

Disagreement and Deliberation: Evidence from Two Deliberative Mini-Publics

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Abstract

The paper is based on two experiments in citizen deliberation. We ask how group level disagreement influences those who take part in a deliberative event. In both experiments, participants discussed in small groups as well as filled in surveys before and after taking part in the deliberative discussion. Both experiments were population-based, i.e. participants were recruited randomly. The topic of the first deliberation experiment was nuclear power, whereas the second dealt with immigration. The degree of disagreement was varied in the following way: In the first experiment on nuclear power all participants discussed in groups with mixed opinions. In the second experiment, participants were first categorized according to their baseline views on immigration, and then randomly allocated into either mixed groups or like-minded groups. In both experiments, a trained facilitator moderated discussions in each small group. Our dependent variables consist of participants' self-reported experiences about taking part in the deliberative event. We look at the participants' experience of being heard in the small group discussion, and their experiences of mutual respect. Based on earlier research, we anticipate that participation in a small group discussion with a moderate level of disagreement gives rise to the most positive experiences. Our results, however, do not support this assumption.

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1. Introduction

In the everyday life, people can usually choose the partners with whom they discuss politics, and quite often people like to discuss with those who agree with them (Mutz 2002). Not necessarily because they like agreement as such but because they like to spend time with people who are similar to them. In the society at large, talking only with those who agree and are also otherwise similar with oneself is likely to be enhanced by two tendencies. A growing part of public discussion takes place in the social media where communication only among like-minded people is typical. In addition, residential balkanization tends to decrease communication across social divisions, and thereby exposure to conflicting political views. Discussion therefore often takes place in echo chambers, i.e. like-minded enclaves, rather than within a heterogeneous public sphere.

What consequences does this type of like-minded discussion have? This is the central question addressed in the paper. We study a specific type of discussion and pay attention to its consequences at the individual level. We ask how the consequences of a deliberative discussion are influenced by the degree of disagreement among those who deliberate. Deliberative discussion is defined as structured discussion guided by a moderator and discussion rules. We test whether participants consider participation as a pleasant experience and whether they would be ready to participate anew in the future.

We focus on data from two experiments designed to test the consequences of deliberation. The experiments are rather similar in characteristics but they concern different topics, nuclear power and immigration. The level of disagreement is studied at a small group level where discussions took place in both experiments.

2. Previous research and hypothesis

The normative idea of deliberative democracy requires participation or representation of all those who are affected by a collective decision, which usually means heterogeneous groups of affected people (Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 128). According to the theory of deliberative democracy, the legitimacy of democratic decision-making requires that all affected interests and perspectives are fairly considered in the deliberative process. In addition, exposure to cross-cutting perspectives has certain instrumental or, more precisely, epistemic benefits. Diversity in deliberating groups encourages people to correct their own biases of reasoning and enhance

their capacity to consider a variety of perspectives (Mercier and Landemore 2012). There is also some empirical evidence showing that deliberation among people with conflicting opinions enhances deliberators' capacity of perspective-taking and levels' of political knowledge (e.g. Andersen and Hansen 2007).

In contrast, negative aspects have been associated with deliberation that happens only among a homogenous group. Karpowitz et al. (2009) put forward the main arguments related to the problems of like-minded deliberation. They start with the argument based on the theory of deliberative democracy that homogeneity undermines democratic legitimacy because it leads to the failure to consider the common good and all affected interests in the deliberative process. According to Karpowitz et al. a homogenous groups is also likely to limit the diversity of different perspectives in deliberation, which undermines the epistemic benefits of deliberation based on correction of biases and mutual learning. For example, Sunstein (2002) claims that discussion in a homogenous group will lead to the polarization of opinions, a limited information pool and even amplification of cognitive errors. Group polarization, in particular, refers to a process where a like-minded group becomes more extreme because the arguments supporting the dominant position are rather reinforced than challenged in the course of discussion.

However, as Karpowitz et al. (2009) point out, deliberation in a homogenous group can benefit certain disempowered groups (see also Abdullah et al. 2016, Himmelroos et al. 2017). For these types of groups, it might be easier to articulate their specific needs or interests in like-minded groups than in more heterogeneous groups where minority interests are not necessarily heard. Moreover, polarization does not always present a dysfunction of deliberation but can be based on a genuine deliberative process (Lindell et al. 2017). Deliberation in a like-minded group can also be an efficient way for a disempowered group to get its voice heard in a public debate, and in this way enclave deliberation can promote more inclusive decision-making. This is possible in particular if enclave deliberation is connected to deliberation within more inclusive forums of deliberation involving more heterogeneous groups. In line with this, Mutz (2002) shows that discussion among like-minded people increases readiness for political participation whereas cross-cutting communication may undermine it. However, the evidence on the influence of opinion diversity on political mobilization is mixed, and suggests that the relationship can be conditional on various contextual factors (Kwak et al. 2005, McClurg 2006, Pattie et al. 2009). There is also some evidence that diversity or disagreement may affect social

and political trust⁴. In North-American studies ethnic diversity has been observed to undermine general social trust (Putnam 2007), whereas in Europe this does not seem to be the case (Hooghe et al. 2008). However, ethnic diversity is not the same as opinion diversity. There are fewer studies on the connection between disagreement or opinion diversity and trust. Mutz and Reeves (2005) found that disagreement as such did not influence political trust but when it was accompanied with incivility trust was decreased. Stolle et al.'s (2008) findings suggests that the influence of diversity on trust is not necessarily always negative but can be conditional on social ties. Stromer-Galley and Muhlberger (2009) find that agreement matters for the evaluation of experience, which in turn matters for the willingness to participate again. However, disagreement does not seem to have negative effects either.

