

# **A failed platform**

## **The citizen consensus conference travels to Chile**

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### **Abstract**

This paper deals with the question of how we can truly put technologies of democracy, the different arrangements that look to enact deliberation on technoscientific issues, to work. Dealing in particular with the case of the citizen consensus conference (CCC), it starts by reviewing the setbacks that the recent STS literature on the subject has identified in the proper materialization of the deliberative turn. Then it proposes to change the focus of analysis to the *work* that CCCs might make, identifying two main kinds performing a laboratory-based experiment and constituting a platform for the dissemination of facts. In order to explore the contribution of this focus to the analysis it then moves to study one particular implementation, a CCC carried out in Chile in 2003. After a detailed genealogy of the planning, implementation and afterlife of this exercise the paper concludes that several of the limitations experienced by this instrument to truly enact technical democracy are derived, paradoxically, *from its success* as lab-based experiment. Given the way such a “success” is conceived, it result impossible for the facts produced by a CCC, both in relation to the issue and about the instrument itself, to travel beyond the laboratory and effectively contribute to technical democracy.

### **Keywords**

Technical democracy, citizen consensus conference, experiment, laboratory, platform

### **Introduction: putting technical democracy to work**

Nowadays we rarely see someone both in policy studies and STS who fails to recognize the value of public involvement in technoscientific issues. On the contrary, “discourses of public participation in science have become virtually hegemonic” (Braun and Schultz 2010, 403). Usually such hegemony is derived from the extended recognition that “the disjunction between expert and lay knowledge cannot be reduced to a mere information gap between experts and the general public” (Bucchi and Neresini 2008, 451). This is why because, “what people know, or think they know, inevitably affects their evaluation of the rulers, as well as their capacity and inclination to participate in self-rule” (Jasanoff 2004, 91). As a consequence, “it no longer seems legitimate to think and work within the classical policy framework without including some kind of stakeholder involvement or public participation” (Felt and Wynne 2007, 56). Then, the main questions has become “no longer *whether* the public should have a say in technical decisions, but *how* to promote more meaningful interaction among policy-makers, scientific experts, corporate producers, and the public” (Jasanoff 2003, 238). The uttermost materialization of this process in technical policy making has been the development since the 1990s of “a participatory turn in science governance, indicated by a new language of openness, transparency,

and deliberation as well as the proliferation of participatory arrangements and events” (Braun and Schultz 2010, 403).

As it could be expected, this hegemonic discourse and its related technologies of democracy have faced important problems to truly transform actual technical policy making. Tellingly, such limited success has not been mainly a result of the outermost opposition of policymakers and experts to accept the need to incorporate the public into policy. On the contrary, at least in western countries, arguments about the need to increase “public participation in policymaking” appear as deeply ingrained in contemporary scientific and political discourse. Although in many cases such a discourse has not been more than a governance cliché, in several others it has opened the doors for the experimentation with new technologies of “democracy” (Laurent 2011) or “elicitation” (Lezaun and Soneryd 2007), or devices specifically designed to properly incorporate lay people/knowledge into policy making. Since late 1980s, the design and implementation of these technologies have become the uttermost materialization of the participatory turn and the most visible illustration of its shortcomings.

Received with enthusiasm at the beginning as the most sensible way to breach the distance between experts/policymakers and lay people, in the last two decades such technologies were extensively tested in its multiple forms, from citizen’s juries to planning cells. However the last years have witnessed a growing amount of critical analyses of such implementation, raising doubts about its real capacity to challenge the status quo. The main point of such critique has been the very limited impact that such exercises seem to have on actual policy making. Beyond their good intentions, at best, it is very difficult to establish if the device has any impact at all on the issue dealt with. On the worst scenario, and quite frequently, such impact appears to be inexistent. As a consequence a growing amount of scholarship, especially in STS, has identified the main effect of such devices not as increasing technical democracy but as it’s very opposite: “a more subtle way of disciplining ... citizenship to make it more suitable to comply with technoscience advancements” (Bucchi and Neresini 2008, 457–8). This is why because “participation of this kind operates in an already constituted field of existing institutional coordinates which not only define a certain problem but also its potential participants” (Papadopoulos 2011, 185). Given this framing many of these exercises, instead of constituting a way for the reform of technical policy making, tend to constitute “a veritable *extractive* industry, one that seeks to engage publics in dialogue and generate certified “public opinion” with the ultimate goal of increasing the *productivity* of government” (Lezaun and Soneryd 2007, 279–80).

None of these devices materializes better these tensions than the Citizen Consensus Conference (CCC). Developed in Denmark in late eighties the CCC looked to enhance the participation of citizens in policymaking through their direct and informed discussion with experts about a particular issue (Grundahl 1995). A key difference between the CCC and other technologies of democracy was that it is organized by the Danish Board of technology (DBT), a public organization funded by the Danish government and with close connections with the parliament. Theoretically, such a close connection assures that the conclusion to be reached through particular CCCs were going to have an impact on policymakers. This was heightened by the premise that only issues that were controversial and/or about to be treated in parliament were going to be dealt with through a CCC. Given this, and other characteristics (for a detailed overview see Grundahl 1995), this device rapidly became one of the most talked about technologies for democracy, being extensively applied in Denmark and elsewhere during late 1990s and early 2000s<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> For a (relatively) updated list of CCCs see <http://www.loka.org/TrackingConsensus.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Such reductions end up in the Danish government cutting the fund altogether in 2011, allowing it to continue functioning but with funding coming from elsewhere (Horst 2013).

This situation started to change since mid-2000s. First of all, the DBT suffered successive reductions in public funding with the result that they were not able to organize another CCC in Denmark since 2005<sup>2</sup>. A similar situation happened internationally, where a flourish of CCCs in early 2000s was followed by its almost complete disappearance by the beginning of this decade. In second place, and directly related to the above, after being initially lauded as an example to follow (for an example see the contributions on Joss and Durant 1995), the device has been the focus of a growing amount of scholarly critique in recent years (Jensen 2005; Goven 2003; Seifert 2006; Bogner 2012; Horst and Irwin 2010; Blok 2007; Laurent 2011; Jasanoff 2003; Nielsen, Lassen, and Sandoe 2007). The points criticized are manifold: the expectance of consensus as the outcome of the exercise, a too rigid framing, the power of stakeholders and experts to guide the discussion, the process to select a right ‘issue’, ‘citizens’ and ‘experts’, the political and media irrelevance of the results, the purely experimental nature of most implementations outside Denmark, etc. Several of these critiques have been specially applied to the application of CCC outside its home country of Denmark, given that the device seems to involve aspects that cannot travel easily to other locations.

Given this situation it is right to ask whether there are reasons to keep the CCC or simply discarded it as a relatively failed device. This second option seems tempting but there is a catch. Many of the problems of CCC are also problems of deliberation itself; so discard it should also mean to move beyond the deliberative turn. Such a move would mean either to (1) return to the traditional deficit model of the public understanding of science or (2) to move somewhere else. This last alternative is interesting, but also fraught with dangers and uncertainties. For this reason a radical rejection of the deliberative turn could well lead to political impotence and fatalism rather than to the development of more effective forms to enact technical democracy. Given this, and before moving in any direction, it is necessary to start by better understanding exactly what are to problems that CCCs faced when trying to fully enact deliberation at the heart of technoscientific governance.

In order to contribute to this task this paper will analyze one particular application of this device: a CCC entitled “the management of my patient record” (“el manejo de mi ficha clínica de salud”) carried out on Santiago, Chile, on November of 2003<sup>3</sup>, one of the only applications of this device in a developing country. In line with a previous paper by the author (Ureta 2013), in dealing with this case the questions will not be on the overall “impact” of the device or, specially, whether the CCC “travels well” (Einsienel, Jolsoe, and Breck 2001) or not (Seifert 2006; Nielsen, Lassen, and Sandoe 2007). Instead, the paper will explore the kinds of *work* that the CCC does when travel to a location like the Chile of the early 2000s. Taking this approach imply two advantages from existing analyses on the travels of CCC. On the one hand, it allows the paper to move beyond the either/or options that pervade many of them. In its replacement the aim is to show that CCC are multiple entities, “enabling and restricting at the same time” (Braun and Schultz 2010, 404). On the other hand, by refusing merely to check whether the initial expectations were fulfilled or not, it opens the analysis to the unexpected, to how the implementation of a CCC always imply the “unpredictable movement, of people and issues, and give rise to forms of social responsiveness and articulations that spill over the models of interaction that organizers bring to bear” (Lezaun and Soneryd 2007, 295). Both advantages, I believe, are necessary steps towards a deeper understanding of the shortcomings (and strengths) of current technologies of democracy.

