
The Emancipatory Effect of Deliberation: Empirical Lessons from Mini-Publics

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Simon Niemeyer¹

Abstract

This article investigates the prospects of deliberative democracy through the analysis of small-scale deliberative events, or mini-publics, using empirical methods to understand the process of preference transformation. Evidence from two case studies suggests that deliberation corrects preexisting distortions of public will caused by either active manipulation or passive overemphasis on symbolically potent issues. Deliberation corrected these distortions by reconnecting participants' expressed preferences to their underlying "will" as well as shaping a shared understanding of the issue. The article concludes by using these insights to suggest ways that mini-public deliberation might be articulated to the broader public sphere so that the benefits might be scaled up. That mini-public deliberation does not so much change individual subjectivity as reconnect it to the expression of will suggests that scaling up the transformative effects should be possible so long as this involves communicating in the form of reasons rather than preferred outcome alone.

Keywords

deliberative democracy, public will, preference transformation, mini-publics, symbolic politics

Much of the theory of deliberative democracy is concerned with macro-level processes of public sphere transformation, but most of the evidence available to us about deliberation comes from deliberative mini-publics. There are good reasons for this: achieving ideal deliberation is much simpler on a small scale. Innovative "deliberative" forums, such as deliberative polls, citizens' juries, and consensus conferences in most cases

¹The Australian National University, Canberra ACT, Australia

Corresponding Author:

Simon Niemeyer, Centre for Deliberative Global Governance, Research School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University, Canberra ACT, 0200, Australia
Email: simon.niemeyer@anu.edu.au

precede the deliberative turn in political theory. Yet despite this promising history of practice in mini-publics, a question mark remains as to exactly how the theoretical promise of deliberative democracy can be achieved on a wider scale, with issues of institutional design largely unanswered.¹

Although the Habermasian tradition of deliberative democracy began with concern about the corruption of the public sphere,² the grander claims of deliberative theory have largely been tested using deliberative mini-publics. While this has been largely positive, providing an important touchstone for deliberative democracy, the development has thus far had relatively little impact on wider political discourse or political action. Moreover, the conclusions drawn from observation of mini-publics on the question of whether Habermasian conceptions of deliberation can actually be achieved is mixed. This is due, at least partly, to the way deliberation has been implemented and the methods used to assess it. Another part of the problem also lies in the narrow construction of what ideal deliberation looks like, which is much contested within the field of deliberative democracy.³ Combined with assertions about the difficulties in scaling up deliberation, this has led to somewhat of a retreat from the pursuit of deliberative democracy as a public-sphere-wide enterprise to the promotion of deliberative mini-publics and online forums as a means for extending deliberation to a wider audience; both approaches have significant limitations.⁴

Here I would like to challenge this retreat. I will do so in three steps. The first step is to establish evaluative standards for a successful deliberative process. To date, these standards are often linked to procedural norms or outcomes in the form of the much-criticized Habermasian ideal of “complete rational consensus.” Although I recognize procedural legitimacy as an important foundation of deliberative theory, I will focus on the outcomes that deliberation ought to produce.

Establishing standards for a successful deliberative process involves identifying the normative benefits of deliberation and developing a better understanding of what it actually “does,” for which theoretical inference is instructive but not conclusive. It has been argued that the “coming of age” of deliberative democracy demands the interplay of theoretical insight and empirical investigation.⁵ Such interplay requires that we first establish the conceptual criteria for what should be considered to be authentic deliberation so that we can recognize when and how it has occurred.

The next task is to develop the evaluative criteria and methodology for assessing deliberation. The methodological approach involves exploring changes to the underlying reasoning regarding the issue at hand—which is operationalized using a methodology to identify the relevant discourses in play as part of an overall subjectivity—and the impact of these changes on expressed preferences. The results of the analysis can be used to apply evaluative standards that have been developed from the interplay of theory and empirical observation—intersubjective consistency and metaconsensus⁶—as well as the content of discourses to explore the extent to which ideal deliberation might have been achieved. The discourses themselves are identified using Q methodology.⁷ These discourses (or factors, to use the terminology of Q methodology) are distinguished by the extent to which they reflect mutually recognized interests, or are an artifact of

manipulation of public will to achieve certain predefined ends under mechanisms that are well described by symbolic politics.⁸

As a second step I will analyze two case studies that demonstrate how the expressed public will is distorted by the power of symbolic issues that dominate the news media. Both case studies involve a predeliberative scenario that can be characterized in slightly different ways by symbolic politics. In the first case study, elites actively promoted symbolic issues to achieve certain predefined ends. In the second case study, there was no intentional manipulation, but the operation of what Chambers refers to as “plebiscitary rhetoric” communicated symbolic messages, particularly through news media.⁹ Both examples had a distortive effect on individual choices (and thus on the public will) such that before deliberation citizens’ expressed preferences tended not to properly reflect the ends that they would have liked to achieve.

Analysis of the deliberative case studies reveals an emancipatory mechanism, whereby participants’ stated preferences more closely reflected their underlying will (that is, their subjectivity).¹⁰ To demonstrate this transformation, I examine both participants’ expressed preferences and their subjective desires. I combine both sets of data to examine intersubjective consistency and the extent to which participants shared a kind of metaconsensus in the form of collective reasoning. Finally, I explore the implications of the findings for achieving deliberative democracy in the wider public sphere.

Revisiting Deliberative Ideals

Deliberative democracy stresses broad-scale participation in political decision-making and the activation of “citizenship” in determining outcomes. Ideally speaking, citizens are supposed to be willing to engage in “communicatively rational” discourse, free of strategic manipulation.¹¹ For the individuals involved, this process requires an open mind, a spirit of reciprocity, and acceptance of the validity of others’ arguments.¹² Normative virtues ascribed to deliberation include the role of civic spiritedness, rather than narrow self-interest, in determining outcomes.¹³

One type of claim relating to the epistemic superiority of deliberative outcomes focuses upon the potential for group deliberation to overcome the problem of bounded rationality, where complexity of problems outweighs the cognitive capacities of the ordinary citizen.¹⁴ Group deliberation reduces the “cost” of acquiring information through information pooling¹⁵—or combining cognitive powers—in much the same way as multiple processors working in a series increases computing power.¹⁶ However, this analogy is based on a rigid notion of rationality that implies that there is a definitively “right” answer, independent of the normative dimension, which can be achieved through rational consensus.

The rational consensus ideal is widely criticized and ultimately unhelpful to deliberative theory. Indeed, in recent years some advocates of deliberative democracy have moved toward more empirically grounded accounts of deliberation.¹⁷ Dryzek and Niemeyer have argued for a more relaxed version of consensus—in the form of metaconsensus—in which intersubjective deliberation produces a situation involving

common agreement on important issue dimensions and legitimate possible outcomes, without necessarily agreeing on the exact outcome.¹⁸ More recently, I have added to metaconsensus the related concept of intersubjective consistency as an ideal deliberative end.¹⁹ Intersubjective consistency occurs when individuals agree on the way in which reasons inform preferences; or, more precisely, when there is a consistent relationship between subjectivity and expressed preferences. I have argued elsewhere that intersubjective consistency is indicative of individuals not merely holding preferences, but understanding *why* they hold these preferences.²⁰

Intersubjective consistency, which I will expand on below, tends to only emerge in circumstances where individuals are attentive to all the relevant reasons for and against an issue (which is a result of achieving metaconsensus).

This deliberative ideal contrasts dramatically with symbolic politics as described by Edelman.²¹ Symbolic politics begins with elites strategically using arguments that invoke particular symbols to manipulate outcomes in a public sphere that is dominated by political spin doctoring. Manipulation occurs in ostensibly democratic political systems where organized interests need at least tacit public approval to gain political legitimacy. Such manipulation is possible partly because of the disparity between the motivations of actors in the political sphere and the relative distance from the issues of citizens. Interests are motivated to act in the political sphere in order to secure particular outcomes.

Zaller rightly points out that symbolic manipulation—which he compares to the framing effect on choices—is not necessarily indicative of a hopelessly debased system of democracy prone to systematic manipulation.²² It is only possible because those not directly affected by the issue have a relatively small incentive to consider it in any depth. Citizens operate as spectators to the parade of symbols on the political stage, unable or unwilling to check political claims against reality.²³ Consequently, citizens “have unstable and inconsistent [policy] preferences, not firm ideological commitments that would resist the blandishments of elites.”²⁴ However, this is not to say that predeliberative citizens have no interest in issues whatsoever.²⁵ The anxiety citizens hold about a “threatening and complex world” can make them susceptible to the parading of political symbols that reduce cognitive dissonance.²⁶

As I will demonstrate using two contrasting case studies, deployment of symbols is not always an attempt to strategically manipulate. And not all symbols are necessarily manipulative. Edelman identifies two types of symbols: referential and condensation. Referential symbols are “economical ways of referring to objective elements in objects or situations” that help with logic and are widely, if not universally understood—such as numbers and statistics.²⁷ Condensation symbols, by contrast, have an emotional content and can include “a name, word, phrase, or maxim which stirs vivid impressions involving the listener’s most basic values.”²⁸ It is this latter form of symbol that has a distorting potential, because of diminished possibility of reality check against the convictions that can be invoked when they are entreated.

Although Edelman focuses on symbolic politics as a method of overt political manipulation through the invocation of condensation symbols, he does recognize the

potential for relatively autonomous processes of symbolic distortion, for example where the public projects its “psychic needs” as it makes demands of politicians and consumes sensationalized media reporting.²⁹ When I refer to symbolic politics, I include all processes involving symbols that distort the public will, whether or not that distortion is intended.

The actual motivation that drives the use of symbols can vary from outright manipulation to simply helping to make a point. Some deliberative democrats argue that symbols, deployed as rhetorical devices, should be permissible under deliberative ideals.³⁰ Referential symbols are more obviously acceptable than condensation symbols, but as Dryzek notes, citing the example of Martin Luther King Jr., the use of emotive language can also lead individuals to question their own positions, promoting greater reflexivity.³¹ For the purposes of the argument in this article, the important side of the symbolic political equation is not the intention behind the use of symbols, but the outcome that results from their deployment—the extent to which it results in a distorted public will. As I will demonstrate, such distortion is much more likely to occur in a nondeliberative public sphere.

This article argues that if symbolic politics is the disease, deliberation is the cure. Deliberation has an emancipatory effect, permitting citizens to develop a shared logic in relation to the issue at hand. It buffers against distortion by symbolic lines of argument because it makes salient the whole range of relevant arguments that are identified as part of a resulting metaconsensus. This shared logic reflects a more holistic view of the issue at hand—one that is more resilient to the vagaries of symbolic framing. I will demonstrate this effect using a number of related methods, which are outlined below.

Assessing Deliberative Outcomes

Investigating the impact of participation in deliberative mini-publics—which includes questioning whether the ideals described above have been achieved—involves utilizing a number of related methodologies that connect to a conceptualization of how the public will is formed and reformed. Figure 1 outlines this conceptualization, which also shows the corresponding methodologies at the bottom.

The left-hand side of Figure 1 represents subjectivity, which is understood in its broadest sense as the way in which the political issue at hand is understood within the public sphere. This includes all the assumptions, judgments, contentions, dispositions and capabilities that come into play on the issue. In most cases this involves linguistic representations, but it also potentially involves a wide array of sensory inputs: imagery, sound, etc. Together these inputs constitute the public sphere: a complex system, where contentions and ideas are formed and interact, represented in the figure by the intersecting ripples.

