



What are Citizens' Juries?

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with special thanks to colleagues Jen Roberts and Oliver Escobar



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What are Citizens' Juries?

Concept origins:

Robert Dahl

'Democracy and its critics' (1989: 340)



“Suppose an advanced democratic country were to create a ‘minipopulus’ consisting of perhaps a thousand citizens randomly selected out of the entire demos.

Its task would be to deliberate, for a year perhaps, on an issue and then to announce its choices...”

What are Citizens' Juries?

“A minipopulus could exist at any level of government—national, state, or local. It could be attended... by an advisory committee of scholars and specialists and by an administrative staff.

It could hold hearings, commission research, and engage in debate and discussion. I see the institution of the minipopulus ... not as a substitute for legislative bodies but as a complement.

Dahl *‘Democracy and its critics’*
(1989:340)



What are Citizens' Juries?

Definition and current context

- Robert Dahl's 'minipopulus', inspired by classic Athenian democracy:

An assembly of citizens, demographically representative of the relevant population, brought together to learn and deliberate on a topic in order to inform public opinion and decision making.

- Blending social science and democratic principles
- Expansion of theories and practices of 'deliberative democracy' (particularly from the 1990s onwards)

What are Citizens' Juries?

Deliberative democracy

- Based on the premise that **collective decisions** should be made through reasoned public discussion, rather than by the sum of individual (private) preferences
 - Political decision-making should be 'talk-centric' not 'vote-centric'



- Goal is “to improve the legitimacy of democracy by making democratic institutions systematically responsive to reasons, not just the weight of numbers or the power of interests” (Parkinson 2012:170)

What are Citizens' Juries?

What is deliberation?

“...communication that induces reflection on preferences, values and interests in a non-coercive fashion” (Mansbridge *et al.*, 2010: 65)

that is:

“...by no force except that of the better argument.”
(Habermas, 1976:108).



What are Citizens' Juries?

Aim of deliberation

- To generate “...reasonable, well-informed opinions in which participants are willing to revise preferences in light of discussion, new information, and claims made by fellow participants.”
- “Although consensus need not be the ultimate aim ... and participants are expected to pursue their interests, an overarching interest in the legitimacy of outcomes (understood as justification to all affected) ideally characterizes deliberation” (Chambers, 2003: 309)
- **Unlikely to be achieved naturally, so artificially created by mini-publics (minipopulus)**



What are Citizens' Juries?

Mini-publics: A public conversation

- A 'mini-public' is a **deliberative forum** where citizens are **selected randomly** to reflect the **diversity** of the **public** affected by the issue, and convened for a period of time sufficient for participants **to form considered opinions and judgements** (MacKenzie and Warren 2012:95)
- Many types, varying from 12 to 500 citizens
 - e.g. **citizens' juries**, consensus conferences, planning cells, deliberative polls, citizen assemblies, etc.

What are Citizens' Juries?

Mini-publics: Key features of the ideal process

- Selection: participants selected randomly or quasi-randomly
- Lowering barriers to participation: e.g. stipend, childcare, transport
- Facilitation: fostering deliberative dynamics and dialogic communication
- Learning phase: participants call in commentators/'witnesses' to present testimonies and evidence: activists, stakeholders, experts, politicians, civil society, business...
- Deliberative phase: participants deliberate in light of evidence and testimonies > re-examining own preferences/views/positions
- Decision-making phase: reasoned conclusions or recommendations made after considered judgement

Main types of mini-publics

	Citizens' Jury	Consensus Conference	Planning Cells	Deliberative Poll	Citizens' Assembly
Participants and length	12-25 2-6 days	10-25 6-8 days	100-500 (in cells of 25) 4 days	130-500 1-2 days	100-160 20-30 days
Task	Learn, deliberate and seek agreement	Learn, deliberate, and seek agreement	Learn, deliberate, record individual preferences	Learn, deliberate and record individual preferences	Learn, deliberate, agree proposal and vote
Output	Collective recommendation; consensus	Collective report; consensus	Preferences aggregated in report, approved by selected participants	Survey results and analysis of preferences/opinion change	Recommendation and document
Cost (£)	16-30K	35-100K	90-120K	200K	300K+

What are Citizens' Juries?

Citizens' Juries



“Enrichment of
representative democracy”
[Gordon Brown (MP), 1998]

- First established in 1971 in the USA, now used all over the world
- 2 – 6 days in length and cost between £16,000 -£30,000
- Typically involve 12-25 citizens selected to be demographically diverse, (i.e. not necessarily representative of a population)
- Learn about and discuss a complex issue of public importance
- Propose a series of recommendations that combine the different points of view
- Recommendations could feed into decision-making

What are Citizens' Juries?

Citizens' Juries



- Ideally used for contested or complex topics, e.g. with:
 - competing vested interests
 - high stakes in the outcome
 - broad impact on communities
 - scientific uncertainty
- Barriers to participation should be lowered to make the process inclusive:
 - recruitment
 - access, location, day
 - participants remunerated for their time

What are Citizens' Juries?

Citizens' Jury Process

Information Phase:

Introduction to the process, information is provided so that participants can learn about the issue in hand

Reflection Phase

Deliberation Phase:

Jurors work together to share perspectives and come up with collective recommendation

What are Citizens' Juries?