Experimental evidence gives support to the view that deliberation in enclaves does not necessarily lead to the negative consequences pointed out by Sunstein. The heterogeneity or homogeneity of a group of people can be defined in several ways. It can reflect their demographic background, identity, opinions and/or attitudes. Karpowitz et al. (2009) show that taking part in a consensus conference increased knowledge over the discussed topic, self-efficacy and interpersonal trust, and did not lead to a polarization of opinions among certain marginalized groups. In their study, enclaves were based on certain background variables, such as income or ethnic background. Grönlund et al. (2015) in turn manipulated the group composition of a deliberative discussion according to pre deliberation opinions. A part of the participants deliberated in like-minded groups and another part in mixed groups with heterogeneous opinions. The main finding of the experiment was that opinions did not polarize even in the like-minded groups and that knowledge over the deliberated issue increased in both types of groups.

What is common to both studies described above is that discussion was not any type of communication but happened under the structured conditions of deliberation. Karpowitz et al. (2009) report the results of taking part in a consensus conference, one of the commonly used forms to organized deliberative discussions. Further, in the experiment by Grönlund et al. (2015) experiment all discussions took place in facilitated small groups with rules of discussion read aloud before the discussion started, and an information package delivered to the participants. Indeed, Grönlund et al. suggest that it is these types of deliberative norms that can

⁴ Dear members of the WPSA panel. This discussion relates to other dependent variables, i.e. trust and efficacy. We have calculated these but there are almost no significant results. We are still thinking how to proceed empirically but the theoretical text is left here, pending review.

alleviate group polarization tendencies. A subsequent experiment (Strandberg et al. 2017) gives support to this interpretation. In the experiment, like-minded small groups with facilitators and discussion norms were compared to groups without facilitators and completely free discussion. The results show that polarization did happen in the latter groups but not in the first.

While there is some evidence on the influence of discussion on heterogeneous versus homogenous environment on people's opinions the topic is understudied. The above mentioned studies focus on opinion and knowledge changes. In this paper, we pay attention to the consequences of group level disagreement on participants' levels of social and political trust, efficacy, as well as experiences of taking part, their own sense of increased knowledge and readiness to take part in political action as well as their views about the need for deliberative forums in political decision-making.

There seems to be evidence that a certain level of disagreement actually helps to achieve the epistemic benefits of deliberation. At the same time, others have found that people find it unpleasant to discuss in environments with high levels of disagreement (Theiss-Morse and Hibbing 2005). A recent study by Esterling et al. (2015) takes a middle-ground approach and suggests that a medium level of disagreement is ideal for good deliberation. Esterling et al. (2015, 530) also argue that the deliberative ideal in fact requires a medium level of disagreement: "with no disagreement, reasons need not be offered nor considered, and with too much disagreement reasons fall on deaf ears." Esterling et al. test whether a medium level of disagreement is good for the satisfaction with deliberative discussion. They study survey responses from *California Speaks* deliberations held on the health care reform in 2007. In the event, participants engaged in structured deliberation with trained moderators. Certain rules of discussion stating the characteristics of ideal deliberation, such as listening respectfully to others and not dominating the discussion, were followed in the process. Esterling et al. look at the influence of table level disagreement, i.e. disagreement in the small-n group, on participants' satisfaction with the deliberative process. Their main observation is that participants indeed had highest levels of satisfaction with the process in those tables where disagreement was moderate, i.e. neither high nor low.

We test Esterling et al.'s suggestion albeit with a slightly different design. We look at evidence from two experiments designed to engage subjects in deliberative discussion. The discussion took place in small groups and deliberation was structured with moderators and rules of discussion. Our study adds to Esterling et al.'s research by two features. First, we are able to get data from discussions where the level of disagreement within small groups was manipulated

to form like-minded and mixed groups. Further, we are able to look at two different topics of deliberation and study whether the type of topic might influence subjects' experiences of the process.

A study of the consequences of the level of disagreement in a deliberative setting is important for several reasons. First, while the deliberative ideal emphasizes a diversity of opinions, it might sometimes be justified to organize more narrow based deliberation for certain minority groups or other groups that tend to be excluded from political discussions. Further, it is important to know what kinds of consequences like-minded deliberation could have. If discussion is not perceived as a pleasant experience it is unlikely that people would be willing to take part again, and the type of experience can also partly contribute to their political mobilization in general. Based on Esterling et al, we formulate a research hypothesis.

