

Recap Meet-Up #6 – Thursday 6 Sept 2018



Meet Up Agenda

1. Welcome
2. Check – in
3. Guest Speaker 1: Prof John Dryzek
4. Guest Speaker 2: Assoc. Prof Simon Niemeyer
5. Guest Speaker 3: Assoc. Prof Dr Selen Ercan
6. Next meeting, 18 October at 5.30pm

Welcome and Check-in

The facilitator, Dr Wendy Russell, welcomed the group of around 30 participants who shared with the group what they were curious about.

The meeting then heard from three guest presenters. In between each presenter, the group broke into smaller conversations and developed questions to be asked at the end of the meeting.

Guest Speaker 1: Professor John Dryzek, University of Canberra's Centre for Global Governance and Deliberative Democracy

It's a little known fact that the University of Canberra is home to the world-leading Centre for Global Governance and Deliberative Democracy. John and the team are well known for their leadership and research in this space. The team has worked on a vast number of projects on a huge variety of issues from climate change, to local council amalgamations in Italy, to honour killings.

John went back to basics and covered what is deliberation. He reflected that deliberation is not just talk, it is listening and being reflective. It is respectful and requires reciprocity where participants need to reach out to those with different views to their own. It should be inclusive of all people and all points of view and should be consequential (something should happen as a result).

Guest Speaker 2: Assoc. Professor Simon Niemeyer, University of Canberra's Centre for Global Governance and Deliberative Democracy

Simon's presentation focused on how deliberation can lead to better quality outcomes. Using a number of case studies on Climate Change and the Bloomfield Track in QLD he looked at how deliberation can challenge our reasons and our choices and lead to better outcomes. He noted that issues arise when citizens begin making sense of the world. Agreement on reasons can be similar, but not outcomes and vice versa. He noted the difficulty citizens will have in reasoning very well if they are anxious or angry.

Deliberation can help participants understand how facts interact with values. Even if participants cannot agree on choices, they can reach a mutual understanding of underlying reasons and why there are differences. There can be greater understanding as to how reasons correspond to choices.

In deliberation a group of people should develop norms of how they all behave in a particular environment, before they begin the process. This will lead to a more fair and reasonable outcome.

He demonstrated how deliberation can substantially shift the views and perceptions of participants and how improved reasoning and “meta-consensus”— shared understanding — can be achieved.

Guest Speaker 3: Assoc. Professor Dr Selen Ercan, University of Canberra's Centre for Global Governance and Deliberative Democracy

Selen explored the deliberation in the face of power and pluralism. She challenged the common misunderstandings about deliberation. Those misconceptions were:

- Deliberation isn't for everyone
- Deliberation isn't for every society; and
- Deliberation isn't for every issue.

Selen challenged us to think about places where deliberation already exists, for village assemblies in India. She also highlighted the recent Citizens' Assembly on the 8th Amendment of the Constitution in Ireland as an example of deliberation bringing the divided together.

Presentations

<https://www.delibdem.org/deliberateact-6presentation>

Future topics

These topics were brought up at a previous meeting. They have been kept here as a reference. We have themed these comments:

Deliberation & methods

- Have an experience of “Deep Democracy” (the Lewis method) <https://deep-democracy.net/category/deep-democracy-basics/>
- Would like an experience of methods
- How to design deliberative mini-publics
- I'm interested to explore the Arnstein/gap model - <http://lithgow-schmidt.dk/sherry-arnstein/ladder-of-citizen-participation.html>
- Can the topic be too broad for a citizens' jury?
- (After a mini-public) How do we know if there has been actual “deliberation”?
- Ethical values and the common good
- Deliberative processes require slower decision-making. Time to think and learn. Time to listen. Time to deliberate. How do we make time?
- How to engage young people in political processes
- What methods will reach the people?

Community capacity building

- Is/can deliberation achieve bipartisan support
- Talking about vs. talking to create futures
- The role of media in promotion and acceptance of participative processes
- How are the topics for a citizens' jury decided? Does the topic need to match the type of process?
- When and how will the government partner with civil society to choose a topic for a participatory process?
- How can we encourage Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders into deliberations? We need more relationship focus
- How do we get the politics to buy in?

- Explore funding opportunities for collaboration between researchers and practitioners of deliberative democracy
- How to increase citizens' trust in other types of participatory innovations? (without the specific function of participatory budgeting)
- What does a good relationship look like?



Case studies

- We can report on our deliberation in schools next year (Wendy)
- Invite researchers from Centre of Deliberative Democracy to present findings in deliberative democracy
- Deliberative processes in extremely polarised societies
- Showcase successful cases of deliberation in Australia and the world
- Lessons from citizen-government engagement failures
- What could ACT do to learn and improve on its current activities?
- How to really get citizens involved in an authoritarian state?

Further Reading:

<https://www.citizensassembly.ie/en/>

Participedia - <https://participedia.net/>

Further listening:

Real Democracy Now podcast - <http://realdemocracynow.com.au/>

Centre for Public Impact - <https://www.centreforpublicimpact.org/podcast/>

Next Meeting – Thursday 18 October, 5.00 – Tour of Democracy – are you in?

Followed by 5.30pm meeting, Museum of Australian Democracy

For the Diary:

22 November 2018, 5.30pm – 7.30pm