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Abstract

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Organizing mini-public deliberations: a careful preparation of the background during four deliberative experiments in Geneva

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Abstract. In order to be institutionalized, deliberative democracy needs places were ordinary citizens debate together. Such places should offer the best possible conditions for debating. These conditions are not straightforward to gather. A lot of empirical work has recently been published on this topic. Mini-public deliberations and deliberative polls are at the interface between academic research and public-spiritedness stimulation. Our research team in Geneva organized four corpuses of debate experiments. This paper investigates ways to optimize the experimental conditions in order to achieve two goals: collecting good quality data and opening constructive deliberative spaces. The first part of the paper exposes different mini-public deliberation experiments that were organized and gave rise to academic publications. The second part presents our researches in Geneva with Lucio Baccaro and André Bächtiger. The focus is put on the procedural context and its consequences on the structure and the quality of the deliberations. We present some of our results concerning the intensity of group pressure linked to the experimental conditions, together with some contrasted dynamics with debate visualizations. The third part is a discussion of the optimization of the deliberation process with respect to the expected goals. From standardization of the process for experimental purpose, to the free and comfortable expression of speech and will of the debating citizens, all the details need to be carefully considered and consciously prepared.
Introduction

One of the biggest issues in the institutionalization of deliberative democracy stands in the structure where citizens could debate on political topics. According to Habermas ideal of communicative action, most of us as researchers imagine these citizens chambers as a comfortable place where talking to each other happens in a respectful and egalitarian way. This compromise of rational reasons implies an attitude of respect for others in an “ideal speech situation” (Habermas, 1984). In these conditions information would be optimally exchanged, each participant feeling free to ask questions and express doubts or ambivalence about a statement. Reflection could be mobilized clearly, logically and be as inclusive as possible. The discussion would be characterized by the absence of personal interest and status claiming. In reality, providing a good context to facilitate dialectical exchange of argument is difficult. The risk of making the structure corruptible or weak and usable as simple rubber-stamp chambers cannot be neglected. The process has to be carefully analysed in order to identify all the structural and logistical obstacles with the aim to collect sincere expression of citizens preferences that will be useful for political decisions.

Deliberative democracy is at the centre of many research agendas (Mansbridge, Bohman, et al., 2012, Dryzek, 2005, Bächtiger, Steenbergen, and Tschentscher, 2008, Bächtiger, Niemeyer, et al., 2010, Hobson and Niemeyer, 2011, Steiner, 2012, Gastil, 2008, Melo and Baiocchi, 2006, Rummens, 2012, Kim, Wyatt, and Katz, 1999). A large proportion of the work is at the normative level suggesting direction of research towards how to make deliberative democracy work as well as possible (Niemeyer and Dryzek, 2007, Smith, 2001, Kesim and Ayirtman, 2006, Lee, 2011) or understanding the reasons for which it does not work (Mutz, 2008). The present article focuses on empiric work and especially mini-public deliberation. It will make a point on how to manage these structures where ordinary citizens are mobilized in a political decision process. Based on the experience in the organization of four corpuses of experiment, evolutions in the logistic and structure of the sessions including among others the presence or not of a moderator will also be discussed. The main effects observed by modifying the conditions of moderation include attitude change, group dynamics modifications as well as structure and quality of the discourse.

1 Theoretical context

This section presents a state-of-the-art about citizens deliberation. Numerous experiments exploring different effects and dynamics during citizens deliberations have recently been carried out. We focus here on some chosen work among a large variety of experiments. For a more complete literature review and an overview of the different forms of citizen participation institutions see Carpini, Cook, and Jacobs (2004) and Goodin and Dryzek (2006).

