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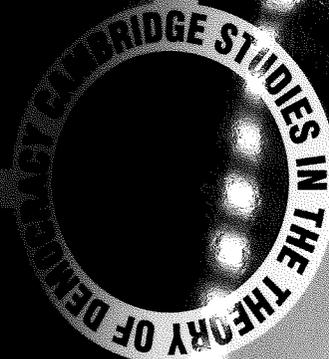
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IT IS SOMETIMES ASSUMED THAT VOTING IS THE CENTRAL mechanism for political decision making. However, the contributors to this volume focus on an alternative mechanism – decision by discussion or deliberation. These original contributions include case studies based on historical and current instances of deliberative democracy, normative discussion of the merits of deliberation compared with other models of collective decision making, and studies of the conditions under which deliberation tends to improve the quality of decisions. This book takes a realistic approach: Rather than assuming that deliberative democracy is always ideal, the authors critically probe its limits and weaknesses as well as its strengths.

Deliberative Democracy



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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

ISBN 0-521-59696-3



PUBLISHED BY THE PRESS SYNDICATE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP, United Kingdom

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS
The Edinburgh Building, Cambridge CB2 2RU, United Kingdom
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

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First published 1998

Printed in the United States of America

Typeset in Centennial

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Deliberative democracy / edited by Jon Elster.

p. cm. – (Cambridge studies in the theory of democracy)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-59296-8. – ISBN 0-521-59696-3 (pbk.)

1. Democracy. 2. Decision-making. 3. Representative government
and representation. I. Elster, Jon, 1940– II. Series.

JC423.D3892 1998 97-32111
321.8 – dc21 CIP

A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 0 521 59296 8 hardback
ISBN 0 521 59696 3 paperback

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Chapter One

 "Claro!": An Essay on Discursive Machismo

Among coachmen, as among us all, whoever starts shouting at others with the greatest self-assurance, and shouts first, is right.

Lev Tolstoy¹

I delight in talking politics. I talk them all day long. But I can't bear listening to them.

Oscar Wilde²

Deliberation has been described, minimally, as "a conversation whereby individuals speak and listen sequentially" before making a collective decision.³ Deliberative "conversations" fall somewhere between two extremes: *bargaining*, which involves exchanging threats and promises, and *arguing*, which concerns either matters of principle or matters of fact and causality. Discussions about the latter may occur even when ends are shared but views diverge as to the best means. The aim of arguing, unlike that of bargaining, is to persuade others of the value of one's views. Typically, both arguing and bargaining enter the deliberative process. Since arguments can also be put forward manipulatively for covert bargaining purposes, it is sometimes arduous to separate one form of deliberation from the other. However, the cynical reduction of arguing to a special case of strategic bargaining does not do: as Elster maintains, argument, even if hypocritical, has a powerful civilizing in-

For their comments and suggestions, I am grateful to the participants in the Workshop on Deliberative Democracy, held at the University of Chicago on April 28–30, 1995 – in particular Jon Elster, Stephen Holmes, and Gerry Mackie. I am also indebted to John Alcorn, Joshua Getzler, Valeria Pizzini, Adam Swift, Federico Varese, and Steven Warner for the many comments and suggestions I received from them.

fluence (1993; see also Chapter 4, this volume). If we accept this view, the extent to which a democracy can successfully deliberate by arguing rather than just by bargaining makes a great deal of difference. In this essay I consider some of the behavioral conditions required for successful deliberation.

To be fruitful, a conversation need not exclude the passions. As Stephen Holmes remarked in discussion, people who are too cool, analytical, and impartial may generate distrust or may fail to rally people around issues. A passionate style can lead to extremes, but this is not always a bad thing. It can generate the energy to sustain harder thinking about issues. Nor, for similar reasons, does a conversation have to be governed by meticulous procedural rules. Yet deliberative conversations, especially when concerning *reasons* rather than *interests*, rely on an elementary form of cooperation. If agents show up late at meetings, pay no attention to one another's speeches, jump the queue, speak all at once, or shout when they have no argument, the conditions for deliberation are simply not there. Deliberation, of course, relies on a grander factor, freedom of speech. Free speech, however, achieves functional significance only if somebody is prepared to listen.⁴

This cannot be taken for granted. There is no reason to expect the mix of dispositions that sustains fruitful deliberative conversations to exist everywhere. Attitudes toward conversation do not originate from democratic arrangements even though they can be shaped and controlled by them. They are likely to be by-products of a preexisting culture and may well be antithetical to deliberation. "It is a very dangerous thing to listen. If one listens one may be convinced; and a man who allows himself to be convinced by an argument is a thoroughly unreasonable person." I suspect many would still agree with Oscar Wilde (*An Ideal Husband*, act 1).

Albert Hirschman (1986) has identified a set of attitudes that can prove particularly disastrous for deliberative democracy:

Many cultures – including most Latin American ones I know – place considerable value on having *strong opinions* on virtually *everything* from the *outset*, and on *winning an argument* rather than on listening and finding that something can occasionally be learnt from others. To that extent, they are basically predisposed to an authoritarian rather than a democratic politics. (42; emphasis added)

For the sake of brevity I dub this general attitude the culture of "Claro!" – Spanish for "Obvious!" "I knew it all along!" "Nothing

you say surprises me" – a belittling snap response that greets those who express an argument, especially if not at all obvious, in countries of that culture.⁵ (As I show later, under certain conditions this type of response is a dominant equilibrium of discursive competition.) In a culture of this kind, deliberative conversations of the arguing type succumb faster than those of the bargaining type: while agents are still likely to prick up their ears when threats and promises are voiced and make an effort to sort them out of the general noise, they are unlikely to listen to one another's arguments, let alone be persuaded by them. Even if democracy does not collapse into authoritarian politics, as Hirschman predicts, it drifts toward the bargaining extreme.

In this essay, I try to explain the apparently inane "Claro!" culture. Italy, rather than Latin America, will provide the background empirical case. I will identify a particular belief about the structure of knowledge that can make sense of why the "Claro!" culture is practiced even by rational individuals in countries in which that belief is common currency. I then explore the pernicious consequences of that culture on democracy and draw some normative conclusions. First, however, I review briefly the effects that deliberation of the arguing kind has on the quality of decisions. Most of them are discussed at greater length by the other authors in this volume.

