

**TEMPORARY AND LASTING EFFECTS OF A DELIBERATIVE EVENT: THE KAPOSVÁR EXPERIENCE.
GYÖRGY LENGYEL, BORBÁLA GÖNCZ, AND ÉVA VÉPY-SCHLEMMER**

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INTRODUCTION

In June 2008 a deliberative study was organized in the South-West Hungarian Kaposvár district. The participants were residents of Kaposvár and the surrounding 53 villages¹. The study was conducted by the Institute of Sociology and Social Policy of Corvinus University of Budapest. It was part of a broader comparative project which dealt with different aspects of European integration. One of its objectives was increasing citizen participation and mobilizing the public opinion². Previous field studies had revealed that the greatest immediate problems for the local society in Kaposvár were unemployment and related issues of the local economy. In this way then, two topics were addressed in the study: questions of economy and employment on the one hand, and European integration on the other. This reflects on the European character of the broader subject of the study.

Deliberative polling (DP) is a technique which combines traditional random-sampling public opinion polls with deliberation in group discussions. This research method had been applied in Hungary only once before this study, but having been conceived in 1988, the method may be considered new also at the international level. In this way, the main objective of the study was experimental. Beside the general objectives of such a study, i.e. assessment of changes in people's of knowledge and opinions upon deliberation, an important objective was to see how this research method can be applied in Hungary. It turned out that the participants changed their mind significantly on several questions. They proved to be better informed on average after the event and their opinions became more balanced in the evaluation of unemployment.

¹Previous versions of the paper have been presented at the Workshop on “Frontiers of Deliberation”, ECPR Joint Sessions, University of St. Gallen (April 13-16, 2011), at the Workshop on “Social Resources of Local Development”, Corvinus University of Budapest (June 10-11, 2011) and at the Workshop on “Deliberation: Values, Processes, Institutions”, University of Warsaw (June 4-5, 2012). The research was supported by the IntUne FP6 project and by TÁMOP-4.2.1/B-09/1/KMR-2010-0005.

² The IntUne (Integrated and United? A Quest for Citizenship in an Ever Closer Europe) project was an FP6 research project financed by the European Union. The core issues of the research were different aspects of the perception of the European integration: identity formation, scope of governance and representation, It was based on elite and public opinion surveys, interviews and media analysis.

Attitudes concerning economic competitiveness became more open, while solidarity and tolerance towards the unemployed also increased. We detected some paradoxical effects as well: support for the EU increased after the event despite the fact that a decreasing proportion of participants felt that EU integration had had an impact on their life. As for the evaluation, the majority of participants were enthusiastic after the event and declared future interest in the topics covered and in participation in public debates (Lengyel 2009).

One year later, as part of a follow-up survey we once again visited the participants and a control sample of non-participants. We measured the stability and change of their knowledge, and their opinions and evaluation of the event. If deliberation is able to enhance knowledge in the long run, it could be an especially useful instrument of collective decision making. If it makes people more circumspect in their opinions, taking into account the positions of others, it may help to decrease social tensions. To see how lasting the effect of deliberation is on knowledge and opinion change, it is useful to measure the effect of a deliberative poll, not only immediately after the event. Nevertheless, such follow-up surveys are conducted relatively rarely. This paper summarizes some results of the follow-up survey. We argue that on the majority of the issues addressed, the opinion changes proved to be temporary after the event, and only some of the changes proved to be lasting ones. The paper also investigates the social characteristics of those who changed their mind temporarily and the ones who did so more permanently.

The subsequent sections of this paper are organized as follows: first we provide an overview of the theoretical issues deliberative models and methods address. Then we proceed to discuss some problematic areas within the subject. This is followed by a presentation of the methodology and design of our project. Then we show a summary of the changes in opinions, attitudes, and knowledge that occurred after the deliberation, and whether the changes persisted for one year. Finally, we will try to describe the socio-demographic characteristics of the short- and long-term changes using regression models.

MODELS AND METHODS OF DELIBERATION

Deliberation is discussed in two ways in the literature: as a *social model* of collective decision-making, and as a *method* based on organized discussions of smaller or larger groups. While there is a common core of them – discussion of relevant public issues in order to reach

the ideal type of properly informed and involved citizens – it seems reasonable to distinguish between models and methods.

Models of deliberation

The deliberative *social model* belongs to the family of normative thinking that conceives participative forms of collective decision making as being able to substitute for (or correct) the model of representative democracy. While representative democracy refers to a form of government in which citizens vote to elect the leaders, in participative models citizens have an active role in governance. Even so, the border between the two types is somewhat vague: deliberation as a method of communication is present in both forms. The difference lies in the fact that in the representative form, deliberation is mostly a privilege of the selected elites, while in the participative model in principle it directly reaches all participating citizens.

Cohen and Sabel (1997) suggest that the model of directly-deliberative polyarchy is “an attractive kind of radical, participatory democracy with problem-solving capacities useful under current conditions and unavailable to representative systems. In directly-deliberative polyarchy, collective decisions are made through public deliberation in arenas open to citizens who use public services, or who are otherwise regulated by public decisions.” In addition, ideally “directly-deliberative polyarchy combines the advantages of local learning and self-government with the advantages (and discipline) of wider social learning and heightened political accountability”. They argue that the above aspects of polyarchy strengthen participatory forms and explain the advantages of directly-deliberative decision making as against representative-aggregative one (Cohen and Sabel 1997, 313-317).

Forms of participative democracy – such as deliberative or associative – overlap in many respects. Associative democracy, emphasizing the values of voluntarism, self-government and cooperation, as Piotr Perczynski put it, “could provide concrete arenas of deliberation, and, in fact, the overall associative system could also be seen as an arena of negotiating, competing and co-operating associations” (Perczynski 1999, 13).

The common characteristics of deliberative and associative models are that they put emphasis on direct deliberation among citizens in collective decision making. In the representative model of democracy the emphasis is on the sequence of selection, deliberation among the selected few and voting. It is normally accompanied by asymmetric communication within the media and ex post deliberation among the cognitively mobilized groups of the society. This model is criticized mostly on the ground of failures of the sequence’s steps. That leads to

a situation in which people are under-informed about and not interested in public affairs. They become alienated from the selected elites, care less about the public good and the very selection may lead to suboptimal results. Selection of representative elites happens in circumstances where people know little about the program of the selected and about the major social problems these programs are supposed to deal with. Public opinion formation relies upon similar conditions.