One account of the way this complexity is dealt with can be found in “discursive psychology.” Understandings of the issue at hand can be seen through the lens of discourses.³² These discourses are defined as a “shared set of capabilities,” which permit the complex arrange of discursive inputs into coherent wholes—sometimes referred to

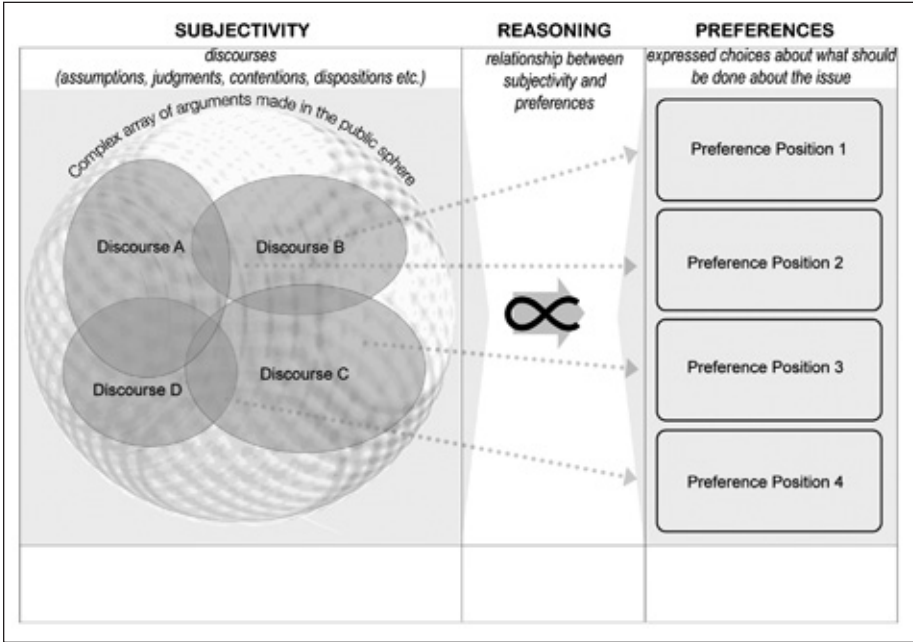


Figure 1. Conceptual model

as “story lines.”³³ Discourses help with understanding in a parallel fashion to symbols described earlier; they assist cognition insofar as they enable the mind to process sensory inputs into coherent accounts that can be shared in an intersubjective fashion.³⁴ They are meaningful and replicable; they can be communicated and understood. But it is not the case that the subjectivity of a given individual can be accounted for by a single discourse, as “most of us will fashion a complex subjectivity from participation in many discourses” as part of a multiple self.³⁵

The analogy between symbols and discourses extends to different types of discourse. Referential symbols that are universally understood and aid comprehension of the world can be compared to discourses that relate to generalizable interests. All—or most—participants agree on the content of such discourses. “Protecting the environment is important” is an example of such a statement; it is universally understood, and it does not appeal to particularized interests. By contrast, symbolic discourses, as the term is used here, are related to condensation symbols, which have a strong emotional content that supports particularized interests to the exclusion of others. Their content may include claims that are putatively generalizable, but they are deployed strategically in order to distort ideal communication and achieve predefined outcomes. For example, environmentalists might appeal to a form of conservation discourse that is emotively focused on large charismatic animals, such as whales, in order to elicit support at the expense of equally pressing or more substantive concerns.

Where discourses comprise the subjective component of the conceptual model in Figure 1, the volitional component on the right-hand side relates to the actual choices we make, which are comprised of preferences. This approach does not ascribe to any particular conception of what is meant by a preference. It is simply an expression of choice that relates to an issue at hand, which leads to some course of action (usually in the form of a policy, in the case of mini-publics).

The middle column of the model represents the relationship between subjectivity and preferences under the heading “reasoning.” This involves a meta form of reasoning regarding the way in which discourses—which also embody reasons—map onto preferences. The mechanism is similar to that described by value-focused preferences; it works along the lines of “this is what I want and this is what I believe is the best approach to achieving it.”³⁶ In this case, the mechanism works more along the lines of “this is how I see the world (issue at hand) and this is what I believe is the best approach for getting it to where I want it to be.”

Metaconsensus occurs to the extent that there is agreement within a group on the nature of the world (or more precisely, the issue at hand) and the nature of the choices that can be made.³⁷ It also covers agreement on how subjectivity ought to map onto preferences. There are two different, but related, forms of this relationship. First, there is a relationship between particular discourses and particular preference positions. For example, if I subscribe to a “pro-life” discourse in relation to abortion, I might tend to be against legalization of the practice. The dashed arrows in the figure represent this relationship—which is never predetermined, but is discovered via observation and analysis. The second form of relationship, intersubjective consistency, is more relevant to the analysis that follows in this article. It involves an overall correlation between subjectivity and preferences relationship across the whole range of discourse elements and preferences, and is represented by the large arrow and proportional sign. The nature of the agreement can be characterized in the form of “we agree on the nature of the issue and the legitimacy of the relevant issue (discourse) components, even though we may not agree on the veracity of different claims; and we agree on how positions in relation to those claims map onto preferences regarding the outcomes that we would like to achieve.” In other words, we may not share our positions, but we do share the logic by which our subjective positions translate into preferences.

Intersubjective consistency is indicative of metaconsensus among the group to the extent that shared logic is only possible if agreement exists on what the important issues are and how beliefs about these issues translate into relevant courses of action—even if there is not actual consensus in relation to the preferred outcome.³⁸ This metaconsensus is indicative of authentic group deliberation, as opposed to outcomes such as group-think or group polarization.³⁹ This is because consistency must be achieved across the whole range of subjectivity (measured in the form of responses to Q statements, see below) and preference options, or that subset of options that form the group metaconsensus. This process of reasoning is a fundamentally discursive property.⁴⁰ It requires that all individuals recognize and evaluate a wide variety of relevant issues rather than intuitive guessing, heuristics that reinforce preexisting biases, or the privileging of

particularized interests that are made salient by the emotional appeal of their symbolic content.

Overall, the model describes a situation where the public will is formed discursively. Discourses frame the understanding of the issue, and preferences follow. To understand the difference between predeliberative and deliberative will-formation, the actual content of these discourses—and the relationship between them and preferences—needs to be understood pre- and postdeliberation. The analysis as a whole helps to determine whether a particular discourse is generalizable or symbolic and distorting. Understanding the content of the discourse by itself is not enough to establish its symbolic nature or otherwise—although it does provide a clue, as in the whale conservation example. It is necessary to examine changes to the impact of the discourse, as well as its role in preference formation and how this changes postdeliberation. The methods used to identify these discourses, obtain preferences, and establish the relationship between them are outlined below.

Empirical Methods: Identifying Discourses

The identification of discourses and exploration of subjectivity utilizes Q methodology, which is an established approach for exploring political behavior.⁴¹ The methodology involves drawing a sample of statements relevant to the issue or phenomenon under study to implement as a “Q sort.” In most cases, statements are drawn from actual dialogue across a wide range of sources—interviews, mass media, parliamentary records, and so on. A representative sample of statements is drawn from this larger pool to comprise the Q statement set, usually numbering between forty and sixty statements.

Obtaining the actual data in the form of a Q sort from participants’ pre- and postdeliberation involves “sorting” the set of statements along a scale (in this case from “most agree” to “most disagree”) using a quota system, where participants distribute (rank) statements along a predetermined grid. For the studies reported in this article there were eleven columns representing relative level of agreement. The shape of the grid approximates a normal distribution; there are a smaller number of statements that could be allocated in the “most agree” and “most disagree” columns, and the greatest number of statements could be allocated to the middle column.⁴² The resulting data comprises an array of responses to the statements, which for the examples cited below range between 5 for most-agree statements to -5 for most-disagree.

The Q sorts are then analyzed using inverted factor analysis to produce the basic materials for the interpretation of discourses. The factor analysis itself involves using individuals as variables and the statements as the population.⁴³ Usually, a relatively small number of discourses (less than six) are identified, depending on the amount of variation among individual Q sorts, reflecting the number of coherent discourses that exist in relation to the issue.⁴⁴

The raw materials used to interpret each discourse comprise an array of factor scores, which represent the typical response to each of the statements under that discourse. These “typical” responses to the statements are interpreted together to build an overall

picture of what that discourse represents. The extent to which individuals concur with a particular discourse is indicated by their factor loading, which is analogous to a correlation coefficient where a “1” denotes complete agreement and a “-1” complete disagreement with a particular discourse.

Preference Ranking

The preference option survey is implemented pre- and postdeliberation at the same time as the Q sorts. The preference options involve policy choices regarding what should be done about the issue being deliberated. Ideally, the choices will relate to actions that would be implemented (by a decision maker). In some cases, as for the Fremantle Bridge case study below, the task of the deliberative forum is to deliberate prior to repeating a “voting” exercise that involves ranking the preferred options—usually between four and nine of them—using a simple preference ordering from “most preferred” (which is given a ranking of “1”) through to “least preferred.” It is the results of these voting exercises that are used to analyze preferences. Where this is not the case, for example in citizens’ juries such as the Bloomfield Track example below, which usually produce a series of recommendations, a set of relevant policy options is developed and implemented as separate pre- and postdeliberation surveys, the latter of which is independent of—but related to—the outcome of deliberation.

Analyzing “Reasoning”: The Relationship between Subjectivity and Preference

The main approach for exploring the relationship between subjectivity and preference is that of intersubjective consistency. Intersubjective consistency is obtained by using the raw data (Q sorts and policy preference rankings) and correlating pairs of individuals to examine the degree of agreement at the subjective level, relating to the nature of the issue, and at the preference level, relating to the preferred policy outcome. Intersubjective consistency is achieved when individuals who agree on the subjective level also agree on preferred policy outcomes, and visa versa. If all possible combinations of pairs are plotted, with subjective agreement on the *x*-axis and preference agreement on the *y*-axis, the extent of consistency is observed by the relationship between the two types of agreement in the form of a positively sloped regression.

Interpreting Results

Together, the different forms of data and analyses described above provide clues about how well the public will is being expressed. The presence of symbolic discourses will tend to have a distorting effect, encouraging particularized thinking, which works against achieving metaconsensus and reduces the observable level of intersubjective consistency. But it is only really possible to identify the symbolic effect once it has been overcome by deliberation. Thus, I might suspect a conservation discourse that

emphasizes whales as potentially symbolic, but I can only confirm this to be the case *if* authentic deliberation has established a metaconsensus that either dissipates this particularized concern or relegates it among a wider range of concerns, which were pre-deliberatively crowded out by the distortion of will formation by its symbolic potency. This type of symbolic discourse, if it is symbolic, should decline during deliberation because it relies on forgoing the process of checking claims, symbolic or otherwise, against other potential claims—a process that characterizes authentic deliberation—and the realities that symbols are supposed to represent. By contrast, a discourse that embodies generalizable interests will tend to survive deliberation because, by definition, it contains claims that should withstand deliberative scrutiny as being acceptable to all. Even if not all individuals wholeheartedly subscribe to the content of a discourse that embodies generalizable interests, they will not be emphatically against it. The existence of such a discourse is fully compatible with the group metaconsensus because all individuals accept the legitimacy of its claims.

It is important to note that not all discourses can be neatly categorized as symbolic or generalizable. Generalizable interests as described by Dryzek are theoretically neat, but empirically messy. A common-good argument is generalizable—for example, universal access to food and shelter—but such claims can also be discursively combined with other arguments or deployed strategically and/or co-opted by a symbolic claim; for example, a generalizable concern for the environment can be distorted by a particularized and symbolic concern about whales. And some claims may be neither generalizable nor symbolic, such as a pragmatic call for more evidence regarding the role of whales in ecosystems. In the examples that follow, the discourses tend to operate along a continuum between symbolic and generalizable, depending on their content. But we are most interested in those discourses that can be most strongly characterized as generalizable or symbolic. As will be seen, these types of discourses play the greatest role in reshaping public will during deliberation.

The analysis of public will using the approach described above has revealed a remarkable regularity in the type of transformations observed across a wide variety of forms of deliberative mini-publics involving different deliberative designs, issues, and institutional settings in different countries. Reporting on all of them would involve far more space than is available here.⁴⁵ Instead, discussion is limited to two case studies that clearly demonstrate the transformative effect of deliberation: the Bloomfield Track citizens' jury and the Fremantle Bridge deliberative survey.

