University of Southampton

Faculty of Social Sciences

School of Economic, Social, and Political Sciences

The Policy Impacts of Public Participation

by

Thomas Edward Price

Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Abstract

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The democratic world is facing crises in representation, participation, and political legitimacy. An increasing number of governments and scholars are moving away from traditional conceptions of democracies, which revolve around regular elections and representative politicians, and hoping solutions can be found in the promise of democratic innovations in public participation. However, this field is novel, and little is known about when democratic innovations are successful at ameliorating these crises and the reasons as to why. Even seemingly simple concepts such as what 'success' ought to constitute are far from agreed upon.

Focussing on cases in the UK and Ireland, this thesis uses cases drawn from the Participedia dataset, validated through comparison to official evaluator documentation, to determine what conditions facilitate policy-impacting success and which do not. Through a comparative analysis of 35 cases, this research argues that there is no one singular condition which makes or breaks a DI's success, but rather a combination of conditions. The results show that successful policy-impacting is largely down to the preferences of target politicians, and that facilitating conditions merely act to attract or maintain these relationships. This suggests that DIs are still reliant on the elite political actors and institutions who have suffered from the losses of democratic trust and legitimacy. However, this need not be the case, and lessons from this thesis can be used to better design DIs and their political environment in the future.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Thomas Edward Price

Title of thesis: The Policy Impacts of Public Participation

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it is my own and has been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission;

Signature: Date: 30/04/2025

Acknowledgments

I started this project when I commenced my MSc in September 2019. That was 5 years ago almost to the day. It is no exaggeration to say these 5 years have been the most significant and challenging years of my life.

I'd like to first acknowledge my supervisors Matt Ryan and Will Jennings who were constant sources of invaluable advice, feedback, and help -- much of it amidst a pandemic. I am truly thankful.

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Definitions and Abbreviations

CSO .... Civil Society Organisation.

DI .... A Democratic Innovation.

Participedia........................ A online repository of case files on democratic innovations

QCA .... Qualitative Comparative Analysis.

csQCA .... Crisp-set QCA. Data within QCA which uses dichotomised conditions. Data which is either 1 or 0 representing being ‘present’ or ‘not being present’.

fsQCA .... Fuzzy-set QCA. Data within QCA which is not binary but expressed as a gradient. fsQCA has a cut-off threshold of >0.5 which denotes that the data is ‘more present than not’.

* .... Boolean operator for AND.

+ .... Boolean operator for OR.

~ .... Boolean operator for NOT

← .... Necessity. Whatever is to the left of the arrow is necessary for the outcome to the right.

→ .... Sufficiency. Whatever is to the left of the arrow is sufficient for the outcome to the right.

←→ .... Both necessary and sufficient.

PRI .... Proportional Reduction in Inconsistency (PRI) figure. When two or more conditions or configurations are logically contradictory, the result with the highest PRI score ought to be preferred.

RF .... Robustness of Fit.

RC .... Robustness of Consistency.

Chapter 1: Introduction and Scope

Introduction to the Topic, and its Importance:

The democratic world is in a state of malaise. Almost universally speaking, the world's established democracies are experiencing the lowest satisfaction with representatives and representative democracy since records began, having already been on a consistent downwards trend (Wike et al, 2023). The median level of satisfaction stands at 59%, with South Africans expressing the most dissatisfaction at 76% and with Indians the most satisfied at 27%.

This democratic malaise is linked to repeated and consistent crises in representation and participation which leads to a problem of political legitimacy for the institution of government (e.g Kupchan, 2012 or Kamlage and Nanz, 2018). The problem of the democratic malaise has crystallised alongside the identification and utilisation of democratic innovations or DIs. These DIs 'reimagine and deepen the role of citizens in governance processes' (Elstub and Escobar, 2019, pp 14). Significant investment, both in money and spilled-ink, has been spent on the prospect of DIs to form a solution to the crises in democracy and thus the democratic malaise at large (e.g see Smith, 2009; Pogrebinschi and Ryan, 2018 ; Kamlage and Nanz, 2018).

In order to best use DIs as a remedy to the democratic malaise, there must be an understanding of how, when, and why they best deepen democracy for ordinary citizens, and what is required to do so. However these are questions for which there are currently no, or at least limited, answers. Answering these questions forms the crux and justification of this thesis. The findings can be used as interpretive lenses to better understand the workings of extant DIs so as to use the findings to better design them in the future. Thus, this research is a crucial tool in ameliorating the democratic malaise.

The Original Contribution the Research Provides:

Accordingly, this research provides three original contributions to the field. Firstly, this research provides answers to all the questions posed above in that it explains how, when, and why DIs best deepen democracy. Secondly, this research puts forward the argument that internal considerations (such as quality of representation) are important when assessing DIs, but that only by looking at actual tangible outcomes like policy impact can we begin to assess them usefully with the aim of ameliorating the democratic malaise. Thirdly, this research deviates from existing comparisons of DIs by focusing exclusively on British and Irish cases. This is owing to the rich precedence of experimental public participation in these countries and their overlooked status amongst the comparative literature. Lastly, this research does not use primary data, such as interviews, but instead relies on the secondary dataset of Participedia and the official evaluator reports. This is an important contribution to the field since there is considerable excitement behind the potential of this dataset, and this research demonstrates that it can used for robust comparative research designs. Finally, this research demonstrates that Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is not only capable of being used to analysis outcomes in a DI-context, but is actually ideally suited to this role. QCA can empirically identify causal patterns that are complex and counter-intuitive with data that is qualitative. The demonstrated utility of this approach to other researchers in the field is the final contribution.

The Approach to the Research:

This thesis uses an approach called Qualitative Comparative Analysis or QCA for short. QCA is a simple yet novel condition-based comparative approach which seeks to uncover which conditions or configurations of conditions form causal pathways to a given outcome. 35 DI cases were drawn from the Participedia project and triangulated using official evaluator reports. These cases were qualitatively interpreted and scored based on whether, and to what degree if so, six conditions were present. QCA was conducted on the subsequent dataset. The results showed that no single condition determined the ability of a DI to impact policy. Instead, five configurations of conditions were shown to successfully facilitate policy impact, whilst one configuration of conditions formed a pathway to unsuccessful policy impact. These configurations are then offered up back to the 35 DI cases and rigorously interpreted with references to the relevant cases.

Overview of Key Findings:

This research answers four research questions:

1) Which conditions, if any, best facilitate policy impact and why?

2) Do any conditions explain when a policy is not set?

3) What do the answers to 1&2 tell us about the participatory environment?

4) What practical interventions could be implemented to improve participatory policy-impact, and would these be ad-hoc or blanket interventions?

Through a comparative analysis of 35 DI cases drawn from the Participedia dataset and their official evaluator reports, this thesis answers the first two questions with four important contributions to the field. A DI is successful at impacting policy when it has a high degree of contact and connectivity with politicians who are amiable to the goals and intentions behind the DI. In other words, a DI impacts policy when it works with a politician who wants it to succeed. A DI successfully sets policy when it produces policy recommendations which gel well with the policy preferences of target politicians such that institutional friction is low. A DI can otherwise seek to lower institutional friction by suggesting policy that is either of very high salience or very low. This unintuitive effect is called parabolic salience. Finally, a DI will enjoy high policy-impacting success when it works with a politician who has already decided to seek public help, in which case a DI's destiny is pre-ordained. However, a DI with any of these characteristics will still fail if it is dead on arrival. This refers to a DI which is never intended to have any political impact. Likewise, a DI which produces a policy recommendation with middling salience relative to the two extremes of parabolic salience, will likely fail to clear any institutional hurdles and impact political policy.

The lessons drawn from this thesis allow us to answer the last two research questions. As it stands, the world of DIs is still very new, and politicians are only just waking up to the potential. Accordingly, viable practical interventions include a greater use of DIs in political decision making and a mechanism of political accountability created to enforce their use.

Overview of Thesis Structure:

This thesis begins with the first of two discussions of relevant literature. The first discussion begins with an examination of five contentions and then uses them to build up the justification for this research and a framework for the contribution to the field. The first contention is that the existing literature tends to assume policy impacting actors to be political elites, and so their insights are of limited value for understanding non-elite DIs. Secondly, much of the existing literature only looks at state-led DIs. Thirdly, that there is no one exact definition of a successful DI, and the current definitions are split along normative lines. Fourth, comparative approaches to understanding policy impact are criminally under-utilised, but offer so much potential. Finally, when the literature does included comparative approaches, it tends to focus on DIs from Latin American countries and not Britain or Ireland. These discussions are the foundations to the research problem. Having now hammered out the research problem, this first chapter ends with a discussion of what public participation is and is not, and how this extends to a definition for DIs. DIs are defined as: 'processes or institutions, that are new to a policy issue, policy role, or level of governance, and developed to reimagine and deepen the role of citizens in governance processes by increasing opportunities for participation, deliberation and influence' (Elstub and Escobar, 2019, p11). The first chapter ends by taking a step back and explaining why DIs are emerging in the first place and what the nature of the problem they purport to solve is. This section introduces and explains what Kupchan (2012) describes as a 'democratic malaise' – the current crises in representation, participation, and legitimacy which representative democracies across the world are finding themselves in. The culmination of this section proposes that DIs are a viable solution to these crises and that this research seeks to further this end.

The second discussion of relevant literature provides the theoretical conditions and hypotheses which will establish the policy impacts of public participation. This section begins by looking at how the design of DIs theoretically impacts upon the outcomes and how achieving specific goals can be potentially achieved by facilitating certain conditions whilst suppressing others. However, it is then demonstrated that, whilst DI design donates some useful insights in participatory policy impact, design itself is not the silver bullet which can form the basis for future interventions. Moving on, the next section begins with an exploration of political theory and real-world case studies to derive all the conditions supposed to have causal impact on policy-impact. This chapter penultimately ends with a discussion on whether British and Irish cases can be considered together in one analysis, owing to differences in the centrality of their political systems, with the conclusion that they can. The second literature review chapter ends with a list of all the hypothesised causal conditions:

1) A administerial and government bureaucratic culture open to participatory policy impact

2) The influence of CSOs

3) Policy recommendations which closely resemble the policy preferences of the target policy maker

4) Left-wing politicians

5) Partisan Policies

6) Salient Policies

Simply explaining the background to these six conditions is not enough for a viable analysis. The third chapter builds on the previous chapter by slowly and systematically demonstrating their causal potential by proposing their policy-impacting mechanisms. This is then the basis for the theoretical framework used throughout the analysis.

The next chapter introduces the analytical technique used throughout this research: Qualitative Comparative Analysis or QCA for short. QCA is a condition-based comparative approach which seeks to uncover which conditions or configurations of conditions form causal pathways to a given outcome. As stated previously, QCA is a novel approach and, whilst being relatively simple to understand, will require explanations of several core concepts. This chapter explains the fundamentals to QCA research before demonstrating how case-set qualitative data can be coded into a form suitable for empirical analysis using QCA. QCA will produce three types of results: necessary, SUIN, and sufficient conditions. These are then explained using methodological theory, and clear examples are given handhold anyone unfamiliar with QCA through the process. Put simply: this section deals with explaining what we are looking for in order to answer the research questions. This chapter ends by explaining how the QCA results can be validated with robustness tests and how potential results can be evaluated.

Having thoroughly explained the principles behind QCA the next chapter on methodology begins by explaining exactly why it is so well-suited for studying PIs and policy-impact before a frank discussion of when it works best and when it does not. There are on-going debates within QCA of how exactly to best perform the method, and what the ideal outcomes will look like. Both sides of the debate are considered, but this chapter proceeds by explaining why parsimonious (in essence, the shortest and simplest configuration of conditions) outcomes are best equipped to answer the research questions.

The methodology chapter then proposes a metric for selecting DI cases for QCA before demonstrating the viability. At this point, the methodology ends with a critical discussion of the two main sources of case study data: the Participedia dataset and of the official evaluator reports from which Participedia often draws.

The next two chapters are for the analytical stage. The first of the two (Chapter 6) draws from the theoretical framework of conditions established earlier and begins to build a QCA-appropriate dataset by coding the presence of the conditions from the cases selected. A discussion of the subsequent dataset is then provided. At this point, the dataset is analysed, and robustness are conducted. Chapter 7 begins with a discussion of what conditions and configurations of conditions are expected to be produced according to the theory. Necessary, SUIN, and sufficient conditions are then explored and explained. It was found that only sufficient conditions form causal pathways to policy impact. At this point, the findings are then evaluated. Chapter 8 is the concluding chapter. This thesis argues that there is no one singular condition which makes or breaks a PI's success, but a combination of conditions. The results show that successful policy impact is largely down to the wants and preferences of target politicians, and that facilitating conditions merely act to attract or maintain these relationships.

Scope:

At this point we can step back and consider the scope of this research. This thesis does take a deep-dive into explaining and defining public DIs in the literature review. However, for the purpose of understanding the scope and limitations of this research at this pre-literature review introductory stage, certain broad concepts must be hammered-out. DIs is an umbrella term defined as 'processes or institutions, that are new to a policy issue, policy role, or level of governance, and developed to reimagine and deepen the role of citizens in governance processes by increasing opportunities for participation, deliberation and influence' (Elstub and Escobar, 2019, p11). As such, DIs can take forms such as Citizen Assemblies, or voluntary associations (to name but two), with no definitive normatively defined form (Jennings and Saunders, 2019; Walgrave and Vliegenthart, 2012; Bevan and Rasmussen, 2020). DIs can adopt a bottom-up approach wherein informal groups seek to set the policies of low-level local politicians only. Conversely, they can be formal and sophisticated, aiming instead to operate within legislative and/or executive branches of the state. Let us now consider the scope of this research.

Given the broadness of DI forms, and given the multi-tiered nature of the political system, the scope of this research is therefore also broad, and will examine the differing levels of participation operating at differing levels of government equally. In terms of datasets or specific countries or regions, this inherent broadness means that there is ample potential to both specialise and generalise. There is significant literature focussing on Latin America owing to significant democratisation after dictatorships fostering innovations of applied public participation and of democratic innovations generally (e.g see Peruzotti, 2007). Indeed, at the beginning of my research, I assumed this richness would inevitably make the scope of the research Latin America-centric. Later, this richness was determined to be equally represented by the Participedia project, which opened up the potential to move beyond Latin America.

However, the decision to use a QCA-focussed methodology meant that inductive reasoning and personal familiarity with the cases was required to properly assess any causal mechanisms present. This means that this research must mirror my Anglo-centric frame of reference since, epistemologically speaking, only these such cases could be used to reliably evaluate policy impact. Consequently, this research only uses British and Irish cases and only those with their details published in English. Therefore, whilst any insights drawn from this research may be useful in understanding DI behaviour more generally, they only describe the nature of participatory policy-impact in specifically Britain and Ireland. A mention of temporality is important here too since this research looks at public participation specifically within the context of democratic innovations and the shifts in institutional and political perspective which have emerged as a result. The term 'democratic innovations' was coined by Graham Smith (2005) 19 years go at the time of writing, and so this research only examines cases which occurred after this date and, where possible, occurred as close to the time of writing as possible. This provides a very specific ecology of cases where they all share a participatory environment shaped broadly by the impact of DIs. Citizens' Assemblies or

Participatory Budgeting DIs were quite unusual before 2005 and consequently rare. Therefore, this scope of 19 years does not provide a hindrance to the research in any meaningful way.

The need for researcher intimacy and familiarity with the cases puts a practical limit on the scope of cases that can be reasonably analysed. This research makes use of a medium-N dataset of 35 cases. Such a dataset size would be considered unremarkable or even slightly low within research using more traditional quantitative techniques, but is actually fairly substantial within standard QCA practice. Therefore, the data scope of this research is also quite substantial. The robustness of this scope is increased further with practical considerations pertaining to data quality and time frames. The use of the Participedia project and of official evaluator reports means that the dataset could be built quickly and efficiently from succinct and reliable sources. Whilst it would be technically possible to increase the number of cases from 35, each case was deliberately hand-selected to lend something to the overall analysis, meaning that the overall dataset accurately and meaningfully reflects the participatory world.

Having considered the scope of the type of data used, let us now consider the scope of the type of research this is going to be. A significant body of work within existing literature (e.g. see Link et al 2006) looks to internal normative goals as a means of assessment such as the degree of demographic representation or an assessment of some quality of the deliberation. This research does not reflect this position. This research understands that these concerns are valid and that no DI can rightfully be called 'democratic' without representation and franchise. However, the scope of assessment here is to look at the political impact of public participation once policy recommendation has been generated. This means that all the cases examined have been 'successes' in that they have concluded and that any DI which, for instance, failed to conclude owing to irreconcilable conflicts which degraded the democratic nature of a PI, will not have been included within the dataset. This concept will be further fleshed out and justified within the literature review.

This thesis seeks to position DIs as an understudied, but both necessary and valid, avenue for impacting policy. This is deliberately diametrically opposed to traditional conceptions of policy-impact which assumes a non-public political elite as the main policy-impacting actor. This deliberately moves away from interest groups, lobbying groups, or wealthy individuals as the de jure agents of policy impacting in academic circles. This thesis contributes to the field by showing that non-elites and public participation can, and do, influence the way in which politicians think and govern. As such, it is important to understand when and why.

Chapter 2: Problematising Public Participation and Its Study

As previously highlighted, this thesis reviews relevant literature over two chapters. The first deals with the 'why' and 'what' of this research – Why is new research necessary? What does policy-impact mean in a participatory context? What even is public participation, and why does it need to be studied now? At the end of this section the reader will understand that DI's form a plausible remedy to democracy's ills, but the extant theory and literature required to properly understand it is held back with assumptions built from traditional forms of democracy such as electoral representation. The reader will also be aware that a comparative method is best equipped for understanding it.

(2.1) Why Can't Existing Literature Answer the Research Questions?

Before moving onto backgrounds and definitions, it is important to explain why existing literature cannot explain the research questions, and why new and unique research is necessary. Below are the five main points of contention introduced earlier within the introduction:

1) Canon literature assumes policy-impacting actors to be political elites rather than 'non-elites' members of the public

2) Research on democratic innovations tends to focus on government-led initiatives, de-emphasising or even ignoring bottom-up approaches

3) Definitions on what constitutes a successful democratic innovation are split along normative lines

4) Conventional statistical approaches to analysis are unsuitable, and suitable approaches are still part of a small and emerging field

5) Systematic comparative approaches tend to focus on areas like Latin America, rather than the UK and Ireland, and lean heavily towards Participatory Budgeting.

<u>Contention 1: Canon Literature Assumes Policy-Impacting Actors to Be Political Elites</u>

The study of DIs is a relatively recent addition to the wider work on democratic governance, being usually considered to have begun in Smith's 2005 work 'Beyond the Ballot 57 Democratic Innovations from Around the World'. This comes well after the publication and proliferation of those texts and theories which form the bases for the study of agenda-setting – a necessary precursor to policy impact. Baumgartner and Jones' seminal Punctuated Equilibrium Theory (1993), for instance, having been published over a decade prior. As a result, much of these texts do not consider the role of ordinary citizens organised into DIs, and instead interpret agenda-setting through the lens of political elites. This translates to a dominance of pluralist, rationalistic, and interest-based assumptions throughout agenda-setting and policy-impacting theory. For instance, assumptions that such actors are inherently political elites who use significant and varied capital as leverage (Burstein and Linton, 2002), that DI actors are no exception to this rule (Gilens and Page, 2014), and that the two forms of actors are therefore completely interchangeable since they are wrongly presumed to share agenda-setting and policy-impacting mechanisms (ibid). Even scholarly work which examines the agenda and policy-impacting role of the ordinary atomised citizen – that most non-elite of actor – tends to see them as precursors to the 'real' actors of interest groups or the media. Consider Casey's (2023) examination of the agenda-setting impacts of letter-writing, one of the few avenues of open to non-political elites. Even here he claims Punctuated Equilibrium Theory to rely on the influence of media and interest groups as the key catalysts of change. This one case helps demonstrate that, even when examining a form of participation not associated with political elites (ibid), the actor of highest perceived relevance is usually still a political elite.

However, this assumption of agenda-setting and policy-impacting actors as necessarily being political elites means that such theories are of limited relevance when understanding the policy-impacting role of DIs. This can be demonstrated by looking at an example of a classic rationalist perspective of agenda-setting from Burstein and Linton (2002). In this work they don't consider interest groups and SMOs (Social Movement Organisations – a form of public participation) as being meaningfully separate since they assume both to 'affect policy only to the extent that their activities provide elected officials with information and resources relevant to their election campaigns' (Burstein and Linton, 2002, pp382). Here, it is assumed that political information is scarce and that a politician, with full and complete information of any potential outcome, will find it worthwhile to 'trade' political access for an actor in exchange for such information. This is a classic rationalist perspective, and it assumes policy-impacting to be limited to actors who possess sufficient social and financial capital required to engage in such a trade. For instance, they assume that an interest group could wield their significant financial capital to acquire politically useful information, and then use their political capital as an 'in' with a politician. There, the politically useful information could be handed over. Similarly, a policy-impacting actor without either such financial or political capital would not be able to utilise such an approach, and thus would fail to set political agendas.

However, unlike interest groups, DIs are demonstrably not political elites, and thus are not guaranteed to possess sufficient capital of any kind, let alone financial, to first gain such political information, nor is it a safe assumption that they possess the political capital to communicate their ownership of such information, and thus maximise their relative utility. For instance, the Citizens'

Assembly of Scotland was allocated a paltry £0.938 million – an amount based on the Irish Citizens' Assembly budget – for all outgoings, including venue hire, accommodation, and the hiring of contractors in IT, graphic design, PR services, and more to cover over two years of work (Scottish Government, 2021). To put that into perspective, the entire working budget of the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland per year was barely 2% of what the UK's largest interest groups spend on lobbying in a year, and that figure does not even include their non-lobbying budget (Ralph and Wilson, 2017).

Therefore, whilst operating under the rationalist assumptions of Burstein and Linton (2002), a DI should inherently possess zero policy-impacting potential because it lacks tradeable capital. Granted, whilst these government-led DI are likely to possess a modicum of financial or at least political capital, it would be absurd to assume that initiatives such as the Citizens' Assembly of Scotland could ever spare the money to engage in such a rationalist agenda-setting mechanism. Even if they could, it's still vanishingly unlikely that their tiny budget would be sufficient to compete with more well-funded interest groups or other agenda and policy-impacting actors. What is more, the central component to the rationalist assumption is that an agenda and policy-impacting actors possesses secret information unknown but desired by a politician, or have the ability to mobilise their capital to provide useful utility desired by a politician, and that a politician must therefore trade something in order to gain it. However, what sort of politically secret information could be usefully generated by a DI, and what would be the use of keeping it secret even if it was able to do so? Are we to suppose that a DI could reach out to a politician, convincingly inform them that their policy recommendations are imbued with democratic mandate and therefore constitute some form of capital, and only offer to reveal it after the politician promises to champion it? Further, to re-emphasise the point, what form of capital would a cash-strapped and likely small DI be able to muster to compare with likes of trade unions or business groups?

To put it bluntly: under a rationalist assumption, DI should possess zero policy-impacting power because they possess low financial and political capital, and are unable to offer up scarce secret political information in exchange for political leverage. However, as will be made obvious, DIs do possess policy-impacting power despite this. However, their ability to do so cannot be understood through the lens of political elites and their presumed political capital.

It should be noted that published works differentiating between elite and non-elite actors in the context of DIs are not completely unheard of. However their conclusions are too often of little useful value in understanding DIs because they fail to properly demarcate DIs as possessing their own agenda-setting mechanisms, separate to those of political elites. This means such analyses run the risk of misreporting the reasons why a DI might be successful. For instance, Gilens and Page

(2014) sought to establish in what policy areas were agenda and policy-impacting actors most successful and why. Methodologically speaking, they also adopted a condition-centric analytical perspective not dissimilar from this thesis. However, they went on (emphasis my own):

'In order to test among our theoretical traditions, we begin by **considering all organized interest groups together, not distinguishing between mass-based and business-oriented groups**'

(Gilens and Page, 2014, p569)

Firstly, Gilens and Page considered mass-based DIs to be a subset of interest groups which, as was just demonstrated in the discussion of Burstein and Linton (2002), is an inaccurate categorisation. Secondly they also combined DIs and business-orientated groups into the same independent variable despite, for the same reasons as before, the two not having similar mechanisms for agenda or policy-impacting. Unsurprisingly they concluded that policy-impacting was easiest in policy areas pertaining to economics and business. However, given that 'business-orientated groups' (ibid) are likely to possess greater financial capital than 'mass-based' groups, and given that business-orientated groups performing best in business-orientated policy areas is painfully close to being a tautology, it seems likely that the policy-impacting influence of mass-based groups was diluted or completely missed out altogether. Lumping business-orientated groups with mass-based groups in business-orientated policy areas is like lumping elite soldiers in with unarmed civilians in a victorious warzone, and then extrapolating that the civilians must have made for fine warriors.

Lastly, elite and non-elite political actors share a disillusionment with democracy trapped in its malaise, but for vastly different reasons. Non-elites look to the crises in representation, participation, and legitimacy discussed multiple times in this piece and come away disillusioned. However political elites such as politicians – fascinatingly – feel that their efforts to improve democracy and ameliorate the malaise go without reward and without progress. We see two opposing ends of the spectrum looking inwards towards a central point, both frustrated at its failings and inertia to change. As such, any resolutions to the malaise are likely to be vastly different and, since this piece of research only concerns mending democracy from a non-elite perspective, it makes sense to demarcate policy-impacting along these lines. Boswell and Corbett (2015) note that whilst non-elites express frustration at democracy because of perceived opacity, elites feel the same because 'they understand all too well' the system of policy creation and implementation and thus become unmotivated and cynical. Notably, the authors conclude that any effort to truly ameliorate the democratic malaise ought to be a two-pronged attack, with each prong for each side of the elite hierarchy. For the non-elites, the correct medicines are DIs and deliberative governance. By differentiating elites from non-elites, we can provide empirical evidence and support for this effort. This does leave us with the question of the correct medication for political elites. If elite disillusionment stems from a deep understanding of an entrenched but flawed system, then perhaps DIs can act as a way of changing the system and removing the elements which caused this cynicism in the first place. As Hendriks (2013) notes, policy generated by the public is imbued with trust by the elites precisely because it does *not* come from the same old sources of cynicism.

This section demonstrates that the prevailing agenda and policy-impacting literature often assumes that some kind of capital (be it social, political, or financial) in the hand of political elites or elite institutions must exist in order for an actor to set political policy. However, as discussed, DIs more often than not simply lack any one of these forms of capital because they are not political elites or elite institutions. Therefore, an elite-centric and thus a capital-centric model of policy-impacting is of limited relevance to understanding the capabilities of DIs.

Further, whilst some literature which distinguishes between elite and non-elite agenda and policy-impacting *does* exist (e.g. see Gilens and Page, 2014), it often fails to include DIs and DIs as something entirely separate from the capital-having political elites and elite institutions. The discussion of Bowell and Corbett (2015) lays out why this omission is so important. If the end goal is to ameliorate the democratic crises, then we need to design separate interventions for both elites and non-elites, and this requires research which differentiates between the two. It then follows that such research cannot make use of elite-driven rationalist assumptions of policy-impacting as a means of understanding non-elite driven policy-impacting.

<u>Contention 2: Propensity for Researchers to Only Focus on Government-led Initiatives</u>

Academics who study DIs have a tendency to overly focus on state-led initiatives over their bottom-up counterparts. This assumption made sense at the beginning of the field where DIs were seen as largely government processes conducted with the aim of assisting its ability to govern effectively (Smith, 2009). However, as DIs have come to encapsulate any 'political practices beyond the traditional understanding of democratic participation' (Veri, 2022, pp171), the literature rarely opts to analyse bottom-up initiatives over state-led alternatives.

This omittance makes sense when we consider academics will naturally focus on cases where 'there was sufficient information about the case in academic or grey literature to allow comparability of the cases' in order to conduct the strongest possible analysis (Ettlinger and Michels, 2024, pp7). When it comes to bottom-up initiatives, this information may simply not be available or not up to a usable standard. It is also true that much of the emerging work in the field conceptualises a DI as being inherently coupled together with policy makers in a prior arrangement (ibid) which is more feasible with a state-led initiative.

It is also true that many bottom-up initiatives can be interpreted through the lens of more traditional policy-impacting literature. Initiatives such as protests are not anything new and well-represented in work on agenda-setting and policy-impacting, but are not classified as DIs (e.g see Jennings and Saunders, 2019). However, even these forms of participation can still become DIs when combined with emerging practices and processes such as integration with technology (Kirkizh and Koltsova, 2021; Enikolopov et al, 2020 ; Åström et al, 2013). Accordingly, they may very well benefit from an analysis made without the assumptions of non-participatory agenda-setting and policy-impacting discussed earlier.

This hole in the literature is worth filling. When academics do cover bottom-up initiatives, they are often finding the importance of 'non-institutional intermediaries' such as charities or CSOs (Civil Society Organisations) in the success of DIs (Matthews, 2022, pp279). These intermediaries deepen democracy by creating the DIs in the first place or by forming a connective bridge to move policy from unempowered spaces to empowered spaces given that they are welcome and trusted in both (ibid, 2022).

Not only does this hint towards the untapped potential of bottom-up approaches as vital for a future with more participatory democracy, but, as will be seen later in the empirical analysis, an understanding of the policy-impacting impacts of public participation is only possible through their inclusion in academic work. This thesis makes use of several bottom-up approaches like academic-led efforts like the Sheffield Citizens' Assembly on Devolution, or the activities of research foundation trusts as with the UK Stem Cell Dialogue. As will be shown, the strength of the analysis depends on them.

Contention 3: Definitions on What Constitutes a Successful Democratic Innovation Are Split Along Normative Lines

Crises in representation and participation have given rises to crises in legitimacy. In order for DIs to help ameliorate this crisis in legitimacy, they must foster the aspect of input legitimacy concerned with citizen input on the political decision-making process (e.g. see Scharpf, 1999). Naturally, in order for DIs to have input here, they will have to have been effective initiatives. However, what role does effectiveness play in outcomes produced through public participation, and what even is 'effectiveness'?

There is no widely agreed-upon definition of effectiveness, and the definitions of a successful DI are split along normative lines. This raises the further question of where policy-impacting as a metric of success stands amongst these conceptions. Link et al (2006) suggested that normative 'internal' goals as contained within the composition of the participatory initiative itself ought to form the basis of success. Here, a DI ought only to be considered successful if it was truly public, and comprised a selection of participants representing the diversity of the public as a whole. Syme and Sadler (2004) drew similar conclusions, but posited that the number of participants in a group rather than its diversity were sufficient to determine success. Integrating the two together, Fung (2006) linked legitimacy and success by determining that the amount of citizen deliberation dictated success, and that this was best achieved through a large and representatively diverse participatory initiative. Moving away from success as something internal to the policy creation stage, scholars have raised concerns that success ought to be determined by the degree of policy-implementation power wielded by the citizenry (Rowe and Frewer, 2004 ; Fung, 2006 ; King et al, 1998). These scholars ask: How successful has an initiative really been if any policy recommendations are twisted beyond recognition, or even ignored by politicians?

This last point strikes at the heart of the previous definitions of success. How can the promise of DIs be achieved if initiatives are labelled successful even if their policy recommendations are ignored? What is the point in worrying about if policy recommendations come from diverse or large populations, if they all ultimately end up in the same proverbial bin? It is this line of reasoning which forms the foundation to focussing on policy-impact. This is explored in greater details in the next chapter.

Contention 4: Systematic Comparative Approaches to Analysing Democratic Innovations Are Underutilised

I propose that, when it comes to analysing DIS, there are many challenges to using traditional statistical methods. Whilst these challenges can be largely mitigated using novel comparative approaches, and this piece of research is by no means unique in adopting such an approach, this area still forms an underappreciate niche.

Let us first consider the typical use cases for traditional statistical methods, and then see how they fit into the realities of democratic innovations. There are three fundamental features to quantitative research in the social sciences. First, social phenomena must be modelled as something countable, measurable, and generalisable. Secondly, a theory of causality is to be linked to the social phenomena in such a way as to isolate which variables cause which outcome. Third, robust findings have to be replicable and generalisable since they purport to have isolated some essential essence of causality (Bryman, 2016).

However conceptualising democratic innovations in such a way as to make them countable, measurable, and generalisable is deeply subjective and vague since their singular case-based nature throws up too many idiosyncrasies. The implementation of DIs is still in its infancy which means there is no wide consensus on what fundamentally constitutes each form of DI (for instance, what makes a Citizens' Assembly, a CA), posing difficulties for a researcher who wishes to count and generalise (Ryan and Smith, 2014). Further this infancy combined with conceptual vagueness means the pool of robust cases for a population sample is also consequently small.

Secondly, establishing causality by isolating minimal causal variables is a challenge for any participatory researcher since the existing literature suggests that causation is likely to be complex and impossible to isolate to just a few variables. For instance, in his study of Brazilian Participatory Budgeting (PB) initiatives, Wampler (2007) noted that the initiative success depended on multiple causal factors converging, with the exact ordering and proportion of convergence being contingent on the wider context of the initiative. This complex interaction of causal conditions likely to be found in participatory research undermines the principle of generalisability inherent in statistical analytical approaches. If something is context dependent then, by its definition, it cannot be generalised. In contrast, researchers such as Baiocchi (2005) have noted that comparative approaches to similar DI cases, which ought to exhibit similar causal behaviour – actually show variation in what conditions and factors were and weren't beneficial in achieving the desired outcome. As such, any approach which claimed that have identified a generalisable rule of causation would likely have missed this variation had a comparative approach not been taken.

To summarise this section bluntly: the world of DIs is demonstrably full of interconnected factors and conditions which are resistant to quantification and measurement. Any analytical method which recognises one of these issues but not the other is likely to produce results unrepresentative of the real world. A systematic comparative approach is the best method for accommodating both. It should be noted here that, whilst a systematic comparative method clearly shows superiority over traditional analytical approaches in this specific context, it exists in something of an underappreciated niche all on its own. Researchers have criticised the 'within-type' precedence of the comparative approach, for instance being largely confined to analysing solely deliberative polls, or solely, participatory budgeting (Gastil et al, 2017; List et al, 2013; Wampler, 2007). This piece of research will take a systematic comparative approach to a combined population of different DIs and will seek to comment on those factors which facilitate or detract from policy-impacting with an eye to explaining this depending on the case type.

<u>**Contention Five: The Existing Literature Focusses on Latin America and Participatory Budgeting**</u>

Analytical research into DIs has been characterised as being European-Centric and conducted through the epistemological lens of a Western white male (Shana et al, 2021). Shana et al notes that the purpose of this research is to ameliorate Western democratic malaises, and so datasets tend to be of this type. However I contend that work done using a specifically comparative approach actually has the opposite problem. Much of the most promising and interesting work conducted using comparative approaches focussed on Latin America, such as Brazil's precedent of Participatory Budgeting.

As highlighted in the previous section, singular Brazilian cases like the Porto Alegre PB initiative act as paradigms (Ryan and Smith, 2012) and the natural starting ground for future comparative analysis (Baiocchi, 2005). Even as the comparative field developed, it was always done within the greater context of Brazilian and Latin American cases. When Nylen (2003) criticised comparative researchers for choosing single cases for analysis, a tendency which encouraged the cherry-picking of only successful cases, he specifically referred to Porto Alegre as the key offending case.

More recently, Porto Alegre and the wider Latin American area has been described as 'a laboratory of political innovations and participatory governance' and as somewhere where 'democracy encompasses more than elections' (Pogrebinschi, 2020, pp1). Consequently, the first 'comprehensive and systematic' data set on democratic innovations is that of the LATINNO dataset covering Latin America (ibid). Conversely, whilst systematic comparative analysis of non-Latin American initiatives absolutely exists (e.g, see Ryan, 2021), much of the literature still focuses on PB rather than the full theoretical range of DIs.

These are not criticisms per se. Latin America arguably is the laboratory of democratic innovation, and PB are arguably the most well-known and successful democratic innovation. However, where these two points converge shows a literature gap of little to no systematic comparative analysis of multiple forms of democratic innovation outside of Latin America. This piece of research will attempt to close this gap through the application of QCA on British and Irish participatory initiatives.

Conclusion to Contentions:

At this point we can begin to summarise the justification for this research and its approach. DIs are not political elites and so extant theories and models cannot be used to understand their policy-impacting behaviours. What's more, the ecology of DIs is vast, and research needs to be conducted on their many forms rather than focussing on just one type as with existing work on PBs. Promising comparative approaches such as QCA are lesser seen in the prevailing literature, particularly so when it comes to looking at British and Irish cases, and this research seeks to build upon them. Finally, a successful DI is one which actually produces policy recommendations and that these actually impact political policy. Internal goals like representation are important, but are not the focus of this research. The next section covers a deeper exploration of policy impact and why it ought to be studied.

(2.2) Participatory Policy-Impact: Why Study It?

This thesis takes the position that policy-impact ought to be the primary method of assessing DI success. This builds on, and diverges from, the third contention pertaining to the differing normative definitions of 'success' explored in the previous sub-chapter as well as other forms of political impact like agenda-setting. However, what is precisely meant by policy impact, and why study it? Within this sub-chapter I will firstly discuss the alternate forms of political impact available for a DI before settling on a definition of policy-impact and discussing its utility.

What is Policy Impact?

On an intuitive level, it seems that policy making-impact can be conceptualised as a binary outcome, wherein a given political actor either informed policy making or it did not. However, policy-making is is a complex process of dissimilar political actors, acting at differing levels of political governance, with differing degrees of expected outcomes, and all under the influence of differing institutions both formal and informal. In untangling the complexity, Jacquet et al therefore proposed that researchers ought to consider impact on actors, institutions, and policy separately (Jacquet et al, 2023).

Actors can include individual policy-makers all the way to more abstract groups such as media or interest groups. Accordingly, a DI may impact the way they are normatively perceived by these actors, the way these actors engage with ordinary citizens in their own future operations, and the way they derive 'policy-relevant information' (Jacquet and van der Does 2021a ; Jacquet et al, 2023, pp7). Similarly, a DI may impact those institutions which provide 'regulative, normative, and cultural-cognitive elements that provide stability and meaning to social life' (Scott, 2013, pp56). For instance, a DI may alter the way a political institution involves the citizenry in any decision making practice, how this involvement might be achieved, and the reasons as to why. Crucially for this thesis, a DI can also impact upon political policy itself. This refers to 'shifts in the substance of policies, that is, the objectives of policies, the instruments used to achieve them, and the settlement of these instruments' (Jacquet et al, 2023, pp6). Further, a DI may impact on policy in the sense of improving some normative quality of a pre-existing policy, such as its 'effectiveness or efficiency in tackling specific problems' (ibid)'. Policy impact therefore moves beyond simple agenda-setting and has an (preferably decisive in the case of DIs) impact on the 'decision making stage of policymaking' by policy makers (Pogrebinschi and Ryan, 2018, pp141).

Agenda-Setting

Political agenda-setting is the process 'which identifies the problem or issue that needs addressing' (Giorgi, 2017, pp14) often 'through political and social institutions' (Birkland, 1997, pp11). In other words, agenda-setting can be understood as the defining and bringing of problems to the attention of politicians or policy makers and therefore acts as a necessary first stage to policy impact. It is therefore a useful tool for assessing DIs when they do not 'yield authoritative final decisions' but 'can at least begin to sway the legislative process' (Pogrebinschi and Ryan, 2018, pp140). Baumgartner and Jones demonstrated that agenda-setting seems to conform to a system of 'punctuated equilibrium' wherein the response to agenda changes is disjointed and paradigmatic, often failing to occur over a period of time and then suddenly witnessing significant change in response to some sort of stimulus (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993). Agenda-setting, as conceptualised as the amount of attention shown to a problem, tends to be largely stable before the equilibrium is disturbed by 'shifts in framing, venue control, and social mobilization' (ibid, 2006, pp 1).

If agenda-setting is to be understood by understanding shifts in framing, venue control, and social mobilization, then it arguably should be understood through examining the causes of these shifts first. Kingdon and Stano proposed that these shifts occur when three separate processes interact: problems, potential solutions, and the political atmosphere (Kingdon and Stano, 1984). The mere act of describing a political problem implies the definition of a political goal. If the problem is climate change, then this implies the terms of an end goal – for instance, net carbon zero manufacturing. However, for Kingdon and Stano, a political problem only moves as a process in agenda-setting if it is a problem of policy rather than an unavoidable reality of life. He writes: "There is a difference between a condition and a problem. We put up with all manner of conditions every day: bad weather, unavoidable and untreatable illnesses, pestilence, poverty, fanaticism […] Conditions become defined as problems when we come to believe that we should do something about them." (ibid, pp 115).

Naturally, once a topic shifts from being an unavoidable reality of life to a problem demanding to be solved, potential solutions to the problem will inevitably crop up amongst a wider public attitude shift. Remember: when political problems are first identified, their potential solutions are also generated. This principle is pivotal for reconsidering the apparent divide between agenda-setting and the stages of policy uptake. These fresh reinterpretations of an issue drive the agenda-setting mechanism of reframing and foster social mobilisation. Cairney (2007) proposes that a refreshed framing and public interest in a topic excites those policy entrepreneurs intrigued by innovations and shifts in institutional norms within representative politics. As an example, let's look at how the problem of smoking influenced the Scottish political agenda. Negative public attitudes in the UK towards smoking reached a head around the same time as Scottish devolution. This new Scotland-centric way of doing politics – literally 'new politics' (Cairney, 2007, pp1) – provided a fertile opportunity for action. Eager to, as it were, 'try out' the new political system, politicians were decidedly open to the issue reframing and new voices coming from demographics previously underrepresented in a purely electoral democracy. The Scottish Parliament forms an excellent example of the final aspect of punctuated equilibrium theory: the selection of a venue best suited, or at least amiable, to agenda-setting. The Scottish Parliament was simply a good venue arriving at the right time. It was a demonstration of venue control despite such a requirement being criticised in agenda-setting circles for being 'peculiarly American' and rarely a feature elsewhere (True et al, 2019, pp2).

Other Forms of Political Impact

Goodin and Dryzek (2006) noted four ways that DIs could move beyond fulfilling the normative-orientated internal goals - like diversity of participants within a DI, number of participants, or the quality of deliberation - described earlier without having a direct impact on policy-creation and policy makers. Many DIs dealing with more salient or controversial topics will naturally receive significant media attention, and so media coverage amplifies the points of deliberation amongst the general public. Furthermore, this engagement with public deliberation broadcasts public concerns back towards decision-makers (Boswell et al, 2016). Put another way, DIs can impact media actors, and these actors then in turn impact upon pre-existing political processes. This means that even superficially unsuccessful DIs 'that fail to achieve policy change can impact public debates in important ways' further down the line (Jacquet et al, 2023, pp130). For instance, this was something seen with the ICA's deliberation on the legalisation of abortion. Since the ICA comprised non-elite citizens rather than politicians, media coverage was noticeably more sympathetic than would be imagined with such a hot-button issue. With this sympathy came objectivity, and with this objectivity came an increase in public knowledge of abortion and subsequent support for its legalisation (The Guardian, 2019 ; Doyle and Walsh, 2024).

Just as a DI can impact the wider public, so too can it drive 'individual level changes' in the participants themselves (Kuyper, 2018, pp4). Goodin and Dryzek (2006) coined this phenomena as confidence-building, and defined it as the increase in democratic empowerment that stems from robustly deliberating on challenging issues to produce robust, confidently held opinions and policy preferences. However, Parry and Ercan (2023) in their analysis of the Safe Nightlife Citizen Jury in Australia found that DIs also generated confidence in a bi-directional sense between citizen and government. Citizens found that previously held DIs provide case studies for success and demonstrate that similar attempts to involve non-elites in political decision-making need not be tokenistic examples of political window-shopping, but genuine attempts to deepen democracy. This generates confidence not only in DIs as a whole, but for the democratic process and government more widely. Likewise, such DIs bolster the confidence of 'government agencies, stakeholders and bureaucrats in the public's capacity for deliberation' (ibid, pp131).

Thirdly, Goodin and Dryzek (2006, pp237) describe DIs as being somewhat immune to the problem of co-option. Co-option refers to the phenomena of policy makers choosing to ameliorate challenging oppositional policies and/or their advocates by actually involving them in the policy creation process and then deemphasising their contribution. In doing so, these opponents 'lose the foundations of their opposition' (Parry and Ercan, 2023, pp131). However, since DIs are designed to include a wide range of opinions from a wide range of diverse participants, the direction of deliberation is largely unpredictable. Hence, there is no guarantee that including oppositional policies and/or their advocates in deliberation will lessen their impact. In fact, the opposite may very well be true, and their impact may convince the other participants. This point from Goodin and Dryzek links back to confidence-building described above in the previous paragraph. For example, Parry and Ercan (ibid) described how the immunity to co-option generated confidence in the government and DIs in general amongst anti-nuclear DI cynics who, when involved with a DI on the topic, found the recommendations to reflect 'evidence of the jury's independence from government, despite accusations to the contrary' (ibid, pp132).

Lastly, whilst not an impact on policy-creation itself, Goodin and Dryzek describe a DI's impact on policy makers and civil-servants in its capacity as a 'means of public oversight forcing official accountability' and collective problem-solving (Goodin and Dryzek, pp235). A DI provides an opportunity for participants to provide testimony (both critical and positive) and pose queries to those political actors responsible for their actioning. Archon Fung describes how early mini-publics in Chicago, called beat meetings, allowed the city's citizens and police officers to 'begin by using a "brainstorming" process to generate a comprehensive list of crime and safety problems in their neighborhood' (Fung, 2003, pp118). From these problems came strategies for solutions, and from this stemmed a rubric of assessment. When the Chicago police officers were deemed to have failed this assessment then this was put directly to them during the beat meetings, thus generating accountability alongside deliberation on how to proceed with the problem in future. Whilst these beat-meetings did not impact the formal policy of the Chicago police force, it nonetheless impacted the delivery of pre-existing policy, and accountability of its execution.

Why Study Policy Impact?

Of the two arguments within this thesis to study policy-impact, the arguably weaker of the two concerns the simple fact that doing so will help fill the gap of 'empirical study of the impact of existing practices on policymaking and the public sphere' (Jacquet et al, 2023, pp4). Or, to put it another way, because studying policy-impact fills a gap in the literature.

One such reason for this gap concerns the still relatively-new status of DIs and the need to initially prove the concept as viable before moving onto empirical questions. Sufficient time was needed to progress before a robust retrospective analysis confirming many of the hopes of democratic theorists and refuting initial critiques could be achieved (e.g see Curato et al, 2017). This logically led to a focus on the 'micro processes of DIs' (Jacquet et al, 2023, pp4) such as those normative conceptions of success discussed in the previous chapter. The result of these initial focusses has been the stunted research on DI's 'impact on the wider political system' (ibid) and the lack of a systematic understanding of this impact (e.g see Parkinson and Mansbridge, 2012).

Another reason concerns the simple fact that many DI researchers are also their biggest advocates. In an academic world still struggling with publication bias, wherein there exists the impetus to only publish new and exciting findings rather than the mundane or unsuccessful, and the desire to publish answers to pressing questions without damaging 'the reputation of the innovation itself' (Spada and Ryan, 2017, pp776), many important contributions to understanding policy-impact will fail to inform the academic field.

Lastly, even outside of DIs, processes for robustly identifying policy-impact are far from agreed-upon. The field is complex with many actors and sources (such as media, lobbyists, or interest groups) contributing differing degrees of influence. Therefore, there is no simple means of deriving the influence of a DI on policy creation, since there is no simple way of doing so for the extant and better-understood political actors. Further, Jacquet and van der Does (2021b) argue that DI researchers have yet to meaningfully engage with even this cursory body of knowledge. The consequence of this is that studying 'DIs' policy impact is yet to fully exploit substantive and methodological insights' on relevant research (Jacquet et al, 2023, pp5).

The substantively stronger argument for studying policy-impact pertains to the ability to discern between genuine attempts to deepen democracy and involve citizens in decision-making, and DIs which merely give the impression of doing so, usually to benefit political elites.

Papadopoulos and Warin (2007, pp459) noted that DIs attracted political behaviour they labelled as 'political window-dressing'. Here phrases often found in DIs such as 'good governance' or 'deliberative democracy' were co-opted by politicians as buzzwords to give the casual observer the impression of being committed to deepening democracy (ibid). This forms the superficial façade of deepened democracy much like the superficial façade of a shop window. Naturally, this does not apply to each and every DI, but if success is determined by internal normative goals, then it becomes impossible to tell the difference between genuine attempts to deepen democracy and mere political window-dressing. However, by shifting focus to policy-impact as a determinate of success, this issue is neatly avoided. It must be iterated here that considerations like participant group size and diversity are non-negotiable elements in any serious attempt to deepen democracy. However, only by looking at whether a politician is committed to the initiative enough to allow any policy recommendations to impact their own policy, can we determine whether an initiative meaningfully deepens democracy. Put simply and perhaps bluntly, we ought to look for action, not lip-service.

This conceptualisation of policy impact as a useful measure of DI success is starting to gain recognition amongst democratic practitioners. For instance, in his analysis of the Irish Citizens' Assembly, Courant noted that the failure to include tangible policy impact as a measure of initiative success, over other forms of impact like agenda-setting described earlier, would be to ignore 'elected officials [having] decisive influence over the fate of the democratic innovation' thus opening up the gates for 'self-interested orientations' and the failure to properly democratise policy creation (Courant, 2021, pp10). This simple point neatly summarises why a focus on agenda-setting alone would be an imperfect measure of DI success: a set agenda is not a guarantee of a tangible outcome informed by a DI. Further, Courant thus echoes concerns (e.g. from Blaug, 2002 or Papadopoulos and Warin, 2007) that politicians may co-opt DIs and use them to further their own agendas under the veil of deference to the public in the form of a political window-shop.

Bringing the narrative back to this thesis, normative internal goals as markers of success are 'not sufficient if democratic innovations are expected to solve the crisis of representation' (Pogrebinschi and Ryan, 2018, pp136). In order to resolve the democratic malaise described earlier, DIs 'must also be effective' (ibid). Not only is studying policy impact the most useful way to assess DI effectiveness, but it is also in fact the only way of truly answering the research questions, and using lessons learned to design effective DIs in the future.

(2.3) Defining Public Participation

Having now defended the sole examination of policy-impact from DIs, it is necessary to now define these innovations initiatives properly. In order to do this, it is first necessary to define public participation as a whole. Political participation in the context of democratic innovations may at first glance appear to be an obvious and intuitive concept. A glib definition might be something simple like all instances of the wider public acting democratically in a formal avenue outside of elections. However, as this section will demonstrate, not only is this working definition a gross over-simplification, each stage of arriving to a useful definition is dripping in value-laden concerns which may not be immediately obvious.

The democratic innovations researcher is challenged to confront their assumptions when creating a definition. By taking a broader conceptualisation of democracy beyond traditional elections, they effectively confer 'democratic status' on those alternate forms of participation which meet their proper definition (whatever it may be), and reject those which do not. For instance, the space between spirited legitimate protest and a riot is often blurred and shifting, yet the democratic innovations researcher must accept responsibility for drawing a line down it. This short section will explore why defining public participation is such a challenge, nail down some of the practical necessary elements, and then introduce and resolve some of the normative implications with a useful definition.

<u>**Defining Public Participation:**</u>

Let us first consider what we mean when we say 'participation' – not just in the context of DIs– but in the context of democracy generally. Robert Dahl's book on democratic agenda-setting power Who Governs? de-emphasises any discussion of definitions in favour of a categorised indices stretching from individuals who had never voted, to the frequent voter additionally well-experienced in the workings of political campaigns (Dahl, 1961). Here, it is not a matter of what form participation takes, but what role in the electoral system an individual participates in. It is assumed that political participation and elections are so inextricable, that they functionally form a tautology. Contrast this attitude with the definition coming from Barnes and Kaase (1979) nearly twenty years later: "[…] all voluntary activities by individual citizens intended to influence either directly or indirectly political choices at various levels of the political system" (Barnes and Kaase, 1979, p42).

This definition deviates from Dahl's assumptions about participation in several important ways whilst making a definitive claim about the fundamentals of democratic practice. Firstly, it accommodates the prospect of citizens engaging in democratic practice outside of the ballot box by deliberately removing reference to any specific avenue, thus legitimising other avenues such as protest. Secondly, and building on from the first, by removing reference to elections or the ballot box, Barnes and Kaase derive the essence of democratic practice: citizens seeking to influence political outcomes in any and all levels of political governance. Finally, the reader should take note of the deliberate inclusion of intention as a necessary component to democratic practice. Barnes and Kaase produced this definition in the wake of field-wide anger at Verba and Nie who had previously produced their own definition which, whilst being effectively the same, had purposefully rejected the prospect of 'civil disobedience and political violence' from ever being considered democratic (Verba and Nie, 1972; Conge, 1988, pp241). This recognition of intention bestowed democratic legitimacy on avenues such as protests as a means of participating politically; a means every bit as democratic as voting in an election.

Wading through the controversy over defining something which had previously seemed so simple, Conge (1988) collated and contrasted the then-canon theories of political participation and derived six common contentions:

1) Active participation versus passive participation.

Is participation something done actively like voting or campaigning, or can participation be passive as with an individual who is politically well-informed?

2) Formal versus informal.

Can informal, more abstract forms of participation ever really be considered democratic practice, and what is the threshold between legitimate and illegitimate practice?

3) Structural versus Non-Structural Objects

Is political participation solely defined as seeking to change the politician in power and their policies, or can it include attempts to 'change the form of government'?

4) State versus Non-State

Is political participation solely confined to the realm of politicians, government institutions, policies, and internal state actors such as police officers, or does it include attempts to set the policies of non-government actors like private corporations?

5) Top-down or bottom-up?

Is political participation a completely voluntary practice of citizens choosing how and when to participate, or does the term also include state sponsored or guided attempts to help citizens pursue and actualise their policy preferences?

6) Intended versus Unintended Consequences.

Are the intended outcomes of participation relevant to its identification and definition? Conge proposes that political intentions are useful for identifying why individuals politically participate but not for identifying what political participation actually entails. Likewise, an examination of outcomes merely describes the political world after political participation has occurred.

At this point it should be clear that proposing a definition of public participation, which includes all plausible forms and excludes all implausible forms, is a challenging task. Such a definition would likely fit awkwardly over several aspects of perfectly valid democratic practices whilst fitting well with others. The next section re-examines and resolves each of these main points of contention in turn and uses these discussion points to produce a definition that is specific to public participation in the context of democratic innovations.

Defining Political Participation in the Context of Democratic Innovations

From these six contentions, the existing scholarly work discussed above, and aided by the guiding principles behind this research, we can begin to form our working definition of political participation in the context of (and only in the context of) democratic innovations. From here on in, we will return to just using 'public participation' as a shorthand for political participation within such a context.

Our focus on policy-impact practically necessitates active participation over passive participation. This reflects the divide between political participation, and participation in the political. To use an example, an individual following a vegan diet for environmental reasons certainly politically participates in a passive sense, but they would only ever possess potential policy-impacting power if they make the leap to an active form of participation, such as participating in a protest with an explicit intention of enacting some change. Now it could well be that said vegan influences the non-vegans around them, but to call this policy impact is just a game of word play. We are concerned with the policy-impact of politicians through democratic means and, again, protests are not DIs.

There is no requirement for public participation to either be formal or informal, nor to be purely one or the other. As Barnes and Kaase (1979) openly stated, and Verba and Nie (1972) merely alluded to, the exercise of democracy comes down to influencing political choices wherever they are made. Not only is this non-prescriptive about democracy's formality, but it also accommodates the possibility that differing areas of political decision-making may benefit from differing levels of participatory formality. This principle also extends to Conge's fifth contention concerning whether political participation is top-down, or bottom-up. Here, public participation can be both, so long as the end goal is political policy-setting.

An explicit niche explored by this piece of research has been to reject the rational model of agenda-setting and policy-impact by focussing on the behaviour of politicians outside of election time. Policy-impact here would thus be contingent on identifiable conditions rather than the possibility of self-interested politicians concerned for their job. As such public participation concerns itself with non-structural aims, seeking to influence the specifics of a politician's position, rather than the position itself. Put bluntly: public participation here seeks to set policies, not choose politicians.

One of the main guiding principles behind this research has been the possibility for democratic innovations to ameliorate the crises in representation, wider participation, and government legitimacy. Questions of whether public participation seeks to only influence state actors or actors beyond formal politics, are easily put to bed. Public participation necessarily seeks to impact the policies of current politicians (even if it may do more).

