Civic-izing Markets

*Selling Social Profits in Public Deliberation*

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The principles of economics and of participation do not sit easily together.

—Involve

Some people say, “Talk is cheap.” We say, “Conversation is cost-effective.”

—Practitioner, dialogue and deliberation listserv

Political scholars and reformers envision public deliberation as a restorative, “real utopian” remedy for a public sphere dominated by professional talking heads and well-funded special interest groups. Public dialogue and deliberation processes, which convene lay citizens to engage with each other on the major questions of our time, invoke nostalgia for a less commercial and more public-spirited civic life—“free spaces” light years from the partisan venom and professional punditocracy that have proved so lucrative to international media conglomerates and influence-seekers. Despite these perceptions, today’s public deliberation projects do not occur in a space free of commerce. For far too long, scholars have ignored the economic dimensions of the contemporary “participation revolution.”

Nonprofit and private consulting organizations produce public deliberation processes for a growing market of public, private, and nonprofit clients who seek to engage their stakeholders in productive dialogue. Professional facilitation consultants are now regular players in formal stakeholder engagement processes for decision making and planning by governments, nonprofit organizations, and private companies. The “organizational infrastructure for public deliberation” offers clients a diverse selection of trademarked processes, including “21st Century Town Meetings™,” “Choice-Dialogues™,” “Fast Forum Opinionnaires™,” “Citizen Choicework™,” “Deliberative Polling™,” “Consensus Conferences™,” and “Issues Forums™.” Sample client lists offered by public deliberation consultants reveal a wide variety of household names, from Fortune 500 companies to industry trade groups to federal agencies to transnational organizations. Such processes are becoming so common that 18 percent of Americans in a 2007 survey had participated in face-to-face or online deliberative problem solving with diverse others over the course of the previous year. A conservative estimate based on the 2009 Dialogue and Deliberation Practitioners Survey puts the cost of such processes at least in the low hundred millions per year. But scholars tend to assume that deliberative reforms are the direct result of a progressive movement to reform politics.
Given the scale of demand for deliberation in organizations of all types, this chapter takes a closer look at the deliberation consulting industry and finds that deliberative reforms are actually marketed to sponsors as civic, socially productive interventions protected from “conventional” business logics, even as they draw on new managerialist discourses long enshrined in the “cultural circuit of capitalism.” Public deliberation consultants have been extremely attentive to managing the commercial dimensions of their work. But researchers have generally either dismissed the “business” of deliberation as inconsequential or have feared deliberation’s contamination by market forces. The analysis conducted here takes a different approach. Using a multimethod field study of the public deliberation industry, we investigate moral claims about the public deliberation market and its impact on citizens and the public sphere, and we find that both perspectives on markets as destructive and as civilizing play a role in justifying the unique virtues of privately facilitated deliberation as a collective good. This multilayered moralization of the deliberation market reveals the impossibility of distinguishing a pure civic space protected from market incursions in an era in which the boundaries of public, private, and nonprofit sectors are continually blurred in practice.

Moral discourses around public deliberation also reveal the stakes involved in producing ostensibly pure civic spaces, inasmuch as these are the products sought after by paying clients. As top-down civic projects and participatory opportunities become more common, and their production by the deliberation industry becomes more sophisticated, the territory being contested is increasingly that ground in which markets are made civic, and markets in turn create civic space. The production and promotion of these civic spaces by private actors, and those actors’ understanding of the imperative to protect such spaces from the market, represent a domain of political life that is not so much new because it is privatized, but new because it represents the private pursuit of political authenticity. Such findings have broad implications for those critics who would write off privately sponsored civic space as “astroturfing” or “democracy, inc.” While there is a burgeoning market for “real” utopias, the civic empowerment they produce for different stakeholders must be investigated not just in terms of the extent to which political and economic outcomes are interpenetrated in practice, but also the ways in which they are moralized as distinct. This chapter argues that the particular manner in which public deliberation is civic-ized contributes to its utility as one form of quiet regulation for sponsors.

Moralizing the Market for Deliberation

Deliberative democracy scholars have elaborated three different types of responses to the rise of markets for deliberation and the resulting commercialization of democratic processes, which can be categorized according to Hirschman’s typology of perspectives on markets as feeble, civilizing, or destructive. In general, deliberative democracy scholars tend to focus on the political rather than commercial aspects of deliberation, and those scholars who have recognized markets for deliberation in most cases have
minimized the potential impact of economic logics on political processes, arguing that professional process production only affects a minor corner of the field and does not represent a significant portion of deliberative practice. The area of disagreement here is in the extent to which deliberation is impervious to the market; as such, these perspectives reflect the conception of markets as feeble.15 As we will argue, this assumption that markets are irrelevant to politics neglects the ways in which (a) the economic dimensions of deliberative processes are pervasive topics of field discourse and negotiation and (b) understanding the economic and civic outcomes of deliberation in fact requires investigating how those outcomes are negotiated alongside each other in the deliberation market.

