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Deliberative Democracy and the Problem of Power

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Abstract

Among the most interesting contributions to contemporary deliberative democratic theory are a number of arguments against deliberation leveled by radical democratic theorists such as Iris Marion Young and Lynn Sanders. These theorists question the meaning and efficacy of deliberation based on deep and vital insights about the impact of structural inequalities and entrenched relations of power. We consider these insights to be critical cautions that deliberative democrats must confront, and offer a response that draws on both theory and practical experience. In particular, we suggest that careful attention to three fundamental challenges of deliberative practice, those of control, design, and democratic change, can go a long way towards ensuring that meaningful and effective deliberation is possible in the face of deep structural inequalities and complex power relations.

Keywords

Introduction

Deliberative democratic theorists and practitioners urge leaders and communities to listen not only to those who agree with them but to those who disagree. In that same spirit we attempt in this paper to enter into dialogue with trenchant critics of deliberative democracy. In particular, we focus on challenges by democratic theorists of an activist stripe who question deliberative democracy's meaning and efficacy under conditions of structural inequalities and in the face of the practical realities of power politics.

The class of argument we concentrate on here is quite at odds with traditional critics of deliberation, such as democratic elitists Walter Lippmann and Joseph Schumpeter, who view participatory forms of democracy as either pointless or dangerous (Lippmann, 1922; Schumpeter, 1947). Instead, we focus on more contemporary critics of deliberation who are animated by the same participatory, inclusive, populist impulses that undergird the deliberative democratic movement itself, but who believe that much of what passes for deliberation today simply reproduces the antidemocratic tendencies deliberation is supposed to counteract.[1]

These critics argue that the deliberative democracy movement has, thus far, largely failed to grasp the way that real power relations operate to undermine the development of meaningfully inclusive and egalitarian deliberative forums. Further, they argue that advocates of deliberative democracy have failed to connect even their best deliberative efforts to processes of institutional or social change. How meaningful deliberation can be cultivated in a society plagued by complex and deeply rooted inequalities, and how the rare cases of legitimate deliberation might lead to the reform of policies, practices and institutions that reflect these inequalities is, for these critics, unclear at best.

We view these as serious challenges that any deliberative democratic theory must address. The stakes are high, for if we cannot craft an effective

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[1] This species of argument has its most immediate roots in the alternative approaches to thinking about power that critical theorists and poststructuralists developed to challenge notions that came to dominate the post-war period. Whereas pluralists of the 1950's defined power as "who gets what, when, and how," and focused on the formal adjudication of interests in formal political spheres, a new generation of theorists argued that power relations are far more complex than any focus on the internal working of elite institutions can account for. This development emerged from works of the second generation of Frankfurt School critical theorists such as Jurgen Habermas and it was also during these decades that Michel Foucault irrevocably changed the face of nearly every discipline in the human sciences by exploding traditional notions of power, authority, identity and agency with seminal works such as *Discipline and Punish* (1977) and *Madness and Civilization* (1988). While the critics of deliberation we deal with here do not explicitly identify themselves with critical theorists or Foucault, the sort of arguments they make situates them firmly in these traditions.

response to these critics, then we have a responsibility to rethink our commitment to deliberation. But if we *can* respond, the work undertaken therein will certainly help us sharpen our focus and bolster our efforts to craft richer, more inclusive and more effective deliberative opportunities for citizens.[2]

We begin by reviewing power-oriented challenges to deliberation, in particular those leveled by Iris Marion Young and Lynn Sanders.[3] We then argue that a strong response to these challenges must involve attention to at least three dimensions of theory and practice that we term *the challenges of control, design* and *change* respectively. How is deliberation controlled so as to ensure it serves democratic purposes and is not contaminated by preexisting power relations? What elements of design are put in place to allow all participants to participate freely and effectively? And how does deliberation relate, and how *can* it relate, to social and political change of the sort that power critics claim or imply is impossible?

We frame these dimensions of deliberative democratic theory and practice as "challenges" rather than, say, "solutions" because while we view these as key components to addressing the problem of power, we think it important to emphasize the complex and dynamic nature of each. Moreover, we refer to them as challenges for theory *and* practice because, in our view, the perennial tension between theory and practice is particularly relevant to the field of deliberative democracy. In a recent article in the *Journal of Public Deliberation*, Jane Mansbridge et al. argue that deliberative democracy has thus far been driven primarily by theoretical literature that derives its normative commitments from abstract principles, and that most deliberative theory "remains relatively unleavened by the direct experience of deliberative practitioners" (Mansbridge et al, 2006: 1). For these authors, the aims and insights of practitioners provide a different lens through which to think about the meaning of rationality, freedom, equality and consensus in deliberative democracy. We agree that there is too often a disjuncture between the work of democratic theorists and deliberative practitioners, and our approach here is grounded by the conviction that theories

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[2] Cohen and Fung (2004) and Fung (2005) proceed along related lines. While we agree with much in these works, we develop some elements of a deliberative democratic response to radical democratic critics in different or extended ways, many of which we flag as we go along.

[3] While the importance of equality as a background condition for deliberation has been well-established by deliberative democratic theorists (Habermas,1998; Knight and Johnson, 1997), radical democratic theorists have deepened the conversation and raised the stakes by focusing on more subtle and discursively constructed obstacles to equality. For this reason, we find the critical perspectives of radical democratic theorists especially rich and compelling, and focus our attention here on some of the more famous of these challenges to deliberation. In particular, we draw on Iris Marion Young's *Inclusion and Democracy* (2000) and "Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy" (2003), and Lynn Sanders's "Against Deliberation" (1997) to bring the problem of power into greater relief.

should be treated as conceptually inextricable from the concrete experiences from which they spring and through which they are made intelligible. In our view, it is only through actively engaging in this dynamic relationship between theoretical speculation, practical consideration, and the ongoing perception of consequences that the field of deliberative democracy will progress and mature.[4]

This irreducibly intertwined and essentially active view of the theory/practice relationship is key to how we conceptualize our own critically pragmatic response to the trenchant critics of deliberation discussed here. As these critics are first and foremost democratic theorists, and not deliberative practitioners, part of our response flows from our view that practical experience with deliberation reveals the extent to which theoretical approaches to power are often too rigidly conceived to adequately capture the nuances of obstacles to deliberation and the manifold opportunities for improvements in deliberative practice and theory. Our views on the challenges of control, design and change have emerged from, and continue to evolve through, an ongoing and flexible process of mutual adjustment of both our commitments as democratic theorists and our appraisal of our on-the-ground work as deliberative practitioners.

