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Chapter 27**Mediated meta-deliberation: Making sense of the Australian Citizens' Parliament***Eike Mark Rinke, Katie Knobloch, John Gastil, and Lyn Carson*

Most of the chapters in this volume look inside the Australian Citizens' Parliament (ACP) to study the practical and political challenges of deliberating together in an assembly of ordinary citizens. However, the ACP also created the possibility for a kind of deliberation that can occur only through mass communication.¹ The news coverage of the ACP had the potential to spark a *mediated deliberation*—a process whereby newspapers, online news outlets, and other media help the wider public understand and think through issues in at least a quasi-deliberative way.

In our view, projects like the ACP succeed or fail not only based on their internal quality but also depending on how they engage the larger media and, ultimately, the broader public. This essay presents a particular aspect of this larger public engagement, which we call “mediated meta-deliberation.” In simple terms, a meta-deliberation involves deliberation *about* deliberation, or how we talk about how this special kind of talk. In the context of this chapter, we focus specifically on how the media do this, hence the term *mediated meta-deliberation*.

In the sections that follow, we explain why organizers of deliberative initiatives should care about the mediated meta-deliberation that occurs regarding their activities. We then apply this concept to the ACP and present a comprehensive analysis of the quantity and character of news coverage generated by the ACP in Australian print media.

Mediated Meta-Deliberation

Deliberative democratic theory has helped give rise to discrete public engagement processes, such as the ACP, but its origins lie in a broader concern about the quality of reasoning that occurs among the larger body of citizens in larger public venues and across diffuse public spaces or “public sphere.” The normative ideal envisions public spheres as places of inclusive, reason-based, and civil exchanges of ideas aimed at discerning the value, legitimacy, and validity of various claims made in the public interest.² Robust public spheres help us understand what practices, processes, and policies best serve the collective good.

Research addressing the role that media plays in such public processes sometimes refers to itself as the study of *mediated deliberation*. Typically using content analysis to categorize and compare media coverage of events, mediated deliberation research provides a relatively new paradigm for understanding the normative implications of modern, large-scale communication systems for deliberative democracy.³

The concept of mediated deliberation has not yet been formulated in a unified fashion, and we do not have an integrated theory available that would reconcile rival conceptions of this phenomenon. For instance, some scholars focus on how mediated deliberation emerges from a “division of labor” between media outlets that complement each other in a society-wide process of deliberation,⁴ whereas others focus more on comparisons of individual media outlet’s contributions to societal deliberation (i.e., on their “internal” mediated deliberations).⁵ In this chapter, we adopt the latter approach to examine the quantity and quality of ACP coverage across the Australian print media system.

Our research constitutes a case study of *meta-deliberation* because we study how the media deliberated about a deliberative event, namely, the ACP. To render collective

judgments about the quality of ostensibly deliberative public processes and institutions, it is imperative that such meta-deliberation take place.⁶ When this process of analysis and judgment takes place through the mass media, we refer to it as *mediated* meta-deliberation. Mediated meta-deliberation fulfills an important function by conferring legitimacy onto some processes while denying it to others. In this manner, it serves an important function by subjecting political communication to critical mediated inquiry,⁷ including the fundamental question of what place deliberation should have in it.⁸

Mediated meta-deliberation can manifest in a variety of forms and through diverse communication media, and it can concern an even wider variety of political communication processes. One example is the mediated discussion of campaign rules and the conduct of political debate in television news coverage.⁹ In that example, a mediated meta-deliberation would constitute something of a self-critique, with some elements of a larger media system scrutinizing other political media from the standpoint of deliberative democracy. In the United States, media criticism programs such as *Counterspin* and even satirical offerings, like *The Daily Show*, can provide a measure of mediated meta-deliberation.¹⁰

It is just as important to scrutinize more specific deliberative events, such as the ACP. Sometimes they constitute empowered bodies,¹¹ but even when they do not, deliberative mini-publics can exert macro-level political leverage through their influence on broader public debates.¹² There are at least four potential consequences of such media coverage that suggest that inclusion in public communication should be part of the evaluation of deliberative events. Mediated meta-deliberation on such events can do at least four things:

1. Raise people's awareness of the event's outcomes (in this case, the six recommendations issued by the ACP);

2. Foster people's interest in the issues deliberated upon, as well as in participatory and deliberative politics generally;
3. Persuade people of the value of deliberation as an alternative mode of politics; and
4. Establish deliberation in the public's mind as an available standard for the assessment of political processes (irrespective of whether a media report or its particular reader deems this standard as legitimate).

