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RESEARCH ARTICLE

Looking in from the Outside: How Do Invited But Not Selected Citizens Perceive the Legitimacy of a Minipublic?

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Deliberative minipublics are often critiqued for being disconnected with mass democracy. This is problematic from the perspective of legitimacy. If ordinary citizens are not aware of the existence of minipublics, how can citizens consent to the process and outcomes of these processes? One possible design innovation is to widen the pool of citizens randomly invited to take part in minipublics. While not all invited individuals will be selected to join minipublics, inviting a large pool of people, at the very least, may trigger their curiosity to closely observe and scrutinise the debates and recommendations of their fellow citizens.

Our article examines the viability of this design feature using the case study of the citizen panel 'Make Your Brussels – Mobility'. We focus on a group of 336 people who accepted the invitation to participate in the citizen panel but were not among the 40 people selected to participate. We have two major findings. First, despite their initial interest in taking part in a minipublic, these citizens did not follow up on their interest in the minipublic. Second, these citizens do not perceive citizen panels as capable of delivering consensual outcomes. We conclude the article by drawing out implications for deliberative practice, especially in enhancing the legitimacy of minipublics.

Keywords: random selection; citizen selection; legitimacy; deliberative democracy; minipublic

Introduction

The growing literature on minipublics has generated debates about the extent to which these democratic innovations can be considered legitimate. While some studies find that participants in minipublics view the process as legitimate, other scholars argue that these processes continue to suffer from legitimacy deficits because they are disconnected from mass democracy (Chambers 2009; Lafont 2015; Papadopoulos & Warin 2007; Parkinson 2006). With a few exceptions, the wider citizenry is often unaware of the existence of minipublics. This is problematic because, as Lafont (2015; 2020) suggests, minipublics serve as shortcuts that bypass deliberations in the broader public sphere, which is incompatible with deliberative democracy's conception of legitimacy.

One way of addressing this deficit is to generate wider awareness of the existence of a minipublic. From a design perspective, this can be done by deepening the pool of citizens randomly invited to join a minipublic and, in so doing, generate interest among the invited population to learn about and monitor the conduct and recommendations of these small-scale processes of democratic deliberation. We think this is a plausible strategy to connect minipublics to mass democracy. While not all invited individuals will be selected to join the minipublics, inviting a large pool of people, at the very least, may trigger 'invited but not selected' citizens' (or non-participants') curiosity to closely observe or scrutinise the deliberations and recommendations of their fellow citizens. That way, minipublics are not islands of deliberation isolated from the wider public sphere. Instead, they can be subject to the democratic oversight of fellow citizens who do not take part in them.

This article examines the viability of this design feature. We investigate how citizens who were invited to join a minipublic and expressed interest in being part of it perceive the legitimacy of the minipublic. We argue that this group of non-participants is of special interest when it comes to investigating ways to connect the minipublic and the broader public. If this specific sub-group of the population which is aware of the minipublic closely follows its process and outcomes and perceives it as legitimate, then this might suggest that raising awareness of the minipublic by widening the pool of invited participants could stimulate its legitimacy in the eyes of the population who did not participate.

Our investigation is contextualized using the case study of the citizen panel 'Make Your Brussels – Mobility' (see below for more information about this panel). We focus

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on a group of 336 people who accepted an invitation to participate in the citizen panel but were not among the 40 people selected to participate. Based on survey results among 209 out of the 336 non-participants, we investigate whether these people who were aware of the citizen panel also followed its work and whether this has implications for their perception of the panel's legitimacy.

This article starts by defining minipublics and then presents the literature about people's awareness of these deliberative processes and how they perceive their legitimacy. In this framework, we describe the case under study, the citizen panel 'Make Your Brussels – Mobility', as well as its participants and the respondents to our survey. The results are then presented and discussed along three dimensions of legitimacy: input, throughput and output. Our study reveals two main findings. First, awareness of the existence of the minipublic among non-participants did not trigger subsequent attentiveness to this process and its results, thereby generating a lack of knowledge and understanding of the process among our respondents. Second, non-participants do not perceive that the process of such a panel is able to deliver consensual outcomes and make its participants move beyond their individual interests. We conclude our paper by drawing out the implications of our findings for the practice of democratic deliberation.

