

Cultivating Deliberative Citizenship Orientations in Communication Studies

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On the backdrop of global concerns about democratic backsliding and increasing calls for academia to take upon the critical role of fostering democracy, deliberative pedagogy offers a framework for integrating deliberative processes in academic programs. This study contributes to the understanding of the role of deliberative pedagogy as a means of cultivating political orientations and behaviors deemed necessary for fostering deliberative citizenship engagement. A quasi-experiment was conducted using a sample comprised of 3 different groups of communication students who underwent the same course process during 3 separate years of implementation. Findings reveal that the experience promoted students' deliberative faith, political interest, and political talk and affected their perceptions about the desired type of government in ways that align with deliberative governance.

Keywords: deliberative democracy, deliberative faith, political efficacy, political talk, deliberative pedagogy

Democratic regimes throughout the world are challenged in many ways. Global trends of populism (Inglehart & Norris, 2016) and democratic backsliding (Bermeo, 2016) are on the rise alongside persistent flaws in existing representative systems of governance (Gastil & Wright, 2018). In response, political thinkers, historians, and practitioners have been offering ways to thwart undemocratic trends by enhancing democratic practices (Lepore, 2020) in varying ways, such as integrating public deliberation in governmental policy-making processes (Suteau, 2019), and developing creative initiatives designed to enhance the deliberative quality of policy-making processes (Fishkin, 2018; Gastil & Wright, 2018).

Yet creative initiatives to mitigate undemocratic trends must be supported by broader transformative processes that cultivate democratic mindsets and cultures. Strong democracies build on a citizenry that encompasses those underlying political orientations and skills that are needed for dealing with difference as a way of life. As Benjamin Barber explained:

it [strong democracy] envisions politics not as a way of life but as a way of living—namely, the way that human beings with variable but malleable nature, and with competing but overlapping interests can contrive to live together communally not only to their mutual advantage but also to the advantage of their mutuality. (Barber, 2003, p. 118)

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In this context, higher education leaders and theorists have argued for the critical role of academic institutions in fostering democracy, underscoring the importance of cultivating the skills, values, and aspirations that nurture democratic citizen engagement (Alger et al., 2019; Daniels, Shreve, & Spector, 2021; Englund, 2002). Specifically, scholars coming from the deliberative democracy tradition (Bächtiger, Dryzek, Mansbridge, & Warren, 2018; Gastil, Richards, & Knobloch, 2014; Nabatchi, Gastil, Weiksner, & Leighninger, 2012), have conceptualized the study of deliberative pedagogy as encompassing praxis-based academic processes that facilitate student learning of values, attitudes, and skills that socialize students for deliberative civic engagement (Carcasson, Black, & Sink, 2010; Longo & Shaffer, 2019; Manosevitch, 2019; Shaffer, Longo, Manosevitch, & Thomas, 2017; Shaffer & Mehlretter Drury, 2021).

Deliberative pedagogy scholars have been experimenting with deliberative processes in various subject fields (McMillan & Harriger, 2002; Mehlretter Drury, Bost, Wysocki, & Ingram, 2018; Weasel & Finkel, 2016) and sociopolitical contexts (Marin & Minor, 2017), providing initial empirical support for the effects of integrating these processes in academic settings on an array of communication skills and civic behavior, specifically in the context of mandatory STEM courses in the United States (Drury, Andre, Goddard, & Wentzel, 2016; Mehlretter Drury et al., 2018; Mehlretter Drury, Rush, Wilder, & Wysocki, 2019). More empirical research is needed to interrogate the applicability of such processes as a means of cultivating deliberative citizenship orientations among higher education students throughout the globe in varying academic and sociopolitical contexts.

This study contributes to the understanding of the role of deliberative pedagogy as a means of cultivating political orientations and behaviors deemed necessary for fostering deliberative citizenship engagement. A quasi experiment was conducted using a sample comprised of three different groups of communication students who underwent the same course process during three separate years of implementation. Findings reveal that the experience promoted students' deliberative faith, political interest, and political talk and affected their perceptions about the desired type of government in ways that align with deliberative governance. The discussion addresses the implications for the pursuit of deliberative pedagogy courses in academic settings and points out directions for further research.

