DELIBERATION
ON ECONOMIC & POLITICAL
INEQUALITY

STANFORD UNIVERSITY CENTER FOR DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY

FINAL REPORT
March 2021

Prepared by:
The Winter 2021 students in Communication 138/238
Deliberative Democracy Practicum: Applying Deliberative Polling

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Executive Summary

Pioneered by James Fishkin at Stanford University’s Center for Deliberative Democracy, Deliberative Polling® is an attempt to use public opinion research in a new and constructive way. The polling process reveals the conclusions the public would reach if people had the opportunity to become more informed and more engaged by the issues. Usually with random sampling that is representative of national demographics, Deliberative Polls is used to understand how public will formation look like if the people were given the platform to engage with people like themselves. However, for this session, we have gathered a sample of 51 undergraduate freshmen from Stanford University, all taking the course THINK 71.

Throughout the course of the school week, these students met in moderated small group discussions and plenary sessions with competing experts. The students deliberated in depth on specific policy proposals designed to reduce economic inequality, which included Universal Basic Income, Baby Bonds, more progressive tax structures, and capping executive pay. To aid in their discussions, participants used a detailed briefing book which discussed policy proposals in these four areas, with balanced arguments for and against each proposal. This booklet was vetted by experts.

Participant Views

When asked if they agree or disagree with the statement “cash grants will help bring people out of poverty,” more participants overall reported agreeing post-deliberation, increasing from 60.0% to 77.3%, as disagreement decreased from 20.0% to 15.9%.

Opinion regarding the financial responsibility of recipients showed very slight changes if at all. Those who agreed that people spend their money irresponsibly decreased from 41.9% to 40.9%, and those who disagreed increased from 32.6% to 36.4%. These changes are slight and likely was not a primary factor in whether or not the participant supported the full proposal of Universal Basic Income.

When coming into the deliberation, participants seemed to have reached a consensus in supporting government involvement to solve inequality. When asked if they agree that the government should be involved in combating inequality, 97.7% of respondents agreed while 2.3% (all Independent) disagreed, and proportions did not change post-deliberation.
When asked if it is impossible to properly fight inequality without the government, slightly more respondents affirmed that it is impossible, from 86.0% to 88.6% and slightly more respondents seemed to affirm that it is not, from 7.0% to 9.1%. Regarding this question, it appears that 9.7% more of Democrats agreed that it was impossible while 14.7% less of Independents agreed, while 3.2% less of Democrats disagreed and 15.4% more of Independents disagreed.

**Universal Basic Income**

This policy proposal was to implement a Universal Basic Income (UBI) which, if passed, would have the federal government provide all working-age adults (over 18 years old) a monthly cash grant of $1,000USD regardless of income. Overall, participants initially came into the discussion with a positive opinion of this proposal, but the debate elicited more skepticism. Throughout the session, support eroded from 65.1% to 56.8%, and opposition increased from 16.3% to 34.1%. This is despite support for the idea of universal basic income (and government providing cash grants) increasing, as shown above.

These observations appear consistent throughout party-lines. While this sample happened to not include any students who identified as Republican, Independents showed greater opposition to this proposal post-deliberation from 50.0% to 61.5%. Democrats showed a more drastic increase in opposition, from 3.2% to 22.6% (while support dropped from 77.4% to 64.5%).

**Baby Bonds**

This policy proposal is for the federal government to, basically, implement a government bond of $1000 to each child born, which is otherwise known as Baby Bonds. Overall, participants entered the deliberation with a majority positive opinion on the proposal, and though the proportion of positive opinions did not change after the session, the rate of opposition increased notably. Support diminished slightly, from 80.0% to 77.3%, while opposition rose from 7.5% to 18.2%. Interestingly, middle opinions also diminished from 12.5% to 4.5%. It is possible that those initially undecided about the proposal skewed negatively post-deliberation.

These observations appear consistent throughout party-lines. While this sample happened to not include any students who identified as Republican, Independents showed an increase in support post-deliberation from 66.7% to 69.2%, though opposition too increased from 25.0%
to 30.8%. Democrats showed a decrease in positive opinion from 85.7% to 77.3%, and an increase in opposition from 0.0% to 12.9%

**More Progressive Tax Structure: Taxes on High Earners/Capital Gains**

Progressive tax structure generally maintained its appeal over the course of the deliberative process. Increasing taxes on income earned by those making more than $2 million per year decreased slightly from 93% to 90% approval, with opposition actually decreasing to 3% from 7% while no opinion increased to 7% from 0%. Increasing taxation on capital gains saw a large increase in approval, going from 70% in favor and 23% in opposition to 83% in favor and 7% opposed.

