

Beyond the Usual Suspects

Representation in Deliberative Exercises

Shelley Boulianne

Public deliberation exercises are intended to provide more inclusive forums for policy debates, in contrast to elite-dominated approaches to public consultation. Their legitimacy is, in part, derived from a participant selection process that is representative of the broader public (Fournier et al. 2011, 148). However, if these exercises are intended to replace elite-dominated approaches, then they should also be judged in terms of the degree to which they achieve demographic and attitudinal diversity. Ryfe and Stalburg (2012, 54) argue that “the question of who deliberates represents one of the most significant gaps in our understanding of deliberative practices.” Without examining those involved in a public deliberation exercise, it is difficult to evaluate whether it reaches its goals of inclusiveness and representativeness.

Deliberation organizers use a variety of strategies to establish the representativeness of the participants in their public deliberation exercises. This chapter considers representation in deliberative exercises as the degree to which there is a match between the participants in a deliberative exercise and the broader public as established by a census or other high-quality survey. The minimum standard for demographic representation is based on the census profile for the geographic area which compares age, gender, and education of participants in relation to the population.

More recently, scholars have opted to go beyond demographic representation and compare the group’s attitudinal composition to their citizen counterparts

as determined by public opinion polls. The focus on attitudes raises issues of inclusiveness, as certain segments of the population may have different perspectives on the topic being deliberated. Engaging these disparate viewpoints is critical for making the consultation deliberative. Furthermore, the inclusion of minority opinions is important because these voices are often systematically excluded from the policy-making process.

This chapter highlights four different deliberative exercises around the topic of climate change that involved members of Alberta Climate Dialogue (ABCD). For each deliberative exercise, I consulted on the design of participant surveys. I advised on the wording of demographic questions to ensure comparability with Statistics Canada approaches and to ensure consistency across the deliberative exercises. For the Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges, I helped design recruitment materials and the Interactive Voice Response (IVR) survey used to assess broader public opinion about climate change. I will discuss the approaches I used as well as other innovative approaches used to recruit citizens to participate in public deliberations. The four recruitment approaches illustrate the challenges of ensuring representativeness and inclusiveness in deliberations about climate change. In deciding between recruitment approaches, deliberation organizers need to recognize the trade-offs between representativeness and inclusiveness.

Climate change is a particularly difficult policy issue given the uncertainty around the impacts as well as the need for both global and localized responses. In this context, citizen engagement is not only a challenge but a necessity.

Recruitment Approaches

Most typologies of recruitment approaches focus on the distinction between random sampling and self-selected samples (e.g., Mao and Adria 2013; Ryfe and Stalburg 2012). However, these categorizations falsely dichotomize the two recruitment approaches, in that they ignore the self-selection process that occurs within the process of random sampling. For example, in all three Citizens' Assemblies on Electoral Reform (convened in Ontario, British Columbia, and the Netherlands) citizens were randomly chosen from voter registration lists. Of the participants chosen from the voter registration list, only 6 to 7 per cent expressed an interest in participating in the deliberative event (Fournier et al. 2011, 32). Although these projects used random sampling, they acknowledged the role of self-selection in recruiting participants. Each step in the recruitment

process, including volunteering to participate, showing up to participate, and attending all meetings involves some self-selection (see Griffin et al. 2015), which compromises the idea of random sampling. Instead of focusing on random sampling issues versus self-selection, this chapter categorizes recruitment approaches in terms of the goals of achieving demographic representation (representativeness) and attitudinal diversity (inclusiveness).

Demographic Representation

Most deliberative events opt for demographic representation based on the census profile for the geographic area (Gastil 2000). This strategy may or may not involve random sampling. For example, *AmericaSpeaks*, a Washington, DC-based non-profit focused on citizen engagement in public decision making, used self-selected samples for their more than forty-five deliberative 21st Century Town Meetings (Lukensmeyer and Brigham 2005). These deliberative exercises addressed policy issues ranging from Social Security to regional planning, such as rebuilding the World Trade Center site. The organization also undertook targeted recruitment in areas of expected under-representation, for example recruiting seniors and youth in deliberations about Social Security (Lukensmeyer and Brigham 2005). In most cases, the goal was to reflect the demographic composition of the region (Lukensmeyer and Brigham 2005).

Demographic diversity can also be achieved by employing random selection. For example, Farrar et al. (2010) recruited New Haven and area residents for a deliberation about airport expansion. They compared their deliberative participants to the voting population in terms of age, gender, marital status, education, income, and race (Farrar et al. 2010). Similarly, for the World Wide Views global citizen consultation project, the Danish Board of Technology encouraged countries to organize their deliberative exercises to ensure representation based on age, gender, occupation, education, and geography (Blue 2012). Focusing on demographic representation is the most popular technique for establishing the representation of deliberative groups (Hobson and Niemeyer 2011).

Despite efforts to establish representation based on demographic variables, deliberative exercises consistently fail to attract particular groups of people. Education, gender, and age are most commonly discussed in demographic representation (Andersen and Hansen 2007; Farrar et al. 2009; Farrar et al. 2010; Fishkin et al. 2010; French and Laver 2009; Griffin et al. 2015; Hall, Wilson, and Newman 2011; Hansen and Andersen 2004; Hobson and Niemeyer 2011; Setälä, Grönlund, and Herne 2010; Strandberg and Grönlund 2012). However,

deliberative events tend to over-represent men, under-represent young people, and almost consistently over-represent the educated. While some deliberative exercises have addressed gender equity and have had some success with age group representation, representation based on education remains the greatest challenge to demographic representation in deliberative exercises (Farrar et al. 2010; Fournier et al. 2011; French and Laver 2009; Merkle 1996). In the BC and Ontario Citizens' Assemblies on Electoral Reform, within the deliberative group 44 per cent held university degrees, whereas 19 to 20 per cent of the population as a whole have university degrees (Fournier et al. 2011). Farrar et al. (2010) found that approximately one-third of their participants had graduate degrees, whereas in the broader voting public, only 12 per cent have graduate degrees. These findings point to a consistent pattern of over-representation of educated people in deliberative events.