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<sup>2</sup> Such reductions end up in the Danish government cutting the fund altogether in 2011, allowing it to continue functioning but with funding coming from elsewhere (Horst 2013).

<sup>3</sup> This analysis will be based on material collected by the author while doing fieldwork in Chile between 2011 and 2012. Fieldwork consisted mainly of (1) fourteen in-depth interviews with actors involved in the development of the CCC and (2) collection and analysis of several materials produced by the project in the form of research reports, papers, presentations, etc.

More in particular, the *work* of CCCs is going to be understood simply as the difference/s that the implementation of CCC causes in a determinate location and time. On this respect, the existing STS literature on these devices identifies two main kinds of *work* that CCCs might make: performing a laboratory-based experiment and constituting a platform for the dissemination of certain facts.

First of all, and following the well-known tradition of laboratory studies on STS (for an overview see Doing 2008), an important part of the literature identifies implemented CCCs as experiments. Such a denomination is derived, first, from the recognition that these exercises are always surrounded by uncertainty and “no method can guarantee their successful democratic outcome” (Jensen 2005, 231). In second place, the experimental status is given by the recognition that such initiatives are usually “organized by professional participation specialists and carried out under controlled conditions” (Bogner 2012, 507), similar to the ones to be found in any scientific laboratory. Inside such depurated spaces, that bear little similitude with the conditions found outside, the entities to be included in the experiment (an issue, experts, citizens, etc.) are produced anew through “complex arrangements comprising literary, material and social elements” (Laurent 2011, 651) and “charged with the task of demonstrating that the method can work” (Bogner 2012, 507). In practical term such *work* means to follow in a step-by-step fashion the “script” (Akrich 1992) on CCC produced by the DBT, ending up with the production of a document in which the citizens make certain recommendations on the issue at hand.

However, implementations of CCCs never look solely to work as successful laboratory experiments on democratic deliberation. There is always, at least in rhetoric terms, a second kind of *work* associated with their implementation: to constitute a platform for the transformation of certain state of affairs beyond the particular (laboratory) setting in which the CCC is carried out. Applying the term developed by Muniesa and Callon (2007) for the analysis of experiments in economics, a platform can be defined as a particular configuration that looks to remove some of the frames set in the laboratory in order to “overcome the distance that an experiment generates between the “inside” and the “outside” of the experimental setting” (p. 173) in order to generate strong compromises between the involved actors regarding the objectives and conclusions of the experiment. In particular, the CCC as platform looks to work as some sort of empirical “demonstrations” (Barry 1999) of the possibility of materializing several key tenets of the deliberative turn: that technoscientific black-boxes can be opened to public scrutiny (Blok 2007), that reflective citizens can actively engage with experts in fruitful discussions of technoscientific issues (Felt and Wynne 2007), that consensus can be reached (Horst and Irwin 2010), and that such a consensus (materialized in a document) can have a decisive impact in the resolution of concrete technoscientific controversies (Laurent 2011) with the final outcome of decisively contributing to the advance towards greater levels of technical democracy. As it can be seen such a list is quite ample, and no little ambitious, and no single CCC could possibly expect to become a platform for its full demonstration, but at least some of them are always present in the justifications given for the need to implement the device.

Obviously these two kinds of work do not cover all the different ways in which a CCC might make a difference when applied in different context. Several other kinds of work that escape such classification might appear, some of them general, other specific to the case under analysis. For this reason this framework will be taken only as a reference for the analysis of the case under study here. In the following sections the paper I will make a genealogy of the Chilean implementation of CCC, specifically highlighting the main kinds of work associated with it and how they reflect the tensions associated with the proper materialization of technical democracy.

## 1. A good traveller

This story starts in Washington DC, more precisely in the headquarters of the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) in 1989 when the Brazilian Doctor Alberto Pellegrini was appointed head of the Research Promotion and Development Unit. From the start Pellegrini wanted to change the main focus of this unit:

Until then the unit had a focus on helping researchers that I considered quite traditional, supporting existing projects, offering short courses on research methods, etc. important things but that do not deal with issues of scientific policy, isn't? And then we started to concentrate on the issue of political decisions... and one important thing regarding bibliographic references is that in 94 a group headed by Gibbons and several other researchers published a book entitled "The new production of knowledge" ... there they highlighted new ways to define the research agenda, the development of projects, the validation of knowledge production, there was a series of very important concepts, and there was a whole literature that appeared in this moment regarding the relevance of participation of the ones who are not... the non-experts in scientific production and evaluation, and we became interested in that, in democratic participation ... and we started looking which were the methods that could allow such citizen participation...

As Pellegrini recognizes, the search for references about the new focus on scientific policy adopted by the unit met with one particular publication: The new production of knowledge by Gibbons et al (1994). As its title reveals, the main thesis of this widely-read book was the emergence of a new way of producing scientific knowledge that the authors called mode 2. In contrast with the traditional mode 1<sup>4</sup>, knowledge production under mode 2 is characterized by being carried out in the context of application, being transdisciplinary, heterogeneous, heterarchical and transient, and being more socially accountable and reflexive. Given these characteristics, they argued, knowledge production should involve "a wider, more temporary and heterogeneous set of practitioners, collaborating on a problem defined in a specific and localized context" (p. 3). Such set is composed not only by scientists (even by scientists of multiple disciplines) but also by "an expanding number of interest, and so-called concerned groups [which] are demanding representation in the setting of the policy agenda as well as in the subsequent decision making process" (p. 7). To bring these non-experts, in the words of Pellegrini, into the process of producing scientific knowledge in the form of "citizen participation" became one of the main focus of the unit's work in the following years.

As he acknowledges at the end of the quote their main task on this regard was to look for "methods" through which such citizen participation could be enacted. Their starting point was to make a comprehensive review of the different kinds of the citizen participation instruments available at the time. Among them there was one that caught their attention from the very beginning.

...and then among these various modalities of participation we found the consensus conference and it looked to us as an interesting methodology because it allows a symmetrical dialogue experts and non-experts surpassing this gap, this knowledge barrier, there is a whole

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<sup>4</sup> Referring to "a form of knowledge production - a complex of ideas, methods, values, norms - that has grown up control the diffusion of the Newtonian model to more and more fields of enquiry and ensure its compliance with what is considered sound scientific practice. Mode 1 is meant to summarize in a single phrase the cognitive and social norms which must be followed in the production. legitimation and diffusion of knowledge of this kind" (p. 2)

methodology assembled to allow such dialogue, and this appeared as important to us, and also there were several favorable junctures happening, the things of luck, isn't?

At the time, the CCC appeared as a quite appealing option to materialize the mode 2 of production of knowledge. Such a perception was provided by the existence at the time of several "success stories" of international applications of the device, such as the projects EUROPTA and ADAPTA, similar to the one the actors from the unit had in mind to carry out in Latin America. Besides this, and in comparison with other tools, the CCC had very clear step-by-step application guidelines and counted with the technical support of a single organization, such as the DBT.

However, probably the CCC would have never been applied in Chile if not for the "favorable junctures" mentioned by Pellegrini. The first one occurred when the unit first contacted the DBT. On hearing their precedence, they were quickly derived to Laura Zurita, an employee of the board at the time. From the very start Zurita was highly supportive of the idea of running a CCC in Latin America, not only because her mother tongue was Spanish but also because she had already spent some time in the continent (especially in Chile) and felt a particular attachment to it. Given this good connection, Pellegrini invited Zurita to Washington in 2000 to explain the CCC methodology to other members of PAHO and start planning its proper implementation.

After that, running a CCC in Latin America became one of the main components of the unit's largest project of the period: the Virtual Library on Health/Science and Society (BVS/CyS)<sup>5</sup>. Such a proposition was introduced by Zurita to the BVS/CyS consulting committee (formed by members of the different countries belonging to the PAHO) in a meeting in Sao Paulo on November of 2001. In this meeting a second "favorable juncture" occurred. Among the members of the consulting committee was Ana Maria Prat, a member of Chile's National Council for Science and Technology (Conicyt) whose reception of the proposal was quite positive because, as she recalled, "*it is very easy to sell projects to me, I buy them quite easily*". However, her enthusiasm was not only based on personal disposition. It was also derived from her perception of Chile at the time as very much open to this kind of experiments for two main reasons, both derived from the recent access to power of the socialist Ricardo Lagos (2000-06). In his government program Lagos proposed to make a mayor reform of Chile's health system in order to secure accessibility and improve quality for all the population of the country, especially the ones with the lowest incomes. Such a reform, it was affirmed, was going to be carried out through "the intersectorial action of the government and great participation of the citizenry" (Lagos 1999, 16). In second place, and connected with this last point, the Lagos administration located public participation in a high place of its agenda. This was manifest when, after just a few months in power, it published an explicit instructive to enforce public participation among public entities (Lagos 2000). On this, it was stated that the State offices had explicitly to "establish spaces and mechanisms to accommodate the worries, needs and proposals from the citizenry" (p. 1). Given these antecedents it is not strange that Prat perceived that the CCC could be one of the "mechanisms" through which this double aim of reforming the health system and granting a more active role to the citizenry in public policy could be achieved. So she volunteered to explore the possibility of running a CCC experiment in Chile.

