

POLICY LAB LEARNING WEBINAR
Citizens' Parliament: Lessons in Public Participation

Friday, 24 October 2025
Online via Zoom

PROGRAMME

Friday, 24 October 2025

4.00pm – 4.05pm

Welcome & Introductions

Nicholas Thomas
Moderator
Research Fellow, Policy Lab
Institute of Policy Studies

4.05 pm – 4.45 pm

Presentation

Nico Carpentier
Extraordinary Professor in Communication
and Media Studies
Charles University, Prague

Vaia Doudaki
Associate Professor in Communication and
Media Studies
Charles University, Prague

4.45 pm – 5.15 pm

Question and Answer

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SYNOPSIS

In a time of increasing complexity and shifting public expectations, public participation builds trust, networks, and shared understanding that enable communities to work together. These qualities, described by political scientist Robert Putnam as social capital, are essential for strong and lasting collaboration across society. They support a “we-first” society in which individuals, community groups, and institutions share responsibility for shaping collective decisions and solving common challenges.

In this webinar, Professor Nico Carpentier and Associate Professor Vaia Doudaki from Charles University in Prague will share their experiences and insights from the Czech Citizen Parliament on Media and Democracy. This deliberative initiative, which was part of the broader MeDeMAP research programme, invited members of the public to reflect on the evolving role of media, build trust across diverse perspectives, and explore collective responses to complex challenges.

By the end of the session, participants will be able to:

- Explore how the Citizens' Parliament and similar initiatives are designed to strengthen bonding and bridging capital through meaningful public deliberation
- Reflect on how engagement design influences the goals and context of a project or initiative
- Consider how the Citizens' Parliament approach fosters trust and shared ownership among participants
- Apply insights from the session to enhance public engagement and collaboration efforts

This webinar is organised by the IPS Policy Lab as part of its ongoing efforts to support policymakers and practitioners in Singapore to expand their public engagement practice. It is particularly relevant for those working in policy development, programme design, stakeholder engagement, and facilitation. The session will offer both conceptual grounding and applied insights to grow social capital by designing inclusive, trust-building engagements.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

About the Speakers

Nico CARPENTIER is Extraordinary Professor at Charles University (Prague, Czech Republic), and Visiting Professor at Tallinn University (Estonia) and at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University (Suzhou, China). He was Vice-President of the European Communication Research and Education Association (2008-2012) and President of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (2020-2024). His theoretical focus is on discourse theory, his research is situated in the relationship between communication, politics and culture, especially towards social domains as war & conflict, ideology, participation and democracy. He frequently uses arts-based research methods, as a hybrid scholar, artist and curator. His latest monographs are *The Discursive-Material Knot: Cyprus in Conflict and Community Media Participation* (2017, Peter Lang, New York), *Iconoclastic Controversies: A Photographic Inquiry into Antagonistic Nationalism* (2021, Intellect, Bristol) and *Democracy and Media in Europe: A Discursive-Material Approach* (2025, with Jeffrey Wimmer, Routledge).

Vaia DOUDAKI works as Associate Professor at the Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism, Charles University in Prague. She is the director of the MA in Media and Area Studies (MARS). She is also the co-chair of the Communication, Social Justice and Democracy Working Group of the International Association for Media and Communication Research (IAMCR). Her work is driven by social constructionist and post-structuralist approaches, focusing on the study of representations, discursive practices and the social construction of identities and social phenomena, in media and communication.

Nicholas THOMAS is Research Fellow at the Institute of Policy Studies. He leads the research programme on Citizen Deliberation and Public Participation. Nicholas brings close to two decades of experience in government and civic engagement, having played a key role in the Forward Singapore Exercise while at the Singapore Government Partnerships Office, MCCY. Prior to that, he was part of the team that established the engagement unit at the Ministry of Health, contributing to major initiatives in healthcare financing, ageing policy, and caregiver support. He has also served on the Our Singapore Conversation secretariat and

been involved in multiple other national-level engagements. He is currently pursuing a PhD in multi-stakeholder partnerships at the Department of Communications and New Media, National University of Singapore, serves on the School Advisory Committee at Northland Secondary School, and volunteers in community-based efforts focused on participation and inclusion.

