

# Academic Consensus, Interface Consensus, and Decision-making procedures: When should we consider citizen discourse in scientific deliberation?

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Kosolovsky and Bouwel (2014) distinguish mainly two different types of consensus: the « *academic consensus* » (established by scientists on a specific subject) and the « *interface consensus* » (established at the boundary between science and society). As they noticed, they are indeed different approaches, which imply 1° different goals - on the one hand we aim for an internal result in the scientific community and its practice, on the other hand we want to take into account the other spheres of the society ; 2° different actors - in the academic world everyone would be on an equal footing and would serve as authority in his own field, on the contrary, interface consensus include different types of actors : scientists, experts, interest groups, citizens or their representatives. According to them, we must study these two types of consensus distinctly because values such as authority, trust, mutual respect, ethical and social consequences take part in our decisions on the second one - the individuals in the group are no longer on an equal footing. We will explain why this distinction is too strong and needs to be refined. But, the purpose of this presentation will be to show that this distinction allows us to examine the fertility of the scientific / citizen relationship. I will argue that, *depending on the decisionmaking procedures adopted, non-academic discourse can harm, or conversely serve, reflection and deliberation in the academic world.* This will involve determining the cases and conditions in which this type of discourse is harmful or fruitful. To illustrate our considerations, we will focus in particular on the dialogue that takes place between our two authors, and Miriam Solomon, about consensus conferences in the medical field. According to Solomon, they bring us nothing more. They are, in a way, rituals, simple choreographies that make official decisions already accepted in the academic world. Yet, they can sometimes be beneficial and greatly participate in academic thinking (Beatty, J., and A. Moore : 2010, Kosolovsky, L., and J. V. Bouwel : 2014). As experts, scientists have certain responsibilities to the public and society, and one of the major challenges they face today and in the future is to improve this scientific / public relationship (Douglas, 2009) for the successful development of the social sphere, but also as we shall see, science.