

Didier Caluwaerts

# Confrontation and Communication

Deliberative Democracy in Divided Belgium

**MPA/PM**  
Méthodes participatives appliquées  
Applied participatory methods



Theories on ethnic conflict tend to work on the premise that a deeply divided public opinion undermines democratic stability, and that conflict-ridden polities are not fertile ground for the development of a strong democracy. Democratic stability in divided societies is seen to be endangered whenever the demos plays too prominent a role, so the commonly formulated solution is that citizens should remain passive.

This book addresses the role of citizens in such divided societies while they are facing political conflict. It offers interesting new perspectives on the potential of deliberative democracy as a viable alternative in the case of deeply divided polities. The author uses cutting-edge data from a deliberative experiment in Belgium, where he gathered Flemings and Walloons to discuss the future of the country at a moment when the tensions between the linguistic groups were at an historic high. His findings are insightful and interesting for deliberative theorists and practitioners, as well as for scholars of ethnic conflict.

*This book has won the Jean Blondel PhD award of the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), and was nominated for the Annual PhD Prize of the Dutch and Flemish Political Science Associations.*

**Didier Caluwaerts** is a post-doctoral fellow of the Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) at the Vrije Universiteit Brussel. His research focuses on the intersection between deliberative and consociational theory. He is part of a large international research network dealing with deliberation in deeply divided societies.





# **Confrontation and Communication**

## **Deliberative Democracy in Divided Belgium**



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**Didier CALUWAERTS**

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**Deliberative Democracy  
in Divided Belgium**

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Didier Caluwaerts

# Contents

<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
Democracy at the Edge.....	11
<b>CHAPTER I</b>	
Beyond Voting: the Deliberative Turn .....	17
<b>CHAPTER II</b>	
Deliberation Across Deep Divides .....	29
<b>CHAPTER III</b>	
Deliberation Under Varying Decision-making Rules.....	45
<b>CHAPTER IV</b>	
Setting the Scene: the Belgian Divide .....	59
<b>CHAPTER V</b>	
Research Design and Measurement Instrument.....	75
<b>CHAPTER VI</b>	
Exploratory Data-analysis .....	99
<b>CHAPTER VII</b>	
Explaining Deliberative Quality .....	131
<b>CHAPTER VIII</b>	
Understanding Intergroup Deliberation .....	149
<b>CONCLUSION</b>	
Democratic Deliberation in Deeply Divided Belgium .....	187
<b>APPENDIX A</b>	
Pretest Questionnaire.....	197
<b>APPENDIX B</b>	
Posttest Questionnaire .....	201
<b>APPENDIX C</b>	
Coding Instructions .....	205
<b>REFERENCES</b> .....	213



## INTRODUCTION

# Democracy at the Edge

Long before anyone had ever heard about deliberative democracy, Sir Karl Popper (2002 [orig. 1963], p.474) wrote the following prophetic words: “the discussion will be the more fruitful the more the partners’ backgrounds differ. Thus the value of a discussion depends largely upon the variety of the competing views”. Even though there is obviously much truth to the idea that a diversity of perspectives contributes to a discussion, few will deny that there is a tipping point beyond which disagreement is too great to allow for any rational discussion. This is especially true when the discussion takes place in the wider public sphere, where political conflicts are unavoidably linked to identities and interests. After all, discussion on strongly diverging political aims and values can ignite public passions beyond what a democracy can cope with.

Attempts at delimiting from what point onwards difference becomes detrimental to the functioning of democracy go as far back as the first works on representative government. The writers of the Federalist Papers for instance set the threshold for political stability very low and offered a first sparkle of hope that even the existence of very deep factions would not stand in the way of their highly desired national unity, albeit under the right institutional setting (Hamilton et al. 2006 [orig. 1787]). John Stuart Mill, however, was less optimistic. He contended that “[a]mong a people without fellow-feeling, especially if they read and speak different languages, the united public opinion, necessary to the working of representative government, cannot exist” (Mill 1991 [orig. 1859], p. 428). The lack of a common identifier among the people would thus prevent the establishment of a stable political union.

