Deliberation within Sectors.
Making the Case for Sector Mini-publics

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Abstract: In this paper it will be argued that a particular type of collaborative governance, *sector mini-publics,* has tremendous utility for policy formulation or evaluation. Sector mini-publics can be situated between traditional mini-publics and enclave deliberation, and should be evaluated using the same criteria applied to mini-publics in general, i.e. those that select from amongst the entire population. *Inclusiveness*, *deliberation* and *influence* are just as important as criteria for evaluation. Drawing on three examples of sector mini-publics, each involving a particular sector (young people, people with disabilities and the elderly), the authors build their argument that sector mini-publics have proven value, and should be encouraged, as well as subjected to further research.
Keywords: *Deliberative democracy, Sector mini-public, Policymaking, special interest groups, inclusion.*

Introduction

Let us engage in a thought experiment. Legislation is required that affects a narrow section of the population. It could be young people or elderly people; it could be for those with disabilities. Policy makers want to know what people think about the proposed policy, in particular, those directly affected by it. This might be at the very early stage of policy development or after the policy has been in existence. Democracy is a form of governance that promises inclusion and policy makers in democracies, therefore, face the challenge of listening to all. Policy makers wanting to collaborate with specific sections of the population may be wary, possibly because of previous experiences that have attracted the same voices while missing out on many others. Should they manage to attract those missing voices, policy makers would want more than opinion from people who are less-informed about the issue. Collaborative governance, using sector mini-publics, is one way to achieve a

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more effective outcome for all. This paper examines how this might be done.

Typically, policy makers look to opinion polls, advisory committees or focus groups. This paper argues for a different type of engagement. Theorists know it as deliberative democracy. Practitioners call it civic engagement, community engagement, public participation or public deliberation. At its best, this form of engagement should be *inclusive* of a population, even if that 'population' is a narrow section of the whole population; it should be *deliberative*, in order to allow participants to consider the topic deeply; and it should have *influence*, to be genuinely collaborative with decision makers—in other words it should influence the policy outcome (Carson and Hartz-Karp, 2005: 122). There are various methods that deliver those three ideals and they are collectively described as *mini-publics*.

In this article we make a case for a specific form of a mini-public. We define this as a *sector mini-public*, i.e. a mini-public assembled to represent a particular section of the population. We assert that sector mini-publics are especially valuable when *public judgment* by the section of the population relevant to the specific policy is wanted and also when voices from a section of the population have had difficulty being heard or are marginalized from traditional entrees to participation. A sector mini-public, though seemingly homogenous, can reveal through its deliberations the complex diversity within, and this diversity is often overlooked or denied by the wider population.

We situate sector mini-publics between traditional mini-publics and enclave deliberation. As mini-publics strive to include the whole public sphere in a miniature, enclaves aspire to gather together rather distinct groups of people (see e.g. Sunstein, 2000). Sector mini-publics are then, in our understanding, not as heterogeneous as mini-publics or as homogenous as enclaves. The distinction between mini-publics, sector mini-publics and enclaves, as well as the importance of making this distinction, will become clearer in the later sections of this paper.

This paper is divided into four sections. Following the introduction, we define sector mini-publics in relation to continuums of interests and inclusiveness. In section three we take an empirical approach to the topic. Three case studies are examined. These examples help to explain how sections of a population can deliberate in various contexts. In section four we present our conclusions.

Defining sector mini-publics

Sector mini-publics in relation to a continuum of interests

In this section we define sector mini-publics in relation to a *continuum of interests* (Figure 1). The continuum of interest can be explained in the context of policy making. There are varying degrees of interest in any policy. There are likely to be interest groups that have organized through formal *associations* to advocate for a policy; or *small organized interest groups* which also advocate, and will deliberate within their own group or across their overlapping groups. There are likely,

too, to be *hyper-interested individuals* who are not part of an organization; these individuals will probably advocate, and may deliberate introspectively or with close others. There are, as well, members of the population who know about the policy but are unlikely to advocate; they are *interested and/or informed*, perhaps discussing it with others. Inevitably there are also some folks who know nothing at all about the particular policy or do not care about it, being *uninformed or uninterested*. Others may have switched off—are *disinterested*—or have become *marginalized*. These various degrees of interest can be placed on a continuum along with voiceless future generations (*unborn individuals*) and the environment (*non-human interests*). Note that only a tiny minority directly advocate for any policy option.

