



THE DIFFICULT INTEGRATION OF MINI-PUBLICS IN COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

THE CASE OF THE EDUCATION REFORM IN THE BELGIAN FRENCH-SPEAKING
COMMUNITY

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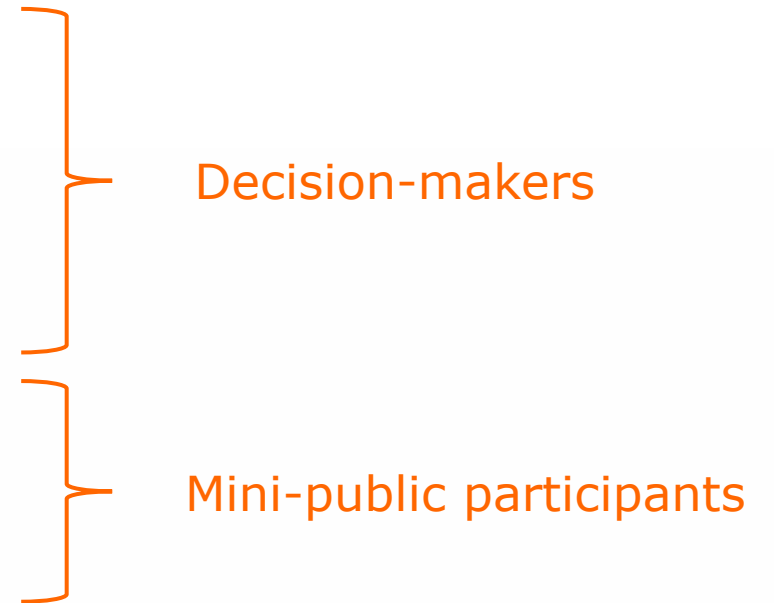
INTRODUCTION

- Increasing use of mini-publics
- Extant research focus on:
 - Internal design
 - Effects on its participants
 - Impact on state actors

→ Shift from Government to Governance : **collaborative governance**

COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

- Governing arrangement encompassing
 - State actors
 - Non-state actors
 - ❑ Organized stakeholders
 - Dominant (neo-corporatist actors)
 - Non-dominant (less formalized actors)
 - ❑ Non-organized stakeholders (professionals, individual field actors)
 - ❑ Lay citizens



COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE

- Two problems:
 - Enclosed deliberative system prone to groupthink
 - Bring diversity of perspectives
 - Deficient accountability ties
 - Check function

One solution
→ mini-publics ?

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Efficiency of mini-publics to solve both problems depends on:

- How do organized stakeholders envision a collaboration with a mini-public in a collaborative governance scheme?
- How do lay citizens and non-organized stakeholders perceive their participation in a mini-public within a collaborative governance scheme?

→ **Legitimacy matters**

HYPOTHESIS

HOW DO ORGANIZED STAKEHOLDERS ENVISION A COLLABORATION WITH A MINI-PUBLIC IN A COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE SCHEME?

- Legitimate owners of the issue
- Collaborative governance = zero-sum game
- Citizens as clients
- Reconnection with citizens and democratic ideals

HYPOTHESIS

HOW DO LAY CITIZENS AND NON-ORGANIZED STAKEHOLDERS PERCEIVE THEIR PARTICIPATION IN A MINI-PUBLIC WITHIN A COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE SCHEME?