H: People who deliberate in groups with medium level disagreement have the most positive experiences of deliberation.

3. Experimental procedures

We focus on two separate experiments that share certain characteristics but are also different in some respects. Both experiments were designed to examine the consequences of taking part in a controlled deliberative discussion. The first deliberation concerned nuclear power and energy policies, and the second immigration. In both experiments, participants were recruited through a random sample of the adult population in a region in Finland. In both experiments, pre- and post-deliberation surveys measure attitudes concerning the topic of deliberation as well as certain "side effects" of deliberation such as political and general social trust, political efficacy, political knowledge, and readiness for political action, as well as experiences of having taken part in the deliberative event. Standard SES variables were measured in the beginning. The questions pertaining to the experiences of taking part in the event form the dependent variables of the present paper.

The experiments were designed to test the influence of a certain manipulation in the conditions of deliberation. In the first experiment, the decision-making method was varied so that half of the groups made a decision with a secret ballot, whereas the other half wrote a common statement on whether to build more nuclear power. The common statement groups were informed that their aim was to formulate a statement, which all group members could accept.

However, it was also emphasized that the groups should not aim at a consensus at whatever cost. If no consensus was reached, the statement should simply indicate the number of individuals for or against a certain view. In the second experiment on immigration, the discussion group composition was manipulated so that part of the small groups were mixed in the terms of participants' opinions, whereas the other part were like-minded. We created the enclaves with the help of a pre-test survey, measuring the respondents' opinions on immigration. Respondents with negative attitudes to immigration formed a *con* enclave, and respondents with a positive view on immigration formed a *pro* enclave. Within these enclaves, subjects were randomly assigned either into mixed or like-minded groups for deliberation, or into a control group.

In both experiments, a trained facilitator guided the discussions and implemented discussion rules derived from deliberative norms. A written description of the rules of the discussion was handed out to the participants, and the facilitator also read aloud these rules at the beginning of the discussion. The rules support the norms of reasoned justifications, reflection, sincerity and respect, whereas the facilitation is supposed to enhance reciprocity, inclusion and equality of discussion. Facilitation and rules of discussion are supposed to help to reach the ideals of deliberative discussion. Table 1 presents the main characteristics of the two experiments.

Table 1 about here

What is relevant from the point of this paper is that the experiments vary in terms of the small group composition. In particular, we varied the level of disagreement of the groups. The ideal of deliberative democracy holds that participants should be exposed to a variety of opinions. In the first experiment on nuclear power, all participants discussed in groups with mixed opinions, and in the second experiment on immigration, the participants were first assigned into *pro* or *con* enclaves according to their immigration opinions. Thereafter, they were randomly assigned into like-minded or mixed small groups where the discussion took place. All discussion groups had a trained facilitator and written rules for discussion. However, in the like-minded groups participants were not exposed to a large variety of opinions because of the selective allocation of participants with similar opinions in these groups. The subjects were not informed about the manipulation of the group composition.

Table 1 shows that other factors, with the exception of the experimental treatments, were held constant in both experiments. There was only one additional difference between the experiments, the expert panel. In the experiment on nuclear power, an expert panel was present. It consisted of four persons, two men and two women, two MPs, a lobbyist for nuclear power companies and a representative for an environmental NGO. The participants heard and questioned the expert panel in a plenum after having read the information package but before going to their small groups for deliberation. In the experiment on immigration, the information package was presented in a plenum, but there was no expert panel. Otherwise the experiments followed comparable procedures with pre and post deliberation surveys, pre and post deliberation knowledge tests, small group discussions and a follow up survey. Table 2 represents the phases of each experiment.⁵

Table 2 about here

4. Results

In order to establish the level of disagreement at group level, we exploit a number of statements presented on Likert scales relating to the topic of each experiment. In the case of nuclear power, we use seven items, which load on the same factor in factor analysis. In the case of immigration, we use 14 items in a similar manner. Participants' opinions on the discussed topic, measured through the sum variable, form the basis for establishing how well participants' agree within each small group initially. Disagreement at group level is operationalized as the standard deviation of the arithmetic mean within each group.⁶ Table 3 displays the level of disagreement, i.e. standard deviation, in both experiments at group level. It also shows the group mean for each group on the classification variable, i.e. the sum variable for opinions on nuclear power (0-7) and immigration (0-14).

⁵ For a more detailed description of the experimental procedures, see Setälä et al. 2010 and Grönlund et al. 2015.

⁶ Another possibility would be to use relative standard deviation, or coefficient of variation (cv), which is a ratio of the standard deviation to the group mean ($cv = \sigma/\mu$). The relative standard deviation makes it possible to compare data from two different samples. At a later stage, a third experiment will be added and comparisons based on relative standard deviation will be carried out across compiled data.