1.1 Mini-public deliberations

Mini-publics deliberations are most of the time organized by academic research teams and sometimes in collaboration with a governmental institution as it was the case for the Europolis project (e.g. Gerber et al., 2011, Fishkin, Luskin, and Siu, 2014). The first deliberative polls - a specific procedure to organize citizen deliberations - were carried out by Luskin and Fiskin (Luskin, Fishkin, and Jowell, 2002). In this experiment, the
participants stayed together for several days to debate a specific issue. Experts - balanced on the different opinions - gave them the information required for understanding what the different stakes in the issue were. After the information sessions, people debated in small discussion groups with a moderator. The personal opinions of participants about the issue were collected at the end of the debate and sometimes also at the beginning. Deliberative polls both stimulate public space by contributing to a more deeply informed opinion and academic research by the data collected during the session. A lot of deliberative polls have been organized in different countries (e.g. Fishkin, He, et al., 2010, Sanders, 2012, Niemeyer, 2004).

Mini-public deliberations do not follow the exact procedure of deliberative polls - which is a copyrighted concept - and generate an important academic literature (e.g. Niemeyer, 2011, Calvert et al., 2014). A part of the work about deliberation is specifically dedicated to political skills and competence of some specific groups with low social status in relation with deliberation (Olsen and Trenz, 2011, Gastil, 2004, Cinalli and O’Flynn, 2013). Effects of the procedure on opinion change are measured before and after deliberation (Barabas, 2004). It is also analyzed in a long-term perspective (Lengel, Gönz, and Vépy-Schlemmer, 2012). A part of the literature is dedicated to the quality of the discourse using the Discourse Quality Index (DQI) (Steenbergen et al., 2003), giving an indication on the justification of argumentation, presence of questions and respect for others (Bächtiger, Niemeyer, et al., 2010, Caluwaerts, 2011, Gerber et al., 2011, Pedrini, 2014). Another part of the work about citizens deliberation concerns the legitimacy of the decision. Which institutional structure can be judged sufficient to assume that the consent of people has been collected? There is a delicate linkage between citizens’ empowerment and efficient institutional structure of power. In this context, citizens’ consultations are used to take the temperature of a specific group on a specific topic to improve the legitimacy of the decision (Goodin and Ratner, 2011, Parkinson, 2003, Van Leeuwen, 2007).

When a group deliberates, we cannot conclude to an equality of status (Himmelroos, 2011), as we will demonstrate below. This evidence has been demonstrated empirically, in particular in the Porto Alegre project (Baicocchi, 2001). Citizen from a popular area of the city had the opportunity to attribute 20% of the municipal budget. Some asymmetries appeared in the repartition of the time of speech. Seniority is important to explain frequencies of time of talk. Women talk less in proportion than men and this effect decreases with seniority.

Jamarillo put to the test Habermas theory about a respectful and inclusive behaviour in the political decision (Habermas, 1984) in organizing deliberation between ex paramilitary and ex-guerrillas in Columbia. Detaching her analysis progressively from the theory, she concluded that it is highly important to open spaces where a rational -by contrast with strategic- dialogue is made possible between factions deeply divided. Period of the debate (beginning, middle, end) and institutional structure influence the way to discuss. She chose not to introduce a moderator -whose interventions would have been able to be only clumsy in this delicate confrontation (Jaramillo and Steiner, 2014).

1.2 Moderation and deliberation

A crucial aspect of deliberative group organisation is the decision of introducing or not a mediator and if so which kind of mediation. Despite the widespread use of facilitators, moderators, mediators, chairpersons, etc. in the empirical research on mini-public or deliberative forums, research on the empirical effects of different types of third-party interventions in deliberations is in its early stages. Landwehr (2014) recently made a
state-of-the-art on the subject and argued that the literature is “surprisingly scarce”. She proposed a theoretical typology of different types of third-party intervention in deliberation, and argues that “different types of forums and different types of conflicts require different types of intermediation”. Notwithstanding this recent attempt of conceptual clarification, most literature on the topic uses terms such as facilitator, moderator, chair, etc. as if they were interchangeable (see Mansbridge, Hartz-Karp, et al., 2006, Trénel, 2009, Moore, 2012). The presence of mediators is often considered as a contextual factor making deliberation possible (Callon, 2009).