1. Advantages of Deliberative Democracy

As with all human activities, deliberation does not invariably produce positive effects. Under certain conditions it does more harm than good. For instance, if the quality of outcomes declines rapidly with time, deliberation may simply waste precious time. In the ski-mountaineering club I used to belong to, the instructors always consulted about the best route, but in bad situations we had as a rule (on which we had previously deliberated) to defer the decision to the school director.

Less obvious drawbacks have also been identified. Benjamin Constant – as quoted by Stephen Holmes in discussion – pointed out two specific risks involved in public discussion: being duped by sheer eloquence and promoting conformism. Through discussion people find out about each other's preferences, and weaker people may sheepishly acquiesce to the stronger. A further risk involves the manipulation of information by lobbies that have much to lose

(see, in this volume, Chapter 5 by Stokes and Chapter 6 by Przeworski). Finally, the subtlety that deliberation may bring to a discussion can have a paralyzing effect. Deliberation may subvert the preference ranking of deliberators, and this can be a good thing. But rather than going all the way and persuading them of a different ranking, it can simply make the choice indeterminate: it becomes impossible to rank options either because of incommensurability or, as in the case of Buridan's unfortunate ass, because of indifference.

However, several scholars maintain that, on balance, deliberation does more to benefit than to harm the quality of decisions or their legitimacy or both.⁶ A possible term of comparison is a silent, merely "aggregative" democracy in which people vote with no prior discussion. This comparison, however, is largely artificial. In practice, a silent democracy hardly exists. Democracy tends to be a discursive enterprise *regardless* of whether deliberation makes for superior outcomes relative to the aggregative case. To be implemented, the aggregative model would require at least one successful deliberative exchange that persuaded all parties of its advantages. Thus, the question of what the effects of deliberation are should be cast against the imperfect deliberative models we have *anyway*.

The positive consequences of deliberation primarily concern the distribution of information. If information and reasoning skills are, for whatever reason, unevenly distributed among deliberators, deliberation improves their allocation and the awareness of the relative merits of different means. This may be useful even if we all agree on the desirability of an outcome. It improves the quality of our casual beliefs on the state of the world that can be brought about by each course of action in the feasible set. (Although some of the time some of us can be manipulated – as Stokes and Przeworski argue in Chapters 5 and 6 this volume – into believing as true or beneficial what is respectively false or against our interests, it is unlikely that all of us will be manipulated all the time by deliberation.)

Furthermore, since imagination is also unevenly distributed, deliberation may introduce into the discussion new solutions to shared problems. Deliberation, in addition, spurs the imagination indirectly if it reveals that, on all known options, no compromise is possible, for this provides an incentive to think of new ones. By the same process, it can instill the courage necessary to embrace so-

lutions that were thought to be too daring before it became clear that no compromise was otherwise possible.

Moreover, public discussion – as Elster argues (1993; Chapter 4, this volume) – provides an incentive to dilute self-interested claims by injecting principled elements in order to persuade others of their merit, or at least legitimacy. Hypocritical as such claims may be, they may lead to making concessions to the general interest or to the interests of other groups. Thus, deliberation can facilitate compromise, improve consensus, and, through consistency, disseminate principles in public life. Principles, in turn, are likely to improve distributive justice and provide better outcomes for weaker groups, which would be penalized under a pure bargaining system.

The effects of deliberation tend to come in bundles that are sometimes hard to disentangle empirically, even in seemingly simple situations. I once heard two men discussing whether it was right to use "she" and "her" instead of "he" or "his" when referring to generic persons. A was for, B was against. B did not feel that arguments concerning equality or fairness had any force. Having exhausted all other (and better) justifications, A said that, if nothing else, B should use feminine pronouns because B was "a gentleman"! B was cornered and found it hard to disagree. What does this exchange accomplish? First, it appeals to an image of the self that may be generally agreeable to the obstinate B. It further points out an inconsistency in preferences by forcing into the discussion the notion that if B wants to stick to his male-gendered vocabulary, he must argue against a shared male norm: "be kind to women." It also provides a special kind of information on the cost of persevering in one's preferred course of action: a warning that others may think B is not a gentleman if he sticks to his "politically incorrect" practice, which contravenes a traditional norm, even if B does not agree with the norm or with other principles that may justify that linguistic practice. Deliberation channels old norms to new cases: it restates an unassailable principle and then shows that the opponent's argument violates that principle; thus, out of consistency or fear of sanctions, the recalcitrant party is induced to revise his preferences or else recant the principle. (This example also shows how a discussion initially meant to persuade may evolve to one in which warnings are issued and will thus more closely resemble the bargaining case.)

On the whole, effective deliberation can affect the quality of de-

cisions in four ways. (a) It can render the outcomes of decisions Pareto-superior by fostering better solutions; (b) it can make the outcomes fairer in terms of distributive justice by providing better protection for weaker parties; (c) it can lead to a larger consensus on any one decision; (d) it can generate decisions that are more legitimate (including for the minority).

2. Analytical versus Indexical Knowledge

Why should people value strong opinions, on everything and from the outset of a discussion? Hirschman did not elaborate on the origins of what I call the "Claro!" culture. This is the question I address in this section.

A common, ad hoc understanding imputes this culture to the presence of stereotypical character traits; in essence, the argument is: "that's just the way some people are." A hot-tempered, volatile, argumentative disposition might be seen as the source of "Claro!" values in public life, and these traits are assumed to be inherently more widespread in certain ethnic groups than in others. A more promising line of research might focus on the sources of such cultural traits and seek in the specific history of countries which display the "Claro!" culture the social events that might have spread and legitimized those values. For instance, one could speculate that the cocky and bellicose chivalrous code of the Spanish aristocracy, once aped by the peoples it colonized, might have provided more than a fleeting inspiration for that culture – not just in Latin America but also in southern Italy and the Philippines.

Here I want to follow a different route. I suspect that cultural values are not the rock-bottom explanation of "Claro!" behavior but can themselves, at least in theory, be derived from beliefs concerning the structure of knowledge and from the mutual expectations that follow from them.