Deliberative methods

Deliberative *methods* on the other hand are not normative social models, but refer to *different* forms of civic discussions aiming at involving citizens in public discourse. There are different types within the family of discursive methods. While the aim of a deliberative poll is deliberation itself (that is, information for and involvement of stakeholders), other methods emphasize consent-seeking and forming suggestions. Another important distinction within deliberative methods concerns the very aim of the action: at one end of the scale the aim is pure research, on the other the aim is triggering social action. Most frequently a deliberative poll lies between the two: research which combines the aims of triggering and studying social action. The participants of deliberative events, in a quest for the public good, argue and debate freely. The arguments may change individual preferences, and raise the level of knowledge of the participants. Deliberation is a learning process, during which citizens gather relevant information, reflect on arguments, and exchange opinions with mutual respect of each other (Fishkin and Farrar 2005). The participants take into consideration balanced and adequate information, and articulate and weigh arguments pro and contra. The very essence of deliberation is consideration of and competition between arguments. The deliberative poll as Fishkin put it “attempts to model what the public would think, had it a better opportunity to consider the questions at issue” (1997, 162). It seeks to promote awareness, reflection and responsibility, to build *better citizens*, to increase the decision making competence of citizens, to create a more transparent public life, to increase the participation of the people in public matters, and to support well-grounded public opinion forming through information and discourse (Luskin and Fishkin 2002).

The method of deliberative polls tries to provide answers to problems related to public opinion and its measurement (Ackerman and Fishkin 2003). The main question addressed by deliberative polling relates to the problem of rational ignorance (Downs 1956) which applies to the social phenomenon when it is not felt to be worthwhile or of importance for people to devote time and effort to gather the necessary information in order to elaborate a well-

grounded opinion. However, the lack of information or elaborated opinion does not prevent the interviewee to formulate an opinion when asked, during a public opinion research. One may argue that citizens are rarely well-informed enough on public issues; therefore, public opinion polls represent a superficial reality. Another problem of public opinion is that as information and cognitive skills are not equally distributed, not everyone has an elaborate opinion on every public issue (Zaller 1993) and this problem raises the question of the equivalency of opinions (Bourdieu 1997). Less elaborate opinions or attitudes may also be less stable over time, more prone to change, furthermore, less consistent – even contradictory opinions can coexist in one person's mind (Zaller-Feldman 1992).

Beside the problem with public opinion itself, there are several other technical issues related to its measurement. Some have criticised not only attempts at measuring public opinion, but even generating it by means of presenting issues, formulating and phrasing the relevant questions, and arranging them in a specific order (Zaller-Feldman, 1992). Beside the inconsistency of opinions at the individual level, another problem of public opinion polls is whether a collective decision can be reached by a simple aggregation of individual opinions (Hardin 2003). Opinions that are still consistent at the individual level do not necessarily lead to a consistent opinion at the collective level (Pettit 2003). Those who deal with collective rationality argue that deliberation may help to rationalize collective decisions. If deliberation precedes collective decisions it may help realize the collective good and may help to find a trade-off between the different particular interests. This is why they are often more rational from the perspective of the common good than those decisions which are obtained by simple aggregation of individual opinions.

As the main aim of a deliberative poll is to produce an informed public opinion, it is interesting to analyze the changes that occur in the level of knowledge and in the attitudes of the participants of the deliberative event. In order to achieve this, survey data before and after deliberation is to be analyzed. To see whether these changes are a product of a cognitive process of elaboration of opinions it is very useful to measure the long-term effect of a deliberative poll, however this kind of follow-up research is conducted in relatively few cases (Luskin-Fishkin 1998, Attitudes to Crime 2002, Hansen-Andersen 2004). Furthermore, opinions and attitudes can change due to impacts other than the deliberative event itself – in order to control for the effect of other factors with simultaneous influence the use of control groups is needed.

Research design and samples

As mentioned above, in May 2008 a representative sample of the inhabitants of the Kaposvár Small Area was polled (n=1514) on the themes of unemployment, economy and the European Union (T1). The respondents of the survey were invited to participate in the deliberative weekend. A briefing booklet containing information about employment, economy and the EU, pros and cons about the possible measures and policies that could facilitate the discussion, was sent out for all of the 435 persons who declared their readiness to attend. In the end, 108 persons participated in the event held at Kaposvár University on the 21-22 of June 2008. During this weekend the participants discussed the themes with each other in small groups of 5-10 and with invited experts during plenary sessions. They were asked to complete a questionnaire, similar to the first one immediately before (T2) and after the event (T3). A year later, in August 2009 we went back into the field (T4)³ and interviewed both the participants and a control group. This way we ended up with a sample of 90 persons who have participated in the deliberative event and had taken part in all surveys measuring both short and long term effects of the deliberation, and a control group of 96 persons. People in the control group were selected from those participants of the initial representative survey (T1) who were interested in the event, but did not show up for one reason or another. Everyone involved had completed the initial survey (T1) and the one conducted a year later (T4). This chapter deals with these two groups (see Table 1). One has to keep in mind that village-dwellers and younger people were slightly underrepresented among the participants of the deliberative event.

³ In the following tables and graphs T1 will refer to the original representative survey, T3 to the survey after the deliberative event done with its participants and T4 to the survey done a year later among participants and the control group (T2 refers to the survey done at the very beginning of the deliberative event, but this won't be addressed in the current paper.)

Table 1: Socio-demographic characteristics of the sample (%)

		Representative sample	Participants	Control group
N		1514	90	96
		100.0	100.0	100.0
Gender	Male	43.2	46.7	43.8
	Female	56.8	53.3	56.3
Education	primary or less	27.1	23.3	19.8
	Vocational	28.5	31.1	26.0
	high school	32.0	33.3	38.5
	college/university	12.5	12.2	15.6
Age	–44	37.0	25.6	29.2
	45–	63.0	74.4	70.8
Settlement	Kaposvár	66.9	77.8	70.8
	Other	33.1	22.2	29.2
Present occupation	Employee	34.0	24.4	37.5
	entrepreneur, own business	4.8	2.2	5.2
	doing casual work	.8	1.1	2.1
	Unemployed	9.8	17.8	8.3
	pensioner	40.1	47.8	37.5
	on maternity leave	5.3	4.4	3.1
	Student	3.8	2.2	5.2
	Other	1.4	.0	1.0