The partisan split on the proposal to increase taxes on income earned by those making more than $2 million per year was pronounced, 100% of those leaning republican before and after the deliberations, compared to those leaning Democrat staying generally in favor at 100% to 80%. Increasing taxes on capital gains saw an increase in popularity among Democrats and Independents, shifting from 87.5% to 100% and 0% to 50% approval respectively.

**Capping Executive Pay in Proportion to the Median Pay**

Capping executive pay is an issue proposed to the student participants in terms of numerical proportion (i.e to what proportion to median salary would you cap executive pay at). A 20x cap on executive pay had an interestingly high drop in favorability, going from 72% in favor pre-deliberation to a relatively low approval rating with only 38% of students approving after the deliberations. Opposition rose from 17% to 43%, while those not sure rose from 10% to 21%, all indicating that capping executive pay became markedly less popular over the course of deliberations.

In terms of partisan divide, capping executive pay remained 100% opposed by Republican leaning students before and after the deliberations. Students who leaned democrat and independents grew significantly more opposed to capping executive pay, going from 73% to 43% approval and 80% to 40% approval respectively.

**Evaluation and Knowledge Gains**

The participants offered very favorable evaluations of the process and all its components. 93%
rated the overall process valuable; 86% rated the small group discussions valuable, 91% for the briefing materials and 89% for the plenary sessions. There were also substantial knowledge gains. On a battery of knowledge questions, the participants increased their overall correct score significantly. Knowledge questions were selected from topics discussed, including Baby Bonds, Universal Basic Income, executive salary inequality, median household income, and student loan debt.

**Changes in Opinions: Economic Floor**

*Universal Basic Income*

Students were asked to rate their support for Universal Basic Income on a numeric scale, with “10” representing strongly agreed, “1” representing strongly disagree, and “5” being in the middle, before and after deliberation. Mean rating for UBI decreased from 7.66 to 6.86 -- almost an entire point. The standard deviation, or spread, made a negligible increase from 2.66 to 2.68 (<Fig. 1>.)

![Average support for UBI](https://cdd.stanford.edu)
Throughout deliberation, participants made a number of arguments against implementing a UBI; participants commonly disagreed with the logic of giving a basic income to everyone rather than those most in need. Here are a few examples:

“From what I read, at least in our briefing materials, is that it’s going to address the inequality issue which I don’t believe is true, because if you’re giving everyone the $1,000 what you are essentially doing is inflating.”

“I don’t think it would address inequity, I think it would address poverty.”

“I agree a lot with person X because I feel that something that is more targeted like putting money into public education or child care would better address the systemic inequalities that exist in society than just giving some fixed amount of money to everyone.”

**Baby Bonds**

Students were asked to rate their support for Baby Bonds before and after deliberation. Mean rating for UBI decreased from 7.85 to 7.79 -- a slight decrease. The standard deviation, or spread, made a negligible decrease from 2.57 to 2.46 (<Fig. 2>). There was a slight decrease for the policy support due to the fact that the students were questioning the effectiveness of the baby bonds.

Some students believed that Baby Bonds would level the playing field and give an opportunity for children who are not supported by their parents. However, others claim Baby Bonds might be an excess source of money that families/babies may not need. There are those who might need baby bonds the most may have less to gain while those who do not need it are also gaining an excess. This slight imbalance may be the reason why the participants slighted disagreed after deliberation.

“I was more in favor of baby bonds than the universal basic income because I think the idea that it’ll like level, the more like level the playing field for like people, young adults growing up.”

“not everybody get those if you’re born parents with certain income level”

“Just because you have rich parents doesn’t mean that your parents will support you and I think that the idea of a baby bond is that everyone starts off on an equal.”
Similarities

Regarding UBI and Baby Bonds, participants were more decisive after deliberating with their class. Compared to the pre-survey (2.3% & 9.1%), the post-survey (0%) stated that no individual selected ‘no opinion’ in the post-survey. These deliberations helped the participants to understand the topics more, and those initially undecided went on to either favor or oppose.

With both UBI and Baby Bonds, we find that after deliberation there was an increase in opposition and decrease in support. Likely, participants initially believed that distributing more money to everyone would be beneficial, but after discussing with peers they considered the prompts in more depth.
**Prompt 1:** Implementing a universal basic income in the form of monthly cash grants of $1000USD to all adults

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Pre-Survey</th>
<th>Post-Survey</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favor</td>
<td>65.1%</td>
<td>56.8%</td>
<td>-8.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the middle</td>
<td>18.6%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>-9.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose</td>
<td>16.3%</td>
<td>34.1%</td>
<td>17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-2.3%</td>
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</table>

**Prompt 2:** Giving all children a bond at birth that accumulates over time, which they may use as adults

<table>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favor</td>
<td>80.0%</td>
<td>77.3%</td>
<td>-2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the middle</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>-8.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>10.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-9.1%</td>
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**Comparison with Economic Ceiling**

The pre-survey resulted in an average standard deviation of 2.615 for policies regarding an economic floor (EF), i.e. UBI and Baby Bonds. The spread for policies regarding an economic ceiling (EC) was much higher with a standard deviation of 3.09. This means that participants were more closely aligned regarding EF policies than they were for EC policies before deliberations began.