Deliberative Democracy and Power Relations

To critics such as Iris Marion Young and Lynn Sanders, most versions of deliberative democracy fail doubly. Because they reproduce undemocratic power relations that beleaguer our larger society, they are neither sufficiently inclusive to be democratic nor meaningful enough to be genuinely deliberative. The specifics of their critiques are instructive. Young, for instance, argues that:

- First, in the real world of politics, "powerful elites representing structurally dominant social segments have significant influence over political processes and decisions." Therefore, deliberation is a luxury to which only political elites have access and, given the structural inequalities, why should disempowered individuals and groups be asked to trust so-called "rational dialogue" with those in whose interest it is to perpetuate unjust economic and political arrangements?

- Second, while those deliberative settings that are obviously exclusionary are troubling, more pernicious yet are the claims that formal inclusion in deliberative processes guarantee that all voices will be heard. Deliberation

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[4] Our approach to the theory/practice relationship draws on the underappreciated deliberative insights of John Dewey, who argues that the relationship between theory and practice is a dynamic one that must be continually explicated in the principled pursuit of more properly democratic deliberation and change. For a fuller discussion, see the analysis undertaken in Alison Kadlec's forthcoming book *Dewey's Critical Pragmatism* (2007), which aims to open new avenues of inquiry into the productive connections that might yet be forged between critical theory and pragmatism, and between critical pragmatism and deliberative democratic theory and practice.

is always structurally biased in favor of those with greater resources and power and to pretend otherwise is morally specious.

- Third, even if legitimate deliberative settings were to emerge against these odds, "existing social and economic structures have set unacceptable constraints on the terms of deliberation and its agenda." On what terms are underserved communities to expect that deliberation will accomplish anything substantive if, for example, the constraints imposed by federal law make it impossible to administer policies that embody a commitment to social and economic justice?

- Finally, even if deliberative democracy is able to redress the problem of constrained alternatives by proposing the creation of deliberative settings free from "the immediacy of the given economic imperatives and power structures," free inquiry is still not possible given that those deliberating are entrenched in a hegemonic discourse "which itself is a complex product of structural inequality." (Young, 2003: 108-15)

Lynn Sanders adds to these points that an ironic antidemocratic appeal is at work in the undergirding principles of deliberative democracy itself. In her view, the rules governing deliberation are steeped in an aristocratic, elitist tradition in which legitimate democratic discussion must be calm, rational, moderate, and guided by mutual respect.[5] And this, says Sanders, is culturally biased in favor of those with greater resources and power because deliberative democracy fails to take into account the differences in status and hierarchy that shape how we communicate. Therefore,

> Taking deliberation as a signal of democratic practice paradoxically works undemocratically, discrediting on seemingly democratic grounds the views of those who are less likely to present their arguments in ways that we recognize as characteristically deliberative. In our political culture, these citizens are likely to be those who are already underrepresented in formal political institutions and who are systematically materially disadvantaged, namely women; racial minorities, especially Blacks; and poorer people. (Sanders, 1997: 349)

While "insidious prejudices" may incline those with more power to discount the arguments of those with less, more problematic yet is the possibility that because of the subtlety of this kind of exercise of power "this prejudice may

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[5] From this perspective, the elitism of Lippmann, who dismissed participatory democracy on the grounds that people are too selfish to discern common interests and too stupid to work together except as destructive mobs, is strangely legitimized because the rules governing appropriate deliberation are themselves inherently elitist.

be unrecognized by those citizens whose views are disregarded as well as by other citizens"—i.e., marginalized citizens may themselves internalize and accept such "insidious prejudices" as norms, and thereby fail to see the ways in which their interests are violated or eclipsed (Sanders, 1997: 353). Thus, in addition to more or less formal and obvious forms of exclusion that undermine deliberation, "hegemonic discourse" can constrain the alternatives under consideration and even manipulate the least powerful in ways that violate their interests in virtually undetectable ways.[6]

What if, then, deliberative democracy excludes under the guise of inclusion and stifles the perception of legitimate grievances while making essentially empty gestures toward free and open inquiry? The practical result, say critics like Sanders, is that both participatory democrats *and* democratic elitists are satisfied; the former can imagine that citizens are being included in a process of grappling with common problems, while the latter can be comforted with the knowledge that the rules of the game are rigged to prevent the inclusion and/or effective participation of non-elites.

Such concerns cast light on the extent to which much that passes for deliberation can actually marginalize and even exclude the perspectives of those individuals and groups who are already at a disadvantage, such as minorities, women and the poor. The concern is that in a society that is structured by deep inequalities, such as ours, formal inclusion, even when it exists, is not enough to guarantee everyone the opportunity to deliberate as equals because the more powerful interests always have greater influence in the deliberative process. From this perspective, then, deliberative democracy suffers fundamental problems of legitimacy. Worse, yet, it masks those problems behind a façade of pseudo-participation.

Creating Room for a Response
Despite the great value of their insights for thinking about the complexity of possible obstacles to deliberation, these arguments smuggle in a number of problematic assumptions that serve as a point of departure for our response. Most importantly, both Young and Sanders posit a rigid and seemingly totalizing view

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[6] Young draws on Gramsci's notion of hegemony in developing her argument and, therefore, it is important to be clear and specific about what is meant by this term. Young describes her use of the term this way, "In a society with longstanding and multiple structural inequalities, some such discourses are. . . 'hegemonic:' most of the people in the society think about their social relations in these terms, whatever their location in the structural inequalities" (Young, 2003: 116; see also Gramsci, 1971). We place "hegemonic" in quotes because, despite its usefulness as a theoretical construct suggesting pervasive and often unconscious cultural and linguistic assumptions, its connotation and usage are often so rigidly totalizing that its unqualified use would be at cross purposes with our aim of showing that there *is* room to maneuver via deliberation in meaningful and powerful ways.

of power, on the one hand, and a narrow, relatively constrained view of deliberation on the other. Their views, in other words, simultaneously do too much and not enough. Both imply a unified view of power that is all-encompassing and hermetically sealed, and therefore miss critical opportunities for authentic democratic engagement. And both suggest only paltry or phony versions of deliberative practice that cannot possibly stand up to the totalizing picture of power they construct.

