EPISTEMIC PROMISE AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION IN JAMAICA

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This dissertation is dedicated to my family -Donald, Janine, Deme, and Deedee Lyew- for

shaping me, challenging me, and supporting me through this and other journeys.

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INTRODUCTION

In the 2020 General Election, Jamaica experienced the lowest voter turnout since the country's 1962 independence - only 37% of registered voters cast ballots that day (*The Jamaica Observer*, 2020). This result was in stark comparison to the recorded highest participation in a General Election, which occurred in 1980 with an 87% turnout. Further, the 2020 results represented the most recent low in a general trend of declining voter turnout, which started in 1989 with 78% and continued through the most recent previous election in 2016, where 48% of registered voters participated (*Electoral Commission of Jamaica*, 2021). Letters to the Editor in the two major Jamaican newspapers suggest that this problem extends beyond voting to political participation in general (Higgins, 2014). Some writers suggest that some Jamaicans are apathetic, having grown wary of politicians' broken promises (Moyston, 2019). Others write that some Jamaicans are hopeless, constrained by forces beyond their control such as the economy and neoliberal global trade (Kyne, 2015). However, still others write that the decision to refrain from politics is much more agentic for certain Jamaicans (Meeks, 2014). They posit that some Jamaicans observe the political system and find it lacking. As such, their lack of participation is a conscious choice, an informed decision to refrain from participating in a system that does not serve them (Carter, 2016). By suggesting that the solution to low participation lies in changing the system rather than individuals, these letters propose an agentic counter-narrative to hopelessness and apathy. These letter writers inform the concept I coin "epistemic promise" that is central to this dissertation.

Paper One builds upon theories of epistemic injustice (Fricker, 2007), broadly defined as "a wrong done to someone in their capacity as a knower" (p.1). Fricker (2007) describes two forms of epistemic injustice: testimonial and hermeneutical. A testimonial injustice occurs when a marginalized person's capacity as a knower is questioned by those in power. Hermeneutical

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injustice refers to a systemic problem, where the experiences of marginalized people are left out of the mainstream discourse of a society. Applying theories of epistemic injustice to excerpts from Jamaican newspapers, I developed the concept of epistemic promise. Epistemic promise refers to the possibility that a person's input in a participatory process will meaningfully affect process outcomes. The epistemic promise of a specific event or process varies based on both the event context and the individual considering involvement. One's perceptions and expectations are influential; an individual is more apt to participate in a process if she believes it has high epistemic promise for her. Broadly applied, this means that people are more likely to get involved in a participatory process if they think their involvement will be valued and make a difference.

Paper Two tests the hypothesis that greater *perceived* epistemic promise is related to a higher likelihood of political participation. Hierarchical logistic regressions and multilevel models are used to test this relationship first in a Jamaican sample, and next in a sample that spans 17 countries in the Americas. To test the unique impact of epistemic promise, the models control for other variables that have been shown to predict political participation such as age, gender, education, and income. Increasing the perceived epistemic promise of a process may encourage *more* participation. However, the perceived epistemic promise may differ from the actual epistemic promise of a process. Increasing the actual epistemic promise may promote *more meaningful* participation.

In *Participation: From Tyranny to Transformation*, researchers tackle the question of how participation in development initiatives can be *more meaningful*, less tokenizing and truly empower the people they are meant to serve (Hickey & Mohan, 2004). They propose that participatory development should be critically engaged with concepts of citizenship and participatory governance, rather than with mere representation. Christens and Speer (2006)

contend that to shift the focus of participatory development, there must be reflection on the values guiding participatory development. If the goal is to maximize the input and meaningful involvement of marginalized groups in political processes, participatory processes should strive towards values that are attentive to power (Cooke and Kothari, 2001; Hickey and Mohan, 2005; Christens and Speer, 2006). I suggest that *epistemic justice* is an appropriate value to guide the design and implementation of participatory processes. By striving for epistemic justice, a designer can consider the ways in which participants' voices are included and excluded throughout a process. I propose that the values of epistemic justice can be applied to participatory political processes using the concept epistemic promise.

Lastly, Paper Three examines how designers of a participatory political process attempt to create more meaningful participant engagement. The Tell Your MP case study (note: MP stands for Member of Parliament) serves as an example of epistemic promise in practice. Tell Your MP attempts to increase the actual epistemic promise of a participatory budgeting process in an urban Jamaican constituency. The actual epistemic promise of a process for an individual in a particular context may be estimated and increased by a method I call the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP). The DEEP method involves identifying instances of epistemic injustice, called epistemic exclusions (Dotson, 2014), and mitigating their effects to foster epistemic justice. Paper Three uses grounded normative theory (GNT) and Black feminist epistemology to analyze the real-world changes to the Tell Your MP project. The similarities between theory and practice are identified, and any differences are used to refine the DEEP method. Findings from Paper Three are expected to inform how designers and evaluators approach future participatory political processes.

After Paper Three, as part of the ethical framework of GNT and Black feminism, I include an epilogue which details my positionality as it relates to the project. Then, the conclusion synthesizes the major findings from each paper and summarizes the potential practical uses for epistemic promise. Overall, this dissertation explores a novel way of addressing the problem of low political participation. This exploration of epistemic promise refocuses the problem, shifting the blame from individual participants and placing it on the flaws in political systems. It proposes a more radical way to increase the numbers of people who participate in political processes and foster meaning in participation. This reframing of the problem has several potential benefits. It provides a counter-narrative to the idea that non-participants in politics are apathetic or hopeless. In addition, it proposes another dynamic that may be important in increasing the likelihood of participation. It also translates theoretical work about epistemic justice into a framework that could be used to improve real-world political processes and, eventually, strengthen democracies. Finally, details are provided regarding where the dissertation fits in the overall literature on participation.

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PAPER ONE: DEFINING EPISTEMIC PROMISE

In this paper I articulate a vision for a novel concept called epistemic promise. Epistemic promise is defined as the chance that a person's input will have an impact on the outcomes of a political process. Epistemic promise is a measure derived by applying the principles of epistemic justice to democratic participation. Epistemic injustice is broadly defined as "a wrong done to someone in their capacity as a knower" (Fricker, 2007, p.1). Thus, the epistemic promise of a process is a measure of how likely a person's input to the process will have a meaningful impact on the outcomes of that process. This concept will be explored in depth in subsequent sections. The concept of epistemic promise was developed during the application of the lens of epistemic justice to Jamaican newspaper articles about political participation. As such, I will refer to quotes from Jamaican newspapers as I explore this concept. I posit that if epistemic justice is the goal of a participatory process, that process should be evaluated to determine and improve its epistemic promise.

This paper makes connections between residents' observations about the Jamaican political system and theories of epistemic justice. Here epistemic promise is also differentiated from similar concepts such as empowerment, political efficacy, and mattering. Drawing from the work of several seminal feminist scholars, I introduce the first step of a method called Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) that could be used to evaluate and improve the epistemic promise of participatory processes, in general, and in Jamaica, in particular. Movements towards epistemic justice can often face resistance from persons and groups in power who do not want to relinquish their epistemic power. Thus, I explore potential resistances to the pursuit of epistemic justice. Finally, I place epistemic promise in the context of the larger movement towards epistemic justice.

Epistemic Promise

The concept of epistemic promise arises from applying the thesis of epistemic justice to participatory processes. Several seminal scholars inform this framework. Although feminists such as Collins (2009), Spivak (1988) and Smith (2013) write about similar concepts regarding voice and being "heard" authentically, Fricker (2007) introduced "epistemic justice" as a theoretical framework. Fricker (2007) states that power exists relationally and structurally. Social power is dependent on "shared social-imaginative conceptions of the social identities [of those implicated in the particular operation of power]" (p. 3). Those who are powerful are given such privilege based on their position in socially accepted hierarchies. Fricker posits two forms of epistemic injustice: testimonial injustice and hermeneutical injustice. A testimonial injustice occurs when someone's knowledge is dismissed because they are not considered qualified to produce knowledge. Hermeneutic injustice refers to a larger scale erasure of a minority group's experiences. This form of injustice occurs when mainstream society has little shared understanding of the lived experiences and ways of knowing of a minority group. Based on this form of injustice, there is no mutually understood framework for the majority group to receive the minority's testimony.

Spivak (1988) refers to this same phenomenon in her seminal paper *Can the subaltern speak?* The subaltern is a broad term referring to minoritized groups. Spivak (1988) posits that the subaltern cannot truly speak, because they cannot truly be heard in a society that diminishes and misunderstands their experiences. She contends that the subaltern voice is constantly "re-presented" by elites. "Re-presentation" refers to the ways that subaltern desires are interpreted through the lens of the elite. To Spivak, when a subaltern group makes a statement or takes an action, it is re-interpreted by elites through the lens of the dominant epistemology. The meaning

of that statement or action is changed by this interpretation, and so the original meaning is corrupted. Furthermore, the meanings become so corrupted by this re-presentation that the final statement no longer reflects the accurate voice of the subaltern. In this way, hermeneutic injustice occurs because the interpretive framework of a society is inadequate for understanding the subaltern voice. Both forms of epistemic injustice - testimonial and hermeneutic - impact a person's ability to "be heard." Thus, both impact the epistemic promise of a political process.

As defined above, epistemic promise is the likelihood that a person's input will have an impact on the outcomes of a political process. My thesis posits that a participant evaluates the epistemic promise of a process and decides to participate in that process if the epistemic promise is high enough. In the Jamaican context, there are numerous structural influences on epistemic justice that will be described in subsequent sections. They include the influences of external and internal power structures including global political institutions, local government, pressures from the tourism industry, and discrimination based on the intersection of factors such as gender, skin color, sexual orientation and disability (Kamugisha, 2007). I propose that many Jamaicans believe that many available local participatory processes have low epistemic promise. Thus, low participation could be the result of processes with low epistemic promise. Thus, one way to increase political participation may be to make an intentional effort to increase the epistemic promise of the system. The following sections explore the limitations to the epistemic promise of political participation for Jamaicans.

Global Influences on Jamaican Politics: A Historical Summary

A history of colonialism, neo-colonialism and the global development agenda places restrictions on Jamaica's autonomy as a country, and thus places restrictions on the power of Jamaican citizens to determine the future of their country. I propose that threats to epistemic justice

lower the epistemic promise of any participatory process. In previous research, I interviewed nine researchers in Jamaica, and found that threats to epistemic justice exist at global, national and local levels of the community research process in Jamaica (Lyew, 2018). This finding illustrates how political context influences the depth of participation in community research projects. For example, the interviewees noted that community members may be included in a research process, but external influences such as the wishes of funders have an outsized influence on the outcomes of community research processes (Lyew, 2018). Applying this finding, I posit that the outcomes of other participatory processes are also subject to multiple levels of influence. Thus, to effectively evaluate these threats to epistemic justice, there must first be an understanding of the Jamaican political context.

I begin with a brief timeline of colonialism in Jamaica, which began in 1494, when Christopher Columbus first landed there. The locale now known as Jamaica was originally called Xaymaca by the Taino people who are its indigenous inhabitants. The Spaniards massacred the Taino people to take control of the land. Those that were not killed in the violent struggles over land were enslaved. Others died due to exposure to diseases carried by the colonizers. Although a small Taino population still remains in Jamaica today, the population has decreased significantly. Many Jamaican schools today teach that the Taino people were completely eliminated by the Spaniards (Williams, 2014). After Spanish colonization, the British captured the island in 1655. As part of the Transatlantic Slave Trade, British colonizers brought thousands of people from West Africa and enslaved them to work on plantations, sending most of the profits back to the British Empire. Groups of formerly enslaved Black people escaped and formed a community called the Maroons, who continued to fight the English until a treaty was passed declaring Maroons free and owners of land. Slavery was formally abolished in Jamaica in 1838 (Ibanez & Rao, 2003). In 1938

Norman Manley and his cousin Alexander Bustamante formed the first Jamaican political party, the People's National Party (PNP), with the explicit purpose of ending British colonial rule. Bustamante separated from the PNP in 1943 and founded the Jamaica Labour Party (JLP). When Jamaica became independent in 1962, Bustamante became its first Prime Minister and the Jamaican Constitution was established on August 6 of that year.

Kamugisha (2007) writes that during the Caribbean struggles for independence from Britain, leaders of the independence movement espoused a vision of participatory citizenship. Leaders spoke of a Jamaica in which the Jamaican people would determine the future of the country, unencumbered by the colonial government. The movement leaders claimed they were working towards equality for all Caribbean citizens. However, Kamugisha (2007) suggests that after independence there was a shift away from that vision. Members of the upper- and middle-classes of the new post-colonial nations were more interested in the emulation of a Western model of citizenship than in the creation of an equitable society (Alexander, 1994; Kamugisha, 2007; Meeks, 1994). Afro-creole nationalism is the term used to describe this mindset of the upper- and middle-classes, in which the major goal of the movement for independence was sovereignty and development. By positioning the colonizers as the only oppressors, Afro-creole nationalists were able to unite the country against British colonizers while simultaneously ignoring inequality along lines of race and class within the newly independent Jamaica. Afro-creole nationalism still exists today in the Caribbean, robbing many poor and Black Caribbean people of their full citizenships by focusing the aims of the country on national development rather than social equity within Jamaica.

In 1972, Michael Manley (PNP) became Jamaica's second Prime Minister, ushering in an era of socialism that aligned with other political activity in Latin America at the time. The 1970s

were largely considered a time of turmoil for the Jamaican public that included mass migration of elites away from the island, and an increase in political violence on the island. The backlash against Manley's socialist policies opened the door for the conservative JLP to gain power. In 1980, the JLP came into power and advocated for more free market policies, which exposed the island to more influence from the United States (U.S.). Sheller (2005) describes the impacts of structural adjustments in the Caribbean. Structural adjustment refers to policies that are put in place to encourage the growth of a country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) after they have taken a loan from the U.S.-controlled International Monetary Fund (IMF). The IMF establishes a set of rules that countries agree to abide by in order to repay their debts and grow the economy. These rules from the IMF are largely context independent and have been shown to have negative impacts on developing nations because of the focus on economic growth over other metrics such as quality of life (Sheller, 2005). These policies changed how Caribbean countries could participate in global trade and restricted government spending on public goods and infrastructure.

In reference to this precarious political situation, Meeks (2014), a Jamaican political theorist, writes:

> For countries like Jamaica, then, caught in the fakir's stare of neo-liberalism, the primary policy question has been how to follow the rules of the game more thoroughly, how to make the state "lean and mean," how to find that elusive niche and how to take full advantage of the purported comparative advantage with the economic wealth and well-being that should naturally follow. The dismal result has been a collapse of the productive economy, the exacerbation of the gap between rich and poor, the impoverishment of the countryside, a massive export of talent,

the undermining of the state, and, in some instances, an all-class crisis or process

of hegemonic dissolution (p.139-140).

Meeks continues, defining hegemonic dissolution as:

A disconnection by significant sections of the population from a formal order that

they no longer feel any loyalty toward, that they perceive to have disrespected them

repeatedly, and that is no longer able to provide many with the modicum of a decent

livelihood (p. 136-137).

Meeks' (2014) notion of hegemonic dissolution can also be connected to epistemic promise. For

example, when deciding whether to participate politically, I suggest that Jamaicans may evaluate

the formal system of Jamaican government and find that there is low epistemic promise. Thus,

they may no longer wish to participate in the formal system. Meeks (2014) posits that Jamaicans

observe the political system and believe that it does not truly work for them, they then disconnect

from the formal system. He names this act of disconnecting, "hegemonic dissolution". I posit that

the trait of the system that participants observe is actually the lack of epistemic promise[1]. Meeks

(2014) argues that an informal system arose from this hegemonic dissolution, which now coexists

alongside the formal political system in Jamaica. For a more complete picture of the effects of

structural adjustments in Jamaica, the documentary *Life and Debt* provides an ethnographic study

of how IMF policies impact the daily lives of Jamaicans (Black, 2001). Black (2001) shows how:

many local farmers have been crowded out of the market by the influx of cheap goods; U.S.

'freezones' in Jamaica underpay workers and send the profits directly back to the U.S. corporations

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[1] Epistemic promise differs from Meeks' (2014) hegemonic dissolution in that they refer to different subjects. Hegemonic dissolution describes peoples' *reactions* to a political environment where they feel abandoned. Epistemic promise refers to a trait of political processes that people can observe. Specifically, how open a process is to their inputs. In my concept, perceiving that a political process has low epistemic promise may lead a person to make an agentic choice not to engage in that process. However, this does not necessarily mean they disconnect from formal politics in general. Conversely, hegemonic dissolution assumes that feeling abandoned by the political environment broadly leads to people disconnecting from formal politics and entering informal politics.

that take part; and, the dairy and banana industries specifically have suffered under structural adjustment.

Another structural factor influencing Jamaican citizens is the tourism industry. Kamugisha (2007) argues that the prevalence of the tourism industry prevents Caribbean citizens from having a say in the country's direction. More (mostly Western) tourists enter Caribbean countries each year than there are nationals of Caribbean countries. Caribbean governments tend to make decisions with the tourism product in mind because tourism is the most profitable export for most small Caribbean nations. Thus, the needs of Caribbean citizens often become secondary to the needs of tourists. Black (2001) in her documentary *Life and Debt* shows how tourism became a more powerful industry because of the trade restrictions placed on Jamaica. This dynamic- where Western visitors are more "heard" than locals- is also influenced by the Afro-creole nationalist drive for development. Kamugisha (2007) contends that based on the numbers of yearly tourists to the region, there is just as much consumption of the Caribbean by the West as there was during colonial times. As such, tourism threatens the epistemic promise of participatory processes for many Caribbean citizens. No matter what Caribbean citizens want, the needs of the tourism industry will still have a significant influence on political outcomes.

In addition to the impacts of structural adjustment and tourism, Jamaica is also under the influence of a global development agenda. Rist (2019) proposes that the rhetoric of development neatly replaces that of colonialism without much change in the material conditions of the countries involved. Former colonizers are now called "developed" nations, while nations that were formerly colonized are "developing". Essentially, Rist (2019) argues that today's development power structure is the same as the power structures that existed during colonialism. Moreover, he contends that today, the financial influence of colonizers has been rebranded under the terms

"foreign aid" and "development assistance". This help comes with a political price. Poorer countries must appease wealthier countries to maintain the flow of aid and assistance, especially as the discussion of global reparations remains at the margins. To change these dynamics would require a global shift in which the impacts of colonialism are recognized. However, such change is unlikely because the Caribbean region has much less political power than Western countries in large international organizations. For example, the United Nations (U.N.) is one of the only bodies large enough to call for reparations in a meaningful way, but the countries with the most political power in the U.N. have also participated in colonization (Sheller, 2005).

Despite the lack of radical structural change, there have been some incremental changes to global development practice. Recognizing some of the limitations of development practices in the 1980s, large development agencies started to move away from prescribing interventions towards "building capacity" in Global South countries, emphasizing ownership of development processes by local institutions in different countries (Rist, 2019). However, analyzing interviews with nine Jamaican community researchers, I found that many of those researchers believe that development practices reflect empowerment in name only, and do not often involve locals in decision-making in practice (Lyew, 2018). Currently, government-controlled community development initiatives such as the Jamaica Social Investment Fund and the Social Development Commission stand alongside community-based organizations (CBOs), non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and development agencies act as contributors to community development in the country. Because development agencies are the major funders of community development initiatives, they have the strongest influence on the solutions that researchers and practitioners explore, exploration timelines, the means of exploration, and the communities to be included (Lyew, 2018). An examination of three participatory development projects in Jamaica revealed similar issues. Project

evaluators reported outsized influence by funders, limited resources to support participatory efforts, and in one case, a "false consultation cloaking the search for electoral advantage" (Ward, 2010, p. 191). Thus, although locals can participate in community development, much of this participation is still constrained by outside forces, which threatens the narrative in development practice that more participation equals more power. This logic that participation equals empowerment has led to what Dagnino (2007, p.549) calls a "perverse confluence" of neoliberal values underlying supposedly empowering projects of civic participation.

Citizenship and Epistemic Promise

To understand the limits to epistemic promise, we must also understand how citizenship is framed, and who is afforded the benefits of citizenship. For example, Dagnino (2007) states that different definitions of citizenship have been conflated, resulting in the erasure of the more radical forms of citizenship that were first pursued in Latin American and Caribbean struggles for independence. Dagnino (2007) traces the history of these forms of citizenship, describing the participatory democratic form of citizenship pursued before independence. Participatory democratic citizenship focuses on determining the rights one wants to have and working towards those outcomes through a social movement. She compares this form of citizenship to new neoliberal citizen, in which the role of a citizen is to be a productive member of society. In a neoliberal vision, the state reduces its protections, and the market becomes the place where one can work to earn the rights of citizenship. Moreover, Dagnino (2007) argues that this confluence stifles the citizenship that was pursued by activists fighting for independence, and that the distinction between these two different visions for Latin America's future should be clearer. With the move towards more neoliberal policies in the 1980s, the national framing of Jamaican citizenship became more aligned with the neoliberal citizen than the participatory citizen.

As illustrated above, Jamaica's political position as a country in the Global South comes with numerous external political dynamics that constrain local politics. These dynamics thus constrain the epistemic promise of many local participatory processes. Even if political processes directly connected Jamaicans to the Jamaican government, many political outcomes would still be moderated by the influence of external power dynamics including structural adjustment, tourism, limited international power, and a global development agenda (Black, 2001; Dagnino, 2007; Kamugisha, 2007; Sheller, 2005). Further, these global power dynamics connect directly to the extreme inequality created by colonizers during colonialism (Dagnino, 2007; Rist, 2010). They also connect directly to who is afforded the rights of citizenship.

In addition to the external influences on Jamaican politics, there are also social dynamics within the country that marginalize the desires of some Jamaicans more than others. Kamugisha (2007) contends that in contemporary Caribbean society there are numerous oppressive norms around gender roles and heteronormativity that are based in colonial practices. Regarding women's rights, the popular discourse is that women received their rights with independence and so anything further is asking too much. Regarding LGBTQ rights, sexual acts are largely criminalized to further heteronormative hegemony. Thus, women, LGBTQ people and others who do not fit into the gender and heteronormative norms of the Caribbean society in which they are citizens are not afforded full rights supposedly guaranteed by citizenship. Afro-creole nationalism, as described above, also feeds into classism in Jamaica where the upper classes largely ignore class and color inequality in the country. This dynamic creates a situation in which classism is blatant both interpersonally and institutionally (Kamugisha, 2007).

There are numerous other marginalized Jamaicans, including Jamaicans with disabilities, indigenous Jamaicans, Jamaicans experiencing homelessness, darker skinned Jamaicans, and

Jamaicans who mostly speak patois[2]. In a number of ways each of these groups is robbed of full citizenship by erasure in the popular discourse (i.e., Jamaicans with disabilities and Taino people), and/or by classist/colorist beliefs in the inferiority of what they have to say. In her book *Exceptional Violence: Embodied Citizenship in Jamaica,* Thomas (2011) argues that a reparations framework must be employed to truly understand the limits of citizenship for many marginalized groups in Jamaica. By considering reparations, that is, what has been lost and what should be rectified, we can fully appreciate the ways in which citizenship was taken from many Jamaicans historically and in present systems, both by colonizers of the past and upper-class Jamaicans of the present. In these ways, the marginalization of certain Jamaicans also constitutes epistemic injustice. If not intentionally mitigated, these epistemic injustices are present in any participatory processes. Participatory processes must pursue epistemic justice in a way that centers the most marginalized, or else risk further marginalizing such groups. Thus, one's personal social standing also influences the epistemic promise of political processes in Jamaica.

As presented in this and the prior section, Jamaicans are subject to numerous inter- and intra-country influences on their political activity. I propose that many Jamaicans are aware of the numerous forces limiting the epistemic promise of formal political processes, and as such, do not participate in politics. In the following section, I discuss the narrative of the "hopeless Jamaican," as illustrated in newspaper articles over the years.

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[2] Patois is an English-based creole spoken widely in Jamaica. English is used for most formal public activity, for example English is spoken in the courtroom and written in newspaper articles (McArthur, 2018). As patois is the first language spoken in the home of many working-class Jamaicans, there is a movement to make patois one of the official languages of Jamaica. Activists suggest that the relegation of patois to a "dialect" rather than an official language is a remnant of colonialism (Douglas, 2012).

A Case for Hopelessness in Jamaican Newspapers

A popular narrative in Jamaican newspapers is that Jamaican citizens, particularly youth, are politically apathetic because they suffer from profound hopelessness. These media narratives are mirrored in the academic literature on political participation in Jamaica. Thus, the theme of hopelessness emerges as one of the most important conversations in both discussions about political participation and Jamaica's development. Some writers and academic authors provide individualistic reasons for this hopelessness; others focus on structural problems in the current political system, a history of violence in political activity, and the legacy of colonialism. Although some Jamaicans may be experiencing hopelessness, I propose that most persons are not hopeless, but rather make an evaluation of the political processes available to them and determine that these processes have low epistemic promise. Given processes with low epistemic promise, such Jamaicans do not see the purpose or benefit of participating. The distinction between hopelessness and low epistemic promise is illustrated in quotes below, taken from Jamaican newspaper articles. Although for some readers, they can serve as evidence of hopelessness or political apathy, they can also be re-interpreted through the lens of epistemic promise. Concepts and phrases that illustrate my premise are in bold in each quote.

In a column in *The Jamaica Observer*, Professor Louis Moyston argues that youth have been apathetic about Jamaican politics since the 1980s, and today's politicians are still missing an opportunity to involve youth (Moyston, 2019). He draws from a newspaper article written in 1989 called *Young Jamaicans and Politics*:

> With everyone else caught up with the economic adjustments/restructuring, our young people went without a moral direction and the opportunity to be politically involved. Truly, that feeling of involvement that characterised the youth of the

1970s gave way in the 1980s to a feeling of **hopelessness, political apathy (and alienation)** [emphasis added], and a strong craving after material and American values (n.p.).

Moyston (2019) notes that the national focus on structural adjustments precipitated feelings of hopelessness and apathy in Jamaican youth. However, it is just as likely that young Jamaicans could have realized how structural adjustments increased the political influence of the U.S. in Jamaica, and thus concluded that there was low epistemic promise in participating in politics. In addition, these young people perceived that they did not matter in the system, and so they stopped participating. Thus, my proposed lens provides an alternate rationale for their limited participation.

In another Letter to the Editor from 2019, Dudley C. Maclean II writes about the continued problem of political garrisons in Jamaica, stating that they should be rooted out. Garrisons are political strongholds that have existed since the 1970s, which have been tied to political violence. McLean II (2019) writes:

> The poverty in these communities is deliberately designed by the political parties to ensure that the needs of constituents are barely met. **Garrisons sustain dependency on the parties, or their dons and gangs, with the outcome being the delivery of votes at election time.** [emphasis added] This is institutional evil personified, and results in dehumanisation...the dehumanisation of our citizens also creates mental health issues (n.p.).

Both McLean (2019) and Moyston (2019) connect structural dynamics to psychological outcomes, arguing that harmful historical political structures continue to have negative impacts on the psychology of Jamaican people to this day. Jamaicans living in garrisons can (accurately) assess that they have limited actual input in a political process controlled by dons (gang leaders who are

informal leaders of the community). The epistemic promise of voting then is low, though participation may be higher because they are forced to do so under threat of violence by the dons. According to this news report, many Jamaicans living in garrisons feel disempowered because they are not truly heard.

In 2018, a speech by a prominent member of the police force offered another possible reason for the proposed hopelessness of Jamaican citizens:

> Ewen Corrodus, the custos rotulorum of St James, believes that the current wave of crime affecting Jamaica is being fueled by a sense of **hopelessness stemming from the belief that nobody is listening to the cries of the nation's citizens** [emphasis added] (Thomas, 2018, n.p.).

Corrodus connects hopelessness to a current political problem - the result of citizens not being really heard by representatives. Moreover, he suggests that this pattern contributes to crime in Jamaica. "Nobody is listening" implies a political process with low epistemic promise. This quote connects hopelessness to an observation that there is low chance of being heard. Moreover, the statement suggests that there is a conscious evaluation on the part of citizens; they notice that "nobody is listening". Because people observe that no one is listening to their concerns, they conclude that participation has low epistemic promise, and thus, do not participate.

In another example, an investigative reporter set out to understand why many youths in Jamaica did not vote in the 2016 election. One university student admits; "I haven't seen any party making much of a difference, so like the average youth, I did not vote because of a lack of faith in the politicians." Another student comments: "Because over the years of witnessing both administrations, and looking at where we are now, I haven't seen the need to exercise my right because **I am left with no choices** [emphasis added]. So, you can almost say that I did vote, but it

was **a vote of no confidence in both major parties** [emphasis added]" (Carter, 2016, n.p.). The sentiments of the above students also speak to a gap in the current political system. The first student, like many other Jamaicans, believes there is no significant difference between the competency and the political stances of the two major political parties. The second student asserts that he did not vote as a signal of a lack of confidence in both parties. He made an intentional choice based on his observation of the system. Both students' comments challenge the hopelessness hypothesis. I contend that neither student is hopeless, but rather both are dissatisfied with the current system. Their choices not to vote actually appear to be acts of protest. The first student does not believe her voice will impact the outcome of the election, because both choices result in the same outcome. The second student similarly sees no discernible difference. Both students have made conscious evaluations that voting has low epistemic promise, thus, they choose not to vote.

In 2015, Dee Kyne, a foreign development worker, comments on the "deep sense of hopelessness" in Jamaica in an article in *The Guardian* (Kyne, 2015, n.p.). She attributes this trait largely to the control of global development institutions over Jamaica's development agenda (Kyne, 2015). In this instance, hopelessness is conceptualized as a reaction to even more powerful forces than Jamaica's politics. Hopelessness in this case is characterized as a reaction to global political forces, which render a country's citizens unable to articulate their own vision for the future. As discussed previously in this paper, these are global epistemic injustices. To such Jamaicans, the epistemic promise of Jamaica's political processes is lowered by the influence of these epistemic injustices, as discussed in sections above. In 2014, Garfield Higgins, a Jamaican educator and journalist wrote about "the crisis of hopelessness":

Various polls and studies over the last 25 years on the question of how Jamaicans

view their government and a future in Jamaica have shown that cynicism exists in

abundance. It is now rock solid. **Thousands of Jamaicans no longer see our**

country as the place where their fortunes, hopes and dreams can be realised

[emphasis added] (Higgins, 2014, n.p.).

Higgins comments on the prevalence of this feeling among elderly Jamaicans who he visited. Thus,

he suggests that hopelessness manifests among older Jamaicans as well as youth. Higgins (2014),

like Kyne (2015) above, also notes how difficult it is for Jamaican citizens to envision a positive

future. Low epistemic promise might also explain this feeling. In such an instance, Jamaicans have

evaluated the state of the country, and perhaps the country's political processes, and determined

that they can no longer realize their dreams there. This sentiment suggests that there is limited

possibility to change the situation in Jamaica, that is, there is low epistemic promise in the

traditional methods of change.

As a final example, in a Letter to the Editor in 2009, Sarah Wilks describes the connections

between labelling and hopelessness:

There are some persons in the media and the political arena who have so abused

the phrase "poor people of Jamaica" that I have come to hate the phrase as much as

I hate poverty. The continuous labelling of Jamaicans by these influential persons

is creating a psychology of poverty which is fast becoming part of our culture. **It is**

creating a state of "learned helplessness". [emphasis added] I would suggest that

we, the people of Jamaica, especially in these hard times, reject this damaging label.

Jamaicans are a powerful, highly creative people. **We must believe that our**

present condition is within our scope to change [emphasis added] (Wilks, 2009,

n.p.).

Here, Wilks (2019) suggests that a change in psychological mindset could combat helplessness in citizens[3]. This comment is another example of the ways in which certain Jamaicans associate hopelessness with their compatriots and conceptualize individualized solutions for such helplessness. If this response is interpreted differently, Jamaicans may be acting based on perceptions of the low epistemic promise of the system. The labelling may serve to further confirm to some Jamaicans that they do not have much credibility in spaces that foster political change, and thus there is no point in participating. In addition, Wilks (2009) notes that Jamaicans need to "believe that our present condition is within our scope to change." However, considering the intra- and inter-country political dynamics discussed earlier in this paper, some Jamaicans are correct that in many ways the present conditions are not within their scope to change.

In summary, representative quotes from the news sources above illustrate a shared thesis about connections between political participation and the political efficacy of Jamaican citizens. The above examples also illustrate how a thesis that connects low participation to a sense of helplessness and hopelessness is shared by both academics and non-academics, middle-class and working-class writers, as well as public sector and private sector workers. Some writers point to historical political shifts as the root cause of political apathy, others to a lack of trust in politicians and the current political process. Some persons point to an individually controllable mindset linked to cynicism or helplessness; and still others to a belief that no one is listening to most citizens. Although most of the narratives in the news connect hopelessness to a lack of participation, a few,

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[3] in psychology, learned helplessness refers to a passivity that develops after a person is repeatedly exposed to a situation in which he has little control. The person seems to give up, and loses hope in better outcomes (Peterson, Maier & Seligman, 1995).

like the example of the students' above, consider a lack of participation to be a protest against a flawed political system where citizens have few choices available to them. Overall, these examples illustrate that hopelessness is conceptualized by many Jamaicans as a response by citizens to a hopeless political system. I contend that this explanation more appropriately aligns with a perception of low epistemic promise in the political system.

Variables Related to Political Participation

In the literature, participation is related to a number of variables, including political efficacy, socioeconomic status, fear of victimization, and access to knowledge (Finkel, 1985; Klesner, 2009; Bourne et al., 2017; Corcoran et al., 2015). Each dynamic is defined and discussed in this section. Political participation in this paper refers to actions taken with the aim to influence outcomes related to governance or politics (Verba & Nie, 1987). The concept of political efficacy refers to one's belief that their political action matters (Finkel, 1985)[4]. Based on the analysis of Jamaican newspaper quotes in the previous section, a lack of political participation might be minimally a direct protest of a hopeless political system, or a passive outcome of feeling hopeless. Many Jamaicans wonder why they should participate politically when (1) they have not experienced significant change in recent times, and (2) they are ignored when they attempt to participate (Carter, 2016; Thomas, 2018; Moyston, 2019). I posit that these concerns can be understood based on epistemic justice. Specifically, when we consider the epistemic promise of Jamaica's political processes, the root cause of the issue pivots from hopeless citizens to a hopeless political process. In addition, citizens make evaluative judgments about the efficacy of

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[4] Note, the distinction between political efficacy and epistemic promise is detailed in Paper Two. Briefly, political efficacy refers to an individual's belief about their individual capacity to make a change, or a political system's likelihood of changing. Conversely, perceived epistemic promise is an individual's perception of a political process' openness to their inputs. Actual epistemic promise refers to the actual openness of the political process to participant input. Political efficacy is a broader concept than epistemic promise and does not refer to any trait of a political system, rather it refers to people's beliefs about the system.

participating in political processes. Thus, rather than being hopeless, they are being agentic. I propose that when many Jamaicans believe many avenues for political participation in Jamaica have low epistemic promise, they decide not to participate in a hopeless system. In addition, in doing so, being agentic means *choosing not to participate*.

