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Transformative Deliberations: Participatory Budgeting in the United States

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Abstract

This article develops two conceptual models, based on empirical data, for assessing deliberation and decision making within United States adoptions of Participatory Budgeting (PB). The first model is results oriented whereas the second model is process oriented. The two models evince the tension between inclusiveness and efficiency that emerge as U.S. PB tries accommodating the dual goals of improved short-term service delivery and democratic deepening. Each model satisfies one of these deliberate goals better. Results oriented deliberation is more effective at producing viable projects whereas process oriented is better at ensuring that all participants' voices are heard. Variation suggests that decision-making in PBNYC exceeds citizens' ability to make collective decisions with rational discourse. Rather, the structural conditions of district constitution, bureaucratic constraints, and facilitator skill impacted decision-making.

Keywords

Participatory Democracy, Open Governance, Democratization, Deliberation, Democratic Innovation

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Introduction:

As Participatory Budgeting (PB) continues to spread from the Global South into the Democratic North, some have questioned whether it will have to change radically in order to adapt to its new environment. This article draws from the latest adoptions of PB in the United States, with an emphasis on the largest implementation to date in New York City (PBNYC), to develop two conceptual models to assess deliberation and decision-making. PB programs in the US are simultaneously trying to improve service delivery and deepen democratic engagement. This dual focus produces a tension between two deliberative models, one focusing on process, and on the other on results. Results-driven PB is aimed at improving the short-term delivery of government services, while process-driven PB targets greater long-term civic engagement and a strengthening of democratic norms. Improvement of service delivery requires concrete, practical proposals; the strengthening of democratic norms requires robust participation by a wide and diverse range of ordinary citizens. It is not hard to see why these goals sometimes come into conflict.

Unlike the famous case of PB in Porto Alegre's Brazil, with its thematic and public works assemblies, U.S. PB programs seek to reconcile PB's dual goals in one set of citizen deliberations. Deliberators and facilitators put forth projects for the community to vote on, some more focused on forming projects more likely to "win" than others. To accommodate these competing goals, individual facilitators and deliberators must reconcile competing deliberative norms of efficiency and inclusiveness.

A key finding of my research is that there is immense variation as to how deliberators and facilitators executed deliberation and decision-making at the district level. Conditions ranging from facilitator skill to education level within the district strongly impacted the degree to which a specific committee had more results or process-driven deliberation.

To account for this variation, I develop a typology for assessing deliberation and decision-making. The typology is based on a framework developed in my recently-completed dissertation on the challenges of translating participatory budgeting to the United States. It invokes the virtues of civic activity in the *polis*, as expounded by authors ranging from Aristotle to Hannah Arendt:[1] 1) citizens

[1] Hannah Arendt, who saw herself as advancing on Aristotle's major themes, describes such a *polis*: "To be political, to live in a *polis*, meant that everything was decided through words and persuasion and not through force and violence" (Arendt 1954, 27). [note: apparently the following is another editor's comment:]

design their own deliberation; 2) deliberative discourse takes place (Gutmann and Thompson 1996); 3) participation is substantive, not merely performative (Moynihan 2003; 2007); and 4) participation has the ability to become institutionalized to scale. Within the tenets of PBNYC, I focus on two norms of deliberation in tension with one another: inclusiveness and efficiency. This definition takes into consideration concepts of dynamic and iterative process (Gutmann and Thompson 2004), rational discourse (Habermas 1996), and emphasis on the publicity of discourse to promote public spirit (Chambers 2005).

This article emphasizes the role of deliberative discourse within U.S. PB, outlining how the conflicting norms of inclusiveness and efficiency have led to two opposed models of democratic deliberation: 1) result-oriented and 2) process-oriented deliberation. Results-oriented deliberation emphasizes efficiency, whereas process-oriented deliberation prizes free and inclusive discussion. Efficiency is more goal-oriented and concerned about forming projects most likely to be selected through the vote. In contrast, inclusiveness prizes diverse participant input, with less emphasis on forming "winning" projects.[2]

Why PB?