Contemporary democratic theory seems to follow in Mill’s footsteps, and holds as a premise that a deeply divided public opinion undermines democratic stability, and that the breeding ground for a strong democracy in conflict-ridden polities is not very fertile. Under such adverse circumstances, democracies face their greatest challenge, that of averting political disintegration. After all, when contact is based on feelings of mutual hostility and misunderstanding, there are very little cross-pressures pulling citizens to the center. These cross-pressures

between citizens are, however, what keeps a country from falling prey to violent conflict (Lipset 1963). Deep, mutually reinforcing cleavages dividing citizens therefore seem to demarcate the natural frontiers of a viable democracy.

One commonly formulated suggestion is that citizens in a divided society should remain deferent (Lijphart 1968). According to this consociational model of democracy, building bridges across competing interests and identities should be left to the elites, joined together in a situation of power sharing. Citizens on the other hand should not engage in the wider political debate, and certainly not in discussion across divides, because grass-root activism will only jeopardize the already fragile balance between the segments (Huyse 1970).

This is a strange, yet interesting paradox: democratic stability in divided societies is endangered whenever the demos plays too prominent a role. It is also a paradox that contradicts the very foundations of model of democracy that recently gained momentum. The deliberative turn, as it came to be known, proposes a talk-centric rather than a vote-centric model of democracy. The quality of democratic decisions is therefore no longer considered a function of mere compliance with aggregation rules or power-sharing mechanisms. Instead, it is determined by extensive argumentation about political choices before voting on them.

One of the widely acclaimed advantages of such a deliberative democracy is that decisions reached through deliberation are more legitimate (Heyse 2007, p. 69). The fact that everyone affected by a decision should have a say on the issue, implies that all perspectives are heard. As such, deliberation has important political merits: it is capable of generating democratic stability, even when there is strong disagreement on the aims and values a polity should promote (Geenens & Tinnevelt 2007, p. 47).

The claim that deliberation is the best and most desirable way of handling political conflict is, however, more of a theoretical construct based on thought experiments, than an empirical finding (for an exception, see Fishkin et al. 2009 on Northern Ireland). Recent studies of the deliberative ideal-type took place in relatively homogeneous groups, whereas there is an upcoming literature that demands empirical tests of deliberation in rather more diverse contexts (see e.g. Saward 2003, p. 123). In response, this book tries to push the frontiers of deliberative scholarship to its extremes, and focuses on deeply divided societies, i.e. societies that are so conflict-ridden that they are constantly on the edge of disintegrating. The first research question that meanders through this contribution is thus: does grass-root deliberation in deeply divided societies, i.e. between citizens of competing segments, exacerbate political conflict? Or, put differently: can conflict accom-

moderation between citizens of diametrically opposed groups live up to the ideal of democratic deliberation?

If division would turn out to negatively impact upon deliberation, this would also beg the question how we could counter this effect. Interestingly, research on the role of institutions in producing deliberative behavior has gained momentum over the last few years (Bächtiger & Hangartner 2007; Landwehr 2009). The comparative study by Steiner and his colleagues (2004) for instance beautifully illustrates this point in that it tries to determine the effect of a number of institutional variations on deliberative quality of parliamentary discourse. With regard to citizen deliberation, however, some research has been done on the impact of decision-making rules, but it is highly limited, and rarely empirical (see e.g. Austen-Smith & Feddersen 2006; Gerardi & Yariv 2007).

A more empirical enquiry into the effect of institutional pressures on deliberation would therefore prove a useful new venue for deliberative research. This is all the more relevant given insights from legal scholarship on jury deliberation, which argued that different decision-making rules have different underlying logics, and hence lead to different ways of deliberating (Hastie et al. 1983). This is why we should also ask ourselves what would happen if we put ordinary citizens from both sides of the divide together to deliberate under the institutional pressure of very demanding decision-making rules. Our second research question is therefore: does the requirement of reaching a decision with a more-than-simple majority alter the dynamics of deliberation?

