

Core conference themes:

1. **How do we move from diffuse democratic experiments to more just, comprehensive, democratic systems?**
2. **How do we educate and prepare citizens to be more effective participants in a just and deliberative democracy?**

Learning Exchange: Embedding Deliberative Practices in Local Democracy – Part I: Archon Fung, Pat Scully, and Matt Leighninger

Reporter: Lisa Blomgren Bingham

- What **innovations, ideas, opportunities, and/or action steps** received the most support among your group?
Embeddedness versus institutionalization: Our existing institutions are not up to the task of climate change. Institutionalization is static and stuck in one institutional place. Embeddedness not limited to one national group but can be embed through a network not stuck in one place or in one country. Institutionalization conveys centralized place-based structure rather than dynamic network.
- In the probes (suggestions, not mandatory questions), we ask about **language, assessment, and technology**. Please share with us anything regarding these topics that resonated with your group.
Risk of looking only at form and not function. Form may become obsolete or not work, so we need to look at another form, then another form. Risk is form will become understood as all of DD, but instead it may only mean that particular form is a problem.
- In the probes, we ask about **justice, equity, and freedom**. Please share with us anything regarding these values that resonated with your group.
- Were there **people** in your group who were interested in working on these ideas? (If so, please be specific about who and the plans being hatched.)
- Based on the discussion, what do you think should be the **top priorities** for educators and practitioners?
- Additional comments:

Focus on Concepts and Measures: What is Embeddedness, what is it to you?
Moving from concepts and descriptions to strategies, will report out to theme team. Will overview session.

John: Interactive, most of work at tables, about halfway through meeting will rotate at tables. Pauses and popcorn style report back, work as full group at end.

First of four sessions on embeddedness. Others legal framework, local governance, and taking this nationally. Can follow thread on embeddedness. Moves from concepts and descriptions to strategies. Laid out four framing questions.

Start with what is embeddedness, what does it look like?

What do you want to learn about E at this conference?

How will what you want to learn advance research/theory and practice?

How would you measure embeddedness?

Other questions to add? No.

Three people please share what is embeddedness and why does it matter?

Donna KSU: External, different, alien comes into existing institution

Robert Carnegie Mellon: Idea becomes institutionalized, used to be in one professor office, not contingent on champion, now dean and part of mission of institution

Alex NIF consultant: E is part and parcel of politics, science of actual decision-making, struggle for power, part of what we do, examples are collaboration, infrastructure, funding, people, networks, procedures all working together

John: Archon and Pat will say few words from research and practice

Archon: Pat will give a report all working on, comes out of several years of work with Everyday democracy, Kettering, and others. Started idea of E arose because 4-5 years ago lots of work on deliberation and has to do with tools and methods and practices of conducting public engagement and deliberation but know less about when the tools become widespread in a community. Definition: embedded just in case people in that community address a lot of different policy problems in different areas over time using tools of direct citizen engagement. Usually politics do not follow deliberative democracy logic but usually follow interest group logic or expertise of public agencies. E means way decisions are made is more deliberative and less expertise and interest driven. Frames it as a fight between other logics.

Second, looked at 9 communities where embeddedness existed, looked at people convening deliberation, found that people doing work trying to embed were doing more than decision-making but instead addressing big systematic deficits in local decision making. Four deficits addressed. Some communities used DD to address weak social fabrics, SD repair relationships in a community, predemocratic, no real collective decisions, reweaving rent social fabric. Second, people did not know what they thought about issue, so clarify peoples views preferences, and opinions. Third, in some communities, representation gap decision-makers out of whack and not responsive to broader public, advancing their own interests and not public. Reel these people back in and strengthen tethers. Fourth, lack of capacity and education. Sometimes co production is main contribution of DD.

One thought in report, depending on what deficit is main problem will call for a different form of public engagement. If weak fabric, need everyone, if lack of capacity, much smaller group.

Joe Goldman suggested that we think about factors that made E possible and came up with three: Building deliberative capacity. How do we build the capacity of individuals and organizations to deliberate? Second, Political Leadership, what do people in government want?

How do you make them want DD? W/o supply on government side, hard to embed. Sometimes lucky with political leader and creates window with deliberative entrepreneurs until they get wrong answer from DD and go south on you. Popular demand for DD, not just small group. Really needs to be popular demand to sustain it over time. Community organizers and groups.

