

Deliberation in the Schools: A Way of Enhancing Civic Engagement?

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Abstract

The public's levels of political interest, sophistication, and participation are notoriously low. Must we accept them as intractable facts of political life? Or could they somehow be ratcheted up? The large and growing literature about "deliberative democracy" envisions a polity in which the public is far more engaged—discussing and thus learning and thinking about policy issues and electoral choices. But a prescription of deliberation only pushes the problem back a stage: how can people be induced to deliberate?

Education, at least as presently configured, is clearly not the answer. Education levels have increased, while political knowledge and interest have either stayed the same or even declined. At least part of the reason, presumably, lies in a sere civics curriculum focusing on structural and procedural facts and patriotic rituals. But what if civics courses came to grips with actual policy issues? With matters of who gets what and how best to ensure national security and prosperity? Might more students then begin to see the stakes and get involved? Might they then remain involved, or even become more involved, in adulthood?

This paper examines the possibilities by analyzing the results from a randomized experiment in a California high school with a treatment designed to resemble a Deliberative Poll. Some students deliberated foreign policy and trade policy issues, others were exposed only to a traditional civic education curriculum, and yet others received no civic education. Compared to the other treatments, deliberation significantly increased knowledge, efficacy, interest, and opinionation. To the extent that these effects endure, adding policy deliberation to civic education may be a long-sought way of boosting the public's level of civic engagement.

In many ways, democratic citizens tend to fall well short of the democratic ideal. Many take only a tepid interest in politics. Most know relatively little about it. Majorities usually vote but large minorities, sometimes majorities, do not (except where voting is compulsory). Only minorities participate in more strenuous ways. In short, the public tends to display moderate to low levels of *civic engagement* (see Kinder xxxx, Luskin 1987, Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, Lijphart xxxx, or Galston xxxx for relevant reviews). To some extent, this will always be true. Inevitably, most people have much besides politics on their minds. But there is some variation—across countries and communities and over time and circumstances—and the quality and legitimacy of democratic decision making presumably benefit when the public is more engaged.

What to do, then, to elevate the prevailing levels of interest, sophistication, and participation? Must we accept them as intractable facts of political life? Or could they somehow be ratcheted up? The large and growing literature about “deliberative democracy” envisions a polity in which the public is far more engaged—discussing and thus learning and thinking about policy issues and electoral choices, where the discussion, to qualify as deliberation, has such normatively desirable properties as inclusiveness (of perspectives and discussants), balance, and civility (see Fishkin and Luskin 2005).

But deliberative democracy remains more ideal than reality. Ackerman and Fishkin’s (2004) “Deliberation Day” (a national holiday for discussing the policy issues in a presidential election campaign) would almost certainly have some effect, were it ever adopted, but is unlikely to be adopted anytime soon. Deliberative Polling (Fishkin 1997; Luskin, Fishkin, and Jowell 2002) provides a window on a more deliberative public’s attitudes and preferences by putting a random sample in a deliberative hothouse for a weekend. The results constitute useful input for policy-makers and others wishing to know what the public would think if it actually thought or

knew much about the issue(s). But as a vehicle for creating a more deliberative public, it has two major limitations. First, the deliberations only last a day or three, a relatively mild treatment to remedy a lifetime's previous inattention. Second, and perhaps more important, each Deliberative Poll (DP) engages a sample numbering only in the hundreds, and the process is sufficiently expensive that even repeated Deliberative Polling cannot be expected to involve more than a small fraction of any sizable population.

To nudge the public as a whole toward greater engagement, we need to “treat” many more people, to make the treatment more sustained, and to time it earlier in the life-cycle. This points us toward the secondary educational system, where, drop-outs aside, virtually the whole teenage population is a captive audience, and extended treatment, over one or more courses, is possible (see Galston 2001, 2004).