Even in the largest forums, broad inclusion rarely happens without special recruitment effort. The objective of (deliberative democracy) process designers is to generate a so-called *mini-public*, which is a microcosm of the *whole* population that is affected by the issue and consequently should be able to wield some influence. This means locating and inviting people from the right-hand side of the continuum. The voiceless pose a particular challenge although their 'voice' can be heard through others. It is important to em-

phasize that those without a keen interest are likely to be the greatest number yet they are often unheard. This is an ongoing challenge for policy makers.

A legitimizing method of ensuring inclusion from the whole population is to apply stratified random selection (Carson and Martin, 1999) to gain participants. By selecting a miniature population a convenor can claim that this population-in-miniature is standing in for the whole. This mini-public is likely to decide in a way that the whole population would, if given enough time and information and deliberative opportunities. There are several formats for the design of mini-publics or deliberative, inclusive processes, including citizens' juries, deliberative polls and consensus conferences, which vary by size, duration and method. But they share the feature that the deliberation is intended to air the viewpoints of the whole public sphere (e.g. Setälä, 2011) or the entire continuum of interests. Mini-publics capture the otherwise-missing voices and they provide opportunities for organised interest groups and hyper-interested individuals to attend as expert speakers. Both authors, in two different countries (Finland and Australia), have convened many mini-publics and witnessed this each time. In contrast, opinion surveys can indicate existing viewpoints only. Unless they are refined using, say, televotes
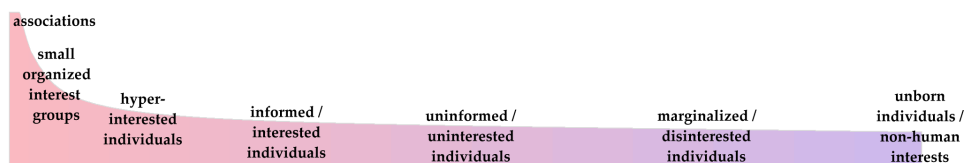

Figure 1. Continuum of interests (Carson, 2012)

(Becker and Slaton, 2000) or Deliberative Polls (Fishkin, 2009), the data will only ever display uninformed opinions.

When we examine sector mini-publics in relation to a continuum of interests, we can make a claim that it is common that these population-specific issues, the focus of sector mini-publics, are often dominated by strong interest groups and hyper-interested individuals (from the left-hand side of the continuum of interests). On the other hand it is not common that policy makers will make an effort to hear those who are less informed and not so active (right-hand side of the continuum), at least not according to the ideals of public deliberation. Also, associations and hyper-interested individuals usually have the disadvantage that they focus intensely on a single issue and in the process may come to forget the common good (e.g. Warren, 2008: 53). For example when discussing disability policies, activists may strive to gain advantage for the one disability group they are representing, thereby losing sight of the bigger picture (see Bonfils, 2011: 48-49). Instead, sector mini-publics that bring together the whole continuum of interests of a specific sector of the whole population, and where associations and hyper-interested individuals could attend as expert speakers, would give policy-makers a refined understanding of what the whole sector population thinks about the specific policy issue.

Sector mini-publics can give important information to policy makers. As in a traditional mini-public, the process of deliberation in sector mini-public follows the *public's learning curve*, i.e. "the process the public undertakes as it struggles to understand complex issues and how best to address them" (Yankelovich, 2010: 12). The public's learning curve includes three distinct stages. First, the focus is on raising consciousness. The media plays an important role at this stage by raising awareness of the issue. During the second stage, the participants in the deliberation explore the issue's many complexities. These stages shift participants from the right to the left along the continuum of interests. This is a long-lasting cognitive and affective process. Finally, during the third stage there emerges a resolution in the form of a *public judgment*, i.e.

> the state of highly developed public opinion that exists once people have engaged an issue, considered it from all sides, understood the choices it leads to, and accepted the full consequences of the choices they make (Yankelovich, 1991: 6).

Even though *public* judgment might not be a suitable wording when it comes to the resolution of sector mini-public (because it does not reflect the judgment of an entire population), it gives a picture of what sector mini-publics can produce for policy makers. Again, it must be kept in mind that as sector mini-publics are deliberating on issues that are fundamental to them – e.g. citizens' jury for people with disabilities deliberating on disability policy – policy makers may have more use for the judgment of that sector than the public judgment of the general population.

Sector mini-publics in relation to a continuum of inclusiveness

As has been described above, deliberative democrats strive to create carefully detailed conditions for public deliberation. These conditions or ideals − inclusion, deliberation and influence − would take place naturally on the level of the whole public sphere. However, this rarely happens. Along the *continuum of inclusiveness* (Figure 2), public deliberation at the level of the whole public sphere would represent the highest level of inclusiveness. One example would be *Deliberation Day*, suggested by Ackerman and Fishkin (2004), where ideally all the citizens would participate in a nation-wide public deliberation.