At her return to Chile, Prat started promoting the implementation of the experiment but her proposal found little interest at the beginning. This situation only started to change when she managed to involve in the project two key actors: Soledad Barria from Conicyt and Soledad Ferreiro from the Library of Congress. The location of Barria, a doctor, in Conicyt at the time was merely circumstantial and temporary. Since the return of democracy in 1990, she had occupied different managerial positions at

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<sup>5</sup> It consisted on a digital library about health topics to be created and maintained in a participative way by the different member countries of PAHO.

the Ministry of Health<sup>6</sup> (MINSAL in Spanish), in them she also developed very close relations with several members of the parliament, especially the ones devoted to health issues. Then her good disposition towards CCC made possible to start enrolling in the project actors coming from the two other institutions necessary to implement a CCC on health issues in Chile: MINSAL and the parliament. Ferreiro, on the other hand, was named director of the library on that same time. Having been director of several mayor university libraries before, Prat knew her quite well so it seemed logical to start their search of further support for the CCC having a meeting with her. Again the reception they found was positive. In a similar way than Prat and Barria, Ferreiro became rapidly interested in the instrument given its promised potential to enhance public participation in law making, one of the main objectives of her new position. For all three of them the CCC appeared as, almost magically, materialize the involvement of citizen into scientific deliberation, helping to heighten the democratic deficit perceived as characteristic of Chile at the time. In acting this was the CCC was helped by the patronage (and funding) coming from PAHO, the institutional support offered by the DBT, its aura of proven success, and the existence of clear (and seemingly easy follow) guidelines for its application. With their support finally a powerful enough coalition was assembled pushing for a proper implementation of the CCC experiment. This was certified with the signing on June 13<sup>th</sup> 2003 of an agreement between the MINSAL, the parliament, and CONICYT. Such a document states:

- The need to consider “the changes in the traditional way to exert democracy implying citizen participation ... in the matters of their concern”
- The “new ways of making science in which the opinion and acceptance of new knowledge on the part of society acquires an ever growing relevance”
- The “existence of a proven methodology for citizen participation in the discussion about the application of technologies and their effect on everyday life developed by the *Danish Board of Technology* [sic] and applied with success in several countries in the world”
- Given this it was decided to carry “out in Chile a Citizen Consensus Conference on health issues with a focus on recent scientific knowledge as a pilot experience for Chile and the region”.
- After that there was a commitment to “evaluate the methodology used and transfer it to other organisms and sectors interested in using it to evaluate technologies with social impact”.

The framing of the CCC in this document is interesting for several reasons. First of all, we can see the recognition of the relevance of “citizen participation” that is reflected in a new way of making science in which the social “opinion and acceptance of new knowledge” have become central. This particular version of the citizenry frames the exercise within what Callon (1999, 84) calls, the “public debate model” of citizen engagement. In contrast with the traditional model based solely on informing the public, here there is recognition about the need to complement technoscientific knowledge with the inputs coming “from the ground”. Such recognition, however, goes hand in hand with the enactment of citizens as merely carriers of *opinions*, ultimately denying them “any competence for participating in the production of the only knowledge of any value: that which warrants the term ‘scientific’” (p. 89). Then the final aim of this model is the *acceptance* of techno-scientific knowledge on the part of the citizenry, an expected outcome of the rational deliberation at the center of the exercise. In second place, the document talks about the existence of a “proven methodology” to do this in the form of the CCC, whose quality is safeguarded by the DBT and has proven successful in several countries. In third place, the experience was openly framed as an experiment whose ultimate aim was to evaluate the instruments and, possibly, transfer it to other public offices. Finally it was decided that the experiment

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<sup>6</sup> That culminated with her becoming minister of health during the presidency of Michelle Bachelet (2006-2010)

will be based at the Library of Congress and headed by an organizing committee formed by actors from the Library of Congress, MINSAL and CONICYT<sup>7</sup>.

With this agreement a first stage of the development of the Chilean CCC ended. What is characteristic of the story so far, in terms of the *work* of CCC, is how easily the instrument was enacted “as an entity (or social technology) in itself rather than one component within a larger frame of governing” (Horst and Irwin 2010, 117); a well-bounded device that rested on “universally agreed goals and meanings, and ... can readily be interpreted and applied across national boundaries” (Nielsen, Lassen, and Sandoe 2007, 13) without mayor transformations. For all the involved actors up to now the device seemed to almost naturally “travel well” (Einsienel, Jolsoe, and Breck 2001), so it was ready to be tried in Chile. In doing so, the CCC worked quite effectively as a powerful “exemplar” (Kuhn 1996; Ureta 2013) of an up-to-date and internationally-tested instrument for citizen participation.

## 2. Setting up the laboratory

As seen above, from the very beginning it was evident for everyone involved that the Chilean CCC was an experiment, they even called it this way in documents and when talking about it. Such a status was given primarily by the novelty of the implementation, as well as the fact that the whole process will be under the continual and systematic observation of several organizations, Chilean (CONICYT, MINSAL, the library of congress) and international (DBT, PAHO). Beyond its particular results, they all looked to transform the Chilean CCC into “a ‘ theatre of proof’ for a particular form of political life” (Marres and Lezaun 2011, 4), a test for the mobilization to Latin America of the very particular kind of democratic deliberation of technoscientific issues enacted by a CCC.

In order to do so an “experimental community” (Bogner 2012) needed to be brought into existence, formed by all the different entities who were necessary to conduct the experiment. As long stated by laboratory studies (Knorr Cetina 1983; Latour and Woolgar 1986), they were not simply going to be mobilized into the lab from somewhere else, but fully enacted inside it, constituting depurated versions of entities existing before the experiment. So the setting up of a experiment involves always “an operation of transformation and reduction: objects are “purified” in order to make them fit for manipulation and production of controlled information” (Muniesa and Callon 2007, 170).

In doing this the members of the organizing committee had a clear script to follow: a document prepared by PAHO (OPS 2002) summarizing in a step-by-step fashion the stages developed by the DBT to implement a successful conference. Such document starts by affirming that the emergence of the deliberative democracy proposed by the CCC depended on the successful enactment of a three key devices: a relevant technoscientific issue, a group of experts on it, and a group of citizens without knowledge and interests on the issue that could participate and produce the final document.

Regarding the first device, a technoscientific issue, during June of 2003 several issues were considered by the committee such as transgenic food, air pollution, emergency contraceptives, waste management, among others. In parallel, meetings to discuss the selection were carried out inside MINSAL that ended with their proposal of the modernization of the Patients Record (PR) as the most suitable issue. At first such a proposal was received with reluctance by other members of the committee (who found it “quite boring”, as recalled by Prat) but the open support to it by both MINSAL and Enrique Accorsi, the deputy heading the health commission at the Congress<sup>8</sup>, gave it an important degree of momentum and by the beginning of July it was finally selected as the issue of the CCC, as affirmed by the committee’s proceedings (included as an appendix in Pino and Elizalde 2004). The entry for a meeting on July 2<sup>nd</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Formed by Soledad Ferreiro (project head) and Ana Maria Pino (project manager) for the Library of Congress, Ana Maria Prat and Soledad Barria for Conicyt, and Nora Donoso for the Ministry of Health.

<sup>8</sup> As recalled by Ferreiro: “I remember that we finished [with the clinical record] because Accorsi was just arriving from Taiwan and was very impressed with the digital clinical record, then he supported it and it gained strength”.

of 2003 affirmed that the health record had been selected because it was a single theme and quite concrete. It still required definitions on the part of the authority and had an important technoscientific component, so required the contribution of experts for its resolution. Also, and centrally, there was a need to know the attitudes of the public about it. In all, it presented the PR as quite close to the “ideal” issue identified by the PAHO guidelines (p. 17).

However, there were other aspects in which the selected issue was not so close to the ideal proposed by the guidelines. First, the clinical record was not object of a proper social controversy. On the contrary, the issue was selected explicitly for being of very little controversy for the citizenry as recalled by Barria:

The truth is that it [the health record] was never too conflictive, I mean, there were tensions but it wasn't the same that with, to say something, abortion or euthanasia, when we discussed about the issue the thing that we tried to do was [to find] an issue that was of relevance for the citizenry but that didn't cause too much strain, because what interested us was to use the method, to see if it worked, do you understand? Then if we started talking about abortion [the group] will end up exploding upon the air, along with the method, then [the clinical record] was, between brackets, a little more aseptic [laughs] from a health perspective ... I think it has a relevance from the point of view of citizen empowerment but not from the technical, medical or clinical one ... but it was a little less conflictive than other issues that we dreamed to solve earlier...

