

Resident Inclusion in the Age of Participation: A Study of
Toronto's Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project 2015-2017

by

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Abstract

Participatory budgeting and other participatory forms of public engagement have reached a high point of popularity as a best practice of democratic government. This gives some cause for celebration for those seeking to *democratize democracy*. However, recent scholarship has revealed a perplexing paradox in how new opportunities for resident involvement remain countered by pre-existing approaches to decision-making guided by abstract notions of public interest. This dissertation seeks to better understanding this paradox by focusing on one of the newest cases of participatory budgeting in North America emerging from one of North America's biggest cities. As an investigation of the City of Toronto's participatory budgeting pilot project, running from 2015 to 2017, this dissertation demonstrates that this paradox is indeed taking place in Toronto. Using a Gramscian analysis of power with a particular focus on the construction of knowledge, this dissertation provides an explanation of how participatory ideals are mobilized alongside prevailing forms of authority to provide new participatory opportunities for involvement without a significant transition of power.

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List of Acronyms

AODA – Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act

BIA – Business Improvement Area

CIO – Civic Innovations Office

CVH – Community Voices Heard

GTA – Greater Toronto Area

IAPP – International Association of Public Participation

LPAT – Local Planning Appeal Tribunal

MDB – Movimento Democrático Brasileiro

NEI – Neighbourhood Equity Index

NIA – Neighbourhood Improvement Area

NPM – New Public Management

OISE – Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

OMB – Ontario Municipal Board

PB – Participatory Budgeting

PBP – Participatory Budgeting Project

PT – Partido de Trabajadores

SDFA – Social Development, Finance & Administration Division.

TCHC – Toronto Community Housing Corporation

TLAB – Toronto Local Appeals Board

TSNS2020 – Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy

TTC – Toronto Transit Commission

YOC – Youth Outreach Coordinator

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Introduction

What role does the common urban dweller fill in the formation of their urban experience? Within their dense, multi-faceted setting, urban inhabitants seek shelter, sustenance, and socialization. Within Canadian society, urban inhabitants generally sate these needs as consumers of conditions resulting from government decisions and market forces. The capacity to take on the role of a producer of these conditions can involve the indirect influence of the ballot box, lobbying, or the direct influence enabled by the ownership of capital. While the predominant role of residents as consumers may ostensibly serve the needs of many, the unique critical capacity of the human mind, at times, triggers a civically engaged spirit in search of something more. Such critical urban consciousness is typically spurred by insufficiencies or intrusions experienced in daily life that compel a desire among residents for more deliberative and participatory forms (and forums) of democracy. This transhistorical process can now be witnessed in the development of new and innovative standards for public participation in the decisions of local government. Borrowing from ideas of participatory democracy that emerged from the re-democratization of Brazil, calls for increased participation now ring out from cities of countries that have been long considered exemplary democracies. This provides a crucial opportunity to investigate the *democratization of democracy*, and how forms of participation interact with pre-existing forms of urban governance in Canada.

A specific model for democratic innovation that involves the urban public beyond the ballot box is that of participatory budgeting. Based on experimentation in Brazilian cities, participatory budgeting is defined as a process by which residents directly allocate public funds in deliberation with each other and with government staff who advise on

formal procedure and feasibility (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016; Tranjan 2012). Initial celebration of this model of participatory democracy featured animated claims of how it nurtured a technodemocratic culture in which residents are recognized as being uniquely informed by experiential knowledge of community needs (de Sousa Santos 1998). Participatory budgeting has since become a best practice of public engagement and good governance within what has been called the “Age of Participation”(Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016; MacCallum 2016) or the period of the “participatory turn” (Bherer, Dufour, and Montambeault 2016). These characterizations of the era reference an acute moment of popularity for ideas of participatory budgeting, but also express a certain satire with many studies now identifying a confounding paradox. This paradox highlights that while the idea of participatory budgeting may be welcomed by government officials as a new way for residents to have a say in government decision-making, this idea is significantly guided by pre-existing practices and understandings of public interest. Participation has been found to become “part of the planning of how power functions” (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016, 46). To better understand how the meaning of participation is being shaped to consolidate power rather than democratize it, scholarship now calls for investigation into specific participatory initiatives.

In order to better understand the current mainstreaming of participatory budgeting this doctoral research focuses on a participatory budgeting pilot project launched by the City of Toronto, running from 2015 to 2017. This doctoral research asks: is this paradox taking place in Toronto? If so, how are participatory ideals mobilized alongside prevailing forms of authority to provide new participatory opportunities for involvement without a significant transition in power? This research seeks to identify how participatory ideals that

situate residents as uniquely informed about needs in the public realm interact with the pre-existing structures of authority in government. A groundswell of literature has formed around questions of urban governance and the production of knowledge in the neoliberal age (Brenner, Marcuse, and Mayer 2012; Callon, Lascoumes, and Barthe 2009; Farías and Blok 2016; MacCallum 2016; March 2012). This dissertation proceeds with a focus on how knowledge is constructed in the inspiration, design, implementation and evaluation of the pilot project to reveal telling insights regarding the participatory paradox.

As an exploration of the participatory paradox, this research provides the plausible narrative that while the pilot project was a response to a progressive vision of increased resident involvement in the allocation of public funds, it continued to situate participants as not being sufficiently informed on how to improve their own communities. This dissertation argues that this irony results from hegemonic strategies that seek to co-opt critical claims while maintaining authoritative arrangements as matters of common sense. These claims to common sense are entrenched within the established protocols, practices and procedures of urban planning that espouse a particular understanding of the public realm. That pre-existing common sense claims are used to shape participatory budgeting, rather than being called into question by participatory budgeting, suggests an instrumentalization that forgoes the possibility of more collective constructions of knowledge with regard to existing urban problems, necessary solutions, and desirable urban futures. This plausible narrative demonstrates how ostensibly participatory programs are not only limited by existing structures, but also reproduce and consolidate limitations to active resident involvement.

The participatory puzzle

Calls for increased appreciation of ground-level knowledge through new democratic forums are long-running. These calls were articulated by American Progressive Era scholar of public administration John Dewey, who famously reasoned that “the individuals of the submerged mass may not be very wise. But there is one thing they are wiser about than anybody else can be, and that is where the shoe pinches, the troubles they suffer from” (Dewey, 1981, 219–20).¹ Such calls advocate for the recognition of everyday expertise as a valuable source of knowledge on overlooked or neglected needs.

It should be noted that the term everyday expertise – meaning the knowledge one has by virtue of their daily interaction with their environment – is far from a contradiction in terms. In fact, this use is actually aligned with the Latin origin of the term *ex-peritus* translating directly as out-of-experience.² The more exclusive form of “special acquired knowledge [...] not within general knowledge” only emerged in the early 19th century with the recognition of expert testimony in court proceedings.³ Similarly, in terms of governance, the increasing complexity and neoliberalization of modern society supports the professionalization of knowledge in matters of public interest. This professionalization serves to depoliticize government decision-making and insulate these matters from public debate and input. Calls for everyday expertise seek to cross-examine this process with insights of those who experience the impacts of these decisions.

¹ Dewey (1981) continues to clarify: “It is said that the average citizen is not endowed with the degree of intelligence that the use of it as a method demands. This objection, supported by alleged scientific findings about heredity and by impressive stats concerning the intelligence quotient of the average citizen, rests wholly upon the old notion that intelligence is a ready-made possession of individuals. The last stand of oligarchical and anti-social seclusion is the perpetuation of this purely individualistic notion of intelligence (38).

² “Expertise” in Online Etymology Dictionary. 2017 < <https://www.etymonline.com/expert> >

³ Ibid

The late Robert Dahl voiced concern with how the increasingly technical nature of government decision-making has led to what he referred to as a crisis in civic virtue (Dahl 1992). Dahl argued for the creation of new forums in which citizens can become equipped with the skills necessary to hold modern government to account (Dahl 1992, 56). However, Dahl also noted that new forums are far from a panacea and come with their own set of challenges “not least of which”, he states, “is to give citizens easy access to expert views while at the same time encouraging them to examine claims to superior knowledge or infallibility with considerable skepticism” (Dahl 1992, 56). Dahl’s precaution is based on his awareness of how increasingly technical and complex arrangements of policy and administration can stifle the involvement of ordinary constituents. This will be shown to be precisely the conundrum that new participatory forums struggle with today.

Theorizations of new democratic forums have been generally grouped into deliberative and participatory alternatives to electoral democracy. Deliberative theories of democracy are broadly defined by a formalized, inclusive, and open exchange between diverse parties who are considered equal contributors to a dialogue or debate (Dryzek 2002; Legacy, March, and Mouat 2014; Pateman 2012). Deliberative forums promote the exchange of views between differing perspectives in an inclusive dialogue for the purpose of cross-examining claims of desirable goals (Legacy 2010, 2709; Pateman 2012, 8). Examples of such deliberative forums are found in collaborative urban planning initiatives and planning review committees. Participatory theories of democracy, on the other hand, take the additional step toward more substantive democratic practices by creating new roles and decision-making capacities for voluntary participants interacting with conventional institutional structures (Baiocchi and Ganuza 2014; Fung 2006; Lerner 2011; Miller,

Hildreth, and Stewart 2017; Pateman 2012). In relation to established representative democracy, participatory ideals support an innovative franchise. How this innovative franchise is shaped in the current period of Canadian urban governance is the focus of this dissertation research.

A model embracing this innovative participatory franchise emerged from the re-democratization of Brazil in 1985. As a way to offset the frequency of clientelism – the practice of political elites directing government expenditure toward political patrons and economic cronies – the Brazilian constitution designates specific funds to be made available to municipalities for participatory allocation on the local level. This arrangement enabled the development of the oft attributed model of participatory budgeting launched in Porto Alegre by the Partido de los Trabajadores (PT) in 1989 to translate “local demands into an investment plan that adheres to the technical criteria required by city departments” (Tranjan 2012, 139). Based on a place-based stake, residents are engaged in a dialogue over the allocation of public funds and the development of public space in order to address neglected needs with creative solutions. Though the idea of a more direct role for residents in investment and urban planning decisions is by no means original to Brazil, the initiation of this model in Porto Alegre has spurred a renewed interest in its feasibility around the world. By 2016, estimates ranged from 1,500 (Flynn 2016) to 2,700 (Sintomer, Herzberg, and Rocke 2014) initiatives taking place around the world under the banner of participatory budgeting (often referred to by the acronym “PB”).

Lerner and Van Wagner argue that participatory budgeting is a way to collaborate horizontally and offset hierarchies “in which politicians are viewed as decision-makers, government staff are viewed as service providers, and residents are mere consumers”

(Lerner and Van Wagner 2006, 15). Scholarship has indeed demonstrated that participatory budgeting can increase the representation of marginalized communities and can direct investment toward neglected needs (Hernández-Medina 2010; Pape and Lerner 2016; Pinnington, Lerner, and Schugurensky 2009; Piper 2014). However, as will be discussed in Chapter 1, recent scholarship arising from the global spread of participatory budgeting has shown that while participatory budgeting may also be used to legitimize existing structures of authority (Nylen 2011; Pateman 2012). Recent scholarship on the spread of participatory budgeting in North America and Europe has further identified the democratizing potential of participatory budgeting to be inhibited by structural limitations (Maley 2010; Patsias, Latendresse, and Bherer 2013; Pin 2016). Analyzing frontrunning cases in the United States and Canada, Pin identifies the emergence of participatory budgeting to be largely aligned with trends of neoliberalization and New Public Management (NPM) rather than a corrective force that contests their influence over government decision-making (Pin 2017; Pin 2016). Similar analysis of the growing establishment of participatory budgeting in Spain and the United States has identified that participatory decision-making continues to be circumscribed by the judgement of professional planners and city staff (Baiocchi and Ganuza 2014; Ganuza and Baiocchi 2012; Jabola-Carolus 2017; Su 2018).

Participatory budgeting now stands at an interesting point of transition. In 2017, after nearly 30 years, the annual participatory budgeting process in Porto Alegre was put under review on the basis of ensuring sustainable use of available funds (Abers et al. 2018; Gelman and Votto 2018). In the same year, participatory budgeting was becoming increasingly established in New York City, potentially displacing Porto Alegre as the locus

of inspiration for cities around the world. This is significant, as recent studies on participatory budgeting in New York finds “managed” and “increasingly inaccessible” forms of participation that could come to define participatory budgeting (Jabola-Carolus 2017; Lerner 2017; Su 2017). Rather than see public participation as having “lost its transformative potential and critical influence to forge new policy and urban directives”, Legacy (2016) calls for dialectical analysis of how differing claims on the advisable degree and purpose of public participation are reconciled and resisted in specific initiatives. MacCallum (2016) urges for in-depth research of initiatives to identify how pre-existing understandings of knowledge and mandate are questioned, renegotiated, or ironically imposed. This research answers this call by engaging in an investigation of how a tamed version of participation is being developed within the City of Toronto.

Explanation of the case study

This dissertation uses the City of Toronto’s participatory budgeting pilot project to explore the factors contributing to the paradox of the participation age (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016). Launched in 2015, the inception of this pilot project can be directly attributed to the efforts of an individual elected official, Councillor Shelley Carroll. Carroll succeeded in passing a motion in Toronto City Council for the city-wide budget to fund participatory budgeting. The pilot project thereby transitioned into the purview of the City Manager’s Office, which granted access to increased staff support and funding. The Strategic and Corporate Policy division in the City Manager’s Office recommended the pilot project design, oversaw the implementation of the pilot project, coordinated staff responses to participant proposals, and conducted a final evaluation in coordination with other senior staff. While this may indicate support and integration of participatory

principles within the City of Toronto, this new level of integration will be shown to also include a number of constraints.

In this three-year pilot project, one ward, and two sub-ward Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs), were each allocated a fixed amount of capital funding each year. These areas are Don Valley East (former Ward 33) in the district of North York, and the two NIAs of Rustic in former Ward 12 in the district of York, and Oakridge in former Ward 35 in the district of Scarborough. All three pilot testing areas featured a common sequence of idea generation sessions, deliberative prioritisation sessions, and a final vote each year.⁴ As a way to coordinate resident proposals with technical requirements of the funding available, eligibility criteria were stated in the initial council decision and developed significantly throughout the course of the pilot project. Other consultative innovations taking place in Toronto, such as reforms in development appeals processes, resident advisory panels, and human-centric planning similarly reflect a belief that technical decisions are incomplete without the input of ground-level perspectives harboring the expertise of everyday life. As such, the participatory budgeting pilot project emerges from an already active participatory turn in Toronto. However, it is unique in that it enabled the direct input of residents in the allocation of \$1,870,000 in capital funding over three years.

Despite indications that participatory values are becoming more established within the City of Toronto, resident involvement continues to be limited by pre-existing

⁴ Eligible projects were determined through an iterative process. Participants were informed about the eligibility criteria (capital projects taking place on city owned property) and amount of funding available (\$150,000 for each area in the first year, and \$250,000 for each area in each of the two latter years). Participants then made proposals on the ways they felt the money could be used to improve their neighbourhoods in public sessions or through an online forum. Staff provided feedback to these proposals on the basis of cost and eligibility in a deliberative public meeting. This deliberative public meeting would then determine the list of eligible projects that would be on the ballot for final vote.

knowledge-intensive processes that inform authoritative understandings of the urban environment. Such knowledge-intensive processes are found in capital asset planning, which is oriented around designated spaces and schedules meant to manage public resources in the interest of the general public. Analyzing how these knowledge-intensive practices are extended into participatory dialogue will reveal how entrenched limitations to the democratization of urban space are ironically reinforced by these ostensibly inclusive practices. Rather than equipping residents to democratize these knowledge-intensive processes, the pilot project will be shown to compel a consensus with pre-existing understandings of urban space and infrastructure.

More than simply nurturing subservient forms of participation among the local population, the City of Toronto's pilot project contributes to understandings of participation globally. For instance, the staff evaluation of the pilot project concludes that participatory budgeting is costly, potentially problematic, and requires professional guidance, and seeks to contribute these findings to the "worldwide knowledge on PB".⁵ Therefore, this pilot project calls out for continued analysis to complement and, if necessary, challenge these findings. The plausible counter-narrative presented by this dissertation supports a more elaborate evaluation of what the pilot project indicates in terms of the current practice and future prospects of public participation.

How Gramsci helps to make sense of the participatory paradox

Antonio Gramsci's focus on how critical consciousness can be defused through selective concessions to re-establish consent with the status quo provides a useful framework for making sense of the noted paradox of participatory initiatives. The Gramscian concepts of

⁵ Toronto's Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto Budget Committee, January 31, 2019, p 15

hegemony and *trasformismo* are helpful in explaining the irony of how participatory budgeting is used to compel residents to accept a limited role in the formation of their urban environment. *Trasformismo* is defined as “the development of an even broader ruling class by gradual and continuous absorption [of adversarial efforts], with methods of variable efficacy” (Anderson 2017, 22). Gramsci originally applied this concept to the period of Italian national unification throughout the 19th century and the formation of democratic government at the turn of the 20th century (Gramsci 1971, 58 note 85). This concept has since been applied in studies of contemporary politics to illustrate the methods by which critical organizing is co-opted so as to symbolize progressive change while ultimately stifling the development of critical consciousness in society (Bates 2013; Fontana 2005; Moore 2005; Simionatto and Negri 2017).

A Gramscian understanding of hegemony aids analysis of how ground-level perspectives interact with material conditions amidst an overarching understanding of legitimacy and authority. In order to attain hegemonic standing, political and economic alliances recruit traditional intellectuals to establish a common sense that frames hegemonic goals as universal. Participatory budgeting, in featuring the direct expression of needs from members of the public, threatens pre-existing notions of common sense and calls existing hegemonic claims of universal interest into question. Gramsci supports the belief that in such situations the state functions as an organ of hegemony to restore faith among the general public and civil society in pre-existing claims of universal interest.

By analyzing how knowledge is constructed within the participatory process, this research will reveal that the fuller becoming of resident participation is compromised by hegemonic notions of common sense. With the original idea of participatory budgeting

being based around Paulo Freire's concept of epistemological curiosity – an acknowledgement that no one perspective is complete unto itself and requires rigorous engagement with the knowledge of others – this will be used as the original thesis of participatory budgeting (Freire 1998, 35). This nuance of participatory budgeting, which invites contributions of everyday expertise of urban residents into the technical process of budgeting public expenditure, will be shown to be undermined by dominant constructions of knowledge and notions of public interest embedded in urban neoliberalism and NPM. These hegemonic notions of common sense are rooted in the increasingly complex processes of urban planning that situate professional planners and senior staff in municipal government as producers of knowledge. This dissertation argues that a prevalence of exclusive constructions of knowledge inhibits the capacity of participatory forums to situate the experiential knowledge of residents in a position of authority.

Limitations of the case study

This dissertation makes use of a the pilot-project in Toronto to investigate a widely recognized paradox. A single case study may be a narrow basis upon which to argue an explanation for this general trend. However, this case study supports a rich analysis of the specific ways this pilot project aligns with the trend of the participatory paradox and, furthermore, how expressions of experiential knowledge interact with established approaches to decision-making (Flyvbjerg 2006; Odell 2001). Furthermore, as the project takes place in Canada's largest city, the case study stands as a telling symbol of how participatory budgeting may operate in other highly developed, urban settings. By situating this case study within the limitations of the Canadian municipality, this analysis will

account for specific elements at play in this specific city while also offering an analysis that is applicable in other jurisdictions.

As will be further explained in the methodology section of Chapter 2, this research investigates the inspiration, design, implementation, and evaluation of the pilot project from the perspectives of interviewees. Due to the limitations of time and capacity, a total of 36 interviews were conducted with a range of stakeholders. While interviews among select public officials allowed for engagement with “key players”, recruitment of participant interviews was dependant on their interest and availability. Recruiting a descriptively representative sample of participants was accomplished to some degree, however, each participant holds a personal perspective on the pilot project that may not be representative. In order to address the undue influence that personal testimony may have over findings, interviews are complemented by analysis of government documentation, cross-referenced with each other, and situated as personal narratives rather than objective information.

Chapter outline

This doctoral research will be presented in the following arrangement of chapters. Chapter 1 will review a corpus of research on participatory budgeting, planning theory, and local political economy in order to situate this doctoral research within the extant literature and current debates in these fields. A literature review based on the search terms knowledge, epistemic communities, civic engagement, public engagement, deliberative democracy, participatory planning, participatory democracy, and local political economy, with a specific focus on cities in liberal democracies, reveals an on-going debate regarding the viability of participatory forums to elaborate understandings of the public interest. This

will provide a firm understanding of the current questions in the literature on participatory budgeting and those in complementary literatures that this dissertation seeks to answer. Chapter 2 will outline the methodology of this research and explain how Gramsci's concept of *trasformismo* provides the analytical framework of this dissertation.

Chapter 3 will begin to investigate how inclusive discourse is mobilized alongside prevailing forms of authority by reviewing the disposition of the Canadian municipality in relation the demands of local constituents. Heeding calls in participatory budgeting literature to account for structural limitations, this chapter investigates the structures that mitigate the capacity of the Canadian municipality to provide as a platform for local empowerment. This chapter will demonstrate how calls for local involvement in government decision-making are consistently responded to by existing authorities with forms of *trasformismo*. This chapter will establish a key divergence in ways of knowing the city and discuss how these divergent ways of knowing relate to existing hegemonic arrangements. Chapter 4 begins a focused inquiry on the case study to illustrate a plausible narrative regarding the driving motivation of the pilot project. This chapter demonstrates how an original consensus on the value of resident involvement that motivated the creation of the pilot project was replaced by overriding priorities based on established notions of "good planning" and public interest when the pilot project was put into practice. Chapter 5 delves further into how the idea of resident involvement is compromised by the design of the pilot project. This chapter investigates how the goals and parameters of the pilot project create a container for interactions between residents and staff. This chapter demonstrates that the pilot project was designed provide an introduction to "how the City works" at the cost of a more engaging and curious process.

Chapter 6 analyzes two-years of field research on the interactions that took place within the container created by the pilot project. The aspirations of participants will be shown to be in tension with the limited grounds for decision-making enabled by the pilot project. While the pilot project is shown to rationalize these limitations, the remaining critical orientation of participants demonstrates that while *trasformismo* has taken place, it is only effective to varying degrees. Chapter 7 discusses the process of evaluation following the pilot project. While staff conducted the official evaluation, evaluation of the pilot project also took place from the perspective of the leading councillor and those of various participants. Each form of evaluation demonstrates the different ways that the strengths and weakness of the pilot project were recognized. Ultimately, the pilot project evaluation is shown to consolidate limitations to the fuller becoming of participatory budgeting in Toronto and in global discourse. The concluding chapter suggests possible impacts for participation in Toronto and recommends areas for continued research on participatory practices more generally.

Collectively, these chapters provide a plausible narrative of how ways of knowing entrench relations to power in the urban setting and how forms of resident recognition and inclusion can function to legitimize, rather than challenge, these power relations. This indicates a significant shift away from the original nuance and innovation that participatory budgeting was inspired by. By investigating this pilot project in terms of knowledge, this dissertation demonstrates the structural limitations to more participatory practices underlying this specific case study and those like it. In doing so, this research provides a plausible explanation of the pilot project itself and demonstrates how critical

epistemological analysis should be used to interrogate growing levels of participatory experimentation in North America.

Chapter 1 - Literature Review

This chapter will conduct a literature review to situate the questions that drive this doctoral research within the extant literature. The study of participatory budgeting has transitioned from an optimistic celebration to a more skeptical interrogation. Though the global spread of participatory budgeting indicates a consensus on the appeal of increased resident involvement, the implementation of these ideals is shown to succumb to prevailing structures of authority that situate residents as consumers of professional judgement. Embracing the experiential knowledge of needs and solutions of residents is a foundational aspect of the original ideals of participatory budgeting. Therefore, this reproduction of centralized knowledge constructions spells out an ironic malfunction, or paradox (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016), of participatory budgeting's popularity. This irony has compelled a critical turn in analysis and a continued liveliness in the study of participatory budgeting in the pursuit of better understandings of how pre-existing structures of authority circumscribe its empowering properties.

Though the quarrel over participatory budgeting emerged around the turn of the millennium, questions of public participation are not new or unique to this literature. Exploring literature outside of the specific study of participatory budgeting helps to understand the structured environment in which adaptations of participatory budgeting take place. In order to better understand how forms of public participation can be pervaded by pre-existing structures of authority, this dissertation will also make use of literature in planning theory, urban studies, and local political economy. These areas of scholarship have long grappled with how the increasing complexity of society creates new roles and domains of knowledge that offset the democratic nature of government decision-making. As such, recent literature features analysis of how the knowledge-intensive approaches to

shaping and managing cities now interact with the rising popularity of participatory and deliberative processes. Critical planning theorist MacCallum (2016) demonstrates how even in the “Age of Participation” exclusive practices and understandings of knowledge embedded within the process of planning and capital development reproduce the very barriers that public participation is meant to challenge. Confronted with a similar paradox as scholarship on participatory budgeting, scholarship in planning theory, urban studies, and local political economy helps to better understand prevailing barriers to public participation as well as the nuanced understanding of knowledge exchange that *could* emerge.

This literature review will begin by outlining the development of studies in participatory budgeting, focusing mainly on the increasing amount of North American cases. This review will demonstrate the drastic shift away from viewing participatory budgeting as a form of democratic innovation and toward an analysis of its adaptation as a device for public engagement that is circumscribed by the very structures of authority it is meant to challenge. This trend has led to pressing questions in this literature about how administrative habits, while further establishing participatory budgeting, continue to reconcile contesting knowledge claims along lines of pre-existing authoritative arrangements. In the second section, a review of studies in planning, urban studies and local political economy will establish how planning creates structures of authority in relation to the urban resident. This literature features well-developed theories on how public participation is systemically challenged by concentrations of “epistemological authority” despite increased levels of involvement (Abram 2000; Huxley and Yiftachel 2000; Sanders 1997). This can be demonstrated by the rise and fall of a belief in

communicative planning as a way to democratize planning decisions and Moore's more recent research on the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) dispute resolution process. Among the most valuable contributions to this literature are those from an identifiable concentration of Australian scholarship, such as that of MacCallum (2008, 2016), which poses many of the same questions as this dissertation with regard to the development of nominally participatory practices (Fincher, Pardy, and Shaw 2016; Hopkins 2010b, 2010a; Inch et al. 2017; Legacy 2010, 2016; March 2012; Mouat, Legacy, and March 2013). These studies advance understandings of how public participation in infrastructure planning and development must contend with established constructions of knowledge. That applications of Gramscian analysis are consistently found in this literature review demonstrates the value of Gramsci to the study at hand. This literature review will conclude with the idea of hybrid forums in order to illustrate what collaborative processes of knowledge production could look like.

Participatory openings within pre-existing structures of government

An explosion of literature has resulted from the initiation of participatory budgeting in Brazil. The initial boom in English literature celebrates the introduction of participatory budgeting by the PT in Porto Alegre as providing a model for enriched democratic alternatives to representative democracy (Baiocchi 2003b; Nylén 2011; Smith 2009, 62; Souza 2001; Wampler and Avritzer 2004). Wampler and Avritzer (2004) depict participatory budgeting as a transformation of the political terrain upon which a new "participatory public" with the capacity to reorient existing government priorities can take shape. Early publications by Baiocchi (2003a, 2003b) present participatory budgeting as an initiative that facilitates the organized participation of the urban poor within a broadened

public sphere. Santos (1998) demonstrates the redistributive effects of participatory budgeting by documenting marked increases in investments to the needs of the poor, claiming that “technical staff has been increasingly submitted to a profound learning process [...] where earlier technobureaucratic culture prevailed, gradually a *technodemocratic* culture has emerged” (emphasis added) (500). This initial coverage conceptualizes participatory budgeting as a new process of resource allocation; one which situates the experiential knowledge of participants in a leadership role.

This celebratory tone is echoed in sequential publications covering how participatory budgeting could be (Baiocchi and Lerner 2007; Irvin and Stansbury 2004; Maley 2010) or has been (Babcock et al. 2008; Cabannes 2004; Chapin 2013; Goldfrank 2007; Koga 2013; McNulty 2012, 2012; Petite 2014; Sintomer, Herzberg, and Röcke 2008; Su 2012) implemented in other settings, including post-industrial and highly-developed cities of Europe and North America. Among the most outspoken supporters is activist-scholar Josh Lerner, who has published and co-published a large amount of scholarship investigating experimentation in Canada and how this experimentation can spread across North America (Lerner 2010, 2011; Lerner and Schugurensky 2005; Pinnington, Lerner, and Schugurensky 2009). Covering the first cases of participatory budgeting in North American, in Guelph Ontario and Toronto’s Community Housing Corporations, Lerner and Van Wagner (2006) state that participatory budgeting creates more horizontal forms of collaboration between elected officials, government staff, and residents. Envisioning what participatory budgeting could look like for the City of Toronto, Lerner wrote his Master of Science in Planning Thesis at the University of Toronto’s as a report to the City of Toronto’s Civic Engagement Unit. In this report, Lerner (2004) explains the myriad

benefits that emerge from transitioning “government policies that were previously decided by political and bureaucratic interests to democratic deliberation by city residents” (19).⁶ This supportive literature continues to be produced by international organizations like the World Bank (2019), and more applied disciplines encouraging the spread of participatory budgeting as a best practice for good governance (Flynn 2016; Shah 2007). Participatory budgeting has thus become a household name within schools of thought regarding public engagement.

Participatory budgeting has been shown to provide a platform for increasing awareness and responsiveness to underserved needs. This is done by civil society organizations representing groups that are typically marginalized along lines of race, gender or income (Piper 2014) or by members of marginalized groups themselves (Pateman 2012; World Bank 2008). Increased representation and involvement in decision-making has been shown to have redistributive effects that situate typically marginalized demographics in leadership positions or otherwise direct funding toward needs in underserved areas (Boulding and Wampler 2010; Bräutigam 2004; Gonçalves 2014; Hernández-Medina 2010; Lavalle, Acharya, and Houtzager 2005). Therefore, the objective success of participatory budgeting is framed as supporting the agency for voluntary residents to directly redistribute public funds toward neglected needs.

The use of more sophisticated analytical frameworks to assess both new and long-running cases of participatory budgeting has brought about a critical turn in the literature. Nylen (2011) refers to this critical turn as the second-wave of participatory budgeting

⁶ Lerner has since co-founded the organization Participatory Budgeting Project (PBP) that has assisted with the design and facilitation of participatory initiatives and educational conferences across North America. Lerner has most recently taken on the position of Co-Executive Director of the organization People Powered: Global Hub for Participatory Democracy.

scholarship. This call for more critical engagement is echoed by authors arguing that analysis of structural limitations is necessary to better understand the impact of participatory initiatives. Such analysis is especially necessary for a comprehensive appraisal of the spread of participatory budgeting. Cabannes (2004) made early contributions to this critical turn by predicting that “a growing number of cities will adopt and adapt this methodology” and that future analysis should focus on how differing objectives are negotiated or contested (45). Situating the Porto Alegre model within a broader history of participatory experimentation⁷, Tranjan (2012) argues for the need to assess participatory innovation “in terms of its ability to alter the balance of power in favour of subordinate classes” (159–60). Studies identifying redistributive effects and increased representation of typically marginalized groups point to what participatory budgeting *can* do. However, closer analysis of how participatory budgeting redistributes power to enrich the role of the resident in the development of their city requires a case specific analysis of structural limitations. Analysis that accounts for structural limitations, rather than celebrating the presence of participatory budgeting as an end in itself, engages more

⁷ During Brazil’s military dictatorship, the military regime instated a two-party system, with military regime supporters represented in the Aliança Nacional Renovadora/National Renewal Alliance and oppositional groups represented in the Movimento Democrático Brasileiro/Brazilian Democratic Movement (MDB). Within the MDB, forms of direct popular participation were called for by the radical wing (the “*autênticos*”) as early as the mid-1970s. In 1977, the MDB won election in the town of Lages. Using the town of Lages as his case, Tranjan conducts a historical political-economic analysis to demonstrate how failures in the national economy, dissatisfaction with traditional political elites, and a relatively high level of industrial development supported the experimentation of critical innovations in the provision of public works. Political leaders, namely Dirceu Carneiro, then Vice-Mayor and Secretary of Public Works, sought to give voice to an increasingly urbanized working class through infrastructure programs, resident-led service delivery, and early models of participatory budgeting. Unlike his superior, Mayor Juarez Furtado, who “envisioned a politicotechnical administration”, Carneiro developed programs that put residents in a leadership position to direct municipal workers to address infrastructure and maintenance problems. Carneiro’s programs also approached an early model of participatory budgeting with a portion of the budget being directly decided by a council of elected representatives from neighbourhood groups. The prevailing authority of traditional elites led to the discontinuation of this experimentation, with an election in 1982 bringing Partido Social Democrata/Social Democracy Party to power. The new administration dismissed the technical staff who had begun to develop an orientation around these new approaches to service delivery and capital improvements developed by Carneiro (Tranjan, 2015).

substantively with what countervailing forces undermine the attributed technodemocratic potential of participatory budgeting (Ganuza and Baiocchi 2012; de Sousa Santos 1998).

Pateman (2012) finds most of the expansion of participatory budgeting around the world to actually be compatible with many of the shifts in western society associated with consumer culture, globalization, and the financialization of municipal government. Challenging popular conceptions of participatory budgeting, Pateman argues that many instances of participatory budgeting are more of a deliberative addition to existing institutional structures rather than a participatory elaboration of how democracy is understood. Deliberative forums, such as citizen assemblies and citizen juries, stand in relation to the more transformative pursuits of participatory democracy as, at best, occasional opportunities for *mini-publics* to engage with government decision-making and, at worst, “useful legitimating devices for already-decided policy” (Pateman 2012, 10). Beyond an invitation to cross-examine claims between residents and public officials, participatory democracy requires an innovative and nuanced franchise that transitions authority over a hitherto exclusive decision-making process (Pateman 2012). Analyzing structural factors helps to identify that while new levels of involvement may be referenced in participatory initiatives, they are not necessarily achieved.

Baiocchi and Ganuza (2014) have made an abundance of contributions to a more comprehensive understanding of the spread of participatory budgeting. These authors find that adaptations of participatory budgeting consistently maintain the communicative dimension of deliberation but are less likely to maintain the empowering dimension of resident-led decision-making. Ganuza and Baiocchi (2012) find that rather than the leftist-inspired institutional reform that originally formed the basis of participatory budgeting, it

has become a politically neutral device for public engagement within established institutions. While participatory budgeting creates a new space in which new types of interactions can take place, these authors conclude that the “participation age is paradoxical”; participation no longer stands for counter-power but rather is part of how established power functions (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016, 331).



FIGURE 1: MILLER ET AL'S, MODES OF PARTICIPATION, 2017

Analysis of how increased levels of participation can be happening and not happening all at once, is aided by the long-running development of frameworks that more precisely measure the depth of involvement. Building upon the early contribution of Arnstein’s Ladder of Citizen Participation⁸ that differentiates shallow forms of inclusion from those more active and participant-driven, Miller et al. (2017) have sought to aid analysis of participatory budgeting with the Modes of Participation Framework (Fig. 1). Miller et al’s comparative and multi-faceted focus on specific cases demonstrates the variety of outcomes that can result from participatory initiatives. While increased representation of marginalized groups among participants is certainly made possible in participatory forums, public involvement in other aspects of deliberation, collaborative

⁸ The Ladder of Citizen Participation distinguishes between non-participatory forms of engagement, tokenistic forms of engagement and more active forms of engagement that involve decision-making capacity. Arnstein (1969) puts informing, consultation, and placation in the category of tokenism, and categorizes partnership, delegated power, and citizen control as supporting citizen power.

decision-making, and authority over outcomes remain limited. This increased specificity is helpful in determining whether increased inclusion is taking place at pivotal decision points.

Who is able to participate and how they are communicated with remain important units of analysis in research on participatory initiatives. However, the importance of including typically uninvolved perspectives in a dialogue with government staff is treated as a standard element of participatory budgeting (Flynn 2016). More complex and revealing questions focus on the capacity of participants to engage in decision-making with authority attributed by a participatory theory of democracy. In short, does participatory budgeting offer any meaningful level of empowerment to those who engage in this dialogue? Early contributions to the critical turn in participatory budgeting scholarship identified a prevailing influence of the institutions of representative democracy, due to the required approval of elected officials (Nylen 2011). Again however, as participatory budgeting becomes an increasingly popular practice, the notion of participants having at least a “de facto” final say is a consistent underlying value in elected officials’ approach to participatory budgeting (Miller, Hildreth, and Stewart 2017). Therefore, assessments of the practical implications and transition of power with regard to the resident in the “participation age” should be focused on the structures and habits within government administration (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016; Pin 2017; Su 2017).

Canadian scholarship has made contributions to the analysis of structural constraints circumscribing participatory innovations. Among the first to acknowledge the formidable nature of structural limitations to participatory budgeting in Canada, Maley (2010) claims that the subservient nature of municipal government, in conjunction with a

lack of radical memory in Canadian society, creates an unlikely setting for participatory budgeting to become established in any meaningful way. Changes in the structure of municipalities have been shown to give way to participatory budgeting experimentation in Montreal, but Patsias, Latendresse, and Bherer (2013) find that “decentralization constitutes a necessary but not sufficient condition for participatory budgeting” (2223). Focusing on the structures and habits within government administration helps to better track how the authority and range of decision-making available to participants is corralled by pre-existing procedures, protocols, and embedded notions of public interest.

The original intention of participatory budgeting advocates was for technical expertise to be made subservient to the popular mandate “and not the other way around”, which requires an openness to new administrative habits within government (Ganuza and Baiocchi 2012, 5). Finding a lack of significant administrative reorientation around experiential expertise, Ganuza and Baiocchi (2012) state that “competing logics of what counts as expert knowledge” stand to confuse and undermine participation (9). One of the key paradoxes that Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers (2016) identify is that even in cities where participatory budgeting is well-established, government staff assume the position of a legitimate authority guarding the line between professional judgement and participant proposals. This authority was often expressed in the process of assessing the feasibility of participant proposals (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016). This dynamic obstructed participants from using participatory budgeting to connect recognized problems with creative solutions and situated them as disruptive and confused in relation to an otherwise orderly and comprehensive pursuit of administering public funds in the public interest.

These same outcomes have been identified in the growing establishment of participatory budgeting in the districts of New York. Focusing on interactions between participants and government staff, Su (2017, 2018) reveals patterns of what they term “managed participation”, which city agency representatives justify by claiming that serving the broader public interest is part of their jobs. Jabola-Carolus (2017) also identifies how the re-negotiation of roles found in the establishment of participatory budgeting in New York City features the increased involvement of professional staff who, though helpful, exhibit the capacity to exert downward pressure on participatory decision-making. Lerner (2017) concurs that despite an increasingly well-attended participatory budgeting bandwagon, “critical stages of deliberation, learning, and leadership development have become increasingly inaccessible” (158). This scholarship makes the valuable contribution of critically analyzing what is arguably replacing Porto Alegre as the world’s most renowned example of participatory budgeting.

Pin (2016, 2017), one of Canada’s leading contributors to the critical turn in participatory scholarship, elaborates the measure of empowerment developed by Ganuza and Baiocchi to explore the first cases of participatory budgeting in the United States (Chicago’s 49th ward), and Canada (Guelph, Ontario). Pin’s in-depth analysis supports that of earlier Canadian scholarship, identifying how participatory innovations tend to be supported only insofar as they align with the goals of neoliberal governance and, in Canada, values of NPM (Maley 2010). Among Canadian scholars, Pin (2017) is unique in revealing how rather than offsetting narrow notions of expertise, “staff can use the scope of the process as a means of shutting down more creative or unusual projects” (130). Once again,

the paradox of forms of exclusion prevailing within participatory initiatives calls for analysis of the dynamic between staff and participants.

A survey of senior staff of municipal governments in Ontario finds that opportunities for resident involvement in budgeting are common, but that there is also a perceived lack of sufficient comprehension among residents (Limani 2014). The countervailing influence of pre-existing processes that can challenge the capacity of participants to engage in dialogue with government as equals is found in the literature on “citizen improvement”. This literature typically focuses on how participatory budgeting helps participants learn how to become more conscientious, technically competent, and mindful (Cooke 2000; Foroughi and Mccollum 2013; Schugurensky 2006). Though not necessarily counter-opposed, prioritizing technical learning by participants is indeed distinct from a possible bottom-up pedagogy led by the experiential knowledge of participants. Similar to the identified relationship between literacy and democracy throughout history (Milner 2002; Missiou 2011), increased literacy in technical procedures has beneficial effects on a residents’ capacity to engage with government. Lerner, Pinnington, and Schugurensky have published a number of works on the valuable learning outcomes available for both participants and public officials in participatory budgeting (Lerner 2010; Lerner and Schugurensky 2005; Pinnington and Schugurensky 2009; Schugurensky 2006). However, structures of authority engrained in civic culture and administrative procedure maintain narrow constructions of knowledge. This, in turn, implies that participants ought to fulfill an idealized conception of the state-society relationship and eschews more critically inclined and participant-led possibilities. To this point, Koga (2013) asks “what kind of citizenship learning can occur and what can be

missed?” (3). Koga finds that a lack of focus on “empowered participation”, can lead to participatory budgeting becoming a form of “pseudo collaboration” that limits both the “scope of participation and social inclusion of residents in local decision-making” (77). This question is now a point of convergence for contemporary literature on participatory budgeting and public engagement.

This review has demonstrated that the literature on participatory budgeting now stands to explore a confounding irony. This irony is that of resident knowledge on neglected needs continuing to be offset and even sidelined within nominally participatory processes. While the broader context of neoliberal urban governance is certainly a source of authoritative determination of what ideas prevail over others, scholarship on NPM helps to investigate how an increased attention to resident needs takes place within a set of overarching terms that reproduce forms of exclusion. As will be explained further in Chapters 2 and 3, NPM symbolizes a new sense of balance between professional knowledge and lay knowledge of constituents. However, this balance remains influenced by established professional values with the emergence of “professional managers” and “interactive professionals” who account for new democratic priorities while mitigating the impact of reforms (Sehested 2002, 1528). Despite a recognition of constituents as stakeholders, NPM ironically draws attention away from constituents who engage directly with government and promotes efficient and parsimonious pursuits of constituent satisfaction at the expense of a critically reflexive dialogue on needs (Aucoin and Heintzman 2000; Garrett 2006). While NPM does primarily include a focus on responsive citizen engagement, priorities of austerity and professionally driven identification of outcomes create limited grounds for consensus. Rather than being receptive to resident’s

participating to improve government on their terms, NPM supports a *compelled consensus* with pre-established priorities and limitations. These prevailing forms of exclusion emerge from a sense of overarching public interest embedded in the knowledge-intensive practices of public administrators and professionals in urban planning and development.

Though far from a democratic panacea, clashes between participatory budgeting and established standards of public engagement indicate a “ceaseless struggle to expand democratic borders” (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016, 323). By accounting for structural limitations within government administration, the study of participatory budgeting will be better able to identify how this struggle is negotiated and in which ways it may be overcome. This dissertation seeks to make an empirical contribution to the literature by investigating how the adaptation of participatory budgeting is motivated, designed, implemented, and evaluated in the existing administrative structures of the City of Toronto. As shown, critical development in the literature is now focused on questions of how the inclusive practices of participatory budgeting challenge or complement existing trends in government decision-making. Therefore, this research offers an empirical contribution that demonstrates how this interplay is taking place in the case of Toronto’s participatory budgeting pilot-project. Furthermore, this dissertation seeks to contribute to the developing understanding of how a paradox of participation can undermine the potential of participatory budgeting while providing the mere optics and impression of increased participation. Therefore, the following section will review literature in urban planning and urban studies in order to make use of developed understandings of structural barriers to meaningful public engagement in this field.

What is Planning and what does it do?

Planning, especially in the urban setting, is a highly technical process that directly impacts the daily routines and prospects of residents. Increasingly, technical understandings of a city enshrine official ways of knowing and experiencing space. This creates an intellectual domain for decision-making, which can both support and inhibit recognition of resident perspectives. This section will flesh out the idea of planning that this dissertation proceeds with to establish planning as a knowledge-intensive process within which participatory processes take place.

Reaching agreement on how planning can be defined and analyzed has historically been a challenge for planning theorists (Alexander 2016). Abram (2000) supports the use of the term planning as a “metonym, for loosely defined collection of both thoughts and practices aimed at some form of order” (353). Huxley and Yiftachel (2000) designate planning practice to include “all public policies [...] that shape urban and regional land-use under the auspices of the modern state” (334). Members of the Australian school, MacCallum and March, indicate the continuation of this broad conception of planning in current literature. MacCallum (2016) states that “the plan’s role is to synthesise a range of information, values and reasoning gathered during the planning process, to form the foundation for future material action” (326). Seeking to pin-down how this overarching understanding informs material action, March (2012) defines planning as: “the ways land and natural environments are valued, used, conserved, developed or organised from a spatial perspective [with] an ongoing orientation to the future” (12). These varying characterizations collectively define planning as a knowledge-intensive and future-oriented

process of evaluation with direct physical implications for the virtual entirety of urban space.

Alexander (2016) discusses how planning must be understood to be composed of various practices ranging from the abstract to the concrete. These practices range from the theorization of abstract planning principles, to the specification of specific domains of planning that encapsulate space and infrastructure in planning strategies, to the level of application linked by a common understanding (Alexander 2016). Therefore, the infrastructure and space that residents interact with everyday are nested within a domain of influence shaped by prevailing theories of planning. Planning principles are developed by leading theorists and are then circulated, applied, and policed on a more concrete level by officials of specific governments or firms. Predominant contemporary approaches to planning are broadly labelled rational comprehensive planning (Legacy, March, and Mouat 2014; March 2012). This situates the practice of planning as involving extensive data gathering, systematic analysis of options, organization according to a standard table of contents, and endorsement by a series of increasingly senior actors (MacCallum 2016). This knowledge-intensive, future-orientated understanding of planning clearly presents a countervailing force for direct input of impacted residents in the formation of their environments. However, as Bolan (1971) questioned in his essay on the social relations of the planner: at whose behest then does planning take place?

Along with the difficulty in definitively setting out what planning is, planning theory is also plagued by an “ambivalence about power” that has been typically addressed by applying theories of power from outside the field of planning (Friedmann 1998, 250). Becoming established as a technical practice at the turn of the 20th century, planning has

largely functioned as an extension of hegemonic conceptions of modernity. Planning is a specific way in which the state plays a rather active role in creating a secure environment for investment – Purcell refers to this active role as *aidez-faire*.⁹ Harvey (1985) argues that developments in the latter-half of the twentieth century in the United States greatly increased the “power of engineers and managers, economists and architects, systems analysts and experts in industrial organization” (32). Referencing the “perceptive” nature of Gramscian analysis, Harvey further explains that “intellectuals acquire a well-grounded social power to the degree that their knowledge becomes a vital material force, not only with respect to techniques of production, but also with respect to the global framing of social action through control and management of money, space, and time” (1985, 32). Among these knowledge-intensive professions are those associated with the planning and management of infrastructure. As explained by Goonewardena (2012), planning “plays a crucial role in mitigating class struggle [...] and thus securing a spatio-temporal fix for production of the capitalist social order at the urban scale” (104). This demonstrates that planning plays the role of providing direction and legitimacy to political decision-making and, in doing so, prioritizes certain interests over others on the basis of a reified common sense.

In Canadian cities, as with most western liberal democracies, urban planning attempts to “steer” the driving force of the market toward publicly desirable ends under the general control of democratically elected politicians. Within planning theory, knowledge is conceptualized as being produced within networks bound by a set of relevant linkages,

⁹ Translating as “help do”, Purcell (2009:142) explains *aidez-faire* as the state actively mobilizing to assist capital as well as allowing *laissez-faire* economic development. Examples of this include public investment, technology transfer from government to the private sector, monetarist policies to control inflation, and workfare policies.

rather than an objective entity to be held and used (Rydin 2007). Therefore, schools of thought on planning serve as epistemic communities. While epistemic communities are not in the business of directly running communities, they function to provide a “vener of objectivity for political decision-making on the allocation of resources” (Haas 1992, 11). Therefore, authority is evoked within the auspices of planning by referencing a superior knowledge on how problems can be solved, solutions can be developed, and goals can be attained. The process of planning provides a sufficient coherence to enable action toward the goals of authoritative alliances arising from different forms of conjuncture, or ideological formation (Thomas 2009). This has specific implications for residents of Canadian municipalities that will be further discussed in Chapter 3.

March (2012) states that “huge technical and professional advances have been made in planning and urban studies in the last one hundred years or so [resulting in] a complex practice of governance without a clear theoretical or conscious practical understanding of the implications of this” (4). March expresses similar concerns as Dahl by claiming that this complexity depoliticizes barriers to “full and inclusive knowledge construction” (2012, 5). March further states that analyzing how knowledge is constructed in the process of urban planning helps to “determine the nature of knowledge and its construction in the wider system” and “the type of ‘democracy’ planning represents” (2012, 43). Though elected officials formally represent the values and beliefs of their constituents, in the case of technical fields like budgeting and urban planning, these representatives are typically dependent on the allocative wisdom of markets and experts in developing strategic choices on how to advance toward desirable outcomes (March 2012). As will be demonstrated,

planning practices situate professionals as balancers of interests with the capacity to accommodate public involvement without de-centering the initial goals of development.

Constructed in-roads to participatory planning

Yanow (2003) identifies a recurring concern for local knowledge among strategies of colonial occupation, managing immigrant slums in London, social work and “unslumming” in 1960s Chicago, and the citizen participation movement in social policies and urban planning of the 1960s and the 1970s (244). At times, this renewed appreciation for local knowledge has resulted from ground-level activism, and this appreciation has developed, in some form or fashion, within the institution of professionalized urban planning and government decision-making as well (Caulfield 1994; Forester 1988; March 2012; Mouat, Legacy, and March 2013). However, Hummel (2006) explains how standards emerging from technical understandings create a significant detachment between authoritative technique and the intended human purpose of planning, as attention shifts from human purposes to formalized methods. The potential prejudicial effect that constructions of knowledge can have is well explained by Hummel’s concept of the “triumph of numbers”, which he illustrates with the example of map making. Mapping sets out an early stage of urbanization, in which details that can be intimately known become integrated into *official* ways of knowing. As Hummel explains:

Knowing breaks off from dependence on what can be seen by the organic eye. Once what could be seen was shapes drawn on paper and the lay of the land inasmuch as it resisted or yielded to human purposes. Knowing had a material referent and a practical use. Now knowing is what we can make of things without reference to things. From the viewpoint of the yeoman, the world seems put together arbitrarily, its givens treated as data (2006, 68).

The drawing of lots and designation of space was part of the early categorization of people and space, with the end goal of creating organized society (Dehli 1990). Such formalized

methods and understandings of knowing the reality of the situation at-hand can become matters of “pure technique” that limit the degree to which even formally superior elected officials are able to address this detachment (Hummel 2006, 73).

Given that urban planning decisions make a direct impact on the daily lives of residents, calls for more public involvement are long-running. One response to this call is the development of communicative planning.¹⁰ Communicative planning was hailed as the communicative turn in planning theory (Healey 1996), the argumentative turn (Fischer and Forester 1993), and even a new paradigm in urban planning (Innes 1995) recognizing new deliberative ways to reach consensus on technical challenges found in the city. Healy (1997) explains communicative planning as being oriented around “matters of collective concern which arise from the problems and opportunities of the co-existence in shared spaces of relational groups, or cultural communities, often with very different priorities and ways of looking at things” (1997, 26). However, the claim that communicative practices had brought about a new paradigm in planning offices was quickly called into question (Abram 2000; Flyvbjerg 2002; Huxley and Yiftachel 2000; Neuman 2000).

The inclusive capacity of communicative planning is found to be compromised by its consensus-driven nature in conjunction with structural elements that privilege certain knowledge claims over others. Huxley and Yiftachel (2000) find that rather than a communicative paradigm of planning, there are rather communicative practices that occur alongside predominant considerations of technical rationality that inform economic theories, design procedures, decision-making processes. Neuman (2000) similarly points

¹⁰ Communicative planning emerged in the mid-1980s, based on the Habermasian concept of communicative action, which Healy (1996:218) documents as developing initially in European cities and then in North American cities.

out how consensus seeking can function to remove contentious issues from the table rather than give voice to marginalized perspectives. While new expressions of knowledge informing alternative and critical views may be gathered, how this knowledge is responded to in practice remains largely within the domain of technical professionals. This prevailing inequality in interpretative capacity is argued by Sanders (1997) to derive from “epistemological authority”, in which certain knowledge constructions are found to represent “truth” more than others (349). Communicative planning critics argue that deliberative forums can actually increase the capacity of professionals, aiming to make progress through the attainment of consent, to determine conceptions of truth (Mannberg and Wihlborg 2008; Neuman 2000). This critical commentary continues with a more recent publication by Purcell (2009) who uses Gramsci’s concept of hegemony to demonstrate that participation in communicative planning reaffirms existing authoritative interests much more than it challenges them. Such affirmation, Purcell argues, is covertly done to mask the uneven distributions of epistemological authority that prevail in these communicative exchanges. This indicates a contradictory, or what Swyndegouw (2005) refers to a Janus-faced, underpinning of collaborative initiatives. In the context of increasingly technical understandings of city planning and associated methods of knowledge production, the situated knowledge of residents becomes one source of data among many.

