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Who Wants To Deliberate—And Why?

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Interest in deliberative theories of democracy has grown tremendously among political theorists, political scientists, activists, and even government officials. Many scholars, however, are skeptical that it is a practically viable theory, even on its own terms. They argue (inter alia) *that most people dislike politics and that deliberative initiatives would amount to a paternalistic imposition. Using two large national samples investigating people's hypothetical willingness to deliberate and their actual participation in response to a real invitation to deliberate with their member of Congress, we find that (1) willingness to deliberate in the United States is much more widespread than expected, and (2) it is precisely those people less likely to participate in traditional partisan politics who are most interested in deliberative participation. They are attracted to such participation as a partial alternative to "politics as usual."*

Deliberative democracy has entered a kind of adolescence. Many of the broad questions emerging from its infancy have been explored extensively, and thus we know much more about both the potential and the limits of deliberation than we did a decade ago. That said, the future is still open, especially in matters of practice. Purely theoretical questions still remain, to be sure, but many of the big advances in our understanding of deliberation are likely to come by carefully aligning normative and empirical inquiry in a way that allows the two to speak to each other in mutually interpretable terms (Neblo 2005, 170; Thompson 2008, 16).

Many scholars, however, are skeptical that deliberative democracy is a practically viable theory, even on its own terms. They argue that most people dislike politics and that deliberative initiatives would amount to a paternalistic imposition. Any apparent enthusiasm for popular involvement is rooted in people's loathing of corruption, not in any deep interest in having their voices heard. As a result, deliberation would serve as, at best, yet another opportunity for the small number of people who are already deeply involved in politics to press their advantages. At worst, it would waste social resources, deepen inequality, and aggravate mass cynicism. Deliberative democrats disagree, arguing that disaffection with politics is largely endogenous to the failures of democracy understood as the pure play of power. Given the significant resources being poured into both applied deliberative institutions (e.g., Deliberative Opinion Polls or the British Columbia Citizens Assembly) and research on them, the stakes in determining who is right are high, both in political science and political practice.

In this article, we begin by reviewing the current state of the debate about deliberative participation, concluding that it has become confused by trying to extrapolate from current, naturally occurring patterns of political participation to conclusions about latent demand for deliberative opportunities. We reformulate the question as "Who is willing to deliberate?" rather than simply "Who deliberates?"[1] Our question is pertinent because some deliberative democrats claim

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[1] "Who Deliberates?" is the title of two important pieces of scholarship: (1) Benjamin Page's (1996) book on the way that media elites can massively prestructure political debate in the broader public sphere; and (2) Cook, Delli Carpini, and Jacobs' (2007) chapter on the rates and patterns of current, naturally occurring discursive participation, including very informal "talk" and somewhat more formal "deliberation." We focus on the latent demand for opportunities to

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that people would deliberate more if they were offered better opportunities for such interaction. Cook, Delli Carpini, and Jacobs (2007, 33), for example, found that "85% of those who said they had not attended a meeting to discuss public issues reported they had never been invited to do so."

Next, we evaluate a basic disagreement between deliberative democrats and their critics. Do citizens (reluctantly) mobilize in the face of perceived corruption as a way of chastening elites, or do otherwise enthusiastic citizens demobilize out of feelings of disgust and despair? We find much stronger evidence for the demobilization thesis, setting the stage for new deliberative opportunities as a plausible supplement to the status quo. Using a large national sample, we analyze the determinants of people's *hypothetical* willingness to deliberate, varying many institutional features of the deliberative forum. Some citizens may not really know their own minds, however, or they may want to appear more civically oriented than they really are. So, using a different national sample, we also analyze the determinants of people's *actual* participation in response to a real invitation to deliberate with their member of Congress. We find that (1) willingness to deliberate in the United States is much more widespread than expected; (2) it is precisely people who are less likely to participate in traditional partisan politics who are most interested in deliberative participation; and (3) people are attracted to such participation as a partial alternative to "politics as usual," rather than reluctantly participating merely to chasten corrupt elites. Taken together, these findings suggest that average citizens do not regard deliberative opportunities as filigree on "real" politics or as an indulgence for political activists and intellectuals.

BEYOND SKEPTICISM AND OPTIMISM ABOUT DELIBERATIVE PARTICIPATION

Critics of deliberative democracy have good reasons to be skeptical that more deliberative opportunities will make a positive difference. Barely half of the U.S. population bothers to show up and vote, even in presidential elections. Why should we believe that they will be lining up for more costly and demanding forms of deliberative participation? Posner (2003, 107), for example, argues that deliberative democracy is "purely aspirational and unrealistic ... with ordinary people having as little interest in complex policy issues as they have aptitude for them." Less polemically, Mutz (2002) finds that mere exposure to political disagreement demobilizes people out of even nondeliberative participation. Eliasoph (1998) argues that otherwise concerned and involved citizens may avoid group deliberation because group dynamics narrowly delineate acceptable forms of political talk. Even major deliberative democrats express similar concerns. Jane Mansbridge's (1980) classic study of deliberation finds that the sometimes adversarial nature of deliberation may have a chilling effect on speech in situations where deliberators have repeat interactions. Sunstein (2009) goes further, arguing that people's natural proclivity is to avoid exposing themselves to ideas and viewpoints with which they disagree. Delli Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs (2004, 321) sum up this line of concern: "[D]eliberation is so infrequent [and] unrepresentative ... as to make it at best an impractical mechanism for determining the public will, and at worst misleading or dangerous."

If the deliberative thesis is correct, however, then existing patterns of deliberation do not necessarily reflect how citizens would participate given more attractive opportunities. Thus, settling the real disagreement here requires that we broaden our focus beyond current levels of deliberation in the mass public and the characteristics of those who already engage in it without being offered novel opportunities.[2] Given the recent proliferation of applied deliberative forums and research on them, surprisingly little work has focused on who is willing to participate.[3] This gap is a missed opportunity to understand a crucial component of deliberative politics. To the extent that deliberative theory is procedural, the composition of the deliberating body looms as a major question (Gutmann and Thompson 1996). Most studies do report on the characteristics of those who engage in deliberation, and many contrast these individuals with those who do not participate. Luskin and Fishkin (2005), for example, report 114 difference-of-means (or distributions) tests on a great range of demographic, attitudinal, behavioral, and other variables. Such analyses are crucial for showing that the sample of participants in the National Issues Convention was representative enough to warrant the normative benefits ascribed to Deliberative Opinion Polls. However, their applied concerns lead Luskin and Fishkin to treat potential selection mechanisms as, in effect, nuisance variables. To get beyond the stalemate between skeptics and optimists about deliberation, we need a different analytical strategy that focuses on selection mechanisms as theoretically and substantively important phenomena in themselves.

Once we understand the basic psychology and sociology of deliberative participation, we can link up with normative theory to think more systematically about which selection processes really threaten the goals of deliberation and perhaps devise remediation

deliberate, rather than current rates of doing so, and on deliberation in a narrower sense, rather than informal talk.

[2] Indeed, we would argue that the existing literature has not adequately distinguished between four crucially distinct phenomena: (1) not deliberating under status quo conditions; (2) not *wanting* to deliberate (or not expressing a desire to deliberate when offered the opportunity, whether hypothetical or concrete); (3) not actually showing up after expressing a desire to deliberate; and (4) not "speaking up," conditional on finding oneself in a deliberative situation, whether everyday political talk or a deliberative forum.

[3] Depending on how one conceptualizes "naturally occurring" deliberation, there is a similarly surprising, although less acute, gap in research on its rate and predictors. Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini (2009) and Mutz (2006), in their very different ways, are leading exceptions.

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strategies. Many critics reasonably worry that deliberation in practice could be perverse, magnifying political inequality if the people who select into deliberation are already privileged (Sanders 1997). Other critics are concerned that racial dynamics produce less than representative deliberative groups, with ensuing negative outcomes for underrepresented minorities (Mendelberg and Oleske 2000). Some sources of variation in willingness to deliberate may be normatively benign, and others that are less benign might be ameliorated in practice if we understood how they worked. But we cannot know until we sort out such selection processes. Alternately, it may be that inequalities in deliberative participation run so unavoidably deep that deliberative reforms would be hopelessly perverse from the outset.

The best known study to address the putative desire for greater deliberation came to a resoundingly negative conclusion that should give potential reformers pause. In their important and influential book, *Stealth Democracy*, John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse (2002) argue that most Americans want nothing to do with a more deliberative democracy, that such reticence is reasonable, and, moreover, that their unwillingness is a good thing because the average citizen is ill equipped to discharge the duties that deliberative theorists would assign to them. In effect, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse argue that people's apparent desire for more participatory democracy is actually a misleading artifact of what Lacy (2001) calls "nonseparable preferences." The idea behind nonseparable preferences is simple: people often condition their preference on a given question on the status of some other question. For example, if citizens prefer divided government, then they may condition their vote for senator on the party of the sitting president. In the present context, the claim is that most people hate politics, but the only thing that they hate more than being involved in politics is the thought that corrupt politicians might feather their own nests at the expense of the public good. So, citizens condition their choices to participate on their perceptions of corruption. Far from participation being attractive in itself, citizens reluctantly consent to be involved only to prevent their *summum malum*. If the political process could be made less corrupt, then they would eagerly withdraw and prefer that it operate quietly in the background. Deliberative reforms predicated on the contrary "are unlikely to improve the system and may very well damage it" (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002, 162).[4]

The stealth democracy thesis thus runs precisely counter to one of deliberative theory's central claims—that a significant amount of citizen apathy is actually a *consequence* of frustration with and disempowerment in the current political system.[5] This claim is also a matter of "nonseparable" preferences, although in the opposite direction from the Stealth thesis. Citizens still condition their choices to participate on their perceptions of corruption: if the political process could be rendered more rational and responsive in their eyes, then they would be *more* inclined to engage it robustly. The disagreement between the stealth thesis and the deliberative thesis could hardly be clearer, and the stakes on which is right could hardly be higher.[6]

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) are among the most unequivocal critics of the deliberative project, but they are hardly alone (Bartels 2003; Eliasoph 1998). Fair-minded reviews of the relevant social-psychological literature reinforce similar worries (Mendelberg 2002). Posner (2004) does not even believe that new data are necessary to make the case against deliberation. He mounts an argument from revealed preferences, denying any distinction between "Who Deliberates?" and "Who Wants to Deliberate?" *a priori*. Dismissing Ackerman and Fishkin's (2004) proposal for "deliberation day," he argues that "If spending a day talking about the issues were a worthwhile activity, you wouldn't have to pay voters to do it" (Posner 2004, 41). Synthesizing the various strands from this larger literature, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002, 161–62) conclude that "pushing people to be more involved in politics and political decision making will not lead to better decisions, better people, or a more legitimate political system. Theorists are misguided if they think otherwise."

