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Public Discussion in the Deliberative System: Does It Make Better Citizens?

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In democratic theory, the practice of discussing public affairs has been associated with desirable consequences for citizenship and democracy. We use Anglo-American survey data to examine twelve hypotheses about psychological foundations for four general conditions that such discussions might promote: autonomous citizens, political legitimacy, good representation and democratic communities. Our data combine detailed measures of public discussion with measures of more of its hypothesized civic consequences than have heretofore been available. They also enable us to probe, using specialized samples, causal inferences suggested by our analyses of random samples in our British and American communities. Six of the hypotheses are supported, including at least one regarding each of the four general liberal democratic conditions we investigate.

From Aristotle and John Stuart Mill to contemporary democratic theory, the practice of discussing public affairs has been associated with desirable consequences for citizenship and democracy.[1] We use Anglo-American survey data to examine four sets of hypotheses about psychological foundations for the liberal democratic conditions that such discussions have been said to promote: autonomous citizens, political legitimacy, good representation and democratic communities.

The first set of hypotheses suggests that discussing public affairs helps to educate autonomous citizens by inculcating independence and internal efficacy.[2] In particular, the

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[1] Aristotle, *The Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988); John Stuart Mill, *Considerations on Representative Government* (New York: Harper, 1862), and *On Liberty* (New York: Bobbs Merrill, 1956); John Dewey, *The Public and Its Problems* (New York: Holt, 1927); Harold Lasswell, *Democracy Through Public Opinion* (New York: Bantam, 1941); Dennis F. Thompson, *The Democratic Citizen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Benjamin Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984); Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, 2 vols. (Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press, 1987); Jane Mansbridge, 'Everyday Talk in the Deliberative System', in Stephen Macedo, ed., *Deliberative Politics: Essays on Democracy and Disagreement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 211–42; James S. Fishkin, *Democracy and Deliberation* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1991); John Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); Stephen Macedo, 'Introduction', in Macedo, ed, *Deliberative Politics*, pp. 3–16; Albert Weale, 'Party Competition and Deliberative Democracy', in Judith Bara and Albert Weale, eds, *Party Competition and Political Democracy: Essays in Honour of Ian Budge* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 271–86; Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1996); Thomas A. Spragens, *Reason and Democracy* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1990).

[2] Mill, *On Liberty*; David Held, *Models of Democracy* (Oxford: Polity Press, 1987); Joshua Cohen, 'Democracy and Liberty', in Jon Elster, ed., *Deliberative Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 185–231.

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more that citizens encounter different points of view, face to face, the more they are likely to examine their own views and thereby develop the autonomy needed for effective liberal citizenship. The next set of hypotheses suggests that discussing public affairs builds political legitimacy for democratic institutions by drawing citizens towards consensus on fundamental values and rules of the game. At the end of the day, even those who still disagree with public policies may nevertheless accept them because of their satisfaction with having been involved in discussions about these matters.[3]

The third set of hypotheses turns to electoral contexts to link political talk with good representation. It suggests that such discussions improve the knowledge and skills that citizens need to evaluate candidates and issues intelligently, and that the experience of discussing public affairs strengthens their desire to participate in electoral activity.[4] Finally, the strongest claims focus on the democratic community to argue that deliberation should be regarded as a fundamental act of citizenship,[5] because it fosters the mutual understanding, tolerance and public spiritedness that citizens require to live and work together successfully.

Our data provide an exceptional opportunity to survey this extensive terrain and to investigate specific claims found here, because they combine theoretically oriented and detailed measures of discussion with measures of more of its hypothesized civic consequences than have heretofore been available. They also enable us to probe, using specialized samples, causal inferences suggested by our analyses of random samples in our British and American communities.

THEORY

Much of the recent empirical interest in political talk has been stimulated by the 'deliberative turn' in democratic theory, which, during the 1990s, drew attention to contexts for discussing public affairs and to deliberative activities that occur or might occur within them. Mansbridge and Habermas suggest we think about all these practices as a 'deliberative system' that educates, constructs, filters, adopts, applies and discards political ideas. At its core is political talk within institutions like national courts, parliaments and civil service departments.[6] Around this core and linked with it is the political talk between constituents and government officials and within political parties, interest groups and the

[3] Joshua Cohen, 'Deliberation and Political Legitimacy', in James Bohman and William Rehg, eds, *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997); Cohen, 'Democracy and Liberty'; Fishkin, *Democracy and Deliberation*; Bruce Ackerman, *Social Justice in the Liberal State* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1980); Bruce Ackerman 'Why Dialogue?' *Journal of Philosophy*, 86 (1989), 5–22; Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*; Seyla Benhabib, 'Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition and Jurgen Habermas', in Craig Calhoun, ed., *Habermas and the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992).

[4] William Galston, 'Liberal Virtues', *American Political Science Review*, 82 (1988), 1277–90; Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*; Barry Holden, *Understanding Liberal Democracy* (Hemel Hempsted, Herts.: Philip Allen, 1988); Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1985).

[5] Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958); Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*; Spragens, *Reason and Democracy*.

[6] Mansbridge, 'Everyday Talk in the Deliberative System'; Jürgen Habermas, 'Concluding Comments on Empirical Approaches to Deliberative Politics', *Acta Politica*, 40 (2005), 385–92; Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).

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media. The model's third ring consists of political talk that occurs among activists, attentive publics and general publics.

To situate the theoretical significance of our investigation in this third ring, several further distinctions are needed. Mansbridge's and Habermas's visions span a communicative spectrum from 'structured deliberation' to 'public discussion' to 'casual political talk'. All three forms of political talk are found in each of the three systemic contexts. But some forms are more common in some contexts than in others. Structured deliberation involves listening carefully to the views of others, explaining one's own views to them and taking time together to think over a matter thoroughly. This exercise finds its most systematic expression in ideal deliberative models constructed by political theorists for purposes of normative inquiry. Structured deliberation is, however, sometimes approximated in core deliberative institutions like parliaments and civil service departments.[7] It has also been approximated in research settings where democratic deliberations are artificially or experimentally constructed for ordinary citizens.[8]

Public discussion, by contrast, refers to extended conversations about political issues, which are less structured by rules, participants or moderators, but which are importantly conducted in 'public' settings where participants are likely to encounter a range of different perspectives. This mode of political talk is commonly found in elite institutions like parliaments, civil service departments, political parties and interest groups. Less systematically, it is also practised by minorities among attentive and general publics in places like work, pubs, churches, school boards, town councils and town hall meetings.[9]

[7] Jürg Steiner, André Bächtiger, Marcus Spörndli and Marco Steenbergen, *Deliberative Politics in Action: Analyzing Parliamentary Discourse* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005); Marco R. Steenbergen, André Bachtiger, Marcus Sporndli and Jürg Steiner, 'Toward a Political Psychology of Deliberation' (paper presented at the Conference on Empirical Approaches to Deliberative Politics, European University Institute, Florence, 2004).

[8] For example: Fishkin, *Democracy and Deliberation*; James S. Fishkin and Robert Luskin, 'Bringing Deliberation to Democratic Dialogue', in M. McCombs and A. Reynolds, eds, *The Poll with a Human Face: The National Issues Convention Experiment in Political Communication* (Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1999), pp. 3–38; John Gastil and James P. Dillard, 'The Aims, Methods and Effects of Deliberative Civic Education through the National Issues Forums', *Communication Education*, 48 (1999), 1–14; Robert C. Luskin, James S. Fishkin and R. Jowell, 'Considered Opinions: Deliberative Polling in Britain', *British Journal of Political Science*, 32 (2002), 455–87; Cynthia Farrar, James S. Fishkin, Donald P. Green, Christian List, Robert Luskin and Elizabeth Levy Paluck, 'Experimenting with Deliberative Democracy: Effects on Policy Preferences and Social Choice' (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Political Psychology, Boston, Mass., 2003).

[9] See: Jeffery J. Mondak and Diana C. Mutz, 'When Good Things Happen Because of Annoying Co-workers: The Role of the Workplace in Fostering Political Tolerance' (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, Mass., 2002); Pamela Johnston Conover, Donald D. Searing and Ivor Crewe, 'The Deliberative Potential of Political Discussion', *British Journal of Political Science*, 31 (2002), 21–63; Shawn W. Rosenberg, 'Reason, Discourse and Democratic Deliberation: Can Citizens Effectively Participate in Deliberative Decision Making?' (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, 2003); David M. Ryfe, 'The Practice of Deliberative Democracy: A Study of 160 Deliberative Organizations', *Political Communication*, 19 (2002), 359–77; John Gastil, 'Deliberation in Conversations and Public Meetings: Exploring the Connection Between Balanced Discussions and Public Knowledge and Attitudes Regarding Los Alamos National Laboratory' (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Political Psychology, Boston, Mass., 2003); Mark Button and Kevin Mattson, 'Deliberative Democracy in Practice: Challenges and Prospects for Civic Deliberation', *Polity*, 31 (1999), 609–37; Jane Mansbridge, *Adversary Democracy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983).

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Lastly, casual political talk, or 'shooting the breeze' with occasional comments about politics,[10] is typically pursued with like-minded friends and acquaintances. This is surely the modal form of political communication in each of the deliberative system's three rings, although attentive and general publics, who are freer than elites to choose their discussion partners, are also particularly likely to save their casual political talk for 'private' occasions.[11] If structured deliberation is quite unusual for these publics,[12] significant minorities among them enjoy casual political talk and occasionally pursue the extended conversations of public discussion.

Casual political talk and public discussion among citizens is an important democratic feature of contemporary liberal states. There has been some recent research on its frequency and scope;[13] its structure and dynamics;[14] and its consequences for political knowledge.[15] But with several notable exceptions,[16] little of this work has specifically investigated public discussion's hypothesized consequences for shaping citizenship beyond the electoral context. And much of it has been hamstrung by standard measures of discussion that do not discriminate between different types of talk, and that may be conflating such talk with a general interest in political affairs.[17]

The hypotheses that we shall investigate are inspired by democratic political theory, many of them by its recent theoretically rich deliberative developments. Let us be clear, however, that we are not directly testing hypotheses about systematic deliberation but are instead using the philosophical literature on deliberation, along with other democratic theory, liberal theory and political behaviour research, to suggest hypotheses that, in the

[10] Katherine Cramer Walsh, *Talking About Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004); William A. Gamson, *Talking Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

[11] Conover, Searing and Crewe, 'The Deliberative Potential of Political Discussion'.

[12] See Frederick Schauer, 'Talking as a Decision Procedure', in Stephen Macedo, ed., *Deliberative Politics; Essays on Democracy and Disagreement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 17–28; Fishkin, *Democracy and Deliberation*.

[13] Stephen E. Bennett, Richard S. Flickinger and Staci L. Rhine, 'Political Talk Over Here, Over There, Over Time', *British Journal of Political Science*, 30 (2000), 99–119; Fay Lomax Cook and Michael X. Delli Carpini, 'Discursive Capital: Civic Deliberation in America' (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia 2003); Conover, Searing and Crewe, 'The Deliberative Potential of Political Discussion'.

