s view is more narrow than that of
Spragens’. Dagger’s focus is the political realm: his examples are of participation in town meetings and neighborhood organizations. By contrast, Spragens’ excellent citizen doesn’t limit his cooperation to the political. Spragens’ civil society emphasis suggests that the excellent citizen will do his part by cooperating in ways as varied as coaching youth soccer leagues, participating in the PTA, and helping out at soup kitchens (229).

3.4 Cooperation: Application and Analysis

There are two important questions which need to be asked regarding cooperation. First, what is its proper scope? Second, why is conditioned (rather than unconditional) cooperation the virtue? I will begin by discussing scope. The foregoing survey showed that although the thinkers propose different versions of the virtue of cooperation, they agree on its basic core. They agree that it is a) a willingness to work with others, b) the aim of which is to accomplish civic tasks, and c) that it is motivated by the expectation of others’ reciprocation. It is the thinkers’ different interpretations of b), their different answers to the question of which tasks are vital civic tasks, that results in the differences of scope that define the three versions. These versions include: the obligatory version of cooperation which is limited to obligatory civic performances like obeying the law, serving on a jury and respecting others’ rights; the political version of cooperation which is limited to obligatory and political civic tasks; and the civil society version of cooperation which comprehends cooperation on all useful civic tasks from the obligatory to the broadly civil society based.
Which of these three versions is superior? How are we to choose between them and on what should the decision hinge? Answering these questions well isn’t a matter of apprehending the platonic form of cooperation and then describing it accurately. Citizen virtues are artificial constructs. However, this doesn’t mean that the way we define cooperation (or any virtue) is simply a matter of preference or of what sounds the best.

Virtues are qualities of character that define the nature of excellence in a given role. Therefore, when we judge between versions of a given citizen virtue, we must judge which version of the virtue best allows the citizen to attain excellence in his role as citizen. Excellence in the citizen role consists in assisting one’s political community in attaining and sustaining liberal democratic ideals. So, the right question to ask is: Which of these versions of cooperation best fits the citizen for assisting her community?9

In answering this question I will focus on the liberal democratic ideals of cooperation for the common good and self-government, because these are the ideals most clearly and directly linked to cooperation. However, the relationships between the liberal democratic ideals are such that citizens’ cooperation (or the lack thereof) impacts each of

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9 We should judge virtue candidates on how well they equip citizens to assist their communities in concert with the other citizen virtues, of course. One virtue alone can’t and shouldn’t be expected to carry the whole load.
Cooperation may be one of the most straightforward of the virtues, but it is far from the least significant.

In order to decide which version of cooperation to adopt, we must identify how the differences between the versions impact the citizen’s ability to assist his community in attaining and sustaining cooperation for the common good and self-government. The difference between the three versions is one of scope. Does including political tasks or political and civil society tasks as part of her cooperation heighten the citizen’s ability to assist her community in attaining these aims? Does excluding these tasks harm her ability? Simply put, yes.

For a community to excel as a liberal democracy, a high proportion of its citizenry must manifest the citizen virtues. Imagine an island state where this is true. Let’s call it “Excellence Island” because the majority of the Islanders are committed to meeting the demands of citizen excellence. Excellence Island is a liberal community. The Islanders are not political animals only, so what excellence demands is not open-ended. Excellence

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10 The liberal democratic ideals are interdependent. Cooperation for the common good is vital to a society’s ability to ensure continued stability, as well as the ability to govern itself (self-government), and to secure the conditions that make freedom to pursue the good possible. In addition, as citizens work side by side, their sense of civic membership grows and with it their recognition of the dignity of citizenship and the equality of others.

11 Some will argue that excellence does not require the citizen to reflect on its demands. On this view, the citizen need not make a conscious effort to be virtuous, so long as he ultimately acts as virtue requires. He need not think “I will cooperate because cooperating advances the aims of my political community” in order to excel at cooperation. There is merit to this argument but it doesn’t change the conclusion of the thought experiment that follows: that participation in the political sphere as well as in broader civil society is an essential part of citizen virtue.
does not require that they do everything in their power to aid their community in attaining its aims. Most Islanders have their own individual life projects to pursue and are not particularly interested in the political sphere of community life. Nonetheless, they are committed to excellence and will do whatever excellence requires, whatever the citizen virtues as they understand them prescribe.

Suppose that on Excellence Island the virtue of cooperation is widely understood to include only cooperation on obligatory tasks. Therefore, virtually all of the Islanders obey the law, serve on juries, and respect others’ legal rights. However, because they are all busy with their own projects and don’t see political cooperation as something required for excellent citizenship, they don’t cooperate on important political tasks in their community. A few citizens might be interested in holding office here or there (because this Islander or that one happens to define his vision of the good in terms of the political life) but for the most part very few people bother to vote, serve as election officials, or campaign for others. Those who would like to run for office have trouble staffing their campaigns and the less rewarding public posts go unfilled.

Under such conditions, self-government could not long continue; the Islanders’ obedience to law and respect for rights would not be sufficient to sustain it. The moral of the story is that we can’t achieve self-government if we aren’t willing to govern ourselves. Being willing to govern ourselves means not just a willingness to serve in public office but also a willingness to be involved in the political process that results in others taking office.

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12 In other words, the virtue catalog they accept satisfies the second element of the reasonable achievability criterion.
In states where government is on a grand scale, being willing to govern ourselves also means supporting the electoral system by which our representatives our chosen. Thus, the excellent citizen’s willingness to cooperate does extend to political tasks. His willingness to cooperate in the political sphere beyond the mere fulfillment of his obligations enables him to better aid his community in attaining the ideal of self-government and thus to better fulfill his role as citizen.

The thought experiment employed above also demonstrates the need for broader cooperation on tasks throughout the whole of civil society. While it is more controversial than the thesis that without political participation self-government cannot be sustained, the thesis that involvement in civil society is crucial to both the health and the survival of our communities has achieved widespread acceptance. Robert Putnam is famous for his *Bowling Alone* argument that as participation in a society’s voluntary associations declines, so does the social capital of that society. Imagine that the citizens of Excellence Island believe that excellent citizenship does not require community involvement, but only political participation and the fulfillment of civic obligations. Since the Islanders aim to fulfill the minimum demands of excellence yet not exceed them, they limit their activities accordingly. No one is left to run the PTA, to help out at the homeless shelter, to organize the block party, to coach the soccer team, or to gather for the next meeting of the philately league.\(^{13}\)

\(^{13}\) Of course, because some citizens will include membership in a philately league or chess club as part of their personal pursuit of the good, some of these voluntary associations will still exist, albeit perhaps in a weakened form.
It is difficult to imagine a society without voluntary associations and activities. It is more difficult still to imagine what their loss would mean for the society’s social fabric. This problem has more than one facet. First are the problems that result from the fact that opportunities for collective cooperation are lost. Citizens miss the synergies they could have enjoyed had they worked together as well as the friendly associations of which they could have been a part. However, the problem with a lack of civic involvement is not just the fact that schools would suffer without the PTA or that children might get into more trouble without youth soccer leagues.

The other problem is that many of the skills and dispositions the state needs in order to succeed would disappear with these organizations. The skills and dispositions that membership in voluntary associations promotes are both a) often directly transferable to the political sphere and b) valuable to the success of liberal democracy in their own right. For example, voluntary associations teach citizens to respect and like each other. Citizens learn organizational skills in these contexts that books don’t teach. Finally, they provide citizens with opportunities to learn how to be both team players and team leaders.

Because each of the three types of cooperation considered here (cooperation on the obligatory, in the political sphere, and on a broader civil society level) is essential to successful liberal democratic government, the virtue catalog should include all three types. Note, however, that cooperation is just one of several citizen virtue families. There is no reason for the cooperation family of virtues to carry the full burden of effective citizenship on its own. While the cooperation family could be framed to include all three types of
cooperation, it would also be acceptable to limit it to obligatory cooperation, and to include cooperation on political tasks under the umbrella of the participation family.

The virtue families are artificial constructs. We should consider a virtue to belong to whichever virtue family provides the best conceptual fit. More important than whether we choose to name a given disposition “willingness to cooperate” or “willingness to participate” is that that disposition be included among the citizen virtues if it so qualifies. This isn’t to say that classification is irrelevant. Although closely related (and as the case of political tasks suggests, actually overlapping) the cooperation and participation families as described here emphasize different aspects of excellence and these differences are reflected in how we understand their member virtues. The cooperation family emphasizes a willingness to carry civic burdens that is conditioned on the behavior of others, while the participation family’s focus is the motivations of justice and community.

Let’s turn now to the question of why it is that conditioned (as opposed to unconditional) cooperation qualifies as a virtue. This is not an issue that divides the focus thinkers. They concur that the excellent citizen’s cooperation is a species of reciprocation (Jones 86; Dagger 112, 218; Spragens 228). Why? If virtue is viewed as moral goodness it seems strange to call a disposition that predicates one’s own actions on the actions of others a virtue. Wouldn’t the virtuous person “do the right thing” without regard to the actions of others?

The Chapter Two framework is key to dissolving this apparent puzzle. In constructing an account of citizen virtue, we seek not a catalog of virtues simpliciter but a
catalog of citizen virtues.\textsuperscript{14} Citizen virtues are those qualities which enable the citizen to aid her state in achieving its aims. Considered in its character as a citizen virtue rather than as an element of moral goodness, we must measure cooperation against one yardstick and one yardstick only: if most citizens in a community possess and act on this disposition, will that community be better able to achieve its aims? In other words, does a willingness to cooperate without regard to whether one’s actions are generally reciprocated aid the state in a way that conditioned cooperation does not?

No. The citizen’s cooperation on obligatory matters like obeying the law makes little difference if others do not cooperate as well.\textsuperscript{15} The societal advantages possible when most citizens fulfill their obligations—for example, the stability and security that come of obedience to law and of respecting others’ rights—are not available to the lone citizen. It is also the case that one citizen acting by himself on civil society matters such as forming a neighborhood association, joining the local soccer league, etc., will not get very far. The ideal of cooperation for the common good is impossible to realize when only one

\textsuperscript{14} In this dissertation I consider the citizen virtues from a purely instrumental perspective. A given quality of character is a citizen virtue (and therefore a trait worth cultivating) because it enables the citizen to excel at his role, to aid his state in promoting and protecting its aims. This isn’t to say that a particular quality of character that is also a citizen virtue might not have intrinsic worth in itself, but it is to say that this aspect of its value is not directly relevant to the line of inquiry I pursue here.

\textsuperscript{15} The thesis that conditioned cooperation is preferable to unconditional cooperation rests on empirical questions. (e.g., Can one citizen’s willingness to cooperate and thereby fulfill his obligations make any difference in the community’s ability to achieve its aims when other citizens are violating their obligations?) A mistaken assessment of the empirical facts would be reason to reverse the thesis. For example, if it were the case that just one citizen could lead many others to cooperate through her own example of cooperation, then that would be reason to argue that unconditional cooperation was the better citizen virtue candidate.
citizen cooperates. Similarly, a citizen who cooperates on civic projects in the political realm may find that a one person political campaign is not very effective. Acting by himself, the citizen cannot sustain self-government.

If unreciprocated cooperation doesn’t aid the state in attaining its ideals, there is no reason for the account of citizen excellence we construct to require it. In fact, just the opposite is true; the liberal sufficiency principle introduced in Chapter Two applies. For many citizens, making room in their lives to cooperate on obligatory, political, and general civic tasks limits their ability to pursue their own visions of the good. The liberal sufficiency principle suggests that if a virtue is to be a *liberal* democratic citizen virtue, then it must allow space for individual pursuit of the good as far as is consistent with the attainment of other key ideals. So, if the citizen’s unreciprocated cooperation does not move his community closer to achieving those ideals, then the cooperation virtue should not be construed so as to require it. Requiring cooperation without regard to whether it is generally reciprocated by the citizen’s community abridges his freedom to pursue his own notion of the good without any attendant increase in his ability to assist his community in attaining its aims\(^\text{16}\)—a violation of the liberal sufficiency principle. Therefore, the cooperation family of virtues is best understood as requiring conditioned rather than unconditional cooperation.

\(^{16}\) My claim is not that *any* increase in the community’s ability to attain its aims justifies limiting the citizen’s freedom. The point is that to adopt a conception of excellence in which the excellent citizen’s freedom is constrained without any attendant boost to his ability to perform his role violates the principle of liberal sufficiency. Such an account is not sufficiently liberal because it restricts the citizen’s freedom more than is necessary for attaining liberal democratic aims—because the restriction in question doesn’t advance liberal democratic aims at all.
3.5 Participation: Survey

*The excellent citizen is interested, informed, and active politically.*

The focus thinkers who discuss participation as a virtue are Dagger, Jones, and Kingwell. Each agrees that some measure of participation is an essential part of the role of citizen, yet they differ on three questions: the proper scope and purpose of participation (Is participation broader than the making and sharing of justice claims? Does the excellent citizen participate in order to contribute to her community or to fight for liberal justice?), participation vs. civic-mindedness (Is being well-informed sufficient or must the citizen be disposed to actually participate?), and participation’s proper focus (Should citizen’s efforts be focused on the local or national sphere?).

I will first discuss the question of participation’s proper scope and purpose. The question of scope regards what sort of behavior participation includes. Contemporary political theorists emphasize the deliberative nature of democracy.17 This emphasis naturally leads to a conception of political participation as participation in political discourse. Following this lead, thinkers like Kingwell consider political participation to be the making and sharing of justice claims: the excellent citizen makes justice claims on his fellow citizens, they in turn make justice claims on him, and he responds to their claims—and hopes, in turn, to be responded to (Kingwell 260).

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17 See the work of Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, for example.
Others see the scope of participation as much broader. Although participation includes the making and sharing of justice claims, these activities do not exhaust participation. Although communication’s role in political participation can hardly be exaggerated, there are types of participatory behavior that do not directly involve the making and sharing of justice claims. The link between some forms of participation and making a claim to justice is plain: working on behalf of a political action committee to legalize gambling on a reservation, writing a letter to the editor arguing for lower taxes for a certain income group, or attending a town meeting to oppose a new freeway, are all examples of political participation in which one would make explicit justice claims. But the link between other forms of participation and justice claims is less direct: registering voters, running for office, serving on a local county canvassing board, campaigning on behalf of someone else running for office, voting, and serving on a neighborhood association are examples.

Thinkers like Jones suggest that the form the excellent citizen’s participation takes is dependent upon “individual interest and initiative” (86). Although he and like thinkers believe the citizen must participate, they don’t believe the citizen has any “specific duties” (Jones 86) in the way of participation. So, if one votes but doesn’t attend town meetings, he might still be a good citizen, and if one would rather campaign for others than run for office himself, that’s acceptable as well.

Of course, the apparent distance between these views on the scope of participation shrinks when one applies Kingwell’s lofty description to practical instances. Properly understood, the difference between these views isn’t making justice claims versus serving as an election official, it is some activity such as speaking one’s piece in a town meeting or writing one’s legislator versus serving as an election official.
Under the view which restricts participation to the making and sharing of justice claims, it is not clear that citizens have this type of discretion. If listening to others’ justice claims is a moral “duty” (Kingwell 260), then which claims can the citizen ignore, and how is he to prioritize his response to the claims to which he does listen? These questions go unanswered on this view. However, discretion to choose the form one’s participation will take is not only tenable, it’s essential. Tenable, because what difference does it make whether one chooses to write a letter to the editor or to speak at a town meeting so long as one participates? Essential, because given the constraints of finite time and energy and two equally compelling public issues, the citizen should be able to choose to which issue he will devote his energies. The necessary nature of discretion in the way that the citizen participates suggests that the citizen will have to be selective in meeting his duty to make his justice claims known and to listen to the justice claims of others.

These differing views on the proper scope of participation also point to a split in the conception of its purpose. Thinkers who give community an important role in the life of the excellent citizen (Dagger and Jones, for example), see participation as a way for the excellent citizen to contribute to her community. She runs for office, serves as an election official, writes letters to the editor and speaks up in town meetings, all as ways of giving to and enriching her community. Others (including Macedo and Kingwell) see

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19 This is not simple altruism. Such citizens contribute to their communities and hope to improve them because these are the places in which they live. When the citizen improves her community, it becomes a better place to live. The citizen is also motivated by reciprocity. Others participate (and in so doing contribute to the community) so she participates (and in so doing contributes to the community). She participates with the expectation that her fellow citizens will participate as well. This conception of participation is very closely related to the virtue of cooperation.
participation in light of the excellent citizen’s duty to fight for and sustain liberal principles, particularly liberal justice. When this citizen participates by writing the editor or standing up in a town meeting, she is seeking to persuade others to share her “interpretations of public norms” (Macedo 272) through public deliberation.

Thinkers also differ in their conception of what is demanded of the excellent citizen: is it mere civic-mindedness or actual participation? Is the important thing just to be involved by being aware of what goes on politically in one’s community? Or must one actually take an active role? Thinkers like Jones endorse the first view. On this view, active participation is certainly not discouraged. If the citizen’s interest in the political life of his community leads to actual participation, so much the better. But on this view, the important thing, the essential thing, is that the citizen be interested and informed about political matters. He must be “civic-minded” (Jones 86). He needs to care about what is going on and devote time to finding out. He must understand what is at stake, have a grasp of the relevant issues, and be able to identify public figures. This gives the excellent citizen the basis for possible participation and enables him to understand how his government works.

By contrast, proponents of the second view (such as Richard Dagger) insist on actual participation. They believe it is not sufficient to be informed and interested, the citizen must actually take part. This view could be endorsed from either perspective on the purpose of participation. If the purpose of participation is to contribute to one’s community, while being interested and informed might nourish one’s sense of civic membership it doesn’t in itself constitute a contribution to one’s community. Similarly, if
participation has the primary purpose of upholding and sustaining liberal principles, being informed or interested in the issues of one’s day is of no efficacy unless one acts on that interest and information.

Another area in which those who think about participation as a virtue differ—in emphasis, if not in fact—is participation’s proper focus: Should the excellent citizen focus his participatory efforts on the local or the national sphere? While all citizens are members of political communities large and small (neighborhoods, cities, states, nations, continents, and perhaps even the global community), the citizen’s first allegiance will go to one or some of these communities at the expense of others. Some emphasize participation on the local level, because this is where they believe it will be the most effective (Dagger 197). Others, like Jones, emphasize participation on the national level, or a focus on the local insofar as it “impinges on the national level” (87).

The question of participation’s proper focus comes down to the question of how one conceives of the political community most relevant to the excellent citizen, and this in turn, has much to do with how one conceives of participation’s purpose. One who conceives of the purpose of participation as defending and sustaining liberal principles might see the citizen’s relevant political community as his nation or even the world—liberal principles have a grand scale. On the other hand, if one sees the purpose of participation as making a contribution to one’s community, one might conclude that the citizen’s local neighborhood or town would be the most logical focus for his attentions.20

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20 One view or the other on participation’s purpose (justice versus community) does not necessitate a particular view on participation’s focus (global or local). One might see participation’s purpose as the defense of core liberal principles and also believe that it
3.6 Participation: Application and Analysis

I will address four questions regarding participation: What is its proper scope, what is its purpose, how should it be conceived (civic-mindedness and voting vs. actual participation), and does it satisfy the reasonable achievability criterion?

Scope of Participation

The first source of conflict between the thinkers is the issue of participation’s proper scope. The political discourse view defines participation as the making and sharing of justice claims. The broader view envisions a wider scope for participation that extends beyond the making and sharing of justice claims. To resolve the issue regarding participation’s proper scope, consider once again the citizens of Excellence Island. Suppose that the Islanders are taught that the excellent citizen must participate. Suppose they are taught that participation consists solely of participation in political discourse, of formulating and sharing justice claims. No other elements of participation are included in their understanding of participation and none of the other virtue families include such elements either. Thus, the Islanders write letters to their editor, but they do not vote in most elections. They make speeches opposing the new freeway, but they don’t run for office. Such a view of what excellence demands begins to look absurd.

Interpreting the political discourse view according to the principle of charity, it may be that properly understood, its intent isn’t to deny that there are other forms of participation, but to highlight the centrality of discourse about justice in the political
sphere. Ultimately, the differing views need not be conflicting views at all. Proponents of the broader view can acknowledge that political participation often involves making justice claims; presumably proponents of the political discourse view could acknowledge the importance of some types of participation that don’t directly involve making justice claims.\(^{21}\)

One way of highlighting the role of political discourse yet retaining the notion that excellence demands other types of participation as well would be to limit the participation family to political discourse\(^{22}\) and to reclassify other types of participation as part of the cooperation family of virtues. However, consideration of the different perspectives on participation’s purpose suggests that something other than organizational issues is at stake here. Rearranging virtue family boundaries does not exhaust the tensions between the different views on participation.

**Purpose of Participation**

The community-centered view of participation’s purpose suggests that political participation is a way for the excellent citizen to give something back to her community. By contrast, the justice-centered view of participation’s purpose suggests that participation is the citizen’s duty because she must fight to enact and sustain liberal principles, particularly liberal justice. These views are not necessarily in conflict. For

\(^{21}\) One might be tempted to limit the virtue of participation to political discourse in order to minimize virtue’s demands on the citizen. However, as we saw in the case of cooperation, this move is illegitimate if it means ignoring what the liberal democratic state actually needs from its citizens.

\(^{22}\) Or, alternatively, the making of justice claims could be brought under the umbrella of the deliberative excellence family of virtues.
example, suppose that Excellence Island is a liberal community in which the Islanders are united by their allegiance to liberal justice. On Excellence Island, then, championing liberal principles and contributing to the community through political participation might amount to just about the same thing. However, suppose that Excellence Island was not a community that prioritized justice. In this case, political participation with the purpose of contributing something to the community might not be a contribution to the advancement of liberal principles at all.

One might suggest that since liberal democracy is the context for this inquiry regarding citizen virtue, it is reasonable to stipulate that Excellence Island is a liberal democracy. After all, we aren’t attempting to answer the question of what citizen virtues would be required for excellence in a society that did not have liberal ideals. Fair enough. But note the importance of distinguishing between a liberal democracy and a community defined by its allegiance to liberal justice: The community defined by its allegiance to liberal justice could be an instance of a liberal democracy, but most liberal democracies are not communities defined by their allegiance to liberal justice. This distinction is best understood in reference to the concept of comprehensive doctrines as developed by John Rawls in *Political Liberalism*. A community defined by its allegiance to liberal justice is a community in which the citizens share a comprehensive doctrine that prioritizes justice. In a liberal democracy, on the other hand, citizens do not necessarily share comprehensive doctrines, and the comprehensive doctrines they hold may privilege religious or utilitarian principles above justice.
Consider the case in which Excellence Island is specified as a liberal democracy, yet not a community defined by the priority that it gives to justice. First, let’s look at the scenario in which citizens participate politically with the purpose of contributing to their communities. Because the Islanders are excellent and therefore committed to achieving liberal democratic ideals, their participation wouldn’t be illiberal. But it would probably have a broader focus than participation targeted at increasing the reach of liberal justice, because before participating, each Islander would be asking, “How can I contribute to my community?” rather than “How can I promote liberal principles, especially liberal justice?” Now, since it is political participation that is in question, and because the excellent Islander is committed to liberal ideals, much of what she might choose to do to participate would in fact promote liberal principles, including liberal justice. However, if the Islander were to participate with the purpose of fighting for liberal principles, and asked herself, “How can I promote liberal principles, especially liberal justice?” before participating, her participation would also be of benefit to her island community because it is a liberal democracy.

It looks as though there’s not much of a difference here. Either way, the citizen’s participation will probably advance liberal principles. Either way, the citizen’s participation will probably be a contribution to her community. But note that on the first scenario, the Islanders ask themselves one question, and on the second scenario, they ask another. The actions are the same, the dispositions different. All else equal, which Islander is more excellent? The Islander who seeks to contribute to her community or the Islander who seeks to advance liberal justice? The Chapter Two framework reminds us to
step back and ask: “Excellent with respect to what frame of reference?” The answer is: “Excellent in the role of citizen—excellent in the role of enabling one’s political community to attain and sustain the ideals of the liberal democratic state: freedom, equality, self-government, cooperation for the common good, and stability.”

Looking back to that larger picture reveals the danger of putting blinders on in order to attend to a single virtue family or to just one of the liberal democratic ideals: the temptation is strong to force a false choice. What is it going to be: community or justice, self-government or freedom? From the broader perspective of the many elements necessary to achieving the type of political community we desire—not just a liberal state, but a democratic one, not just a free state, but a stable one—this sort of forced choice is ludicrous. Both goals—promoting community and championing liberal justice—are essential. We cannot achieve the liberal democratic ideal until both are fulfilled.

However, the question at hand regards not what the purpose of the liberal democratic state is but rather which qualities of character will enable the citizen to aid his state in achieving those purposes. Considered from this perspective, the look of the participation virtue changes. I have argued that in order for the state to achieve its aims, the citizen must be willing to participate politically. It may be, however, that the state can attain its ideals even if its citizens participate for reasons that are less lofty than these ideals. For example, if most citizens’ disposition to participate is rooted in a desire to cultivate better business skills and contacts, will that fact diminish their community’s ability to achieve its ideals? If a disposition to participate that is rooted in selfish desires
suggests that the citizen’s disposition to participate is more contingent or less solid than a disposition to participate that is rooted in purer motives, then yes. Otherwise, no.

In other words, the fact that a citizen’s disposition to participate has selfish roots might be taken to suggest that his disposition to participate would be less consistent than that of a citizen with purer motives, because in some instances the citizen might perceive a given act of participation as lacking in personal benefit and therefore be less disposed to participate in that instance. If this is true, then purer motives better serve the liberal democratic cause. However, if the disposition to participate is taken as a given, then the citizen’s motive is irrelevant. Perhaps he thinks nothing about participating, perhaps it isn’t something he consciously strives for at all; what is important is that the citizen has the disposition to participate.23

The same answer applies to the question of whether the citizen’s motive for participating should be a desire to contribute to his community or a passion for liberal justice. If one or the other of these motives makes the citizen more apt to cultivate the disposition to participate, it is superior because of its instrumental value. It better allows him to perform his role as citizen. Motive is important only insofar as it impacts the citizen’s ability to aid his state in attaining its aims. It doesn’t matter whether the citizen intends to contribute to his community or to advance liberal principles through his participation (unless one purpose is more motivating than the other) as long as has participates.

23 See §3.12 for additional discussion of the relevance of motive to instrumental virtues.
Actual Participation vs. Civic Mindedness

Another source of conflict regarding participation is the question of whether the excellent citizen must actually be willing to participate (if able), or if being civic-minded, interested and informed in the life of his political community is sufficient. Is the disposition to participate essential or is civic-mindedness the requisite virtue? If civic-mindedness doesn’t include a willingness to vote, then it falls far short of virtue status. The importance of the willingness to vote cannot be overemphasized. Voting is an essential part of any description of excellent citizen behavior in a representative democracy. While its citizens are not the government’s only resource for accomplishing its ideals, citizens are the ones who vote and elect representatives. While many sources have the ability to influence what the citizen decides, at the end of the day only the citizen may enter the voting booth. No corporation, political party, or politician may take his place there.

To make the thesis that limiting one’s participation to civic-mindedness is sufficient more plausible, one could stipulate that civic-mindedness includes being interested and informed and voting on the basis of that information. On this view, adopting a civic-minded standard over a willingness to actually participate standard is a way of emphasizing how the nature of the citizen’s role has changed to reflect the context of contemporary political communities. This context is one in which governments provide more services for more people than ever before. As governments become ever more complex, the bureaucrats and experts who run them become ever more numerous. In light of this, the civic-minded thesis argues that it is appropriate for the citizen to adapt his role
to the new context accordingly. It would be foolish for each citizen to attempt to bone up on every in and out of nuclear plant security, the intricacies of relations with a couple hundred foreign nations, or every line of the tax code.

Ultimately, the citizen doesn’t actually have a choice. He must rely on bureaucrats and experts who can specialize, doing the work of government and making the decisions for him. Not even a round table can accommodate a million or more decision makers. Thus, or so this line of reasoning goes, the citizen needs to step back from the table and simply concentrate on voting for good representatives. Good citizenship in the twenty-first century is informing oneself well enough to pick good representatives. They, in turn, will listen to good experts and hire competent bureaucrats; this is what is reasonably achievable.24 The citizen of a liberal democracy must be able to keep his day job and expects to be able to retain his family life.

Note that although this interpretation of participation doesn’t require actual participation beyond voting, the requirement that the citizen be interested and informed is not undemanding. This is not the apathetic citizen that so many thinkers, from de Tocqueville (318-19) to Charles Taylor (9-10) have warned of. When the civic-minded citizen steps back to let others take over the day-to-day tasks of governing, he doesn’t step back from interest in what happens to his political community. Additionally, his role

24 On the civic-mindedness thesis, virtue demands only that the citizen choose his representatives and then allows him to retreat into private life. After all, in order to satisfy the reasonable achievability criterion, an account of citizen virtue must meet its second condition: “Under normal circumstances, a citizen need not forsake peers, family, or other important personal pursuits to accomplish what the virtue catalog requires.”
in electing representatives is an essential one. The well-informed citizen who carefully selects his representatives excels at the most important part of citizen participation.

However, the actual participation thesis asserts that being civic-minded and voting are not sufficient. Carefully selecting representatives is important, but it does not exhaust what the citizen’s role demands of her. There is no quarrel here with the claims that the civic-minded thesis is based upon. Government is very complex and arranging with bureaucrats, experts, and representatives to carry on with its day-to-day work is a necessary evil.

But even communities with good experts and competent bureaucrats require input and involvement from their citizens. The fact that we must rely on others in no way suggests that it is permissible for us to yield our responsibility for the political process to them. Voting and being informed does not exhaust the citizen’s responsibilities.

To see why the actual participation thesis carries the day, consider Excellence Island. Suppose the Islanders believe political participation to be essential for excellent citizenship. However, suppose they are also taught that the complexity of the contemporary age means that the only political participation their citizenship demands of them is voting in elections and staying informed about political life in their community. Since the Islanders always limit themselves to just what excellence requires, never exceeding or falling short of it, what will these beliefs about the virtue of participation mean for how their community functions?

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25 It isn’t always an evil. Although someone must do it, not everyone wants to draw up regulations for nuclear plant security. Sometimes we are glad to put these burdens on the shoulders of others.
It is difficult to answer this question because it is hard to imagine what a liberal democracy with no citizen participation aside from voting would be like. If there were no participation other than voting, would there be any candidates to vote for? If there were candidates, would there be campaigns? Would a lack of participation affect other aspects of community political life? Excellence Island might still have candidates for office, because it is likely that corporations or bureaucratic bodies within government might have reason to sponsor one slate of candidates or another in order to forward their own interests. If the candidates ran unopposed, campaigns and campaigning would be unnecessary. But there would probably also be a few Islanders who ran for office of their own accord, not as part of a quest to be excellent citizens, but out of a desire to fulfill a personal pursuit of the good that they defined in terms of political achievement. Competing interests within a society might also furnish an opposing slate. So, yes, there might still be elections, although they would be different.

What of the campaigns? What would they look like if there were no citizen participation? Political parties would be altered, but likely wouldn’t disappear altogether, because money can purchase the simulacra of participation. Where private citizens weren’t willing to go door to door offering lawn signs or gathering signatures, employees could be hired who would. Where private yards were closed to lawn signs, vacant lots would suffice. And there would always be billboards and newspaper and television ads. However, there would be no letters to the editor, no town meetings, and no one to speak

26 Of course, relying solely on these sorts of motivations to fill public offices would probably mean that the less glamorous or influential offices would go empty or that their incumbents would run unopposed.
for the oppressed or the minority view unless something about that view happened to attract corporate or bureaucratic support. The individual’s point of view would vanish. The sole sources of funding for political campaigns would be the corporate bodies who sponsored the candidates or government itself. Similarly, when citizens’ groups no longer volunteered to conduct voter registration drives, government would either have to pay or allow corporate interests with their own motives to take over.\textsuperscript{27}

The hardest part of this scenario to picture is that citizens would sit silently (with the exception of their vote) rather than speaking out or working in behalf of their own interests. This is where the crux of the argument in favor of active participation over mere civic-mindedness centers. While their nominally democratic government might limp along holding some form of elections with some type of campaigns, at the end of the day, if the Islanders limited their participation to voting, then regardless of how interested and informed in their government they were, their only choices would be yes and no and candidate X or candidate Y. They would have no hand in forming the questions, framing the issues, or selecting the candidates. This means that their interest, however carefully cultivated, couldn’t help but ultimately turn to passivity before the fact of their distance from power, their removal from decisions other than to affirm or deny the choices placed before them. The Islanders might not start out as apathetic citizens, but if they had only their interest and their votes to offer to their community, then at the end of the day they would be subject to Tocqueville’s “immense tutelary power,” (318) the guardian state,

\textsuperscript{27} If this seems an accurate description of what has already occurred in the United States, it is because the level of citizen participation (including voting) is not what it should be.
paternal in authority, a master to its slaves in dominion, perpetuating the childhood of all its subjects.

The choice between candidate X and candidate Y may strike one as meaningful at first, but consider the similarity between this choice and the decision management we practice on children. Three year old Hannah wants candy that I don’t want her to have. I offer a big smile and a choice: “Would you like some raisins or are you ready for bedtime?” She has a choice, but her limited options don’t empower her.

When we allow government to become guardian state, we forsake two of liberal democracy’s highest ideals, freedom and self-government. On such a scenario, the people aren’t self-governed because a group other than the people governs. They aren’t free because as individuals they do not have a say in which direction they go. One might object that a single citizen generally has little impact as to which candidates or ballot measures make it on to the ballot. But this observation holds true for all the citizen virtues. One excellent citizen of himself cannot ideal liberal democracy achieve.

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28 Cf., §5.4 on the difficulty that one citizen’s vote often doesn’t seem to make any difference. Jeremy Waldron argues that the context of today’s citizenship changes the nature of citizen virtue. Because the scale of government has grown so large, we must hesitate before demanding “sincere/heroic individualism.” (35-38). For more on the problem that much of the individual’s participation will appear to have little or no impact, see Parfit. Waldron’s focus in this argument is mistaken. If the sheer scale of contemporary government leads citizens not to behave virtuously, this is indeed a problem. But it doesn’t suggest that political participation is not a virtue. The citizen role demands participation because the ideal of self-government requires it. If citizens cease to participate, their communities will cease to be self-governing.

29 In my discussion of conditioned cooperation (§3.4) I argued that the excellent citizen need not cooperate if he finds that he is the only one cooperating. This conclusion makes sense given that citizen virtues are role-based virtues. When conventions of reciprocation collapse or do not exist, further cooperation does nothing to aid the
However, a significant number of excellent citizens working together can achieve impressive results. The individual who sits back and allows bureaucrats, experts, and other citizens to run his government and make his choices for him loses through his own passivity any sense of responsibility or control over his own fate. By contrast, the citizen who throws himself into the public sphere and participates will develop his sense of civic membership, a sense that he has a part in what happens to him even if does not entirely control it.

In sum, if liberal democracy is to flourish, citizens must be willing to put forth the effort to identify good candidates for office and encourage them to run. We need citizens who are willing to be the roots behind the grassroots campaign. A sound liberal democracy needs poll workers and election officials. Effective self-government requires citizens who will attend town meetings, write letters to the editor, and share their points of view.\textsuperscript{30} Ultimately, however, we as citizens may need to participate as desperately as community in advancing its aims.

A similar argument might be applicable to participation if participation declined to the point that the representative system collapsed and most citizens no longer recognized electoral results as legitimate. In such a situation, a citizen’s willingness to participate would do nothing to aid his community in achieving its aims. Note, however, that these observations are irrelevant to the fact that any one citizen’s participation considered in itself may make no difference (in the outcome of an election, for example). The fact that in the context of a large and complex democracy the influence of one citizen’s participation is imperceptible does not suggest that the citizen should not participate or that willingness to participate is not a virtue. The community’s aims are advanced when most citizens participate. Considered in aggregate with the participation of his peers, the citizen’s participation does aid his government in attaining its aims. The willingness to participate is a virtue because political participation is part of the citizen role, part of what liberal democratic community needs in order to survive.

\textsuperscript{30} A possible objection to this line of reasoning is the idea that active participation is properly the province of the superior or the extraordinary citizen, while civic-
sound liberal democracy needs our participation. Only through action will we feel responsibility, and only responsibility can empower us with the sense that we have a voice in the direction of our own communities. The active conception of participation triumphs over mere civic-mindedness and voting as what the role of citizen demands.

**Participation and Reasonable Achievability**

One issue that must be discussed in conjunction with the virtue of participation and especially with reference to the discussion of whether we need to participate or just be civic-minded is the topic of reasonable achievability. The principle of reasonable achievability states, among other things, that excellence in citizenship must be compatible with an individual’s other pursuits. Since this is an account of *liberal* democratic citizenship, in which freedom to pursue one’s own notion of the good is a high ideal, an account of citizen virtue that requires the citizen to adopt a certain view of the good is unacceptable.\(^{31}\)

For virtues like participation that are open to an interpretation that is possibly quite demanding, this means that we have a tricky balancing act before us. When such virtues demand a great deal from the citizen, the impact on that citizen’s freedom to pursue the

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\(^{31}\) That said, the demands of liberal democratic community itself will mean that certain aspects of the individual’s view of the good must, at minimum, be compatible with liberal democratic ideals.
good is substantial. If the virtue of participation is interpreted in too demanding a manner, we risk abridging the citizen’s freedom in ways that are incompatible with our liberal ideals. On the other hand, if the demands of participation are interpreted too weakly (as I have argued is the case with the civic-mindedness thesis), then the virtue of participation doesn’t accomplish what the virtues are supposed to accomplish, namely enabling the citizen to aid his government in attaining its ideals. Freedom and self-government suffer.32

3.7 Vigilance: Survey

*The excellent citizen makes his own political decisions and resists being bullied by those in power. He demands public accountability and evaluates the character, ability, and performance of officeholders and officeseekers.*

The focus thinkers who discuss vigilance are Galston, Kingwell, Macedo, and Spragens. The thinkers discuss two aspects of vigilance: a personal side focused on the citizen’s own political behavior and a public side concerned with the citizen’s relationship to public political figures. Reflection on the personal political behavior of citizens may initially seem out of place in this discussion. Vigilance is a disposition traditionally directed towards others or towards outside entities, not towards oneself. However, consider that if the citizen lacks a robust conception of his own role and importance as a citizen under a government that is by, for and of the people— if he lacks a healthy regard

32 Freedom suffers both ways. If participation is interpreted in too demanding a fashion, the citizen’s freedom is abridged. If participation is interpreted in too weak a fashion, the citizen gives up freedom in that he no longer participates in his own government (See §5.2 and §6.3 for a discussion of Benjamin Constant’s “liberty of the ancients”). Also, not participating in one’s government may result in one’s freedom being abridged by other parties.
for the dignity of the common office of citizenship—public vigilance is impossible. The personal traits I discuss here under the rubric of political self-reliance—the citizen’s ability to evaluate issues, weigh factors, and come to reasoned conclusions for himself, as well as his disposition towards independence of thought—are prerequisites to public vigilance.