Imagine two ideal-typical societies that differ in one respect only: each is governed by one of two fundamental assumptions about knowledge. In one type of society, knowledge is deemed to be what, for want of a better term, I shall call *analytical* (AK). It is not necessarily seen as professionalized or even specialized, but it is thought to be the result of a combination of good reasoning, empirical verification, and generally hard work. Furthermore, it is believed to be tentative rather than definitive. This set of beliefs has a variety of consequences, one of which is particularly relevant

here: if a person either knows or ignores something about a certain field of knowledge, no one automatically infers anything about her knowledge in other fields. If she happens to know nothing or to have no clear ideas about *x*, it will not be generally assumed that she knows nothing about *y* and *z*. No one infers that she is an ignorant person. Local ignorance is not thought to be dishonorable.

In the other type of society, by contrast, knowledge is assumed to be *holistic*: knowledge or ignorance about *x* is taken as a sign of knowledge or ignorance of the whole. It reveals more than a local failure; it stands for lack of *Kultur*. The notion of excellence in classical antiquity is a parallel case. Excellence, as Paul Veyne (quoted by Elster 1990: 40) argued, was seen as one and indivisible. Someone who does one thing well will do another equally well, even if the qualities required are quite different. Excellence is antithetical to specialization. "A perfection is not the same as a profession, such as philosopher, teacher of rhetoric, etc., which is a specialization, whereas a perfection is an example to everyone – the realization of what every man ought to become" (Veyne 1976: 150). Veyne calls this view of excellence *theorie de l'indice*, index theory. I shall call *indexical* (IK) the analogous beliefs regarding knowledge. (Indexical beliefs may, of course, be dominant *within* any one field of knowledge; in fact, they probably should, but I am not concerned with this special case here.)⁷

Note that beliefs about knowledge do not have a third modality: except in special instances, it does not make sense to have a *hydraulic*, or zero-sum, view of knowledge whereby if one knows nothing about *x* one must know a great deal about *y*. (If anything, the inverse hydraulic view may be more plausible: since resources are scarce, if someone knows a great deal about *x*, one is unlikely to know much about *y*, an inference that strengthens the analytical view.)

From the perspective of a developed society in which scientific thinking is a dominant model, it may seem ludicrous to entertain IK beliefs. The last man on earth to have read everything ever written is said to be Leibniz. Even if one could read everything, it does not follow that one would understand or remember everything. No one can possibly know everything – it has been a long time since this was a feasible feat. Renaissance men are dead and gone. Yet even a cursory appreciation of world cultures suggests that IK – often as a tacit assumption – is, if anything, more widespread than AK. Consider the following random selection:

1. From a religious perspective, knowledge is quintessentially holistic: everything worth knowing is in *one* book – the gospel, the Bible, the Koran. Truth is found in dogma rather than in doubt. Discovery comes, if at all, from reinterpretation rather than from research; knowledge is not a human construct but a gift bestowed upon us by revelation.
2. In the Muslim world (as described by Ibn Khaldun) a holistic view of honorable manhood is traditional. Artisans who work in cities and subject themselves to the limitations of the division of labor are held in contempt.
3. Much of nineteenth- and twentieth-century “Continental” philosophy – for instance, as espoused by Benedetto Croce or the Frankfurt school – is antiscientific and leans toward IK rather than AK.
4. If knowledge is unevenly distributed in a society, IK assumptions may be more cognitively natural in everyday life than AK ones. In the absence of a clear or readily available test of independent validation, or in the absence of clear boundaries between fields of knowledge, people may use as a signal of knowledge in general the simple ability to provide *a* reply and express *a* view: between two savants – one who replied to the first of our questions and one who could not (or not so promptly or eloquently) – we might feel more inclined to rely on the former for further questions.

If the indexical view is widespread, then the right approach might be to turn the starting question on its head. The puzzle is not so much why that culture exists at all as why it is not *more* widespread: the “Claro!” syndrome may be more popular in many folk cultures than its civilized counterpart. Discussions in Italian bars may not be very different from discussions in British pubs or U.S. diners as manifestations of a “Claro!” culture.

“Claro!” attitudes survive in the niches of countries in which the dominant culture is definitely not IK: “If you leaf through *Melody Maker* (a British music magazine) – as a young friend knowledgeable in these matters wrote to me – every week pop musicians are consulted on their opinions of politics, feminism, drug use, etc. There is no reluctance to engage in this sort of behavior which often sparks furious rows. In 1976 David Bowie was quoted as saying that ‘Britain could benefit from a fascist leader’ and apparently proposing himself as a feasible candidate for premier.”⁸

Conversely, even in countries in which *clarismo* rules, niches in

which an analytical approach is nurtured may survive if only in the minds of few enlightened individuals:

Since it is difficult to distinguish the good from the bad prophet – wrote Primo Levi – we must be suspicious of all prophets; it is better to avoid revealed truths, even if we feel exalted by their simplicity and splendor, even if we find them comfortable because they come at no cost. It is better to be content with more modest and less inspiring truths that are laboriously conquered, step by step, with no shortcuts, by studying, discussion and reasoning, and that can be verified and demonstrated.⁹

The real question, therefore, might be the following: how is it that in some countries the political and intellectual elites managed to confine those attitude to *subcultures* while adopting among themselves a restrained style of debate conducive to deliberative practices? I do not have an answer to this question. Maybe there is not just one answer. One could speculate about a variety of explanations: the influence of science percolating in the political sphere; the spread of literacy; the gentlemen’s club style catching on; industrialization and the division of labor; Protestantism; or simply sound consequentialist reasoning bootstrapping wiser people out of their instinctive *clarismo*. Whatever the explanation, it is more likely to be solved by historical research than by sociological conjectures.

However, there is one conjecture – for which I am indebted to Gerry Mackie – that may be of use in ascertaining what we should be looking for. As much as there is evidence to suggest that the indexical view is not automatically discarded in advanced industrial societies such as Italy, there is anthropological evidence that the analytical view of knowledge is not necessarily an indication of “progress.” In an essay on group decision making in an egalitarian hunter-gatherer band, George Silberbauer (1982: 29) writes that “success in promoting a particular argument confers further prestige but never sufficient to occasion an ‘overflow’ into habitual success. Expertise in one field of activity may be seen as not at all relevant to another field.” According to James Howe (1986: 177–8), there is a

strong tendency among the Kuna influentials to speak on the whole spectrum of village concerns. In this respect the Kuna contrast strongly both with the pattern of task-specific and nontransferable leadership Fried finds in simple egalitarian band societies and with

one of the principal conclusions of the pluralist school in political science, namely, that in modern communities in the United States, different groups and individuals have different scopes of influence. According to both Fried and the pluralists, influence in one area (tracking game, setting teachers' salaries) cannot be easily shifted to another (moving camp, urban renewal).

