Effects of a Structured Public Issues Discourse Method on the Complexity of Citizens' Reasoning and Local Political Development

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Abstract

This study was about adult and political development. Political development, here, means improvement in the publicly common ways of relating, which characterize a political culture. A small group of citizens participated in six sessions of a structured public discourse process for working on complex issues. The study's purpose was two-fold. It was an exploratory test of a theory-based hypothesis that when a group used the process, its average hierarchical complexity of reasoning about issues would increase. Anecdotal evidence had previously indicated that useful social benefits and more complex thinking about issues were connected with using this process method. The other purpose was to study what changes in the political culture of the small group, if any, would occur over the course of using the discourse process. The group sessions and pretest and posttest interviews generated data that were scored using the Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System. Scores on related measures of selected interview material provided the quantitative data to test the hypothesis. The null hypothesis was H_0: $P = .5$, where P represented the probability of either no change or a decrease in the group's average hierarchical complexity. The alternative hypothesis H_A: $P > .5$, $p < .05$ (one-tailed) was the dichotomous probability that there would be an average increase in the group's hierarchical complexity. The nonparametric binomial test was used to test for dichotomous observations of either an increase or no change/decrease. Results supported rejection of the null hypothesis, significant at $p < .01$, one-tailed. The average increase in hierarchical complexity of the related measures was significant at $p < .01$, one-tailed, with large effect size. Qualitative methods were used to analyze (a) changes in the group's political culture, (b) increases in participants' hope and motivation about

addressing the issues they worked on, and (c) participant-reported benefits of participating in the process. The group's culture transformed from a fragmented negative tone to a positive, coherent, deliberative tone. The study informs research into fostering adult development, increasing the coherence of public discourse, improving public deliberation, and the role of structured public discourse about complex issues in fostering political development.

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Chapter One: Introduction

This study was about adult and political development. I conducted it as an exploratory test of a hypothesis about fostering political development, using pretest and posttest interview measures and a structured public discourse process developed and field-tested before this study. During the study, a small group in one community used the process to select and begin working on issues of local concern.

As an orientation to the study, this introductory chapter is organized as follows. It begins with a sketch of the larger social concerns that shape my long-term intentions for research and praxis. That sketch is followed by a brief history of experiences that resulted in the discourse process that is part of my methodology. That section introduces the typical discursive problems the process is designed to remedy. Then, I describe some of the anecdotal evidence of effects of public issues discourse on people that I collected during previous work and that largely inspired this study. Next, I introduce the main bodies of work that inform this research. With those foundations as background, I introduce the theorizing that I have done, informed by those bodies of knowledge, and link it with my original motivations for developing the discourse process. That theory building underlies this dissertation and explains my intentions for doing it. To complete this orientation to the study, I next introduce my research questions and close the chapter with definitions used in the dissertation.

Social Concerns

I have had a long-term commitment to developing and implementing replicable group process methods that enable people to understand and address complex issues at

their systemic roots. By *complex issue,* I mean any social concern that is essentially a dispute over how people are relating. People *relate* socially, politically, and economically, and these relations involve other individuals, groups, and institutions. Whether operating as individuals, as members of groups, or as institutional agents, people have myriad interests and priorities, different levels of access to resources, different perspectives, and different modes of reasoning. These differences inevitably lead to disputes about how social, political, and economic life should be organized and conducted. Such issues are commonplace at all social scales.

Some examples of complex issues at a local level would be inner city crime and violence, parents' concerns about traffic patterns and legal speeds through their neighborhood populated with young children, and a contested change in land use. At local or state levels, how to deal with school funding changes, federal mandates, demands for social services, and economic development efforts are complex issues. At national scales, complex issues include such topics as pollution, trade protections, national security, and reforms of campaign finance, income tax, health care, social security, and immigration policies. National issues such as taxation, trade, security, and immigration extend into international issues with other nations, international bodies, and multinational corporations. Internationally, violent conflicts, terrorist activity, human rights violations, economic imbalances, and environmental damage are complex issues that affect everyone on the planet, directly or indirectly. At each of these scales, there is an exponential rise in stakeholders affected by the issues; the complexity of these disputes over ways of relating increases accordingly.

Our chronic difficulties and frequent inabilities to grapple with complex issues are observable at each of these social scales. Some disputes resolve in shorter time spans than others, with and without various forms of harm to some stakeholders. Some disputes stretch into decades without resolutions or the sustained attention necessary to resolve them. My pragmatic view accepts that human societies will always have issues and problems that cause dis-ease or death in physical, emotional, economic, social, and environmental domains. My principled view advocates for commitments and capacities to address those issues for the sake of all humans, other life forms, and the planetary organism they share. My vocation as a scholar-practitioner is to foster the development of those commitments and capacities and the methods to address issues systemically with whatever amounts of sustained attention they require.

My Motivations for Developing the Public Issues Discourse Process

About 20 years ago, I was at a stage in my life when I could begin to invest energy in my local county's civic affairs and issues. The most fascinating and troublesome feature I observed was that the same knotty issues and concerns were talked about year after year, even from one decade to another. Some of those issues were local concerns, some were regional, and some were at state and national levels. People who were talking about these issues included citizens on the street, those who participated in ongoing community leadership programs, local officials in villages, townships, and county offices, state officials, social service agencies and other nonprofit organizations, and active members of the business community. Despite all the talk, virtually nothing happened to address perennial concerns. I did a lot of listening to the nature of that talk and analyzed the nature of the issues. I began to analyze what was going on and why,

imagined what needed to be different to shift the chronic inertia, and experimented with my early ideas for different approaches to public discourse about issues.

When I spent a number of years associated with Kettering Foundation as an independent action researcher, I learned that people in communities around the U.S. and the world were talking about their issues and concerns in ways that were similar to communities in my county. I estimate that I have worked with and listened to more than a thousand citizens face to face over these years, and I have been a regular consumer of news reports and analyses. The same patterns have shown up across all the public discourse about issues with which I have come into contact.

Those patterns are (a) reliance upon abstractions to describe or define issues, and (b) undisciplined talk and thinking that rely upon generalizations and assertions. Abstractions are convenient linguistic means to speak about general problems without specifically mentioning concrete factors or circumstances. I used abstractions above to give examples of issues (e.g., pollution, national security, immigration). My analyses have consistently indicated that reliance upon abstract generalities in efforts to address issues is a form of self-sabotage. This is due to the human habit of reifying abstractions as though they refer to real “things.” Reified abstractions mask the complex nature of the issues and prevent discourses from including vital ingredients. Such ingredients include (a) idiosyncratic meanings and interpretations, (b) the effects of different values, priorities, life conditions, perspectives, and modes of reasoning, and (c) identifying concrete impacts and ameliorative actions that should be associated with the specific issue. These ingredients are essential in order to explicate what the disputes over ways of relating actually involve. Only then can the disputes begin to be resolved. Resolution

processes may span a great deal of time. Reliance upon abstractions masks these and other realities and leads to inertia on the issues and/or reactive policymaking, often characterized by short-term thinking.

When it comes to public issues, talk and thinking are undisciplined when they are ill suited to accomplish a necessary task. Several such tasks are, for example, to identify a specific problem (challenge, issue, question, etc.), to collect or express all concerns about the problem, and to understand why the problem or issue exists. Generalizations typically show up in the form of opinions or blanket assumptions that are employed with little or no discrimination. Assertions are statements that are expressed without a supporting logic or evidence, and are sometimes made without regard for the specific context under discussion. They often reflect beliefs. They are made with a confidence that implies that the speaker's position should be accepted as a given (which often becomes an additional source of disputes). Examples of actions that reflect common generalizations and assertions in public issues talk and thinking include the following.

1. Argue over diagnoses of the problem's cause.
2. Assert opinions about others' views.
3. Assume that a single diagnosis tells what the whole solution is.
4. Assume that one has "the answer."
5. Blame others' actions.
6. Blame others' values.
7. Discount the focus on problem A because problem B is the *real* problem.
8. Express beliefs that "they" will never change.
9. Engage in fact wars to prove that something is, or is not, a problem.

10. Engage in opinion wars.
11. Generalize (often judgmentally) about people and situations.
12. Rush to state all thoughts because there may not be another chance.

None of these actions suit the essential tasks required to address complex issues.

When my association with the Foundation began in the early 1990s, I was searching for methods that would support productive issues-talk. At that time, several Foundation personnel were beginning to systematize how the Foundation had been helping people talk about policy issues. One tenet of the work was to "name and frame" public issues so that citizens could carefully weigh, i.e., deliberate about, their public policy concerns and other "wicked problems." Foundation staff often used the term, wicked problems, to refer to complex issues. To name an issue, citizens' concerns should be described in public, nonexpert terms. To frame an issue meant to identify several choices of direction that could address the issue, so that people could deliberate about preferred policy solutions without a polarized debate.

I learned about these methods through a series of experiences in the Foundation's various programs and became one of its researchers. Concurrent with ongoing volunteer work in my county of residence, I fulfilled both short- and long-term action research contracts and conducted extended workshops with groups of people from over a dozen communities that the Foundation attracted to its community politics program. The processes to name and frame issues were messy and frustrating affairs for these citizens, and very few attempted them outside of the workshops' auspices. Deliberative community forums about issues that had been named and framed in the workshops did not result in systemic actions or other impacts on the issues. I observed that the

consecutive processes of naming, framing, and deliberating were burdened by people's use of abstractions and undisciplined issues-talk, regardless of the distinct tasks required. People could not effectively engage the tasks, nor could the Foundation articulate the tasks' purposes clearly enough to recognize and convey what kind of talk or process was required. Whether naming, framing, or deliberating, the patterns described above prevailed and results were unproductive.

Those years of experience taught me that the Kettering Foundation is right. Issues do need to be named, framed, and deliberated, but those tasks needed to be approached and performed far differently than its methods suggest. Informed by my independent studies in several disciplines and my ongoing issue analyses, I pursued my own theoretical and action research agendas to develop and test methods for working on issues. I wanted to use the familiar patterns of issue-talk and transform them through productive, step-by-step methods that would accomplish the necessary tasks. Only then, I reasoned, could issues of concern begin to be effectively addressed.

The product of those research efforts is the multiple-session discourse process used in this study. Its design generically accommodates iterative work cycles on a single complex issue and it is replicable for use on multiple, diverse issues. It includes unique methods to (a) analyze and understand issues, (b) conceive comprehensive action-systems to address them, and then to (c) name and frame precise questions about implementing specific actions and policies to address the issue. It uses deliberation for deeper analysis and decision making about how and whether to implement those specific, instrumental actions. It includes guidelines for organizing, coordinating, and institutionalizing systemic issues work. Its formal title is *The Integral Process For*

Working On Complex Issues.[1] For this study, I called it by the simple title of *FreshAir*. In this dissertation, I use generic terms to refer to the overall method, e.g., "the public issues discourse process," "the discourse process," or "the process."

Anecdotal Evidence of Effects

Even before I began my own research and development efforts on this process, I learned that sometimes there were positive effects on people who participated in deliberative forums. These forums were discussions that used issue booklets published by Kettering Foundation's affiliate organization, National Issues Forums (www.nifi.org) and by Public Agenda (www.publicagenda.org). Each booklet discussed a policy issue and presented several choices of approach to the issue. Forum discussions could be open to the public or be quasi-public, such as the community leadership program for senior citizens that I codeveloped in the mid 1990s. An early effect I personally experienced was a budding ability to critically analyze issues' complexity and the way the issues were framed. Others had different experiences. For example, one state official that had attended several deliberative public forums "had an epiphany" when she discovered that citizens could consider a wider array of creative options to address an issue than she alone could conceive in her role as an "official expert." Another example was a man who participated in two such deliberative discussions during one of our nine-month leadership programs. He later professed that those discussions "changed my life!" I did not interview him and do not know how he would have explained that change.

Throughout my fieldwork to test various segments of the process, a consistent finding was that the "ordinary citizens" who volunteered to participate in those sessions expressed motivations to participate in more sessions so they could begin to address

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issues. Even when the segment entailed very preliminary work, such as mapping and lightly analyzing all the topics of concern in the community, it appeared that just having a new and productive way to consider the concerns was a motivating experience. This was a crucial finding, since all systemic public issues require voluntary participation by at least some citizens if efforts are to address them. The willingness of volunteers to participate in test sessions was also an indicator of motivation, but it could have been driven by curiosity as much as anything else. The expressions of desire for "more" at the end of every session provided anecdotal evidence that effective discourse processes were attractive and resulted in feelings of motivation to address local issues in substantive ways.

Throughout field testing, I saw that participants could talk and think in disciplined ways when they had a process to foster those behaviors, and I heard participants articulate new insights of many different kinds. Sometimes they were specific to an issue; sometimes they were in the form of more general learnings. Two anecdotes illustrate this. These occurred in the field test of the first five sessions run as a series (rather than as standalone tests). The small group decided to use the process to dig into the presenting issue of loiterers on the corners of the main street in town. At the midpoint of the series, one young professional woman (who had been quite judgmental of the loiterers) shared with the group that she had finally taken a close look at *who* the people were that were consistently loitering. For the first time, she recognized that some of them were young men who had attended high school with her. She made the statement that "If only I, if we, had treated them better when we were in high school, maybe they wouldn't be out there now." This was an issue-specific insight that appeared to affect the woman's interest in

and connection to the issue. It had initially concerned her because it gave the town a negative image and affected her job to promote her employer's business. Her early assertion was that people should not be allowed to loiter. She developed a sense of personal responsibility for what she thought may have been her past behavioral impacts on some of the loiterers. In the remaining sessions, she exhibited a deeper interest in the myriad underlying causes of the issue and approaches to address them.

A less issue-specific insight came from a man in that group who had a shift that reflected a more generalized type of learning. When he had introduced himself to others in the first session, he made a statement that the community was fine just the way it was, and that it did not have any issues that needed to be dealt with. Given that stance, his unstated reason for participating may have been curiosity or to stay abreast of what would happen in the group that might affect the community later. By the time the group was near the end of the second session, he made a very different kind of statement.

> I can see by what we've done here, that we as a community have created these problems, and therefore we as a community are responsible to fix them. I don't believe that, but I'm looking at all that we've put up here [their work written on the flip charts] and that's what it's saying.

A pattern that these two anecdotes illustrate is that of abstract assertions that were replaced by reasoning that was more complex—in the form of new logics—once these two people had participated in some of the sessions of the process. The new logics stemmed from new insights spawned by new information. In the young woman's case, the insight arose from having made a closer observation of the chronic loiterers, and the observation gave her new information. In the context of a group discussion about

underlying causes of the problem, she expressed a new connection. In the man's case, the new information was cocreated by the group of which he was a part, and although he did not appear to like the dissonance it created with his earlier stance ("I don't believe it"), his statement indicated that he trusted the information as reliable evidence. The evidence was the basis for a new acceptance that changes *were* needed in the community and a new sense of responsibility to effect those changes.

Both persons had initially made abstract assertions that were not supported by evidence or logic. Each person developed at least one, new logic (in my hearing). The new logics reflected more informed and more complex reasoning about issues' causation and about individual and collective responsibility for conditions in the community. Observations and reflections on concrete forms of evidence led these people to demonstrate forms of reasoning that were more complex than the reasoning behind their early assertions.

This kind of anecdotal evidence suggested to me that the predeliberation process steps that I was testing were doing more than just giving people a systematic and productive way to begin to work on issues. They seemed to contribute to some participants' development of more complex reasoning about issues of concern. That new reasoning had positive potentials for addressing the issues with new motivations. I surmised that addressing issues with new motivations, insights, and reasoning would present opportunities for further developments that would benefit the disputes over ways of relating that constitute complex issues.

The Bodies of Knowledge That Inform This Research

Both my theorizing (discussed below) and this research reflect my interest in fostering healthy individual and social change and development *so that* complex issues can and will be addressed systemically. This thinking represents a synthesis of an interdisciplinary range of understandings about how we human beings "work" and about how our world works. Several bodies of theoretical and empirical work were particularly important in my theorizing and in formulating and conducting this research, and I introduce them briefly below. These are political development, adult development, methods to foster adult development and learning, and hierarchical complexity. I introduce these before discussing my own theorizing because they provide the essential contexts to understand it.

Political Development

In general, where the term political development is used, it goes undefined and un- or under-conceptualized; is restrictively defined (e.g., to formal institutions); refers not to development but to change, such as consequences of development, or other events; and otherwise creates "corresponding definitional confusions" (Chilton, 1988, p. 8). That was the state of the literature as Chilton found it, and I have been able to discover no improvements since then, except for his work (1988, 1991) to develop and ground a concept of political development. His work articulates a comprehensive metaunderstanding of dynamic interplays that make for political *development*. In doing so, it inherently reflected my thinking about the requirements to address complex issues. It equipped me with finer distinctions and sharpened my own thinking. I view Chilton's work as a necessary foundation for my own work to build upon. As a result, I have framed my field of interest and overall agenda for research and praxis in terms of

fostering political development.

Chilton defines political development in terms of the political culture. That carefully honed definition explains that the political culture consists of the publicly common ways of relating. This section defines these terms. The way of relating in a culture is "the organized system of mutual expectations by which social behavior is informed and made meaningful" (1991, p. 66). For example, in a given culture respectful deference may be expected toward certain roles or individuals such as leaders or fathers, while disdain may be expected toward certain other roles or individuals, such as migrant labor or members of a certain caste or ethnic group. Ways of relating that are disputed in public issues can concern, for example, allocations of resources or favorable or punitive treatments. Culture is defined in terms of such ways of relating, as follows.

> I first propose to call "a culture" *only* groups of people who share, in the special way described below, a way of relating…. I next propose to term a way of relating "shared" only if it is *publicly common* within the collectivity. "Publicly common" means that the way of relating is both (a) understood by all in the culture (a *common* understanding); and (b) in fact used by all actors to orient to one another (the *public* focus of orientation)" (Chilton, 1991, p. 68, emphases in the original).

Those ways of relating are at the nexus of political development. He writes, "*Political development is defined in this work as a specific form of change in the political culture of a society.* The political cultural system, not the individual or social systems, is the locus of development*"* (1988, p. 28, emphasis in the original). That specific form of change looks different at each stage of development, and manifests as a collectivity's

publicly common ways of relating.[2]

Changes in the political culture that reflect different stages of political development are complex dynamics that ensue as "profoundly dissimilar forces" interact: "forces inducing cognitive development and social invention, forces of social inertia, forces of hegemonic control, and forces of subgroup/subculture interaction" (1988, pp. 97-98). Such interacting forces comprise normal social processes, which unfold naturally. They can also be intentionally engaged and facilitated when people participate in designed discourse processes to help people grapple with social issues. I take as a given the necessity of publicly inclusive, structured discourses becoming gradually embedded in the publicly common ways of relating within a culture to address complex issues in ongoing, sustained ways.

My interpretation of Habermas' (1976/1979) theory of communicative action and the evolution of society is that his developmental conception resonates with my own. His orientation is complementary to Chilton's and mine; therefore, I include him with Chilton in making theoretical contributions to a very sparse literature on political development as it is defined here. To date, my additions to political development are my theory (introduced below) and praxis for fostering it, and this current research.

Adult Development

Adult development is a subfield of developmental psychology. Scholars across a wide range of disciplines, e.g., Brown (1991), Chilton (1988), Cory (2004), Gouldner (1977), Habermas (1976/1979), Kelso (1995), Laszlo (2003), Maturana and Varela (1998), Thelen and Smith (1994), Whitehead (1929/1957), and Wolff and Haselhurst (2005), recognize that reciprocal interactions are characteristic dynamics in the domains

[2] See Chilton (1988, 1991) for stages of political development and their genetic epistemological bases.

they study. In the human domain, if the political culture is understood as our publicly common ways of relating, it could suggest that it is artificial to separate individual or adult development very strenuously from political development, because they are reciprocally interactive systems, as Chilton has thoroughly described. It could be artificial from that perspective, but it is nonetheless useful, because developmental patterns do show up in individual adults' private and public ways of relating to self, others, and the world. Therefore, they also show up in the disputes over ways of relating that constitute complex public issues. It is essential to reflect adult development understandings in methods designed for adults to address issues, because adults employ developmentally different structures of reasoning[3] when they are discussing and thinking about issues.

From its primary origins in Piaget's work with children, the field of adult development developed in the latter half of the 20th century in the West. Researchers have been identifying, defining, and refining methods to describe stages and how adult behavior is different at those stages in myriad domains, and comparing theories (Hoare, 2006). Thus, my work has been informed by theoretical and empirical work in this field.

Methods to Foster Adult Development and Learning

Adult development has included a great deal of measuring for effects of intervention methods aimed at increasing adults' psychological development. Through their research with school-aged children, the early moral development efforts by Kohlberg, Rest, and their colleagues (Power, 1988; Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 1999) were instrumental in propagating the idea of fostering individuals' development. In a school-based program, Kohlberg and some of his colleagues pioneered the idea of linking moral development to Dewey's good citizenship and the creation of just

[3] The term, structures of reasoning, is defined on page 30.

communities (Power, 1988). Concurrently, the adult education and literacy fields have promoted psychological development and transformative learning, with the significant influence of Mezirow (1991) and Freire (1970/2002). Judging from Hoare's (2006) prognosis, the fields of adult development and learning are now converging. This is appropriate because learning experiences can include insights that attend the development of reasoning that is more complex. The anecdotes I shared above are one example. Ross (2006) describes the combined dynamics of development, learning, insights, and motivation.

Hierarchical Complexity

From its origins in the developmental psychology field more than 20 years ago as a neo-Piagetian general stage model (Commons & Richards, 1984), the Model of Hierarchical Complexity (MHC) (Commons & Miller, 1998; Commons, Trudeau, Stein, Richards, & Krause, 1998) has been continually refined and now stands as a formal theory (Commons & Pekker, in press). It has universal applicability beyond developmental psychology because it measures task complexity irrespective of the species, the task content, or the cultural context. It deals with the stage sequences of development, as does the adult development field, and explains not only how and why development takes place, but also how to measure it (Commons & Richards, 2002). It accomplishes this by not only accounting for discrete measures of stages of performance on tasks in any domain, but also by providing the measurements of the transition steps between full stages of performance. I have used the MHC's Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System (Commons, Miller, Goodheart, & Danaher-Gilpin, 2005) as the measurement methodology in this study.

My Theorizing About Fostering Political Development

I began this chapter with a discussion of my larger social concerns, the motivations for my public issues work and developing the discourse process, and with descriptions of the deficiencies in common issues-talk and thinking that the process is intended to remedy. I share Einstein's conviction that we cannot solve problems using the same thinking that created them. For complex issues to be addressed, we need to change *what* we talk and think about as much as we need to change *how* we talk and think. We also need to change *what* we do, and *how* we do it, if the issues are to be addressed at all the levels of their systemic complexity.

These needed changes are not simple, lateral changes (for example, adding more information or activity), but vertical, i.e., developmentally more complex and adequate to the demands. The brief selection of anecdotal evidence presented earlier indicated that participation in certain designed discourse processes could be a force for change in catalyzing new insights and developing reasoning that is more complex. The latter is also referred to as cognitive development, one of the sources of change in a political culture (Chilton, 1988, 1991).

Before I state my theory in this section, I sketch how my theorizing about fostering political development unfolded, without repeating theoretical explanations that I have written elsewhere (in Ross, 2002b, 2005, 2006). At the time that my theorizing period got underway, I had already developed my own analytical approaches to issue analyses, and had begun thinking about the new process steps that were needed. That period began with several years of synthesizing over a dozen theories of individual development and integrating and testing that synthesis with political institutions'

development and anthropology's stages of sociocultural evolution. This was followed by internalizing cognition's relation to whole-organism development and development's relation to interactions with the environment, central concepts in the field of genetic epistemology. Anecdotal evidence from my action research, such as that shared above, led me into further investigations of *how* diverse experiences influence (a) motivation, (b) the changes in psycho-logics that underlie human actions and interactions, and (c) the development of more complex structures of reasoning. I integrated the resulting understandings with the MHC's task complexity concepts. I further integrated nonlinear system dynamics and hierarchical complexity with the oscillations of deliberative decision dynamics. I studied the latter through long-term observations and analyses of my own internal processes and by analyzing what did and did not happen in deliberative forums and at everyday micro and macro social scales. Then I used the Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System to analyze the series of steps of the discourse process itself.

The result of all this work, ultimately, was my realization that the discourse process *employs* the interactive dynamics of development itself to accomplish the tasks necessary to address public issues. I saw that the process steps that I had determined were necessary to address issues embed iterations of the sequences of tasks in at least four of the HCSS stages and their transition step dynamics.[4] The tasks are performed by individuals in the context of a group process that extends over multiple sessions. The tasks become increasingly complex, each one a hierarchical building block that the next tasks depend upon. This realization suggested to me the theoretical basis of a hypothesis that the process can support and foster development as groups use its steps.[5]

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[4] Stage definitions begin on page 27. See Table 3, p. 103, for transition step dynamics.

[5] The process steps are described in the third chapter.

My general theory, then, is that when this discourse process is used, development can be fostered because its natural steps are embedded in the process itself. This explains my general hypothesis, which is that political development can be fostered *while* and *by* addressing complex issues. That is, the process to address issues contains in itself the progressive, developmental dynamics for supporting greater complexity of reasoning and more adequate ways of relating in connection with the issues that are worked on. As with any interaction with the larger environment, of course, the process cannot direct, ensure, or force any changes in participants' reasoning, behavioral choices, or ways of relating.

With the foregoing as background, and before stating the logic behind this theory for fostering political development, an orientation from Chilton is an important reminder. It is that "locating political development in the cultural system admits several sources of change" due to the interacting forces at play in not only subgroup/subculture interactions but also in "cognitive-developmental forces; change due to social inertia; and change due to hegemonic control over available cultural alternatives" (Chilton, 1988, p. 14).

Given the above, I state the logic as follows: If (a) structured public issue analysis and discourse can foster participants' individual cognitive development while and by addressing complex issues of concern, and (b) thus alter social inertia and subgroup/subcultures' interactions while and by actively and systemically addressing those issues, and (c) the discursive processes lead to new politics by both the nature of the processes and new systemic approaches to action and institutional change that they equip people to engage, and (d) hegemonic structures gradually adapt (opportunistically and/or under new sociopolitical and/or economic constraints) to forms that are culturally tolerated, and (e) the process iterations extend over time and gradually result in new

publicly common ways of relating, then political development will be fostered.

This is a long-term agenda for sociopolitical change. A fundamental prescription in this agenda is that its methods to address issues must afford opportunities that are conducive for developing new competencies *over time* in the culture, in individuals and groups, and in their institutional arrangements. If methods support this prescription, people might then make qualitatively different contributions to their own and others' quality of life, their interactions, their institutional arrangements, their environment, and the complex issues that cause dis-ease on this planet.

The Pragmatic Value of Greater Complexity of Reasoning

The final point I include here is *why* I place value on greater complexity in reasoning about public issues. There are both pragmatic and normative reasons to value greater reasoning complexity. Chilton's (1991) grounding of political development makes the comprehensive normative argument, and I refer readers to his work for the moral grounds of this position. Here, I advance my pragmatic argument, reflected earlier in asserting my vocation as a scholar-practitioner.

Some pragmatic benefits of more complex reasoning were suggested briefly, above, when I discussed two individuals' development from making abstract assertions to developing and expressing new logics about causation and responsibility. Both assertions supported social inertia because they did not involve the speakers' recognition of needs for them or certain others to change certain personal or social behaviors. A deeper analysis might suggest that there were attitudes toward conditions and subgroups that would support certain forms of hegemony in the political culture. However, both new logics that were developed altered these individual sources of social inertia *by being new*

reasoning that (a) deepened understandings of causation and (b) motivated taking responsibility. Both (a) and (b) naturally led the individuals to new ways of relating with others in connection with the issue, at least during the time I was working with them.

The new *if . . . then* logics that the individuals developed were important steps. Such logics are the hierarchical building blocks for reasoning to make additional important connections among the multiple factors involved in issues. For example, the woman's logic had a simple, nostalgic sort of quality with its starting point of "if only." If it had been more complex, it may have coordinated a *system* of related factors, such as: (a) her personal ruefulness over past behavior with present-day loiterers, (b) addressing present-day students' ways of relating, (c) the future impacts of those ways of relating on any present-day students that were treated poorly, and (d) the town's future image and business prospects. Such connections could use and extend her personal insight, perhaps toward proactive social change efforts that could reduce the weight of certain issues in the future.

Cognitively, it is a task of considerable complexity for many people to conceive a multivariate system such as the one represented by items (a) through (d) above. It is clearly more complex than, for example, the nostalgic *if only* logic that rued past behavior and its possible impacts on current-day loiterers. The steps involved to analyze issues reveal that every complex issue is made up of many multivariate systems of relations operating simultaneously in the society (whether locally or at a larger scale). To address them requires conceiving new multivariate systems of relations that can dismantle the problematic ways of relating. Cognitively, it requires more complexity to conceive and work with more than one multivariate system at a time. It is common knowledge in the

adult development field that only a very small percentage of individuals in any population have the capacity for performing the most complex of these tasks.

At the same time, it is also common knowledge in the field that as people develop reasoning that uses if . . . then logics and that performs the more complex tasks described above, their time horizons of attention continue to lengthen, because they can make more complex causal connections. This is a vital capacity if complex issues are to be given the sustained attention their resolution requires, and a pragmatic reason to promote cognitive development.

Individuals gathered in any self-selected group to address issues can be expected to use different stages of reasoning. The progressive steps taken by a group over the course of the discourse process afford the process, the conditions, the information, and the support to coconstruct abstractions, formal logics, multivariate systems of understanding and action, and potentially, combinations of multiple, multivariate systems of effective approaches to address issues. These *group level* outcome potentials are supplied by the process design, even if all of the individual participants do not reason at task levels that are more complex than if . . . then logics.

To close this theoretical introduction in the context of introducing this study, I provide a brief summary, as follows. My primary motivation is to enable people to understand and address complex issues so that the issues' negative impacts in our world begin to be resolved. My method is to use the familiar patterns of issue-talk and thinking and transform them through step-by-step methods to accomplish the tasks I have identified as necessary for working on issues. Along with that capacity building, there appear to be potentials for participants' reasoning to become more complex in the

process.

Reasoning that is more complex has social, cultural, political, and public issue benefits. The publicly common ways of relating that are possible at more developed stages are the means of dismantling the complex issues I am concerned about, those disputes over ways of relating that humans and their societies have been constructing.

Research Questions

For this research, I implemented the first five steps of the discourse process with a small group to test the hypothesis about fostering political development on an exploratory basis. If the investigation did not disconfirm the hypothesis, then there would be preliminary empirical support for my theorizing about how to foster healthy individual and social change and development, and hopefully political development, *while* and *by* addressing complex issues. Such findings could serve as a basis to conduct subsequent experimental research, to further refine the process materials, and to promote the discourse process for wider use.

My research questions take the form of one hypothesis to test, and two questions.

1. Conduct an exploratory test of the following hypothesis: When study participants engage together using the process to grapple with complex public issues and launch systemic work on them, the group's average hierarchical complexity of reasoning about issues will increase, as measured by the Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System.
2. How large are the changes, if any, in average hierarchical complexity?
3. What changes in the political culture of the small group, if any, will occur over the course of the sessions of the discourse process?

Definitions

Listed in alphabetical order, the following are terms that I use in this dissertation. Thus, I define them here in advance.

Action-logic

Coined by Torbert in connection with his theory of developmental action inquiry (Torbert, 2000b), the term refers to the rationale that underlies actions taken by an individual, group, organization, or any other social entity. Action-logics are situational and developmental, which means that rationales are formulated differently at different stages of development and in different contexts. They may be conscious or unconscious. My use of this term is sometimes paired with an adjective that conveys the developmental stage that an action-logic demonstrates, e.g., formal action-logic. The technical terms for those stages are described below under the definition of hierarchical complexity.

Complex Issues

These are (a) disputes about ways of relating, and (b) any set of social conditions that requires at least several layers of explanation to describe (at minimum) its boundaries, subsystems, and causal relationships, and, therefore a response that is more complicated than a yes or no type of choice about policy or action could address.

Complexity

This nonscientific definition captures my general use of the term, and it enhances the foregoing definition of complex issues.

> Complexity is the property of a real world system that is manifest in the inability of any one formalism being adequate to capture all its properties. It requires that we find distinctly different ways of interacting with systems. Distinctly different in the sense that when we make successful models, the formal systems needed to

> describe each distinct aspect are NOT derivable from each other (Mikulecky, 2006, emphasis in the original).

Deliberation

My definition is that deliberation is a pattern of thought-and-reaction-oscillations that makes up human decision-making processes. The oscillations come from weighing the advantages, disadvantages, and possible contingencies of diverse actions (by oneself and/or others) in relation to whatever a person or group holds valuable in a given situation. It is a natural individual dynamic within adults, which is more or less complex, depending on the individual. It is a social dynamic when two or more people engage earnestly to consider options. It will be more or less complex depending on the individuals, their investment in the subject, the way the options are framed and the discourse is structured, and other factors. Common definitions include (a) weighing options carefully, and (b) any occasion where it is assumed that people are discussing something carefully.

Development

This is the vertical (i.e., hierarchical) process of acquiring more complex behaviors that reflect greater degrees of differentiation and integration. By contrast, it is not a horizontal acquisition of new behaviors or sets of information that are no more complex than those already acquired. Development “lies in how people coordinate their relations with one another” and the environment; in sum: “how they interact” (Chilton, 1988, p. 28).

Domain

A domain is “a set of tasks that share certain qualities in common. Such tasks are similar in both their actions and the objects acted upon (content)” (Commons et al., 2005,

p. 22).

Hierarchical Complexity

This is a premise of the formal theory, the Model of Hierarchical Complexity (MHC), which describes a measure of task difficulty, using an ordinal scale of orders that is based on natural numbers (Commons & Pekker, in press). Hierarchical complexity underlies concepts about stages of development. The term refers to

> the number of recursions that the co-ordinating actions must perform on a set of primary elements. Actions at a higher order of hierarchical complexity: a) are defined in terms of actions at the next lower order of hierarchical complexity; b) organize and transform the lower-order actions; c) produce organizations of lower-order actions that are new and not arbitrary, and cannot be accomplished by those lower-order actions alone. Once these conditions have been met, we say the higher-order action co-ordinates the actions of the next lower order (Commons et al., 2005, p. 8).

Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System (HCSS)

The scoring system of the foregoing Model of Hierarchical Complexity.

Integral or *Integral Approaches*

These are carefully designed processes wherein the inherent complexity of a situation or issue is recognized, including its developmental dimensions, and efforts are those that are essential to address that complexity systemically.