Case Study I: The Bloomfield Track

The first case study concerns a four-day citizens' jury conducted on the issue of the Bloomfield Track. The track itself is a controversial road located in the Daintree region in the tropical northeast of Australia—a region famed for the unique convergence of a remnant tropical rainforest and a coral reef. Historically, the issue has been marked by a lack of public participation and bitter contestation between political interests. Constructed

during the mid 1980s amid controversy, the track remains a largely unsurfaced road, thirty kilometers in length, which passes through high-value rainforest. Its crudeness reflects its mode of construction: a single bulldozer negotiated both difficult terrain and protesters, who were sometimes buried up to their necks in the ground to impede construction. The track is plagued by an unstable surface in a region where annual rainfall is measured in meters. The status of the Bloomfield Track has ever since been implacably stuck in an unsustainable status quo.

Though it was ostensibly constructed to provide access to isolated communities, the actual driving force behind the construction of the Bloomfield Track was a power struggle between two levels of government. The Queensland State government wanted to invite a showdown with a proenvironmental federal government.⁴⁶ Advocates of the Bloomfield Track have historically used colorful rhetoric to make their case.⁴⁷ The most successful arguments concern the need for Bloomfield residents to enjoy access to their isolated properties; this argument continues to retain a strong air of legitimacy amidst the remnants of a “frontier” Queensland culture with an entrenched individual rights ethos.⁴⁸ When paraded as a political symbol it is a difficult normative claim to deny.⁴⁹

Those who oppose the road have often focused on similarly dramatic claims, mainly concerning environmental damage. At the time of construction, opponents invoked highly emotive symbols, such as describing the intrusion of road works into a significant wilderness area known as “where the rainforest meets the reef.”⁵⁰ These arguments were those most represented by the local media—though this distortion in media coverage may not have been intentional.⁵¹ As a result, pictures of pristine rainforest “ruined” by bulldozers dominated the campaign. The most symbolically potent weapon of environmentalists was the potential damage to the onshore reefs by sediment run-off from the Bloomfield Track.

It is a testament to the power of symbolic politics that these discursive battle lines persisted in the public domain, and even after fifteen years the issue remained polarized. As will be seen below, this polarization sustains the status quo against the potential outcomes decided under the deliberative ideal.

The Bloomfield Track Citizens’ Jury

The Bloomfield Track Citizens’ Jury was conducted independently to investigate the processes whereby preferences are transformed during deliberation.⁵² To maximize the possibility of authentic deliberation, the deliberative design itself was intensive. To this end, it was comprised of only twelve participants, who were selected on a random stratified basis out of responses to two thousand recruitment letters distributed throughout the far north of Queensland. Participants were asked to consider recommendations regarding the future management of the Bloomfield track under the guidance of a facilitator over four days: one day of preparation and site inspection; two days of information-gathering during which witness presentations were given; and a final day of deliberation and report-writing.

Table 1. Pre- and Postdeliberative Preference Ranks

Juror*	Predeliberation					Postdeliberation				
	Bituminize	Upgrade	Stabilize	Status		Bituminize	Upgrade	Stabilize	Status	
				Quo	Close				Quo	Close
ADV	5	4	3	2	1	5	4	3	1	2
ASW	4	3	1	2	5	5	4	3	1	2
BOA	5	3	1	2	4	5	4	2	3	1
JAN	1	4	3	2	5	5	4	3	2	1
JUL	2	1	3	4	5	5	3	1	2	4
KEI	4	3	2	1	5	5	3	1	2	4
KOD	2	5	1	4	3	4	5	2	3	1
MAT	5	4	2	1	3	5	4	3	2	1
PEA	4	3	2	1	5	5	4	3	2	1
RAS	4	3	1	2	5	5	4	3	2	1
SNO	1	2	3	4	5	5	4	3	1	2
TAM	2	5	3	4	1	5	4	3	2	1
Aggregate Rank (Borda)	3	4	1	2	5	5	4	3	2	1

*Abbreviations are based on pseudonyms chosen by participants to protect their identity.

Deliberative Transformation: Bloomfield Track

We now turn to the transformative effect of the citizens’ jury: beginning with preferences, the facilitator presented five policy options to participants immediately before and after deliberation:

- Bituminize** Upgrade the road by sealing with bitumen.
- Upgrade** Upgrade the road to a dirt road suitable for conventional vehicles.
- Stabilize** Stabilize specific trouble spots, such as steep slopes, on the road but leave it as a 4WD track.
- Status Quo** Maintain the road in its current condition as a 4WD track.
- Close** Close the road and rehabilitate it.

The resulting preference rankings are shown in Table 1. Two features are worth noting. First, aggregate ranking changed considerably, each deliberative stage producing a dramatically different outcome (shown as the highlighted option). Stabilization was the predeliberative winner. Closure rose from least-preferred before deliberation to become a clear postdeliberative winner.⁵³ Second, there was a strong convergence in preference toward a single consensus position, but a significant level of dissensus remained.

Clearly preferences changed. But this in itself is not enough to demonstrate an ideal deliberative transformation; it is necessary to know why they changed.⁵⁴ In the first instance, this involves looking at the four discourses relevant to the issue. These are summarized in Figure 2, using spheres that contain representative statements

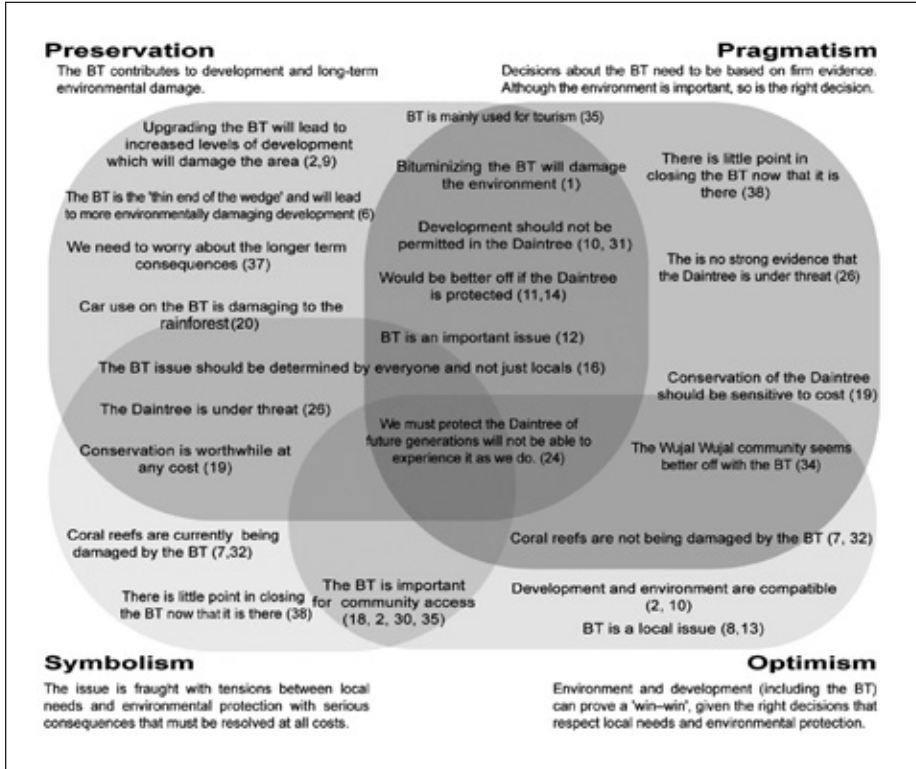


Figure 2. Factor description: the Bloomfield Track*
 *Statements are paraphrased, with relevant statement numbers shown in brackets.

paraphrased from the Q statements (with the corresponding statement number shown in brackets; the complete set of Q statements and factor scores can be found in Table 3 in the appendix). Where a statement is associated with more than one discourse, it is shown in the overlap between the spheres. There is one consensus statement (24) that is shown in the center of the figure, where all four discourses overlap.

The first discourse, Preservation, represents a kind of “enfranchisement of nature” position described by Goodin.⁵⁵ It is a holistic discourse that reflects longer-term thinking and a recognition of the complex interconnections between human actions, environmental consequences, and, ultimately, impacts on society. It is particularly sensitive to the incremental impacts associated with the road, which were not well captured in the discourses in the broader public sphere—particularly among traditional media outlets.

A second discourse, Pragmatism, is strongly correlated to Preservation, but is more conservative in orientation, requiring a greater burden of evidence before conceding any particular course of action.

The third discourse, Optimism, resonates with a form of technocentrism⁵⁶ that is related to the social history of the region, which has been characterized by pioneering

and developmentalism. Here, technological optimism suggests that progress, particularly in the form of roads, yields benefits for both the environment and humans.⁵⁷ Not surprisingly, Optimists tended to favor upgrading the Bloomfield Track.

The final discourse, Symbolism—which is labeled as such because of the condensation symbols that it embodies—pertains more directly to the prevailing political discourse surrounding the Bloomfield Track issue, embodying the more sensationalist claims made in the local media.⁵⁸ Individuals associated with this position tended to focus on two symbolic claims in particular—that of damage to reef and community access—and they sought mechanisms through which to resolve this dissonance. Preference positions associated with this discourse tended to be less stable, shifting from closure, which would address the reef issue, to bituminization, which would reduce runoff and improve community access.

Of all the discourses, the deliberative process had the most profound impact on Symbolism, which dissipated altogether after beginning as the second strongest discourse (beginning with an average factor loading of 0.26, with half the participants significantly loaded; and no significant loadings following deliberation). Optimism declined slightly (average factor loading decreasing from 0.20 to 0.15). Pragmatism increased during deliberation (0.25 to 0.34), but not significantly. Preservation, by contrast, was the strongest discourse throughout the process, with an average factor loading of 0.59 both before and after deliberation, and with eleven of the twelve participants significantly loaded at both stages.

Preservation is arguably a generalizable discourse, both in terms of content and the level of agreement attached to it. The preexisting consensus regarding Preservation might seem counterintuitive. A commonly held perception, inspired by a behavioral perspective of human action, is that in general the public does not hold views that are consistent with an ecological imperative. The reasoning goes that people do not act ecologically; therefore, they must not hold ecological views. Yet, clearly an idealized form of ecological thinking was widely accepted before deliberation, even if its influence on the choices made at the time might seem dubious in retrospect.

This underlying (ecological) consensus can also be demonstrated using the average correlation between participant Q sorts. Figure 3 plots the correlation between all combinations of pairs of individuals for both their Q sorts (subjective position) along the *x*-axis and correlations between their preference orderings along the *y*-axis for both the predeliberative (LHS) and postdeliberative (RH) data. The figure shows the subjective consensus was always high, and increased only marginally from 0.45 to 0.52 during deliberation. By contrast, consensus on preferences (horizontal line) increased dramatically from 0.13 to 0.72.

The regression lines in Figure 3 indicate the nature of the shared logic (intersubjective consistency) within the group. They show a dramatic improvement. This greater consistency suggests that after deliberation individuals began to construct their preference positions in accordance with their subjective positions in an intersubjectively shared manner. Before deliberation no such relationship existed.

