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# Deliberative Democracy and the Neglected Dimension of Leadership

## **Abstract**

Although deliberative democracy is flourishing as a political theory, there is a need to properly acknowledge and theorize upon the role of leadership in deliberative processes. Leaders arise in all political situations for traceable reasons and are an essential element of decision-making. Because deliberative democrats emphasize the necessity of deliberation between free and equal citizens for legitimate decision-making, this stands in stark contrast with the emergence and existence of leaders in deliberative settings. The current lack of engagement has numerous implications for deliberative democracy, but most importantly creates a serious gap between theory and practice. This paper takes a pragmatic view of these issues and seeks to analyze the different ways in which leadership occurs during deliberative practice and the potential this holds for recalibrating deliberative democracy. The analysis is limited to deliberative minipublics as a way to highlight and advance my arguments.

## **Keywords**

Deliberative democracy, leadership, minipublics, democratic theory

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## Deliberative Democracy and the Neglected Dimension of Leadership

The goal of this article is to explore the relationship between deliberative democracy and the concept of leadership. Although deliberative democracy is flourishing as a political theory, there is a need to properly acknowledge and theorize upon the role of leadership in deliberative processes. Leaders arise in all political situations for traceable reasons and are an essential element of decision-making. Deliberative democrats emphasize the necessity of deliberation between free and equal citizens for legitimate decision-making, and this priority stands in stark contrast with the emergence and existence of leaders in deliberative settings.<sup>1</sup> The current lack of engagement has numerous implications for deliberative democracy, but most importantly creates a serious gap between theory and practice. This paper takes a pragmatic view of these issues and seeks to analyze the different ways in which leadership occurs during deliberative practice and how deliberative theory should be recalibrated in light of this analysis. For reasons of brevity and analytical consistency, I limit the substantive discussion to deliberative minipublics.

Throughout this paper, I develop three arguments. First, I hold that deliberative democracy stands in theoretical and empirical tension with leadership. Second, I contend that leaders provide a ‘coordinating focal point’ for followers that deliberative democracy cannot avoid.<sup>2</sup> As soon as deliberation occurs, leaders arise to fulfill certain functions. The ways in which leaders are constrained and enabled within deliberative processes will bear heavily upon whether meaningful deliberation can still occur. Because leaders arise at multiple points in a deliberative process, the critical issue for deliberative democrats is to determine *how leaders can function to facilitate meaningful deliberation*. I propose a four-stage model that highlights the pivotal junctures of leadership for deliberative minipublics. Third, I hold that deliberative democrats should seek to engender or replicate a *lattice of leadership* throughout deliberation to reduce the sway of individual leaders and better uphold the deliberative ideal.<sup>3</sup> In this sense, leaders can act as ‘checks and balances’ upon one another. I will emphasize the practical benefits of having multiple leaders in terms of producing meta-consensus and forging epistemic goodness.

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<sup>1</sup> Jon Elster, *Deliberative Democracy* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 1.

<sup>2</sup> See, for examples, Roger B. Myerson, “Justice, Institutions and Multiple Equilibria”, *Chicago Journal of International Law*, 5, no. 1 (2004): 91-107 or Torun Dewan and David P. Myatt, “Leading the Party: Coordination, Direction and Communication”, *American Political Science Review*, 101, no. 4, (2007): 825-843.

<sup>3</sup> John Uhr, *Terms of Trust: Arguments Over Ethics in Australian Government*, (Sydney: UNSW Press, 2005).

Following these arguments, this article is divided into three main sections. In the first, I seek to define my understandings of leadership and deliberative democracy and tease out points of tension. I will launch a substantive argument that deliberative democrats have ignored the value, problems and inevitability of leadership in the political sphere. In the second section, I look at the function of leaders and contrast it with the deliberative ideal. I will establish the theoretical framework from which I analyze leaders in deliberative democracy (the lattice of leadership) and expound what meaningful deliberation entails. In the third section, I map this framework onto the different stages at which leaders typically emerge in minipublics. These stages coincide with the tasks of *initiating* the minipublics, *operating* the mechanism, the initial *uptake* of the deliberative consensus and the long-term *execution* of the decisions made. I argue that fostering a lattice of leadership can help induce meaningful deliberation and better refines the function of leaders. At each of these junctures, I will discuss and suggest general reform proposals to meet this task. Overall, I contend that deliberative democrats have been remiss (and have undermined their own project) by failing to address how leaders impact questions of agency and power in bringing deliberative democracy from a normative theory to an empirical reality.

Before I begin, a caveat is in order. I focus this critique of deliberative democracy toward minipublics. I acknowledge that outside of these isolated mechanisms lie deliberative arenas in which recourse to leadership may be more or less prevalent. At this stage, my concern is not with the potential of deliberative democracy in civil society, networked governance or other fora. Rather, I offer a general argument for inducing a lattice of leadership to counteract the theoretical tension between deliberation and leadership. How this is constructed empirically depends on the deliberative forum being examined. In the conclusion I suggest that the ‘lattice of leadership’ should be extended to the impending ‘systemic turn’ in deliberative theory and practice. I paint the broad brushstrokes of this step to highlight the importance of understanding leadership in the ‘scaling up’ of deliberation. However, because other examples would not exactly map onto the framework I develop here, it is beyond the scope of a single article to tackle the ways leaders and leadership bear upon all deliberative events.

### **Leadership and Deliberative Democracy**

Leadership is a heavily contested concept. As a result, a review of the leadership literature presents a plethora of definitions. Leadership is an ubiquitous and central theme of social organization and political institutions – all modern governments employ organization

structures strongly focused around hierarchies of leaders and elites, and modern politics as understood and discussed by the public is predominantly focused around a narrative of individual leaders.<sup>4</sup> Despite its centrality, leadership undoubtedly has a complex relationship with theories of democratic practice. The leadership phenomenon suggests an inherently unequal distribution of influence and power, and a threat to liberty, which challenges and worries many democratic scholars.<sup>5</sup> And whilst a popular principle that guides modern government is the prevailing belief that the people should rule, centuries of democratic developments show that democratic leaders rule with authority to a much greater extent than the average person.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately, much of democratic theory has become virtually indifferent to the distinction between good and bad leadership – all leaders become a necessary evil, and our task seems to be to contain them rather than encourage trust in and capacity for good leadership.<sup>7</sup> As Dewan and Myatt note, fundamental questions such as “What is good leadership?” and “Which qualities contribute to good and successful leadership?” remain open.<sup>8</sup> I seek to partially remedy this neglect by discussing what constitutes good leadership for deliberative democracy.

Due to this ambivalence, contemporary debates over the place of leadership in modern democratic societies are notoriously ambiguous.<sup>9</sup> Whole volumes dedicated to appraising the state of democratic theory contain minimal references to the subject of leadership.<sup>10</sup> And despite an acknowledgement by democratic scholars that leadership embodies values that are antithetical to the modern democratic project, in practice its existence has been at least tacitly approved. It would be difficult to deny that democracy (both empirically and theoretically) can be strengthened as result of ‘good’ leadership, even if the practice of leadership has seemed at odds with the principles of freedom and equality.<sup>11</sup> Thus even as democrats have distanced themselves from the concept of leadership, or

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<sup>4</sup> For an overview, see Melvin Stogdill, Ralph. *Handbook of Leadership: A Survey of Theory and Research* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1974).

<sup>5</sup> Kenneth P. Ruscio, *The Leadership Dilemma in Modern Democracy* (Northampton, MA: Edward Elgar, 2004), 1-6.

<sup>6</sup> Haig Patapan and John Kane, "The Neglected Problem of Democratic Leadership," in *Public Leadership: Perspectives and Practices*, ed. Paul 't Hart and John Uhr (Canberra, ACT: ANU E-Press, 2008).

<sup>7</sup> Ruscio, *The Leadership Dilemma in Modern Democracy*, 5-10.

<sup>8</sup> Dewan, Torun and David. P. Myatt, “The Qualities of Leadership: Direction, Communication and Obfuscation”, *American Political Science Review*, 102, (2008): 351.