In contrast, scholar-practitioners Hendriks and Carson lay out the two civilizing and destructive poles of the debate for those scholars who do raise concerns about market colonization, presenting two scenarios for the rise of deliberative facilitation as an industry, one entailing the “prolific spread of deliberative democracy through market forces” and the other producing “competition resulting in non-deliberative and undemocratic outcomes.”16 While Hendriks and Carson assert that the former, civilizing scenario is more likely, in which deliberation sustains a professional “community of practice” “richer than just a ‘marketplace,’” some critics have been far more concerned about the negative implications of a market for deliberative processes, particularly in regard to the commodification of participatory products and services.17

David Mosse, both an academic and a practitioner on development projects, critiques the marketing of participatory development agendas and the commodification of participation in a project with which he was involved: “Through skilful public relations the project management succeeded in establishing ‘participation’ as a technique/commodity and itself as the primary local source and supplier, and reaped the rewards of high-profile visibility, and reputation. . . . What it meant was that participation (ultimately a matter of shifting relations of power) could be formatted, printed, wrapped (sometimes quite literally in coloured tissue paper) and delivered as a gift.”18 Action researchers Kashefi and Mort criticize “the extractive, incidental outputs of the consultation industry”:

This network of academics, market researchers, consultants, trainers, advisors, and public relations workers has an ever-increasing supply of new conferences, training workshops, toolkits, Do-It-Yourself Guides and How-To manuals to promote and sell; it has a plethora of fixed models of consultation that are formulaic and can be learned, packaged, and replicated without being contextualized or situated. The guaranteed output of this process is “the public view” in an unproblematic format, easily digestible by the policy process.19

Ryfe similarly describes market-oriented practitioners, who “brandish a dizzying array of tools, guides, handbooks, and methods.”20 Swyngedouw argues that, “while enabling new forms of participation,” democratic governance reforms produce a “substantial democratic deficit” because “the democratic character of the political sphere is increasingly eroded by the encroaching imposition of market forces that set the ‘rules of the game.’”21
Like those who believe that deliberation is inherently resistant to the market, those who believe the market is destructive claim that deliberative and market values are antithetical. A deliberation “industry” is either impossibly ironic or oxymoronic, and it can’t produce the civic benefits (such as community building and empowerment) that deliberative democrats seek. As Somers argues, “Pairing social together with capital actually threatens the very social relations upon which social capital depends.” Feeble, civilizing, and destructive approaches have been extensively critiqued in the economic sociology literature, but the key point for this analysis is that the researchers and scholar-practitioners cited above apply moral judgments to the deliberation market without attending to how such moral arguments are deployed by industry actors themselves to justify or market their services. Economic sociologists provide a useful theoretical perspective on understanding and contextualizing the ways in which moral perspectives on markets are deployed in practice. These scholars argue that markets are explicitly “moralized”—an approach that allows researchers to investigate how this is accomplished, and how such processes are entangled with the creation and ongoing development of markets themselves. While much of this research has focused on the extent to which seemingly rationalized markets are actually permeated with struggles over social and moral values, others have investigated those markets for products that are acutely invested with “moral ambivalence,” such as life insurance, organ donation, and adoption markets. This study investigates a market for the idealized political “good” of deliberative democracy, in order to understand the ways in which moral values associated with politics, and particularly ambivalence about the relationship of politics to markets, affect the practical production of political processes. In doing so, we describe an understudied dimension of moralized markets—a “civic-ized” market that is increasingly typical in economic markets for the production of structured events designed to reinvigorate civil society. This politically valenced moralization of markets works through nuanced mechanisms, which involve both the rejection of “conventional” market values and an embrace of “authentic,” “responsible” citizenship as critical to profitability. In attempting to understand the “civic-ization” of the deliberation market, the analysis below reveals that industry actors themselves use both destructive and civilizing perspectives, often simultaneously, to advance their interests in the field—asserting not a blanket condemnation or uncritical celebration of market interests, but carving out an idealized middle landscape of civic purpose, in which the wild nature of the market and the corrupted humanity of urban politics are tamed by seasoned pastoralists with a calling for deliberation.

Defining the Public Deliberation Industry

In order to contextualize the economic dimensions of public deliberation, it is first necessary to understand the development of a professional industry that is dedicated to public deliberation consulting. The field of professional public deliberation facilitation developed in the United States in the 1990s and 2000s, and it is supported
organizationally by two major professional associations; national and community-based foundations; specialized training, certificate, and degree programs; and many smaller methods organizations and academic institutes. The International Association of Public Participation Practitioners, or IAP3, was founded in 1990 with the goal of promoting "the values and best practices associated with involving the public in government and industry decisions which affect their lives." The association changed its name to the International Association of Public Participation, or IAP2, in 1996, to reflect its expanded mission: "an organization which looks beyond the formal practitioner to include all people involved in public participation." With 300 members at its first conference in 1992, the association grew by 2009 to include 921 members in the United States and Canada and another 609 in other countries. The U.S.-based National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation, or NCDD, was formed after foundation-sponsored conferences in 2001 and 2002 on engaging communities through D&D (dialogue and deliberation) techniques. Founder Sandy Heierbacher and other conference organizers formed an association of fifty individual and organizational members, which has grown to two thousand members and has inspired similar professional associations in Canada and other countries. NCDD's mission, according to Heierbacher, draws a disparate group of consultants, funders, academics, software developers, and enthusiasts together: "All of us in this field would like to see a future in which every individual has the chance to participate in their communities, in politics, in organizations, and make a difference when it comes to making decisions about things that they care about."