Political Culture

With reference to any collectivity, political culture is “whatever way of relating is publicly common to that collectivity” (Chilton, 1988, p. 25). It “embraces all aspects of

interpersonal culture" including economic and social culture (p. 35). While Chilton explicitly excludes from this definition the "material culture, which concerns how people relate to their physical world" (p. 35), the anthropological insights I have absorbed leave me unable to segregate the natural environment from its intimate and influential role in interpersonal, economic, social, and therefore political culture. Chilton's more philosophically refined position is that the two (the political and material cultures) must be equilibrated with each other, but they involve different truth claims (S. Chilton, personal communication, July 22, 2006).

Politics

All of our ways of relating to others, to groups, to formal and informal institutions, and the natural environment are politics.

Stage

Stage is "the highest-order hierarchical complexity of the task solved" (Commons et al., 2005, p. 8). Terms that refer to the higher range of such stages and that appear in this dissertation are described briefly, below, in their hierarchical sequence. The partial list of stages, below, includes only those that appeared in this study's scored data. Their descriptions reflect a blend of those in the Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System and those in Torbert & Associates (2004) to increase readability. Under each stage description below, I include at least one example of study participants' *content* that uses each different stage, to show the differences in the hierarchical complexity between each stage. The examples are quotations that came from asking participants what they thought of or meant when they heard or used the term *community*. Each meaning would tend to underlie (be the *logical structure* of*)* how they *acted* with regard to community; thus,

action-logics correspond to stages.

Abstract. Abstract stage reasoning uses stereotypes and clichés; uses quantifiers when describing things (all, most, none, some); talks about variables of time, place, act, actor, state, type; makes categorical assertions (e.g., “we all know that”); seeks group membership, status, and is loyal to in-group; places high value on saving face.

Example. People. You think of people involved and people activity and places where the community can go to feel safe and spend time together. Most communities do not have that anymore.

Formal. Formal stage reasoning argues using empirical or logical evidence; uses linear logic (if . . . then, because, thus, therefore); seeks causes and solves problems based on one input (causal) variable; reflects dogmatism; accepts feedback only from objectively acknowledged masters; uses longer-term thinking to achieve results.

Example. This community is, basically, the [name of local city] area because we have the boundary lines of [names of adjacent jurisdictions] that meet the city boundary; therefore, that area would be this community. [empirical boundaries as input variable, logic based on their relations]

Systematic. Systematic stage reasoning coordinates multiple variables or factors and uses them as input to recognize systems of relationships; forms matrices to illustrate relations; situates events and ideas in larger contexts (present and historical); exhibits relativism while juggling multiple relations; inclines toward infrequent judgment of others; forms systems out of relations among variables; starts to recognize self as system and notice own shadow.

Example. I don’t know how to mention this but the word, community, has a lot

of meaning because we are looking to develop a residential community here at [work] so we have been going around to meetings trying to put community [sic], create community, to develop a housing community here at [work]. The word, community, has a specific meaning in that context, in terms of an intentional, planned place to live, work, and have relationships with people. [system]

Metasystematic. Metasystematic reasoning integrates systems to construct metasystems, which can take the form of higher principles that coordinate systems coherently; forms principles that go beyond rules, customs, and exceptions; reflects on and compares systems and perspectives coherently (is meta-analytic), and is aware that people's perspectives depend upon their action-logics; recognizes perspectives as systems, and multiple perspectives as metasystems; coordinates short-term goals with long-term process orientations.

Example 1. I just think of community as a group of homes or people living in homes that are in *x* amount of numbers where they go to the same school, that you see one another, and you are a part of paying either city taxes or county taxes [system] and those taxes go to whatever things that you participate in publicly in that area [system]. That is how I see a community. [metasystem of coordinated relations of systems]

Example 2. I guess, you know, I think about this community more in terms of what we talked about, the [Site] community per se, and all of the different constituencies that were included in there. I guess I kind of felt a part of that community, if you will. I think that could be translated a lot of different ways, in terms of community. I think it maybe changed my perception, that it includes a lot of different parties coming from different perspectives [who] a lot of times you don't

really perhaps think about that have an interest in an issue or a topic, or whatever. [metasystem of parties with different perspectives and interests]

Structures of Reasoning

In this term, *structures* refers to the task operations that shape *how* people construct their reasoning or thinking, regardless of the situation or content matter about which they are concerned. It has the same meaning as action-logics and stages of hierarchical complexity.

Chapter Two: Review of the Literature

This review of the literature that is relevant to my research includes an interdisciplinary range of work that is related to fostering development and to public discussions of issues. The chapter is organized as follows. The first section describes my literature search strategies. The next section begins the review, with a discussion of intentional efforts to foster transformative types of learning. The following two sections cover work related to moral development efforts: moral dilemmas and developing the culture. Then three sections discuss efforts that I have organized based on the number of people they involve: (a) individual and one-on-one, (b) action inquiry and small groups, and (c) quasi-public and public dialogue. Next, I cover the deliberation literature. The broad first section is followed by two, narrower discussions. One is about efforts to integrate deliberation with developmental perspectives, and the other discusses public deliberation's purposes and the deliberation research agenda. I summarize the chapter by providing a broad, chronological recapitulation of the main literature that I reviewed.

Literature Searches

My literature searches scrutinized works that had to do with increasing or fostering development, individual development, political development, cognitive development, action inquiry, transformation, or transformative learning. I was also interested in work in the public domain that is not necessarily regarded as being developmental or transformative, but that by its methods may have that potential. Thus, I also searched for group discourse, group process, public discourse, public or complex issues. Because deliberation is one of the important elements in my research project's

methods, I also investigated current research into its practice, which usually falls under the rubric of deliberative democracy, and to a lesser extent, jury deliberations. Since I had learned that efforts to foster moral development were forerunners of contemporary adult development efforts, I included that literature. I developed dozens of search term combinations that included those mentioned above, and others, to scour for relevant work in all of the academic databases that cover social sciences, and referred to works I had already accumulated in my own library.

Intentional Transformative and Emancipatory Learning

The literature on fostering critical thinking and transformative learning, (e.g., Brookfield, 1987; Cranton, 1994; Freire, 1970/2002; Mezirow 1991; Mezirow & Associates, 1990; Taylor, Marienau, & Fiddler, 2000) is germane to my research in its subject matter, since the discourse process I used in the research embeds opportunities for critical insights to develop and be used. Freire's efforts to foster critical consciousness in literacy classes in Brazil and Chile catalyzed similar grassroot approaches to adult education in the U.S. (Heaney & Horton, 1990) and U.S. practitioners (Hope & Timmel, 1984) have adapted it for use in Africa. This kind of Habermasian communicative learning (Habermas, 1976/1979) involves reflecting on one's own premises or assumptions, ideally in the context of critical discourse with others where it can be validated (Mezirow & Associates, 1990). Curiously, although both Freire and Habermas seem to assume that emancipatory learning will be embedded in sociocultural change efforts, in the U.S. system institutionalized or deliberate applications of the concepts and practices of transformative learning seem to remain within the walls of formal education. For example, one developmental approach to fostering greater reasoning complexity

through critical reflection in secondary schools is Deliberate Psychological Education (DPE), originally developed by Sprinthall and Mosher in the mid 1960s (Hatfield, 1984). The intention for the program was to deliberately embed efforts to foster personal and human development into curriculum for all students, reflecting the John Dewey goal of education as developing students' potential and thus producing responsible citizens (p. 294) who presumably would continue to use such reflective thinking. That vision for integrating developmental practices into society via the schools had valuable implications, although it has not been realized. The training format has since been adapted with generally effective results into adult education programs to increase cognitive development. These have included ethics training for law enforcement and criminal justice students (Morgan, 1998) and graduate counseling students (Chase, 1998), efforts to increase moral judgment of parents of elementary school students (Royal & Baker, 2005), and other developmental aims for rural African American youth, high-risk college students, and counselors' and their supervisors' training (Kaiser & Ancellotti, 2003).

Moral Dilemmas

Apparently, there was a fast-paced interplay of research exchange among certain scholars in the 1970s. James Rest developed the Defining Issues Test (DIT), derived from Kohlberg's work to identify individuals' stages of moral development, as a "'quick and dirty' method" to assess Kohlberg's stages (Rest, Narvaez, Thoma, & Bebeau, 1999, p. 646). Kohlberg had developed his moral judgment interview. Then, with his graduate student Moshe Blatt, he developed the moral dilemma approach by drawing on "discussion techniques from Rest's (1968) and Turiel's (1966) studies that indicated that

stage change could be stimulated through inducing optimal cognitive mismatch and cognitive conflict" (Power, 1988, p. 196). Since then, the DIT has been used in numerous interventions in diverse settings to foster development of moral judgment with good effect sizes. Both the original instrument (DIT1) and its subsequent version (DIT2) that has higher validity (Rest et al., 1999) are test-style multiple-choice formats that offer hypothetical scenarios intended to evoke moral schemas in the responder's answers. Some settings have used the DIT in the context of group discussions about moral dilemmas, providing support for more complex moral judgments. This Kohlbergian approach has centered on macromorality issues (Rest et al., 1999), and has been criticized for inattention to the micromorality questions that arise in individuals' everyday lives (Krebs & Denton, 2005; Rest et al., 1999). Rest et al. explain that both scales are "concerned with establishing relationships and cooperation among people. However, micromorality relates people through personal relationships, whereas macromorality relates people through rules, role systems, and formal institutions" (p. 645). Krebs and Denton recently developed propositions to frame a new approach to explore the micro level, because "in real life, people make moral decisions about themselves and others that matter; the consequences are real" (p. 647). Such a new method would enable people to grapple with everyday issues rather than "philosophize about morality" (p. 646). The philosopher role is not one that most people play (p. 646), and it has been viewed as "'an inappropriate definer of moral judgment maturity . . . because any ethical philosophical level . . . misrepresents moral judgment maturity as restricted to those who are philosophically articulate' (p. 36)" (Gibbs, 1995, as quoted in Krebs & Denton, 2005, p.

646). The complex public issues my research is concerned with require an integration of such scales rather than a dichotomy set up between them.

Group discussions of moral dilemmas to foster development effectively in educational settings have been further developed over the last 20 years out of Kohlberg and Blatt's work, in the form of the Konstanz Method of Dilemma Discussion, which uses semireal dilemmas out of written material from literature to newspapers or experience (Lind, 2005). Aimed at younger students, its typical design is for two short class periods of less than an hour.

Despite the numerous studies that indicate the effectiveness of development-fostering programs such as the foregoing, methods used in educational settings do not transfer well to the public sector and voluntary citizen work on public issues. Whether moral dilemmas concern one individual's choices in a hypothetical scenario, or semireal macro issues taken from current events, such questions generally have a simpler framing that is insufficient for unpacking the layers involved in complex public issues. This is because such issues represent constellations of multiple, interacting dilemmas that require many factors to be taken into account. These include (a) social, political, and economic conditions; (b) actors at various scales, from individuals to institutions; (c) motivations and constraints related to those actors' behaviors; (d) the cultures in which the issues arise; and (e) public policies.

The subfield of transformative learning as a whole remains uneven in using developmental theory and recognizing its implications for various capacities possible, or impossible, at different stages of adult development. Even so, it has been only the moral development efforts in educational environments that have purposefully articulated an

interest in creating and maintaining a particular kind of culture that reflects a higher stage of development than the environment otherwise would have.

Developing the Culture

As far as I can discover, there is only one area of research that articulated and implemented a theory of developing a culture; in this case, a just and moral one in school communities. Kohlberg's "most mature theory of moral education" was reflected in his "just communities" research conducted with a group of colleagues that dated from 1975 (Power, 1988, p. 195). Lind, who later developed the Konstanz method, was also involved in this research project (Lind, 2005). Power's account reveals that the just community research, implemented in several alternative high schools with student bodies of 60 to 100, integrated daily life's micro-level questions with moral considerations in the macro school community context, addressing the macromorality versus micromorality issue mentioned above. The concept of community was a normative one, with "group solidarity and a commitment to norms of care and responsibility that promote the sense of unity. Thus we distinguish a community from an association of individuals who cooperate for the sake of mutual advantage" (Power, 1988, pp. 198-199). Perhaps *just* community was a bit of a misnomer, because Power states that "the *moral atmosphere* research . . . helped to clarify that the norms that were developed . . . reflected a concern for the common good that went beyond the demands of justice" (p. 199, emphasis added). This approach developed a moral atmosphere, individual and collective accountability, and individual and institutional role taking within a democratically structured school setting. My interest in political development is informed by this approach's focus "on the development of a collective or shared consciousness of norms and values . . . [which]

represents the authority of the group and is the real agency of moralization" (p. 203). One finding is particularly valuable to cite.

> That students initially reason about practical values at a lower stage than they reason about hypothetical moral dilemmas is in keeping with previous research by Lemming (1973) that the judgments employed in real-life moral reasoning tend to lag behind moral reasoning competence (Power, 1988, p. 202).

This is germane to my research interest insofar as it affirms the growing edges involved in addressing real world issues, as compared to hypothetical or other issues that are perceived as being more or less removed from vested concerns.

Active research in just communities extended at least until almost 1990; I do not find literature that it continued beyond that in that school community-wide conception. A possible explanation for this could be Kohlberg's death, since he was the driving force behind that research. However, the concept of moral education continues and there is an international society dedicated to it, the Association for Moral Education.

Individual and One-on-One Efforts

Outside of the education field, relatively little research has been framed and conducted to investigate methods to foster adult development beyond the more common adult stage called formal, or formal operational logic. Alexander's research with prison populations and children using Transcendental Meditation ™ techniques (Alexander, Heaton, & Chandler, 1994, p. 59) and numerous other studies have documented "that TM produces distinctive physiological, psychological, and sociological effects (Orme-Johnson & Farrow, 1977; Chalmers, et al., 1989)" (p. 65). One longitudinal study of TM practitioners showed a significant number of the student experimental subjects at

Maharishi International University scoring at postformal levels (p. 62). As discussed by both Alexander et al. and Torbert (1994; 2000a), the TM studies reflect different assumptions about the how and why of adult development than, for instance, Commons and Richards (2002) or Torbert and Associates (2004). They center on different hypotheses about the role of effort in development: “From the perspective of Vedic Psychology (Maharishi, 1972, p. 18:8) any individual effort hinders the experience of transcending and diminishes the realization of natural and balanced personal development” (Alexander et al., 1994, p. 62). Since complex issues require individual and public effort to address them, this research has little bearing on methods used to foster political development.

The field of spiritual direction and companionship, which has been one of my areas of training and active practice for over 15 years, is a one-on-one ministerial domain that does not seem to get research interest. It dates from the sixteenth century with Ignatius of Loyola who operated out of the Roman Catholic tradition. As with any field, it has evolved and includes different schools of theory and practice, including Christian, ecumenical, and secular orientations. Its Ignatian roots have a holistic, developmental approach to fostering personal development in all domains of life, not confined to what is typically considered spiritual. For the purposes of this literature review, I am not including a survey of the field’s current literature, but for the sake of thoroughness I believe it is important to mention it because it involves laypersons fostering the development of other laypersons. Classic works include Barry and Connolly (1982), Fischer (1988), Grosh (1988), Puhl (1952), and Yungblut (1988). Contemporary

approaches to one-on-one coaching that take a whole-person developmental orientation are like this ministry in some ways.

With a natural scientific interest in effectiveness, many studies that measure the effects of interventions demonstrate a primary interest in a subject's stage of development in relation to the intervention. In recent years, the study of adult development has been moving toward more dynamic, rather than static, dialectical understandings that "mark a shift in study from developmental *status* to developmental *process*" (Commons, 2002, pp. 156, emphasis added). One coaching type of intervention has been developed that embeds such understandings to help adults in the one-on-one setting to "bridge this gap between what they do and what they say they do," including when "they seem baffled in trying to explain their new accomplishments" (Wolfsont, 2002, p. 188). Wolfsont blends the use of the learning readiness system of Dennisons' Brain Gym with his understandings of Piaget's developmental theory. That theory asserts that "this gap between success and understanding occurs because the reflective understanding [of] performance requires a higher stage of mental operations than is required for the successful behavior on the task" (p. 188). From his small, informal pilot study to find out how his "deep understanding balance (DUB)" (p. 187) intervention affected participants' behavioral skills and understandings of how they reach goals, he concluded that his combination was effective. By including levels of support, the readiness exercises and his DUB facilitated the rapid transitional increase of one stage of performance in the adults' verbal explanations—their reflective understandings—for how they solved personal goals. Before the intervention, they scored between the formal and systematic stages; afterward, they scored between the systematic and metasystematic stages. Scoring used the Hierarchical Complexity Scoring

System (as does my study). The study "addresses the questions of how participants 'get stuck' in and how they move rapidly through the transition process" and suggests that such transitions are "more likely to occur when people are in an 'ideal learning state'" (p. 198). Wolfsont's explication of his methods is germane to the design of discourse methods, because it illustrates the concept of providing levels of support for development, the process of development, and how each increase in performance is incremental, quantal, and cannot be skipped (Commons & Richards, 2002).

Action Inquiry and Small Groups

The foregoing method, although a one-on-one design, is one demonstration of how individuals' development transpires in interactions with others and the environment. Literature that is most germane to my research would reflect the premise that human development emerges and transpires in social settings and their interactions and in response to the larger environment. Rather than treat such development as an isolated individual endeavor, it can be regarded as a dynamically political process because it inherently involves our ways of relating to self, others, and the world.

Another criterion for literature related to this research is recognition that our complex issues arise and exist as *complexes* that manifest and reflect the myriad ways that people, their institutions, and their processes are (or are not) relating with respect to them. As discussed in the previous chapter, complex issues are much more than just the "thing" that their abstract labels suggest that they are (e.g., conflict, pollution, poverty). They are, or are embedded in, large, complex systems. As such, they are made up of many interacting social actors, transactions, and layers, and they need various layers of

integral attention, analysis, decision making, policy, action, coordination, and reevaluation extended over the long term.

Thus, more germane here are intentional practices that "treat not just individual persons, but all social systems from brief conversations to intergenerational institutions as capable of developmental transformation" (Torbert & Associates, 2004, p. 218). A small body of research validates that specific practices involved in action inquiry—whether used in educational or organizational settings, research efforts, or in informal groups—can foster adults' postformal development into more complex capacities (Foster & Torbert, 2004; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Torbert, 1994; Torbert & Associates, 2004). Two intervention processes situated in higher education's management education settings empirically documented action-logic development in the majority of participants (Fisher & Torbert, 1991; Torbert & Fisher, 1992; Torbert, 1991, as cited in Torbert, 1994). Notable qualities of these studies, which are also reflected in the TM studies mentioned above, are the common, core elements of (a) voluntary engagement, (b) endurance over years, (c) guidance for participants by individuals who measure at later action-logics, and (d) research/learning that integrates inquiry and action in the present moment (W. Torbert, personal communication, 2004).

As one of Torbert's associate authors (in Torbert & Associates, 2004) and a long-time practitioner of action inquiry, I can affirm from my own and others' experience that this practice is developmentally effective. We view it as a developmental action science that, when practiced over time, can foster an individual's and group's development through successive stages of action-logics. This is a reflective awareness research/practice undertaken increasingly in the midst of action. It uses a real-time

learning process to assure feedback loops among the four domains of actions/behaviors, plans/strategies, intentions/purposes, and outcomes/assessments. These four domains can be attended to by individuals and/or collectives. As the practice becomes more and more habitual, it gradually extends an individual's or a group's existential awareness and conscious capacity for increasingly timely reexaminations of assumptions, intentions, strategies, and actions in circumstances in which they arise. As these domains are applied and coordinated at the various scales from personal, to interpersonal, to organizational, to the larger world, the cognitive complexity brought to this critical reflection increases to the points of developing new action-logics.

Action inquiry's effectiveness and broad transportability are among factors that led Torbert to conclude, "the only political principle that invites the potential transformation of everyone's perspective is the principle of inquiry" (Torbert, 1991, p. 236). Action research approaches that encourage reflective inquiry among research teams have also indicated developmental benefits (Marsick & Gephart, 2003; Yorks, 2005).

This theory and praxis of developmental action inquiry bears on processes to foster political development, regardless of issues' subject matter. However, complex issues involve substantive additional factors that require additional processes, which may or may not embed action inquiry (e.g., those listed on p. 35). Specifically, these include down-to-earth, integral analyses of issue layers—involving layers of complex decision-making and priority-setting efforts—and systemic action by institutions and citizens in various configurations and contexts. Systemic public issues require both structured and unstructured engagement of the actors involved, and this includes the public. Much of

that structured and unstructured work is voluntary, yet it is also systemically joined with policy-making dimensions.

A small number of recent studies, using a variety of qualitative methods, are framed in various transformational terms that suggest processual understanding of how to foster transformative change in small groups of adults. Two studies engaged collaborative inquiry in small groups of six persons each. One studied and found transformative changes in White consciousness among European-American people's attitudes, behaviors, and awareness during, and 18 months after, the collaborative inquiry (Paxton, 2003). The other (Van Stralen-Cooper, 2003) studied and found convincing evidence of the development of participants' epistemological capacities during a five-month workplace-learning program. Two other studies drew heavily for their design in various settings on critical reflection practices and transformative learning theory of Friere and Mezirow. In the context of leadership development programs of nine-month duration and six-month duration, respectively, Lamm (2000) and Wicker (2001) found evidence of and enumerated participants' development of perceptual, behavioral, and self-reflective capacities resulting from the programs. Finally, a fifth study (Torosyan, 1999) involved a college course in decision making that was based on Lauer's (1971, 1983, 1996-97, as cited in Torosyan, 1999) interdisciplinary curriculum and pedagogy, specifically designed to foster consciousness development in the 14 students enrolled. Elements of the pedagogy echo Torbert's four domains of experience mentioned earlier, and included other objects of reflection and discursive writing and speaking. The proportion of students who improved in the Measure of Intellectual Development was 53% compared

to 35-40% for other semester-length studies where interventions are employed, indicating beneficial effects of that pedagogical method for decision making.

By their design and the nature of their findings, these five studies taken as a whole demonstrate several of the critical elements for methods to foster adult development or transformation. Their designs incorporated significant time spans that provided participants with multiple opportunities for substantive work, interaction, and reflection. Those gatherings were designed to foster interactions characterized by increasing self-reflective inquiry. The researchers all seemed to have sufficiently internalized understandings of the human dynamics that characterize meaningful shifts in adult development, indicated by the diversely nuanced range of categories and descriptors they used to report their findings. These three elements should be considered fundamental requirements for work in this area. These elements correspond to those reported by Torbert, as mentioned earlier, for processes that foster development.

Quasi-Public and Public Dialogue

It seems to be mainly in the conflict communications and intervention arena that public discourse with any kind of developmental orientation is explored. And although only quasi-public because they involve only a limited number of conflicted persons, for purposes of this review I will include in this category dialogic peace-seeking efforts because they share the common focus of discourse about conflicted relations. Under the rubrics of transcendent discourse (Pearce & Littlejohn, 1997) and sustained dialogue (Saunders, 1999, 2006), these efforts address moral, ethnic, and racial conflicts, often framed in terms of two opposing stances since such polarization characterizes such conflicts.

Pearce and Littlejohn situate their notion of transcendent discourse as a human capacity, citing Kegan's (1994) fifth level of consciousness. Kegan's research into humans' evolution of meaning resulted in his constructive development theory, in which persons exhibiting its fifth and highest level of consciousness begin to develop the awareness that there are multiple, often contradictory and paradoxical systems of influence in their lives. With this awareness comes the increasing capacity to transcend and resolve, at least temporarily, the categories of thought in which conflicts are defined and experienced. Pearce and Littlejohn view this ability to "step out of a system of thought to take a metalevel view" (p. 136) as an option to which people "can set themselves to rise to a higher level of consciousness" (p. 143).

The authors assert that the "aim of transcendence" is to build understanding of "the clashing moral orders" (p. 144) and make the pattern of interaction more productive between conflicting parties. When the efforts work, they say, people will reconceptualize the nature of the conflict, recognize the social constructions from which they operate, and develop a more critical attitude toward the worldviews in tension. The outcome can be differences understood in less polarized terms, new civility, and new ways of expressing differences.

Promoting transcendent eloquence as "a form of speech that bridges or encompasses various moral communities," they include those discourses that have the five characteristics of being philosophical, comparative, dialogic, critical, and transformative (p. 157), and describe three models they believe meet this set of criteria by changing the discourse in different ways. One is the Public Conversations Project (www.publicconversations.org), according to the authors most known for its single-

session dialogues on the abortion issue. It sponsors dialogues where participants can share the experiences that formed their perspectives and, if willing, share any inner dilemmas. Another mentioned is the National Issues Forums (www.nifi.org) that provide a framing of more than two ways to consider a policy question, and try to ensure participants both listening and speaking time for deliberation that leaves them pondering what they heard (these forums are also discussed below with deliberation). Lastly, they mention The Public Dialogue Consortium's (www.publicdialogue.org) approaches, an assortment of multiple experiments. The one described by the authors typically has a public audience observe a discourse between two representative speakers for opposed positions, as trained facilitators pose questions and attempt to shift the parties' focus from past problems to the future's potentially positive quality. Such facilitators not only need specific training to do this, but also need to be already operating from Kegan's fifth level of consciousness.

Such requirements would make that process rather inaccessible, and certainly not easily replicable. As indicated in the previous chapter, it is common knowledge in the adult development field that only a very small percentage of the population includes individuals that reason at the most complex stages. Common estimates based on samples hover between three to seven per cent (Cook-Greuter, 2000; Torbert & Associates, 2004). Kegan's level of fifth order consciousness corresponds to the 13th and 14th orders in the Model of Hierarchical Complexity. The 13th order is the metasystematic stage introduced on page 29. Research on National Issues Forums deliberations (discussed later in this chapter) does not support notions that transcendent discourse as described by Pearce & Littlejohn happens in those venues.

Despite the questionable bases of some of their claims, these authors make several contributions to a fledgling literature on public discourse. Their careful explication of the nature, qualities, and potential outcomes of transcendent discourse provides valuable tools for people to assess the character of the discourses in which they engage, particularly (but not only) where moral conflict is involved. By providing some detailed description of several models in varying levels of use for these purposes, and providing contact information for them, the work is a resource for practitioners. Perhaps most importantly, by situating this high quality of discourse as a capacity of a higher level of conscious awareness, they introduce this possibility to practitioners that may be unaware of it.

Unfortunately, they do not reflect an important realism about human adaptive dynamics that facilitate the constructive development process. They seem to exhibit a surface level grasp of Kegan's levels of consciousness without grounding their notion of transcendent discourse in firm knowledge. Without supplying research upon which to base the implied claim, they convey an assumption that the dialogue models they introduce actually *are* experiences that "achieve transcendence" (p. 211) as they define it. By implication, they convey there is something (perhaps mysterious?) about each model that would lead participants to achieve transcendence. By implication, they convey that such a dialogue experience results in the rare fifth level of consciousness in individual participants, "achievable" by "setting themselves to rise" to it in a given dialogue experience. If it were as easy as all of this, there would be little conflict remaining in our world if only these models were widely deployed. In this regard, the authors seem to perform a disservice as they promote the idea of transcendent discourse.

Community efforts using the Coordinated Management of Meaning (CMM) method for public dialogue have been conducted and studied in very recent years (Dillon & Galanes, 2002; Pearce & Pearce, 2000; Spano, 2001). CMM evolved out of Pearce & Pearce's grounding in speech communication theory (Pearce & Pearce, 2000). It informed the work of the Public Dialogue Consortium's work in at least two communities, where it was used to "guide public discourse about controversial issues" (Dillon & Galanes, 2002, p. 80). This guidance takes the form of facilitator-led small groups that give their views in response to "a set of predetermined questions" (p. 80). They use appreciative listening as modeled by the facilitator, tell their stories, express their opinions and share the beliefs that underlie them. At the end of the two to three hours, "participants come away with a greater understanding, and, it is hoped, appreciation for the diversity of thought, belief, and opinion within their community as well as an understanding of why others hold the beliefs they hold (Pearce 2001)" (Dillon & Galanes, 2002, p. 82). Public dialogues such as these are individually and socially beneficial, and there are many such approaches. Reports do not indicate that the discourses include talk that is more disciplined than the kind described earlier (pp. 5-6). If that is the case, they are unlikely to foster development of more complex capacities or meet the multiple demands of addressing complex issues.

The foregoing authors focus on single-session or otherwise short-term efforts, mentioning only in passing that some conflicts can require a decade to work through. By contrast, Saunders' (1999, 2004, 2006) public peace process (also called citizens' political process) for ethnic and racial conflict has historically required long term sustained dialogue that can require decades. Saunders (2004) conceptualized the process,

which is not a neat model, based on his experience. These ideas appear to have been early influences behind Kettering Foundation's ideas about naming and framing issues (Saunders has had a long association with the Foundation).

In his work with conflicted parties, a single stage can require years, and there is no guarantee a given group will progress through the entire process, nor does he report that one has. It is quasi-public insofar as rather than governmental officials, it engages a selected group of citizens; this is often called track two diplomacy in the conflict resolution field (Saunders, 1999). Two groups of no more than a dozen persons, representing their larger groups of people in conflict, gradually move forward into the process to examine and dialogue about their conflicted relationships. Saunders' work over decades convinced him this focus "on the human roots of conflict and on the overall relationships among groups of human beings like themselves in conflict – the dynamic political process of continuous interaction among them" (p. 7) is how conflicted relationships change over time and is essential for transforming conflicts. The purpose is to lead one group to view or hear another group with new understanding, to "penetrate the consciousness" of the other (p. 143), and change perceptions. Saunders' purpose is to add this human dimension to concepts of governance, necessary for the world having "the complete array of instruments it needs to end conflict and build peace" (p. 6).

The first stage is deciding to engage, once the multiple perils and fears are perceived by participants as lesser than the costs of not engaging. If and when the participants get to the stage of developing an action scenario for change, they act as the micro of the community's macro level, and begin to view themselves as such, because they are now thinking together about how to change the situation rather than being on

opposite sides of the table. Saunders states that most nonofficial dialogues do not get to the scenario building stage. For nongovernmental groups, he cites lack of funding for the prolonged process. The concept of intentionally changing underlying relationships in international relations or conflicted communities has not been one that people customarily think of trying. If that stage is reached, participants strategize about how to implement their action plan for change, assessing resources and methods to engage others. This stage also includes deliberating about the personal and group roles and responsibilities the participants must consider if or as they extend their efforts into a wider population.

Sustained dialogue has been undertaken by groups working on Arab-Israeli, Palestinian-Israeli, Russian-U.S., and inter-Tajik conflicts, among others, as well as several U.S. communities with racial and ethnic tensions (Saunders, 1999). In this model, the participants can manage to discover some area of effort in which to work together even if the entire range of relational issues cannot be addressed. Saunders makes no specific claims about how these smaller efforts change the larger political culture or individual participants' levels of consciousness. He does, however, view citizens' engagement in such sustained dialogues as a microcosm of their larger communities, and notes the potential that once they have personally experienced relationship change for the better, they can learn to "design political actions and interactions that can change their larger bodies politic" (p. 6).

In contrast to Saunders' focus on nonpublic officials for sustained dialogue's track two diplomatic efforts, Scott's (1998) conceptual work in political science and public administration spotlights officials' roles, and maintains and extends the connection

back to the Pearce and Littlejohn move toward transcendent discourse for moral conflicts. In addressing institutional officials, Scott challenges the public administration field's traditional value-neutral stance that has left value conflicts to the political domain. Integrating current controversies over how and whether normative concerns belong in public administration with ideas on individual moral growth, he links moral development and discourse processes to transcend the polarized dialogues in the field. His thesis is that authentic discourse is both product and agent of the moral maturity that appreciates normative issues as natural tensions between conflicting goods, rather than the traditional framing of good versus evil. He discusses the role and place of public administration—governance and its public servants—in fostering moral growth in both individuals and society. This involves more than discursive methods to depolarize public issues; it means also fostering caring relationships and overcoming barriers to them. In this emphasis, he echoes Saunders' concern with the human element in resolving conflicts. His overall argument resonates with Chilton's (1991) normative grounding of political development. He posits another argument supporting the need for public praxis involving institutional and nonofficial citizens.

These discourse-focused areas have been reviewed together here because they share a common focus on conflict and methods to change participants' perceptions of others' views and/or identities, and perhaps of one's own perceptions. Even with their dramatically different time spans of attention, with their range from conceptual to often experimental to systematic approaches, and the different kinds and numbers of participants that engage in the discussions, the shared emphasis is on relational dialogue, with its benefits, as the primary action participants undertake. Pearce and Littlejohn call

attention to the conceptual link between their notion of transcendent discourse and a highly complex level of consciousness, but they do not appear to have an effective understanding of what is involved to develop that level of consciousness or in whom it may exist. As a result, the notion of transcendent discourse remains a conceptual ideal tethered to Kegan's fifth level of consciousness, but untethered to practical realities. By contrast, Saunders's claims of relationship transformation over time while addressing conflicts is well supported by his practical experience and research, but he is silent about, perhaps unaware of, different structures of discourse and reasoning. Both sets of authors have a positive though reactive primary purpose: the reduction of conflict between opposing groups or points of view. For all their merits, including the aim to change the public discourse, they differ from my research interest in extended public discourse toward changing the political culture, catalyzing systemic work on complex issues, and fostering development. Scott's concept, however, recognizes the potential for dynamic feedback among and between authentic discourse and individual and social development, positing the cause/agent and effect/product roles played by both discourse and development. This conception aligns with my own for fostering political development.

Deliberation

As an approach to public discourse that is related to my research methodology, public deliberation is the overall focus of my coverage of the deliberation literature. To recognize that there is a prominent jury context for deliberation, I give that literature only light, initial coverage before the primary discussion gets underway. After this first section that covers the main body of work in deliberation, two other sections discuss specific areas of the literature. The first of those is concerned with efforts to integrate deliberation

with developmental perspectives. The second discusses literature about public deliberation's purposes and the research agenda for public deliberation.

The most common references to deliberation are probably in connection with juries' deliberations of verdicts and the other jury-determined decisions that attend those verdicts. Either-or decisions about a guilty or not guilty verdict reflect a dictionary meaning of deliberation: a group of persons discussing and considering the reasons in favor of, and opposed to, a certain action. This process of thinking about and discussing a decision before choosing for or against an action is akin to debate, which involves opposing sides of an argument. Deliberative debate about mutually exclusive polar arguments, and deliberations of multiple, viable options are qualitatively different dynamics to distinguish. Equally important to distinguish are the motives, objectives, mandates, or needs that underlie why any deliberation takes place at all. For juries, the mandate is clear: their deliberations are charged with making binding decisions in the judicial system. For publics, by contrast, deliberation may be undertaken for a range of purposes; these are cited later in this chapter.