In traditional societies we find the same polarization between the two views of knowledge. On this evidence, it would seem that *equality of resources*, especially equal access to information and relevant experience, may be a key variable for explaining the predominance of AK. (It does not follow, however, that if *political equality* descends on a previously nonegalitarian IK society, AK beliefs will automatically spread, as I will argue in Section 4, point 13.)

3. The Behavioral Consequences of Indexical Beliefs

In this section I consider the features that conversations among people with indexical beliefs are likely to have. I make a general contention: if IK is widespread, the values of the *claristas* can be deduced by applying the principles of simple individual rationality. Relative to a society in which AK is the convention, IK beliefs establish an *incentive structure* that encourages this type of behavior.

Note that this is not a descriptive or historical contention. The "Claro!" culture may emerge in other ways, either independently or in conjunction with IK. Stendhal (1957: 138), for instance, points his finger at provincialism: "An extreme and vulgar dread of exhibiting an inferior self is the active principle in the conversation of provincials. Look at the fellow recently, who, on being told that Monseigneur de Duc de Berry had been murdered, replied: 'I know.'" ¹⁰ Rabbi Joseph Telushkin (1992: 60-1) invokes a special set of cultural values that would explain much the same attitude among Jews: "Two thousand year ago the Talmud admonished: 'Teach your tongue to say, "I do not know."' Yet, because Jewish culture places so much stress on intellectual achievement, such confessions, even in minor matters, do not come easily to Jews." So what I present here is a hypothetical construct of the following form: if IK beliefs are widespread, they suffice to bring about "Claro!" attitudes, regardless of other factors.

Let us consider in detail how the features of clarismo identified

by Hirschman can be derived from IK beliefs. Three main components, logically independent, must be considered: strong opinions, on everything, from the outset of the discussion. (Each attitude could conceivably be derived from alternative mechanisms, but IK can bring about all three of them.)

Strong Opinions. An opinion is strong if expressed in a definitive form that admits neither doubts nor nuances. The opinion is packaged in such a way as to silence the audience rather than to invite further argument. Under IK beliefs, the expression of genuine doubts, rather than mere rhetorical ones, signals a general and thereby dishonorable fragility of knowledge. Doubts are discouraged. Aldo Rico, an Argentinian general and clarista of the first order, said, "Yo tengo sangre asturiana y los asturianos no dudan; la duda es una jactancia de los intelectuales" ("I have Asturian blood, and Asturians never doubt; doubt is the curse of the intellectuals"). ¹¹

Under IK, the alternative to voicing strong opinions is not to express weak ones, but to offer no opinion at all. By keeping silent, one avoids creating an opportunity for a dispute that one may end up losing.

On Everything. Failure to deliver on one problem is a global failure. Whenever one asks even a simple question in the south of Italy, there is no way in which the person asked will let one go without an answer: even if he does not know the correct answer, an answer must be given, be it speculative or vague. (Southern Italians are not alone in this. "Israelis," writes Rabbi Telushkin [1992: 61] "are notorious for offering directions to questioning tourists even to places with which they are unfamiliar.") As a last resort one consults a third person: if one does not know the answer, better than remaining silent is to recommend someone else who does know. A question amounts to a challenge and replying "I do not know" amounts to defeat. I am not implying that if one asks a practical question one receives a fabricated answer; so if someone asks, "Can you fix this car for me?" people feel no compunction in replying negatively if they cannot. The IK beliefs apply not so much to those practicalities that are amenable to prompt empirical testing as to moral, political, historical, and philosophical questions, and to knowledge for its own sake.

At the Outset. This is a corollary of the greater value of certainty over that of doubt. No benefit is accrued from waiting. Waiting signals doubt. If one decides to express an opinion one might just as well put it forward without hesitation. By contrast, in AK societies there is an incentive to wait before expressing one's views; in committees in England there is a tacit ethos whereby coming up with a strong view too soon is generally inappropriate; it is important to take one's time in order to consider all angles of a difficult issue, or else one's impartiality and gravitas are jeopardized. In IK societies, impartiality is a property no one needs to prove, everyone has claim to it by right – "Somos todos caballeros!" – whereas under AK, claims to impartiality come from adherence to the proper procedure in pondering an issue and debating it. Sometimes, it may be objected, even in AK societies taking one's time before expressing one's views simply amounts to strategic posturing, since the important thing is to be *seen* to be taking one's time even if one has a perfectly clear idea of what one wants to achieve. However, even if only a portion of those who take their time before offering their views do in fact spend it usefully trying to shape their opinions, some positive effect will be felt. Under IK, by contrast, *no one* by definition – even those with poorly shaped ideas – will spend any time reflecting on them.

4. Discursive Competition under Indexical Beliefs

Hirschman further claims that part of the "Claro!" culture consists of putting considerable value on "winning an argument rather than on listening and finding that something can occasionally be learned from others." To work out whether this value can be derived from IK beliefs we need to consider how competition works under these assumptions. If anyone manifests a strong opinion to an audience that shares the same culture, the latter has three broad options:

1. To agree, acknowledging the validity and interest of the claim. In this case the claimant wins the match, which ends there; the party who agrees admits implicitly that she did not know or did not think of it first and thereby admits the superiority of the claimant. Under IK beliefs, she implicitly admits a more general kind of inferiority not limited to the issues in question. The immediate social effects do not change, even if the agreement is hypocritical.

Under AK, by contrast, she does not need to worry about the more general signals implied by agreement and can more readily show that she is learning from other people's opinions. Agreement, of course, can be ironic or condescending, but in the IK case this works only if there is a well-established superiority on the part of the agreeing party. Unless there exist asymmetries between the parties that are not alterable by the discursive exchange, the exchange in the IK society is unlikely to end, among peers, with agreement, pure and simple.