Academic literature on the topic of political participation in Jamaica mirrors the themes of the letters and news reports in the prior section. For example, Waller (2013) describes the apathy faced by many Caribbean youth towards political participation. He considers the benefits of Facebook as a site for political discussions. He finds that although Facebook performs a platform for political discussions, being active on Facebook does not usually lead to political participation. Youth included in the study state that they are afraid of political victimization in which they might be violently targeted for their political views. As individual-level factors, both political efficacy and fear of victimization seem to be significant barriers to political participation in this context.

In an analysis of the 2010 Latin American Popular Opinion Project, Powell et al. (2011) find that subjective political efficacy in Jamaica is low. They define political efficacy as the individual belief that one's political actions make a difference. However, political efficacy is distinct from epistemic promise in that political efficacy refers to an individual's belief about their individual capacity. Conversely, epistemic promise is an individual's perception of the system's capacity for hearing their opinions. Individuals responded to statements that measure efficacy, such as: "The average citizen can have an influence on government decisions," or "This country is run by a few people with power, and there is not much people like you can do about it." Findings show that 74% of Jamaicans agreed with the second, non-efficacious statement; 64% of respondents also agreed that the party one votes for does not make a difference. Moreover, 51% of participants believed that many Jamaicans are victims of forces they can neither understand nor

control. The authors conclude that this sense of powerlessness is based on the perception that an uncaring elite control the country, such that political action by the masses is almost meaningless. They also find that efficacy is positively correlated with a wide variety of self-reported political activity and engagement measures such as voting, attempting to convince others to vote, attending meetings of a community improvement committee, and interest in politics. Efficacy also strongly correlates with a number of measures of trust in the sociopolitical institutions of Jamaica, such as trust in the national government and pride in living under the Jamaican political system. Thus, Powell et al. (2011) correlate political efficacy with both activity and trust.

Additionally, Bourne et al. (2017) examine correlates of political participation in Jamaica. Based on a 2006 survey, they measure political participation based on factors such as voting and willingness to participate in protests. They find that political participation in Jamaica is positively correlated with age, confidence, perception of corruption, and religiosity, and negatively correlated with father's education, psychological well-being, and mother's education. Moreover, their findings mirror other studies by illustrating that political efficacy influences participation. The authors' confidence measure is similar to measures of external efficacy. Thus, it is a measure of an individual's perception of the competence of the government. The proposed relationship of external efficacy to epistemic promise is detailed in a later section of this paper. Briefly, political efficacy refers to an individual's belief about either their capacity to make a change or a political system's capacity to change. Conversely, perceived epistemic promise is an individual's perception of a political process' openness to their inputs. Actual epistemic promise is the true openness of the process to participant inputs. Bourne et al. (2017) also identify other salient factors that could be considered individual-level influences.

Although efficacy is linked to political participation, focusing on individual political efficacy may not always be the solution. In the U.S., Rodgers' (1974) shows that many Black students feel less political efficacy. However, their reasons are not personal or individual. Rather, Black students in the study feel apathy towards an oppressive system. Upon reflection on their place in the U.S hierarchy, such students become cynical about the potential for social change. Rodgers' (1974) results can inform the Jamaican context by illustrating that although political efficacy is an important predictor of political participation, efficacy is affected by dynamics beyond individual factors. Although dated, Rodgers' (1974) results might also reflect the missing factor of epistemic promise. That is, Black students understand that the political system does not consider them - it has low epistemic promise for them. They then have low efficacy because they understand the true, limited promise of the system to meet their views, needs, and concerns.

Although studies illustrate that political participation is strongly connected to political efficacy, in both Jamaica and other countries, I posit that fostering political efficacy is only made possible when epistemic justice (i.e., really hearing citizens' comments and concerns), is given priority in the way the public interacts with political representatives. Increasing the epistemic promise of participatory processes should increase the political efficacy of many individuals facing the process. In theory, one would have more political efficacy because one's belief in their own personal capacity for change in the system would increase if the system were more open to their opinions. That is, if the epistemic promise of a system increases, the political efficacy of individuals interacting with the system would be expected to increase. Extending this premise, political participation would increase by increasing political efficacy. Thus, I propose that increasing epistemic promise should increase both efficacy and participation. Given the proposed importance of epistemic promise to political participation, in the following sections, I propose

considerations that designers should take to increase the epistemic promise of participatory processes. Specifically, I introduce a method called Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) that could be used to evaluate the epistemic promise of a system.

Psychological Constructs Related to Participation

The literature on participation spans numerous academic fields and considers many contributing variables (some of which are included as control variables in Paper Two). Of these, there are numerous psychological constructs that are included in the discussion. For example, in the field of Community Psychology, scholars have examined the effect of social perceptions and behaviors such as neighboring, sense of community, place attachment and social capital on civic participation (Perkins & Long, 2002; Xu, Perkins & Chow, 2010). In addition, scholars have studied the relationship between environmental factors and civic engagement. For example, one recent paper found that at the national level, political rights, civil liberties and political decentralization significantly predict both volunteer and voter participation (Perkins, Ozgurer, Lupton & Omidvar-Tehrani, 2021). For the purposes of this paper, I focus on the comparison between epistemic promise and the most similar concepts to it in the literature. Specifically, these constructs include empowerment, mattering, and (as mentioned briefly) political efficacy. Despite the existence of similar concepts to epistemic promise in the literature, I posit that epistemic promise addresses issues found in some of these alternative concepts as they relate to participation.

Traditionally, efforts that seek to increase political participation of Jamaicans are framed using theories of empowerment. In the field of Community Psychology, empowerment is often a goal of participatory practices. Empowerment theory links individual capabilities to support systems and social change; empowerment involves giving individuals the means to make change (Rappaport, 1987). Empowerment also refers to building power at multiple levels: building

individual strengths; building an individual's power through involvement in organizations; and, building organizations' power through coalitions of organizations (Speer & Hughey, 1995).

However, empowerment as a construct has received some valid criticisms. Christens (2012) states that the discipline of community psychology tends to focus on individual or micro-level results when defining empowerment and thus ignores important questions of power. Moreover, he contends that this tendency undermines the ability to more critically identify and potentially rectify more meso- and macro-level societal problems. Perkins (1995) posits that more attention should be paid to empowerment at multiple levels, and that empowerment cannot be divorced from policy. Similarly, Riger (1993) critiques the use of the concept of empowerment in this same discipline. For her, this practice tends to emphasize a sense of empowerment for individuals rather than actual increases in power for collectives. Riger (1993) also contends that the concept of empowerment sets as its goal a form of domination or mastery over others, rather than a communal effort towards betterment. She criticizes this focus as shortsighted as well as masculinized. Thus, although empowerment is the goal of many participatory interventions, these authors contend that there could be other useful ways to consider building power through participation.

Further complicating the issue, in the field of community development in the Global South, numerous authors have contested the logic that more participation equates to more empowerment. These authors point to the limits of participation as a panacea for just development. For one, often the extent of participation in community development is controlled by entities outside the community (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Christens & Speer, 2006; Lyew, 2018). In addition, the rhetoric of participation obscures existing power dynamics. Participation alone also does not mean participants have meaningful entry into decision-making processes. Development rhetoric would

have one believe that grassroots groups hold the power during participatory projects. In reality their participation often merely lends credence to decisions already made by development agencies (Cooke & Kothari, 2001; Hickey & Mohan, 2004; Christens & Speer, 2006). To combat the ways participatory rhetoric obscures power dynamics, Christens and Speer (2006) suggest a more pragmatic approach to participatory development such that more experimentation and thought be given to defining the desired outcomes and values of participatory development. Rather than merely focusing on the amount of participation, the means and mechanisms of participation should also be considered.

Using epistemic promise as a lens enables us to address some of the shortfalls of empowerment, such as a lack of focus on power, and broadens the scope to focus on the connections between systemic flaws and individual experiences. By focusing on the barriers to epistemic justice in specific mechanisms of political participation, as proposed by Christens and Speer (2006), our questions will now focus on *meaningful* access to participatory processes.

Political efficacy is another concept relevant to epistemic promise. Political efficacy is typically divided in the literature into internal and external efficacy (Valentino et al., 2008). Collective efficacy is also an important predictor of participation (Perkins, Brown & Taylor, 1996). Internal efficacy has to do with a person's beliefs about their own capacity to make change through their political actions. External efficacy refers to a person's beliefs about their ability to make change in certain systems. Collective efficacy refers to the belief of members of a group that they can make a political change together (Wandersman & Florin, 2000). Of these three forms of efficacy, external efficacy is most related to epistemic promise. As stated earlier, there are two forms of epistemic promise-- actual and perceived. Perceived epistemic promise refers to an individual's beliefs about the likelihood their inputs will impact the outcomes of a process. Actual

epistemic promise refers to the actual likelihood a participant's inputs will impact the outcomes, measured by how many epistemic exclusions remain in the process. External efficacy is similar to perceived epistemic promise, but not to actual epistemic promise.

The distinctions between perceived external efficacy and epistemic promise will be explored in more detail in Paper Two. However, briefly, external efficacy is a broader concept than perceived epistemic promise and is more focused on the individual's belief about their own capacity in a system. Epistemic promise is also a trait associated with a particular political process, while external efficacy broadly refers to an individual's perception of making change in a wider political system. Thus, epistemic promise is a helpful concept for political science because it is a way to conceptualize the failings of a process as observed by many people, and as influenced by context. I posit that one's external efficacy can often be an accurate approximation of how much their inputs can actually have an impact on the outputs of a system. Thus, external efficacy in some cases can be an individual's perception of a system's epistemic promise. The process has high or low epistemic promise for different people with varying levels of epistemic power based on its design and the context in which it exists. The epistemic promise of a system may be evaluated by anyone, using an evaluative framework that aims for epistemic justice (a proposal for such an evaluative method is discussed in later sections). However, it is important to distinguish external efficacy from epistemic promise because although external efficacy refers to factors outside the individual, the measure of efficacy is focused on the individual rather than the process.

Similarly, *mattering* is a psychological concept that is measured on an individual basis but reflects an individual's judgements about social structures. Although community psychologists have engaged the concept of mattering, it is usually examined in terms of its relationship to the mental and physical health of individuals. Studies suggest that if individuals feel they matter (i.e.,

they count, they are significant or they are important) to specific people, in their community, at school, or in other spaces, they tend to have better mental health (Flett, 2018). In his book on the psychology of mattering, Flett (2018) provides an overview of the topic and proposes future directions. He calls for more research on the connections between mattering and sense of community. However, to my knowledge, studies have not connected the concept of mattering to participatory processes.

I posit that when a participant evaluates the epistemic promise of a process, they consider whether they matter in the process. Thus, a participant's deliberate judgment of the extent to which they matter guides their perception about whether a process has low or high epistemic promise. Evaluating the epistemic promise of a system for a specific actor can then reveal (1) perceived epistemic promise (or external efficacy) which is whether people believe the process reflects low or high epistemic promise, and (2) actual epistemic promise or the chance that an individual's input in the process will matter during the decision-making stages of the process.

Thus, although similar concepts have been explored, I posit that epistemic promise adds a new dimension to the exploration of participation. For example, there are a number of benefits to using epistemic promise as a framework rather than hopelessness. In the table below, I present the proposed differences in framing when using epistemic promise as opposed to hopelessness to analyze the issue of low political participation of Jamaicans.

Table 1

Framing Low Political Participation Using Hopelessness Versus Epistemic Promise

Issue: Low political participation	Hopelessness	Epistemic Promise
Jamaicans are:	Apathetic and have given up on the possibility of a better country. Thus, they do not participate.	Agentic, and they have observed that their inputs do not make much difference in the outputs of political processes, thus they do not participate.
Path to improvement	Focus on how to make individual citizens believe in the value of political participation. Focus on increasing individual capacity to participate in current political processes.	Focus on how to improve participatory processes such that Jamaicans are meaningfully heard and have access to decision-making processes.

Role of government	Government should: ● Reduce the appearance of corruption ● Provide civic education ● Provide more appealing visions for the future of Jamaica.	Government should: ● Prioritize transparency and public participation in decision making processes ● Evaluate participatory processes for their epistemic promise ● Value accountability ● Trust that Jamaicans can articulate a vision for the future if given the forum to do so.
Ultimate Goal	To have more political participation by Jamaicans. An example of success would be increasing the number of voters.	To have more meaningful political participation by Jamaicans. An example of success would be the creation of a participatory national budgeting process.

As presented above, I posit that using the concept of epistemic promise opens more avenues for structural change than using the concept of hopelessness to explain Jamaicans' political participation. In addition, epistemic promise positions Jamaicans as agentic individuals who make active decisions about whether they should participate in a process. To expand the concept of epistemic promise, I present the characteristics of this concept below.

Operationalizing Epistemic Promise

In summary, I propose that epistemic promise has the potential to explain low participation in Jamaica. I also propose that the concept adds to established concepts in political and community psychology. Based on the application of theories of epistemic justice to sentiments of Jamaicans towards their political system, epistemic promise has the following characteristics:

1. Epistemic promise (EP) can be (a) an individual observation of structural problems with a process, and (b) a measure used to evaluate a participatory process.

2. EP has been supported anecdotally and in newspaper articles.

3. EP is predicted by a participant when they decide whether to participate in a process. Thus, EP influences political participation.

4. EP can be assessed through participants' experiences with a process. Thus, making decisions based on perceived EP reflects intentionality and agency on the part of a participant.

5. EP is often conflated with other attitudes such as political efficacy, apathy and hopelessness. It is a counternarrative.

6. EP of a process can vary depending on who is centered during the evaluation of the process.

7. EP can change, but a change in EP should result from significant systemic change.

8. EP of a process for a particular participant is often influenced by factors such as SES, race, gender, and membership in other marginalized groups.

9. EP varies by context; the same political process might have a very different EP in a different context.

10. EP reflects the expectations of participants and adds to the accountability of the process

Thus, epistemic promise is a nuanced concept with room for exploration. The epistemic promise of a process varies based on who is centered in the assessment of a process. For example, in Jamaica, a Black woman from a low SES may perceive that community meetings have less epistemic promise for her, as compared to a high SES White man. For the Black woman, there may be numerous ways she is silenced during the process of deliberation during these meetings, because of her race, gender and social standing. Regardless of whether she attends, she may believe she will not be meaningfully heard. On the other hand, the White man can expect (and assumes) that his voice will be valued at the meeting. Thus, the meeting has high epistemic promise for him; he can perceive that his voice will make a difference in the conversation. Although he might believe that the meeting has high epistemic promise for him, it does not actually have high epistemic promise for all people present.

To begin to rectify the disparity in this hypothetical scenario, I posit that the process of meeting participation should be thoughtfully evaluated for threats to epistemic promise at multiple levels. In the ideal scenario, political processes would have high epistemic promise for the most marginalized members of a society. Such as individuals most impacted by oppressive systems, and as such have the most experience with the negative impacts of political decisions (Catala, 2015). Additionally, by centering the most marginalized in the evaluation of a participatory process, others who are less marginalized should also still have a high likelihood of being heard (Crenshaw, 1989). As Crenshaw (1989) states, referring to those most marginalized in a society: "When they enter, we all enter" (p. 167).

Increasing Epistemic Promise by Fostering Epistemic Justice

I propose that many Jamaicans believe the current available political processes have low epistemic promise for them. Thus, would-be participants make a conscious decision not to

participate in these processes. This means low political participation should manifest in systems with generally low epistemic promise. Thus, one way to increase political participation is to make an intentional effort to increase the epistemic promise of the political system. Several scholars inform this work around epistemic dynamics.

In her seminal work, *Conceptualizing Epistemic Oppression*, Dotson (2014) defines an epistemic exclusion as:

> Anything that unwarrantedly hinders one's ability to utilize persuasively collective
>
> epistemic resources in order to participate in knowledge production and, if required,
>
> the revision of those same resources (p. 119).

Referencing the literature on organizational change, she writes that epistemic exclusion takes place at first, second and third levels. Dotson's work also reveals the type of change that first, second and third order exclusions require. These distinctions will be described shortly. Extending and applying her concepts, to increase the epistemic promise of a system, I propose we must both reduce the epistemic exclusions that are reducible, and intentionally foster epistemic justice. Dotson posits that only first and second order exclusions are reducible, that is, reforms in epistemological systems can theoretically redistribute epistemic power and thus reduce those exclusions. Conversely, third order exclusions are irreducible because they require a complete revolution in the knowledge making process. According to Dotson (2014):

> A first-order epistemic exclusion follows from a persistent compromise of one's
>
> epistemic agency due to inefficiency within shared epistemic resources. That is, a
>
> first-order epistemic exclusion is an exclusion that results from the incompetent
>
> functioning of some aspect of shared epistemic resources with respect to some goal
>
> or value (p.123).

Thus, Dotson suggests that the solution to a first-order epistemic exclusion is to improve the efficiency of the current system. She provides the example of a credibility deficit when some knowers are considered less credible than others. To rectify that tendency, the system should be reoriented to bestow credibility more equally; nothing new has to be added to the system. Thus, this change requires system reform rather than revolution. In a specific contextual example, writing in the Jamaican paper *The Gleaner*, Welsh (2020) states:

> Too few women have taken up the task or been given the opportunity to provide substantive representation in Parliament…as such, women's issues are seldom given priority in the national agendas (n.p.).

To rectify this problem, Welsh suggests that more women should be supported in their run for office. Increasing the number of women in the political system would represent a first order change. It does not change the system, but it makes it accessible to more people.

In contrast, a second order epistemic exclusion is closer to the idea of hermeneutical injustice. In this instance, epistemic agency is limited because there are not epistemic resources to express their experience in a way that is clear to other members of society. Specifically, she posits that "a second-order epistemic exclusion results from insufficient shared epistemic resources" (p.126). As an example, Dotson (2014) uses Lugones (2010) statement that White women can easily exist without ever hearing about the lives of Women of Color (WOC), while WOC must always be aware of the lives of White women. Dotson (2014) states:

> Though one may be able to argue for the benefits of consulting other opinions, certainly many have and continue to make such arguments; one continually has to entreat people who, by and large, have the epistemic power to simply ignore such arguments. After all, the dominant, shared epistemic resources work just fine for

many. Convincing people that they are missing something integral when, in fact,

they cannot detect such deficiencies is no easy task (p. 128).

Thus, Dotson argues that a second order epistemic exclusion is much more difficult to notice, especially for members of the dominant group. Rectifying a second order exclusion requires society to recognize that the values underlying the system of knowledge production must change. For example, community research would be a form of second order change away from traditional research. Community research endeavors to more deeply value community collaboration during a research process. This change in value creates a shift of the entire system whereby more people are considered knowers, and the value of the traditional system itself is called into question. In Jamaica, for example, civic education has been absent from the school curriculum since the 1980s. In *The Observer*, Francis (2016) writes:

One of the problems that messed up the whole system as it relates to young people

and understanding the whole question of politics and the reason for involvement,

was in the 1980s when they took civics out of school (n.p.).

The lack of civics education could impact the ability of many to participate in political processes, because students may not share the language of politics or enough formal understanding of the system to express their thoughts to those in power. Reinstituting civic education would be a second level change because the value of civics would shift from an optional lesson to a mandatory one.

Third order epistemic exclusions are more complex. Dotson (2014) describes a third-order exclusion as: "a compromise to epistemic agency caused by inadequate dominant, shared epistemic resources" (p. 129). She argues that first and second order exclusions can be reduced because they arise from unequal power arrangements. However, third order exclusions are irreducible because they are caused by a knowledge system that is wholly inadequate for the expression of some ideas.

Dotson's third order exclusion is reminiscent of Spivak's (1988) piece *Can the Subaltern Speak?* Spivak (1988) argues that marginalized people cannot communicate their thoughts to elites because the interpretation of the elites will always distort the original thought. Even if someone is able to clearly state their thought, it is dismissed as ridiculous because it is so outside the imagination of the knowledge system. Similarly, Dotson describes a situation in which a knower is unable to communicate a new idea to other members of society because the shared knowledge system itself is inadequate. There are neither the words nor a sufficient paradigm for this knower to express their idea. The problem in this case, is that the knowledge system is not flexible enough to allow for this new idea. Dotson posits;

> Addressing this kind of epistemic exclusion extends beyond making one's behaviour reflect one's values (single-loop process and first-order epistemic exclusion) or even identifying gaps within operative epistemic resources and revising for them (double-loop processes and second-order epistemic exclusion). It would also require third-order changes and third-loop processes where fettered persons gain the ability to be aware of their larger epistemological systems, that is, what orients one's instituted social imaginaries, so as to possibly change them or shift out of them entirely. Recall that triple-loop processes refer to recognizing one's instituted social imaginaries and altering them (p. 131).

Dotson further suggests that one of the difficulties of this work is explaining how a third order change would take place. She does not provide an answer. However, social movements, particularly efforts towards decolonization may represent an example of addressing third order change. For example, in her seminal work on decolonizing methodologies, Tuhiwai Smith (1990) calls into question the Western ideas that are deeply entrenched in traditional research, such as the

idea that time is linear, and that humans are separate from the rest of nature. In this example, decolonization of research is akin to a second order change, but the overall movement towards decolonization requires reckoning with social imaginaries and material realities that appear fixed. In addition, ultimate epistemic justice requires the third order change of decolonization.

Developing a Method for Evaluating Epistemic Promise

I posit that increasing epistemic promise requires diminishing those epistemic exclusions that are reducible and intentionally mitigating or eliminating these exclusions. I propose that a method to evaluate epistemic promise would involve identifying epistemic exclusions. To improve epistemic promise, the process should be changed to mitigate or eliminate these exclusions. In the following section, I propose a tool that can be used to translate the values of epistemic justice to the practical space of participatory processes. I apply Dotson's (2014) framework of first, second, and third order exclusions to categorize examples of epistemic exclusions highlighted by other scholars. In this way, Dotson's (2014) lens is a valuable tool to inform my concept of epistemic justice. Several authors tackle epistemic justice in different ways. Fricker (2013) focuses on virtues; Collins (2009) on self-definition and collective meaning-making by oppressed women; Anderson (2012) on righting deep structural oppression through institutional policies; Catala (2015) on epistemic trust; and Schmidt (2019) on epistemic participation. These studies are summarized below.

I contend that to increase the epistemic promise of participatory processes, processes must be evaluated for threats to epistemic justice. Threats to epistemic justice that are first and second order epistemic exclusions should be removed, and any remaining threats should be acknowledged as limitations to process outcomes. Specifically, applying Dotson, remaining threats are third order exclusions. Fricker (2013) writes that epistemic justice is a necessary condition for political

freedom. Moreover, Pettit (1997) states that there must be three conditions for contestation. First, there is an expectation that processes will involve public debate. Second, there must be sufficient representation such that members of the group affected by any given policy are present during this debate. Third, a forum must exist where people can debate, there must be a suitable setting for such debate. Yet, Fricker (2013) argues that epistemic justice should be the fourth condition of contestation, and thus institutions must be held accountable for the extent to which they practice in an epistemically just way. She provides the example of Stephen Lawrence, a Black man who is a witness to a crime against his friend, but the police do not initially take him seriously as a witness. This testimonial injustice lead to a delay in an investigation that otherwise would have been straightforward had police considered Lawrence a credible witness. Hermeneutical injustices are also present in organizations. Fricker (2013) suggests that for both types of injustice, institutional virtues towards epistemic justice are key. She also writes that epistemic justice is a necessity for contestation, and thus a necessity for a functioning democracy.

Although Fricker (2013) argues that the virtues of institutions should include epistemic justice, Spivak (1988) provides criticism for this proposition. Spivak (1988) is decidedly more skeptical of the possibility that any institution can truly represent a "subaltern voice." She notes that hegemony even influences the views of persons considered "subaltern", as well as those who must interpret these voices, and thus precludes the ability to actually capture an untainted voice. For example, if an upper-class Jamaican is interpreting the words of a working-class Jamaican, there is a good chance that the former will interpret the latter's words in a framework informed by the former's own experiences. Informed by Pettit (2006), Spivak (1988) also seems to call for epistemic justice as a fourth condition of contestation, though the actual possibility of achieving it remains elusive.

Although subaltern voices may be re-presented by elites, Collins (2009) proposes another path. She posits that collective voices of marginalized groups may be strengthened in forums away from the majority. In *Black Feminist Thought*, Collins (2009) asserts that poor and near poor Black women can be adaptive and resilient. Her research examines the intersection of race, class, gender and sexual orientation in a way that bridges structure versus agency. Collins' work can be extended to multiple groups of marginalized persons such as marginalized Jamaican citizens. Applying Collins, disenfranchised groups use self-definitions to combat controlling images in order to experience individual empowerment and collective social justice. Moreover, for her, self-definitions include reflection, a key emotional and psychological component in which individuals reject the tendency to internalize stereotypes and other negative profiles from White society. Moreover, Collins requires the cultivation of safe spaces to rejuvenate and build collective identity and mobilization. Her work is important here because it suggests that historically marginalized groups possess non-economic capital and capacities that can be harnessed for positive individual, group and community development. Applying Collins (2009), epistemic justice can be strengthened when there are spaces for ideas to emerge apart from the purview of the dominant society. In Jamaica, examples of this kind of meaning-making are apparent in reggae and dancehall music, where narratives of working-class Jamaicans are developed by working-class Jamaicans and broadcast to the greater society. Epistemic justice emerges when people who are subject to multiple oppressions are centered and center themselves.

Anderson (2012), like Collins (2009), believes that epistemic justice is impacted by large oppressive systems, which create paradigms to which marginalized groups are subject. Anderson (2012) notes that Fricker's first book on epistemic injustice focuses mostly on individual virtues. Building on that work, Anderson (2012) attempts to scale the concept to the systemic level. She

notes that testimonial injustice becomes structural when "institutions are set up to exclude people without anyone having to decide to do so" (p. 166), and hermeneutical injustice is "always structural" (p. 166). Moreover, Anderson (2012) states that although virtue-based approaches to epistemic justice are important, structural remedies must be enacted to allow individuals who hold those virtues to thrive. An oppressive system built to lessen the value of some people's contributions will not change just because individuals embrace virtues of epistemic justice. For example, even if individual upper-class Jamaicans value the opinions of working-class Jamaicans, if there are structural barriers to hearing those marginalized voices in decision-making spaces, those virtues will not lead to epistemic justice.

Furthermore, Anderson (2012) argues that Fricker (2007) downplays the extent of structural injustice. For example, Anderson (2012) posits that ethnocentrism results in the direct privileging of some groups over others and in access to education. For example, some groups have less access to quality education, but education level is used as a barrier to advancement in most workplaces. Thus, less access to education reflects structural epistemic injustice. Credibility is also affected by the perceptions of certain groups. Anderson (2012) notes that shared reality bias can also make it difficult for members of some groups to understand the views of other groups because they live in worlds with different rules. In the Jamaican context, persons who live uptown tend to have a different set of experiences than persons who live downtown, including living in more technologically 'modern' homes with less exposure to violence. Jamaicans who live uptown and have a certain income level are often unable to fully comprehend life downtown. Anderson (2012) writes that this shared reality bias by the advantaged group is a hermeneutical injustice. Anderson (2012) concludes that "the virtue of epistemic justice for institutions is otherwise known as epistemic democracy: universal participation in terms of equality of all inquirers" (p.172). She

thus captures ways that deep systemic inequality such as structural racism, patriarchy and ableism are also deeply connected to the concept of epistemic justice.

Dotson (2012) also provides a critique of Fricker's (2007) framing of epistemic injustice. Dotson posits that by defining only testimonial and hermeneutic injustices, Fricker closes off the possibility of recognizing other forms of epistemic injustice. Recall that Dotson's (2014) definition of epistemic exclusion is: "anything that unwarrantedly hinders one's ability to utilize persuasively collective epistemic resources in order to participate in knowledge production and, if required, the revision of those same resources" (p. 119). Dotson (2012) posits one more form of injustice - contributory injustice:

> Contributory injustice is caused by an epistemic agent's situated ignorance, in the form of willful hermeneutical ignorance, in maintaining and utilizing structurally prejudiced hermeneutical resources that result in epistemic harm to the epistemic agency of a knower. Both the structurally prejudiced or biased hermeneutical resources and the agent's situated ignorance are catalysts for contributory injustice. As such, it is located within the gray area between agential and structural perpetuation of epistemic injustice (p. 31).

Importantly, she notes that this form of injustice differs from hermeneutic injustice in two ways. Although Fricker assumes that we all share epistemic resources and depend on them equally, Dotson argues that this assumption ignores numerous epistemologies that are produced and used in minoritized communities amongst themselves. She posits:

> Recognition of this reality, however, is thwarted by situated ignorance. Situated ignorance 'follows from one's social position and/or epistemic location,' which

works to institute epistemic differences, while obscuring those same differences (p. 31).

For example, uptown Jamaicans have situated ignorance of the lives of downtown Jamaicans. Due to the social status of uptown Jamaicans, they are ignorant of some aspects of reality, these aspects however are understood by downtown Jamaicans. Thus, uptown Jamaicans who do not seek understanding remain in their ignorance. Many do not seek this understanding because they do not accept the limitations of their epistemic differences, that is, they do not acknowledge their situated ignorance. Additionally, Dotson (2012) argues that contributory injustice is not an innocent action of not knowing, as Fricker frames hermeneutic injustice, but rather an intentional ignorance practiced to maintain epistemic power. It occurs because:

> There are different hermeneutical resources that the perceiver could utilize besides structurally prejudiced hermeneutical resources...The agent plays a role in contributory injustice by willfully refusing to recognize or acquire requisite alternative hermeneutical resources (Dotson, 2012, p. 32).

Secondly, contributory injustice differs from hermeneutical injustice in terms of the nature of the knowledge gap. Dotson notes:

> For Fricker, the hermeneutical lacuna in hermeneutical injustice renders some experiences difficult to conceptualize for the marginalized and the perceiver alike. Contributory injustice does not render experiences equally unintelligible. In fact, those who experience contributory injustice find that they can readily articulate their experiences. However, those articulations generally fail to gain appropriate uptake according to the biased hermeneutical resources utilized by the perceiver (p. 32).

Thus, contributory injustice does not imply lack of hermeneutical resources, it only requires that alternative hermeneutical resources are discounted and dismissed. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's (1999) *Decolonizing Methodologies* is an example of a written hermeneutical resource that is not often used by researchers conducting traditional (Western) academic research. Smith (1999) proposes ways that researchers can decolonize research. Her book is written to be accessible to researchers engaged in the Western research process. Yet it is not used as extensively as it could be. Using Smith's book in the research design process is one way that researchers can access an alternative hermeneutical resource. However, many researchers discount this resource because of the current hegemonic standards of research. Applying this example suggests that this resource is widely accessible to researchers. Thus, ignoring it is not an issue of hermeneutical injustice. Rather, it is an issue of contributory injustice. The resource itself is deemed irrelevant *because* it is outside what is considered dominant hermeneutical resources.

In sum, Dotson contends that testimonial injustice is a first-level epistemic exclusion; hermeneutical injustice is a second-level exclusion; and contributory injustice is an example of a third-level exclusion. She concludes that there may be many other forms of epistemic injustices. To allow for the expression of other forms of epistemic injustices, researchers should employ open conceptual structures to consider epistemic injustice. According to Dotson (2012), completely removing epistemic oppression may not be possible, but open conceptual structures[5] can "aid in reducing the perpetuation of epistemic oppression" (p. 42).

Catala (2015) further explores hermeneutical injustice - when one's experience is misunderstood in mainstream discourse. By adding the concepts of epistemic trust and

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[5] Dotson (2012) describes an open conceptual structure as a theoretical model which allows for change over time and in different contexts. She writes that in seeking the end of epistemic oppression, scholars should continually update their understandings of epistemic exclusions and as such resist static models of epistemic justice.

hermeneutical domination to the discussion of epistemic justice in democracy, Catala argues that true deliberation requires epistemic trust. Hermeneutical domination occurs via the intersection of testimonial and hermeneutical injustice. First, the majority group dismisses the minority group's testimony, and thus causes a credibility deficit. Second, because of the credibility deficit, the minority group is deprived of an opportunity to contribute to the greater social understanding of the experience. This means that they cannot contribute to the collective meaning and so suffer hermeneutical injustice. Finally, per this same scholar, the minority group experiences hermeneutical domination by being "subjected to public discourse on that social practice or experience that is shaped by putatively collective understandings that are in fact wholly formulated and imposed by the majority" (p. 428). In this description of hermeneutical domination, Catala presents a phenomenon that was not specifically considered in Fricker's (2007) framework and illustrates Anderson's (2012) focus on the deeply structural nature of hermeneutical injustice.

According to Catala (2015), "hermeneutical domination...results from hermeneutical marginalization that itself results from testimonial injustice" (p. 431). Several additional concepts are important to her thesis. She posits that testimonial injustice can occur even in the absence of a specific incidence of testimonial dismissal. Moreover, to combat hermeneutical injustice, we must address its root - testimonial injustice. Catala (2015) writes that the testimony of the oppressed is actually more credible due to their lived experiences. Thus, while Fricker (2007) argues for equal credibility, Catala (2015) argues for a special status for persons directly affected by the social issue at hand that includes *more credibility* than less affected persons. Epistemic trust means that the majority group must trust the testimony of the oppressed group, even absent a shared experience. Catala (2015) then links epistemic trust to deliberative democracy. She posits that epistemic power should be controlled, limited, and distributed by a democracy. She argues that the primary purpose

of a democracy is to control, limit and distribute power, and so epistemic power should also be managed accordingly. Each of these requirements, Catala (2015) argues, suggest that minority groups should have a special status in terms of testimony.

First, in terms of the distribution of epistemic power, minority views should be privileged to rectify for the imbalanced starting point caused by hermeneutical domination. Second, epistemic power should be limited. Minorities should be considered more legitimate experts in social issues that affect them. This means that the epistemic power of the majority group should be limited in regards to minority issues. Third, she posits that epistemic power can be controlled by holding the powerful accountable. In a process of contestation, accountability requires that there is transparency during the process, and that reasons are given for any decisions. Catala (2015) writes that the oppressed are primed to provide clear reasons for their decisions. Additionally, she posits that the oppressed share an ultimate goal to achieve social justice, rather than to concentrate power. She concludes that deliberative democracy requires epistemic trust, because epistemic trust bestows the appropriate amount of epistemic power on minority groups. Catala (2015) also maintains that although minorities should be given special epistemic privilege in accordance with their recognized expertise, deliberation is still a necessary process in a democracy because the ultimate goal of democracy is to make collective decisions.