At least three lines of response to the claims of such skeptics have emerged so far. First, Thompson (2008) has pointed out that deliberative democracy is a normative theory that is supposed to challenge the status quo, so arguing that American politics as it stands does not meet this normative standard hardly disposes of the normative claims.[7] Muhlberger (n.d.) combines a similarly normative response with empirical evidence that antideliberative attitudes are part of a larger syndrome of antidemocratic attitudes (e.g., authoritarianism) that cannot be dismissed as a simple matter of citizen preferences.[8] Finally, Dryzek (2005) levels a

[4] Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) claim that people's preferences about political participation are conditional on their trust in the integrity of the political process, although they do not explicitly conceptualize their claims as a matter of nonseparable preferences.

[5] Some deliberative democrats might not want to make this empirical claim about people's motivations, sticking to purely normative claims on behalf of the theoretical superiority of deliberative democracy as an account of legitimacy. Presumably, they would then have to trade off this normative superiority against the value of respecting people's putative desire to avoid politics.

[6] In one sense, the two claims could coexist if they applied to different subsets of people. Yet, they would still be diametrically opposed in their account of the relative balance of such people. As we demonstrate later in this article, the imbalance in types is so skewed as to render this issue beside the point.

[7] Although we focus on making empirical arguments, we acknowledge both the normative categories motivating our empirical research and its normative implications. Neblo (2005) argues that deliberative freedom does not consist in somehow acting outside the causal nexus, but in being responsive to reasons. Such responsiveness to reasons is likely to generate detectable patterns in behavior. Moreover, even if social forces are acting *on* rather than *through* democratic citizens, knowledge of those forces is typically a precondition of negating them. So, we see no contradiction in doing scientific research on deliberative democracy, even if it is understood as an emancipatory ideal.

[8] Thompson (2008) and Muhlberger (n.d.) are careful to avoid flat-footed inferences from their arguments. One worry, though, is that this general line of argument can lead too easily to claims of false consciousness: the masses have not thought things through, so they

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more fundamental attack on standard survey methods, arguing that they cannot capture the inherently holistic, social, and dynamic aspects of deliberative opinion formation.

All three lines of critique have merit, although they also risk being seen as overly dismissive. Here we pursue a different strategy by confronting the claims of deliberation's critics on their own terms. We start by conceding that Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), as the most sophisticated and recent of such critics, make a strong circumstantial case given their evidence. However, we execute much sharper, direct tests that, on the critics' own terms, should be decisive. Our direct tests of people's willingness to deliberate both reverse Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's findings and explain how their circumstantial evidence led them to mistaken conclusions. Although it is true that many people find standard partisan politics and interest group liberalism distasteful, these people tend to see deliberation as a partial alternative to standard forms of participation, and are thus much more open to deliberating than expected.[9] Critics may have a case against theories of *direct* or *participatory* democracy if they simply call for a larger volume of standard forms of political participation.[10] Many critics assume that deliberative democracy is simply an extension of participatory democracy. But the theory does not conceive of deliberation as merely "voting plus"—an activity for political junkies akin to attending rallies or donating to an issue advocacy group. Nor do average citizens regard it this way, as we will see. Thus, it would be hasty in the extreme to dismiss deliberative reforms as hopelessly utopian or perverse merely because many citizens do not vote or find much about status quo politics distasteful. Deliberative democracy cannot (and should not) do without voting and much of the machinery of status quo politics—quite the contrary. But rather than thinking of deliberation as, at best, a nice frill to add to interest group liberalism (Walzer 1999), we might better think of the deliberative character of a political system as conditioning the legitimacy of standard democratic practices. As New York governor and reformist presidential candidate Samuel J. Tilden urged, "The means by which a majority comes to be a majority is the more important thing."[11]

CONDITIONAL PREFERENCES ABOUT DELIBERATIVE PARTICIPATION

As noted previously, deliberative democrats and their critics make starkly contrasting claims about why people would or would not want to participate more in politics, and thus about the prospects for various democratic reforms. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), for example, aim to resolve the question of why citizens, who purportedly hate politics, would nonetheless want more direct forms of democracy. They answer that the only thing that most citizens hate more than participating in politics is for corrupt politicians to subvert the process: "Ironically, the more the public trusts elected officials to make unbiased decisions, the less the public participates in politics" (159). They state their broader thesis in stark terms:

> Americans do not even want to be placed in a position where they feel obliged to provide input to those who are making political decisions. . . . People often view their political involvement as medicine they must take in order to keep the disease of greedy politicians and special interests from getting further out of hand. . . . This form of latent representation, stealth democracy, is not just what people would settle for; it is what they prefer, since it frees them from the need to follow politics. . . . This desire for empathetic, unbiased, other-regarding, but uninstructed public officials is about as distinct as possible from the claim that people want to provide decision makers with more input than is currently done. (131–32)

We agree that citizens want empathetic, unbiased, and other-regarding public officials. But once we acknowledge the need for elected representatives, no sensible person would prefer alienated, biased, and selfish public officials. The real disagreement thus hinges on whether people want "*uninstructed*" public officials.[12] On this point, deliberative democrats and their critics do indeed disagree.

Deliberative democrats argue that much disaffection with modern mass democracy stems from feelings of disempowerment and disillusionment. If citizens believed that the system was less rigged and corrupt, they would be more willing to contribute their voices to the process. As suggested previously, the contest between these two claims can be usefully framed as a question of nonseparable preferences (Lacy 2001). That is, people's preference about one question (whether to participate

do not understand the importance of deliberation. Thus, for their own good, we might have reason to proceed with deliberative reforms even in the face of disinterest or resistance. Whatever the merits of this particular case, the history of reforms predicated on false consciousness suggests that they are at least morally and politically risky. Our findings lower the normative burden of proof for deliberative reform by obviating the need to invoke false consciousness. If many citizens express interest in these events, and almost all of those who participate in them want to do more, then it becomes harder to dismiss them as a paternalistic imposition on the public.

[9] In practice, there is no strict dichotomy between (1) partisan politics and interest group liberalism and (2) deliberation. We use these two constructs as ideal types. That said, we believe that the distinction between, for example, participating in a Deliberative Opinion Poll and a partisan rally is sufficiently robust to warrant contrasting the terms without a recurring caveat.

[10] We leave to the side whether nondeliberative participatory democrats might have their own rejoinders to skepticism about participation. See Pateman (1970) for an argument that previous critics of more ambitious theories of democracy spent a lot of time debunking a putatively "classical" theory that did not track much of what any major figure actually advocated.

[11] Quoted in Dewey ([1927] 1954, 207). There are two separate issues: (1) the normative claim that process should matter, and (2) the empirical claim that citizens care a great deal about process. Most deliberative democrats endorse both.

[12] The term "uninstructed" is misleading here because it conjures the old Burkean distinction between delegates and trustees that deliberative theories cut across. Most deliberativists would leave representatives "uninstructed" in the strong sense, but none would be willing to leave them *unadvised* by a vigorously deliberative public sphere.

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more or less) is conditional on a second question (whether the political system is more or less corrupt).

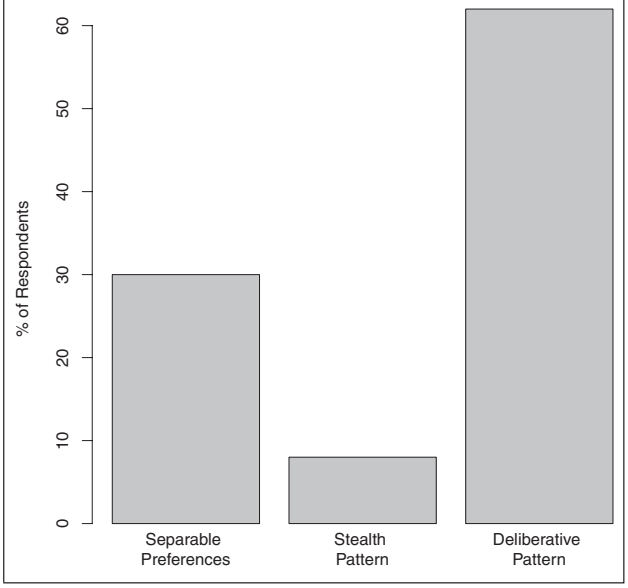
Recent public opinion research gives us a sharp, simple framework for testing the competing accounts of nonseparable preferences. In a national survey, we asked each respondent two versions of a question about the conditions under which people would be more or less interested in getting involved in politics. The first question stipulates that the conditions Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002, 158) see as underpinning stealth-motivated participation get better, and in the second, they get worse.