[14] Shawn W. Rosenberg, 'Reconstructing the Concept of Deliberation: Considering the Structure and Dynamic of Social Communication' (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, 2003); Rosenberg, 'Reason, Discourse and Democratic Deliberation: Can Citizens Effectively Participate in Deliberative Decision Making?'; Arthur Lupia, 'Necessary Conditions for Improving Civic Competence: A Scientific Perspective' (paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the International Society for the Study of Political Psychology, Boston, Mass., 2003); Adam F. Simon, 'Say the Magic Word: Effective Communication in Social Dilemmas' (paper presented at the Annual Meetings of the American Political Science Association, Philadelphia, 2003); James H. Kuklinski, Ellen Riggle, Victor Ottati, Norbert Schwarz and Robert S. Wyer Jr, 'Thinking About Political Tolerance, More or Less, with More or Less Information', in George E. Marcus and Russell L. Hanson, eds, *Reconsidering the Democratic Public* (University Park: Penn State University Press, 1990), pp. 225–48; Gamson, *Talking Politics*; Michael B. MacKuen, 'Speaking of Politics: Individual Conversational Choice, Public Opinion and the Prospects for Deliberative Democracy', in John A. Ferejohn and James Kuklinski, eds, *Information and Democratic Process* (Champaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990), pp. 59–99.

[15] Jason Barabas, 'How Deliberation Affects Policy Opinions', *American Political Science Review*, 98 (2004), 687–701; Robert Huckfeldt and John Sprague, *Citizens, Politics and Social Communication* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[16] For example, Mondak and Mutz, 'When Good Things Happen Because of Annoying Co-workers'.

[17] James H. Kuklinski and Paul J. Quirk, 'Conceptual Foundations of Citizen Competence', *Political Behavior*, 23 (2001), 285–311.

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light of what we know about political psychology, might reasonably be thought to pertain to public discussions, and that seem plausible and worth investigating.[18] Whether and to what extent our results for public discussion can be generalized to more structured deliberation, or to casual political talk for that matter, are concerns that would require further investigations.

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA

The data that we use are drawn from interviews conducted in Great Britain and the United States to investigate a wide range of topics concerning citizenship and the making of citizens. This study employed a quasi-experimental research design, a variation of a 'non-equivalent comparison group' design,[19] which integrated a macro comparative case study design at national and community levels with a variable-oriented design at the individual level. In this article, we focus on individual level relationships between the experience of public discussion and the attitudes and practices of citizenship.[20]

The principal virtue of these cross-sectional data for present purposes is that they combine rich measures of political talk with measures of more of the many hypothesized civic consequences of such talk than have heretofore been available. Another key strength arises from the cultural and linguistic commonality across these nations and communities, which facilitates the cross-national reliability and validity of the psychological measures. The design's basic element is the local community, where citizens learn, experience and talk about their citizenship.[21] Thus, the data are not national samples but are instead drawn from demographically matched research sites: small, stable market/farming communities in Lincolnshire and Minnesota; urban, predominantly working-class communities in Manchester and Philadelphia; and, upper middle-class suburban communities in Essex and North Carolina. For each of these six communities, the data include face-to-face survey interviews with random samples of 125 adult citizens as well as interviews with secondary school students and their teachers and parents. They also include accounts of local history, participant observation information, aggregate data and transcribed interviews with focus groups and community leaders.[22]

Our analysis will be informed by the focus groups and elite interviews, but it will concentrate on two survey datasets. The first dataset consists of the combined random

[18] We are not directly testing deliberative theory, (a) because we are not measuring systematic deliberation; (b) because some forms of deliberation are moderated and the public discussions we measure are not; (c) because much deliberative theory is positing normative ideals; (d) because deliberative theory is diverse and sometimes vague and inconsistent; and (e) because much of the commentary from which we have derived our hypotheses consists of theoretically intriguing but underdeveloped speculations and casual suggestions.

[19] See Thomas D. Cook and Donald T. Campbell, *Quasi-Experimentation: Design and Analysis for Field Settings* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1979).

[20] Since our research design is neither an experiment nor a deliberative poll, it does not directly assess preference formation and transformation. What it does assess is whether people who discuss more often are more likely to have the expected outlooks and patterns of behaviour. This too is important evidence. Compared to alternative methods, ours has the usual strengths of survey methodology (external validity) along with its usual weaknesses (internal validity).

[21] Compare Huckfeldt and Sprague, *Citizens, Politics and Social Communication*, p. 8.

[22] In Great Britain, a professional survey organization conducted all the survey interviews. In the United States, the survey interviews in the Philadelphia community were conducted by a professional survey organization, while the principal investigators recruited, trained and supervised survey interviewers for the other two communities. All field work was done in both countries between 1990 and 1993.

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samples of adult citizens in the six communities. An ordinary least squares (OLS) regression analysis of these cross-sectional data will provide a much-needed initial assessment of the relationships between public discussion and democratic citizenship and will determine whether any of these relationships vary markedly between the United States and Britain. Because OLS regressions of cross-sectional survey data cannot determine the *direction* of causation, their utility in causal analysis is sometimes undervalued. In fact, they provide critical new knowledge about causation. For when they find no significant correlations, the credibility of causal hypotheses is weakened. Conversely, when they do find significant correlations, credibility is strengthened because the causal hypotheses have 'survived a chance of disconfirmation'.[23] Such OLS analyses of political talk have produced theoretically important cross-national results.[24]

The next critical step, however, is to explore the direction of causation, which for political talk is theoretically and methodologically challenging. Where an OLS analysis finds, for example, an association between public discussion and feelings of political efficacy, we infer the existence of a causal relationship. Yet, it may *not* be that (a) citizens feel efficacious because they are discussing, but rather that (b) they are discussing because they feel efficacious.[25] Or (c) both, or more complex still: (d) if political talk is a practice performed repeatedly throughout adulthood, it and the attitudes and behaviours associated with it may reinforce each other in cycles over time such that, in different time periods and contexts, the flow of causation may be either (a), (b) or (c).[26] We cannot pursue causal pattern (d). To investigate the others, we turn to a complementary dataset that includes measures of the same independent and dependent variables.

This second dataset is composed of the responses of the surveyed married or cohabiting parents of secondary school students from all six communities. Although the distinctive demographics of these respondents are less suitable for drawing general conclusions, their dataset enables us to pursue direction of causality issues with two-stage least squares regression (2SLS).

To untangle potentially complex patterns of causation between two variables (X and Y) by using cross-sectional methods like 2SLS, we need to employ instrumental variables that affect one of the two test variables (X) but that do not *directly* affect the other (Y).[27] Furthermore, the claim that a potential instrumental variable has no direct effect on Y must be theoretically and logically justified, instead of being empirically derived.[28] Because

[23] Donald T. Campbell and Julian C. Stanley, *Experimental and Quasi-Experimental Designs for Research* (Boston, Mass.: Houghton Mifflin, 1963).

[24] For example, Bennett, Flickinger and Rhine, 'Political Talk Over Here, Over there, Over Time'.

[25] This is, in fact, what Almond and Verba inferred when they discovered relationships between discussion and internal efficacy in the United States and Great Britain: Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1963).

[26] Stephanie Burkhalter, John Gastil and Todd Kelshaw, 'A Conceptual Definition and Theoretical Model of Public Deliberation in Small Face-To-Face Groups', *Communication Theory*, 12 (2002), 398–422; Martin Hollis, *Reason in Action* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 224ff.

[27] A core assumption of OLS analysis is that the 'disturbance' of a model's dependent variable (Y), i.e., the variation in Y not caused by the model's independent variables (X and the others), is not correlated with these independent variables. But if it turns out that Y causes X, then this assumption does not hold. In 2SLS, this problematic assumption is overcome by replacing the actual values of X with an estimate generated by using an instrumental variable, that is to say, a variable that does not have a direct relationship with Y, and therefore is not correlated with Y's disturbance.

[28] E. Kevin Kelloway, *Using Lisrel for Structural Equation Modeling: A Researcher's Guide* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1998) pp. 172–3.

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such instrumental variables are not available in our random sample dataset, we turn to this complementary parental dataset, which includes a compelling pair: each respondent's spouse's scores on the key independent and dependent variables that are in potentially reciprocal relationships.

Take, for example, a significant correlation that links public discussion with voting. People whose spouses regularly vote tend to vote more themselves ($R = 0.49$, $t = 13.46$), but their spouses' voting should not theoretically or logically be expected to increase the extent to which they themselves discuss politics *in public settings* – except perhaps indirectly through its effect on their own voting behaviour.[29] And people whose spouses engage in frequent public discussion also tend to engage frequently in public discussion themselves ($R = 0.32$, $t = 7.95$), but their spouse's discussion should not directly affect their own propensity to vote. Our 2SLS analysis, which uses spouses' responses as instrumental variables, proceeds as follows: an estimate of the respondent's voting is generated from his or her spouse's voting and is used to determine the effect of voting on discussion; in the same way, an estimate of the respondent's discussion is generated from his or her spouse's discussion and is used to determine the effect of discussion on voting.[30]

Moreover, although small direct effects of a proposed instrumental variable (for example, a spouse's voting) on the variable of interest (for example, a respondent's public discussion of politics) can result in underestimated standard errors and hence misleading inferences,[31] our data display no evidence of any such direct effects, thereby confirming our theoretical justification of their use.[32] For these reasons, respondents' spouses' scores are excellent instrumental variables for identifying the 2SLS models and allowing them to be estimated. Therefore, despite some sacrifice in generalizability, we use the parental dataset to gain additional insights into the causal relationships between public discussion and good citizenship. Because assessing cross-national differences in 2SLS is not straightforward, where our OLS results indicate such differences are important we will explore them by examining separately the parental respondents from each nation.

We focus our inquiry on public discussions because, from the viewpoints of both democratic theory and political psychology, the model's key learning mechanisms are most likely to be found here: encounters with multiple viewpoints, and motivations to produce public reasons.[33] For it is in public places that citizens are most likely to meet other citizens who express a variety of different viewpoints.[34] And it is in public places that

[29] Although, for example, a wife's voting behaviour might provide a subject for a discussion of politics, her husband is unlikely to discuss this subject *publicly*, unless she had also demonstrated a willingness to discuss it publicly; any increase in the husband's public discussion would come directly from the increased public discussion of his wife and only indirectly from her voting.

[30] In practice, the statistical software executes simultaneously the two stages of 2SLS analysis (first estimating the two variables from their respective instruments, and then calculating their effects on each other). All analyses presented here were performed using STATA 8.2.

[31] Larry M. Bartels, 'Instrumental and "Quasi-Instrumental" Variables', *American Journal of Political Science*, 35 (1991), 777–800.