In contrast to these critics' views, our practical experience with deliberation strongly suggests that much more credit ought to be given to ordinary citizens in terms of their capacity to confront and challenge those pernicious undemocratic forces described by the critics. This is not to say that powerful interests will not at times seek to subvert deliberative efforts. Nor is it to contend that citizens can deliberate successfully under any and all circumstances. But we do assert that under favorable conditions the broad citizenry can deliberate quite effectively and with meaningful results. This is where our experience as deliberative practitioners informs and helps shape our theoretical analyses of what constitutes fatal impediments to deliberation and what may be overcome with the help of new practical considerations. Thus, while we agree that the sorts of obstacles to deliberation described by Sanders and Young are real and serious, recognizing that they in fact sap the legitimacy and impact of any deliberative context in which they are allowed to flourish, we believe as well that proper attention to the conditions of deliberation, and in particular to the challenges of control, design and change, can take us a long way toward clarifying and overcoming these sorts of obstacles.

A Deliberative Democratic Response

The criticisms of deliberation that we have been examining coalesce into two main categories. The first concerns the external obstacles to deliberation (who sets the agenda? who is invited to participate?) while the second concerns more subtle internal obstacles to deliberation (what biases are masked by the norms of deliberation? how do "hegemonic" impediments shape which perspectives do and do not count?). These two challenges imply a third: Deliberation is likely to be so distorted and hamstrung by these internal and external problems that it cannot hope to accomplish social and political change of any real significance in the face of entrenched interests and power relations. While these are posed as seemingly intractable obstacles stemming from the complex workings of power relations, we argue here that practical experiences with deliberation loosen these categories enough to create alternative ways to negotiate the issues.

In what follows, we argue that what Young and Sanders view as external and internal obstacles and their consequences may be largely circumvented by addressing the three interrelated challenges of control, design and change. Among

the ways they are interrelated is that proper control is a prerequisite for proper design, because control by a partisan entity with a stake in a specific outcome can put problematic constraints on the deliberative process. It can end up limiting who is invited, what gets on the agenda, and what kind of process is put in place—how, in other words, the deliberative process is designed. Moreover, without proper design in support of an inclusive, legitimate and productive deliberative process, there is little hope that it will result in meaningful social change. Finally, if deliberation does not result in meaningful outcomes and change, it becomes increasingly difficult to make the argument that resources and people's time ought to be invested in deliberation in the future. Thus each of these dimensions of deliberative practice deserves and requires attention and no single one of them is likely to offer an adequate response to the problem posed for deliberation by power.

A. The Challenge of Control

In any given instance, the impetus for public deliberation can emerge from a number of sources and directions—grassroots movements seeking greater public attention to a marginalized issue, public officials struggling with an intractable policy problem, nonprofit organizations aggressively pursuing more inclusive politics, sharp public concerns and conflicts arising from electoral politics, international events, court decisions, natural disasters, emerging technologies, economic developments and the like. Whatever its source the first practical question is how a process of public deliberation may be brought into being to meet the requirements of the moment. This, in turn, raises the key practical problem of how control over a deliberative process will be exercised to ensure and protect its integrity.

The question of who will lead, design and control a deliberative process is critical because the democratic integrity and efficacy of the process can be compromised in a hundred little ways that open it to all of the problems that concern Young and Sanders. While some of these democratically debilitating compromises can be the result of simply not understanding the principles of sound deliberative design (which we'll discuss in some detail in the next section), others can stem from biases and constraints placed upon the process by those who wish to exercise control over it for their own ends. It is the latter problem that this section attempts to address.

The basic principle that ought to guide us in meeting the challenge of control is that no single entity with a stake in the substantive outcome of the deliberation should be the main designer or guarantor of the process. Based on our experience with deliberative practices to date, there are two main vehicles for meeting the challenge of control and helping ensure a meaningfully inclusive deliberative process, and they are ideally deployed in combination. One involves

the protective function of nonpartisan intermediary organizations, and the other concerns the appropriate influence of multi-partisan deliberative leadership coalitions. In short, we are suggesting that no partisan should be in charge of deliberation; instead, non- and multi-partisan entities should operate to ensure that the deliberative context is inclusive and egalitarian.

Nonpartisan Intermediary Organizations
Deliberative processes are less likely to be compromised by pernicious forces if they are controlled and safeguarded by those whose stake is in the integrity of the process, not in its substantive outcome. Explicitly nonpartisan intermediary organizations whose mission is the ongoing cultivation of more properly democratic opportunities for deliberation among an ever broader swath of the public can serve such a critical role. In addition to groups that have long attempted to serve this sort of function, such as the League of Women Voters, many deliberative organizations of just this kind (such as our own—Public Agenda) have sprung up in recent decades and by virtue of their uniquely nonpartisan stance these groups have the best shot at creating the conditions under which participatory and deliberative democratic possibilities can be brought to light.

Multi-partisan Deliberative Leadership Coalitions
Beyond enlisting the aid of nonpartisan intermediary organizations, the cultivation and mobilization of multi-partisan leadership coalitions that cosponsor and cooperatively organize deliberative processes is another means through which the challenge of control can be managed. This is a kind of checks-and-balances approach, in which a variety of actors with cross-cutting agendas join together— perhaps out of frustration with a long-stalled issue—and in so doing tend to ensure the desired result of an open and fair-minded process.

Ideally, *both* nonpartisan intermediary organizations and multi-partisan deliberative leadership coalitions should form part of the equation at this earliest stage of the design process. In our own work at Public Agenda we tackle deliberative opportunities in just this way. If we are approached by a single actor—whether it be a school, a municipal agency, or a citizen group—for help in setting in motion a process of public deliberation, the first order of business is helping that actor think through who to partner with in cosponsoring, organizing and acting upon the proceedings.[7]

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[7] The practice of encouraging single catalysts of deliberation to form a deliberative leadership coalition has other virtues, beyond managing the question of control. We find that diverse cosponsoring leadership coalitions tend to draw larger, more representative cross-sections of a given community, and can offer more varied opportunities for deliberation follow-up than is the case when single entities act alone.

Addressing the issue of control and responsibility is a necessary precondition for the creation of more properly democratic deliberation for at least two reasons. First, it lends legitimacy to deliberative processes by helping to ensure their integrity. And second, it permits the design of deliberative opportunities by explicitly nonpartisan intermediary organizations without undue constraint. Such organizations are then free to innovate on behalf of deliberative democratic processes in ways that are connected, but not beholden, to leaders and experts. And it is through such design innovations, based on core deliberative democratic principles and adapted to the concrete contingencies of a particular time, place and situation, that many of the objections raised by Young and Sanders can be circumvented or overcome in the real life of communities.