> If politics were [less/more] influenced by self-serving officials and powerful special interests, do you think that you would be more or less interested in getting involved in politics? [*1:Definitely more interested; 2: Probably more interested; 3: Probably less interested; 4: Definitely less interested*][13]

Following Lacy (2001), we sort subjects into three categories to test for conditioning. Those subjects who give the same response to both questions have "separable preferences" because their attitudes toward involvement in politics remained the same whether we stipulated more or less influence by self-serving officials and special interests. "Positive complements" (Lacy 2001) are subjects who would want to participate *less* under the condition of less corruption (consistent with the stealth thesis, the two processes move in the same direction, with less perceived corruption leading to less participation and more perceived corruption to more participation). "Negative complements" are subjects who would want to participate *more* under the condition of less corruption (consistent with the deliberative thesis, the processes would move in opposite directions).

Figure 1 demonstrates considerable attitude dependence (nonseparability), with only 30% of respondents exhibiting separable preferences. On the one hand, the results do uncover some evidence for the stealth thesis (i.e., that some people participate in politics only as a form of taking their medicine and that they would happily withdraw if they could). However, such "positive" complements were relatively rare, comprising only 8% of respondents—many fewer than one would have predicted given the circumstantial evidence for the stealth thesis presented in Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002). On the other hand, the test found vastly more evidence in favor of the deliberative thesis (i.e., that people would participate more if they believed that the system were less corrupt and would be further demobilized if

FIGURE 1. Separability of Interest in Politics and Change in Corruption ($N = 404$)



it became even more corrupt). A solid majority, 62% of respondents, were "negative" complements, dwarfing the rate of the stealth pattern. For every respondent who fit the stealth thesis, another *eight* fit the deliberative thesis.

We also asked a similar pair of questions about deliberative forms of participation more specifically:

> Recently, there has been interest in helping regular citizens get more input into the policy process. For example, some organizations run sessions where citizens discuss important issues with their members of Congress. If politics were [less/more] influenced by self-serving officials and powerful special interests, do you think that you would be more or less interested in participating in such a session? [*1: Definitely more interested; 2: Probably more interested; 3: Probably less interested; 4: Definitely less interested*]

As Figure 2 illustrates, the results were even more skewed in favor of the deliberative thesis: more than *11* times as many subjects fit the deliberative pattern[14] as did the stealth pattern. This test showed even more enthusiasm for specifically deliberative opportunities than for more general political participation. We agree that the stealth thesis is "distinct from the claim that people want to provide decision makers with more input than is currently done" (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002, 132). However, on this matter, the stealth thesis applies to only a small portion of the public, whereas the deliberative thesis applies to a wide swath.

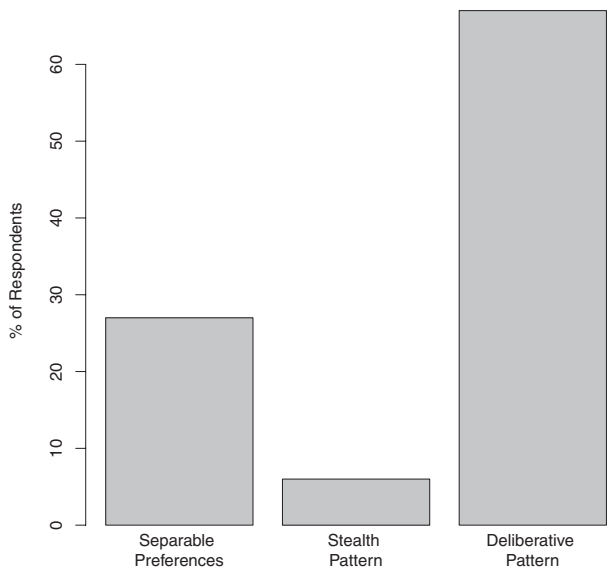
To understand what went wrong with the stealth thesis, we need to revisit another claim, namely, that

[13] These items were administered by Knowledge Networks (KN) to a sample of 404 subjects between September 9 and September 19, 2008. This sample was separate from the larger KN sample that we report on here. KN administers Web-based surveys and maintains a national probability sample panel. If those who remain on the KN panel have a relatively high propensity to participate, then the marginals for participation we report would be too high. However, the effects of the determinants of participation we report here would be biased toward zero. The two versions of the question were presented successively on the same screen. The order was not randomized. The pair of questions specifically about deliberative participation, as shown here, appeared on the following screen.

[14] We label this pattern "deliberative" to contrast it with "stealth." In both cases, the pattern is merely what the corresponding theory would predict given their explanatory accounts of why people do not participate, rather than anything related to the internal, normative workings of deliberative theory, for example. See footnote 5.

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FIGURE 2. Separability of Interest in Deliberating and Change in Corruption ($N = 404$)



"stealth democracy, is not just what people would settle for; it is what they prefer" (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002, 131). Hibbing and Theiss-Morse provide strong evidence that many people do hold stealth beliefs. *We agree that many people would settle for stealth democracy given a restricted range of choices.* However, as we will see, this is *not* what they would ultimately prefer if they believe that effective republican consultation[15] might be available. Here we demonstrate that most people with stealth attitudes also have highly conditional attitudes regarding participation, and that their frustration with status quo politics is not the same as apathy or dislike of political involvement per se. Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (among others) miss this conditioning and so end up overextending their otherwise insightful analysis of stealth attitudes. To substantiate this claim, we now shift gears and turn to a more detailed discussion of who is willing to deliberate.

THEORY AND DATA ON DELIBERATIVE PARTICIPATION

The terms "deliberation" and "deliberative democracy" encompass a range of phenomena and mean somewhat different things to different people (Neblo 2007). In this article, we focus on direct, real-time deliberation among citizens, and direct, real-time deliberation between citizens and their elected representatives. To investigate citizens' interest in these two deliberative processes, we conducted two surveys in the summer of 2006. The first investigates citizens' *attitudes toward hypothetical* opportunities for deliberation, as did Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's (2002) study. The second survey investigates citizens' expressed interest in and *behavioral response to a real opportunity to deliberate* in online forums with their member of the U.S. House of Representatives, where the invitation (via the investigators) comes from the members themselves.

To investigate the determinants of citizens' interest in participating in a hypothetical deliberative session, we randomized the characteristics of the hypothetical deliberative session and collected data on the attitudes and attributes of respondents.[16] These sessions were hypothetical in the sense that there was no promise or suggestion that the respondent's answer would lead to an invitation to an actual session. We embed these experimental variables and individual covariates in a statistical model to uncover the conditions that motivate citizens' participation in deliberative sessions. We specify the models drawing on four broad currents of theoretical work: sociological, psychological, "philosophical," and institutional.

First, we draw on the well-established literature on sociodemographic processes to identify the *individual-level characteristics* that prompt civic volunteerism. In their landmark study of participation, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady (1995) find that resources, recruitment, and engagement drive traditional political participation. Burns, Schlozman, and Verba (2001) extend that general account, reaching further back into "the private roots of public action." We start from this base by including a broad array of demographic and political variables known to influence traditional political participation. We expect that many of the same factors that drive one's willingness to attend a rally, for example, may also drive deliberative participation. Time, money, and education are fairly general resources. In contrast, deliberative theorists conceive of deliberation as a partial alternative to traditional partisan politics and interest group liberalism (or, perhaps, a condition enhancing the legitimacy of traditional politics). Conceived as such an alternative, deliberation may be especially motivating to precisely those people for whom traditional participation (under status quo conditions) is relatively unattractive. We thus have conflicting theoretical expectations and regard it as an open question as to how such factors will play out.

Second, deliberation differs theoretically from standard forms of participation in that it is especially cognitively effortful. Thus, in addition to standard demographic, resource, and engagement predictors, we also include a set of psychological *antecedents of motivation*

[15] By "republican consultation," we do not mean delegate instructions but rather communication between citizens and their representatives in which the representatives seek input from their constituents in forming agendas and in advance of their formal votes, as well as efforts to explain their votes to constituents post hoc.

[16] The survey was part of the 2006 Cooperative Congressional Election Study (CCES), conducted by Polimetrix, Inc. Polimetrix obtains interviews from a large number of opt-in subjects, and then draws a weighted sample from this large pool via sample matching. Our questions were asked of more than 3,000 subjects, even though the matched sample contains only 1,000 observations. For the analyses whose inferences rely on marginal distributions, we use the smaller, matched sample. For regression analyses on the deliberative conditions experiment, we use the larger, raw sample.

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that have strong theoretical links to the kinds of demands that may be particular to deliberative participation. Mutz (2006) argues that many people are *conflict avoidant*, and so will be especially keen to avoid the inherently contentious give and take of deliberation. Cacioppo and Petty (1982) describe the personality variable *need for cognition* as the extent to which people enjoy effortful cognitive activities. Bizer et al. (2004) develop the *need to evaluate* as a disposition to make judgments or take sides. Because several studies show that both the need for cognition and the need to evaluate play an important role in forming and changing attitudes, they are good theoretical candidates for increasing one's willingness to deliberate. As with some of the other standard participation predictors, we have competing theoretical expectations about how *political efficacy* might relate to willingness to deliberate. Several studies have shown, unsurprisingly, that feeling confused and powerless in the face of politics is demotivating. However, deliberative forums are designed to be opportunities to remediate confusion and provide an alternate channel for involving oneself in politics. Citizens could therefore regard deliberative opportunities as a chance to become more empowered. Again, how these competing mechanisms will play against each other is an open question. (See the online supplementary Appendix for the original items and details on scale construction at http://www.journals.cambridge.org/psr2010006).