[32] Such unexpected direct effects are detected by examining the partial correlation between the instrumental variable and the residuals of the second-stage equation controlling for all other variables included in the regression; see Bartels, 'Instrumental and "Quasi-Instrumental" Variables'. None of these partial correlations were statistically significant in our analyses of the parental dataset.

[33] Although these mechanisms are quite plausible from the perspective of political psychology, much research in that subfield would also support a sceptical outlook towards the efficacy of deliberative learning, see Steenbergen, Bachtiger, Sporndli and Steiner, 'Toward a Political Psychology of Deliberation'.

[34] Diana Mutz, 'Cross-Cutting Social Networks: Testing Democratic Theory in Practice', *American Political Science Review*, 96 (2002), 111–26.

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people are often motivated to support their arguments with public reasons in order to avoid appearing too self-interested.[35] Both mechanisms are less likely to characterize discussions in 'private places' such as homes and social occasions with friends.[36] So it is discussions in public places that we measure, discussions of matters of public concern.

These matters of public concern were specified through exploratory focus groups and pre-tests, where British and American citizens were asked to identify the types of political issues that they most frequently discussed with other citizens. Based on their responses, we constructed a series of survey questions to direct attention to 'serious discussions or conversations' about fourteen such issues, local, national and international, during a fixed time period (one month).[37] This inventory, which took a considerable amount of time to administer, preceded and thereby provided a psychological frame for our measure of discussion in public places. It stimulated respondents to recall many examples of such conversations. It also turned their attention towards discussions that were more systematic than exchanges of casual remarks. Thus, interviewers stressed, twice with each issue, that we were interested only in extended discussions ('discussions or serious conversations of five minutes or more').

To assess the frequency of these public discussions, we next asked respondents how often they had serious discussions about matters of public concern in each of eight different settings, which varied in their 'publicness':

People also discuss politics in different places and with different kinds of people. I'm going to read you a list of places where people sometimes talk about public issues. For each one, please tell me how often you usually have discussions or serious conversations of more than five minutes about political issues like those just mentioned. The first is at home. Generally speaking, how often would you say you have discussions or serious conversations about political issues at home? … Never, rarely, sometimes, or often?

The four settings we counted as public were: 'the place where you work', 'at church or synagogue functions', 'at public meetings', and 'with neighbours'. Our measure of public discussion is constructed as a principal-components factor index of these four measures plus an identically structured measure for discussions with 'people with different views from your own'.[38]

The exogenous variables that we use as controls in our models measure demographic background and context as well as political and social factors that we identified in our

[35] Steiner *et al*., *Deliberative Politics in Action*; Simone Chambers, 'Measuring Publicity's Effect: Reconciling Empirical Research and Normative Theory' (paper presented at the Conference on Empirical Approaches to Deliberative Politics, European University Institute, Florence, 2004); Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*.

[36] Under some conditions, private discussions among sympathetic others can reinforce existing prejudices and polarize opinions: see R. Cass Sunstein, 'The Law of Group Polarization', in James S. Fishkin and Peter Laslett, eds, *Debating Deliberative Democracy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 80–101; Lynn M. Sanders, 'Against Deliberation', *Political Theory*, 25 (1997), 347–76.

[37] 'Please tell me how many times, if ever, you have had a discussion or serious conversation of five minutes or more about each topic during the last month. The first topic is the economy, that is, things like interest rates, unemployment, and rising prices. In the last month how many times have you had a discussion or serious conversation about the economy … not at all, once or twice, or often?' This question, designed to draw attention to discussions that might induce 'reflections upon preferences' (Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*, pp. 1–2), was repeated for fourteen international topics, national topics and local topics, two of which were community specific.

[38] Details of this measure and of the control variables may be found in the Appendix to this article.

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review of the theoretical and empirical literature on citizenship as having particularly important potential effects. The control variables for demographic background are Age, Education, Female and Non-white. Controls were also included for national and community context: Britain, Urban and Suburban. The political and social variables included as controls are Strength of Partisanship, Media Usage and National Identity.

RESULTS

Autonomous Citizens

Liberal democratic citizens are free citizens, free to choose whatever values and ways of life they prefer.[39] That is the ideal. But their freedom can be both enabled and impeded by the government, by the community or by their own lack of psychological resources. Among these psychological resources, a sense of autonomy is regarded as particularly important. And, following John Stuart Mill's famous arguments in *On Liberty*, liberal theorists cite public discussion as a life-long practice through which this autonomy can be strengthened and liberty secured. Participatory democratic theorists further suggest that this same experience of discussing public affairs educates 'internally' efficacious citizens whose self-confidence enhances their capacity for action as members of democratic political communities.[40] We investigate two dependent variables in this area: *psychological autonomy* and *internal political efficacy*.

Psychological autonomy refers to a capability for making reasoned choices and acting on one's conclusions, a 'psychological freedom' that is often associated with liberalism and often in tension with majoritarian democratic norms.[41] According to Mill, this is a disposition that citizens may nurture by regularly engaging in public discussions about public matters.[42] When it occurs, the challenge of encountering new viewpoints put by people who believe in them strongly can energize self-reflection and engagement.[43] We measure Mill's psychological autonomy with a self-characterization instrument: a principal components index of three five-point items that ask respondents to characterize their dispositions to make their own decisions and to be their own persons.[44]

Autonomy has a specifically political utility as well: it helps citizens to see their interests clearly and to pursue them collectively.[45] Autonomous citizens are individualistic liberal citizens who possess internal political efficacy, a feeling that they are qualified to deal with

[39] Philip Pettit, 'Agency-Freedom and Option-Freedom', *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 15 (2003), 387–403; John Gray, *Liberalism* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

[40] Arendt, *The Human Condition*; Cohen, 'Democracy and Liberty'; Carole Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970); Barber, *Strong Democracy: Participatory Politics for a New Age*, pp. 190–1; Holden, *Understanding Liberal Democracy*, pp. 125–6; Mark Warren, 'Democratic Theory and Self-Transformation', *American Political Science Review*, 90 (1992), 11–12.

[41] Sebastiano Bavetta and Francesco Guala, 'Autonomy- Freedom and Deliberation', *Journal of Theoretical Politics*, 15 (2003), 423–43.

[42] Mill, *On Liberty*, chap. 3; John Skorupski, *John Stuart Mill* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 354–9.

[43] James D. Fearon, 'Deliberation as Discussion', in Jon Elster, ed., *Deliberative Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 44–68.

[44] These, and all other measures for our models, are reported in the Appendix to this article.

[45] Bavatta and Guala, 'Autonomy-Freedom and Deliberation'; Bernard Manin, 'On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation', *Political Theory*, 15 (1987), 338–68.

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political affairs,[46] a feeling that orients them towards the political world and provides the self-confidence needed to participate in it. This political self-confidence is reinforced by positive experiences in public discussions, and it is infused with expectations for political participation by the culture of public reasons that such discussions encourage.[47] To measure internal political efficacy, we use a standard five-point agree/disagree American National Election Study (NES) survey item, which is likewise based on self-characterization: it asks respondents how qualified they feel to participate in politics.[48]

Table 1 presents the results of our analyses of psychological autonomy and internal efficacy. As shown in the table's first column, our OLS regression using the random-sample dataset provides no support for the hypothesis that public discussion of political issues is associated with higher levels of psychological autonomy. Although national contexts matter, with Americans expressing considerably more psychological autonomy than the British, the relationship between discussion and psychological autonomy is small and statistically insignificant in both countries. Controlling for possible reciprocal effects between discussion and psychological autonomy, as we did in the 2SLS analysis of the parental dataset presented in the second column, similarly fails to reveal any important relationships between the two variables.

These models' overall weakness – only gender and national context consistently demonstrate strong and statistically significant effects, with partisanship and media usage having smaller impacts – is perhaps not so surprising. For the dependent variable here is more personal than political, and the model does not include measures of psychological factors that might dominate it. But what does seem surprising is that, even in this underspecified context, the experience of contested public discussion appears to have no significant value whatsoever for seeking to think independently, for 'making one's own decisions', for seeing oneself as 'one's own person'.

This negative finding could be due to weaknesses in the validity of our self-characterization measure of psychological autonomy. Moreover, the public discussion that we measure is less structured and contested than are the exchanges hypothesized by many deliberative theorists; it also lacks prerequisites for ideal deliberation like 'equal participation' and 'mutual respect among discussion partners'. Our results do not therefore directly test the value of structured deliberations for promoting psychological autonomy. But they do assess the educative value of public discussions that mimic some of the exchanges that John Stuart Mill hoped would generate such effects.

The picture changes dramatically when we shift our focus to internal efficacy, a dependent variable that, compared to psychological autonomy, is more explicitly political. The OLS estimates for internal efficacy in the third column of Table 1 reveal that public discussion emerges as a quite substantial and very significant predictor, even after allowing for the effects of our background, contextual and political and social control variables. The effect is estimated to be greater in the United States than in Britain, but the difference between the two national contexts is not statistically significant: according to these results,

[46] Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture*; Charles W. Anderson, *Pragmatic Liberalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), p. 197.

[47] Fishkin and Luskin, 'Bringing Deliberation to Democratic Dialogue'; John Gastil and James P. Dillard, 'Increasing Political Sophistication Through Public Deliberation', *Political Communication*, 16 (1999), 3–23.

[48] Richard G. Niemi, Stephen C. Craige and Franco Mattei, 'Measuring Internal Political Efficacy in the 1988 National Election Study', *American Political Science Review*, 85 (1991), 1407–13.

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TABLE 1 *Public Discussion: 'Autonomous Citizens' Results*

	Psychological Autonomy		Internal Efficacy	
	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS
Background				
Age	0.02	0.01	− 0.01	− 0.05
	(0.01)	(0.07)	(0.01)	(0.07)
Age^2/100	− 0.02	− 0.01	0.01	0.05
	(0.01)	(0.08)	(0.01)	(0.07)
Education	0.04	0.07	0.12***	0.19***
	(0.04)	(0.07)	(0.04)	(0.06)
Female	− 0.26***	− 0.41***	− 0.37***	− 0.32**
	(0.07)	(0.12)	(0.08)	(0.11)
Non-white	0.21	0.01	− 0.06	− 0.32
	(0.21)	(0.33)	(0.23)	(0.32)
Context				
Britain	− 0.32***	− 0.59**	− 0.19*	− 0.03
	(0.08)	(0.24)	(0.09)	(0.22)
Urban	0.02	0.06	0.08	0.11
	(0.08)	(0.13)	(0.09)	(0.12)
Suburban	− 0.03	− 0.08	0.05	− 0.05
	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.10)	(0.10)
Political and Social				
Strength of Partisanship	0.06#	0.07#	0.14***	0.07#
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Media Usage	0.06*	0.14*	0.05	0.08#
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.05)
National Identity	− 0.06#	0.01	0.02	− 0.06#
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Political Knowledge			0.09*	− 0.02
			(0.04)	(0.06)
Spouse's Score		0.03		0.19***
		(0.05)		(0.04)
Public Discussion				
Discussion	0.03	− 0.31	0.34***	0.46*
	(0.06)	(0.27)	(0.06)	(0.26)
Discussion × Britain	− 0.10		− 0.14	
	(0.07)		(0.08)	
Constant	− 0.34	0.51	− 2.78***	3.52*
	(0.30)	(1.68)	(0.32)	(1.59)
Effect on Discussion		− 1.21		− 0.11
		(1.36)		(0.19)
N	849	550	849	550
R^2	0.06		0.18	
Root MSE	0.97	1.03	1.04	0.98

Notes: #$p < 0.10$, *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$. Unstandardized coefficients are reported in the first row; standard errors are in parentheses.

