Deliberative Versus Parliamentary Democracy in the UK: An Experimental Study

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Abstract

This paper reports the results of new research funded by the Leverhulme Foundation, which employs experimental design to assess two hypotheses that are derived from the existing literature on popular alienation from politics and the potential for deliberative democracy to offer a solution to such alienation. The first hypothesis is that there are two quite different types of citizen who are 'disaffected' with or 'disconnected from' politics, but in distinctive ways: 'Dissatisfied Democrats' (middle class, educated, activist and articulate devotees of a vision of highly engaged citizens); and 'Stealth Democrats' (low socio-economic status, less educated, inactive, with little interest in politics, who are absorbed largely by private concerns). The second hypothesis is that deliberative-style participation would at best only be effective in respect of the former of these groups (the Dissatisfied Democrats), but would be counter-productive with respect to the latter (Stealth Democrats). The implications of the research findings into these issues should be important for the reforms that the political elites who attempt to respond to the problem of democratic disconnect devise. The research design in this paper makes use of both qualitative and quantitative data based on a small sample of British citizens. Both offer broad confirmation of the first hypothesis: we can indeed distinguish two rather different types of critical citizens: measures of political interest, efficacy and trust generally reveal a notable distinction between those whom we had *a priori* designated as Dissatisfied and Stealth Democrats. Neither qualitative nor quantitative evidence, however, suggests grounds for accepting the second hypothesis. There is no obvious sign that those we defined as Stealth Democrats derived any less enjoyment from political deliberation than their Dissatisfied Democrat counterparts, nor that their sense of political efficacy or self-confidence suffered for the experience.

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Background: The research problem

In many of the world's established democracies, the talk is of disconnect, alienation and apathy - and the search is on for explanations and ways to put things right. The blame for this state of affairs is often heaped on parties and politicians and, somewhat less tangibly, on 'the political system'. Those who reject this common wisdom, on the other hand, level their sights on the mass media, and occasionally even on the public itself. The parliamentary expenses scandals that shook the Westminster establishment in the UK in 2008-9 elicited both kinds of reaction – though predominantly the former, as frequent outbursts of public anger made clear.

This situation dovetails with a longstanding difference between the protagonists of participatory democracy and those who defend representative democracy. Whereas the former are inclined to blame the politicians and in some sense or other 'the system', the defenders of representative politics are more disposed to say that citizens themselves, and the media on which they depend for political information, are responsible for the low esteem in which politics and its leading protagonists are currently held. From the perspective of this latter school, the radical participationists are unrealistic in their vision of a widespread popular capacity to engage with politics, and prone to stray uncomfortably close to the territory of shallow populism in their naïve and unreasonable view of the job done by political elites. To the participationists, however, this is an apology for an anachronistic and elitist view of democracy that takes insufficient account of the cognitive revolution which has facilitated a far greater potential for popular political engagement.

A powerful contribution to this debate has been made in recent years by social psychologists John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse (2002) in their research on American voters. They offer a stark challenge to the participationist visionaries in reporting findings which suggest that 'the last thing people want is to be more involved in political decision-making'. They summarise the orientations of American citizens as a preference for some kind of 'stealth' arrangement, whereby citizens know that democracy - and especially accountability – exists, but expect it to be barely visible on a routine basis. Moreover, they draw on findings from social psychology to challenge the claimed benefits of participatory democracy as 'wishful thinking', and they point out that research tends to reveal that it only works under very limited conditions.

This research sets an important challenge which needs to be taken up in Europe and elsewhere. Are the Stealth Democracy findings a unique reflection of the American political culture? Or do they reflect a more general mindset among the citizens of advanced industrial democracies? This paper constitutes an initial test of this question using an experimental design on small groups of British citizens. The data gathered for this exercise and reported here include both qualitative focus group discussions that enable detailed contextualised analysis, and quantitative analysis of pre- and post-group questionnaires. Given the small 'n', we do not pretend that the latter findings are in any way definitive, but they are suggestive and help pave the way for a further stage of more systematic quantitative research.

The Intellectual Context

There is now a considerable body of evidence attesting to popular dissatisfaction with the political process and its major institutions and actors in the world's established liberal democracies. A particular crescendo of complaint and protest about British politicians erupted in the context of the Westminster expenses scandals in 2009, though more general evidence of political alienation has been apparent for far longer – and across a wide array of political systems. Much, though not all, is directed at parties and incorporates various forms of anti-party sentiment (thus, parties are widely held to be self-interested,

untrustworthy, corrupt, ineffective and increasingly irrelevant). Similarly, public trust in politicians is consistently low.

Of course, especially in the light of the scandals over MPs expenses, some of this negativity can reasonably be seen as deserved. But bad faith, and self-regarding or corrupt behaviour by politicians is, in reality, nothing new. Why, then, is it only in recent years that anti-party sentiment and citizen disaffection has become so pronounced? Various explanations can be found in the literature. Russell Dalton (2004), for instance, rejects country-specific explanations and points to two general trends. The first is rising expectations of government among citizens, especially the young, the better educated, the more affluent, and the post-materialist, who, partly because they believe in democracy, are also the most inclined to criticise. These are the 'dissatisfied democrats'. A second general source of decreasing political support is the growing complexity of contemporary political agendas and mobilisation. New debates over environmental quality, social norms, lifestyle choices, multiculturalism, and other social and cultural issues have led to the triumph of interest articulation over interest aggregation. In such fluid, multidimensional policy space it is very difficult for governments to satisfy most of the people most of the time. Moreover the mobilization of 'dissatisfied democrats' makes aggregation more difficult still and provokes a demand for reform that goes beyond tinkering with the core institutions of representative democracy (parties, elections, parliaments) to an increase in direct public involvement in the political process. This in turn threatens to exacerbate the imbalance between the ever-growing clamour of articulated interests and the need for institutions that can effectively channel divergent demands into coherent and effective policy programmes.

In fact, there is widespread interest in participatory democracy in general, and in various forms of deliberative or 'dialogic' democracy in particular (see, eg, Pateman, 1970; Bessette 1980; Cohen 1989; Fishkin 1991; Nino 1996; Ackerman & Fishkin 2004). These are often favoured as solutions to the problem of political alienation, and enthusiasm extends beyond political theorists: In the UK, The Power Inquiry (2006) advocated more

participation, among other things, and commissioned James Fishkin to run its own deliberative exercise in January 2010. The British government's own Green Paper, *The Governance of Britain* (CM7170 2007), proposed use of citizen juries in local politics and the White Paper *Communities in Control* (CM7247 2008) advocated the spread of participatory budgeting in local government. At European level, too, there is significant official interest in the potential of participation through e-democracy (Council of Europe 2009). However, there is of course a long tradition of democratic theory, going back to Schumpeter and Weber, which is generally sceptical of the supposed benefits of participatory democracy, and which casts doubt on the claim that it would work better than 'actually existing democracy' (see Bellamy 2007: 161-3). The most striking contribution in recent years has been made by John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse (2002) in their research on American voters. Drawing on findings from focus groups and surveys, they sternly rebuff the participationist claims, arguing that people:

...do not want to make political decisions themselves; they do not want to provide much input to those who are assigned to make these decisions; and they would rather not know the details of the decision-making process…This does not mean that people think no mechanism for government accountability is necessary; they just do not want the mechanism to come into play except in unusual circumstances.

As Clive James (2009) might put it, democracy is '...that political system that leaves me free not to care about it.' Hibbing and Theiss-Morse summarise the orientations of American citizens as a preference for some kind of 'stealth' arrangement, whereby citizens know that democracy exists, but expect it to be barely visible on a routine basis – an attitude that they describe as naïve and unfeasible. The upshot of their Stealth Democracy study is that the authors criticise both the naïveté of popular attitudes towards politics, and the insistence of some observers that participatory democracy provides the solution to its current discontents. The alleged benefits of participatory - especially deliberative - democracy are portrayed by Hibbing and Theiss-Morse as 'wishful thinking', and they point out that research tends to reveal that it only works under very limited conditions. 'Deliberation will not work in the real world of politics where people

are different and where tough, zero-sum decisions must be made…real deliberation is quite likely to make them hopping mad or encourage them to suffer silently because of a reluctance to voice their own opinions in the discussion' (2002: 207). They cite a variety of research evidence to debunk three of the major claims of the participationists: that deliberative and participatory democracy produces better decision-making (actually, the most powerful personalities often dominate, whether or not they are the best-informed or most rational); that it enhances the legitimacy of the political system (in fact, face-to-face conflict just exacerbates people's anger and resentment (Morrell 1999); and that it leads to personal development (again, it just exacerbates the sense of powerlessness, inadequacy and marginalization of the weakest participants). Indeed, Diana Mutz (2006) has gone so far as to argue that high-intensity deliberation around political differences can actually reduce the inclination of many people to participate in politics, because of the desire to avoid conflict. Not surprisingly perhaps, and borrowing from the terminology of principal-agent analysis, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse found that citizens (the principals) prefer to guard against their agents' (politicians and parties) presumed tendency to shirk, not through 'police-patrol' oversight – direct, continuous and proactive – but through 'fire-alarm' oversight – mediated, episodic and reactive (McCubbins and Schwartz, 1984). Like Schudson's 'monitorial' citizens, they are watchful and engaged in surveying the political scene rather than gathering information intensely, 'poised for action if action is required' (Schudson 1999: 8).

That said, recent research from the USA now suggests that the pessimism of writers like Hibbing, Theiss-Morse and Mutz may be exaggerated. Using a blend of experimental and survey designs, Neblo et al (2009) have investigated American voters' hypothetical willingness to deliberate and their actual behaviour in response to a real invitation to deliberate with their member of Congress, and found that willingness to deliberate in the US is much more widespread than expected, and that it is precisely the demographic groups that are least likely to participate in traditional partisan politics – and therefore those whom we would expect to express the stealth democracy perspective - who are actually most interested in deliberative participation. However, these findings depend

crucially on the particular form of deliberation between citizens and elected representatives that is implemented. Similarly, Bengtsson and Mattila (2009) have found that in Finland people with less education, with less political knowledge and those who feel that the political system does not respond to their needs – again, those we might expect to have 'stealth democratic' attitudes – are actually most likely to want greater use of direct democracy in their political system. Of course, it can be argued that direct or referendum democracy is not at all the same thing as deliberative democracy or high-intensity participation. On the contrary, it has often been regarded as compatible with a populist outlook in which charismatic leaders have direct relationships with the masses, and thereby largely bypass the institutions of representative democracy.

In this paper, we derive two major hypotheses from this literature which we would like to test. **The first (H1) holds that there are two quite different types of citizen who are 'disaffected' with politics, but in distinctive ways: 'dissatisfied democrats' (likely to be middle class, educated, active and articulate devotees of a vision of highly engaged citizens) and 'stealth democrats' (likely to be of lower socio-economic status, less educated, more inactive, with little interest in politics, who are absorbed largely by private concerns, and only consent to participate in order to keep untrustworthy elites in check). The second (H2) is that, (following Mutz), it would seem to follow that deliberative participation would at best only be effective in respect of the dissatisfied democrats, but would be counter-productive with respect to the stealth democrats.** While the former may chafe at the participatory limitations of traditional forms of representative democracy, and might thrive in a more participative environment, the latter could actually be more vulnerable to political marginalization, for they are less likely to take to direct and active engagement. They have traditionally depended on parties as key interlocutors and tribunes of their social group interests, but their parties (typically social democratic or labour in orientation) have often lost this role through strategic adaptation. Without representative parties that express their social identities and serve as communities of political learning, as was once the case, these citizens retreat into a disaffected and alienated take on politics. These feelings will only

be exacerbated by evidence of 'feather-bedding' by self-interested politicians and parties (Hibbing & Theiss-Morse: 121-124).

