THE DELIBERATIVE CITIZEN: THE ROLE OF PERSONALITY AND CONTEXT IN DELIBERATIVE BEHAVIOUR

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The Deliberative Citizen: The role of personality and context in deliberative behavior

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ABSTRACT

To understand the possibilities for deliberative democracy, we need to understand the deliberative citizen and their behavior in different settings. In this paper we investigate the role of personality in different deliberative behaviors. We find that personality affects willingness to participate as well as deliberative behavior. We observe a differing propensity to ‘talk’ or ‘reflect’, suggesting a more complex relationship between the two than implied by deliberative theory, which varies according to personality type and situation configuration. While the findings suggest yet another challenge for deliberative democracy, we are far more sanguine. Deliberation still ‘happens’ but the modes can be diverse — although the bounds of this diversity have yet to be properly explored. Achieving deliberative outcomes require a better understanding of how different deliberative situations are better suited to different kinds of individuals in a deliberative system, rather than seeking a ‘one size fits all’ approach to deliberative democracy.
INTRODUCTION

Deliberative democracy at its heart is concerned with connecting citizens to politics. An important component of this question concerns understanding the nature of the political citizen and how it can inform institutional designs. These questions are not particular to deliberative democracy. Liberal democracy, for example, assumes that public will is formed independently of the political process and that the main democratic function involves the aggregation of ‘pre-political’ preferences (Warren 1992). Deliberative democracy, on the other hand, is defined by a belief that preferences — if not citizens themselves — are shaped by the political process. For deliberative democrats, the process of preference formation ideally involves some form of ‘authentic’ deliberation that takes seriously alternative views.

Deliberative democracy is also concerned with the inclusiveness in deliberation of all those affected by political decisions and the consequentiality of the outcomes — such as, but not limited to, the meaningful transmission of the results of citizens’ deliberations to decision making (Dryzek 2009). The potential trade-offs between the deliberative, inclusive and consequential dimensions of deliberative democracy are significant. One particular recurring theme is the tension between the deliberative and inclusive dimensions, where it is not possible for all to actively engage together in deliberation. Potential solutions involve much contested assumptions about the individual, such as the belief that it is possible to deliberate internally, rather than collectively and thus develop a deliberative system that involves division of labor among individuals (e.g. Goodin 2000).

There is also a legitimate concern that not all citizens can or will deliberate in an ideal sense. However, as we reflect below, citizens do deliberate to varying degrees and in diverse ways, and such deliberation can be induced depending on situation and even potentially improved on a longer time scale. The extent to which deliberativeness can be widely improved — such that citizens’ political preferences reflect their real interests (Manin 1987) — would surely improve the deliberativeness of the system as a whole, even if such a system involves differentiation of deliberative quality across different sites, as recently proposed by Mansbridge et al (2012).

When it comes to willingness to participate in deliberation, there are many conflicting answers in the literature. For example, two of three recent American large survey-based studies concerning willingness to engage in political discussion suggest a very gloomy picture (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse 2002; Mutz 2006) while a third is more positive (Neblo et al. 2010). There are also conflicting results in relation to deliberative behavior, even for specific and tightly controlled settings such as minipublics.

Caution is needed in interpreting these results. There is an unfortunate tendency to ascribe validity to situation-specific observations as though they describe possibilities for deliberative democracy in toto and in perpetuity. We argue that there is a need to take a broader and longer-term view in relation to possibilities for deliberative democracy. In terms of breadth, there needs to be a

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1 For a critique of the systems approach in favor of improving deliberation en mass, see Owen and Smith (2010).
2 For a review of some of the early evidence in the field see Mendelberg (2002).
more sophisticated understanding of what it means to deliberate. In many studies, deliberation is overly simplified, or the concept overstretched (Steiner 2008) in ways that are often dictated by prevailing methodological orthodoxy, such as survey research, which may or may not be theoretically appropriate (e.g. Dryzek 1990, esp. ch.8). Also, a longer-term view is required, not least because perceptions about democracy and the capacities within them vary between situations and over time as democratic systems evolve. This includes questions of deliberative capacity, and those factors that influence deliberativeness among individuals (Dryzek 2009). Progressing deliberative theory amid these conflicting results require explanation, reconciliation and, where appropriate, possibilities for remediation identified. Part of the solution involves developing clearer theories about what it means to deliberate to avoid the problem of concept stretching (Steiner 2008). But it also requires a better understanding of foundational questions, including a richer account of how citizens encounter political situations than is currently the case.

We argue that a better understanding of the deliberative citizen can be achieved when personality is brought into the picture. We also argue that a complete understanding of deliberation as a process focuses not only on acts of speech, but also include a distinctive — as opposed to implied — ‘reflective’ dimension (Goodin 2002). And when the personality approach is combined with a talk/reflective perspective of deliberation, along with possible interactions with context or situation it can account for how different types of individual are attracted to different deliberative situations and how they subsequently behave, with implications for how it is possible to improve deliberative capacities. Deliberation can also consequently be viewed as an emergent property, rather than as a summation of individual deliberative efforts in which talk and reflection are not necessarily simultaneous.

Specifically, this paper explores the role of personality in deliberation to see how it can inform us about what might be both desirable and possible when we speak of deliberative capacity. In doing so we find that there is a personality dimension influencing both participation and deliberation. We also find that detailed analysis of what it means to deliberate at the individual level, through the lens of personality, opens up interesting questions about what we might call ‘deliberativeness’. The results are specific to the Italian minipublic study that we use for illustration, but they demonstrate a strong potential for opening up our understanding of authentic deliberation.

The paper begins by considering the question of inclusiveness and deliberativeness from the individual’s perspective. The discussion then moves on to look at the role of personality as a factor mediating deliberative behavior and how personality can interact with situation in order to produce different behavioral outcomes in respect to deliberation. Attention is then turned to the illustration of the arguments via the case study. The deliberative process was analyzed in respect to level of talk and the relationship to changes that occurred during the event and how this varies with personality type. The results of the analysis are reported and discussed, with concluding comments about the findings and the implications for deliberative theory and practice.
Participation in Deliberation

At first glance the problem of participation in deliberation appears structurally similar to the problem of voting as classically expressed by the inability of public choice theorists to explain why citizens bother to vote when their chances of influencing the outcome are minimal. And yet they do, in numbers that far exceed expectations based on a purely ‘rational’ interpretation (Brennan and Lomasky 1993; Goodin and Roberts 1975). The problem is more profound for deliberation, particularly in mass settings (Chambers 2012), where the ‘cost’ to the citizen is far higher. Depending on the actual reasons for this participation, there may be questions about how ‘representative’ these processes might be in terms of the way in which they reflect the broader population.