Theoretical Argument and Hypotheses

Deliberative Democracy and Deliberative Pedagogy

Deliberative pedagogy is rooted in the deliberative theory of democracy, which underscores the key role that deliberative civic engagement plays in contemporary societies (Dryzek, 2012; Nabatchi et al., 2012; Neblo, 2015). The term *deliberation* refers to a process characterized by deep scrutiny of a broad scope of information, views, experiences, and ideas that are relevant to an issue or problem at hand (Dryzek, 2000; Gutmann & Thompson, 1996). Participants in deliberative processes are encouraged to consider how a given issue affects relevant stakeholders, including lay citizens from different socioeconomic groups, professionals from public and private sectors, associated officeholders, and so on (Mathews, 1999).

The term *civic engagement* is conceptualized as an active contribution to the quality of life in one's community alongside the development of the knowledge, skills, and values that may enhance it (Ehrlich,

2000; Nabatchi et al., 2012). Taken together, deliberative civic engagement refers to processes in which citizens come together to engage in a productive dialogue about their shared problems, with the goal of creating action-oriented solutions that they can all agree upon (Gastil, 2008; Nabatchi et al., 2012).

Deliberative pedagogy is an experiential teaching and learning approach defined as:

a democratic educational process and a way of thinking that encourages students to encounter and consider multiple perspectives, weigh trade-offs and tensions, and move toward action through informed judgment. It is simultaneously a way of teaching that is itself deliberative and a process for developing the skills, behaviors, and values that support deliberative practice. Perhaps most important, the work of deliberative pedagogy is about space-making: creating and holding space for authentic and productive dialogue, conversations that can ultimately be not only educational but also transformative. (Shaffer et al., 2017, p. xxi)

Thus, the field focuses on creating educational experiences in which students undergo changes in their attitudes about the concepts of democracy and citizenship as they relate to their lives (Manosevitch, 2019). The desired learning outcomes are to cultivate and promote deliberative attitudes among students for the longer-term goal of promoting their actual engagement in deliberative citizenship. Discrete experiences in deliberative pedagogy are limited in the scope of their effects but accumulated effects are expected to lead to broader societal changes (Longo, 2013; Manosevitch, Friedman, & Sprain, 2024; McMillan & Harriger, 2002; Niemeyer & Jennstal, 2018; Shaffer, 2014).

Deliberative Pedagogy and Deliberative Attitudes

Attitudes are mental representations of objects, both physical and abstract, that constitute three types of information: *cognitive* information is the individual's knowledge and beliefs about the attitude object; *affective* information is their feelings about the object, and *behavioral* information is one's knowledge and beliefs about their interactions with the object in the past, present, or future (McGuire, 1985; Zanna & Rempel, 1988). To examine the effectiveness of deliberative pedagogy programs in cultivating deliberative citizenship orientations, we need to identify those cognitive, affective, and behavioral attitudes that support deliberative practice and apply the appropriate measures to study them.

Research documents the effects of deliberative pedagogy processes on various learning outcomes related to communication skills, including enhancing students' critical thinking skills and career preparation (Nelson-Hurwitz & Buchthal, 2019), their knowledge and understanding of course content (Drury et al., 2016; Latimer & Hempson, 2012; Mehlretter Drury et al., 2018, 2019; Weasel & Finkel, 2016), and their perception about the relevance of the subject matter, specifically scientific topics, to their everyday lives (Drury et al., 2016; Mehlretter Drury et al., 2019). This body of work provides important empirical data to justify the relevance of deliberative pedagogy to students in the fields of communication and science.

Experiences in political engagement strengthen core political attitudes that in turn enhance political orientations and behaviors (Gastil & Xenos, 2010; Quintelier & van Deth, 2014). Yet few studies have

examined the effects of deliberative pedagogy processes on attitudes and skills that are directly related to deliberative citizenship engagement. A series of studies in the U.S. context investigated the effects of deliberative pedagogy on *scientific citizenship* defined as an increased awareness of the connection between science and society (Horst, 2007; Irwin, 2001; Mejlgard & Stares, 2010), documenting an increase in students' scientific knowledge, a change in their opinions about the scientific issue discussed, and an increase in their levels of anticipated engagement in science-related issues (Latimer & Hempson, 2012; Mehlretter Drury et al., 2018). McMillan and Harriger (2002), in their benchmark study on deliberation in academia, provide a theoretical baseline for the relevance of deliberative curricula to the fields of communication and political science, as well as initial insights from the case studies examined. A qualitative study found that Israeli undergraduate students perceived positive effects of their experiences in deliberative pedagogy on several cognitive and political attitudes related to deliberative citizenship engagement, including deliberative faith, listening to different opinions, political efficacy, desire to engage, political interest, and political knowledge (Manosevitch, 2019).