Spragens and Macedo both endorse virtues which champion the personal side of vigilance, which is self-reliance in the political sphere. Citizens manifest political self-reliance in two modes: independent political thought and citizen self-assertion towards political authority. Thinkers like Macedo focus on independent political thinking. On this conception of vigilance, the citizen is politically self-reliant because he weighs the issues and decisions of his day for himself, not allowing any person, party, or governmental entity to direct his thinking and therefore his choices.33 Thinkers like Spragens focus on citizen self-assertion towards political authority. An excellent citizen of the type he describes manifests political self-reliance by being assertive, demanding the respect due the citizen of a democratic state, and refusing to be bullied by those in positions of power (219).

Public vigilance is examined by thinkers like Kingwell and Galston. It is public because the citizen directs this type of vigilance at prospective and incumbent public officials and then acts on his findings in the public sphere.34 This outwardly-focused vigilance comes in two varieties: vigilance regarding possible abuses of power and critical

33 This is not to say that the citizen is not influenced by others, or that he does not take the positions of persons, parties, or governmental entities into account.

34 Political self-reliance, by contrast, focuses on the citizen’s own conduct in asserting herself in her role as citizen and making independent decisions.
assessment of the ability, character, and performance of those who hold (or seek to hold) public office.  

The first variety of public vigilance (championed by thinkers like Kingwell) is manifest by the citizen focused on and alert to possible abuses of power. He recognizes that the perks of office, things like money, power, and status (MacIntyre’s external goods), are corrupting agents. As a result, he is “suspicious” (Kingwell 261) and therefore always on the alert for possible corruption or more general misuses of power. He monitors his leaders carefully. If he finds anything amiss, he is no longer just vigilant, he is “vocal” (Kingwell 261). When he discovers wrongdoing, the excellent citizen brings his vigilance to fruition by seeking to inform and energize his peers. His reaction to official wrongdoing might take any of many forms. The citizen might speak in a town meeting, relay his findings to the press, run for office, or seek redress through the courts or other institutions.

The second form of public vigilance (described by thinkers like Galston) is more expansive than the first. This type of vigilance concerns itself not just with abuses of power, but with ability, character, and performance. On this view, the excellent citizen’s motivation is not (as with the previous view) a mistrust of public officials, but rather with the need to assess them. The citizen needs to know whether the person who holds (or

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35 Although it doesn’t receive mention from the focus thinkers, a fully worked out account of vigilance would undoubtedly include monitoring and assessing institutions as well as officials.

36 The citizen who manifests the first type of public vigilance actively mistrusts his leaders. The citizen who manifests the second type suspends judgment until after he makes an assessment of the relevant official’s trustworthiness.
seeks to hold) office has the abilities necessary for the job as well as the level of character
that she finds acceptable in someone who represents and governs her. Is this someone she
can trust? The citizen also concerns herself with questions of performance: How has this
person done in other positions of public trust? What is his history in the position? These
questions about an official’s behavior in office are not focused narrowly on the possibility
of corruption, but question her overall performance. The excellent citizen concerns herself
not only with corruption, but with inefficiency and ineptitude as well. Her interest in
candidates and incumbents isn’t limited to critical evaluation either: she also attempts to
recognize and identify efficiency, high competence, and all-around superior performance.

Because the citizen who manifests this type of vigilance assesses both actual
performance and abilities her interest is not limited to incumbents. The question of an
officeseeker’s ability and character becomes as important as an officeholder’s. The need
for vigilance thus extends from the first day of a campaign\textsuperscript{37} to an official’s last day in
office.

\textbf{3.8 Vigilance: Application and Analysis}

As noted above, the vigilance family of virtues has two divisions:\textsuperscript{38} political self-
reliance and public vigilance. By contrast to most of the other virtue families considered

\textsuperscript{37} Or perhaps it begins earlier: the disposition and skills that constitute vigilance
may be just as important in identifying potential candidates to encourage as they are in
deciding who to campaign, vote for, and support when elected.

\textsuperscript{38} Alternatively, one could think of the two forms of vigilance as distinct yet
closely related families of virtue. Whether these qualities are described as belonging to
one family or two makes no difference.
in this dissertation, there are not competing views to choose between and there is little conflict to resolve either within each of these divisions or between them. The aspects highlighted by the focus thinkers differ, but they complement rather than conflict with each other. Thus, rather than using the Chapter Two framework to resolve some real or apparent conflict between the views, in this section I will step back and focus on the three basic questions that must be asked of all citizen virtues: How does this virtue protect and promote liberal democratic ideals? Is it reasonably achievable? Is it suited to its context? I will discuss the individual and public aspects of vigilance separately.

**Political Self-Reliance**

I will argue three points regarding political self-reliance: First, its differing aspects complement each other. Second, it enables the citizen to assist his community in promoting liberal democratic ideals. Third, it is reasonably achievable and well-suited to our time and place.

First, as I noted in the introduction to the application and analysis section, the different accounts of political self-reliance highlight different parts of this virtue. These aspects complement rather than conflict with each other. It makes sense that the excellent citizen who is assertive in his role as citizen and doesn’t allow himself to be bullied also won’t allow others to dictate his political opinions. As a citizen, he will make up his own mind, voice his opinions and act on them accordingly. He does this and resists interference because he recognizes it as part of his role as citizen to do so.

Second, political self-reliance enables the excellent citizen to succeed in his role by assisting his community in attaining its ideals. The citizen helps to promote the ideal of
self-government by opposing others’ attempts to deprive citizens of the privileges and responsibilities attendant to their role. These include not just the privilege of voting and selecting representatives, but also the opportunity to have a voice in government and to be recognized, by virtue of one’s role as citizen, as its most important stakeholder. Living under a government that is by, for, and of the people, as a primary stakeholder the excellent citizen expects not just to have a voice in government, but to have his voice listened to and taken account of. The fact that the excellent citizen weighs the issues of the day for himself means that the voice heard when he speaks up is his own. Political self-reliance also promotes the liberal democratic ideal of equality. Political self-reliance leads citizens to reflect on the equal dignity they share as citizens and elevates the importance of that role as they come to recognize that their political community depends on it.

Third, is political self-reliance reasonably achievable, is it well-suited to our context, to our time and place? Is political self-reliance possible in an age of megademocracies? This question arises for political self-reliance because it is so closely related to the highly demanding participatory and deliberative excellence families of virtue. The participatory virtues require the excellent citizen to become informed regarding the political life of his community. The listening seriously aspect of deliberative excellence demands that he understand the best arguments on each side of a given issue. These demands raise important questions regarding reasonable achievability.\footnote{See §3.6 and §3.10 for more on the participation and deliberative excellence families of virtue and the question of reasonable achievability.} The political self-
reliance virtues then dictate how the citizen uses the information he has gathered; he
weighs matters for himself and doesn’t rely on the say-so of others. In contrast to the
families of deliberative excellence and participation, the emphasis of political self-reliance
is not on seeking information or being informed. Rather, political self-reliance dictates
how the citizen responds to the different points of view to which he is exposed—how he
uses the information that other citizen virtues guide him towards.

Ultimately, the question of whether the demands that the citizen inform himself are
consistent with his freedom to pursue the good is a question regarding the reasonable
achievability of the participatory and deliberative excellence families of virtue. For
political self-reliance, questions of reasonable achievability must instead center on the
citizen’s independence in decision making and his willingness to assert himself in his role
as citizen. These are reasonably achievable demands. To be independent in decision
making does not mean that the citizen is uninfluenced by others’ opinions on political
matters (which would be impossible) it means he does not depend on others for his
opinions (which is possible). He weighs the issues for himself. It is also reasonably
achievable for the citizen to assert himself in his role as citizen and not allow himself to be
bullied.

The virtues of political self-reliance are also suited to our context, to the place and
time in which we live. While some would point out that the complexity and size of our
government requires us to rely more on experts and giant bureaucracy than ever before,
this doesn’t negate the demand for independent thinking, it increases it. Now more than
ever, we need citizens who will weigh the issues for themselves and then act, claiming both the privileges and the responsibilities of citizenship.

Public Vigilance

We must ask three questions regarding public vigilance: First, do the different aspects of vigilance complement each other or do they conflict? Second, does the virtue of vigilance promote liberal democratic ideals? If so, which ones? And third, is it reasonably achievable? Is it suited to our context?

In answer to the first question, there are two elements of vigilance: the critical and the evaluative. After a slight but necessary modification to critical vigilance, these elements can be understood to complement rather than conflict with each other. The excellent citizen who manifests critical vigilance focuses on possible abuses of power and monitors incumbents for signs of wrongdoing. The excellent citizen who manifests evaluative vigilance focuses on the character, ability and all-around performance (or potential performance) of both officeholders and officeseekers. Taken alone, critical vigilance would be incomplete and unsatisfactory. While an attitude of suspicion and mistrust might help to uncover fraud and unseat unworthy political leaders, it would do nothing to identify the leaders that merit our support, the ones we should seek to retain. Also, suspicious mistrust taken too far could easily run the citizen afoul of the virtue of restraint.\footnote{I discuss the restraint family of virtues in §5.5-6.} An attitude of vigilance that helps to keep one’s leaders and one’s government in check promotes liberal democratic ideals. Mistrust that develops into cynicism does not. To avoid conflict between critical and evaluative vigilance, critical vigilance must be
modified to require a critical, assessment-oriented attitude rather than the mistrustful suspicion that could possibly lead to bias or fester into cynicism. Evaluative vigilance then complements and completes critical vigilance by focusing on the broader aspects of the candidate or incumbent’s suitability for office: her character, ability and (potential or actual) performance.

The second question one must answer regarding vigilance is whether it promotes liberal democratic ideals. Vigilance allows the citizen to assist his community in promoting stability, self-government, and cooperation for the common good by raising the standard of those who govern and thus the overall quality of government. The citizen’s vigilance may have effect from the earliest stages as she identifies suitable individuals and encourages them to run for office. When the slate of candidates is set, the citizen evaluates each candidate’s suitability for attaining excellence in the role to which he aspires. Later, when candidates become incumbents, she assesses many of the same qualities as before, but extends her evaluation to include actual performance in addition to potential or expected performance. The excellent citizen is constantly on the lookout for inefficiency, ineptitude, and corruption, but she also attends to high competence and superior performance. She votes on the basis of her observations and communicates what she knows to others.

To see more clearly how all this promotes liberal democratic ideals, consider once again the citizens of Excellence Island. Because they carefully assess both officeholders and incumbents and inform others of what they learn, the quality of both the Island’s leadership and the Island’s government increase over time. Ineffective legislators are
voted out. Corruption is exposed. Superior performance is rewarded. Thus, each of the three ideals are met. First, stability: better government and better leadership mean more stable government. Second, self-government: the fact that the citizens take an active role in selecting and retaining excellent leaders strengthens self-government. And third, cooperation for the common good: the better performance and higher efficiency of their government (both a result of better leadership) makes the Islanders better able to pursue the goods they share in common.

The third question regarding vigilance is whether it satisfies the conditions placed on virtues and accounts of citizen virtue in Chapter Two. Is it both reasonably achievable and suited to its context? Vigilance is suited to the time and place in which we live; it is reasonably, yet not easily, achievable. There are good reasons for arguing that the need for citizen vigilance has increased over time. Government is larger; there are more leaders to monitor and more programs, more departments and more ways in which we rely on our governments. The citizen’s connection to her legislators is less direct than it has been in the past because they represent more people than ever before. Fraud is more serious because we surrender higher proportions of our incomes to the government in taxes than we have previously. As the size of government grows, vigilance becomes more difficult at the same time that it becomes more necessary. The fact that we have more public officials means that there are more officials to monitor. The fact that there are more programs means that there are more opportunities for corruption and incompetence.

Once again the reasonable achievability problem surfaces: how much can excellence demand of citizens before it’s more than what is reasonably achievable? Once
again the promise of personal freedom must be balanced against the requirements of liberal democracy. This means that the citizen will not be a full-time monitor. He will have to rely on experts and the news media for information. However, ultimately healthy liberal democracy will require that he make his own assessments of character, ability, and performance, enter the voting booth, and take responsibility for his choices.

Given the many complex issues contemporary governments face, how can the excellent, yet ordinary, citizen be expected to master it all? How can he monitor and assess the relevant people and issues, and become prepared to take a position, yet still be free to pursue his own vision of the good—a vision which may not have much of a political component? The broader issue at stake is one of reasonable achievability. Is an enduring and stable liberal democratic community actually possible? On the one hand, freedom demands that every citizen be able to pursue his own vision of the good. On the other, stable self-governing political community requires much from its citizens. If political community requires too much, freedom is vanquished. If the citizen gives too little, liberal democratic community is doomed. Is there space between the demands of freedom and the requirements of liberal democratic community?

This is a concern with which our communities must continually struggle. Part of the answer comes in recognizing that for most citizens, pursuit of the good depends upon a liberal democratic context. Citizens whose pursuits of the good depend on life in a liberal democracy—where we have the freedom to choose whom to marry, what to study,

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41 This issue obviously overlaps with the deliberative excellence virtues discussed in §3.10.
which occupation to follow, where to live, and what to believe—must recognize that built in to their pursuits of the good is the necessity of sustaining the liberal democratic community that makes it possible. We must voluntarily abridge our freedom in order to sustain it. Each of us must make some space for traffic with the political life in our pursuit of the good.

At the same time, our expectations of the citizen must be realistic. First, the citizen can’t thoroughly inform himself about every issue. Part of becoming informed will mean learning which issues are important for him to know about, what he needs to monitor, and what he can ignore. Second, the citizen need not do original research. Excellence does not demand that he conduct his own studies on the safety of the water supply. Instead, he surveys the pros and cons identified by others: public figures, pundits, and the media.

3.9 Deliberative Excellence: Survey

The excellent citizen listens respectfully to the views of others and offers her own views willingly, respectfully and carefully.

The focus thinkers who discuss deliberative excellence are Galston, Kingwell, Macedo, and Spragens. While they agree that deliberative excellence is crucial to excellent citizenship, they differ as to what it consists in. Two issues divide them: First,

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42 Because the citizen need not, indeed cannot, do all of his own research, two elements that should be built into our understanding of what vigilance demands are the disposition to evaluate and the skills necessary to assess one’s sources of information.
different thinkers focus on different elements of deliberative excellence. Second, some thinkers characterize the virtue as an ability, while others characterize it as a disposition.

I will first consider the question of which elements make up deliberative excellence. Most thinkers agree that the excellent citizen is willing to express and defend his own views. But some thinkers go further, arguing that how one responds to the views of others is also critical. In other words, deliberative excellence consists not just in talking well, but in listening well. On this view, deliberative excellence has two elements: hearing the views of others and expressing and defending one’s own views.

I will consider the “hearing the views of others” element first. Galston, Kingwell, and (although less explicitly) Macedo are among the thinkers who stress the importance of hearing others’ views. Though they agree as to the importance of this element of deliberative excellence, they differ as to what form it takes: Galston describes the excellent citizen as “listening seriously” to others’ views (227), while Kingwell describes her as “open” to opposing arguments (260).

A view like Galston’s suggests that, at minimum, the excellent citizen must listen seriously to the arguments of others. In a liberal and diverse society, listening seriously to others’ views will mean listening to views that one disagrees with (Galston 227, Macedo 275). The excellent citizen gives his attention to other citizens even when their views are “strange” or “obnoxious” (Galston 227). However, while the excellent citizen must respect others’ beliefs through his careful attention to their arguments, he needn’t necessarily be open to the possibility of accepting those arguments.
On this view there may be cases in which the excellent citizen has such a steadfast commitment to a certain position that it would be virtually impossible, or at least very difficult, for him to adopt another.\textsuperscript{43} On the “listen seriously” view of deliberative excellence, such an attitude is acceptable and consistent with excellence in the deliberative sphere. In this circumstance, the excellent citizen does not listen seriously to others’ arguments because he is open to adopting their conclusions. He is not. He believes he has the better view and is not shopping for a new one. He does, however, listen seriously to others’ views. He gives them his careful attention and hears out the arguments of his peers, trying to understand those arguments and attempting to grasp the source of their attraction.

Thinkers like Macedo would argue that hearing others’ views means being open to the possibility of accepting their arguments. A citizen who is open to the arguments of others has a different disposition than the mere listener towards both others’ views and her own. Remaining open towards others’ views suggests that she may be willing to accept those views. This implies a more attenuated commitment to her own views, a willingness to view her own commitments as contingent.\textsuperscript{44} When an excellent citizen of this sort hears others’ views, she listens to discover whether this is an argument that she might not only wish to understand, but to accept.

\textsuperscript{43} Religious beliefs (and the political positions they inspire) are an example of this type of commitment for many.

\textsuperscript{44} Cf., Macedo on the “broad sympathies” that lead one to regard one’s commitments as “contingent and vulnerable” (267).
Thinkers like Kingwell argue for a different motivation for hearing others’ views. Rather than listening to show respect, or listening in hopes of finding a view one can adopt for oneself, on this view, the excellent citizen hears others in order to evaluate their justice claims. Political discourse, explains Kingwell, is the discourse of justice (260). As every citizen is a participant in this discourse, all citizens have the duty to make justice claims and to hear others’ claims to justice (260). Kingwell believes that this means that the excellent citizen must be open to others’ views, listening to learn what justice demands of him and his community.

The second element of deliberative excellence is the willingness to express and defend one’s views in public. As I mentioned above, there is considerable agreement on this aspect of deliberative excellence. It has two parts: expressing one’s views and defending one’s views. First, the excellent citizen makes his views on public matters known. In expressing his views, he is both clear and sincere. Thinkers like Spragens emphasize the importance of the citizen’s truthfulness: the excellent citizen does not attempt to hide or obscure his views in any way (225-26). Thinkers like Galston believe this virtue is essential for reasons of publicity: liberalism demands that we resolve our differences about policy matters through open discussion (226-27). The citizen must be clear and open about his positions on public issues so that others can understand his views.

Second, the excellent citizen is willing to defend the views she expresses publicly. Spragens suggests that the excellent citizen recognizes and accepts a “moral imperative”

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45 I bracket for a moment the consideration that some would consider this aspect of deliberative excellence an ability rather than a disposition.
to justify her views (Spragens 227). One of the reasons many of these thinkers view explanation as so important is because of the view voiced by Galston that the excellent citizen will aim to persuade rather than coerce as she seeks to defend her views (Galston 227). Persuasion’s primary tool is explanation. To explain her views, the excellent citizen must seek to offer “relevant reasons” in support of them (Spragens 227).

The second issue that divides the focus thinkers is the question of whether excellence in the deliberative sphere is better conceived of as an ability or as a disposition. While thinkers like Macedo and Kingwell discuss deliberative excellence solely in terms of the citizen’s disposition: for example, the citizen evidences a “willingness” to engage in dialogue (Macedo 275) or “openness” to the arguments of others (Kingwell 260), other thinkers see deliberative excellence as a question of ability.

By contrast, Galston and Spragens believe that deliberative excellence involves both disposition and ability. Galston explains that the excellent citizen has “the disposition, and the developed capacity, to engage in public discourse” (227). In other words, the citizen both desires to express and defend his views and he is able to do it well. Spragens argues that the disposition to offer reasons and the disposition to be truthful in doing so must be framed by the excellent citizen’s capacity for good judgment; the citizen offers relevant reasons and abides by the canons of logic (225-226).

### 3.10 Deliberative Excellence: Application and Analysis

I will address three principal questions that arise regarding the deliberative excellence family of virtues: First, must the citizen be open to others’ views or is it
sufficient to listen to those views seriously? Second, is deliberative excellence a family of dispositions or a family of both dispositions and capacities? Third, how does the picture of deliberative excellence that emerges in this chapter measure up to the demands of the Chapter Two framework?

The first question regards how the excellent citizen responds when others express their views. When others’ views are attractive, listening seriously is not difficult. One doesn’t need to be a virtuous citizen in order to listen seriously to speakers with views that one admires or with which one agrees. However, when others’ views are alien and/or distasteful, listening seriously presents more of a challenge and it is this situation in which questions arise regarding how the citizen should act.

In order to understand what the liberal democratic ideals demand of the excellent citizen, we must contrast listening seriously with mere tolerance. Obviously, persecuting or physically assaulting someone who expresses disagreeable views is unacceptable. However, merely tolerating those views is also insufficient. To tolerate someone’s view is to allow that person to express herself. However, the citizen doesn’t excel in the deliberative sphere merely by shutting up and letting someone else talk. The citizen who listens seriously doesn’t merely allow the other citizen to express his view by refraining from interfering with that expression. Simply hearing the other’s view does not suffice.

To see why excellence in responding to others’ views requires more than mere tolerance from the citizen, consider the excellent citizen’s tri-fold motivation for listening.

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46 This type of response would run afoul of the respect for rights virtue which I discuss in §4.5-6.
to others’ views seriously: First, he respects his fellow citizens. Second, he wishes to persuade them. Third, he recognizes his own epistemic fallibility. The excellent citizen listens seriously to others out of respect for their status as fellow citizens. He recognizes that other citizens are his political equals. Each has a vote to cast. Each has the right to a voice in the community’s self-government. Each will live in the community affected by the decisions reached. Listening to others seriously acknowledges their status as co-participants in the conversation. Their arguments deserve respect as the reasoned opinions of his fellow citizens.

The second reason that the excellent citizen listens to others’ views seriously is that he would rather persuade than coerce. Most political activity, for example: laws, zoning ordinances, the issuing of bonds, etc., will result in the restriction of someone’s freedom. While the state has the power to coerce its citizens to give up this freedom involuntarily, and while the state must sometimes exert its coercive power for the greater good despite an individual’s opposition, it must avoid use of coercion where possible. This is both because coercion is offensive to the dignity of citizenship and because excessive coercion results in governmental instability. Thus, when the citizen seeks to effect change in his community, persuasion is preferable to coercion.

The issue of persuasion versus coercion is important in the context of deliberative excellence because persuasion will rarely be achieved by the citizen who chooses to prattle on about his own views without bothering to find out where his interlocutor stands or what her reaction to his arguments is. To persuade he must understand; to understand he must listen. When he listens, the excellent citizen gleans valuable information regarding
what might change his interlocutor’s mind: her motivations, her concerns, and her
questions regarding the matter at hand. Also, the act of listening shows a respect which
the excellent citizen hopes to find reciprocated. If he hears another citizen’s views, that
citizen will be more likely to hear out his, and his chances of persuading her will increase.

The third reason that the citizen listens seriously to the views of others is because
of her recognition of her own epistemic fallibility. Although she may enjoy a strong sense
of conviction that her chosen position is correct or that her views on how to proceed are
superior, the excellent citizen is also conscious of her fallibility. She realizes that despite
her confidence in her own position, she could be mistaken. Everyone is occasionally.
Recognition of her epistemic fallibility endows the excellent citizen with humility\(^\text{47}\) as she
considers views that oppose her own. If she has been arguing for her position in the
public sphere, she does not believe she is wrong, but she knows that she could be. This
recognition causes her to seek out the arguments of others so that she may apprehend her
own errors and change her position when the case warrants it. Her recognition of her own
fallibility also causes her to avoid coercion because the thought of coercing someone on
the basis of her own misjudgments is repellent.

\(^\text{47}\) Both Macedo and Spragens discuss virtues relevant to this discussion. Both
argue that the excellent citizen must view her beliefs and commitments as contingent
(Macedo 267; Spragens 224). But where Macedo’s excellent citizen is “willing to
experiment” with her beliefs and commitments because she has a “less exclusive or
unreflective commitment to anything in particular” (267), Spragens’ excellent citizen
recognizes her beliefs as contingent without waverling in her commitments (224). Her
humility is a virtue not because it leads her to consider changing her own commitments,
but because it causes her to refrain from coercing others in their commitments (225).
I have considered three reasons for listening seriously to the views of others. These reasons make it clear that merely tolerating someone’s views, allowing him to express them yet not giving them careful attention, is insufficient. The first reason for listening seriously is out of respect for one’s fellow citizens. Allowing someone to express his views, yet not bothering to listen or to consider those views seriously, does not show the requisite respect. The second reason for listening seriously is in hopes of persuading one’s fellow citizens. Merely allowing expression of others’ views does not allow one to gain the understanding of those views that one needs in order to work toward persuading those who hold them. In addition, being unwilling to listen to one’s peers means that one can’t hope for his peers to listen to him, because they have nothing to reciprocate. This also decreases the possibility of persuasion. The third reason for listening seriously to others is out of a recognition of one’s own epistemic fallibility. Merely tolerating rather than listening to others’ views will not allow the citizen to learn that he is in error. So merely tolerating others’ views is insufficient. That said, is listening seriously sufficient? Must the citizen, in addition to giving the views of others his careful attention, maintain an openness to accepting those views as well?

One might question whether it is possible for the citizen to listen seriously to a view that he isn’t open to accepting. If one listens to an argument without a willingness to accept it, will he work to make sense of and understand it? If to listen to a view seriously means that one seriously considers adopting it, then by definition it is impossible to listen seriously to a view that one is not open to accepting. However, “listen seriously” need not be understood to mean “seriously consider adopting.” Listening seriously to a view can
mean that we give careful attention to it, seek to understand it, and attempt to see the source of its attraction for our peers. Listening seriously understood in this sense is consistent with not being open to a given view. Motivated by a) his own epistemic fallibility, b) respect for his fellow citizens, and c) a commitment to persuasion rather than coercion, the excellent citizen has excellent reasons for working to make sense of others’ views, even if he is not open to accepting them.

Another reason why one might argue that deliberative excellence requires openness is a concern for compromise. One might argue that self-government is impossible unless citizens are willing to compromise. The citizen who is open to the views of others is obviously ready for compromise. She considers all her commitments contingent and is ready to adopt a new view when she finds a superior one. What of the serious listener? There is no reason why the serious listener should not generally be open to compromise. None of the elements of listening seriously—careful attention, understanding the arguments in favor, seeking the source of its attraction for his peers—requires the citizen to refrain from changing his view or adopting someone else’s. Indeed, as the excellent citizen listens seriously he will seek opportunities for compromise. He will likely have many belief commitments that he is willing to change. The difference between the remaining open view and the listening seriously view is just that the listening seriously view acknowledges that the excellent citizen may have some beliefs which he isn’t open to changing. As long as the citizen meets the demands of listening seriously to the views of his peers, he need not remain open to every view he comes across.
I have argued that the excellent citizen must listen seriously to others’ views. Merely tolerating the expression of those views is not sufficient. The excellent citizen carefully attends to others’ views and works to understand them and the source of their attraction for his peers. He need not be open to accepting those views, however. Listening seriously satisfies the demands of excellence.

The second question I will consider is that of whether deliberative excellence is best understood as limited to a citizen’s dispositions or if a complete consideration of deliberative excellence includes capacities as well. The answer we give to the question of to what extent deliberative excellence is a disposition and to what extent it is a capacity shapes the nature of the virtue. The dispositions involved are distinct from the capacities. One can easily imagine that a citizen who possessed the appropriate dispositions (e.g., a willingness to listen to others, a willingness to share and defend her own views) might lack some of the important capacities: to be logical or clear, for example. The reverse is also true. One could possess the appropriate capacities yet utterly lack the relevant dispositions.

It is a mistake to assume that deliberative excellence must be solely a question of dispositions or solely a question of capacities. Deliberative excellence is not a virtue, but a family of virtues. The reason deliberative excellence should be understood to comprehend both dispositions and capacities is clearer when we reflect on the purpose of constructing an account of citizen virtue. A satisfactory account of citizen virtue names and defines the qualities necessary to excellent citizenship. The purpose for constructing such an account is to better grasp what we must do to be better citizens ourselves, to learn what qualities
we should teach our children, and to consider what traits our voluntary associations, schools, workplaces, and governments should attempt to foster in our neighbors. I will develop this line of reasoning regarding dispositions and capacities further in the section on the respect for rights virtue family in Chapter Four (§4.6). For now it suffices to observe that because the qualities requisite for success in the citizen role comprise a complex of both dispositions and capacities, the answer to what we need to do as individuals, to teach as parents, and to cultivate as a community is not complete unless both dispositions and capacities are included in the response.

The third and final question I will consider regards how the Chapter Two framework should inform our view of the deliberative excellence family. I will first consider how deliberative excellence enables citizens to fulfill their roles and then take up the question of whether it meets the conditions specified by the Chapter Two framework.

To assess whether deliberative excellence is a legitimate member of the citizen virtue catalog one must first establish whether it enables the citizen to fulfill and succeed at his role. The deliberative excellence virtues pass this test. Deliberative excellence enables the citizen to aid his community in attaining its aims by promoting the ideals of cooperation for the common good and self-government (because we talk to each other better), stability (less coercion, more discussion, better understanding), and equality (because we recognize each other’s equal dignity as citizens).

What of the conditions for virtue candidates introduced in Chapter Two? Is deliberative excellence both appropriate to its context and reasonably achievable? As for the context of the citizen role, deliberative excellence is a family of virtues well-suited to
Many of the deliberative excellence virtues (particularly the capacities) are best understood as executive or helper virtues. As with the virtue of courage, they aid a bad man in doing bad things or a good man in doing good things.

Our time and place in history. Liberal democracies never cease to need citizens who can listen well to others and sympathetically interpret their claims; the need for citizens who are able to express themselves clearly and sincerely persists as well. The continuing importance of the deliberative excellence virtues is best understood when considered in conjunction with the other virtues for which they provide support, particularly vigilance and participation (see §3.5-6 and §3.7-8).

One might be tempted to believe that as direct democracy has faded, deliberative excellence has diminished in importance. However, representative democracy demands heightened vigilance from its citizens. As the importance of being a watchdog or even a whistle blower increases, the need for citizens who can express themselves well endures. Monitoring one’s governmental institutions and public officials is of little utility if one lacks the will and the facility to make one’s findings known.

Another reason that deliberative excellence continues to be requisite to excellent citizenship is because the virtue of participation continues to be requisite to excellent citizenship. The deliberative excellence virtues make it possible for the citizen to campaign effectively for his candidate of choice, to persuade others of his position on public issues, and to listen to others’ views in a way that makes his ultimate position on these issues more valuable. Also, the pluralistic character of today’s democracies means that the need for citizens who are willing and able to listen to others seriously is greater

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48 Many of the deliberative excellence virtues (particularly the capacities) are best understood as executive or helper virtues. As with the virtue of courage, they aid a bad man in doing bad things or a good man in doing good things.
than in the past, because there are more voices to which to listen and more justice claims to consider.

The final concern with respect to recognizing deliberative excellence as a virtue relates to reasonable achievability. The reasonable achievability criterion places important restraints on how the deliberative excellence virtues are to be understood. The criterion’s first condition specifies that only virtues attainable by those of average ability, opportunity, and circumstance have place in the catalog. This demands very careful calibration of the capacities that are members of the deliberative excellence family. One must not define them (e.g., the capacity for clear and logical thought, the capacity to present one’s position clearly and logically, the capacity to identify and understand the salient points in another’s presentation) in such a way that developing them would be beyond the ability of the average citizen. At the same time, the capacities must meet a threshold such that if most citizens developed them, liberal democracy would have the citizen resources necessary for its success.49

The second condition of the reasonable achievability criterion requires that (under normal circumstances) deliberative excellence be compatible with the citizen’s other pursuits. This requirement constitutes a powerful limitation to how we conceive of deliberative excellence, especially as it relates to how we respond to others’ views. The

49 Liberal democracy succeeds when the community attains its liberal democratic ideals. Deliberative excellence is just one family of virtues among many, of course. All of the virtue families must share in providing what liberal democracy needs from its citizens. Also, note that this is what liberal democracy needs from its citizens; the burden of ensuring that liberal democracy has what is needed for its success is also carried by other roles (political leaders, journalists, educators, social activists, and so forth).
reason for this is that although the disposition to listen seriously to others’ views is less demanding than the requirement that the citizen remain open to accepting others’ views, it remains a demanding requirement. As explained above, listening seriously to others’ views requires more of the citizen than simply tolerating those views. It requires that we attend to the view, seek to understand it, and identify the source of its attraction for our peers.

The difficulty is that the citizen cannot possibly attend to and seek to understand every view that reaches his notice. Even the citizen who defines his pursuit of the good in terms of the political life cannot do this. The citizen who pursues the good in different spheres of life will have even greater difficulties. Must the citizen who defines the good he seeks in terms of yachting stay home and watch C-SPAN? Must the citizen who defines the good she seeks in terms of tutoring homeless children remain home reading the newspapers? Given the many issues and justice claims competing for her attention, exactly who or what is the excellent citizen to listen to?

The solution to this dilemma lies partly in applying common sense. A citizen of North Carolina need not attend too closely to most of the issues facing Poland. The citizen needs to listen seriously to others, but she needn’t seek divergent, strange, or obnoxious views out.⁵⁰ On the other hand, when the citizen argues for her own positions

⁵⁰ The demands of the participation family of virtues may be stronger. While the citizen needn’t seek out strange or obnoxious views to listen to in order to achieve deliberative excellence, excellence in terms of participation will require him to become reasonably informed on the issues facing his community and this will sometimes require that he seek out information rather than merely passively digesting it.
in the public square, deliberative excellence demands that she listen seriously to the responses she receives. While we wouldn’t ask the boating enthusiast or the tutor to give up every evening and weekend in the name of listening seriously, it is reasonable for the citizen to devote an hour here and there as elections approach.

While it is essential that we take a common sense approach to distinguishing which views the excellent citizen attends to and which she does not, we must not allow such an approach to obscure the reasons for listening seriously in the first place. For example, it makes sense for the excellent citizen to review the leading arguments pro and con for the years’ big ballot measures. In the same vein, due to reasonable achievability constraints, it seems to make sense for the citizen to ignore minor party views on the same issues. After all, some issues must be ignored if the citizen is to be able to have the time to live his life how he chooses. However, the reasons for listening seriously—out of respect for other citizens, from a desire to persuade, or out of a recognition of the citizen’s own epistemic fallibility—suggest that it is illegitimate to ignore a minority view on the basis that it is less common. The individual who expresses the minority view is a citizen whose dignity must be recognized. Further, he is a person the excellent citizen hopes to persuade. Finally, there is a possibility that the minority view is correct and that the citizen hearing the view is the one mistaken.

The suggestions of common sense must be balanced against the demands of the liberal democratic state which must in turn be balanced against the requirements of the reasonable achievability criterion. The tension between these limitations and demands is real. The viability of liberal democracy depends upon the possibility of resolving it.
3.11 Obedience to Law: Survey

The excellent citizen abides by the laws of the land.

The focus thinkers who discuss obedience to law are Dagger, Galston, Jones, Macedo and Spragens. The obedience to law family differs from the other virtue families in the high degree of consensus it enjoys. The focus thinkers agree that the excellent citizen obeys the law and they also agree on what it means to obey the law. The only disagreement regarding obedience to law is that different thinkers attribute it to different virtue families.

Galston alone views obedience to law as a virtue in itself. Jones and Spragens accord in their belief that obedience to law is not a virtue in itself, but an instance of a virtue that encompasses similar dispositions. They disagree, however, as to what that umbrella virtue is and what the relevantly similar dispositions are. Dagger and Macedo both view obedience to law as an obligation related to the virtues, yet not a virtue in itself. In what follows, I will first consider the case for obedience to law as if it were a stand-alone virtue. Then I will consider the arguments for grouping it with either the cooperation (discussed in this chapter) or restraint (discussed in Chapter Five) families of virtue.

Galston believes that the excellent citizen obeys the law without regard to penalties or sanctions (221). There are two reasons for this. First, the excellent citizen recognizes

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51 Although each of the four focus thinkers mentioned in this section classify obedience to law either as a virtue, an instance of a virtue, or an obligation, none offers an argument for why they classify it the way they do. I will consider the issue of the relationship between obligations and virtues in the section which follows.
the law as legitimate and therefore binding. Bound by the law, he does not require the threat of penalties and sanctions to obey. Second, he sees the community’s goals as his own. A community pursues its goals through rules and regulations—through the law. Because the imposition of penalties and sanctions has a social cost which decreases the net benefits of collective action (221), the citizen who doesn’t obey the law impedes the community’s ability to pursue its goals, and the benefits of community membership are diminished for everyone. The excellent citizen maximizes the benefits of collective action by obeying the law.

Jones believes that obedience to law is part of the cooperation family of virtues. (Under Jones’ narrow interpretation of cooperation, cooperation is limited to fulfilling civic obligations). The citizen with a sense of duty fulfills his civic obligations. He recognizes that citizenship has certain obligations and that as a citizen he must meet these obligations. One of the obligations of citizenship is to be governed by the rule of law. The excellent citizen therefore obeys the law. Jones’ position that the excellent citizen must obey the law out of a sense of duty is very similar to Galston’s, who believes that the excellent citizen must not obey the law because he fears punishment, but because he recognizes the law’s authority. If a person chooses not to disobey the law because he fears punishment, he is not obeying the law out of a sense of duty.

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52 Jones actually splits the virtue I describe here into two parts: “sense of duty” which governs non-voluntary civic obligations and “fidelity” which governs voluntary civic obligations. This further categorization doesn’t have any impact on the questions under consideration here.
Dagger also associates obedience to law with cooperation, but he focuses on a different aspect of it. Dagger believes that the excellent citizen reciprocates others’ willingness to bear their fair share of the civic burdens by doing her part in the community and shouldering her own share. In other words, she plays fair. One of the civic burdens she bears is the obligation to obey the law (197). This view points to an important similarity between the three accounts discussed thus far. Despite their differences, in each case, the reason for obedience to law is bound up with the excellent citizen’s desire to see his society reap the fruits of collective action. Jones joins Dagger in recognizing reciprocity as a primary motive for obeying the law. He believes that because other citizens fulfill their civic obligations (by obeying the law) the excellent citizen should reciprocate and fulfill his civic obligations (including obedience to law). Galston believes that the excellent citizen obeys the law in order to avoid placing impediments in the way of collective action and collective goals.