<sup>9</sup> Harvey C. Mansfield, *Taming the Prince: The Ambivalence of Modern Executive Power* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1989).

<sup>10</sup> See for example David Held (ed.), 1993, *Prospects for Democracy*, Cambridge: Polity Press; Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordón (eds), 1999, *Democracy's Edges and Democracy's Value* (companion volumes), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.; Carter, A. and G. Stokes (eds.), *Democratic Theory Today*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002).

<sup>11</sup> Ruscio, *The Leadership Dilemma in Modern Democracy*, 4.

occasionally identified it as a concept fundamentally incompatible with democracy,<sup>12</sup> the reality is that its position is accepted in practice.

For this paper, I define leadership in general terms as an element of social influence in which one person enlists the aid and support of others in order to accomplish a common task.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, I follow Dewan and Myatt, as well as Levi, who argue that leaders provide a coordinating focal point around which others congregate. In other words, leaders “unify expectations about how others will act by fostering an understanding of the political landscape that others can draw upon as a frame of reference.”<sup>14</sup>

There is a conceptual distinction to be drawn between leaders and leadership. On one hand, leaders assume positions of authority, which stands in theoretical tension with democracy. On the other hand, leaders (purposefully or not) deploy this influence to mobilize others, resulting in leadership. The phenomenon of leadership (with respect to minipublics) arises at the institutional and participant level. This paper is primarily concerned with the actual phenomenon of leadership, although the two issues are strongly connected. I argue that the lattice of leadership provides both empirical and normative benefits. Empirically, it is a useful explanatory heuristic that shows how leaders are (and can be) dispersed. Normatively, and prescriptively, it provides a model that dilutes the coercive potential of leadership. This, as I note below, is the dual role John Uhr also associates with the model.

### ***Deliberative Democracy***

The literature on deliberative democracy has rapidly expanded in recent years. As John Dryzek notes, the final decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the democracy literature take a ‘deliberative turn’ in which the legitimacy of decision-making became linked to the notion of deliberation and public reasoning.<sup>15</sup> Most, if not all, deliberative democrats envisage their model operating in conjunction with other mechanisms of liberal (representative) democracy. Because leadership is pervasive in political life, it impacts deliberation itself, the fora in which it takes place, and the macro-uptake of any deliberative event. Bächtiger et al., in a

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<sup>12</sup> Benjamin R. Barber, *A Passion for Democracy: American Essays* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998).

<sup>13</sup> Martin M. Chemers, "Leadership Research and Theory: A Functional Integration," *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research and Practice* 4 (2000): 27. See also Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership: Theory and Practice*, 5th ed. (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 2010).

<sup>14</sup> Torun Dewan and David P. Myatt “Leading the Party: Coordination, Direction and Communication”, *American Political Science Review*, 101, no. 4, (2007): 825-843. M. Levi, “Why We Need a New Theory of Government”, *Perspective on Politics*, 4, no. 1, (2006): 5-19.

<sup>15</sup> John Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics and Contestations* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000), 1.

recent survey of deliberative democracy, usefully distinguish between type-I and type-II versions of deliberative democracy.<sup>16</sup>

Type-I deliberation follows the Habermasian logic of communicative action, in which deliberation “is conceived of as a logic of action oriented toward reaching common understanding (*verständigungsorientiertes Handeln*).<sup>17</sup> Type-I deliberation is a rational form of communication in which actors must be sincere, respectful and prepared to be swayed by the “unforced force of the better argument.”<sup>18</sup> Normatively, much of type-I deliberative theory draws upon Joshua Cohen’s *Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy*.<sup>19</sup> In this seminal work, Cohen outlines the key features of ideal deliberative democracy.<sup>20</sup> He argued that deliberative democracy is a continuous process of decision-making, in which citizens respect the pluralism and values of the polity, as well as recognizing the deliberative capacity of others. Cohen delineates a set of stringent requirements for legitimate deliberation which consists of several principles. Amongst them is: the right to speak and not be excluded whenever possible; equal chance to question others and introduce assertions; the absence of coercion; the right to question the topics themselves; the right to question the rules of deliberation; and finally, that the discourse must be public.<sup>21</sup>

Under type-II deliberation, the normative boundaries of the constitutive elements are relaxed to incorporate other speech acts as ‘deliberation’. Type-II proponents want to move away from the ideal of deliberation offered by early-Habermas and Cohen and incorporate more than just sincere and respectful discussion. As Dryzek notes, deliberative democracy should move beyond the deliberative ideal and toward a more tolerant theoretical base which incorporates “argument, rhetoric, humour, emotion, testimony or storytelling, and gossip” as legitimate instances of deliberation.<sup>22</sup> This paper does not take a stance on the relative virtues of type-I versus type-II deliberation. Rather, I seek to outline a core description applicable to both ends of the spectrum and to highlight the theoretical tension with leadership.

<sup>16</sup> Andre Bächtiger, Simon Niemeyer, Michael Neblo, Marco R. Steenbergen and Jurg Steiner, “Disentangling Diversity in Deliberative Democracy: Competing Theories, Their Blind Spots and Complementarities,” *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 18, no. 1 (2010): 32-63.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>18</sup> Jürgen Habermas, *Moralbewusstsein und kommunikatives Handeln*, (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1983): 132.

<sup>19</sup> Cohen’s piece is widely-cited as a foundation work of deliberative democracy in which he lists features as criteria necessary for the ‘ideal’ of deliberative democracy. Joshua Cohen, “Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy,” in *The Good Polity*, ed. Alan Hamlin and Philip Pettit (Oxford, UK: Basil Blackwell Press, 1989).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> See Bächtiger *et al.* “Disentangling Diversity in Deliberative Democracy”: 36 for a succinct summary.

<sup>22</sup> John Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics and Contestations* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2000): 48.

### ***Points of Intersection and Tension***

Despite the fact that there are varied visions of deliberative democracy, at the core stands an emphasis on mutual reason-giving. Citizens and their representatives have to justify their reasons for actions in a manner acceptable to others, and respond in a reciprocal manner to the reasons of others. The emphasis on mutual reason-giving stands in sharp contrast to power-based, aggregative conceptions of democracy. Although virtually all deliberative democrats concede that voting is an indispensable part of large-scale decision-making, their argument is that democratic legitimacy hinges, at least in part, on the discursive process through which rules and laws are shaped. Decisions based solely on power and competition miss a key element of this legitimacy. As such, deliberative democrats contend that legitimacy is a natural by-product of fair, open and reasonable deliberative procedures. *Although the mode of reason-giving is contested, deliberative democrats of all shades eschew coercion.*

This emphasis on non-coercion is concerning because the communicative process of deliberation naturally gives rise to leaders, which holds potential for coercion. Cohen and Elster both note that essential to the ideal of deliberative democracy is that participants are both free and equal. Similarly, Dryzek avers that rhetoric can be dangerous to deliberative quality if deployed in a manipulative fashion. Moreover, deliberative democrats broadly emphasize the dispersal of power as a pre-condition for engendering free and equal deliberation. This emphasis, I argue, places deliberative democracy in a problematic relationship with leadership. When leadership arises in political situations, it shapes debates for others. Whereas other formulations of democratic theory can accommodate leadership through institutional arrangements and mechanisms, deliberative democracy requires the absence of hierarchy, or at least the dispersal of power, to engender legitimate decision-making. This is a theoretical tension that informs the substantive argument that deliberative democrats have a need to – and have thus far failed to – address the proper role of leadership in deliberative democracy. In a sense, I build upon the argument offered by Ian Shapiro, who suggests that deliberative democrats ignore that politics is really about power and interests, rather than reason and the better argument.<sup>23</sup> I am more sanguine than Shapiro in this article, and I argue that the power created by leadership can be minimized in order to uphold deliberative potential.

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<sup>23</sup> Ian Shapiro, “Enough of Deliberation: Politics is About Interest and Power”, in Stephen Macedo (ed.) *Deliberative Politics*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999): 28-38.