Fournier et al. (2011) provide two counter-arguments to concerns about demographic bias. First, they argue that their deliberative participants are far more representative than legislative assemblies. The participants are "expected to have preferences that are more congruent with those of the general population than those of elected politicians" (Fournier et al. 2011, 54). Second, they examine whether there are differences in policy preferences based on education. The implication is that educational differences in policy preferences would compromise the legitimacy of the deliberative body. However, they used a public opinion poll and found no education-based differences in opinions about the policies being examined and conclude that "the effect of a more representative assembly would thus have been small" (Fournier et al. 2011, 61). However, if the deliberative body is being compared to a public opinion poll, how do we know that the poll respondents were representative of the broader public? Hall, Wilson, and Newman (2011) compared the demographic composition of their deliberative participants, poll results, and census data and found that the deliberative body's composition was similar to that of the poll respondents, but both were dissimilar to the census profile for the region. These findings suggest that deliberative exercises replicate the bias of polls rather than offering a more inclusive form of public participation.

Demographic representation is, in some respects, at odds with principles of inclusion. Recruiting social groups in proportion to their representation in the population would replicate minority statuses which exist in the population. Instead, there could be value in oversampling particular groups whose views may not be represented in the typical policy-making process (Blue 2012).

Oversampling this group would help ensure “a critical mass of participants from minority social groups . . . to ensure their voices are recognized and heard” (Bächtiger, Setälä, and Grönlund 2014, 230). For example, French and Laver (2009) oversampled citizens who live in an electoral division hosting a proposed waste treatment facility, which was the subject of the deliberation. This sampling approach ensures that their deliberative participants include those with “local knowledge” (French and Laver 2009, 428). James (2008, 108) also argues in favour of oversampling groups who are disproportionately affected by the policy domain; this recruitment approach may increase access to “distinct forms of social knowledge more likely to be found among members of such groups.” As another example, the Canadian edition of the World Wide Views project oversampled Indigenous and northern people for a deliberation on climate change (Blue 2012). The assumption is that Indigenous and northern people are differentially affected by climate change and have alternative knowledge about the issue (Blue 2012). Indeed, some argue that the value of deliberative exercises, as opposed to other forms of engagement, is the inclusion of groups who would not have a voice otherwise (Blue 2012; Karjalainen and Rapeli 2015). As such, replicating minority status, which adheres to traditional principles of representation, in deliberative exercises would be counterproductive to the goal of inclusion.

Attitudinal Diversity

Demographic diversity is often used as a proxy for attitudinal diversity, and in many cases, this logic is clearly flawed, particularly when the demographic variables focused upon do not predict attitudinal differences related to the topic of deliberation. Instead, the issue of representation would be better addressed by ensuring attitudinal diversity, particularly on the topic of deliberation. Gastil, Knobloch, and Kelly (2012, 224–25) write:

With regard to representativeness, the final body of citizens who attend the event . . . should be surveyed to determine their relevant demographic and ideological (attitudinal) characteristics. These characteristics can then be compared against relevant census and survey data for the targeted geographic/political region.

James (2008) encourages organizers to consider which demographic variables predict differences in opinions on the policy matter and which groups will benefit more than others from a particular policy direction. In the case of

the BC Citizens' Assemblies, visible minority participants had different preferences about electoral reform than other citizens (James 2008). This group's under-representation could undermine the legitimacy of the deliberating body (James 2008). When it comes to climate change, similar questions could be asked: Which demographic variables affect differences in policy preferences and who benefits more from the different policy proposals?

Bächtiger, Setälä, and Grönlund (2014, 231) recognize the value of attitudinal diversity but also the challenge of recruiting on attitudes about "scientifically complex issues on which people might not have clear pre-deliberation opinions." This concern is particularly relevant for recruitment for climate change deliberations. If the average citizen's knowledge level is low, then recruitment strategies need to be more cognizant of the potential for bias. Citizens who are more knowledgeable about the topic may self-select to participate, leaving those with minimal knowledge excluded from the deliberation. What distinguishes a public deliberation from a stakeholder consultation is the inclusion of non-experts (Blue and Medlock 2014). Recruiting for climate change deliberations is particularly difficult because the framing is often tied to science and can thus restrict knowledge claims to those made by scientific experts (Blue and Medlock 2014). This framing can alienate those without advanced education in the sciences. Furthermore, the experiences of climate change can be elusive as a personal or perceptible experience (Weber 2010; Weber and Stern 2011). Blue and Medlock (2014, 6) write that "Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions, for instance, are imperceptible to the senses without the assistance of science and technology." In the context of climate change policy, participants may not have preconceived notions about climate change or how to address it. As such, ensuring attitudinal diversity could be difficult.

Scholarship tends to focus on attitudinal variables that predict political engagement. For example, many scholars compare their deliberative group to public opinion data regarding political interest, efficacy, confidence, and political knowledge (Fournier et al. 2011; French and Laver 2009; Griffin et al. 2015; Grönlund, Setälä, and Herne 2010; Hansen and Andersen 2004; Merkle 1996; Luskin, Fishkin, and Jowell 2002; Strandberg and Grönlund 2012). Every one of these studies documents that the deliberative participants do not represent the public on at least one of these attitudinal variables. Deliberative participants tend to be more politically interested, efficacious, and knowledgeable than the broader public, as established by public opinion polls. To address concerns about the bias, Luskin, Fishkin, and Jowell (2002, 466) argue that

few of the differences are statistically significant and the differences are “fairly modest.” They also argue that “ordinary polls generally possess the same sort of bias” (Luskin, Fishkin, and Jowell 2002, 466). Their argument accentuates, rather than allays, concerns about representation. Again, in this context, deliberative exercises replicate the bias of polls rather than offering a more inclusive form of public participation.