Though each of these effects on individuals exposed to mediated meta-deliberation is important, their aggregation gives the mass media the power – in contrast to a discrete event like the ACP – to enact larger scale change. Raising awareness of the substantive outcomes of the event can exert direct discursive pressure on political decision-makers (e.g., “Implement the recommendations!”) or through an indirect route via a populace's heightened knowledge about or interest in the issues deliberated upon (e.g., “Do something quickly about problems A and B because of concerns X, Y, and Z”).¹³ Over time, fostering interest in participatory politics, along with persuading people of the merits of deliberation and establishing it as a viable standard for democratic politics, should contribute to a political discourse culture that constitutes a fertile ground for a more deliberative democracy.¹⁴ Taken together, these potential consequences of mediated meta-deliberation are good reasons why the organizers of deliberative events must have a media relations plan if they hope to have an impact on society and politics from the “outside.”¹⁵

Unfortunately, there exists hardly any empirical literature that systematically analyzes the mediated discourse surrounding deliberative initiatives. In a noteworthy exception, political scientist Lawrence LeDuc focused on how three major Canadian newspapers reported on the 2006 Ontario Citizens' Assembly on electoral reform.¹⁶ This

study showed that predominantly negative coverage of the Assembly, which included vilification of the whole initiative, as well as citizens' ability to engage in meaningful deliberation, undercut the perceived legitimacy of the Assembly. The study was confined to a simple summary measure of public sentiment towards the event and accompanying anecdotal evidence. Nonetheless, even this single, limited case study raises the question, Did the Australian media report on the ACP in a similar way? What else can we learn by looking at how the media covered the ACP?

Mediated Deliberation about the ACP

In our analysis of mediated meta-deliberation on the ACP, we break our findings into two parts, one concerning the volume and general topics of the coverage and the second concerning the tone and perspective in the coverage.¹⁷

The first part of our study looks at the visibility of the ACP to get a general sense of how often ACP topics, ideas, and arguments re-circulated into Australian public discourse through the mass media. Here, our question is, *Who* discussed *what* and *when*?¹⁸ In this dimension, we looked into the volume of coverage the ACP received in the media as well as the prominence of different aspects of the deliberative process (analytic, social, or decision-making) including the six final recommendations made by the ACP. We also looked at the sources used by journalists in their reports of the ACP.

In the second part of our study, we examined how ACP participants and ideas were treated in the mediated meta-deliberation on the event. Here, our question is, *How* was the ACP discussed? In this dimension, we specifically looked at the tone with which journalists reported on the ACP and how they portrayed the competence and participation of citizens.¹⁹ This analysis provides a better sense of the perspective from which media reported on the ACP and the judgment their coverage suggests about the quality or legitimacy of the event.

Our study began by collecting a broad sample of ACP coverage in printed newspapers and magazines. In doing so, we tried to collect as high a percentage as possible of all ACP coverage in Australian print media. This was done through a content analysis of articles retrieved from two comprehensive digital news archives, NewsBank and LexisNexis, covering 262 (NewsBank) and 70 (LexisNexis) daily and weekly Australian newspapers, respectively.²⁰ These include nineteen of the twenty-five most circulated newspapers in Australia, including all top ten publications.²¹

Visibility of the ACP in Australian Print Media

Our first question related to the visibility of the ACP through media coverage. How much reporting did it receive? By whom and when? And what aspects of it were discussed? Our search turned up a total of seventy-four unique published articles that made mention of the ACP.²² A total of fifty-nine print media outlets in Australia published at least one news item or opinion piece, and thirty-nine authors (journalists or not) wrote about the event. Citizens in the many scattered parts of Australia could potentially encounter a news story mentioning the ACP in their regional or local paper, or its online equivalent. The flipside of this finding is that forty-eight (or 81.4%) of these papers published only a single article referring to the ACP, and most articles took the form of short announcements that local citizens would be participating in the event rather than in-depth reporting and analysis of the ACP. After all, the median ACP news item was just 243 words long.