Using Gramsci’s theory of hegemony, Flyvbjerg and Petersen (1981) challenge what they call subjective-idealist approaches to planning and suggest that a historical-materialist conceptualization of planning is better equipped to account for power relations in society. A historical-materialist conceptualization of planning acknowledges the

significant influence that the existing material and social environment has on the perception of planning possibilities. Flyvbjerg and Petersen (1981) ask whether public participation without a corresponding reconstruction of knowledge can do anything but affirm the interests of the established system. With this concern in mind, Flyvbjerg (2002) identifies a blind spot in planning, democracy, and scholarly analysis, regarding the relationship between rationality and power. Seeking to fill this blind spot, Flyvbjerg (1998) explores the production of knowledge and rationality in the context of a collaborative urban development project in Aalborg, Denmark. Uncovering what he terms to be “the dark side of planning”, this research stands as another demonstration of the capability of experts to shape the understanding of good planning and obscure the operation of power with the cover of technical reasoning (Flyvbjerg 1996, 387).

Specifically focusing on the planning politics of local development in Toronto, Moore (2013) addresses a lack of attention to the role of expert knowledge in local political economy. Moore (2013) argues that Toronto’s built-form is largely determined by conceptions of “good planning” derived from expert interpretations of provincial legislation and municipal Official Plans (171). Moore demonstrates his argument with research on dispute resolutions by the OMB and identifies a tendency for rulings to align with advice extolled by public sector professionals in the form of expert testimony, even when in adversity with testimony from residents, private developers, and the municipal government. Moore claims that “development proposals live and die at the board depending on the strength of the planning rationale supporting them” (2013, 101). The strength of planning rationale derives from the use of land-use planning language, which is central to the repertoire of planning experts and less accessible to laypersons (March 2012).

In the interest of avoiding costly and disruptive appeals, this technical input is also authoritative in earlier stages of developments and in the creation of Official Plans and other planning strategies (Moore 2013, 86).

To attribute this capacity to a general advantage held by pertinent professionals and city staff, Moore uses the label of the *planning community*. Moore (2013) uses the concept of the planning community, borrowed from a similar study by Chipman (2002), to describe “a very amorphous community, consisting as it does of public officials, planners, and other experts, lawyers, and other parties regularly engaged in the planning process” (33–34). Moore adds that “professionals in traffic, parking, forestry and landscaping, as well as experts in the City’s heritage division, and even the Toronto Regional Conservation Authority, can play a part in the process” (2013, 84). Other planning theorists, such as Forester (1993), support this broad conception for the purposes of analysis, intentionally using the term planner “as a shorthand” for a broad range of future-oriented actors “including project managers, public administrators, program evaluators, and policy analysis, as well as [...] planners” (4). While this conceptual league of experts may appear to offer little explanatory value, such a broad conception is necessary to identify the range of actors involved in the amorphous process of planning illustrated above. Beyond specific experts who work as formally titled planners, a wide range of professionals in both the public and private sector contribute the coordination and technical work that manifests in the creation and implementation of planning. Much of the scholarship demonstrates how openings meant to provide residents with a voice are circumscribed by predominant visions of the future armoured with technical advice on varying levels of planning.

Toronto's participatory budgeting pilot project focused on capital developments in the public realm. Therefore, the specific forms of expertise that will be analyzed in this dissertation include public sector professionals advising on the building of proposals, as well as policy consultants and senior administrative staff in the City Manager's Office and the Financial Planning Division. The latter group of administrative experts are important to recognize in analysis of urban politics as manage much of the knowledge-intensive work informing government decisions. This latter group largely constitute what Sehested (2002) referred to as "professional managers", who mediate the integration of democratic reforms into professionalized public service. These staff use their administrative expertise and expertise in other fields, such as public engagement, to fulfill council motions and established long-term plans. When the City Manager of Toronto who originally signed-off on the recommendation for the participatory budgeting pilot project states "I'm not a planner"¹¹, he is referring to official titles, rather than the broader definition that comprehends planning as a basis for knowledge-intensive, future-oriented action in urban development and governance accounted for by planning theorists. While these city staff are under the formal authority of Toronto City Council, the knowledge-intensive nature of their work situates them as playing a pivotal role in determining how to identify and address complex problems in the modern city.

While the process of planning can overwhelm and circumscribe alternative visions, staff engaged in planning are also valuable allies. Legacy (2010, 2016), another member of the Australian school of participatory planning, contributes the valuable concept of the *knowledge interface*, defined as the integration of stakeholder engagement opportunities

¹¹ Interview with former City Manager, W4I5, March 13, 2018

into the ongoing process of plan-making. Legacy finds that establishing a knowledge interface allows for the utilization of the explicit and tacit knowledge of local and state planners in deliberation with members of the public in order to develop implementable proposals. Legacy's research supports that of Koontz and Newig (2014) who similarly find that the involvement of government staff is necessary to provide helpful guidance and sufficient scrutiny to proposals made by residents, regardless of whether collaborative planning forums are led by bottom-up or top-down forces.

In further exploration of deliberative engagement with urban governance, Legacy, March, and Mouat (2014) identify significant challenges for experiential knowledge to productively interact with formal structures. They argue that the rigidity of highly technical approaches to planning undermine the deliberative development of meaningful consensus and eschew the development of more inclusive processes. This tension is found to be especially pronounced in site-specific disputes (Mouat, Legacy, and March 2013). Identifying a possible crisis in public participation, Legacy identifies a "perverse interest in consensus-oriented and outcomes-oriented planning that serves a narrow economic growth logic over more challenging questions relating to the equitable distribution and access to critical social and public infrastructure" (2016, 4). Legacy argues that even when exclusionary knowledge constructions are supported by state-endorsed participatory initiatives and legislative requirements, participation beyond these constraints can still take place with the continued expression of needs that are known on the experiential level. Legacy argues that seeing participatory processes as a dialectical process through which resident participation is continuously contested, reshaped, and defined helps to transcend a perceived crisis in public participation.

Similar to Ganuza, Baioochi, and Summers (2016), MacCallum (2016) states that though an “Age of Participation” in urban planning may have arrived, “systemic tension between bureaucrats, advocates, and stakeholders” situates residents as “strangers” in the process of designing their own cities and neighbourhoods (11). MacCallum (2008) observes that significant shifts in norms and societal expectations have challenged rationalist approaches with ideas of democratized planning that involve non-traditional actors and different types of knowledge. However, due to established norms embedded in discourse on good planning and “adherence to traditional outcomes-driven rationality, formal hierarchy, closure, [and] linearity”, the implementation and outcomes of these collaborations do not feature participatory values (MacCallum 2008, 326). Identifying forms of epistemological authority, MacCallum’s investigation identifies professionals who “assumed the identity of bureaucrats par excellence” in proactively reinforcing conceptions of the public good, professional practice free of emotion, and informed by appropriate procedure and “balance” (2016, 57). Ultimately, MacCallum finds that consolidations of participatory plans, are ideological events in which particular interests are projected as universal.

As shown succinctly by Moore, authoritative embodiments of knowledge situate the planning community as producers and enforcers of “good planning”. However, MacCallum (2016) is clear that though her research findings can be viewed as cases of ‘poor’ collaborative planning, underhanded manoeuvring, and misuse of power, “such a focus on individuals’ conscious actions would add little to our understanding of the potentials and limitations of participatory planning” (165). Rather, research should acknowledge that the construction of knowledge is implicated by overarching socio-

political relations and that participatory events have “the capacity either to reproduce or to challenge conventional power structures and modes of thinking” (MacCallum 2016, 12). Such a recognition helps to account for how limitations to public input do not simply arise from a conscious disregard on the part of professional, but rather a professionally informed understanding of public interest. Even those seeking to support the pilot project as an ally to participants, are limited in their ability to impact decision-making processes that are conducted by certain constructions of knowledge. While planners may possess, express, enact, and police constructions of knowledge, they are not the source of these limitations themselves. As will be explained in Chapters 2 and 3, participatory public involvement in the formation of urban space and distribution of public funds arises from a transhistorical contestation over authoritative knowledge.

Discussing the *potential* of inclusive planning processes, Yiftachel and Huxley (2000) emphasize the importance of being critically reflexive in order to develop critical theorizations of “the internal world of the profession and accepted practice” (338). March (2012) states that a fixation on technical expertise “teaches, reinforces, and privileges existing formalised knowledge, constricting knowledge or preventing new knowledge from finding purchase in existing formalised processes of planning” (92). Abram (2000) similarly claims that a system of “meaningful local participation [...] requires a thorough and radical rethinking of the deep-seated aims and moralities of planning [and] questioning the desire of the state to control local decision-making” (357). Therefore, democratizing decisions currently understood as technical and apolitical requires conceptions of engagement that put established forms of knowledge at risk of significant elaboration (Appadurai 2000; Legacy 2016; MacCallum 2008, 340; Meagher 2015). With participatory

budgeting engaging in site specific, concrete outputs based on the perspective of participants, it presents an intriguing occasion on which to investigate how knowledge may be reconstructed in spite of the demonstrated resiliency of professionalization against resident intervention. In order to conceptualize how bottom-up expression of knowledge would function in relation to professionalized processes, this final section will briefly explain some theoretical successes in this regard.

What would participatory urban epistemology look like?

This concluding section will establish what empowered resident involvement could look like within the knowledge-intensive field of urban planning and infrastructure management. As has been done in studies in planning theory, urban studies, and participatory budgeting, this research makes use of co-construction of knowledge originating in Science and Technology Studies (STS) (Alexander 2016; Farías and Blok 2016; Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016; McFarlane 2011a). Ideas of more inclusive and progressive urban planning are offered by theorists like Sandercock (2004) who envision planning as an “always unfinished social project whose task is managing our coexistence in the shared spaces of cities and neighborhoods in such a way as to enrich human life and to work for social, cultural, and environmental justice” (134). While official ways of knowing help to provide public goods, they negate the understanding of the city “as spaces of encounter and rapid change [that] are constantly sought to be learnt and relearnt by different people and for often very different reasons, from coping mechanisms and personal advancement to questions of contestation and justice” (McFarlane 2011b, 362). An understanding of planning as an always unfinished task of managing coexistence

helps to better theorize how the procedures of government decision-making can meaningfully involve the plurality and particularity of public participation.

Instances of decisions in resource management and public health being determined on the basis of co-constructed knowledge have taken place in newly-industrialized economies. Community-based research has attributed this to the alternative epistemological paradigms being more readily available in sacred traditions and the religiosity of local culture (Boossabong 2017; Uphoff 1992). This co-construction of the knowledge underlying government programs and expenditure has taken place within highly-developed, post-industrial setting as well. Investigating mental health and self-help strategies, Baillergeau and Duyvendak (2016) state that an appreciation for lived experience can call into question the “hegemonic power of ‘expert knowledge’” and reframe non-expert knowledge as “knowing otherwise” rather than being deemed “wrong knowledge” (421). As outlined in the prior sections, the empowerment of experiential knowledge is a key aspect of participatory budgeting’s original purpose, but adaptations within new settings have mitigated this this specific aspect with abstract notions of public interest and professionalized schools of thought. In order for collaborative decision-making to reach outside of the worldview of established planning, a new dynamic is necessary to situate the resident as “planning otherwise”.

Referencing the worldview of technical experts, Callon, Lascoumes, and Barthe (2009) use the image of a secluded laboratory to illustrate the exclusive nature of technical embodiments of knowledge – and their production – that are willfully distinct from lived experience. Callon et al interrogate this narrow understanding of knowledge production with the concept of “hybrid forums”. Hybrid forums are open spaces in which experts,

politicians, technicians and laypersons, come together to discuss the various impacts, or controversies, of technical operations (Callon, Lascoumes, and Barthe 2009). In such spaces, questions that are thought to be definitively settled are reopened as new actors become involved in defining problems and how they should be prioritized as appropriate means of resolution (Callon, Lascoumes, and Barthe 2009). Callon et al claim that hybrid forums present at least a partial challenge to the typical division in western society between specialist, elected official and layperson: “Laypersons dare to intervene in technical questions; citizens regroup in order to work out and express new identities, abandoning their usual spokespersons” (2009, 35). Callon et al explicitly refer to such efforts as attempts to democratize democracy.

Callon et al's work presents an epistemological challenge to professionalized, knowledge-based practices and helps to envision ways of learning from controversy. Addressing criticisms of mere communicative reforms, these authors are clear that “exchanges alone are not enough, however courteous and civilized” and that “new knowledge must be acquired and shared, and new ways of thinking, seeing, and acting must be developed, pooled, and made available” (Callon, Lascoumes, and Barthe 2009, 33). In this regard, there remains much work to be done in order to implement deliberative and participatory initiatives that approach this critical potential. Therefore, despite the existence of new forums supplementing old institutions with new techniques, the role these new forums play in facilitating a renewed dialogue between government and constituent remains unclear.

Callon et al (2009) state that cooperation between the lay perspective and that of a specialist is increasingly possible with increased proximity to the specific domains in

which the knowledge being produced concerns the human person in their totality. Therefore, their concepts are applicable to the field of urban planning. Scholarship critical urban studies argues that hybrid forums set out a useful way to envision the challenging goal of instituting “technical democracy” (Farías and Blok 2016, 543). McFarlane (2011a, 2011b) specifically argues that participatory budgeting presents a possible case of a hybrid forum as it immerses a diversity of perspectives in a possible reinterpretation of urban priorities. McFarlane also states that participatory budgeting could also merely be a strategy emerging from NPM that involves residents as clients rather than decision-makers (2011, 106). These possibilities must be examined on the level of specific cases.

The crucial element of hybrid forums is a recognition of the need to engage collaboratively in order to address in inherent incompleteness of even professionally informed opinions. The acknowledgment that any single source of knowledge can be characterized by an inherent incompleteness is what Paulo Freire (1998) refers to as “epistemological curiosity”. Epistemological curiosity is “a critically reflective and methodologically rigorous shift in the assessment of knowledge that acknowledges the incompleteness of a current perspective” (Freire 1998, 35). Therefore, the concept of epistemological curiosity will be used to symbolize the broader potential of participatory budgeting. Authors investigating the roots of the original model of participatory budgeting used in Porto Alegre state that Freire’s liberatory pedagogy was indeed part of the founding philosophy and design of participatory budgeting (Baiocchi 2005; Lerner 2004; Tranjan 2012). However, such an open-minded approach to reorienting the priorities of government expenditure and infrastructure management is challenged by vested interests in increasing

the legitimacy of current institutions rather than subjecting them to a healthy measure of rethinking.

While participatory budgeting may seem to be drastically different from the overarching planning process producing Official Plans and zoning designations, this is merely a matter of scale. In participatory budgeting, residents seek to direct capital towards existing needs detected through their own experience and their own evaluation of what constitutes a thriving future for their communities. As with communicative and participatory planning, substantive understandings of democracy inform the aspirations of participants, and by public officials, even if only in rhetoric. Participatory budgeting proceeds on the basis that experiential knowledge of residents matters. However, the highly technical understandings of space and infrastructure developed around hegemonic interests negate this experiential knowledge of critical residents from claiming a leadership role. A formidable barrier to the democratization of technical operations is presented by existing epistemologies that are embedded in professionalized urban planning.

Conclusion

As this literature review has demonstrated, the extant scholarship features a current and active debate around the viability of common residents effectively influencing planning and infrastructure management decisions. Scholarship on the developing popularity of participatory budgeting has reached a paradoxical impasse. New openings for participation have been shown to increase representation of and investment in typically marginalized perspectives. However, further analysis of how participatory budgeting is being adapted in new settings have identified significantly circumscribed cases of “managed participation” that counter the ability of residents to participate as producers of knowledge (Jabola-

Carolus 2017; Su 2018). This dissertation argues that much of the established ways of knowing that counter resident expressions of knowledge are found in established procedures, protocols, and practices of planning.

Reviewing literature on public participation in planning theory, urban studies and local political economy provides a definition of planning as a set of knowledge-intensive activities applied to the physical environment with an ongoing orientation to the future. These technical and professional advances empower a professional community with the intellectual capacity to produce depoliticized depictions of a desirable future. Members of the “planning community” function as balancers or coordinators of diverse interests, existing resources, and official goals in order to provide the grounds for consensus. However, the compelled nature of this consensus reproduces subordination of experiential insights. Similar to participatory budgeting, changes in the inclusive and communicative nature of urban planning decisions have been hailed as transformative. By examining the quality of interaction and the prevailing exclusion of experiential knowledge constructions, these changes are found to undermine the goals they are ostensibly motivated by.

Rather than view limitations to more elaborate forms of inclusion, as illustrated by the concept of hybrid forums, as being the underhanded manoeuvring of public officials, current scholarship urges recognition of structurally engrained assumptions that situate residents as non-planners. This creates a dialectical tension between the experiential knowledge of participating residents and outputs of participatory processes defined by the instrumental reasoning of “good planning”. Using the insights from this interdisciplinary literature on public participation, this dissertation will reveal how these dynamics are

playing out in the City of Toronto's pilot project. The following chapter will explain how the concepts from this literature review were integrated into an analytical framework.

Chapter 2 – Theoretical Framework and Methodology

As explained in the prior chapter, the literature on participatory budgeting currently stands at a point of disillusioned skepticism regarding how participatory aspirations are adapted within different structural contexts. Planning theorists and critical urbanists also call for interrogations of how knowledge is constructed and translated in participatory initiatives in order to discern divergences from stated goals (Legacy 2016; MacCallum 2016; March 2012; Pateman 2012; Rankin 2012). In response to this interdisciplinary calling, this doctoral research uses a Gramscian philosophy of praxis to analyze the renegotiation of roles between residents and public officials, specifically city staff, within the context of a participatory budgeting pilot project.

This chapter will be structured as follows. The first section will address the initial question of why a Gramscian analytical approach was selected. The second section will provide a concise definition of *trasformismo*, a Gramscian concept that helps to analyze cooptation and inclusion of new views without a rearrangement of authority. In the third section, this Gramscian understanding of power will be further fleshed out with an explanation of hegemony and common sense and how they are extended in instances of *trasformismo*. In the fourth section, Gramsci's concepts will be discussed as they relate to analysis of urban politics, and to participatory budgeting specifically. After establishing the theoretical framework of this research, a final section will explain the methodology that was used to gather pertinent findings for analysis.

Why Gramsci?

This doctoral research takes a Gramscian approach to understanding contestation and pacification in the urban setting in order to better explain structural limitations to public

participation in government. Gramsci built upon a Marxist understanding of capitalist hegemony. A classical Marxist perspective of hegemony depicts a ruling class that is able to prioritize the goal of economic profit on a societal scale. The dominant status of capitalist hegemony in urban governance has been argued in Molotch's (1976) conceptualization of cities as "growth machines". Employing a classical Marxist terminology of use value and exchange value, Logan and Molotch (1987) argue that elected officials and large-scale developers collude to capture exchange value with only occasional, material concessions to residents seeking to increase a city's use value. However, a theory of urban power starkly divided along economic lines lacks explanatory capacity with regard to how such imposed priorities are justified within a democratic society. Gramsci used a Marxist analysis of power in society as a starting point for a richer and more comprehensive understanding of how authority functions to impose capitalist socio-economic relations in democratic society. In doing so, Gramsci adds a necessary cultural and intellectual dimension to how class relations are legitimized and perpetuated by pointing to how constructions of authoritative common sense enable the generation of consent among a sufficient portion of civil society.¹²

The development of Marxism to better account for the contemporary condition of urban governance and development of modern technologies of power has been abundantly contributed to by Rancière, Foucault, Lefebvre and authors building upon their insights. Though each of these authors helps to reveal significant dimensions of power in the urban

¹² Molotch himself saw fit to clarify the growth machine thesis by further explaining in a later publication that economic incentives provided a "structuration" embedded in a series of social institutions, which influence understanding of planning goals and the advice of experts (Molotch 1993).

setting, Gramsci offers a more comprehensive overview of the dynamics of power, and how the critical expressions can be dialectically undermined by hegemony.

Rancière's analysis of how significant facets of urban governance are de-politicized has been increasingly applied to the entrepreneurial conduct and technocratic management of cities (Dikeç 2011; Legacy 2016; Swyngedouw 2017). A Rancièrian approach does grasp how narrow conceptions of public interest are entrenched within the depoliticization of expert decision-making. However, Rancière's concept of "post-political" urban governance obscures political interactions and contestations that can take place in spite of this depoliticization. Reviewing the post-political urban governance thesis, McLeod (2011) acknowledges the presence of troubling trends in urban governance but ultimately concludes that it is absurd to believe that urban issues, such as underserved communities and inadequate infrastructure, are not politicized in the eyes of residents. Despite bureaucratized and corporate approaches to urban governance, concerns of adequate housing, public health, quality of services and public infrastructure, the navigability of distance, and the availability of accessible recreation are among the many concerns that continue to characterize the daily struggles of urban residents. In these daily struggles, urban residents cannot help but develop a certain knowledge of these concerns (Gramsci 1971).

As this dissertation investigates the use of knowledge as a pervasive extension of power, Foucault's concepts of governmentality and bio-politics also offer considerable insight to how urban inhabitants can be nurtured into self-managing subjects aligned with authoritative discourse. However, as stated by Thomas (2009), Foucauldian concepts of power attribute an "overdetermined sense of sovereignty" that obscures the requirement of

hegemonic power to be “reproduced each day” (225). A Gramscian understanding of power, on the other hand, includes a specific recognition of the perpetual instability of hegemonic authority caused by intrinsic contradictions that can motivate counter-hegemonic movement (Davies 2014).

Lefebvre, most of all, offers important concepts that aid an understanding of urban power and contestation. These concepts, including but not limited to the social production of space, have been taken up in a growing English literature in critical urban theory (Attoh 2011; Brenner, Marcuse, and Mayer 2012; Duke 2009; Harvey 2008; Holston and Appadurai 1996). Lefebvre’s specific interrogation of how instrumental embodiments of knowledge (*savoir*) come to subsume and dominate critically-embodied forms of knowledge (*connaissance*) is useful for exploring limitations to new forms of resident involvement (Brenner, Marcuse, and Mayer 2012; Lefebvre 2009). Additionally, as is well explained by Kipfer, Lefebvre utilizes many of Gramsci’s insights in his own work, which helps to “urbanize hegemony” (Kipfer 2008; Kipfer and Hart 2013; Lefebvre 1978). While Lefebvre’s concepts remain apt for exploring the development of resident-led urbanization, Gramsci contributes an important coherence and openness to Lefebvre’s approach (Kipfer 2002). Furthermore, while Lefebvre focused on popular culture and everyday life, Gramsci maintains a focus on state-society relationships that is more applicable to the case study of this doctoral research.

Each of the above theorists would undoubtedly shed light on important aspects of the motivation, implementation, and ultimate result of participatory budgeting in Toronto. However, Gramsci provides an explanatory framework regarding how the pilot project simultaneously helps and hinders resident participation by shaping new interactions around

pre-existing forms of common sense. Gramsci offers a superior understanding of how critical pursuits among the public are moderated by the state and adherent intellectuals. This dynamic is directly applicable to current scholarship on participatory budgeting finding ironic limitations to the “the ceaseless struggle” to broaden the boundaries of democracy (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016, 329). The political struggle taking place between new ideas and pre-existing formations of authority is concisely captured by Gramsci’s concepts of hegemony and *trasformismo*. These concepts help to explain how authority is maintained through the capacity to generate consent. This dissertation investigates a concise interface between critical demands of the public and established procedure of the state that has significant implication for the cultural underpinnings of civic engagement. As new ideas and aspirations for resident involvement in government decision-making inspire new critical demands, Gramscian analysis aids investigation of how these ideas are subsumed within pre-existing agendas so as to maintain intrinsic contradictions in society.

Trasformismo

This doctoral research views the adaptation of participatory budgeting through the Gramscian lens of *trasformismo* in order to reveal structural limitations that subvert a more elaborate participatory potential. Gramsci used *trasformismo* to describe the process by which hegemonic authority is maintained through the co-optation and symbolic use of critical views. *Trasformismo* is a form of passive revolution, in which dominant powers gradually co-opt elements of oppositional forces that are strong enough to provoke critical consciousness but not strong enough to overcome the dominant bloc (Cox 1999). *Trasformismo* is described by Andersen (2017) as “the development of an even broader

ruling class by gradual and continuous absorption, with methods of variable efficacy, of the active elements of allied groups and even of adversaries who seemed irreconcilable enemies” (22). Gramsci (1971) originally applied this term to the period of Italian national unification throughout the 19th century and the formation of democratic government at the turn of the 20th century. Within the development of democracy in Italy, the creation of centrist or catch-all political parties in Italian Parliament co-opted the critical claims of those pursuing socialism while also contributing to their defeat. The term has been applied by scholars analyzing limited openings for progressive movements that ultimately undermine the critical thrust of these movements (Bates 2013; Moore 2005).

Despite the social progress that is brought about by bourgeoisie democracy, prevailing forms of subordination can lead to a crisis of faith in the established order and spur critical, counter-movements demanding change. Thomas (2009) explains *trasformismo* as a revolution without a revolution of power that depoliticizes debates and transitions them into purely bureaucratic or technical questions. The deceptive element of *trasformismo* is that this integration occurs while attempting to keep subordinate groups in their subordinate status by dividing and defeating oppositional forces. This deception maintains the impression of a progressive society by avoiding the “cathartic moment” of disillusionment with existing structures of power (Thomas 2009, 152). Ultimately, *trasformismo* maintains intrinsic contradictions of established order by maintaining a conducive terrain for the continuance of an established civil hegemony.

Gramscian hegemony and common sense

A deeper understanding of *trasformismo* as a duplicitous suppression of new critical orientations can be gained with a brief explanation of Gramscian hegemony. This

explanation will provide a framework for identifying the relations between hegemonic authorities, intellectual perspectives, and subordinate perspectives as they will be applied in this dissertation.

Building upon Marxism, Gramsci felt it was necessary to include “new concepts and further levels of determination” to specify the modes of power that maintain exploitative relations in society (Hall 1986, 7).¹³ Gramsci (1971) drew from the philosophy of Benedetto Croce and Niccolo Machiavelli to focus on the significant role that ethical, moral, and intellectual forces play in creating “a terrain more favourable to the dissemination of certain modes of thought, and certain ways of posing and resolving questions involving the entire subsequent development of national life” (184). By replacing the reductive understanding of economic determination, Gramsci argued that hegemony is the result of political and economic alliances that transcend immediate economic interests in order to encompass the interests of subordinate groups. Political and economic alliances establish dominance as a “historical bloc” by rallying general support, and consent, from broad swaths of the public with depictions of hegemonic interests as universal (Gramsci 1971). A historical bloc thus encompasses subordinate groups that have been “won over” by specific concessions and compromises but remain within their subordinate role (Hall 1986, 15). Therefore, Gramscian hegemony aids more comprehensive analysis of power as well as more complex understandings of class-based relationships that do not presuppose a homogenous class-unity as is implied by the idea of the proletariat (Hall 1986).

Gramsci (1971) differentiated how authority was held in pre-revolutionary Eastern Europe and Asia – with its authoritative state and “primordial and gelatinous” civil society

¹³ Hall noted that Marx himself acknowledged the need for further specification to allow for more precise analysis in specific situations in *Grundrisse* (1857).

– and Western Europe, in which “a proper relation between state and civil society” makes a sturdy structure that can repel counterhegemonic action (234). This “proper relation” is based on the existence of “open, public-political space within which [...] contestation among differing and opposing conceptions of the world and systems of belief takes place” (Fontana 2005, 113). Andersen (2017) states that “it is the strategic nexus of civil society¹⁴ which is believed to maintain capitalist hegemony within a political democracy, whose state institutions do not directly repress the masses” (63). Along with the typical coercive capacities of the state, hegemony in democratic societies is attained through consensus generating techniques in order to attain hegemony within civil society, or civil hegemony.

Andersen states that:

[T]he novelty of this consensus is that it takes the fundamental form of a belief by the masses that they exercise an ultimate self-determination within the existing social order. It is thus not acceptance of the superiority of an acknowledged ruling class (feudal ideology), but credence in the democratic equality of all citizens in the government of the nation – in other words, disbelief in the existence of any ruling class (2017, 68).

By gaining a substantial degree of popular consent among civil society and the broader public, a historical bloc establishes what Gramsci referred to as the integral state (Gramsci 1971; Thomas 2009). The integral state establishes a dominant position from which the historic bloc can frame decisions as working toward a universal interest. If successful, opposing counterhegemonic forces are deprived of significant leverage or vantage points from which to propagate their ideology. Purcell (2009) provides an example of this by explaining how “neoliberalism seeks to establish a particular common sense notion that

¹⁴ Civil society refers to organized portions of society beyond the political society of government. The original example of civil society was the clergy, but civil society also includes schools, trade unions, community organizations among other forms of association.

competitiveness is not only ‘the way it is’, but also a good thing, an ethic that will help generate wealth and ensure happiness” (145).

For hegemony to be maintained, it must develop an intellectual following among civil society and be accepted as a faith by “the masses” (Gramsci 1971, 339). Apart from organized civil society, Gramsci also accounted for the subjectivity of the general public “masses”, each member of which possesses a consciousness that is divided between lived experience and hegemonic inculcation. This contestation is illustrated by what Gramsci refers to as two-theoretical consciousnesses within the mind of the individual, “one that is implicit in activity and which in reality unites [them] in the practical transformation of the real world; and one, superficially explicit or verbal, which [is] inherited from the past and uncritically absorbed” (333). Gramsci viewed the contest between these two consciousnesses within capitalist hegemony as counter-opposed claims of what a person should become in their relation to society. While hegemony encourages a superficial consciousness and the consumption of claims of universal interest, Gramsci viewed the transformative consciousness as a source of significant change that progressive movements must gather around. Gramsci explains:

It is necessary to elaborate a doctrine in which these relations are seen as active and in movement, establishing quite clearly that the source of this activity is the consciousness of the individual [...] who knows, wishes, admires, creates and conceives of [themselves] not as isolated but rich in the possibilities offered by other [people] and by the society of things of which [they] cannot help having a certain knowledge (354).¹⁵

¹⁵ This is strikingly similar to Dewey’s (1981) views on liberalism: “The reliance of liberalism is not upon the mere abstraction of a native endowment unaffected by social relationships, but upon the fact that native capacity is sufficient to enable the average individual to respond to and to use the knowledge and the skill that are embodied in the social conditions in which he lives, moves and has his being” (38).

Similar to Dewey, Gramsci places a significant weight on the inherent wisdom derived from the experience of daily life. This significant reorientation in understanding the capacity of residents to produce knowledge based on their own lived experience has a counterhegemonic potential. Gramsci's dialectical understanding of human consciousness situates members of the masses as open-ended configurations of multiple social determinants (Kipfer and Hart 2013).

Gramsci calls for the recognition of intellectuals, as they play a crucial role in the process by which a historic bloc is viewed as accommodating needs beyond the economic interests of elites. For hegemony to propagate itself throughout democratic society, the development of a moral and intellectual unity, or common sense, beyond the state is required. This common sense frames the interests of the dominant group as universal (Anderson 2017). Leading intellectuals pose "all questions around which the struggle rages [...] thus creating the hegemony of a fundamental social group over a series of subordinate groups", culminating in the formation of "national popular collective will" (Gramsci 1971, 133). By enlisting educational and formative social forces, the ideology of the historical bloc is not only consolidated in the state itself but embedded in an everyday common sense used to "organize human masses and create the terrain" upon which the public "acquire consciousness of their position" (Gramsci 1971, 377). This intellectual dimension of hegemony draws out its pedagogical nature, which emerges from established notions of common sense (Fontana 2005; Patnaik 1988). Common sense creates a "folklore of the future, that is as a relatively rigid phase of popular knowledge at a given place and time" (Gramsci 1971, 326). This folklore of the future is presented as knowledge for consumption

by subordinate groups, as well as the more explicitly dominated and excluded “subaltern” groups.

Rather than an overt imposition, this unifying common sense borrows from the “good sense” of subordinate groups but subsumes this good sense within hegemonic interests (Gramsci 1971, 328). By explaining the concept of common sense, Gramsci further innovates Marxist understandings of subordination as resulting from an epistemological consensus (Hall 1986). For Fontana (2005), the process of establishing hegemony – transforming a subordinate group into a hegemonic subject – features the production of knowledge claims as rhetoric. In the development of common sense, knowledge and beliefs are produced and disseminated to the public, creating a rallying ground of understanding for diversely situated groups under the leadership of another (Fontana 2005). This rallying effort includes what Fontana calls a “dual and reciprocal movement” in the interaction of opinion of common people and the knowledge of intellectuals, ultimately leading to this knowledge becoming the opinion of many (119).

Gramsci accounted for intellectual plurality with the conceptual figures of traditional intellectuals and organic intellectuals. He differentiates between traditional intellectuals – who pride themselves on the difference between the objective knowledge of an intellectual and subjective “feeling” of common people – and organic intellectuals who originate from subordinate groups and can function to bridge the gap between hegemonic and subaltern discourses in order to further entrench notions of common sense (Fontana 2005, 110). The term organic intellectual denotes those who have developed an allegiance to an established historical bloc as well as those who adhere to aspiring hegemonic (read counterhegemonic) groups as well. The resilience of hegemonic authority is largely

dependent on its capacity to develop an adherence among organic intellectuals with the support of traditional intellectuals. Organic intellectuals take part in nurturing a superficial consciousness that negates more elaborate forms of self-knowledge among the masses. This concept greatly aids attempts to understand the formidable nature of hegemony. In this process, more critical pursuits become deflated due to division, confusion, and a stultifying sense of defeat.

And yet, the transformative capacity of human consciousness maintains the prospect of counterhegemonic disillusionment. Another key insight that Gramsci offers is the perpetual instability of hegemonic status. Gramsci (1971) explains common sense as “continuously transforming itself, enriching itself with scientific ideas and with philosophical opinions which have entered ordinary life” (326). Rather than transforming “itself”, understandings of common sense are questioned and supplemented by ideas arising from counterhegemonic intellectuals and one’s own personal consciousness of injustice, exploitation, and disservice. While the particular interests of hegemony are claimed to be universal, these claims are undermined by “intrinsic contradictions” (Fontana 2005, 118) and the disillusionment of subordinate and subaltern groups that results from the constant generation of a multiplicity of counter-conceptions of common sense (Patnaik 1988). This requires hegemony to be actively constructed and positively maintained (Gramsci 1971; Hall 1986). In the face of widespread elaborations of common sense, this maintenance takes place in the form of *trasformismo*. The widespread popularity of participatory budgeting, and the broader participatory turn, provides a crucial opportunity to investigate how new ideas are integrated into government at the expense of their original, critical thrust.

Application of Gramsci to urban politics and public engagement

While Gramsci focused on the national politics of Italy and his theories of hegemony have been widely used for analysis of international relations, his insights and concepts have also been productively applied to the urban setting. Fontana (2005) indicates Gramsci's attention to "the physio-spatial and the urban-architectural structure of civil society: various types of buildings, streets and avenues, boulevards, and parkways, squares and other public spaces" (115). Similarly, Davies (2014) argues that Gramscian hegemony grasps "routine urban violence and the way direct administrative compulsion, of which the local state is a key agent, operates as the ubiquitous condition of rule" (3225). Davies (2014) utilizes Gramscian hegemony to reveal the coercive capacity of neoliberal urban governance that has arisen with technocratic managerialism and intensive performance management. The process by which coercive capacity becomes armed with consent is what Davies refers to as administrative domination. Administrative domination is embedded in the everyday routines of the local state, pervasively "fostering the coercive micro-management of public services and the participatory interface between public officials and citizens" (Davies 2014, 3225). As the "taken for granted order of things", administrative dominance evokes a disciplinary logic of rule backed by force (Davies 2014, 3226).

Gramscian analysis has also been utilized to detect how collaborative efforts to address complex issues can absorb counterhegemonic social forces (Simionatto and Negri 2017). Analyzing support for social services in Brazil, Simionatto and Negri (2017) find citizen-led councils, wide-spread use of participatory budgeting, and constitutionally mandated forms of public involvement to be subject to structural barriers within bureaucracies. These authors urge an intensification in the production of critical knowledge

in order to advance the original purpose of public integration into government decision-making. Analyzing anti-poverty strategies in Nicaragua, Rückert (2007) finds that hegemonic institutions absorb counterhegemonic ideas and transform them to fit within existing authority structures to re-establish consensus. Rückert (2007) explains how the notion of participation is transformed from the ability to influence decision-making and reshape policies at the domestic level to nothing more than information sharing and consultation on largely predetermined sets of policies. This absorption of counterhegemonic ideas not only maintains the standing of existing hegemonic capitalist approaches to poverty reduction but also appropriates the participatory process that originally sought to address poverty with ground-level insights.

This dissertation applies the Gramscian concept of *trasformismo* to the participatory budgeting pilot project in the City of Toronto. As shown by the preceding literature review in Chapter 1, participatory budgeting was once hailed as a form of technodemocratic innovation that situates the unique knowledge of residents in a new leadership role in the allocation of public funds. However, as shown in the literature review, adaptations in new settings have been found to lack this crucial element of empowered participation (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016; Pin 2017; Su 2018). Similar findings have been made with regard to the broader participatory turn in government decision-making and urban planning; rather than a refutation of power, participatory engagement has become a best practice for mediating public discontent (Bherer et al. 2016; Pateman 2012; Polletta 2016). Calls for analysis of structural limitations now define both participatory budgeting and planning scholarship. MacCallum (2016) urges recognition of these limitations as arising not from personal intention, but from the structural arrangement

and engrained culture of government decision-making. Gramsci is well suited to advance understandings of how dominant conceptions of common sense can absorb, shape, and divide more elaborate pursuits of public participation.

As will be explained in the following chapter, Canadian cities are subsumed within neoliberal hegemony and are largely structured so as to support and expand the universal claims of this hegemony. Nevertheless, as sites of immersion in the felt realities of universalist claims, cities are highly conducive to the realization of new counterhegemonic visions. What Fontana (2005) calls the “topography of everyday life” in the urban setting shapes political action and the expression, exchange, and consolidation of public opinion (115). This situates cities as being on the edge of hegemony, featuring both a highly developed state apparatus and the sheer physical experience of the resulting conditions.

As noted, hegemony is established by accounting for the interests of some subordinate groups so as to compel consent with their exclusion from power. However, critical consciousness can develop within subordinate groups exposed to new critical ideas triggering moments of disillusionment. Both complacent subordinates and aspiring counter-hegemonic insurgents require an intellectual understanding of their situation in order to “make sense” of their action in the world. Participatory budgeting has emerged from calls for a new relationship between residents, their local government, and the allocation of public funds. In conjunction with pre-existing forms of discontent, this idea gains traction in the minds of critical residents and elected officials seeking to, at the very least, increase their public support. With the prospect of this new relationship, the idea of participatory budgeting is engaged with from both hegemonic and counter-hegemonic perspectives. Rather than solely a limitation or rejection of critical calls for public

participation, new ideas on public involvement are responded to and shaped by authoritative forms of common sense.

This doctoral research proceeded with a broad definition of planning in order to grasp the intellectual domain that participatory budgeting both calls into question and must engage with. After being established as schools of thought and integrated into specific domains of planning within certain settings, planning creates a basis of common sense to direct the use of specific sites and spaces. Gramsci's definition of traditional intellectual was not limited to scholars, clergy, and artists but also included "functionaries who exercise 'technical' or 'directive' capacities in society [such as] administrators, bureaucrats, and politicians" (Ramos 1982). Public officials therefore directly contribute to the intellectual establishment of common sense, nurturing the organic development of adherent intellectuals beyond the state (Fontana 2005; Harvey 1985; Purcell 2009). While government staff formally engage in the field of planning work at the behest of elected officials, the discretion held by workers in this knowledge-intensive field situates them as intellectuals who serve to reinforce and proliferate hegemonic views. These established views are further supported by adherent organic intellectuals or called into question by those intellectuals aspiring to support counter-conceptions of common sense.

Just as common sense provides a "folklore of the future", established procedures and protocols of planning provide an image of the future for consent to gather around. In the process of participatory budgeting, participant proposals express the good sense of residents seeking to address neglected public needs. In criticism of communicative planning, Abram (2000) points to how collaborative planning processes reveal a contest of desired futures. Therefore, Gramsci's two types of consciousness are useful to identify how

critical and experiential insights of subordinate groups work in contest with established views of planning professionals and their representatives. With regard to public interest and the spending of public funds on urban needs, decisions are often informed by a revered expert perspective that becomes internalized and accepted by many. Even those who struggle in neglected or underserviced neighbourhoods may come to believe that the conditions of their life could not be any other way. However, insights on needs gathered through experiential knowledge set the grounds for an elaborated orientation of the role of residents in urban governance.

As such, participatory initiatives themselves encompass both the elaboration and the containment of the relationship between resident and local government. Many participants come to the project seeking to utilize participatory budgeting as one of Callon et al's hybrid forums, calling for the reconstruction of the knowledge underlying the distribution of public funds. Hybrid forums facilitate dialogue based on *epistemological curiosity*. Epistemological curiosity is "a critically reflective and methodologically rigorous shift in the assessment of knowledge that acknowledges the incompleteness of a current perspective" (Freire 1998, 35). Such curiosity calls for a collaborative engagement with experiential knowledge. As has been documented, Freire's liberatory pedagogy drew from Gramsci's theory of hegemony and transformative praxis (Coben 2013; Fischman and McLaren 2005; Ledwith 2001; Mayo 1999) to provide guiding principles for the original design of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre (Baiocchi 2005; Lerner 2004; Tranjan 2012). Democratization of urban planning requires an openness to a plurality of knowledge claims. However, scholarship has identified that references to such openness are commonly contradicted in practice. Engagements between the public and professionals

can instead be based on “ingenuous curiosity”, which Freire (1998) explains to be a certain kind of uncritical knowing characterized as common sense (35). This motivation characterizes that of parties aiming to create new forms of inclusion without a broader reconstruction of knowledge, which results in the identified paradox of the participation age (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016; MacCallum 2016; Su 2018).

Much of these limitations arise from processes of government being enshrined as “pure technique”, rigorously advancing toward public interest. Coined as a term in the 1980s, the principles of NPM include attention to constituents in the spirit of client satisfaction, efficiency and parsimony in the use of resources, and outcomes-based performance evaluation (Hood 1991; Kernaghan 2000). Reforms driven by the values of NPM have established new boundaries between professionals and managers in the public sector that have decreased the capacity of professionals to conduct themselves autonomously beyond the mandate of democratic government (Sehested 2002, 1520). NPM therefore acknowledges the desire of residents to be recognized as stakeholders with a claim to involvement in public institutions. These new boundaries have given rise to “professional managers” who meditate the impact of political demands and professional conduct and “interactive professionals” who engage in new participatory and communicative forms of decision-making (Hendriks and Tops 2003; Sehested 2002). Overall, NPM has been demonstrated by scholarship to perpetuate minimalist views of resident involvement and to function to compel consensus with the very issues motivating increased public participation (Aucoin and Heintzman 2000; Garrett 2006; Pin 2016). Under such pretenses, public engagement produces a dialectic between ground-level perspectives and official ways of knowing (Curry 1997; Neuman 2000). The resolution of

this dialectic along lines of existing authority indicates both a skepticism toward a deeper understanding of truth (Fontana 2005) and a prevailing capacity to determine truth held by professional planning circles (Mannberg and Wihlborg 2008; Neuman 2000).

In order to assess the degree to which the participatory budgeting pilot project follows through on initial claims of situating residents as a source of important knowledge, the below grid was created to account for the significantly divergent motivations underlying curious and ingenuous approaches to public engagement. This Standards and Motivation Grid (Figure 2) specifies the differing standards and priorities that orient the agendas of NPM, participatory budgeting as an end in itself, and participatory engagement inspired by epistemological curiosity. The latter will here be referred to as curious engagement. These differing standards and priorities include those of accessibility and communication, what role is granted to residents upon their inclusion, how final decisions are made, the ultimate target audience that is considered, and the driving motivation underlying these different orientations.

The accessibility standards of NPM (Column A) include those of existing institutions with some reforms in order to be responsive and available to resident inquiries and demands. These standards are oriented around the identification of the resident as a client who should be satisfied with government service. Despite this recognition, decisions are ultimately decided on the basis of professional judgement and existing procedures on behalf of the general public. More specifically, these decisions are made on behalf of a notion of the general interest that is marketed to the general public as the consumer audience of government conduct. This dynamic is driven by the goal of engaging residents

with professionally-informed notions of common sense in order to establish a *compelled consensus*.

Characteristic Standards	New Public Management (A)	Participatory Budgeting circa 2000 (B)	Curious Engagement (C)
Standard of Access	Existing structure with reforms	Voluntary	Situated for Access
Standard of Communication	Responsive	Dialogue	Dialogue in lay language
Identity of the Participant	Customer, Client	Actively Involved	Expert on Community Needs
End Decision-Maker	Professional	Direct	Collaborative
Target Audience	General Public	Participatory Public	People Informed on the Need for Change
Driving Motivation	Compelled Consensus	Participant Inclusion	Epistemological Curiosity

FIGURE 2: STANDARDS AND MOTIVATION GRID
SOURCE: AUTHOR

The original league of participatory budgeting enthusiasts in the early 2000s who viewed the creation and spread of participatory budgeting as an end in itself (Column B), valued the ability for residents to voluntarily partake in dialogue with public officials as an active participant in decision-making. The new level of involvement is celebrated as enabling the direct decision-making role of a new participatory public motivated to increase participant inclusion over public funds. However, structural elements have since been demonstrated to consistently undermine the fulfillment of these standards and challenge the redistributive benefits that excited these original enthusiasts. Considering the more substantive elements necessary for fulsome and empowered involvement, curious

engagement (Column C) sets out a range of standards and foci that enable robust resident-led decision-making.

As expressed in Column C, participatory engagements must be situated for access in order to effectively include the input of those in need. Similarly, communication should take place in a way that is relevant and familiar to residents. By privileging the way in which residents describe, relate to, and know the public infrastructure being discussed, residents are engaged as experts on community needs. Rather than thinking about participants as having sole direct authority, Curious Engagement accounts for the collaborative nature of these decisions that involves the exchange between different ways of knowing the city. At this level of engagement, current residents drawing critical and creative ideas from their lived experience are the target audience. Rather than being marketed to, these residents are engaged with a dedication to epistemological curiosity and a recognition of an inherent incompleteness in established professional perspectives.

With these differing understandings of participatory budgeting serving as a reference, analysis of the pilot project in the City of Toronto reveals how participatory budgeting initiatives can be used to advance instances of *trasformismo*. While such initiatives may be marketed by public officials as reaching a new level of active dialogue and resident-led decision-making (Column B), the structural authority of hegemony and adherent conceptions of common sense shift the driving motivation of practice to that of NPM (Column A). Gramsci's concept of *trasformismo* provides an explanatory framework for this misleading transition. The mere popularity of public participation in the "Age of Participation" presents motivations for governments to appear participatory while maintaining the legitimacy and control of professionally-driven outcomes (MacCallum

2016, 165). This leads to cases of ingenuous curiosity and a lack of substantive practices in relation to claims (Freire, 1998, 44). While the meaning and depth of participation remains an object of contention for residents consciously vying for a more elaborated and participatory role in government decision-making, collaborative initiatives can function to generate consensus with existing procedures of decision-making. In order to avoid this, theorizations of sufficient involvement must account for the fuller becoming of public participation represented by curious engagement (Column C). Cities teeter on the edge of hegemony, filled with a diversity of experientially informed perspectives engaging in perpetual interaction with authoritative conceptions of public interest. Despite participatory budgeting presenting an opportunity to foster a more elaborate and collaborative relationship between the resident and their urban environment, this dissertation demonstrates how this opportunity can be missed without restructuring hegemonic understandings of a desirable future and how to get there.

Research methodology

In order to investigate the participatory struggle, the participatory budgeting pilot project was selected as a single case study. The case study method is well demonstrated and encouraged by participatory budgeting and planning scholarship seeking to capture the minutia of specific initiatives (Flyvbjerg 2006; Legacy 2016; MacCallum 2016; Pateman 2012; Tranjan 2012). The case study method was selected to conduct an in-depth exploration of specific phenomena, as is often done in the extant literature investigating prospects of participatory involvement and expert-non-expert interactions (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016; Mouat, Legacy, and March 2013; Pin 2016; Su 2018). As explained by Odell (2001), the case-study method provides a documentation of process, a

fuller reporting capacity than quantitative measures, and a richer understanding of political phenomenon and decision-making. As participatory budgeting stands out among other forms of public involvement – featuring in-depth dialogue over specific developments and ending with the allocation of funds toward developments deemed eligible – it is treated here as a most likely case study in which to find renegotiated roles and capacities for residents and public officials.

Applying Gramscian analysis to the pilot project reveals an ironic attempt to expand the systematic grip of professionally-led decision-making. In an article discussing Gramsci's contributions to the developing research methodologies, Jubas emphasizes the epistemological implications of Gramsci's *Prison Notebooks*. Jubas (2010) and Hall (1986) find that Gramsci's understanding of civil hegemony is similar to feminist analysis and stand point theory in basing research around the perspective of subordinate groups. Jubas also draws out connections between Gramsci and Flyvbjerg based on their understanding of how authoritative knowledge claims are most successful when they feature references to ground-level and context-specific conceptions of knowledge (2010, 226). This helps to understand how new types of participation can be taking place without a consequential transition in the locus of decision-making. By viewing participatory initiatives as a form of knowledge exchange that elevates the position of experiential knowledge, the prevailing privilege of pre-existing, exclusive constructions of knowledge indicates a strategy of *trasformismo*. Participatory ideals are attractive in offering rich alternatives to existing representative democracy that can democratize urban planning and infrastructure management. These ideas feature the agreeable "good sense" that is integrated into

government decision-making for the actual purpose of reinforcing current hegemonic interests in urban governance (Gramsci, 328).

This research pays specific attention to how the pilot project was inspired, designed, implemented, and evaluated so as to reveal that the pilot project ultimately undermined the very goals that were stated as its driving purpose. By focusing on how knowledge is constructed in the framing, implementation (including the building of approved projects), and evaluation of this three-year pilot project, this study seeks to reveal the structural constraints that cause these dialogues to breakdown and subvert a more collaborative potential. For the purposes of this study, structural elements include the established procedures and designation of roles that mediate and adjudicate the coordination of resources with the needs of the urban population. While they are perpetually vulnerable to counterhegemonic development, these structural factors attain and reproduce a staying power cemented in consent and common sense. Rather than simply a barrier to increased participation, structural constraints on the production of knowledge shape and accommodate new levels of participation.

In order to account for structural constraints, the theoretical framework and methodology of this research situate the participatory budgeting pilot project within the broader structural context of urban governance in Toronto. The realm of urban governance, in Canada, is largely determined by the constitutionally subservient position of the Canadian municipality. The limitations inherent in the very constitution of local governments in Canada make them uneasy rulers of the complex entity that is the modern city. Gramscian analysis equips this study with a historicizing capacity that appreciates how conceptions of common sense have been institutionalized over time. As such, the pilot

project is revealed to be part of an ongoing struggle between aspirations to maintain and reinforce hegemonic relations in the face of burgeoning, critical reorientations of a resident's role in the management of their own cities and communities.

To explore how the pilot project impacted and is impacted by established structures of the City of Toronto, this research made use of specific sources of information: 1) staff reports and government documentation regarding the pilot project, as well as other government documentation outlining current initiatives and Official Plans, and pieces of provincial legislation outlining municipal responsibilities regarding public involvement 2) observation of participatory sessions, including verbal and written staff feedback to participant proposals, and 3) semi-structured interviews with i) participants, ii) directly involved elected officials and government staff, iii) government staff who were not directly involved, and iv) members of community organizations working in the pilot testing areas but not directly involved in the pilot project. Each of these sources of information was selected and analyzed under the themes of epistemological curiosity and epistemological authority so as to establish a plausible narrative of how claims of the former are actually followed by practices of the latter.

Staff reports and government documentation were selected on the basis of how they illustrate the "fine print" of participatory initiatives, as well as the broader policy terrain from which the pilot project emerged. Documentation included staff reports to council outlining the pilot project design and evaluation, responses to participant proposals, background materials of preceding or adjacent government initiatives in public engagement, and provincial legislation. Staff reports to city council were used to establish the agreed upon goals of the pilot project, aimed at increased inclusion of typically

uninvolved residents in a “flexible” decision-making process meant to address pressing community needs. Documentation of participant proposals and staff responses for all three years were made publicly available at sessions and online. As part of this research, these responses were organized into a dataset to investigate trends in proposals across pilot testing areas and to analyze how the eligibility criteria were applied over time. Evaluations taking place at the one-year and three-year mark helped to investigate what findings were being consolidated by the City of Toronto, and whether the stated goals of the pilot project were viewed as being achieved or in need of adjustment. The iterative release of these evaluations also allowed for insight into how staff supervising the pilot project responded to recognized challenges. Further understanding the limited capacity of municipal government to support resident empowerment, rooted in the constitutional subservience of Canadian municipalities, required investigation of past and present planning legislation. These texts collectively provide guides on the history and procedural lattice work upon which the pilot project took root and grew.