A smaller set of studies has examined how deliberative participants compare to non-participants on attitudes related to the deliberative topic. Hall, Wilson, and Newman (2011) compared a public opinion poll of 504 respondents to their sixty-two event participants and documented differences in levels of environmental concern and beliefs in the environmental harm of fossil fuels. Participants in the deliberative exercise about energy issues in Idaho “had high interest and pre-existing attitudes about energy issues” (Hall, Wilson, and Newman 2011, 9). Andersen and Hansen (2007) compared poll respondents to participants in a deliberation about adopting the euro. Those people recruited to participate in the deliberation had planned to vote yes and were less likely to be “undecided” than poll respondents (Andersen and Hansen 2007, 536, Table 2). Comparing a lengthy list of funding projects, Fishkin et al. (2010) examined policy opinions for the 235 Chinese citizens who participated in the deliberation and those who completed the poll but did not participate ($n=34$). They found only one statistically significant difference (a 21 percentage point difference) between the two groups, but several other differences were quite large (Fishkin et al. 2010). They found significant differences between the demographic (age, gender, education, and occupation) composition of the participants and those who did not participate (Fishkin et al. 2010).

The most comprehensive and serious treatment of opinion bias is a study by Karjalainen and Rapeli (2015). Opinions about the deliberation topic played a key role in whether participants showed up to the deliberation (Karjalainen and Rapeli 2015). They found that in a deliberation about immigration, those who opposed immigration were under-represented on deliberation day (Karjalainen and Rapeli 2015). All of these findings were post-data collection reflections. Attitudinal diversity was not a guiding principle for the recruitment strategy. A more innovative recruitment approach would be to assess attitudinal diversity during the recruitment stages and adjust recruitment strategies to ensure a proper reflection of attitudes prior to the deliberative event.

Recruitment Techniques

The most common recruitment techniques are to post advertisements in local newspapers, libraries, and other public spaces, to send invitations to thousands of citizens with the hopes that sufficient numbers will respond to the invitation, or to concurrently conduct a public opinion poll and recruitment for the deliberative exercise. These different strategies have different claims to representativeness and inclusiveness. While polls may be representative, they may not be inclusive, since citizens are randomly recruited with little consideration as to the unique perspectives that exist within subpopulations.

The cheapest form of recruitment relies on a self-selection process. Advertisements are posted at libraries and other public spaces asking for volunteers to participate. Alternatively, the advertisement can be placed on websites, in local newspapers, or distributed via electronic mailing lists. In targeted recruitment campaigns, these strategies are also used, but the recruitment campaigns focus on specialized newspapers or websites that target specific population groups. Another targeted recruitment approach involves contacting organizations that represent or serve specialized populations. The organization often forwards or posts recruitment messages on behalf of the deliberation organizers. All of these techniques rely on a self-selection process. These recruitment strategies emphasize inclusiveness by recognizing that some groups are differentially impacted by policy approaches or may have unique viewpoints about the topic being deliberated upon. The self-selection process likely produces a group of citizens who are highly interested in the topic of discussion.

The other recruitment techniques are clearly aligned with public opinion polling. One approach is to send out recruitment packages to thousands of citizens with the hopes that a sufficient number will return their forms expressing interest in participation. The response rate to these invitations would make most public opinion researchers cringe. For example, Strandberg and Grönlund (2012) sent out invitations to 6,000 Finnish people, 147 volunteered, and only 79 actually participated. In the Canadian arm of the World Wide Views project, 3,000 invitations were sent and 98 people responded to express their interest in participating (Blue 2012).

Another popular approach is to engage in a public opinion poll, which concludes with a question about interest in participating in a deliberative exercise (e.g., Fishkin et al. 2010; French and Laver 2009; Hansen and Andersen 2004). With these designs, researchers can compare the demographic

and attitudinal composition of poll respondents to those who agree to participate in the deliberative exercise. Not only does this approach establish representativeness, but the poll respondents can serve as a control group for comparison (French and Laver 2009). While this research design is one of the stronger methodological approaches to recruitment, descriptions of these methods tend to be uncritical of the self-selection inherent in this process. Karjalainen and Rapeli (2015) highlight the layers of self-selection, and possible bias, introduced into a process that involved contacting almost 12,000 Finnish people, but having only 200 people show up to deliberate. Employment status is a key driver in whether or not people are willing to participate (Karjalainen and Rapeli 2015; Neblo et al. 2010). If employment status affects viewpoints about the topic of deliberation, then this bias could detrimentally impact the representativeness of the deliberating group of citizens. In general, recruitment techniques that replicate public opinion polling techniques have stronger claims to representativeness.

Regardless of the recruitment technique, deliberative exercises often involve some kind of incentive or honorarium for participation. The use of incentives follows best practices in focus group recruitment. Experts suggest that face-to-face focus groups of two hours should be accompanied by incentives of at least \$50 (Stewart, Shamdasani, and Rook 2011). However, adjustments should be made to accommodate the costs of travel and childcare needs related to participation (Stewart, Shamdasani, and Rook 2011).

The following sections describe four deliberative exercises in which ABCD participated that used a variation of the above techniques to recruit participants to deliberate on a topic related to climate change. These case studies highlight the challenges of achieving representativeness while ensuring inclusiveness. For each case study, the demographic profile of the recruited participants is discussed in relation to population characteristics. In some cases, attitudinal comparisons are also made to discuss the success of the recruitment strategy. In each case, the advantages and disadvantages, including costs, are listed.

Case Study 1: City-Wide Food and Urban Agriculture Citizen Panel

This deliberative group was organized by the Centre for Public Involvement in partnership with the City of Edmonton's Sustainable Development department, and involved five members of ABCD in minor roles of assisting with various research activities (see chapter 1). The citizens met six times over two months in

the spring of 2012 to discuss, and provide input into *fresh*—Edmonton’s food and urban agriculture strategy. The meetings included two full-day and four half-day sessions (see chapter 1). Participants were offered \$150 for participating in the deliberation. Of the sixty-six participants recruited, forty-four were enlisted through random digit dialing and the remaining participants found through community groups, universities, and lists of known volunteers (personal communication, Fiona Cavanagh, August 5, 2015). The targeted recruitment was successful in including an appropriate representation of youth and visible minorities as well as two low income people and three people who did not speak English (translation services were provided) (Fiona Cavanagh, email message to author, August 6, 2015). Fifty-eight panelists participated (City of Edmonton 2012).