Lastly, the intentions behind any individual when they exercise public participation is completely irrelevant. I propose that the simple fact that an individual has participated in a political initiative should take precedent over the reasons why. If, for instance, somebody participates in a Citizens' Assembly as a way of making friends, then any political outcome is unintended. But it was still participation in the political, and thus political participation. Hooghe et al. (2014) highlights that it is impossible to ever accurately determine the reasons behind engaging in a political activity, nor should supposedly wrong intentions undermine the legitimacy of any DI. 'Politically expressive' acts are just as important in shaping policies as 'purely instrumental acts' (ibid). Further, as Conge (1988) writes, variables such as intention and degrees of success are empirical features of research which pre-supposes a definition, not necessary features of the definition itself. He writes: '[political participation] should not encompass the intentions of individual participants or the outcomes of their actions. Intentions may explain why people participate (without accounting for what political participation is), while outcomes (whether intended or unintended) explain the consequences of political participation (again without accounting for its nature)' (ibid, pp247).

Put another way, it would be absurd to say something constitutes public participation only when an policy was deliberately set. As such, whilst public participation can accommodate intentional and non-intentional consequences, the issue is completely beside the point. Therefore such an issue won't be included in this piece's working definition.

Having resolved these contentions, a tight working definition for public participation in the context of democratic innovations can be produced: Any form of active participation in an initiative under the umbrella of DIs, both formal and informal, instituted in any way, that seeks to impact political policy. This raises a further question of what exactly constitutes a DI. The next section introduces this concept by distinguishing DIs from other forms of democracy.

(2.4) Democratic Innovations

Given this framework and understanding behind public participation, there is a requirement to now discuss definitions of DIs as something separate from traditional conceptions of democracy. Otherwise, such a wide definition could comfortably accommodate any form of interaction with politics or politicians. Let us first consider how DIs can be defined and then settle on a definition.

However, despite the term itself being coined by Smith (2005), who provided his own definition, and list of 57 such examples (ibid, pp4-6), there is no one authoritative definition or typology by which a democratic innovation can be identified or easily compared. For Smith (2009), taking cues from 'participatory budgeting in Brazil, Citizens' Assemblies on Electoral Reform in Canada, direct legislation in California and Switzerland and emerging experiments in e-democracy' democratic innovations were 'institutions that have been specifically designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process' (ibid, pp1). This definition has found praise for its rejection of democratic innovations as a singular endeavour, but rather as a plurality of processes which 'embody the practice' (Elstub and Escobar, 2019).

Whilst this plurality certainly accommodates any and all initiatives which are unambiguously democratic innovations, Smith's (2009) definition appears to cover certain cases which don't seem to fit in the regular every-day understanding of the term as we would currently use it. For instance, Smith's definition ascribes no importance to temporal implementation. Would then the implementation of the Parliamentary system in 1215 constitute a democratic innovation? What about the women getting the right to vote in 1918? Within the context of the time, these would certainly be innovations in democracy (if not exactly democratic *per se* as with the example of the Parliamentary system), but they also highlight a gap in Smith's current definition: DIs ought to presuppose the existence of a failing representative democratic system, and that a democratic innovation is a new deviation and adjustment of the existing system. Again, this may seem like pedantry, but it provides a robust distinction between academic study of the Porto Alegre PB in Brazil and something like Brazil's first democratic election after dictatorship.

Without an established definition, the literature on DIs has a tendency to list examples which the author argues to be definite examples, rather than provide a fixed metric of what it is and what it is not. For instance, consider this example from Baiocchi and Ganuza: 'Democratic innovations cover a wide range of instruments: participatory budgets, citizen juries, deliberative surveys, referenda, town meetings, online citizen forums, e-democracy, public conversations, study circles, collaborative policy making, alternative dispute resolutions, and so on' (Baiocchi and Ganuza, 2016, p39). They derived this list by tracing the genealogy of democratic innovations from Porto

Alegre as something which encapsulated the desire for progressive social movements and leftist politicians to reject the traditional 'vanguardist' model of left-wing politics (ibid). Or, in other words, Porto Alegre and all DIs necessarily reflect a rejection of representative politics – a definition which helps little. As a further critique to Baiocchi and Ganuza's (2016) work, their list freely mixes means of deepening democracy with the ends in the form of initiatives. For instance, an online citizen forum forms both a means of deepening democracy, but also an avenue. Within this avenue, a study circle forms only a means to be utilised. As such, categorising them together in a singular list is highly misleading. But only through prior knowledge could this distinction be made, so a misleading list to the layperson does little towards providing a definition.

Conversely, consider Geissel's (2013) literature survey of over 200 European examples of DIs wherein 'three types of participatory innovations can be identified: cooperative governance, deliberative procedures, direct democratic procedures' (Veri, 2022, p5). Rather than repeating Baiocchi and Ganuza's example by listing means and forms of DIs, she defines a DI based on whether it fits in one of the three categories. However, this fastidiousness exposes the main problem of such an approach – certain features of DIs straddle each classification and defy pigeon-holing. For instance, are we to state that a procedure of direct democracy will always be without an aspect of deliberation?

Side-stepping the inflexibility of Geissel's (2013) typology, and seeking to capture the spirit of democratic innovations rather than simply listing them, Elstub and Escobar provide their own definition: 'processes or institutions, that are new to a policy issue, policy role, or level of governance, and developed to reimagine and deepen the role of citizens in governance processes by increasing opportunities for participation, deliberation and influence' (Elstub and Escobar, 2019, p11).

Overall, this definition does satisfy their state goal. What's more, the recognition of newness as integral to innovation also satisfies my objection to Smith's definition lacking in temporality. What's more, it distinguishes between purely deliberative initiatives that do not, and were never intended to, impact upon political policy such as study circles, whilst accommodating Smith's 'co-governance innovations' and 'direct democracy innovations' such as Citizen Assemblies (Smith, 2005, pp109). Accordingly, this is the definition used throughout for a DI.

(2.5) The Democratic Malaise – Why Democratic Innovations Matter:

Having discussed what publication participation and DIs are, we arrive at the need to explain they are emerging in the first place. Democratic innovations are gaining increasing recognition for their ability to provide alternatives to a system of representative democracy which is plagued by continuous crises. However, this raises certain background questions querying exactly *why* favour is turning away from representative democracy, what the symptoms of a democratic malaise are, how it was that DIs become the go-to alternatives, and from did this precedent originate from? This section of the literature review lays out the need for, and the viability of, DIs by answering these questions. I propose that there is a crisis in the ability of a representative government to effectively fulfil policy promises, that this leads to rises in the popularity of populists and partisans, that increasing dissatisfaction fosters falling legitimacy and political trust -- often from the most underrepresented demographics already (Quilter-Pinner et al, 2021). However, support for democracy as a broader system remains strong, and support for DIs as a remedy ranges from the most underrepresented (van der Does and Kantorowicz, 2022), civil servants and administrators (Warren, 2009), up to representative legislators themselves (Hendriks, 2013).

In his 2012 *The Democratic Malaise: Globalization and the Threat to the West* Kupchan identified the ability for governments to govern effectively decreases as the negative effects of globalisation take hold. Whilst a link between citizen policy preferences and political action could not be guaranteed before, such a link now becomes weaker and weaker as the extent of globalism increases. Coining the term 'democratic malaise' to describe this effect, Kupchan theorises that globalisation has deepened economic inequalities in industrialised economies, ironically leading to deindustrialisation as market forces demand a service-based economy, and made insulation from foreign financial crises less effective. Naturally, citizens demand that their government respond to ameliorate these problems. However a government's ability to do so may contradict their international obligations under a globalised system, even if these obligations stand as a response to globalisation. For instance, a government may wish to re-industrialise a nation in accordance with the demands of the people, but be unable to do so owing to international obligations to combat climate change. In response, a government is trapped in an impossible dilemma. What's more, traditional policy tools and measures of intervention become increasingly less effective in a globalised world. Economic stimulus policy in a single country is as effective as combatting global economic depression as a bucket is to saving a sinking ship. Either way, a democracy is faced with a crisis in the ability of the state to govern according to citizen demands (Kupchan, 2012).

This progress lowering of efficacy over time encourages partisan or fringe politicians who purport to offer new solutions to old problems. Rather than creating real change and handing the citizenry "real" representation, partisan politics have only made passing popular and effective policy harder and harder as they derail rare moments of bi-partisan political unity and dynamism (Fiorina et al, 2008; Newport, 2019). The cruel irony is that the economic inequality from globalisation only exacerbates partisan sentiment further (Stewart et al, 2020). Throughout the industrialised democratic world, partisan politics from representatives is on the increase (e.g. see Bértoa and Rama, 2021).

As a direct result, citizens of industrialised economies have been characterised as holding view of 'distrust and disaffection' towards tangible figureheads in government, but also more worryingly, towards electoral democracy as a valued institution. When asked in 1944, barely one third of the British public said they could not trust politicians, compared to two thirds in 2021 (Quilter-Pinner et al, 2021). For Kupchan, the end result is simple. Without the ability to govern according to citizen demands, and without the support of the citizens in the first place, a government must inevitably lose its legitimacy to govern (Kupchan, 2012). If we accept Kupchan's argument then whatever the solution to the crisis in governance, it must either dismantle the globalised capitalist economy, or remove policy creation from the power of the partisans. It is the latter of most relevance to DIs.

Falling political legitimacy inevitably leads to falling political trust. This inevitably leads to a decline in participation which create traditional forms of representation (such as elections) since the assumed link between citizen policy preferences and political action can no longer be guaranteed. This effect encapsulates the crisis of representation (Tormey, 2015). Representation has always been assumed to be a function of the electoral system. In the election period, it was assumed that politicians would rationally match their policies to the weighted and hierarchical policy preferences of the citizens, and the winning politician would be the individual who best represented the maximum number of voters. Within the crisis of representation, voters have rejected the 'politics of politicians' and focussed their attentions on what has been described as 'subterranean politics' -- less structure, less direct, and more creative forms of political participation (Tormey, 2015; Kamlage and Nanz, 2017; Dekker and Hooghe, 2003). These subterranean groups can be characterised by their active and deliberate rejection of representatives and the idea of representative politics. Movements like Occupy Wall Street, the hacking group Anonymous, or Extinction Rebellion reflect the frustrations of a voiceless people whilst possessing no hierarchy. Each participant is on an equal level. Citizens are allowed to participate and represent themselves in the form they see fit instead of backing a pre-selected politician with a cynical estimation of the people's policy demands. Conversely, the political world has also seen semi-subterranean groups which seem to buck this trend. These groups often characterise themselves as non-political (although ironically thus making a very specific political statement) and seem to revolve around a central representative figure, a figure for whom each participant can invest in and be rewarded with a semblance of a voice. Consider Russel Brand or Jordan Peterson[1]. However, vitally, these groups still actively reject political parties, politicians in their traditional form, and the election process.

If we can summarise the advent of subterranean politics as choosing self-representation over assigned representation in a formal political institution, then this seems to sound the death knell for the measures of political activity and participation traditionally used in academia (Brennan and Hamlin, 1999). In the Western democratic world alone, France, Italy, and – the main focus of this research – the UK have all seen plummeting party membership levels, often less than a third of the peak value (Van Biezen et al, 2011). All the more shocking, these traditional measures of democratic representation ought to be at their very highest owing to the post 2000s being the most democratic century yet, with the highest number of democratic countries ever, and the lowest numbers of polled individuals who desire a political system other than democracy (More in Common Project, 2021). Even in less objectively democratic times, the average turnout across the democratic world remained stable for over 40 years immediately following World War Two and towards the collapse of Soviet communism (Solijonov, 2016).

What should be clear at this point, is that democratic dissatisfaction is high, but this does not mean high dissatisfaction with democracy itself. We are not necessarily looking at an autocratic future. The democratic malaise has not solely been noticed by the voting public, but also by politicians and administrative institutions, where attempts to ameliorate the malaise can be identified. Even before Tormey (2015) and Kupchan (2012) hinted towards the end of electoral democracy, Warren described how the burgeoning seeds of DIs could be found – not in the manifestoes of political parties or the policy preferences of politicians, or what Warren referred to as 'class agents and social movements' – but in the field of 'policy and policy-making – the domain of technocrats and administrators' (Warren, 2009, pp38). In his study of governance-driven democratisation, Warren noted three innovations informing the practice of political administration: 'empowered participation, focused deliberation' and administrative attentiveness to the outcomes – intended or not – of any policy.

[1] Russel Brand and Jordan Peterson are two examples of counter-culture political and cultural commentators who make use of a media-focussed platform to appeal to the politically apathetic and disenfranchised. Such individuals often possess their own distinct brand of politics and political ideas with few colleagues or rivals, and so often *are* the topic of discussion rather than individuals who articulate or encapsulate the topic

It seems clear that these 'technocrats and administrators' are operating on normative principles of political legitimacy and what the role of governance *ought* to be, but also making pragmatic descriptive claims about how to best realise it through every-day practice, which complement public participation.

Here, the ideal creation of policy is shifted away from internal elite-driven sources with their own agendas and policy preferences, and towards a fresh re-imagining of the public as stakeholders of policy (Warren, 2009; Papadopoulos & Warin 2007). Political legitimacy is generated here since the public's involvement in the creation of a policy necessarily forms consent to be bound by that policy if the public approved of its content.

This principal gels well with public participation and DIs as a practical and pragmatic means of best integrating the public into the policy creation process. The most basic principle of public participation supposes that a diverse population of citizens will deliberate on a given topic and, by virtue of their diversity and differences, will each provide unique and complex contributions both to potential policy *and* to wider discourse by providing a roadmap of their deliberative decisions. However, if and when any common ground can be established, these then form the basis for clear deliverables or the most basic components to policy recommendations. If all the participants agree on something, then that something should automatically be included in the process of creating policy. In response to these clear deliverables, a rubric can be logically derived which informs when a policy has and has not been in line with the rubric's requirements, and thus informing when a policy is legitimate (Van Damme and Brans, 2011). In other words, DIs are a pragmatic means of generating political legitimacy both in theory, and in the eyes of a new generation of civil servants and political administrators.

At the end of this section, it should be noted that scholars seldom discuss the democratic malaise without discussing encouraging solutions. These solutions often revolve around the potential for democratic innovations and public participation (e.g. see Hertie School of Governance, 2017). Deliberation as part of public participation side-steps the political deadlock acerbated by partisan politicians. Public involvement in policy creates two main things. First, it guarantees that governmental policy is truly representative since it formulates a tangible and unambiguous link between the policy preferences of the public and the espoused policies of the representatives. Second, public involvement in the creation of a policy will imbue that policy with natural political legitimacy and public ascent since the public has defined the terms of their governance. Hence the impact of DI policy on the policy of a politician would demonstrate a commitment to deepening democracy and a wish to act on the democratic mandate. This demonstrable commitment can repair broken political trust and cynicisms with democracy. Democratic innovations and public participation 'revive outdated representative democracies' with new approaches and assumptions of what democracy could be (Karlsson et al, 2020, pp114).

The potential for public participation is not based on idealism or the opinions of ivory-tower academics – but built on practical considerations and requirements. The future of democracy depends on understanding public participation and democratic innovations better. It depends on knowing when and why public participation is most successful, and using these lessons to better design future initiatives. This is the central aim to this thesis.

(2.6) Conclusions of Chapter 2

This research uses the highly promising comparative method to look at a wide range of lesser-studied non-elite driven attempts at policy impact to intervene in democracy's malaise. A DI is defined as: 'processes or institutions, that are new to a policy issue, policy role, or level of governance, and developed to reimagine and deepen the role of citizens in governance processes by increasing opportunities for participation, deliberation and influence' (Elstub and Escobar, 2019, p11). This first literature review provided background and definitions. The second part next will look at how this research arrived at its tested conditions and hypotheses.

Chapter 3: How to Best Resolve the Research Problems

Whilst the first literature review deals with the 'what' and 'why' of this research, the second examines those pieces of literature which enable us to answer how the research questions will be answered. This piece begins by looking at existing work on DI design to see how existing work theorises the conditions which make a DI successful or unsuccessful. The second chapter examines the implications of focussing on just the UK and Ireland and resolves the inherent tension between the two country's political systems. The third section takes a broader view based heavily from political theory and case studies to build up a series of conditions which have a causal impact on the ability for DIs to impact political policy. The culmination of this chapter are the bricks with which the theoretical framework was built. In conjunction with the ideas explored in the previous chapter, six conditions are proposed which determine successful participatory policy-impact. These are: an administerial and government bureaucratic culture open to participatory policy-impact, influence from outside CSOs, degree of policy preference overlap between a DI's recommendations and that of the target politician, the ideological inclination of target politicians, the impetus for a politician to utilise DI and DIs in the first place, and the degree of policy recommendation salience.

(3.1) Designing Democratic Innovations

This thesis straddles two camps of political science. It has one leg in the descriptive camp of political science, wherein the establishment of those causal conditions which determine policy-impact is done in the spirit of investigating the political world and to 'explain why things are the way they are' (Stoker, 2013, pp175). However, it also has relevance in the world of system design, a world concerned with actively improving process design to better achieve a given outcome, echoing accusations that 'deliberative systems theory has so far remained an analytical enterprise, less concerned with practical questions of democratic design' (Dean et al, 2020, pp690). An alternate way of conceptualising this research would be to ask: "In what ways are the goals of DIs institutionalised and reflected by the design of democratic innovations?"

The Impact of Institution Design on Policy Impact

Whilst democratic innovations are generally 'cookie cutter' in design, with deliberative polling even being trademarked to prevent its improper use and modification, the minutiae of features can be configured to suit the specific context and to achieve the overall goals (Bobbio, 2019; Ganuza & Baiocchi, 2012). Sherry Arnstein's pioneering 'ladder of citizen participation' proposes that citizen participation can be conceptualised as a singular scale stretching from the lowest form of citizen power in policy-creation to the highest (Arnstein, 1969, pp216). Modifying and designing DIs would therefore be a question of configuring – and usually maximising – citizen control. However, Arnstein's ladder presupposes that high citizen power equates to high design effectiveness. For instance, commentary on citizen control does little to assess the effectiveness of a design which set out to maximise citizen learning (Collins and Ison, 2009), or a design to facilitate anything other than policy outcomes. What's more, high citizen power ought not even be considered necessarily desirable. Fung (2003) noted that high citizen power when not combined with other desirable attributes (such as high or proportional representation) actually hinders democracy since it side-steps representative democracy whilst simultaneously creating a new unelected authoritative group. The International Association for Public Participation builds on this work with increments not only 'more neutral and not so value-laden' (Bobbio, 2019, pp45), but steps which reflect specific roles and purposes. The low citizen control increment is replaced with citizens taking a distinct informing role which is neither worse nor better than total control – just simply different. This development of Arnstein's ladder demonstrates an important principle: 'intensity of involvement and the weight of influence are not the only sensitive dimensions' (ibid).

Fung's equally pioneering Democracy Cube includes three axes of similar dimensions which are used to construct something of a 3D categorical arena. One of these dimensions is functionally similar to Arnstein's ladder, but it is joined with 'participation selection methods' which stretches from 'expert administrators' forming the bulk of a deliberative committee, to 'diffuse public sphere'. The final axis is 'modes of communication and decision' which stretches from 'technical expertise' to 'listen as spectator' (Fung, 2006, pp67-68). With his cube, Fung argued that each dimension corresponded to 'legitimacy, justice, and the effectiveness of public action' and – crucially – that there was no blanket design which accommodated all thee simultaneously, and that certain designs sitting in specific groupings within his 3D arena were 'best suited to specific objectives' (ibid, pp66).

However, configuring a DI to sit within each specific grouping in the democracy cube comes with numerous design dilemmas. If the goal of a DI is to emphasise participation as the most important normative goal, then any initiative design which includes public participation will suffice to a degree. However, if the goal is to create solutions to problems and to enact policy, then a mostly deliberative design is needed, since the use of reason and consideration amongst the effected public stakeholders should generate effective, balanced, and pragmatic policy (Bobbio, 2019; Fung, 2006). To complicate matters further, Urbinati proposed that solving problems stemming from politician inaction require significant citizen power but not necessarily significant deliberation – just so long as some deliberation occurs (Urbinati, 2006). Likewise, political problems stemming from normative complexity require the opposite, wherein citizen power is necessary to be present (though its magnitude matters less) but substantial deliberation is necessary (ibid). This demonstrates that the design of a DI will impact its ability to create viable policy recommendations, with lesser policy impact repercussions as a result. Further, Urbinati's theory supposes that the ratio of power versus deliberation will favour certain policy areas over others. This research looks to highly salient policies like abortion as having significant policy-impacting abilities. If Urbinti is correct, then the policy impacts of a DI dealing with such an issue will be higher if the DI has a heavy focus on deliberation. Though this wasn't tested explicitly, and such a statement ought to be taken with a pinch of salt, the results from this thesis do suggest the validity of Urbinti's idea.

DIs are founded on the principles of representation and inclusion of the public. However, on a practical level, only a tiny proportion of the population have the chance to participate, raising questions as to how to best operationalise public involvement. DIs, such as public hearings, tend to adopt an open-door format where anyone is free to move in and out of the initiative, where public input is more important than deliberation, where participants self-determine the degree of their involvement and self-select as a population (Nabatchi and Leighninger, 2015). This latter factor means the participating population tends to be quite different than a randomly selected population with 'interest groups, political officials, experts, lay citizens, community organisations, NGOs, business groups, media, social commentators all in one room' (Lightbody, 2024, pp7). DIs such as mini-publics, of which Citizen Assemblies are one form, largely differ on each of these factors. Mini-publics will not have an open-door format, and participants will often be paid to ensure continuous engagement with a highly structured and facilitated deliberation. Whilst experts will still feature, their role is not equal to that of the public participant in that they provide' evidence and advocacy of relevant information and positions and are then cross-examined by the lay citizens' (Escobar and Elstub, 2017, pp1). The latter option vastly outweighs the former in terms of its popularity amongst researchers (Grönlund et al, 2014). The reasons as to why are obviously specific to each researcher. However Grönlund (2022) later noted that the success of mini-publics is often down the highly structure collaborative involvement with politicians. The formality and rigour of mini-publics may explain the specific reasons as to why politicians wish to engage in the first place, which thus increases the chance of explaining why a mini-public might be effective, which thus makes their examination a more appealing prospect for a researcher. The potential for policy impacts here are obvious: if you want politician involvement with the intention of impacting policy, then a mini-public would appear to be the optimal choice.

Initiatives based on self-selection or sortition both contain advantages and drawbacks. Self-selection emphasises the democratic nature of a participation, such that anyone may participate, and nobody is considered illegible. However, self-selection often means a self-selected group of biased individuals, or a group consistently entirely of a certain demographic. Practically speaking, an open-door policy may attract anyone, but it will only retain those with the interest, time, and ability to stay – such as retired citizens. Conversely, mini-publics appear to emphasise the democratic principle less than open-door policies since it necessarily removes the chance for anyone to participate by picking participants through random selection. Subsequently, they are less prone to biased selection and aim to collect participants representative of the larger population (Lafont, 2015). Unfortunately, the aspect of participant retention remains a problem since only an individual of very specific and comparatively uncommon characteristics would be able to participate fully. What's more, a purely random selection of participants often entrenches social discrimination of minority groups. For instance, owing to being a minority, no First Nation individual was picked to participate in the British Columbia assembly despite their interests being a topic of discussion (Warren and Pease, 2008). Owing to the popularity of selective mini-publics in the literature, compromises or solutions to the problems outlined above seem to be of largely secondary concern. However, Dryzek and Niemeyer proposed that robust deliberation and representation are two sides to the same coin, suggesting that all possible areas of discourse should be established before the commencement of an initiative, and then the participants be selected to include all demographics with a stake in the proceedings (Dryzek and Niemeyer, 2008).

With the discussion of targeted stakeholders in participation, comes the dilemma of 'whether participatory forums should be open to partisan actors' whether that be in the form of elite-driven interest groups or non-elite actors such as protestors, or whether participation ought to be limited to non-partisan members of the public (Bobbio, 2019, p49; Fung, 2003). The logic for the latter goes thusly: participation ought to be about slowing down heated debate, 'replacing passion with reason', and engaging in something constructive rather than combative (ibid, pp50; Chambers, 2004). Such dispassionate approaches have been accused of producing policy which lacks democratic legitimacy and authority. By removing any individual with even a whiff of investment or contextual knowledge, it becomes hard to justify why the decisions produced through a participatory initiative ought to be accepted as authoritative by any stakeholders. To quote one researcher: "Why should [the protesters] think, after months of hard work, that this group of sixteen people chosen by a market research firm should have the decisive voice?" (Parkinson, 2006, pp1). It seems only logical that allowing partisan actors into an initiative will inevitably encourage confrontation and partisan entrenchment, without allowing for the participants to learn from one another. Initiative design can mitigate these effects with reasonable effectiveness. Open-door designs, for all flaws, does allow for the spirited communication of all perspectives, but the open and continuous flow of individuals of differing opinions, sentiments, and personalities means that dead-lock becomes unlikely (Bobbio, 2019).

As previously stated – the ultimate resolution of this research is determining which factors facilitate policy-impact so the design of a DI can be attuned to maximise their potential. However specific conditions tested in this piece of research do not hint towards equal resolution, and so the absence or presence of a condition is not guaranteed to be resolvable through participation design. For instance, if issue salience carries significant policy-impacting potential, then a participatory design ought to emphasise and increase the salience of the issue. Equally if the presence of left-wing politicians formed a causal condition, and there were no such politicians at the level of governance targeted, then it is vanishingly likely that a DI could be designed to implement a left-wing government.

Concluding Remarks on Initiative Design

This section demonstrates that the design of a DI is often a determinant of its outcome. Specifically, the design of a DI can either facilitate or hinder participatory actors or conditions which are theoretically relevant to policy-impact. I am currently unaware of any existing scholarly work to link a specific DI design with specific policy outcomes, though I have little doubt that it is on the near horizon. Therefore, whilst it is tempting to only include cases of mini-publics in the dataset owing to their theoretical compatibility with policy-impact, this research still includes DIs of all forms. Whilst this whole section is only a review of the literature and of the current scholarly climate, I do think it is worth re-examining this chapter in light of the conclusions drawn from the empirical analysis.

Firstly, Public Dialogues do appear quite able to produce viable policy recommendations, do appear to be able to interact with policy makers, and therefore do impact political policy. Secondly, and most personally interestingly, much of the theoretical concerns about emotive partisans and of partisan policies appears to be overly pessimistic. Rather than created a heated deadlock amongst participants, much of the highly Partisan DIs actually saw highly spirited and convincing discussion. It is no mystery that the highly-partisan ICA on abortion's legality is held as something of the gold standard of a Citizens' Assembly. What's more, partisan policy areas raise the stakes of deliberation meaning that arenas of participation really ought to be formal, well-invested, and ideally in-person. This rules out concerns about potentially toxic anonymised echo chambers breaking down through deadlock. What's more, a lack of partisans and partisan policies is linked to low-stakes mundane DIs which lose their policy-impacting potential due to being so easy to ignore.

(3.2) Examining and Justifying DIs in the UK and Ireland

As detailed in an earlier chapter, some key considerations in the decision to focus on the UK and Ireland included the comparative ease in which an Anglophone researcher (such as myself) could become intimately familiar with such DIs in order to conduct a rigorous analysis, and the fact this geographic area is understudied from a comparative perspective. However, an important other consideration, and one which needs an entire chapter to do justice, is the rich history and precedence of DIs in these two countries. This chapter will cover the existing literature on DIs in both these countries and use it to justify their focus. The UK and Ireland share great similarities, but also possess important differences with implications for DI policy impact. This chapter ends with a resolution of any such tensions.

DIs in Ireland

Many scholars hold up the Irish Citizens' Assemblies (ICA) as an indicator of something of a paradigm shift (e.g see Dryzek et al, 2019 or Harris, 2019). This means the ICA has arguably become the standard by which all CAs are judged, and any explanatory research into DIs (including this thesis) must include some of the cases. So why and when did Ireland begin experimenting with DIs in the first place? Harris offers up that it was a response to the 'profound crises both in global capitalism and in Ireland's national economic and social situation that strained the relationship between government and the people' (Harris, 2021, pp219). It is clear that Ireland's experimentation stemmed from a recognition of the falling trust in politicians to govern, their actual inability to govern, and the falling levels of political legitimacy which follow. These are, almost verbatim, the identifiers of the democratic malaise explained earlier in this thesis, provided as a justification for this research. Already this provides good justification to include Irish cases in this thesis: they are world-class and paradigmatic, whilst fitting the framework like a glove.

Ireland's first DI was the 2013 Convention on the Constitution (CoC), a CA comprising 100 participants. 66 were citizens chosen through random selection, whilst 33 were selected from either the Houses of the Oireachtas or the Northern Irish Assembly. The CoC deliberated on eight topics of high normative value and salience such as laws regarding blasphemy, the recognition of same-sex marriage, and the position of women in Ireland's constitution. In contrast to similar attempts in other European countries, such as those in Romania or Iceland, the CoC saw the 'full support of the political establishment' (Carolan, 2015, pp734). Overall, the Government responded to six of the policy recommendations produced by the CoC pertaining to 'marriage equality, reducing the voting age to 16, reducing the age threshold for candidacy for Presidential elections, removing the offence of blasphemy from the Constitution, enhancing the reference in the Constitution to the office of Ceann Comhairle to give it more status, and including a reference to Oireachtas Committees in the Constitution' (Citizens Assembly, 2015).

However, despite accepting six of the recommendations, constitutionally-required referendums were only held on the first two topics. Further, the participant selection process was criticised for not being reliably representative, the proceedings were seen as opaque, and involvement of political-elites was excessive (Carolan, 2015). The Irish Citizens' Assemblies commenced in 2016 and improved upon these critiques. This time, the participants were completely comprised of ordinary citizens, chosen through a new firm to ensure that they were representative of the population. Crucially, this meant that politicians no longer formed part of the participatory group, and their influence was therefore minimal. Because of this, combined with the ability to request more time when needed, the ICA was noted for its agency. Though this was further criticised with respect to the ability of the ICA to choose the number of topics as compared to the CoC (Courant, 2021). Academics were invited back in, but largely only as part of an expert advisory group who sketched out a proposed deliberation schedule and made recommendations as to expert speakers.

On a regional scale, it seems reasonable to argue that the countries of Latin America can lay claim to the earliest and most-studied experimentation with democratic innovations. Reeling from their dictatorship governments, these countries have seen the 'continuous flourishing of institutions, mechanisms, and processes aimed at enhancing democracy through citizen participation' over the past thirty years (Pogrebinschi, 2021, pp4). But on the scale of singular nations, then it is arguably Ireland which stands out the most. In just over 10 years, the Irish government has conducted six separate CA programmes leading, with some admitted exceptions, to important tangible policy and constitutional change. These include the legalisation of same-sex marriage in 2015 and of abortion in 2018. Such a rigid commitment to deepening democracy emerging from the democratic malaise, combined with robust deliberation of highly salient and sensitive policy topics, means DIs from Ireland make for highly instructive and useful cases within this thesis dataset.

DIs in the UK: Why Study Them?

Whilst the ICA may be considered paradigmatic and the measure by which all over DIs are compared, it has been suggested that this characterisation is driven more by the progressive topic area combined with tangible political changes rather than the good quality of the deliberation (e.g. see Courant, 2021). I would argue that this unfairly overshadows the achievements in democratic experimentation of Ireland's neighbour: the United Kingdom.

In fact, almost twenty years prior to the Irish Convention on the Constitution, the UK held the very first deliberative poll in the world. This DI came as a response to rising crime levels and sought to move away from traditional polling, since it merely described how the public felt at that given moment, and establish 'what the public would think if it had a better opportunity to consider the questions'. (Fishkin, 1994, pp27). The goal was not to impact policy itself, but to better inform the policy preferences of the participants in the run-up to a general election (Fishkin et al, 2002). Widely considered a success, four more deliberative polls were established looking at 'Britain's future in Europe, the monarchy, the 1997 British general election, and the future of the National Health Service on its 50th anniversary in 1998' (Fishkin, 2003, pp129). Whilst never intended to impact policy, these are issues of high salience deliberated in a way well-received by the public, and their ramifications became central to on-going academic debate (ibid, Sturgis et al, 2005).

The UK's political system is more centralised than that of Ireland (this is discussed in greater detail in the next section) in that it lacks public participatory institutions at the heart of government. But the early adoption of deliberative polls speaks to a long-extant interest in democratic experimentation. This is further evidenced by the UK's healthy adoption of mini-publics. In 2007, as part of somewhat weak democratic reforms, the UK saw some of the earliest usage of Citizen Juries concerning national health, crime, and of the position of families (Davidson and Elstub, 2014 ; Curato, 2023). However, since then the usage of mini-publics has only increased, and the number of initiatives recognised by Involve, a major CSO focused on democratic innovations, currently numbers around forty (Involve, 2021). Of these, the majority consist of Climate Assemblies – a form of CA concerned specifically with the impacts of climate change. This is no surprise. CAs have more radical potential compared to other mini-publics because their purpose is to produce policy recommendations explicitly rather than, for instance, produce surveys of opinions like with deliberative polls (Elstub and Escobar, 2017). Climate change is an issue that undoubtedly requires radical responses from politicians, and so it makes sense to deliberate the issue with a DI capable of producing such a recommendation.

Similarities and Crucial Political Differences between the UK and Ireland

Owing to their long historical connection (Ireland only gaining sovereignty from the British in 1922) the UK and Ireland share many similarities when it comes to their political institutions. Both are, of course, modern representative democracies, and both operate within a bi-cameral Westminster-style political system. There are some differences of note. Ireland possesses a codified written constitution which requires the conducting of a referendum to change, whilst the UK has a non-codified constitution. This means it draws fluidly from foundational canon texts (such as the Magna Carta), the laws as designed by the judiciary branch of government, the laws as actually adopted by parliament, and various treaties. Further Ireland is a republic which retains a president (who possesses some formal powers but is largely ceremonial), whilst the UK is a constitutional monarchy, currently with a king who is entirely ceremonial. However, despite sharing vary similar political systems, the mechanisms available for deliberation and cultures within these systems in regards to DIs are very different.

Let's begin by first looking at the UK. At the beginning of the 1990s, the Labour Party began to champion new efforts to shake up the highly-centralised Westminster system with new reforms aimed at deepening democracy. Under Blair's premiership, the Labor government pursued the introduction of proportional electoral systems at the periphery of politics (such as local politics or devolved powers) but stopped short at introducing them at the central government level. With the benefit of hindsight, these reforms were promising but rudderless and lacked a clear framework for the future of democracy. One academic at the time quipped that these efforts showed 'institutional macular degeneration' (Judge, 2006, pp367) in reference to the obvious central blind spot in Labour's vision. At the end of these efforts, there was still no real change at the central level that would facilitate the impact of DIs. Subsequent efforts would echo the goal of deepening democracy at the central level. These were justified so as to 'challenge executive dominance, make government more accountable, and improve direct democracy' (Davidson and Elstub, 2014, pp371). When the Conservative Party was elected in 2010, it demonstrated an unusual level of commitment to deepening democracy despite the expected ideological disinterest in such reforms. This expected ideological interest was such that this thesis argues that presence of right-wing politicians was actually a causally-relevant hindrance to policy impact from DIs. The Conservative Party did this with the creation of a specialist taskforce solely committed to deepening democracy. However, this taskforce lacked any kind of radical element and considered only minor avenues. Davidson and Elstub describe this as being 'straitjacketed by established party policy and, like New Labour, by a continuing commitment to the Westminster model' (ibid, pp 372). As of today (2025) there has yet to be any notably radical reform of the British constitutional system, and the political system remains highly centralised without few mechanisms in place to encourage impact from DIs.

Ireland, like the UK, is also an adherent to the Westminster system. However theirs is a system that has seen significant efforts to decentralise government and foster a political culture open to deliberative democracy and DIs. As early as 2005, pressure was already mounting from academics and CSOs (e.g. the Irish Democratic Audit or the Democracy Commission) to deepen democracy with new participatory approaches (Harris, 2005). Reports from the time even make reference to specific radical DI designs such as deliberative panels (Courant, 2021). In 2009 the parliamentary Joint Committee on the Constitution was advised of the promise of CAs to navigate electoral reform. Not only was the committee highly receptive of the idea, but the introduction of CAs actually become a top recommendation in subsequent reports. Crucially, by 2010, the adoption of a CA was in the political manifestos of Fine Gael and Labor – two of three largest political parties in Ireland who would go on to win the next election. Barring a somewhat convoluted birth, the The Convention on the Constitution (2012–2014) described earlier commenced. Despite it's disputed success (e.g. see Smith, 2009) this convention proved the utility of CAs and formed the foundations for the later ICAs.

The differences in amicability towards DIs is clear, despite the UK and Ireland sharing, on paper at least, similar political systems. The UK has seen democratic reforms only at the periphery of politics, and still remains rigidly defined by the entirely representative Westminster system of democracy. Academics Coleman and Moss note that 'governments tend to be reluctant to expand the scope for public deliberation when it is seen to constrain the power of institutional representation' (Coleman and Moss, 2014, pp424) and this principle is perfectly typified by the UK. DIs will have find policy impact a challenge owing to a hostile environment not at all set-up to receive their policy recommendations, nor used to doing so. In contrast, Ireland saw the adoption of centralised reforms comparatively early on and seemingly with little objection. As a result, government is now more de-centralised and a culture of deliberation and participation has been forged.

Resolving the Tension: Why UK and Irish DIs can be Considered Together

However I contend that it is possible to acknowledge the differences in political systems between the UK and Ireland and still consider cases from the two countries together.

Firstly, whilst the UK may suffer from an institutional blind spot in that DIs may struggle to impact central government, the difference is not some insurmountable barrier. In fact, in what little there is in the way of extant QCA-orientated literature on this topic, British and Irish cases are routinely considered side-by-side and even amongst political systems with even greater differences (eg, see Ettlinger and Michels, 2024). We shouldn't take the difference to mean impact is utterly impossible, nor should we forget that central government is not necessarily the assumed target for most DIs. For instance, the Climate Assembly UK was commissioned by six Select Committees of the House of Commons, the Citizens' Assembly on Social Care was commissioned by the Housing, Communities and Local Government and the Health and Social Care Select Committees together, and both had demonstrable impact. Further, the UK has seen numerous Climate Assemblies, such as those in Oxford or Camden, where the intended political target was local rather than central government, and where policy impact was high.

Secondly, as discussed earlier, Irish cases are widely becoming considered to be paradigmatic and the standard by which CAs as a whole are assessed, to the extent that an Irish model to public participation has been suggested (Courant, 2021). Because of this, many CAs in the UK have deliberately imitated the ICA in an attempt to replicate their success (e.g. see Harris, 2019 or Courant, 2021). Not only is it quite appropriate and useful to directly compare originals to their replicas, it also provides us an opportunity to empirically compare and assess the causal impact of the differing political systems between the UK and Ireland if a justification arises.

This is something that is easy to do with QCA since the analysis stage requires reflexivity and going beyond strict interpretation of just the conditions contained with a solution configuration. Whilst it may be considered unusual to justify location data selection based on method rather than the other way around, it will be demonstrated later on that QCA is the ideal approach to analysing DIs generally, so this ordering begins to make more sense. Hence it is worth staying with the topic of QCA for another important point: many of the conditions tested seek to circumnavigate the barriers put up by the UK’s centralised Westminster system. For instance, the condition of state leadership brings DIs as close to policy makers as possible under such a system, whilst the presence of left-wing politicians create ideological incentives to engage earnestly with DIs.

(3.3) The Policy Impacts of Public Participation

Given the vastness of literature relevant to both policy-impacting theory and public participation, it becomes necessary to distil these fields down into key insights when they otherwise wouldn't appear in other sections. Accordingly, this section will chiefly comprise the critical theoretical perspectives and context behind the causal conditions identified in this piece. This section will conclude with an explanation of how each condition can thus be derived, and why.

The Importance of an Administerial and Government Bureaucratic Culture Open to Participatory Policy Impact

There is no guarantee, nor any reason to suppose, that differing levels of government (whether that be local councils, MPs, or the government itself) or each government institution will respond to the same policy-impacting logic. This means that there is no singular model to policy-impact, and the process must be finely tuned in accordance with who is doing the impacting, and who is the political target (Strömbäck, 2008 ; Walgrave and Vliegenthart, 2012 ; Vliegenthart et al, 2016). For instance, in their analysis of how media actors reach out to politicians to form or co-form their policy preferences, Walgrave et al (2008) demonstrated that politicians in opposition parties in the Belgian Parliament were significantly easier to influence compared to those in the incumbent party or the executive. They noted that media actors set policy by providing capital (such as talking points, critiques, or relevant data) to politicians in both camps. However, the utility of receiving such capital is maximised for opposition parties, who are furnished with an oven-ready means of displaying political competence.

This model seems mirror the rationalistic model of policy-impact rejected in a previous section. However, the aspect of policy-impacting actors appealing to differing institutional levels in order to maximise success is corroborated through an examination of the power-dynamics of government without needing to appeal to a rationalistic mechanism. Consider the lessons taught by Lukes in his 2004 work *Power: A Radical View* where he outlines three means by which political power is exercised. Lukes' Three Faces of Power applied to the process of policy-impact proposes that political authority came in three stages. The first face – the most intuitive – is the authority of figurehead politicians who make political decisions on behalf of the citizenry. The third face – the most abstract – is authority through ideological and/or psychological power, or the ability to control the demands of the citizenry rather than just respond to it. The second face – the most relevant here – concerns authority through the institutions of decision making rather than the decision makers themselves: The somewhat shadowy world of bureaucracy and administerial staff (Lukes, 2004).

A rationalist model of policy-impact would wrongly assume the importance of the first face of power as the only actors which matter – the world of politician and figureheads – and completely de-emphasise the second. However, an understanding of the second face of power combined with the understanding that differing levels of government respond to differing policy-impacting logics, reveals the importance of a DI appealing to bureaucrats and political administrative staff in order to set *their* policy preferences, rather than just that of politicians. In other words, we can say that appealing to differing levels of government need not assume the rationalist model of policy-impact implied by Walgrave and Vliegenthart (2012) and Belgian politicians. The literature corroborates the importance of this second face. Robinson used Lukes' theory to understand policy-impact in the EU and found that 70% of policy decision were made outside of formal council meetings, and instead forged through contact with a technocrats and bureaucrats (Robinson, 2006). Holmes in his study of the New Public Management model of public administration (wherein public administration refocuses agency and importance on the individual as almost a customer of policy, rather than just a citizen to be governed) noted that citizen and participatory inclusion in policy production 'been debated or attempted, but too infrequently realised' (Holmes, 2011, pp1). He proposes that the only way there will ever be 'genuine engagement in the 'co-production' of policy' by the public will be through administerial staff becoming not only enablers of public participation, but active 'collaborators' (ibid). In other words, administerial staff, and thus their culture, must be open to democratic innovations and public participation if there is to be even a modicum of policy-impact.

Therefore, we would expect to see that a DI in a position of highest policy-impacting potential would be one with close ties to administerial staff involved in the stages of policy generation, policy discussion, and policy selection. Likewise a DI would still be expected to have reasonably high policy-impacting capabilities even if there was not such close ties so long as the DI caught the attention of administerial staff in an appealing way, or if the policy recommendations were submitted to politicians via the same channels. This yields one of the conditions to be tested in this thesis.

Understanding The Transmission of Policy from Public to Empowered Spaces

It should be noted this model of policy-impact reflects a previous criticism of mine that policy-impact theory tends to pre-suppose elite actors and largely fails to account for specifically non-elite public participatory actors. As with the discussion of rationalistic policy-impacting theories discussed in the last chapter, the real policy-impacting actors are assumed to be political institutions.

Habermas offers a different view of policy-impact with his deliberative transmission theory which revolves around policy creation through two tracks. Each of these tracks focus of on the public and of public deliberation. His first track concerns the generation of public opinion wherein some general consensus or attitude is reached by the public on a given issue. Consensus can be created through a wide array of communication ranging from rhetoric, deliberation and discussion, all the way to simple jokes. This issue is picked up and moved by median actors (such as protesters, the media, or policy entrepreneurs), who have the ability to transform the abstract and superficially origin-less issue consensus of the public into tangible policy recommendations. These policy recommendations are then transferred to the second track of 'will formation' (Habermas, 1989, pp1). Here the tangible policy demands – and thus the issue consensus of the public – are interacted with by policy makers, who either reject or implement the policy by subjecting it to a trial by argument where the better and strong argument wins (Habermas, 1996). Dryzek builds on Habermas' ideas in two main ways. First, by suggesting formal vocabulary for this process: Public communication to build consensus happens in the 'public space', median actors are the 'transmission' stage, and 'empowered spaces' constitute the politicians or polities able to implement policy. Secondly, he conceptualises the ideal deliberative democratic system as one where policy is continuously communicated from public spaces to empowered spaces, and back again via transmission spaces as a form of accountability (Dryzek, 2009, pp1385).

Whilst centralising the public as capable of policy-impact through multiple avenues, this theory depends on the neutrality of the transmission actors. At best, the process of interpreting public consensus into policy will inevitably alter it – at least partially. At worst, transmission actors will actively twist public consensus to better fit their own policy preferences. Either way, the moving of public consensus to Habermas' second track must raise concern about whose policy is influential. However, for Parkinson, transmission actors changing public consensus may not be a bad thing if they transform it into a format recognisable and understandable to actors in empowered spaces. He offers up the example that the content of stirring speech by an activist as an inappropriate format for a policy recommendation (Parkinson, 2006). In her work examining the impact of publicity and politician secrecy on the quality of deliberation, Chambers similarly opines that this disadvantage is actually an advantage by acting as something of a check valve or a diode. Whilst public consensus is transmitted freely and quickly forwards to empowered spaces, the slow bleed back of accountability gives policy implementors breathing space on how to best actualise the policy (Chambers, 2004). Echoing Parkinson, in his analysis of deliberative democracy's 'normative and empirical considerations' Neblo theorised that the inevitable distortion of public policy preferences as it is transmitted to empowered spaces, is actually the very thing justifying the all-important feedback loop (Neblo, 2005, pp3). With this distortion, it becomes necessary for empowered spaces to interpret the policy recommendation as they find it, and thus necessary to communicate their understanding back to the public for validation. Only through initial distortion of the policy is the validity of the policy maximised (ibid).

The Role of Policy Homogeneity in Policy Transmission, and the Influence on Policy Impact

Transmission of policy from public to empowered spaces, and the interactions of politicians with the policy once it arrives, is often defined by ideological motivation or by pre-existing considerations separate to the policy itself. Put another way, politicians in empowered spaces often have predictable preconceptions and attitudes towards policy from public spaces even before knowing its actual content.

Hendriks noted in her analysis of Citizen Juries in New South Wales that policy suggestions produced by the public were perceived by politicians as inherently laden with the normative advantages of common sense and guaranteed to be authentic representations of the public's policy preferences. She noted that this normative prizing of the public's views meant such policy suggestions carried more weight in policy circles, and often out-competed less truth worthy policy coming from 'the usual suspects' of lobbying groups or elite actors (Hendriks, 2013, pp14). Further, politicians described a sense of obligation to 'treat their [the public's] suggestions with respect' (ibid). However, and of vital relevance to this piece, Hendriks describes how this amenable attitude only facilitates policy-impacting power so long as any policy suggestions didn't challenge 'existing government policy or party positions' or otherwise provide a source of complication or friction (ibid, pp20). Or, in other words, policy-impacting from public participation was facilitated through policy homogeneity. There had to be maximal policy preference overlap between politicians and the public. This mechanism is a classic feature of policy-impact from traditional elite actors, and Hendrik's work implies that it seems to also be consistent with DIs. When examining what makes interest groups successful, researchers often conclude that tactics which convince politicians that their policy preferences are actually in line with that of the interest group – and, in fact, always have been – are associated with the greatest chance of impacting policy. For instance, Huwyler and Martin noted in their analysis of Irish policy-impact (one of the two countries examined in this piece) that synchronous engagement, like repeated face-to-face discussions rather than avoidable emails, could subdue and reframe a politician's own policy preferences and expertise to be more amenable (Huwyler and Martin, 2021). The subtext here echoes Hendriks in that policy homogeneity – whether natural or manufactured – facilitates policy-impact. Plus, given that politicians hold policy recommendations from the public in such high regard, this effect is likely to be increased only further, potentially smoothing over any disagreements and bolstering any agreement.

Again, we can express this principle as a condition for policy-impact success. We would expect any DI which produced policy recommendations which wholly matched the policy preferences of the target politician to be in a position of high policy-impacting potential. Likewise, we would still expect some degree of policy-impacting potential to be conferred upon a DI which produced policy recommendations with a high degree of similarity to a politician's policy preferences.

Interestingly, Hendrik's work also implied that the innovatory aspect of DIs had its own policy-impacting mechanism. When one MP was interviewed as to if and why the Citizens' Jury had been a success, they answered that the 'the novelty of the process' meant that there was far greater political attention applied to the initiative, and this close engagement facilitated policy-impact (Hendriks, 2013, pp21). However, this reasoning appears to be dubious or, at least, skin-deep and hiding a deeper mechanism. It seems unlikely that a politician would be intrigued by the prospect of a DI unless that politician already possessed an interest and commitment to deepening democracy. This seems to ring true for all of Hendriks' observations. Holding the public's views in high regard, feeling an obligation to treat the public's preferences with respect, and actively wanting to engage with DIs are all indicators of someone normatively concerned with deepening democracy. This implies that the conditions which cause this normative concern with deepening democracy are, in themselves, the conditions which facilitate policy-impact. I propose this is an indicator of the ability for politicians with ideological amiability towards deepening democracy to facilitate DI policy impact.

The Ideological Mechanisms Behind Policy Transmission, and the Influence on Policy Impact: The Importance of Left-Wing Politicians

Frustrated with Europe's sluggish response to implementing DIs, Nunez et al analysed party-level factors in fifteen countries to see whether there was any explanation. They found that a politician's support for DIs was 'heavily related to anti-establishment parties, to left-wing parties and to parties with limited access to power' (Núñez et al, 2016, pp341). This observation makes theoretical sense. Anti-establishment parties are, almost through definition, going to be the most frustrated by the representative democracy which forms the backbone of establishment, and will therefore be highly interested in any alternative which circumnavigates such an institution. Parties with limited access to power have traditionally been burned by the First Past the Post voting system and the fears of many voters about wasting their vote, see for example Abramson et al (2010). Therefore, they are likely to want to maximise their influence of policy through alternate democratic means. Left-wing parties are, again almost by definition, committed to majoritarian justice, egalitarianism, democracy, and the removal of hierarchies, and so will be most committed to any means of deepening democracy. As such, one would expect the presence of left-wing politicians to facilitate policy-impact success. This exact variable seems under researched and overlooked in the literature, but this expectation does seem to hold in empirical examples. For instance, the Citizen Initiative Review (CIR) in Oregon – a success by most standards – occurred at a moment in time when proponents for the CIR in both the house and the senate were majority democrats, whilst the opponents were entirely republican (Gastil et al, 2014). This implies that the way the CIR, and potentially DIs in general, are perceived is cleaved down ideological lines.

We can use this to derive a third condition for successful policy-impact. A DI could expect to be in a strong position to influence policy if they targeted politicians who are ideologically inclined towards supporting and utilising public participation and DIs. Since these inclinations ought to be find highest amongst left-wing politicians, we would expect the presence of such politicians to facilitate successful policy-impact.

The Counter-Intuitive Importance of Controversy and of Partisan Topics on Policy Impact

However, the general observation that left-wing politicians ought to facilitate policy impact does not hold in explaining the outcomes for the Irish Citizens' Assemblies (ICA). The ICA is a grouping of arguably the most documented participatory DIs which directly led to the legalisation of abortion in Ireland. Despite taking place in a traditionally conservative Catholic country under the premiership of the right-wing Fine Gael party, the ICA recommended removal of abortion's specific inclusion as prohibited in the Irish Constitution. What's more, Fine Gael agreed and took ownership of the policy recommendation, and the issue was ultimately decided through affirmative referendum. The question must be asked: if left-wing politicians facilitate policy-impact, then why was this – of all policies – successful? I propose the answer lies in two areas.

The issue of abortion was highly partisan and highly politically risky. The majority of Irish adults aged under 55 (78%) were pro-legalisation prior to the ICA whilst the majority above the age of 55 (55%) were against legalisation (Pew Research Center, 2018). The highly partisan and politically risky nature of abortion in conservative Catholic nation would potentially sink or at least severely hinder the career of any politician who championed legalising abortion. This would be of particular concern to right-wing politicians who were nonetheless pro-choice since they risk losing their conservative image and rapport with conservative voters. However, as political outsiders to the representative political system, the ICA could avoid these problems of image, and would have a comparatively easier time proposing the legalisation of abortion. When the ICA produced such policy, a right-wing politician could exercise their commitment to democracy and democratic mandate by agreeing to back the policy, thus saving political face. Or, to put it simply, a right-wing politician might be motivated to hand the issue of partisan policy generation over to a DI, then gladly facilitate policy-impact.

The Importance of Issue Salience

Secondly, the issue of abortion seemed to possess policy-impacting power through its salience with voters. The fact that the ICA was composed of ordinary individuals rather than politicians meant that the media response was more objective and issue-focused, rather than primed to make targeted political attacks (The Guardian, 2019). It was observed that the timing of the ICA saw increased public knowledge on the topic of abortion, and the policy vastly increased in its salience (Doyle and Walsh, 2024). Irish citizens considered it a deeply important make-or-break issue that needed immediate resolution one way or another. A politician, as before, could thus maximise their commitment to democracy and democratic mandate by agreeing to back the policy.

This issue of policy salience possessing policy-impacting power also explains why the ICA's recommendation to remove mentions of women belonging in the home from the Irish Constitution (Article 41.2) actually failed to become policy. Intuitively, this issue overlaps heavily with abortion: both are feminist issues and examples of gendered policy, both are archaic and unusual in a 21st Century Western country, and both possess high emotional and political status making such policies deeply partisan. So why was partisan status alone insufficient to set political policy? Dr Laura Cahillane, a Senior Lecturer in Law at the University of Limerick, offered this explanation in her analysis of Article 41.2: "It's not doing anything, really. Apart from being a bit insulting" (McKinney, 2022). She explains that the issue had no repercussions in the everyday like of the average Irish woman (Cahillance, 2017). Hence it would be likely that an issue with no repercussions would be unable to generate the kind of salience abortion saw, and this would likely explain why the issue failed to become policy.

The success of the ICA deliberation on abortion's legality may initially appear to have been something of a fluke, but the nature of the policy provides us with a good explanation. As counter-intuitive as it may seem, a highly partisan policy area actually provides substantial policy-impacting capabilities for a DI. Therefore, this forms the fourth of the conditions tested within this thesis. Likewise, and more intuitively, high salience can be theorised to also lend high policy-impacting capabilities and so forms the fifth of the conditions.

The Influence of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

Finally, whilst well-established determinants of policy-inpacting success are scarce and contentious across the pre-existing literature, the roles of CSOs are often touted as so obvious as to almost not need analysing (e.g see Lavalle et al, 2005 or Pogrebinschi and Ryan, 2018). CSOs are an interesting addition to this thesis since their influence is multi-faceted and temporal. Their policy-impacting potential stems from both internal and external mechanisms. These external mechanisms are still under the broad remit of the DI process. This stands in contrast to, for instance, the role of media coverage of the ICA on abortion which was external to the DI, and was thus a wholly separate policy-impacting agent.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) form one side to the triangle composing society at large, with the other sides comprising business along with financial markets and the state in its capacity of governance. CSOs are defined in EU law as voluntary non-profit organisations unaligned with the state who act as a 'mediator between public authorities and citizens' (EUR-Lex, 2022). This definition will form the baseline to this chapter. As such, CSOs can be anything from grassroots organisations existing at the local level, to international level organisation such as inter-University research groups or Amnesty International. The policy-impacting capabilities of CSO come in two main forms (Wampler, 2012; Lavalle et al, 2005 ; Pogrebinschi and Ryan, 2018):

1) Their ability to act as the most effective participants within an initiative, and/or maximise the effectiveness of the other participants

2) Their ability to engineer an initiative to maximise its relative utility

Although, as will be demonstrated, a CSO may often exhibit behaviour from both camps.