2. To agree with the strong opinion while at the same time undermining its claim to novelty or relevance. The "Claro!" put-down falls in this category. The exchange ends in something like a draw, in which the claimant may gain marginally by getting some sort of agreement and the counterclaimant is not seen as admitting inferiority; if anything, the "Claro!" response gives a slight edge to the counterclaimant, for not only did he know it all along, but he also did not waste other people's time voicing such triviality. A variant of "Claro!" – much in vogue among intellectual claristas – is to claim that whatever one says was said a long time ago by somebody else, better if a grand master.

3. To choose a frontal attack voicing an equally strong critical or alternative opinion. In this case the match is unresolved and can be repeated. The party who spoke first can move again and choose among the same three options; if he chooses 3 and restates his original claim, the exchange can in theory continue *ad infinitum*. Since this cannot happen in real life, the competition is likely to escalate, at first acoustically. The shouting match will then continue either until one party declares defeat or the match degenerates into a violent confrontation. In IK, whenever ideas are at odds the battle of arguments evolves into a battle of persons. In a world dominated by IK beliefs, the audience cannot just express a partial and qualified disagreement, for this amounts to expressing doubts on the wholesomeness of the knowledge of the other party. Effectively, this line of response collapses into 3. Nor, for the same reasons, can one admit mistakes without admitting a larger loss.

5. Predictions

The structure of incentives and the type of competition that develops allow a number of hypotheses to be made as to the shape

political life will take in a society in which IK beliefs are dominant. The picture that emerges is more than vaguely reminiscent of Italy and many Latin American countries.

1. The accumulation of knowledge is harder to achieve in IK than in AK societies, partly because conversations are not as constructive, partly for a different reason. Even claristas can learn. They can object vehemently to all you say and then repeat exactly the same thing to someone else later on. But they will feel a temptation to say that it was they who thought of the proposition in the first place. The ownership of ideas is likely to be a source of dispute, and fear may keep people from sharing their ideas with others (or, to save time, from having ideas at all).

2. The number of people refraining from publicly voicing their views is likely to be higher in IK than in AK societies. People will be much more talkative in private, for they know their family has no interest in competing. (In Italy it is often difficult to listen to the news on radio or television, because everyone around has a view to express on whatever is going on. This is not so bad, only because television is of such poor quality there.) But publicly, we can expect larger masses of *neghittosi*, people who show no interest in or commitments to public affairs, a notoriously unhealthy bunch for democracy.

3. Among those who feel up to articulating their views publicly despite the greater challenge, the proportion of aggressive, impulsive, opinionated, and bullying people is likely to be higher in IK than in AK societies.

4. Ordinary people, by contrast, will make their views known only if they are so taxed by some issue or contrary opinion that they build up enough aggressiveness to speak up. It follows that, even assuming the *same* distribution of volatile characters as in an AK society, opinions in the IK case will come to the fore in outbursts mixed with destructive emotions, such as rage or indignation. The cocktail combining quiescence and outburst will make for greater political volatility.

5. There will be greater pressure on those who are professional holders of knowledge – academics and politicians – to always be ready to show that they do have strong views on anything that happens to be relevant. It is likely, therefore, that these professions will both attract and select individuals with particularly marked dispositions of type 3 above.

6. Norms against behaving in an aggressive and opinionated

manner will be weaker. There are two reasons for this: the political and intellectual elites will both set a bad example to others and will have no *individual* incentive to introduce norms against their own typical behavior. In IK societies, the distinction between arguments based on pride and arguments based on reason may be blurred. Acts that under AK assumptions would be seen as acts of pride are deemed normal. Quine, in his autobiography,¹² distinguishes between students who want to be right from students who want to *have been* right. The latter can be seen as claristas by character, people for whom in discussion pride takes precedence over reason. While this type will be under some normative control under AK, they will flourish under IK beliefs.

7. The preceding point can be generalized to those groups in IK societies who are more exposed to public life and have more opportunities or pressures to voice their opinions than others. We can expect a larger number of claristas:

- Among members of the middle class than among laborers. Susan Stokes reported in discussion that in Peru it is the middle class and not the Indios who think foreigners naïve when they ask questions or admit their ignorance.
- Among men than among women. In a recently published letter, the late Natalia Ginzburg, an Italian writer, admits her sense of inferiority to men with regard to knowledge. Her anguish comes strikingly across as directly dependent on her *indexical* assumptions about what real knowledge should be about: "I never succeeded in learning either geography or history. So I have a fog in my head on many things. It seems to me that until I have understood everything clearly, until I know how a car is built and how a country is made, what the railway companies are, I will not be able to write anything serious. . . . Leone [her husband] was the opposite of me. He knew everything, everything about a country, everything about everything, how things are in reality" (*La Stampa*, March 26, 1996; my translation).
- Among younger men than among older ones. Robert Nozick, in *The Examined Life* (1990), says that when he was young he thought he should have an opinion about everything.¹³ Albert Hirschman, in an autobiographical essay (1996), tells the story of when he was an adolescent and failed to get an answer from his father on some deep question. Young Albert was bitterly disappointed and confided to his sister: "You know what? Daddy has no world view." Later he

realized that his father was right and has become a champion of the view that we should not trust a strongly defined *Weltanschauung*. Perhaps some degree of youthful clarismo, provided one eventually grows out of it, could have a positive effect and encourage greater participation in public life.

8. Even though media and politicians may make use of academic specialists, in AK societies "intellectuals" are likely to be regarded with suspicion. The conservative William F. Buckley once said he would rather be governed by a random drawing of names from the Cambridge, Massachusetts, phone book than by the faculty of Harvard University.¹⁴ His view is likely to be shared by individuals on both the right and left of the political spectrum. In IK societies, by contrast, intellectuals are highly respected. In both the United States and Great Britain it would be inconceivable for academics and intellectuals to fill the television screen or the front pages of newspapers with their comments on every single political and international affair; harder still would it be for them to occupy ministerial positions. In Italy all this seems perfectly acceptable. In Italy, as well as in other "Latin" countries, writers of fiction are constantly interviewed on current affairs, and their opinions – often as silly as anyone's – spark furious rows in the main media. Countries such as these breed and promote a species of intellectuals aptly dubbed in Italian *tuttologi*, people ready to give us their view on just about anything.