More notably, fifty-seven (or 77.0%) of the articles were published *before* the main Citizens' Parliament that took place in Canberra from February 6-9, 2009. Almost all of these fifty pre-Canberra articles were published in the two months preceding the February meeting. In short, there was a heavy focus on pre-coverage of the event but significantly less coverage after the event. In the period from the main meeting at Old

Parliament House in Canberra until two weeks after the event not more than four articles were published in searched publications.

Although these pre-Canberra stories included one of the longest and most in-depth reports on the ACP, written by an invited panelist and published in the *Canberra Times*, the dramatic drop in coverage from before to during/after the ACP is testament to the impact of the Black Saturday bushfires. These disastrous fires occurred in the state of Victoria at the same time as the main meeting in Canberra, and they dominated media coverage through the duration of the ACP.²³ Chapter 9 of this volume gives an account of the challenges these fires posed for event organizers, but suffice to say although the ACP participants themselves stayed focused on their task at hand—even while following the news closely during breaks in their deliberations—the media found itself unable to divide its attention and stayed focused on Victoria. This alone explains why the ACP was more present in the news before it had actually “happened” than during or after the Canberra meetings.

The brush fires drew away media attention that could have scrutinized more thoroughly the ACP process. This, in turn, could have familiarized the public with what “having a Citizens’ Parliament” actually means—a gap in understanding that would have consequences for public discussions of deliberation in Australia the following year (see Chapter 29). Procedural reporting would have helped readers understand the distinct analytic, social, and decision-making aspects of the ACP.²⁴ Not surprisingly in light of the above findings, there was not much coverage that made reference to any of these aspects. Our coding of the ACP coverage found not a single mention of its analytic process (i.e., the substance and rigor of the Canberra deliberations). Likewise, only three articles (or 4.1% of all) examined the social aspects of the Canberra deliberation (e.g., the respect or listening that occurred). The aspect that received the most print coverage

was the decision making that the ACP was supposed to enable. This received mention in six articles (or 8.2% of all). In sum, scant mediated meta-deliberation occurred with regard to the quality of the main deliberations of the ACP.

The Victoria bushfires also effectively precluded a substantive and sustained debate in the media on political issues for which the ACP could have served as a convenient peg. As we argued earlier, deliberative events have the potential to motivate media coverage that takes a step back to reflect on the state of the political system as much as on the benefits and challenges of particular deliberative initiatives. Although we did not code for this, our reading of the ACP print news coverage indicates that, in spite of external events, this happened to a limited extent, with some articles presenting the inclusive goals of deliberative politics and others referring to common criticisms of the current political system, particularly adversarial party politics.²⁵

Another desirable outcome of deliberative events is providing inroads for substantive media debate of policy issues. In the case of the ACP, citizens debated issues with a procedural focus (i.e., how Australia's political system could be strengthened to serve citizens better). To what extent were the ACP's answers, available in the condensed form of a six-item list of recommendations, present in the media? In the end, the recommendations that came from the Canberra deliberations received limited coverage. About one in four articles (28.4%, $n = 21$) made reference to at least one ACP recommendation, but only four of those were published during or after the main event in Canberra, which means that even the substantive coverage of the ACP was largely of a prospective nature. This coverage often transpired in pre-reports of the ACP that portrayed the Citizen Parliamentarian representing the newspaper's area of circulation. For example, one typical report stated that the regional representative would be presenting a proposal to change the system of voting used in Australian elections.²⁶

Figure 27.1 shows the number of items in the printed news media making reference to and/or giving explications of the top six ACP recommendations.²⁷ Perhaps counterintuitively, the ranking of items on the list did not match their salience in the media. The second-ranked recommendation (“Empower citizens to participate in politics through education”) was by far the most referenced one, though it did not receive much more explication than most others. Looking at the content of such articles, this pattern often reflects journalists’ inclinations to connect this recommendation to the participatory/civic educational nature of the ACP itself. Indeed, several references to a need for educational empowerment were made in articles published before the final ACP meeting. The second most commonly referenced and most often explicated was the fifth-ranked ACP recommendation (“Change the electoral system to Optional Preferential Voting”), a much more concrete – and possibly contentious – item on the list of proposed changes. In sum, we see a tendency to report on ACP recommendations that relate to the event itself or bear a potential for conflict.