Awareness, Interest and Legitimacy

Deliberative minipublics are gatherings of people representing a microcosm of society to deliberate on a particular subject for one or several days to formulate policy proposals (Grönlund et al. 2014). They aim to foster inclusive, respectful and informed exchanges of diverging and reasoned arguments (Grönlund et al. 2014). Because not all citizens in mass democracies can take part in minipublics, a random sample of the broader population is drawn to constitute the minipublic (Fishkin 2009; Ryan & Smith 2014). There are two reasons for this. First, random sampling gives all affected citizens an equal chance to be selected into the minipublic (Dahl 1989). Second, random selection could – at least theoretically – reach traditionally excluded groups (Caluwaerts & Reuchamps 2012; Fung & Wright 2003). The resulting diversity from random selection enables participants to hear diverging opinions, which enriches the quality of deliberation (Caluwaerts & Reuchamps 2014).

The literature has made progress in ascertaining the basis of minipublics' legitimacy among participants. Perceived diversity and effectiveness in providing a forum for a deliberative exchange of ideas tend to be viewed as legitimate justifications for their recommendations to weigh on public decisions (Caluwaerts & Reuchamps 2018; Vrydagh et al. 2020). However, securing legitimacy among the panel of participants is insufficient. To secure legitimacy within the wider political system, a minipublic's recommendations should be justified beyond its participants (Caluwaerts & Reuchamps 2015).

There are two conditions necessary for minipublics to secure legitimacy in the political system. First, people who do not participate (non-participants) in a minipublic must be aware of the minipublic's existence. Second, non-participants should have the opportunity to scrutinise the deliberations and recommendations of minipublics before they can endorse them. Achieving these conditions poses a challenge for deliberative democrats. Indeed, minipublics often fail to go beyond the enclosed space of their deliberations and reach out to the wider citizenry (Caluwaerts & Reuchamps 2018; Fournier et al. 2011). There are, of course, exceptions, as in the case of the Oregon Citizens' Initiative, which has been made visible to the voting population (Gastil et al. 2018).

Meanwhile, within the scholarly literature there have been attempts to examine how the wider population can gain knowledge about minipublics. These results were either obtained from an experiment (Ingham & Levin 2018) or a survey (Cutler et al 2008; Pow et al. 2020) in which academic researchers artificially provided information about the minipublic. Results show that once they are aware of how the minipublic functions and how it is composed, citizens tend to trust it as a legitimate policy-making body. It is especially the highly deliberative character of the process and the fact that it might gather people 'just like them' that boosts citizens' perception of the legitimacy of minipublics.

Our article aims to extend these developments in the scholarly literature by focusing on a 'real-world' minipublic. We focus on citizens who were invited to join a minipublic, expressed interest in being part of it, but were eventually not selected by the organizers to participate. We think this group is an important subject for investigation because it represents citizens who showed initial interest in being part of this democratic innovation. Through this group, we can investigate whether interest in taking part in a minipublic leads to an interest in learning more about the process and outcomes of the minipublic, even among those who were not ultimately part of it. This, we think, can also help us understand how non-participants perceive the legitimacy of the process as they look in from the outside.

This scholarly interest has clear implications for deliberative practice. If our sub-group of non-participants shows interest in monitoring the process and outcomes of the minipublic and perceives the process as legitimate, then we have an empirical basis to make a case for a design innovation that oversamples or expands the number of citizens randomly invited to join a minipublic.

Minipublics and Legitimacy

Before we move to our empirical case, we would first like to discuss how we define legitimacy in our work. Following deliberative scholars who have examined the legitimacy of minipublics (Bekkers & Edwards 2007; Caluwaerts & Reuchamps 2016; Eerola & Reuchamps 2016; Edwards 2007; Geissel 2011; Geissel & Gherghina 2016; Suiter & Reuchamps 2016), we use the three dimensions of input, throughput and output as a structuring device to make sense of our findings. Originally rooted in the seminal work of Scharpf (1970) and Schmidt (2013), we investigate how people's awareness of the minipublic's existence relates to their perception of each dimension, which we define as follows.

1. Input legitimacy rests on the inclusiveness of the minipublic. Since not all those who are subject to the decision can deliberate about it, the minipublic has to encompass the diversity of opinions, ideas and backgrounds present in the wider public. Making sure that all opinions are represented not only fosters more legitimate (Thompson 2008) but also better decisions, as it is only when all ideas are heard that the best one can be identified (Caluwaerts & Reuchamps 2015).
2. Throughput legitimacy refers to the ability of the procedures to guide the deliberations, to foster openness towards the others' arguments, and even to persuade participants in the light of better arguments (Bekkers & Edward 2007), thereby preventing the participants from entrenching their positions or trying to advance their own interests. Throughput legitimacy relies on the presence of professional facilitation, the independence of participants and the provision of balanced information (Ryan & Smith 2014).
3. Output legitimacy, as understood here, rests on two elements (Jacquet et al. 2016). On the one hand, it has to generate public endorsement of its results. On the other hand, it has to show responsiveness and accountability, that is, the results it produces have to provide an answer to the problem that was initially identified.