9. There will be a greater probability of expressing hasty and mistaken views in IK than in AK societies due to the pressure to speak up at the onset of a conversation. More energy will consequently be spent battling with and dispelling inept and confused opinions. Rather than on individual proponents' thoughtful restraint the cost of discarding mistaken views will be dumped on the rest of society.

10. It will be harder to change an opinion once expressed. Taking a strong position binds agents' reputation accordingly. If point 9 is correct, people will also be more likely to be bound to mistaken views. Even if people in AK societies were equally worried about a loss of face (or even more so perhaps, since they voice their opinions as experts) than people in IK societies, IK would still create more opportunities for the loss of faces. Under IK assumptions, *amour propre*, a potential motive for action in most humans, will find an

incentive to manifest itself more often, even assuming the same distribution as in AK societies.

11. In IK societies, the more obvious the mistake, the more the mistaken party wants to be seen as changing her mind, if at all, without prompting by the other party. Persuasion by argument is arduous in argumentative societies. It must be carried out on grounds that are external to the matter at hand; an extraordinary amount of social emollient is required to soothe people who risk making fools of themselves. Rhetoric is more likely to succeed than argument.

12. Lofty rhetoric will happily coexist with mean bargaining, and jointly they will drive serious discussion on principles out of public life. Where arguing rapidly becomes confrontational and murky, bargaining becomes the dominant option and society will be more cynical, less fair in terms of distributive justice, and more conflictual. Shrewd politicians all over the world know how to bargain in order to strike compromises, but in IK societies they will need to be more so disposed and will more likely do away with discussions over principles altogether. Giulio Andreotti brought this strategy to perfection. He studiously never expressed a strong or principled opinion in his entire political career; he kept secret files on and contacts with everyone, and became the archmaster of political compromise. No one, not even the communists, could do without him. I cannot recall a political fight that was ever fought by the Italian political class on principled grounds: The automatic response to any claim, no matter how unreasonable or unsavory, be it from the Mafia or the Red Brigade, has been "bargain." (The typically Italian political phenomenon known as *trasformismo*, politicians changing party or side with great ease, is just one major consequence of this pervasive lack of principles.)

13. A dominant belief in political equality interacts with the predominant view of knowledge, whether indexical or analytical. The interaction, however, is far from simple. In conditions of political equality people give each other equal rights to voice an opinion and perceive themselves to be potentially as good (or bad) at forming one as anyone else. At first sight one would think that equality of this sort is required for AK to have a positive effect on deliberative processes. This is probably true in societies, such as the United States, in which political equality lies at the foundation. However, in IK countries in which there is a long tradition of po-

litical inequality, the effects of IK on the style of debate, rather than suppressed, may be multiplied as a result of greater political equality. In typical Tocquevillian fashion, we can expect that the emergence of equality will make everyone both less inclined to take other people's views as better than their own and more entitled to be opinionated.

By contrast, inequality, rather than weakening AK, can in fact strengthen it. In this respect Britain is an interesting case. In this country the analytical culture is generally dominant, and its effects are reinforced by a strong and widespread perception of the importance of class differences. Political and intellectual elites debate among themselves on AK principles, and *individually* they do not believe any one of them knows everything there is to know. *Collectively*, however, they display a peculiar form of "Oxbridge clarismo" toward everyone else: what *they* do not know is, quite simply, not knowledge.¹⁵ There are therefore two mechanisms, rather than one, that make British people more tentative, averse to generalization, and accurate than most other cultures: AK and, as Tocqueville ([1837] 1988: 438–42) predicted, class. The style of British discussions is tamed by the sense of awe for those who know what is worth knowing, a sense that is not as widespread in either the United States or Italy. Combining the presence or absence of political equality with that of AK and IK yields four rather than two ideal types:

	Equality	Inequality
AK	United States, hunter-gatherer egalitarian bands	Britain
IK	Italy	Traditional authoritarian societies

Italy, in terms of the conditions conducive to good public discussion, is in the worst position of all: it has a belief in both IK and equality. (Note, however, that the fact that people in an IK culture are more inclined to be opinionated could – as suggested by an anonymous referee for the publisher – make them more resilient to the kind of manipulation discussed by Stokes and Przeworski in Chapters 5 and 6, this volume: if they do not listen to anyone, at least they will not listen to those who are trying to fool them.)

14. Hirschman claims that people of the "Claro!" culture will be more predisposed to authoritarian than to democratic politics. This may be partly a direct effect of the greater incentive to bully

people into agreeing with whatever opinion one voices. But mostly this predisposition will be generated indirectly as a response to the consequences listed earlier: partly thanks to more widespread preferences for a strong authority that can impose some order on the turbulent political system and partly because of greater opportunities for a *uomo forte*, a strong man, to exploit the political instability and take over. Even after the collapse of the regime that governed Italy for forty-five years after the war, politicians seem unable to grow out of the unprincipled but effective style of Andreotti – ceaseless bargaining, that is. Cries for a *uomo forte* have grown shriller in Italy in the past few years. Andreotti's characteristic comment was: "Uomo forte? Basterebbe un uomo" (A strong man? Just a man would do).

When I finished listing by deduction all the bad consequences that follow from the "Claro!" culture, I was astonished to find there were so many of them. This "model" seems much more powerful than I had anticipated, and as a scientist, albeit of the "social" breed, I was naturally suspicious of this. I found some comfort in discovering, thanks to Jon Elster, that my predictions were still quite modest compared with Montaigne's: "Many of this world's abuses are engendered – or to put it more rashly, all of this world's abuses are engendered – by our being schooled to fear to admit our ignorance and because we are required to accept anything which we cannot refute" (quoted in Elster 1996: 114–15).

6. Normative Questions

Some recommendations follow from the preceding observations. The first and foremost is that in countries of "Claro!" culture, democracy requires specially designed institutions to assist in countering its specific vices. This has an important practical implication. Many countries look at Anglo-Saxon democracy as *the* model to emulate. Among the arguments put forward for reform – be it constitutional, judicial, or electoral – *imitation*, or rather *pseudo-imitation* as Hirschman called it, of those democracies often plays a part. Democracy and justice are seen as successful in a certain country, and it is inferred that by adopting the same institutional arrangements, success will follow suit. This is not so.