Third, we note that deliberative democracy aspires to go beyond participation in status quo, power politics. As a result, we also include measures of people's preferences over *democratic practice and processes,* a facet of the social psychology of procedural justice (Lind and Tyler 1988). The idea here is that citizens have implicit folk "philosophies" about how democracy is supposed to work and beliefs about how various political processes measure up to those folk philosophies. We include Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's (2002) original four *stealth* items because they were intended to tap such folk intuitions. We also include an index of people's *trust in government* under this rubric because critics of deliberation claim that any apparent interest in more direct democracy is predicated on a lack of trust in current decision makers. Thus, we should observe a significant negative interaction between stealth and trust—those high on the stealth index but low on trust will want to participate, but those high on both will opt out at higher rates.[17] We also include an index we label *sunshine* democracy—a positive rewording of the stealth items. The original idea behind the sunshine items was to make the stealth index more reliable and balanced in coding, and to assess acquiescence bias in the marginal distribution of the original items, which were all coded such that agreement indicated higher stealth. Toward that end, we included a "Neither Agree nor Disagree" response option and wrote four new items (in italics) similar in content to the original stealth items (no italics), but reverse coded so that agreement indicated lower stealth:

> [Stealth 1] Elected officials would help the country more if they would stop talking and just take action on important problems.
> *[Sunshine 1] It is important for elected officials to discuss and debate things thoroughly before making major policy changes.*

> [Stealth 2] What people call "compromise" in politics is really just selling out one's principles.
> *[Sunshine 2] Openness to other people's views and a willingness to compromise are important for politics in a country as diverse as ours.*

> [Stealth 3] Our government would run better if decisions were left up to successful business people.
> *[Sunshine 3] In a democracy like ours, there are some important differences between how government should be run and how a business should be managed.*

> [Stealth 4] Our government would run better if decisions were left up to nonelected, independent experts rather than politicians or the people.
> *[Sunshine 4] It is important for the people and their elected representatives to have the final say in running government, rather than leaving it up to unelected experts.*

Despite the rather direct content overlap, the sunshine items correlated well with each other, but not with the original Stealth items, resulting in two separate factors.[18] Surprisingly, the two scales are nearly orthogonal, correlating at only $r = -0.07$. Moreover, this weak connection is not a matter of acquiescence bias; including a methods factor in the measurement model (Podsakoff et al. 2003) only increases the strength of the relationship to $r = -0.12$.[19] Later, we argue at greater length that this counterintuitive finding indicates contextual conditioning on the part of many citizens when

[17] Alternately, one might think of low trust as constitutive of stealth attitudes, but the modest correlation between the two scales, $r = -0.10$, precludes this interpretation.

[18] As we report, the sunshine items garnered very high rates of agreement. So, the scale should be interpreted as ranging from tepid to strong support for textbook conceptions of representative democracy. Confirmatory factor analysis also indicated that the original four stealth items might be regarded as two closely related factors (i.e., the first two items form a kind of "get on with it" subscale, whereas the last two both express a desire for technocratic alternatives to politicians). However, all four items do scale up reasonably well together, so for the sake of continuity with the existing literature we treat stealth as a single construct. Doing so does not materially affect our results. We also estimated both scales using polychoric correlations. Again, doing so did not materially affect anything. See http://www.journals.cambridge.org/psr2010006 for details.

[19] Indeed, one need not use a measurement model to rule out acquiescence bias driving these results. To test directly whether many respondents actually agreed with all items in the sunshine and stealth scales, we simply recoded each response to "1" if the respondent either strongly or somewhat agreed with the statement, and "0" otherwise, and then summed across all eight items. Both the median and the mode are at five, only one step off the center of the scale, and only 4% of subjects agree to all items. Thus, even before correcting for methods bias in the measurement model, we can directly reject acquiescence as the primary factor behind the (weak) relationship between stealth and sunshine, or the meaning of the scales individually.

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it comes to stealth/sunshine beliefs.[20] The sunshine items tap how they think that representative democracy should work in principle, whereas the stealth items tap what they would settle for as a step away from the corrupt status quo.[21]

Finally, willingness to deliberate is likely to vary according to the institutional characteristics of the deliberative events themselves. There are many ways to construct a deliberative forum, even if we restrict them to direct, real-time events. To get a sense of how willingness to deliberate varies according to several dimensions relevant to both theory and applied deliberative institutions, we embedded an experiment permuting the following variations in the CCES survey:

> Recently, there has been interest in helping regular citizens get more input into the policy process. For example, many organizations run [*1 day/1 hour*] sessions where citizens [*come together/use the Internet*] to discuss [*important issues/immigration policy*] [*<none>; with local officials; with their member of Congress*]. [*<none>; Participants get $25 as thanks for their involvement.*]
>
> If you had the chance to participate in such a session, how interested do you think you would be in doing so? *(5) Extremely interested; (4) Quite interested; (3) Somewhat interested; (2) Not too interested; (1) Not at all interested*.

In sum, we varied (1) the length of the deliberative session; (2) whether it was face to face or computer mediated; (3) involved an unspecified issue or a specific issue; (4) whether it was conducted among citizens, as a consultation with a local official, or their member of Congress; and (5) whether subjects got a monetary incentive to participate.

People are busy and politics takes time, so it seems obvious to test for people's sensitivity to the amount of time necessary to participate in a deliberative event as well as their sensitivity to monetary incentives. In addition to their practical relevance, these conditions might also clarify the role of traditional cost–benefit considerations in willingness to deliberate (analogous to the voting literature's interest in sensitivity to costs and benefits narrowly construed, versus notions of duty, norms, or habit).

Computer-mediated deliberation is generally more convenient (for those who have access to the Internet) and greatly reduces travel and logistical costs. Moreover, it accommodates geographically disparate participants, which is especially crucial for deliberation within subpublics that might not be geographically concentrated. In addition, the relative buffer of computer-mediated deliberation may mitigate reluctance to deliberate among those who dislike conflict or prefer partial anonymity. There are potential down sides as well: "digital divide" bias, decreased civility, loss of nonverbal communication channels, etc.

We included a general versus specific topic manipulation to determine whether marginal rates of interest in deliberation are predicated on people imagining the one topic that most interests them, versus a more general interest in talking about important issues of the day. Much political behavior research shows that most people have a narrow range of issues that they care about enough to be mobilized to participate around. Under an interest group liberalism frame, we should not be surprised to find that participation is linked to particular interests. Deliberative theory, however, predicts somewhat weaker such effects for deliberative participation because we have reasons to participate deliberatively even when we do not have a large, direct stake in some particular outcome.

Finally, there are both theoretical and practical differences between deliberation among fellow citizens (i.e., horizontal deliberation) versus citizens and their elected representatives (i.e., vertical deliberation), so we randomized the type of session.

Before explaining variation in expressed willingness to deliberate, we should note that absolute levels of interest in deliberative participation were quite high. A large majority of people (83%) expressed at least some interest in participating in a deliberative session. Combining across the various conditions, 27% said that they would be "Extremely" interested in participating, another 27% said they would be "Quite" interested, and 29% "Somewhat" interested. Twelve percent said they were "Not too interested," and only 5% said that they were "Not at all" interested. Because this sample's stealth attitudes were comparable to what Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) report, there is little reason to believe that peculiarities of the sample can account for such a high level of general interest in deliberation.

The desire to "get more input into the policy process" by discussing one or more issues with an official and/or other "regular citizens" appears to differ in its predictors from participation in partisan politics and interest group liberalism. Of the seven demographic characteristics from the literature, only education is even of the sign usually associated with greater participation in partisan politics or interest group liberalism (and unlike its function in predicting voting, etc., it is not statistically

[20] Alternatively, it may be that asking respondents these reworded questions prompts them to examine implicit biases about democratic politics, a kind of deliberative interaction within the survey itself (Sanders 1999).

[21] Given its origins, the sunshine index turned out to have surprisingly good internal reliability (.78) and construct validity. All four items have reasonable face validity, tapping major themes in the deliberative literature: "discuss and debate things thoroughly," "openness to other people's views" in the context of debate and persuasion (i.e., different from tolerance), and the two items insisting on democratic processes in the face of expert technocracy and a business model of governance. Moreover, the items are quite different from standard scales of *liberal* democratic values (e.g., McCloskey and Zaller 1984). We had five items on our survey that closely approximate items from Muhlberger's (n.d.) battery measuring "deliberative participation and potential." Four of those five items correlated significantly in the expected directions with our sunshine scale, adding to the case for sunshine's convergent validity. The scale does not correlate significantly with any of several indicators of involvement in more traditional partisan politics (e.g., voting), which counts toward its discriminant validity. That said, we readily admit that further research will be necessary to build an even stronger and more direct case for sunshine's construct validity.