More research is needed to deepen our understanding of the role of deliberative pedagogy in communication programs and to further validate the above-mentioned findings using quantitative measures with varying student populations and sociopolitical contexts. Thus, this study examines the effects of deliberative pedagogy—conducted in the Israeli context—on political attitudes that underlie deliberative citizenship engagement. In what follows, I lay out the theoretical rationale and the empirical basis for the study's hypotheses.

Cognitive Orientations: Political Efficacy and Deliberative Faith

The cognitive approach to social psychology contends that cognitive perceptions of the environment mediate between an individual's experience and his or her consequent behavior (Fiske & Taylor, 1991; Geiger & Newhagen, 1993). A key orientation necessary for predicting acts of citizenship—specifically participation and engagement—is *political efficacy*, defined as an individual's perception of the extent to which they can understand and influence political outcomes (Moy & Pfau, 2000). This perception involves two dimensions. *Internal efficacy* is an individual's belief about his or her personal effectiveness and competence to participate in political processes (Abramson, 1983; Morrell, 2005; Pinkleton, Austin, & Fortman, 1998), while *external efficacy* is an individual's belief about the system's responsiveness to citizens' attempts to influence political processes and decision making (Abramson, 1983; Moy & Pfau, 2000). Although political efficacy alone is not a sufficient condition for predicting citizen engagement, it serves as a key motivational factor for citizens' participation and engagement at large (Abramson, 1983; Almond & Verba, 1963; McLeod, Scheufele, & Moy, 1999b). As such, political efficacy appears to be a key orientation that deliberative pedagogy processes should strive to cultivate or enhance among students (McMillan & Harriger, 2002).

Participation in formal deliberation initiatives has been shown to increase both external and internal efficacy (Fishkin, 1995; Fishkin & Luskin, 1999; Gastil, 2000; Knobloch & Gastil, 2015). As Morrell (2005) explains, "citizens who engage in deliberation get a training for democracy, and like practicing an activity develops one's confidence in doing that activity, deliberation could increase citizens' confidence that they can understand and participate in the political system" (p. 52). In the same way, it is expected that

experiencing deliberation about public issues in the context of an academic course would enhance students' political efficacy.

H1: Participants in a deliberative pedagogy course will have higher levels of political efficacy after participating in the course than they had before their participation.

Political efficacy is a key motivational orientation for political participation at large. Yet a key motivational orientation that is specifically geared to enhancing the practice of deliberative democracy is *deliberative faith*, defined as a sense of confidence in deliberation as a means of resolving public controversies (Knobloch & Gastil, 2015, p. 184) and of generating better public choices compared with other types of decision-making processes (Fung, 2005, p. 406). Research in the United States demonstrates that participation in deliberative processes in public settings has increased participants' deliberative faith (Knobloch & Gastil, 2015) and their trust in government (Boulianne, 2019).

To date, scholars have not directly examined the impact of deliberative pedagogy processes on deliberative faith, yet several studies offer a foundation for such an investigation. A longitudinal study found that deliberative pedagogy experiences in STEM classes were generally perceived as positive opportunities for discussing and collaborating with peers holding diverse perspectives (Rain-Griffith, Sheghehi, Shusterman, Barbera, & Shortlidge, 2020). Mehlretter Drury (2015) found that after deliberation, students tend to use inclusive language to describe their deliberative experiences, such as "we focused, we decided, we came to the consensus" (p. 63), which, she argues, reflects a sense of ownership and commitment to the deliberative process. This may also signify a deep-seated belief in the value of deliberative processes, since when students choose to embrace inclusive language, they seem to implicitly express their beliefs in the value of their experienced group deliberations as a means of reaching understanding and consensus.