Before moving to the description of the case, it is important to note that minipublics need not (or cannot) simultaneously score highly on all three dimensions of legitimacy because there are often trade-offs (Caluwaerts & Reuchamps 2015) and because minipublics serve different purposes (e.g. information-giving, consultation, evaluation, decision-making, etc.).

The Different Types of Non-Participants

In June 2017, the Parliament of the Brussels Capital Region in Belgium organized a citizen panel about mobility issues in and around Brussels. The 'Make Your Brussels – Mobility' panel operated within the framework of the new 'Good Move' mobility plan of the region.[1] The project shows that the parliament, particularly its president, was willing to allow a panel of 40 randomly selected citizens to not only gain awareness of the region's mobility plans, but to gather their opinions and ideas on the topic. The citizen panel was invited to reflect upon the following questions: 'In what kind of neighbourhood do you see yourself living by 2030, and how do you want to travel?' Together, the participants decided to dig deeper into five subtopics: (1) communication, (2) sharing the public space, (3) the 'mobility card',[2] (4) mobility policies, and (5) easing the city's traffic.

The citizen panel met four times in the Parliament of the Brussels Capital Region, on 21 and 28 October (morning) and on 18 and 19 November (whole day). All the deliberations of the panel were moderated by trained facilitators and went from small-group discussions to plenary sessions. Insights from experts and stakeholders were also provided. Several votes structured the deliberations to select demands and practical recommendations, which were then submitted to the whole group of panellists for approval. At the end of its four meetings, the panel submitted to the parliament a 'citizen resolution'[3] containing a list of recommendations around the five subtopics. The citizen resolution was handed over to a special parliamentary commission in December 2017. The commission adopted a parliamentary resolution supporting the citizen resolution and asked the regional parliament to consider it.[4] The Minister of Mobility was subsequently invited to the parliament to discuss the citizen resolution. Finally, in April 2019, the government's mobility plan was adopted in the first lecture by the parliament and is now being implemented.

The recruitment process started with 8,000 randomly selected residents of the Brussels Region (see **Figure 1**). They received an official letter from the President of the Brussels Parliament. Invited residents were asked to communicate their willingness to participate in the event to its organizer: an organization called 'Participation and Citizenship' (PartiCitiz). Among these 8,000 randomly selected people, 377 answered positively. This 5% response rate is approximately the same rate we find for other participatory experiences in Belgium (Jacquet 2017, 2019; Reuchamps 2011, 2013). To select the 40 participants of the panel, stratified random sampling was used to represent the diversity of the population. This means that it accounted for several criteria such as sex, age, level of education, professional background, composition of the family, nationality, most common means of transport and municipality.

The data in the next section present the results of an online survey conducted in June 2018 among the 336 remaining people who agreed to participate but were

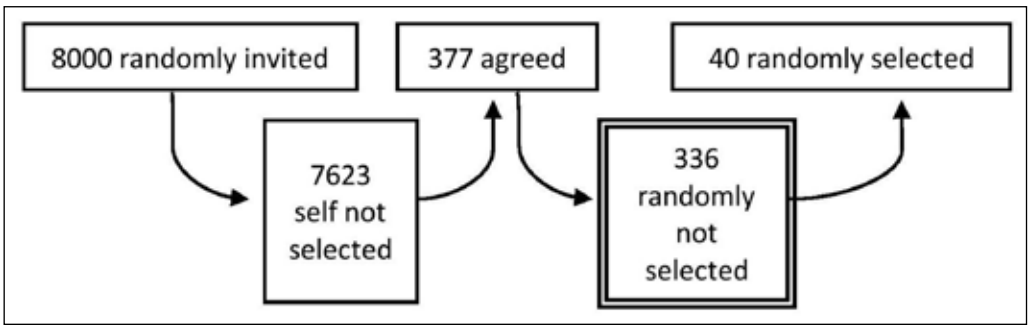

Figure 1: The recruitment process.

eventually not selected to compose the final panel (referred to as the 'non-participants'). In the end, 209 out of the 336 respondents initially surveyed answered the questionnaire, which leaves us with a response rate of 62.2%.[5]

In terms of sex, the respondents were split almost evenly between men and women. In terms of socio-demographic background, the sample of respondents (see Tables A.1 to A.3 in the appendix) has a clear and significant over-representation of highly educated and older people in our survey group. Although random sampling aims to reach a diverse group of people, there is no obligation for them to accept the invitation. This conforms to the trend that younger and less educated people are less likely to accept the invitation to participate (Karjalainen & Rapeli 2015). This is why the organizers proceeded to a second stage of random sampling to gather a diverse group of citizens to participate in deliberation. The first two findings of this paper thus confirm the need to combine random sampling with stratification and the specific nature of those who respond positively to an invitation sent through random sampling. The following question is therefore twofold: how do these people perceive themselves, and how do they perceive the citizen panel despite not being selected to participate?