Table 3 about here

In the current paper, we carry out comparisons within the experiments. This means that the categorization of disagreement is done separately for the experiment on nuclear power and the experiment on immigration. In the former, there were 12 groups. We have trichotomized these into three roughly equally big groups based on the level of standard deviation from each group's mean. Groups labeled as "high disagreement", have standard deviations from 2.09 to 3.00. In the groups with "medium disagreement", the standard deviations range from 1.87 to 2.05, and in the groups labeled as "low disagreement", the standard deviations vary between 1.47 and 1.84. In the immigration experiment, there were 26 groups. Groups with standard deviations from 3.06 to 4.35 have been classified as having "high disagreement", groups whose standard deviations vary between 1.36 and 2.77 as "medium disagreement" and groups with standard deviations from 0.51 to 1.28 as having "low disagreement". The number of groups varies between categories, but since the groups also vary somewhat in size, the thresholds have been chosen by taking into account both the number of persons within each category, and the difference in standard deviation in relation to the closest groups. This method has its weaknesses, since the thresholds with which categories are classified, are not clear-cut. It is, on the other hand not meaningful at this stage to merely look at possible linear associations, as our hypothesis is that participants give highest evaluations to groups with medium disagreement levels.

Having classified the independent variable, i.e. disagreement at group level, we move on to analyze the dependent variables, i.e. how participants evaluated the deliberative events. We make use of questions that were posed directly after deliberation, when participants still sat at tables in their rooms. Thus, the timing and setup of the measurement is identical in both experiments. The six questions we use are listed in table 4. The first five questions are directly linked to the experience the participants had of deliberation, including an evaluation of its epistemic benefits, whereas the sixth measures their support for citizen deliberation as part of the democratic system.

Table 4 about here

The questions posed were almost identical in both experiments and are therefore comparable. The first one is a direct question on whether the participants think taking part was a pleasant experience. The second asks whether they think their issue knowledge increased as a result of taking part in the event. This question taps into the evaluation of the epistemic benefits of the deliberation process. The third question relates to the participants' readiness to take part in civic activities after the deliberative event. The fourth statement measures the participants' willingness to take part in a similar event anew. The fifth measures the internal inclusion of the discussion, whether they found that they could easily put forward their views. Finally, the sixth statement is more general and asks if the participants find that deliberative forums should be organized as a part of the democratic decision-making process.

Before analyzing the influence of group level disagreement, we map the overall views the participants had on deliberation after each experiment (Figures 1 and 2). The participants liked the events very much but for some reason the "strongly agree" option was chosen more frequently in the experiment on nuclear power. For example, in the nuclear power experiment, 80 per cent of the participants agreed strongly with the statement "taking part in the deliberation was a pleasant experience". In the experiment on immigration, 53.6 per cent agreed strongly with this statement. The largest differences regarding how many participants strongly agreed with statements concern learning of the issue at hand, and support for deliberative forums in democratic decision-making. When it comes to self-assessment on learning, almost 60 per cent of the participants in the nuclear experiment strongly agreed with the statement, whereas less than a fourth of the participants did so in the immigration experiment.⁷ The same goes for the overall support for deliberative forums. While 54.8 per cent of the participants in the nuclear deliberation strongly agree with the statement claiming that deliberative forums should be used as a part of the democratic decision making process, the equivalent share among the participants of the immigration experiment is 16.7 %. One possible explanation for this difference might be in the setup of the experiments. The deliberations on nuclear power were preceded by an expert panel, whose members presented their views on nuclear power. In the immigration experiment, an information package on immigration was presented in a plenary session before small group deliberations started. No expert panel was heard in the immigration experiment.

⁷ It is interesting to notice that in the light of answers to a quiz testing issue knowledge, knowledge changes seem parallel in the two experiments: The mean share of correct answers changed from 49 to 66 percent in the nuclear power experiment (Setälä et al. 2010) and from 43 to 63 percent in the immigration experiment (Grönlund et al. 2015).

Figures 1 and 2 about here

On the other hand, taking a look at the shares of those who disagreed with the statements, a very similar pattern arises in both experiments. The statement, with which participants mostly disagreed, is the one claiming that their readiness to take part in civic activities would have increased because of deliberation. In both cases, about one fourth of the participants disagreed. It is noteworthy that, even though there is a difference in the strength of the support, around 90 % of the participants after both experiments find that political discussions for ordinary citizens should be organized in democratic decision-making. It is notable that this is a higher share than in Finnish national surveys where responders are not likely to have experiences of taking part in organized deliberative events. In the Finnish National Election Study of 2011, an identical statement was posed. Of the 1298 respondents, 72 per cent agreed, whereas 24 disagreed (Bengtsson & Christensen 2012, 261). The almost unanimous view where our participants cherish citizen deliberation shows that taking part in a deliberative event encourages views in favor of similar methods to be used more widely.

Moving on to comparing the views according to the level of disagreement in the group people deliberated in, we first show the shares of “strongly agree” between the three categories of disagreement at group level. In figure 3, the comparisons between groups with low, medium and high level disagreement are shown from the deliberative experiment on nuclear power.

Figure 3 about here

Visually, the participants in the deliberation on nuclear power seem to behave partly according to our expectations based on Esterling et 2015. In the groups with high disagreement levels, the participants tend to agree somewhat less than in the other groups. Especially the statements about increased energy issue knowledge thanks to deliberation and increased readiness to take part in civic activities have a lower share in the high disagreement groups. In addition, support for political discussions seems to be lower in the high disagreement groups.