Before describing the methods used to study the public deliberation industry, it is critical to describe briefly the object of analysis and further define key terms. The term "public deliberation" is shorthand for "public dialogue and deliberation," and it is used here to refer to facilitated processes aimed at engaging the public and relevant stakeholders with organizations in more intensive ways than traditional, one-way public outreach and information. Public deliberation processes can range from two-way dialogue meetings to more properly "deliberative" processes, which give lay participants an opportunity to learn about, discuss, and change their preferences regarding policy options. The aggregated input resulting from deliberative processes provides rich information to administrators on participant preferences and, in cases in which decision-making power is turned over to participants, may determine the course of organizational action. The terms "public engagement," "public participation," and "public deliberation" are typically used interchangeably by practitioners in the field to refer to the broad spectrum of reforms aimed at broadening and deepening lay roles in governance. We use the terms "practitioner," "professional," "consultant," and "facilitator" to refer to those actors, whether self-employed or working in a nonprofit or private organization, who are paid to provide facilitation services and products (kits and materials, software and websites, and preference aggregation systems like polling keypads) to client organizations. The term "sponsor" refers to client organizations, but also to third-party organizations, such as foundations, media and real estate development companies, and banks, that may subsidize process facilitation services on behalf of client organizations like public agencies or community-based nonprofits. Sponsors may
also underwrite process costs intended to subsidize participant engagement (through stipends, translation and childcare services, or transportation).

Typically, the responsibilities of the public deliberation consulting firm involve the full range of services required for process design and implementation, including production of informational materials, stakeholder outreach and process marketing, selection of process methods, design of topical scope and coverage, recruitment of participants, recruitment and training of volunteer small-group facilitators, overall facilitation and “master of ceremonies” duties, event logistics, continued communication and follow-up with participants, presentation to the client of process outcomes, and evaluation of process efficacy. Some tasks may be outsourced to subcontractors for large projects, but most contractors provide the complete range of process design and facilitation services from inception to evaluation, which may last from a few months, in the case of engagement on pandemic flu-planning priorities, to ten years or more in the case of stakeholder collaborations on long-term processes like contaminated-site remediation. As consultants, public deliberation facilitators move among multiple institutional contexts, communities, and regions. Because of their mobility, this group of organizations and professionals comprises a “portable community” that comes together primarily through online outlets such as listservs, over the phone in teleconferences and online meetings called “webinars,” and in face-to-face conferences in business hotel chains and on college campuses.31

Methods

This project has employed techniques appropriate for a “deterritorialized ethnography” of an emergent industry characterized by the extensive use of online communities and networks.32 The first author conducted participant observation between 2006 and 2012 at field sites in major cities across the United States and Canada, in a wide variety of forums for peer-to-peer discussions regarding public engagement practice. To complement this research, informal interviews, analysis of archival documents and images, and a nonrandom online survey of deliberation practitioners were also conducted.33 As a multimethod field study, analysis involved cross-referencing the many different forms of data collected in different sites and organizational settings in order to confirm that inductive findings from one site or source also surfaced in other sites and among different kinds of actors.34 Ethnographic research of this kind is ideal for identifying “the logics of particular contexts” and “the strategies through which governance is attempted, experienced, resisted and revised, taken in historical depth and cultural context.”35

The intent of this methodology is to explore practitioner discourse with each other and with clients and stakeholders regarding the business of deliberative facilitation and the economic, political, and social interests pursued within. As such, it resembles the research focus of Healy and Zelizer in their own analyses of moral rhetoric as articulated by organizations and actors in different industries.36 Because we have focused our data collection on the industry, the research described here is by no means
a comprehensive assessment of changes in economic supply and demand for deliberation facilitation services or a fiscal sociology of deliberation. It does, however, allow for an appreciation of the substantial effort that practitioners invest in framing the civic spaces of deliberation as morally worthwhile and protected from both profit-seeking and politicized interests.

A Community, Not an Industry

Contrary to the assertions of those deliberation scholars who adopt the "feeble markets" perspective, deliberation practitioners are highly interested in the role of the market in their work and regularly discuss with each other and with their clients the relationship between civic logics and business interests. These discourses draw on both civilizing and destructive perspectives on markets, allowing for a closer look at the way practitioners “civic-ize” a market for political process.

Practitioners overwhelmingly describe the deliberation industry as a “community of practice” that rejects commercialism and “slick” “peddling.” This perspective mirrors the claims of the scholars described above that market values are destructive of deliberative social relations. In a separate article, we explain how practitioners argue that economic perspectives are inadequate for understanding the complex, long-term benefits of deliberation. Quotes from industry documents like the one that begins this chapter routinely state the incompatibility of participation and economics. Facilitators actively work to prevent the “commodified nightmare” feared by deliberation industry critics, in part through an emphasis on their practice as an evangelical, selfless mission. Intellectual property is shared extensively on listservs, and downloadable books are “all free for the taking.” At conferences for dialogue and deliberation professionals, the “free marketplace” ethic borrows extensively from the open source and “free culture” movements, with which there is some crossover among attendees. Consultants volunteer their services extensively, and they self-publish guides and newsletters to promote the larger aims of the “community of practice.”