As public deliberation at the level of the whole public sphere is highly difficult to achieve, other actions are needed to elicit the public judgment of citizens. Mini-publics that create the public sphere in miniature, constitute the second level of inclusiveness. The idea is that a mini-public, as a population-in-miniature, would be standing in for the whole public sphere which is near-impossible to form. These mini-publics are especially valuable when the issue of deliberation is a general one, such as energy, the economy or health policies (see e.g. Warburton, 2006; Esterling, Fung and Lee, 2010; Setälä, Grönlund and Herne, 2010). These are issues that affect everyone.

However, when the issue is more specific, such as health care policy for the elderly, it might be more advantageous to turn to people who are directly affected. If we want to engage with these sections of population, while at the same time striving to sustain the deliberative quality of participation, we argue that sector mini-publics should be chosen as the mode of operation, situating them at the third level of inclusiveness, on the right-hand side of Figure 2.

Enclave deliberation is situated at the fourth level of inclusiveness. It refers to deliberation among a homogenous group of people (see e.g. Sunstein, 2000). Karpowitz, et al (2009: 582-583) identify three kinds of enclaves: (1) `ad hoc groups who share similar predeliberation *views* on the issue at hand`. This is an enclave of like-minded individuals; (2) where participants of the deliberation `occupy a shared *structural location* in relation to the issue`, in other words, individuals who are affiliated with the topic of deliberation; and (3) one in `which members feel that they share a common predeliberation *identity*`. This shared identity could be, for example, related to the same ethnic background of the enclave participants. In the literature on deliberative democracy, enclaves are often referred to as enclaves of like-minded individuals (e.g. Fung and Warren, 2011; Grönlund, Herne and Setälä, 2012). However, in this

Public sphere	Mini-publics	Sector mini-publics	Enclaves
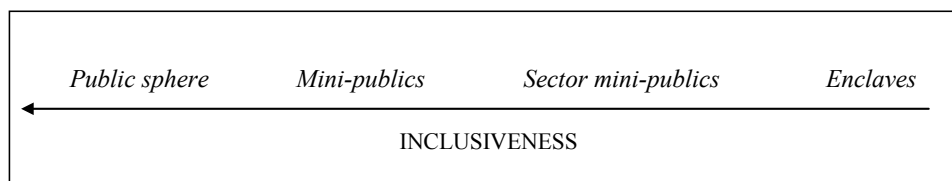
INCLUSIVENESS

Figure 2. Continuum of inclusiveness

article we are interested in the enclave of shared identity, because this kind of enclave has relevance to sector mini-publics.

Most often enclaves of shared identities are formed by homogenous and distinct groups. Examination of the literature on enclaves across different disciplines shows that enclaves are formed, for example, from certain immigrant communities (Xie and Gough, 2011), disability groups, such as people with intellectual disability (Nierse and Abma, 2011) and people with mental disability (Mandiberg, 2010) and groups within age cohorts, such as elderly people living in long term residential care (Baur and Abma, 2011). These are enclaves within different sectors. The difference between sector mini-publics and enclave deliberation becomes clear now. In contrast to enclaves, sector mini-publics strive to include the whole sector, not only categories of people within the sector. This has several positive consequences: (1) that the risk of losing sight of the bigger picture lessens (as we have described above), and (2) that the risk of *group polarization* diminishes.

Group polarization is seen as the most significant consequence of enclave deliberation. Sunstein (2003: 81) refers to a situation where `members of a deliberating group predictably move toward a more extreme point in the direction indicated by the members' pre-deliberation tendencies`. Compared to the deliberation of more heterogeneous individuals, enclave deliberation is considered to be at greater risk of group polarization. There are thought to be two reasons for this (see Sunstein 2000: 88-90). The first is about social pressure, i.e. that in a homogenous

group, individuals can easily feel pressure to take positions that are more socially preferred. People on the left-hand side of the continuum of interests typically know and influence each other in advance of a deliberation. The second argument is about the limited argument pool of enclave deliberation. If the enclave consists of like-minded individuals, there is a threat that only arguments supporting the collective opinion are present, causing the enclave to polarize.

However, as Karpowitz et al (2009: 583) note, it is possible to avoid the worrisome aspects of enclave deliberation with a good mini-public design. This includes, for example, ensuring the quality and diversity of the information given to the participants as well as the professional skill of the facilitators of the deliberation (see also Hamlett and Cobb, 2006). In contrast to enclaves, in sector mini-publics, as heterogeneity grows when striving for representativeness from the whole sector, the risk of group polarization diminishes.