In figure 4, the same visual mapping is done for the deliberative experiment on immigration. First of all, as already discussed above, we see that the shares of participants who agree strongly are overall lower than in the nuclear experiment. Moreover, we do not see patterns in favor of our expectations. In fact, it is the groups with high disagreement where e.g. the share of respondents show a greater willingness to participate in a similar event anew.

Figure 4 about here

In order to test whether the visual observations above, where only the shares of “strongly agree” were compared, bear any statistically significant differences, we calculate the arithmetic means for each item and compare them according to the level of disagreement and experiment in table 5. The coding of the Likert scales for each item varies from 1, “strongly disagree”, to 4 “strongly agree”. The comparisons are carried out with the help of analysis of variance, and for pairwise comparisons, we use post hoc Bonferroni tests.

Table 5 about here

Starting with the deliberation on nuclear power, we see that the overall satisfaction with the event and the group deliberation is reflected in the high arithmetic means. The first statement, i.e. that taking part was a pleasant experience, has a mean of 3.79 in the low disagreement category, 3.77 in the middle disagreement category and 3.75 in the high disagreement category. The lowest support was expressed for the third statement, having an increased readiness for civic participation after deliberation. In the low and middle disagreement groups, the mean is 2.99 and in the high disagreement groups even lower, 2.55. This difference is statistically significant. Another statistically significant difference exists between the high disagreement groups and the other groups concerns statement two, issue knowledge. Participants in the high disagreement groups found that their knowledge on energy issues increased somewhat less than in the two other groups. These two statistically significant differences support our hypothesis that participants do not like high disagreement in deliberation. There are no other statistically significant differences in relation to opinions regarding the deliberative event. When it comes to the deliberation on immigration, the latter three columns of the table, we see that the

arithmetic means for each statement do not vary between the three groups: the level of disagreement at group level does not have an impact on how participants evaluate deliberation. Thus, the visual differences in Figure 4 are not statistically significant.

5. Conclusions

In conclusion, our results are mainly not supportive of our hypothesis. Based on the findings by Esterling et al. (2015), we assumed that participants in groups with medium levels of initial disagreement would like deliberation the best. In our case, the only statistically significant differences concerned two items in the deliberation on nuclear power, and the difference could be found between high disagreement groups in relation to other groups. Participants with a high level of disagreement concerning energy policy found less often that their issue knowledge increased or that their readiness for political action increased. This might suggest that just as the literature on enclaves and deliberation is inconclusive on its effects, the empirical reality might also vary from deliberation to deliberation. Maybe other factors influencing participants' experiences are at play than just the average level of disagreement in the deliberating groups. Some possible explanations can be the topic of deliberation, the moderator's activity, and other group level factors. Nonetheless, especially based on the latter experiment, we can conclude that our results give support to the view that people do not feel extremely negatively about political disagreement (cf. Himmelroos et al. 2017). In general, participants in groups with high disagreement find deliberation under organized forms equally appealing as participants in groups with low disagreement. This goes also for the support of using deliberative mini-publics in democratic decision-making. People who have participated in deliberation seem to be equally supportive of deliberative forums, no matter how much agreement or disagreement the group has had that they deliberated in. However, it should be emphasized that our results are tentative and more analysis is needed to make conclusions that are more robust.

A possible weakness in our research design is the fact that we use a rough and experiment-related classification of group level disagreement. The operationalization of disagreement into three categories according to standard deviation might be behind findings where almost no significant differences could be found. In additional analyses, not yet shown in the paper, we have already added a third experiment, and tested additional dependent variables, such as internal and external efficacy, social and political trust. These show next to no significant differences. Thus, we plan to merge the three experiments and treat the group level

disagreement as a continuous variable and move into the direction of regression analysis as a next step.

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Table 1. Characteristics of the deliberation experiments

Theme	Year	Question	Treatments	Common features	n participants (n invited)	n small groups	Participants in each group	Outcome	Conclusion
Nuclear power	2006	Should Finland build a 6 th nuclear power plant?	Secret ballot and common statement.	Information package, expert panel, rules, facilitation	135 (2500)	12	10–13	Treatment not important to opinion change but the common statement treatment had more positive side-effects	Information and deliberation change opinions. Formulating a common statement produces positive side-effects
Immigration	2012	Should Finland have more immigration?	Like-minded and mixed groups	Information package, rules, facilitation	207 (12000)	26	6–9	Like-minded anti-immigrant groups did not become extreme	Deliberation seems to “launder” preferences. Deliberative norms alleviate opinion polarisation

Table 2. Phases of the experiments

	Nuclear power	Immigration
Pre deliberation survey	T1	T1 + T2
Deliberation day	November 18, 2006	March 31 – April 1, 2012
Knowledge quiz	T2	T3
Briefing	Yes	Yes
Expert panel	Yes	No
A short poll	T3	No
Small group discussions	3 hours	4 hours
Post deliberation survey	T4	T4
Follow up survey	T5	T5