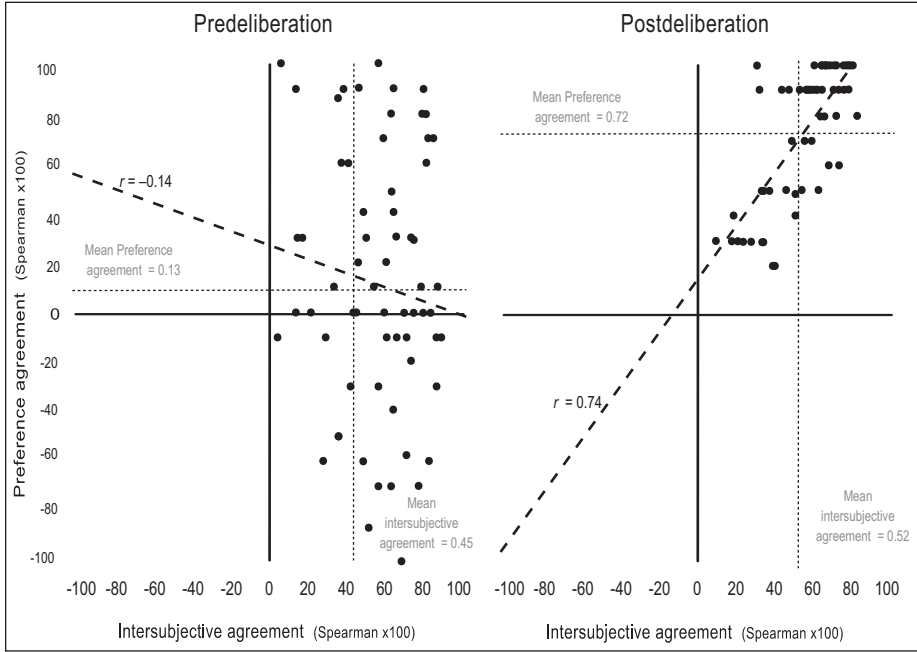


Figure 3. Pre- and postintersubjective consistency: the Bloomfield Track

It turns out that the key to explaining the predeliberative situation is the distorting influence of the non-Preservationist discourses, Symbolism in particular. Predeliberative Symbolists also tended to be Preservationists. But not all Preservationists were Symbolists, and those individuals were the ones who favored road closure. Only after Symbolism dissipated did all those in agreement with Preservationism favor closure. Prior to deliberation, Symbolism, which was a direct product of the prevailing political discourse, had a distorting impact on preferences. In other words, deliberation emancipated participants from the manipulatory impacts of the Symbolism discourse, freeing them to thereafter base their preferences on Preservation, which heretofore had not been able to find full expression in the distorted public sphere.

Three interrelated processes contributed to this effect. First, deliberation provided the impetus for participants to think about the issue. Beforehand, their preferences tended to be premised on fairly casual analyses of symbolic cues from sources with an eye to very particular interests. Second, the information provided during the process directly challenged symbolic claims. Finally, the process of deliberation smoothed the path to nonsymbolic preferences by assisting the participants in grappling with issues of significant complexity, about which their assessments and conclusions then became comparably sophisticated.

For the purposes of this discussion the focus is on the dispelling of distorting symbolic myths. During deliberation many of the existing symbolic arguments tended to be dispelled in the face of the evidence. But it is important to stress that information alone did not do the trick. Ideal deliberation requires that individuals be active receivers of information—to be “switched on” and display judgment in considering arguments through mutual understanding, even in the absence of agreement.

This effect is perhaps best encapsulated by “central” and “peripheral” routes to attitude formation, which Petty and Cacioppo described.⁵⁹ People may arrive at positions via peripheral routes, such as taking cognitive shortcuts or arriving at “top-of-the-head” conclusions or simply following the lead of others believed to hold similar attitudes or values.⁶⁰ Where peripheral shortcuts are employed, people may form positions based on partial information or incomplete information and inconsistent logic. By contrast, central routes to the development of attitudes involve the application of more deliberate effort in a way that is more akin to the reflective deliberative ideal.

Take, for example, the claim that the road would damage the onshore reef.⁶¹ Before deliberation, many of the participants who were concerned about the environmental impact of the road supported the argument that the road would kill the reef because of the large amount of sediment that would be produced by runoff. But it was a weak argument. No actual evidence that this would be the case had ever been found. Yet many were prepared to believe it because of their intuition that the road was bad for the environment—an example of peripheral processing. Environmentally concerned groups argued vehemently that this damage would occur, as they often do in cases where their overall concern encourages them to take shortcuts and invoke symbols—such as direct damage to an area “where the rainforest meets the reef”—to impress upon a public that may not otherwise be willing to act.⁶²

Although the reef-damage argument was comprehensively dispelled by scientific evidence presented to participants, apart from two firm Pragmatists, participants’ environmental concerns did not abate. To the contrary, their concerns tended to intensify as they developed a deeper understanding of the strong arguments regarding the environmental impact of the road: its contribution to increased traffic flow, the knock-on effect of increased pressure to build a bridge over the Daintree River (where vehicular flow is currently restricted by the need to cross by ferry), and the increased likelihood that privately held rainforest parcels would more likely be developed—in what is now a World Heritage area—as access to road and other services increased.

Ordinarily, it is difficult for such arguments to get traction in the public sphere. These arguments require central routes of cognitive processing, working through the arguments that citizens do not ordinarily engage with unless they have a particular interest in doing so. But if motivation to do so improves, as it does when groups engage in deliberation, central processing involving strong arguments is more likely to occur.⁶³

Moreover, motivated deliberators are more likely to cut through weak (symbolic) arguments. In this case, participants directly challenged one such argument—that the road was needed for community access—when a presenter invoked it; they had worked out for themselves that an alternative inland route had already been upgraded, affording similar travel times to major centers.

The Fremantle Bridge Case Study

The Bloomfield Track case study demonstrates the emancipatory nature of deliberation where issue complexity combined with emotive condensation symbols make it all too easy to manipulate citizens' preferences. But not all manipulation need be overt. The case study of the Fremantle Bridge shows how the distortion of public will is possible, even in the absence of strategic manipulation. In such cases deliberation also plays an important emancipatory role.

The Fremantle Traffic Bridge across the Swan River in Western Australia is one of two important road traffic links between Fremantle and the Perth metropolitan area. Its present condition has deteriorated so much that it needs to be either upgraded or replaced. The bridge was constructed in 1939 and upgraded in 1974. This upgrade had an estimated lifespan of thirty years.

In order to decide the future of the bridge, the Western Australian state government embarked on a large-scale community engagement process. The overall objective was to identify the public's views and preferences about six proposed solutions. The Main Roads department, which is responsible for the bridge, identified the following safety and engineering issues: risk collision by river vessels; structural integrity of the bridge; and road-user safety. River navigation was impeded by both the low level of river clearance afforded by the bridge and its misalignment with a nearby railway bridge. The bridge's narrow width and poor provision for pedestrians and cyclists threatened road-user safety.

By contrast, the issues that excited some residents in the region reflected less pragmatic concerns. These included the heritage significance of the bridge, the conservation of the Swan River, and concerns of the indigenous Noongar people, for whom the river is an important cultural symbol.

All of these issues played out in the public sphere. Conflict was neither as entrenched nor as protracted as the Bloomfield Track. But there were passionate advocates, particularly interest groups concerned about the loss of the bridge's heritage value, who argued for its retention. However, this desire directly clashed with the safety, transport, and navigation issues. It is against this background that the deliberative survey was commissioned.

Fremantle Bridge Deliberative Survey

The deliberative survey consisted of a one-day forum that involved approximately two hundred residents drawn from a random sample of six thousand responses to a community survey implemented in Fremantle and the wider city of Perth. A random subsample of fifty was surveyed, using the extension of Q method described above. The forum itself was a one-day process in which participants considered their preferred options for the bridge. Participants were distributed among twenty-five tables (approximately eight to ten per table). During the process they learned about different viewpoints through a series of "expert" presentations by representatives from the community, industry, and government.

Networked computers enabled small-group discussions to be linked together. Inputs generally came from the consensus of the table as a whole, except where there were strongly held minority views, in which case these minority views were reported alongside the consensus. The table computers were connected to a team of six “themers” who worked in pairs to identify themes and questions as they emerged. The output from the themers was broadcast onto a large screen behind the stage. One of the main outputs was in the form of questions or concerns to be put to the panels for their responses.

The overall aim of the process was to give participants the opportunity to consider information provided by the presentations, deliberate in small groups to determine outstanding issues and questions, and to listen to responses. There was no attempt to try to reach participant consensus.

Deliberative Outcomes: Fremantle Bridge

Turning now to the actual outcomes, a preference survey was administered immediately before and after the deliberative process. The main component of the survey involved rating six options, which ranged from minimalist solutions (repairing the existing bridge), to the major construction of a new “statement” bridge, to building a new bridge and retaining the old one:

Repair	Retain existing bridge, but replace the navigation spans and deteriorated components.
Repair and widen	Retain existing bridge, but replace the navigation spans and deteriorated components and incorporate bridge widening.
New bridge, retain section	Construct a new standard bridge next to the current bridge, leaving a section of the existing bridge as a heritage and recreation site.
New statement bridge, retain section	Construct a new bridge that is a major entry statements for Fremantle, leaving a section of the existing bridge as a heritage recreation site.
New bridge plus old cyclist bridge	Construct a new standard bridge and retain the existing bridge as a pedestrian/cyclist facility.
New bridge, retain old	Construct a new two-lane standard bridge and retain the existing bridge as a two-lane bridge with improved pedestrian/cyclist facilities.

The aggregate changes in rank for individual options were relatively small, at least compared to the Bloomfield Track case. However, there were substantial changes that are not well illuminated by simply looking at aggregations. A better way to look at the data for the purposes here involves performing the same sort of inverted factor analysis as performed in Q methodology. Doing so produced three relevant preference positions

Table 2. Preference Factor Scores: Fremantle Bridge

Option	Description	Preference factor 1	Preference factor 2	Preference factor 3
Option 1	Repair	6	4	2
Option 2	Repair and widen	5	3	3
Option 3	New bridge, retain section	4	1	4
Option 4	New statement bridge, retain section	1	2	5
Option 5	New bridge plus old cyclist bridge	2	5	1
Option 6	New bridge, retain old	3	6	6

(factors), which are summarized in terms of the typical preference ordering for each factor (factor scores) in Table 2.

Preference factor 1 is strongly in favor of building some sort of new bridge. This contrasts with the second preference factor, which is strongly in favor of a statement bridge, but sanguine about the possibility of retaining and repairing the old one. The third factor represents a position favoring retaining the old bridge in some form, preferring options that maintain its heritage value.

Loadings on factor 1 increased significantly during deliberation from an average of 0.32 to 0.61. Factors 2 and 3, by contrast, were fairly static. Pre- and postdeliberative loadings for factor 2 were 0.20 increasing to 0.26; and factor 3 from 0.16 to 0.13. From these changes it can be seen that there was a shift in sentiment in favor of constructing a new bridge. There was some preference for maintaining a part of the old bridge for its heritage value, but the emphasis increasingly turned to functionality.

This functional turn is reflected in changes to the discourses that were observed from the factor analysis of Q sorts. In brief, the discourses that emerged from the analysis include:

Safety and Efficiency: Focused on the development of a safe, efficient, modern and long-lasting bridge.

Heritage Priority: Focused on heritage issues with an emphasis on indigenous heritage.

Conditional Alteration: Interested in possible alteration after adequate consideration of the issues.

Alternative Transport: Concerned with issues such as cyclists' safety with an emphasis on economically feasible solution.

The factors themselves are schematically represented in Figure 4. A complete set of factor scores is provided in Table 4 in the appendix.