Li, Schulz, and Thuston (2022) found that participation in a forum enhanced students' hope for an improved future in relation to climate change—although hope differs from faith, as it is a more general concept involving positive expectations and a desire toward a particular outcome (Chadwick, 2015), whereas faith involves a deeper sense of trust in something beyond oneself (Deneen, 1999). Nonetheless, this finding is informative for the present study since hope and faith share core features that are significant for cultivating deliberative citizenship. Specifically, they both carry a sense of optimism and positivity and involve a willingness to embrace uncertainty and ambiguity and move forward in a path that may be challenging and unintuitive. Thus, just as hope is regarded as an important orientation for environmental engagement leading to civic engagement on environmental issues (Ojala, 2012, 2015), deliberative faith is important for willingness to engage in deliberative initiatives on varying public issues. More specifically, undergraduate Israeli students reported that their deliberative pedagogy course experience has promoted their faith in the value of deliberation, not only as a normatively desired type of public discourse but also as a descriptively applicable practice in their specific cultural context: Israel (Manosevitch, 2019). These findings are striking given the nature of Israeli speech culture that seems to contradict deliberative principles (Dori-Hacohen, 2019; Dori-Hacohen & Shavit, 2013; Katriel, 2004). Taken together, my next hypothesis:

H2: Participants in a deliberative pedagogy course will express higher levels of deliberative faith after participating in the course than they had before their participation.

Deliberative Pedagogy and Perception of Government

Enhanced political efficacy and deliberative faith are important outcomes of deliberative pedagogy processes as both may predict future deliberative citizenship engagement. Yet a deeper impact of deliberative pedagogy would also involve enhancing participants' visions of the broader democratic culture. Thus, beyond cultivating deliberative faith, which is a general sense of support for the idea of public deliberation, deliberative pedagogy ought to strive for affecting students' perceptions of the desired nature of government. Specifically, it is desirable that the course would foster a perception of leadership and governance through a deliberative lens. This is an important element of promoting deliberative democracy since, as Cohen and Rogers (2003) explain, "deliberation neutralizes the political role of arbitrary preferences and power by putting collective decisions on a footing of common reason" (p. 242). Thus, a desired outcome of deliberative pedagogy would be to affect students' perceptions of democratic governance in a way that supports the idea of a government system that considers inclusive public debate and opposes the idea of a strong leader or a technocratic-expert leadership that does not account for public opinion and public debate.

Prior research provides initial indirect evidence for the potential impact of deliberative pedagogy on students' perceptions of governance. Mehlretter Drury (2015) found that following deliberation on climate change, students demonstrated a change in their thinking about solutions. They transitioned from thinking about solutions in terms of promoting citizens' knowledge about climate change to underscoring the role of considering diverse perspectives of multiple stakeholders in inclusive problem-solving processes. By advocating for the involvement of various actors across different sectors, the students demonstrated a commitment to collaborative and comprehensive approaches to addressing complex societal issues such as climate change. Building on this finding and having the deliberative pedagogy course examined in this study include readings and discussions of participatory governance in Israel (Nagid, 2015), it is expected that participation in the deliberative pedagogy course would enhance students' support for a government that considers public debate and decrease their support for types of government that do not account for public debate.

H3: Participants in a deliberative pedagogy course will express greater support for a system of governance that aligns with the ideas of deliberative democracy after participating in the course than before their participation.

H4: Participants in a deliberative pedagogy course will express less support for a system of governance that does not account for public debate or public opinion after participating in the course than before their participation.

Political Interest and Political Talk

Deliberative democracy, a talk-centered democracy, is based on the notion of citizens who are accustomed to and ready for engaging in political conversation about pressing issues (Dryzek, 2000). Citizens need to believe in the value of public deliberation (i.e., have deliberative faith) and feel efficacious about engaging in deliberative processes of working through issues. But these alone do not suffice. To realize

the ideals of deliberative democracy, these orientations need to be accompanied with behaviors that put these beliefs into practice, specifically political interest and political talk.

Political interest is a strong predictor of a wide array of political engagement behaviors (Delli Carpini & Keeter, 1996; Powell, 1986; Prior, 2010; Verba, Scholzman, & Brady, 1995), including participation in public deliberation (Cappella, Price, & Nir, 2002; McLeod et al., 1999a; Verba et al., 1995).

