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EVALUATING DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRATIC DESIGNS:

Theory of Change and Citizens'
Assembly Pilot in Lebanon

Michael Tan

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**EVALUATING DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRATIC
DESIGNS: THEORY OF CHANGE AND CITIZENS'
ASSEMBLY PILOT IN LEBANON**

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ABSTRACT

As democratic nations suffer from a lack of responsiveness and democratic deficits, there is a need for a better democratic process. One possible solution is incorporating deliberative democratic designs. Deliberative designs are based on deliberation and consensus-making rather than traditional preference aggregation and voting. However, evaluating deliberative designs is often challenging because of the conflicts between theory and practice. Furthermore, most evaluation frameworks are case-specific and cannot be used for comparative analysis. The essay seeks to address this problem by creating a framework based on the Theory of Change and applying the framework to a citizens' assembly pilot in Lebanon. The resulting framework aims to be flexible, transferable, and comparative and tries to accommodate the gap between theories and practices.

Keywords: *Deliberative Democratic Theory, Deliberative Designs, Theory of Change, Evaluation Framework, Citizens' Assemblies.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The idea that democracies worldwide are becoming increasingly disconnected from the public is now widely accepted (Dryzek et al., 2011). The rising level of democratic deficit and government unresponsiveness has been exacerbating urgent issues like climate change, which requires immediate government actions. The need for faster, better, and more legitimate policy-making processes calls for more trustworthy and innovative democratic solutions (Dryzek, 2002). One such democratic solution is social-political forms or designs that incorporate the elements of deliberation. Deliberative designs are democratic innovations based on deliberative democratic theories, which believe that the process of deliberation can foster learning and better policy outcomes.

Deliberative designs are starting to take root across the globe, from citizens' assembly in Ireland to deliberative polls in the U.S., but the various design structures and conflict between theories and practice make evaluating and comparing design performance difficult. The theory-practice conflict arises from the idealistic nature of deliberative democracy and the concept of what deliberative democracy should be. The idealistic feature makes deliberative theories difficult for practitioners to apply to real-life cases and build practical learnings. On the other hand, much of the empirical works evaluating deliberative democracy tend to be weak on the theoretical front or take only parts of the theory for analysis. The situation is further complicated by the variety of deliberative designs that are out there. Thus, there is a need for an alternative evaluation framework that can encompass the needs of theories and practices. The framework should also be transferable and flexible for different deliberative designs, so comparative analysis and learning could be generated.

Therefore, the essay aims to address the gap in evaluation methods of deliberative democracy by exploring the following research question:

How can we create a better evaluation framework for deliberative democratic designs?

Understanding the needs and the main research question, the essay is aims to:

- **Explore and understand the different types of deliberative designs.**
- **Create an evaluation framework that could**
 1. **find common ground between empirical realism and theoretical idealism.**
 2. **be flexible, transferable, and comparable between different deliberative designs.**

The essay begins by going through a literature review of the topic. The literature review will first discuss the philosophical origins and development of deliberative democracy. The review will be followed by a survey of the evaluation methods generally employed to measure deliberative designs. The essay will then explore deliberative design structures and showcase their similarities and differences. Next, the essay will introduce the approach and method underlying the evaluation framework and explain the framework itself. After establishing the framework, the essay will then apply the evaluation framework to the citizens' assembly pilot in Lebanon. Finally, the essay will reflect on the framework and discuss some shortcomings.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The development of deliberative democratic theory has been relatively new and proceeded in a non-linear and interdisciplinary way. Although the beginning of deliberative theory started in the eighties, most authors reach back to ancient Athenian democracy for inspiration and authority (Dryzek, 2000; Gutmann and Thompson, 2004). The romanticised image of Athenian citizens engaging in political debates and deliberation and participating in lots to be selected for political duties mirrors modern theories of deliberative ideas and practices of random sampling (Fishkin, 2011). Even though ancient thinkers such as Plato disagreed with elements of deliberative democracy based on the belief that wisdom and virtue are not equal among citizens, Aristotle suggested that there could be virtues in the “multitude” which could rival that of one man. The power of the multitude became one of the founding supports for deliberation, which assumed that discussion between citizens would produce better decisions (Wilson, 2011).

Kant’s ideas are also credited as another source for deliberative democracy. Kant holds an egalitarian view of people and believed that all humans deserve respect. From this position, Kant thought of two ideas that would later be central to deliberative democracy. Firstly, giving other citizens respect is a perfect demonstration of treating others as free and equal. Therefore (and secondly), consent through reasoning and public debates is more legitimate than just consent through voting, making deliberative activities crucial for legitimate government. Kant believed the truths and right answers could only arrive through arguments and persuasion that preconditions reason (Chambers, 2018). Therefore, reason operates through persuasion, not coercion. This line of thinking also makes free speech an

essential condition for useful persuasion and quality reasoning. Based on Kant’s view, reason-giving and deliberation are fundamentally different from coercion and can ultimately provide legitimacy for governing institutions. Kant’s work and views on established reason-giving and respect as fundamental components of deliberation (Chambers, 2018), while Aristotle emphasised the capability (more virtuous decisions) of deliberative designs. With the motivation for reinterpreting current democratic theory during the eighties, it is from these philosophers that authors have sought philosophical groundings for deliberative democracy and build alternative democratic ideals.

The development of deliberative democratic theory can be seen as a continuous departure and separation from the conventional theory of participatory democracy. Early ideas of deliberative democracy were born out of reflection and frustration with the decline of participatory democracies during the eighties. Some authors tried to revive participatory democracy by developing it in a new direction (Barber 1984), while others, like Mansbridge (1983), marked the transition to deliberative democracy. Mansbridge analysed two cases of participatory democracies on new theoretical categories (unitary and adversary democracy) that focused on interests and tensions within the cases rather than the traditional focus on direct and representative qualities of democracies. Mansbridge’s work started the central dialogue around the role of individual interests in democracies and critically questioned how it should be addressed. Believing that conflicting and varying interests are a reality, Mansbridge emphasised the difference between aggregative democracies that use participatory methods (voting) to address different interests and deliberative democracy that uses the

transformative power of discussion to address varying preferences. Thus begins the debate between decisions through counting preferences (voting) and resolutions through deliberating for consensus. Although the separation between participatory democracy and deliberative democracy was made, the latter should not be seen merely as a response to the former. Deliberative democracy did emerge from reflecting on participatory democracy, but the developments of the two spaces often overlap and could be seen as competing and complementing each other.

The first usage of the term “deliberative democracy” came from debates on the interpretations of the U.S. Constitution. Some interpretation of the document viewed it as a constraint against far-reaching democratic ambition. At the same time, Bessette adhered to a Madisonian view of the constitution that produced inspiration for further development in deliberative democracy (Florida, 2018). Madison’s view that fair and reasonable voices on public good could be achieved through a body of chosen citizens, whose wisdom and patriotism through deliberation would help the assembly make selfless decisions that are better for the public in the long term. Bessette used Madison’s view to develop democratic theory from the approach of deliberation. Deliberation is seen as reflective and cautious decision-making based on logical and rational reasoning rather than based on short-term incentives and private interests. Bessette described a new understanding of political representation from the angle of deliberation, which contrasted with the fundamental ideas of direct representation and elite representation. To Bessette, representation not only exists from an assembly being chosen but also in the lawmaker’s ability to listen to collective deliberation that represents the public’s real or dominating views. Bessette’s works also introduced the counterfactual inquiry of whether citizens would reach the same conclusion if given the same level of knowledge and expertise on a subject. This inquiry creates the notion that if

there is an appropriate setting that involves rational and logical deliberation, a better decision would be produced. Such inquiry sets the stage for modern deliberative democratic theory’s investigation into the precondition for good quality deliberation and decision (Bessette, 1980). Bessette’s papers also feed into the debate of how interests would impact deliberation and whether a common good is achievable with deliberation (Florida, 2018).