## Minipublics and the Institutional Turn

This theoretical tension between deliberative democracy and leadership leads to empirical troubles. This outcome is perhaps most visible in reference to what Simone Chambers refers to as an ‘institutional turn’ within deliberative democracy. Chambers notes that the first decade of the new millennium saw deliberative democracy move “rapidly from a ‘theoretical statement’ into a ‘working theory.’”<sup>24</sup> There has been an increasing focus on the types of mechanisms and institutions necessary to instill the normative theory of deliberative democracy in the real world. These mechanisms – typically referred to as ‘minipublics’ – involve a small number of citizens deliberating over policy or policies.<sup>25</sup>

Minipublics come in many different forms such as deliberative polls, citizens’ assemblies, citizens’ juries, parliaments, participatory budgeting (PB) and consensus conferences. Minipublics are supposed to operate in society in conjunction with different levels of government to uphold the ideals of deliberative democracy. They can be either consultative, in order to create and disseminate knowledge among participants, or more decisive, in order to engender a specific set of policy recommendations. Ultimately, deliberative democracy is believed to come about when parties are reasonable and use evidence-based arguments to persuade others to reach agreement (or, at least, meta-consensus). Deliberative minipublics are considered to be a legitimate form of decision-making because the open and unconstrained dialogue introduces people to a wide variety of knowledge positions, generates new skills and interests, and fosters relationships.<sup>26</sup>

I argue that there are four critical stages within deliberative mechanisms where there is an established need to consider the role of leaders, both as a matter of practicality and as a matter of theoretical engagement. Those stages are the *initiation* of a minipublic, the *operation* of the minipublic, the uptake of those results, and finally *executing* those decisions within the wider political setting. After discussing the importance of leadership at each of these stages, I suggest how a lattice of leadership can reduce the theoretical problem I elucidated and thus foster meaningful deliberation.

## Meaningful Deliberation and Leadership

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<sup>24</sup> Simone Chambers, "Deliberative Democratic Theory," *Annual Review of Political Science* 6 (2003): 307.

<sup>25</sup> Archon Fung, "Recipes for Public Spheres: Eight Institutional Design Choices and Their Consequences," *Journal of Political Philosophy* 11, no. 3 (2003).

<sup>26</sup> Vivian A. Schmidt, "Taking Ideas and Discourse Seriously: Explaining Change through Discursive Institutionalism as the Fourth ‘New Institutionalism’," *European Political Science Review* 2, no. 1 (2009): 14.

It is necessary to develop a deeper understanding of what constitutes ‘good’ leadership in a deliberative context. The primary goal of leaders in this context should be to induce ‘meaningful deliberation.’ I seek to determine when good leadership occurs for deliberative democracy, and how empirical moments can be recalibrated to better meet this standard.

Fundamentally, *I argue that good leadership (or a good leadership structure) is one that enables and facilitates meaningful deliberation and is geared toward mitigating a coercive environment.* I take it that the deliberative ideal of guarding against coercive influence is necessary for meaningful deliberation. Both type-I and type-II deliberative scholars should concur with this requirement. I also take it that leaders should not allow participants to intentionally obfuscate their message in an attempt to maintain a captive audience and/or limit the impact of other speakers, as this is a type of oppression. Finally, I assume that a good leader should set an issue space appropriately, and allow both the direction and communication of a speech to occur with minimal interference.

I draw upon the work of Dewan and Myatt who argue, as I do, that leaders are an inherent part of (political) life. They note that leaders ‘help unify expectations about how a mass will act’ and also provide the context or learning environment that enables individuals to transform or revise beliefs.”<sup>27</sup> Given that deliberative democrats are concerned with the transformation of people’s preferences resultant from epistemic benefits of their model, the connection between these issues is quite obvious. Dewan and Myatt formally demonstrate that A) leaders who present a sub-optimal message clearly are more likely to be influential than B) a leader who presents an optimal message in an unclear fashion. Further, they show that C) leaders often deliberately obfuscate their message in order to maintain a captive audience.<sup>28</sup> I hold that good leadership should create space for A and B to occur, but guard against C whenever possible.

Secondly, because leadership necessarily provides a coordinating focal point toward which followers tend to gravitate, deliberative democrats must seek institutional formats that help to provide meaningful deliberation between participants. This institutional format should resemble a ‘lattice of leadership’.

### ***The Lattice of Leadership***

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<sup>27</sup> Dewan and Myatt, “The Qualities of Leadership” (2008): 351. See also Margaret Levi, “Why We Need a New Theory of Government”, *Perspective on Politics*, 4, no. 1, (2006): 5-19.

<sup>28</sup> Dewan and Myatt, “The Qualities of Leadership” (2008): 351-368.

According to Uhr, the lattice of leadership is both a normative and an empirical concept. It represents the “pattern of distributed leadership [which] maps points where different forms of power” intersect.<sup>29</sup> The lattice pattern describes a series of intersecting laths that have regular spaces between these points. The system is framed around the edges to generate considerable strength but “also a degree of flexibility” to cope with growth and change.<sup>30</sup> A lattice is conceived as being longer than it is high (more horizontal than vertical), with each lath being thinner than the overall framework. The concept helps to explain the character of dispersed leadership in a democratic system and sets a normative standard to judge how power is shared across different points of authority.<sup>31</sup> I contend that the dispersal of authority allows more unconstrained deliberation between citizens and thus helps maintain normatively desirable deliberative standards.

The fact that the ‘lattice’ concept is both explanatory and normative coincides with my recognition that leaders exercise authority, and simultaneously mobilize others by providing a common referent. In contrast to Joseph Schumpeter’s classic formulation of leadership as a pyramid structure,<sup>32</sup> in which elite rulers sit atop a narrowing structure, the lattice formation can dilute the potential coercive power of leaders by inducing accountability.<sup>33</sup> The positioning of leaders along a lattice also helps to engender trust between leaders and those participants/citizens, because the lattice structure generates considerable self-regulation through a series of checks and balances. This architecture accepts the importance (or inevitability) of leadership when power and interests coincide, but aims to create legitimacy through a division of authority. I will suggest, in the next section (and also the conclusion), that the lattice architecture can help deliberative democrats understand the appropriate role of deliberation within a minipublic and in the macro-uptake of decision-making.

We must not be blind to the potential complications arising from the lattice of leadership. As Uhr notes, the positioning of veto-points and other institutional factors has the potential to gridlock leaders. However, for deliberative democracy (as compared to traditional liberal accounts of democracy), this is less directly problematic as their goal is to facilitate deliberation and enact those decisions rather than to give leaders a wide berth. A

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<sup>29</sup> John Uhr, "Distributed Authority in a Democracy: The Lattice of Leadership Revisited", in Paul 't Hart and John Uhr (eds.) *Public Leadership: Perspectives and Practices*, (Canberra, ACT: ANU E-Press, 2008): 37-44.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 37.

<sup>32</sup> Joseph Schumpeter, *Capitalism, Socialism and Democracy*, (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1943).

<sup>33</sup> John Uhr, "Distributed Authority in a Democracy" (2008): 38.

secondary complication is that the lattice formation requires substantial coordination. Within a minipublic, where extensive moderation already occurs, this is not particularly problematic. Beyond the minipublic scenario, difficulties will arise. However, in many ways, large-scale bureaucracies and the wider society already exhibit elements of lattice formation. Thus coming to terms with the empirical promise and pitfalls of this concept is a necessary first step. In the conclusion, I reflect on the normative potential for the lattice of leadership in deliberative systems.

### **Minipublics and the Exercise of Leadership**

In this section of the paper, I analyze four discrete moments in which leaders arise during minipublic deliberation. I ask how leaders can be both constrained and enabled through a lattice configuration to minimize their coercive potential. I will outline institutional reform proposals that could help engender these changes, and highlight theoretical benefits to my model at each juncture.