Nevertheless, the sense that greed is incompatible with the community mission of deliberation does not mean that practitioners reject the private sector as a venue for their services. One listserv member who conducts work with private clients says, “It's about engagement . . . the venue is irrelevant.” Indeed, deliberation in private settings scrupulously maintains its “civic” framing of citizen-centered discussions around common purpose, providing ammunition to “feeble” markets perspectives that deliberation is not contaminated by market logics even while it has spread to private venues. Graphic facilitation from processes conducted within corporate settings reveals discussions permeated with critiques of “old” ways of doing business in favor of more contemporary, sustainable collaborations among people with “shared” values. One such illustration describes “Fossil Values” in business and government, including the phrases “Free markets are always right” and “Legislation 'He will fix it.'” The “hierarchical,” “individual-centric” sense that “someone must lose for someone else to win” is replaced in deliberation by a collaborative spirit, depicted for employees of one oil
company by a sketch of men and women holding hands in a circle, around a banner titled "doing whatever it takes... together."46

For the purposes of this chapter, however, the question is not the extent to which processes actually enhance social capital, creatively challenge convention, or empower stakeholder critiques that deliberation scholars would judge authentic.47 Instead, this project investigates the ways in which the discourses invoked by practitioners as protecting the civic spirit of deliberation are in fact critical to the marketing of deliberation.48 As such, the "social value" of privately sponsored deliberation is a readily identifiable product with economic and political value for sponsors, even as practitioners take pride in scrupulously rejecting conventional political and economic logics as "fossil values." A better question regards how the melding of civic rejuvenation and organizational problem solving is negotiated in practice—particularly with respect to how readily "civic" discourses and critiques of "business as usual" familiar in the private sector are adopted in the public sector. The following sections describe the ways in which consultants celebrate the uniqueness and irreducibility of their art, while at the same time embracing business practices and tools that gauge the authenticity of deliberative transformations.

*From Consumers to Citizens: Deliberation as a Means of Invoking Civic Transformation*

Much of the literature on deliberative democracy has focused on improving process design, and enhanced process design is a major selling point for the added value that deliberation consultants provide to sponsors.49 In promoting these contributions, practitioners are at pains to assert the civic value of professionally managed democratic interventions, and they do so by balancing claims about the artfulness of their custom designs and the ways in which they revamp a civic space that is currently polluted by a "consumer" orientation on the part of demanding and disengaged publics.

Practitioners emphasize that "good" public deliberation, as opposed to "fake public participation," is distinguished by high-touch, long-term, artfully designed facilitation substantially customized to the needs of individual clients and particular communities.50 One leading independent facilitator describes his projects in this way: "Every single one of them has its own complexity to it, and every single one—none of them are cookie cutters and none of them are pre-designed. They're all sort of unique in one way or another."51 One practitioner's website emphasizes the "art" of meeting client needs through good process design: "The organization is our canvas."52 Another website announces, "We do not offer the same prepackaged solutions to everyone. Our services are tailored to address the unique challenges facing each and every organization."53

The demanding settings of "designer democracy" should reflect the "localized democratic vernacular," in contrast to the hollow "public rituals" represented by standard hearings and contentious politics, wherein citizens are treated as passive "customers."54 In one primer describing "Authentic Public Engagement vs. Business as Usual,"
a leading organization lays out the connection between inauthentic forms of politics and business:

To the extent that citizens are considered at all, it is usually as consumers or clients of government. . . . At worst, cynical, empty public relations gestures prevail, as in the rigged “town meetings” that are so common these days. With participants screened and questions carefully controlled, such counterfeit engagement contributes mightily to the cynicism that is so prevalent among citizens today.55

Here, the civic spaces of ordinary politics are framed as contaminated by virtue of being mass produced for passive consumption, with “cynical, empty” PR on government’s side mirrored by “cynicism” on the part of citizen-consumers.

“Designer democracy,” by contrast, is led by “a host of organizations that are assisting communities with cutting edge processes which are custom-made to fit local contexts,” such that “communities are actually branding their unique civic processes as a special feature of community life” with names like “the Hampton Approach” or “the Arlington Way.”56 While by no means the norm in facilitation practice, designer processes produced by boutique consultancies are the state of the art, command the highest premiums in the field, and are highlighted repeatedly as models of good practice in conferences, trainings, and scholarship.57 The National Research Council’s definitive report on public participation in environmental decision making devotes two out of nine chapters to the importance of understanding the contexts of the decision-making and community setting prior to designing a public engagement process.58 Practically, this takes the form of extensive individual conversations with community members and stakeholders prior to deliberative design, a subject covered intensively in IAP2 public participation certification training.59

It also takes the form of integrating the visual and performing arts into processes as a way of introducing a noninstrumental, one-of-a-kind, and creative culture of deliberation, whether through graphic recording of dialogue of the sort described above, musical performances, drumming, collaborative poetry performances, individually painted “peace tiles,” or “playback theater.” Creative process design should engender the creativity of participants as well; a facilitator dedicated to advancing the use of the “expressive arts” in facilitation describes how “people from all over the world participate in these transformative programs, awakening their creative juices and discovering the authentic self.”60 Participants are encouraged to “move into a left-brain/creative mode” and “leave judgement behind”—both of their own artistic skills and of others, including process organizers.61

Group art projects where every participant contributes (a 3 x 5 index card to a wall mosaic, for example) are a way of reflecting the group back to itself: “Seeing everyone’s together creates a sense of community as well, and each person can see themselves in that community.”62 Anyone has the potential to contribute to this kind of community-oriented creativity, including elite and nonelite participants from all kinds of organizations: “with CEOs and high school students, academics and nonprofit boards of directors.”63 In the Open Space process, “People really have the experience of open
power. They are in charge—which is the reason the level of spirit and creativity are so high." The transformation of passive consumers into creatively empowered citizens in authentic deliberative processes produces changes in feelings and attitudes. A sense of common interests can inspire deliberators to abandon fixed positions in favor of learning about and acting to implement collaborative solutions for the common good.