Table 3. Group level disagreement, and group means, in both experiments

<i>Nuclear</i>				<i>Immigration</i>			
	St. Dev.	Mean	Group #		St. Dev.	Mean	Group #
high	3.00	3.66	6	high	4.35	7.02	5
	2.41	3.79	4		3.82	6.53	2
	2.10	3.48	10		3.55	6.66	3
	2.09	2.99	11		3.54	6.51	19
medium	2.05	3.86	1	3.51	7.70	16	
	1.96	2.65	12	3.35	7.45	18	
	1.87	2.80	9	3.07	8.17	15	
	1.87	2.03	5	3.06	6.82	17	
low	1.84	2.91	2	2.77	7.45	1	
	1.77	3.43	8	2.59	6.93	20	
	1.48	3.56	3	2.35	3.66	13	
	1.47	3.43	7	2.30	7.31	4	
				1.89	10.40	6	
				1.64	10.10	10	
				1.56	10.80	8	
				1.53	4.92	26	
				1.38	10.61	21	
				1.37	10.83	23	
			1.36	9.68	22		
			1.28	10.56	7		
			1.26	11.25	11		
			1.14	10.43	9		
			1.13	9.90	24		
			1.13	5.07	12		
			0.80	5.56	25		
			0.51	5.94	14		

Table 4. The dependent variables of the study; evaluations of the event and their impact

	Nuclear power	Immigration
1.	Taking part in the citizen deliberation was a pleasant experience.	Discussing in the group was a pleasant experience.
2.	My knowledge about energy issues increased during the discussion.	My knowledge about immigration increased during the discussion.
3.	My readiness to participate in political and civic activities increased during the discussion.	My readiness to participate in societal activities increased during the discussion.
4.	I would be happy to participate again in a similar event.	I would be happy to participate again in a similar discussion.
5.	It was easy for me to put forward my views in the discussion.	It was easy for me to put forward my views in the discussion.
6.	In political decision-making, methods similar to citizen deliberation should be used.	Political discussions for ordinary people should be arranged as support of representative democracy.

Table 5. Mean opinions according to group level disagreement in both experiments.

	Nuclear power			Immigration		
	Low disagr.	Medium disagr.	High disagr.	Low disagr.	Medium disagr.	High disagr.
Discussion a pleasant experience	3.79	3.77	3.75	3.55	3.54	3.41
Issue knowledge increased	3.60	3.57	3.18	3.08	3.08	3.02
Readiness to participate in societal activities increased	2.99	2.99	2.55	2.66	2.69	2.88
Would be happy to participate again	3.62	3.56	3.52	3.33	3.30	3.48
Easy to express opinions in discussion	3.66	3.75	3.55	3.36	3.42	3.45
Political discussions for ordinary people should be organized	3.46	3.48	3.75	3.04	3.07	3.08
N	49	44	42	72	71	64

Numbers in bold: statistically significant difference (below 0.05-level) according to ANOVA (Post Hoc Bonferroni)

Likert scales from 1 strongly disagree to 4 strongly agree ("Don't knows" coded as 2.5)

For exact wording of each statement, see table 4.