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the fuller the experience of discussing matters of public concern, the greater the sense of civic competence.

But could this relationship, which appears consistent with the hypothesis, instead be an artefact of internal efficacy's effect on the frequency of public discussion? Judging from our sample of parents, the answer is no. The 2SLS results in the last column of Table 1 show, on one hand, a strong and statistically significant effect of discussion on internal efficacy. Internal efficacy, on the other hand, was estimated not to have an important effect on the discussion of politics in public settings.

POLITICAL LEGITIMACY

Political legitimacy is an umbrella term for a family of concepts.[49] Its central notion is the condition of being in accord with established law or principle. Thus, citizens usually accept official decisions when they believe they have been made in accord with existing rules of the game.[50] Citizens accept these decisions because (and to the extent that) they accept the rules. How, then, do they learn to accept such rules of the game? This question has become a focal point for discourse theorists, who believe that strong legitimacy requires 'genuine' consent to rules of the game, to fundamental laws and norms,[51] and that genuine consent is most effectively learned through public dialogue.[52] The normative discourse models that address such effects are of course more rigorous, conclusive and transformative than are the public discussions experienced by our British and American citizens. But how much of the legitimacy attributed to such ideal dialogues might be attainable through public discussion? The hypothesis is plausible and worth investigating. Thus, we examine the impact of public discussion on two aspects of political legitimacy: *sense of citizen duty* and *government responsiveness*.

Accepting political legitimacy entails recognizing the citizen's duty to obey laws and norms. In his reconstruction of legitimacy measures, Weatherford characterizes this disposition to accept rules of the game as 'civic duty'.[53] The practice of discussing public matters in public contexts can promote this sense of civic or citizen duty directly by teaching rules, and indirectly by promoting a sense of membership in the political community.[54] We measure sense of citizen duty with a principal components index of four-point responses to an inventory of thirty-six different duties identified by citizens during the study's pre-tests. Each duty was printed on a separate card, which respondents assigned to one of four categories. These categories were ranked by degrees of obligation

[49] Stephen M. Weatherford, 'Measuring Political Legitimacy', *American Political Science Review*, 86 (1992), 149–66.

[50] Max Weber, 'Politics as a Vocation', in H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, eds, *From Max Weber* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958); Manin, 'On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation'; Macedo, 'Introduction'; Cohen, 'Democracy and Liberty'.

[51] J. Donald Moon, 'Constrained Discourse and Public Life', *Political Theory*, 19 (1991), 202–29.

[52] Thomas Christiano, 'The Significance of Public Deliberation', in James Bohman and William Rehg, eds, *Deliberative Democracy: Essays on Reason and Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1997) pp. 243–78; Seyla Benhabib, 'Liberal Dialogue Versus a Critical Theory of Discursive Legitimation', in Nancy L. Rosenblum, ed., *Liberalism and the Moral Life* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1989), pp. 143–56; Joshua Cohen, 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy', in Alan Hamlin and Philip Pettit, eds, *The Good Polity* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), pp. 17–34; Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*.

[53] Weatherford, 'Measuring Political Legitimacy'.

[54] Thus, the sense of civic duty is also conceptually connected to the topic of democratic community, which we consider below.

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distinguished by citizens and by theorists who write about the subject: a legal duty of citizens, a moral duty of citizens, a good thing for citizens to do (though not a duty), or irrelevant to citizenship. The potential duties encompass rules of the game, both political and civic. They include: paying taxes, serving on juries, voting in elections, reporting serious crimes, military service, being willing to work, giving to charities and respecting the rights of others.[55]

The second aspect of political legitimacy that we investigate concerns beliefs about government responsiveness, about the attentiveness of the political authorities, about how well the system works. This dependent variable connects with legitimacy through the assumption that citizens who believe that the government cares about what they think and takes their views into account are more likely to feel that it is legitimate, that its decisions are appropriate, and that the regime's established rules and practices are appropriate as well.[56] These beliefs fall under Weatherford's 'representational procedures', and have been empirically linked in measurement studies.[57] They can be promoted by feelings of political engagement that citizens may draw out of their public discussions, by a consciousness of association with diverse others, and by experiencing approval for wrapping one's private interests in public reasons. The sense of government responsiveness is measured by a principal-components index of two 5-point agree/disagree responses to the following statements, with perceptions of more responsive government coded as higher scores, and equal factor loadings assumed: 'I don't think that governments of *any* party care much about what people like me think'; 'There are many legal ways in which people like me could successfully influence what the government does.'

To determine whether public discussion is associated with these two aspects of political legitimacy, we added to our model from the previous section two new independent variables: psychological autonomy and internal political efficacy, which were analysed there as dependent variables. Here they may colour views about the sense of citizen duty and the accountability and attentiveness of the political authorities. The results are reported in Table 2.

Our OLS regression of citizen duty in the first column of Table 2 indicates that public discussion of politics has a small but statistically significant positive relationship in both the United States and Britain: the experience of public discussion may indeed nurture this form of political legitimacy. However, our 2SLS analysis of the parental dataset in the second column, which controls for the possible reciprocal effect of citizen duty on public discussion, does not support this inference. Although discussing politics in public settings is estimated to have a positive effect on the sense of duty, and a more developed sense of duty increases the frequency of public discussion, neither of these effects is sufficiently consistent to reach statistical significance. As the estimated effect of discussion on duty is approximately twice as large as that found in the random sample when the OLS model of the first column is replicated using the parental dataset, this result raises serious doubts that public discussion actually stimulates feelings of duty.

The results are much less ambiguous with respect to government responsiveness, our other measure of political legitimacy. The most powerful factors associated with

[55] The full list is reported in the Appendix to this article.

[56] Holden, *Understanding Liberal Democracy*, p. 126; Fearon, 'Deliberation as Discussion'; Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, pp. 41–2.

[57] Weatherford, 'Measuring Political Legitimacy'; Paul Abramson, *Political Attitudes in America* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman and Company, 1983), pp. 143–4.

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TABLE 2 *Public Discussion: 'Political Legitimacy' Linear Regression Results*

	Sense of Citizen Duty		Government Responsiveness	
	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS
Background				
Age	0.02*	0.03	0.00	0.06
	(0.01)	(0.07)	(0.01)	(0.06)
$Age^2/100$	− 0.01	− 0.02	0.00	− 0.07
	(0.01)	(0.07)	(0.01)	(0.07)
Education	0.03	− 0.06	0.07*	0.09*
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Female	0.21**	0.15#	0.03	0.13#
	(0.07)	(0.10)	(0.06)	(0.09)
Non-white	− 0.24	− 0.03	− 0.01	0.09
	(0.20)	(0.33)	(0.19)	(0.28)
Context				
Britain	− 0.24**	0.22	− 0.55***	− 0.47***
	(0.08)	(0.24)	(0.07)	(0.14)
Urban	− 0.04	− 0.02	− 0.28***	0.30**
	(0.08)	(0.13)	(0.08)	(0.11)
Suburban	0.10	− 0.01	− 0.06	0.07
	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.08)	(0.10)
Political and Social				
Strength of Partisanship	0.11***	− 0.06	0.10***	0.06*
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Media Usage	− 0.04	− 0.07	0.01	− 0.02
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.03)	(0.04)
National Identity	0.10**	0.10*	0.05#	0.03
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Personal Autonomy	0.10**	0.00	− 0.03	− 0.09*
	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Internal Efficacy	0.05#	0.03	0.11***	0.04
	(0.03)	(0.08)	(0.03)	(0.05)
Political Knowledge	0.06*	0.00	0.10**	0.06
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Spouse's Score		0.08*		0.06#
		(0.05)		(0.04)
Public Discussion				
Discussion	0.09*	0.41	0.21***	0.36**
	(0.05)	(0.34)	(0.05)	(0.15)
Discussion × Britain	0.04		− 0.12#	
	(0.07)		(0.07)	
Constant	− 0.41	− 0.87	0.72**	− 1.42
	(0.30)	(1.63)	(0.28)	(1.48)
Effect on Discussion		0.38		0.11
		(0.37)		(0.55)
N	849	550	849	550
R^2	0.13		0.25	
Root MSE	0.94	0.96	0.88	0.90

Notes: #$p < 0.10$, *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$. Unstandardized coefficients are reported in the first row; standard errors are in parentheses.

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perceptions of government responsiveness appear to be the contextual variables of nation and type of community.[58] But the frequency of political talk also plays an important role. Our OLS analysis indicates that public discussion is a statistically significant predictor of views of government responsiveness in both countries and that this effect is considerably stronger in the United States. And the causal inference that public discussion generates perceptions of more responsive government is supported by the 2SLS analysis of the parental dataset. The results of this analysis, presented in the last column of Table 2, show that public discussion has a strong and statistically significant effect on government responsiveness. The converse, that perceived government responsiveness might spur public discussion, is not supported; although the estimated effect is positive, it is not statistically significant. The more that citizens discuss topics of public concern in public contexts, the more they are likely to see their government as accountable, attentive and legitimate.

GOOD REPRESENTATION

Some models of representation are wary of widespread public discussion because its social pressures to produce public reasons can 'over-socialize' individuals and their preferences.[59] And yet such discussion can also help these individuals to clarify their preferences by teaching political knowledge and sophistication.[60] According to other models, by contrast, good representation occurs precisely when public discussion's social pressures are in play, for it is desirable that citizens should take other citizens' preferences into account.[61] And these same pressures may also lead citizens into political activity.[62] To probe public discussion's contributions to representation, we examine its impact upon three dependent variables: *political knowledge*, *political participation* and *protest participation*.

It is a fundamental assumption of most democratic theory that the discussion of public affairs improves political knowledge and sophistication and thereby makes evaluations of candidates and issues better informed.[63] By providing easily shared information, discussion can reduce the costs of acquiring knowledge about candidates and issues.[64] But it is not just opportunity that facilitates political learning; it is also ability and especially

[58] Cf. Shaun Bowler and Todd Donovan, 'Democracy, Institutions and Attitudes about Citizen Influence on Government', *British Journal of Political Science*, 32 (2002), 371–90.

[59] Adam Przeworski, 'Deliberation and Ideological Domination', in Jon Elster, ed., *Deliberative Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 97–122; Warren, 'Democratic Theory and Self-Transformation', p. 9.