Ordinary political conversation, the casual, voluntary talk with no specific purpose or agenda (Kim, Wyatt, & Katz, 1999), plays a pivotal role in deliberative democracy as it contributes to various modes of participation (McLeod et al., 1999a; Wyatt, Kim, & Katz, 2000) and enhances individuals' motivations to participate in structured public discussions (Schmitt-Beck & Grill, 2020). When such conversation exposes interlocutors to crosscutting perspectives and rationales, it may also increase the range of ideas, arguments, and rationales that they are aware of about public issues (Cappella et al., 2002; Mutz, 2006), thereby fostering critical thinking and reflection, which ultimately helps cultivate informed opinion and decision making and encourages participatory citizenship. Taken together, it seems self-evident that the desired outcomes of deliberative pedagogy processes are enhanced political interest and increased engagement in political conversations in varying discourse contexts.

Varying forms of political participation have been shown to enhance participants' political interest (Quintelier & van Deth, 2014), and deliberation in public settings has been shown to enhance both political interest and political talk (e.g., Gastil & Dillard, 1999; Gastil & Xenos, 2010; Knobloch & Gastil, 2015). Similarly, a two-day deliberative pedagogy process in an introductory biology course yielded a significant increase in students' interest in biology and in their awareness of the connections between biology and real-world issues (Mehlretter Drury et al., 2018). In another study, a deliberative pedagogy process on climate change resulted in students expressing their desire to instill climate awareness in others within their local communities (Li et al., 2022), thereby reflecting their enhanced interest in the issue and perhaps their enhanced desire to engage in conversation with others about climate change. Taken together, it is expected that deliberative experiences about key public issues within an academic setting would have similar effects. Thus, my final hypotheses include:

H5: Participants in a deliberative pedagogy course will express greater interest in public affairs after participating in the course than before their participation.

H6: Participants in a deliberative pedagogy course will participate in political conversation more frequently after participating in the course than before their participation.

Method

This study is part of a broader research program on the application of deliberative democracy interventions within communication programs in Israel (Manosevitch, 2019; Manosevitch & Friedman, 2021; Manosevitch et al., 2024). The study applied a pretest-posttest quasi-experimental design. The sample consists of three discrete cohorts of students from the master's degree program at Netanya Academic College in Israel. Each student cohort participated in the same deliberative pedagogy course during three

separate academic years: 2016, 2017, and 2019. Notably, the different cohorts comprising the sample did not know each other and did not have any joint interactions within the communication program. Having three different groups of students who underwent the same deliberative course process, yet separately at three different time periods, enhances the validity of the sample. Of a total 84 students who completed the questionnaires before the course and 76 at the end of the course, the sample includes only those students who completed the questionnaire at both times, with a total paired sample of $N = 62$.¹

The sample (76% female), albeit not a random sample, represents a range of ethnic groups within Israel: 72.5% ($n = 45$) Jewish, 18% ($n = 11$) Muslim, 1.5% Christian ($n = 1$), 8% ($n = 5$) Druze. This breakdown aligns with that of the Israeli population during the time of the study: 74% Jewish, 21% Muslim, 2% Christian, 1.6% Druze (Center Bureau of Statistics [CBS], 2019). The age group is relatively old for a student population ($M = 43$, range 26–63, $SD = 7.44$), the breakdown: 26–35 (16.4%), 36–45 (52.5%), 46–63 (31%).

Because of the limited size of the communication program in this college, the course was mandatory; thus, all the students in the program participated in it. Therefore, there were no students available to constitute a comparable control group. This is an inevitable study limitation. Nonetheless, as the integration of hands-on deliberative processes in communication programs worldwide is limited, there are few opportunities to conduct rigorous research that would enable scholars to scrutinize the types of effects of such endeavors. Having paired-sample data from three discrete student cohorts who completed the course at three different time periods provides a unique opportunity to examine the effects of a deliberation-based curriculum as a baseline for further development of the field, as suggested by Pincock (2012).

The course involved a process of learning about deliberative theory and practice and preparing for and facilitating a deliberative forum (Manosevitch, 2019). Its design was guided by experiential learning theory principles (Kolb & Kolb, 2005), with the theory and practice of deliberative democracy intertwined throughout (Manosevitch, 2019). Careful attention was paid to the design and setup of the process to ensure deliberative outcomes (Knobloch, Gastil, Reedy, & Cramer Walsh, 2013).

Students completed closed-ended anonymous questionnaires at the beginning of the first class of the course and at the beginning of the final class before the reflective discussion. To allow for paired-sample analysis, students provided as an identifier the first three numerals of their (nine-numeral) Israeli ID cards and were assured that questionnaires would not be associated with their names or with their full Israeli ID cards.