In his analysis of the core principles behind Participatory Budgeting (PB), Wampler noted that CSOs empowered the participants of a PB, that empowered participants made for successful PBs, and that successful PBs were effective PBs. He theorised that any DI should seek to combat the problems pertaining to collective action which otherwise deny ordinary citizens a voice in their own governance. There were three main problems: weak inter-citizen networks, poor information comprehension and communication, and logistical difficulties in mobilising sufficient numbers of participants to hold any sort of democratic legitimacy. The presence of CSOs put participants into contact with one another, shared information specific to their 'local contexts' (Wampler, 2012, pp11) whether that be geographical or political, and otherwise encouraged mobilisation. Further, Wampler suggested that the ability of CSOs to steer PBs towards effective implementation is down to two features specific to PBs. He writes: "the annual or bi-annual cycle of budgetary meetings allows citizen and leaders to meet on multiple occasions, thereby helping them to establish and then maintain connections to a wider-range of actors" (ibid). This allows for the creation and subsequent strengthening of inter-citizen and/or inter-CSO alliances which facilitate the ability for participants to strategize towards effective participatory budgeting. Secondly, the frequency of PBs creates a feedback loop wherein the impacts of old budgets can be assessed, and new problems can be approached.

Granted, whilst effective representation and participation in a DI isn't necessarily the same as effective policy impact - a point Wampler himself makes as he acknowledges the possibility for a PB to simply reflect existing Government policy (ibid, pp1) – the ability for an initiative to create viable policy recommendations in the first place is an obvious first step in successful policy-impact. To this end, CSOs clearly play a pivotal role and so form the final condition tested.

(3.4) Concluding Chapter 3: The First List of Conditions to be Tested

If the previous chapter problematised the research, then this chapter sought to provide the means of resolving it. Through the discussion of theories around the design of DIs, it was proposed that a useful analysis ought to contain DIs of varying forms. Only this could provide useful insights into the process as a whole. Most significantly, this chapter produced the six conditions to be empirically tested with a comparative methodology.

These are:

1) An administerial and government bureaucratic culture open to policy-impact from DIs
2) The influence of CSOs
3) Policy homogeneity
4) Left-wing politicians
5) Partisan Policies
6) Salient Policies

The next chapter will reconsider each of these conditions into a robust theoretical framework.

Chapter 4: Theoretical Framework – What Ought To Determine Policy-Impact, and Why Test It?

(4.1) An Administerial and Governmental Bureaucratic Culture Which is Friendly and Engaged with DIs:

The shift in government bureaucratic culture which became known as New Public Management (NPM) fundamentally changed the dynamic between policy makers and ordinary citizens. Whilst before, citizens were viewed as the subjects of policy, acting almost as a hindrance to the ability of bureaucrats to produce ideal policy, they were seen as consumers of policy entitled to 'participate directly or indirectly in decisions that affect them (Holmes, 2011, pp1). This shift facilitated 'collaboration between government agencies, non-government organisations, communities and individual citizens' with the aims of producing legitimate and representative policy (ibid). This implies that policy makers being comfortable in interacting with the demos is something contingent on the NPM model or, at least, that the ability of DIs to impact policy is contingent on administrative and bureaucratic support.

Bureaucratic support acts as an intermediary 'that can act as a brake or catalyst for participatory reforms' (Ryan and Smith, 2012, pp102). Arguably the simplest of the causal conditions included in this pieces of research, bureaucratic support is nonetheless the closest thing to a canon condition in the existing literature, being central to significant bodies of existing policy-impact theory (ibid; Wampler, 2007). There is even some evidence that bureaucratic support is the most important factor when determining participatory policy-impacting success. In their study of Canadian PBs, Lerner and Van Wagner proposed that DIs were most successful 'when staff were passionate and prepared' even going on to imply that the policy-impact process was even more streamlined when politicians were almost taken out of the equation entirely, only being necessary to implement policy (Lerner and Van Wagner, 2006, pp13).

Conceptualising bureaucratic support for DIs is tricky. Much of the finer details of bureaucratic attitudes and internal administerial culture are opaque and unpublished. However, we can assume that any DI instigated by the state and thusly operated by bureaucratic staff would naturally be indicative of a significant degree of bureaucratic support for the endeavour. Hence, where information on administerial or bureaucratic control is vague and/or missing, swapping in for whether a DI was state-led makes for an excellent proxy.

This link between friendly administerial culture and state-leadership as facilitators of policy-impact has something of a pained position within the existing literature. On the one hand, this condition speaks to the importance of institutionalisation – or the degree of integration between a DI and policy makers – and there is little theoretical or empirical doubt that this facilitates policy-impact (e.g. see Ettlinger and Michels, 2024). In some cases (ibid), this level of institutionalism is linked with an obligation for policy makers to allow their policies to be set by a DI. Such institutionalisation by administration or state actors ensures that 'discussions are facilitated to promote deliberative norms' (Elstub and Kohban, 2023, pp116) and that important normative aspects like diversity are present. In other words, close institutionalisation ensures that a DI is optimally designed to pass seamlessly through the policy-making process by those actors who know it best: the policy makers.

This close institutionalisation has been criticised as essentially being a euphemism for excessive state control over the 'process and discourses' (ibid) and tamping down the more radical possibilities of democratic innovations. This might well be the case. However, the potentially fluctuating influence of state intervention only poses a problem if each and every case is state led. Since the dataset contains cases where there is both zero and moderate state oversite, and these are used to comparatively assess the influence of state oversite, the differing degrees of state control will be less of a factor for the condition. What's more, the reiterative process of QCA means that the influence of potential state oversite is made clear and therefore contextualises any conclusions. Finally, whilst such a concern is valid, it doesn't not alter the focus of this thesis. It is supposed that a successful DI is one which impacts upon police. Internal goals such as quality of process – whilst undoubtedly important – are best considered by other academics whose research concerns these issues.

(4.2) The Influence of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

In the second chapter of this thesis, I discussed two forms of CSO influence on policy-impact:

1) Their ability to act as the most effective participants within an initiative, and/or maximise the effectiveness of the other participants

2) Their ability to engineer an initiative to maximise its relative utility

Within this section I will expand upon CSO influence and offer up another causal avenue based on political and social capital. Combining these schools of thought together, I will then derive and assess three core principles behind CSO's influence on policy-impact.

In their analysis of the mechanics behind EU policy-impact, Schrama and Zhelyazkova argued that CSOs sitting on initiative steering or organisational committees often utilise their social capital in order to maximise the initiative's success (Schrama and Zhelyazkova, 2018). The steering or organisational committees are the organisations who decide the manner in which the initiative is conducted in terms of who participates, how, and why. If a CSO carries sufficient social capital, then it will be able to enforce a greater degree of accountability from the target politicians of the initiative by effectively extending the social capital unto the initiative. For instance, if a large and influential CSO such as Amnesty International involved itself with a DI, then it would behove a politician to take more interest in any policy recommendations and to communicate a response. Further, the policy-impacting influence of CSOs is conditional on states' 'bureaucratic capacity to accommodate societal interests' (ibid, pp1) wherein such an ability is highest amongst states with deep and broad bureaucratic institutions. This means that CSOs can act as effective representatives for an initiative at multiple levels of governance simultaneously.

This aspect of CSOs acting as skilled and motivated ambassadors for an initiative is to be a running theme. In their empirical analysis on the conditions which dictate policy output from participatory groups – itself conducted with QCA – Ryan and Pogrebinschi argue that the presence of a CSO is an obvious indicator of a CSO's desire to see a politician's policy changed. For instance, and coming dangerously close to a tautology, nobody would campaign to prevent climate change if there wasn't a desire to see climate change prevented. A CSO which concerned itself with climate change would thus be staffed by individuals motivated towards that same goal. Such a CSO will likely possess tenacity and personal investment manifested as the motivation and connections to push any policy recommendations from unempowered to empowered spaces, and then – vitally – follow up to ensure political accountability (Pogrebinschi and Ryan, 2018). CSOs are often experienced in the policy creation and implementation process, and thus well-equipped to implement design choices right into the foundational premises of an initiative in order to maximise its potential to reach out to those policy makers most likely to respond (Lavalle et al, 2005).

However, where their own engineering abilities fall short, the most successful CSOs are those with access to 'conventional political actors' such as political parties or interest groups (ibid, pp 951). Such CSOs are better situated to channel information, political narratives, legal advice, technical know-how into initiatives where they wield substantial power. This principal feeds back into the work of Schrama and Zhelyazkova and the influence of a CSO's social capital. It is impossible for a CSO to have access to these all-important political actors if they do not have the political or social capital to make it happen. Further, a CSO must hold 'regular consultations' Schrama and Zhelyazkova, 2018, pp1) with a political actor in order to maximise their utility. This points to a very obvious conclusion: if a politician is aware of an initiative, cannot ignore the initiative, and is constantly consulting with the steering and organisational committee of the initiative, then the initiative will possess significant policy-impacting power. As an aside, this model is the one caveat in my initial rejection of the rationalist model of policy-impact. However, an incomplete model is still not a fully complete and useful model.

We can distil this literature down to three key principles which may contribute towards an understanding of CSO's policy-impacting influence. These are:

Principle 1) CSOs increase the effectiveness of an initiative by increasing the effectiveness of the participants

Principle 2) CSOs use their social capital externally in order to increase policy-impact

Principle 3) CSOs use their skills and expertise to engineer maximally effective DIs and push for their full potential to be realised.

We can now critically assess these principles and ultimately reject all but the last as a basis for the theoretical framework.

Principle 1:

This principle borrows heavily from Wampler's (2012) work on CSOs involved with participatory budgeting. Accordingly, the influence of CSOs drawn from Wampler's work seems to depend heavily on the particulars and peculiarities of participatory budgeting - and only of participatory budgeting. As per Wampler (ibid), it is through initial budgetary meetings that CSOs are either first formed or partially empowered, but it is through repeated 'annual or bi-annual cycles' (Wampler, 2012, pp11) where they develop their effectiveness. In other words, CSOs are ineffective at the beginning of an initiative and only through repeated familiarity with the process and the gradual forging of alliances can CSOs exercise their maximal influence on the participants.

This means that the presence of CSOs is unlikely to yield any substantial policy-impact in an initiative which is a one-time only event, one that is short-lived, one where the participants frequently change, or where participation is only minimally deliberative, for instance, as in public hearings. In other words, most initiatives apart from PBs. This means there is limited applicability of the theory to other forms of DI.

Principle 2:

Secondly, a CSO's political and social capital as a catalyst of policy-impact is surely relevant to any type of DI where CSOs may be present, and thus neatly sidesteps the problems behind the first principle. However, I argue that this relevance is partial and often secondary to principle 3. It seems reasonable to state that the CSOs with the highest political and social capital are inevitably the larger, richer, and most well-known examples, and that the smaller and more obscure a CSO is, the smaller its available social and political capital. Therefore, if significant political and social capital was the main determinant behind policy-impacting success then we would expect to see smaller CSOs as having almost zero policy-impacting potential. Even a cursory understanding of participatory policy-impacting shows that this is not the case.

What's more, whilst this argument doesn't invalidate the importance of social and political capital for large and highly influential CSOs, the fact of the matter is that such organisations are unlikely to feature in the majority of cases. In the average British and Irish DI, CSOs are comparatively small fry compared to giants like Amnesty International, and so the social and political capital of CSOs can usually be assumed to be small or not easily measured in any useful empirical way.

Principle 3:

I propose that principle 3 is the ideal framework for understanding CSO policy-impact irrespective of it being the remaining unrejected principle. In short, policy-impact depends less on a CSO's ability to influence policy outside of an initiative as with the social and political capital model, and more on the fact that CSOs are simply present.

When CSOs form part of an initiative's organisational team, they are ideally placed to personally dictate 'rules and procedures and can therefore significantly influence its process' (Pogrebinschi and Ryan, 2018, pp142). Thus, greater CSO control and plurality ought to be linked to an initiative producing recommendations closely following a patterned type. If this type is effective at political policy-impact, then we can say it is CSO influence behind policy-impacting success. Without CSO influence, it is unlikely that a DI would be producing recommendations of this type.

Secondly, a motivated CSO will continuously push for political recognition and, ideally, implementation of an initiative's policy recommendations from the target politicians (ibid, 2018). Further, existing empirical research (ibid) has demonstrated that CSOs hold politicians accountable in responding to a recommendation, thus combining the practical element of policy-impact alongside the theoretical. This strong link between initiative and politician will maximise the effectiveness of policy-impact.

As a summary, CSOs cannot increase DI policy-impacting success by increasing the effectiveness of the participants since this principle largely applies only with PBs. Social and political capital cannot be a main contributing factor either since most CSOs simply lack such capital. However, the ability of CSOs to shape policy recommendations into a form with high policy-impact potential, and then push for acknowledgment and accountability from policy makers, means that principle three is the most viable foundation for the theoretical framework.

Expressed in a tighter and falsifiable form, principle three can be rephrased into the axiom: The more control a CSO has over an initiative's organising committee, the greater the policy-impact facilitation.

Existing literature (e.g. see the oft-cited Pogrebinschi and Ryan, 2018) conceptualises this principle by examining whether CSOs form the majority of an organising committee's members, and then measuring the degree of influence starting at whether CSOs are the plurality. Specifically in this instance, the authors assigned a fuzzy-set coding scheme with the membership crossover point matching the point of plurality. Whilst I accept the wisdom in this process, I have argued above in principle 2 that the mere presence of CSOs (even in a minority form) will still provide a theoretical modicum of policy-impact potential, and that any empirical measurement ought to take this into account.

Taking this consideration into account and stapling it to the above axiom, I propose that a fuzzy-set coding scheme is an excellent means of conceptualising the influence of CSOs. Minority control of a DI, since it would still be in a position to exert influence, should exist beyond the point of the crossover threshold (that is to say 'more in than out') and then conceptual anchors marking equal or majority control should be added.

(4.3) Policy Homogeneity:

Policy homogeneity facilitates policy-impact in three forms. The first two are similar but subtly different. Their shared basic premise is something of a symbiotic relationship wherein the policy recommendations outputted by DI are essentially the same as the current government's policy, or tap into their future policy aspirations. The third way is through the process of what I coined 'pre-determined destiny' or the notion that DIs are engineered from the very beginning to produce outcomes preferential to the target politician, and thusly see minimal restrictions to policy-impact.

The theoretical framework for the first two forms of policy homogeneity builds on Vrydagh and Caluwaerts' model of disentangled public policy setting which incorporates the policy preferences of DIs (in their case, deliberative mini publics) and their interaction with the policy preferences of politicians. The researchers propose that policy-impact through policy homogeneity is either 'continuous' or 'enriching' (Vrydagh and Caluwaerts, 2020, pp117).

Suppose the policy recommendations of both the public and politicians were represented as separate circles labelled X and Y. In the policy-impact process, these circles overlap. The degree of overlap depends on their similarity, producing a common Z region. This is the dialectic. This Z region represents the potential political policy. This is expressed on the left-hand of figure 1 (next page):

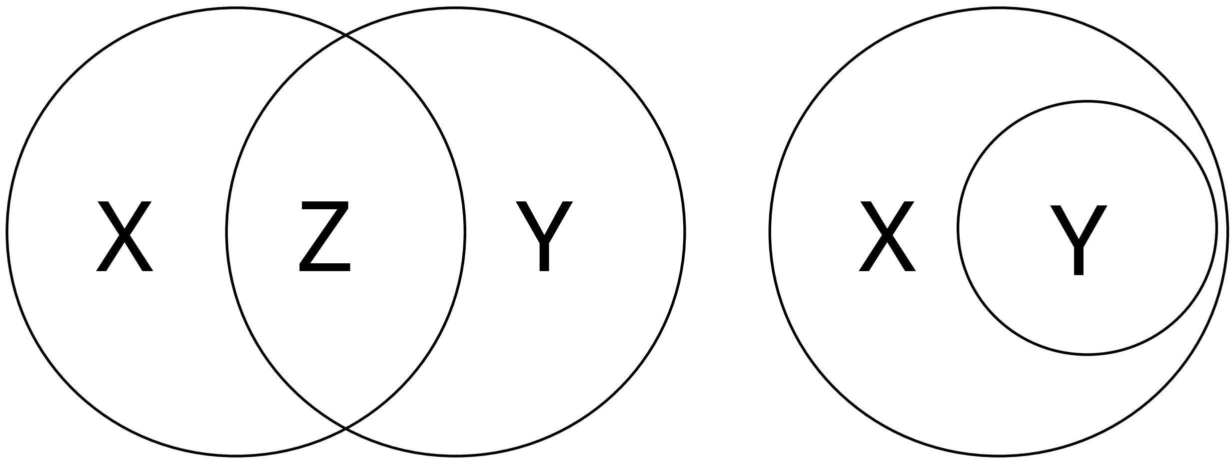


Figure 1- Representation of Continuous and Enriching Policy Homogeneity

With continuous policy homogeneity, the policy preferences of X and Y are functionally the same, and so the dialectic Z features substantial crossover. In this sense, Z is effectively a continuation of the policy preferences of both the public and of the politicians, so the resulting policy is thus sufficiently similar to both (Vrydagh and Caluwaerts, 2020). As was discussed in the second chapter, policy recommendations with a high degree of homogeneity, and thus a proportionally large Z region, are held as ideal policies in empowered spaces (Hendriks, 2013). This is because they move through the policy creation and implementation process with minimal empowered objections or obstacles, and their existence actively imbues the initial policy preferences of politicians with democratic legitimacy and a mandate to implement the policy (ibid). Likewise, if the policy preferences of X and Y were substantially different, there would be a subsequently small overlapping Z region. Since this region would be too small compared to the Y region denoting the policy preferences of politicians, it would face maximal empowered objections and obstacles, and would be unlikely to set political policy. It should be noted that process of continuous policy homogeneity implies and encourages what Blaug described as the process wherein the government or political institutions effectively colonise DIs to force them into operating on the same logic (Blaug, 2002). For instance, if a DI was mediated or chaired by a government representative, or where co-operation between initiative and politician essentially became a euphemism for the government dictating the outcome of the initiative, then we would see high degrees of policy implementation for the reasons described above. However, this wouldn't be a question of successful policy-impact per se, but rather one of the legitimacies of any policy outcomes. There are clear overlaps between this issue and the problems of designing future DIs attuned to the conditions for successful policy-impact.

With enriching policy homogeneity, the policy preferences of DI X are effectively Y+n, in that they constitute the same basic policy preferences of politicians, but build upon them by further supplementing the 'decision-makers' initial preferences' (Vrydagh and Caluwaerts, 2020, pp127). As the name suggests, X is essentially an enriched form of Y. Because of this, there is no divergent and resulting policy of Z, since X completely encapsulates Y. Again, see figure 1 above, and now look at the right-most image. This abstract idea can be best expressed with an example. Suppose a DI proposed that all new housing developments should contain a minimum of 10 trees per 100 residents. This is policy preference X. The initiative engaged with a politician who wanted to propose that new housing developments should contain a minimum of 5 trees per 100 residents. This is policy preference Y. In this example, there was no new compromise or divergently resulting policy required since policy preference X completely encapsulated policy preference Y. Not did policy X continue the core themes of policy Y, it actually enriched and built upon on it. As with before, this means that enriched policy preferences will see minimal resistance from politicians since nothing contentious has changed. On the contrary, the spirit of what each politician seeks to achieve with their policy preferences will be maximised, whilst still retaining democratic mandate since it comes from the public.

The third form is radically different than the other two. The previous models of policy homogeneity imagine the DI and the target politician to be separated behind a hypothetical veil of sorts. When the veil is lifted, and policy homogeneity is present, the target politician is delighted to see that the DI has recommended something they already wanted to do, and thus have no rational reason not to be extremely open about accommodating the policy recommendations. In contrast, pre-determined destiny forms of policy homogeneity suppose that the target politician is completely unsurprised by any policy recommendations because they themselves engineered the DI, or even proposed the DI in the first place, with the express intention of producing a pre-determined outcome. In which circumstances, it is hardly surprising that the target politician would be highly responsive to any policy recommendations.

This form of policy homogeneity features frequently in the literature owing to its poor reputation of missing the point of a DI though, equally, its policy-impacting capabilities are well known (e.g. see Wampler, 2012; Elstun and Khoban, 2023). Politicians have been known to either engineer or propose DIs with the aims of clothing their pre-determined policy decisions with the legitimacy of public discussion and dialogue. However, this public input is no more than just a token. This has empirical backing (e.g. see Pateman, 2012) and even features quite openly within educational literature for policy makers, where the ability of DIs to legitimise the decision of policy makers is touted as a fantastic advantage (Albert and Passmore, 2008). It's hard to argue that this form of policy homogeneity truly captures the spirit of public participation in the policy creation process, and most references to it in the literature condemn it harshly. But it is a definite phenomenon which routinely occurs, and it has definite implications for policy-impact. I can only include what exists rather than what I would like to exist. As with a couple of other conditions within this thesis, we must be cold and non-ideological. We must include this form of policy homogeneity so as to identify it when it happens and make judgements about how often it works, when, and what is says about the political system in which public participation operates.

There is a fourth way in which policy homogeneity possesses policy-impacting power, but this principle heavily overlaps with the next condition of the research: the presence of left-wing politicians. It is important to keep the independence of each condition solidly apart to avoid measuring and analysing essentially the same thing. Since this principle depends on policy homogeneity, it is included here as a plausible explanator should analysis later reveal that policy homogeneity and left-wing politicians predict policy-impacting success. Irrespective of the institutional form of DI, the broad ideological area of the deliberated policy in question, or the socioeconomic make-up of the participants, DIs overwhelmingly tend to produce redistributive policy recommendations espousing 'liberalism, cosmopolitanism, and social justice for all' (Junius et al, 2020, pp4; Pogrebinschi and Ryan, 2018). These classically left-wing policy recommendations are likely to be broadly homogenous with the initial policy preferences of left-wing individuals, and thus likely to find their most staunch champions amongst left-wing politicians.

It should also be noted that classic literature on policy-impact has often highlighted that majoritarian and progressive policy tends to face the least resistance from other policy-impacting actors such as interest groups (Wilson, 1973; 1989; 1995). Here the benefits of such policy tend to be felt by the majority of individuals thus maximising approval for the policy, whilst the costs (be they financial or legalistic) are evenly distributed across the populace. This minimises targeted resistance. This implies that successful policy-impact does not necessarily require left-wing politicians. Rather it would seem successful policy-impact simply requires left-wing policy recommendations. However, this is not the whole story, and the potential of left-wing policies often need activating by left-wing politicians. Whilst widely benefiting redistributive policies may not face friction from other policy-impacting actors like interest groups as much as more targeted policies, they do still face resistance from politicians who aren't left-wing or interested in redistributive policies who 'may require the accompaniment of other circumstances in order to persuade legislators to propose bills' (Pogrebinschi and Ryan, 2018, pp148).

(4.4) The Presence of Left-Wing Politicians

Even the most cursory examination of the global democratic landscape would seem to provide ample ammunition against the idea that support for DI has a left-wing slant. It has been well-noted that European Radical right-wing parties show the strongest support for referendums – a classic amongst the DIs– compared to any other ideological bloc (e.g. see Rojon and Rijken, 2020). However, this is but one form of DI, somewhat separate from the deliberative democracy influenced innovations dominating this thesis, and likely explained by Radical Right's anti-elitist tendencies supporting anything which removes power from politicians (ibid) , rather than support for deepening democracy per se. My argument that the presence of left-wing politicians facilitates participatory policy-impact comprises the arguing of three premises:

1) Theoretically speaking, left-wing politicians *ought* to support public participation, and right-wing politicians *ought* not to.

2) The above principle is demonstrated empirically.

3) Support for public participation is grounded in left-wing beliefs, rather than some other aspect which gravitates towards left-wing circles. That is to say: Do most left-wingers support public participation, or is it that most people who support public participation tend to be left-wing?

Premise One: Theoretically Speaking, Left-wing Politicians *Ought* to Support Public Participation, and Right-wing Politicians *Ought n*ot to.

Left-wing politicians are theoretically more likely than right-wing politicians to actively reach out and engage with public participation in the first place. Junius noted that left-wing politicians displayed attitudes 'more positive toward democratic reform that contributes to an inclusive and egalitarian society' than otherwise contextually similar right-wing politicians who have a normative predisposition against reform which interrupts pre-existing 'institutional arrangements' (Junius et al, 2020, pp4).

This makes theoretical sense. Those ideologically concerned with inclusion and the deepening of democracy will be suspicious of existing institutions which focus political decision-making entirely in the hands of the elite few. By extension, such individuals will be sympathetic to any initiative which actively rejects this older model of democracy in favour of innovation. If such individuals have not yet openly approved of participatory initiatives, they are likely to be at least open to the idea. This is the 'values-driven motive' (Bol, 2016, pp94) for electoral reform and has been shown to be a feature of left-wing politicians on an individual level as demonstrated by surveys of politicians and their attitudes (Núñez, et al, 2016). Likewise, right-wing politicians are likely to be characterised by conservatism and a Burkean hesitance. Given the choice between the imperfect but known option and the unknown but potentially better (or equally ruinous) option, they are likely to be suspicious of the latter. Thus, on an ideological level, right-wingers ought to oppose reform in the form of democratic innovations over the tested-and-true model of representative democracy.

Left-wing politicians are also more likely than their right-wing colleagues to engage with public participation for normative rather than purely practical reasons. Generally speaking, politicians of all ideological leanings engage with the public for three reason: to empower, to gain political legitimacy, and to learn (Bobbio, 2019). Engaging with citizens is not necessarily done with the aim of producing policy of maximum utility, but to engage for 'normative or ideological reasons' as a way of linking policy and representation with the spirit of democracy by including those let-down by traditional forms of democracy (Fiorino, 1990 ; Bobbio 2019, pp42). Or, as Bobbio (ibid, p42) in his explanation of Hisschemöller and Cuppen's (2015) work put it, 'participation can serve to empower people and thus to put in practice democratic ideals, to acquire consensus or to gain inputs from citizens' knowledge when facing complex or badly understood problems.

Premise Two: Premise One is Demonstrated Empirically

If the presence of left-wing politicians had some facilitatory effect on successful policy-impact, then this ought to be backed with empirical evidence. Research into ideology from an policy-impact perspective, let alone a participatory perspective, is few and far between. However, in their analysis of the Fridays for Future (FfF) movement – an environmentally focussed grass-roots DI – Berker and Pollex noted that that both left and right-wing party ideologies determined the nature and magnitude of what they coined 'party reactions' (Berker and Pollex, 2022, pp 1). These party reactions constituted the degree to which a party approved of the FfF's methods (as opposed to the exact message) and their willingness to engage with the initiative's recommendations.

Further, using a similar QCA-based approach, the authors concluded that not only was party ideology a necessary condition for explaining policy-impact in this instance, but that the specific degree of issue-ownership apparently displayed had little impact. Irrespective of a specific left-wing party's position on environmentalism, 'all left-wing parties support FfF to a very similar extent with only minor differences between green, socialist and social democratic parties' (ibid, pp11). This last point is significant since it implies that left-wing support for the initiative was not contingent solely on its policy area. Rather the support existed irrespective to, and potentially in spite of, the environmental policy area.

Premise Three: Support for Public Participation is Grounded In Left-wing Believes Rather than Some Other Aspect Which Gravitates Towards Left-wing Circles

Whilst that last point arguably makes justifying this premise redundant, it should be clarified that left-wing support for the FfF movement (and thus, the implication goes, for public participation more generally) irrespective of the policy area is only a singular datapoint. In order to argue for premise three, it needs to be established that most left-wingers support public participation, rather than it being that case that most politicians who support public participation are also incidentally left-wing. The latter position could well imply a minority position, and thus not necessarily be an indicator of policy-impact facilitation.

Writing in the decades immediately following World War Two, Ronald Inglehart hypothesised that those individuals who had never experienced political and social upheaval took the stable material conditions around them as a given – a state of society which felt as unchanging and timeless as the universe around them. Consequently such individuals, labelled as post-materialists, de-emphasised the salience of factors like healthcare and access to food, and bound themselves to more abstract social issues (Inglehart, 1977). Bowler et al linked these post-materialist ideas to 'changing electoral arrangements' and forms of democracy which 'provide for greater, direct citizen influence over government' (Bowler et al, 2006, pp 437). Junius et al theorised that the greatest representation of post-materialist ideas were amongst challenger political parties and almost perfectly encapsulated by environmentalist parties. If true, this would mean that post-materialist and/or environmentalist politicians were better facilitators of public participation than left-wing politicians.

However, based on their analysis of party ideological support for deliberative democratic initiatives (as well as referendums), Junius et al (2020, pp11) noted that: 'Ideological self-identification is significantly related to support for deliberative events and party family is significantly related to support for referendums. In particular, we found that left-wing parties (socialist and green parties) were most supportive of democratic innovations.' And that 'we did not find any significant difference between green parties and other left-wing parties' (ibid). Further, provided here purely to emphasise principle two from this section, Junius et al wrote: 'As expected, conservative, liberal and Christian democratic parties were less supportive of democratic innovations. Radical right parties were strongly against deliberation but strongly in favour of referendums' (ibid).

This demonstrates that support for public participation is a factor common to left-wing parties and of left-wing politicians overall. Hence, the mere presence of a left-wing politician, rather than an environmentalist politician or one who could simply be described as a post-materialist, is likely to facilitate policy-impact.

Conceptualising the presence of left-wing politicians in terms of a variable for empirical analysis is thus a trivial matter – was the target politician a member of a left-wing or otherwise progressive political party? Given that there are a limited number of relevant left-wing political parties in the UK and Ireland, the ideology can be ascertained through membership of at least one of the below political parties.

For Ireland: The Labour Party, Sinn Fein, the Green Party, etc

For the UK: The Labour Party, The Liberal Democrats, the Green Party, etc

The only slight complication refers to the meaning of "target" in 'target politician' since politicians operating at different levels of government may have different party and ideological commitments. For instance, a left-wing controlled city council under the national premiership of a right-wing government and a majority right-wing Parliament could constitute a left-wing target politician, so long as the DI largely aimed at setting the policy of the city council.

With this in mind, synthesising this theory and conceptualising left-wing targeted politicians is quite a simple endeavour since it can be ascertained through context. For instance, if an initiative is operating within the invited bounds of a county council, then the party majority will indicate whether a target is left-wing. A Labour controlled council is left-wing even if the Prime Minister is a Conservative. Likewise, if an initiative seeks national or legislative change, then the targeted politician ought to be established based on the ideology of the party in power at the time.

(4.5) and (4.6) Partisan and Salient Policies

Whilst two entirely separate conditions, both partisan and salient policies each derive their causal influence in part from a shared overarching principle: the causal effect of controversial policies.

Partisan policies are those policies which neatly split individuals into two distinct camps with little room for compromise. These policies speak to the most fundamental principles of faith, ideology, or normative sensibilities – issues such as abortion, LGBT+ rights, nuclear weapons, or the nationalisation of industry. Career-orientated politicians will naturally be reticent to champion partisan causes, irrespective of their own personal feelings towards the topic, or the views of the general public consensus since they risk the very real destruction of their career. The case-study of the Irish Citizens' Assembly (ICA) on the potential legalisation of abortion demonstrates perfectly how this principle facilitates participatory policy-impact.

Unwilling to champion the issue of abortion themselves lest they ruin their careers, conservative politicians were motivated to hand the issue over to government outsiders like the ICA, for whom the issues of political careers was irrelevant. This allowed the issue of abortion a fair hearing without dirtying the hands of politicians in government. Once the ICA had imbued the issue of abortion with democratic mandate, these same conservative politicians could consider legalising abortion by presenting as mere servants to the demands of the people, rather than pro-abortionists per se.

As the case-study of the ICA shows, partisan policies remove potential political baggage through association with politicians, make it likely that DIs will be utilised in the deliberation of a partisan issue, and then make it likely that the policy outcomes will have significant policy-impacting power (Guardian, 2019; O'Leary, 2019). Further, though still highly controversial, the policy recommendations of the ICA were still held in high regard by the voting public and politician alike since they were trusted to be authentic expressions of the public and free of overt (and potentially corrupting) influence from organised interest or politicians. Again, as previously established, policy which is held in high regard by politicians for exactly this reason, has substantial policy-impacting power (Hendriks, 2013).

This principle of politicians reaching out to public participation when they need something, or when they seek to use public deliberation as a means to end, is well established in the literature (Bobbio, 2019). Politicians find utility in participation's practical 'cognitive resources' such as context-dependent knowledge and insights, but also through what Bobbio described as 'political resources' (ibid, pp42). These political resources consist of the ability for DIs to hand political legitimacy to a politician and to policy areas of concern to the politician. This legitimacy increases support for 'contentious measures, avoid[s] conflicts, reduce[s] the disaffection of the public' (ibid). These are all features which confirm the condition of partisan policies as having policy-impacting power.

Whilst the aspect of politician's own preferences may imply that this model operates similarly to policy homogeneity, it is worth stressing that the policy-impacting capabilities paradoxically lie in the political risk of a policy. From a politician's perspective, this political risk increases the utility of handing over the responsibility to a third party such as a DI, which increases the prospect of policy-impact. Conceptualising this variable in terms of expected behaviour is therefore simple. A policy with high political risk for any actor will lend policy-impact power to any DI involved. Putting this in blunter terminology: partisan policies facilitate policy-impact by encouraging a politician to 'kick the can' of an issue to an outside political agent who can deliberate and formulate policy without dirtying the hands of the initial politician. It is a method of blame avoidance. A politician is not only motivated to utilise a DI in the first place but is also subsequently motivated to respond earnestly and publicly to their policy recommendations. This is the ideal breeding ground for policy-impact. I have coined this theoretical behaviour as the 'can-kicking principle'.

However, we ought to dissect the limits and nuances of this theoretical model of behaviour. Even if a politician kicks the policy can to somebody else, they are still inextricably associated with the policy, and will be still at least partially accountable for its presence in the policy creation and implementation process. This is an important principle because it provides an upper-bound or a limit to the policy-impact impacts of partisan policies, and so we cannot simply assume a direct never-ending correlation between how partisan a policy is and how successful a participatory process will be. It would be foolish to assume that truly repugnant policies would still effortlessly set policies because they were so partisan. If a politician suggested kicking the can for something which truly outraged wider society, there would be obvious repercussions for the politician no matter how hard they kicked the can away. In order for it to be an effective policy-impacting condition, the partisan policy must be one where there is a widespread and even split within society, where each side can be considered legitimate and rational and so not the perspectives of a radical few. Furthermore, it must be a current real existing issue that was not conjured up by a politician wanting to pass something personally important to them but not society at large. Surely even the biggest opponent to abortion would have to agree that abortion was a widespread and long-existing issue within Ireland before the ICA, and that Irish society was relatively split on the issue? Again, the majority of the population aged under 55 was pro-legalisation whilst the majority over was the opposite (Pew Research Center, 2018).

However, the ICA also demonstrated another policy-impacting avenue. Through public deliberation away from the muddying influence of politicians, the issue of abortion solidified the already substantial salience of the issue. Public support of highly salient policies carries its own policy-impacting influence, since politicians seek to gain legitimacy by directly grappling with issues important to the electorate (eg, see Bobbio, 2019). With high issue salience comes high issue attention, and consequently high potential legitimacy (Bromley-Trujillo and Poe, 2018). Thus, the larger the salience of the issue, the more likely that a politician will gain democratic legitimacy through engagement.

Further, salience of an issue through public participation directly bolsters the policy-impacting power of outside actors through a process of remote and secondary influence. Public deliberation of controversial and partisan issues has a legitimising effect on the issue, wherein the facts of the matter take precedence over political point-scoring. As was seen with the ICA, media outlets tended to focus on the ethical considerations of abortion as an independent topic, rather than viewing abortion as a means of attacking a politician (Guardian, 2019). The result of policy legitimisation is the partial rehabilitation of the formerly partisan issue, and the swaying of public opinion. This newly increased salience of the issue amongst the general public – aside from the participants in a DI – encourages policy-impact through avenues completely outside of those intuitively associated with DIs. The literature demonstrates that semi-formal institutions and other policy-impacting actors who operated in the formerly partisan issue area will be emboldened by the increase in salience, and any subsequent activities will have boosted policy-impacting influence through the addition of now wider public support and their democratic mandate (McGovern and Thorne, 2020; Tormey, 2019). What's more, there is strong evidence that high issue salience actually encourages the public to engage with and further support these semi-formal policy-impacting institutions, with the result being a general steering of political behaviour towards getting salient policy enacted (Boninger et al, 1995).

However, for the purposes of this research, salience's policy-impacting potential will only include the first more direct conceptualisation (along with the principle of parabolic salience explained in the next paragraph) rather than also including the process of remote and secondary influence. Exploring the latter model would require extensive research techniques and data sources beyond those specified and justified in this piece. Happily the first model is relatively simple to conceptualise since it only requires that an issue be considered salient and politically important to the electorate. There is a subtler element which the ICA teaches us: a salient policy only possesses policy-impacting power when the current status-quo actively forms a situation which ought to be changed. For instance, free and safe access to abortion is important to many individuals in Ireland and the UK today. However, when Ireland restricted access to abortion and was considering repealing the ban, abortion was already legalised in the UK and this fact showed no signs of changing. Hence, despite it being an important issue in both countries, the salience of abortion could only possess policy-impacting power in Ireland.

At this stage the theoretical framework for salience's policy-impacting power seems to suggest a purely linear relationship wherein policy-impacting potential increases as salience increases. However, the empirical analysis from later on in the thesis showed that this relationship is, in fact, parabolic in that policy-impact is high when salience is extremely low, but also when salience is high. There is a policy-impact 'dead zone' in the middle. This principle is demonstrated crudely below in figure 2 below:

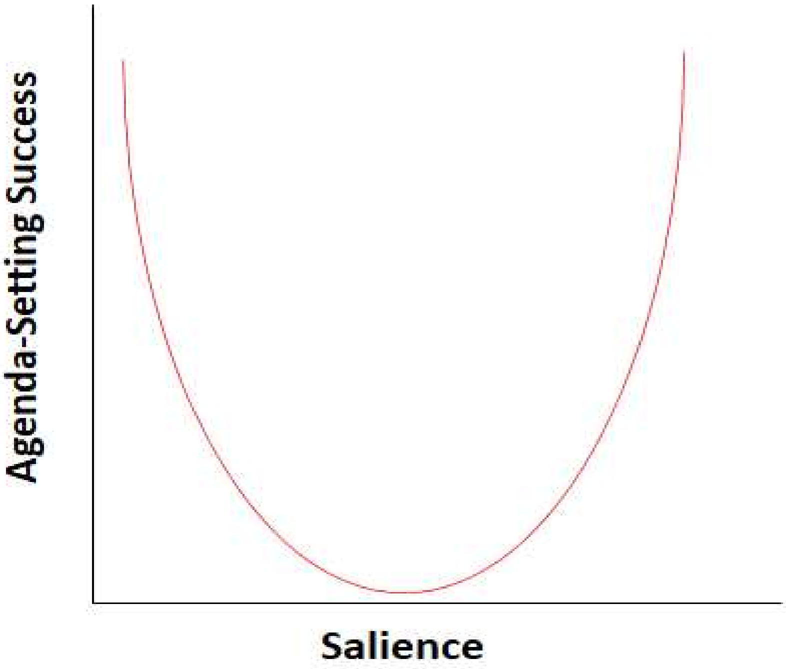


Figure 2 - Representation of parabolic policy salience.

This phenomenon may seem to directly contradict the theoretical behaviour for salience but, in fact, this fits perfectly. The journey a potential issue takes from the point of policy recommendation to policy-implementation is fraught with points of resistance. These points of resistance could be institutional, bureaucratic, or (as with policy homogeneity) down to the disagreement or policy differences amongst those involved in responding to the policy. However, when an issue is particularly salient and important to the electorate, a policy possesses enough momentum to overcome these hurdles. However, a policy of extremely low salience is unlikely to face the same degree of resistance. There is little to object to when it comes to mundane policy suggestions – whether that be down to it being ideologically unobjectionable or perhaps just simply cheap and simple to implement. A policy with extremely low salience is also able to overcome these hurdles but only because the hurdles are smaller and fewer in number.

(4.7) Theoretical Framework Conclusions

Within this chapter I have conceptualised and explained six conditions which I propose to explain policy-impact. The majority are quite straightforward. The minor exception is that of an institutional culture friendly to public participation. However, I demonstrated that state-leadership was a viable proxy.

State-leadership in conjunction with four other conditions - state leadership, the presence of CSOs, policy homogeneity, the presence of left-wing politicians, and salient policy areas - are all highly intuitive since they act to lower the types of institutional friction that a DI's policy recommendation might come across at the policy-impact stage. Or, at least to put a DI in the best position possible to overcome the friction.

A partisan policy area is a less intuitive condition for policy-impacting success, but this section demonstrated that the can-kicking principle transforms this condition into something with considerable policy-impact potential. Finally, this chapter demonstrated that salience can *also* possess counter-intuitive policy-impacting potential since particularly *low* salience also lowers institutional friction – exactly like high salience. I coined this principle 'parabolic salience'.

Having explained the theoretical framework, we can now begin to discuss the methodology behind empirically analysing these conditions.

Chapter 5: The QCA Process. What It Is, and How It Works

This thesis so far has made numerous references to comparative approaches and of QCA, and it is in this section that this method is procedurally explained. The first section broadly explains what QCA is by introducing the concepts of set theory. These are set relations and set interactions, and they can be used to derive causal pathways to a given outcome. QCA does not use numerical variables and instead uses data expressed as either a 0 or a 1, or a figure in between. This notation denotes either the total absence or presence of a condition, or some value between these figures to express the degree of presence. This is crisp-set and fuzzy-set coding respectively. The following section explains how this data is created through a process called 'calibration'. Following on, this section introduces the concepts of necessary, SUIN, and sufficient conditions, and explains how they show causal pathways to an outcome. The section then concludes with a description of tests which ensure that any results are robust and then a means of assessing any results through a process called Formal Theory Evaluation (FTE). Ordinarily, a method is justified before being explained in depth so to have this chapter here might be considered unusual. However much of the concepts and terminology of QCA are likely to be new to most researchers, and so a good understanding of the method must be established before its strengths can be properly explained.

(5.1) QCA Process

Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA) is a set-theoretic approach to social science. Set-theoretic methods share three principal components. Firstly, they synthesise social phenomena into sets. For instance, suppose you had three non-overlapping sets representing 'Genetics', 'Physical Exercise', and 'High Protein Diet'. If the sets for 'Genetics' and 'Physical Exercise' intersected, then the area of crossover could be called 'High Muscle Mass'. However, this is *also* true if 'Physical Exercise' intersected with 'High Protein Diet'. This is called a set relation. Similarly, an intersection of sets looks at the components which fall into one or more sets simultaneously. For instance, all countries within Europe are subsets within the set 'European countries' just as much as all African countries exist within the entirely separate set 'African countries'. However, the Spanish Canary Islands, existing as they do within Africa, could be expressed as these two sets overlapping slightly – or, to use the technical term, an intersection of sets. Secondly, set-theoretic methods 'perceive relations between social phenomena as set relations' (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012; pp3). Third, set relations can be expressed in terms of sufficiency and necessity – concepts that will be fleshed out below – but which roughly pertain to sets existing within other sets or sets encapsulating other sets, respectively.

However, unlike other set-theoretic approaches such as typology, QCA uses set relations for causal interpretation. Put simply, QCA takes the set-relations of social phenomena and seeks to position them as casually sufficient or necessary for an outcome. QCA differs again through its use of truth-tables as a means of expressing and analysing set relations. These truth tables are simplified through Boolean minimisation to produce smaller, yet logically equivalent, truth tables where causal set relations can be inferred.

The still-novel nature of QCA and its procedural uniqueness compared to other empirical methods means that a section on the QCA process will occur twice within this thesis. The first, below, details the generic details common to all QCA, and the second, as contained within the next chapter, will apply the principles to the data and will walk through the analysis step-by-step. Oana et al (2021) provides an elegant breakdown of the QCA steps which is useful to build on. The steps are lumped into three chunks: 'before the analytical moment', the 'analytical moment', and 'after the analytical moment' (ibid; pp4). Before QCA can be conducted, data must be re-constructed into set relations and then logically minimised through the applications of two algorithms: that of the Quin-McCluskey and a separate further minimisation step. After this is completed, any sufficient or necessary conditions which form a causal pathway (or 'solutions') to the outcome are established. Once the analytical moment has finished, any solutions produced are subjected to robustness tests and QCA-specific forms of theory evaluation.

(5.2) Before the Analytical Moment: Calibration

Calibration is the process of turning quantitative measures of a condition into set-membership data suitable for QCA through the use of qualitative thresholds. The exact method of calibration is determined by the type of data required by the specific analysis, whether it be crisp-set or fuzzy-set, and the qualitative thresholds are determined through informed reference to a theoretical framework and empirical evidence (Ragin, 2000).

Crisp-set data exists in a binary form and is thus expressed as a 0, denoting complete absence, or as a 1, denoting complete membership. The principle of calibration is thus simple. The researcher takes a data scale, selects a qualitative threshold point, and then assigns everything below that value the crisp-set coding of 0, and everything above it the coding of 1. This is the process of dichotomisation. A condition is suitable to be expressed as crisp-set data if it is 'is generically binary' (Rohlfing, 2020; pp76) and no reasonably avoidable loss of data is incurred by calibrating it as such. Consider a condition like height. If a qualitative threshold was held at the height of the average doorframe in England and Wales (198.1cm) then any individual with a height over this could be coded 1 for the condition 'tall' and anyone below could be coded as 0 or 'not tall'.

Fuzzy-set follows a similar logic aside from the use of two or more qualitative thresholds to effectively add bands of qualitative data denoting how much a case is within the set. It must be stressed that these bands do not directly and proportionately relate to the relative numerical difference of each datapoint within an uncalibrated dataset. This prevents, for instance, any attempt at retaining 'each's cases relative distance to each other' (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012; pp33). As such a fuzzy-set coding of 0.66 does not mean that any such cases are exactly 33% higher in set membership than a case coded as 0.33. Instead each coding reflects a meaning within the concept that is qualitative. This qualitative meaning of each coding can therefore designate broad positions within the set including minority and majority membership. A typical fuzzy-set coding may well take the form:

Full membership = 1

More in than out = 0.67

More out than in = 0.33

Fully out = 0

To use another example from this thesis, the fact that policy-impact can exist as both weak politician interest up to and including unbounded enthusiasm with immediate policy integration (plus everything in between), and given that it would make little sense to lump the two together as being the same qualitative outcome, it would be suitable to code policy-impact using fuzzy-set calibration. After all, any degree of policy-impact is more in the set of 'policy-impact' than out by its very definition, but some degrees are more in than others. A more real-world example: any good-tasting food is necessarily more in the set of 'tasty food' than out, but something truly delicious would be more in than out compared to something that's mostly tasty – despite both being within the set.

Schneider and Wagemann (2012) describe three approaches to determining qualitative thresholds. The first is 'the obvious fact' (ibid; pp32) which refers to a threshold determined by common knowledge or reasonable assumptions about the dataset. For instance, the majority of people in the UK complete their GCSEs in their eleventh year of school, and so there is a difference in qualification for students competing their tenth year compared to the eleventh. If a researcher wished to calibrate a condition of 'Has completed mandatory minimum qualification' then the eleventh year forms an obvious point for a qualitative threshold. Secondly, there also exist wider conventions and norms within the researcher's specific field of social science which can be drawn upon for threshold justification in the event of no obvious facts. Lastly, and of most relevance to this thesis, is the theoretical-framework derived threshold. Here, the ideal threshold point is one which allows a researcher to meaningfully measure and record the potentially causal mechanism of a phenomena. For instance, this thesis examines the presence of left-wing politicians on policy-impact. The theoretical expectation here is that a politician will act based on *distinctly* left-wing values. As such a qualitative threshold which allowed political centrists, or politicians with a singularly left-wing value amongst majority right-wing beliefs, into the set of 'left-wing politicians' would be wholly unsuitable.

Once a justified threshold has been chosen, the data expressed as set relations, it is then logically minimised into a simplified truth table, ready for the analytical moment

(5.3) During the Analytical Moment: Necessary, SUIN, and Sufficient Conditions

Necessary Conditions

When an outcome is conditional on the presence of a singular condition, then that condition is described as necessary. In the same way that fire is entirely conditional on the presence of oxygen, so too would successful policy-impact always require a necessary condition if one were to exist.

Measures of necessity within QCA make use of consistency values which express as a proportion the 'degree to which solution terms and the solution as a whole are subsets of the outcome' (Rodrigues, 2022, pp2; Ragin, 2006). Put another way, the number of cases where a given condition was present alongside the presence of the outcome, divided by the number of cases where the given condition was not present, but the outcome was present.

Naturally, there is a high threshold for something to be considered absolutely necessary for an outcome. For a purely crisp-set dataset containing less uncertain data than fuzzy-set, or an analysis focussing on more objective data such as from the hard sciences, the consistency threshold for necessity ought to be held at 1, denoting 100% consistency. Likewise the complexity of causal factors within the social sciences means that a more liberal interpretation of necessity can be held, and so the consistency threshold can be lowered.

The ideal consistency threshold is dependent on theoretical justifications chosen by the researcher which pertain only to that specific piece of research. In other words, the threshold can be almost anything so long as it fits within the plausible parameters of the theoretical framework. QCA is particularly susceptible to model overfitting (e.g. see Arel-Bundock, 2019) and so selecting too high a consistency threshold runs the risk of producing highly complex solutions with spurious condition causality. The most recent research in the area tends to favour a threshold of 0.9 (e.g. see Schneider, 2019), a value which emphasises the tight restraints of what causal necessity within the social sciences. Meanwhile, Baumgartner (2022) argues that a lower still threshold of 0.85 is high enough to derive robust causal pathways to an outcome whilst being lenient enough to avoid overfitting.

Baumgartner's proposal is an attractive one in social science. However, the process of robustness tests for QCA (described elsewhere in the chapter in more detail) shows that the thesis results are not prone to overfitting and that the results remain both simple and constant with an even higher threshold figure. Since model overfitting is not an issue, it would perhaps appear reasonable to hold the consistency threshold at an even higher figure than 0.85. This argument could certainly be made. However, public participation is still in its infancy within the UK and Ireland, and what may appear to be the first glimmers of general rules for participatory policy-impact are not guaranteed to remain stable as more and more relevant cases are understood in the future. In other words, model overfitting is still a primary concern here, and so the research design should be made future-proof wherever feasible and justifiable. I propose that this is exactly such an instance. Hence, the consistency threshold figure will be set at 0.85.

SUIN and INUS Conditions

SUIN (Sufficient but Unnecessary part of an Insufficient but Necessary configuration) conditions are conditions which in isolation are not necessary for an outcome. However, as part of an either/or combination with another condition, such that the combination reflects some higher order theoretical concept, they may form part of a necessary solution. Unlike necessary conditions, SUIN conditions must exist as a configuration of at least two or more conditions and, unlike sufficient conditions, must exist as a logical OR configuration.

SUIN conditions must 'pass the hurdle of empirical relevance and theoretical soundness' (Schneider, 2019, pp1115) in that any robust SUIN analysis must be able to link both elements of a disjunction together into a new higher-order concept which still plausibly exists within the bounds of the theoretical framework.

However, why exactly must there be a higher-order concept, and why exactly can a compound disjunction not possess necessity as-is? QCA idealists such as Thiem (2017, pp480) would argue that 'in every QCA solution that exhibits perfect consistency and coverage, the disjunction of minimally sufficient conditions for the outcome is also minimally necessary for that outcome, without a unifying higher-order concept being required' – a claim which argues for the existence of compound necessity over the mental gymnastics of a higher-order concept. The first and most obvious objection to this argument is that the disjunction neither possesses a high enough consistency nor such coverage, so the applicability of this argument within this context is already diminished, irrespective of its strengths. Secondly, scholarly responses to this line of reasoning (e.g. see Schneider, 2018, pp246 or Ragin, 2000, pp209) emphasise that necessity is established through more than just apparent subset relations, and that conceptual meaningfulness is the first factor to consider. If we can make conceptual sense of the 'either/or' nature of a SUIN condition, then this conception must be speaking of a meaningful higher-order concept, and failing to recognise this fact is no better than a researcher assuming that correlation always equals causation.

If we accept that a SUIN configuration requires a meaningful higher order concept, then we must accept that this higher order concept is a necessary condition for explaining policy-impact from DIs. Further, that each component of the configuration is, to a certain degree, interchangeable so long as it maintains the higher order concept. Vis and Dul (2018) coined an excellent example of this principle wherein apples are a necessary condition to making apple pie, but neither red apples nor green apples independently reflect a necessary condition. However their arrangement in a logical OR configuration forms necessity since both red or green apples fundamentally uphold the higher-order concept of 'apple', and if one is not present, then the other logically has to be.

A fatal flaw of the apple pie example is that we, as observers, have full knowledge on the range of apples, available colours of apples, and the minimal requirements to make an apple pie. Thus assessing red and green apples together as a SUIN condition can be done deductively rather than inductively. For instance:

Premise 1: There is an apple pie

Premise 2: Apples are required to make apple pie

Premise 3: Apples are **only either** red or green, and cannot be any other colour

Premise 4: No apples of one of the colours are present

Thus – the other colour of apple becomes necessary to explain the apple pie

However, the same cannot be said for this thesis, and inductive logic must be used instead. Interpreting a SUIN condition thus requires that we not only provide a higher-order concept within the bounds of the theoretical framework which reflects necessity, but that we explain with justification *how* the SUIN condition covers the entire breadth of this concept. For each configuration we must explain how, as it were, red or green apples cover the entire breadth of apple variance.

Sufficient Conditions

A condition can be considered sufficient if all instances of that condition coincide with the outcome, providing there is some justification to suppose so in line with a coherent theoretical framework. As such, a sufficient condition differs from a necessary condition in that the outcome must be explained by the condition when present, but the outcome does not entirely depend on the presence of the condition to occur. For example, a Molotov cocktail is a sufficient condition for explaining a fire - since exploding ordinance by design will cause a fire in every instance - but the mere fact that a fire is present does not mean that a Molotov cocktail was necessarily present. A necessary condition possesses symmetrical causality. If the necessary condition is present, then the outcome will occur. If the same necessary condition is not present, then the outcome will not occur. However, a sufficient condition possesses asymmetrical causation. Whilst it remains true that, if a sufficient condition is present, then the outcome will occur, there is no 'logical expectation' that the inverse is also true (Schneider and Wagemann, 2012, pp 57).

Sufficiency differs from necessity in one other crucial aspect: whereas a necessary condition must exist in isolation, a condition lacking in sufficiency can be bundled together with another similar condition to achieve a configuration which does achieve sufficiency.

This combinational nature is superficially similar to the logic of a SUIN condition, but this is where any similarities end. A configuration of sufficient conditions, unlike a SUIN condition, are constructed using the AND Boolean operator instead the OR. For instance, we might say that X and Y together are sufficient for an outcome, rather than saying X or Y. Further, such configurations only seek to achieve sufficiency rather than necessity. This means that each component within a configuration of sufficient conditions is not essentially interchangeable with any other component as with SUIN conditions. SUIN's interchangeability stems from the requirement of a higher-order concept to lend an umbrella of theoretical plausibility over the configuration. However, since a sufficient condition cannot be separated into interchangeable components, any configuration sufficient for the outcome can be accepted 'as is' without any higher-order concept – so long as it fits within the theoretical framework.

An INUS Condition is a part of a condition which is necessary (but not sufficient) for an outcome which is not necessary but also sufficient. This is one of the more simple concepts within QCA. Unlike SUIN conditions, INUS conditions *do* make use of the AND operator because they depend on the combination of other conditions to 'activate' its sufficiency. Consider this example: smoking by itself is not sufficient for explaining rates of lung cancer since not all smokers will develop lung cancer. However, it is necessary since the vast majority of individuals with lung cancer will have been smokers. Hence it is necessary but not sufficient. When other conditions are present, such as exposure to elemental factors like high levels of dust or just simple genetics, these conditions 'activate' smoking into becoming a sufficient condition.

Since the threshold for necessity ought to be set high, and since a theoretically-sound higher-order concept may not exist linking any potential SUIN conditions together, sufficient conditions – both in isolation and in configuration – form the most common and potentially most interesting results for a QCA researcher.

(5.4) After the Analytical Moment: Validating QCA with Robustness Tests and Set-Theoretic Theory Evaluation

Validating QCA With Robustness Tests

Expressed in simple terms: the procedure for assessing the robustness of a QCA solution involves repeating the analysis multiple times, both with more liberal and more conservative theoretical constraints, and then comparing the results. If there is little to no difference between the outputted causal pathways each time, then the results can be considered robust and valid. At this point there are two fair questions to be asked:

1) Why this approach to validity rather than more traditional measures?

2) Robust results are robust against *what* exactly?