B. The Challenge of Design

Every deliberative context reflects a set of design choices and a lack of attention to their implications can have devastating effects on the quality of deliberation. Such choices can severely limit who will participate, who will be heard, and which interests will shape the terms of the discussion. Mundane as it may sound, many of the concerns that Young and Sanders raise have a great deal to do with how deliberation is designed; poor design exacerbates the problems they identify, while careful and principled design ameliorates them.

Among the critical design-related questions that must be answered in order to ensure that deliberation can proceed in ways that neutralize the pernicious influence of power relations are:

- Who and how are people recruited to participate? Here we examine how properly designed deliberation can reach beyond the "usual suspects" to include traditionally marginalized voices.
- How will the issue under consideration be framed? Specifically, we distinguish "framing for deliberation" from the more typical approach to framing issues, "framing to persuade."
- How will the process be structured and facilitated? A crucial point here is that choices which on the surface seem innocuous and democratic enough can have unintended consequences that undermine deliberation.
- How should the goal or purpose of deliberation be conceived? In addressing the question of ends we are specifically interested in challenging, and offering an alternative to, the traditional view that consensus ought to be the goal and terminus of deliberation. In its place, we propose a concept of "confluence."

Anyone who undertakes the difficult work of organizing deliberation is always already answering these questions in one way or another, but gauging the consequences of these choices is rarely given the attention it deserves. We aim in

this section to briefly discuss answers to each of these questions with an eye to the sorts of consequences that may be expected to follow. For us, the best possible consequences will include the creation of uncommonly rich, inclusive and egalitarian deliberative opportunities for those individuals and groups who are, under present conditions, least likely to be heard in our society.

Who and how are people recruited to participate?
For a deliberative context to be considered democratic, it must reflect commitments to inclusion and free communication among diverse groups of individuals who come to the table with a wide range of viewpoints and from a variety of starting points. Further, well-crafted deliberative forums should be animated by the conscious desire to give voice and opportunity for dialogue to marginalized stakeholders in particular, and to begin with the concrete experiences and diverse viewpoints of these individuals. Therefore, properly democratic deliberative contexts must be designed to begin with and give priority to the inclusion of the perspectives of ordinary citizens who have little or no experience with the often impoverished and exclusionary examples of what passes for public dialogue today.

This means that the "usual suspects," i.e. those most likely to participate in traditional settings for public dialogue such as city council meetings or public hearings, should not be allowed to dominate in properly designed deliberative contexts just because they have developed the skills of political combat. Individuals who have a great deal of experience and comfort with traditional public forums have likely developed habits that, while conducive to engagement with the public components of formal elite structures, are potentially toxic to the kind of inclusive and egalitarian deliberation that we seek in our work. The habits that prevail in traditional "deliberative" settings today are dangerous to more properly democratic models of deliberation because they make dialogue vulnerable to the hostile and polarizing rhetoric characteristic of unproductive gripe-sessions or insider power games, and they most often reproduce those hierarchies of privilege and subordination that dominate formal structures and marginalize certain voices on the basis of race, gender and socioeconomic status.

With intermediary organizations guarding the integrity of the process, and by designing deliberation to privilege the inclusion of these traditionally marginalized perspectives, a great deal of headway can be made in leveling the field of deliberation that Young and Sanders treat as irredeemably rigged in favor of powerful interests.

Framing for Deliberation
How issues are framed for consideration by citizens is directly relevant to the concerns raised by Young and Sanders and presents another key role that

nonpartisan intermediary organizations should play in deliberative processes. When, for example, Young writes of "constrained alternatives" and argues that power relations are such that in most deliberative settings "there is little difference among the alternatives debated," she is raising precisely the challenge of properly framing issues in ways that foster truly democratic deliberation, dialogue and action (Young, 2003: 112-15).[8]

We delineate our view of the proper approach to issue framing by distinguishing between two types: *partisan framing-to-persuade* (the usual use of the term today) and *nonpartisan framing-for-deliberation*.[9] The first involves defining an issue to one's advantage in the hopes of getting an audience to do what you want it to do. The latter involves clarifying the *range* of positions surrounding an issue so that citizens can better decide what *they* want to do. Framing-for-deliberation helps citizens engage a range of advocacy frames that are competing for their allegiance without being overwhelmed by their sheer number and volume. In this sense it acts as a nonpartisan civic information management system. This can mean, for example, creating nonpartisan guides to the policy debate that begin with the public's values and ways of looking at an issue, rather than those of experts and special interests, and provide an overview of the range of approaches and solutions that exist and the tradeoffs among them.[10]

A guiding focus on framing for deliberation allows us to expose how powerful interests promote some frames while marginalizing others to wither on the vine. As one example among countless others, when the federal government can secretly spend hundreds of millions of public dollars (as recent press reports contend) on stealth PR campaigns to promote its foreign policy frames, or pay journalists to dishonestly plant stories in support of its educational policies, basic questions of equal opportunity to engage the policy debate come into focus. Properly designed deliberation may be viewed as a substantive alternative to these kinds of manipulations, a democratic process that contends with these dynamics and promotes a level playing field for all citizens. By providing a number of choices for participants to use as a point of departure for deliberation, and by then

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[8] For relevant discussions of framing and power, see Carragee and Roefs (2004) and Entman (1993).

[9] This discussion draws on the analysis in Will Friedman's (2006) essay, "Reframing Framing." It should be noted that some of the academic literature on framing takes the position that framing is not technically a process of "persuasion" in the sense of providing new information and changing what people believe. Rather, it is a process that activates information "*already at the recipients' disposal*" (Nelson et al., 1997: 225, emphasis in original). We are not quibbling with this point, we are simply employing "persuasion" here in its general usage because the usual connotation of the word makes the distinction we seek in a particularly clear way.

[10] Numerous examples of such guides may be found on Public Agenda's website (www.publicagenda.org) under "Issue Guides" and "Public Engagement/Resource Center."

encouraging participants to use deliberation as a vehicle for generating their own alternative frames, nonpartisan intermediary organizations perform the crucial function of guarding the process from the undue influence of powerful interests while simultaneously empowering participants to challenge the viewpoints of those interests. This is especially the case if it happens within a context that facilitates the free exchange and exploration of ideas.

Facilitating Democratic Deliberation

While recruiting participants in ways that give priority to the inclusion of traditionally marginalized voices and framing issues for deliberation rather than for persuasion is a solid beginning for meaningful deliberation, good design must also include careful attention to the specific processes and structure of public forums. In fact, without a clear understanding of what constitutes a productive process, those with fewer resources will continue to be marginalized regardless of their formal inclusion, and the issue at hand will seem remote and unconnected to the participants.