As matters stand, however, education is clearly ineffective. Education levels have increased since the Second World War, yet political knowledge and interest have either stayed more or less the same or even declined over the same period (Kinder 1983, Luskin 1987, Delli Carpini and Keeter 1996, Price 1999). Presumably the reason lies in the denatured nature of civics instruction. It may not be rigorous enough (Galston 2004). But, more importantly, it is apolitical, emphasizing dry structural and procedural facts and patriotic rituals, while avoiding actual policy issues (Merelman 1997). The evidence that taking existing civics courses increase political knowledge is therefore spotty. Niemi and Junn (1998) find some relationship, but Anderson *et al.* (1990) find none.¹

But what if the civics curriculum were refocused—on politics, rather than mere civics? What if civics courses came to grips with actual policy issues—with matters of who gets what and how best to ensure national security and prosperity? Might students then begin to see the

stakes and get involved?

This is the question we examine here, using data from a randomized experiment in a private high school in California. Students were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: some deliberated with one another about foreign policy and trade policy issues; others went through a traditional civic education curriculum; and yet others received no civic education. Though modest, the deliberative treatment significantly enhanced knowledge, efficacy, interest in politics, and opinionation, suggesting that more ambitious curricular revisions could have a major effect.

Civic Engagement among the Young

Adolescence is a particularly unpropitious stage for deliberating policy issues. *Promising*—in the existence of vast room for improvement and the possibility of enduring effects—but unpropitious. Even more than adults, adolescents are distracted by other (at least seemingly) more pressing concerns. Thus one of the most reliable findings in the study of public opinion and voting behavior is that voting, political interest, and political knowledge are an increasing function of age. The youngest adults vote, care, and know least.² The 1998 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) found that only 26 percent of college seniors had a “proficient” understanding of how the American government worked (Hedges 1999). This age gradient, moreover, has been steepening (Bennett 1998). In the early 1970s, nearly half the 18-29 year olds voted in presidential elections; in 2000, only about one third did so. The pattern for midterm elections is similar (Levine and Lopez 2002). Similarly, young people pay still less attention to and know still less about politics than their elders (Bennett 1998, Niemi and Junn 1998). In 1996, for example, 42 percent of NES respondents under 30 had read news stories about the presidential election, compared to 71 percent of those over 55 (xxxx). Only 58

percent of high school seniors know that the United States has a two-party system, and only 50 percent know that the state governors are part of the executive branch (Anderson et al. 1990). But getting students to participate actively in policy discussions—to deliberate, rather than passively receive information about “civics”—might get them to learn and think more about politics (Galston 2001, 2004). Civic education programs stressing activism and group interaction have been effective in boosting political activism and interest (Westheimer and Kahne 2004).³ Groups of 10-13 year olds worked for four years to build a neighborhood playground developed more favorable views towards politics (Boyte 2003). Among adults, deliberation appears to induce learning, public spiritedness, interest, participation, and efficacy, as well as net attitude change (Fishkin and Luskin 2005; Luskin and Fishkin 2003; Luskin, Fishkin, and Hahn 2007).

Design

The present experiment mimics Deliberative Polling as closely as possible. In very broad strokes, the method of Deliberative Polling is to interview a random sample; provide them with balanced briefing documents; bring them together for small group discussions and plenary sessions with policy experts or policy makers; and then have them answer the same questions they were asked when first interviewed. The main purpose is to catch a glimpse of what the public would think if it thought and knew more about the topics of discussion, but DPs have also routinely produced increases in knowledge, interest, participation, and internal political efficacy—very much the qualities that civic education aims to increase.

Our partner in this experiment, a private high school in Atherton, CA randomly assigned 140 freshmen into three groups. Students in the freshman class rotated through a civics/leadership class taught by the Academic Dean eight times a year for two weeks each month. Each class contained 17 to 18 students. Three classes, totaling 54 students, were

(Table 1 about here)

assigned to Treatment 1 (deliberation); two classes, totaling 35 students, to Treatment 2 (civics), and three classes, totaling 51 students, to Treatment 3 (control). Four students in the control group did not complete the post-test questionnaire and are thus excluded from the analyses below. Table 1 describes the set-up.

The topics of the deliberations in Treatment 1 were U.S. foreign policy, with special emphasis on the war in Iraq and the promotion of democracy, and U.S. trade policy. The first three sessions and half of the fourth were devoted to foreign policy, the remaining half of the fourth and all of the fifth to trade policy.