These changes are routinely described as intangible or incommensurable and not just because they are “unique” to each individual and each process. How does one measure the value of empowerment, sense of community, changes of heart, lessons learned, soul nourishment, or a feeling of belonging or inspiration to act? Practitioners and scholars go so far as to say that the influence of particular processes on decision making matters less than whether deliberation yields higher-order outcomes: giving participants “equal voice,” engendering civic attitudes, and “restoring community and therefore hope.” In the words of one foundation-sponsored study, “substance was almost irrelevant” when an intensive, ambitious deliberative process for Katrina survivors delivered what one mayor’s aide called “motherhood and apple pie.”

Even those who do endorse commensuration emphasize that social outcomes should be central. Gastil argues that, in evaluating deliberative processes, “Exclusive focus on problem-solution analysis, per se, would make our conception of deliberation overly rationalistic and overlook the social aspect of deliberation.” Instead, evaluators should consider “the wide range of additional benefits for public life that deliberative engagement processes hope to realize . . . from beneficial effects on individual citizen participants to broader impacts on the community or even the larger political culture . . . nearly every deliberative enterprise carries ambitions that extend outward in this way.”

Civic Change as a Business Imperative, Accountability as a Civic Imperative

While critiquing business values and the failings of a consumption-oriented model of current politics, practitioners nevertheless invoke contemporary corporate models of accountability and devolved responsibility as providing resources on which to reframe citizen expectations and produce “authentic” attitudinal and behavioral change. To this point, scholars have seen the civic outcomes of deliberation as valuable to sponsors because of their interest in social responsibility, with the side benefit of “reputational capital” gained by sponsoring processes that develop civic capacity. For example, Jacobs and colleagues argue that sponsors are “committed to the public-interest contributions of these forums and to reducing the costs to individuals of engaging in public talking.” New research points to the economic rather than social value of the “intangible” civic outcomes of deliberation, certainly not a surprise given that Molotch has long argued that urban-growth proponents reap substantial economic benefits from a “community ‘we feeling.’”

The fact that interest in the civic outcomes of deliberation has waxed in two decades marked by severe financial strain is no accident. According to Martin, “Democratic
states are likely to grant citizens rights of binding consultation at times of fiscal stress, when intensive state extraction of resources provokes citizen resistance that results in procedural concessions."70 Lee and Romano argue that not just governments, but also corporations and nonprofit organizations use deliberation when they face "existing or potential resistance to austerity policies" in "corporate reorganization, state retrenchment, and urban redevelopment."71 Deliberation is economically useful in these settings because it allows sponsors to "pluck more feathers with less squawking,"72 whether because it provides therapeutic benefits or because it channels citizen action away from costly collective challenges and toward individual commitments to tighten belts and pitch in. On one listserv, a facilitator asking for help with a process in a company facing downsizing is advised to include "the whole organization and see who cares to show up": "If people understand the issues and challenges well, and participate in the grieving process of restructuring, they can deal with the pain of downsizing better."73 A deliberative guidebook advises those who "want to start creating change right away" or "may feel discouraged by the fact that the kinds of changes you're hoping for may be realized too far into the future": "Have no fear! Here are some things you could do right now, which will soothe your anxieties because you will be doing something to address the issue you deeply care about. But also because the pressure isn't on your shoulders (yet) to organize a large effort or produce systemic community changes."74 Such hopeful "prospectancy" about change yet to come is a typical attitudinal outcome not just of deliberation but also of the many other forms of "empowerment projects" described by Eliasoph in this volume.

Contention and litigation are expensive; deliberation consultants offer to manage potential mobilization through "quitting of angry publics, small-scale actions in support of administrative goals, and greater tax morale."75 Deliberative proponents argue that the plague of economic self-interest and political special interests is exactly the reason to undertake a proactive deliberative process:

Officials fear that the demands of the public, both for spending and for information, will be insatiable. They worry that pressure from special interest groups or self-interested voters will warp the messages coming through. . . . Officials . . . often assume that more democratic engagement will lead to more demands for greater spending, with citizens not considering the trade-offs. In fact, practical experience suggests that consultations where citizens are given opportunities to discuss issues and wider scope to make trade-offs produce much richer and more thoughtful results.76

As such, creative participation produces civic changes that are both civically productive and profitable. In a British report called "Democracy Pays: How Democratic Engagement Can Cut the Cost of Government," the author argues that "deeper democratic engagement can increase productivity, both in pure economic terms, and in terms of 'civic productivity'—where neighbourhood and social civic action replaces higher-cost state intervention."77 Saving money is a virtue, not just for its own sake but because it invites citizens to take responsibility for themselves. Despite the fact that slick commercialism and "fake" participation are contrasted with the authenticity
of participatory, artistic, customized processes, neoliberal logics of contemporary governance—emphasizing devolved accountability and performance measurement—are key to framing the self-actualizing, expressive performances enacted in deliberation as morally rigorous and worthy of serious consideration.