The goal in recruiting participants for this panel was to ensure a diversity of participants with respect to gender, length of residence in Edmonton, Indian status, visible minority status, disability status, and city ward of residence (personal communication, Fiona Cavanagh, August 5, 2015). However, women were over-represented in terms of those who participated in the deliberative exercise (City of Edmonton 2012). While population estimates suggest that 5 per cent of Edmonton residents have an Aboriginal identity (Statistics Canada 2011), only 2 per cent of the panel identified as such (City of Edmonton 2012). The recruitment strategy sought representation from visible minorities and was successful in achieving representation comparable to the census profile for the city (City of Edmonton 2012; Statistics Canada 2011). In terms of disability, the recruitment strategy failed to match the census profile (Statistics Canada 2015).

Disadvantage

The recruitment through interviewer-led phone calls was conducted by graduate students. This group was expensive to employ and required a good deal of specialized training. Despite training efforts, there were inconsistencies in recruitment practices from recruiter to recruiter. The labour cost for the recruiters was approximately \$6,700 for the forty-four participants who were randomly recruited (personal communication, Fiona Cavanagh, August 5, 2015). This estimate does not include the labour involved in targeted recruitment to the various community agencies and universities.

The hybrid recruitment approach produced an over-representation of educated people. Statistics Canada (2011) estimates that 38 per cent of the Edmonton population have high school or less education, whereas the deliberative group

included only 6 per cent of this education group. Despite the concerted efforts to ensure diversity, the participating group was largely composed of university graduates.

While efforts were made to ensure demographic diversity, the recruitment process did not include a general population, probability-based survey, which would have enabled a comparison of the attitudinal diversity of participants compared to the general population. This is a particular concern when recruitment is conducted through community groups. Members of community groups may be like-minded and thus may not ensure a diverse range of attitudes about the topic being deliberated upon. A survey of participants suggests that there were more left-leaning participants than right-leaning participants, although the most common response was “middle of the road” (City of Edmonton 2012). This ideological representation could be explained by the recruitment of university students, since university students tend to be more left-leaning (Olcese, Saunders, and Tzavidis 2014). Studies show that views about climate change are driven by ideological orientation (Davidson and Haan 2012). As such, ideological bias could undermine the work of a deliberative body. While the panel included a range of ideologies, a general population survey was not available to establish how the panel compared to broader public opinion.

Advantage

The strategy of random recruitment with targeted recruitment was successful in ensuring proportional representation for members of visible minorities and young people. Approximately 28 per cent of the Edmonton population consists of people aged 18 to 34 years and 29 per cent of panelists were in this age group (City of Edmonton 2012; Statistics Canada 2012). The inclusion of this age group is important, as young people’s future well-being may depend on successful climate change policies. The strong representation of young people reflected targeted recruitment at universities. The successful recruitment of visible minorities was in part attributable to targeted recruitment through community organizations. This recruitment approach has some clear success in achieving inclusiveness.

The random recruitment part of the approach addressed concerns about representativeness. The forty-four participants who were randomly recruited could, arguably, serve as a representative body of Edmontonians. While there were biases noted in the composition of the entire deliberative group, it is unclear whether the bias was introduced by the targeted recruitment or through

the random recruitment process. A comparison of the two groups would help advance research in this area.

Case Study 2: Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges

The Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges was organized in partnership with ABCD, the Centre for Public Involvement, and the City of Edmonton's Office of the Environment. Citizens were recruited to participate in a six-Saturday event to learn about the city's energy and climate challenges and to provide policy recommendations related to these topics. The recruitment strategy for this panel was designed based on successes and challenges in the 2012 Food and Urban Agriculture Citizen Panel.

Addressing concerns about attitudinal diversity, the recruitment process included a probability-based random sample of citizens to assess their views about climate change and other related views. The intention of this practice was to ensure attitudinal representation. In addition, the Centre for Public Involvement redesigned its recruitment materials and practices and contracted a third party to conduct recruitment (personal communication, Fiona Cavanagh, August 5, 2015). Probit, a subsidiary of EKOS Research, conducts ongoing recruitment of citizens, via interactive voice response surveys (IVR), to participate in its online panel. These IVR surveys include landline and cellphone-only households.

When citizens are contacted, they are asked a small number of survey questions, and are then asked if they would like to participate in further research. Of those who agreed to participate in further research, 2,400 people were re-contacted by phone to complete a recruitment survey (CPEECC 2013). Of these participants, more than 300 citizens expressed interest and availability to participate in the Citizens' Panel in fall 2012 (CPEECC 2013). They were told that if they were selected they would receive approximately \$400 as an honorarium (with some adjustments for childcare and transportation as well as regular attendance at meetings) (Fiona Cavanagh, email message to author, September 16, 2014). Participants were then asked to complete an informed consent form for research purposes and a Freedom of Information and Privacy Protection consent form, which would allow their names, contact information, and survey responses to be shared with the Centre for Public Involvement and

Alberta Climate Dialogue. After multiple contacts, 101 citizens returned the signed consent form (Elliott Gauthier, email message to author, July 10, 2015).

Upon review of the age profile of these 101 citizens, the Centre for Public Involvement engaged in targeted outreach to try to obtain representation from young people aged eighteen to twenty-nine years (CPEECC 2013). In total, sixty-six citizens were selected to ensure quotas were met to match the population distribution in terms of age, gender, education, ethnicity, disability, households with children, household income, city ward, and households in which a member is employed by the energy sector (CPEECC 2013). The panel mimicked census data for the city on gender, age, and household size, but under-represented households with children in the home (Statistics Canada 2012). In terms of education, those with high school or less were under-represented (29 per cent) in proportion to their representation in the Edmonton population (38 per cent) (Statistics Canada 2011). However, of the four case studies, this project had the greatest success with the recruitment of this education group.