The presence of a regulator of discourse produces tensions among the theoretical imperatives of equality of participants, inclusion and absence of constraint (Habermas, 1984). The third-party person is de facto in a position of leadership and power, which violates the principle of equality of the participants. Thus, while the facilitator may on one hand facilitate actors inclusion in the discourse (Trénel, 2009, Gundersen, Byrd, and Prudhomme, 2006, Moore, 2012), he risks on the other hand to distort the communication and hinder its free-flowing character (Moore, 2012, Ryfe, 2006). Concerning the effects of third-party intervention in political deliberation, literature is scarce. We can mention the study of Ryfe (2006), who finds that mediation reduces the presence of story-telling and of Trénel (2009), who proposes an experimental approach distinguishing between basic and advanced facilitation and finds that the latter facilitates the discursive interventions of women and non-white people.

Even within the abundant general literature on mediation (see for example Wall, 1981, Silbey and Merry, 1986, Zartman and Touval, 1985, Kressel and Pruitt, 1989, Carnevale and Pegnetter, 1985, Faget, 1997, Terris and Maoz, 2005, Mrad, Stébé, and Marchal, 2008, Six and Musseau, 2002) the studies analysing the effects of mediation are rare (one exception is Pruitt and Johnson, 1970), as observed by several authors in the field (for ex. Touzard, 1977, Trénel, 2009). That is why it is important to focus on that specific point. There is a part of reflexivity, abstraction and knowledge mobilized in the debate. However we focus here on some contextual and relational factors and their effects on deliberations.

2 Four experiments

Four corpuses of data were successively collected1. The topic of the debate was for all the corpuses the extension of political rights to foreigners. Specifically, it was discussed whether or not foreigners that have been legal resident in the Canton of Geneva for at least eight years should be given rights for voting and eligibility at the cantonal level, as well as at the municipal and federal levels. The first corpus is a pilot study involving only students and composed of 110 participants (Baccaro, Cradden, and Deville, 2011). The second one is composed of 120 citizens of Geneva, recruited by a pooling centre. In these two corpuses, two kinds of experimental conditions are tested: discussion with a ‘moderator’ and ‘free discussion’ (Deville, 2015). The third corpus is constituted of students, with 122 participants and three different kinds of moderation as experimental conditions: Position taken (participants clearly announce their opinion during the first round table), No position taken (participants only present themselves), Reflexion first (participants are not allowed to clearly take position during the first 40 minutes) (Baccaro, Bächiger, and Deville, 2014). The last corpus compares 2 different frames2 democratic and nationalist

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1Swiss National Fund Project “Unpacking deliberation: a field experiment” and “Understanding the Process of Deliberation: The Role of Facilitators, Content Themes, and Discursive Networks”

2With control condition with no frame and both frames for a full experimental design. The frame was a video of a few minutes.
to study the effect of contrasted normative discourses with 160 participants. In this last corpus, moderation has a single modality where participants took position at the outset.

2.1 Context of the debate

Extension of political rights to foreigners is an important issue in the Swiss city of Geneva. Politically, countries and cities are increasingly inhabited by disenfranchised long-term immigrants. In Geneva, where the experiment takes place, 40 percent of the legal residents old enough to vote are excluded from the franchise at the cantonal and federal levels. This population includes second- and third-generation foreigners. With regard to citizenship criteria, Geneva has a restrictive immigration regime: a twelve-year period of residency is required before an application for ordinary naturalization can be made. In addition, the naturalization process takes on average four years from beginning to end. On the other hand, the rights of Geneva citizens are incredibly large, compared to other countries. A characteristic of the Canton of Geneva is to be structured as a direct democracy regime. Citizens have the opportunity to vote on municipal, cantonal and federal elections, both for legislative and executive councils. Additionally they are called several times a year to vote for referendums. These referendums directly concern a text of law or a budget allocated to a major infrastructure project. Political rights also include the popular initiative. With 10'000 signatures required for the cantonal level, every citizen has the right to suggest a text of law. The legislative council has to take into account the initiative and with minimal constraints in the validity procedure has to submit it to the vote of the People. To extend political rights to foreigners implies not only to give them the right to elect people in legislative and executive institutions, but also to give them voice on a large panel of decisions at different degrees of importance depending on the communal, cantonal and federal level.

