



**UCLouvain**

# Making Deliberative Mini-Publics (DMPs) Better?

## Recent findings on DMPs' participation, support and policy impact

### ***IMPACT: Linking DMPs to policy-making***

Based on the works by Ann-Mireille Sautter, Christoph Niessen, Didier Caluwaerts, Julien Vrydagh, Rebecca Gebauer, Sacha Rangoni et al., Vincent Jacquet et al.

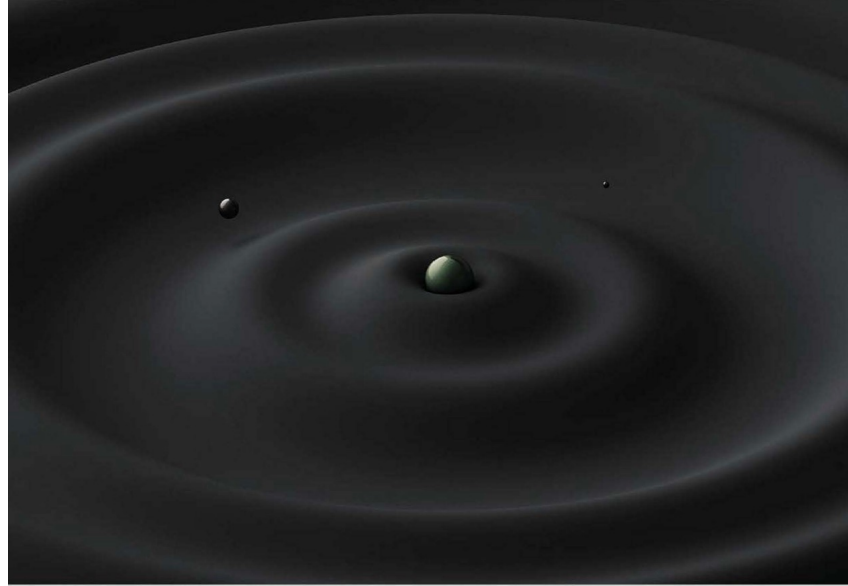
Brussels, 21 November 2024

**11 Take-Home Messages (THM)**

Min Reuchamps

*IMPACT: what are we talking about?*

ECPR PRESS



# The Impacts of Democratic Innovations

Edited by Vincent Jacquet, Matt Ryan  
and Ramon van der Does

Open access: <https://ecpr.eu/Shop/ShopProductInfo?productID=192>

## *IMPACT: what are we talking about?*

- **Take-home message = THM1:** ImpactS
- **THM2:** Impacts on WHAT?
  - Policies
  - Actors
  - Institutions
- **THM3:** ‘Successful/positive cases’ vs. ‘failed/negatives cases’
- Democratic innovations: ‘institutions that have been specifically designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process’ (Smith 2009: 1) vs DMPs

*IMPACTS of Deliberative Mini-Publics  
(DMPs)/Citizens' Assemblies (CAs)*



Didier Caluwaerts and Min Reuchamps

## **18 Evaluating citizens' assemblies: Criteria, methods and tools**

**Abstract:** Citizens' assemblies (CAs) have been heralded as a potential antidote to the alleged crisis of democratic legitimacy and effectiveness. However, CAs are used in a variety of designs, on a variety of topics, and in a variety of political and institutional contexts. As the experience with CAs deepens and competing designs proliferate, demands for concrete evaluation standards and tools have risen. This chapter aims to offer a comprehensive account of central evaluation criteria for CAs, both in the input, throughput, and output phases, and it gives an overview of potential methods for evaluating CAs. Moreover, the chapter also outlines a new operational evaluation tool, the CA Evaluation Survey (CAES), which taps into the different dimensions.

**Keywords:** citizens' assemblies, deliberative democracy, legitimacy, evaluation, institutional designs, methods, input, throughput, output, CA Evaluation Survey (CAES)

Output

Public endorsement

- I discussed [the issue under discussion] with others outside of the CA (e.g. friends, family, colleagues).
- I shared the recommendations of the CA via mail or social media.
- I am convinced that a large part of the citizens can endorse the recommendations of the CA.
- I am convinced that a large part of the politicians can endorse the recommendations of the CA.
- I am convinced that a large part of the policy makers can endorse the recommendations of the CA.

Political uptake

- It was clear from the start what was going to happen with the recommendations of the CA.
- I am convinced that politicians will take into account the CA's recommendations.