After deliberations, the difference in spread between the two categories (EF and EC) dropped dramatically from 0.475 to 0.02. This means that over the course of the study, group opinion aligned relatively more in favor of EC policies than it did for EF policies.

One potential explanation is that UBI and Baby Bonds were more easily, immediately understood, and therefore participants learned less over the course of deliberations that would change their initial opinion or cause them to fragment. For example, the pre-survey knowledge section resulted in participants accurately defining UBI and Baby Bonds at 95.5% and 100% respectively.
On the other hand, Capping Executive Pay and More Progressive Tax Structures are policies that were not so readily understood. They require more technical knowledge and augment systems we already have in place rather than erect new ones. Perhaps, students learned more about the context and efficacy of these two policies over the course of the deliberations and came to more of a consensus.

For example, the transcripts of one group show participants beginning the discussion of a More Progressive Tax Structure with a lot of confusion, and ending the discussion with more clarity and confidence. Here is a sampling of comments from that discussion in order:

“Um I think just looking at the numbers, although I probably don't understand it all the way, the fact that a 1% increase would lead to 125 million available for other necessary uses seems like a very appealing argument to me.”

“I’m not, I guess I wasn’t really quite sure why the capital gains tax wasn’t like similar to income tax to begin with.”

“I was kind of like I agree with like... a 1% increase [having] such a huge impact... but I was also kind of trying to read into... the opposition's like argument against the like capital gains. I think they said, like right now, that [in terms of] income tax on the top 1% they paid 37% like total... but like the proposal that was put in place [would] hike that up to like 65%, but I was also confused why we couldn't play up... [the] big huge impact [and] want to... very gradually increase it.”

“I feel like this kind of 125 million figure is misleading because it accompanies a 1% increase in the tax obligations of top earners, but what we know empirically, is that on the whole top earners actually paid less effective blended tax rates than a lot of middle earners... And I think a lot of that comes from capital gains tax dodging. I think honestly that the capital gains tax argument of I've already paid tax on this money is very disingenuous because I know they haven't. A lot of companies, especially a lot of like big tech CEO's make virtually nothing for salary. So, for example, it's not like a secret that. Mark Zuckerberg only collects $1 a year in salary, but rakes in millions from just owning his own stock and also from stock buybacks that he keeps using government bailout money on. So for that particular reason I kind of think that the proposal is almost too fair, to the point where I feel like top earners really should be paying a lot more, and especially, they should be paying a lot more capital gains tax, since there are a lot of social programs that the government does not provide but needs to be providing.”
Changes in Opinions: Economic Ceiling

**Prompt 1:** Increasing taxes on income earned by those making more than $2 million per year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
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<th>Post-Survey</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favor</td>
<td>93.0%</td>
<td>90.9%</td>
<td>-2.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the middle</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>-4.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>2.3%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-2.3%</td>
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On the first economic ceiling topic, proposing that taxes on income earned by those making more than $2 million per year be increased, student support increased slightly after deliberation (Mean change: $T_1 = 8.448; T_2 = 8.605). Support was already high, with 93.0% of students favoring the proposal before deliberation. It is worth noting that though the mean of student responses increased, students did move toward the center, as the percentage of students in the middle increased from 0.0% to 6.8%.

**Prompt 2:** Increasing taxes on capital gains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Pre-Survey</th>
<th>Post-Survey</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favor</td>
<td>74.4%</td>
<td>93.2%</td>
<td>18.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the middle</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-7.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
<td>-11.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>11.4%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>-11.4%</td>
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In respect to capital gains, students were initially 74.4% in favor of increasing these taxes; however, after deliberation, the percentage of those in support increased to 93.2%, an 18.8% change (Mean Change: $T_1 = 6.872; T_2 = 8.256). Additionally, after deliberation, the 7.7% those who were “in the middle” on this issue adopted either an opposed or favor position. Those in opposition of higher capital gains taxation decreased from 17.9% to 6.8%.
Prompt 3: Capping executive pay to 20x proportion of the median employee salary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Pre-Survey</th>
<th>Post-Survey</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Favor</td>
<td>72.7%</td>
<td>43.2%</td>
<td>-29.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In the middle</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oppose</td>
<td>18.2%</td>
<td>38.6%</td>
<td>20.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No opinion</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
<td>0.0%</td>
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</table>

Student support for capping executive pay to 20x proportion of the median employee salary decreased by more than a point and a half (Mean change: T1 = 6.841; T2 = 5.182). Before deliberations, a majority of 72.7% of students supported the proposal. Less than half of students were still in support after deliberation (43.2%). Those in the middle doubled (from 9.1% to 18.2% of student responses), and those in opposition increased from 18.2% of student responses to 38.6%. Though a plurality of students remained in support of the proposal, students became much more widely split overall.