Through Sunstein’s works, further inquiry focused on how interest groups and individual interests could impact democratic politics. Mainly, Sunstein studied how preferences are formed. He claimed that only through deliberative procedures could individual and biased preferences be exposed. He then argued that such revelation of personal interests could lead to genuine public interest (Sunstein, 1984).

In general, the authors that contributed to deliberative democratic theory through debates on the American Constitution created a new paradigm for understanding democracy. On the one hand, there is the understanding of democracy as the mechanism of aggregated preferences that relies on individual interest and preferences. On the other hand, there is the understanding that democracy has a transformative nature that can be realised through deliberation. Such deliberation is believed to give citizens the power of achieving genuine self-determination.

Manin (1987) takes the deliberation into greater importance by proposing deliberation as the foundation of democratic legitimacy. Although there is no consensus on the source of legitimacy for democracy, Manin argues that democratic legitimacy is not general will, as usually believed, but the deliberation of the public. Manin explains that legitimacy arises not from predetermined preferences and interests of individuals but rather the process of its formation, which is deliberation (Manin, 1987).

Elster continued expanding the distinction between aggregative and deliberative democracy from a market perspective. He argued that participatory democracy is motivated by the agent's benefit, while deliberative democracy is motivated by consensus on reasons (Elster, 1997). Elster also criticised participatory democracy by arguing that participation is a by-product of political activities; therefore, participatory democracy is practically meaningless by centring on participation itself.

Cohen's work further revolutionised deliberative theories by moving into the trend of idealisation. Cohen built his ideal state of deliberative democracy based on Rawls's work. For Rawls, a just society is a system that is fair and involves the collaboration of free and equal citizens. Cohen extends this further by including the decision-making procedures in the realm of collaboration and deliberation. The ideal deliberative democratic system includes deliberative procedures that involve the exchange of reasons with respect and democratic components under a setting where citizens are free and equal in the decision-making process (Cohen, 1989). Cohen concludes that by having both deliberative and democratic elements, such a system would produce truly legitimate decisions. Cohen's work is influential in that it produced an ideal model and created a trend of idealisation. His work generated the normative values of deliberative democracy and what deliberation ought to look like. However, the normative ideals also create barriers to empirical research and practical applications.

Part of the barriers and confusion between theorists and practitioners stems from the mismatch between theoretical idealisation and practical application of deliberative democracy. Although deliberative democrats generally agree on the fundamental core of deliberative democracy, what is considered deliberation and how it should be achieved are contested. For example, when debating what deliberation is, some theorist accepts a broader

concept that includes all forms of political talks (Cook et al., 2007). The argument is that political talks, in general, develops citizen's political views and creating conditions for good deliberation (Walsh, 2007; Mansbridge, 2007). Others dictate deliberation as decision-oriented. The definition of deliberation and its forms then determines the conditions and subsequent points of evaluation. For instance, the decision-oriented view focuses on three elements (a state of disagreement, a legitimate decision, and a collective decision) as the central core of deliberation (Cohen, 2014). These cores then define evaluative standards. The element of a legitimate decision reveals the necessity of public-spiritedness, equal respect, accommodation and equal participation (Cohen 2014; Mansbridge 2007; Thompson, 2008). The resulting conditions stem from the initial conception of decision-oriented deliberation and would differ from those developed from the all-political-talk definition of deliberation. Therefore, the ideal and open-to-interpretation natures of deliberative democracy create confusion and incomparable evaluation standards and frameworks.

The design structures of practical deliberative democracy and various evaluation tools also complicate things. Part of this is because cases of deliberative design are individually unique and differ in context, culture, and goals/issues being deliberated. Another reason is that practical evaluations often do not apply to appropriate theoretical frameworks and vice versa. Evaluations often take convenient parts of theoretical works to evaluate, and the aspects are often retrospective. Many studies that analyse and evaluate deliberative design focus on the result or particular aspect of deliberative design. For example, studies deemed the Irish 2016 Citizens' Assembly successful due to its ability to propose new reforms and implement them. Analysis praised the communication and transparency of Ireland's Citizens' Assembly, believing these factors as crucial to its success (Devaney, 2020). Deliberative

design that failed to create reforms or did not take off was often criticised by listing factors that could have contributed to its demise (Boswell and Niemeyer, 2013; Warren, 2012). These case studies provide valuable insights for future developments of deliberative design. However, it fails to measure “how” good or bad the deliberative designs are from an equal and objective perspective. Some studies tried to close this gap in evaluation by quantifying and measuring the aspects of deliberative design. For instance, participants of a city planning citizens’ initiative in Vancouver were surveyed of their perception of how friendly the experience was (Beauvais, 2018), while participants of Ireland’s 2016 Citizens’ Assembly were surveyed on how satisfied they were with the deliberation (Farrell et al., 2019). Other more sophisticated evaluations measured opinion shifts by creating controlled groups and comparison groups. Surveys on opinions before and after were conducted to participants and non-participants to compare the actual change of opinion change through deliberation (O’Malley et al., 2020; Farrell et al., 2013). These more controlled and experimental studies provide helpful methods and understandings of how deliberative design could be evaluated. Nevertheless, they fail to deliver a more holistic evaluation that can be compared with different design cases.

Another innovative method of evaluation was employed in India. A study on India’s village assemblies used a text-as-data approach and a structural topic model to quantitatively measure differences in participation, agenda-setting power, and dialogic responsiveness between genders and social roles (Parthasarathy et al., 2019). Focusing on the deliverability aspect of deliberative designs, a gap analysis method could be used to pinpoint issues that altered the expectation of deliberation and not just meeting expectations (Flinders and Dommett, 2013). A study of parliamentary discourse created a discourse quality index to achieve a more wholesome evaluation, which systematically

attempted to operationalise principles for identifying and evaluating deliberation (Steiner et al., 2004). The index includes categories that track elements of deliberative theory (such as the content of justification and respect towards other actors). In a study of political networks in the U.S., deliberative elements such as the need for a state of disagreement were analysed using national surveys and comparative studies with other countries. (Mutz, 2006).

Evaluative frameworks and methods in deliberative democracy are innovative and different. Although exciting, the plethora of evaluative forms creates a situation where deliberative cases cannot compare with each other to gauge performance. Frameworks also focus on minor aspects of deliberative democracy and ignore the larger picture of the design and the underpinning theories. Lastly, the many forms of deliberative design exacerbate these problems and make differentiating and evaluating deliberative designs extremely difficult.

In summary, there is a space in deliberative democracy that needs a flexible and transferable evaluative framework that create common ground between theorist and practitioners. The essay aims to explore this space by mapping deliberative designs and sites as well as creating an evaluation framework founded on the Theory of Change.

3. MAPPING OF DELIBERATIVE DESIGNS AND DIFFERENCES

Mini-public Designs

The essay will use “mini-public” to describe a category of deliberative designs that dominate this field. Although the term mini-public has been used to categorize and describe other democratic designs (such as participatory governance), the essay will use mini-publics to define a set of deliberative designs that facilitate a representative microcosm of the public through random sampling of citizens and allow them to debate and deliberate based on curated and balanced information and expertise. Besides these similarities, designs of mini-publics have many differences in their method of selecting participants,

the amount of time spent on deliberation, the desired output of the design, and the amount of government involvement (Smith and Setälä, 2018). Figure 1 shows an overview of some mini-public designs and their differences that will be discussed below.