The other virtue to which obedience to law is ascribed is restraint. Spragens argues that the excellent citizen controls his desires and regulates his passions and impulses. Achieving self-mastery in this manner allows him to pursue his interests through “applicable rules and procedures” (223). Macedo shares a similar view. On his view, the excellent citizen is self-critically reflective; he reflects on his projects and commitments and chooses to “channel” and “constrain” them so as to respect the rights of others (269). In doing so, he attains “self-mastery” and “self-control” (269). Both citizens show self-restraint, but Macedo’s citizen chooses how he will constrain his activities while Spragens’ citizen chooses to follow the law and the law dictates how his pursuits are constrained.
3.12 Obedience to Law: Application and Analysis

In this application and analysis section, I will explore three questions. First, does the excellent citizen’s motivation for obeying the law matter? Second, if obedience to law is an obligation, then why do we discuss it in the context of the citizen virtues? Third, to which virtue family and to which category of virtues should we assign obedience to law?

The foregoing survey suggests several reasons why the citizen may be disposed to obey the law: to assist one’s community in the pursuit of its aims, out of a sense of duty, because of the law’s authority, because of obligations that stem from reciprocity, or from fear of punishment. The question is, does the excellent citizen’s motivation for being disposed to obey the law matter? Are some of these motivations worthy of the excellent citizen while others are not?

If we ranked these motives in terms of selflessness and purity, the desire to assist one’s community might be ranked first, because it isn’t intermixed with obligation. The citizen motivated in this way would choose to obey the law, not because he felt constrained to do so, but out of an attachment to or an affection for his community. The motives of sense of duty, being bound by the law’s authority, and being obligated by

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53 I discuss the status of civil disobedience in the context of other virtues: allegiance to liberal democratic community (§4.2, n1), responsibility (§5.4, n19), and restraint (§5.6).

54 Because there is little controversy as to whether obedience to law promotes our liberal democratic ideals, is suited to our time and place, or is reasonably achievable, I will not directly address these aspects of the Chapter Two framework here.

55 Such a desire might arise out of a sense of civic membership or out of recognizing community members as friends.
The citizen motivated by a sense of duty feels he must fulfill his civic obligations (in this case, obeying the law). Fulfilling one’s civic obligations is a clear instance of assisting one’s community. The situation of the citizen motivated by reciprocity is similar. The citizen feels obligated to reciprocate others’ willingness to carry their fair share of the civic burden by carrying his own share (in this case, obeying the law). In carrying his fair share of the civic burdens, he too, is assisting his community. The principal difference between these two views is simply that the citizen motivated by a sense of duty might believe that duty requires him to act in a certain way regardless of the actions of others, whereas the citizen motivated by reciprocity is motivated by others’ actions. The situation of the citizen who feels bound by the law’s authority is a little different. Rather than acting from a sense of obligation that stems from civic duty (fulfilling civic obligations, carrying a fair share of civic burdens) this citizen feels obligated by the authority of the law itself. Nonetheless, that law originates in his community, and in recognizing the law’s authority the citizen is, indirectly at least, acknowledging his relationship to his community. That relationship is one in which his community is the authority and he is obligated to meet the community’s demands.

Fear of punishment appears to be the least admirable of all the motives mentioned. The citizen who obeys the law out of fear is motivated not by attachment to community or affection for friends, nor by duty, but out of concern for his own well-being. So, we can rank the relative admirability of these motives, but does this ranking correspond to their suitability as motives for the excellent citizen? Must the excellent citizen’s disposition to obey the law be based in a desire to assist his community, or is it sufficient if he is disposed to obey out of duty? What of fear of punishment? The answer to these questions lies in the nature of the virtues. The Chapter Two framework explains

56 The citizen motivated by a sense of duty feels he must fulfill his civic obligations (in this case, obeying the law). Fulfilling one’s civic obligations is a clear instance of assisting one’s community. The situation of the citizen motivated by reciprocity is similar. The citizen feels obligated to reciprocate others’ willingness to carry their fair share of the civic burden by carrying his own share (in this case, obeying the law). In carrying his fair share of the civic burdens, he too, is assisting his community. The principal difference between these two views is simply that the citizen motivated by a sense of duty might believe that duty requires him to act in a certain way regardless of the actions of others, whereas the citizen motivated by reciprocity is motivated by others’ actions. The situation of the citizen who feels bound by the law’s authority is a little different. Rather than acting from a sense of obligation that stems from civic duty (fulfilling civic obligations, carrying a fair share of civic burdens) this citizen feels obligated by the authority of the law itself. Nonetheless, that law originates in his community, and in recognizing the law’s authority the citizen is, indirectly at least, acknowledging his relationship to his community. That relationship is one in which his community is the authority and he is obligated to meet the community’s demands.

57 Note that in real world rather than idealized situations most people will be motivated to obey the law by several factors. The citizen will obey the law because of her sense of civic membership, because she feels it is her duty, because she recognizes that the law is legitimate, and because she fears punishment, all simultaneously.
that liberal democratic citizen virtues are the personal qualities that enable the citizen to assist his community in protecting and promoting its liberal democratic aims: stability, cooperation for the common good, self-government, freedom, and equality.

Governmental stability and individual freedom to pursue the good are the two ideals most directly impacted by obedience (or disobedience) to law. When citizens obey the law, the government’s stability is enhanced and the individual’s freedom to pursue his own vision of the good is greater. So does the citizen’s motive for obeying the law have an impact on how well he is able to assist his government in attaining these ideals? Consider the following three scenarios:

**Scenario #1:** Everyone on Excellence Island is disposed to obey the law out of their desire to assist their community in achieving its aims. With no theft, no murder, and no illegal parking, individual freedom to pursue the good is greatly increased. Citizens leave their homes unlocked, walk alone at night, and travel from city to city without fear. Governmental stability is not threatened by anarchy. The Excellent Islanders need spend no money on security devices, nor time patrolling their property, and their taxes are lower because they have little need for a police force or prison system. Their peers are not deterred by threat of punishment, but urged to obedience by their own desires to see their community advance in its ability to achieve collective good. In short, the Islanders have more time and money to pursue the good, more freedom of movement and more peace of mind.

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58 The individual’s freedom to pursue her own version of the good is greater because her pursuit is less likely to be disrupted by lawbreakers that don’t respect her right to pursue her vision of the good.
Scenario #2: Everyone on Excellence Island is disposed to obey the law out of a sense of obligation. They all obey the law as in Scenario #1 and reap the same benefits. They obey the law because they feel obligated rather than because they desire to do so, but the results are the same as under Scenario #1.

Scenario #3: The citizens of Excellence Island are disposed to obey the law because they are afraid of being punished. They reap many of the same benefits of obedience to law as the citizens in scenarios #1 and #2. Governmental stability and individual freedom to pursue one’s own vision of the good are greater than if the citizens did not obey the law. However, their costs are higher than under the other two scenarios. Since their obedience to law depends on fear of punishment, they are forced to choose between ceding their privacy through constant monitoring to deter crime (which negatively impacts individual freedom) or higher crime (which also negatively impacts freedom and raises the specter of anarchy). The Islanders must also pay taxes to support the strong police force and prison system required to sustain the threat of punishment.

These scenarios suggest that the citizen’s motivation for obeying the law is not significant in comparison with the question of whether he is disposed to obey the law.\textsuperscript{59} If

\textsuperscript{59} However, it may be the case that the superior citizen does not obey the law out of fear of punishment due to the significant cost to his community of maintaining the threat of punishment. The superior citizen is the one who exceeds the requirements of the citizen role. By contrast, the excellent citizen is the one who meets the requirements of the role. (Following this pattern we might define the fair citizen as one who doesn’t meet all the requirements of his citizen role, but who obeys the law and doesn’t actively do anything to prevent his community from achieving his ideals. We might then define the poor citizen as one who doesn’t meet the demands of his role and who actively involves himself in things (including breaking the law) that hinder his community from attaining its ideals).
citizens obey the law, governmental stability and individual freedom will be greater, and this is true under all of the above scenarios.

The second question I will address in this section is the relationship between obligation and virtue. Defining a term like virtue is not like accurately describing the scene of an auto accident. There is no form of virtue against which to measure the definition. Instead, there are two guidelines that should guide us in deciding how to define a given term: (a) common usage and (b) what is conceptually most useful.

Common usage might suggest that the actions of individuals are divisible between two spheres: those actions and choices people are forced or expected to make (for which no praise is merited) and the actions and choices they freely choose (which may merit praise dependent upon the choice made). Legally and morally obligatory actions would belong to the first category, while virtuous actions would belong to the second. On this common usage view, obligatory actions cannot be meritorious, because they are prescribed rather than freely chosen. Since only meritorious actions can be virtuous, obligatory actions cannot be virtuous.

This sort of division makes initial sense. We call an action virtuous because we wish to praise it. Sam: “I chased a little old lady down the block to give her the package she had dropped.” Annie: “Oh, that was virtuous of you.” Tom: “I went to work today.” Clara: “So—?” Annie praises Sam and calls him virtuous because he went out of his way

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60 A larger debate on these issues rages between Aristotelians and Kantians. They would likely have a different way of framing these issues. I must prescind from that debate here.
and did something he didn’t have to do. Clara doesn’t call what Tom did virtuous because he merely did what was expected of him.

Someone who accepts this view might ask why we should call the citizen who obeys the law virtuous. Obeying the law is something that every citizen is both required and expected to do. If he doesn’t obey the law and we are able to catch him, he will be punished. How is it meritorious to obey the law under these circumstances? Among the eleven virtues explored in this dissertation, obedience to law provides the clearest example of this issue, but the question of why obligatory actions should be considered virtuous clearly applies to several of the other virtues as well. The citizen who cooperates by voluntarily coaching a youth soccer team is virtuous, but what of the citizen who cooperates by fulfilling his legal obligation to serve on a jury? The citizen who respects rights by intervening to protect someone else’s rights from violation is virtuous, but what of the citizen who respects someone else’s rights by refraining from violating them himself?

Note that the obligatory does not end at the boundary between lawful and unlawful. The reach of the expected extends beyond what we are forced or required to do. For example, there is a strong argument to be made for considering voting an obligation of citizenship. In the United States, she who does not vote does not run afoul of the law, but she isn’t fulfilling her obligations either. Also, we may expect citizens to treat each other with civility even when it is not legally required. While we may praise a child for saying “please” and “thank you,” we expect his parents to avoid rude behavior without any thought of praise.
If virtue hinges on whether an action or disposition merits praise, we must purge our citizen virtue catalogs of every mention of the legally required, the morally obligatory, and the commonly expected. However, even if common usage does suggest this route (and it seems a little extreme), the conceptually most helpful criterion gives us reason for not taking it. In constructing a catalog of citizen virtue, we seek to construct a catalog of the traits that the citizen needs to assist his community in protecting and promoting its liberal democratic ideals. These qualities are the minimal must-haves that the citizen must exhibit in order to perform his role properly. In a sense then, given the demands of his role, all of these qualities are required of the citizen. Although he can choose whether to volunteer at the Red Cross or to coach the soccer league, the citizen must be disposed to cooperate in his community. Although he can choose whether to run for office himself or campaign for someone else, he must be disposed to participate politically. If not, he fails to fulfill his role.

Considered in this way, all of the citizen virtues are required for the success of liberal democratic community. Given this realization, we could choose to rename them the “citizen qualities,” but as they are the traits that define excellent citizenship, it is appropriate to call them virtues. For even if these virtues are required for proper function in the role of citizen, together they describe a citizen who can appropriately be named excellent. The excellent citizen is the one who fulfills her role. Fulfilling her obligations and meeting societal needs and expectations makes her “excellent.” Her obedience to the law is obligatory, but her disposition to obey is virtuous.
The third question to consider is which virtue family and which category of virtues obedience to law should be assigned to. These decisions also hinge on conceptual usefulness. Obedience to law could be assigned to either the cooperation or the restraint families, because it is both an instance of cooperation (in fulfilling civic obligations) and an instance of restraint (directing one’s passions and impulses into accepted channels). The citizen cooperates in obeying the law by restraining himself. On pragmatic grounds, I consider obedience to law as a stand alone virtue for two reasons: first, because the disposition to obey the law is so crucial for success in the citizen role, and second, because it is much more specific than either restraint or cooperation, requiring not just a cooperative attitude generally, but a specific type of cooperation, and not just restraint generally, but a very specific type of restraint.

Obedience to law is unique among the virtues in that a reasonable claim can be made towards its belonging to any of the three virtue family categories. I have included it as part of the community category because of its close link to cooperation. Obedience to law is crucial to the success of community cooperative endeavors. But there is also reason to consider obedience to law as belonging in the liberalism category, because without obedience to law, the core principles of liberalism are trampled. Finally, because obedience to law is born of self-restraint, one can also make a case for its inclusion in the self-governance category. The self-control required for obeying the law exemplifies the self-governance focus of these self-directed virtues.
3.13 Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced the first third of my preliminary citizen virtue catalog. The community citizen virtues include cooperation, participation, vigilance, deliberative excellence, and obedience to law. This part of the virtue catalog treats the citizen role as it pertains to the citizen’s behavior towards liberal democratic community. The community citizen virtues paint a demanding picture of what excellence in citizenship demands.

The excellent citizen obeys the law, cooperates on obligatory civic tasks, and stays informed. However, this does not yet exhaust her contributions to her political community. She cooperates on political and civil society tasks and takes an active role in the political processes of her community. As she evaluates the character, ability, and (potential or actual) performance of incumbents and office-seekers, she manifests her vigilance towards these processes. The excellent citizen weighs the decisions of her day for herself; she won’t be bullied by others on political issues. She is ready to express and defend her own views and allows others the same privilege as she listens to their views.

This catalog of the community citizen virtues suggests that virtue-fostering projects are critical, because the role the virtue catalog appears to describe for rank and file citizens is not a role that many citizens fully fulfill currently. Groups committed to virtue-fostering projects must devote attention to what sources will be the most effective and what sources will be the most appropriate for promoting traits that consist of both dispositions (e.g., the willingness to cooperate, the willingness to participate, the willingness to obey the law) and developed capacities (e.g. the ability to assess
officeholders and officeseekers, the ability to be fully informed, the ability to express one’s views in a logical manner).
CHAPTER FOUR

LIBERAL CITIZEN VIRTUES

4.1 Allegiance to Liberal Democratic Community: Survey

The excellent citizen “Understand[s] . . ., accepts[s] . . ., and act[s]” (Galston 221) on liberal democratic principles and works to see these principles instantiated more perfectly in his community’s institutions.

The focus thinkers who discuss allegiance to liberal democratic community are Galston, Jones, and Macedo. They agree that the excellent citizen will be loyal, but disagree as to the object of this allegiance. They discuss three possibilities: the excellent citizen might be loyal to the core principles of his society, to liberal principles, or to liberal institutions.

Galston champions the first possibility, that the excellent citizen is someone who shows allegiance to the core principles of her society (221). A plurality of citizens manifesting this disposition—citizens who understand, accept, act on, and defend the community’s core principles—strengthens the community. A plurality of citizens lacking this disposition, citizens who are actively disloyal or simply apathetic regarding these principles, weakens it.
Macedo’s view is similar to Galston’s. However, on his view, the citizen is loyal not to her society’s core principles, but to liberal principles. Her allegiance is to liberalism rather than to community. She is attached to principle and reluctant to compromise (275). Jones offers another similar, yet contrasting account. On his view, the excellent citizen’s allegiance is not to core principles or to liberal principles, but to particular liberal institutions. She is loyal to her “own country, viewed as a historical project in which [she is] engaged” (84). But this allegiance is conditioned on whether the institutions in question “exemplify the features of the liberal model” (84). In other words, if her country’s institutions aren’t liberal, she isn’t loyal.

Jones’ view thus provides an interesting contrast to the views of both Galston and Macedo. Jones’ citizen, like Galston’s, centers his allegiance in what is particular to him. Galston’s citizen isn’t loyal to just any principles; he is loyal to the principles of his particular community. Jones’ citizen isn’t loyal to just any institutions, she is loyal to the institutions which govern her, the institutions of her community. At the same time, Jones’ citizen, like Macedo’s, joins her allegiance to liberalism. Macedo’s citizen privileges liberal principles above all others; Jones’ citizen conditions her allegiance to institutions on the question of whether they reflect liberal principles. Jones’ view thus combines the patriotism implicit in Galston’s view with the commitment to liberalism explicit in Macedo’s. Jones’ focus on institutions highlights both the tension between liberalism and community and the possibility of accommodating it. I will defend a view similar to the one suggested by Jones in the analysis section that follows.
4.2 Allegiance to Liberal Democratic Community: Application and Analysis

A clearer picture of the excellent citizen’s allegiance requires answers to two questions: First, does the excellent citizen show allegiance to her community’s core principles or to liberal principles? Second, does the excellent citizen direct his allegiance towards principles or towards institutions?

Allegiance to Community Principles vs. Allegiance to Liberal Principles

Upon first inspection, it appears that there is little difference between being loyal to liberal principles and being loyal to the core principles of the community to which one belongs. Both types of allegiance are loyalty to political ideals. Further, given that the focus here is liberal democratic community, the community core principles to which the citizen shows allegiance will be liberal democratic principles. One might be tempted to conclude that there is thus no difference between the two forms of allegiance, because on either hand the principles in question are liberal principles: either the citizen is loyal to liberal principles or the citizen is loyal to liberal principles! In this light, the two types of allegiance appear not just similar, but identical.

However, although liberal democratic communities are rightly our focus, it is helpful to consider the respective implications of these allegiances in a community which is not liberal. Consideration of the excellent citizen’s behavior in an illiberal community shows that the dispositions diverge in critical ways. In an illiberal community, the citizen loyal to liberal principles is still loyal to liberal principles, but the citizen loyal to her community’s core principles accords her allegiance to ideals that aren’t liberal. The differences this scenario points to are significant, regardless of whether the citizen’s
community closely approaches liberal democratic ideals or falls far short of them. The two dispositions diverge in non-liberal contexts because they have different roots. Although both types of allegiance are allegiance to political ideals, on the first (or community core principles) view, a citizen’s primary allegiance is to her political community: whatever its ideals are, they are hers. On the second (or liberal principles) view, the citizen’s primary allegiance is to liberalism: whatever her community’s ideals are, her ideals are liberal.

Considered in this way, the two types of allegiance are markedly distinct. One is based in allegiance to liberalism and the other is based in allegiance to the particular political community to which the citizen belongs. To compare these different forms of allegiance properly, we must return to a role-based consideration of citizen virtue. Which form of allegiance better enables the citizen to fulfill her role—which form better prepares her to assist her community in protecting and promoting liberal democratic ideals? Let’s first consider the case of allegiance to principles. Allegiance to liberal principles clearly enables the citizen to promote liberal democratic ideals because the liberal democratic ideals include liberal principles of freedom and equality. So, citizens who show allegiance to liberal principles—citizens who understand, accept, and act on them—move the community closer to achieving its liberal democratic ideals. However, allegiance directed towards a specific political community also promotes liberal democratic ideals. As citizens show loyalty to the community of which they are a part, they strengthen both a) the stability of their community and b) its ability to reap the benefits of collective cooperation for the common good. These are also key liberal democratic ideals. In other words, both allegiance to one’s community and allegiance to liberal principles protect and promote
liberal democratic ideals. Both are necessary traits if the citizen is to perform his role successfully.

Although the excellent citizen may find that his allegiance to community and his allegiance to liberal principles are occasionally in tension, he must not reject one of these forms of allegiance in favor of the other. The citizen who acts in support of liberal democratic community will require both a strong commitment to liberal ideals and a strong commitment to community. Both forms of allegiance lead the citizen to fulfill his role better. The citizen who acts in support of liberal democratic community will require both a strong commitment to liberal ideals and a strong commitment to community.

However, to observe that neither form of allegiance should be rejected in favor of the other is not to suggest that the tension between the two can safely be ignored. When tension between the citizen’s allegiance to liberalism and the citizen’s allegiance to a particular community is strong—as when a society’s core principles differ from its liberal principles—the citizen must be guided by a dual recognition: First, illiberal community is not the community for which he strives. Second, liberal principles cannot be realized apart from community. Community that falls short of liberal ideals does not satisfy the excellent citizen. At the same time, the excellent citizen cannot turn his back on community. Liberalism requires community, the more stable the better, to achieve its aims.¹

¹ The situation that pits these forms of allegiance against one another will dictate whether the excellent citizen reforms the community from within (as many worked to do in the United States during the Civil Rights era) or attempts to begin building community anew (as the colonists chose to do during the Revolutionary War era). Due to the high costs associated with political instability, there is a strong presumption in favor of reform from within. Political protest is consistent with excellent citizenship. But dissent must either
In sum, the excellent citizen’s commitment to liberal principles means that he is loyal to liberal principles rather than to the principles of his society (insofar as they fall short of or conflict with liberal principles.) However, insofar as he is also committed to the promotion and preservation of community, the citizen must be loyal to his own community, despite its failings—although he needn’t embrace those failings. For the excellent liberal democratic citizen, community apart from liberalism is empty; liberalism apart from community is impossible.

**Allegiance to Principles vs. Allegiance to Institutions**

In the foregoing segment, I discussed two forms of allegiance: allegiance to liberal principles and allegiance to the core principles of one’s society. At its roots, this proved to be a contrast between allegiance to liberalism and allegiance to (a particular) community. In this segment I will consider allegiance to liberal principles and allegiance to liberal democratic institutions. This pair has the same ancestry as the pair explored in the previous segment. Although the form the question takes is different, the fundamental follow prescribed channels within the current system (e.g., a legally sanctioned protest aimed at changing others’ minds in order to alter the locus of the political majority), or be constructive in intent (aimed not simply at registering outrage or overthrowing the status quo, but at establishing a community that is substantially closer to realizing liberal democratic ideals) when reform from within and non-disobedient means have failed.

2 The institutions to which I refer are the actual institutions that support the functions of liberal democracy, not liberal democratic institutions understood as ideals. These are physical organizations like the legislature, political parties, and law enforcement agencies, as opposed to ideals such as freedom of expression, the protection of civil liberties, and associational autonomy. The form of allegiance that I contrast with allegiance to liberal principles is not allegiance to liberal democratic institutions in abstract, but rather allegiance to the particular political institutions of one’s own liberal democratic community.
question remains the same: To what is the citizen loyal, liberalism or community? If he owes allegiance to both (as I argue he does), how is he to respond to conflict between them?

At first it may seem that there is little difference between allegiance to principles and allegiance to institutions. After all, the institutions of a liberal democratic state reflect liberal democratic principles. Being loyal to those institutions is a way of showing allegiance to those principles. Nonetheless, these forms of allegiance differ in ways worthy of note: First, institutions are historically rooted and particular. That is, they exist at a particular place and time and reflect a specific instantiation of liberal principles. This is not true of liberal principles. Liberal principles are ideals; they are not historically rooted, not particular, and do not reflect a context-specific instantiation. Second, institutions seldom or never perfectly embody the principles that they are based upon. By contrast, liberal principles are, of course, perfect reflections of themselves. Finally, their scope is different. The demands of allegiance to institutions are wider-reaching than those of allegiance to principles.

Of course, from the perspective of this dissertation, the differences between these forms of allegiance are interesting but ultimately unimportant unless they have different impacts on the citizen’s ability to perform and excel in his role. I will argue that they do

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3 Note that although I abbreviate the names of these forms of allegiance for more convenient reference, these are not just any principles or just any institutions: the forms of allegiance I discuss here are allegiance to *liberal* principles and allegiance to *liberal democratic* institutions.
have different impacts. The two issues which separate allegiance to principles from allegiance to institutions in this regard are scope and specificity. I will discuss scope first.

**Scope**

One of the primary differences between allegiance to liberal principles and allegiance to liberal democratic institutions is scope. To excel in his role, the citizen requires allegiance broader than allegiance to liberal principles. When the citizen’s allegiance extends only to principles, he adopts a focus narrowly directed towards liberal principles. Such a narrow focus is insufficient to meet the demands of his role. The citizen whose allegiance is to institutions has a broader focus. Because liberal democratic institutions reflect and support liberal principles, as with the citizen whose allegiance is to principles, this citizen works to advance liberal principles. But because these institutions are democratic as well as liberal, the citizen whose allegiance is to institutions must also attend to the requirements of self-government. Additionally, because these institutions are not ideals, but functioning entities that reflect and support liberal democratic ideals, the citizen whose allegiance is to institutions must concern herself with the aims of stability and cooperation for the common good as well. So, while the citizen loyal only to liberal principles may focus exclusively on realizing liberal principles, the citizen loyal to liberal democratic institutions balances the competing demands of several ideals. The citizen who works to meet the demands of all the liberal democratic ideals and to balance them so that this is possible is better able to promote and protect liberal democratic ideals than the citizen whose only allegiance or whose highest allegiance is directed towards liberal principles.
This argument doesn’t suggest that the citizen should be loyal to liberal democratic institutions and not to liberal principles. Allegiance to liberal principles is essential. If the citizen does not embrace liberal principles, he cannot be said to protect and promote liberal democratic ideals, and he should not be called an excellent citizen. Allegiance to principles is necessary but not sufficient. To be successful, the liberal democratic state requires more from its citizens in the way of loyalty than allegiance to liberal principles alone. It depends on citizens who are not only loyal to liberal principles but also loyal to liberal democratic institutions. In the absence of citizen allegiance to its particular institutions, the liberal democratic state struggles and will ultimately fail. While allegiance to principles is a legitimate candidate for citizen virtue, it mustn’t be interpreted to exclude allegiance to institutions. The citizen’s allegiance to the institutions of his own community is essential.

**Specificity**

The other important difference between allegiance to liberal principles and allegiance to liberal democratic institutions is allegiance to institutions’ specificity. Allegiance to institutions better enables the citizen to protect and promote liberal democratic ideals because it is directed at the local, the particular, and the specific.\(^4\)

\(^4\) In the foregoing discussion of scope, allegiance to institutions was the broader form of allegiance in the sense that it demanded that the citizen attend to the requirements of liberalism, democracy, and community stability, rather than just liberal principles alone. In this discussion of specificity, allegiance to principles is the broader form of allegiance in the sense that it lacks the community-specific focus of allegiance to institutions. Together, these sections on scope and specificity constitute my argument that the form of allegiance appropriate to the excellent citizen is both broad and narrow: It is broad in that it covers all three aspects of liberal democratic community; it is narrow in that it is focuses on a particular community.
Because principles are not concrete, allegiance to liberal principles lacks this anchor. As a result of its specificity, allegiance to one’s community institutions is more motivating, more efficient and effective, and more appropriate to the citizen role than allegiance to abstract liberal principles alone.  

*Greater motivational power*

I will begin by discussing allegiance to institutions’ motivational power. I will explore two factors behind this power: the sense of civic membership which grows through life in the community and the fact that the strength or weakness of the community’s liberal democratic institutions has a direct impact on the citizen’s life. I will then explain why the motivational power of allegiance to institutions is relevant to its status as a virtue.

The citizen’s allegiance to institutions stems from his sense of civic membership. This sense of civic membership accounts for allegiance to institutions’ motivational power. A citizen’s sense of civic membership has multiple elements. I will discuss four of them here: shared heritage, shared practice, shared civic burdens, and shared historical project. The first element is shared heritage. The citizen with a sense of shared heritage views herself as belonging to a community whose past is (or has become) her past and whose future will be her future. Reflection on the events and characters that have shaped her

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5 As in the section on scope, this is an argument for recognizing the importance of allegiance to institutions, not an argument for rejecting allegiance to principles (Allegiance to particular liberal democratic institutions demands that the citizen protect and promote liberal principles). Allegiance to principles is necessary but not sufficient for excellent citizenship. Allegiance to liberal principles is a necessary allegiance, but it cannot be the citizen’s primary allegiance.
community’s past enables the citizen to construct a narrative which includes her own life. Dagger suggests that a strong civic memory allows the citizen to feel a sense of pride in her community’s successes and sorrow at its disappointments and failures (164). Some of these triumphs and tragedies will be political, others not. The citizen’s narrative will be a tapestry of war and victory, privation and plenty, elections and assassinations. In the United States it might include the memory of man’s first walk on the moon and of the space shuttle explosions. It will include block long lines at the gas pump and Olympic victory. It will include Pearl Harbor and the release of the Iranian embassy hostages. As the citizen celebrates civic accomplishments and laments civic failures, shared heritage means that she is bound to her community by history and her place in it.

The second element of a sense of civic membership is shared practice. Where the shared heritage element of civic membership concerns the community’s past, the shared practice element concerns the present. The citizen is bound to his community by the traditions and day to day practices he shares with his peers. As with the citizen’s community heritage of successes and failures, these traditions and practices need not be overtly political, although sometimes they will be. The citizen’s sense of shared practice and traditions might grow out of his annual enjoyment of community fourth of July festivities, his pride in uniquely strict (or loose) local liquor and gambling statutes, his state’s tradition of great barbecue, or his town’s reputation for keeping the sixties alive.
The third element of a sense of civic membership is the recognition and acceptance of shared civic burdens. This is actually a species of the shared practice element. The citizen who recognizes that certain civic performances are vital to the health of her liberal democratic regime moves closer both to the community she carries them for and to the peers she carries them with. Shared sacrifice becomes glue. Think of build a new library and save this historic building committees, the sandbagging team during flood season, and the members of a small town’s city council who put in long hours working out the minutiae of zoning ordinances. Hours of work creates bonds the citizen is loath to ignore, not just to the people with whom he serves but to the community he serves for.

The fourth element of a sense of civic membership is the sense that one is participating in a historical project. In a liberal democratic community this project is the pursuit of liberal democratic ideals. The citizen has the sense that she is involved in a quest bigger and more important than herself, a pursuit that others pursued before she took it up, a quest that will likely be pursued when she no longer can. Such a citizen can look to the past and see attempts to extend the franchise, to the present and her own efforts at penal reform (or the like), and to the future and the advances it will offer, and see that her efforts are small yet important skirmishes in a larger struggle. She is bound by this realization to the community that has her project as its own.

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6 For more on the notion of civic burdens, see §3.3-4 on cooperation, §3.5-6 on participation, and also Dagger (197).

7 I borrow the term “historical project” from David Jones (84).
In sum, the sense of civic membership that inspires allegiance to institutions is a key source of its motivational power. The citizen who feels the pull of shared heritage, shared practice, shared civic burdens, and shared historical project has strong reasons for her allegiance to the institutions which inspire these feelings, reasons that are at the heart of what motivation is. Sense of civic membership’s different elements provide multiple overlapping support for allegiance to institutions.

Another factor in allegiance to institutions’ superior motivational power is that it is specific liberal democratic institutions, not liberal principles or liberal democratic institutions in general, that govern the citizen. When the citizen improves the institutions of her own community this has a direct impact on her life. The same can’t be said if she is working in the service of establishing liberal principles and democratic processes in Sierra Leone. This isn’t to say that working to establish liberal principles in Sierra Leone is not valuable, and it isn’t to suggest that there may not be many U.S. citizens who are highly motivated to assist Sierra Leone in becoming a more liberal community. But it is to say that because the liberal democratic institutions which govern the citizen have direct influence over her life and because the strength or weakness of those institutions may well determine whether she will have the wealth, the leisure, and the freedom she needs to work for social change in Sierra Leone, the well-being of those institutions is a natural priority for her.

Given my comments on motivation in Chapter Three, it may seem puzzling to conclude that it is allegiance to institutions’ greater motivational power that makes it primary over allegiance to principles. In Chapter Three I argued that the citizen’s
motivation for obeying the law was unimportant because the only factor relevant in
determining citizen virtue is whether a given trait prepares the citizen for success in his
role. The citizen’s motivation for obeying the law is irrelevant to a discussion of citizen
virtue because as long as he actually is motivated to obey the law, the nature of that
motivation doesn’t alter his behavior; it doesn’t impact his ability to succeed in his role as
citizen.

The reason the question of motivation functions differently in the case of allegiance
is that both allegiance to institutions and allegiance to principles are important aspects of
the citizen role precisely because they are the citizen’s motivation for acting to promote
and protect liberal democratic ideals. What counted in the case of obedience to law was
whether the citizen actually obeyed the law. What counts in the case of allegiance is
whether the citizen actually acts on his allegiance, i.e., whether he is motivated by it. So,
one reason allegiance to institutions is primary is that it has greater motivational power
than allegiance to principles alone.8

More efficient and effective

I now turn to the second reason that allegiance to institutions’ specificity makes it
primary to allegiance to principles alone: Allegiance focused on a particular set of
institutions is more efficient and effective at promoting liberal democratic ideals than
allegiance with a broader focus. For example, if the airplane cabin I am riding in

8 The claim isn’t that citizens are not motivated to act by allegiance to principles,
it’s just that citizens are even more likely to act when motivated by allegiance to
institutions. If allegiance to principles proved to be just as motivating as allegiance to
institutions, there would be no reason (on this argument, at least) to view allegiance to
institutions as the primary virtue.
depressurizes, I should first fix my own air mask, then assist my family members sitting next to me, and then turn to help those sitting in our immediate vicinity. I attend to my own mask first because it would be unwise for me to attempt to help others until I have ensured my own air supply. Once my own air supply is established I can assist others without fear of collapsing. Next, I help my little daughter seated next to me. It makes sense for me to help my daughter both because she is my responsibility—who should I expect to help her if I do not? (more on this below)—and because I am in the best position to be aware of her needs (I can better calm her and help her to cooperate in an emergency situation).

Aside from the fact that she is my daughter, it would not make sense for me to spend the time necessary to reach little Tommy a few rows ahead of us when someone right next to me needs my help. After helping my daughter, I could then turn and help those seated nearby. In like manner, it doesn’t make sense for us to direct our allegiance and the actions based in that allegiance toward other communities if our own community requires immediate attention. It is more efficient to stay where we are, to focus on difficulties at home rather than seeking difficulties elsewhere. Because we have a more thorough knowledge of the challenges our own communities face, this approach is likely to be more effective as well.

The airplane analogy is imperfect, of course. The fact that the passengers on the plane all face the same danger (not getting the air they need) suggests an assumption that does not apply where the task of protecting and promoting liberal democratic ideals is concerned. The danger different communities face is not equal. Consider the case of
providing medical aid in a war zone. Soldiers incur different levels of injury. If I am a
surgeon, it does not make sense for me to spend time setting the broken arm of the soldier
closest to me when others who require urgent life-saving surgeries are yet within my
reach.

Both the airplane and the triage examples suggest some important points relevant
to thinking about cultivating allegiance towards a particular community. As when I put
my own mask on first in the airplane example, the physician must be healed himself before
he can work on others. In the realm of community this means that I can’t work on fixing
others’ institutions until I fix my own. I know how to help others only after I learn how
to help my own community succeed. When our own communities are stable and well-
governed, we can then focus on helping other communities.

However, waiting for our own community institutions to come to a perfect
realization of the liberal democratic ideal likely means waiting forever; it must be that we
can turn to helping others before our own community reaches perfection. The triage
example provides insight here. The physician need not postpone helping others until he is
fully healed, but he must wait until he is a) strong enough to provide the care needed and
b) healthy enough not to endanger his own health in the exertion. The physician who
observes these cautions will be more efficient and effective in caring for his patients. The
citizen who acts out of allegiance to particular institutions will be more efficient and
effective in promoting and protecting liberal democratic ideals.
Locally-focused allegiance appropriate to the role

The third reason that allegiance to institutions’ specificity makes it primary over allegiance to principles alone is that locally-focused allegiance is the virtue appropriate to the role. Returning to the airplane example, my daughter is my responsibility. I help my daughter with her breathing mask because it is part of my role as her mother. The excellent citizen acts out of allegiance to his community because it is part of his role as citizen. Because I am a person (who has obligations to my fellow human beings as part of that role) as well as a mother, I have a responsibility to help others that extends beyond my family members and includes the other passengers on the airplane. Likewise, as part of her personhood or as part of some other role, the citizen likely has responsibilities that extend beyond the boundaries of her political community. Nonetheless, citizen virtues pertain only to one role: that of citizen. The citizen’s role is to help her community succeed. Being loyal to the particular liberal democratic institutions of one’s own community means sensing one’s community membership, recognizing one’s role as citizen, and being motivated by the resultant pull of responsibility.

In any discussion of citizen allegiances such as this one, the question of why the citizen should award his allegiance to a particular community simply because he was born or resides there arises. While allegiance to the institutions of one’s own community may be more effective and/or more motivating than allegiance to liberal principles, how can it be justified? Why should the government that happens to have jurisdiction over the citizen claim his loyalty? If the citizen were truly committed to liberal democratic ideals, why
wouldn’t the community closest to achieving these ideals rightly gain both his admiration and his allegiance?

By way of response, it is appropriate to observe that the citizen isn’t a citizen of the realm of ideas. The citizen is the citizen of a particular community. Her role as citizen is not to assist all political communities in realizing the liberal democratic ideals, nor is it to assist the community that most closely realizes these ideals. Her role is to assist her community in realizing those ideals. There are arguments that contend against such a focus. For example, humanity might be better served if the citizen were a missionary for liberal democratic ideals in the communities that most needed them. The citizen herself might be better off if she withheld her efforts and her allegiance from an ailing community and sought a new home in another. However, I do not address these possibilities here.

The question put forward by this dissertation is: “What does the role of citizen demand?” The citizen’s citizenship is specific; it is particular. The community closest to attaining liberal democratic ideals rightly gains the citizen’s admiration, but not her allegiance. Her role pertains to one community only, her own, and that community is best assisted if the citizen directs her allegiance to it.

I began my discussion of allegiance to liberal democratic community by arguing that the excellent liberal democratic citizen is loyal to liberal principles rather than to his community’s core principles. Such a citizen is committed to protecting and promoting

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9 Most people have a role in many political communities, of course. One might be a citizen of the city of South Bend, the state of Indiana, the nation of the United States and possibly even more global communities. The point here is just to observe that the citizen of Sierra Leone has citizenship responsibilities pertaining to Sierra Leone that he does not have towards the United States.
liberal democratic ideals, and community principles too often deviate from these ideals. I also argued that allegiance to the liberal democratic institutions of one’s own community is primary over allegiance to liberal principles alone. A successful liberal democratic state requires citizens who understand, accept, and act on liberal democratic principles and work to see these principles instantiated more perfectly in their institutions. The excellent citizen doesn’t choose between liberalism and community, he carefully balances their demands.