Following Dewey (1927) we can say that the health record was mostly a non-issue, because it had no proper public around, no one who really cared about it. Instead of being a matter of controversy or tension, it was selected for its exact opposite: for being non-political, for being “aseptic” and not attracting any kind of the debate and tensions associated with truly political issues.

Then the issue was selected above all as a way to test the functioning of the device and not for its relevance as part of an ongoing sociotechnical controversy, something quite usual in CCC implementations in countries different than Denmark (Bogner 2012; Seifert 2006; Goven 2003; Callon, Lascoumes, and Barthe 2009). The most important thing were not the characteristics of the existing debate and controversy regarding the issue but the fact that the issue was “at hand” (Seifert 2006) for the organizing committee. Beyond the official argumentation to select it, at the end the potential impact of the CCC on the issue was irrelevant; for them “any outcome is a good outcome” (Goven 2003, 427). Once this issue was approved a second task was to select the group of experts who were going to provide the technical inputs for the citizens' deliberations. A first step in the constitution of this group of experts was taken on July 10<sup>th</sup> when in the third meeting of the organizing committee “a list of experts was proposed with a multidisciplinary focus”. At first five key areas were identified: legal, ethical, managerial, medical and informatics. To each one an expert was tentatively nominated, a mixture of (mainly) doctors, lawyers, and public officials coming from institutions such as Colegio Medico (doctor's guild), PAHO, the National Health Service and National Labor Security Association (ACHS). These actors were contacted and they met, along with members of the committee, on July 17<sup>th</sup>. Such group was composed by four doctors covering differing medical and managerial aspects of the record, a lawyer from the Doctor's Guild, and an expert in informatics from ACHS. In all, it constituted a straightforward group of “scientific” experts, using the definition from the PAHO guidelines (p. 23), or people with technical expertise in the issue at hand. However, the guidelines also identified a second kind of experts: “opinion-setting” ones or people who “could be representatives of stakeholder organizations, people prominent in the arts, etc.”, but they were completely absent from the call. In excluding them the organizers were transgressing one of the ideals of the CCC: making “a systematic inventory of, and make audible, constituted points of view, some of which either cannot or do not want to make themselves heard in the public space” (Callon, Lascoumes, and Barthe 2009, 173).

After they agreed to participate, the organizers asked them to submit a document stating their position on the issue. Once delivered, these documents were transformed into a single document by actors from the library of congress (Arrau 2003). Such a transformation implied not only its translation into “citizen’s language”, as recalled by Pino, but served as a key device to stabilize a particular version of the issue as formed by a limited number of exclusive subthemes (medical, ethical, managerial, legal and informatics), and no others. To each one them a particular narrative was attached in the form of the inputs provided by a single “scientific” expert translated into citizens’ language.

The most remarkable thing about this document is how similar the experts’ positions about the issue were. Without exceptions all of them coincided (1) in the need to reform the existent PR and (2) the main elements that a replacement should have. Regarding the first point the document affirms in the first paragraph: “all of them [experts] signal the relevance from different analytical angles of a single patient record containing the history of health events of a person, from its birth to its death” (Arrau 2003, 1). The reason for such a change is the perception that the current system suffers for several critical problems: the multiplicity of records for a single patient, lack of standardization, missing information, etc. Regarding the second key point, the experts propose to introduce a unified, standardized record and with national coverage. Regarding the technical characteristics of this record most of the inputs left it open, with the exception of the informatics expert who affirmed that it was perfectly possible to make it digital, functioning through the Internet and reaching the whole country. The only point in which there were a certain degree of differences between the experts was about the accessibility of the PR. While for some of them (mostly the ones working in the public health system) the patients have the right to access the outputs of the PR but not the device itself because it belongs to the doctor/health institution, for others the patients should have the right to access to the full content of her PR because it belongs to her. This document was sent to the members of the citizens’ panel for their study before the first preparatory weekend.

In third place, regarding the selection of people to form the citizen panel, the PAHO guidelines affirmed that “The selected panel should be formed by a diverse group of persons in accordance to several socio-demographic criteria such as age (between 20 and 65 years old), gender, educational level, activity and location of residence” (p. 16), covering the whole of the country, and, centrally, with no bested interest in the issue. At the beginning the members of the committee planed to strictly follow these guidelines in the selection of the members of the Chilean citizen panel. However, their practical implementation proved to be much difficult than expected and several diversions started to appear. In most cases these diversions were manifested in tensions between Zurita, as the technical actors oversighting the “correct” application of the device<sup>9</sup>, and members of the organizing committee.

First there was the issue of coverage. In the Danish and most other implementations the CCC has a national coverage, so theoretically any citizen of the country has the opportunity to apply and, if selected, participate on them. In the Chilean case this proved to be impossible. Given the extended and fragmented geography of the country (extending for more than 4.000 kilometers from north to south), it proved financially impossible to make a call and, especially so, to mobilize people from all over the country to participate in the CCC. For this reason the organizers, with the consent of Zurita, decided just to make the call in the capital city of Santiago and in two adjacent regions (both with large rural areas), arguing that “they constitute the central region of Chile. With that an important part of Chilean population was included, with a great diversity of socioeconomical levels” (Pellegrini and Zurita 2004). Second, the statistical representativeness of the selected citizen in regard of Chile’s population became a major source of conflict with Zurita (2003), as she recalled in her later report on the conference:

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<sup>9</sup> Half joking she was called by one the citizens participating in the CCC the “German lady of the conference”, given her role as the embodiment of discipline and methodological rigor.

The selection of citizens ... is one of the aspects in which the conference defies the prevailing quantitative paradigm, where the focus is put on the quantity of voices present and their statistical representativeness. It was difficult to surpass the quantitative thinking in the selection of citizens. In my first visit to Chile we discussed in depth the idea of a panel of citizens chosen in a way to represent different social strata, ages and thoughts (as described in the document from PAHO [2002]). The procedures [to do so] were reviewed thoroughly in two meetings with the directive committee. The first proposal presented by the project head [later] talked about a number of citizens much higher than agreed (30, divided proportionally to the populations of the three regions). When I asked the project head [why they changed this], she answered me that it was what has been recommended, a procedure to make the sample statistically representative. It was asked, besides, that the citizens were selected randomly, that they have lived for a number of years in each region, and that they have complete primary education. ... This way to choose citizens would have been against the conception of the conference, so it became necessary to change the call in order to select citizens based on their personal characteristics and the motivations to apply to the conference and don't exclude from the call any citizen for social or economic reasons (Zurita 2003).

The main matter at stake in this controversy was how the results of the CCC can become the valid opinion of a social entity beyond the participants on the panel. In previous applications of the instrument such validity is given by, out of the people interested in participate, handpicking case by case a small group that includes the main kinds of people supposedly characteristic of this larger social group (city, country). However in the Chilean case the members of the committee, especially the ones coming from MINSAL, initially tried to put forward an alternative selection method based on the statistical representativeness of the selected citizens in regard of the population of the three regions. Only this approach (that involved selected a far larger number of citizens among other changes) appeared to secure the capacity to show the results of the CCC as more than the opinion of small group of citizens. Zurita openly opposed to this "quantitative paradigm" and based on the support of the rules for making a CCC made by the DBT/PAHO was finally able to push for a selection criteria quite similar to the one used in implementations elsewhere.

A third problematic issue was related to the diffusion of the call on these three regions. Such a tension was derived from the diverging conceptions of the actors involved regarding who a "proper" participant in a CCC should be. The Danish canon, embodied by Zurita, establishes that all the citizens have the right to participate in the conference, especially the ones who have no special connections with the issue and do not usually participate in these kinds of events. The definition used by the organizing committee was somewhat different. At first it planned to distribute the call only to people who had previous certain connection with the health system, such as local leaders and actors with a record of previous involvement public consultations. When Zurita challenged this definition, they complemented this strategy by involving social workers from the Undersecretariat for Regional Development as enrollers of people potentially interested in participating. This end up including in the final list a large number of "professional citizens", local leaders with important expertise in different participatory schemes, a public quite different from the figure of the "lay citizen" included in the CCC guidelines, the "perfectly uncommitted individual" (Lezaun and Soneryd 2007, 294).