The students assigned to take the class in September, October, and February received the deliberative treatment. A Stanford University moderator visited the school and conducted a two-week DP-like intervention consisting of six one-hour meetings. The students completed the pre-test questionnaire in first half hour of the first meeting, immediately following which they were given briefing materials from a national 2003 DP on similar topics. In the last meeting, they completed the post-test questionnaire.

As in full-fledged DPs, the students submitted questions to be answered by experts. In this case, however, the students themselves served as the experts, researching the questions and presenting their findings to the class. Two students were randomly selected to serve as “experts,” one on foreign policy, one on trade policy, and asked to prepare themselves with the aid of readily available resources like the briefing materials, local libraries, and the internet. Each expert had 2-3 minutes to express his/her views and then answered questions from other students, based on the small group discussions.

The students assigned to take the class in November and January received the traditional civics treatment. They were given pre- and post-test questionnaires were conducted during the first and last class meetings and, in-between, received the same briefing materials prepared for the deliberative treatment. They were only asked to read the briefing materials, however, not to discuss them. The class meetings were simply those of the Academic Dean's normal civics/leadership class. **[More information on civics class to come.]**

The students assigned to take the class in March, April, and May constituted the control group (Treatment 3). The school gave them the pre-test questionnaire in early March and the post-test questionnaire roughly two weeks later, to match the two-week measurement interval for Treatments 1 and 2.

Table 2 displays the sample's demographics. About half (50.8%) were male, a large majority (78.4%) were Caucasian, and all but a few (95.6%) were either 14 or 15 years old. More than 90% of their parents had earned at least a college degree or more, and about 70% of their parents had been born in the U.S. This sample is not of course representative of the general high school population of the U.S., but this is an experimental design, whose strength lies in the causal inferences sustained by random assignment.

Measurement

The pre- and post-test questionnaires contained items gauging attitudes about and knowledge of relevant policy issues, plus political efficacy, interest, participation, tolerance, and trust. We constructed the following eight indices to capture civic engagement. (The exact question texts can be found in Appendix 1.)⁴

Knowledge. We asked ten questions in various closed-ended formats (multiple choice, true/false) to measure knowledge of the topics deliberated. The questions were based on

information in the briefing materials, provided to students in the deliberative and civics treatments. Right answers were coded as 1, wrong answers and “don’t know” responses (DKs) as 0.⁵

Involvement. This is the mean responses to questions asking how much attention the respondent pays to politics and how many issues he or she has opinions on.

No Opinion on Trade Policy. Students were asked six questions about their attitudes on issues dealing with globalization and free trade.

No Opinion on Foreign Policy. We asked seventeen questions about attitudes on foreign policy issues revolving around the conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Efficacy. We constructed an efficacy index using eight questions measuring various constructs dealing with representation, government accountability, and understanding of political affairs.

Tolerance/Respect. This is an index tapping tolerance of and respect for others’ beliefs with four questions dealing with the students’ openness to and interest in opinions other than their own.

Participation. This consists of items measuring the student’s willingness to engage in five participatory behaviors, including contact government officials, volunteering on campaigns, and voting when they come of age.

Trust in Government. This averages the answers to two questions regarding trust in the federal government and American democracy in general.

Results

Table 3 presents pre- to post-test changes in all three treatments and the differences in those changes between treatments, while Table 4 presents the changes in each treatment and the

differences in those changes between treatments. Compared to the control group, the

(Tables 3 and 4 about here)

deliberation group exhibited significantly greater gains in civic engagement. The gains achieved by the traditional civics group were generally weaker. For instance, the deliberation group increased their score on the knowledge test by an average of 1.57 questions, compared to only 0.23 for the control group ($p < .001$). The civics group increased their score by an average of only .31 ($p = .36$, in the comparison with the control group). Similarly the students engaging in deliberation, students showed a significant increase in political interest ($p < .001$), while the corresponding increases were somewhat weaker and less significant for those receiving traditional civics instruction ($p = .02$). Both the deliberation and civics treatment groups experienced significant gains in political efficacy as compared to the control group ($p = .04$ and $p = .006$, respectively).

