University of Alberta

The Deliberative Experience: Exploring the Experiences of Participants within the Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges

by

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Abstract

Climate change is a complex and value-laden issue, polarized by debate, and the localized nature of its effects warrants greater community response and citizen participation. This research contributes to existing deliberative democracy theory and practice by exploring the nature of participant experiences at the Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges. Following the journeys of select deliberators, through journal entries, observations, and survey responses, I seek to provide greater understanding of resulting knowledge, belief, and opinion changes, and shifts in civic engagement as well as the elements of the deliberative event that facilitated or hindered participant change and the production of meaningful, "public-spirited" dialogue. Key findings show that participants experienced knowledge increases and opinion formation, but that factors such as a lack of formal decision-making power, activism, and City of Edmonton bias towards low carbon caused participant frustration and skepticism of the process.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Climate Change and Public Participation

Climate change is a "wicked" problem, defined as such by its complexity and uncertainty (Palmer 2012: 495-496). The issue of climate change traverses social, economic, and environmental dimensions on multiple scales. The effects of climate change are often context-dependent and localized, and the solution does not likely lie in one scientific-technical fix alone (Marshall and Picou 2008: 244). There is increasing pressure to respond and adapt to climate change. The Copenhagen Accord identifies a mean surface temperature of 2 degrees Celsius as the "acceptable" level of temperature rise, but there is evidence demonstrating that it is unlikely or even impossible to keep the rise in global mean surface temperature at or below that critical level without a radical reevaluation of the risk that better reflects the need for urgent action (Anderson and Bows 2011). Response to climate change requires "radical changes in all manner of domains, from the way we produce and organize the transformation and socio-physical metabolism of nature to routines and cultures of consumption" (Swyngedouw 2010: 215). Decentralization of environmental governance and decision-making concerning responses to climate change may play a role in effectively addressing this global risk. A deliberative turn in environmental governance reflects the high complexity, high stakes, and high uncertainty of climate change and its resultant impacts. Deliberative decision-making speaks to the criteria proposed by Funtowicz and Ravetz for "postnormal" problems; that is, "the strategy of postnormal science becomes critical when systems uncertainty and decision stakes are high" (Marshall and Picou 2008: 234).

Incorporating public participation in environmental governance is not novel, and is seen in international agreements, such as Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration:

> *Environmental issues are best handled with participation of all concerned citizens, at the relevant level. At the national level, each individual shall have appropriate access to information concerning the environment that is held by public authorities, including information on hazardous materials and activities in their communities, and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes. States shall facilitate and encourage public awareness and participation by making information widely available. Effective access to judicial and administrative proceedings, including redress and remedy, shall be provided.*
>
> (1992 Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, Principle 10)

Public participation takes diverse forms, such as public advisory committees and citizen juries. Public participation and deliberation find relevance in the normative and value-based nature of climate change, and may be preferentially suited to address localized climate effects and needs.

Participation by those affected by decisions is arguably a vital component of a just and democratic society through the creation of inclusive spaces for empowered decision-making and shaping "the realities that affect their lives" (Pimbert and Wakeford 2001: 25). In theory, open, rational dialogue is expected to result in extensive benefits such as enhanced citizen engagement in political affairs, greater tolerance of alternative viewpoints, improved ability of citizens to recognize and articulate their preferences, restored faith in the democratic system and increased legitimacy of the constitutional order (Carpini, Cook and Jacobs 2004: 320). Inclusion within deliberations presents a valuable learning experience that can challenge and substantiate participants' opinions, and contribute to knowledge gains and increased exposure to alternative arguments and perspectives (Pimbert and Wakeford 2001). There are also practical reasons for increasing participation in climate change decision-making. Greater public involvement may overcome the decision-making gridlock regarding climate change that is created by the

mobilization of scientific uncertainty and political rhetoric. Participation may also inspire continued engagement and collective action that contribute to local adaptive response efforts and motivate decisive policy and action by governments and other institutions.

There are some concerns regarding public involvement processes, including the effects of power inequalities and tokenism (Parkins 2002). However, it is possible for deliberative goals to be achieved through non-deliberative means such as voting, self-interest, and the strategic use of coercion (Mansbridge et al. 2010). The existing power structures and inequalities that plague modern society are difficult to prevent from entering the deliberative space, and as such, there is a need to explore the likelihood of obtaining legitimate deliberative outcomes in spite of these non-ideal conditions. As well, the results of deliberative or participatory initiatives require evaluation and greater investigation, as do the nature and extent of participant change, such as increased citizen engagement and opinion formation resulting from deliberations (weHall, Wilson and Newman 2011: 1).

1.2 Study Purpose

Given the important connections between the challenges of climate change and the constructive responses that can result from public deliberation, this research aims to explore the unique experiences of deliberators at the Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges. The study was conducted in Edmonton, Alberta where there has been a recent increase in public participation. Collaborative efforts by the City of Edmonton, the Centre for Public Involvement, and the University of Alberta have led to the creation of citizens' panels and juries that have contributed to decision-making on topics such as the municipal budget and food and agriculture. I focused on select participants in the Edmonton energy and climate change deliberation, and their experiences with change in opinions, knowledge, and engagement levels as well as how they were affected by the

processes that arise as a result of practicing deliberative democracy within a specific political reality of public policy decision-making at a municipal level.

To understand the impact of deliberation on panelists I used a journaling, or diary-keeping method that provided me with insight into their personal thoughts and emotions. Survey results supplemented this data with information about the entire group of deliberators. I also used my own experience with the planning and design of the deliberation and observations of the sessions to gain context and understanding of the process and of participants' responses to aspects of the event.

This study contributes to the growing body of applied research regarding deliberative democracy in practice. The research drew on the assumptions and current understandings of participant experience developed within deliberative democratic theory, and assessed the extent, nature and causes of deliberator transformation and meaningful experiences in the context of the Edmonton Citizens' Panel. An evaluative approach provided useful information about shifts in opinion, knowledge, and engagement level, as well as the effects of political and practical limitations. Knowledge gained through this research contributes to a stronger understanding of the deliberator experience.

1.3 Theoretical Framework – Deliberative Democracy

Habermasian deliberative theory is founded upon the concept of communicative rationality, the central tenet of which is reaching decisions through reasons understood and agreed upon by citizens (Habermas 1994: 4). Authority rests with the best argument, reached through public debate and a cooperative search for solutions (Habermas 2006). The focus on "reason" has more recently shifted towards an interest in mutual justification. Mansbridge et al. (2010: 67) note the "Enlightenment overtones of a unitary and knowable entity" that are implicit in the language of "reason", and find a stronger, more nuanced basis for deliberation in arguments that participants can justify to those who reasonably disagree with

them. Abandoning the requirements of rational, or "mutually justifiable" reasoning would lead to a devolution of communicative standards that accepts pluralistic claims of validity and nullifies the evaluative criteria for identifying a "good" or strong argument.

In expanding decision-making beyond simple preference aggregation, deliberative democracy embraces "processes of judgment and preference formation and transformation within informed, respectful, and competent dialogue" (Dryzek 2011: 3). Opinion transformation can signify that participants have "acquired new factual information…detected logical mistakes in their reasoning, or developed new perspectives on the information they have, for example, taking a more long-range view" (Mansbridge et al. 2010: 78). In evaluating the efficacy of deliberations, opinion transformation may provide an indication of open, and rational dialogue and debate. In fact, Mansbridge et al. (2010: 78) assert that deliberation would be pointless if it did not incite some change in the opinions or strength of opinions of the participants.

Shifting opinions through deliberation is a gradual and iterative process that can occur in the absence of consensus; "That a single 'unconstrained' conversation, especially on a highly charged subject, appears much more likely to end in disagreement than agreement is not strong evidence against the power of rational argumentation" (Chambers 1996: 170). As such, consensus becomes secondary to meaningful deliberation that is ongoing and open to revision. However, deliberation as a decision-making process requires some kind of closure, as "the closer our conversations come to embodying the ideal, the more inefficient they are" (Chambers 1996: 171). The reality of procedural limitations and the need for political outcomes thwarts the achievement of an ideally constructed discourse, and in order to bring practical relevance to deliberative dialogue some concessions to the ideals must be made.

For example, equality plays an important role in ensuring the legitimacy and democratic nature of deliberation; both equal access to decision-making influence and protection from coercion (Knight and Johnson 1999: 281). However, there are challenges to full equality, as some participants may "be driven by self-interest, blinded by prejudice, or deluded by ideology" (Johnson 1998: 166). "Unreasonable" arguments are needed to challenge these non-justifiable claims and counter structural inequalities, including emotional appeals and the incorporation of civil disobedience to demonstrate "the depth of grievances or of outrage, prompt relevant political actors to reconsider and perhaps revise" (Johnson 1998: 166-167).

1.4 Deliberative democracy in Edmonton

Efforts by the Centre for Public Involvement, the City of Edmonton, and the University of Alberta have resulted in a recent uptake of deliberative events and projects in the Edmonton area that have set the stage for the Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges:

- The 2008 Edmonton Citizen Panel on the Budget was a collaboration between the City of Edmonton and the University of Alberta. Diverse Edmontonians learned about and discussed City of Edmonton budget priorities. Forty-nine citizens participated in six sessions, supported by an issue guide that reflected multiple perspectives.

- The Centre for Public Involvement (established in 2011) is a formal partnership between the City of Edmonton and the University of Alberta to build public involvement in Edmonton and beyond.

- A diverse and representative group of 66 Edmontonians participated in the City wide Food and Agriculture Citizens' Panel in 2012. In five sessions, citizens developed potential strategies and directions for the City

of Edmonton.

• The Office of the City Clerk is working with the Centre for Public Involvement on an Internet Voting Project (2012-2013), including a Citizen Jury, online engagement, and stakeholder roundtables to see if Internet voting is viable for the City of Edmonton.

(Participant Handbook, Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges, 2012: 11)

1.5 Project Background

The Edmonton deliberation was a participatory strategy responding to the City of Edmonton's Strategic Environmental Plan, *The Way We Green*. The involvement by citizens will inform decision-making and implementation of *The Way We Green* goals by City Council and the Office of Environment, drawing on the expertise of citizens to formulate recommendations and define community values and perspectives.

The deliberations focused on actions and initiatives related to climate change, including implementation of energy transition and greenhouse gas reduction. Over the course of six sessions, panelists considered and contrasted future climate change and energy vulnerability scenarios, attended learning sessions led by climate science, policy, and other experts, and explored the tradeoffs related to different energy transition options. It is hoped that throughout the sessions panelists recognized their own values and preferences, helping them to develop final recommendations for City Administration and the Edmonton City Council.

1.6 Methodology

In order to effectively explore the experiences of participants in this deliberation I employed a mixed methods approach consisting of pre and post survey questionnaires, observation, and participant journaling. The combination of quantitative and qualitative methodologies reflects the recent shift away from a dualistic conception of methods that asserts the oppositional nature of quantitative and qualitative approaches, towards a downplaying of this dichotomy, and an acceptance and recognition of the benefits of using a multi-method approach (Winchester and Rofe 2005). Winchester and Rofe (2005) elaborate on the role of mixed method research:

> Classically, qualitative and quantitative methods, such as interviews combined with questionnaires, are seen as providing both the individual and the general perspective on an issue (for example, England 1993), while similar arguments have been raised for mixed methods more broadly (McKendrick 1996; Philip 1998). This triangulation of methods and use of multiple methods are sometimes deemed as offering a cross-checking of results in that they approach a problem from different angles and use different techniques (17).

The multiple methods used in this research contributes to this cross-checking, in particular using survey results to situate journal participants within the larger group of panelists, and using journals to dive deeper into the trends highlighted by survey responses.

1.7 Quantitative Methods

1.7.1 Pre and Post Survey Questionnaires

A survey approach allows for timely data collection from all deliberators, contributing to a more cohesive and generalizable evaluation of participant change. Singleton Jr. and Straits (2010: 270) describe the usefulness of the survey method:

> Among all approaches to social research, in fact, surveys offer the most effective means of social description; they can provide extraordinarily detailed and precise information about large, heterogeneous populations. By using probability sampling, one can be certain, within known limits of sampling error, whether the responses to a sample survey accurately describe the larger target population. Furthermore, the topics covered and the questions that may be included in surveys are wide-ranging.

A quantitative approach based on analyzing participant responses to structured questions prior to and after completion of the deliberative event contributes to the study of participant knowledge, attitude, and opinion changes regarding climate change over the duration of the deliberations. Surveys were developed collaboratively with other Alberta Climate Dialogue researchers in such a way that questions reflected the multiple research interests associated with this deliberative event. Survey questionnaires were administered prior to and throughout the deliberation process, and there are plans to continue survey work up to two years after the event. This research project, however, involves the administration of two of the questionnaires, a pre-survey to all participants before deliberations occur, and post-survey immediately after completion of the deliberative event. The post-survey repeated many of the questions from the pre-survey, allowing for a longitudinal examination of participant perspectives and how they changed or remained stable after participation in the deliberations.

The goal of survey data collection in this study was to generate a description of the nature of participant change. This quantitative method was complemented by qualitative research approaches that sought to better understand the process of participant change and the unique experiences of participants.

1.8 Qualitative Methods

1.8.1 Observation

My presence at the deliberative event provided me with the ability to directly experience the dialogue and interactions of participants. Kearns (2010: 241) iterates the potential for observational research: "With critical reflection…observation can be transformed into a self-conscious, effective, and ethically sound practice." Uncontrolled visual and aural observation allowed for the collection of complementary evidence that assisted in contextualizing and corroborating survey responses and participant journal entries. Observation was guided by the primary research goals, understanding the nature of participant experiences and transformative moments, and identifying participant responses to non-deliberative aspects of the event, but was not limited to noting only predetermined phenomena. Observation allows for a circumventing of the reactivity to which surveys are often vulnerable: "[Surveys] are susceptible to reactivity, which introduces systematic measurement error. A good example of this… is the tendency of respondents to give socially desirable answers to sensitive questions" (Singleton Jr. and Straits 2010: 271). Participant observation can allow for more accurate understanding of the realities of the deliberations through being part of the event and directly witnessing participant contributions and interactions.

In deliberations I took on the role of observer-as-participant, remaining distinct from the group of participants, as I was not contributing my thoughts to the

discussions nor was I participating in activities, though I was physically present at the event and deliberators were informed of my role as an observer and academic (Kearns 2010: 246). My involvement with the planning of and preparation for the event allowed me another opportunity for observation.

1.8.2 Participant Journaling

Ten participants were recruited to maintain journals throughout the deliberations in which they reflected on their experiences within the deliberations. These participants were recruited based on purposive sampling techniques – important sources of demographic variation among the population were identified and the recruited participants were chosen to reflect this variation. Drawn from the demographics gathered through the initial recruitment survey, participants were chosen based on age, education level, gender, and ethnicity.

Journal participants were provided with a blank paper notebook and a page of guidelines including a list of broad framing questions and prompts. They were also asked to record anything else that they deemed to be relevant regarding their own experiences throughout the deliberation process. The participants were asked to record their reflections, including their changing (or unchanging) perspectives on climate change, experiences, learnings, and emotions throughout the deliberations from October 13, 2012 to December 1, 2012. The length of entries was the choice of the participant, though they were asked to provide a journal response after each of the six sessions.

Participant journaling, or the diary method, is different from other data collection methods in that participants "control the timing and means of [data] capture" (Carter and Mankoff 2005: 2), and maintain relatively greater freedom to direct the nature of reflections and to define important concepts or topics. Meth (2003: 196-197) articulates the empowerment aspect of diary research:

> The twin principles of giving voice and empowerment are well served by using solicited diaries. Diaries offer the opportunity for respondents to define the boundaries of their shared knowledge, within, of course, the restrictive context established by the guidelines given on what is desired by the researcher…This may be empowering for the respondents in that it offers them the opportunity to identify what is and what is not their primary concern, it also allows them to construct these concerns in a way which clarifies for the researcher their own particular priorities.

This form of research demonstrates a collaborative approach that encouraged greater participant reflexivity through active participation in data collection and reflection upon their own perspectives and behaviours, and how these changed throughout the process of deliberations. Participants were encouraged to use the open-format of the journaling activity to explore concepts and ideas that they considered to be important. Diary keeping also allows for the inclusion of multiple modes of response, from straightforward reporting of events to personal reflection (Elliot 1997) and captures the expressions of those who are less comfortable or able to communicate their thoughts in the deliberation itself, or in the structured surveys.