Research on civic volunteerism has discovered patterns of political participation related to certain individual level characteristics — primarily a variety of demographic and political variables (Burns et al. 2001). These characteristics of participation accentuate the limitations of traditional political participation because of variation in skills and resources. When it comes to deliberation, the same individual variables have been shown to also distort the representation because not all participate to the same extent and those who do tend to be drawn from the politically privileged (Sanders 1997). This phenomenon is well established, but has more to do with structural questions — such as access to political resources — than the characteristics of the individual. When it comes to the individual we believe that personality can contribute to understanding the participation question.

Personality and Participation

Personality variables have been shown to predict those situations that individuals tend to seek out or avoid. This suggests that individuals selectively choose situations that evoke conduct in line with their dominant personality characteristic, while situations less attuned to one’s personality are avoided (Asendorpf 2009). The phenomenon is referred to as ‘personality niching’, or the effect of personality-based self-selection to situations (Carnahan and McFarland 2007).

Importantly, the nature of personality niching is dependent on the properties of the specific situation (Wagerman and Funder 2009). There are at least three situational aspects considered relevant to assessing and describing individual conduct. These include: the situational strength (‘weak’ versus ‘strong’ situations), the extent to which the situation heightens or diminishes an individual’s self-awareness, and whether the situation is autonomously selected or imposed (Blass 1991). Together, these features inform our understanding of when and how certain personality variables can be expected to predict individual behavior.

The strength of a situation mediates its influence of personality. A strong situation diminishes the effect of personality because it involves greater social scripting as a guide to behavior and a common understanding of what is expected from individuals. Conversely, weak situations lack definitive scripts and thus influence individuals differentially depending on their personality (Blass 1991).

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3 This may be offset to some extent in formal minipublics that are associated with a political decision. But even where there is little formal connection to decision-making, citizens still participate in minipublic deliberation, sometimes very willingly, depending on the particular issue context. See Baccaro et al. (Forthcoming).
Because of the effect of personality niching, citizens who choose to participate in settings such as a minipublic, may not represent the personality profile of the affected community. This is important because personality also correlates with political preferences, attitudes and ideologies (Gerber et al. 2011). Thus, if personality influences participation it is also likely to influence representation of particular attitudes, preferences and ideologies with implications for other forms of representation — such as ‘discursive representation’ (Dryzek and Niemeyer 2008). There is also a problem for generalizability of experimental/empirical research findings in respect to minipublic deliberation, which is also likely to translate problems for understanding deliberation on a wider scale.

The influence of personality on participation becomes more complex when we consider the particular situational effects. For example, certain kinds of issues may be more likely to attract different personality types. A very salient issue — such as the case study we examine below on local council amalgamation — will not only have an impact on public opinion formation (Clarke et al. 1999), it will also attract specific personality types.

Different individuals may also be attracted to different kinds of deliberative design, based on for example, the size of the deliberating group. Even the nature of the invitation can impact on who is willing to participate (e.g. Lazarow et al. 2014) — and thus could help explain the very different outcomes in relation to the large survey studies cited above to the extent they involve slightly different operationalization of the participation question.

Overall, understanding personality could help to illuminate who it is that is attracted to particular deliberative situations, as well as how they behave in those situations. Hence, in the same way as we pay attention to gender, age, social and economic status (SES), and education when we consider issues of fair and equal representation in politics, there may be a need to consider the implications of over- or underrepresentation of individuals in deliberative settings based on personality types. Personality also stands to inform questions in relation to specific behaviors, or ‘deliberativeness’, as we now discuss.

**Deliberativeness: Understanding who Deliberates and How?**

Deliberativeness has always been a tricky and fluid concept, with different ideas about what it should look like. Take, for example, the distinction between two forms of deliberation identified by Bächtiger et al. (2010) the stricter, procedural notion of deliberation (type I) versus the more open approach to intersubjective communication, including story-telling and rhetoric in conveying meaning and argument (type II).

On the other side of the deliberative equation, in terms of transformation, there are also conflicting stories about what deliberation should do. Early deliberative theory stressed concepts such as achieving consensus or more simply in terms of preference transformation, both of which are becoming increasingly questioned as suitable standards for deliberative ends (Niemeyer and Dryzek 2007).

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4 There is a well established link between personality and the demographic variables often used to achieve statistical representativeness in minipublics, but we argue that this is insufficiently direct because of personality niching, where individuals with particular characteristics within those demographics will still more or less likely to participate than others within that category (Blass 1991).
Moreover, the separateness of the discussion regarding deliberation as a process and the resulting transformation has shielded an important question in relation to deliberativeness from an individual perspective. That there appears to be an expectation that individuals simultaneously provide arguments as well as reflect on those arguments suggest a tension in deliberative theory at the individual level (c.f. Bohman 1998). What is required of the deliberating individual is not just cognitively demanding (Holt 1999), it is also psychologically demanding. It involves a process whereby deliberating individuals are supposed to simultaneously advocate an opinion and be prepared to change their mind — even if it is not necessary from a deliberative perspective that they do (e.g. Baccaro et al. Forthcoming). In other words, on one hand individuals are supposed to provide arguments that support particular outcomes, and on the other hand they are also supposed to be open to the arguments of others and, where necessary, either accommodate those perspectives or re-evaluate their position altogether.

Although we agree in general terms with the proposition that humans appear to reason dialogically — internally, but possibly more effectively in groups (Mercier and Landemore 2012) — we believe that the implicit assumption of simultaneously arguing and reflecting may not accord well with the way in which individuals actually behave. This will especially be true for certain individuals in particular situations. Our argument is consistent with the concern expressed by Mercier and Landemore (2012) in relation to the potential for confirmation bias by ‘deliberating’ individuals, which they argue is more likely to be reduced by a strong (in our terms) deliberative situation, defined by group discussion. However, we argue that the effect of deliberation is more complex than this formulation implies. For example, depending on the strength of that situation it might be possible that deliberation provides an expressive function for some individuals, who simply make arguments for the sake of being heard, without engaging in a process of internal reflection (e.g. Gambetta 1998). For these individuals, inducing reflection might involve a whole different set of capabilities quite separate to the act of speaking. And, although we are careful not to suggest that the talking and reflection are completely disconnected, the relationship between them could turn out to be more complex than straightforward cognition via discussion (Mercier and Landemore 2012).