2.2 Description of the corpuses

The first pilot study, which was run in 2010 is composed of students. We recruited the participants using direct marketing in the University building. Half of the debates were moderated and the other half were free-discussions. At the end of the deliberations, the participants had 15 minutes to fill in a recommendation form. At the time of the experiment, the Geneva Constitutional Assembly was completing its discussions about political rights of foreigners as part of an overall revision of the cantonal constitution. Thus the discussions happened against the backdrop of a real political process. This arguably increased the realism of the experiment. We introduced the recommendation requirement to make the participants discuss with the aim of making a decision as opposed to simply express opinions. Half of the participants were given a questionnaire about their opinion on the extension of the political rights for foreigners before the beginning of the debate. After the debate, they had to fill in a second time the same questionnaire. The other half of the participants were given the questionnaire only at the end of the discussion. The principal conclusion of the study is an absence of anchoring effect for the pre-deliberative questionnaire. No significant difference was found between the two experimental conditions (Baccaro, Cradden, and Deville, 2011).

Excepted the Federal Council which is eligible by the National Assembly.

As the notorious 9th February vote when a popular vote disowns the Schengens negotiations between Switzerland and the European Union, leading Switzerland to a tricky diplomatic position.

This method gave a larger part of people who did not show up (-50%), people who felt obliged to accept did not come.
The experimental condition tested during the pilot and 2011 experiments was the difference between *free-discussion* and *moderator*. Half of the groups participated in a *free-discussion*. It means that the only third person present in the room was a technician looking after audio and video recording, giving the questionnaire and indicating how to fill in the recommendations\(^6\). He did not intervene in the debate. A *moderator* was present for the second half of the 12 groups, in addition to the technician. Both tasks are attention consuming. The role of the moderator is to start the debate by a round table where the participants present themselves, the ID on their badge\(^7\) and their position on the statement that will be debated. The moderator gives the floor to the participants who must indicate with a hand move when they wish to talk. During the pilot study moderators were authorized to summarize the point of view of a participant and ask for reformulation in case of confused interventions. They could also invite people remaining mute to take the floor. This led to a large variety of moderation styles depending on the personality of the different moderators. For the second corpus, for the sake of standardization the moderator limited his interventions to ruling the times of speech, interrupting a too long intervention and avoiding the monopolization of the debate by a strong character. Direct offenses against other participants were also regulated, but remained rare in practice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Corpus</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Participants</th>
<th>Modalities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corpus 1</td>
<td>January 2010</td>
<td>Swiss and foreign students</td>
<td>-Moderator -free discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(pilot)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corpus 2</td>
<td>February 2011</td>
<td>Swiss citizens</td>
<td>-Moderator -free discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corpus 3</td>
<td>March 2012</td>
<td>Swiss and foreign students</td>
<td>1. Position taken 2. No position taken 3. Reflection first</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Experimental corpus