For scholars of deliberative democracy, PB offers a real-world framework to test the normative ideals of deliberation. PB can take on many different forms according to the context in which it is implemented. There exist forms of participatory democracy in the United States, such as mechanisms for citizen feedback with school boards, neighborhood policing (Fung 2004) and urban planning (Berry et al. 2006), to name but a few. In order to mark a departure between other forms of citizen engagement and PB, however, I offer a bounded definition of PB involving three aspects that make PB a unique process over other forms of democratic participation:

Participatory Budgeting is a 1) replicable decision-making process whereby citizens 2) deliberate publically over the distribution of 3) limited public resources that are instituted.[3]

[2] There was a concern that residents would be less likely to vote upon more unconventional projects. In reality, most residents selected more conventional projects that related to safety, schools, and the elderly/youth.

[3] The definitional addition of bounded resources differentiates PB in the US from Brazil where PB often does not have a clear amount of resources.

This definition requires the process be more than one ad hoc event, such as a citizen jury (Fishkin 1991) or a deliberation day (Ackerman and Fishkin 2005).[4] The deliberations must be done in public, not in the private space Rousseau outlined for the general will to be decided. Finally, funding must be clearly delineated so that a set amount of funds will be spent by the local state/government.

Why do citizens decide to participate in PB deliberations in the first place? Some citizens enter because they want to propose a specific project (material), while others enter because they want to feel a part of their community (existential) and there are varying levels of intermediate ideology at play in between (Inglehardt 1999, 1991). Inglehart (1999, 1991) notes that as human survival becomes increasingly secure, the "materialist" emphasis on psychological and economic security diminishes with an enlarged emphasis on "post-materialist" goals such as quality of life, freedom, and self-expression. As citizens' basic material needs are met there is a deeper emphasis on existential self-actualization (Maslovian 1943).[5]

PB throughout Latin America typically brings legitimacy to weak or non-existent political regimes. In contrast, PB in the US supports existing political institutions. This is partly what differentiates PB in the US from other implementations aimed at democratization, such as in Brazil. Thus, PB in the United States is more closely tied to existential self-actualization.

I use a theoretical and analytical framework that places PB in the US within an analytic tradition that harkens back to fundamental questions on citizens and politics centered around four basic tenets: 1) citizens design their own participation; 2) deliberative discourse takes place (Gutmann and Thompson 1996); 3) participation is substantive, not merely performative (Moynihan 2003; 2007); and 4) participation has the ability to become institutionalized to scale.

This framework differs from traditional literature surrounding deliberation and participation with a focus beyond engagement itself to how citizens can design their very engagement. For example, it is not enough that PBNYC creates new spaces for participation; it is vital that citizens are able to be architects of their involvement. Similarly, some scholars posit that deliberation and participation are at odds with one another (Mutz 2005). I argue that participation must have a

[4] Such as the ones sponsored by AmericaSpeaks.

[5] Tom Tyler (2006) argues that people's feelings of a process are tied not just specifically to the material outcome but related to feelings such as civic duty. Similarly, Henrik Bang (2009) notes that people who enjoy being involved are more excited by the experience itself than the material outputs.

deliberative element. Participation must be more than consultative or performative – it must be binding. Thus, it must extend participation beyond traditional deliberative dialogues. Institutionalization prevents PB from being an ad hoc or one-time-only engagement that political leadership can easily dismiss. Yet, for Participatory Budgeting to become institutionalized in the US, it needs to move beyond ideological, personal or intra-political reasons for enactment and reduce high costs of participation.[6]

Norms of Deliberation:

> When properly conducted, then, democratic politics involves *public deliberation focused on the common good,* requires some form of *manifest equality* among citizens, and *shapes the identity and interests* of citizens in ways that contribute to the formation of the public conception of the common good. (Cohen 1989, 19)

These principles outlined by Joshua Cohen underpin a modern conception of deliberative democracy. The empirical data presented in this article illustrate that two norms of deliberation, efficiency and inclusiveness, produce different and perhaps incompatible models of deliberation.