Deliberation might be better understood, not as the sum of individual deliberative efforts in a group context, but in terms of an emergent property in which different kinds of individual behave in particular ways that suit their own particular dispositions in respect to talking and reflecting. Moreover, these dynamics will be affected by the nature and the strength of the deliberative situation. If this is correct, then there is little wonder that there are so many wildly conflicting results when empirically investigating deliberation (Thompson 2008). However, we argue that understanding the role of personality and situation helps to make sense of these results, and informs a deeper understanding of the possibilities for deliberation.

Deliberativeness and Personality: The importance of interaction

Personality niching can help to explain the internal dynamics of deliberation in relation to speaking/arguing and reasoning/reflecting. For a start, those citizens who are willing to participate in a deliberative event could be predisposed by virtue of personality to a particular form of conduct. As a result, these individuals might ‘evoke’ or ‘manipulate’ the group dynamic in a certain way, especially since niching can produce relatively high levels of homogeneity and thereby reinforce certain behavioral tendencies among each other (Asendorpf 2009).
However, even if there is a particular personality type more attracted to deliberation there will still be variations in personality within any given deliberative situation — as is the case in relation to our case study below.

Moreover, the specific nature of the deliberative situation will also affect the expression of personality in terms of deliberative behavior. This idea of impact on citizens’ deliberative behavior by the combination of personality and the structuring role of situation is not entirely new. Mendelberg (2002), for example, hypothesizes the interaction between individuals with differences in ‘need for cognition’ and the deliberative impact of available time in providing impetus for cognitive laggards to engage with available information.

The most common example of a situation in the deliberative literature concerns the size and composition of the deliberating group, particularly in relation to the diversity of opinions within the group, which can have an effect on the nature of the outcome (Mercier and Landemore 2012). Other situational characteristics that are likely to be important, especially in relation to deliberative situations, include, among others: the nature of facilitation, the duration of the event, and the specifics for a given issue, such as the topic itself and length of time it has been in the public realm (e.g. MacKenzie and Warren 2012), the proximity and familiarity of the issue to the participant (Niemeyer 2011), and the extent to which individuals have previously engaged in authentic deliberation, either with others or via internal reflection (Goodin 2000).

To illustrate the potential role of interaction between personality and deliberative situation, take for example the conflicting findings in relation to group polarization — where individual attitudes are supposed to intensify depending on the inclination of the group (Mercier and Landemore 2012). Mercier and Landemore argue that the combination of argumentative reasoning and the situation concerning level of diversity of group opinion may help explain confounding deliberative experimental results. While this is likely to be true, we argue that there will still be substantive variation in the results because of the interaction between personality and situation — where the situation involves more than just group composition. There are examples where a group fails to polarise even when the conditions for it are putatively met, as was the case for a Finnish minipublic case study on immigration policy by Lindell (2014).

Although the group-level changes are relatively weak, Lindell (2014) does find significant individual-level changes. On one hand there are changes that make sense through the lens of personality-related variables: where low trust and empathy for others correlates with increasingly anti-immigration sentiment. There may also be a situational (group) effect, where there were higher reported levels of coercion within the group by such individuals.

More problematic for a relatively straightforward view of deliberation is that transformation in preference was smaller among those more educated, which should, in principle, be more willing to reflect; or in psychological terms, have a stronger ‘need to evaluate’ (Bizer et al. 2002). However, such a conclusion divorces a deliberative minipublic event from the broader political situation experi-

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5 Facilitation in deliberative minipublics is one good, understudied example. This is changing, recent examples include (Lerner 2003) and MacKenzie and Warren (2012).
6 One more important situational factor is the extent to which a situation is voluntary: freely chosen situations have been shown to give more expression to personality as a predictor of behavior. Overall, a freely chosen, weak situation that heightens individuals’ self-awareness can be expected to lead to strong links between personality traits and specific behavior. While, on the other hand, in a compulsory, highly restricted (strong) situation that make individuals focus on, for instance a very specific mechanical tasks, personality differences will not stand out as strongly (Blass 1991). This is important because, in many cases, political participation is voluntary and the aim with inviting them to political processes is to give voice to citizens’ own perspectives and arguments (heightened self-awareness).
enced by such individuals. ‘Good’ deliberators are precisely those individuals who are willing to genuinely reflect on the issue, and such individuals may well have already carefully considered their position prior to the event, at least in those cases where all the relevant information was already available. In such situations, it might well be the conclusion the deliberation perhaps only produces ‘opinion clarification’ (Knight and Johnson 2011). Or, those individuals who are more liberal in orientation in respect to issues such as immigration may find themselves exposed to more conservative views, which, although not entirely persuasive, have a moderating effect on their positions as part of a more sophisticated metaconsensus (Niemeyer and Dryzek 2007). Thus, we may not only fail to observe liberal polarisation among a liberal group, but a slightly conservative transformation, even though the outcome was still predominantly liberal — as appears to be the case for both Lindell (2014) and Barraco et al (Forthcoming).

On the other hand, where an issue is not salient in the public sphere those strongly predisposed to deliberation could more likely experience more dramatic transformation — and in directions that could be more readily anticipated — as they have an opportunity to update their information, in which cases the finding relating to the effects of deliberation are likely to revolve around information (Goodin and Niemeyer 2003).

Similar situations will plausibly have a different effect on those individuals with a low need to evaluate, where the nature of group effects could be much stronger, either in the form of succumbing to (negative) group effects in conforming to opinions — as potentially observed by Lindell (2014) — or via more positive effects in the requirement that they will need to justify their position in a deliberative setting (Mercier and Landemore 2012). They may also be more politically gullible and prone to influence by non-deliberative political tactics (such as symbolic politics) that are addressed by minipublic situation, leading to a conclusion that deliberation has an ‘emancipatory’ effect by addressing problems associated with political manipulation (Niemeyer 2011) — as long as such individuals are at least potentially open to alternative arguments, which is enhanced by the deliberative situation (Barabas 2004).

The interaction between deliberation, personality and situation described above paints a complicated picture of deliberative behavior. It does not make it impossible to infer any generalizations about such behavior, but it does suggest that empirical deliberative research needs to be sensitive to these interactions and account for them in their findings, which need to be expressed in terms of ‘if’ such conditions are found — in terms of personality and situation — ‘then’ such outcomes are likely to be observed.