4.3 Tolerance: Survey

The excellent citizen does not act to silence or coerce those with differing views and life ideals, but allows them to express themselves up to the limits of others’ reasonable free expression.

Each of the focus thinkers proposes some variety of tolerance as a virtue and what each means by tolerance is similar. The thinkers share broad agreement about what tolerance looks like: the excellent citizen is tolerant because she allows other citizens to express their views (or choose their life ideals) freely.11 However, despite the substantial agreement they share, the thinkers’ discussions of tolerance differ in four important areas:

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10 Cf., the discussion of listening seriously vs. remaining open to others’ views in §3.10. These sections deal with similar issues. The principal difference is that deliberative excellence targets the citizen’s role in the public sphere while tolerance concerns the citizen’s extra-political behavior.

11 Kingwell is a possible exception. What he has to say about tolerance is rather cryptic: the excellent citizen tolerates other citizens’ “imperfections” (261). He doesn’t explain what sort of imperfections he has in mind.
what it is that the excellent citizen tolerates, why she tolerates, her attitude towards those she tolerates, and her attitude towards the tolerated position.

**What to Tolerate**

We must first look at what it is that the excellent citizen tolerates. Unrecognized differences between the focus thinkers on this question can be confusing or even misleading. The thinkers’ answers to this question span the range of possible objects of toleration: from our peers themselves, to our peers’ beliefs, actions, or ways of life. Apparently, it is her fellow citizens themselves that Kingwell’s citizen tolerates as she attempts to overlook their “imperfections” (261). Both Dagger and Jones opt for the more traditional view that the excellent citizen tolerates others’ beliefs and convictions (Dagger 196; Jones 185). Spragens’ citizen tolerates others’ actions (222). Finally, Galston tolerates and Macedo sympathizes\(^{12}\) with others’ ways of life (Galston 222; Macedo 267).

Bracketing Kingwell’s unusual view, the main difference between the thinkers is that some limit tolerance to the deliberative sphere, as both Dagger and Jones do when they discuss beliefs and convictions, while others extend it to the broader realm of life choices, as does Spragens when he identifies actions as the target of tolerance, and as do both Galston and Macedo when they focus on tolerating different ways of life. Because tolerating different life choices usually includes a measure of tolerance towards the deliberative sphere as well, the latter of the two types is the more encompassing.

\(^{12}\) For a discussion of how Macedo’s conception of broad sympathy extends beyond traditional notions of tolerance, see below.
Why to Tolerate

Let’s consider the excellent citizen’s motivations for being tolerant. Possible reasons why the citizen might choose to tolerate are nearly as diverse as what she might tolerate: She might tolerate for pragmatic reasons, because of moral considerations, out of a concern for governmental stability, or for a combination of these reasons.

Dagger’s excellent citizen is an example of someone who tolerates for pragmatic reasons: she tolerates others on the expectation of reciprocity. She tolerates others and expects the same treatment in return (197). Citizens with this sort of view tolerate others with the hope of creating an environment in which others are more likely to tolerate them. Galston provides us with another view of the pragmatic motivation for tolerance. His citizen tolerates because she hopes to influence others (222). She sees coercion as ineffective; how can she hope to persuade or educate her peers without showing them tolerance first? Tolerance of others’ ways of life is crucial to convincing them of her point of view.13

Galston’s comments also suggest a moral motivation for tolerance. His citizen believes that not only is coercion ineffective as a means of influence, it is morally inferior to persuasion and education (222).14 Simply put, it is morally preferable to persuade someone rather than to force them, better to educate them than to coerce them. Jones’

13 Cf., the section on deliberative excellence in Chapter Three.

14 Galston observes that when someone is convinced to change the course they are taking this “should be” the “consequence of education or persuasion rather than of coercion” (222). The pragmatic part of his view emerges when one considers his comment that this “in many cases has to be” the case (222).
citizen is also motivated by a moral regard for her fellow citizens. She has an “altruistic concern to avoid the evils caused by illiberal regimes” (85). Because of this, she is anxious to maintain governmental stability. She believes that violating the civil liberties of others jeopardizes the stability of liberal governments (85), and thus threatens the evils she hopes to avoid. On Jones’ view, intolerance is a violation of others’ civil liberties, so the excellent citizen protects the liberty of others by eschewing intolerance.

Like Jones, Galston is concerned with the preservation of liberal society. He identifies diversity as one of its “defining” features (222). He argues that the “maintenance of social diversity requires the virtue of tolerance” (222). This gives the excellent citizen of a liberal democracy another reason to tolerate. Seeking to perpetuate the liberal character of her government and society, she champions diversity. To nurture diversity, she cultivates the virtue of tolerance in herself and encourages it in others.

Dagger is another who identifies a concern for diversity as a reason for tolerance. However, his concern is not governmental preservation, but personal enrichment. Dagger’s excellent citizen tolerates others because she believes she will benefit from hearing diverse points of view (196). Someone who takes this view might see the opportunity to broaden one’s horizons, become more accepting of others, and cultivate a sense of humility as one of the chief reasons for being tolerant.

**How to Tolerate**

Opinions on tolerance also diverge on the question of what attitude the excellent citizen adopts towards those whose beliefs or actions she tolerates. One way to look at this is as a question of how far tolerance must go. Does excellence in the matter of
tolerance receive its definition in contrast to hostile interference: tolerance as indifference? Or does excellence in this matter extend to respect or even to the embrace of those who require our tolerance? Those who define excellence in contrast to hostile interference maintain that aloof indifference is sufficient for excellent citizenship. When a person’s beliefs or actions are objectionable or offensive, the excellent citizen stands back and refrains from interfering with the expression of that person’s beliefs or life choices (so long as they don’t unjustly infringe on others’ rights to make life choices). The excellent citizen doesn’t treat the person with hostility, but he doesn’t necessarily show her esteem either; he cultivates a steady indifference.

Others, like Spragens, believe that excellence requires more of the tolerant citizen. To refrain from hostile interference is not enough. The excellent citizen recognizes others as worthy of his respect and treats them accordingly. On this view, aloof indifference does not meet the level of respect required. Spragens explains that an excellent citizen acknowledges others’ “moral status as purposive and responsible human agents” (222). This means that although the citizen may disapprove of the opinions or choices of the other citizen in question, he tolerates her views in a way that manifests the “positive concern” he has for her (222).

Macedo’s view extends further still in the direction of affirming the citizen whose beliefs or actions we must tolerate. The “broad sympathies” of Macedo’s citizen are unlike Spragens’ citizen’s “positive concern.” Spragens’ citizen’s concern doesn’t suggest any weakening of her commitment to her own position. She doesn’t necessarily have any
desire to adopt the tolerated position or lifestyle (222). Macedo’s citizen, by contrast, tries to understand others’ projects and commitments as if they were his own and focuses on his similarities to others (267). This attempt to understand and identify with others’ commitments and life ideals means that the citizen is the reverse of hostile, far from aloof, and not limited to positive concern. Citizens who show broad sympathy towards others leave tolerance behind as they not only affirm the tolerated citizen but embrace both him and the choices he makes.

**Attitude Toward Others’ Positions**

Just as thinkers differ on what attitude the excellent citizen should have towards the peers whose views or actions he tolerates, so also do they differ on the attitude the excellent citizen should take towards the views or actions tolerated. Unsurprisingly, the positions the focus thinkers adopt regarding the attitude one should take toward others’ views or life choices closely parallel the positions they hold on how one should act towards those tolerated. The attitudes they commend vary from outright rejection to open-armed acceptance of the tolerated position.

As before, Kingwell’s stance puts him at one extreme. On his view, what the excellent citizen must tolerate are “imperfections” in his fellow citizens (261). Given that they are imperfections, Kingwell’s citizen certainly doesn’t approve of or accept them. They are blemishes to be dealt with, not views to consider. Both Galston and Spragens

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15 Spragens defines his view in part by contrasting it with Iris Young’s “recognition and affirmation” account (222). Her view is apparently quite similar to Macedo’s. Young’s account prompts Spragens to dissent, reminding the reader that “Toleration does not necessarily mean approval” (222).
are less extreme. Neither interprets the need to tolerate as a need to overlook other citizens’ imperfections, as Kingwell does, but nonetheless, both explicitly reject the characterization of tolerance as a sign of approval or acceptance (Galston 222; Spragens 222). Epistemic humility does not motivate tolerance for these thinkers.\textsuperscript{16} The excellent citizen does not tolerate because he is unsure of his position, nor does he tolerate because he is in search of a new one. He tolerates the position \textit{despite} disagreeing or disapproving of it. While Spragens believes that the excellent citizen shows positive concern towards the citizen whose actions he tolerates, this does not mean he respects or accepts those actions. In other words, while Spragens’ citizen always treats his peers with esteem, he does not always esteem their actions.

Macedo’s position again occupies the other extreme. Macedo’s excellent citizen, in attempting to understand and identify with others’ commitments and life ideals, does not disapprove of those commitments and ideals. Rather, he attempts to make them his own. His attitude is one of acceptance. He approaches positions to be tolerated as potential lifestyle options and as commitments that he might want to adopt (267). Comparing Galston and Macedo’s accounts yields a clear picture of the difference between these positions. Galston’s citizen hopes to convert others: Tolerance allows him to use education and persuasion (rather than coercion) as tools for influencing other

\textsuperscript{16} For more on epistemic humility, see §3.10. As part of the deliberative excellence family of virtues, epistemic humility may motivate the excellent citizen’s disposition to listen seriously to her peers. The focus of deliberative excellence is the public sphere; arguments propounded in this forum often come to have coercive force over others. By contrast, tolerance is the virtue appropriate to the citizen’s behavior outside the public sphere. Because the citizen’s beliefs and arguments outside this sphere will typically not have coercive force over others, epistemic humility is less important in this setting.
citizens (222). By contrast, Macedo’s citizen hopes to be converted. He looks at his own commitments and ideals as contingent (267) and looks to others as possible sources of new lifestyle choices and commitments (267).

4.4 Tolerance: Application and Analysis

I will address three principal questions concerning tolerance. First, what does the excellent citizen tolerate? Might he limit his toleration to others’ expression of their beliefs or does he extend it to include their actions and ways of life? Second, why tolerate? Does the citizen’s motivation for being tolerant matter? Third, how does the excellent citizen go about tolerating others? What is his attitude towards the object of his tolerance?

What to Tolerate

Let’s begin by examining the first question: What does the excellent citizen tolerate? There are some actions and ways of life which the citizen clearly need not tolerate. The citizen need not tolerate assault if someone hits him. He need not tolerate his neighbor’s lifestyle if he discovers that she belongs to a cult which sacrifices children over bonfires. Actions or ways of life which seriously interfere with others’ legitimate pursuits of the good need not be tolerated; breaking the law need not be condoned.

The excellent citizen tolerates most expressions of belief, because they are just that, beliefs. Thus, the excellent citizen tolerates claims such as: “the Earth is flat,” “the President is retarded,” “my hamburger is talking to me,” “WASPs are greedy monsters who care only about themselves” “we ought to drop a bomb” and “my team is better than
yours” without hesitation. However, when the expression of beliefs interferes with others’ freedom to pursue the good, the situation is more complex. This brings the question of whether and which actions the excellent citizen tolerates to the fore.

Consider a residential street in lovely, dry Phoenix, Arizona. One neighbor grows a beautiful, perfect, lush green carpeted lawn to wiggle his toes in. His neighbor across the street xeriscapes her yard with native plants adapted to the dry climate. Each morning as the grass man turns on the hose he looks across the street and mutters, “Look at that weed patch! Xeriscaping, my foot. It’s just a big excuse for laziness! That has to be the ugliest lot in the whole city. Oh, my property value!” he complains. The native plant lady looks out the window and sees the grass man with the hose. “Watering again! A lawn like that takes two inches of water a week in this climate! Phoenix receives only seven inches of rain in a whole year. It’s just not right!”

If these neighbors are excellent citizens, they will tolerate each other’s landscaping. Allowing the native plant lady to prattle on about xeriscaping will not be sufficient. The grass man must stand by and tolerate her actions as she digs up her lawn. The native plant lady must allow the grass man the freedom to talk about how he hopes his lawn will soon remind people of the local golf course. But in addition, she must also tolerate his actions in irrigating just like the golf course does (provided it’s allowed by law). This lesson extends beyond the contentions of neighborhood landscaping. Those who shave their heads must be tolerated. Those who tattoo and pierce themselves must be tolerated. Those who avoid black cats must be tolerated. The same goes for ways of life: Mormons,

17 Assume that local covenants prohibit neither xeriscaping nor grass lawns.
Catholics, Atheists and Wiccans must be tolerated. Hermits and urbanites must be tolerated. Vegans as well as those on the Red Meat Only diet must be tolerated. The excellent citizen tolerates smoking, exercise fanaticism, and habits that lead to gross obesity. All of these people, in taking the actions and living the lifestyles that others find so distasteful, are redeeming the promise of liberal democratic community: You may pursue the good in your individual way as long as you do not interfere with others’ freedom to do the same. The excellent citizen tolerates diverse expressions of belief, actions, and ways of life as long and insofar as they do not interfere with the freedom of others.

Why to Tolerate

The second question that arises regarding tolerance is why tolerate. Do the citizen’s motives for tolerating others matter? Are some motives superior to others? The conclusions reached in Chapter Three regarding motivation and obedience to law are directly relevant to these questions. I concluded there that the citizen’s reasons for being disposed to obey the law are not important, unless those reasons impose significant additional societal costs. The case is the same with respect to tolerance. There are many reasons why the citizen might choose to tolerate others’ beliefs and actions: to encourage reciprocity, to influence others, to persuade rather than coerce, to maintain governmental stability, to broaden one’s horizons, to cultivate one’s sense of humility, or to increase one’s acceptance of others. Any of these motives (and most likely, a combination of them) might lead the citizen to tolerate others’ actions and ways of life. While some of these motives seem “purer” than others, none imposes significant additional societal costs.
What matters is that the citizen tolerate; from the standpoint of assessing excellence in citizenship, his motives for being tolerant are unimportant.

To see this, consider that the focus here is not the superlative person, but the excellent citizen. Demands upon the superior person and the excellent citizen differ. Different roles demand different performances and must be judged differently. Citizen excellence is judged instrumentally: how well can one assist one’s community in attaining its ideals? This means that in assessing others’ citizenship we can account as equal motives that in other contexts (for example, in assessing personal goodness) might be ranked in terms of moral superiority. In this respect, the role of liberal democratic citizen is less demanding than that of superlative person.

Tolerance is a citizen virtue because it allows the citizen to assist his community in protecting and promoting the liberal democratic ideals of freedom, equality, and stability. Community stability is enhanced when the citizen tolerates regardless of whether he tolerates because he’s concerned with the stability of his community or just because he thinks tolerating others is the most effective way of trying to change their minds. Freedom and equality are enhanced when the citizen tolerates regardless of whether he does so out of epistemic humility, to encourage others to tolerate his views, or because he hopes to broaden his horizons. From the perspective of what the citizen role demands, the important thing is the citizen’s tolerant actions, not his reasons for those actions.

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If the aim were to identify the superlative person, we might conclude, for example, that such a person tolerates not because he hopes to get something from others, but rather because he hopes to improve himself through hearing others’ views.
How to Tolerate

The third question to ask regarding tolerance is how the citizen should tolerate others and their beliefs and actions. What attitude is appropriate: indifference, positive concern, or broad sympathy? These dispositions ask different things of the citizen and some demand more than others. Because liberal democratic citizen virtues should allow as much space for the citizen to pursue her vision of the good as possible, we must select the least demanding version of the virtue that still meets the requirements of the role.

The citizen role requires that the citizen assist her community in protecting and promoting liberal democratic ideals. Tolerance qualifies as a virtue because it enables the citizen to assist in promoting the ideals of freedom, equality, and stability. When the citizen tolerates an individual’s beliefs or actions, she sustains that individual’s freedom to do as she wishes and recognizes her equal dignity as a citizen. Because the citizen’s tolerance recognizes others’ equality and sustains their freedom, it also promotes stability. Citizens are less likely to rebel against their governments when citizen dignity is recognized and freedom is preserved.

To assess what type of tolerance the citizen role requires, we must identify what sort of tolerance would foster these three ideals. I will consider the different forms of tolerance in order from the most demanding to the least. Broad sympathy is an extremely demanding interpretation of tolerance. Broad sympathy requires that the citizen attempt to identify with the individual in question and adopt the projects and commitments of that individual as his own. For the citizen who has opposing commitments or different projects

\[19\] It isn’t actually a form of tolerance at all, but rather a type of acceptance.
ultimately, the virtue catalog of which tolerance-as-indifference is a part must be judged as a whole. Tolerance-as-indifference need not promote and protect every community ideal, (because other virtues within the catalog will promote the ideals that tolerance doesn’t address), but it must be compatible with all of them.

If the citizen need not cultivate an attitude of broad sympathy towards the beliefs, actions, and people with whom she disagrees, what level of tolerance does the citizen role demand? Granted that the native plant lady need not accept the grass man’s views, nor welcome his actions, is it important that she show him positive concern or does indifference suffice? Does tolerance-as-indifference enable the citizen to protect and promote the community’s ideals? Suppose that the native plant lady cultivates tolerance-as-indifference. Because she doesn’t interfere with the grass man’s actions, his freedom to pursue his vision of the good is preserved. In tolerating his actions, the native plant lady has done her part to protect and promote the ideal of freedom.

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Ultimately, the virtue catalog of which tolerance-as-indifference is a part must be judged as a whole. Tolerance-as-indifference need not promote and protect every community ideal, (because other virtues within the catalog will promote the ideals that tolerance doesn’t address), but it must be compatible with all of them.
Spragens argues that citizens should keep their disapproval of others’ actions to themselves out of friendliness and humility, among other virtues (223). This seems mistaken to me. If it’s acceptable for the citizen to disapprove of others’ actions, then it should be acceptable for the citizen to express that disapproval. The interests of what Spragens calls “civic friendship” may require that the citizen express that disapproval in a civil manner, but it should not keep him from expressing his views entirely.

Civility merits its own place in the virtue catalog as a member of the tolerance family of virtues.
way that the native plant lady can evidence her recognition of the dignity that is owed him as a person and a citizen.

When positive concern is interpreted to demand civility, a contrast between tolerance-as-indifference and tolerance delivered with positive concern is no longer necessary. The native plant lady’s approach to the grass man may be one of indifference: she may attempt to ignore his lawn and the topic of his watering habits entirely. Yet if she is to be an excellent citizen, she must at the same time recognize that as a citizen he is her political equal, and that like herself, he is a person and a moral agent. This requires that she treat him with civility. She cannot act from hostility. She can ignore the actions she finds distasteful, but she cannot ignore her fellow citizen. If she chooses to address the grass man’s landscaping habits, she must do so with civility. This requires a) being willing to give reasons for her own view and b) addressing the grass man with the intent of helping him to understand her view. She must attempt to persuade rather than to bully.\(^{23}\) The excellent citizen’s readiness to give reasons for her views acknowledges her respect for her peers as persons who are moral agents and as citizens who share an equal stake with her in the community.\(^{24}\)

In this section, I argued that the excellent citizen tolerates others’ beliefs, actions, and ways of life. She may disagree with, disapprove of, or ignore others’ actions, but she

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\(^{23}\) Cf., §3.10.

\(^{24}\) The citizen’s civility also promotes another liberal democratic ideal—cooperation for the common good. Civility greases the wheels of reciprocity which in turn makes cooperation possible. The ideal of cooperation for the common good can only be realized if citizens’ traffic with each other is civil.
must treat them with civility. From the perspective of what the citizen role demands, the
important thing is the citizen’s tolerant actions, not his reasons for those actions.

4.5 Respect for Rights: Survey

The excellent citizen recognizes that others have rights and refrains from
violating those rights. He demands that others respect his rights.

As with tolerance, respect is widely recognized as a citizen virtue. Each of the
focus thinkers discuss some form of respect for rights. Each agrees that all citizens have
rights that the individual citizen must respect. Agreement on respect, however, ends
there. Conceptions of respect range from the limited to the expansive. I will begin
exploring respect by considering the core of respect agreed to by all the focus thinkers. I
will then discuss three elements of respect that do not yet enjoy consensus: rights-
percipience, positive respect, and self-respect.

Let’s turn first to what the focus thinkers agree on: that all citizens have rights.
The focus thinkers don’t each make this claim explicitly, but the idea that all citizens have
rights is implicit in the belief (variously expressed, yet held by all the thinkers) that the
excellent citizen must abstain from violating others’ rights. Observing others’ rights by
not transgressing them is the core element of respect. Some see it as the whole of respect,
the entirety of what excellence requires, while others build on it to demand much more
taxing performances of the excellent citizen. Ultimately, however, all agree that respect
for rights means that one does not violate the rights of others. I’ll refer to this type of respect as basic respect.\textsuperscript{25}

Three aspects of respect that demand more taxing performances of the citizen are rights-percipience, positive respect, and self-respect. The trait I refer to as rights-percipience is not actually an aspect of respect at all, but a necessary precondition for it. The percipient citizen is one who is aware of the rights of others. It is impossible for someone to avoid violating others’ rights if he doesn’t know what those rights are. For this reason, Galston and Kingwell both recognize percipience as essential to respect (Galston 224; Kingwell 260). Galston’s focus is percipience-as-capacity: the excellent citizen has “the capacity to discern” the rights of others (224). Kingwell’s focus is percipience-as-disposition: the excellent citizen “exhibit[s] sensitivity” to others’ rights (260). In both cases, the excellent citizen’s percipience prepares him to exercise other forms of respect by making him aware of others’ rights.

The second aspect of the respect for rights family which doesn’t yet enjoy consensus is positive respect,\textsuperscript{26} advocated by Dagger, Macedo, and Spragens. It is a demanding expansion of basic respect. Positive respect find its roots in the excellent citizen’s recognition of the worth of his peers. Dagger’s position and Macedo’s are nearly identical: Dagger explains that the excellent citizen recognizes others as “equally worthy

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\textsuperscript{25} Basic respect regards the negative rights of others, their right not to be interfered with. Many thinkers believe that there are also positive rights, rights that require others to get involved in order to respect the right. I will address these types of rights in my discussion of positive respect.

\textsuperscript{26} Cf., the discussion of positive concern in §4.4.
of consideration” (196); Macedo suggests that the excellent citizen recognizes others as “equally worthy of respect” (275). Spragens’ view accords with theirs;²⁷ he believes that the excellent citizen recognizes the “positive worth” of other citizens and their “moral status as purposive and responsible human agents” (222). Despite their claims that the recognition of other’s worth as persons shapes the citizen’s day-to-day actions toward others, Macedo and Spragens offer few details as to exactly what sort of behavior positive respect entails.²⁸ I therefore focus on Richard Dagger’s account of respect in what follows both because it raises interesting issues and because it is the most complete.

Dagger believes that the obligations of positive respect extend beyond just treating others with appropriate deference and dignity. He explains that the worth others have by virtue of their very personhood²⁹ means that they hold positive claims on others, claims which “cannot always be satisfied simply by leaving the rights-holder alone” (196). These claims are not just the negative ones we commonly consider—rights not to be interfered with in a specific way, rights that enjoin restraint on the part of other citizens. Mere

²⁷ Spragens differs from Dagger and Macedo, however, in that he rejects egalitarianism. He argues that egalitarians err on the question of rights because rather than asking what rights are due the democratic citizen, they ask “what entitlements are due the equal clients of the welfare state” (222). He echoes de Tocqueville in warning of the possibility of a “benevolent, intrusive, and condescending nanny state” (222).

²⁸ In discussing tolerance, I argued that civility should be admitted to the virtue catalog. Positive respect = recognition of positive worth. The excellent citizen treats others civilly because he respects their positive worth.

²⁹ Like Macedo, Dagger doesn’t restrict the excellent citizen’s respect to other citizens. “All persons” are equally worthy of consideration (196).
restraint is not enough. The citizen who stands back from others with a hands-off attitude cannot be an excellent citizen; the status others have as persons requires more of him.

Dagger argues that each person has the right to autonomy, the right to “exercise his or her capacity” to lead a self-governed life (30). Additionally, each person has a claim upon others’ assistance to protect and promote this capacity (30). This means enabling others to “widen [their] range of choice” because a wider range of choice gives a person more scope to lead a self-governed life (33). Therefore, not only does the right to autonomy include the right to be free from assault (because being assaulted interferes with a person’s capacity to control his own life (32)), under appropriate circumstances, the right to autonomy might also include a right to healthcare or education (33).³⁰ Dagger’s highly demanding position thus offers quite a contrast to the basic, restraint-centered view of respect defended by many.

³⁰ Two of Dagger’s tests for determining whether a proposed right ought to be recognized as an actual right limit positive respect’s otherwise extremely broad scope. First, a right does not interfere with others’ rights. If it does interfere, the negative effect of infringing upon someone else’s rights must be counterbalanced by the good achieved by increasing the scope of the first person’s autonomy (34). According to Dagger, whether a right interferes with others’ rights will often depend upon the circumstances in question: If most of us are quite wealthy, the reduction in wealth required to fund others’ education or healthcare does not have much impact on our level of autonomy, but it is a great boon to the autonomy of those whose healthcare or education we fund (34). If circumstances are otherwise, and most citizens are very poor, funding others’ healthcare or education constitutes a burden that significantly detracts from citizen autonomy. Under such circumstances, a right to healthcare or education would not be recognized. Circumstances also determine the outcome of another of Dagger’s tests: is it possible to realize the right in question? In the case of healthcare, for example, technological resources must be available (35). If the resources aren’t available, then the citizen doesn’t have a right to them.
The third aspect of respect which does not enjoy universal recognition as a citizen virtue is self-respect. Dagger and Kingwell both champion it by arguing that part of respect for rights is to respect one’s own rights and defend them. Dagger suggests that just as we must not treat others as “mere objects” (means to an end) we cannot allow ourselves to be treated that way either (196). Kingwell suggests that just as we must be “sensitive” to others’ justice claims, part of what our citizenship consists in is making our own justice claims heard (260). So, self-respect might be described as the member of the respect virtue family that directs us to include ourselves under the umbrella of respect. If all persons are worthy of respect, then as persons, each of us can expect and demand the same sort of respect that we accord others.

4.6 Respect for Rights: Application and Analysis

In this section I will address rights-percipience, basic respect, and positive respect. I will first explore whether it is appropriate to classify rights-percipience as a virtue. Then I will turn to a consideration of positive respect. I will begin by discussing why basic respect might be judged insufficient for attaining liberal democratic ends. Then I will explore whether cataloging positive respect among the citizen virtues is consistent with the strictures of the reasonable achievability criterion.

Rights Percipience: Capacities as Virtues?

The first issue that arises regards rights-percipience. Is the virtue of rights-percipience best interpreted as a disposition (percipience-as-disposition, hereafter PAD), a capacity (percipience-as-capacity, hereafter PAC), or both? If percipience is understood
It is important to settle this question, not just so that we know how to conceive of the respect family of virtues, but also so that we know how to conceive of the other traits that may involve some element of capacity in addition to disposition: particularly the vigilance and deliberative excellence families but also the tolerance, participation and cooperation virtue families. If it is never legitimate to classify a capacity as a virtue, then the conclusion that PAC does not qualify as a virtue is straightforward and we can focus on whether PAD promotes our liberal democratic ideals. However, if it is appropriate to classify at least some capacities as virtues, then we must consider whether PAC presents such a case.

How is one to define which types of qualities are virtues and which aren’t? Upon what basis can the decision to extend the virtue catalog to capacities or to limit it to dispositions be made? The question central to this dissertation is: “What are the virtues of the excellent citizen in a liberal democratic state?” This question is motivated by others: “Which qualities should we strive for for ourselves and hope for for our children?” and “how can I encourage better citizenship in my peers?” Given this focus, if a trait enables citizens to assist their communities in protecting, promoting and realizing liberal democratic ideals, but cannot be taught or acquired, it is not the object of this dissertation’s inquiry; it is not one of the qualities we seek to identify. It makes little sense to strive to teach to others a quality that is not teachable, nor to attempt to cultivate within oneself a disposition that is not cultivatable. The virtue catalog I construct here is a catalog of citizen virtues. These are the qualities that allow the ordinary, rank and file citizen to fulfill her role successfully. This catalog excludes traits that cannot be

31 It is important to settle this question, not just so that we know how to conceive of the respect family of virtues, but also so that we know how to conceive of the other traits that may involve some element of capacity in addition to disposition: particularly the vigilance and deliberative excellence families but also the tolerance, participation and cooperation virtue families.
cultivated. This is not to say that such traits do not merit study. They may prove quite important in drafting a sketch of the superlative person or the superior citizen. It is to say, however, that because these traits cannot be cultivated, they are not of interest from the standpoint of this project.

At this point, one might rightly observe that there is no necessary link between the ordinary citizen and qualities that can be cultivated (nor between the superior citizen and traits that cannot be, for that matter). However, hope for the possibility of liberal democratic community is founded on the assumption that the average citizen can cultivate and come to possess the qualities he requires to fulfill his role successfully. If this assumption is mistaken, then liberal democratic community is impossible, for liberal democracies are built upon the satisfactory role performance of ordinary citizens. Without both the willing and the able participation of these citizens, there is no democracy.

This understanding of citizen virtue and the citizen virtue catalog suggests that a satisfactory answer to the question of whether it makes sense to include capacities among the citizen virtues will distinguish between natural capacities and developed capacities. A natural capacity or aptitude is an innate tendency, inclination, or talent for doing something; it cannot be taught or acquired. A developed capacity or skill is an expertise that arises through training and practice; it can be taught or acquired. To clarify the distinction between natural capacities and developed capacities let’s look at some concrete examples. Some people are just naturally better at tennis than others. Even if I devote most of my time to practicing tennis, I will never be Serena Williams. So, too, with the piano: Even if I practice the piano for hours every day, I will never be good enough to go
on world tour. However, provided that I practice diligently, I will eventually learn to play
the piano and to play tennis. Part of piano-playing and tennis-playing is aptitude: either I
have a natural capacity to learn to play easily and well or I do not (which isn’t to deny that
natural capacity comes in degrees). Part of piano-playing and tennis-playing is skill: I
learn to play and I play better the more I practice. In this sense, the capacity to play the
piano (or tennis) is both a natural and a developed capacity.

Just as being able to play the piano or tennis is a capacity, traits like intelligence,
communicative articulacy, and the ability to discern character are capacities as well. These
capacities aid the citizen in contributing to his community. The more intelligent and
articulate the citizen and the greater his ability to discern character, the better prepared he
is to help his community excel. As with tennis and piano, a particular citizen might not
have great natural capacity where intelligence or communicative articulacy is concerned.
But just as with tennis and piano, there is an extent to which it is possible for the citizen to
develop these capacities. Although effort alone may never be sufficient to make him one
of the more intelligent people in the United States, and while practice may not leave him at
the level of the professional speaker, a citizen can become better educated and learn more
logical patterns of thinking; he can learn to communicate well enough to share his
positions on the issues with his peers. These examples suggest that many capacities have
both a natural and a developed component. What does this mean for the question of
whether we should count capacities among the virtues?

I have argued that because the purpose of this inquiry into the citizen virtues is
practical (driven by the question of what qualities of character we should strive for for
ourselves and hope for in our children), it makes sense to limit the description of citizen virtue to those qualities that can be taught or acquired. Therefore, if the capacity in question is one that most people could develop (at least to a degree), then it is an appropriate candidate for inclusion in the catalog of citizen virtues. If the capacity in question is innate and wouldn’t be possible for most people to develop or acquire, then however useful the trait may be to the success of a given liberal democratic community, it is not a suitable candidate for citizen virtue. This argument suggests that while developed capacities have a place in the virtue catalog, natural capacities do not.

A second argument for this same thesis—that only qualities which most citizens can acquire should be described as citizen virtues—asks us to consider what the liberal democratic state needs from its citizens in order to excel and succeed. Must every citizen have a significant natural capacity for intelligence, communicative articulacy, discerning character, and perceiving rights in order for the state to flourish? Or is it sufficient if most of the state’s citizens merely develop these capacities to a reasonable degree? In point of fact, every citizen does not have the natural capacity to excel in these areas. Fortunately, although liberal democracy is a very demanding form of government, every citizen need not have outstanding natural capacities in order for it to succeed.

Although citizens are the focus of this inquiry, the success of liberal democratic community does not depend upon citizens only. Contemporary liberal democracies have other resources upon which they can and must rely. In addition to the citizen, those who fill executive, legislative, and judicial positions in the democracy play a crucial role in its success. Others in non-governmental capacities, such as educators, journalists, activists,
and public intellectuals, also shoulder part of the burden of liberal democratic government through the unique roles that they play. As with citizenship, these roles each have specific associated virtues of their own.\textsuperscript{32} Excellence in these roles is defined in part by the willingness to exercise those natural capacities which liberal democracies need and rank and file citizens lack.

Thus, the burdens of government do not fall solely on the back of the rank and file citizen. The citizen need not have every capacity or disposition crucial to her community’s success. Nevertheless, liberal democratic community cannot succeed without her. Ideally, the liberal democratic community will enjoy gifted leaders. Probably, it will benefit from the experts hired to study questions of fact and propose policies. Hopefully, it will profit from the activists and novelists, the poets and holy people who would shape the community’s conscience. Above all of these, however, the liberal democratic community must have a mass of people with citizenship skills that meet a reasonable threshold: citizens who are reasonably able to perceive others’ rights, detect corruption, communicate with their peers, identify competent leaders, and so forth. Liberal democratic community can’t hope for a nation of superior citizens, and a handful of superior citizens alone will not suffice.\textsuperscript{33} Successful liberal democratic community

\textsuperscript{32} See Chapter One, n1.

\textsuperscript{33} The superior citizen is not to be confused with the excellent citizen. Earlier, I described the superior citizen as the one who exceeds the requirements of the citizen role (Chapter Three, n59). It is now clear that she may exceed the requirements of the role in either or both of two ways: she may be more willing (perhaps because this mission aligns with her own vision of the good) or more able to act in ways that protect, promote, and realize the liberal democratic ideals. The excellent citizen meets the requirements of her role. She evidences the developed capacities and dispositions that allow her to aid her
requires a mass of citizens who function with reasonably well-developed citizenship capacities.\textsuperscript{34} The citizen virtues describe what liberal democratic community requires, not of its superior citizens, but of the mass of rank and file citizens. Therefore, these virtues must be possible—even for citizens lacking any particular natural aptitude for them—to develop. Capacities that can be developed are legitimate candidates for citizen virtue; capacities that cannot be developed are not.

If some capacities can be developed and some cannot be, what of PAC (Percipience-As-Capacity)? Is it a natural or a developed capacity? PAC is like tennis. It is a capacity that has both a natural and a developed component. Some people are naturally more aware or sensitive to others’ rights than others. But PAC is also a developed capacity. No more than an unathletic person should conclude that attempting to learn tennis is futile, the citizen who is initially rights-blind need not concede failure. While Wimbledon may not be realistic, the uncoordinated can play tennis, and the initially rights-blind can come to see. For evidence of this, consider the changes the American civil rights movement has wrought in the hearts and minds of millions of citizens who were previously blind to the struggles of their fellow Americans. Insofar as PAC is a developed capacity it is acquirable and therefore a legitimate candidate for citizen virtue.

\textsuperscript{34} One might object that the term “reasonable” is conveniently vague here. However, the question of what would constitute a sufficient or reasonable threshold of citizenship skill to enable the citizen to succeed in his role is precisely the question that Chapters Three, Four, and Five are devoted to exploring.
Rights-percipience is both a capacity and a disposition. Percipience-as-capacity (PAC) is the capacity to perceive the rights of others. Percipience-as-disposition (PAD) is a highly-focused attention to, and concern for, the rights of others. PAD is the desire to be rights-percipient become a habit. The excellent citizen exhibits both aspects of awareness. The disposition to be rights-percipient strengthens the capacity to be rights-percipient. PAC is developed through practicing PAD.

Once PAC is established as a legitimate candidate for citizen virtue (because as a developed capacity it is acquirable), the question of whether rights-percipience is a quality that enables the citizen to better perform his role is easily answered. Rights-percipience is not only compatible with liberal democratic ideals, it is crucial to realizing the ideals of freedom and equality. Unless citizens recognize each others’ rights, personal freedom will be trampled; the liberty to pursue one’s own vision of the good will be severely circumscribed. When citizens do recognize each other’s rights this freedom is preserved. Rights-percipience is also crucial to equality. The citizen’s dignity as a full moral agent is not recognized unless his rights are as well. Rights-percipience thus qualifies as a citizen virtue.

Many thinkers do not include rights-percipience in their discussions of respect. However, respect for rights without rights-percipience is respect without an object; it is respect for something that one never perceives. Respect for rights is only possible when citizens are rights-percipient. Rights-percipience is thus crucial to respect whether one’s conception of respect is broad or narrow.
Positive Respect

One way of defending positive respect is to compare it to self-respect. Self-respect, in turn, is often defended by analogy to basic respect. Basic respect requires that the citizen not violate others’ rights. Dagger argues for self-respect by observing that just as one must not violate others’ rights by treating them as “mere objects” or means to an end (basic respect), one should not allow oneself to be treated that way either (self-respect) (196). Since one doesn’t infringe upon one’s own rights, the principal thrust of self-respect is to defend one’s rights against infringement by others. The argument for positive respect then takes these ideas a step further by suggesting that the citizen must intercede and take action on behalf of others when their rights are threatened, just as he takes action on his own behalf when his rights are threatened. In sum: for the same reasons that the citizen must not violate others’ rights, he must not allow his own rights to be violated, and just as the citizen does not allow his own rights to be violated, he must not allow others’ rights to be violated.

Although initially attractive, this line of reasoning does not overwhelm.
Fortunately, we need not rely on it; in point of fact, we must not. The Chapter Two framework suggests that any argument for recognizing respect for rights as a citizen virtue should center on its instrumental value: how does it enable the citizen to fulfill her role? This approach requires a shift in argumentative strategy. Basic respect does not qualify as a citizen virtue because it is the morally correct thing to do (although it is the morally correct thing to do). Rather, basic respect qualifies as a citizen virtue because it allows the
citizen to fulfill her role: to assist her community in achieving its ideals.\textsuperscript{35} Other forms of respect qualify or fail to qualify as citizen virtues by the same criterion.

