To deliberate or not to deliberate: a qualitative analysis of (non-)participation in mini-publics

An increasing number of scholars and political actors support the development of mini-publics – that is, deliberative forums with randomly selected lay citizens. It is often argued that such innovations are a key ingredient to curing the democratic malaise of contemporary political regimes because they provide an appropriate means to achieve inclusiveness and well considered judgment. Nevertheless, real-life experience shows that the majority of citizens refuse the invitation when they are recruited. This raises a challenging question for the development of a more inclusive democracy: Why do citizens decline or accept to participate in mini-publics? This talk addresses this issue through a qualitative analysis of the perspectives of those who have been contacted to participate in three mini-publics: the G1000, the G100 and the Climate Citizens Parliament. The analysis shows that the reluctance to take part in mini-publics is rooted in the way individuals conceive their own roles, abilities and capacities in the public sphere, as well as in the perceived output of such democratic innovations.

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Alle sind herzlich eingeladen!