Once all the applications were received (almost 500), the members of the organizing committee selected the 16 members of the citizen panel based on their place of residence (using it as a proxy for their socioeconomic status), occupation and demographic variables such as gender and age. Besides this, the selection process involved several "intuitive" components, in the words of Pino, such as the handwriting of some of applicants. In all, the group finally selected gave the impression to the committee of successfully representing in certain way the whole "diversity" of the population of the

three regions considered. Once these individuals were contacted and all accepted to participate, finally the CCC could be properly run.

Up to this point is important to summarize which kind of work the CCC was making on Chile. As seen on this section, such a work was focused mostly on enacting a laboratory in which the experiment could be run. First, there is a constitution of a clear “inside” formed by the actors and spaces involved in the planning of the CCC, that can be contrasted to the “outside” usually labeled Chilean society. Second, and centrally, the mobilization of CCC’s objects from this outside to the inside was not a mere relocation but a transformation. Especially in the case of the issue and the group of citizens, and to a lesser degree in the case of experts, the entities mobilized so far to the CCC are not “natural” objects but were specifically produced, or tailored, in the process of setting up the experiment. In doing so digressions from the script were inevitable. As the tensions between Zurita and the committee reveals, at several points the enactment of CCC’s devices for the Chilean experiment challenged the guidelines developed by PAHO/DBT. All the compulsory entities were there (citizens, experts, issue, etc.) but in slightly different versions, with new characteristics and agencies. This wasn’t a fully a “Chilean lab for democracy”, nor a “Danish lab” faithfully reproduced on Chilean soil. It was an in-between version in which a particular Chilean issue, experts and issue were carefully produced.

### **3. Running the experiment**

The first instance in which this deliberative laboratory was put to work was on October 3-5 when the first preparatory weekend was carried out. The team in charge of running this instance was formed by Rodrigo Elizalde, a psychologist selected to act as facilitator, Pino and Zurita. Accompanying them as observers were Nora Donoso in representation of MINSAL and Ulysses Panniset from PAHO; whose presence somewhat heightened the status of the conference as an experiment from which some useful knowledge could be obtained.

This weekend mostly centered in giving the citizens’ information about the issue, so they can discuss and arrive to a first set of key subthemes that need to be explored more in depth; a first basis for the future consensual document. Besides refining the issue, the weekend looked to start producing citizens out the persons selected, in the understanding that “when selected, the members of the panel were not yet citizens that could deliberate; rather, they had to be made deliberative citizens through adequate techniques” (Laurent 2009, 7).

After meeting the selected people in the Library of Congress, the organizers took them to a convention center located in Malloco, a rural area located just outside the urban area of Santiago. Such a movement was not meaningless, but involved “a matter of moving from ‘the world of things’ to a rarefied domain of materially unencumbered or unmarked actors, of disentangling actors from the attachments of their everyday, material lives in order to produce a purified, stand-alone public” (Marres and Lezaun 2011, 12). Then the travel was in itself the entrance into the laboratory, out which it was expected to emerge both a refined issue and deliberative citizens.

The first official activity of the weekend was for the citizens to introduce themselves and speak about their reasons to apply to the conference. In accordance with the guidelines these “discussions and brainstorming sessions form the starting point for the discussion of key ideas” (p. 25) about the issue. In the Chilean case the scenario set by the participants’ introductions was quite different:

It is normal during the first weekend for the citizens to be expectant and have a lot of questions about the process. But this group of citizens had, besides, some special characteristics. At the moment of expressing what had motivated them to participate in the conference the overwhelming majority talked about their desire to participate in decision-making and make their voices heard and they referred very little or none at all to the health record. They showed a great need to be heard and taken into consideration. This worry exists

in all societies, citizens feel in general alienated in respect of decision making. However, this need is very intense in the case of Chile and possibly other countries of the region. (Zurita 2003)

What can be inferred from Zurita's words is that the kind of citizen that firstly emerged from the Chilean CCC importantly diverged from the one in-scripted in the PAHO/DBT guidelines. Instead of being people who "voluntarily manifest an interest on the issue" (OPS 2002) for most of them the issue was irrelevant; it could have been any other and they would have applied anyway. What they really cared about was being considered as citizens. They answered the call and appeared in the library because they wanted to make their voices heard; because of the promise made in the call for the CCC about their chance to actively participate in policymaking.

In parallel with their lack of interest in the issue, the first activities of the weekend revealed another characteristic of the selected participants, as recalled by Zurita:

...the citizens were quite worried with the idea of representativeness. Some of them considered themselves as representatives of some or other group and manifested a great deal of responsibility about such representation. For what I could perceive, such a feeling of representativeness is very extended in the country, and probably in other countries of the region. It is important that the organizing team of future consensus conferences give attention to this fact and develop group games that contribute to give the citizen that perception that they only represent themselves and their ideas and that they are only responsible to themselves and their own conscience

Here again we can see the emergence of the issue of representativeness, this time not on the part of organizers but on the one of the selected individuals. As Zurita points, some of them felt that for the fact of being selected to participate in the CCC they had become representatives of some kind of mayor entity and they have to speak on their regard. This perception made them not to feel free to express their own opinions when they felt that they might be different from the ones of this perceived collective.

This version of the citizens forced the directing team to change their plan of activities for the weekend. Instead of centering mostly on identifying the relevant subthemes of the issue, they carried out several group games throughout the weekend with the double aim of helping the participants to start acting as a group and developing their capacities to reach consensus. Most of these games were proposed by Elizalde, who had an extended previous experience in this kind of activities.

These games were of various kinds, such as one called "the orchestra", as Elizalde recalls:

I remember one we made that really fitted nicely, the orchestra. Each one of them was a musical instrument and they had to walk the entire place playing as an orchestra, then at the very end the question was, ok, the orchestra can be the orchestra, but how can I ... transform this into a principle that they elaborate so they can use in the work at the consensus conference

Such games helped importantly the participant in building trust between them and start considering themselves as a group. In doing this they also transformed the tone of the weekend from the reflexive exercise expected in the guidelines to a more social-bonding, even self-help, experience as revealed by one of the annotations put in her diary of the CCC by one of the participants:

Today was one of these days that, when they are finishing, you start to analyze what happened and I can say that I have grow along with very special people, something that few times happen, that you tune in with other people in such a way, that the same language is spoken and in a respectful, friendly, way, with great altitude, to be surrounded by such a special people

makes you grow and makes you see life in a better way, it is incredible the communication with whom we have worked, it is impressing the way in which we always reach consensus, in a democratic and respectful way (Aburto 2003)

In this extract, as in the rest of her diary, Aburto does not mention at all the issue as something relevant about the first weekend or the CCC as a whole. For her it was an experience of meeting new people and, centrally, of learning to work as a team with them, to the degree that they “always reach consensus”. Then for the citizens the CCC was never a matter of solely reaching discussing the problems of the PR or testing a innovative instrument for deliberation, but also an experience, a source of strong emotions, an aspect that is usually forgotten when analyzing the work of technologies of democracy, as noted by Harvey (2009).

This does not mean that the issue was completely absent from the weekend. On the contrary, the group spent an important amount of time discussing it. On the second day they were asked to tell their “dreams and visions” about the PR and then an exercise was carried out to arrive to “consensual points” about them. Then three experts gave presentations on the medical, ethical and computational aspects of the PR. After that they made a subdivision of the issue into relevant subthemes, as recalled by Elizalde (2003):

An exercise of thematically definition was carried out to determine from where study, question, discuss and think that health record. Seven different subthemes were defined: financial/technical/ethical/political/legal/medical/managerial. ... The question that we made as managing team was how can we work seven subthemes with four groups? Hence we determinate that, given that they were fifteen citizens, we could divide them in three groups of four and one group of three. We decided the groups of four will work two subthemes and the group with three members just one. In relation with the potential difficulty of this arrangement, in the sense of being too many subthemes [for each group], their [later] reduction was decided

Two interesting things can be noted from his summary. First, with the exception of the two additions (financial and political) the list of relevant subthemes identified was the same as the one provided by the experts in the preparatory meetings. Of these two additions there is only evidence that the citizens explicitly demanded the financial aspect. Second, as the last part of the quote shows, the final number of subthemes to be dealt with was derived not mainly from the multifaceted nature of the issue but from the number of participants and how to divide them into subgroups, as recommended by the guidelines. Given this it was concluded that a reduction on the number of subthemes was necessary. Third, this division of the issue in different subthemes, especially between mostly technical aspects (financial, technical, legal, medical and managerial ones) and ethical and political ones, as noted by Blok (2007), “bears witness to what Latour (1993: ch. 2) calls the “Modern Constitution,” legislating the separation of science from politics, knowledge from power, facts from values” (p. 173). By doing this, the issue was enacted as formed by components that are irreducible to each other, derived somewhat from their different “essences”.