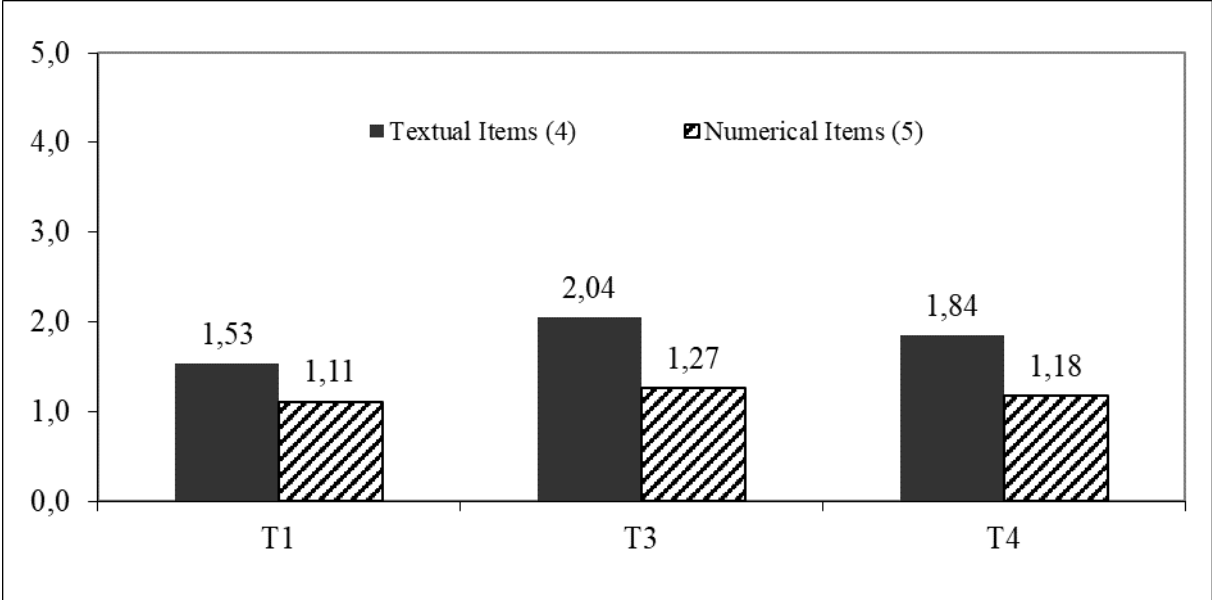
Cramer's V measures: Gender: n.s., Education: n.s., Age: 0.07***, Settlement: 0.06**, Occupation: n.s. Statistical significance: *** < 0.01, ** < 0.05, * < 0.1

TEMPORARY AND LASTING CHANGES

We present here the changes in opinion, attitudes and levels of knowledge that occurred immediately after the deliberative event and consider whether these endured a year later. One

of the main aims of a deliberative poll is to produce an informed public opinion. One possible measure of its success, therefore, is the gain in the participants' knowledge. Before such an event, the participants are sent an information booklet where they are provided with material covering the topics to be discussed. Many of them will also have gained further information from each other in small group discussions as well as from the experts during plenary sessions. Our questionnaire contained nine multiple-choice knowledge questions, out of which five were related to actual numerical data, such as the unemployment rate in the region, nationwide, and in the EU. Four other questions were referred to legal rules, such as eligibility for social welfare benefits and were more textual in character, rather than numerical. Overall, it can be said that the knowledge index⁴ was significantly higher both after the deliberation and a year later than before the event. Although there was a slight drop in levels of knowledge a year later, we can still talk about both short-term and lasting changes in information gain. The qualitative and quantitative questions did not follow similar trends: information about numbers did not increase significantly, whereas it did so more clearly at the higher level of knowledge, in terms of qualitative information about the industrial profile of the area and the prevailing legal rules (see Graph 1).

Graph 1: Knowledge gain of participants of the DP, immediate and lasting effects (T1 – T3 – T4) (n=90) (average number of correct answers concerning textual and numerical items)



T-tests: Textual Items: T1T3 $t = 3.29^{***}$, T1T4 $t = 2.15^{**}$, Numerical Items: T1T3 $t = n.s.$, T1T4 $t = n.s.$

⁴ Additive indices were created from the nine knowledge items.

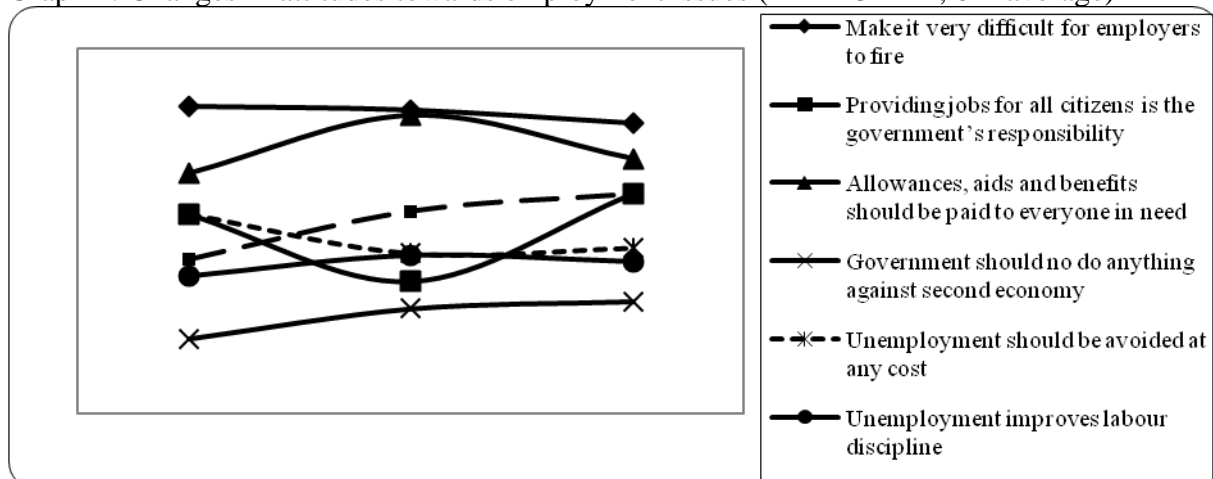
Interestingly, however, when we look at the control group, a similar trend is detectable: there was a significant increase of knowledge during the year between the pre-deliberation survey (T1) and the follow-up survey (T4), but in their case the change related to knowledge of numerical facts. As no significant differences existed between the participants and the control group in the long term regarding knowledge level, we cannot say that the changes in information gain were clearly due to the deliberative event. Deliberation resulted in a short- and long-term knowledge gain in terms of *qualitative* information. This knowledge gain however is contingent, since in the meantime members of the control group also became more knowledgeable about facts and especially figures of unemployment, that is about *quantitative* information. In the long run, therefore, according to our results, deliberation affects the type and not the level of knowledge gain.