Thus, for the purpose of establishing whether positive respect qualifies as a citizen virtue, the right question to ask is not whether positive respect is justified by analogy to self-respect and whether self-respect is justified in turn by analogy to basic respect. Rather, one must ask whether and how the citizen’s positive respect promotes and protects community ideals. Is positive respect instrumentally valuable in achieving the appointed ends? An affirmative answer strengthens its claims as a citizen virtue candidate. However, an affirmative answer is not the only hurdle to recognizing positive respect as a virtue, because there are different possible means to achieving liberal democratic ends. The liberal sufficiency principle directs that the least demanding virtue candidate that does the job is the one that should be cataloged as a citizen virtue.\textsuperscript{36} If basic respect sufficed to protect and promote liberal democratic ideals, then the citizen could succeed in his role without the further restriction of his freedom to pursue the good that positive respect

\textsuperscript{35} Basic respect qualifies as a citizen virtue because when citizens infringe upon others’ rights, the ideals of freedom and equality are directly threatened, and the ideals of stability, self-government, and cooperation for the common good are indirectly threatened. Citizens promote and protect these ideals when they respect others’ rights by not infringing upon them.

\textsuperscript{36} Because different ways of organizing, naming, and delimiting the virtues with respect to one another are possible, it is more accurate to observe that the least demanding virtue catalog is the one we ought to adopt. The question of what we call this or that demand on the citizen or which virtue in particular the demand results from is not relevant, but the total burden levied by the conception of excellence we endorse is. We must ask whether the citizen virtue catalog we hope to adopt allows citizens to pursue the good as they see fit (or to come as close to that goal as possible consistent with attaining and maintaining the community’s liberal democratic ideals).
requires. If this were the case, positive respect would not qualify for the citizen virtue catalog. Before devoting further attention to positive respect then, we must consider whether basic respect suffices for attaining liberal democratic ends.

Upon initial consideration it may appear that because basic respect answers the demands of liberal democratic community, positive respect is unnecessary. Imagine a community in which basic respect were universally enjoyed. In such a community, ordinary citizens, community leaders, corporations, and relevant political entities would all respect the rights of others by not infringing upon their rights. On this scenario, the scope of positive respect would be considerably diminished. In a community where basic respect is near universal, many of the clearest examples of positive respect—participating in a political protest to draw attention to the plight of a group whose rights have been ignored, boycotting a corporation to show disapproval of a policy, arguing with one’s work colleagues to end an unfair hiring practice, or physically intervening on a city street to halt a physical assault—would not be possibilities. Each has one thing in common: each example involves the citizen intervening when others’ rights are violated. If others’ rights aren’t being violated, then showing positive respect by interceding isn’t possible. This is a state of affairs worth pursuing. A shrinking scope for positive respect suggests a broader scope for the liberal democratic ideals of freedom and equality.

Note, however, that this observation—that when basic respect prevails, the scope of positive respect is diminished—doesn’t establish that basic respect suffices for attaining liberal democratic ends. There are two reasons why basic respect may not by itself fully answer the demands of liberal democratic community. First, the communities in which we
perform our citizen roles are communities that have not yet fully attained the liberal
democratic ideals. Even if basic respect would suffice in a community that perfectly
realized its ideals, we must recognize that we do not live in such communities. Second, it
may be that there is scope for positive respect apart from acting to intervene when others’
rights are violated. If realizing liberal democratic ideals requires that citizens must act to
expand others’ range of choice, simply abstaining from infringing the rights of others will
not suffice.

The first reason that basic respect may not fully suffice for attaining liberal
democratic ends is that we live in imperfectly liberal democratic communities. While
basic respect might suffice if every individual and entity in the community were to manifest
it, it is common in our communities for citizen rights to be infringed. In contexts where it
is common for some citizens to violate the rights of others, positive respect may be an
important citizen virtue. In these contexts, opportunities for the citizen to intercede, to
take a stand, and to attempt to halt the violation of others’ rights are plentiful.

37 To be appropriately accounted a citizen virtue, basic respect needn’t suffice for
attaining liberal democratic ends by itself. None of the virtues I have discussed could
suffice for attaining liberal democratic ends on their own. Thus, the fact that basic respect
doesn’t suffice for attaining liberal democratic ends in itself is not an argument for
excluding it from the virtue catalog, but rather an argument for including an additional
virtue or virtues—in this case, positive respect.

38 There is no question that positive respect enables the citizen to assist his
community in promoting and protecting liberal democratic ideals. If citizens intervene to
prevent others’ rights from being violated this can enhance their community’s realization
of ideals like freedom, equality, stability, and even (although less directly) cooperation for
the common good and self-government. The nagging question about positive respect is
not whether it can advance liberal democratic ideals, but rather whether it is consistent
with the reasonable achievability criterion.
The second reason that basic respect may not suffice for attaining liberal democratic ends is that there may be scope for positive respect apart from acting to intervene when others’ rights are violated. If basic respect were near universal, and if the community in which we lived were perfect in the sense that no one violated the rights of others, would the liberal democratic ideals of freedom and equality be fully satisfied? Richard Dagger doesn’t believe so. He explains autonomy as “the right to the protection and promotion of one’s ability to lead a self-governed life” (30) and “the right to widen one’s range of choice” (33). Respecting rights means that those in a position to do so will “help widen the right-holder’s range of choice” (33). On this view, the ideal of freedom would not be realized even if basic respect were universal, because being free to pursue the good requires more than just being left alone (196). Basic respect does not suffice because it does not address the prerequisites of freedom. Dagger believes that the citizen evidences his positive respect for others not just by intervening when others’ rights are threatened, but also by providing for the conditions that make choosing possible.

Dagger’s principal examples of this type of assistance are education and healthcare. He endorses the idea that the citizen can’t fully realize her freedom until she

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39 Dagger’s arguments for this type of respect refer to the protection and promotion of “autonomy” and the “capacity to lead a self-governed life.” However, for reasons I explain in Chapter Five, I consider some of his assumptions regarding autonomy seriously mistaken. Therefore, in keeping with the distinction I draw in Chapter Five, I will refer to “freedom” rather than “autonomy” in this discussion.

40 These examples are curious because education and healthcare are typically seen as goods that governments, not individual citizens, work to provide. Nevertheless, Dagger argues that the apparent right to healthcare is “a right that holds against anyone who is able to help provide this care” (33).
Dagger explains that if helping to increase another’s range of choice would narrow the helper’s range of choice, there are two possible ways of resolving the conflict between the helper and the helpee (34). The first possibility would be to set either a ceiling or a floor for autonomy (Either limit the amount of resources the helper must transfer to a certain level or set a minimum level the helpee’s resources should reach). The second possibility would be to invoke John Rawls’ difference principle (34).

He observes that a right to healthcare “holds against anyone . . . able to help provide this care” (33). In other words, on Dagger’s view, not only must a citizen show basic respect by not violating other’s rights himself, if he has the resources to do so, he must help others to widen their range of choice. He must feed the hungry, house the homeless, and provide education and healthcare to everyone whose ability to pursue the good would be significantly increased by the provision of these prerequisites.

Such a demanding conception of freedom raises serious reasonable achievability concerns, concerns which can’t be fully resolved within the scope of this dissertation. Part of the reason for this is that these are ultimately not just questions regarding reasonable achievability, but questions of how we will choose to conceive of freedom, questions of how our community will come to understand its own ideals. Answering these questions requires reflection both on the type of freedom we hope to possess and on the nature of the freedom possible in a liberal democratic system.

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41 Dagger explains that if helping to increase another’s range of choice would narrow the helper’s range of choice, there are two possible ways of resolving the conflict between the helper and the helpee (34). The first possibility would be to set either a ceiling or a floor for autonomy (Either limit the amount of resources the helper must transfer to a certain level or set a minimum level the helpee’s resources should reach). The second possibility would be to invoke John Rawls’ difference principle (34).
If we ultimately come to view freedom as an ideal that demands food, shelter, education and healthcare as prerequisites, then enhancing others’ freedom is a potentially endless and exhausting task. The danger of overburdening the citizen is real. While increasing freedom is a laudable goal, if success in his role requires the citizen to enhance others’ freedom at the cost of his own, it is a goal that is in tension with itself. The reasonable achievability criterion directs that we define the citizen role narrowly enough to permit other pursuits. That one should not define the citizen role in such a way that citizens must restrict their life projects to political or community-oriented aims in order to be accounted good citizens is a key tenet of liberalism. The citizen may have other pursuits than that of promoting the freedom of his fellows, and his role must be defined in a way that allows space for these other pursuits.

Dagger’s picture of positive respect is likely thus unacceptable for a liberal government that must rely on its citizens in the way that a democracy must. Providing the prerequisites of freedom whenever one is able to, to whoever needs them, does not leave the space for personal pursuits that the freedom promised by liberalism requires. This is true not just because reducing the citizen’s financial resources impacts his ability to pursue his own projects (we could, as Dagger suggests, solve this problem by stipulating that the citizen need not contribute if it would take him below a certain threshold), but also because the citizen’s own projects demand non-financial resources that are also limited: his time, his energy, and his focused attention (TEA). Requiring that the citizen feed,

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42 This tension doesn’t mean that it is an unworthy goal, just that it will be a difficult one to realize (if balancing the citizen’s own need for freedom and his role in enhancing others’ freedom is possible at all).

205
house, school, and nurse his peers whenever he is able to do so would diminish his TEA resources and therefore his ability to pursue his own vision of the good.\textsuperscript{43}

The fact that the citizen requires TEA resources as well as financial resources to pursue her own vision of the good is an important reason why the role of expanding access to the prerequisites of freedom is a function we typically assign to government entities rather than to individual citizens.\textsuperscript{44} There are three reasons to hesitate before defining the citizen role to require the sacrifice of the citizen’s TEA resources. First, TEA resources are among the citizen’s most precious because they are among the most limited. They are difficult or impossible to renew and one can’t simply work harder or longer in order to replenish them. Second, it is more difficult to justify taking one citizen’s TEA to benefit another than it is to justify the redistribution of financial resources. While financial resources are often unequally distributed to begin with, owing to factors such as inheritance, unjust economic arrangements, and socioeconomic and racial status, every person is endowed with a limited gift of time, energy, and attention. A person’s TEA endowments can’t be traced to his parents or grandparents or government programs; they are uniquely his. Further, relative to the situation of financial resources where some have none and others enjoy virtually infinite resources, TEA endowments are roughly equal. So while financial redistribution may correct injustice, reducing one citizen’s TEA to benefit

\textsuperscript{43} “Require” in the sense that the citizen role requires these actions for successful performance of the role.

\textsuperscript{44} This observation doesn’t suggest that one should not work to feed the hungry and house the homeless. There are good reasons to devote both one’s financial and one’s TEA resources to helping others. I believe being a moral person requires it. However, it is probably not part of the citizen’s role.
others may contribute to injustice. Third, the citizen’s TEA resources are necessary to all pursuits. There is no vision of the good that it is possible to pursue without one’s TEA resources. Any diminishment of the citizen’s TEA restricts his capacity to pursue the good.

Nonetheless, extending each person’s range of choice remains a legitimate goal, especially when the constraints on choice are food, shelter, and education, as opposed to the affordability of vacation cottages. One of liberal government’s proper functions is to help its citizens feed and house themselves and school their children. Because the primary means of paying for these functions is typically taxation, the citizen indirectly supports extending others’ range of choice through paying his taxes. However, the indirect support his role requires of him is passive and financial. From the standpoint of his citizenship, the larger portion of his TEA then, is reserved for his own projects.

This is only the larger portion of the citizen’s TEA however, not the whole. The citizen’s TEA cannot be reserved sacrosanct, for his benefit and his benefit alone. Although any diminishment of his TEA endowment restricts the citizen’s capacity to pursue his own vision of the good, his community does have legitimate claim upon some portion of his TEA. Consider the cooperation and participation virtues discussed in Chapter Three. The excellent citizen cooperates on projects for the common good and participates in the civil society life of his community. This involves redirecting a portion of his TEA endowment from pursuits of his own priority to community projects.

45 Especially in the U.S., healthcare is a more controversial example. The provision of healthcare can be included or excluded from the list of liberal democratic government’s proper functions without alteration to the line of reasoning defended here.
Given the foregoing arguments, one might ask why it would be acceptable in a liberal democracy for the citizen role to require any sacrifice of the citizen’s TEA at all. The reason for this is that unless most citizens sacrifice some portion of their TEA endowment, life in community is impossible. If life in community is impossible, most individuals’ pursuit of the good is also impossible. Without community, the citizen lacks the basis her pursuit of the good likely requires. Robbed of her ability to pursue the good, “life is solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short”—and meaningless as well. The citizen has little freedom to pursue anything and little leisure to enjoy those pursuits. Given that this is true, life in community is a component of almost every citizen’s picture of the good, although this may not be obvious to the citizen herself. If citizens’ pursuits of the good require life in community, then defining the citizen role to require some sacrifice of TEA in order to sustain community only makes sense.

What does this mean for positive respect? While Dagger’s conception of positive respect is likely too demanding, some form of respect that requires the citizen to sacrifice a portion of his TEA resources in order to protect and promote the freedom of others is likely an appropriate addition to the virtue catalog. Imperfect liberal democratic communities fall short of the ideal of freedom because individuals are too often interfered with in ways that frustrate their pursuits of the good. The virtue of basic respect requires that citizens not interfere with other citizens in these ways. Perhaps an appropriately-defined positive respect would require that when it is in their power, citizens act to prevent or halt such interference from occurring.
As I suggested above, the reasonable achievability concerns that any form of positive respect raises can’t be fully resolved here, because these are ultimately questions about how our community will come to understand its ideals, questions about how we will choose to conceive of freedom. However, intermediate progress is possible. The exploration of respect undergone here offers direction in answering these questions. This much we know: the type of freedom the citizen needs is the freedom to pursue her own vision of the good. The nature of the freedom possible in a liberal democratic system is freedom to pursue the good limited by the necessity of securing that pursuit’s preconditions.

4.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced the second third of the preliminary citizen virtue catalog. The liberal citizen virtues include allegiance to liberal democratic community, tolerance, and respect for rights. This part of the virtue catalog treats the citizen role as it relates to liberal democratic community. What is the citizen’s role in enabling his community to better attain the ideals of freedom and equality?

The excellent citizen acts under a dual allegiance: he is loyal to the community in which he lives, but also to liberal democratic ideals as instantiated in institutions. Such a citizen seeks to ensure that his community’s institutions move ever closer to realizing the liberal democratic ideals. One way he does this is by tolerating diverse expressions of belief, actions, and ways of life. The excellent citizen is civil towards those whose actions and ways of life he disagrees with. Recognizing that other citizens share in the dignity of
being citizens and moral agents he views them as political equals. He perceives the rights of others and doesn’t violate those rights. When possible, if others’ rights are threatened, he intervenes. He also demands that others respect his rights so that he can pursue his own vision of the good.
CHAPTER FIVE

SELF-GOVERNANCE CITIZEN VIRTUES

In Chapter Five, I will discuss three family groups: autonomy, responsibility, and restraint. Where the relationships within citizen virtue families in Chapters Three and Four were so close that they could be characterized as sibling or parent-child relationships, the looser relationships sketched in the restraint and responsibility families of Chapter Five are probably better conceived of as extended family relationships: relationships between cousins, distant cousins, and great-aunts and uncles.

5.1 Autonomy: Survey

The excellent citizen reflects critically upon her ideals of life and character and chooses how she will live.

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1 The term self-governance is ambiguous because when applied to specific citizen virtues, “self-governing” seems to refer to strengths of character such as self-control that allow one to govern or be in charge of oneself. However, in political contexts, the term “self-governing” often applies to groups rather than persons. In these contexts, self-governing receives its definition in contrast to being governed by some other person or group, not to a loss of self-control (e.g., “Latvia is no longer part of the Soviet Union; it is now self-governing.”). In the discussion that follows, this ambiguity between meanings is fitting, for this chapter’s focus is those virtues that aid a person in becoming self-governed (in the first sense) and which, if adopted by enough citizens will enable a people to become self-governing (in the second sense).
Let’s look first at the autonomy family of virtues. Both Dagger and Macedo discuss autonomy as an important quality for the citizen to possess. Although neither thinker proposes autonomy itself as a virtue, the remarks they make regarding the virtues they do favor evidence their high estimation of autonomy. In the section that follows, I will first consider what autonomy is and then discuss the role that community and culture play in its development.

Both Macedo and Dagger possess quite similar conceptions of autonomy. Both view choice as autonomy’s animating principle. Autonomy is important, they believe, because the individual must be free to choose. Freedom of choice allows the citizen to choose not only how she will live her life (Dagger 15, 196), but also to choose who she is—being autonomous means “actively [developing] one’s individuality” (Macedo 269). This choosing who she is and how she will live is what it is to be self-governing. On Dagger’s view, autonomy is “the ability to lead a self-governed life” (196).

Just as they agree on what autonomy is, Dagger and Macedo hold similar views on how autonomy plays out in the life of the individual. Macedo believes that deciding how to live one’s life is a matter of “formulating, evaluating and revising ideals of life and character” (269). Dagger notes that the citizen who excels at autonomy is the citizen who reflects critically upon the ideals and principles by which she will live her life (15).

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2 Dagger’s most applicable virtue candidate is “valuing autonomy” which is the disposition to “protect and promote” one’s own and others’ autonomy (196). Macedo’s closest virtue candidate is “autonomous self-development” (269, 272) which is the process of striving to become autonomous (as opposed to simply being autonomous).
Autonomy thus implies the “capacity to reflect critically and to act on the basis of these reflections” (Macedo 269).

Both Dagger and Macedo are eager to show that the value they place on autonomy does not suggest a diminished appreciation for community. Indeed, in different ways they both argue that community and culture make autonomy possible. Dagger believes that the role of community is to provide the resources and the environment that will facilitate autonomy. He focuses on the idea that community members have an obligation to protect and promote the autonomy of their peers (33). Depending on the circumstances, this assistance in developing autonomy could take the form of anything from forbearing from physically assaulting others to the provision of adequate education and healthcare (33).

Macedo’s view of the influence of community and culture on autonomy has a different focus. For Macedo, as for Dagger, the citizen makes use of community resources to develop his autonomy. But Macedo’s focus isn’t on the financial and physical resources that a community might offer. On his view, the community resources that make autonomy possible are social practices, “shared values and norms” (270). Citing Michael Oakeshott, Macedo argues that social practices like a common language or moral code are the medium by which citizens give expression to their autonomy; its

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3 Note, however, that the value they place on community is strictly instrumental. Their focus is on how the community benefits individual self-development, not on how individuals may benefit their communities.

4 For more on this aspect of Dagger’s view, see the discussion of positive respect in §4.5-6.
development is impossible without them (270). A common language allows the citizen to express himself and formulate his ideas; a common moral code gives him a point of origin as he chooses and discards principles by which to direct his life. Of course, social practices alone are not enough: “a pluralistic and tolerant culture” is a critical ingredient as well (270). On Macedo’s view, the development of autonomy is impossible in a culture which doesn’t leave space for individuals and their variations. If being autonomous means choosing how to live, the development of autonomy requires being part of a culture where different life choices are possible.

While Dagger’s focus is the idea that others must aid the development of their peers’ autonomy by fostering circumstances in which the achievement of autonomy will be possible, Macedo’s focus is the notion that each individual directs his own quest for autonomy against the background of his culture and its social practices. Both thinkers believe that the process of developing autonomy is not solely within the individual’s grasp (Dagger 17, Macedo 270). According to Dagger, circumstances must be right; the citizen must have the resources true choices require such as adequate healthcare and education. On Macedo’s view, the citizen develops autonomy only against the backdrop of the social practices of a tolerant culture.

5.2 Autonomy: Application and Analysis

There are three questions regarding autonomy that need to be answered: First, what are the grounds for classifying autonomy as a virtue? Second, what of autonomy’s
acquirability: Does it meet the conditions for being a virtue? Finally, how are autonomy and self-governance related?

To answer the first question, autonomy is a citizen virtue because it enables the citizen to assist his community in achieving its liberal democratic ideals. Specifically, autonomy promotes the ideals of self-government—because self-government is impossible without a sufficient number of autonomous citizens—and freedom—lacking citizen autonomy, the freedom to pursue one’s own vision of the good has little meaning. Without autonomous citizens, self-government cannot be sustained, but worse yet, the freedom that is self-government’s complement cannot be enjoyed. Both self-government and freedom are among our highest ideals.

Let’s take a closer look at each of the reasons for autonomy’s importance to liberal democratic community. I should begin by flagging the fact that my use of “autonomy” may be considered nonstandard. I understand autonomy as the disposition and the developed capacity to reflect critically on one’s principles, decide how to live, consider one’s circumstances, and then act based on those reflections. I draw a sharp distinction between autonomy and freedom. As I will argue in the pages that follow, a person may be autonomous regardless of how constrained his circumstances.  

The first reason that autonomy is an important candidate for citizen virtue is because of its relationship to the liberal democratic ideal of freedom. Freedom to pursue one’s own vision of the good doesn’t exist apart from individual autonomy. The citizen must choose how to live before the freedom to live how she chooses can be meaningful.

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5 Unless he is dead or mentally incapacitated.
Autonomy is a prerequisite to true freedom. The autonomous citizen chooses how to live and formulates her life ideals accordingly. Thus, it is autonomy that makes it possible for the citizen to form a picture of the good, to decide what ends she will pursue with her freedom, and to resolve to act on those decisions. Without an object, her freedom has no meaning.

The aims of the liberal democratic citizen and his state are closely intertwined. While the citizen’s role (qua citizen) is to assist his state in attaining and excelling at its aims, the aim of the liberal democratic state is to enable its citizens to attain and excel at their aims (not just qua citizens, but qua individuals). A community achieves this by providing its citizens with the greatest possible freedom consistent with equality, stability, cooperation for the common good, and government by the people. However, the community’s provision (and protection) of the citizen’s freedom is not in itself sufficient. Freedom to pursue his aims does not in itself guarantee that the citizen will be able to attain them. In addition to having the freedom to pursue his aims, the citizen must also be autonomous. He must consider his circumstances, reflect critically on his aims, and then act based on those reflections. It is freedom guided by autonomy that allows the citizen to accomplish his aims. Ironically, when the citizen acts autonomously he assists his community in attaining its aim—to enable him to attain his aims.

6 I am not suggesting that all ends are equally worthy of pursuit just because they are chosen ends. The autonomous individual evaluates which goods are worthy of pursuit; he doesn’t by choosing them make them worthy. For more on this point, see Charles Taylor’s excellent insights in The Ethics of Authenticity (35-41).
The second reason autonomy is an important candidate for citizen virtue is its connection to the ideal of self-government. While autonomy is an essential personal quality, it has critical repercussions on a wider societal scale as well. Autonomous citizens are indispensable to a community’s ability to govern itself. Government is by the people only when the people (or the representatives they autonomously choose) are making the decisions. A self-governing community is possible only when a critical mass of individuals are both a) disposed to act autonomously and b) free to do so.

The connection between the individual’s autonomy and his community’s ability to be self-governing may not be immediately clear. Given that the autonomous individual is one who chooses how to live and “formulate[s], evaluate[s], and revise[s]” his “ideals of life and character” (Macedo 269) autonomy may seem an obvious candidate for status as a personal (as opposed to citizen) virtue. It is crucial to realizing one’s potential as an individual, one’s dignity as a person. Autonomy is the ability to reflect critically on one’s principles, decide how to live, consider one’s circumstances, and then act based on those reflections. But consider: these same qualities are essential to the role of citizen as well. The citizen of a self-governing state must reflect critically on the issues of his day. He

7 For example: As a private person, the autonomous individual might reflect on the principle of integrity and decide that living with integrity is one of his life ideals. He might then reflect on how he can live a life of integrity and choose how he will act as a result of these reflections. As a citizen, the individual may be faced with the choice of who to support for political office. He must reflect on what type of leader he and his fellow citizens should be seeking, compare the available candidates against this ideal, decide which candidate to favor, and act in support of the candidate by campaigning, voting, and so on.

8 Of course, we must proceed with caution when it comes to defining what reflection involves. Most citizens are not philosophers and need not be in order to qualify

217
must recognize and adopt principles of good government and apply them to issues facing his state. He must be able to evaluate facts and weigh policies and then come to decisions. He must choose how to act. Most importantly, the citizen must be able to listen to the banter of the market square and decide for himself what to buy. The skills and dispositions are very much the same. The qualities that allow the citizen to pursue his aims in private life enable him to be an effective citizen, participating in his community’s self-government, in public life.

Citizens who cannot (or will not) reflect on goals, consider circumstances, apply principles, and make decisions, are not prepared for the demands of self-government. It is obvious that self-government is impossible for a people captive to a foreign power; it may be less clear that the behavior of the people governed may in its own way be as severe an impediment to self-government as is coercion by a foreign power. For many of us, the worst threat to the prospect of our community’s self-government is that we—and our

as excellent citizens. This is an issue of reasonable achievability. To restrict excellent citizenship to extraordinary (superior) citizens (extraordinary because unusually highly educated, unusually gifted at communicating, or in some other way—because unusually thoughtful about citizenship, for example) is inconsistent both with democracy and with the demanding nature of the liberal democratic state. For success, the liberal democratic state requires a reasonably high level of behavior on the part of many (or even most) of its citizens. Since most citizens don’t have the reflective temperament that leads them to prize the examined live above all others, we cannot define excellence to demand that the citizen adopt such a temperament.

Nonetheless, excellent liberal democratic citizenship does require a) an awareness of one’s role as citizen and b) some modicum of consciousness regarding what one’s participation in the life of his political community should be aimed at achieving (the liberal democratic ideal). Excellent citizenship requires this because liberal democratic community requires citizens with these qualities in order to thrive and survive. Insofar as it not within liberalism’s scope to ask this of its citizens, so much the worse for liberal democracy’s tenure and tenability.
fellow citizens—will give up the opportunity to act autonomously in the political sphere of our own accord.

Benjamin Constant and Alexis de Tocqueville first described this sort of gentle despotism almost two centuries ago. Constant observes that despotism of this nature poses a danger when citizens sacrifice their ability to share in public power in return for the guarantee of freedom to pursue “private pleasures” (317). He believes that the “danger of modern liberty” is that citizens will “surrender” their rights to political power, enticed by government’s offer to see to their happiness and “spare” them all troubles “except those of obeying and paying!” (326). The difficulty is that while we gain “individual liberty” to pursue our private interests, we lose our “political liberty,” our ability to steer the course of our own communities (326). This is a serious problem, because political liberty is individual liberty’s only guarantee. Without such a guarantee, Constant argues, we will find it difficult to enjoy our individual liberty, our freedom to pursue private pleasures (326).

De Tocqueville’s consideration of this gentle despotism, penned twenty-one years after Constant’s essay, is strikingly similar. The government “willingly labors” for the happiness of its citizens, “but it chooses to be the sole agent and the only arbiter of that happiness . . . .what remains, but to spare [citizens] all the care of thinking and all the trouble of living?” (318). When citizens cede control over their affairs, the result is a nation “reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd” (319).
In sum, if a community is to be self-governing, then it is the governed who must make the choices about how it is to be run (or at least regarding who should run it).

However, citizens who do not act autonomously in their private lives are not likely to act independently in the public sphere. Additionally, citizens who do not act autonomously in their private lives do not in their shared public life constitute an autonomous community. A community of citizens that are not autonomous cannot achieve the ideal of self-government; such individuals are slowly robbed of the “uses of [themselves]” (de Tocqueville 318-19). Thus, autonomy is an important candidate for citizen virtue because it is crucial to the citizen’s ability to assist his community in achieving the liberal democratic ideal of self-government.

I have argued that autonomous citizens are key to the realization of a liberal democratic community’s highest aims. Autonomy promotes the ideals of both self-government and freedom and therefore appears appropriately classified as a citizen virtue. However, autonomy isn’t appropriately classified as a citizen virtue if it doesn’t satisfy the conditions for being a virtue. As I discussed in Chapter Four, one of these conditions is acquirability. The acquirability issue may be one reason why Dagger and Macedo hesitate

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9 There is an ongoing debate regarding whether someone who lacks autonomy in private life can be politically autonomous in the Rawlsian sense—living under institutions which conform to principles she would choose herself. I don’t mean to address this question, but rather to observe that the citizen who doesn’t employ critical rationality in private life—reflecting on her goals, considering her circumstances, applying principles, and making decisions—is unlikely to critically reflect on the issues of her day, to recognize and adopt principles of good government, and to apply them to issues facing her state. In short, the citizen who is not autonomous in private life is likely to lack in her public life exactly those skills that are most crucial to self-government.
to describe autonomy as a virtue. Both suggest that autonomy is not under the individual’s sole control (Dagger 17, Macedo 270).

Does autonomy satisfy the acquirability criterion? Suppose that an individual were to decide one morning to turn over a new leaf and become a better citizen. If he recognized autonomy as one of the citizen virtues and decided that it was the one he lacked, could he acquire it? At first glance, autonomy may fare poorly in comparison to its sister virtues. An individual might awake one morning and decide to start obeying the law or decide to start voting, but can he simply decide to become more autonomous? However, unfavorable comparisons of this nature are mistaken. First, citizen virtue regards not what the citizen does, but what he is disposed to do. In other words, obeying the law isn’t actually the virtue, the willingness to obey the law is. Participation in the political sphere isn’t itself the virtue, the disposition to participate politically is. Therefore, the relevant comparison is not between whether the citizen can decide to vote and whether he can decide to be autonomous, but rather between whether the citizen can decide to have the disposition to participate politically and whether he can decide to have an autonomous disposition.

To better see the relevance of this point, consider an example from outside the sphere of politics and citizenship. A person who decides he needs to be less selfish can decide (and act) on a specific action that is unselfish. However, it is difficult or impossible to lose the disposition to selfishness with the same sort of decisiveness. We don’t call an individual who acts unselfishly on one or two isolated occasions selfless. To qualify as
selfless, one must have the habit of acting unselfishly—a habit demonstrated by consistent unselfish actions over time.

Because “decide” suggests the immediacy of the moment, it is misleading. The acquirability criterion requires not that the average citizen be able to acquire a virtue at will, but that the virtue be acquirable. As with other dispositions, autonomy is a habit that requires time to develop. Many of the virtues including both dispositions (such as cooperation) and developed capacities (including members of virtue families like deliberative excellence and respect) are developed only over the long term and with considerable effort.

Suppose that we assume that autonomy is a quality that can be acquired; what of Dagger and Macedo’s observations that its development is not under the individual’s sole control? Dagger would argue that if one awakes one morning and strives to achieve better citizenship in an environment where adequate education and healthcare are lacking, the possibility of achieving autonomy is significantly impaired (33). Macedo might argue that attempts to cultivate autonomy in our children are in vain if we can’t also offer them a “pluralistic and tolerant culture” (270) in which to grow. Do their views suggest that autonomy should not be judged a virtue?

They do not. The fact that Dagger and Macedo offer descriptions of autonomy which throw its status as a virtue into doubt is better grounds for questioning the basis of their descriptions than reason for doubting that autonomy is a virtue. Each has different grounds for his conclusions, but both men err in concluding that autonomy is not within the individual’s control. True autonomy arises not from removing all possible barriers to
choice, but in choosing how to respond to the barriers which confront one. If autonomy is “choosing how to live” then autonomy is possible for all of us—regardless of our state of health, our level of formal education, or our community’s level of tolerance.

Although the limitations under which we labor are all different, we are all limited. This is not to deny that some limitations are more telling for the scope of one’s possible choices than others. The concentration camps of the twentieth century remind us that it is possible for others to take almost everything from us, that every external circumstance can become a limitation and appear a barrier to choice. But the stories of the men and women who survived the camps, men like Victor Frankl (Man’s Search for Meaning) and women like Corrie Ten Boom (The Hiding Place) also remind us that it is not possible for others to take everything. Even when our choices are narrowed, we still can choose. To seek life or death, to act from selfishness or selflessness: there are still possibilities.

The notion that autonomy is less possible for the less-advantaged is a dangerous liberal conceit; it denies the reality of individual agency. The agency of the individual dignifies not only the denizens of wealthy twenty-first century liberal societies, but all individuals. Given that the degree of pluralism and the level of healthcare and education many of us enjoy are unique in human history, we should tremble before the arrogance of denying the possibility of autonomy to those not similarly advantaged. Lest we are

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10 Cf., Thomas Spragens on responsibility: “Just because we all are born into a world we did not make and did not choose does not mean that a liberal democratic society . . . should . . . deny [its citizens’] capacity to make the best of their circumstances” (221).

11 How our choices are constrained is morally significant. The fact that individuals may have some possibility of autonomy even in the worst prison camps does nothing to lessen the moral horror of such circumstances.
tempted to judge that someone without access to higher education, the internet, a kidney transplant, or even penicillin lacks autonomy, we should consider how future thinkers might judge today’s circumstances. One can only guess what they will wonder at: “No AIDS vaccine, no cancer cure, no bodypart regeneration technology, no wearable computers, no global common language, and no insta-travel. Add this to a grueling work week, a brief life expectancy, terrorism, and the threat of nuclear war! We can only conclude that early twenty-first century individuals had little scope for autonomy.”

Many of us are autonomous despite the fact that the barriers to choice are many and varied. It is impossible to remove every barrier to choice. We cannot ensure that every individual has the life choices that any other individual has ever had. While we can (and should) seek to extend the reach of healthcare, education, and tolerance to everyone, the notion of a community in which there are no constraints on one’s freedom to choose is utopian. Freedom of this sort does not exist. Governments can’t arrange it, and money can’t buy it.\textsuperscript{12} With respect to autonomy, the relevant issue is how the citizen chooses to

\textsuperscript{12} Even if resources were not limited, many barriers to choice could not be eliminated. There are many reasons for this, but I will mention just two: First, consider that while we can extend the conditions for opportunity, we cannot make all opportunities universal. For example, only a certain number of people can belong to Harvard’s freshman class. (Harvard’s incoming class could be enlarged, but after a certain point, the experience would be a dramatically altered one.) Only one person can be president of the United States every four years. We need not limit this observation to the fact of our different inborn abilities to merit such opportunities as being president of the United States or a student at Harvard. The same conclusions hold for any opportunity that only a limited number can enjoy—even if the limited number who are chosen to participate are selected randomly.

The second reason that many barriers to choice cannot be removed is the fact that each of us are born into families. Consider the implications that this fact has for our life choices. We are shaped by our birth order, being only children, big sisters, little brothers, and so forth. We are raised by parents who have enjoyed and suffered different

224
respond to the conditions he faces and the opportunities that are his. The fact of his agency presents the individual with two possibilities: He may allow others and outside circumstances to decide how he acts. Or, alternatively, he may formulate principles by which he will live his life and act in accordance with those ideals. He may govern himself. It is this autonomy which the liberal democratic state requires of its citizens in order to succeed.

The final issue that merits attention is the question of how autonomy and self-governance are related. By self-governance, I mean individual mastery, the qualities of character that fit a person for democratic society, including the traits that I discuss in this chapter. For Dagger, the question of how autonomy and self-governance are related is moot, because on his view, autonomy is self-governance (196); the ability to lead a self-governed life is autonomy. However, Dagger’s identification of the two is based on a very limited notion of self-governance. On his view, autonomy, and therefore self-governance, simply means that the citizen chooses the principles by which she will live. Now, this ability to choose is doubtless an essential component of what it is to be a self-governed person. But simply being able to choose the principles by which one will live does little to ensure or promote other qualities of character that we typically associate with being a self-governing person. Autonomy is an executive virtue like courage in that experiences and had diverse opportunities. As Michael Sandel has suggested, we enter the world as “encumbered selves.” We are born into a concrete environment and while we may not choose to embrace the cultural milieu that greets us, we must react to it in some way. Our varied backgrounds present each of us with opportunities for some choices and barriers to others.
it enhances a citizen’s virtue or vice. As Dagger acknowledges, an autonomous citizen can act “in a thoroughly selfish manner” (16) and still be thoroughly autonomous.

So what might self-governance be thought to include that mere autonomy (understood as choosing one’s life principles) does not? Macedo argues that “striving for autonomy” means developing “self-governing reflective capacities” (269). He suggests two differing roles for these reflective capacities: first, these capacities allow the citizen to “formulate, evaluate, and revise ideals of life and character” (269)—a notion very similar to Dagger’s limited sense of self-governance in which the citizen chooses the principles by which he will live. Second, these capacities “enable people to channel and constrain their own projects so as to respect the rights of others, and actively to exercise their freedom of choice, to achieve self-mastery and self-control” (269; emphasis added). Self-mastery and self-control, which I address in this chapter under the rubrics of responsibility and restraint, are indeed essential aspects of a full picture of self-governance.13

5.3 Responsibility: Survey

The excellent citizen recognizes himself as an agent, avoids needless dependence on others, and reliably fulfills his role as citizen.

The focus thinkers who discuss responsibility are Galston and Spragens. They discuss two aspects of responsibility: accountability and self-reliance. The excellent

13 Note that Macedo does not explain how the first role relates to the second. While autonomy enables citizens to achieve excellence in self-governance (through good choices), it does not mean they will achieve these strengths. The autonomous citizen might instead make poor choices, displaying a lack of responsibility and a lack of restraint. Autonomy is but one of the necessary components of being a self-governing citizen.
citizen accepts accountability for her actions and their consequences. She is also self-reliant. She does not rely on others to do what she can do for herself.

Spragens introduces accountability by explaining that the excellent citizen is someone who accepts both “the status and [the] burdens of agency” (220). Such a citizen recognizes that she is free to act how she chooses; she also recognizes that those actions have consequences. When the citizen chooses the act, she also chooses its attendant consequence. The excellent citizen therefore tries “to foresee those consequences to the extent possible” and is prepared to accept them (220). When the citizen fails to fulfill her duties or breaks the law, she is ready to answer for those failings.