A positive aspect of enclave deliberation is its potential for creating spaces for disempowered or marginalized people (Sunstein, 2000; Karpowitz et al, 2009). Mini-publics, and deliberative democracy overall, can tacitly concede to prevailing imbalances of power, wealth and education (e.g. Sanders 1997). As a result some voices are missed from deliberation. Thus Sunstein (2000: 76) states that `enclave deliberation might be the only way to ensure that those views are developed and eventually heard`. In enclave deliberation a safe space is created for everybody to voice their opinions and be heard. Most importantly in an enclave

one can be who one is. This is true for sector mini-publics, as will be evident in the cases presented in the following section. However, as we point out later, with certain groups of people it might be best at times to start first with enclave deliberation and then move along the continuum of inclusiveness. In this fashion the lower levels of the continuum can be seen as channels that lead to fuller societal participation.

Finally, as public deliberation at the level of the whole public sphere can be seen as highly difficult to achieve, and as public deliberation in enclaves can carry a certain stigma, we argue that, depending on the theme of the deliberation – an issue that touches the whole society or only a certain sector of the population – the aim should be in eliciting public judgment through the implementation of mini-publics and sector mini-publics respectively.

Examples of sector mini-publics

We present here three real-world examples of sector mini-publics, implemented in Finland during 2010-2011. These three examples have been chosen because they consist of different sections of the population – young and elderly people and people with disabilities – and also because they all have different aims. They show three different ways of utilizing sector mini-publics. Extensive research material was gathered on all the cases. After presenting each case, we summarize these by comparing them to the three ideals of deliberative democracy, i.e. inclusiveness, deliberativeness and influence.

Case 1. Organizational development through a youth jury

A youth jury is a specific form of a citizens' jury, made up only of young people, typically aged between 12-25 (Carson, 2004: 7). The citizens' jury format was invented by American Ned Crosby in the 1970s. He saw the existing models of citizen participation as inadequate and thus tried to find more efficient and effective way. Seven principles have emerged as central to the citizens' jury. Firstly an objective is to form the target population in miniature. Also the size of the jury should not be too large — generally 24 maximum (although one of the authors, Carson, is currently experimenting with larger numbers, see www.newdemocracy. com.au). Information given to the jurors is of high quality. Similarly facilitators strive to guarantee the high quality of deliberative discussions. All manipulation is forbidden, and the total process is driven by ideals of equality and fairness. Finally there should be enough time for deliberation, usually between three to five days (Crosby and Nethercut, 2005).

Ideally youth juries give a voice to young people, resulting in better equity in decision making processes and wider diversity in the political arena (one of the authors, Carson, has documented Australia's first youth jury which she convened, see Carson, 2004). Importantly, a youth jury, like a traditional citizens' jury, forms a safe public space for young people to open up to others and to listen well. Jurors are able to meet and exchange ideas with young people different from

themselves. They also collaborate with adults, who usually work in the jury as project leaders, facilitators and expert witnesses. These youth jurors are unlikely to meet in their everyday life.

The prospects of the youth jury format motivated the establishment of the first Finnish youth jury by one of the authors, Raisio, in the city of Vaasa in November 2010. Over three days jurors from two selected secondary schools deliberated on the issue of involvement in the school community. The aim was to provide information for the school administration to develop the schools, for local government to support them in developing youth programs, and especially to provide a genuine opportunity for young people to have an influence on issues important to them. Gathered research material includes pre-and post-jury questionnaires, interviews done with jurors (16/19) and facilitators and recordings of the small group deliberations.

To be credible to the wider society, the composition of a youth jury should match a population's demographic profile. In the case of the Vaasa youth jury, the wider population of which it should have been representative consisted of two schools, i.e. Vaasa technical school and Vaasa upper secondary school. These were the Finnish language upper secondary schools in Vaasa. Altogether 195 youths signed up for the jury. Through stratified random-sampling 24 jurors were selected, of which 19 eventually participated.

The young jurors deliberated and collaboratively authored a declaration that consisted of sixteen recommendations for action. These ranged from local school issues such as drawing attention to the school environment, as well as regional issues such as increasing the availability of student welfare services, and also national policy issues such as making it possible for students to obtain study grants. An evaluation of the influence of the youth jury by Muurimäki (2011) reported that nine of the jury's sixteen recommendations were being implemented at least partially. Additionally, the declaration of the youth jury was discussed extensively by the city council, the city board and the youth council of Vaasa. Also local and regional media reported widely on the youth jury. The roles of these governing bodies and media were important as they expanded awareness of the youth jury outside the school boundaries, from a micro to a macro level. It should also to be noted, that the youth jury was considered as *good practice* by regional decision-makers, leading to a regional youth jury, on the future of the Vaasa region.