Pat Scully: Was asked to talk about what E means from perspective of practitioner. Local practitioners. Works for national NGO that provides resources for local practitioners. Community transforms the way it makes decisions about and acts on public problems. So local practitioner does not have to all over again convince people. Resources human and institutional partners and financial resources are all in place. Think about it in terms of development of local capacity in terms of public officials and everyday folks.

Table conversation:

Lisa, Terry, Jared Duval Washington DC at Demos, Verene Wheaton college, Michigan coalition, Robert Cavelier Carnegie Mellon, co direct SW program of DD.

Verene: Starting a looking at embedding in college, all aspects of student and administrative life, looking to get to a place where deliberation as opposed to debate or power plays or special interests are the default for making decisions, and when we get it down, moving into community and civic engagement, becomes default.

Robert:

Lisa: tension between institutionalization versus embeddedness

Robert: Jim Fishkin deliberative poll, labor intensive, will know when deliberative polling has been institutionalized when on news you hear that Gallup has done a deliberative poll on health care, becomes an institution of democracy as polling.

Deliberative poll has science of random sampling, well-crafted background information, and small group discussions. Not institutionalized to point where a polling firm is doing it on a regular basis.

Jared: Sounds like what AmericaSpeaks does, working on chapter looking at what they did in New Orleans.

Robert: Becomes ad hoc, must be gathering, funding. How could that be national way of doing things? Carolyn uses convenience samples, not statistically as powerful. Still if broad enough still interesting.

Terry: Language is important, go off into. Difference between institutionalization and embeddedness. Work with local officials and communities in California. EM takes a structural and institutional form, but strong neighborhood organizations are demanded and are one form, civic engagement managers, some communities set up public engagement goals and resident surveys every year, not just a structure now we have a forum on,

Robert: but is a structure as opposed to a particular champion

Terry: Nothing lives for every, imperfect institutionalization is the norm. Not much anything in CA permanent, what is possible and culturally appropriate will differ by community. Lot of ways to have local officials look to this work over time.

Robert: Look to case studies and examples.

Danielle Atkinson: works with diff communities and groups, the closer citizens are to the issue the more they see the effect of the problem the more likely they are to be in and engaged.

Climate change there is less DD because people don't understand issue as well and it is ruled by experts, this is a paradigm shift for me, community organizer by nature. Work with Acorn, and

they would not call it deliberative democracy, but would not exist unless working on issues relevant to members, like foreclosure. Environmental part of coalition, not having conversations everyday with people that feel they are affected.

Jared: **Going back to embeddedness versus institutionalizations. Our existing institutions are not up to the task of climate change. NGOs and governments. Institutionalization is static and stuck in one institutional place, where embeddedness not limited to one national group but can be embed through a network not stuck in one place or in one country. Institutionalization conveys centralized place based rather than dynamic network.**

Wheaton uses language infusion Verene says. Infuse it into every aspect of our overall educational project. It would be everywhere. Infusing leads to embeddedness.

Terry: Eric Hopper said every profession begins as a reform and ends as a racket. There is the danger that you infuse, embed, institutionalize as less responsive.

Robert: Infused and has not turned into racket. Example Federal Weed and Seed program for distressed communities to get funding must demonstrate that they are organized, have community group, articulate problem. In Pittsburgh, worked with steering committees and did random sample of community and what they were working on legitimized by community input and turned out to be successful of how a weed and seed program continued to grow. Every city has a weed and seed program. Embedding

Terry: Weeding looking at communities and taking care of bad issues, like drugs, and seed it by having practices that make community grow.

Jared: In order for it to become part of the mode/business as usual of schools, high schools and colleges especially, will have to introduce it as an idea and a practice and figure out how to make that seem normal and accessible. Find ways to introduce practices of deliberation and development of a citizen. Use them in educational institutions.

Terry: Really believe in this, but not so essential. So little civic education now. What seems to work in local government is it useful or successful, if it works, then people will do it. E.g., can't do budgeting anymore, doesn't work, must get people involved in budgeting. If local officials find that it is better for them, if people get educated about budgeting, it works that way too. It is another way to do it.