[60] Mark Lindeman, 'Opinion Quality and Policy Preferences in Deliberative Research', in Michael X. Delli Carpini, Leonie Huddy and Robert Y. Shapiro, eds, *Political Decision-Making, Deliberation and Participation* (Amsterdam: Elsevier Science, 2002), pp. 195–221; Fearon, 'Deliberation as Discussion'; Manin, 'On Legitimacy and Political Deliberation'; Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*; Mansbridge, 'Everyday Talk in the Deliberative System'.

[61] Bruce Ackerman and James S. Fishkin, 'Deliberation Day', in James S. Fishkin and Peter Laslett, eds, *Debating Deliberative Democracy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 7–30; Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, p. 42.

[62] Anderson, *Pragmatic Liberalism*, p. 80; Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*.

[63] Galston, 'Liberal Virtues'; Huckfeldt and Sprague, *Citizens, Politics and Social Communication.*

[64] Russell Hardin, 'Street-level Epistemology and Democratic Participation', in James S. Fishkin and Peter Laslett, eds, *Debating Deliberative Democracy* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2003), pp. 163–81; Holden, *Understanding Liberal Democracy*, pp. 74–5.

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motivation.[65] Encounters with citizens expressing multiple viewpoints in public discussions, and the challenge of defending one's own views, can set participants on edge and thereby stimulate learning.[66]

The conceptualization and measurement of political knowledge is more complicated than it may at first glance seem.[67] Most survey researchers have asked respondents about prominent political leaders, institutions and political issues. Our measure is a principal-components index of seven 3-point responses to identification questions about political leaders and organizations that occupied, at the time, the centre of the political stage.[68] These questions had the following form: 'I am going to read a list of individuals, groups and terms. Please try to identify each as best you can.' Correct responses were coded 2, while partially correct items were coded 1, and incorrect responses received a score of 0.

Unless citizens express their views by voting and other participatory activities, little representation occurs. But without the help of non-instrumental motivations, it is difficult to see why anyone would take the trouble to participate.[69] Satisfactory explanations for political participation, therefore, require accounts of how relevant non-instrumental motivations are learned and maintained.[70] One place they may be learned is through the practice of public discussion, where efforts to formulate public reasons can stimulate a sense of political engagement.[71] Furthermore, the clash of opposed opinions may stimulate solidarity towards those with whom one agrees and irritation towards those with whom one disagrees. Public discussion, then, is a setting in which people may learn both civic skills and political engagement. It is a political act.[72] But because it is not aimed at influencing the government, it is explicitly excluded from definitions and measures of standard political participation.[73]

To examine the impact of public discussion upon standard political participation, we used a principal-components index that combined a 4-point scale of voting in local elections with five yes–no responses to the following items: (a) voted in the last presidential/general election, (b) contributed money to a political party or candidate,

[65] Robert C. Luskin, 'Explaining Political Sophistication', *Political Behavior*, 12 (1990), 331–61.

[66] Ackerman and Fishkin, 'Deliberation Day', p. 18; George E. Marcus and Michael B. MacKuen, 'Anxiety, Enthusiasm, and the Vote: The Emotional Underpinnings of Learning and Involvement During Presidential Election Campaigns', *American Political Science Review*, 87 (1993), 672–85.

[67] Kuklinski and Quirk, 'Conceptual Foundations of Citizen Competence'; Luskin, 'Explaining Political Sophistication'; Michael X. Delli Carpini and Scott Keeter, *What Americans Know About Politics and Why it Matters* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1996), Appendix 2; Robert C. Luskin, 'Measuring Political Sophistication', *American Journal of Political Science*, 31 (1987), 856–99; W. Russell Neumann, *The Paradox of Mass Politics* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1986).

[68] See Appendix to this article for names used.

[69] Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York: Harper, 1957), p. 274.

[70] Paul Whiteley and Patrick Seyd, *High Intensity Participation* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002; M. Margaret Conway, *Political Participation in the United States* (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly Press, 1991); Brian Barry, *Sociologists, Economists and Democracy* (London: Collier-Macmillan, 1970), p. 16.

[71] John Gastil, 'Is Face-to-Face Citizen Deliberation a Luxury or a Necessity?' *Political Communication*, 17 (2000), 357–63; Sidney Verba, Kay Lehman Schlozman and Henry E. Brady, *Voice and Equality* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1995.

[72] Lester W. Milbrath, *Political Participation* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965).

[73] Verba, Schlozman and Brady, *Voice and Equality*; Geraint Parry, George Moyser and Neil Day, *Political Participation and Democracy in Britain* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Sidney Verba and Norman Nie, *Participation in America* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

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(c) wrote to, spoke to or met with public officials, (d) attended a public meeting, (e) worked for a party or candidate. To measure protest participation, we employed a principal-components index of three yes–no responses to questions about engagement in the following activities: (a) public demonstrations, protest marches, sit-ins, blockades or vigils, (b) boycotts of products, stores, companies or schools, (c) union strikes or pickets.[74]

To assess the effect of public political discussion on the representation variables, we now add two more controls to the models used in the previous section: sense of citizen duty and government responsiveness, which were treated there as dependent variables. The OLS and 2SLS estimates for political knowledge, standard political participation and protest participation are presented in Table 3.

As can be seen in the first column of Table 3, political knowledge is significantly structured by control variables that tap 'ability', 'motivation' and 'opportunity'.[75] Education provides a highly significant coefficient of the expected sign, which apparently reflects ability's contribution to learning political knowledge. And it may be motivation that drives the strong and significant contributions made by gender and race. Opportunity appears to be reflected in the strong links with national and community contexts and with media usage as well – not surprisingly, since our dependent variable's political leaders and organizations were prominent in the media. What is surprising is that, net of the effect of these independent control variables, public discussion does not appear to have a significant association with political knowledge.[76]

But before we conclude confidently that citizens learn their basic political facts elsewhere, we must consider the results of the 2SLS analysis of the parental dataset in the second column of Table 3, which controls for the reciprocal effect of political knowledge on public discussion of political issues. This analysis reveals a complex, mutually reinforcing significant relationship between the two variables, at least among the admittedly limited demographic of the sample. Public discussion is estimated here to have a strong positive and statistically significant causal effect on political knowledge, at the same time that the hypothesis that more knowledgeable individuals tend to discuss politics in public more frequently is also supported.

The estimates for political participation are presented in the third and fourth columns of Table 3. Here we see that the practice of public discussion has a substantial and statistically significant positive association with political participation, net the effects of all control variables. The OLS results demonstrate that national context affects both political participation and discussion's possible effects on this participation. Thus, consistent with their constitutional and cultural traditions, the British are less likely than the Americans to engage in standard political participation which, as measured here, includes many participatory actions beyond voting in general elections (where the British historically have turned out in greater numbers). The interaction term indicates that the

[74] Alan Marsh, *Protest and Political Consciousness* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1977); Samuel Barnes and Max Kaase, *Political Action* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1979).

[75] Luskin, 'Explaining Political Sophistication'.

[76] By contrast, Delli Carpini and Keeter (*What Americans Know About Politics and Why It Matters*, p. 183) find that discussion retains its significant coefficient after controlling for many of the same independent variables. Their measure of political knowledge is richer than ours, but their measure of discussion is, by comparison, very abstract and could be tapping instead a general interest in political affairs. See Kuklinski and Quirk, 'Conceptual Foundations of Citizen Competence'; see also Bennett, Flickinger and Rhine, 'Political Talk Over Here, Over There, Over Time'. Our measure seems to us more likely to capture actual discussion experiences by virtue of its being issue framed, deliberatively cued and context specific.

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TABLE 3 *Public Discussion: 'Good Representation' Results*

	Political Knowledge		Political Participation		Protest Participation	
	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS
Background						
Age	0.06***	0.11#	0.05***	− 0.06	0.03*	− 0.03
	(0.01)	(0.07)	(0.01)	(0.05)	(0.01)	(0.07)
Age^2/100	− 0.05***	− 0.11#	− 0.04***	0.08	− 0.03**	0.02
	(0.01)	(0.07)	(0.01)	(0.05)	(0.01)	(0.07)
Education	0.24***	0.18**	0.09**	0.03	0.05	0.03
	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Female	− 0.33***	− 0.20#	0.06	0.08	0.11	− 0.16#
	(0.06)	(0.13)	(0.06)	(0.08)	(0.07)	(0.11)
Non-white	− 0.67***	− 0.95***	− 0.88***	− 0.09	− 0.53**	0.32
	(0.18)	(0.32)	(0.17)	(0.23)	(0.20)	(0.32)
Context						
Britain	− 0.36***	0.52*	− 0.24***	0.08	− 0.12#	− 0.35#
	(0.07)	(0.24)	(0.07)	(0.13)	(0.08)	(0.24)
Urban	− 0.01	0.27*	− 0.12*	− 0.04	0.40***	0.27*
	(0.07)	(0.12)	(0.07)	(0.09)	(0.08)	(0.14)
Suburban	0.28***	0.27**	− 0.12#	0.01	0.36***	0.35***
	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.08)	(0.08)	(0.09)	(0.11)
Political and Social						
Strength of Partisanship	− 0.01	− 0.07	0.21***	0.08**	0.01	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.05)
Media Usage	0.10**	0.01	0.02	0.05	0.01	0.06
	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.06)
National Identity	− 0.05	− 0.03	0.03	0.03	− 0.07*	− 0.06#
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Political Autonomy	0.08**	− 0.05	0.09***	0.03	0.05#	0.06#
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Internal Efficacy			0.09***	0.12**	0.07*	0.09
			(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.07)
Sense of Citizen Duty			0.00	0.00	− 0.03	0.13*
			(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.07)
Gov't Responsiveness			0.07*	0.05#	0.02	0.01
			(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Political Knowledge	–	–	0.09**	0.09*	0.12***	0.12*
			(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.07)
Spouse's Score		0.08#		0.28***		0.18***
		0.05		(0.04)		(0.05)
Public Discussion						
Discussion	0.05	0.63*	0.39***	0.47***	0.22***	− 0.10
	(0.05)	(0.28)	(0.05)	(0.18)	(0.05)	(0.36)
Discussion × Britain	− 0.03		− 0.17**		− 0.01	
	(0.07)		(0.06)		(0.07)	
Constant	− 1.08***	− 2.88	− 0.84***	0.85	− 0.52	0.86
	(0.26)	(1.54)	(0.26)	(1.21)	(0.30)	(1.58)
Effect on Discussion		0.63*		0.08		0.08
		(0.35)		(0.12)		(0.21)
N	849	550	849	550	849	550
R^2	0.27		0.41		0.18	
Root MSE	0.85	0.95	0.77	0.73	0.90	0.93

Notes: #$p < 0.10$, *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$. Unstandardized coefficients are reported in the first row; standard errors are in parentheses.