Answering both of these questions requires of course the observation of communicative interactions between citizens from both sides of the divide. Due to their highly segmented nature, however, divided societies are characterized by only a limited number of contacts across divides. Political life, and hence political discussion, take place within the confines of the subgroup's own public sphere.

This inherent limitation explains why we opted for an experimental research design. In 2010 we gathered 83 Belgian citizens from both sides of the linguistic cleavage. Some of them were in a linguistically homogeneous group, whereas others were in a divided group, and all of the groups were asked to make a decision using a simple majority, a two-thirds majority or a unanimity rule. The question we presented them was as simple as it was controversial: "how do you see the future of Belgium?" At a moment when the negotiations on the state reform stranded, and early elections were in sight, these deliberative mini-publics dealt with issues that went to the heart of the Belgian political deadlock.

Of course, these research questions and this design did not emerge in an intellectual vacuum. The experiments organized in Belgium are part of larger research project on deliberation in deeply divided societies, coordinated by Jürg Steiner from the University of Bern. The project has an explicit comparative aim of determining the favorable conditions for deliberation in deeply divided societies, and so far, similar experiments have been set up (or planned) in Colombia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Israel, Turkey and South-Africa.

Despite the comparative perspective of the larger project, the Belgian case was a very specific one among the others for three reasons. First of all, Belgium is not only a prime example of a deeply divided society, it was also considered, from the beginning of the 1980's onwards, as the textbook case of a consociational democracy (Lijphart 1981, p. 1). After all, the 1970 state reform constitutionally cemented the power-sharing institutions that aimed at pacifying the divide between the linguistic groups. Since the 2007 elections, however, Belgian consociationalism has been experiencing difficulties. The traditional overarching elite cooperation proved unable to cope with the political tensions built up over the years, and the unwillingness to accommodate their conflicts led parties from both sides to question the pacification model, albeit without proposing any viable alternatives.

Secondly, the nature of the Belgian divide also constitutes a perfect test case for deliberative democracy. It is not only a divided society, but also a linguistically divided society. Since the deliberative model relies heavily on discursive processes, the language barrier raises the threshold for mutual understanding even higher than in countries that are divided on religious or ethnic grounds. After all, linguistic differences hinder what are in essence talk-centric processes of decision-making.

And finally, language differences not only limit the number of face-to-face contacts, they also reduce the transmission of opinions from the other side. After all, different languages create multiple internally homogeneous public spheres within which media and politicians can develop an "us vs. them" ethno-nationalist discourse without any cross-pressure (Sinardet 2009). Because the Belgian party system and media landscape are split along linguistic lines, a unique feature of Belgian politics, citizens can spend a lifetime without ever remotely coming into contact with what is happening across the linguistic border. The media seldom report how the other side perceives political issues, and parties can please their electorate with an unbridled nationalist rhetoric. The lack of such a nation-wide public sphere makes it all the more interesting to put citizens from both sides together and have them discuss issues, which their representatives are struggling with.



Before turning to the specifics of deliberation in deeply divided Belgium, we should come to grips with the theory of deliberative democracy. In chapter one, we discuss the deliberative turn in political philosophy. Based on an extensive review of deliberative scholarship, we argue that discussion at the grass-root level has to meet several criteria (Bohman 1996; Dryzek 2000; Steiner et al. 2004). First of all, the discussion has to be inclusive. Everyone in the group has to be allowed to argue his or her point of view, and multiple perspectives on a problem have to be taken into account. Deliberation also requires its participants to show respect. Not only should they avoid foul language, they should also abstain from personal attacks, and treat counterarguments as they want their own arguments treated. Thirdly, the positions taken or perspectives raised in a discussion have to be extensively justified. Arguments supporting a position should be well thought-through and formulated in terms that everyone can reasonably be expected to accept. As such, citizen deliberation could benefit from referring to the common good and abstract principles. And finally, power differences should be bracketed in a deliberative setting as to allow the “forceless force of the better argument” to guide the discussion (Habermas 1981).