The second aspect of responsibility, self-reliance, regards avoiding “needless dependence” on others (Galston 222). While Galston and Spragens agree that the citizen cannot be “wholly independent” (Spragens 220), they also agree that the excellent citizen cares for herself; she is self-supporting to the best of her ability (Galston 222; Spragens 220). This means that she provides for herself and her children. She does not seek a political, an economic, or any other type of “free ride” (Spragens 220). She cleans up after herself (Spragens 221). Additionally, the citizen’s acknowledgment that she is a “doer of deeds” rather than merely a “locus for reaction” (Spragens 220) means that she can be expected to “make the best of [her] circumstances” (Spragens 221), whatever the deck of life has dealt her.
5.4 Responsibility: Application and Analysis

Spragens argues that responsibility is crucial because if citizens lack the virtue of responsibility they “never attain the status of a moral being” (221). However, while likely true, this claim is not entirely on topic. Although the question of which virtues are necessary for moral personhood is an important one, a different set of questions should shape discussion of the citizen virtues and therefore also the focus of this dissertation.

The question critical to this inquiry is: Why is responsibility a citizen virtue? (As opposed to: Why is it a virtue simpliciter?). How does responsibility enable the citizen to assist his community in attaining its liberal democratic ideals? The question is not why the virtue is crucial for the person, but why the person (manifesting the virtue) is crucial for the community.

The distinction between responsibility understood as a moral virtue (a virtue simpliciter) and responsibility understood as a citizen virtue is an important one. I will argue that responsibility understood as a moral virtue is broader in scope than

14 Because my aim in this dissertation is to identify and describe the citizen virtues, the claim that responsibility is crucial to moral personhood has little relevance here. Rather I must answer whether responsibility is a citizen virtue: a trait that enables the citizen to assist his community in attaining its aims.

The claim is off-topic for Spragens as well. Spragens claims that responsibility is crucial to moral personhood as part of an argument which concludes that liberal societies justifiably seek to nurture responsibility in their citizens (221). This suggests a thesis Spragens’ other writing indicates he doesn’t intend: that a liberal regime should insist upon responsibility out of concern for its citizens’ status as moral persons. Spragens makes his (decidedly instrumental) view of citizen virtue clear elsewhere. Civic virtues are the traits that are “necessary or highly valuable to the preservation and success” of the regime (214). Given his other comments, Spragens ought to be arguing that liberal democratic societies are justified in seeking to promote responsibility because they can’t continue to survive and flourish without responsible citizens.
responsibility understood as a citizen virtue. I will conclude that there are elements of
responsibility understood as a moral virtue that don’t map well to what we intend when
we list responsibility as one of the citizen virtues. Therefore, in addition to asking why
responsibility is a citizen virtue, we must ask what: What is responsibility understood as a
citizen virtue?

To answer whether responsibility should be cataloged among the citizen virtues,
the method suggested by the Excellence Island thought experiment introduced in Chapter
Three seems a good place to start: On Scenario A, responsibility is part of the citizen
virtue catalog and all the Islanders manifest it in their behavior. On Scenario B, it is not.
On which scenario does the Island better attain its liberal democratic ideals? If the
Island’s ideals are better attained under Scenario A, then responsibility may qualify as a
citizen virtue. If they are not, then it does not. Unfortunately, we can’t make use of this
line of reasoning without a clearer and more concrete conception of responsible behavior.
What do responsible Islanders do that irresponsible Islanders don’t do, and vice versa?
Until we know how life and community under the two scenarios is different, we can’t
compare them. Until we know what type of responsibility applies to citizenship, we can’t
know how life under the two scenarios differs.

The term responsibility is commonly employed in two distinct (yet related) senses:
the first is that of “taking responsibility” and the second is that of “being responsible.”
Taking responsibility means recognizing one’s agency and acting accordingly. Being

15 Responsibility may qualify as a virtue if it satisfies the conditions described in
Chapter Two: appropriate to time, place, and historical context; compatible with non-
negotiable political ideals; and reasonably achievable.
responsible means fulfilling one’s role in a reliable manner. Before a helpful comparison can be made between those who manifest the virtue of responsibility and those who do not, we must determine which of these two senses of responsibility (or whether both or neither) is relevant to citizenship.

Taking Responsibility

Let’s consider responsibility in the sense of “taking responsibility” first. One takes responsibility by acknowledging one’s agency and acting accordingly. Both types of responsibility discussed by the focus thinkers—accepting accountability and being self-reliant—are examples of taking responsibility. Accepting accountability is taking responsibility for one’s actions by acknowledging one’s agency and accepting the consequences. Being self-reliant is taking responsibility for oneself by acknowledging one’s agency and then carrying one’s own burdens to the best of one’s ability.  

Let’s look at accepting accountability first. What accepting accountability entails is clearer if we look outside the realm of citizenship. For example, a child who has learned to accept accountability for his actions will: a) recognize himself as an agent: e.g., “I am the one who chose to swing the baseball bat,” b) recognize the results of his actions, e.g., “The lamp broke because I swung the baseball bat,” and c) act on that recognition. He will admit what he has done and accept punishment or offer restitution, e.g., he will help to glue the lamp or do chores to help buy a new one.

16 Self-reliance should not be understood in an excessively individualistic way. It is not wrong for the citizen to ask for or receive help from friends, family, and government when he needs it. However, he mustn’t attempt to shift responsibilities that are properly his own to others without good reason.
Spragens embraces the relevance of this sense of responsibility for citizenship. He suggests that the responsible citizen is someone who is ready to answer for his own actions, someone willing to put the consequences of his actions on his own tab (220). However, the question of what it means to accept accountability for one’s actions in the realm of citizenship is not as easily answered as one might assume. While the meaning of accepting accountability may initially seem obvious—the responsible citizen recognizes that she is an agent, that she chooses her actions, and that the results of those actions are the outcome of her own choices—its application is far less clear. The problem with interpreting responsible citizenship to mean acceptance of accountability emerges when one considers what is to take the place of the lamp broken by the child. What sort of wrongdoing is it that the citizen is to take responsibility for, and how is he to act on that recognition? What sort of admission of fault is desirable? What sort of restitution is possible?

There are two ways of answering these questions. Because the questions are founded on a model of responsibility that is inappropriate to citizenship, I shall argue that neither way works. Ultimately, we must adopt a different model of responsibility; the questions themselves must be altered. Before jumping to a discussion of this, however, it will be useful to consider how accepting accountability understood on the accepting-punishment-for-wrongdoing model misdirects us. The first step in applying this model is

17 Because even the most vicious citizen doesn’t have difficulty taking credit for what he has done well, accepting accountability generally means acknowledging wrongdoing and accepting its consequences. If a person declines to acknowledge his praiseworthy actions to others, not only will we not judge his behavior vicious, we may praise him for not seeking attention.
to identify the wrongdoing that the citizen must take responsibility for. I will consider two areas in which a broken lamp might lurk: the legal requirements under which the citizen functions and the requirements of his role.

**Accountability for Breaking the Law**

The first place to look for a broken lamp is in the legal requirements under which the citizen functions. On this view, breaking the law is breaking the lamp. The responsible citizen: a) recognizes that he chose to break the law, b) recognizes the results of his unlawful action, and c) attempts restitution or accepts punishment. In a situation where the citizen has broken the law, each of these steps represents behavior the community will wish to encourage. The citizen who is responsible in these ways is preferable to the citizen who is not.

However, that such a citizen is preferable isn’t grounds for recognizing “willingness to accept accountability for breaking the law” as a citizen virtue. Interpreting responsibility in this way presents two difficulties. The first difficulty is that defining responsibility as accountability for breaking the law disqualifies it as one of the elements of the virtue catalog. The virtue catalog is the set of citizen virtues which describes the traits a citizen must possess (at minimum) to succeed in fulfilling his role. While it’s true that good citizenship comes in degrees (e.g., one who possesses more of the virtues may be a better citizen than the one who possesses fewer), the excellent citizen is not merely the very good citizen (someone who possesses many or most of the virtues), she is the person who possesses *all* of the virtues in the virtue catalog. She possesses every virtue appropriate to carrying out the citizen role. Accepting accountability for breaking the law
cannot be one of the virtues in this set because one of the other members of the set is obedience to law. To fulfill her role, the citizen must obey the law. A person needn’t be morally perfect to be an excellent citizen, but she can’t be a lawbreaker and an excellent citizen at the same time. Thus, although responsibility understood as willingness to accept accountability for breaking the law is clearly better for the community than irresponsibility, it is not a citizen virtue.

The second difficulty with defining responsibility as accountability for breaking the law is that this interpretation of responsibility doesn’t fit well with what we mean by responsible citizenship. When we include responsibility as one of the virtues, we don’t mean that if the citizen should commit a crime, he must take responsibility for it (although he should). We mean that the citizen should *be responsible* by reliably fulfilling his role.

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18 Excellent citizenship and moral perfection are distinct. While many virtues may qualify both as virtues *simpliciter* and as citizen virtues, many do not. Some traits relevant to the fulfillment of one’s role as citizen may have little bearing on one’s moral goodness (political participation, vigilance, and some elements of allegiance to liberal democratic community are good candidates for inclusion in this category). Similarly, some traits relevant to moral perfection may have little bearing on one’s fitness or usefulness as a citizen (possible examples include humility, selflessness, and faith).

19 This is slightly overstated. See §4.2 (n1) and §5.6 for a discussion of civil disobedience and the narrow circumstances in which such actions might be judged to be legitimate.

20 Our most serious societal problems are not the result of large criminal populations that fail to confess and accept punishment. The problem isn’t that we need to lock more people up, the true difficulty is that we don’t have enough citizens who understand themselves as agents. One needn’t be a murderer or a thief for this to have serious societal repercussions. Citizens who don’t understand themselves as agents don’t acknowledge that they have control over what they do; they don’t recognize the influence they have on outcomes. This results in ill-advised actions, undesirable consequences, and attitudes of apathy or despair towards potentially positive action.
Before discussing this issue further, however, we should consider the other area where one might look for a broken lamp: the citizen’s role requirements.

**Accountability for Failing to Fulfill Role Requirements**

The second area to look for a broken lamp is in the citizen’s failure to meet his role requirements. Assume, for example, that the citizen in question neglects to vote. Voting is one of the role requirements of citizenship. A citizen can’t be said to fulfill his role successfully (and thus be an excellent citizen) unless he manifests a willingness to vote. So, applying the broken lamp template to responsibility interpreted as acceptance of accountability for failing to meet one’s citizen role requirements, the responsible citizen who fails to vote will: a) Recognize his agency in this (lack of) action: voting or not voting was within his power.\(^{21}\) b) Recognize the result of his action. c) Act on that recognition. The difficulty with applying this template to the failure to vote example is that it isn’t obvious that there is a broken lamp to fix. Perhaps the citizen would have voted for George W. Bush, but decided to work late that night instead. It doesn’t matter; George W. Bush became President of the United States anyway. Perhaps the citizen was going to vote for Al Gore, but allowed himself to become engrossed in a novel. It doesn’t matter—even if he lived within one of the infamous Florida precincts, his one vote would not have altered the outcome of the election.

That one person’s vote rarely makes the difference in an election is well-known, but recognize that in the realm of citizenship, this is the rule, not the exception: it is

\(^{21}\) Obviously, he needn’t recognize his agency in not voting if his political circumstances are such that voting isn’t actually within his power.
frequently the case that one’s failure to perform some aspect of the citizen role is not particularly perceptible. Often the citizen’s performance (or lack of performance) in the citizen role has an obvious negative impact only when he acts in concert with a large number of his peers. Similarly, it is often necessary for many citizens to act in concert to effect positive change.\(^{22}\) The difficulty of perceiving the impact of one’s actions isn’t specific to the voting example, but general in its inclusion of much of the citizen role requirements class.\(^ {23}\) This is not to say that whether the citizen cooperates, participates, is vigilant, and so forth is of no importance. (On the contrary, the bulk of this dissertation is devoted to arguing that it is). But it is to say that when the citizen fails to fulfill his role, both the lamp and the damage to it may be difficult to identify and to describe.\(^ {24}\)

Even when the citizen is able to identify and describe the nature of what he must accept accountability for, it isn’t clear how he can fix the lamp or remedy the harm that he has done. He can admit publicly that he didn’t vote, but even if he and many others do this, how will their admissions further the community’s efforts to achieve its liberal democratic ideals? The citizen who neglects to vote can’t offer restitution in any traditional sense. He can’t go back and cast his vote, and we wouldn’t wish him to alter

\(^{22}\) A single individual can occasionally have great impact for good or ill—the vigilant whistleblower and the disloyal seller of state secrets provide good examples—but such a person is the exception, not the rule.

\(^{23}\) Cf., §3.6 on the difficulty that the citizen can’t perceive the influence of his vote.

\(^{24}\) One way of approaching the difficulty of identifying the damage would be to apply the Excellence Island scenario. If all the Islanders didn’t vote, what would be the consequence? If the citizen takes an action such that liberal democratic community would be threatened if all his peers did the same (e.g., if no one voted), then that action might constitute the breaking of the lamp that he must take accountability for.
the outcome of the election after the fact even if he were able. The best he can do is choose now to participate more diligently in the future. Thus, looking for a broken lamp amid the citizen’s role requirements is problematic. Counterparts to the broken lamp either do not exist or are difficult to identify. Further, it isn’t clear how the citizen could fix the lamp, nor is it obvious that fixing the lamp would promote and protect liberal democratic ideals.

These questions regarding what the lamp is, how to fix it, and whether fixing it enables the citizen to assist his community in attaining its aims are problematic for the same reason that understanding responsible citizenship as accountability for breaking the law is problematic: the accepting-punishment-for-wrongdoing model of responsibility doesn’t fit the type of responsibility we intend when we consider what it is to be an excellent citizen. When we speak of responsible citizenship we envision citizens who reliably fulfill their roles, not citizens who apologize for not having done so. Consider which is more helpful to a community striving to achieve its ideals: a) a crowd of people who step forward to admit that they have not been good citizens (whether because they have broken the law or because they have failed to fulfill citizenship’s role requirements) and that they have only themselves to blame or b) a crowd of citizens that have acted on their agency to be responsible citizens in the first place? I argue that the answer is (b).

While the citizen who accepts punishment for breaking the law and the citizen who works to make up for past citizenship shortcomings both act in ways that benefit their communities, it is the citizen who fulfills what his role requires of him that enables his community to achieve its aims. Citizens who reliably fulfill their roles (the “being
“responsible” sense of responsibility) are actively promoting and protecting community ideals, while citizens who accept accountability for breaking the law or for not meeting the requirements of their roles are acknowledging that they haven’t promoted community ideals.

Before turning to a consideration of what “being responsible” in reliably fulfilling one’s role entails, however, we should consider the element of “taking responsibility” that does map to what we expect of the excellent citizen: self-reliance. While the accepting-punishment-for-wrongdoing model doesn’t fit well with what we intend by “responsible citizenship,” self-reliance is an integral part of what we generally understand responsible citizenship to be.

Under both the self-reliance and accepting accountability aspects of taking responsibility, the individual recognizes that she is an agent, that she chooses her actions, and that the results of her actions are the outcome of her own choices. The responsible person recognizes that she is not merely a “locus for reaction” but a “doer of deeds” (Spragens 220), that she is an actor and not merely the acted upon. The responsible citizen founds her self-reliance on this recognition. She recognizes herself as an agent and actor who can act to change her own circumstances. The principal ways of being self-reliant are economic and political, but there are other types of self-reliance as well.25

25 I can’t explore these other aspects here, but examples of other areas where the responsible citizen does not ask others to do his work or to carry his burdens for him might include cleaning up after himself, rearing his children, and serving in the military at the request of his country.
Economic self-reliance is straightforward: the responsible citizen works to feed, clothe, and house herself and her dependents to the best of her ability. She doesn’t expect others to provide what she can provide herself. As to the political realm, the responsible citizen maintains her independence in making political decisions. She doesn’t shift the burden of looking after her interests or speaking on her behalf to others. While she may function happily under a representative system where an elected official represents her, she doesn’t allow this delegation of power to change her fundamental outlook: at the end of the day, it is she who must ensure that her views get a hearing, and ultimately it is she who must ensure that her interests have a champion. She must monitor her representatives as well as the representatives of others and follow public debate.

Does a citizen’s self-reliance promote and protect her community’s liberal democratic ideals? Yes, it does. To see this, let’s consider why “needless dependence” as Galston calls it (222), is a problem for liberal democratic communities. When the citizen is not self-reliant, he depends on others to carry his burdens and to do his work for him. This may have either of two results: his government or his peers carry the burdens and do the work that was properly his, or those burdens are dropped and the work is left undone. Both results negatively impact his community. When the citizen’s burdens are picked up

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26 If the citizen’s representative is aware of her interests and is ably defending them, then political self-reliance may require little. In other circumstances (when her representatives oppose her views on legislation very important to her, for example), much more may be demanded. Because this is a question of defending her own interests, such demands do not raise reasonable achievability concerns.

27 Compare this discussion of political self-reliance with the discussion of the same trait under “vigilance” in §3.8.
and his work done by his community, his needless dependence drains finite government resources. Not only does this leave his community less able to pursue projects for the common good, but needless dependence of this type may also direct resources away from others with real needs (those who are dependent out of necessity) or from those who merit a larger share of government resources due to their greater efforts. So the potential negative effects of the citizen’s work being done by others are three: a) there are fewer resources to accomplish community projects, b) more of the needy are left in need, c) those who merit more resources are left unrewarded (raising issues of justice and making the offer of effective incentives difficult).

If the citizen’s work is not done by others, if his burdens go uncarried, the results may be at least as serious. In the economic sphere, the citizen himself may suffer when his food, clothing, and housing needs go unmet. More seriously, his children and others who reasonably look to him for support may suffer. In the political realm, the citizen’s interests may go unrepresented, his positions on the issues may pass unheard. Public debate will be poorer and community decisions may not be as good as they would otherwise have been.

In short, self-reliance promotes the liberal democratic ideals because needless dependence is financially and socially expensive in ways that harm the community’s ability to attain its ideals. Self-reliance fosters governmental stability by ensuring that limited community resources are reserved for necessities. It increases opportunity for cooperation for the common good and underscores civic equality by preparing citizens to work as partners rather than parasites. Finally, it sustains self-government by ensuring that citizens
Many people are simply responsible all-around. Taking responsibility for oneself by being self-reliant is thus a critical part of responsible citizenship.

I have considered both of the aspects of responsibility addressed by the focus thinkers: accepting accountability and being self-reliant. Both are forms of responsibility understood in the sense of “taking responsibility.” I concluded that while accountability’s accepting-punishment-for-wrongdoing model of citizenship doesn’t fit well with what we intend by responsible citizenship, self-reliance is an important part of what it is to be a responsible citizen. I turn now to the other sense of responsibility that I have identified, “being responsible,” in order to consider whether it also merits a place in our understanding of responsible citizenship.

**Being Responsible**

When I introduced the two senses of responsibility, I defined “being responsible” as fulfilling one’s role in a reliable manner. Defining responsibility in terms of role fulfillment fits well with common usage. Responsibility is a trait that we typically associate with roles rather than with isolated actions. For example, one might be a responsible student, a responsible employee, or a responsible parent. In each case, responsibility is evaluated against the given role’s requirements. It is not that one is responsible and also happens to be a parent. One is a responsible parent because one fulfills one’s parental role.28

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28 Many people are simply responsible all-around. We call the person “responsible” (suggesting general, overall responsibility) who acts responsibly in each of her roles.
Although we may predicate responsibility or irresponsibility of isolated actions, we determine the status of the action by comparing it to our expectations of the role holder. It is understanding what a given role involves and what it aims at that allows us to judge isolated actions as responsible or irresponsible. For example, to be a responsible student, the student must prepare for and attend class. So if we notice the student skipping class, we judge that act irresponsible. To be a responsible mail carrier, the mail carrier must work to deliver each item to its appointed address in a punctual fashion. So if we see the mail carrier apologizing to the chatty neighbor that he can’t stop and talk, we judge his offer of regret responsible. To be a responsible parent, a parent must work to ensure his child’s physical and emotional well-being. So if we notice a child with no coat out in the cold, we may conclude that her parents’ failure to furnish her with one was irresponsible.

One-time actions do not establish responsibility. While one can be said to act responsibly on a given task, or to act responsibly on a given day or week, responsibility is ultimately judged over a sustained time frame, according to what is appropriate to the given role. In order to be judged responsible, the mailcarrier must deliver the mail correctly not just today, but on an ongoing basis. The parent must see that his child has adequate food, clothing, and shelter, and must take her on outings, not just today, but throughout her juvenile years. The responsible student will study not just for this exam,
While we ultimately judge responsibility over a sustained time frame, interpreting the sustained aspect too strictly leads to error. Common usage is a good guide in this respect. We wouldn’t call the student who neglects to study for a single minor quiz during his entire college career an irresponsible student (although choosing to skip studying for that quiz would qualify as an irresponsible act). A consistent pattern of fulfilling one’s role is what responsibility requires.

Therefore, we say that responsibility consists in fulfilling one’s role reliably.

One question that must be resolved regarding responsibility as reliable role fulfillment is the question of what roles it is that the citizen must reliably fulfill. Must she perform all her roles responsibly, just her key societal roles, or just her role as citizen?

There are two possible avenues of response. The first concludes that in order to succeed in attaining its aims, liberal democratic community needs citizens who fulfill not only their citizen roles responsibly, but all their roles (or at least those roles relevant to their society’s success: roles such as parent, employee, and community leader). The other avenue of response suggests that when we consider responsibility as a citizen virtue, the relevant role is the role of citizen alone.

The first line of response suggests that the virtue of responsibility requires that the citizen reliably fulfill not just his role as citizen, but his other key societal roles as well. This claim is founded on the observation that liberal democratic community needs not just responsible citizens, but also responsible employees, parents, community leaders, and so forth if it is to succeed. Liberal democratic communities need workers ready to report to their jobs as much as they need citizens ready to report for jury duty. They need responsible parents who teach their children about citizenship just as much they need

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29 While we ultimately judge responsibility over a sustained time frame, interpreting the sustained aspect too strictly leads to error. Common usage is a good guide in this respect. We wouldn’t call the student who neglects to study for a single minor quiz during his entire college career an irresponsible student (although choosing to skip studying for that quiz would qualify as an irresponsible act). A consistent pattern of fulfilling one’s role is what responsibility requires.
citizens who are ready to participate in the political sphere themselves. And they need responsible community leaders just as much as they need responsible citizens to evaluate these leaders.

The second line of response argues that citizen responsibility concerns citizen performance in the citizen role alone. Which of these responses is correct? Must the citizen reliably fulfill all of his key societal roles or does it suffice for excellent citizenship if he concentrates on the citizen role alone? This initially appears a good question to resolve by employing the Excellence Island thought experiment first introduced in Chapter Three. If the Islanders are taught that responsibility understood as a citizen virtue means reliably fulfilling the citizen role only, will they be less able to assist their community in achieving its aims than if they believed that responsibility meant reliably fulfilling all of one’s key societal roles? It seems clear that such citizens would be of less use to their communities.

If the Islanders adopted the more expansive interpretation of responsibility, teachers, police, parents, and legislators would all reliably fulfill their different roles. Under the citizen role only interpretation, it appears that many of them would not. This is because the Islanders do only what they believe excellent citizenship requires of them and no more—unless by coincidence or because it coincides with their interests. On the narrow interpretation of responsibility, Island parents, teachers, legislators, and police would be less likely to fulfill their roles because their conception of excellent citizenship would not mandate reliably fulfilling these roles. Thus, the Excellence Island experiment
suggests that responsibility understood as reliably fulfilling all of one’s key societal roles is the better candidate for citizen virtue.

However, employing the Excellence Island experiment to answer the question of which roles the citizen must fulfill reveals limitations to its usefulness. Although many citizens must manifest excellence in order for the community to achieve its liberal democratic ideals, the success of liberal democratic community does not hinge on citizens alone. The success of liberal democratic community depends on many diverse roles and role holders. In the political sphere liberal democracy’s ability to succeed may require or be aided by a responsible judiciary, legislature, and executive. In the public sphere it may require or be aided by responsible educators, journalists, social activists, and public intellectuals. In the private sphere it may require or be aided by responsible parents, spouses, children, and siblings.

In contrast to both the resources and the requirements of liberal democratic community, the focus of the Excellence Island experiment is the Island’s citizenry alone. As a result, the experiment can only suggest which conception of responsibility would be superior if the sole resource for attaining community ideals were the citizenry. This limits its usefulness. Because the citizenry is not liberal democratic community’s sole resource for attaining its ideals, employing Excellence Island scenarios to judge between virtue candidates is dangerous in cases such as this one. The danger is that we will adopt a conception of excellent citizenship that is more demanding than it needs to be, due to our neglect of the place that other roles play in liberal democratic community’s success.
Given that a) reliably fulfilling all of one’s key societal roles is more demanding than reliably fulfilling one’s citizen role alone (because it places greater limitations on the citizen’s ability to pursuing his own vision of the good), and because b) fulfilling one’s citizen role suffices for liberal democratic citizenship (since those in other roles properly assist the state with matters under their purview), I conclude that the superior virtue candidate is responsibility understood as reliable fulfillment of the citizen role alone. Concern for reasonable achievability requires that any conception of citizenship we construct allow for individual pursuit of the good as far as is possible consistent with attaining liberal democratic community’s other liberal democratic ideals. Therefore, virtues accepted into the citizen virtue catalog must demand no more of the citizen than is necessary for attaining liberal democratic community’s other aims. Responsibility understood as reliably fulfilling the citizen role alone is less demanding than responsibility understood as reliably fulfilling all key societal roles. Because other roles and role holders are available to assist liberal democratic community in attaining its aims, responsibility understood as fulfilling all one’s key societal roles is more demanding than is necessary. This isn’t to deny the fact that to succeed liberal democratic community will need more than citizens who fulfill their roles to achieve its ideals. However, if liberal democratic community is to succeed, other roles (responsible bureaucrats and presidents, responsible generals and janitors) with their own associated virtues, will have to meet these needs.\(^{30}\)

\(^{30}\) One might worry that this just shifts obligations to other roles which may then in turn fall afoul of reasonable achievability requirements themselves. However, the constraints of reasonable achievability would not apply to these other roles in the same way. For example, because many of these other roles are voluntary (elective roles like president and legislator, for example), there is no reason the role’s demands need be
So, responsibility as a citizen virtue is best understood as a matter of reliably fulfilling the citizen role. Two questions remain: 1) What does reliably fulfilling the citizen role involve? And 2) how does manifesting this type of responsibility assist one’s community in attaining its ideals? The citizen who reliably fulfills his role is a) dependable, b) knows his role, and c) recognizes its importance. I will explain each of these characteristics in turn. In the course of doing so, I will also answer the second question, demonstrating how each characteristic allows the citizen to better assist his community in attaining its ideals.

The citizen must be dependable. It does not suffice for a citizen simply to fulfill his role, he must fulfill it reliably. To enjoy stability (one of the liberal democratic ideals), a community must have a base of citizens that consistently fulfill their citizen roles. The community must have a substantial body of citizens that can be counted on to vote, serve on juries, pay taxes, obey the law, and serve in the military when drafted. Such citizens must be ready to perform their roles without reference to personal whim or convenience. The only group that can fill this role is the community’s citizenry. No other roles or role holders can take their place. Therefore, if liberal democratic community is to achieve its aims, the citizen must be dependable. The citizen who cannot be depended upon to perform his role reliably is not a responsible citizen. As I argued above, responsibility is manifest over a sustained time frame. The citizen who votes in one election, then skips the next two, who occasionally pays his taxes, or who sometimes accepts assignment to jury limited so as to preserve room for the citizen’s pursuit of the good. If the citizen understands and chooses the role, fulfilling its demands may be understood as part of her pursuit of the good.
duty, is not a responsible citizen. The excellent citizen (who is also a responsible citizen), is a citizen who votes, serves on juries, and pay his taxes consistently over time.

With the exception of those whose roles are easily fulfilled either through luck or mere coincidence, those who reliably fulfill their roles are those who know their roles and consciously work to perform them successfully. Most roles worth discussing require more than luck and coincidence to be fulfilled. Knowing one’s role is important to fulfilling it successfully. Take, for example, the bank teller. The teller’s role is to conduct the bank’s transactions honestly, efficiently, and accurately. He must do everything he can to ensure that his drawer will balance at the end of each day. The teller who knows his role doesn’t let gossip, daydreams, or his friendship with bank patrons interfere with this goal. In addition, the teller who knows his role understands that his job is not the same as the chief executive’s. It isn’t his place to worry about the bank’s stock price or to speak with the press on the bank’s behalf. He also knows that he is not the custodian. His time at work shouldn’t be spent tidying the bathrooms or disposing of trash.

The teller example suggests three reasons why knowing one’s role is important. When one doesn’t know his role he may: a) Perform the wrong role, overstepping his authority or failing to perform the role’s minimal requirements, b) be distracted by other pursuits, c) neglect the true aims of his role. Although it would be a problem if a citizen began ordering people around as though he were the president or a military general, it is unlikely that role confusion will lead the citizen to overstep the bounds of his authority. More likely, the role-ignorant or role-confused citizen won’t recognize the important place of citizens in the self-governing state and will thus underperform. The role-ignorant
or role-confused citizen may also be distracted by other pursuits. Attention to some other role he holds or a hobby may make him the equivalent of the restroom-tidying or gossip-mongering teller.31 Finally, the main problem with the citizen who doesn’t know his role is that this ignorance leads him to neglect striving to achieve the role’s principal aims. Like the teller who doesn’t know that his most important job is to ensure that his drawer balances at the end of the day, such a citizen has a difficult time fulfilling his role simply because he doesn’t know what it is. Therefore he can’t consciously make and act on plans to succeed in achieving those aims.

The responsible citizen is able to fulfill his role because he knows what his role is and he strives to carry it out. The responsible citizen knows what his role aims towards. He knows that he must assist his state in achieving its aims. He therefore has an idea of what those aims are. While it would be a mistake to ask the citizen to be a philosopher or a citizenship theorist, it is important that in attempting to avoid this error we do not fall into another at least as serious: not requiring the citizen to have some minimal awareness of the liberal democratic ideals and basic duties of citizenship. The citizen will have difficulty showing allegiance to liberal democratic ideals and working to see that his institutions embody them if he doesn’t know what they are. The citizen cannot monitor public officials and institutions effectively unless he knows what he must guard against. The citizen cannot promote liberal democratic ideals in public fora unless he has some idea

31 A common variation of this problem for citizenship is that of the citizen focusing on one aspect of his role, and then neglecting or actually being unaware of the role’s other requirements. Such a citizen may spend all of his time on what we might term his citizenship hobby—campaigning for a certain cause or coaching the youth soccer league, for example—while failing to fulfill his role’s other aspects.
of what they are. He can’t channel his autonomy towards the service of his state unless he knows what it is that his state needs to do.

One might object that there are many aspects of citizenship that citizens perform well without giving any thought to their roles as citizens. For example, one might coach a neighborhood youth soccer team, not because he understands that he is promoting the ideal of cooperation for the common good, but because he enjoys it. In coaching a youth soccer team, such a citizen is acting as a good citizen even if he gives no thought to his duties or aims as a citizen or to anything beyond the satisfaction of teaching soccer to youngsters on a crisp Saturday morning.

While it is true that there are many things one can do to be a good citizen that do not require any conscious contemplation of liberal democratic ideals or citizenship duties, it is important to remember that to be an excellent citizen one must perform all aspects of the citizen role. Coaching a youth soccer team is not in itself sufficient for excellent citizenship. Many other necessary aspects of excellent citizenship do require that the citizen be cognizant of his aims as a citizen.

The third characteristic of the citizen who reliably fulfills his role is that he recognizes the role’s importance. He knows that in a system where government by the people is a high ideal, there is no replacement for the citizen. He is aware that his community’s ability to function well as a community and to achieve its aims rests in no small measure on his own actions and those of his peers. Because of this, the responsible citizen takes his role seriously. He accepts his status as citizen and the burdens of being a citizen. This means recognizing himself and his peers as agents and recognizing that his
actions will affect his community’s ability to attain its ideals either positively or negatively. The responsible citizen has a strong sense of stewardship towards his community; its quest for the liberal democratic ideals becomes his own.\(^{32}\) Because the citizen is more likely to achieve what he actively aims at than what he does not, this makes him more effective in promoting and protecting his community’s ideals.

In this section I identified two senses of responsibility: taking responsibility and being responsible. I concluded that one of the senses of taking responsibility championed by the focus thinkers, accepting accountability for wrongdoing, although praiseworthy does not reflect what we mean by responsible citizenship. On the other hand, I concluded that taking responsibility for oneself is an important element of responsible citizenship. The virtue of self-reliance is crucial in maintaining liberal democratic community’s ability to achieve its ideals. I also argued that “being responsible” is an important part of responsible citizenship. I explained being responsible as a matter of reliably fulfilling one’s citizen role. I suggested that the citizen who reliably fulfills his role is dependable, knows his role, and recognizes its importance.

### 5.5 Restraint: Survey

*The excellent citizen moderates the demands she makes on her government.*

Let’s look next at the restraint family of self-governance. Galston and Kingwell are the focus thinkers who discuss restraint. Both argue that the excellent citizen moderates what she demands of her government. Galston discusses restraint in

\(^{32}\) This is not to the exclusion of his own pursuit of the good, but insofar as he functions as citizen.
expectation of government-provided services, while Kingwell is concerned with the citizen’s response to unsatisfactory governmental performance.

Let’s turn first to Galston’s discussion of restraint regarding our expectations of governmental services (224). Because government financial resources are limited, citizens must sacrifice both their financial means and the benefits they desire. The excellent citizen recognizes her government’s financial constraints and structures her political behavior accordingly.

The excellent citizen’s recognition of governmental constraints has three parts: a) asking only for the services that her government can afford, b) being willing to pay for the services she asks for, and c) agreeing to painful fiscal responsibility measures when necessary (Galston 225). First, Galston argues that the excellent citizen asks for only the public services his government can afford (225). Such a citizen has the “ability to moderate public desires in the face of public limits” (“Civic Education” 93). This type of restraint is essential to protect long-term community interests from citizens’ short-term desires (224). The excellent citizen either scales back her desire for public services to what her government can pay for, or she finds other avenues to provide what she seeks.
Second, the citizen must be willing to pay for the services she asks for. Every government has limited financial resources. With few exceptions, governments must look to their citizens as the source of these revenues. In addition to recognizing that she should request only what her government is able to provide, the excellent citizen is also aware that someone must pay for the services she requests. Galston argues that the excellent citizen puts her wallet behind her demands, rather than displacing the costs of public services to future generations (225). Finally, the excellent citizen is willing to accept painful fiscal responsibility measures when necessary (224-225). These measures might take the form of higher tax rates so that the government can better pay its bills and cuts in government services so that the bills that continue to come in are lower.

Kingwell introduces the other type of restraint I wish to consider: restraint in expectation of government performance. He suggests that the excellent citizen tolerates governmental “imperfections” (261). However, he doesn’t specify what he means by imperfections, nor does he detail which types of imperfections should be tolerated. In an attempt to draw out this idea, I will interpret “imperfections” to mean the shortcomings that we perceive in our governments, problems both real and imagined. These include

33 Although Galston doesn’t address this, I take it that one can be too poor to help pay for essential government services and still be an excellent citizen. The single mother who pays very few taxes is not a bad citizen when she supports and votes for the school bond measure. Her vote for better services when she can’t personally afford to pay for them doesn’t constitute a lack of restraint on her part. To be an excellent citizen she must vote with her community’s ability to pay in mind and must recognize that financial resources devoted to one set of programs diminishes the community’s ability to support others. (The fact that she isn’t in a position to pay taxes could mean that she lacks the virtue of self-reliance (see §5.4), but that is a separate question). The important point vis-á-vis restraint is that those with the means to pay must be willing to be taxed for the services they expect their governments to provide.
limitations on what it can accomplish, our frustrations with its inefficiency, and our dismay at the fact that it sometimes moves in directions other than what we would choose. I will explain restraint in expectation of government performance as a trait that involves patience with government shortcomings balanced against healthy vigilance. The excellent citizen recognizes the constraints that his government operates under and moderates his expectations of government accordingly.

5.6 Restraint: Application and Analysis

I will begin this section by considering how restraint in expectation of government services enables the citizen to assist his community in attaining its aims. I will then explore whether the scope for this type of restraint extends beyond Galston’s focus on limited government financial resources to encompass other limited resource situations. Next, I will take up restraint in expectation of governmental performance, inquiring why it’s appropriate to our context.

Restraint in Expectation of Government-Provided Services

So, how does restraint in expectation of government-provided services enable the citizen to assist her community in attaining its aims? When the citizen and her peers limit their demands for services to the services that their government can afford and are willing to pay for the services that they demand, this promotes the liberal democratic ideals of stability and self-government.

This is easy to see by contemplating what will happen if they do the reverse. If the citizen and her peers demand more services than their government can afford and are
unwilling to be taxed for the services that they demand, their government will ultimately face financial ruin. When their state finds itself unable to repay its creditors, the citizens reap the fruit of their lack of restraint. Parties outside the control of their government force the decisions the citizens did not make themselves. Abrupt cuts in services and the sudden imposition of heavy taxes cause suffering and may result in civil unrest. Financial ruin threatens the self-governing status of their government as well as its stability. If the people don’t govern themselves by demanding fiscal discipline in both spending and taxing from their representatives, others will step in to fill the void.\textsuperscript{34}

Restraint in expectation of government-provided services is thus an important citizen virtue. The citizen who demands only the services his government can afford and who is willing to pay for the services he demands protects his government’s stability and promotes its ability to be self-governing.

The potential scope for this type of restraint extends beyond the government-provided services that are Galston’s focus. Limited government financial resources spark his call for restraint, but the need for restraint extends to other areas of life limited by finite resources as well. Energy is an obvious example of why this type of restraint is important in other limited resource situations. Suppose that Excellence Island suffers from a not-so-excellent energy shortage. If the Islanders include this expanded conception of restraint as part of their notion of citizen virtue, they will: show restraint in the amount of energy they demand (appropriate to the limited supply), be willing to pay the cost of what they

\textsuperscript{34} Regardless of whether these others are fatigue-clad revolutionaries, the leaders of a coup d’etat, or suits from Wall Street, the World Bank, or the IMF, the result is the same. The people are no longer directing their own future, they are no longer governing.
To show excellence in this regard, the citizen first recognizes the need for restraint. This means recognizing a limited supply of electricity or a shortage of water. Next, she moderates her demands for the energy resource in question. She might water her lawn only after dark to save water or replace all her incandescent bulbs with fluorescent ones to conserve electricity. If necessary, the citizen will accept painful measures to meet the demands of a crisis. She might accept a rationing scheme or give up watering her lawn altogether. She might suspend her use of major appliances until after peak electricity usage hours. The citizen also pays the cost of what she demands. This might include a willingness to see additional power plants built or to pay the true cost for goods and services with hidden, resource-draining costs.