#### ***Initiation***

I begin this section with a current and pertinent example: A curious moment in the 2010 Australian federal election campaign came when the Australian Prime Minister Julia Gillard, her government having failed to implement climate change policies during the previous term, promised a ‘citizens’ assembly’ to build consensus and develop policy on the issue.<sup>34</sup> At first glance this would seem to be a major coup for deliberative democrats. However the plan was widely rejected by the opposition government, other federal parties and the public after being seen as a stalling tactic and an example of the Prime Minister abrogating her leadership responsibilities. Post-election negotiations saw that policy as one of the first that the Greens Party, a major player on the political left and generally supportive of inclusive and deliberative procedures, sought to have rescinded before swearing support.<sup>35</sup> Neither the public nor the Greens felt that a citizens’ assembly was likely to produce an effective or worthwhile response, and it is interesting to observe that there was a visceral public preference (contrary to expectations of deliberative democrats) for a decisive, rather than a more inclusive, process.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Adam Morton and Tom Arup, "Pm Pledges 'People's Assembly' on Climate," *Brisbane Times*, July 23 2010.

<sup>35</sup> Sarah Collerton, "Citizens Assembly Not Dead: Gillard," *ABC News*, September 1 2010.

<sup>36</sup> Mark Kenny, "Galaxy Poll Shows Julia Gillard's Carbon Plan Has Backfired," *The Adelaide Advertiser*, July 26 2010.

This example highlights some initial problems for deliberative democratic practices. These issues are predominantly related to how, and under what circumstances, a minipublic can be successfully commissioned. I agree that it is likely that deliberative mechanisms can generate the promising results that deliberative democrats so often ascribe to the process, such as increased knowledge and citizen-engagement. The validity of these arguments is an empirical question that I partially bracket here. However, these promising results are contingent benefits. They are contingent in the sense that they actually require the implementation of deliberative mechanisms in the real world. These mechanisms require a large amount of support – material, financial and, perhaps most importantly, political. They are complex and in some ways counter-intuitive structures which require expertise to establish and run. They require political support to both implement them within the structures of the state and to establish their political credibility with the public. Within the current structure of political society, leaders and political elites still play a key role in driving the agenda and setting the terms for political engagement. Though deliberative democrats are interested in reducing this traditional stranglehold, it still requires the co-option of political elites in order to get through the gates. Thus deliberative democrats must squarely grapple with a number of specific problems of initiation.

There are many examples of when political leadership is vital to initiating a deliberative minipublic. As Lyn Carson argues, the empirical success (or failure) of deliberative minipublics hinges upon (and is highlighted by) the catalytic nature of combining a skilled process champion with an enabling leader.<sup>37</sup> However, the current analysis lacks a focus on the motivational factors which induce leaders to implement wide-scale deliberative processes or to commission minipublics. Current treatments of minipublics (and deliberative democracy in general) largely ignore practical challenges such as how leaders are able to convince other members of the government to back the project, and how to translate deliberative outcomes into meaningful public policy.

Initiation faces another leadership problem in the form of credibility. Though it is conceivable for deliberative democrats to create a minipublic and fund it privately, enthusiastic and energetic participation in those minipublics hinges somewhat on the perceived stakes and credibility of the project. A 2005 review found that the most important motivations for participation in deliberative fora were accountability, high stakes and the

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<sup>37</sup> Lyn Carson, "An Inventory of Democratic Deliberative Processes in Australia: Early Finding," (Sydney, NSW: University of Sydney, 2006), [http://www.activedemocracy.net/articles/engaging\\_comm\\_summary\\_20070115.pdf](http://www.activedemocracy.net/articles/engaging_comm_summary_20070115.pdf), accessed 14/02/2011.

diversity of deliberators.<sup>38</sup> The perception that a minipublic has high stakes associated with it, in the current political landscape, is contingent upon the degree to which participants believe the outcomes will be listened to and implemented by the political elite. Hence, even before deliberative mechanisms start to operate, they require the persuasiveness of leaders and the cooperation of elites to become a credible project.

It is clear that leaders hold a unique position of power in implementing/commissioning minipublics. They often have the ability to fund a minipublics, and the rate of participation of citizens is dependent upon the proximity to powerful leaders. However, this noticeably creates a problem of bias, and opens the potential for coercion. The first substantive recommendation is a simplistic one: that deliberative democrats need to draw upon different typological distinctions of leaders to supplement the institutional turn in deliberative democracy. This needs to be combined with sustained case-study analysis of the leaders who have initiated and successfully initiated and implemented deliberative minipublics, and under what circumstances this occurred.

Such a move could be informed through the work on participatory budgeting. Brian Wampler, in an extensive review of PB, highlights the importance of mayoral support for the initiation of deliberative/participatory projects. Quite simply, “Mayors must be willing to delegate authority to citizens.”<sup>39</sup> As expected by deliberative democrats, stronger delegations results in stronger outcomes. There are (at least) four salient factors that contribute to whether or not a mayor will employ a process of PB: 1) to reward party loyalists who seek broader political inclusion; 2) to reach out to new constituencies; 3) to obtain a democratic branding for the regime; and 4) to foster links between officials and civil society. In a later publication, Wampler builds upon these criteria and includes another condition. Mayors, Wampler argues, are more likely to delegate authority when s/he has a strong inner circle.<sup>40</sup> Thus, political stability (probably linked with incumbency) correlates positively with a mayor’s ability and willingness to delegate authority to democratic bodies. Although the analogy of mayoral delegation might not hold for all leaders seeking to delegate/employ alternate democratic mechanisms, much can be gleaned from this type of analysis.

This step has both theoretical and pragmatic advantages. If deliberative democrats can establish which leaders are more likely to commission and successfully garner political

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<sup>38</sup> David M. Ryfe, "Does Deliberative Democracy Work?", *Annual Review of Political Science* 8 (2005): 57.

<sup>39</sup> Brian Wampler, "Expanding Accountability Through Participatory Institutions: Mayors, Citizens, and Budgeting in Three Brazilian Municipalities", *Latin American Politics and Society*, 46, no. 2 (2004): 73.

<sup>40</sup> Brian Wampler, "When Does Participatory Democracy Deepen the Quality of Democracy: Lessons from Brazil", 41, no. 1 (2008): 61-81.

support for a minipublic, then deliberative democrats will know where to focus research attention, when to apply for grant money and where to deploy the minipublic more successfully. Establishing which leaders are likely to commission deliberative institutions would also allow deliberative democrats to focus their attention in a more concerted manner. It therefore allows them to create a lattice of leadership by directing attention toward multiple leaders from a wider variety of sources for funding opportunities. Moreover, the rationale for leaders to delegate would be clearer – thus adding transparency to the process, which minimizes the coercive potential of leadership.

Selecting which leaders will provide political capital for a minipublic also helps to minimize problems with self-selection and representation endemic to deliberative minipublics. Deliberative democracy is often criticized for being elitist and not representative across the right demographics or discourses. If linking deliberative events to enabling leaders engenders more participants from the under-represented demographics, then this theoretical claim against deliberative democracy is diminished. Moreover, by linking more leaders to a minipublic, then different demographics can identify with more discourses, also raising the likelihood of more diverse participation from society. By recognizing the importance of different types of leadership at discrete moments in deliberative practice, the appropriate function of specific leaders can be rolled back into deliberative theory by fleshing out how leadership can contribute to enabling free and equal discussion without necessarily undermining this ideal.

### *Operation*

Leaders are similarly necessary to the operation of deliberative minipublics. There are at least two distinct ways in which this occurs: leaders are required to run the event, and leaders arise amongst the participants.