As a necessary addition to staff reports and government documentation, field research was conducted to observe the meetings taking place as part of the pilot project. Each year, the in-person sessions were organized in a three-phase process including initial brainstorming; proposal feedback and short-listing; and a final vote by all eligible residents of the respective pilot testing area. In-person research of these sessions was conducted in 2016 and 2017 by attending a minimum of one session in each of the first two phases in each location. Attending sessions allowed for a first-hand look at dynamics of the sessions including participant turn-out, how the sessions were facilitated by the City Manager’s Office staff, what role the elected councillors and their staff played, and how participants

responded to the guidelines of the pilot project. Using insights from the literature, along with the stated goals and purpose of the pilot project in government documentation, analysis of these observations was organized by the themes of epistemological curiosity, inclusivity, and epistemological authority. In order to capture data related to these themes, notes were taken during observations on the staff approach to facilitating meetings, expressions of interest or demands made by participants, how this approach to facilitation supported or inhibited these expressions and demands with claims to common sense, and how these interactions reached the goals of inclusivity and resident-led outcomes. Differing claims on what problems are most pressing and how they should be addressed were key sources of data on the renegotiation of roles taking place within this pilot project.

The deliberative meetings were especially valuable as this stage was the main point at which participants received and discussed staff responses to their proposals. In these sessions, participants pitched their proposals to each other or attempted to elaborate and challenge staff interpretations of their proposal in order to determine a short-list that would serve as the ballot for that year. Therefore, the deliberative sessions were the most informative moment of knowledge-exchange in the entire process and, by extension, the relationship created by the pilot project. In 2017, the researcher also attended the final vote meetings, which provided less information due to minimal discussion taking place. Visiting these sessions also allowed for a first-hand exploration of the neighbourhoods in which the pilot project was taking place. Exploration of these neighbourhoods was helpful in gaining a more comprehensive impression of the state of infrastructure and community-life in each of the pilot testing areas. After the pilot had concluded, the researcher was also invited to attend a staff-exclusive workshop on participatory public involvement, which

allowed for additional insights into the staff perspective on the purpose of and limitations to increased resident involvement in decision-making. All of these points of contact during this fieldwork presented opportunities to develop a rapport with participants and city staff and recruit them as interviewees.

Interviews were conducted as a way to explore the information gathered from staff reports and the dynamics observed at participatory sessions in more depth. Due to the generous contributions of time and thoughtfulness from interviewees, this research shed light on many intersecting trends of frustration and creativity in Toronto. While dynamics in and around the pilot project are the main unit of analysis, this research also made use of other forms of participatory inclusion happening around the same time in order to illustrate the broader dynamics that are arising in the “Age of Participation” (MacCallum 2016) in Toronto. A total of thirty-six interviews were conducted with twenty-eight individual interviewees, as detailed in Appendix A. Interviewees included (3) elected officials involved in the pilot project, (4) city staff involved in the design and implementation of the pilot project, (6) lesser involved city staff who helped with design, promotion, or feasibility assessments, (9) pilot project participants from across the pilot testing areas, (1) staff of a community organization working in Oakridge, (2) Senior staff from Planning and Development at the City of Toronto, (1) staff of the Civic Innovation Office (CIO), and (2) staff from the Ministries of Housing and Public Affairs and Ministry of the Attorney General. Each of these perspectives provided insights into the pilot project or other instances of the participatory turn in Toronto and were able to illuminate the extent to which the participatory turn was increasing the capacity of residents to direct government priorities and decisions. To investigate how interviewees’ impressions of the pilot project

developed over time, follow-up interviews were conducted with (1) councillor (Councillor Shelley Carroll), (2) leading staff, (2) lesser involved staff, and (3) participants. Though far from exhaustive, this number of interviews was deemed sufficient to illustrate the dynamic created within the pilot project and to explore how this dynamic related to pressing community concerns and to adjacent efforts to address these concerns.

As with the observation of meetings, interviews were used to investigate the dynamic between residents and city staff supported by the pilot project in terms of epistemological curiosity, epistemological authority, and conceptions of common sense. Interviews were semi-structured, with specific questions that were adjusted based on the interviewees' relation to the pilot project. The interview templates created for this research are included in Appendix B. Interview questions focused on the purpose of resident participation; what residents are able to contribute to decisions of government expenditure and development of public infrastructure; what legitimate limitations to resident participation remain appropriate; how tensions between official processes and resident awareness ought to be resolved; and expectations that interviewees have for the future of participatory budgeting. In order to gain an understanding of each interviewee's motivations and broader experience, interviews began with a question about their background in civic engagement and familiarity with participatory budgeting.

Interviewees who were involved in the creation and supervision of the pilot project were able to provide insight into the driving motivations and core goals of the pilot project in more detail than is available in documentation. Additional interviews with government staff were attained through recruitment during sessions or snowball sampling by inquiring about additional perspectives that interviewees felt this research may benefit from. This led

to a second round of interviews with government staff who were lesser involved in the pilot project but who had insights into how it interacted with existing administrative practices. Government staff interviewees who were not involved in the pilot project (such as Senior Staff in Planning and Development) were nevertheless well positioned to talk about other approaches to public involvement and how the participatory budgeting pilot project fits into this overall effort. Interviews with provincial ministry staff and the Civic Inclusion Office helped to establish an understanding of other significant reforms in resident involvement taking place in Toronto, such as the reform of the OMB into the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal (LPAT) and a successful bid for a Bloomberg Philanthropies Grant. Interviews with public officials and staff helped to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how resident perspectives are weighed in relation to established approaches to urban planning and development, what new levels of engagement and collaboration are viewed as possible, and which are not.

This research endeavoured to include a representative sample of participants in each area on the basis of gender, race, ability, income level, and level of education. Determining what demographics were represented among participant interviewees was based on visible attributes and clarifying questions before and during the interview. Naturally, participants were an especially useful source of information on how the pilot project was experienced. Questions for participants centred around their motivation for participating, where they believe valuable knowledge for the purposes of solving pressing issues can be derived, and how they felt reasonable limitations to resident involvement were determined. In the NIAs, it was especially necessary to reach beyond the participating residents and engage with non-participating residents and staff of community organizations. These non-participants

provided a perspective on challenges in these communities and on how concerned residents are attempting to address them through means other than the pilot project. It was important to have a roughly equal number of interviewees from each area in order to attempt a comparison of how the pilot project played out in each pilot testing area. While many more residents could have been interviewed, those who were interviewed were able to provide a resident perspective on what changes are necessary in their community and what level of resident engagement they believe is necessary. Participating residents were able to share their evaluation of how well, if at all, the pilot project met these needs.

Cumulatively, the data gathered from these various sources of information bring into view of a divided effort to increase resident involvement in urban planning and allocation of public funds. This research provides the plausible narrative that this effort was divided on the basis of different standards of involvement and ultimate goals of resident involvement. By exploring how these standards and goals are expressed and negotiated within the context of the participatory budgeting pilot project, this dissertation argues that the pilot project ironically reinforced technical understandings of urban planning and development that cast participants in the role of consumers. This irony provides a telling indication of the influence of structural limitations to resident involvement and of how participatory budgeting is being adapted in new settings.

Conclusion

This chapter has established the analytical framework for this research. Gramsci is among a number of insightful theorists who aid investigations of power, knowledge, and urban politics. However, as demonstrated above, Gramsci provides a particularly comprehensive and applicable framework for analyzing how critical calls from subordinate groups can be

co-opted so as to expand forms of pre-existing authority. Gramsci's concept of *trasformismo* helps to explain the underlying politics of state responses to calls for critical change fuelled by new ideas and long-running frustrations. Participatory initiatives can function to accommodate these calls to expand consent and defuse, divide, and defeat subordinate groups seeking more elaborate roles for residents in the formation of their environments.

Trasformismo was explained in terms of the hegemonic pursuit to maintain power through consent. Discussion on the role of intellectuals in this pursuit provides the basis for recognizing how members of the planning community and their representatives have the capacity to produce and reproduce common sense parameters for government decision-making. Though participatory budgeting may have the potential to constitute a hybrid forum that nurtures epistemological curiosity between local government and constituents, this potential interacts dialectically with established hegemony. While critical residents may come forward to demand new directions for capital investment within this participatory initiative, the planning community maintains the capacity to rationalize exclusions and exclude rationality derived from experiential knowledge. Gramsci's explanation of the individual consciousness, with its transformative and compliant possibilities, will continue to be referenced as a key dichotomy. While residents utilize insights derived from their daily experience, adherent intellectuals in the knowledge-intensive field of planning co-opt these contributions, shape participant expectations, and reinforce the main tenets of hegemonic common sense in relation to the distribution of public funds and the role of the resident in their formation of the public realm. Gramsci's

analysis was shown to be applied to matters of urban politics and public engagement and this dissertation seeks to further develop this application.

This chapter has established how Gramscian analysis will detect the process of *trasformismo*. The concept of hybrid forums and epistemological curiosity serve as a radical aspiration underlying ambitious calls for participatory budgeting. Advocates of participatory budgeting, as represented by literature prior to the structural turn, sought a new direct role for participants in final decision-making over the allocation of resources. NPM similarly recognizes the importance of being responsive to resident demands and interests, but ultimately situates professionals as the ideal navigators toward public interest. The Standards and Motivation Grid was used to enumerate these defining characteristics in order to identify what level of engagement the pilot project reaches with a sufficient degree of precision. While claims aligning with advocacy may be used to describe Toronto's participatory budgeting pilot project, the reallocation of roles and consequential actions and outcomes will reveal an ultimate alignment with the values of NPM. The research methodology section outlined how this investigation took place and what sources of insight inform the conclusions of this research. By conducting this research, this dissertation seeks to contribute empirical findings to the literature on participatory budgeting as well as a theoretical explanation for prevailing limitations to public participation.

Chapter 3 - The City as a Questionable Vehicle for Increasing Recognition of Residents

The urban setting is a fascinating site in which to investigate questions regarding the democratic quality of a society. Being densely populated and highly technical built-up areas, cities present both pressing opportunities and formidable challenges for the provision of public goods. Recent scholarship on participatory budgeting emphasizes that celebration of its endorsement by governments around the world should be moderated by mindfulness of how pre-existing structures of power can undermine the transformative potential of these initiatives (Bherer, Dufour, and Montambeault 2016; Ganuza and Baiocchi 2012; Pateman 2012). Therefore, analysis of the participatory budgeting pilot project in Toronto requires an understanding of how the political economy of Canadian cities impacts the capacity of residents to self-govern. By accounting for the history of Toronto as a Canadian municipality, this chapter will illustrate the hegemonic context in which experimentation in resident participation takes place. Local government stands as a democratically elected and mandated body, specifically designated to mediate matters of local concern. However, the ideological and material context of cities features an array of intervening influences that mitigate the capacity of local government to substantively represent local interests.

This chapter will demonstrate that a tension between experiential and authoritative views of urban priorities is embedded in the genetic code of Canadian municipalities. Decentralizations of authority in local governance and in urban planning will be shown to consistently result from the attribution, or construction, of required knowledge and intelligence. Due to the salient significance of physical experience, the history of Toronto is punctuated by specific cases of pushback from residents and calls for increased involvement in the development of their urban environment. However, even when engaged

with, nuanced visions of planning from the perspective of residents continue to be negated and undermined by the established notions of good planning and public interest. This chapter will demonstrate how institutions of urban governance have been modified to maintain and expand hegemony through intellectual elaboration and disingenuous reforms for public involvement.

This chapter will be structured as follows. The first section will outline a theoretical understanding of the municipality as a structural environment that participatory budgeting takes place within. The second section will demonstrate how municipalities were originally created in the interest of hegemony rather than residents calling for self-government. The third section will further explain how the structural make-up of municipalities, specifically in Ontario, presents authoritative checks on the involvement of residents; this is in spite of on-going responses to critical calls for increased involvement. Historical developments in Toronto demonstrate the consistent subordination of resident-led decision-making by authoritative interests, a prioritization that is now enshrined by the professionalization and neoliberalization of urban governance. A sixth section will outline how elements of the participatory turn in Toronto continue to be managed by conceptions of common sense that make sense of existing hegemony so as to compel consent. A lasting contestation between resident perspectives and established decision-making with regard to desirable urban futures characterizes this dissertation's findings. Therefore, a seventh section will outline this contestation as taking place between distinct ways of knowing the city, which will be delineated as the *little c city* and the *big C City* for the continuation of this dissertation.

City as Structure

From the Agora of ancient Athens, to the contemporary city square, the urban setting is a unique site of meeting and exchange. More than simply a concrete oasis of amenities, a city is the site of everyday pursuits for sustenance, shelter, striving, and socialization. As such, the urban setting features an intermittently harmonious and contentious mix of investment, technical advancement, social aspiration, and the basic needs of residents. The *potential* for collaboration created by the physicality of a city must be contemplated in relation to the overarching forms of governance that determine the allocation of authority and understandings of common sense. While tensions between state and society certainly exist in rural and less-developed settings, the uniquely dense and active nature of cities present unique challenges that are typically responded to with increasingly complex forms of urban governance. The increasingly technical nature of urban governance detaches decision-making from the perspective of current residents and establishes forms of “pure technique” (Hummel 2006). The notions of public interests underlying these technical approaches are regularly challenged by members of the public looking to present their own perspectives on public interest. Examining how divergent ideas of public interest are expressed, negotiated, and resolved in the urban setting helps to better understand the city as a set of structured relations that support a particular type of society.

Liberated ideas of sovereign local government democratically governed by local residents have fuelled movements both ancient and nascent (Bookchin 1987; Russell 2019). The Canadian municipality on the other hand is notoriously influenced by higher levels of government and market influences, which limit the degree to which municipal governments – let alone critical residents – can engage creatively in the governance of their

city (Clarkson 2001; Jacobs 2010; Lorinc 2006; March 2012). This limitation is embedded in Section 92 of the Canadian Constitution, which situates the municipality squarely within the jurisdiction of provincial governments. This disposition has long been characterized as being a “creature” of provincial authority. This formal subservience to higher levels of government situates them as “nodal scales” in which hegemonic interests are reproduced at the local level (Clarkson 2001; Isin 2000b; Jessop 2005; Keil 2002). Jane Jacobs (2010), an icon of localized decision-making and community-minded nuance in urban planning, grieved that demands for increased municipal autonomy must struggle against an outdated “political artifact [endowed] with the strength of bureaucratic tradition” (106). Therefore, however much experimentation with participatory decision-making (and other trends) may symbolize resident-led decision-making, the capacity to do so is impeded by these structurally embedded relations of power.

The constitutional disposition of municipal government has been shown to be pivotal in the development of participatory budgeting. The new 1988 Constitution of the Federative Republic of Brazil supported the initiation of participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre among other Brazilian cities by establishing the ability of municipalities to accumulate revenue and receive federal transfers mandated for participatory allocation (Caldeira and Holston 2015; McFarlane 2011; Tranjan 2012). Emerging from a reimagining of democracy on a national level, the institutionalization of participatory principles places a trust in the perspective of the public themselves. Experimentation with participatory budgeting in Canada has similarly resulted from modifications of municipal government and access to new revenue streams (Patsias, Latendresse, and Bherer 2013). However, Canadian municipalities have been found to be poorly equipped to empower

resident perspectives, acting more so as a significant brake on the critical aspirations of residents (Maley 2010; Pin 2016). Canadian municipalities lack both the financial resources and, more importantly, sufficient decision-making autonomy to engage in fulsome participatory decision-making. This is especially true in the current period, in which cities are treated as economic engines that must be governed strategically by entrepreneurial municipalities.

The domain of planning is a concise example of the liminal role played by municipalities between the demands of local residents and the growth-oriented strategies of neoliberalism espoused from higher levels of government. As March (2012) states of the planning system in Victoria, Australia, though there may be an increasing amount of “extensive opportunities for public involvement”, additional mechanisms built into these opportunities undermine their ability to empower experiential knowledge (126). As will be shown below, municipal decision-making and local planning processes have long recognized the resident as having a virtual right to be represented either through election or provisions for direct involvement. Nevertheless, structural arrangements enable certain interests to attain the hegemonic status to set out rules and validate certain embodiments of knowledge over others.

Despite formidable limitations, notions of public interest informing urban governance continue to be called into question by demands arising from the physical experience and localized priorities of residents. Calls for increased involvement situate residents as uniquely informed on where investments and developments are necessary to meet pressing needs. Rather than a reliable body to amplify critical concerns, the Canadian municipality is more regularly found to be a facilitator of national and provincial strategies

that privilege balanced budgets and private-sector driven economic growth at the expense of the human bodies that are systemically subjected to negative consequences (Clarkson 2001; Isin 2000b; Keil 2002). Therefore, the participatory turn has led to nuanced uses of power rather than more elaborate nuances in the distribution of power.

The Gramscian concept of hegemony is helpful in exploring how the state functions as an organ of hegemonic interests. Gramscian concepts have been applied to issues of urban governance and grassroots expressions of public interest by numerous authors (Davies 2014; Flyvbjerg and Petersen 1981; Fontana 2005; Harvey 1985; Purcell 2009; Rückert 2007; Simionatto and Negri 2017). Davies (2014) specifies that “Gramsci saw cities as the motor force of historical conflict and development [...] a terrain upon which the integral state is enacted and contested day-to-day” (3224). This understanding elucidates the precarious prospects of self-governing cities and their position on the edge of hegemony. Given the physical nexus of lived experience and urban development, the good sense of the urban public cannot be completely ignored. In order to maintain hegemony, political and economic elites reform matters of common sense in ways that quell the continuation of counterhegemonic organization while maintaining subordinate groups in their subordinate role. Moments in which critical calls are answered without a redistribution of existing power relationships constitute Gramscian *trasformismo*.

This perpetual interplay between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic influences will be consistently demonstrated throughout this dissertation. In featuring a direct dialogue between residents and public officials, participatory forms of civic engagement break up the monolithic conception of the state, expose certain cracks and openings within existing hegemony, and allow for a more precise investigation of how the state compels

moral and political passivity (Maley 2010). Such moments of engagement can expose structural limitations on the development of epistemological curiosity in urban planning and infrastructure management. Prima facie, participatory budgeting in Toronto indicates an increased capacity for residents to engage with local government and directly determine the allocation of some capital funding. However, assessing the structural factors that support or limit the emergence of participatory initiatives provides a more explanatory understanding of whether they enable new capacities for resident leadership or, rather, simply offer an additional step in an existing authoritative process. As will be shown in the following section, a mixture of coercion and consensus is found in the original creation of municipalities as well as established approaches to urban planning.

Slanted Foundations

The use of local government to reconcile local demands with the priorities of authority is found in the incorporation of the original colonial cities of British North America. Canada's first incorporated city, Saint John, was voted on by British parliament in 1785. Isin (1992) quotes correspondence from the governor of New Brunswick to the Colonial Secretary at Whitehall stating:

The sudden increase of Inhabitants at this port and the confusion incident to so novel a situation have induced me to comply with the general wish in granting them a charter of incorporation. [...] Although every useful liberty is given to the citizens, there is a sufficient influence retained in the hands of the Government for the preservation of Order and securing the perfect Obedience (45).

This justification for incorporating Canada's first city demonstrates how concessions are made in order to quell disruptive and critical movements against the hegemony of colonial government. Before 1785, townhall meetings had been deemed illegal in Atlantic Canada based on the belief that they could support the emergence of "different and undesirable

loyalties and practices among settlers” – that is, loyalties to the local population as opposed to the British Empire (Isin 1992, 43).¹ Despite incorporation, the autonomy of urban inhabitants and reigning ideas of “civilization” continued to be shaped by hegemonic authority (Dehli 1990, 111). With regard to the territory that would eventually become Toronto, skepticism about the ability of the local population to operate government by British standards continued well into the nineteenth century (Dehli 1990, 120).²

Rising population around urbanizing centres in Upper Canada led to continued calls for local regulation of markets and management of public works. Prior to the 1830s, local governments in Upper Canada were typically instituted as “police towns” that were governed by an appointed magistrate and Justice of the Peace (Dehli 1990, 120; Isin 1992, 49). Town hall meetings were called and run by magistrates to designate responsibilities regarding public works, rather to hear and address the demands of residents (though these unsolicited town hall meetings happened as well (Dehli 1990; Isin 1992).

The Township of York, having been acquired through the Toronto Purchase in 1787³ and incorporated as a “police town” in 1814, was incorporated as a city and renamed

¹ The impression of self-government as a hotbed for undesirable loyalties was directly informed by cases of local government in New England. Prior to the American Revolution, town hall meetings were sites of deliberation among thousands of residents seeking to address inequitable policies, from conscription to taxation. Among the most famous town hall locations, Boston’s Old South Meeting House was a deliberative space for colonial settlers to demand the removal of British military regiments that were being stationed around the city. Tensions culminated in the 1770 Boston Massacre and public backlash that led the British government to deem control of government to have lost all force. The British government complied with demands to remove military regiments. The event was regularly commemorated in Boston until 1775 “to impress upon our minds the ruinous tendency of standing Armies in Free Cities”. (“History of the Old South Meeting House”, Revolutionary Spaces < <https://www.revolutionaryspaces.org/history-osmh/>>)

² When proposals to incorporate what would become the City of Toronto were first made, a member of the House of Assembly in Upper Canada, Francis Collins, referred to the area of “Little York” as a “paltry, dirty, hole” that, at the time, lacked the necessary wealth and intelligence to form local government (Isin, 1992).

³ Historical accounts of this purchase of land from the Indigenous inhabitants are mainly derived from British records. Records indicate that payment for the territory encompassed an area of 250,808 acres in exchange for “some money, 2,000 gun flints, 24 brass kettles, 120 mirrors, 24 laced hats, a bale of flowered flannel, and 96 gallons of rum”. In 2010, an additional \$145 million was given to the Mississauga First Nation of New Credit by the Canadian government in compensation for misunderstandings on whether or not this exchange was a purchase or an agreement to share the land. (Starmans, 2015)

Toronto on March 6, 1834. Similar to Saint John, this decision was based on the rapid increase in population, wealth and commerce, and the inability of appointed magistrates to manage this development (Dehli 1990; Isin 1992). Also similar to Saint John, the incorporation of Toronto featured a system that was better equipped to enforce the interests of higher levels of government than to develop any degree of sovereignty. Continued political allegiance to the British Crown was consolidated by extending political franchise to property owning men, a class of residents viewed as being more attentive to British sensibilities and the importance of economic growth (Dehli 1990).

The creation of municipal governments was initially explored in the Durham Report, an investigation into the causes of rebellion in Upper and Lower Canada in 1838. The Durham Report states that “the utter want of municipal institutions giving the people any control over their local affairs, may indeed be considered as one of the main causes of the failure of representative government and of the bad administration of the country” (Isin 1992, 52). The report recommended that the British Crown enable localized administration and decision-making. However, a lack of such provisions for municipal government in the founding documents of the united Province of Canada indicated a prioritization of diffusing local tensions rather than empowering local expression of needs (Isin 1992). When municipal councils were incorporated, elections required the approval from the Governor-in-Council. Empowering local elites to govern using property tax actually alleviated higher levels of government of the costs of governance (Isin 1992). While these changes responded to bottom-up determinations of need, there is a consistent focus on ensuring a set of rights and duties that existed within limitations prescribed by higher levels of government (Good 2019; Magnusson 2015; Tindal and Tindal 2000).

This glimpse of the early formation of municipal government demonstrates that the original design of local government in Canada was premised by the goal of organizing and policing critical views of residents. As colonial objects, displacing Indigenous communities and empowering elite segments of the settler population, it seems as if Canadian municipal governments were intended to organize the imposition of authority rather than facilitate the representation of locally-known needs.

Whose Streets?

Another indication of how municipal governments function as a purveyor of top-down authority rather than a vehicle for local expression of need is in the formation of planning regimes. This function is expressed in the basic chain of command outlined in provincial legislation as well as by the epistemological authority accumulated within the professionalization of urban governance.

The financial crisis of the late 19th century brought about the need for coordination in the development of streets, railways, residential zones, and industrial zones. In Ontario, the creation of the Ontario Railway and Municipal Board in 1906 was a response to this need (Chipman 2002; Milligan 2011). After the intermittent economic development of the interwar period, the province created the Department of Planning and Development and the Planning Act in 1944. This new Act represented “an entirely new planning system for the province, involving planning areas and planning boards and created a process for the adoption and approval of Official Plans” (Chipman 2002, 18). The renamed OMB served as a dispute resolution body with quasi-judicial authority, creating a planning arrangement that continues to be distinct from the rest of North America (Chipman 2002; Krushelnicki and Renaud 2003; Moore 2013).

Similar to formation of municipal government, approaches to urban planning included an acknowledgement of the importance of resident input on local developments. Under the Planning Act of 1950, municipal city councils could form their own planning boards (Planning Act, 1950, s.1). Among other responsibilities, these planning boards would “hold public meetings and publish information for the purpose of *obtaining the participation and co-operation of inhabitants* of the planning area in determining the solution of problems or matters affecting the development of the planning area” (Planning Act, 1950 s.8 b, emphasis added). After such investigation and consultation took place, the municipal planning board would recommend an Official Plan to City Council for a vote. However, only after approval from the Ministry of Planning and Development, did the recommended plan become the Official Plan of the area in question (Planning Act, 1950 s.10, ss.2). In the case of an objection being made by an impacted landowner, the planning board could then become a Committee of Adjustment to adjudicate over by-laws and minor alterations in the implementation of the Official Plan (Planning Act, 1950, s.15 ss.7). If the Committee of Adjustment was unable to resolve objections, the issue was referred to the OMB, which held power of the same force and effect as that of the Ministry (Planning Act, 1950 s.29). While these provisions indicate a recognition of the significance of locally situated perspectives, they are more so modelled with the intention of maintaining the participation and cooperation of landowners.

Continued population growth in Toronto and in the surrounding townships (East York, North York, York, Etobicoke, and Scarborough) brought new pressure on the coordination of public services, investment in infrastructure, and economic growth. These challenges brought about calls for amalgamation as early as 1951. After conducting an

analysis of options in consultation with these surrounding townships, the OMB recommended a two-tier government option. This two-tier option resulted in the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, which was viewed as addressing the issues of coordination while also maintaining “a government that is close to the people” (Colton 1980, 70). This demonstrates a continued recognition of the place-based stake of residents and the need to maintain a practical relationship between local government and residents in the formation of modern Toronto. However, despite proximity, evidence of a significant misalignment between the perspective of residents and that of local government is found in contested claims on how to manage post-war urban growth.

Bocking (2006) finds that the authority of experts in Toronto was in its heyday between 1940 and 1970. At the beginning of this period, experts in planning and engineering began to take on more of a leadership role in developing political order in the growing city. Many groups of professionals had also recommended a more coordinated and overarching form of government as a way to leverage the funding necessary to provide necessary infrastructure for a growing population (Bocking 2006, 58). Bocking states that “expert perspectives gained in influence because they were consistent with powerful public and private interests and institutions, all sharing a common definition of the public interest: the need to support urban development by the private sector” (2006, 78). In alliance with this high paced development, experts in the planning and engineering offices of metropolitan government were able to shape the policy agenda of the day (Bocking 2006, 61). This approach to planning and development proceeded with a recognition of the resident as a consumer, with limited ground for involvement in decision-making (Bocking 2006, 73). For this very reason, this arrangement that had held experts in such high regard

would be called into question by residents who began to demand a more active role in the formation of their city.

Along with public uprisings making up the civil rights movement, demands from residents for new approaches to planning became pronounced in the 1960s (Magnusson 2015). Caulfield discusses how, similar to American cities, planning decisions in Toronto were influenced by the planning paradigm of modernism. Modernism is defined as “an approach to city-building rooted in a perception of the historical urban landscape as a problem to be solved by cataclysmic refashioning” (Caulfield 1994, 54), “unified organizational life and universalist architecture” (Giedion 1967, 25). The modernist approach legitimated drastic physical change by applying terms such as “obsolescent”, “uneconomic”, “deteriorated”, “blight” and “improper” to low-income and racialized communities such as Regent Park and Kensington Market (Caulfield 1994, 55). Thus, this paradigm enabled the condemnation, demolition, and repurposing of spaces occupied by organic community life under the legitimating auspices of urban renewal.

In 1971, the efforts of residents organizing against modernism culminated in a turning point in local development politics in Toronto. The Spadina Expressway, slated to cut through existing inner-city residential areas, had been approved by both tiers of government in Toronto. However, it was being challenged by residents at the OMB⁴ as well as in the streets. At a public event, the members of Stop Spadina Save Our City Coordination Committee proclaimed “Toronto is a living organism, with a past, a present and hopefully, a future. It is more than just concrete and steel. It is a community of people

⁴ Residents and resident groups such as the Stop Spadina, Save Our City Coordination Committee, and Spadina Review Corporation organized public demonstrations and delivered a petition of 15,709 signatures from residents opposing the provincial approval and funding of the expressway to the OMB.

of many different origins, who have come together to form what we think of as Toronto” (Milligan 2011, 28). This critical expression of the perspective of residents led to the first divided opinion in the sixty-five years of the OMB’s existence, and the cancellation of the expressway (Chipman 2002; Milligan 2011; Robinson 2011). The Spadina Expressway was later revealed to be the first in a network of expressways that would have created a fundamentally different Toronto than that which exists today (Milligan 2011; Robinson 2011). This exemplifies resident-led planning, with a critical group of residents conducting their own evaluation and advocating for their own ideas of proper development and use with their own vision of a desirable future.

With swaths of disillusioned city dwellers rallying to contest the legitimacy of planning decisions, it was necessary for hegemonic authorities to answer the demand for increased representation of residents in order to re-establish consensus. In 1973, planning legislation was amended so that the Minister of Planning and Development could appoint Advisory Committees “consisting of such persons as the Minister appoints, one of which will represent *the municipality in the development planning area* in whole or in part and one of which will be broadly representative of *the people of the development planning area*” (Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1973, s.3. emphasis added). This responsibility of accounting for the views of “the people” became that of the municipality in 1983, when municipalities could be delegated the authority to approve their own Official Plans and by-laws (The Ontario Planning and Development Act, 1983, s.4.). By this time, more direct forums of resident involvement and neighbourhood management, such as neighbourhood associations and community corporations, had been recommended by the City of Toronto’s Neighbourhood Services Working Group. However, “not even the

‘radicals’ on the Toronto Council” welcomed resident groups taking up powers formerly held by municipal government (Magnusson 2015, 52). Public influence over planning and development was limited to an advisory role.

In 1984, Cullingworth (1984) declared that participation was part of planning in Canada. Cullingworth and other authors attribute this change in planning to a highpoint in advocacy and activism that has since regressed into bureaucratic forms of decision-making (Elliott 2010; Robinson 2011). Cullingworth qualifies his meaning of participation in this instance by saying:

Physical protests against the bulldozer have given way to public hearings, commissions of inquiry, social surveys, community meetings, environment impact assessments, advisory councils and multiplicity of mechanisms for appealing or objecting decisions. [...] How far *true participation* can survive institutionalization is an open question (1984, 419). [emphasis added]

While the terms of consent were shifted by a critical awakening, this new level of engagement was offset by the increasingly technical and professionalized process of planning. Though efforts among residents had succeeded in displacing modernism, new constructions of common sense continued to sideline the perspective of residents. This intellectual development included residents albeit within controlled processes, significantly separated from direct decision-making. In fact, Caulfield (1994) explains that “the new outlook toward the inner city not only was a consequence of ideas impressed on city hall from outside but also arose from within the ranks of the city’s technocratic elite” (69). As Harvey (1985) notes, the initial stages of urban neoliberalization involved the professionalization in urban governance. As an appreciation for the resident perspective ascended in parallel with this professionalization, this intellectual development ultimately

produced new ways of selling visions of urban futures to the public so as to garner consent and police critical organizing (Caulfield 1994; Grant 2006; Isin 1992).

In the 1990s, New Urbanism was defined as replacing “sprawling, placeless, hyper-privatized spaces with denser and more pedestrian-oriented communities characterized by revitalized public realms, ecological sustainability, and diversity of uses and users” (Rutheiser 1997, 119). While it symbolizes many of the values fought for by resident-led movements, New Urbanism has been criticized as further privileging privatization of space and centralization of planning decisions (Grant 2006). This embedded bias creates selective openings for resident engagement, with more politicized demands being viewed as disruptive “noise in the system” and hence in need of professional direction (Magnusson 2015, 10). Keil (2002) argues that Metropolitan Toronto “spearheaded” NPM and municipal budget discipline in Canada, and that such practices became even more established by its amalgamated successor (594).

Efforts to establish a better footing for resident-led urbanization were significantly undermined by the “Common Sense Revolution” launched by the Conservative administration of Premier Mike Harris in 1995. Isin (2000) explains the Common Sense Revolution as “giving programmatic form to technologies, techniques, mentalities, and rationalities that have been emerging in the social body along with the new alignment of groups and classes” (163). This iconic neoliberal strategy emphasized a minor instrumental role for government, made cuts to welfare programs, reduced taxes, privatized the management of public utilities, and removed perceived barriers to growth by rescinding major elements of the Planning Act (Isin 2000b; Keil 2002; Winfield 1998). The long-established subordination of the municipality under the thumb of provincial government

became increasingly restricted by the golden straightjacket (Friedman 2000) of globalization and “urban neoliberalism” (Keil 2002).

In this same term in office, the Harris administration dismantled Metropolitan Toronto and replaced it with the current single-tier City of Toronto despite local resistance. Rather than a government that is meant to be close to the people, the amalgamation created a “mega-city” that is arguably too large to respond to community needs but too small to effectively confront substantive economic challenges (Clarkson 2001, 519). A late addition to the City of Toronto Act enabled the creation of community councils to “pacify concerns that the amalgamated city would be less accessible” (Flynn 2017). However, this participation would take place within an increasingly neoliberal context. As first Mayor of the new city, the administration of “Mega-City Mel” Lastman conflated liveable cities with competitive and entrepreneurial municipal conduct (Keil 2002, 594). Within this context, responsibilities that were downloaded and defunded by the province compelled municipalities to resort to privatization and corporatization as a way to manage important facets of the urban environment. While these decisions are made under the auspices of universal public interest and ideas of brighter urban futures, they created depoliticization domains that deflected public oversight and obstructed involvement. The city officials and community workers in Toronto interviewed for this dissertation consistently mention the Harris administration as being a direct contributor to current challenges in identifying and addressing resident needs.⁵

⁵ Interview with Morris Beckford, Executive Director of Access Point, W4I2, Interview with Senior Corporate and Management Policy Consultant, W1I4, April 19, 2017; Interview with Councillor Carroll, W1I1, April 18, 2017; Interview with Rich Whate, W1I3, April 19, 2017; Interview with Councillor Frank Di Giorgio, W1I6, April 20, 2017

Isin (2000) states that attempts to re-establish modes of resident control through municipal governance are attempting to solve a problem that has been long forgotten by neoliberal government. Subordinated groups are better aimed at creating de-territorialized social movements – such as issue-based equity-seeking groups or social movements seeking recognition and support from higher levels of government (including the U.N.). However, there is something evidently significant about the specific physical territory in which contestations over self-government play out. Contemporary approaches to urban governance and development provide a source of socio-economic enrichment but on an uneven basis. Notable failures in the neoliberal urban project are found in growing income disparity, disproportionate representation of visible minorities in underserved and overpoliced parts of the city, and a crisis of affordable housing (Hulchanski 2010; Polanyi, Johnston, and Khanna 2015). This develops an acute source of critical consciousness among low-income and disadvantaged residents with regard to the norms of urban governance. The negative impacts of austere budgets, neglect of public infrastructure, and disregard for organic community character are felt by civically engaged residents and equity-seeking groups of the middle class as well. Residents generally seek to take part in the growth of their city due to the significance of the physical environment to their daily lives. The motivation of these pursuits is place-based, constituted by a specific physical environment to which they are deeply related. Therefore, place-based efforts should not be discounted in their ability to stage the reimagining of more desirable futures and to contest established forms of common sense regarding the function of municipal government. These place-based pursuits continue to push for new standards of resident involvement, as shown in the participatory turn.

Constructing the Participatory Turn in Toronto

The failure of neoliberalism to create healthy cities (albeit for some more than others) has led to a growing interest among scholars, progressive politicians, and the general public in forms public engagement that allow residents to act as a corrective force. Both established channels for public input – from budget consultations to elections – and even in-depth consultations, such as former Mayor David Miller’s *Listening to Toronto*, are generally viewed as offering little in terms of the problems residents seek to address (Lerner and Van Wagner 2006; Rebick 2009). Scholarship has identified how public consultations systematically ignore the first-hand knowledge gathered by low-income and racialized residents of Toronto in their everyday interaction with infrastructure and public services (Beckford 2018; Rahder and McLean 2013; Wood 2013). Both a long-running critical awareness of shortcomings in urban governance and new ideas on how common residents can get involved in government decision-making have led to critical calls for new standards of public consultation. These critical calls demonstrate the politically charged perspective of residents. It is when these calls are answered by established authorities, that the underlying politics of hegemony can be detected.

Among the impacts of a rising call for increased participation, the consultation of residents in the formation of their environment has become an established part of professional practice. The Director of Zoning and the Committee of Adjustment explains:

There’s no zoning decision that we make, whether it’s across the city or a site-specific application, where there isn’t community consultation meetings and then, later, a public meeting under the Planning Act at one of the committees that we report to. So, there’s opportunity for the public, or concerned citizens, to voice their opinion on what they think of the zoning by-law that is being proposed. And, certainly, that feedback is helpful, we want to know what the public thinks.⁶

⁶ Interview with Director of Zoning and Committee of Adjustment, W4I6, April 3, 2018

Referencing the long-running obligations for public engagement outlined in the Ontario Planning Act, this senior staff conveys an aspiration to go beyond the minimum standards. This senior staff sees public consultation as a desirable approach to learning what the public thinks in the form of useful feedback. The consultation of residents that has been part of planning legislation since the 1950s is now reinforced with informative signage, inquiry numbers, online access to information, and public meetings that support nearly perpetual public consultation.

More significant examples of the participatory turn are found in the reform of the OMB into the LPAT. This overhaul was based on priorities of increasing supports for residents seeking to dispute development applications and establishing more recognition for Official Plans created by municipalities, granted they were in alignment with Provincial Policy Statements (PPSs). PPSs had begun to be used in Ontario in the 1990s as a way to guide municipal decision-making and, if necessary, rulings at the OMB (Chipman 2002; Moore 2013). The LPAT is an independent tribunal but reports to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) and the Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG). These two Ministries were engaged in the review of the OMB leading to its transition into the LPAT. A senior staff of the MMAH explains the reasoning behind some of the changes involved in this transition:

One of the main changes is actually more deference to municipalities and municipal decisions. [...] We've got a lot of letters from the general public [...] many of the people who wrote in had indicated that their municipal government has a professional planning department and, y'know, they didn't appreciate that there was this second-guessing taking place at the OMB.⁷

A senior staff of the MAG similarly states:

⁷ Interview with staff of MMAH, W3I5, December 12, 2017

One of the main functions of the overhaul is to give municipalities and decision-making authorities more deference and more power over their own planning in their community but along with that new right and new deference, comes a new level of responsibility. Because, if the municipality wants its decision to stand at the LPAT, it needs to make sure it's conforming with all of the relevant plans and documents. And, if they want to be able to defend decisions on smaller points against the conformity standard as opposed to the old best planning standard, they're going to have to make sure that all of those documents have a sufficient level of information and detail so that that the Tribunal will actually have something to compare that decision against. And in creating plans with that level of detail, again, I don't think it's possible to do that in a vacuum and to properly impact the assessment on residents and communities without having those conversations [during the formation of the Official Plan].⁸

While more support for resident involvement and deference to municipalities in planning their own cities are situated as the drivers of change, this change is mediated by a continued requirement to adhere to professionally-orientated conceptions of "good planning".

Staff of the MMAH explain the relationship between the valuable knowledge of residents and the necessary knowledge of experts: "In the planning process, I think we all recognize that technical knowledge is absolutely critical. [...] You can't expect that the public is going to understand complicated elements associated with developing their community or the hydro-geological elements of the area".⁹ Staff of the MAG explain the balancing function necessary between the stated interests of active residents and the needs of the silent majority and residents of the future:

Residents have a different view and a different stake than the other parties. So, the municipality tries to balance a whole set of interests, like creating enough housing, creating enough affordable housing, creating enough intensity around major transit. They're looking at more of a macro-level. [...] It's a matter of making sure that the rights of new hypothetical residents are balanced with the existing folks who live there and trying to make sure that, not only are those interests balanced in a way that is appropriate but even if at the end of the day decisions are made that the residents do not agree with, that they feel that they have had an opportunity to be

⁸ Interview with staff of MAG, W4I4, March 16, 2018

⁹ Interview with staff of MMAH, W3I5, December 12, 2017

heard. [...] It's not appropriate in a democracy for people to have decisions foisted on them without an opportunity for reconsideration and input into that process.¹⁰

This staff continues:

I think experts can help educate residents about the broader interests that are at stake. I think residents already have a fairly good sense of what is good for them and what is good for their block and what is good for their neighbourhood and why, in terms of how they define good. [...] Whereas experts, I think, have more insight into why we need to change things, [...] I think experts have that macro view whereas I think residents, generally, have more of an interest in what's going on in their own individual sphere.¹¹

These interview testimonies indicate that Moore's finding of experts playing a determining role in OMB rulings remains constant despite reform to the LPAT. While these changes are a response to calls for more respect for Official Plans developed and approved by local government, the requirement to coordinate with a myriad of technical factors and legislative requirements continues to situate the planning community in a leading role. The priority of supporting resident involvement becomes qualified with attributed shortcomings in rationalization and awareness. This reveals that attention to resident input remains mitigated by notions of broader public interest, which professional perspectives are claimed to be better able to navigate towards than the participating members of the public themselves. This irony is enabled by both constructions of a necessary technical knowledge, held by specialists, as well as presumed interests of the silent majority (including residents of the future) making active residents seem unnecessarily loud and selfish. This ultimately puts staff who are interpreting this information in the role of a broker between vocalized contributions of concerned residents and understandings of public interest embedded in protocols of urban planning and asset management (Abram

¹⁰ Interview with staff of MAG, W4I4, March 16, 2018

¹¹ Interview with staff of MAG, W4I4, March 16, 2018

2000; Cullingworth 1984; Davies 2014; Mannberg and Wihlborg 2008; Neuman 2000; Yiftachel and Huxley 2000).

This dynamic is also found in new standards of public engagement that take place prior to developments. As stated by the Director of Zoning and Committee of Adjustment, engagement in Toronto goes beyond the legislated requirements. Public engagements over area specific developments gathers the thoughts of the public on how public funds should be invested and how development should be managed. This involves what the former City Manager refers to as “working out the balance”. He explains this dynamic as:

You may have a macro planning strategy approved in the Official Plan that says the avenue planning plan will be for three to seven storeys, varying by whatever density depending on where you are along the avenue, etcetera, which is the starting point for getting feedback from the residents and most residents want it limited to say three and then you work out the balance. But you can’t professionally walk into a committee or Council to explain what you’re recommending without that input.¹²

Again, consulting the public is confirmed as a necessary part of professional conduct. However, this consultation takes place without questioning certain presumptions and the extent to which this feedback is actually used is shown to be limited.

The residential density mentioned in the example of housing is a specific struggle in the urban setting. Another concise trade-off between the needs of the current public and imperatives of planning decisions is found in the availability of community space. The Director of Zoning and Committee of Adjustment references calls for more community space in low-income neighbourhoods. The Director challenges these calls in saying:

Who’s running that operation? Y’know, does the city have a community centre elsewhere nearby that fulfills that same purpose? We’re in a time when the budget only goes so far. You can’t go open a community centre all the time. Y’know, there’s Parks, Forestry, and Rec. and others who map out and do long-term work

¹² Interview with former City Manager, W4I5, March 15, 2018

plans on the best sites for the best community uses that factor in the ability to meet the operations and capital costs to provide such use.¹³

In rationalizing limitations on how much “what the public thinks” can influence planning decisions, this senior staff explains how public needs must be met with professional management of scarce financial resources. Endowed with the legitimacy of determining “the best sites for the best community uses”, professional perspectives on proximity and purpose hold authority over those of the public. Davies’ (2014) concept of administrative domination helps to understand how constructions of common sense are used to both generate consent and authoritatively dispel critical sentiments. This capacity is enabled by the conceptualization of urban challenges as technical problems best addressed by professional recommendations based on quantified and depersonalized information (Hummel 2006).

In the downtown core, a Senior Project Manager of Transportation Services explains how the utilities and infrastructure lacing the public realm create a crowded and highly technical conversation in each public works project. This Senior Project Manager explains:

Every project that we do [at Transportation Services] comes down to a conversation on space. Sometimes we’ll be battling it out over about 5cm of space, sometimes between the Pedestrians' Project group, the Urban Forestry Department, the TTC, and Transportation’s Road Operations Group that want a better place for their waste receptacle people to pull up and collect the garbage and then you’ll get the business owners who want nothing more than parking spaces. [...] And so, what you need is someone in place, some staff member in place, to be able to draw all of those desires and balance the needs of all those individual groups.¹⁴

This explanation indicates the number of interests that are currently engaged in determining the use of space, and how resident participation takes place within a process of establishing

¹³ Interview with Director of Zoning and Committee of Adjustment, W4I6, April 3, 2018

¹⁴ Interview with Senior Project Manager in Transportation Services, WI18, April 21, 2017

consensus. This senior city staff sees himself already engaging in a participatory process¹⁵ in which he, as a member of the planning community, is able to play a coordinating role in the determination of optimal use. Frequent references to specific measurement speak to the ways of knowing physical experience that are distinct from that experience itself. This explanation, along with the technical terminology, demonstrates how public interest is served amidst, and indeed through, a number of technical factors characterizing specific sites (Hummel 2006; MacCallum 2016; Moore 2013). Space and public funds are viewed as being scarce and in need of the “pure technique” of planning to sufficiently address needs (Hummel 2006).

This Senior Project Manager explains how, in instances of public engagement, professional perspectives on proper decision-making need to be taken seriously. He states:

When you go to a public meeting and we’ll suggest that, at this point, we’re removing a lane of a road and putting down a bike lane, we’re not just coming up with this idea in our heads or forcing this on anyone. *It’s the reality*. It’s based on traffic counts and requests from the residents that’s driving this change more so, and we’re also playing the catch-up game. [emphasis added]¹⁶

This Senior Project Manager desires members of the public to acknowledge that modifications of the built environment are not developments derived from an imposing imagination, but rather rational decisions based on different sources of intelligence on needs. In these remarks, rationality is based on quantified notions of public interest that constitute a “reality” in conjunction with the broader political economy of municipalities. This senior staff refers to “the catch-up game” in which cash-strapped municipalities attempt to address deficits in necessary infrastructure. The mention of other residents draws attention to both the heterogeneity of the general public as well as how ideas from residents

¹⁵ Interview with Senior Project Manager in Transportation Services, WI18, April 21, 2017

¹⁶ Interview with Senior Project Manager of Transportation Services, WI18, April 21, 2017

require the support of professional rationality to be enacted. Due to the material conditions of municipalities and reigning ideas on how to overcome challenges, professionalized common sense places significant guard rails on the participatory turn in Toronto.

Nevertheless, there is an acknowledged role for the everyday expertise of residents. A Senior Strategic Policy Consultant Specializing in Stakeholder Engagement in the City of Toronto's Urban Planning division, states that such involvement allows residents to "bring their expertise in terms of the communities they live in, the things that need to happen in their perspective based on their everyday lived experience, the things that are working, the things that aren't working".¹⁷ This senior staff is a member of a Community of Practice on public engagement in the City of Toronto, facilitates Toronto's Planning Review Panel, and also teaches a course in public engagement at a local university. This senior staff explains their views on the importance of resident input as:

If you don't have buy-in, on a policy or the particular direction that you're trying to take, it puts that thing at risk of not being fully implemented. I always like to point my classes to the Transit City initiative that Mayor Miller initiated as part of his re-election campaign and the way that Rob Ford was able to just cancel that whole plan on his first day in office and really set back transit building in Toronto by quite a few years because of it. So, beyond making a project better by incorporating the ideas of the public, public engagement really helps to build a constituency for an idea.¹⁸

In his description, this senior staff elaborates the conclusions of Koontz and Newig (2014) and Legacy (2010) who find the viability of projects to be largely based on input from professionals and staff. This senior staff complements this finding by suggesting how strong public engagement can prevent erratic decision-making of municipal level politicians by building a constituency for an idea. Beyond the way constituencies are

¹⁷ Interview with Senior Strategic Policy Consultant Specializing in Engagement, W4I8, April 3, 2018

¹⁸ Interview with Senior Strategic Policy Consultant Specializing in Engagement, W4I8, April 3, 2018

represented by elected officials, this more concise constituency serves as a reference for buy-in for plans on city improvements. Questions remain about the degree to which this recognition of everyday expertise supports constituencies, or groups of stakeholders, that have already formed around ideas arising from felt needs. In response to questions of how the Toronto Planning Review Panel mediates contentious issues, this senior staff states that such issues do not typically arise and characterizes typical conversations as “dispassionate”, “very choreographed”, and “planned”.¹⁹ This dispassionate engagement is counted as a strength of the panel, which is seen as able to work towards consensus, with the option for participants who do not align with this consensus to write minority reports.²⁰ However, this suggests that something significant is missing from the dialogue, as contentious and divergent discussion is compromised by an underlying strategy to generate consensus and buy-in with government decision-making.

A proactive effort to support civic engagement is also found in the City of Toronto’s creation of the CIO, which resulted from a successful application by Mayor John Tory to the Bloomberg Philanthropies grant in 2017. The Design Strategist of the CIO explains that priority projects have focused on questions of how to build a more responsive government, with more recent focus narrowing to “increasing levels of civic engagement among underrepresented communities”.²¹ The CIO explores complex questions of responsiveness and engagement through a “resident-centric design process”.²² Resident-centric design is explained as beginning with immersion in civic engagement processes with an emphasis

¹⁹ Interview with Senior Strategic Policy Consultant Specializing in Engagement, W4I8, April 3, 2018

²⁰ Interview with Senior Strategic Policy Consultant Specializing in Engagement, W4I8, April 3, 2018

²¹ Interview with Design Strategist, CIO, City of Toronto, April 6, 2018

²² Interview with Design Strategist, CIO, City of Toronto, April 6, 2018

on the resident experience, “primary, mixed-method research, [...] observing different civic engagement processes. We’re talking to residents”.²³ This staff continues to explain:

We have been attending several civic engagement events both as an observer as well as a participant and doing some reflective journaling and ethnographic research just observing what is going on at some of the existing civic engagement processes both within the City but also [...] a protest for example, y’know, trying to get a sense of how that differs from a town hall.²⁴

Following this research phase, a process of ideation takes place in collaboration with focus groups of residents, “community stakeholders”, city staff, and subject matter experts.²⁵ CIO staff states “we generate a big list of ideas, which is often people’s favourite part of the process”.²⁶ Clearly, the CIO functions to identify barriers to involvement and shortcomings in responses to resident needs. However, the capacity for this learning process to evoke structural change is far less certain.

In developing ideas emerging from this immersive research into proposals for new policy and practices, this CIO staff explains that: “the Office itself doesn’t actually, y’know, do any civic engagement, right. We are more of an internal consultancy and so, we’re going to be actively seeking out a partner division within the city that would be willing to experiment and prototype with us”.²⁷ The search for a partner, or “client”, is also required to obtain continued funding passed the duration of the original grant.²⁸ Therefore, in order to continue to exist, let alone implement ideas, the CIO seeks to “make sure we’re aligned with work that’s being done in other parts of the City”.²⁹ In order to align with existing work and scope out the feasibility of ideas, the CIO Design Strategist explains that

²³ Interview with Design Strategist, CIO, City of Toronto, April 6, 2018

²⁴ Interview with Design Strategist, CIO, City of Toronto, April 6, 2018

²⁵ Interview with Design Strategist, CIO, City of Toronto, April 6, 2018

²⁶ Interview with Design Strategist, CIO, City of Toronto, April 6, 2018

²⁷ Interview with Design Strategist, CIO, City of Toronto, April 6, 2018

²⁸ Interview with Design Strategist, CIO, City of Toronto, April 6, 2018

²⁹ Interview with Design Strategist, CIO, City of Toronto, April 6, 2018

“we basically said hey, y’know, in our first conversation, ‘who are the experts inside of the City or outside of the City that really get this stuff and live and breathe it?’ And that kind of led us to about a dozen folks both internal to the City and outside”.³⁰ Among those internal to the City of Toronto, the CIO engaged with the Community of Practice on public engagement.³¹ This Design Strategist explains that the CIO is also often contacted by “private sector companies that want to get involved in the public sector and public good”.³² The position of the CIO is found to be one of in-depth exploration but with a limited capacity to act on what is learned. Therefore, in the process of determining what ideas will work or how learnings will be responded to, understandings of feasibility and fundability interfere with a dedication to the resident perspective. Referring to participatory forms of involvement, this CIO staff states: “If you talk to public servants, in-person events take a lot of time and energy and they cost a lot to organize”.³³ In 2020, the CIO was transitioned in to the Customer Experience Transformation and Innovation program “ensuring residents have the best experience possible when they access City services” (City of Toronto, 2019). This indicates that while the CIO may aspire for curious, “resident-centric” engagement, partnerships with existing experts, agendas, and private sector involvement reproduce the limitations embedded in NPM.