For example, I briefly consider a Jamaican project I will expand upon in the third paper of this dissertation. The Community Development Fund (CDF) is a grant given to each constituency in Jamaica. The CDF grant should be spent on a community-directed project. However, political representatives do not often prioritize collecting suggestions or feedback from community members (Samuda, 2015). These representatives do not provide epistemic trust to their constituents. If the epistemic trust in the constituents were as high as it should be, soliciting

community suggestions and feedback would be the most important part of the process of deciding how to spend a CDF grant. Constituents should be given higher epistemic trust than political representatives should because they are the people who experience life in the community. Thus, they have more knowledge about what the community needs. In the current CDF process, some political representatives believe that their own knowledge of the community is sufficient to make decisions on behalf of the community. Because the political representative's office moderates the process, the epistemic power currently lies with the representative rather than with community members. If this process is meant to be democratic, Catala (2015) would argue that the epistemic power should be limited, controlled, and distributed. Moreover, the epistemic power of the political representative should be limited. The epistemic power of the representative should also be controlled by holding the representative accountable. Finally, the epistemic power should be distributed so that community members hold more power during this process.

Catala's (2015) framework of hermeneutic domination is compelling, and benefits from Schmidt's (2019) examination of epistemic participation. Schmidt (2019) proposes an expansion on Fricker's (2007) ideas of epistemic justice:

> Epistemic injustice can be understood through a lens of participation in inquiry, rather than using the received view that focuses on testimony. On my account, victims are marginalized when disrespected and devalued as potential participants in inquiry due to prejudice...Preventing and remedying epistemic injustice requires creating inclusive communities that respect and foster participation in inquiry (p. vi).

Schmidt (2019) writes that "epistemic subjects who are unfairly blocked from contributing to the process of inquiry are victims of epistemic injustice...epistemic subjects are treated justly when

they are unconstrained in their capacity as inquirers" (p. 70). Moreover, she suggests that the context of inquiry is central to the goal of epistemic participation. Schmidt (2019), like Catala (2015), is concerned about how testimonial injustice intersects with the political process to create hermeneutical injustice. Although Schmidt (2019) and Catala (2015) share a similar argument, Schmidt (2019) addresses the limitations of the forum and representation [from Pettit's (1997) list] and Catala (2015) emphasizes the expectations of deliberation and sufficient representation. Schmidt (2019) first describes the failure of epistemic appraisal, which is identical to Catala's epistemic trust, when members of a group are not given adequate respect for their viewpoints. She then describes the failures of epistemic recognition, when persons are considered irrelevant to the situation at hand, and thus not afforded any epistemic standing. Schmidt distinguishes her concept from testimonial injustice because, for her, the testimony of an oppressed person itself is not challenged, but rather the person is never given a platform. Third, Schmidt (2019) discusses failures of epistemic access that deny persons access to crucial resources or spaces (such as the Internet) due to prejudice.

I have developed the following diagram to connect these theories of epistemic justice, as well as provide considerations specific to the Jamaican context (see Table 1). I start with Catala's (2015) description of how testimonial injustice during the point of contestation leads to hermeneutic injustice, which then feeds hermeneutical domination. According to Dotson (2012), testimonial injustice is a first-order epistemic exclusion because it requires first-order system changes. For example, credibility deficit can be reduced by making the knowledge system more efficient. However, hermeneutic injustice is a second-order epistemic exclusion because it requires second-order changes to the system. For example, hermeneutic injustice can be reduced by questioning and increasing the shared resources of the knowledge system. Additionally,

hermeneutical domination aligns with Dotson's (2012) description of a contributory injustice because it includes both agentic choice to ignore certain hermeneutical resources and a knowledge structure that does not value these resources. Thus, hermeneutical domination requires third-order changes. These levels are reflected in Figure 1.

To the left of Catala's (2015) process of hermeneutical domination, I list specific examples of epistemic exclusions occurring at each step. To the far left, I categorize these exclusions as first, second and third level epistemic exclusions (Dotson, 2012, 2014). To the far right, I list proposed ways to foster epistemic justice at each step of Catala's (2015) process. This diagram provides a more holistic view of the mechanisms by which epistemic exclusions typically occur, as well as connections between exclusions and ways to foster justice.

Figure 1

Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination

	Epistemic Exclusions (Dotson, 2014)	Formation of Hermeneutical Domination (Catala, 2015)	Fostering Epistemic Justice and Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination
First Order	Lack of recognition (Schmidt, 2019)	Minority testifies, is dismissed by majority, and suffers credibility deficit	Epistemic trust: Centering minoritized groups, recognizing credibility (Catala, 2015; Collins, 1990; Schmidt, 2019)
	Credibility deficit (Catala, 2015)		Institutional and individual virtues (Fricker, 2013; Fricker, 2007)
	Re-presentation of the subaltern voice by elites (Spivak, 1984)		Structural change on an institutional/policy level (Anderson, 2012)
	↓		
Second Order	Western research prioritized in intervention designs (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999)	Minority is deprived of the opportunity to contribute to social understanding of problem	Decolonizing research methods (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999)
	Marginalization of citizens based on race, class, ability, gender etc. (Kamugisha, 2007)		Recognition and removal of social discrimination against marginalized groups (Kamugisha, 2007)
	Lack of access to forums of deliberation -'epistemic access' (Schmidt, 2019)		Epistemic access and places to deliberate (media, Internet, physical forum) (Schmidt, 2019; Fricker, 2013)
	Chances for epistemic injustice at multiple levels of knowledge production (Lyew, 2019)		Recognition and removal of barriers to epistemic justice in research (Lyew, 2019)
			Limit the epistemic power of majority (Catala, 2015)
	↓		
Third Order	Lack of interpretability of subaltern because the paradigm doesn't allow subaltern logic (Spivak, 1984)	Minority is subject to public discourse that has already been shaped in a way defined by the majority	Recognizing and combatting epistemic justice at multiple levels in the political economy (Lyew, 2019)
	Research on issues constrained by external funders (Lyew, 2019)		National policies to improve Jamaica's ability to self determine
	The neoliberal 'development' agenda (Dagnino, 2007; Sheller, 2005; Rist, 2010)		
	Tourism (Kamugisha, 2007)		Institutional polices and values oriented towards epistemic justice (Anderson, 2012; Fricker 2013)

The above information presents the relationships between key theories of epistemic justice in the political process of contestation. I propose that the only way to disrupt hermeneutic domination is to recognize and combat forms of epistemic exclusion at multiple sites during the process. Furthermore, I propose that disrupting hermeneutic domination increases epistemic

promise. As defined earlier in this paper, epistemic promise is the possibility that a person's inputs into a process influence the outputs. Hermeneutical domination is the endpoint of decision-making processes that consistently devalue the inputs of minoritized communities. Thus, processes that have low epistemic promise contribute to hermeneutical domination, because minoritized participants have little say in process outcomes. My addition to Catala's (2015) work is to consider how other theorists have suggested increasing epistemic justice, and to connect Catala (2015) to Dotson's (2014) framework of epistemic exclusions. I have placed those suggestions in the timeline of the formation of hermeneutical domination.

Guided by Dotson (2014), I propose that hermeneutical domination is disrupted by (1) recognizing the epistemic exclusions at each stage and working towards rectifying these exclusions, and (2) considering the ways that epistemic justice can be fostered at each stage. I will refer to this process of recognizing exclusions and fostering justice as epistemic disruption. Moreover, I propose that increasing epistemic promise fuels epistemic disruption. By disrupting hermeneutical domination, the epistemic promise of a process is increased. That is, the likelihood that a participant's voice will matter in the process will increase as epistemic justice is fostered and epistemic exclusions are reduced. Epistemic disruption is more straightforward for first and second order exclusions. Theoretically, these exclusions should be identifiable, and the corresponding remedies should be relatively straightforward to think through and implement. However, third order epistemic exclusions require more extensive action than can be contained in a process. Thus, not every process will be able to address the first and second order epistemic exclusions, and no process will be able to address third order exclusions[6]. However, following

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[6] Dotson (2014) writes that complete systematic transformation is necessary to combat third order exclusions. As such, no individual process can combat these exclusions. However, some larger social movements, such as decolonization, seek the level of transformation required to combat these exclusions.

Dotson's (2012) suggestion, the table is meant to be an "open conceptual structure" where epistemic exclusions in a process can be identified to brainstorm solutions. Eliminating epistemic oppression in most processes is likely impossible, but the table is a tool that can be used to recognize the limitations and possibilities of participation in a particular process and in a particular context. Using the Table, I propose the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) method of assessing epistemic promise. DEEP involves applying the table of disrupting hermeneutical domination to a participatory process to recognize and mitigate epistemic exclusions.

Recall, epistemic promise is the chance that a person's input will have an impact on the outcomes of a political process. Increasing epistemic promise requires decreasing epistemic exclusions by taking specific actions to foster epistemic justice. Each specific action to foster justice is tailored to the epistemic exclusion it is meant to address. Thus, DEEP as an open conceptual structure, can be used to (1) identify possible epistemic exclusions in a process, and (2) brainstorm specific actions that can be used to foster epistemic justice in the face of those exclusions. I posit that implementing both (1) and (2) will lead to greater epistemic promise of the entire process by reducing first and second order exclusions. The method also allows for identifying level three exclusions that impact the process. Identifying level three exclusions can help illuminate the larger structural issues that continue to impact the epistemic promise of a process.

To relate this concept to real world participatory processes, I propose that in the design of a political process, multiple sites for epistemic exclusions should be considered. These processes should be changed to combat the epistemic exclusions that are revealed in their structure. Table 1 presents a rubric that can be used to evaluate and improve the epistemic promise of a system. This

table represents a first iteration of the DEEP method that can be used to recognize epistemic exclusions at each stage, as well as to recognize ways to increase epistemic justice at each stage.

Resistance to Increasing Epistemic Promise

Increasing epistemic promise aligns with principles of democracy. Increasing epistemic promise of participatory systems is necessary to reduce the silencing of minoritized groups. However, this change would not happen without resistance. Dotson (2011) suggests that it is possible to trace practices of silencing. This silencing results in epistemic violence (Dotson, 2011). It furthers epistemic justice to recognize and resist practices of silencing. Despite the clear connections between improved democracy and increasing epistemic promise, there will inevitably be some resistance when epistemic promise is increased because it requires a redistribution of epistemic power. People and/or groups that currently hold a significant amount of epistemic power will lose some of that power. They will also be challenged emotionally because many ways that they are used to understanding the world will be challenged. This section explores the motivations of individuals and/or groups that resist epistemic justice so that we may begin to predict and understand the resistance to increasing epistemic promise.

Both Dotson (2018) and Medina (2013) write about the challenges of relinquishing epistemic power. These authors also examine why many in power would rather remain in situated ignorance and resist the redistribution of epistemic power. Situated ignorance is defined as a lack of knowledge based on one's social position. For example, many Jamaicans who live uptown have situated ignorance about the lives of Jamaicans who live downtown. Many uptowners do not understand the experiences of downtowners because they live very different lives. Uptowners have significant epistemic power. Thus, downtowners understand many of the experiences of uptowners because the logic of uptowners forms the foundation of mainstream discourse. If there is action

taken to increase the epistemic promise of any participatory process in Jamaica, uptowners will necessarily lose epistemic power as it is redistributed more equitably. Some uptowners will be open to navigating this loss if they value the idea that their loss leads to greater equity for all. However, many uptowners will also likely be resistant to these changes.

Medina (2013) suggests that thinking about democratic activity as resistance rather than consensus is a more productive orientation to deliberation. Epistemic resistance is "the use of our epistemic resources and abilities to undermine and change oppressive normative structures and the complacent cognitive-affective functioning that sustains those structures" (p. 3). Moreover:

> Epistemic resistance does not simply designate something of instrumental value or
> a transitional stage; it refers to a mode of relationality that is crucial for democratic
> sociability- in fact, the heart and soul, the epistemic centerpiece, of a democratic
> culture (Medina, 2013, p.4).

Medina posits that when we take epistemic resistance as our mode of relationality, there will be necessary epistemic friction, defined as the stress or conflict that occurs when epistemic claims are brought together. There can be beneficial epistemic friction that forces one to be critical of one's beliefs by having to explain the justification for such beliefs. On the other hand, there can be detrimental epistemic friction which results in silencing as some beliefs, questions, or lines of inquiry are censored.

In addition, Medina (2013) writes that the 'hermeneutically privileged' (p. 75) sometimes refuse the responsibility of epistemic friction. In this refusal, epistemic resistance becomes a vice. The hermeneutically privileged have difficulty appreciating the limitations of their understanding. They are rarely challenged on their understanding of reality because the dominant culture has been shaped to validate their view of reality. Such privileged subjects then are reluctant to admit their

situated ignorance about the reality of other members of society. They are, moreover, reluctant to acknowledge the credibility of other epistemic knowers in society. Many such persons reject the situatedness of their knowledge, and thus resist debating with other knowers from different backgrounds. Medina writes that such hermeneutically privileged persons:

> Have a double resistance or doubly reinforced resistance to friction: the inability to see alternatives (a first-order resistance to friction, a lack of openness to epistemic counterpoints), plus the inability to see one's inability (a second-order resistance or meta-resistance, a resistance to recognize one's lack of openness to epistemic counterpoints). This double-blindness or meta-blindness blocks paths to fight and repair hermeneutical gaps and the injustices that result from them (p. 75).

As a solution, he focuses on how such individuals can take epistemic responsibility by working to value deliberation that is open to conflict, and genuinely wrestling with a diversity of views.

However, Dotson (2018) views the barriers to epistemological change as more purposeful than Medina (2013) suggests. Through an analysis of recent police brutality cases and informed by Cooper (2014), Dotson (2018) writes that the public discourse treats structural racism as an afterthought and focuses on racist individuals instead. She writes that those with epistemic power in these situations prefer to be in 'resilient oblivion' rather than challenge their own views about the system. She defines 'resilient oblivion' as:

> The ability to epistemically contain augmenting positions that is fueled by one's orienting variables and epistemological orientations. Epistemic power, then, can promote resilient oblivion to any range of existing situations, including, for example, a potentially oppressive status quo (p. 151).

Dotson (2018) also quotes Cooper's (2014) article *White America's Scary Delusion: Why Its Sense of Black Humanity Is So Skewed* to further illustrate this dynamic:

> Until White people are ready to relieve themselves of an all-consuming belief in a colorblind legal system, ready to recognize violence at the core of the ideology of whiteness (which is, I hope you hear me saying, different from calling all White people violent), ready to adopt a new framework, we can't talk. We can't talk because y'all can't hear me (Cooper, 2014, n.p.).

Those in power downplay the need for a new epistemology, but both Dotson (2018) and Cooper (2014) argue that the current epistemological stance towards Black Americans is violent. Although this example is in a U.S. context, the same might be said about the 'resilient oblivion' of uptowners in Jamaica. Any attempt to increase epistemic promise will likely rattle some uptowners who would rather not admit that the current epistemological stance towards downtowners is violent and needs to be replaced.

As a counter to these resistances, I consider Collins' (2009) articulation of a Black feminist epistemology. Her description of this epistemology serves as an example of realigning the values of knowledge creation. Collins' (2009) challenges the positivist epistemology by describing the Black feminist way of knowing. In so doing, she also questions how those with hermeneutical privilege create and maintain values about knowledge. These values allow those with privilege to be the gatekeepers of who can be knowers, and what constitutes knowledge. For change to occur in the mainstream, those with hermeneutical privilege will have to value what Dotson (2014) refers to as a third-order change. As discussed above, this level of change requires an examination of one's entire way of knowing. It also requires valuing and seeking out resources from othered

epistemologies such as Black feminist epistemology or the epistemologies described in Tuhiwai-Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies*.

There are several ways that those with hermeneutical privilege will feel threatened by increasing the epistemic promise of participatory processes. They will lose some of their epistemic power as this power is redistributed (Dotson 2014). They will be challenged in their self-perceptions (Medina, 2013). In addition, they will have to acknowledge that their current epistemology is deeply inequitable and violent (Collins, 2009). However, Medina (2013), Dotson (2014, 2018), and Collins (2009) have suggested personal and institutional ways to mitigate this resistance. That said, the work towards epistemic justice will be multifaceted, and epistemic promise is one tool to move participatory processes towards this final justice. However, these necessary changes to participatory processes cannot exist in a vacuum.

The Work of Epistemic Justice and Epistemic Promise

In sum, epistemic promise is the chance that a person's input will have an impact on the outcomes of a political process. Increasing the epistemic promise of participatory processes requires fostering epistemic justice at multiple stages in the process. It also requires recognizing and minimizing epistemic exclusions. However, as discussed earlier, existing theories suggest that the epistemic promise of a process can only be increased at the first and second orders of change (Dotson, 2014). Third-order change requires deeper social change efforts, and the critical questioning of existing epistemologies. Thus, increasing the epistemic promise of systems will also expose the limitations of these systems, caused because of the epistemological context in which they exist. Those limitations will require social movements, dismantling of oppressive systems and massive shifts in epistemic power that are likely beyond the capacity of any one participatory process.

Epistemic promise as a concept can help keep participatory processes accountable to the values at the core of democracy. That is, are people effectively heard? Do the processes we use allow people to participate in meaningful ways? What does it mean to participate meaningfully? Epistemic promise also centers processes and social systems as the sites of change, rather than focusing on the behavior of oppressed individuals. When applied to a specific process, the rubric for evaluation of epistemic promise (Table 1) illuminates the areas for relatively simple improvements *and* the more pernicious oppressive systems that limit even the most ambitious participatory processes. When a process is designed and evaluated with high epistemic promise as the ultimate goal, we explicitly prioritize epistemic justice as a core value of participation. With this lens, some Jamaicans' refusal to vote is an agentic action, a message to the government that they will not participate in a process with no guarantee that their vote will make a difference, no guarantee of material changes in their lives, and no guarantee of accountability from their representatives. Essentially, voting in Jamaica has low epistemic promise for many Jamaicans.

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PAPER TWO: PERCEIVED EPISTEMIC PROMISE AND PARTICIPATION

Following Jamaican Independence in 1962, voter turnout increased annually until 1993 (Morrison, 2016). However, since 1993, the percentage of registered voters participating in Jamaican elections has severely declined, save for a small increase in 2007 (Morrison, 2016). In 2020, only 37% of registered voters made it to the polls (*The Jamaica Observer*, 2020). Many Jamaicans, including academics and everyday citizens, wrote newspaper pieces speculating on possible individual and structural reasons for this low participation (Higgins, 2014; Meeks, 2014; Carter, 2016). In Paper One, these reasons are examined using theories of epistemic justice, resulting in the concept called epistemic promise. Epistemic promise connects structural and individual variables that may impact political participation. I propose that individuals observe the epistemic promise of a political process and consider it before deciding whether to participate. There are two forms of epistemic promise- *actual* and *perceived*. This paper examines the relationship between a proxy for perceived epistemic promise and political participation.

Epistemic promise refers to the possibility that a person's input in a participatory process will meaningfully affect process outcomes. As noted earlier, the epistemic promise of a specific event or process varies based on both the event context and the individual considering involvement. One's perceptions and expectations are central; an individual is more likely to participate in a process if she believes it has high epistemic promise for her. Broadly applied, this means that people are more likely to get involved in a participatory process if they think their involvement will be considered valuable and make a difference. Although an individual can attempt to estimate the epistemic promise of a process, her perceptions about it may not accurately reflect the extent to which she is actually significant to that process. The actual epistemic promise of a process for an individual in a particular context may be estimated and increased by the

Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) method. Moreover, epistemic promise is increased when epistemic justice is fostered. Although this study focuses on political processes, the concept I call epistemic promise may be broadly applied to other participatory processes. Perceived epistemic promise is represented in this analysis by a proxy measure that was designed to capture a related concept, *external efficacy*.

Political participation is represented in this paper by four variables representing different forms of political activity: past voting, future voting, attendance at community meetings and protesting. Hypothetically, a person who perceives high epistemic promise in a particular form of political activity should have a higher likelihood of participating in that activity. For example, if a person believes that their individual vote is inconsequential to an election outcome, they have determined that voting has low epistemic promise for them and may decide not to vote. Similarly, if a person believes their representative will attentively listen to their perspective during a community meeting, they may determine that attending community meetings has high epistemic promise for them. In contrast, protesting may have a less straightforward relationship with epistemic promise.

Protesting is considered a non-institutionalized form of political activity (Slavina, 2021). There is debate in the literature about the differences between institutionalized and non-institutionalized political activity, but essentially institutionalized activities are formally connected governmental processes, such as voting or joining a political party. Conversely, non-institutionalized activities exist outside of the formalized political system, such as protests or boycotts (Slavina, 2021). Epistemic promise may have a different relationship with non-institutionalized forms of political activity because of the numerous shapes that these forms of activity take and the ambiguity of their outcomes. Thus, I hypothesize that perceiving high

epistemic promise (as captured via external efficacy) predicts a higher likelihood of participation in all the types of participation examined here except protesting.

This paper relies on two studies to test these relationships. Study 1 uses a sample of Jamaican residents, and Study 2 uses a larger sample of residents from across 17 countries. The following section surveys the literature of variables related to political participation. A description of the dataset and how these variables are operationalized is provided, followed by the assumptions involved in using a secondary dataset for these studies. Finally, I present findings from Studies One and Two.

Variables Related to Political Participation

The studies in this paper control for other variables typically related to political participation to understand the unique role of epistemic promise in political participation. The chosen variables are both prevalent in the literature and relevant to the Latin American and Caribbean context. These variables include internal efficacy, class, economic inequality, education, gender, and age. In addition, I include a variable to represent an awareness of neocolonialism. Many of these are individual-level variables, but economic inequality is a country-level variable. Each of these indicators is described and linked to scholarship below. I also provide their predicted influence on political participation.

Internal Efficacy

Internal efficacy refers to one's belief that one can impact change in the political space (Campbell et al., 1954). According to Valentino, Gregorowicz and Groenendyk (2009):

> Individuals high in internal efficacy feel they understand how to take part in
> politics, and are not intimidated by the challenges, conflicts or disagreements that
> occur in that arena (p. 308).

Studies have established that high internal efficacy correlates with higher political participation (Pollock, 1983; Valentino, Gregorowicz, & Groenendyk, 2009). Thus, I hypothesize that internal efficacy will explain some of the variances in participation and will be positively related to political participation as studied here.

Class and Participation

There are theoretical divides in the literature about whether and how class affects political participation. For example, according to one line of research, high income tends to be associated with higher political participation. In another line, income has little or no effect on participation. Some studies suggest that having a more privileged class background facilitates civic engagement indirectly through their access to social capital, education, and membership in political organizations (Carreras & Castañeda-Angarita, 2014; Klesner, 2009). Laurison (2015), using Bourdieu's work on "political competence," posits that being higher class has psychological benefits in addition to greater access to the political system. To explore the relationship between income and participation, Laurison examined a survey question where participants could indicate a political opinion or indicate "I don't know" (Laurison, 2015). He finds that low-income participants were significantly more likely to indicate "I don't know" than high-income participants. Laurison (2015) posits that higher-income participants may believe they are legitimate holders of political opinions. In contrast, low-income participants may not provide a political opinion because they feel they are not legitimate holders of political opinions. Additionally, in a Jamaican study, researchers used multivariate regression modeling to examine the relationship between socioeconomic class and political participation (specifically protests and voting). However, no statistical differences were apparent in levels of political participation

between socioeconomic classes (Bourne et al., 2017). In this paper, household income is a proxy for class status. I hypothesize that income will be positively related to political participation.

Economic Inequality and Participation

Economic inequality refers to inequality at the country level- whether wealth or income is distributed mostly equally throughout the society, or there are significant gaps in income or wealth between the rich and the poor (Norris, 2015). Inequality is traditionally measured using the Gini coefficient. Studies show that economic inequality is related to an individual's external efficacy and actual political participation. For example, Norris (2015) used multilevel regression models to examine the relationship between perceived external efficacy and state-level inequality. He shows that state-level inequality in the United States (U.S.) has a significant negative relationship to external efficacy (ranging from -2.03 to -7.38, p< 1.0). Moreover, in three of the four models that examine the relationship between inequality and efficacy, state-level inequality is the most robust explanatory variable over individual and other contextual variables. Norris (2015) posits that increasing income inequality may explain the downward trend of external efficacy in the U.S. In states with high inequality where people express low political efficacy, this scholar suggests that citizens may assume that the government serves the interest of the rich. So they have less belief in the responsiveness of the government to their interests.

Solt (2008) examines the relationship between income inequality and political engagement. He describes three major theories to explain this relationship: the relative power theory, conflict theory, and resource theory. The relative power theory contends that rising inequality would negatively affect political engagement, especially for the poor. This theory suggests that there may be issues that never make it to the public forum because the wealthy negotiate behind the scenes. The poor then become exhausted with a system in which they have no real say and disconnect. In

contrast, conflict theory suggests that rising inequality would spur increased political engagement. As inequality rises, conflict theory posits that the poor and the rich form strong opinions about economic policy, sparking more political debate in the citizenry. Finally, resource theory suggests that the relationship between inequality and political engagement depends on individual income. According to this thesis, country-level inequality is not a significant factor in determining political engagement. Instead, those with the resources to participate (i.e., time, money, transportation) will participate, and those without such resources will not. Solt (2008) performs a multilevel model based on surveys from citizens of wealthy and middle-income democratic countries to examine the relationship between country-level inequality and political engagement and political engagement. The results from Solt's (2008) study support the relative power theory. Income inequality reduces political engagement except for among the wealthiest residents. Thus, the wealthiest 20% in the countries studied are the only citizens whose engagement is unaffected by income inequality. The author posits that these findings also support the claim that economic inequality undermines political equality.

Researchers used data from Chile to examine the relationship between beliefs in distributive justice and participation (Castillo et al., 2015). Participants were asked whether Chile should "implement strong policies to reduce income inequality between rich and poor" and whether "inequality is beneficial because it incentivizes poorer people to make an effort" (p. 493). These two measures were combined to create a distributive justice score. Their findings show that beliefs in distributive justice were positively related to participation in protests and that people with higher educational levels tend to be more likely to participate in protests. However, results found no relationship between distributive justice beliefs and voter participation. These findings

suggest that inequality or the perception of inequality can predict some forms of participation and not others.

In addition, Corcoran et al. (2015) assess data from 29 countries to test the relationship between the perceptions about structural inequality and collective action. The results show that the perception of unjust inequality in society is positively related to all forms of collective action. Those participants who engage in high-cost collective action (such as protests) are those who both perceive structural injustice and have high efficacy (Corcoran et al., 2015). Based on the above studies, I hypothesize that income inequality (measured by the Gini coefficient) will negatively affect voting and meeting attendance. Conversely, it should be positively related to protesting.

Education, Sex, and Age

Education is one of the most reliable positive predictors of political participation (Berinsky & Lenz, 2011; Condon, 2015; Persson, 2015). In addition, one study shows that higher-educated citizens participate more frequently in institutionalized forms of political participation such as voting (Marien et al., 2010). However, one review of the literature suggests that education serves as a proxy for other variables such as civic knowledge or income (Persson, 2015). Persson (2015) suggests that education could still serve as a control variable but that researchers should pay more attention to the causal mechanisms of how education translates into more participation. In my paper, education was considered a control variable. However, because it is highly correlated with other measures, it was excluded from the analyses.

Studies show that men tend to have more access to political participation than women (Desposato & Norrander, 2009; Marien et al., 2010; Malmberg & Christensen, 2021). For example, in a study in seventeen countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, researchers found a consistent gender gap wherein men were more likely to participate than women in all forms of

participation (Desposato & Norrander, 2009). They attribute these effects partly to differences in access to resources such as education and lower-income. In addition, some contextual variables such as the number of women in political power lessen the gap between the participation rates. In the Jamaican context, Bourne et al. (2017) find no significant differences between the participation of men and women, which contradicts popular narratives of men dominating the political space.

Age also has a significant impact on participation. Some studies have found that young people are less likely to be politically active, especially in institutionalized forms of political activity such as voting or party membership (Gimpel et al., 2004; Marien et al., 2010; Melo & Stockemer, 2014). In 2021, more activities are now available in which youth can participate in political discourse, such as by producing political videos on platforms like TikTok and Youtube; virtual petitions; and virtual organizing (Bowyer & Kahne, 2016; Luttig & Cohen, 2016; Chen & Stilinovic, 2020). Thus, youth participation in institutionalized politics may also be low, but non-institutionalized forms of activism such as protests may show other trends. In the Jamaican context specifically, news articles and academic studies suggest that youth are apathetic towards political participation generally (Skyers, n.d.; Waller, 2013; Francis, n.d., 2016; Bourne et al., 2017). For example, in a study by Bourne et al. (2017) of Jamaican citizens, age is positively related to political participation and accounts for 11.5% of the variance in political participation. The older the citizen, the more they tend to be engaged in political participation.

Colonialism and Neocolonialism

In Latin America and the Caribbean, the impacts of colonialism and neocolonialism also affect the political power of citizens to this day (Dagnino, 2007; Kamugisha, 2007). For example, Kamugisha (2007) writes about the reduced capacity for citizenship for women, queer people, and people with disabilities in the Caribbean. He notes that those in power do not consider people in

these groups to be full citizens, and thus they have limited access to participatory processes. In addition, more significant structural dynamics limit the power of citizens of Caribbean countries. For example, Latin American and Caribbean countries still experience the impacts of neocolonial structural adjustments. They are also subject to global trade regulations by colonizer countries such as the U.S. (Dagnino, 2007). Finally, tourism is the most profitable export for many countries in the Caribbean. As Kamugisha (2007) writes, the consumers of the tourism export are also from colonizer countries such as the U.S. and European nations. The preferences of tourists, who are primarily people from Europe and the U.S, influence tourism policy decisions. Moreover, because tourism is of great importance to these nations, tourism will often win if citizen opinions clash with potential profits. Additionally, when countries survive based on tourism, the voices of their citizens tend to matter less than the perceptions of tourists (Kamugisha, 2007). In this study, "trust in the United States (U.S.) government" is used as a proxy measure for an awareness of the impacts of neocolonialism. I assume that those who trust the U.S. government more are less aware of that country's neocolonial impact. Thus, greater trust in the U.S. government may be related to a higher likelihood of participation. Overall, the studies reveal the unique contribution of epistemic promise by controlling for the variables above. The dataset used for this study includes most of these variables, and the Gini coefficients were added to the dataset from the CIA World Factbook 2019 (CIA, 2019). Below, I describe the dataset and how each of these variables is operationalized in the models.

Data and Variables

The Latin American Public Opinion Project AmericasBarometer (LAPOP) is a comprehensive survey tool that has been deployed yearly since 2006 throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. LAPOP researchers conduct face-to-face structured interviews in several

countries with nationally representative samples of voting-age adults each year. LAPOP uses a stratified multi-stage cluster sampling method described further in their technical report (LAPOP, 2019). Briefly, LAPOP researchers divided the population into subgroups based on the size of the municipality, whether the household is in an urban or rural area, and the country's regions. Researchers then conducted sampling in each subgroup and combined them to ensure that they were nationally representative but not overly clustered in any geographic area. For further details, see p. 3-4 of the LAPOP 2018-2019 Technical Report (LAPOP, 2019). Once a stratified sample was determined, LAPOP researchers interviewed one participant per household. For the 17 countries included in this study, data collection started in Colombia as early as September 10th, 2018, and ended in Uruguay on May 19th, 2019. Overall, LAPOP reports that their stratified survey design has a minimal effect on the data compared to a fully randomized sample (LAPOP, 2019).

This paper includes two studies. The first includes participants in Jamaica, and the second includes participants from 17 countries and will be referred to as the regional sample. The data for both are from the 2018-2019 LAPOP survey. The Jamaican sample includes 1,513 participants. The regional sample includes a total of 26,526 participants. Jamaica appears in both samples. The 2018/2019 survey data were selected because they were the most recently released data at the time of my analyses. LAPOP does not survey the same individuals every year; thus, the responses from one year cannot be connected to the same participant in another year. In addition, I selected a year after the publication of analyzed articles in Paper One to corroborate these findings with the sentiments in the referenced newspaper articles. For the second study, I analyzed only one year of data to reduce the chance of potential errors resulting from having a multilevel model nested by

both country and year. The section below describes the operationalization of the independent and dependent variables.

Independent Variables

The seven independent variables include external efficacy, internal efficacy, country-level inequality, age, household income, sex, trust in the government of the United States, and years of education. External efficacy is the proxy variable for epistemic promise in this study. External efficacy is captured on a Likert scale of Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (7). Participants respond to the statement, "Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?" Internal efficacy is also measured on a Likert scale of Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (7). Participants respond to the statement: "You feel that you understand the most important political issues of this country. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?"

The Gini coefficient measures country-level inequality. This coefficient was developed to measure the distribution of wealth in a country, and scores range from 0-100. If a country has a Gini coefficient of 0, the income in that country is distributed perfectly equally- everyone makes around the same amount of money per year. On the other end of the scale, a Gini coefficient of 100 implies the maximum level of income inequality. Thus, very few people earn a large income, and the majority earn a small income. Age is the self-reported age of the participant measured in years, ranging from 16-90+ years old.

Household income is self-reported. For each country, the range of household incomes is divided into 16 income brackets. An individual's household income score is represented on a scale from 0-16, where 0 represents membership in the lowest household income range of that country; 16 represents the highest household income range. Thus, a household income of 1 represents

membership in the second-lowest income range regardless of the country. However, in real currency value, a person in Jamaica who has a score of 1 may have a higher household income than a person who has a score of 1 in Haiti. Thus, this measure allows researchers to consider the impact of comparative household income. Sex refers to the participant's self-reported sex. The options are Male, Female, or Other. In the samples included in these studies, no participants selected "Other" as their sex. Next, trust in the United States government is measured on a Likert scale from Not at all trustworthy (1) to Very trustworthy (4). The question states: "The government of the United States. In your opinion, is it very trustworthy, somewhat trustworthy, not very trustworthy, or not at all trustworthy, or do you not have an opinion?" Finally, education refers to the scaled educational background of the respondent. LAPOP researchers asked participants their highest completed level of schooling and the number of years they attended school. Researchers used a scale to convert these responses to 'years of education' measure in which 0 indicates no formal education, and 15 represents the highest number of years of formal education. A bivariate cross-tabulation of the independent variables across the four dependent variables will be provided upon request.

Dependent Variables

The dependent variables for these studies are binomial indicators of an individual's participation in three political processes: voting, attending community meetings and attending protests. These variables are referred to as past voting, future voting, attending meetings, and protesting. Past voting reflects a response to the question, "Did you vote in the last presidential elections of [year of last election for country]?" The possible responses are Yes (1) or No (0). Future voting is measured by the question, "If the next presidential elections were being held this week, what would you do?" Originally there were four categories of responses: "Would not vote;

would go to vote and leave the ballot blank; would vote for a new candidate; would vote for the incumbent." The first two and last two categories of this question were combined, resulting in two new categories. These were: "Would not vote or would go to vote and leave the ballot blank (0) or Would vote either for a new candidate or the incumbent (1)". The categories were combined for parsimony to directly compare persons who participated in this mode of participation to their counterparts who refrained from participating. This parsimony was particularly helpful for interpreting and presenting the results of the multilevel models. Before the categories were recoded, they contained the following number of participants: Would not vote (N= 4,075); would go to vote and leave the ballot blank (N= 6,555); would vote for a new candidate (N= 8,501); and would vote for the incumbent (N= 5,471). Recoding the data does not seem to have resulted in skewing because the number of participants is close to evenly distributed across the two categories. The new categories had the following numbers of participants: Would not vote (N=10,630) and would vote (N=13,972).