Deliberation, primarily in jury contexts, had been the subject of over 100 studies as of six years ago, most of them using it as an experimental variable or testing other pretest and posttest variables (MacCoun, 1999, as cited in Macoubrie, 2001). The interest in juror deliberation spans a wide range of legal interests unrelated to this review, such as jury selection, case detail presentation, etc. However, two dissertations on jurors' reasoning explored if jury or jury-type deliberations improved the quality of reasoning of individuals about trial verdicts. The design of one study was too flawed to cite the study here. In the other study, Flaton (1999), findings did not support the hypothesis that

participants would demonstrate significant improvement in their reasoning about verdicts after deliberating: about equal numbers of persons' reasoning declined as improved. In a different study of 13 juries, in 75% of the non-hung bodies from one to four jurors changed their votes after deliberation, and other studies show that higher percentages of jury verdicts are affected by deliberation, but "*how and why* is little understood" (Macoubrie, 2001, p. 18, emphasis added).

The literature indicates that the how and why of deliberation outside of jury rooms is still little understood, because "the field of public deliberation and our knowledge about this phenomenon is nascent, and much remains uncertain" (Williamson & Fung, 2004, p. 3). This is largely because "empirical research has lagged behind theory and practice" (Delli Carpini, Lomax Cook, & Jacobs, 2004, p. 315), a gap that some have already attempted to explain (e.g., Levine, Fung, & Gastil, 2005) and that I will not repeat here. Until fairly recently, when public deliberation and/or deliberative democracy were discussed or theorized about, the underlying assumption was that deliberation was, or would be, actually taking place among citizens convened for that purpose. Part of the problem in some deliberation research seems to be the absence of criteria for what constitutes deliberation, under what conditions it occurs, and for what purpose. I have encountered no published research that indicates if citizens had been asked directly about the occurrence of deliberation in their personal experience. Instead, the researchers appear to do the judging. My earlier research found that, according to the assessment criteria given to practitioners from six communities with deliberative politics experience that ranged from two to four years, on a continuum from civil discussion to deep

deliberation, the occurrence of *some* deliberation in their communities ranged from zero to twenty-five percent (Ross, 2002a).

Understandably, questions about deliberation are developing, and they challenge earlier assumptions and give rise to new hypotheses. Some researchers are beginning to explore an unsystematic, eclectic range of angles on deliberation. Complicating the matter, clear agreement about the definition of deliberation is not evident (Delli Carpini et al., 2004), nor is there a scheme to understand its various contexts and purposes, qualitative variances, or explanations for them.

These are signs of the still-new status of deliberative democracy as a subfield of political theory. It was only "around 1990 [that] the theory of democracy took a definite deliberative turn" (Dryzek, 2000, p. v). The developmental perspective that Habermas (1983/1990) integrates in his conceptions of deliberative, communicative action is helpful in any sense-making effort to sort through the variety of perspectives and assumptions about deliberation that appear in the literature. That variety relates to the stages of development that the study of deliberation itself is going through. Together, the long list of "intramural points of contention among deliberative democrats" (Dryzek, 2000, pp. 6-7) and the eclectic array of research strategies to date are akin to hierarchical complexity's smash transition step, described in the next chapter. It is the messy step just prior to arriving a synthesis—in this case, of new understandings about a phenomenon or a set of phenomena. This transition, indicated by the state of the literature, shows signs of being a hierarchically more complex shift, moving from more mythical ideals of deliberative democracy to more rational considerations of deliberation.

> As political theory underwent a major revival . . . a great deal of it came to focus not on realistic deliberations of the kind possible in a "face to face society," but rather on the deliberations of agents in purely imaginary thought experiments. The work of John Rawls, in particular, inspired a flowering of work on hypothetical decision procedures, asking us what principles we would choose if we could hypothesize ourselves behind a "veil of ignorance" in which we lacked knowledge of all particulars about ourselves or our society. The Rawlsian "original position" was not meant to be instituted, it was only meant to be imagined. The claim was that if we envision it faithfully, we can work out the appropriate first principles of justice for the whole society" (Fishkin & Laslett, 2003, p. 1).

Two recent reviews of the empirical literature on deliberative democracy's practices (Delli Carpini et al., 2004; Ryfe, 2005) provide thorough discussions of the state of the subfield, its challenges, and its questions and I do not repeat them here, although some of their conclusions are reflected below along with others.' In this section, I highlight certain points from my reading of other contributors to the literature, many of whom were not included in those reviews.

Deliberation is not just one phenomenon; it is better understood as a dynamic pattern. The pattern can be deliberately designed and employed, as in forums, but it does not need our assistance for it to occur naturally to certain extents. It is an innate pattern of system dynamics that appears at many scales and over different time spans (Ross, 2005). Its quality or "bandwidth" can range from what Lee (2003) calls first-order to higher-order deliberation, which have different contexts, purposes, and qualities; while there is a

"necessity of deliberation for any ethical enterprise aimed at constructing moral and political community" (Lee, 2003, p. 22), its qualities will vary with the contexts and purposes. "First-order deliberation is characterized by the need for a group of atomistic self-interested agents to make concrete collective choices," a form seen in legislative efforts, including the development of the U.S. Constitution at the Philadelphia Convention (p. 14). By contrast, "higher-order deliberation aims to achieve 'full reciprocity and symmetry of understanding' and when extended over time, transform such considerations to be congruent with a discursively-generated public good and communal *ethos*" (Tully, 1995, as quoted in Lee, 2003, p. 15).

In practical terms, then, "the deliberative dimension will, obviously, always be a matter of degree" (Fishkin, 1991, p. 38). While "at the core of any notion of deliberation is the idea that reasons for and against various options are to be weighed on their merits" (Fishkin & Laslett, 2003, p. 2), very few people in this subfield are examining the degrees, scales, and locus of such weighing. The need is intimated when the dynamic activity is scrutinized.

> Public deliberation is dialogue with a particular goal. It attempts to overcome a problematic situation by solving a problem or resolving a conflict. The joint activity through which deliberation takes place within the public sphere is dialogical and not merely discursive…. Discourse takes place in actual dialogue. Nonetheless, discourse and dialogue must be distinguished along several dimensions" (Bohman, 1996, p. 57).

Deliberation also takes place internally, within individual human systems. It is a "personal decision process, in which the individual mulls things over in his or her mind, not necessarily a collective social process at all" (Dryzek, 2000, p. vi). Although Ryfe (2002) asserts that deliberative talk is not a particular mode of reflection, my action research suggests that it can be, and Goodin's (2003) analysis concurs. Goodin, who later entitled a book *Reflective Democracy,* explains how deliberation has both an "'external-collective' aspect" and "a familiar 'internal-reflective' aspect" (Goodin, 2003, p. 54), such that "in practice, the two modes are inextricably intertwined" (p. 55). It is a common intertwinement in creative, oscillating decision-making processes as people interact with each other and their environment (Ross, 2005). In this light, complexity theory's vantage point lifts deliberation beyond the confines of existing political and discourse theories, to a view of "democratic discourse as a complex system, with emergent properties" (Farrell, 2003, p. 9).

Such dynamics are more and less explicit in some scholars' discussions. For example, there is often intertwined internal and external movement, to and fro, when citizens exchange views and debate their supporting reasons concerning public political questions. They suppose that their political opinions may be revised by discussion with other citizens; and therefore these opinions are not simply a fixed outcome of their existing private or nonpolitical interests (Rawls, 1999, pp. 138-139).

The movement to and fro transpires in both the internal-reflective and the external-collective domains when "discourses, treating as they do problematic validity claims as hypotheses, represent a reflective form of communicative action" and reflect "the relations of symmetry and reciprocity presupposed in communicative action"

(Habermas, 1983/1990, p. 201). In the course of the oscillations, people can arrive at syntheses and insights, such that

> it is not just the mutual interpretation of one another's contributions. It takes place within a framework of accountable social interaction that is reflexively called into question *as it is being used*. Various equilibrium models, including Rawlsian reflective equilibrium and the Piagetian concept of learning, have been proposed to capture this dynamic process of reflection and revision. The important feature that these models capture is that the deliberative situation is *dynamic and open ended*" (Bohman, 1996, pp. 58-59, emphases added).

Although placing their emphasis on different dimensions of deliberations, authors in addition to the foregoing view them as being interactive social processes with dynamic relationships among individual cognition and interpersonal discourse, e.g., Buttom and Manson (1999); Greitemeyer, Brodbeck, Schulz-Hardt, and Frey (2006); Karlsson (2005); Karpowitz and Mansbridge (2005); Krebs and Denton (2005); Rosenberg (2005); and Winterstein (2005). Despite these general acknowledgments, nonlinear science is a natural informant and educator about deliberation that has been employed by very few scholars and researchers. Those who situate civic and adult education as a chief function of public deliberation (e.g., Brookfield, 2005; Gastil, 2004; Rosenberg, 2005; Williamson & Fung, 2004; Yorks, 2005) could benefit from incorporating transformative learning and other nonlinear understandings into educational research agendas and analyses.

Beyond the literature's discourse, and perhaps unaware of it because of the gap already mentioned, numerous "civic entrepreneurs" have been pursuing their own initiatives which are "vital laboratories of public deliberation," such as Center for

Deliberative Polling, Citizen Juries, National Issues Forums (NIF), AmericaSpeaks, Study Circles Resource Center, Public Conversations Project, Viewpoint Learning, and others (Williamson & Fung, 2004, p. 12). Despite all the activity, "little empirical work has been done to study how in-person deliberation influences later behavior and political beliefs (Burkhalter et al., 2002)" (Gastil, 2004, p. 309), although short-term attitude changes have been studied, e.g., Muhlberger (2005) and Barabas (2004). Findings from a combination of two different studies that used NIF as civic education to explore a social cognition model suggest that the way such forums are conducted and how they are experienced by adult learners will impact their effectiveness as civic education. One conclusion was that "it would be a mistake to increase the quantity of NIF and similar programs without simultaneously devoting sustained attention to improving their quality" (Gastil, 2004, p. 327).

Integrating Deliberation With Developmental Perspectives

I have previously presented (Ross, 2002b, 2005) the way that I integrate developmental understandings into my theory and methodology, including the process for framing issues so that they can be deliberated. Important additions to the literature on deliberation have been made by Rosenberg (2002, 2004a, 2005) and his former graduate student, Winterstein (2005). Only one literature review (Ryfe, 2005) referred to some of Rosenberg's work, although not his recent argument that citizens lack the capacity to deliberate due to their stages of cognitive development. Although my current research will join that discourse, to date I do not find his argument entertained beyond Winterstein's dissertation.

Its close relation with my research makes it important to discuss that dissertation research, which was about a theory of discourse structures. Winterstein (2005, p. 1) set his scope to address the first of his three theses, which is that "structures of communication exist that are analytically distinct from one another structurally and in terms of relative sophistication." The larger interest that housed that thesis was taking a "cognitive developmental perspective to explore the relationship between individuals' capabilities for political reasoning and the social interaction contexts in which they engage in this activity." His stated scope was confined to "the elaboration of distinct structures of communication, or discourse structures, that are logically related to structures of cognition." Toward this end, he developed a developmental stage model of discourse based on Piaget and Kohlberg, as well as Rosenberg's (1988, 2002) previous work that described sequential, linear, and systematic reasoning.

He later introduces two empirical studies conducted with Rosenberg "in an attempt to explore the relationships between cognitive structure, group and facilitation formats, and forms of discourse" (p. 248). I report here key points contained in his introductory remarks on that same page. Without describing what it was, he informs the reader that the hypotheses and conduct of the research used a "schema of interaction structures . . . that is somewhat different from the description of discourse structures I have presented." This included the introduction of "transformative discourse as the highest level of interaction" but the meaning given to this is not defined. The studies' goals were to (a) investigate "possibilities for producing" high levels of political discourse through "active experimenter facilitation" oriented by general developmental concerns, and (b) "attempt to explore possibilities for stimulating cognitive development

in subjects through participation in facilitated political deliberation; however this latter goal will not be a focus of my discussion." No literature review or other information was included to indicate expertise in either of those endeavors.

Without transcriptions for both studies completed, his reporting is confined to a few segments and discussing them in the context of the author's new discourse model. Despite the interest to "produce" high levels of discourse, in the first study the small deliberative part of the design was structured to produce, based on my reading, a polite debate via panels assigned a position to promote "cooperative deliberation" (p. 252). The design seemed to be hampered by assigning roles to participants to play (difficulty with making role distinctions was mentioned by a participant, per the author). Such a contrived design would be unlikely to result in a deliberative occasion. Winterstein acknowledged some design flaws, but the assignments of debate positions, panels, and roles were not among the ones he mentioned. Similarly, from the author's description of the second study, its undisciplined design fell short of anything that my fifteen years of action researcher-practitioner experience would expect to be deliberative.

Since data analyses were not completed, no findings could be reported to respond to the hypotheses. However, the conclusion was tendered that people must be operating at the systematic stage in order to deliberate, and that the study participants' capacities and their discourses were not nearly systematic.

Despite the sections of the discourse model that described how each stage of performance would—in theory—deliberate, it and much of the deliberation literature demonstrate vague assumptions about deliberation. This surely underlies the lack of agreement about its definition. The need to define it is not recognized by all who write

about it; for example, Winterstein does not articulate a working definition of deliberation. Winterstein's concerns center on deliberative democracy's high ideals and images of citizen discourse (reconstructive discourses that use systematic reasoning, according to Winterstein and Rosenberg), because

> the full participation of citizens in the political public sphere of democratic societies, regardless of the degree to which their deliberations are directly tied to decisions on public policy, requires a high level of discursive interaction when the complex social structures and plural worldviews of modernity are at stake…. While unmanageable as a form of direct communicative coordination of public institutions, reconstructive discourses are necessary within the broad public sphere to elaborate worldviews and construct overarching frameworks of agreement and negotiation (Winterstein, 2005, p. 246).

I gather that, for this author, the main purpose and benefit of citizens' discursive interaction is to inform policy. I do not glean that he makes the connection I make with systemic work on complex issues, although he does offer a practical example of how people who reason with less complex cognitive structures may not be able or interested to engage in an effort like an inclusive, long-term city planning effort.

Rosenberg's (2004b, 2005) recent work has not yet included reports on the two studies introduced by Winterstein, but he has been asserting the position mentioned earlier (that citizens cannot deliberate) and challenging assumptions about deliberation's possibilities.

The more important contribution of these authors' work, in my view, is their developmental perspective entering the deliberation discourse. It is regrettable that it

includes the mechanistic, cause-effect phrasing about “producing” cognitive development. The assumptions reported by Winterstein also place a great deal of emphasis on facilitator capacities to produce the desired discourse levels and cognitive performance. His report infers that the researchers had the necessary expertise to design and conduct deliberative occasions. Even though such expertise was not apparent in the studies and transcript segments as they were reported, there appears to be at least one set of conflicting assumptions that Winterstein does not reconcile. What is the relationship—cause-effect or otherwise—between facilitators’ capacities to produce the desired discourse levels, and participants’ capacities for reasoning at the systematic level that would, in his judgment, produce the desired discourse levels?

This work makes valuable contributions while also indicating more about the void in the study of public deliberation that my research responds to. Before closing this review and summarizing those and other points, there are additional gleanings from my review of this literature to cover.

Deliberation: Purposes and Research Agenda

My research interest and methodology include but are not confined to public deliberation, but I do not find literature that extends far enough beyond deliberation to include my interest to develop the political culture while, and by, addressing complex issues systemically. Therefore, I include a discussion of purposes cited for public deliberation to create a broader context for it here. My brief coverage of purposes is followed by a summary of research interests that are relevant to mine, which contributors to the literature have placed on the agenda.

Perhaps because my years of research with diverse communities, including those with Kettering Foundation's community politics program area, involved teaching citizen-practitioners a "whole story" that was centered on but not confined to just deliberation, those individuals were the only ones I have heard describe the purpose of deliberative politics as that of changing the civic culture. Recently, though, "there is a growing movement calling for the development of deliberative civic culture and public institutions" (Levine et al., 2005, p. 1). It seems as though purposefulness beyond the act of deliberation itself does not pervade many practitioners' thinking. At the heart of a set of case studies was the finding that participants grappled with wondering about the purpose and place of public deliberation in the U.S. political system (Buttom & Manson, 1999). This is a question that surfaces often in this literature because a prevalent assumption among deliberative democrats is that citizens should be involved in public decision making and those decisions should reflect the influence of citizens affected by them, although they rarely do (Dryzek, 2000; Ryfe, 2005).

Buttom and Manson derived from their studies that the prevailing general purposes of convening deliberative gatherings reflect a range: educative, consensual, activist/instrumental, and conflictual. Levine et al. report that despite the countless deliberative efforts over many years, the idea of action as a purpose is a new idea now occurring to some who convene deliberative gatherings. Actions come out of decisions to act, and although many writers do not discuss citizen action at all, some do regard the general purpose of deliberation to include decision making or common ground that can inform policy decisions, e.g., Lee (2003), Macoubrie (2004), Mathews (1999), Rosenberg (2005), and Winterstein (2005).

Others have taken the thinking further into addressing specific needs, advocating for deliberative decision making to characterize how we coordinate our intentions and actions to guide our future actions (den Hartogh, 2004), to address future stakes (Karlsson, 2005), grapple with issues concerning science and technology in relation to governance (Farrell, 2003) and concerning the global environment (Dryzek, 2000; Laslett, 2003; Stern, 2005). Some view the benefits of deliberation as so vital as to advocate for the institutionalization of deliberative techniques and norms at the level of national government (Levine et al., 2005; Williamson & Fung, 2004) and international agency and development efforts (Daubon, 2005; King, 2003). One motive for this advocacy is to exploit such techniques' potential for reconstructing boundaries and transcending differences that manifest in violence between and among communities, a necessity for "any ethical enterprise aimed at constructing moral and political community" (Lee, 2003, p. 22). All of these purposes are relevant to the research agenda for public deliberation and my research.

That long agenda is already being articulated by authors cited here, and others. Before it can be pursued coherently, the subfield needs clarity about what deliberation is, its various, yet-to-be-articulated degrees of occurrence, and the suitability of those degrees of deliberation for meeting diverse purposes. Its diverse purposes also need coherent articulation. This means that definition efforts should be integrated with developing a system for understanding why and when deliberation is needed or desirable. Although his work seems to be unnoticed by others in the subfield, Lee's (2003) lucid and contextual distinctions offer a valuable starting point.

Research needs to study conditions that foster the criticality and reflexivity of higher-order deliberation (Lee, 2003) that lead to the kind of transcendent discourse that Lee and Pearce and Littlejohn espouse for dealing with moral conflicts, that Scott espouses for value-laden public issues, and the discourse structures that Rosenberg and Winterstein are interested in. I classify the chief elements of that research agenda as process-structure issues and the informed application of developmental understandings. Those who have recognized the need for structured processes to support such quality, although they do not provide answers, include Dryzek (2000), Gastil (2004), Levine et al. (2005), Macoubrie (2004), Rosenberg (2005), Ryfe (2002), and Winterstein (2005). Habermas summarizes the elemental importance of structured processes or procedures.

> "Dialogical" and "instrumental" politics can *interpenetrate* in the medium of deliberation if the corresponding forms of communication are sufficiently institutionalized. Everything depends on the conditions of communication and the procedures that lend the institutionalized opinion- and will-formation their legitimating force (Habermas, 1996/1998, p. 245, emphasis in the original).

In order for future research to identify "particular keys, strategies, or patterns of talk" that assist "successful deliberation" (Ryfe, 2005, p. 60), informed application of developmental understandings need to underlie both assumptions about deliberation and the design of discourse structures for it (Rosenberg, 2005; Winterstein, 2005). A new contest in the discourse is the argument recently introduced by Rosenberg and Winterstein that the demands of deliberation are beyond citizens' cognitive developmental capacities to meet. This stance counters others' assumptions and

assessments, such as Ryfe's (2002, p. 5) conclusion that "it is not then, that people cannot deliberate, it is simply that they often don't in these forums."

Enough research has accumulated to surface the myriad assumptions that have characterized the field to date, which bodes well for more mature research. Ryfe (2005) suggests that findings do indicate the need to revise images assumed by deliberative theorists. Rosenberg (2005) proposes more than some revisions, arguing for reconstructing the concept of deliberation theory and practice based on his recent observations of incongruence. Such an examination will likely lead to the kind of transformative learning that will foster the field's own progress into its next stage of development.

Those efforts need to include a great deal of boundary crossing in two areas summarized by Ryfe (2005): First, "despite its breadth, the empirical study of deliberation is not yet very rich or deep. More integration across disciplinary boundaries would be useful" (p. 64). He deepens that critique with a second point, that "moreover, the theory of deliberative democracy needlessly remains removed from its practice" (p. 64) and practitioners of deliberation, empirical scholars, and theorists "might gain from greater interaction" (p. 49). That would facilitate the new learning needed to fill the void apparent in the discourse, because "finally, and perhaps most importantly, we must learn more about what deliberation actually looks like. It simply will not do to place the very practice under investigation into a black box" (p. 64).

Summary

The idea of intentionally fostering adult development in the Western world quietly existed in the centuries-old field of spiritual direction, emerged and developed in the 20th century in the field of psychology and moved into elementary and secondary education, and from there into postsecondary and other adult education. It took the forms of moral education and psychological education with the influence of Piaget, Kohlberg, Rest, and others. Concurrently, there was a small movement of just communities efforts in alternative schools, where the idea of creating cultural norms for ways of relating was pursued alongside fostering students' moral development in daily school life. A more generic understanding of transformative learning for adults became more widespread in education with the influences of Freire, Habermas, and those who extended their ideas (e.g., Mezirow), but it has not reached into general Western society. Torbert has played a leading role in promoting research and practice to foster development through action inquiry in organizational management and graduate education for that field, and has promoted the development of social science's research inquiries and practitioners' practices.

Meanwhile, after 25 years of public dialogue and deliberation practices of various kinds,[6] a few scholars and practitioners are connecting the idea of deliberation with the idea of transformative learning or discourse, at least in theory, and with the idea of action. The idea of a connection between a rigorous approach to adult development theory, public discourse in general, and deliberation in particular has joined the subfield in my work and in Rosenberg's and Winterstein's recent attention to deliberative democracy. Rosenberg has a track record by virtue of his past research in political reasoning and

[6] National Issues Forums celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2006.

cognitive development yet is a newcomer to the practice of deliberation. Despite the nascent state of the deliberation subfield, writers in it and various other fields are identifying the normative roles that deliberation should be playing in local to national to international issues. To rise to those challenges, the theory and practice of deliberation need to mature; their long research agenda has been articulated, and they will surely grow. The subfield now includes one developmental perspective that makes early assertions that citizens lack sufficient cognitive development to deliberate in the way that is necessary or that meets the standards set by democratic theory's deliberative turn of the last 17 years.

This dissertation research and the discourse process it uses contribute to the literature in the fields of fostering adult development, public issues dialogue and deliberation practice, and political development.

Chapter Three: Methodology

This chapter is organized as follows. It begins with several sections that serve different introductory functions. The first of those introduces my research perspective and provides a general overview of the study. A short section in which I make certain methodological distinctions follows it. The third introductory section is my discussion to acknowledge the study's various methodological limitations. With those foundations in place, the remaining sections of the chapter describe the research methodology in detail. The first of those sections reports on the research site, population, recruiting methods, and the study participants. The next section describes my data collection methods. The final section covers my data analysis methods. It is subdivided between a long discussion about the quantitative methods used for hypothesis testing, other tests, and scoring, and a final, brief discussion of the qualitative analysis methods.

Research Perspective and General Overview

My interdisciplinary perspective on fostering political development guided the study. That perspective integrates adult development, public issues analysis, and the structured public discourse methodology for addressing complex issues. To do the exploratory hypothesis testing and to study any changes in the political culture of the group of study participants, I designed this study to use a combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches. These methods are introduced only lightly as this chapter begins because I discuss them in more detail later.

I conducted an exploratory test of a hypothesis that when study participants engaged together using the process to grapple with complex public issues and launch

systemic work on them, the group's average hierarchical complexity of reasoning about issues would increase, as measured by the Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System.

This exploratory hypothesis testing used the quantitative methodology of the Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System (HCSS), which derives from the Model of Hierarchical Complexity (MHC) (Commons & Pekker, in press; Commons & Richards, 2002). I used this validated measurement method to score pretest and posttest participant interviews and group work. It is a suitable measurement method in tests for increases in reasoning complexity because it quantifies the steps and stages of performance that are involved in thinking (and other behaviors) as they develop to greater task complexity. The HCSS ordinal scale enabled me to quantify and report changes.

I used qualitative methods to investigate my other research interest: What changes in the political culture of the small group, if any, will occur over the course of the sessions of the discourse process? Those methods included pretest and posttest interviews with study participants, participant observation integrated with action research, my reflections as the process facilitator, and my analyses as the researcher.

The data analysis section later in this chapter gives more information about both the quantitative and qualitative methods I used.

Methodological Distinctions

This study involved traditional research methodologies and the unique methodology of the discourse process. The discourse process was one of my research instruments to generate and collect material that I used in data analyses (interviews with participants before and after the entire process were the other instruments). The distinction I want to clarify is between the generic process method and the material it

generated from study participants. The various steps of the process are described in this methodology chapter (in a later section), because they are replicable, methodological steps. As the small group in this study used those steps, it generated unique material. The type or *kind* of material that the steps generate is described in this chapter as part of describing the discourse process method. However, the specific *content* material about public issues that the group produced by using the steps is unique to each group that uses the method, including the group in this study. Relevant selections of the material content are reported in the next chapter with the study's results. Such content is the result of using the discourse methodology, but it is not part of the discourse methodology itself.

Methodological Limitations of the Study

As an exploratory, preexperimental study, there are a number of limitations in my research design and methodology. I think these are important to acknowledge before the details that follow in this chapter and the next one because they are integral to forming interpretations of the study's methods and results.

The study met none of the essential conditions for experimental research (i.e., Campbell & Stanley, 1963). I identify those limitations here, beginning with general research design limitations, then the limitations of specific analytical methodologies.

Research Design

The study involved only one community and thus affords no site comparisons. Participants were nonrandomly selected from a small population within that community, and that population included whatever people my recruiting methods reached. Those recruiting methods invited self-selection to participate. Thus, as is characteristic of much of the psychological research that is performed (Cohen, 2001), it was a sample of

convenience. The group of eight self-selected participants involved in the whole study was small; it was reduced to that number, from the original eleven, by experimental mortality. As a preexperimental study, it did not include a control group for means comparisons with the experimental group.

With only one treatment group and one process facilitator involved in the study, the design does not afford comparisons between or among treatment groups. Along with other methodological limitations discussed here, this means that it is impossible to assess from this study if the treatment protocol is reproducible, i.e., if results were dependent upon or independent of the particular facilitator. My involvement as developer of the discourse process, researcher, and facilitator means that my multiple roles could have had influences in the treatment that are not reproducible by others. A final design limitation could be concerns about segregating and/or distinguishing causal factors involved with individual change when the treatment includes a series of interactions among individuals in a group. Questions may arise, such as one about how much the group (as compared to the treatment) influenced any changes in an individual. Because this study's design did not control for diverse causal factors, it cannot respond to such questions, although I can acknowledge here that I am aware of them.

Analyses

The limitations in the analytic methodology involve scoring issues and analyses of results that derived from scores. This section highlights some limitations that are also acknowledged later in the chapter, but avoids duplicating those discussions. A first limitation is that I served as the scorer and there was not a second, blind scorer of all the related measures used in my analyses, although it is standard to include one. As the later

discussion describes in more detail than I give here, a scoring calibration process compared a small sample of my scoring to that of a blind scorer to report calculated reliability scores. The process had limitations that may have affected the reliability scores. The calibration sample was drawn on a nonrandom basis. Another limitation was that, due to circumstances and the sheer volume of interview material, the second, blind scorer in the calibration process could not read and score all the material that preceded a given item that fell into the calibration sample to score. Some interview items stood alone without requiring that background. However, many of the participants' statements to me in interviews inherently reflected that they knew that they had already told me their reasoning, meanings, and interests: they were not formulating statements anew for the sake of a blind scorer.

Given these circumstances and those I mention next, a possible limitation of the study is two-fold. I had no defendable basis on which to calculate scoring error, and that supported a conservative approach, which is to not account for scoring error in the results. Even though there is a possibility of scoring error variability or noise in the results, if I tried to account for scoring error, it could degrade the conservatism of my results.

The study could not benefit from a second, blind scorer for two reasons. The first was lack of financial resources on my part to compensate a qualified person for the many days' worth of scoring work. The second is that only three people—Dr. Michael Lamport Commons, Dr. Patrice Marie Miller, and I—have the proven skills to score the transition steps between stages using the HCSS (M. Commons, personal communication, July 22, 2006). Since Dr. Commons serves on my doctoral committee, to serve as a second scorer

beyond the purpose of conducting the necessary calibration process could raise conflict of interest issues. It was legitimate and necessary for him to serve as the blind scorer in the aforementioned calibration process.

The design of the study leaves open the possibility of scorer bias because I served as the only scorer of material, except for those items that fell into the calibration sample discussed above. Because I was extremely aware of this potential for bias, I critically reviewed all of the scored material at least four to five times for technical accuracy and at times made corrections based on those critical assessments. Despite my awareness of the bias issue, my well-developed research ethics, and my diligence in technical application of the scoring method, it remains possible that scoring bias exists undetected.

Procedurally, a weakness was that there were no independent, internal control procedures over handling the data collected, such as independent validation procedures to check for or ensure accurate entry of scores into SPSS. I sent all SPSS data files and electronic versions of the scored calibration and interview material to Dr. Commons, since he is the primary expert in the scoring method.

Another analytic limitation is that the related measures used to test the hypothesis were not independent measures. Neither my nonparametric nor my parametric tests of significance met the standard assumption for such tests, that random sampling was used. While the nonparametric binomial test that I used to test the hypothesis does not assume a normal distribution, the parametrics I applied to the results of that testing do assume a normal distribution, which is not a valid assumption for this small study. Finally, I acknowledge that parametric methods assume an interval scale, and the HCSS scores fall on an ordinal scale.

Site, Population, Participant Recruiting, and Study Participants

This section provides information on the site selection process and its criteria, the population of interest, methods and results of participant recruiting, and demographic and other background information about the study's participants.

Site

For my convenience, the site selection process considered small communities located in southwest Ohio. Before making my site selection, I stayed abreast of such local communities' news and issues because I wanted to select a site where the news reports indicated that there were signs of civic interest in local issues. The first site I selected seemed to meet that criterion, but a random sample of invitations to participate in the research did not succeed in recruiting enough people for my original experimental design of a control and an experimental group. Based on those responses, I could calculate the inference that the number of random invitations I would have to issue to get even one small group of participants would exceed the small community's resident population. I decided that additional criteria were (a) a site where there was already a culture of civic engagement, i.e., some history of visible civic activity; and (b) a larger resident population.

My limited resources did not permit me to purchase data for and conduct another random sample approach. I received Institutional Review Board approval to change the study to an exploratory, preexperimental design.

I investigated two other, larger communities with histories of at least some citizens being active in local issues. I eliminated one of them because there was a risk that introducing a new process could confuse people by mixing with the status of a

different local project that seemed to be in a state of suspension. The site I finally selected, and conducted the study in, was a small city with a population under 30,000 and the areas adjacent to it. In Ohio, geopolitical subdivisions that are neither cities nor villages are called townships. As is often the case in Ohio, several townships surround the city. In this study, I refer to the city and those townships as "the community."

Population

The population for the project was the general adult and high-school-aged population of the selected community. The population of interest was described as any person who lived, worked, or felt invested in the selected community. Adolescents under the age of 18 could participate with the informed consent of a parent or guardian; no adolescents of any age volunteered to participate.

Recruiting Methods

I adopted the kinds of recruiting methods that I, and others, have used in the past to publicize local issues forums or meetings. To attract self-selected study participants, I extended invitations by email, phone, and personal contact. The texts of my emailed invitations are shown in Appendix A. I provided more detail in the emailed invitations than I attempted to give in voice-contact invitations. Emailed invitations went to people involved in major institutions in the community. One of these was an electronic list serve, sponsored by a private citizen, for public discussion that was open to any person in the community and to diverse points of view. People in other institutions that I invited by email were members of the city council, neighboring townships' boards of trustees, local school board members, the city manager, and the director of the Chamber of Commerce. I extended invitations by phone to fire departments, firefighter associations, police chiefs,

local businesses and nonprofit organizations, high school civics teachers, church pastors, and individual residents. I attended a city council meeting and used the public comment portion of the agenda to personally explain the study and invite people to participate. Council meetings were broadcast to the community on cable television. The newspaper published a short article on the project (which I do not share in this document for confidentiality purposes, in accord with the informed consent process). I encouraged people that I contacted to share the invitation with others in the community.

Final participant selection was determined by those who could commit to six weekly sessions taking place on the same day of each week. I had set the maximum number of participants for any one group at twelve, an acceptable maximum for small group process work. There were not enough volunteers with matching schedules to conduct more than one group.

Study Participants

The original group of eleven participants who could meet on the same evening fell to ten by the second week, and to eight by the third week of the project as, one by one, unanticipated professional and educational schedule changes of three persons usurped their availability for the project's remaining evenings. Each of the three people who had to drop out had definite, objective schedule conflicts. All participants lived and/or worked in the community defined above. All participants engaged in the informed consent process for research with human subjects and signed forms indicating their informed consent to participate. The informed consent materials assured the participants that I would maintain the anonymity of their individual identities as well as the community's. The Informed Consent Form is in Appendix B.

Participants had varying levels of previous exposure to me, to one another, and to local civic life. I include that background here along with their stated motivations for participating. Two of the participants were persons I had been briefly acquainted with in previous years. One of these two individuals lived within the city limits, and the other lived in an adjacent township. Both were active in community life. The relevance of the project to their civic interests and their prior experience with me were combined motivations for their participation. Both of them responded to the notice I had posted on the local list serve. One of those persons shared the project invitation with other social networks, attracting four other participants, two of whom knew each other beforehand. Those two were a couple that had moved into the community within the last six months, and lived a short distance outside the city boundary. They viewed the project as an opportunity to become acquainted with the community and some of its members. The other two from those networks were people who were active to different degrees in community volunteer efforts, and were attracted to the project by their respect for the person who sent them the invitation. One participant responded to a call I had made to a community business where the person worked. That person lived a distance beyond the community, had had no involvement in it, and was attracted to the project's potential to inform general problem solving. Another, who was a concerned but not visibly active city resident, responded to the local newspaper's article after my council visit.

Basic demographic information about the eight participants is shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Participant Demographic Information

ID	Gender	Age	General education diploma	High school graduate	Several college courses	2-3 Years post-secondary	Bachelor degree	Master degree
#1	F	57	✓		✓			
#2	F	33		✓			✓	✓
#3	M	47		✓			✓	
#4	F	31		✓			✓	✓
#5	F	52		✓			✓	✓
#6	F	56		✓			✓	
#7	F	57		✓		✓		
#8	M	47	✓			✓		

Data Collection Methods

Fieldwork spanned approximately three and one half months. It began with pretest interviews, which I conducted in a two-week period before the group sessions began. The length of the weekly, weekday-evening sessions ranged from two to two and one half hours. The final session, with the group's agreement, was almost three hours long. Posttest interviews began three weeks after the last group session and were completed over a four-week period that accommodated participants' schedules. The pretest and posttest interview questions are in Appendix C.