Diary research most often uses historical diaries, maintained for personal purposes and examined post hoc (Meth 2003: 195-196). However, the solicited diaries used for this research were written with the understanding that they would be examined by the researcher for the purpose of this study. The participants were provided with guiding questions and topics, prompting them to generate a text that reflected some awareness of the researchers' interests. The questions and prompts were purposefully broad in order to allow for relatively free expression, though the practical needs of the research required the provision of some guidance in order to ensure that data collected would be relevant to the research topic (Bedwell, McGowan and Lavender 2012: 151).

Possibly the most significant advantage to using participant journaling to support other forms of quantitative and qualitative research is the provision of space for documenting intimate thoughts that would not otherwise be fully expressed (Meth 2003: 200). Meth refers to a participant who explains journaling as a more preferable avenue for divulging personal views that she would not be comfortable sharing in a group setting, and would thus not be available for observation by the researcher:

> I found it better to write the diary than talking during the group interview because I wrote at my own pace. There was no rush. I had time to memorize. There are some secrets I wrote about, things that I couldn't disclose to any person. I never felt guilty when I did that but I tried to avoid people's names when writing about them so that I don't find myself in trouble in future. The feeling that these things should be known drove me. It helps to have all the things you cannot talk about written down. (Interview with Mrs F, Cato Manor, 2002) (Meth 2003: 200-201).

1.9 Limitations

The data collection methods chosen maintain some limitations. Surveys typically provide weaker evidence of cause-and-effect relationships, and their standardized nature prevents reflexivity and adaptation or modification of questions or themes (Singleton Jr. and Straits 2010: 271). In order to more effectively determine the aspects of the deliberative event that contributed to or inhibited participant change, and to allow greater flexibility for investigation of emerging concepts, I employed additional qualitative methods of data collection. As well, interpretation of data is subject to researcher biases and error. This potential for error was likely reduced through the use of multiple data collection methods to triangulate the results.

Time constraints limited the ability to conduct follow-up research on the long-term opinion, knowledge, and engagement changes demonstrated by participants. However, continued data collection, external to this research project, will be conducted by Alberta Climate Dialogue researchers and will contribute to a longitudinal study that will supplement the shorter-term snapshot developed through this research.

1.10 The Researcher

It is important to identify one's own positionality (Watt 2007: 84); that is, the biases, feelings, and thoughts that influence the process of knowledge construction. I came into this research after spending some time working in the field of environmental engagement. I believed in the capacity of ordinary citizens to comprehend complex science, and formulate well-founded opinions but I had not seen that capacity fulfilled by any of the social marketing, behaviour-focused campaigns that I had worked on. I knew that I wanted to further explore the role of the public in creating environmental change, but was disheartened and made skeptical by my previous experience. I challenged deliberative democracy to stand up to my criticisms, but retained some hope that I would find a way of encouraging an informed and active citizenry.

In developing the methodology for this study, I drew upon concerns and questions I had when learning about deliberative democracy. I personally struggle to reconcile the need to be a well-spoken, confident, and quick-thinking individual with the reality of diverse deliberator personalities, education, and experience levels. As someone who is not comfortable speaking in front of strangers or large groups I empathize with those who want to be a part of a deliberative form of decision-making, but lack the eloquence to consistently communicate their ideas within a rapid-fire, multi-person conversation. This attracted me to journaling, or diary-keeping, as I believed this method could act as not only a means of collecting data but also enhance the experience of deliberators who were unable to

verbally communicate their thoughts in the Citizens' Panel and wanted another way to express their opinions.

My involvement with planning and creation of written materials for the deliberation exposed some of my beliefs and preferences. My work on the Citizens' Handbook, a guide and information source for deliberators, communicated to participants my belief in the reality of climate change and the need for mitigation and adaptation. My professional relationships with Alberta Climate Dialogue, other organizers, and researchers seemed to align my values with theirs in the eyes of participants, with one journalist noting that my "friendship" with a presenter made him hesitant to express his true feelings about that individual's presentation. I realize that it is impossible to deny the impacts of my own biases and can only hope that being forthright with my subjectivity will facilitate a greater understanding of the results.

1.11 Organization of Thesis

The first paper (Chapter 2) focuses on the nature and extent of deliberator transformation in the context of the Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges. It incorporates journal entries written by panelists and survey responses to assess the changes in knowledge, beliefs and opinions, and civic engagement levels experienced by deliberators. Special attention is given to the aspects of the event that may have hindered or encouraged the realization of transformative moments and learning. The second paper (Chapter 3) provides a critical reflection on the realities of practicing deliberative democracy, including a discussion of deliberative ideals that may be neither applicable nor effective in a real world context. A focus on deliberator experience is maintained in this chapter, as aspects of the Citizens' Panel are explored and evaluated through the reactions and responses of panelists. The paper seeks to understand how a divergence from traditional deliberative theory impacts the deliberative experience and outcomes of the event.

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Chapter 2: Participant experiences of change in a deliberative setting: A mixed methods analysis of catalysts and barriers to knowledge, opinion, and engagement shifts

2.1 Introduction

Much of the literature on deliberative democracy anticipates deliberator outcomes such as knowledge gains, opinion clarification and change (Dryzek 2011; Neimeyer 2011) and increased civic engagement and political capacities (Fusarelli, Kowalski and Petersen 2011). However, there is also extensive research on barriers that impede deliberator change. Context and demographics such as income, education, and age can prevent adoption of new opinions and behaviours (Jones, Fly and Cordell 1999). Inaccessible infrastructure, services, regulation, and government support can limit change (Huddart-Kennedy, Beckley, McFarlane and Nadeau 2009), and rhetoric can constrain thinking, preventing opinion shift (Norgaard 2006).

While there is notable theoretical work on the potential for deliberator change, there is space for further empirical study that takes a closer look at participants' unique experiences in a deliberative process. This study, through surveys, a journaling activity, and observational recordings, attempts to understand the individual and group dynamics of knowledge, opinion, and inclinations towards further personal engagement as they occurred within a citizens' panel process in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

This study coincides with recent efforts by leaders within the City of Edmonton administration to enhance citizen engagement in key city decisions. In the span of five years the municipality has witnessed the use of citizens' panels on topics ranging from the City budget, to food and agriculture, and internet voting (Participant Handbook 2012). The city has taken steps towards sustainability with *The Way We Green*, a municipal environmental plan that promotes integration of

low carbon initiatives with broad-based environmental objectives. As the major focus of this study, the Citizens' Panel is a City of Edmonton-led project that supports the goals of *The Way We Green* by evaluating detailed policy maneuvers and implementation options. Alberta Climate Dialogue, a research-focused initiative at the University of Alberta, and the Centre for Public Involvement, a joint venture between the City of Edmonton and the University of Alberta, took on the role of non-governmental deliberation conveners, recruiting climate science and deliberative experts and facilitators to spearhead the design of the Citizens' Panel. Their collective knowledge, experience, and resources created a deliberation that held the potential for extensive positive change, making the Citizens' Panel an ideal setting for this research.

The Citizens' Panel provided the opportunity to analyze participant changes as they occurred throughout the process of deliberation, as well as identify the interactions, motivations, and barriers that led to and impeded change. This research reasserts the potential for positive personal change as a result of participation in a deliberative event. However, the results also call attention to specific aspects of deliberation that assist in meaningful knowledge, opinion, and engagement change, and awareness of factors that thwart participant growth.

2.2 Literature Review

2.2.1 Public knowledge and climate change

The issue of climate change provides an interesting backdrop for exploration of learning and change through deliberative participation because of the unique attributes of the issue. When a topic is as deeply value-laden as climate change, a space opens up for citizens to participate in the decision-making process. Climate change generates normative uncertainty and incites value-driven debates, for example, determining who is responsible for climate mitigation efforts: current high polluting countries, past polluters, developing nations, or those countries that

can afford the financial burden. Taking a more sociological approach to the challenges of climate change, Beck (1996: 13) is skeptical that technology can control the risks it has created and therefore looks to the public to recognize "the trends which are eroding the system and delegitimating the bases of rationality." As the socio-cultural and economic aspects of climate change are recognized decision-making moves into a normative realm that requires a broader set of perspectives beyond the predominant scientific-technical conversation.

While scientific and technical methods are suitable for risk identification, there is likely no single technological fix to climate change. Rather, Swyngedouw (2010) reiterates existing literature that argues there is "an urgent need for different stories" and "great new fictions that create real possibilities for constructing different socio-environmental futures" in order to avoid the reactionary response that emerges from a strict liberal-capitalist order (Swyngedouw 2010: 228). That is, there must be a shift in societal values that support unlimited economic growth and retain faith in technology to overcome environmental limits. Such a Promethean discourse is often disseminated by the policy-making elite (Dryzek 2011). Dryzek refers to the systemic difference between elites and publics regarding technological risk, asserting that public consensus will generate more precautionary outcomes than will policy-makers. Political decision-makers, reiterating the technocentrism that is entrenched in a "world economy" (2011: 11) and relevant institutions such as the World Trade Organization and World Bank, within which many governments operate, are likely to maintain confidence in the limitlessness of the environment and the need for continuous economic and industrial expansion. This discourse suppresses dissent and argument for a restructuring of social and economic organization (Swyngedouw 2010). Dryzek counters that deliberators are not embedded within these discursive constraints and are thus more freely able to question potential risks. Inclusion of the public in decision-making is therefore more likely to result in outcomes that challenge the institutionalized patterns of environmental degradation and industrial expansion that contribute to climate change.

Scientific knowledge has thus far been unable to mobilize effective responses to the heightening urgency and increased calls to act on pressing environmental issues. There is an increasing distrust of government and scientific institutions, as traditional problem-solving strategies fail to address the complex, large-scale problems that are coming to typify the 21st century (Marshall and Picou 2008). As the battle for scientific authority between climate change believers and skeptics continues to thwart recognition of and adaptation to environmental risks, we must instead look to non-scientific experts. We must redefine and democratize science, opening it up to greater public input. This argument is central to the field of post-normal science, which focuses on the expansion of scientific peer review to broader audiences (Funtowicz and Ravetz 1993).

2.2.2 Opinion and knowledge change

Elite-centered power, as exhibited through the use of rhetoric and hegemonic discourse, can "make sure that such preferences as citizens do express are manipulated by elites. Symbolic politics involves suppression of the autonomy of citizens, because their opportunity to reflect upon their preferences is restricted" (Dryzek 2011: 6). Inundation with a dominant discourse is in direct dialogue with Lukes' (2005) third dimension of power: the subjective and real interests of participants are subverted as rhetoric and symbolic claims prevent citizens "from having grievances by shaping their perceptions, cognitions, and preferences in such a way that they accept their role in the existing order of things, either because they can see or imagine no alternative to it, or because they see it as natural and unchangeable" (Lukes 2005: 28).

However, the self-reflexivity that deliberators gain through dialogue is expected to overcome the force of rhetoric, to challenge and break down these hegemonic discourses by prompting deliberators to examine their own taken-for-granted opinions and values. Neimeyer (2011) claims, "if symbolic politics is the disease,

deliberation is the cure" (107). Similarly, Dryzek (2011) illuminates the possibilities for overcoming power imbalances through realignment of preferences with subjective dispositions" (7).

Symbolic claims disconnect an individual's values and beliefs from the preferences they express. Through a process of reasoning with other deliberators, an individual attains greater reflexivity and is able to reconnect their underlying values with preferences that better align with these values. Neimeyer describes the effect of deliberation on distortive symbolism:

> First deliberation provided the impetus for participants to think about the issue. Beforehand, their preferences tended to be premised on fairly casual analyses of symbolic cues from sources with an eye to very particular interests. Second, the information provided during the process directly challenged symbolic claims. Finally, the process of deliberation smoothed the path to nonsymbolic preferences by assisting the participants in grappling with issues of significant complexity, about which their assessments and conclusions then became comparably sophisticated (2011: 117).

Reflecting on Neimeyer's studies of the Bloomfield track and the Fremantle harbor bridge, Dryzek (2011) argues that through explaining their reasoning, deliberators were forced to address whether their preferences matched their values and beliefs and realign them accordingly, effectively countering the impact of rhetoric. Deliberation prompted participants to consider the issue in greater depth and seek out information that challenged the rationality and logic of symbolic claims. Exposure to diverse perspectives also increased the sophistication of and evidence for their conclusions (rather than taking cognitive "shortcuts" such as repeating things they had heard elsewhere without any supporting information or evidence). Symbolic claims are evaluated through the lens of all relevant perspectives, in order to survive this "reality check" the rhetoric-filled argument

must be considered justifiable by all the discourses represented within deliberation.

Through deliberation, participants develop a shared logic (Neimeyer 2011). That is, rather than agreeing on an outcome or decision, participants agree on the nature of the issue at hand and the choices that can be reasonably made (109). They define a system of logic or reasoning that equips them to deem particular outcomes valid in the realm of relevant discourses. As a result, deliberators were able to weed out symbolic discourses that were not supported by a universally accepted logic and were based on unfounded, sensationalist claims (114-118).

An investigation of the nature of opinion changes following deliberative polling indicates that participant opinions changed significantly regarding a considerable number of policy items (Luskin, Fishkin and Jowell 2002: 467). As well, Hobson and Neimeyer (2011) explore the role of deliberation on climate change in Australia. In a comparison of those who participated in deliberations and those who did not, deliberations similarly appear to have impacted individual perspectives; "there is less skepticism, more desire for action, and a greater willingness to act" (966). These participants indicated knowledge gains and decreased feelings of helplessness in the face of the complex environmental issue:

> I know a lot more, a hell of a lot more, and I don't feel anywhere near as threatened as before. I don't. Because I think it's achievable. It just means we put a few things on hold, get our priorities right, and look after this, otherwise it will be too late (Male, late 40s)… I felt stymied. I don't feel stymied now, I don't feel threatened, I think I have hope, I have optimism. And I believe too I've changed (Female, late 60s) (2011: 966).

In summary, deliberation often results in opinion shift because of a confluence of factors. Deliberation encourages participants to consider an issue in greater depth rather than relying on symbolic cues, resulting in a process of knowledge seeking

and a re-evaluation of one's beliefs. Deliberation also opens participants up to a wider range of opinions and logics that challenge symbolic or narrow-minded claims. However, one must not expect extreme opinion and knowledge shifts from a short-term deliberative engagement such as the Edmonton event, as "a few weeks' elevated reading, chatting and thinking, intensified by a couple days' focused discussion, can make some difference but cannot fully remedy a lifetime's inattention. Our only claim is that, on average, our participants emerge looking *more* like ideal citizens than they did beforehand" (Luskin et al. 2002: 484).

2.2.3 Changes in civic engagement

In addition to opinion and knowledge change, authors also note a set of expectations with regard to changes in civic engagement. Fusarelli, Kowalski and Petersen (2011) refer to three forms of citizen engagement: adversarial approaches, electoral approaches, and communicative approaches. An adversarial approach, such as social movements and street level action, assumes that collective opposition and confrontation will result in achievement of citizen goals. Electoral approaches, such as voting, contributing money to an issue or candidate campaigns, or running for office (Cooper, Bryer and Meek 2006: 81) avoid the conflict and confrontation generated by adversarial forms of civic engagement, but their efficacy is often drawn into question; "Though the process allows registered voters to exercise power, the level of participation is often limited as evidenced by low turnout…In fact, voter turnout tends to be greatest when citizens are displeased and angry" (Fusarelli et al. 2011: 45). Finally, Fusalerri et al. describe communicative forms of civic engagement. This approach assumes that open dialogue and exchange of ideas will encourage stakeholders to test their beliefs and opinions, and will result in joint action and shared commitment and responsibility (46). Involvement in deliberative, collaborative forums characterizes this approach to civic engagement. There are a number of benefits:

> Participation gives citizens a more direct say, it gives a voice to individual citizens and to minorities, it encourages civic skills and civic virtues, it leads to rational decisions based on public reasoning, and it increases support for the outcome and the process (Michels 2011: 276).

Multiple instances of empirical research support this claim of enhanced political capacities, as results indicate that deliberation has a significant effect on increasing the participants' engagement in political affairs. For example, Min (2007) explores the effects of face-to-face and online deliberations on civic engagement. The author's experimental research is based on the assumption that deliberation can facilitate political participation: "Katz (1992) writes how deliberation can increase citizens' political participation: 'By the very process of talking to one another, the vague dispositions which people have are crystallized, step by step, into specific attitudes, acts, or votes'" (1370-1371). Through preference recognition and formation, it is believed that participants will be infused "with a public spirit" (1371).

