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Plebiscite Deliberations: Self-Determination & Deliberative Democracy in Guam

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Abstract

In 2015, Guåhan (Guam), an unincorporated territory of the United States, could hold a plebiscite to determine its political status. This self-determination plebiscite will give the electorate the opportunity to deliberate on one of three internationally recognized political plans for the future: Statehood, Independence or Free Association. This monumental event has received little attention in the United States, with little media coverage appearing despite the recent self-determination plebiscites held around the world (e.g., Puerto Rico and the Falkland Islands). Nonetheless, the U.S. has a large stake in this election process. The people of Guåhan are U.S. citizens, yet are simultaneously denied full voting rights in U.S. presidential elections. Thus, the opportunities for political participation on Guåhan are based upon a dependent relationship with the U.S. Moments of political participation in Guåhan occur primarily through actions that both depend upon and reinforce communicative channels directed against the U.S. nation-state. The phenomenon of political dependency creates a complex situation for public deliberation amongst the Guåhan electorate. Even in Guåhan there is much confusion, contradiction, and deliberation concerning plebiscite eligibility and the ballot initiatives on the political status options. Thus, we propose a process of public deliberation, facilitated through educational programming, to analyze the arguments for each plebiscite plan and encourage even wider public deliberation. Drawing from a rich international tradition of school debate and deliberative voting guide reforms, we develop a detailed proposal aimed at both increasing voter education and turnout in the Pacific. Our proposal also stresses the pressing need for more communication scholarship on the political connections between the U.S. and Guåhan.

Introduction

Guåhan (Guam) is an unincorporated territory of the United States and stands as one of the "oldest colonial dependencies in the world" (Van Dyke et al., 1996; Naiman, 2010).[1] In 1950 the Organic Act of Guam designated the island as an unincorporated territory of the United States. The resulting ambiguity has resulted in decades of deliberation concerning the island's sovereignty and residents' political powers (Perez, 2005). For example, the Organic Act granted U.S. citizenship to Guåhan residents, yet that citizenship includes unique restrictions (Gutierrez, 2003; Hofschneider, 2011; Camacho & Monnig, 2010). For example, Guåhan residents can vote in local elections and plebiscites, but they are barred from presidential votes outside of the primaries. Although Guåhan does elect a delegate to the U.S. House of Representatives, that individual serves as a delegate, rather than a representative, which severely limits his or her voting opportunities and political capital (Stade, 1998; Underwood, 2013; U.S. Department of Insular Affairs, 2008).[2] On an individual level, residents must prove both U.S. citizenship and residency on the island to have voting eligibility. One of the few advantages available to eligible Guåhan voters, who are legally defined as "Chamorros,"[3] is the ability to participate in plebiscites, including self-determination plebiscites, which determine the political ties between the island and the U.S.

The anticipated 2015 Guåhan plebiscite will offer a unique opportunity to investigate the complexities of public deliberation and the political milieu of America throughout other unincorporated territories such as American Samoa, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (Cagurangan, 2013). In preparation for the plebiscite, the Guam Election Commission is registering qualified "Chamorro" voters and intends to create a public education campaign when funds are appropriated.[4] Yet these projects are impeded by a lack of funding and the small sample of prior plebiscite deliberations.

Thus, we seek to address the question: How should voters deliberate and select among the self-determination options for the 2015 Guåhan plebiscite? We

[1] We use indigenous names and spellings for the island Guåhan (Guam) and its people, Chamorus (Chamorros) to avoid the Spanish and U.S. colonial terminology. This decision follows other Chamoru and Pacific scholars by taking ownership of otherwise borrowed legally sanctioned names for the island and its indigenous inhabitants. The Chamorro Language Commission changed the spelling of Chamorro to Chamoru in 1994; the spelling has not been officially adopted, however (see Aguon, 2006; Dames, 2003; Monnig 2007).

[2] Delegates from U.S. territories are non-voting members of the House of Representatives. These delegates serve more of a lobbying function due to their limited voting rights as members.