Economic Ceiling Analysis

Generally, changes in the means denotes a change in position. While near consensus existed among student opinions regarding increasing the taxes on higher income individuals, opinions changed in the topics of increasing capital gains taxation, and capping executive pay. The increase in support for increasing capital gains tax and decrease in support for capping executive pay represent an inverse relationship. This may be significantly influenced by the expert opinions expressed in the plenary session:

“I don’t see how one can effectively CAP, the ratio from highest to lowest employee as probably the materials for this call me clear, you can offload to contractors, the lowest paid employees”

“I suspect the economic significance of capping executive pay is trivial alongside a more progressive taxation system, which involves the entire population.”

Student responses reflected a general disillusionment with the current economic system, which increased after deliberation. For example when asked whether they believed financial success
depends on luck rather than hard work, 79.5% of students agreed before deliberation. This increased to 93.2% after discussions (Mean Change: T1 = 6.795; T2 = 7.545). In addition, student responses to knowledge-based questions increased in accuracy across the board after deliberation. This suggests that some of the changes in opinion reflected in the post-survey may also have occurred because students gained a better understanding of the underlying issues with which these topics interact. Observations of student deliberation suggest that students were understanding of their own ignorance on the issues of tax codes and corporate structure. Their changes in opinion may be attributed to an increase in knowledge due to the briefing materials, deliberations, and plenary sessions.

**Qualitative Analyses**

One of the practical realities of this experiment in deliberation is the non-uniform nature of the individual deliberations, with varying degrees of moderator interaction, participation, and other factors leading to at times dissimilar outcomes for participants. As such, this report on the qualitative will focus on the structure, qualitative differences and practical execution of the deliberative discussion instead of the specific thoughts of students regarding the discussed policies (which themselves are analyzed in depth in the quantitative analysis section). Content of discourse itself is still important, but the unique nature of each session lends itself to the observation of holistic trends rather than individual opinions for our quantitative analysis. Accordingly, this section will be split into five subsections regarding the most prominent observation made in our quantitative analysis (Participation, Moderator Influence, Time Allocation, Pace of Deliberations) followed by a brief discussion of conclusions and recommendations for future development of the deliberative event.

**Participation**

Overall participation in the deliberative discussions was good, with all participants generally speaking multiple times in each session. However, there are a few exceptions where students participated less that indicate a few recurring problems within the structure of the sessions. The two biggest issues that seem to arise to negatively affect the participation of students are over-moderation and individual students alternately dominating the conversation or hiding in the background.

The first problem, over-moderation, arises when moderator influence (which will be discussed in more detail later) leads to an over-structured session where students are more responding to the questions and cues of the moderator than steering the discussion in a collective way.
With less fluid discussions students’ thoughts come out less frequently and naturally and oftentimes a singular student begins to dominate the discussion (which can feel more like a one on one between moderator and student than a 5+ person deliberative session). Though this problem wasn’t present in very many sessions, it suggests that a more uniform set of rules for the moderator role would help increase participation and prevent this phenomenon of over-moderation from happening.

The second issue of individual students speaking so much they dominate the conversation was similarly recurring but not a universal phenomenon. Some students just seem to be more willing to speak their mind on the issue (whether or not this stems from pre-existing beliefs or a strong interest in the topic), while some (thankfully rare) students choose not to speak at all. While moderators generally do good work in keeping the students speaking equally, those with well developed minority viewpoints often end up naturally driving the deliberation. While the exact nature of that minority opinions widely varies throughout the breadth of our sessions, the common trend seems to be students wanting to ensure that their contrasting opinions are represented at least at parity with the opinions of the rest of the group. A reassessment of whether or not the priority of the deliberation should prioritize forming group consensus or showcasing differences in opinion must preface any real attempt to deal with this problem, with a focus on the former suggesting a limitation on individual speaking while the latter would encourage equal time given to diverse (if unpopular) viewpoints.

**Moderator Influence**

Varying levels of moderator influence on the deliberation were the most important, prominent, and recurring issues observed throughout our qualitative analysis. While moderator training was uniform, moderators in practice had very different ideas on how involved they would actually be in the live deliberation. Some moderators took a hands-off approach and only intervened to correct developing issues as they arose (as was emphasized in the training), and these sessions were the most successful in terms of participation and quality of debate.

