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Distinguishing Participation and Inclusion

Kathryn S. Quick[1] and Martha S. Feldman[2]

Abstract

This article argues that participation and inclusion are independent dimensions of public engagement and elaborates the relationships of inclusion with deliberation and diversity. Inclusion continuously creates a community involved in defining and addressing public issues; participation emphasizes public input on the content of programs and policies. Features of inclusive processes are coproducing the process and content of decision making, engaging multiple ways of knowing, and sustaining temporal openness. Using a community of practice lens, we compare the consequences of participatory and inclusive practices in four processes, finding that inclusion supports an ongoing community with capacity to address a stream of issues.

Keywords

inclusion, participation, public engagement, deliberation, diversity, community of practice

In this article, we focus on the practices of organizing public engagement and their consequences for the community capacities that public engagement creates. We suggest that conflicts regarding the utility of public engagement are frequently the result of conflating what are actually two independent dimensions of public engagement: participation and inclusion. We define the two dimensions as follows: Participation practices entail *efforts to increase public input oriented primarily to the content of programs and policies*. Inclusion practices entail *continuously creating a community involved in coproducing processes, policies, and programs for defining and addressing public issues*. Although inclusion is a term often used to designate concerns related to marginalized populations, our use of this term expands the meaning. In a later section of the paper, we explore the connections between demographic diversity and inclusion.

Distinguishing participation and inclusion illuminates the implications of different practices of public engagement for the capacities of the community to make decisions and implement programs. Conflation of participation and inclusion under the overarching category of "public engagement," or simply "participation," muddles both the practice and theory of organizing democratic engagement. While public participation is often a mandated part of decision-making processes, how public participation is implemented can exacerbate tensions between government organizations and members of the public. Public bodies may go to great lengths to create forums for the public to provide input on policy choices, only to have the public decline to take part because they do not feel their participation will make a difference, or protest after having participated that the discussion was somehow inauthentic or unsatisfactory. The consequences include participation burnout by well-meaning members of the public, government organizations, and politicians (Aleshire 1970; Taylor 2003;

DelliCarpini, Cook, and Jacobs 2004; Koontz and Johnson 2004). In this article, we describe how planners, public managers, or residents organize public engagement in different ways and the consequences of those practices.

We begin with a review of key constructs from the literature on public engagement and communities of practice. We then distinguish participatory and inclusive patterns for organizing engagement, before analyzing four decision-making processes in a single city to elucidate features of the inclusive and participatory practices and how they create different kinds of communities. In the latter part of the article, we discuss what inclusion contributes to practice and scholarship on public engagement, focusing on the implications of inclusion for community building, deliberation, and diversity. We conclude with the implications of this analysis for conceptualizing communities of practice.

Constituting Communities through Public Engagement

Public engagement has become a fundamental feature of the public–government relationship (Reich 1998; Roberts 2004; Innes and Booher 2004). The body of literature related to practices of public engagement in planning and other public

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issues is immense, appearing under the umbrellas of citizen participation, civic engagement, collaborative governance, and inclusion and representation in democracy. A full review of this literature is beyond the scope of this paper. We focus on the question of how different forms of engagement, empirically or normatively described in the literature, constitute different kinds of communities. These communities may be intentional or incidental, explicit or implicit, and exclusive or inclusive. Our premise is that engagement practices are not merely techniques to be acquired in order to organize meetings effectively, but highly consequential choices that shape the inherently political process of planning and policy making (Lowry, Adler, and Milner 1997; Bryson 2004). We turn to the community of practice literature, described below, to examine how engagement practices have different consequences for the kinds of communities or publics constituted through engagement.

Public Engagement

Most of the literature on public engagement conceptualizes the relationships between government and other sectors in one of two ways: as adversarial or potentially collaborative. We utilize this lens to draw attention to the role of public–government relationships in shaping the community of actors who address public problems. The first approach dichotomizes the roles of the public and government in bringing about public engagement. In one vein of this literature, the community provides the impetus for public involvement in decision making. The government may be more or less receptive, and the public may be more or less aggressive in its insistence to play a role, but the general dynamic is from the outside in: the public must demand a role for itself in decision making (Arnstein 1969; Alinsky 1971; Friedmann 1987; Reardon 1998; Beard 2003). Another vein of this of literature describes people within the government who act on behalf of the public's interests. These include advocacy (Davidoff 1965), equity (Altschuler 1965; Krumholz and Forester 1990; Krumholz and Clavel 1994), and progressive (Clavel 1986, 2010) planners who utilize their positions within government, professional judgment, and ethical commitments to address what they know of the concerns of socioeconomically marginalized groups.

The second approach sees the relationship between government and the public as potentially collaborative and analyzes examples of collaboration to understand what can be done to support and enhance them. We fundamentally agree with this second approach, and would like to push it further. Research on collaborative governance describes interactive processes for making and implementing public policy or urban or regional planning (Healey 1997; Forester 1999; Abers 2000; Feldman and Khademian 2000, 2007; Vigoda 2002; Hajer and Wagenaar 2003; Fung and Wright 2003; Innes and Booher 2003; DelliCarpini, Cook, and Jacobs

2004; Roberts 2004; Crosby and Bryson 2005; O'Leary and Bingham 2006, 2009; Briggs 2008). Recent theorization of network governance analyzes cross-boundary collaborations within networks that include government and nongovernment actors (Kettl 2002; Booher and Innes 2002; Hajer and Wagenaar 2003; Goldsmith and Eggers 2004; Agranoff 2007; Sandfort and Milward 2008), while some scholarship on new public management reconceptualizes members of the public as partners rather than as customers of government (Denhardt and Denhardt 2000; Bovaird 2007). Public administrators and other stakeholders are often differentiated into designer/convenor and "participant" roles and are only sometimes coalesced as "co-learners" (Roberts 2004) who "co-evolve" the process (Innes and Booher 2003).

We propose that some forms of governance make use of community capacities to improve planning and policy outcomes in part by building community itself as a resource for decision making. The bodies of literature just reviewed recognize the importance of collaborative engagement processes, particularly deliberation, but often continue to reify divisions between actors, between issues, and between process and content in problem-solving efforts. The inclusive practices we analyze bring those boundaries into play, building connections among issues, among actors, and across problem-solving efforts.

Communities of Practice

To provide insight into the significance of practices that build community over time, this article builds on a third body of research, the communities of practice literature. Although community can be defined in a number of ways (geographical, demographic, etc.), through the community of practice lens we focus on the constitutive role of practices in creating community. Bringing theories of practice to the domain of public engagement draws attention to the importance of public management in enacting and changing social structures (Healey 1997; Forester 1999; Allmendinger 2002; Feldman and Khademian 2002; Hajer and Wagenaar 2003), including how creating and re-creating structures of engagement constrain and enable different kinds of publics and forms of engagement (Feldman 2010).

Building on Lave's (1988) path-breaking studies demonstrating the relationship between cognition and practice, Lave and Wenger (1991) articulated the idea that communities can be defined by situated practices that produce distinct ways of knowing and learning. Defined in this way, communities are not necessarily coincident with organizational, geographical, or demographic boundaries. Communities of practice learn and change through the practices they enact: as long as people are engaged in practices, community is being created, and the character of the practices defines the nature of the community. Participation in a community is accomplished by learning the practices, tacit and explicit, intended

and unintended, that make one part of a community (Lave and Wenger 1991; Brown and Duguid 1991). Much of the work on communities of practice has focused on learning related to work organizations (Brown and Duguid 1991; Orr 1996; Carlile 2002; Bechky 2003; Nicolini, Gherardi, and Yanow 2003); professional groups (Orr 1996; Yanow 2003; Bechky 2006; Kenney 2007); workplace teams (Currie, Waring, and Finn 2008); or occupations (e.g., butcher), identities (e.g., teenager), or venues (e.g., Alcoholics Anonymous) (Lave and Wenger 1991).