[3] The Guam Decolonization Registry registers those eligible to vote in the plebiscite. Registrants must be "Native Inhabitants of Guam," defined as those who became U.S. citizens by virtue of the 1950 Organic Act and their blood descendants (3 G.C.A. § 21001).

[4] Historically, the Government of Guam has funded electoral education campaigns but this is no longer feasible given the current fiscal circumstances of the government (see Natividad, 2012).

propose a unique forum for prompting public engagement by facilitating the creation of voting guides and wider public deliberation through high-school classroom activities. We begin by reviewing Guåhan's historical movements for self-determination. We provide a brief review of contemporary scholarship on public deliberation and self-determination, then consider the utility of student-produced voting guides and student-centric deliberative forums. Finally, we suggest modes for future research and project evaluation, with an eye toward enriching deliberative scholarship more broadly.

Guåhan Self-Determination

Guåhan's political status has been ambiguous since 1898, shortly after the U.S. took over the island from Spain (Political Status Education Coordinating Commission [PSECC], 1994). The first large scale effort to revise the island's "unincorporated" status resulted in the 1980 Commission on Self-Determination[5] and the resulting 1982 plebiscite.[6] This plebiscite and two more votes held in 1987[7] selected commonwealth status and resulted in the Guam Commonwealth Act (GCA). Commonwealth status entails substantial self-government over internal issues and a degree of autonomy, while residents enjoy U.S. citizenship and federal laws and policies control foreign affairs (Lansing & Hipolito, 1998). This status derives its legitimacy from the consent of citizens of the entity and the U.S. Congress (Van Dyke, 1992; Lansing & Hipolito, 1998).[8] Yet Guam's status was never changed due to a series of revisions and delays in the U.S. Congress (Lansing & Hipolito, 1998).[9] In 1997, after years of legislative inaction by the

[5] The commission's purpose was "to ascertain the desire of the people of Guam as to their future political relationship with the United States of America" (PSECC, 1994, p. 138).

[6] This plebiscite was unsuccessful. None of the status options received the required 51% of the votes, which led to the two highest vote-getters, commonwealth and statehood, moving to a runoff election in which commonwealth prevailed. The people's mandate to seek commonwealth status led to a series of discussions, public hearings, and working sessions with Washington, D.C. from 1983 until the Guam Commonwealth Act (GCA) was drafted in 1986 (see Natividad 2012; Lansing & Hipolito, 1998; Ada & Bettis 1996).

[7] The Commonwealth Act was voted on and approved by the people in two separate plebiscites in 1987 and introduced in six consecutive Congresses (the 100th through the 105th) (see Alvarez, 2011; Ada & Bettis, 1996).

[8] Van Dyke (1992) explains that commonwealth status has distinct meanings in different contexts, but for insular political communities it is a flexible status designed to allow for adjustment as appropriate in the relationship between the U.S. and the insular political community. Lansing and Hipolito (1998) make clear that the GCA provided for mutual consent in decision-making with the U.S. regarding Guåhan's internal affairs, and U.S. government control in areas of foreign affairs and defense.

[9] The Commonwealth Act faced trouble from U.S. federal officials who urged revisions before introducing the bill to Congress. The Guam Commission on Self-Determination decided instead to present the Commonwealth Act to President Reagan and the House of Representatives and U.S. Senate in 1988. A hearing on the Guam Commonwealth Act was held during the 105th Congress,

U.S. federal government, the Self-Determination Commission was replaced by a newly formed Commission on Decolonization[10] tasked with researching and conducting a plebiscite on the three decolonization processes recognized by the United Nations (UN): statehood, independence, and free association. Statehood, if selected, would make Guam the fifty-first state, resulting in equal political and economic rights for Guåhan residents (Bradley, 2000). Independence would designate Guåhan as an independent nation with complete and exclusive control over its internal and external affairs and its own constitution (Bradley, 2000). Free association would result in continued ambiguity whereby Guåhan would establish or continue close association with other nations, but Guåhan would not be incorporated into the U.S. (Gutierrez, 2003). The advantage of this status is that it signals that one nation (here, Guåhan) will delegate powers to the other (here, the U.S.), resulting in uniquely close policies not commonly found between nations (Troutman, 1996). This status is also difficult to define, however, since free association is "defined only by the agreement for free association itself" (Rosenblatt, 1988).[11]