As for preferences, the discursive transformation was not as strong as the Bloomfield Track case study. Here the biggest change involved an increase in agreement with the largest predeliberative discourse (Safety and Efficiency) from 0.33 average factor

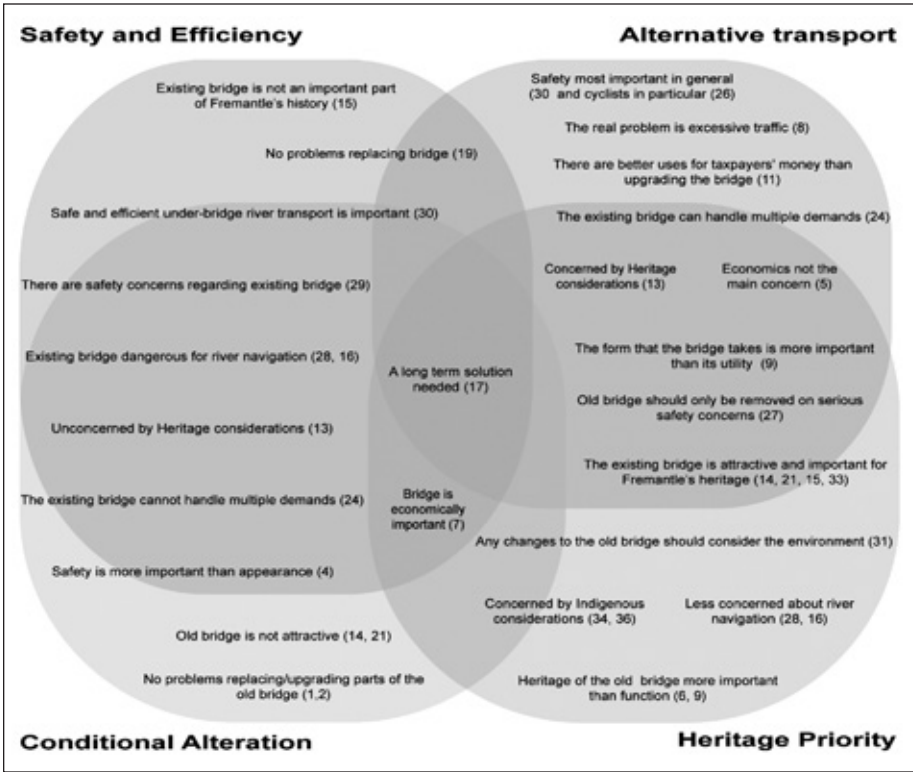


Figure 4. Factor description diagram: Fremantle Bridge

loading to 0.48 following deliberation. The other relatively large movement was a decrease in Heritage Priority from 0.23 to 0.13.⁶⁴

Analysis of the overall changes reveals a shift away from Heritage Policy with much of this resulting in a migration toward Safety and Efficiency. In other words, we see a movement away from concern about heritage issues in favor of more pragmatic concerns about public safety and efficiency. This movement does not quite reflect a dissipation of manipulative symbolic politics in the same way as it did in the case of the Bloomfield Track. Advocates of keeping the old bridge did appeal to heritage, which had the same effect as a symbolic issue, but in this case the argument was genuinely felt and able to be checked against reality.

The symbolic nature of the heritage issue is only fully revealed in comparison to the postdeliberative outcome of the deliberative survey. And it is a relatively smaller impact than for the Bloomfield Track case study. This can be seen in Figure 5, which shows pre- and postdeliberative intersubjective consistency. Prior to deliberation, the overall relationship between subjectivity and preferences was much greater than for the Bloomfield Track, in this case 0.34 for all individuals in the study.⁶⁵ The relationship did improve during deliberation, reaching 0.70, but the overall change was not as dramatic as for the Bloomfield Track.

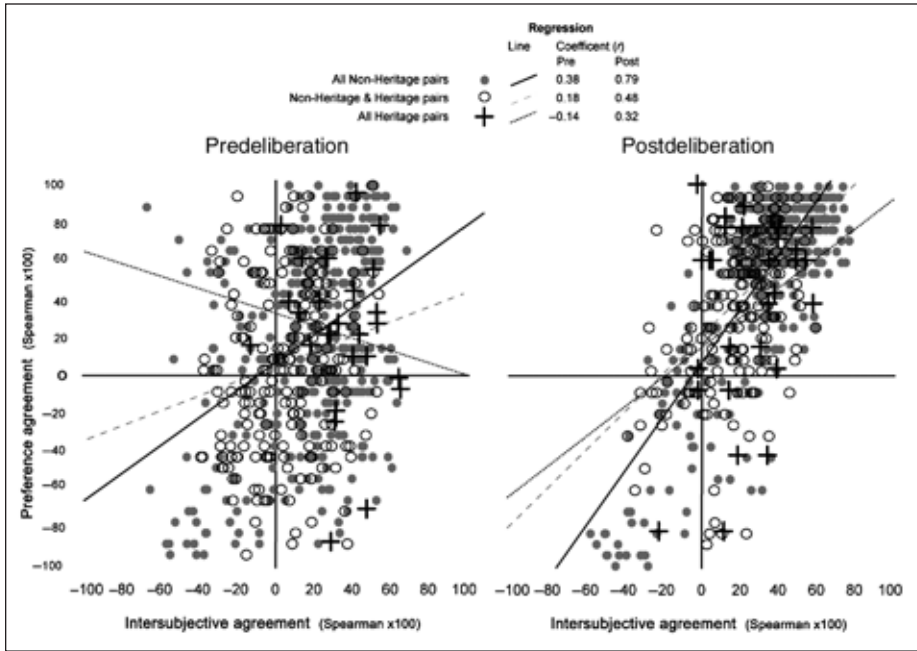


Figure 5. Pre- and postdeliberative intersubjective consistency: Fremantle Bridge

However, the impact of the Heritage Priority discourse becomes clearer when those individuals who are significantly associated with it (using factor loadings) are looked at separately from the others. This is done in Figure 5, where all pairs of individuals not loaded on Heritage Priority before deliberation are plotted separately from those combinations of pairs where one individual is loaded significantly on Heritage Priority, and separately again from those pairs of individuals who are both loaded on Heritage Priority. Before deliberation, it was clear that intersubjective consistency was much higher within the Non-Heritage group (0.38) than the Heritage–Non-Heritage pairs (0.18). And the Heritage pairs actually had a negative relationship (–0.14). After deliberation, all sets of pairs were strongly intersubjectively consistent (0.79, 0.48, and 0.32, respectively). It is important to note that the postdeliberative figures relate to those same individuals who were significantly associated with Heritage Priority before deliberation, even if they no longer agreed with that position. Before deliberation, there were thirteen individuals significantly loaded on the Heritage Priority discourse; after deliberation this decreased to eight individuals.⁶⁶

If we look at only those individuals who were still associated with Heritage Priority after deliberation, it turns out that both the pre- and postdeliberative intersubjective correlations are higher. For Heritage–Non-Heritage Pairs the values are 0.29 and 0.53 pre- and postdeliberation respectively; and for Heritage pairs the values are 0.22 and 0.50. From this it appears that these true believers, who remained in agreement with Heritage Priority, were individuals who began the deliberative process with relatively well-developed positions—at least compared to those who dropped Heritage Priority

during deliberation. It is these latter individuals who appeared to display symbolic political behavior in relation to the heritage issue where, before deliberation, casual observation of the issue in the public sphere made this dimension more salient: not least because it is easier to grasp, being conducive to peripheral processing.

And as it turns out, these individuals were also less likely to actually live near the bridge; for those who did, the reality of the issues embodied in Safety and Efficiency were far more salient from the outset, apart from the smaller group of die-hard individuals for whom Heritage remained paramount. For those who did not hold a strong commitment to Heritage, beyond its intuitive appeal, the deliberative process made salient those more practical issues that were otherwise crowded out by the heritage issue prior to deliberation.⁶⁷

These changes occurred not because the deliberative process deemphasized Heritage Priority, so much as that it synthesized the wider concerns reflected in Safety and Efficiency into participant evaluations, particularly for that group of participants that had only thought about heritage before deliberation because it was intuitively appealing, with its strong emotive content and symbolic potential. It took a deliberative process to decouple these participants from symbolic positions to positions that reflected more the sort of broad rationality described by Elster or “deliberative” positions described by deliberative ideals.⁶⁸ There was an emancipatory effect, but unlike the Bloomfield Track example, the predeliberative situation was not a product of overt manipulation of political symbols. It was merely a case of some individuals taking shortcuts before deliberation in forming their positions, based on a particular argument that was emotive, easy to comprehend, and relatively easy to articulate.

The Emancipatory Effect

Both case studies reported above involved a move from a situation where symbolic concerns played a distorting role before deliberation to one where individuals were emancipated to consider the issue across a wider range of considerations on more equal terms. Before deliberation, symbolic claims tended to crowd out other concerns that were either acknowledged but not acted upon (in the case of Preservationism for the Bloomfield Track) or were nonsalient because they were less likely to gain traction in the prevailing public sphere (in the case of Safety and Efficiency for the Fremantle Bridge). Whether a discourse is symbolic depends on the content of the discourse and upon its actual impact on the development of positions. The actual nature of symbolic politics varies. The Bloomfield Track Symbolism discourse contained a number of claims that were made strategically, with the express desire to invoke a symbolic response. In the Fremantle Bridge case study, the Heritage Priority discourse embodied a claim regarding the heritage of the Fremantle Bridge that exhibited characteristics of symbolic politics, not because it was intentionally manipulatory, but because it had crowded out other concerns that became legitimated by the deliberative process. In both cases, the final outcome reflected a greater level of integrative thinking across the range of relevant issues, once individuals were liberated from the effect of distorting symbols, whose claims only had a chance to be checked against reality in the context of a deliberative process.

Lessons for Deliberative Democracy

The results of the two case studies in this article suggest that deliberation does not fundamentally change individuals or inculcate a sense of moral duty. The particular values that prevailed in both issues were always present (and measurable), even if they were latent in expressed preferences. Before deliberation, most participants believed they were acting in the public interest,⁶⁹ but good intentions alone are not sufficient to formulate civic-minded preferences. Predeliberative preferences were more strongly influenced by discourses associated with symbolic politics. Following deliberation, symbolic cues reduced the “cost” of arriving at a decision,⁷⁰ but the cognitive shortcut resulted in positions that did not properly reflect participants’ overall subjectivity.

Before deliberation, symbolic politics—or at least the mere presence of potent symbols—distorted participants’ preferences. This process may be manipulative and overt, as in the case of the Bloomfield Track, or incidental, as in the case of the Fremantle Bridge. Deliberation successfully corrected the influence of symbolic politics because it provided both the incentive and the means to develop positions on an intersubjective set of recognized issues that extended beyond the narrow set of unhelpful symbolic ones. The mechanism whereby this occurred did not so much involve changing incentive structures, as predicted by institutional rational choice.⁷¹ Rather, it changed the decision *pathway* from a casual understanding of emotionally appealing content to a deeper understanding that allowed participants to better express their own subjectivity. The change was as much a function of stripping away the impact of symbolic arguments as it was due to participants’ increased ability and willingness to deal with issue complexity. This suggests that the transformative effect might be more easily replicated in the wider public sphere than is ordinarily supposed.

The Potential for Deliberative Democracy

In a sense, there is nothing particularly surprising in the results discussed here. It has been repeatedly demonstrated that, in contrast to the persisting Schumpeterian assertion regarding “primitive citizens,” citizens *do* have the right stuff to make democracy work.⁷² However, Schumpeter is at least partly correct—citizens often do become primitive when they enter the political field. But this is largely due to the nature of politics that they encounter, characterized by a parade of emotive issues and symbolic cues propagated by both elites and mass media in the public sphere. The evidence presented in this article suggests that politics as usual is the illness, and deliberative democracy can provide a cure.

The potential for citizen transformation looks promising, but transforming a corrupted public sphere remains challenging. Walton prescribes greater engagement by citizens in political dialogue as a remedy.⁷³ However, simply encouraging greater engagement in politics may be too weak a cure for the prevailing political disease. Goodin and Dryzek provide a reality check for how, in many states, the impact of mini-publics is limited.⁷⁴ But the analysis in this article shows that the

symptoms of the disease are real. The public will is, in many cases, not being expressed in ways that reflect the underlying subjective desires of citizens. Because of this, deliberative democracy should not be seen as a high-minded attempt to implement unobtainable ideals, but rather as a solution to the undemocratic distortion of citizens' desires.

Mini-publics may act as a guide for wider public opinion, as demonstrated by the example of the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly on electoral reform. The outcome of the assembly was a proposal for a system of single transferable vote. When this was subsequently put to referendum, a large number of citizens voted "yes"; they trusted assembly members' judgments, because they were people like themselves. This case leads Warren to suggest a trust-based role for mini-publics, where citizens can trust the outcomes because people just like them produced them.⁷⁵ If the mini-public voted for single, transferable voting system, then citizens can trust their judgment that this is the best option for electoral reform.