Measures

The effects of the course were examined for three political orientation variables: deliberative faith, political efficacy, and perspectives about the preferred form of government; and for two political behavior variables: political interest and political talk. Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed

¹ The study received ethics approval from the research ethics committee of Netanya Academic College.

or disagreed with a series of statements. Responses were recorded on a 7-point scale ranging from “highly disagree” to “highly agree.” Following is a detailed account of the measures applied in this study.

Deliberative Faith

Building on prior research (Broghammer & Gastil, 2021; Knobloch & Gastil, 2015), deliberative faith was measured by three discrete items. Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed with each of the following: (1) the first step in solving shared problems is to discuss them together [discussion first], (2) even people who deeply disagree can make sound decisions together if they devote time to sit together and talk [sound decisions], and (3) people who support different political parties can conduct fruitful and respectful conversations about political issues [opponents can talk].

Political Efficacy

Building on prior measures (Abramson, 1983; Morrell, 2005), eight items were used to measure participants’ political efficacy. An index of four items was used to measure *internal political efficacy* (i.e., the extent to which participants perceived themselves as having personal competence to participate in politics; Morrell, 2005). Participants were asked to rate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with the following statements: (1) I consider myself well qualified to participate in policy-making processes; (2) I believe that I am more informed about key issues in Israel than most people; (3) I believe that I have a pretty good understanding of the key issues facing Israel than most people; (4) if a friend asks me about the elections, I feel that I have sufficient knowledge to help them decide for whom to vote ($\alpha = 0.77$).

An index of four items was used to measure participants’ *external political efficacy* (i.e., their beliefs about government’s responsiveness to citizens’ attempts to influence politics; Abramson, 1983). Participants rated the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with each of the following statements: (1) people like me do not have a say in governmental decisions; (2) government officials and elected public officials do not care about what people like me think; (3) according to our own system of government, it doesn’t matter who is in the government because the public decides how the country is run; (4) there are many legal ways by which lay citizens can influence our government’s policies ($\alpha = 0.64$).

Political Interest

Building on prior measures (Boulianne, 2011; Lupia & Philpot, 2005), four items were used to measure participants’ political interest. Study participants were asked to rate the extent to which the following statements were true for them: (1) I think about public issues, (2) I follow the development of issues that I am concerned about, (3) I pay attention to information and differing opinions about issues that I care about, (4) I seek out information about issues that I care about ($\alpha = 0.89$).

Political Talk

Building on Kim et al. (1999) measure for political conversation, an index of four items was created to measure participants’ engagement in political conversations. Participants were asked to rate the extent

to which they agree or disagree with each of the following statements: (1) I talk with my family and friends about issues that I am concerned about; (2) I talk with people at work about issues that I am concerned about; (3) I talk online, anonymously, about issues that I am concerned about (e.g., in online comments, forums, or blogs); (4) I talk online about issues that I am concerned about (e.g., on Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp groups, and the like), ($\alpha = 0.74$).

Preferred Type of Government

Building on the Israeli Democracy Index measure for *preferred form of government* (Hermann et al., 2011, pp. 41–44) and the measure of the Economist Intelligence Unit for *democratic political culture* (as cited in Hermann, Atmor, Heller, & Lebel, 2012, pp. 98, 111), single questions were used to measure participants' attitudes toward different types of government systems. These questions were examined at the granular level as individual items and were not combined into an index. Participants were provided the following descriptions of five different approaches to democratic governance and were asked to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed that it was the best way to run our country: (1) a government that is made up of experts rather than elected representatives [expert], (2) a democratic system of government in which representatives are elected by all citizens [representative], (3) a direct democracy in which significant issues are decided by public referendum [direct democracy], (4) a political system in which the government takes into consideration public debate in the policy-making process [considers public debate], (5) a strong leader who does not take into account the parliament or the elections [strong leader].

Results

Effects on Political Orientations and Political Behaviors

H1, H2, H5, and H6 posited that participation in a deliberative pedagogy course would enhance participants' deliberative faith, internal and external political efficacy, political interest, and political talk. Paired-sample *t*-test results provide support for these hypotheses (Table 1). Participants expressed higher levels for all these orientations and behaviors at the end of the course compared with their responses at the beginning of the course. These differences were significant for two measures of deliberative faith—sound decisions and opponents can talk, as well as for the index measuring political interest. For the other measures, discussion first, internal and external political efficacy, and political talk, there was an increase in participants' levels, but this increase did not reach the desired level of significance.²

² Both political efficacy variables significance levels were close to but not sufficient for the desired level, internal political efficacy ($p = 0.074$), external political efficacy ($p = 0.065$). This may be due to the small sample size.