The Commission on Decolonization planned to consider these options during the November 2000 and 2002 election cycles. Yet convening a plebiscite formally required the registration of at least 70% of qualified "inhabitant" voters (Kerrigan, 2011),[12] but voter registration proved problematic for at least two reasons. First, two separate Guåhan voting registries exist, one listing all voters in Guåhan and a second listing only Guåhan residents who are entitled to self-determination plebiscite votes. This second registry is not race-based but instead defines voting rights by ancestry and residency.[13] In addition, voter registration for the plebiscite was further confused by differences between United Nations and U.S. standards for the recognition of indigenous peoples' rights and political power (Ada & Bettis, 1996; Van Dyke et al., 1996). The United Nations recognizes that the native inhabitants of a "non-self governing territory" have the right to vote and exercise collective self-determination through a decolonization process (Guam, 2011). Difficulties related to voter registration resulted in delaying the 2002 plebiscite, and all discussion of plebiscite voting was silenced

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in 1997, but no further legislative action was taken. Guåhan officials have now ended their pursuit of Commonwealth status for the island.

[10] Guam Public Law 23-147 created the Commission on Decolonization (hereafter referred to as "the Commission").

[11] The shift to the UN decolonization options rendered moot Guåhan's efforts to achieve commonwealth status.

[12] This percentage requirement was repealed in 2012 under Guam Bill 154-31 § 2110.

[13] The Chamorro Registry defines "native inhabitants" as those who were inhabitants of Guam by 1899, those who were temporarily absent from the island at that time, and those born on the island before 1800 and their descendants. In contrast, the Guam Decolonization Registry defines "native inhabitants" as those who became U.S. citizens under the 1950 Organic Act of Guam and their descendants.

until the 2011 election of Governor Eddie Baza Calvo (Underwood, 2013). The revitalization of support for the plebiscite has been linked to political change, but also to community concerns regarding the U.S. military buildup in Guåhan as bases are closed in Japan (Kerrigan, 2011).[14]

The anticipated 2015 plebiscite will be organized by the Commission on Decolonization and has already sparked voter registration campaigns and scholarly position papers from the respective taskforces. Voter education has received little attention, however (Quintanilla, 2012). In 2012, the Commission worked on a request for U.S. Department of the Interior funding to support a local education program about the options for political status, but this request has not yet been formally submitted for approval (Alvarez, 2012). The largest problem is that voter education currently focuses on instructing residents about voter registration—i.e., on determining who may and may not participate in the plebiscite—rather than on helping residents to deliberate about the options to be determined by the plebiscite. Some voters, citing the 1987 vote that was not respected by the U.S. Congress, have also expressed concern about enforcement, given that the plebiscite is a non-binding vote (van Dyke, 1992; Lansing & Hipolito, 1998; Torres, 2012). Therefore this proposal addresses how voter guides and public deliberative forums could tackle these needs of answering concerns about the voting process while encouraging deliberation about the plebiscite options.

Self-Determination Plebiscites and Voting Procedures

Self-determination plebiscites are an internationally recognized mechanism of recourse for determining the legitimacy of control over particular geographic spaces and populations (Barker, 2005; Hendrix, 2008; Kly & Kly, 2001, 2006). In this case, the UN Charter and resolutions as well as international conventions grant the "people" or "inhabitants" of Guåhan the right to self-determination (Aguon, 2008-2009, 2010-2011). Yet how should voters deliberate on and select between the UN-recognized self-determination options? This proposal, which aims both to support deliberation and to pose critical questions regarding the deliberation, is informed by scholarship concerning direct democracy and public debate. We believe that when voters are reasonably well informed, they will make choices consistent with their interests and values (Gastil, 2004). Yet we are concerned that past plebiscites and current voter-educational activities might prevent Guåhan residents from voting in a way that represents their intentions.