If we are correct, establishing any laws about deliberative behavior will need to draw on a diversity of research involving different methods, settings and deliberative designs, rather than single isolated case studies. To do this we need a comprehensive theoretical framework for understanding the incentives, activities and advancement of deliberative citizens in various contexts. For this purpose we suggest the ‘personality triad’, giving equal consideration to personality, situations and behavior (Wagerman and Funder 2009). In this spirit, we offer our case study below as one small contribution to an overall picture as well as a demonstration of the relationship between these three.
THE CASE STUDY: VALSAMOGGIA CITIZENS’ INITIATIVE REVIEW

The case study involves a deliberative minipublic conducted in the Valsamoggia region in Italy, 3-5 October 2012. The deliberative event — called a Civic Review Initiative (Iniziativa di Revisione Civica; IRC) — was conducted in the lead up to a referendum in which citizens were asked whether they were in favor or against a unification involving five neighboring local councils. The proposal is controversial, and had already been the subject of public debate for some time (Niemeyer et al. 2012).

The IRC was commissioned by the interim body established to coordinate activities between the councils (The Unione) with the goal of improving citizens understanding and knowledge of the issue in the lead up to a referendum on the established amalgamation proposal.

Recruitment

Letters of invitation to participate in the IRC were mailed to 800 randomly selected addresses. The recruitment letter stated that participants would contribute to a document stating their findings to be distributed to the electors prior to the referendum. It emphasized that participation did not require any particular skills, competences or preparations for the event. And it was also stressed that a facilitator would be responsible for maintaining deliberativeness and ensuring autonomy on the part of participants. A modest stipend of 150 Euros was offered as inducement to participate. Seventy-one individuals accepted the invitation (8.9% of the total). The final selection of participants was made to achieve a descriptive representation of the population based on gender, age, and education, with 20 participants randomly selected from the respondents.

The Deliberative Process

The IRC comprised a three-day process, during which local activists and politicians were invited to make a presentation in support of their position in relation to the referendum proposal. Experts on the local context, political parties, movements, local businesses, representatives of different work organizations — with a stake in the unification process — and local administrators were invited to participate in a panel to present their positions/arguments to the IRC participants. The speakers’ role was to illustrate from a variety of perspectives the relevant issues to help citizens’ reflect ahead of the referendum.

Participants were invited to ask questions of the speakers. A combination of small group and plenary group sessions were conducted to permit participants to reflect on their perspectives regarding the amalgamation, which culminated in two different positions being collated into the final report. This report also outlined the main themes of discussion that was intended as an input to the broader pre-referendum public debate.
METHODS AND RESULTS

Assessment of Personality

For the IRC we assess personality based on the ‘big five’ personality traits and sub-level facets that are commonly used to explain human personality (Costa Jr and McCrae 2008). The traits include Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. Each trait is defined by six sub-level facets, which are:

**Neuroticism**
- Anxiety
- Angry hostility
- Depression
- Self-consciousness
- Impulsiveness
- Vulnerability

**Openness**
- Fantasy
- Aesthetics
- Feelings
- Actions
- Ideas
- Values

**Conscientiousness**
- Competence
- Order
- Dutifulness
- Achievement striving
- Self-discipline
- Deliberation

**Extraversion**
- Warmth
- Gregariousness
- Assertiveness
- Activity
- Excitement seeking
- Positive emotions

**Agreeableness**
- Straightforwardness
- Altruism
- Compliance
- Modesty
- Tender-mindedness
- Trust

To assess personality we implemented a widely validated instrument in the form of NEO-PI-3 (McCrae and Costa 2010). Importantly, unlike most research on personality in the political sphere, we used the most comprehensive test available, consisting of 240 items on a 5-point scale. This larger instrument was implemented to permit more detailed assessment of personality, including both traits and facets (the test includes 8 items for each facet) as well as to improve robustness of the results in the face of small sample size.

There are shorter versions of the survey, such as the NEO-FFI (60 items) and the TIPI (10 items), which are more commonly used in political settings, but they do not permit a detailed analysis of behaviour, particularly at the facet level. For example, a path breaking empirical investigation of deliberative participation by Neblo et al (2010) included personality variables. The study showed that the variables ‘need for cognition’, ‘need for evaluation’, and ‘conflict avoidance’, had a significant effect on individuals’ hypothetical motivation to participate. Also when it came to actual participation, conflict avoidant individuals were less likely to participate, while individuals with high political efficacy were more likely.

10 A slightly more detailed description of the facets can be found online at http://preview.tinyurl.com/2khjfa. For a more detailed description see McCrae and Costa (2010)
However, while the study has made an important contribution, it is an incomplete picture — partly because it is relatively insensitive to situation as well as investigating a relatively narrow set of personality facets. Indeed, many existing studies in deliberation tend to only explore a single personality trait, without including other traits in the study, or drilling down further to explore specific facets within those traits. However, we believe that studying facets could yield a more complete picture for understanding and explaining various (deliberative) behaviors.

Ours is a much smaller study than that of Neblo et al. (2010). However, it does have a number of advantages. In addition to the systematic implementation of a comprehensive personality survey, the small sample, in association with an actual deliberative event, permits a more intensive study of deliberation and personality that includes a detailed understanding of the situation and its potential interactive effect on behaviour. And, if we are correct, properly understanding personality and deliberation will require repeating studies such as this across many different sites. To this end, our study offers an illustration of how personality and situation affect participation and deliberation rather than as a definitive finding for deliberation in all cases.

Out of the 20 individuals that participated in the deliberative process, 18 completed the personality test. The use of the NEO-PI-3 instrument assumes that the above personality dimensions are present across all individuals, irrespective of variation across the traits. This indeed appeared to be the case for the Valsamoggia data.11

**Personality as a predictor of participation**

To compare participants in the IRC with the Italian population, the individual facet scores for each participant were standardized according to demographic category (gender, age, education) resulting in a score with a mean of 50 and a standard deviation of 10.12 Figure 1 shows both the average score for each of the five main personality traits and their six component facets compared to the Italian population. The average adjusted trait levels are shown as the bars, with the lines showing the adjusted average for each of the facets. Those scores that are close to the average population result (50) are not significantly different. Significantly positive or negative differences are shown as results in the grey region of the figure.13

11 Cronbach’s alpha test was applied to the raw data resulting in a measure of internal consistency among the items of a scale, were 0.83, 0.69, 0.90, 0.55 and 0.84 for N, E, O, A and C, respectively. All were acceptable — although Agreeableness was at the lower end of the scale — such that the data can be used to benchmark against the wider population as well as evaluating the relationship between personality and behaviour within the deliberating group.