In the best cases, because energy problems of this type may result in nothing more than mild discomfort and moderate inconvenience, this type of restraint may appear not to merit citizen virtue status because it isn’t clear that liberal democratic ideals are at stake (Having a comfortable and convenient life, while desirable, is not one of the liberal democratic ideals). However, contemplation of the worst cases makes it clear that this view is mistaken. One need only imagine the worldwide death toll attributable to disputes over water and oil to appreciate that this type of restraint is essential to the community’s demand, and be willing to accept painful measures to deal with the undersupply as necessary. If this expanded notion of restraint is not part of their conception of citizen virtue, they will likely not do these things. The island’s energy crisis will be exacerbated and their community will suffer as a result.

35 To show excellence in this regard, the citizen first recognizes the need for restraint. This means recognizing a limited supply of electricity or a shortage of water. Next, she moderates her demands for the energy resource in question. She might water her lawn only after dark to save water or replace all her incandescent bulbs with fluorescent ones to conserve electricity. If necessary, the citizen will accept painful measures to meet the demands of a crisis. She might accept a rationing scheme or give up watering her lawn altogether. She might suspend her use of major appliances until after peak electricity usage hours. The citizen also pays the cost of what she demands. This might include a willingness to see additional power plants built or to pay the true cost for goods and services with hidden, resource-draining costs.
stability and to its ability to govern itself. The expanded conception thus appears superior.

**Restraint in Expectation of Governmental Performance**

The other type of restraint I will discuss is restraint in expectation of governmental performance. Because it is not discussed by the focus thinkers (save for Kingwell’s brief, rather vague remarks) rather than raising questions regarding others’ accounts in this section, I will offer my own account of what restraint in expectation of governmental performance is and why it is important as a citizen virtue.

Every citizen is faced with a government that does not do all that he might wish it to. I will discuss three ways in which government performance often disappoints its citizens and then I will explain the excellent citizen’s disposition towards his government’s performance. The first way in which governments disappoint their citizens is in their limitations. We may wish that our government could provide all its citizens with the highest level of healthcare available. It cannot. We may wish that government could promise an inexhaustible supply of electricity and water at low rates without harm to the

36 When the citizen shows restraint in his expectations regarding limited energy resources, he contributes to his community’s stability and to its ability to be self-governing. There may be other benefits as well. The excellent citizen might find that accepting painful measures to meet the demands of a crisis prompts an increase in his sense of civic membership (which in turn promotes the ideal of cooperation for the common good). Being in the same boat (even an unpleasant or unhappy one) with other citizens and community members increases his sense of connection to them. Such a situation may allow neighbors to become more closely knit together as everyone exchanges their tales of privation. Of course, bonding-through-hardship experiences arise more naturally after natural disasters than in a resource shortage situation where the opportunities for finger pointing are plentiful. In these situations, the excellent citizen must find a balance between vigilance (as he evaluates the performance of government officials) and restraint.

256
environment. It cannot. We may desire that our government could eliminate all incidence of crime, yet remain liberal. This is unlikely. All governments are limited both in what they can provide and in what they can accomplish. A government can only increase its financial resources within a certain range; the supply of certain natural resources at its command is fixed; its power over human behavior has limits. We will desire things that our government will not be able to provide.

A second area in which a liberal democratic government may disappoint its citizens is in its inefficiency, especially as compared to other (non-liberal or non-democratic) forms of government and business. In a liberal democracy like our own, there are many occasions for inefficiency. Our legislative system is inefficient as myriad interest groups and parties have their say, as a bill works its way through lobbyists, committees, legislative bodies, and more committees. Our judicial system is inefficient as stays, continuances, and appeal after appeal pile on top of each other, where a jury first hears the case, and then one court, and then another. The federal system and the checks and balances provided for by our constitution are inefficient. The bureaucracy essential for administering a large state defines inefficiency. The regulatory bodies and the layers of regulation meant to protect us are also occasions for inefficiency.

The final problem that I will discuss here is government’s tendency to provoke and irritate its citizens by moving in directions they do not desire. In a democracy, none of us get to play the role of absolute ruler. Our government may often move in directions we do not like, come to judgments that we do not agree with, craft laws by which we have no
wish to abide, and make decisions that are very different than those that we would make ourselves.

So, what is the excellent citizen’s disposition towards governmental performance? The excellence citizen evidences the virtue of restraint. She moderates her expectations of government but does not drop them. She evaluates governmental performance against a realistic assessment of what is possible for a liberal democratic government in a world of limited resources and human free will. There are four qualities that characterize the excellent citizen’s response to these disappointments. She a) identifies the nature of the problem, b) refrains from empty complaints, c) uses influence fairly, and d) eschews civil disobedience.

First, the excellent citizen recognizes the nature of the problem she has with her government’s performance. She asks whether it is something that she should accept as unavoidable (such as the fact that government is limited), something to tolerate as the cost of being governed in a liberal democratic society (such as government’s inefficiency or the fact that her government will sometimes go in a direction other than what she would prefer), or something that she and others should work to change.

This categorization will often be a matter of degree. The virtues of restraint and vigilance are complements. Restraint towards governmental performance reminds us that vigilance taken too far can be vice. Vigilance performs the same function for restraint. Too much restraint or restraint towards the wrong things is vicious. For example, limitations on what government can accomplish are unavoidable. The excellent citizen revises her expectations to reflect what her government can reasonably accomplish.
However, this doesn’t mean that the citizen should accept just any explanation that involves limited resources. Artificial scarcity is not something the excellent citizen need accept with alacrity. Such a citizen is justified in responding to misuse or misallocation of governmental resources, and may even be obligated to do so.

In like manner, it is appropriate for the citizen to accept governmental inefficiency as the cost of being governed in a liberal democratic society, yet also appropriate for her to campaign for reform that will lessen the effect of unnecessary inefficiency. Finally, when the excellent citizen disagrees with government actions and decisions, she will recognize such disagreement as the cost of representative democracy and accept the decision of the majority. However, if she believes the government actions she disagrees with to be unjust, she will not shrug her shoulders and go about her own business. Any account of citizen virtue that directs the citizen to sit idly by in the face of injustices like institutionalized racism is malconceived. Any citizen who is so restrained toward government that he does not respond to injustice is not virtuous.

The second way the excellent citizen responds to disappointment with her government is to refrain from empty complaints. This is closely connected with identifying the nature of the problem she has with governmental performance. The citizen who recognizes that government cannot provide what she desires because its powers are limited and its resources are unavoidably scarce will school her expectations accordingly rather than complain. The excellent citizen has other virtues to call on, particularly deliberative excellence, that enable her to change what would have otherwise been complaints into constructive arguments for resource reallocation, measures to reduce
government inefficiency, and arguments for the political path that the citizen would like to see her government take.

Rather than making empty complaints, the excellent citizen is creative in seeking other avenues to meet her needs. The excellent citizen looks elsewhere for solutions to her problems not because she is cynical about her government’s abilities, but because she adopts a realistic attitude towards the demands on her government versus its resources. The case is the same with inefficiency; rather than complain, the excellent citizen will turn her energies towards trying to change what she does not like if she is unable to accept it.

The third way in which the excellent citizen responds to disappointment with her government is by using whatever influence she may have fairly. If an excellent citizen finds herself in a position of power or privilege where she has better access to governmental channels and the reins of power than others citizens, she will not use this influence to circumvent the system at the expense of her fellows. In the case of government’s limitations, this means the citizen will not use her power to divert extra resources towards herself (or the projects she favors). In the case of governmental inefficiency, this means that she will not use influence to jump ahead in the system leaving a backlog of equally deserving others who have waited longer. When majority rule drives government in ways she doesn’t favor, not using influence unfairly means the excellent citizen won’t use unusual power or influence to subvert democratic rule.

The fourth way in which the excellent citizen responds to disappointment with her government is by eschewing civil disobedience, except under certain carefully delimited circumstances.

37 Cf., Spragens’ discussion of the civic virtues that libertarianism requires (216).
and defined conditions. Galston, Jones and Macedo each briefly discuss the conditions under which it might be appropriate for the citizen to disobey the law. They are unanimous in concluding that a “heavy burden of proof” (Galston 221) must be met before civil disobedience is justifiable. Jones reminds us that the channels of law must be tried first, for only “evil which cannot be resisted within the law” (86) is the proper subject of civil disobedience. Macedo explains that the excellent citizen responds to government in this way when government has “become destructive of the proper ends of government” (272).

As I explained in my discussion of allegiance to liberal democratic community, political protest is consistent with excellent citizenship (§4.2). a) Citizens must either follow legally prescribed channels or the cost of fomenting instability³⁸ must be outweighed by the cost of continuing with the status quo. b) In those (comparatively rare) cases where civil disobedience is justified, citizens must choose the least disruptive, least community destabilizing means that will accomplish the purpose for which their disobedience is justified. c) Civil disobedience must be constructive in intent: the only appropriate aim of disobedience is establishing a community that is substantially closer to realizing liberal democratic ideals. Merely overthrowing the status quo or expressing disapproval of one’s government are not aims that justify instability’s costs.

³⁸ Because a lack of stability endangers all of the other liberal democratic ideals, the cost of continuing with the status quo would have to be assessed as very high in order for it to exceed the cost of instability. Such a status quo would probably include a government that was actively working to defeat liberal democratic ideals.
In sum, the excellent citizen responds to disappointment with her government by examining her expectations and adjusting them to reflect both what is possible for any government and what is possible for her liberal democratic government in particular. She reacts with good will and understanding to those problems which are unavoidable given the character of her government. Her recognition of the nature of these problems gives her the patience to let the system run its course and the good will to hang with the system until it does. The excellent citizen does not circumvent proper channels through an unfair use of influence nor through civil disobedience (unless a heavy burden of proof is met). She does not resort to empty complaints. She either diverts her energy elsewhere (in the case of unavoidable problems) or focuses her energies in order to solve the problem (exercising her deliberative excellence to effect real change, or in extreme conditions, turning to civil disobedience).

The value of restraint in expectation of governmental performance is clear: the polity where citizens show this type of restraint is better equipped to meet the demands of self-government than the polity that is not. Citizens who identify the nature of their disappointments with government and refrain from empty complaints have more time and energy to focus on positive tasks. Citizens who don’t abuse their influence and citizens who eschew civil disobedience (with certain carefully defined exceptions) allow their governments to pursue the ends of government more efficiently.
5.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I introduced the final third of the preliminary citizen virtue catalog. This part of the virtue catalog treats the citizen role as it relates to liberal democratic community. A self-governing community requires citizens who can govern themselves. Such citizens are autonomous, responsible, self-reliant, and restrained.

Autonomous citizens consider their circumstances, reflect critically upon their principles, decide how to live, and then act based on those reflections. A responsible citizen recognizes that she is an agent, that she chooses her actions, and that the results of her actions are the outcome of her own choices. She knows her role as citizen, recognizes its importance, and reliably fulfills it. Self-reliant citizens recognize that they can act to change their own circumstances. Such a citizen works to feed, clothe and house himself and his dependents to the best of his ability. He doesn’t expect others to provide for him what he can provide for himself.

A citizen well-prepared for the demands of self-government also shows restraint. She moderates the demands she makes on her government, limiting her demand for services to what her government can afford. Her restraint also extends to other areas of life limited by finite resources. She shows restraint in the amount of energy resources (e.g., water, electricity, etc.) she demands, is willing to pay what they cost, and to accept painful measures to deal with their undersupply. She is also restrained in her expectations of governmental performance, moderating her expectations, but not dropping them. She evaluates governmental performance against a realistic assessment of what is possible for a liberal democratic government in a world of limited resources and human free will. In
response to disappointments with her community, she identifies the nature of the problem, refrains from empty complaints, uses influence fairly, and eschews civil disobedience.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

I will conclude by addressing why this inquiry was needed, what I did to meet the need, and what this inquiry has accomplished. Finally, I will discuss how this inquiry intersects with other work in philosophy and political theory.

6.1 Why This Inquiry Was Needed

I will first address why this inquiry was needed. This dissertation contributes to current work in philosophy and political theory by identifying and filling a gap in contemporary scholarship. Broadly speaking, that gap is a lack of attention to the nature of civic virtue. In surveying the relevant literature, I found it easy to find mention of the need for civic virtue, but very difficult to locate any extended discussion of its basis, its nature, or its constituents.

Among neo-liberals and communitarians this lack of attention to civic virtue is especially disturbing, as both groups are committed to programs that demand such attention. While many of these thinkers discuss the importance of civic virtue, very few give sufficient attention to what it is or to which specific virtues comprise it. In particular, citizen virtues (among the principal constituents of civic virtue) have not received the study that they deserve. If, as communitarians and neo-liberals argue, civic virtue is

265
essential to the preservation and perpetuation of liberal democratic community, then this lack of attention to the nature of civic virtue and its constituents is a serious lack indeed. My project has been to work toward filling this gap by giving the citizen virtues the careful attention that they deserve.

6.2 What I Did to Meet the Need

I concluded that in order to give the citizen virtues the attention they deserve I needed to construct a catalog of citizen virtues (not just a mere list of the names of promising sounds traits) backed by an explanatory framework to defend it. From a practical perspective, having a catalog rather than a mere list to refer to is important because knowing only that “respect” is a citizen virtue doesn’t inform me how to act or what to teach my children. It doesn’t tell me whether respect means restraining myself from violating the rights of others or whether it means insisting on respect for others’ rights and my own.\(^1\) Even if “respect” is specified as “respect for the rights of others,” this still doesn’t tell me enough about what that means, what it includes, and what its limits are. Having a virtue catalog to refer to allows a deeper, more accurate understanding of the nature of each virtue and what it entails than is possible to glean from the name of the trait alone.

To construct and defend such a catalog and in order to have a basis for the claims I make in building it, I had to develop an explanatory framework. I argued in Chapter Two that this is where previous accounts have fallen short. While we must emulate Aristotle in

\(^1\) I argue that respect for rights means both these things in §4.6.
expecting only as much precision as the subject matter allows, it is striking that
contemporary accounts of citizen virtue have often offered no basis for favoring one
account of citizen virtue over another, no grounds for deciding whether a quality
nominated as a virtue should actually be recognized as a citizen virtue. Granted, there is
no hope of discovering a foundation for citizen virtue that offers the comfort of
mathematical certainty. But granting this shouldn’t mean that I must rely on unsupported
opinion alone, nor should it mean that in constructing my catalog I must turn my back on
the possibility of offering any justification for my conclusions other than mean intuition.

It’s not only that I need not turn my back on the possibility of offering reasons—I
must not. If work on the citizen virtues is to have any practical point at all, I must have a
basis upon which to pin my claims and make my arguments, an anchor that unsupported
opinion and mean intuition cannot offer. (It won’t do—or it shouldn’t—to testify to the
state curriculum board that cooperation should be inculcated in the state’s high school
civic courses because “it seems like an important civic virtue to me.”) In other words, I
must have a more objective explanatory framework.

Fortunately, as I concluded in Chapter Two, careful consideration of the role-
based nature of citizen virtue provides the grounds for the explanatory framework that
previous accounts have lacked. Given that:

a) Citizen virtues are those traits that enable the citizen to succeed in his role as
citizen.

b) The role of liberal democratic citizen is to assist one’s community in protecting,
promoting, and realizing the liberal democratic ideals.
the appropriate framework for assessing both individual virtue candidates and accounts of citizen virtue is straightforward. To assess a given virtue candidate, I ask whether the candidate is a quality that will enable the citizen to assist his community in protecting, promoting, and realizing the liberal democratic ideals. To evaluate competing accounts of citizen virtue, I ask which of the catalogs better enables the citizen to carry out this mission.

After formulating this explanatory framework in Chapter Two, I turned to the construction of a preliminary catalog of citizen virtues in Chapters Three, Four, and Five. I applied the explanatory framework to six of the more complete contemporary accounts of citizen virtue in order to settle on eleven virtues under three categories: community citizen virtues (cooperation, participation, vigilance, deliberative excellence, and obedience to law), liberal citizen virtues (allegiance to liberal democratic community, respect, and tolerance), and self-governance citizen virtues (autonomy, restraint, and responsibility).

The Nature of the Excellent Citizen

Equipped with this preliminary catalog of citizen virtue, I can now sketch the excellent citizen, the person who successfully fulfills her citizen role.

The excellent citizen cooperates. She is willing to work with others to accomplish civic tasks. These tasks are not limited to obligatory civic tasks (e.g., serving on a jury), but extend to political (e.g., passing out flyers for a political campaign), and broadly civil society (e.g., coordinating the neighborhood association) tasks as well. The citizen’s willingness to cooperate is predicated on the expectation that others in society will reciprocate and cooperate accordingly.
The excellent citizen is willing to participate. Not only does she vote and stay informed on the important issues of the day, she takes an active role in the political process of her community. Participation includes not just the making of justice claims, but broader forms of participation such as voting, running for office, and encouraging others to run.

The excellent citizen is politically self-reliant. She weighs the issues and decisions of her day for herself, and does not allow outside influences to determine her thinking or her choices. Assertive towards political authority, she demands the respect due the citizen of a democratic state; she refuses to be bullied by those in power.

The excellent citizen is vigilant. His vigilance is both critical and evaluative in nature. It is critical in that he is on the lookout for possible abuses of power and monitors incumbents for signs of wrongdoing. It is evaluative in that he assesses the character, ability, and all-around performance (or potential performance) of both officeholders and officeseekers.

The excellent citizen manifests deliberative excellence. He is willing to listen seriously to others’ views (although he is not necessarily open to accepting them). He is willing to express his views on public matters truthfully and with sincerity. Willing and able to express and defend his views clearly, he abides by the canons of logic and offers relevant reasons in support of his claims.

The excellent citizen obeys the law.
The excellent citizen shows allegiance to liberal democratic community. She is loyal to the specific political community of which she is a part and to liberal democratic institutions.

The excellent citizen tolerates diverse expressions of belief, actions, and ways of life (as long as they do not interfere with the freedom of others). Although she may disapprove of or reject their views, she is civil towards those whose actions and ways of life she disagrees with. She recognizes other citizens as sharing in her dignity as a person and moral agent and she views them as her political equals.

The excellent citizen is aware of others’ rights. He is able to perceive the rights of others and he carefully attends to what he perceives. Not only does the citizen not violate the rights of others, he intervenes when others’ rights are violated if he can. In addition, he demands that others respect his rights so that he can pursue his own vision of the good.

The excellent citizen is autonomous. She considers her circumstances, reflects critically upon her principles, decides how to live, and then acts based on those reflections.

The excellent citizen is responsible. He recognizes that he is an agent, that he chooses his actions, and that the results of his actions are the outcome of his own choices. He is self-reliant. He recognizes that he can act to change his own circumstances. He works to feed, clothe and house himself and his dependents to the best of his ability. He doesn’t expect others to provide for him what he can provide for himself. Maintaining his independence in making political decisions, the excellent citizen delegates power, but not responsibility. He understands that it is he who must ensure that his views get a hearing,
and ultimately he who must ensure that his interests have a champion. He knows his role as citizen, recognizes its importance, and reliably fulfills it.

The excellent citizen shows restraint. She moderates the demands she makes on her government. She limits her demand for services to the services that her government can afford and she is willing to pay for the services she demands. Her restraint extends to other areas of life limited by finite resources as well. She shows restraint in the amount of energy resources (e.g., water, electricity, etc.) she demands, is willing to pay what they cost, and to accept painful measures to deal with their undersupply. The excellent citizen is also restrained in her expectations of governmental performance. She moderates her expectations but does not drop them. She evaluates governmental performance against a realistic assessment of what is possible for a liberal democratic government in a world of limited resources and human free will. In response to disappointments with her community, she identifies the nature of the problem, refrains from empty complaints, uses influence fairly, and eschews civil disobedience.

6.3 What This Inquiry Has Accomplished

Dissertations often read like sporting contests: Who will win, the Rawlsians or the Utilitarians? This is not the direction that I have chosen to travel here. I aim neither to support nor to undercut any of the current schools in political theory. Rather, my aim has been to look at one area (the need for citizen virtue) that has received a lot of agreement among diverse thinkers but little analysis, and engage in some of the necessary analysis. Rather than favor one school of thought over another, I have argued that more attention
must be paid to what citizen virtue is (Chapter One), and then I have gone on to model what paying more attention would look like (Chapters Two through Five). This means that my most significant accomplishment in this dissertation is not to be found here in the conclusion, with some type of exultant summing up supporting one political theorist or another, e.g., “Therefore, Rawls reigns triumphant!” but earlier, in my formulation of the explanatory framework and my construction of a preliminary catalog of citizen virtue.

Although my ultimate aim is neither to support nor to undercut any school of political theory over another, my work does have special application for neo-liberals and communitarians. Both of these groups are among the leading proponents of the importance of citizen virtue, and both schools of thought champion programs for which a virtue catalog and the explanatory framework to back it up are critical.

**Formulation of Explanatory Framework a Significant Advance**

My formulation of an explanatory framework for the citizen virtue catalog constitutes a significant advance. With an explanatory framework it is possible to a) construct the citizen virtue catalog on a basis beyond mean intuition and unsupported opinion, b) assess whether a given quality of character is a citizen virtue, and c) judge between competing accounts of citizen virtue. I will discuss each of these in turn.

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2 This dissertation doesn’t offer an extended treatment of why civic virtue is critically important (for a brief discussion, see §1.2.) Nor is this a dissertation about why merely procedural liberalism fails (although I believe it does). Nonetheless, because the thesis that civic virtue deserves more attention rests on the assumption that civic virtue is critically important, this dissertation has little applicability to those who reject that assumption.
The explanatory framework offers a basis for the citizen virtue catalog beyond mean intuition and unsupported opinion. Without such a basis for the virtue catalog I champion, my ability to pursue projects to foster the virtues is threatened. The observation that “these seem like praiseworthy traits” may suffice for my own acceptance and pursuit of a given catalog of virtues, but I should probably have better grounds when I instruct my children to do the same. If I wish to persuade neighbors or strangers to adopt these traits, having defensible grounds for my conclusions is all the more important. Finally, given that one of the most common contexts for reference to the virtues is civic education, the need for a more objective basis for the virtues is acute: A plan to foster citizen virtues in the schools is not simply a plan to encourage the virtues, but a plan to coerce others through state power. I can’t properly contemplate any use of the state’s coercive power for the purpose of fostering the virtues unless I have a defensible basis for my conclusions.

Any reasonable explanatory framework—one that provides grounds beyond unsupported opinion for assessing which virtue candidates are in fact virtues—could offer the basis I describe as so essential in the preceding paragraph. However, the merit of my account isn’t simply that my explanatory framework provides a basis, but that it provides a convincing and appropriate basis for building and defending such a catalog. My explanatory framework is built around the observation that citizen virtues differ from virtues *simpliciter*. Their nature is different and they must be evaluated differently. Because citizen virtues are role-based virtues, their value as virtues must be measured in instrumental terms. Given that the role of citizen has a clearly defined end—to aid one’s
political community—the instrumental worth of a given citizen virtue (or catalog of
virtues) must be measured in terms of how well it aids its bearer in accomplishing that end.
For liberal democratic communities, this end is the protection, promotion, and realization
of liberal democratic ideals.

The ability to assess whether a given quality of character is a citizen virtue is
particularly useful when evaluating unconventional new virtue candidates. Take, for
example, three of the more unusual virtue candidates I surveyed in Chapter One:
nonviolence, the quality of appreciating procedures and forms, and the willingness to try
and to accept new things. Each of these candidates claims the allegiance of at least one
prominent political theorist, but especially for those who come from a different political
theory tradition than the virtue candidate’s proponent, these candidates will seem odd.
Fortunately, I need neither accept these qualities as virtues on the basis of expert authority
nor reject them outright on the basis of their oddness. The explanatory framework I
advocate recommends a more defensible method of evaluation.

One strength of this explanatory framework is that it offers a uniform template that
one can apply to diverse citizen virtue candidates. The explanatory framework helps me
to focus my inquiry on the relevant questions regardless of the nature of the candidate I’m
considering. To assess whether the quality of appreciating procedures and forms should
be recognized as a citizen virtue, I ask the same questions and follow the same process I
applied to the more familiar virtue candidates in Chapters Three, Four, and Five: Does
appreciating procedures and forms enable the citizen to assist his community in protecting,
promoting, and realizing the liberal democratic ideals? Which (one or more) of the ideals
does it protect and promote? Is it compatible with all of the liberal democratic ideals we understand as non-negotiable? Is an appreciation of procedures and forms appropriate to the time, place, and historical context in which we live? Is the appreciation of procedures and forms reasonably achievable? Is it a) attainable by citizens of average ability, opportunity, and circumstance? and b) compatible, under most circumstances, with the citizen’s other pursuits?

Another reason the explanatory framework I champion constitutes a significant advance is that it provides persuasive grounds for judging between competing accounts of citizen virtue. Suppose that after constructing my own catalog of the virtues in Chapters Three, Four, and Five, I wish to compare it to focus thinker David Jones’ account. How am I to judge which catalog is superior? The explanatory framework suggests that given the role-based nature of citizen virtue, the answer must be judged instrumentally. So whichever of the two catalogs better enables the citizen to carry out her role—to assist her community in protecting, promoting, and realizing the liberal democratic ideals—is the superior virtue catalog.

Each of the virtues in Jones’ catalog has a counterpart virtue in my catalog. With one exception, each of Jones’ virtues is comprehended by a broader, more

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3 As Jones is one of the six focus thinkers whose virtue catalogs I used as building blocks in constructing my own catalog, it is no coincidence that my catalog comprehends all the traits mentioned in Jones’ catalog. I hope that my debt to Jones and to the other focus thinkers is obvious. Nonetheless, I do not hesitate to claim that Jones’ account is flawed and that my account represents an improvement. My catalog is more demanding than Jones’ catalog because if liberal democratic community is to survive, its citizens must do more than Jones’ catalog prescribes. Further, my catalog is broader than Jones’ catalog because liberal democratic community relies on a greater diversity of traits than Jones acknowledges.
The possible exception is a trait Jones calls “sense of duty” which finds a counterpart in my virtue “obedience to law.” Because the citizen’s actions under either of these two virtues are the same (he obeys the law), it may not be accurate to describe “obedience to law” as the broader virtue. My virtue, “obedience to law,” and Jones’ virtue, “sense of duty,” differ in that I argue that the citizen’s motivation for obeying the law is irrelevant, while Jones describes obeying the law as something the virtuous citizen does because motivated by a sense of duty.

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**Figure 2**

*Jones’ Citizen Virtue Catalog Compared To Mine*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jones’ Catalog</th>
<th>Preliminary Catalog (Chapters 3, 4, 5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loyalty</td>
<td>Allegiance to Liberal Democratic Community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sense of Duty</td>
<td>Obedience to Law</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fidelity</td>
<td>Responsibility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pragmatic Tolerance</td>
<td>Respect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reciprocity</td>
<td>Cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic-Mindedness</td>
<td>Participation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vigilance</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deliberative Excellence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tolerance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Autonomy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Restraint</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4 The possible exception is a trait Jones calls “sense of duty” which finds a counterpart in my virtue “obedience to law.” Because the citizen’s actions under either of these two virtues are the same (he obeys the law), it may not be accurate to describe “obedience to law” as the broader virtue. My virtue, “obedience to law,” and Jones’ virtue, “sense of duty,” differ in that I argue that the citizen’s motivation for obeying the law is irrelevant, while Jones describes obeying the law as something the virtuous citizen does because motivated by a sense of duty.
The greater breadth of allegiance to liberal democratic community (as compared to loyalty) and the greater breadth of participation (as compared to civic-mindedness) in the example above both satisfy this criterion. The greater breadth of these traits allows them to better prepare the citizen for assisting his community. (For more evidence of this, see the discussion of participation in §3.6 and the discussion of allegiance to liberal democratic community in §4.2).

Note that while the virtues in my catalog are more demanding than their counterparts in Jones’ catalog, they still satisfy the reasonable achievability criterion. Being the broader or the more demanding virtue doesn’t in itself make a virtue superior. Being the broader virtue makes a virtue superior only if a) its greater breadth means that the citizen is better equipped for assisting his community in promoting the liberal democratic ideals⁵ and if b) the virtue is still able to satisfy the reasonable achievability criterion.

In addition to the fact that Jones’ virtues are comprehended by their counterparts in my catalog, there are several virtues in my catalog which receive no mention in Jones’ catalog at all—despite the fact that they are essential to the promotion of the liberal democratic ideals (namely: vigilance, deliberative excellence, tolerance, autonomy, and

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⁵ The greater breadth of allegiance to liberal democratic community (as compared to loyalty) and the greater breadth of participation (as compared to civic-mindedness) in the example above both satisfy this criterion. The greater breadth of these traits allows them to better prepare the citizen for assisting his community. (For more evidence of this, see the discussion of participation in §3.6 and the discussion of allegiance to liberal democratic community in §4.2).
It may appear that on this method of judging between competing virtue catalogs, longer catalogs of virtue are automatically judged superior to shorter ones. This isn’t the case. Although the virtues happened to map to each other quite neatly in the comparison between Jones’ catalog and my own, this won’t always be true. One virtue family in my catalog might map to three or four virtues in someone else’s catalog. One virtue in someone else’s catalog might map to two different virtue families in my catalog. Simply multiplying the number of traits mentioned doesn’t contribute to the citizen’s ability to assist his community. If one catalog is longer than another, but the longer catalog contains a number of traits that don’t actually assist the citizen in fulfilling his role, or if the longer catalog includes a number of traits that are only marginally helpful while it omits an essential trait included by the shorter catalog, then in such cases the shorter catalog is the superior one.

In the preceding pages I have argued that my formulation of an explanatory framework for the citizen virtues constitutes a significant contribution. It gives us the justification necessary for pursuing projects which seek to foster the virtues, it allows us to assess virtue candidates proposed by others, and it enables us to judge between competing catalogs of citizen virtue. Most important, the basis it offers for these assessments is both convincing and appropriate given the nature of citizen virtue. I will now argue that my construction of a citizen virtue catalog also represents an important advance.

**Formulation of Citizen Virtue Catalog a Significant Advance**

**Intellectual Curiosity Requires It**

Why is an explicit catalog of the virtues so important? The first reason, which is so obvious as to be often overlooked, is to satisfy our intellectual curiosity. If the civic virtues are as important to liberal democratic community as has been claimed by

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6 It may appear that on this method of judging between competing virtue catalogs, longer catalogs of virtue are automatically judged superior to shorter ones. This isn’t the case. Although the virtues happened to map to each other quite neatly in the comparison between Jones’ catalog and my own, this won’t always be true. One virtue family in my catalog might map to three or four virtues in someone else’s catalog. One virtue in someone else’s catalog might map to two different virtue families in my catalog. Simply multiplying the number of traits mentioned doesn’t contribute to the citizen’s ability to assist his community. If one catalog is longer than another, but the longer catalog contains a number of traits that don’t actually assist the citizen in fulfilling his role, or if the longer catalog includes a number of traits that are only marginally helpful while it omits an essential trait included by the shorter catalog, then in such cases the shorter catalog is the superior one.
communitarians, neo-liberals, and others, then they are worth thinking about. This would be true even if we were to conclude that all hope for fostering the virtues in our fellows was vain. If the citizen virtues are as important to our way of life as has been suggested, then studying them bears interest even if it lacks a practical motivation.

Projects to Foster the Virtues Require It

The second reason my construction of a citizen virtue catalog represents a significant advance is that we do have practical motivation for studying citizen virtue because we seek to pursue projects to foster the virtues. While we do not yet have all the answers about exactly what is possible, what is appropriate, and what will be effective in terms of fostering the citizen virtues, it is reasonable to hope that cultivating virtuous citizens is possible. Surely the question of whether a community’s citizens have the virtues required to sustain it is not a matter of mere luck or serendipity; some conditions must be more conducive to virtue than others. There must be some actions that governmental entities, schools, voluntary associations, families, or individuals could take to increase their community’s sum of virtue. Now if it is possible to foster the virtues, then virtue-fostering projects should be pursued. I argued in Chapter One that not only is liberal democracy the best form of political community open to us, it is worth preserving besides. This means that we must do what we can to preserve and perpetuate it. Because liberal democratic community cannot persist and flourish without the citizen virtues, we

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7 My use of “we” in this paragraph is an intentional attempt to elide questions of who does pursue projects to foster the virtues, who should pursue such projects, and who must act to preserve and perpetuate liberal democratic community. Depending on how these questions are framed, “we” could be each of us as individuals, us understood as families or groups, or even the community as a whole.
must do what we can to foster the virtues in ourselves and others. However, such projects are unlikely to meet with success unless we proceed with the explicit understanding of individual citizen virtues that a virtue catalog provides.

*To Recognize What We Are Attempting to Foster*

Before we can develop plans to foster the virtues, we need to decide which qualities of character it is that we hope to encourage. An explicit virtue catalog, like the one I sketched in Chapters Three, Four, and Five, makes this possible. No individual, group, or entity can craft a plan for fostering the citizen virtues if they don’t know what they are. A catalog like the one I have proposed identifies and describes the virtues liberal democratic community requires to survive and flourish. Individuals, civic groups, schools, churches, workplaces, and governments can then look to this catalog as they consider what form their role in fostering the citizen virtues should take.

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8 Note that this isn’t the same as saying that no individual, group, or entity can foster the virtues without knowing what they are. It seems obvious that some civic groups, churches, or workplaces may foster the virtues without any explicit plan to do so and without any explicit reflection on the nature of the virtues being fostered. My comments are not directed toward groups who foster the virtues without pursuing this purpose. Rather, I address those individuals, groups, and entities that explicitly seek to foster citizen virtue without the requisite reflection on what the citizen virtues are.

9 For the purposes of this discussion, it is convenient to refer to a single citizen virtue catalog, as if community-wide consensus regarding the virtues were a fact. However, achieving community-wide consensus on the whole of any virtue catalog is unlikely. Nonetheless, achieving the broadest agreement possible on a substantial catalog of citizen virtue (as opposed to a virtue catalog that has been stripped and left content-free in a misguided effort to gain support) is desirable because it better situates us for success in implementing virtue-fostering projects. However, broad agreement isn’t necessary for all such projects. A voluntary organization that has a plan for fostering virtue within its membership need not abandon its project solely because the virtues it seeks to foster are not recognized as virtues by some parties outside the organization.
Constructing an explicit catalog of citizen virtue allows us to identify the virtues we hope to foster in others. It also allows us to identify the virtues we hope to foster in ourselves and our children. I can’t resolve to be a better citizen without an understanding of what it is I must change, what it is I must strive for. The preliminary catalog of citizen virtue I have outlined in this dissertation offers just such a picture of the excellent citizen I endeavor to become. Similarly, I can’t teach my children to live the citizen virtues if I don’t know what they are. Fortunately, the preliminary virtue catalog offers an answer: cooperation, participation, vigilance, deliberative excellence, obedience to law, allegiance to liberal democratic community, respect for rights, tolerance, autonomy, restraint, and responsibility.

*To Learn Whether/How it Is Appropriate to Foster Virtue*

It is not enough just to identify the citizen virtues. Before pursuing any project to foster them we must address the issues of which means will be appropriate and which means will be effective. Because the virtues are diverse, it is a mistake to attempt to answer these questions armed only with a general understanding of citizen virtue considered as a unit. Instead, we must look to a citizen virtue catalog in order to gain a more specific understanding of the individual virtue in question.\(^\text{10}\)

Before pursuing projects to foster the virtues, we must ask whether and how it is appropriate to foster citizen virtue. However, reflection on the broad interpretation of

\(^{10}\) When considering whether it is appropriate to attempt to teach responsibility in the schools or whether autonomy can be effectively fostered by groups other than the family, I can turn to the preliminary virtue catalog for a full description of these virtues. Such a description doesn’t in itself answer these questions, but it puts one on the path toward an answer.
citizen virtue that I advocate in this dissertation suggests that this is not quite the right question. It is not the right question because the nature of the citizen virtues is diverse and therefore the answers as to what will be appropriate or effective in fostering a given virtue are diverse. Rather than asking whether and how it is appropriate to foster citizen virtue we must ask specifically about virtue X or virtue Y.

Consider: some liberals object to the idea of government promoting the disposition to participate politically, insisting that encouraging participation is not an appropriate function of liberal government. However, these same thinkers may readily accept the idea of teaching the skills relevant to effective political participation. In this example, the answer to the question of whether it is appropriate to foster the virtues may differ depending upon the virtue at issue (the disposition to participate versus the skills of participation). The answer to the question of how to foster the virtues also differs depending upon the virtue in question. Fostering the skills of deliberative excellence likely requires a different approach than fostering the dispositions of deliberative excellence.

The dispositions versus skills distinction is just one reason why what is appropriate or effective for fostering different virtues depends upon the virtue being considered. The answer to whether it is appropriate or effective to foster a given virtue also differs between dispositions. Some thinkers will conclude that it is appropriate for government to foster the disposition to obey the law or to show basic respect for rights, yet think it

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11 I have argued for a broad interpretation of citizen virtue because the qualities that prepare the citizen to succeed in his role are numerous and diverse. Given that citizen virtue is judged in terms of its instrumental value—How well does this quality allow the citizen to succeed in his role?—it makes sense to consider not only dispositions, but skills and developed capacities as well.
inappropriate for government to foster the disposition to cooperate or allegiance to liberal
democratic community. Others will conclude that while it is appropriate for government
to foster the disposition to obey the law, a willingness to cooperate is appropriately
fostered only by the family or by voluntary associations.

Ultimately, the relevant point here is a simple one: because the virtues are diverse,
our conclusions as to whether and how it is appropriate to foster them will also be diverse.
When considering how to foster them, it is both misleading and unhelpful to consider
citizen virtue as a unit. Instead, we must consider the virtues individually and in
significant specificity. Only once we have a grasp of the nature and limits of each virtue
are we satisfactorily prepared to attend to the question of whether and how to foster them.
Constructing a catalog of the citizen virtues represents a significant advance because it
allows us to consider individual virtues with the specificity required.