Figure 1. Overall assessments of deliberation, nuclear power

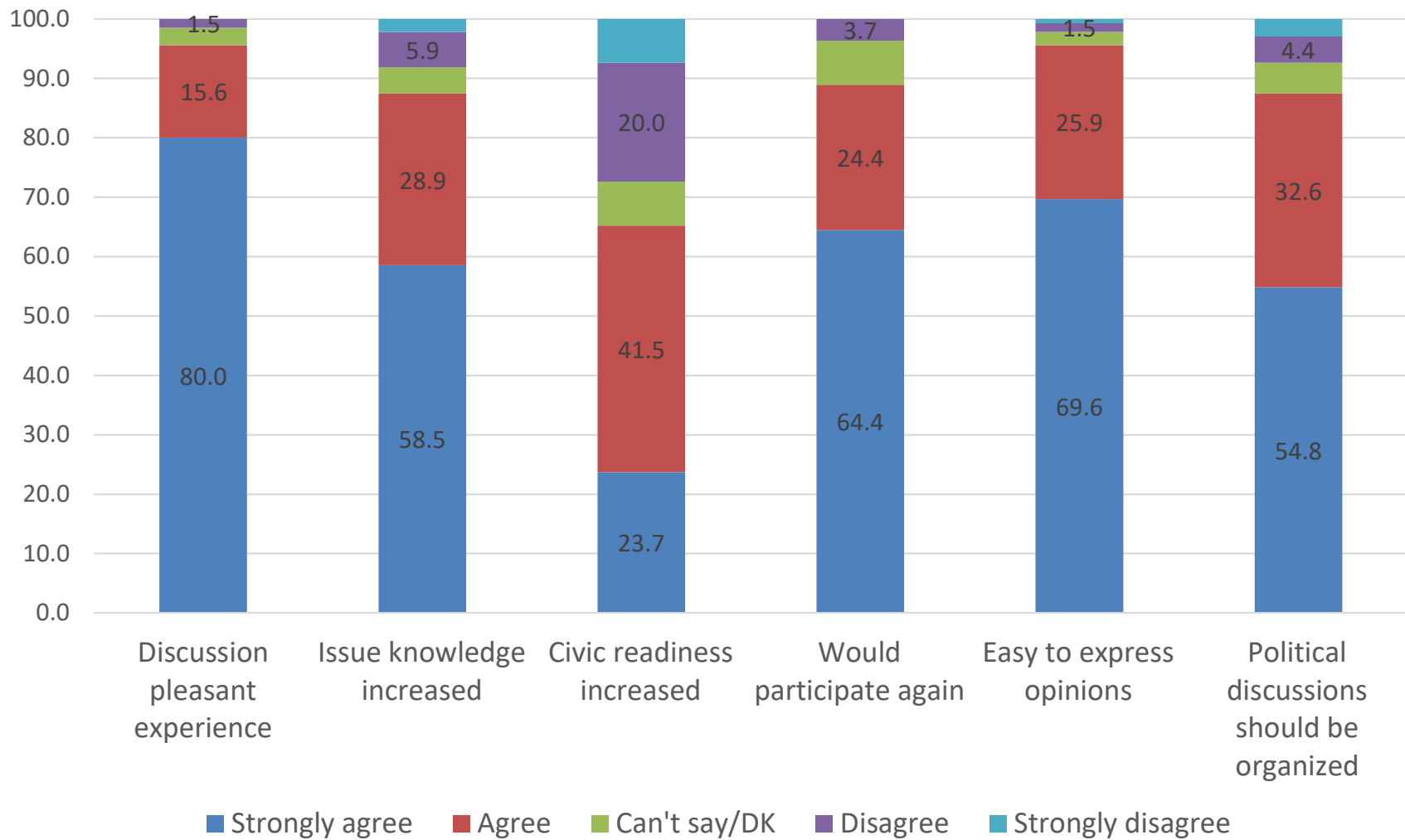


Figure 2. Overall assessments of deliberation, immigration

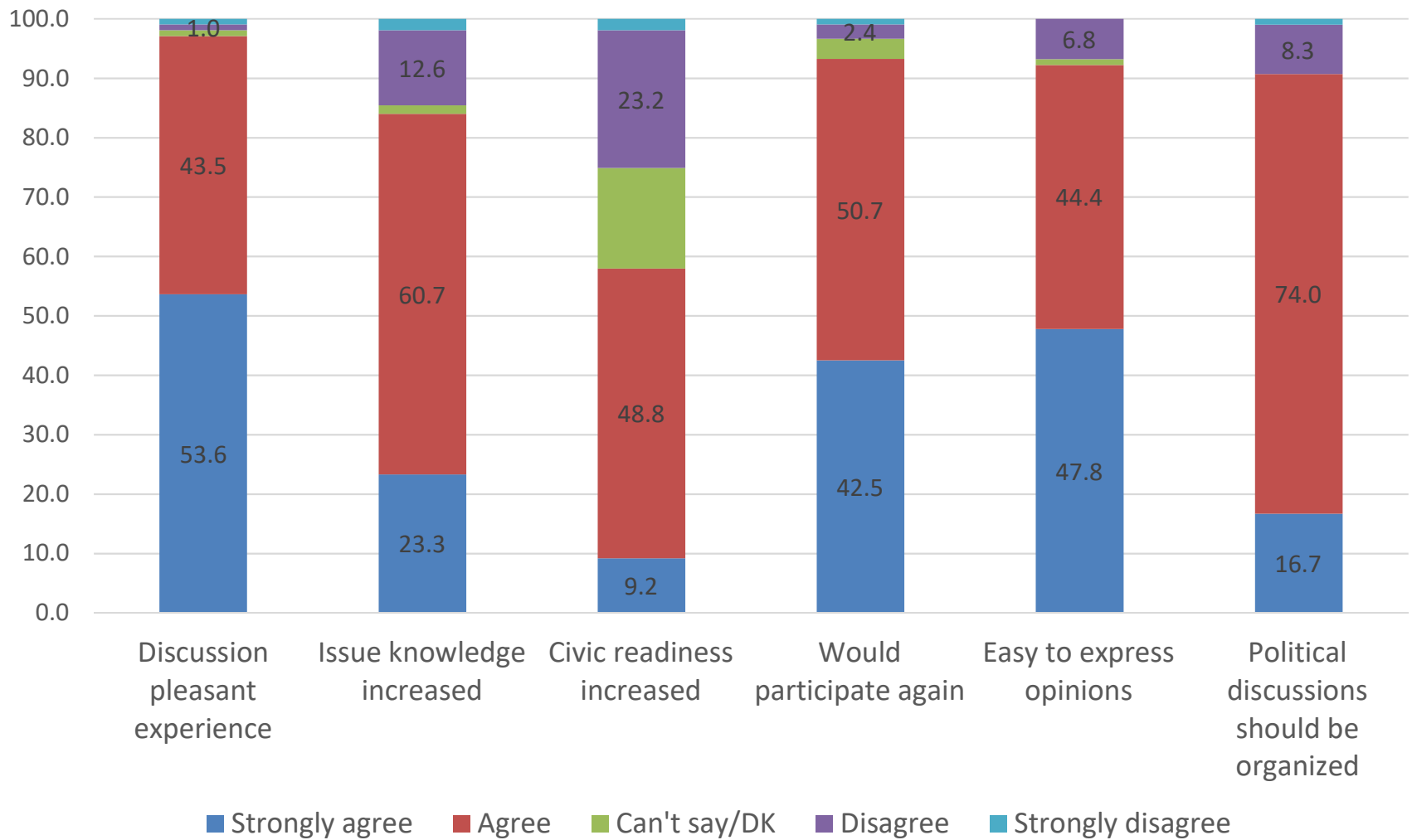


Figure 3. Opinions after deliberation according to group level disagreement.