The element of random sampling is fundamental to mini-public designs since a random sample provides mathematical equality by guaranteeing an equal probability for individual citizens to be selected. Proponents of deliberative polls, for example, argues that such random sampling is the defining feature of working deliberative designs (Fishkin, 2009). Although such a pure random sample creates equality,

TYPES	SIZE	TIME	OUTPUT	EXAMPLES
Citizens' Jury	10-40 Participants	Couple of Days	Recommendation	Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review
Planning Cell	25 in each. Total of 100 Participants	Couple of Days	Recommendation	German Ministry of Research and Technology 1982, Department of Environmental Protection of New Jersey 1988
Citizens' Assembly	50-200 Participants	Series of Weekend	Recommendation, Agenda Setting	Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform (British Columbia), Citizens' Assembly (Ireland), We the Citizens (Ireland)
Government Active	100+ Participants	Series of Weekend	Recommendation	Constitutional Convention (Ireland), G1000 Amersfoort
Deliberative Poll	200+ Participants	Weekend	Opinion Change, Agenda Setting	What's Next California, Stanford Center for Deliberative Democracy

Figure 1. Mini-publics Design.

it does not ensure marginal groups and citizens from different geographical regions. Such concerns are addressed in the selection process of Citizens' assemblies. For example, British Columbia Citizens' Assembly (BCCA) included stratified sampling across different factors, such as gender and electoral regions, to ensure that minorities are represented. A quota was further added to have two randomly selected citizens from the indigenous population after the original 158 participants did not represent them (Warren, 2012). Such devices (stratified random sampling and quotas) are beneficial to achieving a representative sample and is especially important in smaller mini-public designs. It could include marginalised voices that otherwise would most likely not be represented fully in the pure random sampling method. However, small-sized designs should consider that the more the factors considered in the stratified sampling process, the smaller the pool of participants would be available for selection. There is also a difference in the amount of self-selection among designs. Because the participation of deliberative mini-publics designs is not required by law, participants often will be self-selecting to some extent. Many mini-public designs adhere to the participation method of opinion polling. Other designs (such as the Canadian citizen's assemblies) conduct stratified sampling after reviewing the interested participants and also interview them on their motivation for participation. The G1000 Belgium also conducted targeted recruitment of citizens from marginalised groups, such as homeless people or immigrants who have not initially accepted the invitation (Participedia, n.d.).

Time is also another variable among mini-public designs. Usually, when more time is allowed for participants to learn materials and deliberate about a specific issue, the quality of deliberation will be better. However, more prolonged deliberation would incur a high cost to the organisers as well as participants. There is the risk of having too long of a mini-public that retention of participants would be an issue design (Smith and Setälä, 2018). Although the time threshold for losing participants is perhaps different for each specific deliberative design, comparing the BCCA to the citizen's assembly in Ireland shows how increasing time and issues could impact participant retention. The citizens' assembly in British Columbia,

which lasted ten weekends on the single issue of electoral reform, yielded an excellent retention rate (Warren, 2012). BCCA's performs contrasts with the low retention rate of the citizens' assembly in Ireland, which lasted eleven weekends over a timespan of fourteen months on five different issues, which had to replace over a third of its participants throughout the deliberation stage. Thus, most mini-public designs only last a couple of days to avoid monetary costs and loss of motivation from the participants.

Another significant difference between designs is the aspired output or result and how that output is realised. Realistically, mini-publics designs are generally sanctioned or treated as complementary or consultative measures by the government and public; therefore, most designs aim to produce a report of recommendations that the participants agreed upon through deliberation. The G1000 Belgium did this by selecting a smaller group of participants to draft the recommendations. In contrast, recommendations in designs such as the planning cells drafted the report with active leadership by the organisers (Smith and Setälä, 2018). Designs could also be used in preparing for future deliberative events and are tasked with setting the vision or deliberated issue (Gastil and Richards, 2013). For example, We the Citizens, an Irish citizens' assembly in 2011, involved hundreds of citizens in discussing regionally and coming up with important issues to the Irish people (Participedia, n.d.). The results of and issued discussed in We the Citizens became an influencing factor in formulating the Irish Citizens' Assembly in 2016. Deliberative polls are different in that their output is generally a report representing public opinions after informed deliberation. Deliberative polls achieve this by conducting before-and-after surveys of those involved in the deliberation, those that received the learning information (but no deliberation), and those who did not participate in anything. The final product is information on opinion changes rather than a collective recommendation.

Lastly, there is a growing body of new designs that mix political stakeholder with randomly selected citizens. The essay will categorise this type of design as a "government active" design. One example is the Irish Constitution Convention in 2012, which included one hundred members, with twenty-nine from

Oireachtas and four from Northern Ireland's political parties (Involved.org, n.d.). The idea of including politicians is the hope that participating lawmakers would act as a liaison between the citizens' assembly and key decision-makers (Suiter, Farrell, and Harris 2018). Nevertheless, the convention was deemed "all form and little substance (The Irish Times, 2013)" and only two of the eighteen recommendations were put into a referendum. The G1000 Amersfoort in 2014 also included government officials and other stakeholders, such as employers, artists, and clerks (Participedia, n.d.). The idea is to have the assembly represent not only the public but also the whole system. Amersfoort had a more open deliberative process and agenda setting procedure that allowed participants to identify issues to be discussed. However, the impact of including political figures in deliberation needs further analysis, as current literature provides little information on this topic.

Online Deliberation

Another relevant factor for deliberative design is conducting such processes with the help of Internet technologies. At the time of writing, covid-19 has drastically changed how citizens behave and socialize. With the advice of social distancing, venues and procedures that facilitate traditional deliberative designs are no longer feasible. Indeed, the citizens' assembly pilot in Lebanon, which the essay will later focus on, was postponed due to the pandemic and parts of the assembly process were moved online. Therefore, the essay feels the need to review online deliberative designs and its complication. Online deliberative designs are still an emerging space and demand more in-depth research. Regardless, the essay will examine two differences among online designs: the process of selection and the deliberative method.

Selection is a concern for online deliberative designs since the difference in digital power creates a situation that is not equal in (Internet) accessibility (Smith et al., 2009). Differences in computer literacies and technical knowledge further complicate this issue. Another problem throughout the sampling process is the lack of motivation to participate in online deliberation. Most people are usually unaware and

not interested in such an opportunity and is unwilling to volunteer, which also raises concern about the self-selection tendency of those that do participate. Some studies have shown that random sampling yielded low volunteer rates (2%-4%), making achieving appropriate representation difficult (Strandberg and Grönlund, 2018). To provide possible measures to increasing motivation and Internet equality, some designs have offered technical equipment and support to combat the divide, while others provided monetary benefits to incentivize citizens (Grönlund, Strandberg, and Himmelroos, 2009).

There is also a difference in online deliberative designs on the usage of either synchronous or asynchronous (or both) online discussion. Synchronous discussion (online and live deliberation) generally mimics real-life socialisation and produces better speech situation with more reciprocity. Asynchronous discussion (online but does not require real-time action, such as uploaded contents) allows participants to have more time to analyse and evaluate information and develop logical arguments. Although both types of deliberation type offer benefits and drawback, studies have shown that asynchronous discussion tends to provide better quality discussion (Strandberg and Berg, 2015).