Self-Perception of the Non-Participants

The respondents to our survey who are among the 336 non-participants not only differ in terms of education and age but also in their self-perception (**Table 1**). There is a strong feeling of self-confidence in their knowledge about political issues, particularly in relation to those regarding mobility. 81.4% of the respondents claim they have quite a good understanding of the mobility issues that Brussels faces. Also, 59.3% of them consider that they are better informed than most people about government and societal issues. Moreover, they have a pre-existing interest in citizen participation (**Table 2**). 63.6% of them believe that half of our representative assemblies should be composed of randomly selected citizens. 73.2% of them think that citizens should meet again to discuss political matters, and 73.6% would agree to participate in such a process if they were invited again. Hence, these people have a positive stance towards deliberative and participatory practices. However, does a positive stance imply follow-up attention to the minipublic and support for its recommendations?

The Legitimacy Perceptions of Non-Participants

One of the normative arguments backing the organization of minipublics and their linkage with the broader population is the fact that they could potentially stimulate debates in the broader public and even eventually help citizens to position themselves on the issue discussed (see e.g. Mackenzie & Warren 2012; Ingham & Levin 2018). This potential rests on two elements: first, citizens have to follow the process, be knowledgeable of how the minipublic functions and the decisions it produces. Second, citizens have to perceive the minipublic as legitimate, in the sense that they think decisions are reached based on fairness and mutual consent. Otherwise, citizens cannot use the outcomes of a minipublic as proxies for their position on the issue.

To investigate how citizens who are aware of the process evaluate it, our analysis relies on their perceptions of the input (composition of the panel), throughput (perception of how the deliberations were conducted), and the output (quality of and support for the recommendations it produced). Depending on these results, we will investigate the extent to which being aware of the existence of a minipublic can generate support for its results, thereby studying the legitimacy upon which a minipublic rests. If people who are aware of the process tend to trust the participants, consider them legitimate and endorse the results, then this awareness should lead to the broad support a minipublic needs to build its legitimacy to determine political decisions. Awareness would thus be the key to generate support for the minipublic's process, participants and outcomes and thereby allow it to contribute to the overall deliberative

Table 1: Internal political efficacy of the non-participants.[6]

	Disagree	Median option	Agree	Missing
I think I am better informed about societal issues and politics than most people	20.6% (43)	19.6% (41)	59.3% (124)	0.5% (1)
I think I understand the mobility issues Brussels is confronted with pretty well	10.5% (22)	5.7% (12)	81.4% (170)	2.4% (5)

Table 2: Support for citizen panels among the non-participants.[7]

	Disagree	Median option	Agree	Missing
If I am randomly selected again to participate in such a panel in the future, I would agree to participate	3.4% (7)	4.8% (10)	73.6% (154)	18.2% (38)
We should gather citizens again to discuss societal issues, like we did with the citizen panel	3.4% (7)	6.2% (13)	73.2% (153)	17.2% (36)
Parliaments should be composed of elected representatives and randomly selected citizens instead of only elected representatives	23.4% (49)	10.5% (22)	63.6% (133)	2.4% (5)

quality of the system by fuelling it with largely supported recommendations. However, as we will see in this paper, awareness is not synonymous with follow-up or knowledge of the process. If our respondents are aware of the existence of the process, they are not necessarily knowledgeable about precisely how it functioned, how it was composed, or what sort of impact its results were deemed to have. On the one hand, this lack of knowledge explains the high rates of missing and median options in the following tables. On the other hand, it encourages us to interpret our results cautiously, keeping in mind that respondents might use feelings to position themselves, and not thorough assessments based on the actual presence or absence of the elements expressed in the following questions.

General feelings towards the minipublic

Table 3 shows that our respondents have warm feelings towards the minipublic they were invited to: 59.3% of them have positive feelings about the process, 62.2% said they are satisfied with the process and 62.7% said they were satisfied with the organization of the process. However, approximately 20% of them abstained from answering the questions. This high rate of non-responses is even more significant when more precise questions about the process were asked. As we will see in the following sections, this shows that our respondents, despite being aware of the process, do not seem to have followed its work closely and therefore tend to find it difficult to precisely rate this minipublic.