Table 1. Deliberative Pedagogy Course Effects on Political Orientations and Behaviors (N = 62).

Measure	Before		After		<i>t</i> -test
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>D</i>	
Internal Efficacy	4.15	1.20	4.33	1.01	1.82
External Efficacy	3.24	1.10	3.48	1.04	1.88
Discussion First	5.79	1.23	6.03	1.21	1.36
Sound Decisions	5.60	1.40	6.05	0.93	3.04*
Opponents can Talk	4.29	1.56	5.08	1.54	3.62*
Interest	4.61	1.27	4.98	1.14	2.73*
Talk	3.34	1.14	3.48	1.10	1.05

p* < .05.Effects on the Preferred Type of Government**

The study's findings also provide support for H3 and H4. The results of the *t*-test reveal that the participants expressed a significant decrease in their support for types of government that contradict the essence of deliberative governance coupled with a significant increase in their support for types of government that align with the idea of deliberative governance (Table 2).

Table 2. Deliberative Pedagogy Course Effects on Perceptions of Preferred Type of Government (N = 62).

Measure	Before		After		<i>t</i> -test
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>D</i>	
Type of Government					
Expert	4.24	1.92	3.63	1.87	2.17*
Representative	4.71	1.75	4.89	1.71	0.83
Direct Democracy	4.45	1.90	5.01	1.51	2.58*
Considers Public Debate	5.36	1.31	5.62	1.32	1.22
Strong Leader	2.66	1.97	1.51	0.84	4.09*

**p* < .05.

Specifically, results show a significant decrease in participants' support for a government system that is based on the idea of a strong leader that doesn't account for other people and also in their support for a government that is based on experts. These results were accompanied by a significant increase in participants' support for direct democracy. Although direct democracy does not necessarily constitute deliberative democracy, it does align with the idea of accounting for public debate, which is the essence of deliberative governance. Finally, participants demonstrated an increase in their support for a government that considers public debate and in their support for a government that is comprised of public representatives; however, these two effects did not meet the desired level of statistical significance.

Discussion

On the backdrop of global trends that undermine democratic culture (Bermeo, 2016), and the call to incorporate practices that nurture democratic citizen engagement within academia (Alger et al., 2019; Daniels et al., 2021), this study applied a quasi-experiment to examine the effects of deliberative pedagogy on students' deliberative orientations and behaviors.

The deliberative pedagogy course experience enhanced core students' political orientations and behaviors associated with public deliberation, including political interest, engagement in political conversation, and most importantly—two dimensions of deliberative faith. These findings align with prior research on the effects of deliberative experiences on U.S. citizens in community settings (Knobloch & Gastil, 2015) and on the perceived effects of deliberative pedagogy on undergraduate Israeli students (Manosevitch, 2019).

Thinking specifically about challenging social-political contexts such as Israeli society, these findings are encouraging. Despite deep internal cleavages (Blander, 2018; Friedman, Neubauer-Shani, & Scham, 2023; Horowitz & Lissak, 1989) and ample research evidence that Israeli discourse culture contradicts core principles of deliberative democracy (Dori-Hacohen, 2019; Dori-Hacohen & Shavit, 2013; Katriel, 2004; Manosevitch & Friedman, 2021), deliberative pedagogy proved effective. Further, although intercultural learning scholarships illustrate that mere presence of others in the classroom does not produce crosscutting engagement (Lev Ari & Laron, 2014; Otten, 2003), deliberative pedagogy seems to work differently. The process in which students learn about public deliberation, acquire skills for facilitating such processes, and undergo actual deliberative experiences proved effective in cultivating core deliberative orientations. These findings align with a previous study that illustrated that Israeli students can cultivate deliberate orientations through creatively negotiating between their own speech culture and deliberative principles (Manosevitch et al., 2024).