4. APPROACH AND METHODOLOGY

Theory of Change

The essay employs the Theory of Change as the fundamental approach and methodology in evaluating deliberative democratic designs. Theory of Change is suitable for this task because it is flexible, adaptable, and evaluative enough to be applied to deliberative designs. The method also creates an overarching framework that could be shared amongst practitioners and theorists.

Theory of Change is a type of methodology usually deployed in businesses, philanthropy, NGOs, and governments as a planning or evaluation device to achieve desired social change in any project or initiative. At the core, the Theory of Change is a process in which the goals and change that an initiative aspires to realise are defined and then worked backwards to identify conditions needed for the change to happen. The exploration of conditions could also be mapped further to ascertain evaluation criteria and methods (Brest 2010).

Theory of Change emerged in the mid-nineties from program theory and was used to generate learnings about the effectiveness of an initiative. The theory's evaluative properties led to its quick implementation within evaluation practices (Weiss, 1995). Theory of Change is a valuable alternative to traditional evaluative methods of programs, which tends to be unclear on their goals and underlying assumptions. Lack of clarity on final goals muddles the conditions, evaluation methods and fails at achieving desired goals. Weiss (1995) argues that organisers are frequently unclear about how changes happen and develop throughout a complex community project. Weiss defines Theory of Change as a way to identify assumptions of a project, force organisers to articulate how conditions could lead to goals

and recognise the relationship between different conditions and variables. A reason for the popularity of the Theory of Change across disciplinary fields and types of project is its' ability to be intellectually grasped and appeal to common sense. The idea of mapping out the outcomes and preconditions and creating an evaluation strategy that could assess whether these conditions are realised and goals successfully achieved is flexible and straightforward to be applied to almost all initiatives for social and political change.

The first step of engaging with the Theory of Change is to identify an ultimate goal for the program. Such goals need to be feasible and preferably agreeable to everyone involved in the program. Following this step, organisers and stakeholders can then isolate certain necessary conditions to achieve the outcome. Those conditions would then be analysed to create lower levels of conditions. Such processes would continue until all perceivable conditions are recognised. The visible product of the Theory of Change is often an outcome pathway that diagrammatically displays the relationship of outcomes to conditions. The ultimate desired outcome would be the diagram's starting point. The necessary conditions to achieve this outcome would follow the outcomes with arrows displaying it as a causal relationship. The necessary conditions would act as another more specific set of outcomes that would be followed with a lower level of conditions, and so on. Overall, the outcome pathway displays the logic behind the desired change and reveals underlying assumptions (Brest, 2010).

Theory of Change is innovative in that it separates aspired outcomes and actual outcomes, which is extremely useful in evaluating initiative performance

and generating learnings. Performing such a method before deciding on the vehicle that drives the social change also helps organisers select the most appropriate design. Nevertheless, the Theory of Change could be applied throughout the entire process of an initiative, from planning to evaluation, by continuously incorporating new learnings and input from organisers, stakeholders, and participants. The method could also be used to analyse and evaluate programs retrospectively by analysing documents, speaking to stakeholders and examining existing data. Doing so can generate learnings on what was valuable and detrimental to social change throughout a program (Brest, 2010).

As mentioned previously, the popularity of the Theory of Change is its ability to pick out conditions and assumptions and its power to evaluate the program. Therefore, each condition of the outcome pathways needs to be paired with indicators that could measure the program performance to achieve the condition. Such practice ensures that the outcomes can be concrete and measurable items (Weiss, 1998). Although having an evaluative indicator for each condition is desirable, the practical monetary and labour limitation prevents real-life programs from doing that. It would be helpful for constrained organisers to focus on some conditions that are deemed as more important and focus resources on priority conditions instead.

Theory of Change is an elastic method that could be applied to many different disciplines. The method has a flexible structure by allowing practitioners to create their own set of goals and conditions that follows a logical and common-sense procedure. Pairing measurable indicators with each condition, the Theory of Change could facilitate change and measure the change. In summary, the adaptability, flexibility, and evaluative properties of Theory of Change makes it a suitable method for evaluating deliberative designs.

5. EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

Adapting Theory of Change to Deliberative Democracy

The Theory of Change is flexible and evaluative, making it an appropriate foundational method for analysing forms of deliberative democracy for both practitioner and theorist. However, some modifications were made to balance the theory and practice, resulting in a framework that is adaptable to different deliberative design and accessible to comparative theoretical and empirical analysis.

The evaluation framework is a blend of the Theory of Change and the theoretical concept of deliberative democracy. The first step of the framework is to apply the Theory of Change process to the theory and concept of deliberative democracy. By identifying the goals and necessary conditions for deliberative democracy, the framework effectively established a theoretical standard of deliberative democracy. It made clear the potential (goals) and properties (conditions) of deliberative democracy. After reviewing the makeup of deliberative democracy, the second step is to apply the same process to the specific deliberative design. By forming the goals and conditions of deliberative design, practitioners and evaluators can make clear the practical aspiration and imagined qualities of the design. The third step is to overlap the conditions between deliberative democracy and the deliberative design and find shared conditions. This is where theory meets practice. By finding common grounds between the two sets of condition, the framework essentially restrains the practical aspiration of deliberative design with theoretical potential. Likewise, the theoretical ideals of deliberative democracy can be confined to the actual case of deliberative design. The fourth step is to apply the shared condition to different stages of the deliberative design and create

indicators that describe what the condition would be like in the context of a particular procedure. The last step is to generate measurement tools that could gauge the performance of deliberative design in each stage for each condition.

The set of goals and conditions for deliberative democracy is also a reference point for comparing different deliberative designs. Applying this framework would create different sets of conditions for each deliberative design. The overlapping conditions shared between deliberative designs could then facilitate comparative analysis from both theoretical and practical angles. The entire framework is shown diagrammatically in Figure 2 (next page).

The adapted framework and method are different from the traditional Theory of Change in a few ways. The first is the added step of overlapping conditions. This is used to create common ground between theories and practices and seek goals and conditions theoretically supported and practically warranted.

The second is that instead of continuously creating subsets of condition and indicators, the framework uses the stages of the deliberative design to ground the conditions contextually and create indicators. The first reason for doing this is because the goals and conditions of deliberative democracy are theoretical and idealistic rather than practical. Because conditions are abstract and conceptual, it is not easy to create further subsets that could be evaluated. Applying the conditions to stages help contextualize the abstract concepts and create measurable indicators. The second reason for using