When asked, all of the jurors stated that the jury discussions were rich, that they all had a chance to voice their opinions openly and that they had been heard. Similarly none of the jurors felt diminished at any stage. All of the jurors were satisfied with the performance of the facilitators and the project leaders. All but one of the jurors were satisfied with the youth jury generally. Also, when asked if they would participate again in a similar event, sixteen of the nineteen jurors responded affirmatively. The following comments from the jurors indicate their satisfaction:

> I had a really a nice time here. As I haven't before been in this kind of youth jury or any like this where I can present my opinions and where I can influence…

I think that a youth jury is a really good idea, as in it we were in a way those who made those decisions. Not teachers, parents or others.

It was a nice experience when for once we got to present our own opinions. In school we only answer to the questions of the teachers, and cannot at times express our opinions. But here we did.

Regarding future applications of youth juries, jurors stated strongly that this particular youth jury's influence should be proven before making further conclusions. This issue has also been raised elsewhere. For example Segall (2005: 370) states that `when forms of participation do not have a "point" to them, they may actually do more harm than good, as they end up causing frustration and a sense of futility when it is realized that participation was "about nothing".` The jurors explicitly stated that the declaration of the jury, or at least parts of it, should have an influence `so that it would have some benefit, as we spent three days and achieved this`. So the influence of sector mini-publics is a highly important issue, because if nothing happens, cynicism may increase towards future involvement. However, influence can be understood in many ways. We return to this issue later.

Case 2. Citizens' jury for people with disabilities as a support for project management

People with disabilities are often unable to participate fully in civic life. Their plight is often categorized as `dependent and worthy of charity` or even a `thing to be worked on`, while their right to political participation is ne-

glected (Edwards, 2008: 1669-1677). In 2011 a citizens' jury was convened for people who live with disability or long-term debilitating disease. The objective of the citizens' jury was to support the project management of the Finnish national development program for services for people with disabilities, to give a voice to people with disabilities and overall to offer a novel way of influencing project management, policy-setting and public attitudes. The challenge for the organisers was to accommodate the many different modes of communicating and moving by jurors.

It is important to bear in mind that deliberation includes not only verbally-expressed viewpoints but also the presence of diverse bodies, i.e. `the physical presence of disabled bodies`, that create new kinds of perspectives, raise new questions and decrease prejudice between people (see Clifford, 2012: 211). One can influence deliberation just by being present (see also Phillips, 1995). In a citizens' jury for people with disabilities many prerequisites need to be taken into account (Edwards, 2008). For example, there is often need for assistants, such as wheelchair assistants and sign-language interpreters and technical aids, such as an induction loop. Accessibility, in particular, needs to be provided. This includes access to the venue, but also movement inside it. Even issues that often seem irrelevant, such as echoing in the room, the flickering of fluorescent lights, noisy situations and a room filled with sensory stimulants, can have a significant influence on, for example, people with autistic spectrum disorders.

The Finnish national development

program for services for people with disabilities – with its partners – convened the citizens' jury for people with disabilities in the summer 2011. One of the authors, Raisio, was the project designer. The theme of the regional jury was `participating in my own life`. Persons over 16 years of age who resided in these two areas and live with some disability or long-term disease were able to register to participate in the jury. Twenty-two registrations were received. From these ten people were chosen to participate. Eventually nine jurors participated. Disabilities represented in the jury were physical disability, mental disability, hearing impairment and visual impairment. People with intellectual disabilities did not have representatives in the jury. Where needed, assistants and sign-language interpreters were provided for the jurors, in addition to their own carers. All of the nine jurors were interviewed soon after the jury (semi-structured qualitative interviews).

During the three days of the jury, jurors questioned witnesses they had nominated, deliberated both in small groups and in the whole group, and collaborated to produce a final declaration which was publicly presented at a media conference. Jurors' experiences from the deliberation were very similar to those expressed in the youth jury. For example, it was appreciated that facilitators were able to create a warm and safe atmosphere for discussions, that they gave everybody an equal chance to express their opinions, and they ensured that quieter ones participated to the discussions. Facilitators were able to summarize the discussions and move the discussion forward when it stalled. This `safety` can be seen in

the jurors' comments:

> I think when we think about the ways of influencing, this citizens' jury is really a form that brings people together and such that creates a trustworthy feeling, as it happened now during these days. That one can really show what one really wants to show and to say.