12 The method for normalising the data for comparison can be found in (Costa et al. 2007). Initially this was done against the US norms. However, a direct comparison with the Italian population was performed using the data from Costa et al. (2007), which was very kindly supplied to us by Antonio Terracciano, who was involved in the study.

13 There are two limitations in respect to assessing the level of self-selection on the basis of personality. The personality profiles for the 800 citizens who were sent the recruitment letter are not available, nor are they for those respondents where were not included in the study. Both groups, however, were randomly selected. The second limitation concerns potential differences between the population from which the IRC participants were drawn and the Italian national norms, against which our results are compared. However, while some studies do show regional differences in personality between national and ‘founder’ populations compared to our results — which concern a region considered closest to the Italian norm — are comparatively small.
Figure 1. Normalized Facet and Trait Scores for Valsamoggia Participants
At the trait level, there are several clear differences between participants and the population in terms of Neuroticism, Openness, and to a lesser extent, Extraversion. It can also be seen from the figure that there are some very significant findings at the facet level, some of which contradict the more general trait level findings. Below we return to discussion involving a number of selected facets, after consideration of the overall results in respect to deliberation.

**Deliberative Styles and Personality**

Analysis of deliberation was done in respect to both the ‘speech act’ dimension as well as deliberative transformation. Observation involved counting ‘statements’ made by individuals during the larger group (plenary) sessions. We chose this much simpler form of analysis, as opposed to a detailed study of speech acts using a method such a discourse quality index (DQI) (Steenbergen et al. 2003) because of the fit of the approach with our interest in the tension between talking and reflecting. It also avoids privileging a particular conception of deliberation, where we are open to the possibility of different deliberative styles.

A ‘statement’ is defined as talking by a participant that is bounded by talk from another participant. The 346 statements by participants were divided in to ‘short’ and ‘long’ statements, where long statements comprised any talk longer in duration than 30 seconds. There is considerable variation among participants regarding the level of talk — at least in the plenaries. Two individuals failed to speak at all, with one speaking on 62 occasions and a fairly even distribution between these extremes.

Deliberative transformation was measured on two dimensions. First, was a measure of whether or not an individual changed their disposition across a range of beliefs or values in relation to the issue, broadly understood here as ‘attitudes’. These were obtained by asking participants to respond to a series of statements drawn from public discourse about the issue, which were implemented as part of a Q method study in conjunction with this research (see Appendix A). The second was a measure of change in expressed preference, in relation to five options presented to participants in relation to the issue. These options are also shown in Appendix A.

Table 1 shows the correlation between each of the personality traits and facet and the level of talk (total, number of short and number of long statements) as well as level of deliberative transformation.

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14 Most notable is the very low level of Deliberation among participants — an ostensibly alarming finding for a deliberative event, although ‘deliberation’ here refers to a tendency of caution in decision-making, something qualitatively different to ideal deliberation described by deliberative democrats.

15 Approximately 1/3 of the process was spent in breakout groups of 4-5 participants which was not included in the tally. Apart from practical limitations on counting the number of speech acts during the breakout groups, the plenary sessions are important because it was here the participants tended to more strongly advocate in favour of particular outcomes, rather than actively discuss our seek clarification.

16 This definition works for the plenary session, which was more formal than conversational in style, compared to the small breakout group sessions, where speech acts were commonly interrupted by interjections from other participants as part of the conversational flow.
Table 1 Correlations between facets speech acts and transformation

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<th></th>
<th>Discourse (Number of Statements)</th>
<th>Deliberative Transformation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>Short</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N1: Anxiety</td>
<td>0.07</td>
<td>0.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N2: Angry hostility</td>
<td>-0.45</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N3: Depression</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N4: Self-consciousness</td>
<td>-0.27</td>
<td>-0.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N5: Impulsiveness</td>
<td>0.10</td>
<td>0.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N6: Vulnerability</td>
<td>-0.08</td>
<td>-0.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
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<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E1: Warmth</td>
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<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E2: Gregariousness</td>
<td>0.11</td>
<td>0.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E3: Assertiveness</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E4: Activity</td>
<td>-0.07</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E5: Excitement seeking</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E6: Positive emotions</td>
<td>0.29</td>
<td>0.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>0.52*</td>
<td>0.51*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O1: Fantasy</td>
<td>0.45</td>
<td>0.48*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O2: Aesthetics</td>
<td>0.22</td>
<td>0.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O3: Feelings</td>
<td>0.63**</td>
<td>0.65**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O4: Actions</td>
<td>0.39</td>
<td>0.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O5: Ideas</td>
<td>0.46*</td>
<td>0.46*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>O6: Values</td>
<td>0.47*</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
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<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A1: Trust</td>
<td>-0.02</td>
<td>-0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A2: Straightforwardness</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A3: Altruism</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A4: Compliance</td>
<td>-0.03</td>
<td>-0.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A5: Modesty</td>
<td>0.66**</td>
<td>0.67**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6: Tender-mindedness</td>
<td>0.43</td>
<td>0.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>-0.11</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C1: Competence</td>
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<td>-0.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2: Order</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
<td>-0.21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3: Dutifulness</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>0.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4: Achievement striving</td>
<td>-0.25</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5: Self-discipline</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6: Deliberation</td>
<td>-0.05</td>
<td>-0.13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

17 Significance of the correlation is indicated, where * corresponds to p≤0.05 and ** corresponds to p≤0.01
Personality and Deliberative Styles

In terms of both participation and deliberation we observe a number of trends at the trait level. The relatively high Neuroticism among participants has already been noted, but there is no evidence in Table 1 that these individuals are particularly expressive. They tend to change their attitudes, but there is not a corresponding change in preference. Individuals high on Openness, by contrast, appear much more likely to talk, but this doesn’t appear to translate into any appreciable change in attitude or preference. However, the story does not end there. When we take a finer grained look at the results at the facet level a number of clearer trends emerge. We do not have the space to consider all the findings, but instead select a small number of key facets to illustrate their impact on deliberative behavior. There will be other kinds of observable deliberative behavior, particularly for studies with different situational contexts, but here we discuss three that can be observed in this case.