To contrast, some moderators directly steered the conversation in terms of setting discussion topics and goals (ex: directly asking students to push the debate in a normative direction), interjecting into the deliberation, and even providing their own presentations to preface the discussion beyond the provided briefing materials. It would be fair to say that this largely had a negative effect on the deliberations, with students interacting less organically with each other and more in line with the prompts of their moderators. This irregular level of moderator engagement also has a deleterious effect on the analysis of the pre and post surveys, with
students having dissimilar levels of direct exposure to the moderators’ viewpoints. This may be a direct consequence of enlisting moderators from the pool of instructors teaching the course, each with their own (more or less) pronounced opinions on the topics discussed, resulting in students falling more in line with the instructor/moderator when they take control of the session. I would suggest more stringent adherence to the moderator norms, more effort to make the moderators’ role in the deliberation uniform, and a separation of the instructor role from the moderator position to avoid familiarity with the students.

**Time Allocation**

Time allocation was generally very evenly distributed, with each topic receiving time equal roughly half of the 80 minute deliberation session. This ranged between 30 and 40 minutes from each topic, with notably less time spent in direct discussion in sessions where the moderator prefaced the session with their own presentation (itself 10-15 minutes) or directly intervened to switch the format (ex: going from a back and forth to a Q&A). No topic individually seemed to consistently take up more time, with the level of structure in the session determining the exact process of switching between issues (either organically by students or by moderators after a lull in the conversation at an appropriate time). More structure generally meant less time actually deliberating between students, but also was useful in situations where the conversation naturally slowed down and a push was needed to switch topics. It may be prudent to set limitations (perhaps at 10 minutes with 35 minutes allocated to each topic) on time spent not deliberating and in alternative forms of discussion (i.e. Q&A that could have occurred outside of the deliberation itself), if not prohibiting it entirely.

**Pace of Deliberations**

Pace of discussion varied heavily between individual sessions, some having more static levels of engagement while others were more dynamic (in terms of discussion picking up or slowing down). While some sessions were very active with dense deliberation throughout the 80 minutes, others were more passive and required more intervention from the moderators. Deliberations that were more structured (i.e. more q&a or moderator led) were also observed to have those students on the more passive side. However, moderators also had a positive effect on keeping the discussions fresh and not bogged down on smaller arguments by asking questions or changing the topic when necessary, evidencing their importance as referees for the deliberation (rather than coaches).
More sessions appeared to pick up activity over their 80 minute durations (opposed to slowing down) as students were able to develop more complex opinions about the specific topics. This is a great indication of students’ previous beliefs actually being shifted (or at least influenced beyond neutrality) over the course of the deliberation.

Miscellaneous Observations

International students had interestingly divergent opinions on many of the topics discussed, generally were more supportive of the traditional welfare state and expansion of benefits. Even more fascinating was their lower opinion (especially compared to the American majority) of financialization and consumer investment as a solution for economic and political inequality.

Most issues seemed to have at least some level of consensus approval on the conceptual level (save for executive pay capping) with a few outliers generally associated with the more fiscally conservative students. Disagreements were much more common when comparing proposals against each other (ex: UBI vs. Baby Bonds) and when considering the specifics of policy execution. This proved to be some of the most substantive deliberation, and could be encouraged further by allocating more time for an explicitly comparative discussion on the issues.

Conclusions

While the deliberations can certainly be qualified as a success, there clearly needs to be a more uniform normative standard for individual sessions and a re-emphasis on student-led (but not dominated) discussion. Moderator influence especially needs to be standardized so each student going through the lengthy process of deliberation is afforded the same amount of time to speak organically and formulate their own distinct viewpoints.

Notes to Future Research

The qualitative analysis on student deliberation could be further expanded into examining their quality of discourse as well as the types of discourse. Discourse Quality Index (DQI) which is developed by Steenergen et al. (2003) provides an insight into a systemized understanding of how people spoke such as the frequencies of speech act, respect among participants, level of justification, contents of justification, and usage of story-telling (Steiner, 2014).
Though DQI is limited as it only counts for the individual speech act -then to consider the collective epistemological aspect of deliberation - it might be useful for understanding deliberation in an educational context. For instance, the difference between domestic and international students’ ways of justifying their arguments could have been systematically investigated.

Also, in the deliberation, there were varying levels of deliberation from questioning the actual outcome of proposals once they are implemented or what would be the meaning of diminishing political inequality and economic inequality. Even though there is nothing wrong with approaching the issue from a concrete and realistic perspective, if the instructors wanted to use Deliberative Poll to teach students to think critically, differentiating the levels of conceptual deliberation would be useful. For instance, Rosenberg (2007) had differentiated the types of deliberation based on their goals: conventional for choosing the right path and maintaining social relationships, cooperative for reaching agreement on the meanings, and collaborative to reconstruct meaning.