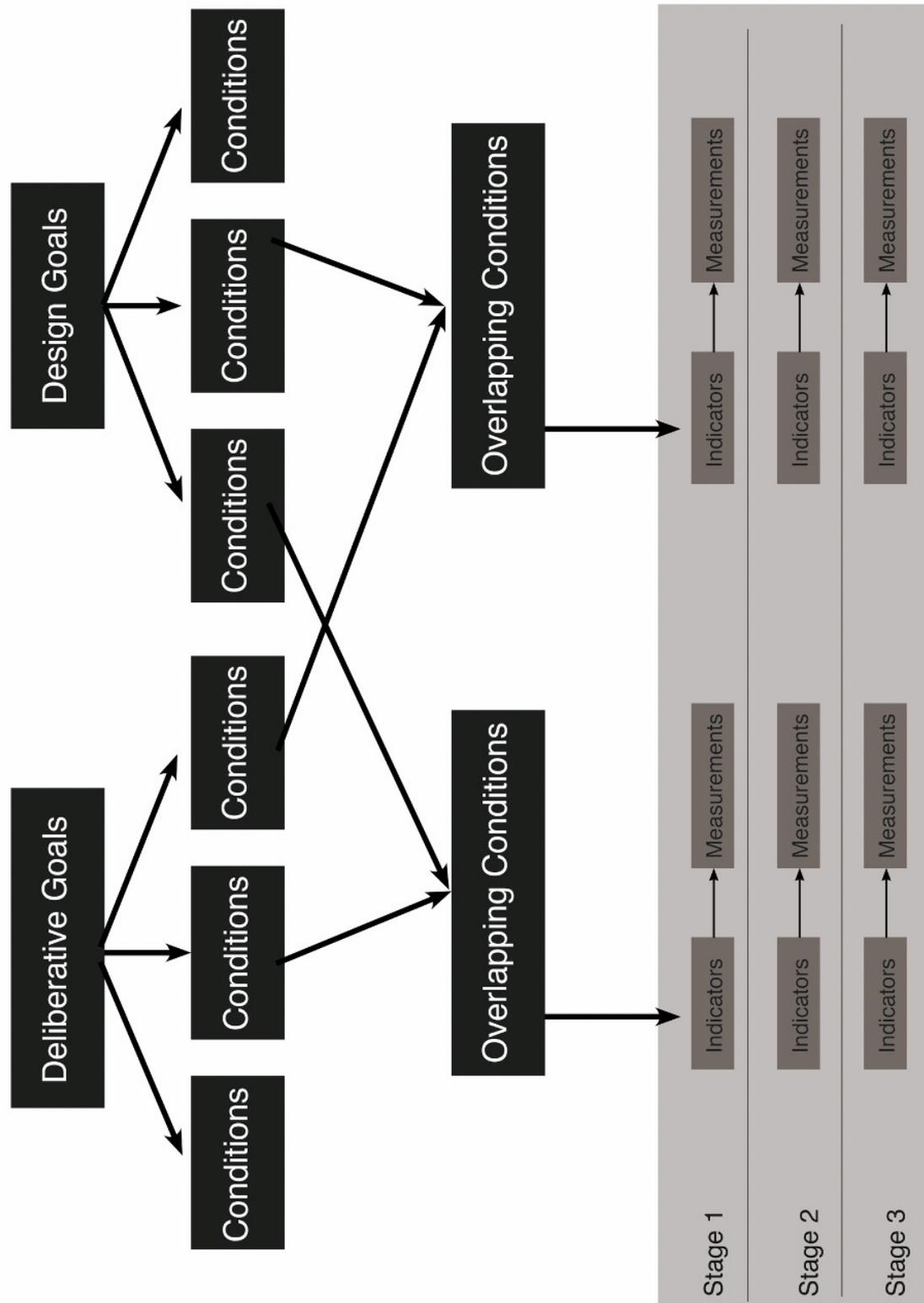


Figure 2. Evaluation Framework.

stages is that the traditional Theory of Change creates an outcomes pathway that, to some extent, dictates the following design and action of a program. Instead, it is the design of deliberative programs that dictates the action and procedures. Thus, it would be inappropriate to create indicators and evaluative tools for a deliberative design without placing the conditions within the decided design structure.

The last difference is the idealistic nature of the goals and conditions included in the framework. Conventional Theory of Change creates conditions that are more practical and actionable. However, the goals and conditions of deliberative democracy are derived from the understanding of the ideal state of deliberative democracy. Cohen’s idealization very much influences theorists’ understanding of what causes good deliberative democracy and what it entails and aim for. As mentioned in the literature review, this created a plethora of misunderstanding and problem between theorists and empiricists. Precisely because of the idealization, the adapted framework included two features (overlapping and applying to stages) to conceptualize the features of deliberative democracy in a more practical and realistic setting without losing its theoretical edge.

Goals of Deliberative Democracy

The first goal of deliberative democracy is from contemplating the central purpose and aspiration of the school of thought itself; producing a better decision. Thus, through the workings of deliberative democracy, the outcome should be a thoughtful and deliberate decision, which is assumed to be better than decisions through aggregative means (Bächtiger et al., 2018).

The second and third goal of deliberative democracy is themselves “deliberative” and “democratic”. Deliberative democracy will not happen if there is no quality deliberation. Although quality deliberation

could be viewed as a means to the first goal, it also ends. Good deliberation symbolizes the authority and legitimacy that embodies deliberative democracy through discussion and mutual understanding. Deliberation also represents the distinctive procedure that separates deliberative democracy from participatory democracy. Similarly, deliberative democracy also seeks to have a set of procedures that are democratic and embodies the value of freedom, equality, and fairness (Beauvais, 2018).

The last goal of deliberative democracy is to generate learnings. Deliberative democracy is used as a mechanism for arriving at a decision and as a tool to educate participants to create a better understanding of the issue (Estlund, 1993). The goals of deliberative democracy are listed in Figure 3.



Figure 3. Goals of deliberative democracy.

Conditions for Deliberative Democracy

The conditions for deliberative democracy covered in this essay are elements that are generally accepted by most deliberative democrats (Bächtiger et al., 2018). Although the scope of what each condition entails and how strict each should be enforced are contested, authors agree that to achieve the ideal state of deliberative democracy, the core of these conditions need to be present throughout designs.

As mentioned, these conditions are idealistic rather than realistic because they are derived from an ideal model of deliberative democracy. Therefore, practitioners should not be discouraged for not achieving these conditions in absolute terms but should strive to achieve them as best as possible. The conditions are not isolated and regularly feeds into each other. Consequently, the conditions should be viewed in a holistic manner, with individual conditions supporting each other rather than lone variables. Figure 4 displays the conditions that are covered.

CONDITIONS FOR DELIBERATIVE DEMOCRACY
Respect
Absence of Coercive Power
Equality and Inclusion
Reason Giving
Consensus-driven Decision-Making
Common Good
Transparency
Sincerity and Authenticity

Figure 4. Condition of deliberative democracy.

Respect

A condition for a successful deliberative democratic design is the ideal of mutual respect. Respect is crucial to all theories of deliberation (Gutmann and Thompson, 1996). Although the ideal of respect has been interpreted differently, no author disagree that for deliberation to work appropriately, respect needs to be present in the room. Respect includes active listening and proactive effort to understand the meaning and logic behind other people’s arguments.

Rather than seeing other’s arguments as meaningless, corrupt, or manipulated, respectful participants seeks to comprehend the speaker’s motives as the speaker experiences them (Williams, 1962). Similarly, respect allows participants to ask questions that can extract each participants’ understanding, experiences, and how words and expression are interpreted, breaking down barriers between people with different backgrounds (Collins, 1990). To have participants discuss with each other and allow participants to understand each other despite differences, respect is vital in fostering healthy deliberation.

Absence of Coercive Power

The absence of coercive power has also been a long-standing standard for good deliberation. Coercive power, on the surface, is the use of force and making others do things against their will (Bächtiger et al., 2018). Nevertheless, a more in-depth analysis reveals that even speech and language exhibit some power difference and coercive power (Foucault, 1977). These power differences (for example, having the word “mankind” representing entire humanity) are often subtle and ingrained in our language. These slight differences could alter the course of deliberation and hinder people’s will to express themselves independently. With this understanding of coercive power, it would be practically impossible to remove all elements of coercive power in a deliberative design. Nevertheless, the ideal of no coercive power remains as a central condition in the deliberative enterprise and specific deliberative design could be evaluated by how closely they resemble this ideal.