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TABLE 1. Hypothetical Willingness to Deliberate (CCES Respondents); OLS Regression Estimates

	B (SE)
Individual Characteristics	
Strength of partisanship	−0.025 (0.022)
Church attendance	−0.015 (0.018)
Education	0.019 (0.018)
Income	−0.012 (0.007)*
White	−0.202 (0.071)***
Full-time employment	0.045 (0.053)
Age	−0.008 (0.002)****
Male	−0.006 (0.047)
Motivation	
Political interest	0.296 (0.033)****
Conflict avoidance	−0.051 (0.027)*
Efficacy	−0.016 (0.024)
Need for cognition	0.136 (0.027)****
Need for judgment	0.048 (0.027)*
Democratic Practice	
Sunshine democracy	0.021 (0.025)
Stealth democracy	0.026 (0.029)
Trust in government	0.040 (0.042)
Deliberative Conditions (Treatments)	
Member of Congress	0.144 (0.047)***
Length of session (hr/day)	0.013 (0.044)
Place of session	0.010 (0.044)
Topic of session	0.038 (0.044)
Incentive for participation	0.124 (0.044)***
Interactions	
Congress condition × Stealth democracy	−0.131 (0.047)***
Place condition × Conflict avoidance	−0.024 (0.036)
Constant	3.74 (0.093)****
Number of observations	2242
R^2	0.135
Adj. R^2	0.126

Notes: CCES, Cooperative Congressional Election Study; OLS, ordinary least squares. All covariates, except the level 1 dummies and treatment dummies, have been centered.
*$p < .1$, ***$p < .01$, ****$p < .001$.

significant here).[22] See Table 1. Younger people, racial minorities,[23] and lower-income people expressed significantly *more* willingness to deliberate, all of which are reversals from traditional participation patterns. Women, less partisan people, and non-churchgoers were also slightly more likely to want to deliberate, although not to a statistically significant degree. On these criteria, it would appear that the kinds of people attracted to the deliberative opportunities offered are fairly distinct from those drawn to partisan politics and interest group liberalism. These results are consistent with deliberative democracy's claim to provide an outlet for those frustrated with status quo politics.[24]

There were fewer surprises with the effect estimates for the cognitive antecedents of motivation. General political interest, need for cognition, need for evaluation, and conflict avoidance all had significant effects in the expected direction (i.e., positive for the first three and negative for the last). Efficacy had a small, negative coefficient but was not statistically significant. Similarly, the insignificant interaction between conflict avoidance and the face-to-face versus online condition suggests that the distance provided by online discussion does not ameliorate conflict avoidant people's relative distaste for deliberation.

Presenting the results from the variables in people's attitudes toward democratic processes is a bit more complicated. None of the main effects for stealth, sunshine, or trust are significant.[25] However, the interaction between stealth and the experimental "Congress" condition was negative and highly significant, indicating that, with the other variables controlled, people high on stealth were not as attracted as were others by the *hypothetical* prospect of talking with their (presumptively corrupt) members of Congress.[26]

[22] These reversals in demographic effects were not driven by some peculiarity in our sample. Using the same sample, we specified models of vote turnout and an index of traditional participation, finding a pattern on these variables much like that in previous research, suggesting that there really is something different about deliberative participation. See http://www.journals.cambridge.org/psr2010006 for the online supplementary Appendix.

[23] Initially, we believed that the somewhat surprising sign for the coefficient on race was a function of Hispanics being attracted to deliberate about immigration policy in that condition. However, more detailed analyses revealed that not to be the case. The sign for "white" stayed the same when we included a Hispanic dummy. In addition, interacting the Hispanic dummy with the General versus Immigration topic condition did not show up as significant, so the particular issue does not seem to be driving this result. The same pattern emerged in the equation predicting willingness to deliberate in the Congress experiment, although the coefficient reverses in the equation for actual turnout at the session.

[24] These findings suggest that some deliberative forums may not face the difficult trade-off between deliberation and participation that Mutz (2006) identifies with naturally occurring, cross-cutting political talk. Similarly, we found no such demobilization in our experiments involving actual deliberation between members of Congress and their constituents. These findings do not contradict Mutz's argument, but suggest possible ways to soften the effect of her findings in practice.

[25] Because the stealth thesis conceives of participation as a second best in the face of untrustworthy elites, we also ran a model that included an interaction between *stealth* and *trust,* which proved insignificant. To give this version of the stealth hypothesis its strongest chance for finding support, we also tested separately for moderating effects across the whole range of the interaction (following Brambor, Clark, and Golder 2006) and found no substantial heterogeneity. Trust neither moderates stealth nor constitutes a syndrome with it through high correlation ($r = -0.10$). These findings would seem to cut rather deeply at a core claim about stealth democracy.

[26] The sum of the stealth and the Congress–stealth interaction term is statistically significant ($p = .01$). There was substantial heterogeneity in the interaction between stealth and the Congress condition using the Brambor, Clark, and Golder (2006) checks. The Congress condition increased the willingness to participate among those low on stealth, but did not affect those high on stealth. Thus, it is not that people high on stealth were especially turned off by their Congressperson, but unlike everyone else, they simply did not care that it was a relatively high-ranking official. We should also note that the Congress condition is in contrast to a collapsed version of the other

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The main effect for the Congress condition was positive and significant.[27] Most people were motivated by the thought of talking with a high-ranking government official, so there seems to be somewhat more enthusiasm for vertical (i.e., republican) deliberation than horizontal deliberation. Unsurprisingly, people were also attracted by a monetary incentive. More surprisingly, people did not seem especially sensitive to the length or mode of the deliberative session. These findings merit further attention because they may indicate a theoretically interesting insensitivity to certain kinds of participation costs (akin to some findings in the voting literature), or they may reflect an inability to vividly imagine the logistical costs of participation at the time of response. There was also no significant effect on general, unspecified issues versus a specific issue of the day (immigration policy). This last finding suggests that, contrary to an interest group politics frame, people are not especially parochial in their willingness to deliberate.[28]

When taken together, the five manipulations in the question wording experiment constitute a $2 \times 2 \times 2 \times 3 \times 2$ experimental design, yielding 48 conditions. We have good theoretical reasons to include the main effects in the model, but we had no theoretical expectations about interactions among the conditions. It is possible, however, that some of the manipulations jointly explain willingness to participate in deliberative sessions. When we test for this more complex conditioning in a fully factorial analysis of variance, however, we find that none of the interactions between experimental conditions had significant effects in a saturated model (even with an "*n*" over 3,000).[29] So, the main dimensions on which deliberative forums vary do not seem to interact much at all. One could spin a large number of plausible ad hoc hypotheses about how they might have interacted (e.g., that those getting to talk to a member of Congress would be less sensitive to financial incentives, or that people would be more sensitive to the topic when investing a full day). So, by ruling such hypotheses out, this negative result is of considerable interest in itself.

Overall, these findings present quite a different picture of willingness to deliberate than what we might have expected if we thought of deliberation as just another form of traditional political participation. We now turn to comparing these results on interest in hypothetical deliberation with those analyzing actual behavior in response to a concrete invitation to deliberate.

DELIBERATING WITH MEMBERS OF CONGRESS

In the summer and early fall of 2006, we conducted a series of field experiments in which random samples of citizens from 13 congressional districts were offered an opportunity to participate in an online deliberative forum with their member of Congress to discuss immigration policy.[30] Sixty-five percent of respondents agreed to participate in principle.[31] Subjects who agreed to participate in principle were randomized into treatment and control groups.[32] Of those assigned to the treatment condition, 34% showed up on the specified date and time for the discussion with their member of Congress. Given typical response rates to surveys, and the relatively burdensome requirements of this invitation (four surveys, reading background materials, plus an hour long commitment at a specific date and time), these participation rates are reasonably high.[33]

Because actual participation was conditional on agreeing to participate initially, we first estimated both stages simultaneously as a Heckman selection model. However, *rho* was not significant ($p = .428$), indicating that patterns in the determinants of the actual turnout were not conditioned on patterns in initial agreement to participate.[34] We report the determinants of people's willingness to participate in the first column

two conditions <None; local officials> because preliminary analyses showed no difference between these two.

[27] Because the treatment conditions were randomly assigned, they should not affect the other independent variables in the model. Thus, there is no loss of substantial information about the experiment's main effects as a result of including them in our larger model.

[28] Alternately, it may be that nearly everyone was highly motivated by immigration policy as an issue. This interpretation seems unlikely for two reasons. First, immigration was chosen as the "most important problem" by only 10% of subjects. Second, this model controls for general political interest, so the immigration manipulation should be a fairly strong test of parochialism in willingness to deliberate.

[29] Only 1 of 26 interaction terms rises to the .05 level of significance, and this is a largely uninterpretable four-way interaction. When we correct for multiple comparisons, the effect is no longer significant.

[30] The Congressional Management Foundation, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization, recruited the members of Congress to participate in the study. Five of the members were Republican and seven were Democrats, spread across all four major geographic regions. The members themselves were diverse ideologically, including one member from each party who voted against their party on recent immigration legislation. We also conducted two sessions in which citizens were invited to deliberate with an immigration policy expert, as a kind of level two control condition.

[31] KN conducted this survey in the summer of 2006. Participants were informed that indicating a willingness to participate made them eligible for an invitation to a session involving other citizens and their member of Congress.

[32] We realize that randomizing after such a filter complicates estimating treatment effects from the field experiment. However, it is important to note that *none of the results in the current paper are affected by this decision* because we are modeling the filter itself as the first stage in the Heckman model. In concurrent work, we justify this design choice for research questions affected by it and develop statistical techniques to properly analyze those data. See Kevin Esterling, Michael Neblo, and David Lazer, n.d. "Estimating Treatment Effects in the Presence of Selection on Unobservables: The Generalized Endogenous Treatment Model," http://polisci.osu.edu/faculty/mneblo/papers.htm

[33] We acknowledge that participation in an online deliberative session is in many ways less demanding than face-to-face interactions typically envisioned in the literature on deliberative democracy. We argue that finding conditions that motivate this category of deliberative behavior holds out the promise of measurable, if only incremental, improvements over the status quo by deliberative criteria, a promise that may prove even more consequential with the increasing diffusion of e-government institutional practices.