### *Moderators as Leaders*

The first issue is an essential feature of the smooth operation of minipublics, as trained moderators and facilitators are supposed to keep participants on topic and uphold principles of good deliberation such as mutual respect, understanding, and tolerance. Leaders are supposed to provide the framework for deliberation and maintain the structures/boundaries of discussion. As I noted in the definitional portion, leadership generates a coordinating function and acts as a focal point to align followers' understanding of an issue area. As I stressed earlier, the division between type-I and -II deliberative democracy makes the appropriate function of specific leaders difficult to judge. Should they

hold a strict role in supporting the deliberative ideal, or should a more lax stance be taken?<sup>41</sup> How leadership operates and where leaders place their emphasis might cloud participants' judgments. However, regardless of the forum in which deliberation is taken, deliberative democracy is not an anarchic concept and there is always a stipulation that people interact without outright coercion from others.<sup>42</sup> This understanding creates a problem because leaders exercise authority to keep deliberation in line with a deliberative vision, but simultaneously not to exercise a coercive influence over those participants. This problem is sometimes addressed implicitly (and explicitly in the case of Rawls) with an appeal to virtue and behavioral norms.<sup>43</sup>

Unsurprisingly, the widespread use of moderators in practical deliberative applications is evidence of the wariness amongst practitioners toward relying upon virtue alone for creating deliberative conditions amongst citizens. This has effectively shifted the burden of virtue upon the moderator to uphold the principles of deliberation in the absence (or perhaps simply deficiency) of necessary virtue by the participants. In defense of deliberative democrats, the role of moderators and facilitators is accounted for, and their function in relation to deliberative theory is sometimes reasonably well-specified.

However, the degree to which leadership is associated with moderators is little developed at all, which represents a large theoretical problem for what is initially a necessary compromise to create deliberative conditions. Numerous studies have found that the impact moderators can have on deliberation is potentially very significant to the outcome of the process.<sup>44</sup> Moderators may be active, in the sense that they may violate the principles of the process and deliberately interfere. But they may also be passive in the sense that they may legitimately believe they are enforcing the required norms, yet in doing so they impact upon the course of the deliberation in a significant way. By setting standards for the achievement of legitimate deliberation, and employing moderators to achieve those standards, deliberative democracy entails a coercive potential. In the absence of a reliable means of self-enforcement amongst participants, these standards must be enforced by individuals. Yet to what degree

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<sup>41</sup> Amelie O. Rorty, "Varieties of Rationality, Varieties of Emotion," *Social Science Information* 24 (1985), Martha C. Nussbaum, "Emotions and Women's Capabilities," in *Women, Culture and Development*, ed. Martha C. Nussbaum and J. Glover (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1995).

<sup>42</sup> Cohen, "Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy."

<sup>43</sup> John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 1996): 157.

<sup>44</sup> Paolo Spada and James Raymond Vreeland, "Participatory Decision Making: A Field Experiment on Manipulating the Votes," (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 2009), Marc Cartan Humphreys, William Masters, and Martin Sandbu, "The Role of Leaders in Democratic Deliberations: Results from a Field Experiment in São Tomé and Príncipe," *World Politics* 58, no. 4 (2006), John Fulwider, "Do Moderators Matter? Answering a Jury Deliberation Challenge to Deliberative Democracy," in *Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association* (Marriott Wardman Park, Omni Shoreham & Washington Hilton, Washington, DC: 2005).



those individuals wield leadership, and to what degree they change the fundamental power dynamic of deliberation, are very important questions stemming from deliberative practice that have not been posed coherently thus far, let alone answered.

Given that minipublics seek to engender free and unconstrained deliberation, the coercive ability of leadership to vitiate deliberation needs to be minimized. The best way to manage this problem is by creating a lattice of leaders, or in this case, a ‘lattice of moderators’. Within a minipublic setting, participants should be exposed to a wide range of moderators. At the outset of a deliberative event, several moderators/facilitators should outline their vision for how deliberation should occur and of the issue area at stake in the deliberation. This will allow for a public airing of moderators’ views, ensure that moderators all have similar stances and help generate accountability as they check and balance against each other. During the deliberative event, however, it may be necessary for small groups to maintain close contact with just one or two moderators. Establishing a rapport between participants and moderators is often necessary for maintaining a positive deliberative environment.

These proposals generate another useful theoretical and empirical deliberative by-product. Because leaders hold positions of authority, and thus provide coordinating focal points for followers, it is difficult to determine whether meta-consensus is generated through meaningful deliberation (where preferences shift toward single-peakedness) or because participants are following cues from a leader (leader bias). This is an important issue to grapple with, given the importance that many theorists of deliberative democracy (such as List and Dryzek & Niemeyer) place on meta-consensus. Of course, because preference analysis in minipublics focuses on ‘before and after’ data from the event, it is impossible to tell exactly why preferences shifted unless one can control for certain variables. Having a lattice of leaders, in which participants are exposed to multiple moderators for short periods of time, minimizes the likelihood of one moderator coercing a group. Moreover, exposure to multiple moderators allows participants to determine if leaders are providing a clear and consistent issue space for deliberation. This format helps to control the exercise of leadership. Although it may not be a perfect solution, this is certainly a realistic and pragmatic step that deliberative democrats can take to reduce the coercive potential of moderators.

### *Participants as Leaders*

In many minipublics, teams of individuals are actually drawn from the deliberative body to adjudicate over certain issues when deliberators prove incapable of reaching

consensus or providing policy options.<sup>45</sup> Many minipublics actually institutionalize a process through which leaders arise amongst deliberators to take ideas to a subsequent stage of deliberation. 21<sup>st</sup> Century town hall meetings are paradigmatic of this issue. In these minipublics, small group discussion between 10-12 people occurs. Their views are sent to a central ‘theme team’ which distills common trends and ideas from the multiple small group discussion and then presents it back to the room for comments and/or votes. This reflexive back-and-forth methodology is said by proponents to be a powerful way to link large and small group discussion, whilst the interactive voting augments the transparency of the procedures.<sup>46</sup> However, the fact that the ‘theme team’ operates as a hierarchical leadership structure is neglected. I agree that this is a powerful way to link small and large group discussion; but it leads to the automatic conclusion that leaders are vital in undertaking the transformation and dissemination of ideas from small to large group in a hierarchical structure, and vice versa. This is an under-recognized problem endemic to many different deliberative fora that needs to be placed as a central focus in order to explore the ramifications that leaders can have on deliberative events.

At the level of participants themselves, there are also several features of group behavior that create conditions in which leaders and elites might arise. As David Ryfe points out in a review of deliberative projects, “Individuals tend to be hesitant deliberators, preferring to ‘pass the buck’ when they can and to rely on information short cuts when they can’t.”<sup>47</sup> This is the classic problem of “rational ignorance” when the cost of educating oneself on an issue exceeds the potential benefit that the knowledge would provide.<sup>48</sup> This issue is compounded by Caplan’s notion of rational irrationality, in which people have little incentive to even critically evaluate the knowledge that they do possess.<sup>49</sup> The net effect is that most citizens have relatively little or no knowledge of public policy. This is a problem often recognized and sometimes discussed by deliberative democrats, who generally argue that minipublics and deliberation actually minimize this knowledge gap and lead to good

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<sup>45</sup> This was certainly true for the Dialogue with the City project initiated by Alannah MacTiernan and Dr Geoff Gallop in Western Australia, Australia. See Janette Hartz-Karp, "A Case Study in Deliberative Democracy: Dialogue with the City," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 1, no. 1 (2005). It is also true for Participatory Budgeting.

<sup>46</sup> See People and Participation, available at <http://www.peopleandparticipation.net/display/Methods/21st+Century+Town+Meeting>, accessed on 16/02/2011.

<sup>47</sup> Ryfe, "Does Deliberative Democracy Work?," 56.

<sup>48</sup> For the classic discussion of this concept, see Anthony Downs, *An Economic Theory of Democracy* (New York, NY: Harper and Brothers, 1957).

<sup>49</sup> Bryan Caplan, *The Myth of the Rational Voter: Why Democracies Choose Bad Policies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007).

decisions. It seems likely, though, that leadership roles often develop within minipublics in order to facilitate communication and overcome problems of rational ignorance. As such, the formalization of leadership roles within minipublics may turn out to be vital in order to overcome knowledge and motivational gaps amongst participants. If this is true, then acknowledging when and how leaders arise is a crucial theoretical and practical challenge.