Research in planning, public management, and public affairs has rarely drawn upon the communities of practice concept. Some public management scholars describe designating and developing a community of practice, composed of a group with clear membership, such as a government agency, as a strategy for enhancing internal cohesion and knowledge management (Bate and Robert 2002; Dawes, Cresswell, and Pardo 2009) or organizational capacity building (Snyder and Briggs 2004). These practices impose the idea to strengthen an "insider" identity and bring newcomers into the group via a reinforcement and orientation to a specified set of practices. This is anathema to the original conceptualization of communities of practice, however, which holds that new members and changes in practices continually reconstitute the community such that it is not a fixed entity and there is no single authoritative "core" set of practices (Lave and Wenger 1991; Wenger 1998). Mandating canonical practices, "designing" communities of practice with the intention of constituting a certain identity, or labeling groups "communities of practice" to solidify internal cohesion, is inimical to their vitality as emergent entities (Brown and Duguid 1991; Orr 1996; Wenger 1998). Thus, Currie, Waring, and Finn (2008) describe explicit efforts to establish a unified "community of practice" within a public hospital as a misplaced strategy to create a "learning organization." The effort stymied shared learning by focusing on everyone having the same knowledge rather than on creating contexts in which people practiced together and evolved new ways of knowing through these practices.

The community of practice lens has been appropriated in ways consistent with the original conceptualization by planning and policy scholars as a way of enhancing our understanding of collaboration. In forest fire management, Goldstein and Butler (2010) distinguish "stakeholder" orientations to addressing problems collaboratively from "community of practice" orientations to networks organized to share professional expertise. They find that the latter offers the benefits of serving as a forum for including a variety of forms of knowledge, ongoing development of individual and collective expertise, and relationship building to "amplify the potential to address emergent problems" (Goldstein and Butler 2010, 240). McCoy and Vincent (2007) used communities of practice ideas to guide their management of collaborative planning projects, while Schweitzer, Howard, and Doran (2008) used them to oversee a policy research project, each involving

students, practicing professionals, and experts from various disciplines. Both teams of scholars found the framework helped them to include a range of stakeholders, encourage interchange among different perspectives, and use the experience as a community-building opportunity. Feldman and Khademian (2007) describe informational and relational practices through which public managers build communities of practice in which participants with political, technical, and experiential ways of knowing may bring their knowledge to bear on public issues. We extend the community of practice perspective to an explicit examination of public engagement.

Defining Participation and Inclusion

Our use of the community of practice perspective enables us to distinguish participation and inclusion by analyzing public engagement processes as they relate to community building over time. Scholars of "inclusive management" characterize a pattern of practices by public managers that facilitate the inclusion of public employees, experts, the public, and politicians in collaboratively addressing public problems (Feldman and Khademian 2000, 2002, 2007; Feldman et al. 2006; Feldman and Quick 2009; Feldman, Khademian, and Quick 2009; Quick 2010). Feldman and Khademian (2007) described inclusive practices as creating "communities of participation." In this article, we clarify this literature by defining the difference between participation and inclusion, showing the relevance of this distinction to managing processes of public engagement.

Inclusion is *not* a term we have coined to describe participation that we believe has been done particularly well. Instead, we argue that inclusion and participation are two different dimensions of public engagement and that organizing public management to incorporate both enhances the quality of the decisions reached and the community's long-term capacities. Specifically, participation is oriented to *increasing input* for decisions. Practices for organizing highly participatory processes encompass inviting many people to participate, making the process broadly accessible to and representative of the public at large, and collecting community input and using it to influence policy decisions. Some practitioners might describe a process that is successful in enhancing those practices as an "inclusive" one. We find, however, that it is useful to distinguish two sets of patterns, because enhancing *participatory* practices enriches the input received, while enhancing *inclusive* practices builds the capacity of the community to implement the decisions and tackle related issues. Inclusion is oriented to *making connections* among people, across issues, and over time. It is an expansive and ongoing framework for interaction that uses the opportunities to take action on specific items in the public domain as a means of intentionally creating a community engaged in an ongoing stream of issues. The absence of inclusion tends to reinforce divisions, for example, by
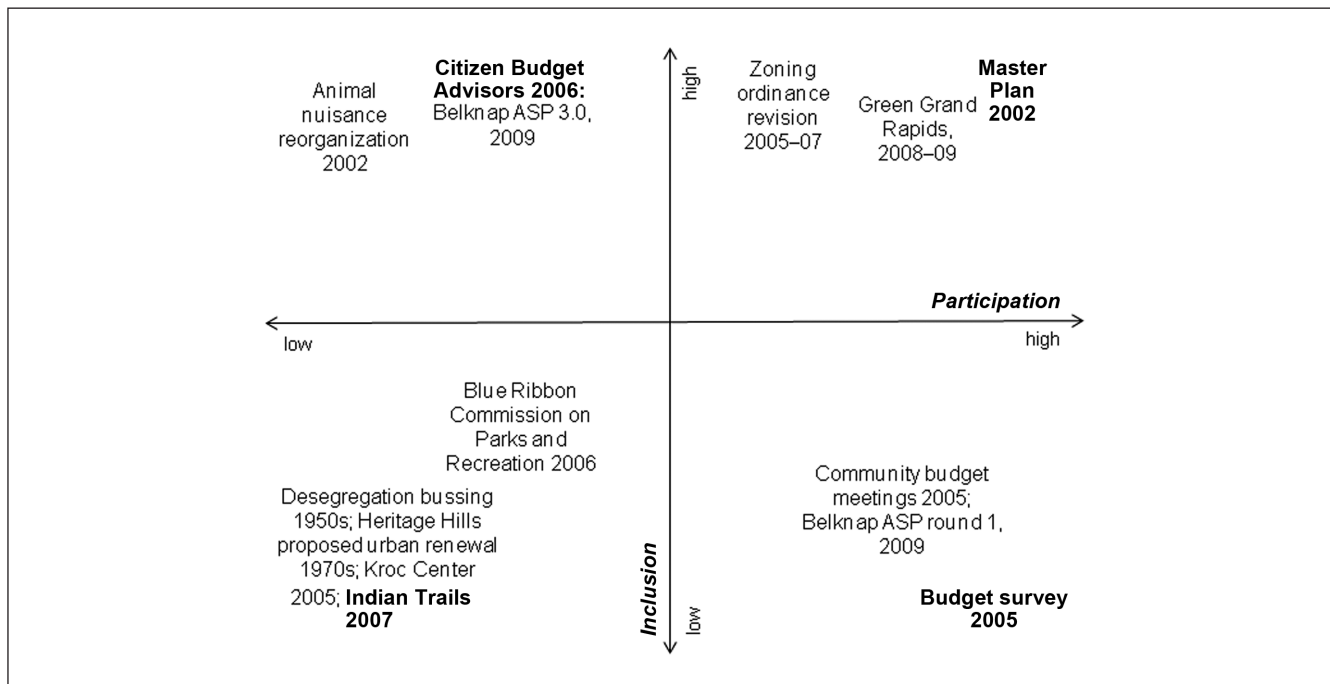
Figure 1. Public engagement processes mapped on the dimensions of participation and inclusion
Sources: Carron et al. 1998; Kadlecek 1996; LaMore and Supanich-Goldner 2000; Robinson 2006; Feldman and Quick 2009; Quick 2010; Logan, n.d.; authors' ongoing fieldwork

dichotomizing the "process designer" versus "process participant" or "government" versus "public" roles.

Inclusion understood in this way is somewhat different from the common use of the term to describe the openness of a process to socioeconomically diverse participants. We choose the word *inclusion* to describe connections made not only among individuals' and groups' points of view but connections across issues, sectors, and engagement efforts. In a later section, we address the overlap of inclusion and diversity, suggesting some ways to enhance diversity through combining participatory and inclusive practices. In the remainder of the paper, we use this distinction in our comparison of engagement processes in order to explore why it is important to understand these dimensions separately and to identify some key features of inclusive processes.