Whilst it may be tempting to approach QCA with a framework of common-sense built upon experience from other approaches and their tests of robustness, the inherent case-based approach of QCA and the rejection of standard empirical practices (such as random data selection) makes this significantly harder (Thomann and Maggetti, 2017). Take two of the validity tests widely used to assess other empirical research: the deliberate avoidance of sampling bias and the element of wider applicability. Add then the testable identification and suitable consideration of outlier data. As described in the previous section, QCA is typically used on data which was hand-picked rather than randomly selected, and therefore draws on the traditions of based-based constructivist methods sampling. Therefore testing for sampling bias in a typical usage completely defeats the point. This hand-selection of cases also therefore naturally limits the wider applicability of findings. As for outlier data, QCA does not allow for the simple deletion of cases or the inclusion of randomly selected cases to "pad out" the negative influence of outliers. This would obfuscate and potentially negate any meaningful results derived from the cases. This means that standard robustness tests are simply not applicable.

Secondly, the strengths afforded to QCA through its qualitative data-collection methodology form the very basis for its chief weakness. By allowing the researchers to make judgement-calls in both collecting their data and calibrating its membership in sets, QCA seems to necessarily allow for researcher bias, arbitrary standards, or even simply being mistaken in an estimation (Goldthorpe, 1997; Skaaning, 2011). Thus, a robust result can be considered a result which remains consistent meaningful even when these judgement calls are called into question. However, defenders of QCA have pointed out the necessitated intimacy of case knowledge a researcher requires to code cases ought to address most of these concerns (Schneider and Wagemann, 2010). Further, defenders of QCA argue the detractors have missed the point; that QCA forms a 'dialogue with cases' and that the debate about robustness is less important than testing whether QCA can provide clues explaining 'diversity between cases' (Skaaning, 2011, pp392). However, whatever the purpose of QCA, without a robust means of assessing data-formulation decisions, any definitive conclusions drawn must be taken with a pinch of salt.

Testing Robustness Through Adjusting Sensitivity Ranges

This method for testing the robustness of QCA data is remarkable in its simplicity. Adjusting the sensitivity range is to adjust calibration and consistency thresholds and use the new results to assess the robustness of the original.

When a researcher encodes case study data into the binary outcomes required for crisp-set QCA, they are unlikely to begin by simply reasoning that a variable is either present or not-present. More likely a researcher will adopt some form of numerical index of data and then use their knowledge of prevailing theory to pick a numerical number to act as a crossover point for membership and non-membership. For instance, a researcher wanting to code for whether a state is wealthy may use a 10-point scale, wherein 0 denotes absolute poverty and 10 corresponds to untold riches, and use this scale as a metric for comparison. Here the researcher may designate 7 as the crossover point – where any state scoring 7 or above is considered wealthy. The researcher would then transform the data to code any state with a score above or equal to 7 as '1' in the crisp-set QCA. Likewise, with fuzzy-set data, the researcher would perhaps assign a score of 5 to denote a state that was more wealthy than not wealthy. In which case, instead of being coded either 0 or 1, any state score between 5 and 7 would be recoded as a non-integer between 0 and 1 – perhaps 0.51 or 0.66 denoting its 'fuzziness' between the two extremes. This is the process of calibration described earlier.

Testing robustness through adjusting calibration refers to the process of performing an initial analysis as described above, and then repeating the process with both a lower and a higher calibration crossover figure. For instance, to use the above example, changing the crossover point of wealth from 7 to 6, and then from 7 to 8 for a crisp-set dataset, and then also adjusting the threshold for 'more wealthy than not wealthy' in a similar fashion for fuzzy-set data. If through the change in calibration more data is given membership of the outcome (thus coding a case as 'wealthy'), and if this occurs in conjunction with no changes to the outputted solutions (the combination of conditions which explain the outcome), then the initial analysis and its data can be considered robust and dependable. To put it bluntly: if the results don't radically change when the data is slightly changed, then the results are robust. This process is then repeated to test the counterfactuals, or those conditions which explain when the outcome is not present. Since this effectively tests the opposite of the initial test, any solutions which contains conditions found both in the initial and the counterfactual test would be considered a contradiction. A single unchanged condition cannot explain when an outcome is present but also when the outcome is not present. If no new contradictions are found, then this also bolsters the robustness of the test and its data.

Testing robustness through adjusting consistency follows a similar logic but applied after the calibration stage and before the results stage. The consistency value is 'the percentage of causal configurations of similar composition which result in the same outcome value' wherein a low consistency value would mean that the evidence provided by the data does not support the inclusion of a condition in a solution (Roig-Tierno, 2017, p17). As with before, an initial analysis is performed with a given acceptable consistency threshold, and then the process is repeated with both a higher and a lower value. Provided that altering the acceptable consistency value does not change the results as implied by the outcome combinations or cause any logical contradictions, then the outputted causal pathways can be considered robust.

<u>**Method for Comparing Results from Sensitivity Test**</u>

The above sensitivity test relies on adjusting the values of both the calibration and consistency thresholds. However, Oana et al describe 'research-realistic situations' wherein a nuanced theoretical framework may warrant examination of a newly plausible calibration/consistency point - for instance with the examination of seemingly outlying cases (Oana et al, 2021). Or, in other words, if the theory allows for the shifting of calibration/consistency thresholds once, then it may allow for the further shifting of values, right up to the plausible bounds posed by the theory. For instance, again using the 10-point scale of state wealth, if 7 is a plausible calibration threshold for crisp-set data, but 6 also forms a plausible figure, then 5 may very well be pivoting on the edge of the theoretical framework but still just about sit within it. In such circumstances re-performing the analysis for every new analytical decision produces considerably more alternative solutions, and the complexity of evaluation increases in tandem.

To formally compare the results of an initial solution (IS) to the whole range of new solutions built from theoretically plausible thresholds, a researcher should look for the 'robust core' (ibid). Oana et al (ibid) propose aggregating all the alternative solutions derived from the sensitivity adjustment into a singular band of figures stretching from the smallest theoretically plausible value to the highest. This is called the minimum test set (minTS) and maximum test set (maxTS) respectively. The initial solution is then compared to the minimum and maximum test sets along with the outcome. The robust core is the data common to all three. This principle is expressed below in figure 3:

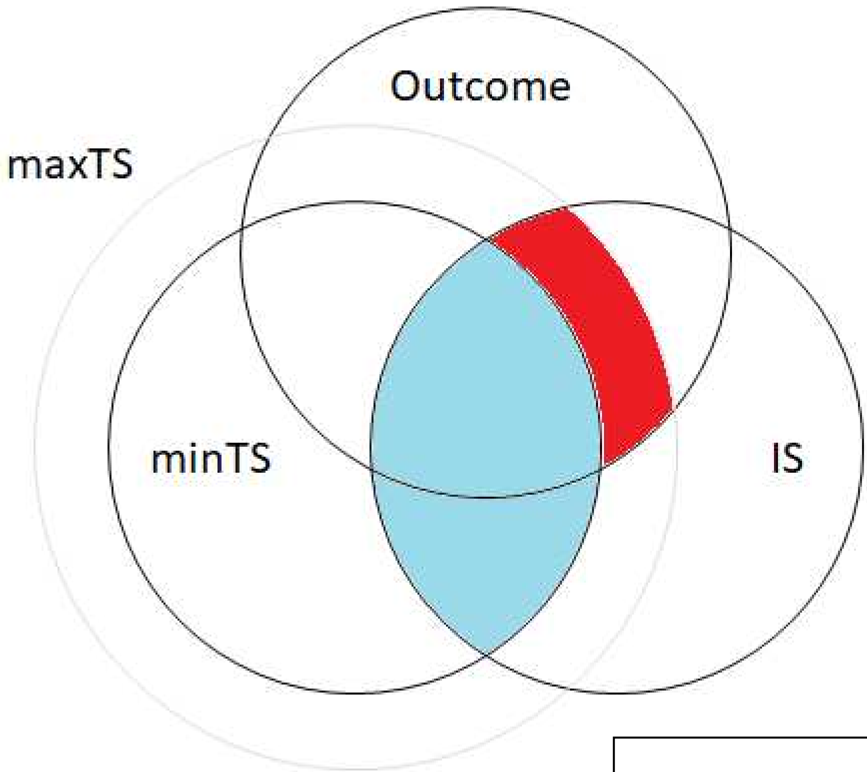
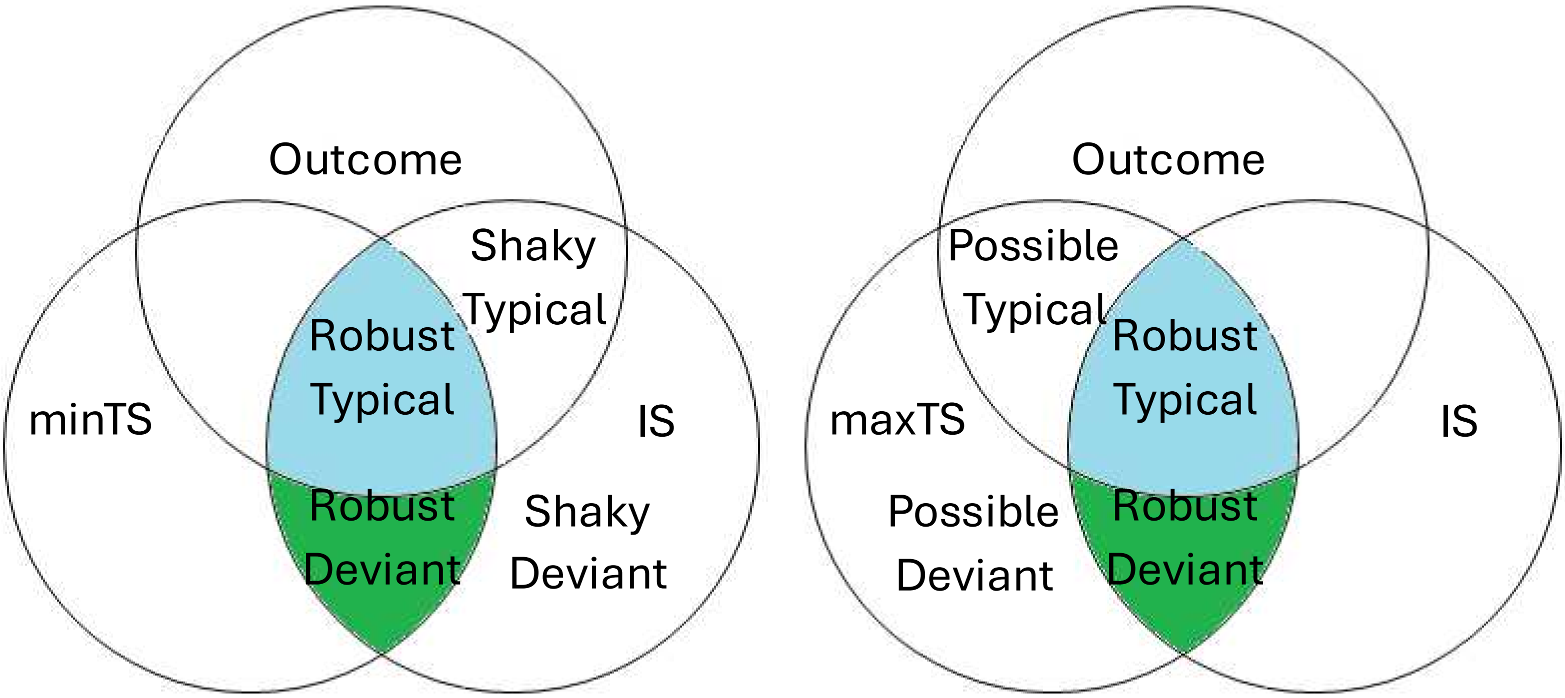


Figure 3 - Robust core from sensitivity test

Adapted from Oana et al, 2021, pp149

From this Venn diagram we can see the interaction between the solutions and the outcome. The area in blue denotes the area of overlap that will occur no matter the exact value of each sensitivity threshold, and the red denotes the area of additional overlap when at the very extremes of the thresholds. Since only the blue area exists at each threshold score, this represents what is unchanging each time: the robust core. Or, expressed simply, the valid results.

The sensitivity test allows the researcher to assess the robustness of any configurational solution. What it doesn't do, however, is tell the researcher which specific cases move from being part of the configurational solution (a 'typical' case) to being irrelevant to the solution when the calibration and consistency are changed – and vice versa. As before, this principle can be expressed in figure 4 below – note that the left Venn diagram shows the arrangement for minTS and the right shows the same for maxTS:



Adapted from Oana et al, 2021, pp149

Figure 4 - Robust typical cases

Oana et al (ibid) usefully categorise cases as being at least one of four descriptors: robust, shaky, typical, and possible. Robust typical cases are those cases which unchangingly form part of the outcome, whilst robust deviant cases are unchangingly never part of the outcome. Shaky cases are those cases which reflect the configurational solution of the initial solution before sensitivity testing but don't form part of the robust core of cases. Their status as either being typical or deviant – polar opposites – are liable to change through calibration and/or consistency adjustment. Possible cases exist only when using the maxTS adjustment. Here, possible typical cases are new additions to the cases found within the initial solution and the robust core that only escape irrelevancy when using the maxTS.

Whilst the specific cases found within the robust core are, by definition, not liable to change, an analysis cannot be considered robust and valid if the other cases move category at the slightest adjustment of calibration and consistency threshold. This is primarily a problem for a fuzzy-set analysis since crisp-set data – being binary – exists at the extremes of each category. Consider the example XY plot below (figure 5), drawn from data created at an earlier point in the research but since modified:

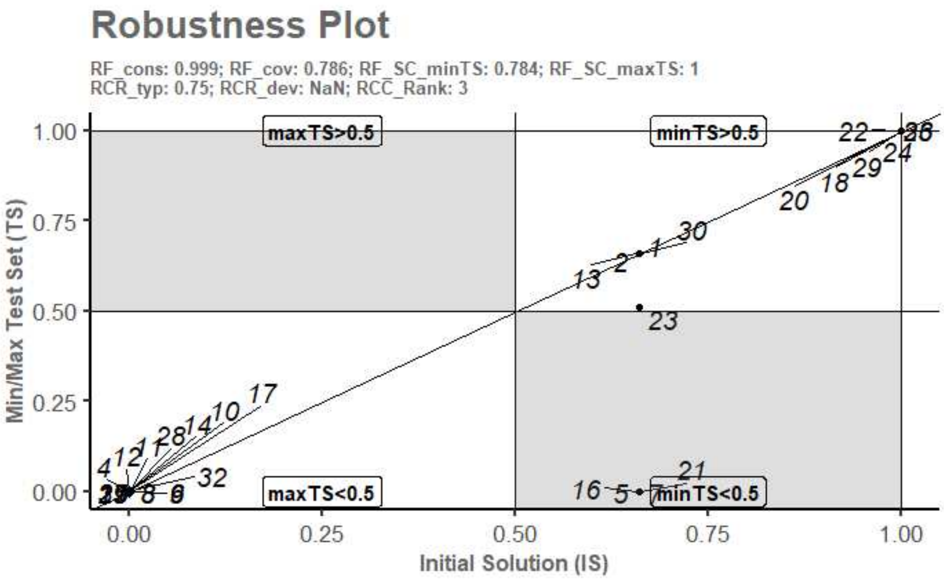


Figure 5 - Example XY plot showing relevant case from the robustness test

In this example, the consistency for the IS was placed at 0.9, and the minTS/maxTS consistency figures were 0.05 in each direction – 0.85 and 0.95 respectively. The top-left quadrant contains the possible typical and deviant cases, the top-right contains the robust typical and deviant cases, the bottom-right quadrant contains the shaky typical and deviant cases, and the bottom-left contains the irrelevant cases. It is the non-shaded quadrants (the top-left and the bottom-right) which provide the means of assessing the solution robustness and validity. Similarly, the bottom-left quadrant provides the least analytical information since all the irrelevant cases are placed here.

All cases aside from three are placed along the diagonal line and outside of the most problematic quadrants. This means that few cases differ in placement between the IS and the consistency adjustments, and that the results are largely robust. A more thorough breakdown of this result will occur in the next chapter when the theoretical principles of QCA are applied to the thesis data.

The process of validating QCA with robustness tests is lengthy with many new terms likely unfamiliar to the average researcher. However, this section demonstrates that it is a simple process. In essence, assessing the robustness of QCA solutions involves repeating the QCA process multiple times with slightly different figures for calibration and consistency and then looking for those solutions and specific cases which remain consistent throughout. The next section describes FTE (Formal Theory Evaluation) which shows how theoretical expectations can be assessed against empirical findings.

(5.5) Set-Theoretic Theory Evaluation

QCA, despite its use of numerical data and Boolean logic, sits firmly within the camp of qualitative approaches. The task of interpreting and understanding any solutions from QCA is thus an inductive endeavour – one which uses pre-existing ideas and the reinterpretation of specific cases to gauge how well the empirics interplay with the theory. Since QCA is a reiterative process, preliminary findings are then fed back into the analysis until robust balance is formed between the empirics and the theory. As such, hypotheses are neither rejected nor accepted with QCA, unlike with quantitative methods. However, the initial and reiterative process of QCA demands that the researcher makes hunches throughout which are then justified with theory as with case and condition selection, or the setting of calibration thresholds. A growing body of research (e.g. see Ragin, 1987, pp118-121; Schneider and Wagemann, 2012; pp 295 or Oana et al, 2021; pp 172) propose that evaluating these hunches and theoretical expectations should form the basis for any useful analysis. Given that many of the theoretical behaviours of the conditions described in the theoretical framework compliment or work in plausible tandem with other conditions, evaluating these theoretical groupings is an important step to the thesis

Set-theoretical theory evaluation (STE) 'is a procedure for identifying which parts of the theory are supported by empirical evidence and which ones are not' (Oana et al, 2021, pp172). STE takes theoretically-plausible solutions (T) along with the actual empirical solutions (S) and derives four 'logically possible scenarios' (ibid) to put cases into. Note, ~ denotes the NOT function so ~T would mean a case where theoretically-plausible solutions are not present:

1) T*S which shows the degree of overlap between the expectations and empirical reality
2) T *~S which shows the theoretical expectations not reflected in the solutions
3) ~T*S which shows us unexpected results or, at least, those not reflected in the theoretical expectations
4) ~T*~S which shows what was neither theoretically expected nor empirically shown

Since it is usual for some cases which reflect a solution to not lead to the outcome, and since it is also usual for at least *some* of the cases to have their outcomes unexplained by a solution, it is also necessary to integrate case membership scores along with T and S. Case membership is denoted with either a Y or a ~Y, denoting >50% case membership in the outcome and <50% case membership respectively. For instance, T*S*Y would show cases which firstly reflected the theoretical expectations, but only if they also reflect the solution configuration, and showed the outcome in the form of either policy-impact or unsuccessful policy-impact[2]. Accordingly, the higher the number of

[2] Note: Because fuzzy-set coding includes values between 0 and 1, it is still possible for cases with >50% share (~Y) to partially contribute towards the outcome.

cases within T*S*Y – the more validation the original hunch receives. Likewise, T*S*~Y shows cases which reflect both the solutions and the theoretical expectations, but which do not lead to the outcome. As Oana et al (ibid) put it 'These cases are puzzling and if they are numerous, the empirical support for the theory is undermined'. This same logic of case membership then applies accordingly to the logically possible scenarios 2, 3, and 4 described above.

(5.6) QCA Process: Conclusions

Whilst still a novel methodological approach and thus unfamiliar to most researchers, this section has demonstrated that QCA is a fairly simple process to understand. Causal pathways are uncovered by deriving set relations and interactions between conditions relative to the outcome. Data is created by either dichotomising continuous data or with the use of conceptual anchors where appropriate. Causal pathways are either necessary or sufficient. A necessary condition is always required for the outcome whilst a sufficient condition merely forms one single pathway to the outcome. The robustness of QCA results can be determined by adjusting the sensitivity of calibration thresholds and/or the thresholds for consistency, and then comparing the results to the original. Finally, FTE allows us to compare whether conjunctions of conditions expected to appear within the theoretical framework are represented in the empirical results.

Chapter 6: The Suitability of QCA, the Dataset, and Participedia

As previously stated, QCA is ideal for the analytical task in hand but operates on principles likely to be completely new to the vast majority of researchers. This stands in contrast to method such as linear regression or time-series analysis which are well-understood and widely utilised; thus, requiring less of an explanation. This point is of particular importance here since it is considered unorthodox to arrange a justification for a methodology after its introduction in a previous chapter. However, it was pertinent that the method and its terminology be well-understood before justifying its use and going into deeper theoretical discussions. I therefore make no apology for how methods-heavy this section is, or how often a thesis on politics refers to outside concepts like Boolean logic or truth table reduction algorithms.

This begins by justifying the use of QCA by looking at its strengths and resolving its weaknesses. Due to the process of truth table minimisation with QCA, it is possible to produce different configurations of solutions from the same initial data. This chapter then explores this principle and argues that the simplest and most parsimonious solution is best. The means of creating the dataset are then explored and justified. This section argues that a medium-N dataset is best in this specific scenario. Finally, the Participedia dataset as a source of case studies is introduced. Participedia as a dataset consists of summary reports covering the particulars and processes of DIs and other democratic innovations. This section will explain how useful data can be derived and how the legitimacy of any such results can be validated. Whilst Participedia forms the primary dataset, any such results were checked against any official evaluation documents to triangulate and make concrete the facts.

(6.1) Justifying QCA

The decision to use QCA was based on four considerations:

1) It being a method which examines causes of effects rather than effects of causes. This perfectly suits the condition and case-based nature of the analysis. Alternative methods are limited in accommodating conditions and cases rather than discrete variables, thus ruling out purely quantitative approaches such as time-series analysis

2) QCA's comparative approach being adept at identifying the complex and/or counter-intuitive interactions of conditions forming causal pathways to an outcome as previously identified by scholars in the field (e.g. see Wampler, 2007 or Baiocchi, 2005)

3) QCA's adeptness at using small and medium-N datasets typical of comparative approaches concerned with identifying commonality and differences between cases
4) The simple fact that most other empirical techniques could not accommodate these factors irrespective of how adept QCA was at accommodating these factors.

Firstly, since this research is condition based, the analysis must be able to accommodate the prospect that a singular condition can produce multiple different causal effects on policy-impacting success, which may or may not interact in a complex dynamic. Or, in other words, a focus on the ***causes of effects*** rather than the effects of causes. For instance, the theoretical framework describes how a singular condition of politically risk partisan policy can facilitate policy-impacting from DIs in two completely different ways: either by forcing politicians to obey a democratic mandate or through the legitimising effect of deliberation. Alternatively, a researcher wanting to establish the causes of wildfires may hypothesise that causality derives from the condition of warm weather. Multiple different effects can stem from this one condition, such as dryness, high temperatures, and the propensity for humans to have barbecues in natural surroundings – all of which can cause wildfires.

This focus on the causes of effects is the exact foundation of QCA since it approaches social science through the lens of sets and set interactions. This is an acknowledgment that understanding complex social phenomena often requires a model of causation which is equally complex – or that singular conditions, or discrete variables in isolation, are unlikely to provide an accurate explanation of a case. QCA can accommodate causal complexity through its use of the Boolean logical operators AND (*), OR (+), and NOT (~). The names of the logical operators reflect their function. The AND operator denotes that a condition, be it affirmatively or as a negation, must be bundled with another condition. The OR operator sits between two conditions which are effectively interchangeable or, as it were, potential options. Lastly the NOT function simply denotes the absence of a condition. Providing that a condition forms a component to a causal pathway in conjunction with another causally relevant condition, the exact interaction can be expressed through these three operators alone. To go back to the wildfire example, dryness and a propensity for barbecues all fall under the same set 'Features of Hot Weather', but their combination may only be sufficient for explaining wildfires, whilst a combination of dryness and heat may be necessary as they fall under the same set of 'Conditions for Combustion'. Likewise, the theoretical framework explained earlier makes frequent reference to a something of a master and slave dynamic between conditions wherein the causal mechanism of one condition overlaps into another. This is called conjunctural causation. For instance, sources of ignition such as barbecues only gain their causal impact on wildfires when in conjunction with dryness. To use an example from this thesis, recall how DIs tend to produce progressive policy recommendations in line with the expected policy preferences of progressive or left-wing politicians. In certain cases therefore, the presence of left-wing politicians would 'activate' the policy-impacting potential of policy-homogeneity that would exist. Here the left-wing politicians would act as the master condition and policy-homogeneity the slave condition. As such, the ideal analysis for this thesis must have been able to robustly demonstrate this hypothetical dynamic.

QCA can not only derive causally complex pathways to an outcome, but accommodates the prospect that the complete logical negation of a causal pathway may not provide an explanation for the failure to achieve an outcome. For instance, if conditions X * Y * ~Z form a causal pathway to the outcome, it may not be the case that a configuration of ~X * ~Y * Z explains the failure to reach the outcome.

Secondly, whatever the exact approach chosen, it must accommodate an analysis based on cases. A case-based analysis is highly suited to looking at public participation, political processes, and outcome for two main reasons. Firstly, a standardised conception of each does not exist. There are multiple varieties of participatory initiatives, as are there many differing configurations of democracy and typology of politicians and policy makers. It is impossible to form a definition for each which necessarily encompasses each variation without exclusion whilst still being useful. For instance, it would be unjustified to say that participatory budgeting is the median form of democratic innovations, so can therefore be considered as a proxy for all other forms of public participation. Similarly, whilst certain similarities will obviously exist between democratic systems, a 'one size fits all' approach would overly simplify and obfuscate important contextual differences which dictate the potential for policy-impacting success. Secondly, as described in the theoretical framework, the prospect of a comparative and constructivist approach to understanding public participation is very promising. Such an approach is, to borrow philosopher von Wright's (1971) terminology, 'finalistic' in that it seeks to uncover facts and is 'anchored in the problem of making facts understandable' (Ragin, 1999, pp1138) rather than an attempt to find generalisable mechanisms of political behaviour.

QCA is such a comparative case-based approach which deals with cases of differing types and forms. It is this approach which allows a researcher to exercise that key advantage of the comparative approach outlined earlier: understanding why a causal condition holds in one case but not in another.

Thirdly, and directly relating to the previous point, a case-based approach makes it likely that the overall population size of different cases will be small. After all, there are only a limited number of participatory initiatives, and this size gets even smaller when the scope comprises only the UK and Ireland. Consequently, the method of analysis must accommodate a small or medium-N dataset. Since QCA emphasises richly complex interactions and the commonality and differences between cases, it allows for a comparison of a comparatively small-n dataset - though generally no smaller than 10 (Oana et al, 2021).

However, it is not enough to simply assert the dominance of a method without critically evaluating the alternatives. Due to its very nature, policy-impact by any agent in any context is a temporal process. There is always some initial policy-preferences championed by Agent A who wishes to set policy, an activity which is intended to influence Agent B, and then followed by some activity which shows Agent B to have had their policy impacted. Translated to a quick hypothetical policy-impacting model within the context of a DI, we would expect to see an instance of the independent variable condition impacting upon a DI – whatever it was – temporally followed by some sort of indication that the policy-recommendation of the DI was bought to the attention of a politician and allowed to impact policy. As a temporal process policy-impact thus lends itself well to a time sensitive analytical approach like time series analysis – so why wasn't such a method used?

Before demonstrating QCA's suitability here, consider some of the advantages and abilities of time-series analysis which a comparative approach wouldn't provide so easily. Time-series analysis is fundamentally about using discrete variables and prior data which corresponds to a time value to predict the value of future data based on the value of its time value. An example would be predicting the likelihood of a political party winning an election using multiple instances of prior polling data. If the polls over the months, weeks, and days prior to the election showed a slowly decreasing level of support, then time-series analysis would estimate the level of support on the day of the election and beyond. If for some reason that same political party enjoyed more support in warmer months than colder months and the election was to be held at the beginning of the warm months, a good time-series analysis would predict a fluctuation in support immediately after the election. Time-series analysis uses empirical data in the form of discrete variables which removes the potential problems arising from interpreting qualitative data. It is also adept at forecasting and modelling the impacting of interventions, such as the conditions analysed in this thesis. A formal model of time-series analysis suitable for this thesis would be: Policy(t) = Policy(t-1) + DI(t-1)*Conditions(t-1) + error(t). Aside from highlighting the temporality of policy-impact, time-series analysis can be used to determine causal patterns (e.g see Jennings and Saunders, 2019) which point towards specific conditions – and thus answer the research questions. For instance, if markers of policy-impact notably increased in magnitude and density around election time, or in predictable time-frames relative to certain types of participatory initiative, then these provide clues as to those conditions which facilitate or detract from policy-impact. Similarly, providing there are sufficient data points and variation over time, the use of time-series data may act as the proverbial crystal ball, and allow for researchers to predict policy-impacts which are either hypothetical or have yet to occur. Lastly time-series analysis is ideally suited for the granular deconstruction of independent variable conditions to determine the respective impact on the outcome dependent variable. If a researcher had justifiable reason to examine the effect of causes (i.e discrete variables in isolation) then QCA would technically still work, but its use would be hard to justify.

Despite the promise of time-series analysis, measuring policy-impact in this manner is problematic. Very few DIs exhibit the sorts of policy-impacting behaviour, with peaks and troughs, which can be plotted over time. For instance, Greenpeace have conducted various campaigns to impact policy for decades, neither dramatically increasing nor decreasing their efforts. Expressed graphically each campaign would consist of a fixed data point year on year. The one piece of data which arguably could constitute a variance suitable for time-series analysis would be the announced date of the campaign's commencement. But this would position decades between the evidence denoting the independent and dependent variables. Whatever the approach, a researcher would struggle to robustly link any sort of evidence of policy-impact to any such examples of Greenpeace's campaigns.

The obvious exception to this general rule would be forms of political participation which come in the form of protests. Protests in the form of mass participation tend to be dramatic and short, and so form a distinctive 'spike' in activity intended to impact policy, one which would easily lend itself to time-series analysis. However, a focus almost entirely on protests would severely limit the amount of useful data available for analysis, and almost certainly guarantee the omission of those forms of democratic innovation which formed the justification for research in the first place. Whilst protests are an entirely legitimate form of public participation, an analysis solely focussed on this one form could not be robustly and uniformly applied to all other forms. Second of all, many initiatives which use protest will use a whole range of differing policy-impacting mechanisms which, again, cannot be temporally plotted with ease. This last point neatly arrives at the other fatal flaw of using this narrowly temporal approach. To derive a certain condition as having causality, it would be necessary to repeat the research for a functionally similar participatory initiative in every way aside from the examined independent variable as a control. Unfortunately, the world of DIs is complex, and this high requirement constitutes a tall order for the constraints of PhD research. It is technically feasible, but hard to depend on when other alternatives exist.

But what of that final advantage of time-series analysis: its ability to use discrete isolated variables? The social world is complex, and the central premise that a social variable can ever truly be isolated is doubtful. Any research which examines human behaviour or characteristics, whether it be in the social or physical sciences, must contend with causal factors outside of researcher control being bundled together with independent variables. Whilst there are plenty of techniques within quantitative analysis to account for these outside interactions, I contend that condition-based comparative approaches like QCA simply side-step this issue entirely. This is something substantiated by existing scholarly work (e.g. see Wampler, 2007 or Baiocchi, 2005) where purely quantitative techniques were unable to identify complex relationships between multiple variables. Therefore, within the context of public participation and DIs, the ability to utilise discrete variables is neither an advantage nor a disadvantage, and so shouldn't enter into consideration.

(6.2) Problems with QCA

QCA is not a method without its downsides and methodological differences, and no empirics drawn from QCA should be accepted without understanding its limitations. Let's start with one which confronts this research directly.

Within the theoretical framework it was demonstrated that the influence of CSOs on policy-impact was two-fold. Firstly, they could use their expertise to maximise the effective potential of a DI, and then use their political capital to maximise the desired political attention. Secondly, CSOs work beyond the commencement of a DI to ensure accountability from the target politician and ensure that any policy recommendations continue to stay on the political agenda with the aim of impacting policy. This second policy-impacting mechanism is temporal in nature and so, in order to measure its influence, a researcher would have to code for its influence at various given points of time. However, QCA assumes that all the conditions within an analysis exist simultaneously, and so 'obscures the sequential paths of causation' (Caren and Panofsky, 2005, pp147) in favour of a model of causation based on condition interaction. In other words, QCA assumes that a condition is static – something rarely seen in politics.

There do exist several proposals for integrating temporality into QCA. Caren and Panofsky offered up Temporal QCA (TQCA) which makes use of the new Boolean operator THEN alongside AND, OR and NOT. Say a researcher conducted research on the influence of conditions A and B on outcome C. Using TQCA they would code for the presence of A and B in isolation and then add new columns for the temporal conditions of 'A THEN B' and 'B THEN A'. This would then exist as a stand-alone measurement of temporality. However adding new Boolean operators drastically increases the number of possible configurations for a given number of conditions compared to standard QCA. For three conditions standard QCA would have 8 possible configurations (2^n) whilst TQCA (n!*2^n) would have 48. For my own research of six conditions this means a total of 46,080 possible configurations. Interpretation becomes unworkable. TQCA also neglects differences in magnitude of time passed. By using the THEN operator, it is impossible to distinguish between 1 second and a millennium. Of course, you could add even more Boolean operators for, say, 'within a year' or 'the hour following the event' but this would only compound the number of possible configurations.

Hino (2009) provided an alternative means of integrating temporality. TQCA was concerned only with the order of conditions, whilst Hino proposed that QCA integrated with temporality ought to pivot on how the conditions changed over time. Hino's method was simple: take temporal data (such as immigration over time), arrange it from lowest to highest, then dichotomise it as with standard QCA practice. In the immigration example, any year below the threshold had little influence from new immigration, whilst any year above it would see the presence of influence from new immigration. Hino himself pointed out in the very paper which first proposed this approach was that the approach tended to make use of value-neutral quantitative data which completely lacked the sort of interpretive and qualitative nuance that QCA utilises so well.

We find ourselves seemingly hitting a brick wall. If there exists no practical means of integrating temporality into QCA, and the conditions operate temporally, then how can we proceed with QCA? The answer lies, as Hino pointed out, in the interpretative quality of QCA. QCA practitioners cannot neglect the role of deep case familiarity when coding and then interpreting cases. I was able to account for the temporal aspect of CSOs because, when it was present, it was detailed within either the Participedia entry or the official evaluative report. At the various times that CSOs seemed to be a component to a solution for policy-impact, I re-visited the case in question to see what form this influence took, and whether its combination with other conditions made sense within the context.

This adherence to the importance of case knowledge forms a counter to most other criticisms of QCA. There has been much ink spilled amongst academics as to whether QCA is able to distinguish between empirical data and data generated through random chance (e.g. see Marx and Dusa, 2022) or whether it can be used to establish causal pathways in simulations designed to test the ability to do so (Lucas and Szatrowski, 2014; Rohlfing, 2016). I take the position that any methodological critique of QCA – especially those which work with random or simulated data – is meaningless unless the conditions, calibration, and interpretations are done with one eye firmly on the details of the cases. This does bring us neatly to the criticism which is hardest to resolve.

If QCA can only be meaningful if conducted with deep and nuanced case knowledge, then there must be some upper ceiling of case knowledge a researcher can plausibly consider to be intimate with, thus making QCA 'unfit for larger-N studies' (Finn, 2022, pp1). As discussed later on in the thesis, QCA can (and usually does) experience a limited diversity of cases where certain combinations of conditions that could explain an outcome are simply not present in any usable case, and so the proper outcome for such a combination is unknown. Just because a certain combination of conditions is possible doesn't mean that a case demonstrating this will exist. Whilst there are options for dealing with limited diversity, it is always preferrable to fill these logical gaps whenever possible (increasing the number of cases). QCA, then, seems to be stuck between a difficulty in filling logical combinations and maintaining a high level of case familiarity. However, this problem with large-N studies doesn't seem insurmountable. Collaborative or dialogue-based QCA studies could share the case study labour around across a pool of researchers, and help somewhat with the ever-present problem of subjectivity. What's more, this critique seems to assume that the QCA researcher is a broadly average individual and not, as they so often are, highly-trained and experienced researchers with high levels of case intimacy. Alas this is not a description of myself. My personal solution to this problem was simply to conduct a medium-N study – thus avoiding the problems of using unfamiliar cases whilst maximising the number used.

(6.3) Simplicity or Complexity? The Justification for Parsimony

With a QCA-appropriate tabular dataset, each case can be described as providing a singular logical statement required for the outcome, and so each case together in an arrangement can form a long OR statement describing all pathways to the outcome. For example, see below in table 1:

Case	Condition 1 (C1)	Condition 2 (C2)	Condition 3 (C3)	Outcome
Case 1	1	1	1	1
Case 2	0	0	0	0
Case 3	0	1	1	1

Table 1 - Example of multiple conditions making a series of OR conditions for an outcome

The Boolean expression for Case 1 is: C1*C2*C3 → Outcome, and the expression for Case 3 is likewise ~C1*C2*C3 → Outcome. Therefore the singular logic statement for all pathways to the outcome would be:

C1*C2*C3 + ~C1*C2*C3 → Outcome

Or simplified further to:

(C1+~C1)C2*C3 → Outcome

The overarching purpose of QCA is to take this highly complex string of logical statements and minimise it so as to derive a series of maximally simplified configurations which still adequately reflect necessity and/or sufficiency based on a given threshold. Whilst massively reductive, this principle highlights a tension within social science which QCA takes a proactive approach with rectifying: maximising simplicity comes at the cost of maximising explanative sufficiency - and vice-versa. If explanative worth takes precedence, then potentially irrelevant or redundant conditions can feature in a causal configuration. However, emphasising simplicity may move in the opposite direction, and a causal configuration may lose vital and significant conditions, and potentially its explanative worth.

Strategies for finding the ideal balance between these two factors fall into one of three categories: the use of complex analysis, intermediate analysis, and parsimonious analysis. The intuitive position for the empirically-focussed researcher may be to focus on the explanative worth of a sufficient solution with the most constituent conditions, at the cost of simplicity, in order to come closest to 'the true, underlying causal structure' (Dusa, 2022, pp541) of a dataset. The reality is this approach is flawed and that the best strategy is highly controversial. Therefore, like so many decisions within QCA, the ideal minimisation strategy is determined by the subjectivities of the researcher and the variational constraints of the research. The next section will examine the different strategies and demonstrate why policy-impact is best determined through parsimonious analysis.

What Do We Mean When We Say 'Strategies'? – Explaining and Separating Complexity and Parsimony

The QCA method for uncovering causal pathways relies on one of Mill's (1843) definitions of causality as something which can be established through looking at the differences and subsequent consequences of otherwise similar actions. For instance, if two DIs are *exactly* alike except in one specific condition, and the subsequent policy-impact is different, then the differing condition can be justifiably attributed to have had causal impact on policy-impact. Standard QCA implements this procedure through use of the Quine-McClusky algorithm. Here, the inputted tabular dataset is split up into groups of conditions along with the corresponding outcome. If the pairs differ by a condition, but not by the outcome, then the difference is considered causally irrelevant, and can be removed from the analysis. This algorithm then takes what remains of the pair, compares it to a new case to form a new pair, and then repeats the process until no new differences can be found anywhere in the dataset. The resulting logical configuration is then simplified through Boolean algebra into those configurations which show causal pathways.

However, this iterative process will combine conditional pairs together in ways not represented by the cases in the dataset, and so will be unable to assess them according to the outcome. Further, the practical realities of social science mean that these logically-possible combinations may not exist in the empirical real-world, and so cannot be added to the dataset to avoid this problem. Such outcomes are called logical remainders and positions on their meaning and how best to deal with them form the basis for the differing minimisation strategies. For the sake of easy explanation, consider the hypothetical dataset below in table 2, modified from Ragin and Sonnett's (2005, pp2) excellent example, but with conditions from this thesis:

CSO	**Left-wing Politicians**	**Policy-Impact**
1	1	1
1	0	0
0	0	0
0	1	?

Table 2 - Example of a logical remainder in a truth table

Here the first three rows show pairs which are both logically possible and contained within the dataset. The fourth row shows a pair which is logically possible, but not reflected by any of the cases, with an unknown outcome expressed by a question mark. This is the logical remainder.

The conservative solution strategy contends that, since the fourth row's logical combination isn't represented in the dataset, there is no justification for including it as part of the analysis. As such the only configuration which forms a causal pathway to the outcome is a combination of the two conditions, or: CSO * Left-Wing Politicians □ Policy-impact. In contrast, the parsimonious strategy contends that the logical remainder can be recoded depending on which value provides the most parsimonious causal pathway. If the remainder was re-coded from '?' to 0 then the resulting causal pathway would be unchanged, and thus equally complex, from the conservative solution. However, if the remainder was re-coded to 1, then the condition of Left-wing politicians becomes necessary and sufficient for the outcome entirely by itself, or: Left-Wing Politicians □□ Policy-impact. Since this configuration is simpler it is thus more in keeping with parsimony's aims. The intermediate solution operates similarly to parsimony in that it allows for the inclusion of pairs unrepresented in the dataset, but uses researcher justification as a means of assessing how the logical remainder should – if at all - be recoded. So what are the objections to the most parsimonious solution, and how can they be resolved?

Objections to Parsimony: Why Settle for Less?

Logical redundancies are an inevitability of the Quine-McCluskey algorithm. The main strength of any conservative solution is that it is cautious about assigning causal importance to any logically redundant condition without proper justification. Likewise, the primary weakness of any parsimonious solution is that it is 'forced to make untenable simplifying solutions' (Baumgartner, 2015, pp1) which potentially contradict logical laws or exist without conceptual meaning consistent with the researcher's theoretical framework.

This concern is not merely theoretical and is a demonstrable factor in any parsimonious analysis. For instance, Schneider and Wagemann (2012) used pre-existing data examining the causal impact of the birth control pill, pregnancy, and biological sex on the risk of thrombosis to test each minimisation strategy's ability to reflect truthful causal pathways. Predictably, the parsimonious strategy derived results from the logical impossibilities of a pregnant biological man and a pregnant biological women on the pill. Further, the illogical union of pregnancy and of being a biological man within the dataset allowed for the contradictory position that the birth control pill was both insufficient and yet equally sufficient in forming a causal pathway to contracting thrombosis. When logical impossibilities create logical contradictions in a logical system, any statement can be logically asserted, no matter how untenable. This is the principle of *ex falso quodlibet* or 'from falsehood, anything'. It hardly has to be explained that inaccurate or outright impossible results are not a positive attribute to any empirical analysis. So how can the position to use parsimonious solutions be justified?

A Defence of Parsimony

The potential for a repeat of a 'pregnant biological man' situation within an analysis shouldn't detract from two simple facts:

1) Parsimonious analysis is capable at accurately identifying causal pathways in data where causal pathways have previously been established through alternate methods

2) In datasets with limited diversity, such as this very thesis, the parsimonious dataset *is* capable of identifying causality.

To demonstrate these points, consider the following hypothetical scenario in table 3 below: the culmination of research showed that the presence of CSOs, and only CSOs, in a DI was both necessary and sufficient for explaining policy-impact. However, before this was established, the dataset with limited diversity and two instances of logical remainders was produced:

CSO	Left-Wing Politicians	Policy-Impact
1	1	1
0	1	0
1	0	?
0	0	?

Table 3 - Example of limited diversity in a truth table where a parsimonious solution can establish causality

As with the previous tabular data, the two logical remainders are signified through red question marks. The conservative solution would choose to only include the first two rows of data in the analysis. This would conclude that both CSOs and the presence of Left-Wing Politicians are necessary and sufficient components to a configuration which explains policy-impact, or: CSOs * Left-Wing Politicians Policy-impact. This is, of course, a direct contradiction of what we know about the hypothetical research from what is apparent in the table – only CSOs are necessary and sufficient. The conservative solution would state that the presence of Left-Wing Politicians isn't always necessary for policy-impact to occur but, because it cannot judge from what happens when Left-Wing Politicians *aren't* present, the conservative solutions would assume it to be causally relevant until proven otherwise. However the parsimonious solution, through re-coding policy-impact with an eye for simplicity, would produce the correct causal pathway in that only CSOs were necessary and sufficient for policy-impact. Likewise any number of utterly arbitrary conditions can be introduced to the dataset and, so long as they coincide with CSOs, would be conferred causal necessity and sufficiency as part of a conservative solution. Tighter causation is maximised through parsimony's recognition of the practicality of a cautious ontology wherein there is no reason to expect every tested condition to have an impact on policy-impact. This means that the inclusion of a great deal of conditions in a solution – whether they feature as present or negated – ought to be treated with a healthy dose of scepticism.

I find that this cautious ontology fits better with the re-iterative and interpretive process of QCA. By knowingly underfitting a model, a researcher is justified in presuming every component of a solution configuration to possess some causal relevance. The researcher is at minimal risk of misattributing causality. Further if, at the interpretive stage of the analysis, the details of a case seem to speak of conditions beyond those contained in the underfitted model, it is no hardship to expand

and include them in the discussion. But when a researcher is left with an extraneous or spurious condition which just doesn't fit into the narrative of the case, then an attempt to shoehorn in an explanation which fits with the empirics may result in an interpretation which just isn't true or justifiable. It is for these reasons that this thesis uses the parsimonious solution throughout.

(6.4) Constructing the Dataset – Why Use Non-Random Case Selection?

The culmination of the literature review and its cursory examinations of DIs indicates that DI policy-impact is a complex process. Complex in the sense that there does not seem to be singular 100% necessary conditions which the outcome depends on, and that conditions with theoretical causal influence in one case may not translate to another. To apply a paraphrased axiom commonly used in QCA research: it is not clear why policy-impact happens in some cases but not others. QCA is an approach well-suited to sorting out this case complexity. QCA is fundamentally about deriving explanative configurations of conditions within those cases which show the causal pathways to an outcome and/or that outcome's negation. QCA requires the reflexive reinterpretation of cases through the lens of these configurations to ascertain how the conditions manifest and assert themselves.

QCA's discussion of issues concerning robustness, data skewness, or numerical measures of causation could make the casual on-looker think the method is trying to hide its qualitative credentials under the clothes of the hard sciences. However, at its core, QCA is a case-orientated qualitative method, and the inclusion and exclusion of specific cases is pivotal to the analysis. Within QCA the chosen cases are not selected randomly but hand-picked based on a given criterion to achieve a given aim. This section will justify the hand-picking of cases, use qualitative methodological theory to detail a case selection criterion, and then demonstrate how the dataset fulfils said criterion.

Why Use Non-Random Case Selection?

Ragin and Becker (1992) describe how the world of social scientific research must consolidate the awkward bed mates of ambiguous theoretical frameworks and suppositions with the highly complex and messy realities of the empirical world. Case studies involving human beings and their complex overlapping interactions with society rarely lend themselves to simple pigeon-holing according to the framework of a broad theory. As a result of this, the social sciences cannot produce 'context-independent knowledge' (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p222) like the harder sciences, and that learning from complex cases is often 'the only route to knowledge' (Campbell, 1975, pp191) available to the researcher. When a researcher interprets a case, they apply theory to contextualise and understand the evidence presented within, and that the eventual product of this interpretation is a description of social phenomena which is empirically useful (Ragin and Becker, 1992). This description of social phenomena contains, or at least implies, causal factors and conditions along with descriptors of an outcome. The factors and conditions within this thesis are resistant to quantification or exist in a hyper-specific binary form, and so would not lend themselves easily to a purely quantitative analysis without losing precious explanative context. By using cases rather than data points, empirical analysis of the relevant factors and conditions can be completed whilst preserving and utilising them in their context-rich form. It seems obvious to say but it's worth emphasising that as researchers we don't always know what's important until after an initial analysis. When we strip down and purify a case into discrete variables, we run the risk of throwing out something which is later revealed to be important. As will be shown in the analysis, context is vital to understanding policy-impact, and as much of it should be preserved and understood as is feasibly possible.

The reflective nature of QCA demands that the researcher possess deep familiarity with any of the cases analysed such that inductive and/or abductive reasoning can be achieved. Deep and robust familiarity is achieved, in part, by carefully selecting for cases based on their conceptual richness. As Flyvberg (2006, p229) points out in his defence of case-study research, a 'representative case or random sample may not be the most appropriate strategy' when seeking to maximise conceptual richness. This principle hinges on five sub-principle of information orientated selection:

Firstly, and building directly on the previous point, hand selecting for cases allows for a researcher to build and then maintain a feasibly high intimacy with the dataset. A randomised sampling of cases would likely yield cases from a linguistic and/or cultural sphere unfamiliar to the researcher, thus hindering the ability to gain deep intimacy. This specific thesis uses British and Irish DIs. These two countries are both well-established and stable Parliamentary representative democracies where the majority of content-rich DIs are conducted in English. As a solely Anglophone researcher, this means that most DIs can be effectively coded, and that considerations stemming from different cultural attitudes and shibboleths are going to be reasonably similar. However, these two democracies have a large cultural variance when it comes to public participation which in turn ensures rich conceptual variance. Scotland has leaned heavily into DIs as something of a cure-all for social and democratic ills, Ireland has its paradigmatic Irish Citizens' Assembly, and England has found great success with DIs at the city council level.

Secondly, hand-selecting for cases allowed for the maximisation of known variation found within cases and thus the maximisation of the amount of potentially useful datapoints. There are many different forms of public participation, differing avenues of policy-impact, differing contexts, and differing rates of success – all of which contribute useful insights into successful policy-impact. By hand selecting cases, the data represents (for instance) Citizen Assemblies in three different countries with three different political cultures towards DIs, two different forms of DI, and topics ranging from the somewhat mundane like the public dialogue on attitudes towards leap seconds, to the era-defining referenda on abortion's legality.

In achieving maximal variation, each of the conditions to be analysed must be represented by at least one of the cases (Schneider and Rohlfing, 2013), and at least one case should contain a tested condition in absolute isolation (Bunce, 2000; George and Bennett, 2005). For example, with the condition of policy salience, at least one case should have a high membership score with the presence of other conditions being irrelevant, and another different case should have high policy salience with no other conditions coded as present. A randomised selection of cases was unlikely to reflect these very specific (and often rare) circumstances, whilst the adoption of a hand-selection technique guaranteed that the dataset upheld these standards.

Further, variation is maximised throughout by ensuring that the presence of certain conditions in cases does not overly skew the entire dataset and negatively impact the analysis. With specific reference to the QCA method, an overly skewed condition within a dataset increases the chance of any result having low relevance of necessity and high triviality. Oana et al (2021) argues that a skewness of more than 20% from complete homogeneity is the absolute acceptable limit, or that case skewness should conform to 0-20% < X < 80-100%. Hand selecting cases means that all the entries within this dataset fall within these parameters and that the skew of conditions can be arranged in such a way as to broadly reflect reasonable assumptions about the outside world. For instance, if the majority of cases show state leadership, then this condition should feature broadly proportionately in the dataset. Lastly, and similarly to the last point, the information-orientated (Flyvberg's preferred phrase instead of 'hand-selection') selection of cases meant that the dataset can reasonably demonstrate both equifinality and multifinality whilst till accurately reflecting the real world. This means that two cases should show the same outcome, but achieved through a differing combination of conditions, and vice-versa respectively (Ragin, 1987).

Thirdly, hand selecting cases guarantees the inclusion of data required to falsify a hypothesis in the Popperian sense. Hempel's famous raven paradox demonstrates the ambiguity beneath the seemingly intuitive task of assessing evidence to prove a hypothesis. Hempel proposed a seemingly innocuous hypothesis: "All ravens are black" and then demonstrated that this hypothesis is logically equivalent to the hypothesis "All non-black things are not ravens". Since the two hypotheses were logically equivalent, any evidence for the second hypothesis had to be evidence for the first hypothesis. Logically therefore, the existence of a red apple would seem to be evidence that all ravens are black since it constitutes a non-black thing that is not a raven.

This paradox represents the issue of positively trying to confirm a hypothesis rather than trying to falsify it. By transforming Hempel's original hypothesis into something like "Black ravens do not exist", then the existence of a single black raven is sufficient evidence to falsify a hypothesis. Likewise, the existence of a singular case study will constitute sufficient evidence to falsify a hypothesis, even if it competes with mountains of lesser evidence. The process of hand selecting cases recognises that there are differences in the evidence-providing potential for each case (contrary to random selection) and so forms a way of guaranteeing that if a 'black raven' case exists, that it can be included in the dataset.

Fourth, no discussion of good scientific practice is complete without mentioning Kuhnian paradigms. Kuhn (1962) proposed that interpreting scientific progress as a series of puzzles and solutions gave rise to the exemplar case around which scientific paradigms formed. Consider how Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica* defined for many not only the scientific rules of the universe, but also the ways in which they ought to be examined. No physicist after Newton could fail to make use of the laws of motion or the basics of calculus. Because *Principia Mathematica* became the exemplar, the problems highlighted within the book became the necessary puzzles to be solved next. Likewise, any solution to the puzzle was judged against the standards of exemplar as to its worthiness, and must work within its broad theoretical confines (Kuhn, 1962, pp38-39). Flyvberg (2006, pp232) writes: 'A scientific activity is acknowledged or rejected as good science by how close it is to one or more exemplars; that is, practical prototypes of good scientific work'. The process of hand-selecting cases guaranteed that exemplar cases which dictate the terms of the field were included in the analysis.

Finally, in his five defences of case-study research, Flyvberg (ibid, pp230) highlights the importance of the 'critical case' in any case study. This critical case allows for a degree of generalisability as prized by the harder sciences. The inclusion of a critical case allows for 'logical deductions of the type' (ibid) such that it can be applied to other cases. For instance, if a door frame is too low for someone who is 5 foot 7, then this critical case feature would allow for the logical deduction that the door frame was too low for someone who is 6 foot 6. To use an example from this very thesis – it was theorised that a highly partisan and risky policy recommendation carries policy-impacting potential. A critical case here would be one which demonstrated this high political risk. If this case failed to impact policies, and the policy-impacting power lay in the partisan nature of the policy, then policy would logically be unlikely to be impacted in cases with less partisan policies.

(6.5) Feasibility of the Dataset: How the Dataset Reflects the Five Requirements of the Hand-Selection Criteria

The dataset may make use of 35 cases, but the selection process for each case was not done for 35 reasons. The majority of the cases were chosen for the primary reason highlighted above: to maximise variation of a given categorical type. As such there is little point in explaining each of these cases in great detail since doing so would be to demonstrate that some cases are different than other cases – which is a requirement for QCA anyway. This section will, however, demonstrate the five principles discussed above by drawing directly from the dataset and explaining their utility.

To demonstrate variation, consider two cases: 'Space Weather Dialogue' and the 'Public Dialogue on Data Openness, Data Re-use, and Data Management' or shortened as simply 'Data Dialogue'. The first dialogue sought to inform the public and politicians about naturally occurring weather phenomena in space which may have negative consequences on Earth. The second focussed on informing the public about the use of their private data by researchers, and whether researchers should release the data back to the public. Both of these cases share certain similarities. They are both examples of public dialogues conducted broadly at the same time, and they targeted the same right-wing politicians, so their respective policy-impacting capabilities are highly comparable. However the Data Dialogue was conducted by an administrative sub-arm of the government, enjoyed substantial political support through policy homogeneity (data openness being a stated aim of the then coalition government), and dealt with a policy area which was both highly salient to the general population, and carried with it substantial political risk owing to pushback by the powerful research institutions who controlled the data. Conversely, the Space Weather Dialogue was purely a ground-up initiative, enjoyed little politician support or recognition, and involved a policy area seen as mundane and hard to feel strong feelings towards. The Data Dialogue showed substantial policy-impacting influence, whilst the Space Weather Dialogue did not.

A black raven case would need to be a case which showed substantial similarities, if not literal symmetries, with other cases of the kind, but with one key difference. The utility of this key difference is to act as evidence in accordance with the principle of falsification. If this difference lay in a single condition or variable, it would mean that the difference was not pivotal or 100% necessary in explaining the outcome. If this difference lay only in the outcome, then it would demonstrate that none of the conditions were strictly 100% necessary. It is worth remembering in the messy world of social sciences that necessity need not be 100% representation of a condition, and that these two examples are purely to demonstrate the black raven case principle. As such, the 'Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly' is an excellent example of a black raven case. Here, Adur & Worthing declared a climate emergency and conducted a citizens' assembly to establish ways in which the climate emergency would be addressed. The majority of climate assemblies examined in the thesis were state led initiatives invariably conducted by a local council, enjoyed substantial politician support through policy homogeneity and the pre-approval of any recommendations, were conducted by left-wing councils, and dealt with policy which was important to the populace and largely unpartisan. Each of the climate assemblies examined saw maximal policy-impact. However, Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly bucked the trend by occurring in a right-wing controlled council. This demonstrated through a single case study that, other variables being controlled, targeting left-wing politicians was not *always* necessary to impact policies, and thus a falsifiable hypothesis along the lines of "Left-wing politicians are necessary for DI policy-impact" can be suitably falsified.