Deliberative democracy begins with the assumption that we live in pluralist democratic societies (Gutmann and Thompson 2004; Weindstock and Kahane 2010). Such societies are characterized by conflicts of interests, both politically and morally driven, and deliberative democracy aims to find new ways to understand and address such conflicts without sacrificing pluralism. Theoretically, deliberation rests on the assumption that rational discussion and exchange of views will enable a wider array of considerations to be taken into account, resulting in the ascendency of the better argument (Gutmann and Thompson 2004, Cohen 1989). In the process of deliberation citizens must be civic-minded, opening themselves up to the arguments of their fellow citizens, and ready to evince reciprocity in their conversations (Gutmann and Thompson 1996; Weindstock and Kahane 2010).

Critics contend that lacking the empowerment to make such decisions, deliberation might amount to little more than uninformed chatter (Richardson 2010). Within this line of critique it follows that most citizens, unlike informed jurors on a jury or members on a selection committee, lack the knowledge or

[6] In its current framework, participation in U.S. PB is labor-intensive, resulting in high barriers to entry and high resource and time costs to participation.

understanding to make binding and authoritative decisions (Waltzer 1999). Some go as far to suggest that deliberative democrats actually do not believe that mass citizens should be empowered, but rather use deliberative democracy to consolidate forms of elite control (Posner 2003). Modeling democracy on a "faculty workshop" stifles the range of available options and implies that political influence will go to the most learned and skilled rhetoricians (Sanders 1997).

Some critics fear that the process of deliberation will lead to problematic outcomes. Some posit that within deliberation itself, the reification of hegemonic norms such as white male patriarchy are magnified through the deliberative process (Young 1999; Mouffe 1999). Beliefs can be manipulated and induced through the process of deliberation, vitiating the "democratic" aims of the project (Stokes 1998).[7] In the end, citizens may be further balkanized and alienated from one another, as participants become more entrenched in their viewpoints and divisions widen (Sunstein 2007).

The outcomes of PBNYC are more constrained than in other prominent deliberative exercises. Therefore, some of the norms of deliberation, such as morally justified decision-making, are reduced. According to Thompson, "legitimacy prescribes the process by which, under these circumstances, collective decisions can be morally justified to those who are bound by them" (Thompson 2008, 502). Many deliberative democracy theorists posit that a decision is legitimate if it responds to reasons identified to justify a decision (Cohen 1989, 2007; Guttmann and Thompson 2004; Mendelberg 2002.) In contrast, PBNYC mandates that deliberations result in viable project proposals.

While it was pre-determined that viable projects were the desired end of deliberations, there was wide variance about *how* to decide upon projects. Were the goals of deliberations to craft the most innovative proposals or those that accurately assess tactical district needs? How should district needs be adequately determined? Should committees put forward the proposals that are most likely to be voted upon? These are some of the many questions that emerged in the course of deliberations.

The structure of PB devolved power down to individual budget committees to come up with their own answers. Some micro-level facilitators and deliberators favored putting forth "winning" projects that they thought were likely to be selected by residents at the final vote. Some other groups were less concerned

[7] See Ben Olken, "Direct Democracy and Local Public Goods: Evidence from a Field Experiment in Indonesia," *American Political Science Review* (May 2010). He finds direct citizen participation in decision-making leads to high levels of satisfaction and legitimacy.

about putting forth projects likely to win. The result was that for some groups process trumped results, and for others, vice-versa. Having the predetermined end of coming up with viable projects, while leaving the means open, resulted in variance across deliberative approaches throughout subcommittees. [8]

While deliberations were intended to forge budget proposals, the very reason citizens (as opposed to traditional elites) drove the process marks a sharp departure from status quo budgeting. Citizens participated not only to forge proposals in their area but also to engage in the basic activity of politics. Therefore, individual facilitators and in-group deliberation dynamics influenced the realization of these competing norms.

Deliberation in Action

PB in Chicago and New York took a similar form insofar as residents signed up to be budget delegates.[9] These constituents opted to work with city agencies over the course of several months to craft viable budget proposals for residents to vote upon. The topics of these committees centered on the main funding areas for discretionary funds such as Parks and Recreation, Transportation, and Education. Through a process tracing budget committees in each of the four districts implementing PB, supported with survey data and in-depth interviews, I devised a typology with two models for assessing deliberation and decision-making.