The implications of the research findings into these issues should be important for the reforms that the political elites who attempt to respond to the problem of democratic disconnect devise. New forms of radical participatory democracy may not be the answer that some envisage them to be; reforming existing systems of representative democracy may be of far greater import, since few citizens are likely to care for more demanding levels of political involvement. However, we cannot be sure of this until the empirical research is done.

Research design and measures

There is no doubt that H1 and H2 require testing by quantitative method; Neblo et al (2009) provide an excellent example of how an attitudinal survey with an experimental design built-in to it can be used effectively to address the stealth democracy thesis. We certainly hope to emulate and build-on this approach in due course. However, as methodological pluralists we also believe in triangulation and this paper is intended to be a prior step based on the analysis of (largely) qualitative data. Drawing on funding provided by the Leverhulme Foundation[1], we have been able to commission six focus groups of 8-12 citizens each in order to explore attitudes towards representative politics and political participation. These groups were stratified so as to investigate the possibility that younger and better educated people are typically 'dissatisfied democrats' who respond more positively to the idea of participatory and deliberative democracy, while older and/or less educated groups are more prone to a 'stealth democratic' or populist perspective, thereby providing a test of our key hypotheses. That is, notwithstanding the findings of Bengtsson and Mertil in Finland, our reading of the literature would generally suggest that 'stealth democrats' would be more likely to be less well-educated and lower

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socio-economic class than 'dissatisfied democrats'. We thus selected our group members according to these criteria.

Beyond this basic distinction, we also took a cue from the experimental research designs of Andrew Morrell. In the first of these papers (Morrell 1999), he found that, contrary to his expectations, participants taking part in 'strong' democratic (ie, deliberative) decision-making procedures group did not show higher levels of collective decision-acceptance. In fact, those taking part in procedures more akin to liberal democratic bargaining showed slightly higher, though not statistically significant, levels of collective decision-acceptance and group satisfaction. The best predictor of positive feelings of tolerance, efficacy and empathy was simply whether or not an individual voted with the majority. He concluded that 'theorists who advocate greater citizen participation must take seriously the question of how often and in what way participation by citizens should occur...For now, though, it would probably be preferable to accustom citizens to participation by introducing direct citizen input through structures that maintain some distance between people and their opinions. Under these procedures, citizens are allowed a comfortable space in which to offer opinions and insights without being forced to interact in a highly personal way with others who may disagree with them' (Morrell 1999: 320). In essence, this is tantamount to a preference for representative over participatory democracy, though the use of referendums as an occasional supplement to standard electoral politics could theoretically form a part of the overall package of 'representative democracy'.

In the second of his papers, Morrell (2005) focused specifically on feelings of political and social efficacy. In particular, internal political efficacy – a citizen's feeling of personal competence to participate effectively – is regarded as an important precursor of participatory behaviour; without this, citizens 'will likely become apathetic about, indifferent to and disengaged from the democratic process' (Morrell 2005: 50). This experiment revealed that there was no relationship between the type of decision-making procedures that people took part in and their feelings of political efficacy. Again, this ran counter to hypothesis, as he had expected those who took part in deliberative exercises to

develop a greater sense of personal efficacy than those involved in 'voting-only' decisions.   Morrell conceded that this was consistent with Hibbing and Theiss-Morse's negative findings about the effects of deliberation: 'That deliberation did not significantly affect the global measure of internal political efficacy lends support to their claim that deliberation will not achieve what deliberative theorists expect in regards to making better citizens' (op.cit: 63). That said, Morrell did find that subjects who engaged in 'face-to-face deliberative decision-making' showed higher levels of 'situation-specific efficacy' than those who only voted. This was a measure of respondents' feelings about *the particular decision-making procedure they took part in*, rather than a measure of their general feelings of political efficacy.

Taking our cue from these studies, we are incorporating measures of both specific and general internal political efficacy, social trust and acceptance of decision-making procedures as specific aspects of our dependent variable. These are all things that we would expect to differ as between stealth and dissatisfied democrats, and in particular, we would expect these groups to react differently to deliberative situations in terms of these measures.

Our research design split matched groups of citizens into two sets of three groups, as illustrated in Table 1 below. The first set took part in issue discussions and decisions designed to approximate to established liberal democratic parliamentary systems of debate and decision-making, while the second resembled a process of 'strong' participatory/deliberative democracy.   Each set is sub-divided into three groups, one of which is carefully selected to match the expected demographic and attitudinal profile of 'dissatisfied' democrats, the second of which is designed to consist of 'stealth' democrats, and the third of which is a mixture of both attitudinal types (see Table 1). All participants are pre- and post-group surveyed for their attitudes on political efficacy and trust, in order to gauge the impact of the various decision-making processes.

Table 1: Focus group breakdown

Parliamentary exercise	Deliberative exercise
Dissatisfied democrats (All aged 18-44 and ABC1, gender split, n=10)	Dissatisfied democrats (All aged 18-44 and ABC1, gender split, n=10)
Stealth democrats (All aged 45+ and C2DE, gender split, n=11)	Stealth democrats (All aged 45+ and C2DE, gender split, n=10)
Mixed Dissatisfied/Stealth democrats (All aged 35-55, ABC1/C2DE split, gender split, n=12)	Mixed Dissatisfied/Stealth democrats (All aged 35-55, ABC1/C2DE split, gender split, n=10)

If we return to our original broad hypotheses, we are now in a position to specify our expectations in greater definition. **H1 holds that there are two quite different types of citizen who are 'disaffected' with politics, but in distinctive ways: 'dissatisfied democrats' (likely to be middle class, educated, active and articulate devotees of a vision of highly engaged citizens) and 'stealth democrats' (likely to be of lower socio-economic status, less educated, more inactive, with little interest in politics, who are absorbed largely by private concerns, and only consent to participate in order to keep untrustworthy elites in check)**. In order to evaluate whether there is any truth to this proposition, we firstly make use of qualitative focus group discussion to offer an interpretive assessment. We then examine the pre-discussion questionnaire data to see if there are discernible differences between those that we regard *a priori* as likely to be dissatisfied and stealth democrats on a number of relevant variables relating to political interest, trust, efficacy and engagement. **H2 proposes that deliberative participation would at best only be effective in respect of the dissatisfied democrats, but would be counter-productive with respect to the stealth democrats.** Again, we draw on both qualitative and quantitative data from our discussion groups, though we focus primarily on the latter; specifically, if the hypothesis is broadly correct, we would expect to find that Stealth Democrats involved in the deliberative decision-making exercises: (a) are less likely to enjoy, value and accept the outcome of the exercise than Dissatisfied Democrats; (b) are less likely to score positively on the post-group scores of efficacy, trust and engagement than either their counterparts in the parliamentary decision-making exercises

or Dissatisfied Democrats in the deliberative exercises; and (c) are more likely to show negative shifts on these measures from pre- to post-group questionnaires than their counterparts in the parliamentary decision-making exercises or Dissatisfied Democrats in the deliberative exercises.

The relatively small number of subjects (n=63 overall) makes it very unlikely that we will uncover statistically significant findings, but in combination with the qualitative interpretation, it should provide us with indicative evidence that paves the way for more systematic quantitative analysis in the future.

Recruitment of discussion groups and process of decision-making exercises

We have explained that dissatisfied and stealth democrats were defined in terms of a combination of demographic and attitudinal/behavioural characteristics, considered likely identify these two types. The groups were recruited face-to-face and using free-find approaches (i.e., not using Panels or pre-selected lists) by Ipsos MORI in London early in 2010. Defining characteristics are set out in Table 2.

Table 2: Characteristics of Dissatisfied and Stealth Democrats

Believe that the system of governing Britain: 'Could be improved in small ways but mainly works well'; or 'Could be improved quite a lot'; or 'Needs a great deal of improvement'	Believe that the system of governing Britain: 'Could be improved in small ways but mainly works well'; or 'Could be improved quite a lot'
States that: 'I currently am involved in decisions made by the government and Councils' or 'I would like to have more influence over decisions made by the government and Councils'	States that: 'As long as the government are doing their job I am happy to let them get on with it' or 'Don't know'
Has done two or more of a list of activities in the last two or three years	Has done two or fewer of a list of activities in the last two or three years
Aged 18-44	Aged 45+
ABC1 social grade	C2DE social grade

In essence, Stealth Democrats were selected on the basis that they (a) did not perceive a need for radical reform of the existing system of representative democracy, even though they might be critical of it to a certain extent, (b) showed little inclination to participate actively in politics, and [c] were relatively content to let the political elites govern. As we already know, they were also middle aged to elderly and among the lower socio-economic strata. By contrast, Dissatisfied Democrats were selected on the basis of their (a) critical perception that the country required significant political reform, (b) express willingness to participate actively rather than leave things to political elites alone, and [c] record of actual involvement. They are younger and of middle and upper socio-economic strata. Having selected the groups on the basis of these attributes, we would expect to find significant differences between them in terms of a wider array of attitudes towards politics and indicators of political efficacy and support. If this turns out to be true then we can claim to have established at least some *prima facie* evidence for the existence of out two stereotypes of political citizens. We appreciate that the selection criteria might appear to be be designed in order to set up the hypotheses to succeed, but we do not believe that this is what we are doing. Rather, we have selected according to the logic of our expectations but only on the basis of minimal defining criteria (ie, two simple attitudinal criteria, one behavioural criterion and one demographic criterion); if our expectations are justified then these basic criteria should prove to be backed up by a much richer set of qualitative attitudes and quantitative measures of political efficacy and trust that confirm the validity and usefulness of the broader stereotypes of 'dissatisfied' and 'stealth' democrats.

All groups were held in London at London, which ensured that geography was held constant. All groups were initially asked to discuss in focus group format some general questions about the nature and functioning of the current political system. These included:

- Whether or not people were dissatisfied with the democratic system/decision making process as it stands; what they liked and didn't like about it.

- Sources of any dissatisfaction: would greater 'involvement' help counter this?

- Why people don't want to be involved? Does this vary by group?

- What would encourage people to get involved? What are the best methods (e.g. petitions, referendums, participatory budgeting new media/web2.0 etc?), and the pros/cons of each?[2]

Later, the groups were variously asked to take part either in exercises that were designed to approximate either 'deliberative' or 'parliamentary liberal-democratic' decision-making procedures. In the three 'deliberative' decision- making exercise participants were asked to discuss a particular subject via the following stages:

1. *Pooling of perspectives:* Here, everyone who has an opinion on the issue is encouraged to express it without any debate yet on the merits/demerits of each opinion.

2. *Critical scrutiny:* The opinions expressed are then subject to debate/criticism from other participants.

3. *Reformulation:* The group is divided into groups of 3 or 4, and participants are asked to reformulate their views in a way that is acceptable to the small group. Each small group then reports its main conclusions back to the plenary group.

4. *Voting:* By a show of hands, participants are asked to vote on which of the three breakout groups' views they would prefer as policy, until one is chosen by a majority of participants (removing the lowest scoring view if necessary).