The Toronto Planning Review Panel and the CIO both symbolize the values of epistemological curiosity in using collaborative engagement to address the inherent incompleteness of established constructions of knowledge. However, the nuance, creativity, and overall capacity to address systemic issues from the perspective of the

³⁰ Interview with Design Strategist, CIO, City of Toronto, April 6, 2018

³¹ Interview with Design Strategist, CIO, City of Toronto, April 6, 2018

³² Interview with Design Strategist, CIO, City of Toronto, April 6, 2018

³³ Interview with Design Strategist, CIO, City of Toronto, April 6, 2018

resident remains limited by an inclination toward dispassionate, choreographed, planned engagement and the need to utilize scarce financial resources efficiently. This suggests that these developments remain circumscribed within notions of public interest and proper government conduct laid out in theories of NPM. NPM symbolizes the contemporary recognition of the need for parsimonious use of resources, outcome-based decision-making, and responsiveness to residents coached by ideals of client satisfaction (Garrett 2006; Hood 1991). Despite this responsiveness, a focus on client-satisfaction sets out the narrow civic ontology that invites resident input but eschews critical interventions that challenge established conceptions of efficiency and public interest.

As shown in the testimonies above, increased forms of inclusion are subject to the policing capacity of experts who enforce legislative requirements and the goals of existing programs. In order for the policing capacity of this role to be properly differentiated from mere manipulation, analysis must account for the way in which this capacity draws from understandings that have become established as common sense (MacCallum 2016). The integration of critical views without a reorientation of hegemonic priorities constitutes an instance of *trasformismo* within the participatory turn in Ontario. This is found in openings that are created by and for critical resident views but actually divide potentially counterhegemonic positioning by enforcing and reproducing the constraints of common sense in the interest of existing hegemonic authority. Amidst the participatory turn, the public is viewed as a necessary partner. New constituencies are created by civically engaged discussions on Toronto's future. However, the prevailing privilege of certain ways of knowing the city significantly limit the franchise of these constituencies.

The structural divide between the big C City and the little c city

This final section will briefly outline a use of terms symbolizing a tension between the state and the public that arises in the process of recognizing and addressing issues in the urban setting. Given the focus of this research, interviewees frequently made references to “the city”. This shorthand term was used in a variety of ways that are worth unpacking. At times, interviewees would mention: “people at the city” or “people in the city”; the city as a beautiful place, or the city as an organization; the city as something that can be sensed and felt, or the city as something that acts on the basis of responsibility and authority. It is safe to assume that all interviewees, at the time of the interview, would acknowledge that they were *in* the city of Toronto.³⁴ However, in other uses of the term there was a latent distinction that was frequently made between the people who live in Toronto and people who work at the City of Toronto.

Residents of Toronto were often depicted by references to the diverse cultural makeup and an emotive self-awareness within the geographic boundaries of the city, also referred to as “the community”. Mentions of “the city” in this sense spoke of life, history, consciousness, personality, and what Toronto could become. The term was also used with a similar frequency to refer to a much narrower group of people, constituted by their connection to decision-making processes meant to orchestrate order and equity within these boundaries. In interviews, residents often used “the City” as a direct reference to government officials, often meaning specifically city staff. Interviewed city staff would differentiate between mechanisms that are the responsibility of the City of Toronto, and

³⁴ While this is certainly true, affinities with the original townships, such as Scarborough and North York, among residents in these areas indicate the distinct loyalties and ways of knowing space that will be explained in this section.

the official decision-making capacity of Toronto City Council. In these references, the City is the centre of intelligence that functions to figure out the site-specific interests of the massive constituency³⁵ residing in the city's geographic boundaries. The government functions to conduct this figuring out with an ongoing orientation to the future, contemplating present action in relation to established goals. As such, discussions on legitimate decision-making in Toronto interestingly packed two distinct understandings into a central term. Though "the City" may be a common shorthand, it constitutes an implicit claim of which groups determine what action is possible in the city.

Going forward, references to these differing understandings will be made with a basic grammatical distinction. The inhabitants of Toronto and the spaces of the built form that they occupy will be referred to as "the little c city", while the formal institutions and authoritative boundaries managed and enforced by the City of Toronto will be referred to as "the big C City". These two uses draw out the difference between institutionalized authority and the more foundational, heterogeneous society in which this authority is intermittently accepted, deliberated on, and contested. Such analysis can reveal the epistemologically contested turf that underlies even small-scale participatory initiatives within a highly planned environment. One conception of the city is being used to designate the experiential knowledge and aspirations of residents, and another is used to designate an authoritative institution of formalized decision-making under the official brand of Toronto. These different senses of the city are significantly distinct, but inherently intertwined with the physicality of the city as a common focus.

³⁵ Recall that Toronto is the fourth most populated city in North America.

The little c city and big C City are two distinct ways of knowing the city – with the former informed by lived experience, human senses, and emotion, and the latter informed by legislation, zoning, and professionalized methods. What the little c city knows as places of memory, personal meaning, daily struggle, and imagination, the big C City knows as places of specific land-use by-laws, maintenance schedules, zoning language, divisional purview, and budget lines. What the city may know in a first-hand and colloquial way, the City knows through census data, standard measurements, and officially designated boundaries. This differentiation is helpful for this research on tensions between the intimate and varied knowledge of situated urban inhabitants and systemic embedded in the institutions of local government (Forester 1988; Holston and Appadurai 1996; Jacobs 2010; Meagher 2015; Moore 2013). Dispersed and partially recorded personal stories flowing over, around, and through these official boundaries create living communities and locally-known identifications of urban space (Holston 1998). Privileging the overarching knowledge of protocols and programs, the bailiwick of administrative and planning professionals, situates this intimate knowledge as one source of data among many in the calculation of decisions to create an attractive and well-organized city for both present residents and residents of the future.

Despite these divergent ways of knowing, and prevailing characterizations of residents as out of touch and grounded in the present, both the big C City and little c city are future oriented. Resident aspirations and strategies to create a more desirable tomorrow exhibit a similar future-oriented evaluation of necessary action to improve the space around them. The formality and scale of big C City planning often situates the little c city as being stuck in the now and out of touch with “the big picture”. However, the immersed nature of

the little c city provides telling insights into how elements of the present need to change in the future in order to create more livable communities. Government decisions that advance toward the future envisioned in the Official Plans and budgeting schedules of the big C City intermittently support and infringe on the futures envisioned within the varied perspectives of the little c city. Clashes in these futures are found in protested developments, expressive public consultations, critical local media, the personal grumblings among frustrated residents, and the often silent suffering of displacement and neglect. These clashes spell out a divided city, which calls for more collaborative decision-making seek to reconcile. However, the degree to which this tension is alleviated depends on the manner in which this collaboration takes place.

Similar to Gramsci's two types of consciousness, and differing conceptions of intellectuality, this differentiation between the two meanings of city is useful for analysis of contested claims between critical sentiments within the masses, represented by the little c city, and the authority of the state, represented by the big C City. The established ways of running the city are the result of economic and political alliances that prioritize economic productivity and maintain public complacency with claims of moral and intellectual unity (Davies 2014). This intellectual unity is ostensibly consolidated within the plans, protocols, and programs of the big C City. However, the consistent, physically informed, lived experience of the little c city fuels skepticism toward official narratives and provides the grounds for counterhegemonic disillusionment and the development of place-based critical capacity. The call for increased resident participation is an example of "good sense" that is appropriated by hegemonic actors to re-establish a common sense that is conducive to hegemonic expansion. Within participatory forums, residents bring forward their critical

perspectives to attempt to elaborate the common sense underlying government decision-making with new ideas on how public funds and urban space can be utilized to address resident needs. In the resulting negotiations, hegemonic authority can become accepted and aligned with by members of the little c city. However, the experiential knowledge of residents continues to provide a distinct, potentially transformative, way of seeing the world. Both the little c city and the big C City are heterogeneous and feature internal contestations of authority. Nevertheless, this duality helps to identify structural barriers to the emergence of counter-conceptions of common sense as they arise in collaborations in urban planning and development. Investigating how these differing claims are negotiated and resolved in the context of the pilot project will reveal how structural barriers restrain participatory budgeting from supporting a more collaborative process.

These two distinct ways of knowing overlap in many ways, linked by the physical city and the fact that the specific people evoking these ways of knowing traverse these epistemic boundaries. And yet, they hardly ever fully align due to a divergence in loyalties to human purpose as opposed to “pure technique” (Hummel 2006). Pulling government decision-making closer to the former is the purpose of participatory processes. However, it is only when ideas become assessed and approved within the epistemology of the big C City that public funds and the public realm are subject to action. This creates a conspicuous imbalance of power within participatory processes. As shown throughout this chapter, the proximate diversity inherent in the physicality of cities results in a reoccurring tension that can take the form of either conflict and collaboration (Davies 2014; Magnusson 2015; McFarlane 2011a). Stages of renegotiated roles have situated decision-making capacity closer and closer to the people of a city – from the magistrates of the British Crown, to

provincial governments, to municipal government — with an increasing amount of entry points for resident voice. However, reigning conceptions of public interest and good planning continue to be imposed under the auspices of technical expertise and common sense.

Some forms of engagement, such as those drawing from the common sense of NPM, expand the hegemonic status of existing authorities. While resident views are counted as important stakeholders, lay perspectives on urban planning decisions are consistently countered by those associated with more technically proficient intelligence. Viewed dialectically, contesting claims to legitimate urban planning are resolved along the lines of pre-existing relations of authority, supplementing hegemonic forms of common sense with references to public demands without a significant rearrangement of power. This can lead to division, defeat or a prevailing sense of need that fuels alternative visions of the future. After all, *trasformismo* involves methods of varying efficacy (Anderson 2017). With a direct focus on physical space and infrastructure, which is subject to both day-to-day perceptions of resident routine and the official zoning and enumeration of urban planning, this case study reveals contesting forms of knowing what choices are necessary to pursue a desirable future.

Conclusion

Analysis of participatory budgeting must proceed with attentiveness to the structural aspects of existing power relations. Therefore, this chapter has reviewed the structures of authority within the Canadian municipality that have implications for the participation of residents in government decision-making. Despite the unique opportunity of urbanization to be informed by the experiential knowledge of residents, structural elements of local

governance negate the upward expression of this knowledge. Municipal governments have been demonstrated to perform a policing role in relation to local residents rather than to provide a platform for resident expression. This policing role, originally played in a literal fashion, was meant to defuse local tensions on the behalf of British authorities rather than to empower local perspectives. This policing role now takes place in the interest of hegemonic visions of the future intellectually reinforced by the epistemological authority of professional administrators and planners. Land-use planning and capital developments in Toronto now emerge from crowded, knowledge-intensive processes that are not conducive to public input. This does not bode well for the empowerment of the experiential knowledge of the resident. As such, new forms of public engagement continue to feature the pitfalls of communicative planning, which increase the epistemological authority of professionals more notably than the engaged public (Abram 2000; Mannberg and Wihlborg 2008; Purcell 2009; Yiftachel and Huxley 2000).

With conclusions from both Isin and Moore suggesting that the means to influence local political economy are outside the purview of municipal government, participatory programs launched by municipal governments would appear to have little power to actually decentralize to residents. And yet, the salient consequences of municipal decision-making and the failures of established approaches to urban governance continue to fuel critical ideas of new ways that residents can act as a corrective and generative force. This history informs the research of this dissertation in two specific ways. First, in Toronto there is a history of re-thinking planning priorities based around the importance of resident input. Second, power relations challenged in moments of re-thinking can be re-established through more sophisticated means of maintaining resident involvement on the sidelines of

decision-making. Rather than being solely a hinderance on resident input, municipal governments have more and more included provisions for residents to be involved in the formation of their urban environment. Acknowledgement of the physical, place-based stake of residents found in planning legislation in the Toronto's post-war era indicates a long-running recognition that local demands ought to be heard. Residents and civil society groups have succeeded in pushing for higher standards of public involvement in adversity with authoritative understandings. Similar to the early 1970s, calls for increased resident participation are now gaining significant momentum, recognized within political offices and schools of thought in planning. This momentum now plays into an established framework with a long history of resident engagement and the development of new standards for resident involvement that fit within the professionally-directed procedures of municipal decision-making. This research therefore seeks to assess the impact of the rise of participatory budgeting within this context.

Analysis of the new openings arising from the participatory turn in Toronto demonstrate how these openings are structurally mitigated by preconceived notions of public interest and a drive for consensus. There is a palpable irony in the consistent privileging of constructions of knowledge other than the resident within forums meant to increase resident participation. Even with the embrace of “what the public thinks”, everyday “expertise”, and “resident-centric design”, Cullingworth's question of how conducive these reforms are to “true participation” remains as relevant today as ever. True participation implies that participating residents are able take part in the decision-making processes that they are interested in with ideas of their own. However, recent modifications in resident involvement in municipal decision-making continue to situate participating

residents as one source of data to be considered in the process of professional decision-making. The concept of *trasformismo* is helpful in identifying how the rethinking of urban planning priorities maintains hegemonic power by co-opting the values of civil society. New intellectual explanations and material concessions maintain existing authoritative structures by engaging in consensus-generating strategies to dispel critical engagement.

Participatory budgeting is a new and distinct form of public consultation in relation to the history of Toronto. By demonstrating the current structural arrangement that creates two distinct ways of knowing the city, its needs, and its possibilities, referred to herein as the little c city and big C City perspectives, this chapter has set the groundwork for analysis of the participatory budgeting pilot project. The following chapters will demonstrate how these two perspectives meet within the pilot project.

Chapter 4 “Creating Space Within the Machine”: The Origins of Toronto’s Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project

A trending use of participatory practices suggests an emerging role for residents in determining how public funds are allocated in the development of the public realm. However, as stated in the prior chapter, Canadian cities are not designed nor financially equipped to engage in robust bottom-up, resident-led urban development. Therefore, the degree to which participatory practices in any way challenge the habituated practices of the planning community remains the focus of critical scholarship (MacCullum 2016, Ganuza, Baiocchi, Summers 2016). The hegemonic status of neoliberalism and NPM establish parsimonious use of resources, client-centered service, and corporate approaches to management as matters of common sense. Toronto is no exception with the “mega-city” emerging from the Common Sense Revolution “spearheading” the development of NPM in Canada (Keil 2002, 594). These conditions leave little room for the epistemological curiosity necessary to engage in in-depth participatory decision-making. While attention to public input is arguably increasing, residents remain situated as consumers of professional decisions approved by elected officials. However, in response to these conditions, progressive advocates continue to call for increased levels of resident participation to act as a corrective force to the myopia of established conceptions of public interest.

This chapter will discuss the inspiration and design of the City of Toronto’s participatory budgeting pilot project in order to reveal how demands for increased public involvement in budget decisions are integrated into the machinery of municipal government. The introduction of participatory budgeting as a practice in the City of Toronto came about due to the initiative of a specific councillor and a general consensus among senior staff on the value of resident input. However, as this idea was transitioned

into an implementable plan, consensus on the importance of resident involvement succumbed to other priorities based around pre-existing notions of public interest. This creates a significant shift away from the goal of uniquely informed residents having final say on the allocation of designated public funds with support from staff, and toward the goal of involving typically uninvolved residents in an educational process of “how the City works”. This drive to involve residents without questioning pre-existing planning processes suggests that the pilot project is meant to assemble a constituency for an idea emerging from the big C City rather than empower the ideas that already exist in the minds of the little c city.

This chapter will be structured around the motivation and design of the pilot project. This first section will illustrate how Councillor Carroll came to advocate for participatory budgeting within the City of Toronto. Councillor Carroll’s path to becoming a participatory budgeting advocate followed a fairly regular process of being lobbied by civil society actors and engaging in research on how participatory budgeting was playing out in other jurisdictions. Due to having minimal access to resources to finance and support participatory budgeting, Councillor Carroll required the buy-in of high-level city staff, such as the Executive Director of Financial Planning and City Manager’s Office. Based on a consensus on the importance of resident involvement, the pilot project began to take shape. The second section will reveal how the motion passed by City Council to organize a pilot project for participatory budgeting led directly to an increased level of staff influence. These forms of influence will be shown in the determination of how and where the participatory budgeting pilot project would take place. A third section will reveal an underlying distrust that participatory practices will address pressing issues and a prevailing

faith in staff-driven understandings of needs and solutions. This helps to understand the countervailing values that shape the original idea of participatory decision-making from a position of power. A final section will reveal an intermittent distrust and hope among the little c city regarding participatory processes in order to demonstrate the perspectives that the pilot project sought to engage.

Getting participatory budgeting on the table

Toronto's participatory budgeting pilot project emerges as an attempt to deepen the involvement of residents in the allocation of public funds. This section will demonstrate how the pilot project emerged from a consensus on the value of resident participation. In this process, the efforts of a specific elected official were pivotal. Councillor Shelley Carroll provided a driving force for the pilot project, seeing it as a necessary addition to the civic relationship between the municipality and the public. Carroll acknowledges a long-running focus on public consultations in Toronto in saying:

The City of Toronto does a lot of consultation, I always make the joke that the city of Toronto is really the birthplace of municipal level consultations. Consultations R Us, since the days of Egerton Ryerson¹! That's true but it's all based on "here's a thing we're going to do, and if you don't like it come to the meeting tonight and scream no!" We don't have a lot of things that are specifically constructed for you to come and tell us what you'd like to say yes to.²

Carroll points to limitations in current approaches to public engagement based around the ability of the public to have a proactive say in urban planning and development. Seeking to address the underlying dynamic of approaches to public engagement based on pre-

¹ Adolphus Egerton Ryerson was a politician, Methodist minister, and education reform advocate in 19th century Upper Canada. The Canadian Encyclopedia explains his politics as "a mix of loyalty to British-Canadian institutions; a conservative mistrust of radical philosophy; a liberal optimism in humankind; and a deep and abiding religious commitment". *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. <<https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/egerton-ryerson>>

² Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2017

determined interests, Carroll attempts to reach a new level of public involvement. This is fitting as Carroll came to municipal politics as a sign of change. After having worked as a bank teller and operating her own day care centre, Carroll made her foray into politics as head of the North York Parent Assembly and the Toronto Education Assembly in a fight against funding cuts and education reforms brought about by the Harris provincial administration. Carroll was elected as a School Board Trustee in 2000. In 2003, she became the representative of Don Valley East replacing retiring councillor Paul Sutherland, who was the incumbent for the Don Valley East district of North York since 1985. Carroll was appointed to the Executive Committee of Mayor David Miller's government and elected as Budget Chief in 2006, remaining in the position during the 2008 financial crisis. Carroll was solicited to run for the Ontario Liberal Party in the 2011 provincial election but remained dedicated to municipal politics, in part due to personal concerns with the election of Rob Ford as Mayor (Pagliaro 2016). Carroll has since spoken out in favour of renewing Toronto's aging high-rise towers (Lightstone 2010), reforming the police board, and maintaining investment in public services with balanced budgets (Dorskoch 2009). This career path indicates a fluency in financial management as well as a willingness to push back against austerity.

While Carroll's efforts provided a driving force for the pilot project initiation, her own motivation resulted from a specific experience in which standards of public consultation and her own identity as a progressive councillor were called into question. In her capacity as Budget Chief, Carroll presented an early review of the upcoming budget with Social Planning Toronto in 2010. Carroll reports to have been confronted by the Chair

of Social Planning Toronto, Judy Rebick, over the need to go beyond the current local standards of progressive government. Councillor Carroll remembers the moment as:

People said, ‘for progressive government why aren’t you doing participatory budgeting?!’ Judy Rebick was Chairing the meeting that night. She really yelled at me, and I thought, y’know, I’m a progressive why are they yelling at me? [...]. At that point, we all had this sort of mythical idea that everyone in Porto Alegre files into a football field and votes on every penny of the entire city budget. That was sort of the myth in North America. And so, I promised to look into it and about that same time the public was becoming aware of the work in South America, they were yelling at their councillors in Brooklyn.³

This origin story from the perspective of Carroll demonstrates how critical interventions can disturb and elaborate existing understandings of progressive politics. Carroll, who had hitherto accepted established standards of resident involvement, became taken with Rebick’s common sense claim that progressive local government requires the participatory inclusion of residents.

The motivation behind Rebick’s call for participatory budgeting can be extrapolated from her book published the year prior called *Transforming Power: from the personal to the political*. The book’s subtitle is a direct reference to the feminist legacy of challenging power relations and inequities that are embedded in cultural institutions, indicating Rebick’s will to empower the personal experience of marginalized groups. In this book, Rebick (2009) discusses the increased community leadership and solidarity with low-income communities found in her research on participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre and TCHC in Toronto. In earlier work, Rebick (2000) discusses the need for new forms of democracy that renew a faith in the role of the public sector and offset the detrimental effects of overreliance on the private sector. Seeing participatory budgeting as situating the collective “genius” of ordinary people in more than just an advisory role, Rebick argues

³ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2017

that participatory budgeting is a necessary addition to representative democracy (121–22). This call for more progressive government was effective in attuning Councillor Carroll to this possibility.

In order to figure out how participatory budgeting could be implemented in Toronto, Carroll looked to how the practice was growing in American cities like Chicago and New York. Participatory budgeting in these cities resulted from advocacy from groups focused on issues in public housing, which Lerner and Baiocchi were directly involved in (Baez and Hernandez 2012, 319; Su 2017). After attending the 2002 World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, members of these groups began advocating for participatory budgeting as a way to increase public say in the allocation of public funds (Baez and Hernandez 2012, 319). Lerner and others advocating for participatory budgeting continued to learn about the adaption and impact of participatory budgeting taking place in Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) Operating Units, what was at that time North America's most established use of the Porto Alegre model.⁴ After a research project based on TCHC in 2008, Lerner and other advocates organized a series of public talks to raise awareness and interest in participatory budgeting in New York (Baez and Hernandez 2012; Duarte Laudon 2010). This advocacy initially caught the interest of Chicago Alderman Joe Moore, who began the first participatory budgeting initiative in the United States in Chicago's 49th Ward in 2009. To formalize the support being provided to Moore, Lerner and Baiocchi

⁴ The TCHC participatory budgeting process began in 2001 and originally distributed \$18,000,000 dollars in capital funds over two years with Tenant Representatives from 13 Operating Units composed of hundreds of individual buildings. The amount of funding available has since descended to \$10,000,000 in 2009, \$5,000,000 in 2014. The TCHC process was most recently reformed to support residents playing an advisory role in the allocation of \$600,000 of operational funds and no longer features the direct allocation of capital funding.

founded the Participatory Budgeting Project in the same year.⁵ This advocacy was also successful in convincing a bi-partisan group of four Councillors in New York City (Brad Lander, Melissa Mark-Viverito, Eric Ulrich, and Dan Garodnick) – who had not heard about participatory budgeting prior to this advocacy – to each pledge \$1,000,000 to finance participatory budgeting in their districts with PBP providing technical assistance in 2011 (Baez and Hernandez 2012).⁶

Carroll’s research included trips to a conference in Boston, as well as direct observation of participatory budgeting in New York. Carroll explains her research process as:

So, I went down there in their first year and observed it, met all the [PBP] people and they did a little training and they actually let us all take part in the vote. [...] I sat down and interviewed Melissa Martin-Viverito, Brad Lander, people who sort of led the charge there. I said ‘y’know, it was a nice conference where you were talking to the residents, now talk to me, a councillor. How hard is this on your staff? What do city staff think?’ I really asked them to unpack it for me. It seemed doable. We don’t have as many resources as a New York city councillor, but I thought, this is doable, and I’ve got to figure out how to do this.⁷

Carroll’s determination to implement participatory budgeting in Toronto was organized by her long-running knowledge of the inner mechanics of the City of Toronto. She knew early on that similar experimentation would need to be supported with different resources. The resources that Carroll mentions include both funding to be allocated by participants, as well as the human resources necessary to facilitate the process. Such resources are more

⁵ Participatory Budgeting Project, “History”. <https://www.participatorybudgeting.org/mission/>

⁶ New York now features the fastest growing cases of participatory budgeting, featuring the establishment of Participatory Budgeting New York (PBNY). Originally termed a form of “revolutionary civics” by local media, this increasingly established process has been identified by scholarship to be fraught with limitations that make it “increasingly difficult” to participate (Lerner, 2017).

⁷ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2017

available in municipal offices of big cities in the United States, with the additional partisan support of municipal level political party associations.

In order to unlock necessary resources, Carroll engaged with offices of the Executive Director of Financial Planning, Josie La Vita, and City Manager, who at the time was Joe Pennachetti. An initial hurdle that she was confronted with was a low level of understanding among her colleagues of what participatory budgeting entails beyond existing levels of consultation. Carroll explains:

I talked to staff, I talked to the CFO and the City Manager, and the City Manager's policy staff. They were having trouble wrapping their heads around it. They said 'we kind of already do something like' that and I said, 'no you don't, we don't ever really put money on the table and say [to residents] *this is your money, you're really going to decide from the beginning to end of the whole process how it gets spent*. We don't do that, we never do that'. Then I started talking to other progressive councillors, they said 'oh we already do that'. And I began to realize there is little or no real understanding of what participatory budgeting is even though it is big international movement.⁸ [emphasis added]

Carroll's heartfelt admiration for the potential of participatory budgeting was based on her belief that residents engaging with each other and with staff would help to accomplish a number of goals. Frequently citing the importance of engaging resident knowledge on necessary local improvements, Carroll also wanted to level the playing field between residents vying for public funds and help residents learn about the complexities involved in managing these funds. Three distinct goals that Carroll sought to accomplish are explained as:

The biggest benefit of PB is the fact that you load everybody in the geographic area into the room and you're able to say to them 'no I'm not going to come to your perfect little affluent association and talk to you about what you need or your one thing'.⁹

⁸ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2017

⁹ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111-W4, April 10, 2018

PB creates a dialogue where people get to learn how things work, why they cost what they cost, why they're not compatible in this park but are in that park, they learn all those sorts of things that are usually internal considerations.¹⁰

We need to get the timing right and staff have to realize that they need to implement projects, it's not up to the Councillor.¹¹

Clearly, Carroll saw the goal of participatory budgeting as being the amplification of unheard voices in an educational dialogue between residents and staff. This hopeful vision resembles that of the early celebratory literature covering the rise of participatory budgeting. There are also elements of the citizen improvement literature in Councillor Carroll's point on the benefit of participants learning how the City works. What is less clear is how an equal dialogue between participants and staff would be ensured so as to empower the resident perspective on what and how projects need to be implemented.

During budget deliberations in January 2014, City Council directed the former City Manager to report to the Budget Committee on the potential for a participatory budgeting pilot project.¹² In order to demonstrate the payoff of investing in participatory budgeting in the interim, Councillor Carroll conducted participatory budgeting out her office to allocate funds from private developers through Section 37¹³ of the Planning Act. Despite this initial experiment in participatory budgeting being composed of cobbled together resources and commemorated as being an "impossible task" on a three-month timeline, it was sufficient to set an example for the City Manager's Office and other councillors.¹⁴

¹⁰ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2017

¹¹ Recorded in field notes from conversation at an idea gathering sessions in Ward 33 in September, 2016

¹² City Council minutes. City of Toronto. Meeting No. 47, January 29 to January 30th, 2014

¹³ Section 37 refers to a section of the Planning Act (R.S.O 1990 c.13) that enables local municipalities to impose "community benefits charges" on a developer to "pay for the capital costs of facilities, services and matters required because of development or redevelopment". While revenue from these charges can be used to fund community improvements broadly construed, this source of funding presented some problems as the revenue is only received when the developer obtains their building permit. Therefore, funds were not available for immediate implementation of approved proposals.

¹⁴ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2017

Despite the initial equivocation mentioned by Carroll above, awareness of participatory budgeting as a distinct practice was present within the City Manager's Office.

Former City Manager, Pennachetti, states:

People have been talking about [participatory budgeting] for probably half of the time I was in Toronto, seven or eight years at least. It wasn't high on our radar for our priorities but it's a key directive that came from Council and they want to pursue it. [...] Shelley Carroll is the one who's been to conferences and has been to a lot of them. We said fine, but she knows and acknowledges, because she's been Chair of the Budget Committee, that it also means a lot of time for staff, and she understands how this has to be thought out properly. [...] I wouldn't have moved as quickly as we had mainly because we knew that it would turn into way more money, and it will. But we never argued with the principle and the logic of participatory budgeting because as staff, we know what's out there, we go to conferences, we are talking to other people.¹⁵

Pennachetti acknowledges the motivational effect that Carroll was able to have on experimentation with participatory budgeting. However, along with this acknowledgement, he mentions that it is Carroll's awareness of the need to strategically plan new levels of consultation in coordination with existing staff resources that gave her ideas credibility. With this limited capacity in mind, Pennachetti explains what he saw as the goals that participatory budgeting could accomplish:

the goal was not to get into operating budget issues and hiring staff but if you were limited to X dollars, where would you put it? And my recollection is that most of [the participants] fell back to where it's headed, which is what I'll call minor capital works in the neighbourhood. [...] It may be fixing up a park that is in bad shape that our Parks guys have in year twelve and [the residents] think it's necessary now [...] or minor roadwork somewhere, it could be something at a community centre, and in my mind, it works.¹⁶

The former City Manager acknowledges that "you'll find anomalies across the city [...] because we go for ten to twenty years and when you hear what it is, you agree with the councillor and the residents saying, 'are you telling me that that piece of shit swing or

¹⁵ Interview with former City Manager, W4I5, March 15, 2018

¹⁶ Interview with former City Manager, W4I5, March 15, 2018

whatever in a park is not going to be replaced for twenty years?’... sorry, yes, the money should be found one way or another”.¹⁷ This high-ranking official seeks to extend the eyes and ears of the big C City in order to address unknown or neglected infrastructure that is perceived by members of the little c city. He admits that anomalies can fall through the cracks of existing maintenance cycles and that residents are especially informed about such cases. Pennachetti explains that he already had concerns with funding for parks infrastructure maintenance, stating that he doubled the budget for these expenses in 2015.¹⁸ However, reference to “anomalies” suggests that residents playing the role of a corrective force is only occasionally necessary.

A consensus on the value of increased resident involvement is also expressed by the Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, Meg Shields, who has worked for the City Manager’s Office since 1989. Shields would become the main staff lead of the pilot project, in coordination with the Executive Director of Financial Planning, La Vita, City Manager Pennachetti, who was succeeded by Peter Wallace in 2016, and the Director of Corporate Policy, Fiona Murray. Shields explains her motivation in engaging with members of the public as: “The public bring a perspective that we cannot bring to the table, they deeply understand their days, their interaction with government, their interaction with infrastructure, [...] we cannot possibly replicate that or do it justice by proxy”.¹⁹ Shields acknowledges the unique perspective that residents accumulate through experience. Shields furthermore acknowledges that this perspective cannot be replicated by other constructions of knowledge and, therefore, must be engaged with directly. This again

¹⁷ Interview with former City Manager, W4I5, March 15, 2018

¹⁸ Interview with former City Manager, W4I5, March 15, 2018

¹⁹ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W1I4, April 9, 2017

characterizes the little c city as playing an important role of informing decisions and understandings of need within the big C City.

Shields expresses excitement about the alignment of factors that enabled the pilot project to come together explaining that “there was leadership, there was interest, there was a community request, we had lots of research done on this, we had good engagement practice, we had the NIA system. Councillor Carroll had some experience”.²⁰ Shields states that leadership is a crucial element in experimentation with new practices.²¹ Referring to this leadership as a “political discussion”, Shields says the role of staff is to figure out how to deliver on the decisions emerging from that discussion.²² As a civic engagement specialist and part of the City of Toronto’s Community of Practice on public engagement, Shields possesses a wealth of knowledge on public engagement practices, including participatory budgeting. Shields had been engaged in research on Porto Alegre and had been involved in discussions on participatory budgeting with the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto.²³ Despite advocacy in the United States and Lerner’s study for the City of Toronto’s Community Engagement Unit in 2004 both making use of the process of TCHC, Shields reports that there were few local examples to draw from in order to put together a municipally-run pilot project.²⁴ Therefore, putting the idea of participatory budgeting into practice involved the creation of a new, experimental model.

²⁰ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114-W4, March 8, 2018

²¹ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114, April 10, 2017

²² Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114-W4, March 8, 2018

²³ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114, April 10, 2017

²⁴ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114-W4, March 28, 2018

In communication with city staff from Porto Alegre, Shields learned about concerns of “political interference” in the participatory process.²⁵ These concerns were reiterated in interviews with other staff, based on the perceived frequency of elected officials manipulating the participatory process for political gain or blocking the approval of proposed projects.²⁶ In order to create a participatory process that was designed to provide participants with new levels of influence, as called for in participatory theories of democracy, the participatory process would need to be pre-approved by City Council and insulated from further influence from councillors. As stated above, establishing a dialogue between residents and staff, independent of elected officials, complies with Carroll’s vision of an ideal participatory process.

Therefore, while Councillor Carroll is recognized as playing a necessary leadership role by Pennachetti and Shields, transitioning participatory budgeting from an idea into practice needed to be done from the diligent perspective of professional staff. Evidently, Carroll was able to play the role of organic intellectual, bridging a gap between hegemonic structures and critical sentiments among civil society. However, the design of the pilot project will be shown to entail a process by which critical ideas are taken up as a way to expand rather than challenge hegemony, and thereby constitute a process of *trasformismo*.

Planning participatory budgeting: From idea to action

On February 2, 2015, the City Manager’s Office presented the requested report to the Budget Committee outlining an implementation plan for a participatory budgeting pilot project. The recommended pilot project was for the 2015 budget year only and would take

²⁵ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114-W4, March 28, 2018

²⁶ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113-W4, April 9, 2018; Interview with Senior Strategic Policy Consultant Specializing in Engagement, W418, April 3, 2018

place ward-wide in Ward 33, and in two locations designated as NIAs that were subsections of other wards. These NIAs were Rustic in Ward 12 and Oakridge in Ward 35. Each area would be provided with \$150,000 and the costs of administering the pilot project would be supported by “existing resources”.²⁷ The staff report outlined a criteria for eligible proposals that will explained in the following chapter. As the funds were drawn from capital reserves, proposals needed to be one-time expenses on physical infrastructure. The total \$450,000 allocated to the pilot project makes up .015% of the total \$2,976,000,000 capital budget for 2015. In each of these locations, the pilot project would feature an identical procedure composed of idea gathering sessions, a proposal development session, and a final vote open to all residents in each respective area. All residents, not just citizens, in these areas over the age of 14 would be able to participate and vote. Therefore, this process creates new grounds for resident inclusion in the allocation of public funds.

The pilot project was primarily composed of in-person meetings. As stated in the 2016 Participant Handbook, “ideas are collected at meetings and can be submitted online, but working with your neighbours to review the ideas is an important part of the PB process”.²⁸ Distributed pamphlets described the proposal development sessions, also called shortlisting meetings, as a place to discuss “the best ideas” and where “city staff will help to figure out if projects are eligible for PB funding”.²⁹ Many renditions of participatory budgeting, in Brazil and across North America, feature the election of delegates to negotiate with city staff on behalf of participants and to take part in an oversight committee

²⁷ For Ward 33, a total of \$150 thousand was made available from the City's Parkland Reserve Fund, the Public Realm Reserve Fund, or the Capital Financing Reserve Fund. For the NIAs, \$150 thousand for each was drawn from an established \$12 million fund established under the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020.

²⁸ “Participant Handbook”, City of Toronto, distributed in 2016.

²⁹ Information and wording from pilot project pamphlets created by the City of Toronto for public distribution in 2016.

to monitor the implementation of successful proposals. Some renditions of participatory budgeting also involve a steering committee populated by participating members and community organization representatives. The pilot project in Toronto did not feature any of these, aside from Carroll's own Ward 33 steering committee.³⁰ Rather, the pilot project was designed to provide an organized sequence of involvement opportunities that did not require significant time and energy on the part of participants.³¹

Aside from the long-running process at TCHC, the recommendation did not mention participatory budgeting initiatives in other Canadian cities that had taken place by this point, such as Hamilton, Guelph, and Montreal. Instead, the report cited successes in New York, San Francisco Chicago, Boston, and Paris. Using these examples, participatory budgeting was explained as “a specific type of engagement process where residents propose and vote on community investment projects, funded through a pre-determined portion of a government's budget”.³² The staff report cites possible goals of the pilot project as being the increased engagement of underrepresented communities, increased government transparency, and budget decisions that better reflect local interests.³³ The standard Equity Statement section of the staff report reiterates that “the PB pilot will leverage the City's existing community capacity building, communications and outreach strategies to seek greater inclusion of non-traditional participants in public decision-

³⁰ Due to increased involvement from Councillor Carroll in Ward 33, participants in this ward were able to get additional training on how to effectively advocate for their ideas and join a ward-specific steering committee to make suggestions on process improvements. However, this steering committee was essentially a group of highly involved participants without any additional control over process design or resources. All decision-making over resources allocated to and by the pilot project was conducted as recommended by the City Manager's Office.

³¹ Interviews with staff, W1I3-W4, April 9, 2018; Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W1I4-W4, March 28, 2018

³² February 2, 2015 City Manager's Report to Budget Committee, Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project p. 3

³³ February 2, 2015 City Manager's Report to Budget Committee, Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project p. 4

making and will increase the number of people involved in local decision making”.³⁴ However, it is unclear who is included among “underrepresented communities” or “non-traditional participants”. Carroll specifically mentioned the goal of leveling the playing field between resident associations and residents without formal associations. Underrepresentation can be further read as referring to equity-seeking groups that experience systemic forms of exclusion along lines of race, gender, ability, income, education, and citizenship. Designing the process to take place in NIAs further indicates the desire to reach out to underserved communities that are disproportionately populated by low-income, visible minority and immigrant demographics specifically. Shields explains:

When we looked at the people who participated in the budget process, there’s kind of a diminishing return on the kind of feedback we we’re getting from the public in terms of the city’s budget. And we thought, how do we increase that kind of engagement to a level that is more satisfactory, and in a particular case, y’know, we’ve said well maybe PB is a way for people to get introduced to the City’s budget process as well.³⁵

Citing “diminishing returns” on the type of feedback gained through existing budget consultations, Shields explains that the goal was to introduce new people to the budgeting process. Shields also mentioned the goal of avoiding the exacerbation of existing inequalities among residents, such as allowing the “usual suspects” to dominate the process.³⁶ This identification of usual suspects and “disruptors” is mentioned in evaluations, attributing regularly engaged residents as representing narrow interests.³⁷ This suggests that rather than creating a new platform for the efforts of already civically engaged

³⁴ February 2, 2015 City Manager's Report to Budget Committee, Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project p. 3

³⁵ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114-W4, March 28, 2018

³⁶ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113, April 18, 2017; Interview with Senior Corporate Management Consultant, W114, April 18, 2017.

³⁷ Participatory Budgeting Pilot Evaluation, *Environics*. Prepared for City of Toronto. December 2, 2015.

residents, the pilot project was meant to involve residents other than these usual suspects. Furthermore, situating participatory budgeting as a way to introduce residents to the budgeting process suggests that, rather than supporting a reconstruction of knowledge, the intention was to raise awareness and involvement in existing processes. A new basis for participation in the allocation of public funds is certainly created by the pilot project. However, in this founding document, it is unclear what franchise will be extended to the constituents that the pilot project will assemble.

After the first year, a staff report delivered to the Budget Committee in December of 2015 recommended a two-year extension of the pilot project. The justification for this extension stated: “the findings of the City's pilot, and research from other PB initiatives around the world, suggest that the benefits of PB are often incremental when a PB process is implemented over several budget cycles, is a priority of the government, meets the needs of the community, [and is] adequately resourced and subject to ongoing evaluation”.³⁸ Along with supporting on-going engagement and evaluation, the report also recommended an increase in resources, including: 1) \$250,000 being available for each area³⁹ (drawing from capital reserve funds, Section 37 funds ready to be spent, and NIA funding for City Facilities); 2) the allocation of \$138,000 from the City Manager's 2016 Operating Budget to hire a temporary full-time position to serve as staff lead on the pilot project; and 3) \$35,000 for program and evaluation costs.⁴⁰ The temporary full-time position would provide what had, in 2015, been supported by “existing resources” in the City Manager’s

³⁸ December 30, 2015 City Manager's Report to Budget Committee, Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project, City of Toronto, p 1.

³⁹ These amounts account for .025% and .019% of the 2016 and 2017 Capital Budget respectively.

⁴⁰ December 30, 2015 City Manager's Report to Budget Committee, Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project. City of Toronto

Office.⁴¹ These modifications indicate the realization that a sustained, and well-resourced process would be necessary to accomplish the range of goals attributed to participatory budgeting in these reports. This recommendation to extend the pilot project also included modifications of the eligibility criteria that will be explained in the following chapter.

Along with the importance of including “non-traditional participants”, a primary goal of the pilot project was to support resident-led decision-making in collaboration with professional staff.⁴² The staff lead who was brought into the pilot project with the new resources was Rich Whate. Whate worked with progressive organizations focused on environmentalism and healthcare before coming to the City of Toronto in 2004 as a Policy Consultant. Coming to the project in its second year, Whate did not take part in the design of the pilot project and states that he did not know much about participatory budgeting prior to being hired.⁴³ Whate presents as the epitome of the humble civil servant, working diligently to fulfill the requests of Council and presenting a friendly face to residents interacting with the City. The way in which Whate mixes his informative advice with a grounded sense of humor, speaks of a disillusioned will to muddle through toward attainable achievements. Explaining the goal of the pilot project, Whate situates participatory budgeting as necessary improvement on past attempts at resident engagement. Whate states:

We go with what the public decides and that’s what makes participatory budgeting truly different from anything else. [...] Our history of pretending we’re asking when we’re just telling creates cynicism. So, I think part of the PB opportunity is that if we’re really open and legitimate about it, it really builds the trust that then allows us to go back down the other ways we engage and say well, if we build trust in this

⁴¹ February 2, 2015, City Manager's Report to Budget Committee, Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project. City of Toronto, p. 6

⁴² Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113-W4, April 9th, 2018; Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114-W4, March 28, 2018

⁴³ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113, April 10, 2017

way, then in the other ways we engage will maybe be a better exchange because there's better relationships.⁴⁴

In explaining the goal of participatory budgeting, Whate expresses the importance of participatory budgeting going beyond established ways of involving the public by enabling participating residents to have decision-making power. Whate's comments indicate both an acknowledgement that the big C City needs to be more curious about resident concerns, but also a belief that participatory budgeting can be used to increase trust in pre-existing decision-making processes.

Commitment to resident-led decision-making is explained as a necessary improvement on the first year of the pilot project. Carroll explains how maintaining this commitment requires a learning process on the part of staff. Referring to the final year of the pilot project, Carroll explains:

What you're going to see in our pilot this year is that there's been learning, everyone learns in a PB! [...] At first, I yelled and screamed at [city staff] because we had a vote and the very next day they said "we can't do that, or that, or that" to all my projects. I said, "you can't stand in a gymnasium, say you're going to do a thing and then not do it". So, they learned something about how to talk to people, which is what PB is for.⁴⁵

Carroll's explanation demonstrates how developing a resident-led dialogue with staff requires the learning of new practices. This explanation also demonstrates how, despite the goal of creating a process that would be free of "political interference", Carroll was required to use her formal status as an elected representative to play an enforcing role to ensure approved projects were implemented. As will be explained in the following chapter, proposed projects were assessed for feasibility using an eligibility criteria. If proposals were deemed to be aligned within these criteria, they could be added to the ballot and

⁴⁴ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113-W4, April 9th, 2018

⁴⁵ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2017

approved for implementation. Even though Carroll stands to enforce this procedure, the level of epistemological curiosity present in the process of determining eligibility remains unclear. Carroll explains the importance of having a “deep conversation” to listen to what residents want.⁴⁶ Carroll admits:

That’s a scary thing for city staff because they know that they will end up saying, “well that would be great, but you know, this is capital money and we’re not allowed to spend it that way”. But that’s the point of this, is that people learn that it actually is hard to run a city. So, you start to have the conversation. [...] *That’s the whole point of this.* With that micro amount of money, [participants] understand how hard our macro task is. That’s the whole point.⁴⁷

These statements help identify that while staff are required to learn new engagement practices, the “whole point” of participatory budgeting is for residents to learn about the difficulties of running a city. This situates staff as playing a balancing role in participatory budgeting to guide expectations and develop consensus around the established process of capital expenditure. Though Councillor Carroll stands in the wings of the participatory process as a promoter and enforcer, her own aspiration is to create an educational process for residents led by staff.

Therefore, while the pilot project creates a new basis for participatory allocation of public funds by “non-traditional participants”, an emphasis on “citizen improvement” narrows the degree to which residents can advocate for ideas that matter to them (Lerner 2010; Schugurensky 2006). The goal of educating residents on norms contests the potential for participatory budgeting to be led by experiential knowledge. This learning process on the part of residents can help increase capacity to engage with the big C City by developing a fluency of pre-existing procedures, protocols, and programs; however, this is a significant

⁴⁶ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2017

⁴⁷ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2017

shift away from the original goals of attaining a new level of technodemocratic engagement drawing from the irreplicable perspective of current residents. As the idea of participatory budgeting is put into practice, the original leadership provided by Carroll is displaced by the judgement of staff. This judgement of staff, as shown in the literature on communicative planning and other contemporary cases, can present a significant limitation to critical and imaginative proposals from participants (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016; Mannberg and Wihlborg 2008; Su 2018). As explained by MacCallum (2016), to focus on the issue of meddling bureaucrats preventing change explains little about the potentials and limitations of elaborating urban epistemologies. Therefore, exploring the construction of knowledge underlying the interactions found in participatory forums has the potential to provide a more explanatory account of prevailing power imbalances.

An initial example of staff leadership is found in the selection of locations. While the location of Ward 33 was chosen due to the leadership of Councillor Carroll, the other two locations were chosen by staff.⁴⁸ Shields explains the reasoning behind the selection process:

Clearly, Ward 33 was ready. They had some experience, so we were looking at other areas. I think, from a *pure research perspective* we chose different geographical areas, different [levels of] political involvement, areas that had infrastructure, areas that didn't have infrastructure, areas that have changed, areas that have been pretty stable for a long time, so I like that we got to test out this stuff.⁴⁹ [emphasis added]

The councillors representing the other areas exhibited a significantly lower level of enthusiasm about participatory budgeting but were open to experimenting with the funds available in the NIA program. Councillor Frank Di Giorgio of Ward 12 states he became

⁴⁸ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2017; Interview with Councillor Di Giorgio, W116, April 20, 2017; Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114, April 19, 2017

⁴⁹ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114, April 19, 2017

aware of the concept of participatory budgeting when he was approached by staff.⁵⁰ Councillor Michelle Holland of Ward 35 states that, while she had been made aware of participatory budgeting during her university studies and was aware of the participatory budgeting of TCHC, she had not considered implementing such a project until staff were preparing their proposal for City Council in 2014. Holland explains:

City staff approached me about the idea of having the PB program in our ward while they were preparing the report for Council. I thought Oakridge was a great fit for this experiment since it had long been identified by the City as a NIA [...] In addition, the PB pilot program wasn't redistributing money already allocated to the ward for other purposes but rather providing an additional stream which would only further improve the neighbourhood.⁵¹

These comments confirm staff leadership in designing the pilot project. Furthermore, these other wards provide perspective on what participatory budgeting looks like without a councillor serving as an enforcer of stated goals.

Shields states that staff approached the selection of locations from a “pure research perspective”. While the pilot project was inspired by the values of epistemological curiosity and an overt frustration with faux-progressivism and urban neoliberalism, as the pilot project was designed and implemented it became subject to administrative domination coached in the values of NPM. The context and goals underlying the pilot project have a significant implication for the degree to which the experiential knowledge of the little c city will be able to counter the “pure technique” of the big C City.

Reviewing the structural integrity of supports for public participation in Toronto

A consensus on the value of increasing resident involvement in government expenditure was sufficient to launch a participatory budgeting pilot project. However, it is nevertheless

⁵⁰ Interview with Councillor Di Giorgio, W116, April 20, 2017

⁵¹ Email correspondence with Councillor Holland, November 9, 2017

important to situate this pilot project within the broader historical trends explained in the prior chapter. Scholarship has revealed that past moments of apparent consensus on the importance of resident participation have been undermined by underlying agendas determining priorities in urban development (Cullingworth 1984; Grant 2006; Huxley and Yiftachel 2000; Rahder and McLean 2013). Therefore, it is worth reviewing what countervailing forces undermine or mitigate experimentation in participatory decision-making. Such countervailing forces are found in an attributed superiority of centralized decision-making to reach strategic decisions that meet pressing needs. Centralized decision-making is characterized by an overarching view that coordinates decisions with established notions of public interest and corresponding technical requirements.

Despite the excitement for participatory budgeting that Carroll had roused within the City of Toronto, support for participatory budgeting varied among Toronto City Council. Skeptical and even critical views of participatory budgeting are represented within the councillors selected to host the pilot project. Councillor Di Giorgio reports to have been surprised by the two-year extension of the pilot project. Explaining his preference for a more centralized process of identifying needs, Di Giorgio states:

The thing that I find most, not troublesome, but maybe astounding about participatory budgeting is that when you look at things from the centralized budgeting point of view, what we're looking at is what's needed in a particular area, ok? So, monies are being allocated on a needs basis. When you engage in this participatory budgeting, it's like the purpose is to get people involved in deciding on things that they might want and they forget about what's needed in an area, ok? [...] I don't think the city is in a position where they can do both, from a fiscal point of view.⁵²

Situating a centralized process as having a superior perspective on the needs of a community in coordination with scarce resources presents a stark contrast to curiosity

⁵² Interview with Councillor Di Giorgio, W116, April 20, 2017.

engagement with the unique perspective of residents. Di Giorgio, who served as Budget Chief from 2013 to 2014 under Mayor Rob Ford, claims that participants will “forget” about what is needed. A reverence for centralized, professional decision-making implies an insufficient ability for common residents to grasp the value of technical requirements and look beyond their own interest. Such attributions construct knowledge in a way that situates residents as lacking the necessary insight to responsibly allocate public funds and improve their own communities. However, it is these very attributions of legitimacy and comprehension that are directly called into question by advocacy for participatory decision-making.

With skeptical and even critical sentiments among City Council, a considerable degree of discretion was given to staff to determine the viability of participant proposals. Similar to how Moore identified the ability of the planning community to determine matters of “good planning”, within the context of the pilot project city staff were largely able to define “good participation”. As will be shown in the following chapters, staff did not simply inform participation but managed it along lines of established practices and pre-existing conceptions of public interest (Su 2017, 2018). Asked what sense of mandate guides her sense of proper participation and proposal eligibility, Shields responds:

What’s my onus? It’s that I have to be responsible for the funds that we spend [...] The other thing about PB, and it’s not just in Toronto, it’s always surprising to me that people have the sense that in other PB jurisdictions 75% of residents in the neighbourhood participate, or massive numbers participate. It actually tends to be very small [...] PB for me is one form of civic engagement, and I think it is really important to acknowledge all of the ways that we engage with the public, annually, formally, elections, deputations, legislative requirements and informally, hundreds and hundreds of public meetings that we hold every single year. [...] I was thrilled that we’re doing the pilot because it does give us an opportunity to learn. We do want to make sure that our engagement strategies fit Toronto well, Toronto now and future.⁵³

⁵³ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114, April 19, 2017

Shields reiterates her sense of the role of staff in a different interview as “I just think at the core, as a public servant I’m always assessing best value for the responsibility I’ve been given to spend tax payers’ dollars and make decisions wisely and not just reflect the current residents needs but I have to look ahead as well, what’s coming”.⁵⁴ This brings a dimension to Shield’s earlier comment and demonstrates how the knowledge of participating residents is weighed alongside a responsibility to all residents of Toronto, both current and yet to come. This demonstrates how claimed desires to access the irreplicable knowledge of residents can exist alongside an attributed superiority of the technical expertise of planning. As responsible as this may seem, the epistemological underpinning of this conception of public interest is revealed by reference to residents of the future. Residents of the future are necessarily represented by proxy, not by active residents but by the ideas of public need embedded in hegemonic approaches to urban governance. In this statement, Shields evokes her intellectual function to weave together new, potentially critical practices with an authoritative claim of common sense and public interest.