As well, Eggins, Reynolds, Oakes and Mavor (2007) note the discouraging effect of "rational ignorance"; that is, citizens "learn that being informed and engaged has no utility for them" (94). Ordinary democracies fail to provide citizens with meaningful opportunities to have their opinions recognized, and teach citizens that their vote has little influence. The authors anticipate that participation in a deliberative poll will provide citizens with the opportunity to meaningfully impact decisions, thus moving them away from rational ignorance and encouraging greater political participation. Results indicate that participation increases feelings of political engagement "when they are treated with respect and given opportunities to discuss issues, ask questions and to air their views in collaboration with other members of a relevant community" (99). Fair treatment assisted deliberators in identifying as effectual citizens.

2.2.4 Barriers to change

Despite the extensive research indicating the opportunities for change that are opened up or enhanced by deliberative involvement, there remains strong evidence of barriers that may inhibit anticipated knowledge, belief, and behaviour gains. Climate change maintains high system complexity and uncertainty, which can make adaptive responses and policy decisions vulnerable to stalemate. Waiting for scientific consensus regarding the causes and impacts of climate change instigates an inaction that can thwart proper mitigation and adaptation. Beck (1989) refers to the trap of scientific rationality; that is, as long as there is scientific uncertainty a risk is not recognized as such and will not be appropriately treated or addressed. The nature of the scientific method is not to accept hypotheses as absolute proof, but rather to reject null hypotheses (indicating that there is significant evidence that a hypotheses *may* be true). As such, scientific certainty is rarely, and arguably never, attained. This creates a perceived knowledge gap that is often blamed for public inaction; "people don't know enough information; climate science is too complex to follow; or corporate media and climate skeptic campaigns have misled them" (Norgaard 2011: 1).

This "information-deficit model" assumes that a direct change in behaviour will result from targeted information campaigns that improve knowledge. While this may sometimes be the case, it is an overly simplistic version of the true barriers to action. Brody, Himanshu and Vedlitz (2012) highlight a national survey in which more than 68% of the American respondents acknowledge that climate change has negative environmental, health, and economic effects (Brody et al. 2012: 1-2). However, the literature is quick to admit that increased knowledge of climate change and its effects does not necessarily lead to paralleled environmental behaviours, and that there are a multitude of barriers to change (Kollmuss and Agyeman 2002; Whitmarsh, Seyfang and O'Neill 2011; Brody et al. 2012).

Personal characteristics contribute to the likelihood of an individual changing their behaviours. Jones et al. (1999) argue that context and demographic variables

(such as age, education level, and affiliation to natural resource industries) influence the tendency of individuals to demonstrate pro-environmental values and behaviours. Individuals are more likely to partake in pro-environmental behaviour if it lines up with their habits, needs, and wants (Brody et al. 2012: 4-5). Experiences with environmental degradation are also important; "direct experiences of natural hazards have… been found to have a strong influence on individual behaviour" (Brody et al. 2012: 4), prompting those who have been directly affected by environmental problems to maintain a higher level of environmental concern and to act in more pro-environmental ways. This is important to note, as there is a "widespread perception amongst the public that [climate change] is a spatially and temporally remote risk… while it is considered socially relevant, most individuals do not feel it poses a prominent person threat" (Whitmarsh et al. 2011: 57). Outward appearance to neighbours, family and friends can also instigate or prevent behaviour change; many authors "suggest that the perceived social pressure surrounding an issue has a significant impact on an individual's behavioural intentions" (Brody et al. 2012: 5). Community-based social marketing campaigns attempt to harness this peer pressure by making pro-environmental behaviours more visible, creating new norms such as the presence of blue recycling bins on the curbs in residential neighbourhoods.

The accessibility of necessary infrastructure and services is frequently a determining factor in the likelihood of an individual engaging in pro-environmental behaviours. Huddart-Kennedy et al. (2009) refer to behaviours that are directly related to infrastructure or opportunities, such as curbside recycling and public transportation (310). Access to appropriate tools may be limited by personal finances or gaps in service provision, policy, or incentives. Government regulation is vital in ensuring the existence of structural requirements and appropriate financial incentives, disincentives, or assistance.

Through her research in Norway, Norgaard (2006) asserts that significant numbers of citizens demonstrated knowledge of climate change, belief in climate

change, and concern for climate change but retained inaction similar to that expected from individuals uneducated and unconcerned about climate change. Norgaard attributes this occurrence to socially organized denial. She asserts that cultural norms, instigated and perpetuated by a powerful elite, consistently refocus public attention away from climate change. For example, the emphasis on tradition and the past in Bygdaby, Norway focuses attention away from future generations. Thinking about climate change, which appears very abstract and in the future, contrasts with their focus on the past and traditional practices so it is ignored: "Individuals may block out or distance themselves from certain information to maintain coherent meaning systems" (Norgaard 2006: 351). Whitmarsh et al. echo this idea of denial, or distancing oneself from the problem; "people tend to identify causes of climate change with other people or groups, such as SUV drivers, industry, the US or China" (Whitmarsh et al. 2011: 57). Denial allows people to guiltlessly maintain status quo activities. Norgaard also insists that denial helps individuals to avoid "the emotional and psychological entanglement and identity conflicts that may arise from knowing that one is doing 'the wrong thing'" (Norgaard 2006: 366).

In summary, this literature review provides insights into the potential for deliberator knowledge and belief change and enhancement of individuals' political capacities. However, the research regarding barriers to change presents a challenge to the anticipated benefits of deliberation. As I endeavored to illuminate the experiences of participants at the Citizens' Panel deliberation, this knowledge provided a starting point for understanding the conditions leading to participant change or lack of change.

2.3 Study Setting and Research Objective

The City of Edmonton is located in central Alberta, Canada. The province has a prominent energy sector and is home to the controversial oil sands developments, covering over 140, 000 square kilometers of land in northern Alberta. An

extensive coal industry supports the majority of electricity generation. The oil and gas industry is a major contributor to the province's economy. In 2011 Alberta's upstream energy sector employed approximately 116, 000 people and was responsible for 27.6 percent of the province's GDP (Government of Alberta).

Edmonton is a large urban centre, with a population of over 1,000,000 in the Capital Region. It is predicted that by 2040 the city's population will have grown by over 50 percent (City of Edmonton 2010: 11). A surplus of available land and an increase in personal automobiles following World War II led to expansion of suburban areas. This pattern of growth is still seen today, as 58.6% of households live in single-detached houses, while only 5.8% live in high-density apartment buildings with five or more storeys (Statistics Canada). Suburban expansion has left Edmonton with a larger landmass than other major metropolitan centres such as Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa, and Calgary (Pembina Institute).

In recent years the municipal government has taken steps to address the issue of suburban sprawl. The City of Edmonton developed a series of ten-year strategic plans including *The Way We Green*, which places focus on environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable growth, urban design, transportation, and housing. The broad-based goals of the City's strategic plans require more detailed implementation steps. The City of Edmonton retained Pembina Institute and HB Lanarc to develop "The Discussion Paper on Edmonton's Energy Transition" (2012), which responds to the vision outlined by *The Way We Green* by recommending specific activities to assist in the transition to a low carbon society. This document was provided to deliberators at the Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges as the primary source of information on which to base their discussions, and as an overview of the possible energy solutions that would be considered by the City of Edmonton.

The Citizens' Panel was commissioned by the City of Edmonton to respond to and evaluate Edmonton's energy options. Alberta Climate Dialogue and the

Centre for Public Involvement partnered with the City to convene the deliberation. These organizations brought together experts on climate science and sustainable development, as well as leading deliberative democracy theorists and practitioners to develop a well-designed process that could be expected to deliver on the deliberative outcomes as anticipated in the literature noted above. With the assistance of a polling firm, 66 Edmontonians were selected to reflect the demographic diversity of the city, in order to maintain a minimum Panel size of 55 given anticipated attrition. Ten of the original 66 participants withdrew their participation, leaving 56 panelists. These individuals deliberated over six Saturdays from October to December 2012 and generated a report with their recommendations to be presented to City of Edmonton administration and City Council.

This research identifies and describes the nature and extent of participants' experiences within the Edmonton deliberations. The study focuses on changes in knowledge, beliefs, and opinions regarding climate change and energy, as well as shifts in civic engagement levels and political capacities. Specific attention is given to the conditions under which participant change was enhanced or suppressed within these settings. Toward this end, responses to pre-deliberation and post-deliberation surveys and journaling assist in developing an understanding of the experiences of deliberators.

2.4 Methods

2.4.1 Surveys

Surveys were administered to all participants prior to the initial deliberative session and immediately following the final session. A polling firm conducted initial recruitment and gathered demographic data and preliminary information on individuals' beliefs about climate change. A representative and diverse subset of those who were contacted became the Citizens' Panel. These 66 individuals were

emailed extensive pre-deliberation surveys that captured information about political engagement and citizenship, and beliefs and knowledge of climate change, energy, and municipal policy. Post-deliberation surveys were administered in person at the end of the final session and repeated many of the questions from the pre-deliberation survey. These repeated questions allowed for measurement of shifts in opinions and beliefs.

2.4.2 Journals

Ten citizens from the Citizens' Panel were recruited to maintain personal journals throughout the duration of the sessions. Of these ten, four journalists were chosen for detailed analysis. The four individuals, and any other participants mentioned in this study, are referred to using pseudonyms. By focusing the research on four participants I was able to relay more of their experiences through narratives. I chose these four journalists specifically because of my proximity to them during the six sessions. I observed these participants closely by sitting at their tables and monitoring their activities. Through my observations of these four individuals I gained useful insights into the contexts that inform their journal entries. Often, observations also helped me to corroborate sentiments they had expressed within their journals, lending to the accuracy of my interpretations.

The use of participant journaling enabled the collection of participants' private thoughts concerning both the ways their perspectives changed throughout deliberations, and what aspects of deliberations resonated with them and may have prompted or inhibited personal change. Carter and Mankoff (2005) note that journal research allows participants to control the flow of data collection, and to define what they consider to be important topics of study. The opportunity for participants to direct the data collection process complements the broader goals of citizen involvement by providing a space for active participation in the research and recognizing the value of participants' contributions.

The structured and quantitative nature of survey questions and the limitations of group dialogue restrict participants' abilities to express intimate feelings and sensitive topics. Journaling creates a relatively private setting for participants to divulge controversial, or personal views (Meth 2003), and supplements survey responses with more detailed descriptions. The relatively open-format of journals is also flexible, accommodating different modes of communication including creative, personal expressions and more straightforward descriptions of events (Elliot 1997).

2.5 Limitations

I chose to analyze only the survey responses of participants who provided answers to both the pre-deliberation question and the corresponding post-deliberation question. Though this reduced the sample sizes, it lowered vulnerability to error caused by a change in the composition of respondents. It is also worthwhile to note that some questions used different Likert scales in the pre- and post-deliberation surveys, so the responses required recoding.

The limited time period allocated for data collection also imposed some restrictions. Follow-up on sustained participant changes in knowledge, opinion, and civic engagement was beyond the scope of this research. Additionally, behaviour change was predicted by participants' reported intentions and knowledge gain was self-reported, as time did not permit for a full-scale evaluation of participants' knowledge and behaviours prior to and after the deliberation.

2.6 Survey Results

I selected questions that reflect three potential sources of change identified in the literature: 1) knowledge about climate change, energy, and municipal policy-making; 2) beliefs and opinions about climate change, energy, and related policy;

and 3) ideas about civic engagement and participants' own actions and abilities. Using statistical software (SPSS), paired samples t-tests provided descriptive statistics to explore participant change between the pre and post surveys. "Don't know" responses were excluded from analysis.

2.6.1 Knowledge questions

Survey responses addressing participant knowledge change show the strongest shift of the three categories (Table 2-1). Based on respondents' self-reported knowledge, it appears that statistically significant knowledge gains occurred regarding all relevant topics included within the deliberation, such as climate change, energy vulnerability, and Edmonton's current energy situation. Specifically, knowledge of what energy vulnerability is demonstrates the strongest change and knowledge about how municipal policy-making works demonstrates the least change (as reflected in the *t* values).

Table 2-1 Paired sample t-test, knowledge questions

Survey question	**N**	**Pre survey mean**	**Post survey mean**	**t**	**Sig (2-tailed)**
How informed do you feel about…					
[a]what climate change is	31	2.8	3.6	-6.061	0.000**
[a]how energy is used in Edmonton	32	2.2	2.8	-4.211	0.000**
[a]what energy vulnerability is	32	2.1	3.3	-7.924	0.000**
[a]ways to reduce Edmonton's GHG emissions	31	2.2	3.2	-5.391	0.000**
[a]ways to reduce Edmonton's energy vulnerability	31	1.9	3.0	-6.472	0.000**
[b]how municipal policy-making works	32	4.0	5.0	-2.755	0.010**
[a]the City of Edmonton's environmental policies	32	1.7	2.5	-3.937	0.000**

* significant at p<0.05, ** significant at p<0.01
[a]Rated on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1=not at all informed and 4=very informed
[b]Rated on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1=not at all informed and 10=very informed

2.6.2 Belief and opinion questions

Few statistically significant shifts in mean responses were found in questions regarding beliefs and opinions about climate change, energy, and related municipal policy (Table 2-2). However, trust in the municipal government to make good decisions regarding climate change increased, and respondents indicate a significant increase in the personal importance they give climate change. Unexpectedly, results indicate a statistically significant decrease in desire to reduce dependence on personal automobiles, as well as coinciding decreases in agreement with many other sustainable City policies. As the majority of panelists voted in favour of transition to a low-carbon society along with many of the proposed initiatives, increased disagreement with these policies is surprising but may be the result of increased knowledge about the complexity of these issues.

Based on a count of the responses, none of the respondents, either prior to or after deliberations, believe that scientists do not think climate change is happening. In the pre-deliberation survey, 7 respondents indicate that they believe there is disagreement among scientists, and 17 believe that most scientists think climate change is happening. Post-deliberation, 21 respondents believe that most scientists think climate change is happening, and only 3 respondents believe there is disagreement. As well, fewer participants believe after the deliberation that climate change originates from natural causes. Pre-deliberation, 10 respondents believe that climate change is caused by human action, 2 believe that it is natural, and 13 believe climate change is caused by both human action and natural causes. Post-deliberation, no respondents believe climate change is natural, 11 believe it is caused by humans, and 14 believe in a combination of human and natural causes.

Table 2-2 Paired samples t-test, belief and opinion questions

Survey question	N	Pre survey mean	Post survey mean	t	Sig (2-tailed)
To what extent would you agree or disagree with the following City policies…					
[a]promote greater urban density and less expansion	27	3.2	3.3	-0.189	0.852
[a]promote energy efficient buildings	30	3.8	3.7	1.000	0.326
[a]promote renewable energy	29	3.7	3.4	1.864	0.073
[a]promote energy-efficient travel options	31	3.5	3.3	1.545	0.133
[a]reduce dependence on the personal automobile	31	3.2	2.9	2.559	0.016*
[a]reduce consumption of all natural resources	28	3.4	3.1	1.185	0.246
[a]reduce greenhouse gas emissions	29	3.5	3.6	-0.769	0.448
Is the City doing more than enough (1), the right amount (2), or not enough work (3) on climate change?	18	2.7	2.8	-1.000	0.331
How much do you trust the following to make good decisions about climate change?					
[b]municipal government	27	2.6	3.1	-2.590	0.016*
[b]provincial government	27	2.0	2.2	-1.000	0.327
[b]federal government	27	2.0	2.3	-1.688	0.103
Has the world's temperature probably been going up (1), or probably not been going up (2)?	27	1.0	1.1	-1.000	0.327
[c]How important is the issue of climate change to you personally?	28	3.4	3.8	-3.545	0.001**

* significant at p<0.05, ** significant at p<0.01
[a]Rated on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1=strongly disagree and 4=strongly agree
[b]Rated on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1=not at all and 4=a lot
[c]Rated on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=not at all and 5=extremely

2.6.3 Civic engagement questions

Results indicate a statistically significant decrease in participants' comfort speaking publically at a community meeting (Table 2-3). This result is surprising, as their experience speaking at the deliberation would lead one to assume that they would become more comfortable. Survey responses also point to increased citizen empowerment regarding their ability to affect government decisions.