Probit also conducted a separate IVR survey to establish broader public opinion on key attitudinal variables. In terms of attitudinal variables, the panelists were more efficacious and trusting, and liked living in Edmonton more than respondents to the public opinion poll (CPEECC 2013). Panelists were slightly more likely to believe that climate change is happening and that climate change is caused by humans (CPEECC 2013). The panelists were also more likely to pay attention to energy and climate issues and more likely to view governments, industry, and individual citizens as having a greater role to play in addressing climate change (CPEECC 2013). While this public opinion data was useful in assessing attitudinal diversity, the data presents a challenge in trying to determine which attitudes to focus upon to ensure representation. In the end, priority was given to beliefs about the existence of climate change.

Disadvantage

This recruitment approach was expensive. Costs were associated with the recruitment of participants and administration of the IVR survey to establish the broader public's attitudes related to the deliberation topic. The total cost for both initiatives was approximately \$13,000 (CPEECC 2013). The attitudinal survey was conducted as an IVR survey, which is substantially cheaper than a telephone survey. While this mode reduced the costs of data collection, the trade-off was a low response rate (Loptson and Boulianne 2013).

Also, some aspects of the recruitment process fell short of achieving their intended goals. The IVR survey targeted both cellphone and landline numbers; the inclusion of cellphone-only lines was expected to address the challenge of recruiting young people, but this recruitment approach failed to produce sufficient representation of young people. As such, in addition to the high costs of recruitment, additional targeted recruitment strategies were required to address these deficiencies. In other words, the random recruitment process was not successful in ensuring proper representation based on age.

Despite the demographic diversity of the panel, the panelists were not representative of the broader public on attitudes related to climate change and who is responsible for addressing climate change (CPEECC 2013). As such, demographic diversity does not ensure attitudinal diversity. The group of deliberative participants was more likely to believe in climate change, report higher efficacy and trust, and enjoy living in Edmonton, than the broader public (CPEECC 2013). Self-selection becomes a challenge in recruiting participants with minority viewpoints. They can opt not to participate, despite being invited.

Advantage

The recruitment strategy, at its onset, did engage in a random recruitment process, meeting some of the criteria required to generalize the findings beyond deliberative participants. This recruitment process helped provide legitimacy in the eyes of City Administration and Council. The assumption was that the policy recommendations were on solid ground if all demographic groups were represented in the group of deliberating participants. In particular, council members talked about the importance of representing those employed in the energy sector as well as those not employed in the energy sector, and citizens who are skeptical of climate change (see chapter 1).

The recruitment strategy was successful in ensuring demographic diversity. The only major deviation was in terms of households with small children and those with high school education or less. In terms of the education bias, an Alberta study suggests that education does not affect beliefs about the existence of climate change, beliefs about the causes of climate change, or level of concern for climate change (Davidson and Haan 2012). However, as mentioned, public opinion polls may over-represent educated people and may not properly represent differences in views based on education (see prior discussion of Hall, Wilson, and Newman 2011). The deliberative participants were comparable to the census profile on the demographic variables that affect attitudes related to

climate change, such as gender and age (Davidson and Haan 2012). This deliberative event was successful in establishing representativeness, but struggled with the inclusion of climate change deniers who were invited but chose not to participate. Further deliberative studies should experiment with approaches to more effectively engage and retain people holding minority viewpoints.

Case Study 3: Energy Efficiency Choices

This deliberation was organized by the Alberta Energy Efficiency Alliance in partnership with ABCD. Each of the deliberative groups met electronically for two hours sometime during November 2013. The recruitment of participants relied on Probit, using a process very similar to the process conducted for the Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges, except that the goal was to engage a cross-section of Albertans. As mentioned, Probit conducts ongoing recruitment of citizens, via interactive voice response surveys (IVR), to participate in its online panel. Volunteers for this online panel were contacted by email to ask about interest in participating in a two-hour discussion about energy efficiency in Alberta. If they were interested, they were asked to type in their name and contact information as well as dates for which they would be available to participate.

Probit recruited 462 participants from their existing voluntary panel. However, many of these participants did not provide email addresses during this recruitment process, and so phone calls were made to all participants without email addresses asking them to confirm their interest in participating in the event. In the end, only 162 citizens participated in one of the series of two-hour meetings. In the Energy Efficiency Choices project, most participants were not contacted by an interviewer to confirm their participation. In contrast, in the Energy and Climate Challenges panel, all participants were contacted by an interviewer via phone to confirm their interest in participation, resulting in a higher participation rate. Of the four deliberative projects described, this project involved the least commitment of time from participants (two hours versus eight to forty-three hours for the other projects) but did require some technical skills in order to participate.

Despite using random recruitment, the process failed to recruit sufficient females, young people, people with less education, and people with young children. Approximately 29 per cent of the population is aged 18 to 34 years, whereas 2 per cent of those recruited were in this age group. Approximately 12 per cent of

those with high school or less were recruited to participate, compared to 39 per cent of the Alberta population that has a high school education or less (Statistics Canada 2011). Finally, the recruitment process under-represented households with children in the home (Statistics Canada 2012) and included only 4 per cent Indigenous people, compared to the reported proportion of 6 per cent of the Alberta population (Statistics Canada 2011).

Disadvantage

Although this project involved the largest number of participants and some form of random recruitment, the representation was biased toward males and contained very few young people. Compared to the three offline deliberations, this deliberation had the poorest representation of young people in the deliberation (only 2 per cent were under the age of 30 years). Given the online form of the deliberation and the inclusion of cellphone lines, the under-representation of young people is surprising. This bias is important for the topic of climate change, as this group's future well-being may depend on effective climate change policies. Approximately 57 per cent of participants were male in this online deliberative exercise.