Stakeholder demands on organizations and governments for rights and services are uncivic, in this framing, because they increase costs for sponsors and encourage "consumer" attitudes. The moral virtues of deliberation are directly linked to this new form of citizen "accountability"—as opposed to a "customer satisfaction" model. A workshop for public officials facing budget challenges teaches that from 1970 to 1999, the model of government that prevailed was a "vending machine" model in which "customer satisfaction" dominated; 2010 to the future is the age of "community as partner" and "citizen accountability." Discourses of citizen accountability, with the associated expectation of measurement to quality standards, may seem odd when participants themselves are being asked to turn off their right, rational brains and suspend judgment. In empowering deliberation attendees to be creative and active participants, sponsors can enact performance measurement routines that commensurate ostensibly just social outcomes; they also invoke a reciprocal accountability from those being engaged for participating as requested. The founder of Open Space argues that "Open Space seems to create an incredible sense of community. The key is, it's a safe space within which people can take authority and responsibility for themselves." In this way, the soft value of "sense of community" is linked not to the virtues of collective action or doing for others, but to creative self-actualization and responsibility for self, individual-level outcomes that can be measured in terms of attitudes toward taxation and volunteering, for example. Creativity is efficient, in the words of one consultancy, which argues that their services are

an engine for creativity. From beginning to end, our work is infused with the use of multiple intelligences, principles of emergence and the power of play. An exciting environment with engaged participants is created when all of these elements "fire" at the same time leading to unimagined creative results in record time. As the harmonizing of "play" with "results in record time" indicates, business logics are not hostile to creative civic transformations but are framed as civilizing forces that rationalize authentic engagement. As Fleming argues, businesses have embraced personal authenticity and play as informal social control, yielding more effective ways of accomplishing traditional capitalist goals such as labor discipline.

Hendriks and Carson similarly celebrate the development of public engagement accountability standards imported from business as a civilizing potential outcome of a market for deliberation: "A diverse deliberative profession emerges resulting in the development of international standards. Pressure to maintain quality standards rises, leading to a growth in training, accreditation, and independent evaluations of deliberative processes." Independent evaluations ensure that deliberative interventions are "real" and of high quality, systematically yielding to the citizen the empowerment and
individual action that deliberation promises. A report on deliberative training offered to public administrators highlights the transformational nature of authenticity on the part of government bureaucrats: “Civic engagement involves ‘culture change’ and ‘authenticity’... There are inherent tensions in the idea of government sponsoring citizens to do what citizens need to do for themselves. When this tension is handled well, public administrators are acting... ‘authentically.’”

Not surprisingly, given the affective discourses of worker self-actualization in the “cultural circuit of capitalism,” business administrators are typically understood to be ahead of the curve in abandoning a passive, consumption-oriented culture in favor of crafting reliably authentic engagement experiences for “citizen” stakeholders. One consultant recommends borrowing from the field of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in terms of commensurating soft outcomes like culture change: “The CSR field while relatively new, has a lot more experience when it comes to reporting and measuring things that are largely intangible. It made me realise that we should look at the lessons from the CSR industry’s experience with reporting when we look at how we can implement some evaluation and reporting in our industry.”

Deliberative methods guidebooks draw on corporate change management models, including Six Sigma, General Electric’s WorkOut method, and Ford’s Whole-Scale Change method, as models for deliberative process. Similarly, survey respondents report Covey, IBM Jam, Scenario Planning, and other corporate trainings alongside public deliberation trainings like National Issues Forums. Businesses are regularly recruited as partners in supporting efforts to disseminate best practices and to reward accountability; the IAP2 provides event-naming rights and a number of other sponsorship opportunities to businesses for the Association’s “Core Values Awards,” a celebration of outstanding engagement projects.

The emerging market for online deliberation software is also negotiated in terms of moral discourses that blend civic transformation and economic virtues such as profitability. Such software provides front-end functions that guide participants through participatory budgeting and other deliberative methods online; its back-end functions allow for “fully integrated reporting functions.” Here the marketing of commensuration of deliberative outcomes and, in most cases, ranking and surveillance of stakeholders’ relative power, resistance-level, and participatory behaviors, is repeatedly highlighted. Even for explicitly disciplinary goals, however, social and economic outcomes are blended, with technologies providing participatory experiences that are both fiscally responsible and civically accountable. For participatory budgeting, a deliberative technique whose diffusion is explored by Baiocchi and Ganuza in this volume, and which is typically studied in terms of its effectiveness in producing indigenous civic capacity, a deliberation software firm advertises that “participatory budgeting is sweeping the globe as the latest best-practice for governance transparency and community engagement.” Its proprietary budget allocator is “the most efficient and risk free way to get your community participating in planning your budget.”