Paradoxically, what can appear on the surface to be democratically inspired approaches to design can actually result in contexts that stultify participation in exactly the sorts of ways that Young and Sanders warn us about. For instance, on the surface, inviting participants through ads in the local paper sounds democratic enough, but it tends to result in a collection of the usual suspects who, for whatever reasons, love to attend traditional public meetings and thrive in them. If public forums are to be truly inclusive and representative much more active and targeted forms of outreach and invitation must be pursued—recruitment strategies that have more in common with community organizing than they do with typical public hearing procedures offer one solution.[11]

Or again, sometimes those designing deliberative contexts simply assume that the way to ensure a legitimate bottom-up process in which participants are free to engage in meaningful dialogue is to make sure that groups are small enough and that moderators are chosen from and by the pool of participants. On the surface this appears inclusive and democratic, but in reality this approach can severely constrain the quality of deliberation and can even backfire to such an extent that participants' cynicism and disengagement are exacerbated rather than mitigated. In such situation, moderators tend to be self-selecting, and the sorts of traits that often lead individuals to promote themselves for the position (they consider themselves experts on the subject, they "love to talk," they have strong feelings about how the problem needs to be addressed…) can be so

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[11] This is the approach that Public Agenda applies in its Community Conversation work. The other approach is to recruit a random sample of the public and pay people an incentive to participate—a strategy with which we have some qualms when civic engagement, as opposed to civic *research,* is the goal (Friedman, 2006: 11).

counterproductive to the process of deliberation that they can have a lethal effect on its quality. They also, in our experience, tend to be the individuals with greater societal resources, often, in fact, white males of higher socioeconomic status than the other members of their group. Once these individuals are given practical control of small-group deliberation, the groups tend to reproduce the inequalities and silences that characterize our larger society. In other words, precisely the obstacles cited by Young and Sanders tend to proliferate unchecked. The significance of design comes to the fore when we realize that potentially self-defeating dynamics such as these can be easily circumvented. Even minor guidelines to groups about selecting moderators and the moderator's function can make a major difference here, and an even stronger remedy integral to our own work is in-depth moderator training prior to a deliberative process.

While concrete considerations such as size, composition and facilitation are certainly crucial aspects of the design process, we also believe that subtler issues concerning the way we conceptualize the *goal* of deliberation should play a key role in designing properly democratic deliberative contexts. Specifically, we challenge the traditional idea that the goal of deliberation is consensus. While often viewed as the gold-standard when it comes to assessing deliberative outcomes, we argue that consensus ought to take a back seat to the more properly deliberative goal that we call "confluence."

Rethinking the Goal of Deliberation
In our experience, subtle forms of manipulation and exclusion of the sort described by Young and Sanders tend to take root in deliberative processes that equate success with the generation of consensus. By viewing consensus as the goal and terminus of deliberation, well-meaning advocates of deliberation naively, yet quite dangerously imply that there are no irreducible conflicts of interest at work in any given issue of common concern. If consensus is the point and purpose of deliberation, then it must follow that only trivial and easily surmountable differences separate us from one another in society. In practice, a consensus orientation tends to elide conflicts in such a way that the interests of the less powerful are rendered silent, invisible or unthinkable. The habitual association of deliberation and consensus thus hampers our ability to cultivate and benefit from deliberative opportunities.[12]

In the place of consensus, our view of deliberation seeks *confluence*. Literally, confluence means a gathering or flowing together at a juncture. In a deliberative democratic process, this juncture should be a common problem around which alternative views may be voiced and heard. Confluence thus encourages participants to reach across boundaries and explore multiple

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[12] See also Christopher F. Karpowitz and Jane Mansbridge (2005) for a related discussion on "Disagreement and Consensus."

perspectives by focusing together on the examination of an issue from as many vantage points as possible. Such a problem-oriented approach seeks ongoing input and insight from the range of possible stakeholders in a process that clarifies serious differences as well as potential common ground, and suggests ways of moving ahead on an issue that are, if provisional, nevertheless practical and dynamic.[13]

By its nature, the goal of confluence helps deliberative democratic practice respond to Sanders's objection that the pursuit of "common interest" and "common voice" too often simply "coincide[s] with the promotion of the views of the dominant" in deliberative forums. Instead, she recommends public processes that articulate and recognize deep differences and conflicts of interest via forms of "testimony" and "storytelling" (Sanders, 1997: 370-72). But a problem-oriented and carefully designed approach that takes confluence as its goal effectively addresses Sanders's concerns. For if a gathering of diverse perspectives rather than a single-minded pursuit of consensus is central to the process and goal of deliberation, then there is no reason why critical differences among people need be washed over and eclipsed, nor why such alternative forms of communication as testimony and storytelling should not be viewed as legitimate expressions of deliberation that build our civic identities. Moreover, while Sanders treats mutual respect as a prerequisite of deliberation (Sanders, 1997: 348), our process- and problem-oriented approach hinges on the idea that mutual respect is developed *through,* rather than prior to, deliberation.

In a world defined by flux and contingency, the ability to bring alternative viewpoints to bear on a common problem is crucial not only because it allows us the opportunity for the expansion of civic capacity and inspires a taste for democratic engagement, but also because it points toward possibilities for moving ahead on real problems.[14] Moreover, these possibilities are more dynamic and educative than the static results typically resulting from consensus-oriented deliberation. Paradoxically, confluence increases the chances that participants will, despite their many real differences, be positioned to identify and pursue new,

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[13] It is this problem-orientation that distinguishes deliberation from dialogue. Whereas dialogue is about understanding and exchanging viewpoints with others, deliberation is about exploring a common problem by bringing as many perspectives to bear on the problem as possible. Dialogue is of course an integral component and tool of deliberation, but the guiding and central role of the common problem at hand is a defining feature only of deliberation.

[14] While some might argue that exposing conflicts of interest may lead to polarization and entrenchment of opposing viewpoints rather than to the expansion of civic capacity (e.g., Shapiro, 1999: 31-2), our practical experience suggests otherwise. We have found that, given the right conditions and design, conflicts of interest do not significantly impede individuals' willingness to continue deliberation across boundaries. In fact, we have found that participants are more inclined to find the process legitimate when real differences are allowed to emerge as key features of deliberation.

unforeseen and unexpected directions for working together. That is, in contrast to the static conclusions of consensus, a problem-oriented process that focuses as much on real differences as on commonalities may lead to a greater appreciation of previously unknown shared interests that can form the basis of working agreements for moving forward on concrete public problems. And this brings us to our final section, on how confluence and the "working agreements" it may spawn are related to concrete programs and processes of social and political change.