When asked, jurors explicitly stated that they were able to voice their opinions and be heard in the small groups. This was also noted in discussions within the whole group, even though it was considered slightly more daring to speak out loud in that configuration. Most importantly, from the comments of jurors it can be seen how empowering the event was for them:

> Well, I tensed up, was a little bit shocked that I can be here now. But then I realized that these are my opinions and affairs that I am speaking about. I have a full right to them.
> But we learned to be ashamed of ourselves, that we are not full members of the society. A few years ago I probably wouldn't have said anything at all. But now I had the fortune to be able to say what I had to say.
> Interviewer: What is your feeling now after the three days of the jury? Juror: Well damn good, as I feel that I am not yet totally useless in this society.

Jurors were hopeful about the jury's influence. Although some skepticism was present, jurors genuinely hoped that decision-makers would acknowledge the jury's work and act on it: `That it wouldn't just be left in

some paper pile, but that it would have influence on real steps forward`. It was also acknowledged that while some issues were fairly easy to implement, others would take longer. Similarly it was seen that had the theme of the jury been more specific, it would have been easier to develop more concrete suggestions. The perceived threat was that the suggestions had become so broad that decision-makers could avoid responding to them. In the interviews jurors also hoped that they would be informed about the progress of the declaration, for example by inviting them together at a later stage.

In the end, evaluation of the jury's actual influence is difficult to gauge as the jury covered such a large area, 35 municipalities altogether. However, there is some knowledge of actions taken because of this particular citizens' jury, e.g. an official council initiative in one of the municipalities to increase the transparency of governance and the bishopric initiated accessibility evaluation in the parishes. Also, organizers of the jury disseminated information about the jury by writing to several relevant Finnish practitioner journals. Additionally, as jurors had hoped, they were invited back six months after the jury. They were briefed then on what had happened so far. This was greatly appreciated by the jurors. It is important to close the feedback loop by keeping jurors up-to-date on what is happening after the jury ends.

Case 3. Citizens' jury for elderly people as an instrument of policy-making

Finland is the fastest aging country in Europe. Additionally, people in Finland, like those in other developed countries, are living longer than ever before. This means that participation in the different functions of society, such as voting, volunteering or participation in various citizen forums, must be made accessible even to the oldest citizens (McBride 2006). It is possible that contemporary societies will see elderly people increasingly as a burden. The European Union has addressed the challenge with its 2012 thematic year of Active Aging and Solidarity between Generations. On its website active aging was defined as `growing old in good health and as a full member of society, feeling more fulfilled in our jobs, more independent in our daily lives and more involved as citizens` (European Union 2012).

There is a strong focus on active aging in Finland. For example when the Act on Care Services for the Elderly was being drafted at the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, it was considered important to involve elderly citizens in policy making. With this background, a (regional) citizens' jury for elderly people was designed by one of the authors (Raisio) and implemented on 17, 18, 21 and 22 November 2011. The jury deliberated, questioned witnesses and wrote a declaration in response to the question `What is elderly people's good life and good residence and how is it to be realized?`. The jury consisted of people aged 65 or older. After extensive publicity, 55 elderly people signed up for the jury. In total 26 people were chosen as the jurors, with 23 eventually participating. The jury was bilingual, in Finnish and Swedish. Each of the jurors was interviewed. Semi-structured qualitative interviews were carried out at their homes or in other preferred places. The

interviews were transcribed and interpreted through directed content analysis.

Even though the jury days were intense, elderly jurors stayed active for the duration. All of the jurors said that, if there was a possibility, they would participate again to a similar event. Similarly, all of the jurors considered that citizens' juries should be used as a method for influencing policy-making in the future. It was particularly appreciated that, no matter the societal background of the jurors, everybody was equal, that the jury's atmosphere was participatory in a natural way, and that the jury strived for actual influence. Even the bilingualism of the jury was positively appraised:

> This was the most positive event I have ever been to. No language was neglected. In many places many times, Finnish hasn't been translated. But here everything was translated and everybody got to know everything. That was absolutely great. No one had to feel left behind. So this was a positive experience, that all were so well treated.

As the assignment for the jury came from regional and national actors, evaluation on its actual influence is, as was the case with the citizens' jury for people with disabilities, a difficult process. Jurors hoped for influence in two spheres of governance:

> If and when it doesn't just stay here, that it goes out to these decision-makers, on the municipal and national level. That distribution and the range become wider compared to these ordinary discussions.