Regarding changes of attitudes and opinion, two themes were addressed in our questionnaire: attitudes towards (1) unemployment with related issues of the economy (market, foreign investments, the role of the government and personal responsibility in providing jobs, etc.) and (2) European integration processes. Changes in opinion and attitudes showed different patterns in the case of the different questions⁵. Regarding attitudes towards unemployment issues (see Graph 2) the share of those who thought that ‘it’s the government’s duty to provide jobs for everyone’ (as opposed to one’s own responsibility) significantly decreased in the short term (from 38% to 17%), but increased over the original level a year later (43%). A similar pattern could be detected regarding opinions about allowances that should be paid to everyone in need: solidarity increased after the deliberation (from 53% to 80%), but it did not persist a year later (59%). In both cases the control group showed very similar attitudes before the deliberation and a year later which means that both the increased solidarity and the increased self-responsibility were an effect of the deliberative event and only a temporary change was generated. Nevertheless, long-term effects could be detected in opinions about the government’s increased role, even if this were at the cost of increased taxes. Positive opinion increased from 28% to 34% and was 42% a year later. A similar trend could be detected in the issue of the governments’ role in the regulation of the second economy.

Overall, among the 7 questions concerning employment issues, in the case of 4 there were significant short term changes, and there were long term changes in the case of 2 questions.

⁵ Only significant changes (at the $p < 0.1$ or higher level) will be reported in the statistics. The different questions were asked on different scales (1-5, 1-7, 0-10). In order to make them comparable all scales were recoded into a 0-1 scale.

Graph 2: Changes in attitudes towards employment issues (T1 – T3 – T4, 0-1 average)



Significant changes:

Providing jobs for all citizens is the government's responsibility: T1T3 $t = -4.429^{***}$, T3T4 $t = 6.286^{***}$

Allowances, aid and benefits should be paid to everyone in need: T1T3 $t = 3.503^{***}$, T3T4 $t = -3.628^{***}$

Government should not do anything against the second economy: T1T4 $t = 1.872^*$

Unemployment should be avoided at any cost: T1T3 $t = -1.989^*$

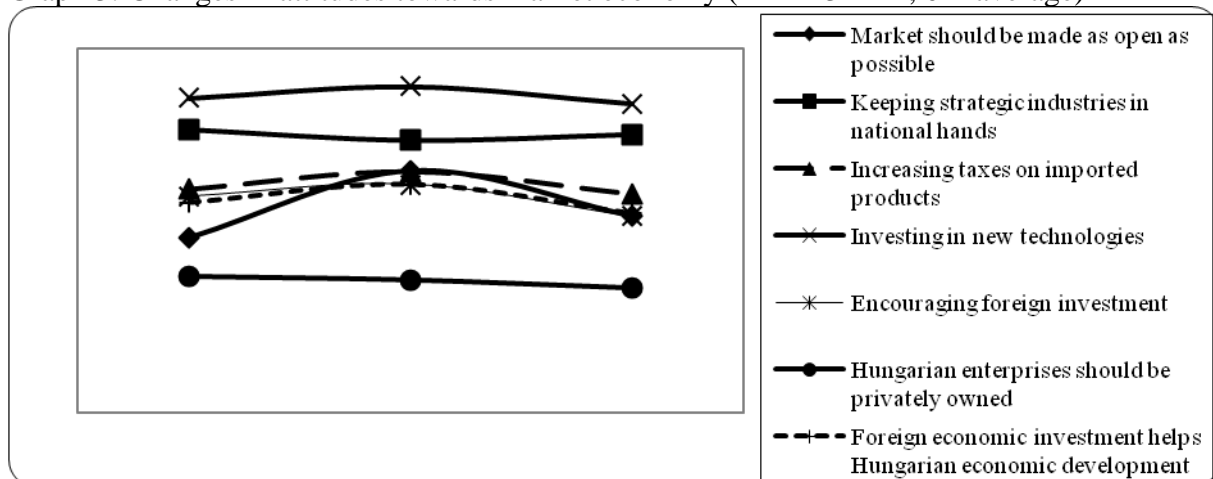
Government should spend more: T1T3 $t = 2.632^{***}$, T1T4 $t = 3.569^{***}$

In terms of attitudes towards the market economy, participants became more positive towards the idea of an open market immediately after the deliberation, but this change did not have a significant lasting effect a year later according to the average of the answers (see Graph 3). However, when looking at the distribution of the answers there was some realignment over time.

Attitudes towards foreign investments showed a different pattern: a slight positive change after the deliberation and a significant drop a year later. Initially 24% of the participants of the deliberation were against encouraging foreign investments (1-2 answers on a 1-5 scale) that decreased somewhat to 13% after the deliberation but grew again to 38% a year later. In parallel with this trend, initially 48% thought that foreign investments help Hungarian economic development that increased somewhat to 56% after the deliberation and dropped back to 39% a year later.

Among the seven questions concerning economic issues, there was significant short term (T1T3) change in case of one question, and there was no significant long term (T1T4) change in this respect.

Graph 3: Changes in attitudes towards market economy (T1 – T3 – T4, 0-1 average)



Significant changes:

The market should be made as open as possible: T1T3 change $t = 3.864^{***}$

Investing in new technologies: T3T4 $t = -1.858^*$

Encouraging foreign investment: T3T4 $t = -2.187^{**}$

Foreign economic investment helps Hungarian economic development: T3T4 $t = -3.046^{***}$