[14] Governor Calvo's meeting with the Commission coincided with his letter to President Barack Obama officially announcing the Commission on Decolonization and detailing the island's intentions to seek political self-determination pursuant to the UN charter and UN resolutions 1514 and 1541. The full text of Calvo's letter highlights the significance of the self-determination issue for the local administration.

Deliberative democracy emphasizes quality public participation regarding public issues (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004). But public participation is not always aimed at inclusion, as both public forums and voting systems have been used at times to strip minority communities of their rights (Gastil, 2000, 2008; McBride, 2005). More recently, multiple states have ratified legislation prohibiting marriage between homosexuals (Abrajano, 2010). These examples illustrate the need for culturally appropriate frameworks to address the exclusion of minority populations from the deliberation and voting contexts. Public deliberation and direct voting processes do not always increase the autonomy of all voters or residents of a jurisdiction. In the case of Guåhan, the plebiscite will be determined by a community of eligible voters from a population of 160,000 residents.[15] While this is a small and relatively cohesive voting pool compared to a U.S. state,[16] achieving a "yes" vote on any one option in the Guåhan plebiscite will not be an easy task. Peabody and Woolley (2011) have argued that convincing a public to vote "yes" is more difficult than persuading them to vote "no." In the 2015 Guåhan plebiscite, we expect even more difficulty as voters must choose, not between a simple "yes" or "no" on one option, but between three UN-recognized options: statehood, independence, and free association.

The recommendations of our proposal flow from the rich scholarship regarding national referendums in Europe (De Vreese & Semetko, 2004; Fossum & Menéndez, 2005; Smith, 2012), Canada (Lea, 2006; LeDuc, 2011; Warren & Pearse, 2008;), New Zealand (Aimer & Miller, 2002; Levine & Roberts, 1993), and the U.S. (Fournier et. al., 2011; Gastil, 2008). Yet we have been careful to consider limitations regarding the applicability of this literature about independent nations to Guåhan's ambiguous status. Further, we have reviewed studies of referendums in Puerto Rico (Declet, 2001; Malavet, 2000; Medina, 2009-2010; Monge, 1997; Napoli, 1996) that point to important parallels with Guåhan's situation, but that literature is of limited applicability to Guåhan due to the differences between Puerto Rico's commonwealth status and Guåhan's position as an unincorporated territory.[17] Accordingly, this study seeks to engage and enrich this body of literature by examining self-determination plebiscites in the

[15] Demographic data from the 2000 and 2010 U.S. Census Bureau show that the Guåhan population is comprised of an estimated 37% Chamoru, 26% Filipino, 11% other Pacific Islander, 7% Caucasian, 6% Asian, 2% other ethnic origin, and 10% mixed.

[16] Further, the participation of the indigenous Chamoru communities, who are not a minority in Guåhan but are a minority within the broader U.S. electorate, may have a profound impact on decision making since they are among those eligible to vote for self-determination. While U.S. citizens in the fifty states, faced with a matter as weighty as self-determination, might expect their federal representatives to initiate deliberations about it in Congress, that option is not available to Guam's delegate to Congress. Accordingly, the plebiscite is the only means of introducing such deliberation and voting concerning the issue of self-determination for Guåhan.

[17] Puerto Rico is an organized territory of the U.S. with commonwealth status. The scholarship on Puerto Rico is much more abundant than that of Guåhan.

Pacific. In what follows, we argue that increasing public deliberation—specifically through the elementary and secondary school curricula—will educate the electorate, increase voter turnout, and work to establish a norm of public deliberation in Guåhan.

Proposal Details

To address these difficulties regarding voter education and public deliberation concerning Guåhan self-determination, we propose a substantial increase in educational programing regarding the upcoming plebiscite through (1) in-class argument analysis in middle and high schools, and (2) community presentations. Academics have argued that both educators and the media must bear the responsibility of educating voters (Moses, 2007; Sondheimer & Green, 2010), yet much of this scholarship addresses university education (Moses, 2007) while devoting little attention to K-12 schools. We argue that providing voter-educational programing in the middle school and high school grades 6 through 12, not only provides necessary skills, but also draws from the schools' networks of communities, family members, and friends, thereby expanding the reach of such education.