- Different perceptions among lay citizens and non-organized stakeholders

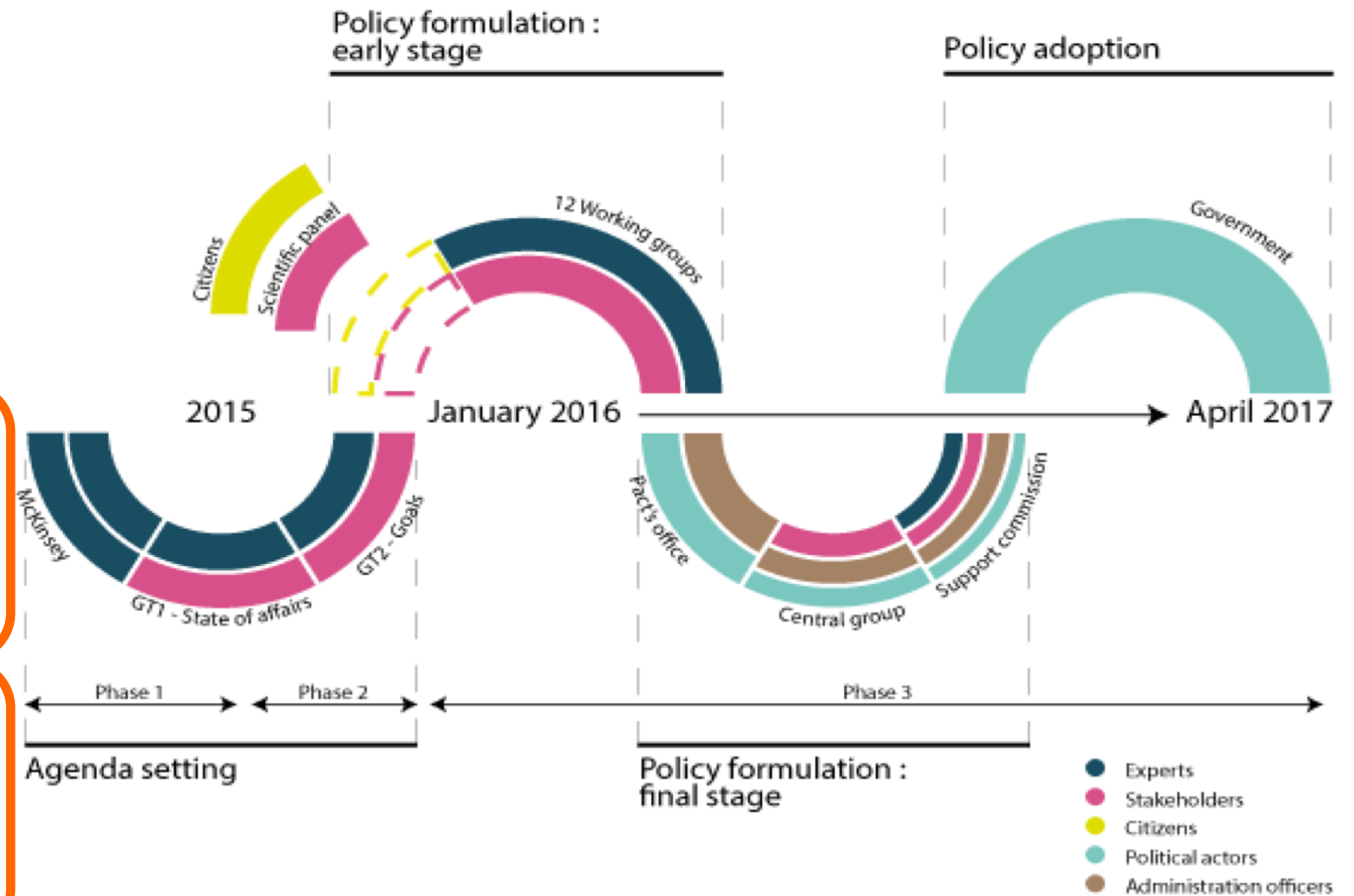
THE CASE

THE PACTE POUR UN ENSEIGNEMENT D'EXCELLENCE

- Education reform in French speaking Belgium
- Collaborative governance scheme with three mini-publics
 - State actors
 - Non-state actors

- Organized stakeholders
 - Dominant (neo-corporatist actors)
 - Non-dominant (less formalized actors)

- Non-organized stakeholders (professionals, individual field actors)
- Lay citizens



The difficult integration of mini-publics
in collaborative governance

THE CASE

THE PACTE POUR UN ENSEIGNEMENT D'EXCELLENCE

	Citizen Panel	Citizen Conference	Consensus Conference
# participants	24	81	116
Selection	Random selection	Open call followed by stratified random selection	Open call followed by stratified random selection
Category	Citizens	Teachers, students, parents	1/3 citizens, 2/3 teachers
Agenda	Diffuse	Diffuse	Precise
Topic	Open	Semi-open	Closed
Media attention	Low	Low	High

METHODOLOGY

- Surveys of stakeholders (82) and participants (105) after mini-publics
- In-depth interviews of stakeholders (11)
- Observation of mini-publics

ANALYSIS

PARTICIPANTS

- Non-organized stakeholders participating in mini-publics whose design increases the stakes of participation show more critical views
- Lay citizens participating in mini-publics whose design lowers the stakes of participation show more positive views

Participants' perceptions

Legitimacy depends on the mini-public

1. Composition of the mini-public: lay citizens or non-organized stakeholders
2. Media attention
3. Openness of the agenda

Hypothesis

- Different perceptions among non-organized stakeholders and lay citizens

ANALYSIS

PARTICIPANTS

Participants' perceptions

Legitimacy depends on the mini-public

1. Composition of the mini-public: lay citizens or non-organized stakeholders
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→ Design matters

Hypothesis

- Different perceptions among non-organized stakeholders and lay citizens

→ Status matters

ANALYSIS

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ANALYSIS

STAKEHOLDERS

Organized stakeholders' perceptions

1. Lack of awareness and understanding of mini-publics
 1. Deficient communication
 2. No formal link
 3. Timing
 4. Not involved before and during
2. Mini-publics as top-down process
 1. Lack of legitimacy because no expertise and no representativeness

Hypothesis

- Legitimate owners of the issue
- Collaborative governance = zero-sum game **X**
- Citizens as clients **X**
- Reconnection with citizens and democratic ideals **X**

ANALYSIS

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CONCLUSION

IMPLICATIONS FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF THE COLLABORATIVE GOVERNANCE SCHEME

- Low contribution of mini-publics to
 - Deliberative quality
 - Accountability claims
- Because of the position of stakeholders:
 - Lack of awareness among organized stakeholders
 - Top-down vision of organized stakeholders

SUGGESTIONS

- Interaction of different sites of deliberation throughout the policy-making process
- Involve stakeholders in mini-publics (observer, resource person) and elaboration of participatory plan
- Invite mini-publics' representatives at the negotiation table