Attending meetings is measured by the question, "Meetings of a community improvement committee or association? Do you attend them?" This question originally consisted of four categories that I recoded into two categories: Never (0) and at least once a year (1). For the purposes of this paper, the research question asks whether or not participants attended a community meeting. As such, the main goal is to compare those who attended versus those who did not. Considering the frequency of meeting attendance could be interesting for future research. However, I chose to reduce the variable to two categories to directly assess these two options. This variable also reflects ordinal data. Although it could be interpreted as a quasi-continuous variable, it is more appropriate to consider ordinal data as distinct categories. The original categories included the following numbers of participants: Once a week (N= 779), once or twice a month (N=

3,484), once or twice a year (N= 3,609), and never (N= 18,415). When recoded, the new categories were At least once a year (N= 7,872) and Never (N= 18,415).

Finally, protesting reflects a response to the question, "In the last 12 months, have you participated in a demonstration or protest march?" Two choices were available: No (0) or Yes (1). As reflected above, three of the four participation measures refer to participation that occurred over the past year. The future voting variable refers to a hypothetical participation scenario. As illustrated, most of the variables of interest appear in the LAPOP dataset. However, external efficacy serves as a proxy for epistemic promise. In addition, three of the participation measures occur *before* the measure of epistemic promise. Thus, a few analytical assumptions are required.

Analytical Assumptions

These analyses involve three guiding assumptions. First, I assume that participants observe the epistemic promise of a process first and then decide whether to participate. The newspaper articles in Paper One inform this assumption. Second, epistemic promise remains relatively stable unless there is a significant political change. This assumption reflects the use of a single survey rather than a longitudinal survey. Third, the external efficacy measure in the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) survey is used as a proxy for *perceived* epistemic promise because the measure's wording captures the thrust of the concept.

Order of Events

In Paper One, epistemic promise is developed from theories of epistemic justice put in conversation with letters from Jamaican newspapers. I posit that a person evaluates a process's epistemic promise and then decides to participate if the epistemic promise is high enough for them. The summary analysis of newspaper articles analyzed in the first paper of this dissertation supports this order of events. However, in the newspaper articles, the phenomenon I call *epistemic*

promise is often reduced to (I suggest incorrectly) *hopelessness* or *political apathy*. For example, one Jamaican student, when asked why he did not vote in the last election, says:

> Because over the years of witnessing both administrations and looking at where we
>
> are now, I haven't seen the need to exercise my right because I am left with no
>
> choices (Carter, 2016, n.p.).

This student decided that there was no reason to participate after "years of" observing the political situation. He decides to refrain from voting *after* he observes his political choices. In the language of epistemic promise, this student sought to understand potential epistemic promise in voting, perceived that voting has low epistemic promise for him, and then decided not to vote. Other examples of this sequence of events appear in Paper One. Thus, certain Jamaican citizens express that they observe the system, find it lacking, and then stop participating. In an example from theory, Meeks (2014) coined the term hegemonic dissolution to describe:

> A disconnection by significant sections of the population from a formal order that
>
> they no longer feel any loyalty toward, that they perceive to have disrespected them
>
> repeatedly, and that is no longer able to provide many with the modicum of a decent
>
> livelihood (p. 136-137).

Meeks (2014) also writes from the Jamaican context. He posits that citizens observe the formal political system and find it lacking in its material benefits: "a formal order that is…no longer able to provide." The system also lacks respect for their voices: "a formal order…that they perceive to have disrespected them repeatedly" (Meeks, 2014, p. 137). Using this postulate, certain Jamaicans perceive that those in power do not listen to them. They consider the political system lacking in epistemic promise and so decide to disconnect from it. Therefore, in addition to being an independent variable (i.e., it takes place before outcomes such as political participation), I

hypothesize that epistemic promise will be positively related to some forms of political participation- if individuals perceive high epistemic promise, they will be more likely to participate.

This analysis is also part exploration because epistemic promise is a new concept. Given that, I concede that it is also possible that epistemic promise might be impacted by participation, creating a possible feedback loop. For example, a citizen might vote in an election, but if her preferred candidate does not win, she may perceive that her voice matters less than she initially thought. She may re-evaluate the means of participation, deciding that the epistemic promise of the system is lower than she first assumed, and change her subsequent participation accordingly. Although this decision-making direction is not illustrated in the newspaper articles examined in Paper One, it could represent one possible way that epistemic promise changes over time. As the latter direction is not represented in my findings thus far, the current analysis focuses on the causal direction suggested in existing literature, specifically that an individual's perception of high epistemic promise leads to a higher possibility of participation. Although this order of events is supported, the question about epistemic promise appears in the same survey as the questions about participation (i.e., ordering is not reflected). However, as reflected in the newspaper letters, epistemic promise is assumed to be relatively stable.

Stability of Epistemic Promise

An indicator that captures the nature and scope of perceived epistemic promise is the independent variable in this study, external efficacy (detailed in the next section). I created four models, one for each of the dependent variables that reflect various measures of political participation. Three of the measures consider participation in the past year. One of the measures examines predicted future participation. Survey participants are asked about their present external

efficacy, the proxy for perceived epistemic promise. Thus, three of the models relate present epistemic promise to past participation. This is a possible constraint of the survey process. Ideally, for a prediction model, a survey would measure epistemic promise first, and then a follow-up survey would measure participation. For these models, I assume that epistemic promise is relatively stable for an individual - so a respondent's perception of epistemic promise as indicated in the survey is similar to the epistemic promise perceived at the time of their past participation. The participation measures that ask about the past all specifically refer to participation during the past year. Given the short period between the act of participation and the measure of epistemic promise, these analyses assume no significant political changes have occurred to alter epistemic promise dramatically.

The Jamaican newspaper articles support this assumption and illustrate epistemic promise as something that can change. However, it reflects a more stable evaluation of one's context rather than a dynamic that changes based on mood. People discuss their present perception of the epistemic promise of the political system and apply that perception to past participation. In this paper, I also explore a fourth dependent variable: future voting behavior. This variable is limited in scope because it is a hypothetical measure of attitudes towards participation rather than actual participatory behavior. However, using this measure is expected to inform our understanding of how epistemic promise might relate to attitudes about future participation. Overall, the absence of longitudinal data precludes determining causal relationships between epistemic promise and the four indicators of political participation studied here. However, findings are expected to quantify certain links between variations in epistemic promise and the probability of past and future political participation.

The final assumption involves using a proxy for perceived epistemic promise. Epistemic promise is a new concept and so there are no datasets available that would use a measure designed to capture it. However, the measure for external efficacy used in this survey captures epistemic promise sufficiently to serve as a proxy. Given the centrality of this concept as an independent variable in subsequent modeling, the following section examines it in detail.

External Efficacy as a Proxy for Perceived Epistemic Promise

The third primary assumption of this paper is that a measure of external efficacy can serve as a proxy for perceived epistemic promise. External efficacy and epistemic promise are related concepts, but they are distinguishable in several primary ways. The following section defines and compares epistemic promise and external efficacy, then describes why this study's particular measure for external efficacy is used as a proxy for epistemic promise.

Epistemic promise refers to the possibility that a person's input in a participatory political process will meaningfully affect process outcomes. The epistemic promise of a specific event or process varies based on both the event context and the individual considering involvement. One's perceptions and expectations are germane; an individual is more likely to participate in a process if he believes it has high epistemic promise for him. Broadly applied, this means that people are more likely to get involved in a participatory process if they think their involvement will be valued and make a difference. Although an individual can attempt to estimate the epistemic promise of a process, his perceptions about it may not accurately represent the extent to which he is actually integral to that process.

External efficacy developed from the concept of political efficacy. Briefly, political efficacy refers to the belief that an individual can impact the political process (Campbell et al., 1954). Numerous scholars have found a positive relationship between political efficacy and

participation (Finkel, 1985, 1987; de Moor, 2016; Bourne et al., 2017; Halpern et al., 2017). The greater one's political efficacy, the more likely one is to participate. After developing political efficacy, researchers separated the concept into two subtypes: internal and external efficacy (Caprara & Vecchione, 2013). Researchers used these new concepts to distinguish between a person's thoughts about their own political capacity (internal), and a person's thoughts about the capacity of the system to change (external). The *Oxford Handbook of Political Psychology* defines external efficacy as: "People's belief(s) that the political system is amenable to change through individual and collective influence" (Caprara & Vecchione, 2013, pp. 42–43).

As described above, there are several similarities between epistemic promise and external efficacy.

First, both concepts can represent an individual's belief about a political environment. The definition of external efficacy specifies that it is a "belief" generated by the individual observing the political system. Similarly, *perceived* epistemic promise is an opinion about a political process that an individual generates. However, I contend that the *actual* epistemic promise of a political process may be different from an individual's *perception* of the epistemic promise for them. The literature on external efficacy does not, to my knowledge, endeavor to connect individual beliefs about the openness of a system to the actual openness of that system. Instead, the *feeling* towards the system and how that impacts participation is the primary focus for research about external efficacy (Caprara & Vecchione, 2013; Esaiasson et al., 2015). Thus, external efficacy is similar to *perceived* epistemic promise but does not overlap in meaning with *actual* epistemic promise.

The second similarity between epistemic promise and external efficacy is the focus on political processes. However, Esaiasson et al. (2015) note that external efficacy can reflect an individual's belief about a wide range of elements in the political environment. These authors propose that external efficacy is such a broad concept that it serves as an umbrella for several sub-

concepts. For example, we can observe the multiple related concepts held in external efficacy by examining the three items that comprise the most common external efficacy scale:

1. Representatives do not care about the opinions of people like me.

2. People like me have no influence at all on government policy.

3. Political parties are only interested in my vote and not in my opinion (Esaiasson et al., 2015, p. 4)

These questions ask for a respondent's beliefs about three separate elements of the political environment: their representatives' openness to the public's beliefs, government policy, and the interests of political parties. Despite this breadth of subjects, Esaiasson et al. (2015) argue that external efficacy has been used interchangeably with some more specific concepts. For example, researchers have used external efficacy scales to measure 'political responsiveness,' even though that concept refers to the actual behaviors of specific political representatives. Similarly, I posit that *perceived* epistemic promise refers explicitly to beliefs about deliberative political processes while *actual* epistemic promise refers to traits of these processes (Catala, 2015). Considering the scale above, we can observe that item (1) could capture some aspects of perceived epistemic promise. It refers to "opinions" (discussed in deliberations) and "representatives" who hold decision-making power in deliberative political processes. However, item (2) has a broader scope; "influence" on policy could be achieved through other means than deliberation. Item (3) also mentions "opinions." So, it could capture some elements of epistemic promise, especially as it seems to imply that it would be more democratic for parties to care about opinions rather than just votes. Thus, two items may capture epistemic promise in this popular measure of external efficacy, but the third does not. Like Esaiasson et al. (2015), I argue that external efficacy measures are broad enough to capture aspects of more specific concepts (such as epistemic promise and political

responsiveness). However, these measures are so broad that they capture more than those specific variables.

In the case of this study, the measure for external efficacy used in the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP) survey is as follows: "Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?" This question is most similar to the item (1) in the scale above. It captures aspects of the deliberative political process, such as the participant's input into a political process, i.e., "what people like you think." It also references decision-makers during a political process, i.e., "those who govern this country." Finally, it speaks to the deliberative interaction between the two, i.e., are the decision-makers actually "interested" in the inputs. Ideally, to fully capture perceived epistemic promise, this question would ask participants whether their opinions matter in a *specific* political process such as voting. However, given the limitations of using a secondary data source to study a new concept, the measure approximates the concept of perceived epistemic promise.

Although this measure that reflects external efficacy may serve as a proxy for perceived epistemic promise, I posit that analyzing the results through the lens of epistemic promise could more easily translate the findings for practical purposes. As described above, epistemic promise has two connected types: perceived and actual. If perceptions of low epistemic promise are related to low participation, the solution could involve increasing both the perceived and actual epistemic promise of a process. Conversely, because external efficacy focuses on the *belief* about the system and does not theoretically relate to *actual* measures of a trait of the system itself, it is less practically applicable for *systemic* change. When low external efficacy is related to low participation, the theoretical solution is to increase the individual's external efficacy. In addition,

epistemic promise results from the application of theories of epistemic justice to a political context. Thus, there are moral implications in any interpretation through the lens of epistemic promise. Processes with low epistemic promise are less aligned with epistemic justice, and as such, are sites of epistemic violence (Dotson, 2011, 2014). Overall, epistemic promise is a more normative concept than external efficacy- it connects individual beliefs about a political process to its structure. Moreover, it serves as a judgment on a process's adherence to principles of epistemic justice.

In conclusion, in this study, the measure of external efficacy is sufficiently close to the definition of perceived epistemic promise to serve as a proxy. Further, interpreting these results through the lens of epistemic promise may reveal more practical solutions than an external efficacy interpretation for people seeking to make structural change to political processes. Given the above assumptions, the following sections detail the hypotheses and results of both studies.

Summary of Hypotheses

In Study 1, data from a sample of Jamaican participants are analyzed using hierarchical logistic regression modeling. These regressions control for age, gender, education level, trust in the United States government, and income. I hypothesize that external efficacy (i.e. my proxy for perceived epistemic promise) will be related to three forms of participation: past voting, future voting, and meeting attendance. Additionally, external efficacy will explain a significant amount of the variance in each of these three forms of participation. However, external efficacy will not be related to protesting in the past year and external efficacy will have a positive relationship with past voting, future voting, and attending community meetings. External efficacy will not have a significant relationship with protesting in the past year.

Study 2 employs multilevel models to analyze data from 17 countries in the Americas, including Jamaica and 16 other countries across Latin America. Henceforth this sample will be referred to as the "regional sample". These models were constructed with the intent to include the most prevalent control variables in the literature to construct models that fit the data as well as possible. In addition, by controlling for the effects of the most common predictive variables, these models may show the unique contribution of external efficacy, the proxy for perceived epistemic promise. After the model-building process, the final models include the variables that fit the data most accurately. Using the final models, I predict that external efficacy will positively correlate with past voting, future voting, and attending community meetings. However, external efficacy is not expected to have a significant relationship with protesting in the past year.

Demographics

The sample demographics are presented first, followed by the methods and results of Studies 1 and 2. The demographics of the Latin American and Caribbean sample are included in Table 2 below. The Jamaican sample is a subset of this larger regional sample, thus the demographics for Jamaica are highlighted in Table 2.

Regional Sample

The Latin American and Caribbean sample includes 26,526 participants. However, for some analyses, the sample size is significantly less because of missing or incomplete data. Only surveys where participants responded to all the variables of interest are used in these analyses. As evidenced in Table 2, the sample contains a balanced ratio of male to female participants. The average age of persons in the sample is 40 years old, and the average household income is 7.5 on a scale of 16. This result suggests a normal income distribution. Household income is standardized within each country, such that the lowest incomes are represented by 0 and the highest by 16. The

codebook for this data did not include the numerical values of the household incomes, so they are represented according to the standardized scale. Next, the years of education are relatively high, and reflect a mean of 10 years of education out of a possible maximum of 15 years. In addition, the countries have a small range of Gini coefficients. For example, Jamaica has the lowest Gini coefficient (35) and Brazil the highest (53.5), which means that Jamaica is the most economically equitable society represented in the study, and Brazil is the most unequal. However, Jamaica appears to be a society with a large class gap, as evidenced by newspaper articles, a documentary on the topic, and previous theoretical papers (Black, 2001; Ibanez & Rao, 2003; Kamugisha, 2007; Higgins, 2014; Meeks, 2014; Bourne et al., 2017). Thus, if Jamaica is the most economically equal society represented, the sample skews towards countries where inequality is generally high.

Table 2

Sample Demographics

Country of Residence	N (Total)	Country's Gini score (0-100)	Participant Sex by Country		Participant Means by Country										
					Education (Years)		Age (Years)		Trust in the United States Government (Not at all trustworthy (1) to Very trustworthy (4))		Internal Efficacy (Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (7))		External Efficacy ((Strongly disagree (1)- Strongly agree (7))	
			Male (%)	Female (%)	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Argentina	1528	41.4	50	50	11	(3.7)	42	(18)	2.0	(.97)	4.3	(1.7)	3.3	(2.0)
Bolivia	1682	42.2	50	50	11	(4.5)	40	(16)	1.8	(.87)	4.1	(1.6)	4.0	(1.9)
Brazil	1498	53.9	50	50	9	(3.9)	39	(16)	2.3	(1.0)	3.9	(1.9)	3.7	(2.0)
Chile	1638	44.4	50	50	12	(3.6)	42	(17)	2.0	(.94)	4.3	(1.8)	3.1	(1.8)
Colombia	1663	50.4	50	50	10	(4.3)	40	(16)	2.3	(.91)	4.2	(1.7)	3.9	(2.1)
Costa Rica	1501	48	50	50	10	(4.3)	41	(17)	2.3	(.93)	4.6	(1.6)	3.6	(2.0)
Ecuador	1533	45.4	50	50	12	(4.0)	38	(17)	2.2	(.92)	4.3	(1.6)	3.8	(1.9)
El Salvador	1511	38.6	50	50	9	(4.6)	40	(17)	2.2	(.96)	4.5	(1.7)	3.5	(2.0)
Guatemala	1596	48.3	49	51	8	(4.5)	38	(15)	2.2	(.97)	4.0	(1.7)	3.6	(2.0)
Honduras	1560	52.1	50	50	8	(4.2)	38	(16)	2.3	(1.0)	3.9	(1.9)	3.1	(2.0)
Jamaica	1513	35	50	50	10	(2.8)	40	(17)	2.0	(.97)	4.0	(2.0)	3.7	(2.1)
Mexico	1580	36.8	49	51	10	(4.3)	42	(17)	1.9	(.92)	4.3	(1.6)	4.4	(2.0)
Nicaragua	1547	46.2	50	50	9	(4.4)	35	(15)	2.4	(1.1)	4.4	(1.9)	3.9	(2.2)
Panama	1559	49.2	50	50	11	(3.8)	40	(16)	2.6	(.90)	4.3	(1.9)	3.3	(2.1)
Paraguay	1515	46.2	50	50	10	(4.5)	40	(16)	2.6	(.91)	3.8	(1.7)	3.8	(1.9)
Peru	1521	42.8	50	50	12	(3.7)	39	(16)	2.2	(.92)	4.3	(1.6)	3.7	(1.8)
Uruguay	1581	39.7	49	51	10	(4.1)	46	(18)	1.9	(.92)	4.4	(1.8)	3.7	(2.0)
Mean (SD) for Total Sample		44.7	50	50	10	(4.2)	40	(17)	2.2	(.98)	4.2	(1.7)	3.6	(2.0)
Total N in Sample	26526													
Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.														

Jamaican Sample

The demographics for the Jamaican sample are highlighted near the center of Table 2. The sample includes a total of 1,513 participants. As in the previous sample, analyses were performed using only data from those responses that included all the variables of interest. Thus, the analyses may include less than the full number of sample participants. There is an equal percentage of male and female participants in the Jamaican sample. In addition, the average age is 40 years old (s.d.= 17). The mean years of education is 10 (s.d.= 2.8) of out a possible 15, which is relatively high. Jamaicans in this sample have an average trust in the United States government of 2.0 (s.d.= .97), which suggests that on average they believe the U.S. government is "Not trustworthy". They have slightly lower internal efficacy at 4.0 (s.d.= 2.0) and slightly higher external efficacy at 3.7 (s.d.= 2.1) than the average in the Latin American and Caribbean sample overall. These results suggest that on average, Jamaicans in this sample responded neutrally to whether they "understand the most important political issues of this country" (i.e. internal efficacy). In addition, the mean lies between "Somewhat disagree" and "Neither agree nor disagree" in response to "Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think" (i.e. external efficacy). The following sections describe the methods and results for Studies 1 and 2.

Study 1: Predictors of Participation in Jamaica

Methods

Hierarchical regression modeling is used to analyze the relationship between external efficacy and participation in Jamaica. This method is appropriate because the unique contribution of each variable can be determined at each modeling step. Findings will show how each variable is related to the form of participation under study. I predict that external efficacy, the proxy for perceived epistemic promise, will explain some of the variance for each form of participation

except protesting. Four models are created, one for each form of participation. As described in earlier sections, the models control for variables that research shows predict participation, specifically: income, age, sex, internal efficacy, and trust in the U.S. government. An education variable was included in the initial models. However, bivariate correlations (provided upon request) reveal that education highly correlates with age (r =-.416) and income (r= .274). To minimize multicollinearity errors, I did not include education in the final regression models[7]. In Jamaica, it is predicted that external efficacy will positively affect voting in the last election, intention to vote in the next election, and attendance at community meetings. In addition, external efficacy will have no relationship with the likelihood of protesting. The results are presented below.

Results of Study 1

Table 3

Hierarchical Regression of Variables Related to Voting in the Last Election in Jamaica

Variables	Coefficient (B)	S.E.	Exp (B)
Constant	0.298	0.177	1.347
Age	0.043***	0.008	1.044
Sex (1= Female)	-0.102	0.235	0.903
Income	0.000	0.024	1.000
Trust in U.S.	-0.250*	0.122	0.779
Internal Efficacy	0.012	0.060	1.012
External Efficacy	0.136*	0.059	1.146
*p< .05, **p< .01, ***p<.001			
N= 349, Nagelkerke's R Squared= 0.14			
Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.			

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[7] To reduce multicollinearity, one or more of the highly correlated independent variables had to be excluded. To determine which variable to exclude, regression models (not included in this paper) were performed including education and excluding age and income. The model fit in all instances was improved with the exclusion of education and inclusion of age and income.

Past Voting. Table 3 displays the results for the hierarchical regression where past voting was the outcome variable. Past voting was measured by the item: "Did you vote in the last presidential elections of [year of last election for country]?" Considering the R-squared value in Table 3, this model accounts for 14% of the variance of past voting. This implies that the model has some predictive power, but there may be other influential variables that are missing. As summarized in Table 3, external efficacy is positively related to the likelihood of voting in the last election (b=.136, odds= 1.146, p<.05). The higher the external efficacy of Jamaicans in this study, the more they voted in the last election. Through the lens of external efficacy, the more a person believes that the system is amenable to change, the higher likelihood that they had voted in the past election. External efficacy serves as a proxy for perceived epistemic promise. This finding indicates that those persons from Jamaica who believe the government cares about their opinions are more likely to have exercised the right to vote as defined here. Two other variables that significantly influence past voting include age and trust in the U.S. government. Findings show that age has a positive relationship to past voting (b= .043, odds= 1.044, p<.001). Thus, older participants are more likely to have voted in the last election as compared to their counterparts. Additionally, contrary to expected, the variable that measures trust in the U.S. government has a negative relationship to past voting (b=-.250, odds=.779, p<.05), indicating that Jamaicans are *less likely* to have voted in the last election if they have higher trust in the U.S. government. Three variables, sex, income and internal efficacy, did not have significant influence on past participation. These results indicate that women are just as likely as men to have voted in the last election; income did not play a significant role in whether participants voted; and respondents' beliefs about their own abilities to affect political change had no effect on whether they voted in

the last election. Next, Table 4 presents the variables that influence the likelihood of voting in a hypothetical future election.

Table 4

Hierarchical Regression of Variables Related to Predicted Voting in the Next Election in Jamaica

Variables	Coefficient (B)	S.E.	Exp (B)
Constant	0.155	0.182	1.168
Age	0.037***	0.008	1.038
Sex (Female= 1)	-0.296	0.243	0.743
Income	-0.008	0.025	0.992
Trust in U.S.	-0.066	0.126	0.936
Internal Efficacy	0.042	0.061	1.043
External Efficacy	0.142*	0.060	1.153
*p< .05, **p< .01, ***p<.001			
N= 325, Nagelkerke's R Squared= 0.13			
Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.			

Future Voting. Responses are based on the query: "If the next presidential elections were being held this week, what would you do?" The model explains 13% of the variance of future voting. Similar to the previous model, this implies that this model has value for predicting future voting, however there may be other predictive variables missing. These results suggest that external efficacy also has a significant positive influence on future voting (b=.142, odds= 1.153, p<.05). Thus, the more Jamaicans believe the political system is amenable to change, the more likely they will vote in the future. Applying an epistemic promise lens, the more persons believe that their representatives care about what they think, the more likely they will vote in the future. One other variable emerged as a significant predictor of voting in the future. Age has a positive relationship with the probability of future voting (b=.037, odds= 1.038, p<.001). This means that

the older a person, the more likely they are to vote in the next election. This finding mirrors the relationship between age and past voting. However, my results show that sex, income, trust in the U.S., and internal efficacy do not significantly influence plans to vote during the next Jamaican election. But do these same indicators help gauge participation in community meetings?

Table 5

Hierarchical Regression of Variables Related to Attending at Least One Community Meeting in Jamaica

Variables	Coefficient (B)	S.E.	Exp (B)
Constant	-1.130	0.192	0.323
Age	-0.006	0.008	0.994
Sex (Female= 1)	0.599**	0.249	1.820
Income	-0.001	0.026	0.999
Trust in U.S.	0.260**	0.124	1.297
Internal Efficacy	-0.029	0.062	0.971
External Efficacy	0.027	0.062	1.027
*p< .05, **p< .01, ***p<.001			
N = 340, Nagelkerke's R Squared= 0.04			
Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.			

Attendance at Community Meetings. Table 5 presents model findings based on the question: "Meetings of a community improvement committee or association? Do you attend them?" In this test, external efficacy was not significantly related to this form of community involvement. This means that Jamaicans with high external efficacy are no more apt to attend community meetings than their peers with lower external efficacy. In addition, older persons are just as likely as their younger counterparts to attend community meetings. Income and internal efficacy similarly did not have a significant relationship with meeting attendance. Overall, the model explains only 4% of the variance in meeting attendance. However, two variables

significantly predict meeting attendance: sex and trust in the U.S. government. These findings show that sex is highly influential and positively related to such attendance (b=.599, odds=1.820, p<.01). Thus, female participants are 1.8 times more likely to attend community meetings than males from Jamaica. Trust in the U.S. government is also significantly related to attendance (b=.260, odds=1.294, p<.01). The higher a participant's trust in the U.S. government, the higher the likelihood they will attend community meetings once a year or more. Readers should note that in the past voting model, trust in the U.S. government was also a significant predictor but in the opposite direction. However, the lack of a relationship between external efficacy and community meeting attendance refutes the hypothesis for this outcome. It is important to assess the possible impact of those variables on participation in protests.

Table 6

Hierarchical Regression of Variables Related to Protesting in the Last Year in Jamaica

Variables	Coefficient (B)	S.E.	Exp (B)
Constant	-4.437	0.725	0.012
Age	-0.053	0.033	0.948
Sex (Female= 1)	0.482	0.750	1.619
Income	0.054	0.075	1.056
Trust in US	0.021	0.366	1.021
Internal Efficacy	-0.004	0.194	0.996
External Efficacy	0.164	0.178	1.178
*p< .05, **p< .01, ***p<.001			
N= 349, Nagelkerke's R Squared= 0.07			
Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.			

Protesting. Table 6 presents the results for protesting in the last year based on the query: "In the last 12 months, have you participated in a demonstration or protest march?" There are no significant relationships between any of the independent variables and the likelihood of protesting.

This means that older Jamaicans are no more apt to participate in protests than younger Jamaicans; female Jamaicans are no more likely than males; income differences are not predictive; differences in trust levels in the U.S. don't affect protesting; and higher or lower internal or external efficacy do not affect participation in protests as defined here. In addition, this model explains only a small percentage of the total variance (only 7%). These results suggest that this model does not include independent variables that help predict the likelihood of protesting.

Summary of Results from Study 1. The findings support three of the four hypotheses. External efficacy is positively related to both past voting (b=.136, odds= 1.146, p<.05) and future voting (b=.037, odds= 1.038, p<.001). However, counter to the third hypothesis, external efficacy does not help explain attendance at community meetings. As hypothesized, external efficacy does not significantly influence protesting. The measure for external efficacy is, "Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?" Thus, for both past and future voting, the higher a participant's belief that their representatives are interested in what they think, the more likely they have voted or will vote in the future. These findings suggest that increasing the perceived epistemic promise of voting may increase the likelihood of voting in the Jamaican context.

An interesting and unpredicted trend appears in the relationship between trust in the U.S. government and participation. Trust in the U.S. government did not influence future voting or protesting. However, such confidence in the U.S. government had a significant effect on past voting (b= -.250, odds=.779, p<.05) and attending community meetings (b=.260, odds=1.294, p<.01). The lower a participant's trust in the U.S. government, the less likely they were to vote. In addition, the higher the trust in the U.S. government, the more likely they were to attend community meetings. These results suggest that trust in the U.S. government shapes certain forms

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of participation. This finding also parallels the theory discussed in Paper One. Kamugisha (2007) theorizes that Jamaicans understand that the influence of countries such as the U.S. place limitations on their civic power. It is possible that those who do not trust the U.S. government vote less because they are aware of the country's neocolonial influence on the Jamaican government (Moyston, 2014). In this scenario, potential voters may believe that their opinions are negligible in the face of this more powerful political influence and so decide not to vote. This possibility is also supported by the positive correlation between external efficacy and trust in the U.S. government ($r=.167$, $p<.01$). The more participants trust the U.S. government, the more they perceive that representatives care about what they think. Theoretically, participants who trust the U.S. government may be aware of its influence on Jamaican politics. However, because they trust this political power, they may still have faith in the political system and thus be inclined to participate. Future studies should further illumine the relationship between trust in the U.S. and participation. Study 2 examines the same questions as Study 1 but based on a much larger context. The sample in Study 2 consists of residents of 17 countries in the Americas.

Study 2: Participation in a Regional Sample

Methods

The next phase of this analysis considers whether the proxy for epistemic promise, external efficacy, and the other five indicators help explain the four types of participation in a broader ecological context. Four multilevel models are constructed to examine the relationship between external efficacy and forms of participation across 17 countries. Multilevel modeling (MLM) helps to analyze data that are nested in groups. Participants here are spread across 17 countries; thus, countries can be considered groups. The primary relationship of interest is between external efficacy and the likelihood of participation. However, MLM assumes that this relationship of

interest may differ from country to country because of certain unique country-level variables. In this case, literature suggests that inequality at the country level (measured here by the Gini coefficient) may impact the relationship between external efficacy and participation (Solt, 2008; Castillo et al., 2015; Laurison, 2015; Norris, 2015). For example, one study in the U.S. suggests that state-level inequality has a significant negative effect on external efficacy (Norris, 2015). In countries with greater inequality, participants' external efficacy may be lower in general than residents in countries with less inequality. The 17 countries in this study have a variety of Gini coefficients. So, the average external efficacy for a given country may be significantly different from the average in another country. MLM allows for control for the variance in the average external efficacy caused by differences in Gini coefficients across countries. In addition, the models control for observed variance between countries that may not have a clear theoretical explanation. In this MLM, the first-level equation reflects the same equation as a simple logistic regression model. It includes external efficacy as an independent variable and participation as a dependent variable. At the first level, variables represent measures for each participant. However, the second level of the regression modeling accounts for country-level variances. Thus, any variables in the second level of the test are measures that relate to countries. Thus, inequality is a second-level variable controlled in the second equation of the model. In addition, the second equation includes variance between countries caused by other unspecified variables. The final set of equations tests for the relationship between external efficacy and participation while controlling for income as a first-level variable, inequality as a second-level variable, and the variance between countries caused by other unspecified variables. This final equation was developed through a process of model building.

Model building involves adding variables step by step to determine the model of best fit. When a variable is added and the model fit improves, that variable remains in the model. If the model fit worsens, that variable is removed. For further details on the model building process, Sommet and Morselli (2017) detail the process of building a multilevel model using an accessible example. Specifically, for each dependent variable, the steps were as follows: create a null model, calculate the intraclass correlation (ICC), and add second- and first-level variables one by one to determine their impact on model fit. After determining the best fit model for each dependent variable, the model was used to examine the relationship between external efficacy and the dependent variable. I created one model for each dependent variable: past voting, future voting, meeting attendance, and protesting. Each model was built using the same process discussed below.

The first step of any MLM process is to create a null model that controls for any variance in first-level variables that are explained by differences at the country level. From the null model, the intraclass correlation (ICC) for each model is calculated. The ICC is a measure of the variance that results from unspecified country-level differences. Traditionally, when the ICC indicates that between-country differences cause less than 10% of the variance, a researcher may use a simple regression model instead of an MLM. In that case, the second level of the equation is considered unnecessary unless there is a theoretical reason to maintain the second level. The ICCs for the MLMs in this study ranged from 0.73% to 2.59%. In this instance, despite the low ICC values, I elected to use the MLM both because of the variety of political contexts in the sample and because ICCs are often underestimated in logistic regressions (Clarke, 2008; Snijders & Bosker, 2011). To minimize errors, these authors suggest employing MLM if there is a theoretical basis for maintaining the data nested. Thus, MLM is used rather than standard regression modeling to

account for the variance caused by country-level factors, despite the relatively small variance indicated by the ICCs.

Next, I created the models. The Gini coefficients were standardized by taking the average Gini of the entire sample and subtracting this average from each Gini coefficient. This process is called grand-mean-centering and is used to make it easier to interpret the final equation. Next, the independent variables- external efficacy, income, age, and sex were standardized through cluster-mean-centering to standardize the variable around the average for that cluster of participants[8]. In this analysis, the cluster is a country. I calculated the average of external efficacy in each country and subtracted this average from the external efficacy score for each participant in that country.

After each independent variables was standardized, they were included in the model using SPSS. At each step, the model fit was observed and compared to the previous model fit. A smaller Bayesian information criteria score indicates a better model fit. If the addition of a variable improved the model's fit, it remained in the model. If the addition of a variable worsened the fit of the model, it was removed. Gini score was the first variable added because it is a second-level variable. Then, first-level variables were added. As a final step, for any variables that improved model fit, I also explored whether the interaction between these variables would improve the model fit. Table 11 in the Appendix documents the steps of the model building process. The models presented below are the final, best fit models.

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[8] Trust in the U.S. government and internal efficacy were not included in the model building process for Study 2. Multilevel models are more sensitive to error than one-level regressions. Significant random variance can result with the addition of each independent variable (Snijders & Bosker, 2011). As such, I chose to reduce the number of independent variables by only including the other variables that were most prevalent in the political participation literature.