Student Impact

While the formal instruction of THINK 71 equipped students with the theoretical foundations to understand citizenship, the deliberative poll has aided students in understanding and debating its applied tenets. For instance, course instruction, surrounded by normative economic inequality discussions, was supplemented by practical policy applications to achieve such equity. Through deliberation, students who had little to no previous opinion of the issues were able to build upon their knowledge of the class and take an actual position. This can be demonstrated through the data. During the pre-survey, some students indicated that they possessed no opinion on certain policy matters; however, all students who initially had no opinion ended up taking a position in the post-deliberation survey. Essentially, the no opinion responses had been eliminated, indicating that students felt confident after deliberation to form their own policy view. This demonstrates the theoretical elements of citizenship being put into practice.

Additionally, just as citizenship involves engagement from the respective polity, the deliberative poll provides an outlet for this engagement among the students. The deliberation process has mocked the policy discussions that occur within real-world associational densities within civil society. Through their discussions of briefing materials and attendance of the plenary session, THINK 71 students are able to engage with the material more deeply than before. The aforementioned changes in means, and by extension the policy positions, capture
this phenomenon: students are becoming more engaged and informed regarding topics of citizenshipe. Collectively, deliberation provides a unique opportunity for the teaching team to utilize these insights to better understand the current mindset of Stanford students, and the role their course played in shaping their opinions.
Letter to the Teaching Team - Fabian Valerio
Dual COMM 138 and THINK 71 Student Perspective

Being coincidentally enrolled in both the THINK 71 course and the Deliberative Democracy Practicum class yielded an interesting opportunity for insight and participation in both sides of the partnership. For instance, I was able to understand my class’s conversation’s dynamic and relay this knowledge to our Deliberative Poll team for a more tailored construction of the practicum. I also had the chance to hear my classmates’ live reactions to the event, which elevated my comprehension of our event evaluation questions at the end of our post-survey. In the end, evaluation of the Deliberative Poll event’s impact on the THINK course is multi-faceted.

The compatibility of holding a Deliberative Poll event in the “Citizenship in the 21st Century” course depends on its efficacy in contributing towards two particular goals of the course: giving students the opportunity to explore citizenship and bridging connections between the freshman students.

On the topic of creating spaces for the students’ learning of citizenship, the Deliberative Poll served as a way for students to immerse themselves in the themes of class discussions. Early in the course, for example, the importance of contribution through voting is considered. Later, dialogue is explored, as students question the role and approaches to freedom of speech. With the Deliberative Poll, students are able to contribute towards their class’ understanding of policy issues in a select approach to conversation. They are able to practice what they preach as they engage each other’s stances and collectively refine their opinions, leading to the second course goal.

When considering the latter goal of bridging freshman students in this proposed introductory course, this partnership supports creating a space in which students’ input is valued. The small group seminar-style format of the class gives way for students to opine and craft their perspectives, under guidance of instructors. However, the small group discussions during the Deliberative Poll were great opportunities for students to craft their perspectives, this time in conjunction with their peers. With instructors pivoting to being moderators, students sustained the responsibility of answering questions but this time were able to create the questions themselves and guide the discussion in whichever direction they preferred, during the small group discussion which were the highest ranked component of the event, in terms of value added to the students’ learning.
REFERENCE


Appendix I. Statistical Analysis

For additional tablature see Center for Deliberative Democracy Website.

Table 1. Supported maximum monthly cash amount for UBI ("no opinions" excluded)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>T1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. of Responses</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1559.72</td>
<td>1578.85</td>
<td>1510.00</td>
<td>1317.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>1223.74</td>
<td>1227.53</td>
<td>1278.41</td>
<td>723.45</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 2. Supported maximum monthly cash amount for Baby Bonds ("no opinions" excluded)

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. of Responses</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>34</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1995.65</td>
<td>2180.00</td>
<td>1650.00</td>
<td>1829.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>2518.70</td>
<td>2920.42</td>
<td>1634.23</td>
<td>1815.34</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Table 3. Supported proportion of a company’s median salary to cap executive salary ("no opinions" excluded. The value including an outlier is in parentheses.)