[34] Indeed, there was little systematic variation in the equation for actual turnout: the only factor that rose to statistical significance at $p < .05$ was political efficacy, which predicted increased turnout. For the most part, then, once people expressed a willingness to deliberate,

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TABLE 2. Participation in Deliberative Sessions with Member of Congress (Knowledge Networks)

	(Model 1) Expressing Willingness to Participate	(Model 2) Showing Up for Session *if* Willing	(Model 3) Participants vs. Nonparticipants	(Model 4) Participants vs. Unwilling to Participate
Individual Characteristics				
Strength of partisanship	−0.033	−0.062	−0.090	−0.129
	(0.061)	(0.080)	(0.071)	(0.087)
Education	0.090	0.087	0.107	0.223*
	(0.079)	(0.106)	(0.096)	(0.119)
Income	−0.034**	0.015	−0.004	−0.044**
	(0.015)	(0.019)	(0.017)	(0.022)
White	−0.198	0.315*	0.242	0.076
	(0.144)	(0.184)	(0.170)	(0.208)
Children (<12) in household	0.180***	0.092	0.141*	0.231**
	(0.069)	(0.080)	(0.075)	(0.098)
Employment	−0.761****	−0.208	−0.513****	−0.931****
	(0.121)	(0.153)	(0.136)	(0.171)
Age	−0.013	−0.018	−0.014	−0.006
	(0.015)	(0.030)	(0.023)	(0.025)
Male	−0.057	−0.053	−0.048	−0.115
	(0.122)	(0.163)	(0.143)	(0.174)
Motivation				
Conflict avoidance	−0.163**	−0.026	−0.075	−0.146
	(0.066)	(0.085)	(0.077)	(0.095)
Efficacy	0.130*	0.228***	0.260****	0.332***
	(0.067)	(0.088)	(0.078)	(0.096)
Civil society	0.128***	−0.032	0.034	0.142**
	(0.046)	(0.051)	(0.047)	(0.063)
Attention to issue	0.161*	0.172	0.270***	0.363***
	(0.092)	(0.124)	(0.111)	(0.135)
Need for cognition	0.049	0.073	0.085	0.124
	(0.069)	(0.095)	(0.085)	(0.107)
Need for judgment	0.108	0.026	0.098	0.189*
	(0.069)	(0.095)	(0.084)	(0.101)
Democratic Practice				
Sunshine democracy	0.144***	0.156*	0.193**	0.304***
	(0.053)	(0.084)	(0.076)	(0.091)
Stealth democracy	0.160***	−0.032	0.054	0.180**
	(0.059)	(0.075)	(0.068)	(0.087)
Trust in government	0.186***	−0.032	0.045	0.116
	(0.057)	(0.074)	(0.067)	(0.082)
Other Model Parameters				
Panel	2 Controls	2 Controls	2 Controls	2 Controls
District	12 Controls	12 Controls	12 Controls	12 Controls
Constant	0.460	−1.150	−2.621	−2.204
	(0.468)	(0.741)	(0.606)	(0.714)

Notes: We refer to those who said they were unwilling to participate as 0s, those who said they were willing but did not show as 1s, and those who said they were willing and did show as 2s. Model 1 is a binary logit comparing {0} to {1,2}. Model 2 compares {1} to {2}. Model 3 compares {0,1} to {2}. Model 4 compares {0} to {2}.
*$p < .1$, **$p < .05$, ***$p < .01$, ****$p < .001$.

of Table 2. As with the preceding varying deliberative conditions experiment, willingness to deliberate in this field experiment did not follow the standard pattern from previous research on participation in traditional partisan politics and interest group liberalism.[35] Again, the coefficients for age, race, gender, strength of

their actual participation seems to be largely a function of random variation (probably surrounding availability for the specific date and time set by their member of Congress).

[35] Some previous research suggests that participation in standard "open" public hearings, face-to-face town halls, and other such venues often show the same socioeconomic status biases as voting (although it is not clear whether the difference is a matter of differing

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partisanship, and income were all the reverse sign of models predicting standard participation, although of these variables only income was statistically significant in predicting willingness to participate.[36] Being white predicted a slightly higher rate of actually showing up for the session.[37] Unlike the hypothetical experiment, in this specification, traditional employment dampened willingness to deliberate, probably as a proxy for constraints on specific dates and times. However, having young children in the household (which would also seem to affect availability negatively) was positive and significant.

We also included a more extensive battery of questions (*Civil society)* about participation in nonpolitical forms of civic engagement. Consistent with Putnam (2000) and contrary to Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002, 184–89), an index of such engagement powerfully predicts willingness to deliberate.[38] The motivational factors all had the expected sign. *Conflict avoidant* people were significantly less likely to want to deliberate, whereas efficacious people and those paying attention to the issue were slightly more likely to express willingness.[39]

Some of the most powerful and most interesting results hinge on citizen's attitudes toward democratic practice. Recall that *sunshine* attitudes and *trust* in government were not significant in the hypothetical deliberation model. In the current model, however, both are substantively large, statistically significant, and positive. This finding regarding *trust* fits uncomfortably with the stealth democracy story because, in that theory, those who trust government should be willing to withdraw and let it operate in the background. Instead, respondents seem more willing to participate in deliberation with a government in which they have more trust—a behavioral result reinforcing the findings reported previously regarding nonseparable attitudes toward deliberative participation. Because the sunshine index was designed to mirror the content of stealth with the opposite valence, it is not too surprising that it should positively predict willingness to deliberate. Indeed, as reported in column 2, sunshine is one of the few factors with a significant effect in driving turnout for the session among those who report a willingness to participate.

Things become even more interesting when we consider the results for *stealth*. In the hypothetical model, *stealth* had large, negative, and significant effects in the Congress condition. Yet, here we get a complete reversal. *Stealth* has substantively large, statistically significant, and *positive* effects on willingness to deliberate. Given Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's (2002) interpretation of stealth attitudes, this stark reversal is difficult to explain. Indeed, that the *sunshine* and *stealth* indexes should point powerfully in the same direction is, in itself, perplexing at first blush. The items for the scales were explicitly designed to point in opposite directions in their content. However, if we question the standard interpretation of *stealth*, the results become less perplexing. If many or most people expressing stealth beliefs have conditional attitudes about the content of the items, then a different interpretation of the meaning of *stealth* offers itself. On the standard interpretation, most people dislike politics intrinsically and do not want to be more involved, but reluctantly agree to more direct democracy as a hedge against the corrupt status quo. They would most prefer a nondemocratic technocracy that operates in the background. Recognizing that this model might not be achievable, they settle for more referenda and other forms of direct democratic control.

We agree with Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) that most citizens prefer stealth democracy to direct democracy, and more direct democracy to the status quo. However, we extend by one step the same move that they make regarding direct democracy. That is, just as with the apparent desire for more direct democracy, people do not really hold stealth democracy as their first preference. Instead, they will settle for stealth democracy if the civics textbook version of deliberative representative democracy is not achievable.[40]

control variables). If the effects here are indeed reversed, then it may be that the reversal is driven by an *interaction* between the form of participation and our method of recruitment (i.e., identifying a broad sample and randomly inviting participation). This question is worth pursuing in future research because it has important implications for institutional design regarding open forums and outreach efforts. We thank Archon Fung for raising this point.

[36] One might suspect that variables like political interest and "need for cognition" may be mediating the effects of education in most of these models. We examined this possibility in both the CCES (Table 1) and KN (Table 2) data sets, and remain confident in the relative nonimportance of formal education for the following reasons: the relationships between education and the motivation variables are weak, so high colinearity is not a concern; only modest education effects emerge in specifications in which the motivation variables are removed; path analyses reveal that the motivation variables have no substantial intervening effects on education; and the literature discussing these variables gives little justification for assigning causal priority to education over and above motivation.

[37] As with the preceding survey experiment example, the result regarding willingness to participate does not seem to be driven by Hispanics being especially interested in discussing immigration. More perplexing is the finding that although non-white respondents may be more likely to express a willingness to deliberate (as evidenced in column 1 of Table 2 and in Table 1), columns 2 and 3 of Table 2 indicate that they are less likely to actually participate. Uncovering the determinants of this pattern merits future research attention (see Abramson and Claggett 1984).

[38] Again, sample differences do not seem to be driving demographic and other differences. We specified another set of models of vote turnout and an index of traditional participation, using the same KN sample. Again, those models yield a pattern on variables much more in keeping with previous research, suggesting that there really is something different about deliberative participation. See the supplementary online Appendix.

[39] The model also includes dummy variables for each district. We suspect that most significant differences are due to heterogeneity across districts rather than members themselves having a differential effect on participation because, prior to attending a session, most citizens know little about their own member of Congress (Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996). In addition, in an expanded model, we found no evidence that people's baseline approval of the member, approval of the member's handling of immigration, trust of the member, or copartisanship affected his or her willingness to participate or actual participation.

[40] The relationship between direct democracy and deliberative democracy is admittedly complex. On most accounts, legitimate direct democracy would have to include a mass deliberative component, whereas the issue is less acute on a representative account.

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With this expanded menu in view, we can see why the *stealth* index reverses its effect between the hypothetical and actual offer to deliberate. The actual offer from their member communicates new information about that member that runs counter to their stereotypes of politicians. Constituents might believe that most members of Congress are corrupt politicians who do not really care about what average citizens think. But when their member, in effect, says, "*No, really, I do want to talk with you. Will 2 weeks from Tuesday at 7 pm work?*", they update and reason that their member must be one of the (perhaps few) good ones. The frustration and desire for reform evinced by stealth attitudes indicate motivation for change, rather than apathy or aversion. On this reading, those high on stealth order their preferences thus:

status quo → more direct democracy → stealth democracy → more deliberative representative democracy

These preferences are not single peaked with respect to Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's (2002, 47) notion of "process space," so it makes sense that the stealth index might behave nonmonotonically when new options enter the perceived choice set.