Residents signed up to act as budget delegates; they would sit on committees at neighborhood assemblies meetings within their districts. The goals of the committees were to 1) sift through the ideas presented at the neighborhood assemblies, 2) assess needs in the district through site visits, 3) deliberate on new projects, 4) work directly with agencies and 5) create new projects for the vote on March 26th 2012. For the initial budget delegate meeting each committee sifted through proposals put forth in each neighborhood assembly to assess feasibility. The district composition, bureaucratic actors and facilitator leadership/organization of each committee strongly influenced the degree to which site visits were conducted and the way in which community needs were assessed.

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[8] Should more attention be paid to the specific implementation of these ends? For instance, should there have been more top-down imposed uniformity on deliberations? PBNYC resulted in wide variance of implementations of deliberative norms. Yet, the converse would have been a non-deliberate imposition of values.

[9] Originally in Chicago the process was designed to have delegates or "community representatives" elected, but they ended up being self-selected in practice. Perhaps learning from Chicago, New York City never envisioned delegates being elected.

Facilitator Impacts

> If the participants are mostly like-minded or hold the same views before they enter into the discussion, they are not situated in the circumstances of deliberation. They do not confront the problem that deliberation is intended to address. (Thompson 2008, 502).

Facilitation resulted in two models: 1) result-oriented and 2) process-oriented. Results emphasized efficiency whereas process prized free and inclusive discussion. The following examples outline implementation of these two facilitation methods through the process of project deliberation, decision-making, and formation. Similar projects within two different deliberation paradigms were treated very differently. For example, one district pulled a project from the ballot that another included on the ballot. The role of the facilitator emerges as a critical explanatory variable in these two districts.

The behavior of facilitators in PBNYC suggests that facilitator impacts are more nuanced than some literature outlines and that there are tradeoffs between efficiency and enabling all voices to be heard. Moreover, the lack of quality control across facilitation methods questions the balance between devolving autonomy to individual committees and facilitators and the need for greater process quality control. Disparate facilitator methods created widely varying forms of deliberative discourse.

District Composition and Deliberation Typology

The structure and organization of individual city council members and district committees influenced facilitator training, organization, and resources. District committees were groups of citizens, typically asked directly by city council members, to serve a leadership role within individual districts. District committees worked directly with city council members and other organizers of PBNYC to organize the disparate parts of the process, such as neighborhood assemblies and the vote. City council members and district committees determined the level of training the facilitators received. In some cases, facilitators dropped out of the process and were replaced by members of the district committee itself and received no training. There was wide variance in the level of facilitation training within districts.

Demographic factors such as the level of heterogeneity or homogeneity along indicators of race, socio-economic status (SES), and education influenced the composition of districts. Bureaucratic constraints impacted needs assessment and fulfillment of deliberative norms within all budget committees. Individual bureaucrats working in respective city agencies were direct information sources

for budget delegates. The differences amongst bureaucrats in the four districts impacted how respective subcommittees were able to acquire information to form projects. Additionally, homogeneity or heterogeneity in the district composition affected needs impact assessment and project formation within the subcommittees.[10] Participation of individual bureaucrats and district composition were non-controllable PBNYC variables.

Levels of homogeneity and organization impacted how focused committees were on process- vs. results-oriented deliberations. Levels of homogeneity influenced the space for contestation. District organization relates to the norms emphasized to facilitators, such as ensuring a maximum number of viable projects. District factors such as composition and bureaucratic capacity relate to a facilitator's ability to influence decision-making. While influenced by these factors, individual facilitators still had agency in shaping the deliberation.

Results-Focused Model of Facilitation

Within districts with richer networks of activism, high social capital and more affluent, educated budget delegates, facilitators faced a challenge of keeping budget delegates on task. For example, in District A[11] the facilitator was a white well-educated, professional overseeing a primarily white, professional, well-educated committee, with one Asian woman, one black woman and one Orthodox Jewish male. He ensured that projects were timely and done in a constructive and fair manner, and that people did not fall behind schedule. When voting neared, he had participants email around their proposed projects prior to the meeting. He came to the meeting with extensive notes that systemically covered each project. At this meeting, people were not given the option to deliberate or discuss their proposals, with the vote scheduled for the week after. All the participants of this meeting were middle-aged or older, white, relatively affluent, and educated residents. Rather than deliberative, this meeting was highly efficient and people left with a concrete understanding of what they needed to get done.