Jurors signed the declaration of the jury on 23 January 2012, and the decla-
ration was received by a distinguished Member of Parliament. Two months later an official response was given by the Social and Health Ministry. In its statement the working group of 15 persons on the Act on Care Services for the Elderly claimed that they had taken into account the suggestions made in the jury's declaration when the group drafted the legislation. Additionally, the working group hoped for a successful continuation of the citizens' jury concept in Finland. At the regional and municipal levels, the jury's declaration has been discussed in many official organs. Because of the hot topic of the jury, it received considerable media coverage. The jury was, for example, discussed on the national television news. Additionally, as was the case with the youth jury, the citizens' jury for elderly people was considered to be *good practice*, and many other municipalities have shown interest in the format.

Summary of the three cases

Three different examples of sector mini-publics have been described. Next, we compare these three cases to the three ideals of deliberative democracy. In relation to *inclusiveness*, it can be considered to have been on the highest level in the youth jury. Compared to the citizens' jury for people with disabilities the number of volunteers participating in the youth jury was much higher, which made it easier to match the demographic profile of the target population. However, it can be asserted that all three juries managed to gather together quite successfully the complex diversity within their particular section of the population.

Heterogeneity in the juries was strong. In the youth jury there were young people from both high school and vocational school. There were also young people from immigrant backgrounds. In the citizens' jury for people with disabilities there were jurors from different disability groups. In the citizens' jury for elderly people there were Finnish-speaking and Swedish-speaking jurors, as well as jurors from the countryside and from cities. Therefore, even though there were shared attributes, such as age or living with a disability, there were also many differentiating attributes, such as the study place, disability group and language, which actually might have been stronger attributes than the shared ones (see Phillips, 1995). For example different disability groups are ordinarily very separate from each other. Shared identity is felt more with those who have a similar disability, than with people generally identified as disabled (Bonfils, 2011: 48-49).

As with traditional mini-publics, sector mini-publics need to strive to include all the voices of the section of the population. In the citizens' jury for people with disabilities the absent voice was someone with intellectual disability. It could be that participating in deliberation with people different from them felt too intimidating. In future research it will be necessary to find ways to include people with intellectual disabilities. The first step forward could be to begin with enclave deliberation for people with intellectual disabilities (see Nierse and Abma, 2011), and, only after that, move forward on the continuum of inclusiveness. A similar kind of challenge was faced in the citizens' jury for elderly people.

In the steering committee of the jury, the issue was raised about how those elderly citizens who live in long-term residential care could participate. This was seen as important; otherwise the views of those who could not live in their own home anymore would be missing. In this particular jury it was decided that a resident in long-term care would act as an expert witness. For ethical and medical reasons this expert witness was interviewed before the jury. The videotaped interview was shown to jurors, which became one of the most emotional moments.

All three juries achieved very high standards of *deliberation*. Jurors had open dialogue. They accessed comprehensive and diverse information. They respected each others. Trust was high. They considered issues from many different perspectives. They represented interests other than those of vocal interest groups and hyper-interested individuals. In the end all three juries achieved consensus in the form of an official declaration of the jury. However, jurors were not of the same mind on all issues. This is not problematic for deliberation, as the goal is not for everybody to agree on everything; rather that everybody can accept the decisions made (Mansbridge et. al., 2010). Overall the reactions to participating in the three juries were very positive. They were willing to participate again and also considered sector mini-publics as good practice for organizational development, project management and policy making.

As in other studies (e.g. Segall, 2005), *influence*, i.e. the impact or effectiveness of the mini-public, became a threshold question. Jurors saw that it is highly important that there should

be real influence; that participation in these juries would not be *placebo* democracy. However, it must be kept in mind that influence and effectiveness can be understood in many ways. Most importantly, it does not often mean direct democracy with absolute decision-making power. For example, Friedman (2011) considers that in public deliberation there should be a middle way between direct decision-making power and placebo democracy. This middle way would mean, for example, that when a mini-public offers its recommendations, relevant policy makers should always give an official response in which the recommendations are acknowledged. If they are not going to act on them, policy makers are obliged to say why. In doing so, the deliberation can go forward. Given the difficulty of attaining influence, it would be essential in the early stage to make it obligatory for policy makers to officially consider the results of mini-publics.

It is also important not to focus only on policy makers regarding the influence of mini-publics. As Friedman (2011: 137-138) states, the influence of public deliberation can be considered the responsibility of other actors. These include, for example, NGOs and citizens themselves. These various actors can be seen as `potential change agents that can help create a bridge from an emerging sense of public judgment to various forms of problem solving`.