This problem becomes even more acute for deliberative democracy when we recognize that all actors entering the political arena do so on unequal terms and with unequal skills. Though opportunity can be somewhat equalized, underlying talent and ambition cannot, and deliberative processes too suffer from the problem that, even within their forums, leaders and unequal power structures will emerge.<sup>50</sup> The fact that leadership structures are often institutionalized within the deliberative mechanism means that deliberative democrats need to weigh the cost and benefits of having leadership structures vis-à-vis their commitment to substantive equality.<sup>51</sup>

In one deliberative review, the larger problem of leadership tendencies for minipublics was expounded by Avi Tucker.<sup>52</sup> He argues that the initial and inevitable inequity of understanding between organizers and participants for deliberative mechanisms allows what might otherwise be described as ‘second face’<sup>53</sup> power to be wielded in terms of agenda setting and opinion leadership. Just as conventional leaders within modern politics effectively shape the political discourse through their possession of superior understanding and position within the system, so too do minipublic organizers have an effective way to do this through their use of moderation, selection of expert testimony, and control over the agenda for discussion.<sup>54</sup> Similarly, more informed participants who initiate discussions and weigh in more frequently will have a large impact on determining the course of the deliberation, and thus the outcome engendered. The emergence then of informed elites within deliberative mechanisms is no different from their emergence in wider political society – and preventing them is a difficult task given the points raised above. Thus, more adequately explaining how leaders can be a legitimate feature of deliberative mechanisms is crucial.

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<sup>50</sup> See for example, and in the case of citizen juries, Sanders, "Against Deliberation."

<sup>51</sup> Robert Michels, *Political Parties: A Sociological Study of the Oligarchical Tendencies of Modern Democracy*. (New York, NY: Transaction Publishers, 1999 [1911]).

<sup>52</sup> Avi Tucker, "Pre-Emptive Democracy: Oligarchic Tendencies in Deliberative Democracy," *Political Studies* 56, no. 1 (2008).

<sup>53</sup> Peter Bachrach and Morton S. Baratz, "Two Faces of Power," *American Political Science Review* 56, no. 4 (1962).

<sup>54</sup> Tucker, "Pre-Emptive Democracy: Oligarchic Tendencies in Deliberative Democracy."

Though there have been some suggestions by deliberative democrats on how the political processes can be changed to improve information-seeking incentives and diversify understanding amongst political participants,<sup>55</sup> these need to be much more prominent and practical if they are going to seriously deal with this problem. Similarly, deliberative democrats will have to reconcile the tendency toward information elitism, natural inequality of decision-making capacity and leadership as a division of labor, with the principles of their project. These tendencies toward elitism run directly counter to the necessary conditions for legitimacy deliberative democrats uphold, so it is critical that they be reconciled with the wider project. It should be clear from this discussion that there are different types of leadership in operation. Recognizing this, in and of itself, is an important first step in fleshing out how leaders can operate successfully and legitimately with deliberative minipublics.

Somewhat ironically, I argue that creating multiple points at which leaders can arise in deliberative minipublics may well help to foster equality and diminish coercive potential. In participatory budgeting and 21<sup>st</sup> Century town halls, the rise of leaders is voted on by other participants. These leaders go on to another stage of deliberation with other participants. I would argue that the leaders should be selected at random from within a group of motivated participants. I recognize that not all participants have the desire or characteristics to be effective leaders. However, if participants put their own name, or another participant's name forward, and then leaders were randomly selected from that group, a lattice formation would be engendered. This prescription would stop participants who seek a greater influence in the final outcome from logrolling or jockeying for these positions. Authority would also be more evenly dispersed, and participants would not know who to convince directly, but would have to forge arguments that could persuade everyone (thus upholding the deliberative value of reciprocity).<sup>56</sup>

Building on Dewan and Myatt, I also contend that deliberative democrats should realize the potential for some participants to intentionally obfuscate their arguments in order to have a greater impact on others. These authors demonstrate that leaders may often complicate and even obscure their message in order to maintain a captive audience and to limit the influence of other 'leaders'. This is very troubling for minipublics discussion, in which the event may be quite 'time-poor'. The obfuscation of a message in a calculated attempt to limit the voice of another is, I hold, a type of coercion and contrary to the

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<sup>55</sup> Ilya Somin, "Deliberative Democracy and Political Ignorance," *Critical Review* 22, no. 2-3 (2010).

<sup>56</sup> Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson, *Why deliberative democracy?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004).

deliberative ideal. Minipublics moderators and facilitators can minimize this strategy by imposing time-frames for all speakers. Although this is swapping one leadership issue for another, the trade-off represents a significant reduction in coercion. Moreover, it helps to disperse leadership authority across the lattice more widely as it assigns an accountable role to both internal participants and the moderators. These are all practical issues that help minimize leadership coercion in minipublics and foster a lattice of leadership to disperse leadership power arrangements.

### *Uptake*

Another problem for deliberative democracy lies in the fact that deliberative mechanisms are not a self-executing system of governance. Deliberative minipublics require a great many structures or processes within society to implement a deliberative outcome. In the past, deliberative democrats have contended that their theory does not go ‘all the way up and down’ in society. In recent times, though, there has been a turn toward a systemic approach to deliberative democracy.<sup>57</sup> A deliberative system is a collection of pseudo-independent bodies which deliberate discretely and in conjunction with one another. Although each body may not be perfectly deliberative, and indeed may even exhibit un-deliberative features, considering each mechanism can contribute to the deliberative legitimacy of the overall system. Although not using this ‘systemic’ language, Goodin and Dryzek have discussed the macro-uptake of minipublic deliberation.<sup>58</sup> In this section, I discuss the necessity of leadership in this ‘uptake’ process. In the conclusion, I flag how leadership may bear upon the impending systemic turn.

The uptake of any minipublic decision seems impracticable without some form of leadership. Specifically, the process of transference from deliberative mechanisms to the enactment, articulation and communication of decisions seems impractical without recourse to leadership structures. To be clear, this section deals with how leaders can carry ideas forward. This is analytically separate from the leadership necessary to enact a particular decision.

In terms of political support, I employ the experiences of the 2006-2007 Citizens’ Assembly on Electoral Reform in Ontario, Canada to inform my argument. This Citizens’

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<sup>57</sup> See, for example, John Parkinson, *Deliberating in the real world: problems of legitimacy in deliberative democracy*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006) or Michael Neblo, *A research agenda for deliberative consultation on health care and bioethics*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Bioethics Conference, 2010).

<sup>58</sup> Robert. E. Goodin and John Dryzek, “Deliberative impacts: the macro-political uptake of minipublics”, *Politics and Society*, 34, no. 2 (2006): 219-244.

Assembly consisted of 103 randomly selected citizens across the province. They deliberated over a 12-week period on a new electoral system to adopt for the province. By an overwhelming majority, the assembly settled upon a significant reorientation to a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) system. However the subsequent referendum intended to confirm the recommendations of the assembly proved to be a study in the problems faced by deliberative democratic initiatives that lack elite and leader support. Major parties and their leaders during the election remained silent or tacitly critical of the initiative, which severely hampered public understanding through a lack of opinion leadership. The assembly itself did not take a leadership role in the campaign, instead leaving traditional state institutions such as the Electoral Commission of Ontario to promote the work of the assembly, which led to a lackluster and lethargic education campaign.<sup>59</sup> Partisan organizations filled the education gap, which further confused the campaign. The eventual result was a heavy vote against switching to MMP (garnering only 36.9%) which was widely seen as resulting from these problems.<sup>60</sup>

Because public leaders and officials did not take a visible role in this deliberative event, the popular support for uptake wavered and the event lost momentum. Public opinion, and in particular mass opinion, is largely a product of elite cues.<sup>61</sup> Deliberative forums that reach results thus usually need to compete with other societal interests/values in order to make the case for their decisions. The fact that those decisions were reached through deliberative processes is not, *prima facie*, a fact strong enough to convince those who did not participate that they should endorse its conclusions.<sup>62</sup> As found with the Ontario Assembly, during the referendum campaign it quickly became apparent that traditional leaders (whose own interests were not in line with that of the assembly's) were far more influential in guiding public opinion than the Assembly's results on their own. Advocacy and leadership is required to secure the successful uptake of policy generated in deliberative forums.