Advantage

The recruitment costs were approximately \$10,000, which for a sample of 462 is cost-effective. However, as mentioned, this cost-effective approach depended on impersonal email correspondence without human contact via phone. This impersonal approach detrimentally affected the participation rate for the project. Many people expressed interest but failed to follow up on their commitment.

The cost-effective recruitment methods allow for the recruitment of a large sample, which is useful in examining nuances in attitude changes and policy preferences. In addition, the large sample and probability-based recruitment process may allow for the possibility of generalizing findings, after weighting to address under-representation and over-representation of key demographic groups. However, with the high dropout rate between recruitment and participation, the principle of randomness is seriously compromised. While 462 citizens expressed interest in participation, only 162 actually participated. Of the four deliberative projects, this was the highest dropout rate between recruitment and participation. This dropout rate could indicate non-response bias, in which the attitudes held by those who participated differ significantly from the attitudes

of those who did not participate. This bias may undermine the ability of this group to represent the range of views about energy and climate issues in Alberta.

Case Study 4: Water in a Changing Climate Citizen Panel

This deliberative group was organized as a partnership between the Oldman Watershed Council and Alberta Climate Dialogue and involved citizens discussing the connection of water to climate change. The participants met for eight hours in February 2014 (see chapter 1). Participants were recruited through two methods. The first approach was to send invitations out through the Oldman Watershed Council's electronic mailing list (Alberta Climate Dialogue 2014). The second was through advertisements published in newspapers or at public meeting places, such as libraries and post offices (Alberta Climate Dialogue 2014). In either case, participants had to sign up on the ABCD website. As part of the sign-up procedures, participants were asked their name, contact information, occupation, length of residence in the Oldman Watershed area, whether they had specialized knowledge about climate change or water issues, their self-assessed knowledge level around climate change, and their views about whether climate change is happening and the sources of climate change (human, natural, combination). In total, sixty people signed up to participate in the deliberation held on February 22, 2014. Thirty-three people were selected from this list with the goal of ensuring a diversity of perspectives (Alberta Climate Dialogue 2014). Participants were offered \$100 for participating (Alberta Climate Dialogue 2014).

The recruitment process produced slightly more women than men, an under-representation of young people, and under-representation of those with high school or less. The recruitment process was successful in recruiting people from First Nations communities. In terms of political ideology, the group was split evenly between right- and left-wing thinkers (Alberta Climate Dialogue 2014). In addition, the distribution of urban and rural dwellers matched the characteristics of the region (Alberta Climate Dialogue 2014).

Disadvantage

The biggest disadvantage of this form of recruitment is that it is not random. As such, it is unclear whether panelists' characteristics, as well as their views, are representative of the population. The recruitment method produced a list of participants who were more likely to be women, older, and better educated, but

the misrepresentation on demographics was not greater than the bias observed for recruitment processes that included a random selection component (see Table 4.1). However, as mentioned, demographic representation does not mean attitudinal representation. Given the recruitment method, the greatest concern is that these participants were more politically aware than non-participants. The participants were largely recruited through the Oldman Watershed Council electronic mailing list and thus were a group already engaged with the political process. In addition, they may have had homogeneous views on climate change and water issues, because they were largely recruited from a single community organization.

Advantage

The greatest advantage of this form is the low cost. The recruitment through the electronic mailing list has minimal costs. The sign-up process required minimal work from a programmer. Finally, posting notices at public spaces in the community required minimal labour and printing costs. The targeted recruitment strategy was effective in representing groups that are under-represented in other processes (see Table 4.1). Approximately 9 per cent of participants were from First Nations communities. This group is typically left out of traditional policy-making processes. In terms of climate change, this group may be differentially affected by the impacts of climate change, which makes their participation critical (Blue 2012). With respect to First Nations, the recruitment strategy was able to achieve inclusiveness, but for other groups, representativeness is a key concern.

Conclusion

This chapter highlighted a number of important considerations and challenges in recruiting participants for deliberative projects, and described the recruitment processes followed for four public deliberations in which ABCD participated. Despite efforts to ensure representativeness, all four case studies were biased in terms of education. This challenge is consistent with other deliberative events, which also fail to reflect the educational composition of their geographic community (Farrar et al. 2010; Fournier et al. 2011; French and Laver 2009; Merkle 1996). The recruitment approach for the Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges performed better than the other approaches because quotas were established around recruitment processes. Comparing four deliberative exercises demonstrates that larger and random samples do not better

Table 4.1. Demographic profile of recruited sample for the four deliberative projects

	Edmonton Food and Urban Agriculture n=58*	Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges n=66**	Energy Efficiency Choices n=462**	Water in a Changing Climate n=33*
Length of deliberation	2 days and 4 ½ days	6 days	2 hours	1 day
Honorarium	\$150	\$400	–	\$100
Percentage of females	57%	52%	42%	55%
Percentage with children at home, under the age of 18 years	–	26%	23%	–
Indigenous	2%	3%	4%	9% from First Nations Communities
Age				
34 and under	29%	35%	18–29: 2%	15%
35–44	12%	12%	30–49: 26%	9%
45–54	20%	15%	50+: 72%	12%
55–64	19%	17%		33%
65+:	20%	21%		24%
Education				
High school or less	6%	29%	12%	6%
Some college, trade school, University, or completed diploma	24%	30%	34%	44%
University degree, certificate, or more	70%	41%	54%	50%

*Number represents actual participants rather than all those recruited.

**Number represents individuals recruited to deliberate, not the number of participants.

Sources: City of Edmonton 2012; Gwendolyn Blue, Email message to author, July 8, 2015; the author's analysis of data from Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges; and Kristjana Loptson, email message to author, June 19, 2015.

represent the demographic characteristics of the population than smaller and non-random approaches. This was most evident in the Energy Efficiency Choices deliberative exercise. Furthermore, this chapter highlighted the trade-offs between representativeness and inclusiveness. The approaches used by the Water in a Changing Climate and the Food and Urban Agriculture Citizen Panel performed better at recruiting people who are typically excluded from the policy-making process, such as Indigenous people and visible minorities. However, these approaches fared the worst in terms of education bias. Only 6 per cent of participants had high school or less. In other words, inclusiveness came at the expense of representativeness. Fournier et al. (2011) suggest addressing education bias by examining whether education predicts differences in policy preferences.