Some were disappointed by this emphasis on efficiency. "I've been working on this project for the last five months and now it is dead," one budget delegate

[10] In more homogenous districts, where people were more familiar with one another and area needs, deliberative discourse was more accommodating. In contrast, in more heterogeneous districts residents were less familiar with one another and deliberation was sometimes contentious. The district composition impacted the nature of facilitation within deliberations. Both of these factors were unavoidable but able to be structured through skilled facilitation.

[11] PBNYC participating districts are anonymized to protect privacy of participants.

lamented. Yet the majority of people were glad the meeting was brief and efficient: “Everyone came prepared, did their homework, and our facilitator made tough calls based on agencies’ rules – we have to do what we have to do.”

The facilitator was technocratic. While he was stern he did not put forth his own preferences but rather conveyed agency information and rules for projects per instructions from the Council member’s office. The majority of budget delegates at this final meeting responded favorably to the facilitator’s results-driven approach. Yet, these were budget delegates who, for the most part, had projects that were already approved to go on the ballot. Absent from the meeting was a middle-aged, white, middle-class woman whose project had recently been rejected by city agencies. She did not attend this final budget delegate meeting and had written an email to the committee prior to this meeting outlining her frustration at the process.

This delegate made her project and frustration known to all: “I've made a board of projects for next year I am hopeful that it will get chosen next year, I was sad it didn't get chosen because I am skeptical of politicians in general – was this process really up to the people?” Next to her board of projects for the following year, she made a board for people to write criticisms and complaints of the process. By the end of the meeting, two boards were entirely filled with comments. Examples included “more outlets for citizen engagement” and “finding ways to push a progressive agenda beyond PB.”

Her projects’ inability to make the ballot raises the challenges of the results-driven model on decision-making. While highly innovative and creative, and containing both artistic and cultural elements, it involved many different agencies. This unique project faced additional bureaucratic obstacles, with each overseeing agency having their own specific and often obtuse guidelines.

Yet, part of this woman’s frustration extended beyond bureaucratic limitations of the government, and focused on the facilitator style channeled through the district committee and city council member’s office. Through instructions from the city council member and district committee, facilitators were given clear protocol for feasible projects. Therefore, facilitators did not encourage freeform deliberation leading to projects that were ineligible for funding. Part of her frustration was simply that “no one gave my project a chance because it wasn’t a cookie-cutter project.”

Other budget delegates were interested in her project. Many budget delegates expressed outrage at only being able to work on "sidewalk repairs." "I am here to do big projects to strengthen our troubled democracy," noted one budget delegate.

The results-driven model mitigated the strong opinions of budget delegates. One consequence of heavy-handed, stern facilitation was fewer opportunities for heated disagreement between participants. The absence of serious moral disagreement, in turn, short-circuited the exchange of reasoning that forms the core of the deliberative democratic ideal. Where citizens cannot disagree, they cannot learn from one another, nor can they learn to accept the validity of other ideological and moral points of view (Gutmann and Thompson 1996, 84-94).[12]

Another consequence of heavy-handed facilitation was that creative projects were often stymied before they could be considered by the group. The approach stifled the range of creative projects while maximizing the total number of projects. Having a strong facilitator prevented the delegates from straying from the task of making viable projects – especially those likely to be voted upon. Yet, a less intrusive facilitator may have opened the meeting up to broader and more democratic forms of deliberation.

In more heterogeneous districts, the results model of facilitation was able to bring together disparate viewpoints and project ideas. Through the course of deliberations two dynamics emerged: 1) strong facilitation was able to effectively guide and steer the conversation; and 2) through getting to know one another the members of the committee formed bonds that enabled them to transcend their own agendas.