Research Methods

This research is part of a long-term, continuing ethnographic project in a single city: Grand Rapids, Michigan. Since beginning research with public managers and members of the public there in 1998, we have observed a pattern of strong commitment to engaging stakeholders in addressing the city's problems. Public managers, politicians, and neighborhood leaders have coupled this with ongoing experimentation with the formats for public engagement. On some occasions, all parties appear very satisfied with the opportunities and outcomes of engagement, and at other times, there has been

indifference to or angry backlashes against efforts to involve the public. Observing these dynamics prompted our questions about the relationships among formats for public involvement and the kinds of political communities they sustain.

Using the definitions of inclusion and participation above, we mapped, along low to high participation and low to high inclusion continua, fourteen processes that we and other scholars have observed in Grand Rapids (Figure 1). From this perspective, one can see that the dimensions of inclusion and participation are independent. Some processes are both participatory and inclusive, others are neither, and some processes are high on one dimension and low on the other. Each quadrant contains a number of engagement processes. The high–low cells (high participation, low inclusion and high inclusion, low participation) provide particularly persuasive evidence of the distinctiveness of the inclusion and participation dimensions.

To illuminate these relationships, in this paper we compare four cases (highlighted in bold), one from each quadrant, that together demonstrate a range of inclusive and participatory approaches to engagement. We selected these cases because we have particularly strong data for them and because our study participants consider them exceptional. The Master Plan has "almost been elevated to sainthood status in terms of process and inclusion" by people in Grand Rapids (Ian, city government manager, October 25, 2006).[1] Conversely, the Indian Trails decision was vehemently decried as undemocratic. The other two cases are contrasting

approaches to addressing a city budget crisis that has garnered intense, prolonged attention from many quarters. Following a thick description of each case, we compare their practices for organizing public engagement and the consequences for building community to show how participation practices differ from inclusion practices.

This analysis draws on data from more than one hundred interviews with forty-six study participants, including fourteen city government employees and thirty-two members of the public, composed of representatives of neighborhood and business organizations, consultants, nonprofit foundation staff, elected and appointed city officials, and individual residents. We used a theoretical sampling strategy (Glaser and Strauss 1967) through which we sought participants with knowledge of and opinions, both positive and negative, about the engagement processes we were studying. Participants were identified through references from other study participants, observing community meetings, and reviewing meeting minutes and media coverage. They were then invited to participate and interviewed by one or both authors, in person or by phone, primarily individually but occasionally in groups. We conducted confidential, unstructured, active interviews (Holstein and Gubrium 1995; Spradley 1979) in which we engaged the study participants not only in accounts of what they observed or experienced, but in sharing their interpretation of those events. They expressed and explained their opinions or feelings about a process or event, compared it with others, and suggested what might have been done better. In addition, between 2001 and 2010, one or both authors made eleven visits to the city, toured Grand Rapids with city staff and community organizers, and observed seven community meetings or events related to the four cases, as well as ten additional meetings that were related to follow-up processes ensuing from these cases. We reviewed records of community participation (e.g., committee meeting minutes, compilations of data from public input), government documents (e.g., plans, budgets, project proposals, staff reports), community organizations' websites, and media coverage of these events. Data were then analyzed using standard coding, categorizing, and memoing techniques (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1990; Emerson, Fretz, and Shaw 1995; Lofland and Lofland 1995).

Three features of these data and the broader research project through which they were collected are particularly important for this analysis. First, the data are longitudinal, allowing us to follow events over long periods of time, pursue new lines of inquiry that emerge during the research, and take a process-based view (Mohr 1982; Eisenhardt 1989; Van de Ven 1992; Sewell 1996; Langley 1999). Second, to a large extent, they provide us with an insider, or emic, perspective (Goodenough 1970; Geertz 1973; Miller and van Maanen 1979; Agar 1986). For example, ten of the forty-six study participants in this study subset have been interviewed six or more times over many years and have enriched this analysis

by providing their own comparisons among the four processes. Third, the data provide us with many different perspectives, allowing us to triangulate among various interpretations of the processes and events (Denzin 1978; Altheide and Johnson 1994; Janesick 1994; Yin 2003). Together, these features allow us to generate thick description, enhancing the validity of our interpretive analysis and inductive theory development (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Geertz 1973; Kirk and Miller 1986; Lin 1998; Locke 2001; Yanow and Schwartz-Shea 2006).

The Cases

Grand Rapids is a Midwestern American city with an estimated population size in 2009 of 193,700 in a metropolitan region with a population of more than 1.2 million. The state's second largest city after Detroit, it plays an increasingly important role in Michigan's economic, social, and political development, and its economy and population have grown relative to the state as a whole. Manufacturing dominated the local economy through the 1990s, but recently there has been large-scale private investment in medical services and research. Charitable foundations established by local families support human services, recreation, and cultural programs and facilities (Garcia 2009). In the 2000 national census, 67 percent of residents identified themselves as white, 20 percent as African American, and 13 percent as Latin. Approximately 10 percent were foreign-born, and more than 50 percent had moved to their current residence within the previous five years. Less than 25 percent of adults had a bachelor's degree and 16 percent lived below the poverty level.

The city electorate has repeatedly affirmed a council-manager form of government in which the city manager plays a central role in allocating and managing the city's budget and human resources (Zeemering 2010). One city manager held the position from 1988 to 2008, overseeing a management team that has, for over a decade, actively invited public input and fueled public capacity to engage in city decision making. Although the processes and results of public engagement have varied, generally there is a mutual desire and expectation for community involvement in governance among the public, city government, and elected officials (Feldman and Quick 2009). We now describe four engagement processes in the city, in chronological order.

High Participation and High Inclusion: The Master Plan[2]

Grand Rapids updated its Master Plan starting in 2001 and completed the process the following year. The process operated within strict financial constraints, firm deadlines, and legal guidelines. The update involved broad-based engagement of residents, nonprofits, and businesses and was funded

by a local foundation and the city. It was the first master plan for the city in nearly four decades. Politicians and planners working behind closed doors had produced the previous versions. This time, however, the process involved hundreds of community meetings and engaged approximately three thousand members of the public. Planners, politicians, neighborhood organizers, members of interest groups, and neighborhood residents worked side by side to discuss what kind of neighborhoods they wanted and how to create them.

The mayor appointed a Master Plan Steering Committee composed of thirty-one persons, suggested by a variety of sources, representing diverse interest groups:

> They looked for stakeholders that were visible in their parts of the community and asked them to take an active role in making sure that if someone is not at the table, that person or that group of persons had been identified and invited. There are still many voices not speaking, there are many chairs at the table that are still empty, and there is still much more work to do, but it cannot honestly be said that the city has not made an effort to rectify any deliberate hidden agendas. (Patsy, Steering Committee member, September 10, 2001)

City staff and consultants helped the Committee map out the process and organize the public meetings. The Committee served as the primary decision maker during the thirty-month process, however, hiring the consultants and deciding how to proceed:

> It would be very easy for [the city staff] to say, "Look, we're the people who know how to do this. Here's what we suggest and you probably ought to go along with it." They aren't doing that at all. They are willing to give us opinions, but they are not putting themselves into the process. They said from the beginning, "Look, this is your committee, this is your master plan, we're here to advise and help." And they have stuck with that. (Todd, member of Master Plan Committee, September 7, 2001)

The Master Plan process began with opportunities for community participants to bring their experience of the city environment to the process, contributing insights about their neighborhoods, commutes to work, and parts of the city that they wanted to protect or improve. This experiential knowledge was translated into visual displays in which types of neighborhoods, levels of neighborhood density, and kinds of business districts were provided. As later discussion focused on how to solve specific problems, a website that depicted transitions was used to show a variety of different ways of approaching these problems. At each community meeting, participants redrafted a set of policies for particular land uses

that the community indicated were high priorities, such as green space in the central city.