The next two chapters each deal with one of the two experimental conditions we would like to manipulate. Chapter two goes into detail on the potentially disastrous effects a divided group composition could have on the quality of deliberation. Based on an extensive literature review, it lists up the social psychological mechanisms that could explain how a group division could translate into deliberative behavior. Chapter three on the other hand, deals with our second research question, and gives an overview of what is known hitherto about the effect of decision-making rules on the quality of deliberation. The literature review offers insights from a wide spectrum of approaches going from formal theory over jury research to social psychology, all of which argue that decision-making rules do impact upon the quality of deliberation.

In the next chapter, we go into detail on why we chose to research deliberative democracy in Belgium. We therefore highlight not only the tensions that run through Belgian politics, but also explain the attempts that have been made so far to pacify those cleavages. We have particular interest in the consociational idea of power sharing that has guided successive Belgian state reforms, and zoom in on one specific assumption of Lijpart’s theory that has so far been underdeveloped, namely the public deference assumption. After all, this assumption, that the people in a divided society have to remain passive (Bogaards 1998), is highly relevant from a deliberative point of view.

After the discussion of why Belgium constitutes an ideal test case, chapter five deals with the methodological issues. The aim of every experimental research is to be able to make causal claims by manipulating a limited amount of treatment variables all the while keeping potential confounders constant over all experiments (Morton & Williams 2010). This methodological chapter lists up all the methodological choices we made in order to keep our results as robust and valid as possible. More specifically, we discuss the procedures used to select the participants and assign them to the individual groups, the way we implemented our treatment conditions (i.e. group division and decision-making rules), and the way in which we tried to keep potential confounders constant over all the groups.

After the theoretical and methodological chapters, we turn to the empirical part of this book. The sixth chapter covers our exploratory data analysis. First of all, we discuss how we coded and analyzed the data gathered in the experiments. More specifically, we develop our measurement instrument, the Discourse Quality Index (DQI), and explore variation in the individual dimensions of this index. Based on this exploratory data analysis, we detect which items show enough variation to be taken up in further analyses and which items should be dropped from further analyses. After the univariate analyses, we see how the individual DQI items knit together by calculating their correlations and performing a factor analysis. This is not only a test of construct validity, but also a test of the theoretical assumption that inclusion, respect, justification and so on are all part of one unidimensional construct called deliberation.

Based on the results of these preliminary analyses, the final two chapters present our interesting results. They show that the composition of the groups and the decision-making rules matter, but also that they influence deliberative quality in very intricate and unexpected ways, and that they even interact with each other. Chapter seven analyses how group composition and decision-making rules affect the discourse quality as a whole. This allows us to see to what extent deliberation in divided societies can live up to the theoretical ideal-type of deliberation under each of the experimental treatments. Chapter eight performs the same analyses, but with the individual dimensions of the DQI as dependent variables. As such, this chapter brings out the dynamics and social-psychological mechanisms that are active under each of the experimental conditions. Together these two final chapters offer a first empirical answer to the question whether deliberation feasible in deeply divided settings, and how we can understand the dynamics of intergroup deliberation.

## CHAPTER I

# Beyond Voting: the Deliberative Turn

In recent years, democratic theory has witnessed the rise of a new paradigm. The deliberative model of democracy challenges the idea that the representation and aggregation of interests into collective decisions is the core of political life. Rather, it emphasizes the central role of political discussion between ordinary citizens (Baccaro 2001). Such a free and open discussion on issues of public concern is claimed to generate not only better solutions, but also more legitimate ones.

Besides its strong anti-elitist stance, deliberative democracy also refuses to go along in the classical power logic of politics. It therefore proposes the idea of a *Herrschaftsfreie Kommunikation* (Habermas 1981). This is a non-coercive form of communication; a public dialogue in which the individual differences in power between the participants – ideally – don't play a role. It is a type of communication in which individual citizens justify their positions, and in which only “the forceless force of the better argument” plays a role (Dryzek 2000).