Respondents also report an increase in their "trying to act in ways that reduce climate change."

Table 2-3 Paired samples t-test, civic engagement questions

Survey question	N	Pre survey mean	Post survey mean	t	Sig (2-tailed)
To what extent do you agree or disagree that a good citizen should…					
[a]discuss politics with those who disagree with them	32	2.8	3.0	-1.561	0.129
[a]be willing to justify their political views	32	3.0	3.3	-1.869	0.071
[a]listen to people who disagree with them politically	32	3.1	3.4	-1.973	0.057
[a]allow others to challenge their political beliefs	32	3.1	3.3	-1.679	0.103
How important are the following to your opinion of what it means to be a good citizen…					
[b]work and pay taxes	30	4.0	4.0	-0.320	0.752
[b]obey laws	30	4.5	4.3	1.795	0.083
[b]volunteer to help those in need	30	3.9	3.8	0.619	0.541
[b]be an active member of community organizations	29	3.2	3.1	0.372	0.712
[b]know how government agencies work	30	3.3	3.3	0.158	0.876
[b]know how to affect changes in their community	30	3.5	3.4	0.779	0.442
[c]How comfortable do you feel about speaking in public at a community meeting?	32	6.2	5.2	3.067	0.004**
[d]How much can people like you affect what the government does?	31	2.9	3.2	-2.252	0.032*
To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following…					
[a]I can do little about climate change	23	2.2	2.2	0.000	1.000
[a]I can work with others to address climate change	27	3.2	3.3	-1.140	0.265
[a]I am trying to act in ways that reduce climate change	25	3.0	3.2	-2.281	0.032*
[a]most of my friends are trying to act in ways that reduce climate change	23	2.5	2.7	-1.817	0.083

* significant at $p<0.05$, ** significant at $p<0.01$

[a]Rated on a scale of 1 to 4 where 1=strongly disagree and 4=strongly agree

[b]Rated on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=not at all important and 5=extremely important

[c]Rated on a scale of 1 to 10 where 1=not at all and 10=very

[d]Rated on a scale of 1 to 5 where 1=not at all and 5=a great deal

In summary, there is noticeable increase in knowledge among panelists, but the survey results suggest little opinion shift regarding climate change and municipal energy policy, and very little change in beliefs about civic engagement and participants' own political abilities. This finding bolsters the need for further inquiry into the factors that prevent opinion and behaviour change in spite of the robust process of citizen deliberation in which these panelists participated.

While these results fail to capture substantial change in opinions and engagement levels, the detailed journal entries of individual participants may provide additional insights and more nuanced understanding, discovering subtle shifts and changes that fall beyond the scope of the survey questions.

2.7 Journal Results

2.7.1 Knowledge and information

Journal participants reflected the trend in knowledge increases exhibited by panelists' cumulative survey responses. Virginia, a 66-year-old university educated female, indicated that after the second session she felt "a little better equipped to be able to look at and analyze some problem areas that we are and will be facing in the near future", and "much more confident to discuss with colleagues and friends the effects [of] climate change and energy."

Kimberly, a 26-year-old female, frequently wrote that she learned a lot from the day's session. Her survey responses support this statement, with consistent increases on knowledge-related questions. Kimberly entered the deliberations with an acute awareness and insecurity regarding her perceived lack of knowledge on the topic of municipal climate change and energy policy; "Right now I just have limited opinions based on no evidence just lunch room and supper table conversations… I am embarrassed to say that I really don't know any of the city councillors, I am not involved in following city decisions/issues – but I do vote

(even if it is an uninformed one)." Kimberly, throughout the first session, often referred to information about renewable energy that she gleaned from conversations with her father. While she was hesitant to give her own opinions, she spoke with assuredness when conveying what she heard from her father – she appeared to be taking his word as fact. However, Kimberly began to show some critical thinking and awareness regarding this source of information as the sessions continued:

> My dad is a power engineer and a very knowledgeable man. Most of my opinions and info I get from him…When I have questions from our discussions I call up my dad and get his knowledge or opinion. I trust everything he says – BUT I know that his opinion is biased because he works for a coal power plant (and doesn't believe in global warming).

Kimberly expressed an appreciation for expert-based information; "I am interested in learning more of the data/statistics/research on all of these topics" and became frustrated when "we are arguing with 'not hard facts'." Virginia similarly agreed: "people need hard facts". The expert presentations enhanced Kimberly's learning. She saw them as reporting technical information, or these "hard facts," in a way that she could understand; "I wouldn't consider myself an academic, I don't have the science background but these presentations are well geared and informative to me." However, she indicated some impatience with the learning process that may have impacted her ability to fully engage with and critically absorb all the new knowledge; "It is hard (to a certain degree) to be patient and get all the information and follow the leaders. I just want to dive in and start the report." Virginia also discussed her struggle with receiving so much information; "Today I walked out at the end of the day… feeling like I had an information overload. So many things were presented to us… I was tired and had reached my 'in-take' for the day."

Toby, a middle aged male with a high school education, like Kimberly, spoke to some knowledge-based uncertainties about climate change, but rather than attributing them to his own lack of information he referred to the dissenting opinions that he believed to be held by experts; "I do read 3-4 newspapers daily and have read so many conflicting stories on climate change and the environment. I know nothing is proven." While he believed in climate change, he was unsure of whether it stems from anthropogenic causes; "Although the [consensus] is that man is the cause of this there are many good scientists that say it is just normal. The one volcano in Iceland last year put more CO_2 in the atmosphere than man has in the last 40 years." The expert presentations contained less hesitation and argued anthropogenic causes of climate change, leading Toby to question the legitimacy of their information;

> The second presentation of the day ["The Way We Green: Energy"]… I felt it was very slanted. I think most people thought the same… I am concerned if some of the information that is going to be presented to us is going to be biased… There is so much conflicting information. A lot of it is very biased and misleading.

His knowledge of climate change and energy was rooted in his own experiences. When speaking during the sessions, Toby consistently referred to Hurricane Sandy, a storm in October 2012 that impacted portions of the Caribbean and the United States and coincided with the timing of the Citizens' Panel. In his journal he also reflected on the connection between climate change and local climactic events; "The severe thunderstorm last night was a sign to all of us there that the climate is changing." He placed more validity in these experiences than in the presumed expertise of speakers. Referring to one presenter Toby wrote the following: "I lost count of how many times she mentioned her PhD or doctorate. If she could understand percentages or math she might know how useless her study was." Despite his skepticism of the information he was presented with, Toby indicated some learning throughout the process. After the first session he

stated, “I am not comfortable yet having in-depth conversations about climate change. I am no expert and would rather keep listening.” Following the second day Toby acknowledged that he “did learn a few things today and had a few clarified”, but later on admitted that he still did not feel fully informed; “I felt that I learned a lot today, but, I felt that I did not learn enough to make any recommend any suggestions. Hopefully more is coming.” After the last session, he emphasized his knowledge gains; “I did feel I learned a lot. I have a better understanding of Global Warming, the causes and possible solutions.” His belief that scientists and other experts are still unsure about the causes of climate change likely prevented him from feeling fully knowledgeable about the issue. However, rather than let this uncertainty become a barrier to conversations about climate and energy, Toby accepted this ambiguity and continued to be productive in conversations;

> Over the course of the day I realized that there is not going to be a golden moment where I will get a definitive answer on climate change. [But] There are other aspects that are important in relation to climate change and dealing with those will have a positive effect on the environment.

2.7.2 Beliefs and opinions

Mahirah is a middle-aged female of a visible minority working for a prominent oil pipeline company. Her survey responses indicate that her beliefs and opinions about climate change and energy policy did not change dramatically over the course of the six sessions, reverberating with the lack of significant change in group responses. However, Mahirah’s journal entries show some nuances within her relatively static survey opinions. She indicated an increasing feeling of urgency regarding response to climate pressures: “Our homework was to read pages 20-46. My reactions and feelings during that read were very emotional and stretched my thinking. It clearly shows something must be done now to avoid any disasters or ill effects in the future.” Mahirah maintained opinions throughout the

deliberation that reflect a moderate and balanced approach to climate and energy issues, but she never questioned the reality of climate change, nor the need for response; "The need for energy balance must exist – how can we control this? Warming sounds positive, however, the increase in temp[erature] results in adverse effects upstream and downstream. Climate change exists." She consistently referred to "quality of life" throughout her journal entries as a qualifier for any municipal plans or policies. She demonstrated concern for her fellow humans, often thinking beyond her own personal interests, and found the "selfishness" of some of the other panelists disconcerting;

> I feel citizens were very much focused on their own interests and not our city, their neighbors nor the purpose of the citizen's panel… Of importance is to implement plans which will work for the citizens while maintaining quality of life…A few panelists believe this [low carbon] is top priority and the city should do much more. Again, I believe they are selfish.

Her experiences at the panel may have broadened and nuanced her perspective, but she remained focused on what she saw as the bigger picture – quality of life; "I feel this [low carbon] is something that is nice to have… Obviously food and shelter is number one towards quality of life."

In the post-deliberation survey, Virginia indicated agreement with most of the low carbon policies. Her first journal entry outlined many of her initial opinions:

> I realized that yes my original views on energy + climate change were in line with the majority of the people at our table…we need to build a "core at city centre"… we need walking + biking paths in <u>all</u> sections or neighborhoods of the city…we need to make more efficient use of gas consumption…we need to have people talking…walking…interacting as a community not in isolation of each other. Build communities – have

> gathering places, use the human resources to benefit all and recognize that all people have potential + good ideas

Virginia demonstrated a forward-looking concern for future generations. This is an aspect of her perspective that remained strong from the beginning. In her first journal entry, Virginia stated; "I am very interested in issues of climate change and energy, because it will determine how we live in the future… we have to be the gate-keeper of our resources for the generations behind us… we need to leave a better world behind by being good tenants while we are on earth." She returned to this theme in her concluding thoughts; "Now it is time to move forward and continue to be and become a better steward of our planet." Virginia, like many other participants, indicated some concern regarding the financial costs of implementing a low carbon plan. Kimberly also expressed this fear, which was fairly pervasive within the panel discussions, writing; "my common thought was always brought back to money – if costs go up in the future, but wages don't, the future sounds VERY stressful…money + stuff will ruin us. I don't want our decision to spend money to buy wind turbines/ solar panels (stuff) to ruin us." Virginia indicated some trepidation regarding the burden that may be suffered by individuals who are not equipped to handle cost increases;

> [R]ight now the initial investment will not be cost effective for us during our life time (if you are 60 yrs old! HaHa)…For people, living on a fixed income…costs are becoming prohibitive…the energy cost cost way more than a person can afford… Will all the implementations… retrofits to houses, difference types of public transportation i.e. natural gas, electric, solar power, etc… be affordable for the everyday sole wage earners of the family? Will seniors on a fixed income, have to lower their level of comfort (travel, lifestyle) in order to be able to afford the changes?

However, Virginia recognized that "change does come with a cost; many people do not want to change what is working now if it will mean taking dollars out of

their pockets even at the risk of depleting resources." Towards the end of the Citizens' Panel Virginia became more pointed in her expectations of the role of policy-makers; "All in all I feel that for energy consumption to be reduced…we have to have a plan… They [changes] have to be implemented – or even mandated… we have to start somewhere." She also asserted the importance of public education in gaining support for change:

> I think there has to be an "education of the general public to inform them of the need to change and that the changes are not just happening because someone, or city council has said so… We have to understand how important it is to get to a low carbon future by a target year… 2050. You can't just ram it on individuals.

She concluded her thoughts by expressing concern about the effectiveness of the process; "Now I only hope that all this hard work will not fall on deaf ears!" This worry coincides with her post-deliberation survey responses indicating only "slight" and "some" trust in the three levels of government.

Like Virginia, Toby also considered the role of policy-makers; "Over the course of the day my perspective did change on what responsibility the City Of Edmonton does have on climate change. I never really gave it much thought on how the design of the city would have on Environmental or Economical issues." While he continually denied that he held strong opinions on the issues, Toby expressed well-cultivated ideas about how to achieve sustainable energy consumption:

> My thinking is that to get people to "participate" is to make it easy for them to make the right choice. Not to penalize by taxing them for making the wrong choice. I think it is extremely important to develop tools (Energy Calculators) and make improvements to systems (ie. Transit). This is the way people can do the right thing… People today are busy,

> most don't want to be educated on climate change but are willing to do their part. Make it easy for them, give them choices and I believe they will do it.

A noticeable shift in Toby's perspective was his growing concern for climate adaptation. From my observations of the sessions, Toby became a very vocal advocate for preparedness, consistently attempting to refocus conversations from reducing carbon emissions to what he referred to as "climate change readiness." He has little faith in reversing or mitigating climate change but believes that it is vital to prepare for a future of increased climatic instability:

> Spending all of or most of our resources into reducing greenhouse gasses is just foolish. I have heard that even if we reduced CO_2 production in the entire world by 50% it would take up to 100 years for the temperature to reduce by 1 degree C. For example we need to design our new neighbourhoods for both solar energy and for flooding. In Edmonton we could not endure 2 weeks without electricity in the middle of winter [referring to the electricity blackout following Hurricane Sandy]. We need to improve our infrastructure so this does not happen.

Toby was skeptical about whether human releases of greenhouse gases have impacted the climate, but he did believe the climate is changing. He believed that in order to find greater support and momentum for the low carbon policies, there must be an attempt to broaden the conversation:

> There is another side to this and I wanted the group to consider it. When we do make these changes there can be other benefits as well that will help justify the cost and the inconvenience in people's life. Doing this with more than the goal of just lowering greenhouse gases will help encourage people of Edmonton to do what is right.

An interaction between two antagonistic deliberators further emphasizes Toby's point. A self-proclaimed "environmentalist" and a climate skeptic consistently disagreed over issues of climate change and energy. However, in the fifth session, upon talking to each other about their own lifestyles rather than arguing about the reality of climate change they found that they were able to agree on many low carbon policies.

2.7.3 Civic Engagement

The journal participants displayed varying degrees of civic engagement. Kimberly, for example, reported on her post-deliberation survey that she was "trying to act in ways that reduce climate change"; she disagreed with that statement prior to deliberation. However, while proud of the work done at the panel, she was hesitant to continue her efforts:

> In the afternoon when we did the "moving forward" piece it was hard to commit to anything because mentally I wasn't prepared to continue moving forward. Lack of motivation… This late afternoon activity felt a little bit of pressure. I felt guilty not signing up for anything. I am proud of the report but I don't know how far I want to go and push/talk about it.

Mahirah and Virginia both reported increased attempts to effect change through knowledge sharing and discussion with others. Mahirah stated; "I have become more conscious of the amount of power I use and share my knowledge with co-workers." Virginia reported intention to increase her own participation beyond the Citizens' Panel; "as a concerned citizen of the future of Edmonton I will certainly share my experience with people I know." Virginia's post-deliberation survey responses also indicate a strong belief that citizens like her can affect what the government does. This is supported by her journal entries, which consistently referred to the importance of involving the public in political conversations and

decision-making. After the first session, Virginia already demonstrated confidence in her own abilities and of those around her, writing:

> Every individual is important + each + everyone has some possible solution or maybe the link to complete the thought process… At the end of the day, I was convinced that as a group – we had the leadership in the room to make suggestions – to the right people to at least begin to bring about change in Edmonton future use of energy… Judging from the people at my table, everyone had something to offer.

Toby's journal entries unearth a shift in his political capabilities and skills. He entered the Citizens' Panel with some hesitation; "I was wishing on my way there that I had not agreed to be on the panel." He was also skeptical of the influence the panel's input would have; "I have not felt my opinion, or the Citizen's Panel participation will have a huge impact on decisions the City of Edmonton will make in the future. I expect that they will take a couple of ideas from this group, but they will more heavily rely on professional consultants." His pre-deliberation survey responses echo this skepticism, as he responded that people like him can only affect what the government does "a little", and that he can do little about climate change. Despite his trepidation towards the Citizens' Panel, Toby attended every session, and became a consistent contributor to discussions. He attributed the personal connections he made with other panelists as a motivating factor; "It was hard to get motivated in the morning to get to the panel. It was a busy week and I was feeling under the weather. It was the friendships I had made with a few that got me going." Kimberly similarly found inspiration in the other participants; "The best part about this panel is getting to work/know new Edmontonians (outside of my circle of friends/family)… I feel very respected here. We have created our own family here."