By contrast, the other three groups experienced a 'parliamentary' decision-making exercise. In this, participants were first of all asked to vote as they would in an immediate General Election using a mock ballot paper[3] and ballot boxes, and were then asked to

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[2] Full discussion guides used in this research by the groups' moderators are available on request from the author.

[3] The voting ballot paper options were Labour, Conservative, Lib Dem and Other.

vote 'referendum style' on policy options on a particular issue. They were not involved in group deliberation on the issues. However, all participants were given a short information pack containing some background information on the subject or subjects that the decision-making was going to be based on, in addition to being asked to complete a short pre- and post-group questionnaires. Participants were also shown some media news footage on the subject in the groups themselves. The deliberative decision-making exercise was on the subject of student tuition fees, while the Parliamentary decision making exercise was on tuition fees and, where time allowed, on capital punishment as well.[4]

The remainder of this paper reports our findings, starting with a general account of focus group participants' attitudes towards the current democratic system in the UK, noting any indications of distinctions between stealth democrats and dissatisfied democrats, and drawing on quantitative analysis of pre-group questionnaires, before moving on to an analysis of the decision-making exercises. Once again, this draws on both qualitative and quantitative evidence. While the latter focuses on specific measures of political efficacy, political and social trust, the former deals with questions of how participants enjoyed the decision-making process, and what they liked/disliked about it.

General attitudes towards representative democracy and political engagement in the UK

It is of course important to note that as with all qualitative research, this work is designed to be illustrative and suggestive rather than statistically valid. It therefore provides insight but does not allow firm conclusions to be drawn. Findings should therefore be

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        Ⓐ   Our question wordings in the Parliamentary votes were: 'To pay for universities should tuition fees be increased or should the money come from somewhere else (e.g. higher taxes)?' (Increase tuition fees/Somewhere else (e.g. higher taxes)) and 'Do you support or oppose the reintroduction of the death penalty for certain crimes?' (Support/Oppose).

viewed as indicative only and any conclusions drawn at this stage are only intended to be regarded as suggestive and in need of further and more systematic confirmation.

Qualitative feedback from those recruited as Stealth Democrats

Inevitably, participants expressed a range of views on the current system of representative democracy as it is perceived to operate in the UK. Equally inevitably, perhaps, the Westminster 'expenses scandal' of 2009 drew some venom from our participants.

They are a load of no-good thieves. Excuse me, these people would be in prison in Courts of Law if they weren't Members of Parliament. These are criminals. They have committed criminal offences, they have stolen. They have done it knowingly and happily and contentedly. The country is being run by thieves! (Recruited as Stealth Democrat).

A *lot of them are totally immoral (in) what they do. I think it was disgusting. I mean, some of the amounts of houses; they were swapping houses and running round, are you trying to tell me that that was in order? Any decent person wouldn't have done a thing like that. Everybody is going to cheat a little, but not to the degree that they were cheating.* (Recruited as Stealth Democrat).

All of this is consistent with the SD view, of course, although it is not necessarily unique to the stealth democratic perspective. However, it reflects the outlook which Hibbing & Theiss Morse describe as preferring to avoid direct involvement in politics if possible, while strongly resenting any indication that elected representatives might exploit their positions for personal benefit: if they do, then representative democracy needs to provide mechanisms of involvement and control. That said, among those recruited as Stealth Democrats there was also widespread feeling that, while the current system might not be

perfect, it still works reasonably well overall, and that there is no more viable alternative. Suggestions for change tended to be for minor reform (eg, greater transparency and more information to be made public) rather than demands for radical overhaul. Indeed, there was significant scepticism about schemes for more direct participation, a point to which we will return in due course.

...on the whole, looking at governments from other countries, I think we do it pretty good. Compared to almost anywhere in the world, we're on top. Recruited as 'Stealth Democrat'

Both stealth democrats and dissatisfied democrats saw strengths in the existing system. In particular, many approved of the MP-constituency link, thus emphasizing the key role of the elected representative. The participants that mentioned this as a strength liked the fact that if they have a problem or want to raise an issue they know where to go and find advice, someone that has influence and someone that has the potential to help them.

...[having a local MP is] a gateway for the person on the street, like myself, or anybody else, they have places where you can go and talk to them and that is a way forward towards linking into the government and having your say. Recruited as 'Stealth Democrat'

Reflecting much previous research, we found that our participants tended to distinguish between MPs as a general group of actors, and particular individuals who represented a specific constituency; when asked, people often express low regard for politicians in general, but nevertheless esteem their own MPs. Such views were influenced by personal experiences. Those that thought their MP did a good job in helping them with a problem tended to be far more positive about MPs in general and a few went as far as to defend MPs against general criticism from other participants. However, participants tended to see this system as something of a lottery; it is only as good as your local MP. If a citizen is fortunate enough to have an MP that is easily accessible, interested, engaged and keen

to help constituents, then the system is effective. There is also some awareness of the daunting nature of the task that MPs often face, not least in terms of the sheer number of constituents that have to be represented:

(There's) too much pressure. I mean, in our area there's just too many people. (Recruited as Stealth Democrat)[5]

It is interesting to observe that those recruited as Stealth Democrats were not insensitive to the role played by citizens if the system of representative democracy is to work well. They were particularly likely to argue that it is incumbent on voters to elect an MP and hold them to account. They contended that if they were not happy with their MP people had the opportunity to replace them at General Elections. As such, they saw that it was important to up actually turn out at elections:

You can vote your MP in or out actually…when I talk to my friends and they say 'I haven't voted' I am horrified. Recruited as 'Stealth Democrat'

I think a lot of people are thinking to themselves these days 'what difference does it make?' The thing is, it does make a difference because they are the same people who are complaining when things don't go the way they want. Recruited as 'Stealth Democrat'

In various other ways too, the Stealth Democrats in our sample were apt to defend the way the system worked, even if they were aware of certain shortcomings.

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This challenge is destined to become all the greater if the government presses ahead with current plans to reduce the number of MPs sitting at Westminster, and thereby increase the average size of constituencies.

Once you have voted them in you have got to put your trust in them, there is no other way around, the system is not fool-proof and its not perfect, but once we vote for them, we have to unfortunately let them get on with it. The only redress we have got is at the next election. (Stealth Democrat)

In part, this attitude seems to be driven by a frank recognition that few citizens are really likely to be drawn to active engagement in the detail of politics. There are too many other distractions for most people, in particular work and domestic life, just as Hibbing and Theiss-Morse pointed out with respect to their American sample.

It is time and it's tiredness; you get to an age where you've done the MP and you've done the school and you've done the ranting because of the road humps and you get to a stage where you think I have got other things, bigger fish to fry. (Stealth Democrat)

*I think you have to have a passion about these types of things. I think politics does attract a certain type of person and that generally they are quite well meaning and they are very hard workers too. I wouldn't be prepared to work as hard as they do. (*Stealth Democrat)

Can't be bothered (to participate more actively). *For these issues to have a massive effect on my life, for example Council Tax, just using one example, they would have to treble it or quadruple it before it would even bother me financially. And that is the truth - just can't be bothered. I can't see the point, I don't think it would make any difference.* (Stealth Democrat).

Moreover, there was widespread scepticism about the alternatives to representative democracy among those we recruited as Stealth Democrats. This does not mean that these groups were not critical of political elites, but they were inclined to see real problems in attempting to use some kind of issue-based participatory process for citizens at large, recognising the inevitability of conflict over issues, and problems of lack of information

about specific issues. In particular, our participants were unsure about the potential for direct democracy to be used as a regular part of the political process at national level:

....it is impossible for it to work; how long does it take a Bill to go through Parliament when it involves 600 people? When it involves 60 million.... (Stealth Democrat)

I think that if you're running a country, you know it's a complex global world we live in, you know. You can't just make individual decisions without looking at the ramifications. So, you know, you need a programme, you need some sort of joined-up policy on a number of things that you can put before the electorate. And people can say 'well, actually, we like your approach, and we like your approach'. (Stealth Democrat)

This latter quotation is an interesting apology for party democracy: the participant in question is in effect arguing that the system needs someone or something to aggregate demands, to see the connections, to forge a coherent programme, rather than take things on an issue-by-issue basis. One of the things that critics of the system in the UK, such as the Power Report (2006), have honed in on is the 'problem' of parties as packages that bundle together multiple policy promises, thereby preventing citizens from cherry-picking their preferred policies on an issue-by-issue basis, but our Stealth Democrat has pointed to what might be an even greater problem with government by direct democracy: by what mechanism can policy alternatives be aggregated into coherent programmes of government under such a system? Relatedly, one of our participants who had been recruited as a Stealth Democrat responded to the proposition that single-issue groups might provide an 'answer' to the problem of modern democracy by expressing doubt that they would tell the unvarnished truth any more than the parties do.

None of this means that those recruited as Stealth Democrats are uncritical of the system of or political elites. As we have seen, they provided some stinging criticism of those MPs caught out by the expenses scandal. In addition, two other major criticisms stand

out. Firstly, they do not appreciate the sense that parties and politicians manipulate or spin political information.

They speak in sound bites and they are trained to do that, and repetition over and over again so that when they get their two minutes on the news - education, education, education[6] – its all……it's crap!...in the last war they buried bad news; they won't ever be able to do that again.

It should be noted, however, that our participants did not place all the blame for this state of affairs on politicians. While they are clearly somewhat cynical about the way elites exploit the arts of 'spin' they are equally aware of the role and culpability of the media. In essence, they seem to see the political elite and the media as sharing joint responsibility for the manipulation of political information in partial and partisan ways. Witness, for instance, this exchange in one of the Stealth Democrat groups:

Interviewer: *But what about the media here?*

Male 1:   *You know what they say about the media don't you? There are little sayings we have been hearing around the table this evening: "don't let the truth get in the way of a good story."*

Female 1:   *They will print want they want to.*

Male 2:   *I think the media love sensations.*

Female 1:   *Sensations, yes, and if one party is down they boost up the other party.*

Female 2:   *You can't believe everything you read in the papers.*

Male 3:   *There is nothing they enjoy more than a good disaster or a good war.*

Female 2:   *Yes*

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[6]

A direct reference to Tony Blair, wittingly or otherwise.

The second – and perhaps most striking – criticism to emerge from the Stealth Democrat groups was an implicit - and sometimes quite explicit - lament about the shortcomings of the political system in providing adequate social or political representation for those who are not white, middle class and male. Given the socio-economic profile of our Stealth Democrats much of this took the for of an implied critique of the Labour movement in Britain.

*And it's a closed shop, you know if you're not part of that sort of chattering classes you know you're not privy to it. (*Stealth Democrat)

To be honest, you know, personally I've always voted Labour and I'll never vote Tory. I don't care how good they are, how nice, how slick, how much they've changed, I wouldn't. So I would vote on principle rather than personality. I mean, I don't really care whether (Gordon) Brown's a good man or not, I'm more interested in what the party represents. (Stealth Democrat)

This is a powerful statement of traditional tribal loyalty to Labour because of its class connotations, irrespective of short-term factors like leadership or issue appeals. Moreover, it is fascinating the most prominent voices in the group where this statement was made were [a] a politically aware Glaswegian Labour man, [b] a middle-aged West Indian immigrant, and [c] a white working-class female retiree from London's East End: one might almost see these people as the collective embodiment of a classic 'Old Labour' coalition. This prompts one to wonder if the changing identity and strategy of the Labour Party in particular has been more important to the loss of support for politics than has hitherto been recognised? If so, it makes for a fascinating contrast with Russell Dalton's argument that affluence and cognitive mobilization have been major contributory factors explaining year-on-year loss of political support around the democratic world: 'Although virtually all social groups have become more cynical, in most nations these trends are

disproportionately greater among the young, the better educated, the more affluent and post-materialists' (Dalton 2004: 195). An alternative hypothesis suggested by our research is that the problem with the growth of affluence might be the impact it has had on working class perceptions of politics in the UK, via the changing strategy and identity of the (New) Labour Party. This transformation has left some of the party's traditional constituency feeling under-represented and struggling to see the difference between the major parties.