On October 24-36 the second preparatory weekend was held, this time without Zurita and the observers. The main focus of this weekend was the elaboration of key questions about the PR that the citizens were going to make to the experts on the proper CCC. Deriving from this the main activities where related to (1) the concept of consensus and how to reach it and (2) the way make informed questions. Running this weekend, however, proved to be much challenging than expected.

First, the members of the citizen panel were unhappy with the experts selected to make presentations.

Regarding the experts' exposition, the citizens did not share the opinions provided by one of them [the one presenting the medical perspective] given the impossibility of having an electronic health record. They questioned the mechanism used to select the experts. It was indicated to them that the group of experts have been selected with different focuses and positions, because they, as citizens, should be informed without bias, with amplitude, considering the diversity of opinions and the respect for them (Pino and Elizalde 2004)

This criticism is relevant because it represented the first time in which the citizens manifested an interest in transforming the way the conference, and the issue, has been framed by the organizing committee; a key step towards the proper materialization of technical democracy in accordance with the literature (Callon, Lascoumes, and Barthe 2009; Jasanoff 2003). In this respect the Chilean CCC seemed to, at least initially, to be functioning in the second sense outlined above: as a platform for the transformation of technoscientific decision making in Chile, at least in the lab in which the experiment was being carried out until this moment.

This growing divergence between the organizers' vision of the "correct" way to deal with the issue and the one of the citizens was also evident regarding the expected reduction on the number of subthemes of the issue, as recalled by Elizalde:

[The citizens] worked in subgroups trying to reduce the number of subthemes in order to have optimally four subthemes. No theme was eliminated but we looked to regroup them. Each subgroup made a proposal but we couldn't arrive to consensus at this moment. ... [On the second day] each subgroup was asked to choose a representative; ... [and] these people reached a consensus about a way to regroup the number of subthemes, something that really eased the work made by the group the rest of the day. ... The subgroups developed different kinds of questions, open, closed and others, exercising this way in the making of questions about the issue of the conference. ... A deepening of the key questions per subthemes was made, asking that only two affirmations per subtheme be selected, developing in this way [the citizens'] capacity of synthesis and [their ability] to highlight the relevant above the secondary (Elizalde 2003)

At first, the citizens failed to arrive to a consensus about how the nine subthemes identified in the previous weekend should be reordered to make just four out of them. Given this they tried a new approach on the second day by selecting representatives of each subgroup and putting them to work on the reduction. This strategy proved to be successful, but it had also its costs: it replaced the "consensusing" (Horst and Irwin 2010) expectation at the heart of the CCC, or "the active process of seeking and expecting societal consensus" (p. 107), by an oligarchic arrangement in which a sample of the citizens was selected to decide for the rest of them. After this the rest of the weekend was devoted to polish the questions that the citizens were going to make to the experts on the closing ceremony of the CCC.

#### **4. An emotional ceremony**

With the inputs provided by the preparatory weekends, the proper CCC was carried out on November 22-24. This time the experimental setting was changed from a laboratory experiment into a platform (Muniesa and Callon 2007). Such configuration was given, first, by devising a new space for the experiment. Instead of the lab-like location on the outskirts of the city the final event of the CCC was carried out in two very public buildings belonging to the Congress and located in downtown Santiago: the first two days on the Palacio Ariztia and the final act on the main hall of the National Congress. Second, the assistance was open to any citizen wishing to do so and personal invitations were sent to all

the people who applied to the call. Third, the media, public authorities and parliamentarians were personally invited to the last act. All these measures looked to establish “robust compromises” between the experiment and the different actors surrounding the issue, especially politicians, so its results were going to really be taken into consideration in policymaking.

The first two days consisted mainly in that the citizen panel first listen (Saturday) and then made questions (Sunday morning) to twelve experts previously selected by the organizing committee<sup>10</sup>, whose presentations covered the different subthemes of the issue in terms quite similar to the ones presented in the summary document prepared by the library of congress. The contribution of this activity to the overall result of the CCC, that is capital on the Danish CCC template, was weakened by two developments on this case. First, as noted by Pellegrini and Zurita (2004), “the experts’ talks were more general than they use to be [in Danish implementations] and not so focused on the citizens’ questions” (p. 356). This poor quality of the exchange was attributed both to the organizers (for not assigning specific questions to each expert) and the citizens (for making “diffuse” questions). Adding to this the absence of any written material, the final result was that the expert’s input did not contribute much to the drafting of the final document.

Along with this, on Sunday morning the discussion with experts was overtaken by an unexpected event:

During the second day a confrontation occurred about different thoughts regarding representativeness. One of the citizens in the audience claimed that the citizens [of the panel] were not representative, that he was a communal leader and that the citizens did not “represent” his people. The citizen panel reacted actively against this, indicating who they were and their right to represent themselves. This episode indicates several important aspects of the consensus conference. On the one hand, the confrontation between the classic systems of representation and the thought of the consensus conference. On the other hand, it was an sample that the citizens have empowered themselves and have become conscious of the conference (Zurita 2003).

In this controversy we can see resurfacing a theme that has been present all along the experiment: representativeness. On the critical comments on the part of one member of the public and the reactions of the citizens we can see again the issue of how fifteen people without previous participation or experience on the issue can truly represent any collective larger than themselves, in this case Chilean society (or, at least, their regions of origin). This critique came from a person associated with grassroots mobilization and local leadership, a kind of representativeness with a strong tradition on the country. As Zurita recalls in this case the critiques were downcast by the effective justifications on the part of the members of the panel about “their right to represent themselves”, but also shows how difficult was to mobilize the kind of citizens’ representativeness associated to CCCs in Denmark, where there are related to several other factors (Horst and Irwin 2010), to the Chilean experiment.

On Sunday afternoon the citizens were taken to a conference center in southern Santiago and put to work to arrive to the ultimate consensus about the issue and write the document summarizing it. This stage proven to be quite long and exhausting, lasting until the next morning. The main cause of the slowness was not, as it could be expected, the difficulties derived from the process of arriving to a consensus about the issue. On the contrary, the citizens arrived early on and with relative ease to a

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<sup>10</sup> Five of them were representatives of different public and private health institutions, four came from companies dealing with health issues (especially on its IT side), two were members of NGOs dealing with health issues (CODEPU and CINTRAS) and the last one was the chairman of the project for State’s Modernization

consensus about the changes they thought the PR needed in relation with each one of the subthemes<sup>11</sup>. The problem was how difficult it proved for the citizens to translate such a consensus into a written document. This slowness was not only derived from the problem to arrive to the exact phrasing of each idea, but also with the lack of experience on the part of the citizens about the technical tasks necessary to produce a written document, such as using computers. This situation forced the members of the organizing committee to have a much more active role than expected, acting as mediators between the oral ideas and phrases of the citizens and the final written document.

The result of this process was a thirteen-page document that starts by claiming that the current PR is obsolete and needs a radical change. Then it proposes that, given that the health system is in a process of reform and several public offices are automatizing its work processes, the best solution is to replace the current PR with what they called the Electronic Unique Health Record (REUS in Spanish) involving three main components:

- It was going to introduce a standard device for the recording of all the health information about the patients.
- It was going to be based on a digital format (ideally online).
- It was going to be accessible on its entirety to the patient.

Beyond the acronym, and in a similar way than the CCC on a similar issue investigated by Jensen (2005), “the themes and problems defined in the problem catalogue remained remarkably stable throughout the process” (p, 232). There were no new additions or perspectives on the issue, just a selection between two of the competing positions presented by the experts. First, the document clearly sided with the option of an electronic patient record, as proposed by the experts coming from the IT health companies<sup>12</sup>. Second, it clearly choose the option of a PR fully accessible to the patient, clearly siding with the experts coming from PAHO and NGOs rather than the option of a limited accessibility championed by the actors coming from the public health system. Although these selections were not irrelevant, they did not represent a mayor addition to the existing situation about the issue. Although such addition is not the main aim of the CCC, as noted by Callon et al. (2009), in practice end up in a situation in which “lay expertise thus becomes a copy of expert expertise, and it is inevitably a copy of slightly inferior quality” (Bogner 2012, 519).