Results from Study 2

I hypothesize that across 17 countries, external efficacy will positively influence voting in the last election, intention to vote in the next election, and attending a community meeting in the past year. Conversely, external efficacy should have no significant relationship with protesting in the past year. The multilevel modeling results for each participation outcome are provided in Tables 5-10: past voting, future voting, community meeting attendance, and protesting. These models include participants from the 17 countries across the Americas.

Table 7

Multilevel Model of Variables Related to Voting in the Last Election in The Regional Sample

Variable	Coefficient (B)	S.E.	Exp(B)
Intercept	1.009***	0.136	2.744
Income	0.034***	0.003	1.035
Sex (Female= 1)	0.146***	0.031	1.157
External Efficacy	0.015*	0.008	1.015
Note: Yes=1 and No=0. Yes is the reference variable.			
*p< .05, **p< .01, ***p<.001			
N= 26,434, Correct Classification = 72.4%			
Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.			

Past Voting. Table 7 documents the variables that were included in the final model of past voting. The model fit is illustrated by the percentage of cases in the data that the model correctly predicted. Here, the model correctly predicted 72.4% of the cases, suggesting that it fits this data well. As such, it should provide valuable insight into the predictors of past voting. External efficacy is positively related to past voting, showing a relationship with voting in the last election (b= .015, odds=1.015, p<.001). This finding suggests that respondents are more likely to vote if they believe their representatives care about their thoughts. The variable that identifies the sex of a respondent

is the most statistically significant in the model (b= .146, odds=1.157, p<.001). Female respondents are more likely than male respondents to have voted in the last election in their respective countries. In addition, the income indicator is important and shows that participants who have higher household incomes are more likely to have voted in the last election than their lower-income counterparts (b= .034, odds= 1.035, p<.001).

Table 8

Multilevel Model of Variables Related to Predicted Voting in the Next Election in the Regional Sample

Variable	Coefficient (B)	S.E.	Exp(B)
Intercept	0.317***	0.099	1.373
Income	0.057***	0.003	1.058
Sex (Female= 1)	-0.152***	0.028	0.859
External Efficacy	0.064***	0.007	1.066
Note: Yes=1 and No=0. Yes is the reference variable.			
*p< .05, **p< .01, ***p<.001			
N= 21,984, Correct Classification = 60.6%			
Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.			

Future Voting. Table 8 provides the modeling results to gauge expectations about voting in a future election. The overall model is a good fit for this data, correctly classifying 60.6% of the outcomes. External efficacy is positively related to voting in a future election (b=.064, odds= 1.066, p <.001). This suggests that respondents who believe their representatives care about what they think have a higher likelihood of voting in the next election. In addition, sex is inversely related to voting (b= -.152, odds= 0.859, p<.001), suggesting that men are more likely to vote in the next election. As in the previous model for past voting, income positively influences the odds of voting in the future (b=.057, odds= 1.058, p <.001). This finding suggests that in their respective

countries, people who earn higher incomes are more likely to vote in the next election. Next, Table 9 presents the model for community meeting attendance.

Table 9

Multilevel Model of Variables Related to Attending a Community Meeting in the Past Year in The Regional Sample

Variable	Coefficient (B)	S.E.	Exp(B)
Intercept	-0.876***	0.134	0.417
Income	-0.008*	0.003	0.992
External Efficacy	0.063***	0.007	1.065
Note: Yes=1 and No=0. Yes is the reference variable.			
*p< .05, **p< .01, ***p<.001			
N= 23,172, Correct Classification = 69.7%			
Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.			

Attending Community Meetings. Table 9 displays the model for community meeting attendance. The model classifies 69.7% of the outcomes correctly, suggesting a good fit for the data. External efficacy is significant and positively related to attending at least one community meeting in the past year (b=.063, odds= 1.065, p <.001). This finding suggests that respondents are slightly more likely to have attended a community meeting if they believe their representatives care about what they think. Income is inversely related to community meeting attendance (b= -.008, odds=.992, p<.05). Thus, the less income a respondent earns, the more likely they are to attend a community meeting. Notably, sex is missing from this model because it did not improve the fit during the model building process. Although sex was significant for both voting measures, this finding implies that sex is not a significant predictor of meeting attendance in this sample. Finally, Table 10 shows the final model for protesting.

Table 10

Multilevel Model of Variables Related to Protesting in the Past Year in The Regional Sample

Variable	Coefficient (B)	S.E.	Exp(B)
Intercept	-2.290***	0.113	0.101
Income	0.049***	0.005	1.051
Sex (Female= 1)	-0.121**	0.044	0.886
External Efficacy	-0.037***	0.011	0.963
*EE*Gini*	-0.007**	0.002	0.993
Note: Yes=1 and No=0. Yes is the reference variable. *p< .05, **p< .01, ***p<.001 N= 23,291, Correct Classification = 89.8% Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.			

Protesting. Table 10 provides the modeling results for protesting. The model fits the data very well, correctly classifying 89.8% of the outcomes. In this model, all four variables are important and help explain this form of participation. Income is positively related to protesting (b=.049, odds=1.051, p< .001), suggesting that the more household income earned, the more likely they engaged in protests in the prior year. One's sex differentially affects this activity. Male participants are more likely to have protested in the past year than female participants (b=-.121, odds=0.886, p<.01). A significant interaction also emerged between external efficacy and income inequality, measured by the Gini coefficient (b=-.0007, odds=.993, p<.01). This variable suggests that the relationship between external efficacy and the likelihood of protesting varies in countries with different levels of income inequality.

To better understand this interaction, I use a method and online utility created by Preacher et al. (2006) to plot external efficacy and the likelihood of protest participation in the overall

average level of inequality in the sample, at one standard deviation above and below the average. Figure 2 illustrates the interaction between external efficacy and protest participation at one standard deviation above and below the mean Gini coefficient. As noted earlier, Gini coefficient refers to the measure of income inequality at the country level. A higher Gini coefficient indicates a higher *inequality* score; thus the *least equitable* countries have high Gini scores. For all groups (i.e., high-, mean- and low- inequality), the higher the external efficacy, the less likely an individual in that country protested in the past year. The lower the external efficacy, the more likely an individual in that country protested in the past year. Thus, a respondent is less likely to protest if they believe representatives care about what they think. Examination of Figure 1 helps us interpret the nuances of the interaction between Gini score and external efficacy.

When external efficacy is high, there are differences in the likelihood of protesting. Specifically, protesting is least likely in the low Gini coefficient group, slightly more likely at the mean Gini coefficient, and most likely at the high Gini coefficient. This finding suggests that when people believe their representatives care about their opinions, protesting is *most likely* in countries with the *highest inequality*. However, when external efficacy is low, the lines in the graph begin to converge. This trend suggests that when external efficacy is low, the chance of protesting is higher in general than when external efficacy is high. In addition, the chance of protesting for residents with low external efficacy is similar regardless of whether the participants' country has high-, mean-, or low- income inequality.

Figure 2

External Efficacy Versus the Likelihood of Protest Participation in Countries with Varying Levels

of Economic Inequality
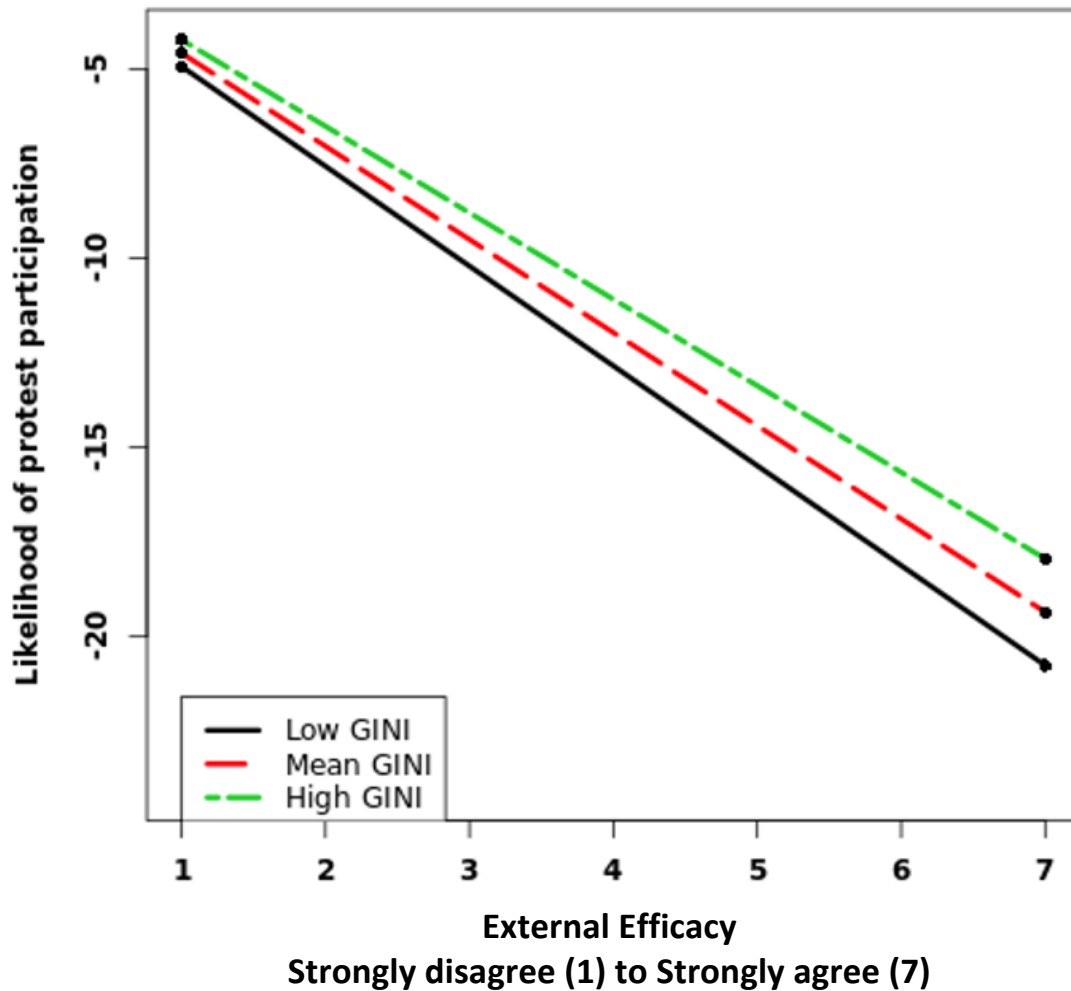
External Efficacy
Strongly disagree (1) to Strongly agree (7)

Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.

These findings suggest that if a person perceives a low likelihood that their representatives care about their thoughts, then protesting is more likely regardless of the state of inequality of the country. Conversely, if they believe their voices are valued, they are less likely in general to

protest, especially if they live in a country with *less* inequality. These results may also show that perceiving higher epistemic promise motivates people away from protesting. In this way, protesting differs from the other forms of participation studied here. Higher epistemic promise predicts a greater likelihood of past voting, future voting, and attendance at community meetings. Protesting stands out as a non-institutionalized form of participation. As such, perhaps epistemic promise is an important consideration for increasing institutionalized forms of participation, but not for affecting non-institutionalized forms of participation. The measure here asks specifically about government representatives, and, as described in the literature, non-institutionalized political activity is typically disconnected from formal government processes (Slavina, 2021).

  Summary of Results of Study 2. External efficacy is positively related to past voting, future voting, and community meeting attendance in this regional sample. Notably, it is negatively related to protesting, the only non-institutionalized form of participation included in this study. Additionally, the interaction between country-level inequality and external efficacy was only significant in the model of protesting. This interaction shows that when external efficacy is high, those respondents who reside in the countries with the most inequality are more likely to have protested than residents in the countries with the least inequality. Yet, when external efficacy is low, the likelihood of protesting is similar regardless of country-level inequality. Both income and sex were important in many of the models. Other variables such as age and country-level inequality were included during the model building process. However, they did not improve the fit and they do not appear in any final models. In addition, income was significant in all models. Higher incomes are related to a higher likelihood of past voting, future voting, and protesting. Lower incomes, to a slightly lower likelihood, help predict attendance at community meetings. Lastly, sex was significant in both voting models and the protesting model.

Discussion

External efficacy proves to be an important predictor of several of the political activities tested in these studies. Findings about other variables related to participation are discussed briefly, followed by a review of the hypotheses. Finally, a case is made for the use of an epistemic promise analysis of the results. I argue that epistemic promise may be a more applicable concept than external efficacy for interventionists seeking to increase political participation.

Variables Related to Participation

This study supports previous findings in the literature about how certain indicators influence political participation. First, in Study 1, age is positively related to past and future voting, suggesting that the older the participant, the more likely they are to have voted or plan to vote in the future. This result supports previous findings that youth are less likely to participate in institutionalized forms of participation like voting (Melo & Stockemer, 2014). The only other significant variables in Study 1 (excluding external efficacy, which will be discussed next) show that trust in the U.S. government influences past voting and community meeting attendance; and sex affects community meeting attendance. Specifically, trust in the U.S. government is negatively related to the likelihood of past voting, which supports the hypothesis that awareness of neocolonialism leads to less participation (Higgins, 2014; Meeks, 2014). However, trust in the U.S. government is positively related to meeting attendance. In this study, I interpreted lower trust in the U.S. government as a form of awareness of neocolonialism. However, future research should test this relationship by using measures that more directly capture that awareness. For example, a more precise measure of that phenomenon may ask about how much influence participants believe the U.S. government has on their country. The other significant relationship in Study 1 was

between sex and community meeting attendance. Women are much more likely to attend community meetings. This pattern is contrary to a previous study on gender and participation that showed men were more likely than women to attend community meetings (Desposato & Norrander, 2009).

In Study 2, income and sex are important in the best fit past voting, future voting, and protesting models. This finding suggests that these variables are significant predictors in the regional sample. Income positively affects all three forms of formal participation. Thus, the higher one's household income, the more likely they are to participate in these events. This finding supports past studies (Carreras & Castañeda-Angarita, 2014; Klesner, 2009) and refutes other inquiries that find no impact of income on such participation (Bourne et al., 2017). Strikingly, income is *negatively* related to participation in community meetings, suggesting that participants with lower household incomes are more likely to participate in community meetings. Future research could investigate why community meetings seem to be a more accessible or attractive form of participation for lower-income households. It is possible that members of lower-income households are more socially connected to their local community, and so this network provides support for furthering participation. For example, one study found that extensive social ties in a low-income African-American community encouraged residents to undertake more physical activity, presumably because they were exercising with people they already knew (Child et. al., 2017). Next, sex was positively related to past voting, suggesting women are more likely to have voted. However, it is negatively related to future voting and protesting, suggesting men are more likely to participate in these activities. This finding parallels one study, which found that men are more likely to protest and women to vote (Malmberg & Christensen, 2021). Yet the impact of sex here illustrates the variability apparent when specific types of political involvement are assessed.

The following section will discuss the specific effects of external efficacy and how these results may be interpreted through the lens of epistemic promise.

External Efficacy, Perceived Epistemic Promise and Participation

As discussed previously, external efficacy and perceived epistemic promise are related but distinct concepts. Both concepts broadly refer to individual beliefs about the political environment. However, perceived epistemic promise is theoretically connected to the actual epistemic promise of a political process, whereas external efficacy focuses primarily on beliefs about the system. In addition, epistemic promise refers to specific deliberative political processes, whereas external efficacy can refer to broader aspects of the political environment. Finally, epistemic promise is derived from theories about epistemic justice. Thus, I posit that it is a more normative concept than external efficacy. Despite these differences, the measure used for external efficacy in this study is an appropriate proxy for epistemic promise. It reads: "Those who govern this country are interested in what people like you think. How much do you agree or disagree with this statement?"

Ideally, to capture epistemic promise, this measure would ask specifically about each form of participation. Recall, epistemic promise refers to the possibility that a person's input in a participatory process will meaningfully affect process outcomes. It requires a specific participatory channel that participants observe and judge (Catala, 2015; Fricker, 2013). In this case, participants are judging the openness of representatives to citizens' opinions. The potential barrier to participation lies in the openness of government representatives. Given the broad nature of the proxy question, each answer reveals the extent to which a person believes that their input will be seriously considered in any political process involving "those who govern this country." Participants perceive the epistemic promise of processes where it matters whether government representatives are interested in their opinions. They then decide whether to participate in political

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events. For example, attending a town hall is a participatory process where it may matter whether "those who govern" are attentive to a participant's opinions. If the representative does not care, the participant's voice is not likely to impact outcomes because the representatives control the outcomes. Conversely, one may not care if the government cares about their opinion during a protest because the representative has less control over protest outcomes. In the following sections, I interpret the findings using this framework.

When participants in the Jamaican sample were more confident that the government cared about their opinion, they were more likely to have voted in the past *and* predict that they would vote in the future. This finding supports the hypotheses in this paper and corroborates the articles presented in Paper One. These findings align with authors who suggest that some Jamaicans do not vote because they do not believe that participating will have any impact (Carter, 2016; Higgins, 2014). If one perceives that the government does not care about one's opinion, one is less likely to vote. In addition, the proxy is a significant contributor to the likelihood of voting even when controlling for several other relevant independent variables. This pattern was also evident in the models based on the regional sample. In the sample of participants from 17 countries, the proxy emerged as a significant, positive predictor of past and future voting. These findings suggest that perceived epistemic promise is an important element of participation that also applies in a regional context; it is not confined to the Jamaican context. Thus, for persons seeking to increase voter turnout, one solution could be to increase the perceived or actual epistemic promise associated with the process of voting.

On the other hand, perceived epistemic promise had no relationship with attending community meetings for Jamaicans in this study. This result could be related to the lack of specificity in the measure. The question asks about "those who govern this country," which could

imply national leaders rather than local government leaders. If that is the case, the measure may not have captured the epistemic promise of a non-national political activity such as attending community meetings. However, it is also possible that perceived epistemic promise does not apply to the context of community meetings in Jamaica for other reasons. For example, it is unclear whether representatives attend such community meetings in Jamaica. If these meetings occur between community members, perhaps those with high epistemic promise participate because they generally believe that change can happen in political spaces. However, those who perceive low epistemic promise may consider meetings with other community members to be a mode of political participation worth partaking in, because the outcomes are not dependent on representatives. Overall, the model of community meeting attendance has the lowest explanatory power of any of the models that focused on Jamaica, it explains only 4% of the variance in the outcome. Thus, there other variables likely exist that influence meeting attendance in Jamaica that are not accounted for in the present study. When the relationship was tested using the regional sample, higher perceived epistemic promise predicted a slightly greater likelihood of attending community meetings. Thus, it is possible that regionally, participants evaluate the perceived epistemic promise of community meetings before deciding to attend. However, further research should determine whether these results would hold true for a more specific measure. For example, researchers could question whether one believes that their inputs into a community meeting have meaningful impacts on meeting outcomes.

Protesting was predicted to have no impact on perceived epistemic promise because protesting is a non-institutionalized form of political activity. Protesting primarily exists outside the formal political system, so there may not be a specific process that a person evaluates before participating in a protest. Unlike voting, which is a formal means of interacting with the

government, protests do not have a consistent format or leadership structure. Results from the Jamaican sample support that hypothesis; there was no relationship between protesting and perceived epistemic promise. This finding suggests that epistemic promise may only be relevant for forms of participation that have formal processes that people can judge before they decide whether to participate. However, in the regional sample, those participants who perceived higher epistemic promise were *less* likely to protest. This finding may also be attributed to the informal nature of protests. For example, suppose a person perceives a higher likelihood that her inputs into the formal political process will be considered. In that case, she may be more inclined to participate in formal means of political activity and refrain from protesting. This explanation is supported by the interaction between the proxy and economic inequality.

Chart 2 shows that when perceived epistemic promise is low, protesting is more likely in general than when perceived epistemic promise is high. However, when perceived epistemic promise is high, participants in countries with greater inequality are more likely to protest than those who live in more equal societies. Thus, when one perceives high epistemic promise, the likelihood of protesting is moderated by the inequality of one's society. This finding supports the literature that shows that country-level inequalities impact political participation (Corcoran et al., 2015; Norris, 2015; Solt, 2008). This moderation could be unique to protesting or relevant for non-institutionalized forms of participation in general. In comparison, this interaction was not significant in the regional models for voting, suggesting that epistemic promise is uniformly positively related to voting, regardless of a country's economic inequality. Future research should test whether and how participants judge the epistemic promise of institutionalized versus non-institutionalized forms of participation.

Overall, perceived epistemic promise is shown to significantly contribute to the likelihood of voting in both a Jamaican context and a larger regional space. However, the relationship to other forms of non-national participation, such as attending community meetings, may be more accurately determined by using a measure that asks about the specific process. In addition, evidence suggests that perceived epistemic promise may not play a role in deciding whether to participate in non-institutionalized forms of political action such as protesting. Alternatively, perceiving that "those who govern" do not care about one's opinions may lead one to participate in a non-institutionalized activity, as shown in Chart 2. This finding supports Meeks' (2014) theory of hegemonic dissolution. He writes that when citizens become disillusioned with the formal political system, they begin to participate in informal political activity. This initial exploration of epistemic promise shows that it is an important element in the study of participation. Thus, interventionists who want to increase participation in a formal political process should consider increasing the process's perceived and actual epistemic promise. The connection between perceived and actual epistemic promise encourages us to move from individual belief as sole motivators to the structure of the political processes.

The Benefit of Using an Epistemic Promise Interpretation

As proposed earlier in this paper, epistemic promise is a more justice-oriented concept than external efficacy (Catala, 2015; Fricker, 2007; Smith, 2013). The theoretical connection between perceived and actual epistemic promise also assumes that participants observe some truths about the system (Collins, 2009; Dotson, 2011, 2014). I argue that epistemic promise is a more productive framework than external efficacy for informing interventions to increase participation. Based on the framework of external efficacy, the solutions may be to convince individuals that the political system can change. However, based on a framework of epistemic promise, the solution is

always to improve the participatory process (Catala, 2015; Fricker, 2013; Schmidt, 2019). For example, considering future voting, interventions could focus on improving the voting process for participants who are less likely to vote because they perceive that voting has low epistemic promise. The theory of epistemic promise also assumes that people observe truths about political processes based on their standpoint (Collins, 2009). Interventionists could seek to understand why the voting process has low epistemic promise for those participants who see it as such and make the process more accessible. The following section explores the limitations of these studies and directions for future research.

Limitations and Future Directions

The LAPOP AmericasBarometer was the secondary dataset used for these analyses. Thus, an appropriate proxy was used to measure perceived epistemic promise. This proxy was sufficient to capture an approximate measure of perceived epistemic promise; ideally, a measure would be designed specifically for this concept. Another limitation involves missing data. Some data were missing due to incomplete surveys. For example, one country, the Dominican Republic, had to be entirely excluded because there was no measure of external efficacy. However, even totally excluding entries with missing data, the samples were large enough to test the relationship between the proxy and various forms of participation. Despite the limitations of using a secondary dataset, the rigor of the LAPOP survey provided a strong rationale for its use in exploring the new concept of epistemic promise.

As discussed earlier, three of the variables represented past participation, and one variable indicated future participation. Ideally, all the variables would have occurred after the epistemic promise measure. However, I argue that epistemic promise is relatively stable, barring sizeable structural change. All three of the past participation variables measured participation in the

previous year. I assume that the epistemic promise reported in the survey was likely similar to the epistemic promise participants observed at the time of their past participation. In addition, these measures indicate actual participatory behavior rather than predicted. So they were included to strengthen the assertion that actual participation is connected to this proxy for epistemic promise. The similarity of the outcomes for the past and future voting variables in both samples supports the assumption that epistemic promise may generally remain the same between the time of participation and the time to answer the survey.

Further quantitative research could differentiate between external efficacy and epistemic promise by using survey questions that more pointedly capture all aspects of epistemic promise. For example, a researcher could examine the relationship between actual voting behavior and the answer to the measure "How much do you agree with the following: I believe that my vote will have an impact on the outcomes of this election." Also, qualitative researchers could continue to refine the concept of epistemic promise to understand whether it is specifically relevant to only some forms of participation and the limitations of the contexts in which it can be applied. This initial exploration of the concept of epistemic promise reveals that it is an important element in the study of political participation. However, future research could also explore the connections between perceived and actual epistemic promise. How accurate are the perceptions of epistemic promise of various forms of participation? How does improving the actual epistemic promise of a process change the perception of that process? How does actual epistemic promise relate to participation? Inquiry about such questions should pose fruitful to multiple disciplines.

Conclusion

A proxy for perceived epistemic promise significantly contributed to explaining the likelihood of voting in Jamaica and the larger region. In addition, in the regional sample, the proxy

significantly predicted attendance at community meetings and was inversely related to the likelihood of protesting. These results suggest that perceived epistemic promise may influence participation for some forms of participation and not others. Specifically, participants may observe the epistemic promise of more formalized forms of participation, such as voting, before they decide to participate. However, people may not similarly evaluate less formalized forms of participation, such as protesting, in the same way. As such, epistemic promise may have a different role in decisions about non-institutional forms of participation. The theoretical connections of perceived epistemic promise to actual epistemic promise may encourage interventionists to take a structural approach to address perceptions of low epistemic promise. This initial exploration of epistemic promise illumines some of the nuances of the concept and introduces it as a significant variable in the study of political participation.

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PAPER THREE: ACTUAL EPISTEMIC PROMISE IN PRACTICE: TELL YOUR MP AND THE DEEP METHOD

Every year since 2008, the government of Jamaica grants $20 million Jamaican dollars (JMD) to each of its 63 political constituencies through the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). Constituencies are geographically defined areas represented by one government representative called the Member of Parliament (MP). The CDF is the only government funding that is specifically earmarked for community-directed development (Samuda, 2015). This means it is the *only* source of government funding for which the MP is required to collect community input before deciding how the funds are allocated. In practice, some MPs are more intentional than others about collecting this input (Samuda, 2015). In the community of South East St. Andrew, an innovative project aimed to improve this process by increasing the ways that community members could share their opinions. The Tell Your MP (TYM) project involved the design and implementation of a mobile application where community members could propose community projects, vote on their favorite proposals, and view the updates when projects were selected. TYM was the first of its kind in Jamaica - a technology driven intervention to improve a participatory political process. As discussed in Paper One, there are two types of epistemic promise, actual and perceived. Paper Two explores perceived epistemic promise. This paper explores *actual* epistemic promise. Specifically, how might TYM have improved the actual epistemic promise of the CDF budgeting process?

I coined the concept "epistemic promise" to describe the possibility that a person's input in a participatory process will meaningfully affect process outcomes. The epistemic promise of a specific event or process varies based on both the event context and the individual considering involvement. One's perceptions and expectations are influential; an individual is more apt to

participate in a process if she believes it has high epistemic promise for her. Broadly applied, this means that people are more likely to get involved in a participatory process if they think their involvement will be valued and make a difference. Although an individual can attempt to estimate the epistemic promise of a process, her perceptions about it may not accurately reflect the extent to which she is actually significant to that process. Paper Two investigates perceived epistemic promise and this paper will explore actual epistemic promise. An investigation of the relationship between external efficacy (as a proxy for perceived epistemic promise) and political participation showed that for some political processes, participants are more likely to participate if they believe that their input will affect process outcomes. Based on previous academic literature and these quantitative results, I argue that epistemic promise is positively related to decisions to participate in certain forms of participation. Practically, increasing epistemic promise may increase involvement in institutionalized forms of participation. Ethically, increasing epistemic promise aligns with the goals of epistemic justice. Thus, to improve participatory processes, I suggest that increasing epistemic promise should be a priority for designers and evaluators of such political processes.

This paper explores how actual epistemic promise might be estimated and increased by the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) method. The current version of the DEEP method is applied to a practical example, the Tell Your MP project (TYM) in the constituency of South East St. Andrew (SESA), Jamaica. I use a case study method to illustrate how epistemic exclusions were identified and mitigated in a participatory budgeting project. The Tell Your MP project (referred to as TYM hereafter) aimed to use a mobile application to increase constituents' access to and deepen their participation in a collective budgeting process. Using the TYM case study, I seek to improve upon the DEEP method. In Paper One, DEEP was based on academic

literature about epistemic justice. By applying DEEP to the TYM case study, I aim to understand whether and how the theoretical DEEP method applies in a practical space. These results and subsequent understanding may guide improvements to the method. At the conclusion of this paper, I propose a refined DEEP method for evaluating the epistemic promise of participatory processes.

Using DEEP to evaluate the TYM process, I answer the following queries: Has TYM increased the epistemic promise (EP) of the original process (OP), and if so, how? How can TYM's epistemic promise be further improved? What can the TYM case study teach us about epistemic promise? Finally, based on the results from the three research questions above, the DEEP method is modified to capture epistemic exclusions more precisely in a range of participatory processes. I propose that the DEEP method can be applied in practical scenarios to evaluate the current epistemic exclusions existing in a participatory process and to suggest ways to eliminate or mitigate those exclusions.

After introducing the case study below, the DEEP method in its original form is summarized. To provide context for this specific case study, the DEEP method must be supplemented by literature on specific challenges for this type of participatory process. Specifically, the analysis must account for typical epistemic exclusions in the implementation of civic technologies broadly, participatory budgeting practices, and information and communication technologies (ICTs) in Jamaica. Subsequent sections will briefly review this academic literature. Grounded normative theory will frame the TYM case study, as well as the process of analyzing TYM using DEEP. Finally, the DEEP method will be modified based on those findings.

The Tell Your MP Case Study

This case study explores the Tell Your MP project (TYM), a collaboration between a design firm that will be referred to as The Organization, the Mona School of Business, and the

Member of Parliament (MP) for the constituency of South East St. Andrew (SESA). TYM involved the development of a mobile application for a participatory budgeting process that is normally performed offline. In 2016, a team from the Mona School of Business and Management set out to study participatory budgeting in Jamaica (FRIDA, 2016). The MSBM study entitled *Open/Participatory Budgeting for Improved Transparency and Civic Engagement in Jamaica* found that:

> Jamaicans as a whole have a desire to be more involved in national budget governance and crave more information. The findings also substantiated our initial view that greater access to information and inclusive governance hold the potential to increase trust and citizen willingness to become more active citizens (FRIDA, 2016, p. 1).

The MSBM team surveyed 1,749 people and held four focus groups to determine Jamaicans' willingness to participate in crafting the National Budget. In the initial study, the MSBM team found that people were concerned about access. Specifically, during the focus group, there were questions about how the budget choices would be presented. Some participants suggested heavy use of charts and graphics, or even dramatizations of the consequences of one choice over another. Participants were also concerned about how the budgeting choices would affect the poor. Overall, persons were interested in participating, and particularly felt that they would be more inclined to do so if the process was extremely transparent.

As the next stage of their inquiry, the MBSM partnered with The Organization to implement a participatory budgeting pilot project, TYM, which aims to increase the type of participation and the reach of participation in SESA by providing more avenues for constituent members to take part in the CDF (Constituency Development Fund) decision process. Every year,

each constituency is awarded $20 million Jamaican dollars (JMD) from the government of Jamaica (GOJ). In theory, constituents are supposed to drive the direction of the CDF, that is, the fund should be spent on issues about which community members are concerned. However, that is not always or even often the case. Samuda (2015) writes that many MPs do not engage the community in any meaningful way when deciding how to spend the CDF. TYM aims to change that process. The original process for budgeting the CDF involved up to two in - person public townhalls. The Member of Parliament (MP) would present possible ideas on which the CDF and constituents could comment and provide feedback. The MP would then take the lead of the process. In the TYM process, constituents are given access to a mobile application which would allow them to propose projects for the CDF, vote on these projects, and monitor the final project. Thus, the TYM project involves constituents much more than the original process. I contend that a deeper analysis of the TYM case can add to our understanding of epistemic promise in practice.

I propose that the TYM project represents an effort to increase the epistemic promise of the budgeting process. Moreover, I posit that studying changes between the TYM and the OP, as well as the TYM implementation process, will expand the thesis on epistemic promise. This paper is informed by several theories, specifically theories of development, participation, and epistemic justice. However, the project also relies on a grounded theory perspective by drawing from real world examples of the concept, "epistemic promise" as illustrated in Jamaican newspaper articles. This analysis will show how epistemic promise is illustrated in certain newspaper articles referenced in Paper One. However, the study of this practical example, TYM, will illumine strengths and limitations of this concept. In addition, I propose a method, the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) that can be used in future design of civic information and

communication technologies (ICTs). The DEEP method may be used to evaluate and improve the epistemic promise of a political process.

Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) and Participatory Budgeting

Tell Your MP (TYM) represents the application of an information and communication technology (ICT) to a participatory budgeting project. The advancement of information and communication technologies (ICTs) presents opportunities for people to connect in ways that were largely unthinkable previously (Saldivar et al., 2019). For example, social media use has been connected to organizing of the Arab Spring, strengthening of the Black Lives Matter movement, and growth of the #MeToo movement (Brown, 2018; Guesmi, 2021; Maqbool, 2020). In addition, ICTs have been employed to support more civic participation in government initiatives (Herringshaw, 2018; Saldivar et al., 2019; Waller, 2006). Some examples include mobile applications and digital spaces that; support participatory budgeting in Brazil, provide greater transparency between government and citizens in the United States (U.S.), and allow more avenues to contact representatives in Uganda (Herringshaw, 2018; Peixoto & Sifry, 2017a).

Some scholars argue that ICTs that facilitate civic participation have the potential to deepen democratic participation by increasing the ways that people can interact with their representatives (Waller, 2006). However, there is debate about which types of civic technology have more liberatory potential. For example, numerous scholars propose that participatory budgeting in particular represents one of the more liberating forms of civic technology (Augsberger et al., 2019; Brun-Martos & Lapsley, 2017; Cabannes, 2004; Cabannes & Lipietz, 2018). These authors argue that participatory budgeting enables citizens to contribute to a decision - making process that has real material impact. Participatory budgeting involves community discussion about how to spend a certain amount of community funds. The process can take longer than traditional methods of

budgeting by representatives, but involves much more deliberation between community groups, government representatives, and interested individuals. Some scholars suggest that to truly maximize the liberatory potential of participatory budgeting, designers should focus on improving the deliberative process (Baiocchi & Ganuza, 2014; Cabannes & Lipietz, 2018; Gilman, 2016). I posit that improving epistemic promise should improve the deliberations of a participatory budgeting process because it focuses on improving access and deepening participation.

The Tell Your MP (TYM) project which will be explored here involves replacing an in - person townhall with mobile application that facilitates a participatory budgeting process. Constituents of South East St. Andrew (SESA) in Kingston, Jamaica, are able to use TYM to suggest community projects, vote on their preferred projects, and monitor the implementation of these projects. As a participatory budgeting application, TYM has the potential to increase the epistemic promise of the Community Development Fund participatory budgeting process. As stated above, ICTs like TYM have the potential to strengthen democracy, but the addition of technology does not automatically improve the democratic process.