Participants' demographic information was collected in the first individual interviews (the pretest). In addition to being part of the research design, the interviews were an opportunity to establish a level of familiarity between each participant and me. The interview sessions exposed them to my personality, which would help them adjust later to my style of facilitating the group sessions. Before the interview with each individual began, I conducted the informed consent process and obtained the signed

consent form. I signed the form as researcher in the presence of each participant. I retained the original of each signed form, and at the first group session, gave each participant a copy of his or her completed form.

During the interview, I invited each person to describe the meaning they gave to the term "community," and to discuss a local issue of personal concern. My questions about their ideas of impacts, causes, and approaches to address the issue were designed to gather material with which to score the reasoning they used to discuss an issue they had thought about. There was no need to have each person discuss the same issue, because the HCSS scores the task-activities of the reasoning, rather than the content of the subject that is discussed. Another reason for this approach is that it respected that individuals demonstrate a great deal of diversity in the issues that they are interested in. To ask a person to discuss an issue that he or she had never given much consideration would not be an effective way to learn how a person is currently reasoning. This is consistent with a realism born of my practical experience: citizens invest effort in issues that they are concerned about, and do not get involved in efforts that they do not perceive as affecting them. Another reason for this approach is that I wanted the entire project to be as natural as possible from the participants' perspectives. I did not want to gather data by administering instruments that they would perceive as incongruent with ordinary talk about public issues. The HCSS's flexibility accommodated these data gathering criteria in a natural way.

At the beginning of the first session, I proposed to the assembled participants that they adopt a covenant to not reveal their identities to people in the larger community. I iterated that my commitment as researcher was to keep confidential their identities and

the community's. I proposed this expanded use of confidentiality based on sensitivities I developed while listening to some of them in the pretest interviews. The group had a brief discussion of this proposal to gain clarity and to make sure each person understood what it meant. They agreed that it was fine if the content of discussions was shared with people outside of the group, that no identities would be associated with any content, and that they would not identify any of the sessions' participants to anyone else.

Group discussion and observation data were collected during the six sessions of the project. In the individual posttest interviews, most participants volunteered their own observations about various group discussions and dynamics. All group sessions and individual interviews were audio recorded as disclosed during the informed consent process. Data collected during the group sessions included my observations and reflections as researcher-facilitator. Most of the group's work resulted in a handout that I compiled from each session's flip charts, augmented by partial transcriptions of the audio recordings whenever I deemed it useful. I distributed such handouts either in advance of or during the subsequent session. Those work products are part of the data collected during the study, as are several extra handouts I created for the group during the project. Work products that do not compromise confidentiality about the site or the participants are included in Appendix D.

Before the fieldwork began, I designed the basic posttest interview. It referred to the pretest interview questions and invited reflection on how the participants' experiences in the group sessions affected their thinking about the same issue they discussed in the pretest. After the last group session, I tailored the posttest for additional inquiries about the specific topic and issue the group worked on during the project. By design, an

umbrella topic and a specific issue related to it are chosen by a group in the early sessions. Thus, each time the process is used, the topic and issue are unique to the group. The interview design allowed for follow-up questions and adjustments, as appropriate, to accommodate those instances where participants' thinking did not lend itself to a particular preplanned question, or where a response at one point in the interview happened to anticipate a subsequent question I had planned.

To mask participant identities, I assigned each person a number, which I used to identify their interview transcriptions. Instead of transcribing the identity of any participant or other person in the larger community who was mentioned by the group during discussions or interviews, I used "N___" to mask those persons' identities. Likewise, and in accordance with the informed consent agreements, I used a similar method to mask any information that would indicate other information about the study location, e.g., "[Site]" masked the name of the community in transcriptions.

While I transcribed the audio recorded individual interview responses verbatim and in their entirety, I did not transcribe all of the audio recorded group sessions, or transcribe them in their entirety. This is due to the design of the session processes. Many of the sessions ask participants to mention different kinds of information in order to construct a list. One session may produce several different kinds of lists. Each list is like a building block that is used to produce the next one (the main tasks of each session are listed below). The various lists were transcribed from the flip charts I wrote on during the sessions, and incorporated into the various handouts distributed to the group afterward. This task of producing lists does not often involve discussion or even complete sentences, in many cases. Sometimes participants offered a brief background story to illustrate why

they suggested an item for a list. For purposes of group handouts and later data analysis, I chose to transcribe portions of a session's recording selectively, depending upon how well they served those purposes.

The process methods used during the study varied by session. They are part of reporting my data collection methods, thus I include overviews of them here. The following list briefly describes the sequence of broad tasks performed over the six sessions. Many of the early tasks amounted to producing lists of various kinds, as mentioned above. The process book used in the sessions is not included in this dissertation (but see Appendix E for more information). The first reason is that it is copyrighted material and training is required to understand and use it. The second is that the descriptions below, along with the reporting I do in the remaining chapters, probably convey the process more meaningfully than reading the step-by-step instructions in the materials. The next chapter includes extended descriptions of how the group produced its work as it engaged in these activities.

1. Identify all the topics of concern in the community and why they are concerns. Map how and why they connect with each other. The purpose is for a group to make a well-considered selection of one topic to focus on first.
2. Select a priority topic to focus on. Using the steps provided, select one of the issues derived from that topic. The work done in those steps demonstrate to the participants that issues derived from a topic include both causal factors and troublesome impacts connected with the topic. Every topic has at least several of each because topics represent concerns about multiple phenomena. Either a causal factor or troublesome impact may be selected as an issue to work on throughout

the remaining sessions. Once such an issue is selected, use additional steps to analyze why the issue exists, its impacts, and the factors that support its continuance. The purpose is to develop a thorough understanding of the issue. Its outcome is a summary issue description that orients the next steps of work.

3. Based on the summary issue description, identify a systemic array of reactive and proactive actions tailored to address the issue. These amount to an action-system that would need diverse individuals, groups, and institutional actors to implement it. The purpose of this step in a larger setting is to do the first layer of organizing, launching, and coordinating action to address the issue. That includes volunteer activity and policy work, and starting work on at least one initial question that will need public deliberation. In this project, the outcome of this step was confined to selecting one of the actions that would have high potential to make a meaningful change in the issue and that would require deliberation.

4. Using criteria provided in the process materials, select one of the actions that would require complex decisions about its implementation because there is no single, correct answer and because many people will be affected by any decision. Using the template provided, develop several viable, diverse approaches toward deciding upon that action. The outcome is a brief issue booklet about the question that needs deciding. It includes the reasons for asking about what to do about the issue (the "issue-question") and a neutral presentation of the diverse possible approaches to it. The booklet serves to educate people about the issue and possible approaches to it, and people refer to it as a resource as they deliberate.

5. With reference to the issue booklet, deliberate all the pros, cons, and real world consequences and trade-offs. Include the range of different perspectives introduced by each approach and include other perspectives introduced by participants. Evaluate the thoroughness of the deliberations and articulate decisions that people are ready to make and have enough information to make. The outcome is the informed articulation of priorities and decisions, and the reasons for them. For this study's participants, the purpose of deliberation was to find out "where they landed" on the issue-question, without needing to take any action at all to implement it. Deliberation plays a vital role in the process of working on complex issues, and its ideal dynamics are complex. Appendix F shows the ideal representation of deliberation's multilevel, nonlinear dynamics when the issue-question is framed using this process.

Data Analysis

Materials generated by the study were analyzed using the quantitative methods of the HCSS for scoring, nonparametric and parametric tests for significance, and qualitative categorical and interpretive methods. Below, I describe the approaches I took to data analysis.

Hypothesis Testing and Analysis

The sections below introduce and discuss the hypothesis, the method for testing it, the follow-up research question, and the related measures that I used to investigate those interests.

Hypothesis. I tested the following hypothesis in this preexperimental study: When study participants engage together using the process to grapple with complex

public issues and launch systemic work on them, the group's average hierarchical complexity of reasoning about issues will increase, as measured by the Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System (HCSS).

My follow-up research question was: How large were the changes, if any, in the group's average hierarchical complexity of reasoning, as measured by HCSS?

Binomial test. One method I used to interpret the results of hypothesis testing was the nonparametric binomial test. The test is based on the binomial distribution. This method is appropriate in studies such as mine when the hypothesis test involves observing or measuring whether or not an event happens: either-or conditions that are "dichotomous events" (Cohen 2001, pp. 611-612). Cohen's text explains the basis of the binomial distribution from the probabilities of running separate trials of dichotomous events. His table of probabilities of the binomial distribution (p. 703) gives *p* values for one-tailed tests of $N < 16$. The SPSS binomial calculation assumes two-tailed, and its *p* value must be halved to reflect one-tailed tests. My hypothesis was one-tailed.

In this study, the dichotomous events were either (a) the group's average hierarchical complexity of reasoning would not change or it would decrease (the null hypothesis), or (b) the group's average hierarchical complexity of reasoning would increase (the alternative hypothesis).

The binomial test does not dictate the content of the two dichotomous conditions; it requires only that they are mutually exclusive conditions that cannot coexist at the same time (Cohen, 2001). There are multiple ways to form a null hypothesis. One way is to group things in different ways. For this test, I grouped *no change* and *decrease* together as one side of the dichotomy. These were tested against *increase* as the other side of the

dichotomy. This one-tailed test is conservative. It would be harder to find a difference with the *no change* combined with the *decrease* than if one used *no change* alone. This approach meets the requirements of the binomial test and deals appropriately with the three possible treatment conditions of increase, no change, and decrease.

I assumed a uniform distribution that the group's average hierarchical complexity was equally likely to show either increase or no change/decrease: a 50:50 probability. The binomial distribution reflects this symmetry of equal probability, and the null hypothesis distribution is a form of it (Cohen 2001). This method is appropriate for this study's hypothesis testing because the assumptions of the test are consistent with my hypothesis. As mentioned earlier when discussing limitations, however, this study does not meet the binomial assumption of random sampling.

In order to calculate the change in the group's average hierarchical complexity of reasoning, I had to calculate the change in each individual participant's hierarchical complexity scores. The average group change was the mean of the total participants' changes. Individual participants' changes were calculated by subtracting the ordinal scores of three pretest measures from the ordinal scores of their related posttest measures (the scoring method and the related measures are described below). The results (no change/decrease *or* increase) of comparing each of the three related measures were three events per person, in binomial test terms. Events are observed (0) as happening (positive) or not happening (negative). For this test, a positive event was represented by 1 and indicated an increase; a negative event was represented by -1 and indicated no change/decrease.

I stated the null and alternative hypotheses as follows, using Cohen's (2001) symbol *P* to represent the binomial probability. H_0: $P = .5$, where *P* is the probability of no change or a decrease in the group's average hierarchical complexity. H_A: $P > .5$, $p < .05$ (one-tailed) where *P* is the probability of an increase in the group's average hierarchical complexity.

To run the binomial test, the positive and/or negative counts of events are entered into SPSS for calculation of event number, mean, standard deviation, observed property (positive observation, here, would mean an increase), test property (negative would mean no change/decrease), and significance.

Follow-up research question. My follow-up research question asked a quantification question: How large were the changes, if any, in the group's average hierarchical complexity of reasoning, as measured by HCSS? To measure the changes, if any, the units of change—for each participant on each of the three related measures—were totaled and averaged. From those participant totals, the mean, standard deviation, *z* score and its *p* were calculated. These are basic parametric statistics. They assume a normal distribution, random sampling, and an interval/ratio scale. Although this study's methods do not meet those assumptions, and the study has other limitations described above, these common statistics were calculated and reported for the sake of comparison. I calculated Cohen's *d* for effect size of the results, using the calculator at http://web.uccs.edu/lbecker/Psy590/escalc3.htm.

Related measures. As Cohen (2001) points out, the variability from subject-to-subject in some experiments makes it difficult to have a low number of participants and achieve sufficient power. He suggests that "a very useful way to avoid much of the

subject-to-subject variability in any experiment is to measure each subject in more than one condition" (Cohen 2001, p. 223). In addition to subject-to-subject variability, there is variability within any given subject, particularly in an experiment to foster development. In this study, I needed a way to test for developmental, hierarchical increase (a form of variability) within the larger natural expectation of human variability. Cohen's recommendation supported my choice of several related (though not independent) measures for testing the hypothesis.

The choice of measures reflects the premises of task theory that are embedded in the Model of Hierarchical Complexity. I measured responses to several key questions that the theory predicts would give a participant the greatest opportunity to use more complex reasoning. Such opportunities are questions that invite reflection on prior actions and thinking (Commons et al., 2005). Together, the measures I selected reflected the task set of

> three basic dimensions: action, description or reflection upon that action (King & et al., 1989; Tappan, 1990), and the number of elements that a person can work with at a given time which are required to perform that action and to report on it (Commons et al., 2005, p.13).

The action dimension is the first one with which the HCSS is concerned. Then, there are additional tasks, which refer to the action, and together these provide the elements of hierarchical complexity. Reflective reporting is part of the hierarchical sequence of reasoning tasks that can be scored. The complete sequence follows.

1. Do[ing] the action.
2. Reporting on doing the action (shadowing).

3. Reporting on why one chooses that particular action.
4. Reporting on why that justification is good.
5. Reporting on why that system of justifications is good (Commons et al., 2005, p. 14).

The posttest interview gave participants several opportunities to reflect, as above, on the issue that they had chosen to discuss (their action) during the pretest interview. Each person had selected a public issue of personal interest or concern, and I had made it clear to each person that it did not matter what the issue was. The measure named *issue1* was the person's initial description of an issue and why it was problematic. The measure *diffthink* was the first reflective opportunity (within the context of this research) to revisit and reflect upon how the person conceived the issue described earlier in the item *issue1*. The measure named *whybest1* was posed near the beginning of the posttest. It was a capstone question, corresponding to the fifth item listed above. As a capstone question about the person's system of justification, it followed a set of three probes. Those probes invited reflection on the person's approach to *address* (not just describe) the issue of concern, as reported in the person's pretest interview thinking. The measures *whybest2* and *whybest3* were capstone questions at various other points of exploring whatever new thinking about the issue the person had done, or was currently doing as the posttest unfolded. Each of the measures, *whybest2* and *whybest3,* were compared to *whybest1* as related measures. These items represented the key points of thinking about the initial issue that each study participant discussed at length. In this way, the related measures provided the best basis for comparing reasoning about issues before and after the group's discourse sessions.

Using the Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System

The Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System was the quantitative methodology used in this study. It was the basis for both calculating my scoring reliability and for scoring and analyzing participant interviews and some of the group work. This section mentions previous work that validated the method, explains the scoring calibration process and the scoring method itself, and describes the kind of material from the study that was scored and how data was organized and electronically entered.

Validity of the Model of Hierarchical Complexity's Scoring System. At least four validation studies have been conducted to establish that the HCSS assesses the same levels of performance as scoring systems that are more content-dependent, and does so with high levels of reliability (Dawson, 2003, 2004). Comparable systems included the Perry Scoring system, Kohlberg's Standard Issue Scoring System, Good Life Scoring System, Good Education interviews, and the Lexical Abstraction Assessment System.

Scorer calibration. I had been studying the Model of Hierarchical Complexity and using its scoring system informally since 2002. In 2004, one of my two doctoral courses in experimental research design and statistics included formal instruction by Dr. Michael Commons, one of the two primary developers of the model over more than 20 years. He graded my scoring samples, which were drawn from a wide array of sources, and asserted that I had satisfactorily completed that learning experience and was a qualified scorer in the method. In 2005, he invited me to participate with him and Dr. Alice Locicero in conducting a half day November scoring workshop, and I did so. It was a preconference workshop of the Association for Moral Education's annual conference held in Cambridge, MA.

This study generated many hours' worth of spoken material from the interviews and group sessions. As discussed earlier in this chapter, it was not possible to hire a second scorer. This meant that this study's data would not be reported in the standard manner with the rates of interrater agreement on the scoring.

Instead, Dr. Commons calibrated my scoring to his in the following manner. He instructed me to select 30 to 40 items I had scored from the study. The first 30 would be items that had been easy to score, and the next ten would be difficult items. Ideally, I would be able to include two items, each, that had been scored at four stages (abstract, formal, systematic, metasystematic) and the transition steps between them. These were not randomly selected, since the aim was to have the sample include all possible stage and step scores without omitting any in the hierarchical sequence. The item selection method balanced the needs to (a) have a calibration sample of a manageable size, (b) include at least one and preferably two items from each of sixteen sequential levels of hierarchical complexity, and (c) have $n > 30$ to justify the assumption of a normal distribution. The approach would enable us to draw inferences about my general scoring reliability as it related to Dr. Commons' scoring, which was that of an established expert.

Per Dr. Commons' instructions, I assigned random numbers to the sample to scramble the items. Before sending the sample in small batch increments to him for blind scoring, I sorted it in ascending numerical order. This numerical sequence determined the order of items that I batched in groups of four to send to him. The randomly assigned sequence numbers were the sample items' only identification; that is, participants were not associated with the items in the batch. Each batch had statements to score, their associated item numbers, and, if the statement came from an interview response, the

interview question that prompted the statement. Some were items from group sessions, rather than interviews. Per instructions, I did not include in these batches the scores that I had already given the statements. After Dr. Commons scored a batch, he sent the updated electronic document to me to insert my score for each item beneath his score in the document. I referred to my scoring records to obtain the score I had assigned to each item, inserted my scores, and returned the further-updated electronic document to him.

Since the calibration sample items were drawn from material generated by this new research, this calibration process was nontraditional as compared to common methods to determine interrater reliability. Dr. Commons did not have the sources of the items to score, which were the full interviews or group session transcripts. The participant interview response that generated a scorable item took place within the larger context of the interview and its flow of questioning. As the interview questions in Appendix C indicate, successive questions led participants to build up a line of reasoning, only part of which was represented within one given item. It was generally appropriate to treat each item as a distinct element of reasoning because each one probed a different aspect of an issue. As described earlier, some questions were like capstones, following a series of three questions that probed a person's reasoning, although not all participants responded as intended or had responses to these.

Although in one study that compared scoring systems, statements that did not include responses to "why" questions were treated as nonscorable (Dawson 2002), that approach was not a good fit with my larger research interests. I would be able to cover very little ground with a participant if I probed every statement to the fullest extent possible. It would demand tremendous (and probably unattainable) stamina on the part of

participants to do so and still cover the breadth of considerations for which I wanted to hear their reasoning. Complex issues and approaches to address them can involve many different scales of attention involving different actors, institutions, venues, conditions, etc. A thorough discussion of any one issue can become quite lengthy.

Most often, procedures to ascertain interrater reliability involve the raters scoring the same full body of data. Particularly true with scoring stages of adult development, this approach is used in diverse studies concerned with, for example, sentence completion stems (Cook-Greuter, 2000), a vocabulary's mean word lengths and lexical items (Dawson, 2004), validity studies across methods (Dawson, Xie, & Wildon, 2003), or epistemological interview data (Lahey, Souvaine, Kegan, Goodman, & Felix, 1988). This range indicates that the nature and the length of material to score can vary widely, depending on the research interest. In this study, individual participants' interviews ranged from 6,200 to 13,300 total words per person.

Depending on the nature of the scoring system, there are few or many dimensions of scoring. For example, in Cook-Greuter's study, each sentence completion would be scored at one of only a handful of possible adult stages. The measure with

> the longest "track record," namely the Moral Judgment Interview (Colby, Kohlberg, et al., 1987) . . . at its *most* finely differentiating makes 13 distinctions between stages 1 and 5; it distinguishes 2 transitional points between any two stages; all other developmental measures in the constructive-developmental paradigm make even fewer distinctions (Lahey et al., 1988, p. 357, emphasis in the original).

The Subject-Object Interview is similar to the HCSS in making finer distinctions than other systems do. As does the HCSS, it has discernible transitions between any two stages, although its stages are spread wider apart than the MHC's. It has 21 transition distinctions between its five stages (Lahey et al., 1988). These demand numerous, precise distinctions be made by scorers. As its authors state,

> Obviously, "percent *exact* agreement" is more or less impressive depending upon the number of distinctions that can possibly be made. Colby, Kohlberg, et al. report 8 different interrater tests (each involving 10 to 20 interviews). They report complete agreement (using 13 possible distinctions) of: 53%, 63%, 63%, 63%, 78%, 63%, 52%, a mean of 60%, mode and median of 63% (Lahey et al. 1988, p. 357, emphasis in the original).

The authors' point, above, is that scoring demands differ among scoring systems depending on how finely discriminated the scoring method is. The analogy of a twelve inch ruler can illustrate the point. One system may identify stages of development that would correspond to the inch-marked measurements on a ruler. Another system may identify the same inch-marked stages and half-inch-marked transitions that can be discriminated between each stage. A system like the HCSS might treat each three fourths of an inch as a full stage and mark one-twelfth of an inch for each of the several transition steps within each stage. A system like the Subject-Object Interview may define a stage as two and one quarter inches, and mark transitions at every three fourths of an inch.

The stage and step structure of the HCSS has considerably more discriminations to score than these other systems. As a comparison, if I had used the Subject-Object

Interview in this study, I would have had about one half of the possible scores that I worked with using the HCSS to score its stages and the transition steps within them.

Each scoring system evolves its standards for acceptable levels of reliability. The "working definition of reliable" for the Subject-Object Interview at the point when its developers had trained seven scorers was "exact agreement or one discrimination difference (1/5 stage) 80% of the time (8 of 10 interviews)" (Lahey et al., 1988, p. 358). T. Dawson (personal communication, April 2005) currently uses a modified version of the HCSS that has the same general structure as the unmodified version. All of Dawson's raters work on the full interview text and consult together until they achieve exact agreement on stage, and 85% agreement within three steps. In one study, she reported that raters' initial agreement was 80% within a half stage, and disagreements were then discussed until consensus was reached (Dawson, 2003). The same method of rater discussion was used by Cook-Greuter to train scorers and develop interrater reliability (Cook-Greuter, 2000).

This discussion conveys that it is an intricate procedure to score data for developmental stage discriminations and to achieve interrater agreement. The 70-80% range that appears acceptable in much of the developmental assessment research was one that the Subject-Object Interview authors viewed as "perfectly reasonable to us, and which the S-O Interview obtains" (Lahey et al., 1988, p. 357). This discussion reveals that the levels of complexity involved in scoring systems vary widely depending on how discriminating the system is.

For this study's calibration process, we did not use the procedure of discussing our scores to arrive at either full agreement or explicit disagreement. Nor did I alter my

calibration sample scores after Dr. Commons generated his. The objective was to have as pure a process as possible to assess my scoring reliability in relation to his, without the traditional raters' consultations to gain agreement. Thus, this process was conservative.

To get a calibration score on the basis of the procedure that we used, I entered into SPSS each item's identifying number with our respective scores per item. I sent the SPSS data file to Dr. Commons for his verification, then ran the SPSS functions to generate Pearson's correlation coefficient and Cronbach's alpha. I forwarded that output to Dr. Commons. Cronbach's alpha coefficient "takes what may seem like a more extreme approach" than others that are used for measuring reliability (Caskie & Willis, 2006, p. 63). It treats each item as separate and examines the item-pair correlations. Our calibration process was designed for this kind of assessment. The computation results in a "conservative estimate" that represents an average of all of the paired items' correlations (p. 64). The result of this calibration process was a Cronbach's alpha of .882 based on standardized items. I also ran a Pearson's for comparison's sake, which reported r .789, $p < .01$, two-tailed.

As discussed above, our purpose was to calibrate my scoring to Dr. Commons' scoring, not to get interrater agreement on all of the material generated by study. That was not possible, given its volume. Nor was it possible to confine the goal to arriving at interrater reliability on only the related measures. As explained earlier, the items in the related measures entailed large amounts of related interview material covered before and between those measures' specific items. We found that the combination of the detailed scoring method and our disparate degrees of access to the body of material meant some inherent challenges, as described here.

Despite the differences between this study's design and its scoring system and other studies' designs and scoring systems, for comparison's sake I converted our scores to traditional within-full-stage score values and ran correlations on them as if we had a traditional interrater design. In that scenario, reliability was Cronbach's .897 based on standardized items and Pearson's r .813, $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

Scoring. I used the most recent version of the Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System manual of the Model of Hierarchical Complexity (Commons et al., 2005) to score participants' statements. The higher range of stages, or orders, that may be applicable to statements of adults in a community such as the one chosen for this study is shown in Table 2.

Except for the last listed stage, paradigmatic, the stages shown in Table 2 are the same ones defined in the first chapter. In Table 2, the descriptions come only from the HCSS. Although it is commonly known in the field of developmental psychology that formal education enables most adolescents, and therefore also adults, to use formal stage reasoning in at least some domains, I include the abstract stage for a particular reason. As described in the introductory chapter and earlier in this chapter, reasoning complexity is structured in a building-block fashion. Abstract statements, often made in the form of assertions, are requisites for constructing formal reasoning, e.g., if . . . then logics. As the earlier-presented anecdotes illustrated, talk about public issues commonly reflects abstract stage reasoning. In Western settings, it is the common starting point of reasoning in the domain of public issues.

Table 2

Higher Range of Orders of Complexity

Order or stage	Order or stage name	General descriptions of tasks performed
9	Abstract	Discriminates variables such as stereotypes; uses logical quantification; forms variables out of finite classes; makes and quantifies propositions; uses variable time, place, act, actor, state, type; uses quantifiers, e.g., all, none, some; makes categorical assertions, e.g., "We all die."
10	Formal	Argues using empirical or logical evidence, and logic is linear, one-dimensional; solves problems with one unknown using algebra, logic, and empiricism; forms relationships out of variables; uses terms such as if . . . then, thus, therefore, because; favors correct scientific solutions.
11	Systematic	Constructs multivariate systems and matrices, coordinating more than one variable as input; situates events and ideas in a larger context, i.e., considers relationships in contexts; forms systems out of relations.
12	Metasystematic	Integrates systems to construct multisystems or metasystems out of disparate systems; compares systems and perspectives in a systematic way (across multiple domains); reflects on systems, i.e., is metalogical, meta-analytic; names properties of systems, e.g., homomorphic, isomorphic, complete, consistent, commensurable.
13	Paradigmatic	Discriminates how to fit, and fits, metasystems together to form new paradigms.

Note: From "Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System (HCSS) How to Score Anything" (pp. 62; 92-93), by M. L. Commons, P. M. Miller, E. A. Goodheart, and D. Danaher-Gilpin, 2005, Cambridge, MA: Dare Association, Inc. Copyright 1991-2005 by Dare Association, Inc. Adapted with permission.

Table 2 includes the paradigmatic stage to indicate the complexity toward which the metasystematic stage's transition steps lead.

Scoring a statement involved identifying two components of its score. The first component is its stage, or order, of hierarchical complexity of performance. The second component of the score is the transition step within that order.

Between each stage of task performance there is a universal pattern of transition steps. They are the same from one stage to another. The steps are the dynamics of the dialectical process of increasing complexity and are shown in Table 3.

A score includes the number of a stage as shown in Table 2's first column and the number of the transition step within that stage. The HCSS uses point values as shown in Table 3 to indicate the step of the transition task being scored. For example, to indicate a performance that is a transitional step to metasystematic, say at step 2's relativism, the score could be shown in the form of either 11-2 or 11.6 points. A score for performing fully at the metasystematic stage is 11-4 or 12. The point system to indicate the steps offers an accessible way to conceive how the steps express the percentage of the transition process that is underway from one stage to another.

For quantitative analysis of both the calibration sample and interview data for related measures, I created an ordinal scale of integers to reflect the continuous accumulation of steps from stage to stage. The abstract stage is the ninth order of complexity. It requires 45 *previous*, successfully coordinated tasks before its tasks can be performed. Thus, my scale began at 45 to represent the abstract stage, the lowest stage contained in my data. Abstract stage/step 1 was 46 on the scale, abstract stage/step 2 was 47, etc. Running continuously from there, the scale ended at 64, metasystematic step 3.

Table 3

Transition Steps and Their Scoring

Step (or substep)	Scoring points	Relation	Name	Dialectical form of the dynamics that go on in each step
0 (4)	.2	a = a' with b'	Temporary equilibrium point (thesis)	Previous stage synthesis does not solve all tasks. Deconstruction begins, an extinction process.
1	.4	b	Negation or complementation (antithesis)	Negation or complementation, Inversion, or alternate thesis. Forms a second synthesis of previous stage actions.
2	.6	a or b	Relativism (alternation of thesis and antithesis)	Relativism. Alternates between thesis and antithesis. The schemes coexist, but there is no coordination of them.
3	.8	a and b	Smash (attempts at synthesis)	The following substeps are transitions in synthesis.
Step 3, Substep 1			Hits and excess false alarms and misses	Elements from a and b are included in a nonsystematic, noncoordinated manner. Incorporates various subsets of all the possible elements.
		Step 3, Substep 2	Hit and excess false alarms.	Incorporates subsets producing hits at stage n. Basis for exclusion not sharp. Over generalization
		Step 3, Substep 3	Correct rejections and excess misses	Incorporates subsets that produce correct rejections at stage n. Produces misses. Basis for inclusion not sharp. Under generalization
4 (0)	1.0	a with b	New temporary equilibrium (synthesis and new thesis)	Arrives at a new, temporary equilibrium where all elements are coordinated and "settled."

Note: From "Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System (HCSS) How to Score Anything" (p. 98), by M. L. Commons, P. M. Miller, E. A. Goodheart, and D. Danaher-Gilpin, 2005, Cambridge, MA: Dare Association, Inc.

Interview and group session material. As mentioned earlier, many of the utterances participants made during group sessions were not scorable data because they were various kinds of additions to lists that did not invite or require complete thoughts or explanations, or justifications for making them. Another kind of statement I did not score was a story or narrative that was offered to illustrate a point that had already been made. I confined scoring for the study's results to individual participants' statements in interviews, including items in the related measures, and to the various conclusions that the group reached during the deliberative session.

Data organization and electronic data entry. Basic participant demographic information and each scored interview item were assigned a variable name and entered into SPSS. Item scores were identified as belonging in pretest or posttest groups.

Other Analyses

I used qualitative methods, in the forms of interpretive or categorical approaches to analysis, in four areas. The first area was the issue that the group developed, its "tone and intention issue." The second area concerned the changes within the group culture from the first to last sessions of the project. The third area was individual participants' self-reporting in the posttest interview about their sense of hope and their sense of motivation, and the fourth was the different domains of life in which participants reported changes related to their participation in the discourse process. Below, I briefly discuss the approach I took to analyzing each of these areas.

Tone and intention issue. I used two approaches to analyze the tone and intention issue the group worked on. I related its evolution as an issue to the process steps that the group went through, and I analyzed the political nature of the issue.

Changes in the group culture. To analyze the changes in the group's culture during the project, I relied upon my observations, comparisons between group sessions' dynamics as evidenced in the session transcripts, participants' comments in posttest interviews, and reference to others' work to inform and support my analysis.

Participants' sense of hope and motivation. My interest in participants' sense of hope and motivation developed as I listened to them during their last group session, and I supplemented the interview questions to investigate this. I asked one question, each, about hope and about motivation. Participants used a four-item scale for both categories of hope and motivation. I invited them to use half points when their best-fit response would fit between any four point items, implementing a seven point scale without demanding more scrutiny than necessary from participants. The seven resulting categories and their associated points were as follows.

1. Very, 4.0.
2. Between moderately and very, 3.5.
3. Moderately, 3.0.
4. Between slightly and moderately, 2.5.
5. Slightly, 2.0.
6. Between none and slightly, 1.5.
7. None, 1.0.

Participants' domains of change. I identified two broad categories that warranted analysis: two themes that are relevant to political development, and the domains of activity in which participants reported they could or did use new learning. I prepared frequency distributions on the latter, and a narrative interpretation of the former.

Chapter Four: Results

My report of results in this chapter is organized as follows. After this introduction, the quantitative results are presented. That presentation iterates the hypothesis I tested and its follow-up research question, gives the presentation sequence of the test results, and reports the results and related analyses. The remainder of the chapter is dedicated to reporting qualitative results. These include (a) results of the group's issue work done in the six sessions, (b) a partial transcript that illustrates the culture of the group at the mid-point of the series of group sessions, and (c) several categories of changes reported by participants.

Results of Hypothesis Testing

The exploratory hypothesis tested in this research was described in the following way: When study participants engage together using the process to grapple with complex public issues and launch systemic work on them, the group's average hierarchical complexity of reasoning about issues will increase, as measured by the Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System. The hypothesis is stated as follows where, per Cohen (2001), *P* represents the probability of dichotomous events. H_0: $P = .5$, where *P* is the probability of no change or a decrease in the group's average hierarchical complexity. H_A: $P > .5$, $p < .05$ (one-tailed) where *P* is the probability of an increase in the group's average hierarchical complexity. The related research question was stated in the following way: How large were the changes, if any, in the group's average hierarchical complexity of reasoning, as measured by HCSS?

The results of testing the hypothesis are presented as follows. Table 4 reports the raw participant scores on the related measures. Table 5 reports the dichotomous distribution to positive or to no change/negative observations for the related measures that I used to test for step change. Observations of the hypothesized behavior are positives indicated by the integer 1. No observations of the hypothesized behavior are indicated by -1. The data in the last row were subjected to the binomial test. Table 6 reports the binomial test results. Following those results, Table 7 reports on step increases in the related measures, and Tables 8 and 9 report effect size calculations.

Table 4

Raw Scores on Related Measures

Participant ID #	issue1	diffthink	whybest1	whybest2	whybest3
1	45	-$_a$	50	55	54
2	50	55	50	51	-$_a$
3	55	55	55	59	60
4	55	59	55	-$_a$	60
5	55	64	59	59	60
6	55	60	56	59	60
7	55	60	60	64	60
8	50	55	50	56	55
N	8	7	8	7	7
Total	420	408	435	403	409
Mean	52.500	58.286	54.375	57.571	58.429

Note: The subscript ($_a$) indicates an item with no score

Table 5

Related Measures to Test for Step Change

	Related measures	Step changes per measure, per participant #1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8	0bserv. + -	Total Poss.	Sig. (one-tailed)
1	issue1 – diffthink	-[a]	1	-1	1	1	1	1	1	+6, -1	7	$.0547_a$
2	whybest1 – whybest2	1	1	1	-[b]	-1	1	1	1	+6, -1	7	$.0547_a$
3	whybest1 – whybest3	1	-[c]	1	1	1	1	-1	1	+6, -1	7	$.0547_a$
Observations										+18, -3	21	
# of positive change		2	2	2	2	2	3	2	3	+18		$.000_b$**
# of no change or negative change		0	0	1	0	1	0	1	0	-3		$.000_b$**
Net amount of changes		2	2	1	2	1	3	1	3	+15	21	$.0039_b$**
Was there a one step increase? 1=yes, 0=no		1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1			

Note. Values having the subscript ($_a$) were obtained for $n = 7$ from Cohen's (2001, p. 703) Table A. 13 Probabilities of the Binomial Distribution for $P = .5$. Values having the subscript ($_b$) were obtained by SPSS Binomial Test (default setting is two-tailed) and halved.