We can summarize the qualitative feedback from those we recruited as Stealth Democrats as consisting of a degree of worldly cynicism about political elites and an awareness of some of its shortcomings; in particular, a loss of political and social identity with the Labour Party has undermined the feeling that there is an adequate choice for some of these citizens within the current party system. There is also a resentment of news management and spin (though culpability is shared with the media itself in this respect), and of any suggestions of self interested exploitation of their position by political elites. At the same time, there is a broad acceptance that the system of representative democracy as a whole works generally quite well, and a recognition that few people really have the inclination or aptitude to get involved in the detail of political action, especially at national level. While most acknowledge the importance of voting and appreciate the possibilities of access to influence through their elected representatives, there is reluctance to engage much beyond this. On the whole, these attitudes must be regarded as consistent with those that Hibbing and Theiss Morse describe as those of the Stealth Democrat.

Qualitative feedback from those recruited as Dissatisfied Democrats
How does this qualitative feedback contrast with that from those recruited as dissatisfied democrats, if at all? First, dissatisfied democrats are generally more inclined to express strong cynicism about the system of representative democracy. We encountered some very strong criticisms of political parties, several of which are familiar from the Stealth Democrat groups as well - eg, parties are denigrated for being adversarial, for the dark

arts of spin and media manipulation, and for not delivering when in power – but the tone of such criticism was often more strident and unforgiving.

I haven't voted last time, I just don't believe that that will change anything... no one listens, no one cares. (Dissatisfied Democrat)

I didn't vote (at) this one because, same reason, I just don't think it will make a change. (Dissatisfied Democrat)

If you see Cameron, Cameron could be part of Labour really...and Blair could have been (Conservative)…(Dissatisfied Democrat)

I think it's to do with the system, so you have this two-party stereo system and one party gets in with a huge majority and then is able to manipulate the media to bring through lots of bills quietly that are slowly changing the whole fabric of how we live.(Dissatisfied Democrat)

Often the people we initially vote for because we feel that they share closely our views, you often find that, well, when they are actually in power they are not doing anything they said they would. (Dissatisfied Democrat)

Initially, whenever election time comes, the propaganda you receive, it's like everything you want to hear; it doesn't matter who the party is, they are all shouting everything you want to hear, but it doesn't actually come to occur... (Dissatisfied Democrat)

Although some counterpoint to these statements was provided by participants who contended that it was important to vote because the party complexion of governments did make a difference to policy outcomes, others pointed to further shortcomings of party government by suggesting (if not in so many words) weaknesses with the doctrine of the mandate and the idea that manifestos constitute a clear and comprehensive statement of

party pledges. Moreover, they contended, the system leaves most ordinary citizens disempowered and helpless bystanders.

I think the general public, the ordinary man on the street, the decision has been taken away from them really. They're just like watching a movie.(Dissatisfied Democrat)

When a couple of million of us stood up and...went on a march against the war (in Iraq), it was just, well very nice - we got the cameras out and we've all had a nice day out, off we go home again. Nothing: it wasn't noticed anywhere apart from the people outside the country knew that we didn't vote for this. (Dissatisfied Democrat)

Elite politics in general is regarded as tedious and remote, and this elicited a demand from some participants for something more 'interesting', though there are no suggestions for how this might be achieved:

And make it more interesting and accessible to us because it's really boring; politics is fed to us at the moment and people don't want to engage and no wonder they just turn off. (Dissatisfied Democrat)

On the back of this angry appraisal of the system, the dissatisfied democrats developed a series of demands and suggestions for reform; these were on the whole more far-reaching than the proposals put forward by the Stealth Democrats, which is the second striking difference between the two sets of participants. While the Stealth Democrats were at best usually only lukewarm about direct democracy for national politics, and limited their reform ideas to demands for greater transparency and access to policy information, the Dissatisfied Democrats were more inclined to be drawn to more innovative and/or ambitious schemes of citizen participation and demands for better 'service' from elected representatives. One group proposed daily MP surgeries in their constituencies, while also expecting their representatives to be on the floor of the House of Commons far more regularly. This is not only unrealistic but betrays a lack of understanding about the requirements of a legislator. In terms of proposals for increased participatory

opportunities, there was general enthusiasm for the use of referendums at national and (especially) local levels. One group suggested that a criterion for the use of referendums should be to introduce them 'when there isn't a clear majority in Parliament and/or parties are split' – that is, recourse to direct democracy should occur when party government fails. Another saw it as important that there should be more frequent recourse to direct democracy for the 'things that are going to affect us - not the little things, the major things'. One individual saw further potential virtue in direct democracy as a mechanism by which the peculiarly excessive power handed to long-term single party governments in the UK can be checked and balanced:

So if you have a situation like you have now where there's an adversarial set up and one party can get in...with a huge majority for a very long time before anybody can do anything about it, then...where people are more engaged and have referendums and things, that might hold back that potential to change things very insidiously just because you have a lot of power. (Dissatisfied Democrat)

Another participant suggested that referendums should be held in the context of widespread mass public discussion, along the lines of James Fishkin's famous deliberative events (Fishkin 1991; Ackerman and Fishkin 2004).

I think things should be talked through, perhaps with the help of some advisers with statistics and numbers and then after perhaps months, you know, debating, then you select what is, in a sense, what the public wants. (Dissatisfied Democrat)

The Dissatisfied Democrats were aware of some of the potential pitfalls of direct democracy, however, and stipulated certain conditions for them to be meaningful. In particular, the public must feel that whenever they are consulted their voice is genuinely listened to and the results are neither manipulated nor overlooked.

I think referendums would be a good idea, but again they are so expensive, to do one on every issue - I don't think it would be practical. So I think a bit of a change would

probably be good but you can't enforce it to a great extent because it is just not practical in the real world. (Dissatisfied Democrat)

But what happened in Ireland last time they had a referendum on Maastricht (sic)? They went back and had another one until they agreed with the government. (Dissatisfied Democrat)

The same for planning permission where I am. I'm in Bloomsbury, they, you know, the business behind us, they wanted to put up something. They built something that was two storeys higher than what the plan was in Camden and then when we all went to have a look at it and nothing was done, and now they want to add something else and we've all complained and said no, they shouldn't be allowed to do this, and of course nobody spoke in their favour, but still it happened…(Dissatisfied Democrat)

There was also general support for other innovations such as citizen juries, interaction between MPs and constituents via Internet blogsites (*'but it would have to be interactive'*), and better political and civic education. One participant made a novel proposal along the following lines:

I was sitting here thinking about it and probably we have to come up with a third House (of Parliament) *and a third House has to deal with people who voluntarily want to come into the House each day and sit down and discuss matters of great importance to the nation, do you understand me? It is not paid for, you just come into the House, probably cap the number to say 50, once the first 50 are in that is it, they sit down and discuss matters of society and whatever it is that affects the nation. Then, after discussion, they probably can change that and it becomes a civic responsibility and then…it might be for two weeks, three weeks, one month, and then off you go, like a political jury.* (Dissatisfied Democrat)

This is interesting partly because the notion of 'political jury' service is in fact remarkably close in conception to the understanding of democracy first practiced in Ancient Athens,

and sometimes revived by contemporary political theorists (Goodwin 2005). More significantly for us, however, it reveals the strain of thought in the popular mind which regards the professional politician as somehow alien from the mass of the citizenry, an 'other' whose influence needs to be checked by the presence of unelected non-professionals in the legislature. It was perhaps inevitable that even if this instinct was shared by others, the proposal itself was seen as too radical by some, and drew criticism for undermining the desired element of expertise that a second or third chamber should have:

> *...but the point of the second chamber is to talk over a Bill and see if it can be implemented and whether it would be effective...I think the second chamber should be filled with experts who know the subject matter.*(Dissatisfied Democrat)

This exchange generated an unresolved debate about the relative merits of expertise and 'the common man', which is in itself, of course, a perennial problem to which proponents of elite democracy such as Weber and Schumpeter believed they had provided satisfactory answers.

Inevitably, opinion was not monolithic within any of our groups, and some of those we recruited as 'Dissatisfied Democrats' articulated views more in keeping with what we would expect of Stealth Democrats. The best example was provided by a woman who made the following speech:

To be honest...as long as World War III is not happening, and I am comfortable, I really don't care, that is the bottom line, I don't care; as long as I get to do whatever I want, work wherever I want, apply where I want and there are no restrictions in terms of males and females and retirement age, and all of that, I don't care what's happening. I care about my own life and being comfortable, and I don't vote for my local MP because I don't even know who they are ...(Dissatisfied Democrat)

Thus, she bluntly declares her lack of interest in politics, she doubts her political efficacy, and states her desire to focus on her private domain so long as she is left alone by the state. She concedes that there could be more of a case for involvement in politics that impacts directly on her locality, but national politics is far too remote. There is of course a naivete here, for in stipulating that she is content so long as there are no gender restrictions on her life chances, she fails to think about the fact that it is an achievement of politics that there are far fewer such constraints on women in the UK today; she is equally unaware that further political action might be required to address any remaining impediments to the life chances of women (for instance, over equal pay or maternity rights). Not surprisingly, perhaps, she was immediately criticised for these reasons by other members of the group.

A more measured counterpoint to the critical tenor of much of the Dissatisfied Democrats' discussion was provided by one man who, presumably unwittingly, articulated a defence of party democracy in Downsian terms, by highlighting the value of party ideology as a heuristic shortcut by which voters can assess rivals for elective office (though this contribution elicited no direct reaction from other group members).

I think, as D. mentioned before, people are too cynical about politicians. I mean, yes, we don't understand issues and we never know if they are doing right for you and often it turns out that it doesn't benefit you, but I think in democracy you, with so many complex issues, you have to trust that the people in charge have some sort of checks and balances and information that they get is so complex and it is sifted even for them that you can't take an active role in all of this and you just have to vote on one party based on a very, very, vague ideology that they represent and just hope that they sort of keep the course...I think that is all you can do with such a large machine.(Dissatisfied Democrat)

In summary, while it would be an exaggeration to claim that those whom we recruited as Dissatisfied Democrats were of a single mind, the qualitative feedback from the group discussions reveals that they were notably more strident than their Stealth Democrat

counterparts in criticising the political existing system of representative democracy in the UK, and that they were generally more open to the use of referendums in national politics, and to participatory democratic innovations. To this extent, we can conclude that our qualitative findings are broadly consistent with H1. What of the questionnaire data that our participants generated?