This problem is linked to the notion raised earlier that people are less likely to participate if outcomes derived are not going to influence public policy. Political capital is obtained from leaders in positions of power implementing and sanctioning the deliberative institution. This augments the problem inherent in mechanisms of deliberative democracy:

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<sup>59</sup> CBC News, "Nearly 3 Million Residents Still Don't Know About Referendum, Says Elections Ontario" *CBC News* 2007.

<sup>60</sup> ———, "Ontario Rejects Electoral Reform in Referendum," *CBC News*, October 11 2007.

<sup>61</sup> John Zaller, *The Nature and Origins of Mass Opinion* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

<sup>62</sup> Parkinson, *Deliberating in the real world*.

those who participate are – to some degree – always self-selected.<sup>63</sup> Although minipublic organizers endeavor to obtain a relevant cross-section of society through fairly sophisticated sampling methodology, the people most likely to participate, it is often noted, are white, middle-class males who have the time and financial means to attend deliberative events. These are the people less likely to need the representation and engagement offered by deliberative mechanisms. Deliberative democrats argue that the majority of citizens want to deliberate. For example, there was a day in the United States in which citizens were invited to attend a deliberative event and discuss policy issues with their member of congress.<sup>64</sup> The rate of reply for people who wanted to attend this event was, unsurprisingly, very high. Deliberative democrats employ this as an example that citizens – counter to the thesis offered by John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse – really do want to participate in deliberative events.<sup>65</sup> However, the rate of reply was likely high because the event was connected to decision-makers. A consultative mechanism with no connection to the locus of public power would have engendered fewer participants – and more importantly, fewer participants from the key demographics that are most in need of representation.

Therefore, linking leaders to deliberative structures is often necessary for implementing a deliberative mechanism, and will in turn make these mechanisms less consultative and more likely to engage participants in a meaningful way. The notion of representation is a much-discussed issue for deliberative democracy. This analysis suggests viewing leaders as a vital feature in understanding why people want to participate and thus how participants can be induced to do so from the key demographics (or discourse). The exact role of leaders in the uptake of deliberative outcomes from minipublics will hinge on the specific characteristics of the wider society. However, the theoretical point remains: attached leadership enhances the desire for people to participate. Similarly, a wide spectrum of leaders can enable the uptake of deliberative outcomes in a legitimate manner. The depth and breadth of leadership links back to the lattice of leadership argument. Deliberative democrats need to come to terms with how minipublics function in society and map out, both before and after the deliberative event, which leaders are necessary to effectively spread the message of a deliberative minipublic. The more leaders spreading a message, the more this helps with epistemic correctness (the wisdom of crowds).

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<sup>63</sup> Jason Barabas, "How Deliberation Affects Policy Options," *American Political Science Review* 98, no. 4 (2004).

<sup>64</sup> See Michael Neblo et al. "Who Wants To Deliberate? And Why?" *American Political Science Review*, 104: 566-583.

<sup>65</sup> John R. Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, *Stealth Democracy: Americans' Beliefs About How Democracy Should Work* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

This argument finds resonance with a recent piece by Kai Spiekermann and Robert Goodin.<sup>66</sup> These authors formally establish, using Condorcet jury theorem (CJT), that groups influenced by single leaders will have a lower chance of finding a correct answer than if that group is exposed to multiple leaders. Indeed, Spiekermann and Goodin show that multiple leaders are necessary to generate the correct answer. It is important not to collapse procedural and epistemic versions of the CJT together. As List and Goodin argue, these issues should be treated separately.<sup>67</sup> And whilst deliberative democrats are generally interested in the procedural value of decision-making, the macro-uptake of minipublics is an issue which bridges the procedural and epistemic divide. There is an empirical truth (i.e., what the minipublic decides upon) and a procedural value (how the individuals in the minipublic arrived at that decision). Individuals in society can accept or reject this recommendation on either procedural or epistemic grounds. However, as Spiekermann and Goodin show, the multiplicity of leaders enhances that ability of followers to select the right outcome. Thus, if deliberative democrats are convinced of the procedural legitimacy of the minipublic, then the macro-uptake hinges upon having a lattice of leaders in society to purport and advance these recommendations for other individuals to arrive at the same conclusion.

At this stage, another question arises: who should lead in terms of enforcing a decision made through a deliberative process? Minipublics, in particular, are almost always one-off events in which it is not possible to reconvene the same deliberators, present them with new information as policy is implemented and re-source deliberative legitimacy for the subsequent decisions if an alteration is required. Thus it is clear that once a decision is reached within a minipublic, the decision cannot be deliberatively ‘legitimately’ recalibrated as new information comes to light by the original deliberators in the minipublic.

This conclusion is true for at least two reasons. First, it would be impractical because reconvening the original participants would be prohibitively costly and participants would likely be unwilling. Second, it would be undesirable. Modern society has to balance between legitimacy and effectiveness. Continuously slowing down progress for (potentially minor) deliberation is not a plausible goal. Moreover, the practical application of deliberative decisions varies greatly from one situation to the next. This leaves deliberative democrats with a subsequent question: How far can decision-makers go in enforcing deliberative

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<sup>66</sup> Kai Spiekermann, and Robert E. Goodin, “Courts of many minds”, *British Journal of Political Science*, forthcoming. Available at: <http://journals.cambridge.org/action/displayFulltext?type=1&fid=8455063&jid=JPS&volumeId=-1&issueId=-1&aid=8455061&bodyId=&membershipNumber=&societyETOCSession=>

<sup>67</sup> Christian List and Robert. E. Goodin, “Epistemic Democracy: Generalizing the Condorcet Jury Theorem”, *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 9, no. 3, (2001): 277-306.



decisions without undermining the deliberative legitimacy of those decisions? The actual enactment of any result may be significantly different from that which was arrived at during deliberation, but if the modification was necessary in order to deliver optimal results in field conditions, then surely we would be unhappy to say that the outcome is illegitimate, even if the spirit of the deliberatively planned decision is somewhat violated.

Some recommendations regarding the uptake of minipublic deliberation have already been touted. Tina Nabashi and Cynthia Farrar published a recent report entitled “Bridging the Gap between Public Officials and the Public”. Among their many prescriptions, these authors suggest that tailoring minipublic events on lawmakers’ priorities and developing robust networks of local supports who can partner with legislators can aid with the legitimate uptake of deliberation.<sup>68</sup> In very general terms, Nabashi and Farrar recognize the legitimacy gap that faces minipublic uptake: those who did not participate have no *a priori* rationale to accept the deliberative outcome. They argue that the field of deliberative democracy develops “an education campaign that is responsive to the concerns and suggestions of the lawmakers.”<sup>69</sup> This highlights the necessity of public officials in both the initiation and uptake of deliberation. A clearly delineated lattice of leadership would provide a reasonable scope of action for leaders to manage the operation of deliberative decisions so uptake can be meaningful, and would deliver a system of checks and balances in which leaders could be charged with implementing the deliberative outcome.

### ***Execution***

The notion of execution can be thought of as the natural extension of uptake. Once an idea is carried forward by a political leader, it needs to be executed in society. This involves employing large government agencies and private corporations to bring the decision to an empirical reality. However, the sets of decision-making structures necessary to carry out a policy change are not within the purview of deliberation. In this section, I argue that executing a decision relies upon other leaders to actually take care of the day-to-day running of the policy which is being implemented.