In the case of deliberations about climate change, recruitment processes need to account for self-selection biases within random recruitment approaches, which may lead to the over-representation of people who are more interested and knowledgeable about the issues than others. The Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges was well-positioned to identify and address attitudinal biases before the deliberative event, because this project included a large, random digital dialing survey of Edmontonians conducted prior to the event. This recruitment enabled the identification of bias in participation at the onset. This recruitment approach identified climate deniers and invited them to participate, but in the end, this group disengaged from the project. Perhaps this group could have been retained if they were over-sampled, providing a critical mass of participants with minority viewpoints (Bächtiger, Setälä, and Grönlund 2014). This approach of over-representation was used for First Nations residents in the Water in a Changing Climate, and was useful in ensuring inclusiveness.

While the discussion of representativeness focuses on education, gender, and age (Andersen and Hansen 2007; Farrar et al. 2009; Farrar et al. 2010; Fishkin et al. 2010; French and Laver 2009; Griffin et al. 2015; Hall, Wilson, and Newman 2011; Hansen and Andersen 2004; Hobson and Niemeyer 2011; Setälä, Grönlund and Herne 2010; Strandberg and Grönlund 2012), these four deliberative events identified another group that is challenging to recruit. Families with small children were difficult to engage in these deliberative events. Unfortunately, efforts to address this bias, such as offering free childcare to enable participation of families with small children, were ineffective in overcoming some biases in participation. Reducing the effort required to engage in the deliberative project was also ineffective in obtaining participation from this group. The Energy Efficiency Choices project required minimal effort to participate, but the project failed

to engage participants who had small children in the home. Further research should experiment with alternative recruitment strategies to address participation biases and consider how these biases impact the policy recommendations proposed by deliberative groups. Finally, the literature on deliberative events should introduce standardized reporting approaches, like those offered in public opinion research (see <https://www.aapor.org/>), to enable comparisons across events about the number of people who were invited, the number of people who showed up, and the number of people who fully participated in the deliberative event (Karjalainen and Rapeli 2015). Different reporting approaches were used in the four deliberative events, reflecting differences in the broader literature's approach to reporting on participation.

References

- Alberta Climate Dialogue. 2014. *Water in a Changing Climate*. Calgary: Alberta Climate Dialogue. <http://www.albertaclimatedialogue.ca/final-report-water-in-a-changing-climate/final-report-water-in-a-changing-climate/>.
- Andersen, Vibeke Normann, and Kasper M. Hansen. 2007. "How Deliberation Makes Better Citizens: The Danish Deliberative Poll on the Euro." *European Journal of Political Research* 46(4): 531–56. doi:10.1111/j.1475-6765.2007.00699.x.
- Bächtiger, André, Maija Setälä, and Kimmo Grönlund. 2014. "Towards a New Era of Deliberative Mini-Publics." In *Deliberative Mini-Publics: Involving Citizens in the Democratic Process*, edited by Kimmo Grönlund, André Bächtiger, and Maija Setälä, 224–46. Colchester, UK: European Consortium for Political Research Press.
- Blue, Gwendolyn and Jennifer Medlock. 2014. "Public Engagement with Climate Change as Scientific Citizenship: A Case Study of World Wide Views on Global Warming." *Science as Culture* 23(4): 560–79. doi:10.1080/09505431.2014.917620.
- Blue, Gwendolyn, Jennifer Medlock, and Edna Einsiedel. 2012. "Representativeness and the Politics of Inclusion: Insights from World Wide Views Canada." In *Citizen Participation in Global Environmental Governance*, edited by Richard Worthington, Mikko Rask, and Lammi Minna, 139–52. London: Earthscan.
- City of Edmonton. 2012. *City-Wide Food and Urban Agriculture Strategy Report On Citizen Panel Process and Recommendations*. https://d1ok7k7mywg42z.cloudfront.net/assets/509af364dabed6d3bo04a74/Citizen_Panel_Final_Report_September_2012.pdf.
- CPEECC (Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges). 2013. *Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges Report*.

https://www.edmonton.ca/city_government/documents/PDF/CitizensPanel-EnergyClimateChallenge.pdf.

- Davidson, Debra J., and Michael Haan. 2012. "Gender, Political Ideology, and Climate Change Beliefs in an Extractive Industry Community." *Population and Environment* 34(2): 217–234. doi:10.1007/s11111-011-0156-y.
- Farrar, Cynthia, Donald P. Green, Jennifer E. Green, David W. Nickerson, and Steven Shewfelt. 2009. "Does Discussion Group Composition Affect Policy Preferences? Results from Three Randomized Experiments." *Political Psychology* 30(4): 615–47. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9221.2009.00717.x.
- Farrar, Cynthia, James S. Fishkin, Donald P. Green, Christian List, Robert C. Luskin, and Elizabeth Levy Paluck. 2010. "Disaggregating Deliberation's Effects: An Experiment Within a Deliberative Poll." *British Journal of Political Science* 40(2): 333–47. doi:10.1017/s0007123409990433.
- Fishkin, James S., Baogang He, Robert C. Luskin, and Alice Siu. 2010. "Deliberative Democracy in an Unlikely Place: Deliberative Polling in China." *British Journal of Political Science* 40(2): 435–48. doi:10.1017/s0007123409990330.
- Fournier, Patrick, Henk van der Kolk, R. Kenneth Carty, André Blais, and Jonathan Rose. 2011. *When Citizens Decide: Lessons from Citizen Assemblies on Electoral Reform*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- French, Damien, and Michael Laver. 2009. "Participation Bias, Durable Opinion Shifts and Sabotage Through Withdrawal in Citizens' Juries." *Political Studies* 57(2): 422–50. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.2009.00785.x.
- Gastil, John. 2000. *By Popular Demand*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gastil, John, Katie Knobloch, and Meghan Kelly. 2012. Evaluating Deliberative Public Events and Projects. In *Democracy in Motion: Evaluating the Practice and Impact of Deliberative Civic Engagement*, edited by Tina Nabatchi, John Gastil, G.M. Weiksner, and Matt Leighninger, 205–30. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Griffin, Jamie, Tarik Abdel-Monem, Alan Tomkins, Amanda Richardson, and Stacia Jorgenson. 2015. "Understanding Participant Representativeness in Deliberative Events: A Case Study Comparing Probability and Non-Probability Recruitment Strategies." *Journal of Public Deliberation* 11(1): 1–28.
- Grönlund, Kimmo, Maija Setälä, and Kaisa Herne. 2010. "Deliberation and Civic Virtue: Lessons from a Citizen Deliberation Experiment." *European Political Science Review* 2(1): 95–117. doi:10.1017/s1755773909990245.
- Hall, Troy, Patrick Wilson, and Jennie Newman. 2011. "Evaluating The Short- and Long-Term Effects of a Modified Deliberative Poll on Idahoans' Attitudes and Civic Engagement Related to Energy Options." *Journal of Public Deliberation* 7(1): 1–31. <http://www.publicdeliberation.net/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1136&context=jpd>.