This seems promising on the face of it. However, the analysis of symbolic manipulation suggests caution, depending on the type of information that is being communicated by the mini-public. A danger exists that reliance upon simple conclusions by mini-publics shortchanges the decisions made by the rest of the public, which may end up going along with decisions that do not reflect its underlying will. If the information communicated is merely the end result in the form of aggregate preferences—such as "the mini-public arrived at conclusion 'x'"—then the public is being asked to trust too much in that mini-public's decisions. It may actually perpetuate the circumstances that are conducive to the symbolic distortion of public will. If they want to avoid this distortion, citizens need to be attentive and adopt a skeptical disposition toward potentially symbolic claims, taking into account the range of relevant issues as part of a metaconsensus.

Another important reason not to emphasize aggregate preferences is that it creates an epistemic expectation that many mini-publics may not be able to meet. There is an assumption (often implicit) that a well-run mini-public is capable of providing the definitive answer to a particular policy problem. This might be true for a particular type of mini-public that includes the time, information resources, and deliberativeness adequate for proper deliberation on a relatively straightforward issue. However, at least some processes, if not many, will fall short of these basic necessities. There is limited empirical evidence available that suggests small variations to deliberative designs can in fact produce different outcomes.⁷⁶ Even worse is the possibility that a mini-public might be manipulated to produce a particular outcome.

However, this does not mean that mini-publics—even less-than-ideal ones—cannot contribute to political decision making. Although aggregate outcomes may vary, what does remain relatively stable between different mini-publics is that deliberation reveals the lines of reasoning without the influence of symbolic distortion. Relying solely on the outcomes in the form of aggregated preferences will simply shackle public opinion to outcomes that appear concrete, but are possibly indeterminate.

Emphasis on communication of deliberative reasoning overcomes this limitation. Whereas communicating aggregate preferences provides citizens with a position they

might trust, it does not necessarily empower them to understand. By contrast, communicating the reasoning that underlies a deliberative outcome empowers citizens to make their own evaluations of the mini-public's decisions. Reproducing the emancipatory effect of deliberation in the wider public sphere requires nudging citizens just a little bit harder to grapple with the reasons that underlie the judgments of their peers.

The problem here is that in ordinary political life such requirements are potentially time-consuming. By contrast, Warren's proposal is elegant because it is sensitive to the scarce political resources available to citizens, including the time required to understand complex issues. It is much easier to trust other citizens to deduce the same outcomes that you might under the same circumstances than to make the same evaluations yourself without the resources afforded to citizens in mini-public deliberation.

Is there a way the results from deliberative mini-publics can be articulated so that the simplification afforded by Warren's approach is maintained, and wider discursive engagement is promoted in a way that fosters a flourishing public sphere (or at least addresses a debased one)? It is possible to imagine a situation in which, rather than communicating outcomes in the form of aggregate preferences ("single transferable vote was preferred by deliberators") the outputs of deliberation are communicated in the form of simplified reasons ("single transferable vote was found by deliberators to produce electoral outcomes that better represented the diversity of community opinion")?

The trust dimension is still important in the communicating reasons approach, but rather than relying on simplistic aggregated preferences, citizens can trust that their mini-public counterparts successfully "sort the wheat from the chaff" to focus on the issues that are most relevant to them. Mini-publics could deal with the complex array of claims, counterclaims, and symbolic content that might otherwise confuse an issue that is communicated purely through the usual channels of the public sphere. Other citizens can reap the benefit of this hard work by being able to more easily focus on those arguments that have been deemed as important by the metaconsensus, without the undue influence of special interests or symbolic politics.

It is conceivable that such an approach—one that emphasizes the transmission of reasons over conclusions—might also have a positive impact on elites. Imagine a situation in which a political actor, who would normally use symbolic claims to good effect, is faced with a situation in which the veracity of his or her claim will be scrutinized and the results communicated following a deliberative mini-public. The incentive to deploy symbolic language would be reduced, and a deliberative mini-public might, in turn, be able to use its precious time and resources to even greater effect, without having to wade through various strategic claims. This would be less likely to occur if only the final aggregate outcomes are communicated, because there is no mechanism to illuminate the veracity of claims beyond supposing that they simply did not carry enough force to influence the final outcome.

Focusing on reasons might even produce higher levels of trust than those reported by Warren because citizens are not required to take at face value the recommendations produced by mini-publics. When they are given sufficient evidence for them to make up their own minds, they are treated as discursive equals. This changed focus

might also address the legitimacy concerns expressed by Parkinson, who questions why the broader public should accept mini-public recommendations, when the transformation of the participants ends up separating them from their peers.⁷⁷ The evidence presented above demonstrates that the transformation in mini-publics is mainly at the preference level, with preferences coming to reflect largely preexisting subjective states. If the broader public is given the opportunity to understand this transformation it is more likely to evoke positive responses.

It is worth considering whether emphasizing reasons from the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly would have led even more of the public to agree with its outcomes and, as a result, pass the referendum with the requisite majority. The question is ultimately empirical, requiring the application of methods outlined in this above to the public sphere more widely. Specific questions that would need to be addressed concern the efficacy of communicating reasons rather than aggregate preferences, the incentives required to encourage citizens to listen to the conclusions of mini-publics, and the level of detail required to achieve the desired emancipatory effect—which is unlikely to be as onerous as a legal judgment and could simply involve headline-style bullet points.

Conclusion

We can learn important lessons from the mini-public deliberative processes, which suggest possibilities for a reinvigorated public sphere. The major dynamics of deliberative transformation observed in two selected case studies involved correcting the distortion of public will, which had been impacted previously by the operation of mechanisms such as symbolic politics, which served to disenfranchise ostensibly sovereign citizens, disconnecting them from their underlying will. Deliberation did not so much fundamentally change the underlying positions of citizens as open up avenues of intersubjective reasoning; this process was facilitated by removing the distorting effects of symbolic claims. This reasoning process served to reconnect participants' underlying will (measured in the form of subjectivity) to their expressed will (measured in the form of expressed preferences for particular courses of action).

In light of these insights, I have argued that scaling up deliberative democracy should involve the promotion of the same kind of reasoning as observed in mini-publics, but using mechanisms that simplify the transformative process for the wider public. This could involve communicating the results from mini-publics, as suggested by Warren, to reduce the cognitive cost of citizens arriving at autonomous decisions.

However, I have argued that the form of communication is important. Rather than communicating aggregate outcomes in the form of preferences, a simplified version of the process of reasoning could provide enough information to reduce the burden of political engagement in the community. It could also empower citizens to make choices that reflect their own will. In this way, it might be possible to replicate the promise of deliberation observed in mini-publics in the wider public sphere. By contrast, I have argued that merely communicating aggregate preferences (or recommendations for action) risks replicating exactly the same sort of processes that gave rise to symbolic politics in the first place.

Appendix: Factor Scores

Table 3. Factor Scores: Bloomfield Track Case Study

No.	Statement	PRES	PRAG	OPT	PROP
1	Laying bitumen on the Bloomfield Track would be beneficial for the environment. It may even help reduce fuel usage and the greenhouse effect.	-2	-3	1	1
2	I don't know if improving the Bloomfield Track would lead to a rapid acceleration of development in the area to the detriment of the environment.	-3	0	2	0
3	In deciding on what to do with the Bloomfield Track I don't know whether it's more important to meet the needs of the community or the environment.	-2	-2	2	0
4	Whilst impacts on locals in the Bloomfield area are a concern, it is the broader community that should carry more weight when deciding what to do with the Bloomfield Track.	2	1	3	3
5	I don't know what the people of Bloomfield think about the Bloomfield Track.	1	2	2	-2
6	The road is just the "thin edge of the wedge." Further improvement of the road will lead to more development in the area resulting in environmental damage. This may not happen for a long time, but it will happen.	3	3	-2	2
7	Erosion from the Bloomfield Track is permanently damaging the coral reefs that fringe the beaches below.	1	-2	-2	3
8	When it comes to the Bloomfield track, people living in Cairns are in no position to judge what the interests of the local residents of Bloomfield are.	-1	0	2	-1
9	If the Bloomfield Track is sealed (bituminized) there will not be a rapid increase in environmentally damaging development in the Daintree area in the future. It may even benefit the environment there.	-4	-1	-1	-1
10	No development should be permitted in World Heritage areas such as the Daintree.	3	4	-3	1
11	I would be worse off if more of the Daintree rainforest is protected.	-3	-2	-1	-1
12	The Bloomfield Track issue is important for Queensland.	2	2	0	-1
13	I'm not sure if the future of the Bloomfield Track should be determined by locals, outsiders, or both.	-1	-1	1	-1
14	The fate of the Bloomfield Track is of no concern to me.	-3	-4	-2	-3
15	Economic development associated with the Bloomfield Track will provide more opportunities for future generations in North Queensland.	-1	-1	0	1
16	The future of the Bloomfield Track should be determined by everyone and not just by those who live in the Bloomfield area.	3	3	1	2

(continued)

Table 3. (continued)

No.	Statement	PRES	PRAG	OPT	PROP
17	I don't know how, but I think that there must be some way in which everybody benefits from protecting the rainforest near the Bloomfield Track.	2	0	4	1
18	The Bloomfield Track is important because it allows quick access to remote areas of the North.	0	0	2	2
19	Conservation in the Daintree area is worthwhile at whatever cost.	4	-3	2	4
20	Using cars on the Bloomfield Track is bad for the rainforest.	2	-1	0	-1
21	Any decision about the Bloomfield Track will greatly affect people like me.	1	-2	0	2
22	I have no idea what the people in the Bloomfield area think about the Bloomfield Track.	1	1	1	-1
23	Erosion from the Bloomfield Track does not cause siltation or damage to the fringing inshore reefs between Cape Tribulation and Cooktown.	-1	0	-1	-2
24	If we don't take steps to protect the Daintree Rainforest future generations will miss out on the opportunity to experience the area as we do now.	4	3	4	4
25	We don't need to worry too much about environmental damage in the Daintree region because future generations will be better able to deal with these problems than we are.	-3	-4	-4	-4
26	There is no reason to believe that the Daintree Rainforest is under threat.	-4	0	-3	-4
27	If future generations could have their say about the Bloomfield track, they would be less concerned about the environmental impacts than many people make out.	-2	-1	-3	-3
28	The protection of plants and animals in the Daintree is OK so long as it doesn't affect me.	-2	-4	-3	-3
29	Let's fix the problems in the Daintree just for now. The future will take care of itself.	-4	-3	-4	-2
30	The more that it is possible for the average North Queensland resident can access the Bloomfield Track the better.	-2	-2	-2	-1
31	I don't like how development is creeping further and further North into the Daintree and beyond because of its effect on the environment.	2	1	0	0
32	The coral reefs along the foreshore below the Bloomfield Track are not badly affected by the road.	0	2	1	-4
33	Native animals in the Daintree need protection because they have a right to life, which cannot be traded against economic considerations.	3	2	3	1

(continued)

Table 3. (continued)

No.	Statement	PRES	PRAG	OPT	PROP
34	The Wujal Wujal Community is better off now that the Bloomfield Track has been built.	1	4	0	2
35	The most important use of the Bloomfield Track is for tourism.	1	1	-3	-1
36	I'm concerned that I will be made worse off by any decision about the Bloomfield Track.	0	-1	-1	-2
37	I think that both short and long-term perspectives are needed in deciding what should be done with the Bloomfield Track, but I don't know which one is more important.	0	3	3	3
38	The Bloomfield Track may not have been the best idea, but I guess there is probably little point in closing it now that it has been built.	-1	4	-2	2
39	I don't really know who benefits most from the protection of rainforest in the Daintree.	0	1	1	-3
40	A long-term perspective on the Bloomfield Track is essential.	4	1	4	4
41	When it comes to the Bloomfield Track, it's not important to worry about what the future will hold. We need to worry about now.	-1	2	-4	0
42	Everyone in Queensland is better off for having a road like the Bloomfield Track.	0	-3	-2	-2