The students also expressed more opinions after deliberating. They expressed nearly 1 more attitude (out of 6) on trade policy issues after deliberating, while the control group expressed about .5 fewer attitudes ($p < .001$). By contrast, the difference between the traditional civics and control groups was a minuscule .04 attitudes ($p = .46$). On the other hand, neither deliberation nor civics did so on foreign policy. We suspect that this was because students came into the project with more fully formed opinions on the “hot button” issues of Iraq and Afghanistan than on the more arcane issues of trade policy. In the pre-test survey, 37.1% of the students gave zero no-opinion responses (expressed an opinion on all 17 relevant items) on foreign policy, whereas only 17.1% gave zero no-opinion responses (expressed an opinion on all 6 relevant items) on trade policy. .

On three other indices, neither the deliberation nor the civics group achieved significant

gains. Both treatment groups were statistically indistinguishable from the control group with respect to changes in the tolerance/respect, participation, and trust in government indices. Participation is a matter of overt behavior that may take more time to develop. Tolerance/respect and trust might change more with more extended deliberation. We expand on these last reflections below.

Discussion

Deliberating policy issues in school appears from our experiment to produce significant increases in civic engagement, distinctly greater than the increases produced by traditional civics instruction. Knowledge, interest, efficacy, and opinionation on the less salient of our issues increase—which may in turn increase in political participation down the road. People higher in political efficacy, knowledge, and interest are likelier to vote and to engage in more demanding participatory activities like working for election campaigns (Verba and Nie 1972, Verba, Schlozman, and Brady 1995, Abramson and Aldrich 1982). So even though our results show little effect on participation, they show effects on some the variables known to affect participation—and may thus betoken some indirect, longer-term effect

It is worth keeping in mind, moreover, just how limited our deliberative treatment was: only a couple of weeks in only one course. A whole semester, not to mention the possibility of several semester-length courses, given over to the deliberation of live policy issues could be expected to have a far larger effect.

Of course these results stem from just one, possibly atypical school. Similar experiments on other schools or school systems will show how far these results can be generalized. But if they echo these findings, we should consider transforming civics education accordingly. This may be the one practical way of elevating the quality of democratic citizenship.

Table 1
Experimental Treatments

Month of Class	Group	Date of Pre-Test	Date of Post-Test	<i>n</i>
September	Deliberation	9/12	9/20	18
October	Deliberation	10/11	10/21	18
November	Civics	11/16	11/28	17
January	Civics	1/4	1/13	18
February	Deliberation	1/31	2/8	18
March	Control	3/1 (approx.)	3/15 (approx.)	17
April	Control	3/1 (approx.)	3/15 (approx.)	17
May	Control	3/1 (approx.)	3/15 (approx.)	17
	<i>n</i> for Deliberation			54
	<i>n</i> for Civics			35
	<i>n</i> for control group			51
	Total <i>n</i>			140

Table 2
Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
<u>Gender</u>	
Male	50.8
Female	49.2
<u>Age</u>	
12	0.7
13	2.2
14	63.7
15	31.9
16	1.5
<u>Race</u>	
White	78.4
Non-white	21.6
<u>Father's Education</u>	
Gradate Degree	79.3
College Degree	14.1
Less than College	6.7
<u>Mother's Education</u>	
Gradate Degree	59.3
College Degree	32.6
Less than College	8.2
<u>Parents' Nativity</u>	
Born in U.S.	70.4
Not Born in U.S.	29.6

Note: The *n* is 135, except for gender and race, where the *n* is 134.

Table 3
Pre- and Post-Test Civic Engagement by Treatment

	Control		Deliberation		Civics	
	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test	Pre-Test	Post-Test
Knowledge	2.51	2.74	2.59	4.17	2.60	2.91
Interest	3.22	3.06	3.16	3.37	3.21	3.30
Opinion, Trade Policy	1.89	2.36	2.24	1.30	2.11	2.54
Opinion, Foreign Policy	2.02	1.49	2.26	2.06	1.91	2.11
Efficacy	3.01	2.99	2.91	3.04	2.81	3.03
Tolerance/Respect	3.66	3.55	3.67	3.56	3.39	3.29
Participation Index	3.43	3.34	3.51	3.31	3.65	3.55
Trust in Gov. Index	2.83	3.03	2.81	2.87	2.86	3.01
	47	47	54	54	35	35

