7 Other interesting deliberative practices

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This chapter describes other deliberative practices that did not meet all three criteria for inclusion in this report: impact (commissioned by a public authority); representativeness (participants were randomly selected and demographically stratified); and deliberation (they had at least one full day of face-to-face meetings). The examples in this chapter are nonetheless valuable and relevant for the OECD's broader work on citizen participation. The first part of the chapter looks at the other types of deliberative trends across the world: Deliberative Polls in Africa; deliberative practices in Latin America and India; as well as international and transnational deliberative processes.

The second part of the chapter discusses other creative ways that deliberative processes have been used in responding to social mobilisation, designing new models of democracy, drafting constitutions, as well as in democracy festivals and 21st Century Town meetings.

Introduction

This report has covered a range of representative deliberative processes that meet three specific criteria: impact (they were commissioned by a public authority); representativeness (their participants were randomly selected and demographically stratified), and deliberation (they had at least one full day of faceto face meetings). For comparative reasons, all cases had to have these elements in common. However, across the world, there have been many other deliberative processes that were shorter, where their participants were not randomly selected, or they were initiated, funded and carried out by academia or civil society organisations, without support or link to public authorities. These examples were not included for methodological rigour to ensure comparability of similar processes. However, they are equally as important, valuable, and promising, and could also be ways that countries could implement provisions 8 and 9 of the Recommendation of the Council on Open Government (2017).

Deliberative processes have also been subject to innovation and were an integral part of proposed new models of democratic institutions, such as in the Byron Shire Council model of democracy in Australia, or were used in complex processes of drafting constitutions in an open manner, such as in Iceland and Chile. The context of those deliberative processes of the study which were part of a broader innovative democratic experimentation was not discussed, therefore this chapter explains some of these creative uses of deliberative processes.

What is covered in this chapter is therefore not an extensive analysis, as it is not based on the data collection conducted for this report. It is rather a short overview to complement the core report findings, as many of these examples and other notable deliberative democratic innovations are extensively covered elsewhere (see Elstub and Escobar, 2020: 371-449).

Deliberative trends across the world

Deliberative Polls in Africa

This report does not feature any examples from Africa, as there have not been any that were commissioned by public authorities to the best of the authors' knowledge at the time of writing. However, there have been several deliberative processes that should be recognised. To date, there have been four Deliberative Polls in Malawi (2017), Senegal (2016), Ghana (2015), and Uganda (2014). Deliberative Polls were conducted by the Resilient Africa Network together with Center for Deliberative Democracy led by James S. Fishkin (Cdd.stanford.edu, 2020; see Chapter 2 for a description of Deliberative Polls).

Resilient Africa Network is a partnership of African Universities financed by the USAID (ResilientAfrica Network, 2020). In addition, a more experimental Deliberative Poll took place in Tanzania in 2015 and was conducted by a group of academics and civil society organisations and funded by development foundations. This Deliberative Poll was done in parallel to an informational session undergone by a second random sample of participants. The results in opinion change of both groups (the one that was exposed to learning and deliberation and the one that was only subject to learning) were compared, revealing the strong importance deliberation had in shaping citizens' opinions (Birdsall *et al.*, 2018).

Deliberative polls in Africa have been successful in engaging citizens in informed deliberation and produced well thought-through recommendations for all levels of government: local (Senegal and Ghana), regional (Malawi and Uganda), and national (Tanzania). The policy issues covered in these polls have been: flooding and community relocation; food security; water; sanitation; hygiene; challenges of rapid urbanisation; dealing with environmental disasters and population growth; and the use of natural resources.

All of the Deliberative Polls have had high participation rates and intensive deliberation (Fishkin *et al.*, 2017:151). Furthermore, it was found that even though some of these countries experience low levels of education, this has not significantly affected the deliberation and is not an obstacle for such processes to be implemented (Chirawurah *et al.*, 2019:31). As a result, several evaluation studies highlight the importance and potential of informed deliberation in shaping development policies in this region (Chirawurah *et al.*, 2019:31). This shows the universal nature of deliberative processes and their adaptability to different contexts and applicability for addressing policy questions related to development. However, in cases where foreign aid is used to conduct deliberative processes, particular efforts could be taken to ensure transparency and accountability of the process, which helps enhance the legitimacy of its outcomes.

Deliberative practices in Latin America

Deliberative practices are widespread in the Latin American region, though they tend to take a different form to the models of representative deliberative processes described in this report. There are interesting one-off and institutionalised examples.

One of the notable ad hoc deliberative experiments took place in Colombia in 2012. Researchers from the University of Bern organised a deliberative process with Colombian ex-members of paramilitary and guerrilla organisations to study deliberation in a post-conflict situation. The results of 28 roundtables showed that fruitful deliberation can happen in hostile and conflictual environments. Researchers also found that deliberation can be key in post-conflict situations as it facilitates dialogue, understanding and reconciliation (Ugarriza and Caluwaerts, 2015).