Robert: Value is usefulness, and if useful, part of process, then infused and embedded. Have foundations coming to us saying we need citizen input on city county collaboration. When you combine need and much better.

Danielle: Don't know if climate or culture allows for it to be a useful tool right now. Introduce early for people to come. As people see any kind of dialogue with your local government, see it Robert: If all we did is send out flyers that say town hall meeting flyers, won't work. We need to pay citizens for their time and get a random sample. Call citizens and tell them paid, breakfast, lunch, information, and magic happens and they show up.

Verene: Dichotomy between DD and community organizing. Civil rights movement was DD in my view. People insisting on being part of conversation and had been systematically excluded. Value in precision but interested in who wants to dichotomize those two. Sense that political organizing not the same but not in conflict.

Danielle: Affluent county in Michigan have both affluent and underrepresented population. Community organizing can further deliberative democracy by helping people feel heard and empowered in conversation and will participate next time.

Robert: The more close you are to neighborhood, more momentum. Can hire someone who knows how to organize.

JOHN: Institutions of DD embedded in medium sized geographic districts. What might it look like in LA or cyberspace?

Risk of falling into looking at form and not function. Form obsolete and does not work, look at another form, then look at another form. Risk is form will become DD we don't need, but that means form is a problem.

Carolyn: What is the relationship between well-functioning advocacy and well functioning deliberation. Placeholder for future discussion.

John: Key questions for research – this is one.

Susan: Vermont, EM is culture where people will just assume will have a voice and that it needs to be heard, if true at local small or midsized, local level more empowered. Town meeting structure in VT embeds DD. Changing in varying. From Montpelier Middlesex.

TURN TO WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE:

What are the things you want to learn most about embedding and how will answering those questions advance research and practice.

Terry: Civic engagement practitioners come to local government and sell them on a model. Everyone has their own business model for their approach. Different measurement, useful over time, if you want to deal with social fabric issue as Archon said then lots of people. What kind of engagement would promote a fuller engagement over time? Now, some people think they do it and they do one model or silo, not broader.

Jared: AS brings together representative groups of folks to deliberate on really challenging issues. All of their examples are recommendations or reports that come out afterwards. British Columbia citizens assembly, understood not just a recommendation but something put directly on a ballot linked to policy change. It will take that laboratory federalism approach. What are some kinds of local initiatives or policy changes that need to happen so that when this process is happening you have legitimacy so that recommendation can be directly acted upon to change policy.

Robert: AS tries to get stakeholders to buy in early and throughout the process.

Terry: The success is often less getting agreements up front than politics question of spectacle in the press and coming together afterward.

Robert: AS If they do that over time may get enough press so that if they brought it to a vote, enough people might be influenced.

Jared: AD not a scalable or sustainable model of doing it. Can't rely on foundation grants to do it as case studies.

Danielle: How is this being researched and what topics are being studied. So many places when DD is seen as failure when instead just a factor not followed through, e.g., diversity and good

sampling. Need ages and cultures, not just youth or communities of color. Leave out people and come out with a result that is affected by who is in the room and don't get community support.

Robert: Gastil has a good overview book. Working hard on doing the best you can. Want to learn how sure are we that processes are representative, and how that makes them work or not.

Jared: Less how they work than how they become supported and part of policy process.

Robert: Putting on ballot is one form of outcome.

Danielle: Interested in evaluation of experimentation of tactics.

Jared: In New Orleans, first forum only 1/3 African American and much more dominated by wealthy New Orleans, got recommendations like turning Lower 9th into green space. Next Community Congress, did huge outreach not only in city but Diaspora, and brought in through teleconferencing. Credible process second time.

Robert: Materials that you give to people incredibly important, a skill set, art, and science of document development.

Verene: Still stuck at prequestion, representation, how do we ensure that our practice that we embed takes into account not only racial, ethnic, political representation. Just the rhetoric of the morning, now that in nirvana with liberal administration, need to figure out where it is important to take a stand on words like peace and justice with my administration in college.

Robert: Blogosphere angry at phrase deliberative democracy.

Verene: What happens when we commit ourselves to a community process and we disagree politically with the community and get answer we don't want. How do we keep our own ideology from or identity politics from sabotaging what it is we want to do?