Perhaps people high on *stealth* might want to participate in deliberation with their member of Congress at higher rates for entirely different reasons. For example, they might consider it a golden opportunity to hold their presumptively corrupt member's feet to the fire. But this explanation would not account for why the effect should *reverse* itself so dramatically between the hypothetical version of talking to one's member of Congress and the actual version. Any proffered alternative explanation must make sense of how the new information being conveyed by the member's concrete offer leads to the reversed effects of stealth beliefs specifically.[41]

The model in the second column of Table 2 tests for the determinants of actually participating in a deliberative session, conditional on having reported willingness to participate. Once a participant expressed intent to attend a session, there are few determinants of who actually shows up. This implies that the key to explaining participation is in understanding who expresses willingness to participate.

The third column of Table 2 reports an alternate way to code participation, where we group those who do not show up for a session (those who say they will not participate with those who say they will but do not).[42] Column 3 finds a few additional significant results compared to the second (attention to issue and young children in the household enhance participation, and employment suppresses participation). In addition, race is no longer net predictive of actual participation. We ran a series of Wald tests comparing the coefficients in model 3 (net deliberative turnout) to a model with the same specification and the same subjects, predicting their vote turnout. (See http://www.journals.cambridge.org/psr2010006). Partisanship, education, income, employment, age, civil society, sunshine, and stealth all showed significant differences in the expected direction, indicating that even variables that are not statistically significant in model 3 may nevertheless differ significantly from their effect on more traditional forms of political participation (i.e., several of these null results are a departure from the norm when it comes to voting). Put differently, on many criteria, actual deliberative participation in our sessions draws a significantly *less* biased population than voting. Again, these findings suggest that it is deeply misleading to think of deliberative participation as the provenance of activists and political junkies or any other proper subset of participants in "real" politics.

We conceptualize the propensity to actually participate as a continuous latent index, anchored at one end by those who have no interest at all in participating in such sessions, and at the other end by those for whom participating in the sessions is their top priority; most respondents fall somewhere in between these two end points. Reporting an interest in participating (but not actually participating) indicates an intermediate level of interest in participating: something more than dismissing participating out of hand, but something less than actually committing the time to attend (perhaps by overcoming obstacles to do so). The results in columns 1 to 3 suggest that most of the consequential movement is at the low end of the latent index; once someone reports intent to show up, whether he or she does is largely random, perhaps due to exogenous conflicts with the meeting time.

Alternatively, one might worry that reporting intent to participate, but failing to show up, represents only a kind of social desirability. If one believed this counter interpretation, it might be tempting to say that, outside the sunshine index and a few other variables, the significant findings in the first column are simply uncovering determinants of social desirability rather than determinants of actual participation. If it is the case, however, that those who express intent to participate are actually the type that are likely to actually show up, then the dependent variable in the third column combines two distinct types among the recoded zeroes: those who certainly will not show up, and those who

That said, what we call "deliberative republicanism," over time, may well foster interest among citizens in more direct and participatory forms of democracy.

[41] One might argue that differences in the composition of the sample or contextual features of the two questionnaires might explain the difference. To test for this possibility, in addition to the session with the members of Congress, we invited people to participate in identical sessions with a nonpartisan expert on the issue of immigration. Under these conditions, the coefficient on stealth is similar to its effect in the corresponding hypothetical conditions—basically indistinguishable from zero. See the supplementary online Appendix.

[42] The binary logit results in the first and third columns are equivalent to a generalized ordered logit for a three-category dependent variable that relaxes the parallel regression assumption used in ordinary ordered logit (Williams 2006, 59). For a three-category dependent variable, a generalized ordered logit model estimates two equations, one for each alternative, and allows the parameters to vary across the equations (ordinary ordered logit estimates one equation, and hence constrains the parameters to be equal across equations).

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are likely to show up but do not for some exogenous reasons.

To get some leverage on whether the determinants uncovered in the first column are actually predicting motivation toward behavior rather than simply social desirability, we have added a fourth column to Table 2, with a dependent variable that equals zero for those who are unwilling to attend and one for those who actually do attend (i.e., this model discards those who report intent to show up but do not, or equivalently, an unordered model with independent errors comparing these two categories). In column 4, we observe that there are quite a few determinants of who actually shows up, compared to those who are unwilling to participate. Indeed, most coefficients in this final model are of similar magnitude and precision to those reported in the first column: only efficacy and sunshine show a statistically significant difference on a Wald test of equality across equations in models 1 and 4, in both cases merely reinforcing the effect already present in model 1.[43] Thus, models 2 and 4, together, provide fairly strong evidence for interpreting the respondents' expressed willingness to participate as an indicator of a genuine, if diffuse, interest in participating, rather than a mere expression of social desirability.

INTERPRETING ANTIDELIBERATIVE ATTITUDES

Deliberative democracy is rooted in the notion that legitimate political decisions must typically come with a rationale that does not merely restate the will of the decision maker, whether that decision maker is a dictator, a politburo, or even a democratic majority. In that sense, it is the antithesis of authoritarianism. Alas, much evidence suggests that authoritarian attitudes are not uncommon among citizens of even the most consolidated democracies (Altemeyer 1981). Indeed, certain "soft" authoritarian (Muhlberger n.d.) attitudes garner levels of support that would seem to make deliberative democracy a pipe dream. Take, for example, two of the items from the stealth scale:

> *Elected officials would help the country more if they would stop talking and just take action on important problems.*

> *What people call "compromise" in politics is really just selling out one's principles.*

As with previous studies, we find that large portions of the public agree with these statements: 66% agreed with the "talk versus action" item, and 43% agreed with the "compromise" item.[44] Because compromise and especially debate are essential to deliberation, it would seem reasonable to infer that many members of the public have attitudes that would make it difficult for them to function in a deliberative public culture.

Yet, it is worth exploring more closely what these attitudes mean and how they function in a broader view of public debate. A different frame on similar questions produces precisely the opposite conclusion, namely, that average citizens evince a remarkably *favorable* disposition for deliberative participation. Consider the agreement rates of positively framed versions of the two preceding questions, from the sunshine scale:

> *It is important for elected officials to discuss and debate things thoroughly before making major policy changes.* [92% Agree]

> *Openness to other people's views, and a willingness to compromise are important for politics in a country as diverse as ours.* [83% Agree]

Even more people agree with these prodeliberative attitudes than with the corresponding stealth statements. It is thus incorrect to infer that large majorities of the public have unambiguously negative attitudes about debate and compromise. We do not want to repeat the same mistake in the opposite direction by arguing that large majorities of citizens have unambiguously positive attitudes about debate and compromise. Indeed many of the citizens in our sample agreed with *both* the positive and negative versions of these questions. Either citizens are deeply confused about these issues (i.e., they exhibit rampant nonattitudes) or they are deeply conflicted.

Our many systematic findings regarding stealth and sunshine indicate that the nonattitudes explanation is implausible here. If we were really dealing with random noise, then the indices would not have so many interpretable causes and consequences. We are left to conclude that large portions of the public have complex and conditional attitudes about the role of debate and compromise in public discourse. In our view, such complexity is unsurprising and perhaps quite appropriate. The folk intuition that much elite political talk is a mix of reasonable debate and demagogic drivel seems entirely sensible. Similarly, some compromises are rightly regarded as reasonable, even noble, forms of mutual accommodation, whereas others are cynical or craven.

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) suggest that most citizens overreact to the negative parts of the mix and discount the positive. Quoting a participant in one of their focus groups as complaining that "Congress bickers all the time between the two parties, and they're always struggling for the power, rather than taking

[43] In a separate regression comparing those who report that they are unwilling to participate to those who report an intent to participate but do not show up, we find that sunshine is not predictive of this difference. This pattern indicates that sunshine is one of the few things that really tracks a differential commitment to the participatory component of our experiments.

[44] Unlike Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002), we included a "neither agree nor disagree" choice in order to get a better handle on possible acquiescence bias. For comparability to their marginals, we can simply calculate agreement and disagreement as a proportion of those not choosing the middle category. The resulting rates of agreement on the original stealth items are very comparable to theirs. Across the four items, the rates are quite close, so sample differences are not likely to be driving our more optimistic findings on the other items and analysis. It is important to note that we used the full sample and full response range to calculate the stealth and sunshine scales.

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care of the issue," they argue that "people's impatience with deliberation and compromise is an important element of the American political system" (137). However, this inference assumes that there is little truth to this person's accusation about the quality of elite political discourse. The implication is that most people typically misperceive genuine deliberation as bickering and reasonable compromise as the result only of power struggles. On the basis of this and other comments in their focus groups, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse infer that "The notion that debating among elected officials may actually be necessitated by their responsibility to represent the interests of diverse constituencies across the country is rejected by most people" (142).