Equality and Inclusion

The ideal of equality, which includes elements of respect, inclusion (encompassing the voice of people who have interests at stake in the collective concern), and freedom of expressing opinions, is another condition for good deliberation (Habermas, 2008). When thinking about the condition of equality, it is crucial to understand that this does not mean

equal influence in deliberation; instead, it is an equal opportunity to influence (Knight and Johnson, 1997). This is because having equal influence would mean giving equal weight to both good and bad arguments throughout deliberation, and that equal influence is impossible since participants do not enjoy equal resources, education and wealth. Nonetheless, equality as having equal opportunity to influence is still very much an ideal, but such understanding does make this condition more comfortable to grasp and measure.

Reason Giving

The condition of reason-giving is crucial to achieving quality deliberation. Reason-giving is the act of presenting structured, comprehensible, and persuasive arguments. The “reason” given in deliberation are of two types; one that appeals to the rational mind, and another that moves the emotional mind. The first type of reasoning is logically and rationally structured. Logical reasoning frequently uses facts and theories to support arguments and claims. The second type of reasoning deals with emotional arguments, whereby people use storytelling, anecdotes, and personal experiences to persuade fellow participants (Neblo, 2020). Emotional reasoning can also facilitate deliberation by acting as a lubricant in deescalating conflicts and making connections to other members. Realistically, arguments frequently exhibit a mixture of both logical and emotional support, and both types of reasoning include some usage of appraisal and emotional commitment.

Consensus-driven

The ideal of consensus-driven decision making is another condition for the goals of deliberative democracy. The underlying assumptions are that reaching consensus represents that mutual understanding and efforts of collaboration between participants were involved, creating a better decision that has more consideration and application than decisions from participatory means. To some degree,

seeking consensus is, in effect, the act of engaging in critical debates and making valid claims, the necessary qualities of good deliberation (Elster, 1986). However, consensus-driven deliberation aims not only at better decision making but could also clarify underlying conflicts about issues discussed. Undeniably, even under the ideal of a consensus-driven design, a consensual decision is not guaranteed. In such circumstances, deliberative designs end with voting and some type of majority rule (Cohen, 1989).

Orientation to Common Good

Quality deliberation and better decision making could be perpetrated under an orientation to the ideal of the common good. It is assumed that if participants have a notion of the common good and transcend above self-interests (Cohen, 1989), a healthy space could be created that allows participants to debate and analyse issues more reasonably and keep a more open mind. All of this will result in wiser decisions and better deliberation. However, this does not mean there is no room for private interests, as individual interests could act as a motivational force in deliberation under certain circumstances. However, the interests need to be constrained by consideration of fairness and rights of other participants (Fraser, 1990).

Transparency

A degree of transparency is needed to guard deliberative democracy against corruption and power intervention (Bächtiger et al., 2018). Besides supporting the condition of “absence of coercive power”, transparency also make sure deliberation and designs are justified. By being transparent about the process, information, and materials used throughout a deliberative design, organizers would need to ensure a fair assembly. Participants will also need to make more effort in deliberation to justify the procedures and final decision to the public.

Sincerity and Authenticity

Finally, there is the ideal that participants would behave authentically and sincerely throughout the deliberation (Bächtiger et al., 2018). This is similar to some previous conditions in ensuring that communication between participants are real and founded. Having authentic and sincere discussion facilitates better understanding, connection, and procedure for participants and can culminate into superior information and final decision making.

Overlapping Conditions

As mentioned, an overlapping process is needed to find evaluative ground that is both theoretically supported and practically desired. Evaluators should compare the conditions of deliberative democracy and deliberative design to identify common conditions. Bear in mind that some conditions might be overarching and inclusive of other conditions, requiring evaluators to merge and combine conditions where appropriate.

Stages and Indicators

To contextualize the conditions and create indicators, conditions are applied to various stages of a deliberative design. Generally, the mini-publics design includes a planning, selection, deliberation, and a concluding stage. Practically, the number and how divided the stages are depends on the discretion of the organizer or evaluator. It should be noted that the more stages identified, the more labour-intensive the evaluation process since an extra stage could mean an extra set of indicators. To generate indicators, evaluators should envision what that condition would be in a particular stage. For example, the condition of equality could be an equal opportunity to participate in the selection stage. In contrast, the equality could be an equal opportunity to present arguments in the deliberation phase.

Measurement

When indicators are identified, the next step is to generate measurement tools to size the performance of each indicator. Any appropriate tools that measure the indicator could be employed, but the essay will focus on surveys as the primary evaluation method. The use of surveys in evaluating deliberative designs are common and appropriate since many of the condition (and therefore indicators) are based on the experience and understanding of participants and organizers. When creating surveys, it would be helpful to consider the groups involved in the process and create control and experimental groups similar to deliberative polls and a concluding stage. Practically, the number and how divided the s

6. APPLICATION OF EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The essay applies its framework to a case Citizens' Assembly Pilot (CAP) in Beirut, Lebanon. The pilot program is facilitated by the RELIEF Centre and is aimed to tackle the issue of energy justice in Lebanon. The CAP in Lebanon is a unique case of deliberative initiative in its context and debated issue (energy policies). Most deliberative designs occur in stable democratic countries and are usually backed by the government. With ample funding and support, these initiatives tackle clearly defined issues in their vision and scope. The CAP is very different from conventional deliberative initiatives. The first issue is the lack of government credibility and support.

The second issue is the topic of energy justice discussed in the assembly. Unstable accessibility to energy and chronic power shortages is a significant issue for those living in Beirut. Additionally, current government policies heavily rely on fossil fuel and are stubborn to search for alternative energy sources or amending the already-frail energy infrastructure (McDowall, 2019). Despite the prevalence of the issue, the direction of future energy policies and what energy justice means remain vague in Lebanon. Therefore, the assembly is also burdened with exploring what energy justice means for participants and creating a vision for Lebanon's future energy policies. Energy justice is also complex and technical, so the CAP needs to deliver an assembly that allows participants to learn, deliberate, and decide within a tight time frame and limited government support. The CAP is made more complicated by COVID-19, which changes how a deliberative design operates and delivers content.

With these difficulties also comes a great potential for learnings and insights. The usage of the CAP could test three aspects of deliberative democracy:

How deliberative designs operate in a relatively undemocratic context, how designs could tackle vague and complex issues, and how designs could handle online and in-person deliberation and learning (due to COVID-19, parts of the assembly were moved online). These potential aspects push the boundary of deliberative theory and go beyond just evaluating designs.

Understanding these potentials, the organisers created two aims to the CAP: To create consensual solutions for the energy crisis and foster learning and insights for future initiatives similar to a citizens' assembly.

The essay examines the goals and conditions of the CAP by using the information from a pre-consultation presentation and the final report by the organizers. The conditions are compared to the conditions of deliberative democracy to create a list of overlapping conditions, which is then used to generate indicators of evaluation.

Goals of Deliberative Design

The goals of the citizens' assembly align with the issue and context and are presented clearly in the assembly's consultation presentation. The first goal is for the assembly to create a vision for energy justice and solution in Lebanon. This goal is partially agenda-setting rather than deciding on a specific policy because communities in Lebanon still needs a clear idea of the direction of the energy sector and fuel use.

The second goal, generate learning about this issue for participants, ties in with the first goal. A better

understanding of the issue could be conducive to a clearer picture of what the energy future should be in Lebanon.