As alluded to before, the case of the Irish Citizens' Assembly (ICA) is included as a paradigmatic exemplar case. In his analysis of the ICA Dimitri Courant argued that the initiative stood out amongst other Citizen Assemblies owing to its high level of institutionalisation, repeated and trusted use, and its grappling with policy issues of major importance – often correlating with high policy-impact (Courant, 2021, pp1). Courant is not alone in this measure, and academics have frequently asked whether the ICA could constitute something of an 'Irish Model' to mould future DIs globally. Arguing to the contrary, Courant nonetheless interpreted previous Irish democratic innovations and international examples through the lens of the ICA in building his argument, concluding that the ICA 'is clearly a reference and an inspiration at the global level' (ibid, pp17). Paradigmatic exemplars dictate the puzzle of its arena and is the reference point for any solution. A key puzzle of the ICA – particularly in regard to its role in legalising abortion – was the conundrum of a how and why a conservative party (albeit with some classical liberal sympathies), which appeals to a conservative voter-base in a conservative Catholic country, could produce progressive policy recommendations ostensibly at odds with the political soul of a nation. As the analysis shows, the unexpectedly high policy-impacting ability demonstrated was down to the can-kicking principle. Had the ICA not been included within the dataset, then the importance of partisan policies and the mechanisms behind the can-kicking principle would have been lost and thus not carried forward in our generalisations about policy-impacting theory. It would have been assumed – safely in my opinion – that highly partisan policies carried no policy-impacting abilities, and probably even the direct opposite. This would have entered into the theoretical framework as an obvious truth. By including the paradigmatic ICA we have established the reference point for an important policy-impacting mechanism for understanding future DIs with theoretically-problematic partisan policy areas.

Finally, the dataset contains examples of critical cases. To reiterate, such a case would allow for logical deduction through some stance of either its internal conditions or outcomes which could form a reference point for some limited degree of generalisability. In demonstrating a critical case, let us examine the Citizens' Assembly on Brexit (CAB). The CAB was a non-state led initiative which recommended a soft Brexit ideal, targeted the right-wing Tory government at the time, and worked with a policy area which was both highly salient and highly partisan – the UK's continued membership of the EU. It failed to display any degree of policy-impact. The highly partisan nature of Brexit – being an almost quintessential example of the variable – makes the CAB an excellent critical case. Controlling for the rest of the conditions remaining the same, there is no theoretical reason in accordance with the theoretical framework to suppose that a less partisan issue would have lent any more policy-impacting influence. So, any other cases – whether in the data selection or not - which shows this exact criterion could be logically assumed to show the same degree of policy-impact even if the Partisan variable was lower, and thus we have an inkling into the ecology of DIs out in the real world.

(6.6) Feasibility of the Dataset: The Decision to Use Medium-N

Whilst the previous section dealt with the logic of filling the dataset, the size and parameters of the dataset also contribute to the validity of any results. Whilst there is no upper limit to the number of entries in a dataset on a purely technical level, time constraints and the limits to researcher case-intimacy form a practical upper-barrier. An intermediate number of cases stretching from 10 to 50 has been observed to be practical for rigorous tests (Berg-Schlosser and De Meur, 2009) and only research utilising more than eight individual conditions would warrant a greater number – although at this point the chance of generating spurious configurations greatly increases (Hanckel et al, 2021).

The choice therefore to opt for 35 cases within the dataset would therefore seem to be uncontroversial. However, as was emphasised in the previous section, case diversity is of paramount importance, and this factor seems to pose a dilemma. To achieve a perfect diversity of cases within a 6-condition dataset, the number of cases would have to be 64 for a purely crisp-set dataset (2^6) or over 1500 for a fuzzy-set dataset – depending on the number of increments between 0 and 1.

However, this dilemma exists only if we demand *perfect* diversity from the dataset rather than an acceptable level of imperfection. The fact of the matter is that cases within the messy world of social science cannot reasonably be expected to demonstrate perfect diversity, and that whatever causal mechanisms truly exist will logically manifest themselves in the clustering of cases. Further, the self-imposed limit of examining just British and Irish cases means that perfect diversity is a vanishingly small possibility.

Whilst technically imperfect, the dataset is of a size which allows for viable researcher familiarity, and which still avoids the problem of condition-specific skewing emphasised in the previous section. This consequently means that the dataset neatly avoids overt case clustering. However, the best defence of the dataset lies in the use of, again, parsimonious solutions rather than complex or intermediate. The parsimonious solution, like the complex solution, links together case conditions to the outcome, but deviates from complexity by de-emphasising the importance of every single conditional factor. As a result only the parsimonious solution is 'broad enough to cover types of cases which have not been observed empirically' (Glasesser, 2022, pp 3489) and thus smooths other pedantic gaps in the diversity of cases.

(6.7) Introducing and Justifying Participedia

Having introduced and justified the need for a case-based method of analysis, this section will detail the method of collecting and encoding DI data. The Participedia project is a database describing DIs, both on-going and concluded, across the globe in terms of variables including, but not limited to, their scope, their aims, their internal composition, or the ultimate outcome – all highly relevant to this thesis. Participants of an initiative or trusted contributors are invited to upload these details to Participedia using broad coding schemes and consistent glossaries of terminology to ensure a high level of quality and the robustness of data. This thesis makes use of the Participedia project as its primary dataset with each datapoint triangulated and clarified through examination of formal evaluator reports where necessary and possible. The decision to use Participedia hinges on three main points: the data is substantive and of a useful quality, the use of Participedia data in empirical work is well established and promising, and that the dataset ameliorates practical concerns associated with alternate means of collecting data.

The Participedia dataset explicitly deals with 'the rapid development of experiments in new forms of participatory politics and governance around the world' and itself identifies and seeks to improve upon the shallowness of knowledge in this area (Fung and Warren, 2011, pp341). However, whilst colleague datasets such as the LATINNO project also function within this area, Participedia is somewhat unique in that its data consists both of descriptive cases as well as discrete data, and so interpretation is of a holistic nature. The main research question in this piece was to establish the conditions which facilitate or detract from the policy-impacting ability of DI. This emphasis on conditions and facilitation means a focus based on establishing causation through the impact of singular variables was never going to answer this research question. For instance, as with the case of the Irish Citizens' Assembly, the ability to impact polices stemmed from politicians wanting to hand over potentially career-ending policies to a third party, and also the legitimising effect of public discussion on previously untouchable policies. Though completely different, these two factors arose independently from the conditions of policy salience and politically risky/partisan politics. Had it not been possible to adopt a holistic case-based approach here, this fact would have been obfuscated, hidden, and would likely not have made it into the analysis. Alternatively, had a researcher simply tried to quantitatively correlate policy-impacting success with a numeric measure of salience, the important richness of extra contextual detail here would have been lost. As such, the first major component which makes Participedia indispensable is the capacity for rich holistic analysis of differing cases with otherwise no possible alternatives. Most of the forms of public participation which fall under the conceptual umbrella of DIs have a degree of formality and of procedure. Hence any resulting Participedia case is likely to be the tip of the iceberg and one which directly draws from a much larger and substantive body of evaluation reports and conclusions. Participedia provides the researcher with an almost impossible combination: a condensed natural-language account of a DI that simultaneously reflects the immense contextual details.

Secondly, Participedia is ideally suited for comparative research since its design will consistently generate diversity and variation. Participedia relies on its users to submit each case entry, and so the suitability of a potentially participative process is crowdsourced to the public rather than relying on the potentially conservative and/or unimaginative perspectives of individual researchers. This means that researcher prescriptivism does not have a hold on Participedia's content. As new forms, platforms, and perspectives on DIs increase, so too will the number and variance of entries increase in tandem. Diversity and variation in forms of participation are vital in the study of democratic innovations. Each participatory design comes with its own relative strengths and weaknesses, but also suitability for achieving differing goals (e.g see Fung, 2003; Smith 2009). Therefore, a high diversity of DI forms is vital for providing robust explanatory information about the participative ecosystem.

The Participedia project is slowly gaining recognition as the powerful tool it is within contemporary empirical research. Consider these two examples: ruminating on the shallowness of empirical data on democratic innovations, Smith et al asked of Participedia three questions: 'what kinds of participatory processes work best, for what purposes, and under what conditions?' (Smith et al, 2015, pp243). These three queries have remarkable similarity to my own research questions, only further cementing Participedia's use. Using a questionnaire to code the data (an approach replicated further within this methodology) the researchers found that Participedia can easily support 'systemic comparative analysis' of cases (ibid, pp245). Veri (2022) used Participedia to test a new analytical approach for clustering forms of democratic innovations together whilst avoiding conceptual stretching or unhelpful typological overlaps. Though not evaluation piece per se, Veri found that Participedia allowed him to 'evaluate democratic innovations from an empirical point of view' (ibid, pp2) and that the cases provided sufficient contextual richness to allow for retroactive inductive interpretation of what each case could explain. Again, two requirements with significant overlap with this thesis. Using inductive interpretation of each case's features based on its position within a cluster, Veri argued that DI fall into at least one of four categories: referendums, Citizen Management Platforms, Public Meetings, and Minipublics. These four categories reflect pre-existing 'normative categorization of participatory and deliberative democracy' (ibid, pp1) and a weaker less empirical dataset may not have led to such clean theoretical harmony.

Thirdly the Participedia dataset provides a practical as well as robust means of analysing participatory data. Time and budget constraints make ease of use and practicality an important factor in choosing the Participedia project. Of note is Participedia's extensive filtering system allowing for precise identification of cases pertaining to specific criteria and conditions. For instance, whilst there may be 262 total cases split between the UK and Ireland, there is no guarantee that each of the cases are equally relevant, nor rightfully was their purpose the same. By using Participedia's filter system, it was possible to show only those DIs which actively sought to set the policies of politicians, rather than another goal like changing public opinion. At the time of writing the total number of such cases now numbers 143. Further Participedia allows for greater granularity in terms of showing whether policy was impacted successfully set or not. This drastically cuts the time required to code such cases accurately. Lastly, though technically a disadvantage for most researchers, the Participedia project has been criticised for a considerable Western-world centric bias, and as concentrating largely on DIs within Western Europe and the US (Smith et al, 2015). However, since the scope of this project is the UK and Ireland, this disproportionate focus actually constitutes an advantage. This removes the need to utilise multiple datasets, and prevents issues pertaining to interpretation and ease of comparison since cases in both countries will have been written following a standardised format and glossary

(6.8) Validating Participedia

As described previously, Participedia holds great potential as a dataset tailor-made for analysing DIs. However given that the project is open to contributions from 'researchers, students, practitioners, public officials, and interested publics', there are important questions raised about the robustness and validity of any published case study (Gastil et al, 2017, pp4). This section will contain a methodology for validating datasets generally and how, when applied specifically to Participedia, such important questions can be raised and satisfactorily answered.

Firstly, we must examine who contributed to the project and what protections are in place to ensure the validity of their authorship. As mentioned before, Participedia is open to contribution from practically any individual with knowledge of a particular DI, but not necessarily any involvement with the initiative or, indeed, any relevant formal qualifications. This naturally necessitates consideration of potential measurement error. Measurement error comes in two broad forms: systemic measurement error (SME) and random measurement error (RME). The first refers to error which is baked into the measurement technique itself, and thusly biases inference. The second refers to a more random and inconsistent method of measurement which can obfuscate meaningful results but not necessarily due to bias.

Participedia will be subject to some SME owing to the unavoidable fact (at least in the social sciences) that self-selected individuals will only take the time to publish the details of a case if it was successful or was in some way worth their time. This means that 'it is reasonable to assume that the sample of cases on the platform is somewhat skewed to cases that have proved more effective in either democratic terms or in relation to their impact on the political system' (ibid, pp4). Or, in other words, that Participedia cases are more likely to be positive than negative. However this baked-in bias actually provides a protection against RME. Given that an individual must voluntarily invest time and effort into their case-study, it makes the chance of sloppy mistakes and the cutting of corners that much more unlikely. Therefore measurement error is unlikely to be random, and more likely to be sustained throughout. By being aware that bias may occur, but checking to see whether the bias in consistent, Participedia can actually be validated further. What is more, the QCA approach used in this research allows for the hand-picking of case studies which exhibit certain characteristics – making ameliorating bias and balancing data a feasible task for any researcher taking qualitative approaches to data validation.

Second criterion: is the data useful, or arranged in a useful way? Submission to Participedia requires an author to complete two forms. The first form is written in natural language and details the broad components of the case. The second form contains fixed-field close-ended questions which, when published, allow for a Participedia user to filter out results based on a certain criterion. This flexible and then rigid system allows for the author to contribute important nuanced context of a case whilst still providing objective aspects for direct comparison. With specific relevance to this piece of research, this approach allows for an in-depth dialogue with the case to learn its eccentricities and infer vital contextual information which indicate the presence of the conditions which form the independent variables, but also the indicators of successful policy-impact which form the dependent variables. In this regard Participedia stands out amongst its peers. This database allows for deep inductive fact-findings missions, whilst remaining grounded with objective details as a framework from which to build.

Lastly, taking influence from Smith et al and their own evaluation of Participedia's potential, it is possible to validate Participedia based on the potential to provide insights in one place rather than through extensive and multi-faceted research. For instance, if a Participedia case study contains all the information – and hopefully more – as could be ascertained through multiple alternate sources, then the use of Participedia as the sole data source is validated. Put simply – do the Participedia cases summarise and reflect reality? Let us evaluate Participedia with reference to a case explored extensively in the literature review. In this case, we'll use the Irish Citizens' Assembly and its iteration to consider the repealing of the constitutional amendment banning abortion in Ireland. The criteria will firstly consist of whether Participedia's write up includes details which can indicate the presence or absence of all my conditions, secondly a measure of the degree of policy-impact seen, and finally some degree of reflective text (either analytical or simply descriptive) which allows for a deep reflexive re-examination of the case later on.

From these requirements we can produce table 4 below describing how the presence or absence of each condition was identified:

Condition	Participedia Case Notes	Prescence of Conditions Expressed as Either 1 or 0
Policy Salience	Participedia describes abortion in Ireland as 'Being an issue of public debate and controversy' as a reason for its consideration by the ICA	1
Political Risk/Partisan policy	The case describes strong formal resistance from 'opposition party members and anti-abortion activists'	1
State-led Initiative	Yes, the ICA was established with a parliamentary resolution	1
Access to Left-Wing Politicians	The case describes the ICA's implementation by Fine-Gael - a centre/right leaning political party	0
Government Policy Homogeneity	The case study mentions that the ruling party at the time was able to 'pre-emptively support the amendment's repeal'	1

Table 4 - Table showing the representation of conditions within a Participedia case

Secondly the Participedia case describes how the outcome of the ICA ‘proved invaluable in acquainting the political classes with the fact that the Irish public had become much more liberal in recent decades’ along with how the ICA strongly communicated the public’s demand for the repealing of the ban on abortion to politicians (The Irish Citizens' Assembly, 2016). Finally, the case details how the findings of the ICA influenced the wording of the referendum that is constitutionally required when changing the Irish constitution. From these considerations it is clear that a strong degree of policy-impact was observed as a direct consequence of the ICA.

Lastly, Participedia’s entry on the case is typical in that it contains rich sectioned details useful for reflexive re-examination or initial knowledge-building. These sections include, but are not limited to, background history and wider context, how the initiative was organised, how participants were selected, and details on the deliberative process itself. If the conditions needed to be expanded or needed to be altered, or made more granular, almost certainly the wider textual details of the case could accommodate this change. For instance, if through research it became clear that the condition of salience needed to be in conjunction with political trust, then a reflexive examination of the case would demonstrate that the ICA received high trust from citizens and politicians a-like.

(6.9) Problems with Participedia

Most of the problems with validating Participedia concerns the quality (in both the normative sense and in the sense of condition) of the case entries themselves. Hopefully the previous section proved that the cases are sufficiently rigorous to be used in empirical analysis. However, that section speaks little about Participedia's – and many other repositories of qualitative data – problem with case publication bias.

In what they coined as 'The failure to examine failures in democratic innovations' Spada and Ryan (2017, pp772) noted that when it came to academic journals, there seemed to be an inverse relationship between journal prestige and the likelihood of them publishing details of non-successful or non-noteworthy DIs. Journals, much like researchers, strive to distinguish themselves by publishing 'exciting' articles about genius innovation and their world-changing potential to fix democracy's ills. Accordingly, DIs which failed to live up to expectations will struggle to generate the pre-requisite excitement for publication, and unsuccessful DIs struggle to be seen as innovative in the eyes of those who contend that innovation and improvement are largely synonymous.

Whilst not an academic journal, Participedia appears to be ill with the same symptoms. Participedia's cases can be filtered based on the *types* of change achieved by a DI, with options ranging from policy uptake to participant education, but there is no option to show only those cases where *no* change was achieved. Likewise, if a researcher were to simply manually check the outcomes of each case, they would quickly find that the number of successful DIs far outstrips the number of unsuccessful cases. There are two obvious possible conclusions here. Firstly, that DI's trying to impact policies are an unparalleled success, and unsuccessful cases are few and far between. Alternatively, that case authors – many of whom are volunteers – are simply less likely to spend the time writing up a 'boring' unsuccessful case.

This publication bias in Participedia is of a particular blow to any QCA researcher since the inclusion of cases failing to show a causal path to the outcome are as important as those cases which do. So what possible justification can there be to continue using the Participedia dataset? One answer lies within the analytical approach itself. QCA does not examine randomly-selected cases as with more purely quantitative approaches and so is less susceptible to this certain kind of sampling pressure. Despite being significantly rarer than successful cases, it was still perfectly possible to seek out and select unsuccessful cases with explanative worth. There was enough of such cases to build up a medium-N dataset that conformed to the standard QCA thresholds of variable skew and, whilst not 'ideal', this was sufficient to proceed with the analysis. Another approach, again strongly utilised by QCA, is to recognise that unsuccessful cases may be buried or obfuscated within the details of more successful cases or their official reports. The entry for the Irish Citizens' Assembly extolls the influence had on Ireland's abortion policy but provides a somewhat hurried account of similar Irish Citizens' Assemblies conducted on the issues of referendums and fixed-term Parliaments. However, triangulating the Participedia entry with the official report allows these less-successful DIs a chance to contribute to the dataset.

(6.10) Methodology Chapter Summary

Within the preceding chapter I have hoped to demonstrate that QCA is not an overly complex procedure, but one whose mechanisms and areas of debate are highly technical and often not the remit of social scientists. I also hoped to have demonstrated that, as an analytical approach, it neatly avoids many of the issues with alternate methods. QCA is well-adapted to working with the overarching conditions on the real-world rather than isolated variables. Likewise, it takes at its core a model of causation based on identifying the trajectory of complex interwoven conditions whose relation to one another is often, in itself, complex and nuanced. It also deals with some of the issues with other qualitative approaches by introducing a rigorous and empirical analysis of case-based data.

As with before, I also hoped to have demonstrated that the hand-selection qualitative interpretation of cases, often a source of criticism from quantitative circles, can actually aid in robust empirical analysis. Participedia, strengthened through triangulation with official evaluator reports, provides an excellent repository of cases with which an effective QCA-based approach can be undertaken. The next chapter takes the theoretical foundations from this chapter and begins to apply them. It details the selection of cases and their transformation into data suitable for QCA. At the end, a series of robustness tests are conducted to demonstrate empirical rigour.

Chapter 7: Analysis Part 1 – Building Foundations

At this point we have problematised the research, proposed six conditions which purport to explain policy-impact, introduced and justified QCA, and done the same with Participedia. From this section onwards we step away from the theory and begin on the practical analysis. This section begins by drawing from the theoretical framework to compose a coding schema for each of the 6 conditions tested. This is the logic by which the conditions are transformed into either crisp or fuzzy-set data, and forms the basis for the complete dataset used within this thesis. A.2 in the appendix demonstrates this coding with the Climate Assembly UK case. This dataset is then critically discussed. At this point the dataset is minimised as part of the necessary cursory stages to QCA, but the resulting solutions are not yet discussed. Instead, robustness tests are applied to demonstrate they are not the result of chance and liable to radically change with minor modifications to the dataset. Put reductively, that they reflect something which is 'true'. At the end of this chapter, the resulting solutions for policy-impact are ready for analysis in the next chapter.

(7.1) Condition Coding Scheme and Logic

Having discussed the ecology of participatory cases within the dataset, we can now move on to detailing how each of the cases was coded. The theoretical framework laid out the signifiers of each individual condition as well as the differing forms each condition may take. These signifiers were then transformed into continuous qualitative anchors (something akin to, but not quite the same as, likert scales) against which cases can be compared and appropriately coded.

Some conditions warranted granular coding criterium whilst others were suited to broad strokes. The former will form fuzzy-set conditions and the latter will be crisp-set. Likewise some conditions were easier to code for, whilst others – particularly for left-wing politicians – require some nuanced discussion and reference to further theory. Let's start with the simplest conditions first.

<u>Partisan Policies</u>

The policy-impacting potential of partisan policy areas works on the 'can-kicking' principle described earlier in the chapter. As a reminder: here such policies are considered either politically dangerous or just plain inappropriate for a politician to consider without the public's input, thus motivating the use of DI as a means of creating policy. This motivated use of a DI facilitates policy-impact. A politician in such circumstances 'kicks the can' to a DI and makes it responsible for generating policy instead. This same politician then gets to implement their policy recommendations, now imbued with the democratic mandate generated through involvement of the DI, whilst retaining distance from the partisan policy.

Coding for partisan policies is to build a framework by which politically dangerous or inappropriate policies can be identified. This can be achieved with a simple crisp-set coding metric:

- Full Out) "Anything not considered in line with the 'fully in' qualitative anchor"
- Fully In) "The topic of discussion behind the initiative was a recognition of social, ideological, and/or ethical implications with irreconcilable differences being a consequence of all policy outcomes. A politician or party involved with such a policy would likely have their premiership defined by their involvement."

Salient Policies

Salience was conceptualised in the theoretical framework as being of high importance to those involved stemming from their perspective that the current political situation is unacceptable. This could very well be the case for a number of DIs but this could be a statement so obvious that it need not be stated, or just implied by the existence of the DI in the first place. Therefore a purely text-literalist approach – or looking for specific phrases in the case description – is unlikely to properly recognise salient policy areas. This thesis makes use of a concept from English common law to identify salience: the man on the Clapham omnibus. This hypothetical individual is considered to be the personification of plain and ordinary reason. His opinions are likely to be representative of the majority of the population, and so the kinds of issues this man would think to be salient are likely to be salient for the majority of participants in any DI. Expressed with qualitative anchors:

- Full Out) "Anything not considered in line with the 'fully in' qualitative anchor"
- Full In) "Is this topic of high importance for someone with median knowledge and median opinions, and would they consider the current status-quo to be a policy problem?"

Coding for State Leadership

A definition which cannot distinguish is a poor definition. Whilst the question of whether state leadership is present is arguably a binary one (that is to say, either it was or it wasn't), a crisp-set coding would be unable to distinguish between the differing forms of state leadership and this potential influence on policy-impact. Some DIs, such as the Irish Citizens' Assemblies, are the direct result of executive and Parliamentary powers and answer directly to the most authoritative figures.

Whilst others see a state leadership that is a little more removed from elected representatives, such as those which seek to impact the policy of small Government departments or public bodies.

The theoretical framework ascribes the former form of state leadership as the most ideal type and the best operationalisation of the concept. Therefore, such cases would be considered ‘fully in’ whilst the latter cases would be considered ‘more in than out’. Obviously completely grassroots DIs would be coded as ‘fully out’. Since the question of state leadership is binary, it makes little sense to code for state leadership in any form below the crossover point. We can convert these principles into qualitative conceptual anchors:

- Fully Out) “Initiative was purely grassroots and the state had no hand in planning or implementing the initiative”
- More in than Out) “Initiative came via a public body with links and/or funding to government body”
- Fully in) “Initiative came straight from government (either local or national) or Parliament”

Since there is a conceptual distance between these two forms, and a definite preference for initiatives which stem straight from Government or Parliament, the middle conceptual anchor coding ought to be closer to the crossover threshold than to the ‘fully in’ coding of 1. I have elected to use 0.67 where appropriate.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs)

I argue in the theoretical framework that the policy-impacting influence of CSOs comes in two forms: a primary form and a much smaller but still relevant secondary form. The primary form is that CSOs use their expertise to shape a DI into its most optimum policy-impacting form, and then that CSOs act as agents of accountability ensuring that political recommendations reach politicians and are at least acknowledged. The secondary form proposes that CSOs possess a modicum of political capital and this political capital can help gain and retain political attention on behalf of a DI.

Existing QCA-based literature examining the influence of CSOs on political policy (e.g. see Pogrebinschi and Ryan, 2018) assign the membership crossover threshold to be the point that CSOs become a plurality in the organising committee of a DI. Whilst I accept the wisdom in this process, I have argued above in the secondary form that the mere presence of CSOs will still provide a theoretical modicum of policy-impacting potential, and that any empirical measurement ought to take this into account.

Taking this consideration into account and adding it to the other primary form of CSO influence, I propose this fuzzy-set coding scheme will best measure the policy-impact of CSOs:

● Full Out) “Was there zero CSO control of the DI?”

● More In than Out) “Did CSOs form a minority of control?”

● Even more In than Out) “Was there no clear majority of CSOs in control, or was their control equal to non-CSOs?”

● Significantly more In than Out) “Was there majority CSO control?”

● Fully In) “Was there full CSO control?”

Since there is a linear increase in CSO involvement beginning at the threshold point, and since there is no theoretical ambiguity of influence at this point and thus no reason to code it particularly near the threshold of no influence, I have elected to code More In Than Out at a firm value of 0.625. Even more In than Out was coded as 0.75, Significantly more In than Out was coded as 0.875, and Fully In was coded as 1.

Policy Homogeneity

Like several other conditions within this thesis, the theoretical framework demonstrates that policy homogeneity primarily comes in two forms. The first form is a representation of policy homogeneity in its semantically purest form but mechanistically less reliable. This form proposes that policy recommendations from DIs which gel well with the policy preferences of the target politician will see significantly less institutional friction and, likely, a certain degree of institutional facilitation. Quite literally the policy recommendations and policy preferences are homogenous. This means that the policy-impacting potential of such a policy recommendation is greatly improved. However, this form merely increases the odds of successful policy-impact based on an assumption of the target politician’s rational behaviour.

The second form is less semantically pure but arguably a more robust representation of the core idea behind policy homogeneity. This second form supposes that in certain situations politicians will have already decided that a policy is important and that it ought to be implemented but will use participatory initiatives as a means of validating or legitimising the policy. As such a DI will be created with the sole intention of producing a specific outcome through the seeding of certain topics of deliberation and a rigid limit on possible policy routes. Since the outcome policy recommendations are all but guaranteed to gel well with the pre-decided policy preferences of the politician, there is little question that policy homogeneity is present, and that policy homogeneity will be the main driver behind policy-impact and implementation.

These two forms offer different routes to the same basic policy-impacting mechanism. However, the less semantically pure conception actually offers up the strongest demonstration of the principle. We can convert this principle to qualitative anchors:

- Full Out) “Did the target politician demonstrate zero ownership or interest in the policy recommendations or, alternatively, did they expressly disapprove of it?”
- More In than Out) “Was there some indication that the policy recommendations aligned with the policy preferences of the target politician?”
- Fully In) “Were the broad details of the policy, including the policy topic itself, pre-determined, and the public only offered the chance to comment or contribute to smaller details?”

Policy-Impact

As per the discussion in the literature review, this thesis defines policy-impact from a DI as the influence of any DI’s policy recommendations on the ‘decision making stage of policymaking’ by policy makers (Pogrebinschi and Ryan, 2018, pp141).

By this metric, any DI which its policy recommendations actually becoming implemented policy largely unchanged ought to be the metric by which the strongest degree of policy-impact is coded. Likewise, the second-strongest metric of policy-impact ought to be demonstrations that policy recommendations were substantially influential in policy formulations. Similarly, the lowest form of policy-impact (whilst still being More In than Out) should be that policy recommendations were included in discussions of policy formulation but were not seen as authoritative or notably influential.

It should also be acknowledged that sincerity from politicians towards DI can be feigned, and that there is a difference between sincerely including DI policy recommendations in policy making, and just simple professional courtesy. Thus, political recommendations which were at least acknowledged, but went no further, do demonstrate a modicum of policy-impact, but ought not be coded as over the cross-over point. The last coding metric is obvious: if a DI didn’t receive any of the above, then it ought to be coded as fully out. These principles can be converted to qualitative anchors:

- Fully Out) “No sign of politician acknowledgment, nor any sign that political recommendations were entered into policy discussions”
- More Out than In) “Political recommendations were acknowledged by politician”
- More In than Out) “Political recommendations were acknowledged by politician and were included, or will be included, however spuriously, in policy discussions”
- Significantly More In than Out) “Signs that policy recommendations formed an integral

part of policy discussions"

● Fully In) "Policy recommendations became actual policy"

These may appear to be quite generous qualitative anchors but when understood in the context of the demands of the data, they are quite tight in actuality. Since the cases cover a wide range of variables like subject, point in time, target actor, and write-up author, we cannot build a tailor-made hyper-specific rubric which applies across all the cases unlike with something like the Porto Alegre participatory budgeting DIs in Brazil. Having said this, the reiterative approach of QCA means that these anchors have been finely tuned to provide sufficient points of gravitation to allow for a useful calibration of data across cases which retains conceptual clarity. Further, as will be demonstrated in Section 7.5 within this chapter, these anchors are highly robust.

The Presence of Left-Wing Politicians

What ostensibly appears to be a simple coding exercise is in fact one of the more interesting stages here, and possibly the most controversial. It would be reasonable for a researcher to identify the target politician or group of policy makers (using the method described in the theoretical framework), establish their political party affiliation, then crisp-set code based on whether that political party was left-wing. As the theoretical framework argues, the exact *type* of left-wing party (e.g. centre-left, environmentalist, civic nationalist) is largely irrelevant since existing empirical evidence from the literature shows that they all display similar relevant progressive traits like support for innovation and democratic empowerment. For the UK, this general principle seems to ring true. In all the relevant cases the target politicians have either been the right-wing Conservative Party or left-wing parties such as Labour, the SNP, or the Greens. However Irish politics has seen primary domination from Fine Gael – a right-wing political party with a strong progressive social streak and a strong affiliation for Citizen Assemblies. In fact, one of the indicators of left-wing parties and of social progressiveness I identified in the theoretical framework was an investment in post-materialist policies and values – something reflected by the views of the modern Fine Gael voter (Moreno, 2019).

This raises a conundrum: should a right-wing party be coded as left-wing, or perhaps ought this variable be looking at socially progressive politicians rather than those explicitly on the left-wing? I propose that the former is preferential to the latter. At least, the presence of left-wing politicians ought to be a fuzzy-set variable, and that Fine Gael ought to be placed somewhere near the cross-over point.

Let's look back to the theoretical framework. I discussed how Junius et al (2020) demonstrated that support for democratic innovations was common across all left-wing parties and largely low amongst liberal and Christian democratic parties like Fine Gael. Further, this same grouping of support was not as strong when looking at parties only with post-materialist values. In other words, it makes sense to just look at left-wing parties rather than social progressivism. However, the facts remain: Fine Gael specifically does show support for democratic innovations and has demonstrated so repeatedly – thus making it the one and only exception. The data collected from this thesis shows that this support is certainly there and observable, but waxes and wanes as to its intensity and sincerity. On matters relating to its own policy interests like abortion, Fine Gael certainly did show significant support for the Irish Citizen Assemblies. However, on referendums and gender equality, Fine Gael largely seemed to show apathy – though crucially not disapproval. A final consideration as to how this condition ought to be coded comes down to coding robustness and flexibility. Whilst it may be unlikely that my coding scheme will be used again after this thesis, it still makes sense to integrate the possibility that new parties or party positions will appear in the future, as almost certainly will new DIs. Thus, the coding scheme below seems to tightly conceptualise exactly what it is that the presence of left-wing politicians provides to policy-impact from DIs, whilst allowing for the fact that other political parties may deviate from this formula whilst still providing something close to the same causal mechanism. Left-wing parties right up to the political centre are Fully In whilst right-wing parties are Fully Out except if they are defined by post-materialist values. Converted to qualitative anchors:

- Fully Out) "Right wing"
- More In than Out) "Party which shows a concern for post-materialist values"
- Fully In) "Left-wing party"

Post-materialist right-wing parties ought to be coded as close to the conceptual crossover point as possible, whilst being just into 'more in' territory to reflect the caution that should be taken not to equate post-materialist values and political leftism per se. I have assigned all cases targeting Fine Gael a coding of 0.51 for this reason. This is admittedly controversial within QCA general practice since doing so constitutes something of a 'I don't know' coding figure. However, I maintain that this is still best practice here.

(7.2) Discussion of the Dataset

The purpose of this section is to introduce and explain the DIs which make up the dataset. This is the ultimate product of the case selection criteria introduced in the previous section and of the coding scheme's particulars. At first glance, the prospect of describing 35 cases in any sort of useful or meaningful way is a daunting prospect. However, the case selection criteria already introduced and explained five specific cases when demonstrating how they reflected either case variation, of being a critical or paradigmatic case, and of being a 'black raven' case. Further, those cases with explanative worth as part of the analysis are fully fleshed out and their policy-impacting behaviours explained. Therefore, this initial section will look at the general ecology of the cases within the dataset by discussing their typology and distribution of conditions. What remains of the remaining 30 cases can be grouped together into two categories: Public Dialogues (PDs), and Citizen Assemblies (CAs).

Whilst I've discussed the difference between DIs – and thus PDs and CAs – in the literature review, it is still worth reiterating a few key differences to provide context for the cases. As the name would suggest, a public dialogue is primarily about bringing members of the public together into a dialogue with policy makers or organisations (both private and public) which are themselves in a dialogue with policy makers. The vague nature of the term 'dialogue' here is no accident. Participants are rarely (if ever) asked to actively produce policy recommendations, and the ideal outcome is purely the production of the public's observations (be they positive or negative) having been informed on an issue and provided the opportunity to deliberate it amongst themselves. These reactions, whilst not binding in any sense of the word, contextualise a given policy as it provides policy makers with the public's view. A Citizens' Assembly (CA) follows a similar format up until the end of the deliberation stage. Here, instead of just reporting the general feelings of the group, a CA is tasked with providing specific policy recommendations and guidance. Whilst there is no requirement that such policy recommendations result in any automatic policy-impact, CAs are usually conducted under the tacit assumption that this will be the case.

Both PDs and CAs select their participants from the public but using differing strategies for differing normative reasons. A PD is something of an 'open house' wherein any member of the public in any capacity can choose to participate when they desire and choose to leave with equal freedom. In contrast, CAs tend to opt for a random selection of participants drawn from the general population. A PD, then, seeks to accumulate maximal unique and varied perspectives, whilst a CA acts to maximise the representativeness of the participants relative to the wider population (Lafont, 2015).

Finally, in keeping with the lasses-faire attitudes to participant selection, PDs are a far more varied and less-typologically neat form of initiative than CAs. A PD can consist of everything from a town hall meeting to an internet forum page. Participants can deliberate in a free manner and their reactions can be recorded using anything from structured interviews to semi-structured discussions. A CA is a far more formal affair, with a heavy emphasis on deriving consensus and clear deliverables in the form of policy recommendations.

Overall, there are 15 PDs within the dataset and 19 examples of CAs. There is little, if any, notable deviations from the standard model of PD represented by any particular case within the dataset, at least not with any implications for policy-impact. However CAs can effectively be herded into two further sub-groups. One the one hand we have those CAs like the Irish Citizens' Assemblies, the Sheffield Citizens' Assembly on Devolution, the UK Climate Assembly, or the Citizens' Assembly on Brexit. These conform neatly to the typology of a DI with randomly selected individuals tasked with providing specific policy recommendations through structured dialogue. On the other hand we see the representatives of the 'pre-determined destiny' cases discussed in the theoretical framework section regarding policy homogeneity. These cases also conform neatly to the same typology of the previously mentioned CAs, but their structured dialogue is largely taken to the extreme, such that the specific policy recommendations produced are inevitable with almost guaranteed policy-impact. Hence pre-determined destiny. These pre-determined destiny cases are overwhelmingly tasked with dealing with policy to target climate change, with some examples being the Brighton & Hove Climate Assembly or the Camden Council's Citizens' Assembly on the Climate Crisis.

Numerical Descriptors of the Dataset

We can learn a lot about the ecology of cases by looking at aggregated numerical descriptors of the cases. Table 5 below shows the skew of conditions and of outcomes in the dataset:

Condition	Ratio out of 35 Cases	Skew (%)
State Led PI	28	80
CSO	20	57.14
Policy Homogeneity	20	57.14
Presence of Left-Wing Politicians	20	57.14
Salient Policy	24	68.57
Partisan Policy	14	40
Policy Successfully Impacted	27	77.14

Table 5 - Skew of conditions and outcomes within the dataset

We can see here that the overwhelming majority of cases which were suitable for inclusion in this dataset saw at least some degree of state leadership and that at least some successful policy-impact was perceived. It must be noted here that this measure of skew ignores fuzzy-set coding and instead rounds to the nearest integer. In the discussion I propose that this is likely down to biases within the Participedia dataset wherein successful DIs are more likely to be written about then unsuccessful examples, and that state leadership is often a means of attracting attention to a DI in the first place. If the cases within the dataset can be loosely compared to animals within a given environment, then certain traits can be reasonably expected to crop up more often than not, so this makes sense.

The remaining conditions see a reasonable degree of balance and variation in-line with some common-sense expectations. It seems reasonable to suppose that DIs which deal with highly partisan and politically volatile policies are on the rarer side, whilst it seems equally reasonable to suppose that salient policies are most likely to draw the most traction. Both these expectations are exhibited in the dataset. Likewise, there seems little reason to link the remaining conditions to the expected existence of a DI at all (though, obviously, the whole point of this thesis is to link them to policy-impact), nor would the presence or absence of any remaining condition be particularly unusual. It seems reasonable to expect these conditions to be represented through pure chance and the close adherence of 50% skew seems to confirm this.

(7.3) Analysing the Truth Table and Understanding the Implications of Coding

The construction of a logical truth table is the immediate first step after collating together a dataset. Arranged as a data matrix with conditions and outputs forming the column headers, both truth tables and QCA datasets appear similar and largely interchangeable. However, datasets only contain all the relevant cases and describe them in terms of the presence or absence of certain conditions. In contrast, truth tables list all the possible combinations of those conditions, and then groups cases which reflect these logical combinations together. With fuzzy-set QCA, cases will often have varying degrees of membership in multiple logical combinations, and so will be positioned where the consistency is greatest. A dataset matrix will thus contain as many entries as there are cases, whereas a truth table will contain the number of entries which equals 2 raised to the power of the number of conditions. A truth table which examines four conditions will have 16 entries, a truth table with 5 conditions will have 32 entries, and – as with this thesis - a truth table of 6 conditions will have 64 entries.

Since a truth table does demonstrate the logical combinations of conditions which reflect given outcomes, they do technically provide some explanative worth. However, solution frugality and parsimony are the aims of any QCA researcher and so the truth table is often ignored and sent straight to Boolean logical minimisation. This hastiness is a mistake. The truth table in this form provides the first glimpse of the ecology of DI policy-impact as operationalised and measured by the coding. It is here that we first see the argument of reality that the conclusion seeks to make. It is useful, therefore, to pause and assess the truth table. Why are many cases grouped together at a certain logical combination? Why does one logical combination contain only one case? Why, exactly, are no cases found at an arbitrary logical combination not found within the dataset?

Reality tends to cluster together and repeat itself. This is why I opted for an analysis looking at the parsimonious solution rather than the complex or intermediate. Still, the fact that out of 64 possible logical combinations of conditions, only 21 (just less than a third) being populated with cases makes for a situation worth investigating. Before examining the logical combinations which are present in the data, let us first examine those absent combinations and use the theoretical framework to fill in the gaps.

Firstly, whilst the number of empty entries admittedly does far outstrip the number of filled entries, this is a perfectly acceptable product of using such a high number of conditions within the dataset. The more conditions present, the more logical combinations produced, and thus the less reasonable the expectation that each entry be filled. Remember, data suitable for QCA must not be skewed. Thus, it is also not necessarily possible to find cases in existence which conform to a logical combination of conditions whilst not further negatively contributing to the overall skew of a variable. However, five general expectations, drawn from the theory, can be used to cluster certain logical combinations together and explain their absence.

Expectation One: a DI where none of the conditions manifest is not likely to garner any kind of political attention. This first expectation is the simplest and is largely self-evident. Each of the conditions tested was selected for its theorised ability to facilitate policy-impact even in isolation. Thus, it makes little theoretical sense for a DI reflecting none of the conditions to possess the potential to reach any sort of policy-impacting stage.

Expectation Two: few DIs will emerge championing a highly partisan policy combined with low salience, and it is unlikely that one would ever be taken seriously by any policy maker. For instance, it would be highly surprising to hear of a DI which recommended the return of the death penalty but didn't express much desire to see such a policy implemented since the participants didn't feel that the current situation was a problem. A rather extreme example, perhaps, but theory and the dataset both reflect that such a logical combination is unlikely, and so any and all combinations where this duo manifests are not going to be problematic. The obvious objection here is that the truth table does contain certain cases where this combination exists. However, these cases are highly unusual in that they are the product of a large private enterprise instigating a DI to deliberate on an abstract policy which might be relevant in the future. This is by no means a standard expectation, and we shouldn't expect such cases to crop up frequently.

Expectation Three: Similar to the last expectation, it is highly unlikely to find a DI who espoused a policy desired neither by the DI itself or the targeted policy maker. In such circumstances the question must be asked of who wants this policy to happen, and why was it championed in the first place? As such it is perfectly reasonable not find a DI with both low salience and low policy homogeneity.

Expectation Four: any DI worthy of serious consideration is the product of skilled organisation. This organisation can either come from the influence of motivated and experienced CSOs forming part of the DI's organising committee, or comes about as a result of implementation from the state or local government. Certain cases also display both at the same time. However, it is highly unlikely to find a DI which lacks both at the same time. After all, who would be running things and ensuring each stage of the deliberative process was achieved? Such an initiative would be largely rudder-less and without competent direction.

Finally, Expectation Five: the use of DIs in particular has greatly proliferated over the past 15 years and those numbers continue to grow. This same time period has seen the complete domination of right-wing parties in the governments of both the UK and Ireland. Hence, the vast majority DIs are going to have occurred in a time period without the presence of left-wing parties, and so a significant absence of cases with left-wing parties are to be reasonably expected. The important caveat here is that not all DIs directly seek to set the policies of the executive and the legislature, and many operate at the local-council level. Unlike with the executive or the legislature, left-wing parties still form a major presence here. It is notable that many left-wing parties at the local level are actually the initiators of many DIs. For instance, consider how many Citizen Assemblies about the climate or the environment are initiates of city or town councils. These are obviously initiatives with a large degree of state oversight and so the combination of state leadership and left-wing politicians ought to crop up consistently. Hence this means that there are unlikely to be many non-state led DIs where left-wing politicians are present. Unlike some of the other vacant entries, this is largely a temporal expectation rather than one dictated by unlikely or contradictory combinations of conditions. If a left-wing party were to win the next election in either Ireland or the UK, then the use of DIs would likely continue (or probably even increase) and many of the vacant entries could thusly be filled.

Applying these expectations (though retaining them for analysis later on) leaves the explained logical combinations in place with a more manageable 13 empty entries. The resulting truth table (table 6) is below. Only the case ID number is shown but the full name for each case is shown in table 29 within the appendix:

Reference Rows	Truth Table Rows	STATE LED	CSO	POLICY HOMOGENITY	LEFT-WING POLITICIANS	SALIEN T	PARTISAN	OUT	n	Case ID
1	24	0	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	24
2	31	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	32
3	40	1	0	0	1	1	1	1	1	4
4	47	1	0	1	1	1	0	1	2	6,20
5	48	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	2	5,7
6	50	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	14
7	59	1	1	1	0	1	0	1	3	1,23,29
8	64	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
9	63	1	1	1	1	1	0	1	5	18,22,26,30,3 5
10	44	1	0	1	0	1	1	1	2	16,21
11	38	1	0	0	1	0	1	1	1	15
12	46	1	0	1	1	0	1	1	2	10,13
13	17	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	1	25
14	28	0	1	1	0	1	1	1	1	27
15	33	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	11,17,19
16	55	1	1	0	1	1	0	0	1	3
17	37	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	2	8,9
18	27	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	31
19	20	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	2	28,33
20	51	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	1	12
21	53	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	1	34
22		0	0	0	0	0	1	?	0	Empty
23		0	0	0	0	1	0	?	0	Empty
24		0	0	0	0	1	1	?	0	Empty
25		0	0	0	1	0	0	?	0	Empty
26		0	0	0	1	0	1	?	0	Empty
27		0	0	0	1	1	0	?	0	Empty
28		0	0	0	1	1	1	?	0	Empty
29		0	0	1	0	0	0	?	0	Empty
30		0	0	1	0	0	1	?	0	Empty
31		0	0	1	0	1	0	?	0	Empty
32		0	0	1	0	1	1	?	0	Empty
33		0	0	1	1	0	0	?	0	Empty

Table 6 - Dataset truth table with five explanations for logical remainders removed

Truth Table Analysis

Starting off with the most populated logical combination at row 9: A state led DI with heavy influence from CSO, which deals with a policy which is both salient and non-partisan, communicated to a left-wing politician who approves of the policy, will successfully set political policies. This is an immediately intuitive causal pathway to policy-impact and sees the majority of tested conditions present.

The majority of cases within this entry are what I define as 'pre-determined destiny' cases. Here, such cases are usually instigated as a result of some loose policy already existing and being affirmed by politicians, who then create a DI with the intention of deciding the minutiae of the policy or otherwise to provide legitimacy to the pre-existing policy. By far the most common form of DI on Participedia is a Citizens' Assembly regarding the environment or climate change. This is a classic example of pre-determined destiny case. Typically, a local authority, run by a progressive party such as Labour or the Green Party, will declare a climate emergency and will seek to enact policy accordingly. Hence a policy to combat climate change through a change in policy already exists. Owing to the successful precedent of previous climate orientated CAs, and the proclivity of left-wing politicians to use DIs, a new CA is formed. This CA is limited in their endeavours. They cannot rescind the declaration of the climate emergency, nor can they suggest policy that goes far beyond the plausible reach of a local authority. Instead, they will produce reasonable measures in line with the pre-existing policy. Thus, the policy recommendation will seamlessly set the stage for the local authority to implement new policy.

Explaining why certain combinations are populated with only one case is likely down to the sheer number of possible logical combinations effectively spreading out and cleaving groupings of cases which would have existed with fewer conditions. This is opposed to these sparsely populated combinations being in some way rare or unusual. One notable exception here is row 8 which is populated only by the Stem Cell Dialogue. This is the only case where each and every condition is present, including the more uncommon condition of a partisan policy area. The uniqueness here is most likely down to simple statistics wherein it is just not common to find a DI which happens to tick every box. The reason for this is simple: the more conditions included within an analysis, the more possible logical combinations generated, and so the less likely that a singular case happens to contain each condition. This is the same discussion as had about the problems of limited diversity within the methodology. Whilst not being unusual, six conditions within QCA is no small amount.

The most interesting task here is explaining why 12 of the plausible logical combinations remain unpopulated, especially since the application of the five expectations process removed any implausible combinations. However, I don't see any entries which immediately jump out as unlikely to occur. It seems reasonable, therefore, to draw three possible conclusions:

1) The somewhat unlikely – but still definitely possible – scenario that the fact no DI exists to fulfil an entry is purely incidental rather than as a result of some invisible hand or general principle preventing it from doing so.

2) Secondly, and far more likely, it is perfectly possible than most if not all of these empty entries *could* potentially be populated by DIs, but that these specific cases did not make it into the dataset. It is possible that such cases were never uploaded to Participedia in the first case. It's also equally possible that they were uploaded, but the entry was particularly lacking in conceptual detail, and thus a poor fit for the recursive process of QCA.

3) It could just be that such specific DIs weren't selected for analysis because their inclusion in the dataset would negatively impact the variable skew of cases already within the dataset.

It seems reasonable to suppose that each of these possible conclusions are true to an extent. It is certainly true that the ever-increasing skew of a condition's coding meant that I was more judicious about which cases best provided explanative worth, and it is possible that the finite number of relevant DI cases on Participedia meant that potentially more varied cases had to give way to better detailed cases. Whilst it wouldn't be true to say that all cases in the Participedia dataset had an equal chance of being left out of the analysis (and thus be considered random) it is true that there was no systematic bias in excluding certain cases. What's more the analysis of the truth table has not shown any worrying omissions or puzzling inclusions, the theoretical framework is well represented in the cases, and the diversity is strong. Empty logical scenarios are an inevitability for even the tightest of analyses using QCA and don't have to constitute a major problem. Besides, the whole ethos behind constructing robust data suitable for QCA isn't to fulfil each and every single criterion of diversity. Unexplained gaps are completely acceptable so long as the dataset reflects the participatory world to a good extend – something which is abundantly clear here.

<u>Implications of Coding</u>

Despite the data in this thesis making heavy use of fuzzy-set logic, the truth tables examined in this section do not reflect this. Whilst the measures of fit are retained throughout the minimisation process, the fuzzy-set values are dichotomised (that is to say, either a 0 for condition absence or 1 for condition presence) and rounded to the nearest integer in the truth table. This raises an interesting implication for the way in which the data was coded. Perhaps, by being either more judicious or liberal with the presence of a variable, more of the empty logical truth table entries could be filled? If the crossover point were to be adjusted one way or the other, then borderline ‘out’ conditions could now be ‘in’ and vice versa. As will be expanded upon in the next chapter on robustness tests, the frequent use of statements to form Likert scale-esque conceptual anchors as a means of coding fuzzy-set data means that most of the conditions are resistant to coding adjustment without losing their conceptual meaning. Hence, the data set produced, and the subsequent array of logical combinations was something of an inevitability. However, what little wiggle-room exists in code adjustment is still worth discussing as to its implications on the truth table.

One variable with a modicum of plausible adjustment is the measured output: policy-impact. The coding process for policy-impact posits that even very minor (and potentially misleading) signifiers of policy-impact are ‘more in than out’ and so coded as 0.6, or just about present. However, a more judicious interpretation may reject anything other than definitive policy-impact as notably present. In which case all cases formerly coded as 0.6 could now be coded as values below the 0.5 crossover threshold. This would lower the skew of successful policy-impact from 80% to 66%. However, an examination of the present truth table shows that this process would simply result in more contradictions than newly filled entries. That is to say that none of the empty rows would be filled, but now the truth table would show that certain solutions now simultaneously lead to successful policy-impact *and* unsuccessful policy-impact. The two cases which this would affect – cases 30 and 21 – are presently represented by rows 9 and 10 and show a combinational pathway to successful policy-impact. If these two cases were to be recoded as unsuccessful policy-impact, then they would still be present in these rows amongst similar cases *with* successful policy-impact. The implication, therefore, is that there is a logical combination of conditions which both explains policy-impact but also equally explains the failure to impact policy. In other words, either a more judicious or a more liberal approach to coding would prevent us from retaining conceptual clarity in explaining certain kinds of policy-impact.

Another potentially fruitful avenue to explore are those conditions with an element of subjectivity: that of policy homogeneity, salience, and partisan policy. When coding from the Participedia case I used a very dogmatic and text-literalist approach in accordance with my own judgment and then validated these results by checking against official evaluator reports. This meant that I could triangulate each condition in a robust manner. If I didn’t see these concepts expressed in either – whether that be in a weak or strong form - I didn’t include them. However, this doesn’t mean that they weren’t there, but rather that the authors of the Participedia entry or the official evaluator report didn’t or couldn’t include them. If I was to overrule the written facts of a case and replace it with my own baseless opinions (rather than justified gut instincts supported by the theoretical framework) on certain matters – like whether I personally thought a policy was salient, or controversial and partisan, or whether I reasoned the target politician would have approved of the policy recommendations – then the skew of these conditions would have changed considerably. This may have meant that more logical combinations in the truth table could have been populated by cases. It's worth emphasising here that it would be absurd to suggest that, say, it explicitly needed to be mentioned in the details of a case that a DI proposing more coal-powered power stations would not see policy homogeneity with a Green Party politician in order to be coded as such. This so obviously goes against the limits of judgment. But injecting personal and unchecked opinions into an empirical analysis without even so much as a bias-check in place is incredibly bad scientific practice, particularly if said opinions aren't compatible with the theoretical framework.

(7.4) Prime Implicants

At this point we can begin the truth table minimisation by algorithm process. Again, parsimony and solution simplicity are the goals of any good QCA researcher. However, the Quine-McCluskey (TQMA) algorithm just by itself is only partially capable of doing so. TQMA can produce solutions formulas which, with the use of an alternate minimisation procedure, can be minimised further into a fewer number of solutions which are yet logically equivalent to those produced by TQMA.

TQMA can thus be seen as producing multiple solutions where only a few have any explanative worth. The rest 'share' their explanative worth as part of a logical OR relationship with another solution which shares that same element of explanative worth. Put crudely, effectively saying the same thing twice. Prime implicants are the minimal number of logical expressions which together cover the entirety of the TQMA solutions in terms of logical equivalence.

Prime Implicants for Policy-Impact

The process of extracting the most minimal solutions from the TQMA solution begins with a prime implicant chart. Table 7 below shows the prime implicant chart for successful policy-impact.

	17	24	28	31	33	38	40	44	46	47	48	50	59	63	64
~STATELED*LEFTWINGPOLITICIANS		x		x											
STATELED*POLICYHOMOGENITY								x	x	x	x		x	x	x
STATELED*PARTISAN						x	x	x	x		x	x			x
~CSO*~LEFTWINGPOLITICIANS					x			x							
~CSO*SALIENT							x	x		x	x				
POLICYHOMOGENITY*LEFTWINGPOLITICIANS				x					x	x	x			x	x
POLICYHOMOGENITY*PARTISAN			x					x	x		x				x
~LEFTWINGPOLITICIANS*~SALIENT	x				x							x			
LEFTWINGPOLITICIANS*PARTISAN		x				x	x		x		x				x

Table 7 - Prime Implicant chart for successful policy-impact

Notice three separate important components here. Firstly, the column headers are numerical figures. These numerical figures correspond to their respective row from the truth table outlined in the previous section. Secondly, the left-most column contains a series of logical solutions and the unminimized prime implicants. Thirdly, the chart shows numerous crosses with, on the face of it, no discernible pattern. These crosses show which prime implicants are logically equivalent to which solution from the truth table. For instance, row 24 from the truth table (the second from the left, between rows 17 and 28) is logically equivalent to both the first and the last prime implicants as shown in blue on the left-hand side. Or, expressed in Boolean logic:

(~STATELED*LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS) + (LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*PARTISAN)

=

~STATELED*CSO*~POLICYHOMOGENEITY*LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*SALIENT*PARTISAN

At this point we have two solutions which are logically equivalent and, to borrow the phrase from earlier, effectively saying one and the same thing from the perspective of the minimisation algorithm. This means one of them is logically redundant. Identifying logically redundant solutions can be done with a simple axiom: if this solution were to be removed, would all the truth table rows (the columns in the table above) still be covered by at least one cross?

Starting at the bottom with the most complicated and least parsimonious prime implicants, can we remove the bottom solution (LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*PARTISAN) and yet retain full truth table coverage? By doing so, it becomes clear that all truth table rows remain covered, and that truth table row 24, denoting by column header 24, is covered by only one prime implicant: ~STATELED*LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS. Thus we can conclude two things: the last prime implicant is logically redundant and the top solution is a fully minimised logically equivalent expression of ~STATELED*CSO*~POLICYHOMOGENEITY*LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*SALIENT*PARTISAN. Or, expressed in Boolean logic:

~STATELED*LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS = ~STATELED*CSO*~POLICYHOMOGENEITY*LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*SALIENT*PARTISAN

This process of further minimisation by moving up through the prime implicants table may occasionally come across two or more prime implicants which are logically equivalent to the same TQMA solutions. In which case, a researcher ought to remove the more complex solution of the two. If they are tied, then it is acceptable for a researcher to exercise discretion as to which to remove and which to leave behind so long as it fits within the theoretical framework. The reader may notice that this was the case for the Prime Implicant chart above. The fully minimised prime implicant table for policy-impact is shown below in table 8:

	17	24	28	31	33	38	40	44	46	47	48	50	59	63	64
~STATELED*LEFTWINGPOLITICIANS		x		x											
STATELED*POLICYHOMOGENEITY								x	x	x	x		x	x	x
STATELED*PARTISAN						x	x	x	x		x	x			x
POLICYHOMOGENEITY*PARTISAN			x					x	x		x				x
~LEFTWINGPOLITICIANS*~SALIENT	x				x							x			

Table 8 - Fully minimised Prime Implicant chart for successful policy-impact

Prime Implicants for Unsuccessful Policy-Impact

Having outlined the process of further minimisation above, let us move straight to the prime implicant chart showing solutions for unsuccessful policy-impact as shown below in table 9.