Policy implementation

- I am convinced that we will find my ideas in tomorrow's policies.
- I am convinced that we will find the CA's recommendations in tomorrow's policies.

THM4

*IMPACTS & Political uptake*



Christoph Niessen

## 24 How do elected officials perceive deliberative citizens' assemblies?

**Abstract:** Despite their increasing use, citizens' assemblies are far from being unanimously supported by elected officials. While citizens' assemblies offer the opportunity to increase the quality and acceptance of decision-making, they may also require to give away power and engage with alternative legitimacies. In light of this ambiguity, the objective of this chapter is to explore how elected officials perceive CAs, i.e. when they support and when they oppose them? The question is addressed from two angles. First, the theoretical bases of why elected officials may (dis)like CAs are considered. Secondly, the results of existing empirical research on the matter are reviewed. These findings are then discussed vis-à-vis their theoretical relevance and the main lessons for the prospects of CAs as a democratic reform proposal are derived.

**Keywords:** deliberative democracy, democratic innovation, elite attitudes, deliberative wave, citizen deliberation

**Corrected Table 24.1.** Potential factors influencing elected officials' perception of CAs

THM5

<i>View:</i>	<i>Decision-making power:</i>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Positive</b>		
			<b>Complementary</b>		<b>Disruptive</b>
			<b>Consultative</b>	<b>Co-decisive</b>	<b>Solely decisive</b>
<i>Factors:</i>					
Interests	Power	Losing power	Gaining popularity/votes Better decisions/acceptance	-	
	Outcome	Disagreeing	Agreeing		
Ideas	Representative legitimacy	Electoral representation Electoral accountability	Both legitimacies	Descriptive representation Justification and rotation	
	Capacity	Through selection, professionalisation and adversarial exchange	Both forms of capacity	Through epistemic diversity, independence and deliberation	
	Complementarity	Non-complementary	Complementary	Non-complementary	
	Ideology	Conservative	Progressive		
	Socialisation	Long political career		Short political career	
Institutions	Experience with elected institutions	Positive	Problematic	Negative	
	Experience with citizen deliberation	Negative	THM6	Positive	

## *IMPACTS & Political uptake*

- Interview with 91 Belgian MPs
- MPs' discourses depend on:
  - + their evaluation of citizens' competence
  - + their vision of representation
  - + their experience with citizen deliberation
- **THM7:** organizing the first DMPs has changed Brussels MPs' opinions towards DMPs

=> IMPACTS & Policy implementation

## *IMPACTS & Policy implementation*

### **How do Mini-publics Affect Public Policy? Disentangling the Influences of a Mini-public on Public Policy Using the Sequential Impact Matrix Framework**

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#### **ABSTRACT**

Several studies have investigated the impact of mini-publics on public policy. These works do not however integrate the fact that decision-makers have preferences before a minipublic, and that these preferences affect the way a mini-public can impact public policy. The article develops a model to measure the influence of mini-publics on public policy, called the Sequential Impact Matrixes (SIM). This framework distinguishes multiple types of influences that a mini-public can exert on decision-makers following the latter's initial sets of policy preferences. The model suggests that a minipublic can exert five different kinds of influences on decision-makers, namely a continuous, enriching, innovating, shifting, or an inhibiting influence. The framework is applied on the Citizens' Panel 'Make Your Brussels Mobility' and it shows that most of the Panel's recommendations were in line with the decision-makers' initial preferences, whereas influences altering these preferences are rarer.

#### **KEYWORDS**

Deliberative democracy;  
mini-public; public policy;  
policy impact; decision-  
maker