To Achieve Wide Agreement

Cultivating an explicit understanding of the citizen virtues is important because in
most cases we can’t pursue projects to foster the virtues before achieving wide agreement
on what they are. The ability to discuss specific citizen virtues, their bounds and limits, (as
is made possible by an explicit catalog of the citizen virtues such as the one I’ve
introduced here) is essential as we seek to attain such agreement. It is also essential as we
face disagreement as to what the virtues are or as to how a given virtue should be
understood. The ability to discuss the details of specific virtues will allow us to resolve
disagreement and aid us in deciding how to approach conflict that appears irresolvable.
Most plans to foster the virtues require wide agreement. Consider the most obvious venue for projects to foster the virtues, the schools. We can’t implement a plan to teach schoolchildren the virtues unless most of their parents recognize those traits as desirable. This is true both from the standard of what is appropriate in a liberal community—where we seek to keep coercion to a minimum—and from a practical standpoint—because state legislatures and local school boards are unlikely to approve plans to foster the virtues unless we can reach wide agreement on the nature of the virtues to be fostered. Some shared understanding must be achieved in order to win others’ assent to potentially coercive virtue-fostering projects.

The first step towards achieving wide agreement is to identify existing areas of agreement and disagreement. This requires explicit consideration of the nature of the citizen virtues. Parties on all sides must be ready to make their virtue catalogs explicit. Identifying areas of agreement shows us what we can build upon; identifying disagreement shows what opposition must be overcome and to what extent it is possible to do so. Constructing an explicit catalog of virtue helps us to avoid twin, yet opposing traps:
assuming irreconcilable disagreement where there is opportunity for mutual learning and consensus,\textsuperscript{12} and depending on apparent agreement which is merely apparent.\textsuperscript{13}

Identifying the areas in which we disagree allows us to consider the underlying reasons for that disagreement, and hence our prospects for resolving it. Before classifying disagreement as resolvable or irresolvable we must understand its roots: Does disagreement that a certain trait qualifies as a citizen virtue stem from disagreement with

\textsuperscript{12} One reason that the citizen virtues may not have received the individual attention they require is the belief that getting specific about citizen virtue means losing sight of common ground. If this were true, meaningful discussion of citizen virtue would be impossible on a societal level. It is not true, but unfortunately the assumption that there is no common ground leads many to avoid the shared topic of citizen virtue in favor of focusing on whatever pet topics are dominant in their own political theory traditions. However, we needn’t despair the possibility of meaningful agreement. A shared commitment to liberal democratic community guarantees common space upon which to build our virtue catalogs.

\textsuperscript{13} Another reason that the citizen virtues have not received more specific attention is that we sometimes assume that we all share a serviceable picture of citizen virtue already. However, when virtue catalogs are made explicit, it often becomes clear that areas of apparent consensus are just that—apparent. Agreement on the surface often hides deeper disagreement below. While it is true that many of us accept accounts of the virtues that appear similar in their broad outlines, these same accounts may look quite different when filled in. Differences on the details are not necessarily small differences. Citizens who agree that respect and loyalty are essential citizen virtues can become over-comfortable with the assumption that they are in agreement, ignorant that their agreement on terms masks crucial differences on a deeper level. The notion of respect as limited to basic respect (not violating the rights of others) is quite different than the notion of respect understood as including broad positive respect (providing others with the healthcare and education required for complete enjoyment of their freedom). Achieving wide agreement on virtues like respect requires that such differences be identified, appreciated, and where possible, resolved.
the virtue catalog’s explanatory framework\textsuperscript{14} or disagreement with the manner in which the framework has been applied?\textsuperscript{15}

If the disagreement results from reference to different explanatory frameworks it may be possible to persuade one party of the superior nature of the other party’s framework, or it may be possible to formulate a new framework that both parties can agree to. If the disagreement stems from the manner in which the framework is applied, it may be possible to convince one party or the other that they are in error. Clarifying our differences can lead to resolution of conflict and move us closer to the wide agreement that many virtue-fostering projects require. Of course, there will be cases in which clarifying societal differences on issues of what is civically virtuous will not lead to resolution of conflict. Not all differences can be clarified into nonexistence. In these cases, explicit attention to the nature of specific citizen virtues enables us to understand the import and extent of our disagreement and to decide how to deal with conflict.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14} For example, one might reject the question of whether a trait promotes liberty, equality, and fraternity as the proper criterion for determining whether a quality qualifies as a citizen virtue.

\textsuperscript{15} For example, I might reject the conclusion that selfishness is a citizen virtue, even if the account in question shares my explanatory framework—that virtues are those qualities that promote the liberal democratic ideals—on the grounds that “selfishness” frustrates the ideal of cooperation for the common good. Alternatively, I might reject part of someone else’s virtue catalog on the grounds that although we appear to share the same framework, we do not. For example, if the explanatory framework involves promoting freedom, a demanding interpretation of freedom may result in a very different virtue catalog than one that results from a weaker understanding of freedom.

\textsuperscript{16} Dealing with apparently irresolvable conflict means answering questions both crucial and difficult: Should we move forward with projects to foster the virtues when only a portion of the catalog we endorse achieves wide agreement? In these cases, what does “moving forward” mean? Do we attempt to foster only that portion of the catalog
A successful plan to foster the virtues requires the explicit understanding of individual citizen virtues that only a citizen virtue catalog could provide. Constructing a preliminary catalog of virtues allows me to: identify the virtues that need to be fostered if liberal democratic community is to survive and flourish, intelligently approach the question of whether it is appropriate and how it will be effective to foster the virtues, and work with others towards achieving wider agreement on the nature, scope, and desirability of promoting these traits.

**Intersection of This Inquiry with Contemporary Political Theory**

I have argued that the formulation of an explanatory framework and the construction of an explicit catalog of citizen virtues represent a significant advance. But how does this inquiry intersect with other work in philosophy and political theory? First, from the standpoint of intellectual curiosity, this inquiry should be of interest to any thinker who believes that citizen virtue is necessary to liberal democratic community’s health and longevity. If citizen virtue understood as a unit is that important, the question “What are the virtues of the excellent citizen in a liberal democracy?,” which directs attention to the specific citizen virtues that constitute citizen virtue qua unit, is critically important as well.

Second, from a practical perspective, this dissertation is of particular relevance for those interested in fostering the citizen virtues. My work has special application for neo-liberals and communitarians. Both groups champion programs for which a virtue catalog which is widely agreed upon? Are the traits in question so important to the health of liberal democracy that it is appropriate to consider exercising the state’s (or other) coercive power on those who do not agree?
and the explanatory framework to back it up are critical. In the following sections, I will explore my project’s importance for communitarians and neo-liberals in turn.

**Relationship Between Neo-Liberals and Communitarians**

First, however, a brief consideration of their origins can help us better understand how communitarians and neo-liberals are alike and how they differ. At the beginning of the 1970's, publication of John Rawls’ *A Theory of Justice* took the worlds of philosophy and political theory by storm. Rawls’ conception of liberalism, an ambitious and intellectually creative re-interpretation of social contract theory, quickly became entrenched as the academy standard. The view’s dominance has provoked and energized its critics, including the communitarians. Rejecting the notion that government can be neutral towards human ends, communitarians charge that Rawlsian liberalism is impoverished—to too thin to do the substantive work required by moral and political theory.

Neo-liberalism arose as a response to the communitarian challenge. Neo-liberals endorse the communitarian insight that complete government neutrality is neither achievable nor desirable, but reject the notion that this means we should reject liberalism. Neo-liberals accuse communitarians of throwing the baby out with the bathwater (Berkowitz 24) and ask what sort of political system communitarians would substitute (Jones 78). Surely we don’t want to return to the bad old days of not being free to worship, to marry, or to follow the occupation we choose. They observe that even communitarians embrace these fruits of liberalism (Berkowitz 24). Neo-liberals agree with

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17 Compare §1.1 where I use this same line of reasoning to defend liberal democratic community as a form of government worth preserving.
communitarians that civic virtue is essential to liberal democratic community, but insist that one need not look outside the liberal tradition to identify the virtues.

A key difference between communitarians and neo-liberals is that while neo-liberals seek to foster citizen virtue for the purpose of sustaining a liberal democratic state capable of ensuring liberty or justice, communitarians seek to foster citizen virtue for the purpose of sustaining a self-governing liberal democratic community (for they believe that true liberty lies in self-government). Some observers have suggested that the difference between communitarians and liberals can be captured by Benjamin Constant’s distinction between the liberty of the ancients and the liberty of the moderns (Waldron 35-36).

“The aim of the ancients was the sharing of social power among the citizens of the same fatherland: this is what they called liberty. The aim of the moderns is the enjoyment of security in private pleasures; and they call liberty the guarantees accorded by institutions to these pleasures” (Constant 317). Liberals emphasize the liberty of the moderns while communitarians seek some measure of return to the liberty of the ancients. For the liberals, the private sphere in which one is free to pursue one’s own ends is paramount. For the communitarians, the ability of citizens to grow through participation in self-government is key.

I now turn to a discussion of why this inquiry has special application for communitarians and neo-liberals. I will show that while they have diverse goals, the formulation of a convincing and appropriate explanatory framework and the construction of a virtue catalog based on that framework is essential for progress by both groups.

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18 Waldron’s comments are limited to Sandel.
Sandel and the Communitarians

Michael Sandel is one of the best known communitarians. He argues that liberty is impossible unless citizens share in self-government (5). But they can’t share in self-government unless they “possess, or come to acquire, certain qualities of character or civic virtues” (5-6). Therefore, it is essential that we institute a “formative politics, a politics that cultivates in citizens the qualities of character self-government requires” (6). Sandel’s “formative politics” is what I have referred to above as a virtue- fostering project (or rather, a set of such projects). What Sandel’s account lacks is the explicit catalog of the virtues I have suggested is necessary for carrying out such projects.

My citizen virtue catalog is an important corrective addition to the work of communitarians like Sandel who preach how crucial virtue is and how essential that we promote it, yet neglect to consider the individual virtues that comprise it. There are two reasons why neglecting the nature of specific citizen virtues in this way is unacceptable: First, as I argued in Chapter One, citizen virtue is not ahistorical. In rejecting procedural liberalism and looking with nostalgia on a better past, a time when virtue better received its due—whether that past is thought of as the age of Aristotle or as the era of the Founding Generation in American history—we must resist the temptation to assume that their virtues should be our virtues. Their times are not our times, their challenges are not our challenges, our resources were not their resources. Our liberal democratic communities—both the ones we enjoy and the ones we aspire to—are very different from the political communities with which these men were acquainted. This isn’t to say that an appropriate catalog of virtue for our time doesn’t share important commonalities with
Aristotle’s catalog or with Jefferson’s, but it is to say that we mustn’t blindly import the virtues of other ages. We can’t assume that now that we again recognize the importance of citizen virtue we can simply embrace the same virtues championed by Aristotle or Jefferson.

Second, once they acknowledge civic virtue’s context-dependence, it will not do for communitarians (or anyone else) to suppose that most thinkers now agree on the nature of civic virtue, or that everyone knows which qualities of character conduce to self-government today. The survey that introduces each section in Chapters Three, Four, and Five of this dissertation establishes that agreement cannot be taken for granted. Although many of us have similar ideas about civic virtue in its broad outlines, we differ on the details that determine how the excellent citizen actually behaves. Even among lists of virtue that share many traits in common, one list or the other invariably includes one quality (or several) that is unique when compared to the other list. In short, Sandel’s call to re-institute our nation’s formative project simply can’t be heeded without a more explicit picture of the virtues to back it. I take preliminary steps towards such a picture in Chapters Three, Four, and Five. Without such a catalog, the communitarian’s formative project has no form.

**Neo-Liberals**

It is not only communitarians who stand to benefit from constructing a catalog of citizen virtues. Peter Berkowitz argues that the extraliberal or nongovernmental sources of virtue upon which liberal democratic community has historically relied are becoming extinct:
[T]he extraliberal or nongovernmental reservoirs from which liberalism has drawn in the past to foster the virtues necessary to maintain itself—in particular, the family, religion, and the array of associations in civil society—have undergone substantial transformations and can no longer be counted on in the way that the classic liberal tradition counsels (6).

If he is correct, then neo-liberals and others who accept the thesis that citizen virtue is crucial to the healthy longevity of liberal democracy are faced with the task of either renewing old sources of the virtues or finding new ones (Berkowitz xiii, 192).

If Berkowitz is right that traditional sources of virtue are weakening and that some have already vanished, this threatens liberalism’s tenure and tenability—but only if those sources cannot be effectively and appropriately replaced by new sources. I am not as sanguine on this score as are many neo-liberals and civil society theorists. I believe that liberal democratic community faces a grave threat; it isn’t obvious to me that contemporary culture does provide adequate, effective, and appropriate sources of virtue. However, liberal democratic community’s prospects for health and longevity are not my topic. I limit myself to writing the prescription, not inquiring whether or how the healthcare infrastructure can fill it.

In order to defend liberalism’s ability to succeed, the neo-liberal must show that today’s virtues can be appropriately and effectively fostered by other than the traditional sources of virtue (or that traditional sources can be renewed). This task is not possible without a virtue catalog. I argued above that a diverse catalog of citizen virtues may have a diverse catalog of sources. For example, it may be most effective for the family to teach responsibility, while the public schools are the most effective teachers of the skills that pertain to deliberative excellence. Because different virtues have different sources, and
because the source that is judged effective for fostering one virtue may not be so for another, it makes little sense to discuss questions of what will be effective and (as is at least as important from the neo-liberal perspective,) what will be appropriate without reference to the specific virtues we seek to cultivate.

There are three ways in which the ability to reference an explicit catalog of the virtues furthers the neo-liberal project. First, neo-liberals need no longer simply claim that commitment to liberalism and the virtues are compatible. They can demonstrate it by constructing a catalog of liberal virtues. This allows neo-liberals to show, as Macedo expresses it, that “the language of virtue, citizenship, community, and human flourishing” is not “beyond the bounds of liberal politics” (254). Neo-liberals are anxious to establish that the notion of liberal virtues is not merely a reaction to communitarian criticism, nor an ill-fitting add-on to Kantian liberalism (Macedo 257). Constructing a catalog with an explanatory framework that justifies it is an opportunity for neo-liberals to show that “[liberal citizen] virtues need not be imported from the outside, for they are immanent in liberal practice and theory” (Galston 217).

Second, it is only after one considers the specific citizen virtues required by contemporary liberal democratic community that one can profitably reflect on what source (or sources) is needed to foster a given virtue. Because neo-liberals seek to foster the citizen virtues, and because their liberal heritage makes the question of how the virtues are fostered and by whom critically important, the question of what sources can foster the required virtues is key. Explicit consideration of the relevant virtue enables us to ask the right questions. Does living in a liberal democratic community naturally cause this virtue
to take root? Or is there some existing source of virtue sufficient to foster it? If so, is the source—the government, the workplace, the church, the school, the family, or a voluntary civic organization—one we are comfortable with encouraging in conjunction with fostering that particular virtue?¹⁹

Finally, the ability to reference an explicit catalog of citizen virtue allows the neo-liberal to grapple with neo-liberalism’s classic dilemma: What is to be done if the virtues liberal democracy needs are not the ones a liberal democratic citizenry naturally develops? Both Galston and Berkowitz argue that this is the case. As Galston puts it, “The liberal virtues are the traits of character liberalism needs, not necessarily the ones it has” (217). Berkowitz argues that “Liberalism depends on virtues that it does not readily summon and which it may even stunt or stifle” (xiii). Further, “because of the limitations which

¹⁹ The intuition (shared by many) that it is appropriate for government to foster some citizen virtues but not others may point to interesting further work to be done in classifying the virtues. Why is it that while some virtues (especially skills, but possibly others such as respect for rights and tolerance) seem unobjectionable even when fostered by coercive government power, others (with a more moral “feel”?) seem appropriately fostered only privately if at all? Pursuing further classification would prove particularly profitable if it allowed us to develop a template able to accurately distill some pattern from our intuitions and to provide an explanation: (e.g., “All virtues of X type may be fostered by the government, while most virtues of Y type may not, because . . .”). Notwithstanding this being a promising direction for further research, I consider one of the successes of this dissertation to be that I have shown that many of the familiar ways of classifying qualities of character (e.g., skills versus dispositions) are irrelevant to my principal question: Is this quality a citizen virtue, a trait important to the success of my liberal democratic community? Other thinkers have noted that the virtues are role-dependent (Dagger) or instrumentally valuable (Galston, Jones), but most haven’t followed these claims to their logical conclusions. Because citizen virtue is a species of virtue, it is tempting to make the mistakes that stem from conflating citizen virtue and virtue simpliciter. For example, it is natural for us to judge others’ personal virtue based on the motives and feelings behind their actions. However, I have shown that this sort of criterion is largely irrelevant to discussions of citizen virtue. Clarity regarding what is and is not relevant to citizen virtue is essential if we are to make plans to foster it.
liberalism places on the state, liberal regimes depend on virtues that they cannot, left to their own devices, summon easily or cultivate vigorously” (189-90).

Identifying the virtues that need to be fostered makes crafting a plan to foster them possible. We may need new sources of virtue because old ones have faded away or lost their efficacy. We may need different sources because the citizen virtues themselves are now different. The point is, if liberal democratic community is in trouble because it doesn’t naturally inspire the virtues that are necessary to sustain it, the only thing that can save it is a thorough understanding of what is missing accompanied by a frank acknowledgment of the deficiency and its effects.

6.4 Conclusion

In conclusion, I understand Constant’s argument to be that we should content ourselves with neither the liberty of the ancients nor the liberty of the moderns; instead we must seek both. Unsatisfied by the liberty of the ancients which provided no protection to private rights and freedoms, we must not become too comfortable in the liberty of the moderns, enjoying our rights and our private pleasures, while losing the freedom unique to participation in self-government.

My argument for a balanced understanding of the liberal democratic ideals—we seek not just a free state, but a self-governing one, not just a stable political community, but an effective one—reflects my endorsement of this thesis;\textsuperscript{20} my virtue catalog and explanatory framework rely on it. The key question that remains is whether liberal

\textsuperscript{20} These claims deserve a much more extended treatment, but such treatment is the topic for a different dissertation.
democratic citizens can retain their freedom to pursue their own visions of the good, yet manifest the virtue critical to sustaining their way of life—and not only can they, will they? As I have said, I am not optimistic on this score, but as I have argued that liberal democracy is the best form of government available (and the only real possibility on the table), I think we must pursue it in the hope that our more pessimistic assessments of human possibilities and probabilities are mistaken.
APPENDIX

THE FOCUS THINKERS AND THEIR VIRTUE CATALOGS

The descriptions of the virtue catalogs that follow are my attempt to summarize the focus thinkers’ positions in a manner that is both accurate and concise. Although this format is useful as a first step towards understanding and comparing the focus thinkers’ accounts, it is important to recognize its limitations. Often the thinkers’ explanations were not as explicit as these descriptions suggest. In teasing out their intended meanings I may have unintentionally attributed views to them that they had not intended to imply. Further, forcing the accounts to fit a common format runs the risk of suggesting a foreign organizational structure as native.¹

1.1 Richard Dagger

Richard Dagger writes about civic virtue in Chapter Twelve of his book, Civic Virtues: Rights, Citizenship, and Republican Liberalism. His discussion occurs within the context of his defense of what he calls “republican liberalism.” Under this view, autonomy

¹ Because the focus of the main body of this dissertation is the citizen virtues, not the focus thinkers, these difficulties aren’t, ultimately speaking, an obstacle to my project. Although I make every effort to attribute the focus thinkers’ views accurately, at the end of the day what matters for my argument is whether my claims regarding the status of a virtue candidate are persuasive, not whether the virtue candidate as I describe it is an entirely faithful representation of one thinker’s view.
and civic virtue are understood as “complementary ideals” that occasionally find themselves in tension (194). The aim of the republican liberal is to cultivate both autonomy (defined as “the ability to lead a self-governed life” (30) and civic virtue (194). The republican liberal seeks to “promote the civic virtues that enhance the individual’s ability to lead a self-governed life as a cooperating member of a political society” (195). In others words, the goal of republican liberalism is to encourage the virtues that make autonomy possible, not some vague and amorphous type of autonomy, but specifically autonomy that is lived out in a political community where one is a contributing member.

Both civic virtue and autonomy are ideals for Dagger, and he seeks to present them in such a way that neither eclipses the other. One takes a highly instrumental view of civic virtue from his writing (civic virtue is important insofar as it conduces to autonomy), but one also takes a very restricted view of autonomy (autonomy has worth only within political society, when one is a contributing member of that society). Civic virtue makes autonomy possible, but at the same time the autonomous citizen has a heavy load of civic burdens to bear.

Dagger suggests that most of the traditional virtues (virtues simpliciter) likely “conduce” to “republican-liberal citizenship” (195), but ultimately focuses on six virtues which are distinctly civic: the republican-liberal citizen “respects individual rights, values autonomy, tolerates different opinions and beliefs, plays fair, cherishes civic memory, and takes an active part in the life of the community” (196).
1.2 Dagger’s Catalog

Liberal

To respect rights: The citizen does not allow himself or others to be treated as mere means to another’s ends (196) because as persons, we are all worthy of respect. This means that “rights-holders have a [not merely negative] claim upon others” (196).

Values autonomy: The citizen “protect[s] and promote[s] the ability to lead a self-governed life” as something “intrinsically valuable” (196).

Tolerates different opinions and beliefs: The citizen “recognizes that individuals must be free to think and decide for themselves” up to the limits of the autonomy of others (196).

Republican

Plays fair: The citizen is motivated by reciprocity. He or she bears a fair share of civic burdens and demands the same of others (197). This includes obeying the law and viewing other citizens as “partners in a common enterprise” (197).

Strong civic memory: The memory of civic accomplishments and failures one shares with other community members that both reflects and generates civic identity (164, 197).

Active part in civic life: The citizen participates politically (197)

1.3 William Galston

William Galston discusses liberal virtues in Chapter Ten of his book, Liberal Purposes: Goods, Virtues, and Diversity in the Liberal State. Galston there surveys how both friends and foes of liberalism suggested for many years (and continue to suggest) that liberalism and the virtues are in tension. In past decades, despite the lack of consensus on any one version of liberalism and despite the lack of any agreed upon picture of virtue, there has been near consensus that concern for the virtues has no part in liberalism. This is
a view that Galston joins with recent thinkers (Shklar, Budziszewski, Mansfield, Wilson and others) in rejecting. He asserts that “the operation of liberal institutions is affected in important ways by the character of citizens” (217). He further argues that no matter how carefully our institutions are designed to withstand human folly, as virtue weakens “liberal political contrivances” will fail (217). Fortunately, liberalism need not look outside itself for the virtues it requires, for “they are immanent in liberal practice and theory” (217). Galston outlines a list of the liberal virtues he believes liberalism requires, cautioning that “the traits of character liberalism needs, [are] not necessarily the ones it has” (217).

1.4 Galston’s Catalog

Virtues of Liberal Society:

**Independence**: The citizen takes responsibility for him or herself and avoids being dependent on others (222).

**Tolerance**: The citizen acts in accord with the belief that education and persuasion are better avenues for influencing one’s fellow citizens than coercion (222).

Virtues of Liberal Politics:

**a. General Citizen Virtues**: “Requisites of every political community” (221).

**courage**: The citizen is willing “to fight and even die” for his country (221).

**law-abidingness**: The citizen accepts laws as legitimate without “direct threats or sanctions” (221) and meets “a heavy burden of proof” to justify civil disobedience (221).

**loyalty**: The citizen “understand[s] . . . accept[s], and . . . act[s] on the core principles of [his] society” (221).
b. Citizen Virtues specific to a liberal polity:

respect: The citizen “discerns” and “respects” the rights of others (224).

discernment: The citizen discerns the “talent and character” of office-seekers as well as the performance of incumbents (224).

self-discipline: The citizen demands “no more public services than [his] country can afford” and “pay[s] for all the benefits [he] demand[s]” (225). The citizen accepts “painful measures when they are necessary” (225). This is the ability to moderate public desires in the face of public limits (93).

General (liberal) political virtues: apply to leaders and citizens alike (226).

political discourse: The citizen has “the disposition, and the developed capacity, to engage in public discourse” (227). The citizen is willing “to listen seriously to a range of views which . . . will include ideas the listener is bound to find strange and even obnoxious” (227). The citizen is also willing to “set forth [his] own views intelligibly and candidly” aiming at “persuasion rather than manipulation or coercion” (227).

anti-hypocrisy: The citizen either confronts social imperfection through “public appeal” to “collective convictions” or through “quiet acts that reduce the reach of hypocrisy in [his] immediate community” (227).

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2 For ease of reference, I’ll call this virtue “respect” as Galston himself doesn’t name it.

3 For want of a more accurate designation, I’ll call this virtue “discernment.” Galston himself doesn’t name it.

4 For ease of reference, I’ll call this virtue “self-discipline” as Galston himself doesn’t name it.

5 For ease of reference, I’ll call this virtue “anti-hypocrisy.” Galston himself describes it as “the disposition to narrow the gap (insofar as it is in one’s power) between principles and practices in liberal society” (227).
1.5 David Jones

David Jones discusses civic virtue in an article entitled “A Pragmatic Defense of Some Liberal Civic Virtues.” As a “liberal friend of community,” he argues that political liberalism must be accepted and respected, yet at the same time, accedes to the communitarian view that a greater degree of community is required in our society—particularly as an antidote against the ills of unrestrained capitalism. Because of the difficulty past and present thinkers have had in coming to a consensus on the good, Jones offers a pragmatic defense of the civic virtues by arguing for their instrumental value in “constitut[ing] a disposition to foster, support, and participate in liberal political institutions” (83). He classifies the civic virtues under four headings: conscientiousness, tolerance, reciprocity, and civic-mindedness (84). He suggests that autonomy and practical wisdom should also be included in this group, but doesn’t discuss them further, so I don’t include them here.

1.6 Jones’ Catalog

Civic Conscientiousness includes “those traits of character that manifest themselves in a sense of duty or a feeling of obligation” (84).

i. Loyalty: The citizen is loyal to the state’s political institutions insofar as they remain worthy of liberal allegiance (84-85).

ii. Sense of duty: The citizen has a sense of duty to fulfill his “nonvoluntary civic obligations” (85). This includes recognizing constitutional constraints and the rule of law.

iii. Fidelity: The citizen has “a sense of responsibility to fulfill voluntarily undertaken civic obligations” (85). These include “holding public office, serving as a judge, or being a member of the civil or military service” (85).
Pragmatic Tolerance: The citizen seeks “to avoid the evils caused by illiberal regimes” and recognizes that to violate others’ civil liberties is to threaten a liberal regime (85).

Reciprocity: The citizen returns the good he receives through others’ civic conscientiousness. He may be civically disobedient if “evil cannot be resisted within the law” (86).

Civic-mindedness: The citizen is politically interested and informed. This could include “an inclination to actively participate in ways that go beyond the civic duties” (86).

1.7 Mark Kingwell

Mark Kingwell offers a unique account of citizen virtue in an article entitled “Defending Political Virtue.” His aim is to suggest a middle path between the temptation to rule political traits “out of moral court” and pessimistic Machiavellianism (246). At the same time, he hopes to avoid the Aristotelian tendency of identifying private and public virtue (247). He argues that it is important to identify and consider both the virtues of citizens and the virtues of leaders. He urges that we acknowledge what is required to lead in a society such as ours—even when those virtues diverge from the virtues of traditional morality. We must alter our understanding of the virtuous citizen so that the virtues of the citizen complement the virtues of the leader. Citizens must display the virtues necessary for tempering power-hungry politicians, yet at the same time, not judge those leaders by an unrealistic standard (given the demands of effective politicking in a society like our own). Kingwell identifies ten traits as belonging to the politically virtuous liberal citizen (260): love of self, civility, decency, fairness, maximization of self-interest, suspicion, tolerance, reasonableness, sensitivity, and respect. However, he does not discuss love of self, decency, or fairness further, so I haven’t included these traits here.
1.8 Kingwell’s Catalog

**Civility**: The citizen is open “to the arguments of others” and “restrain[ed]” in his own arguments (260).

**Maximization of self-interest**: The citizen seeks to maximize his “personal goods” constrained by others’ pursuit of the same (260).

**Suspicion**: The citizen is “vigilant and vocal” toward his political leaders (260-61).

**Tolerance**: The citizen tolerates “imperfections” in fellow citizens (261).

**Reasonableness**: The citizen tolerates “imperfections” in the government (261).

**Sensitivity**: The citizen is sensitive to “the justice claims of fellow citizens” (260).

**Respect**: The citizen is committed “to the idea of political association” given his “recognition that other citizens are partners in that commitment” (260-61)

1.9 Stephen Macedo

Macedo first discusses what citizens living in a community flourishing in a “distinctively liberal way” (as opposed to one simply governed by liberal justice) are like (265-71) and then concludes with a list of the virtues the discussion points to: “broad sympathies, self-critical reflectiveness, a willingness to experiment, to try and to accept new things, self-control and active, autonomous self-development, an appreciation of inherited social ideals, an attachment and even an altruistic regard for one’s fellow liberal citizens” (271). He then suggests that it is possible to distinguish between liberal virtues that are “judicial, legislative, and executive in character” (275) and gives examples of each, but these virtues differ from the virtues he had previously introduced. I have taken the liberty of assigning the virtues from the original list to their (apparently) appropriate
categories. It was necessary to create a new category for the last two virtues. I have also shortened the name of some of his virtues (as indicated below) for brevity.

1.10 Macedo’s Catalog

**Judicial virtues:** Virtues that allow the citizen to “stand back” and judge his personal projects “from an impersonal point of view” (275).

- **Impartiality:** The citizen treats others as “equally worthy of respect” and acts justly (275).

- **Self-Critical Reflectiveness:** The citizen has the capacity to “formulate,” “evaluate,” and “revise” his own ideals of life and character (269).

- **Attachment to Principle:** The citizen doesn’t compromise on issues of rights and “liberal fairness” (275).

**Legislative virtues:** These virtues spring from the broad sympathies that grow within the citizen as he learns to respect the rights of others.

- **Broad Sympathies:** The citizen sympathizes with “widely divergent ways of life,” considering different life ideals and commitments as real options for himself (267).

- **Willingness to dialogue:** The citizen is willing “to engage in dialogue with those who disagree” (275).

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6 Also “self-governing reflective capacities.”

7 Macedo calls this “the ability sympathetically to survey different ideals in personal deliberation” (275).

8 Macedo calls this “the willingness to engage in dialogue with those who disagree.”
Executive virtues: The action-oriented virtues that allow one to “resolve, act, and persevere” (275).

Initiative, independence, resolve, perseverance, diligence, and patience (269). 

Willing to Experiment: The citizen views his commitments as contingent, and is open to change. (267).

Autonomous Self-Development: The citizen actively develops her individuality (269), perceiving choice amidst pluralistic complexity and uncertainty as a positive opportunity (269).

Community 

Appreciation for Social Ideals: The citizen is familiar with societal practices, traditions, and norms and views his social inheritance as a resource (270).

Loyalty: The citizen has an “altruistic regard” for and attachment to her fellow liberal citizens which stems from their common commitment to liberal justice (271).

9 Macedo offers this list of executive virtues without individual explanations of each virtue. For the most part, they are familiar and need little explanation. Rather than referring to them individually, I will simply call them “the executive virtues.”

10 Macedo calls this “a willingness to experiment, to try and to accept new things.”

11 Macedo calls this “self-control and active, autonomous self-development.”

12 Macedo doesn’t actually use this category in his discussion of liberal virtues. But (perhaps because these two virtues are introduced to defend liberalism from critics who deride liberalism’s atomistic outlook) there is no obvious place for these virtues in his judicial/ legislative/ executive framework.

13 Macedo calls this an “appreciation for inherited social ideals”

14 Macedo calls this “an attachment and altruistic regard for one’s fellow liberal citizens.”
1.11 Thomas A. Spragens, Jr.

Thomas Spragens devotes Chapter Eight of his book, *Civic Liberalism: Reflections on Our Democratic Ideals*, to a discussion of civic virtue.\(^\text{15}\) This discussion of civic virtue occurs against the larger context of the book in which Spragens proposes and defends “civic liberalism” as an alternative to several leading contemporary variants of liberalism. As part of his exposition of civic liberalism, Spragens argues that liberty and equality, despite their centrality to the liberal democratic project, should not be allowed to overshadow the project’s other important goals and ideals (175). He identifies civic virtue as one of the worthy goals that we should not allow our ideals of liberty and equality to overshadow (175).

Spragens regards civic virtue as “not so specifically and distinctively liberal”\(^\text{16}\) as other democratic ideals, yet it must “be included with any compelling account of liberal purposes” (175). He believes that liberalism’s neglect of ideals like civic friendship and virtue may be responsible for its reputation for being “morally tepid and even perverse” (177). Nonetheless, he suggests that civic liberalism’s vision of civic virtue is necessarily a “partial and constrained subset” of virtue, and in endorsing Rawls’ distinction between “comprehensive” and “political” goods, notes that were the picture of civic virtue he

\(^{15}\) See also the beginning pages of Chapter Seven where Spragens discusses his views on the relationship between civic virtue and liberalism.

\(^{16}\) This view represents the conventional wisdom, but contrasts with the view of others who write about liberal civic virtue including Peter Berkowitz, Stephen Macedo, and William Galston. All three argue that civic virtues grow naturally out of liberalism. Spragens notes a few pages later that a concern for civic virtue was historically “a dimension of liberal aspirations” (178), so perhaps he means only that civic virtue has not been one of the ideals liberalism is known for.
presents more comprehensive rather than political (limited), “it would not be legitimate for a liberal regime to affirm and promote it” (178).

Spragens identifies seven virtue “clusters”: responsible self-reliance, respect for the human dignity of all fellow citizens, law-abiding self-restraint, democratic humility, reasonableness and good judgment, neighborly *eunoia*, and the public-spirited willingness to participate in civic service (229). The clusters are organized around the ideals of civic liberalism: liberty (autonomy), equality, and civic friendship and around the tasks and processes of government “self-governance, deliberation, rule of law, and respect for the rights of others.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liberal Ideals, Tasks, Processes (as identified by “Civic Liberalism”)</th>
<th>Civic Virtues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>autonomy (liberty)</td>
<td>responsible self-reliance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>respect for the rights of others</td>
<td>respect for the human dignity of all fellow citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rule of law</td>
<td>law-abiding self-restraint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>equality</td>
<td>democratic humility</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>deliberation</td>
<td>reasonableness and good judgment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>civic friendship</td>
<td>neighborly <em>eunoia</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>self-governance</td>
<td>willingness to participate in public service</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 3**  
*Genesis of Spragens’ Virtue Catalog*
Each of Spragens’ seven virtue clusters has up to three associated virtues.

Spragens acknowledges that his clusters are not entirely distinct and discrete; there is “overlap, interplay, and mutual reinforcement” among the virtues (219).

1.12 Spragens’ Catalog

**Responsible self-reliance**: The “capacities and habits necessary to a politics of autonomy” (219).

**Independence**: The citizen is “assertive” rather than “subservient” or “subordinate,” yet “submit[s] to rational and legitimate authority” (219).

**Self-reliance**: The citizen provides for himself and his dependents “politically and economically” to the best of his ability (220).

**Responsibility**: The citizen is an accountable agent (220).

**Respect for human dignity**: The citizen acknowledges the “moral status” of fellow citizens as “purposive and responsible human agents” (222).

**Tolerance**: The citizen tolerates his fellow citizens in a way that “incorporates a positive concern and affirmation” for them (222), although he doesn’t necessarily approve of their actions.

**Honoring of Civil Rights and Liberties**: The citizen honors “the rights and liberties that necessarily pertain to democratic citizens” (222).

**Law-Abiding Self Restraint**: Virtues required by the rule of law

**Self-Restraint**: The citizen “regulates” his passions and rather than acting on “immediate impulse,” pursues his interests through “applicable rules and procedures” (223).

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17 Indeed, Spragens’ account would be striking if for no other reason than that he is the only thinker who uses the term “unity of the virtues” for some reason other than to deny it. After discussing the seven virtue clusters and their associated virtues, he praises the recent account of “civic magannimity” offered by Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson and says he wishes to appropriate their term and “broaden it to encompass and to capture the unity of the liberal civic virtues” that he has discussed (230).
**Objectivity:** The citizen confronts policy choices by “abstracting” from his or her “personal biases” (223).

**Democratic Humility:** “The recognition and cheerful acceptance that each of us is one among [moral] equals” (224).

**Fairness:** The citizen doesn’t demand “more than [his or her] share of honor, wealth, or of power” (224).

**Humility:** The citizen “recognizes and affirms that ultimately his or her beliefs about both moral truths and matters of empirical fact are just as beliefs” (224).

**The Deliberative Virtues:** The virtues based in the “moral obligation” we have “to explain ourselves” when we differ (225).

**Reasonableness:** The citizen “(1) acknowledges the moral imperative to justify one’s views and actions to one’s fellow citizens, (2) engages in practical discourse with sincerity and universal intent . . . and (3) offers relevant reasons in support of [his or her] favored policies and outcomes” (227).

**Forthrightness, Candor, Sincerity, and Dedication to the Truth** (moral deliberative virtues): The citizen should “intend his or her remarks to be comprehensible, truthful, and appropriate” (226).

**Good Judgment** (intellectual deliberative virtues): The citizen possesses: a “capacity for achieving critical distance from both oneself and the subject matter” (226), “a sense of what constitutes relevant considerations” (226), and “the ability to abide by canons of logic and consistency” (226).

**Neighborliness:** The “dispositions of heart and will conducive to civic friendship” (228).

**Friendliness:** “Readiness to relate to others in a positive and helpful way”; a “willingness to be cooperative” (228).

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18 For ease of reference, I’ll call this virtue “fairness” as Spragens doesn’t name it. He states that this “absence of pleonexia,” defined as “the insistence upon getting more than one’s fair share” (224), constitutes the “distributive dimension” of democratic humility.

19 For ease of reference, I’ll call this virtue “humility” as Spragens doesn’t name it. He states that this “absence of dogmatism” constitutes the “epistemic dimension” of democratic humility.
Public-Spirited Willingness to Participate in Civic Service

The citizen “identifies” and “contributes” to the “general good” (229), and “affirm[s] the priority of public good over particular advantage” (229).
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