Planning staff or consultants began each meeting with a brief description of the bigger project and the work done to date, to show people how their work was shaping the process and outcomes and to orient newcomers so that they could participate. They disseminated a road map of the process to help people understand how the parts fit together, which they updated and redistributed periodically to reflect new content, additional meetings, and records of the number of meetings or persons who had participated so far. More than 120 small group meetings were held at different times and locations around the city. The process unfolded in five phases, each accompanied by newsletters, videos, website updates, and press releases about progress to date and the upcoming topics and opportunities to be involved. A citywide community forum, attended by 150 to 300 people, was held to launch each phase, act on the knowledge already gathered, and decide on next steps.

Throughout the process, the community provided information, the planning staff and consultants would use the community's input to come up with a series of ideas, and then everyone would meet to evaluate whether they had gotten it right yet:

> I think [city staff and consultants] struck a nice balance with getting people's input where it counts, like asking, "What kind of city do you want to be in?" And then saying, "Okay, this is the kind of city you told us you want. Here's how we can do it. We're bringing this back to you to find out if this is where you want to go and how you want to get there." It gives a lot of buy-in for people who may not even have participated. (Todd, September 7, 2001)

The process changed as it went along in response to the community's engagement. For example, in early meetings, residents articulated concerns about the quality, character, and compatibility of development that could arise from different land use designations made through the master plan. Noticing the frequency of these comments, the planning staff and consultants suggested that development guidelines might be a good way to engage questions about what different kinds of permitted development would be like. Community members agreed, and the planning staff and consultants updated the Master Plan scope and process flow diagram to insert a series of additional, parallel discussions about development guidelines to help elaborate particular aspects of the plan. On the basis of initial meetings about the guidelines, the process differentiated again to take up two complementary approaches: (1) development guidelines that visually depicted and spelled out in additional detail how to implement some of the most substantial changes being proposed, such as a new mixed-use land use category, and (2) preliminary land use plans and concept sketches for four locations

generally understood to need change. Stakeholders responded to these plans, and their positive and negative reactions to testing out how the proposed changes could be implemented led to iterative revisions. The development guidelines were adopted in the Master Plan, which also included draft land use plans from three neighborhoods where local businesses and residents had reached agreement.

The Master Plan was finished on time and within budget. The mood of the fifth and final community meeting, titled "It's a Plan!" was celebratory, with staffed information stations, the plan document and maps on display, and posted images and inspiring quotations about what the community had accomplished and still could do. People milled about visiting with one another, until the chair of the Master Plan Steering Committee addressed the crowd, making it clear that input was still welcome:

> I am proud of the committee and proud of this project. From the outset this was a community based process, and it still is a community based process. If you'll look at the plan book here, you see that unobtrusively, down in the corner, on the right side, it says "DRAFT." So, we're still looking for input tonight. However, we do hope, because the process has been community based both in concept and in execution, that this plan does truly reflect the will of the community. (Jack Hoffman, September 12, 2002)

Backed by strong community support, the Master Plan sailed through City Commission approval. The process that the Master Plan task had set into motion, however, was not ended. With their increased capacity and interest in planning issues, the community embarked on a process of rewriting the zoning ordinances to implement the Master Plan. Although the city's planning department could have rewritten the document relatively quickly, instead they organized another public process in which staff worked together with hundreds of residents on the details of zoning definitions and zoning maps. In this step, participants translated the visioning of the Master Plan into the new domain of making difficult choices among trade-offs over permitting higher or lower density in different land use classifications, and over possible land uses for each area of land. The zoning ordinance was adopted in 2008, and an update of the Master Plan, focusing on environmental stewardship ideas raised by the public, was completed in 2010. Relationships built through the Master Plan process have sprouted out into new areas of cooperation, reenergizing a citywide affordable housing coalition, spurring joint planning among adjacent residential and business associations (Jenna, foundation staff member, June 22, 2005), prompting six neighborhoods to produce their own area-specific plans. In sum, the process raised community expectations and skills for engagement (Kyla, neighborhood organizer, June 24, 2005; Joe, city government manager,

August 11, 2006; Will, city government manager, August 11, 2006; Ian, October 25, 2006), creating a culture in which "residents expect and want to be involved in decision making, and city staff and city commissioners want residents' involvement" (Rachel, city government manager, July 25, 2007). A participant later commented:

> After the Master Plan process, this community now understands that the City will listen and that this is powerful stuff, and so they recognize that we have an opportunity to have some input here so let's do it. (Frank, neighborhood business association organizer, December 16, 2004)

A designer of the Master Plan process explained that building the community connections and knowledge to move forward into other issues had been an explicit objective:

> What we did with the Master Plan and I believe with the zoning ordinance is 50/50: 50 percent of the success of the project is the process, and 50 percent is this great document. Neither one overpowers the other, but in the process you get that whole social dynamic that you're trying to get to, that community wisdom about a specific topic that they can talk about in an intelligent way and talk about to others in the community, and then that will also guide their decision-making process. And then you have this great document that is the institutional memory for the process and is a reference for communities to help remember what they discussed and be able to apply it through policy decisions. (Rachel, August 14, 2007)

When city managers were organizing a community process to update the Master Plan five years later, they invoked the "50/50" rule in another form: about 50 percent of the people involved in a process should have been involved in prior, related efforts while the other 50 percent are newcomers. The goal of this approach is to build community in an ongoing way, providing opportunities for people who have been involved in previous efforts to continue working on their concerns from different perspectives, to sustain their relationships with one another, to make use of their knowledge of issues and capacities to work together, and to continually bring in new participants and fresh perspectives that "help the group think in different ways" (Rachel, September 5, 2007).

High Participation and Low Inclusion: The Budget Survey

Within two years of the Master Plan's completion, the City began to address severe budget pressures due to declining local income taxes and revenue sharing from the state. In the year beginning July 1, 2004, it lost $30 million from its

$120 million General Fund, the most flexible portion of the total city budget. For the following year, the City anticipated an additional $11 million cut that would result in a cumulative loss of 25 percent of the city's total workforce from its 2002 levels. Because they already felt in touch with many of the engaged residents of Grand Rapids due to the Master Plan and other outreach efforts, and because of their concerns about the impact of the budget decisions on city services, the city's senior government managers felt the need to go beyond the number of people who would care enough and be able to attend a community meeting to "the silent majority" who would not attend (Will, August 11, 2006). They saw a survey as a way of obtaining scientifically representative information that would give them "a clear idea about citizens' priorities about the budget, to know what outcomes they value the most" (Ian, October 25, 2006).

In early 2005, the survey team administered an anonymous telephone survey to 759 randomly selected Grand Rapids households, asking respondents whether they would prefer that the city stop, reduce, maintain, or increase funding for forty-two services. They then advertised four open meetings around the city. The 132 people who attended those meetings worked through a set of paired budget allocations in which they had to decide, for example, whether community services or operating parks was more important. They used remote control devices to record their individual preferences, which were aggregated and projected back to the group on a screen. The voting took up to ninety minutes, and the city's management team organized the gatherings so that there would be no discussion until the voting was complete. The meetings were a "raucous" process (Ian, October 25, 2006), with people frequently protesting loudly, "You can't choose between those two!" One participant reported, "The tension in the room was intense, to say the least. One guy threw down his remote and refused to pick it back up" (Ben, neighborhood organizer, October 20, 2006).

Using the telephone survey and meeting data, the survey researchers ranked residents' priorities for services. The city managers proceeded to "budget according to those results" (Ian, October 25, 2006), interpreting the lowest ranked services as the first places to cut expenditures. In May 2005, the city commissioners adopted the budget by a vote of five to two, but some community members vociferously protested that the surveys did not represent the community's real priorities. People were angry about the ranking system *and* some of the specific budgeting allocations that it produced. With regards to the process, one participant explained,

> People couldn't speak their own mind about what they thought about stuff. If a choice wound up being one of the bottom ones, it seemed like you were giving an okay to cut it, and people weren't very comfortable with that. (Ben, October 20, 2006)

And an organizer from a neighborhood where the public swimming pools were closed protested, "Anybody who's voting to close pools is not a person who lives around or with children in a neighborhood. These rules have been made on a different level" (Jen, neighborhood organizer, May 10, 2006).