A website for “stakeholder engagement evaluation software” asserts that “the software has been designed around the United Nations Brisbane Declaration on Community
Engagement. . . . This software program is an attempt to make evaluation and the Brisbane Declaration more accessible and easier for practitioners to use in a very practical way.” Promised results include the following:

- Improved Outcomes
- Reduced risk
- Greater efficiency
- Lower cost
- Improved decision making
- Clear accountability

An analysis of the use of deliberative engagement software as a market device, and the way in which it may force changes in the marketing and practice of deliberation, is beyond the scope of this chapter. But the fact that the marketing of deliberative software is explicitly grounded in discourses of civic best practices and international public engagement standards is interesting precisely because deliberative software commensurates the outcomes of deliberation in starkly revealing ways.

The use of management software in deliberative projects is advertised as enhancing “stakeholder radar,” with proprietary techniques aimed at gauging stakeholders’ potential for transformation. Stakeholder management software is advertised as supporting “the assessment of each stakeholder’s support for the project (either positive or negative) as well as their receptiveness to messages about the project,” which facilitates “a tailored communication plan” that “keep[s] the project and its key stakeholders aligned.” New tools integrating deliberative events with communications and research strategies have significantly enhanced the scope of custom-tailored deliberative process management and the scale of ongoing engagement monitoring. But the use of the term “alignment” is not unusual in online discussions among deliberation practitioners, with some version of “align” occurring in 11 percent of all files in the listserv database.

The civic transformations that “real” deliberation produces may be authentically felt and personally empowering for participants even if they are in support of administrators’ aims, including saving money and reducing costly forms of contention. However, the fact that deliberative projects produce civic authenticity as an intentional outcome should not be uncritically celebrated before realizing that the “social profits” of deliberation have economic and political value for sponsors. Discourses of moral virtue in deliberation look very similar to ideological trends occurring in contemporary business, regardless of how much “old” ways are criticized. The collective good in such processes is redefined in terms of whether civic discourse and citizen actions reflect administrator priorities and economic efficiency, which may shift the direction of civic capacity away from critical forms of social change, even as it enhances civic capacity and cultures that reward citizen action. Simply determining which processes are “real” or “good” deliberation versus which are “bad” will not suffice, inasmuch as the value of processes to clients stems from the social and civic productivity and demonstrable accountability they are able to claim.
When Good Citizenship Means Financial Sacrifice: Deliberative Anticommercialism and the Selling of Political Authenticity

What is clear is that we have reached a point in which the kind of divides that kept capitalists and anti-capitalists apart are not easily separated linguistically and, in some cases, even practically. . . In other words, capitalist firms are increasingly utilizing the weapons of the weak—contextual fleeting practices—to make themselves strong.

—Nigel Thrift

Deliberation facilitators with a personal commitment to the production of transformative, authentic experiences on the part of citizen stakeholders pursue such outcomes despite the professional risks involved in alienating clients, and they often perform volunteer facilitation at personal cost to their own livelihoods. Such actions indicate that the pursuit of profit is not the sole, or even the primary, motivation for deliberation practitioners—and deliberation scholars who focus on practitioners' self-sacrifice and passionate evangelism can be excused for understanding deliberative innovation as a progressive reform movement. But unpacking the multiple ways in which deliberation consultants construct their activities as morally meaningful provides traction on the complex nature of specifically civic moral markets. The construction of a civicized market for facilitated deliberation in particular may have consequences not only for conventional economic aims such as profitability but also for political, social, and economic equality.

This chapter takes up such a challenge in two ways. First, we articulate that practitioners' moral discourses of "destructive" and "civilizing" practices—their simultaneous embrace of anticommercialism and accountability—both have their roots in the contemporary "cultural circuit of capitalism" defined by Boltanski and Chiapello, Thrift, and others. Second, scholars of deliberation should avoid distinguishing "bad"/commercialized or "good"/civic-ized deliberation in favor of paying attention to the ways in which the moral framing of the deliberation market as civic is itself a mechanism for greater market attachment and enhanced, if "quiet," management of publics—and not just on behalf of capitalist firms, as Thrift suggests in the above quote.

Authentic civic action and enhanced technologies of management are by no means mutually exclusive, nor is their creative combination restricted to civic-ized settings in the private sector. This finding corresponds with recent research, including Martin's in this volume, investigating the fiscal and managerial implications of deliberation as it has been employed in particular historical contexts.

The protective halo reserved for deliberation as a "real utopian" political activity has kept deliberation from being considered alongside other forms of stakeholder management and public relations, except as an idealized alternative. Removing that halo to research deliberation's moral claims allows us to make connections with scholarship investigating the normative practices and larger consequences of other forms of subsidized participation, citizen empowerment, and civic partnerships.

This task is even more urgent because scholars outside of this volume have yet to connect these democratizing practices and their potentially regressive outcomes.
in a systematic way, despite the fact that there is evidence that deliberation is used strategically in tandem with the grassroots lobbying described by Walker, the digital campaigning described by Kreiss, and other top-down “empowerment projects” as described by Eliasoph. Inasmuch as researchers have a moral obligation to engaged publics in their studies of deliberation in action, it is less to make deliberative empowerment ideals “work” better in practice than to imagine more ambitious opportunities for the “systems change” that deliberation repeatedly offers, and rarely delivers—even, and especially, when it works as promised.