Before we take stock of what theory has said about the potential for citizen deliberation in divided societies (in the next chapter), we need to understand a little bit better what democratic deliberation is all about. We therefore start with a contextualization of the so-called deliberative turn in political theory, by contrasting it with the liberal, aggregative account of democracy. Once we clearly know what deliberative democracy is up against, we discuss its basic premises. A short review of Habermas' discourse theory will prove to be useful to that end. This offers us the theoretical tools to put deliberation into operational terms by distinguishing between type I and type II deliberation.

## I. The limits of aggregative democracy

In order to fully understand the deliberative turn in democratic theory, we first need to roughly sketch the theoretical background against which it came about. Liberal or aggregative democracy was inspired by utilitarian accounts of democracy, and takes a vote-centric approach to democratic politics. Based on the idea that collective preferences are mere aggregates of individual preferences, liberal democracy tried to devise efficient and effective mechanisms for aggregating individual votes into collectively binding decisions.

These aggregative accounts of democracy stress the steady nature of political preferences: people hold fixed preferences, which are exhaustive and fully transitive, and they enter the political arena with the aim of maximizing their individual utilities (Riker 1982). In such a theory, democracy is reduced to the expression, registration and aggregation of individual preferences into a generally binding decision (Akkerman 2007, p. 273). Politics is thus a means to Pareto-optimization, and clear and simple preference aggregation is considered the best way of avoiding suboptimal collective outcomes. The collective good in such a model is considered to be nothing more than the sum of the individual goods, and any possible set of individual preference orderings can be turned into a collective equilibrium as long as transparent and adequate aggregation rules structure collective decision making.

The simplicity of its mathematical logic and the idea that the collective good is what is best for the largest number of people, are what makes aggregative democratic theory so appealing. Nevertheless, the model has come under serious attack. Social choice theorists have pointed out considerable flaws in the hard-core premises of the liberal theory of democracy, by showing that aggregation mechanisms suffer from instability and arbitrariness, and that they give rise to strategic behavior (Dryzek & List 2003; Mackie 2003).

**Table 1.1: Preference orderings leading to cycling**

		Preference		
		1st	2nd	3rd
Actor	1	a	b	c
	2	b	c	a
	3	c	a	b

First of all, aggregation at least potentially leads to instability because of so-called “cycling”, a phenomenon first identified by Condorcet (1785). Condorcet’s paradox states that the sum of all individual preference orderings could lead to an intransitive preference ordering at the group level (Knight & Johnson 1994, p. 279). This can easily be illustrated. Suppose you have three actors (1, 2 and 3), with the preference orderings among three alternatives (a, b and c) listed in table 1.2. Suppose, moreover, that a decision has to be made by means of a simple majority. This means that the choice for one alternative over another can be approved by two out of the three actors. For actors 1 and 3 {a > b} applies; for actors 1 and 2 {b > c} applies; and for actors 2

and 3  $\{c > a\}$  applies. This would lead to the following result at the aggregate level:  $\{a > b > c > a\}$ .

The application of a simple majority as the aggregating device, given these theoretical preference orderings, would therefore lead to the surreal situation in which options are eventually preferred over themselves. In such a situation, the so-called “single peakedness” of preference orderings is missing (Aldred 2004). This means that majorities would not be stable because they could never lead to an optimal equilibrium (Dryzek & List 2003). Hence, any aggregation rule, however simple and effective it may be portrayed, holds the potential for cycling, which thoroughly undermines aggregative theorists’ claims to stability and decision-making optimization (Shapiro 1996).

Secondly, aggregative arbitrariness is a consequence of the fact that the same initial preference distributions lead to different social outcomes under different aggregation mechanisms (Riker 1982). Aggregative theorists pretend that the aggregation of individual preferences into collective decisions is a mechanic translation of inputs into outputs, which eventually lead to optimal societal outcomes.