In one district, District B, tensions reached such a fever pitch that one delegate exited a meeting in tears. Through the results-driven model, facilitators were able to effectively keep participants focused on forming viable projects instead of getting marred in individual personality conflicts. The results-driven approach enabled participants to effectively assess community needs and move beyond their parochial interests. Given the level of demographic heterogeneity in many of these committees, the results-driven model was instructive. Strong facilitation also enabled genuine relationship building between diverse participants. These organic relationships formed during the process of deliberation were effective at enabling decision-making.

Process-Focused Model of Facilitation:

[12] For some, learning to navigate the economy of moral disagreement is a critical educational component of deliberation.

Within more heterogeneous districts, process-focused facilitation often led to genuine grassroots empowerment; the tradeoff was that the process was significantly less efficient. In District C, the understaffed city council member's office created a leadership vacuum that was filled by the district committee. The facilitator was not originally trained to be a facilitator and was plucked from the district committee to facilitate a diverse group composed of one black young professional woman, one black professional male, one black community activist, one white professional/activist, one black high school student, and a white British man living in a homeless shelter.

The facilitator was already burdened with community commitments and missed as many meetings as she facilitated, due to other obligations or health ailments. As a result, the facilitator's roles and responsibilities became distributed between two other members of the group. One, an older white woman, pressed the group to embrace creative proposals; the other, a younger black woman, urged the group to focus on pragmatic proposals with a higher likelihood of success. When the facilitator was present, either in person or via email, she tended to offer her own strong opinions in lieu of providing neutral arbitration between the various positions. A meeting intended to solidify concrete proposals started 45 minutes late. The discussion was peripatetic and circuitous:

> A[13]: "When you reach out to the agencies you realize they have thought of these things but they don't have the resources, funding or otherwise."
> B[14]: "When parks guy came everything is so expensive, and overhead costs are ridiculous."
> The Facilitator[15]: "Want to disband politics and start over?"
> *Laughter*

Discussion continued with people outlining opinions and ideas for proposals covering an expansive range of proposals and projects. The facilitator ensured that everyone's opinion and voice was heard. She made people feel comfortable with one another and created an environment of ease where everyone's opinion felt valued – including frequently adding her own views. At the end of the meeting, consensus was not reached and there were no clear next steps to turn these ideas into action.

As a result of this process-focused deliberation, a similar project that had been vetoed by the facilitator under the results-driven model ended up making the ballot of projects residents could vote upon. At a final meeting before the vote,

[13] High School Black Female
[14] Older White Professional/Activist Female
[15] Middle-Aged Black Activist

Council members and organizers tried to explain to budget delegates why their proposal would neither be viable nor have a high probably of being voted on. The facilitator was absent at that meeting, therefore the group self-directed itself. Even when told in the starkest terms that their creative project would probably not be turned into a realistic project, they did not make a results-based decision. Rather, the four participants who showed up to the last meeting self-facilitated a process-focused deliberation culminating in a decision to continue with their creative project.[16] When given the option to make a results-based decision they decided to prize deliberation above all. Ultimately, their project was put on the ballot, received a low number of votes, and was not chosen by the residents. Yet, all the participants were still confident in their decisions. "Even though our project was not chosen, we began the process to put forth the type of proposal we want to better our neighborhood. This is just the beginning," one delegate recounted.