	37	53
CSO*LEFTWINGPOLITICIANS*~SALIENT		x
LEFTWINGPOLITICIANS*~SALIENT*~PARTISAN	x	x
STATELED*CSO*~SALIENT*~PARTISAN		x
~CSO*~POLICYHOMOGENEITY*LEFTWINGPOLITICIANS*~PARTISAN	x	

Table 9 - Prime Implicant chart for unsuccessful policy-impact

Starting then from the bottom. This solution is logically equivalent to row 37 in the truth table. Would removing this solution leave row 37 unrepresented in the final results? No, because there is another more parsimonious solution which also covers row 37. Therefore, it can be removed. This process continues until only the second solution possibly remains, as shown below in table 10:

	37	53
LEFTWINGPOLITICIANS*~SALIENT*~PARTISAN	x	x

Table 10 - Fully minimised Prime Implicant chat for unsuccessful policy-impact

At this point we have arrived at the final solutions from which the mechanism of both successful and unsuccessful policy-impact can be inferred.

(7.5) Robustness Tests

At this stage it is important to emphasise that a robustness test which makes use of calibration sensitivity is not practical for this thesis owing to the particulars of the dataset and the way data was collected. The crisp-set coding was not derived through the dichotomisation of continuous data, but instead formed from qualitative identification of the presence of a condition. That is to say: whether that condition was ‘there’ or not. Adjusting this measurement in order to be more or less judicious would be to ignore the condition when present and to convolute the condition into existence when not. Likewise, the fuzzy-set data was also derived through identification of qualitative anchors rather than the application of multiple thresholds to a set of continuous data. This means that the fuzzy-set data was not collected through calibration and is thus resistant to calibration adjustment without losing important conceptual meaning.

Instead, the sensitivity ranges aspect of the robustness test will consist entirely of adjustments to the consistency threshold, followed by the usual fit and case tests. The section below will demonstrate that the configurations which explain both policy-impact and the failure to set political policies display a healthy degree of robustness. An argument will also be made that the results (at least for successful policy-impact) display an acceptable level of robustness even beyond these promising results. A review of the Venn diagrams presented within the methodology chapter dealing with robustness tests will be of use to even the most seasoned of QCA researchers. However, a 'cheat' to understanding these results is to remember two rules:

1) For RF (Robustness of Fit) Coverage and Consistency, a result of 1 means that the solutions for sufficiency are exactly the same as the most conservative robust results. You can think of the solutions for sufficiency (IS) to be 'what we hope to argue in the thesis' and the robust results to be 'what we can almost guarantee to be true'. Hopefully they both agree with one another. Higher scores are better scores. We want there to be the highest coincidence between our initial solutions and the robust core as possible.

2) The min and max Test Solutions show the degree of coincidence between the solutions for sufficiency and the solutions produced when we push the boundaries of what a plausible threshold for sufficiency is. Again, higher scores are better scores. Ideally the max Test Solution would be higher than the min Test Solution since this indicates that the solutions are more robust at the more rigorous end of plausible solutions.

Understanding case-orientated robustness tests relies on understanding the principles of shaky and possible cases. As a reminder, shaky cases are those cases which either reflect the initial solution or do not feature at all, but whose membership changes once the sensitivity parameters are changed. Shaky cases are thus not part of the most robust grouping of cases. In other words, later on in the thesis I will show several solutions which explain policy-impact. From this I can make two lists: one list of all the cases which show at least one causal pathway to the outcome, and another of the cases which do not. However, if we modify the sensitivity parameters, then the shaky cases are those which fall off one of these lists. Shaky typical cases show the outcome but do not when the sensitivity parameters are changed. Shaky deviant cases do not show the outcome but are poised to do so when the sensitivity parameters are changed. Possible cases are those cases which are either typical or deviant only when using the tightest and most stringent sensitivity parameters. Here, possible typical cases are new additions to the cases found within the initial solution and the robust core that only escape irrelevancy when using the maxTS. Likewise, possible deviant cases are new additions not found within the initial solution but will be when the same sensitivity parameters are used.

Sensitivity Ranges

The *SetMethods* package within the R environment includes the 'rob.inclrange' function which takes the initial inclusion cut threshold figure and repeats the analysis at ever broader ranges until the solution changes – however minor – for the first time. At the time of writing this function is only effective at determining the lowest threshold value which was determined to be 0.7 for the solutions explaining policy-impact, and 0.78 for the solutions explaining the failure to set policy. Further testing showed the upper threshold limit to be 0.84 and 0.99 respectively.

Fit Orientated Robustness Tests: Policy-Impact

A fit orientated robustness test was conducted using the 0.7 to 0.84 threshold. The results are shown below in table 11:

	RF Coverage	RF Consistency	min Test Solution	max Test Solution
Robustness of Fit	1	1	1	1

Table 11 - Results for fit orientated robustness test for successful policy-impact conducted using the 0.7 to 0.84 threshold

As expected, these results confirm the lack of solution change. The RF Coverage and Consistency scores show that the IS (Initial Solution) aligns perfectly with the RC (Robust Core) such that the IS can be considered perfectly robust. Likewise, the min and max Test Solutions confirm that these also align perfectly with the IS. This is a more than adequate range of values to consider the solutions for sufficiency to be robust.

However, amongst QCA practitioners (e.g. see Oana et al 2021, pp 155) it is considered good practice to conduct fit orientated robustness tests using consistency thresholds which 'challenge as substantively possible' (ibid) the boundaries of plausible thresholds, even if it means choosing new values which extend beyond the thresholds of unchanging solutions. Whilst 0.7 and 0.84 already seem to extend beyond any plausible inclusion threshold, the initial solution was nonetheless treated to a trial by fire with new threshold values more in keeping with tests for necessity rather than sufficiency. The lower threshold was retained whilst the upper threshold was raised to 0.9. The results are shown below in table 12:

	RF Coverage	RF Consistency	min Test Solution	max Test Solution
Robustness of Fit	0.829	0.978	0.811	1

Table 12 - Results for fit orientated robustness test for successful policy-impact conducted using the 0.7 to 0.9 threshold

Again, as expected, these results show a change in solutions. The RF Coverage and Consistency scores consisting of less than 1 indicates that the solutions from the IS and that of the RC do not exactly align. The RF Coverage score of 0.829 shows that over 80% of the cases covered by the configuration within the IS are still found within the RC. Further, the RF consistency score shows that nearly 98% % of the individual conditions as part of condition configurations within the IS are also found within the robust core. These initial results suggest that, whilst not exact, there is still a high degree of overlap between the IS and the RC. In other words, the most robust solutions are very similar to the initial solutions. Crucially, the aspect of greatest importance – the configuration of conditions as they relate to the outcome – still remains highly stable even at these extreme thresholds. In other words, the solutions derived through an analysis for sufficiency are quite robust and are more than adequate to continue with.

The min and Max Test Solution scores also point towards an interesting conclusion: the solutions are more stable at the more rigorous higher end of the threshold than at the lower end. As discussed in the methodology, necessity and sufficiency both demand high threshold levels before they lose their conceptual meaning, and a significant proportion of QCA researchers put the consistency threshold higher than the value of 0.8 chosen within this thesis. The maximum Test Solution score of 1 shows that the overlap between the IS and the solutions created with a rigorously-tight consistency threshold of 0.9 retained perfect overlap. Equally, given that the consistency threshold for the minimum Test Solution is still comfortably within (and even above) plausible limits for sufficiency, the simplest conclusion from this trial by fire is that the solutions which purport to explain successful policy-impact are highly robust and resilient to even abnormal changes.

Fit Orientated Robustness Tests: Failure to Impact Policies

A fit orientated robustness test again was conducted for the failure to impact political policy, only this time using the 0.78 to 0.99 threshold. The results are shown below in table 13:

	RF Coverage	RF Consistency	min Test Solution	max Test Solution
Robustness of Fit	1	1	1	1

Table 13 - Results for fit orientated robustness test for unsuccessful policy-impact conducted using the 0.78 to 0.99 threshold

As with before, the IS aligns perfectly with the RC, showing that the solution remains stable and robust even across this comparatively wide threshold. In other words, the solutions for unsuccessful policy-impact also comfortably pass the fit orientated robustness test, and so we can proceed with the analysis. However, when conducting a similar trial by fire test, it became clear that the solutions couldn't take the same punishment as those for successful policy-impact. Since the upper threshold could go little further than 0.99, I lowered the lower threshold to 0.7. The results are shown below in table 14:

	RF Coverage	RF Consistency	min Test Solution	max Test Solution
Robustness of Fit	1	1	1	0.484

Table 14 - Results for fit orientated robustness test for unsuccessful policy-impact conducted using the 0.7 to 0.99 threshold

The only major difference here is obviously that of max Test Solution. This means in contrast to those results for successful policy-impact, these solutions were actually most stable at the lower end of consistency thresholds and largely fell apart at the more rigorous thresholds. But let's stop for a moment here and remember one thing: this is a trial by fire test and uses thresholds far beyond the plausible ranges for sufficiency. The solutions for sufficiency have already passed this test. This is a point of intrigue rather than a problem per se. All the more intriguing is that these results remained perfectly stable even down to the laughably implausible consistency threshold of 0.01.

This result is likely down to the particulars of the dataset. Whilst within the acceptable parameters of data skew, only 8 out of the 35 cases showed a complete lack of policy-impact, and only 3 out of that 8 displayed a consistent solution to the negated outcome. This less-than-ideal representation of cases lead to a less-than-ideal degree of conditional variance. With such little variation there was less chance of border-line cases deviating from a robust grouping of cases. Despite this peculiar case behaviour, three distinct groups are visually apparent in all the XY plots tested irrespective of the consistency threshold. Understanding these groups will still provide valuable insight into the failure to set political policy.

Case Orientated Robustness Test: Successful Policy-Impact

At this point it has been established that the solutions for both successful and unsuccessful policy-impact are robust. We can now continue onto the case-orientated robustness tests. The sensitivity and fit-orientated robustness tests describe the limits and statistical features of the data's robustness, but do not specify which specific cases have a negative impact. In order to do so, three techniques are used:

1) The use of XY plots to visually identify which cases are problematic
2) The categorisation of problematic cases as either possible or shaky
3) The use of robustness case ratios which specify the proportions of robust and shaky cases

The solution which explains successful policy-impact was again analysed using the consistency thresholds of 0.7 and 0.84. The XY plot is shown in figure 6:

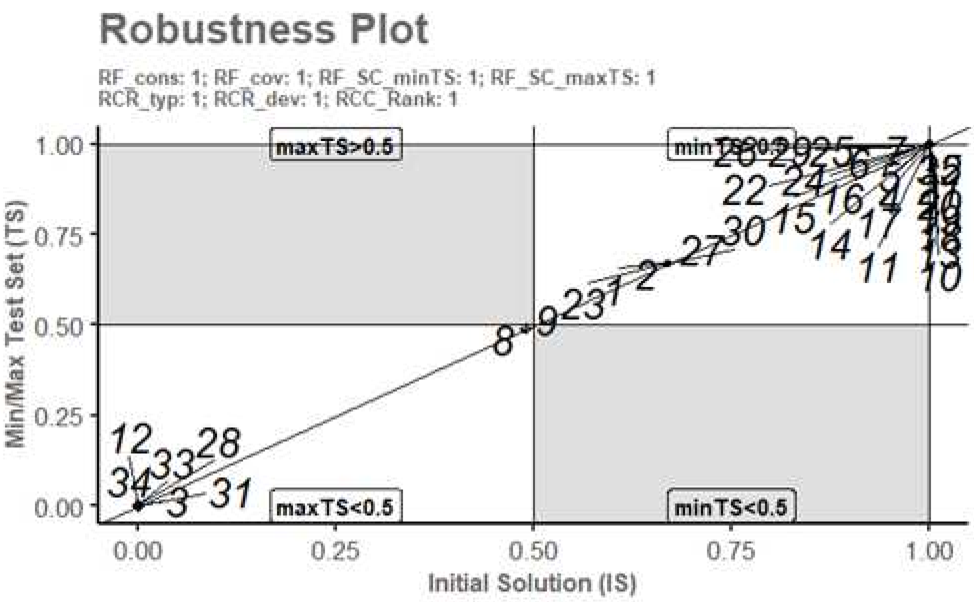


Figure 6 - XY plot showing results of case-orientated robustness test using the consistency thresholds of 0.7 and 0.84 for successful policy-impact

The fit-orientated robustness test already confirmed that the solution did not change when the consistency threshold was adjusted between these two figures, and this XY plot can be used to visually confirm this. As can be see, all 35 cases are plotted along the diagonal line, and zero are found in the darker upper-left section, denoting possible case, or the darker lower-right section denoting shaky cases. Whilst cases 1, 2, 12, 14, 23, and 30 are not positioned at the very extremes of each quadrant, nor are they so close to any boundary to warrant further examination. Cases 8 and 9, however, hover right on the boundary. These two cases are going to become recurring cases of note within this analysis and will be explored in more detail later on in the thesis. They are the ICA examinations of referendums and fixed-term Parliaments respectively. The long and short of their position is down to the 0.51 coding of the presence of left-wing politicians and the coding of 0.4 when it came down to policy-impact success. In other words, they were narrowly subsets of left-wing politicians and narrowly outside of the subset of successful policy-impact. They possessed all the attributes one would expect to form a causal pathway to policy-impact but are unique in that they were effectively ignored in favour of the more ‘flagship’ ICA deliberations such as those on abortion’s legality in Ireland.

The results of the robustness case ratio test are as follows in table 15:

	Ratio of Typical Cases	Ratio of Deviant Cases	Robustness Case Rank
Robustness Case Ratio	1	1	1

Table 15 - Results of the robustness case ratio test for successful policy-impact

Unsurprisingly, given that there are no possible or shaky cases, the ratio of typical cases stands at 1, and the ratio of deviant cases stands at 1. This means that 100% of the typical cases are members of both the IS and the minTS. Because there are no deviant cases, then technically 100% of the non-existent number of deviant cases are also members of both the IS and the minTS and thus also of the robust core. Because all the cases are perfectly fitted along the diagonal line and thus typical, the robustness case rank assigns the solutions with a rank of 1 as shown by the RCC Rank figure on the bottom-right of the figures above the XY plot. This rank – out of a possible 4 - provides a rough scoring of the solution robustness. 1 denotes a perfectly typical case set, 2 denotes some possible cases but not shaky cases, 3 denotes some shaky cases but not possible cases, and 4 denotes both possible and shaky cases.

Using the same ‘trial by fire’ consistency thresholds as before, a new XY plot (figure 7 below) was generated, this time showing cases outside of the upper-right and lower-left quadrants.

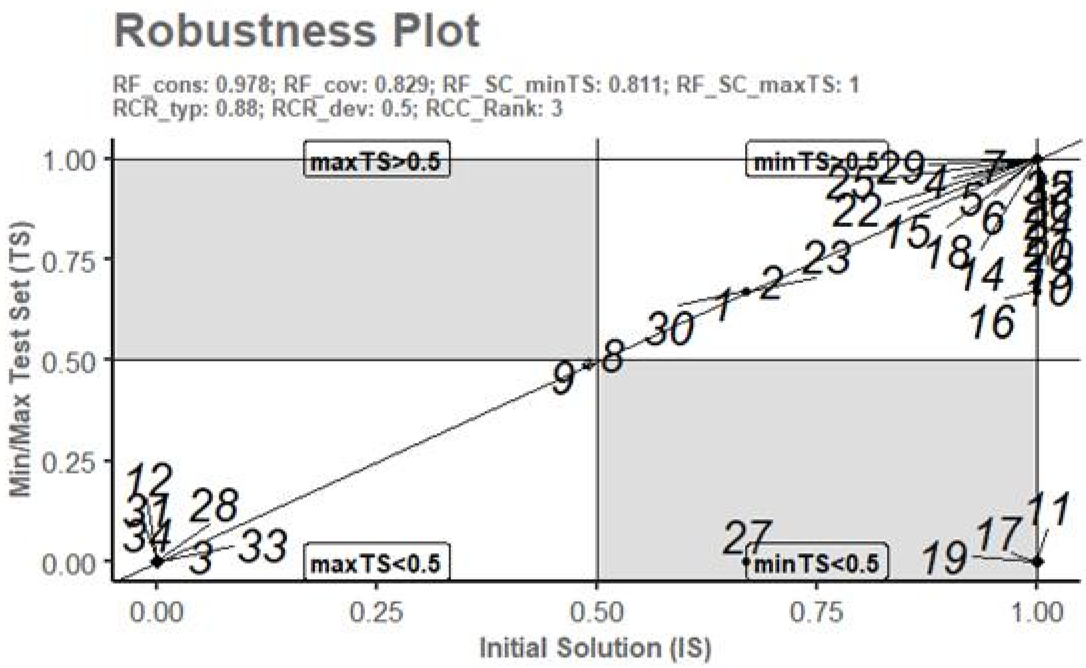


Figure 7 - XY plot showing results of case-orientated robustness test using implausibly extreme 'trial by fire' consistency thresholds for successful policy-impact

There are no cases found within the upper-left quadrant and so no cases are liable to change into showing causal pathways when using maximally lenient test set parameters. However, the lower-right quadrant shows four newly shaky cases. As a reminder, shaky cases are those cases which are liable to showing the opposite outcome when sensitivity parameters are adjusted. Case 19 is shaky deviant which means that it did not show a pathway to policy-impact, but would if the trial by fire thresholds were used. Likewise, cases 11, 17, and 27 are shaky typical so suggesting the opposite is true when using such thresholds.

An examination into the Boolean expressions for the lower-right quadrant provides clues as to why this is. Case 19 will conform to at least one of the below Boolean expressions:

~LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*~SALIENT + PARTISAN*STATELED + POLICYHOMOGENITY*STATELED + ~LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*PARTISAN*POLICYHOMOGENITY

Case 19 shows a coding of 0.67 for the STATELED variable and everything else is coded as 0. This means it conforms to the first expression: ~LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*~SALIENT. This Boolean expression, as show below, is also one of the possible Boolean expression for the shaky typical cases of 11, 17, and 27. This means that one of the Boolean expressions for the lower-right quadrant is:

~LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*~SALIENT + PARTISAN*STATELED + POLICYHOMOGENITY*STATELED + ~LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*PARTISAN*POLICYHOMOGENITY

This means that even though it did not lead to successful policy-impact, its coding was in-line with shaky cases which did show successful policy-impact. Cases 11 and 17 also conformed to the Boolean expression of ~LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*~SALIENT which means we have a direct contradiction. Case 27 conforms to the Boolean expression shown above of ~LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*PARTISAN*POLICYHOMOGENITY which is last in both sets of Boolean expressions.

This has been a fairly abstract analysis for far, but now we can synthesise the findings into a general statement about shakiness. If a case conforms to a Boolean coding of:

~LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*~SALIENT or ~LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*PARTISAN*POLICYHOMOGENITY

then we cannot make robust assertions as to the nature of its policy-impact outcome. Cases which conform to these expressions are found in our solutions but which quickly contradict one another. But it's important to emphasise, once again, that this is only the case when using the trial by fire consistency thresholds – thresholds which go far beyond any plausible range. The fact that only four cases have become shaky is highly encouraging. Let's examine the results of the robustness case ratio test for the trial by fire thresholds as shown below in table 16:

	Ratio of Typical Cases	Ratio of Deviant Cases	Robustness Case Rank
Robustness Case Ratio	0.88	0.5	3

Table 16 - Results of the robustness case ratio test for successful policy-impact using implausibly extreme 'trial by fire' thresholds

These results tell us that 88% percent – a significant majority – of the typical cases are members of both the IS and the minTS even at this extreme level. A ratio of deviant cases score of 0.5 tells us that 50% of deviant cases (case which ought to show a causal pathway to the outcome but actually do not) are within the robust core. The rest are either shaky or possible. Given that only four such cases exist in the XY Plot show above, this is an acceptable result, though a higher score is a better score generally speaking. In such hypothetical circumstances, this would mean that none of the cases change their outcomes at even the highest and most rigid consistency thresholds. In short: even with the trial by fire consistency levels, the results are highly robust. We need only be the smallest bit worried about only two Boolean expressions if, and only if, we choose to adopt largely implausible consistency thresholds

Case Orientated Robustness Test: Unsuccessful Policy-Impact

Throughout this robustness test two sets of consistency thresholds have been used for both successful and unsuccessful policy-impact. The first are thresholds in the theoretically plausible range and the second are those outside of this range – dubbed the 'trial by fire' figures. Since it has been well-established at this point that all the cases for both analyses are robust within the plausible range, there seems little point in conducting more case tests just to visually what the statistics already show. Therefore, I am going to jump straight ahead to the infinitely more instructive tests using the trial by fire figures.

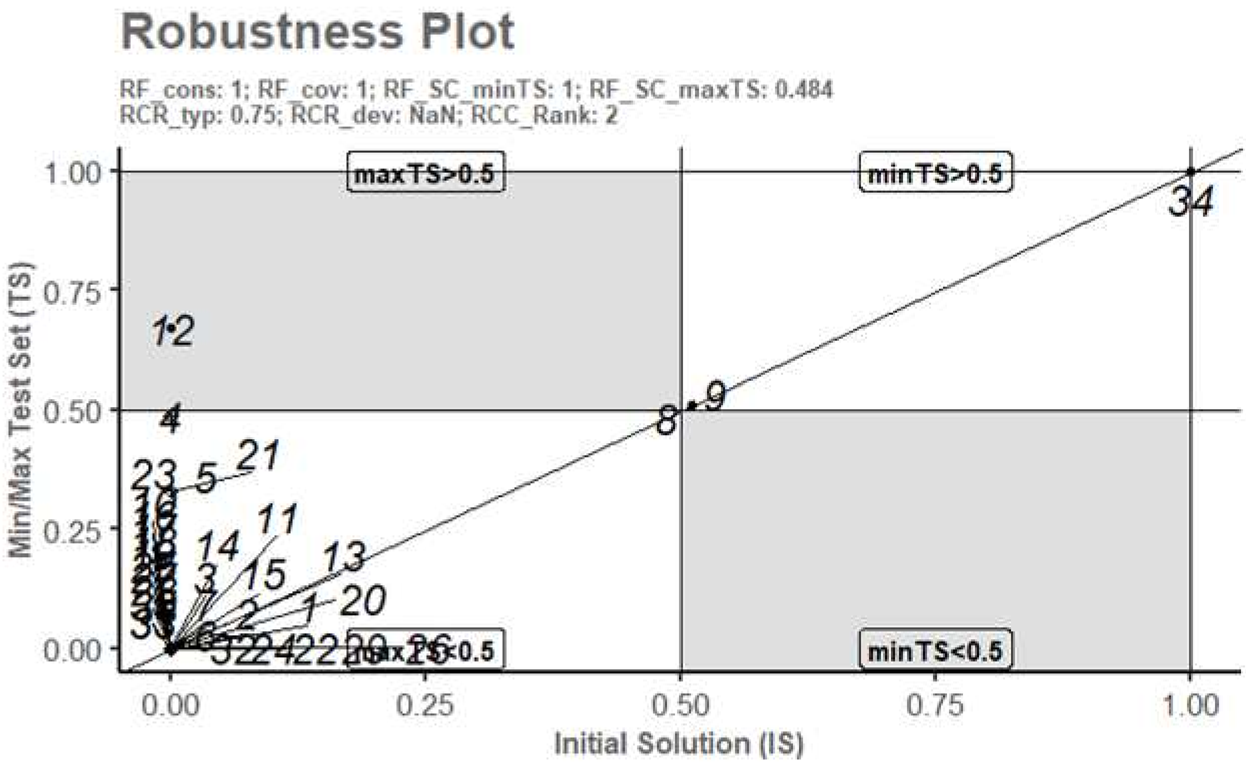


Figure 8 - XY plot showing results of case-orientated robustness test using implausibly extreme 'trial by fire' consistency thresholds for unsuccessful policy-impact

From the plot above in figure 8 we can see that case 12 is now newly possible and typical. Since just one case has moved into a problematic quadrant, understanding this behaviour in Boolean terms is going to be far simpler than before. The Boolean expression for this quadrant is:

LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*~SALIENT*~PARTISAN

Therefore, since possible cases exist only when using the maxTS threshold figures for consistency, we can conclude that 'LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS*~SALIENT*~PARTISAN' is also a causal pathway to unsuccessful policy-impact but only at consistency thresholds of 0.99. Again, it is worth emphasising that this value goes completely beyond any sort of plausible cut-off point for sufficiency, to the point where it is nigh-on impossible to increase it any further. The fact that case 12 – and only case 12 – is newly possible at these thresholds speaks only to the robustness of the analysis overall.

Finally, let's examine the results of the robustness case ratio test for the trial by fire thresholds, and begin to draw conclusions from these robustness tests, as shown below in table 17:

	Ratio of Typical Cases	Ratio of Deviant Cases	Robustness Case Rank
Robustness Case Ratio	0.75	NaN	2

Table 17 - Results of the robustness case ratio test for unsuccessful policy-impact using implausibly extreme 'trial by fire' thresholds

Whilst not being quite as strong as the results for successful policy-impact, this case ratio test confirms that the data is robust and fit for analysis. 75% of the typical cases are members of both the IS and the minTS even at this extreme level. Since there are no deviant cases then the ratio of deviant cases here is irrelevant. Finally, a robustness case rank of two simply confirms what we already know – there are possible cases found at these extreme levels but no shaky cases.

<u>Conclusion and Discussion of Robustness Tests</u>

The purpose of a robustness test in an empirical study is to ensure that any results remain resilient from alterations to either the data or the specifics of the analysis. Within QCA specifically, this means that a robustness test is successfully conducted when any solution remains constant – or at least sees minimal change – across the full breadth of plausible theory-affirmed parameters such as consistency or calibration anchors.

In this regard, all the solutions suggested by the analysis can be considered robust. Those solutions which explain policy-impact remained perfectly robust at consistency values far exceeding any values drawn from the theory or from wider literature. What's more, when these results were pitted against a true trial by fire robustness test, the solutions still emerged largely unscathed. Had these results nonetheless emerged within more a more plausible consistency range, then the solutions could still have provided valuable insight into the policy-impacting process. Equally those solutions which explain the failure to impact policy also remained constant across and beyond any plausible consistency threshold. All of these cases will be revisited in the next chapter on analysis.

This robustness test used consistency sensitivity tests, fit-orientated robustness tests, and case-orientated robustness tests. As mentioned at the beginning of the section, the use of measurements reminiscent of likert-scale when coding the cases means that the data is highly resistant to the adjustment of calibration thresholds without losing conceptual meaning. The use of likert scales within QCA is completely acceptable, and so this does not form any significant problem. Nonetheless the design of this analysis has excluded what could potentially be a very useful robustness test provided that some continuous raw data could have been used. I would, however, re-emphasise that QCA examines the causes of effects rather than the effects of causes, and that none of the conditions examined in this thesis would be better conceptualised as continuous. For instance, the effect of CSOs was supposed to stem from their relative influence compared to other actors. This is why they were conceptualised as being either the minority, equal, or majority actors rather than, say, a descriptor based on the raw count of CSOs. Nonetheless, this field should welcome any viable attempt at doing so, and future research building from this design would certainly benefit from the integration of calibration threshold sensitivity robustness tests.

(7.6) Analysis Part 1 Conclusions

This chapter has seen the six conditions and the measurement of policy-impact successfully conceptualised as either crisp-set or fuzzy-set data in-line with the theoretical framework and then transformed into a truth table. This truth table showed all logical combinations of conditions relative to the outcome but only around a third were populated with cases. This is not unusual with QCA and the number of empty logical configurations increases with the numbers of conditions tested. However, after applying five theoretical expectations regarding the likely behaviour of DIs, the truth table was shown to be very highly representative of the real participatory world. The application of robustness tests then showed that the solutions to be analysed remained consistent well beyond theoretically plausible bounds. We can therefore end this chapter with the knowledge that the coding criteria was a good representation of the hypothesised mechanisms of the conditions, that the dataset is representative of the real world, and that the solutions are in excellent form for analysis.

Chapter 8: Analysis Part 2 – QCA and Formal Theory Evaluation

Having established the robustness of any results, the process of empirical analysis can now commence. This chapter begins with an exploration of the expected results as drawn from the theoretical framework. This is followed by the actual analysis which begins by attempting to derive necessary and SUIN conditions, of which there were found to be none. This isn't unusual within QCA. Testing for sufficient conditions proved to be far more fruitful and five causal pathways to successful policy-impact were found along with one pathway for unsuccessful policy-impact. XY plots showing the distribution of cases as they partake in each causal pathway relative to policy-impact are produced. Cases which best exemplify this causal pathway are then re-visited and re-interpreted through this new lens to create an individual narrative of policy-impact from which a conclusion can be drawn. With these, a final analytical step is taken in the form of Formal Theory Evaluation (FTE). It is common practice within QCA to begin the analysis chapter with a preliminary prediction of the solutions, based on logic or intuitive hints from the theoretical framework, as a way of contextualising the results (e.g. see Pogrebinschi and Ryan, 2018). However, discussion of complex solutions constructed from conditions potentially outside of those represented in the results is an important aspect of FTE since it is this discussion which constituents the 'theory' aspect of Formal Theory Evaluation, so the prediction of results is left until this stage. At the culmination of this stage, the final conclusions and insights are drawn.

The results show that there are no singularly necessary conditions, SUIN or otherwise, which explain policy-impact behaviour. However, there are numerous sufficient configurations of conditions. Further, as theorised, a DI having their destiny pre-determined or being the recipient of the can-kicking principle was shown to be a pathway to successful policy-impact. The results of the FTE show two further policy-impact principles. Firstly, configurations of conditions which compliment one another at reducing institutional friction or political objections from policy makers will see successful policy-impact. Secondly, curiously, salience was demonstrated to show a curious parabolic relationship wherein it facilitates policy-impact at very high levels and also very low levels – but not at middling or 'dead zone' levels. A policy area which fits into this salience dead zone was further demonstrated to form a causal pathway to unsuccessful policy-impact. Finally, not all DIs are born equal, and the analysis ends with a discussion of how certain cases were effectively dead upon arrival.

This chapter ends with a discussion of the analysis as to its limitations and how future researchers may wish to build upon the method and results.

(8.1) Expectations of Results Drawn from Theory

Since each individual condition has been theorised to possess causal influence independently, there seems little reason to discuss these again since this would be simply reiterating the theoretical framework. However certain conditions appear to be complimentary matches for one another and so it is reasonable to suppose that they will appear in the results. For successful *policy-impact* these are:

1) Policy homogeneity * Left-wing Politicians
2) Policy Homogeneity * ~Partisan Policy
3) Salient Policy * Partisan Policy

As was demonstrated in the theoretical framework, policy homogeneity spreads its *policy-impact* causality over other conditions; namely the presence of left-wing politicians and the influence of partisan policy. DIs tend to produce progressive and left-wing policy recommendations, and so policy homogeneity and its causal influence can be expected to be maximised in the presence of left-wing politicians. Likewise, policy homogeneity hinges on minimising the friction a policy faces as it moves to empowered spaces. A non-partisan policy is not politically risky, and unlikely therefore to face significant friction. Therefore, it can also be expected to see policy homogeneity's causal power maximised with non-partisan policies.

A partisan policy is deeply risky for a politician to champion, and such a policy will face significant friction as it moves to empowered spaces. Therefore, if such a policy also lacks salience, and is widely perceived to be of little importance, then such a policy is unlikely to be taken up by a politician or possess any reasonable policy-impacting power. Further, as the ICA with abortion shows, if salience is combined with politically risky partisan policy, then a politician may be encouraged to reach out to a participatory initiative working in such a policy area, or at least be more receptive to their policy recommendations. This is because participatory initiatives provide a chance to implement potential democratic mandate from a salient policy, whilst allowing politicians the chance to distance themselves from the politically risky and partisan aspects.

For unsuccessful policy-impact these condition configurations are:

1) ~SALIENT*~PARTISAN
2) ~SALIENT*PARTISAN

These two complex theoretical solutions both suppose that a lack of salience forms part of a causal pathway to policy-impact. They have only one difference between them, but assume very different causal influences. The theoretical framework proposes that partisan policies and salience are essentially two sides to the same theoretical coin. If a DI isn't dealing with a partisan policy area, then it needs to acquire its political momentum and ability to command political attention from somewhere else. However, if that same DI also is dealing with a policy with little salience, then the available sources for momentum and political attention are severely limited. Without these factors in place, there is no impetus for a politician to look to DIs for policy recommendation in the first place, nor to listen to anything their participants suggest.

Likewise, a DI which deals with a highly partisan policy area which is of yet low salience cannot take advantage of the can-kicking principle described earlier. A politician dealing with high public demand to respond to a highly risky partisan issue is trapped between a rock and a hard place. Thus, they are motivated to 'kick the can' to a legitimising source of policy such as a DI. However, if there is low public demand to respond to something highly partisan, then the pressure to act is minimised. Thus, a politician sees zero impetus to 'kick the can' to a DI, and will likely ignore any political actors demanding action within operating within the policy area.

(8.2) Necessary Conditions

Let's begin this section with a re-cap of the methodology chapter to condense down what necessary conditions are and how they can be ascertained. A necessary condition is one which is required for the outcome to occur. When necessary conditions are present, there are no cases which show the outcome which yet do not also show this necessary condition. A typical QCA analysis will show single conditions combined together in an intersection to produce a causal path to an outcome. For instance, 'Condition A * Condition B ← Outcome'. However a necessary condition is just a single condition by itself achieving the same outcome as in 'Condition A ← outcome'.

Necessity as a theoretical concept presupposes a standard of causality unusual within the social sciences. Whilst it would be reasonable to state that oxygen is necessary for a fire to occur, and that it is impossible for one to occur without it, such stringency cannot apply to policy-impact and the messy world of human interactions. Instead, necessity within QCA is expressed as the ratio of cases where both the outcome and examined condition was present, divided by the number of cases where the outcome was present but not the examined condition. This is the Consistency of Necessity (ConN) figure. As per the opinion of Baumgartner discussed within the methodology, the threshold for necessity is held at 0.85, since this value allows for causal necessity without the risk of model overfitting. If a singular condition has a ConN figure higher than 0.85, it is a potentially necessary condition for explaining policy-impact. It is important to reiterate that causality within QCA is not a symmetrical process. Just because a condition is necessary for an outcome, it does not logically follow that the absence of that condition is proportionally necessary for the absence of the condition. Fuel is a necessary condition for fire, but it is not necessarily true that the lack of fuel necessarily explains a lack of fire. So, if a condition has a ConN figure of 0.12 for successful policy-impact, it is not necessarily true to say that the absence of that condition has a consistency of 0.88 when explaining *unsuccessful* policy-impact.

The Coverage of Necessity (CovN) figure informs the researcher as to whether any apparent causal necessity is, in fact, trivial or empirically relevant. A seemingly necessary condition may actually be trivial or irrelevant if there is a large disparity between the number of cases where the condition is present and the number of cases where the outcome is present. If a condition was present in each and every single case within a dataset, then of course that condition will be present each time the outcome is also present. For example – suppose this analysis included the condition of 'One of the participants of the DI has brown hair'. It is overwhelmingly likely that each and every case within the dataset had at least one participant with brown hair, so this condition would be present for every example of successful policy-impact from DIs. However, it would be absurd to call this observation causally relevant or useful even if it passed a cursory plausibility test. The CovN value is expressed similarly to the ConN figure except the number of cases where the outcome and examined conditions are present is divided by the number of cases where the condition is present bur not the examined condition. CovN is a useful measure of triviality but not without flaw. If a condition is present in each case within a dataset, then it is not only present in tandem with the outcome, but also – paradoxically – present each time the outcome was absent. CovN as a figure is unable to ascertain when this is the case.

Schneider and Wagemann (2012) offer a solution to this problem in the form of the Relevance of Necessity (RoN) figure. The RoN figure not only takes into account any size discrepancies between a condition and the outcome, but also considers any discrepancy with the negated outcome. There is no (at the time of writing) researcher standard for what constitutes an acceptable RoN figure. However, Schneider and Wagemann suggest that any RoN figure close to 0.5 can be considered trivial. It is important to note that the RoN figure does not supersede the CovN figure despite improving upon it. The RoN figure is a far more cautious measure of relevance and so, if the ConN and CovN figures are high but the RoN is not, there may be grounds for disregarding the latter if justifiable by the researcher.

The results for the necessary condition analysis are shown below in table 18. As always a tilde (~) symbol denotes negation:

Conditions	ConsN	CovN	RoN
STATE LED	0.764	0.762	0.615
CSO	0.509	0.719	0.773
POLICY HOMOGENEITY	0.604	0.88	0.895
LEFT-WING POLITICIANS	0.555	0.847	0.879
SALIENT POLICY	0.715	0.754	0.651
PARTISAN POLICY	0.407	0.736	0.85
~STATE LED	0.278	0.706	0.895
~CSO	0.508	0.752	0.808
~POLICY HOMOGENEITY	0.46	0.66	0.743
~LEFT-WING POLITICIANS	0.524	0.719	0.762
~SALIENT POLICY	0.285	0.655	0.863
~PARTISAN POLICY	0.593	0.714	0.7

Table 18 - Table showing Necessary conditions for successful policy-impact

Let's start with the most important finding here – none of these conditions by themselves cross the 0.85 consistency threshold to be considered necessary. We can conclude immediately that there are no necessary conditions which explain either successful or unsuccessful policy-impact from DIs. Standard researcher practice here is to re-examine the results by lowering the consistency threshold to a value not supported by the theoretical framework and seeing whether anything useful can be gleaned. To do so in this specific case such a threshold would have to be lowered to 0.764, which is almost certainly too low. However, I propose that by sorting the conditions in descending order of ConsN, and then looking at the measures of triviality, we can still gain some meta-insights into what is going on. That is to say: insights into the ecology of cases. Table 19 below shows the highest three ConsN results with the addition of a new column denoting the skew of the case coding in the dataset.

Conditions	ConsN	CovN	RoN	Skew
STATE LED	0.764	0.762	0.615	80%
SALIENT POLICY	0.715	0.754	0.651	68.57%
POLICY HOMOGENEITY	0.604	0.88	0.895	57%

Table 19 - Table showing the three highest consistency Necessary conditions for policy-impact along with the skew of data

Note: Realistically speaking a consistency threshold of 0.604 is too low for even a hypothetical analysis. However, I have kept Policy Homogeneity here because both its measures of relevance/triviality are the highest out of any other condition.

The highest necessity scores are for a DI being state led, narrowly followed by the DI dealing with a highly salient policy. These results are highly intuitive. It seems highly unlikely that the state would invest finite resources like man-power and money into a DI unless there was a reasonably strong commitment to implementing any policy recommendations. Likewise, a DI which didn't deal with a salient policy would have trouble gaining any traction in the first place and an even harder time drawing the attention of a policy maker if they ever got to the stage of producing policy recommendations. However, the skew of the state led cases is exactly on the borderline (80%) of being unacceptable. This is reflected by the very low measures of relevance. It seems reasonable, therefore, to suggest that even this weak degree of causal necessity is explained by the sheer frequency of state led cases within the dataset. It's a simple fact that a significant proportion of DIs are state led, and so the causal influence of this condition comes close to the example condition of 'One of the participants of the DI has brown hair' introduced earlier in this chapter. If this skew were to be lowered with the addition of non-state led cases, then the ConsN would likely fall even further. The condition of policy salience has a consistency value only barely lower than that of state leadership, but has higher relevance/lower triviality and a far more reasonable degree of skew. Similarly, whilst policy homogeneity has a consistency really too low to consider necessary, it also has a very high relevance figure and an even more balanced skew. Again, it seems reasonable therefore to suggest that the consistency figures for these two conditions would remain stable even with the addition of more cases to the dataset, and so are probably – as it were – 'true'.

It must be re-emphasised at this point that none of the conditions crossed the 0.85 threshold for necessity. This means there are no necessary conditions. Therefore this analysis is akin to examining borderline but insignificant measures in a probabilistic analysis. Much like a researcher might do with a potentially interesting regression value with a P-value above the standard 0.05. This means that the conclusions drawn here are of limited inferential and interpretive value for arguing a mechanism of policy-impact. That being said, the empirics still demonstrate definitive variation between the differing conditions, and so it is worth concluding that these two conditions might not be strictly necessary, but both demonstrably appear to be very useful attributes for a DI to have if they wish to successfully set political policy. As such, these results cannot form any part of the final conclusion of this thesis, but ought to form food for thought for the planning of future DIs.

(8.3) SUIN Conditions

As with necessary conditions – let's quickly recap what a SUIN condition is and how they can be determined. A SUIN condition is a configuration of two or more conditions which by themselves are not necessary for the outcome. However, when arranged together in an AND (+) configuration, they form a necessary causal pathway to the outcome. This thesis takes the position that an empirical result which suggests a SUIN condition can only be accepted if the configuration speaks to a higher-order concept within the framework of the theory. For instance, suppose the empirics suggested a configuration of '~State led + Left-wing Politicians' ← unsuccessful policy-impact. This suggests that if a DI *was* state led (and thus the first part of the SUIN condition is irrelevant), then the presence of left-wing politicians *must* act as the replacement in its capacity as the other 'half' of the higher-order concept to explain the failure to impact policy. If we don't have the first bit of the SUIN condition then we must, at least, have the second bit, and vice versa. Since there is no obvious or intuitive justification in the theoretical framework to derive a higher-order concept from both negated state oversite and the presence of left-wing politicians, this configuration cannot form a SUIN condition. Remember: a higher-order concept must feasibly work within the broad bounds of the theory. Likewise, if the analysis suggested a configuration of 'State Led + CSO ← policy-impact' then these two conditions stretch the conceptual breadth of the higher order condition of 'requires competent leadership'. If there is no state oversite, then there *must* be strong CSO leadership – and vice versa.

As with before, the consistency cut-off to be considered necessary is 0.85, and the principles of CovN and RoN remain the same. This analysis uses two methods of establishing the validity of a SUIN condition. Firstly, the theoretical framework is re-examined to see whether there is any plausible concept which links each condition together under a higher-order concept. This step is obviously limited by the imagination of the researcher, so the second approach is to look at the details of the relevant cases as shown by an XY plot. If the examination of the cases revels some kind of mechanism which fits with the implications of the SUIN conditions, then this is excellent evidence for its validity. In other words: does this SUIN condition make sense within the context of any cases?

First SUIN Condition for Successful Policy-Impact

SUIN Condition	Inclusion	CovN	RoN
POLICYHOMOGENEITY + ~LEFT-WING POLITICIANS	0.854	0.776	0.536

Table 20 - Table showing first SUIN conditions for successful policy-impact

At a glance of table 20 above, this apparent SUIN condition appears to fulfil all the most basic criteria. It's inclusion figure crosses the 0.85 threshold (albeit barely), and its measures of relevance are both acceptably high. Even the RoN value, a more cautious measure ordinarily, is reassuringly high. However this combination of condition as part of a higher-order concept does not seem to make conceptual sense. From the theoretical framework: policy homogeneity is a strong indicator that any policy recommendations produced by a DI will, at worst, not be met with open hostility and, far more likely, be met with approval and interest. If the target policy maker *wants* to implement similar policies, then they will be far more amenable to policy suggestions in the same vein – thus facilitating policy-impact. Likewise, left-wing politicians have been empirically demonstrated to be more ideologically supportive of deepening democracy and of public involvement in the policy production process than right-wing politicians.

If we are to accept this SUIN condition, then we are to propose that if there is no policy homogeneity, and thus little politician support in DI's policy recommendation, then in order to facilitate policy-impact there *must* be right-wing politicians who are also unlikely to show support for both the DI and any of its recommendations. Remember, the cross-over point for coding left-wing and right-wing parties is the political centre. If it's not left-wing, then it's right-wing. This requirement that policy-impact is facilitated by right-wing politicians when policy homogeneity isn't present doesn't logically follow from the theoretical framework. Likewise, suppose the inverse. If left-wing politicians are present (thus removing the second component to the SUIN condition), then we must have policy homogeneity in order for policy to be impacted. We can have both or one or the other, but not neither. In this specific hypothetical circumstance this means that there must be left-wing politicians OR policy homogeneity to successfully impact policy. This would seem to make conceptual sense for the reasons outlined above. Perhaps this union of condition could exist under the umbrella of 'Politician investment in the DI's success'? This line of reasoning falls apart for two reasons. Firstly, this analysis contends that a SUIN condition only exists if each condition is one 'half' of a higher-order concept. So if a higher-order concept exists, then it doesn't matter if both conditions are present simultaneously, or if the first condition is present and the second not, or whether the first condition is missing whilst the second condition is present. Thus a higher-order concept works ‘both ways’. The higher-order concept ‘Politician investment in the DI’s success’ only works in one direction. If we don’t have policy homogeneity (the first condition) but we *do* have a lack of left-wing politicians (the second condition) then the higher order-concept collapses. We cannot accept one ‘direction’ of the SUIN condition whilst rejecting the other. They both must work. Secondly, even if we could accept the premise that ‘Politician investment in the DI’s success’ is a higher-order concept because it works solely under ‘POLICY HOMOGENEITY + LEFT-WING POLITICIANS’ then this is simply not the same SUIN condition as we started out with. It has been contorted and twisted into a statement quite different than the original empirical result.

Second SUIN Condition for Successful Policy-Impact

SUIN Condition	Inclusion	CovN	RoN
~STATE LED + POLICYHOMOGENEITY + PARTISAN	0.884	0.808	0.581

Table 21 - Table showing second SUIN conditions for successful policy-impact

Again this apparent SUIN condition in table 21 above seems to tick all the right boxes. It comfortably surpasses the 0.85 threshold and has some of the highest measures of relevance in this whole analysis. However, deriving a singular conceptually meaningful principle from a SUIN condition becomes harder the more individual conditions are included in the mix. This is particularly reinforced when the component conditions conceptually differ to the degree shown here. Further, to find a higher-order concept which intuitively follows from the theoretical framework, we wouldn’t expect any of the conditions to be in their negated form. This makes the task of linking these conditions together even harder.

Below in figure 9 is the XY Plot for this condition:

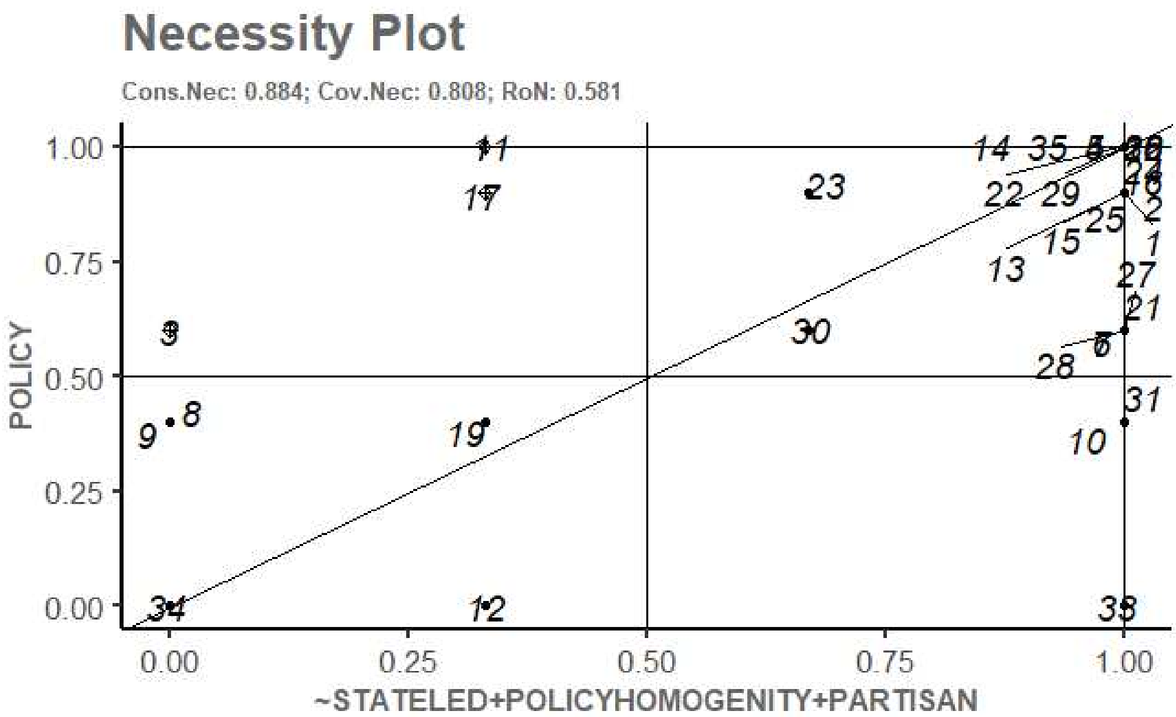


Figure 9 - XY plot for SUIN conditions for successful policy-impact

What is immediately obvious is the intense cluster of cases in the upper-right corner, whilst the remaining cases are peppered around with little obvious clustering. This is primarily down to the fact that this apparent SUIN condition is so loose as to apply to pretty much every successful case irrespective of the differing subtleties of policy-impact mechanisms. Within this quadrant we find every single instance of what I have termed 'pre-determined destiny' cases – those cases where the outcome was pre-determined and approved at the onset of the DI – whose success lies squarely with substantial policy homogeneity and where neither reflect a lack of state oversight or partisan policies. These include Citizens' Assemblies dealing with climate change or instances of Participatory Budgeting. Likewise, we also see cases such as the Irish Citizens' Assembly on the legalisation of abortion (case 5) where, again, there certainly *was* state oversight, but where the combination of policy homogeneity and the partisan position of the policy definitely did contribute to the successful outcome. Even the more mundane cases like Play England – Street play project (case 25) where the public campaigned for the incredibly low-stakes and utterly unobjectionable policy of building more playgrounds for children. What possible higher-order concept could plausibly apply to and explain all these cases in combination?

It seems clear that this emphasises the importance of requiring a meaningful higher-order concept when assessing SUIN conditions. With enough cases and tested conditions, it becomes likely that spurious correlations are offered up by the analysis which provide little to no explanative worth for policy-impact. The spuriousness and 'one size fits all' nature of this apparent SUIN condition does lead us to an interesting question: why are there still cases in quadrants other than the top-right? Whilst there are no necessary conditions or configurations, there are many sufficient combinations of conditions, of which these cases are excellent examples. These will be analysed and discussed after the analysis for SUIN conditions explaining unsuccessful policy-impact.

SUIN Conditions for Unsuccessful Policy-Impact

The analysis offered up just one possible configuration for explaining unsuccessful policy-impact. Given that comparatively few cases showed a lack of policy-impact, it is worthwhile to go through each relevant case as part of the analysis.

SUIN Condition	Inclusion	CovN	RoN
~STATE LED + ~POLICYHOMOGENEITY	0.865	0.406	0.540

Table 22 - Table showing only SUIN conditions for unsuccessful policy-impact

This configuration above in table 22 just about crosses the 0.85 threshold, but the measures of relevance are concerning. The CovN figure shows a significant degree of triviality and suggests that this apparent pairing is spurious. However, curiously, the RoN figure provides a more optimistic value, despite its reputation as a more conservative measurement. If the negation of both policy homogeneity and state oversite coalesced under a higher-order concept, then this configuration could cautiously be accepted. However, there does not seem to be any obvious basis drawn from the theory for linking these two conditions together in such a way.

The substitutional nature of a SUIN condition (wherein the causal mechanism of the SUIN condition can remain, even if one of the conditions is missing, by effectively substituting it for the other condition) means that three propositions about unsuccessful policy-impact can be made:

1) A DI operating under close supervision of the state would **only** (almost only - given that 12.5% do buck this proposition) ever fail to impact policy if it produced something not in-line with the policy preferences of the target politician

or

2) A DI which produced policy in-line with the policy preferences of the target politician would **only** fail to set political policies if the initiative was not state led.

or

3) The above propositions, but with successful policy-impact. Or, in Boolean terms, no DI could be coded as either:

STATE LED + ~POLICY HOMOGENEITY <- 1

or

~STATE LED + POLICY HOMOGENEITY <-1

The third proposition can be tested just by looking at the dataset. The principle of falsification means that we only have to find a singular exception to each component of the proposition in order to reject it. However, since we are working with a threshold of sufficiency less than a perfect figure of 1, we ought to find multiple to assert the point.

For ‘STATE LED + ~POLICY HOMOGENEITY <- 1’, then there is a myriad of choices within the dataset, such as UK Citizens' Jury on Air Quality or the Irish Constitutional Convention (2012-2014). Likewise, for ‘~STATE LED + POLICY HOMOGENEITY <-1’ there are also multiple cases like the Citizens’ Assembly on Brexit or the Nanodialogues Public Engagement on Nanotechnology (UK). This is more than sufficient to disregard the third proposition.

Below in figure 10 is an XY plot showing the cases which conform to this configuration. A reflexive re-examination of the cases will show whether any of the first two proposition are reflected.

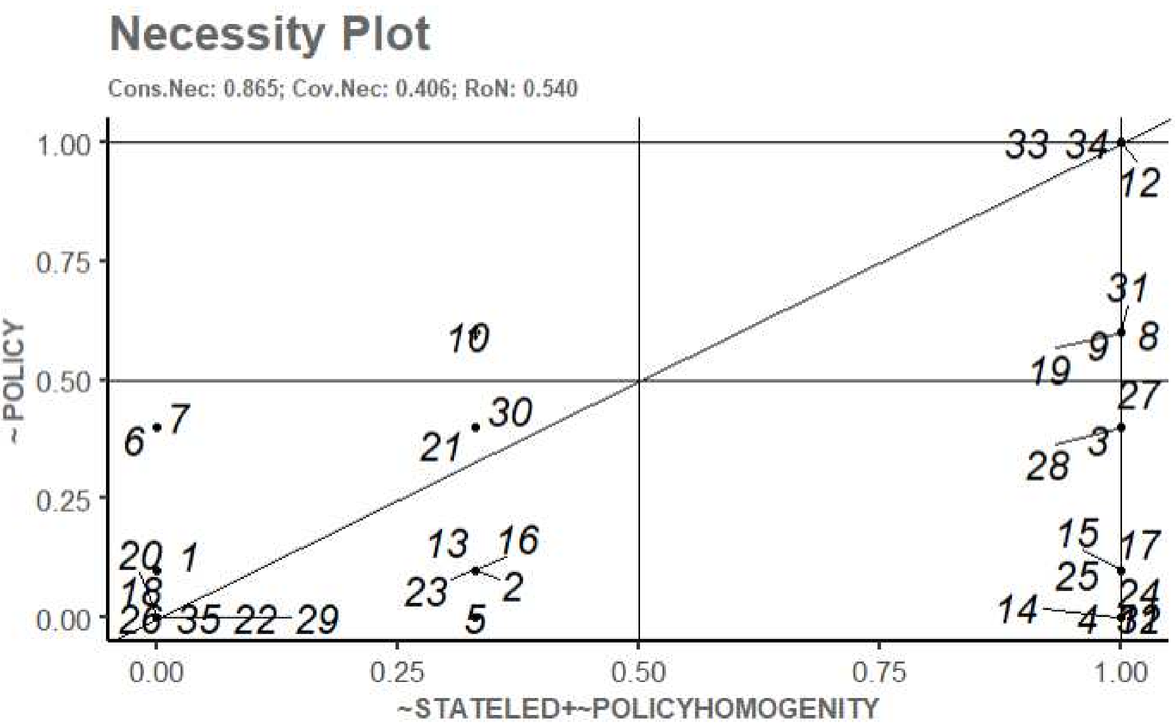


Figure 10 - XY plot for SUIN conditions for unsuccessful policy-impact

There are two distinct groups in the most relevant upper-right quadrant. Cases 12, 33, and 34 conform to the SUIN condition whilst displaying zero policy-impact outcomes, whilst cases 8, 9, 19, and 31 show a modicum of influence. These cases are going to crop up again in the entire analysis chapter both here and for sufficiency. Since there are only seven cases within the upper-right quadrant, and since they are both highly instructive and frequently appear, I propose that it is useful to go through them all in detail.