Input legitimacy

First, the legitimacy of a minipublic can come from its composition, from the trust and the legitimacy people assign to the participants of the minipublic based on their characteristics. In this case, as we can see in **Table 4**, 39.7% of our respondents think that the panel accurately represents the diversity found in the broader Brussels population, while only 8.6% think it does not. Moreover, 59.8% of them think the participants cover a large diversity of opinions about the issue discussed. More importantly, they seem to consider the participants as legitimate actors to contribute to public decisions about mobility issues. 50.6% of them believe that the participants are no less legitimate than political actors in expressing their views on mobility policies. Lastly, a majority of the respondents who answered the question think the participants have enough expertise on the subject to express their opinions and ideas about it.

Throughput legitimacy

Diversity is not sufficient to ensure trust in the minipublic and its recommendations. This diversity must be articulated in deliberations that aim to formulate recommendations to enhance the common good. In other words, the deliberations among the participants have to be based on the public interest, not on each participant's individual interests, and reflect a consensus among the participants in order to foster trust among the wider public (MacKenzie & Warren 2012). In this case, the respondents do not seem to believe that the participants have the ability to come up with mutually acceptable recommendations to advance the common good. As shown in **Table 5**, 47.8% of the respondents think that the participants are only defending their personal interests without trying to advance the common good. Also, 41.7% think that the participants do not listen to one another but only try to promote their own opinions. Moreover, they seem to think that participants have strong opinions on the subject. They seem convinced that the participants have different opinions, and that they are not afraid of defending them: so much that it would be almost impossible to find solutions on which everyone agrees. When it comes to the ability of participants to change their mind in light of better arguments, the respondents are quite unsure: 34% of them answered with the median option and 6.7% abstained, while the percentage of people agreeing and disagreeing is almost the same.

Table 3: Evaluation of the Brussels Mobility panel among the non-participants.[8]

	Disagree	Median option	Agree	Missing
Overall, my feelings about the citizen panel are positive	5.7% (12)	15.8% (33)	59.3% (124)	19.1% (40)
I have positive views of the process of the citizen panel	18.2% (38)	/	62.2% (130)	19.6% (41)
I have positive views of the organization of the citizen panel	17.2% (36)	/	62.7% (131)	20.1% (42)

Table 4: Perceptions of input legitimacy among the non-participants.[9]

	Disagree	Median option	Agree	Missing
I think the participants of the citizen panel accurately represent the diversity of the Brussels population	8.6% (18)	33.5% (70)	39.7% (83)	18.2% (38)
The participants have different opinions about mobility in Brussels	4.3% (9)	29.2% (61)	59.8% (125)	6.7% (14)
The participants of the citizen panel do not have enough expertise to express their views on mobility issues	43.0% (90)	25.8% (54)	13.0% (27)	18.2% (38)
I think the participants have as much legitimacy as elected representatives to express their views about mobility issues	11.0% (23)	10.0% (21)	50.6% (106)	28.2% (59)

Table 5: Perceptions of the deliberative quality among the non-participants.[10]

	Disagree	Median option	Agree	Missing
The participants do not pay attention to what others say. They just came to defend their own opinions	25.8% (54)	25.4% (53)	41.7% (87)	7.2% (15)
The participants focused on their individual interest rather than on the common good	22.0% (46)	23.4% (49)	47.8% (100)	6.7% (14)
The participants are sincere. They do not hide their true opinions	12.9% (27)	23.9% (50)	56.5% (118)	6.7% (14)
It is difficult, maybe even impossible, to find solutions on which everyone agrees	14.8% (31)	17.7% (37)	60.8% (127)	6.7% (14)
The participants did not change their minds, even if the others presented good arguments	29.7% (62)	34.0% (71)	29.6% (62)	6.7% (14)

Table 6: Perceptions of output legitimacy among the non-participants.[11]

	Disagree	Median option	Agree	Missing
Even if I did not participate, I followed the work of the citizen panel closely, for instance through the media, social networks, friends, and/or the parliament website.	51.2% (107)	12.0% (25)	29.2% (61)	7.7% (16)
The citizen panel forgot important issues when it comes to mobility in Brussels	30.1% (63)	27.3% (57)	23.4% (49)	19.1% (40)
I totally agree with the recommendations made by the citizen panel	13.9% (29)	21.0% (44)	45.4% (95)	19.6% (41)
I think the majority of the citizens agree with the recommendations made by the citizen panel	9.6% (20)	24.4% (51)	46.4% (97)	19.6% (41)
I think good decisions were made by the citizen panel	4.3% (9)	20.1% (42)	54.1% (113)	21.5% (45)
I have positive views of the results of the citizen panel	17.7% (37)	/	60.8% (127)	21.5% (45)
The recommendations of the citizen panel should be turned into laws	10.5% (22)	17.2% (36)	52.6% (110)	19.6% (41)

Table 7: Follow-up attention to the minipublic among the non-participants.