Through the duration of the sessions, the ease and frequency with which Toby tapped into his deliberative capacity increases. After the third session, he reported;

"I feel comfortable talking in the group." Near the end, Toby had a moment of self-reflection in which he realizes the increase in his engagement level; "Over the course of the sessions I did get a little more vocal against a few of the recommendations. I did this because I saw that very few people were. If the group's final paper was going to withstand the criticism from fellow citizens and council they would have to address some of these concerns when they wrote the final draft." He concluded by stating that he would probably be involved in a process like this again.

2.8 Discussion

The literature on deliberative democracy reviewed earlier emphasizes knowledge gain, opinion realization and change, and honing of civic skills stemming from self-reflexive and reasoned dialogue (Dryzek 2011; Neimeyer 2011; Luskin, Fishkin and Jowell 2002). These benefits contribute to the impact of deliberation, and supplement and can even arise in the absence of a meaningful decision or outcome. The results of this study highlight occurrences of both change and stasis, and the external conditions that likely contributed to such outcomes.

2.8.1 Participant change

Shifts in opinion and knowledge are fostered by increased experience with and exposure to the topic at hand, and dialogue that challenges pre-existing beliefs and requires that information and opinions be justified within a broader range of perspectives. Interactions and friendships amongst deliberators enhance deliberative engagement and openness to discovering common ground. The presence of these key factors led to significant participant change amongst the deliberators in the Citizens' Panel.

Toby, spurred by the silence of others and his skepticism toward the information he was presented with became vocal about climate adaptation, an area of concern

mostly ignored within the panel. As he began a critical analysis of the discussions and engaged in dialogue with other panelists, he noticed a gap in the conversation that helped him to refine his perspective. Rather than explicit opinion change, Toby experienced opinion formation. He went from claiming that he had no strong opinions on the topics to becoming an advocate for adaptation.

The types of information provided to and drawn on by participants can inspire change. Personal experience with the impacts of climate change, in the form of observed unexpected weather events or exposure to others' experiences, appeared to prompt increased concern, and a desire for initiatives that address climate change. Brody et al. (2012) highlight the importance of context on individuals' willingness to change beliefs and actions, stating that those who have experienced environmental degradation are more like to adopt concern and corresponding behaviours. Toby observed the hardships created by Hurricane Sandy, which occurred during the Citizens' Panel, and embraced a perspective of climate change adaptation inspired by a desire to avoid similar consequences. Increased exposure to the effects of climate change may broaden deliberators' experiences and prompt a shift in perspectives towards a more pro-environmental outlook. Many participants vocalized their desire for information about other areas of the world, how other places are coping with and mitigating the effects of climate change. Norgaard (2006) refers to a focus on tradition and the local, which draws attention away from the concerns of future generations and the global good. The journal participants in this study avoided such "socially organized denial", many of them maintaining a strong focus on future generations and quality of life for all, and an interest in the global aspects of the issue. Increasing deliberators' experience with climate change, directly or indirectly through stories, guest speakers, current events, or case studies, may have enhanced opportunities for opinion and behaviour shifts by eliciting empathy and creating tangible connections to climate change.

The process of deliberation and dialogue with other viewpoints created opportunities to cut through single-minded, rhetoric-filled beliefs and biased knowledge by opening up this type of thinking to challenges from other perspectives. Kimberly's knowledge and beliefs were tempered by the array of opinions she was exposed to through the deliberation. She became more tentative towards the "biased" opinions of her father, a climate skeptic and employee at a coal power plant whose opinions she previously relayed unquestioningly. Her emerging self-awareness and more careful consideration of the sources of her knowledge represent the reflexivity that Neimeyer (2011) argues weeds out rhetoric and leads to more reasonable and thoughtful opinions. Kimberly had previously taken a "cognitive shortcut" (118) by uncritically repeating statements she had heard someone else make, but she began to consider the foundation of such claims and engaged in more nuanced evaluations of information sources.

The opportunity for dialogue amongst diverse individuals can enhance deliberator change by creating a space for deliberators to work through disagreements and investigate one another's perspectives. Even when participants do not share common perspectives, deliberation and a shared logic can assist them in transforming their diverse viewpoints into mutually acceptable outcomes (Neimeyer 2011). The interaction between the environmentalist and the climate skeptic exemplify this – when they stopped debating and started a dialogue they recognized rather than rejected each other's values, and in doing so realized they can agree on many policy outcomes. After sharing information with each other about their respective preferences and motivations, the climate skeptic said; "Connor and I lead similar lifestyles, we just disagree about why we need to."

The human interaction, collegiality, and friendships that developed through the deliberation also stimulated changes in engagement levels. Deliberators can be expected to have "a greater willingness to act" (Hobson and Neimeyer 2011: 966). Some participants reflected this, stating their intentions to continue spreading the knowledge they gained to others. Two journalists attributed the motivation for

their engagement during and after the deliberation to the human interactions they experienced. Eggins et al. (2007) refer to fair and respectful treatment as a means of encouraging a sense of citizenship in participants. Toby and Kimberly indicated that friendships and feelings of family and respect persuaded them to continue their efforts when they were otherwise feeling disheartened.

2.8.2 Lack of participant change

The extensive time and effort required of deliberators in the Citizens' Panel might have led to physical and mental exhaustion that discouraged future involvement. Past volunteer and advocacy work also appeared to constrain the increased political engagement that is expected after participation in a deliberation. Distrust of the process, including perceived biases and skepticism toward the actual impacts deliberative outcomes will have, also reduced the likelihood of increased engagement by Citizens' Panel participants. Finally, the existing structural and practical limitations of moving towards a low carbon lifestyle seemed to temper uptake of and support for low carbon measures. Existing economic dependencies on coal-heavy energy and physical barriers such as insufficient public transit access influenced opinion change towards sustainable initiatives. These important attributes constrained opportunities for opinion change and increases in civic engagement.

Engagement levels can be negatively impacted by extensive involvement in political or social issues that leads to feelings of exhaustion or the satisfaction that one has already done their part. While the results of this study show that there were some instances of increased engagement and political capacity, as predicted by the literature (Fusarelli, Kowalski and Petersen 2011; Min 2007; Eggins, Reynolds, Oakes and Mavor 2007), overall, surveys and journals point to more static results. Kimberly reported feeling not "prepared to continue moving forward" resulting from a lack of motivation and exhaustion. Other participants spoke to me at the final session, citing their past involvement with community

leagues and volunteering as a reason for not having the energy or motivation to also engage in action on this issue.

Lack of desire to continue involvement may have also followed from skepticism towards the effectiveness and meaningfulness of their participation. Toby's cynicism towards the legitimacy of experts and biased information highlights a barrier to opinion change. Greater exposure to a more varied landscape of expert opinions and perspectives may have reduced resistance towards the knowledge that was shared with participants. Toby also believed that the panel's input would be taken lightly compared to the opinions of experts, and thought the panel was biased and "led down a path." Virginia too showed hesitancy in the ability of the City of Edmonton to efficiently implement new ideas; "I find it frustrating that the city seems to be moving slowly at implementing change…and at times one department doesn't seem to know what the other department is doing. At times things are started – but it doesn't seem like there is even a completion date." Eggins et al. (2007) assert that meaningful participation and the realization that their input has utility will assist citizens in moving away from rational ignorance and towards greater political engagement. Insufficient decision-making autonomy or influence of the panel, or a failure to properly communicate to participants the extent of their power, may have made the deliberative exercise appear less meaningful, discouraging engagement.

In this study, participant change was also found to be constrained by practical limitations, such as cost and accessibility, and the structure of energy dependence that is currently at play in the province. A large body of knowledge describes barriers to opinion and belief change, including structural and demographic barriers (Huddart-Kennedy et al. 2009; Jones et al. 1999). Some participants feared cost increases, preventing them from being entirely supportive of low carbon policies. Virginia demonstrated concern regarding how up-front investments would impact older citizens like her who may not live to reap long-term financial benefits. She also noted inaccessibility of infrastructure and

services, such as living far from a bus route and an absence of bike trails near her home. Many Edmonton citizens also rely on the current, coal-heavy energy industry. For example, Kimberly's father is employed at a coal-power plant and so his wellbeing and that of his family are directly dependent on the existing economic structures.

Further questions linger following these findings. There is space for follow-up on the long-term knowledge, opinion, and behaviour changes of participants. Continued data collection, conducted by other Alberta Climate Dialogue researchers, will contribute to a longitudinal study that will supplement this research. Additionally, there is a question regarding how the learnings and changes experienced during deliberations can be translated to the greater public. Resources and time prevent deliberations from being entirely inclusive, and so there is a need to effectively communicate the outcomes. Neimeyer (2011) argues that simply reporting aggregate preferences "shortchanges" the rest of the public as they are asked to trust in the decision of the deliberative panel without experiencing any of the knowledge gains or opinion shifts. It is therefore vital to articulate the logical pathways or reasoning undertaken by deliberators. There are opportunities for future research to investigate communication of deliberative conclusions, as well as support for the congruent learning, opinion development and change of non-participants.

2.9 Conclusion

Using journal entries and survey responses, this chapter draws attention to individuals' unique experiences with change and stasis. The results indicate some shifts in knowledge, opinions and engagement levels as well as barriers that impeded potentially transformative moments. The use of journals and surveys to capture individual change permitted a deeper insight into the experiences of participants that would not be possible by analyzing only the final outcome (the Citizens' Panel Report and recommendations to Council). Surveys allowed for

collection of large amounts of data from many panelists, but are limited by length and predetermined questionnaire items. The journals supplemented survey data by capturing additional thoughts and explanations, and allowed for participants to express unexpected instances of change or important moments that researchers would not think to include in surveys. This research offers particularly important insights into research methods and the role of participant journals for understanding subtle shifts that may not warrant a change in survey response but can provide significant knowledge of the effects of deliberation.

This research provides practitioners and conveners of deliberative events with important insights regarding aspects of the process and design that encouraged change and meaningful learning. For example, the atmosphere of camaraderie and respect fostered by facilitators at the Citizens' Panel encouraged some of the participants to be more politically engaged, while the lack of communication and ambiguous scope of the Panel's decision-making power frustrated some participants as they felt that their input would not have a meaningful impact on future policy. Finally, this research also provides decision-makers with a closer look at the impacts of deliberation on individual participants that will assist in evaluating the usefulness and effectiveness of a deliberative approach in future decision-making.

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Chapter 3: Participant experiences under constrained deliberative conditions: A study of participant reactions to the limitations of practicing deliberative democracy in a non-ideal setting

3.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to understand the ways in which deliberators are affected by the features of deliberative democracy that emerge under the constraints of practice, and that often differentiate practical exercises from various deliberative democratic theories and ideals. Deliberative democracy is based upon an ideal of reasonable and logical argumentation, in the absence of rhetoric, coercion, and power imbalances. In practice, it is almost impossible and perhaps undesirable to replicate this ideal, as exclusionary design processes (Barnes, Newman, Knops and Sullivan 2003), activism and advocacy biases (Young 2001), "hidden" dialogues and constrained public contexts (Eliasoph 1996), and practices such as voting and consensus arise in response to practical and political constraints and the need for tangible outcomes.

In this study, observations and participant journals assisted in highlighting aspects of the Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges that diverged from the ideals of deliberative theory, and how designers' negotiations of the existing practical constraints and tensions affected participants' experiences.

The development of the Citizens' Panel was informed by theories of deliberative democracy as well as extensive and diverse practices of citizen participation. Significant efforts were made to establish an effective environment for meaningful deliberation, and a space that was inclusive, open to new ideas, and connected to political realities and decision-making opportunities. Recruitment efforts endeavored to engage a demographically representative sample of Edmontonians, experienced facilitators provided guidance as well as training to

others on how to encourage dialogue and autonomous decision-making, written materials and expert knowledge aimed to minimize bias, and activities and discussions attempted to create space for a diverse array of perspectives. The extensive efforts, research, expertise, and funds that went into the creation of this event led to it being an exemplary setting for an analysis of the constraints of deliberative democracy in practice, and how these limitations impacted deliberators.

The results of this study highlight how aspects of the design, process, and execution hindered or enhanced the potential for meaningful dialogue and deliberative outcomes. This research also reasserts the inevitability of a less than ideal deliberative context in practice, and emphasizes instances of both negative and positive participant experiences under these realistic conditions.

3.2 Literature Review

3.2.1 Deliberative democracy often functions in an imperfect space

A classical definition of deliberative democracy posits an ideal space – a space in which pre-existing power and socioeconomic inequalities are neutralized and the strongest, most logical and universally agreed upon arguments and ideas reign supreme. However, it is inevitable that in practice, deliberations operate in imperfect spaces, complete with coercive processes, assertive activists employing rhetoric, and dichotomous "frontstage" and "backstage" dialogues (Eliasoph 1996) that betray the assumption of open discussion within public deliberations.

3.2.2 Coercive power

The concept of communicative rationality embraces ideals of equal participation by all those affected by a decision, authority resting with the best argument, reason, and respectful responsiveness to others' claims (Habermas 1994). An

assumption is made that "arbitrary preferences and power" (Hendriks 2009: 175) do not affect the process of decision-making, and rather, outcomes are decided via a logic that is universally understood and considered reasonable by all. In this Habermasian sense of deliberation, means of communication are devoid of coercive power. However, this idealistic version of deliberation fails to inform in situations of power inequality; "although providing certain universal pragmatics for communication within the public sphere…Habermas has been criticized by contemporary theorists for failing to identify an institutional basis for an effective public sphere in the organized capitalism of the 21st Century" (Parkins 2002:167).

In a pragmatic setting, power inequalities are easily transferred into and reproduced within deliberations, but these inequities need not render deliberative democratic processes illusory or ineffective. Rather, there may be good reason to expand or loosen the assumptions and requirements of traditional deliberative theory, allowing the ideals of deliberative democracy to guide political action in non-ideal situations. Relaxing the prohibition on coercive strategies may actually result in the achievement of effective deliberation down the road. Mansbridge et al. (2010: 82) refer to uses of coercive power that, inspired by deliberative values, promote better deliberation. For example, power used by facilitators maintains order, promotes equal speaking opportunities for all deliberators, and focuses the discussion. Deliberation in practice requires an organizing force to instigate dialogue, but theoretically deliberation should exist in the absence of this leadership, and dialogue should be directed by the group (Moore 2012: 149). As such, facilitators are charged with finding a balance between directing discussions towards a goal, and maintaining a position of non-ownership. The facilitator's role is in "helping the group toward clarity and group progress" (Moore 2012: 155) without taking control over the direction of deliberation or imposing his/her own opinions.

Mansbridge et al. (2010) also advocate for the inclusion of self-interest as a means of clarifying the common good by identifying the diversity of relevant preferences

and justifying the adoption of a particular policy. In the case of failure to clarify the common good or reconcile of self-interests, a mechanism such as voting may be deployed in order to escape conflict (Mansbridge et al. 2010: 75). Voting is outcome-based and preferences are taken at face value (the result is based on the power that each party wields, rather than reasons); however, "voting has the capacity to bring every full member of the polity into the decision and give that member's "say" an equal weight" (Mansbridge et al. 2010: 85). In this way, voting may complement the deliberative process as a way to define and recognize the preferences in the room, helping to bring those perspectives into the conversation. Voting also plays a functional role, in bringing about tangible outcomes in a non-unanimous setting, or when the process is goal-oriented.

From this perspective, coercive tactics can contribute to the creation of a more equal deliberative situation; and as such, this use of power is not only acceptable, but a necessary precondition for meeting the requirements of fair deliberation. Furthermore, broadening our understanding of what constitutes a valid deliberative practice gives new life to deliberative theory, enhancing its applicability in a non-ideal space. In the next section, I explore in more detail the literature surrounding some of the challenges of executing deliberative processes.