** $p < .01$.

[a] Diffthink question was not asked because this participant demonstrated irritation at the previous question about how she understood her issue now, and I did not want to provoke further irritation to the detriment of the remainder of the posttest.

[b] Whybest2 question did not apply to this participant because her response to diffthink had anticipated it, in effect, and to pose the question would be redundant.

[c] Whybest3 question did not apply to this participant because her response to whybest2 had precluded continuing the several questions that would lead up to it.

Table 6

Binomial Test Results

Binomial test					
N	Mean	Std. dev.	Observed prop.	Test Prop.	Exact sig. (one-tailed)
8	1.00	.000	1.00	.50	.0039**

**$p < .01$.

Table 7

Step Increases in Related Measures

Related measures	Step increase per measure, per participant								Mean	Std. dev.	*z* Score	Sig. (one-tailed)
	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8				
1 issue1-diffthink	-	5	0	4	9	5	5	5	4.71	2.628	1.79	.0367*
2 whybest1-whybest2	5	1	4	-	0	3	4	6	3.29	2.138	1.53	.0630
3 whybest1-whybest3	4	-	5	5	1	4	0	5	3.43	2.070	1.66	.0485*
Step increases per participant	9	6	9	9	10	12	9	16				
Average step increases per participant	4.5	3.0	3.0	4.5	3.3	4.0	3.0	5.3	3.825	.886	4.28	.0000**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Effect size

Researchers often use effect size calculations to adjust their research designs to achieve the greatest power, and the calculations are equally usable, and advisable, to report on the significance of the results after the research is conducted (Cohen, 2001). I ran the SPSS descriptive statistics on the scores for each measure to obtain their means and standard deviations**.** I calculated the effect size of my results using that information in the means and standard deviations effect size calculator at http://web.uccs.edu/lbecker/Psy590/escalc3.htm. Table 8 shows the results of the calculations. The effect size classifications are based on Cohen (2001), who states that *d* = .2 is considered a small effect, *d* = .5 is considered a medium effect, and *d* = .8 is considered a large effect. With reference to the phase of research design, he also states, "*d* = 1.33 is generally too large to require an experiment" (p. 219).

Table 8

Calculated Effect Size of Related Measures

	Related measures	Posttest mean	Pretest mean	Posttest std. dev.	Pretest std. dev.	Cohen's *d*	Effect size class.
1	issue1 – diffthink	58.29	52.50	3.450	3.780	1.599 *r* = .625	Large
2	whybest1 – whybest2	57.57	54.38	4.077	4.033	.787 *r* = .366	Large
3	whybest1 – whybest3	58.43	54.38	2.699	4.033	1.180 *r* = .508	Large
Total		174.29	161.26	10.226	11.846	3.566	
Average		58.10	53.75	3.410	3.949	1.189 *r* = 1.499	Large

To calculate the effect size of the average step increases of the group, I used the between subjects effect size calculator at http://web.uccs.edu/lbecker/Psy590/escalc3.htm#Calculate%20d%20and%20r%20using%20t%20values%20(separate%20groups. Results are shown in Table 9. The significance level reported in Table 7 is .0000; thus, the effect size reported in Table 9 is conservative.

Table 9

Calculated Effect Size of Step Increases

df	Sig. (one-tailed)	Critical *t* value	Cohen's *d*	Effect size *r*	Effect size class.
7	.0005**	5.408	4.088	.898	Large

Note: The critical *t* value from Cohen's (2001) Table A.2 (p. 692), *df* = 7, one-tailed, .0005 significance level is 5.408. The .0005 level is the lowest provided by that source.
**$p < .01$.

Hypothesis Test Conclusion

Based on the results of the binomial test, I reject the null hypothesis that $P = .5$. The test for the group's average increase obtains a p level of .0039. In probability terms, this equates to 2 to the 8th power: the odds of 1/256, significantly less than the .05 level of significance.

When this group participated in the discourse process to address complex public issues, its average hierarchical complexity increased, $P > .5$, $p = .0039$, one-tailed. The size of the group's average increase was significant at $p = .0000$ (one-tailed), with large effect size.

Other Results

This final section reports on qualitative results of the group's work throughout the process and reports on changes that participants reported after the end of the discourse process, during the posttest interviews. These findings respond to the following research question: What changes in the political culture of the small group, if any, will happen over the course of the sessions of the discourse process?

Results of the Group's Work

In this section, the results of the public issues work that the group did in each of the six sessions of the discourse process are described in detail. Except where it is helpful to do so, these do not repeat the descriptions given in the previous chapter. These session descriptions include my own activities in the role of facilitator and my observations of the group's activities. They refer in general terms to the content matter about the issue the group worked on. Work products from sessions are described, and I indicate below when a work product is included in Appendix D. The subsection headings below are short labels that communicate the main product that should result from the session. With this group, in some cases, the product was not completed until the next session. To keep this presentation simple, I do not change the labels to reflect such timing differences. The short labels reflect terms used in the discourse process materials. I use them here because they meet the need for succinct session identifiers.

Session 1 – Map of the territory. The work that participants did in their first session laid the foundation for the rest of the process and their eventual issue. They began by identifying 39 topics of concern. As they discussed which topics were more like the

tip of an iceberg (as compared to the submerged base of an iceberg) they were able to separate the topics into two distinct clusters. They characterized one cluster as consequences and symptoms. It was associated with recent years' changes in the community's former status quo, with those differences in the quality of life feeling like a threat. They recognized that all of the topics of concern in that cluster were directly or indirectly affiliated with local land uses. The other cluster was associated with the strains that characterized local public life and showed up in the relations of the public with its government and in the relations between local governments. They characterized that cluster as containing issues of process: "how we get the job done, relate, and communicate, how we do things, how things are working or not working." Words that they used as part of some topics' descriptions included angst, trickery, tension, strain, and other terms to describe what contributed to the strained relations, from their perspectives.

At that juncture, the next task was to select one topic of priority concern to work on in more detail in the next session. The process steps do not require or invite participants to identify or analyze the relationships between any topic-clusters they develop. In this case, once people had discussed the distinctly different nature of each cluster they had created, they tried to articulate "the gap" between the two clusters: What was the missing link that would transform one cluster's strains so that the symptoms and consequences in the other cluster could be addressed? The most they could do was name that the community needed a process to connect the two clusters, which was hard to do when there was a lack of a sense of community and a lack of communication.

My job as facilitator in this process was to help people share and build their knowledge base together. My role did not include imposing my own thinking or analyses

on the participants. The discussion went until the end of that session's allotted time. The next session would begin where this one left off, with this session's work typed up in an orderly format that would facilitate selection of a topic.

Session 2 – Summary issue description. As the next session began, participants were no closer to finding words to describe that topic, yet they stated that they shared the same grasp of what they meant. That was sufficient for me to suggest that we proceed to the steps to turn the topic into an issue, a more specific set of concerns that they could work on through the rest of the sessions. It takes a thoughtful process to get from the broad, implicit generalizations of a topic (whether it has words to label it, or not) to identifying a specific issue or problem. Regardless of what kind of topic concerns people, it has identifiable impacts and causes that people can cite from experience, or that they fear they will experience. Some or all of those may be bona fide issues that can be worked on. For this group to sort through the impacts and causes of this hard-for-them-to-name topic, its discussion included anecdotal stories that unpacked it and revealed more about the concerns.

One person reported that his stances on certain issues in the community seemed to put him on the police department's list of people to track and then harass with traffic tickets over minor things. Another reported that family members had said the city's atmosphere had been antagonistic across the forty years they had lived there. Some people reported a number of frustrating, unsuccessful attempts to get basic public information from City Hall. Some told the stories of citizen referendum efforts over the years, and how each one left more damaged relations in its wake regardless of which side "won." Despite citizen outcries, mostly in connection with land use issues, successive

city administrations would pursue their own agendas. There were chronic difficulties in obtaining official explanations for decisions or creating opportunities for dialogue about them, either before or after they happened. Echoed within the group discussion, the community politics seemed to be summed up by a resident (not participating in this study) who posted to a local bulletin board: “It’s hard to live here in the middle of the ‘Hatfields and McCoys.’ I try to stay in the background and not say much so I don’t risk the venom and being labeled.” Through their explanations of impacts and causes, participants defined their key issue of concern, using these terms: “The issue, the problem is that citizens are unaware, frustrated, and therefore powerless, uninvolved, and misinformed.” Moments later, the group coalesced around a name for the elusive umbrella topic this problem referred to: “the troubled interactions between government and the people.” The group adopted this as its orienting topic.

By the time these milestones were reached, we did not have enough session time remaining for the last step: to pull their work together into a summary description of the issue. One person suggested that they could work on the summary from home before the third session, and all agreed. The process book had an example for reference, modeling the factual, unbiased style to use when summarizing an issue.

During the week, I received summaries drafted independently by two of the participants. One person’s proclaimed “power to the people” in a democracy. It echoed comments that the person had made in the last session, and prescribed what citizens should do to “take the power back” from the “power elite.” The other one followed the example in the materials and included statements made by other members of group.

Session 3 – Action-system and first issue-question. I inserted some discussion time at the beginning of the third session so we could surface assumptions about the project and the process, and the neutrality with which issues are treated in both. It answered a couple of persons' previously unasked questions and seemed to afford more clarity in general about what we were doing, and why. In the course of that discussion, the person who wrote the manifesto-type issue summary explained why it sounded the way it did: it reflected the perception that the group was homogenous, that everyone seemed on the same page about motivations and what they wanted to be different in the community. One outcome of this first discussion was that that person said that it clarified why the issue's summary description had to be neutral and not prescribe solutions, and also that the rawness of so many bad experiences made it "probably impossible to *feel* neutral."

The work planned for the session resumed, and the group formulated the overall issue as an open-ended question: How do we improve interactions between government and people in ways that reduce frustration, increase information exchange, and foster citizen participation and cooperation in their government?

The agenda for the remainder of this session was very straightforward. The first task was to brainstorm all the conceivable actions that could be taken by anyone, or any entity, in the community, to directly address the issue the group had selected. The group produced a long, diverse, systemic to-do list: an action-system. The next task was to select only one of the actions that met the basic criteria provided in the process book. Participants' discussion surfaced four actions from which to choose. Cast in the form of questions that were specific enough to be deliberated productively, they were as follows.

1. How do we involve the whole community in deciding changes to zoning codes?
2. Who needs to be included and considered in deciding zoning variances?
3. How do we ensure transparency and access to all public information?
4. How do we ensure accountability and protections in cases of retribution?

Rather than choosing one of them and ending the session at the two-hour mark, the participants began a different discussion in which they raised other questions and exchanged diverse perspectives. I listened without redirecting their focus back to the task. The discussion reflects the culture of the group at that point. A partial transcript of that discussion follows. A change from one speaker to another is indicated by a line space. The transcript does not include any identification of which participants spoke, or when, because the purpose of reporting the discussion is to convey the culture of the group via the flow of its content.

> Maybe we should be asking what do we expect government to do for us, what do we want them to do, what should they provide us, what's the best way to do *that* and not anything else. And beyond *that*, get out of other activity, like the development business. A lot of people feel they shouldn't be in it.
>
> It's a human thing, it's a personal thing: they've been elected, they're right. Period. Period. There are two ways you look at our form of government, either they're responsible to do what the people want or the government's structured so if people don't like it, they can vote you out.
>
> Do we think it's a power thing? Why do we think they don't do what we want them to do?
>
> Because they often *do* do things we don't want them to do.
>
> But *why* do they do things we don't want them to do?
>
> Because they're right.

There's a debate around government issues about to what extent do you do just what the people say and to what extent do I, as an elected official, take what people say and factor it in with what I know and experience and make the best decision I can. I think there's a legitimate other condition there that says it's my obligation to synthesize information and make decisions and act in what I perceive is in the community's best interest, even if it's different from what [some people say].

That is a tension a leader deals with. And I also think there are things you have a perspective on, of what's best overall for the city, that another tension is what's best for the city as opposed to what's best for people that live [nearby contested issues]. And that's a tension they deal with. So where does the distrust come in? We know these are issues they deal with. So why do we distrust them? [pause] I admit they've done some bad things . . .

And why do they mistrust [citizens] too, right? Because there's mutual distrust, isn't there?

Yes, oh yeah.

Yeah, they're sitting around having the same meeting we are, by the way. What you just said is the basis of their [effort to meet citizens].

[Facilitator] So if we're asking how do we understand the role and responsibility of government, so the city, conversely, could be asking how do we understand the role and responsibilities of citizens? N___, I'm remembering you telling of a conversation with the city manager, and him asking if it's the city's job to educate citizens.

Yeah.

[Facilitator] So it sounds like there are some mutual questions, and the them is us, and the us is them: we've met the enemy and it's us?

Right.

I have to wonder why at meetings people don't discuss or ask questions. It almost seems as though the manager comes up with the answer he thinks is cool, and says here, I've done all this research and this is what you have to do if you want a happy city. And everyone on council nods, and if any of them asks him to explain or if they could have more facts, they're accused of slowing things down or grandstanding. But policy is actually being developed by maybe one or two individuals, and of course they're the experts because, after all, they're getting paid [x] thousand dollars plus per year.

[Facilitator] So, if you had a policy to require discussion of decisions before they're made, etc., it'd be information you don't have now.

Right. And it should be part of the job description of the city manager, which is a big and responsible job, is that he be flexible in terms of goal setting, that it's not just his goal.

See, this has been literally, and I'm serious now, I got into this with [a city staff person] in a fun discussion, and he pointed me to a text that's 200 years old. People have been arguing about this subject for 200 years: the responsibility of a person to do what the people want in a democracy.

[Facilitator] But you're [the group] talking about what specific structural changes are possible to alleviate the problems you've identified. This is not up at the philosophical level.

What problems are you talking about?

[Facilitator] The first sentence of the summary description you came up with last week.

Citizens' communication . . .

The interactions, being alienated, adversarial.

Part of what it comes down to though, the reasons for those is because of past experiences. And it's one thing to say they want people to call them at city hall, but it's like, what happens when you call? And then if you call them and this happens, is when you feel apathetic and adversarial. It's one thing to say we should do this, this, and this, and they should do that, that, and that, but if they're not going to do that, that, and that, then it doesn't matter if you do this, this, and this. Sometimes it's like you're in a twilight zone.

I was suggesting a connection between elected officials not feeling it's their responsibility to do what people want, a correlation between that and the adversarial. If you want to get to the root, that's it: "I'm elected; now I'm the boss. Elected representatives can't possibly know what everyone wants, so they do their best. Vote me out if you don't like it." His argument is valid. I don't agree with it.

One option could be a public forum to talk about what are the responsibilities.

I don't understand. You brought up the point we can't go in and strong-arm them. They've been strong-arming us for 200 years. We gave them the power, now we're asking for the power back. We want more control of what you

> do. You're saying I can't ask for this because I might offend somebody. At this point, I could care less about offending them. The issue is getting power back to the people, to make them more confident to come to vote, to feel like they got control. You have to go back and take some power back and limit what their responsibilities are. See, I don't have a good trust factor.
>
> It all boils down to they hold all the cards right now and the only card citizens hold is that they go to the ballot box. Citizens have to be able to talk to each other to develop their own sense of where they are, what they want. It has to be really grassroots [like neighbors talking and saying] "let's find a candidate who will do these five specific things for us." Maybe if we [this group] make a list of five things we want a candidate to do . . . This group can come up with the list, we're a "neighborhood" right now.

From that last statement, the discussion broadened out, briefly, to questions of democracy and citizen engagement. I intervened to close the session, sharing the observation that this appeared to be a state of messiness that groups sometimes encounter in the midst of complex issues work. I reminded the group that it had identified four viable issue-questions, and reflected that it was okay if the group was not ready to make a choice. To gain closure to the session, I invited participants to state how they were doing or feeling as we closed the session without finishing the task. Overall, they felt confused about where they had ended up.

Sessions 4 and 5 – Develop the issue framework. To address the diversity apparent in previous session's closing discussion, I determined that the group needed to reorient its attention to its individual and collective dynamics. I began session four by making the case for refocusing. I prepared several handouts to introduce the logic behind a focus on their own "tones and intentions." One handout, excerpted below, conveys the logic.

> Our attitudes shape our behaviors toward others. While we feel angry, frustrated, mistrustful, disrespected, and shut out, we risk flavoring our approaches to introducing this issue with those feelings. If we let those adversarial feelings

> dominate us, we are likely to provoke adversarial reactions in others, and keep the vicious cycle of troublesome relationships going. Since our overall goal is to end adversarial divisions and processes, we are wise to step back and carefully choose which feelings and motivations we want to flavor our public efforts. If we frame and deliberate this issue for ourselves, we should be able to accomplish three things: (a) Figure out what kinds of chain reactions may be set in motion if we take different approaches to introducing the overall issue; (b) Find ways to keep our feelings in perspective so we can have them, but they don't "have us" at the expense of our effectiveness on this issue; (c) Align our intentions and purposes to reach a well-considered decision about the kinds of public relationships we want to have as we introduce this issue, and what strategies might support them.

Participants adopted this rationale and agreed to focus on this issue. Diverse reactions to this turning point showed up in participants' retrospective reflections during posttest interviews, including the excerpts from three persons below.

> Yeah, that really blindsided me. Once it was done, it made good sense. But it wasn't what I was expecting and I wasn't sure why it was at that point in the process. After it was said and done, it seemed vital to do that, but it almost seemed like it was tacked on or that it wasn't the original intent. And I didn't understand it at all.

> You were seeing more the personal attitudes and the words. The words that were coming out, they were more agitated or aggressive, and it became more personal like, in their own little, what you feel inside. Well, I would probably include me, also. And it was getting away from what the topic or issue was. So I think that's why we had to get rid of that undertone first. And you started asking a few questions, then kind of fleshed that, and then I started seeing it.

> I think it really helped focus our energies in one direction in one approach. And I think we struggled prior to that [with] these topics that we weren't really sure which were the best one.

The group developed a precise issue-question to describe the new focus: What kinds of relationships do we, as a group, want to have around the issue of troubled interactions with and among citizens, officials, and public servants? The summary issue description included in Appendix D shows the group's work to describe the overall issue and its causative and problematic factors. The remainder of the fourth session, and all of the fifth, were spent developing the issue's framework, comprised of four different approaches toward tones and intentions, using the process's issue-framing template. The different content that fleshed out each approach was developed using the same outline, indicated by the following subheadings, in the sentence-stem forms of wording used in the template.

1. We might favor this approach if we assume that . . .
2. This approach to the overall issue would be best because . . .
3. Examples of how we would prepare for taking this approach . . .
4. This approach may be worrisome, because . . .
5. Trade-offs that would be involved, including impacts on the kinds of relationships we want . . .

The titles given to the four approaches were as follows.

1. Approach 1, the intention and tone of preparing to organize an "us vs. them" campaign to get the changes we want.

2. Approach 2, the intention and tone of preparing to take an “it’s the law” approach to enforce needed changes.
3. Approach 3, the intention and tone of preparing to take a positive “strategic encouragement” approach to get changes rolling.
4. Approach 4, the intention and tone of preparing to take a fully collaborative community-wide approach to work on changes.

The template-based descriptions of the four approaches that the group developed are included in Appendix D. These served as the discussion starters for the deliberation of each approach.

Session 6 – Deliberation. Before describing the sixth session, I summarize the progressive activity that brought them to that point, to refresh the memory of its evolution from the steps described above. The overall issue of concern was given a title: How do we improve interactions between government and people in ways that reduce frustration, increase information exchange, and foster citizen participation and cooperation in their government? From the action-system that the group created to respond to that umbrella issue, participants initially identified four priority issue-questions, from which they needed to choose one to work on in the remaining sessions. Instead of one of those, the group adopted the concern about tone and intention as the one that it would develop and deliberate during this limited project. This issue-question was given a title: What kinds of relationships do we, as a group, want to have around the issue of troubled interactions with and among citizens, officials, and public servants?

The last session of the process for this group was for its deliberation. Several discrete segments structured the session. It included the processes of opening the

deliberative session, deliberating the tensions embedded within each approach, followed by deliberating the tensions across all the approaches, and the final process of closing the deliberation. Opening the session included reviewing the ground rules, and participants articulating their personal stake in the issue they were about to deliberate. In the closing process, participants reflectively evaluated the thoroughness of their deliberations, summarized their conclusions and reasons for them, and reflected on the deliberative process and its effects on them.

Each approach was deliberated separately. At the end of the time spent on each approach, the group drew interim conclusions about the implications of its tone and intention. The group summarized its conclusions about each approach as it finished this part of deliberating about it. Those interim conclusions about each approach are reported in Table 10. It reports the group's summary statements as it drew conclusions about each approach. These were transcribed from the session recordings. Table 10 also indicates the statements' HCSS scores.

Appendix D includes a report of the group's deliberation. The report is not a verbatim transcription of the session. Rather, it is a narrative compiled from the transcriptions, which I edited for readability. Participants had requested a report that they could share with others in the community.

The report begins with participants' statements of their personal stake in the tone and intention issue. Then, the deliberative discussion of each approach is reported. The report provides a basis for contrast with the transcript of the group's mid-point discussion in its third session, presented above. The results of the group's work throughout the deliberation reflect the culture of the group at the end of the process.

Table 10

The Group's Conclusions About Each Approach

Approach	Conclusion
1	The scenario we foresee if our approach to the overall issue were dominated by this tone Is that it would just be more of the same: long term conflict, bad feelings, more angry folks, and more of not getting things done. Nothing would change in the long term on either "side." HCSS score is formal, 10.0.
2	The scenario we foresee if our approach to the overall issue were dominated by this tone Is characterized by antagonism and even fear, despite efforts we may make to make enforcement neutral. Legal actions of various kinds would sever communications even further. Everyone would have reason to be on constant guard, looking over their shoulders because we were not careful about what we asked for, and got stuck in it. HCSS score is systematic, 11.0.
3	The scenario we foresee if our approach to the overall issue were dominated by this tone Is one of wanting to work together enough that we're all willing to give something to get something. We wouldn't be taking stances of either "yes" all the way, or "no" all the way. We would be breaking through such either/or gridlocks, and finding a third way. We would not be going into every endeavor expecting, or looking for, a fight. HCSS score is systematic, 11.0.
4	The scenario we foresee if our approach to the overall issue were dominated by this tone Is that there would be a lot fewer "us and them" dynamics. The more connections people began to have with better communication methods among them, the fewer the biases that would remain. We would be changing our perspectives, toning things down, and becoming more tolerant. It would be good for both "sides," and we'd be finding out we can agree on some things even when we disagree on other things, without the tensions and adversity. HCSS score is systematic, 11.0.

Overall, the group asserted a preference for the fourth approach because it held the greatest potential effectiveness to foster *un*troubled interactions in the community, by changing how public relationships and decisions were structured and conducted. As the deliberation's report indicates, the group explicitly discussed how there would be issues or situations when a higher-level approach would not fit or succeed, in which case the next lower approach could be appropriate to try. It identified that there may be cases where none of those higher-level approaches could work and the first approach would be advisable as a last resort. This conclusion scored at HCSS systematic stage 11.0.

Results Reported by Participants

By devoting the foregoing space to the levels of the group and the issues, I have attempted to set a meaningful context to present the following results reported by participants. This section reports how they assessed their levels of hope and motivation toward the overall issue of the adversarial political culture, and the life domains in which they reported that they could or had already begun to use the benefits of participating in the process.

Hope and motivation. One section of the posttest interview was devoted to exploring how participants were thinking and feeling about various dimensions of the overall issue that they worked on. The title given to that overall concern is repeated here: How do we improve interactions between government and people in ways that reduce frustration, increase information exchange, and foster citizen participation and cooperation in their government? I asked one question, each, about their hope for and their motivation about that issue being addressed (see the interview questions, Appendix C). Figure 1 reports the means of participants' ratings on the scale of one to four,

comparing the before and after senses of hope and motivation. Table 11 reports the significance of those changes.

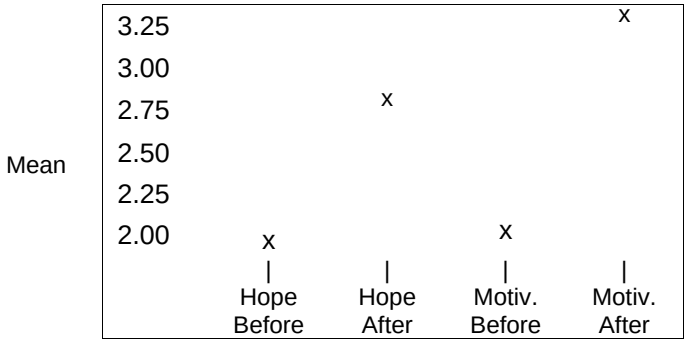

Figure 1. Before and after means of hope and motivation

Table 11

Results of T-Tests on Hope and Motivation

	Paired samples test							
	Paired differences							
	Mean	Std. dev.	Std. error mean	95% Confidence interval of the difference		*t*	*df*	Sig. (one-tailed)
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 hope1–hope2	-.8125	.8425	.2979	-1.5169	-.1081	-2.728	7	.015*
Pair 2 motive1–motive2	-1.0625	.9797	.3464	-1.8815	-.2434	-3.067	7	.009**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

Participants explained their levels of hope and motivation in terms that I grouped into the coded categories itemized below. Table 12 uses the codes to indicate how participants rated those categories, and to report the categories' frequencies. Each

occurrence of a letter code in Table 12 represents one individual's explanation, and most individuals gave more than one reason when responding to the questions.

1. I indicates issues around investment at personal level (either limited or liberating).
2. M indicates general motivation by nature, interest in issue.
3. NH indicates negative history, historical trends.
4. NT indicates negative tone of people in group/community.
5. O indicates other reasons.
6. P indicates positive personal qualities of people in group.
7. PT indicates positive tone of people in group.
8. S indicates discovery of new system or method to address issues.

Table 12

Categorical Explanations for Hope and Motivation

		Reason for level of hope		Reason for level of motivation	
Rating		Before	After	Before	After
Very	4.0	P	O P S	M S	M P P S S
Between moderate-very	3.5		PT S		I M S
Moderate	3.0		I P PT		P S
Between slight-moderate	2.5	O P S	PT S		
Slight	2.0	NH NT NT NT	P PT	I I M NT NT S	I NH PT S
Between none-slight	1.5	NT		I M NH S	
None	1.0	NH NH	NH	I	

Benefits of participating. Table 13 describes how participants reported using the benefits that they claimed from participating in the process used in this research. All participants are included in the first category because they reported having at least one new insight, during or after participating in the process, which bore a connection to their participation. Seven people indicated by discussion that they had at least one specific idea of how they could use the new insight(s) in a future situation. I treated that as learning and included the persons in that second category. Four participants reported taking new forms of action that were based on new assumptions or insights connected to their participation, and they are included in the third category. The fourth category accommodates one person's report of a significant change in her action-logic in the domain of her local political activity. Her HCSS score of interview material discussing this change reflected her transition to the metasystematic stage 12.0 in this line of reasoning. The final category is for the two participants who reported, and measurably demonstrated, operating from new action-logics that they reported as pervading their interpersonal lives. For one, it was a transition to the HCSS systematic stage 11.0. For the other it was an extension of reasoning about two topics. She had scored at systematic 11.0 on one topic, and at metasystematic 12.0 on the other topic. She extended both of these to metasystematic action-logics in a new domain she discovered in her own life. The various domains referred to in this paragraph are described after Table 13 is presented.

Table 13

How Participants Could, or Were, Using the Benefits Gained

ID	Freq. distrib. 100%	Total benefit categories per person	New insight(s)	Idea(s) to use new learning in future	New actions based on new assumptions	New action-logic in a domain	New action-logic in living
1	12.5%	1	✓				
2		2	✓	✓			
3	37.5%	2	✓	✓			
4		2	✓	✓			
5	12.5%	3	✓	✓	✓		
6		4	✓	✓	✓	✓	
7	37.5%	4	✓	✓	✓		✓
8		4	✓	✓	✓		✓
Benefit counts		22	8	7	4	1	2
Frequency distribution of benefits per category			100%	87.5%	50%	12.5%	25%

Across the participants, there was a diverse range of domains where they foresaw that the learning could be applied, and/or where they had actively begun to employ it. Table 14 classifies those seven domains and indicates which participants cited them as either anticipated or active applications. The symbol ✓ indicates that a participant anticipated a domain, and the symbol ☑ indicates that a participant described doing new activity in a domain.

Participants reported these results during their individual posttest interviews. The results they reported were expressed as positive experiences for them. Some of them appeared to have long-term implications. While I hope participants continue to benefit from the experiences, these results do not say anything about whether or not that will be the case.

Table 14

Domains in Which Participants Could, Or Did, Use Learning

ID	Domain total per person	1. Inter-personal (in general)	2. Family	3. Employ. work	4. Meetings (any)	5. Community or sub-communities	6. Group(s) (any)	7. Other issues (in general)
2	3	✓				✓	✓	
3	3			✓		✓		✓
4	2						✓	✓
5	4	✓				☑	☑	✓
6	3	☑				☑	☑	
7	4	☑	☑	N/A		✓		✓
8	5	☑	☑	N/A	☑	✓		☑
Total count	24	5	2	1	1	6	4	5
Freq. distrib.	100%	20.8%	8.3%	4.2%	4.2%	25.0%	16.7%	20.8%
Current count	11	3	2	-	1	2	2	1
☑ Freq. distrib.	100%	27.3%	18.2%		9.0%	18.2%	18.3%	9.0%
Anticip. count	13	2	-	1	-	4	2	4
✓ Freq. distrib.	100%	15.4%		7.7%		30.7%	15.4%	30.8%

Chapter Five: Discussion

Results of this study suggest robust support for the hypothesis that the average hierarchical complexity of the group's reasoning about public issues would increase, as measured by the HCSS, when the group used the structured public discourse process. The results provide empirical support of positive effects in the form of changes in the group's political culture and benefits to individual participants.

This closing discussion begins with relating this study's contributions to the literature and to deliberative discourse practice. The next section is dedicated to my analytical interpretation of diverse elements connected with changes in the small group's culture and of themes that surfaced from participants' experiences. That section has its own summary discussion. The final sections present the limitations of the study, implications for further research, and my concluding reflections.

Contributions in Relation to the Literature

This study offers theoretical and methodological contributions to the fields of adult development and learning, political development, and deliberative democratic practice. I hypothesized that development of hierarchically more complex reasoning could take place in a group of citizens while, and by, working on complex issues using this study's discourse process. Its discourse process method and preliminary findings support the new convergence of the fields of adult development and learning by demonstrating dynamics that foster both development and learning. Its preliminary findings may help to expand notions of development and learning beyond educational settings into civic life.

Methodologically, it demonstrates a widening of options for adult development measurement methods. Traditionally, instruments are developed and validated for repetitive use in such forms as survey and multiple-choice questions, sentence stem completions, or prescribed interview questions for a particular domain. This study was the first to use the Hierarchical Complexity Scoring System to score for stage and transition step using interview material from study participants' free-flowing responses on self-chosen public issues, and to score a group's deliberative conclusions.

Although institutional development tends to be the primary interest of those concerned with political development, I hope this study's contributions inform political development scholars. Its findings begin to bring to life Chilton's (1988, 1991) insights into the locus of political development in the political culture, and the study contributes to theory and practice for fostering political development.

The methods used in this study, and the findings generated by it, respond to voids that others and I have identified in the area of deliberative democratic practice. This research offers a coherent definition of deliberation and a structural understanding of its developmental dynamics. It also demonstrates that there are effective processes to prepare for and enable productive deliberative discourse on specific complex issues. It takes the practice of deliberation out of its black box and contributes new theory to interpret what deliberation is (as defined here) and what capacities citizens have for it. It contributes to the recent discourse about whether or not citizens have capacities for deliberation: it offers empirical evidence of that capacity. The work produced by the group using steps of the study's structured discourse process supports and responds to the need identified in the literature for discourse structures that improve the quality of

deliberation. Finally, it responds to the deliberation research agenda for involving more disciplines: the theory and practice behind this research is interdisciplinary.

Discussion of the Findings

My analytical discussion of findings has four subsections that contribute to understanding more about the concept of political culture—defined as the publicly common ways of relating—and about the concept of fostering political development. In the first section, I discuss the politics of tone and intention and why it was an important issue for the study group to deliberate about. Next, I reflect on some of the contributions that structured, deliberative action inquiry can make to deliberative practice. The third analysis explores and interprets the emergence and resolution of the tone and intention issue in the group of participants. The last section of analytical discussion offers a concrete, nontheoretical description of the two prevailing themes I heard from participants' experiences. Its nonscholarly voice is aimed at making a distinct contribution to social knowledge *by* its accessible discussion of themes that are central in political and adult development dynamics. The adult development literature is replete with technical descriptions of static snapshots of developmental stages; I offer a dynamic alternative that may speak to audiences both inside and outside of adult development.

The Politics of Tone and Intention and the Importance of Deliberative Inquiry Into It

The purpose of this section is to discuss why the tone and intention issue was critical for this group to inquire into. As the transcript in the previous chapter shows, one of the participants raised some fundamental inquiries in that midpoint discussion. In one instance, for example, "Why do we think they don't do what we want them to do?" In another, "So why do we distrust them?" The inquiries were about why *we* do something,

not about why *they* do something. Other participants did not engage the queries into why do *we,* which would mean examining some assumptions and beliefs. Nor did I, in my role as facilitator, invite them to; my activity during their impromptu diversion from task was to observe what was happening among them. I observed that they did not naturally move into an inquiry into why do *we*—or why do *I*—even in the face of the direct questions. Instead, they moved away from inquiry.

The practice of inquiry bears directly on why the tone and intention issue was important to deliberate. The method's overall design is an integral approach to inquire into an array of factors that make up the layers of issues. In a social context, an issue represents a collective perception of a complex, a complicated set of "stuff" going on that people want to change. As stated in the first chapter, complex issues are disputes about ways of relating. Factors that contribute to such disputes include people's intentions, assumptions, beliefs, values, biases, concerns, needs, hopes, and life experiences, as well as larger social factors. The collection of those individual factors contributes to an individual's perspective on an issue. The participants demonstrated an array of uncoordinated, diverse perspectives in that midpoint discussion. And the discussion was in the context of addressing a very challenging issue.