One other angle of the visibility of the ACP concerns whose voice appears as a source in the articles. Most articles mentioning the ACP cited somebody other than the journalist (83.8%), but articles relied mostly on a single source (60.8% of all articles). The right-hand side of Figure 27.2 shows that, distinguishing between five categories of sources (participants, organizers, politicians, experts, and non-participating citizens), we find almost no range of voices in individual ACP articles; only 23.0% of articles feature sources from more than one of our categories. Put another way, there was almost no comparison or contrast of perspectives of the ACP among sources *within* individual articles.

What did the pattern look like *between* articles? Was there considerable diversity of sources cited? Figure 27.2 shows that Citizen Parliamentarians were by far the most

frequently cited group in the articles related to the ACP: Nearly two-thirds of articles (63.5%) relied on participants as sources. One in every four articles (27.0%) quoted one or more organizers. By contrast, politicians, experts, and non-ACP lay citizens played marginal roles in the mediated meta-deliberation on the event. The coverage largely revolved around those who had a direct role in the ACP itself, giving them some room to articulate their views. With the exception of one article about then Prime Minister Rudd's "Sorry Speech" that made passing reference to the ACP, citizens not involved with the ACP were not given any voice in the coverage at all.

Mediated Assessment of the ACP

Going beyond asking *what* was reported to asking *how* the ACP was represented in that reportage, we found that the overall tone of the coverage was largely positive. More than half of the articles presented a favorable picture of the ACP (54.1%); many remained neutral (37.8%), and only six articles (8.1%) presented an ambivalent view. There were no unambiguously negative reports on the event.

A sizable share of the articles (25.7%) even advocated more or less explicitly for the ACP as a process worth pursuing in the future. Most articles, however, remained silent in this regard. More notably, almost none of the articles included a prediction that the ACP would have a real impact on Australia's governing structures. (On the other hand, we found in the coverage no predictions of zero impact either.)

Finally, we looked at how the mediated deliberation represented the capabilities or intellect of ACP participants, as well as the Australian public at large. Aside from one ambivalent article,²⁸ none of the reporting made a reference to the Citizen Parliamentarians' competence. One-in-five articles (19.2%), however, referred positively to the capabilities of ordinary citizens in general to engage directly in policy-making. Only one (1.4%) portrayed Australian citizens as incapable of deliberating

about complex policy, and this came in relation to Prime Minister Gillard's 2010 plan to convene a similar event, a Citizens' Assembly, on climate change (see Chapter 29).²⁹ Overall, therefore, the coverage appeared mildly favorable toward the idea of further citizen involvement in Australian policy-making.

Putting these pieces together, we find a depiction of the ACP as a lovely but toothless tiger, a charming initiative that was kept insulated from the real world of politics it was designed to have an impact on. Several articles (21.6%) went at least far enough to support the vague real-world goal of increasing the political engagement and participation of citizens. Generally, however, meta-deliberation of the ACP shied away from pondering the worth and weight of its substantive contributions.

Conclusion

Earlier, we explained why mediated meta-deliberation is an essential component of a deliberative political system.³⁰ Our foray into mediated meta-deliberation in the case of the ACP now puts us in a better position to speculate about the four potential impacts of mediated meta-deliberation on the public and public debate.

Our first conclusion is that the scant visibility granted to the ACP probably failed to *raise awareness* of the outcomes it produced, particularly the final recommendations, simply because the event and recommendations received limited coverage. Moreover, the coverage it received was heavily skewed toward the lead-up to the Canberra meetings and was, therefore, unable to report on the final recommendations.

Our second conclusion, however, is that the coverage the ACP received had considerable potential to *stimulate interest* in inclusive politics and deliberative variants in particular. Given the positive overall tone of the coverage and the frequent connection to generic demands for more citizen participation in democratic processes, it is likely

that foreshadowing the ACP probably aroused curiosity in many readers about what such an event might produce, by way of outcomes.