	Yes	No	Missing
Have you read the final report?	30.6% (64)	62.2% (130)	7.2% (15)

Output legitimacy

Our results (see **Table 6** and **7**) show that 51.2% of the respondents did not follow the outcomes of the minipublic in the press or elsewhere, while 62.2% of them did not read the final report. Also, as in the previous sections, when it comes to assessing features of the minipublic or its outcomes, many respondents (approximately 20%) abstained or answered with the median option. This could stem from the weak follow-up attention and consequent lack of knowledge of the results among respondents (**Table 7**). **Table 6** is thus to be interpreted in the light of this high abstention and median response rate.

As shown in **Figure 2**, when respondents do position themselves on the outcomes of the minipublic, they are generally supportive. 60.8% of them are satisfied with the results, and 52.6% of them even think they should be turned into laws. Moreover, they think the majority of the population could support these recommendations and they do not think that the panel forgot important issues when it comes to mobility. Also, all items show a high non-positioning rate among the respondents, which could again be a consequence of the low attention they devoted to following the outcomes of the minipublic in the press or elsewhere.

> 1= Creating a digital platform gathering all the information about public transport (timetables, routes, prices, etc.)
> 2= Reducing the number of parking spaces in favour of a better public space
> 3= Obliging all public transport operators to use the MOBIB card to provide their services
> 4= Creating a central authority in charge of coordinating and supervising all mobility actors
> 5= Implementing a toll for citizens who do not live in Brussels and using its profits to invest in better public transport infrastructure

To sum up, the support among non-participants for the recommendations issued by the panel 'Make Your Brussels – Mobility' cannot be attributed to their greater knowledge or follow-up attention to the process or the outcomes it produced. Their initial awareness did not turn into greater interest in the work of the minipublic.

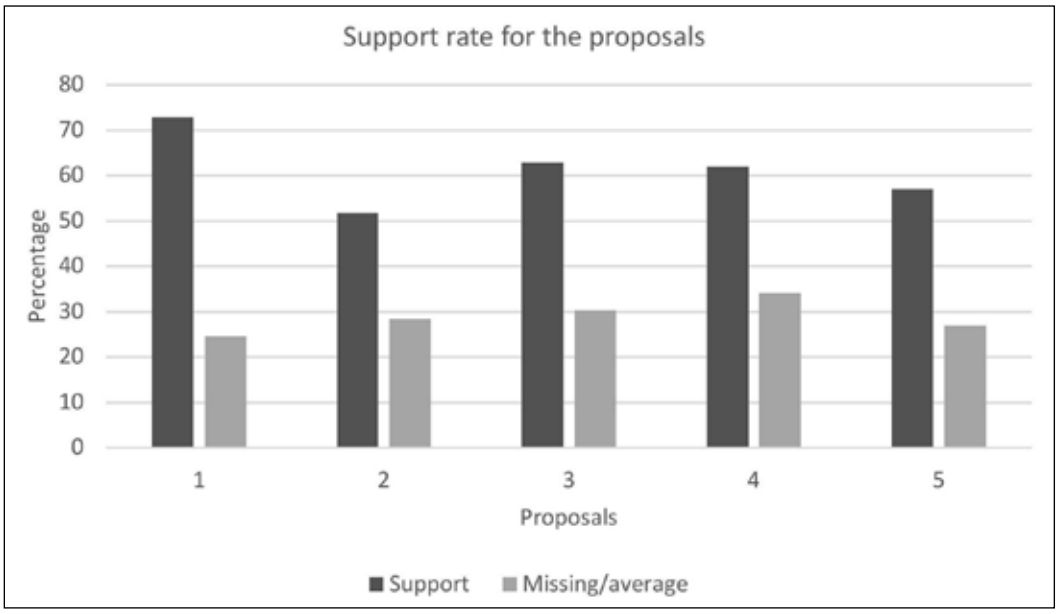

Figure 2: Support for the panel's proposals among the non-participants.[12]

Neither does awareness lead to stronger support for the recommendations made by the minipublic. Therefore, awareness among non-participants does not necessarily support the legitimacy of the minipublic in making public decisions, because awareness does not seem to increase the support for the process and outcomes of the minipublic.