3.2.3 Participatory exclusion

Exclusionary processes such as the timing and location of events or the language, education, or knowledge needed to understand deliberations, limit the involvement of particular participants and the potential for marginalized discourses to gain recognition within the deliberative setting. Barnes et al. (2003: 391) refer to four factors that contribute to exclusion from deliberation, and limit the "potential for public participation to contribute to social justice". First, discursive practices shape the way the public is constituted or categorized, determining which individuals or groups should be represented within the deliberation. For example, ethnicity may be acknowledged and steps taken to

ensure racial diversity, but reference to poverty may be absent and thus not accurately represented. Second, the authors refer to "competence," or the assumptions made about who is capable of contributing to the deliberation. Competence is ascribed to an individual or group holding "a particular type of knowledge and experience… considered to confer the insights necessary to define the problems to be addressed" (Barnes et al. 2003: 392). Third, the perception that certain skills are necessary to effectively contribute may exclude potential participants. The authors give the example of specialized, technical skills and language that deem non-experts less equipped to participate. Finally, practical aspects of deliberation such as time and location can restrict those with physical disabilities and needs, and an unfamiliar or intimidating setting or procedures may also discourage participation. Young (2001) summarizes the restrictions placed on potential deliberators by the procedural aspects of participating in a public forum:

> Even when a series of public hearings are announced for an issue, people who might wish to speak at them need to know about them, be able to arrange their work and child care schedule to be able to attend, be able to get to them, and have enough understanding of the hearing process to participate. Each of these abilities is unevenly present among members of a society (Young 2001: 680).

Strategic agenda-setting by powerful players is another way that deliberative democratic processes are particularly vulnerable to power. Parkinson (2003) highlights the hierarchical relationship between deliberation organizers and participants. The organizer often manages the agenda, relegating participants to providing information rather than acting as autonomous decision-makers. This lack of agenda-setting power can lead to "participants in real deliberation resisting what they see as limited agendas" (Parkinson 2003: 189). Limits on the scope and subject of deliberations, and using specific language and terminology, suffocates contention and demands for change before they are able to enter decision-making. Determination of what is to be discussed within the deliberative setting, what

information is to be presented and by whom, and what is beyond the scope of conversation can suppress certain concerns and conflicts while highlighting others. While it is vital for organizers to provide participants with experts and written information about the relevant issues, especially when the topic of discussion is quite technical, "the danger is that this involves a powerful framing role" (Moore 2012:152). However, when a group is created in response to specific political action, such agenda framing may be necessary in order to maximize influence within this particular policy-making context.

3.2.4 Activism, advocacy, and bias

The role of activist would seem to be at odds with that of a good deliberator, as direct action such as protests or sit-ins seem considered coercive and confrontational from a deliberative point of view. These activist strategies can be seen as interest politics (Young 2001: 674), pushing a single demand, message, or agenda without a lot of space for reciprocal dialogue. Yet the assumption that existing hegemonic discourses, institutions, and unequal power structures thwart meaningful dialogue even in an intentionally deliberative setting pushes many marginalized voices to the outer edges of democracy; confrontational tactics are seen as the only way to get ones message heard.

There is an expectation with legitimate deliberation that arguments be made within a frame of logic and reasoning that is understood by all deliberators, thus entailing the exclusion of simple partisan interests or uses of coercion and force to prompt acquiescence (Young 2001: 672). Young orchestrates a hypothetical dialogue between an activist and deliberative democrat in an attempt to set up (and perhaps begin to break down) these two contrasting ways of approaching democratic change, where activists are not included in deliberation and deliberation is excluded from an activist's tactical toolbox.

The activist refrains from engaging in deliberation within existing institutions as he sees these institutions as producing and perpetuating injustice: participation co-opts the time and energy of activists. Those in power are able to steer the direction, scope, and topic of conversation. The activist instead protests through direct action such as street demonstrations in order to maintain the clarity of his message. The deliberative democrat fails to find a place for activism within deliberations, as she envisages activism as interest politics, that is, the promotion of particular policy ends through pressuring (lobbying), a decidedly non-deliberative act of coercion. A characteristic of interest groups is their lack of "obligation to discuss issues with those with whom their interests conflict" (Young 2001: 674), which would obviously be contrary to the process of deliberative dialogue.

With this perspective on the behaviour of activists, Young asserts a more nuanced view of the activist – an activist position is different than a group interest, as it is a universalist claim regarding injustice and collective good, and not a self-interested stance motivated by personal gain (Young 2001: 675). However, activism often entails the use of strong group rhetoric that draws attention to their cause in the face of hegemonic forces that have consistently marginalized their discourse. This is unwelcome in traditional deliberative forums, which aim to break through slogans and emotional appeals in order to unearth rational and relatable arguments.

A further extension of Young's thinking on activism is found in the emergent idea of deliberative activism. "Deliberative activism" is the act of practicing deliberative democratic ideals in the face of power inequalities and entrenched structural and political disadvantages. Fung (2005) suggests that non-deliberative means, when guided by the goal of creating a more deliberative situation, are justified if they follow these principles:

> 1) Fidelity to the decision-making process of deliberation, despite its shortcomings in practice, and to improving (not revolutionizing) the current institutions and political practices;
> 2) Charity, assuming that others are willing to practice good faith deliberation until they prove otherwise;
> 3) Exhaustion, exhausting all deliberative means prior to engaging in non-deliberative means; and
> 4) Proportionality, the use of non-deliberative means should be in proportion with the extent that deliberation is restricted (Fung 2005: 402-403).

Rather than attempting to restructure the sociopolitical situation, the deliberative activist uses non-deliberative tactics to reach a deliberative end. Fung argues that the distinction between deliberation and activism outlined by Young (2001: 399) is less antagonistic than she suggests, and that real life deliberative democrats should use whatever methods necessary (including coercive means) to achieve an end goal of a deliberative space. As a method of prying open a democratic space where one does not naturally exist, activism and coercive tactics may contribute to the creation of a more "level playing field" on which to conduct deliberation.

Rostboll (2009) tempers this by emphasizing the need to maintain reason-giving even when engaging in coercive methods:

> the use of non-deliberative means should be combined with reason-giving. It might under certain circumstances be necessary for powerless groups to add force to their arguments, but they must still justify their ends as well as their use of non-deliberative means to others. In this way they uphold their commitment to treating their adversaries as reason-responsive even though they simultaneously realize that their adversaries must be forced to listen (Rostboll 2009: 33).

These authors all provide strategies for enacting deliberation under a non-ideal speech situation, resulting in the creation of a potentially more applicable and more realistic version of deliberative democracy that can function in the contemporary world.

3.2.5 "Frontstage" and "backstage" dialogues

In searching for snapshots of meaningful and transformative dialogue within a deliberative event, it is important to understand how context shapes such public-spirited talk. Eliasoph (1996: 262-263) argues that the more public the context, the less public-spirited the dialogue that occurs, and we must look at how a group structures the public sphere within their unique context in order to understand how willingly people will engage in open, challenging, and empathetic dialogue. Civic practices or norms created and perpetuated by those in the room delineate the appropriateness of public-spirited discourse in a particular space, shaping the type of dialogue that will occur.

It is said that people become good citizens through their interactions with fellow citizens, and by engaging in "open-ended, voluntary, and equal exchange" (Eliasoph 1996: 262). Such exchange may or may not happen within a deliberative space. The assumption of deliberative democracy is that a deliberative event will create an ideal space for public-spirited moments, by espousing a focus on open, reciprocal, questioning, and cooperative dialogue. However, Eliasoph observes two distinct dialogues that emerge from a public context – "frontstage" and "backstage" or "hidden" dialogues. Frontstage dialogue is born of the pressure to make an impression, to look good in front of other people, while backstage citizens can relax and escape the fear of judgment. This is similar to Goffman's dramaturgical concept of acting within social situations. Like Eliasoph, Goffman (1959) refers to the "front" – an individual's performance that defines and influences the context for those who are observing the performance. Settings, appearance, and manner are all employed by the

"actor" to convey social status, lifestyle, or the actor's role in a situation or interaction (Goffman 1959: 22-24). In both Goffman's and Eliasoph's notions of the public "front", the group itself establishes acceptable topics of conversation, behaviour, and tone, and in doing so limits or encourages moments of public-spiritedness within the deliberation. Open public dialogue is then relegated to the backstage or embraced within the deliberative space.

However, such backstage dialogues need not be detrimental to effective group deliberation, and may actually enhance communicative skills as well as a sense of community among deliberators. Engagement in other, non-deliberative spaces provides deliberators with an opportunity to become confident in their preferences and verbal skills prior to or parallel with forays into the deliberative arena. von Lieres and Kahane (2006) identify a key feature of deliberative design as "the existence of *separate spaces* in which members of marginalized groups can reflect on dynamics of power and exclusion, and negotiate questions of common agendas, strategies and identities" (von Lieres and Kahane 2006: 133). As such, backstage spaces may also be a place where structurally disadvantaged groups can engage in counter-discourses and gain the confidence and capacity to meaningfully engage in the public sphere (Cornwall 2008: 59-60).

With these insights, a key question arises: where are moments of public-spiritedness occurring, and how are they being encouraged or discouraged? In exploring the conditions that affect public spiritedness, Eliasoph (1996) refers to the use of humour by a country-western dance club. The group context, or frontstage, was composed of joking and casualness; "Frontstage, members could not discuss relationships, work, family, health, or the wider world, except to make fun of such attachments" (Eliasoph 1996:271). In this way, humor relegated meaningful, public-spirited conversations to brief, private exchanges in small groups that occur "between scenes." Alternatively, Moore (2012: 155) reports the use of humour to facilitate free flowing and candid conversation that created a

comfortable space, "a 'lightness' that puts people at ease," and encouraged humility.

In summary, this literature review draws attention to the challenges of translating deliberative theory into practice. Exclusionary practices, uneven distributions of power, advocacy positions and biases, restrictive public contexts, and mechanisms such as voting contrast with traditional ideals of deliberative democracy, and yet are likely inevitable without dramatic transformation of the existing political space. The way that deliberators respond to these limitations is the focus of this research, and the results will assist in understanding how far an event can stray from its theoretical foundations while still resulting in deliberative outcomes and open dialogue.

3.3 Study Setting and Research Objective

As discussed in the previous chapter, research was conducted at the Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges, which was held from October to December 2012 at the University of Alberta in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. The citizen deliberation, comprised of adult (18 years or older) Edmontonians, was proposed with the intention of supporting and informing the implementation of the City of Edmonton's strategic environmental plan, *The Way We Green*. The deliberation was designed and executed through a partnership between the City of Edmonton, Alberta Climate Dialogue, and the Centre for Public Involvement.

Sixty-six participants were recruited through random sampling (though ten panelists – as often happens in such exercises – retracted their participation at different stages of the process, in all cases but one citing health or work commitments). The random sampling was followed by outreach targeted towards youth who were less represented in the sample. Recruitment of participants occurred approximately four weeks prior to deliberations.

Table 3-1. Panel composition as compared to the City of Edmonton population

Characteristic	Percentage (%) of Edmonton population	Percentage (%) of Citizens' Panel
[1]Gender – Male	49.9	48.5
[1]Gender – Female	50.2	51.5
[1]Age – 18-29	25.4	25.8
[1]Age – 30-49	36.8	30.3
[1]Age – 50+	37.8	43.9
[2]Education – High school or less*	43.4	28.8
[2]Education – College or apprenticeship or trades diploma*	30.1	30.3
[2]Education – University certificate or degree*	26.5	40.9
[2]Ethnicity – South Asian or Chinese	11.6	13.6
[2]Ethnicity – Other visible minority	11.3	10.6
[2]Ethnicity – Aboriginal, Inuit, Métis, or First Nation	5.3	3.0
[2]Ethnicity – Not a visible minority	77.1	71.2
[3]Disability – Activity difficulties/reductions	17.6	12.1
[1]Households with children**	41.0	25.8
[2]Personal Income - $0-$29,999***	51.0	34.9
[2]Personal Income - $29,999-$59,999***	30.0	27.3
[2]Personal Income - $59,999+***	19.0	34.9
Employed or family member employed by energy industry	-	13.6

[1] Government of Canada (2011)
[2] Government of Canada (2006)
[3] City of Edmonton.(2006)

The final panel composition was a somewhat successful representative sample of the Edmonton population. As seen in Table 3-1, organizers based panel recruitment on a number of population characteristics including gender, age, education level, ethnicity, and income. It was also noted whether a panelist was employed or had a family member employed by the energy industry, as this is a relevant factor in the stake and opinions they have in the deliberative outcomes. The panel had a higher proportion of university-educated individuals than in the

Edmonton population, a lower proportion of people from households with children, and a higher proportion of individuals with an income of over $59,999. However, many of the other characteristics such as ethnicity, age, and gender indicate a fairly representative sample population.

Deliberations spanned eight weeks with six eight-hour Saturday sessions and assigned readings for each week. An extensive team of deliberative design experts and facilitators provided structure and maintained the flow of discussions. Two professional facilitators led from the front of the room, transitioning between activities and small group discussions as well as assisting in instigating and directing plenary conversations. The large group of citizens was split into approximately 10 tables. Table facilitators and note takers were present at each of these smaller groups to guide table discussions and activities. Each session focused on a different piece of the decision-making process including: an introduction to deliberative process and the issues of climate change and energy; table activities to illuminate personal and common values; expert presentations on climate science and proposed policy changes; small group deliberation of policy options and trade-offs; plenary voting on final recommendations; a review of the draft Citizens' Panel recommendations; and planning for next steps and continued action.

Citizen recommendations were based on Edmonton's Energy Transition Discussion Paper, developed by the Pembina Institute and HB Lanarc. The Pembina Institute, as a prominent mainstream environmental organization, received much of the attention and criticism for the Discussion Paper recommendations due to citizen familiarity with the organization and the presence of a Pembina representative at some sessions. The organization maintains a moderate, multi-stakeholder approach to energy and environmental issues. The Discussion Paper outlines three potential energy strategies; low carbon, reduced carbon, and business-as-usual. Attention was paid to the social, economic, and environmental costs and benefits of each strategy. The paper is founded on the

assumption that climate change is a real and present threat to the City of Edmonton and the world, and that human activities represent a significant contribution to recent increases in greenhouse gases. The Discussion Paper was developed with an interest in encouraging the adoption of low carbon energy policies and initiatives.

This research strives to understand specific occurrences that resulted from the difficulties of translating deliberative theory into practice in the Edmonton deliberations, and how these tensions affected participant experiences. The study focuses on aspects of deliberative design, process, and implementation, and how these elements constrained or enhanced opportunities for meaningful dialogue. Results from this study bring to light the real world imperfections of deliberative spaces, and how the presence of advocacy, "backstage" or "hidden" dialogues, and exclusionary practices influence the experiences of participants. These experiences were explored through direct observations of participants during deliberations, reflections from participant journals, and personal experience as a part of the planning and development of the event.

3.4 Methods

3.4.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation is a research method that involves watching and critically reflecting on phenomena in an attempt to "understand more fully the meanings of place and the contexts of everyday life" (Kearns 2005: 245). In this study, participant observations focused on a single table or group of deliberators during each session. Each day of deliberation, observations occurred at a different table with a different combination of deliberators. However, special attention was given to participants who were also maintaining journals as a part of this research. Focusing on a small group of panelists at each session allowed for greater attention to the experiences and interactions of a small number of individuals,

providing a more thorough understanding of the observed moments. Other observational data was collected through my own participation in the planning of the event.

Observations were informed by the research goals of understanding aspects of the deliberation that impeded or enhanced opportunities for meaningful participant experiences, and focused on:

- Panelist recruitment and event planning
- Activities and design elements
- Panelist responses to written materials, presentations, facilitators, and each other
- Moments of conflict and emotional responses
- Other influential or transformative moments

Description of occurrences were recorded, including a summary of what participants said and what reactions these statements incited from other participants, and the nature of emotional responses including body language and tone of voice. The frequency of such occurrences was also noted in order to gauge how common a particular reaction was among participants. This type of observational data provided evidence to support or contrast what participants said in journals or during the sessions. As well as counting and complementing, observational research can provide greater contextual understanding by immersing oneself in the "socio-temporal context of interest" (Kearns 2005: 242). Involvement with event planning provided insight regarding the motivations for particular deliberative design choices, the goals and expectations of organizers, and limitations placed upon the event by funding, time, and partnerships with other organizations. Kearns, Smith and Abbott (1991) report that their observations of research participants often contrasted with what the participants admitted to in interviews. Observing all six sessions provided me with a better understanding of participants' personalities, opinions, lifestyles, and relationships

with other deliberators that they may not have honestly represented in their survey or journal responses, or in formal discussions.

Field notes were either handwritten annotations in a notebook or typed on a laptop. These notes included direct observations, quotations, and personal reflections. Continuous reflection encouraged concurrent data analysis throughout the observation periods and allowed me to direct my observations towards emerging trends and my own developing curiosities. Post hoc review of these notes allowed for further investigation of interesting patterns or occurrences.