Neighborhood groups organized a series of alternative public forums to facilitate what one described as more "authentic" input. Instead of "pigeonholing" people into either–or budget allocation choices (Ben, October 20, 2006), they invited the public to think about what should be discussed in the budgeting process and how. They educated themselves and the public about how the city budget works, and tried to "flip-flop" the discussion away from viewing the city as a "charity case" and "taking away what was least important" and toward "building a city that is attractive to people" (Paula, community resident, May 31, 2006; Ben, October 20, 2006). Based on their recommendations, the City Commission agreed to a few changes in the content of the budget, including reinstating the public pools.

Low Participation and High Inclusion: Citizen Budget Advisors[3]

The next phase of the budgeting story began a few months later, as the city anticipated that another $11 million in budget cuts would be required for the year beginning July 1, 2006. The senior managers and commissioners acknowledged the unhappiness with the previous year's process and outcomes, and in the fall of 2005 appointed a group of Citizen Budget Advisors to advise the city manager on the public participation process and specific budget recommendations. The people asked to serve were the most vocal critics of the budget survey. Senior city government managers explained that move in a broader context, telling us, "It is kind of our m.o. [modus operandi] to take the loudest complainers and bring them inside the tent" in order to "afford and give them responsibility" for helping to resolve the conflict (Will, August 11, 2006) and to "arm them with better information" to generate better options together, or, if the oppositional dynamic cannot be changed, to have a "better fight" that is more productive (Joe, August 11, 2006).

Ironically, the Advisors decided against additional public outreach. The twenty-one individuals who agreed to serve were diverse in terms of place of residence, income, race, ethnicity, affiliations (community resident, business owner, neighborhood organization or other nonprofit staff, etc.), and opinions about appropriate uses and sources of city funds (Gabriel, May 8, 2006; Karen, May 10, 2006; Alicia, May 11, 2006; Fred, May 31, 2006, all Citizen Budget Advisors). For example, they were divided in their feelings about raising city taxes, supporting labor unions, and subsidizing recreation for low-income residents. The Advisors decided they could achieve deeper deliberation and produce better decisions if they have in-depth, repeated, deliberative conversations among themselves than if

they used their energies and time on organizing other public forums. They dismissed the facilitator appointed by the city, appointed their own chair, and branched out into smaller groups to brainstorm options. Between their meetings they conferred with their contacts in the community, returning to the group to work through options together, frequently coming up with new ideas and positions.

Very early on, the Advisors turned aside from the expected path of making line-by-line budget recommendations. Someone posed the question, "What kind of city do you want this to be?" and the Advisors and government managers reoriented their work around that question. As one participant explained, "We could have argued about which pool to close forever, but asking 'Do you want our kids to have a pool?' was an answerable question that let us move on" (Carla, October 11, 2006). From a three-inch binder full of budget information that city staff gave them at their first meeting, within four months the Advisors had stripped their analysis down to a ten-page final report that laid out "foundational considerations" for how to think about the budget, supplemented with suggestions about just a few budget items. Their final report, released in March 2006, provided input for the immediate budget decisions as well as future budget discussions by emphasizing broad principles for thinking about how to use the city budget, such as promoting social equity, building long-term community assets, and taking a long-term view of budgeting priorities and constraints.

The city's senior managers accepted the Advisors' authority to dismiss the facilitator. They changed tracks from supplying voluminous packets of budgeting information to providing tailored responses to Advisors' questions. They redirected their technical support toward helping the Advisors to draft their position statement. The city managers then took the Advisors' final report to heart, referencing the guidelines in their budget and making several specific cuts in accordance with them, including measures they otherwise found inadvisable or painful. An example is laying off members of the senior management team, which they disagreed with because of the value they received from their work and found uncomfortable because of their personal relationships (Will, August 11, 2006). In June 2006, the city commission adopted the proposed budget by a vote of five to two and with a minimum of controversy.

Like the Master Plan process, this budget process was the immediate predecessor of additional public processes. Through this process, it became apparent that neither the Advisors process nor any single budgeting cycle could resolve the tendency for the budgeting constraints to "take a meat axe" to parks and recreation (Will, August 11, 2006). Consequently, the city commissioners and manager launched the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Parks and Recreation to look at options to preserve these amenities. Several of the Advisors became members of this commission, which began meeting biweekly in November 2006,

produced a final report in March 2007, and helped to launch Friends of Grand Rapids Parks, a nonprofit organization that today partners with the city to advocate for and provide resources to support parks and recreation programs.

Low Participation and Low Inclusion: Indian Trails Golf Course[4]

Our fourth case took place fifteen months after the Advisors process concluded and three months after the Blue Ribbon Commission produced their final report, as the city was facing ever-increasing budget pressures. It involves the possible sale of Indian Trails, a city-owned, no-frills golf course known for its affordable fees and short wait times. Golfers who are low-income or nonwhite are most likely to choose Indian Trails among the courses in the area, and the local newspaper's editorial team noted, "If ever there was an 'everyman' course, Trails is it" (GRP June 25, 2007). It is a popular area for hiking and winter sports among the residents of the adjacent neighborhoods, which include many of the lower-income areas of the city (Mac, January 22, 2009; Tonia, March 9, 2009, both neighborhood residents).

Members of the Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Parks and Recreation asked during their meetings for more information about "rumors" of a possible sale of Indian Trails, voicing concerns that it would be controversial and shortsighted to give up the green space and community amenities it provides. Reassured by city staff that it could not happen without a public vote, they declined to consider the option any further and did not even recommend a public discussion of selling Indian Trails in their final report (BRCPR minutes November 20, 2006, December 18, 2006, January 22, 2007). Nonetheless, three months later, a proposal to seek a buyer of the facility suddenly appeared on the city commission's meeting agenda without even a twenty-four-hour public notice. Apparently acting on faith in the mayor's goodwill and judgment in placing it on the agenda (Teresa, community activist, June 24, 2008), commissioners barely discussed the item before voting seven to zero in favor of the proposal to spend up to $100,000 to market the property.

A huge public outcry ensued. Commissioners received "an avalanche of calls and e-mails from irate residents" (GRP June 25, 2007). Community activists and the editorial board of the local newspaper promptly decried both the sale idea and the decision-making process (GRP June 25, 2007), which some senior city staff had been trying to slow down to allow public discussion (GRP June 26, 2007). People objected to the sale because the community uses Indian Trails, and because closing it seemed elitist. Critics protested that the decision was reached hastily, without community deliberation. The Indian Trails proposal had not arisen out of any systematic review of public assets for possible sale, and furthermore was inconsistent with the overarching review of parks and recreation policy that the Blue Ribbon Commission

had just concluded. The proposal's hasty timing and inconsistency with previous discussions damaged community trust, prompting residents and the press to speculate whether the mayor had some "hidden motive" in proposing the sale (Grand Rapids forum of urbanplanet.org, June 2007; Rachel, June 25, 2008; Ira, June 26, 2008; Rich, nonprofit staff member, March 5, 2009).

Features and Consequences of Inclusive Practices

The varying community reactions to experiments with different approaches to public participation—ranging from enthusiastic engagement to vehement criticism—led us to analyze how the different processes were enacted. In particular, we were motivated to understand how the Citizen Budget Advisor format, a process involving only twenty-one critics, could be accepted as more participatory than the budget survey involving 759 randomly selected households. Furthermore, community conflict over the process and decisions declined at the same time that financial shortfalls in the city budget became more acute. In trying to understand this puzzle, we compare the practices for organizing public engagement in our four cases.

Engagement Practices in the Budgeting Processes

The budget processes are particularly interesting to compare as they are on the same topic. The Advisors process represents a very different way of creating and supporting community than is often enacted in community engagement processes. The survey is more typical, constituting a kind of public hearing in which people were asked to express their opinion, in favor or against, on a prescribed set of issues and policy options. In contrast, the Advisors did not engage in a broad-based public engagement process but instead used a small group setting to make connections across diverse interests and concerns. The members were not formally representing different positions in the way that weighted voting or some stakeholders designs might do. Instead, they utilized time between meetings to check in with their individual connections with groups within the community, and then in meetings they engaged their diverse views to explore new opportunities. They did not work on a prescribed agenda or refine a particular course of action proposed to them by city staff but rather iteratively redefined the problem, their process, and their recommendations as they went along.