Discussion

This paper aimed to examine the link between the awareness and perceived legitimacy of a minipublic among a specific subset of the wider public, namely those who were invited but not selected to partake in a minipublic. The interest of this group lies in its members' awareness of the minipublic's existence. Since they are aware of it, and more importantly were interested to take part in it, we proposed that they would be more likely to have followed its processes and developed opinions about it. Based on this assumption, we suggested that we might use the oversampling of participants to expand awareness about minipublics in the broader population, in order to eventually trigger support for them and their results among the broader population, hence securing their legitimacy to weigh on public decisions. However, our findings tend to limit the desirability of this suggestion for two reasons.

First, we assumed that awareness of the existence of such a minipublic would be key. Subsequently, this awareness would lead to support for the minipublic's recommendations. However, our results show that a majority of the non-participants did not closely follow the work of the minipublic, despite indicating their willingness to participate when they received the invitation from the President of the Parliament of the Brussels Capital Region. One could speculate that this attitude can be explained by the disappointment they felt because they were not selected to actually participate in the minipublic. Furthermore, non-participants who followed the process and results of the minipublic did not express greater support for its recommendations. Hence, the assumption that awareness would go hand in hand with support does not seem to hold. Based on our exploratory results on this particular section of the population, we assume that awareness is insufficient to trigger interest and legitimacy.

Second, previous empirical studies have shown that minipublics can be used by the wider population as trusted information proxies to debate and position oneself on the issue under discussion. However, our results show that this is unlikely, at least in this particular case. In the first place, there was a lack of knowledge and follow-up attention to the process among our respondents: they were not aware of how the participants deliberated, the arguments exchanged, and the grounds on which recommendations were accepted or rejected. Consequently, this made them less likely to use the minipublic as a source of information or a basis for broader deliberations about mobility. Moreover, not only did they lack knowledge about the process, but they also seemed to have a low opinion of the aspects building its legitimacy: almost half of our respondents believed that participants would focus on their individual interests instead of advancing the common good. Moreover, more than two thirds believed it is 'difficult or maybe even impossible' to make mutually acceptable decisions. Therefore, it is hard to envision how they could trust the minipublic to deliver consensual recommendations they could use to position themselves on an issue.

What are the implications for deliberative practice? Our findings suggest that broadening the pool of randomly invited citizens may be useful in generating awareness about the minipublic but it is insufficient to ensure citizens' close attention to the conduct and outcome of minipublics' recommendations. A mere invitation to participate therefore does not create a ripple effect of interest and trust in the proceedings and outcomes of a minipublic among the wider public.

Instead, our suggestion to secure the legitimacy of a minipublic and support for its recommendations among initially aware and interested citizens is to significantly publicize the process, its outcomes and its role in

policy-making, and to actively involve citizens beyond its participants not only as spectators but also as active participants in the minipublic. More generally, channels of communication might be created to directly connect the minipublic (and its discussions) to the wider public (through media campaigns advertising the project, or through livestreams of the minipublics' debates, among others). More interestingly, this greater communication might be organized the other way around, from the general public to the minipublic. This could allow the broader population to directly fuel the minipublic debates by making comments, bringing additional ideas or even voting on the recommendations produced by the minipublic through an internet platform. Eventually, a greater part of the population would not only be aware of the minipublic, but also included in it, thereby increasing its outreach and legitimacy as the quantity and diversity of voices it encompasses grows.

Conclusion

This article investigated an often overlooked category of individuals in the study of deliberative democracy: those who were invited but not selected to take part in minipublics. Our study finds that people who were invited to, and hence made aware of the existence of, a minipublic do not closely follow its process and recommendations nor positively evaluate the different aspects of the minipublic.

One direction for future research is to analyse factors that could strengthen the link between the minipublic and its non-participants, whether these are invited but not selected citizens or members of the wider public. Developments in institutionalized forms of deliberative democracy such as the Ostbelgien Modell (Niessen & Reuchamps 2020) and the mixed parliamentary committees in Brussels and in Wallonia (Reuchamps 2020) are beginning to investigate these possibilities. Only then will we be able to grasp the levers of the possible connection between a minipublic, its results and the wider public.

Appendix: Tables

(Some respondents did not indicate their age, sex or education level when answering the questionnaire, which explains why some tables add up to 206 or 204 instead of the expected 209.)

Table A.1: Samples disaggregated by sex.