Nuclear power. Shares of "strongly agree"-answers

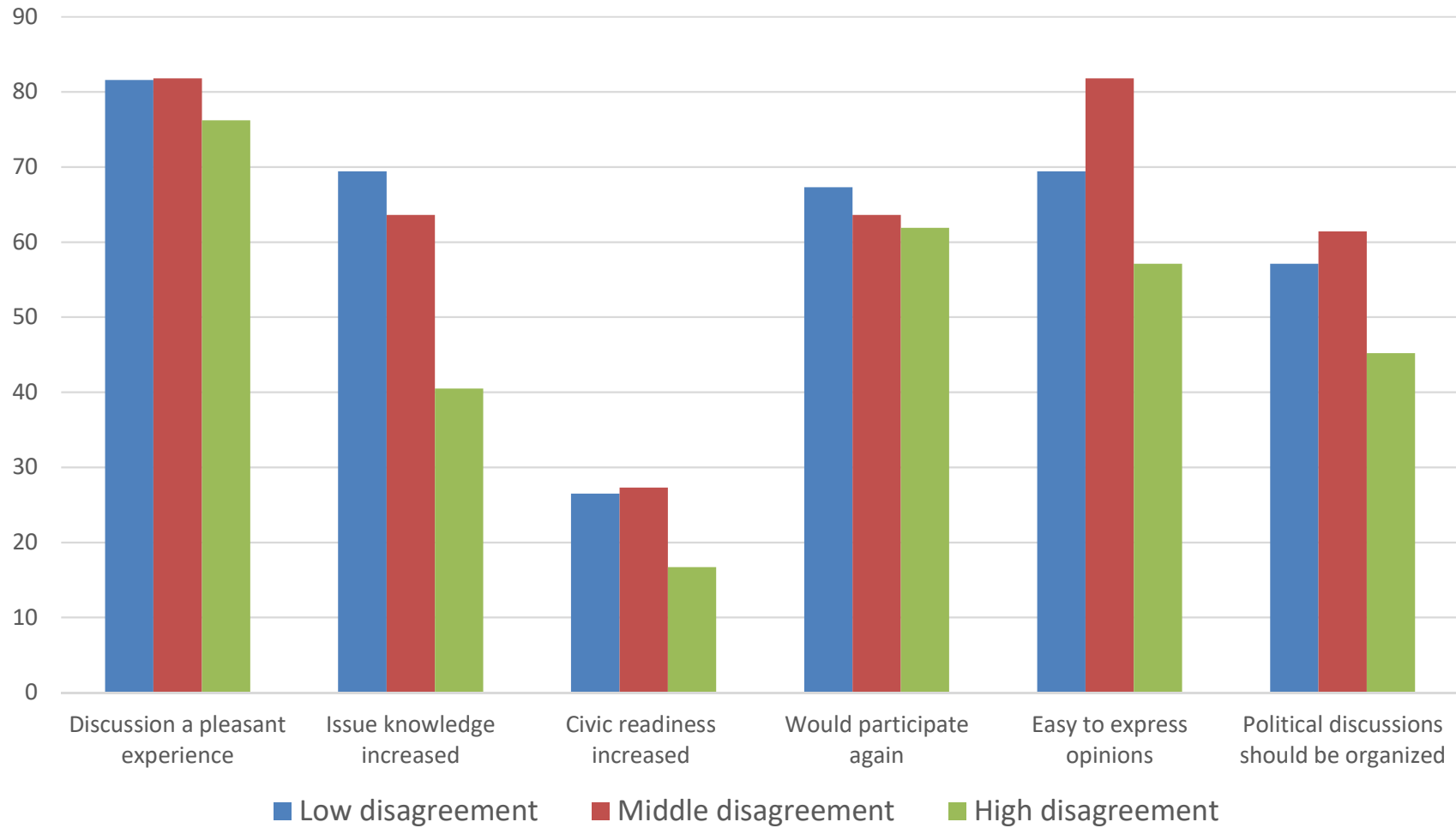


Figure 4. Opinions after deliberation according to group level disagreement.
Immigration. Shares of "strongly agree"-answers