The second corpus in February 2011 was carried out with Geneva’s citizen participants only. The procedure was improved compared to the pilot study. The participants received a standardized welcome address introducing the topic of discussion. They were invited to consider the issue from the point of view of general interest and to make an effort to justify their propositions and remarks. The introductory address also emphasized the importance of respect and mutual listening. The moderator role was standardized. All moderators played an exclusive chairperson role consisting in managing requests for the floor. They had been trained by the research team for this role. All of them were men of comparable age (mid to late 20s). Twelve discussion groups containing between nine and eleven people in total were constituted. Six discussion groups were assigned to each treatment condition (*Moderated, Free-discussion*). All participants were given two questionnaires, one pre- and the other one post-deliberation. The pre-deliberation questionnaire collected some sociodemographic variables and contained questions about general political opinion and about confidence in the political institutions and people in general as well. A part about representations of the foreigners, knowledge\(^8\) and attitude about political rights to

\(^6\)Recommendations were addressed to the Constituent assembly of Geneva for the three first sessions and to the Grand Council of Geneva for the last session, because the Constituant process reached the end.

\(^7\)To match questionnaires.

\(^8\)With a random change in the ranks of the items
foreigners had to be filled at $t_0$ (before the beginning of the deliberation) and $t_1$ (after deliberation). The post-deliberation questionnaire contained some additional questions released from a dogmatism scale (Rokeach, 1960) and also about subjective perception of the debate dynamics. Participants were asked to debate successively one hour about the extension of political rights to foreigners, and a second hour about the extension of political rights to minors (16-17 years old).

The third session took place in the evenings of the 1st and 6th March 2012. A total of 122 students, sixty the 1st March and sixty-two the 6th March, were gathered to deliberate about the political rights of foreigners in Geneva. The majority of participants (56%) were Swiss citizens; the remaining 44% were foreign citizens. Consequently this time, all-affected interests were present in the deliberative process. While the participants were filling in a baseline questionnaire they were randomly assigned to one of the three discussion modalities: (1) Position taken; (2) No position taken; and (3) Reflection first (Baccaro, Bächtiger, and Deville, 2014). Participants discussed for approximately 75 minutes. The protocol was otherwise the same as in the precedent corpus and the questionnaire was only marginally amended.

A fourth and last study has been carried out the 26th January and the 2nd February 2013. The goal was here to test the effect of different frames, introduced during the first minutes of the deliberation. A video was shown to the participants prior to the debate and presented an inclusive argument either in favour of the extension of political rights to foreigners or a nationalist argument against it. Some of the groups saw one of these two videos, some others saw both and some did not see any. In order to make the experimental process as clean as possible all the logistic around the experiment had been standardized as much as possible. Moderation was standardized on the position taken condition. The aim was to minimize group effects in order to identify cognitive work during debate. The 160 participants were recruited by a pooling centre among the residents of Geneva. 50% of them were Swiss and the other 50% were foreigners. 40 participants were assigned to each condition (Table 1). From the 2011 experiment, all the debates were recorded in both audio and video format. We experienced some data loss during the pilot study after recording only one audio track. For this last corpus the debates lasted one hour and a half. 24 hours of debate were recorded in duplicate.

3 Results

3.1 Contrasted group dynamics

Changing the moderation conditions leads to variations in the speech act duration, discourse quality (presence of justified arguments$^{10}$) and quantity of conceptual content$^{11}$. The results from the corpus of February 2011 are summarized in Table 2. In free-discussion condition interventions are shorter (-19 sec) and less justified arguments are present compared to the moderated condition (-0.11 pt)$^{12}$.

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$^9$A critical amount of participants to obtain significant statistical effects.
$^{10}$Here computed as presence of justified arguments. Appendix 'Codebook DQI'.
$^{11}$Obtained by a thematic content analysis (Krippendorff, 2012) - Appendix 'Content thematic coding'.
$^{12}$Free-discussion double the time of retranscription and coding.
Table 2: Comparision free-discussion and moderation *p<0.05 ***p<0.001

Relational dynamics are rendered by a network analysis (Wasserman and Faust, 1994) applied to the political debate. It was used in different works about political debate (Leifeld and Schneider, 2012, Roduit, 2007) to link between thematic and actors, and also for highlighting the personal network of actors (Cinalli and O’Flynn, 2013, Gastil, Black, and Moscovitz, 2008). In our case, the network measure is directly applied on the transcript to make the group dynamic appear. It notifies every reference (approval, disapproval and neutral references) made to another participant.  