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effect of public discussion may be somewhat weaker but still statistically significant in Britain, where there is both less discussion and less participation than in the United States. Controlling for the possible reciprocal effect of standard political participation on discussion does not diminish this relationship: according to the 2SLS results in the fourth column, discussing politics in public does indeed make citizens more likely to participate, and not vice versa.

The causal picture is less clear with regard to protest participation. In the fifth column, the OLS estimate for public political discussion is found to have a positive, statistically significant relationship with protest behaviour. But when we use 2SLS to control for the reciprocal effect of protesting on the frequency of public discussion, this relationship disappears; in fact, the coefficient for public discussion becomes negative. This finding may only reflect the particular demographics of the parental sample, but it prevents us from concluding that discussing political issues in public encourages citizens to protest if necessary to make their points.

In sum, citizens who engage in public discussion do seem to be preparing themselves for representation in at least one way. Although the evidence that these citizens gain political knowledge or become more willing to rally, boycott or strike is ambiguous, the conclusion that they become more likely to participate in conventional politics by working through campaigns, attending council meetings and, indeed, voting is soundly supported. In the course of public discussions, citizens may encounter public reasons and social norms that push them past inclinations to avoid the costs of political participation and into the political arena. Some theorists see a potential in political talk for wider consequences still. They speculate that it might improve not only participation but also the fundamental character of citizenship in the democratic community.

THE DEMOCRATIC COMMUNITY

For many normative theorists, the character of citizenship in the democratic community is as important as political participation in electoral arenas.[77] From this perspective, public discussion has the potential to shape the civic side of citizenship by teaching solidarity, tolerance and public spiritedness. But what makes other commentators uneasy about these visions of active citizenship is the prescriptive assumption that frequently accompanies them: that citizens are fully citizens only if they are fully engaged in a democratic community.[78] We investigate the effects of public discussion upon measures of five theory-driven aspects of the citizen's role in the democratic community: *civic engagement, community identity, neighbouring, political tolerance* and *public spiritedness*.

Work in the civic republican tradition often notes Aristotle's claim that public discussion helps citizens achieve their full potential as political and social beings.[79] It does so by imparting understandings that society is natural, and that it is natural for citizens to be socially engaged.[80] We measure belief in this ideal of civic engagement with a principal

[77] Arendt, *The Human Condition*; Barber, *Strong Democracy*; Christiano, 'The Significance of Public Deliberation'; Michael Sandel, *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

[78] Held, *Models of Democracy*, p. 281; Holden, *Understanding Liberal Democracy*, pp. 121–2.

[79] Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,1980), 1094a, 1105b; [2nd edn, 1988], 1253a.

[80] David Marquand, *The New Reckoning* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1997).

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components index of 5-point agree/disagree responses to four items such as 'People are only able to reach their full human potential if they are involved in a community', and 'The ideal community is one which leaves people alone to lead their lives in private' (disagree). In the same vein, public discussion's mix of multiple viewpoints can help citizens to understand one another and can thereby encourage shared perspectives.[81] Through such shared perspectives, public discussion builds solidarity and community identity,[82] which support good citizenship in the civic community by motivating activities like 'neighbouring'.

Our measure of community identity is a principal-components index of five 5-point responses and two 3-point responses to items like the following: 'How strongly do you think of yourself as belonging to the [name of city/town] community?' 'How strongly do you think of yourself as belonging to the neighbourhood?' 'I do not have much in common with people in [name of city/town].' 'How often do you think of yourself as a neighbour?' We measure neighbouring with a principal components index of yes/no responses to six questions about whether, during the last six months, the respondent has watched over someone's home, helped someone move, put someone up for a few days as a favour, lent someone money, gave someone advice on important matters, or cared for someone's children.

Some communitarian theorists also suggest that public deliberation can strengthen the democratic community by promoting tolerance and public-spiritedness. It would do this by generating mutual respect and public-orientation.[83] Mutual respect, which should function empirically as a democratic norm,[84] can be learned by listening to multiple viewpoints expressed in public discussions.[85] And this might motivate citizens to practice tolerance, an open-minded willingness to endure attitudes, races, religions or ways of life that differ from their own.[86] Public-orientation, learned through the experience of deploying public reasons, is said to promote public-spiritedness or civic virtue, a disposition that encourages people to consider according the welfare of their community greater weight than their own convenience.[87] Liberal theory has, however, been sceptical

[81] Cohen, 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy'.

[82] Ackerman and Fishkin, 'Deliberation Day'; Fearon, 'Deliberation as Discussion'; Barber, *Strong Democracy*, pp. 182–6; Holden, *Understanding Liberal Democracy*, p. 126.

[83] Macedo, 'Introduction'.

[84] John L. Sullivan and John E. Transue, 'The Psychological Underpinnings of Democracy: A Selective Review of Research on Political Tolerance, Interpersonal Trust and Social Capital', *Annual Review of Psychology*, 50 (1999), 625–50.

[85] Diana Mutz, 'Cross-Cutting Social Networks: Testing Democratic Theory in Practice', *American Political Science Review*, 96 (2002), 111–26; Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, 'Democratic Disgreement', in Stephen Macedo, ed., *Deliberative Politics; Essays on Democracy and Disagreement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 243–79.

[86] Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler and Stephen M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart* (Berkeley: University of California Press,1985); Manfred Stanley, 'The Mystery of the Commons: On the Indispensability of Civic Rhetoric', *Social Research*, 50 (1983), 851–3; cf. Lori Weber, 'Rugged Individuals and Social Butterflies: The Consequences of Social and Individual Participation for Political Tolerance', *Social Science Journal*, 40 (2003), 335–42.

[87] See John P. Diggins, *The Lost Soul of American Politics: Virtue, Self-Interest and the Foundations of Liberalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984); Ackerman and Fishkin, 'Deliberation Day'; Gutmann and Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement*, p. 42.

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about these public-regarding claims, particularly about deliberation's hypothesized positive effect on tolerance.[88]

We measure political tolerance with a principal-components index of five yes/no responses to a version of the Sullivan, Pierson and Marcus instrument.[89] Thus, we asked about feelings towards ten controversial political groups like the National Front and the Ku Klux Klan. Then, with regard to the respondent's least-liked group or organization, we asked whether its members should be allowed to pursue the following five activities in the local community: teaching, forming a local branch, having its book in the library, running for the town council and speaking at a public meeting. Finally, we measure public spiritedness with a principal-components index of five 4-point responses to questions of the form, 'From time to time, the government asks everyone to help the country by making a personal sacrifice. Using the responses on this card, tell me how you would react if you and other citizens were asked to make each of the following sacrifices': use public transport, forgo a salary increase, lower the heating at home, take refuse or recyclables to a recycling centre, and protect the environment even when inconvenient.

Table 4 presents the results of our analyses of civic engagement, community identity and neighbouring. Civic engagement, the first of these three dependent variables, assesses support for the civic republican ideal, for the belief that people find full expression through involvement in the community and its public concerns. In our OLS analysis, public discussion shows an important and statistically significant performance in both Britain and the United States, which is consistent with the hypothesis that this learning experience may strengthen the republican ideal and thereby support the development of democratic communities. Moreover, the parallel 2SLS analysis of causal direction reveals that public discussion of political matters does indeed tend to boost civic engagement, while civic engagement is at the same time reciprocally fostering more frequent public discussion. The practice of public discussion and the ideal of civic engagement are apparently mutually reinforcing.

Community identity, modelled in the third and fourth columns, taps conceptions of and feelings about membership in the local community and neighbourhood. This identification with the community is another dimension of the solidarity that, from a civic republican perspective, democratic communities require. According to our OLS results, it too is promoted by public discussion in both countries. And the 2SLS analysis demonstrates that, in this case too, significant causality flows both ways. Public discussion and community identity support each other. Some liberal theorists have wondered, by contrast, whether public discussion might have unintended, undesirable consequences that erode solidarity and engender suspicion by highlighting differences among citizens.[90] But it does not erode the solidarity of community identity in our British and American data. Instead it strengthens it.

Turning to neighbouring, the third dependent variable in the table, we find that discussion's relationship with this practice is positive and statistically significant.

[88] William A. Galston, 'Diversity, Toleration and Deliberative Democracy', in Stephen Macedo, ed., *Deliberative Politics; Essays on Democracy and Disagreement* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 39–48; Warren, 'Democratic Theory and Self-Transformation', p. 13.

[89] John L. Sullivan, James Pierson and George Marcus, 'An Alternative Conceptualization of Political Tolerance: Illusory Increases 1950s–1970s', *American Political Science Review*, 73 (1979), 781–94.

[90] Mark Warren, 'Deliberative Democracy and Authority', *American Political Science Review*, 90 (1996), 46–60.

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TABLE 4 *Public Discussion: 'Democratic Community' Results*

	Civic Engagement		Community Identity		Neighbouring	
	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS
Background						
Age	−0.01	−0.16*	0.01	−0.03	0.02*	−0.13*
	(0.01)	(0.08)	(0.01)	(0.07)	(0.01)	(0.06)
$Age^2/100$	0.01	0.19*	0.00	0.04	−0.04***	0.14*
	(0.01)	(0.09)	(0.01)	(0.07)	(0.01)	(0.06)
Education	0.14***	−0.04	−0.10**	−0.11*	0.05	−0.04
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Female	0.02	0.24#	0.07	0.48***	0.13*	0.24**
	(0.06)	(0.17)	(0.06)	(0.12)	(0.07)	(0.09)
Non-white	0.52**	−0.33	0.00	0.05	0.30#	0.35
	(0.19)	(0.33)	(0.19)	(0.30)	(0.20)	(0.28)
Context						
Britain	−0.28***	0.30	−0.27***	0.10	−0.16*	0.05
	(0.08)	(0.27)	(0.08)	(0.22)	(0.08)	(0.13)
Urban	−0.08	−0.05	0.23***	−0.08	0.16*	0.07
	(0.08)	(0.13)	(0.07)	(0.12)	(0.08)	(0.11)
Suburban	−0.01	−0.02	−0.05	0.02	−0.02	0.16#
	(0.08)	(0.11)	(0.08)	(0.10)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Political and Social						
Strength of Partisanship	0.01	−0.02	0.05#	−0.06	−0.05	−0.05
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Media Usage	−0.03	−0.04	0.07*	−0.04	0.08**	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)
National Identity	0.00	−0.02	0.18***	0.21***	0.05#	0.00
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.03)	(0.04)
Political Autonomy	−0.06*	−0.09*	−0.08**	−0.06#	0.03	0.08*
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.04)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Internal Efficacy	0.04	−0.06	−0.09**	−0.06	−0.01	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.03)	(0.05)
Sense of Citizen Duty	0.00	0.03	0.12***	−0.03	0.08*	−0.09
	(0.03)	(0.08)	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.03)	(0.05)
Gov't Responsiveness	0.14***	0.13**	0.10**	0.07#		
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.05)		
Political Participation	0.04	−0.10	0.13***	−0.11		
	(0.04)	(0.15)	(0.04)	(0.12)		
Community Identity	0.20***	0.05	–	–	0.00	0.00
	(0.03)	(0.09)			(0.03)	(0.05)
Spouse's Score		−0.16*		0.21***		0.30***
		(0.06)		(0.06)		(0.04)
Public Discussion						
Discussion	0.14**	0.74#	0.16**	0.76*	0.14**	0.45***
	(0.05)	(0.55)	(0.05)	(0.39)	(0.06)	(0.15)
Discussion × Britain	−0.01		−0.06		−0.03	
	(0.07)		(0.07)		(0.07)	
Constant	0.43	−2.19	−0.52#	−1.46	−0.22	−0.55
	(0.28)	(1.34)	(0.28)	(1.23)	(0.29)	(1.47)
Effect on Discussion		0.32*		0.25*		−0.11
		(0.17)		(0.14)		(0.11)
N	849	550	849	550	849	550
R^2	0.25		0.25		0.15	
Root MSE	0.88	1.01	0.88	0.92	0.93	0.91

Notes: #$p < 0.10$, *$p < 0.05$, **$p < 0.01$, ***$p < 0.001$. Unstandardized coefficients are reported in the first row; standard errors are in parentheses.