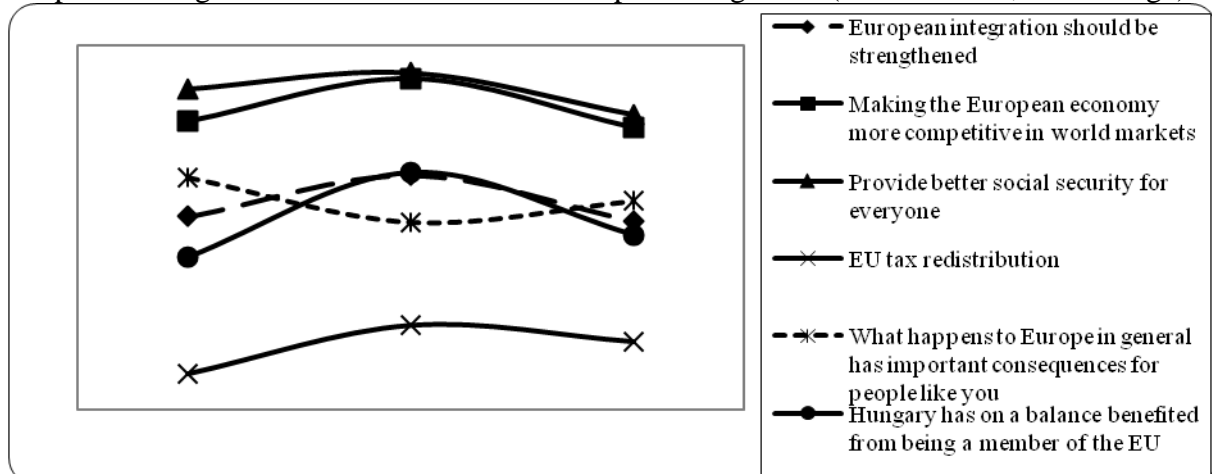
Regarding perception of the European integration project, attitudes were more changeable over time, which could be a sign that opinions or attitudes on this subject were not yet crystallized due to the distant, abstract and complicated character of the subject and the low level of public interest (see Graph 4). There was only a short-term change in opinions on the question of strengthening integration, on the perception of the benefits of the EU for Hungary and on the need to make the the EU more competitive in world markets. The pattern of the answers before the deliberation and a year later was very similar among the participants of the deliberation and the control group, which means that in the case of these questions the temporary changes are also to be drawn back to the deliberative event itself.

There were, however, some long-lasting changes, in terms of the increased tax level to be distributed at the EU level and the decreased share of people believing that what happens at the EU level has consequences for their life. In terms of tax redistribution, the initial 10% to be attributed to the EU level has increased to 23% and a year later, despite a slight decrease, it was still at 19%. Regarding the perceived consequences on people's lives, there was an important decrease due to the deliberation among the participants (from 28% to 8%) which went back to some extent a year later, but still represents a drop of 20%. In terms of opinions before the deliberation and a year after, the general trends of the participants' opinions are in line with the control group, where there was a significant decrease as well (from 28% to 15%).

Besides these trends, better social security as the main aim for the EU showed a changing pattern independent from the deliberation, as there was no immediate effect – it decreased only after it.

Among the six questions concerning issues of European integration, all but one were affected by short-term change and there were lasting changes in only three cases.

Graph 4: Changes in attitudes towards the European integration (T1 – T3 – T4, 0-1 average)



Significant changes:

European integration should be strengthened: T1T3 change $t = 2.458^{**}$, T3T4 $t = -2.324^{**}$

Making the European economy more competitive: T1T3 change $t = 3.191^{***}$, T3T4 $t = -4.021^{***}$

Provide better social security for everyone: T3T4 change $t = -3.66^{***}$, T1T4 $t = -2.14^{***}$

EU tax redistribution: T1T3 change $t = 3.005^{***}$, T1T4 $t = 2.707^{***}$

What happens to Europe in general has important consequences for people like me: T1T3 change $t = -2.901^{***}$, T1T4 $t = -2.135^{**}$

On balance Hungary has benefited: T1T3 change $t = 2.634^{**}$, T3T4 $t = -2.304^{**}$

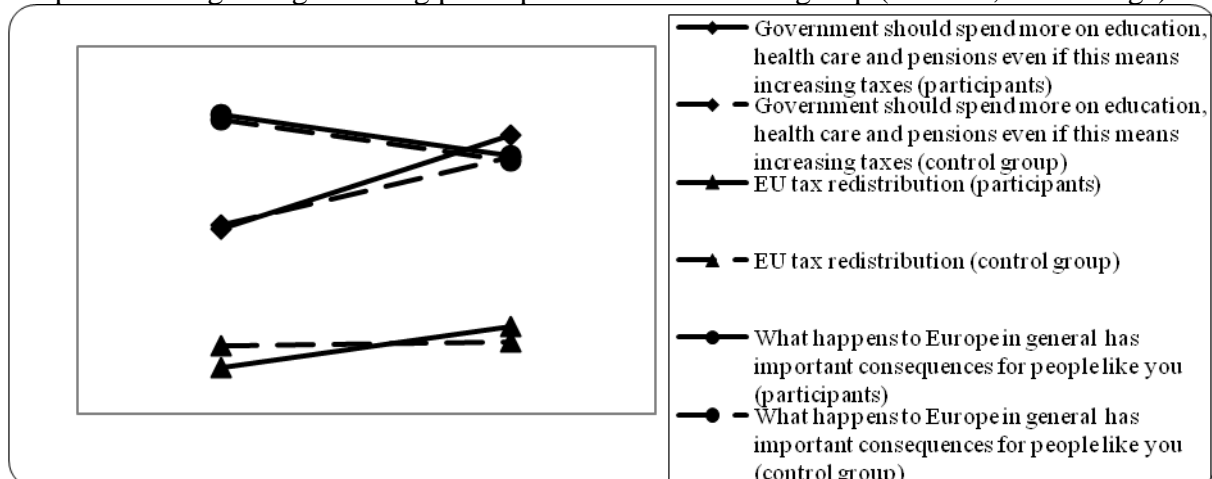
Overall there were short-term changes in half of the investigated 20 attitude/opinion items and long-term changes in a quarter of them.

To set up a *typology*, four patterns of attitude and opinion change can be discerned. Due to partial overlapping between short- and long-term changes there was *no significant change* whatsoever in the case of eight questions (such as keeping strategic industries in national hands, increasing taxes on imported products, investing in new technologies, that Hungarian enterprises should be privately owned, that it should be made very difficult for employers to fire staff, that unemployment should be avoided at any cost, that unemployment improves labor discipline and that government should not do anything against illegal work). In the case of six questions the deliberation had an immediate effect on opinions but this was *not lasting*

and opinions went back close to their initial levels a year later. This was the case of the attitudes towards an open market, that 'it's the government's duty to provide jobs for everyone', 'allowances should be paid to everyone in need', European integration should be strengthened', 'the EU should become more competitive', and that 'Hungary has benefited from its EU membership'. In most of these cases the control group confirmed that the changes were only temporary as there was no change among them and the differences between the participants and the control group were not significant.