Table 4
Changes and Differences of Changes by Treatment

	Control	Deliberation	Civics	Deliberation – Control	Civics – Control
Knowledge	.23 (.17)	1.57 (.25)	.31 (.16)	1.34***	.08
Interest	-.16 (.08)	.21 (.09)	.09 (.09)	.37***	.25*
No Opinion, Trade Policy	.47 (.21)	-.94 (.23)	.43 (.28)	-1.41***	-.04
No Opinion, Foreign Policy	-.53 (.38)	-.20 (.40)	.20 (.31)	.33	.73
Efficacy	-.02 (.05)	.13 (.06)	.23 (.08)	.14*	.24**
Tolerance/Respect	-.11 (.07)	-.11 (.09)	-.10 (.10)	.00	.01
Participation	-.09 (.06)	-.20 (.08)	-.10 (.10)	-.11	.00
Trust in Government	.20 (.09)	.06 (.09)	.16 (.09)	-.14	-.04
N	47	54	35		

***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05 (one-tailed)

Note: The numbers presented are means and the standard errors for means are in parentheses. Four subjects in control group did not complete the post-test questionnaire and are excluded from the analysis. Standard deviations in parentheses. Unequal variance is assumed.

Appendix 1: Question Wordings and Response Choices

Knowledge

1. Which of the following is closest to the number of countries that have joined the World Trade Organization (WTO):

- 10
- 50
- 100
- 150
- 200
- Don't Know

2. Which of the following countries is not part of the NAFTA trade agreement:

- United States
- Canada
- Great Britain
- Mexico
- Don't Know

3. Which of the following is closest to the percentage of all world trade accounted for by the top five exporting countries (United States, Germany, Japan, France, and Great Britain):

- 30%
- 40%
- 50%
- 60%
- 70%
- Don't Know

4. In 2002, President George W. Bush imposed tariffs on what imported commodity?

- iron
- oil
- coal
- steel
- sugar
- Don't Know

5. How much does the United States spend annually on subsidies to American cotton growers?

- \$30 million
- \$300 million
- \$3 billion

- \$30 billion
- \$300 billion
- Don't Know

6. As far as you know, what is the Bush administration's position on creating a new Free Trade Area of the Americas? Does the Bush administration...

- Support it
- Neither support nor oppose it
- Oppose it
- Don't Know

7. Which of the following countries now harbors the most Al Qaeda and Taliban fighters?

- India
- Pakistan
- Sri Lanka
- Indonesia
- Saudi Arabia
- Don't Know

8. Iraq was directly involved in the attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon on 9-11-2001.

- True
- False
- Don't Know

9. Large quantities of weapons of mass destruction have been found in Iraq.

- True
- False
- Don't Know

10. Which of the following is closest to the number of Americans killed in Iraq since the war began:

- 100
- 500
- 1,000
- 10,000
- 15,000
- Don't Know

Interest

1. Some people have opinions about almost every political issue; other people have opinions about just some issues; and still other people have very few opinions.

What about you? Would you say you have opinions about almost every issue, about many issues, about some issues, about very few issues, or about no issues at all?

- Almost every issue
- Many issues
- Some issues
- Very few issues
- No issues at all
- I haven't thought much about this

2. Some people don't pay much attention to politics. How about you? How much attention do you pay to politics?

- A Great Deal
- A Lot
- A Moderate Amount
- A Little
- Not at All
- I haven't thought much about this

Trade Policy Attitudes

1. The U.S. should reduce government subsidies protecting U.S. farms and industries from competition.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly
- I haven't thought much about that

2. On the whole, more free trade means more jobs, because we can sell more goods abroad.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly
- I haven't thought much about that

3. Protecting existing American jobs and industries is more important than lowering prices and creating new jobs through free trade.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly
- I haven't thought much about that

4. The U.S. should actively pursue more free trade agreements like NAFTA – the North American Free Trade Agreement.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly
- I haven't thought much about that

5. American companies should be penalized for moving jobs to other countries.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly
- I haven't thought much about that

6. What sort of impact would you say that NAFTA – the North American Free Trade Agreement – has had so far on the American economy? Would you say it has:

