

The Common Good

Political Science

Whether politics serves shared interests or aggregates private ones.

Aggregative

- Public interest is the sum of preferences
- Voting aggregates them
- Preferences taken as given
- Neutral between conceptions of the good
- Underpins much democratic theory

Deliberative

- Public interest emerges through discussion
- Preferences can change with reasons
- Requires reasoned justification to others
- Aims at agreement, not just counting
- Underpins citizens assemblies

THE DIFFERENCE THAT MATTERS

Aggregation asks what people want; deliberation asks what they could justify to each other.

Educational reference. Deliberative bodies are usually advisory precisely because they lack electoral authorisation.