One of the most well-known practices of citizen engagement – participative budgeting (PB) – originated in 1989 in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and has been extensively employed in the region, becoming institutionalised in numerous Latin American countries. Peru and Brazil have embedded PB in national legislation and numerous cities have it institutionalised on the local level: Mexico City (Mexico); Buenos Aires and Rosario (Argentina); and Medellin (Colombia). PB can include several stages of citizen deliberation, from brainstorming priority funding areas for a community, to collective development of projects that will receive funding, to deliberation prior to voting for specific projects.

In addition, deliberation is a core component in many institutionalised bodies and practices created to represent citizens and civil society in decision making, which are common at all levels of government. Examples of these include deliberative councils such as the National Planning Council in Colombia and multi-level policy making mechanisms, such as the National Public Policy Conferences in Brazil (Pogrebinschi, 2016:5). Due to the deliberative nature of various councils and policy conferences, the LATINNO database, which documents democratic innovations in Latin America, has over 200 democratic innovations registered in Brazil, out of which 92% are deliberative (Pogrebinschi, 2016:8).

On the local level, deliberation in cabildos (local councils or town hall meetings) is a longstanding tradition in Latin American countries. Modern democracies inherited this tradition from colonial rule. In cabildos, citizens have an opportunity to debate and exchange ideas related to local decision making (Ugarriza, 2012). The cabildos are often ad hoc practices and do not offer citizens decision making power, although they nonetheless provide an important arena for debate and deliberation. For instance, the tradition of local-level deliberation and the network of cabildos was useful in Chile during the deliberative constitution-writing process of 2016, discussed below (OECD, 2017).

Similarly, in the state of Oaxaca, Mexico, traditional governance structures, such as usos y costumbres, are practiced locally. In these structures, communities are ruled by traditional assemblies, which are in most cases mandatory for community members, and allow for citizen deliberation on local issues, resource allocation, and electing community representatives (Magaloni *et al.*, 2019: 1850). Four hundred and

eighteen out of 570 municipalities of Oaxaca has adopted such traditional governance structures, making it a widespread phenomenon (Magaloni *et al.*, 2019: 1846).

The culture of deliberation in different shapes and forms is therefore widely present in most Latin American countries, with citizens showing interest and capacity to participate in a more systematic way. This offers a favourable environment for the models of deliberative processes presented in this study to be applied in the region, for the benefit of citizens and governments of all levels.

Village democracy in India

India's use of deliberation as a democratic practice is a long-standing tradition widely spread around the country. The gram sabha, or village assemblies, are part of local governance structure that were institutionalised in the 1992 Indian constitution and affect 840 million people living in approximately one million villages in rural India (Parthasarathy and Rao, 2017). As per the constitution, all rural Indian villages are governed by an elected village council, and a council (or gram sabha) comprised of all residents over 18 of the village and on the electoral roll. They hold meetings at least two times a year (Parthasarathy and Rao, 2017).

This deliberative tradition is also present in urban India. In 2015, the government of National Capital Territory of Delhi launched a decentralisation policy to give local councils more decision making power. The smallest local governance unit, the mohallas (approximately a thousand households) can form a "mohalla sabha" or an open meeting where citizens can propose, deliberate and decide about local public works, monitor their progress as well as identify potential publics for social benefits such as pensions (Government of Delhi, n.d). The process of a mohalla sabha is composed of a deliberative stage followed by decision making through consensus or majoritarian voting.

The village democracy exercised through the gram sabhas, provide a space for citizens –both men and women, high and low castes – to share ideas, take decisions, raise concerns and make the government accountable. The local deliberative practices in rural India face many challenges (funding, clarity of scope, civic capacities, inequalities amongst participants, etc.) (Samy, 2017), but have demonstrated positive effects on the social inclusion of lower-caste groups and women and had impact on poverty reduction and local development (Parthasarathy and Rao, 2017).

International and transnational deliberative processes

Both international and transnational deliberative processes have been included in the study, but it is worth distinguishing between the two types of processes. International deliberative processes, such as World Wide Views, are those practices where deliberative panels take place simultaneously and on the same policy question in several different countries and later their results are presented as an aggregate of results from different national panels. In such cases, many countries can be involved in the process, and the total number of participants is relatively high. However, this design does not create an opportunity for citizens from different countries to interact and deliberate together (Smith, 2018:8). Nevertheless, supranational governments and international organisations can use the recommendations produced in such processes as a collective output of the countries involved. They can also be taken into consideration on the national level.