Every attempt to address issues is political, because it intends to impact the ways of relating in and among the polis: the people who contribute to an issue, those who are affected by the issue, and those who have governance roles in any dimension of the issue. For people to realistically conceive of undertaking complex action to address issues, and for the actions to have the necessary integral change-making potential (where integral is understood as *essential to completeness*), an effective political change process must rest

upon and reflect a certain set of principles. These are implicit in the methodology I used, and this section makes some of them explicit.

Torbert's (1991) explication of his action inquiry paradigm gives a coherent rendering of the principles most important to emphasize here, and Habermas' (1976/1979) communicative action theory and Freire's (1970/2002) pedagogy for critical consciousness are consistent with these. Torbert shows a concise, building-block logic of why inquiry is an essential political activity. Three of the principles are liberty, equality, and fraternity. He adds two more: inquiry and quality, as the first and last principles in the hierarchy. He recombines all of these to construct his new paradigm. He asserts, "we are missing a fourth political principle—a principle never before recognized as political—the principle of inquiry. The only political principle that *invites the potential transformation of everyone's perspective is the principle of inquiry*" (Torbert, 1991, pp. 236, emphasis added). This principle is primary, followed by peerdom, which combines the principles of fraternity and equality "without the sexist connotation of fraternity" (p. 234), and liberty. Quality is the "quaternary political principle, approached only in the context of the commitment, attention, and skill cultivated through ongoing practice of the first three principles" (p. 234).

In any setting, liberty and peerdom (equality and fraternity, combined) are not necessarily givens: perceptions and realities of whether or not they operate depend largely on the culture's operative—not espoused—action-logics. Without liberty and peerdom, people find it difficult to meet their needs, and motivation (conation) to decide to do something that seems impossible to do is naturally depressed. Maslow explicates what is at stake.

> There are certain conditions that are immediate prerequisites for the basic need satisfactions. Such conditions as freedom to speak, freedom to do what one wishes so long as no harm is done to others, freedom to express oneself, freedom to investigate and seek for information, freedom to defend oneself, justice, fairness, honesty, and orderliness in the group are examples of such preconditions for basic need satisfactions. These conditions are not ends in themselves but they are *almost* so since they are so closely related to the basic needs, which are apparently the only ends in themselves. Danger to these freedoms is reacted to with emergency response as if there were direct danger to the basic needs themselves…. Secrecy, censorship, dishonesty, and blocking of communication threaten *all* the basic needs" (Maslow, 1987, pp. 22-23, emphasis in the original).

The tone and intention issue was as important as any other issue people attempt to address through deliberative inquiry. Every attempt to address issues is political because it *intends* to impact the ways of relating in and among the polis. Thus, intention plays an inherent role in this political activity.

Our intentions may be unconscious or conscious. Interpreted in terms of Kegan's (1982) work, if we are not conscious of having certain intentions because we are embedded in them, they often *have us* and they implicitly govern our tones, assumptions, behaviors, etc. Conversely, if we are conscious of our intentions, we can *have* them without our actions necessarily being governed by them; this is because we can inquire into and modify them. If we are aware of our intentions, they are explicit in our private thinking. Often, we may assume that they remain in that private domain. However, when they flavor our speech and behaviors, they are no longer private, even though we may

assume that they remain private if they are not spoken. As illustrated in this study, the flavor of individuals' tones and intentions enters the discourse whether intended or not. This study suggests that these are helpful to become aware of and bring into the public domain purposefully so that they get deliberate attention. As invisible but real participants in the public domain, tones and intentions can be made explicit. Realistically, to speak about them to others probably requires safe space in which to do so. The participants in this study apparently felt safe.

To articulate actual intentions publicly is an intensely political act. If such acts do not already characterize the publicly common ways of relating—the political culture—the acts may *change* the politics (the ways of relating) *by* being acts done in public. Thus, both knowing and stating our intentions toward social change play a political role in fostering change. The kinds of intentions we have will flavor the kind of change we foster. If we have a commitment to foster positive change, we are wise to inquire into and examine our intentions so our tones, assumptions, and actions are consistent toward that goal. This is one reason why inquiry is the primary political principle and practice.

By exposing the participants to their tone and intention issue, illustrating how it showed up, and explaining why it was crucial to address, the space was open for them to own the value of inquiring into it in a structured, deliberative way. It is just as legitimate to deliberate about tone and intention as it is to deliberate about any traditional "out there" public issue. The logic that I give here shows that tone and intention are inherently political and are among the factors comprising issues. Thus, (a) tone and intention is a public ("out there") issue, (b) it is complex because multiple perspectives construct it and multiple approaches to address it are possible, (c) the approaches embed competing

tensions, and (d) “this tension must be worked off by the participants’ own efforts” (Habermas, 1992/1996, p. 17). This is the classic formula for when to use deliberation.

Paradigm of Deliberative Action Inquiry

The idea and practice of developing several approaches to a public issue so that people can deliberate about it are not new, at least in the U.S. As a process of thoughtfully weighing differences, deliberation is associated with a transformative quality (Mathews, 1999) and playing a role in the sometimes decades-long process from citizen’s earliest awareness of issues to arriving at a “public judgment” about them with a will to make policy changes on them (Yankelovich, 1991, p. 64). Thousands of single-session meetings for public deliberation have been convened over the last two decades. Even so, a change in orientation from talk to action is only beginning in the minds of many practitioners who convene them (Levine, Fung, & Gastil, 2005). In my years of doing research connected with Kettering Foundation, I found few signs of what my program area called “real” deliberation, and no evidence of systemic action on issues. These are natural outcomes in the absence of a rigorously systematic theory and practice that embeds certain requisites: (a) a metasystematic understanding of the layers of complexity involved in issues; (b) issue framing that ensures specific, real world tensions to deliberate at all; and (c) processes for recognizing, and deciding upon, systemic action.

Real deliberation requires focus on the bona fide tensions resulting from different life experiences of people employing different action-logics. With a rigorous issue-framing system to help ensure such focus, real deliberation’s talk does not include blaming, polemics, diagnoses, opining, fact wars, and other off-topic tangents that are otherwise quite common in unstructured talk. Such incoherence was demonstrated in the

spontaneous, midpoint digression into which this study's participants veered. When the deliberation is focused, people's naturally deliberative, nonlinear oscillations among and between the embedded tensions have the environment they need to elicit insights, inform and shift assumptions, and take in more of the perspectives and conditions that the issue involves. When a process such as the one used in this study equips people to identify the layers within issues before determining the specific question(s) that needs deliberation, people have a better chance to invent a metasystem of actions—an action-system—that a well-focused issue needs. The results of this group's deliberations support my assertion that the discourse process used in this study reflects substantive improvements to processes for naming, framing, and deliberating complex issues.

This study demonstrated that complex issues take myriad forms. When a deliberative framework enables people to weigh several choices of perspectives that they could adopt toward their own tones and intentions, it is an extraordinary opportunity for individual and collective reflection that will impact the political culture that contributes to the issue. Even when issues are not explicitly about tones and intentions, those elements have a place in deliberating every complex issue. This is because tones and intentions contribute to people's ways of relating, and every issue is a dispute of some kind over ways of relating.

Genuinely deliberative occasions offer a structured opportunity for more comprehensive reflection: to step back, perceive, judge, and weigh, in an orderly way, a range of perspectives and impacts on them. Such efforts include the stakes of each individual, groups, institutions, and the larger issue with which those stakes are concerned. Each of these stakes is considered in light of impacts and benefits of each

approach. The result can be the comprehensive discourse of nonlinear, deliberative dynamics that increase in their hierarchical complexity as they are engaged, as illustrated in Appendix F.

Inquiring into assumptions and suspending them long enough to explore alternative assumptions and their implications are fundamental (and deliberative) activities in accounts of critical reflection and transformative learning (e.g., Brookfield, 1987; Cranton, 1994; Fischer & Pruyne, 2003; Mezirow, 1991; Taylor et al., 2000; Torbert & Associates, 2004). Critical reflection liberates the individual and the community by making themselves observable or transparent to themselves (Badillo, 1991), and such transformative potentials are associated with positive social evolution (Earley, 1997; Habermas, 1976/1979; Morrow & Torres, 2002; Torbert, 2000b).

This structured approach to critical reflection, using a paradigm of deliberative action inquiry with multiple perspectives and conditions about which to deliberate, enables adults with different reflective capacities to conduct a meaningful issue deliberation. When the issue has an array of tones and intentions to deliberate, as these study participants did, people can weigh how each option may contribute to (or detract from) an overall goal, and strategic choices about them in advance can reduce the odds of self-sabotaging efforts once the active work begins. This is especially essential when the stated goal is to transform an adversarial political culture. It is also essential for every other kind of complex issue.

Political development requires the landscapes afforded by social structures—such as public issues discourse methods—that embed the principles of inquiry and quality and the “multi-paradigmatic nature of human consciousness/reality” (Torbert, 2000b, p. 75).

These notions are summarized by Fischer and Pruyne (2003) when they write, “reflective thinking . . . depends on environments that support high-level abstract thinking about multiple perspectives” (p. 185), and the “key factor . . . does not seem to be education in general, but a certain *kind* of education—a focus on reasoning about ill-structured problems” (p. 189, emphasis in the original). Participants’ disparate tones and intentions toward achieving a common goal certainly represented an ill-structured problem to focus on in this study.

The Emergence of the Tone and Intention Issue

The participants’ impromptu discussion near the end of their third session illuminated that they were not of one mind about how, why, and when they should engage their overall goal, much less of one mind for choosing one of the four issue-questions they had prioritized. From one perspective, the discussion was like an ordinary conversation among citizens that might take place almost anywhere. However, its context and timing made it noteworthy. It took place *instead of* making a key decision. Experience over the years has taught me to pay close attention when a group avoids a task. It usually signals that something is going on, unnamed, that needs to come to the surface. It could be something as simple as not really understanding the task to be done, or something much more complex. Thus, this was an important discussion to emerge.

As the occasion that brought the tone and intention issue to the surface, the discussion’s content merits a closer look, for its own sake as part of this study, and as a comparison to the group’s later, deliberative session. To highlight an instrumental pattern within the discussion and the political developmental dynamics in the group, I introduce and use the Triangle Model of Responsibility (Schlenker, Britt, Pennington, Murphy, &

Doherty, 1994). It can contribute a layer of coherence to the midpoint transcript included earlier. The participants' discussion lacked coherence in the traditional sense, since they were unable to coordinate and reflect on the relations among the myriad points they raised (or their assumptions). The model explicates some of those relations, and in doing so, coordinates foundational issues of accountability and responsibility. Such fundamental issues happened to be reflected in the four issue-questions from which the group avoiding choosing one.

1. How do we involve the whole community in deciding changes to zoning codes?
2. Who needs to be included and considered in deciding zoning variances?
3. How do we ensure transparency and access to all public information?
4. How do we ensure accountability and protections in cases of retribution?

The model posits that responsibility is an essential part of holding people accountable and that accountability entails "an evaluative reckoning" (p. 634) that judges self and/or others. It asserts, "there are no exceptions" (p. 635) to the requirement that to make an evaluative reckoning, "the evaluator has information about three key elements and the linkages or connections among them" (p. 634) "*as perceived* by the individual who is making the judgment" (p. 638, emphasis added):

> (a) the *prescriptions* that should be guiding the actor's conduct on the occasion, (b) the *event* that occurred (or is anticipated) that is relevant to the prescriptions, and (c) a set of *identity images* that are relevant to the event and prescriptions and that describe the actor's roles, qualities, convictions, and aspirations (Schlenker et al., 1994, p. 634, emphases in the original).

The elements defined by Schlenker et al. are couched in language that implies judging specific instances and individual actors, and they need to be generalized to apply to the participants' discussion. For example, *actor* would apply to the class of citizens, the class of officials, or the government, and *event* would apply to classes of events. The image of a triangle is ideal for suggesting the tensions among and between the three elements. When an "audience" is judging a situation comprised of those elements, the authors reflect that added dimension to the triangle by calling it "the accountability pyramid" (p. 635). Their explication of the model and the significance of different weights that an evaluative judgment can place on the elements' linkages is worthwhile reading; it is beyond my scope to discuss those here. Their notion of the pyramid is germane because much of the participants' discussion reflected various judgments on others' situations, resulting in quite an assortment of such pyramids, including the four issue-questions above. This was because participants *perceived differently* the prescriptions, relevant events, and identity images evoked during the discussion.

With regard to the foregoing three elements of evaluative reckonings, a rhythmic flow of judgmental statements in that discussion illustrated that each person had particular perceptions of prescriptions, events, and identity images (for whatever actors were being referred to). The purpose of referring to the Triangle Model in this analysis is not to show simple support for the model. Rather, it helps to notice both positive and negative evaluative statements, and helps to contrast judgments with other kinds of statements. In the process of using those categories to assess statements, attention picks up on other features that could be obscure without a method to sharpen the comparisons. For example, the *scale* of participants' attention ranged from prescriptions, events, and

roles at the level of citizen and official minutiae to larger questions of roles and responsibilities. The *scope* ranged from personal levels of distrust to political philosophy. The *type* of statements ranged from searching questions, to balanced observations, to judgments, to prescribing a decision for the small group to make about a hypothetical candidate. The *focus* shifted from arriving at nonjudgmental observations to moving away from them back into judgment, like the "patterned set of influence links among members" discussed by Arrow, McGrath, & Berdahl (2000, p. 43). Together, these elements yield a vivid illustration of the HCSS third transition step's oscillation dynamics—called "smash" (see Table 3)—happening at the observable level of a group. It is a natural process in the course of individuals and social units deciding how to interact with their complex environments. Many times, issue dialogues and deliberations fail to develop beyond this step.

As the group's transcript indicated, prescriptions, events, and identity images focused predominately on "them." Some statements in the discussion reflected negative judgments along the lines of similar statements made in the first two sessions. Half of the participants later referred to this as a "negative tone." Albeit understandable, if such a tone flavored efforts to foster positive change in an adversarial political culture, it would fail, because it would be perpetrating the very culture it purportedly wanted to change. The dichotomy between the group's expressed desire to improve the culture and the tone that characterized a number of participants' attitudes—and the silence about that dichotomy—was the invisible elephant in the room.

That impromptu discussion ensued immediately after I asked the group which of the four issue-questions it wanted to select for its work during the remaining sessions.

The discussion is a valuable basis for comparing the coherence, in tone and intention, with the group's later, deliberative discussion. It raised a key question for me: Why did participants veer so far away from their task of selecting a specific issue-question to work on, when it would be a concrete starting point to address their pressing concerns? It is unlikely that a single explanation could account for it, given the diverse participants and group dynamics. Perhaps the options felt too objective or positive to resonate with some of the people. For example, comments in a later session surfaced both the attraction to punitive action and the revulsion toward collaboration: "It [one of the approaches] is not *mean* enough. We feel the need to punish before we feel clear to build new relationships," and another was, "We all will have to overcome habits and even our personal revulsions." Perhaps a sense that it would be a concrete beginning, like a commitment from which there was no turning back, induced some resistance. Resistance can take numerous forms at such points. An insight into dynamics that happen "not infrequently, especially at the point of decoding concrete situations" (Freire, 1970/2002, p. 156) may apply here.

> It is just that in facing a concrete situation as a problem, the participants begin to realize that if their analysis of the situation goes any deeper they will either have to divest themselves of their myths, or reaffirm them. Divesting themselves of and renouncing their myths represents, at that moment, an act of self-violence. On the other hand, to reaffirm those myths is to reveal themselves. The only way out (which functions as a defense mechanism) is to project onto the coordinator their own usual practices: *steering, conquering, and invading* (Freire, 1970/2002, pp. 156-157, emphasis in the original).

In this setting, any such projections were not onto me (with my facilitative role loosely corresponding to Freire's training coordinator above), but perhaps onto the "them" of city officials. Whether or not that was the case, perhaps they needed a set of clear criteria or steps to launch and guide the selection process. Perhaps because the process had increasingly narrowed the focus so that discrete issues were identified, that focus acted like a magnet that attracted all the diverse, internal stances to the surface. Perhaps, as with groups in other settings, they simply could not bring themselves to commit to one direction when there were several from which to choose; especially when, in this case, they had new questions and implicit assumptions beginning to surface.

Coordinating all of this, without an intentional process-container to assist, can be a complex task involving the three distinct kinds of coordination described by Arrow et al. (2000, p. 42). Groups' coordination tasks are that of "interactional synchrony" or action; that of shared meanings and norms, i.e., understanding; and that of "adjusting purposes, interests, and intentions," i.e., goals. The group's spontaneous discussion indicated that the group was not coordinating these factors at that point. However, the benefit in this case was that the diversity and confusion were out in the open. There were clear signs that the earlier sessions' opportunities to voice a wide range of emotions, and their reasons, had not lessened those feelings' strength. These factors made it easier for me to introduce them to their tone and intention issue.

They had formulated, as an open-ended question, the overall issue they wanted to address: How do we improve interactions between government and people in ways that reduce frustration, increase information exchange, and foster citizen participation and cooperation in their government? It would not require a huge leap in logic to connect that

issue of interactions with the importance of individuals' tones and intentions. However, given the group's orientation toward *others'* objectionable attitudes and behaviors, the group needed a process to reorient its attention. That process had to do two things. First, it needed to introduce *that* there was an elephant in the room, and what it was made up of. Then, it needed to persuade the group that the issue of tones and intentions was a bona fide complex issue to address.

Arrow et al.'s (2000) work on small groups as complex systems supports the issue's importance as the first one to address. Using their formulation, the tone and intention issue was a "global variable," defined as "the global structure or pattern generated by the interaction of local variables [which] in turn constrains the future behavior of these local variables" (p. 43). The authors describe the coordination tasks of a group (those listed above) as local variables. The implications of this interactive, mutually-shaping dynamic "between micro- and macro-system levels" (p. 44) for the future of a group are significant, and suggest the level at which interventions are effective.

> Each global variable (or, more accurately, the system that all of the local variables jointly reflect) may have subsequent effects on *all* aspects of the group's local activity…. When [the group members] are dissatisfied with the state of the group, or when outsiders notice and comment on problems in the group as revealed by global variables, this is a cue to change something. However, global variables cannot be changed directly—what needs to be changed is the local dynamics that give rise to them. Action identification theory (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987) suggests that when groups receive negative feedback from the environment, they

> are cued to focus on lower-level subtasks, rather than higher-level group tasks, as a locus for corrective action" (Arrow et al., 2000, pp. 165-166).

To shift the issue's focus from a traditional community issue to an individual cum group issue for explicit action inquiry was to situate corrective action on such lower-level subtasks.

The most striking thing I noticed as the group convened and got settled for the last session was the difference in the quality of its overall energy. I had expected that some sharper tones would still be evident, as they had been during the several previous sessions. This time, the energy seemed clear and open, ready, and free of any sense of struggling. That quality characterized the entire session. Two persons later expressed their surprise at this "dramatic" shift in the group. I reflected on possible explanations for this.

From some of their comments at the end of deliberating and in the subsequent interviews, I speculate that completing the fourth and fifth sessions' work played a transformative role. It seemed clarifying to have the four, clearly different approaches to tone and intention (to create their issue booklet to deliberate); this clarity could have contributed to the change in energy. In addition to providing an orderly structure for deliberation, the separately described, distinctly different perspectives perform that clarification service. That new clarity can lend explanatory power to understand and sort out the confusing din of internal thoughts. It is often hard for people to slow down their thinking enough to even notice their mental zigzags of internal decision-making attempts to choose among scarcely-conceived, unarticulated options. All of the participants

referred in some way to the explanatory benefit of having distinct approaches. For example, the person who had drafted the earlier manifesto realized that

> I guess I've [now] looked at these things as separate things, which I probably hadn't before. I didn't think of them as separate, to choose this way or that. In one way, they were all bundled up together and this pulled them apart and kind of examined each one individually. And I probably hadn't examined each individual [one]: "Well, what if I did this and not the other, what would I gain?" Seeing it like this, with the one, two, three, four, you know, I can see the differences in those.

All participants but one referred to the importance of having viable approaches based on distinctly different human perspectives, as compared to just having different actions from which to choose, without systematic distinctions.

In addition, or even alternatively, the passage of time between beginning to develop the approaches in the fourth session and arriving at the sixth session may have cleared some of the sharper-toned energy as they spent time in the project. It may have been cathartic for participants with a lot at stake in this issue to have all of their sentiments, concerns, and hopes formally legitimized. By including those in the course of developing all of the approaches, the process legitimized a wide range of diversity—the participants' and others'—even before getting to the stage of deliberating.

The content and quality of their thoughtful deliberations (see Appendix D) illustrate the difference between smash and reaching synthesis in HCSS terms (see Table 3). This completes the transition to a next stage in hierarchical complexity. In contrast to the diverse, smashing statements in the midpoint discussion, the observably smooth

undulations of deliberation's back-and-forth, interactive reasoning indicate the sea change in the group's coherence. Participants demonstrated the capacity to remain focused, build constructively on one another's contributions, and synthesize well-reasoned contextual conclusions about how, when, and why they may use the various tones and intentions in the community.

Their conclusions happen to reflect the pattern suggested by action identification theory, mentioned earlier.[7] That framework describes the pattern of shifting from higher-level tasks to lower-level ones as the effective place to make course corrections when environmental feedback indicates corrective action (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987, as cited in Arrow et al. 2000, p. 166). The group reflected this pattern in the situational hierarchy it developed for when and why it would employ actions derived from each of the approaches to tone and intention. By process design (see Appendix F), the approaches follow a progressive sequence of action-logics with increasing complexity, i.e., the first approach was the least complex, and the fourth approach was the most complex. For example, it demands far less skill for a group to organize a campaign among like-minded people against something (the first approach) than it demands of several individuals, groups, and various entities to succeed at negotiated solutions that meet the requirements of multiple, diverse, vested interests (the third approach).

The sharper energy of distressed concern, confusion, judgment, and frustration, which characterized the earlier group sessions, transformed by the end of the six sessions. The political culture of the group transformed. That earlier negative tone, as several participants called it, gave way to freer, open, pragmatic, and hopeful energy. Tones of us

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[7] Other theoretical frameworks, including developmental ones, would have explanatory power for this common pattern. In this space, it seems sufficient to use only the one that has already been introduced.

versus them derive from dualistic action-logics that view events in such terms, pitting in-groups against out-groups. As findings about the participants' hope and motivation suggest, the group dynamic resulted in a complex set of negative feedback loops. Participants who did not, themselves, bring a negative tone toward city officials or other citizens, developed an unvoiced, inwardly negative attitude toward the several participants who *did* voice their negative judgments about officials and other citizens. Rather than articulate the attitude or associate it with specific individuals, it was safer to refer to the negative tone as "the group's" or "the people in the group."

It is worth a brief discussion to unpack how a layer of projected attitudes feeds the loops that give a group's global variable its character. Projection is a normal part of humans' nonlinear system dynamics (Van Eenwyk, 1997). Its psycho-logic is that whatever attitudes or beliefs that an individual has but does not recognize, or is unwilling to claim as his or her own, will be unconsciously assigned elsewhere: for example, to other individuals, groups, societies, etc. In this group's case, and likely in many others, projection of attitudes played a silent role in constructing the overall negative tone. The loop began with several individuals' critical, frustrated statements and the tones that accompanied them. These were directed at the community's officials and other citizens: the *them*. If no other people had a reaction to these statements, there would not have been a negative feedback loop at all. However, four people *did* have reactions. They developed a negative attitude toward the negative attitudes of others (see Table 12), creating a dynamic loop of negativity. One of those four said that he adopted a negative attitude toward officials based on what he heard from others. The result was four people with negative tones toward (primarily) officials, and four people with negative attitudes

toward those negative tones. *The original three "negative" people did not mention or seem to perceive any negative tone at all in their group experience.* The perception of negative tone resided in only four other people. My analysis is that those four were sufficiently embedded in their negative attitudes toward the others' negative attitudes that they projected the responsibility for negativity onto the three vocally negative people. The silence that accompanied so much of this nonverbal dynamic is a natural dimension of social organisms' communications dynamics. In summary, the feedback loops were comprised of spoken judgments toward officials and unspoken judgments of those judgments. Seven of eight participants' judgments characterized the global variable of group tone, a complex group dynamic indeed.

These human system dynamics account for how only three individuals with negative tones (on a surface level), in a group of eight people, could have so much power to influence. In reality, seven of the eight people constructed and maintained the negative tone. Only one participant consistently held a nonjudgmental attitude toward all people in the group, all the people in the community, and the group itself. That person's earnest, inquiring influence was not sufficient to alter the dynamic feedback loop that the others were maintaining at the level of the global variable.

By the end of the project, different attitudes and energy had transformed that feedback system. The pluralistic tone with which the group ended indicates that the global variable of tone developed to the systematic stage by the end of the process. The experience of observing and analyzing the creation and transformation of this group's culture makes an important new contribution to my (and hopefully others') understanding

of the potential roles that tone and intention issues may play in efforts to foster political development.

Two Important Themes From Participants

The purpose of this section is to introduce two major themes that reflect significant impacts participants discussed at length during my final interviews with them. In the first of two sections, I draw from two participants' experiences to discuss the theme of transforming us versus them mindsets and behaviors. Then I develop the theme of liberation, also through highlighting specific participants' experiences. This theme showed up in personal and interpersonal dealings, public and private. These two themes merged to underlie a unique community project that two members of the group began to plan after the last group session. All of these influences could be expected to have some positive direct and indirect impacts on the adversarial community atmosphere over time.

"*Getting off our horses.*" The negative tone that had been apparent in the group was initially introduced into the group dynamics by several people. They had had an accumulating number of disturbing experiences dealing with the city and certain groups of citizens over the years they had lived in the community. Each of them had a different kind of history in the community and different levels of activity. I cite only two of them because they were more influential within the group and the way they described their changes illustrate this theme best. One of them, who I will call Larry, had lived in the city for only a few years. In that time, he had trouble getting public information from officials to help him solve various problems and to inform his voting decisions. Along with those frustrations, he was concerned about the community being overdeveloped with both residential and commercial buildings. He had never attended a public meeting or been

visibly active, but he considered himself very active by virtue of his considerable mental, residential, and child-rearing investments in community life. The other was a long-time activist, who I will call Janet. She had been involved in various ways in many community initiatives. Janet and Larry began the project with points of view about local affairs that were quite similar to the first and second approaches that the group deliberated. Approach 1 was the tone and intention of an "us versus them campaign," which was how Janet and others had been using legal mechanisms for a long time. Approach 2 was the legalistic tone and intention of forcing officials to change through passing new laws and exercising vigilant oversight over, and enforcement of, existing laws. Larry's perspective toward officials reflected a combative, heavy hand of the law tone. Both Larry and Janet were convinced that officials routinely made questionable deals and violated administrative and zoning ordinances to the detriment of the community, relations with at least some citizens, and democratic process in general.

In our individual interviews before the group work began, each of them explained in detail the local issue that concerned them the most. They described how they understood the causes of the issue, what should be done about it and by whom, and what they would do if they were in charge of making sure the issue was dealt with. In brief, Larry's remedy centered on requiring officials to disseminate all public information to citizens in a timely, accessible way. Thus equipped, citizens could "take the power back from the government" and control the community development directions and decisions. Janet had been thinking for a long time about what she would do to address the zoning-related issues (the real or suspected back room agreements, strategic appointments to the zoning appeals board, manipulations of the code, and outright violations). She would start

a neighborhood congress system to be a defense mechanism, a counterforce against the city's power. It would select and support new candidates for public office that would support the congress's agenda. She wanted to ensure that the voice of a huge number of citizens was too strong for officials to dismiss, and believed such a congress was the only hope to alter the traditional dynamics and get a different caliber of public officials into office.

Those sketches capture how Janet and Larry began the project. They ended it very differently. In Janet's terms, it was time for everybody—citizens (including her) and officials—to "get off their horses," to step out of the vicious cycle of playing offense and defense with no end in sight. She would not build a defense mechanism against the city, but rather, something very different. For Larry, it was to "quit looking at it like an us versus them thing, because it's not an us versus them: it's a 'we.'" He no longer thought in terms of citizens ("us") taking the power back from the government ("them").

How did their experiences in this six-week project transform their long-held perspectives? A thorough explanation would include probing their self-reports about their thinking, learning their biographies, hearing how they internalized all of the discussions and activities during the group sessions, and considering the life events that were going on while they were having and reflecting upon their project experiences. Instead, my explanation will simply draw from the main experts: the people who had the actual experience. I offer a synthesis of their reports about getting off their horses. The process of "laying down arms and coming to the peace table" was the way another participant described this shift.

Their first step in this transformation was noticing *that* they had been thinking like aggressive warriors. They had not seen it this way before. They had felt like victims of others' behaviors, and thus justified in taking a defensive stance. They had not realized that their defensive stance behaved just like an offensive stance. This was like finding out they had been playing a different role than they thought they had been.

Once they recognized that they had been in an aggressive role (mentally and in their concrete actions), they had a reaction to that discovery. They realized it ran counter to what they said they wanted. They also had a natural reaction to do the kind of mental role playing that most adults can do: they imagined how their aggressiveness would trigger undesired reactions in others. Those reactions would seem to be defensive, but of course, they would be aggressive, too. In this way, they realized how they participated in a cycle of adversarial tones, intentions, and relationships, but, as Larry said, "I don't want to feel like an outsider to another group of people." Neither of them wanted that. Since they were now aware of their own roles in supporting many of the situations they did not like, they became open to alternatives.[8]

Fortunately, the group process that elicited these experiences and insights was simultaneously introducing them to a range of alternatives. They discovered for the first time that there *were* alternatives. They simply had not known that their view of reality was not really "all bundled up together" in one, unpleasant way. They did not have to be stuck where they were, and they could look at alternatives. They found out that they could step out of the vicious cycle, first mentally, then physically. The alternatives

[8] There are important things to understand about how and when people can become open to alternatives at all; regrettably, they are beyond my scope here.

indicated that there were different ways to do this, so they would not be stuck in any single approach at all. This was a liberating discovery.

As is often the case, along with that liberation came feelings of insecurity, taking forms that reflected each person's uniqueness. For example, Janet said that although "getting off the horses first" was necessary, "it's not something that I am personally real comfortable about. It makes me nervous. I feel safer on the back of my horse. And I'm sure that they probably do, too." As a novice in civic affairs, Larry's fears were different: "I don't know if I've got what it takes to be able to do it mentally, physically, or verbally, so it kind of scares me." These and other participants found creative and further-liberating ways to experiment with and ease into their discoveries.

With these internalized understandings that "we need to act the way we want them to act" (another participant's observation), Larry and Janet took different paths. Larry's is reflected in the next section. Janet and another participant dove into early planning for a substantive, long-term goal to develop a "neutral platform" for a nonadversarial community "network mechanism" that could include citizens from every part of the community, city officials and departments, and area groups and organizations. They planned to begin by conducting focus groups throughout the community to research and test their ideas and integrate them with what they would learn from others. Their intention was to foster communication and informal issue deliberations on an ongoing basis, so the "community organism could know itself" and begin to learn how to recognize and deal with its issues before they became situations that tore the organism apart. This did not seem to have a pie-in-the-sky idealism. Rather, it reflected the realism of the group's deliberative conclusions, that diverse approaches should be tailored to

address conflicts that arise from time to time. They wanted to build an infrastructure to support local communications and information exchange, and proactively reduce unnecessary conflicts. Such a mechanism would support efforts to work through the inevitable future conflicts, too.

Liberated by taking multiple perspectives. The discovery that they could consciously select from among multiple perspectives in forming their own thoughts—about anything—was the high point for some of the participants. Reports from Larry and a woman I will call Sue showed how thoroughly life changing it was for them. There are both nuances and pronounced differences in how each person used their new insights. For the sake of brevity, I will highlight only Sue and Larry, and do so without discussing all of the differences I heard during their interviews and later scored.

How were these experiences liberating to Larry and Sue? They released them from a trap. Although this played out differently for each of them, the common trap was to be wedded to one way of looking at things. As they both said, they didn't *know* there was any other way to look at and react to things. Many of us do not. This is reminiscent of the saying, "If you find that you are digging yourself into a hole, the first thing to do is: stop digging." That is easy for a critic to say, yet it does not consider this: what if digging is all we know *how* to do? What if we do not even know *how* to stop it? This could be like electric current without an on/off switch installed: the electricity just keeps flowing. These people were elated to discover that they could switch; they could look at and react to things in life quite differently.

The first step was to realize *that* they had been looking at and reacting to things in one way. An analogy may illustrate what this seemed to be like for them. If we never

encountered any reflective surfaces—mirrors, glass windows, pools of water, etc.—and if we did not have arms and hands with which to touch our own faces, and if we never talked about seeing, how would I know that I *had* eyes? How would I know *how* I saw things at all? I suspect I would not even think about seeing, but rather just take it for granted, because neither I, nor our culture, had a concept of it with which to think about it. Just so, many people do not have a concept of, or a way to, notice that they have a point of view. Often, we assume whatever we think *is* the way reality is. This is reminiscent of another saying: "Our perceptions are our reality." It is often true. We often *are* our points of view and so we have no reason to give them a second thought, just like the eyes that I am unaware of in the analogy. Both Larry and Sue made this point, that they had not had any *concept* about their own perspectives. The group process provided the concept for first realizing *that* they had perspectives. Simultaneously, as described above, they learned that there were other perspectives than their usual ones. This contrast supported their discovery that they had been using the same perspective to view things in life, even when it was not getting satisfying results. With the structured support and resources of the process as a starting point, they began running numerous joyful experiments in this liberating territory of multiple perspectives.

The group's focus on tone and intention was instrumental for *bringing home inside* what it *meant* to them to explore and use different perspectives. Larry's early experiments were with his family, and he found that it meant a whole new world of information that he could mine from within himself and share with others. He told me how his whole thought process had changed, and with it, his behaviors. An immediate benefit was that he became more approachable by his wife and children, who now clearly

enjoyed being with him. Rather than reacting to things out of old habits, he took time to look at things from different perspectives—his own new inventory and those he imagined others might have—to find out what a whole situation might be about. He would ask questions now, and in a nonthreatening way. All of this also meant a way to help others mine information from within them. One of several examples he gave was reading books with his elementary school-aged children. He would suggest they pause at various points in a story, and talk about what perspective a character was using at that particular point. Then they would imagine what *other* perspectives might the character take, and how would the story be different then? He found he could directly transfer his learning to any other domain in his life, including educating his children so they would not live in the trap from which he had just emerged.

This played a major role in transforming how he wanted to address the issue of citizen access to public information and community development: it erased the dividing lines between "us" and "them." For the first time, he was viewing the entire community as a "we" without those dividing lines. For him, it had become a system in which to exchange as much information as possible about points of view and respect them *as* valuable information, even when they were different or conflicted. He would respect those differences. With his experience of becoming unwedded to one point of view, he wanted to help other citizens appreciate the information-value of differences and respect them, too. The exchange of viewpoints *as* essential information became a main criterion, in his view, for developing a healthy community.