A similar measure was used by Landry (2007) in social psychology aggregating approval and disapproval as a leadership measure. Appendix ‘Codebook DQI’
The graphs in figure 1 and 2 are rendered using the 'debate' package (Rousseaux, Deville, and Baccaro, 2014) specially designed for political discourse synthesis. Figures 1 and 2 have been selected out of twelve discussion groups to show contrasted configurations. Figure 1 presents moderated groups of discussion in the corpus of February 2011 with Geneva citizens. Figure 1(a) shows a well-balanced repartition of recognition inside the discussion group. Each participant receives or gives at least two links. Five people have a comparable centrality, while three are more peripheral. Figure 1(b) depicts a situation very centralized around the only person strongly against the extension of political rights to foreigners. The only man of the group, who has a strong neutral link with her, spends considerable time asking her questions in order to understand her mind. Even if this network is visually strongly centralized it does not mean an absence of reciprocity: most of the links are given in return. In the free-discussion groups, without big difference compared to the moderated groups we can find the same two kinds of contrasted configurations (Figure 2). Figure 2(a) is balanced: almost all the participants have at least been approved once. It is noticeable that an isolated participant was never mentioned and do not mention anybody. When the group becomes larger, some people do not talk at all during the debate. Figure 2(b) is strongly centralized around one participant. By contrast with the centralized situation shown in Figure 1(b) we have here a case with much less reciprocity. This central participant used a strong strategic discourse in order to rally other participants to his views. His strategy consisted in approving other participants for no particular reason, even when expressing opposite opinion or racist and violent discourse. He therefore approved a lot but was not approved back in reciprocity. With this consistent attitude he managed to obtain a strong leadership in the group.

3.2 Three different kinds of moderation

During the third session we tested different conditions of moderation. The results significantly identify a mechanism of conformism for the condition No position taken. This effect is observed for the two other conditions. The average participant in this procedural condition becomes less favourable for granting political rights to foreigners by 1.4 points on a 0-10 scale. The magnitude of the average change as a percentage of the group mean at t0 is almost -24 per cent, which is non-negligible. The Position taken and Reflection first modalities seem to have no significant effect on individual opinion on average. In addition, while participants in the Position taken and Reflection first conditions register a significant learning effect, those in the 'No position taken' condition do not (Baccaro, Bächtinger, and Deville, 2014).

4 Discussion

The presented results include several main points that deserve to be developed. First, no matter the context and the modality of moderation, a deliberation between people that do not know each other prior to the discussion makes quickly appear some inequalities in the group. Mini-public deliberation, even if we try to offer a good context, is not a situation of perfect equality as required by the Habermas theory. By comparing the free discussion and moderator conditions, we can nevertheless mention a tendency of moderation condition that can avoid a situation of monopolization of talk by a solely dominant actor. In most of the cases, in the presence of a moderator, 3-4 actors appear

14 Appendix 'Packages spnet and debate'
to be more central than the others. In all groups, some people remain mute or speak only once during the session. It does not mean the process does not worth, it just indicates that people are not equal in there capacities to talk about a political topic in a group of unknown people\(^{15}\). Small changes in moderation modalities have consequences on opinion after deliberation. A first *tour de table* during which participants express their preferences on the topic lowers the group pressure and conformism effects. Without expressing their preference at the beginning, people tend to regress on the median opinion during the deliberation. This effect is not present when participants are asked not to take a stance during the first 40 first minutes of the discussion. We can conclude from this study that little details in the procedure make important changes in participant preferences.