The case of Latin American countries that adopted the U.S. Constitution is only the most famous illustration of the failure of simple imitation. An interesting case is that of the 1993 Italian electoral

reform, which introduced a mildly diluted variant of the majority system. (The old and almost pure proportional representation system has been abandoned and blamed for much more than it was guilty of [Warner and Gambetta 1994].) Under "Claro!" values, such as those that inhabit the minds of many Italians, the adversarial system, which is to some extent promoted by the new electoral system, may be dangerously unsuitable, for it encourages radicalization and destructive competition rather than compromise. A host of other reasons must of course be considered, but the degeneration of Italian political life after the 1994 elections may be a manifestation of precisely that danger.

In designing their institutions, democracies that exist in a "Claro!" culture should worry not only about the excesses of self-interest – as Elster (1993) showed that the U.S. constitutionalists worried about – but also about the collective failures that may be engendered by their specific culture. To the extent to which the larger the audience the more extreme clarista-type attitudes will become, one could hope that by keeping the number of listeners small the discursive style might improve. As Elster argues (Chapter 4, this volume) secrecy – albeit at the cost of making partisan interests and logrolling more likely to come to the fore – may discourage "grandstanding and rhetorical overbidding." My guess, however, is that staunch claristas are unleashed by as small an audience as their own image in the mirror.

Beliefs in IK are very resilient. They need not even be truly believed to shape people's actions. They can be sustained by second-order reasoning: "I believe that everyone believes that IK is the case" suffices to motivate the same actions as much as the first-order belief. Even if people for some reason were to stop believing that other people truly believed in IK, they might continue to act on IK nonetheless. This state of affairs takes the form of an inferior convention: a practice that no one wants but no one can afford to be the first to stop. The practices that may originally emerge from IK beliefs take on a life of their own.

A social psychological process, suggested by Susan Stokes in discussion, could further strengthen the independence of practices from beliefs by the formation of suitable values. People are unlikely to be able to sustain "Claro!" attitudes for purely strategic reasons. Whenever there is strong pressure to adopt costly behaviors for instrumental reasons, people end up effectively attaching value, via cognitive dissonance reduction, to those behaviors. By expressing

"strong opinions on everything from the outset," people end up rationalizing them and believing in their value and the desirability of the way they are expressed. The values are perhaps an excrescence of the beliefs. Yet they develop a separate nature, much like truffles are an excrescence of the roots of certain trees but acquire a strong taste of their own.

An interesting question concerns what happens when IK agents meet with AK agents. Can one type "invade" the other? Here I have only my experience to go by. Homo analyticus finds meeting a clarista both upsetting and useless, and is most likely to switch partners rather than engage in a confrontation. The clarista is somewhat attracted but ultimately irritated by conversations with homo analyticus. He is easily provoked because he senses an easy ride. The clarista's prejudices concerning the superiority of an argument – sweeping, complex, dynamic, realistic, holistic, contextually aware, and what not – find a fertile terrain on which to be discharged. His optimistic perception is that just one blow will knock the opponent out, and this tempts him to pick a fight. Our analytic David can fight back, however: he can sling piercing pebbles against the numbed organ of doubt of this Goliath, causing much unease. He will never concede victory, will at most retreat diplomatically to avoid a confrontation. The clarista, in turn, will never admit that any doubt can cause even a ripple in his mind, and if you ask whether he won the match he will reply: "Claro!" But he will never feel quite so sure and thus will hold his opponent in even greater contempt. In conclusion, except for brief friction-ridden encounters, the two types are likely to crowd each other out and remain in segregated groups.

All the points I have outlined suggest a tenacity of IK beliefs and their associated attitudes, which makes the question of how a group can switch from IK to AK at once pressing and difficult.

Deliberative democracy benefits from a style of debate typical of scientific discussion. Science and democracy, as Merton, Popper, and many others have pointed out, share, or rather gain from, a number of similar virtues, including tentativeness, which is of key relevance to this essay. Both science and democracy acquire legitimacy by public justification.¹⁶ Yet they differ not only in terms of the procedure by which their respective justification is publicly achieved, but also, and particularly, in their objective. Deliberation concerns eminently unscientific matters for which there is no ready test available: it matters most when we have only partial information, or when we face long-term decisions whose effects are hard

to establish, or when we are divided on principles. We cannot rely on the development of science to shape political discussions automatically.

Can we place our hopes on technology and its by-products? As usual, technology cuts both ways. Television seems generally conducive to clarismo. For one thing, it has large audiences – in fact the largest audiences ever available to individuals – which may be a tantalizing incentive to carry one's iconoclastic clarismo to unprecedented extremes. Furthermore, claristas are entertaining, make exalted statements, avoid subtle distinctions, and squabble with one another theatrically. Television thrives on strong views and definitive remarks. It competes for viewers by making programs less instructive and more fun to watch. Suppose, however, that our conversations took place by electronic mail. Unlike letter writing, which is slow and cumbersome, e-mail has an immediacy that makes communicative exchanges comparable with oral exchanges. Would this technology put some constraint on claristas? Having to write increases the cost of rhetoric and eloquence. It makes shouting at and interrupting each other difficult. The e-mail receiver, moreover, can wait longer to reply, without this being seen as a sign of weakness. "Speaking and listening" sequentially is unavoidable on e-mail. Or rather, the clarista would have to work harder to be true to his type when using this medium. He would have to use capital letters to "shout"; paste his opponent's text within his own reply and "interrupt" the latter's sentences in the middle with his own strong remarks; and so on. Committed claristas would be better off sticking to oral communication.

Is then passively hoping that the spread of electronic means of communication will miraculously turn us into better deliberators all we can do? An explanation in terms of beliefs of the "Claro!" culture gives us some normative advantage over one in terms of values: beliefs lend themselves to rational discussion and thus change. One can dispute beliefs in a way in which one cannot dispute values. If one could demolish IK beliefs and related conventions, the values associated with the "Claro!" culture would most likely evaporate more quickly than one would expect. The convention of binding women's feet was abandoned at the turn of the century in China. It collapsed more rapidly than any one would have predicted. The net of multiple values that entrapped this cruel prac-

tice by providing justifications went quickly with it, as Gerry Mackie (1996) has shown.