NOTES

1. Involve (2005).
2. Fung and Wright (2003a); Wright (2010).
3. Vogel (1989); Evans and Boyte (1992); Crenson and Ginsberg (2002); Wolin (2010).
4. Walker, McQuarrie, and Lee (this volume).
7. These include 3M, Abbott Laboratories, Allstate, Altria Group, American Express, American Red Cross, AstraZeneca, AT&T, Autotrader, Coca Cola, Cisco, the Clinton Global Initiative, the Consumer Electronics Association, Eastman Chemical, the Enterprise Foundation, the Environmental Protection Agency, Exxon, FedEx, the Food and Drug Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Government Accountability Office, Georgia Pacific, Girl Scouts of America, GlaxoSmithKline, the International Monetary Fund, Kraft, Macy’s, SAP America, Shell Chemical, Sierra Club, State Farm, Sun Microsystems, Sun Trust Bank, Teradata, the United Nations, United Way, the U.S. Postal Service, World Bank, and the World Economic Forum.
8. National Conference on Citizenship (2007: 17). In a 2003 survey, Jacobs, Cook, and Delli Carpini found that 25 percent of American adults sampled had participated in a “face-to-face deliberation” on a public issue (2009: 37); the percentage in this survey is likely higher due to the fact that this question did not require deliberation to occur at a “meeting” or with others with diverse views.
10. Thrift (2005). Thrift describes this cultural circuit as an “extraordinary discursive apparatus” including “business schools, management consultants, management gurus and the media,” yielding “continual critique of capitalism, a feedback loop which is intended to keep capitalism surfing along the edge of its own contradictions” (6).
11. de Bakker et al. (2013).
25. As in the deliberation literature, scholars of politics who address market influences typi­
cally assume the “destructive markets” perspective, with arguments fearing the commer­
cialization and commodification of public life through media conglomerates and interest
groups. The approach used in this chapter draws on the work of recent institutional
scholars such as Walker (2009) and Kreiss (2012) on the extent to which markets and
technologies may produce civic opportunities at the same time that they channel them in
particular directions.
26. Database files. All database files are stored electronically by the first author.
27. Database files.
28. Database files.
29. Interview with first author, September 24, 2006.
30. Leininger notes that “in common usage, ‘deliberation and democratic governance’ =
active citizenship = deliberative democracy = citizen involvement = citizen-centered
work = public engagement = citizen participation = public dialogue = collaborative gov­
ernance = public deliberation. Different people define these terms in different ways—and
in most cases, the meanings are blurry and overlapping” (2009b: 5). While public “con­
sultation” connotes one-way processes in the United States, in the Commonwealth coun­
tries, it generally connotes more deliberative methods.
31. Chayko (2008). A 2009 membership survey by the IAP2 found that 68 percent of respon­
dents preferred to communicate with the association through an online method (N =
169; database files).
33. See Lee (2011) for more information on data collection, coding, and limitations.
37. For economic supply and demand, see Hendriks and Carson (2008) for a chart of the
growth of privately facilitated processes over time; for a related fiscal sociology, see Mar­
tin, this volume.
38. Lee, McNulty, and Shaffer (2013). This chapter is adapted from Lee’s forthcoming book
and from Lee, McNulty, and Shaffer (2013).
41. Database files.
44. Database files.
45. Database files.
46. Database files. All quotes are extracted from examples of graphic facilitation.
47. The question of whether deliberation as practiced meets normative ideals as developed
in political theory has preoccupied deliberation researchers (Thompson 2008) to the
exclusion of an investigation of the ways in which “real” deliberation, practiced with
scrupulous attention to remedying inequality and challenging authority, might be useful
in particular historical and institutional settings in managing or marginalizing the challenges it produces. Not incidentally, deliberative democratic theory is a useful validation tool in these efforts (Mutz 2008).


50. Snider (2010).

51. Interview transcript.

52. Database files.

53. Database files.


59. For this reason, “high-quality” deliberative processes actually move stakeholder grievances out of public view; most, but by no means all, stakeholders are willing to trade increased decision-making power for less access to public claims making (Lee 2007). Note that this relocation of politicized negotiation is accompanied by an increase in creative expression, as described in the next paragraph.

60. Database files.

61. Database files.

62. Database files.

63. Database files.

64. Database files.


70. Martin, this volume.

71. Lee and Romano (2013: 742).


73. Database files.

74. Database files.

75. Lee and Romano (2013: 748).


77. Zacharzewski (2010: 8).

78. Database files.


80. Database files.

81. Database files, emphasis ours.


84. Database files.

86. Database files.
88. That business support for accountability and performance measurement has reputa-
tional value might provoke cynicism from “hostile markets” critics. Nevertheless, the
Core Values Awards are so rigorous that no awardee was selected for Organization of the
Year in 2009 because none of the organizations entered met the IAP2 award committee’s
standards.
89. On participatory budgeting, see Baiocchi (2003; this volume).
90. Database files.
91. Database files.
93. Database files.
94. Database files.
95. N = 8,473.
97. McFall (2009).
98. Hajer (2005); Segall (2005); Head (2007); Maginn (2007); Hendriks (2009).
100. Boyle and Silver (2005); Soule (2009); Walker (2009); Kreiss (2012).