Case number 12 was The POWER2010 campaign. This DI (somewhat vaguely) sought to mobilise British citizens and encourage them to engage with the prospect of nation-wide political reform. This was to be achieved in four parts. First, British citizens were asked to suggest means of political reform, which then became the focus of a deliberative poll undertaken by 130 citizens from London. From this poll, 29 concrete proposals were derived, and the public were asked to vote on what was most important to them. This culminated in a final list of 5 proposals. The POWER2010 campaigners then released a nationwide request that British citizens independently contact political candidates standing in their constituencies and ask them to 'make a public commitment — a pledge — to clean up and reform' (POWER2010, 2010). The POWER2010 Participedia entry summarises the result: 'While campaigners were heavily involved in advocating for electoral reform and fairer voting, their efforts made little initial impact in Parliament. Officials were elected and politics went back to business as usual' (ibid). The lack of policy-impact in this instance seems to have little to do with the configuration in question. It seems that directly and definitively impacting the policy of those with the power to actually reform democracy was not the highest priority of POWER2010. Instead, they championed a vague and meandering avenue of policy-impact wherein the public were still relied upon to impact policy using the same old policy-impact mechanisms which existed prior to DI. In other words, despite the deliberative focus of the DI, the policy-impact mechanism at play was still that of the unempowered individual, rather than of the deliberative collective. The individual was expected to set political policies in the same manner as before the advent of DIs, and thusly in the same manner that warranted the introduction of DIs in the first place. The form of policy-impact was still that of the unempowered individual, rather than of the deliberative collective. POWER2010, as the name suggests, in actuality sought to educate the public and provide them with a plan for change rather than provide a direct avenue to political policy-impact. This is obviously still an important function of a DI. However, in terms of concrete and direct policy-impact, it is of little surprise POWER2010 was coded so low.

POWER2010 was an example of a partial state-led DI in that it was run primarily by campaigners who commissioned acting politicians within the House of Lords to lead. POWER2010 failed to produce something explicitly in line with the policy preferences of target politicians.

Accordingly, it reflects the first of the SUIN conditions propositions. However it is clear that the lack of policy homogeneity played little role in its failure to impact policy, nor did this case show any sort of higher-order concept linking the two components together into something within the theoretical framework.

Case 34 (Camden Health and Care Citizens' Assembly) is also an example of a state led DI, meaning that it too must rely on some sort of higher-order concept linking the two conditions together, wherein the lack of policy homogeneity explains the unsuccessful policy-impact.

On the surface this DI contains all the features of the ordinarily quite successful DIs I have termed 'pre-determined destiny' cases. It is a product of a left-wing local council with a strong interest in democratic innovations and a history of using Citizen Assemblies to successfully impact political policy. The Camden Health and Care Citizens' Assembly (CHCCA) was convened to integrate the public and their views into Camden Council's health and well-being strategy – though its adjacency to the COVID pandemic meant this this became the primary issue.

Understanding why the CHCCA was unsuccessful requires little interpretation. Rather than the public be asked to produce deliverable policy recommendations, the public were instead tasked with formulating vague principles of what their ideal healthcare strategy would look like. Without concrete policy recommendations, there was little obligation for implementation. As the Participedia article succinctly says:

> 'The purpose was to shape health and care policy in Camden. It seems this purpose was never meaningfully achievable as the Assembly had little ability to affect policy. The Assembly was never tasked with producing actionable recommendations. This is likely the case because the power of the Council to change health and care policy is constrained due to the control of the national government and NHS, who hold the responsibility for policymaking.' (Camden Health and Care Citizens' Assembly, 2020)

The authors of the Participedia case reason that this made the CHCCA more in-line with a public consultation rather than a true a Citizens' Assembly. Whilst I do not dispute this, I argue that this redefinition does not go far enough in explaining its failure to impact polic. If the specifics of health and care policy is fundamentally out of the hands of both the public and of Camden Council, then the logic behind holding a CA in the first place is called into question. Perhaps if the CHCCA were tasked with producing policy deliverables, and then Camden Council used their political position to communicate their recommendations to the government, then this would better constitute a more ideal CA. the CHCCA was effectively dead on arrival, and its failures cannot be attributed to a lack of policy homogeneity. As with before, this case also does not speak to any sort of higher-order concept.

Case 33 is The UK Citizens' Biometric Council (UCBC) commenced by the Ada Lovelace Institute. The UCBC allowed the public to learn about burgeoning biometric issues such as facial-recognition technology, and then ultimately produce policy recommendations. The UCBC is coded as having neither state oversite nor policy homogeneity.

Whilst it did not possess any kind of state oversite, the Ada Lovelace Institute is a successful, highly influential, and well-funded independent research CSO operating in a policy area with very high public salience. However, it's lack of policy-impact is of little mystery. Whilst the UCBC was overall a very slick operation, the end product was merely a publicly available report with an *invitation* for collaboration and consideration from policy makers, rather than any definitive link to policy makers. Had this link existed then it seems reasonable to propose that the policy-impact would have been much higher. Likewise, it therefore seems reasonable to attribute its failure to impact policy as down to its lack of state oversite. However, the lack of state oversite forms only one part of the overall SUIN condition, and the 'either or' aspect of the lack of policy homogeneity means that there isn't sufficiently good reason to suppose the existence of a higher-order concept relevant for understanding the UCBC, and so we ought to err on the side of caution.

However, a frequent theme throughout the DI was that the participants almost unanimously started with little knowledge of biometric issues, and then unanimously called for restrictions during the policy recommendation stage. Whilst biometric issues do not yet demand much attention from politicians, such was the discomfort felt by the participants regarding that lack of regulations that it seems reasonable to suppose that such issues would be highly influential in the voting intention of the participants if the matter did come under public scrutiny. Hence, the UCBC may yet possess some direct policy-impact in the future, along with a secondary form of policy-impact amongst the newly educated participants. However, this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Cases 8 and 9 refer respectively to the Irish Citizens' Assembly (ICA) deliberation on referendums and fixed-terms Parliaments respectively. Whilst technically separate issues, these two topics were considered together as one extended deliberative exercise, and so will be analysed together. Ultimately the ICA recommended that future referendums ought to be under the jurisdiction of the electoral commission, that funding for either side of a referendum campaign ought to be equal, that multiple referendums be held simultaneously, and that greater options beyond a yes/no binary answer be included in the referendum question. The ICA also narrowly advocated that Parliaments should remain fixed for no longer than four years. Both these cases were coded the exact same way: there was maximal state oversite, minimal influence from CSOs, no discernible policy homogeneity, neither were notably salient nor partisan, and both saw 'more out than in' policy-impact. All ICA cases from this era saw at least some policy-impact owing to the submission of any policy recommendations to the Irish Parliament being a legal requirement.

Since both were state led, then the higher-order causal influence would have to be revealed by the lack of policy homogeneity. Interestingly, despite the greater than zero coding for policy-impact, I think these cases show that an argument (albeit hyper-specific) can be made for a SUIN condition here linking a lack of state oversite with a lack of policy homogeneity. The ordering of the ICAs between 2016 and 2018 was supposed to see referendums be the penultimate topic and fixed term Parliaments be the last. Therefore, these would both occur after the primary draw of focus for the ICA: the deliberation on the 8th amendment and the subsequent legalisation of abortion. It was felt that the decision about the future of referendums should be completed before the all-important referendum on abortion, and so the topics were moved around to allow for this. Whilst the abortion deliberations saw strong societal investment, prolonged media interest, and the involvement of politicians, it seems clear that these two ICA cases simply lacked the same momentum, and thus were subordinate to the more interesting deliberation about the 8th amendment. Could this lack of politician interest form a SUIN condition stemming from the lack of state oversite or policy homogeneity? It seems reasonable to suppose, hypothetically since this wasn't the case with the ICA, that a politician would be further removed from a DI without state oversight and so would be less positioned to develop an interest. Likewise, it seems only rational that a politician would be less interested in a policy that had little to nothing in common with their own policy goals. Within the ICA's own official report for these cases, it was mentioned that deliberation time was often cannibalised and pushed back to make room for the vastly more important deliberations on abortion (Citizens' Assembly of Ireland, 2018, pp107). Further whilst the ICA deliberating abortion was a process over five weeks long, and the ICAs discussing climate change and an ageing population took two weeks, the ICAs about referendums and fixed term Parliaments were allocated a mere single weekend. When it comes to the ICA, there seems be a correlation between the perceived more interesting topics and successful policy-impact. Or, in other words, a possible SUIN condition could be 'lack of politician Interest'.

However, this SUIN condition seems largely specific to the ICA. If a lack of politician interest indeed forms a SUIN condition, then ought we not see a lack of left-wing politician also forming a component of the condition? After all, it has been empirically demonstrated that left-wing politicians are ideologically more interested in deepening democracy and encouraging public participation Junius et al (2020). The only reason that the lack of left-wing politicians does not form an objection to the 'lack of politician interest' condition is that Fine Gael has demonstrated strong progressive democratic tendencies and a keen interest in public participation despite being a right-wing party. In a case without Fine Gael we would expect to see 'a lack of politician interest' include a lack of left-wing politicians at the very least.

Case 19 is the Public Dialogue on Significant Water Management Issues in the UK (PDSWMI) – a DI which, unsurprisingly, allowed the public to feed into policy plans regarding the Environment Agency's River Basin Management Plans. Since it was under the oversite of the state – albeit a government body rather than government per se – it was coded as being state led. Thus, the necessary condition for the lack of policy-impact here is its lack of policy homogeneity. Using the lessons from the ICA cases above, this also ostensibly appears to be a case where a lack of politician interest hindered any form of policy-impact.

It was found that the intended function of the PDSWMI was really as a springboard for designing future consultation material rather than dictating the terms of policy. However, the analysis showed that the Environmental Agency were surprised with the positive response from participants and the quality of outcomes achieved. Accordingly, the Environmental Agency expressed an interest in using public participation again in the future. From the Participedia article: 'The process has instilled significantly more confidence in the EA to work with the public in future as water management policy and practice develops at national and catchment levels' (Public Dialogue on Significant Water Management Issues in the UK, 2014). It would seem then that the primary reason the public was initially relegated to a purely consultation-orientated role was because the Environment Agency had little interest in using DIs in policy creation. However, after the success of the PDSWMI, the prerequisite interest in public participation was generated, and it seems reasonable to predict greater policy-impact in the future. However, as with the ICA cases, it seems tenuous to link the negation of both state leadership or policy homogeneity under the umbrella of such a SUIN condition of 'lack of politician interest' without at least some reference to left-wing politicians and their high likelihood of an interest in DIs. It is prudent to be cautious when looking to argue for necessity. In this specific case it is best to err on the side of caution and conclude there not be a SUIN condition present.

Finally, case 31 is the Debating UK Education Reform: Model Westminster Event 2014 (DUER) deliberative dialogue, and the easiest to explain from this section. This was a one-day event where individuals of voting age, but under the age of 21, deliberated possible reforms to GCSE and A-Level qualifications. The results were then presented to the Parliamentary Cabinet.

As a Model Westminster event, it is highly unlikely that the proceedings and recommendations would have been considered on par with any other public dialogue in terms of its legitimacy, and the fact that the recommendations eventually were presented to policy makers is likely more of a 'sweetener' to entice participants rather than a plausible avenue to policy-impact. It may, therefore, appear reasonable to begin to apply the SUIN condition requirements from the ICA cases. After all, isn't it true that a lack of political interest includes apathy and a lack of earnest seriousness? However, this argument can be rejected even without objections about the lack of left-wing politicians. This argument is fundamentally a semantic argument which wrongfully equates missing political interest in a DI to the simple fact that the DUER was probably never going to be taken seriously irrespective of any conditions present – SUIN or otherwise. Its purpose was to engage young people – a demographic with low levels of political participation – with deliberation and the Parliamentary process. Perhaps a similar DI which conformed more to the norms of 'real' public dialogues would see greater policy-impacting success. The DUER event was merely a one-day event, one which saw zero input from outside experts, and which recruited solely from a populace pool already politically engaged.

(8.4) Sufficient Conditions

As with the previous chapter, let's begin with a re-cap of what a sufficient condition is and how they can be ascertained. A necessary condition is one which is required for the outcome to occur. If the outcome has occurred, then so has the necessary condition. They are inextricably linked. Sufficient conditions, on the other hand, provide *a single* causal pathway to the outcome, but not the only one. If a sufficient condition is present, then the outcome will occur. However just because the outcome occurred doesn't mean that the sufficient condition was present. For instance, eating excess calories is a necessary condition to the outcome 'gain weight' whilst eating excessive burgers (as opposed to something equally fattening) would form a sufficient condition.

Within social science it is often rare to find necessary conditions. In the highly complex world of human interaction, seldom does one condition form a causal pathway to an outcome, and often deriving causality is a process of understanding facilitation and condition compounding. Sufficient conditions are perhaps more interesting and better suited to studying social phenomena because they can exist in configurations of more than one condition together. Whilst this analysis did not find any necessary conditions, this chapter will propose three sufficient conditions for explaining policy-impact and one which explains the failure to impact policy,

The standard for something to be necessary must be kept conceptually tight and so the threshold for necessity was fixed at 0.85. Conceptual inconsistencies are more acceptable for sufficiency and so the threshold for sufficiency is set slightly lower at the standard value from extant QCA literature: 0.8. Unlike with necessity, CovS here does not provide a measure of relevance. Instead, this figure describes how much of the outcome is explained by the sufficient condition. For instance, whilst a CovN of 0.2 would have been grounds for disregarding a necessary condition, this score simply means that the sufficient condition covers 20% of the cases where the outcome is present. Finally, sufficiency does not make use of RoN as a secondary measure of relevance. Instead, the sufficiency relation makes use of the Proportional Reduction in Inconsistency (PRI) figure which is used to assess logical contradictions in pathways to the outcome and to the negated outcome. For instance, if the combination of left-wing politicians and policy homogeneity was both sufficient for explaining policy-impact and unsuccessful policy-impact, then the solution with the lower PRI score would be rejected.

The results for the sufficient conditions for successful policy-impact are shown below in table 23. As always the tilde (~) signifies negation and the asterisk (*) signifies the Boolean AND operator.

Sufficient Conditions	ConsS	CovS	PRI
~STATELED*LEFT-WING POLITICIANS	0.957	0.088	0.953
STATELED*POLICY HOMOGENEITY	0.909	0.516	0.890
STATELED*PARTISAN	0.822	0.293	0.784
POLICY HOMOGENEITY*PARTISAN	0.849	0.202	0.779
~LEFT-WING POLITICIANS*~SALIENT	0.835	0.213	0.771
Solution Formula	0.8740	0.9090	0.848

Table 23 - Table showing Sufficient conditions for successful policy-impact

~STATED LED * LEFT-WING POLITICIANS

State leadership, whilst not quite crossing the 0.85 threshold for necessity, still had the highest score out of any condition. It is curious therefore to see that its *negation* can actually contribute towards successful policy-impact when in combination with left-wing politicians. Its low coverage score of only 0.0881 tellingly shows that such a situation is not at all common for successful DIs and so the particulars of the relevant cases are likely to be quite specialised rather than general. Nonetheless it's impressively high consistency and PRI scores warrant further investigation. Drawing from the theoretical framework there appears to be two possible explanations at play here:

1) Owing to their ideological inclinations towards empowering ordinary citizens, left-wing politicians have a predilection towards more grassroots political movements as authentic representations of the citizenry and their policy demands. We can reasonably expect that a left-wing politician will be far more amenable to a DI which emerged from the community than a right-wing politician. Thus, would be more likely to lend their support and interest, thus facilitating policy-impact.

2) The influence of state oversight is still an advantageous and beneficial thing for a DI, but the combination of left-wing politicians and a grassroots movement means that the presence of left-wing politicians 'activates' the policy-impacting potential lost by a lack of state oversite. This is a master and slave dynamic where only by combining with the 'master' condition of left-wing politicians can the 'slave' condition of a lack of state oversite achieve policy-impact success.

Both relevant cases follow a similar format, but it is case number 32 of the Nanodialogues Public Engagement on Nanotechnology UK (NPEN) which best demonstrates the second explanation. Nanotechnology concerns the use of technology built at the molecular and atomic scale and holds much promise in almost every scientific field. However, concerns regarding their adversarial applications and potentially negative environmental consequences prompted both the Royal Society and the Royal Academy of Engineering to recommend future government action be informed with the use of public dialogues. Four public dialogues were launched in 2006 under the Labour Government. The Participedia entry describes the extent of the successful policy-impact:

> 'The project successfully influenced the Environmental Agency (EA), Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC) and Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) policy on nanotechnology in a number of ways including: The EA changed how it regulated nanoparticles in the environment as a result of listening to the recommendations of public participants. The results of the dialogues were fed directly into the EPSRC Ideas Factory (2007), which considered priorities for £1.5 million research funding. Two public participants from the People's Inquiry were invited to present the outcomes of the Inquiry to DEFRA's Nanotechnologies Stakeholder Forum. The results were considered by the cross-Government Nanotechnology Issues Dialogue Group (NIDG) which works to enable the development of nanotechnologies and co-ordinate Government activities across departments, agencies and research councils The results and learning were used by the NEG. The dialogues shaped priorities for research council funding of later nanotechnology research. The dialogues helped create more robust science policy on nanotechnology.' (Nanodialogues Public Engagement on Nanotechnology (UK), 2017)

What absolutely dominated NPEN was the perspective of public engagement not as a simple necessity or an example of garbage-can policy making, but as an absolute necessity. The entire focus on the DI was its role as an 'experiment in upstream engagement' where it was the citizen's natural role and right to participate in the creation of policy which impacts upon them. The official report on the DI noted that public engagement in the issue fed into 'Public trust in the political decisions and regulatory processes surrounding the development and application of novel technologies' and was an 'essential element in ensuring a healthy democracy' (Irving et al, 2006, pp49). As a direct result of this, successful policy-impact, rather than public engagement or public education, was held to be the fundamental measure of the DI's success, and its only means of evaluation. The report summarises: 'In other words, engagement isn't just about shoring up public confidence, but is also potentially a means of enlightening government and improving policy' (ibid, pp24).

It is clear that that the principle of directly deepening democracy ran through the core of this DI. This DI would have been highly interesting to any left-wing policy maker with an ideological inclination towards those exact same principles. However, what is undeniable is the influence of CSOs in the success of NPEN. It was DEMOS – a CSO concerned with collaborative democracy – who facilitated a meeting "between some of the participants and key policy makers, where they could submit their recommendations", and it was DEMOS who reached out to the Environmental Agency and ultimately secured a collaboration based on the policy recommendations. However, it is doubtful that DEMOS would have been successful as they were at piquing the interest of policy makers had those policy makers been right-wing. Again, Junius et al (2020) demonstrates that right-wingers, with the exception of radical right wing populists, are simply less interested in public participation and receiving their policy recommendations. It was the ideological inclinations of those policymakers which allowed DEMOS to work to their fullest potential and so it is not particularly problematic that the presence of CSOs do not form part of this sufficient condition configuration. This case study shows that the lack of initial state oversight formed little hindrance to the success of NPEN and that the presence of left-wing politicians provided fertile ground for it to flourish.

STATE LED * PARTISAN

With a score of only 0.8220, this configuration has the lowest consistency threshold out of any from this analysis. Despite this, I argue that it covers one of the most interesting and paradigmatic participatory cases within the entire dataset: the Irish Citizens' Assembly (ICA) work on repealing the Eighth Amendment of the Irish constitution – thus legalising abortion. This combination suggests that a DI which enjoys considerable state oversite will see policy-impact facilitated when dealing with a highly partisan policy area. In explaining this mechanism, let's quickly re-cap what I coin the 'can-kicking' principle from the theoretical framework behind a partisan policy.

The can kicking principle seeks to explain when and why a politician may choose to use a democratic innovation over traditional policy creation and implementation streams when the policy area is highly controversial. The principle supposes that a politician or party will fear repercussions – be they potential damage to personal image or perhaps increase popularity thus lowering the chances of re-election – if they choose to champion certain causes. However, they recognise that simply choosing to do nothing despite mounting pressure will likely lead to the similar outcomes. Here, politician or party is trapped between a rock and a hard place. Thus, a policy-maker is motivated to eagerly 'kick the can' of the problematic issue over to a democratic innovation where it can be decided by the public free of political interference and the inevitable issues of mistrust. This creates distance between the problematic issue and the policy maker. If the public's deliberation sanitises the issue and produces a clear deliverable imbued with democratic mandate, then the same policy makers effectively receive permission from the public to proceed with the policy whilst enjoying praise for acting on said democratic mandate. This general principle is well-established in the literature since it closely echoes rational models of politician behaviour (e.g see Weaver, 1986 or Riker 1986). However a participatory context shows that something subtly different occurs which sets it apart. The rational behaviour model assumes that politicians use prior knowledge or educated guesses to make political decisions which have the lowest risks/costs possible with the highest returns. Weaver (1986) argues that blame-avoidance is highest in each whilst 'credit-claiming' is comparatively lower in each when the stakes are the future voting behaviour of citizens using the past perceived policy decisions of the politician to inform their vote. However, in a DI context with a partisan policy area, the rational decision changes since the potential costs melt away, perhaps even being increased by *not* kicking the can. By choosing to kick-the-can, a politician gets to avoid blame *and* claim credit simultaneously for a low political cost.

The ICA is a perfect example of policy-impact via the can-kicking principle. Being still a highly Catholic and generally conservative country, the highly partisan and politically risky nature of abortion could potentially sink or at least severely hinder the career of any politician who championed legalising abortion. This was of particular concern to right-wing politicians, who were nonetheless pro-choice since they risked losing their conservative image and rapport with conservative voters. As demands to legalise abortion grew, it was decided to hand the issue over to the ICA for discussion. The fact that the ICA was state led meant that its policy recommendations would be closely monitored by policy makers and bureaucratic staff alike and would act as an in-house source of policy. This provided the ICA with a privileged direct channel for policy-impact the likes of which a grassroots or CSO-driven DI could only dream about. The fact that the ICA was composed of ordinary individuals rather than politicians meant that the media response was more objective and issue-focused, rather than primed to make targeted political attacks. It was observed that the timing of the ICA saw increased public knowledge on the topic of abortion, and the policy vastly increased in its salience. Irish citizens considered it a deeply important make-or-break issue that needed immediate resolution one way or another. Fine Gael, as before, could thus maximise their commitment to democracy and democratic mandate by agreeing to back the policy, whilst maintain a politically safe distance.

POLICY HOMOGENEITY * PARTISAN

This combination of condition also applies to the ICA work on the legalisation of abortion discussed in the previous section, and for broadly the same reasons. However, it is with the condition of policy homogeneity where the policy-impact of a partisan policy is shown most elegantly. This combination suggests that policy-impacting potential is reached when there is a strong desire from politicians to 'kick the can' of an issue into the hands of a DI, whilst being eager to receive the policy recommendations which will provide democratic legitimacy to their intended policies which predate the DI. This mechanism is perfectly represented in case number 16: Public Dialogue on Data Openness, Data Re-use, and Data Management (PDDODRDM).

The combination of policy homogeneity and of partisan policies is unique within this analysis since both conditions are factors which exist and operate outside of a DI. Hence it is most useful to look at the context of the DI rather than the internal particulars. The newly-elected Conservative/Liberal Democrat government wished to increase the availability of previously closed off datasets to 'create new and innovation information services and products – both commercial and non-commercial' (Public Dialogue on Data Openness, Data Re-use, and Data Management, 2012). This included the release of data collected using public funds but previously unavailable for public or commercial use.

Since much of this data was publicly funded, private, and never intended to be used by any party other than the government, there were significant moral issues attached to its common release, along with a strong economic counterargument. Naturally this selling of the public's data by the government was seen with suspicion and, judging by Participedia' entry mention of significant unanswered questions from the public (Public Dialogue on Data Openness, Data Re-use, and Data Management, 2012), it seems reasonable to assume that significant public outcry would be generated if any decisions were made 'behind closed doors' and out of the public's hands. However, as with the ICA and the legalisation of abortion, distance between the policy and government could be formed by handing the issue over to public discussion. Thus, the public would have the chance to decide what happened to their own data, there would be minimal criticism of outside interference from political or commercial interests, and the government could maximise their democratic legitimacy by acting upon any policy recommendations now imbued with the consent of the public.

The public ultimately decided on three constraints on data release:

1) Self-regulation by technical experts and researcher who received the data was sufficient for data not in the public interest
2) Independent specialists should be brought in to govern the release of data with public interest
3) Independent specialist should be brought in to govern the release of data with personal identifying information along with the continued input of the lay public.

Whilst suggesting some caveats, the PDDODRDM's policy recommendations allowed the government's plans to release public data to continue. Further, these broad recommendations gelled well, and so formed significant policy homogeneity, with the government's own code of practices within the newly formed Public Sector Transparency Board. This provided minimal friction to the movement of the public policy recommendations to empowered political spaces and, predictably, significant policy-impact could be seen. The dialogue directly influenced the Research Councils UK's data policies, and the recommendations were distributed to government ministers for reference on future policy discussions.

~LEFT-WING POLITICIANS * ~SALIENT

This solution is by far the least intuitive to understand since both condition components exist in their negated form. This solution implies that policy-impact is actually facilitated by the combination of a policy area of little concern to citizens (or, at worse, complete apathy) when it is targeted to politicians who are less likely to be amiable to public participation and DIs generally. However, something is readily apparent from the XY plot below in figure 11 (next page):

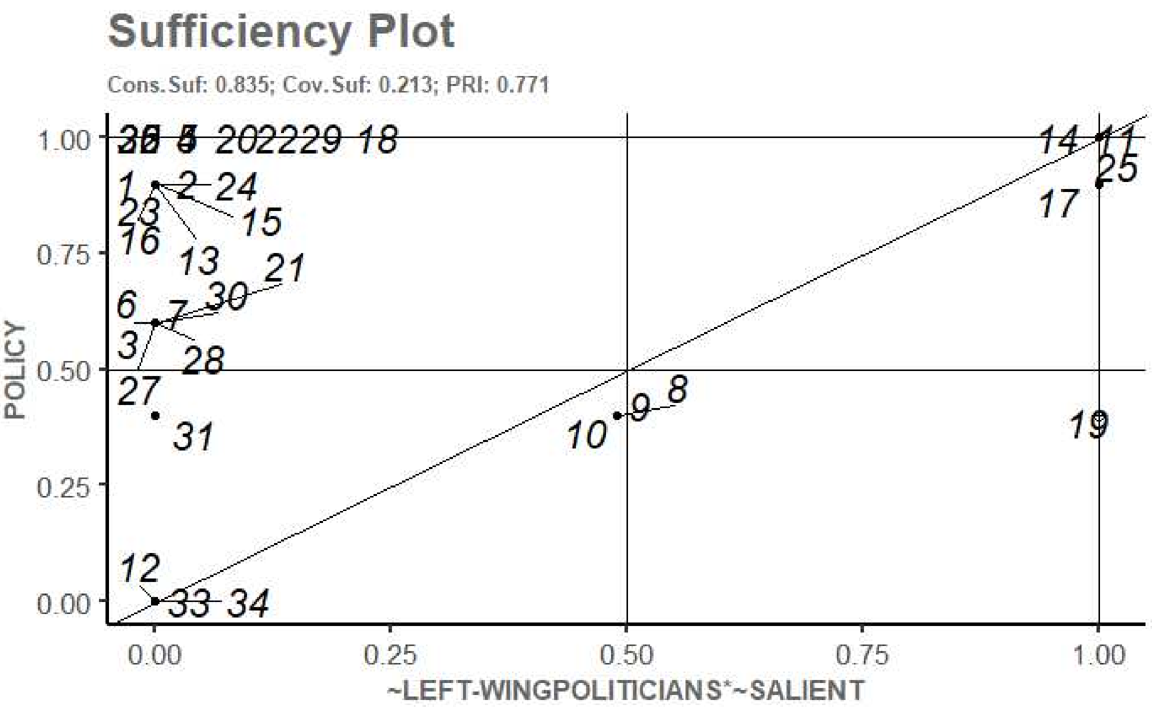


*Figure 11 - XY plot for the sufficient configuration of conditions '~LEFT-WING POLITICIANS * ~SALIENT' for successful policy-impact*

Cases 11, 14, 17, and 25 are all examples of DIs which dealt with abstract policies of minimal current concern or policies which are simply quite mundane. Cases 11 concerns whether the UK should formally cease using the leap second in its calendar, case 14 asks for the public's input in regulating future geoengineering technology when (or, indeed, 'if') such technology is invented, case 17 educates the public and invites their input on the best way of dealing with weather phenomena caused by factors in space, and case 25 looks at ways of getting children to play outside more often.

In light of this grouping the lack salience as a facilitating factor for policy-impact begins to make sense. The theoretical framework imagined high salience to be a motivating factor for policy makers in their quest to govern with maximal democratic legitimacy. Or, as it were, it was predicted that a policy issue with high salience would provide policy makers with the impetus to jump over the proverbial bar. However, an issue with particularly *low* salience actually achieves the same effect by lowering the bar. We need to ask ourselves: what is the risk for policy makers if they include the public's views on a report to help merely guide future policy making on a topic many, MANY years into the future? What exactly is the challenge about allowing volunteer streets to close their roads to cars in order to make it safer for children to play? When it comes to such non-salient policy areas, it is hard to imagine the institutional barriers preventing such inconsequential policy-impact. It seems reasonable to suppose that this intersection between lack of salience in combination with a lack of left-wing politicians was sufficient to activate political interest and support even without the ideological motive to do so.

But what does this mean for salience as a useful condition for policy-impact? From this one result I do not think it reasonable to completely disregard it in the future. When salience is low, demand for action is also low, but so is the bar to implementing the policy recommendation. This facilitates policy-impact. When salience is high, the policy may be politically risky or logistically challenging for policy makers to respond to, but the high demand for change provides the momentum for change to happen regardless. This also facilitates policy-impact. There is thus a middle 'dead' zone where policy-impact is low when salience is middling. When the demand for something is weak, and the policy area is troublesome to respond to, it is unlikely to see any real policy-impact occur.

Whilst salience in its negated form here fits within the theoretical framework, it's unity with the lack of left-wing politicians here is puzzling. However, I propose that the answer lies in the recent dominance of right-wing parties in recent British and Irish politics. The dataset shows that there is a strong correlation between salient issues and the presence of left-wing politicians. In fact, 85% of cases with left-wing politicians present have been dealing with salient policies, showing a strong willingness for left-wing politicians to tackle policy issues perceived as most important and perhaps to actively be seeking them out when they are present. This is further reflected by the fact that 58% of cases with salient policies have occurred with the presence left-wing politicians. However, as per the theoretical framework, these two conditions are conceptually distinct. Put simply, any and all politicians irrespective of their ideological leanings will be motivated to respond to salient issues, as reflected by the only slight skew over 50% of the salient policy to left-wing politician ratio. Left-wing politicians, on the other hand, are ideologically motivated to move public participation to the centre of policy making and will thus be more amenable all DIs generally rather than focusing on just the politically inconsequential, safe, and mundane DIs. Collinearity concerns are valid here, but it is telling that the conjunction of 'Left-wing Politicians * Salient Policies' was neither a sufficient condition for the outcome nor, most tellingly of all, a SUIN condition. The tendency for left-wing politicians to become involved with DIs tends to happen at the local council level where particularly salient issues like climate change are a popular discussion for public participation. What these DIs with policy areas of low salience show us is that they operate at a different institutional spaces and levels than DIs which typically deal with more salient issues. Instead of targeting the local level, they target the sitting government and the executive. Consider the example of the Leap Seconds Public Dialogue on Time Changes in the UK. What use would it be for anyone other than central government to consider scrapping the leap second from British time keeping? Thus their target politicians are going to be, more often than not, right-wing politicians since these are the politicians overwhelmingly found there in recent years. Whilst these politicians *ought* to provide more friction to policy-impact, the lack of salience means that this friction is still completely minimal, and policy-impact can continue irrespective of the target politicians' ideologies.

STATE LED * POLICY HOMOGENEITY

With a coverage score of 0.507 and a consistency score only beaten by a solution with two relevant cases, this configuration is arguably the most useful and explanative solution here. This solution alone purports to explain exactly why just over half the cases within the dataset saw successful policy-impact. Looking at the XY plot in figure 12 shows that a very obvious pattern of cases emerges

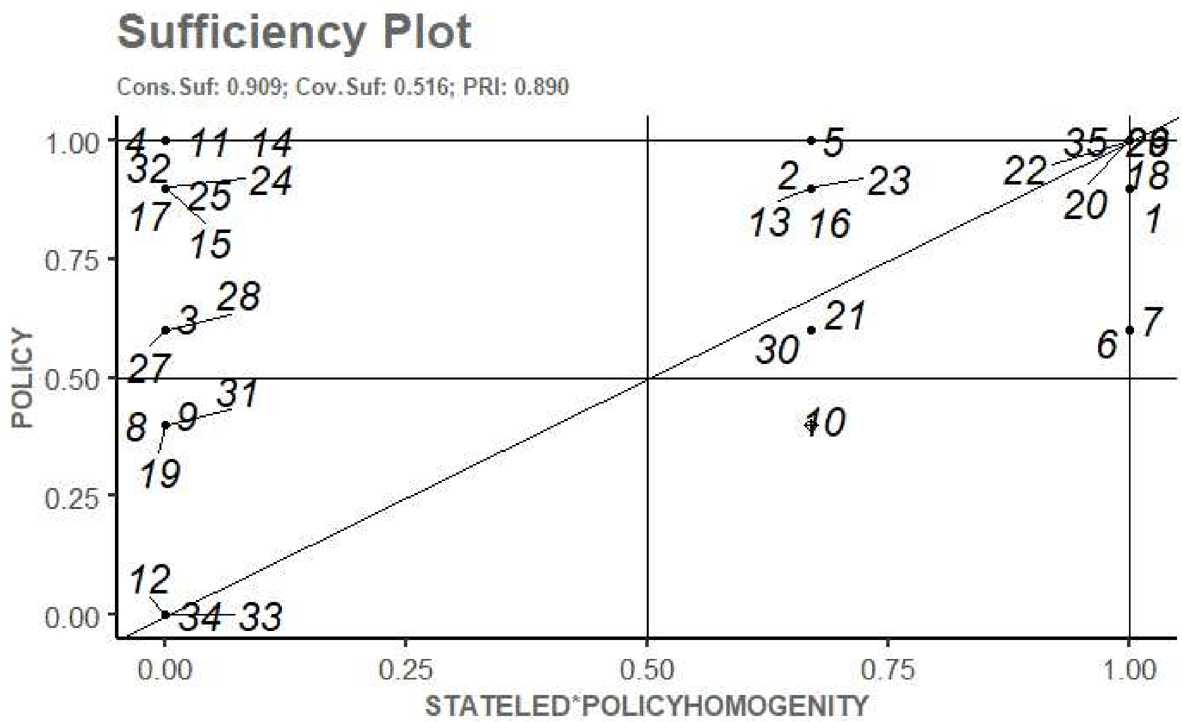


*Figure 12 -XY plot for the sufficient configuration of conditions 'STATE LED * POLICY HOMOGENEITY' for successful policy-impact*

There are six cases at the upper-most right-hand corner. These cases are the strongest examples of the relationship because they have high X (Policy-Impact) and Y (The configuration of conditions) values. Of these six cases, five are all Citizens' Assemblies (CA) or juries constructed to deliberate and deliver policy to local councils who had already declared a climate emergency. The remaining case is the Equally Well Participatory Budgeting initiative. This pattern is no coincidence and demonstrates the principle of 'pre-determined destiny' as an explanation for policy-impact.

Let's firstly compare these CA and juries to the Irish Citizens' Assembly (ICA) convened to discuss the legalisation of abortion. The ICA were handed the task of deliberating the repealing of the 8th amendment in a thorough and even-handed way. At various points in the proceedings, concerns were even raised that certain individuals had previously exhibited behaviour which would imply that their minds were unlikely to be changed. At the end, each individual voted on a potential revision of abortion law which included options for total legalisation, partial legalisation under certain circumstances, and a complete ban of abortion under any and all circumstances. In other words, the individuals who comprised the ICA were given complete agency to decide the direction and the magnitude of any policy recommendations.

This stands in stark contrast to the initiatives in question here, where the participants had their agency comparatively stripped back. They could not choose to – as it were – 'undeclare' the climate emergency if they so wished, nor could they choose to extend or otherwise further the declaration beyond the remit specified. With the concrete 'seeding' of policy already sown, the CAs were essentially tasked with deciding *how* ambitious they thought the council's reactions should be, rather than *what* the reactions should be. Further, being at the local Council level the potential opportunities for innovative or particularly drastic policy were significantly lower than they might have been at the central government level. Whilst more cycle paths to discourage car use and greater investment in enhanced biodiversity are all useful measures against the climate crisis, they stretch little beyond the sorts of policies a local council might implement already, and certainly cannot compare to more drastic measures. Such DIs could only specify the minute features of a broader pre-determined policy which already had the go-ahead to proceed. It was as if these initiatives were the set menu at a budget restaurant, whilst the ICA had full rein of a whole supermarket.

The lesson from the environmentally-focussed CAs shows that policy-impact is an easy task when the targeted politician has already decided to implement your policy recommendations whilst actively channelling policy deliberation to reflect a pre-determined policy. With this in mind, it is no small wonder that this solution leads to highly successful policy-impact. This intersection between state leadership and policy homogeneity clearly points to the phenomena of a DI only being created in the first place to rubber-stamp pre-existing policies. Without state oversite, it would be impossible for local councils to ensure that any directions of dialogue or policy recommendations adequately reflect their policy aims. Thus, the local councils simply created their own. This purposing of DIs to 'rubber-stamp' pre-existing policies is no conspiracy nor, necessarily, a bad thing. Right at the beginning of government interest in DIs, it was acknowledged that DIs could legitimise extant policies, and was even touted as an advantage. For example, when the Scottish Government published a literature review on the value and purpose of public participation, it was stated plainly that: 'public participation can contribute to the process of authorising and legitimising what public managers do' (Albert and Passmore, 2008, pp4).

Action on climate change is necessary, but that isn't to say that it isn't contentious amongst the public. A common criticism of CAs orientated towards climate change is that they overly focus on consensus amongst the participants (e.g. see Machin, 2023), which culminates with the more radical solutions compromising with the more conservative solutions, thus watering down any resulting policy recommendations. Machin laments the CA as a model for not allowing meaningful changes in climate policy owing to a demand for consensus over radical action. However, whatever its weaknesses, these CAs show that they can at least provide some momentum for environmentalist policies by imbuing them with democratic legitimacy and thus smoothing over much of the potential friction from critics. Here, policy-impacting success is of primary concern, and the meaning of any policy recommendations is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Going back to the Equally Well Participatory Budgeting (EWPB) initiative, we see a perfect example of a less contentious application of pre-determined destiny. EWPB was handed £200,000 and tasked with ameliorating social inequality and all the ills that brings to one of Scotland's most economically-deprived areas. With PBs the largest hurdle to policy-impact from DIs has already been jumped: the delivery of the policy recommendations. The necessary funds had already been allocated (and could not easily be rescinded) and the intended targets had already been broadly approved by the state. In other words, the destiny of the PB admittedly had already been determined, but the option to only choose the policy minutiae meant that there would be *definite* action.

Sufficient Conditions for Unsuccessful Policy-Impact

The results for the sufficient conditions for unsuccessful policy-impact are shown below in table 24. As always the tilde (~) signifies negation and the asterisk (*) signifies the Boolean AND operator.

Sufficient Conditions	ConsS	CovS	PRI
LEFT-WING POLITICIANS * ~SALIENT * ~PARTISAN	1	0.208	1

Table 24 - Table showing Sufficient conditions for unsuccessful policy-impact

LEFT-WINGPOLITICIANS * ~SALIENT * ~PARTISAN

Since this is the only solution which explains the failure to impact policy, the comparatively low overall solution formula of only 0.208 may appear far from conclusive. However, observe the relevant cases here: case 8 and 9 are the ICA deliberations on referendums and fixed-term parliaments, and case 34 is the Camden Health and Care Citizens' Assembly. These all point towards an interesting pattern of continuity which affirms their relative explanative worth. Not only are these cases the exact same relevant cases as found within the proposed SUIN condition for unsuccessful policy-impact, but this solution formula strongly affirms the reasons why that SUIN condition could not be accepted. There seems little point in re-introducing these cases twice in one chapter so, as a (very) quick reminder, the two ICA cases played second fiddle to the more premier areas of discussion like abortion or climate change, whilst the Camden Health and Care Citizens' Assembly was never in a position to impact any policy.

Let's begin this analysis with cases 8 and 9 where the ICA deliberated over referendums and fixed term Parliaments. It was explained in the section for SUIN analysis that these two cases were clearly of secondary interest compared to the ICA's deliberation on the Eighth amendment and that there was a clear correlation between the more interesting and socially relevant topics and successful policy-impact. Here we can apply the can-kicking principle again. This principle supposes that partisan issues actually generate their own salience, and it is this tension between the demand to do something and the difficulty in doing something which ultimately leads to the success of participatory initiatives. The lack of partisan status for referendums and fixed-term parliaments meant a lack of subsequent salience, and thus a lack of interest in the policy recommendations from politicians.

This damming combination of low partisan status leading to low salience also applies to the Camden Health and Care Citizens' Assembly. I proposed in the previous section that Camden Council may (emphasis on 'may') have been more successful had they used their political capital to communicate the policy recommendations to central government. It seems reasonable to propose that, had the Camden Health and Care Citizens' Assembly found some resolution to a highly partisan issue with wider societal implications, then this would have caught the attention of central government policy makers, or at least motivated Camden Council to attempt some form of secondary policy-impact.

The aspect of left-wing politicians actually forming part of a causal pathway to *unsuccessful* policy-impact is initially quite puzzling. However, I propose that its inclusion here is relevant but quite mundane. What unites all three of these cases is that they were effectively dead upon arrival. For the ICA cases, they simply could not generate the same frenzied interest as shown by the discussions on the Eighth amendment, and so fell by the wayside. For the Camden Health and Care Citizens' Assembly, there simply wasn't the institutional apparatus in place to impact the health policies of central government, and so the policy recommendations' policy-impacting potential was effectively zero. The question must then be asked: how is that a DI could be launched – with state funding and intervention no less – that had zero chance of ever achieving their goals? It seems reasonable to say that their uneasy births are down to an inflated sense of optimism in the use of democratic innovations. Left-wing politicians' ideological sympathies for the principles of public participation meant that their implementation took precedence over considerations of their policy-impacting viability. Their role in educating and empowering the public was seen as a perfectly acceptable overall goal even if this was the only realistic outcome. It is likely that a right-wing politician would simply have never breathed life into these DIs in the first place.

(8.5) Formal Theory Evaluation: How Well Can the Theory Explain the Results?

QCA is a constructive rather than deductive analytical approach. What's more, singularly necessary conditions are quite unusual, and QCA solutions are often a complex configuration of multiple conditions – to say nothing of potentially unequal condition weights. As was explained in the methodology chapter in more detail, this makes formal quantitative theory evaluation (with reference to such tools as hypothesis testing, P-Values or regression co-efficient) a flawed task within QCA. However, Formal Theory Evaluation (FTE) provides us with a means of assessing how well the theoretical framework explains policy-impact by identifying which *parts* of the theory are represented in the empirical solutions. To quickly reiterate the methodology – FTE inputs a theory (T) expressed in Boolean terms, compares it to all the relevant solutions (S) and sorts the cases into one of four categories:

1) T*S cases which show perfect overlap between theoretical expectations and empirical reality
2) T *~S cases which shows the theoretical expectations not reflected in the solutions
3) ~T*S cases which shows us unexpected results or, at least, those not reflected in the theoretical expectations
4) ~T*~S cases which shows what was neither theoretically expected nor empirically shown

Then, to reiterate from the methodology: 'Since it is usual for some cases which reflect a solution to not lead to the outcome, and since it is also usual for at least *some* of the cases to have their outcomes unexplained by a solution, it is also necessary to integrate case membership scores along with T and S. Case membership is denoted with either a Y or a ~Y denoting >50% case membership in the outcome and <50% case membership respectively. For instance, T*S*Y would show cases which firstly reflected the theoretical expectations, but only if they *also* reflect the solution configuration, *and* showed the outcome in the form of either policy-impact or unsuccessful policy-impact. Accordingly, the higher the number of cases within T*S*Y – the more validation the original hunch receives. Likewise, T*S*~Y shows cases which reflect both the solutions and the theoretical expectations, but which do not lead to the outcome. As Oana et al (Oana et al, 2021, pp172) put it 'These cases are puzzling and if they are numerous, the empirical support for the theory is undermined'. This same logic of case membership then applies accordingly to the logically possible scenarios 2, 3, and 4 described above.

So what, exactly, was the theory in question? This question has two answers. The first answer is obvious: the conditions themselves. Each of the conditions identified and tested in this thesis were selected for holding some form of causal influence on policy-impact. Hence, there is a general theoretical expectation that each and every one of them in isolation could be represented in the empirical results. Answer two is less obvious. Certain conditions are likely to exhibit causal power only in combination with others, whilst other certain conditions may equally share an policy-impacting mechanism, wherein we would expect to see one always in conjunction with the other. Or, in other words, the theoretical framework itself *already* suggests complex causal solutions to policy-impact, and that these must also be assessed against the empirical results. This section will reintroduce and explain some of these expected configurations by drawing from simplified ideas from the theoretical framework and presented earlier in the section on expected results. Again, this not an exhaustive list of all expected conditions, but merely the ones which can reasonably be expected to operate in conjunction with another:

For policy-impact these are:

1) Policy homogeneity * Left-wing Politicians
2) Policy Homogeneity * ~Partisan Policy
3) Salient Policy * Partisan Policy

For unsuccessful policy-impact there are:

1) ~SALIENT*~PARTISAN
2) ~SALIENT*PARTISAN

Formal Theory Evaluation

FTE also makes use of the SetMethods package within R. This particular package, as previously explained, assigns the case to one of eight possible scenarios. For ease of analysis I have included these scenarios again along with their broad meanings below in table 25 (next page):

Row	Configuration of Theory and Solution	Coverage	Meaning	Consequence
1	T*S	*Y	Cases which show the theory, and the empirical findings, and also lead to the outcome	Ideal
2	T*S	*~Y	Cases which show the theory, and the empirical findings, but do not also lead to the outcome	Highly problematic
3	T*~S	*Y	Cases which show the theory, but do not show the empirical findings, and also lead to the outcome	
4	T*~S	*~Y	Cases which show the theory, but do not show the empirical findings, and do not also lead to the outcome	Theory is limited
5	~T*S	*Y	Cases which do not show the theory, but do show the empirical findings, and also lead to the outcome	Expand on the theory, and possibly re-do analysis
6	~T*S	*~Y	Cases which do not show the theory, but do show the empirical findings, but do not also lead to the outcome	
7	~T*~S	*Y	Cases which do not show the theory, and do not show the empirical findings, but lead to the outcome	Puzzling and worth revisiting case
8	~T*~S	*~Y	Cases which do not show the theory, and do not show the empirical findings, and do not also lead to the outcome	Ideal

Table 25 - Formal Theory Evaluation scenarios and their explanation

FTE is then a process of interpreting the numbers of cases within each section and, where applicable, the ratio of cases between them. To add credence to the theories tested, we would expect that most cases would fall into the categories of row 1 and 8, and only if a substantial number of cases fall 2 ought we be concerned with the ability to explain policy-impact. Since there are substantially fewer cases showing unsuccessful policy-impact than successful policy-impact, the analysis will be far less cluttered and complicated, and so easier to follow the general principle. For this reason, I have elected to break from the existing precedent and begin FTE from there.

Formal Theory Evaluation for Unsuccessful Policy-Impact

Table 26 below shows the eight possible scenarios, along the percentage of cases within each scenario, the raw number of cases, the case numbers themselves, the same columns for configuration and coverage, and the same column of consequences as the above table for ease of analysis. Note: the percentages do not add up to 100%. This is because the number of cases isn't a ratio of the total cases in the dataset, but the number of cases divided by the number of possible within each configuration of theory and solution along with the coverage of the outcome.

Row	Percentage of Cases Within the Category (%)	Number of Cases	Case Numbers	Configuration of Theory and Solution	Coverage	Consequence
1	37.5	3	8, 9, and 34	T*S	*Y	Ideal
2	0	0		T*S	*~Y	Highly problematic
3	25	2	10 and 19	T*~S	*Y	
4	22.22	6	11, 13, 14, 15, 17, and 25	T*~S	*~Y	Theory is limited
5	0	0		~T*S	*Y	Expand on the theory, and possibly re-do analysis
6	0	0		~T*S	*~Y	
7	37.5	3	12, 31, and 33	~T*~S	*Y	Puzzling and worth revisiting case
8	77.78	21	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 32, 35	~T*~S	*~Y	Ideal

Table 26 - Formal Theory Evaluation for unsuccessful policy-impact

Starting with a very cursory glance at the results. No cases fall into the two most concerning categories shown at rows 2 (T*S*~Y) and row 5 (~T*S*Y). Respectively this means that zero cases directly contradict both the theory and the empirical results, and that the theory does not need to be expanded to include either more conditions or a greater number of complex theoretical configurations. We see in row 4 six cases which *ought* to have ended up with unsuccessful policy-impact, had the theory been all-explaining, but which actually saw the complete opposite. Moving onto row 7 we then see three cases which show a failure to impact policy, but whose causality cannot be explained by either the theory or the empirical results. These cases will have to be reviewed.

It must be re-emphasised at this stage that causality within QCA is not symmetrical so simply because a condition leads to an outcome does not necessarily mean the negation of that condition leads to the negated outcome. For this reason, whilst tempting, we cannot consider rows 1 (T*S*Y) and row 8 (~T*~S*~Y) to be effectively saying the same thing. That being said, it will be useful to consider rows 1, 4, and 7 together since they speak to the strength of any final conclusions. These results ostensibly tell us that only a minority of unsuccessful DIs can be explained by the theoretical framework and the empirical results whilst, ideally, we would see a plurality. However, the three cases in row 7 which contradict both the theory and the empirics are the now oft-discussed POWER2010, Debating UK Education Reform: Model Westminster Event 2014 (DUER), and Camden Health and Care Citizens' Assembly. These cases were covered in more detail within the section on necessary conditions where it was revealed that their failure to impact political policy had less to do with their conditional composition and context, and more to do with the blundering intent behind their implementation. These DIs were effectively dead upon arrival and were *never* going to successfully impact policy. If, just for a moment, we discard these DIs from consideration, then we are left with five unsuccessful DIs within the dataset, and so the three cases in row 1 *do* form an explainable plurality.

This still leaves the six cases within row four which seem to show the limits to the theory. All six of these cases show a negated salience and high policy-impact, despite the theoretical suggestions. However, these cases are simply not good examples of the theory since they all operate on their own idiosyncratic logics Most of these cases have also been seen before in the section on sufficient conditions. It was discovered here that cases 11 and 25 were so mundane and so low stakes as to produce minimal reasonable objections or institutional friction, meaning that their success in impacting policy was almost assured. Cases 14, 15, and 17 were DIs which dealt with policy areas so abstract and of questionable meaningfulness, that little more than a loose oral agreement from policy makers was required to be coded as high policy-impact. Rather than showing the limits of the theory, these six cases work in tandem with the cases in row 1 in support of the theory shown in the section on sufficient conditions. Salience is a parabolic condition. Very high salience leads to policy-impact, but so too does extremely low salience. In the middle there is a dead-zone where a lack of salience means a failure to impact policy. The cases of row 1 fit neatly within this dead zone, whilst the cases of row 4 sit at the extreme end of low salience. This just leaves case 13 left - Scottish Crowdsourcing Exercise "Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making". This is a case which features prominently amongst the solution for policy-impact: State Led * Policy Homogeneity. This means, and a review of the case confirms it, that this DI had its destiny pre-determined. It was *always* going to be successful irrespective of its other conditions. This means the theory holds under most conditions but would seem not to hold under pre-determined destiny cases.

Formal Theory Evaluation for Policy-Impact

As with before, the distribution of cases in each scenario are below in table 27 on the next page along with the broad meanings:

Row	Percentage of Cases Within the Category (%)	Number of Cases	Case Numbers	Configuration of Theory and Solution	Coverage	Consequence
1	74.07	20	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 13, 16, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 35	T*S	*Y	Ideal
2	0	0		T*S	*~Y	Highly problematic
3	3.7	1	28	T*~S	*Y	
4	25	2	31 and 33	T*~S	*~Y	Theory is limited
5	18.52	5	11, 14, 15, 17, 25	~T*S	*Y	Expand on the theory, and possibly re-do analysis
6	12.5	1	19	~T*S	*~Y	
7	3.7	1	3	~T*~S	*Y	Puzzling and worth revisiting case
8	50	4	8, 9, 12, and 34	~T*~S	*~Y	Ideal

Table 27 - Formal Theory Evaluation for successful policy-impact

The results initially look quite promising. In contrast with the FTE for unsuccessful policy-impact, we see here that the theoretical framework actually explains the policy-impacting influence of just under three quarters of all the cases within the dataset. What's more, there are zero cases which directly contradict either the theory or the empirical results. Cases 31 and 33 suggest some limitations to the theories, and within row 7 we see that only one case is explained by neither the theory nor the empirics. However, unlike before, row 5 indicates that there are five cases which seem to operate outside of the theory whilst conforming to the empirical results. If no explanation can be provided for these cases, then the theory cannot adequately explain policy-impact.

Put bluntly: cases 3, 11, 14, 15, 17, 25, 31, and 33 all ostensibly appear to be problems for the theory. However, vitally, with the exception of case 3, literally all of the problematic cases are the same problematic cases within the FTE for unsuccessful policy-impact. Thus, the same explanations can be used. Cases 31 and 33 were dead on arrival and no configuration of conditions would change that. Cases 11, 14, 15, 17, and 25 were those mundane cases where extremely low salience actually yielded a paradoxical increase in policy-impacting power. If we amend the input of theories into the FTE to include the parabolic policy-impacting influence of extremely low salience (~SALIENT) – effectively repeating the FTE with the addition of ~SALIENT as well as SALIENT - then the following results are produced as shown in table 28 below:

Row	Percentage of Cases Within the Category (%)	Number of Cases	Case Numbers	Configuration of Theory and Solution	Coverage	Consequence
1	92.59	25	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 30, 32, 35	T*S	*Y	Ideal
2	0	0		T*S	*~Y	Highly problematic
3	3.7	1	28	T*~S	*Y	
4	25	2	8, 9, 31, 33, 34	T*~S	*~Y	Theory is limited
5	0	0	0	~T*S	*Y	Expand on the theory, and possibly re-do analysis
6	12.5	0	0	~T*S	*~Y	
7	3.7	1	3	~T*~S	*Y	Puzzling and worth revisiting case
8	50	4	12	~T*~S	*~Y	Ideal

Table 28 - Formal Theory Evaluation for successful policy-impact with the addition of a parabolic salience condition

With this theoretically-sound addition, the theory and empirics can now explain policy-impact for 92.59% of the cases within the dataset. If we include the minority of unsuccessful DIs included for the first FTE, then the number of cases explainable by the theory and empirics is over 80% of all cases. With this new analysis, we also see cases 8, 9, and 34 have shifted from row 8 to row 4. However, these cases have also been thoroughly dissected within this thesis and their explanations follow the same patterns. Case 34 was the well-intended but essentially impotent Camden Health and Care Citizens' Assembly which lacked the remit to change the health policies of central government. Cases 8 and 9 are those Irish Citizens' Assemblies on referendums and fixed-term Parliaments. These cases covered cases which were certainly salient but lacked the enormous salience of the 'rockstar' ICA case concerning the Eighth Amendment and the legalisation of abortion. If the policy-impacting potential of salience forms a parabola and thus has a dead-zone in the middle, then cases 8 and 9 certainly fall into this category.

Case 3 is intriguing. It remains alone in the puzzling row 7 of each of the FTEs for successful policy-impact. It is unshifted by the inclusion of negated salience, and its policy-impacting influence cannot be explained by either the theory or the empirics. Case 3 is the UK Citizens' Jury on Air Quality (UKJAQ). This case was a state-led DI with heavy influence from CSOs which targeted left-wing politicians with a salient and non-partisan policy area. The Department of Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) arranged for 22 jurors to deliberate on what direction air quality should take and what DEFRA specifically should do to achieve these deliverables. It saw modest policy-impacting success wherein the policy recommendations were submitted and considered by DEFRA in their decisions – though ultimately there was little indication of direct and explicit policy uptake.

There are two conditions notably absent from the theory and empirics in any form – whether that be in a negated state or not: the influence of state oversite and of CSOs. I propose that it was state oversite which ultimately explains Case 3's policy-impacting success. State oversight assumes that close proximity to policy makers along with administerial and governmental staff closely invested and interested in DIs will facilitate policy-impact. The official UKJAQ report notes that DEFRA actually nominated a representative to follow the Citizens' Jury and to be the one to receive the recommendations. Further, this representative was tasked by DEFRA themselves in ensuring that the recommendations would be included in any future internal reports and, where the policies were seen as outside the remit of DEFRA, that the representative pass them on to the relevant policy makers. DEFRA here showed a genuine intent and administrative investment in the DI to influence their policy. The result was minimal institutional friction, minimal distance between the public and policy makers, and a high regard for the policy recommendations produced. Thus, policy-impact was facilitated. The fact that Case 3 didn't have its policy-impact coded higher is simply down to the fact that many of the recommendations were seen as unworkable by DEFRA or outside of their immediate remit.