On the other hand, transnational processes are designed as a single deliberative process where citizens from different countries participate together. In this case, it is possible to make the process more representative as the random selection of participants can be stratified based on the composition of the community in question, such as, for example, the European Union. Participants from all nations are then able to deliberate face-to-face. Even though such processes require substantial translation capacities, there have been recent successful smaller scale examples. For example, the 2019 Citizens' Dialogue in The Hague gathered randomly selected citizens from five different countries to discuss European affairs.

One hundred and twenty Europeans were split into smaller groups and each of them was equipped with numerous interpreters to help participants communicate (Bertelsmann-stiftung.de, 2020). Such transnational processes, when citizen participants from all concerned countries are involved, are equipped to produce common recommendations for supranational governments and international organisations that are highly representative of citizens' opinions.

Taking into account that citizen participation in supranational decision making is challenging as it is, deliberative processes can offer a representative and sustainable way of achieving meaningful and informed citizen input at this level of government.

Other creative uses of deliberative processes

Deliberation as an answer to social mobilisation

The massive demonstrations around the world in recent years (Chile, Hong Kong, France, Bolivia, Lebanon, and Colombia) are to be studied case by case as per the local and national context, but are symptomatic of a general trend. Citizens are disappointed by their political elite; they distrust their political apparatus and disagree with critical policy choices. Through popular protest, citizens are looking for a way to express a collective demand for greater political participation. Some national governments are answering this citizen demand with ad hoc deliberative processes.

In France, after the Yellow Vests movement and the subsequent protests around the country, President Emmanuel Macron announced the organisation of three-month national participatory process. The Grand Débat National (Grand National Debate) consisted of different channels and methods of participation online and offline around four topics: fiscal policies; climate change; democracy; and public services. From January to March 2019, almost two million contributions were posted in the dedicated online platform and more than 10,000 local meetings were organised. The last stage of this participatory process consisted of four thematic national conferences and 21 citizen conferences with randomly selected citizens (Grand Débat National, 2019; Buge and Morio, 2019).

At the time of writing, a similar process is ongoing in Colombia and is set to finish in March 2020. The Conversación Nacional (National Conversation) is President Duque's answer to the massive protests and strikes of November 2019. Organised around six topics, citizens are invited to participate in an online platform and in deliberative conferences organised for each topic and each region (Conversación Nacional, 2020).

Deliberative initiatives can help citizens to channel their demands in a constructive way within an institutionalised space where governments are more willing to listen compared to social mobilisations and protests. Deliberation can help to build common understanding, and results in informed citizen recommendations rather than a wish-list of demands, allowing for constructive and peaceful dialogue between citizens and governments. The outcome of deliberation as an answer to social mobilisation depends on the commitment of the government to implement the solutions that emerge and the willingness to share the decision making power with citizens in the long term.

Deliberative processes used to design new models of democracy

In 2019, the newDemocracy Foundation designed and facilitated a co-creation process for a new model of democracy for the Byron Shire Council in New South Wales, Australia. The goal of the process was to identify how the Byron Shire Council could include citizens and stakeholders in decision making in a permanent way within the limits of its resources. The co-design of this model was also done in an innovative way. A design group was established, which constituted of two members of each of the following groups:

council staff; councillors; community groups; expert process designers; state agencies; and citizens from a community panel (newDemocracy Foundation, 2019).

The community panel was a Citizens' Jury of 18 randomly selected citizens who met six times over the course of three months to discuss and produce recommendations for what the Byron Shire democracy model could resemble. After the model was designed, it was tested by the groups involved (including the citizen group) and feedback was reported to finalise the model.

The distinctiveness of this model of co-creation was that a Citizens' Jury was formed not only to gain informed citizen recommendations and input, but also to give them equal opportunities, a clear mandate, and equal decision making power in the model design process. Citizen representatives had a strong basis for the opinion they put forward when debating and working on the model with other stakeholders in the design group, as their stance was developed during the community panel process and was backed by this group.

Deliberation and co-creation in constitution-writing processes: Iceland and Chile

Iceland

In 2008, Iceland established an innovative framework using deliberation and co-creation mechanisms to include citizens and stakeholders in a participatory constitution-making process. Even though it was novel, it is important to acknowledge that antecedents in British Columbia (2004), the Netherlands (2006), and Ontario (2007) helped to craft and design the latter process (Suteo, 2015).

In the aftermath of the 2008 financial crash in Iceland and the "pots and pans" revolution, the growing echo for a constitutional reform took hold amongst the electorate and elected representatives. In November 2009, "the Anthill", a civil society organisation, held the first National Forum, a one-day deliberative exercise with 1,200 randomly selected citizens and 300 representatives of interest groups and institutions (Suteo, 2015). In June 2010, Iceland passed a Constitutional Act, which established a Constitutional Council of twenty-five elected members in charge of drafting a bill for submission to parliament. Then, parliament organised a second National Forum with 950 randomly selected citizens to deliberate and establish the priorities of the public regarding the new constitution. This document meant to serve as inspiration and basis for the Constitutional Council deliberation (Landemore, 2015).