3.4.2 Participant Journals

Participant journaling uses diaries written by research subjects. These journals can contribute to a greater understanding of how participants perceive their experiences; "Diaries can be used not only to identify patterns of behaviour but also to provide greater insight into how individuals interpret situations and ascribe meanings to action and events" (Alaszewski 2006: 37). In this study, the journals maintained by select panelists supplemented my own observations of the deliberative process and provided insights into their reactions to different aspects of the event. The journalists' perspectives assisted me in identifying notable practices and facets of the deliberation. A more detailed theoretical foundation for the use of journaling as a data collection method is found in Chapter 1. Chapter 2 includes a detailed description of the journaling process.

3.4.3 Pseudonyms

Journal participants and panelists were given pseudonyms for the purposes of this research. The involvement of organizations such as the Pembina Institute and HB Lanarc is publically available information, and thus these organizations are referred to by name.

3.5 Limitations

As with any data collection method, there are drawbacks to participant observation. Observations occur through the subjective lens of the researcher and are ultimately vulnerable to misinterpretation. However, the addition of participant journaling assists in triangulating both survey responses and participant observations through *in situ* investigation of participant perspectives that minimize the effects of the researcher (Carter and Mankoff 2005).

Participants' awareness of my involvement in planning the Citizens' Panel and creating written materials may have influenced their willingness to criticize aspects of the deliberation in their journal entries or while I was present.

3.6 Results

3.6.1 Observations of coercive power

A number of examples of coercive power emerged throughout the deliberation. For example, one journal participant felt that the scope of conversations was too limited to a well-defined topic, but recognized that this "may have been in the name of the project." The Citizens' Panel was a goal-oriented process that was developed to review the Pembina Institute and HB Lanarc Discussion Paper and give feedback and recommendations on the proposed low carbon initiatives. Facilitators pressed for soft consensus in order to develop a final Citizens' Report within a limited time. Voting captured the extent of agreement on the final recommendations, though an effort was made to qualitatively capture moments of dissent in the report.

Besides guiding deliberators towards the goal of developing their final recommendations to the City of Edmonton, facilitators also played a prominent role in encouraging dialogue and leading activities. A journal participant

expressed favourability towards facilitators who refocused the group by reviewing and digesting the large volumes of information and previous discussions; "The morning explanation that [the lead organizer] gave was awesome. I felt that it was a good summary and clarity. It provided a good purpose with examples of what we were doing," "I really like the [lead] facilitator…she summarizes our points." However, one of the lay facilitators was less effective, dominating the conversation and providing her own opinions in response to discussion questions. During one table conversation this lay facilitator spent more time giving her own perspective on the benefits of low carbon than the deliberators spent in dialogue with one another.

Voting occurred using iClickers: handheld devices that allowed the user to anonymously provide responses to multiple-choice questions. Responses were collected instantaneously and projected at the front of the room, allowing participants to garner an idea of the predominant perspectives among their co-deliberators. The interactive nature of the voting process created excitement in some participants, but isolated others who were less technologically inclined, for example, a few of the older deliberators required assistance using the iClickers. A young journal participant expressed enthusiasm about the activity; "The iClicker was an amazing tool and I had a LOT of fun using it and seeing the room's thoughts…I love to see the instant results and opinions of those in the room." Another wrote about a very different experience with the voting process; "The most amazing thing I saw was the vote on housing density at the last minute. It passed so quickly, and people (for the most part) did not know what they were voting for."

3.6.2 Observations of participatory exclusion

The Citizens' Panel occurred on six Saturdays throughout the months of October, November, and December 2012. Deliberators were given an honorarium for their participation, as well as provided with meals and compensation for travel costs to

and from each session. The lower number of panelists from households with children than is present in the Edmonton population (41% of Edmontonians come from households with children, compared with 25.76% of panelists) may have reflected the poorly promoted childcare services. Panelists were expected to maintain English competency, though proportionate visible minorities were sufficiently represented in spite of this requirement (more visible minorities were represented in the panel with 71% non-visible minority panelists, compared with the Edmonton population where 77% of citizens are non-visible minority).

The technical nature of the issues necessitated strategic efforts to convey climate science and energy policy in such a way as to make it understandable to a wide range of education levels. Written materials provided to deliberators were created for an eighth grade reading level and were edited to remove terminology and maintain plain language. Expert presentations similarly attempted to condense the highly technical nature of climate and energy issues into an easily understandable but not overly simplified summary. Many panelists indicated adequate comprehension of the presentations: "I don't have the science background but these presentations are well geared and informative to me;" "The speakers did an excellent job of presenting their information… not only was it interesting – it was very informative as well." The experts also ended up being the authority on points of contention among deliberators. Often, participants disagreeing over the technical details of green energy, for example, deferred to the relevant expert. However, the topic remains very complex, prompting one participant to note his hesitancy; "I am not comfortable yet having in-depth conversations about climate change. I am no expert."

While one participant applauded organizers on being "interested in hearing from everyone," she also felt the practical limitations of deliberation; "I'm not sure everyone in the groups were really on the same page… at times I felt that there was no time for questions for clarification because of the time constraint." Others raised concerns about the extent of the decision-making power allotted them. Two

participants became vocal in the first plenary discussion, insinuating that the City of Edmonton is using this deliberation to pay "lip service" to the issue of climate change, and will not follow through with the recommendations of the panel. Another expressed concern about panelists' control of how results will be used; "One thing I was kind of worried about was = How will this draft be presented to the city? Will we as panel members be kept informed as to how this will happen?" The use of the Pembina and HB Lanarc Discussion Paper as a foundation for discussions frustrated one participant in particular, who felt constrained by the limited subject matter:

> People felt limited by the Pembina document, which frustrated people and made them feel hemmed in, both people who wanted to do more and people who wanted to do less were feeling that they were limited. People had great ideas, but along the way they seemed to have disappeared or gone by the wayside… This is all based on one group's opinions [Pembina Institute], I'm not saying they're wrong – but it's not the only opinion… There's no place to submit ideas and suggestions. For example, someone suggested banning drive thrus, but that wasn't an option to be talked about.

This same panelist later wrote in his journal,

> It should have been called the Citizens' Panel review of the Pembina recommendations. I just felt in the weeks previous that anyone who had some great ideas on the various topics, who presented low cost solutions were ignored. I saw a few people get very frustrated and I felt for them. Maybe what was needed was a preceding panel recommending deletions/additions to the Pembina report.

The focus on climate change throughout written materials, presentations, and discussion topics was a point of frustration for some participants who self-

identified as climate skeptics. Toby, a journal participant, believed in climate change but was hesitant to believe that it is caused by human release of greenhouse gases. Instead of reducing carbon emissions, he was concerned about adaptation efforts and "climate readiness." As discussed at length in Chapter 2, he wanted to expand the conversation to illuminate other benefits of low carbon initiatives in order to inspire climate skeptics. Another panelist made clear his skepticism by using the expression "so-called greenhouse gases" but still discussed his desire to support local, small businesses in his community as a motivation for driving less. He and Toby later bonded over a desire to use messaging that incorporates alternative benefits to engaging in low carbon activities, in order to avoid isolating skeptics through a focus on climate change.

3.6.3 Observations of activism, advocacy, and bias

Most presenters supported a citywide shift to low carbon, and used assertive language that attempted to influence panelists. One expert presenter declared, "we can't do nothing," and claimed that concerns about the costs of low carbon initiatives are not a valid "excuse" to avoid action. An organizer of the event, while speaking to the group, said, "sustainability – duh! We wouldn't be here if we weren't all motivated by a deep environmental concern." One expert, a representative of a prominent real estate development lobby, indicated some disagreement with a transition to low carbon but the general imbalance of perspectives was detected by some participants; "I would hope that it was a little less biased next time… with more input from professionals of differencing opinions and solutions." Participants also raised questions about the bias of the research they were presented with and wondered if the scientific information contained fear mongering that created or shaped participants' opinions. The perceived partiality of the event may have constrained the legitimacy of any outcomes. At the end of the process, a journal participant stated, "On my way to the last session I gave thought if I needed to accomplish anything today and decided I did not. I had come to the conclusion that we as a group were led down

a path. We were able to stray off pavement a little bit, but if we got too far the sprinklers came on." Another deliberator questioned whether outcomes really represented the range of perspectives in the room; "Do we have an adequate reflection of what people are truly thinking? The process has felt in general to be very directed… It seems that the same people are always talking."

The use of the Discussion Paper as a foundation for conversations contributed to questions about the bias of the panel. The Paper was developed primarily by the Pembina Institute. The preexisting reputation of the organization influenced some participants to approach the document with hesitancy. One participant did not hold back her resentment of the Pembina Institute, telling those at her table, "The Pembina is just fascists that's trying to put restrictions on us!" Another questioned the legitimacy of the organization saying, "I've read books that dispute some of the science coming from Pembina." The presence of a senior advisor from the Pembina Institute may have returned some credibility to the Discussion Paper. He addressed questions and comments that arose regarding the organization's advocacy approach, and assured panelists that the development of the recommendations was vetted by a variety of perspectives including economics professors from the University of Alberta, developers, energy companies, and City of Edmonton staff.

Citizen input occurred late in the City's planning process. Deliberators were aware that city administration already maintained some level of commitment to the recommendations proposed by the Pembina Discussion Paper; "When I first came and started listening to all the information, I felt like it was a paper trying to justify all the building development the City wanted to do," and "It seems to me that the City has bought the report as fact and truth. Are we here so the City can say to the rest of the citizens 'we did a Citizens' Panel and they agree with all the recommendations'?" The Pembina Institute, deliberation hosts and speakers, and the City of Edmonton's expressed inclination towards low carbon initiatives made

some panelists feel obligated to provide their consent; “I feel participants were pressured to agree to the details in the draft report.”

Not only did deliberators notice the bias of presenters and those involved with organizing the panel, but in each other as well. Select individuals became known as activists or environmentalists, as they promoted well-defined views and would challenge others using a confrontational tone and vocabulary. One journal participant noted the intensity of the “environmentalists”; “It felt like a weight had been lifted… A couple of us at the table found a way to have some fun amongst the serious nature of our discussions. The “Environmentalists” in the room must have taken the weight the others have lost.” Some participants questioned the presence of these individuals, as they felt that the Citizens’ Panel was not the right space for activism; “He was in the room under false pretenses. He had no hesitations and was there only to change peoples’ minds if he could.” A young male, who had previously expressed strong pro-environmental views, joined a conversation where participants were discussing their uncertainties about low carbon initiatives. He was similarly perceived as trying to sway others’ perspectives, so deliberators objected to his being there; “I’m sorry, Jason, but I’m having a real issue with you and Connor challenging everyone’s opinions,” “I don’t think this is the right group for you.” The assertive and vocal nature of the individuals that panelists identified as environmentalists or activists appeared to have instigated resistance from other panelists. A journal participant referred to a negative emotional reaction he had to one man’s attitude that prevented him from engaging in valuable dialogue:

> In the morning I was getting quite angry, almost to the point I wanted to punch the fellow sitting beside me. He was snickering and shaking his head at everyone in the room who had comments that did not agree with his. I got the feeling he thought his beliefs were more important than anyone else… I had lunch with the fellow that was snickering at everyone. After a conversation with him, I discovered that he was very passionate

about the environment and had read a lot on climate change. Although he seemed like a very intelligent man, it did seem he had some issues. I will choose to just ignore him in the future.

Other participants became quiet in the presence of these opinionated and insistent individuals. For example, during a group dialogue one of the "activists" got into a heated argument with another participant. I made eye contact with a panelist, and she gave me an uncomfortable smile as she sat back in her chair and disengaged from the conversation.

3.6.4 Observations of "frontstage" and "backstage" dialogue

Multiple factors appeared to prevent participants from vocalizing dissent during "frontstage" or public discussions, such as my relationship with conveners and presenters, and time constraints that led to participants feeling rushed. A journal participant, who remained quiet during a presentation about changing personal environmental behaviours, later displayed hesitancy to express his true opinions; "The next part here is a little hard to say. I know you are friends or colleagues, but the only part I did not care for and made me a little angry was the presentation this morning." Another journal participant highlighted another example of hidden conversations. When the deliberation concluded, participants voted on the proposed recommendations and the draft report, voting overwhelmingly in favour of the low carbon initiatives. However, a journalist told another story about panelists' opinions; "At the end of the day, I still believe participants were not entirely in favor of the draft report. I overheard many panelists stating they wanted more time to dialogue plus get some information on other research."

At the first session deliberators discussed the difference between dialogue and debate. They were given a list of characteristics of the two types of communication. Debate was characterized as criticizing others' point of view, searching for weaknesses and flaws in others' positions, jumping to judgment, and

with an objective of winning. On the other hand, dialogue incorporates finding common ground, examining all points of view, and trying to understand others' views and why they hold them. Panelists quickly determined what type of communication was appropriate within the deliberation. Humor was used to alleviate tensions between differing perspectives, and to enable deliberators to present their opinions as ambivalent so as to be dismissed as a joke if others disagreed. One deliberator continually expressed self-interested values such as only acting in ways that provide tangible personal benefits, but when he sensed that others did not agree with his opinions he mocked his own beliefs by laughing, "it's my goddamn choice!" (referring to environmental behaviour changes). At this point, the others laughed and joked along with him rather than continuing to discuss their differences in opinion. Other participants similarly engaged in the creation of a lighthearted atmosphere, placing expectations of congeniality and optimism on other deliberators; "it is frustrating because we are arguing with… hard headed negative people. I am a positive person;" "I really like the facilitator... She is positive…she is nice;" and "a couple of us at the table found a way to have some fun amongst the serious nature of our discussions." This understanding of dialogue as an optimistic and friendly activity led one journal participant to conflate having a strong perspective with debate, writing, "It was interesting to try to follow the guideline of dialogue rather than debate. Sometimes the topic or opinion is so strong that it was natural to revert to the debate format."

Concurrently, this congeniality and use of humour also encouraged the creation of personal bonds that strengthened deliberators' sense of community as well as commitment to the process. For example, a journal participant noted, "we have created our own family here." She stated that "the best part about this panel [was] getting to work/know new Edmontonians" and "wish[ed] to stay in touch with some of the panelists – they are nice and I could see forming friendships." Another journal participant credited these friendly relationships as the reason he

continued to engage in the deliberation process; “It was the friendships I had made with a few that got me going.”

3.7 Discussion

A review of the literature delineated some of the tensions and constraints that surround the practice of deliberative democracy, as well as the potential that a break from theoretical ideals holds for rectifying power imbalances (through inclusion of the deliberative activist (Fung 2005)), and the achievement of more deliberative outcomes (through strategic incorporation of coercion (Mansbridge et al. 2010)). The results of this study emphasize how participants’ experiences are impacted by the ways in which designers and organizers negotiated the realities of deliberation in practice.

Issues of representation and exclusion significantly impacted participants’ abilities to engage in deliberation. Such issues included practical barriers like time commitment and topic complexity, and design choices that incorporated a limited agenda of pre-defined recommendations and a climate change framework. Particular design aspects of the Citizens’ Panel attempted to prevent or remedy exclusionary barriers. Lee (2011) outlines the steps taken in many deliberative endeavours to encourage diversity and equal participation. Accommodations for those with disabilities, translators and mixed language materials, childcare provision, financial compensation, and assistance with transportation are all efforts that facilitate the engagement of a diverse group of participants. The Citizens’ Panel achieved a fairly representative sample of Edmontonians, with comparable age, gender, and ethnicity characteristics through targeted recruitment, honorariums, and transportation and parking assistance. However, under-communicated childcare opportunities and the occurrence of sessions on Saturdays (a day when children are not in school) likely influenced the lower proportion of participants from households with children. Lee (2011: 16) also refers to the significant time and resource burdens associated with participation in

an extensive deliberation. The Citizens' Panel was comprised of six, full day sessions as well as extracurricular reading assignments, which presented a sizeable commitment of time and effort. Additionally, the topic of climate change and energy is technical and complex, and demanded a high level of comprehension from panelists. This prevented one journal participant from engaging in conversations that required some understanding of climate change, an internal exclusion based on his perceived lack of competency or necessary knowledge and skills (Barnes et al. 2003). However, efforts were made to simplify the large volumes of scientific information and assist panelists in engaging more fully and confidently with the issue. Journal participants proved responsive to climate science presentations, noting that they were informative, easy to understand, and interesting. Experts were also used as a source of authority on questions or points of contention regarding energy policy and technology, preventing panelists from becoming hung up on details and stalling productive dialogue. The nature of the topic at hand may have been responsible for the disproportionately high number of panelists with a university education.