Table 4. Factor Scores: Fremantle Bridge Case Study

No.	Statements	A	B	C	D
1	Replacing timber elements with steel components would destroy the authentic appearance of the bridge.	0	0	-5	1
2	Alterations will lead to nothing but the uglification of the bridge.	-1	-3	-4	-2
3	The bridge has stood the test of time for the past sixty-seven years; there's no need for major changes to it.	-4	-2	-3	-2
4	The safety of the bridge is more important than its appearance.	3	0	4	2
5	The main concern is to have a bridge that underpins the economic activities in the region	1	-3	2	-3
6	The function of Fremantle Bridge as a transport gateway is more important than its heritage.	1	-4	-1	-1
7	There are no specific economic benefits for the Fremantle from the bridge.	-1	-3	-2	0
8	The problem is not the vulnerable structure of the bridge but excessive traffic, which should be reduced.	-2	0	0	4
9	As long as there is a bridge that I can cross, I don't care about its structure.	-2	-5	-2	-4

(continued)

Table 4. (continued)

No.	Statements	A	B	C	D
10	We should definitely preserve the heritage value of the bridge, but only if it is financially viable.	0	-1	0	3
11	Taxpayers' money should be spent on services that are more essential than upgrading the bridge.	-2	-2	-1	3
12	It is worth spending money to retain the iconic status of the bridge.	-1	2	-2	-3
13	We shouldn't stick to the past when deciding about the future of the bridge; we should be open to modern design options.	3	-2	4	-3
14	The bridge is certainly an attractive entry statement to Fremantle and without doubt far more important than trucks.	-2	1	-4	0
15	The Fremantle Bridge is irreplaceable. It is a strong, enduring part of our history.	-3	3	-1	-1
16	Reducing the risk of vessel collision on the Swan River should be the main consideration when deciding about the future of the bridge.	2	-2	3	1
17	It is most important that the solution is a long-term one.	4	3	3	2
18	River craft deserve better traffic conditions on the Swan River.	1	-1	1	-2
19	Altering or replacing the existing Fremantle Bridge means diminishing Fremantle.	-5	-1	-3	-5
20	Whatever works are undertaken, the heritage value of the old bridge will be affected.	0	1	-2	-4
21	The old bridge provides a scenic entrance to Fremantle that attracts tourists.	-3	1	-1	1
22	The cost of maintaining the old timber structure is too high.	2	-1	0	0
23	Providing a better pedestrian and cycle traffic should be the main consideration when deciding about the future of the bridge.	0	0	2	2
24	The old bridge will never be able to handle vehicles, bikes, and pedestrians at the same time.	2	-1	2	-2
25	The most important thing is that access to Fremantle from its north is maintained in the most undisturbed manner as possible.	1	1	0	-1
26	The most important issue for cyclists is safety, which means they need access across the bridge, which has a good surface.	2	1	-1	5
27	Since the traffic bridge has important heritage significance, the only grounds for its removal should be on the grounds of serious safety issues and verified by heritage engineers.	-1	5	2	2
28	The existing bridge is too low; archways are too narrow and do not line up with the railway bridge, making navigation dangerous.	3	0	3	3
29	The critical infrastructure of the bridge raises serious safety concerns.	4	2	1	0
30	Safe and efficient movement of all road and river users across and under the bridge should be the main considerations.	5	2	1	4
31	Any changes to the bridge should give right consideration to the environment.	1	4	1	1

(continued)

Table 4. (continued)

No.	Statements	A	B	C	D
32	We just got traffic calming in Town Centre after twenty-five years of effort. I don't want bridge to be built bigger, better, faster to reverse the gains of the last twenty-five years.	-1	0	0	-1
33	This magnificent timber bridge is a rare and beautiful sight in today's world; it should be preserved.	-3	2	-3	-1
34	When deciding about the future of the bridge, indigenous concerns should be given adequate consideration.	0	4	5	0
35	The Fremantle Traffic Bridge is the most iconic landmark and the main tourist attraction in Fremantle.	-4	-4	1	0
36	Indigenous people would want to minimize impact on the Swan River, a registered site, which is of importance and significance to them.	0	3	0	1

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Notes

1. See, for example, Graham Smith, "Taking Deliberation Seriously: Institutional Design and Green Politics," *Environmental Politics* 10, no. 3 (2001): 72–93.
2. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, Studies in Contemporary German Social Thought. (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1989).
3. André Bächtiger, Simon Niemeyer, Michael Neblo, Marco R. Steenbergen, and Jürg Steiner, "Disentangling Diversity in Deliberative Democracy: Competing Theories, Their Empirical Blind-Spots, and Complementarities," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 18, no. 1 (2010): 32–63.

4. The main problem with mini-publics relates to scale, raising questions regarding their legitimacy with the wider public, see John Parkinson, "Legitimacy Problems in Deliberative Democracy," *Political Studies* 51 (2003): 180–96. The solution that is often suggested to this scale problem is the deployment of online deliberation, which raises questions about the quality of discourse. For a review, see Davy Janssen and Raphaël Kies, "Online Forums and Deliberative Democracy," *Acta Politica* 40, no. 3 (2005): 317–35.
5. James F. Bohman, "The Coming of Age of Deliberative Democracy," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 6, no. 4 (1998): 399–423.
6. Simon John Niemeyer and John S. Dryzek, "The Ends of Deliberation: Metaconsensus and Intersubjective Rationality as Deliberative Ideals," *Swiss Political Science Review* 13, no. 4 (2007): 497–526.
7. Steven R. Brown, *Political Subjectivity: Applications of Q Methodology in Political Science* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1980).
8. Murray J. Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985).
9. Simone Chambers, "Rhetoric and the Public Sphere: Has Deliberative Democracy Abandoned Mass Democracy?" *Political Theory* 20, no. 3 (2009): 323–50. John B. Thompson, *The Media and Modernity: A Social Theory of the Media* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2007), Doug Walton, "Revitalizing the Public Sphere: The Current System of Discourse and the Need for the Participative Design of Social Action," *Systemic Practice and Action Research* 20, no. 5 (2007): 369–86.
10. This involves a different mechanism than the one identified by Knops, although the clarity of language he identifies would certainly contribute to the same mechanism I identify here. Andrew Knops, "Delivering Deliberation's Emancipatory Potential," *Political Theory* 34, no. 5 (2006): 594–623.
11. John S. Dryzek, *Discursive Democracy: Politics, Policy and Political Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
12. Amy Gutmann and Dennis F. Thompson, *Democracy and Disagreement* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press, 1996).
13. For example, Adolf G. Gunderson, *Environmental Promise of Democratic Deliberation* (University of Wisconsin Press, 1995); Jane J. Mansbridge, "A Deliberative Theory of Interest Representation," in *The Politics of Interests: Interest Groups Transformed*, ed. Mark P. Petracca (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1992); Michael Saward, "Green Democracy?" in *The Politics of Nature: Explorations in Green Political Theory*, ed. Andrew Dobson and Paul Lucardie (London: Routledge, 1993); David Y. Miller, "Deliberative Democracy and Social Choice," special issue, *Political Studies* 40, (1992): 54–67.
14. Herbert Alexander Simon, *Models of Man: Social and Rational* (New York: Wiley, 1957).
15. Bernard Grofman and Guillermo Owen, eds., *Information Pooling and Group Decision-Making* (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1986).
16. James D. Fearon, "Deliberation as Discussion," in *Deliberative Democracy*, ed. Jon Elster, *Cambridge Studies in the Theory of Democracy* (London; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

17. Hugh Ward, Aletta Norval, Todd Landman and Jules Pretty, "Open Citizens' Juries and the Politics of Sustainability," *Political Studies* 51, no. 2 (2003): 282–99.
18. John S. Dryzek and Simon John Niemeyer, "Reconciling Pluralism and Consensus as Political Ideals," *American Journal of Political Science* 50, no. 3 (2006): 634–49.
19. Niemeyer and Dryzek, "The Ends of Deliberation: Metaconsensus and Intersubjective Rationality as Deliberative Ideals."
20. Simon John Niemeyer, "Deliberation in the Wilderness: Transforming Policy Preferences through Discourse" (PhD diss., The Australian National University, 2002). This ideal is consistent with a broader conception of free agency than implied by citizen sovereignty because it entails not just freedom *to* choose, but freedom to choose *why* one chooses across the domain of normative and epistemic claims. See Gary Watson, "Free Agency," *The Journal of Philosophy* 62, no. 8 (1975): 205–20. See also Jon Elster, *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
21. Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*.
22. John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 95–96.
23. Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*, 5–7.
24. Arguably, the most profound recent example of this kind of politics is the justification for the invasion of Iraq. Here the stated justification—weapons of mass destruction—was invoked because of its evocative symbolic content, which resonated strongly with the constituencies in a number of the countries participating in the invasion (e.g., United States, UK, and Australia). See also David O. Sears, "Symbolic Politics: A Socio-Psychological Theory," in *Explorations in Political Psychology*, eds. Shanto Iyengar and William James McGuire, *Duke Studies in Political Psychology* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993)
25. Phillip E. Converse, "Attitudes and Non-Attitudes: Continuation of a Dialogue," in *The Quantitative Analysis of Social Problems*, ed. Edward R. Tufte (Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley, 1970), 168–89.
26. Jon A. Krosnick, "The Stability of Political Preferences: Comparisons of Symbolic and Nonsymbolic Attitudes," *American Journal of Political Science* 35, no. 3 (1991): 547–76.
27. Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*, 6–7.
28. Doris A. Graber, *Verbal Behavior and Politics* (Urbana: University Of Illinois Press, 1976), 289.
29. Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*, 77.
30. See Bächtiger et al., "Disentangling Diversity in Deliberative Democracy: Competing Theories, Their Empirical Blind-Spots, and Complementarities."
31. John S. Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 51–54.
32. Rom Harré and Grant Gillett, *The Discursive Mind* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1994).
33. John S. Dryzek, *The Politics of the Earth: Environmental Discourses* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 1997); John S. Dryzek, "Reconstructive Democratic Theory," *American Political Science Review* 87, no. 1 (1993): 48–60; John S. Dryzek, "Australian

- Discourses of Democracy,” *Australian Journal of Political Science* 29 (1994): 221–39; John S. Dryzek and Simon John Niemeyer, “Discursive Representation,” *American Political Science Review* 102, no. 4 (2008): 481–94; M. Hajer, *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995).
34. Dryzek and Niemeyer, “Discursive Representation,” 481.
 35. Harré and Gillett, *The Discursive Mind*, 25. It should be noted that for Habermas, “discourse” refers to an idealized and undistorted form of communication, whereas here it is an empirically observable phenomenon embodying meaning, the content of which is explored and process of formation compared to these Habermasian ideals.
 36. See Joseph L. Arvai, Robin Gregory, and Timothy L. McDaniels, “Testing a Structured Decision Approach: Value-Focused Thinking for Deliberative Risk Communication,” *Risk Analysis* 21, no. 6 (2001): 1065–76; Ralph L. Keeney, *Value-Focused Thinking: A Path to Creative Decisionmaking* (Cambridge, MA.: Harvard University Press, 1992).
 37. Dryzek and Niemeyer, “Reconciling Pluralism and Consensus as Political Ideals”; Niemeyer and Dryzek, “The Ends of Deliberation: Metaconsensus and Intersubjective Rationality as Deliberative Ideals.”
 38. Niemeyer and Dryzek, “The Ends of Deliberation: Metaconsensus and Intersubjective Rationality as Deliberative Ideals.”
 39. For a critique of the assumption that groupthink and polarization are ubiquitous in group deliberation, see Robert S. Baron, “So Right It’s Wrong: Groupthink and the Ubiquitous Nature of Polarized Group Decision Making,” in *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, ed. Mark P. Zanna (San Diego: Elsevier Academic Press, 2005), 219–53.
 40. Hugo Mercier and Helene E. Landemore, “Reasoning Is for Arguing: Understanding the Successes and Failures of Deliberation,” *Political Psychology* (under review).
 41. It is also one of the few methodologies (particularly among those that are quantitative in nature) that is consistent with discourse theory. Ricardo Blaug, “Between Fear and Disappointment: Critical, Empirical and Political Uses of Habermas,” *Political Studies* 45 (1997): 100–17.
 42. The actual number of statements that could be allocated to each column varies with the studies reported in this article. It should be noted that it is possible to use a simple Likert scale for a Q study. However it is usually preferable to obtain a Q sort. Experience has shown that the quality of the resulting data is much enhanced by the sorting experience. It is an essentially “discursive” encounter, where participants are able reflect on their positions as they weigh up the statements in relation to one another, rather than provide relatively spontaneous responses to individual statements in isolation. Moreover, the resulting data are more strongly intersubjective in the sense that there is a more strongly shared understanding of which statements are more-agreed or less-agreed with, as opposed to using a Likert rating, where one individual’s rating may mean something slightly different than another individual’s rating. For example, some individuals are more likely to express their positions at the extremes of the spectrum compared to others, even if they happen to essentially agree in terms of the relative ordering of statements.
 43. Most commonly used for producing the factors is the Principal Components method, followed by a Varimax rotation, but it is also possible to employ other methods, including