Three features of the Advisors' practices *reconstituted connections* between roles, among people, across issues, and over time:

1. They *engaged multiple ways of knowing*. They expanded the vocabulary of their discussion to focus not on whether the budget should provide funding for pools or any other item but on the broader discussion of "What kind of city do you want Grand Rapids to be?" They engaged various scales and vantage points on the problem, deliberating about prioritizing budget allocations among specific line items for the next year, fiscal management for long-term solvency, and broad principles about how the city budget could support their desired vision for the community.

2. All parties *coproduced the process and content of their decision making*. The Advisors reframed the mission of their group from overseeing public engagement to being the venue for public engagement. To accomplish that change in their mission, they changed their process, firing their facilitator. They modified their relationship with public managers from providing input to city managers to being partners in redefining the budgeting problem and policy options. Together, Advisors and staff produced decision guidelines for enhancing community assets. This was a different kind of decision outcome from the recommendations about line item budget allocation that the public managers originally expected. In sum, the Advisors' input altered the problem, process, and roles for decision making and policy outcomes.

3. They *sustained temporal openness*. By enlisting the most vocal critics of the previous process, the conveners and participants in the Advisors process acknowledged the importance of past discussions. At the same time, they explicitly created an agenda for future work on a problem that they could not adequately address given their scope of work and time frame, namely, the long-term sustainability of parks. Their recommendations took the form of guidelines for decision making about that year's and subsequent years' budgets rather than a set of decisions for that budget year.

These features of the Citizen Budget Advisor process were not found in the Survey process. The Budget Survey had a great deal of input but provided little opportunity for people to make connections across issues, among different perspectives on the budgeting choices. The Budget Advisor process had less input but provided more opportunity for understanding the connections among a broad array of issues and perspectives and for connecting these various ways of understanding the problem to produce new understandings and opportunities for action.

The Master Plan process shares with the Budget Advisors process these three features for allowing and encouraging participants to make connections:

- The Master Plan *engaged multiple ways of knowing*, encouraging those involved to bring varying values, perspectives, and ideas to the discussion. Providing a glossary of planning terms at meetings, for example, removed barriers to understanding and allowed planners to take responsibility for orienting newcomers and nonplanners to useful planning concepts. This was done to create a space for people to exchange different ways of knowing, not to require everyone to use planning terminology.

- The *coproduction of the process and content of decision making* in the Master Plan is illustrated by the introduction of a parallel, complementary effort to develop design guidelines. The idea for the guidelines emerged from questions in the early stages of the master plan process about how different options for the plan would look and feel. The design guideline work for visualizing and playing with master plan options helped the participants to make choices about the master plan and extended its work further into implementation.

- The *temporal openness* of the Master Plan is exemplified by the side-by-side "It's a Plan!" / "It's a draft" messages of the final community meeting. It affirmed that the plan—building the city—was an ongoing project, requiring broad-based involvement and openness to new ideas as implementation of the plan took place. These features of the inclusive practices supported a community who would implement plans into the future. Indeed, residents, developers, planning staff, and planning commissioners continued for years to bring dog-eared copies to meetings as a reference for what they are trying to accomplish in terms of planning outcomes and as a reminder of the work they have done together and the relationships through which they implement the plan.

From this perspective, then, we formulate the answer to our question about why the Citizen Budget Advisors format was accepted as more participatory than the Budget Survey: the Advisors' process was not more participatory but rather *more inclusive*. The Master Plan process was inclusive as well as participatory, while the Indian Trails decision making was neither. Inclusive practices display the following features: engaging multiple ways of knowing, coproducing the process and content of decision making, and sustaining temporal openness. The processes organized in inclusive ways supported developing communities in which people defined public issues jointly and continuously and developed processes for addressing them. We characterize these as inclusive communities.
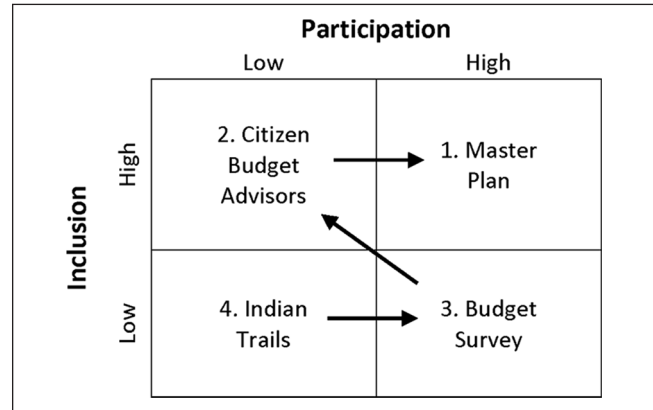

Figure 2. Community satisfaction with the public engagement processes, with rankings and arrows showing the flow from least to most satisfaction

Inclusion and Community Satisfaction

Why is inclusion an important enhancement to engagement? The connection-building features of inclusion build community in ways that commonplace forms of public participation do not. The community of practice research helps us to see that all practices create communities, but they create communities of different kinds. Practices used in public decision processes can create communities in which people feel excluded. Perhaps they are left out of decision making, or even those who do participate may feel atomized from one another or disconnected from the decision making because their input does not seem to be valued. The survey practices used in the budget survey produced this kind of community even though the intent was quite the opposite. By contrast, practices can create communities in which people feel included. The participants are brought into relationships with one another and their input has a meaningful impact on decisions. The Budget Advisors process and the Master Plan clearly produced this sense of inclusion.

One of the most appealing consequences of inclusion is that, among our four cases, processes with high inclusion produced more satisfaction and approval in the community than the processes with high participation, which tended to suffer from burnout and ill will. In these cases, enhanced inclusiveness was a more dominant driver than enhanced participation to increasing the public's sense of the legitimacy of a process and its outcomes. Figure 2 ranks the four engagement processes we presented in this paper according to how much community satisfaction was expressed with how the proposal was developed for city commission action. We rely on three indicators of satisfaction: the community responses when the proposal came before the city commission, reaction in the local press, and opinions expressed to us during interviews. By these indicators, the high inclusion processes were viewed more favorably than the low inclusion processes.

The three features of inclusive practices contribute to the increased satisfaction with these processes. We opened the paper by pointing to the burnout, fatigue, and conflict that result from many engagement processes. Inclusive processes' third feature, temporal openness—not "finishing" the process once and for all—seems to reduce participation fatigue and burnout. While this may at first seem paradoxical, we suggest that those in inclusive processes receive clear feedback that their input is meaningful, since they are effecting changes in both process and content as they go along. Closure may not be reached on all of the important issues raised in a process, but sometimes the process provides a home for unresolved issues by setting up subsequent deliberations to pick them up. They are building a community in which they are not merely invited to be at the table but they also do work together, including deciding policies, implementing programs, and identifying future work to sustain and make use of the relationships and knowledge they have built. Inclusive practices allow participants to experience the creation of a problem-solving community as well as the accomplishment of specific tasks or goals, resulting in a greater sense of satisfaction.

With regards to the first and second features of inclusive management, engaging multiple ways of knowing and coproducing process and content, the budget survey was criticized as inauthentic because of a sense that public officials had predetermined the decision points and outcomes of the budgeting process through asking "pigeonholing" questions. This resulted in public anger and lack of trust. By contrast, the Advisors' process, with less participation but more inclusion, involved the Advisors and managers in redefining the questions and sequence for their decision making. This process met with overwhelming approval and legitimacy, increasing the sense among citizens that public officials are listening and working with the community. Similarly, the Master Plan process changed to incorporate design guidelines, reflecting interests and perspectives that citizens introduced to the consulting and professional team. Such coproduction of process and content, reflecting multiple ways of knowing, yields higher satisfaction because it allows the community to see how their engagement is making a difference and encourages continued engagement.