C. The Challenge of Change

Democratic theorists who question whether deliberation can be meaningful in the face of society's structural inequalities are saying, in effect, that deliberation is bankrupt as a resource for democratic change. In this section we explore what can be done to connect deliberative democracy more successfully to significant processes of social and political change. Such a deliberative democratic theory of change is, we believe, among the field's most urgent next steps. While we do not claim to offer a fully developed analysis, we do sketch out some lines of thinking and inquiry that we think offer fruitful possibilities.

Specifically, we propose in this section to map out two interrelated dimensions of democratic change that flow—or can flow—from deliberative practice. The first involves the ongoing maturation of civic capacity through the development of particular habits of inquiry and communication that we sum up in John Dewey's phrase "social intelligence."[15] In essence we argue that well-designed deliberative democratic experience nurtures social intelligence and that this in turn facilitates very real forms and processes of democratic change apart from this or that specific problem or policy debate. Indeed, we are here speaking of ongoing processes that can meaningfully transform the very context and dynamics that surround any given policy debate.

The second dimension of deliberative change concerns the more episodic but equally important realm of concrete public problem-solving. Here, specific, public issues are confronted and attended to via deliberatively inspired and informed actions. Such problem-solving is designed to set in motion new

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[15] Dewey first uses the phrase in his short piece "Moral Principles In Education" (1909), but the idea took on its first definite form in *The Public and Its Problems* (1927), with his quote that "There is no limit to the liberal expansion and confirmation of limited personal intellectual endowment which may proceed from the flow of social intelligence when that circulates by word of mouth from one to another in the communications of the local community. That and that only gives reality to public opinion. We lie, as Emerson said, in the lap of an immense intelligence. But that intelligence is dormant and its communications are broken, inarticulate and faint until it possesses the local community as its medium." In the 1930's, Dewey came to use the term regularly and with greater precision in pieces such as "A Common Faith" (1934) and in the famous "Liberalism and Social Action" (1935).

collaborations and solutions to effect change. Change, in turn, will inevitably tend to bump up against resistance, from simple inertia and calcified habits to undermining actions by those who fear losing control, status or resources. The process of countering such resistance we will explore via a notion of "deliberative democratic activism."

Social Intelligence as a Form and Engine of Democratic Change
Hal Saunders reminds us that, "Change does not always result from a linear series of actions and reactions between groups." Rather,

> Change also evolves through a cumulative, generative process of continuous, multilevel interaction that can change perceptions and create opportunities that did not seem to exist before. Looking beyond specific issues and episodic transactions to the process of interaction over time may even enable us to design a process aimed at eroding underlying political obstacles to change. (Saunders, 2005: 3)

These "continuous, multilevel interactions" are the building materials of social intelligence around which deliberative practices may be developed in the service of meaningfully democratic change. The stakes of this sort of change are quite high because, as Dewey explains, "social intelligence is the sole form of social control [i.e., control by citizens] that can and will get rid of existing evils without landing us finally in some form of coercive control from above and outside" (Dewey, 1938: 320).[16]

On this account, social intelligence concerns the potentially ever increasing capacity for public problem-solving and habits of inquiry that result from authentic democratic engagement and the shared evaluation of the consequences of that engagement. Social intelligence is thus not a top-down, "we know best" approach to determining deliberative norms because we are not suggesting here that citizens need to be *reformed*. Rather they need to be provided with contexts and opportunities that are conducive to the development of the part of themselves that has a taste for communicative inquiry about problems of common concern.

Social intelligence takes as its guiding principles (1) the protection and expansion of our capacity for free and communicative inquiry and (2) the

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[16] John Dewey, "The Economic Basis of a New Society," LW 13: 320. It is crucial to note that "social control" is a bottom-up concept in Deweyan pragmatism, and must not be confused with the top-down notion of social-engineering. In Dewey's view, social control is fundamentally a matter of citizens working together to actively reform existing institutions in ways that increase our capacity to realize our professed commitments to the democratic values of liberty and equality of opportunity.

protection and expansion of our capacity to perceive and evaluate the shared consequences of our choices, habits, policies and practices. Moreover, we evaluate the shared consequences of our choices not just by how well they seem to address our common problems but also, and critically, by the way in which they act back upon and impact our individual and collective capacities for continuing democratic inquiry. From this standpoint, free inquiry is not only a matter of seeking information and generating thoughtful attitudes about issues, it is a matter as well of appreciating and harnessing the democratic potential of attitudes *about* our attitudes (i.e. "second order attitudes"), which themselves are only generated through communication. In other words, the free communication across boundaries that is the very heart of public deliberation teaches and enables us to critically reflect on our own views, attitudes, interests and commitments. That we can do so means that citizens need not be viewed as passive receivers of information or inevitable pawns of hegemonic forces. Rather, under proper democratic conditions, we can be dynamic inter-actors, generating a form of intrinsically communicative intelligence that, in turn, is critical to any proper concept of democratic change.[17]

Well-designed processes of public deliberation can thus have many beneficial outcomes and effects apart from concrete institutional and policy change which, while important (and discussed below), should not be the only barometer or avenue of deliberative democratic impact. Participants may gain a sense of communicative and political efficacy; communities may become stronger and more self-aware, and social capital may increase; leaders may gain valuable input for public policies as well as a newfound appreciation for the democratic capacities of citizens; democratic expectations and habits may be developed and heightened all around.[18]

In sum, in sharp contrast to the antidemocratic tendencies toward apathy or hostile polarization that mark today's political culture, deliberative democratic practice stimulates the evolution of improved civic capacity in the form of what we are here calling social intelligence. By taking a principal focus on increasing our individual and collective ability for ever more sophisticated perception of the consequences of our habits of thought and action, we will be better equipped to distinguish between those habits that improve and those that impede our capacities for free inquiry. This is the very material of problem-solving, as it is

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[17] One way to think about the substantive meaning of social intelligence is in contrast to the more familiar notion of "social capital" made famous by Robert Putnam (1993; 2000). For instance, whereas social capital pivots on the claim that healthy democracies depend on networks of social trust generated in civil associations such as bowling leagues and singing clubs, social intelligence centers on civic capacity generated by problem-oriented inquiry across boundaries by citizens.

[18] Researching such effects is just now getting underway in the D&D field and is something the authors intend to explore through Public Agenda's new Center for Advances in Public Engagement (CAPE).

just this capacity for free inquiry that makes it possible to identify common problems in a way that they may be productively addressed.