ICTs for Strengthening Democracy

As described above, ICTs have numerous benefits for connecting citizens to the government. However, whether they improve the democratic process depends on other design factors. Some interventions largely maintain the same power structures, but allow more people to participate in the political process. For example, the Uganda U-Report system allows citizens to contact their representative about infrastructural problems in their communities. However, the citizens cannot propose solutions, nor do they get updates when problems are solved (Peixoto & Fox, 2016). Although this mode of participation allows for more connection between

representatives and their constituents, the power dynamic remains unchanged. The representative still holds the power to address the issue how and when they choose.

Similarly, participatory budgeting (PB) can also be deployed in ways that challenge traditional power structures or support them. Cabannes and Lipietz (2018) argue that there are three logics underpinning the use of participatory budgeting: political, good governance, and technocratic. These logics have distinct goals, and designs can be shifted to prioritize these goals. Political refers to PB's use as "an instrument to 'radically democratise democracy' and contribute to a new building and deepening of a new polity, i.e. participatory democracy" (p. 35). Good governance refers to PB's use as "an instrument to establish new societal priorities and construct new relationships between citizens and governments, reestablish/strengthen the links between actors, deepen social ties and improve governance" (p. 35). Technocratic refers to PB's use as "an instrument to improve financial efficiency and optimize often scarce public resources and service delivery" (p.35). Thus, although participatory budgeting is considered one of the more liberatory uses of civic technology, it too can have varying liberatory potential. From the list above, improving the epistemic promise of a participatory budgeting would align with the political logic towards strengthening participatory democracy.

Evaluating Participatory Processes for Epistemic Promise

As described above, technology can be applied to the civic space towards a few different goals (Cabannes & Lipietz, 2018). To that end, it is important to understand what goals are being met. For example, Peixoto and Fox (2016) conducted a meta-analysis of 23 empirical studies on information and communication technologies (ICTs) meant to improve public service delivery in various countries in the Global South. The authors were interested in which ICTs resulted in government representatives making change. They found that many of the ICTs increase the

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capacity of representatives to respond, but do not affect willingness. In addition, many projects focused on getting as many people to participate as possible, presenting their engagement numbers as markers of success. However, only a few of the projects analyzed included an evaluation of whether the wishes of the participants were translated into tangible projects. Similar findings were expressed in a report on ICTs funded by the Making All Voices Count (MAVC) grants (Herringshaw, 2017, 2018). Additionally, Herringshaw (2017, 2018) finds that some ICTs increase the capacity for meaningful change and increased participation. The difference lies in the political goals of the decision-makers who use such technology. She concludes that ICTs do not immediately generate change, but rather they tend to reflect, enable, or amplify existing political agendas. Additionally, these projects do not often distinguish between voices of individuals and the 'collective voice' of the community. Herringshaw (2017) suggests that the government's culture should be oriented towards listening to citizens. Achieving such a culture of openness would provide a stronger foundation for the implementation of ICTs. Moreover, this author echoes a concern detailed by other scholars - too often ICTs are assumed to automatically improve democracy through increasing the number of participants in a decision - making process (Peixoto & Sifry, 2017a). However, even if a new civic technology increases the number of participants, the depth of participation may not change. Thus, a more appropriate response would involve deepening participation rather than increasing participants.

However, there is a large discourse about what it means to *deepen* participation. In Paper One, I assert that deep participation cannot be achieved without attending to issues of epistemic justice. In this paper, I assert that the designers of decision - making processes can ensure opportunities for deeper participation by designing towards epistemic justice. To design towards epistemic justice, I propose that processes should be designed with attention to epistemic promise,

be evaluated for their epistemic promise, and efforts should be made to increase epistemic promise. Furthermore, I propose the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) method as a tool to guide designers and evaluators in increasing the epistemic promise of participatory processes.

Epistemic Justice and Technology

I will briefly review the literature on issues of epistemic justice in political processes as it relates to civic technology. First, civic technology tends to increase access for participants who are already privileged and can exclude community members who have less access to technology (Peixoto & Fox, 2016; Samant et al., 2013; Waller, 2006). Second, designers can replicate systems of exploitation through applying technology directly to already biased processes (Benjamin, 2019; Noble, 2018).

These issues can both be connected to issues of epistemic promise. The underlying factors that enable participants who are already privileged to benefit more from civic technology can be the same factors underlying the design of the process. For example, in Jamaica, a smaller percentage of people per capita have access to the Internet than in the U.S. (Gallegos, 2013). If a national voting app was launched as the only way to vote in both countries, a higher percent of U.S. citizens would automatically have the infrastructure to participate in voting. In practice, this means implementing a national voting app because the only means of national voting will have different impacts on the participation of U.S. citizens than it would on the participation of their Jamaican counterparts. The complexity of this issue deepens when we consider the fact that people who live in urban areas have more Internet access than those in rural locales (Waller, 2006). In this scenario, rural Jamaicans would have less access to the national voting process than urban Jamaicans because they have less access to the Internet. The complications multiply when we consider how the matrix of oppression differentially affects individuals (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw,

1989). For example, working-class Jamaicans have less Internet access than uptown Jamaicans. In a real - world example, when participatory budgeting was introduced in Brazil, the people most likely to participate were young, Whites of higher socioeconomic backgrounds (Peixoto & Sifry, 2017b). Although the intervention was meant to increase participation generally, the means of participation gave unequal access to people who already had greater access to political processes. Thus, access to technology is an issue of *epistemic* access in the case of all civic technology interventions (Schmidt, 2019).

In addition, Benjamin (2019) writes that any process of coding a new piece of software will reflect the biases of the coder. Thus, designers must be attentive to their own biases, and especially to the ways the status quo can be oppressive. For example, *Coded Bia*s (2020) includes a segment which explored the design of automatic soap dispensers. The dispensers were designed such that the soap would dispense when someone waved a hand underneath the spout. However, in practice, the dispenser only worked for White hands.[9] Thus, only White people who used it could access the soap. This error occurred because the design team had only tested it on White people - people who are considered the norm in the U.S. There is a growing literature on design that only focuses on White consumers (Benjamin, 2019; Noble, 2018). If people of other races had been included at the design stage, this error would likely have been detected before the product went to market. Product design is different than process design in that the output of product design is obvious - it works for the purpose for which it was designed or not. In this scenario, the soap dispenser dispenses soap or it does not.

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[9] The spout of the soap dispenser included a sensor that measured changes in reflected light. White hands reflect more light than Black hands because the color Black absorbs light. The dispenser was only tested on White hands, and as such the sensor was not sensitive enough to detect the amount of light reflected by Black hands.

Similarly, in designing participatory processes, designers can also exclude marginalized populations if they are not attentive to epistemic injustices. However, in the political context it is often easier to claim that a technology works for everyone when in fact "the soap" may not be dispensed equally (Benjamin, 2019). There are not always measurable, binary outcomes in the debate about whether a participatory process works. For example, Benjamin (2019) describes how facial recognition technologies are being deployed in major cities to aid police in apprehending suspects. However, current facial recognition software frequently mistakes Black people's faces, alerting the police to some citizens fully unconnected to the crime in question. This is one example of the dangers that come with deploying technology without using a critical lens. These technologies can replicate the current oppressive systems in ways that are often invisible because they are implemented by computers. Thus, another epistemic justice issue is the replication of oppressive systems in uncritical technological interventions.

Epistemic Promise and Evaluating Civic Technologies

As described above, unequal access to technology and uncritical design are both challenges to epistemic justice in the implementation of civic technology. Thus, I propose that the examination of these issues as well as related topics should be considered by evaluating the epistemic promise of processes that involve technology. In addition, epistemic promise may connect the process to the structures that hinder its capacity to be epistemically just. As noted earlier, epistemic promise refers the possibility that a person's input in a participatory process will meaningfully affect process outcomes. The epistemic promise of a specific event or process varies based on both the event context and the individual considering involvement. One's perceptions and expectations are germane; a person is more apt to participate in a process if he believes it has high epistemic promise for him. Broadly applied, this means that people are more apt to get

involved in a participatory process if they think their involvement will be valued and make a difference. Although a person can endeavor to estimate the epistemic promise of a process, his perceptions about it may not accurately reflect the extent to which he is actually important to said process.

I created the original Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination table for increasing epistemic promise from information available in theoretical papers. This table is the first iteration of the evaluative method I propose, Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP). In this paper, the DEEP method is used to assess a real project - the Tell Your MP (TYM) intervention. In this evaluation, I propose that DEEP will reveal how TYM increases the epistemic promise of the original process. In addition, the rubric will be helpful in considering improvements for TYM. However, as this method was developed from theory there may be some unpredicted limitations that appear in practice. These possible additional limitations will be revealed in the subsequent case study. DEEP will be revised to account for the practical limitations that may emerge. As Dotson (2014) writes, it is unlikely that society will ever reach a perfect democratic process. Power dynamics and epistemic exclusions will always exist that are beyond the scope of a particular project. However, by evaluating processes for epistemic promise, I posit that we can understand the limitations of TYM, the larger structures that prevent TYM from fulfilling its true potential, and help foster more democratic processes.

The original framework for mitigating epistemic exclusions is detailed in Paper One; I provide a brief review here. Increasing epistemic promise of a process involves disrupting the hermeneutical domination in that process by identifying the epistemic exclusions at each stage and making efforts to mitigate them. I refer to this process here as the DEEP method. Increasing epistemic promise using DEEP involves addressing a number of epistemic exclusions as described

in the literature. Some examples of epistemic exclusions include: "re-presentation" of the participants' voice, barriers to Internet access, processes that privilege the voices of representatives rather than the public, and the ways some voices are disregarded based on the social standing of the speaker (Catala, 2015; Fricker, 2013; Schmidt, 2019; Spivak, 1988). Increasing epistemic promise is a multifaceted process that aims to holistically improve the chances that participants will be meaningfully heard.

The DEEP method that I am developing will be used to (1) evaluate the epistemic promise of TYM and (2) propose improvements that would increase its epistemic promise. Epistemic exclusions refer to;

> Anything that unwarrantedly hinders one's ability to utilize persuasively collective
>
> epistemic resources in order to participate in knowledge production and, if required,
>
> the revision of those same resources (Dotson, 2014, p. 119).

Dotson (2014) posits that epistemic exclusions occur at first, second, and third levels. The nuances between these levels are explained later in this paper. In addition, Dotson (2014) proposes that there may be exclusions that do not fit neatly into first, second and third levels. She emphasizes that context is always changing, and so evaluations of exclusions must be flexible and dynamic as well. Thus, the DEEP method should be flexible as well. I endeavor to improve upon it based on lessons learned from this case study. Possible epistemic exclusions in TYM will be examined in each stage and possible ways to mitigate these exclusions. My analyses may also reveal certain epistemic exclusions that do not fit into the current rubric. Those exclusions will be used to improve the epistemic promise rubric. This study can increase our understanding of the phenomenon I call epistemic promise by observing and documenting a real - world example of transformational democratic processes. Specifically, this analysis will endeavor to illumine aspects

of epistemic promise not covered by theories of epistemic justice, and in clarifying the ways in which the theoretical foundations of epistemic promise may manifest in practice.

Thus, I propose that evaluating a democratic process for its epistemic promise can reveal the depth of participation afforded by it or how much a participant's voice matters in the process. In addition, evaluating a political process for its epistemic promise can improve process accessibility. I argue that the TYM intervention increased the epistemic promise of the original process, but this same intervention can also be improved. In this way, I explore the characteristics of epistemic promise by studying the implementation of TYM.

Improving Democratic Processes with Epistemic Promise

Scholarship shows that ICTs are increasingly being employed in initiatives to improve governance. However, there are two primary interpretations about how to use ICTs to do so. On one hand, some ICTs are developed to contribute to overall economic growth. On the other, some ICTs are developed to strengthen democratic processes (Cabannes & Lipietz, 2018). For ICTs that are designed specifically for the latter processes, there is a need for a measure of participation that speaks to the depth of such participation rather than merely counting numbers of participants. Quality of participation and the quantity of participants are both needed measures. Simultaneously, to optimize the potential of these civic ICTs, it is important to understand and design for access at multiple stages of democratic processes. In addition, there are dangers that come with deploying technology without a thorough analysis of the power dynamics present. I propose that increasing epistemic promise as a measure can help address these concerns. This paper will illustrate the potential for employing epistemic promise as an evaluative measure of interventions as well as deepen the understanding of this concept by building upon existing theoretical concepts informed by practical findings.

This case study considers: (1) ways that Tell Your MP has increased the epistemic promise (EP) of the original process (OP); (2) further possible improvements to the EP of the TYM intervention; and (3) lessons from the process for increasing EP of the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). Finally, I propose a rubric to evaluate the EP of other civic information and communication technologies interventions (ICT) in Jamaica. To accomplish these goals, I consider the process of disrupting hermeneutic domination explored in Paper One as the first draft of the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP method). The DEEP method will guide my analysis of the improvements made by TYM, as well as direct my exploration of possible improvements to TYM. In addition, I will consider the lessons learned in the implementation of TYM to consider whether there are other threats to epistemic justice that occur during implementation that have not been reflected in the original DEEP method. Finally, I will revise the rubric based on the findings that emerge.

Epistemic Justice and the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise

Throughout this dissertation I argue that participatory political processes should aim for epistemic justice as the goal of participation. Epistemic justice effectively frames the problem of how to improve the *depth* of participation. Noting and rectifying epistemic exclusions strengthens the democratic process by illuminating issues of power and access within deliberations. Moreover, to effectively reorient participatory processes towards the goals of epistemic justice, I propose "epistemic promise" as a measure of the extent to which participants' inputs affect the outcomes of a participatory process. The epistemic promise of a specific event or process varies based on both the event context and the individual considering involvement. One's perceptions and expectations are influential; an individual is more apt to participate in a process if she believes it has high epistemic promise for her. Broadly applied, this means that people are more likely to get

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involved in a participatory process if they think their involvement will be valued and make a difference. There are two forms of epistemic promise: actual and perceived. Paper Two focused on how perceived epistemic promise impacts participation. This paper considers whether and how we can estimate actual epistemic promise. In addition, I propose a method for improving the epistemic promise of processes.

The Value of a General Estimation of Epistemic Promise in a Process

Participatory processes will have different levels of epistemic promise for different individuals. For example, in a Jamaican context, a wealthy Jamaican may perceive that having a meeting with their government representative has high epistemic promise for them because of their social standing. Perhaps this person travels in the same social circles as the government representative, has financial resources that could help the representative in the future, or has attained a respected educational level such that their opinion is taken more seriously. In this case, the process or means of participation is a meeting with their government representative. This wealthy individual may have a reasonable expectation that their opinion will be valued enough to have some impact on the meeting outcomes. Conversely, a working - class Jamaican may perceive that having a meeting with their government representative has low epistemic promise because they lack the wealth, education or social networks valued by the representative. Thus, this working - class citizen may have a reasonable expectation that even if they meet with their representative, their input may not be valued enough to affect the meeting outcomes.

I provide the example above to illustrate that epistemic promise reflects an individual perception about a participatory political process. However, that individual perception is based on real, observable social constraints or privileges. The judgment about whether a process has high or low epistemic is personal because it is assessed from a particular standpoint. However, I posit

that designers and evaluators of participatory political processes can also perform assessments of the epistemic promise of a process by paying attention to the experience of the most marginalized would - be participants. As suggested by Catala (2015), the most marginalized standpoints should be centered during the analysis of epistemic promise. If marginalized standpoints are centered, designers and evaluators can more accurately understand the epistemic exclusions affecting them. Returning to the above example about a meeting with a representative – imagine that an evaluator wants to increase the epistemic promise of a meeting with one's representative. If this evaluator considers the barriers to access faced by the wealthy citizen, she may conclude that the process has reasonably high epistemic promise for that person. However, if she considers the experiences of the working - class citizen, she may realize that they share similar barriers to access. For example, perhaps the representative is very busy - it may be difficult for either citizen to schedule a meeting. However, once the meeting is set, the working - class citizen still faces barriers to being heard because his views are not taken as seriously as the wealthy individual's views. This example illustrates that centering the most marginalized persons can help illuminate more epistemic exclusions. If epistemic justice is the ultimate goal for participatory political processes, it is logical and prudent to anticipate and mitigate as many epistemic exclusions as possible. Thus, if an evaluator endeavors to improve the epistemic promise of the process for as many people as possible, they should seek the perspectives of those who are most marginalized in the process, in particular, and in the society at large.

Applying the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise Method to Political Processes

I propose Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) as a method for estimating the epistemic promise of a participatory political process. As indicated by the name, this method aims for a "dynamic evaluation" or a continuous assessment of the epistemic promise of a

participatory process. It is also called "dynamic" to indicate that the epistemic promise of a participatory process can change based on whose experience of the process is centered, and it can also change as the broader social and political environment changes. Currently, the DEEP method is represented by the process of Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination. I propose that for the DEEP method, one should use the model of Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination to evaluate a process for epistemic exclusions. Then, one should seek ways to mitigate these exclusions using the suggestions on the right - most column. The DEEP method, informed by the Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination model, will be compared to the evaluations conducted by The Organization's team on their work to improve the CDF process.

Methods for the Tell Your MP Case Study

Methodologically, I employ a single, instrumental, holistic, exploratory case study research design (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Stake, 2005; Yin, 2018). For my analysis, I am guided by both grounded normative theory (GNT) (Ackerly et al., 2021) and Black feminist analytical frameworks (Collins, 2009). The next sections detail the research design and analytical approach followed by the analysis, results, and conclusions.

Research Design

The nature and scope of this analysis lends itself to a case study design. Yin (2018) writes that a case study is an appropriate research design for studies that ask "how" and "why" questions about contemporary events in which the researcher has little control over the outcomes. In addition, Creswell and Poth (2018) posit that a case study is appropriate when the research problem calls for an "in-depth understanding of a case or cases" (p. 67). Within case study research, there are a few decisions a researcher must make about the case - will there be one or multiple cases? What

type of case study will be performed? Will the case be embedded or holistic? (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2018). These decisions are explained below.

According to Stake (2005), there are three types of case studies: the intrinsic, the instrumental and the collective. Instrumental case studies are those in which the case serves as an example of a more generalizable concept. In addition, instrumental case studies can be used to explore cases that are novel in their context. Analyzing a novel case provides a baseline understanding of how the innovation of the case differentiates it from common cases of similar phenomena. This TYM analysis reflects an instrumental case study because the case is novel due to its context. It is the first major attempted change to the Constituency Development Fund participatory budgeting process in Jamaica. In addition, this case provides an illustration of the generalizable concept of epistemic promise, defined as: the possibility that a person's input in a participatory process will meaningfully affect process outcomes. The epistemic promise of a specific process or event varies based on both the event context and the person considering participation. As noted earlier, one's expectations and perceptions are significant because people are more apt to participate in a process if they believe it has high epistemic promise for them. Broadly applied, this means that people are more likely to get involved in a participatory process if they think their involvement will be appreciated and make a difference. Although one can attempt to gauge the epistemic promise of a process, their perceptions may not accurately reflect the extent to which they are actually significant to that process. The designers of the TYM process made changes to the original process in an attempt to improve the chance that participants 'have a say' in the process. These changes illustrated how designers actively tried to increase epistemic promise of the CDF process. Thus, the current case will be used as empirical evidence of the challenges, and benefits of attempts to increase epistemic promise in practice. The case

study analysis endeavors to deepen the understanding of the emerging concept called epistemic promise.

Finally, the TYM case study is considered holistic because it does not examine the experience of any sub-groups within the case (Yin, 2018). This case study maintains a meso-level view of the CDF process. The analysis focuses on process changes and the experience of the process designers, rather than on the experience of community members. This is one limitation of this method because ideally the epistemic promise of a system would be assessed from the collective perspectives of multiple stakeholders, including community members. However, the method benefits from the ability to compare a potentially improved process with the original process. In addition, the flexibility of types of data sources that can be examined allows for a more holistic, complex description of this novel case in its context (Yin, 2018).

An ethnographic method was also considered for this study. However, ethnography is primarily focused on understanding the "shared patterns of a culture or group" (Creswell, 2018, p. 67). Traditional ethnographic research is also usually marked by extended observation in the field. After and during this observation, the researcher creates a story of the cultural meanings of a phenomenon or the relationships between socio-cultural phenomena (Suryani, 2013; White et al., 2009). The ability to observe The Organization's implementation was limited by my location, funding, and the unpredictability of the implementation stages. Thus, the current research questions are bounded and do not necessitate the breadth and depth of the long - term observation that an ethnography would require.

Thus, rather than use an ethnographic analysis, I employed a case study design both because of its appropriateness for my primary research questions and practical fit. This analysis focuses on process changes rather than community response to these changes. Thus, it is important

to use a method that can provide details about process changes and context. In future work, an ethnography could provide additional insights about the TYM case overall. However, I focus on exploring the concept epistemic promise rather than other political dynamics occurring during the change in the CDF process. In conclusion, the instrumental case study provides data to write the story of these contextual changes; explore the concept of epistemic promise; propose more questions about the relationship between epistemic promise and political participation; and reflect the practical nature of this dissertation.

Analytical Framework

The case study is informed by a Grounded Normative Theory (GNT) and Black feminist epistemological values. GNT was developed to explain ways that some political theorists have analyzed empirical data to inform theory, rather than the other way around (Ackerly et al., 2021). Normative political theory is "concerned with ideals, values and standards, intuitions, principles and argument" (Alexander, 2019, p. 410). Compared to positivist political theory that concerns itself with *what is*, normative political theory considers *what should be*. As such, normative theorists are concerned with social justice issues in the political sphere. In addition, grounded theory as a methodology has a long history as a constructivist interpretive lens (Charmaz, 2017). Constructivism "assumes that people (including researchers) construct or interpret the realities in which they participate through their own situated perspectives" (Clarke, 2019, p. 9). Thus, grounded theory finds common ground with feminist and decolonizing research ethics in its requirements for transparent self-reflexivity, centering the experience of participants, and recursivity (Collins, 2009; Coulthard & Simpson, 2016; Hesse-Biber & Flowers, 2019; Mruck & Mey, 2019; Smith, 2013). Grounded normative theory combines the ethics of constructivist grounded theory with a firm commitment to the creation of normative theory, that is, *what should*

our politics be? (Ackerly et al., 2021). For an analysis to be considered GNT, there are four commitments that must be evident in the work: comprehensiveness, recursivity, attentiveness to epistemological inclusion and epistemic accountability. In addition, GNT - based research designs exist on a spectrum from more or less solidaristic with the community under study. As with case studies, GNT methodology requires empirical data based in real - world contexts.

Complementing the GNT methodology, this analysis follows the values of Black feminist epistemology (Collins, 2009). Black feminist theory is a theoretical framework developed based on the knowledge practices of Black poor and near poor women in the U.S. However, this paradigm is widely applicable to marginalized populations. The values of Black feminist epistemology include: using lived experience as a criterion of meaning; using dialoguing to assess knowledge claims; practicing an ethic of caring; practicing an ethic of accountability; and for Black woman scholars in particular, re-articulating a Black woman's standpoint. The recognition of the impact of intersecting oppressive systems is also central to a Black feminist approach (Crenshaw, 1989). Collins (2009) refers to the intersection of these systems as the matrix of oppression, and posits that most Black U.S. women experience multiplicative oppression because they fit multiple marginalized categories.

Data and Analysis

I was introduced to the Tell Your MP (TYM) project in 2018 as a research intern for the Organization. This case study includes observations from my time on the project team, data sources provided by The Organization, correspondence with the project implementation lead and publicly available media reports. Data sources include newspaper articles, process flow diagrams, pictures of each screen of the mobile application, and The Organization's final project report.

I followed Yin's (2018) approach when performing this exploratory case study. First, a timeline of the development of the TYM process was created to map the challenges and supports across the implementation stages. Next, the source documents were coded via MAXQDA with structural, hypothesis, In-vivo and process codes (Saldaña, 2013). After the initial round of coding, the data were coded a second time using codes developed during the first round. The coding process was designed to capture information that could answer my four research questions, as well as uncover additional themes relevant to the concept, epistemic promise. In addition to source data that specifically relates to TYM and the CDF process, I read newspaper articles containing Jamaican perspectives of barriers to political participation and about the CDF in general.

My primary use of this coding process is to further develop the concept, epistemic promise, and propose ways that it can be evaluated in a practical civic intervention. To my knowledge, the implementation of the TYM process is the first attempt in Jamaica to use technology to improve the CDF process. As noted earlier, the development of the TYM process focused on increasing both the number of participants *and* the depth of their participation. As such, it represents a contemporary and evolving example of an intervention to increase epistemic promise. After coding was completed, MAXQDA was used to collate emergent codes, assess all code entries, and develop themes. The emergent themes are presented in the results section.

Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination and Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP)

To answer each of the research questions, I employ the Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination model to consider whether and how epistemic promise is fostered in the change from the original process to the TYM process (Question 1). In addition, I examine how TYM could further improve the epistemic promise of the process (Question 2). For Question 3, I consider other

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constraints to epistemic promise that arose in this practical context. Lastly, to examine Question 4, findings from Questions 1-3 are used to propose a method that could be used to evaluate the epistemic promise of other participatory processes.

To understand whether and how the TYM project disrupts hermeneutical domination, I analyze the threats to epistemic promise at each step in the original process and the subsequent TYM process. To understand the limitations of epistemic promise of the CDF process generally, I consider the ecological context of the process, that is, the limitations to epistemic promise that are inherent in a political process that exists in Jamaica. Contextual factors include the history of colonialism; present neocolonialism; inequality within the country; and the marginalization of certain Jamaicans. In addition to these factors, I consider whether and how the limitations expressed in The Organization's final report are threats to epistemic promise.

Figure 3

Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination: Theories to Inform the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic

Promise

	Epistemic Exclusions (Dotson, 2014)	Formation of Hermeneutical Domination (Catala, 2015)	Fostering Epistemic Justice and Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination
First Order	Lack of recognition (Schmidt, 2019)	Minority testifies, is dismissed by majority, and suffers credibility deficit	Epistemic trust: Centering minoritized groups, recognizing credibility (Catala, 2015; Collins, 1990; Schmidt, 2019)
	Credibility deficit (Catala, 2015)		Institutional and individual virtues (Fricker, 2013; Fricker, 2007)
	Re-presentation of the subaltern voice by elites (Spivak, 1984)		Structural change on an institutional/policy level (Anderson, 2012)
		↓	
Second Order	Western research prioritized in intervention designs (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999)	Minority is deprived of the opportunity to contribute to social understanding of problem	Decolonizing research methods (Tuhiwai Smith, 1999)
	Marginalization of citizens based on race, class, ability, gender etc. (Kamugisha, 2007)		Recognition and removal of social discrimination against marginalized groups (Kamugisha, 2007)
	Lack of access to forums of deliberation - 'epistemic access' (Schmidt, 2019)		Epistemic access and places to deliberate (media, Internet, physical forum) (Schmidt, 2019; Fricker, 2013)
	Chances for epistemic injustice at multiple levels of knowledge production (Lyew, 2019)		Recognition and removal of barriers to epistemic justice in research (Lyew, 2019)
			Limit the epistemic power of majority (Catala, 2015)
		↓	
Third Order	Lack of interpretability of subaltern because the paradigm doesn't allow subaltern logic (Spivak, 1984)	Minority is subject to public discourse that has already been shaped in a way defined by the majority	Recognizing and combatting epistemic justice at multiple levels in the political economy (Lyew, 2019)
	Research on issues constrained by external funders (Lyew, 2019)		National policies to improve Jamaica's ability to self determine (Dagnino, 2007; Kamugisha, 2007)
	The neoliberal 'development' agenda (Dagnino, 2007; Sheller,2005; Rist, 2010)		Institutional polices and values oriented towards epistemic justice (Anderson, 2012; Fricker 2013)
	Tourism (Kamugisha, 2007)		

Figure 3 above shows the model for Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination (DHD). This model was developed from theories of epistemic justice applied to political participation. The center column reflects how those with epistemic power in a society maintain hermeneutical domination in public deliberations (Catala, 2015). Catala (2015) writes that those with epistemic power in a society maintain control over the shared knowledge and ways of knowing in a society by forming hermeneutical domination. In spaces of deliberation, she writes that members of minority groups may find their testimony dismissed by those in power because these minority group members are not considered credible knowers. Because their voices and ideas are dismissed,

they are robbed of the opportunity to contribute to the greater social understanding of the issue. Furthermore, because they are robbed of this opportunity to contribute, minority group members are often subject to a public discourse that is defined by the majority - persons with epistemic power. I posit that to increase epistemic promise, designers or evaluators must disrupt the process of hermeneutical domination. This disruption can, and should, occur at all points in the process.

In the column to the left of this process, I use Dotson's (2014) concept of epistemic exclusions to align with these steps in hermeneutical domination. Briefly, epistemic exclusions are ways that some groups are left out of the process of knowledge production. Dotson (2014) distinguishes between three levels of epistemic exclusions. These first-, second- and third - level exclusions align with the steps of hermeneutical domination, and thus represent areas of possible change at each step. To increase epistemic promise, these epistemic exclusions should be mitigated. Within each category of exclusion, I added examples from theory about epistemic exclusions that could occur at that step. The furthest column to the right provides examples of approaches to mitigate the epistemic exclusions in the second column. Disrupting hermeneutical domination may occur by using the solutions to the right to eliminate epistemic exclusions at each step. As discussed in Paper One, I propose that a method called the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) could be used to evaluate and mitigate these epistemic exclusions. Currently, DEEP has three steps. First, use the left columns of the Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination (DHD) model to check for potential first-, second- and third - level exclusions in the participatory process being evaluated. Second, use the right column to find solutions to these exclusions. Third, implement these solutions to mitigate or remove the identified epistemic exclusions.

This instrumental case study describes the improvements of a participatory process through the implementation of the Tell Your MP (TYM) application. The designers of TYM set out to improve the chances that participants would have their voices heard during the process. From this practical example, I aim to refine the proposed evaluation tool by placing the case study findings in conversation with the current DEEP method. That is, I will observe how the designers of TYM improved on the original process and whether that reflects an improvement according to the Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination (DHD) theories that inform the DEEP method.

Results and Discussion

Question 1: How did TYM improve the epistemic promise of the original process?

The first concern in evaluating TYM is considering how the application of this technology improved upon the epistemic promise of the original CDF process. The process maps (Figures 4, 5, and 6), final report, and newspaper articles about TYM were coded for references to process improvements. The following three themes arose: shifting credibility, increasing transparency, and increasing accessibility. Each theme is summarized below.

Shifting Credibility. Credibility refers to the weight given to a person's opinion or experience. If a person is considered a credible source, those in power consider them knowledgeable about the issue at hand. For example, Fricker (2013) writes that testimonial injustice occurs when those in power dismiss certain people's knowledge because of their social standing. Specifically, those in power do not consider certain people in minoritized groups to be 'knowers.' However, people who are subject to oppression are often the most knowledgeable about the experience of oppression (Catala, 2015). Catala (2015) writes that decision - makers must give epistemic trust to marginalized people to combat testimonial injustice. Their knowledge is valid

and should be valued as such. In addition, decision - makers should redistribute epistemic power so that oppressed people have the most say in political discussions (Catala, 2015).