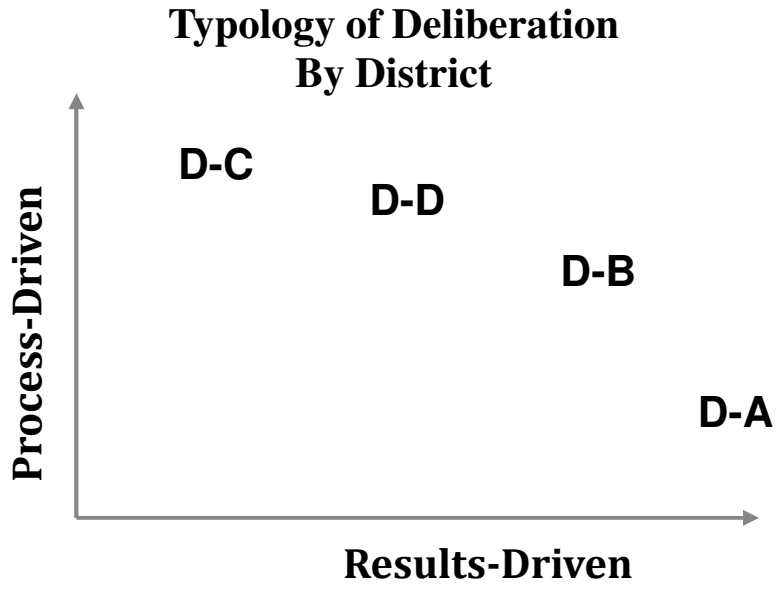
Deliberative Lessons

> There is wide variation along every single dimension of the PBNYC process. But that is okay. If the purpose is civic engagement and encouraging participation we do not need perfect uniformity across every committee. – PBNYC Budget Committee Facilitator

Empirical examples of PBNYC deliberation and decision-making place deliberations on a spectrum ranging from process- to results-oriented. Results-driven deliberation prized project feasibility (see figure 1 below). In contrast, process-driven deliberative models prized participant expression. As a result, similar projects within two disparate deliberation paradigms were treated very differently. Variation suggests that decision-making in PBNYC exceeds citizens' ability to make collective decisions with rational discourse. Rather, the structural conditions of district constitution, bureaucratic constraints, and facilitator skill impacted decision-making. These conditions impacted the degree to which a specific committee had more results- or process-driven deliberation.

Figure I:

[16] While critics may contend these were "usual suspects" participating, the process in fact brought out citizens who are not typically engaged in civic life. Out of the 7 people in this committee, I would classify only two as "usual suspects." The others were a mix of already active citizens, but for whom PB represents a deepening of their democratic engagement. At least two members of this committee were entirely new to civic engagement, with PB marking the first time they were involved in politics.



PBNYC districts have been anonymized to protect privacy of participants.

Each district contained variation pertaining to implementation of deliberative norms on specific committees. By structurally creating room for on-the-ground variation and creativity, budget delegates were able to utilize their unique backgrounds. Greater uniformity may have led to higher quality control, but would also have meant imposing a top-down structure, stifling subcommittee creativity. In theory, greater top-down control would have been the most efficient way to conduct deliberation and decision-making. In practice, the implementation of deliberation and decision-making were highly dependent upon individual facilitators and deliberators. Committees were beholden to facilitators with wide variance in background, organization, and time commitment to PBNYC.

The freedom for individual committees to determine their own deliberative norms is contrasted with the limited forms of freedom of participants before entering in the PBNYC process. The need to generate "feasible" projects tightly constrains deliberation. The ability for district level factors to impact micro-level decision-making fostered citizen creativity at the expense of quality control. Yet, it is unclear whether another deliberative model might have performed better.

Within heterogeneous districts, the results-driven model may have stifled discussion and been ineffective. The process model in heterogeneous districts

appears to have intensified disagreement and encouraged speculative discussions divorced from concrete policy issues. Likewise, the process-driven model in some homogenous, affluent districts may have resulted in discursive conversation without end. The results-focused model, buttressed with opportunities for engagement, suggests that structured deliberation and participation can be mutually reinforcing. Without face-to-face opportunities for relationship formation, such as through online deliberation, the results-driven model will prevent genuine deliberation discourse.

Deliberation and decision-making within PBNYC can fulfill deliberative norms while taking on multifaceted forms, some more focused on process and others more on results. While the results- and process-driven model prized different ends, both models enabled forms of deliberation. The conflicting goals of PB – short-term service delivery and long-term civic engagement – require 1) structured deliberation and 2) conveying specific information, while providing 3) opportunities for genuine relationship formation.

Heavy-handed results-driven facilitation resulted in a great number of viable budget proposals while stifling citizen creativity. The results model too tightly enforced boundaries whereas the process model was too expansive without explaining the necessity of feasible proposals. At times, a focus on results enabled productive conversation. Especially in more heterogeneous districts, with more avenues for disagreement, results-structured deliberation opened up spaces for genuine deliberation and discussion. In more homogenous and less conflict-prone districts, the results-driven model runs the risk of dissuading innovative proposals and leading to greater disillusionment.