Concrete Problem-Solving and Deliberative Activism

Social intelligence is not stimulated in a political vacuum; rather, it is largely brought into being as citizens confront common problems. Therefore, while the development of social intelligence will be an indispensable feature of any enduring process of change, the ongoing expanding and maturing of civic capacity must be accompanied by a range of concrete opportunities to effect real change in specific situations in the near-term. Indeed, without the promise of concrete payoffs citizens will be less inclined to embark on deliberative undertakings in the first place; and without instances of concrete results, citizens will be unlikely to sustain deliberation over time.

Moreover, and particularly relevant to our present purposes, the immediate problems posed to deliberation by power politics come into focus when we realize that, typically, those with real power to shape policy are under no obligation to respond to the outcomes of even the most conscientiously designed instances of public deliberation. Rather, in most instances deliberative processes are such that decision-makers and influencers can choose to respond to them or not *at their discretion*. The result is that the potential role that deliberation might play in public life is diminished as power politics picks up where deliberation leaves off.

There are exceptions in which a straighter line can be drawn between deliberation and change in the form of new public policies, which Archon Fung calls "Empowered Participatory Governance" and Joshua Cohen calls "Directly-Deliberative Polyarchy." These are situations in which government officials commit to citizen deliberation as part of a formal decision-making process (Cohen and Fung, 2004**).** Cohen and Fung pose such official empowerment of citizen deliberation as the key means by which deliberation may have appropriate impacts on public life. "In our view," they write, "participatory-deliberative arrangements [created by officials] represent the most promising path toward the ends of deliberative democracy" (Cohen and Fung, 2004: 30).

We certainly favor "participatory-deliberative arrangements" situated in public institutions and organized by public officials. But we also hold that deliberation will continue to fall short if it is not also situated and controlled, to a very significant degree, in civil society as well. In this light, public deliberation is just as much about strengthening civil society and civic practices as it is about adjusting how public officials do their work.

Essentially, we see two problems with viewing officially sanctioned and organized deliberation (important as it is) as the sole, or even the primary, path toward more meaningful deliberative democratic practice. First, instances of empowered participatory governance, let alone *well-designed* instances (beyond

the debilitating democratic kabuki of most formal, public hearings) are quite rare. Therefore, deliberation must now act from outside official institutions much of the time or there will be so few opportunities that its proof of concept and transformative potential may never adequately be realized.

Moreover, deliberation must *always* be anchored and controlled from outside officialdom to some extent if it is to address issues—and solutions to issues—that are controversial and threaten to significantly upset the status quo. Officially sanctioned and organized deliberation will naturally tend to be limited to those issues and solutions with which officials are comfortable. And should issues and solutions *un*comfortable to officials make their way onto the policy agenda through the efforts of enterprising citizens, officially controlled deliberation is likely to be conducted in a less than whole-hearted fashion. Thus, relying solely on institutionally-based solutions to the problem of power invites the very distortions and dangers of agenda setting, exclusion, constraining rules of engagement and the like that Young and Sanders warn about. In short, if one way to connect public deliberation to processes of political and societal change is to make official institutional practices more inclusive of public deliberation, another is through citizens, groups and coalitions learning to leverage deliberation on behalf of democratic change from the position of civil society.

Our capacity to leverage deliberation for change depends in large part on our ability to address the challenges of control and design at the outset. By properly attending to control and design we tend to confer on deliberative processes a high degree of procedural democratic legitimacy which, in turn, creates a capacity to promote change. To date this capacity has often gone untapped by deliberative democrats, who often seem to feel as if their work is done when deliberations conclude and a report is written. Rather, the conclusion of a round of deliberation marks not the end of the deliberative democrat's work, but a new and most challenging phase of it, an *activist* phase of a particular kind.

In conceptualizing such *deliberative* activism, Young's juxtaposition of the deliberative democrat and the political activist is a useful point of departure. In her "Activist Challenges to Deliberative Democracy," Young suggests that, "[T]he theory of deliberative democracy should be critical of typical tactics of activism such as street marches, boycotts, or sit-ins, on the grounds that their activities confront rather than engage in discussion with people the movement's members disagree with." The activist, on the other hand, believes that "deliberation is as likely to reinforce injustice as to undermine it" because existing power arrangements "make it nearly impossible for the structurally disadvantaged to propose solutions to social problems that might alter the structural positions in which they stand." Such *structural* change, in contrast to cosmetic policy adjustments that only skim the surface of societal inequities, can best be addressed, in Young's view, via activism. She concludes that the deliberative and

activist approaches to political life, while sometimes complementary, ought rightly to be viewed as in tension with one another. "The best democratic theory and practice," she writes, "will affirm them both while recognizing the tension between them" (Young, 2003: 103, 115, 119).

We propose parsing the activist/deliberator concepts differently. Young's hard distinction between deliberation as mere discussion and activism as outraged action eclipses the possibility that the strategies of activism might be consistent with the means and aims of deliberation. We think it viable to view some instances of activist protest as deliberative communicative acts, meant to foreground important truths and provoke thought and reasonable responses on the part of both direct adversaries and wider audiences. We certainly think the carefully calibrated, symbolic acts of nonviolent protest by Gandhi and King can be viewed in this light.[19] Instead of drawing a hard line between activism and deliberation, we think it more useful to distinguish two forms of activism, which we call "traditional" and "deliberative."

We see the deliberative activist's project as operating on "either side," so to speak, of deliberation itself. It is activism that *precedes* deliberation to make it more possible, and *follows* it to more meaningfully connect it to processes of change. As our concern in this section is particularly with laying the groundwork for a theory of deliberative democratic change, our main focus will be on the latter, outcomes-oriented phase of deliberative activism.[20]

We are concerned here with advancing a form of activism capable of encouraging and, when necessary, compelling *an authentic response to legitimate deliberative processes by those with power*. In practice, such an "authentic response" usually means that leaders respond to deliberation either through significant changes in policies, practices or institutional arrangements, *or* through a clear statement explaining why such change cannot take place—the latter being a deliberative response that serves to move public discourse forward.

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[19] In this we depart from Archon Fung's (2005) discussion of deliberative activism in his excellent "Deliberation Before the Revolution." There Fung contends that activism is marked by "noncommunicative forms of power" (2005: 403). As noted above, we disagree that traditional activist tactics are noncommunicative—indeed, how could they be? The point, rather, is whether or not they are communicative in a *deliberative* sense. (E.g., is action accompanied by reasons? Is time and space created for a reasonable response? Is there a willingness to enter into dialogue?)