These qualifying remarks indicate a significant change in the orbit of priorities, as the gravity of established procedures and understandings of public interest clearly influenced the way the pilot project was designed. What began as an idea of how to learn from the irreplicable perspectives of residents, transitioned into an introduction to existing processes of budgeting public funds and developing the public realm. With this shift in goals, the final decision-making capacity of residents takes place within managed contours of existing processes. Furthermore, these existing processes and ways of knowing a city and its needs are used by staff seeking to nurture acceptable forms of participation. This

⁵⁴ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114-W4, March 28, 2018

shift in the guiding focus leads to an approach to the pilot project that is much less curious and more so meant to compel consensus with existing processes and a limited role for resident leadership.

Many of the elements of Callon et al's hybrid forum are in place, with lay knowledge of residents being brought into dialogue with professionals in urban planning. The importance of engaging with the ground-level knowledge of residents drove the creation of this pilot project with claims of valuing the local and experiential knowledge found in interviews with a number of senior staff. However, the crucial element of epistemological curiosity is only questionably present, with the knowledge of residents being qualified in a number of ways. These qualifications support the superior knowledge claims of technical experts as well as the presumption that pre-existing centralized approaches to planning serve to represent the interests of the general public. Therefore, residents participating in the pilot project, under the supposed auspices of participatory democracy, become ironically countered by notions of "the public" as mobilized by city staff. This acutely demonstrates how the authoritative capacity of hegemony is expanded by the use of common sense to generate consent and dispel counter-hegemonic expression and organization (Davies 2014; Fontana 2005). As these technical practices and notions of public interest are used to measure the legitimacy of participatory decision-making, rather than the other way around, it must be asked if there is anything significantly new about participatory decision-making aside from terminology and approaches to communication.

How these limitations shape the design of participatory practices exemplifies the importance of accounting for structural factors in the analysis of participatory budgeting. Ricardo Tranjan, whose work was quoted in earlier chapters, was able to bring an informed

participatory philosophy to the City of Toronto as staff. After taking part in the Urban Fellowship Program, Tranjan became Manager of the City of Toronto's Poverty Reduction Strategy Office. Tranjan worked with a lived-experience advisory group to inform strategy and service-delivery design and evaluation. He explains:

Once you have that group there's a lot of on-boarding, because it's a group that won't necessarily have a lot of the basic knowledge about how this machine works. So, I bring that together, then start talking about policy, and then go and spend a lot of time myself following-up with my policy staff [...] Creating those spaces within the machine [...] it's not something you can do half-ass.⁵⁵

Creating opportunities for resident involvement in "the machine" of municipal government is clearly a difficult process. Though such opportunities have traditionally been part of the urbanization process, the increasing scale and technical nature of urban challenges reinforces barriers to the empowerment of experiential knowledge. However, the high level of uncertainty in addressing complex problems, such as poverty reduction, requires new constructions of knowledge, supported by onboarding to increase capacity of participants. Tranjan was consulted by Shields in the creation of the pilot project but he was not involved in the design process.⁵⁶ Though Tranjan is clearly supportive of in-depth public involvement, he does not believe it is always the best choice. Tranjan states: "my reluctance is that poorly thought through and poorly carried out community engagement goes back. It goes back in that residents don't feel it was a meaningful participation".⁵⁷ Emphasizing that making opportunities within the machine of municipal government should not be taken lightly, Tranjan advises against treating participatory budgeting as a best practice because ingenuous attempts may only add to a sense of defeat and exclusion among participants.

⁵⁵ Interview with Dr. Ricardo Tranjan, W214, April 28, 2018

⁵⁶ Interview with Dr. Ricardo Tranjan, W214, April 28, 2018; Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114, April 19, 2017

⁵⁷ Interview with Dr. Ricardo Tranjan, W214, April 28, 2018

Views from outside the big C City walls

In discussions with people working in the communities in which the pilot project took place, a significant level of distrust toward city-driven processes is found. A long history of disappointment with typical consultative practices is a matter of experiential knowledge itself. These disillusioned perspectives express a skepticism of what the City of Toronto calls participation. This provides a glimpse of the distrust that new and more genuine collaborations are meant to regain.

Interactions between the City of Toronto and residents are moments in which epistemological understandings manifest as practices that either reproduce authoritative constructions of knowledge or, alternatively, engage in a reconstruction of knowledge. The tendency for consultative or participatory initiatives to result in the former is well known by civically engaged residents and community workers in Toronto. Morris Beckford, who works as an Executive Director for AccessPoint Alliance and has written on epistemological divides that pervade attempts of public engagement, is not optimistic (Beckford 2017, 2018). In an interview, Beckford shares his perspective on participatory budgeting:

I hate participatory budgeting, period. Because if you look at the International Association Public Participation levels of consultation, that I have in my office and bring to every location that we go to, you have *inform, consult, involve, collaborate*. And participatory budgeting likes to think it's at collaborate, but it's really not.⁵⁸

Clearly, Beckford sees participatory budgeting as having a tendency to reproduce rather than question established urban epistemologies. Beckford explains his view on the challenges in elaborating the basis of knowledge that the City of Toronto draws from:

It's not easy, the city government is a huge bureaucracy [...] you go to your tower and you're enclosed in your tower and that's the sort of knowledge that you want

⁵⁸ Interview with Morris Beckford, W4I2, March 12, 2018

to engage with. [...] I'm not sure that's even changeable but maybe that's why they are trying to do participatory budgeting, to change some of that.⁵⁹

Beckford's personal experience and academic research makes him acutely aware that processes that include residents do not necessarily welcome their understandings of the city and necessary improvements. Though Beckford is decidedly skeptical, he admits that this could possibly be a moment of transition to more elaborated ways of knowing the city. Beckford also states that the experience could motivate residents and that "it might actually change their perspective of how to engage with city government".⁶⁰ Whether this change is characterized by increased critical capacity or increased complacency with foundational aspects of the big C City will be investigated in the following chapters.

A Community Development Worker working in the NIA of Oakridge draws from her long-running experience to explain her skepticism regarding the pilot project. This Community Development Worker states:

The city workers may have in their heads "well, this is where we want the money to go or whatever" and I don't know how much they listen and how much they take into consideration what the people are saying or whatever. Sometimes I wonder if it's worthwhile that people go to those meetings. Yeah. [...] I've been in this field for such a long time, I know that sometimes [city staff] will come out and they will get the community excited and then the people will come out and they will participate but then sometimes everything will just come to a standstill then the community will go back to sleep [...] and people lose interest.⁶¹

These testimonies represent the existing critical sentiment among the little c city of Toronto. Experience in both the shortcomings of urban neoliberalism and in consultative practices that claim more than they sincerely deliver leads to a high level of suspicion of whether participating with the big C City is worth the time. This is similar to the

⁵⁹ Interview with Morris Beckford, W4I2, March 12, 2018

⁶⁰ Interview with Morris Beckford, W4I2, March 12, 2018

⁶¹ Interview with Oakridge Community Development Worker, W4I1, March 8, 2018

demonstrated suspicion of residents. Though the pilot project is meant to alleviate this mutual suspicion by engaging in a collaborative process, a prevailing prioritization of pre-existing processes threatens to exacerbate this divide.

A range of perspectives on the potential of participatory budgeting to present a distinct form of public engagement are expressed by participants, with statements like:

We never get anything around here. It's because we don't have a resident association.⁶²

Staff will go 'oh we can't really do this, we don't want to do this' and participants say 'well why not, why don't we change things', right? So, the citizens are able to teach them to have more accountability, right? [...] Citizens will have more awareness of what's not working, obviously.⁶³

The participatory budgeting was really interesting to me, I can do many infrastructure projects and probably get it done and it won't require input from developers whatsoever. It's just me, my decision, and the City's.⁶⁴

I just loved the people having an opinion on what's happening in their area because sometimes [city staff] come in and just say "this is what we're doing". And it's kind of like well who did you ok that with? Not to say that the people have ownership of the area but, if they have to see it every day and their children have to live in it, I think those are the people who should have first priority in terms of opinion.⁶⁵

I saw the change that civic engagement is making in me and I thought other youth should get that opportunity too. [...] I decided I wanted to do something more practical and hands-on. So, I started to see how the physical environment really plays into like the social issues that arise and [PB] interested me and I want to learn more.⁶⁶

These statements from participants exhibit visions of a potential brought about by a new dialogue between residents and staff. The pilot project was designed to meet some of these exact issues, such as offsetting the advantages of resident associations and inviting

⁶² Interview with Ward 33 participant, W3I1, December 8, 2017.

⁶³ Interview with Ward 33 participant, W3I2, December 9, 2017.

⁶⁴ Interview with Ward 33 participant, W3I3-W4, April 9, 2018

⁶⁵ Interview with Rustic Youth Outreach Worker, W3I4, December 11, 2017

⁶⁶ Interview with Rustic participant, W1I5, April 19, 2017

residents in poor neighbourhoods to have more of a say over local developments. Participants express a cautious optimism that participatory budgeting could empower residents to have more control over local development in order to keep the big C City accountable. The following chapters will reveal how the underlying strategy to introduce participants to how the city works interacts with the intentions and ideas that these participants bring to the pilot project.

Conclusion

This chapter provides insight to how the participatory budgeting pilot project was originally inspired in the mind of a specific councillor and put into practice with the assistance of the City Manager. Seeking to learn about how participatory budgeting could work, Carroll reached out to American colleagues who, in a roundabout way, had learned about participatory budgeting from research on the TCHC process. In large part due to the position of Canadian municipalities, Carroll required the support and guidance of senior level staff to finance and implement the pilot project. Interviewed staff, similar to those in the prior chapter, profess a consensus with the value of engaging with the experiential knowledge of residents. The resulting pilot project recommended by staff features a new basis for inclusion of “underrepresented” residents and “non-traditional participants” in the allocation of designated public funds. This pilot project was extended in the interest of reaching these goals with increased resources. However, this initial conversation on the design of the pilot project indicates how it functions to compel consensus with pre-existing processes of the big C City rather than empower the nuanced insights of the little c City.

The value of the pilot project is acknowledged by public officials to be how it addresses a particular knowledge deficit within the big C City. However, residents making

up the little c city are also attributed as having a knowledge deficit by senior staff and critical councillors who characterize residents as being out of touch with pressing needs. Gaps in established processes, such as Pennachetti's "piece of shit swing", are admitted to occasionally occur. However, this merely implies that the perceptive capacity of the big C City needs to be extended to account for such anomalies. Focusing on how only a small portion of residents engage in participation, Shields views her onus as ensuring the responsible use of public funds on behalf of a notional public interest, including residents of the future. Whate, as will be further shown in the following chapters, seeks to engage in a process where residents have final say, but with the overarching priority of building trust in pre-existing modes of engagement. Carroll's own goals consistently included introducing residents to the difficulties of municipal government, and the other councillors participating in the pilot project also placed a significant amount of trust in the judgement of staff. With a consistent reference to how much residents need to learn and the importance of restoring trust in pre-existing arrangements, the predominant goal of the pilot project appears to be supplementing, rather than reconstructing, current constructions of knowledge. Due to this underlying strategy to expand consensus with existing priorities and procedures, increased funding and staff support does little to empower the perspective of active residents as opposed to notions of public interest embedded in NPM. This is surely far from what Rebeck and others pushing for more progressive government in 2010 had in mind.

Despite some of the basic elements of hybrid forums being in place, a detrimental lack of epistemological curiosity indicates that significant limitations await critical and creative participants. While participatory budgeting can strengthen civic relations, those

who are familiar with public engagement realize the potential harm that insincere engagement can cause. Learning did occur on the part of staff, with Carroll playing the role of enforcer. However, this learning is explained to entail a developing understanding of how to manage participation rather than to how to better empower resident-led decision-making. Critical sentiments are active in the communities involved in the pilot project, necessitating an exploration of how the pilot project design interacts with the intermittent hope and cynicism found among the little c city. The following chapter will demonstrate how the eligibility criteria was used to create parameters of participation. In doing so, this dissertation will continue to reveal how, despite a participatory opportunity, authoritative constructions of knowledge prevail in situating residents as consumers of the policies and plans of the big C City.

Chapter 5 – Defining the Conditions for “Final Say”

The prior chapter provided an overview of how the original inspiration of the pilot project in Toronto was fundamentally modified as it transitioned from an idea into a specific pilot project. What began as a new level of engagement in which residents utilize their unique perspective to directly allocate public funds became a process in which residents are introduced to how the City works. Rather than an absolute limitation on resident input, critical calls for resident involvement are accommodated within the contours of existing authority. This chapter will further reveal how the pilot project was put together so as to symbolize new levels of resident inclusion while maintaining the perspective of residents in a subordinate position. The pilot project will be shown to be *increasingly* designed to compel consensus with how the City works rather than engage curiously with residents.

This chapter will focus squarely on the basis for interaction between residents and staff by investigating the proposal eligibility criteria. Naturally there are limitations to what participants are able to propose, and education on “how the City works” provides important lessons that can potentially build capacity for continued civic engagement; however, a prevailing privilege of exclusionary ways of knowing can be shown to greatly undermine the primary goals of participatory budgeting while nevertheless maintaining a claim to participatory engagement. Though the participatory budgeting pilot project is premised on the belief that residents are uniquely informed about needs in their neighbourhoods, the eligibility criteria staked out the range of participation as taking place on the “turf” of the big C City. The eligibility criteria increasingly entrenched the role of professionals as having a superior comprehension of what choices will advance toward a desirable future.

Rather than equipping residents to participate, this eligibility criteria more so situated responding city staff to limit and redirect participant proposals.

This chapter will be structured as follows. The first section will confirm that the goal of the participatory budgeting pilot project is composed paradoxically of the dual goals of welcoming the final say of participants while also teaching participants how the big C City works. The second section will elaborate on how the eligibility criteria that constituted the scope of the pilot project placed specific, knowledge-based limitations on participant proposals. This section will demonstrate the degree of staff discretion to draw from pre-existing embodiments of knowledge to manage the pilot project. The third section will further demonstrate how the scope of the pilot project was increasingly narrowed despite the allocation of more resources to the pilot project. This increasingly narrow scope will be shown to result from staff discretion and knowledge on pre-existing practices despite the explicit goals of the original staff recommendation. A final section will discuss how limitations also arose from the design and facilitation of meetings. While attempts were made to create an accessible process for underrepresented groups, choices in design and facilitation are found to reflect a significantly limited degree of curious engagement with participants. Cumulatively, these sections will illustrate the paradoxical idea of participation being presented by the City of Toronto's pilot project. This will set the stage for analysis, in Chapter 6, of how participating residents responded to this with their own ideas.

Residents have the final say

Participatory budgeting brings the experiential knowledge of residents into direct dialogue with the technical know-how of professional city staff. Engaging with the technical advice

of professional staff has always been a component of participatory processes (Ganuza and Baiocchi 2012; Santos 2005; Tranjan 2012). Legacy, Koontz and Newig (2014) find that the success of community involvement in infrastructure management and development largely depends on the scrutiny and support of staff. By engaging these distinct perspectives, participatory budgeting could create a hybrid forum for mutual learning between lay perspectives and professional experts in order to reach creative, and even critical, nuance in uses of public funds and the public realm (Callon, Lascoumes, and Barthe 2009; McFarlane 2011a). However, recent scholarship has exposed structural limitations that emerge in the process of determining the eligibility of proposals and how proposals will be implemented (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016; Lerner 2017; Pin 2017; Su 2018). Investigating how eligibility is determined helps to establish a deeper understanding of how reigning conceptions of common sense continue to limit the capacity of residents to take on a meaningful role in decision-making.

The claimed priority of resident-led decision-making is found in coverage of North America's first case of participatory budgeting in Guelph, Ontario. Pinnington, Lerner, and Schugurensky (2009) quote the Manager of Community Development of the City of Guelph, Janette Loveys-Smith, explaining the role of city staff in participatory budgeting as: "Our job is to monitor and, in some cases, implement the framework that exists about risk, liability, insurance, those types of things [...] but the decisions are left up to the community whether they want to turn left or right. [...]"(469). Loveys-Smith further explains that "[m]unicipal staff must have highly developed skills for facilitation, such as self-awareness, active listening, willingness to let go of 'expert' assumptions, and experience with group dynamics [...] otherwise this 'facilitation' role can quickly slip into

directing or even manipulating residents as to how to allocate funds” (Pinnington, Lerner, and Schugurensky 2009, 474). This acknowledgement speaks to the pressing challenges of in-depth civic engagement (Dahl 1992; March 2012). Overcoming this challenge by situating participants as final decision-makers is what makes participatory budgeting distinct among other forms of public engagement. However, this explanation glides over a contradictory aspect of the administrator’s role; while the administrator is supposed to implement the existing framework of risk, liability and “those types of things” they are also required to let go of expert assumptions and experience. In the approach to a final decision, participants encounter many figurative intersections at which staff stand to make recommendations based on pre-conceived definitions of public interest. Despite the appearance of innocuous diligence, the guiding role of staff largely differentiates which contributions can drive the development of the public realm from those that are merely pedestrian. Rather than willful manipulation, such limitations arise from established embodiments of knowledge rooted in a non-participatory status quo (MacCallum 2016, 165).

Similar claims of situating residents as having final say are found in Toronto.

Shields explains the core goal of the pilot project as:

If we boil it down to what we think separates this participatory budgeting from other participatory processes and what else there is in terms of other civic democracy initiatives, the one thing that keeps falling out is the public have final say in the decision that is made. [...] I also understood that due to my other work in engagement the necessity to bring city staff along so that they could feel like they could frankly respond to ideas.¹

While the City of Toronto pilot project was a substantial adaptation of participatory budgeting, the determining element is explained to be participants having the final say. To

¹ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114-W4, March 28, 2018

provide the guiding role appropriate to staff as technical advisors, the basis for frank responses would be derived from the eligibility criteria.

As staff lead of the pilot project in 2016 and 2017, Whate expresses a view similar to that of Loveys-Smith. While the specifics of participatory budgeting were new to Whate, he explains “the past experience I’ve had, which I think supported the PB project, is just the experience that listening to people is the biggest thing”.² Whate explains how he sees participatory budgeting as representing a new opportunity to work collaboratively with residents:

On the whole engagement scale, that ladder of engagement, [the pilot project] is on the far end where people are involved, they’re going to have influence over the outcome, they’re going to vote on it, and it’s going to happen. That’s *golden engagement*. Our responsibility is to be genuine and [...] we’ve had to say to lots of people “that idea is really not within the scope of this”.³ [emphasis added]

Whate explains golden engagement as taking place when residents have influence over something that actually happens, but there is a limited scope within which this influence holds sway. When a proposal does not comply with the scope of the pilot project, a succinct point of tension is reached. Whate explains how this tension is resolved:

Because we’re trying to also just make this an *intro to the City*, we say “well, here’s how we would talk about it, we’re going to give it to Parks, they’re going to look at it. [...] When your expectation is that you want people to stay involved, even after PB is done, you don’t cut it off, you don’t say “thank you for your opinion and have a nice day”. It’s more like “great, how did you like this?” How are you helping them, y’know, stay involved, do you know about other opportunities with the city? Do you know that the city does this [other] type of engagement? Like this [pilot project] is a conduit and I’m learning to treat it that way.”⁴ [emphasis added]

With the pilot project decidedly including an “intro to the City”, Whate seeks to reach golden engagement by informing participants on pre-existing processes. While this may

² Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113, April 19, 2017

³ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113, April 19, 2017

⁴ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113, April 19, 2017

reach new levels of communication between the big C City and little c city, dedication to reaching new levels of empowerment is unclear, if not dubiously absent. This concisely demonstrates the shift identified in the prior chapter, in which a resident-led process becomes one in which participants are educated on matters of established procedures and notions of common sense. By treating the pilot project as a conduit, rather than a hybrid forum, ways of knowing derived from the little c city are countered by the goal of compelling consensus with ways of knowing derived from big C City. Therefore, while the pilot project is claimed to support resident-leadership, it becomes more so defined by administrative domination (Davies 2014) and pure technique (Hummel 2006) rooted in epistemological authority rather than epistemological curiosity.

The Fine Print of Golden Engagement

Indications of a new level of resident involvement are found in taglines and slogans such as “Council has already had their say, now it’s up to residents to decide” and “Council doesn’t even see it, you’ve got the power!”, which were used to attract and inspire participation.⁵ In fitting with theories to participatory democracy, these slogans indicate how the pilot project shifts decision-making power over the allocation of the designated funds from elected representatives to residents. While these sloganistic pitches omit the role played by staff in vetting proposals, participants were quickly engaged with the importance of ensuring the proposals adhered to technical requirements and the eligibility criteria.⁶ What explains the difficulty of advising participants of the necessary factors for consideration while introducing them to participatory budgeting:

⁵ Field observation at numerous sessions, specifically noted on September 24th, 2016, October 26th, 2016, September 16th, 2017, and October 16th, 2017.

⁶ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114-W4, March 28, 2018

In trying to draw people into the process, y’know, we have the tagline ‘how would you spend \$250,000 to improve your community?’ Right off the bat then, we have to moderate their expectations and that’s a tension. How do you sell something, and what’s the fine print? And we have to give fine print, or at least the rules of engagement. So, we moderate expectations with rules of engagement, like how you’re going to play this game. [...] In any engagement around any urban planning exercise or civic engagement, the notion is to give people a clear choice but one that limits ... (pausing to rephrase) that frames and moderates the debate from the start.⁷

This “fine print” was provided by the eligibility criteria that obligated proposals to be within the funding available, capital in nature, and to take place on publicly owned property within the pilot testing areas. An outline of these technical requirements was presented in promotional materials, at initial idea gathering sessions in printed outlines and verbal responses to initial ideas, and in proposal development meetings with documented and verbal responses to proposals provided by city staff. While this eligibility criteria provides a necessary basis for dialogue between staff and participants, closer investigation reveals the significant degree to which these requirements diverge from curious engagement and compel consensus with pre-existing ways of knowing.

In the original staff report recommending the pilot project, a new level of resident involvement is symbolized by an eligibility criteria “kept purposely broad to ensure maximum flexibility”.⁸ First and foremost, eligible proposals (and eligible participants) were designated by the selected pilot testing areas – all of Ward 33, and the NIAs of Rustic and Oakridge. Within these designated boundaries, allowable “community improvement projects” were defined as those which: i) seek to acquire, develop, maintain or improve infrastructure or assets owned or leased by the City; ii) do not delay, cancel, or supersede the Council Approved Ten-Year Plan; iii) begin construction within 12 months and can be

⁷ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113, April 19, 2017

⁸ February 2, 2015 City Manager's Report to Budget Committee, Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project, 5.

completed within 18 months after the final vote; and iv) meet the requirements of funding available.⁹ It is also stated that “projects can leverage other sources of secured Capital Funds if they wish”.¹⁰ While these requirements certainly stop short of ensuring maximum flexibility, they serve the purpose of providing a transparent and explicit list of technical requirements that participant proposals must adhere to. Prima facie, these eligibility criteria are sufficient to support curious engagement with how residents of these areas believe their communities can be improved. However, analyzing these criteria as ways of knowing helps discern the structural influence underlying assessments of eligibility.

i) Eligible Space

The boundaries of the pilot areas limited the degree to which participants could make proposals that mattered to them. Within the designated pilot areas, funds could be used to acquire and develop public property. The requirement to invest in publicly owned or leased property maintained a focus on investments that would plausibly create a benefit to the general public. In Ward 33, a large amount of public space and infrastructure was available for development. In the NIAs, on the other hand, (which, by definition, encompass a low level of recreational space and public infrastructure) offer a much more restrictive space in this regard. Whate explains:

In the NIAs the boundaries are very small, and they make the NIAs very small and arbitrary. So, in both Oakridge and Rustic we’re dealing with the fact that people use the park outside their planning boundary, but they weren’t eligible for this pilot. So, [participants] say “well why can’t I? I use that park or I walk down that street, but it’s outside Rustic so I can’t vote for it? That seems ridiculous”, [...] Or people who were involved in it, lived outside of it and couldn’t vote and they said “well, why did you design it around Keele [street] and Culford [street]”. We said, “well, those are the planning boundaries”. Urban planning puts layers on communities, but I think the PB has shown that people put their own filters on communities and their own layers. When it fits, you get fabulous ideas [...] But it’s the worst when

⁹ February 2, 2015 City Manager's Report to Budget Committee, Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project, 6.

¹⁰ February 2, 2015 City Manager's Report to Budget Committee, Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project, 6.

an arbitrary boundary cuts people out of it. Or we say, well in fact that's not really the city's property, that's public, that's private or that's the conservation authority, we can't really do it there. That makes no sense to people and that's when people say "well, why don't you get your act together government" [and] it becomes uncomfortable sometimes.¹¹

This tension between "layers" of neighbourhood identification is an initial way in which participation is corralled by embodiments of knowledge built upon exclusive, professionally driven decision-making. Whate's statements highlight how staff seeking to support a fulsome and rewarding are constrained by established approaches to planning. While Whate recognizes how official boundaries can obstruct participants from making improvements in their community that matter to them, he is obligated to use these official boundaries to guide participation.

NIA's are an interesting example of big C City strategies to address inequities by means of pure technique (Hummel 2006). Toronto's NIA's are a subsection of 33 of Toronto's 140 designated neighbourhoods. Based on the Toronto's Neighbourhood Equity Index (NEI) Score¹², NIA's are recognized to feature heightened need of investment and social support as part of the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 (TSNS2020). The TSNS2020 Methodological Documentation states that neighbourhood boundaries were established by Social Development, Finance & Administration (SDFA) division of the City of Toronto based on census-tracts "in the mid-1990's as a geography for service planning purposes as opposed to being based on historic neighbourhood identity".¹³ This

¹¹ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113, April 19, 2017

¹² This TSNS2020 NEI is derived from the Urban Health Equity Assessment and Response Tool (HEART)@Toronto project. This index of 15 indicators includes analysis of physical surroundings, economic opportunities, healthy lives, social development, and participation in civic-decision making – this analysis captures a range of factors from unemployment to community spaces for meetings.

¹³ The full explanation further states: "The index must adhere to the existing 140 neighbourhood planning area boundaries developed by the City of Toronto. [...] They have since been adopted by the City of Toronto, multiple agencies and organizations for reporting on social wellbeing. It is the intent to keep these boundaries consistent over time and as of 2014, they have not changed since their inception. Designating NIA's using

illustrates an initial instance in which the process of planning provides an understanding of urban space that is fundamentally different than that of the people who live there. As stated by Dikeç (2011) in their research on Parisian *banlieues*¹⁴, the place-making practices of urban policy do not exhaust the meaning of these places. Nevertheless, official planning decisions continue to demonstrate a dominance over how these urban spaces are known.

As stated, within these boundaries only certain infrastructure is eligible for investment. This creates limitations specifically in NIAs, which are both small and tend to include community housing properties that are owned by the TCHC. While the TCHC is itself owned by the City of Toronto, it was treated as a distinct domain of decision-making and property management within the parameters of the pilot project. As will be shown, this brought about a reoccurring tension with the knowledge of needs held by some of the NIAs least well-off residents. Though a few TCHC properties do exist in Ward 33, this challenge may not have been considered in Carroll's call for an open conversation. As shown in the prior chapter, the inclusion of the NIAs was a staff recommendation. However, this existing understanding of property lines stands as a structural limitation to the ability of residents – notably those recognized as excluded and struggling – to direct capital toward the needs that they are aware of.

ii) Compliance with the 10-Year Capital Plan

The criterion of complying with the existing Ten-Year Capital Plan has a broad range of implications for the pilot project. Rather than a static document, the Ten-Year Capital Plan

these boundaries improves the ability to consistently monitor the wellbeing of NIAs over time.” TSNS 2020 Neighbourhood Equity Index: Methodological Documentation. *City of Toronto Social Policy Analysis and Research*. 2014, pp.3-4.

¹⁴ Banlieue literally means suburb, but it carries different connotations from the ones associated with the British or North American suburb. Originally an administrative concept, the term banlieue geographically denotes peripheral areas of cities in general (Dikeç, 2011, 7).

is updated each year and approved by City Council. Therefore, this criterion refers to a living document that provides the basis for accountable and forward-thinking allocation of public funds. Each iteration of the Ten-Year Capital Plan, typically reaching nearly 1,000 pages, features optimistic reports from the Mayor and executive-level city staff followed by outlines of how tens of billions of dollars in public funds will be distributed. In each Ten-Year Capital Plan, the specific Capital Budget for the year mandates the allocation of billions of dollars toward everyday maintenance, new developments, and development studies. The amount of this capital funding allocated to the pilot project was consistently below 1%.

The Ten-Year Capital Plan in 2015 explicitly discusses the importance of stewardship and resident engagement, making the pilot project seem like a natural extension of the plan rather than a competing process. However, the Ten-Year Capital Plan(s) also negates ongoing public engagement as it is the embodiment of planning knowledge that designates the official evaluation, use, and upcoming developments of physical space to meet public needs. In this criterion, precedence is given to the forms of public consultation that took place in the formation of this plan as well as expert-oriented knowledge on legislative obligations, growth-related projects, and required technical studies that chart a course to a desirable future. The capital developments stated in the Capital Budget for each year constitute areas that participant proposals are not able to interact with based on an authoritative claim to “good planning”. The Ten-Year Capital Plan also tracks the “State of Good Repair Backlog” and allocates funds to maintain aging infrastructure. While former City Manager Pennachetti admits that these long-term

schedules can fall out of alignment with lived realities, this official schedule is situated to rival the perspective of participants.

iii) Eligible Timeline

Among the most conspicuous of the original criteria is the required timeline for proposal implementation. Proposals had to feasibly be built within 18 months of the final vote. This is conspicuous because it is an unnecessary limitation on resident-leadership and prioritizes adherence to established budgeting cycles. The timeline is explained in the January 2019 staff evaluation of the pilot project as “a way for residents to see the cumulative impact over three years” and “an important commitment that Toronto made to maintaining momentum”.¹⁵ At the same time, this required timeline effectively excludes certain projects and negates the momentum of participatory creativity by undermining a more open dialogue between residents and staff. The Senior Project Manager of Transportation Services explains how divisional staff viewed this required timeline:

We were asked to look at a list of projects provided by the City Manager’s Office and decide which of these projects makes sense or is feasible or met our program objectives, and primarily whether they were deliverable within the restricted timeframe provided. [...] That was a challenge. So, we had to look at these projects and decide the level of construction activity required to make these projects happen, [...] the level of planning required, whether we would need to pull in additional consultants for implementation, like an engineer for example, whether there were any civil works required or utility work required. Those are aspects of a project that would most likely lead us to exclude a project.¹⁶

This senior staff continues to explain that proposals had to be assessed amidst a pre-existing workload, which he described in a prior chapter as already being in the position of a catch-up game:

The reality is, with the *accelerated delivery timelines* for this program, other things didn’t happen. Other things needed to be removed from our existing program to

¹⁵ Toronto’s Pilot Project Pilot Evaluation, *City of Toronto*. January 2019, pp. 12-13.

¹⁶ Interview with Senior Project Manager of Transportation Services, W118, April 21, 2017

deliver these projects on time. It's not that we just added it to what we were doing, we did take things away from our existing program. We did have to delay other things from happening. So, it's a case of dropping other things and focusing on this for a considerable amount of time.¹⁷ [emphasis added]

While this senior staff credits the pilot project for providing increased staff support in the stage of public engagement and gathering of proposals, the assessment and implementation of these ideas did not receive the same level of additional support.¹⁸

iv) Eligible use of funds

As will be shown in the next chapter, the designated portion of funds presented a limiting factor to many proposals. Staff responses to participant proposals would include cost estimates. If estimates went beyond the funds available, the proposals in question would be deemed ineligible. Frequent disqualification based on price estimates is partly due to a desire among participants to address problems that have a complexity and scale beyond the scope of the pilot project. However, high cost estimates can also be attributed to the cost factors involved in public procurement. Cost estimates were solely within the domain of professionals, and participants, despite frequent reports of shock and disbelief, had little grounds on which to refute these estimates. The staff recommendation to increase the available budget from \$150,000 to \$250,000 for the second and third year indicates a consensus on the need to access a larger portion of funds. Though still a modest sum, the increased budget allows for more expensive proposals to be counted as eligible and potentially more numerous projects to result from the final vote. Despite the benefits of dealing with a bigger portion of funding, the capacity for resident leadership remains constrained by structural factors.

¹⁷ Interview with Senior Project Manager of Transportation Services, W118, April 21, 2017

¹⁸ Interview with Senior Project Manager of Transportation Services, W118, April 21, 2017

Along with the limited amount of money, the eligible type of expense was strictly capital. One of the most frequently cited difficulties mentioned in retellings of engaging with participants over eligibility is that of clarifying the difference between capital costs – one-time expenditures on physical infrastructure and required studies – and operating costs – ongoing expenses such as wages or payment for services, labour, and energy consumption.¹⁹ It is specified in the 2016 Participant Handbook that capital expenses are “physical projects that benefit the public and have a long-term impact”.²⁰ While the difference between a physical object and an ongoing service is easy enough to understand, ongoing difficulties emerged from the case-by-case determination of what physical developments would require operational expenses of maintenance or utilities (e.g. water, electricity). Therefore, while the requirement of proposals to be solely capital was clearly conveyed, what capital expenses required operational costs or further studies was unclear. As will be demonstrated in the following chapter, further clarity was not provided to participants and staff did not apply this criterion on a consistent basis, which indicates shortcomings in supporting resident leadership and providing lessons on how the City works.

The explanation of the eligibility criteria thus far demonstrates the initial scope within which the City of Toronto sought to achieve “golden participation”. This gives an initial indication of how “managed participation” was part of the pilot project (Su 2018). Eligibility criteria are indeed helpful for organizing clear and transparent terms for dialogue between residents and staff. However, this section has demonstrated that the initial

¹⁹ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W1I3, April 19th, 2017; Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant W1I4, April 18, 2017; Interview with former City Manager, W4I5, March 15, 2018; Interview with Director of Zoning and Committee of Adjustment, W4I6, April 3, 2018

²⁰ “Participant Handbook”, *City of Toronto*, 2016, pg. 5.

eligibility criteria used in the Toronto pilot project compels a consensus with ways of knowing the city other than that of the resident. Rather than technical imperatives, these big C City ways of knowing are part of exclusionary planning practices that present poor building blocks for a collaborative process. The way in which staff recommendations can go beyond technical requirements and engage in a value-laden construction of good participation became more pronounced in the second and third year of the pilot project.

Extension of participation within an increasingly narrow scope

As explained in the prior chapter, after the first year of the pilot project, a staff report recommended a two-year extension of the project. This extension was based on research findings that the impacts of participatory budgeting require prolonged commitment. There were also a number of findings arising from the first year of the pilot project that led to modifications in these two latter years. In this staff report, limitations regarding eligible boundaries for investment and the amount of funding available were acknowledged. Recognizing divergent understandings of neighbourhood boundaries and the limited space in NIAs, the staff report states that city staff would discuss how the boundaries could be rethought with elected officials.²¹ However, the boundaries of the pilot testing areas remained the same for the duration of the pilot project for the purposes of longitudinal evaluation.²² As stated above, a considerable increase in funding was also recommended, from \$150,000 per area to \$250,000 per area. While this increase in funding suggests an increase in the number and type of proposals that could be considered, matters of proposal eligibility increasingly limited how these funds could be used.

²¹ City Manager's Report to Budget Committee, Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project, *City of Toronto*. December 30, 2015, p. 8.

²² Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113-W4, April 9, 2018; Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant W114, April 10, 2017.

Along with these acknowledgements, there were also other modifications that continued to narrow the scope of participation. Some signs of how staff were learning to refine their approach to participatory decision-making are found in the modification of eligibility criteria. While there were no formal changes to the eligibility criteria, the staff evaluation of the first year led to the following recommendation:

City staff involved in the PB pilot identified other observations that will be important to monitor over the longer-term evaluation of the pilot [such as] *monitoring the ideas generated through community meetings to determine which ideas are best met through PB or addressed through another mechanism*. For example, at community meetings during the 2015 PB pilot [there] were service requests that were addressed immediately by City staff while other ideas were already planned for that year by the applicable City division.²³ [sic] [emphasis added]

This finding led to a fifth criterion of whether the participatory budgeting process was “the best source of funding” for a proposal in order to avoid redundancies and maximize the use of the funds available. This change reinforces the goal of providing an “intro to the City” and use the participatory process as a “conduit”. The staff report provides ideal examples that demonstrate how such guidance can broaden the participatory experience. However, as will be further explained below in the discussion on the facilitation tool of the “parking lot”, such guidance removes proposals from the context of participatory decision-making and places them firmly within established processes with pre-existing levels of recognition for resident leadership. This new criterion indicates a further breakdown of the original consensus that residents had a direct role to play in filling gaps in existing processes.

A sixth criterion that entered into the assessment of eligibility was that proposals could not require additional review, such as studies or consultations, or pre-existing

²³ City Manager's Report to Budget Committee, Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project, City of Toronto, December 30, 2015, p. 7.

partnerships, such as a resident association. This requirement was not found in staff reports to City Council until the Pilot Project Evaluation was submitted to the Budget Committee in 2019.²⁴ This criterion actually diverges from typical definitions of capital expenses, as the Ten-Year Capital plan includes funding for various studies. Therefore, projects needed to be virtually finalized by the time of the final vote, which clearly privileges simple projects. Carroll, recounting a discussion with city-staff, expressed her belief that the participatory budgeting sessions could replace the required consultation for capital developments.²⁵ Being done the other way, in which *only* projects that do not regularly require consultation can be approved, continues the trend of an ever-narrowing scope. The obligation for proposals to not require partnerships formalizes participant proposals to the point that participants are viewed as strangers within their own community, questionably informed on the desires of even the general public of their neighbourhood.

This sixth criterion is similar to a number of other informal changes that diverge from the framework of the original staff recommendations approved by City Council. For instance, although the original eligibility criteria deemed leased property to be eligible for investment, it was not counted as eligible in practice.²⁶ Also, the possibility for community improvement projects to leverage other sources of capital funding was not utilized or mentioned as a possibility in staff feedback to participant proposals. In an interview, Whate stated that additional funds were not available within the limitations authorized by City Council.²⁷ These informal changes indicate the discretion of staff to diverge from explicit

²⁴ Toronto's Participatory Budgeting Pilot Evaluation", *City of Toronto*. January 2019, p. 7.

²⁵ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2017

²⁶ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113-W4, April 9th, 2018

²⁷ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113-W4, April 9th, 2018

council directives, and the broader potential of participatory budgeting, based on traditional exclusionary practices.

These additional limitations emerged from the role of professional staff as balancers of a range of interests and existing resources (including human resources). As such, the outcomes of the pilot project were significantly guided by the judgement of staff regarding the requirements of good planning, rather than by the experiential knowledge of residents regarding locally felt needs. In doing so, professionally-informed definitions of “good participation” emerge and increasingly compel a consensus with the established big C City ways of knowing and doing. This brings into view the significant level of staff discretion that emerged in the formation of the pilot project and continued to be invoked in its implementation. Though this level of staff discretion fulfills the regular role of balancing a range of factors within established processes, this discretion sits oddly within the context of a participatory process. While the need for staff to be involved to advise on feasibility and other constraints is indeed necessary, this capacity is extended outside of technical requirements and into a broader criteria informed by exclusive epistemologies of good planning. Limitations of the broader becoming of a participatory process are also found in the structure of meetings with residents.

Participatory parking lots and narrow inroads for resident expression

This section will elucidate a figurative geography of the participatory spaces created by the pilot project process, describing where these spaces emerge and where their edges lie. Two aspects of the pilot project that created the topography for participation are the facilitation technique of “the parking lot” and the decision to hold a single “proposal development session”. These two aspects greatly determined *what* discussion took place and *how*

discussion took place within the participatory budgeting pilot project, as will be further demonstrated in the following chapter. These limitations resulted, in part, from the low level of resources allocated to the pilot project. Though additional operational dollars were allocated to support the facilitation and promotion of the pilot project, the feasibility of projects was added to the existing workload of divisional staff on an accelerated delivery timeline. This limited support only further reflects the limited degree of epistemological curiosity underlying this project and a lack of capacity to align with little c city ways of knowing.

Using the developing eligibility criteria, staff guided participating residents down the path of participatory engagement (which is admittedly under construction). At both the idea gathering meetings and proposal development sessions, participants proposing ideas were coached to consider improvements that fit within the eligibility criteria. Occasionally, participants contested the eligibility criteria or attempt to occupy discussion with necessary improvements that they felt were important even though they were admittedly outside of the eligibility criteria.²⁸ In these moments, participants seek to shape the meaning and potential of participation. Along with the regular techniques of patiently listening to residents, Whate, who facilitated virtually all of the observed sessions, placed proposals or subjects of discussion deemed to be outside the pilot project scope in an ideational “parking lot” (i.e. these subjects were noted but ultimately set aside and not discussed). This “parking lot”, despite its pronounced connotation in discussions over the improvement of urban public space, was used to guide participation toward “golden engagement”. As explained by Whate:

²⁸ Observed at various meetings during fieldwork and mentioned in the 2015 Environics Evaluation.

The parking lot is a symbol of the way in which we allow room for the other ideas to be heard in a really transparent way. [...] The other thing it does, particularly if there's more than one person with those ideas, you can take those ideas and say, "ok we've heard that, the school programs, your youth programs in the community are suffering, we've heard it, but today we're talking about capital programs". [...] In our PB, we were always confidently able to say, we will take all of the ideas that you suggested, including comments that are about the City or whatever, and if there's not someone here to talk to about it, we'll take them back. And, I think that's an important part of respectful, real engagement [...] Parking lots work when there's a public dialogue and people are tossing around ideas and outside ideas get thrown in and we can park them, so to speak. People also call them bike racks.²⁹

In an effort to validate proposals deemed ineligible, these proposals were said to be passed on to the appropriate internal divisions or agencies, such as TCHC, Toronto Hydro, or TTC, so that they may be implemented by other means. The parking lot is a concise way in which the pilot project was used as a conduit and a way to increase trust in government procedures. While the promise of passing on ideas to relevant departments indicates responsiveness and a will to honour participation, staff provided no assurances on implementation to residents. This research did not identify the implementation of any of the proposals passed on as such, which provides an impression that these ideas were only transferred from one parking lot to another, left to idle in an undisturbed status quo.

An established understanding of scope is indeed useful, and necessary, for designating funds and rendering the concrete outputs of participatory budgeting. However, the use of the parking lot indicates how ideas of more elaborate participation are set aside rather than used to drive a more relevant and receptive approach to capital asset planning. With the above analysis of the increasingly narrow criteria by which proposals were assessed, it seems that the parking lot became increasingly large as the pilot project proceeded. By extension, participants pushing for nuanced approaches to capital

²⁹ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113-W4, April 9, 2018

development are viewed as being clamouring disruptors or out of touch and uninformed people in need of education, rather than dedicated informants on locally felt needs.

Another decision in the design of the pilot project that limited the development of a deeper dialogue over community improvement was the narrow in-roads for participation. These narrow in-roads resulted from a conjunction of required in-person engagement and a limited schedule of sessions in which to participate. Though idea gathering sessions tended to be numerous, widely dispersed through the pilot areas, and compatible with online submissions, proposal development sessions were limited to a single meeting in each area. It is within these proposal development sessions that the climax of dialogue takes place. As will be shown in the following chapter, these sessions provided opportunities for participants to view and respond to staff assessments of eligibility. At times, participants revised proposals or challenged misunderstandings on the part of staff in order to have them deemed eligible.³⁰ These sessions also provided the official space in which participants deliberate with each other to motivated for the proposals that they felt were important. Participants motivating specific proposals was termed “championing”. Following this deliberation, participants decided the top fifteen most popular projects to be included on the final ballot for a vote.

Despite the importance of in-person attendance to the proposal development meetings, which Whate describes as “pretty fundamental”³¹, the prevailing model in the year 2016 and 2017 featured a single proposal development meeting in each area. This is despite Councillor Carroll advocating for a larger number of proposal development sessions. Shields justifies the decision in this way:

³⁰ Observed at various meetings during fieldwork.

³¹ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113-W4, April 9, 2018

The first year when we had multiple meetings, people were like ‘why are we here again, why are we talking about this?’ because the same people came to both meetings and they felt like they had shortlisted it at the previous meeting and, y’know, we had that issue in Ward 33. A Councillor Carroll staff had asked us to hold a second, or third even, shortlisting meeting and the public came, our staff came, and Councillor Carroll’s staff came although they said they weren’t going to come. We had said we don’t quite understand why we’re having this meeting because there’s not a lot here to decide and then the public were pretty frustrated by showing up and felt like there was really no purpose for them again.³²

Shields explains another justification, considering the organizational challenge presented by multiple proposal development sessions in 2015:

One of the things that we experienced by having multiple people at multiple times look at the same project from different lenses was that they changed radically [...] They added new elements to the project, the whole purpose and intent changed, and the original proposal wasn’t there. Then at a separate meeting the original person was there to champion that for the shortlisting of it and it radically changed again and so it was very hard for staff to keep on top of all the changes that were happening.³³

There are various motivations behind the significant decision to narrow the opportunities for participants to receive staff feedback and to advocate for proposals. There is a continuously stated priority of fostering direct deliberation between neighbours and a consistently stated goal of alleviating time commitments and making participation accessible. These decisions were based on the intention of creating an accessible and less onerous process for ordinary residents to take part in and to allow for the discovery of lesser-known needs by residents themselves. Additionally, there was an interest in organizing the development of specific proposals in order to maintain the original intention of proposals and create a procedure that enables focused staff feedback. As such, what this decision aimed to do was to create a manageable and accessible dialogue between staff and residents with the minimal resources available to support the pilot project.

³² Interview with Senior Corporate and Management Policy Consultant, W114-W4, March 28, 2018

³³ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Consultant, W114-W4, March 28, 2018

However, the decision to hold a single proposal development meeting continues to reflect a limited degree of curious engagement underlying the pilot project. First, holding a single meeting directly contradicts the goal of engaging a high number of underrepresented and non-traditional participants. As will be shown in Chapter 6, this perpetuated forms of exclusion with underrepresented residents continuing to be excluded by factors of time, awareness, location, and confidence. Second, the creative potential of residents' collective genius is cut short by attributions of a proposal's original intent. Staff responses would often recommend significant alterations to or "bundling" of proposals, or new locations based on established approaches to capital planning and development. Proposals required "champions" in order to get on the ballot. Therefore, present participants were often invited to champion the proposals of those not present.³⁴ By holding a single proposal development meeting, proposals were designated by a specific intention. A more curious and well-supported process would account for and offer feasibility responses to different versions of similar proposals. Furthermore, deeming a more drawn out discussion on the specifics of a proposal to be unnecessary indicates the limited depth of discussion that was sought within the pilot project. As such, the pilot project is found to be more intended to support a manageable idea of participation, rather than resident leadership proposing ideas that matter to them.

Whate and Shields admit that questions remain about how to orchestrate the perfect process.³⁵ In many cases, limitations were necessary due to the resources available to the pilot project. However, along with accounting for the fact that the resources allocated to

³⁴ Observed at various meetings during fieldwork.

³⁵ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114-W4, March 28, 2018; Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113-W4, April 9, 2018

the project were the result of staff recommendations and the approval by City Council, it is important to note that much of the most significant limitations arose from pre-existing understandings of public interest and good planning. This explains why considerable increases in the resources available in the second and third year led to a minimal increase in the capacity for resident leadership. This chapter has identified how decisions regarding eligibility assessment and meeting facilitation compelled alignment with big C City ways of knowing. In attempting to create a form of golden engagement, the big C City endeavoured to evoke a Midas touch by establishing a framework for good participation. However, upon interacting with the organic nature of experiential knowledge, this Midas touch is shown to overly determine the framework of good participation and drain the life from a more active participatory potential.

This begs the question of whether the big C City and little c city can ever truly meet in the productive praxis envisioned by technodemocratic visions of participatory budgeting. While complete alignment is impractical due to fundamental differences in the sensory experience informing these distinct ways of knowing, productive collaborations beyond that found in this pilot project are certainly possible. This is found in studies on grassroots epistemologies and the redistributive literature on participatory budgeting (Hernández-Medina 2010; Meagher 2015; Piper 2014). Even within a limited scope and set of participation opportunities, resident leadership can lead to a significantly nuanced approach to administering public funds and developing the public realm. However, the prevalent privileging of established constructions of knowledge diverts the pilot project away from this participatory potential and towards a route of ingenuous curiosity and prevailing forms of exclusion.

Due to the structures of authority within the planning process, staff are able to play an intellectual role vis-à-vis the lay perspective of residents. From this position, city staff are able to reproduce and generate consent with the pre-existing notions of common sense and direct the distribution of public funds and the development of the public realm. This leads to a process in which, rather than resident-led proposals determining what gets implemented, what can be implemented determines what residents are able to propose. Furthermore, these limitations can arise not from matters of absolute necessity but rather from political decisions that are depoliticized under the auspices of technical knowledge. Rather than simply a limitation of public input, this prevailing influence of established notions of common sense and technical know-how shapes the idea of participation so as to privilege compliant forms of resident involvement and to continue to eschew more creative and critical resident-led interventions.

Rather than an inevitable failure in participatory planning, Legacy encourages engaging with this prevailing struggle for resident involvement dialectically in order to identify how the very meaning of participation is shaped by contesting counter-opposed claims of what participation means as a practice. This dialectical process is concisely found in definitions of final say. Whether by intention or banal complacency (as both were at play), this pilot project constitutes a case of *transformismo* in which the principles of participatory budgeting are undermined and co-opted by pre-existing goals of existing definitions of the very common sense depictions of public interest that in-depth public participation is meant to offset. How successfully this co-optation gained the buy-in of critical residents will be demonstrated in the following chapter. The following chapter will

outline how residents interacted with this participatory interface in terms of compliance and contestation in order to consolidate how participation is defined in Toronto.

Conclusion

Toronto's participatory budgeting pilot project was sold as being a new level of civic engagement in which participating residents have final say over the allocation of public funds. As a traditional part of participatory budgeting, getting to the final say involved an in-depth dialogue with the technical advice of city staff. While this is certainly a new level of communication between staff and residents, the level of empowerment accorded to residents is much less clear. Investigating the terms upon which resident proposals were deemed eligible reveals how the experiential knowledge of residents continues to be diminished by exclusive practices rooted in professionalized approaches to planning. A prevailing privilege of pre-existing ways of knowing is found in how the participatory process shifted increasingly toward an educational process on how the city works. By compelling consensus with established ways of knowing the city, the capacity of residents to play a leadership role is significantly diminished.

The funding and eligibility criteria in the first year were sufficient to support a curious level of engagement with residents seeking to improve their communities. Even small budgets and specific criteria can enable for nuanced approaches to allocating public funds and developing the public realm. Significant limitations to the capacity for resident leadership arose from pre-existing embodiments of knowledge outlining the designation of space and distribution of public funds. In conjunction with the limited supports allocated for the pilot project, the eligibility criteria placed narrow and, at times, impractical requirements on what proposals were deemed eligible. Limitations arising from pre-

existing practices, largely based on staff discretion, continued to be placed on the pilot project in the latter two years. This demonstrates how participatory processes are not so limited by the amount of funding available for allocation but rather by ways of knowing and assessing participant proposals. By compelling alignment with big C City ways of knowing, the participatory pilot largely undermines a more elaborate understanding of public participation.

These limited grounds for assessing proposal eligibility were also reflected in the facilitation and scheduling of meetings. What used the ideational parking lot to provide the impression of being heard amidst a narrow basis for resident-led decision-making. The decision to limit the proposal development meetings to a single meeting in each area in the latter two years created narrow inroads for participation and worked against the inclusive goals of the pilot project in the interest of organizing a more manageable process. While these decisions were made in the interest of fostering engagement between neighbours and making participation less onerous, this staff-led decision reflects a limited curiosity in the ideas that residents have accumulated in the experience of their communities.

These compromises in resident leadership expose the bare bones of the pilot project, spelling out an initiative meant to engage the public with the *idea* of participation rather than support real deliberative engagement on the needs of local publics with the capacity to allocate funds. Rather than resident proposals being developed into a capital investment plan in accordance with technical requirements of government operations, the pilot project in Toronto was designed to support a deliberative consultation in which public demands are subject to a shifting set of eligibility criteria based on, at times tacitly known, operational norms. Moments in which the eligibility criteria empower the tacit knowledge

of experts demonstrates how the meaning of participation emerges dialectically. This participatory dialectic perpetually negates the fulfillment of the resident-led decision, and replaces it with the exclusive, expert-led interpretation of need that participatory budgeting is meant to challenge and elaborate. This chapter has demonstrated the effort to give the impression of substantive change without rearranging orders of power, as explained by Gramscian *trasformismo*. The following chapter will demonstrate how the participating public responded to this idea of participation with conscious intentions of their own.