Jared: When you give time, information, expertise, on table for deliberation, assumption is that you will get generally more progressive decisions.

Robert: Dealing with issues of fundamental opportunity or civil liberties, might see that. With security issues, might see that. When you design material, force of better argument, art and science of producing document.

Jared: Clean elections legislation and Common Cause. Now that folks are running as clean elections candidates, in Maine you are seeing more pro-environment, more economic opportunity folks with opportunity to run with public funding.

Robert: 9 different neighborhoods with different problems, need to create opportunity to have discussion, details of discussion did not lend themselves to left/right character, tends to get community based discussion. No taxes.

Terry: **Some communities, for some local officials, do public involvement in order to get beyond the usual voices, but sometimes community leader may feel like you are getting around real voice of community. On the ground dynamics of this is not champions of the world of**

democracy, but rather to get their work done and be successful. Dynamics get glossed over in language about DD.

Robert: Active citizen turns from squeaky wheel versus broken wheel. When 65 random sample squeaky wheels were not in room and reasonable citizen worked.

Danielle: Tea parties by conservatives and protests on stimulus dollars, whole frame was our voices not being represented and our voices not being heard. But DD owning process. Progressives can still own and not be scared and not a left/right thing.

Robert: Sunstein, deliberative trouble,

Terry: Can be misused as ombudsman can be misused as union buster.

JOHN: What do we need to know about EM and how would it affect theory and practice. What is the relationship between who initiates and from where and the likelihood that DD practice will be embedded?

Laura Black Ohio U: Models and stages of embeddedness, what does a community actually do? Who are participants, where does it start? How does it grow? Is failure necessary for DD to become embedded?

Christine: Why we should care about embeddedness. What is it good for? Less about how you achieve embeddedness than why it is important? Our conclusion is we are all advocates for deliberation, but making the case for outcome of deliberation involves making the case for intangible values, so it is hard to make the case, how do we make the case for deliberation in different environments.

Robert: Evaluation and assessment, value seen in its usefulness. Can tell that things are beginning to work by moving from you going to foundation to foundation coming to you. Deliberation seen as useful valuable and needed.

Embed agencies, expert culture, harder to convince experts than politicians, dealing with failure.

Terry: Many themes at table, notion of **embeddedness is a political question**. Notion that discussion of embeddedness forces you into clarity about it being a political question.

PAT: NEW TABLE

Paul Leisner: City of Portland, coordinate neighborhood systems. Agreed upon good quality standards, ability to participate, healthy skills and linking together.

David Smith: National Conference on citizenship. Are we building trust and connectedness between people and people, people and government, level of empowerment?

Linda Blong: Fielding University certificate. Study patterns of communication, who does what with whom and what forms, study effect of change over time. Ask people what they do when they have concern re: community:

Susan Clark: Ask people, tolerance, and openness to new ideas. Other is sense of personal or individual responsibility for public decisions, ownership, and connection to public decisions.

Sue McCormick, everyday democracy center. Frequency of opportunities to engage in quality deliberative process. True representative segments. Is there consistent news coverage? Diverse community institutions initiate, sponsor, and support.

Brian: Do citizens expect to use it? If solution goes south and decision makers say that you chose it and can point figures.

Christina Kellerher: Sustained dialogue campus network. What are the best ways to measure? Survey. E.G. Citizens know where to go when they see a deliberative gap?

Kwaku: Deliberative outcome measure based on discussion and satisfaction with community engagement, coming up with indicators.

David: Process/outcome distinction is reasonable. Seemed like 4-5 are about process and others outcome.

Paul: How people feel, versus elements in place in system.

Susan: Tolerance could be an outcome. Content versus

Also: Process and outcomes on people versus institutions

Is it embedded: Structural piece
Is it the default way to do things?

What is the effect?
Did it build trust?
Did it build empowerment?