Questionnaire data analysis

What does the quantitative analysis tell us? Recall the first of our major hypotheses (H1):*There are two quite different types of citizen who are 'disaffected' with politics, but in distinctive ways: 'dissatisfied democrats' (likely to be middle class, educated, active and articulate devotees of a vision of highly engaged citizens) and 'stealth democrats' (likely to be of lower socio-economic status, less educated, more inactive, with little interest in politics, who are absorbed largely by private concerns, and only consent to participate in order to keep untrustworthy elites in check)*. The qualitative evidence generally tends to justify H1. If H1 is correct we would also expect evidence of consistent differentiation between the two groups of subjects in respect of a range of indicators relating to political interest, trust, efficacy and engagement. The details of the pre-questionnaire findings on these matters are reported in Appendix 1.

The key findings are generally very clear: overall, H1 holds. First, dissatisfied democrats are more likely to claim to be very interested in politics in general, and in national and international affairs. Interestingly, however, when the realm of politics comes 'closer to home' – that is, when it is a matter of local issues – the stealth democrats express greater interest. When it comes to social and political trust, the stealth democrats are consistently more likely to claim to hold such feelings 'very strongly'; of particular interest to us is the clear finding that stealth democrats are more likely to express trust in government and politicians generally than their dissatisfied democrat counterparts. This is an important finding that is consistent both with H1 and with our sense of the qualitative evidence from the focus group discussions. The people that we expected *a priori* to fit the profile

of stealth democrats are more accepting and trustful of the existing system of representative politics. Also consistent with this is the further finding that stealth democrats are more likely to accept that 'in general, those who are currently involved in decision-making for the country as a whole, such as politicians, parties, civil servants and interest groups, are best-placed to make these decisions'. Dissatisfied democrats, on the other hand, clearly have a much more strongly developed sense of political efficacy, being confident that they can understand public affairs and that they can become involved in politics and have an impact if they should choose to do so (see items 2f-j in Appendix 1). The evidence in Question 5 is also fully in line with the implications of H1 in so far as those we defined as likely to display stealth democratic attitudes seem to be much less likely to demand an active say in running local services than those we expected to be dissatisfied democrats, and are far more likely to be content to allow the authorities to get on with doing the job on their own. Unsurprisingly, our stealth democrats are generally more inclined to hold that 'the experts who provide and manage public services know best – they should find out what we think and get on with it' than to feel that 'the general public should be much more actively involved in shaping public services, through for example people deciding on priorities' (see Q.3). The only note of discordancy from the pre-group questionnaires comes from responses to Q.4; unexpectedly, stealth democrats appear a little more likely to claim that they can influence decisions locally and nationally. Overall, then, this evidence (which only be regarded as indicative given the small sample size)[7] is overwhelmingly consistent with the view that there are two quite distinctive types of citizens; both may be critical of the representative system of democratic politics, but they come at the issue in quite different ways.

Decision-making exercises

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[7]

The smallness of the sample means that most of the crosstabulations on which these results are based do not show statistically significant relationships between variables. The few that do are noted on Appendix one with an asterisk.

The decision-making exercises were designed to offer a test of H2. To recap, this proposes that deliberative participation would at best only be effective in respect of the Dissatisfied Democrats, but would be counter-productive with respect to the Stealth Democrats. Again, we draw on both qualitative and quantitative data from our discussion groups. If the hypothesis is broadly correct, we would expect to find that Stealth Democrats involved in the deliberative decision-making exercises: (a) are less likely to enjoy, value and accept the outcome of the exercise than Dissatisfied Democrats; (b) are less likely to score positively on the post-group scores of efficacy, trust and engagement than either their counterparts in the parliamentary decision-making exercises or Dissatisfied Democrats in the deliberative exercises; (c) are more likely to show negative shifts on these measures from pre- to post-group questionnaires than their counterparts in the parliamentary decision-making exercises or Dissatisfied Democrats in the deliberative exercises.

Parliamentary style decision making

Participants in these groups were asked to vote for a party as they would in a general election, and then to vote on two policy issues (tuition fees and capital punishment) in a referendum-style format. In this way, they were obliged to make decisions with little or no active participation in prior deliberation, although they were provided with briefing material on each of the issues in advance of the 'referendum' votes – much as would be the case in real-life representative democracies.

On the whole participants enjoyed the opportunity to vote on single issues. There was little clear evidence of obvious distinction between Stealth Democrats and Dissatisfied Democrats in this respect, although some observed that they might only vote in referendums if they cared about the issue at stake. A few participants – mainly those recruited as Dissatisfied Democrats - were frustrated that the options[8] on which they were

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         The ballot paper wordings were:

required to take vote – in particular on tuition fees – were not comprehensive enough to take account of their views.

For the most part, participants' votes on tuition fees and capital punishment did not match up with the view of the party they voted for, although they did not seem to be surprised by this, nor necessarily overly concerned. Indeed there was general acceptance that a party could not reflect a person's view on every single issue.

"You would have to have a million different parties so you could find one that covered all the bases" Recruited as 'Dissatisfied Democrat'

The ensuing discussion revealed that such disparities would only be likely to impact on voter choice when an individual felt extremely strongly about a certain issue. Giving participants the chance to vote on single issues, as they would in a referendum, could be regarded as an institutional means by which voters would have the opportunity of resolving the party-issue disparity, of course, although as we have already noted participants were alive to various potential problems with direct democracy, including of a lack of impartial information, danger of media manipulation, the power of special interests, and so on.

"Facts, more facts. A lot of the time we are making decisions on things that we are not very well informed about." Recruited as 'Dissatisfied Democrat'

"I think it shows us though that we don't have enough information to make those decisions." Recruited as 'Stealth Democrat'

Q1. To pay for universities should tuition fees be increased or should the money come from somewhere else (e.g. higher taxes)? 1. Increase tuition fees 2. Somewhere else (e.g. higher taxes)

Q2. Do you support or oppose the reintroduction of the death penalty for certain crimes? 1. Support 2. Oppose

Deliberative style decision making

Those that took part in the deliberative-style decision-making processes were initially asked to individually state their opinions on the chosen subject (tuition fees) and then to discuss freely as a group some of the ideas that were generated by this. The group debate that ensued did have some rules; in particular, if someone was questioning what another participant had said they would were required to re-state that person's initial point of view in their own words. Most participants struggled with this 'mirroring' part of the exercise, although it did not hinder them from expressing their views or taking part in the exercise more generally. The plenary groups were divided into smaller breakout discussion groups, before the latter reported back to former and a final vote was taken by the plenary body.

When the group was split into smaller groups of three or four, it was observed that participants often deferred to more dominant members of the group, or to someone that they perceived to be better qualified. The dominant person would then either project their views onto the group or encourage further debate within it. The smaller groups were asked to form a consensus and report back to the plenary group. However, it became apparent that a consensus was often not achieved, as several suggestions emerged rather than a single coherent view. In fairness, this should not necessarily be seen as an implicit criticism of the deliberative approach since the time available for this exercise was limited in the admittedly somewhat artificial circumstances of our experiment. Even so, it was evident that for the most part participants were unwilling to compromise on their views. For example, when small group rapporteurs relayed their suggestions to the plenary group, other group members would sometimes also mention their ideas, and these

were not necessarily consistent with those expressed by the rapporteur. This was common among both Stealth Democrats and Dissatisfied Democrats.

Qualitative feedback suggested that most participants – both Stealth Democrats and Dissatisfied Democrats – enjoyed the deliberative process and felt it was fair and democratic. In particular they liked the fact that everyone was given a say and the entire group got to air and hear a multitude of ideas and be forced to consider suggestions that they had not heard or thought of themselves. It was not generally apparent that Stealth Democrats were more overwhelmed or uncomfortable than Dissatisfied Democrats during the deliberative exercise, contrary to expectations.

"It's the democratic way…giving everyone a chance. A fair system" Recruited as 'Stealth Democrat'

There was very little disagreement among the Stealth Democrat groups and the mixed groups on the solution to the tuition fees debate. This meant that when it came to voting for a decision it was easy as the groups said more or less the same thing. However, among Dissatisfied Democrats there was some frustration with the process as participants wanted to vote for specific ideas that emanated from each sub-group, but were not happy with being told they could not cherry-pick in this way. This suggests a refusal to accept that some kind of aggregation of policy ideas and demands becomes inevitable at some stage in almost any kind of policy-making process. Thus, we ended up in the unexpected situation that Dissatisfied Democrats were actually the most likely to be critical of deliberative decision-making because of the difficulty they experienced in reaching a consensus. Again, we should emphasize the time-constraint factor in all this, but it is a striking outcome which suggests that the most politically self-confident and efficacious citizens may also be the most egotistical and disinclined to compromise.

(It was) rubbish, because you didn't get the best out of it. If you had enabled me to choose that further…there were things from each group that I would have voted for. Recruited as 'Dissatisfied Democrat'

I don't think it was representative of me really. Recruited as 'Dissatisfied Democrat'

Interestingly, there was disagreement about the value of achieving a 'middle of the road' decision. While some participants felt that consensus was positive because it meant that everyone had listened to each other and come up with a compromise that most could agree on, others - including at least one Stealth Democrat - felt that it represented a 'watered down' position which was not necessarily the best technical solution to a problem. Indeed, they compared it to the political landscape where parties fight for the middle ground leaving very little to choose between them.

I think one of the problems with the process from a political view is that they're all fighting over the middle ground. Middle ground is a spoilt spot. So there's nothing really radical there…' Recruited as Stealth Democrat

Post-group questionnaire data analysis

A clearer view of the impact of the decision-making exercises on participants' attitudes is provided by analysing the post-group questionnaires. We must reiterate that the sample size is so small that there is no expectation of achieving statistically significant findings here; rather, we are drawing on the questionnaires in order to help clarify or confirm impressions derived from the qualitative feedback and to provide a basis on which to pursue further research in the future. So, we are looking initially for evidence that Stealth Democrats involved in the deliberative decision-making exercises: (a) are less likely to enjoy, value and accept the outcome of the exercise than Dissatisfied Democrats; and (b) are less likely to score positively on the post-group scores of efficacy, trust and engagement than either their counterparts in the parliamentary decision-making exercises

or Dissatisfied Democrats in the deliberative exercises. We can start by referring to Tables 1a-h in Appendix 2. Table 1a here shows no difference between Stealth and Dissatisfied Democrats in terms of enjoyment of the deliberative decision-making exercise, although the former were a little more likely to prefer the parliamentary decision-making procedure than the latter. Stealth Democrats doing the parliamentary exercise were not more likely to enjoy it than those taking part in the deliberative exercise. This runs counter to the hypothesis, although the quantitative differences are hardly great. In general, these tables reveal few notable differences between Stealth and Dissatisfied Democrats. The former prove to be a little more likely to regard themselves as well qualified to take part in the deliberative decision-making exercise than Dissatisfied Democrats, but significantly *less* sure of themselves with respect to the parliamentary exercise; Stealth Democrats doing the parliamentary exercise were a little more likely to feel that they had a pretty good understanding of the issue, but in the deliberative group, it was the Dissatisfied Democrats who were slightly more confident of their understanding; the same pattern holds in respect of a declared willingness to participate in similar exercises in the future – but the reverse pattern holds when it comes to being satisfied with the outcome of the decision-making processes (an interesting finding, for it tends to refute the notion that Stealth Democrats would be particularly uncomfortable with the demands of deliberative decision-making); slightly counter-intuitively, Stealth Democrats were a little more likely to claim that they were well-informed on an issue regardless of type of decision-making process, but (more expectedly) Dissatisfied Democrats were more likely to claim that they made a contribution to the discussion. In short, there are really no clear patterns here that suggest Stealth Democrats are generally less likely to feel positive than Dissatisfied Democrats on any of the relevant measures if they are involved in deliberative rather than parliamentary decision-making. Moreover, if we compare Stealth Democrats involved in parliamentary decision-making to Stealth Democrats involved in deliberative decision-making, we find that the latter are more likely to score positively than the former on each indicator bar the final one (willingness to take part in future exercises). This runs completely counter to the hypothesis that Stealth Democrats will be happier if allowed to engage in decision-making with less discussion and deliberation, and opens the door to

the alternative view that involvement in deliberation might actually enhance participants' sense of efficacy and enjoyment.