Chapter 6 – Participants, Professionals, and Prevailing Epistemic Privilege

As explained thus far, the pilot project emerged from a consensus that residents hold unique knowledge on necessary improvements in their respective parts of the city. The resulting pilot project invited all residents aged 14 and above in Ward 33 and the NIAs of Oakridge and Rustic to propose ideas and “champion” proposals for how these areas could be improved. The pilot project particularly aimed to engage non-traditional participants in government decision-making processes. As shown in the prior chapter, as the consensus on the value of resident input was put into practice as a specific pilot project, the grounds for resident leadership became crowded by authoritative and exclusive embodiments of knowledge embedded in the typical planning process. Shifting from a desire to learn from residents about how to more effectively allocate public funds, the pilot project decidedly became an “intro to how the City works”. Therefore, this chapter will investigate the extent to which residents were able to modify regular planning processes and the ways that elements of the regular planning process modified the resident-led nature of participatory budgeting. This investigation will reveal how participatory processes can be used to compel consensus with existing planning practices in response to participants using their experiential knowledge to develop creative solutions to locally known problems.

The first section of this chapter will note significant distinctions in demographic make-up and resident motivations between the pilot testing areas. Noting these distinctions serves to demonstrate how the pilot project procedure that was common across areas took place in different physical and social conditions. The second section will focus on the idea gathering sessions and proposal development sessions using field research conducted during the last two years of the pilot project, publicly available staff responses to resident

proposals over all three years¹, and interviews with participants. Though the overall pilot project also involved a promotional effort, a final vote, and the implementation of approved projects, the stages of idea gathering, and proposal development reveal how participants in each of these three areas sought to make use of participatory budgeting and how staff responded.

Findings from each area will be presented separately, providing a clear view of some of the pivotal differences between these communities. Despite distinctions, what will be shown to be common across all areas is a will among participants to make creative use of public funds to address locally known issues, issues which are not addressed by existing approaches to planning a better future for Toronto. As a response to counter-conceptions of common sense arising from the little c city, participants across all three areas were confronted with established ways of knowing embedded in the planning process and the structural authority of the planning community.

Tale of three areas

As discussed in prior chapters, Toronto's participatory budgeting pilot project was organized to take place in Ward 33 and the NIAs of Rustic and Oakridge, which are smaller areas within their respective wards. These areas were selected due to the leadership of Councillor Carroll in the initiation of the pilot project and by staff selection based on "pure research".² These areas are located in different portions of Toronto, with Ward 33 in Don Valley East, Rustic in Ward 12 York South-Westin, and Oakridge in Ward 35 Scarborough Southwest.

¹ Responses to participant proposals 2015-2017, City of Toronto. <<https://open.toronto.ca/dataset/participatory-budgeting-pilot/>>

² Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114, April 19, 2017

Beyond their geographic position, these areas are distinct in a number of ways. Census data from 2016 indicates distinctions in terms of socio-economic well-being between Ward 33 and the NIAs of Oakridge and Rustic. These details demonstrate that Oakridge and Rustic are specific cases of Hulchanski's "third city" encompassing high-levels of both racial minorities and poverty (Hulchanski 2010). In Oakridge, 42.6% of residents are below the Low Income Measure³, which is double the city-wide average (20%) and has risen since 2011.⁴ In Rustic, 31.7% of residents are below the Low Income Measure.⁵ Ward 33, where 23% of residents are below the Low Income Measure, features the lowest rate of poverty among the pilot testing areas but one that is still higher than the city-wide average.⁶ Focusing on families with children poverty rates in all pilot testing areas jump substantially higher and shows that Ward 33 is not free of such worrying trends (Polanyi, Johnston, and Khanna 2015). Families in all three areas are more likely to have children than the city-wide average. Rustic and Oakridge both feature levels of formal education lower than the city-wide average, while Ward 33 features a higher than average amount of residents who have received a university degree. The racial and linguistic diversity of Toronto is present in all pilot testing areas with representation of visible minorities and households speaking English as a second language being well above the city-wide average.⁷ All areas are roughly evenly divided by gender.

³ "The Low Income Measure (After Tax) is a measure that reflects households living with income below half of the Canadian after tax household income median. The LIM threshold varies with the size of the household". 2016 Neighbourhood Census, National Household Survey, Oakridge.

⁴ Oakridge, 2016, Neighbourhood Profiles, Statistics Canada, Prepared by Social Policy, Analysis & Research, City of Toronto.

⁵ Rustic, 2016, Neighbourhood Profiles, Statistics Canada, Prepared by Social Policy, Analysis & Research, City of Toronto.

⁶ Ward 33, 2016, Ward Profiles, Statistics Canada, Prepared by Social Policy, Analysis & Research, City of Toronto.

⁷ In Oakridge, 55% of residents report having a mother tongue other than English, with 40% speaking a language other than English at home. The most frequent language other than English, by far, is Bengali.

The City of Toronto Pilot project set out to “leverage the City's existing community capacity building, communications and outreach strategies to [...] increase the number of people involved in local decision making”.⁸ This would include mailout and social media announcements of the pilot project, localized city staff and recruited community contacts promoting the process to residents, and, in 2017, situated tabling sessions meant to engage inadvertent participants. Reviewing the above socio-demographic differences gives an idea of what a representative turnout would look like. The above details also provide an impression of the type of pressing issues exist in these parts of Toronto. By reviewing how well the pilot project includes residents with fully formed ideas based on specific needs in their community, the pilot project will be shown to reproduce rather than challenge pre-existing limitation to resident inclusion in decision-making.

Field research helped to identify the range of motivations among residents in each of these three areas. In Oakridge, poverty and food insecurity are recognized problems.⁹ While poverty is widespread in Oakridge and surrounding areas, it is concentrated within TCHC-owned buildings in Teesdale Place. A Youth Outreach Worker working in the Oakridge Community Centre¹⁰ mentions that “there’s definitely a need for more

These rates are higher than the city-wide averages, being 46% and 29% respectively. In Oakridge 75% of residents identify as a visible minority, compared to the city-wide average of 51%. The most prominent racial minorities in Oakridge are reported to be South East Asian and Black.⁷ In Rustic, 48% of residents report a mother tongue other than English, with 31% speaking a language other than English at home. The most common language other than English is Italian, which is also the most predominant ethnic origin and country of origin reported by immigrated residents. In Rustic, 60% of residents identify as a visible minority, with the predominant visible minority being Black. In Ward 33, 68% of residents report a mother tongue other than English, with 58% speaking a language other than English at home. The most frequently reported languages other than English are Cantonese, Mandarin, and Farsi. In Ward 33, 71% of residents identify as a visible minority, with a Chinese population that is double the city-wide average.

⁸ February 2, 2015 City Manager's Report to Budget Committee, Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project, 3.

⁹ Interview with Morris Beckford, W4I2, March 12, 2018; Interview with Oakridge Community Development Worker, W4I1, March 8, 2018

¹⁰ The Oakridge Community Centre is one of the nine community centres in Scarborough District that provides programs for free.

programming here in this community, there's a need for more space. There's a need for a youth lounge, or a youth gym, or just stuff, [...] equipment, or things, but again capital is very hard to come by in this community".¹¹ Interviewed residents from Oakridge explain their motivation to participate in the pilot project: "there is this stigma that I am advocating about. Get us the billboards, get us the meeting, get us something to begin to have a different conversation about who lives in Toronto Community Housing"¹² and "I've certainly always paid attention to what was going on around me. I have lived in the neighbourhood my entire life. So, I've got a stake in it and I don't really plan to go anywhere".¹³ These residents draw from their existing knowledge of needs to direct public funds in pursuit of a more desirable future for Oakridge.

In Rustic, similar issues of poverty play out in the context of a divided community. Both Oakridge and Rustic feature TCHC high-rise towers built in 1972 that now stand as focal points of poverty in their respective areas. A significant difference is the notable racial tension between the predominantly Italian homeowners and predominantly Black tenants of a specific TCHC buildings, the Falstaff Towers, that is found in Rustic. A civically engaged female leader among the Italian community named Giacommetti expresses her concern with the pockets of poverty in her community: "This is a poverty area, ok? And, it's especially because we have three Toronto Housing, low income, clusters of apartments, the ones on Falstaff, the ones on Queens Dr., the ones on Maple Leaf. So, they bring the whole area down, economically, health-wise, etcetera".¹⁴ Another member of the civically

¹¹ Interview with Youth Outreach Coordinator, W2I2, April 26, 2016

¹² Interview with participant from Oakridge, W1I7, April 20, 2017

¹³ Interview with participant from Oakridge, W4I3, March 9, 2018

¹⁴ Interview with participant, W1I9, April 21, 2016

engaged homeowner community, an elderly male named Lustig, shares an account of past attempts to engage with the tenants of Falstaff in saying:

[T]here's three huge apartment buildings and there's not too many apartment buildings in the whole area but that is a focal point because there's problems there: low income people, unemployed, recent immigrants and all that type of stuff. So, we're trying to reach out to them and they don't want to respond. And if they do respond, it's always negatives. Everybody says I'm racist, hey, it's a situation where you have Blacks and Whites. You have to be fair and honest about the way it is. [...] We sit in on these community meetings and I pinpoint them, I says, "listen, you're Black, why don't you get your people to come to these meetings and maybe we can get some good input from them?"¹⁵

These remarks indicate that a salient racial tension characterizes the pre-existing physical and social terrain that the pilot project takes place on. Both Lustig and Giacommetti mention attempts to engage with the tenants of Falstaff and other TCHC buildings, and this overt racial tension is clearly one barrier to progress in this regard.

A Caucasian, female youth representative named Peterson, seeks to address these divides in her community. Peterson explains:

I grew up kind of more with the seniors, whereas there's a lot of young people in the Falstaff buildings. So I was comfortable going to the [pilot project] meetings because I knew a lot of the people but then, like as soon as I kind of started talking about "well this is what the youth in the community want", people started getting pretty hostile and were like, oh, you know, "I'm scared of young people in this community, they're always just hanging out at night, and drinking and smoking". [...] I don't think anyone said anything specific, but it was directed towards youth and the Falstaff buildings.¹⁶

With full awareness of the local tension, Peterson seeks to use the pilot project as a way to broker better relations in her community. A Youth Outreach Worker who works in the Falstaff community mentions ideas for the pilot project that they hope to use as a way to broaden the identity of this community. The Youth Outreach Worker states:

¹⁵ Interview with Councillor and resident, W116, April 20, 2016

¹⁶ Interview with participant, W115, April 19, 2017

The news portrays this area in a bad light. So, something that we wanted to do in terms of equipment and stuff like that was a podcast, some type of like media that we can control, so that when you Google “Falstaff” it’s not just shootings and things like that. It’s more of the positive things that are happening. I think that having our own media would be an important piece in an effort to bring light to what’s in these buildings.¹⁷

Statements from these youth representatives indicate how the pilot project could be used to address divides in this community. Youth from Falstaff are explained as seeking to amplify local knowledge by investing in media they can control. The pilot project is viewed as a new empowering opportunity to build capacity to challenge historically and physical entrenched divides resulting from past decisions in planning and resource allocation.

In Ward 33, the higher standard of living leads to residents proposing projects that are more recreational in nature, but this ward also features low-income needs and feelings of exclusion. First time civic engager, Rachele Lombardi, found out about the process as a member of her condo board. She says, “it was a resident that brought participatory budgeting to our attention and thought that it might be a great idea to do something with that piece of land at Buchan and Sheppard [...] We wanted to be able to engage residents in something that would be very interesting to all of us”.¹⁸ Lombardi also mentions that the pilot project is part of a long-running effort to create a sense of community among her fellow condo owners, who are mostly South-East Asian owners.¹⁹ Other participants, such as Shirley Kehmikar, engage on a more critical and experienced basis. Kehmikar explains her area of Ward 33 as being historically neglected stating “we never get anything around here. It’s because we don’t have a resident association”.²⁰ Kehmikar seeks to utilize the

¹⁷ Interview with Youth Outreach Worker, W3I4, December 11, 2017

¹⁸ Interview with participant, W1I2, April 8, 2017

¹⁹ Interview with participant, W1I2, April 8, 2017

²⁰ Interview with participant, W3I1, December 8, 2017.

pilot project to challenge the substandard infrastructure in her area but expresses a skepticism on the potential of the pilot project to change these conditions. She states: “I’m not holding my breath [...] I’ve worked in government long enough to know that each department has her own agenda”.²¹ Seeing how these different levels of civic awareness and motivation are supported in the pilot project provides telling signs of how it helped to address pressing needs.

Among the Ward 33 participants, there are also those with experience in civic engagement from their professional life. Mary Dimas, who Chaired the Ward 33 steering committee, has a master’s degree in Urban Planning and explains this is her first time getting involved at this level of civic engagement as a resident.²² Dimas explains what she feels her experience in urban planning allows her to contribute as a participant:

I see it from both angles. If I were a planner giving a lot of information out, it sometimes opens you up to criticism. But, as much as I understand that, there needs to be a transparent process, especially with participatory budgeting and it is a project run by the community. [I thought] it would be interesting to see if the City could let go of a little bit of their decision-making and let the community do that.²³

Dimas’s perspective is at the nexus of the knowledge divide between technical professionals and the lived experience of residents. Dimas seeks to test how the pilot project increases the role of resident in decisions typically guided by professional planning. Another participant who spanned this divide is Raymond Chiu, who worked for an engineering firm in the 90s. Chiu recalls the public consultations on highway routes that he was involved in as “a rubber-stamping process” that would be overridden by other factors.²⁴ Chiu explains that for the past two-years he has attempted to fix “roughly half a

²¹ Interview with participant, W3I1, December 8, 2017.

²² Interview with participant, W3I3-W4, April 9, 2018

²³ Interview with participant, W3I3-W4, April 9, 2018

²⁴ Interview with participant, W3I2, December 9, 2017

kilometer” of unfinished bike path. He explains: “It’s actually quite deceptive because on all bike plans and the bike network planning documents it shows there’s a trail there. So, that was annoying.”²⁵ The pilot project now presents a new way for Chiu to address this concise case of divergence between the big C City and little c city perceptions of the land of Toronto.

Reviewing this range of motivations identifies the specific ideas of change that these participants brought to the pilot project. With this background, the implementation and outcomes of the pilot project can be better assessed. NIAs present a context of scarce and overburdened infrastructure, and past planning and development decisions that designate space in ways that may hobble the inclusive practices of participatory budgeting. The following section will analyze whether the pilot project reproduced disadvantages that arise from these conditions or supported participants in challenging them. Outcomes in the NIAs will be compared to outcomes in Ward 33, which features more space, increased political support, and higher levels of formal education. What this comparison will demonstrate is that, despite distinctions, limitations to resident involvement were largely reproduced and rationalized as common sense, with only glimmers of collaborative potential, in all three areas.

On the road to the final say

As explained in the prior chapter, participant proposals were required to fit a number of criteria. In the original staff recommendation, the eligibility criteria established that proposals must not conflict with the Ten-Year Capital Plan, must be used to develop, acquire or repair property owned by the City of Toronto, must be capital, one-time

²⁵ Interview with participant, W3I2, December 9, 2017

expenses, and must be feasibly built within 18 months of the final vote. The ability to leverage other funds that was included in this original recommendation was not explicitly utilized or promoted. In the two-year extension, the budget was increased from \$150,000 to \$250,000, and informal criteria were established based on staff judgement of the best use of the funds available. These informal criteria were used to deem projects that required continued consultation, studies, or pre-existing partnerships ineligible. As argued in the prior chapter, these eligibility requirements situate participation within a domain of knowledge that equipped staff to compel consensus among participants. This section will reveal the ways in which residents navigated and responded to these criteria in the interest of creating better futures for their communities.

Idea gathering in Oakridge

Arriving at an idea gathering session at the Oakridge Community Centre in September 2016, one finds a range of demographics from the area, albeit a modest turnout of approximately 20 participants. This is one of two idea gathering sessions taking place in 2016. This meeting is catered with pizza and soft drinks from local favourite Regino's. Stacks of session materials and participant surveys, translated into Bengali and other local

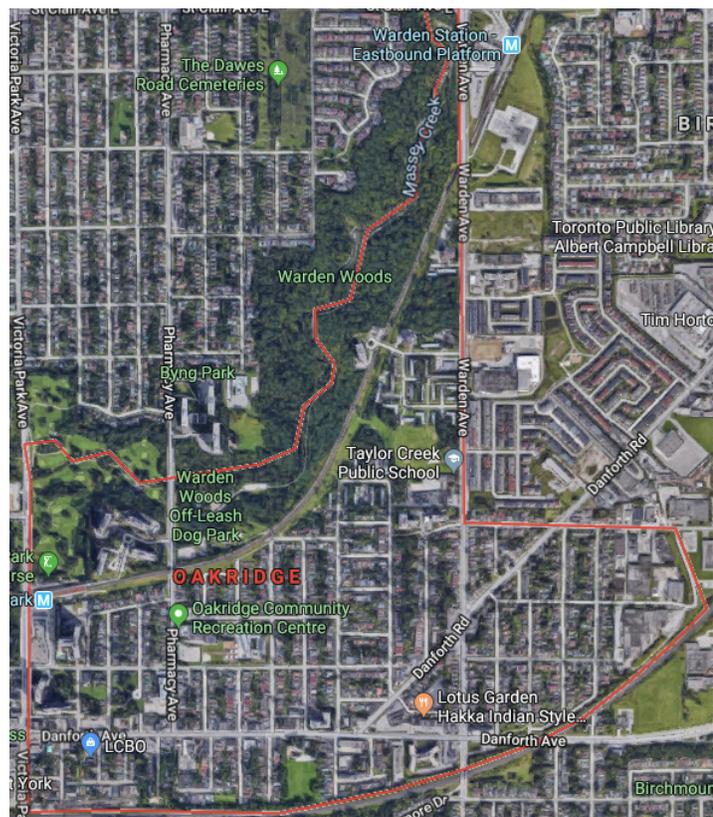


IMAGE 6.1 – OAKRIDGE – GOOGLE MAPS

languages, sit at the entrance. A mostly adult crowd mills about, conversing with each other and with city staff, reviewing process materials and guidelines, and writing down their proposals on flip-chart boards prepared by staff with the headings: Beautification, Safety, Parks and Recreation, Streets and Sidewalks, Accessibility and Signage, and “Other”. Taking place at the same time as an afterschool gathering of youth, some younger residents occasionally become curious enough to participate. After some informal discussion, Whate presents the pilot project procedure, eligibility criteria, and information on successful projects from the prior year.

The Oakridge Community Centre is a short distance away from Teesdale Place as well as the main strip, Danforth Avenue. The Oakridge Community Centre seems to be an ideal location as it attracts a wide range of residents in terms of race, gender, and language.²⁶ Two Bengali women sit together to complete their proposal activity sheets and participant surveys. One of these women balances attentive participation with smiling to her baby in the stroller and positively affirmation the good behaviour of her slightly older child.²⁷ A considerable group of staff are also in attendance, including staff from the City Manager’s Office, the Youth Outreach Coordinator for the Oakridge Community Centre, and staff from the divisions of Parks, Forestry & Recreation, Transportation Services, and Public Health. City staff engage with all participants but tend to be mostly in conversation with Caucasian participants.

In this observed 2016 idea gathering session in Oakridge, there was an evident amount of success in gathering both civically engaged as well as typically uninvolved residents into an active dialogue with city staff. When asked about the absence of

²⁶ Observation recorded in field notes, September 24, 2016

²⁷ Observation recorded in field notes, September 24, 2016

Councillor Holland, participating residents respond with knowing smiles saying something along the lines of “she doesn’t come out to things like this”.²⁸ The Councillor’s office staff represents the councillor, gathering information on proposals and responding to questions as the flipcharts fill with ideas.

In September 2017, idea gathering sessions are conducted as a series of situated tabling sessions. Rather than two designated meetings, five such situated tables would be set up to engage residents. Located at the doorways of the Oakridge Community Centre and West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre, these tabling sessions were used as an alternative to designated meetings in order to meet inadvertent participants utilizing this infrastructure. As with the 2016 meetings, Whate receives support from divisional staff who help engage participants. As they set up their table with printed materials and a map of the eligible area, Whate briefs the volunteering staff on what phrases are useful and how to coach participant proposals in terms of the eligibility criteria.²⁹

The observed tabling sessions was at the West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Centre. Participant interactions were largely composed of people coming to use the community centre but with little time or interest in participating. While many of these impromptu participants appreciated the spirit of the participatory budgeting pilot project, many do not live in the pilot testing area or lack a readily available substantive proposal.³⁰ The City of Toronto reports that 75 interactions resulted from these tabling sessions in Oakridge³¹, but these interactions were observed to reach a questionable depth.

²⁸ Observation recorded in field notes, September 24, 2016

²⁹ Observation recorded in field notes, September 16, 2017

³⁰ Observation recorded in field notes, September 16, 2017

³¹ City of Toronto’s Preliminary Evaluation Report, Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager’s Office. City of Toronto Budget Committee, November 2018, p 9

In 2016, using designated idea gathering meetings, 51 distinct project proposals were gathered and responded to. Of these 51 proposals, 17 were deemed to be eligible for the final ballot. This represents a decrease in total ideas from 2015, wherein 71 distinct project proposals were gathered and 11 were responded to as eligible. However, the increased percentage of eligible proposals in 2016 suggests that the eligibility criteria was better conveyed by staff and understood by participants. In 2017, 63 proposals were gathered and responded to, of which only eight were deemed eligible for the final ballot. Along with not gathering a larger amount of ideas than in 2015, this suggests a less clear understanding of eligibility criteria and, as suggested by staff and councillor interviewees, an increased willingness of staff to apply rigid readings of these criteria.

Proposal development in Oakridge

The October 2016 proposal development session at the Oakridge Community Centre again features a bustling turnout of around 35 participants. At this evening meeting, many of the participants observed at the idea gathering session are in attendance in addition to many others, making up what appeared to be a diverse turnout. There is a notable increase in youth participants, specifically youth of colour. Translated materials providing information on the pilot project and a sheet with columns and rows for participants to indicate and explain which proposals they support are once again available alongside Regino's Pizza and refreshments. Surveys are placed at each seating location by staff prior to the beginning of the meeting in order to increase participant responses for the final evaluation of the pilot project.³² The eligible proposals are placed in a central location for viewing and ineligible proposals were grouped on a separate wall. After Whate provides the opening presentation,

³² Observation recorded in field notes, October 11, 2016

participants are invited to view staff responses to proposals and select which they believe should be on the final ballot.

Many of the proposals made in Oakridge focus on addressing the low-economic standing and deficient infrastructure in this NIA. Increased funding for programs in the Oakridge Community Centre and for childcare centres are not eligible because they rely on operating funds. Similarly, proposals for farmers' markets to address the lack of access to fresh food, as there is no grocery store in Oakridge, are also rejected on the grounds of not being a capital project. Proposals to increase access to free wireless internet in parks are rejected on the basis that they require operational expenses. Proposals for a swimming pool, splash pad, skating rink, and a skateboard park are also placed among the ineligible proposals due to estimated cost. A proposal to acquire land at Danforth and Warden Ave. is deemed ineligible due to costs and existing guidelines for land acquisition. Calls for security cameras in parks to increase public safety are responded to with the basic information that the City does not install surveillance cameras in public places.

Small and rudimentary installments like benches, shade structures, and games tables are found among the proposals deemed feasible. Despite constraints, proposals fitting within the typical understanding of capital projects demonstrate how the pilot project succeeded in a new level of involvement for residents to allocate public funds. A group of Black youth promote their proposal for a running track in Oakridge and adult participants associated with the local Business Improvement Association (BIA) promote a performance stage in Oakridge Park. A proposal for improved sidewalks on Pharmacy Avenue for public safety is deemed eligible in the form of 100 meters of new two-metre wide sidewalk. While a new playground was deemed to be beyond the available budget in 2015, the increased

funding and an evident increased openness to resident ideas³³ included playground equipment and playground improvements. Additional lighting in parks, water bottle refilling stations, and a new digital sign board for the Oakridge Community Centre are also approved as capital projects. The staff approval of projects that use water and electricity demonstrates that there is a certain degree of such operating costs that an eligible proposal can entail. However, this degree is not explicated in staff responses.

A degree of collaborative decision-making is evident in the development of proposals in Oakridge. A proposal to install a tall fence or net to stop soccer balls from being kicked out of Oakridge Park and into the neighbouring residential lots is stated in the staff responses to be “not something the City typically installs” but was approved in terms of all eligibility criteria. Staff recommend that two separate proposals for a playground and outdoor fitness equipment, originally proposed for Oakridge Park, be installed in the nearby Elward-Maison Parkette and Madelaine Park respectively due to the limited space available in Oakridge Park. Champions are occasionally successful in modifying their proposal or correcting an error in response to staff feedback. If a new playground or splashpad is too deemed as too expensive, participants suggests making improvements that can be done for under \$250,000 to the one nearby. Whate accepts this point and adds improvements to the existing splash pad in Prairie Drive Park to the eligible proposals. Though the Councillor’s staff and city staff believe that a proposal for an accessible swing is unnecessary due to existing equipment, participants notify them that the existing accessible swing is currently unusable due to it missing a necessary part.³⁴

³³ A proposed playground improvement in Prairie Drive Park was estimated to cost \$500,000 in 2015, while a new playground in the same area was estimated to cost \$250,000 in 2016.

³⁴ Observation recorded in field notes, October 11, 2016

During the review and championing of proposals, one participant stands out as a passionate leader of civic engagement. This participant is named Harriet Cain, who moved to Toronto from Barbados thirty years ago and is now a tenant of the subsidized Teesdale apartments. The increased presence of energetic youth had been challenging Whate's ability to facilitate an orderly discussion and it is Cain who helps to organize the group of young boys and guide their participation in the prioritization of eligible proposals.³⁵ As a project champion, Cain holds multiple proposals in her hands and speaks to a range of community improvements that other participants should consider. In the filling out of the proposal prioritization sheets, Cain carefully spells each word, at times speaking each letter aloud, as she engages purposefully in the pilot project.

In an interview, Cain explains her motivation as drawing from a desire to see a more active and dignified community taking part in the formation of their environment. Cain has served in the role of tenant representative in TCHC's participatory budget and also volunteers at the Teesdale free lunch program. In an interview, Cain explains her motivation as:

What I've learned to do is [...] see the needs because, sometimes, this is really fascinating, everybody doesn't have it in their minds, because it's not something that we were trained to do or brought up to do as part of our culture, to be part of the community, to celebrate community. [...] We have learned, or have been taught, not to be that community-wide, having lenses in the community [...] I was told that it was complex, I no longer believe it.³⁶

Cain speaks of unlearning the inherited role of a non-critical resident and states directly how she is taking on the role of employing a critical lens. She states that residents need to

³⁵ Observation recorded in field notes, October 11, 2016

³⁶ Interview with participant, W117, April 20, 2017

take on this role despite common sense claims that the process of addressing these needs is too complex for residents to be directly involved.

Amidst the many issues present in the NIA of Oakridge, only some can be addressed through participatory budgeting. Cain explains how she navigates the eligibility criteria of the pilot project in pursuit of addressing issues in her community that she sees:

We have guidelines of the things [that are eligible]. So, for you to go outside that means that you see something bigger than the PB. So, if I see something bigger than the PB than you take it to the staff and the staff needed to note it up and put it in *the parking lot* or whatever. But, there's no illusion like "ok I can get everything, the sky's the limit". It's not so. You already had the outline, which helps you to stay focused. [...] We have all said ok it's there, validate you and then we go on.³⁷ [emphasis added]

Cain accepts that proposals made through participatory budgeting must fit within constraints. Cain has clearly developed a comfort working strategically through eligibility criteria, which is likely the result of years of experience in the TCHC participatory budgeting program. Using this familiarity with proposal requirements and her lived experience of inadequacies in the physical environment of Oakridge and Teesdale, Cain proposed a mural to beautify a TTC subway overpass adjacent to the entrance of Teesdale Place. This mural is one of many proposals attempting to improve the identity of Teesdale Place in the minds of both outsiders and in the self-identity of tenants who pass through the Teesdale Place entrance everyday as they come and go from their homes. After a follow-up community consultation to choose the artist for the mural, and some needed

³⁷ Interview with participant, W117, April 20, 2017

repairs by the TTC to address a leak in the bridge, the murals in Image 6.3 and Image 6.4 were completed.



IMAGE 6.2 – MURAL IN OAKRIDGE, PHARMACY AVE – PHOTO FROM FIELDWORK

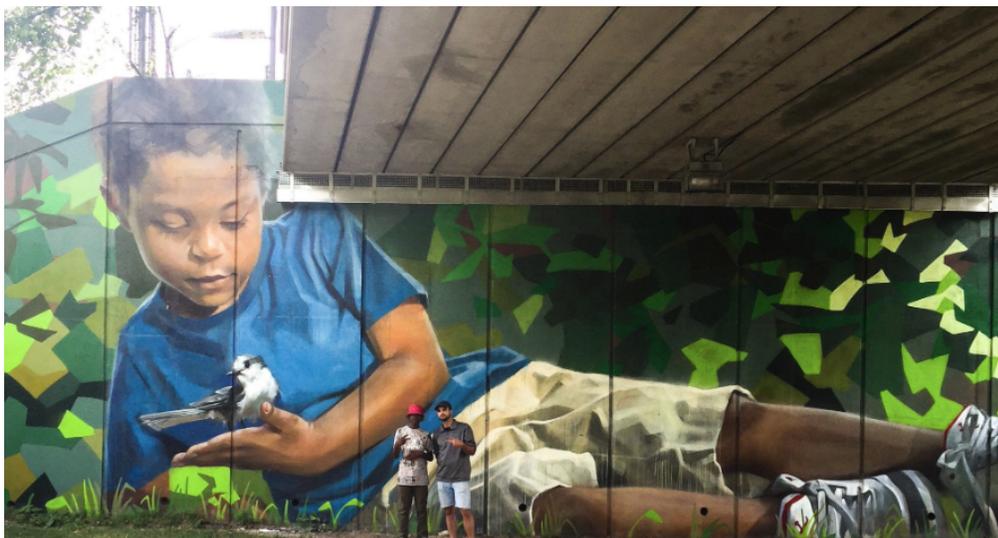


IMAGE 6.3 – MURAL IN OAKRIDGE, PHARMACY AVE - @PBTORONTO TWITTER

When Cain is pressed on whether proposals made within the eligibility criteria, such as murals and beautification, can make substantial contributions to important local needs, she explains:

PB gives us that part to play in terms of we get to say that we want safety and then identify the type of safety that we want. All the kinds of beautification that we want, all the places that we want to gain and just make it a site of hype and thinking. So, this needs to be tailored to our needs. [...] We are able to, through PB, go into safety and identify what safety is for us. You tell me that safety is for you, you might think that I would need what... 20 cameras?! And I would say that's not safety, safety

means that I need you to do some beautification. Make it more pleasant [and ensure] security in terms of encouraging you to have a voice and [know that] you have other people that are pushing and are working on your behalf to make sure you're able to be creative.³⁸

Cain represents an impressive source of local insight that consciously grapples with the pedagogical impact that the physical environment has on resident life.

Insofar as field research for this dissertation reveals, Cain represents a unique combination of experience and involvement but one that indicates how participatory budgeting forums can provide spaces for strategic planning from the margins based on hyper-localized knowledge and goals. Cain's approach fits well with Meagher's (2015) metaphor of critical epistemology that grows like a weed "finding new ways to work around the city and through the city" without completely internalizing existing urban logics (808). Strategizing within the guidelines of the eligibility criteria of participatory budgeting, Cain seeks to make lasting impacts in creative ways, such as turning the non-place of a subway overpass into a site of local affirmation and encouragement. Cain explains that next she wants to champion a stage in Oakridge park: "We want to hopefully get some power plugs so that when our jazz people come in with their guitars and stuff we have that boom, boom, boom, boom sound, y'know?!"³⁹ Based on findings in Oakridge, it would seem that the pilot project was serving the intended purpose of supporting the involvement of new residents in the decision-making process of small-scale capital improvements.

Though the pilot project appears to welcome resident recommendations on necessary changes, proposals are also limited by existing programs and practices within

³⁸ Interview with participant, W117, April 20, 2017

³⁹ Interview with participant, W117, April 20, 2017

the big C City. Proposals to invest in emergency phones are rejected on the basis that an Emergency Services Wayfinding Plan is already underway and would address these needs if deemed necessary. Proposals for bike lanes on Albion Avenue are validated as capital projects but were recommended against because the proposed location had not been identified in the Toronto Cycling Network Plan. Proposals to install informative signage for plant-life in parks and along walking trails in order to attract and educate users were made in all three years of the pilot project in Oakridge. These proposals are rejected because a city-wide Trails Wayfinding Strategy is in progress and this proposal would be best addressed through the Master Planning process for the Taylor-Massey Creek Sub-watershed area, which encompasses Oakridge. Proposals to turn paved parking lots into green space are not recommended because ongoing activities are deemed to require parking space. Requests to install soccer posts and markings are recommended against based on the reasoning that this would designate these spaces as bookable for soccer events and diverge from the intended purpose of this green space. In 2015, calls for curb cuts intended to make certain roads more accessible for disabled pedestrians are recommended against by staff on the basis of drainage issues and compliance with AODA requirements. In the same year, the desire to install a traffic light or traffic calming measures at or around the Danforth were deemed to not be a capital project and involve traffic studies that would exceed the timeline for eligible projects. These limitations diminish the resident-led nature of the pilot project by invoking claims of superior oversight. Staff responses do raise practical concerns that should be accounted for in decision-making. However, participants are given little basis to contest and question these responses as they are treated as facts of “how the City works” rather than subjected to fulsome deliberation.

Proposals made across all three-years for fruit bearing trees, bake ovens, and expanded community gardens are responded to by staff stating that the pilot project is not the best source of funding. Participants clearly sought to address pressing concerns of food insecurity by attempting to create places to produce and prepare food. However, existing programs determining where and when community gardens and bake ovens would be built require a pre-existing community partnership. In 2016, a young mother champions a proposed bake oven, reasoning that if the structure was built the required community partnership will be easier to develop.⁴⁰ In the spirit of dialogue and resident-led decision-making, Whate adds the bake oven to the eligible list and it was approved by participants for the ballot by participants present. Ultimately, however, this proposal was removed from the ballot based on the final say of senior staff in line with established planning practices.

In 2015, proposals were made for new equipment in the Oakridge Community Centre, such as new computers. While these proposals fit the provided description of a one-time capital expense that will have a lasting impact on the community, they were deemed ineligible. Proposals for computers in the community centre aim to address specific needs in this highly impoverished community. Staff responses cite the operational expenses required by this equipment however it is not made clear how this differs from other proposals, such as a light or fountain, that were deemed eligible despite this same need. In 2017, proposals to use capital funding to build a few “little library boxes” in parks, were responded to by staff saying “the City does not build Little Library boxes”. These proposals sought improvements that fit within the eligibility criteria but were rejected because they are not capital expenses that are typically done.

⁴⁰ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 11, 2016

Similar limitations are found in the efforts to develop Prairie Drive Park. Prairie Drive Park provides the closest city-owned green space for residents of the predominantly concrete Teesdale Place. This park was the focus of proposals in all three years of the pilot project as the Teesdale property itself is ineligible because it is owned by TCHC. In 2015, participants made a wide range of proposals for maintenance and new installations, some of which were deemed ineligible and some of which were recommended by staff to be “bundled” as a single proposal. Bundling is a practice used to make multiple developments on a more cost-efficient basis. The recommended bundle did not include all proposals, such as improvements to the outdoor washroom and playground, on the basis that this could raise costs above the funds available and regular maintenance was already scheduled for 2019. This package was supported by the final vote of 2015. However, parts of this bundle had to be proposed again in 2017 since inaccurate price estimates caused portions of it to not be completed, as acknowledged in staff response. This demonstrates the need for a certain degree of humility in assessing proposals going forward. Nevertheless, proposals to this park continued to be responded to with narrow and presumptive assessments of the appropriate use of participatory budgeting. While the knowledge of city staff is helpful in notifying residents of pre-existing approaches to capital asset development, contestation over Prairie Drive Park indicates significant limitations in bettering the lives of residents that arise from a prevailing privilege of pre-existing practices of planning.

In the 2017 proposal development session, an assembly of approximately 12 participants gathers in the October evening to look over staff responses. The mood of the meeting is much more subdued with a complete absence of youth and animated characters like Cain. The Bengali mothers, diligently completing the participant surveys, continue to

propose increased playground structures for children in Oakridge.⁴¹ Among the cadre of city staff in attendance, Whate stands at the front of the room, equipped with his informative PowerPoint presentation and a pad of paper turned to a blank page, ready to record the varying contributions of participants.⁴² Whate explains that championing would not be necessary this year as only eight of the 63 proposed projects have been deemed eligible. Whate invites residents to provide feedback to or challenge staff responses to proposals but stops short of facilitating such a critical review.⁴³ It appears that the participants present are either satisfied with the eligible proposals or do not understand themselves as having the ability to refute the professional recommendations and rationale. After Whate's presentation is complete, the session drifts into an informal sort of event, with racially divided groups of discussion, staff distributing pamphlets for upcoming TSNS2020 events, and viewings of the staff responses to ineligible proposals. A proposal for computers for the community centre once again sits among the ineligible proposals.

Two Caucasian women casually engage and do not seem overly invested in the process. When asked what motivated them to come, they both respond "we came because *John* asked us to last night".⁴⁴ BIA Coordinator, John Beers, participated in all three years of the pilot project. Though his position with the BIA suggests a focus on the commercial well-being of Oakridge, he also expresses a concern for residents suffering from poverty. In an interview, Beers references the many boarded up storefront windows along the Oakridge section of the Danforth, and how there are few accessible and engaging spaces for residents to socialize and connect. Commenting on rejected proposals, Beers states:

⁴¹ Observation recorded in field notes, October 17, 2017

⁴² Observation recorded in field notes, October 17, 2017

⁴³ Observation recorded in field notes, October 17, 2017

⁴⁴ Personal interaction with participant recorded in fieldnotes, October 17, 2017

I personally like the idea of a computer lab in Oakridge Community Centre. [...] we're talking about a city-run community centre, in the middle of a Neighbourhood Improvement Area, that doesn't even have a library. [...] That could have been something that would have been beneficial to the people in that neighbourhood, but that was nixed early on. [...] There were limitations to where things could happen. So, because of that it starts really being about, more than anything, parks.⁴⁵

Despite important projects being placed in the parking lot, Beers collaborated with other participants within these limitations to propose a gazebo-like performance stage in Oakridge Park. Oakridge Park encompasses a tight cluster of playground equipment and trees, and a soccer field.⁴⁶ The performance stage was deemed eligible and supported in the final vote in 2016. However, the limitations of pre-existing approaches were quickly encountered in the process of implementation. Beers explains the difficulty in working with staff of Parks, Forestry & Recreation, to designate the specific place of performance stage in this way:

We met with the engineer about our idea. He kept looking at the front part of the park, which is a very crowded part of the park, as it is. [...] We were kind of thinking just beyond that part, not in the soccer field, kind of in the corner just south of the playground to put this stage structure so people could sit on the grass and watch whatever's happening there. [...] [The engineer] came back to see what we thought of these three ideas that he had planned out and all three of the proposals were in the front part of this very crowded park. [...] In order for you to watch anything going on that stage, it was essentially a combination of concrete you'd be sitting on or a hilly grassy, it didn't make any sense.⁴⁷

Beers continues to explain how the basis for determining what makes sense was established:

He was clear that it wasn't his call it was the Parks and Rec management's call that we couldn't have anything anywhere near the soccer field. So, it was very disappointing for everyone there and one person afterward, he was quiet for the longest time, and then he said "huh, I wish I hadn't filled out that PB survey yet". [...] My feeling about it, really and truly was, it's not worth the \$75,000 to put it there, that front part is so crowded as it is. [...] It seems like the Parks staff and

⁴⁵ Interview with participant, W4I3, March 9, 2018

⁴⁶ Observations recorded in fieldnotes, March 9, 2018

⁴⁷ Interview with participant, W4I3, March 9, 2018

management weren't on board, [...] they are used to doing their own thing, "this is how we run our department and what is this, what do you mean, what is PB?" [...] Some of us were like "oh ok, they do their job" whereas others were a little more "well, no this is still our thing and we still call the shots".⁴⁸

Though some participants reportedly accept the technical rationale underlying capital developments, Beers identifies with others who were under the impression that they should have the final say. With even successful projects continuing to be characterized by a tension of who knows best between residents and city staff, Beers expresses his disappointment in the lack of meaningful communication found in the participatory pilot project:

I was hoping that this learning process where residents would be learning how the city works, would also be a chance for the city staff to learn more from the residents, and make a better relationship. I mean we're talking about the residents that *live* around the park and the people who *maintain* the park. It's *their* park but also the residents' park and there should have been a better relationship overall with that.⁴⁹ [emphasis added]

In explaining his frustration with the pilot project, Beers succinctly points to the shortcomings that resulted from a lack of epistemological curiosity and a willingness to learn on the part of city staff. While the park is legitimately owned and managed by the big C City of Toronto, he strongly believes that the people of the little c city of Toronto who actually use the park are entitled to a decision-making role.

Idea gathering in Rustic

The first observed idea generation session in Rustic took place on a sunny afternoon in September 2016 at Chaminade College School, located in the heart of the homeowner community. Pizza and refreshments from a popular local vendor, Pizza Nova, sit beside a table of informative materials and surveys translated into Italian, Portuguese, Spanish, and Somali. Approximately 12 participants sit in small groups at a few different tables. Whate

⁴⁸ Interview with participant, W4I3, March 9, 2018

⁴⁹ Interview with participant, W4I3, March 9, 2018

shares the stage with Shields and Councillor Di Giorgio who are seated at the front of the room. Whate does most of the talking in presenting the pilot project procedure, eligibility criteria, and examples of proposals from the prior year and Shields occasionally contributes clarifying points.⁵⁰

After the explanation is complete, participants begin to ask questions about how much involvement they can have in the design of their proposals. A youth participant inquires, “who determines what a shaded gathering place or new play structure looks like?”⁵¹ Shields and Whate both explain that the pilot project allows the public to propose ideas and that “other

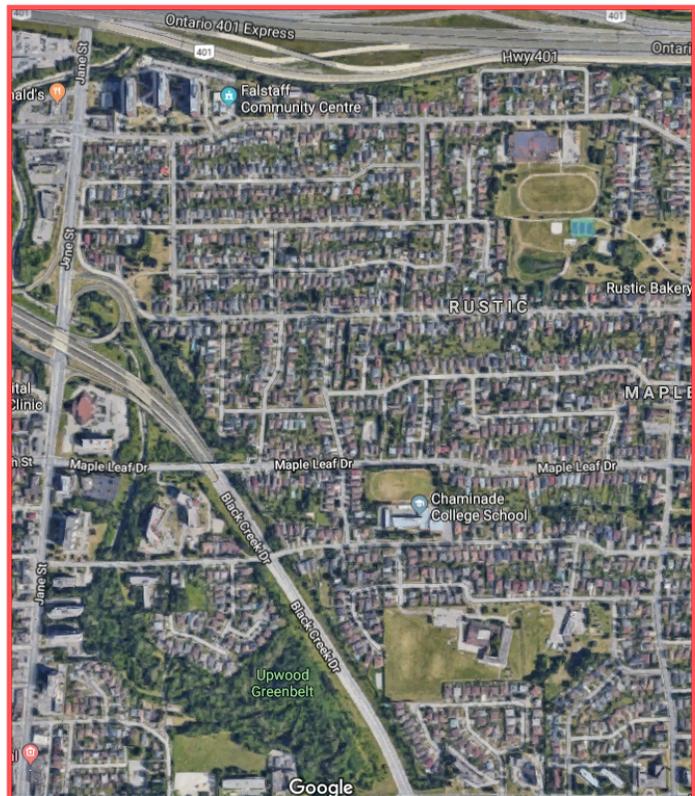


IMAGE 6.4 – RUSTIC – GOOGLE MAPS

processes” need to be changed in order for the public to be involved in the design stage.⁵² Participants seem unsatisfied with the unclear difference between proposing and designing an idea.⁵³ As the facilitating staff struggle to provide an explanation that is both technical and diplomatic, Di Giorgio interjects with what he believes to be a legitimate division of labour and responsibility. “The public doesn’t have any knowledge of costs”, he states, and

⁵⁰ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 10, 2016

⁵¹ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 10, 2016

⁵² Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 10, 2016

⁵³ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 10, 2016

continues to explain that staff are responsible for managing project design with consideration of established procurement and capital development processes.⁵⁴ With these boundaries in mind, participants are encouraged to engage in discussion and contribute ideas about how to improve public space in Rustic. Various flipchart boards are set up much as they were in Oakridge.

There is an obvious familiarity between many of the participants from the Italian community, Di Giorgio, and the city staff. Both of the civically engaged homeowners quoted in the first section (Giacometti and Lustig) are present and actively engaged. The room is completely absent of participants from the Falstaff Towers – who are rather represented by disparaging comments and vague references about gangs and dangerous groups.⁵⁵ Using a map of the NIA (similar to Image 6.4) on display at the session depicting the eligible area, Shields explains how Black Creek Drive is a known “cognitive barrier” that separates the south-western corner of the area with the rest of Rustic.⁵⁶ Therefore, from this initial meeting a number of divisions within Rustic are evident. In order to overcome these divisions, idea gathering sessions in 2016 were held at the Falstaff Community Centre, which neighbours the three high-rise apartments operated by TCHC, and at Brookhaven Public School on the west-side of Black Creek Drive to engage these residents directly – even though this school itself was outside the NIA boundaries.

Idea gathering sessions at the Falstaff Towers are not observed as part of this field research until 2017 at one of seven situated tabling sessions used to gather ideas from residents. Whate stands behind a table set with a map of Rustic, pamphlets on the pilot

⁵⁴ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 10, 2016

⁵⁵ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 10, 2016

⁵⁶ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 10, 2016

project, surveys, and a notepad at the doorway of one of the apartment buildings and attempts to engage residents. Passing-by residents, virtually all of whom are Black, frequently propose investment in the buildings of the TCHC property. Whate references the eligibility criteria and attempts to attract attention to the parks within the homeowner community that are eligible for investment, causing many tentative participants to lose interest and move on. Some residents exhibit cynicism simply upon seeing the City of Toronto logo, and make statements such as “you don’t care about us”, or “the City keeps making promises, but nothing that we need gets done” as they walk by.⁵⁷

A particular Black female resident takes the opportunity to berate Whate as a representative of the big C City, listing the many needs that exist inside the Falstaff Towers and continue to go unserved. Another Black woman, who had chosen to make some proposals, attempts to intervene by encouraging her fellow tenant to think about the pilot project as an opportunity to invest in community improvements for children: “this is a way to express the voice of the people”.⁵⁸ Though the audible frustration of the angry participant does not dissipate, she calls some children over from the nearby playground on the TCHC property. Amidst a heated exchange occurring between the two tenants, Whate attempts to answer questions from the children on how the pilot project works. One of the children points to the nearby playground and proposes “make that playground better”. Whate responds diligently by saying “what does making it better involve?”.⁵⁹ The child responds, “I don’t know, just better!”, popping his hands open with excitement.⁶⁰ The arguing residents reach the end of their interaction and start to shuffle the children along. Whate,

⁵⁷ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 19, 2017

⁵⁸ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 19, 2017

⁵⁹ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 19, 2017

⁶⁰ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 19, 2017

visibly overwhelmed by the chain of interactions, diligently writes down “make the Falstaff playground better” on the list of proposals.⁶¹

After the participants move on, Whate acknowledges the divisions caused by race and racism, how he stands out as a white man in the Falstaff area, and how there is a need to mend relations between the marginalized communities and City-run decision-making.⁶² Whate explains how it is important to get residents of Falstaff out to the proposals development session in order to champion eligible proposals, otherwise their proposals get swept away.⁶³ Whate also acknowledges the limited space for eligible proposals in Rustic and how proposals were beginning to pile-up in some of the more popular parks. As a solution, Whate states he may set up a table in the Ricardo Parkette, the park that is furthest away from the Falstaff buildings. Therefore, while Whate accounts for the long-running issues in the Falstaff area, within the context of the pilot project the balanced distribution of resources in the city-owned parks takes precedence. As Whate begins to shut down the tabling session, a Black woman arrives home from work and expresses interest in participating. This participant suggests making repairs to the unused Falstaff basketball court nearby and also states that she used to use the pool at a closed down school, Nelson A. Boylen Collegiate Institute up the street, but now has to go to an overcrowded facility that is much further away.⁶⁴ Whate writes down her ideas and invites her to come to the proposal development session in October. The participant responds, shaking her head, “I

⁶¹ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 19, 2017

⁶² Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 19, 2017

⁶³ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 19, 2017

⁶⁴ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 19, 2017

can't make those sessions because I'm so tired after work, my mind is like blahhh".⁶⁵ Whate acknowledges this barrier and thanks her for her participation.

In 2016, the designated idea gathering meetings gathered 47 proposals. Of these proposals, 23 were deemed eligible in staff responses. This indicates an increased interest and comprehension on the part of participants in comparison to 2015, in which seven of the 34 proposals were deemed eligible. In 2017, situated tabling gathered the most proposals to date with 57 proposals being gathered. However, only 10 of these proposals were deemed eligible to move on to the final vote, which again indicates a decreased comprehension of rules on the part of participants and a stricter approach to their application on the part of staff. In Rustic, there is also the additional factor of local divides in the community that have developed over the history of this NIA and discourage many members of marginalized communities from even taking interest in participating.

Proposal development in Rustic

This single proposal development meeting in October 2016 was located at the Chaminade College School in the evening. Whate, Shields, and a group of staff from Parks, Forestry & Recreation, and Transportation Services welcome a small turnout of around 12 civically engaged residents. Translated materials, participatory activity sheets, and catering from Pizza Nova flank the entrance. Staff responses to eligible and ineligible proposals are placed in separate clusters.

Proposals for a skateboard park, ice rinks, public wi-fi, and splash pads, are among the wall of ineligible proposals. A proposed water feature for Maple Leaf Park and a proposed kilometre of sidewalk to improve pedestrian safety on Queen's Drive are both

⁶⁵ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 19, 2017.

rejected due to insufficient funds and because neither project could be completed within 18 months. A proposed bake oven is stated to require a pre-existing community partnership. Proposals for a greenhouse and an outdoor kitchen are acknowledged to be capital expenses but require operating expenses such as electricity, water, and maintenance. Games tables, benches, fountains, lighting (with the exception of street lighting serviced by Toronto Hydro), are again among the eligible proposals. Street modifications to address traffic congestion on Queen's Drive, are among the eligible proposals, though staff responses state that some require further community consultation.

References to existing procedures are also used to reject proposals. A proposed fountain for Ricardo Parkette was deemed ineligible because connections to water provision "may exceed" the pilot project budget, and "priority for water bottle-filling stations are larger parks with more assets/sports amenities". A proposal to label plant life in the Upwood Greenbelt, a trail that is on the west side of Black Creek Drive, is rejected on the basis of the ongoing Parks and Trails Wayfinding Strategy. A proposal to install telephones for emergency use are rejected on the basis of the ongoing Emergency Services Wayfinding Plan. Stylistic preferences for unique benches were responded to by staff stating that only standard benches would be permitted.

Proposals were at times deemed "eligible but not appropriate" based on staff interpretations of necessary space and urgency of need. Both a splashpad and a playground in Rustic Park are not recommended based on the size of the park. The issue of necessary space had come up in 2015 with participants proposing soccer posts being told that there was not sufficient space for soccer posts in the entire NIA. Also in 2015, proposed lighting for Rustic Park was recommended to be bundled with other improvements but ended up

being voted on individually because no other proposed improvements were deemed to fit within the space available. Proposed repairs and painting in Rustic Park were responded to by staff stating that the infrastructure in question is “new and not in need of repairs”. These responses continue to indicate how the resident-led nature of the pilot project was mitigated by existing practices and understandings of need.

As participants navigate the eligibility criteria in making proposals for community improvements, Maple Leaf Park, the biggest, city-owned park within the NIA, is an active site of eligible proposals. Among these proposals is a wall to provide a surface for projected films for residents to organize events around. Peterson champions the Maple Leaf Movie Wall proposal on behalf of youth who are not in attendance.⁶⁶ Some participants make claims of imminent vandalism or the need to consider how film viewings would be organized. Nevertheless, the movie wall in Maple Leaf Park receives sufficient support to be included on the ballot. Such a wall is proposed for Rustic Park as well but is deemed ineligible due to necessary space.

With an imaginative range of proposals being funnelled by assessments of eligibility by city staff similar to Oakridge, what makes the sessions in Rustic saliently different is the absence of marginalized socio-economic groups. Many of the participants of the 2016 proposal development session are familiar from the observed idea gathering session. Two Caucasian women who arrive late to the session are the exception. These women explain that they were late because they walked from the other side of Black Creek Drive.⁶⁷ They had proposed a splash pad, which they find among the wall of ineligible

⁶⁶ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 18, 2016

⁶⁷ Personal communication recorded in fieldnotes, October 18th, 2016

proposals. Seeming uncomfortable and frustrated, they leave shortly after.⁶⁸ While residents of the Falstaff buildings are not present, they are again frequently represented by disparaging comments from some homeowners. One participant who champions a mural in Rustic Park, states that a new mural was needed because, “that one that’s on the Falstaff Community Centre does not represent the Rustic community!” and that the bad reputation of Falstaff had to be “overcome by the fuller identity of Rustic”.⁶⁹ This proposed mural is explained by the champion, Giacommeti, to possibly go on a new wall that will also serve as a barrier to a ravine that this participant claims is a site of loitering, drug dealing, and sex work.⁷⁰ These characterizations, along with interviews with some of these homeowner residents, provide strong indications that there is something more than the 1.5 kilometre distance between the Falstaff Towers and the meeting location that discourages the participation of Falstaff residents.

