Session 5
Citizens’ Assemblies and other forms of Mini-Publics
Ireland’s Constitutional Mini-Publics

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General government financial balances

Source: Eurostat and OECD

* 2012-2014 Eurostat estimates from January 2013
Ireland’s Constitutional Mini-Publics

• Random selection
  • Citizen members don’t feel they have a ‘mandate’
  • ‘mirror of society’

• Experts, interest groups and politicians aren’t excluded
  • Experts are brought in as expert advisors, not as members
  • Interest groups are also invited to make presentations
  • Politicians may also be in the room as ‘fellow members’

• Deliberation (facilitated small-table discussions)

• The agenda and outcomes are decided by the government
Measures of Satisfaction with the Deliberative Process During the Discussions on Abortion

Note: 1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree; 3=neither disagree nor agree; 4=agree; 5=strongly agree. The response rates ranged between 76-91 (out of 99 members).
Source: Sunday surveys of Citizens’ Assembly members
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>ICC output</th>
<th>Government reaction</th>
<th>Action?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Reduction of presidential term</td>
<td>3 recommendations</td>
<td>Government accepted 2; rejected 1</td>
<td>Referendum defeated May 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Reduce voting age</td>
<td>1 recommendation</td>
<td>Government accepted this</td>
<td>Referendum was promised for 2015; now promised within next 18 months (?)</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Increasing women’s participation in politics</td>
<td>3 recommendations</td>
<td>Ministerial task force to investigate further</td>
<td>No update</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Marriage equality</td>
<td>2 recommendations</td>
<td>Government agreed to referendum and to supporting legislation</td>
<td>Referendum passed May 2015</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Electoral system</td>
<td>10 recommendations</td>
<td>Government promised to establish an electoral commission and to task it with addressing 4 of the other recommendations; remaining 5 recommendations rejected</td>
<td>Consultations ongoing about establishment of an Electoral Commission.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7. Votes for emigrants/N. Ireland residents in presidential elections</td>
<td>1 recommendation</td>
<td>Ministerial task force considered options</td>
<td>Referendum promised within next 18 months (?)</td>
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<td>8. Blasphemy</td>
<td>2 recommendations</td>
<td>Government agreed to principle of referendum</td>
<td>Referendum passed October 2018</td>
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<tr>
<td>9. Dáil (parliamentary) reform</td>
<td>12 recommendations</td>
<td>No formal response from government</td>
<td>The bulk of the recommendations were implemented in June 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>10. Economic, social and cultural rights</td>
<td>2 recommendations</td>
<td>Government rejected this</td>
<td>Rejected</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Awareness of Citizens’ Assembly

Base : All Referendum Voters 1264

66% Aware
34% Unaware
Citizens’ Assembly Statements – True or False
Base: All aware of Citizens’ Assembly 830

- Randomly selected Irish citizens discussed the topic of abortion in the Citizens’ Assembly.
  - True: 70%
  - False: 11%
  - Don’t know: 19%

- Only citizens that were in favour of a repeal of the 8th were represented in the Irish Citizens’ Assembly.
  - True: 65%
  - False: 14%
  - Don’t know: 21%

- Experts were invited to inform the discussion of the Citizens’ Assembly.
  - True: 76%
  - False: 5%
  - Don’t know: 19%

V1 Q.8 ONLY IF YES IN Q7 For each of the following statements, please tell me whether you believe it is true, or false. DO NOT PROMPT
Irish process of mixing representative and deliberative democracy

Pressures for change

- Societal/economic/political modernization
- External pressures (e.g. from agencies or due to international obligations)
- Pressure groups/public opinion

Government/parliament

Referendum or Legislative reform
• Thank you!
• [link to email: David.Farrell@ucd.ie]