In the case of TYM, the new process affords more credibility to the constituents than the original process. In addition, TYM redistributes epistemic power from the MP to the constituents. The process maps below illustrate this change. They show the original process (Figure 4) and the TYM process (Figures 5 and 6). The maps show the stakeholders and their roles in each step, starting from preparation and ending in the decision - making and implementation process. For this analysis, I focus on the segment of the map that includes political decision - making. As shown in Figure 4, the political decision - making process originally included: participating in a consultation meeting, submitting CDF proposals, and implementing CDF proposals. Citizens only participate in the consultation meeting. However, in Figures 5 and 6, TYM expands the political decision - making process from three to six steps. In the new process, citizens are involved in three of those six steps. So, citizens have more formal opportunities to participate in TYM.
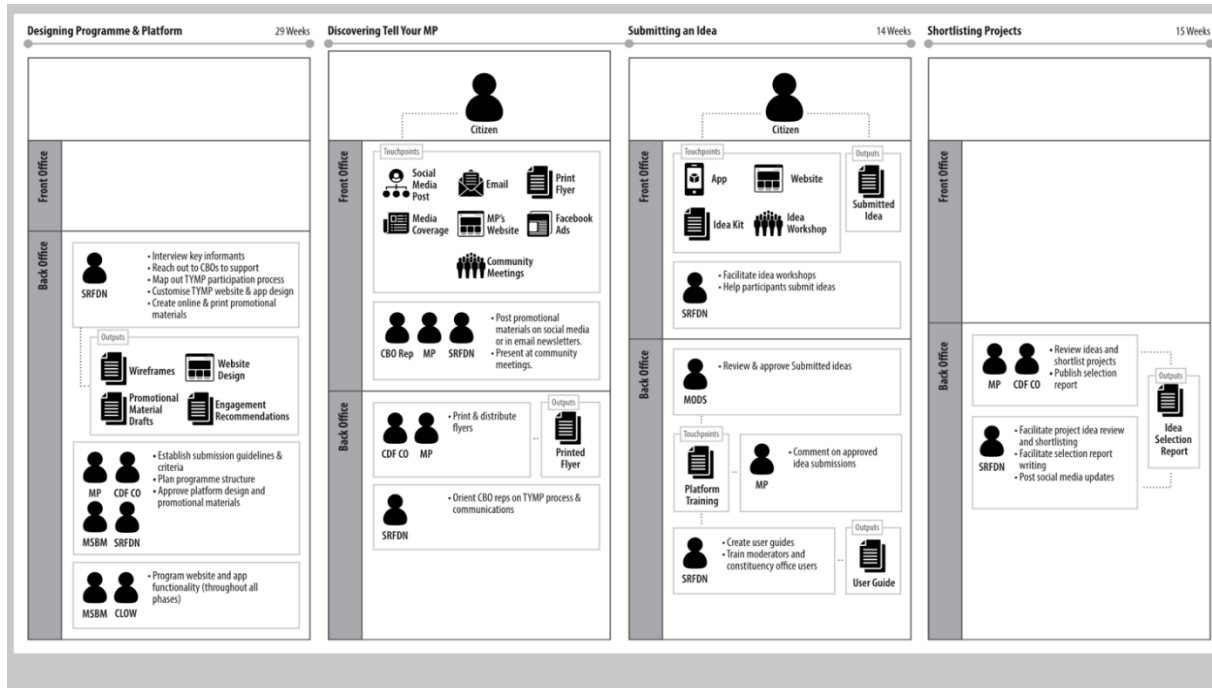
Figure 4

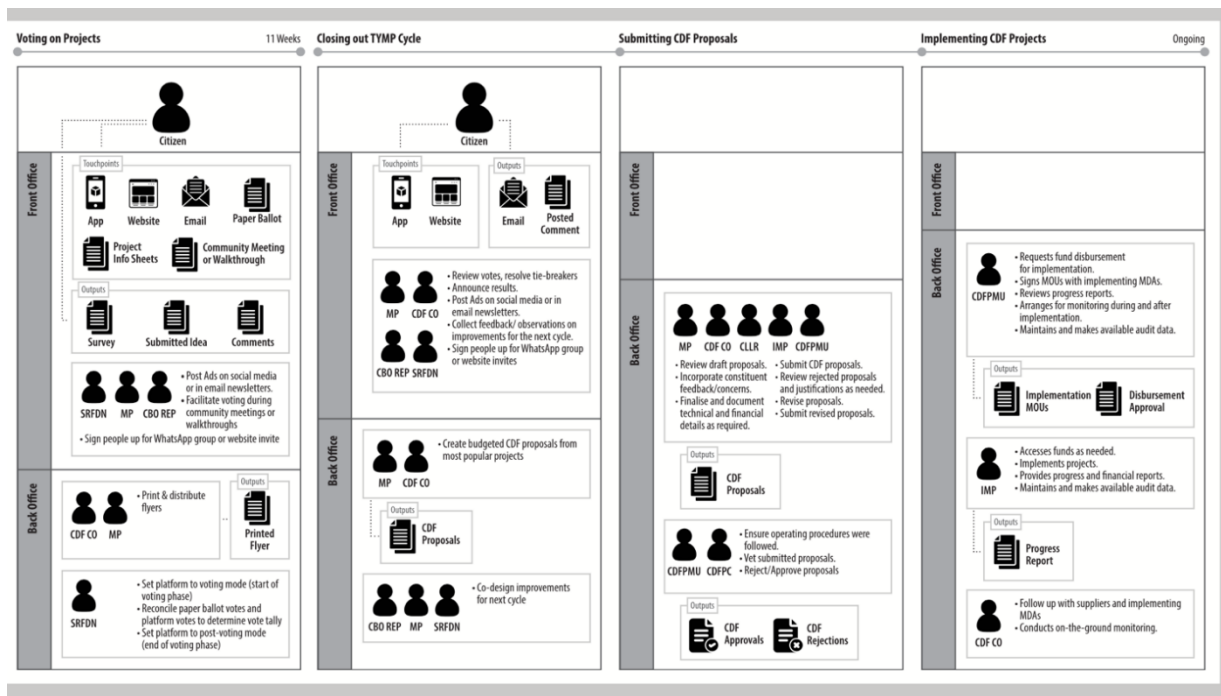*The Original Budgeting Process*
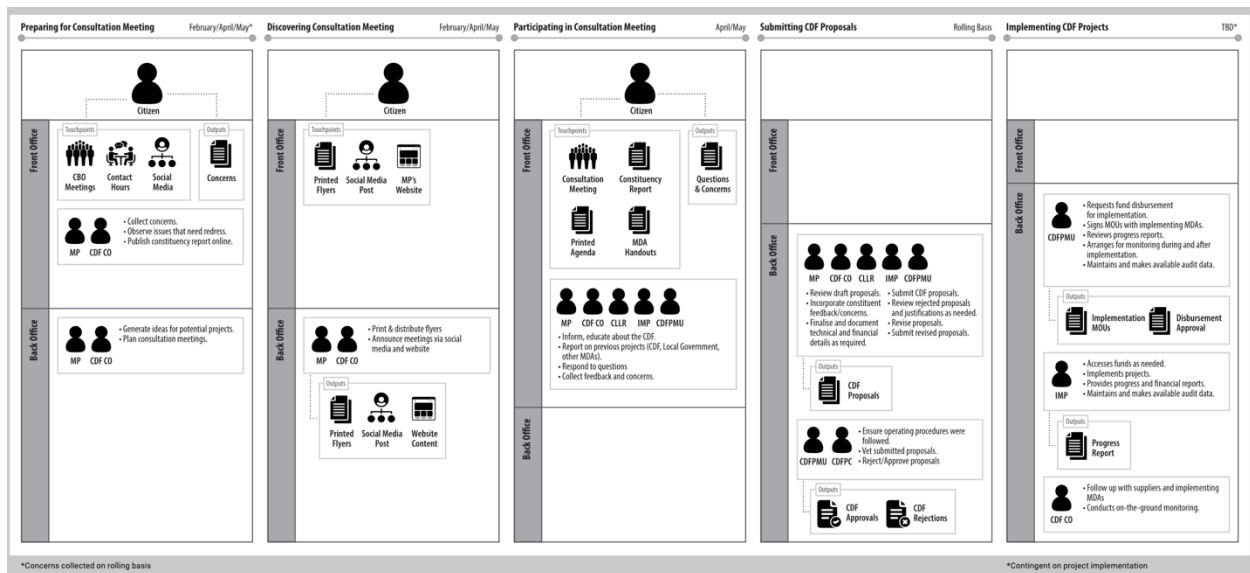
Figure 5

The Tell Your MP Process Part 1

Figure 6

The Tell Your MP Process Part 2

Both processes include the Member of Parliament (MP) and his office in all the steps. However, examining the details of each step, we can see that in the new process, the type of participation is more extensive. In the original process, during the consultation meeting, the MP describes how the CDF process works and gives updates on CDF - funded projects in the constituency. Other politicians and organizations present on projects that have occurred in the community over the past year. Then, according to The Organization's final report:

> Constituents ask questions or provide feedback/suggestions if they have observed
>
> or been directly affected by the outcome of particular projects (CDF-funded or
>
> otherwise) or raise new concerns.

Thus, the constituents' role in the original process is to comment on past projects and make suggestions for possible projects. This meeting occurs once or twice a year, and constituents participate in a townhall style forum. To its credit, this step affords participants some credibility in that their knowledge of the past projects is valued. However, the MP holds most of the epistemic power. He sets the tone for the meeting, chooses which past projects to discuss, and chooses which politicians and organizations to invite to the meeting. The TYM process starts at a different point for citizens. First, they must download the TYM application onto their phones or visit the website on a computer. Then, according to The Organization's final report:

> In [the Idea submission] phase, citizens suggested ideas for community
>
> development projects. There were no restrictions on the number and types of
>
> suggestions that could be made, nor on who could make them: suggestions from
>
> citizens living in other communities were accepted as well. All suggestions,
>
> however, were subject to a short- listing process before being made available for
>
> voting.

Thus, TYM begins with suggestions from the constituents rather than from the MP. The process transfers the epistemic power to set the boundaries of the conversation from the MP's office to the constituents. Instead of providing feedback on past projects, TYM starts by asking participants to submit ideas for future projects, thus putting more epistemic trust in their ideas than during the previous process. In the original process, the MP's office creates ideas for future projects. According to The Organization's final report:

> After the consultations, the MP and the CDF Consultant, together with the Constituency and Division Committees, review the concerns and suggestions raised. They identify potential projects and create high-level descriptions for them.

Conversely, in TYM, the ideas for future projects are created by the constituents. In both processes, the MP's office decides which projects will be shortlisted based on feasibility. However, in the original process, the final projects are selected by the MP's office after the consultation meeting. The TYM process added a Voting phase, in which constituents submit votes for their favorite projects. The Organization's final report describes the Voting phase as follows:

> In the Voting phase, citizens resident in SESA voted for the ideas they most want to see implemented. Citizens were presented with short descriptions of up to ten community development projects and Youth Innovation projects each and were allowed to vote for multiple projects in each category. The top projects were determined by popular vote.

Thus, TYM also shifts the epistemic power to choose the final projects. It redistributes power from the MP's office to the constituents. Participants are afforded more credibility in that their votes are considered crucial to the final decision.

The TYM process was also explicitly designed to give more credibility to the lived experiences of participants, as shown in tweets from The Organization, dated October 3, 2019:

> [Tell Your MP] was designed to allow citizens more influence over how their tax dollars are spent in their constituency... As citizens, participants acted as **eyes on the ground** [emphasis added] to see if something is working as it should be, or if it's not yet a thing, that it could work.

The phrase "eyes on the ground" refers to a participant's lived experiences. That is, this process treats lived experience as valid observations of whether a project "is working as it should be." The original process also valued the lived experience of constituents. However, this experience was primarily considered valuable feedback for projects that had already occurred. With these new avenues for participation, TYM allows participants more freedom to create ideas for projects from scratch.

The Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise method suggests that we must first identify the epistemic exclusions and then mitigate them to increase epistemic promise. In the original process, issues of credibility served as epistemic exclusions. Participants were afforded enough epistemic trust to comment on the MP's ideas. However, TYM mitigated these exclusions by creating avenues of participation that allow idea generation and commentary. Catala (2015) suggests that mitigating a credibility deficit requires that systems give more epistemic trust to those most affected by the political decisions made. In addition, Schmidt (2019) writes that a related epistemic exclusion occurs when decision - makers do not recognize certain people as 'knowers.' Schmidt (2019) also suggests that decision - makers should make intentional efforts to recognize a wide variety of possible 'knowers.' TYM frames constituents as 'knowers' in their communities. For example, they are the "eyes on the ground." In addition, TYM affords credibility to

constituents by changing the structure of the entire participatory process such that constituents now have more say in what ideas are proposed and which ideas move forward. Based on these analyses, I propose that TYM has identified and mitigated the epistemic exclusion of credibility. Thus, TYM has increased the epistemic promise of the original process by mitigating this exclusion. There are also two other ways that TYM has increased the epistemic promise of the original process - increasing transparency and increasing accessibility.

Increasing Transparency. Transparency refers to the amount of information about the process that decision - makers share with participants. Schmidt (2019) contends that epistemic access refers to both access to the spaces of deliberation and knowledge about decision - making mechanisms. She suggests that concealing the mechanisms of decision - making is an epistemic exclusion. Dotson (2011) also discusses the epistemic violence of obscuring the mechanisms of power. In addition, Spivak (1984) writes that the ideas of minoritized people can be erased or lose meaning when they are re-presented by elites. This re-presentation happens most easily when decision - makers conceal these discussions from the public eye and when people from these minoritized groups cannot speak for themselves. Based on these sources, a lack of transparency is an epistemic exclusion.

Sources suggest that TYM increased the transparency of the original process. Figure 4 above shows that citizens can observe one act of deliberation in the original process. They attend a consultation meeting and can hear and see anything that occurs during that meeting. However, constituents are not privy to the conversations when the MP's office is preparing for the consultation meeting and making decisions following that meeting. With the implementation of TYM, citizens had several months during which they had access to all the proposed project ideas and could comment on them. Thus, individuals had a much longer period to consider and provide

feedback about the set of proposed projects. During the Voting stage of TYM, votes were also made public. Citizens could also gauge the popularity of each project as the voting continued. Thus, there were no surprises when the final projects were selected. Finally, during the Monitoring stage, persons have access to a platform where MP Thomas plans to post updates. According to The Organization's final report, during the Monitoring stage of TYM, "updates on projects' status and activities from proposal to completion will be published, allowing citizens to track and discuss their progress." Conversely, during the original process, citizens received updates about the CDF projects in a single newsletter. The breadth of information provided by TYM eclipses the information provided in the original process. Constituents can view more parts of the process through the app and the website, and they can continue discussion virtually and in person about the progress of the process.

In all three stages, individuals can see the mechanisms of the decision - making process more clearly than they could in the original process. In addition, a news article about the project notes: "Technology served to make the bases for decision - making more transparent." A similar comment was made about the TYM idea generation events. Per one article, "[The TYM project] help[ed] to raise awareness of some of the workings of the government at the local level." These articles contend that beyond simply viewing the progress of the current process, the open nature of the app, website, and related marketing efforts served to demystify the process itself. Participants could observe some of the inner workings of decision - making in their local government.

There are also more resources provided to constituents in TYM than in the original process. These resources help citizens effectively propose ideas that fit the scope of the CDF. The third panel of Figure 4 illustrates the documents that constituents have access to during the original

process consultation meeting. Compare this to the third panel of Figure 5, which illustrates the Idea Submission phase, and the first panel of Figure 6, the Voting phase. In the latter process, constituents are provided more information through the app and website. These sites of information remain online for months. In addition, TYM provides residents with more opportunities to receive information through idea toolkits, idea generation workshops, and a host of other communications, including emails and fliers. This process deepens constituents' understanding of how to propose projects, what constitutes a successful project, and what their fellow constituents think about the proposals. Increasing transparency is also an explicit goal of the TYM project. In a newspaper interview about TYM, the Member of Parliament, Brandon Thomas,* (note: * denote pseudonyms) comments:

> Our entire political system can only gain from giving citizens greater ownership of
>
> the entire democratic process - by having a greater say and that much needed
>
> transparency to monitor how their tax dollars are being spent.

With this statement, he connects transparency with "greater ownership," and, as such, more epistemic power in the democratic process. He emphasizes that the citizens already have ownership in the process through "their tax dollars." Moreover, he adds that constituents can monitor project progress and hold representatives more accountable for this spending. Both Schmidt (2019) and Dotson (2011) note that a lack of transparency is an epistemic exclusion. To mitigate that exclusion, designers should make political processes more transparent. The above examples illustrate how TYM has displayed more of the process than the original process, such that constituents can monitor the current iteration of the process and deepen their understanding of decision - making in this process in general.

In addition, TYM improves the transparency of the original process by providing more avenues for people to view the direct contributions of constituents. Spivak (1984) contends that the re-presentation of ideas by elites is also an epistemic exclusion. She writes that when elites translate ideas from minoritized groups, they lose some of the meaning of the original idea. The meaning may be shifted or may be lost entirely. In the TYM process, The Organization moderates the forum for submitted ideas for explicit content and pranks, but genuine suggestions are displayed as written by the constituent. During the original process, ideas from the consultation meeting are re-presented by the MP before they are submitted for implementation. Similarly, in TYM, there are instances of this re-presentation after the idea submission and voting phases. However, the initial idea submission phase and open spaces for comment on the app allow for a few communications that the MP's office does not translate. Conversely, the original process has only one space in which these original thoughts are displayed - at the consultation meeting. Thus, TYM also mitigates the epistemic exclusion of re-presentation. As described above, TYM mitigates at least two epistemic exclusions of the original process, obscured decision - making, and re-presentation by increasing the process's transparency. According to the DEEP method, identifying and mitigating these exclusions improves the epistemic promise of the process. Thus, increased transparency is another way that TYM has improved the epistemic promise of the original process. The final way TYM improves on the original process is by increasing accessibility.

Accessibility. Accessibility refers to how easily people from a variety of backgrounds can engage in a process. Schmidt (2019) contends that epistemic access is critical for the epistemic justice of any deliberative process. Epistemic access refers to participants' ability to attend spaces of deliberation and the ability to be recognized as knowers in these spaces. The ability to be

recognized as knowers in these spaces relates to credibility. The present theme refers to the openness of the process for attendees physically and virtually. If certain persons are blocked from participating in the process because they cannot use the means of participation, this is an issue of accessibility. Fricker (2013) and Anderson (2012) contend that to mitigate accessibility issues, process designers must make structural changes to enable a broad range of the population (ideally everyone) to take part. Fricker (2013) refers to creating access as an institutional virtue, while Anderson (2012) writes that accessibility must be more than a virtue; it must be reflected in tangible institutional change.

Based on the process maps in Figures 4, 5, and 6 above, TYM made several changes to the original process that affected process accessibility. First, in TYM, the platform of deliberation is the app or website. During the original process, the platform was the consultation meeting. In TYM, citizens can participate over the Internet from wherever they have digital access. In the original process, individuals could only participate at the in - person meeting. Although this change ensures a more accessible process for those with Internet access, it could produce more barriers for those without Internet. One research paper lists ICT infrastructure as a significant barrier to the implementation of e-government in Jamaica (Waller & Genius, 2015). Jamaica has technological advancements that surpass many of its counterparts in the Global South. However, the ICT infrastructure is primarily concentrated in urban areas. In rural areas, access to electricity is intermittent, and Internet access is unreliable (Waller & Genius, 2015). According to the Statistical Institute of Jamaica, as of 2017, only 53.4% of Jamaican households had access to the Internet (STATIN, 2021). It is unclear how many constituents in South East St. Andrew have access to the Internet. However, The Organization also considered the issues of having a process entirely online.

According to The Organization's final report, TYM supplemented the online system with in -
person events to guide persons through the process:

> A CBO orientation workshop launched the Suggestion phase and promotional
> activities. CBO representatives were given a walkthrough of the programme, the
> website, the communication materials and their anticipated role as communication
> partners. Subsequent presentations and workshops were conducted at CBO, special
> interest group and consultation meetings. Idea workshops were held during the
> Suggestion phase. Using a worksheet—the "Idea Kit," which was also available
> online—as a guide, a facilitator helped workshop participants articulate their
> community development ideas, and submit them online. During the Voting phase,
> [The Organization's] facilitators and CBO volunteers walked through a couple of
> communities, introducing TYMP to the residents, providing information sheets
> with overviews of the shortlisted projects, and collecting votes. Facilitators helped
> people to register and vote online during CBO meetings. If online voting was not
> possible due to a lack of Internet, electricity, or other technical difficulties,
> participants were invited to add their contact information to a sign-up sheet. These
> participants were emailed registration invitations for the website and received
> follow-up phone calls. Otherwise, votes were collected with paper ballots,
> especially if participants lacked email addresses or ready Internet access. An
> announcement ceremony (the last major in - person activity to date) marked the
> beginning of the Monitoring phase.

As written above, individuals without Internet access at home had a few opportunities to attend in
- person workshops and CBO meetings. It is unclear how many people participated at the in -

person events compared to virtually in their homes. There were some constituents, as noted in the above quote, who did not have email addresses or Internet access. These constituents were still able to participate through these in - person events. The in - person events also engaged community - based organizations (CBOs) to spread awareness of the process to people who participate in those groups. As detailed above, in - person activities accompanied most steps of the TYM's online process.

By providing multiple avenues for participating, both online and in - person, TYM increased both the number of places of deliberation and the modes of participation through which they could be accessed. Opening the virtual avenues of participation may have allowed a more diverse participant pool for the process. As MP Thomas* notes:

> I do two CDF consultations every year, but it is really only a small section of the constituency that participates, so we are using this as a way to get more people involved in the process and get more people to participate in decisions that affect their lives.

The Organization's final report also supports the assertation that only a small section of the constituency typically participates in the original process:

> In a population of over 27,000 adults, there are anywhere from 80-100 attendees at each consultation meeting: about 0.74% of the adult population participates in formal consultation each year.

TYM was only used to allocate 5% of the total CDF for that year (1 million Jamaican dollars). Usually, either one or two consultancy meetings serve as feedback for allocating the total 20 million Jamaican dollars. As such, it seems that TYM received more participation than the normal

process alone, especially given the small share of the fund allocated through TYM. The Organization's final report notes:

> Overall, there were 46 project idea submissions…including 10 project ideas submitted by members of the D/deaf and blind communities. By the end of the Voting phase 104 accounts were created on the website, and there were 71 votes cast, including 21 collected via paper ballot.

As illustrated in the above quote, TYM received participants during both the Idea Submission and the Voting phases. Those 46 people who submitted project ideas would not have had a similar opportunity in the original process. The 104 accounts created on the website illustrate that at least 104 people were invested in observing or participating in the process. The Voting results also show that people used both methods for voting, with 50 votes cast online and 21 offline. Thus, multiplying the channels through which people could participate in TYM has increased accessibility. TYM has possibly increased the number of participants and has given citizens a choice of how to participate. The Organization's final report also noted that some attendees at the in - person workshops were not aware of the CDF process at all. Thus, marketing these multiple channels of participation also spreads awareness about the process. Increasing awareness of the process also increases access to it. Constituents are not able to participate in a process if they are unaware of its existence.

In addition to creating more awareness and a variety of spaces for people to participate, TYM also may have increased access for participation from constituents with disabilities. For example, TYM intentionally sought out members of D/deaf and blind communities. Of the 46 proposals that were received, ten were authored by D/deaf or blind constituents. There is no information on how many participants with disabilities participated during the original process.

However, specific accommodations were not in place to facilitate the participation of people with disabilities. In contrast, the TYM application had both text and speech navigation to enable both D/deaf and blind constituents to participate.

The Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) method proposes that epistemic exclusions are identified and mitigated by fostering epistemic justice. According to Schmidt (2019), an epistemic exclusion occurs if there are barriers to participants attending the spaces of deliberation. TYM mitigates this exclusion by providing more steps of the deliberative process and two different modes of reaching participants, both online and offline. The designers changed the structure of the original process, formalizing more steps for feedback from citizens (Anderson, 2012; Fricker, 2013). TYM was also intentionally designed to collect feedback from D/deaf and blind constituents. People in minoritized groups such as people with disabilities are often robbed of their full citizenship (Kamugisha, 2007). By prioritizing accessibility for these groups, the designers of TYM also mitigated this exclusion. TYM fosters epistemic justice by mitigating several exclusions related to accessibility. Thus, TYM increased the epistemic promise of the original process.

Question 2: How is TYM an imperfect process?

TYM has improved the original engagement process. However, TYM itself could still be improved to allow more meaningful participation. The following themes resulted by considering the barriers to deeper involvement that were either created by TYM or that did not change from the original process. In this section, I use the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) to identify the epistemic exclusions that remain in the TYM process. The themes of remaining epistemic exclusions were as follows: lack of transparency, access barriers, and limits to credibility. Findings for these three themes are provided below.

Lack of Transparency. There are still areas in TYM that are not fully transparent to participants. As discussed above in the section on transparency, a lack of transparency is an epistemic exclusion. A lack of transparency can occur when those in power obscure the mechanisms of decision - making (Dotson, 2011; Schmidt, 2019). It can also occur when participants' opinions are re-presented by those in power, such that the original opinion is only visible to those in power (Spivak, 1984). TYM improved the transparency of the original process. However, there are still instances where decision - makers obscure the process from the participants.

For example, the last panel in Figure 5 shows the Shortlisting phase of TYM. After the initial Idea Submission phase, the MP's office decides which ideas are feasible and shapes these ideas into proposals before the Voting phase. This part of the process is not visible to participants. In addition, the opinions of participants from the Idea Submission phase are transformed by the MP's team during the Shortlisting phase, effectively re-presenting these ideas. Another related problem in the TYM process is that some participants shared projects already in progress in the community. According to The Organization's final report:

> Participants sometimes suggested already ongoing/recurring projects, despite a variety of communication channels being used over time to communicate ongoing/recurring work in the constituency.

Although The Organization made attempts to share this information, it may not be reaching all constituency members. In this instance, participants can observe the mechanisms of the process itself, but many participants are not receiving the relevant information that could help them participate effectively. This is an epistemic exclusion that could be improved by further increasing the public education about the process.

Finally, the transparency promised during the monitoring stage may be difficult to maintain because implementing agencies do not report to MP Thomas. In the initial phases of the design process, when I was still a member of the design team, we created a map of the entire CDF process. Figure 7 shows an excerpt of that map from The Organization's final report. The map excerpt documents the stakeholders involved at the national government level and how they connect to constituency governance. The MP submits the project proposal to the national CDF board after the Voting stage in the TYM process. If the board accepts the proposal, an implementation agency is selected to manage the implementation of the project. At that point, organizations in the "Government Bodies" circle in Figure 7 share information about the implementation amongst themselves. The national board releases funds to the implementation agency, and the agency provides updates to the national board. There is no legal imperative for the implementation agency to update MP Thomas or the constituents about the project progress. Thus, the Monitoring stage of TYM is promising for increasing the transparency of the process, but there may be issues updating the community. There is no established person in the current process to liaise between the implementation agency and the constituency. As of my most recent conversation with the project lead, Jodi Reed,* the Monitoring phase was stalled because of disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. As of this writing, the TYM website is no longer active. It is unclear whether the Monitoring phase was ever implemented as designed.

Figure 7

Excerpt of the Ecosystem of the Community Development Fund Process
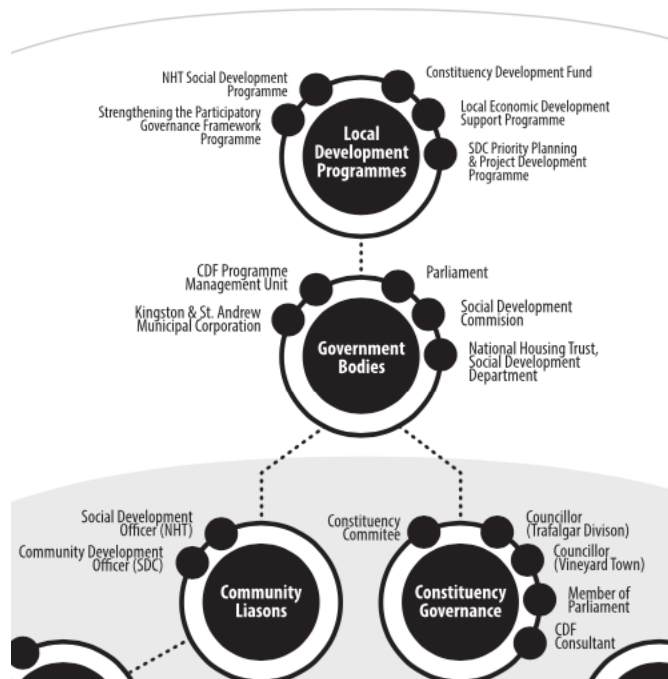
Thus, this challenge reflects as another epistemic exclusion. Using the DEEP method, one way of mitigating this exclusion might lay beyond changes to the TYM process. There would need to be a change made to the national CDF process. For example, the national board could legally require that the implementation agency share its reports with constituents.

Access Barriers. As described previously, access refers to how easily people from various backgrounds can engage in the process. Barriers to access can prevent people from attending the spaces of deliberation and thus represent epistemic exclusions (Fricker, 2013; Kamugisha, 2007; Schmidt, 2019). TYM made significant improvements to accessibility from the original process. However, a few access barriers remain. First, infrequent meetings by certain community - based organizations posed a challenge to the number of in - person workshops and meetings that could supplement the online process. Initially, the designers planned to use the community meetings to promote the TYM app and facilitate brainstorming workshops. The Organization's report states:

CBOs sometimes postponed, cancelled or suspended meetings, due to bad weather

or holidays, among other reasons…reducing the promotion and facilitation

opportunities. The uncertainty of meetings being held also made it difficult to invite

the broader community to TYMP presentations and workshops in advance.

If the meetings had been more predictable, or if there had been another plan for the in - person

meetings, more constituents may have attended. It is unclear how these unpredictable times and

canceled meetings affected participation numerically. However, we can imagine how much more

effective they would have been if they had occurred as planned.

In addition to issues with in - person meetings, some participants experienced issues with

the virtual platform. The Organization's final report notes:

Direct observations and participant comments highlighted bugs and difficulties

with certain website interactions that could not be resolved during this cycle. For

example, registration/sign-in was a multi-step process. While a number of

participants registered and signed in without a problem, some participants got stuck

at various points in the process because of entry errors, or an inability to access

email inboxes for registration confirmation links, or bugs that prevented the social

media sign-in options from working.

These bugs and errors may have turned some potential participants off the process entirely. One

could assume that those participants who are less accustomed to using mobile applications,

websites, or computers in general, may find it even more challenging to participate when faced

with bugs. This exclusion, in particular, is likely to impact those participants most adversely from

minoritized groups, such as people with disabilities and those with less computer literacy

(Kamugisha, 2007; Waller & Genius, 2015).

In a further attempt to close the gaps in Internet access, The Organization attempted to hold workshops at computer labs in communities. However, the team encountered difficulties accessing the spaces:

> Some resources identified in the planning stage were unavailable in practice. For example, some community computer labs, which could serve as additional, facilitated entry points for participation, lacked staff and functioning equipment.

These difficulties formed further barriers to access for some constituents who may not have had home computer access. As described in the prior section on accessibility, if a process uses the Internet to host its space of deliberation, it is limited by the general public's access to the Internet (Waller & Genius, 2015). It is unclear how many people in the constituency of South East St. Andrew have Internet access. It is also unclear how many people who could participate virtually would not have attended physical meetings. These are considerations for future iterations of the project. Literature also suggests that older people may experience more difficulties participating in Internet-based means of involvement (Peixoto & Sifry, 2017b). However, I could not find any indications of differential usage of the TYM application versus participating in person for older individuals. The age distribution of app users was also unclear. In Jamaica, people who live in rural areas and working - class persons are also less likely to have consistent electricity and Internet access (Waller & Genius, 2015). South East St. Andrew is an urban constituency but consists of a mix of working-, middle and upper - class citizens. Thus, TYM still has epistemic exclusions in its process. The epistemic promise of TYM could be improved by mitigating these access barriers.

Limits to Credibility. In a previous section, I describe how TYM affords more credibility to constituents than the original process. Credibility refers to the ability to be recognized as a

'knower' in the process. Having credibility means that decision-makers value your perspective in the deliberative process (Catala, 2015; Schmidt, 2019).

First, the process maps show that the MP's office can decide which proposals pass to the Voting phase after the Submission phase. This phase contains epistemic exclusions both because of a lack of transparency and limited credibility afforded participants. The decision to have the MP's office shortlist the projects presumes that the office has the context and knowledge to choose feasible new projects. However, there may be other ways designers could bring community members or community groups into the decision - making process at this step. For example, in Brazilian implementations of participatory budgeting applications, community groups are recruited to form a council to review proposals (Cabannes, 2004). Thus, this epistemic exclusion is present in TYM but could be mitigated in future iterations.

Second, the national government limits how the MP can allocate the CDF. The MP can only propose to use the funds for limited categories of issues. For example, he cannot spend the funds on roadwork, so even if participants wanted roadwork done in the community, the CDF could not fund it. Another related issue that arose in practice was that resident proposals tended to focus on short-term needs of community members. These requests were incompatible with the rules of the CDF process, which explicitly defines short-term needs as 'welfare' and limits the amount that can be used from the budget for such purposes (Samuda, 2015). Residents are effectively limited in what they can request. As such, it is not possible to have a process entirely directed by citizens' needs. Citizens could be considered more credible and given the option to request anything they believe to be a community need if there were fewer restrictions on the types of projects funded by the CDF. Historically, the government limits the CDF because there is a public perception that representatives use the funds to give personal favors to certain community members, essentially

buying votes (Samuda, 2015). However, if the transparency of the process is increased and some restrictions lifted, the power over the CDF spending could be more fully placed in the hands of residents. These actions could mitigate this epistemic exclusion and increase the epistemic promise of TYM.

Finally, observations by The Organization's design team suggest that some residents still do not believe that their voices will be heard:

> There were citizens—both active community - based organisation (CBO) members and non-members—who were skeptical that their input would actually lead to a timely, tangible output. There were also concerns among CBO-members especially, about what appeared to be multiple, uncoordinated consultation efforts at the local government level.

Despite the improvements, participants remain skeptical that decision - makers will hear them. This reaction is likely due to a generally strained relationship between the public and government officials (Meeks, 2014). Meeks (2014) states that Jamaican citizens have faced decades of disappointment from their leaders such that many have withdrawn from formal politics. The quote above illustrates that this intervention is merely one step in the process of rebuilding trust between citizens and their representatives. The process structurally gives citizen voices more credibility. However, many persons still do not *believe* that they will be heard. Spivak (1984) also writes that members of minoritized groups become frustrated with elites who consistently re-interpret their lives, losing nuance along the way. It is reasonable that constituents initially have some skepticism about the new TYM process. In this case, skepticism is tied to a broader context of mistrust. This broader context is a barrier to the epistemic promise of TYM that changes to TYM alone may not solve. Dotson (2014) notes that modifications to one project do not solve some epistemic

exclusions. In this case, the way to mitigate this epistemic exclusion is to foster epistemic justice in the Jamaican government in general. In so doing, people may start to believe again that the government works for them.

Above, I identified three types of epistemic exclusions that remain in the TYM process. TYM improved the epistemic promise of the original process. However, according to the theories that guide DEEP, there can never be a process that reflects perfect epistemic promise (Dotson, 2014). We can continually refine the epistemic promise such that it is as high as possible. Thus, even for systems like TYM that significantly improve their predecessors, it is important to identify existing epistemic exclusions. In future iterations of TYM, designers could make changes to mitigate the exclusions that have been identified here. In addition, some epistemic exclusions are broader than can be addressed by changes to this process. It is critical to note how elements in the broader context, such as government mistrust, can impact the epistemic promise of the process. Such exclusions require societal shifts. Identifying these constraints could help interventionists better understand the limits of their interventions. In addition, noting these broader elements can highlight the movements that interventionists should support to provide the best context for their interventions to thrive. For example, designers or interventionists committed to having a CDF process with the highest epistemic promise should also prioritize supporting movements to reform government transparency, access, and the sharing of epistemic power on a broader scale. It is only with a shift of these social values that we can expect residents to trust that they will be heard.

In the next section of this discussion, I examine the recommendations of the design team. These recommendations arose through the practice of implementing TYM. Thus, they were informed by practice rather than theory. However, the project's goal is to increase the likelihood that participants are heard during the process. As such, these recommendations should reflect some

of the theorized ways that we can foster epistemic justice. Because these recommendations arose from practice, they can also inform the development of the DEEP method itself. What are the suggestions from practice that are not covered by the theories that inform DEEP?

Question 3: How can designers continue to improve on the TYM process?

The Organization's designers provided six recommendations to improve the TYM process in the future. The design team consisted of the project lead, Jodi Reed,* and one of the Organization's co-directors, Daniel Singh.* For three months, I was also a member of the design team as the research design intern. I conducted background research on participatory budgeting, served as the second interviewer for expert interviews, selected relevant quotes from these interviews to create design insights, and brainstormed with the team. Jodi served as the lead interviewer; led brainstorming sessions; managed connections between the MP's office and The Organization; attended the consultation meetings; conducted marketing for the project; created the process maps, overall plan, and all other documentation for the project. In addition, Jodi authored the final report with input from the Co-Directors of The Organization. To a lesser extent, the other co-director and the administrative manager of The Organization contributed to brainstorming and other support of the project.

At The Organization, the entire team contributes to each current project. Jodi led this project but was also involved with two other projects during my time at The Organization. Jodi studied Human - Computer Interaction and Design and approached the project from the perspective of a human - centric designer. Human - centered design reflects design that centers the human purpose of a product or process rather than its aesthetic value. As a human - centered designer, Jodi attempted to understand the process of the CDF in - depth and design the app to respond to the major human issues in the original process. Daniel is a trained visual artist and lecturer. The

entire design team shares an interest in applying technology to problems of governance in Jamaica and the broader Caribbean. They have experience building mobile applications in the past in collaboration with government entities and creating digital literacy workshops with development organizations. The following recommendations appear in The Organization's final report, which I had no part in creating. This final report was released months after I ended my direct involvement with the project.

First, the designers proposed that there should be more CBO engagement throughout project marketing, promotion, and implementation in the next iteration of TYM, to "strengthen community ownership." They suggest that this route will encourage increased participation and greater project sustainability. The theories of epistemic promise would suggest that there should be more engagement, but specifically targeting marginalized members of communities who may not have been heard in the process (Catala, 2015).