- Helped a lot
- Helped somewhat
- Not had much effect
- Hurt somewhat
- Hurt a lot
- I haven't thought much about that

Foreign Policy Attitudes

1. By the time we leave Iraq, the results will have been worth the cost in lives and dollars.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat

- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly
- I haven't thought much about that

2. In general, the U.S. should be willing to invade other countries we believe pose a serious and immediate threat, even if we don't have a lot of international support.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly
- I haven't thought much about that

3. The U.S. should be willing to intervene in the affairs of other countries to make them more democratic.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly
- I haven't thought much about that

4. The Department of Homeland Security is doing an adequate job of protecting our borders, cargo transportation, and sea ports from terrorist attack.

- Agree strongly
- Agree somewhat
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Disagree somewhat
- Disagree strongly
- I haven't thought much about that

5. How much, on the whole, would you say that the war with Iraq has strengthened or weakened our national security? On the whole, has it...

- Strengthened it a lot
- Strengthened it somewhat
- Neither strengthened nor weakened it
- Weakened it somewhat
- Weakened it a lot
- I haven't thought much about this

6. And how much, on the whole, would you say the war with Iraq has increased or decreased the

power of Al Qaeda and similar terrorist groups? On the whole, has it...

- Increased their power a lot
- Increased their power somewhat
- Neither increased nor decreased their power
- Decreased their power somewhat
- Decreased their power a lot
- I haven't thought much about this

7. And how much, on the whole, would you say the war in Iraq has increased or decreased the chance of future terrorist attacks in the United States?

- Increased it a lot
- Increased it somewhat
- Neither increased nor decreased it
- Decreased it somewhat
- Decreased it a lot
- I haven't thought much about this

8. How successful or unsuccessful would you say the U.S. has been at keeping leaders hostile to the U.S. from being likely to regain power in Iraq? Have our efforts been ...

- Very successful
- Somewhat successful
- Neither successful nor unsuccessful
- Somewhat unsuccessful
- Very unsuccessful
- I haven't thought much about this

9. How successful or unsuccessful would you say our current policies WILL BE in keeping leaders hostile to the U.S. out of power in Iraq?

- Very successful
- Somewhat successful
- Neither successful nor unsuccessful
- Somewhat unsuccessful
- Very unsuccessful
- I haven't thought much about this

10. How important is it that a DEMOCRACY be established in Iraq?

- Absolutely necessary
- Extremely important
- Somewhat important
- Somewhat unimportant
- Not very important

- Not important at all
- I haven't thought much about this

11. How important is it that a STABLE GOVERNMENT be established in Iraq, even if it is not democratic?

- Absolutely necessary
- Extremely important
- Somewhat important
- Somewhat unimportant
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- I haven't thought much about this

12. How important is it that a GOVERNMENT FRIENDLY to the U.S. be established in Iraq, even if it is not democratic?

- Absolutely necessary
- Extremely important
- Somewhat important
- Somewhat unimportant
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- I haven't thought much about this

13. And how about Afghanistan? How successful or unsuccessful would you say the U.S. has been at keeping leaders hostile to the U.S. from being likely to regain power in Afghanistan? Have our efforts been ...

- Very successful
- Somewhat successful
- Neither successful nor unsuccessful
- Somewhat unsuccessful
- Very unsuccessful
- I haven't thought much about this

14. How successful or unsuccessful would you say our current policies WILL BE in keeping leaders hostile to the U.S. out of power in Afghanistan?

- Very successful
- Somewhat successful
- Neither successful nor unsuccessful
- Somewhat unsuccessful
- Very unsuccessful
- I haven't thought much about this

15. How important is it that a DEMOCRACY be established in Afghanistan?

- Absolutely necessary
- Extremely important
- Somewhat important
- Somewhat unimportant
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- I haven't thought much about this

16. How important is it that a STABLE GOVERNMENT be established in Afghanistan, even if it is not democratic?

- Absolutely necessary
- Extremely important
- Somewhat important
- Somewhat unimportant
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- I haven't thought much about this

17. How important is it that a GOVERNMENT FRIENDLY to the U.S. be established in Afghanistan, even if it is not democratic?