Quietly Stewing: The Angry Neurotic

The angry neurotic in our case study is more willing to participate — in the sense of being present — in minipublic deliberation than average, but is relatively silent during the plenary sessions. At the trait level there is a consistently high level of Neuroticism among the participants compared to the population. A neurotic individual is generally considered anxious, prone to worry and easily agitated and angered. The neurotic person is thus generally inclined to avoid social and collective actions because social settings are experienced as extremely stressful for these individuals. Conversely, low levels of Neuroticism (Emotional Stability) have been correlated to participation in social and collective activities (Caspi et al. 2006).

Our findings ostensibly contradict the common understanding of the neurotic. But the difference can potentially be explained when the particulars for this case (situation) is combined with the tendency for neurotic individuals to also be strongly opinionated (Mondak 2010). Recall that this is an issue that was very local, public, and strongly contested, which could appeal to neurotics, who are more likely to seek out opportunities to express their opinions, where they are strongly felt, particularly in small and relatively safe settings. The small setting and non-hierarchical features of deliberative minipublic is less threatening in principle for such an individual.

However, once the IRC began, the neurotics were less likely to talk — at least in the larger group, the smaller breakout groups more likely to suit their disposition. And if they did talk, it was brief. Neurotics did change their attitudes — although not so much their preferences.

The theory of deliberation and personality is not yet well developed enough for us to speculate on precisely what drove this behavior for our case study, or whether this is a situation specific outcome. However, the relatively taciturn behavior in the larger group settings reflects an anxiety that is consistent with why neurotics tend not to participate in politics in general. Nevertheless, they did participate in disproportionate numbers. So, that the IRC did engage a section of the population normally not disposed to political participation could be seen as an advantage, rather than a weakness, although it requires that the implications for representativeness and optimum design for working with neurotic individuals in deliberative settings be worked though.
Talk without Transformation: The Ideas Open Individual

That the Valsamoggia participants were above average on the personality trait of Openness is less surprising, it being related to proclivity for political discussion, social network size, liberalism, enjoying novel experiences and having a high need for cognition (Mondak 2010).

More than any trait, Openness is also correlated to talk during the IRC, particularly for the facets Feelings, Ideas and Values (Table 3). This resonates with prior findings on Openness and political discussion (Mondak 2010). The facet of Feelings in particular connotes receptivity to one’s own inner feelings and emotions. High scorers on this facet experience feelings deeply and intensely and they perceive of emotions as an important part of life (Costa Jr and McCrae 2008). It makes sense that this facet is related to an individuals’ willingness to share their experiences with others. In particular, the loquaciousness among individuals scoring high on Values appears related to the issue, focusing the attention on conflicting values.

Focusing now on the facet of Values, these individuals are supposed to be the opposite of dogmatic, indicating a willingness to reflect on core values, such as political, religious and social values. However, here we find the opposite case: talk does not translate into changes to attitudes, nor necessarily preferences (Table 3) — the same is also true for the facet of Ideas, which indicates intellectual curiosity and unconventional thinking (Costa Jr and McCrae 2008).

Why was this the case? Conventional deliberative theory might suggest an absence of authentic deliberation, but this is not necessarily the case. There are two possible explanations that are consistent with an understanding of personality interacting with contextual variables. Firstly, for an issue that was already heavily discussed in the public sphere, the openness disposition had already been activated prior to participation in the deliberative event and these individuals simply held the ‘right’ preferences (from their perspective) from the start. Openness is indicative of a nuanced thinking and the ability to cope with conflicting feelings and information without falling back on a simplified way of thinking about an issue. On the other hand, low scorers on Openness tend to adopt firm positions to avoid dealing complexity (Mondak 2010), which is more likely to be addressed in a minipublic compared to an open individual, who has already engaged in deeper cognition.

The second explanation involves a delayed reaction, with open individuals needing to continue their cognition beyond the deliberative event. This is finding that is supported by tentative evidence form other studies conducting follow up interviews (Littleboy et al. 2006). Although it is an issue that requires further exploration, it is plausible. Open individuals solve complex problems without necessarily needing to fix their position — kind of Socratic humility in which they recognize the fallibility of their own reasoning. Openness is also related to levels of political aptitude, efficacy and self confidence (Mak and Tran 2001), which further strengthens the interpretation that what we witness are people who do not need to take a stand to prove to others that they are capable, their belief in themselves make them more independent.
In either case, Openness involves cognition processes that go well beyond the period proscribed by a given deliberative event, such as a minipublic. Thus, the idea that deliberation (as a speech act) and preference transformation is a simultaneous and discrete event appears deeply problematic, and likely to produce confounding results in particular kinds of case study, at least in the case of open individuals.

**The Agreeably Modest Group-Hugger: Appreciative Talk without Transformation**

Agreeableness does not impact on the level of participation for this study, but it does affect deliberative behavior. As for Openness, there is a tendency to talk, but there is no significant relationship with transformation — either attitudes or preferences.

The reasons for this are different to those for Openness. Agreeable individuals’ seek to establish positive interpersonal relations and have a proclivity for pro-social behavior (Carlo et al. 2005). And they are driven by a desire to establish good-natured relations with others. This tendency is especially prominent in political settings, making them more likely to seek collaboration (Park and Antonioni 2007). A competitive environment, such as a formal debate, might discourage them from participating, but if there is an attempt to create a convivial environment via facilitation then these individuals might be more likely to talk.

Within Agreeableness, the facet Modesty is strongest in explaining level of talk. Agreeableness indicates a humble and self-effacing character (Costa Jr and McCrae 1992) and someone who seeks to establish smooth interpersonal relationships (Xiaohua Chen et al. 2009). In discussion, they seek to constantly reiterate and give emphasis to others’ statements and create a convivial environment, rather than engage in the contestation of ideas. Such tendencies come at a deliberative cost. An overly ‘appreciative’ effect might result, at the expense of dealing with substantive issues, leading to a ‘group hug’ effect, as observed by Curato et al. (2013). This is a very different dynamic to the tension between talking and reflecting hypothesized earlier, and which appears to occur for individuals who are open, but not those who are agreeable (and modest, in particular).

