

Appendix 1

Communicating Publics: How can deliberation help?

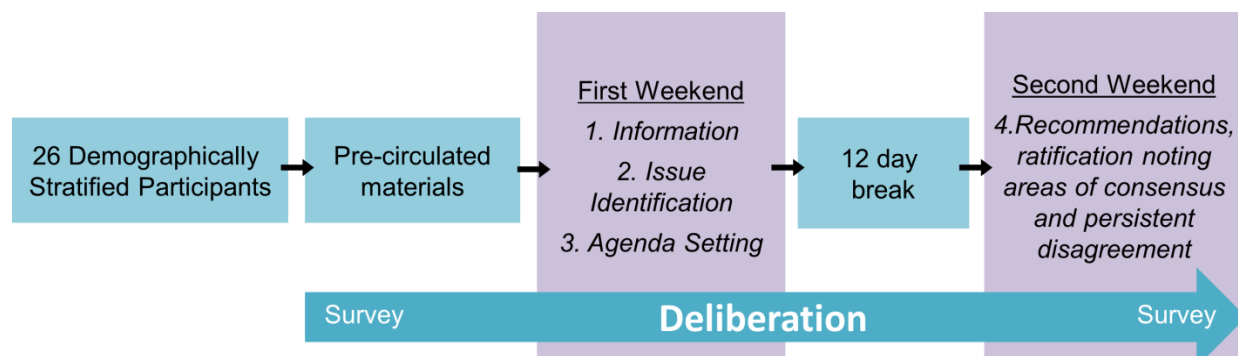
Summary of Panel 3, Science Communication Workshop, CSPC 2013, which took place on Wednesday, November 20th in Toronto, Ontario

<http://www.cspc2013.ca/workshopsymposium-3-science-communications>

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Policy involving science and technology affects all citizens, not just experts and communicators. The work conducted by our team attempts to address democratic deficits (Burgess and Tansey, 2009) by helping broader publics to meaningfully participate in policy processes. A significant challenge faced in this effort is that topics in science and technology often involve highly technical information that requires in-depth consideration of context and time for discussion. In 2007, our team led by Dr. Michael Burgess Professor and Chair in Biomedical Ethics at the University of British Columbia's W Maurice Young Centre for Applied Ethics, developed an approach for conducting deliberation on complex issues in science and technology that could be employed to both educate citizen participants and foster deliberative engagement (Secko, Burgess, and O'Doherty, 2008). This approach begins by carefully recruiting a demographically stratified group of disinterested citizens to participate in one of our deliberative events (see Figure 1). Those who agree to participate are then sent a background booklet before the event and receive additional background information on the first day of the deliberation from a range of diverse experts. Over two non-consecutive weekends, the participants engage in small and large group facilitated conversations until they develop a set of shared recommendations on the final day of the event. The outputs produced during these processes do not demand consensus but instead, note areas of convergence as well as points of persistent disagreement.

Figure 1. An approach to deliberative engagement



Dr. David Secko led our panel by providing an introduction to our deliberative method followed by a description of one of our most recent case studies, the *Advanced Biofuels: A Public Deliberation*, which took place in fall of 2012 at Concordia University in Montréal, Québec. David explained that the purpose of this event was to produce balanced recommendations for policy makers about socially acceptable approaches for advanced biofuel

development/production in Canada and help contribute to the lack of public engagement/awareness around bioenergy and biofuels. This event was the ninth time our deliberative model had been used by organizations around the world on a range of topics (see Figure 2).

Figure 2. List of select deliberative events

Event name	Location	Date	Topic
The BC Biobank Deliberation	Vancouver, Canada	April/ May, 2007	Biobanking
Mayo Biobank	Rochester, US	September, 2007	Biobanking
Office of Population Health Genomics, Department of Health	Western Australia	Stakeholders: August, 2008	Biobanking
		Public: November, 2008	
Engaging the BC Public on Salmon Genomics	Vancouver, Canada	November, 2008	Salmon Genomics
BC BioLibrary Deliberation	Vancouver, Canada	March, 2009	Biobanking
Explosives, Genomics, and the Environment (RDX Talk)	Vancouver, Canada	April, 2010	RDX Bioremediation
Rochester Epidemiology Project, Mayo	Minnesota, US	November, 2011	Biobanking
Advanced Biofuels: A Public Deliberation	Montréal, Canada	October/November, 2012	Advanced biofuels
EngageUC: Engaging University of California Stakeholders for Biorepository Research	Los Angeles, US	June, 2013	Biobanking
	San Francisco, US	September/ October, 2013	

The second speaker in our panel was Dr. Holly Longstaff. Holly focussed specifically on the six biobanking deliberative events that have been conducted by our team since 2007. She underscored the importance of recruiting for representation of interests in these events given the fact that the small participant sample size ($n=25$) cannot be statistically representative of the provincial/state population (Longstaff and Burgess, 2010). Holly also talked about the importance of developing a background booklet that is scientifically accurately while also accurately portraying the widest possible range of opinion to participants. Finally, she discussed the difficulty in evaluating deliberative events given disagreements in our field about what frameworks ought to be used, how events should be evaluated and who is qualified to evaluate them, and how evaluators can track and measure longer term impacts of deliberation on participants, policy makers, and others.

Dr. Kieran O'Doherty was the third and final speaker in our panel. In his talk, Kieran addressed our 2010 deliberative event on *Explosives, Genomics, and the Environment*. His talk focussed on the complexities of defining deliberative results given the large amount of data produced during these events and the fact that determining what constitutes the 'results' of the deliberation may not be self-evident (O'Doherty, 2013). There are also divergent views in the field of public engagement about who should formulate conclusions and write final reports. While some argue that it should be the participants themselves, others believe it should be event facilitators,

scholars, or even ghost writers. Yet irrespective of who authors these outputs, our experience teaches us that the conceptualization of results needs to be part of the event design at the outset of deliberation and is contingent upon a number of factors including the framing of questions for deliberation and facilitation processes.

The above issues and many other topics are discussed at length in publications that have been produced by our team. For a complete list of these references please see the resources section at the conclusion of this report.

Resources

Publications from deliberative democracy events and associated research

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