The last goal is to generate learning for practitioners. The citizens' assembly in Lebanon is unique in that it is operating in a middle east country where government trust is low and inefficiency is high. High-profile cases of citizens' assembly usually occur in democratically stable countries. Thus, the assembly in Lebanon provides practitioners with a valuable opportunity to test how deliberative designs function in a volatile setting. Goals are listed in Figure 5.

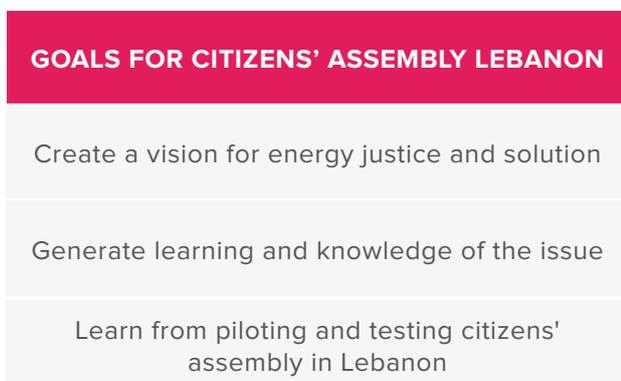


Figure 5. Goals for Citizens' Assembly Lebanon.

These goals are also translated into specific questions, as described in the final report, which provided the basic structure of deliberated topics. Goals of creating vision and learning of energy justice resulted in deliberation and learning regarding the history of Lebanon's energy policies, different energy mix, and future actions for individuals and communities. The goal of testing and learning from the pilot also represents the research aims of the CAP, which became the basis for evaluation surveys and feedbacks of the initiatives.

Conditions of Citizens' Assembly

The conditions of the citizens' assembly in Lebanon were presented in the consultation presentation as well. The ten conditions identified were from a list of citizens' assembly criteria (Hughes, 2019) provided by Involved.org, an organisation that develops and support democratic innovation. The list of conditions adapted is shown in Figure 6. It should be emphasised that these conditions are adapted

and not specifically tailored to the CAP, resulting in generalised conditions and a lack of scrutiny behind the assumptions connecting the goals, conditions, and indicators. An exhaustive application of the Theory of Change to deliberative designs could produce more focused and appropriate evaluation criteria when applying this evaluation framework.

CONDITIONS FOR CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY	DEFINITION
Clear Purpose	The issue discussed in the design needs to be clear to everyone involved. This includes the set of questions that will be addressed and the particular scope of the issue.
Sufficient Time	The amount of time for deliberation is sufficient for the particular issues and the particular phases and procedure.
Representative	The pool of potential assembly members is created through random selection. The process and recruitment strategy need to be justifiable and logical. Random stratified sampling should also be used to ensure that the demographics of the assembly mirrors the demographic of the represented community.
Inclusive	Assembly members have the equal opportunity to attend the assembly and engage when attending. The inclusivity should counteract monetary and physical barriers. The language and information used should also be accessible and understandable for participating members.
Independent	The assembly needs to be impartially facilitated and insulated from outside power intervention or biases.
Transparency	All information, including the recruitment methodology, advisory group membership, speaker lists, agendas, and briefing materials, should be accessible to the public. Materials from the planning and design phase should also be published. Any final reports or learning should also be made accessible by the public.
Generative Learning	The information provided by the assembly should facilitate the learnings of the members. The information should be balanced, accurate, and understandable to the members.
Structured Deliberation	The deliberation has a straightforward procedure that allows members to weigh different perspective, discuss with fellow members and seek mutual understanding. The deliberation should also be supported by facilitators who are well briefed and knowledgeable without adding personal biases.
Collective decision-making	The assembly reaches a final set of recommendation or decision by the end of the assembly. The decision should seek to be consensual, collectively agreed upon, and understandable to all members.
Evaluated	Assembly members are surveyed about their experience, how they perceived and felt about the process and any program's shortcomings.

Figure 6. Conditions for Citizens' Assembly.

Overlapping Conditions

The conditions distilled from ideals of deliberative democracy are then compared with the conditions presented for citizens' assembly. The overlapping process resulted in five points of commonality, and five overlapping conditions were developed.

Equality and inclusion

The first point of commonality between the two sets of conditions is the emphasis on equality and inclusion. The deliberative democratic theory described equality and inclusion as encompassing representation of the voice of all stakeholder and having the freedom to express opinions. There is also the ideal element of having equal opportunity to influence despite different backgrounds and levels of education and wealth. Citizens' assembly's condition of representation and inclusion echoes the idea of having representation that appropriately depicts the community and ensures equal opportunity to engage with the citizens' assembly. The inclusive nature highlighted by both conditions also coincides with internal power differences as described in the Absence of Coercive Power condition of deliberative democracy. These are the power differences caused by subtle qualities of language and style of speech, standing standard for good deliberation. Coercive power, on the surface,

Independent

The second common condition is the independence of the assembly. Assembly's conditions call for an assembly that is impartially facilitated and insulated from biases. Similarly, deliberative democracy demands the absence of coercive power and a process insulated from outside intervention.

Transparency

The third common condition is transparency, which is listed in both sets of conditions. This condition is meant to guard against corruption and power intervention by making information and materials

throughout the deliberative design accessible to the public.

Structured Deliberation

Both sets of conditions share some aspect in envisioning the conditions for quality deliberation. Assembly's condition of structured deliberation entails a deliberative procedure that allows participants to consider all correct information and engage with critical discussion with others to seek mutual understanding. There is also the presence of knowledgeable and impartial facilitators that support the participants when needed. These qualities are included as well in the respect, reason-giving, sincerity and authentic conditions. Reason giving, both logical and emotional, allows participants to engage in discussion and create mutual understanding and proactive listening with the presence of respect, sincerity and authenticity.

Consensus Decision-making

Consensus-driven decision making is a condition shared by both ideals and practices. Assembly's collective decision-making condition made clear that the logic behind the final decision should be comprehensible to all members and be collectively agreed. Likewise, deliberative democracy's consensus-driven decision condition emphasize consensus and use majority rule only when agreement cannot be brokered.

Stages and Indicators

The essay examines three stages that would apply to the overlapping conditions: selection, deliberation, and conclusion. The selection stage includes the process of selecting the pool of potential members as well as the sampling of participants. The deliberation stage involves learning the issue, deliberation and discussion, and the final decision making. The end of the deliberation stage also marks the end of the assembly. The conclusion stage is anything that happens after the assembly, including making materials and reports accessible, publishing the final decision, and distilling learnings from experience.

The goal of applying conditions to stages is to contemplate what that condition would look like in a particular setting and derive possible measurement tools. The essay draws insight and information from the CAP final report to better reflect and assess the CAP under these indicators. Figure 7 (below) provides a table and summarises the indicators for each overlapping condition in each stage. As shown below, applying the same condition to different stage results in different indicators that are more appropriate to the specific context.

STAGE	OVERLAPPING CONDITION	INDICATORS
Selection	Equality and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demographically representative Equal opportunity of attending the program without circumstantial barriers.
	Independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Selection process should be fair and not biased towards any group.
	Transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reasoning, method, and process behind selection method should be publicly available.
Deliberation	Equality and inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equal opportunity for speech Equal participation Information provided and arguments are comprehensible by all members
	Independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impartially facilitated Information and material are impartial
	Transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Materials provided and transcripts of deliberation, and final report should be publicly accessible.
	Structured Deliberation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Straightforward and guiding procedure Respectful and sincere discussion Arguments made with appropriate logical and emotional reasoning
Conclusion	Decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collectively agreed decision and comprehensible by all members.
	Independent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Final decision and report as well as learnings should be free from bias and not be altered.
	Transparent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes such as the learning report, evaluation, and seeking government response should be clear, documented, and made publicly accessible.