With the document at hand, the citizens were taken on the morning of Monday 24<sup>th</sup> of November to the closure act of the CCC, to be held at the main hall of the National Congress. After a welcoming speech from Ferreiro, acting as project manager, the spokesperson of the citizen panel was invited to read the final document to the audience. This moment had a strong impact on the actors who have been involved in the experiment all along such as Elizalde:

I feel that the citizen consensus conference has been always inside of mine, in the sense that I felt that it was so rich, at the end of the conference my heart felt it this way when Mario, a peasant from Rengo who was the one who read the letter in front of the deputies and senators, read the letter in the place of honor ... when a citizen, that is a peasant, read a letter and sometimes he makes mistakes in the reading and you realized that it's the first time in his life that he has read [in public], ... it's something very emotional, I cannot describe it well because

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<sup>11</sup> As a clear manifestation of this most of the citizen went to sleep well before the final document was finished, a situation was quite surprising for Zurita for whom “commonly all the citizens want to stay present until the last comma is put, in order to be sure that the document shows their thoughts” (Zurita 2003). On doing this, they argued that “they trusted the group and knew that the central aspects of the document were already done” (Elizalde 2003).

<sup>12</sup> Such an option was criticized by members of the organizing committee such as Pino, for whom “the document was focused on the electronic patient record as the only option, even though the issue was not put in this way” (Pino and Elizalde 2004)

is the humanization of the human being, because everyone says that he doesn't know [about the issue], isn't?

As Elizalde recalls this was a highly emotional moment, at least for the members of the panel and the organizers. There, standing in the main hall of the National Congress, was a man, a peasant from a rural area, speaking directly to the authorities on a matter of technical relevance such as the changes needed in the PR. For most of them, especially the ones who have been involved from the very beginning such as Pellegrini, Prat, and Barria (all of them present), it was the fulfillment of a long held expectation, even a dream. The CCC was finally delivering its promise; it did *work* as an experiment in deliberative democracy. After travelling thousands of miles it has produced the same result as in its point of origin: a well-crafted document in which a group of lay citizens summarize their points of consensus about a technical issue.

However, this moment also signaled the last proper *work* of the CCC in Chile, at least in the way it was predicted to do so. From now on things started to increasingly diverge from the script, affecting importantly the ultimate capability of the Chilean CCC to really enact technical democracy in the country and elsewhere in Latin America, as it was originally planned.

At the immediate level, there were serious difficulties in enrolling both politicians and the media to participate in the closing ceremony and contribute to the diffusion of its results. Even though several press conferences and meetings were carried out all along the planning process in order to inform about and, especially, generate certain expectations on them about the experiment, their response was far colder than expected. Only four parliamentarians showed up at the closing act, not even the members of the Health Commission who were discussing a project of Law regarding the rights of patients (and in which the reform of the PR occupied an important place). Regarding the media, and in contrast the affirmation included in the PAHO guidelines that CCCs “generally enjoy an excellent coverage” (p. 45), they were mostly uninterested on it. Although several television networks and the press were present on the closing ceremony, the CCC was completely absent from television and only occupied marginal spaces on next day press

Such a low involvement was related to the ultimate incapacity of this CCC to properly work as a platform in two of the main senses identified by the literature: transforming the issue and motivating further applications of this instrument.

First of all, the effect of the final document on the issue of the changes necessary on the HR was null. Its recommendations were never considered in the further discussion of the issue, not even in the congress whose library was the main organizer of the CCC. Such oblivion was derived from two characteristics of the process.

On the one hand, after the closing act the final document was mostly left alone to represent the position of the citizens. There were no further official publications, press conferences or workshops to disseminate its contents widely. It just became a pdf uploaded to the conference's website<sup>13</sup>, hoping for anyone with interest in the issue to find it while browsing on the web. This situation was directly derived from an organizing team who rapidly disbanded after the conference without properly fulfilling the last task assigned to them by the PAHO guidelines on CCC: “to secure a diffusion of the final document and organize its further development through written materials and debates”. This rapid disbandment was related not only to a lack of funding to continue carrying out activities but also, and centrally to a lack of interest on the issue itself. As we saw above none of the members of the committee had any special interest on the PR, it was selected solely on the basis that appeared as a nice case to test the instrument, so it's understandable that they almost instantly deserted the issue after the experiment ended.

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<sup>13</sup> Website: XXX (Note that it has been taken down since then)

However, this complete irrelevance of the citizen panel's conclusions on the further discussion of the issue was not only related to human actors who lost interest in it. It was also derived from the particular technical device signaled as the sole outcome of the conference: a written document. In accordance with the CCC guidelines, the document was to become the only embodiment of the consensus reached during the CCC. There was no other way out of the process, no other possible outcome. No other media such as an oral or audiovisual account would suffice. Neither a derived organization or demonstration on the part of the citizens, like a citizen's association or a protest. Only the document. But documents are weak devices when they are left alone, especially in a country in which citizen's involvement in issues of their concern usually takes the form not of document but of direct public demonstrations. In this last sense the document operated as an anti-political device (Barry 2001), because it allowed to avert any further mobilization of the citizens regarding the issue. Contrary to public demonstrations, in Chile documents could be easily left aside. On the other hand, the irrelevance of the document on the issue was connected to a second key factor identified by Donoso:

The final opposition [to the transformation of the PR] came from the health services, from the health professionals. ... the medical teams saw the traditional patient record as a matter of intellectual rights, this was very surprising to us, very surprising, though it shouldn't have been because it is deeply ingrained in the culture of the health sector, but it was interesting to see how a controversy arose here, or a tension, between the ones who were in favor of digitalizing the data, obviously with access barriers, and the others who by no means wanted to digitalize it. Obviously this it related with the fear of transparency in [health] management, it was a way to maintain this information as a tool of power, etc. ... At the same time [in which the CCC was carried out] a project for a law on [patient's] health rights was being discussed and these very sensible ethical issues were circulating in the agenda of the sector. Then, I think, the carrying out of this [CCC] was crisscrossed by a more general context and for this it is important to consider in which context are you going to locate your consultation; if it is going to be a trigger of conflicts and tensions or effectively it is going to be a quiet consultation, in which you can have the pure opinion of citizens ... I think this is what happened, this is what happened, because there were other processes developing in parallel to this consultation and were not touched by this consultation, but they were implicit. For this [the CCC] is also interesting, because one thing is that you make it almost as inside a laboratory, controlling all the external variables, and other is that you make it in a context in which you are forced to consider all these contextual variables, [then] these contextual variables are also a source of information to interpret what happened there and what happened were the obstacles of medical personnel ... to this issue of the digitalization

This quote is very illustrative of two things. First, it shows the existence of a strong opposition on the part of the medical personnel at MINSAL to both the digitalization and the opening of the PR to the patients. Given this, even if the document would have been distributed among them, they would have probably block any attempt to implement its recommendations. The second, and most interesting point, refers to the connection between the CCC and this opposition to the digitalization/access. As Donoso recalls, at the time in which the CCC was carried out the issue of the probable changes in the health record was being discussed as part of a larger law project regarding the patient's rights. On this discussion the opposition of the medical personnel to digitalization/access was publicly made<sup>14</sup>. However, this critical position of the medical personnel was never openly presented in the CCC,

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<sup>14</sup> For example, in a paper published in January of 2003 in the Chilean Medical Journal by two prominent members of the bioethics commission of the National Health Service (Vacarezza and Núñez 2003).

neither by the experts nor in documents<sup>15</sup>. As a result at no point during the conference this outright opposition was presented or debated, leaving the citizens no opportunity to test or sharpen against it their recommendations. On the contrary most of the participating experts agreed, or did not openly oppose, the idea of the need of the HR to be accessible to patients and in this way it was included in the final document.

The question now is *why* this situation happened, why this publicly-known position of such central actors was kept outside of the CCC. One hint of an answer can be seen in the later part of Donoso's quote: the degree to which events happening elsewhere entered *into* the CCC laboratory. From her position, the CCC was marred from the beginning by the conscious exclusion of contradictory position in order to avoid conflict. On this regard we can recall the words of Barria seen above: this issue was specifically selected for its lack of controversy, in order to test the instrument in a controlled environment. Then if this lack of controversy was not *out there*, it should be produced *in there*. As a consequence the issue was depurated while mobilizing it inside the laboratory, leaving aside aspects that could cause controversies inside it. On doing this we can see an "impulse to protect the experiment, to preserve the purity of its scientific and political meaning by insulating it from the forces of society at large" (Lezaun 2011, 21). On this respect the CCC was again "anti-political", in relation with refusing to allow a proper confrontation of contrasting positions in order to safeguard its harmony. This deputation produced a neat experiment in which consensus was easily reached, but that had important difficulties in working as a platform, especially when faced with the strong opposition of the MINSAL actors.