The second recommendation was to "revisit the role and form of technology in supporting participation." They suggest that there may be other technologies that more adequately fit the intervention context. In addition, there may be other places in the process where technology could provide better support. They cite difficulties when participation occurs mainly in digital space, noting that perhaps the app could be used primarily for information sharing or documenting the progress of the CDF process rather than for proposal uploads. Such a change could mitigate some of the access issues discussed previously. For example, it may reduce the impact of Internet access issues because the spaces of deliberation would occur offline. However, this suggestion could also limit access because in - person deliberation would be tied to a particular space and time. This change would also shorten the period that people could access the platform. The theories in DEEP would suggest that there is also a more significant issue regarding the use of technology in the

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space that could not be solved regardless of process improvements. Specifically, global power dynamics that undermine the financial stability of Jamaica's government are also indirectly related to the lack of reliable technology in the country (Dagnino, 2007; Kamugisha, 2007). This challenge cannot be solved by any improvements to TYM but by systemic political change (Dotson, 2014). However, DEEP does not specifically consider technology or the physical infrastructure of modes of participation. Thus, this suggestion will be used to update the DEEP method steps for the Jamaican context.

The third suggestion proposed by the designers is to "refine online audience targeting." Specifically, they show that the number of people who submitted proposals was small compared to the number exposed to virtual marketing. Although this pattern was somewhat expected, the designers believe that more people who are traditionally excluded from the process would be made aware of the new ways to participate with more targeted marketing. Theories of epistemic justice support the targeted focus on traditionally marginalized people (Anderson, 2012; Catala, 2015; Collins, 2009; Kamugisha, 2007). Thus, this recommendation should mitigate some epistemic exclusions related to accessibility. In addition, more targeted marketing gives more credibility to people in those marginalized groups. Credibility refers to whether those in power consider a person's knowledge to be relevant to the discussion. If marketing is targeted, it implies that those in power are specifically seeking out the perspective of those being targeted. It also implies that the process leaders consider knowledge from those groups to be integral in the process. Thus, targeted marketing may afford some constituents more credibility, mitigating an epistemic exclusion (Catala, 2015; Schmidt, 2019).

Fourth, the designers express the need to "prioritize quality of participation over scale." This recommendation aligns with the need to delve deeply into the minutia of how epistemic justice is

promoted or degraded (Catala, 2015; Dotson, 2014). The theories that inform the DEEP method suggest ways to mitigate epistemic exclusions in deliberations. In this framework, the quality of participation is related to lowering epistemic exclusions. The designers' suggestion to focus on quality aligns with the ultimate goal of the DEEP method, to transform the process into one which aligns with the values of epistemic justice as much as possible. The designers suggest that the next iteration of TYM should focus less on widespread marketing. Instead, improvements should focus on achieving a straightforward and efficient user process. Moreover, they propose engaging people who are already active citizens before moving on to bigger groups. This suggestion may limit access to some individuals short - term because fewer people may be made aware of the process (Schmidt, 2019). However, ensuring a smooth process may also improve access, especially for those who experienced technical issues in this round of TYM. This suggestion, in combination with targeted marketing, may improve access most for marginalized people. Based on the theory of intersectionality, if the process works for those most marginalized by the normal process, it is more likely to work for everyone (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2009).

The fifth recommendation, to "coordinate with other consultation efforts," attends to some epistemic exclusions related to transparency. There is not currently a centralized place where constituents can view the current community projects. Without this information, it is more difficult for constituents to produce original suggestions. If they do not know what has happened in the space, it may be difficult to propose a new idea. Thus, coordinating with other consultation efforts to display this information could provide more access. In addition, designers note that constituents were frustrated with a pattern of multiple organizations asking them for their opinion and then seemingly not acting on these same opinions. This dynamic further undermines the trust between the citizens and the leaders of these community development efforts. As discussed earlier, many

Jamaicans do not trust that those in power can hear them. They do not believe that these leaders afford them sufficient credibility (Catala, 2015; Spivak, 1984). This belief is justified by years of tensions between the government and the people (Meeks, 2014). To combat this belief, leaders must afford constituents more credibility and show that they take their opinions seriously during the decision - making process. This means that there must be improvements in both the actual and perceived epistemic promise. This recommendation from the designers aligns with the use of the DEEP method to improve TYM. It also connects to a broader social issue that cannot be fixed by improving TYM alone. However, coordinating consultation efforts with other agencies may contribute to rebuilding that trust between citizen and community development leaders.

Finally, the designers suggest that the next iteration should "accommodate emergent capacity and scheduling constraints." They recognized the importance of planning around the schedules of community organizations and increasing the period for participation in general. In addition, this recommendation proposes that designers should prepare as much as possible for unpredictable situations because of the number of institutions involved during this process. Examining this strategy based on the DEEP theories reveals that it calls for a second - level change (Dotson, 2014). According to Dotson (2014), second - level change involves changing the values of the decision - making process. In addition, Anderson (2012) writes that structural change is necessary to institute values of epistemic justice in an organization. A process that can accommodate changing capacities and schedules should be flexible. Thus, the designers suggest that an improved TYM would be more dynamic than the current version. Yet planning for a dynamic process may look different than the current design.

The theories that inform the DEEP method do not specifically address how the flexibility of a process could increase its overall epistemic promise. However, in practice, the designers

observe that planning for a more flexible process could increase the likelihood that more participants are heard in the process. If the process was more flexible than it currently is, it could address some of the epistemic exclusions related to accessibility. Smith (1999) discusses the linearity of time as a Western concept that permeates research. It does not well suit ecologies like Jamaica and can undermine epistemic justice and ultimately epistemic promise. The designers' proposal for more flexible time and a recursive process challenges the idea of a straightforward intervention that reflects a start and end point. This lesson from practice adds to the DEEP framework. Creating a more flexible TYM process could increase its epistemic promise. Thus, this is another area where the TYM case study contributes to our understanding of epistemic promise in practice.

The Organization's designers also mirrored many of the suggestions proposed by the DEEP theorists. For example, designers prioritized seeking out marginalized community members. The epistemic justice theorists also posit that epistemic promise is improved by centering the views and experiences of marginalized groups (Collins, 2009; Crenshaw, 1989). In this way, the TYM case study supports many of the theoretical assertions of epistemic justice theorists. However, there were also certain learnings the DEEP framework provided that were not captured by designers. Most prominently, DEEP recognizes the impact of third - level epistemic exclusions, which cannot be mitigated simply by process changes (Dotson, 2014). These third - level epistemic exclusions require more significant social change.

The designers also made recommendations for process improvements that were not captured by the framework that informs the DEEP method. Specifically, they recognized limitations in the physical infrastructure that can affect access to the participatory process in this case. For example, certain participants have limited Internet access, which could preclude their

participation in a multiplicity of ways. Specifically, those with less Internet access are also more likely to be working - class people already marginalized by the political system (Waller & Genius, 2015). Constraints related to physical infrastructure are a significant threat to the epistemic promise of technological interventions in the Jamaican context specifically. Second, designers noted the need for flexibility in this context because of the unpredictability of schedules and limited resources. However, the DEEP framework does not explicitly address ways time constraints and too much rigidity can limit epistemic promise.

Question 4: How can this case study inform the evaluation of epistemic promise?

The TYM case study supports the use of the DEEP method for increasing epistemic promise because many of the designers' suggestions for improving the process also mirror the theories that inform DEEP. These designers set out to change the original process such that participants were more likely to be heard by the representative. Specifically, as mentioned in a tweet from The Organization: "[TYM] was designed to allow citizens more influence over how their tax dollars are spent in their constituency." The designers sought to increase epistemic promise. They learned how to do so through using theory about previous participatory budgeting efforts; expert consultation on participation efforts in Jamaica; and through implementing an improved participatory budgeting process. Thus, the TYM case study illustrates how one group of designers increased the epistemic promise of a process in practice. The designers' recommendations mirror many of the theories informing DEEP. Their method for improving epistemic promise, by identifying limitations and mitigating them, also mirrors the DEEP method. They also noted that TYM could, and should, be improved in the future. This also supports the assertion that epistemic exclusions cannot be fully eliminated, but they can be mitigated as much as possible (Dotson, 2014). This suggests that these theories, and the DEEP method, are supported

in practice. Additionally, the TYM case proposes methods for improving epistemic promise that are not reflected in depth in the DEEP method. Specifically, the TYM case captures how limited Internet infrastructure acts as an accessibility barrier in the Jamaican context. In addition, the designers assert that flexibility and a longer time frame for the project could improve its epistemic promise. These two recommendations based on practice can be added to the DEEP method for the Jamaican context.

Finally, the DEEP method captures some epistemic exclusions that are not mentioned by the designers - specifically those that were indicative of third - level exclusions. Using DEEP allows us to identify structural issues as well that cannot be mitigated by changes to the process itself but that require systemic change. For example, improving people's trust in the government requires a significant systemic, cultural shift (Meeks, 2014). In addition, the constraints on how the CDF is spent at the national level can also challenge the epistemic promise of this process because it takes epistemic power away from constituents. As another example, by using the DEEP method to examine third - level exclusions, we can observe that the lack of Internet infrastructure in Jamaica is one of many impacts of the country's financial precarity (Waller & Genius, 2015). Reading the last row of Figure 1, we are reminded that this financial precarity was originally caused by colonialism and then further entrenched by neocolonialism (Dagnino, 2007; Sheller, 2005; Rist, 2010). These global dynamics still constrain the epistemic promise of any political process that occurs in Jamaica. The DEEP method reminds us that there are also third - level epistemic exclusions in political processes that may not be mitigated with changes to the process, and require larger scale change. Adding an analysis of third - level epistemic exclusions allows designers to pinpoint which limitations can be solved by process changes. In addition, I propose that explicitly noting these third - level exclusions can emphasize the need to push for change

beyond just changes to the specific process. For example, in this case to further support the TYM process, The Organization should support broader efforts towards decolonization. Decolonization efforts should eventually reduce the impacts of colonial and neocolonial forces, and thus increase the epistemic promise of any Jamaican political process.

In sum, the nature and scope of proposed solutions indicate some of the complexities of implementing potentially transformative technology in historically challenged spaces. Based on the findings, I propose improvements to the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) method. This method builds on the original framework and translates it into steps for designers. As the original framework is supported by this practical example, I posit that it can be translated into a practical tool for evaluating epistemic promise. In addition, this practical example evident in the Tell Your MP (TYM) project offers certain practices not captured in the original framework. These elements will be added to the DEEP method as well. As an open conceptual structure, I propose that the DEEP method can be applied to participatory processes broadly but should be modified to capture any additional epistemic exclusions relevant to the context in which it is deployed. Below, I describe the modified DEEP method.

Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise. Based on the literature surveyed and the lessons learned in this instrumental case study, I posit that DEEP involves the following actions:

1. Possible epistemic exclusions should be described with context - specific first-, second- and third - level exclusions discussed in scholarship on epistemic justice and political access. At this stage, the Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination table can be used as a summary of general epistemic exclusions.

2. Designers should also specifically consider the ways the physical infrastructure may limit epistemic promise for marginalized groups. For civic technologies in particular, issues of

Internet and computer access as well as software literacy should be prioritized when deciding on the means of participation.

3. Designers should consider the flexibility of the process based on the following types of questions. Is the process flexible enough for the context in which it is being deployed? What is a reasonable time frame for the completion of this process given the stakeholders' schedules? Is there time built in for possible delays?

4. The participatory process that is undergoing evaluation should be examined for the presence of those first-, second- and third - level exclusions described in step 1. This examination should include both: input from marginalized groups on their experiences of any barriers to being heard during the process under evaluation as well as any other information that can be gathered on broader contextual exclusions.

5. For the revealed epistemic exclusions, designers should search for potential suggestions for eliminating or mitigating these exclusions. This search should include any relevant literature as well as collecting possible suggestions from community members.

6. Action items should be decided for improving the epistemic promise of the process. Every DEEP method should end with clear action items on how any existing epistemic exclusions may be mitigated. The more epistemic exclusions can be mitigated or eliminated, the greater the chance that participants' inputs will have a meaningful impact on outcomes. This means that the more the overall epistemic promise of the process would be expected to improve.

7. Third - level epistemic exclusions should be identified and included in any reports on the DEEP method. Although these exclusions cannot be mitigated by process changes, they can inform designers about broader barriers to epistemic promise in that context.

8. Finally, DEEP should be performed recursively because the context of an intervention may shift with time. Epistemic promise is highly context dependent, and so any analysis using the DEEP method necessarily refers to a specific time period and a specific political environment.

I propose that the DEEP method can be used to approximate and suggest improvements to the epistemic promise of a participatory process. Moreover, the DEEP method can provide a systematic and thoughtful framework for evaluators to improve the epistemic promise of participatory processes. If the general epistemic promise of the process is improved, participants are more apt to both experience a deeper level of participation and be truly heard.

Conclusion

The case study of the Tell Your MP project serves as an example of how the epistemic promise of a real - world process could be increased. This practical example supports many of the theories included in the Disrupting Hermeneutical Domination framework. Changes to the original process that were considered improvements in TYM align with suggestions by epistemic justice theorists such as shifting credibility (Catala, 2015; Collins, 2009), increasing transparency (Fricker, 2013; Schmidt, 2019), and increasing accessibility (Kamugisha, 2007; Schmidt, 2019). In addition, designers used a method akin to the one proposed in the original DEEP method to identify epistemic exclusions (referred to as "limitations") and mitigate them. In this way, the TYM case study supported the DEEP method as a framework for understanding and mitigating epistemic exclusions. However, the designers and tenets from the original DEEP table offered recommendations not covered by the other. These additional suggestions were added to the new version of the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) method. As illustrated throughout this dissertation, DEEP is a method that I propose can be employed in practical contexts

to identify the epistemic exclusions in a process and create solutions to mitigate them. Ultimately, DEEP may help evaluators, interventionists, designers, and other practitioners evaluate and improve the epistemic promise of participatory processes.

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CONCLUSION: IMPROVING PARTICIPATION THROUGH EPISTEMIC PROMISE

Epistemic promise is a new concept in the study of community engagement that serves as a counter-narrative to the idea that people do not participate in political activities largely because they are "hopeless." Informed by this concept, I posit that people may choose not to participate in a process that has low epistemic promise for them. If they do not believe their inputs will have a meaningful effect on outcomes, they are less likely to participate. Epistemic promise is derived by applying theories of epistemic justice to the question of whether and how designers of participatory processes can deepen participation by changing the process itself.

I develop the concept of epistemic promise in Paper One by informing theories of epistemic justice with real - world data from Jamaican newspaper articles that attempt to explain low political participation. I posit that participatory processes should be oriented towards the goal of epistemic justice and that this concept more accurately reflects the political malaise that is increasingly common in Jamaica. The second paper reflects a quantitative approach, using a proxy for epistemic promise to predict four forms of participation. The proxy is related particularly to institutionalized forms of participation, suggesting that epistemic promise may be particularly relevant in those contexts. For example, in the Jamaican sample, perceived epistemic promise is empirically related to voting, but not to protesting. However, the proxy indicator has its limitations, such as only asking about whether participants believe "those who run this country" care about their thoughts, rather than asking them about a specific participatory process. Thus, I suggest that future research should develop measures that can capture the specificity of epistemic promise. Despite this limitation, the proxy variable approximates aspects of epistemic promise that make it an important predictor of dimensions of political participation considered in this dissertation.

Finally, in the third paper, I apply a broad evaluative method for epistemic promise to a practical case study. The Tell Your MP project represents an example of a team of designers who aim to improve the likelihood that participants will be heard during a participatory budgeting process. Case study results support the theories of epistemic justice used to create the epistemic promise concept. A method called the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) is proposed as a guide for researchers, designers, evaluators, and other practitioners interested in increasing the epistemic promise of political processes.

This project reflects exploratory dimensions, as I am proposing epistemic promise as a new political concept to inform the future study of participation. However, this exploration has revealed that there are several benefits to the adoption of epistemic promise as an academic concept with applied dimensions. First, epistemic promise helps reorient the goals of participation to align with epistemic justice. Epistemic justice is an issue at the core of deliberation because epistemic exclusions affect members of society differently based on their social standing. The present study has illustrated that to increase the chances that marginalized groups are effectively heard during a participatory process, the entire process should be designed to foster epistemic justice as much as possible. I posit that to achieve this goal, designers can aim to increase epistemic promise using the steps found in the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) method to highlight and mitigate epistemic exclusions. It should be noted that epistemic promise as a concept assigns accountability to the *participatory system* rather than to individual participants, refocusing problems of participation away from a "hopelessness" narrative towards the understanding that systems should be designed to cultivate epistemic justice.

Second, this project documents a proxy for perceived epistemic promise that positively predicted voting in both Jamaican and regional contexts. My findings suggest that epistemic

promise could be an important consideration for efforts to increase voting and other institutionalized forms of participation in similar spaces. Further research should be conducted on the types of participation that are related to epistemic promise. For example, researchers could consider whether individuals evaluate epistemic promise for all forms of political participation, or whether it only applies to formal, institutionalized forms of participation. Research should also be conducted about whether epistemic promise is relevant in other contexts. For example, do citizens of Global North countries like the U.S. evaluate epistemic promise before deciding to participate? Researchers could also investigate the epistemic exclusions that exist in different political contexts. For example, what are the epistemic exclusions for residents of authoritarian regimes as compared to more democratic political systems? Studying epistemic promise in other political contexts and geographic regions could further refine the concept and assess its possible generalizability.

A secondary dataset was employed to test the possible relationship between perceived epistemic promise and participation. In future research, measures should be developed that more fully capture epistemic promise. For example, factor analysis of the developed measure could help to empirically determine the differences between external efficacy and epistemic promise. I propose that there are nuanced distinctions between these two concepts, and that in some cases using theories of epistemic promise to interpret participation data could identify more opportunities for effective redress than by using theories of external efficacy. The data examined in Paper Two are correlational, and so I suggest that future studies could benefit from the use of longitudinal data to assess whether epistemic promise leads to participation. Findings in Paper Two suggest a significant relationship between the two indicators, but longitudinal or experimental research designs could better test these dynamics over time.

Finally, Paper Three illustrates an example of how epistemic promise might be improved in practice. I use the example of the Tell Your MP project to illustrate how designers on the ground implemented changes to a participatory process to make it more likely that participants could be heard. In other words, these designers sought to improve the epistemic promise of a participatory budgeting process. The TYM case study also shows how making structural changes may improve the chances of a more democratic deliberative process by including more participants. Some barriers are mitigated during this process while others are introduced. For example, shifting the process to a virtual space enabled increased access because deliberation was stretched over a longer period. However, it also created barriers to access for potential participants who have limited Internet access. In practice, the steps that designers took to improve the epistemic promise of the process were similar to the steps proposed in the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) method. And this method was improved using findings from my case study analysis. However, a project limitation is that the case study did not include sufficient input from community members but rather relied on secondary data sources based on the observations of The Organization's team about the community's perspective. Future studies about epistemic promise in action should prioritize the voices of community members to illumine whether the epistemic promise that is "theoretically" is apparent and experienced by community members. This type of research would examine and document the experiences of community members before and after improvement of the epistemic promise of a participatory process.

Despite the limitations of using secondary data sources, this dissertation proposes an innovative approach to orienting participatory processes. In community psychology, epistemic promise could nuance the literature on empowerment which has been criticized for being too broad. In addition, epistemic promise adds a normative, justice-centered perspective to issues that

are normally considered under frameworks of external efficacy. In sociology, this work contributes to the connections between structure and agency by suggesting a way that agentic individuals observe structural limitations. In addition, it extends the work of Black feminist sociologists such as Collins (2009) by centering marginalized viewpoints and using intersectional analyzes to reveal the quality of political processes. This work also contributes to development studies, as the DEEP method could be used in community development applications and in the design of more just civic technologies.

Ultimately, I propose that epistemic promise represents an interdisciplinary, theoretically grounded, and practically relevant concept that can impact several academic fields. In addition, it could impact the practical fields of evaluation and community development. Thus, the possible multi-disciplinary uses of this concept are multiple and exciting for both academic and applied reasons. By refocusing issues of participation around dynamics of epistemic justice, epistemic promise seeks solutions to transform systems. It represents a potentially more radical direction for the study of participation, by considering the root of any deliberative space - who gets heard and why.

EPILOGUE

As a burgeoning epistemic justice scholar, I endeavored to align the methods and presentation of this dissertation with the values of epistemic justice. As such, in this epilogue I reflected on my research values and positionality. A researcher's positionality can bring potential strengths and biases to the work that may not be obvious to the reader. In addition, research values reveal a bit about how I made decisions throughout the process.

Research Values

Transposing the ethics of Black feminist theory and grounded normative theory (GNT) into the Jamaican context requires a few orienting values (Collins, 2009; Ackerly et. al, 2021). First, Jamaicans are considered knowers based on their own lived experiences. Second, the researcher should have accountability for the presentation of their findings. Specifically, the research should be as comprehensive as possible. It should also be attentive to power dynamics and should not harm the community. Third, the researcher should practice self-reflexivity. In this case, as a Black Jamaican woman, this also involves the assertion of my standpoint based on my lived experiences. Fourth, findings should be recursive, that is, continually re-analyzed with the introduction of more data. Ideally, this process would involve dialoguing with research participants. Finally, the research should be attentive to multiple systems of oppression, and center the experiences of the most marginalized, as informed by the by the matrix of oppression (Crenshaw, 1989; Collins, 2009). In GNT terms, the research should be epistemically inclusive. That is, it should include multiple ways of knowing from the perspective of a variety of stakeholders.

Although this study aspires to these values, it succeeds in some dimensions more than others. The lack of feedback from constituents from South East St. Andrew (SESA) is a limitation in epistemological inclusion. In addition, dialoguing with participants has been limited to the

participant-observation phase, when I served as a research intern at The Organization. However, during my analysis I endeavored to uphold the other values outlined above. Thus, to the best of my ability I have and continue to endeavor to: frame Jamaicans as knowers; engage multiple data sources to increase the comprehensiveness of the study; attend to power dynamics; present my standpoint in a positionality statement; practice recursive coding and interpretation; and consider multiple standpoints, particularly those of marginalized participants. The current study is less solidaristic with the SESA community in that I developed the research questions, and the main data source was created by The Organization. However, I anticipate that this study will serve as a starting point for future studies of participatory systems in Jamaica, ultimately towards the goal of increasing access to meaningful political participation.

Positionality Statement

According to the values of both grounded normative theory methodology and Black feminist epistemology, the researcher should practice self-reflexivity. As a Black Jamaican woman, I should also share my epistemological standpoint based on my lived experiences.

Connection to Tell Your MP. I am in a unique position as a researcher who is currently examining the Tell Your MP (TYM) project as an outsider. However, I was also a team member during the development of the TYM process. At that time, my involvement was as a research intern. I was looking for field hours to satisfy the requirements of my PhD program when I reached out to the Co-Director of The Organization. I had followed The Organization on social media for a few years and appreciated their focus on deep civic participation facilitated by technology such as mobile apps and websites. After an interview, I was offered the position of summer research intern. During my time with The Organization, I conducted a literature review on participatory budgeting; served as a notetaker for interviews with local experts on participatory processes; and

attended a planning meeting with the Member of Parliament (MP) and the lead researcher on the pilot study that birthed the project. I also worked with The Organization's team daily for two months during the Summer of 2018. My time in the office was spent summarizing findings from interview recordings; brainstorming research insights based on the interviews and previous literature; proposing examples of participatory budgeting apps to guide refinements to the TYM app; and collaborating directly with the project lead to fill in any gaps in the project organization such as scheduling and transcribing notes from a few meetings she had observed. Although we do not communicate frequently, I am still cordial with both the TYM project lead, Jodi* and the principal of The Organization, Daniel* who was physically present during the development of the TYM process.

Epistemological Standpoint. I was born and raised in Kingston, Jamaica; I identify as a light-skinned Black woman. In Kingston, I am considered 'brown' because I am light-skinned. Although I identify politically as a Black woman, many Jamaicans would express that there is a distinction between brown and Black Jamaicans. Colorism allows me ease in some situations that would be threatening for dark-skinned Jamaicans. For example, there are often spontaneous police spot checks for illegal weapons. At these police checkpoints I am rarely stopped if my car windows are down. As soon as the police officers see that I am a small brown woman, I am not considered a threat. This certainly complicates my view of Jamaican society. Compounding my brown privilege is my 'uptown' privilege. I was born to a family of small business-owners and professionals in Kingston and grew up a member of the middle-class in Jamaica. In Kingston terms, I would be considered uptown based on my social circles, family background, family connections to powerful people, the high school I attended and my parent's status as business owners. Uptown belonging has to do with the ability to afford a certain lifestyle, but also the social

circles to which you belong, who you know and your institutional affiliations. As an uptown Kingstonian, I have a limited understanding of the day-to-day lives of working class and poor Jamaicans. In Kingston, there are also a set of upper-class families that can be recognized by their last names and their tendency to only associate with each other. I am also not familiar with the day to day lives of these upper-class families. My class background may have impacted my interpretation of the results of these studies.

For example, it may have impacted how I interpreted the newspaper articles examined in Paper One. I endeavored to counter this by using multiple quotes over several years to inform my interpretations and thus to triangulate the data. As much as possible, the quotes were interpreted as literally as possible. I assumed the writers were expressing their experiences and observations of the system. These experiences and observations were considered valuable and truthful. Some of these experiences and thoughts were familiar to me as a Jamaican. However, I also endeavored to consider those that were unfamiliar just as truthful. Essentially, I viewed each quote and article as a window into the experience of some Jamaicans. In Paper Three, the Dynamic Evaluation of Epistemic Promise (DEEP) framework pushed me to consider the experience of those who are most marginalized by the political process. Thus, this framework also worked to counter some of the biases I may bring to the research as an uptown Jamaican.

Another dynamic that shapes my perspective on happenings in my home country is my foreign education. In 2008, I applied to colleges overseas and attended one of the top ranked schools in the U.S., Stanford University. Soon, I will hopefully graduate from Vanderbilt University with my PhD. As a citizen of a Third World country, I am eager to center who I consider to be my people in my research. As such, I engage in research with Jamaicans and align with decolonial and Black feminist values. I know that my status as a PhD candidate, and hopefully

soon to be PhD holder, affords me a certain degree of power to create knowledge that much of the Western academy accepts as legitimate, as well as push the boundaries of what the global academy can accept as legitimate. I know that my proximity to power gives me some leverage to make an impact in Jamaica and for Jamaica by centering our stories and ways of doing in my work. I also imagine possibilities of impacting local policy, as well as policies of the agencies and countries that Jamaicans depend on for funding social services. However, due to my color and class privilege, as well as my elite Western education, I am cautious of the ways I may re-inscribe systems of oppression and Western-based research practices in my hopes to return and have an impact.

Fanon (1964) writes that colonized intellectuals (i.e., scholars from the Third World who have been educated in the West) who desire to work against colonialism should approach their intellectual work in specifically anti-colonial ways. Fanon calls for the radical separation of the bourgeoisie from the ways in which the imperial nation would like them to act:

> The historical vocation of an authentic national bourgeoisie in an underdeveloped country is to repudiate its status as bourgeois and an instrument of the capital and to become entirely subservient to the revolutionary capital which the people represent…the imperative duty of an authentic national bourgeoisie is to betray the vocation to which it is destined, to learn from the people, and make available to them the intellectual and technical capital it culled from its time in colonial universities (p. 99).

He calls for members of the national bourgeoisie to use their status to re-distribute power and capital to the people. Additionally, he writes about the importance of community participation in

the decisions made by a national bourgeoisie. He also directly challenges people like me, to make available the capital that I have gained in colonial institutions. As a colonized intellectual, I have power to critique culture and policy. I consider Fanon's words a call to reject the Western-determined trappings of individual success and instead embrace a vision of community engagement and active citizenship.

Fanon writes that in the first stages of being a colonized intellectual, one must prove they have assimilated the colonial framework. I am reminded of my undergraduate honors thesis, which was a cross-cultural experimental psychology study, which included Jamaicans but still centered Americans in both background literature and as a 'normal' comparison group.

In the second stage, colonized intellectuals have their convictions shaken and they become more aware of oppression, but they are still often outsiders to their people. In further wrenching themselves away from the ideals of White supremacy, they come to focus on the goodness of their people by taking a strengths-based approach. I position myself at this second stage, wanting to center the 'voices' of Jamaican people and make a real impact. Yet, I still feel like an outsider in some ways.

In the third stage, the colonized writer becomes a galvanizer of the people through their writing. Fanon calls this the 'combative' stage. I aspire to this stage where my work will have impact in both the academic realm and in real world social movements. Fanon posits "the colonized intellectual, however, who strives for cultural authenticity, must recognize that national truth is first and foremost the national reality" (Fanon, 1964, p. 161). Thus, I must focus on the lived experiences of Jamaicans outside my circles. Reflecting on this, I also understand that I cannot hope to know everything or speak for everyone, but I can work towards epistemic justice in my personal and professional circles as well as in my written work.

Finally, Fanon posits that a revolutionary colonized intellectual, in her return to her people, is also a person in resistance:

> Once the colonists who had relished their victory over these assimilated individuals, realize that these men they thought saved have begun to merge with the 'nigger scum', the entire system loses its bearings. Every colonized intellectual who crosses back over the line is a radical condemnation of the method and the regime, and the uproar it causes justifies his abdication and encourages him to persevere (p. 158).

Rather than my privilege making me 'less Jamaican', I aspire to use my position to subvert the colonial project. My interest in epistemic justice broadly, and epistemic promise specifically, is a result of this desire to use my access to create more space for the perspectives of marginalized Jamaicans in Jamaican policy. My intellectual journey has involved unlearning harmful ideas of who is considered a legitimate knower and coming to a greater understanding of the disproportionate impact of oppressive structures on marginalized people.

I also consider my positionality based on concepts in Black feminist theory (Collins, 2009). Collins (2009) posits that Black women in the U.S. use self-definition to combat negative controlling images that are created by a racist, classist society. Controlling images are essentially stereotypes and harmful assumptions about such women. Moreover, Collins (2009) writes:

> Through the lived experiences gained within their extended families and communities, individual African-American women fashioned their own ideas about the meaning of Black womanhood. When these ideas found collective expression, Black women's self-definitions enabled them to refashion African-influenced conceptions of self and community (p. 13).

Collins also notes that Black women often create collective meaning. In my own life, my standpoint has been influenced by numerous Black women from the Caribbean, the U.S., and African countries such as Eritrea and Cameroon. Through intentional community with Black women, I have grown in my understanding of anti-Black racism and the myriad ways it shows up in the majority White institutions I have attended. I have also become aware of the more subtle ways it shows up through colorism and classism in post-colonial societies. The experience of becoming friends with working-class Black people has also spurred my interest in the oppressiveness of class systems. My standpoint has been changed by learning from these affinity groups of Black women. Although I was raised middle-class, these experiences undergird my desire to challenge systems of oppression. Overall, the matrix of oppression affects me differently in the U.S. than it does in Jamaica because of my relative color and class privilege. This was initially confusing, but it has allowed me to see the global permutations of anti-Blackness and how as an individual I can both benefit from and be harmed by those controlling images. Additionally, it has influenced my feelings of solidarity, which was once only with people living in the Third World. That feeling of solidarity has now expanded to marginalized people of color globally, guided by the idea that our liberation is tied together. This solidarity guides my endeavors of everyday resistance.

Collins (2009) describes everyday resistance as seemingly mundane acts in which many Black women engage in response to an oppressive system. I practice everyday resistance by using critical frameworks to inform decisions in my everyday life. For example, in my research I center Jamaicans despite the relatively easier access to American participants. I also engage with critical theories and endeavor to cite feminists and Third World scholars as often as possible for this reason. I practice these seemingly innocuous actions and observe them in others around me.

In regard to the TYM case study, Black feminist theory is integrated into my analytical framework. The values that I practice daily also shape my perspective on the importance of centering lived experiences; focusing on the experience of those most marginalized by the matrix of oppression; and doing my best be accountable to my research partners. Overall, my experiences as a colonized intellectual and a Black feminist largely shape my personal standpoint and impacted how I interpreted the findings of this dissertation.

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Table 11

Model Building for The Multilevel Models in Paper Two

Past Voting				
ICC= 2.59%				
N= 26434				
Step Number	**Variable Added**	**Information Criteria (Model Fit)**	**Fixed or Random Effects? (Test of fit)**	**Keep or Remove**
0	Intercept	119337.267		
1	GINI	119349.66	Fixed	Remove
2	Income	106825.528	Fixed	**Keep**
3	Age	113480.53	Fixed	Remove
4	Sex	106787.166	Fixed	**Keep**
5	External Efficacy	105586.559	Fixed	**Keep**
6	EE*Gini	105598.494	N/A	Remove
7	income*Gini	105601.361	N/A	Remove
Future Voting				
ICC= 0.73%				
N= 24602				
Step Number	**Variable Added**	**Information Criteria (Model Fit)**	**Fixed or Random Effects? (Test of fit)**	**Keep or Remove**
0	Intercept	105302.148		
1	GINI	105311.432	Fixed	Remove
2	Income	95487.932	Fixed	**Keep**
3	Age	95567.119	Fixed	Remove
4	Sex	95481.3	Fixed	**Keep**
5	External efficacy	94727.303	Fixed	**Keep**
6	EE*Gini	94759.707	N/A	Remove
7	income*Gini	94734.315	N/A	Remove

Attends Community Meetings				
ICC= 2.51%				
N= 23172				
Step Number	**Variable Added**	**Information Criteria (Model Fit)**	**Fixed or Random Effects? (Test of fit)**	**Keep or Remove**
0	Intercept	117692.253		
1	GINI	117705.234	Fixed	Remove
2	Income	104722.95	Fixed	**Keep**
3	Age	104935.624	Fixed	Remove
4	Sex	104763.904	Fixed	Remove
5	External Efficacy	103627.335	Fixed	**Keep**
6	EE*Gini	103642.093	Fixed	Remove
7	income*Gini	103645.928	Fixed	Remove
Protested				
ICC= 1.31%				
N= 23291				
Step Number	**Variable Added**	**Information Criteria (Model Fit)**	**Fixed or Random Effects? (Test of fit)**	**Keep or Remove**
0	Intercept	141016.659		
1	GINI	141070.692	Fixed	Remove
2	Income	125742.433	Fixed	**Keep**
3	Age	125742.433	Fixed	Remove
4	Sex	125583.486	Fixed	**Keep**
5	External Efficacy	124062.096	Fixed	**Keep**
6	EE*Gini	124089.724	Fixed	**Keep***
7	income*Gini	124050.799	Fixed	Remove*
Note: A smaller information criteria indicates a better model fit.				
Source: The AmericasBarometer by the Latin American Public Opinion Project (LAPOP), www.LapopSurveys.org.				
*In this case, I maintained the interaction that showed a significant relationship with the outcome and included the predictor of most interest, despite a slightly lower fit. The interaction between ep*GINI was not significant for any other models.				