In three further questions, however, a lasting change could be detected. Attitudes towards increased government spending with increased taxes, increased EU redistribution and decreased consequences of the EU in one's life all showed a durable change. In these questions it is interesting to see whether the effects can be attributed to the deliberation or to an overall change in the opinion climate (see Graph 5). In the case of government spending and the consequences on EU events on people's lives, the changes were in line with those occurring among the control group, which suggests that these changes cannot be directly associated with the deliberation, but rather with a change in the overall context. As opposed to these trends, responses to the question about EU tax redistribution showed a different pattern. There was an initial gap between the participants and the control group which decreased to some extent after the deliberation. Before the deliberation, the participants were significantly less open to the EU level redistribution than the control group (10% vs. 15%) – by this change the participants did exceed the level of the control group where the opinions on the matter remained unchanged after the deliberation (19% vs. 16%).

Graph 5: Lasting changes among participants and the control group (T1 – T4, 0-1 average)



Significant changes among the control group:

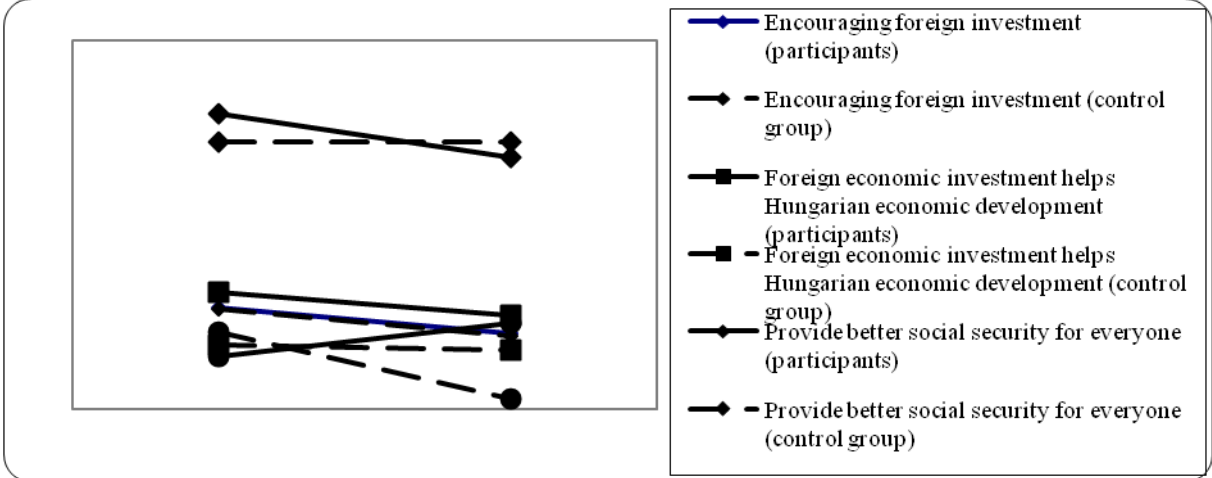
The government should spend more: T1T4 change $t = 3.146$ ***

What happens to Europe in general has important consequences for people like me: T1T4 change $t = -2.249$ **

The last group of changing patterns is where the deliberation had no immediate effect, but opinions had changed a year later; that is, *only long term change* could be detected. This happened for three questions: on encouraging foreign investment, the benefits of foreign investments to Hungary and the need for the EU to promote improved social security. In these cases comparison with the pattern followed by the control group is also important, for it can provide an explanation why these changes happened, whether it was due to a change in the overall opinion climate or the national/ international environment. (The spring of 2009 was especially difficult in Hungary due to both the world financial crisis and the Hungarian economic crisis and people's attitudes towards the foreign investments and social security might have changed) Attitudes towards encouraging foreign investments showed a very similar trend among the participants and the control group, with only a slight decline over one year, which was not statistically significant (see Graph 6). So, in this case we might talk about this being an effect of the changing environment. Regarding opinions about how helpful foreign investments are for the Hungarian economy, there was an initial gap between the participants and the control group, with participants being more positive in this respect. A year later, the opinion of the two groups became closer. However, regarding these two latter questions, the slight increase followed by the significant decline in the support for foreign investment among the participants mentioned earlier might be the effect of the deliberation. Regarding the wish for a social Europe, the opinions remained unchanged in the control group, while the participants experienced a decrease during the year after the deliberation –

they followed a different trend in this respect, but still, there was no significant difference between the participants' opinion and the control group's opinion.

Graph 6: A comparison of the participants and the control group (T1 – T4, 0-1 average)



Significant change within the control group:
 The market should be made as open as possible: T1T4 change $t = -2.145^{**}$

Another interesting case concerns attitudes toward the open market, where there was immediate change after the deliberative poll, but no lasting effects of the deliberation. However, comparing this trend to the control group, it seems that while no significant change occurred in the long term among the participants (in terms of the average answers), the control group became significantly more reluctant to support the open market. While there was no significant difference between the groups at the beginning, a year later the participants of the deliberative poll were more positive towards the idea of an open market than the control group. In this sense, we might hypothesize that after a short positive change followed by a decline in support, the stability of participants' opinions over the long-term could be attributed to their experience of deliberation – without this, opinions would have changed negatively.

Taking all the changes between both groups into account, it can be said that for two questions the significant change was probably due to deliberation itself, although with a different pattern. In the case of the share of tax to be allocated to the EU, the initial opinion of the participants was significantly different from that of the control group; however, a year later, with no changes in the control group, the participants' opinion on the matter became more enthusiastic. As for the question on the open market, there was no significant difference at the beginning between the two groups, but the gap became significant a year later, with the

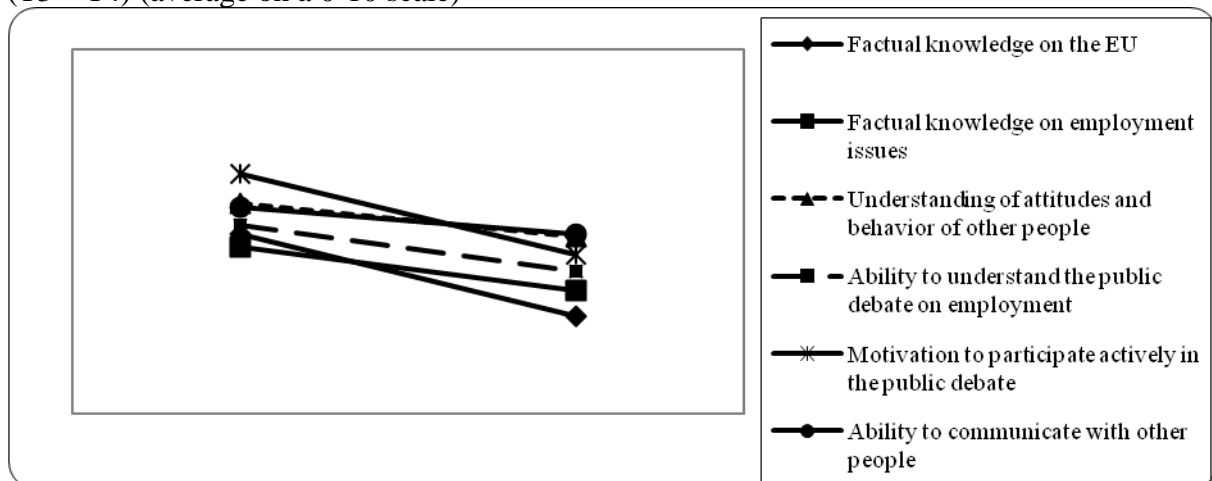
opinion of the control group showing a significant decline while the opinion of the participants remained relatively unchanged.