So far, then, we have little or no evidence that confirms H2, but we have a further set of indicators consider. Is there any evidence that any of our Stealth Democrats might have shifted their feelings with regard to efficacy, trust or engagement in a negative direction as a result of taking part in the decision-making exercises? We hypothesized that this might be the case, especially perhaps for Stealth Democrats taking part in deliberative decision-making exercises. We can check for this by comparing those questions which participants were asked both before and after the exercises. The cross-tabulations that trace the pattern of changing attitudes from before to after the groups are too large and complex to report in this paper[9], so we have simplified matters by focusing only on how many participants changed position on each of the indicators in question, and in which direction, the details of which are recorded in Appendix 2, Tables 2a-k.

In brief, there is little to confirm H2 in these tables. Tables 2a and 2b are similar in as much as there is no clear pattern among either Stealth or Dissatisfied Democrats, whichever style of decision-making they have been involved in: approximately as many moved closer towards favouring greater involvement in political life as moved further away from it. There is certainly nothing here to suggest that Stealth Democrats involved in deliberative decision-making might have reacted against the experience by becoming less willing to participate in politics nationally or locally. Similar conclusions can be drawn from the evidence of Tables 2c, 2d, 2e, 2g, and 2k. Admittedly, in Table 2c we observe that there was a shift towards the view that political elites should be left to govern within each of our groups – but if anything, this was *least* pronounced among Stealth Democrats in the deliberative group. Table 2d shows that 3 out of the 4 groups

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[9]

Full details available from authors on request.

experienced a growth in the conviction that they were well-qualified to take part in politics, shared fully by our Stealth Democrats, irrespective of type of decision-making they had been through. Table 2e reveals an overall growth in participants' conviction that they had a good understanding of the important issues facing the country, although there was no clear trend at all for Stealth Democrats in the deliberative group. Table 2g suggests that the group discussions tended to enhance participants' sense that they were politically well-informed (except for the Dissatisfied Democrats undertaking deliberative decision-making, strangely); in any case, both sets of Stealth Democrats felt this. And Table 2k reveals that Stealth Democrats as a whole shifted closer to the view that 'the general public should be much more actively involved in shaping public services', especially those who had taken part in the deliberative discussion. All of this evidence runs counter to the general expectation that would Stealth Democrats react negatively to the experience of deliberating.

Some of the tables do appear to show findings more in keeping with H2, it should be said. For instance, there was a slight net decrease in the number of Stealth Democrats from the deliberative exercise group who felt that they 'could do as good a job in public office as most other people' (Table 2f); similarly, there was a net decrease in the number of Stealth Democrats that felt able to 'influence decisions affecting the country as a whole' (Table 2i), but given that this is true of both those who participated in deliberation and those who undertook parliamentary decision-making processes, it cannot quite be said to run true to H2. Overall, however, it is not possible to look at the quantitative evidence from the post-group questionnaires and discern any patterns that confirm H2. Given the small sample size there is of course a risk that any changes we do find from pre- to post-group questionnaires are little more than random noise, but in any event, we cannot claim that the data point clearly to the fact that Stealth Democrats react more negatively to involvement in political deliberation than better educated and more politically efficacious Dissatisfied Democrats do.

Tables 3a-h provide a final test of the questionnaire data. An implication of H2 is that Stealth Democrats who find themselves in mixed groups with dissatisfied democrats are more likely to react negatively to the experience than their counterparts who are in groups comprising only of Stealth Democrats. This follows the logic of the argument that the experience of finding themselves with better educated, more confidently assertive and articulate individuals will only serve to exacerbate any sense of inadequacy they might feel, thus marginalising them and further undermining any sense of political efficacy or desire for participation they feel. We are particularly interested in two types of comparison here: first, between Stealth Democrats in mixed groups and those in 'Stealth-only' groups; and second, between Stealth Democrats experiencing deliberative decision-making and those experiencing parliamentary decision-making processes, on the grounds that they more they are obliged to take part in deliberation, the more they will react negatively against it.

The evidence of Tables 3a-k is emphatic: it strongly contradicts these expectations drawn from H2. Only in Tables 3b and 3h can we discern patterns that remotely accord with such expectations, and even then only with respect to the mixed versus stealth-only comparison; in all other cases, Stealth Democrats in mixed groups actually appear *more* rather than less likely to express greater efficacy or desire for participation after the groups discussions. And in no cases do Stealth Democrats undertaking deliberative exercises appear less efficacious or inclined to participation than their counterparts involved in parliamentary decision-making. Overall, then, the answer from our analysis is clear: H2 simply does not hold on the basis of any of the evidence available form this research project.

Summary and conclusions

This paper reports the results of a research project that employs experimental design to assess two hypotheses which are derived from the existing literature on popular alienation

from politics and the potential for deliberative democracy to offer a solution. The first hypothesis is that there are two quite different types of citizen who are 'disaffected' with or 'disconnected from' politics, but in distinctive ways: 'Dissatisfied Democrats' and 'Stealth Democrats'. The second hypothesis is that deliberative-style participation would at best only be effective in respect of the former of these groups (the Dissatisfied Democrats), but would be counter-productive with respect to the latter (Stealth Democrats). While the former may chafe at the participatory limitations of traditional forms of representative democracy such as party and electoral politics, and have the confidence that they could thrive in the context of greater institutional opportunities for participation, the 'Stealth Democrats' are actually more vulnerable to political marginalization, for they are less likely to thrive through or seek out direct and active engagement. The research design makes use of both qualitative and quantitative data based on a small sample of British citizens. Both offer broad confirmation of the first hypothesis: we can indeed distinguish two rather different type of critical citizens: measures of political interest, efficacy and trust generally reveal a notable distinction between those whom we had *a priori* designated as Dissatisfied and Stealth Democrats. Neither qualitative nor quantitative evidence, however, suggests grounds for accepting the second hypothesis. There is no obvious sign that those we defined as Stealth Democrats derived any less enjoyment from the deliberative exercise than their Dissatisfied Democrat counterparts, nor that their sense of political efficacy or self-confidence suffered for the experience. It does not make any difference if we try to isolate those Stealth Democrats from mixed stealth/dissatisfied groups, or those involved in deliberative rather than parliamentary decision-making: those we designated Stealth Democrats do not appear to have been turned off from political participation by their experience in these focus group exercises.

Why might this be the case? In brief, there are a number of possible explanations. The first is quite simply that the hypothesis that those we regard as Stealth Democrats – relatively low in socio-economic status, and not highly educated – will not feel comfortable being obliged to take part in detailed political deliberations about issues in which they might have little interest or of which they might have little knowledge is

simply wrong. While we are certainly open to this possibility, however, we would suggest that it is too soon to reach such a definitive conclusion yet. An alternative possibility is that there are shortcomings in our research design. For one thing, even though we are convinced that our groups provide invaluable insights, it is undeniable that there are real limitations in working with such a small sample. These limitations become most apparent when attempting to test the hypotheses with quantitative data. This is particularly problematic with respect to H2, where the numbers in the cells of our tables are really too small to offer significant tests. A rather different kind of problem might lie with the design of the decision-making exercises. Were the procedures in the so-called 'deliberative' and 'parliamentary' groups sufficiently distinct from one another to provide a valid test of the hypothesis? An even more fundamental problem might affect the process by which we recruited participants, specifically, our putative Stealth Democrats. By their very nature, these are supposed to be people who lack any interest in politics or inclination to become involved in it; that being the case, they might also be the sort of people who are disinclined to take part in focus group research on politics! We hope that we have got around this problem by offer financial inducements to take part, but we cannot be sure that this worked. If there is a problem of this nature, then it is likely to bias our findings by underestimating the presence of Stealth democratic attitudes among electors, and may go some way to explaining the rejection of H2. These are issues which require further reflection before more systematic and rigorous testing of the hypotheses we have explored in this paper can be undertaken.

Appendix 1: Pre-Decision-Making Exercise Questionnaire Results

Q1. How interested, if at all, would you say you are in …? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY IN EACH ROW	Very interested N	Fairly interested N	Not very interested N	Not at all interested N	Don't know N
a) …Politics (.11)					
All	14	40	6	2	0
Dissatisfied Democrats	10 (32.3%)	17 (54.8%)	4 (12.9%)	0	0
Stealth Democrats	4 (12.9%)	23 (74.2%)	2 (6.5%)	2 (6.5%)	0
b) …Local Issues (.51)					
All	21	29	9	0	1
Dissatisfied Democrats	9 (29.0%)	17 (54.8%)	5 (16.1%)	0	0
Stealth Democrats	12 (41.4%)	12 (41.4%)	4 (13.8%)	0	1 (3.4%)
c) …National Issues (.30)					
All	18	35	5	0	1
Dissatisfied Democrats	11 (36.7%)	18 (60.0%)	1 (3.3%)	0	0
Stealth Democrats	7 (24.1%)	17 (58.6%)	4 (13.8%)	0	1 (3.4%)
d) ….International Issues (.61)					
All	20	31	7	1	0
Dissatisfied Democrats	12 (38.7%)	16 (51.6%)	3 (9.7%)	0	0
Stealth Democrats	8 (28.6%)	15 (53.6%)	4 (14.3%)	1 (3.6%)	0

Q2. Can you tell us to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements:
PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY IN EACH ROW