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Furthermore, our 2SLS analysis finds that the causal force of public discussion remains apparent, even when controlling for the reciprocal potential of neighbouring to encourage public discussion. Neighbouring is an aspect of solidarity that addresses an activity rather than an attitude, an activity that contributes to the democratic community by providing everyday interactions that help make civic life attractive.

In Table 5, we examine the third and fourth components of the citizen's role in the democratic community: political tolerance and public spiritedness. Political tolerance asks people to endure others whose political views they find disturbing or distasteful. We see a small, statistically significant positive association of public discussion with political tolerance in our OLS analysis in the first column of the table, but only for the United States.[91] Yet even this modest potential effect fades away in the parental dataset when our 2SLS controls for the reciprocal effect of tolerance on public discussion are introduced; an additional analysis (unreported in this table) of tolerance in the subsample of American parents alone similarly finds no statistically significant effects for discussion. This negative finding may be peculiar to the measure of tolerance employed here, which asks respondents to endure members of violent groups like the National Front and the Ku Klux Klan. Such people may seem to them so extreme and far removed from the 'different others' they actually encounter in their communities that they may not generalize to the former any of the tolerance-friendly respect they may learn towards the latter.

Nevertheless, from this evidence it appears that public discussions of politics have at best little and at worst none of the positive consequences for political tolerance about which some democratic theorists have speculated. Moreover, political tolerance is systematically reduced by community identity, which, as we saw above, is apparently strengthened by public discussion. This pattern is consistent with liberal expectations about tensions between solidarity in the democratic community and the toleration of difference. By building solidarity without building tolerance, public discussion may indeed be contributing to these tensions rather than correcting them.

Our last dependent variable is public spiritedness, the willingness to sacrifice for the common good. The OLS results show that in Britain – but not in the United States – public discussion has a small positive relationship with public spiritedness. But in the parental dataset, which combines respondents from both countries, our 2SLS analysis reveals that neither of the two variables seems to have an important causal effect on the other. And looking only at British parents, as we did in an additional, unreported analysis, we find that public spiritedness tends to increase the frequency of public discussion slightly ($\beta = 0.10$, $p < 0.1$), while public discussion does not increase public spiritedness. This leads us to presume that the positive OLS result among our random sample of British respondents probably reflects such reverse causation as well. If the context of public reason in public discussion does indeed teach a concern for the public good, then apparently this concern is not sufficiently strong to outweigh the inconveniences involved in using public transport or lowering the heating in one's home.

In sum, we have found support for three causal hypotheses about the positive effects of public discussion on the character of democratic communities. Talking about politics

[91] Cf. Mark Peffley and Robert Rohrschneider, 'Democratization and Political Tolerance in Seventeen Countries: A Multi-Level Model of Democratic Learning', *Political Research Quarterly*, 56 (2003), 243–57; Neil Nevitte, 'Tolerance and Intolerance in Advanced Industrial Democracies: The Cross-Time Evidence', in Loek Halman and Neil Nevitte, eds, *Political Value Change in Western Democracies* (Tilburg: Tilburg University Press, forthcoming), pp. 59–80.

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TABLE 5 *Public Discussion: 'Democratic Community' Results*

	Political Tolerance		Public Spiritedness	
	OLS	2SLS	OLS	2SLS
Background				
Age	0.00	0.03	0.03**	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.07)	(0.01)	(0.07)
Age^2/100	0.00	−0.03	−0.02*	0.00
	(0.01)	(0.08)	(0.01)	(0.07)
Education	0.15***	0.14**	0.03	0.05
	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Female	−0.08	0.14	0.05	0.17
	(0.06)	(0.16)	(0.07)	(0.14)
Non-white	−0.34#	−0.10	0.09	−0.27
	(0.19)	(0.35)	(0.21)	(0.33)
Context				
Britain	−0.12#	0.03	−0.07	−0.38#
	(0.08)	(0.26)	(0.08)	(0.25)
Urban	−0.13*	0.15	−0.09	0.11
	(0.08)	(0.14)	(0.08)	(0.12)
Suburban	0.26***	0.09	−0.04	0.06
	(0.09)	(0.11)	(0.09)	(0.10)
Political and Social				
Strength of Partisanship	−0.06*	−0.06	−0.05	0.02
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.03)	(0.05)
Media Usage	−0.05	−0.07	−0.03	−0.04
	(0.03)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.06)
National Identity	−0.03	−0.05	0.04	−0.03
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Political Autonomy	0.04	−0.10	0.00	0.07*
	(0.03)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.04)
Internal Efficacy	0.02	0.02	−0.05	−0.03
	(0.03)	(0.07)	(0.03)	(0.07)
Sense of Citizen Duty	−0.05	−0.08	0.14***	0.10#
	(0.03)	(0.08)	(0.04)	(0.07)
Gov't Responsiveness	0.12***	0.11*	0.11**	0.09*
	(0.04)	(0.05)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Political Knowledge	0.12***	0.14**	0.04	0.08#
	(0.04)	(0.06)	(0.04)	(0.05)
Political Participation	0.10**	−0.07	0.06#	0.03
	(0.04)	(0.14)	(0.04)	(0.14)
Community Identity	−0.09**	−0.11#	0.01	0.04
	(0.04)	(0.08)	(0.04)	(0.08)
Spouse's Score		0.09*		0.16***
		(0.05)		(0.05)
Public Discussion				
Discussion	0.09*	0.58	0.00	0.03
	(0.06)	(0.51)	(0.06)	(0.50)
Discussion × British	−0.13*		0.10#	
	(0.07)		(0.07)	
Constant	0.10	−0.93	−0.91**	−0.03
	(0.29)	(1.69)	(0.31)	(1.54)
Effect on Discussion		0.36		0.16
		(0.32)		(0.21)
N	849	550	849	550
R^2	0.22		0.11	
Root MSE	0.89	0.99	0.95	0.90

Notes: *$p < 0.05$ **$p < 0.01$ ***$p < 0.001$; $N = 849$. Unstandardized coefficients are reported in the first row; standard errors are in parentheses.

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in public increases civic engagement, community identity and neighbouring. These attitudes and activities are, however, all in the area of solidarity with friends and neighbours. And they are all attractive. By contrast, when it comes to making the sacrifices required to endure different others (political tolerance), or to achieve abstract common goods (public spiritedness), public discussion shows little promise of producing the positive hypothesized results.

CONCLUSION

Democratic theory has long offered occasional but intriguing speculations about the potential of political talk for improving the character of citizenship and the quality of democratic regimes. During the 1990s, the 'deliberative turn' in democratic theory stimulated widespread interest in these themes among political theorists and, more recently, among researchers in political behaviour and political psychology.

Much of the theory has focused on ideal deliberations or on deliberations in institutional settings where the exchanges are, on average, more structured than in the everyday political talk of ordinary citizens.[92] Hence, despite Mansbridge's and Habermas's inclusion of ordinary citizens in their thinking about deliberative systems, these citizens have often been left out of the research picture because their talk seems to be so casual and not directed at producing publicly binding decisions.

A principal source of the scepticism about including everyday political talk is that its differences from structured deliberation, and certainly from ideal deliberation, may be more differences of kind than of degree,[93] that it may drive people apart rather than together,[94] that it simply may not produce the benefits associated with ideal deliberation.[95] This is why we drew a distinction between casual political talk and public discussions, those much less common extended political conversations conducted in 'public' settings where participants are likely to encounter a range of different perspectives, and where they may be motivated to support their arguments with public reasons. Public discussions are not deliberations. But they are pursued by enough of the public some of the time to interest us in hypotheses about their potential consequences, hypotheses inspired by democratic theory and research in political behaviour.

To construct our overview of this territory, we have used two different samples and types of analysis. With these tools, we have investigated twelve hypotheses about the psychological foundations of four liberal democratic conditions that public discussion might promote: autonomous citizens, political legitimacy, good representation and democratic communities. Our two tests for each of these hypotheses have different and complementary strengths. The random sample used in the OLS analysis provides more generalizable results than the parental sample, but the 2SLS analysis of the parental data provides more insight into the direction of causality than is possible with OLS.

We will therefore count a hypothesized relationship as supported only when public discussion is estimated to have a positive and statistically significant effect on the dependent variable in both the OLS analysis of the random sample and the 2SLS model

[92] Schauer, 'Talking as a Decision Procedure'.
[93] Gutmann and Thompson, 'Democratic Disagreement'.
[94] Ian Shapiro, *The State of Democratic Theory* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2003); Sunstein, 'The Law of Group Polarization'.
[95] Schauer, 'Talking as a Decision Procedure'.

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with the parental sample. Six of our twelve hypotheses meet this standard, including at least one regarding each of the four liberal democratic conditions. Discussing political issues in public settings generates (a) feelings of internal efficacy, an aspect of autonomous citizenship; (b) perceptions of government responsiveness, part of political legitimacy; (d) political participation, which is critical to good representation; and (c) civic engagement, community identity and neighbouring, all three of which contribute to the democratic community.

Despite the fact that the public's political talk is weak in deliberative quality and diversity of views, its public discussions nevertheless appear to produce some of the desirable consequences for good citizenship that are suggested in democratic theory and in recent work on deliberation. These findings are by no means conclusive. Yet they do make the hypotheses seem more plausible than they did before. How widely might they be generalized across the deliberative system? From a theoretical perspective: less likely to casual political talk than to structured deliberation, with the caveat that we have not tested structured deliberation, and with the observation that something like the public discussion we have tested is more common than structured deliberation, even in the deliberative system's core institutions like parliaments and civil service organizations.