- Hansen, Kasper M., and Vibeke Normann Andersen. 2004. "Deliberative Democracy and the Deliberative Poll on the Euro." *Scandinavian Political Studies* 27(3): 261–86. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9477.2004.00106.x.
- Hobson, Kersty, and Simon Niemeyer. 2011. "Public Responses to Climate Change: The Role of Deliberation in Building Capacity for Adaptive Action." *Global Environmental Change* 21(3): 957–71. doi:10.1016/j.gloenvcha.2011.05.001.
- James, Michael Rabinder. 2008. "Descriptive Representation in the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly." In *Designing Deliberative Democracy: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly*, edited by Mark Warren and Hilary Pearce, 106–21. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Karjalainen, Maija, and Lauri Rapeli. 2015. "Who Will Not Deliberate? Attrition in a Multi-Stage Citizen Deliberation Experiment." *Quality and Quantity* 49(1): 407–22. doi:10.1007/s11135-014-9993-y.
- Loptson, Kristjana, and Shelley Boulianne. October 2013. "Trust in Municipal Government: The Case of the Citizens' Panel on Edmonton's Energy and Climate Challenges." Alberta Climate Dialogue. <http://www.albertaclimatedialogue.ca/research-brief-trust-in-municipal-government/research-brief-trust-in-municipal-government//edit>.
- Lukensmeyer, Carolyn, and Steve Brigham. 2005. "Taking Democracy to Scale: Large Scale Interventions—For Citizens." *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* 41(1): 47–60. doi:10.1177/0021886304272656.
- Luskin, Robert C., James S. Fishkin, and Roger Jowell. 2002. "Considered Opinions: Deliberative Polling in Britain." *British Journal of Political Science* 32(3): 455–87. doi:10.1017/s0007123402000194.
- Mao, Yuping, and Marco Adria. 2013. "Deciding Who Will Decide: Assessing Random Selection for Participants in Edmonton's Citizen Panel on Budget Priorities." *Canadian Public Administration* 56(4): 610–37.
- Merkle, Daniel M. 1996. "Review: The National Issues Convention Deliberative Poll." *Public Opinion Quarterly* 60(4): 588–619. doi:10.1086/297775.
- Neblo, Michael A., Kevin M. Esterling, Ryan P. Kennedy, David M.J. Lazer, and Anand E. Sokhey. 2010. "Who Wants To Deliberate – And Why?" *American Political Science Review* 104(3): 566–83. doi:10.1017/s0003055410000298.
- Olcese, Cristiana, Clare Saunders, and Nikos Tzavidis. 2014. "In the Streets with a Degree: How Political Generations, Educational Attainment and Student Status Affect Engagement in Protest Politics." *International Sociology* 29(6): 525–45.
- Ryfe, David Michael, and Brittany Stalburg. 2012. "The Participation and Recruitment Challenge." In *Democracy in Motion: Evaluating the Practice and Impact of Deliberative Civic Engagement*, edited by Tina Nabatchi, John Gastil, Matt Leighninger, and G. Michael Weiksner, 43–58. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Setälä, Maija, Kimmo Grönlund, and Kaisa Herne. 2010. "Citizen Deliberation on Nuclear Power: A Comparison of Two Decision-Making Methods." *Political Studies* 58(4): 688–714. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9248.2010.00822.x
- Statistics Canada. 2011. "NHS Focus on Geography Series – Edmonton." <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/fogs-spg/Pages/FOG.cfm?lang=E&level=3&GeoCode=835>.
- . 2012. "Edmonton, Alberta (Code 4811061) and Division No.11, Alberta (Code 4811) (Table). Census Profile. 2011 Census." <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2011/dp-pd/prof/index.cfm?Lang=E>.
- . 2015. "CANSIM - 115-0014 – Total Income for Adults with and without Disabilities, By Age Group and Sex, Canada, Provinces and Territories." <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/daily-quotidien/150522/dq150522f-cansim-eng.htm>.
- Stewart, David W., Prem N. Shamdasani, and Dennis W. Rook. 2011. *Focus Groups: Theory and Practice*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Strandberg, Kim, and Kimmo Grönlund. 2012. "Online Deliberation and its Outcome – Evidence from the Virtual Polity Deliberative Experiment." *Journal of Information Technology and Politics* 9(2): 167–84.
- Weber, Elke U. 2010. "What Shapes Perceptions of Climate Change?" *Wiley Interdisciplinary Reviews: Climate Change* 1(3): 332–42. doi:10.1002/wcc.41.
- Weber, Elke U., and Paul C. Stern. 2011. "Public Understanding of Climate Change in the United States." *American Psychologist* 66(4): 315–28. doi:10.1037/a0023253.