Figure 7. Stages & Indicators.

Stage 1: Selection

Equality and inclusion

Mirroring the demographic and makeup of the represented community is a foundational principle to the citizens' assemblies and deliberative designs. It is also an indicator of equality and inclusion in the selection stage. The CAP members were stratified and randomly selected based on age, gender, residential status (migrant), ethnicity (non-Lebanese), and access to generators and electricity. More participants were added to compensate for anticipated dropouts and unreached targets (elderly and migrant worker). The created mini-publics is diverse in occupation and level of education, although these parameters were not included in the stratification. 68% of the participants thought that relevant groups of the community were represented in the evaluation survey.

Another aspect of equality and inclusion in the selection stage is the assembly's ability to provide equal opportunity of attending the program. The CAP faced tough challenges in this perspective. The impact of covid-19, the language barrier, and gender culture made recruiting the elderly, non-Arabic speaking participants, and women difficult to reach and retain. Regarding member retention, only 3 members dropped out, and participating members gave outstanding ratings on the level of support that the organizers provided.

Future deliberative designs could invest more resources to offset potential participation barriers (translation services, increased quota for minority groups), but the challenges of reaching targeted groups are understandable given the extraordinary circumstances of the CAP. Follow up surveys and contacts should be made to members that dropped out to better assess the support provided by organizers.

The context of Lebanon also raises a boundary problem of deliberative designs given the refugee

crisis in the country. Although the issue of refugee population may not apply to the municipal of Hamra, discussion of the limitation or inclusion of those that could and should participate (which is beyond the scope of this essay) should be further explored.

Independent

The selection process should be fair and not be inappropriately biased towards certain groups to be selected. The CAP's sample population is recruited from calls and applications from online and offline outreach. A random stratified sampling method based on previous criteria was applied to the sample population. The limitation of the outreach channel means that the sample population could be skewed (towards previously contacted individuals and active members of the community), and the limitation of the location (municipal of Hamra) also decreases the number of willing participants.

A potential way to evaluate how well the sampling method employed could be to compare the assembly participants to Hamra's demographic on more parameters. This might shed light on how good the recruitment process is in creating a representative mini-publics and potential rooms for improvements and innovations.

Transparent

The reasoning, method and process behind the selection of members should be documented and be publicly accessible. These information are documented in the CAP final report and will be made available to the public.

Stage 2: Deliberation

Equality and inclusion

The deliberation stage should give equal opportunity for speech to all members and motivate equal participation. The information provided and arguments raised should be understandable by all members and make sure they do not drive more significant power difference. The evaluation survey received high average ratings (out of 10) in terms of chance to express views (8.7), hear others' views (7.7) and understanding of the information (8.8). The final report mentioned that some individuals new to deliberative environments seem to feel less comfortable expressing themselves. This could potentially be mitigated by prompting less active members or spending more time warming up conversations or ice-breakers.

Independent

The deliberation should be impartially facilitated and ensure that the provided information and materials are not biased and do not share misinformation. The CAP made efforts to provide accurate and unbiased materials, expert knowledge and inviting community stakeholders to express arguments regardless of backgrounds. Due to covid-19, the bulk of the information (learning phase) was made into recorded videos. This made information more accessible as members could now learn at their own pace and unpack complex ideas.

Transparent

Materials provided, transcripts of the deliberative discussion, the final report, and the decision's reasoning should be publicly accessible. All of the recorded videos, Q&A sessions, and information provided were made accessible online.

Structured Deliberation

The deliberation should have a straightforward and guiding procedure. Respectful and sincere arguments should be made with appropriate logical and

emotional reasoning motivated by the goal of mutual understanding. Members gave 9.5/10 average rating in terms of how comfortable they felt with sharing their views, which could indicate the level of respect in the assembly. Survey questions investigating how well members understood each other's' reasoning could be employed to better understand the quality of the deliberation.

Decision making

The final decision should be a collectively agreed decision that is consensual and comprehensible to all members of the assembly. The CAP members made 3 collective decisions: priorities of energy justice principles, percentage of energy-mix, and methods of electricity conservation for individual and community. The first two decisions are decided in more individual voting and statistical calculation, rather than deliberation and consensual agreement. Final decisions are created by members submitting personal ranking of principles and energy-mix ratio percentage and calculating the ranking score and average. The voting prompts seems to be inherently difficult to discuss in deliberative settings. The amount of time and resources are exponentially higher when asking members to agree on rankings and percentage points as opposed to choosing one option out of many (for example, British Columbia's citizens' assembly on electoral reform). Future questions could be designed to better fit the deliberative environment and promote consensual decisions rather than relying too heavily on culmination of individual votes. However, the evaluation survey shows that members are satisfied with the collective decisions. Members gave 8.8/10 average rating in terms of how much they agree with the assembly decisions and 84% of the members agreed that the decisions was consensual and understandable.

Stage 3: Conclusion

Independent

The final decision and report agreed by the assembly should not be altered. Learnings and subsequent report should be as objective and free from biases as possible. The CAP final report documented the process of decision making as well as the subsequent recommendation made by the assembly.

Transparent

Actions in the conclusion stage (learning reports, evaluation, seeking government response) should be made clear, and all preceding outcomes and information should be publicly accessible. The CAP final report made clear the next steps envisioned by the assembly members, including the role of the government, key institutions, and future citizens' assemblies.

7. SHORTCOMINGS AND CONCLUSION

The results of the evaluation questionnaires indicate the CAP to be a successful initiative and highly applauded by its participants. From an evaluation framework standpoint, the survey results align with the indicators and show the presence of quality deliberation in the assembly. Although the decision-making process could've had more deliberation rather than the reliance on culmination of individual votes, the CAP seems to satisfy the aim of creating a vision of energy justice and policies for the future of Hamra through quality deliberation. A plethora of learnings are presented in the final report, but the case have potential for further learning and exploration. Follow-up interviews, comparative surveys, and follow-up action of the consensual decision could provide deeper insights into the impact of the CAP and potential improvements.

The essay believes the created framework fulfilled the research tasks, nonetheless, there are some shortcoming that will be discussed. The first is complication arising from theoretical ideals of deliberative democracy. Conditions of the theory are somewhat paradoxical in their relationship with outcomes. For instance, equality and inclusion could be seen as the means to quality deliberation. Yet deliberation could also be seen as means to equality and inclusion. This makes application of Theory of Change and finding causal relationships frustrating. However, the essay argues that by establishing the point of outcome (quality deliberation), the following conditions are set into place and causal relationships are made clear. The second is the lack of robust application of Theory of Change to the CAP. Although conditions are listed by the organizers, those conditions were adapted and not original to the goals of the initiatives. This unalignment could lessen the effectiveness of the indicators and possible evaluation methods.

The idealized theoretical underpinnings of deliberative democracy provide important normative and epistemic values. However, these ideals are not the most compatible for applying to real world practices. The essay strived to create a framework base on the Theory of Change that could comprise both the theoretical groundings and practical needs. The evaluation framework interrogates the goals and condition of both the theory and practical design. The framework then overlaps the conditions to create commonalities that are both conceptually acceptable and practically useful. By applying the overlapping conditions to stages of the design, conditions are made into concrete indicators and real-world measurements. In summary, the evaluation framework hopes to find commonality between deliberative democratic theory and deliberative design and be a framework that could be applicable to and compared across deliberative designs.

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