(8.6) Assessing DIs: Beyond the Configurations and Reviewing the Literature

Thus far this analysis has been conducted without a consideration of normative concerns. That is to say, this section has concentrated solely on which configurations of conditions determine policy impact, with no examination of whether the DIs in question solve any of the issues associated with the democratic malaise described earlier. To end the analysis here would be to make a potentially grave error since, in theory, we may well conclude that the best way for a DI to impact policy is to design it so it does not deepen democracy at all and does not deviate from existing democratic institutions or practices in any meaningful way. Since the spirit of this research is to use lessons learned to improve future DIs to solve the democratic malaise, such a conclusion would be indefensible. This section re-examines the DIs covered in the analysis to assess the intention behind their creation by asking a simple question: was this DI conducted to deepen democracy, or was it a facade for existing policy-impacting avenues?

These facades can take multiple forms, and this thesis reviewed several of them in the literature review chapters. Papadopoulos and Warin (2007, pp459) coined the term 'political window-dressing' to describe the creation of a DI which, to the causal observer, looked like an earnest attempt to deepen democracy, but which under the surface hid the same 'elitist policymaking' as before (Elstub and Khoban, 2023, pp118). In such circumstances, deliberation on a policy may superficially take place, but the general direction of deliberation, and even the final policy decisions, had already been made prior. Along the same lines, elite-led DIs run the risk of becoming colonised (Habermas, 1987 ; Blaug, 2002) by policy makers by way of their influence over the initiative design and therefore the 'issues, information and witnesses' which are deliberately 'mobilised out' of the DI (Smith and Wales, 2000, pp58). In such cases, public deliberation may very well take place, and any recommendations taken-up may be organic, but these too are largely pre-determined. Second, DI's policy recommendations may well look like they have been taken up by policy makers, when in fact the recommendations have been cherry-picked according to the policy makers' prior preferences (ibid).

From these critiques we can begin to form a metric of assessment. Excessive control of DI design likely to inform the final result, cherry-picking of policy recommendations, and otherwise any evidence that a DI was conducted to legitimise elite policy makers rather than empower the public, all form a means of assessing the normative quality of a DI.

With this metric in mind, it becomes clear that many of the mechanisms associated with those DIs which saw successful policy-impact rely on the façade of deepened democracy. Most brazenly has been the mechanism of pre-determined destiny associated with the configuration of STATE LED * POLICY HOMOGENEITY. This mechanism describes policy makers creating or significantly controlling a DI such that any outcome inevitably reflects the policy makers' pre-existing plans or policy preferences. In essence, this is merely a re-phrasing of the first part of the metric of assessment. Further, the fact this solution had a coverage score of >0.5 means that just over half the cases in the dataset display elements of this façade. Admittedly, in my analysis I did describe how such DIs can still hold democratic goods by lending democratic legitimacy to policies usually seen as holding normative goods, but facing significant criticism of institutional friction, thus allowing them to traverse these obstacles and become implemented policy. However this only holds up if we suppose the pre-existing policy to truly be representative of the policy preferences of the wider population – and we have no reason to suppose this would always, if ever, be the case. Likewise, an academic concerned with internal goals like representation, participant learning, or quality of deliberation may hold such DIs in high regard (e.g. Syme and Sadler, 2004 ; Link et al, 2006 ; Fung, 2006). However, in the context of this thesis and policy-impact, this complete lack of functional autonomy on behalf of the participants is the antithesis of participatory democracy.

The second metric concerns cherry-picking of policy recommendations. This analysis has shown cherry-picking to not only occur frequently, but to exist in two main forms. Firstly, for the purpose of reflecting the pre-existing policy preferences of policy makers. Secondly because of differences in the perceived importance of each policy recommendation. For instance, the team behind the Scottish Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making public dialogue, again represented by the pre-determined destiny configuration discussed above, quite freely admit that particular policy-making attention was given to those topics already 'being worked on by policy teams' and which 'seemed to adhere quite nicely to what the public were saying' (Topaz, 2020). Combined with the fact that certain topics were pre-seeded so as to encourage deliberation on the pre-existing preliminary Test, Trace, Isolate, Support Strategy, it seems reasonable to attribute the policy-impacting success to the deliberate cherry-picking of policies aligning with pre-existing policy preferences.

Secondly, whilst I extol the successes of the ICA on abortion, and attribute the policy-impacting success to the can-kicking principle, it has also become clear in this analysis that not every ICA was treated equally by the Irish government. Vital deliberation time was re-allocated from lesser-perceived topics to those better-received, as with the ICAs on future referendums and fixed-term

Parliaments. In theory this would have been defensible had these supposedly lesser ICAs seen similar policy impact. However, this was also not the case. It seems clear in this analysis that the policy-impact of each ICA was contingent on the desires of policy makers rather than some attribute emerging from deliberation.

Thirdly, even the can-kicking principle itself is drenched in similar normative implications as pre-determined destiny DIs. Fine Gael was a minority government immediately preceding the ICA and could only govern with the assistance of independent but socially progressive politicians (Reidy, 2023). Katherine Zappone, who would play an instrumental role as a minister in the government, made her support contingent on a 'referendum to liberalise abortion provision' (ibid, pp 246). This means that the decision to hold the ICA was less about a concern for deepening democracy and more about a politically convenient route to an outcome pre-determined and pre-approved by figures within Fine Gael. Not only was the ICA conducted to legitimise pre-existing government policy, but it arguably was also conducted to legitimise the government itself.

However, at this stage it is also important to acknowledge that some DIs do not fit easily into this pessimistic mold, and some absolutely were instituted with the intention of deepening democracy.

The Camden Health and Care CA was held up as an explanatory for unsuccessful policy making because it was effectively impotent, and was only conducted due to a sense of inflated optimism for the role of DIs. This latter aspect is the pivotal point here: this CA was conducted because Camden Council truly believed in 'using citizens' assemblies to support policy development' (Camden Health and Care Citizens Assembly (Participedia), 2020) inspired by the success of several other prior CAs. This is compounded by the influence of Councilor Georgia Gould – a member of the left-wing Labour Party – who when speaking about the success of one of these CAs said: ''I think citizens' assemblies are absolutely the future of democracy' and 'My ambition is that everyone in Camden is part of a citizens' assembly about an issue that is important for our borough' (Hill, 2019). These are not the words of a politician interested in conducting a DI for any reason other deepening democracy.

Whilst it is hard to argue that the can-kicking principle behind the ICA on abortion was done with altruistic intentions, it is harder to argue that it was an example of political window-shopping. DIs often rely on existing political institutions as a means of creating political change (Elstub and Khoban, 2023), and the ICA on abortion was no different, since it was immediately followed by a referendum. Again, this is not the actions of a government interested in the facade of deepened democracy. In fact, CAs are more immune to being used as legitimising facades than other DIs (Boker and Elstub, 2015) because they produce clear policy deliverables. These clear policy deliverables form a clear rubric for assessing government action and inaction, meaning governments are held to account (Elstub and Khoban, 2023). It seems unlikely that a government only interested in the facade of democracy would conduct a DI which would make them look so inept.

(8.7) Analysis Part 2 Conclusions

The next chapter seeks to answer the research questions by taking a general overview of the findings, so it is useful now to take a step back and comment on how the final analytical stage went. In short, the findings were extremely useful and strong.

Not finding any necessary conditions is very normal when conducting QCA since an assumption of causal complexity is often, as it was in this research, a reason for choosing QCA in the first place. The analysis produced five solutions for policy-impact which were:

1) ~State Leadership * Left-wing Politicians
2) State Leadership *Policy Homogeneity
3) State Leadership * Partisan Policies
4) Policy Homogeneity * Partisan Policies
5) ~ Left-wing Politicians* ~Salient Policies

And only one solution for unsuccessful policy-impact:

1) Left-wing Politicians * ~Salient Policies * ~Partisan Policies

All of which, with the help of XY Plots, showed highly plausible and useful causal pathways to policy-impact. What's more, the theory behind the can-kicking principle and of parabolic salience seemed to hold true. At this point we can use these insights to answer the research questions and comment further on the future of DIs.

Chapter 9: Conclusion: The Policy Impacts of Public Participation

Having now discussed the caution we ought to take when interpreting the result in the previous chapter, we finally arrive at the opportunity to observe what the empirical results tell us about policy-impact from DIs. Armed with individual narratives of policy-impact, this chapter re-visits the research questions posed within the introduction and provides answers to them. From the very beginning this thesis has taken the position that it would be insufficient to merely describe causal pathways to policy-impact from DIs. The 'spirit' of the research was to use these findings to learn lessons as to the nature of public participation with the hope that future initiatives could be improved.

This chapter begins with a discussion of what wasn't found. Chief amongst which is that policy-impact is a complex process involving the interaction of multiple conditions rather than conditions existing in isolation. Further, whilst the presence of CSOs was theorised to be a component for at least one of these complex causal pathways, the results show that this was not the case.

The chapter then brings back the original research questions posed right at the beginning of the thesis. It is the first two which seek to answer what conditions lead to both successful and unsuccessful policy-impact. Using the results from the empirical analysis I finally provide answers to these most pivotal of questions. The last two questions build on these findings and both concern a general question of: "What do these findings mean?" I propose that these findings demonstrate that policy-impact is an entirely possible endeavour and offers great promise for the amelioration of the democratic crises. However, many of the solutions for policy-impact reflect something opposite to the principles of deepening democracy in that they appear to largely legitimise pre-existing government policy generated by political elites. Ultimately, the next necessary step for DIs is to foster wide-spread acceptance and normalisation of DIs amongst politicians as sources of policy, and also to institute some kind of accountability for their use and misuse.

(9.1) Discussion of Implications: What Wasn't Found

Let's start with what wasn't found. Firstly, there are no singular conditions in isolation (Necessary conditions) which explain either successful or unsuccessful policy-impact. The use of QCA has shown that only complex intersections of conditions provide such causal pathways. Again this is perfectly normal within usual QCA practice, and indeed mirrors similar pre-existing research on DIs (e.g. see Wampler, 2007) which shows their influence on outcomes to be configurational in nature.

Secondly comes the surprising (and no doubt controversial) insight that the influence of

CSOs, no matter to what degree it exists, seems to have no discernible impact on policy-impact. This runs contrary to the findings of existing non-participatory literature, but is in line with contemporary literature on democratic innovations such as Pogrebinschi and Ryan (2018) Or Bussu and Fleuss (2023). Pogrebinschi and Ryan concluded that the policy-impacting capabilities of CSOs was largely non-existent (occasionally even only existing in the negated ~CSO form) and only contributed when combined with mass participation in heavily localised PBs. Meanwhile, Bussu and Fleuss noted that CSOs 'struggle to have tangible impact because of looser or no links with centres of power' (ibid, pp 141). Neither of these explanations seem to easily apply to the findings of this thesis. I observed that most cases with high levels of CSOs did enjoy significant links with politicians or decision makers which rules out the centres of power explanation. However, Pogrebinschi and Ryan were able to observe a definitive link between CSOs and policy formulation/ policy-impact, whilst these details were often simply missing from the Participedia case reports, and so I was not able to do the same. Perhaps the influence of CSOs was too abstract or remote for the authors of the Participedia entries to properly grasp, or perhaps the work of CSOs was not communicated fully. Alternatively, perhaps CSOs just didn't have that much influence, and the empirics are 100% correct. The Participedia team imagines that each case entry be composed of descriptors of the 'who, what, when, why, where, and how' of the proceedings, and so we would expect details of CSO and their work to be present in the cases. In fact, the presence of CSOs was actually well-documented in the parts of a case concerning the design of rules or the composition of convenors, something I myself utilised in the data coding stages. Therefore, I feel justified in stating that the authors of Participedia cases *are* able to include the influence of CSOs where they are present, but that CSO influence was simply not causally relevant to policy-impact.

Thirdly, whilst there certainly were instances were a DI was conducted in the 'correct spirit' of deepening democracy amidst the democratic malaise, it is challenging to conclude that this spirit was universally present. This challenges the assumptions of myself going into this thesis, and I predict many other deliberative theorists, that DIs could be largely characterised as being routes for the public to impact policy. Rather, many DIs showed signs of being fronts and instances of 'political window shopping' (Papadopoulos and Warin, 2007, pp459) wherein it was shown their intended purpose was to legitimise pre-existing government policy or even whole government themselves. That being said, the insights gained from these DIs, as well as those with more democratic intentions, are still useful in answering the research questions.

(9.2) Discussion of Implications: Answering Research Questions 1 & 2

The first research question queried what conditions, if any, impacted upon policy-impact. The glib answer would be just to regurgitate the list of solutions produced during the analysis. But many of these solutions seemed to coalesce towards similar causal mechanics whilst others remained separate. Accordingly, we can say that policy-impact is influenced by four different factors:

1) Politicians who want the DI to be successful
2) Policies which are continuous or at least low friction with that of the target politician.
3) Parabolic salience where both very high and very low salience are capable of overcoming hurdles
4) Politicians who seek to utilise DIs irrespective of what their purpose is.

Factors two and four are very similar to the first factor. A more detailed exposition demonstrates the subtleties.

Firstly, just over half the cases which demonstrated successful policy-impact fell into the category of being 'pre-determined destiny' cases, whilst the two solutions which reflected the can-kicking principle (STATE LED*PARTISAN and POLICY HOMOGENEITY*PARTISAN) had coverage of 0.293 and 0.202 respectively. I could simply conclude this section by reiterating the mechanics behind these two principles but their crossover areas and their commonness as an explanation speaks to a more useful insight. Put in a simple axiom: *policy-impact in these cases only happened because the target politician wanted it to.* These cases form the majority of cases. Thus, whilst not forming a necessary condition which can explain policy-impact, this is still the most important explanation.

In the majority of cases there was no persuasion or 'bringing round' of a politician, and the ability of participants to influence the policy which affects them was entirely under the control of the politician. At best the participants of a DI could deliberate on a narrow range of possible topics pre-selected and 'seeded' by the target politician, with the result being a high likelihood of policy homogeneity. At worst a DI was either engineered from the grounds up to legitimise a pre-determined policy outcome, or was only given a position of superficial authority when a politician didn't want to deal with a certain policy themselves. In other words, the kind of politician to instigate a DI is the kind of politician to respond to their recommendations. Likewise, the data doesn't show that DIs are particularly able to impact the policies of politicians not already significantly invested or 'sold' on the idea of a DI. Policy-impact in the majority of cases was because of a context of 'sold' politicians prior to the DI rather than any sort of influence which developed during or after a DI.

This is not the sign of a healthy ecology of DIs conducted to deepen democracy. In the final sub-chapter to the analysis, I demonstrated that the key-determinants of policy-impact were associated with excessive political control of a DI's proceedings likely to produce a predictable final result, policy makers cherry-picking their preferred policy recommendations and scrapping others, and otherwise evidence that a DI was only ever conducted to legitimise elite policy makers rather than deepening democracy. This constitutes good evidence that the majority of the cases within the set of 'successful' policy-impact could be categorised as examples of political 'window-shopping' (Papadopoulos and Warin, 2007, pp459) or as examples of politicians having effectively 'colonised' (Habermas, 1987 ; Blaug, 2002) DIs. In fact, it reflects the pre-existing form of representative politics and our current form of democracy. In a representative democracy, politicians are elected to enact policy on behalf of the electorate. Their assigning to office is legitimised by the citizenry, and thus their decisions are too. Therefore we already live in a world where politicians pre-determine policy and the public's input is minimal.

This unfortunate truth should be our main takeaway here. However, valuable insights can still be gleaned. Acting as something of a silver-lining, at least with the pre-determined cases the participants were allowed the opportunity to actually legitimise and provide ascent to any such policy themselves. Furthermore, referring to the can-kicking principle as such may be using too cynical a name. Whilst it is not ideal that a politician gets to choose when and why a DI is used, the fact remains that there definitively were instances where participants *do* get to define political problems, *do* get to design policy alternatives, and *do* see the ultimate implementation of their ideas. As such this echoes the position of an increasing number of researchers in the field that, as participatory practitioners, we ought to be concerned about implementation as a parallel to policy-impact since it constitutes the 'final "fate" of citizen ideas' (Vrydagh, 2022, pp69).

Secondly, though not represented by any conjunction of conditions, it was nevertheless demonstrated in the Formal Theory Evaluation stage that certain intuitive combinations of conditions were well-represented as causally significant. Policy homogeneity when intersected with either the presence of left-wing politicians or a non-partisan policy area formed a complex condition for successful policy-impact. The complimentary pairing of policy homogeneity and of left-wing politicians was outlined in the theoretical framework where it was explained that DIs have a tendency to produce progressive or socially egalitarian policy recommendations which will see little objection from similarly-minded left-wing politicians. So too does this logic apply to the combination with non-partisan policies. Such policies are likely to have a high degree of political support across the political spectrum and throughout the transmission from unempowered spaces to empowered spaces. Or, as with left-wing politicians, the causally relevant factor here is the lack of objections and institutional friction to the policy. In other words policy-impact seems to be facilitated by the production of popular or politically-feasible policies which any and all politicians or policy makers would be motivated to respond to. Echoing the concerns running through this conclusion, this principle does not seem in-line with the goals of deepening democracy since it still signifies that policy-impact is dependant on politicians and their pre-formed policy preferences than the force of a DI's policy recommendation.

Thirdly came the influence of what I coined 'parabolic salience'. The operating principle has been explained multiple times in the thesis already but the long and short is that politicians tend to respond best to highly salient policies for the electorate, but also to policies of low salience where potential obstacles to policy-impact are proportionately low. Parabolic salience is interesting for two main reasons. Firstly, parabolic salience contradicts some of the rational traps democratic researchers may fall into when considering the mechanisms of policy-impact. Politicians ought to rationally favour policies which are cheap, easy to implement, and liable to win or maintain votes. In other words, policies which maximise utility relative to their costs. This desire to win or maintain votes means that a rational politician ought to align their policy priorities with policy areas of highest salience for the voting public, and thus be more amenable to complimentary policy recommendations from DIs. Likewise a rational politician ought to put policies of low salience at the bottom of their list of priorities, and thus be less open to policy-impact from DIs. This general expectation seems so intuitive as to have received little critical evaluation of what is ostensibly common sense, but does occasionally crop up within existing literature concerning policy impact – e.g see Moat et al's (2003) work on linking local knowledge and context together with policy attractiveness.

However this thesis has demonstrated that *low* salience also possesses policy-impacting capabilities. Let's reiterate that expectation of rational political behaviour from before: Politicians ought to rationally favour policies which are cheap, easy to implement, and liable to win or maintain votes. Whilst policies of low salience are unlikely to win or maintain votes, they do seem to be cheap and easy to implement at least within a participatory context. Whilst low salience may very well mean low priority, it also equally spells low commitment for a politician. Further, low priority is only a problem when such a policy must compete with policies of greater perceived priority. Within a participatory context, it was common to see such policy suggestions stand alone.

Secondly, parabolic salience seems to be immune to other conditions which would ordinarily negatively impact policy-impacting capabilities. For instance, in the empirics it was shown that lacking politicians who ought to be ideologically invested in public participation seemed to have no ill effect. This suggests that parabolic salience operates on an entirely separate rule set to the rest of the conditions tested within this thesis. We can use this to derive lessons for future DIs.

So what lessons can be drawn from these two interesting points? Firstly, if successful policy-impact stems from the marriage between low salience and low commitment, then future DIs dealing with issues of low salience should be mindful to not produce policy recommendations which push for actions beyond those requiring low commitment. In other words, if what a DI pushes for is of low salience, then they shouldn't recommend radical policy changes. This seems to be just common sense but I propose that this axiom implies a more elegant lesson. If a low salience policy is unlikely to gain or maintain votes, then its low salience means that it is unlikely to *lose* votes either. Therefore if a DI is seeking to reach out to a particularly cautious politician or one who favours gradual incremental reform rather than sweeping policy change, then emphasising low-stakes policy recommendations is likely to lead to policy-impact. Secondly, if parabolic low salience is immune to the negative effects bought on by other conditions, then a DI finding themselves in non-ideal circumstances as to its conditions or attributes, they may well find success by emphasising the principle of 'low salience = low political commitment = low political risks' to the target politician.

Lastly one of the more curious conjunctions of conditions was the intersection between the presence of left-wing politicians and a lack of state leadership. State leadership was demonstrated to be a highly useful attribute for a DI to have, despite not quite forming a necessary condition by itself. Similarly, one of the important recurring themes through this thesis has been the importance of politicians willing to reach out and facilitate the success of DIs when DIs are unable to do so themselves. This general principle has strong echoes of the theoretical expectations of state leadership as a means of facilitating policy-impact. So when state leadership is absent, it makes logical sense that there must be another condition which reflects a close affinity to sympathetic politicians. Left-wing politicians can be reliably classified as being just such a source of sympathy owing to their ideological inclinations. Thus, when a DI is lacking in any sort of conditions which usually lead to policy-impact, left-wing politicians can 'activate' the facilitatory process, and provide a pathway to policy-impact. For instance, the case of the Nanodialogues Public Engagement on Nanotechnology UK (NPEN) had few attributes that we would ordinarily expect to facilitate policy-impact. However, the ideological inclinations of the target politicians meant that engaging with the public via the NPEN DI was considered the top priority. In other words, politicians engaged with the DI not because of what the DI *had* but because of what the DI *was* in the eyes of progressives concerned with democratic outreach. The DI was in such a favourable position that the question wasn't whether it would impact policy, but rather what would have to happen for it to *not* impact policy.

The second research question asks for the negation of the first question: what conditions determine unsuccessful policy-impact?

It's worth reiterating again that the nature of QCA and the still-acceptable but not ideal analysis for the negation means we need to pick our lessons here cautiously. Causality in QCA is not symmetrical and so we ought not expect that the conditions for unsuccessful policy-impact are simply the inverse of the successful conditions, and ideally we'd learn something completely different about policy-impact by looking at the negation. At this stage I think it's clear that we've identified two elements which are likely toxic to any DI, and should be avoided in the future.

It seems almost too obvious to say, but the analysis has demonstrated that a DI which is effectively dead upon arrival stands no chance of being resuscitated irrespective of how many other conditions associated with successful policy-impact are present. If the DI has no means to achieving a link with a politician, has zero basis for attracting political attention in the first place, or the target politician is powerless to respond to any policy recommendations, then the DI will fail at any form of policy-impact. Remember: this dataset contained cases which showed each of these ills – this is not stated without foundation.

Secondly, though only one complex intersection of conditions were found to lead to unsuccessful policy-impact, even this contributes to the lessons of parabolic salience. Whilst parabolic salience suggests a high likelihood of policy-impact at the two extremes of salience, we cannot ignore the policy-impact dead-zone somewhere in the middle.

It was previously observed and discussed that the influence of other conditions had little effect on the policy-impacting capabilities of parabolic salience. This principle seems to extend into the middling salience dead-zone where no other conditions were sufficient to changes its fortune. We would have expected the other conditions to provide momentum to overcome the hurdle of the dead-zone. As the empirics showed during the Formal Theory Evaluation, a lack of partisan policies meant that policies stuck in the salience dead-zone were unable to take advantage of the can-kicking principle afford by invested politicians. Conversely, if a policy *is* partisan then the impetus to kick the can will exist on some level, but if the salience is too low then this impetus is comparatively weak, and therefore probably will not happen at all.

All this speaks to bleak news for any DI which is dealing with a policy area that falls into this dead-zone of salience. My analysis shows that there is little remedy to ensure successful policy-impact without some kind of modification to the perceived salience of an issue. That being said, lessons from parabolic salience's influence on *successful* policy-impact may also apply here. If a DI in unable to increase the perceived salience of their issue, then they might benefit from producing policy recommendations which are of low political risk or effort for a politician to respond to.

(9.3) What Does This Mean About Public Participation, and What Lessons Can We Draw?: Answering Research Questions 3&4

The third and fourth research questions might pose different queries, but the answers to one will feed into the other. Let's answer both questions simultaneously.

Throughout this thesis I have emphasised that certain elements to the research should be taken at face-value and any normative aspersions should be put aside for a moment. This is when we pick these aspersions back up. The prevailing narrative through this thesis, and corroborated by the analysis in Chapter 8, has been that DIs are still very much under the control and desires of target politicians, and often it was the political context which determined policy-impact rather than strategy. It was often easy to tell which DIs would be successful merely by looking at who instigated and arranged it in the first place. Our normative perspectives here dictate what lessons we should be drawing.

Cynics might say that this high degree of politician control means that DIs are often simply legitimising efforts which bolster the position of representative politicians and make no progress in ameliorating the democratic malaise. They might point to the heavy-handed seeding of deliberation topics by local councils who have already declared political responses, or to the ICA's success in mucking out the Irish Government's problem with abortion who were soon then abandoned on issues less pressing for politicians. The analysis shows that these criticisms do apply in many of the successful DI cases. Unfortunately, it seems bizarre to argue that the configurations which reflect successful policy-impact are indicative of earnest attempts at deepening democracy.

However, we might point to a more optimistic future, if not an ideal now, by pointing out a clue in the term 'democratic innovations'. The fact of the matter is that democratic innovations are going to be brand new to many politicians and, by default, are only going to be successful with politicians who are already familiar with their proceedings and aware of their successes. At this early stage it is only reasonable to expect that a DI capable of forming even the weakest of bonds with politicians (let alone policy-impact) is one which is enjoying close links to politicians already familiar with the concept of a DI. I take this latter position. One of the striking things about reading the cases from the Participedia dataset was how often DIs were an experiment, and that the policy makers simply had no idea how to respond to their recommendations. What was readily apparent was that no case seemed to show that policy makers found the experiment to have been a failure. At this stage of the thesis I don't really see much of a public participatory environment – I see more of a political world learning what public participation is. Nothing will change about overt politician influence until DIs are seen as just another unavoidable part of the democratic process.

At this point we can begin to discuss some of the expectations outlined in the chapter justifying a focus on just British and Irish cases. This chapter explained that, despite some promising constitutional reforms, the British political system is highly centralised and, unlike Ireland, lacks both a culture of deliberation and the apparatus to do so at the government level. From this, there were two expectations:

1) Irish cases being more successful than British cases at changing policy at the central government level.

2) That we see greatest deliberation at the periphery of British politics owing to the 'institutional macular degeneration' (Judge, 2006, pp367) of reform.

The dataset was not randomly selected, and so general observations about the distributions of outcome should be taken with a grain of salt, but it is clear just from the dataset that both these expectations hold up. The majority of DIs from Ireland show substantial, and frequently fully-in, policy impact when targeting central government, whilst the same cannot be said about similar British attempts to do the same such as the Citizen's Assembly on Brexit. Further, the dataset is full of excellent examples of British DIs conducted at the periphery of politics. These include the numerous climate assemblies conducted by local government, such as the Camden Council's Citizens' Assembly on the Climate Crisis. However, we also see that these generalities are not fixed laws. The ICAs covering referendums or fixed term Parliaments failed to yield any substantial policy impact despite the centrality of the DI. Further, whilst still not yielding complete 'perfect' policy impact, the Climate Assembly UK (CAUK) still led to some impact on policy discussion, and that cannot be ignored.

However, these inconsistencies aside, a look at the key findings does suggest the importance of a less centralised central government. Chief amongst which is the causal configuration of STATE LED * PARTISAN, where we see the can-kicking principle in action. It seems almost redundant to say, but if there is no target DI, then a politician will never kick it the can. Since Britain lacks any sort of go-to state-sanctioned DI with bi-partisan support, a BCA rather than an ICA so to speak, then it cannot utilise the can-kicking principle to the same degree. It is not difficult to suppose that the Citizens' Assembly on Brexit, with its highly partisan and politically toxic policy area, would have been more successful had it been situated amongst constitutional reforms allowing DIs to impact central government. Given the political climate at the time, it seems reasonable to suppose that a politician would be all too pleased to kick the can of responsibility regarding Brexit to a publicly respected and effective DI in much the same way as the Irish government handled the question of abortion's legality.

QCA is a constructivist approach and only seeks to make sense of cases within a specific context. It does not necessarily intend to produce results which are generalisable outside of this context. However, we can still make cautious comment on other political systems abroad so long as we keep this limit in mind. We would expect these findings to be relevant for any country with similar levels of constitutional reform allowing deliberation in the policy creation system. For instance, whilst the UK lacks such reforms at the central level, and instead sees them primarily at the periphery, this is not an unusual state of affairs globally. Georgia has a hybrid and highly centralised system but one which regularly uses DIs at the local government level (Kakhishvili, 2022), as does Nigeria. We can also cautiously say that less centralised systems are more likely to see greater deliberative policy impact. Having said that, reform alone is not a silver bullet. In the wake of the Yellow Vests protests, the French government created the Citizens Convention for Climate (CCC) to place 'citizens' voices at the centre of national conversations on climate policy' (Courant (Deliberative Democracy Digest), 2021). This ought to have been the perfect time for the Macron government to kick the can of this contentious issue to the people. Indeed, this was what initially appeared to be happening. However, rather than seeing substantial policy impact, the CCC's 'recommendations were eliminated or watered down' (ibid) and a required referendum was flatly shelved. France is an excellent reminder that some reform and some de-centralisation of government is not sufficient unless it reaches the sort of threshold attained by Ireland.

I think this is a good point from which to answer question 4. What can we do to improve public participation in the future? I think it's obvious that familiarity with DIs needs to be increased amongst politicians. Only by being properly understood and integrated into the policy-creation process will DIs be able to exercise their own authority and, as it were, 'throw their weight around' without having to rely on friendly or scheming politicians to do all the work. So, on this front I have two recommendations. The first is that we need to push for constitutional reform in rigid Westminster political systems including in the UK. As it stands, participatory policy impact is identifiably achievable at the periphery of politics, but in the UK struggles to do similarly at the central level. Whilst this may seem a lofty goal, it is important to remember that Ireland's use of DIs at this level kicked off with pressure from academics whose open discussion of participatory reforms entered into the mainstream (Courant, 2021). My second recommendation would be to further the good work already been done by democratic theorists by encouraging the use of DIs and of their experimental use in policy creation. I see this as having two effects. Firstly, obviously, it should lead to a greater use of DIs. Secondly, it should normalise the suggestion within representative democracy culture that participatory democracy is an asset that can be used and indeed should be used.

However, familiarity with DIs is one thing, whilst accountability to their recommendations is another. If DIs are to ameliorate the crises in democracy, then they must eventually lose the tag line as being a product of innovation and experimentation as I just recommended, and become a core part in governance as a general norm. The only way I see to formalise the use of DIs is to hold politicians accountable when they had the opportunity to with DIs but opted not to. For instance, in Gdansk, Poland the local government has stated that any policy recommendation from a DI which achieves more than 80% public approval will be implemented (Carson and Gerwin, 2018). This is a positive step since it builds a road for normalising DIs as a means of creating policy. However, accountability is still very low here since the promise has not been set into law and so only binds the decisions of politicians if they wish to be bound. This principle would be considered utterly tyrannical if applied to representative democracy. Imagine a government which can only be changed if 80% of the population agrees and only if the government wants to leave?

I don't offer up any comment as to whether this shift towards the normal use of DIs should be slow and reformed based or more radical. However, what should be obvious is that DIs do work, and do produce useful policy that surprises even those cynical to the involvement. It is my personal belief that the use of DIs can only go up because of this and that accountability is a demand which naturally grows in tandem. The future is bright for DIs. At the time of writing there is a Citizens' Assembly on tackling climate change within my university city of Southampton, which I believe to be the first. From what I have seen so far, I predict significant levels of policy-impact and therefore, hopefully, a good reason to adopt more in the future.

(9.4) Discussion of Limits

I think it wise to split the discussion of limitations into two sections. The first should consist of a critical overview of the thesis and its foundations, whilst the second should focus specifically on the analysis and how this impacted upon the conclusions.

This thesis looked at the policy impact of public participation. It may therefore appear redundant to say that this research will not examine DIs which don't target politicians, nor will it study policy-impact from non-participatory sources. However, the political sphere is multi-faceted, and these are important limitations to discuss. Certainly, forms of participation such as street protests will seek to impact the policy preferences of actors other than politicians or make use of avenues other than politicians sitting in Parliament. Likewise, politicians may have their policies impacted by non-participatory-elite actors such as the media or charities who, in turn, may have had their own policies set by a DI (Vliegenthart et al, 2016; Strömbäck, 2008; Walgrave et al, 2008; Walgrave and Vliegenthart, 2012). This thesis also did not consider the prospect that a DI which did not seek to impact policy but aimed for, say, participant education, did in fact communicate political problems and did directly see policy impact.

The point here is that the assumptive model of the research does not – and cannot – accommodate every nuance in the complicated and highly-interwoven world of politicians and policy-impacting actors. However exactly because of this high degree of interwovenness, the results of this research will be of relevance to any researcher working within this or adjacent fields. It's just that they should limit their expectations somewhat. For instance, this research would not be directly relevant for a researcher concerned with when and why politicians are most open to influence from back-benchers and policy entrepreneurs. However, it would be relevant for understanding how those actors developed their own policy in the first place. Moreover, I hope to have demonstrated that a QCA-based approach to understanding policy-impact is highly effective and straightforward. The theoretical frameworks, their conceptualisations, and their evaluations are highly applicable to any researcher within policy-impact or democratic innovations -- even if my contribution is to be a springboard for critical research which contradicts my conclusions.

Looking at the results we should be cautious about what it is that we are actually seeing at this concluding stage. QCA is a process best suited for building theory rather than testing it. The aspects of Formal Theory Evaluation conducted at the end of the analysis deductively test hypotheses in the form of Boolean intersections of conditions, rather than the individual conditions themselves. In other words, there was no empirical theory testing for the hypothesis that, say, policy homogeneity *caused* successful policy-impact.

The results found in this analysis have been highly useful in providing insights into the nature of policy-impact from DIs, and this should not be ignored. Just because we cannot hammer the academic world with definitive claims about policy-impact derived through quantitative analysis does not mean that we cannot answer the research questions posed at the beginning of this thesis.

This caveat of optimistic caution about any conclusions brings me to the elephant in the room: particular caution ought to be applied for the lessons drawn about when policy-impact is unsuccessful. The Participedia dataset suffers from publication bias which meant that the number of useful unsuccessful cases was low. The small number of cases which formed the Boolean intersection for unsuccessful policy-impact do not provide much opportunity for reiterative reinterpretation of the cases' proceedings. Nonetheless, the skew of policy-impact was within the 80% limits prescribed by standard theoretical practice, I was honest and critical about the coding of cases as I saw them, and so the analytical process was sound enough not to require discarding results. What is more the findings from the Formal Theory Evaluation make theoretical sense and provide empirically-robust credence to the results.

Chapter 10: References

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Appendix

(A.1) Table Showing Case ID, Full Case Name, and the Coding for each Condition Along With the Outcome

Case ID	Case	STATE LED	CSO	POLICY HOMOGENITY	LEFT-WING POLITICIANS	SALIENT	PARTISAN	POLICY
1	Climate Assembly UK	1	1	1	0	1	0	0.9
2	UK Stem Cell Dialogue	0.67	0.63	0.67	1	1	1	0.9
3	UK Citizens' Jury on Air Quality	1	1	0	1	1	0	0.6
4	Irish Constitutional Convention (2012-2014)	1	0	0	0.51	1	1	1
5	The ICA (Eighth Amendment)	1	0	0.67	0.51	1	1	1
6	The ICA (Ageing Population)	1	0	1	0.51	1	0	0.6
7	The ICA (Climate Change	1	0	1	0.51	1	1	0.6
8	The ICA (Referendums)	1	0	0	0.51	0	0	0.4
9	The ICA (Fixed-term Parliaments)	1	0	0	0.51	0	0	0.4
10	The ICA (Gender Equality)	1	0	0.67	0.51	0	1	0.4
11	Leap Seconds Public Dialogue on Time Changes in the UK	0.67	0	0	0	0	0	1
12	POWER2010	0.67	0.875	0	0	1	0	0
13	Coronavirus (COVID-19): framework for decision making	1	0	0.67	1	0	1	0.9
14	UK Public Dialogue on Geoengineering	0.67	1	0	0	0	1	1
15	Public Perceptions of	1	0	0	1	0	1	0.9

Case ID	Case	STATE LED	CSO	POLICY HOMOGENITY	LEFT-WING POLITICIANS	SALIENT	PARTISAN	POLICY
	Industrial Biotechnology							
16	Public Dialogue on Data Openness, Data Re-use, and Data Management	0.67	0	1	0	1	1	0.9
17	Space Weather Dialogue	0.67	0	0	0	0	0	0.9
18	Camden Council's Citizens' Assembly on the Climate Crisis	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
19	Public Dialogue on Significant Water Management Issues in the UK	0.67	0	0	0	0	0	0.4
20	Oxford Citizens Assembly on Climate Change	1	0	1	1	1	0	1
21	Review of the Managing Radioactive Waste Safely (MRWS) Siting Process	1	0	0.67	0	1	1	0.6
22	Leeds Climate Change Citizens' Jury	1	0.75	1	1	1	0	1
23	Patient and Public Views on the Health Research and Clinical Trials Approval Process	0.67	0.63	0.67	0	1	0	0.9
24	Citizens' Inquiry into the Forensic Use of DNA and the National DNA Database	0	0.63	0	1	1	1	0.9

Case ID	Case	STATE LED	CSO	POLICY HOMOGENITY	LEFT-WING POLITICIANS	SALIENT	PARTISAN	POLICY
25	Play England - Street Play Project	0	1	0	0	0	0	0.9
26	Equally Well' Participatory Budgeting in Govanhill, Glasgow 2008-2012	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
27	Citizens' Assembly on Brexit	0	1	0.67	0	1	1	0.6
28	Sheffield Citizens' Assembly on Devolution	0	1	0	0	1	1	0.6
29	Adur & Worthing Climate Assembly	1	1	1	0	1	0	1
30	Citizens' Assembly of Scotland	1	0.875	0.67	1	1	0	0.6
31	Debating UK Education Reform: Model Westminster Event 2014	0	1	1	0	1	0	0.4
32	Nanodialogues Public Engagement on Nanotechnology (UK)	0	1	1	1	1	0	1
33	The UK Citizens' Biometric Council	0	1	0	0	1	1	0
34	Camden Health and Care Citizens' Assembly	1	0.875	0	1	0	0	0
35	Brighton & Hove climate assembly	1	0.63	1	1	1	0	1

Table 29 - Table showing each case ID, the case name, and the coding for the conditions and the outcome

(A.2) Demonstration of How a Case was Coded

The purpose of this section is to demonstrate how and why a condition was scored a certain way in a given case. This scoring process is all about identifying an attribute, or set of attributes, then using political theory and case knowledge to make a judgment as to what extent these attributes are reflected in a case.

The political theory in this instance is the theoretical framework in Chapter 4. This chapter took each causal condition and explained how and why it would influence the policy impact. Accordingly, this could be translated into a description of what each condition would look like in a maximal 'perfect' sense and a minimal 'borderline' sense. Put loosely, this formed a description by which we can say that a condition was present, and to what degree.

Chapter 7 then began (in 7.1) with a conversion of these description into useful qualitative anchors where each anchor revolved around a point where the explanative worth of a condition changed based on its changing extent. For instance, the theoretical framework supposes that CSOs can use their influence to impact policy when they are present on the organising committee of a DI, and that this influence is maximised when they form the majority of committee members. Likewise their influence was theorised to be much lower when they form a minority of committee members, but their influence was still present and active – just to a lesser degree. Here, there are five clear qualitative anchors which describe the changing influence of CSOs:

1) Evidence that CSOs were completed absent from a DI organising committee
2) Evidence that CSOs were present but in the minority
3) Evidence that CSOs were present equally proportionate to non-CSOs.
4) Evidence that CSOs formed the majority of the organising committee
5) Evidence that CSOs completely comprised the organising committee

As can be seen, these anchors describe the presence of a condition and its extent. Fuzzy-set QCA would assign anchor 1 above as 'Fully Out' of the condition of CSO, anchor 5 as 'Fully In', and anchor 2 as the crossover threshold. Anchors 2, 3, and 4 would then describe degrees of membership of the condition. Anchor 2 describes circumstances where the condition of CSO is more in than out, anchor 3 describes the circumstances where the condition is even more in than out, and so on. Likewise, if the theoretical framework supposed that CSOs influence policy impact by simply being present in a DI organising committee, then we would use crisp-set QCA and there would be two qualitative anchors:

1) No evidence of CSO being present
2) Evidence of CSOs being present

Fuzzy-set QCA ascribes numerical scores between 0 and 1 to each qualitative anchor, and specifies anything to be more in than out of the condition set to be coded anything above 0.5. The gap between scores isn't necessarily proportional or linear. It depends on the theoretical 'space' between each qualitative anchor according to the theoretical framework. Likewise, crisp-set QCA simply assigns a score of 0 or 1 depending on whether evidence exists that a condition is present in the case

The case chosen to demonstrate the coding process is that of Climate Assembly UK – or CAUK. This is a good case to demonstrate the coding principal because it is well-known to democratic innovation researchers and uses a mix of fuzzy-set and crisp-set coding conditions. Again, the theoretical framework used for assessing this case is found in Chapter 4 and the discussion of modifying the framework into qualitative anchors along with numerical scores is found in Chapter 7.1. Coding using qualitative anchors is elegant and simple. However, for the sake of clarity and credibility, I will go into particular detail when coding for the first condition as a real-world example. The sources of information are the Participedia Project and official DI reports. For some conditions, largely those which require little interpretation, it will be sufficient to consult just Participedia in order to plausibly and robustly code. Other conditions require more examination and case knowledge in which case both Participedia and the reports will be consulted.

<u>Coding for State Leadership</u>

The theoretical framework here supposes that state leadership and influence is likely to make a DI have greater potential for policy impact. However, state leadership and influence exists in degrees, and these degrees are likely to be important. Three qualitative anchors were chosen:

- Fully Out) "Initiative was purely grassroots and the state had no hand in planning or implementing the initiative"
- More in than Out) "Initiative came via a public body with links and/or funding to government body"
- Fully in) "Initiative came straight from government (either local or national) or Parliament"

In layman's terms, we will be offering up these anchors to CAUK to see which best describes the extent of state leadership. Chapter 7.1 explains that there is a significant normative gap between More in than Out and Fully In wherein the latter is disproportionately more ideal. Therefore it makes sense to ascribe More in than Out a score closer to the threshold than to the 1 of Fully In. Once we see which anchor best reflects, we will then use this insight to ascribe it a score accordingly.

Immediately, it is obvious that CAUK is Fully In the condition of state leadership. For this to be the case, CAUK would need to come straight from government or Parliament, and this is exactly what we see. The Participedia case details:

'In May 2019, the UK Parliament declared an environment and climate emergency, which paved the way for the government to pass a law in June 2019, committing the UK to reach net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Six Select Committees of the House of Commons (Business Energy and Industrial Strategy; Environmental Audit; Housing, Communities and Local Government; Science and Technology; Transport; and Treasury) commissioned a citizens' assembly to inform how the UK can reach that target.' (Climate Assembly UK (Participedia), 2020).

Such unambiguous language hardly needs greater investigation, but the official evaluator report goes on:

'CAUK is the first nationwide CA in the UK, the first national climate assembly in the UK, and the second CA to be commissioned by House of Commons select committees following the Citizens' Assembly on Social Care in 2018' (Elstub et al, 2021, pp13).

Whilst the official report itself describes:

'Sign off on the assembly's plans rested with Parliament, including House of Commons select committee staff and officials from the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST). These individuals have considerable experience of putting together balanced panels and evidence for Members of Parliament and select committees.' (Climate Assembly UK, 2020, pp51)

And

'Parliamentary officials were also able to input to all aspects of the assembly's plans at earlier stages in their development.' (ibid)

These excerpts need little interpretation. From them we know plainly that the DI was commissioned straight from Parliament, that the execution of the DI was ran past Parliament first to gain its approval, and that Parliament was able to determine large aspects of the DI's overall nature. It is clearly an example of a DI that was state led and unambiguously Fully In the condition at that. Therefore, we give it the coding score of 1.

Coding for the Presence of CSOs

The coding scheme in Chapter 7.1 provides the following coding scheme to accurately capture the influence of CSOs acting in a DI's organizing committee on policy impact:

- Full Out) "Was there zero CSO control of the DI?"
- More In than Out) "Did CSOs form a minority of control?"
- Even more In than Out) "Was there no clear majority of CSOs in control, or was their control equal to non-CSOs?" 120
- Significantly more In than Out) "Was there majority CSO control?"
- Fully In) "Was there full CSO control?"

Much like coding for the condition of state leadership, this assessment is quite simple and requires little to no interpretation. We simply need to establish whether CSOs were present in CAUK's organizing committee and the overall proportion if so. The Participedia entry describes the organizing of the CAUK: 'Its activities were run by Involve, the Sortition Foundation, and mySociety. Involve was the lead organizer and was responsible for ensuring the quality of the process. They worked on the assembly design (structure, timings, accessibility) and provided the facilitation team. Involve was also the main point of contact for assembly members. For their part, the Sortition Foundation was responsible for recruiting the participants, while mySociety created the assembly website and branding.' (Climate Assembly UK (Participedia), 2020).

As can be seen from this short extract, the organisation of CAUK was solely down to Involve, the Sortition Foundation, and mySociety – all examples of CSOs. Owing to the utility of this extract, there isn't a plausible reason to look beyond Participedia and into official reports in order to glean any more information. It is already clear that there was full CSO control, and so again this condition receives a coding score of 1.

Coding for Policy Homogeneity

The theoretical framework in chapter 7.1 behind this condition supposes that it comes in two primary forms. The first supposes that significant overlap between the policy preferences of the DI and policy makers will make policy impact more likely. The second supposes that policy makers pre-determining the destiny of a DI will make policy impact all but guaranteed. Thus there are three qualitative anchors here:

- Full Out) "Did the target politician demonstrate zero ownership or interest in the policy recommendations or, alternatively, did they expressly disapprove of it?"
- More In than Out) "Was there some indication that the policy recommendations aligned with the policy preferences of the target politician?"

● Fully In) "Were the broad details of the policy, including the policy topic itself, pre-determined, and the public only offered the chance to comment or contribute to smaller details?"

In order to at least code for More in than Out, it is necessary to find some indication that the CAUK's policy recommendations broadly line up with the preferences of relevant lawmakers. The Participedia entry does somewhat tenuously hint towards this being the case. It describes how upon receiving the details of the CAUK's policy recommendations the 'Government invited the Expert Leads to give briefings to government officials' Climate Assembly UK (Participedia), 2020) which is something only likely to happen when policy homogeneity is present. At the very least this hints toward the two policy sets being considered as compatible by the Government.

However, the official evaluator report goes one further and provides a robust justification for coding this condition as Fully In with a score of 1. It explains in its background to the CAUK that: 'Parliament commissioned Involve to organise CAUK and provided them with a list of topic areas, agenda-setting questions, and areas to prioritise and deprioritise, which collectively covered the six select committee's interests on climate change and Net Zero' (Elstub et al, 2021, pp17). Here, we can see that the CAUK fulfils all the requirements laid out in the Fully In qualitative anchor. The broad details such as topics of discussion and areas of most and least concern were pre-determined, and agenda-setting questions were provided to keep discussion on a highly-curated track. It is unlikely under these circumstances that the participants would have been able to recommend anything notably radical or unexpected, and this appears to be by design. This is reflected by a general sense from many of the participants that the recommendations lacked ambition (ibid, pp83).

Coding for the Presence of Left-Wing Politicians

As Chapter 7.1 explains, coding for the ideological position of the target politicians ought to be a simple endeavour covered by a simple crisp-set coding metric. If the target politicians are part of a left-wing party then they intuitively ought to be coded as Fully In and given a score of 1. Likewise, if they are not part of a left-wing party, then they ought to be coded as Fully Out and given a score of 0. After all, if they aren't a member of a left-wing party, then they don't reflect the causal mechanism as outlined in the theoretical framework of Chapter 4.

However, there do exist right-wing political parties like Fine Gael in Ireland who do reflect a modicum of the ideals which make a left-wing party left-wing, such as distinct support for deepening democracy and DIs. To summarise the discussion found in Chapter 7.1: to code as purely crisp-set would be to either lose this important contextual contribution or to make the incoherent choice to code a right-wing party as left-wing. This provides the justification for a fuzzy-set coding scheme with three qualitative anchors:

- ● Fully Out) “Right wing”
- ● More In than Out) “Party which shows a concern for post-materialist values”
- ● Fully In) “Left-wing party”

Parties which gravitate around the middle qualitative anchor should be coded as close to the conceptual crossover point as possible. This preserves the distinction between parties which are left-wing and those which are not, as far as is reasonably practicable, whilst still allowing parties with post-materialist values to contribute towards the causal influence of left-wing politicians. The CAUK targeted politicians in Parliament and Government. The party in government at the time, and the one with a plurality in Parliament, was the right-wing Conservative Party. The consideration now is whether the Conservative Party could plausibly be considered to possess sufficient post-materialist values to be best represented by the middle qualitative anchor, or whether they ought to be considered Fully Out of the condition.

Neither the Participedia entry, nor any of the official reports, suggest the Conservative Party had any ideological predilections towards DIs in the manner of Fine Gael. In fact, the official reports suggest the opposite, and make frequent reference to a sense of disinterest or even suspicion towards the CAUK. For instance, it was observed that some of the politician interviewed in relation to the project were concerned the CAUK and DIs in general undermined the authority of Parliament (ibid). To this end we can reject the possibility of the Conservative Party being anything other than evidence to code the condition as Fully Out and score it as 0.

Coding for Salience

Generally speaking, it is unusual for DI case authors to explicitly comment on the issue salience. This is likely because doing so when the topic of deliberation is of low salience will undermine the perceived importance of a DI to the reader. Because of this, this thesis advocated for a qualitative judgement as a means of coding for salience. A crisp-set metric was chosen with two qualitative anchors:

- ● Full Out) “Anything not considered in line with the ‘fully in’ qualitative anchors
- ● Full In) “Is this topic of high importance for someone with median knowledge and median opinions, and would they consider the current status-quo to be a policy problem?”

However, in the case of the CAUK, we can actually draw good evidence from the Participedia entry and the official evaluator report to make a robust assessment of the issue salience. The Participedia entry discusses how the population of participants was chosen to be representative of the wider British population as a whole. To this end ‘The selected group of citizens was reflective of the broader population in terms of age, gender, educational level, ethnicity, geography, urban/rural area, and their level of concern about climate change' (Climate Assembly UK (Participedia), 2020). This last part is crucial. The salience of the issue was proportional to how the wider population felt about the issue. The official evaluator report details that the salience of climate change was assessed by using a 2019 IPSOS MORI poll. Here, it was demonstrated that 85% of individuals polled were concerned about climate change, versus 14% who were not. This is highly compelling evidence that the average individual in the street, someone with median knowledge and median opinions, would consider the topic of CAUK's discussion to be highly salient. Therefore, the condition was coded as Fully In and scored a 1.

Coding for Partisan Policies

Similarly to the process of coding for Salient policies discussed in the previous sub-section, coding for Partisan policies is heavily dependent on researcher judgment rather than any objective markers as with, for instance, the presence of left-wing politicians. Likewise this condition also has two qualitative anchors:

- Fully Out) "Anything not considered in line with the 'fully in' qualitative anchor"

- Fully In) "The topic of discussion behind the initiative was a recognition of social, ideological, and/or ethical implications with irreconcilable differences being a consequence of all policy outcomes. A politician or party involved with such a policy would likely have their premiership defined by their involvement."

Partisan policies are those which we suppose to invoke the can-kicking principle discussed in the theoretical framework. As was explained in chapter 7.1, a Partisan policy is either politically risky for policy makers due to significant social, political, and institutional friction, and/or if something that would be perceived as grossly inappropriate if the public weren't heavily consulted.

Consider how the legalisation of abortion in Ireland, with its enormous normative and ethical dilemmas demanding soul-searching and long mental consideration, would easily be coded as Fully In of the condition. Likewise, consider how the Play England – Street Play Project, a DI looking at building playgrounds for children, would easily be considered Fully Out. When looking at the details of the CAUK, the researcher must ask themselves: did the topic split the country in half along a deep and seemingly-irreparable divide? Is the CAUK in the same category as legalising abortion, or say bringing back the death penalty?

I argue that if a researcher needs to spent more than a minute thinking whether a DI's topic is partisan, then it probably isn't. Partisan policies are self-evident and we would expect to see significant mention of the real-world controversies included in the Participedia entry and the official evaluator report. But there is none, and its conspicuous absence means we have no good grounds to code this condition as Fully-In, and so must code as Fully-Out with a score of 0.

Coding for Policy Impact

The theoretical framework for policy impact recognises that, when the target politician is in a position to implement its preferred policy, impact's ultimate and most purest form will therefore also be policy implementation, or at least attempted implementation. Such a recommendation can definitively said to have passed through all stages of the policy cycle, and implementation is the best signifier that the politician has genuinely taken the policy on board, as opposed to simply feigning interest as with 'political window-dressing' (Papadopoulos and Warin, 2007, pp459). However, it is not necessarily true to say that a DI's policy recommendation had zero policy impact in the event that it failed to be implemented. A DI's recommendation that was highly influential in policy formulation and/or selection ought still be considered significantly More in Than Out. Therefore, in order to robustly code for this condition, we need to identify the lower-most parameter of policy impact. This lower parameter must be able to differentiate between genuine intentions on behalf of a policy maker to integrate the views of a DI into policy discussions, and 'political window-dressing' wherein the policy maker's goal is to feign such intention to cloak themselves in democratic legitimacy. The latter forms the qualitative anchor just below the condition threshold.

From these principles, we derived the following coding scheme in Chapter 7.1:

- Fully Out) "No sign of politician acknowledgment, nor any sign that political recommendations were entered into policy discussions"
- More Out than In) "Political recommendations were acknowledged by politician"
- More In than Out) "Political recommendations were acknowledged by politician and were included, or will be included, however spuriously, in policy discussions"
- Significantly More In than Out) "Signs that policy recommendations formed an integral part of policy discussions"
- Fully In) "Policy recommendations became actual policy"

The Participedia entry states 'Following the report's publication, the six Select Committee Chairs wrote a letter to the Prime Minister and another to the Opposition leaders to highlight the Assembly's contribution and ask them to consider its recommendations' (Climate Assembly UK

(Participedia), 2020). As a response, the government then invited representatives from the CAUK to explain the policy recommendations to officials within the government. Without going any further, we can already identify that the minimal criteria for policy impact, as dictated by the qualitative anchors above, has been met.

The official evaluator report noted that the projected impact of the recommendations on committee members and civil servants was something of a mixed bag. One Chair was quoted as saying of the recommendations ‘I think that will be the basis for our [future] inquiry. ... it won’t be just one other piece of evidence. It will be the basis.’ (Elstub et al, 2021, pp88). Whilst another stated that there was little doubt that the recommendations would be included, but saw them more as having an agenda-setting role (ibid; pp87). However, I contend that even this more pessimistic view speaks to ability for the recommendations to dictate the manner of policy discussions. Moreover, the fact that ‘550 stakeholders and government officials have attended in-depth briefings on the Assembly’s recommendations’ Climate Assembly UK (Participedia), 2020) speaks to the strong level of consideration these recommendations were given. Such continuous consideration, something that is both financially and logistically costly no doubt, speaks to the expected role of the recommendations in policy discussions, and the need for relevant policy makers to be intimately aware of their details. At this point we can code for at least the second-highest qualitative anchor.

However, this is where the coding potential of the CAUK ends. There was no policy implementation despite there being the potential to do so. The evaluator report does offer up some explanations for this: ’Moreover, it was clear that the committees had not really considered how to deal with CAUK recommendations in advance of receiving them. In some respects CAUK also clashed with elements of the parliamentary system’ (Elstub et al, 2020, pp106). It was clear that the CAUK came up against some substantial institutional friction and, as is a common theme in this thesis, found that its power to impact policy was actually down to the desires and feelings of the target politicians rather than some quality of the recommendations or the particular DI. Nonetheless, despite not being a case that fully displays the condition, it is clear that the CAUK’s policy recommendations greatly impacted the policy discussions of stakeholders and government officials, and could arguably have not impacted them to any greater degree. Therefore I have opted for a score of 0.9 to reflect both the lack of policy implementation and the minimal capacity to show any greater impact on policy discussion.