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<th></th>
<th>T1</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Democrat</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N. of Responses</td>
<td>30 (31)</td>
<td>21 (22)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>145.83</td>
<td>150.00</td>
<td>124.89</td>
<td>175.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(32399.19</td>
<td>(45597.73)</td>
<td>(51590.24)</td>
<td>(63996.28)</td>
<td>(78458.27)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td>163.27</td>
<td>2920.42</td>
<td>170.81</td>
<td>226.29</td>
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<tr>
<td>(179579.20</td>
<td>(213168.80)</td>
<td>(217705.80)</td>
<td>(240397.40)</td>
<td>(263089.00)</td>
</tr>
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</table>
Implementing a universal basic income in the form of monthly cash grants of $1000USD to all adults

Giving all children a bond at birth that accumulates over time, which they may use as adults

Increasing taxes on income earned by those making more than $2 million per year

Increasing taxes on capital gains

Capping executive pay to 20x proportion of the median employee salary

Appendix II. Briefing Materials
See Center for Deliberative Democracy Website

Appendix III. Pre-Deliberation Survey

1. Please write your email address so we can send you briefing materials. [Fill in the Blank]

2. On a scale 0 to 10 scale, where 0 is strongly opposed, 10 is strongly favored, and 5 is in the middle, how strongly would you oppose or favor each of the following?
   a. Implementing a universal basic income in the form of monthly cash grants of $1000USD to all adults
   b. Giving all children a bond at birth that accumulates over time, which they may use as adults
   c. Increasing taxes on income earned by those making more than $2 million per year
   d. Increasing taxes on capital gains
   e. Capping executive pay to 20x proportion of the median employee salary

3. On universal basic income, what maximum monthly cash amount would you support? Please enter in a monthly amount. Enter the amount as an integer, for example 1000. If you do not have an opinion, please enter ‘no opinion’. [Fill in the blank]

4. On baby bonds, what maximum annual cash contribution would you support the federal government providing for baby bonds? Please enter in an ANNUAL amount. Enter the amount as an integer, for example 1000. If you do not have an opinion, please enter ‘no opinion’. [Fill in the blank]

5. On capping executive pay, on a scale from 0 to 500 what proportion of a company’s median salary would you want to cap executive pay? Please enter in a number. Enter the amount as an integer, for example 200. If you do not have an opinion, please enter ‘no opinion.’ [Fill in the blank]

6. On a scale 0 to 10 scale, where 0 is strongly disagree, 10 is strongly agree, and 5 is in the middle, how strongly would you disagree or agree with the following statements?
   a. The rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer.
   b. Financial success depends on chance and circumstance rather than hard work.
   c. People tend to be irresponsible while spending their money.

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d. The middle class is taxed too much.
e. The government should be involved in combating inequality
f. It is impossible to properly combat inequality without the government.
g. The upper 1% deserve all the wealth they have.
h. Cash grants will help bring people out of poverty
i. Higher taxes on the wealthy will ultimately hurt the economy

7. Here are some things that people find more or less important for themselves or society to have. On a scale 0 to 10 scale, where 0 is unimportant, 10 is important, and 5 is in the middle, how important or unimportant would you say each of the following is to you?

   a. Seeing to it that everyone has equal opportunities
   b. Leaving people and companies free to compete economically
   c. Making one’s own choices
   d. Making sure the government does what the people want
   e. Earning as much as possible
   f. Being able to get a good education
   g. Having a well-educated society
   h. Moving up the corporate ladder
   i. Seeing to it that our community puts people over profits

Please Indicate the Right Answer (Answer invisible to participants)

8. What is Universal Basic Income? Correct answer: a

   a. A government program in which every adult citizen receives a set amount of money on a regular basis
   b. A government program that guarantees employment for every adult citizen
   c. A government program that caps salary, to ensure equality in the amount of earnings for every adult citizen
   d. A government program that only gives monetary aid to unemployed adult citizens
   e. Don’t Know

9. Which of the following countries have historically implemented Universal Basic Income on a national scale? Correct answer: a

   a. Mongolia; Iran
   b. Germany; Switzerland
   c. Japan; Korea
10. **In which of the following countries, outside of the U.S., do new college students accrue the highest student loan debt?** Correct answer: b
   a. Germany
   b. United Kingdom
   c. Switzerland
   d. Mexico
   e. Don’t Know

11. **What was the median U.S. household income in 2019?** Correct answer: b
   a. Less than $50,000
   b. Around $65,000
   c. Around $80,000
   d. More than $100,000
   e. Don’t Know

12. **Which of the following defines a baby bond?** Correct answer: a
   a. An investment account every newborn receives. The money would grow, and the child would gain access to it when they turn 18.
   b. An individual’s first ownership share in a company
   c. The act of taking possession of private property for government purposes
   d. A 9 digit number used to identify the first bank an individual created an account with
   e. Don’t Know

13. **Fill in the blank: On average, an American CEO’s salary is ____ times their average worker’s salary.** Correct answer: d
   a. <100
   b. 150
   c. 200
   d. >250
   e. Don’t Know
14. Which high-grossing industry houses companies including Facebook and Walt Disney? Correct answer: c
   a. Industrials
   b. Financials
   c. Communications
   d. Utilities
   e. Don’t Know