For communication scholars calling to integrate deliberation-based courses in communication studies (e.g., Carcasson et al., 2010; Shaffer & Mehlretter Drury, 2021), these findings provide important justification for the effectiveness of such courses. It is realistic to set the cultivation of deliberative attitudes and behaviors as learning outcomes of such courses. However, more research is needed to interrogate possible explanations and differences to explain these findings. Do these effects work the same for all students, and how do gender, political disposition, and other variables make a difference?

Looking at perceptions of governance, the course seemed to have affected participants' perceptions in ways that align with deliberative systems of governance. But the results are inconclusive. Findings reveal a significant decrease in participants' support for government systems that contradict the essence of deliberative governance—a government based on experts and a government that is run by a strong leader who is not required to consider the parliament or the elections. Also, there was a significant increase in the support for governance systems that align with the deliberative democracy principle of accounting for public preferences—a representative government and direct democracy. Although these latter types of governance do not necessarily involve public deliberation in decision-making processes,

they both speak to a core premise of deliberative democracy—the importance of accounting for public voice in policy-making processes.

Results were different for the deliberative system of government. Participants' support for a government that considers public debate increased after the course, but the increase did not reach the required significance level. What might explain this? Perhaps the notion of a government that considers public opinion is vague and participants cannot clearly envision how such an idea can manifest itself in practice. This is specifically plausible given the Israeli parliamentary system of government where the deep internal cleavages (Cooperman, Sahgal, & Schiller, 2016; Horowitz & Lissak, 1989; Rubinstein, 2017) yield a broad spectrum of political parties running for office each election. Consequently, in recent decades, Israeli governments have constituted a coalition of parties who often manage to secure policy agreements despite deep ideological differences (Mahler, 2016). Thus, policy making often results from negotiation and compromise rather than careful weighing of trade-offs. It is plausible that although the course cultivated students' belief in the value of deliberation for resolving public problems, they cannot envision the applicability of public deliberation in their immediate parliamentary reality. Future research may follow scholars who incorporate participatory governance experiences within deliberative pedagogy (e.g., Buberger, 2019; Carcasson, 2019) to examine whether that would yield different results.

Given the limited applications of deliberative processes in academic programs, there are few opportunities to conduct rigorous research that would enable scholars to scrutinize their effects. The paired-sample quantitative data from three discrete student groups who underwent the same course process during three different time periods provides a unique opportunity to learn about effects of such processes. Thus, this applied research contributes to the growing scholarship on the effects of deliberative processes in academia by validating key outcomes sought by deliberative pedagogy. But it has limitations. Although the sample was fairly representative of Israeli society in terms of ethnicity and religion, it was skewed in terms of gender and age, limited to the same setting and instructor, and examined only immediate effects of deliberative pedagogy. Longitudinal research in varying academic settings and research populations is needed to examine whether effects sustain over time and what variables affect their long-term impact.

Amid current trends of democratic backsliding and affective polarization, it is presumptuous to claim that single deliberative pedagogy courses can bring about a broad societal change. Scaling up the effects of deliberative pedagogy involves a strategic approach that moves beyond stand-alone courses to a broader vision of communication departments and academic institutions.

Although only a limited number of students may participate in comprehensive deliberative pedagogy learning, such courses can serve as anchors for institutionalizing deliberative events within the program of study. Students and faculty can engage in periodical deliberative experiences throughout their academic journeys—headed and facilitated by the course participants—thereby fostering a deliberative culture within the department. Additionally, other courses can incorporate these departmental deliberative events into their course plans, using them as topics or case studies for practical assignments like writing press releases, creating news items, producing radio and television broadcasts, or documentaries. Further, since the principles of deliberative democracy are versatile and adaptable to varying communicative contexts

(Gastil, 2008), deliberative norms and values practiced within departmental events may be further applied in other communication-related courses.

Institutions in varying social and cultural contexts may also benefit from deliberative pedagogy processes. Research shows that students who underwent deliberative pedagogy experiences seem to internalize the principles of deliberative democracy discourse in a way that enabled them to creatively integrate their own cultural norms with deliberative norms of communication, even in cases where these seem to be in conflict (Manosevitch et al., 2024). More research is needed to examine how such processes may be applied in cultures that pose varying challenges to deliberative democracy discourse worldwide.

The insights discussed above may contribute to scholars seeking to pursue deliberative processes in their teachings and provide a baseline for designing further research into the effects of such processes as an antidote to current trends of democratic backsliding.

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