It should be emphasized not to underestimate the difficulty to take part in the process and debating about policies with unknown people. Only few people contacted by telephone during the recruitment phases accepted to take part in the experiment (10%), and had a high rate of not showing-up participants (30%) the day of the experiment. However no systematic bias on socioeconomic variables and opinion were identified to explain this unannounced cancellation. This action of standing at the same table with people who potentially do not have much in common requests energy for its implementation but is perhaps the most important aspect to stimulate democracy.

The debate is most of the time experienced as positive by the participants. We can mention some cases, which all happened in *free discussion* groups, where things went wrong. The first case was during the pilot study when a student was defeated by the entire group and left the room very angry. A second case worth mention happened during a re-interview one year after the 2011 experiment. During the corpus of February 2011 a woman expressed a strong dissatisfaction for the organization. She reproached to have been let alone with unknown participants in a room with too few instructions. She was also afraid of the use and confidentiality of the data. This question of confidentiality always has to be assured to the participants. When coming to political opinion, it is difficult to feel free to express ones views. Long history of power coercion is a strong obstacle to the expression of free will. During this wave of re-interview, other participants were quite positive and willingly accepted to be re-interviewed (80\(^{16}\)). This good memory of the event seems fundamental to us, as debating about policies is not as innocent as it can seem at the first glance: it deeply engages the participant in the task.

**Conclusion**

The experience in the organization of these four experiments leads us to draw two important conclusions: (1) small group deliberation is a configuration of status inequality, as rendered in debate graphs (2) a moderator is beneficial for the experiment, avoiding extreme participants dissatisfaction and balancing monopolistic strategic talk. In order to collect high quality data out of situations that will be compatible with an academic analysis, all the details need to be thought about and the procedures have to be standardized as much as possible. This cannot guarantee ideal conditions of deliberation, but it will allow understanding causal connections in a transparent procedure. The confrontation of opinion is an important part of the process independently of the final conclusion in itself. It is not possible to create a context which guarantees ideal conditions of deliberation in the Habermas definition, but we can learn from empiric and suggest procedures that lower psycho-social bias linked to group dynamic. These bias are desirable to be minimized in

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\(^{15}\)And also are unequally motivated to talk on the topic in itself.

\(^{16}\)Almost no refusal when being able to join at the right number, one participant was deceased.
order to guaranty a true consent of the participant and obtain from the deliberative pro-
cedure not only his alignment on - even if implicit - group pressures. Like every political
institution, deliberative democracy can be corrupted. To make it happen efficiently, it
has to be constructed with a policy of transparency.

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ations.

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APPENDIX

Codebook DQI

Type of speech
(0) The participant do not give an opinion or do a proposition
(1) The participant gives an opinion or do a proposition

\textit{jus\_lev Justification}

(. ) Non coded (type\_sp = 0)
(1) No justification
(2) A justification. the participant give a reason Y why X should or shouldn’t be accepted
(3) A justification with a link: a reason Y is given why X souhld or shouldn’t be accepted and a link Z is done between X and Y
(4) Two justifications or more with an explicite link for each.

\textit{App\_desap}

(1) The participant approves an intervention or a participant
(0) The participant makes a neutral reference to an intervention or a participant
(-1) The participant disapprove an intervention or a participant

\textbf{Approval}

d’accord / tout à fait / c’est vrai (pas forcément c’est vrai que...) / je vous rejoins / je partage le fait que / etc.

\textbf{Neutral references}

Intéressant / Important / Central / Crucial/ Oui...mais

\textbf{Disapproval}

Au contraire / Pas d’accord / C’est faux / C’est pas vrai et c’est pas vrai que

\textbf{Reference to the participant}

Nom / Prénom / Monsieur / Madame etc. / Vous / On (si en lien avec le groupe)

\textbf{Nom\_ap\_desap}

Name of the participant to whom it was made a reference.
Content thematic coding

CEN: Caractérisation négative de l’étranger / Negative frame on foreigners
Stereotypic negative frame around “foreigner” category
“Moi-même je suis partie 17 ans en dehors de Genève et quand je suis revenue le choc, la gare, les rues, on se croirait plus en Suisse...”