For Sue, bringing home the learning about using multiple perspectives meant exciting new ways to approach all of her interpersonal dealings and her modest social

change efforts. She integrated those new insights into her thinking about the issues she was most passionate about, nationally and locally. I do not discuss details of her experience here because I think the following observation eliminates the need to do so. I observed that although there were significant differences in her and Larry's interests and "where they were coming from" in general, before and after the project, she used her learning in ways that were similar to Larry, but from a different angle. Her palpable excitement was that she now had ways to decide what approach to take with individuals, groups, or organizations: she could approach and handle things "according to who that person *is* or who the people *are.*" She developed a detachment from her own preferences that enabled her to assess a situation in a more comprehensive and realistic way. She could consider the person or persons involved, their individual and/or institutional constraints, the individual and social needs that people were trying to meet or were unaware of, and base her strategic approaches on who the people *are* that she was or was going to be interacting with. She was running experiments with her grown children, extended family, and friends in the community who were concerned about the same issues she was. Our interview was punctuated by a phone call from one of her children, whose reaction to a recent interchange with her was so positive that he called spontaneously just to tell her he loved her. With a laugh, she told me, "See? It's because of how I approach the situation!" Her new sense of general empowerment was both exciting and liberating because she felt equipped with new powers of discernment. These fed her creativity for conceiving new ways to help others learn how to use multiple perspectives, to see others' conditions with new eyes, and to see how systemic

complexity needed to be addressed. She saw this as the best hope for breaking certain kinds of cycles that trap both citizens and their societies.

In this group's community, with its troubled interactions between citizens and their government, there was a long history of us versus them dynamics and entrenched positions that clashed in important issues. What happened during this project has potential to influence changes in that political culture. As I write this, it has been many months since the end of the fieldwork. I have not returned to the community—a follow-up study is decidedly alluring—and thus, I cannot report further than this about participants' experience.

There are two differences about this case's issue to point out before closing. As mentioned earlier, people have been framing public issues for a long time; there are several different methods for doing this, including mine in recent years. A customary design is for one person or one group to develop the approaches into an issue booklet for *others* to deliberate the issue. In other words, most often, people do not experience both processes. Another difference is that if this project group had selected one of its four prioritized issue-questions in session three, before the tones and intentions surfaced as an issue, this transformative theme may have never developed, at least not in such life-changing ways as it did for Sue and Larry. The difference in this case was that the tone and intention issue invited a different kind of deliberative activity: self-reflective inquiry. By self-reflective, I mean that there was an explicit need for people to move their attention back and forth from the issue *within* them to the community issue in front of them, in order to reflect upon the implications of each possible choice of intentions and

their tones. Unfortunately, our social settings rarely provide such transformative opportunities.

Summary Discussion

From this novel experience of using new methods and working on an unconventional public issue, participants reported a wide range of learning and benefits, and experienced what some of them referred to as the "dramatic shift" in the group by the last session. Discovering that there are methods to address tough issues was a hopeful and motivating insight for many. As both products and agents of the process's impacts, participants' levels of hope and motivation, and the overall group tone, realized positive development. Some of this was a result of that insight into the existence of processual methods to work on issues, some was appreciation that negative tones could transform, and some was a result of learning that there are usefully different perspectives and tones that can work in certain contexts. Participants who had that new learning developed various conceptions of how they could use, or described how they were already using, that information to meet their interests and affect their own and others' experiences. The group-level competency developed sufficiently to conceive a systematic approach toward addressing positive change in the local political culture. All participants increased the hierarchical complexity of their political reasoning, and many applied it to other domains. Some of those changes were already having positive influences on people beyond the group. A new small group formed to develop and implement a newly-conceived metasystematic approach to a community network that holds possibilities for change in the adversarial political culture over time.

The culture of the small group transformed in the course of the process, with the dramatic shift that was evident at the beginning of the last session. The incoherence of its earlier discussions, particularly the impromptu diversion during session three, gave way to the productive tasks of developing diverse approaches to the issue and high quality deliberation. The group culture lost its negative tone and us versus them orientation.

These changes happened in the context of a systematically designed, structured discourse process for working on complex issues. As the vehicle that introduced new experiences, the process itself was an integral part of what happened. The group system functioned within that higher-order system. It enabled both the negatively toned and the subsequent positively toned group-global variables to develop and play their roles in participants' experiences. The progressively different building blocks of the session methods increasingly narrowed the group's attention, beginning with abstract topics of concern, and ending with up-close-and-personal concerns about the available tones to take in interactions with others in the community. It was a vehicle for participants to cocreate a wider range of free choices to act. In the course of the process, the political culture of the group transformed. It had been a microcosm of the macrolevel problem in the larger community that concerned the group. The process supported development of more complex action-logics that positively benefited the participants, and others. The project ended on a promising note with increased levels of hope and motivation toward improving the community's adversarial political culture, and lived experiences of some processes for doing so.

Limitations Of The Study

In the third chapter, I outlined the limitations in the study's design and methodology. I do not repeat them here but I do emphasize that those limitations preclude drawing any firm inferences from the findings of this small study. Additional limitations include the sample's limited diversity: demographically, culturally, and developmentally. Developmentally, a limitation is that no participants were involved who were operating primarily at the abstract stage of development. Results may have been different if the group included such participants. This includes the possibility of higher mortality, because people with abstract action-logics may have become frustrated at the sessions' formats and dropped out before the sessions were finished. Alternatively, they may have remained in the sessions with frustrated attitudes. The limitations of this study do not inform questions about such impacts.

At the other end of the diversity spectrum, this sample had a higher percentage of people operating at systematic and metasystematic stages of hierarchical complexity than common knowledge in the adult development field expects to find in the general adult population. This may have had significant influence on how the group work unfolded and results may not be reproducible.

Finally, the unique combination of the participants, their issue, and their process facilitator means that it is unlikely that this study's treatment protocol would be reproducible. This may be true despite the fact that the generic process steps are replicable.

Implications for Further Research

The structured discourse process itself is designed to be replicable for working on virtually any complex public issues. In theory, and based on my earlier anecdotal evidence and this study's preliminary findings, this study could be replicated with other groups working on other issues with other facilitators, and show an average increase in hierarchical complexity. Yet before the research and the process can be replicated, I must first develop a manual and a training program for process facilitators, including a component for training the trainers.

Once those foundations are laid, I certainly recommend a major research program in which this process is implemented community-wide in several locations with comparative studies on changes in the issues, the political culture, the individuals, and the average hierarchical complexity of groups that participate.

While it was immensely valuable to me to score so much interview material from an issue-analysis standpoint, it is not practical to design research that demands as much scoring effort as this design required. To do more research on how this discourse process affects average hierarchical complexity, it will be essential to develop an instrument suitable for the broad area of public issues. To be practical to administer, such an instrument could end up sacrificing the richness of material gained by the methods used in this study.

Research into the socially significant impacts of using this discourse process for working on both tone and intention issues and more traditional public issues should be designed to overcome the limitations of this study, mentioned above. Comparative studies between tone and intention issues and traditional public issues should be designed

to discover how impacts on participants and groups correlate with the specific subject of the issue selected to work on. Findings here suggest that a study should be designed to investigate if a tone and intention issue needs to arise organically from within the process of addressing larger issues, as it did in this study, or if the issue can be introduced as an issue unto itself that people are motivated to engage. If so, how would such introductions be designed? Another research question is that of investigating and comparing impacts on people when a group only deliberates an issue, versus a group that both develops the approaches using the template and deliberates about them, as this study's group did.

International relations expert Harold Saunders recently published another book on his work, "Politics Is About Relationship: A Blueprint for the Citizens' Century" (2006, Palgrave MacMillan). His loosely structured sustained dialogue process developed out of watching the slow evolution of relational change over the course of dialogues between conflicted parties, which spanned years. My small study introduces the research question: How might parties to such dialogues be beneficially impacted if their efforts are preceded by a more tightly structured process, such as this, that specifically guides people through a deliberative action inquiry into their own tones, intentions, alternative possible strategies, and assessments of potential impacts of those various strategies? How might deliberating tone and intention issues, in general, affect populations in conflicts and brewing conflicts?

For many months, researcher Richard Harwood has been traveling the United States to promote and discuss his book, *Hope Unraveled: The People's Retreat and Our Way Back* (2005, Charles F. Kettering Foundation). He reports that

> people can no longer see or hear themselves reflected in politics and public life…. They abhor this retreat, but feel lost about what to do.… [We need to] square with the reality of people's lives . . . tap into people's desire to be part of something larger than themselves . . . affirm our commitment to hope" (Harwood, 2005).

Further research could indicate if the process used in this study provides a method to implement those prescriptions.

Two of the participants in this study suggested that the process should be customized for use in two other areas: family systems work, and child education. Both of them believed it valuable to extend the benefit of discriminating specifically different perspectives and tones. In their experience, family services and educational methods are silent about using multiple perspectives. They were convinced it would make a significant contribution to adults' and children's well-being and effectiveness in interpersonal relations, just as it was in their own experience.

This interdisciplinary research implies an interdisciplinary range of further research. It suggests that it would be valuable to investigate how to institutionalize tone and intention issues as a liberating discipline that becomes embedded in education, family services, and efforts to address complex issues, including public policy.

The implication that I find most compelling of all is that the anecdotal evidence of effects of this process that I collected earlier is supported empirically through this preliminary study. The sterile-sounding phrase *increase in average hierarchical complexity* manifests in people's lived experience as making important new connections that deepen understanding of self, others, and the world. It manifests as new motivations to invest in social change efforts at home, at work, in the community. It manifests as new

understandings of complex causation involved with public issues, and *that* is an essential foundation for addressing complex issues of any kind. The contrived dualisms and cause-effect thinking that characterize much of our world *do* transform and benefit from increased hierarchical complexity of reasoning, as indicated by this study. Dualisms and cause-effect thinking have played major roles in constructing the complex issues we face today. We cannot solve problems using the same thinking that created them. We need new problem-finding and problem-solving processes so that our average hierarchical complexity increases while, and by, working on those complex issues. This is the major social implication of this study: it points at a way to accomplish these ends.

Conclusion

Of the countless public issues that I have had the privilege to work on with other researchers and citizens in many venues over the years, this occasion of working on a tone and intention issue was particularly rich. Although this was the first opportunity to actively work with that issue, it was certainly not the first time or place that I saw the need for it. Some years ago, I summarized my thinking about "those elements that are necessary in considering how a public can address complex social or political issues in such a way that the evolution of the culture and the structures it supports might be assisted" (Ross, 2000, p. 1). The summary was based on experiences in public issues work that I had accumulated at that point. The first element that I discussed began as follows.

> Address the community's most presenting *or* hidden needs first, those which, if left unaddressed, would likely sabotage other efforts. These can include (a) troubling relationships and their history and (b) differing assumptions about

> capacity, knowledge, power, leadership, and/or inclusivity. Provide a method for recognizing them because people need to become conscious of them before they can intentionally work through them. Provide a method for working through them because the [likely] alternative is paralysis or regression (Ross, 2000, p. 2).

Whether or not a political culture is characterized by troubled relationships or misplaced public assumptions, in these decades of rapid change with their clashes of worldviews, expectations, and competitions for resources, the potential for an increasing number of tone and intention types of issues is, itself, a pervasive—if unrecognized—sociopolitical issue. For this reason, this small study has significance because it demonstrates an effective discourse process for people to work on such issues with transportability to diverse settings.

Because of this study, I have institutionalized the tone and intention issue by incorporating it into this discourse methodology as a specific option for groups to discern using before addressing other issues.

By providing the purposeful structure, the processual methods, the context, and the real world reasons for engaging all voices on an issue, the process used in this study is an institutionalized form of a “liberating discipline” as described by Torbert (2000b, p. 80). It legitimizes, respects, and appropriately uses people’s perspectives to conceive systematic combinations of approaches to complex issues. What happened in this study was that diverse forms of human energy, motivation, and capacity were freed, and some had already started to make positive contributions in private and public domains.

Another conclusion I have is that this research has valuable on-the-ground implications for political development. When we consider the conundrums posed by

perennially troublesome issues, an integrated understanding of positive experiences, human motivations, and adult development can help us transform hopeless assumptions that things will never change. We have the knowledge of the necessary conditions to liberate the conative, motivational dimension of human nature. Now, to develop those conditions is, itself, a universally-germane complex issue that demands priority if we are ever to address the serious challenges that humanity has brought upon itself in every region of the world—and in their populations' publicly common ways of relating.

Such an understanding of conation's role in human existence has much to say about "apathy" and "public disengagement." What might it say about addressing the systemic, underlying issues in conflicted communities and societies? Freeing up people's environments, for example by such methods as used here, would employ the wisdom of identifying corrective actions at the foundational lower-level tasks discussed earlier. Whole-system change, at any scale, must include the level of individual human beings. It must incorporate and use their motivations to satisfy their basic needs. It must learn from and use their perspectives on what that *means.* This small study demonstrated some dimensions of why that is so.

Finally, in light of this study's discourse method and results, there is some value to discussing the word *paradigm.* In recent years, "new paradigms" are announced in one arena or another with noticeable frequency. They "tend to emphasize their revolutionary dissimilarity from the paradigms prior to them" (Torbert, 1994, p. 80). The people who study and measure stages of development in the field of developmental theory use the term with a specific, technical meaning. In that domain, a paradigm is measured by the hierarchical complexity of the tasks necessary to construct it, just as other stages are

measured by the task complexity needed to construct, for example, a linear logic, a system, or a metasystem. The paradigmatic level of development is characterized by its use of methods that are quantitatively and qualitatively more complex and adequate to deal with other clashing or competing systems and metasystems. Hallmarks of sociopolitical paradigms are dynamic processes that can resolve complex questions by engaging all perspectives constructively (Sonnert & Commons, 1994). These are institutionalized practices premised on *needing* and *using* all worldviews' perspectives in "recognized complementarity" to the others (Torbert, 2000b, p. 80). They are public discourses and social levels of organization, including societies, that effectively integrate "all members . . . [in the] co-construction of solutions" to complex issues (Commons et al., 2005, p. 50). Social, economic, and political issues are enormously complicated metasystem-complexes that are not susceptible to technical or short term remedies. If, as the planet's 21st century inhabitants, we hope to address them with an effectiveness that exceeds our history to date, we must employ genuinely new paradigms. Torbert's developmental action inquiry and the methodology used in this study are good models. As discourse methods that depend upon all action-logics for their effectiveness, they can embed paradigmatic complexity.

> When the public discourse is extended in time, has real power, is inclusive, and establishes its own rules and agenda, and when it engages in real co-construction of its rules, agenda and prioritization of assumptions, then the discourse may be paradigmatic (Commons et al., 2005, p. 50).

This is my dream, the ideal, the long-term goal for radically new sociopolitical norms and processes worldwide that equip people to address their complex environments with greater competence, less violence, less dis-ease.

Referring to capacities that he associated with his Learning III (which corresponds to the metasystematic stage), a passionate Gregory Bateson expressed the following convictions.

> If I am right, the whole of our thinking about what we are and what other people are has got to be restructured. This is not funny, and I do not know how long we have to do it in.… The most important task today is, perhaps, to learn to think in the new way…. The step to realizing—to making habitual—this other way of thinking—so that one naturally thinks that way when one reaches out for a glass of water or cuts down a tree—that step is not an easy one. And quite seriously, I suggest to you that we should trust no policy decisions which emanate from persons who do not yet have that habit (1972/2000, pp. 468-469).

If we do not currently think that way—and few of us do—so much more the reason to institutionalize a new field of political development. Its theory and early praxis have potential for such liberating disciplines to begin to permeate our publicly common ways of relating: a new field to develop individuals, institutions, and their cultures while, and by, addressing their confounding complexes of issues. Such liberating disciplines need to be embedded in the way we humans do all of our important work: living, intending, inquiring, thinking, learning, analyzing, strategizing, relating, transacting, educating, deliberating, policy making, governing, and being good stewards of the entire ecosystem in which we coexist, on which we all depend.

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Appendix A: Invitation Wording to Participate in Study

I used both a long and a short form of invitation wording to recruit participants. Version A is the initial longer version. Version B is the shorter version I used after Version A had recruited initial participants. One of them suggested a shorter version would be a good idea.

Version A

I extend this open invitation to all who live, work, or feel invested in [Site]. I am seeking at least 30 diverse people who can participate by committing to six weekly sessions, beginning early [month]. These individuals stand to gain personally-useful new skills and insights while co-creating a full "portrait" of a local issue they select. After this project, this issue booklet can be the handout for a "ya'll come" town meeting on that issue. FreshAir is a win-win-win for these participants, the [Site] community, and issues that need citizens' wise and varied voices of lived experience.

Following this invitation note is a description of the project sessions, the benefits from participating, and additional information about the research.

Please RSVP by [date]. If you would like to participate and/or if you would like more information, please call me at 513-734-7996 (day or evening) or email me at sara.ross@global-arina.org.

If you know anyone else who you think may be interested, please forward this email-invitation to them or post it where citizens and officials can see it. I am relying heavily on word of mouth and existing social networks to reach potential participants and diverse populations. Please accept my thanks to you, in advance, for spreading the word!

Sincerely,
Sara Ross

Description of the project:

This innovative project uses a systematic public process I developed, which gives people all the steps required to prepare any of their local issues for community-wide attention, deliberation, and comprehensive action. Now the whole process can be done in far less time and effort, and with far more clarity and insight, than has ever been possible before. This user-friendly method has been field-tested and is not experimental. I am using it as the centerpiece of my dissertation research project, and inviting you to participate in the project and its benefits.

Sessions will be on whichever consistent week day evenings the most volunteers can be available, and Saturdays are an option if enough people elect them. I want to begin the sessions by the first week of [month] and finish before [date]. Below are short descriptions of what happens in each session. They are followed by a list of the beneficial outcomes from participating. Each session is about 2 hours long and includes a free refreshment break (one or two sessions may last up to 2.5 hours, depending on the small group).

Session 1: Identify all the topics of concern in the community, identify what kind of challenges they seem to be, and map how they connect with each other (for example, any subtle or obvious "domino effects" that suggest some things are like roots that feed or contribute to others).

Session 2: Select an initial topic to focus on and, by using a several-step process, identify precisely what the real issue is that the group wants to work on in the remaining sessions. Use a natural, human process to understand why the issue exists, and the wide range of things that are "keeping it alive" as a problem.
-- Explanation: FreshAir makes distinctions between topics and issues. A topic is a generic name for a huge category, like "education" or "crime" or "economic development." By contrast, an issue is a specific need or set of troubling conditions that people want to impact with positive, observable outcomes and systemic improvements. This distinction helps us get beneath common labels so we don't mistake the tip of an iceberg for the iceberg of "real issues" at the bottom of things.

Session 3: Use insights provided in FreshAir to catalyze abilities to identify all the kinds of reactive and proactive actions the issue needs.
-- Explanation: Some issues need reactive-type remedies if they have gone on for a long time; all issues need positive, proactive or preventative changes that "starve the problem" of whatever it has been "feeding on."

Session 4: Group the reactive and proactive actions by the categories they seem to fall into: voluntary activity and behaviors, public policy related, and deeper questions or issues that don't have quick-and-easy answers, which people will need to grapple with further. Choose which of those questions to work on. Begin an orderly (and usually rather enlightening) process of "framing" it for community dialogue and deliberation.

Session 5: Finish the process of "framing" the issue.
-- Explanation: "Framing" results in 'charts' that enable people to recognize and hear all the strong, different perspectives on what should be done about an issue (and why). It ensures everyone hears the voices that may disagree with each of those perspectives (and why they disagree). This fosters mutual understanding and respect among citizens, assures that all the different impacts and benefits of possible actions will be considered, and avoids decisions that create unintended consequences.

Framing also helps everyone see that one simple or "pet" approach is not enough to fix or address complicated questions or issues. Especially for old familiar issues, it shows the

variety of "feeding tubes" a community needs to remove if it really wants to "starve the issue" and do things differently. It helps people feel motivated to create new ways of doing things that support community health, because the "portraits" of old familiar issues, and new questions that arise, become so much clearer using FreshAir.

Session 6: Test the issue-framing created by each small group, by using it to discuss (deliberate) the pros and cons of different approaches to address the issue. Testing helps assure that the framing is realistic and will accommodate all the perspectives and life conditions in the larger community.

Beneficial local outcomes of the project:
1. Project participants get to keep the FreshAir booklet and use it over and over for any other issues.
2. The Session 1 issue mapping created by participants can be used like a map of the local territory and inform priority-setting for efforts to address issues and improve the quality of life.
3. Participants stand to gain essential new capacities and practical new ways to think about and approach issues with the kind of attention they need (and rarely get). These benefits extend to personal and organizational settings, too.
4. The comprehensive work done in the project serves the community by identifying a range of systemic approaches (voluntary, policy, and public participation) to address particular local issues (including item 5).
5. The entire community can use the issue booklets produced during the project for town meetings to deliberate how to address the issues and move into systemic action on them.

Optional: If project participants elect to work on it: Community-wide public dialogue and deliberation using the issue booklets they developed. (Including planning, follow-up reporting & action planning, and task groups to coordinate whatever volunteerism, policy attention, and further issue work the community voice identifies as necessary.)

Also, because this is research, I will meet with each person who volunteers to participate - once before the sessions, and once after - for a brief, casual interview-conversation that I audiotape (so I can listen and not have to take notes!). At the first one, we'll also go through the informed consent process so research-participant rights and mutual expectations are clear. Everyone's identity, and what they say, is kept confidential by using traditional research methods to protect that privacy. There is no monetary compensation for participating, nor are fees required to participate.

Version B

This invitation is to a project called "FreshAir." This project is for my dissertation research. It involves small group discussion processes one evening per week for six weeks. Each session does different things that lead up to productive outcomes at the end.

Participants will have created a usable "town meeting discussion booklet" for the issue

they select to focus on. They also develop a range of other useful information about the community's issues. [A town meeting is not part of this project, but I commit to help people put it on if they wish to (and I hope they do!)].

Participants get to keep the FreshAir booklet as their own resource. Once the process is learned (through this project, for example) the booklet is designed to be re-usable for other issues that arise - public or organizational.

Participants can expect to learn the following:

- how to identify which issues seem to contribute to other issues or problems, to inform prioritizing

- how to "get to the bottom" of the topic participants select to work on, so the real issue can be worked on. This gets beneath common labels and even the divisive "either/or" choices that limit actual options and unnecessarily create divisions between people and groups.

- how to see and understand all the factors that make the selected issue exist in the first place

- how to develop a real-world list of the various actions needed to "starve the issue" of whatever it has been feeding on

- how to turn all this understanding into a sensible, easy-to-use write-up ("issue booklet") that everyone can use to deliberate about the pros and cons of different points of view about how to tackle the issue (by the way this is done, it de-polarizes the issue and removes potential for relationship-ruining "shouting matches" or "us vs. them" debates).

- how to work with and benefit from other people's perspectives and see how all of them are actually needed in some way if challenging community issues or problems are ever to be addressed in a healthy way that works.

Sessions will start in early [month] and end before [date]. At least one small group will meet [weekday] evenings. With enough participants, another group may meet a different evening of the week, or on Saturdays. Before and after the project, I will meet with participants individually for a brief interview conversation.

Please call me at 513-734-7996, or email sara.ross@global-arina.org to participate, and/or for more information.

Sincerely,
Sara Ross

Appendix B: Informed Consent Form

Prospective Research Subject: Read this consent form carefully. Ask as many questions as you like before you decide whether you want to participate in this research study. You are free to ask questions at any time before, during, or after your participation in this research.

Project Title:

How does the work citizens do in FreshAir—to grapple with complex public issues and launch systemic work on them—affect how they think about issues?

Principal Researcher:	**Organization:**
Sara N. Ross	Ross is a doctoral learner at Union Institute & University, Cincinnati, Ohio

Location of Study:	**Phone:**	**Email:**
[Site city] & immediately adjacent areas	513-734-7996	sara.ross@global-arina.org

Purpose of This Research Study
You are being asked to participate in a research study designed to answer the research question posed as the name of the project, listed above. The answers to this question will make a socially meaningful contribution to new knowledge about how to tackle complex public issues. Conduct of this study partially fulfills the principal researcher's requirements toward earning her doctoral degree.

Eligibility of Participants
Persons in the general population of the [site] area community are eligible if they:

- Live in the [site] community, either the city or adjacent townships

OR

- Own or work in businesses, agencies, governmental offices, or other organizations located in the community,

AND

- Speak and read the English language sufficiently to participate in English-language interviews and discussions, and to comprehend English-language written materials.

AND

- Are high school age or older.

Procedures
You will be asked to engage in the following activities:

1. Agree to the researcher audio taping and transcribing the following:
    a. Group discussions about public issues with other study participants for confidential research use.
    b. Interview conversations with you for confidential research use;

2. Participate in a separate interview with a researcher before and at the end of the study. The interviews will be casual and conversational, and explore questions about public issues and how you think about them. The researcher will meet individually with you for these interviews. Each interview will last about 30 minutes, and may last up to an hour, depending on how much you want to discuss. They will be scheduled in advance with you for a time that is convenient for you. They will take place in a mutually agreeable location (e.g., your home, workplace, or a meeting room in a public building).

3. Receive and maintain in usable condition the *FreshAir* booklet given to you for your use during the study, and your optional use thereafter.

4. Read brief sections of the *FreshAir* booklet before the sessions, as instructed, and bring the booklet with you to each session. Short descriptions of the sessions are as follows, with an approximate schedule (which may vary based on local needs).

Session 1: Identify all the community's more complicated issues, their nature, and their connections (if any)	First week
Session 2: Select a first issue to focus on and understand it in more depth.	Second week
Session 3: Identify what kinds of action the issue needs.	Third week
Session 4: Identify which kinds of work on the issue are needed, and begin issue framing if time permits.	Fourth week
Session 5: Issue framing completed.	Fifth week
Session 6: Test issue framing(s) by deliberating the options	Sixth week

5. Attend and participate with other study participants in each of the sessions of *FreshAir* at [meeting location to be determined]. Each session will last approximately two (2) hours to two and a half (2½) hours, and include a short break with free refreshments. The sessions will be held on week or weekend days or evening, to be determined by participant availability.

6. Be involved the study and able to spend approximately 13-15 hours (enumerated above) participating in the interviews and Sessions 1 through 6.

Possible Risks

Research ethics require that all possible risks to study participants be identified and assessed, so that participants can weigh them against the possible benefits of participation. Participation in this study is voluntary. The chart below itemizes possible risks of participation in it.

Possible Risk	***Likelihood***	***Possible Seriousness***
1. Traffic accident en route to/from meetings	Low	Low to high
2. Slipping, tripping, or falling on the way into, out of, or while walking in meeting room	Low	Low to high
3. Choking on refreshments	Low	Low to high
4. Perception of disapproval by other study participants if a person decides to withdraw from the study before it is finished	Low	Subjective
5. Discover people have different views on issues than previously perceived	Medium	Subjective
6. Feel uncomfortable when views on issues are inquired about, in either interviews or meetings	Unknown	Subjective
7. Feel uncomfortable speaking in a small group of people, some or all of whom are not previously known	Unknown	Subjective

Possible Benefits

Research ethics also require that possible benefits to study participants and others be identified. The following list describes the possible benefits of this study to participants, the community, and/or society at large.

1. Have an opportunity during the interview to speak freely and confidentially about public issues of concern.
2. Experience group discussion processes about complex issues.
3. Begin to tackle issues of concern during the study (if you and others want to).
4. Keep the *FreshAir* booklet and use it later to address other public issues.
5. Use these new methods in other areas of life, such as work and home.
6. Meet additional members of the community.
7. Have the choice to use the group's work later to plan and participate in a community-wide public meeting to deliberate the issue(s) too.
8. Improve the local community by knowing how to work together productively on issues.
9. For society at large, make a contribution to knowledge about how to tackle complex public issues.

Financial Considerations
There is no financial compensation for your participation in this research. Participants who must provide for care of their dependents while they are participating in the meetings may incur additional costs, and such costs are not covered or reimbursable. There are no known additional costs to participants in the study.

Treatment for Adverse Effects
This study involves minimal risk, as described above under possible risks, which is equivalent to risks encountered in normal life. There are no adverse effects attributable to this study and neither Sara N. Ross as principal researcher nor Union Institute & University are liable for or will provide you with medical treatment or financial compensation for injury or illness arising during this study.

Confidentiality

You will not be anonymous to me or to study group participants, but I will ensure the confidentiality of records that identify you. There are three levels of confidentiality with which this study is concerned.

1. The first level is that of the name of the community in which the research is conducted. I will not reveal that information beyond what is necessary for the institutional review process that oversees the research. In my research reporting, I will mention its general geographic location and population size, e.g., "a community in southwest Ohio with a population under [the amount of] x," and specifically state that the actual community is not identified, but rather referred to under a pseudonym for that reporting.

2. The second level of confidentiality concerns the discussions among study participants during the *FreshAir* sessions. To serve the work-in-progress of current and subsequent sessions, flip chart recording will capture discussions' salient points. The audio tapes of the small group sessions will be transcribed either by me or by an outside transcriber to which the individuals are anonymous, and speakers on the tapes will not be identified by name anywhere. The exception to this, of course, will be the happenstance occasion when one participant may refer to another in the course of the discussion, for example: "Mary's comment (such and such)," and in such cases transcribers will replace any names of others with a blank like this: "N_____." Further, any comments referring to individuals outside of the study group will also be replaced by such a method.

3. The third level of confidentiality concerns your identity as a participant in the study. Your name will be randomly assigned a simple number code, and your identity will be kept strictly confidential in all the records of the study and its reporting. Masking techniques will be used

in reporting research results so that you cannot be identified by personal characteristics. I will be the only person with access to records that identify you.

The results of the study, and any data included in it, may be published but will not give your name or include any identifiable references to you. However, any records or data obtained as a result of your participation in this study may be inspected by the Union Institute & University's Institutional Review Board, provided that such inspectors are legally obligated to protect any identifiable information from public disclosure, except where disclosure is otherwise required by law or a court of competent jurisdiction. These records will be kept private in so far as permitted by law.

Termination of Study

You are free to choose whether or not to participate in this study. There will be no penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled if you choose not to participate. You will be provided with any significant new findings developed during the course of this study that may relate to or influence your willingness to continue participation. In the event you decide to discontinue your participation in the study, please notify Sara Ross, at telephone number 513-734-7996, of your decision so that your participation can be terminated in an orderly fashion.

Your participation in the study may be terminated by the researcher without your consent under the following circumstances: if you are disruptive to the sessions, despite a verbal caution from the researcher, to a degree that makes the sessions' work, within the time allocated to them, impossible to achieve with the disruptions.

It may be necessary to terminate the study without prior notice to, or consent of, the participants in the event that Sara Ross is seriously injured or becomes seriously ill and cannot continue the study in an acceptable time frame.

Resources

Any questions you have about this study and/or about your rights as a research subject will be answered by Sara Ross, 3109 State Route 222, Bethel, Ohio 45106. Phone: 513-734-7996. Email: sara.ross@global-arina.org

Appendix C: Interview Questions

Pretest Interview Questions

How many public meetings, of any kind, have you attended in your life? (For example, town meetings, public hearings, or the meetings of a city, village, or township government, etc.)

In how many of those meetings did you, yourself, speak? (a) *To* others (for example, make a comment to those at the meeting) (b) *With* others (for example, in a discussion during the meeting)

1. These days, when you hear, or say, or read, or think about the term "community" or "this community," what do you refer to, or include, in that?

2. In your opinion, what are some of the issues or problems in this community that something should be done about?

Which of those issues would you like to pick, so we can spend the next few minutes talking about it?

3. How long has this issue been around?

4. What are the reasons it is a problem?

5. Why does this problem exist?

6. Who should be doing something about this, and why are they the ones who should?

7. What should they be doing about it?

8. How would they explain to you why they haven't already done what you just said?

9. What would need to happen, for the people you've mentioned to be motivated or made to do something about the problem?

10. If you were put in charge of addressing this issue because you were the only one who had really thought about it, what would you do?

11. What is your vision of how things will be different in the future, once an approach like yours has worked?

Posttest Interview Questions

1. Since our sessions, when you have thought about, or said, "this community," what do you refer to or include in that?

Thinking back to our first interview, we closed it with what you'd do if you were in charge of getting the issue you talked about addressed. (Transcript of this part of first interview given to participant to refresh memory.) Let's put ourselves right back into that moment of the conversation. You've just finished describing how you'd address that issue...

1. Why do you choose that approach?
2. Why is that a good reason to choose it?
3. Why do those reasons give us the ultimate explanation for it being an effective approach?

Since then, we've done the sessions, mapped the issue-connections, analyzed the roots of a big issue so we could create that comprehensive list of ways to address it at its roots, and used a framework of diverse points of view to help us deliberate and coordinate our tones and intentions toward that overall issue. How do all those experiences affect how you now:

1. Define what makes that issue (from our first conversation) a problem?

2. Explain why that's the best way to understand the problem now?

3. Describe what the differences in your thinking are, between then and now?

4. Explain why those differences are valuable. Or, explain why no differences are needed.

5. Explain why this combination of reasons makes for the most accurate way to understand that problem?

And how would you now describe:

6. What you would do to make sure that problem got addressed?

7. Why do you choose that approach?

8. Why is that a good reason to choose it?

9. Why do those reasons give us the ultimate explanation for it being an effective approach?

Re: The overall issue, the range of problems caused by the troubled interactions between citizens and government (and citizens with citizens)

1. If we had taken the group temperature on this issue at the beginning of our sessions, how would you have rated your personal sense of hope about it changing for the better? Why?

2. Back then, how would you have rated your personal motivations to address the issue? Why?

3. Is this issue one that people should just live with, or should work out between themselves, or should address as a community? Why?

4. If this has concerned you (or others) before our group conversations, why do you think you (or they) had not done something to address it?

5. The group created a list of numerous different changes and actions that both government and many citizens could take to quit supporting this adversarial culture and to do things differently. How did this, and/or any of the experiences in the sessions, affect your attitudes in relation to the issue?

6. How does that affect your motivations for wanting to address this overall issue? Why?

7. What is your sense of hope, now, for successfully addressing this overall issue? Why?

8. What has changed for you?

Re: The tone and intention issue: "What kinds of relationships do we want to have around work on the overall issue (etc.)?"

1. What's your understanding of why we did the deliberative decision-making about this issue in the last session?

2. How would you describe, now,
    a. Any personal insights or benefits from deliberating about something in a group?
    b. How you think the group benefited from deliberating about this issue?

3. Two scenarios. How would community-wide attention on the overall issue be affected if, before it were addressed specifically:
    a. Only your group had deliberated about the tone & intention issue?
    b. A lot of people, citizens and officials, deliberated about tone and intention, too?
    c. What would account for any differences between these scenarios?