Third, we conclude that, given the prospective character of most reporting and especially the absence of any statements about the efficacy of the process, mediated meta-deliberation on the ACP was unlikely to generate *support for deliberative politics*, per se. Had favorable reporting continued at a steady clip after the ACP, it might have given curious readers a better sense of how such an event might transform Australian politics.

Finally, we conclude that coverage of the ACP worked to *promote deliberation as a common standard* for politics only insofar as democratic deliberation implicates generic demands for citizen participation. The deliberative processes and standards implemented in the ACP go well beyond mere participation, and the almost complete lack of reporting on them constituted a missed opportunity for mediated meta-deliberation to judge the soundness of this approach to addressing future Australian political conflicts.

All of this provides new beginnings for both organizers and scholars of deliberative democracy. The ACP teaches us that practitioners should consider carefully the newsworthiness of the deliberative process. Upon completion of such analysis, it might make sense to employ media strategies that capitalize on those aspects of a deliberative event that have stronger appeal to media outlets. In the case of the ACP, the experience of ordinary citizens received relative prominence in journalistic accounts of the event, indicating that what was newsworthy here was the inclusion of ordinary citizens.

An effective media strategy could also highlight the clearest political or policy conflicts at play in the issues deliberated upon at the event. But this would be a delicate

task that would require close work with journalists that sensitizes them to the rationales and goals of deliberation in relation to the standard conflict-oriented frames through which we understand “normal” party politics.

This case study, however, stands as but one data point in what we hope becomes a larger body of work on mediated meta-deliberation. Any single study has the limitation of its particularities, but this case may prove unique in the degree to which external events took over the news cycle, just as the ACP came to its climax. The disastrous Victoria bushfires were an immediate and compelling distraction, though a global economic crisis was already looming by the time the Citizen Parliamentarians arrived in Canberra. Generalizations to similar events in Australia or other places must be drawn with caution given the small amount of coverage that was generated and the limited set of content categories we employed. Further, although we provided analysis of news coverage, we do not have the data necessary to understand how the public responded to that news coverage, and future research could make good use of survey data coupled with a finer-grained time-series of news coverage.

More modestly, we simply hope that our case study serves as a stepping stone toward continued research on mediated meta-deliberation in other contexts. We look forward to discovering the commonalities across cases and learning the particular circumstances under which journalists use the outcomes of deliberative events to confront the assumptions and stances of both lay citizens and political elites, thereby increasing an event’s “deliberative impact.”³¹ We also hope that future research will show the full variety of meta-deliberation that occurs in different media outlets, in print and television as well as more interactive online settings. How might such meta-deliberation alter the public’s sentiments toward policy-making, deliberation, and public

participation? Questions such as these—answered across different social, cultural, and situational contexts—open the way for a new research program that has only just begun.

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Figure 27.1: References to and explications of ACP recommendations in Australian print media

Note. Figure shows absolute number of articles that made reference to the final ACP recommendations and/or explicated them ($N = 74$). *R1*: Reduce duplication between levels of government by harmonizing laws across State boundaries; *R2*: Empower citizens to participate in politics through education; *R3*: Accountability regarding political promises and procedures for redress; *R4*: Empower citizens to participate in politics through community engagement; *R5*: Change the electoral system to Optional Preferential Voting; *R6*: Youth engagement in politics.

Figure 27.2: Types and diversity of sources in ACP articles in Australian print media

Note. Figure shows absolute number of articles that used at least one source from the respective category (left hand) and absolute number of articles using sources from no, one or more than one source category (right hand) ($N = 74$).

Notes

¹ For perspectives extending the deliberation concept to mass-mediated communication, see John Gastil, *Political communication and deliberation* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008); Jürgen Habermas, "Political communication in media society: Does democracy still enjoy an epistemic dimension? The impact of normative theory on empirical research," *Communication Theory* 16, no. 4 (2006): 411-426.

² Jürgen Habermas, *Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1996); Gastil, *Political communication and deliberation*; Hartmut Wessler, "Investigating deliberativeness comparatively," *Political Communication* 25, no. 1 (2008): 1-22.