15. In 2019, the CEO of Walt Disney earned a salary of $47,525,560. What was the median employee pay for a Walt Disney employee? Correct answer: b
   a. Less than $50,000
   b. Around $50,000
   c. Around $75,000
   d. More than $100,000
   e. Don’t Know

Questions About You

16. Do you consider yourself a Democrat, a Republican, an independent or none of these?
   a. Democrat
   b. Republican
   c. Independent

16.1. If you consider yourself a Democrat, do you consider yourself a strong or moderate Democrat? If this question is not relevant to you please skip to the next question.
   a. Strong Democrat
   b. Moderate Democrat

16.2. If you consider yourself a Republican, do you consider yourself a strong or moderate Republican? If this question is not relevant to you please skip to the next question.
   a. Strong Republican
   b. Moderate Republican
16.3 If you consider yourself an Independent, do you lean more toward the Democrats or the Republicans? If the question is not relevant to you please skip to the next question.
   a. Lean Democrat
   b. Don’t Lean
   c. Lean Republican

17. When it comes to politics, do you usually think of yourself as...
   a. Extremely Liberal
   b. Liberal
   c. Slightly Liberal
   d. Moderate/Middle of the Road
   e. Slightly Conservative
   f. Conservative
   g. Extremely Conservative
   h. Haven’t thought much about it.

18. List your top 3 sources from which you receive your news. [Fill in the blank]

19. How often do you consume news?
   a. Daily
   b. Couple times a week
   c. Once a week
   d. Couple times a month
   e. Other

Political Landscape

20. On a scale 0 to 10 scale, where 0 is strongly disagree, 10 is strongly agree, and 5 is in the middle, how strongly would you disagree or agree with the following statements?
   a. Public officials care a lot about what people like me think
   b. Most public policy issues are so complicated that a person like me can’t really understand what’s going on
   c. People like me don’t have any say about what the government does
   d. I have opinions about politics that are worth listening to
21. Now we’d like you to think about the people who disagree strongly with you, particularly about issues like those we’ve asked you to consider. On a scale 0 to 10 scale, where 0 is strongly disagree, 10 is strongly agree, and 5 is in the middle, how strongly would you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about those people?
   a. They just don’t know enough
   b. They believe some things that aren’t true
   c. They are not thinking clearly
   d. They have good reasons; there just are better ones on the other side
   e. They are looking out for their own interests
   f. They consume media sources that share misinformation and/or lies

22. On a scale 0 to 10 scale, where 0 is strongly disagree, 10 is strongly agree, and 5 is in the middle, how strongly would you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, also referring to people who disagree strongly with you about the issues like those we’ve been asking you about?
   a. I respect their point of view even though it is different from mine.
   b. It is hopeless to reach agreement with them.
   c. I would be willing to compromise to find a solution we both can support.

**Introductory Information**

23. Please indicate your gender. [Fill in the blank]

24. With which ethnic-identity do you most identify with? [Fill in the blank]

25. With which socioeconomic identity do you most identify?
   a. Upper class
   b. Upper middle class
   c. Middle class
   d. Lower/Working class
   e. Prefer not to answer

26. Where is your primary city of residence? [Fill in the blank]

27. What is your prospective major? If currently unsure, write “Undeclared.” [Fill in the blank]
28. **Can you tell us if anyone in your immediate or extended family has been affected economically by the COVID-19 crisis? And, if so, which best describes the most serious impact?**

   a. To my knowledge no one in my family has been affected economically  
   b. One or more family members has been only moderately affected economically  
   c. One or more family members has been severely affected economically (for example, job furloughed, unemployment or risk of business closure)  
   d. Prefer not to answer

You have reached the end of the survey. Thank you. You’ll receive your discussion materials shortly.
Appendix IV. Post-Deliberation Survey

Questions 1 to 15, Questions 20 to 22 from the Pre-deliberation survey were asked again. This appendix will only show questions that were unique to the Post-deliberation survey.

Finally, some questions about the discussions you have engaged in.

1. On a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is “a waste of time”, 10 is "extremely valuable" and 5 is exactly in the middle, how valuable was each of the following in helping you clarify your positions on the issues?
   a. The small group discussions within your section
   b. The briefing materials
   c. The plenary session
   d. The event as a whole

2. And how strongly would you agree or disagree with each of the following statements, on a scale of 1 to 5?
   a. The group discussions gave everyone the opportunity to participate
   b. Members in my group each participated equally in the discussions
   c. My moderator sometimes tried to influence the group with their own views
   d. My moderator tried to make sure opposing arguments were considered
   e. The important aspects of the issues were covered in the group discussions
   f. I learned a lot about people very different from me - about what they and their lives are like