Sex			
	Men	**Women**	**Total**
Brussels' population	586,625 (48.9%)	612,101 (51.1%)	1,198,726
Self-selected drawn from 1st stage random sampling	202 (53.6%)	175 (46.4%)	377
Participants drawn from 2nd stage random sampling	21 (52.5%)	19 (47.5%)	40
Respondents to our survey	104 (50.5%)	102 (49.5%)	206

χ^2 (1, n=246) = .003, N.S. between the three samples

Table A.2: Samples disaggregated by age group.

Age						
	17–24	**25–34**	**35–50**	**51–65**	**66+**	**Total**
Brussels' population	108,352 (11.7%)	204,444 (22.0%)	267,194 (28.7%)	192,057 (20.7%)	157,682 (17.0%)	929,729
Self-selected drawn from 1st stage random sampling	9 (2.4%)	31 (8.2%)	118 (31.3%)	130 (34.5%)	89 (23.6%)	377
Participants drawn from 2nd stage random sampling	5 (12.5%)	10 (25.0%)	12 (30.0%)	6 (15.0%)	7 (17.5%)	40
Respondents to our survey	0 (0.0%)	12 (8.9%)	56 (27.4%)	80 (39.2%)	56 (27.4%)	204

χ^2 (4, n=246) = 39,658, p<.001 between the three samples

Table A.3: Samples disaggregated by educational attainment.

Education				
	Primary	**Secondary**	**Higher**	**Total**
Brussels' population	348,181 (36.8%)	255,389 (27.0%)	342,689 (36.2%)	946,259
Self-selected drawn from 1st stage random sampling	9 (2.4%)	70 (18.6%)	298 (79.0%)	377
Participants drawn from 2nd stage random sampling	5 (12.5%)	20 (50.0%)	15 (37.5%)	40
Respondents to our survey	1 (3.8%)	24 (11.6%)	181 (87.9%)	206

χ^2 (2, n=246) = 52,490, p<.001 between the three samples

Notes

[1] The Brussels Parliament dedicated a page of its website to this citizen panel: http://www.parlement.brussels/panel_citoyen_fr/ (last accessed on 23 October 2019).

[2] The mobility card, MOBIB, is used in Brussels for public transportation.

[3] The content of the citizen resolution is available on the Parliament website: http://www.parlement.brussels/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Résolution-citoyenne-191117_FR.pdf (last accessed on 23 October 2019).

[4] The resolution of the special committee can be found here: http://www.weblex.irisnet.be/data/crb/doc/2017-18/134912/images.pdf (accessed on 30 October 2018).

[5] We recognise that one limitation of this study is the lack of survey data that can allow us to compare the views of non-participants to the views of the wider population. As the next section demonstrates, respondents of our survey are highly educated and politically active and interested citizens which might make their perceptions significantly different from those of the wider population.

[6] On both items, respondents were asked to position themselves on these statements using a scale from 0 (completely disagree) to 10 (completely agree).

[7] On the first item, respondents were asked to position themselves on this statement using a scale from 1 to 5: 1 (completely disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (agree), 5 (completely agree).

On the two last items, respondents were asked to position themselves on these statements using a scale from 0 (completely disagree) to 10 (completely agree).

[8] On the first item, respondents were asked to give their feelings about the panel as a whole and its process on a five-point scale: 1 (very negative), 2 (rather negative), 3 (neither negative nor positive), 4 (rather positive), 5 (absolutely positive).

On the last two items, respondents were asked to give their satisfaction with the results of the citizen panel on a four-point scale: 1 (not at all satisfied), 2 (rather unsatisfied), 3 (rather satisfied), 4 (absolutely satisfied).

[9] On the first and last item, respondents were asked to position themselves on this statement using a scale from 1 to 5: 1 (completely disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (agree), 5 (completely agree).

On the second item, respondents were asked to position themselves on these statements using a scale from 0 (completely disagree) to 10 (completely agree).

[10] On all these items, respondents were asked to position themselves on these statements using a scale from 0 (completely disagree) to 10 (completely agree).

[11] On items 2, 3, 4, 5 and 7, respondents were asked to position themselves on this statement using a scale from 1 to 5: 1 (completely disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neither agree nor disagree), 4 (agree), 5 (completely agree).

On the first item, respondents were asked to position themselves on these statements using a scale from 0 (completely disagree) to 10 (completely agree).

On the sixth item, respondents were asked to give their satisfaction with the results of the citizen panel on a four-point scale: 1 (not at all satisfied), 2 (rather unsatisfied), 3 (rather satisfied), 4 (absolutely satisfied).

[12] Respondents had to indicate to what extent they were favorable to those reforms, using a five-point scale: 1 (not at all favorable), 2 (rather unfavorable), 3 (neither favorable or unfavorable), 4 (rather favorable), 5 (absolutely favorable).

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Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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