Argument Analysis

In-class argument analysis asks students to examine the arguments related to the upcoming plebiscite. This would require a review of Guåhan's history, a study of American and international legislation regarding self-determination votes, and a thorough understanding of the three plebiscite options: statehood, independence, and free association.[18] The design of this classroom activity will be informed by previous research on deliberative pedagogy (Enslin, Pendlebury, & Tjiattas, 2001; Gastil, 2008; Griffin, 2011; Kroll, 2005; Levinson, 2002; McKinney & Chattopadhyay, 2007; Parker, 2003; Waghid, 2007). Further, community members could be incorporated into this process as oral history interviewees who would narrate the previous plebiscite votes: Those who voted in the 1982 plebiscite would be invited to reflect on their experience of process. Additionally, students would be tasked with researching the legal definitions of the plebiscite three options.

To be sure, community members and activists in Guåhan are already working to educate the public regarding the definition of each of the plebiscite options; such education, however, must often work to counteract false or misleading information about the plebiscite options distributed by the local media. Our recommendation assists in dispelling these myths by using the classroom as a

[18] This is part of the proposed messaging for an education campaign, but would also need to include other elements (see Natividad, 2012).

place of education to facilitate inquiry about political advocacy. As students investigate and begin to classify arguments as supporting one of the three plebiscite options, they may in turn inspire the community to better understand how each option is likely to affect the political status of Guåhan.[19]

Following the completion of their research, students will be tasked with creating voting guides. Such documents will follow the framework of voting guides produced in the U.S. state of Washington (Ackerman & Fishkin 2005), but will only assess the three Guåhan plebiscite options, rather then a full slate of ballot measures. This process mimics that of the Citizens Jury, which brings together community members for four days of deliberation about a specific policy issue (Jefferson Center 2004; Carlson & Crosby, 2013). The critical difference is that we propose that middle and high school students, who by and large are below voting age, be the ones to conduct the deliberation and production of the voting guides. Because elementary and secondary school-aged youth comprise approximately 25% of the island's population (Bureau of Statistics and Plans, 2012) and generally maintain active involvement in their communities,[20] their views on public matters are taken seriously by adult residents of Guåhan. Thus these voter guides, written by students for their local communities, would likely receive respectful consideration from, and have substantial appeal for, Guåhan voters. Because these deliberative guides would be constructed by students, many of whom are not yet able to vote, they would likely provide a more straightforward and accessible analysis, and perhaps a more nuanced perspective, than voter guides produced by political advocacy organizations. These deliberative voting guides written by students will not and cannot replace scholarship already underway concerning the plebiscite. Rather, the student-produced guides are intended to serve as a gateway for the interested, but perhaps less-informed or less-educated, voter who needs a springboard to access more sophisticated or scholarly deliberations about the plebiscite.

Given the budget shortfalls of the Government of Guam, the voting guides produced by students will need to be paid for and printed by external sources.[21] Federal funding could be appropriated through measures similar to the U.S. 2014

[19] This same exercise is employed in many other classrooms and at other deliberative events, particularly those occurring at the University of Guam and those organized by the Guam Legislature's Public Policy Institute (see Natividad, 2012).

[20] For the 2011-2012, total enrollment for grades K-12 was 40,262 students, with 12,469 students enrolled in the ninth through twelfth grades. The total student population comprises 25% of Guam's overall population, of which ninth- through twelfth-grade students account for 12.8% (Bureau of Statistics and Plans, 2012, Tables 6-10, 6-11). Further, ninth- through twelfth-grade students maintain active community involvement by participating in Chamorro cultural groups, programs and events hosted by the Public Policy Institute of the Guam Legislature, and other extracurricular activities.