A REFLECTIVE VIEW

Evaluation of the event

Another interesting result of the deliberative event is the evaluation of its effects and efficiency by the participants themselves. In terms of skills or knowledge that they considered were improved by the event, the participants mentioned first of all an increased motivation to participate actively in public debate (75%), and also to communicate more with other people and better understand their attitudes and behavior (68-69%). A lower number of participants mentioned that the event helped them to comprehend the public debate on employment or to improve their knowledge on employment issues in the EU. A year later, a significantly lower number of participants mentioned that the event served to improve their factual knowledge on the EU or employment issues, as well as their ability to understand and participate in public debate on these issues (see Graph 7).

Graph 7: Evaluation of the deliberative event – perceived improvement of knowledge/skills (T3 – T4) (average on a 0-10 scale)



Significant changes:

Factual knowledge on the EU: $t = -3.328^{***}$

Factual knowledge on employment issues: $t = -1.967^*$

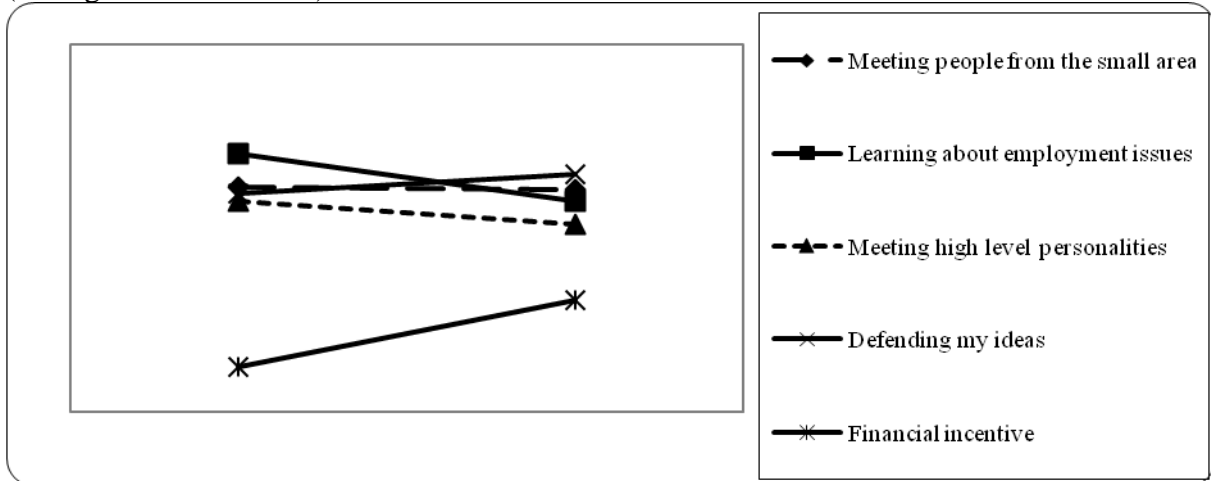
Ability to understand the public debate on employment: $t = -2.067^{**}$

Motivation to participate actively in the public debate: $t = -3.302^{***}$

As for their motivation to participate in the event, learning about employment issues was mentioned significantly less frequently a year later than immediately after the event – and

they placed more importance on the financial incentive they gained from agreeing to participate (see Graph 8).

Graph 8: Evaluation of the deliberative event – motivation for participation (T3 – T4) (average on a 0-10 scale)



Significant changes:

Learning about employment issues: $t = -2.246^{**}$

Financial incentive: $t = 2.300^{**}$

Factors influencing the changes

We have seen how different aspects of opinions and attitudes changed after the deliberation and whether these changes were lasting. This raises the question of what factors affected the overall changes in opinions and attitudes. In order to analyze this, linear regression models are used, testing the effect of information and social-demographic factors on opinion and attitude changes. The dependent variables are opinion-change indices where first the opinion changes are calculated from the pre-and post deliberation answers (T1T3) and from the pre-deliberation answers and the answers given a year after the deliberation (T1T4) to the set of twenty questions described previously. Then the absolute value of these variables is summed up in two additive indices that stand for the short- and long-term changes. These indices sum up the intensity of opinion change; however, they contain no information on the direction of these changes.

We have included several socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, education. In order to include information on the respondents' material resources, we used a proxy measuring the quality of the neighborhood recorded by the interviewer. Besides these variables, knowledge change indices were used in our models as a more substantial

determinant of the opinion change based on the assumption that opinion change occurs due to increased level of information and knowledge gain.

Four regression models were built: three among the participants of the deliberative event, measuring short-term and lasting changes, and one model where the control group was also included in order to measure the effect of the deliberation itself on the long-term opinion changes (see Table 2).

Regression models show that men were more open to change their opinion than women (see Model 1), however, this is only true of short term opinion changes – it doesn't determine lasting effects of the deliberation. The unemployed changed their mind less frequently than the employed. When these impacts were controlled for other variables (education, knowledge gain, and material conditions) both gender and being unemployed had significant effects on the short term. If we take into account the general trends of opinion change *during the deliberation*, that *solidarity has overall increased*, it is not surprising that the unemployed changed their opinions less than non-unemployed, who might have become more socially sensitive on the matter. On the other hand, the other main trend of the opinion changes, the increased level of self-responsibility regarding finding a job, should have affected the unemployed themselves. Regarding why men are more affected by opinion change, a possible explanation can be that men participate more in public debate and they are also more likely to hold extreme opinions than women – but these explanations cannot be directly verified here. At the same time, those who changed their opinion more also found the event as a whole more valuable in helping them clarify their position on the issues and they felt more active during the informal and social parts of the event. In parallel with this, men were also more likely to find the event more valuable in this sense than women, with an average of 7.51 vs. 5.96 on a 0-10 scale.