Inclusion and Cooptation

In considering community satisfaction, we must assess the possibility that community members are simply being pacified or co-opted in an inauthentic process (Arnstein 1969; Flyvberg 1998; Briggs 1998; Cooke and Kothari 2004). In the Advisors' process, which brought the most vocal critics of the city's budgeting efforts into a process that was organized and would be certified by the city government, there is ample evidence that the public was not pacified or co-opted. The city managers followed the Advisors' recommendations

even when they disagreed on the basis of their professional expertise or found the requests personally difficult. The managers explained they had intentionally "armed people for a better fight" over contentious issues by encouraging as much information sharing and discussion of different views as possible and by recruiting the most vocal critics of budgeting choices "into the tent" to work through options. These are strategies for making conflict and difference productive, not making them go away (Czarniawska-Joerges and Jacobsson 1989; Czarniawska and Joerges 1996; Eisenhardt, Kahwajy, and Bourgeois 1997; Feldman and Quick 2009).

A public engagement process that simply reproduces the power of particular stakeholders—as the budget survey reinforced the city managers' and commissioners' discretion over the budget and the Indian Trails case gave the commissioners' sole decision-making authority, for example—is not inclusive. Indeed, we would not characterize any process that addresses difference by avoiding or silencing dissent as inclusive. Instead, inclusive processes actively engage difference to stimulate exploration and generate new understandings. They may involve co-optation in the original sense—"a process of absorbing new elements into the leadership or policy-determining structure of an organization as a means of averting threats to its existence" (Selznick 1949, 13)—that is not about averting difference but rather about maintaining the stability of the institution. Stability may still be important, but the "institutions" stabilized in inclusive processes are the frameworks for an emergent process of community building rather than the power of a given organization (Quick 2010). The importance of having built a community is that the community members move forward using their differences, in a productive rather than a fractious way.

Implications of Distinguishing Participation and Inclusion

In the following, we explore the relationship of our definition of inclusion—making connections and building communities—and other understandings of inclusion in engagement. We discuss why we believe that distinguishing participation and inclusion is important to understanding the potential and limitations of deliberative processes as well as to creating more diverse engagement in public processes.

Inclusion and Deliberation

Deliberation is commonly advocated as a mode of public involvement engagement in order to engage diverse perspectives in public decision making. Our theorization of inclusion shares with scholarship on deliberative democracy an emphasis on deliberative processes. They are a way of defining the public interest as an alternative to discerning it through the aggregation of individual interests through voting or other mechanisms (Rawls 1971; Dryzek 1990;

Fishkin 1993; Benhabib 1996; Reich 1998; Young 2000; Fung and Wright 2003; Gutmann and Thompson 2004). Deliberative processes enlist communicative or collaborative rationality (Habermas 1984; Healey 1992; Fischer and Forester 1993; Verma 1996; Innes and Booher 1999, 2010), generating a broader sense of the public interest or public value (Moore 1995; Mansbridge 1999; Abers 2000; Bryson 2004; Crosby and Bryson 2005; Grant 2008; Nabatchi, forthcoming), relationships for policy implementation (Innes and Booher 2003; Feldman and Khademian 2007), appreciation for others' perspectives and new understandings of policy options (Fischer 2000; Feldman et al. 2006; Bryson, Crosby, and Bryson 2009), and broader recognition of resources (Feldman and Quick 2009). Our analysis supports the use of deliberative practices but suggests they would be more fruitful if they were incorporated as part of inclusive processes. The differences in orientation become more evident if we analyze the differences between deliberation and inclusion with respect to our three features of inclusive practices.

Deliberation and inclusive practices are most similar with respect to our first feature of inclusive practices, engaging multiple ways of knowing. Deliberation is often engaged specifically because of its ability to bring disparate ways of knowing to bear on a particular decision process. Because it does not also emphasize altering the process and sustaining temporal openness, however, deliberation is limited in the extent to which it can build community unless it is incorporated in an inclusive process. Without the community-building aspects of inclusion, we argue that it is harder for deliberative processes to succeed in the pursuit of engaging multiple ways of knowing.

In relation to our second feature of inclusive practices, coproducing process and content in response to input, deliberation typically engages the parties involved in coproduction of content, namely, the definition of the issue and policy and programmatic options to address it. Deliberation tends to distinguish government/designer and citizen/participant roles in terms of process, however (Innes and Booher 2004; Roberts 2004). We suggest that having designated "designers" and "participants" reinforces boundaries between the parties, confining opportunities to build connections that are important to building community capacity for ongoing policy-making work. Separating the control of process and content also fails to tap the generative possibilities of engaging them side-by-side. Healey (2003, 110-11) warns that when planners predetermine the optimal decision-making process for communities, they "miss the power of a process mode to change the way things go," since she recognizes content and process as "co-constituted, not separate spheres." Scholars have suggested that the benefits of coproducing content through deliberation include enabling new ways of understanding problems and discovering new policy options (Fishkin 1993; Reich 1998; Abers 2000; Fischer 2000; Young 2000; Gutmann and Thompson 2004). Coproducing

content *and* process in response to one another may be even more beneficial in uncovering policy opportunities.

In relation to our third feature of inclusive practices, sustaining temporal openness, this is not necessarily a feature of deliberation. Common forms of deliberation for policy making—including National Issue Forums (Gastil and Dillard 1999), citizen panels (Crosby, Kelly, and Schaefer 1986), deliberative polling in person (Fishkin and Luskin 2005) or online (Evans-Cowley and Hollander 2010), public agenda forums (Yankelovich 1991), planning charrettes (Thomas 2006), and community meetings on urgent policy issues (Weeks 2000)—are self-contained, not organized to create connections over time and issues outside the immediate scope of the deliberation. Collaborative arrangements for adaptive management of resources, in which the participants iteratively define the problem together, decide on policies, and share responsibility for ongoing implementation (Innes and Booher 1999, 2010; Butler and Goldstein 2010), are deliberative forms that incorporate the temporal openness characteristic of inclusion. Adaptive management arrangements tend to be composed of agencies and other stakeholders with a specified responsibility for or interest in the resource, rather than being open to broad participation by any individual who might be interested in the topic.

Inclusive processes are organized on a rolling basis to incorporate previous and emerging issues and participants. Inclusive processes have discrete decision-making pieces—a Master Plan, a zoning ordinance revision, or a budget proposal, for example—but phases make way for the next effort, and managers actively pick up information, people, and energy from prior efforts—the budget survey, for example—to seed subsequent processes. This provides ways for the community to sustain and create resources that are valuable for community-based problem solving, including relationships, community attention to issues, and knowledge (Feldman and Quick 2009). An inclusive "way of knowing" a public policy problem is an ongoing accomplishment that must be sustained through the "continuous renewal of associations" among parties and perspectives (Feldman et al. 2006). Similarly, creating connections to build a community of engaged participants with a capacity to inform and implement policy making is an ongoing project. Governance and civic culture are involved in this transformation. Healey (2004) suggests that governance, undertaken reflectively, is entirely capable of creatively transforming its own capacities in such ways, while Briggs (2008) describes several participatory decision-making efforts around the world that build "civic capacity" to make policy choices *and* sustain forms of working together, inside and outside government arenas.

Thus, inclusive practices are not an alternative to deliberation but one of the possible tools for deliberation. The orientation is different if deliberation is placed in the context of an inclusive process. While the quality of public deliberation is sometimes measured by how the decision "sticks" when it

comes to implementation (Moynihan 2003; GrisezKweit and Kweit 2007), when deliberation is part of an inclusive orientation, the emphasis is less on whether a particular program or policy sticks than on building a community that can work together to adapt to implementation challenges and pick up new issues. This is not about a community sticking together in terms of maintaining their unity behind a policy, but rather their sustaining a platform for ongoing deliberation and dialogue.