Proposals from Falstaff residents were challenged by barriers of both the official eligibility criteria as well as a racially charged social tension. Because of the multiple idea gathering sessions that took place in 2016, staff responses to proposals made by absent participants are available for viewing. Peterson recalls proposals for Falstaff Park being spoken against by participants. Peterson explains: “some people were like, ‘Oh, I’ve never heard of that park, it doesn’t exist’ but I think the City knows if a park exists. So, there needs to be more people from this part of the community involved so they can get their fair share”.⁷¹ In the case of the pilot project, Peterson puts her trust in the mediating

⁶⁸ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 18, 2016

⁶⁹ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 18, 2016. The mural on Falstaff Community Centre features an elaborate collage of painted images of people who use or help run programs there, who are predominantly Black.

⁷⁰ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 18th, 2016.

⁷¹ Interview with participant, W115, April 19, 2017

determination of the big C City to address divides within the little c city. Mediation is shown to be necessary, as Rustic exhibits divides within the little c city itself can perpetuate inequities. However, the limited meeting opportunities and limited scope of the pilot project does little to offset these divides and largely supports their reproduction.

While Falstaff Park is acknowledged to indeed exist by staff responses, there are indications of difficulty in discerning if it existed as an eligible site for investment. The eligible areas for investment were usually treated as rigid boundaries. However, the case of the Falstaff community reveals an interesting derivation from this rigidity. In all three years of the pilot project, participants proposed investments in the Falstaff Community Centre, Falstaff Park, the Falstaff buildings and their courtyard. The Falstaff buildings were consistently treated as the property of TCHC, but Falstaff Park and the Falstaff Community Centre varied over the duration of the pilot project. In 2015, proposals to expand the community centre and a community greenhouse were responded to taking place on TCHC property. In 2016, however, proposed improvements to the Falstaff Park basketball court, and a rooftop garden on top of Falstaff Community Centre are acknowledged as taking place on city-owned property. A proposal to “repaint interior walls and replace water fountain, etc.” of the Falstaff Community Centre is responded to with a \$50,000 estimate and a note “Community could provide more information on desired upgrades”. These proposals went without being championed and it can only be wondered how these proposals could have been further defined if participants from Falstaff had attended. In 2017, Falstaff Community Centre was closed⁷², with programs being relocated to a number

⁷² According to public announcements: “The project includes roof replacement, renovations to washrooms and change rooms, exterior waterproofing, replacement of exterior stairs, landings and guardrails, replacement of interior floors, interior painting, new cabinets and counter tops in kitchen, improvements to

of other community centres, and this presented an opportunity to “bundle” some participant proposals in with the construction. However, in 2017 proposed improvements of the Falstaff basketball court and the Falstaff Community Centre were deemed to be on TCHC property. This demonstrates significant failures in the pilot project in terms of being either resident-led or an educational intro to the city.

As such, the eligibility criteria perpetuated a focus on parks in the homeowner area, which directly contributes to the history of disappointment and neglect in the Falstaff community. The Youth Outreach Coordinator who works in Falstaff community explains this same concern:

I notice a lot of people are told to come from TCHC, [but] they say they won't even participate because it's not in their area. They won't see it. They'll have to walk to see it. So, the people making the decisions are the people that will be benefiting from the budget and not necessarily the people who need the services. The movie wall is great, the ideas are great, I'm just saying something that I know they would like to see, [...] something like the heating in this building. Like that's TCHC, and that's their issue, but I think that's what their looking more from the fund, like things that are more practical than flashy because there's real needs other than luxuries.⁷³

In Chapter 4, Councillor Di Giorgio is quoted expressing his belief that a centrally driven approach to budgeting scarce resources is a surer way to focus investment on needs while a participatory approach is more likely to focus on wants. Here, the explanation of the Youth Outreach Coordinator points to shortcomings of the centralized decision-making advocated by Councillor Di Giorgio and yet agrees with him on the importance of focusing on needs and not luxuries. The basis of how needs are determined is the contested matter. Rather than a proposal for podcast equipment to increase awareness of positive

the mechanical heating and ventilation systems and upgrades to electrical safety systems including emergency exits” (Falstaff Community Centre to close for renovation project. *Toronto.com*. Aug 15, 2017).

⁷³ Interview W3I4, December 11, 2017

developments in Falstaff, or improvements to the Falstaff Community Centre, which is commonly referred to as “bursting at the seams”, proposals focused on park improvements and ideas of public safety among the homeowner community.

The need for more community space in Rustic is so pressing that in 2015 a proposal was made to renovate a small storage building in Maple Leaf Park into a clubhouse. Staff responses acknowledged that “while the renovation of the building is a capital expense, staff identified that clubhouses owned by the City require a commitment of operating expenses to open, clean, and program the space. Will pass along idea to Parks, Forestry & Recreation”. Once again, existing government programs and protocols negate the imaginative contributions, levels of active involvement, and desired alternative futures sought by participants.

A missed opportunity to engage in resident-leadership and invest in common interests that could help mend the divides of Rustic is found in attempts to restore the community space and infrastructure once enjoyed at the Nelson A. Boylen Collegiate Institute, which sits empty beside Maple Leaf Park.⁷⁴ Ideas on uses of the school infrastructure were brought up by participants at the 2015 participatory sessions but were placed in the parking lot. This is documented in the evaluation conducted by Environics Research after the 2015 year as “confusion about the purpose of the meetings”.⁷⁵ In 2016,

⁷⁴ Nelson A Boylen, operated by the Toronto District School Board, stopped enrolling students as of the 2015 school year and officially closed in June of 2016. The school was formerly a popular community asset with a pool and other recreational infrastructure owned by Toronto District school board. A report on a community consultation states: “The Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB) is interested in buying the Nelson A. Boylen site, community members at the meeting were told. Doorsteps Neighbourhood Services has also shown interest in using the site to expand their programs, and The 12: Ward 12 Community Alliance would like to see the property turned into a community hub. Fannie Sunshine. “Future up for Debate of Nelson A. Boylen Collegiate Institute in Jane Street and Sheppard Area,” Toronto.com, May 16, 2016

⁷⁵ Participatory Budgeting Pilot Evaluation, *Environics*. Prepared for City of Toronto. December 2, 2015. Prepared for the City of Toronto to accompany City Manager’s report to Budget Committee. City of Toronto. December 30, 2015, p. 8.

an interviewed participant from the Italian community, Joe Rizzuto, brings the researcher to Maple Leaf Park to provide a first-hand look at the site of various proposals. Rizzuto explains the Nelson A. Boylen infrastructure as:

There's a great facility, there's a gymnasium in there that could be used, and a swimming pool that could be used in the community and it seems that nobody cares about it, it just sits there and rots. [...] We were hoping that it would be able to be used by the community, where you can have the swimming pool and the gymnasium, different projects. It a lot of pressure away from the Falstaff Community Centre because it is small and they're trying their best to get everything going in there with little room, and it would help everyone out.⁷⁶

In front of the school, a sign displays the words “Never Stop Learning”.⁷⁷ However, similar to the lack of collaboration on improving the Falstaff Community Centre, the limitations around Nelson A. Boylen that are enforced within the pilot project are ironically used to teach participants that they can do very little about infrastructure deficits in their community. Such limitations present missed opportunities to learn from participants about how public funds should be allocated to salient issues in this part of Toronto. Rizzuto expresses an interest in using collaborations in infrastructure development as a way to build trust across generational and racial divides.⁷⁸ Unfortunately, a similar curiosity is not found within approaches of the big C City.

The 2017 proposal development session once again takes place in the Chaminade College School in the evening. A small group of around 6 “usual suspects” are in attendance. An equal number of staff are also in attendance, some of whom are heard being briefed on the fly by Whate.⁷⁹ Stacks of translated materials remain undisturbed due to the absence of those they were intended to include. Whate makes his regular presentation on

⁷⁶ Interview with participant, W2I3, April 17, 2017

⁷⁷ Observation recorded in field notes, April 17, 2017

⁷⁸ Interview with participant, W2I3, April 17, 2017

⁷⁹ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 16, 2017

how the pilot project is progressing and again states that there is no need for championing since only 10 proposals are eligible for the final vote.

Toward the end of the meeting, a note on locations for the final vote prompts a discussion on how to increase awareness and engagement. Due to the Falstaff Community Centre being under construction, locations that were slightly outside the NIA would be used and some participants believe that this will lead to accessibility issues and a decreased turnout.⁸⁰ The Councillor's Assistant, sitting in as Di Giorgio's proxy, calls out "are we marketing that there will be cake?!"⁸¹ While being well-intentioned, it seems obvious that more than the near universal enjoyment of cake would be necessary to make participation worthwhile in the eyes of otherwise non-participating residents.

Clear examples of how the pilot project could have better supported resident-led decision-making are found throughout participant proposals and staff responses. A desire among residents for a more substantive discussion on infrastructure needs is evidenced by creative and critical proposals. Due to pressing needs in Rustic, many proposals were outside of the eligible scope of the pilot project, but experiential knowledge of needs continued to be challenged within the eligibility criteria as well. Many proposals were deemed ineligible simply because of notions of necessary space. Residents sought to make additions to public space with proposals such as an outdoor kitchens, green houses, and repurposed storage buildings. These proposals were acknowledged to be capital but were invalidated because of the way the proposal was understood in relation to conceptions of operational needs. Once again, one can only wonder how the process would have developed trust and momentum if the capital element of a project was built with the

⁸⁰ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 16, 2017

⁸¹ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 16, 2017

participatory funds available and the other elements were addressed through future work, as was done with the movie wall in Maple Leaf Park. Due to the unique nature of the movie wall, operational expenses and additional studies were required in addition to increased capital costs, which indicates continued inconsistencies in openness.⁸² This again reveals how the narrow application of the eligibility criteria and a centrally organized use of public funds reproduced barriers to a more collaborative potential.

Idea gathering in Ward 33

The observed idea generation meeting in Ward 33 took place in September 2016 at the Parkway Forest Community Centre on an overcast afternoon. The meeting space in this new community centre is filled with many similar features to those in other areas, including worksheets, flipcharts, translated instruction material, surveys, as well as snacks and beverages. What makes this meeting stand out among the other locations is the central role of the Councillor who stands near the flipchart boards engaging participants in an excited and encouraging fashion. Carroll speaks to her minimized role as that of a “facilitator” between residents and City operations.⁸³ Carroll states that building momentum and avoiding disappointment requires that “unfeasible projects shouldn’t be on the ballot”.⁸⁴ Staff from the City Manager’s Office are present, but the Councillor naturally attracts the majority of attention and questions.

⁸² Similar to Oakridge, even within the realm of eligible proposals, implementation issues occurred, and estimated prices changed. Continued studies and consultation have resulted in a new location for a wall with mounting and a projector pedestal for \$60,000. While the wall itself was eligible, a projector needs to be borrowed from the city, films can only be shown if multiple permits are attained and paid for, and staff time is necessary. Prior to being built, an inflatable projection surface was borrowed from the city on the occasion of movie screenings. This is an example of how the pilot project did not create a less onerous entry point for residents nor produce solely capital projects.

⁸³ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 17, 2016,

⁸⁴ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 17, 2016

The observed idea gathering session in 2016 was one of three that took place around the ward. Because of the larger catchment area, participants are less likely to know each other, with much of the 20 residents observed participating doing so as individuals. Some participants do engage in small clusters of

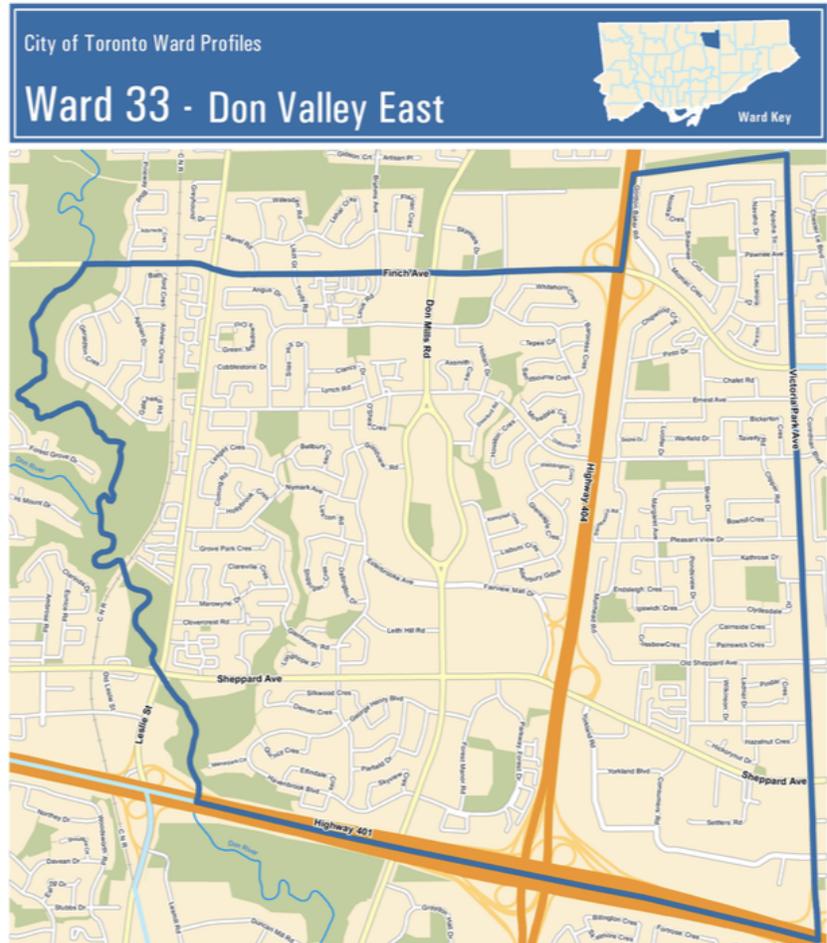


IMAGE 6.5 – WARD 33 – CITY OF TORONTO WARD PROFILES

conversation with each other, as do staff. Many participants continue to arrive throughout the session. Along with staff from the City Manager’s Office, the Councillor’s Constituency Assistant is present to help engage participants. The Councillor’s staff mentions that many ideas are also being proposed online.⁸⁵ Though this was the only observed 2016 idea gathering session in Ward 33, there is clear indication of an increased level of investment in the participatory process on the part of the Councillor and her staff.

In September 2017, two concurrent afternoon tabling sessions take place at the Parkway Forest Community Centre and the Fairview Library as part of the seven that will

⁸⁵ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 17, 2016

occur. At the library, Whate and Carroll are both found engaging with participants individually. Carroll engages in a drawn-out discussion with a participant, Chiu, attempting to address an unpaved portion of bike path in his neighbourhood. Between interactions with participants, Whate quickly briefs a young staff volunteer who arrives and does not appear familiar with the purpose of the session.⁸⁶ The library appears to be utilized by a diverse range of residents and many of these library users show interest in the tabling session, though not all make proposals. Some passers-by state they are not from the ward but are encouraged by tabling volunteers to give their thoughts on what capital improvements they think are necessary in the area anyway.⁸⁷ Whate does much of the engaging, inviting participants to propose ideas and complete a short survey afterwards. The young staff volunteer, seeming reluctant, was not observed to engage with any participants. After concluding her discussion with Chiu, Carroll continues to engage residents in a jovial fashion “we’re doing something fun today, we’re spending money!”⁸⁸ Carroll checks her watch, stating that she intends to spend half her time at this tabling session and half her time at Parkway Forest Community Centre.⁸⁹

At the Parkway Forest Community Centre, which is a short walk away from the library, Carroll’s Constituency Assistant and a small team of civically engaged volunteers from the Ward 33 steering committee attempt to engage impromptu participants. Many of those stopping to participate express that they are not from the area or are not able to come up with an idea with the time they have available. Whenever technical details about eligibility are requested, the Constituency Assistant is called over by the supporting

⁸⁶ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 23, 2017

⁸⁷ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 23, 2017

⁸⁸ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 23, 2017

⁸⁹ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 23, 2017

volunteers. While this table is not observed to engage a large number of residents, it does provide the opportunity for an East Indian family, led by the excited engagement of their child, to propose some ideas.⁹⁰ Carroll arrives at this tabling session to review the proposals gathered so far and thanks her assistant and volunteer team for helping to engage participants. Carroll is able to reinforce the engagement effort as more residents pass by, calling out “we’re doing something fun today!” with charismatic confidence.⁹¹

In 2016, designated meetings gathered 58 distinct proposals, 19 of which were deemed to be in fitting with the eligibility criteria. This represents an increase from 2015, which gathered and responded to 47 distinct proposals, 9 of which were deemed eligible. In 2017, 78 distinct ideas were gathered at tabling sessions, again the highest yet, with 17 being deemed eligible. Like the other areas, tabling sessions do not seem to be an effective way to pass on the idea of participatory budgeting and does not lead to more eligible proposals being submitted by participants. Once the idea of participatory budgeting is in public circulation, as suggested by increases in 2016, participants are able to develop ideas to propose at idea gathering meetings. Though the situated tabling sessions in Ward 33 were observed to feature many of the shortcomings noted in the other pilot testing areas, the Councillor’s support for the project will continue to have motivational effects on level engagement among residents.

Proposal development in Ward 33

The proposal development session in October 2016 takes place in Parkway Forest Community Centre in the evening. A large room is necessary to accommodate the approximately 50 participants in attendance who represent a, mostly adult but otherwise

⁹⁰ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 23, 2017

⁹¹ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, September 23, 2017

diverse, range of residents in the area. Divisional staff are present, similar to other meetings, complemented by the Councillor's staff and members of the Ward 33 steering committee. Before the session begins, the availability of interpretation services in Mandarin and Arabic is announced.⁹² As with sessions in other areas, eligible and ineligible proposals are placed separately. While the room is filling up, some participants proactively engage with staff about how their proposals were misunderstood and do not belong on the ineligible wall.

Similar to prior meetings in Ward 33, Carroll sets the tone of the room with an opening speech. Focusing on the knowledge that participants do have, Carroll states “people can handle their own tax money and make their neighbourhood better [because] you know what shape your sidewalks are in!”⁹³ The Councillor briefly informs participants about how participatory budgeting is a “matter of habit” in some cities of the United States and Brazil.⁹⁴ Carroll encourages participants to develop a “reasonable list” of proposals for the final ballot and that participants should encourage their neighbours to participate.⁹⁵ As a way of demonstrating how participants can succeed, Carroll calls a participant named Walter to the front of the room to share his experience of proposing outdoor fitness equipment in 2015 in Bellbury Park. Walter has a presentation prepared and represents the growing Spanish community in Ward 33.⁹⁶ He explains that he had not thought of himself as a civically engaged person that could campaign for an idea and that he developed these qualities as a champion for the Bellbury fitness equipment. After applause, Whate takes

⁹² Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 26, 2016

⁹³ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 26, 2016

⁹⁴ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 26, 2016

⁹⁵ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 26, 2016

⁹⁶ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 26, 2016

the stage to present updates on how the pilot project has proceeded in Ward 33 and how participants will advocate for proposals this evening.

Among the ideas on the ineligible wall, ideas that are both unique and similar to other areas are found. Yoga programs and activities for seniors are listed as being programs that require operational expenses. Proposals to acquire more parkland, an artificial fishing pond, a pedestrian bridge over Sheppard Avenue, are all deemed to be beyond the scope of the pilot project for reasons of cost and the need for further study. A proposal for “Solar Power at Parkway Forest Community Centre” is acknowledged as being a capital project but is responded to with “more information necessary”. Similar to the NIAs, proposals for computers in a community centre, a grocery store, community gardens, more public washrooms, water features, swimming pools, and a new tennis court are deemed to require more funds than are available. Infrastructure for ice rinks is proposed but largely rejected due to the existing process of managing ice rinks.

Among the eligible ideas are familiar proposals such as improved lighting (with the exception of streetlights managed by Toronto Hydro), new fountains in locations to be determined by staff, playgrounds, a fitness running track, benches, gazebos, and games tables. Proposals for curb cuts at specific locations to increase accessibility, a bike storage locker, and widening 100 meters of sidewalk on Don Mills Road are also among the eligible proposals.

A familiar level of dialogue is also found in the staff responses to proposals and negotiations of eligibility. Lombardi, who spoke on behalf of her fellow condo tenants, argues that her proposal for a garden had been misunderstood as being proposed for an area

of sidewalk.⁹⁷ Taking her proposal from the ineligible wall, she insists that the proposal is for a “butterfly garden” to be built on an un-kept portion of grass at a street corner she and her fellow condo tenants hope to improve.⁹⁸ After an exchange with Whate, Lombardi’s proposal is added to the eligible list and Lombardi joins the line of presenting champions.⁹⁹ It is unique that Lombardi was able to propose what was essentially a community garden. This is due to the impression that this condo community would tend to the necessary maintenance.¹⁰⁰

Also making a presentation is an older, male participant who imparts of longwinded justification for his proposal for park benches and a public washroom. Carroll intervenes to justify the eligibility criteria and recommend some other processes through which this proposal can be made.¹⁰¹ Therefore, participants who wish to speak are welcomed to speak, but coordinated around the rough guide provided by eligibility criteria and established processes. Limitations to dialogue also emerge from established processes, specifically regarding proposals to modify streets and control traffic. Due to the larger area of Ward 33, many streets and intersections are the object of participant proposals. Proposed bike lanes are rejected on the basis of prioritizing the 10-year Cycling Network Plan. A proposed stop sign in an area of concern is responded to as requiring standardized studies by Transportation Services, as are proposals for road widening. Attempts to calm traffic and increase pedestrian safety are similarly deemed ineligible due to the need for further research. This was the case even for a proposal that was modified during a proposal

⁹⁷ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 26, 2016

⁹⁸ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 26, 2016

⁹⁹ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 26, 2016

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2019

¹⁰¹ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 26, 2016

development session in 2015 to install a solar powered speedometer to inform drivers of how fast they are going. Similarly, proposals for road repairs to Sheppard Avenue in 2015 were responded to as not being necessary. These limitations prioritize the technical understanding of traffic control and convey the message that, though residents may walk on them every day, the streets are best understood and managed from the perspective of the big C City.

Returning to a focus on parks, staff judgement continued to limit dialogue over the use of public funds. Proposals for a new tennis court in Godstone Park and a playground in Dallington Park were deemed ineligible based on conceptions of necessary space. Proposals for new playgrounds were commonly approved and estimated to cost the entire \$250,000 available. This demonstrates the working assumptions, entrenched as a common sense of capital asset development, which staff proceed with in responding to proposals. Dimas, who made proposals that were approved in 2015, points to limitations to collaborative decision-making:

The response to my [street beautification] project from the City was generally a fairly good one, they told me how much the project would cost and that it was viable to do. So that was a positive thing. But the fact that there was no breakdown of the amount that they said it would cost was something that was perplexing to me. The greatness of the project and how big it was going to be was maybe not the same way I saw it in my mind. So, there was a bit of a disconnect between what the City saw as the project and what I saw as the project and there was no sort of communication about that before the decision was made that it was \$60,000.¹⁰²

Dimas points to how increased dedication to a dialogical exchange is needed for participants to be able to define what is meant by a proposal. With a more dialogical approach to proposal development, costs could be modified and accomplish a better

¹⁰² Interview with participant, W3I3-W4, April 9, 2018

alignment of visions between staff and residents. However, these block amounts serving as project estimates were a mainstay of the pilot project.

Dimas helped to chair the Ward 33 steering committee, in which participants recruited by the Councillor's office could propose ways to improve the pilot project. Dimas had suggested collaborating with students from Seneca College to design promotional materials for eligible proposals. Dimas speaks about the minimal difference that the steering committee was able to make on how the pilot project proceeded:

We had a staff member [Whate,] sit on our steering committee and sometimes there was a question mark as to what their involvement was on the steering committee. On one hand we wanted to be able to say to them as the Ward 33 steering committee what we wanted but on the other hand they would say "oh no we can't do this" or "we're doing this" like there was sort of a disconnect. They would have their own outreach strategy and then we had another outreach strategy within the community. The Seneca students wanted to print off stuff for an outreach strategy and then the City was like "oh well we have our outreach strategy, but you can still do it on your own". It would be interesting to see on the steering committee next year if there was a little bit more power with outreach strategy in the community. [...] It wasn't like "well no you can't be involved" but where is the borderline? Why are we a steering committee if we can't have control over our outreach strategy?¹⁰³

Dimas' experience demonstrates how the inclusion of an area-specific steering committee did little to address prevailing disconnections between participants and the pilot project. Even with a steering committee endorsed by a leading Councillor that included the staff lead of the pilot project, highly involved participants were not able to counter the vision of the pilot project that existed within the big C City.

The 2017 proposal development session is, again, animated and well-attended. A group of approximately 40 attends this evening session. A large number of staff from Planning, Economic Development, Transportation Services and the City Manager's Office are in attendance. The Councillor's Assistant and volunteers are more engaging than the

¹⁰³ Interview with participant, W3I3, December 4, 2017

divisional staff.¹⁰⁴ In speaking with these staff about their view and expectation of the process, there is a common impression among staff that the \$250,000 being discussed does not justify the work necessary to support the process.¹⁰⁵

Whate conducts his regular presentation and encourages all participants to fill out the survey. He discusses the eligibility criteria and the need to work under these terms for the pilot project but again invites criticism of the criteria. Whate also states openly that price estimates may change, or proposals may be eliminated if they are found to not conform with eligibility criteria. Whate encourages the participants present to review all eligible proposals and champion them if they agree with them in order to get them on the ballot.¹⁰⁶ Championing is explained to involve a commitment to promote the project in collaboration with the Seneca students. One participant asks if it is too late to make a proposal, Whate states that the time has passed but the participant should come and talk with him.¹⁰⁷

On the ineligible wall sit creative and reoccurring proposals such as more programming, an animal rescue centre, more library space, a small artificial beach, surveillance cameras in Parkway Forest, water parks, community gardens, a greenhouse, a community oven, customized hedging, new pathways, and free wi-fi at community centers. Proposals for signage on trails are rejected based on the developing Parks and Trails Wayfinding Strategy, and bike lanes and bike paths are required to be identified in the Cycling Network Plan. Roadway widenings and physical improvements to increase safety and improve drainage are responded to as requiring long-term studies to be done in

¹⁰⁴ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 12, 2017

¹⁰⁵ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 12, 2017

¹⁰⁶ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 12, 2017

¹⁰⁷ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 12, 2017

coordination with other existing plans. Proposals for Dallington Park that are otherwise eligible such as curb cuts, pathways, and games tables are responded to as ineligible due to a current review of the park under “the larger capital plan” and that proposed improvements “may be able to be incorporated”.

The eligible proposals include benches, new lighting in parks, murals, recreation improvements to Shawnee Park, and a new playground and new paint for the splashpad in Bellbury Park. Many of the eligible proposals, including one for new trees in the ward, state that exact locations will be determined by staff.

In comparison to staff responses in 2015 and 2016, responses to proposals in 2017 provide an impression of how staff conduct has shifted over the duration of the project. A 2017 proposal to widen sidewalks along Sheppard Ave is responded as questionably eligible despite sidewalk widening proposals made for the corner on Don Mills being deemed as eligible in 2016. Horticultural displays and landscaping are responded to as requiring operating expenses and continued maintenance, rather than engaging in a dialogue over what can be done with the existing capital funds as was done in 2016. Similar to Oakridge, staff responses to proposals would occasionally suggest a new location for participant consideration.¹⁰⁸ However, this level of proactive negotiation was not present in responses to 2017 proposals such as a running track in Clysdale Park and Pinto Park and a soccer field in Dallington Park, which were responded to as “more information required”. This indicates a decreased level of engagement on the part of responding staff in the active dialogue with participants necessary to support a collaborative process.

¹⁰⁸ Multi-use sports pads proposed for Havenbrook Park and Parkway Forest Park in 2015 were “adjusted” to Lescon Park and Dallington Park, which are significantly further north on the other side of Sheppard Avenue. This relocation was also done for the proposed outdoor exercise equipment, originally recommended for Lescon Park or Dallington Park but adjusted to Bellbury Park.

Curb cuts in Shawnee Park and Linus Park to address accessibility needs are among the eligible proposals. However, the championing of these proposals brings about an unprecedented case of active staff involvement in the deliberative process, where this participation had hitherto generally been limited to answering the occasional question. As participants prepare to champion their proposals, a staff member of Transportation Services dramatically takes the stage to announce the traffic risks that arise from diffusely located sidewalk entry and exit points.¹⁰⁹ This staff from Transportation Services suggests that statistics and liability for public safety should guide decision-making rather the views of pedestrians.¹¹⁰ Participants nevertheless proceeded to champion the curb cuts, one of which is supported in the final vote of 2017 similar to 2016. Evidently, participants felt confident in their ability, and that of their neighbours, to look both ways before crossing the street, and to see needs in their community through their own eyes and not through statistics and liability.

Perhaps due to the success of outdoor fitness equipment in Bellbury Park in 2015, proposals for similar installations for a number of parks are among the eligible proposals in 2017. The level of dialogue that was supported by the pilot project is indicated by the experience of Kehmikar, who proposed an underserved neighbourhood predominately populated by seniors. Kehmikar explains her experience at the 2017 proposal development session after making her proposals for fitness equipment specifically for seniors in this way:

I spoke to Rich Whate at the last meeting and he had these little files showing the Bellbury Park project. So, I said Rich, be aware, we are seniors, and this isn't going to work. And so, we spoke very freely and he's a very caring person too. [...] In the end, he said this is just an example of something. But I don't know what they're

¹⁰⁹ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 12, 2017

¹¹⁰ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, October 12, 2017

going to put. [...] You need to make sure that the equipment that you have is useful to the society that lives here. And like I said, all the people here are seniors.¹¹¹

Kehmikar had proposed a set of devices with moving parts, similar to an elliptical machine, that could be accessed by people with mobility issues, rather than the stationary frameworks that required the strength and agility of a fit and able-bodied person. Kehmikar's proposal also included specific surfacing that would be more accessible to seniors.

Accessibility improvements for the Bellbury Park fitness equipment was also proposed and the staff response stated an uncertainty in terms of timeline, costs, and need. While a critical dialogue took place about the initial staff response to her proposal, Kehmikar remains unsure if this dialogue would have the desired outcome:

Do they listen? If they have their own mandate and say their mandate is, say for example, only to have fixed equipment, how will that help seniors is my question. [...] If stationary equipment is their goal, what kind of stationary equipment do they have for seniors, I have no idea. Seniors have to have something that's going to give them mobility. Then don't do it, then I'd rather that they just don't do it, don't fool people into thinking that.¹¹²

Kehmikar sees herself to be contesting practices that follow the established sense of mandate and is skeptical whether the participatory process is sufficient to enable residents to redirect this practice. Kehmikar's proposal would receive support in the final vote. After a long period of uncertainty, outdoor fitness equipment without moving parts but specifically designed for seniors has been installed.¹¹³ This indicates, once again, how the

¹¹¹ Interview with participant, W311, December 8, 2017

¹¹² Interview with participant, W311, December 8, 2017

¹¹³ The successful installation of this equipment was covered in local news under the headline A Playground for Seniors. City News. Toronto. July 2019. <<https://toronto.citynews.ca/video/2019/07/11/a-playground-for-seniors/>>

pilot did allow for a degree of resident-led decision-making and creativity to address local needs, albeit within common sense limitations of capital asset planning.

Another participant in the 2017 year, Chiu, provides insight into his experience using the pilot project to address a long-running concern of an unpaved portion of bike path. Chiu's proposal had been responded to by staff citing complications of drainage and the need for ongoing studies to determine the necessary design and materials. However, the pilot project brought focus to this proposal and provides an explanation for why it can't be implemented, unlike the established channels Chiu had resorted to initially. Despite the rejection of his proposal, Chiu reports that the pilot project did help him move forward with the project:

I think that the PB processes is good in that you have this staff person who is actually on top of things and looking into what was proposed, especially if it's something substantial. It's not a complaint about a map, you're just saying this section of the map should be built, what do the city staff really have to say about it? So, I think the responsiveness is a benefit of the PB process [...] Basically, participants deserve a reasonable explanation as to the development in their proposal including any relevant comments from city staff that would allow them to continue to engage. [...] now I know that they have an issue with such and such, I can follow up with that, I can suggest something, I can request a meeting with city staff to see about that issue. So, I would say that that's enough disclosure such that you're not concealing something that could potentially empower the citizen to continue to be engaged.¹¹⁴

In this openness to learning from urban planning expert perspectives, Chiu represents the "improved citizen" (Lerner 2010; Lerner and Schugurensky 2005; Schugurensky 2006). Having learned from staff feedback, in conjunction with his professional experience as an engineer, Chiu gained insight on the specific factors that make up a level of complexity not commonly known by residents. Chiu also represents a will for persistent, critical intervention in order to test the accuracy of the feedback he is provided. Rather than simply

¹¹⁴ Interview with participant, W3I2, December 9, 2017

being satisfied that the paving of the path cannot be done at this time, Chiu maintains his critical lens and seeks to use it. Chiu explains that “Whate suggested I get [staff] out and I will get them out and I will go out with them and look at the drainage and I’ll say ok what do you think of this and is it as bad as you think it is [...] So I think next year, if something can be done and there is PB, I will probably propose something”.¹¹⁵ While Chiu’s approach to learning about how the city works and his continued engagement as a critical resident spells out an ideal participant path, this continued engagement happens within the regular realm of resident-staff interaction rather than within a participatory process. Despite the considerable amount of work that this simple issue has required of him, Chiu will continue to explore how the pure technique (Hummel 2006) expressed by the bike path map can be reclaimed by the humans who use it.

Based on these experiences, the pilot project in Ward 33 offered a new level of involvement for residents seeking to propose new community improvements and get more informative responses to such requests. Dimas, who pointed to prevailing “disconnects” between participants and staff, states that this pilot project was an intermediary step “smack dab in the middle” of pre-existing procedures and direct resident-led decision-making.¹¹⁶ Dimas elaborates on what she sees as a limited capacity for input and leadership that diminishes the participatory nature of the pilot project in relation to how the City typically works:

[Whate] had to sort of ask other people and it just kind of created a funny atmosphere [...] It creates the idea that this is a City of Toronto Project, or a Shelley Carroll project, but it’s like you’re tokening the community, and saying “oh yes, but you’re involved”, which is the same way it works with planning in all of

¹¹⁵ Interview with participant, W3I2, December 9, 2017

¹¹⁶ Interview with participant, W3I3-W4, April 9, 2018

Toronto. They have all these consultations, but yet, developers do what they want to do at the end of the day.¹¹⁷

Dimas' explanation speaks directly to the ingenuous curiosity that is evidenced in a participatory process that prioritizes pre-existing understandings of land-use and capital asset planning. Despite the concentrated dialogue between residents and local government, prevailing logics interfered with a more substantial and consequential process of resident-led decision-making.

Due to a unique level of engagement, the polls for the final vote in Ward 33 were included in field research in 2017. The polls are visited by unexpected participants as well as intentional participants who state they are also trying to mobilize the vote.¹¹⁸ After the polls close, a final vote announcement takes place at the Oriole Community Centre. A small group of participants gather to see which proposals would be implemented. Again, some participants have decided to attend because of the endorsement by their neighbours, with one participant stating that “a lady passing out flyers notified me, I wouldn't have come otherwise”.¹¹⁹ Clearly there is a distinct buzz about participatory budgeting in Ward 33.

Based on the 2016 turnout of 653 residents participating in the vote on the final project, Elections Toronto was required to count the ballots of the final vote in Ward 33.¹²⁰ Between 2015 and 2016, turnout had almost doubled from 384 votes to 653, indicating some considerable momentum and a bigger increase than in the NIAs, despite the considerably larger number of eligible voters. Where 653 voters represent 1.2% of the 2016 eligible population in Ward 33, Rustic and Oakridge both only included .5% to .7% in their

¹¹⁷ Interview with participant, W3I3-W4, April 9, 2018

¹¹⁸ Observation recorded in field notes, December 9, 2017

¹¹⁹ Personal interaction with participant, field notes, December 9, 2017

¹²⁰ Toronto's Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto Budget Committee, January 31, 2019, p 8

respective years of highest turnout. The increase between 2015 and 2016 was 70% in Ward 33, where the NIA voter turnouts maintained or decreased in the latter two years. Ward 33 voter turnout in 2017 was actually a steep decline from 2016, with only 277 residents participating. This is the lowest turnout of all three years in Ward 33 but was still more than the 53 and 45 votes in Rustic and Oakridge respectively.

After the final vote is announced, a cake is presented to entice a celebratory mood. However, neither the City Manager's staff nor the Councillor's staff has remembered to bring forks and knives in order to consume the cake.¹²¹ This is an all too salient analogy for an invitation for resident-led decision-making that is not equipped to enable the practical enjoyment of this idea. The above demonstrated shortcomings in fulfilling the claims on resident-led decision, similarly, created an impression of increased participation while obstructing more substantive outcomes. In the 2017 final vote meeting, Whate shares that "it's not the numbers that matter, it's the new faces realizing the impact they can have on this city that counts".¹²² While the pilot project did allow for an increased dialogue between staff and residents, the pilot project appears to be, at most, only intermittently effective in enabling residents to make the impact they are seeking to have on their communities.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated how the crucial stages of idea gathering and proposal development played out in each pilot testing area. At these points in the pilot project, participants drawing proposals from their experiential knowledge of needs met with staff drawing responses from their knowledge on established planning practice. Across all areas,

¹²¹ Personal interaction with participant, field notes, December 9, 2017

¹²² Quoted from fieldnotes, December 9, 2017

participants sought to address specific problems in the pursuit of a more desirable future for their communities. However, what is equally evident is that the efforts of participants were corralled by hegemonic claims to common sense that reinforced rationalized limitations to resident involvement. As a rethinking of these limitations underlies the call for participatory budgeting, the pilot project represents an instance of *trasformismo*, riddled with the paradoxes of the participation age (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016).

A new level of resident involvement did indeed take place, with new conversations taking place among residents regarding community improvements directly allocating public funds. Beyond paved trails, shade structures, water fountains, and benches, nuanced projects such as the mural and digital display board at the entrance of Teesdale Place in Oakridge, the movie wall in Maple Leaf Park in Rustic, and a fitness park for seniors in a “neglected”¹²³ Ward 33 neighbourhood demonstrate the value that can emerge from participatory projects. However, these glimmers of collaborative potential took place within limited range of decision-making. Kehmika’s experience proposing fitness equipment for seniors demonstrates the tacit understandings embedded in typical planning decisions that nonetheless set specific limitations to proposal eligibility. It is important to note that the mural and movie wall required considerable work, and funds, outside of the pilot project, and this only begs the question of why the eligibility criteria was enforced so rigidly in responses to other proposals.

Along with those prior, this chapter demonstrates how the goal of resident-led decision-making was significantly diminished by prevailing priorities of existing planning practices. This can partially be attributed to the low amount of funds allotted to the pilot

¹²³ Interview with participant, W311, December 8, 2017

project in terms of both funds for proposals and staff assigned to support the pilot project. Whate, acting as an organic intellectual seeking to rebuild trust and communication between the residential masses and the decision-making capacity of the municipal government, was charged with an unmanageable level of tasks; Whate was observed orientating under prepared staff, working with a diverse range of participants, and maintaining an upbeat and engaging manner. Limited staff capacity could also explain the noted inconsistencies and lack of out-of-the-box thinking found in staff feedback. Furthermore, limitations of scope consistently inhibited resident proposals, from repurposing a closed school to operational dollars for new programs. These limitations were felt across all areas but were most notable in the NIAs that are experiencing decreasing publicly available infrastructure and increasing levels of poverty. In the case of Rustic, a divided physical and social terrain created additional barriers to involvement of those most in need. In many ways, the pilot project was simply not equipped to address the most pressing issues in these communities.

While these sheer limitations in resources must be acknowledged, a comprehensive explanation for the broader limitations experienced in the pilot project, and the minimal resources allotted to it, is found in the influence of established ways of knowing embedded in the planning process (MacCallum 2016). These established ways of knowing were found to largely replace the resident-led nature of the pilot project by undermining the experiential knowledge that participants drew from in making proposals on how to improve their community. Much like Whate's invitation for criticism of the eligibility criteria, this participatory strategy does not explicitly limit involvement but rather accommodates interventions within the contours of established claims to common sense.

A prevailing power relationship emerging from these common sense claims is found in how proposals were often limited not by a strict reading of the eligibility criteria but by staff judgement based on regular processes, protocols, and practices. Conceptions of necessary space, best use of available funds, and the unclear definition of “capital expense” reinforced limitations to resident participation. Proposals for community gardens, bake ovens, and traffic studies were deemed to be insufficiently informed on actual needs in the community. Common requests for bike paths, pathway signage, and emergency phones were countered by official planning processes. Proposals for computers and new equipment in Oakridge were deemed ineligible despite their direct connection to pressing needs in this area. Discretion, rather than strict liability, also reproduced unequal advantages that the pilot project was meant to flatten with a “butterfly garden” in Ward 33 being deemed eligible, unlike all other such requests, due to the perceived responsible nature of a condo community. Again, these limitations were experienced in all pilot testing areas but were most notable in NIAs residents seek to enrich the scarce public infrastructure in their area. At times, a will to support and advise participant proposals is found in staff responses. However, these glimmers of possible collaboration were again overshadowed by an increasing trend of bluntly imposed staff judgement expressing an administrative domination and prevalence of pure technique within a nominally participatory initiative (Davies 2014; Hummel 2006).

Staff responses were packaged as objective information about what can and cannot be done in certain places within the limitations of the pilot project. The pilot project was designed with aspirations of an introduction to how the City works leading to improved citizens becoming experts in “good participation”. However, analysis of staff responses

reveals a confusing inconsistency and opaqueness in how proposals were assessed, which interfered with any attempt to provide coherent lessons on how the City works. A lack of in-depth engagement over the price and scale of proposals, as mentioned by Dimas, abandoned opportunities to modify price estimates and attempt a better alignment of views between the little c city and the big C City. Therefore, much like communicative planning and nominally participatory initiatives covered by critical scholarship, these initiatives may increase the communicative nature of government but they stop significantly short of new levels of resident empowerment (Abram 2000; Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016a; Huxley and Yiftachel 2000; MacCallum 2016). Rather, the main lesson emerging from the pilot project was that the ability of residents to have an impact on their community is contingent on alignment with big C City ways of knowing, and not the other way around.

That mistakes and inconsistencies in price and timeline estimates are found to occur demonstrates that even the traditional intellectuals of the big C City are engaged in an ongoing process of figuring out how to approach a desirable future. This only further emphasizes the importance of engaging more collaboratively in the spirit of epistemological curiosity as part of a meaningful participatory process. In so doing, the project emerging from the pilot project would have been more aligned with residents' known needs and built more momentum for the pilot project. Translated materials, situated tabling, and offers of locally sourced pizza and cake were found to pale in comparison to the self-driven residents and how word of mouth inspired participation in each area. Increased political support in Ward 33 is shown to have notable results in terms of both number of participants and the will to lead from the little c city perspective. While Councillor Carroll has been shown to be complicit in using the pilot project as an "intro to

the City”, the call for participation was taken up by organic intellectuals among her constituents vying for a more desirable future.

In response to this blurry array of limitations reproducing a sense of exclusion, participants variably accepted this judgement, gave up due to frustration, or continued to push their point. Some participants were no doubt convinced of the reasoning provided by staff. However, others continued to demand that the perspective of residents must be taken more seriously. Therefore, while the pilot project may have attempted to co-opt the meaning of participation with a less empowering process, many participants across these areas appear to maintain their critical perspective on the need for increased resident involvement. While higher levels of formal education better equipped some Ward 33 participants to engage with confidence, Cain in Oakridge demonstrates how ambitious counter-conception of common sense can be developed through experience in civic engagement and a drive to improve community.

These identified shortcomings beg the question of whether or not an effective experiment in resident-led decision-making can even be said to have taken place. However imperfect, this pilot project is now part of the history of Toronto. How this historical moment is being consolidated will be demonstrated in the following chapter on pilot project evaluation.

Chapter 7 - Evaluating the place of the resident in Toronto: A post-pilot project perspective on the prospects of participatory practice

This chapter will review how the pilot project was evaluated to demonstrate how it informs future action. Evaluation took place in many forms, in the attentive eye of the leading councillor, under the analytical oversight of senior staff, and in the hearts and minds of participants. In each of these forms of evaluation, how well the pilot project served its purpose and how it might better do so in the future provide telling indications of what particular changes participatory budgeting is understood to call for.

This chapter examines different actors' evaluation of the pilot project. The first section will review Councillor Carroll's own evaluation of the pilot project that she largely helped initiate. This section will demonstrate the limited capacity of representative democracy to provide the political support necessary to counter the structural influence of hegemonic forms of common sense. The second section will demonstrate the impact of this structural influence by reviewing the official evaluation of the pilot project. As the capstone piece of the pilot project, the official evaluation is a crucial step in the process of *transformismo*. In the process of evaluation, the idea of participation, having transitioned into practice in the pilot project, is transitioned back into the process of ideation of how participation ought to be done going forward. The official evaluation consolidates the practicality of participation and, if it continues, how it should be integrated into the existing arrangements of government. The third section will continue to illustrate how practical forms of participation are being developed among staff seeking to better engage with what residents think. The continuing search for new ways to build engagement and trust among residents is shown to reproduce the shortcomings it seeks to overcome by not engaging curiously with residents. A final section will review some evaluations of what participants

believe the pilot project says about civic relations in the future as a way to illustrate the ambition for change that exists within the little c city.

Prevailing constraints on representative democracy

Carroll played a pivotal role in bringing the pilot project into being. As such, she is among the most invested in specific ideas of what participation is supposed to do. In prior chapters, Carroll was shown to support staff providing important insights and lessons to residents on how the city works. At the same time, she exudes a belief in the generative and transformative possibilities of participatory processes. Viewing the pilot project from this perspective, this leading Councillor is among the first to acknowledge that the pilot project has much room to grow. Reviewing how the three-year pilot project exhibited intermittent successes in resident-led creative uses of public funds, Carroll mentions how staff and residents are still learning how to reach this potential. Carroll states:

What happened as a result is that there's sort of a sameness to the projects, all the proposals are sort of in the same basket, but I think it was because the residents were handed this brand-new concept [...] So, they kind of started to narrow their ideas on what would be viable and what should go on the ballot [thinking] "we want that, and we'll just put it in a different area". That doesn't alarm me because they'll do that and then they'll learn something new and then maybe it broadens back out the next year. That's the evolution of it.¹

In this explanation, the idea of participatory budgeting is characterized as being new to residents and involving a growing awareness of new ideas that animate participation. However, the call from residents for deeper involvement and the ideas that motivate these calls are far from new. Participant proposals are noted to be whittled down by impressions of what was eligible. The range of motivations existing among the residential masses are homogenized into the experience of residents looking for acceptable ideas. This implicitly

¹ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111-W4, March 8, 2018

justifies the exclusion of long-running ideas involving creative and critical uses of public funds and interventions in the public realm. This characterization also omits an account of how those pushing for ideas deemed ineligible, who were commonly labelled as disruptive and self-interested usual suspects, may have simply settled for what was available or may have withdrawn their participation entirely. Thinking of residents as occasionally coming across ideas, similar to how a consumer comes across needs they did not know they had until a new commodity arrives on the market, eschews the historically informed experiential knowledge that participatory budgeting, at one time, was meant to empower. This understanding itself has significant implications for the evolution of participatory budgeting.

Carroll expresses a strong belief in the value of participation and continues to position herself as a leading advocate for new participatory practices. Anticipating the official evaluation, she acknowledges the capacity of staff to inform the viability of the continuation or expansion of participatory practices in Toronto. Carroll explains her thoughts on the evaluation as:

Whether or not it says it's too labour-intensive and that we shouldn't do it, is something I worry about every night. Because that's up to staff, what they want to write. But, if they do, I'll be delivering a minority report that states that while this is labour intensive, it's work that needs to be done. Because, the change in conversation and that capacity that we need to build in residents to help us design this city is urgent.²

Councillor Carroll expresses an urgent need to increase the capacity of residents to participate in a renewed conversation on how the city is designed. Despite potential disagreement with staff over whether the labour-intensive aspects of this renewed conversation are worthwhile, Councillor Carroll insists that new levels of participation

² Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2017

must take place. But, as this leading councillor has been shown to comply with established ways that the city currently works, it must be asked, to what end is this increased capacity directed?

An impression of Carroll's ideal outcome is found in her explanation of the success she sees in the conduct of former "champions". Carroll explains:

We have a meeting about, y'know, doing some hydro work and making a mess in your neighbourhood, or a development application meeting, people who have been champions, come in with a totally different posture because they now understand "your job's hard, his job's hard, I've got to make a meaningful contribution here". So, there's a whole different atmosphere around those champions and if you were doing this every year that just builds and builds and builds and when they do that, it definitely impacts all the people around them.³

Carroll's explanation concisely outlines the development of organic intellectuals being recruited to hegemonic notions of common sense. With aspirations of a more engaged city, Carroll foresees a new league of civically engaged residents being reared by the insights of public administrators and professional planners who serve as the traditional intellectuals of the big C City. Certainly, increased awareness of how municipal government works and how hard city staff work helps residents to engage more effectively. However, it is important for "meaningful contribution" to be defined by the degree to which an issue matters from the resident perspective, rather than by these revealed difficulties of urban governance. Despite a consistent participatory zeal, this vision indicates an ideal based on a compelled consensus with limitations arising from the broader context of municipal government.

As shown in the prior chapter, participants were occasionally successful in making use of the participatory pilot project to address unmet needs with creative solutions within

³ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2017

the eligibility criteria. However, an idealistic expectation that a broadening of creativity will prevail against the narrowing force of staff responses does not account for the formidable countervailing force presented by the latter. By subsuming participatory democracy within existing forms of common sense, participating residents will continue to clash with the underlying bias of contemporary urban governance. Furthermore, many will internalize this clash, limiting their own demands with an inherited sense of *meaningful* contributions. In turn, these organic intellectuals, as burgeoning civic champions, continue to impact those around them by further distributing hegemonic forms of common sense among their respective subordinate groups.

The change that Carroll calls for on the part of staff is for them to become more “user-friendly”⁴, which largely aligns with the client-centered responsiveness of NPM. Along with the limited civic ontology implied by viewing residents as clients, NPM is equally influenced by priorities of austerity and professionalization, which diminish the value of a more engaged government (Aucoin and Heintzman 2000). Within this existing arrangement of priorities, elected officials can inspire or otherwise motivate higher levels of responsiveness. Despite pressure for public sector professionals to engage with the lay knowledge of constituents and “users” of public services, professionals in the city staff are able to play a role in how such reforms impact their domains (Sehested 2002). Carroll explains how new levels of participation require the support of senior staff in conjunction with overt political support:

You want budget and financial planning staff to have some understanding of this and some enthusiasm for it. It can’t just be a policy wonk in the City Manager’s office. Finance staff has to care about it to some extent. [...] But having a political

⁴ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111-W4, March 8, 2018

lead that also has a little more budget background I think is going to be really instrumental in coming up with a model that is, y'know, sustainable worry free.⁵

The success of participatory budgeting is explained here to require the buy-in of professional staff led by the motivational force of elected officials. Rather than a new participatory understanding of democracy in which the ideas and demands of residents drive the process directly, participatory budgeting is dependent on the support of elected officials. This is further indicated by Carroll's remarks that participatory budgeting positions councillors' staff to play a more active role in capital asset planning.⁶ Despite the pursuit of a dialogue between staff and residents over a designated portion of money free of political interference, the continued involvement of political officials is necessary. This exposes the overtly political nature of participatory budgeting and its reliance on support from elected representatives.

To some degree, the overtly political and formalized authority of elected officials is able to rival the professionally-oriented machinations of municipal government. However, this requires the political force of more than a single councillor, and consensus on the value of participatory budgeting among City Council is far from total. This is shown by Councillor Di Giorgio who expresses having "conflicting views on what the benefits are".⁷ His expectations for the evaluation are explained in this way: "I'm ok with getting a report. I just think that [it] can't possibly support what they hell we've been doing".⁸ The divided opinion among councillors was on full display at the February 12, 2018 City Council budget discussions, in which a motion to delete expenditures voted on by

⁵ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111-W4, March 8, 2018

⁶ Interview with Councillor Carroll, W111, April 18, 2017

⁷ Interview with Councillor Di Giorgio, W116, April 20, 2017

⁸ Interview with Councillor Di Giorgio, W116, April 20, 2017

participants in the third year of the pilot project was followed by a motion to expand participatory budgeting.⁹ This indicates that while Toronto councillors remain interested in participatory initiatives, a consensus on their importance is far from consolidated. Amidst political divisions and the pressure for austerity, Carroll urged her colleagues to be mindful of the upcoming pilot project evaluation report in May 2018.¹⁰

Despite maintaining her position as a formal authority in municipal government, Carroll's limited capacity to motivate a more engaged city is found in a February 2019 meeting of the Budget Committee. Waving the pilot project evaluation in her hand, Carroll called for continued forms of participatory involvement. At the front of the committee room, the new City Manager, Chris Murray, and Executive Director of Financial Planning, La Vita, sat stoically and calmly stated that the extent of the council request for participatory budgeting had been reached. Vapid responses from senior staff are complemented by dismissive remarks from other councillors. With the pilot project now complete, supportive councillors must now strategize around how the official evaluation factors participatory budgeting into the common sense of the big C City.