The collective decision will however strongly depend on the aggregation rule it results from (Miller 2002, p. 294). A simple 50% plus one majority will generate a different result than a two-thirds majority. This means that outcomes will always be arbitrary because they are contingent on the choice of the rule. Even if there is something like an optimal outcome, as aggregative theorists seem to assume, it should remain constant no matter what the aggregation rule is. This arbitrary character of collective decision-making rules reduces substantive decisions to procedural specificities, and thereby empties democracy from all meaning (Dryzek & List 2003). The claim that aggregation always leads to the best collective outcome, which reflects the collective will, will therefore not hold (Dryzek 2000; Knight & Johnson 1994).

Finally, aggregative democracy holds to be true that actors pursue their interests and preferences in a straightforward manner; they say what they rationally want to achieve. Self-interested individuals therefore make their intentions clear to others, and they are supposed to state clearly what their preference orderings are. But rational actors also know that misrepresenting these orderings could be beneficial to achieving their actual preferences (Austen-Smith 1992; Miller 1992). The very possibility of manipulative behaviour makes aggregation mechanisms obsolete, because the link these mechanisms aim to provide between initial preferences and ultimate outcomes disappears. Voting rules are no longer devices for decision-making; they are obstacles to be overcome in rationally pursuing one’s goals (Miller 2002).

Aggregation might therefore lead to collective decisions, which are not a reflection of the actual preference distribution in society, but of the way in which the actors (mis)represent their preferences. This means that aggregative procedures are flawed because they are open to manipulation. Effective aggregation therefore requires supplementary supervision mechanisms that counteract manipulation. The claim that aggregative mechanisms are optimal because they reduce decision-making costs therefore proves to be wrong: the need for sanctioning manipulation imposes significant extra costs on the aggregative decision-making process. Liberal theories of democracy therefore don't live up to the expectations they raise. Aggregation does not lead to stability or singular decisions, and it is collectively suboptimal because it is prone to strategic manipulation.

As a reaction to the reduction of democracy to voting, which is the central principle in representative and direct models of democracy, deliberative theorists have advanced a contending democratic model, one that stresses the importance of talk. The deliberative turn in democratic theory has shifted the emphasis from finding the right aggregation mechanism to the discussion that precedes the voting phase (Dryzek 2000). Extensive public discussion could solve the problems aggregative accounts face. By deliberating, citizens could induce single-peaked preference orderings, which lead to transitive collective preference orderings (Knight & Johnson 1994). Moreover, in its Habermasian form, the exchange of rational arguments ideally leads to a singular consensus, so that no formal decision is needed and the arbitrariness of decision-making rules is no longer a worry. And, finally, in a discussion, the true intentions of the actors and the truthfulness of their arguments can be traced so that strategic manipulation can more easily be discovered. The question deliberative democrats raise is therefore no longer how to reach a collective decision given fixed preferences, but how to transform those preferences through a process of rational discussion.

## **II. From power struggle to communicative symmetry: type I deliberation**

The idea that democracy is about transforming preferences – through talk – instead of aggregating them – through voting – finds its roots in the writings of Jürgen Habermas. Based on a historical analysis of early bourgeois society, he argues that the role of the public sphere significantly changed as societies moved from a feudal polity into a liberal one. In the feudal political system, politics was closed off from the larger society, and dealt with the search for compromises while balancing the interests of both the king and the aristocracy (Koningsveld

& Mertens 1986). In the early bourgeois society, however, the public sphere changed its focus. It was no longer about balancing power, but about critical reflection on politics (Manin 1997; Mansbridge 2006). The public sphere became a forum in which citizens could meet to discuss politics, and get to well-informed opinions (Devos 2001, p. 175).

According to this new ideal, decision making had to be taken out of the smoke-filled rooms in which compromise was the dominant mode of decision-making. Politics was no longer considered to be a secret struggle in which contenders sought to gain power and control over the decision-making institutions; it was to be a public discussion, which bracketed the power of numbers, and which was guided by the search of well-informed ordinary citizens for a consensus based on nothing more than the power of the better argument (Keulartz 1992, p. 177).