CEP: Caractérisation positive de l’étranger / Positive frame on foreigners
Stereotypic positive frame around “foreigner” category
“Des étrangers qui sont venus en Suisse qui ont apporté à l’évolution économique ou politique du pays.”

CP: Compétence politique / Political skills
Vote complexity / understanding of the topics / learnig / debates’ complexity / reference to political skill
“Beaucoup de gens ne savent pas pourquoi ils vont voter et ne sont pas au courant du tout.”

F: Fermeture / Closseness
Negativ stereotyping about Switzerland: swiss people as closeminded and conservative.
“Les Suisses des fois ils se referment parce que ils ont peur peut-être que leur système tremble.”

IA: Principe des intérêts affectés / Affected interests principles
Reference to the principle: it should be allowed to have voice on decisions foreigners are implied in.
“Le suffrage universel veut que ceux qui participent à l’effort d’une communauté, qui sont soumis à ses règles, puissent se prononcer sur les affaires politiques de cette communauté.”

ID: Identité / Identity
Reference to people’s identity (indifferently swiss or foreigner).
“L’intégration des étrangers dans notre société présuppose et vise l’existence d’une identité nationale.”
(also coded “integration”)

IN: Intégration / Integration
Reference to integration: process and reason of being.
“Ca pourrait contribuer considérablement en Suisse pour une meilleure intégration des étrangers.”
“On risque de biaiser le principe-même de démocratie.”

“Donc cette suspicion elle est toujours là : est-ce qu’ils vont vraiment bien voter ?”

“De quoi parle-t-on alors ? D’accorder aux étrangers des droits qu’ils ne réclament pas.”

“Que les étrangers de notre canton participent effectivement à la politique de proximité.”

“Le diplomate n’aura pas les droits politiques, car sa fonction est de représenter un autre pays.”
Vote and eligibility as inseparable
“Les droits de vote et d’éligibilité sont intrinsèquement liés. Ce sont deux choses qui vont ensemble.”
R packages ‘spnet’ and ‘debate’

To be able to synthetise political debate dynamics, we needed some software developments. This developments have been done in order to make synthesis of the debates, keeping as many informations as possible on the graphs, as proposed in the packages `spnet` and `debate`. This method differs from the use of regression models by privileging a visual representation of the debate. Because manual coding of content is time-consuming, we have also done developments of automatic coding, in the `debate` R package.

To easily track over time how relational dynamics evolve, we need parliament members to have a fixed position within the network. Furthermore, it is important for facilitating the reading of relational dynamics to render political affiliation by placing parliament members on their respective seat of the assembly room. Although several softwares exist for rendering maps, and several others for rendering networks, it did not exist efficient tools, freely available, providing methods for rendering both dimensions simultaneously. Based on the ‘sp’ package (Bivand, Pebesma, and Gomez-Rubio, 2013), which provides efficient classes for storing spatial data and methods for handling and rendering them, the ‘spnet’ package aims at facilitating the rendering of social networks on maps. For instance, the package allows to create/manipulate maps and networks data, matching coordinates on the map with network nodes, plotting several networks, efficiently customizing the graph to add colors, symbols, set arrow heads, deal with opacity of links. The package is especially designed for monitoring time-varying networks to observe how connections and flows evolve over time. The package is currently available on the CRAN. This public and free release of our tool gives the possibility to the scientific community to reproduce our methodology.

The next step was to automatize the coding procedure. Our R package `debate` is a tool to modelize political debate. It offers the possibility to extract content of the debate in a semi-automatic procedure. From a pdf file, the package extracts text and composes a database making possible to run further statistical analysis in a flexible way. The user can define a dictionary for the automatic content analysis. A separated syntax defines the ‘stop’ markers to identify begining and end of each speech act. The database shows debate’s content as an overall measure, by MP or by other covariables easy to define from this step.