- the manual rotation of factors according a specific criteria. For example, in the Bloomfield Track case study, manual rotation was used to maximise the relationship between the resulting factors and the positions held by individuals in terms of their expressed preferred options regarding the future of the road. The approach is given detailed treatment in Niemeyer, "Deliberation in the Wilderness: Transforming Policy Preferences through Discourse," chap. 6.
44. Complete consensus among participant Q sorts would result in a single discourse, as would a strongly bipolar relationship where one group is in complete consensus with the discourse and the other in complete dissensus. More commonly individual responses to the Q sorts tend to cluster around a small number of discourses. The absence of any structure among the Q sorts would fail to produce any meaningful discourse.
 45. See Anna Littleboy, Naomi Boughen, Simon Niemeyer, and Kath Fisher, "Societal Uptake of Alternative Energy Futures: Final Report" (Newcastle, NSW: CSIRO Energy Transformed Research Flagship, 2006); Simon John Niemeyer, "New Mexico ForestERA: Analysis of a Citizen and Stakeholder Deliberations on Forest Restoration Issues in Northern New Mexico" (Canberra: Deliberative Democracy Research Group, Research School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University, 2008); Simon John Niemeyer, "Report of the Analysis of the Ubc Biobank Deliberative Process" (Canberra: Deliberative Democracy Research Group, Research School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University, 2007); Simon John Niemeyer, Selen Ayirtman, and Janette HartzKarp, "Achieving Success in Large Scale Deliberation: Analysis of the Fremantle Bridge Community Engagement Process," in *Micropolitics in Deliberation Reports* (Canberra: Deliberative Democracy Research Group, Research School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University, 2008); David M. Secko, Nina Preto, Simon Niemeyer and Michael M. Burgess, "Informed Consent in Biobank Research: A Deliberative Approach to the Debate," *Social Science and Medicine* 68 (2009): 781–89.
 46. Elim Papadakis, "Environmental Policy," in *Hawke and Australian Public Policy*, ed. Christine Jennet and Randal G. Stewart (Melbourne: Macmillan, 1990), 142.
 47. Examples include issues such as, law-and-order enforcement (by flushing out drug traders, orchard thieves, and illegal migrants) and assisting the defence of Australia from attack by sea.
 48. Ross Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the Early 1980s: A History of Queensland* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1984), esp. 250.
 49. Even where environmental concerns create significant tension, many have acquiesced to such arguments, or reduced dissonance through a kind of kind of technocentric belief that both environment and community can benefit from the road. Indeed, one of the most creative of the arguments along this vein was that the Bloomfield Track would abate greenhouse gases due to reduced distances traveling to and from the Bloomfield Region to major centers in the South, as argued by the Queensland Minister for the Environment in Parliament QLA, "Queensland Parliamentary Debates," ed. Queensland Legislative Assembly (Brisbane: Government Printers, 1983), 748.
 50. Wilderness Action Group, *The Trials of Tribulation* (Mossman: Wilderness Action Group, 1983).

51. Tim Doyle, "Environment and the Media," *Social Alternatives* 11, no. 1 (1992): 47–54.
52. Funded by Land and Water Australia. Although the deliberative process was not directly linked to a decision, there is no evidence to suggest that participants took the process any less seriously.
53. The aggregation method used was Borda count. A number of possible methods can be used to calculate aggregate preference, for example H. Stern, "Probability Models on Rankings and the Electoral Process," in *Probability Models and Statistical Analyses for Ranked Data*, ed. M. A. Fligner and J. S. Verducci (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1993), 173–95. Moreover, no single method provides the definitive outcome, a conclusion most famously demonstrated by the work of Kenneth J. Arrow, *Social Choice and Individual Values*, 2nd ed. (New York: Wiley, 1963). Two of the other possible methods that could be used include Condorcet (or consensus), and Hare. All three methods were used, producing slightly different results for predeliberative ranks, but the same result postdeliberation—reflecting an increased level of consensus. For a complete analysis of policy preferences, see Niemeayer, "Deliberation in the Wilderness: Transforming Policy Preferences through Discourse," chap. 7.
54. It is relatively easy to imagine a scenario in which preferences have changed for reasons that strongly contradict deliberative ideals—bribery, threats, or even the successful manipulation of positions using plebiscitary rhetoric. Moreover, it is entirely possible that at least some individuals may hold well-developed positions prior to deliberation that reflect the ideals that are produced as a result of deliberation.
55. Robert E. Goodin, "Enfranchising the Earth and Its Alternatives," *Political Studies* 44, no. 5 (1996): 835–49.
56. See Tim O'Riordin, *Environmentalism* (London: Pion, 1981).
57. Fitzgerald, *From 1915 to the Early 1980s: A History of Queensland*; Dean Jaensch, "Electoral Characteristics of Small Northern Towns," in *Small Towns in Northern Australia*, ed. Peter Loveday and Ann Webb (Darwin: Australian National University, North Australia Research Unit, 1989), 301–24.
58. Doyle, "Environment and the Media."
59. Richard E. Petty and J. Cacioppo, *Communication and Persuasion: Central and Peripheral Routes to Attitude Change* (New York: Springer-Verlag, 1986).
60. Arthur Lupia, "Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behaviour in California Insurance Reform Elections," *American Political Science Review* 88, no. 1 (1994): 63–76.
61. This information had been in the public domain for some years, for example, Anthony M. Ayling and Avril L. Ayling, "The Effect of Sediment Run-Off on the Coral Populations of Fringing Reefs at Cape Tribulation," in *A Report to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority* (Townsville: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, 1991) and Anthony M. Ayling and Avril L. Ayling, "Medium-Term Changes in Coral Populations of Fringing Reefs at Cape Tribulation," in *A Report to the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority* (Townsville: Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, 1999), but it is a testament to the power of symbolic arguments that they persist in the face of countervailing evidence. Importantly, the evidence presented did not prove that there was, or ever would be, an adverse impact of the

- Bloomfield Track on the inshore reefs. It only supported the case that none could be found, such is the nature of scientific research. This point was contested among participants on the final day of the Bloomfield Track deliberative process and has implications for the role of basic scientific literacy in deliberation of evidence, which is beyond the scope of this article.
62. Climate change is another example where activists have overstated impact in order to elevate their concerns in public debate. See for example, Aynsley J. Kellow, *Science and Public Policy: The Virtuous Corruption of Virtual Environmental Science* (Cheltenham, UK and Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2007).
 63. Blair T. Johnson and Alice H. Eagly, "Effects of Involvement on Persuasion: A Meta-Analysis," *Psychological Bulletin* 106 (1989): 290–314; Mercier and Landemore, "Reasoning Is for Arguing: Understanding the Successes and Failures of Deliberation"; Richard E. Petty and John T. Cacioppo, "Involvement and Persuasion: Tradition Versus Integration," *Psychological Bulletin* 107, no. 3 (1990): 367–74.
 64. The remaining two discourse factor loadings for C and D were both 0.10 before deliberation and 0.18 and 0.04 postdeliberation respectively.
 65. Note that the predeliberative intersubjective consistency was taken prior to deliberation, but *after* information was sent out to participants. This might suggest that the preinformation intersubjective consistency may have been even lower. However, results from other case studies where a complete longitudinal record is available suggest that improvements in intersubjective consistency occur primarily during interpersonal deliberation and may actually *decrease* during early stages of mini-public deliberative processes involving information dissemination. Such outcomes contradict the assertion by Goodin and Niemeyer that deliberation begins at the early stages of information acquisition. Certainly a strong impact is made, but it appears that intersubjective synthesis is a result of interpersonal deliberation. See Robert E. Goodin and Simon John Niemeyer, "When Does Deliberation Begin? Internal Reflection Versus Public Discussion in Deliberative Democracy," *Political Studies* 51, no. 4 (2003): 627–49.
 66. Significance of a factor loading is determined by the formula $SE=1/\sqrt{n}$ where n is the number of statements in the Q sort. Here we calculate the standard error based on the number of statements used in the CP study from the original study (36) so that $SE=0.167$ and the 95 percent confidence interval $=SE \times 19.6 = 0.32$, such that a significant loading is one that is 0.32 or greater.
 67. More detailed arguments, including explanation as to why Fremantle Bridge Deliberative Survey achieved deliberation can be found in Niemeyer, Ayirtman, and HartzKarp, "Achieving Success in Large Scale Deliberation: Analysis of the Fremantle Bridge Community Engagement Process."
 68. Elster, *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality*.
 69. This is not surprising: citizens tend to vote expressively as citizens in the political sphere, in contrast to "economic voting" as consumers in markets based on narrow self-interests. See Geoffrey Brennan and Loren E. Lomasky, *Democracy and Decision: The Pure Theory of Electoral Preference* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).
 70. Lupia, "Shortcuts Versus Encyclopedias: Information and Voting Behaviour in California Insurance Reform Elections."

71. Compared with Yvonne Rydin and Mark Pennington, "Discourses of the Prisoners' Dilemma: The Role of the Local Press in Environmental Policy," *Environmental Politics* 10, no. 3 (2001): 48–71.
72. J. Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, 5th ed. (London: Allen & Unwin, [1943] 1976), 262. See also Philip E. Tetlock, "The Ever-Shifting Psychological Foundations of Democratic Theory: Do Citizens Have the Right Stuff?" *Critical Review* 12, no. 4 (1998): 545.
73. Walton, "Revitalizing the Public Sphere: The Current System of Discourse and the Need for the Participative Design of Social Action."
74. Robert E. Goodin and John S. Dryzek, "Deliberative Impacts: The Macro-Political Uptake of Mini-Publics," *Politics & Society* 34 (2006): 219–44.
75. Mark E. Warren, "Two Trust-Based Uses of Mini-Publics in Democracy," paper presented at the Conference on Democracy and the Deliberative Society, University of York, UK, 2009.
76. See, for example, Littleboy et al., "Societal Uptake of Alternative Energy Futures: Final Report."
77. Parkinson, "Legitimacy Problems in Deliberative Democracy."

Bio

Simon Niemeyer (simon.niemeyer@anu.edu.au) is a research fellow with the Centre for Deliberative Democracy and Global Governance, Research School of Social Sciences, The Australian National University. He graduated with a PhD in 2002. His research has focused on the impact of deliberative processes on preference formation and the implications for deliberative theory, using case studies across Australia, the USA, Canada and Europe. He has also researched energy technology acceptance and uptake and, more recently, the governance implications of the public response to climate change.