	Strongly agree N	Tend to agree N	Neither agree nor disagree N	Tend to disagree N	Strongly disagree N	Don't know N
a) I think most people can be trusted (p=.10)						
All	*5*	*23*	*19*	*11*	*3*	*0*
Dissatisfied Democrats	0	14 (46.7%)	8 (26.7%)	7 (23.3%)	1 (3.3%)	0
Stealth Democrats	5(16.1%)	9 (29.0%)	11(35.5%)	4 (12.9%)	2 (6.5%)	0
b) I tend to believe what my friends tell me (p=.04)*						
All	*7*	*31*	*12*	*6*	*4*	*0*
Dissatisfied Democrats	0	18 (60%)	7 (23.3%)	2 (6.7%)	3 (10.0%)	0
Stealth Democrats	7 (23.3%)	13 (43.3%)	5 (16.7%)	4 (13.3%)	1 (3.3%)	0
c) I trust the government to act in the best interests of the country (p=.24)						
All	*5*	*16*	*21*	*12*	*7*	*0*
Dissatisfied Democrats	0	8 (26.7%)	11 (36.7%)	7 (23.3%)	4 (13.3%)	0
Stealth Democrats	5 (16.1%)	8 (25.8%)	10 (32.3%)	5 (16.1%)	3 (9.7%)	0
d) In general, I tend to trust politicians (p=.43)						
All	*1*	*6*	*12*	*22*	*20*	*0*
Dissatisfied Democrats	0	2 (6.7%)	5 (16.7%)	14 (46.7%)	9 (30%)	0
Stealth Democrats	1 (3.2%)	4 (12.9%)	7 (22.6%)	8 (25.8%)	11(35.5%)	0
e) In general, those who are currently involved in decision-making for the country as a whole, such as politicians, parties, civil servants and interest groups, are best-placed to make these decisions (p=.38)						
All	*6*	*19*	*17*	*12*	*5*	*1*
Dissatisfied Democrats	1 (9.1%)	10 (24.2%)	8 (27.3%)	8 (27.3%)	2 (6.1%)	1(6.1%)
Stealth Democrats	5 (14.3%)	9 (28.6%)	9 (28.6%)	4 (14.3%)	3 (10.7%)	0 (5%)
f) When people like me get involved in politics, they really can change the way that the country is run (p=.54)						
All	*8*	*19*	*15*	*12*	*5*	*3*
Dissatisfied Democrats	5 (16.1%)	10 (32.3%)	5(16.1%)	8 (25.8%)	2 (6.5%)	1(3.2%)
Stealth Democrats	3 (9.7%)	9 (29%)	10 (32.3%)	4 (12.9%)	3 (9.7%)	2(6.5%)
g) I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics (p=.05)*						
All	*5*	*16*	*15*	*15*	*7*	*4*
Dissatisfied Democrats	5 (16.1%)	11(35.5%)	4 (12.9%)	6 (19.4%)	3 (9.7%)	2(6.6%)
Stealth Democrats	0	5 (16.1%)	11 (35.5%)	9 (29%)	4 (12.9%)	2 (6.5%)
h) I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country (p=.90)						
All	*9*	*24*	*20*	*3*	*4*	*1*
Dissatisfied Democrats	5 (16.7%)	12 (40%)	9 (30%)	2 (6.7%)	2 (6.7%)	0
Stealth Democrats	4 (12.9%)	12(38.7%)	11 (35.5%)	1(3.2%)	2 (6.5%)	1(3.2%)
i) I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most other people (p=.07)*						
All	*10*	*19*	*15*	*13*	*2*	*3*
Dissatisfied Democrats	8 (25%)	7 (22.6%)	7 (22.6%)	7 (22.6%)	2 (6.5%)	0
Stealth Democrats	2 (6.5%)	12 (38.7%)	8 (25.8%)	6 (19.4%)	0	3 (9.7%)
j) I think that I am as well-informed about politics and government as most people (p=.50)						
All	*4*	*31*	*14*	*10*	*2*	*1*
Dissatisfied Democrats	3 (9.7%)	18(58.1%)	5 (16.1%)	4(12.9%)	1 (3.2%)	0

Q3. Please read the following pair of statements (A and B) and decide which comes closest to your own opinion. PLEASE TICK ONE BOX ONLY IN EACH ROW							
A - **The experts who provide and manage public services know best – they should find out what we think and get on with it** *All*	1 – agree much more with A N *11*	2 N *12*	3 N *7*	4 N *9*	5 – agree much more with B N *21*	Don't know N *1*	B - **The general public should be much more actively involved in shaping public services, through for example people deciding on priorities**	Don't know N *0*
Dissatisfied Democrats	2(6.7%)	8(26.7%)	3 (10%)	5 (16.7%)	11 (36.7%)	1 (3.3%)	Ave=3.6	0
Stealth Democrats	9 (29%)	4 (12.9%)	4 (12.9%)	4 (12.9%)	10 (32.3%)	0	Ave=3.1	0

P=.19

Q4. Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting a) your local area and b) the country as a whole? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR PART A AND ONE FOR PART B						
	Strongly agree N	Tend to agree N	Neither agree nor disagree N	Tend to disagree N	Strongly disagree N	Don't know N
a) **your local area (p=.56)** *All*	*12*	*30*	*7*	*10*	*2*	*0*
Dissatisfied Democrats	5 (16.7%)	16 (53.3%)	3 (10%)	6 (20%)	0	0
Stealth Democrats	7 (22.6%)	14 (45.2%)	4 (12.9%)	4 (12.9%)	2 (6.5%)	0
b) **the country as a whole (p=.35)** *All*	*1*	*10*	*13*	*21*	*6*	*2*
Dissatisfied Democrats	0	6 (20%)	8 (26.7%)	12 (40%)	4 (13.3%)	0
Stealth Democrats	1 (3.6%)	9 (32.1%)	7 (25.0%)	7 (25.5%)	2 (7.1%)	2(7.1%)

	I'm not interested in knowing what public authorities are doing to improve the area, as long as they do their job N	I would like to know what public authorities are doing to improve the area, but I don't want to be involved beyond that N	I would like to have more of a say in what public authorities are doing to improve the area N	I would like to become actively involved in helping public authorities in what they are doing to improve the area N	I am already actively involved in helping public authorities to improve the area N	Don't know N
Q5. Which of these statements comes closest to your own attitude towards a) how local public authorities (such as your local council) work to improve this area? b) how national government works to improve the country? PLEASE TICK ONE BOX FOR PART A AND ONE FOR PART B						
a) **local public authorities (p=.09)*** *All*	*7*	*15*	*32*	*6*	*1*	*0*
Dissatisfied Democrats	1 (3.3%)	5 (16.7%)	19 (63.3%)	4 (13.3%)	1 (3.3%)	0
Stealth Democrats	6 (19.4%)	10 (32.3%)	13 (41.9%)	2 (6.5%)	0	0
b) **national government (p=.06)*** *All*	*8*	*18*	*29*	*5*	*0*	*0*
Dissatisfied Democrats	0	7 (24.1%)	18 (62.1%)	4 (13.8%)	0	0
Stealth Democrats	8 (25.8%)	11 (35.5%)	11 (35.5%)	1 (3.2%)	0	0

Appendix 2: Post-Decision-Making Exercise Questionnaire Results

Q1a

DECISION_MAKING		POST Q1a Taking part in the decision-making exercise was an enjoyable experience			Total
		AGREE	Neither agree nor disagree	DISAGREE	
DELIBERATIVE	DISSATISFIED	16 (100%)			16 (100%)
	STEALTH	15 (100%)			15 (100%)
		31 (100%)			31 (100%)
PARLIAMENTARY	DISSATISFIED	12 (75%)	2 (12.5%)	2 (12.5%)	16 (100%)
	STEALTH	13 (92.9%)	1 (7.1%)	0 (0%)	14 (100%)
P=.33	Total	25 (83.3%	3 (10%)	2 (6.7%)	30 (100%)

Q1b

DECISION_MAKING		POST Q1b I considered myself well-qualified to participate in the decision-making exercise			Total
		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	
DELIBERATIVE	DISSATISFIED	11 (68.8%)	5 (31.3%)	0 (0%)	16 (100%)
	STEALTH	12 (80%)	2 (13.3%)	1 (6.7%)	15 (100%)
P=.32		23 (74.2%)	7 (22.6%)	1 (3.2%)	31 (100%)
PARLIAMENTARY	DISSATISFIED	11 (68.8%)	1 (6.3%)	4 (25%)	16 (100%)
	STEALTH	7 (50%)	6 (42.9%)	1 (7.1%)	14 (100%)
P=.05	Total	18 (60%)	7 (23.3%)	5 (16.7%)	30 (100%)

Q1c

DECISION_MAKING		POST Q1c I felt that I had a pretty good understanding of the important issues			Total
		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	
DELIBERATIVE	DISSATISFIED	15 (93.8%)	0 (0%)	1 (6.3%)	16 (100%)
	STEALTH	12 (85.7%)	1 (7.1%)	1 (7.1%)	14 (100%)
P=.55	Total	27 (90%)	1 (3.3%)	2 (6.7%)	30 (100%)
PARLIAMENTARY	DISSATISFIED	10 (62.5%)	2 (12.5%)	4 (25%)	16 (10%)
	STEALTH	12 (85.7%)	2 (14.3%)	0 (0%)	14 (100%)
P=.13	Total	22 (73.3%)	4 (13.3%)	4 (13.3%)	30 (100%)

Q1d

DECISION_MAKING		POST Q1c I felt that I made as good a contribution as most other people in the group			Total
		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	
DELIBERATIVE	DISSATISFIED	14 (93.3%)	1 (6.7%)	0 (0%)	15 (93.8%)
	STEALTH	12 (85.7%)	1 (7.1%)	1 (7.1%)	14 (100.0%)
P=.57	Total	26 (89.7%)	2 (6.9%)	1 (3.4)%	29 (100.0%)
PARLIAMENTARY	DISSATISFIED	13 (81.3%)	2 (12.5%)	1(6.3%)	16 (100.0%)
	STEALTH	11 (78.6%)	1 (7.1%)	2 (14.3%)	14 (100.0%)
P=.70	Total	24 (80%)	3 (10%)	3 (10%)	30 (100.0%)

Q1e

DECISION_MAKING		POST Q1e I think that I was well-informed about the issues in the decision-making exercise			Total
		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	
DELIBERATIVE	DISSATISFIED	13 (81.3%)	2 (12.5%	1 (6.3%)	16 (100%)
	STEALTH	15 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	15 (100%)
P=.21	Total`	28 (90.3%)	2 (6.5%)	1 (3.2%)	31 (100%)
PARLIAMENTARY	DISSATISFIED	8 (50%)	5 (31.3%)	3 (18.8%)	16 (100%)
	STEALTH	11 (78.6%)	2 (14.3%)	1 (7.1%)	14 (100%)
P=.27	Total	19 (63.3%)	7 (23.3%)	4 (13.3%)	30 (100%)

Q1f

DECISION_MAKING		POST Q1f Taking part in the decision-making exercise made me think about other points of view on the issue that I hadn't considered before			Total
		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	
DELIBERATIVE	DISSATISFIED	15 (93.8%)	1 (6.3%)		16 (100%)
	STEALTH	14 (93.3%)	1 (6.7%)		15 (100%)
P=.96	Total	29 (93.5%)	2 (6.5%)		31 (100%)
PARLIAMENTARY	DISSATISFIED	14 (87.5%)	2 (12.5%)	0 (0%)	16 (100%)
	STEALTH	13 (92.9%)	0 (0%)	1 (7.1%)	14 (100%)
P=.23	Total	27 (90.0%)	2 (6.7%)	1 (3.3%)	30 (100.0%)

Q1g

DECISION_MAKING		POST Q1g I am satisfied with the decision(s) we came to as a group during the decision-making exercise			Total
		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	
DELIBERATIVE	DISSATISFIED	14 (87.5%)	1 (6.3%)	1 (6.3%)	16 (100%)
	STEALTH	14 (93.3%)	1 (6.7%)	0 (0%)	15 (100%)
P=.62	Total	28 (90.3%)	2 (6.5%)	1 (2.2%)	31 (100%)
PARLIAMENTARY	DISSATISFIED	7 (43.8%)	7 (43.8%)	2 (12.5%)	16 (100%)
	STEALTH	10 (71.4%)	3 (21.4%)	1 (7.1%)	14 (100%)
P=.31	Total	17 (56.7%)	10 (33.3%)	3 (10.0%)	30 (100.0%)

Q1h

DECISION_MAKING		POST Q1h I would be willing to get involved in similar decision-making exercises in the future			Total
		Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	
DELIBERATIVE	DISSATISFIED	16 (100%)	0 (0%)		16
	STEALTH	14 (93.3%)	1 (6.7%)		15
P=.30	Total	30 (96.8%)	1 (3.2%)		31 (100%)
PARLIAMENTARY	DISSATISFIED	12 (80%)	1 (6.7%)	2 (13.3%)	15 (100%)
	STEALTH	14 (100%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	14 (100%)
P=.21	Total	26 (89.7%)	1 (3.4%)	2 (6.9%)	29 (100.0%)

Table 2a: Which of these statements comes closest to your own attitude towards how *national government* works to improve the country?
- I'm not interested in knowing what public authorities are doing to improve the area, as long as they do their job
- I would like to know what public authorities are doing to improve the area, but I don't want to be involved beyond that
- I would like to have more of a say in what public authorities are doing to improve the area
- I would like to become actively involved in helping public authorities in what they are doing to improve the area
- I am already actively involved in helping public authorities to improve the area

		Number changing towards a more participative option	Number changing towards a less participative option	Number maintaining stable preference
Dissatisfied Democrats	Deliberative (p=.60)	4	3	6
	Parliamentary (p=.00)*	0	2	13
Stealth Democrats	Deliberative (p=.30)	4	4	6
	Parliamentary (p=.28)	3	3	8
	Totals	11	12	33

Note: Figures in parenthesis are chi square significance statistics for cross-tabulations between pre- and post-group attitudes; * denotes a significant relationship (thus indicating a stable set of preferences over the two sets of questionnaires).