In the longer run, there is a similar trend, but this connection is not significant (see Model 2). People with a university degrees were less likely to change their opinions, which could be explained by the fact that their opinions were more established and they had more developed cognitive mobilization skills.

If we include the immediate (T1T3) impact of the deliberative event into the explanation of the long-run (T1T4) opinion changes of the participants (see Model 3) it proves to be the single most important explanatory factor; it overwrites the effects of gender and education as

well. Even the impact of knowledge change proves to be unimportant when investigated together with the short-run opinion change index.

If we investigate the long-term impact of participation in the deliberative poll on opinion change (see Model 4) it proves to be insignificant. None of the explanatory variables prove to be significant, except for education which counter-indicates opinion change. Interestingly there was no significant difference between the participant group and the control group in terms of the intensity of opinion change. In this sense, it seems that in the long term, the deliberative poll had no lasting effect – opinions that changed did so regardless and could not be ascribed to participation in the event. Overall, this is the most important – negative – finding of our paper.

Table 2: Linear regression models of temporary and lasting (unstandardized regression coefficients)

	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Model 4	
Dependent:	T1T3 opinion change		T1T4 opinion change		T1T4 opinion change		T1T4 opinion change	
Constant	5.044	***	5.579	***	3.019	***	6.021	***
Male	.790	**	.611		.220		.205	
Unemployed	-.870	*	-.116		.313		-.146	
University	-.693		-	*	-.659		-.712	*
Wealthy neighbourhood	-.010		.233		.248		-.156	
T1T3/T1T4 knowledge change	-.058		-.089		-.076		-.037	
T1T3 opinion change					.509	***		
Participated to the deliberation							-.183	
R Square	.094	n.s.	.062	n.s.	.249	***	.028	n.s.
n=	90		90		90		186	

Statistical significance: *** < 0.01, ** < 0.05, * < 0.1

However, the models presented here are not significant ones, with the exception of the one where previous opinion change is included among the explaining factors. This means that the

variables included are not the ones determining the intensity of opinion change. The included variables explain 9% in the case of the immediate opinion change, but only 3-6% of the long term changes.

Besides technical issues concerning the low sample size and the construction of the additive opinion change index, the inclusion of other substantial explanatory variables could be considered. It seems that age, activity/inactivity or media usage do not have a significant impact on opinion change either. On the other hand, when trying to build models on the opinion change in separate questions without any aggregation, the results are similarly insignificant. The opinion change concerning a question is mostly defined by the previous opinion on that matter – without any effects of the mentioned socio-demographic or substantial variables. Level of education had a negative effect on opinion change in the first models, but other basic socio-demographic characteristics did not influence it significantly.

CONCLUSION

In the literature there is much criticism on the applicability of the deliberative social *model* and it therefore makes sense for the debate on this kind of deliberation to be tested empirically. Deliberative *methods* may offer many advantages, but they also face several problems. Reviewing the empirical studies on deliberation, there are relatively few quantitative and reliable analyses of how deliberation really works. While opinions do frequently change, ‘most empirical analyses do not explain the patterns of opinion change or lack of change’ (Barbaras 2004, 688).

Proponents of deliberative polling suggest the need for follow-up research to determine if the opinion changes brought about by their method are temporary or lasting. The control sample surveyed in this study allows for an assessment to be made of the effect of deliberation and the effect of other factors e.g. public discourse or crisis. Similarly to the Kaposvár Deliberative Poll, participants in follow-up study conducted in Denmark ‘reverted somewhat to their initial opinion position’ and measured persisted ‘increase among the participants in the level of knowledge’ (Hansen and Andersen 2004, 271-276). As for knowledge change after the deliberation, the Kaposvár experience shows significant and lasting gains, with two important qualifications. First, this is true only in the case of the textual items, because knowledge of numerical items did not grow in the short run. Qualitative and quantitative information had different chances to influence the knowledge of deliberative poll participants

(Fishkin et al. 2009). Second, in the long run knowledge levels grew within the control group as well. While the impact of deliberative polling mostly had to do with textual knowledge, in the control group of the local population the knowledge about quantitative information grew. It might be thought that it was the impact of the crisis: information about the numerical data concerning unemployment became known. However, in this case the growth should have been detected among the deliberative poll participants as well. The difference may have to do with the deliberative poll discussions and with the age composition of the samples. Due to the self-selection of the deliberative poll sample, the elderly were over-represented among the participants.

In terms of attitude change, in two out of five items there was no change at all. In every third item the changes were temporary only. In two cases out of the twenty the changes were lasting due to the effect of the deliberative poll. The two items were ideologically sensitive ones: the higher proportion of tax redistribution on the EU-level and the open market.

The empirical results of the Kaposvár follow-up survey show that the deliberative poll had a minor lasting effect on people's thinking. In the short term, immediately after the event, the knowledge of the participants grew significantly; they changed their mind on several issues; they became more tolerant towards the unemployed; and their opinions became more circumspect and less extreme. They evaluated the event enthusiastically and they felt that they would be ready to participate in further public debates. One year later, most of these effects had disappeared: the level of knowledge and most of the opinion changes did not differ from those of the control group, while the evaluation of the event – although remaining positive in most of the dimensions – became less enthusiastic.

Our findings suggest that deliberative polling does not change people's views permanently. For those who want to experiment with forms of participative democracy, this might sound like bad news. But it could also contribute to an improvement in the methods of decision-making. Even if temporarily, it can efficiently contribute to providing better information for citizens and it can enhance the confidence and ability of lay citizens to participate in public affairs in the short run. Prior to important collective decisions it may help to counterbalance the two major problems of voting practices and other forms of decision making: ignorance and disinterest. Better-informed and motivated citizens will be more likely ready to participate in collective decisions shortly after these types of deliberative events.

There is one additional aspect of these findings which is worthy of further study. Deliberative polls are not only about knowledge gain and arguing. Emotions and stories count as well. In our case, the side effects of the emotional dynamics of the event were mostly positive: tolerance and trust grew (even if temporarily). More evidence is needed to discover whether this is always (or typically) the case. It looks likely that arguing and being informed helps to form balanced opinions. But how emotional dynamics of these events influence the passions of the majority and of opinion leaders in the short and in the long run is a matter for further research.

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