The draft bill, proposed by the constitutional assembly to parliament, was submitted to a non-binding referendum in 2012 and secured a two-thirds approval. Moreover, and for a variety of reasons (see Landemore, 2015), the crowdsourced constitution was buried by parliament before the legislative elections of 2013. The Icelandic constitution-writing process was able to include citizens and stakeholders during two deliberative moments and through online participation to comment and amend the draft text.

Chile

The Chilean pre-constituent process was intended to open constitutional deliberation to citizens in 2015-2016. It was initiated by civil society organisations and backed by the government, aiming to replace the 1980 constitution, which was drafted and enacted under the Pinochet dictatorship and which, despite numerous amendments, has been unable to gain full legitimacy in the eyes of the citizenry and part of the political establishment (Observatory of the Constituent Process in Chile (2018).

In October 2015, President Michelle Bachelet announced a multi-stage process to draft a new constitution. As a first step, the President organised citizen dialogues, a broad citizen deliberative exercise at the local, intermediate, and national level (OECD, 2017). The process was organised in three main stages. First, an online individual questionnaire gathered 90,804 responses. Next, there were local self-convened meetings of 10 to 30 people, taking place mostly in private spaces but also in universities, schools, churches, and

other social spaces. Finally, more institutionalised participation took place through local cabildos or town hall meetings at the provincial and regional level.

The consultation mechanism was based on a deliberative convergence methodology, which conceived the consultation as an opportunity to deliberate – even in the presence of diverging viewpoints – and reach conclusions or convergence collaboratively. The results of the consultation, the Citizen Bases, were not binding for the executive or legislative branches of the Government; rather, they aimed to provide insights to inform the constitutional discussion (OECD, 2017).

A parallel consultation was held for indigenous populations (6,478 participants) to include their voices in the new constitution. As per official numbers, 204,000 people participated in local meetings and 17,000 in the parallel indigenous consultation. The initial commitment of the Government was to send to Congress a new draft constitution, based on the Citizen Bases and then ratified through a plebiscite. For diverse political and institutional reasons (Observatory of the Constituent Process in Chile, 2018), the constitution was not amended as proposed by President Bachelet, but the process has established a precedent. Citizen participation in the constitution-writing process remains relevant in Chile, as protesters' demands for more participation during the 2019 social mobilisation and the decision of the government to organise a plebiscite in April 2020 demonstrate (France 24, 2020).

Democracy festivals

Deliberation is a key element of democracy festivals that are usually set up by non-governmental organisations that partner with governments. Originating around 50 years ago in Almedalen park on the Swedish island of Gotland, today democratic festivals have spread across the Nordic-Baltic region and take place annually in Sweden, Denmark, Finland, Norway, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Iceland. Germany and the Netherlands have also set up their own, and the United Kingdom, France, Ukraine, Croatia, Nepal, and Korea are in the process of setting up similar democracy festivals (We Do Democracy, 2020).

Democracy festivals bring together citizens, government representatives, civil society, and entrepreneurs to discuss and deliberate over key social issues. Topics covered usually range broadly to cover any issue related how a given country, region, city, or community can be improved. The festival setting provides an informal inclusive environment for all members of society to deliberate on an equal footing, and focuses on participation and interaction (Democracy Festivals Association, 2020). Such festivals complement government citizen participation efforts, contribute to fostering a deliberative culture, and provide opportunities for the public to exercise civic fitness.

21st Century town meetings

The 21st Century town meeting is a model of citizen participation in decision making that encompasses deliberation and digital tools to allow for wider engagement. First developed and trademarked by the America Speaks organisation, the 21st Century Town meeting model has been applied fairly extensively to date (Americaspeaks.org, 2020). Even though they have a deliberative element, these meetings usually are composed of self-selected participants and do not always have face-to-face discussions, hence they were not included in the main study.

Typically, any interested citizen can sign up to participate in the deliberative process. However, organisers usually engage in broader outreach efforts, especially to invite underrepresented groups to join the process. Demographic stratification is used to ensure that the group is more or less representative.

Before the meeting, participants are sent information materials to enable informed and constructive discussions. On the day, participants are then divided into groups of 10-12 people, and with the help of an independent moderator, learn about and discuss various policy issues (Participedia.net, 2020).

The distinctive feature of 21st Century town meetings is the use of electronic keypads at each group table that allow participants and note takers to immediately transfer their arguments, ideas, opinions, and votes to a dedicated team. This team then processes this information, aggregates views, highlights hey arguments, provides immediate feedback, and can initiate participant polling and voting on various questions throughout the day (Participedia.net, 2020).

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