This is the core of type I deliberation as Bächtiger and his colleagues (2010) call it: participants in deliberation cannot exert power over others or coerce them, but they have to yield to better arguments that were brought against their position. As such, communicative action entails a symmetrical relationship between citizens (Geenens & Tinnevelt 2007): those participating in public deliberation should not treat each other as objects or means to certain ends, but they have to fully acknowledge the communicative rights and potential of the other actors. At this point, communicative action differs from strategic action. In the latter case, the interaction is not about finding consensus, but about manipulating other actors in such a way as to bring them to pursue the goals you set out. The use of power and coercion is therefore the standard operating procedure in strategic action (Geenens 2007).

Strategic action is based on a narrow conception of rationality, which basically seeks to answer how certain personal goals can be achieved in a situation of mutual interdependence between all actors involved. Communicative action, on the other hand, takes on a different conception of rationality. “[It] distinguishes itself from strategic action”, Habermas (1992, p. 80) writes, “through the fact that successful action coordination is not traced back to the purposive rationality of action coordinations but to the rationally motivating force of achieving understanding, i.e., to a rationality that manifests itself in conditions for communicatively reached agreements”. Communicative action is thus rational to the extent that it improves mutual understanding (*Verständigung*) between the participants (Habermas 2002, p. 115).

In order to reach *Verständigung*, communicative action must meet the criteria of the ideal speech situation (*ideale Sprechsituation*). This means first of all that deliberation should be conceptualized an intersubjective way, even though there is some disagreement on this

issue (Goodin & Niemeyer 2003). Weighing and justifying arguments should not merely be a cognitive process; it should be part of a dialogical process, where ordinary citizens meet each other, and discuss issues together. Arguing back-and-forth is an interactive and interpersonal process, which allows all relevant opinions and perspectives to be included in the debate (Bohman 1996, pp. 53-57).

Such an intersubjective process sharply contrasts with the Aristotelian version of deliberation (Manin 2005). Aristotle proposed more of an oratory model, in which two or more discussants confronted arguments for and against an issue. This exchange of arguments cannot be considered the essence of deliberation. The actual deliberation, according to Aristotle, was taking place inside the listeners' heads.

This cognitivist account resonates in the writings of some contemporary scholars (see e.g. Goodin 2003; Goodin & Niemeyer 2003). The central process in this "deliberation within" approach is the learning phase, i.e. the weighing of each of the arguments internally (Eveland & Thomson 2006). "The impetus for fixing one's attention on a topic and retrieving reasons from stored memory", Goodin and Niemeyer (2003, p. 642) contend, "might come from any number of sources: group discussion is only one". Hence, the essence of deliberation according to them is not dialogical interaction but rather the internalization of conflicting arguments, and the reconsideration of previous opinions in light of better arguments (Manin 2005).

Even though this cognitivist account seems attractive, and even though their proponents are right to emphasize the importance of the learning phase, we should make an important side-note on the merits of deliberation within versus intersubjective deliberation. The main reason for promoting deliberation between individuals is that this allows for all arguments to have a proper place in public discussion. When deliberation is considered to be a cognitive process, one can however never be sure that one knows all arguments. People are after all "cognitive misers" (Ryfe 2005, p. 51). They use heuristic shortcuts and information cues to form opinions (Lupia & McCubbins 1998). The result of their cognitive deliberation could, therefore, reflect mere self-interest or their own ignorance when the arguments they consider are biased (Geenens & Tinnevelt 2007, pp. 31-32; Ryfe 2005, p. 51). Deliberation as an intersubjective process has a lesser chance of falling prey to such a bias.

In order to be considered type I deliberation, the discussion also has to be rational (Bächtiger et al. 2010). Arguments formulated and positions taken have to be rationally justified (Steiner et al. 2004, p. 20). And whenever a better argument is brought to the discussion, the participants are expected to be open to persuasion and to yield to the