The implication for deliberative design means that such Agreeable individuals may require more formal settings in order to induce authentic deliberation. Or, we can look at deliberation as an emergent property of the group, where the presence of agreeable individuals plays a facilitative role for deliberation within the group — particularly in those situations beyond minipublics where there is no facilitator to create such an ‘appreciative’ context. As Curato et al. (2013) point out, appreciativeness is insufficient to produce deliberation, which also requires contestation of ideas and the presence of other dispositions conducive to such behaviour.

We cannot be entirely sure that the Valsamoggia IRC achieved this kind of balance, to produce a thoroughly ‘deliberative’ process. While there are both arguments for and against such a finding (Niemeyer et al. 2012), to the extent that it was deliberative it appears that this was achieved via the interaction of different deliberative styles in a group context, and that these styles are related to personality and situation in ways that we believe have important implications for deliberative theory.
DISCUSSION

Based on our introductory discussion and observation from the case study we argue three main points

Personality Influences Deliberate Style, along with Situation

The case study has demonstrated that there is a differential effect of personality in willingness to participate. Further, personality appears to influence the way in which individuals behave once they are present in a deliberative situation. While similar kinds of effects can be observed in relation to other variables, such as demography, personality gets to the heart of the matter by directly accounting for the dispositional traits that correlate to deliberative behavior.

Differentiation among Deliberative Citizens and Deliberation as an emergent property

Related to the role of personality is the finding that there are many different ways in which individuals might behave in a deliberative situation, which can still collective contribute to a deliberative (or non-deliberative) outcome. We have drawn attention to three types of individual for our case study. Some individuals talk, while others appear to listen and reflect. Indeed, overall there is a strong inverse relationship in the case study between level of talk and level of transformation (Niemeyer et al. 2012). We question whether there is an inherent problem with this situation. The design of many deliberative minipublics accepts that some individuals — experts, representatives etc. — who take on a formal role of speakers, and it may not be so problematic for the same to be the case within the deliberative group. Moreover, a single statement by one individual can easily be as influential many made by another. And the example of the modest agreeable ‘group hugger’ who is not necessarily engaging in reasoned argument may still play an important role in creating an environment in which those who have something important to say feel comfortable in doing so (Curato et al. 2013).

There may in effect be a form of deliberative niching, with different roles played by different individuals, where the emergent property is still something we might call deliberation. The challenge for deliberative democrats is to properly understand what this property actually looks like and what are the possible routes to achieving it — both within minipublics and beyond. We do argue, however, that there needs to be more complex thinking in terms of how deliberation works than is currently the case, particularly in respect to what it means to construct the deliberative situation, both in terms of minipublic design and understanding the operation of deliberative systems.

Complex Deliberative Effects

It is tempting to deduce from the observations of deliberative styles above that ‘angry neurotics’ will always tend to sit quietly and hold dark thoughts as they observe the process around them, that ‘ideas open’ individuals will always talk but not transform and that ‘agreeably modest’ individuals will always seek to smooth the path to creating better group dynamics. But this is not our main point. It is entirely possible that these observations would not be replicated for other deliberative situations. These traits could manifest themselves differently, or not explain anything about deliberative behavior at all, and other facets of personality come into play.
Our particular observations are likely to be in part due to the situational characteristics of our case study. One such situational factor is the relatively novel nature of minipublics in the Valsamoggia region, which are not a routinized practice. This implies a weak situation — potentially reducing the effects of self-selection. The invitation letter sent citizens might have been their first encounter with deliberative ideas and practices, invoking a different response that to concepts that are relatively familiar and commonly discussed.

We would argue that a similar effect would operate for other studies concerning willingness to deliberate, as well as the impact of the specifics of how the idea of deliberative participation is defined and communicated.

Also, the wording of letter of invitation used in the IRC might have had an effect on our observations. It stressed the importance of citizens coming together and expressing their voice, and thereby influences the outcome of a controversial issue, rather than explicitly focusing on deliberative principles of communicative reciprocity. The letter also stressed the absence of need for special skills or competencies from participants. These factors combined with the very public and controversial nature of the IRC topic may well have appealed to more neurotic and angry individuals. We have also posited that the same dynamics may have contributed to the relative lack of transformation by Open and talkative individuals during the IRC process.

The observed effects would not only be due in part to the particulars of the case study, but also the composition effects of the group itself. But unlike other group compositional theories, such as group polarization, the effect is on the dynamics of deliberation, rather than the outcome per se. For example, the relative predominance of ‘angry neurotic’ individuals, could have induced their ‘modest agreeable’ counterparts to be relatively more talkative in order to smooth-over the underlying frustrations and tensions within the group.

We do not discount the possibility of consistent findings in relation to deliberation across different situations in terms of certain kinds of deliberative behavior — particular where the deliberative component of the situation is sufficiently strong. However, the observations above paint a relatively complex picture of the dynamics occurring in the lead up to and during a deliberative event. The interaction between (and composition of) personality type and situation creates a scenario in which deliberation is an emergent property in which interlocking factors come together to produce particular kinds of outcome. And the importance of personality also suggests that there are different deliberative styles on the part of different kinds of individual (and in different settings). Depending on the strength of the situational effect, the findings from one study to the next could be substantially different. It is thus important that empirical deliberative research is very attentive to these potential effects of group composition (in terms of personality) and situation.
CONCLUSION

Deliberative participation and deliberative style appear to be mediated by personality, as well as situation. Our findings, though case study specific, point to potentially important implications for the way in which we understand the possibilities for deliberative democracy.

This potential interaction between personality, deliberative situation and deliberative style opens up a rich discussion on the conflicting results that have been observed when it comes to deliberation in practice — in addition to internal problems within the field relating to inconsistent application of theories of deliberation, lack of middle theories and inappropriate research design. The implication is not dissimilar to the move toward personalized medicine, which recognized that treatments for various ailments are differentially effective based on identifiable variations within the population (e.g. Blau and Liakopoulou 2013).

Deliberation need not be personalized per se, but if we take seriously the systematic differences among citizens that merely reflect different needs and styles when it comes to deliberation, rather than a capacity to deliberate, it suggests a rather different approach to deliberative systems than in terms of differentiation of functional sites (see also Owen and Smith 2014). It implies that, rather than think about sites in a deliberative system that may or may not be 'deliberative': we need to think about different sites (and possibly, time-frames) that suit different deliberative styles. At the very least it requires sensitivity to the need to create sufficiently strong deliberative situations, where possible, precisely what it is that constitutes such a situation, and an appreciation for the mechanism and timeframe involved in creating it.