What effect:
Use discourse analysis
Tolerance in community

Thematically: Capacity of institutions and citizens
Effects on people

Survey tolerance/openness for new ideas

Level of empowerment: I have a say to solve problems, I have a place to go to be heard, and avenue to pursue

Satisfaction re community participation/engagement

Deliberation outcomes: openness or discussion

Evaluate outcomes of DD: turnout, political efficacy

News cycle: Is there a consistent public accounting of the impact of deliberation on decision-making/public policy outcomes

Build trust people to people, people to government and connectedness, people to civic institutions

Distinguishing process (structures, events, offices of DD) form outcomes (voter turnout, higher, more diverse elected, higher political efficacy)

Diverse community institutions initiate, sponsor, or support public engagement

Ask people what they do when they have a concern or question about their community

Capacity

Study patterns of communication, who says/does what with whom and in what forms (how), effect of change over time

Frequency of opportunities to engage in quality deliberative processes Public processes attract truly representative segments of community

Citizens know where to go for help when they seek to address a deliberation gap

Agreed standards for good public involvement process

For cities and counties: clear goals/indicators for public engagement practices in decision-making bodies and departments

People feel their voice is being heard and making a contribution

Common language is being used, group learning and collective understanding'

For cities and counties: staff with public engagement education/support responsibilities

Measures: The ratio of questions to statements is growing in public sessions

Does the parking lot conversation match the formal conversation?

Whether a formal process started by one leader survives change of leadership

Percentage who say they have worked on a community project (already a census question)

How do you measure: Quantity, count people involved, young categories

Structure: What are opportunities, system community

Community capacity, succession of leadership

People's ability to engage

Do people listen fewer gaps between what people want and what decision makers do?

Common narrative, tell similar story about that community

Ownership of public decisions at individual level and right/opportunities to participate and obligation to participate

Effects: indices of social capital are up

Higher levels of participation in public process

Increase in bridging the social gap

Social and political acceptability, avoidance of litigation, ability to engage in cooperative behavior in the future

Sustainability of community organizations that address social issues

People no longer look like deer in headlights when D word is used

Number of citizens who have participated in deliberative forum

Number of dedicated positions
Extent of involvement in decision-making process on public polity issues
A systematic set of measures, quality and effectiveness of outreach continually bringing in new voices, vibrant capacity building for leaders, experts, citizens, processes: mechanism of government, legislative and bureaucratic to engage the public
Ongoing process exists for policymakers to listen to diverse voices
Effect quality of public discourse
How many organizations/institutions in the community use deliberative practices
Measure citizens political efficacy over time
Language of deliberation becomes common vocabulary
Repeat successful projects, consistency increasing likelihood
Public agencies seek and interface with deliberative public
Public comes to expect deliberative processes
The extent to which the majority of citizens have influenced a decision policy or initiative
Initiation of dialogue prior to mandated decision-making in regulatory processes formative
In participation in problem solving processes
Consensus is implemented in some concrete way
Participation grows as folks realize that their voices are essential to their community
Willingness by public non-expert unelected to participate
When a community assumes deliberation is the next step in addressing an issue
When a community is inclusive
Community confidence, buy in and engagement on policies (local government and national government)
Level of involved citizens and diversity of citizen representation
Engaged citizen organizations able to address problems through cross sector partnerships
Change in percentage of public that expects to participate in decision-making process
Do most people know who to go to for what, e.g. Issues, needs
Decisions take longer to make
More people otherwise not engaged become engaged
Level of process utilization
Voting rate
Number and types of unmet needs problems issues existing
Difficult problems/challenges successfully are identified by recognized by a representative group of community members who attempt to find a collective way forward
More community buy in to policy suggestions
Extent to which specific deliberative mechanisms are taken for granted in political institutions
Ask the people involved to say what has changed for them in their life
Public officials have working relationships with nonprofits schools, community organizers, etc and use them regularly to address issues
Is 3-5 years is it clear how community addressing HOT issue?
The way (the different kinds) the number of ways; the length/depth of engagements; the percentage and number and diversities represented within groups engaged for what purposes
The number range/variety success or kinds of success in relation to original or related purposes
Citizens and polity makers expect they will be engaged in decisions
Extent citizens turn out to public meetings more readily more often in larger numbers.

By means of written communications to public letters to the editor, blogs, and to officials,
elected, appointed

Extent of youth involvement

Interview city members about their own evaluations of outcomes

Measure numbers, attendance participations

Deliberative decision-making happens in multiple venues and across sectors

Deliberatively arrived at decisions are routinely implemented