[21] The Guam Commission on Decolonization has been tasked by Guam Public Law 23-146 with providing public education regarding the plebiscite (Guam, 2011, § 2109), but has no funding for implementing the educational campaign at this time.

Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill, which recommends the allocation of $2,500,000 for a Puerto Rico plebiscite.[22] Once funding has been secured, the guides will immediately become available online (Freelon et al., 2012) and will be distributed in print in core community locations such as churches, schools, village fiestas, bingo halls, and shopping centers. Additionally, the guides will be presented to the community during a series of public deliberations.

Community Presentation

Many researchers have addressed the efficacy of voting guides, particularly in rural locations whose residents lack access to voting materials or public deliberative events (Ackerman & Fishkin, 2005; Fournier et al., 2011; Freelon et. al., 2012; Schkade et al., 2007). We argue, however, that in smaller, more cohesive communities such as Guåhan, stand-alone voting guides are insufficient. What is needed instead to improve both voter turnout and deliberation is a broad-based forum for discussion. Therefore, the second portion of this proposal is that the middle and high school students, who have recently analyzed the plebiscite and created voting guides, participate as debaters in a series of public deliberations. Using a public debate format, which gathers together both students and adult experts, these deliberations will investigate the three plebiscite options on a public stage.

Student participation has a long history of invigorating deliberation, whether held in the classroom or in public settings (Dukalskis & Trapp, 2008; van Eemeren et al., 1995; Fine, 2001; Miller, 2007; Mitchell, 1998; Littlefield, 2001; Inoue, 1994; Suzuki, 2002). Students also have knowledge and skill sets that add value to political campaigns and energize voters (Hollander & Longo, 2008; Ingle et al., 2012). The design of these second-stage student deliberations would draw from this rich body of literature, which combines Asian, European, and American debating traditions, much in the same way that Guåhan's schools respond to the diverse and multi-ethnic heritage of their students. There are twenty-three schools (public and private) on Guåhan that offer ninth- through twelfth-grade education. These schools will be eligible for participation in these second-stage deliberations, and the student debates will be modeled after the National Forensic League procedure already used in Guåhan. This structure utilizes in-class training debates, college volunteers, and competitive tournaments. By integrating classroom activities and public deliberation, however, this project will reach a broader community than that of contest-only debate. Using the League's method would both allow the students to practice their arguments before reaching a larger

[22] Funding is recommended through the Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (Byrne/JAG) (U. S. House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations, 2013, p. 52).

stage, and create a competitive atmosphere that will garner an audience at the debates.

Debate events will begin with a discussion of the assignment and distribution of print copies of the voting guides to audience members. Groups of students and adult experts, formed into three teams, each of which will advocate one of the plebiscite options, will present a series of speeches. The format will consist of a round of student speeches followed by a round of expert speeches. Then the audience will be invited to pose questions to the speakers. Finally, the students will provide a round of rebuttal speeches. Audience polls will be taken at the beginning and end of the event, with results provided to the audience immediately following each poll. A winner for the debate will not be announced; rather, the moderator will conclude the event by congratulating and thanking all participants and encouraging the audience to interact with participants at a closing reception.

Voter Efficacy and Project Evaluation

Past efforts at self-determination education have resulted in complex publications and debates, which while academically fascinating are seldom accessible to voters. This proposal, by engaging whole communities through local schools, helps voters build the foundational knowledge needed to engage in these complex deliberations. We are confident that this innovative proposal will prompt insights about the nature of public deliberation, self-determination, and elections among minority populations. As argued by Keith (2007) and Gastil (2000, 2008), the resulting process of engaged inquiry will provide the skills necessary to motivate the public toward deliberation and participation as a voting citizenry.