The official evaluation

An official evaluation of the pilot project was delivered to City Council in January 2019.

As a standard practice, this evaluation identifies what level of success was attained and

⁹ In this council meeting, Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti, proposed a flurry of cost-saving amendments to the 2018 budget, including reducing the number of Toronto wards by half, ending the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and deleting the participatory projects, specifically in Ward 33, from the capital budget. Councillor Mammoliti ended up withdrawing his motion to delete the participatory projects in Ward 33, stating "as much as I would love to do this, I think my emotions took the best of me with regard to where these parks might be, and I don't think it's right to take the money away from the local community. As much as I would love to". Following this exchange, a motion for staff to consider "extend[ing] the Participatory Budgeting Pilot initiative for another three years, and include Wards not already covered in the existing pilot projects" in the 2019 budget was made by Councillor James Pasternak and passed with 33 for and nine against (Personal observation, Toronto City Council recorded sessions).

¹⁰ Stated during Council proceedings February 12, 2018.

what lessons were learned with regard to future instances of participatory budgeting. Many perspectives were engaged in this evaluation, with resident contributions included through surveys distributed during the pilot project. However, findings are analyzed and presented from the perspective of the big C City. It is within this evaluation that much of the intellectual work is done to situate participatory budgeting in relation to the common sense of existing hegemony. Therefore, the evaluation encompasses the dynamic of ruling by consent and does not explicitly argue against participatory budgeting. Rather, the good sense of participatory budgeting is integrated into existing procedures while its more critical elements are undermined by existing claims of universal interest and common sense.

In opening, the evaluation reports three main findings. First, residents desire ongoing opportunities for involvement and clear information regarding developments in their neighbourhood. Second, residents desire more opportunities to engage directly with staff, their elected representative, their neighbours, and local organizations. Third, while participatory budgeting can benefit communities, it is resource-intensive, can cause frustration and exacerbate division in communities, is limited in terms of accessibility, and can lead to a “mismatch of investment with broader community needs”.¹¹ Appreciation for the importance of resident engagement in government decision-making is expressly signalled throughout the evaluation. However, these acknowledgements are contextualized by a broader rationale that the most important goals of participatory budgeting can be better attained by already existing processes.

¹¹ Toronto’s Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto, January 31, 2019, p 1.

The evaluation explains that evaluating the pilot project was difficult, as no specific goal is recognized to have been established. This is expressed in the (rather cheeky) statement:

Typically, when City staff develop an engagement plan they first consider the program's objectives (informing, consulting, partnering, assessing etc.) and then select a methodology to achieve those goals. In the case of the PB pilot, staff were provided with a methodology – participatory budgeting – and asked to evaluate it against objectives which emerged from research on other jurisdictions, participants, and partners.¹²

This statement argues that collaboration emerging from resident participation must be directed toward a specific end goal rather being of value in itself. The general goal of increasing the number of “non-traditional participants” and underrepresented groups in the allocation of public funds seems to have collapsed under its own vagueness and not served as a guiding goal of the pilot project. The above statement jettisons the range of goals that created the consensus on the value of participatory budgeting discussed in Chapter 4. From playing a corrective role for maintenance schedules, as supported by Pennachetti, to allowing residents to have a final say, as mentioned consistently by Shields and Whate, none of the original points of agreement seem to have bearing.

Instead, the evaluation treats the purpose of the pilot project as being the provision of an enjoyable engagement experience that maintained alignment with the eligibility criteria. To this end, the pilot project is implied to have been a considerable failure, with a reported 90% of proposals being outside of the eligible scope or already addressed through regularly scheduled maintenance.¹³ The ease with which this high percentage of ineligible proposals was swept aside indicates the presumed legitimacy of eligibility guidelines and

¹² Toronto's Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto, January 31, 2019, p 4.

¹³ Toronto's Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto January 31, 2019, p 9.

established maintenance schedules. The evaluation states that “the pilot boundaries of the small NIAs also confused or frustrated residents who saw the borders as arbitrary or inconsistent with their view of their community”.¹⁴ Despite being out of line with how residents view their community, these boundaries remain unquestioned. Similar to staff responses to participant proposals, the assumed legitimacy of current approaches to planning implies that any tension with these approaches is attributable to weaknesses of participatory budgeting.

The eligible community improvements projects that residents of NIAs were able to make within the eligible scope could perhaps provide some sign of success. However, the evaluation states that the small size of NIAs led to “over investment” in certain parts of the ward and “overdesign” in parks. While NIAs were too small, the larger size of Ward 33 was reported to result in a feeling of distance and irrelevancy among participants. The report also expresses concern with how participatory budgeting created competitive dynamics and divisive language between residents.¹⁵ These criticisms assess the value of participation on the basis of customer satisfaction, a desire for dispassionate engagement, and technical orientations of the proper use of space. Such an assessment, as well as the presumed legitimacy of the eligibility criteria, ignores the relevance of proposals in the eyes of the very participants who proposed them, and instead presumes the perspective of the public at large.

A similar slight against the knowledge and experience that participants drew their proposals from is indicated in an implied pedagogical order. Participatory budgeting is framed as offering “opportunities for residents to meet and *learn from City staff* [and for]

¹⁴ Toronto’s Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto January 31, 2019, p 12.

¹⁵ Toronto’s Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto January 31, 2019, p 12.

City staff get to meet residents *to receive ideas* for local infrastructure and input on programs and services [emphasis added].¹⁶ This use of language is evidence of an ironically prevalent empowerment of conventional ways of thinking within a participatory process (MacCallum 2016; March 2012; Moore 2013, 102). This demonstrates how experimentation with participatory decision-making can elaborate institutions while the intellectual and cultural underpinnings of these institutions remain unchallenged and even further entrenched (MacCallum 2016; March 2012).

These qualitative assessments of the pilot project are accompanied by quantitative measures reporting that approximately 2,500 interactions between public officials and residents took place as a result of the pilot project.¹⁷ As interactions with residents are a valuable currency for client-centered and responsive government, this amount is deemed to be “generally low”, with the average percent of eligible voters participating calculated as 0.8%.¹⁸ This is explained to be despite efforts to improve the communicative aspects of the pilot project (e.g. marketing, materials, and proposal responses).¹⁹ Therefore, these low numbers are implicitly reasoned to be either a lack of attentiveness or lack of interest among residents. In either case, online forums are mentioned as gathering more input on a more timely and affordable basis, with a specific case reported to gather responses from 2,800 residents over four weeks.²⁰ Comparing participant turnout in Toronto to the larger turnout found in New York (2.2%), the evaluation attributes this to increased funding and broader discretion in the use of funds in New York initiatives.²¹ However, this point is not

¹⁶ Toronto’s Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto, January 31, 2019, p 5.

¹⁷ Toronto’s Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto, January 31, 2019, p 8.

¹⁸ Toronto’s Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto, January 31, 2019, p 6.

¹⁹ Toronto’s Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto, January 31, 2019, p 6.

²⁰ Toronto’s Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto, January 31, 2019, p 5.

²¹ Toronto’s Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto, January 31, 2019, p 8.

followed-up with any motivation to increase budgets or broaden eligibility criteria. Continuing to diminish the value of what motivated the participants that did take part, the evaluation states that “low participation and voting rates can be a concern particularly if a limited number of residents make final decisions on behalf of an entire neighbourhood”.²² By focusing on the number of participants involved, this report overtly eschews a participatory theory of democracy in which those involved are accorded a legitimate franchise and taken seriously.

After demonstrating questionable, and potentially problematic, outcomes arising from participatory budgeting, the report outlines different financing scenarios. These scenarios include expansion of participatory budgeting to all wards for a full four-year council term, calculated to cost \$25,000,000 in capital funds and \$6,130,000 in operating funds, and all NIAs, which was calculated to cost \$31,000,000 in capital funds and \$5,600,000 in operating funds.^{23,24} While these amounts still stand below 1% of the \$4,000,000,000 capital budget for 2018 alone, this is a significant shift from the amounts dispersed in the pilot project. In conjunction with the questionable benefits attributed to participatory budgeting, these substantial costs create challenges for those who support the expansion of participatory budgeting.

With high costs and questionable benefits being argued to arise from participatory budgeting, the report crystalizes the paradox of the participatory age (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016) in stating that PB can be an “appropriate engagement tool when it

²² Toronto’s Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto, January 31, 2019, p 8.

²³ Toronto’s Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto, January 31, 2019, p 14.

²⁴ In an appendix, other scenarios possible scenarios include expanding participatory budgeting to a portion of all wards and NIAs annually or phasing-in an expansion to all wards. The report notes that a partial or phased in approach would create equity concerns.

aligns closely with an existing program or budget process, or Council's directions" (emphasis added).²⁵ The report recommends that, if participatory budgeting continues to be utilized, it could involve theme-based participatory budgeting projects, which focus on the concerns of a specific demographic (e.g. youth), or a specific issue (e.g. traffic, public safety) to "help projects" focus on pressing needs.²⁶ The report did not recommend a continuation or expansion of participatory budgeting in Toronto. Rather, the report recommended the provision of a toolkit of participatory budgeting resources and the inclusion of these resources in the City's civic engagement training courses.²⁷ These provisions support internally driven cases of participatory outreach. While the staff report does not explicitly make an argument against participatory budgeting, the belief expressed by this report is that participants need help aligning with the public interest.

This evaluation is a moment in which a certain sense of balance emerges from the epistemological authority of professional staff. Similar to the specific projects that emerged each year from participatory budgeting, this final report involves the translation of a participatory process into a conventional product, embedded within a logic that relies on centralized forms of knowledge construction (MacCallum 2008). This is an acute demonstration of how the participatory dialectic – a clash between the established goals of the big C City and the critical insights of the little c city – is resolved along the lines of existing authority so as to restore faith in hegemonic expressions of universal interest. Participation is transformed from a new way to support resident-led decision-making to an

²⁵ Toronto's Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto, January 31, 2019, p 4.

²⁶ Toronto's Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto, January 31, 2019, p 14.

²⁷ Toronto's Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto, January 31, 2019, p 2. These recommendations were approved by the City of Toronto Budget Committee on February 20, 2019, along with motion 3d that "City Council request the City Manager to present to the Budget Committee in 2019 on the Participatory Budgeting Pilot Project.

introduction on what needs are worth funding. As such, this evaluation takes part in an intellectual movement that defines participation so as to be subservient, rather than challenging, to existing municipal processes and priorities. There are signs that the authors contribute to this movement knowingly. As a council commissioned report, the immediate audience of this report is Toronto City Council. Beyond this immediate audience, authoring staff write that the report is meant to “contribute to the worldwide knowledge on PB”.²⁸ This self-referential statement exemplifies a claim to knowledge production in the midst of an ongoing process of making sense of participatory budgeting in relation to governance in established democracies.

Evolution of participation within the big C City

Staff leading the pilot project admit that figuring out how to best extend participatory opportunities to residents is an ongoing process. This again indicates that rather than an absolute limitation, work within the big C City is being done to figure out how to include resident participation in a manageable form. As shown by the evaluation report, this exploration proceeds in a way that invalidates the knowledge on needs that is accumulated every day in the little c city, and rather seeks to engage within the contours of established priorities.

Echoing the evaluation report, Shields states that a high-level of proposals were either already accounted for by existing maintenance schedules or were outside the scope of funds available. Regarding basic needs of maintenance and repair, commonly voiced by TCHC tenants, Shields states that solutions to these needs should “just be done, you shouldn’t have to participate in a big process to get that done”.²⁹ Referring to impromptu

²⁸ Toronto’s Participatory Budget Pilot Evaluation, City Manager. City of Toronto, January 31, 2019, p 15

²⁹ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W4I4-W4, March 28, 2018.

participants engaged at tabling sessions, on the other hand, Shields states “we said to people, how do you want to spend a quarter million dollars and they were like ‘ahhh, can’t really think of anything’ or a big thing like a new library”.³⁰ It is important to specify that this difficulty arises from the challenge of identifying improvements that were both desired and *eligible*. Shields explains that, in response to participants compliantly selecting simple developments like a bench, “we figured out how to get that information across on how you would actually request a bench [outside of participatory budgeting]”.³¹ This consistent minimization of the role of residents to influence capital developments suggests that the desirable city is one in which active and unstructured participation is not necessary. While the service provided by professional coordination of protocols and resources is able to address some public needs, this omits a vision of a city in which active participation is part of an ongoing process of bottom-up learning and resident empowerment.

Shields seems to support opportunities for residents to engage recreationally in government decision-making, but not opportunities for residents to bring attention to shortcomings in existing approaches to managing the public realm. Arguing for a faith in established maintenance schedules to address obvious needs, Shields comes to contradict her earlier statement about the irreplicable perspective of residents that cannot be done justice by proxy. Rather, participatory budgeting is framed as being redundant, overdemanding, and questionably relevant given the existing responsiveness of the big C City.

The closer look at the negotiation of eligible proposals in the last chapter demonstrates how existing protocols and programs limited the creative capacity of direct

³⁰ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W4I4-W4, March 28, 2018.

³¹ Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W4I4-W4, March 28, 2018.

participation. When asked about how pre-established approaches to capital asset planning limit opportunities for participatory decision-making, Shields explains:

There're some existing policies, or protocols, or practices that are long standing within divisions, that even they are trying to change as well. A good example might be ideas that came forward with regard to outdoor fitness equipment. Has there been a practice of installing those? If staff has always been told they can't do them then they will most likely also say you can't do them. [...] *I don't think it's willful not wanting to do PB, I think it's just that the City is a big ship, it takes a while to turn. And new ideas filter down very differently.* [...] If people haven't had time to be exposed to those things or have been shot down a bunch of times, or, even faced difficulties with the supplier who went out of business and then they couldn't get parts, all of that stuff is about responsibility of handling public funds.³² [emphasis added].

Precisely as MacCallum (2016) states, a sufficient explanation for this tension in approaches to capital expenditure is not provided by scapegoating members of staff as meddling or uncooperative. A more comprehensive explanation is provided by analyzing how certain understandings of how staff ought to serve the public are systemically produced and reproduced (MacCallum 2016). Shield's reference to a specific proposal is useful in connecting struggles experienced in the pilot project with the knowledge-intensive processes of decision-making for divisional staff. In describing how the big ship of the big C City can be unwittingly slow to develop new and more responsive practices, Shields mentions chain of command and, again, notions of responsible public service as limiting factors. A former City Manager's Office staff shared in an interview how pressure from superior staff and a generally tense work environment created a contentious context for the pilot project's design and implementation.³³ Along with Shields' mention of staff being "shot down a bunch of times", this perspective of former staff exposes the reality that staff are themselves compelled to comply with the status quo of how the city works.

³² Interview with Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, W114, April 19, 2017

³³ Interview with former City of Toronto staff, W419, April 24, 2018

Within this high-pressure context, characterized by a low level of resources in relation to the task of running a municipal government, abstract notions of public interest offered by NPM and urban neoliberalism become entrenched.

Having been centrally involved in the pilot project evaluation, Whate shares his view that one of the main outcomes is better communication between City of Toronto divisions and more support for creative, responsive capital development planning. Whate describes the benefit of a more widespread familiarity with resident participation across the divisions of municipal government as making “every City process more participatory as oppose to these separate participatory budgeting processes. [...] we’ll have a better more transparent process, by which people see where they can take their input”.³⁴ Whate explains this more participatory City to feature more communication about “what Parks and Rec is going to invest in in the future and why”, and “more moderation of people’s ideas so that we can input them in *the right places*, wherever they are (emphasis added)”.³⁵ While this vision forward presupposes resident involvement, this is done in a way that integrates residents into existing processes rather than one that creates designated spaces for direct resident-led decision-making. Communication of the rationale behind future-oriented decisions suggests that residents will be informed, but a focus on moderation and references to “the right” place indicates little change from established approaches to developing the public realm. Much like the shifts following the resident-led cancellation of the Spadina Expressway, developments within the big C City take place to mediate demands for involvement.

³⁴ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113, April 19, 2017

³⁵ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113, April 19, 2017

In response to the long list of participant proposals that were outside the scope of the pilot project, Whate believes that these needs can be met with “a coherent way to activate spaces with skateboard parks, same as dog parks, same as bake ovens, same as splash pads”.³⁶ He states: “The innovation becomes, well how can we take the best experience and learn from it. PB is just a lot more input in that city innovation process”.³⁷ Viewing the innovation process as taking place within the big C City with input from the little c city results in the reproduction of exclusive knowledge constructions within responsive strategies. A focus on coherence continues to base the right use of space on the perspective of traditional intellectuals who are empowered to make-sense of distributions of public funds in the process of planning. This illustrates the intellectual process of integrating subordinate views in order to secure claims to universal public interest without restructuring the distribution of authority. As stated by MacCallum (2016), echoing critiques of communicative planning, the generic expectations of planning must be put at risk in order to avoid conservative, and potentially disempowering impacts on public participation. Despite the desire for a more participatory City, the removal of specific spaces for direct decision-making and a priority of coherence leaves little room for the curious engagement necessary to welcome residents as producers of knowledge. As such, residents continue to be cast in the role of consumers of professional decisions.

A March 2018 meeting of Toronto’s Community of Practice on public engagement provided another opportunity to learn about how staff who support resident participation see it becoming more established in Toronto.³⁸ This meeting was attended by 16 City of

³⁶ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113, April 19, 2017

³⁷ Interview with pilot project staff lead, W113, April 19, 2017

³⁸ This group meeting to review the findings of the pilot project presented another opportunity to see how city staff in Toronto are evaluating public participation. The event was organized as part of the Divisional

Toronto staff from across divisions³⁹ and was led by an external facilitator, Matt Leighninger⁴⁰. In this meeting, initial discussion is based on what engagement was happening in Toronto and then moves to a focused discussion on what can be learned from the pilot project. Whate gives a presentation with a tentative evaluation of the pilot project, amounting to a review of the procedure and turnout, with occasional comparisons to other jurisdictions.⁴¹ There is discussion on “thick” and “thin” forms of engagement, with in-person, deliberative engagement or calls to action presented as thick engagement, and low-commitment forms of engagement, such as surveys or online participation, presented as thin engagement. It is acknowledged that some residents desire thick involvement, but thin involvement works for more residents and this touches on core goals of equitable participation.⁴² Participatory decision-making also requires funds to be pre-approved with a formally specified designation. There is some discussion on “over formalization” and how this formalization is not the best way to engage residents beyond the “usual suspects”.⁴³ Therefore, with a focus on participant turnout as a way of getting a better sense of what the public thinks, thin levels of involvement are viewed as most viable and equitable.

Engagement League Project, made up of representatives of different divisions of the City of Toronto. Those present include the interviewed Senior Project Manager from Transportation Services, and a number of participants from Urban Planning. The attendees ranged in terms of their official rank, from frontline workers to senior managers. During introductions, all attendees identify themselves as being regularly involved in public engagement.

³⁹ Attendees included Whate, Shields, as well as Senior Project Manager in Transportation Services and Senior Strategic Policy Consultant in Urban Planning interviewed during this doctoral research.

⁴⁰ Matt Leighninger is a civic engagement and public participation specialist who currently works as an Executive at Public Agenda and co-published a book entitled *Public Participation in the 21st Century* (John Wiley & Sons, 2015).

⁴¹ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, March 27, 2018.

⁴² Observation recorded in fieldnotes, March 27, 2018.

⁴³ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, March 27, 2018.

There is a continued mention of disruptors or “usual suspects” who are framed as challenging productive processes meant to engage a broader target audience. One staff states that they “feel weird when people ask to volunteer, because I don’t know where to put it”.⁴⁴ This limited degree of ability to participate speaks to a limited capacity on the part of the big C City to receive input from the grassroots. Some staff mention the need for technological advancement in public engagement using algorithms and social media to establish connections with community desires.⁴⁵ Affirming a common interest in technological advancement, public input is referred to as important “data” throughout the meeting.

Toward the end of the meeting, with a range of engagement strategies emerging from discussion, Whate suggests the development of a protocol to guide the selection of engagement practices would be helpful in offering options to City Council.⁴⁶ With the mention of City Council, a frustration with irresponsible decision-making comes to the surface. This frustration is expressed against elected councillors as disruptors, with multiple attendees mentioning “erratic behaviour” and unpredictable preferences.⁴⁷ One staff member states that this unpredictability disrupts the ability of staff to “make long-term promises to the public”.⁴⁸ Other attendees validate this point.⁴⁹ One attendee states that “decision-makers request thin engagement” and this receives notable agreement from other attendees.⁵⁰ Staff also mention how this stems from and creates trust issues between

⁴⁴ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, March 27, 2018

⁴⁵ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, March 27, 2018.

⁴⁶ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, March 27, 2018.

⁴⁷ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, March 27, 2018.

⁴⁸ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, March 27, 2018

⁴⁹ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, March 27, 2018.

⁵⁰ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, March 27, 2018

administrators and the public.⁵¹ A lack of faith in representative democracy is found to inspire staff to seek out new language and new practices to communicate with the public directly.

This discussion among staff makes clear that there is a desire to rebuild trust with residents and to also engage broadly to avoid equity concerns. The desire to make long-term promises speaks to a desire to develop coherent constituencies for ideas of a desirable future for Toronto with coordinated strategies. As emergent processes evolve within the existing structures of the big C City, pre-existing epistemologies that situate planners and professional staff as balancers of interests and resident perspectives as sources of data shape the evolution participatory democracy in Toronto. Professional staff continue to producing knowledge within the “isolated laboratories” (Callon, Lascoumes, and Barthe 2009, 43) of the big C City, and this perpetuates a dialectical tension between professionally informed notions of “good planning” and experientially informed demands from residents (Aucoin and Heintzman 2000; Legacy 2016; Neuman 2000). Residents fighting for nuance and more direct forms of involvement for the little c city are limited by these notions or labelled as disruptors. Despite a consistent focus on equity, this epistemological orientation systemically reproduces equity concerns by not only perpetuating but rationalizing the neglect of those residents most in need (Beckford 2017; Rahder and McLean 2013). As shown in the prior chapter, participants brought forward specific ideas on how their communities could improve. It is within these same perspectives that one can find specific evaluations of how the pilot project could inform future forms of collaboration.

⁵¹ Observation recorded in fieldnotes, March 27, 2018

Views of the future among civic subordinates

This section will demonstrate evaluations of the pilot project from the perspective of participants. These views demonstrate the future-oriented evaluations of how well existing opportunities for resident involvement fulfill the needed level of engagement. Envisioning the future of participatory budgeting in Toronto, Lombardi from the Ward 33 condominium community states: “I think that you’re going to get a lot more creative people trying to get their ideas across [and] more projects, covering a wider area”.⁵² Dimas, who served as a traditional intellectual vying for a shift in the hegemony of the status quo, states “I hope that it’s embedded in the habits of the year and it’s just something more and more people get involved with when it happens every year”.⁵³ These hopeful takes express a normative belief in the value and creativity of public participation that should be embraced in future initiatives.

Some other participants state that serious changes are needed in order for participatory budgeting to be accessible and meaningful. Rizzuto states that: “I think it will be a waste because there’s not enough money to do the things that are needed”.⁵⁴ Rizzuto evokes the language of needs, similar to Di Giorgio, but argues that perspectives among the little c city are best situated to identify them. Khemikar, who proposed the seniors’ fitness equipment in Ward 33 explains: “I think it might be done in other parts of the ward, [but] how many people my age are going to work like I did? I’m going to tell you it was very hard on me”.⁵⁵ Khemikar’s experience demonstrates how one of the main learning outcomes of the pilot project was not as much “how the city works” as it was how hard it

⁵² Interview with participant, W1I2, April 18th, 2017

⁵³ Interview with participant, W3I3, December 4, 2016

⁵⁴ Interview with participant, W2I3, April 27th, 2017

⁵⁵ Interview with participant, W3I1, December 8, 2017

is to work with the city. These critical evaluations of the pilot project point to how the intention of creating a worthwhile and accessible process for participants was not accomplished.

Contemplating both the strengths and weaknesses of the participatory budgeting pilot project, other interviewees discuss how it can become more useful and effective for residents. Peterson, a youth participant from Rustic who has since enrolled in the Masters of Urban Planning program at Ryerson University, explains that she enjoyed learning about how the city works and trusted staff to provide reliable guidance in decision-making.⁵⁶ However, the tension arising from divides in the community of Rustic led Peterson to state that the pilot project would not be a good way for other youth to get involved in their community, especially as a first impression.⁵⁷ Based on this experience, Peterson explains her impression of participatory budgeting in this way:

I think PB exposes the needs in the community and, at least in Rustic, I don't know about the other communities, you can tell that our community has been really neglected for a long time. And when money is shown to people like that, it really brings out a tribal kind of like "I need this because it makes my life better", and then that leads to the classism, the racism, the ageism.⁵⁸

Recognizing the difficulty of "inter-tribal" collaboration, Peterson desires a city-wide youth participatory budget that will encourage youth to get involved and provide them with the means to invest in community needs that they recognize.⁵⁹ However, despite a more open-minded disposition, Toronto's youth are not a homogenous community free of internal divides. Therefore, a youth only participatory budget will also have to deal with these tensions as well. Within this youth-specific engagement process, limitations on

⁵⁶ Interview with participant, W5I5, April 19, 2017

⁵⁷ Interview with participant, W1I5-W4, March 11, 2018

⁵⁸ Interview with participant, W1I5-W4, March 11, 2018

⁵⁹ Interview with participant, W1I5-W4, March 11, 2018

decision-making capacity could also prevail. What will determine how much youth contest or comply with pre-existing constructions of knowledge is their allegiance to certain hegemonic or counter-hegemonic understandings of common sense.

Also focusing on the potential of youth, Cain from Oakridge expresses her belief in the lasting impact of the projects that result from participatory budgeting in this way: “even if we don’t ever have a pilot again, the pieces that we chose are lasting. [...] if you do something that you and the community can build on”.⁶⁰ Cain further explains the generational effect that motivates her to improve her community, saying “they will be able to work among themselves to understand and to participate easier than before”.⁶¹ Cain explains how her dedication to improving her community connects to her goals of fostering community awareness in the youth of Oakridge:

I show them those things because being involved in our area is not something that we readily do. But I think, by growing up from that age, it will be part of you. Then when you see something that’s already in your lens, you’ll say “oh well this is missing, that is missing, Oh I can do that, I can do this”. So, it gives you a wider idea of what we call and what I know to be community.⁶²

In this explanation, Cain demonstrates her goals of helping to develop a community of residents that is more self-aware of their capacity to define and address problems with an orientation to the future. Cain seeks to spread an intellectual understanding of residents in underserved communities as having the capacity to define and shape the surrounding environment. This is an example of Gramsci’s first form of consciousness that situates members of the masses in a collaborative counterhegemonic effort to transform society. In

⁶⁰ Interview with participant, W117, April 20, 2017

⁶¹ Interview with participant, W117, April 20, 2017

⁶² Interview with participant, W117, April 20, 2017

Cain's view, it is by drawing from the resource of experiential knowledge that effective forms of planning and meaningful forms of participation will be established.

Like Peterson, Chiu from Ward33 accredits the importance of technical expertise. However, Chiu goes further to comment on how technical expertise must support rather than inhibit participation. He states:

I have a lot of respect for engineers and planners because the trail system is just top notch. They do a good job and that's their job, to make this stuff and make it last. You don't want it breaking down and eroding but that shouldn't get in the way of PB. Because every kind of innovative project that gets bogged down because there has to be an engineering study, you're not going to get anything innovative. [...] If people get into this pattern well, this is the only thing I could propose, or these are the only types of things I could propose, [...] It's just not going to bode well for the future.⁶³

Chiu implicitly states how participatory budgeting should aspire to become a hybrid forum, in which technical knowledge and lay knowledge engage collaboratively. While respecting the importance of credentialed expertise, in the case of participatory decision-making, Chiu problematizes the limitations imposed on what could be a more elaborate process. Chiu argues that a structural change is necessary in order for participatory processes to effectively involve residents in government decision-making, saying:

If you really want amazing projects, you really have to plan well. [...] but that can only happen if we structure the budget and structure the planning process to accommodate that. The current structure doesn't accommodate that.⁶⁴ [...] Certain groups should be in some way able to direct staff. [...] There has to be some way that the citizens can say 'you know what, in my area there's just two things that we want city staff to look into, just two, can you just look into this?'.⁶⁵

Chiu specifically states that new practices must overcome exclusive constructions of knowledge and be instead oriented around the insights and concerns of residents. He

⁶³ Interview with participant, W3I2, December 9, 2018

⁶⁴ Interview with participant, W3I2, December 9, 2018

⁶⁵ Interview with participant, W3I2, December 9, 2018

explains “I have seen some things that are very, very unsafe, like playsets. And I talk to city staff and they say ‘ah well, I don't think it’s unsafe’. I think it’s unsafe! How much effort do I need to go into to get them to pay attention? So, yeah there’s always that need for citizens to speak up and say, yeah we’ve got to do something about this!”⁶⁶ The degree to which the participatory budgeting pilot project supported residents in defining safety and how the lack of safety should be addressed is shown to be questionable.

Certain improvements were able to be made under resident-led definitions of security, as viewed by Cain. The ability to mobilize staff would provide participating residents with an advantage in relation to existing structures of decision-making but is severely limited by existing allocations of resources and notions of public interest within the big C City. While the amount of funds available is of importance, the democratizing potential of participatory processes is determined by the way in which they reconstruct the knowledge necessary to enable action. In order to focus on pressing needs, Chiu sees value in issue-oriented participatory budgets and specifies the selection and prioritization of issues must emerge from the resident perspective.⁶⁷ Though reference to certain groups being able to mobilize staff could be interpreted as being already present in neighbourhood associations or interest groups, Chiu’s remarks indicate that he desires the recognition of groups with a critical perspective on narrow definitions of a safe and healthy city.

These participant testimonies demonstrate the varying impact of the pilot project on civically engaged residents. This further demonstrates the specific goals that remain to be attained for more critical residents to deem participatory budgeting a success. Some of these testimonies give evidence of an ongoing demand for initiatives that enable more

⁶⁶ Interview with participant, W3I2, December 9, 2018

⁶⁷ Interview with participant, W3I2, December 9, 2018

pronounced resident leadership. Some former participants have little quarrel with participatory processes guided by the sagacity of professional judgement. In Gramscian terms, these subordinate perspectives have been integrated into the common sense claims of hegemonic urban governance and represent an organic intellectual taking on the intellectual precepts of existing hegemonic priorities. This further establishes hegemonic interests in a war of position over how allocations of capital and uses of urban space are coordinated towards desired futures. Those who maintain their critical stance for an elaborated role for residents, on the other hand, represent organic intellectuals working on behalf of the counter-hegemonic change. At times, these distinctions play out within the individual consciousness just as much as they do in the broader public consciousness. It is within this context that these varying senses of civic consciousness navigate and evaluate the environment of their everyday life.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the various forms of evaluation that took place with regard to the pilot project. These varying perspectives illustrate many of the continuing divisions and limitations that entrench status quo approaches to public engagement and urban governance more broadly. Beginning with Carroll, this chapter demonstrated that continued political support is necessary to encourage a fuller becoming of participatory processes. However, even within the mind of an identified change agent, the ideal becoming of participatory budgeting is shown to not so much lead to a new level of empowerment for residents as it does a new level of involvement within existing arrangements of power. Without critically reflecting on how knowledge is constructed,

resident participation will continue to be riddled with the limiting factors demonstrated in the prior chapter.

These limiting factors are indeed contributed to by the official evaluation report that situated participatory budgeting as an overly expensive process that renders questionable, and potentially problematic, results. The official evaluation sought to reaffirm faith in existing approaches to address public needs, with the added good sense of participatory budgeting. By recommending the use of participatory budgeting within existing processes, the evaluation represents an attempt of *trasformismo* in capturing the symbolism of resident-led decision-making within existing structures of authority. By focusing analysis on the process of knowledge-exchange, it becomes clear that the pilot project was not intended to engage in a re-construction of knowledge. Rather, participatory processes are instrumentalized to increase acceptance of established knowledge constructions based on a perceived incompleteness of lay knowledge. Demands for participatory levels of engagement are now positioned on a political landscape in which this evaluation of participatory budgeting has taken place.

The perspectives of Shields and Whate continue to confirm how resident engagement in open-ended decision-making is not viewed as valuable or responsible. Rather, participatory processes provide advisement for overarching processes seeking to determine coherent approaches to addressing public demands. This vision of a more participatory City continues to elide the fact that ideas of coherence and responsive government are exactly what advocates of participatory decision-making seek to offset, correct, and elaborate. Discussion among the City of Toronto's Community of Practice on public engagement demonstrates the active curiosity about how to restore trust and attempt

collaboration with residents amidst a crisis of faith in representative democracy. These pro-participation staff remain limited by a scarcity of resources and political support for in-depth engagement, as well as their own notions of public interest that encourages thin forms of engagement with the general public rather than thick forms of engagement with usual suspects. While curiosity is certainly present among these staff, this curiosity does not extend to the point of epistemological curiosity, and staff continue to situate themselves as necessary balancers of the public interest. These ideas of manageable public involvement are intermittently challenged and supported within the little c city. The short review of the diverse range of evaluations among past participants shows how active participants can both become subsumed within the levels of participation on offer or continue to push for a reimagining of the resident role in mandating community improvements. The latter inclination must now strategize around the official evaluation of the pilot project.

Conclusion

This dissertation began by reflecting on what role residents are able to take on in the formation of the conditions of the cities in which they live. With increasingly technical and generally exclusionary approaches to governance arising from urban neoliberalism, the degree of necessary public involvement is the object of an active debate. In the contemporary moment, referred to as the participatory turn (Bherer, Dufour, and Montambeault 2016) and the Age of Participation (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016; MacCallum 2016), this debate is renewed with new ideas of how the public ought to be involved in government decision-making and local developments. A perplexing paradox is found in new opportunities for resident involvement that remain countered by pre-existing approaches to planning and abstract notions of public interest. This dissertation investigated if this paradox was taking place in a participatory budgeting pilot project initiated by the City of Toronto. Identifying that this paradox was indeed present in Toronto, this dissertation further investigated how the ideals of participatory budgeting were mobilized alongside prevailing forms of authority to provide new participatory opportunities for involvement without a significant transition in power.

This analysis is aligned with the structural turn in the study of participatory budgeting, which accounts for how new opportunities for resident agency take place within the contours of existing institutions and arrangements of power. This analysis was also supported by insights from urban studies and planning theory that account for how authoritative constructions of knowledge are drawn from in government decision-making. Further elucidating the role of hegemonic knowledge, Gramsci's concept of *trasformismo* was used to analyze how new critical ideas are integrated into existing hegemonic arrangements by defusing the critical element of these ideas. It is through the recruitment

of new intellectual adherents that hegemonic authority is renewed in the face of counter-hegemonic organizing. This analytical framework reveals the instrumental use of participatory budgeting in Toronto.

As shown in Chapter 4, what began as an idea calling for new inclusive practices to empower the unique perspective of residents to directly allocate public funds became a process intended to teach residents how the City works. This is a significant shift away from goals of empowerment and toward goals of increased communication and “citizen improvement”. Participants were ironically inhibited in their ability to allocate even small sums of capital due to the many processes and protocols that were enforced rather than called into question. Rather than generating new orientations of capital allocation by engaging in a deep collaboration of experiential and technical knowledge, this research identified how new participatory practices were used to legitimize limitations and encourage forms of “good participation”. This illustrates the process by which subordinate views are integrated into universalist claims of existing hegemonic interests. This is an intellectual process in which knowledge constructions provide organizing principles for society and organic intellectuals develop to bridge the gap between hegemonic authority and the consciousnesses of the residential masses.

This instance of *trasformismo* diminished the critical thrust of participation by aligning it with established approaches to planning. As stated by Legacy and other members of the Australian School on public engagement in planning, participatory budgeting initiatives shape and reshape the meaning of participation. The below Standards and Motivation Grid demonstrates how claims of new practices (Column B) were applied to a process that oriented by pre-existing priorities of neoliberalism and NPM (Column A)

and points to the higher standards that would help to improve on identify shortcomings in future initiatives (Column C)

Characteristic Standards	New Public Management (A)	Participatory Budgeting circa 2000 (B)	Curious Engagement (C)
Standard of Access	Existing structure with reforms	Voluntary	Situated for Access
Standard of Communication	Responsive	Dialogue	Dialogue in lay language
Identity of the Participant	Customer, Client	Actively Involved	Expert on Community Needs
End Decision-Maker	Professional	Direct	Collaborative
Target Audience	General Public	Participatory Public	People Informed on the Need for Change
Driving Motivation	Compelled Consensus	Participant Inclusion	Epistemological Curiosity

FIGURE 2: STANDARDS AND MOTIVATION GRID
SOURCE: AUTHOR

In terms of accessibility, the pilot project took place within the communities of eligible participants in the form of scheduled meetings, situated tabling, and online idea submission. These provisions are a crucial – good sense – step to engaging in resident-led decisions-making. These meetings were promoted using existing networks with some additional investment in outreach. Meetings were complemented with translated materials and food in order to further enable participation. However, accessibility remained limited minimal staff support for the pilot project, which led to narrow opportunities to participate. This is especially the case for the highly significant proposal development meetings that took place as a single meeting in each of the latter two-years. As shown in Chapter 5, leading staff based this choice on the priority of creating a more manageable process for

participants and for responding staff. This created specific limitations for marginalized residents in Rustic who had to overcome barriers of availability, distance, and an unwelcoming social terrain. Therefore, while the pilot may claim to have been open to the voluntary involvement (Column B) of “non-traditional participants”, what actually occurred was an established approach to public engagement, with some reforms (Column A). This demonstrates the need for modes of decision-making to be situated for access (Column C) in order to engage with such residents in decision-making processes.

In terms of communication, the pilot project did allow for a new level of communication between residents and professional staff of the municipal government. In proposing community improvements, participants were able to receive feedback from staff entailing information on feasibility. While this new level of communication was claimed to be a dialogue (Column B) between residents and staff, it was more so limited to responsiveness (Column A). Rather than engaging in a dialogue, responses from staff were laden with specific understandings of space that were not up for debate. While this partially resulted from scarce supports and already busy workloads for responding staff, an increasingly narrow eligibility criteria and increasing frank responses created a limited basis for exchange. As shown in Chapters 5 and 6, matters of design, price estimates, and appropriate use of funds were increasingly decided by professional staff. Participants were able to create a more substantive dialogue by contesting responses with their own understandings of projects and eligibility (Column C), but the established language of “good planning” defined the terms of ultimate outcomes.

Leading staff stated that the pilot project was meant to enable the active involvement (Column B) of residents who would have the final say. However, the limited

grounds for involvement demonstrates how the values of NPM oriented this process around aims of client satisfaction (Column A) rather than participant empowerment. With available options determined by existing approaches to managing resources in a parsimonious fashion, the City Manager's Office sought to engage residents in the experience of allocating public funds. The limitations to this experience are found in characterizations of residents as being in need of learning about how the City works in order to have an informed opinion about how pressing needs can be best addressed. The pilot project welcomed interest and engagement, but residents were not recognized as experts on local needs (Column C). This has direct implication for how final decisions were actually determined in the pilot project. While the pilot project was claimed to be defined by the direct final say of participants (Column B), the understandings of space, eligibility, and design were demonstrably made by professional staff (Column A). This excluded the generative and nuanced potential of more in-depth collaborative decision-making (Column C), which would have increased the relevance and momentum of the pilot project by engaging in epistemological plurality. Councillor Carroll was able to play an enforcing role, but only if they succeeded in the final vote. To succeed in the final vote, a proposal had to be deemed eligible and be championed at the proposal development meeting.

The target audience of the pilot project is one of the most telling factors, as this decisively indicates its underlying logic and goals. The pilot project framed the target audience to be broadly construed "non-traditional participants" and underrepresented groups (Column B). However, it can be discerned that it was actually the general public (Column A) that was the audience of the pilot project. The situated tabling that took place in 2017 indicates that the non-traditional participants being sought by the pilot project were

these common residents rather than civically engaged residents actively seeking these opportunities. Residents actively seeking opportunities to express fully formed ideas of their own (Column C) were regularly countered by notions of public interest held by professional staff. Due to this limited basis for involvement, residents actively seeking to improve their communities were viewed as disruptive or a “usual suspect” that city staff sought to reach beyond. Much like the underlying understanding of residents as clients, participants seeking meaningful and necessary improvements in their community did not fit-in well or were typically let down by the pilot project.

Finally, the driving motivation of this pilot project was shown to be compelling consensus (Column A) with established ways of knowing and improving the city. While the driving motivation of the pilot project was claimed to be the inclusion of new participants (Column B), this research has revealed how this claimed inspiration was mitigated in the design, implementation, and evaluation of the pilot project. While new levels of involvement did take place, this did not involve the inclusion of the experiential knowledge of participants. Therefore, this inclusion took place within the context of an “intro to the City” meant to rebuild trust in existing approaches to community improvement and resident consultation. The result was a narrow group of mainly rudimentary projects and consistent exclusions to substantive and purposeful projects meant to address locally known issues. As shown in Chapter 6, meaningful projects were occasionally deemed feasible and built. However, these glimmers of collaborative potential were increasing subject to an increasingly narrowing scope. In order for participatory initiatives to be more effective in the goals of aligning public funds with underserved needs, participatory initiatives must be driven by epistemological curiosity (Column C). In so doing, curious

engagement will build the relevance of public participation that actually engages in experimentation and utilizes the practices necessary to do so.

The above Standards and Motivation Grid organizes this doctoral research to demonstrate how innovative claims were followed through with conventional practices that situate the resident as a consumer of government decisions. Based on analysis of interviews, staff reports, and responses to proposals, this paradox is attributed to the goal of providing a nominally participatory process in which residents are able to express their understanding of their physical environment within constraints set out by an elite-driven pedagogy. Rather than disturbing or elaborating the established urban epistemology that supports hegemonic interests, the participatory budgeting pilot project was guided by it. This means that even if more resources were allocated to support the continuation of participatory budgeting, participation would continue to be limited by exclusive decision-making processes and hegemonic priorities. Responding to calls for new participatory practices, the pilot project functioned to quell critical organizing and develop buy-in to a tamed process. This study's findings are generalizable as it draws from the specific situation of municipalities as well as experimentation in participatory decision-making that aligns with an inclusive discourse but perpetuates many exclusive constructions of knowledge and practices of decision-making.

As argued in Chapter 3, though the municipal government is well positioned to reflect and empower the experiential knowledge of residents, the very make-up of the Canadian nation-state situates municipalities to maintain residents in a subordinate position. With the rising professional class and increasing complexity of approaches to planning, participatory practices of municipal government take place on the highly

technical terrain of designated budget lines, legal frameworks, and planned space (Cullingworth 1984, 419; Davies 2014; Harvey 1985; March 2010). These frameworks establish distinct ways of knowing the city and its needs, here distinguished as the big C City. These frameworks create the basis for prevailing exclusions and managed forms of participation that welcome public input without rearranging authority over decision-making (Ganuza, Baiocchi, and Summers 2016; Jabola-Carolus 2017; Pin 2017; Su 2018). Even the leading advocate, Carroll, ultimately saw compliance with existing constructions of knowledge as necessary for resident to be legitimately involved. Taking heed of critical calls from Social Planning Toronto to fulfill claims of progressive government, Carroll brought this motivation into the walls of the big C City. Once the idea began to get traction among City Council, senior staff designed the pilot project to be manageable and questionably relevant rather than transformative. In the future, advocates and allies should collaboratively plan participatory processes in more detail. More detailed planning and proposed mechanisms for community-led oversight will help ensure that the outcomes of future initiatives are more aligned with the intentions of advocates seeking meaningful change.

Again, rather than attributing this paradox to the conscious meddling of staff, this renegeing on the potential of participatory budgeting results from structural factors engrained in ways of knowing public space and public interest that guide actions and judgements. Toronto's Community of Practice demonstrates how supporters of public engagement are seeking out ways to connect with residents and make long-term promises. However, new practices will always be subject to an overwhelming tendency to compel consensus if they are not able to align with little c city ways of knowing. There is an

inherent divide between the big C City and the little c city. Both are heterogenous, but this duality helps recognize how Gramsci's two consciousnesses – one transformative and the other complacent – play out in interactions with urban space. The divergent nature of these ways of knowing are most obvious to those who have become disillusioned with the hegemonic “folklore of the future” (Gramsci, 1971:326, note5). However, the structural authority of certain ways of knowing within the big C City limits the degree to which these critical sentiments can have an impact on society. While being able to direct allocate a designated portion of funds was once the unique virtue of participatory budgeting, this research has demonstrated how this virtue may also come with severe limitations. The use of public funds has been shown to come with a number of constricting conditions. Future initiatives should be specifically designed to allow uninhibited collaboration between residents and city staff. Examples include issue-based conversations where problems and issues are deliberated on first to develop funding proposals or designated free participation zones that can be built up and invested in by residents in dialogue with urban professionals. Such initiatives will be better equipped to learn from the experiential knowledge of residents and demonstrate what happens when collaboration is able to take place.

It is important to recall that *trasformismo* does not completely dominate the capacity of critical consciousness. Despite systemic patterns of expert advice limiting the role for residents and their local governments, this research found many more residents who maintained a commitment to their knowledge of needs and solutions. This commitment is rooted in the physical experience of everyday life in the city, in which the intrinsic contradictions of the status quo can be felt and witnessed. As shown in Chapter 6, participating residents drew their motivation from their experiential, place-based

knowledge of needs. In Chapter 7, residents shared their vision of a possible future for participatory processes that urged initiatives to align much more with how the infrastructure and space of the city is experienced. This suggests that it is accurate to view cities as being situated on the edge of hegemony. Therefore, despite structural challenges, experiential knowledge provides a source of motivation to develop place-based platforms for increased resident control over what is currently presented as the depoliticized technical work of municipal government.

In order to democratize existing democracies, residents must view their daily experiences, and those of others, as a vital source of knowledge. Hybrid forums (Callon, Lascoumes, and Barthe 2009) should continue to be theorized as a way to maintain and enrich understandings of democracy amidst increasingly complex approaches to governance. This process of democratization is one that the participatory budgeting pilot project in Toronto only served to confuse. As argued in Chapter 7, ongoing calls for public participation must now position themselves around the fact that participatory budgeting has taken place in Toronto. Therefore, advocacy for the levels of public control over public resources must develop renewed criticisms and arguments regarding what meaningful levels of public control look like. In order to contribute to this dialogue, continued research should focus on identifying richer cases of knowledge exchange, such as those demonstrated by an inspiring range of authors seeking to empower lay knowledge and engage in the democratization of democracy as it is currently known (Beckford 2018; Farías and Blok 2016; McFarlane 2011a; Meagher 2015). Furthermore, research should assess how forms of resident-led forms of urban literacy and visioning of desirable futures

can stimulate critical consciousness and transform local government with demands to align with little c city ways of knowing.

This dissertation sought to develop a better understanding of the elements necessary to attain new collective knowledge constructions in the democratization of democracy. This research is pressing due to the increasingly complex problems faced by our democracies, such as poverty, food insecurity, climate change, and the conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, that call for reconstructions of knowledge that draw from the experience of those most in need. Though participatory budgeting has become a largely tamed form of extra-electoral civic engagement, the original basis for its imagination continues to motivate renewed calls for resident inclusion. If past disappointments can be situated within the broader potential of participatory democracy, they will assist in the articulation of demands for change yet to come.

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Appendix A – List of Interviewees

Code	Name	Relation to Pilot Project	Date of Interview(s)
Councillors			
W1I1 W1I1-W4	Councillor Shelley Carroll	Councillor of Ward 33	April 18, 2017 March 8, 2018
W1I6	Councillor Frank DiGiorgio	Councillor Ward 12, Rustic	April 20, 2017
Email Contact	Councillor Michelle Holland	Councillor of Ward 35, Oakridge	November 9, 2017
Provincial staff			
W3I5	Ken Petersen and Assistant	Manager, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing	December 12, 2017
W4I4	Kate Julien	Senior Policy Advisor, Ministry of the Attorney General	March 16, 2018
City of Toronto Staff			
W1I3 W1I4-W4	Rich Whate	Staff Lead for the latter two-years of the pilot project	April 19, 2017 April 9, 2018
W1I4 W1I4-W4	Meg Shields	Senior Corporate Management Policy Consultant, City Manager's Office	April 19, 2017 March 28, 2018
W1I8 W1I8-W4	Robert Mays	Senior Project Manager, Transportation Services	April 21, 2017 April 10, 2018
W2I1	Rose-Ann Bailey	Community Development Officer	April 26, 2017
W2I2	Sabrina Novello-Cheatley	Youth Outreach Coordinator, Oakridge	April 26, 2017
W2I4	Ricardo Tranjan	Manager, Poverty Reduction Unit	April 28, 2017
W4I1	Barbara Garcia	Community Development Worker, Oakridge	March 8, 2018
W4I5	Joe Pennachetti	Former City Manager	March 13, 2018
W4I6	Michael Mizzi	Director of Zoning and Committee of Adjustment	April 3, 2018
W4I7	Meghan Hellstern	Design Strategist, Civic Innovation Office	March 12, 2018
W4I8	Daniel Fusca	Senior Strategic Policy Consultant, Urban Planning	April 3, 2018
W4I9	Emily Harris	Former staff of City Manager's Office	April 24, 2018
Participants			
W1I2	Rachele Lombardi	Participant from Ward 33	April 18, 2017
W1I5 W1I5-W4	Riley Peterson	Participant from Rustic	April 19, 2017 March 11, 2018

W1I7	Harriet Cain	Participant from Oakridge	April 20, 2017
W1I9 W1I9-W4	Luisa Giacometti	Participant from Rustic	April 21, 2017 March 16, 2018
W2I3	Joe Rizzuto	Participant from Rustic	April 27, 2017
W3I1	Shirley Kehimkar	Participant from Ward 33	December 8, 2017
W3I2	Raymond Chiu	Participant from Ward 33	December 9, 2017
W3I3 W3I3-W4	Mary Dimas	Participant from Ward 33	December 4, 2017 March 12, 2018
W4I3	John Beers	Participant from Oakridge	March 9, 2018
Non-Participating Community Contacts			
W4I2	Morris Beckford	Executive Direct of AccessPoint Alliance and author, Oakridge	March 9, 2018
W3I4 W3I4-W4	Haley Prescod	Youth Outreach Worker, Rustic	December 11, 2017 March 10, 2018

Appendix B – Interview Templates

Government Official Interview Template

1. Tell me a bit about your career history leading up to your current position.
2. What was your involvement in the participatory budgeting pilot project?
3. Can you provide a brief description of how capital development in the public realm is typically done in Toronto?
4. What are the most pressing issues that inform the goals of public sector urban planning?
5. Are there notable innovations in recent history that make the way planning has been done in the past different from how it is done now?
6. Can you mention some occasions in which you or your staff had a shortage in the knowledge necessary to complete a planning task? Where did you seek out this necessary knowledge?
7. What do residents bring to the planning process?
8. How can experts in planning help to inform the contributions of residents?
9. Is there anything that a resident can bring to the planning process that an organized and well-resourced department of planning professionals cannot provide without such input?
10. What priorities guided the design of the pilot project?
11. Were any of these priorities difficult to maintain during implementation of the pilot project?
12. Did you consider the TCHC participatory budgeting process, and gather any learnings from this long running effort? What other initiatives did you take cues from?
13. What other tools are available to discern what residents need and how a city should develop?
14. Where do you see participatory budgeting in Toronto in five years?

Resident/Participant Interview Template

1. Can you tell me about your experience in civic engagement? What's your inspiration to be involved?
2. What project(s) were you most interested in?
3. Why did that proposal matter to you?
4. Were there other projects that people on the board or other people you know interested in proposing?
5. Where would you situate the pilot project in terms of depth of engagement?
6. How should appropriate limits to resident proposals be determined? How are these limits best set for a productive and meaningful process?
7. What were you able to learn from staff?
8. What were you able to learn from other participants?
9. Did you get to share your project with other people and then also hear from other people about what they found valuable about their projects?
10. Was there ever a time when you felt that necessary information or knowledge wasn't available? Where do you believe this information or knowledge can be found?
11. What are the most pressing needs in this community?
12. Did you feel the turnout to the sessions you've attended were representative of the local community? Why or why not?
13. Are you interested in getting involved in electoral politics? In what way?
14. Do you have any experiences from the pilot project you'd like to share?
15. Where do you see participatory budgeting in Toronto in five years?