³ For examples, see Benjamin I. Page, *Who deliberates? Mass media in modern democracy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Dennis Pilon, "Investigating media as a deliberative space: Newspaper opinions about voting systems in the 2007 Ontario provincial referendum," *Canadian Political Science Review* 3, no. 3 (2009): 1-23; W. Lance Bennett et al., "Managing the public sphere: Journalistic construction of the great globalization debate," *Journal of Communication* 54, no. 3 (2004): 437-455; Xiang Zhou, Yuen-Ying Chan, and Zhen-Mei Peng, "Deliberativeness of online political discussion: A content analysis of the Guangzhou Daily website," *Journalism Studies* 9, no. 5 (2008): 759-770; Rousiley C. M. Maia, "Mediated deliberation: The 2005 referendum for banning firearm sales in Brazil," *International Journal of Press/Politics* 14, no. 3 (2009): 313-334.

⁴ See the system-level perspectives introduced in John Gastil, *Political communication and deliberation* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2008); Habermas, "Political communication in media society: Does democracy still enjoy an epistemic dimension? The impact of normative theory on empirical research."

⁵ For two examples of perspectives focusing on deliberation occurring within individual media, see Wessler, "Investigating deliberativeness comparatively"; Todd Graham and Tamara Witschge, "In search of online deliberation: Towards a new method for examining the quality of online discussions," *Communications* 28, no. 2 (2003): 173-204.

⁶ Dennis F. Thompson, "Deliberative democratic theory and empirical political science," *Annual Review of Political Science* 11 (2008): 497-520; John Dryzek, "Democracy and Earth system governance" (presented at the Amsterdam Conference on the Human Dimensions of Global Environmental Change "Earth System Governance: People, Places and the Planet," Amsterdam, The Netherlands, 2009).

⁷ Amy Gutmann and Dennis F. Thompson, *Why deliberative democracy?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2004).

⁸ Thompson, "Deliberative democratic theory and empirical political science."

⁹ Eike Mark Rinke and Hartmut Wessler, "Comparing the deliberativeness of television news in Germany, the U.S., and Russia" (presented at the annual conference of the International Communication Association, Political Communication Division, Boston, MA, 2011).

¹⁰ See Gastil (2008), pp. 43-46.

¹¹ See, for example, Mark E. Warren and Hilary Pearse, eds., *Designing deliberative democracy: The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2008) on the Citizens' Assembly, John Gastil and Katie Knobloch, *Evaluation report to the Oregon State Legislature on the 2010 Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review* (Salem, OR: Oregon House Rules Committee, 2010) on the Citizens' Initiative Review, or Boaventura de Sousa Santos, "Participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre: Toward a redistributive democracy," *Politics & Society* 26, no. 4 (1998): 461-510 on Participatory Budgeting.

¹² Robert E. Goodin and John S. Dryzek, "Deliberative impacts: The macro-political uptake of mini-publics," *Politics & Society* 34, no. 2 (2006): 219-244; James S. Fishkin and Robert C. Luskin, "Bringing deliberation to

the democratic dialogue,” in *The poll with a human face: The National Issues Convention experiment in political communication*, ed. Maxwell McCombs and Amy Reynolds (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1999), 3-38.

¹³ For similar arguments, see James S Fishkin, “Consulting the public through deliberative polling,” *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management* 22, no. 1 (2003): 128-133; Archon Fung, “Recipes for public spheres: Eight institutional design choices and their consequences,” *Journal of Political Philosophy* 11, no. 3 (2003): 338-367.

¹⁴For accounts of the importance of cultural foundations for public deliberation, see Andreas Hepp and Hartmut Wessler, “Politische Diskurskulturen: Überlegungen zur empirischen Erklärung segmentierter europäischer Öffentlichkeit,” *Medien & Kommunikationswissenschaft* 57, no. 2 (2009): 174-197; Bernhard Peters, *Public deliberation and public culture: The writings of Bernhard Peters, 1993-2005* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008); also Henry E. Brady, James S. Fishkin, and Robert C. Luskin, “Informed public opinion about foreign policy: The uses of deliberative polling,” *Brookings Review* 21, no. 3 (2003): 16-19.