Inclusion and Diversity

Our use of the term *inclusion* to describe a set of practices that bring a broad range of issues, sectors, perspectives, and forms of engagement into play is potentially confusing because it does not coincide with the commonplace use of inclusion to refer to the demographic diversity of participants that scholars of democratic theory have alternately espoused (Verba and Nie 1987; Galston 1995; Gutmann 1995) and critiqued (Kymlicka 1995; Young 2000; Parekh 2002; Mansbridge 2003). Our use of the term may be misread as being dismissive of diversity. Instead, we see the distinction between participation and inclusion as a way of focusing attention differently on diversity. Ely and Thomas (2001) have noted that an organization's ability to manage conflict and sustain benefits from workplace diversity is enhanced by the expansion from a "discrimination-and-fairness" to an "integration-and-learning" paradigm. Similar benefits may be reaped from multiplying frameworks for diversity in public engagement processes.

We argue that participation and inclusion are different and complementary ways of engaging diverse populations. A mixture of approaches enhances the democratic legitimacy of a process through diverse representation and facilitates innovation through learning from different perspectives. Together, they orient processes both to enhance the diversity that is present and to benefit from diverse perspectives in decision making. Understanding diversity as having inclusion and participation angles enables a richer understanding of representation in public engagement processes. Practices for increasing participatory representativeness center on optimizing accessibility of the process so that input can be more diverse. These practices include providing language translation, child care, or transportation assistance, and choosing convenient meeting times and places for various constituencies.

While it is important to have diverse voices at the table, these practices and a participation orientation to diversifying a process may be insufficient or even counterproductive without a complement of inclusive practices. The inclusive practices that enable participants to define the problem and develop the process iteratively and interactively help to make use of participatory diversity by incorporating learning and change in response to diverse input and making connections among diverse perspectives. We do not suggest that inclusive or participatory practices are a better approach to

diversity. Rather, we suggest that attention to both the participation and inclusion dimensions is important for engaging diversity and that there is great potential for future research on how features of inclusion can be used to increase the impact of having diverse voices at the table.

Inclusion and Communities of Practice

Our cases illustrate a particular form of the coproduction of practices and community in which community building is both means and end. This contrasts with other forms of public engagement, such as what Arnstein (1969) characterizes as "non-participation," in which practices also create a community, but it is a community of citizens alienated from government. Since with or without intending to "build community," engagement practices do create communities, it is important to be thoughtful about the consequences of different forms of engagement.

These cases also demonstrate why it is important that a community of practice be *emergent*, with loosely and iteratively assembled cores:

> There is no place in a community of practice designated as "the periphery," and, most emphatically, it has no single core or center. (Lave and Wenger 1991, 36)

This may be said of a community constituted around any practice. The problem of the periphery specifically in an *inclusive* community of practice is not to help newcomers overcome barriers in order to participate in a core set of practices but to orient all participants to manage boundaries in continuously open-ended ways in order to keep the community expanding. This orientation accelerates learning and momentum by not only recognizing that there is no circumscribable limit of any community of practice, but by specifically encouraging and enhancing its expansiveness. Practices oriented to expanding connections constitute a community that seeks new members, new understandings of public issues, and new opportunities to act together. Sufficient time and iterativity in the process allow these connections to develop in ways that one-time consultations and forums focused on single issues do not.

We have characterized the distinguishing features of inclusion as an orientation to coproduction and open-endedness, and we suggest that practices of inclusion must themselves be open-ended, oriented to reinventing their own means and ends rather than to a formulaic set of methods, required elements, or sequencing of steps (Brown and Duguid 1991; Orr 1996; Wenger 1998). Therefore, we explicitly do not suggest that the best way to develop a vigorous community of engagement is through a particular set of best practices for engagement. Just as public comment practices have led to perfunctory and unsatisfactory forms of engagement, today's more innovative techniques for organizing engagement

(e.g., dot voting, consensus conferences, focus groups), if applied formulaically, can also stultify participation and learning. Attending to making ever-expanding, open-ended connections is an example of intentionality without formulaic application. Simply having people at the table does not produce a community of practice, nor does inviting people to be included in a "community of practice." As we described at the beginning of the article, such strategies tend to exclude potential participants and to stymie learning and innovation, both of which are contrary to the purposes of public engagement.

Instead, inclusive practices involve creating community through sharing practices, bringing together what in other contexts might be different "cores"—such as different sectors or types of expertise—and creating together a moving, changing combination of them. To accomplish this, organizers of public involvement manage these processes in ways that allow participants to coproduce the practices through which they develop ways of addressing issues and become a community in which these practices take place. While key engagement practices are often initially introduced by public managers or consultants launching a process, these practices are not coincident with individuals or formal positions within the community of practices. Indeed, the inclusive practices in our cases become available for others to implement as they are enacted and create community through this availability. Inclusion is not an end state, but a continuous process, like the continuous process of building a democratic community through ongoing inquiry (Dewey 1927; Dryzek 1990; Schneider and Ingram 1997; Flyvberg 1998). The vitality of an inclusive community requires continuous expansion of its periphery.

"Participation builds community" is a common axiom in practice and scholarship about public engagement. We suggest that "inclusion builds community" is a more appropriate thesis and that understanding the distinction allows us to organize public engagement differently in order to build community. Engaging multiple ways of knowing, coproducing the content and process, and sustaining temporal openness are key features of inclusion that contribute to the building of community. Iterative discussions of content and process over time, in contrast with single-issue or single-meeting approaches to pubic engagement, allow participants in inclusive processes to revisit and revise their questions and approach, to track how processes and issues change over time, and to expand community by creating more connections among issues and participants. The expansiveness of the community constituted through inclusion is one of its defining features. Rules of thumb for valuing process and outcome or for balancing newcomers and old-timers represent ways of focusing attention on the expansive nature of inclusion. Paradoxically, the cohesion of an inclusive community depends on its *not* being a static collection of persons or practices.

Conclusion

Our article draws attention to the salient distinctions between inclusion and participation in engagement. It introduces the community of practice lens for analyzing engagement, identifies key features of inclusive practices, and suggests what inclusion may add to existing models of interactive engagement such as deliberation. We argue that attention to inclusion as a distinctive set of practices is both a theoretical imperative for scholars and a practical advantage for planners and other managers of public processes. Practically, the variety of public issues, communities, time frames for decision making, and goals for engagement call for a range of approaches. Distinguishing the dimensions of inclusion and participation can help those involved to design engagement to suit those different parameters, to reduce conflict over divergent expectations by communicating the intentions and mechanisms for engagement in terms of participation and/or inclusion orientations, and to enhance the benefits of engagement by incorporating both orientations.

Managers who have been successful in launching inclusive public engagement have designed open-ended processes that provide ample, ongoing opportunities for participants to redefine the "what" and "how" of the problems they are trying to address. Key practices in inclusive processes can be identified, but our research indicates that it is a pattern of practices and how they are enacted, rather than discrete methods or techniques, that make a process inclusive. Attention to the ways in which practices enable participants to become a community of participants with connections to one another as well as to the problems that they identify and engage allows planners and public managers to reap the benefits of inclusion as well those of participation.

Authors' Note

This study is an equal collaboration between the two authors.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

Notes

1. All study participants are identified by pseudonym and, the first time they appear in this account, by role.
2. The details of the process are foregrounded in the preface and Chapter 1 of *Plan Grand Rapids*, available at http://www.grand-rapids.mi.us/index.pl?page_id=634. Other details in this description are drawn from meeting observations, interviews, other sections of the plan, outreach materials, meeting minutes, and media coverage.
3. The Advisors' final report, meeting agendas, and meeting minutes may be found at http://www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us. Other details in this description are drawn from interviews and media coverage.
4. The Mayor's Blue Ribbon Commission on Parks and Recreation's final report, meeting agendas, and meeting minutes may be found at http://www.ci.grand-rapids.mi.us/index.pl?page_id=4990. Other details in this description are drawn from interviews, the *Grand Rapids Press* (abbreviated GRP), and other media coverage.

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