However, this does not imply a need to homogenize deliberative behavior — even if this were possible. While we differentiation of sites seems conducive to deliberation, it also appears that different deliberative styles can work together at the same site to produce good outcomes — provided that we can accept that some individuals may be more likely to contribute to the content of deliberation via speech acts, while others may be more likely to reflect on that content for a given deliberative moment.

Ultimately, a strong deliberative system is likely to require a diversity of deliberative situations. And while it requires diversity in arguments, it may also benefit from diversity in deliberative styles — the boundaries of which have yet to be properly demarcated. We have only begun to scratch the surface in relation to the question of personality and the role of situation in creating particular dynamics. But we are confident that this can be a productive line of investigation for deliberation and deliberative democracy as it seeks to move from theory to reality.
APPENDIX A MEASUREMENT OF DELIBERATIVE TRANSFORMATION

Deliberative transformation was assessed at both the level of expressed policy preferences and attitudes (beliefs and values) in relation to the issue of council amalgamation. The method followed closely the approach used by Niemeyer for analyzing deliberative minipublics (Niemeyer 2011). In short, the method involves implementing two surveys, the first involving a rank ordering of preference options, the second involving a quasi rank ordering of statements capturing beliefs and values in relation to the council amalgamation issue — which have been collected, implemented and analyzed in accordance with Q methodology (Brown 1980). While the implementation of the attitude statements was done in accordance with Q methodology, the analysis of the data in this paper is not a Q analysis.18

Table 2 below shows an English translation of the statements that were provided to participants in the Italian IRC case study (originals are in Italian).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement English version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>The shift from the union to the fusion is a step to big which brings too many uncertainties. If things are done more gradually the change will be painless because people will be already used to it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>The fusion is a small step to complete a path of amalgamation that started 20 years ago. The amalgamated municipality it is a reality in facts. How much do we have to wait still?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>The amalgamation will erase the local diversities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>The fusion is not the only solution to the issues of our territory but it is the more concrete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>It is not yet clear how are they are going to amalgamate the contracts of the municipal clerks across the territory. Things like these should be decided before the amalgamation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>The fusion is a decision that has already been taken and they are trying to impose it top down. They are trying to sell the product 'amalgamated municipality'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>With or without the amalgamation, the important thing that is at the practical level, nothing will change. For example the offices should stay where they are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>The amalgamation will benefit the employees and the citizens. The employees will increase their competences through more training. Therefore the citizens will benefit of more specialized professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>We are misusing the fusion. The needs of the territory are not being respected and the Valsmaoggia is being used as a lab rat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I would not like that the money of my taxes would be used in the municipalities next to mine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Through the fusion we will be able to unblock some funds. The latter can be invested in the municipalities that are more in need</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

18 A report of the preliminary Q analysis can be found in Niemeyer et al. (2012).
19 Translated from the original Italian version.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Statement English version</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>The fusion seem to me another way to change everything to change nothing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>The fusion is a leap in the unknown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>The fusion is necessary to lower the taxes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>There are not enough elements do decide in favour or against the fusion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The fusion is an innovative process that will make as an example to follow for Italy and the rest of Europe.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The fusion is the right answer to the limit of the union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>The amalgamation will offer the possibility of save money by cutting the political costs and the bureaucracy costs and making the administration more efficient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>The choice of the fusion is due to the wish of certain political parties to maintain the political dominance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The fusion will bring the resources to make the intervention that our territory needs, like the bicycle paths or the public transport between the municipalities or the high school.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>If the fusion will not be done, the single municipalities will not be capable of maintaining the current quality of the services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Through the fusion we will be able to exploit the potentials of the territory to improve the building-, commercial-, handcraft- and agricultural development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>The new municipality will be politically more powerful in front of other municipalities like Bologna metropolitan. In this way our interests will be protected outside our municipality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>The consequence of the fusion is that either we will pay more than before or they will cut the services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>It is not possible to say yes or not to the amalgamation without knowing how it will be, how much will it cost and how it will be done.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The fusion will change our relationship with the administration. The fusion will move away the administration and the power from the local territory and centralizing it somewhere else</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>The fusion benefits the bigger municipalities at the detriment of the smallest also with respect to the external funding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The fusion is too risky because is a one way process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>The needs of the citizens are too different across the municipalities. It will be too difficult for The amalgamated municipality to answer to everybody.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>If the administration chose for the fusion it means that it is the right choice. This choice should be taken by the experts not the citizens</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>In these days of crisis and changes at the European level, the amalgamation is necessary and opportune.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>The union is a failure and a cost, because it absorbed just a very small part of the services and the money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>It is not worth to make the amalgamation in this time of reorganization with the metropolitan bologna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>It is not necessary to be big to be good. The small municipalities can be better managed of the bigger and do more things. It is a matter of good administration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>In this fusion there is no project, no vision and no strategy. Things should be done in a very different way.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>With the amalgamation there will be a deficit of democracy because the municipalities will be only consultative. The citizens will have no power</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To obtain the pre-deliberative data, participants were interviewed in their homes by Italian speaking researchers, where they completed both the preference and attitude questionnaire (Q sort). This research was undertaken within a broader research project on values, attitudes and preferences among deliberative participants. At this stage, a short personality test — the Ten Item Personality Inventory — was introduced and distributed to the participants. The test was described as a mean for researcher to better understand individual political conduct. Their anonymity was ensured. The post-deliberative data was collected in the final session of the last day of the deliberative event.

The preference survey options are shown in Table 3. The ‘Yes’ and ‘No’ options relate to the proposal for council amalgamation put to IRC participants, with the addition of two additional options: increase the power of the Unione, which is the interim body implemented to coordinate activities between the existing local councils (Option A); and Postpone the amalgamation altogether and permit time for the development of a new plan (Option D).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Option Identifier</th>
<th>Option</th>
<th>Option Description</th>
<th>Option Description English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Unione</td>
<td>Rafforzare l’ Unione dei comuni</td>
<td>Increase the power of the Unione</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>NO</td>
<td>Lasciare le cose come sono</td>
<td>Leave things as they are</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>YES</td>
<td>Procedere alla fusione</td>
<td>Go ahead with the amalgamation as proposed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Postpone</td>
<td>Fare la fusione in modi e tempi diversi</td>
<td>Postpone the amalgamation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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REFERENCES


democracy