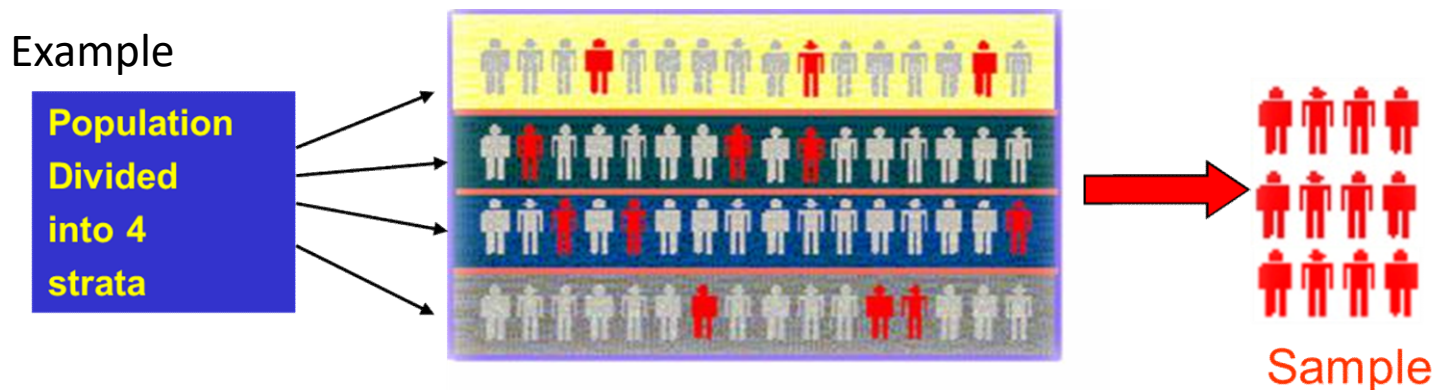
Which citizens should be selected for a citizens' jury?



What are Citizens' Juries?

Selection: Stratified (quasi-) random sampling

- Important to ensure representation of all relevant groups (diversity)
- Divide population into sub-groups of interest; e.g. gender; age-group; diversity of public opinion on topic
- Select cases within each stratum by simple random sampling
- Combine the selections for all strata into one sample



What are Citizens' Juries?

Advantages & Disadvantages

- + High levels of **inclusion**
 - + gives **voice** to 'silent majority', who may not be well informed, articulate, or highly motivated
 - + method encourages jurors to adopt a **citizen perspective**, rather than a self-interested viewpoint
 - + Can create a **long period** of engagement beyond the CJ
 - + Enables members of the public to make **informed decisions** on complicated issues, so that decision making isn't dominated by experts
 - + Gives **rich insight** into how citizens think about issues that affect them
- The findings do **not represent** the opinions of the public
 - Been through the deliberative process (information, evidence and opinions, and reflection)
 - Small group, that is not an entirely representative sample of the public
 - **Expensive** in terms of time and cost
 - **Qualitative** research method – difficult to reflect findings numerically
 - Difficulty **integrating** the recommendations into **policy**

What are Citizens' Juries?

Critical issues at 'micro' level

- Crucial to lower **barriers** to participation
- Participants' **selection**:
 - Statistically representative (large mini-publics) or demographically diverse (small mini-publics)?
 - Demographic AND discursive/attitudinal representation?
- **Design** choices:
 - Who sets the agenda/question to be answered?
 - Who selects the 'witnesses'/'contributors'?
 - Who oversees the process?
- '**Internal inclusion**' (Young 2001) and effectiveness depend on skilful facilitation

What are Citizens' Juries?

Critical issues at 'macro' level

- **Institutional fit**

- Using mini-publics *ad hoc*, or embedding them in the institutional system

- Making deliberative democracy viable requires overcoming the problem of **scale**

- Mini-publics offer alternative division of democratic labour
- But can they function as '**trusted proxies**' for those who don't participate? (Warren 2009); 'vicarious deliberation' (Gastil et al 2014) => more research needed

- Mini-publics challenge the traditional roles of (and require new mindsets and practices from):

- mainstream **media**
- **politicians**
- **experts** and **advocates**

What are Citizens' Juries?

Example CJs

Recommend exploring participedia: <http://participedia.net>



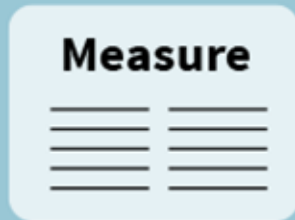
What are Citizens' Juries?

Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review

Citizens' Initiative Review: *How It Works*



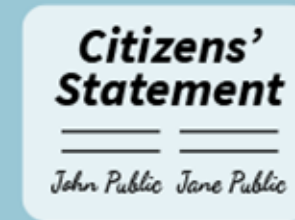
For each measure on the ballot, a panel of **20 randomly selected and demographically diverse voters** is assembled.



Over the multi-day review, the panel **hears directly from campaigns** for and against the measure and calls upon policy experts.



The panel drafts a **Citizens' Statement** highlighting the most important findings. The statement is provided to voters as a fact-based resource at election time.



What are Citizens' Juries?

Citizens' Juries on Wind Farms in Scotland: 2013-2015

Two overall **research aims**:

- Understand **how deliberative processes can be used to engage citizens on complex public issues.**
- Learn about **citizens' views on on-shore wind farms before and after the process** (i.e. having had the opportunity to learn and deliberate on the topic).

An invitation to the report...

<http://tinyurl.com/citizens-juries>



What are Citizens' Juries?

Our Voice Citizens' Jury on Shared Decision-Making: 2018-2019

The aim of the jury was to produce a set of recommendations for the Chief Medical Officer in Scotland that answer the following question:

"What should shared decision making look like and what needs to be done for this to happen?"

An invitation to the report...

http://scottishhealthcouncil.org/our_voice/citizens_jury.aspx#.XmZ1c6j7SUK



What are citizens' juries?

Thank You

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Further information:

- Scottish Health Council will share these slides on the Healthcare Improvement Scotland: Community Engagement website
- Short video about mixed methods – citizens' juries & surveys: <https://www.sgsss.ac.uk/methods-resource/surveys-and-citizens-juries/>



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