We doubt that most people are so simplistic and reductive in their views. Accordingly, we decided to test this claim more systematically. We asked a standard Likert agree/disagree question based on a close paraphrase of Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's (2002) inference, quoted previously: "One of the main reasons that elected officials have to debate issues is that they are responsible to represent the interests of diverse constituencies across the country."[45] Far from most people rejecting this notion, only a small minority disagrees with it (6%). A large majority (84%) explicitly agrees with it. Most citizens seem quite willing to make room for debate and compromise, although (reasonably, in our view) they do not regard all debate as constructive or sincere, nor all compromise as principled. It is simply inaccurate to characterize all public frustration with partisan politics and interest group liberalism as rooted in naive perfectionism. As we have seen, it is precisely those people who are high on stealth who *want* to deliberate when given a signal that they can actually have both rational debate and republican consultation at the same time. There is no contradiction between passionate support for democratic ideals and despair about the way status quo practices subvert them. Such attitudes can coexist in the same person, be activated by different stimuli, and interact in complex ways. Take, for example, the other pair of questions from the stealth scale:

> *Our government would run better if decisions were left up to successful business people.*
>
> *Our government would run better if decisions were left up to nonelected, independent experts rather than politicians or the people.*

Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) choose a negative frame for their data on these questions. Having found that 32% of citizens agreed with the "business people" statement and 31% with the "experts" statement, they infer from these numbers that the public likes "decision-making structures that are not democratic, and not even republican" (138). Simply turning around the frame provides a more optimistic interpretation though: each statement was rejected by more than two thirds of the public, so it seems gratuitously pessimistic to describe the public as having a broad fondness for nondemocratic decision-making structures.[46]

That said, it does seem troubling that a substantial minority of the public appears so frustrated with the status quo that it would forgo even the minimal autonomy afforded by the institutions of representative democracy. However, in qualitative follow-up interviews on these questions,[47] we found that many respondents who agreed with the "successful business people" item interpreted it as implying that such people would make good *candidates* for public office (e.g., Ross Perot or Michael Bloomberg), rather than directly crafting policy qua business people. On this interpretation, there is nothing at all antidemocratic about such beliefs. Indeed, the other interpretation conjured up images of having energy policy crafted by oil executives—a prospect that was decidedly unpopular, even among those who initially agreed with the item.

Finally, as with the first pair of stealth questions, there was substantially more agreement with the reverse coded statements than with the original ones:

> *In a democracy like ours, there are some important differences between how government should be run and how a business should be managed.* [73% Agree]
>
> *It is important for the people and their elected representatives to have the final say in running government, rather than leaving it up to unelected experts.* [80% Agree]

Whereas significant minorities agreed with the stealth questions, large supermajorities agreed with the corresponding sunshine versions. Unlike the first pair of stealth items, most of the public is not even conflicted here—they simply reject the stealth attitudes and embrace the sunshine ones. We conclude that any picture of the American public as so desperate to avoid politics that they are willing to submit lightly to plutocratic or technocratic rule is deeply misleading.

WHY SOME PEOPLE ARE UNWILLING TO DELIBERATE

None of the foregoing is meant to suggest that the public is unambiguously positive about the prospects of a more deliberative democracy. Critics are surely right that substantial numbers of people do not want to

[45] This question was asked on the 2006 CCES. We also included a randomization that substituted "often disagree about" for "have to debate" in this question. We got similar results across conditions, so the finding is robust regarding the public's attitudes toward both debate and disagreement.

[46] On these two items, we got slightly lower rates of agreement from theirs, partialing out the "Neithers." However, including the "Neithers" category cuts into support rather dramatically with only 18% agreeing outright with the business people item and only 13% with the experts item, suggesting that acquiescence bias was confounding their original response categories. The agreement rates that we report for the corresponding sunshine items include the "Neithers."

[47] The brief qualitative interviews were conducted with a separate convenience sample of people, not the CCES respondents. However, these interviews asked several of the relevant questions from our CCES module.

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TABLE 3. Percent Citing Reasons for Not Wanting to Deliberate (Among Those "Not Too" or "Not at All" Interested in Deliberating)

Do not know enough to participate	42%
Too busy	31%
Dislike conflict	29%
Will not lead to binding decision	26%
Impossible to discuss politics rationally	17%
Political views private	15%
No interest in politics	15%
Everyone already knows what to do	4%

deliberate, even if they overestimate how many. Recall that in our experiment assessing interest in participating in different kinds of deliberative sessions, we found a skew toward substantial interest: *Extremely interested 27%; Quite interested 27%; Somewhat interested 29%; Not too interested 12%; Not at all interested 5%.* Of the 17% who said they were "Not too" or "Not at all" interested, we followed up to find out why they did not want to participate. Critics argue that the main reasons are that most people are uninterested in politics and that they consider deliberation unnecessary because everyone already knows what needs to be done. We did not find much support for these claims. Indeed, as Table 3 shows, they were among the least cited reasons. As argued previously, people seem to regard deliberation as a partial alternative to more standard partisan politics and interest group liberalism. As a result, a general lack of interest in politics as conventionally understood does not seem to drive people's unwillingness to participate in deliberation. Similarly, consistent with our finding that most Americans are well aware that debate and compromise are often necessary, few people find deliberation pointless on the grounds that everyone already knows what needs to be done. On the contrary, the modal response to the question about why respondents did not want to deliberate indicates that many people are quite humble in the face of complex policies and do not believe that they know enough to participate meaningfully.

We do, however, find support for the claim that conflict aversion is a substantial deterrent to people's willingness to deliberate. We found substantial conflict aversion in our sample, with 32% agreeing with their conflict aversion item on the baseline survey and 29% of those not interested in participating in the hypothetical deliberative session citing it as their reason why. That said, many factors go into people's decisions to do things, and it would be easy to overestimate the effect of conflict aversion. For example, 60% of those who were conflict avoidant on the baseline survey were nevertheless willing to deliberate with their member of Congress. Thus, even though some aversion to conflict may be widespread, it is hardly decisive with respect to participating in deliberation.

If we multiply out the rate of people who were not interested in deliberating (17%) with the percentage of those who cite conflict aversion as the reason (29%), then we get a predicted net decrease in willingness to deliberate due to conflict aversion of about 5%. As it happens, this estimate comports well with the behavior we observe in the model predicting willingness to deliberate with one's member of Congress. Holding the other variables constant, moving from one standard deviation above the mean to one standard deviation below the mean on a conflict avoidance index predicts about a 6% decrease in one's willingness to deliberate. This level of suppression indicates that conflict aversion should be regarded as a significant, but not overwhelming, impediment to realizing a deliberative culture.

A NOTE ON THE CONSEQUENCES OF DELIBERATION

Many scholars (Eliasoph 1998; Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002; Mendelberg and Oleske 2000; Mutz 2002; Posner 2003 ; Sanders 1997; Sunstein 2009) worry that pushing deliberation on reluctant citizens, beyond wasting time and resources, will cause actual harm by leading to even greater frustration with and aversion toward politics. Even some scholars who are highly sympathetic to deliberative democracy echo such concerns (e.g., Mansbridge 1980) under some circumstances. This article focuses on who is willing to deliberate, not the content and consequences of deliberation, which we address in concurrent work. Here we cannot fully develop our response to such worries, and for now, we concede that caution in interpreting the policy implications of our results is warranted. But it is worth noting briefly that nothing like these negative consequences came to pass in our field experiments. Quite the contrary, participants almost uniformly described the experience as positive: 95% Agreed (72% Strongly Agreed) that such sessions are "very valuable to our democracy," and 96% Agreed (80% Strongly Agreed) that they would be interested in doing similar online sessions for other issues. Such positive reactions were nearly independent of whether the citizens were of the same party or agreed on the issue with their member of Congress or the majority of the other citizens in the session. Open-ended responses to the sessions were also overwhelmingly positive, with participants remarking on various aspects of the sessions that fit quite well with the hopes and intentions of deliberative democrats. For example:

> It was great to have a member of Congress want to really hear the voices of the constituents.

> I believe we are experiencing the one way our elected representatives can hear our voice and do what we want.

> I thought he really tried to address the issues we were bringing up instead of steering the conversation in any particular direction, which was cool.

> I realized that there are A LOT more sides to this issue than I had originally thought.

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In addition to these positive attitudes, we identified positive causal effects on people's issue-specific political knowledge, attention to politics beyond the issue under discussion, external political efficacy as a result of participation, and their propensity to discuss politics with people in their social network (with many more potential benefits—and harms—of deliberation yet to be tested for).[48] Again, we acknowledge that it is entirely possible that these positive attitudes and effects are peculiar to something about our forums. The preliminary evidence, however, suggests that deliberation did not produce the perverse results critics worried would ensue.

CONCLUSION

Many scholars of political behavior (as well as many nonacademics interested in politics) are inclined to be skeptical of the aspirations of deliberative democrats. The story goes that average citizens hate politics and cannot even get it right when they show up every 4 years (if they show up) to cast a vote on a simple binary choice between candidates who have been bombarding them with information for months. How can anyone seriously expect them to want to participate in more detailed discussion of policy, much less do so competently? The intuition behind such skepticism is reasonable on its face. However, the aspirations of deliberative democrats do not seem so hopelessly utopian when we consider that many citizens are demobilized precisely by the peculiarities of partisan and interest group politics that political sophisticates take as exclusively constitutive of political participation. The motivation and competence to participate are not arranged in such an ordered way as to preclude a greater desire for alternative forms of participation. Our findings suggest that willingness to deliberate is much higher than research in political behavior might suggest, and that those most willing to deliberate are precisely those turned off by standard partisan and interest group politics. If the standard forms of participation can be embedded in a more deliberative framework, then the tension between the two may well lessen. Far from rendering deliberative democratic reforms ridiculous or perverse on their own terms, these findings suggest that the deliberative approach represents opportunities for practical reform quite congruent with the aspirations of normative political theorists and average citizens alike.

[48] For the results on knowledge and attention, see Kevin Esterling, Michael Neblo, and David Lazer, n.d. "Means, Motive, and Opportunity in Becoming Informed about Politics: A Deliberative Field Experiment." For the results on political efficacy, see Kevin Esterling, Michael Neblo, and David Lazer, n.d. "Estimating Treatment Effects in the Presence of Selection on Unobservables: The Generalized Endogenous Treatment Model." For the results on network diffusion, see David Lazer, Anand Sokhey, Michael Neblo, and Kevin Esterling, n.d. "Second-Hand Deliberation: The Network Effects of Political Events." All accessible at http://polisci.osu.edu/faculty/mneblo/papers.htm

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