4. Should lots of people in the community deliberate the tone and intention issue before anyone starts to address the overall issue? Why?
5. Why is that a good reason?

6. Why would your reasons here explain the to the community the ultimate purpose of people deliberating about this first?

7. What's your vision of how things would be here if this happened?

Reflective closing questions
1. What did you originally hope to get out of participating this project?
2. How do you describe what you actually have gotten out of it?
3. How do you list the things you've learned?

Appendix D: Group Work Products

Table of Contents

Introduction to Appendix D

The items included in this Appendix are products of the group's most substantive work. They are presented here in their original format. Each product emerged from the work the group did in the sessions described in this dissertation. The processes that generated the work were described in the Methodology and Results chapters. Here, I describe the processes of compiling the work into the forms of these products.

I compiled the Summary Description of the Issue into its final form for the group by combining the two draft summaries that two of the participants had prepared with other points made in the group's discussion of the issue during the second and third sessions. The group approved the compilation.

The flip charted work during the issue framing in the fourth and fifth sessions provided almost all of the content of the Issue Approaches. The sections in each approach that are entitled *This approach to the overall issue would be best because* were compiled partially from comments on the flip charts during the framing sessions, but mostly from the audio-recorded statements during group discussions in the course of developing the approaches. I organized the sequence of points that people made so that the paragraphs would read smoothly and did minor editing.

I prepared the Report on Deliberation at participants' requests, which were made as we closed the final session. They wanted it so they would have a "full deck" of all their work during the project, and several wanted to be able to share the deliberation's outcomes with others in the community. I developed it from my verbatim transcriptions of the sixth session's audio-recordings. To reduce occasional choppiness between speakers, convey collective agreements, and assist the readability of the report, I edited

the transcripts by limited forms of additions, spelling out some contractions, inserting conjunctions, etc. The most frequent kind of addition I made was to insert connecting phrases. As an example of this kind of editing, in Approach 1's section, for instance, I inserted the following phrases at the beginning of early paragraphs: "adopting this tone, "on the other hand," and "the worrisome aspects of this approach are." I also inserted "we" phrases to indicate meanings, agreements, or positions of some but not all participants. For example, in Approach 2's section of the report, I inserted such phrases as "some of us say knowledge," "we notice some of us believe," "overall, we value," and "we value." All of the participants received and approved the report.

Summary Description of the Issue

The Topic	The Issue
The topic is *the troublesome interactions between government and the people.*	And the issue, the problem with that is that *Citizens are unaware, frustrated, and therefore powerless, uninvolved, and misinformed.*

Summary Description of the Issue

The nature of the problem. The city government and some of the people of the city and the surrounding area are increasingly alienated and adversarial. People who are troubled by this relationship, and the interactions that characterize it, are those who tend to be active in civic affairs. There is a long history of mistrust and conflict between groups, which has gone unaddressed.

Why this is a problem. For many active citizens, this adversarial relationship has a major negative impact on their quality of life. Active citizens need to feel at home in their community, rather than shut out of meaningful participation in civic affairs by their own government processes. As citizens of a democratic nation, they need to be involved in the rule-making and decision processes that impact their investments in their quality of life. Those investments include relationships, property values, and concern for the welfare of the whole community in the near and long term. Adversarial dynamics destroy relationships and entrench beliefs that "who ever does not agree with me, is against me." In a civilized 21st Century community, it is a public problem that citizens are feeling and acting like enemies toward one another.

Effects of the problem. Some active citizens end up feeling trapped in frustration, anger, or confusion. Some feel unaware of things they need to know. Others drop out of active engagement in civic affairs to avoid the frustration. Others spend large amounts of time and money to get their views included on the public decision-making agenda. Some fear retribution for getting involved in issues or for having views that differ from local officials and other citizens. Some are discouraged that the situation will not get better. There is risk of inconsistent and less effective official decisions when processes do not build in time to consider the full range of short- and long-term impacts. Such decisions can deepen divisions, and cost time, effort, and tax dollars to address their "fallout." Such unintended consequences have included lawsuits, ill will, lost trust, and small problems becoming big problems. In the adversarial atmosphere, viable solutions can go unexplored or be torpedoed if the wrong persons offer them. Mutual mistrust results in behaviors that widen the existing divisions. For example, some citizen requests for public information go unfilled, some feel the need to have a witness to certain conversations, some people quit speaking to each other, and some people who are not on "the right side" fear and/or have experienced a range of unfavorable treatments by city employees or official groups serving them at taxpayer expense. These cumulative effects result in some exemplary elements of the city government's mission going unfulfilled.

Causes of the problem. Both the processes of government and the attitudes of citizens—outside of and inside government—need to evolve, because both have trapped the community in troublesome patterns. Both government and citizens operate in ignorance of what all the "others" deal with and are concerned about. The community does not know how to handle its inherent diversity in non-adversarial ways.

Conclusion: The portrait we've painted of this issue is not a masterpiece, but provides a clear picture from which to decide what the community needs to work on.

Issue Approaches

Approach 1:
The intention & tone of preparing to
organize an "us vs. them" campaign to get the changes we want

We might favor this approach if we assume that:
- It's the only thing that will work, because we've tried everything else.
- We won't see change unless we do something dramatic.
- They're out to get/beat us, we have to fight back. They will take over anything else we do, but they can't take over this kind of community-organized effort.

This approach to the overall issue would be best because: There is strength in numbers. We need to appear strong by having cohesive ideas and being united with one voice, in order to be heard as intended. We need to get reactions, threaten the status quo, be a force for change. This is necessary if we want to get something done that others are trying to stop, or if we need to stop something others are trying to do. We've experienced injustices and want to put an end to them. We need to get the facts and feel confident in having the power of information, because knowledge is power. With this approach, we can hold them accountable, get their attention, and prove ourselves a force to deal with. This is important so the things we've experienced do not happen to someone else. It should minimize our damages, and protect us because they'll retaliate against us. This is probably the fastest way, and drastic enough, to change how things are done.

Examples of how we would prepare for taking this approach:
- Start talking to the silent majority, seek them out
- Have an action or solution already in mind that we're aiming for
- Prepare a report ("white paper") that builds the case and lists examples of the problems people have had and the interactions that are troublesome. This would explain why we want to take an "us vs. them" approach. Use this write-up to convey that there are unacceptable actions going on that must stop and to get others on our side.
- Prepare for information rallies.
- Encourage people to share their experiences widely, so other people hear the kinds of problems that exist and decide to get involved because they'll realize it could happen to them, too.

This approach may be worrisome, because:
- The "powers that be" will tell us to not rock the boat. They will feel backed into a corner, and they'll shut down communications.
- People will continue to not speak to each other.
- Some people in the community will feel squeamish about a confrontational approach—or clearly disapprove of it—and they may shun those who are involved in it (then, more people not speaking).
- Some people will say they are tired of conflict, and opt out altogether (then, more are uninvolved).
- This could tarnish the community's reputation. If so, our property values go down.
- The solution we aim for might not be the best one, or one that a majority will agree with.
- Citizen referendum and lawsuit activity have taken approaches that are basically similar to this, and created or deepened divisions even when "we won."

Trade-offs that would be involved, including impacts on the kinds of relationships we want

- It would take a lot of people a lot of time and energy to make this work effectively
- Relationships and public business would probably get worse before they got better (if they ever do)
- Improving and rebuilding relationships would probably have to wait until we got the troublesome government processes and behaviors changed
- Other trade-offs?

***The scenario we foresee if our approach to the overall issue were dominated by this tone*:**

Approach 2:
The intention & tone of preparing to
take an "It's the law" approach to enforce needed changes

We might favor this approach if we assume that:

- Government officials are not following the law
- Government officials have no interest in cooperating with citizens to make changes voluntarily
- They will begin to follow the laws if we make them, and won't go and change laws we want back to something else
- We cannot trust our government officials

This approach to the overall issue would be best because: Citizens do not need patriarchs for their officials. We can make our own decisions and have officials do what we want. It is our constitutional right to be heard and empowered. We need our officials to facilitate, not dictate. Since our history suggests that they do not seem to share this point of view, it is important to get their attention, and demonstrate we mean business – and that we will take it all the way. We mean it when we say "power to the people" and we need to make them accountable. Government "is" the people, and citizens need to control the process and have access to all public information. We need to restore confidence that citizen voices will be heard and democratic ideals adhered to, and restore integrity to all operations and interactions. Overall, this approach should mean that our tax dollars will be used for what we want them used for, and that we'll get all the information we need to be sure things are done the way the law requires.

Examples of how we would prepare for taking this approach:

- Start community fund raising to hire an attorney
- Recruit volunteer legal experts
- Get a copy of the laws we're concerned about
- Attend and audio-record all meetings and create a library of meeting tapes
- Call for state audit of government operations
- Prepare for community rights-awareness rallies
- Keep journal or diary of all infractions, times, and dates

This approach may be worrisome, because:

- Legal costs citizens would have to bear, and our tax dollars paying for city's legal costs
- The amount of time involved for citizens, and for government (could slow its operations)
- Citizens could be hit with a "slap lawsuit"

- Fear that if things are going on that should not, that there will be a cover-up, info destroyed
- People could shift blame to others to avoid blame, cause more rifts and problems
- This divides us, rather than healing relationships
- Government attitude would likely become resistant, create more troubled interactions

Trade-offs that would be involved, including impacts on the kinds of relationships we want

- This would put information and compliance needs ahead of our other needs, such as getting more dialogue included in meetings and inclusion in certain decision-making. The combative atmosphere would cost us getting better processes in these other areas.
- Like the first approach, improving and rebuilding relationships would probably have to wait until we got the government compliance issues resolved.
- What do we do to our public relationships if we are wrong to assume law-breaking is going on?
- Other trade-offs?

***The scenario we foresee if our approach to the overall issue were dominated by this tone*:**

Approach 3:
The intention and tone of preparing to
take a positive "strategic encouragement" approach to get changes rolling

We might favor this approach if we assume that:

- We don't know if they'll go along with our ideas, need to get them on board
- We have to give in order to get, meet them "where they are"

This approach to introducing the overall issue would be best because: if we take a "positive encouragement" approach to giving officials incentives to help us with what we're after, it is a "win-win" for everyone. It will save us—and the city—a lot of time, effort, legal fees, and tax dollars. We will be spared divisive lawsuits and referenda. This may take longer and be challenging to figure out, but it will get us closer to our goal of reducing conflict. We can paint a positive picture of all the good things that could come out of encouraging change to begin this way, and attract lots of good attention to the city. It will promote business because the strife is gone. Neighbors will be protected from impacts of bad decisions and divisions. It would clear the way for the kinds of changes everyone would want, to streamline government processes and get community projects worked on (for example, the kinds of parks/recreation we want). We will feel freer to support council's ideas when we are not afraid of old dynamics anymore, and council and other officials will feel freer to support our ideas for the same reason. The feel of being enemies should decrease.

Examples of how we would prepare for taking this approach:

- Find out what "they" want, and come up with a doable, deliverable way to do it
- Tailor our approach talking to different people to meet their specific interests so they have incentive to engage in a positive approach to other changes
- Design a questionnaire that asks everyone what they want and need, what bothers them, etc.
- Plan how to use the questionnaire's results to educate everyone and find where we agree without difficulty, what positive changes are easier to make now to get us off to a good start

This approach may be worrisome, because:

- It feels as though it could raise false hopes (for us and others)
- It might risk making political promises that aren't delivered – on the part of officials or citizens – for the sake of a "peace treaty" of sorts
- All people do not want the same thing, so either officials or citizens striking agreements and deals to provide incentives could end up creating new problems
- It could really be like behind-the-scenes business as usual, and we end up disagreeing about who gets the carrot-incentive, and which kind it should be
- We could lose our self-respect by taking this approach, it is not the way some of us operate
- This is a "softer," slower, less direct way to get needed changes made, takes more time/energy
- It would involve shared power and putting different priorities on things than we may want to
- Some of us don't want to "be nice" again and go through all this again: "been there, done that" (and what did it get us?). Some of us feel that they are not worth our kindness!

Trade-offs that would be involved, including impacts on the kinds of relationships we want

- Since our full range of concerns, and how seriously we take them, don't really get full attention this way, officials could make a decision "the old way" and we'd be divided again.
- This sacrifices rights we're entitled to in favor of incentives to "encourage" instead of uphold.
- Other trade-offs?

***The scenario we foresee if our approach to the overall issue were dominated by this tone*:**

Approach 4:
The intention and tone of preparing to
take a fully collaborative community-wide approach to work on changes

We might favor this approach if we assume that:

- We can, or at least we must try to, trust others.
- Other citizens and city officials want good public relationships, good decisions, and effective processes just as much as we do
- When significant change depends on everyone understanding what's at stake and buying into it, we need to get the whole community together and involved in the process

This approach to introducing the overall issue would be best because: It is a way of changing the underlying causes of the overall issue we're concerned about: it builds relationships. It sets up a new model, a new habit, a new framework, which will enable us to work on new issues that come up. It encourages the feeling of community, and will result in reduced stress and tensions. It may feel challenging at times to "trust the process" and it may take time. It can replace our long history of mistrust with something we all want: a greater quality of community life and ways to maintain it.

Examples of how we would prepare for taking this approach:

- Get together with, network with, other individuals and talk about things in this tone
- Cast our net broader, try to include everyone

- Find ways to get people talking – let "issues" arise naturally if they exist, without introducing the overall issue we've identified as an "issue" or "problem" we have – that labeling can make it a bigger problem
- Have meetings facilitated by someone who is neutral, to help build trust in new processes
- Develop our "web of connections" to highlight who all is connected to whom in various ways
- Make our "web of connections" well known, be a grapevine, a means to an end, a resource

This approach may be worrisome, because:

- It is not "concrete" enough to specifically identify what will get changed
- It is not mean enough! We feel the need to punish before we feel clear to build new relationships
- It is a slow approach, too, and time consuming
- New open processes could concern officials or anyone who might be afraid of what may come out, what we will begin to find out, that could lead to criticism of them
- We are afraid a new network resource (our web of connections) could be abused, hurt
- We (citizens and officials?) are afraid this approach could leave us open to be manipulated
- There is no way to predict results, neither citizens nor officials will feel in control
- It is not everyone's style to be collaborative and open; it means learning new skills, discomfort
- We all will have to overcome habits and even our personal revulsions

Trade-offs that would be involved, including impacts on the kinds of relationships we want

- This means feeling vulnerable; it feels risky to put our trust in other people and untried processes with no guarantees that the kind of real, deep change we're after will come about at all
- It really makes us weigh how much we value what we say we value, to not take control of what happens, in favor of making way for the community to decide about and adopt new processes
- We will feel the challenge to let some trial-and-error processes take place, and to hold onto the belief that everyone really <u>is</u> trying, with good intentions, to involve and respect citizens
- Other trade-offs?

The scenario we foresee if our approach to the overall issue were dominated by this tone:

Report on Deliberation

Deliberating the Issue:
The Thinking and Outcomes of Our Deliberative Session

Before starting, we expressed some of our personal stakes in this issue.

- It would certainly be a nicer place to live if these bad feelings weren't here; would certainly be a nicer place for *me* to live!

- There's an awful lot of time and energy that's really wasted in the current situation. It would be nice to get that off our backs and be able to address specific littler issues that are interesting and often fun to solve, without this impossible monster that underlies things. This matters tonight because we'd like to be successful and have a better environment.

- Even though I don't live in the city limits, it's the closest community to where I live, so if it was a friendlier, happier community, obviously it would benefit me. Also, if there were better relations between government officials and people, government would be more effective and more would get done.

- It would make the community a better place to live. We can't solve all the problems and please everybody, but it would be a good way to establish that there are problems and there are ways to solve them to a certain extent.

- I hate wasting time, energy, and money. And we're doing all of it, a lot of people are: wasting time, energy, and money. We could use it to better serve the whole community.

- It's a case of personally learning, in case I ever find myself in that situation, there would possibly be some ways to avoid doing some of these things…so it's a learning experience.

- We had talked about democracy, and how this may be a failing of democracy. If we can't make democracy work on such a small scale, how can it ever work on a large scale? I want to see it work here because I want democracy to succeed.

- I want to see better government and better community relations. I think it makes a difference. The kind of government people live with affects people as individuals. I care about people who live here, and l live close by; I want it to be better for people.

Using the approaches we developed in our Issue Booklet, we deliberated about the different tones and intentions we could employ toward the overall issue. First, we weighed the pros and cons of each different approach, and imagined what kind of future scenario it would mean for the community if each tone were the dominant one. The following pages summarize our deliberative thinking about each approach.

Approach 1: The intention & tone of preparing to organize an "us vs. them" campaign to get the changes we want

This is the tone and approach of things that are already going on now. It's the status quo, not in the sense of a public campaign, but in the form of people finding others willing to walk into the fire with them over an issue. Such efforts have been organized issue by issue, and stir things up, but have never been organized as a long term campaign to stop the overall nonsense.

Adopting this tone to get changes made would mean people wouldn't want to participate, it's too high-intensity, certainly not worth it for people who never had anything happen to them that they had to fight against.

On the other hand, perhaps with the negative national publicity over the ____ case, this type of approach might tap into existing energies and seem appropriate given the nonsense of [that case], which seems rather emblematic of the larger issue we're concerned about.

The worrisome aspects of this approach are that it means there would continue to be winners and losers, and could make that rift even greater, although we're unsure if it could be greater than it already is. Losers bide their time, because even if someone else wins the battle, the war isn't over. It may just be the nature of the system, to have winners and losers.

But our goal is that we want to help make decisions, not keep opposing decisions or having the *us vs. them* dynamic. We want an "we're all in this together" tone. That would stop the cycle. With this approach, even if a concerted campaign flipped the balance of power, that's all it does: then "us" has the power of the system over "them." All we would be doing is trading places, and that means no change at all.

This approach works best on a specific issue that has a specific yes or no answer, like a "do you want it or not want it?" question. A campaign would have to have a specific and limited goal – such as a movement for a strong mayor, for example, or the _____ battle. It requires defined targets, and only those things would happen that are focused on by such campaigns.

They would create more ill will and tension, and it doesn't seem worth it. Targeted issue campaigns don't lead to general system change. That's what we want, but this just reinforces what is already here. However, if we had a different system, where people have a say in advance about deciding what they want, or do not want, such campaigns would not be necessary, and our relationships wouldn't suffer this long term, sore underbelly after battles.

We agreed this approach is only a last resort if all else fails. In general, we place the highest value on wanting broader change, improving relationships, and being freed of aggravation.

When would it be worth it to head into more aggravation by using this approach? We agree that land use decisions can warrant this, because they are irreversible, and dramatically affect people where they live. Homes are bedrock where people say No.

Looking ahead. The scenario we foresee if our approach to the overall issue were dominated by this tone is that it would just be more of the same: long term conflict, bad feelings, more angry folks, and more of not getting things done. Nothing would change in the long term on either "side."

Approach 2: The intention & tone of preparing to take an "It's the law" approach to enforce needed changes

This approach rests on the assumptions—some of us say knowledge—that government officials are not abiding by existing laws in all cases and circumstances. It is neutral toward our relationships with one another, because we all have to follow the law. If we believe laws are not being followed, our tone should convey we want to find diplomatic ways to get the facts on the table. If laws have not and are not being broken, we need to know that so suspicions can be laid to rest. In the meantime, this tone risks relationships becoming hostile and people taking sides, even if we all regard the law as the bedrock of democracy.

We would like to approach things with the assumption that the law is followed and implemented without favoritism or discrimination toward selected people and issues. We are concerned that patriarchal attitudes of "father knows best" at the government level lead to uneven treatment of people and issues. This approach would lead us to remove such people from office, in favor of those who do what constituents want and who take impeccable care with legal requirements.

While we see the potential for hostile relationships aroused by insisting on lawful behaviors, on the other hand, if such efforts were successful, it would not matter if those who do not follow the law and those who support them became hostile, because they would no longer be in power. We have the right to insist on lawful behavior without apologizing. This tone may generate respect, since it is the way the system is designed to work.

Since this approach does not rest on an *us vs. them* basis but rather on already-spelled out law, it is a firm and diplomatic basis for taking the high moral ground, beyond issues of relationship. It is also possible that if other things happen in the community to improve, that a shift to proper enforcement of the law will be an end result rather than something we need to emphasize specifically. We would not want this legal enforcement tone to dominate everything we do, because in itself, it is not enough.

When we turn this legalistic approach around, we find ourselves ambivalent about judgments between the spirit of the law and the letter of the law. We notice we want to hold government to a strict execution of the law in areas where we fear its misuse or abuse, yet we also want public servants to be more facilitative than rigid and dictatorial in applying the law to citizens in certain cases. If laws aren't serving well as they are written, we need to deliberate to change them, but that needs to be broad-based deliberation, not among only a select few.

Overall, we value the spirit of the law over compliance, a balanced spirit of cooperation and compliance. We value public servants striving to make laws work for all of us without impersonal rigidity. We value both government officials and citizens living within the law without the weight of fear of dictatorial punishment for mistakes.

Looking ahead. The scenario we foresee if our approach to the overall issue were dominated by this tone is characterized by antagonism and even fear, despite efforts we may make to make enforcement neutral. Legal actions of various kinds would sever communications even further. Everyone would have reason to be on constant guard, looking over their shoulders because we were not careful about what we asked for, and got stuck in it.

Approach 3: The intention & tone of preparing to take a positive "strategic encouragement" approach to get changes rolling

The main thing we like about this approach is its positive, non-antagonistic nature, especially by comparison with the first two approaches. It gives us an optimistic feel that we *can* work things out in a way that involves enough give and take from everyone to get a job done without causing problems. It means being proactive, creative, and the potential to get people excited about positive change and looking for the positives everywhere we can, including complimenting officials when they do commendable things. These are underlying modes or tones that we need in order to change the dynamics.

At the same time, there can be a concern that it would be effective in only tiny increments, because overall, it is important that government and relationships be working right. We shouldn't have to negotiate our way to proper operations. However, it does not prevent us from being assertive about what our concerns are, and we can still ground this approach in our root concern so it stays in the forefront.

Even if we adopt this tone willingly, there is a worry about how realistic it is. What incentives do citizens have to offer besides promising to not create an uproar or organize to vote out officials who don't want to engage?

To avoid the potential downside of coming up with exchange offers everyone may not want to live with, we assume this tone includes the necessity of developing good community networking. The voice of many must be brought to the table, not the voice of only a few who are ignorant of what the community wants and is willing to offer in the course of negotiating exchanges.

Toward improving relationships, it changes the tone by the prospect of going to officials and saying: "We know there has been a lot of conflict over the years, we're tired of it, you're probably tired of it too, let's find a better way to work together on things…and when contention arises, let's agree to find tradeoffs we can live with."

However, this approach assumes there is willingness on both sides, and there may not be. Also, while it may make us feel better, it could come across as weak, too, to the other "side." By contrast, if we come from a more oppositional approach, there may be more willingness in others to engage in negotiation.

A benefit of this approach is that it does not narrow options down, but can serve as a springboard for either genuinely more collaborative approaches, or for taking stances suggested by the earlier two approaches if they are needed as backup systems. This provides the tone of an initial overture, and gives all of us the time and opportunity to do our homework and figure out what we bring to the table. It would be a good, educational process for everyone, if this characterized working things out.

One unresolved downside is that some people prefer "ready-resonance" with ideas, letting natural alignments and attractions to visions bring people together, rather than negotiating our way through everything. Realistically, this approach cannot work yet, because we do not have any venues for such conversations to take place. That gap would have to be filled first.

Looking ahead. The scenario we foresee if our approach to the overall issue were dominated by this tone is one of wanting to work together enough that we're all willing to give something to get something. We wouldn't be taking stances of either "yes" all the way, or "no" all the way. We would be breaking through such either/or gridlocks, and finding a third way. We would not be going into every endeavor expecting, or looking for, a fight.

Approach 4: The intention & tone of preparing to take a fully collaborative community-wide approach to work on changes

This is the approach that captures our overall goals, it addresses the overall issue we're concerned about. We want to replace our long history of mistrust with a new pattern of trust and reduced tensions, and have a greater quality of community life. None of the other approaches strive for this directly.

But if any tone portends negotiating from a weak position, this one does. It does not have any strong positions built into it. We may have a concern that it could be easily dismissed or manipulated. At the same time, we're aware that it does not prevent us from using the tones and tools of the other approaches that have some sharp edges, as needed.

The benefit of risking this stance is that it could lead to a broad, long-term framework to get the whole community up to speed, and able to take any kind of action. That means we could work on focused issues, find ways to get people talking, find out and define the issues, and have various meetings facilitated by someone neutral when needed. Along with all this, there would be small group meetings happening all over town that make the web of connections we've talked about, a very empowering prospect.

Once that happens, information starts moving back and forth, and it's harder to steer people down a path where they don't want to go. Once they know what's going on, with communication methods that work, people aren't easily manipulated, if that should be attempted. Starting off with this tone could lead to such wide spread meetings, and they wouldn't be gripe sessions. They could be productive and educational, like learning the aspects of the laws about something of keen interest, for example, for businesses. It could also be the means to the end of fostering community, something we all hold as highly valuable.

Some of us believe that starting off this way could lead to city council finally feeling it has a way to get a broad enough sense of what people want. It needs to feel assured it knows, and this could begin to change the way it thinks about a lot of things, and change the way business gets done, for a lot of reasons.

Despite those positives, we are aware that there are people whose feelings of animosity run deep, and this tone is probably not aggressive enough for them because it holds out little realistic hope that things will change. We could, potentially, lose the prospect of their participation in community change efforts like this. On the other hand, this kind of open approach affords a soapbox for everyone, regardless of what is on their minds. They can all say their piece. In the process of hearing one another, we would begin to find things out that we need to know, that put us at greater ease, etc.

This could be too optimistic, and we might find out that no one is really interested in wide-spread collaboration to make change, then efforts toward our goals would fizzle. We can only hope that having easy access through such processes would start to encourage more activity. We are telling ourselves that if we threw a big enough party, a lot of people would want to come.

Looking ahead. The scenario we foresee if our approach to the overall issue were dominated by this tone is that there would be a lot fewer "us and them" dynamics. The more connections people began to have with better communication methods among them, the fewer the biases that would remain. We would be changing our perspectives, toning things down, and becoming more tolerant. It would be good for both "sides," and we'd be finding out we can agree on some things even when we disagree on other things, without the tensions and adversity.

After we deliberated the tensions within each of the foregoing four approaches, we looked for any overall tensions among them.

We characterized the differently-toned approaches in terms of which ones block other tones, and which tones are open to others. While we recognized that there can be specific situations where actions based on approach 1 may be practical or necessary, its tone is not one of choice because it pits one group of citizens against another, and acting on that adversarial basis—as we know so well from experience—leaves long-lasting scars on the community and individuals. In that sense, it is in tension with approaches 3 and 4, which have markedly more positive tones. On the other hand, as we said earlier, if we had a system in place where citizens were involved at the early stages of things, this might not be needed.

The second approach to *action* (as compared to just tone) also has potentially legitimate uses that are not necessarily at odds with any of the other approaches, but its tone of distrust blocks healthy relationships and is in tension with approaches 3 and 4, which assume some degrees of trust and willingness between people.

The tone of approach 3 could co-exist to some extent and in certain situations with that of approach 4, but there is tension between their assumptions about who is "at the table," how they got there, and what brought them there. Approach 3's tone assumes there are probably fewer people involved directly, and that it could be an elite few who bring others to the table to negotiate the gives and takes of coming to agreements. Its aim is focused more on dealing with specific decisions, than with changing the culture of the community. In that sense, it blocks the full expression of approach 4.

By contrast, approach 4 assumes community issues or questions require some ongoing venues for fully collaborative and community-wide involvement. It is the most open of all the tones that could be adopted. It is not in competitive tension with any of the other tones because their situational uses fit within the openness of approach 4, which indeed, may influence the others toward moderation. It does not imply taking everything on blind faith or being naïve; it accommodates realism and flexibility.

In that vein, we considered how the strong tones of approach 2 would actually "look" and play out in a scenario where approach 4's tone was dominant. This seemed important because of the charged emotions, judgments, and suspicions that people express either verbally or by not speaking at all to certain people. We imagine the adoption of approach 4's tone could meet people where they are, wherever they are. Eventually, such a tone characterizing relations should underlie enough new, positive experiences that people's anger and anxiety levels would gradually diminish. People who would feel more comfortable and secure in tone 2 might relax more as the open tone of 4 leads to more information acquiring and sharing. It should also lead to the feeling of being more supported in general, rather than dependent on only their own efforts to meet needs. We do not foresee that people preferring the tone of approach 2 would feel in tension with or alienated within approach 4.

When we compared the time-and-energy demands implied by enacting each approach, we concluded that each, in its own way, could certainly take time. The tone of the energy expended in approaches 3 and 4 would be generally more positive and satisfying. This would be so because both products and relationships would be held in equal value, not sacrificed for expediency's sake. We can imagine that proceeding on the basis of approach 4 would initially be heavier in such demands, but that in the long term, it would result in fewer urgent situations to deal with.

Finally, we recognized that another reason that approach 4 has the least amount of tension with the others, is that it does not presume a stance of telling others what to think or inducing them to react in particular ways. Rather, it assumes creating the venues and processes to work with whatever people think, even when it is in tension with others.

Summary of Deliberative Outcomes

The foregoing work helped us formulate the following reasoning and preferences, as we summarized our conclusions about tone-adoption and its relational impacts.

In this group, there is a sincere desire to build community and to be as non-adversarial as possible. We conclude the fourth approach can best support this. Values underlying this consensus include: the importance we place on healing relationships and having more good ones; wanting the democratic ideal to prevail in our community; preferring the benefits of long-term thinking for real change over short-term efforts; higher levels of information-sharing; and the tangible benefits of fostering community for its own sake.

A down-to-earth realism goes along with this. We realize that desire does not preclude using the sharper-edged tools available for doing community business when they are a last resort, or when they would be more practical and effective for particular issues or circumstances. Until we deliberated this issue, we had not been considering that the third approach existed or that it fit anywhere in accomplishing our ultimate goals of addressing the overall issue that concerns us.

We realized toward the end of our deliberations that our focus had shifted considerably with regard to that overall issue, placing less emphasis on government, and more on people. This may be because, as one of us commented, "if we're worried about being pushed around or some of those other things that seem to be a root of a lot of this issue, the sense of building community gave us a sense of empowerment." There may be other valuable things to understand about this shift, too. For example, it may be about interplays we intuit between processes we hope the community adopts, and the products they can produce. We did not explore this idea beyond naming that when we use ourselves and each other to solve our problems, we find out not only that we can, but also that our "products" become much more than we aimed for at the start. Another dynamic behind our shift may be quite natural: the shifts that occur as hope takes root, that we become freer to place our attention on the positives as we become less weighed down by the negatives we have struggled with. We talked about the real impacts for changing public relationships by doing very simple, positive things; for example, conveying compliments even to people with whom we disagreed about something else.

We identified that we experienced diverse benefits from deliberating our issue. A significant one was the usefulness of having each approach described separately so we could explore it thoroughly and clearly distinguish it from the other ones. This had value for the sake of considering its tone, practical usefulness, and relational impacts. It also equipped us to weigh it against the others and see how, when, or if it could complement the others.

We concluded that the first approach is like a return to a familiar ground zero, and none of us favor such a return. Our hope is that even if an issue in the future requires such a strategy, that the deeper changes we hope take root across the community will help to prevent it becoming personalized as *us vs. them*. We hope approach 4 helps such issues be seen as just being issues, which we do not need to personally identify with to the point of destroying relationships over them.

We share the assumption that broad community networking is essential to the life of the community, communication and information-flows within it, and our ability to achieve a better quality of civic life overall. We believe there may be quite a period ahead before the spirit of mistrust and adversity dissipates in the community, yet it has to start somewhere. We agree that community life that is rooted in the tone of approach 4 is the "somewhere" it has to start, even if it takes generations.

Preferences for the tone of approach 4 do not overshadow the challenges it represents to us. For a couple of us, the spirit and practice of negotiation reflected in the third approach is more familiar and easier to envision using as an individual. As our issue-framing mentioned, using

approach 4 for public business implies citizens learn new skills. Leadership questions arise in connection with sustained commitment and neutrality that ensures truly collaborative efforts to meet others needs as well as our own. We wonder about people's interest levels and ability to see long term change develop gradually, without reverting to inactivity or business as usual. At the same time, we see the third approach as a viable option when the fourth does not work, for whatever reason. A real challenge is suggested by the idea of creating new venues for productive citizen-citizen and citizen-official interactions. Developing a shared imagination for what they need to look like may prove challenging, too.

As our discussions kept showing us, and the foregoing illustrates, deliberating the issue of our own tone led us inevitably to imagining how things would work in practice. How things will work is obviously up to everyone, not just this group. At the same time, our participation in this process leaves us feeling that we have more company now. Things seem pretty hopeful, and we look forward to finding ways to get some wider agreement on what kind of interactions we want to have in the community, and spread that hope in such interactions more widely.

Appendix E: Availability of Study Material

The term, study material, refers to scored interview transcripts and the version of the copyrighted discourse process materials that were used in this study.

Study material will be made available to qualified researchers who request it. The written request must include the researcher's organizational affiliation, an explanation of the research interest in the material including the connection of the material to existing or upcoming research, and a signed confidentiality agreement about the use of the material. The confidentiality agreement form will be mailed to the person who makes the request. Signed requests should be sent in writing to:

Sara N. Ross
3109 State Route 222
Bethel, OH 45106-8225
USA

Appendix F: Discourse Structure Underlying the Deliberative Session

Structure for the Nonlinear Dynamics of Deliberative Decision-Making in The Integral Process For Working On Complex Issues							
Feedback loop complexity built into approaches' perspectives (i.e., their basic action-logics) ↓	Concurrent 1st person 2nd person 3rd person feedback loops during deliberation ↓	**0** Encounter reasons, assumptions & actions involved in approach	**1** Frame/advocate/illustrate one's own pro/con concerns (i.e., action-logics formed & used toward the issue)	**2** Frame/advocate/illustrate/inquire into issue-concerns of other's concerns (present & absent) (i.e., other action-logics formed & used toward the issue)	**3** Coordinate the issue's pro/con tensions *within* the approach	**4** Coordinate the issue's pro/con tensions *across all* approaches	**5/0** Sort/ Differentiate/ Synthesize/ Decide
Feedback loops within→ deliberative decisions		0	1	2	3	4	5/0
1st Approach 0-loop abstract	1st individual						
	2nd group						
	3rd issue						
2nd Approach 1-loop formal logic	1st individual						
	2nd group						
	3rd issue						
3rd Approach 1-loop formal logic	1st individual						
	2nd group						
	3rd issue						
4th Approach 2-loop systematic	1st individual						
	2nd group						
	3rd issue						