As a consequence of our combined experience we can say that participants in mini-publics understand and accept that not all of their suggestions can be implemented. Cynicism is not the inevitable consequence of a mini-public which has minimal influence (cf. Segall, 2005). It can be enough that the

mini-public's recommendations are included in some way in decision-making. As one juror in the youth jury aptly commented:

> But if at least those would be applied in some way, so that thinking could be done based on them. Those don't have to be directly put into action, but if those would at least be taken into account in the decision-making.

Also, it is important to note the impact on participants (building their deliberative confidence), and the significance of mini-publics in influencing public discussion at the macro-level. These are important aspects of mini-publics' effectiveness. For example all three cases affected the participants deeply. They become more empathic (see Morrell, 2010), and more focused on the common good. Also the empowerment of the jurors was clearly seen in their comments. Empowerment was especially strong within the jurors of the citizens' jury for people with disabilities. Jurors also showed signs of positive attitudinal changes towards societal and political participation, and this is consistent with Gastil's findings (Knobloch and Gastil, 2012). However, this attitudinal change can be quite nuanced. As a case in point: participants in the youth jury were positively affected by their experience. One said afterwards:

> I first thought that it would be, you know, quite boring, like politics. I think even as a word (i.e. politics) it sounds boring. But then when I came there, it wasn't like that.

There is cynicism toward traditional ways of doing politics towards which young people are resistant. So

they may become more politically efficacious but their openness will require new ways of participating that meet their needs. Most importantly, all the results are indicative that there was movement along the continuum of interests in all three juries. During the days of the jury uninformed and even disinterested individuals became informed and more interested in the topics of the deliberation as well as in societal issues more generally.

All three cases had a pronounced public profile. Each received a very high level of media visibility. As well as that they were discussed in many official institutional situations, such as municipal boards and councils. This, too, should be considered to satisfy the ideal of *influence*.

Conclusions

One way to understand deliberative democracy is to see it as an umbrella term for many different practical applications of public deliberation (Nabatchi, 2010). Collectively these applications are often described as mini-publics. However, in this paper, we make a claim that deliberative democracy can be considered beyond mini-publics as they are commonly understood. In addition to traditional mini-publics that strive to form the whole public sphere in miniature, we assert that there exist also sector mini-publics with a particular kind of objective: to represent a specific section of the population. Moreover, we consider sector mini-publics to be as important as traditional mini-publics in taking deliberative democracy forward, both in theory and in practice. The focus remains on achiev-

ing a more just public sphere.

Sector mini-publics can be situated between traditional mini-publics and enclave deliberation. The three cases described in this paper show, that in a similar way to traditional mini-publics, sector mini-publics can live up to the ideals of deliberative democracy. Also, as sector mini-publics strive for representativeness from the whole sector, the risk for group polarization is not as worrisome as it might be in enclaves.

Sector mini-publics have the potential to bring forth the voice of marginalized sections of the population. They should, however, not be dismissed as emancipatory practices. Of course the emancipatory, or empowering, attribute of sector mini-publics should not be ignored, but it must be borne in mind that sector mini-publics also carry a pragmatic utility for policy-makers. As was depicted by the continuum of inclusiveness, on a specific policy issue, sector mini-publics give voice to the public judgment of the section of the population relevant to the specific policy. Thus they provide important information for policy makers as well as increase the legitimacy of the decisions made.

We encourage theorists as well as practitioners of deliberative democracy to continue research on sector mini-publics. In relation to future research we would highlight two issues. The first relates to inclusiveness in sector mini-publics. As with traditional mini-publics the challenge is to form groups which are as representative as possible. For example, it is not enough to include young people. There should also be marginalized young people; those who are outside mainstream society. Similarly it is not enough that there

be immigrants. That category should be broadened to include refugees and asylum seekers. It is necessary to keep in mind that sectors are far from homogenous. The challenge is how to include the marginalized within the marginalized? We need to ask always: whose voice is missing? In this case, the continuum of interests forms a useful reference point for policymakers to reflect on which interests are present and which are missing.

The second issue we would highlight is the influence of sector mini-publics. How is influence to be defined? How empowered should sector mini-publics be? How different are they to traditional mini-publics? We would highlight the ambiguity of the concept of effectiveness. For example, in many instances it does not mean direct decision making power. Also, it does not mean that influence should be the sole responsibility of policy makers. The intractable problems with which we are faced within our contemporary societies are the responsibility of us all (Raisio, 2010; Carson, 2011). This means policy makers, public officials, private firms, academics, NGOs and citizens themselves.

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