But what does this tell us about public discussion among ordinary citizens as a mechanism for improving citizenship and democracy? Even if these findings hold up in further analyses, we still need to face the fact that public discussion is practised by only a minority of citizens some of the time.[96] The findings give systematic empirical support to the intriguing intuitions of theorists like Aristotle and John Stuart Mill. Their practical significance, however, depends on increasing substantially the numbers of citizens who engage in them.

[96] Conover, Searing and Crewe, 'The Deliberative Potential of Political Discussion'.

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APPENDIX: VARIABLE DEFINITIONS AND MEASUREMENT

Public Discussion: Principal-components factor index of five 4-point responses to questions of the form, 'Generally speaking, how often would you say you have discussions or serious conversations about political issues ____? Never, rarely, sometimes, or often?' Cell entries here and in the following indices are the items' normalized scores on the first principal component.

Indicator	Random sample	Parents sample
The place where you work	0.545	0.473
At church or synagogue functions	0.681	0.755
At public meetings	0.728	0.715
With neighbours	0.635	0.696
With people with different views from your own	0.661	0.572

Independent Citizens

Psychological Autonomy: Principal-components index of three 5-point agree/disagree responses to the following statements, with more autonomous responses coded as higher scores.

Indicator	Random sample	Parents sample
Like a lot of people, I sometimes don't mind when other people make decisions for me.	0.726	0.722
In making decisions, I am sometimes influenced more by the advice of others than by my own feelings.	0.735	0.774
I always make my own decisions; I am my own person.	0.767	0.780

Internal Efficacy

Five-point agree/disagree response to the following statement: 'I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics.'

Political Legitimacy

Government Responsiveness Principal-components index of two 5-point agree/disagree responses to the following statements, with perceptions of more responsive government coded as higher scores and equal factor loadings assumed.

Indicator	Random sample	Parents sample
I don't think that governments of *any* party care much about what people like me think.	0.795	0.822
There are many legal ways in which people like me could successfully influence what the government does.	0.795	0.822

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Sense of Citizen Duty

Principal-components index of thirty-six 4-point responses to the question of whether each act is a legal duty, a moral duty, a good thing for citizens to do (though not a duty), or neither a duty nor a good thing for citizens to do.

Indicator	Random sample	Parents sample
Paying taxes	0.059	0.102
Appearing as a witness in a trial	0.208	0.272
Serving on juries	0.178	0.185
Reporting serious crimes you have witnessed	0.256	0.235
Military service in peacetime	0.230	0.255
Defending the rights of minorities	0.393	0.469
Giving to charities	0.435	0.341
Insisting that *others* are polite and considerate in public places	0.409	0.299
Educating the next generation	0.339	0.311
Protesting against laws that you believe are very wrong	0.315	0.218
Voting in elections	0.289	0.331
Speaking English outside the home, regardless of the language your family speaks	0.306	0.263
Promoting the good of the community	0.515	0.485
Obeying *major* laws	0.085	0.213
Participating in community organizations	0.465	0.480
Helping the homeless	0.387	0.473
Military service in wartime	0.252	0.238
Being tolerant of people you disagree with	0.465	0.424
Being a good neighbour	0.443	0.490
Helping the needy	0.462	0.570
Respecting the flag	0.458	0.403
Being polite and considerate in public places	0.452	0.363
Preserving local and national traditions	0.470	0.454
Respecting the rights of others	0.445	0.416
Participating in public discussion of political issues	0.437	0.364
Obeying *minor* laws such as traffic laws	0.223	0.229
Being loyal to your country	0.479	0.414
Supporting the president (government) during times of crisis	0.434	0.335
Staying informed about public issues and political candidates	0.467	0.365
Protecting the environment	0.421	0.404
Helping strangers during an emergency or disaster	0.489	0.410
Participating actively in politics	0.409	0.349
Being willing to work	0.453	0.349
Caring for the elderly and sick	0.455	0.487
Stepping in if you see someone being cruel to another person	0.437	0.458
Being willing to put the public interest above one's own	0.466	0.399

Good Representation

Political Knowledge: Principal-components index of seven 3-point responses (correct responses were coded 2, partially correct items coded 1, and incorrect items received a score of 0) to questions of the following form, 'I am going to read a list of individuals, groups, and terms. Please try to identify each as best you can.' For the five country-specific questions, the US version is listed first.

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Indicator	Random sample	Parents sample
Mikhail Gorbachev	0.732	0.684
NATO	0.662	0.683
George Bush/Margaret Thatcher	0.737	0.718
Dan Quayle/Michael Heseltine	0.627	0.489
[Name of local mayor/MP]	0.539	0.309
Sandra Day O'Connor/Edwina Currie	0.700	0.675
AFL-CIO/TUC	0.723	0.664

Political Participation: Principal-components index of six yes/no responses (yes = 1, no = 0) as well as a 4-point scale of voting in local elections.

Indicator	Random sample	Parents sample
Talking to people about the last presidential election – the one between Bush and Dukakis – we've found that a lot of people didn't get round to voting in that election. How about you? Did you manage to vote in that election?	0.586	0.592
How often would you say you vote in local elections … always, usually but occasionally miss one, rarely, or never?	0.594	0.585
Have you in the last three or four years contributed money to a political party or candidate?	0.631	0.622
Have you in the last three or four years written to, spoken to, or personally gone to see a local or national government official about some public problem or issue?	0.666	0.676
Have you in the last three or four years attended a public meeting such as a town meeting or a council meeting?	0.619	0.565
Have you *ever* done work for one of the parties or candidates?	0.557	0.640

Protest Participation: Principal-components index of three yes/no responses (yes = 1, no = 0) to the following questions.

Indicator	Random sample	Parents sample
Have you ever taken part in a public demonstration, protest march, rally, sit-in, blockade, or vigil?	0.730	0.788
Have you ever joined in a boycott of, for example, a product, store, company or school?	0.662	0.720
Have you ever engaged in a union strike or picket?	0.570	0.589

The Democratic Community

Engaged Citizenship: Principal-components index of four 5-point agree/disagree responses to the following statements, with stronger beliefs in the importance of development through involvement in the community coded as higher scores.

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Indicator	Random sample	Parents sample
People are only able to reach their full human potential if they are involved in a community.	0.675	0.685
The ideal community is one which leaves people alone to lead their lives in private.	0.645	0.567
People can easily reach full human potential without being involved in public affairs.	0.752	0.778
People who lead quiet lives not bothering with politics and the community are being somewhat selfish.	0.555	0.630

Community Identity: Principal-components index of five 5-point responses and two 3-point responses to the following items.

Indicator	Random sample	Parents sample
How often do you think of yourself as a neighbour?[a]	0.569	0.395
How often do you think of yourself as a member of the [name of city/town] community?[a]	0.727	0.725
How strongly do you think of yourself belonging to the neighbourhood?[b]	0.716	0.730
How strongly do you think of yourself as belonging to the [name of city/town] community?[b]	0.622	0.676
In [name of city/town] we all want more or less the same things in life.[c]	0.502	0.405
People can depend on each other in [name of city/town].[c]	0.575	0.659
I do not have much in common with people in [name of city/town].[c]	0.564	0.645

[a]Five-point scale: all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, occasionally, never.
[b]Three-point scale: very strongly, fairly strongly, not so strongly.
[c]Five-point agree/disagree scale.

Political Tolerance: Principal-components index of five yes/no responses to the following questions regarding the respondent's most-disapproved group or organization.

Indicator	Random sample	Parents sample
Should a member of [group name] be allowed to teach in a local school or college?[a]	0.706	0.660
Should a member of [group name] be allowed to form a local branch of the [group name] in this area?[a]	0.826	0.808
If a book in favour of [group name] was in the local library and some local people campaigned for it to be removed from the library would you support their campaign or not?[b]	0.550	0.641
Should a member of [group name] be allowed to run for the Town Council in this local area?[a]	0.859	0.845
Should a member of [group name] be allowed to organize and speak at a public meeting in this local area?[a]	0.803	0.787

[a]'Yes' coded 1; 'no' coded 0. [b]'No' coded 1; 'yes' coded 0.

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Public Spiritedness: Principal-components index of five 4-point responses to questions of the form, 'From time to time, the government asks everyone to help the country by making a personal sacrifice. Using the responses on this card, tell me how you would react if you and other citizens were asked to make each of the following sacrifices. Would you definitely agree to it, probably agree to it, might agree to it, or would you *not* agree to it?'

Indicator	Random sample	Parents sample
In order to save energy would you ride a bus to work rather than drive a car?	0.543	0.632
Would you go without a wage or salary increase for the good of the country's economy?	0.607	0.513
In order to save energy, would you lower the heating in your house by 10 degrees during the winter?	0.635	0.632
Would you personally take your garbage to a recycling centre?	0.711	0.716
Take steps to protect the environment even if it was personally very inconvenient?	0.729	0.708

Neighbouring: Principal-components index of six yes/no responses (yes = 1, no = 0) to the following questions.

Indicator	Random sample	Parents sample
In the last six months, have you watched over someone's home, cared for their pets, picked up their mail, or just checked on things while they have gone out of town?	0.411	0.488
In the last six months, have you helped someone move?	0.412	0.607
In the last six months have you let someone stay in your home for a few days as a favour?	0.568	0.488
In the last six months, have you lent someone more than $100?	0.570	0.559
In the last six months, have you spent considerable time advising someone on an important decision in his or her life?	0.619	0.532
In the last six months, have you looked after someone else's children on short notice for a few hours?	0.584	0.418

Exogenous Background Variables

Age: Ordinal scale code 1 for adults younger than 37 years old; those 37 to 52 years old are coded 2; those 53 years old or older are coded 3.

Education: Years of schooling, normalized within each country sample.

Non-white: Dummy variable coded 0 for whites; all others are coded 1.

Female: Dummy variable coded 0 for men and 1 for women.

Married: Dummy variable coded 1 for married respondents and respondents living as married; all others coded 0.

Exogenous Context Variables

United States: Dummy variable coded 0 for residents of the United States and 1 for residents of Britain.

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Urban: Dummy variable coded 1 for residents of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania and Manchester, England; all others are coded 0.

Suburban: Dummy variable coded 1 for residents of Cary, North Carolina, and Brentwood, England; all others are coded 0.

Exogenous Political and Social Variables

Strength of Partisanship: Ordinal scale coded 0 for those professing no party identification, 1 for those claiming a 'not very strong' party identification, and 2 for those claiming a 'strong' party identification.

Media Usage: Principal-components index of two 4-point responses (every day, three or four times a week, once or twice a week, or less often) to the following questions, with equal factor loadings assumed.

Indicator	Random sample	Parents sample
How often do you watch the national network news on TV?	0.762	0.761
How often do you normally read a newspaper?	0.762	0.761

National Identity

Principal-components index of two 5-point responses (all of the time, most of the time, some of the time, occasionally, never) to the following questions, with equal factor loadings assumed.

Indicator	Random sample	Parents sample
How often do you think of yourself as an American/as British?	0.898	0.878
How often do you think of yourself as a citizen of the United States/Great Britain?	0.898	0.878

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