[20] Fung (2005) concentrates especially on the antecedent factors or phase of deliberative activism, i.e., on establishing "fair and inclusive deliberation or the conditions that support such deliberation" (2005: 402). Fung spends less time on the post-deliberation phase of activism that we will be discussing here, aimed at ensuring deliberation's appropriate impacts. Given his emphasis on institutional solutions ("Empowered Deliberative Governance") it makes sense that Fung would not have much to say about civic-activist tactics to leverage deliberation on behalf of democratic change. His solution is to make official institutions more inclusive of deliberation rather than to empower deliberative actors situated in civil society.

In seeking to ensure such a serious response by leaders, deliberative activists (usually organizers and "activated participants" of deliberation) can pursue any number of tactics. These will aim at compelling leaders and powerbrokers to support deliberation without hijacking it and to respond to real changes people want to see as they develop a sense of shared interests and become impatient with unresponsive or fraudulent leadership. One example involves inducing policymakers to publicly endorse deliberation, which will make it more likely that they either will spontaneously take the results seriously or can be made to do so through public pressure. (Some leaders will sign on willingly because they see the value of it, while others will require incentives such as pressure by leaders of significant voting blocks, media coverage that makes them fear being left out of a significant public process, etc.) Other examples of deliberative activism could involve using the media to inject deliberative results into an electoral debate so that a previously ignored issue gets on the policy agenda, or pressuring leaders who refuse to respond seriously to public deliberation to do so. Such pressure can be brought to bear via petitions, television ads, nonviolent demonstrations or media strategies that make it uncomfortable, if not impossible, for leaders to ignore the outcomes of meaningful deliberation. Moreover, leaders who *do* respond conscientiously to deliberation can be rewarded through positive press or votes.

Figuring out the best approach to democratic deliberative activism in a given instance is, of course, no simple assignment. The relationship between leaders, experts and public deliberation is complex and contingent, especially given that it takes place in a representative system of governance which does not clearly articulate a role for public deliberation. We do not argue, for instance, that leaders are generally obligated to do everything that a deliberative assembly recommends as if it were an exercise in direct democracy. In fact, given the horrendous conditions for public deliberation that typically prevail and the resulting incoherent, inarticulate and confused state of public opinion and discourse, it would be irresponsible of leaders not to look long and critically at anything that passes across their desk bearing the imprint "the public's will." We do think, however, that leaders and experts are well served, and in a very real sense obligated—as leaders, citizens and beneficiaries of a democratic society—to take seriously sincere and carefully constructed deliberations by citizens and to respond to them in authentic ways that move the policy process and debate forward.

None of this is to say that concrete public problem-solving by citizens should await the actions of officials, experts and other societal leaders. In many instances democratic deliberation leads toward independent actions by citizens, the self-organization of communities and the evolution of networks and coalitions that can create grassroots solutions without expert advice or governmental action.

This is a good and meaningful product of deliberation, but it is also the case that responses to public problems often require resources, expertise and policies that individuals and communities cannot reasonably be expected to muster. In a democracy, officials, experts and other leaders and power players must be responsive to the serious civic commitment that legitimate acts of public deliberation represent.

Change, Leadership, and the Continuing Challenge of Power

While we addressed social intelligence and concrete problem-solving sequentially in order to clarify them, they are, in fact, deeply interrelated—perhaps even best viewed as two sides of the same coin. Concrete problem-solving, and the deliberative activism that amplifies its impacts, may be thought of as episodic processes that both apply social intelligence and generate it at the same time—much as periodic exercise uses muscles and generates them simultaneously. Concrete problem solving begins by drawing on the social intelligence that currently exists within a group or community in order to (a) move forward on the issue at hand and (b) spur the further development of social intelligence.

Social intelligence and concrete problem-solving are, in other words, two dimensions of the same process of deliberative democratic change. Citizens typically get drawn into processes of deliberative engagement because they want a real voice in addressing tangible problems facing their communities. Once so engaged they often find the experience of well-designed deliberation intrinsically satisfying and stimulating. At this point our two dimensions of change can become highly reinforcing in a kind of virtuous cycle: as an intrinsically stimulating democratic involvement that also helps address concrete public problems makes people want to *stay* engaged, their democratic capacities develop (they become better at it), social intelligence evolves, and the process becomes at once more satisfying, stimulating, effective and meaningful.

Such transformative possibilities go for leaders as well as the general public, and to the very interconnections between leaders, experts and the public. Leaders and experts in elite policy-making bodies must be made to understand that, contrary to Lippmann, the conditions for governance would be dramatically improved if citizens were given the opportunity to develop non-polarizing habits of communicative inquiry. Contrary as well to rigid and totalizing views of power which imply that political structures are either largely enemy terrain or controlled by discrete puppet masters that insist upon the ongoing subjugation of social intelligence, we take the view that it is in leaders' interests to participate in reforming many of the structures that breed antidemocratic ills.

The view that leaders have an inherent interest in deliberative democratic reform may seem naïve given the poverty of contemporary electoral politics, or may suggest that the democratic reform we have in mind is not terribly

meaningful or deep, but an expansive view of democratic possibilities suggests otherwise. This is not to imply that all problems are solvable, or all interests are ultimately commensurable, or that there are no powerful forces that profit from the perpetuation of our polarizing hostility. It is only to suggest that there exists an enormous range of possibilities for the advancement of meaningfully democratic practices and policies that may be realized simply for the price of improving our capacities and enlarging our opportunities for collaborative inquiry about common problems. Moreover, capitalizing on even a small number of these opportunities could well have unanticipated positive impacts on both the structures of governance and the democratic habits of citizens.

This expansive possibility should be balanced by the awareness of power dynamics that are likely to develop as deliberative democratic practice becomes increasingly active and effective. As we become more adept at connecting deliberation to democratic change—when those with power can no longer accept or reject deliberation at their discretion—it is likely to lead to a number of reactions. We are hopeful, as noted, that many will see the benefits of more deliberative participation by citizens and will welcome and support it—and it is the practitioner's job to help bring as much of this about as possible. But it would be naïve not to expect that many others in positions of considerable power will seek to maintain their customary advantages either by attempting to reject deliberative processes outright or else by exerting control over their design. Not only should we expect and prepare for these dynamics as theorists and practitioners, we should in at least one respect welcome them. For when those with great power begin to take deliberation seriously enough to attempt to undermine it we will know we are making real progress and that we are well-armed for the struggle.

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