THM8

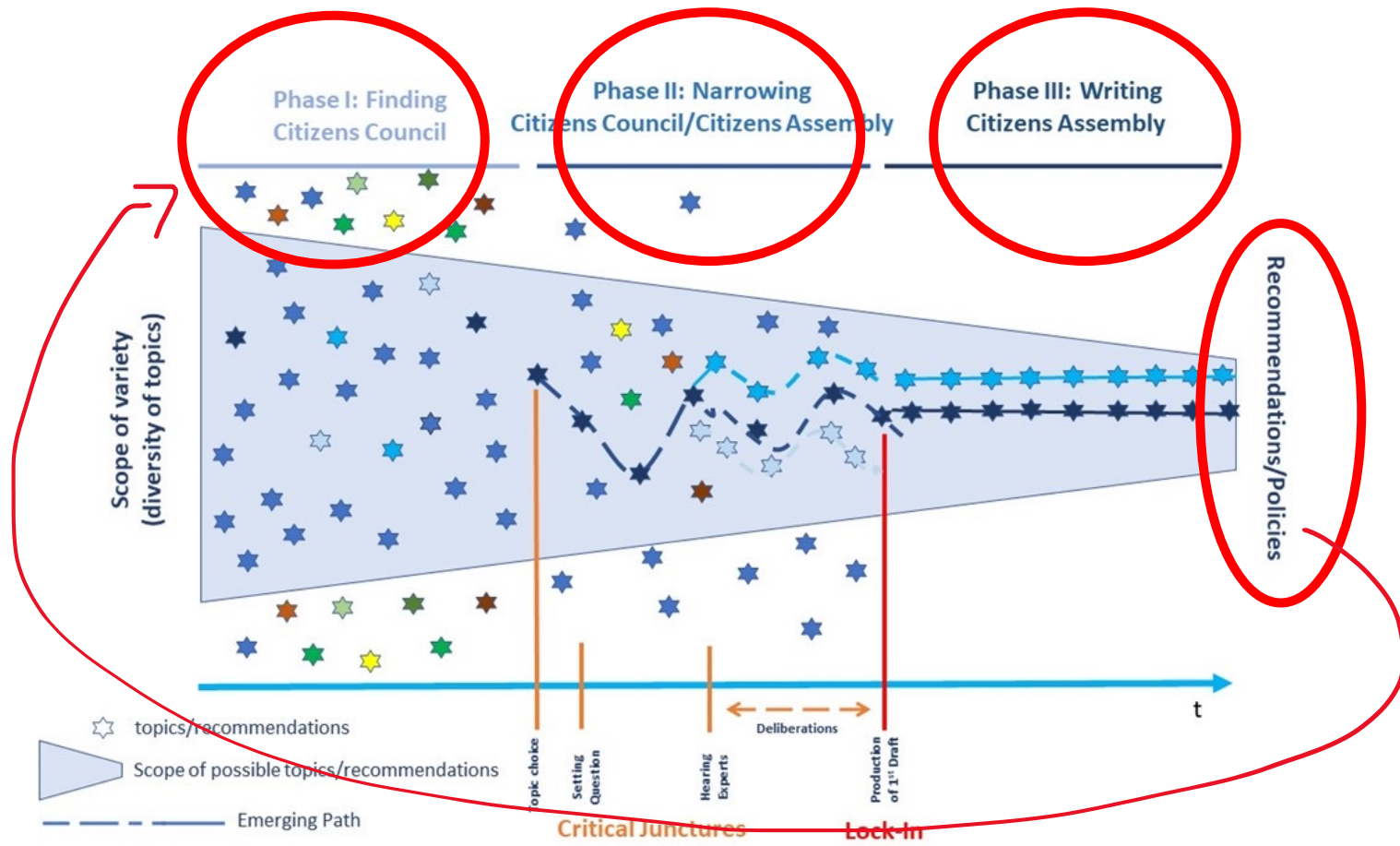


**THM9** 4 Stages of recommendation making and processing  
in the Permanent Citizens' Dialogue**1. Finding Stage: Identifying a topic**  
(BR, citizens council), **proposals via**

- a. public appeal (suggestions need 100 signatures)
- b. suggestions from political factions in parliament
- c. suggestions from within the citizens council (at least 2 promoters)

**4. Receiving and implementing recommendations**  
(parliament/government )**2. Narrowing down the chosen topic**  
(BR, citizens council & BV, citizens assembly)**3. Writing recommendations**  
(BV, citizens assembly)

## The constitution of recommendation paths in the OBM



	Bürgerversammlung 1 - Care	Bürgerversammlung 2 - Inclusion
Full endorsement		· Context
Partial endorsement with minor modifications	· Respect of institutional leeway · Policy not generalisable	
Partial endorsement with major modifications	· Outside scope of competences · Deontological objections	
Exists already positive response	· Improve visibility, accessibility, transparency	
Exists already negative response	/	· Existing policy suffices
Refusal	· Outside scope of competences	· Sufficiently covered by other recommendations · Lack of resource · No task of political institution · Deontological objections

THM10

## *IMPACTS on INSTITUTIONS*

Following the first Walloon mixed deliberative committee: permanent mixed council?

*The best of both worlds*

- Permanent mixed council <sup>THM11</sup>
- Citizens' assemblies
- Mixed deliberative committees
- Regional popular consultations

**What do you  
think?**