The intent of the Citizens' Panel, to evaluate a preexisting set of recommendations from the Pembina Institute and HB Lanarc Discussion Paper, contributed to panelist feelings of constraint, brought on by their limited ability to direct or expand the topic of conversation. This agenda-setting by deliberation organizers reinforced a hierarchical relationship that positioned participants as information givers, limiting their ability to direct discussions and decision-making (Parkinson 2003). Parkinson notes the danger that this lack of power will incite frustration among participants (2003: 189), a reaction encountered by some deliberators in the Citizens' Panel. A deliberator noted the displeasure he observed multiple panelists feel with the refined subject matter as they felt their ideas were lost when they failed to fit into the predetermined agenda.

The rhetoric of climate change used by organizers and expert presenters also contributed to the creation of a confined frame for conversations that some

deliberators believed limited their ability to discover mutually agreeable outcomes. Specifically, two climate skeptics or individuals who were disinterested in low carbon initiatives for environmental reasons found inspiration in other benefits to low carbon that they believed should have been more prominent in the deliberation, such as community development and support for local business, and alternative energy sources for back-up in crisis situations, such as Hurricane Sandy. The power inequalities between organizers and deliberators instigated frustration in panelists who sought greater influence on the direction of deliberations. However, the specific and limited agenda assisted deliberators in finalizing the Citizens' Report, which may have tangible policy outcomes, rather than ending with an aimless and nonconsensual result. As well, the Discussion Paper, while perceived as biased towards low carbon initiatives, provided a starting point for conversations that panelists, without strong knowledge of energy policy, climate science, and economics, could not have come up with.

The Citizens' Panel was established upon widely supported scientific knowledge regarding the reality of climate change, and the significant human contribution to greenhouse gas emissions. Furthermore, the deliberation was set within an existing policy-making process where the municipal government had already shown interest in reducing its carbon footprint, and had passed *The Way We Green* environmental strategic plan. These factors greatly shaped participants' experiences and understandings of bias. The advocacy position of organizers and expert presenters raised some discomfort in panelists who perceived the deliberation as underserved by different perspectives on climate and energy solutions. In creating a basis for discussion, panel designers chose to accept prominent scientific knowledge that provides strong evidence in support of climate change. The decision was made in the interest of advancing conversations regarding the proposed policy options, rather than spending time tied up in a debate about climate change. This choice led to there being no formal space within the deliberation for climate skeptics, despite a range of panelist opinions about climate change. Without a unanimously acceptable basis for deliberation,

panelists who remained skeptical of the reality and causes of climate change were somewhat isolated from conversations. Three of the journal participants, with diverse perspectives, voiced common beliefs that the panel was "directed" and "led down a path," and that they felt some "pressure." Organizers believed that the goals of the deliberation (to make recommendations regarding the City of Edmonton's transition to low carbon) would be better and more swiftly achieved if deliberations were founded on the assumption that climate change is a real and present threat. However, as not all panelists were able to reconcile this assumption with their values and beliefs they saw the panel as biased, and rebelled against the goals of the deliberation; "On my way to the last session I gave thought if I needed to accomplish anything today and decided I did not." Reducing the focus on climate change and instead presenting it as one of the many motivations and challenges related to energy may have mitigated the feelings of exclusion and frustration held by some climate skeptics. Providing equal attention to issues such as cost, energy security, and health would likely have enhanced the inclusion of differing perspectives and promoted a more objective view by organizers.

The presence of panelists who were perceived as activists influenced the way that participants' engaged in dialogue with one another. These strong and passionate voices appeared to deter more mild-mannered panelists and anger those with different views. Some panelists were seen as promoting a particular interest and identified as activists or environmentalists. These individuals seemed to hold unyielding opinions and attempted to change other peoples' minds through aggressive tones and interrogation of others' views. Activists are often understood as contradictory to the process of deliberation, as activists may reiterate strong rhetoric and abstain from discussion with those who maintain conflicting interests (Young 2001). During the deliberation, these "activists" often dominated discussions and their confrontational natures discouraged more soft-spoken deliberators from engaging in dialogue. One journal participant identified herself as being an optimistic person, who was turned off by the negative disposition of other deliberators. Another referred to the bad attitude of one "environmentalist"

that prompted him to avoid future encounters with that individual; "Although he seemed like a very intelligent man, it did seem he had some issues. I will choose to just ignore him in the future."

Fung (2005) makes a strong case for the "deliberative activist," noting the necessity of strong voices in a coercive or non-deliberative setting. Fung (2005: 399) argues that if other parties are not willing to participate in fair deliberation, then those who limit themselves to strictly deliberative methods in spite of this will accomplish nothing. While a confrontational and assertive temperament may be required in order to give balance to a marginalized perspective, in this case it caused other deliberators to disengage from potentially illuminating and meaningful discussions. The failure of these activist voices to improve the deliberative quality may have resulted from the existing bias of the panel. As many deliberators already viewed the organizers, the City of Edmonton, and the Discussion Paper as predisposed towards a low carbon strategy, the "activists" were asserting a pro-environmental viewpoint that was already quite strongly supported within the deliberation. This oversaturation of a pro-environmental perspective may have incited deliberator resistance to the activists. Fung (2005: 403) suggests that the use of non-deliberative methods be proportional to the extent that adversaries deny fair deliberation, and that activists employ charity in assuming that adversaries are willing to deliberate. Perhaps the combative nature of activists was inconsistent with fellow deliberators' willingness and openness to alternative views, and the acceptance of a low carbon perspective by panel conveners. However, I believe that the responsibility for proportional activist response lies with activists themselves. Organizers should not necessarily limit or exclude specific activist positions, or dictate the extent and nature of individuals' expressions of opinion. Rather, they should simply encourage and remind deliberators of the goals of open-mindedness and cooperative, reciprocal dialogue, and ensure that individuals are participating in the capacity that they were recruited for (as citizens, rather than formal lobbyists or activist group representatives).

The ways that a group structures their space will affect the likelihood of "public-spirited" or honest, challenging dialogue (Eliasoph 1996). The creation of a "frontstage" and "backstage" inhibited conversation and limited participants' abilities to engage in productive and open dialogue within the formal deliberation, but also encouraged personal connections and community spirit through the more honest and open conversations that occurred "backstage". The use of humor and lightheartedness by panelists created a deliberative context that fostered friendships and a sense of community, and ultimately encouraged continued engagement. However, while an enjoyable atmosphere, this congeniality sometimes prevented deeper dialogue with difficult and contentious issues. Two of the journal participants explicitly placed value on maintaining a "positive" outlook and jovial manner. Often, when discussions became too serious or tensions arose someone would attempt to make a joke, derailing the flow of conversation. Deliberators' expectations of congeniality and non-confrontational dialogue may have stemmed from the distinctions made between dialogue and debate. Organizers encouraged a search for common ground, and understanding others' views, which may have been construed by panelists as the need to be polite and agreeable. This focus on congeniality can prevent challenging but important dialogue, creating what Eliasoph (1996) and Goffman (1959) refer to as a public front. Deliberators were less likely to voice dissenting opinions, creating a "frontstage" consensus, and a "backstage" or hidden dialogue where panelists privately discussed their disagreement with the final recommendations. The distinction between dialogue and debate, in written materials and early conversations, likely helped shape this communicative context where participants sought common ground and tried to avoid conflict within the formal deliberation.

Voting produced a final majority agreement, and elicited both positive and negative participant experiences. The purpose of the Citizens' Panel was to produce a set of agreed-upon citizen recommendations that would comprise the final report presented to City Council. Mansbridge et al. highlight the ability of

voting to circumvent "irreconcilable conflict" (2010: 75), which secured the relative consensus necessary to move forward with the Citizens' Panel report. Voting with iClickers was also an engaging and tactile activity that excited many panelists and broke up the monotony of group dialogue. A journal participant indicated her interest in seeing how others are answering the same questions; "I had a LOT of fun…seeing the room's thoughts." However, voting likely influenced the perspectives of deliberators. Seeing the voting preferences of fellow panelists may have induced a bandwagon effect that accounts for the majority agreement on a low carbon pathway in spite of noted individual dissent. A journal participant's concern regarding how quickly voting occurred, not allowing for voters to fully understand what they were voting on, reflects Mansbridge et al.'s (2010) hesitation about the inability of voting to capture clarification or explanation.

3.8 Conclusion

The Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges faced a number of practical and political limitations and realities that led to incorporation of voting, a limited scope and subject, advocacy, and the need to produce a tangible outcome. Observations and participant journals illuminated multiple factors that greatly influenced the experiences of deliberators within the Citizens' Panel. Equal opportunity to participate was restricted by the technical and complex nature of the issue and practical factors such as timing of the sessions and the commitment required to participate in such an extensive process. The limited scope of decision-making power available for deliberators led to some frustration and doubts about the potential impacts of their efforts, and the perceived bias of organizers and written materials isolated those who did not agree with the low carbon objectives. Notably, the "positive" and agreeable context informed by panelists' understanding of their deliberative expectations prevented the discussion of difficult topics within the formal deliberative setting while simultaneously encouraging community spirit and friendship "backstage".

However, the Citizens' Panel produced a final report of energy and climate policy recommendations that has been reviewed by City of Edmonton administration and presented to the City Council, an outcome that likely would not have come about had some of the traditional deliberative requirements not been relaxed. Mansbridge et al.'s (2010) expansion of what constitutes deliberative democratic processes provides a starting point for renewing the viability of deliberative democracy in the non-ideal context of contemporary society, and is supported by the tangible outcomes of the Citizens' Panel. While some deliberators perceived it as biased, the Pembina Institute and HB Lanarc authored Discussion Paper provided a multi-stakeholder approved, technical foundation for recommendations that could not have been produced by panelists with the given time and resources. And voting, while a non-deliberative form of measuring preferences, enabled the articulation of decisive and direct recommendations. While the activism present in this panel frustrated meaningful dialogue between activists and other deliberators I do not believe these voices should have been restricted. Facilitators can remind participants to strive for cooperative and respectful dialogue, but these strong opinions are a result of creating an inclusive and diverse deliberative space.

These results highlight an important point of consideration for deliberation conveners. Strict adherence to deliberative ideals may facilitate "free-flowing dialogue aimed at producing reasonable and well-informed opinions" (Parkins and Mitchell 2005: 533). However, in cases such as the Citizens' Panel, deliberative theory is used to inform and structure goal-oriented, public decision-making processes that are concerned with attaining pre-determined outcomes. It thus becomes necessary to recognize the purpose of a deliberative engagement, as a loosening of the strict deliberative requirements may actually lead to achievement of desired outcomes. The experiences of the individual deliberators delineated in this paper provide a fresh perspective through which to understand the impacts of deliberation, and deserve consideration when navigating the complex political realities that constrain and shape the practice of deliberative democracy.

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Chapter 4: Conclusion and Future Research

4.1 Conclusion

The purpose of this research was to explore the experiences of deliberators as part of the Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges. A focus on the individual facilitated a deeper understanding of the conditions under which deliberators were able to engage in and generate open dialogue and transformative learning experiences.

Multiple key factors were found to encourage a change in opinions, knowledge, and engagement levels. Initially, survey results indicated little significant deliberator change. However, participants' journal reflections quickly exposed a number of important learning moments and human interactions that altered the individuals' perspectives in subtle ways that were otherwise undetectable using survey methods alone. Further exploration of deliberator experiences also illuminated the impacts of processes and practices, such as participant activism and the limited scope for deliberation (caused by a focus on climate change and predetermined policy options), on the attainment of moments for dialogue, learning, and effective deliberative outcomes. The results demonstrated the complex reality of practicing deliberative democracy, the constraints imposed by the existing political context, and how this impacted the unique experiences of deliberators.

Through this study, I began to understand the value of individual deliberators' experiences as outcomes of the deliberative process in and of themselves. Through the act of dialogue with others, deliberators can form and transform their perspectives and develop a shared understanding that recognizes multiple viewpoints and transcends rhetoric and symbolic arguments. They can find encouragement and inspiration to take action from the friendship and camaraderie of other deliberators. Alternatively, interactions with strong, activist voices can

cause mild-mannered deliberators to retreat or those with different opinions to become defensive, and limited decision-making power and lack of autonomy over the direction of conversations can frustrate future engagement efforts. These results do not reflect on the final decisions or outputs of the Citizens' Panel, but they are significant outcomes nonetheless and must be investigated and understood in order to appreciate the range of effects that a deliberative event can have on the political landscape.

This research drew on theories of deliberative democracy, from the foundational ideals of communicative rationality and non-coercive reasoning (Habmeras 1994; 2006) and the expected self-reflexivity and nuanced opinion formation of deliberators (Dryzek 2011; Neimeyer 2011), to an emergent, flexible view of deliberation that recognizes the legitimacy of coercive power in order to create a deliberative space where one does not naturally exist (Fung 2005; Mansbridge et al. 2010). A focus on the individual within the context of the Citizens' Panel sheds light on the ways that the deliberator experience is impacted by the conditions of this practical application of deliberative theory. Also framing this study is consideration of the role of deliberation and public participation in climate change policy and decision-making. The nature of climate change as value-laden, with high uncertainty and overlapping social, economic, and environmental concerns, presents a unique opportunity for public involvement. Decentralized, participatory initiatives have the potential to respond to complex issues involving high stakes and uncertainty (Marshall and Picou 2008), and lay perspectives may incite a precautionary approach to climate change (Dryzek 2011). Through capturing individuals' views on the topics of climate change and energy use, this research highlights the contributions of the public to conversations regarding environmental policy and decision-making.

The results of this thesis provide information on aspects of the Citizens' Panel that encouraged or discouraged dialogue and meaningful or transformative experiences in deliberators. Through exploring deliberators' responses to

activities, presentations, written materials, and interactions with one another it was found that experiential knowledge instigated greater concern towards climate change, dialogue amongst deliberators challenged and dispelled some of the existing rhetoric and symbolic claims, and friendship and collegiality inspired participation and a search for common ground. Alternatively, deliberators were physically and mentally exhausted from the rigorous time commitment, and loosely defined decision-making power and autonomy over the scope and subject of deliberation instigated frustration. The creation of a friendly and polite space prevented challenging or emotionally charged conversations, and the foundation of climate science and carbon reduction on which the Citizens' Panel was built isolated climate change skeptics or those disinterested in environmental protection.

These findings contribute to theoretical understandings of deliberation as well as act as a practical resource for future deliberative initiatives. This study increases understanding of participant experience as a result of deliberative involvement, including the nature of opinion formation and change as anticipated by Dryzek (2011) and Neimeyer (2011), and deliberator response to the presence of activism and voting to attain consensus that Mansbridge et al. (2010) and Fung (2005) include in their revised conceptions of deliberative democracy. Furthermore, the results, such as the types of information and presentations that resonated with deliberators, and the reactions of deliberators to bias and a constrained agenda can be used to inform design and implementation choices for future deliberative events.

4.2 Directions for Future Research

Both Chapters Two and Three deal with the tensions and conditions under which deliberative democracy must operate in practice. The realities of policy-making, practical limitations of time and funding, and negotiation of the political context constrain the choices available to deliberation conveners and ultimately both

negatively and positively impact the experiences of participants. Greater investigation into the political context and process planning of a deliberative event would lead to improved insights regarding the complexities of translating deliberative theory into practical participatory decision-making opportunities.

Additionally, the nuanced accounts collected through participant journaling for this study also point to the potential for greater use of this method in understanding deliberator experience. The journal entries allow the participants to direct data collection, highlighting emergent ideas and detailed information about shifts in their thinking or meaningful moments of dialogue. Journaling led to a greater understanding of the occurrences and interactions that shaped participants' opinions and knowledge and provided a linear record of their changes over time. Increased use of this method can improve knowledge of the complexities and subtleties of the deliberator experience, and point to aspects of design and implementation that could improve the results of participation.

Finally, of course, my own interest in improving climate change mitigation and adaptation also shapes the direction I hope future research to take. The results of this study highlight aspects of deliberation that encourage adoption of greater environmental concern, such as increasing direct connections to the tangible impacts of climate change and building respectful relationships through open and challenging dialogue with others to promote the search for common ground. It is my hope that these factors can inform future attempts to enhance citizen engagement around and support for climate change initiatives and other carbon reduction policies, creating stronger and more resilient communities in the face of this environmental challenge.

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