It is on this above point that deliberative democrats have over-estimated the ability of minipublics to provide policy decisions or recommendations. The ideal of power dispersion that deliberative democrats aim for creates problems for the practical incorporation of

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<sup>68</sup> Tina Nabashi and Cynthia Farrar, *Bridging the Gap Between Public Officials and the Public*, available at [http://www.deliberative-democracy.net/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=176:bridging-the-gap-between-public-officials-and-the-public&catid=47:contributions&Itemid=89](http://www.deliberative-democracy.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=176:bridging-the-gap-between-public-officials-and-the-public&catid=47:contributions&Itemid=89).

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid*, iv.

deliberative processes within the state. “Such dispersion comes at the cost of considerable inefficiency, policy incoherence, and occasionally logjam. Dispersion is consequently opposed by countervailing impulses founded upon arguments of expertise, efficiency, expediency, and tradition.”<sup>70</sup> Thus the fact remains that deliberative bodies cannot deliver decisions as quickly, efficiently, or decisively as singular leaders can.

Of course, speed and efficiency are not always positive values. Deliberative democrats would likely note the importance for decision-making of taking time to weigh options. However, the modern decision-making demands on the state are vast – so vast in fact that managerial bureaucracy in large nations has expanded faster than its upper managerial capacities, placing leadership demands upon the lower ranks.<sup>71</sup> Hundreds of consequential decisions that will impact the lives of citizens must be made in the day-to-day management of the federal executive and public service. Budgeting, scheduling, allocations, claims processing, and oversight require constant decision-making and judgment in modern government hierarchies. The resulting decision-making capacity of government must be extensive, as indeed it is. It must also be broad; it is a lattice of leadership where the capacity of make decisions is located widely at different points and for different reasons.<sup>72</sup> This means that a decision reached under deliberative circumstances would almost certainly be pulled and stretched as it is funneled through different areas of governance. This is precisely why deliberative democrats must come to terms with this concept. The actual empirical operation of a deliberative decision must occur through some lattice of leadership. Recognizing this, and implementing reform proposals suggested in this paper, may be crucial to reaping the benefits of deliberation.

It seems likely that deliberative uptake from minipublics will still require extensive networks of singular decision-makers supporting it in a fairly conventional legislature–executive arrangement in order to make its vision practicable. If deliberative democrats can designate a lattice of leadership at these multiple stages in minipublic deliberation, then the issue of scope (i.e., the scale of effect in society) should be easier to determine.<sup>73</sup> The lattice of leadership will also lead us to consider whether there should not be a more measured approach to balancing the practical benefits of singular decision-making with the legitimacy

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<sup>70</sup> Patapan, Kane, and Hart, *Dispersed Democratic Leadership*, 4.

<sup>71</sup> Paul Light, *Thickening Government: Federal Hierarchy and the Diffusion of Accountability* (Washington D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 1995).

<sup>72</sup> John Uhr, "Distributed Authority in a Democracy: The Lattice of Leadership Revisited," in *Public Leadership: Perspectives and Practices*, ed. Paul 't Hart and John Uhr (Canberra, ACT: ANU E-Press, 2008).

<sup>73</sup> Will Friedman, "Deliberative Democracy and the Problem of Scope," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 2, no. 1 (2006).

benefits of deliberative processes.<sup>74</sup> Determining which issues are more susceptible to leaders (or conversely those issues that require strong leadership) is another important step for deliberative democrats to take in, bringing practicality to the normative ideal.

### **Concluding Remarks**

Throughout this article, I have analyzed the role of leaders with respect to minipublic deliberation. Leaders generate authority by virtue of their position, and leadership (as a phenomenon) acts as a frame of reference for followers. Given the natural prevalence of leaders, and the theoretical tension of leadership with the deliberative ideal of non-coercion, the implications of leadership require sustained attention. I have argued that good leadership can be induced through a lattice formation which disperses power and provides a set of checks and balances. The exact set-up of this dynamic hinges upon which stage of minipublic we are analyzing.

Admittedly, the narrow focus upon minipublics might not do justice to recent deliberative theory. As noted throughout this article, many deliberative democrats have begun to recognize the importance of a systemic approach. The actual deliberative quality of each specific institution matters less than whether or not the institution performs a function in achieving the broader aim of system-wide deliberation. The discussion of initiation, uptake, and execution all appreciate the place of leaders beyond minipublics. Leaders in society are crucial in providing financial and political capital to minipublics from the outset. Leaders are also important in the vertical and horizontal transmission of deliberative outcomes through society. Although the lattice architecture is an explanatory tool of leadership and power, it is also a normative yardstick. The coercive effects of leadership can be mitigated by (ironically) employing more leaders. This structure stops any one leader from acting as a central frame of reference, and allows individuals a chance to engage in meaningful preference formation. Moreover, the lattice formation could also inspire deliberation between leaders which would be beneficial to the deliberative quality of the system at large. I suggest that the lattice idea should be more systematically extended to the formation and analysis of deliberative systems. However, such a move would require in-depth theoretical work, and is thus beyond the scope of this article.

Leadership, even at the level of minipublics, remains vital for theoretical cohesiveness and empirical practicality. I have endeavoured to isolate four moments with respect to

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<sup>74</sup> Renee A. Irvin and John Stansbury, "Citizen Participation in Decision Making: Is It Worth the Effort," *Public Administration Review* 64, no. 1 (2004): 55-65.

deliberative minipublics. Other deliberative structures, and the system as a whole, could be analysed using similar terms. I have elaborated this argument in two main ways. Firstly, by examining how and why leadership plays a vital role in modern governance and why deliberative democracy faces a crucial theoretical problem in its widespread implementation if it does not consider and incorporate a role for leadership within its design. I have argued that deliberative democracy has a specific need (compared to other formulations of democracy) to factor leadership in to the theory. Secondly, I have discussed the practical elements of why leadership is required to install deliberative processes and implement their outcomes, and why deliberative democrats are inevitably going to rely upon leadership to make their vision a reality. This recognition, I have contended, should lead deliberative democrats to formalize/incorporate a lattice of leadership at four stages of minipublic deliberation.

Overall, this paper contributes both normatively and empirically to what is a major area of necessary inquiry for deliberative democracy. Leadership is more than just a buzzword – it is a phenomenon intrinsic to human society, and its continual presence poses real challenges to deliberative democracy. Ignoring the role of leadership has left deliberative democracy lacking a strong account of agency, without a pragmatic way of implementing its ideals; and this practical gap has undermined the philosophical soundness of the project. This topic should stand as a point of academic interest in the future, and this article should stand as exploratory and analytical ideas in this direction.

*Table 1 – Minipublic Moments and the Lattice of Leadership Prescription*

<b>1 - Initiation</b>	Leaders hold a unique place in commissioning minipublics. A focus upon leader’s own interests, the cohesiveness of their inner circle,
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	<p>and their desire to reach new constituencies is crucial. A study of mayors in PB should offer information about when, and under which conditions, mayors (and more broadly leaders) are willing to delegate power to minipublics. This allows for a lattice of leadership because analysis of (and application for) minipublics would be directed at a wider range of leaders.</p>
<p><b>2a – Moderators as Leaders</b></p>	<p>Internal to the minipublic, moderators are required to maintain certain rules and deliberative quality. Moderators should be arranged along a lattice in which there is no hierarchy discernible to participants. Several moderators should address the participants at the outset of the event to highlight different interpretations of the event.</p>
<p><b>2b – Participants as Leaders</b></p>	<p>In many minipublics (PB, 21<sup>st</sup> Century Town Halls), participants are often required to take leadership positions. These ‘leaders’ should be drawn randomly from a group of able and willing participants. This helps bring about a lattice shape in which no participant can deliberately strengthen their influence over the outcome.</p>
<p><b>3 – Macro Uptake</b></p>	<p>As with initiation, minipublic uptake to societal level requires as many voices as possible. Undertaking case-study analysis of which leaders are prepared to do this, and why, should allow for a multitude of leaders to be involved.</p>
<p><b>4 - Execution</b></p>	<p>The enactment of any deliberative outcome goes through multiple channels of society. It is necessary for deliberative democrats to come to terms with how the lattice shape contorts deliberative outcomes through leadership, and what this means for the systemic turn.</p>

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