In parallel, this implementation also failed at the main aim set by its organizers: to work as a platform for the further usage of CCC as a concrete way to advance towards technical democracy in Chile and/or Latin America. On this respect, at the local level there were some initial encouraging signs in the form of an interest on the part of actors from MINSAL to apply the instrument, as recalled by Elizalde:

There was something they wanted to make afterwards, that the conference becomes something like a methodology that the Ministry [of Health] could use at health centers ... there were going to make micro-conferences ... they wanted to make a modification on the methodology to simplify it, because it was too expensive ... and too long, they wanted to make a synthetized version of the conference, then we said 'ok, lets work on a synthetized version, so the people don't have to sleepover at the place', but Laura opposed it, she said to me 'Rodrigo, the methodology is what it is, it cannot be altered', then there was some tension with them, because they wanted by any means a more simpler, cheaper, methodology ... this was the problem at last, when we have people who are not informed about a matter or issue, the question is: are they going to make an in-depth document if they are not informed? Or they are going to make a very simple document that will be easily distorted by the expert and transformed into whatever the politician or expert wanted to make? Then, from one way or the other, for me was an ethical issue, until which point the conference could loose some of its technical methodological characteristics and still be valid? This was the main fear ... the citizen consensus conference is a very useful, very valid, tool but it can also be a very fragile one, it could be directed, manipulated

In this quote we can see the instrument behaving as what Latour (1987) have called an "immutable mobile" or a device that can travel to several places maintaining a certain internal structure, a certain integrity. In this case Zurita acted as the enforcer of such integrity, shielded by a claim about the CCC's

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<sup>15</sup> Returning to the above example, although Vacarezza and Nuñez's paper was published few months before the CCC in a very well-known Chilean medical journal (constituting the only publication on Chile on the issue at the moment), it was not included in the preparatory document prepared by the Library of Congress.

“fragility”, about how easily any change on it could result in its distortion becoming simply a mean for the experts to move their projects forwards. If the actors involved truly wanted to enact citizen’s consensus, and its related technical democracy, the CCC should be left as it is.

From Elizalde’s point of view such immutability of the CCC was right due to an ethical imperative. But it had also the consequence that the instrument (or a simplified version of it) could not be applied in this case given the highly financial and temporal costs involved, at least from the perspective of MINSAL. In the end both at MINSAL and the Library of Congress the CCC was never again seriously considered as a tool to enact participatory subjects in favor of (1) traditional participatory devices such as Focus Groups, (2) other deliberative procedures such as the “Dialogos participativos” (Participative dialogues), and (3) web-based consultations.

At the international level, the lack of further applications of the CCC was a consequence of the changes experimented by the main actor motivating it, as recalled by Pellegrini.

This was on 2003, I retired from PAHO on 2004 [laughs] and there were important changes, the research unit practically disappeared for these things that happen in our region, isn’t? and then it lost a lot of resources and did not carry out any other experience and this thing about politics in which we were interested, about the politics of research, did not become important ... the favorable conjuncture fade away [laughs] isn’t? And the things did not turn out as we expected ... The problem, as I told you, was that PAHO was pushing this and PAHO stopped doing it, isn’t? And I think this was decisive ... you know that these things are favorable conjunctures that many times depend on people, while they consolidate institutionally, there is a moment in which they depend a lot on people and sadly [in this case] it did not happen.

Given that PAHO have been the main institutional actor pushing (and, critically, funding) the mobilization of CCC its loss of interest meant that no other implementations was carried out.

In all, we can conclude that the Chilean CCC worked quite poorly as a platform. Beyond the emotional moment of the spokesperson reading the final document aloud, the key actors to which this act was directed proven to be quite resistant to the kind of reconfiguration of policymaking and the role citizens on it that the CCC proposed. This problem reflects one of the main lessons of laboratory studies in STS: almost anything can be produced in a laboratory. The real challenge is to “raise a world” (Latour 1983), to make an new order in which such objects are deemed to be true, existent. And in this sense the Chilean CCC worked quite poorly, because it was unable to raise a world in which the two main *facts* emerged during its experimental phase (the transformations proposed on the issue by the citizens and the effectiveness of CCC in enacting technical democracy in Chile) were accepted as valid by the key actors.

## **Conclusions**

In the decade that has passed since its implementation the Chilean CCC has become a fairly obscure case. This is not only related to the fact that the final document had no effect whatsoever in changing the state of affairs regarding the PR or that the instrument was never used again in the country. In parallel, this exercise did not even become a proper academic exemplar of the usability and/or problems of technologies of democracy with the exception of a single publication by two involved actors (Pellegrini and Zurita 2004). It is not even accounted for on most lists on CCCs, or in any other publication dealing with the instrument. In most aspects the Chilean CCC almost completely vanished after its closing act ended, leaving no traces behind it. Given this we could conclude that its contribution towards the advancement of technical democracy in Chile or elsewhere has been minimal.

Such an outcome, however, was not a consequence of the ultimate failure of the device, as some critics could rapidly conclude. On the contrary, it was, quite paradoxically, *a direct consequence of its success*. Or, at least, its success in working finely in one of ways outlined in the introduction: as an experiment on the deliberation of a technoscientific issue by group of lay citizens. In this particular sense the Chilean CCC clearly worked as expected, all the stages were completed with only minimal deviations from the script concluding with a well-crafted document in which the members of the citizen panel made informed recommendations about the issue at hand. Such a success, however, proved to be quite costly. In particular it implied that the Chilean CCC did not work at all in the other main sense identified above: as a platform for the implementation of deliberative democracy on technoscientific issues in Chile and/or elsewhere.

Such a contradiction between these two kinds of work was not inevitable. Laboratory-based experiments and platforms are combinable; in fact they need to be combined if the facts produced by an experiment are expected to be accepted as valid beyond its secluded site of production. Then, the problems faced in combining these two kinds of work seen here were related not to *inherent* incompatibilities between them, but mostly to the way each of them were enacted in the Chilean case. Or, to say it more clearly, it was derived from the particular way the CCC was framed as an experiment by the actors involved.

As seen above, from the very beginning the actors involved in planning the CCC were preoccupied (we could even say obsessed) with making the implementation of the CCC in Chile a “*success*”. Such a success was mostly understood as planning and running the instrument in a way as similar as possible to the script developed by DBT. Any diversion from it was taken as producing different degrees of “false consensusing” (Horst and Irwin 2010), and hence challenged. Such a focus had several manifestations:

- Having a watchdog (Zurita) censoring any deviation from the Danish standard.
- Choosing (or producing) an aseptic issue.
- Recruiting only “technical” experts and with similar positions on the issue.
- Selecting disaffected citizens for the panel.
- Managing the discussion in ways that lead almost inevitably to a consensus.
- Taking as a given the interest of the media and politicians in the scheme.
- Refusing to transform in any way the instrument for further implementations.

The focus, all the time, was not on the issue or the citizens, nor the experts, but on the instrument and its “correct” application. Everything was ordered in this direction and, quite expectably, the organizers ended up claiming this kind of success. The Chilean experiment with CCC was carefully designed not to fail in this particular sense and it did not.

However if we challenge this definition of *success* a different picture emerges, especially if we use the definition largely held by laboratory studies. From this perspective the “*success*” of an experiment lies not in the correct application of the available templates to running it, but in producing facts strong enough to convince all the relevant actors about its validity. Then an experiment cannot be deemed successful if it cannot produce such facts. What kind of facts did the Chilean CCC produced? As the last paper shows, the facts produced were recognized as such only in the very particular configuration out of which they emerge (during the conference, with all the people and devices involved). Any transformation on this arrangement “led to rupture, difference, and distance” (Law and Mol 2001, 614) and made them cease to be facts. Given this, and playing with the concept developed by Latour (1987), we can call them *immutable immobile*, because they couldn’t be altered or mobilized without becoming something different. The emergence of such immutable immobile was enough, but just enough, to claim the success of the experiment in the very same moment in which it is produced (during the

closing ceremony of the CCC, when the peasant was reading the document), but not a moment afterwards. However such facts were useless in a platform configuration such as the one sought after by the CCC, when the results of an experiment needed to be mobilized to several locations beyond its place of production.

Then we can conclude from this case study that for really work as expected concrete implementations technologies of democracy need to stop thinking themselves purely as experiments, because from this it is quite easy to adopt the impression than building a functioning deliberative laboratory is an enough “success”. In most cases lab-like conditions are necessary, for sure. But they aren’t enough. As concluded by Lezaun (2011) after analyzing a similar democratic experiment, beyond its local functioning “the challenge is always how to create the conditions for the dissemination, amplification or proliferation of affects generated in political laboratories” (p. 24). One way out of this situation, as proposed by this paper, is to start thinking technologies of democracy also as platforms, a particular kind of technosocial assemblage that not only puts deliberation of issues by heterogeneous publics (including not only experts and lay people, but also policymakers, the media, etc.) at its center but also is centrally focused on the achievement of strong compromises between them producing facts that are “mutable mobile” (De Laet and Mol 2000); facts that can travel widely being transformed in the process, generating the conditions for raising multiple worlds in which the tenets of technical democracy and taken to be true.

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