- Absolutely necessary
- Extremely important
- Somewhat important
- Somewhat unimportant
- Not very important
- Not important at all
- I haven't thought much about this

Efficacy

1. How much do public officials care about what people like you think?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all
- I haven't thought much about this

2. How much say do people like you have about what the government does?

- A great deal

- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- None at all
- I haven't thought much about this

3. How much attention do you feel the government pays to what people think when it decides what to do?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- None at all
- I haven't thought much about this

4. How much do you feel that having elections makes the government pay attention to what the people think?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all
- I haven't thought much about this

5. How much of a difference would you say it makes who is in power?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- None at all
- I haven't thought much about this

6. How much do you feel you can understand what is going on in politics and government?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all
- I haven't thought much about this

7. How in touch are national political leaders with the rest of the country?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- None at all
- I haven't thought much about this

8. How worthwhile are your opinions about politics?

- Extremely worthwhile
- Very worthwhile
- Moderately worthwhile
- Slightly worthwhile
- Not worthwhile at all
- I haven't thought much about this

Tolerance/Respect

1. How interested are you in hearing the opinions of other people?

- Extremely interested
- Very interested
- Moderately interested
- Slightly interested
- Not interested at all
- I haven't thought much about this

2. How willing are you to read things or listen to people who challenge your own opinions and provide different perspectives on political affairs?

- Extremely willing
- Very willing
- Moderately willing
- Slightly willing
- Not willing at all
- I haven't thought much about this

3. How open are you to changing or revising aspects of your political beliefs?

- Extremely open
- Very open
- Moderately open
- Slightly open
- Not open at all

I haven't thought much about this

4. Do you agree or disagree with the following statement: "I discover that people with views different from mine often have very good reasons for their views."

- Strongly agree
- Somewhat agree
- Neither agree nor disagree
- Somewhat disagree
- Strongly disagree
- I haven't thought much about this

Participation

1. How willing would you be to contact politicians or government officials either in person, or in writing, or in some other way?

- Extremely willing
- Very willing
- Moderately willing
- Slightly willing
- Not willing at all
- I haven't thought much about this

2. How willing would you be to work together with people who share the same political concern?

- Extremely willing
- Very willing
- Moderately willing
- Slightly willing
- Not willing at all
- I haven't thought much about this

3. When you turn 18, how likely is it that you will take the time to vote?

- Definitely vote
- Probably vote
- Might or might not vote
- Probably not vote
- Definitely not vote
- I haven't thought much about this

4. How willing would you be to show your support for a particular party or candidate by, for example, attending a meeting, putting up campaign signs, or helping in some other way?

- Extremely willing
- Very willing
- Moderately willing
- Slightly willing
- Not willing at all
- I haven't thought much about this

5. How willing would you be to talk to other people to persuade them to vote for a particular party or candidate?

- Extremely willing
- Very willing
- Moderately willing
- Slightly willing
- Not willing at all
- I haven't thought much about this

Trust in Government

1. How much do you trust the government in Washington to do what is right?

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- Not at all
- I haven't thought much about this

2. How satisfied are you with the way democracy works in the United States?

- Extremely satisfied
- Very satisfied
- Moderately satisfied
- Slightly satisfied
- Not satisfied at all
- I haven't thought much about this

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¹Consistent with findings that education qua years of schooling has little effect on political knowledge, once other relevant variables, including cognitive ability, are controlled for (Luskin 1990; see also Mereleman 1981).

²The gradient is only steepened by statistical corrections to raw turnout rates (McDonald and Popkin 2001).

³Cf. Gastil and Dillard (1999), who find that National Issues Forums increased political cynicism rather than participation, and Strachan (2006), who finds that classroom discussions about assorted political issues made students more inclined to “work on a political campaign” but not much more political efficacious. Note, however, that neither of these studies involved anything like random assignment.

⁴ The questions on foreign and trade policy attitudes were taken from past DPs conducted using adult populations and were in that sense pre-tested extensively. The questions on civic engagement were taken from the American National Election Studies as well as previous DPs.

⁵Traditional practice, criticized by Mondak (xxxx) but supported by Bennett (2001) and Luskin and Bullock (xxxx).