The results model leaves less room for the idiosyncratic nature of deliberators or ideologies. However, a strict commitment to end results is within itself an ideology. Ideology can also be present in the process-driven model. One potential weaknesses of facilitation is allowing ideology to infuse deliberations. The ideal approach seems to be structured around results while allowing for diversity of opinions and potentially less realistic proposals through process. Facilitators ought not to favor results above all, but rather strive to balance genuine deliberation with forming concrete and feasible proposals.

Conclusion:

The evidence shows that deliberation and decision-making in PBNYC can take multifaceted forms; some prizing process and others results. While the results- and process-driven model prized different ends, both models enabled a type of

deliberation fulfilling many deliberative norms while evincing the tension between efficiency and inclusiveness.

Yet, why do people choose to participate in PB in the first place? I argue people enter into PB for both material and immaterial reasons. The tension between efficiency and inclusiveness illuminates micro-level deliberators and facilitators managing these dual reasons for engagement. Material reasons include a specific project proposal while immaterial reasons are focused on less tangible goods such as increased community inclusion, civic knowledge, or stronger relations with elected officials. I argue that U.S. PB thus far produced modest material results, such as more innovative projects, and substantial immaterial or existential results.

Comparing projects voted upon through PB with projects implemented by elected officials prior to PB illustrates that PB primarily produces projects that are similar to those prior to PB. However, the residents who design the projects, even if these are similar in form to pre-PB projects, more accurately assess district needs. The innovative projects that depart from pre-PB projects offer citizens a rare opportunity to flex their citizenship muscle in a creative outlet.[17]

Even the *most* innovative PB projects disprove critics who contend that ordinary citizens are not able to effectively understand the intricacies of city budgets or put forth rational proposals. PB districts produced results no worse than non-PB districts, and in some respects their projects more creatively and effectively addressed community needs.[18] Moreover, participating in the PB process itself is a transformative civic act for participants.

The most transformative existential output of PB is the new identity it gives its participants. Participants experienced a greater community inclusion and deeper, more organic relationships with one another, their elected officials, and their neighborhoods. Specifically, residents appear before other human beings *qua* citizen, not in their more familiar capacities of family member, employee, or customer (Arendt 1954). Part of the reason people participate in PBNYC is to act in this unique arena as a citizen.

PB provides new opportunities for citizens – as architects of their collective life – to use speech and reason to combat traditional power dynamics. On the local level PB creates a micro-space, a modern day *polis,* where citizens can use speech and

[17] In my dissertation I find, using my criteria, that 62% of all projects PBNYC voted upon were conventional and 38% innovative. In contrast, matched pairs not implementing PB had innovative projects 15% of the time.

[18] Given the current literature, even a "null" finding would be noteworthy.

reason to create new forms of engagement and participation. Integral to this conception of the *polis* is freedom (Arendt 1954, 30)[19]. Arendt further explains:

> The organized polis is the highest form of human communal life and thus something specifically human, at equal remove from the gods, who can exist in and of themselves in full freedom and independence, and animals, whose communal life, if they have such a thing, is a matter of necessity (Arendt 2005, 116).

The *polis* is the "highest form of human communal life" because man has the option to attend a *polis* and not be subjected to another human being. The option to engage in political life is an expression of freedom. The *polis* enables individuals to escape the confines of daily life. Within the *polis* an individual's actions can become timeless and transcend temporality and mortality. The *raison d'etre* of the *polis* is to enable humans to achieve "immortal fame" (Arendt 2005, 197). The desire to distinguish oneself is a principal reason citizens participate in PBNYC in the first place.

Perhaps the ability to use reason-giving speech within PB will enable a similar conception of the *polis* to emerge in the contemporary United States. I have shown that fulfilling the goals of deliberation will be neither monolithic nor easily implemented. But it may still be true that PB in the US can be a viable model for deepening democracy and helping modern citizens achieve the ancient virtues of politics.

[19] I am building upon Arendt's *stylized* Aristotle—many classicists think Arendt gets Aristotle wrong in some important ways.

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