A project of this scope is necessary given that plebiscites rarely receive national media attention (Viernes Perez, 2009). Within U.S. media and news coverage, there is a complete lack of regard for Guåhan and no significant media attention directed toward island politics (Natividad & Kirk, 2010). Scholars attribute this neglect in large part to the island's dependent status, which in turn influences local media and public-opinion formation (Dalisay, 2012; Perez, 2002).[23] Although Guåhan's self-determination efforts are largely invisible within mainstream news media, the complexity of the Guåhan case demands attention and presents a great opportunity for increasing deliberation in Guåhan, as well as in other, similar electoral contexts. This deliberation proposal will be particularly

[23] Mainstream U.S. media attention is often directed to Guåhan only during natural disasters, after controversial remarks by elected officials, or in the midst of investigations over political corruption on the island (see also Dalisay, 2009, 2012).

salient in areas where the electorate is in someway excluded from full political participation and/or comprises a minority demographic.[24]

The Guåhan self-determination plebiscite of 2015 presents a unique occasion for research regarding a small electorate in a high-stakes decision-making process. Accordingly, subjects for research regarding this plebiscite will be selected through snowball sampling, a recruitment method particularly applicable when the study concerns a sensitive issue and requires the knowledge of insiders to locate people through social networks (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981; Browne, 2005; Ingle et al., 2012). The initial sample will consist of individuals who attended the public deliberations at high schools; those study respondents will be enlisted to refer other potential participants. Those referred will receive the paper voter guide from one of the community locations and will be instructed on how to access the online platforms that distributed the guides. This research will need to be funded through external sources, and will be assessed by the Guam Commission on Decolonization which evaluates the political status for the island.

This locus of research can be mined in three ways. First, teachers and researchers alike can conduct evaluations of the student participants before and after the plebiscite. The assessment can be based on ongoing observations and questionnaires about student involvement in the initial argument-analysis portion of the program, and measurements can also be made about student engagement in deliberative discussions with their communities. Second, individuals attending or participating in the second-stage public debates or in community deliberations sparked by the students' deliberations can be interviewed in advance of the plebiscite.[25] Additionally, follow-up surveys of the members of the snowball sample can be used to further assess individual deliberations after the voting guides have been distributed at student events, online, and at community meeting places. These surveys will be distributed by mail or, due to the large number of landline telephones on the island, conducted via telephone.[26]

These methods may help evaluate the efforts of our two-part proposal for increasing public deliberation through education and community projects concerning the self-determination plebiscite. Nonetheless, there are limitations to

[24] This proposal will strive to address the limitations of earlier efforts, which have been criticized for failing to reach individuals or for targeting messaging campaigns too narrowly (see Natividad, 2012).

[25] See Gastil et al. (2012) for discussion of direct observations of ongoing deliberative events, and for assessments of deliberative structures. See Black et al. (2010) for explanations of self-assessment measures of deliberation.

[26] See Dalisay (2009, 2012) for a discussion of measurement methods, Guåhan print newspaper readership and messages, and opinion expression on local political issues. In many ways these approaches are consistent with previous efforts organized on the island (see Natividad, 2012). This proposal builds from those efforts and seeks to widen the scope and reach of self-determination education.

these methods. These include bias of the respondent-driven sample arising from selection on the basis of social networks, and the limited generalizability of the results of the research due to the lack of a representative.

Conclusion

Our two-part plan addresses the need for greater education and clarity concerning the 2014 self-determination plebiscite. In-class investigation and discussion, community reporting, and public debates will set an example for deliberation among all Guåhan residents. Such an example is necessary given the dearth of public deliberation about Guåhan political issues at the U.S. national level, as Guåhan residents are currently denied the right to vote in U.S. presidential elections and lack effective voting representation in the U.S. Congress.

We believe that this proposal will encourage voters of Guåhan to enter into deeper deliberations to investigate the three plebiscite options of statehood, complete independence, and free association. Deliberation about these three choices regarding self-determination stands to shift the tide in the political engagement of Guåhan residents toward empowerment; as a model our proposal may also encourage deliberative engagement regarding the relationships between the U.S. and other territories. The deliberative design we propose aims to foster conscientious voting, community understanding, and international attention for this critical vote. We hope that this proposal can perhaps bring a much-needed element of participatory democracy to this island context, which currently faces a democratic deficiency at the heart of U.S.-territorial relations.

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