Perhaps the way in which that convention was finally demolished will teach us something in this albeit extremely different domain. One of the conditions that ended it was a particular form of bootstrapping: circles of families formed and pledged to abandon inflicting the practice on their daughters and to marry their sons only to girls whose feet were not bound. This broke the vicious circle that prevented individual families from acting alone because that would have destroyed their daughters' chances of finding a husband. Whether a similar strategy – circles of intellectual and political elites mutually pledging to switch to an analytical frame of inference – would achieve the desired effect is open to question. Even if this were so, where would the necessary political energy and clarity of mind come from? This is anyone's guess. The way elites are selected suggests pessimism. They are more likely to be claristas or more unprincipled than average or both at the same time.

After all I have said, moreover, how could I possibly end with a strong opinion?

Notes

1. Lev Tolstoy, "Storia della giornata di ieri," *Tutti i racconti* (Mondadori, 1991) 14; my translation.
2. Oscar Wilde, *An Ideal Husband*, act 1.
3. Austen-Smith, in the paper presented at the Workshop on Deliberative Democracy, University of Chicago, April 28–30, 1995. Note that unless universal consensus is both reached and immediately observable, the final decision must be arrived at by some other arrangement, the most common of which in contemporary democracies is, of course, voting under some majority rule.
4. Even if nobody listens there must be an expressive value attached to free speech: witness the improvised orators at Speakers' Corners in London's Hyde Park.
5. I conform to the Italian political jargon in which a few Spanish or Spanish-sounding expressions are used in a derogatory way: *boatos* are loud cries and protestations that either are uttered in response to bogus dangers or achieve nothing or both; *somos todos caballeros* are dubious claims to innocence based on status rather than evidence; and *peones* are vociferous and ineffectual backbenchers. The latest in this family

are the *berluscones*, peones working in Silvio Berlusconi's party. By contrast, Latin appears in the political jargon when serious matters are at hand. A recent example is *par condicio*, which refers to fairness applied by media in giving all political parties a chance to express their views.

6. For example, Habermas (1984); Manin (1987); Elster (1993), and most contributors to this volume.
7. "Indexical" here is not used in the same sense as in the philosophy of language, that is, words whose meaning depends on context, such as "here," "today," "I."
8. Steven Warner (private communication).
9. Appendix of 1976 to "If This Is a Man," in Primo Levi, *Le opere* (Einaudi, 1987), 209–10; my translation.
10. I am indebted to Gerry Mackie for this quote.
11. I am indebted to Roberto Gargarella for this quote.
12. Quine (1985: 478) writes: "A vast gulf, insufficiently remarked, separates those who are primarily concerned to have been right from those who are primarily concerned to be right. The latter, I like to think, will inherit the world." I am indebted to Joshua Cohen for bringing this to my attention.
13. I am indebted to John Alcorn for pointing this out to me.
14. I am indebted to Gerry Mackie for telling me about this.
15. I am indebted to Steven Warner and Joshua Getzler for this point. The latter supplied the quote paraphrased in the text:

First come I; my name is Jowett.
There is no knowledge but I know it.
I am the Master of this college:
what I do not know isn't knowledge.

From "The Masque of Balliol" (composed by and current among members of Balliol College in the late 1870s), in W. G. Hiscock (ed.), *The Balliol Rhymes* (1939), in *The Oxford Dictionary of Quotations* (Oxford, 1992), 59:7.
16. For a discussion of these issues see D'Agostino (1996).

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Chapter Two

Deliberation as Discussion

If one begins with “deliberative democracy,” one is immediately drawn toward trying to define the term, and hence into arguments about how precisely it should be understood. While such arguments can be enlightening and are surely unavoidable for anyone interested in the subject, I will try a different approach here, one that bypasses the problem of deciding what should count as deliberation and deliberative democracy. Instead, I will consider the following question. What good reasons might a group of people have for discussing matters before making some collective decision, rather than simply voting on the issue or using some other decision rule that does not involve discussion? In other words, what is the point or value of *discussing things* before making political decisions?

Put in these terms, the question may seem trivial, but I will suggest that spelling out answers is a valuable exercise for anyone interested in the more academic idea of deliberative democracy. This is especially so if we keep in mind the contrast between discussing a decision before voting on it or otherwise deciding, and simply voting without benefit of discussion.

I see six major reasons or arguments for discussing a matter before reaching a decision on what to do. There are surely more, but I think these six constitute the most important ones and they certainly provide an interesting set of issues to examine.

A group of people might want to discuss matters before making a collective decision in order to:

For very helpful comments and efforts to acquaint me with an unfamiliar literature, I wish to thank Bernard Manin, Uday Mehta, Michael Nebl, and Frank Sposito. They are in no way responsible for errors of omission or commission that remain.

1. Reveal private information
2. Lessen or overcome the impact of bounded rationality
3. Force or encourage a particular mode of justifying demands or claims
4. Help render the ultimate choice legitimate in the eyes of the group, so as to contribute to group solidarity or to improve the likely implementation of the decision
5. Improve the moral or intellectual qualities of the participants
6. Do the “right thing,” independent of the consequences of discussion

1. Revealing Private Information

Consider a group of five people who need to choose a restaurant for dinner. One obvious reason for discussing the matter would be to allow these people to express their preferences about where to eat. Note, however, that voting can also be a means of revealing (private) information about preferences, so we should ask why discussing the matter might be better than simply having a vote.

In the first place, simply to hold a vote it might be necessary first to have a discussion to settle on a procedure. But this is not really the sort of discussion we are interested in, and in all legislatures (for which the restaurant seekers are a metaphor) procedures exist. Provisionally, then, I will just assume a procedure – for example, suppose everyone writes down his or her first choice on a piece of paper and the plurality winner is chosen. In the case of a tie, the winning restaurant will be chosen randomly.¹ Why might a group of people prefer to discuss the choice rather than simply vote on it in this or some similar way?

One reason is that discussion allows people to express diverse *intensities* of preference – that is, whether they have strong or indifferent feelings about particular choices. Of course, a voting system could be devised to allow for the expression of more finely grained preferences than “I vote for Siam Garden.” For instance, after the individuals were polled for their suggestions, they could write a number between 0 and 10 next to each suggestion and then use some rule to aggregate the votes and choose a winner. But here we encounter a general problem with the voting approach: the group could know what sort of voting scheme would be appropriate to the particular issue at hand only if they discussed the matter first. It may be that there always exists a voting system that can simulate