Table 2b: Which of these statements comes closest to your own attitude towards how *local public authorities* work to improve the country?
- I'm not interested in knowing what public authorities are doing to improve the area, as long as they do their job
- I would like to know what public authorities are doing to improve the area, but I don't want to be involved beyond that
- I would like to have more of a say in what public authorities are doing to improve the area
- I would like to become actively involved in helping public authorities in what they are doing to improve the area
- I am already actively involved in helping public authorities to improve the area

		Number changing towards a more participative option	Number changing towards a less participative option	Number maintaining stable preference
Dissatisfied Democrats	Deliberative (p=.06)*	3	5	6
	Parliamentary (p=.04)*	6	4	6
Stealth Democrats	Deliberative (p=.05)*	3	3	10
	Parliamentary (p=.11)	2	4	8
	Totals	14	16	30

Table 2c: In general, those who are currently involved in decision-making for the country as a whole, such as politicians, parties, civil servants and interest groups, are best-placed to make these decisions

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Dissatisfied Democrats	Deliberative (p=.04)*	4	1	9
	Parliamentary (p=.27)	7	1	9
Stealth Democrats	Deliberative (p=.08)*	3	2	11
	Parliamentary (p=.58)	5	2	6
	Totals	19	6	35

Note: Responses to these questions have been combined in to three categories for ease of analysis: Agree (=strongly agree + tend to agree combined); neither agree nor disagree; disagree (strongly disagree + tend to disagree combined). This also applies for Tables 2c-2j.

Table 2d: I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Dissatisfied Democrats	Deliberative (p=.00)*	5	0	10
	Parliamentary (p=.03)*	1	3	12
Stealth Democrats	Deliberative (p=.93)	7	3	6
	Parliamentary (p=.51)	6	2	6
	Totals	19	8	34

Table 2e: I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Dissatisfied Democrats	Deliberative (p=.02)*	4	1	9
	Parliamentary (p=.01)*	2	2	10
Stealth Democrats	Deliberative (p=.48)	3	3	8
	Parliamentary (p=.08)*	3	1	9
	Totals	12	7	36

Table 2f: I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most other people.

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Dissatisfied Democrats	Deliberative (p=.07)*	4	2	9
	Parliamentary (p=.00)*	1	0	14
Stealth Democrats	Deliberative (p=.24)	2	4	9
	Parliamentary (p=.59)	4	3	7
	Totals	11	9	39

Table 2g: I think that I am as well-informed about politics and government as most people

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Dissatisfied Democrats	Deliberative (p=.15)	0	5	9
	Parliamentary (p=.00)*	5	1	9
Stealth Democrats	Deliberative (p=.60)	7	4	5
	Parliamentary (p=.51)	6	2	6
	Totals	18	12	29

Table 2h: Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Dissatisfied Democrats	Deliberative (p=.29)	2	1	11
	Parliamentary (p=.85)	6	2	8
Stealth Democrats	Deliberative (p=.00)*	1	2	13
	Parliamentary (p=.40)	4	3	7
	Totals	13	9	39

Table 2i: Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting the country as a whole?

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Dissatisfied Democrats	Deliberative (p=.25)	3	2	6
	Parliamentary (p=.04)*	5	0	11
Stealth Democrats	Deliberative (p=.68)	3	4	4
	Parliamentary (p=.10)*	1	3	8
	Totals	12	9	29

Table 2j: When people like me get involved in politics, they really can change the way that the country is run

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Dissatisfied Democrats	Deliberative (p=.66)	4	4	7
	Parliamentary (p=.00)*	3	0	13
Stealth Democrats	Deliberative (p=.76)	3	5	8
	Parliamentary (p=.51)	4	4	6
	Totals	14	13	34

Table 2k:
1- The experts who provide and manage public services know best – they should find out what we think and get on with it
5 - The general public should be much more actively involved in shaping public services, through for example people deciding on priorities

		Number shifting down scale to a position closer to 1	Number shifting up scale to a position closer to 5	Number maintaining stable position on scale
Dissatisfied Democrats	Deliberative (p=.08)*	5	5	14
	Parliamentary (p=.33)	7	3	6
Stealth Democrats	Deliberative (p=.19)	3	5	7
	Parliamentary (p=.34)	3	4	7
	Totals	18	17	34

Table 3a: Which of these statements comes closest to your own attitude towards how *national government* works to improve the country?
- I'm not interested in knowing what public authorities are doing to improve the area, as long as they do their job
- I would like to know what public authorities are doing to improve the area, but I don't want to be involved beyond that
- I would like to have more of a say in what public authorities are doing to improve the area
- I would like to become actively involved in helping public authorities in what they are doing to improve the area
- I am already actively involved in helping public authorities to improve the area

		Number changing towards a more participative option	Number changing towards a less participative option	Number maintaining stable preference
Stealth Democrats: MIXED GROUPS	Deliberative	3	2	0
	Parliamentary	2	0	2
	Total for mixed groups	5	2	2
Stealth Democrats: STEALTH ONLY	Deliberative	1	2	6
	Parliamentary	2	3	5
	Total for Stealth-only groups	3	10	11

Table 3b: Which of these statements comes closest to your own attitude towards how *local public authorities* work to improve the country?
- I'm not interested in knowing what public authorities are doing to improve the area, as long as they do their job
- I would like to know what public authorities are doing to improve the area, but I don't want to be involved beyond that
- I would like to have more of a say in what public authorities are doing to improve the area
- I would like to become actively involved in helping public authorities in what they are doing to improve the area
- I am already actively involved in helping public authorities to improve the area

		Number changing towards a more participative option	Number changing towards a less participative option	Number maintaining stable preference
Stealth Democrats: MIXED GROUPS	Deliberative	2	3	1
	Parliamentary	0	1	3
	Total for mixed groups	2	4	4
Stealth Democrats: STEALTH ONLY	Deliberative **	1	0	9
	Parliamentary	2	3	5
	Total for Stealth-only groups	3	3	14

Note: * denotes a significant relationship (thus indicating a stable set of preferences over the two sets of questionnaires) at 10 level. ** = significant at 5% level.

Table 3c: In general, those who are currently involved in decision-making for the country as a whole, such as politicians, parties, civil servants and interest groups, are best-placed to make these decisions

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Stealth Democrats: MIXED GROUPS	Deliberative	1	1	4
	Parliamentary	0	2	1
	Total for mixed groups	1	3	5
Stealth Democrats: STEALTH ONLY	Deliberative	1	2	7
	Parliamentary	3	2	5
	Total for Stealth-only groups	4	4	12

Note: Responses to these questions have been combined in to three categories for ease of analysis: Agree (=strongly agree + tend to agree combined); neither agree nor disagree; disagree (strongly disagree + tend to disagree combined). This also applies for Tables 3c-3j.

Table 3d: I consider myself well-qualified to participate in politics

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Stealth Democrats: MIXED GROUPS	Deliberative	3	0	3
	Parliamentary	3	0	1
	Total for mixed groups	6	0	4
Stealth Democrats: STEALTH ONLY	Deliberative	4	3	3
	Parliamentary	3	2	5
	Total for Stealth-only groups	7	5	8

Table 3e: I feel that I have a pretty good understanding of the important political issues facing our country

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Stealth Democrats: MIXED GROUPS	Deliberative	2	1	2
	Parliamentary	1	2	0
	Total for mixed groups	3	3	2
Stealth Democrats: STEALTH ONLY	Deliberative	1	2	6
	Parliamentary	1	2	7
	Total for Stealth-only groups	2	4	13

Table 3f: I feel that I could do as good a job in public office as most other people.

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Stealth Democrats: MIXED GROUPS	Deliberative	2	1	2
	Parliamentary	2	0	2
	Total for mixed groups	4	1	4
Stealth Democrats: STEALTH ONLY	Deliberative	0	3	7
	Parliamentary	2	3	5
	Total for Stealth-only groups	2	6	12

Table 3g: I think that I am as well-informed about politics and government as most people

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Stealth Democrats: MIXED GROUPS	Deliberative	4	0	2
	Parliamentary	2	0	2
	Total for mixed groups	6	0	4
Stealth Democrats: STEALTH ONLY	Deliberative	3	4	3
	Parliamentary	4	2	4
	Total for Stealth-only groups	7	6	7

Table 3h: Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Stealth Democrats: MIXED GROUPS	Deliberative	1	0	5
	Parliamentary	0	2	2
	Total for mixed groups	1	2	7
Stealth Democrats: STEALTH ONLY	Deliberative	0	2	8
	Parliamentary	4	1	5
	Total for Stealth-only groups	4	3	13

Table 3i: Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting the country as a whole?

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Stealth Democrats: MIXED GROUPS	Deliberative	2	2	2
	Parliamentary	0	1	2
	Total for mixed groups	2	3	4
Stealth Democrats: STEALTH ONLY	Deliberative	1	3	3
	Parliamentary	2	2	6
	Total for Stealth-only groups	3	5	9

Table 3j: When people like me get involved in politics, they really can change the way that the country is run

		Number changing towards greater agreement	Number changing towards less agreement	Number maintaining stable preference
Stealth Democrats: MIXED GROUPS	Deliberative	3	0	3
	Parliamentary	1	0	3
	Total for mixed groups	4	0	6
Stealth Democrats: STEALTH ONLY	Deliberative	0	5	5
	Parliamentary	3	4	3
	Total for Stealth-only groups	3	9	8

Table 3k:
1- The experts who provide and manage public services know best – they should find out what we think and get on with it
5 - The general public should be much more actively involved in shaping public services, through for example people deciding on priorities

		Number shifting down scale to a position closer to 1	Number shifting up scale to a position closer to 5	Number maintaining stable position on scale
Stealth Democrats: MIXED GROUPS	Deliberative	0	2	4
	Parliamentary *	0	0	4
	Total for mixed groups	0	2	8
Stealth Democrats: STEALTH ONLY	Deliberative	2	1	6
	Parliamentary	2	3	5
	Total for Stealth-only groups	4	4	11

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