¹⁵ The distinction between “inside” and “outside” strategies in deliberative event planning is introduced in Peter Levine, Archon Fung, and John Gastil, “Future directions for public deliberation,” *Journal of Public Deliberation* 1, no. 1 (2005): Article 3.

¹⁶ See Lawrence LeDuc, “Electoral reform and direct democracy in Canada: When citizens become involved,” *West European Politics* 34 (2011): 551-567.

¹⁷ Wessler calls these “input” and “throughput,” respectively; he also identifies a third dimension (the “outcome”) that is not part of our analysis. Wessler, “Investigating deliberativeness comparatively.” For an account of one specific outcome of the ACP, its consequences for public discourse in subsequent Australian elections, see Chapter 29.

¹⁸ There are contrary views about whether deliberation scholarship should focus on questions of who deliberates (e.g., Page, 1996) or what ideas and topics are deliberated upon in public, see Benjamin I. Page, *Who deliberates? Mass media in modern democracy* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1996); Wessler, “Investigating deliberativeness comparatively”. We elude this dichotomy altogether and prefer a more comprehensive approach that takes both aspects of mediated deliberation into account.

¹⁹ Generally, throughput analyses in the mediated deliberation framework focus on justification, rebuttal, and civility as assessment criteria, since these are particularly important from a deliberative point of view. While this is reflected in our other work, we restricted us here on the more substantive question of tone in coverage, given our aim to contribute to a broader *ex post* assessment of the ACP.

²⁰ There are some downsides to relying on digital news archives for research. In particular, they can present an incomplete account of the actual printed news coverage since they are often stripped off newswire articles. See J. H. Snider and Kenneth Janda, “Newspapers in bytes and bits: limitations of electronic databases for content analysis” (presented at the annual meeting of the American Political Science Association, Boston, MA, 1998); David A. Weaver and Bruce Bimber, “Finding news stories: A comparison of searches using LexisNexis and Google News” 85, no. 3 (2008): 515-530. However, this is less of a problem for us as articles reporting the ACP are unlikely to have come primarily from wire services, due to the characteristics of the event. The search also included items disseminated by the Australian national news agency, AAP. The query used to search the databases was ((Australian Citizens’ Parliament) OR (Citizens’ Parliament)). The searches covered all articles published by August 31, 2011. Inspection of the resulting items and other coverage yielded that this query had good discriminatory power to capture all of the ACP coverage available.

²¹ Based on circulation figures for the second quarter of 2011. See The Newspaper Works, *Australian printed newspaper circulations decline inworsening retail conditions* (The Newspaper Works, August 11, 2010), <http://www.thenewspaperworks.com.au/news/circulation-june-2011-quarter/>.

²² A small number of ACP articles were published in multiple newspapers. These articles were only counted once.

²³ John Dryzek, "The Australian Citizens' Parliament: A world first," *Journal of Public Deliberation* 5, no. 1 (2009): Article 9.

²⁴ For an exposition of this analytic distinction for the evaluation of deliberative events, see John Gastil, Katie Knobloch, and Meghan B. Kelly, "Evaluating deliberative public events and projects," in *Democracy in motion: Evaluating the practice and impact of deliberative civic engagement*, ed. Tina Nabatchi et al. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

²⁵ Two example are Robin Brown, "Power, and policymaking, to the people," *Canberra Times* (Canberra, September 7, 2010); John Warhurst, "Power of non-party people," *Canberra Times* (Canberra, February 12, 2009).

²⁶ Kirsten Leiminger, "Citizens to outline views in Canberra," *The Journal* (Dandenong, January 18, 2009).

²⁷ We counted thematic references. That is, they needed not necessarily mention the recommendation itself but had to refer to the policy goal it formulated.

²⁸ Joanne McCarthy, "Grassroots government," *Newcastle Herald* (Newcastle, Australia, January 29, 2009).

²⁹ "Climate assembly valuable, says expert," *AAP News*, July 23, 2010.

³⁰ Gutmann and Thompson, *Why deliberative democracy?*; Thompson, "Deliberative democratic theory and empirical political science."

³¹ Goodin and Dryzek, "Deliberative Impacts."