Democratic Innovations after the Post-Democratic Turn:
Between Activation and Empowerment

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**Abstract**

When it comes to the status of democracy, the current times present a curious chasm: On the one hand, the depoliticisation of contemporary discourses and institutions has led to a legitimacy crisis of democracy; yet on the other, there has been a resurgence of normative democratic ideals and practical ‘democratic innovations’ in the sphere of civil society. This article evaluates the potential of these innovations to engender a genuine renewal of democracy by analysing them in relation to the concepts of ‘activation’ and ‘empowerment’. The theories of deliberative and participatory democracy originated as accounts of the deeper forms of democratisation needed for empowerment against the depoliticising forces of neoliberalism; yet, I argue, most of the innovations that have since emerged in their name fit the description of (mere) citizen activation – the elite-led engineering of citizen engagement that, beyond the control of the citizens themselves, not only fails to lead to empowerment, but can even work to perpetuate existing structures. In recognition of the ambivalent nature of the post-democratic condition, I argue academics and democracy practitioners must accept a new, more responsive role in relation to citizens and the wider society.

**Introduction: Democratic Innovation in Post-Democratic Conditions**

When it comes to the status of democracy, a chasm has opened up between those analysing real-world events in advanced democracies to reach a diagnosis of ‘post-democracy’,[[1]](#endnote-1) and those undertaking normative theorising to celebrate a new surge of vibrant innovation in democratisation.[[2]](#endnote-2) Is the analytical diagnosis of post-democracy one-sided and overhasty, failing to see that the crisis only applies to the existing model of liberal, party competition-based democracy, not democracy as such?[[3]](#endnote-3) Are normative democratic innovators naïve and stuck in their own world, failing to usefully respond to what is really going on? Or might democratic innovations actually present a solution to the current failures of democracy – making the coexistence of these two perspectives no coincidence or mystery at all? Precisely because it is self-illusionment and miscommunications across different social spheres that mark the conditions of post-democracy, this article makes these two distinct literatures speak to each other, evaluating the role that normative theorising and practical innovation on democracy can and ought to still play after the post-democratic turn. While some may argue the reality of populism, rising illiberalism, post-truth and social division mean that normative concepts such as deliberation have lost their relevance, a more hopeful view would see such innovations as particularly pertinent in these conditions – provided they are fully informed by, and take seriously, what the post-democratic turn implies.[[4]](#endnote-4) This understanding is what this article seeks to contribute.

The diagnosis of post-democracy points to the paradoxical simultaneousness of almost universal support for democracy in the abstract yet discontent with concrete democratic institutions in the here and now;[[5]](#endnote-5) or of a ‘world-historical peak’ of democratisation yet its decline within the most established and advanced democracies.[[6]](#endnote-6) What leads to such discontent and decline is the *empirical* reality of capitalist globalisation, which has fostered neoliberalism as an exclusive hegemonic ideology and shifted power away from the people and towards a narrow business elite instead;[[7]](#endnote-7) and as political apathy and alienation, a loss of trust in the governing elites, and the rise of populism show, this is now beginning to have serious ramifications on how democracy is *normatively* perceived as well.[[8]](#endnote-8)

Ingolfur Blühdorn elaborates the fundamental paradox of what he terms a ‘post-democratic turn’ or ‘post-democratic constellation’ as the simultaneous radicalisation of citizens’ democratic demands and expectations and a growing tendency – in a context of unprecedented political complexity – towards undemocratic values and activities.[[9]](#endnote-9) The post-democratic constellation is the result of both citizen protests, which express a ‘crisis of democracy’ in the foremost sense not of specific factual problems but of shifting norms and expectations amongst citizens,[[10]](#endnote-10) and the actions of political officials and representatives, administrators, courts and all sorts of ‘extra-constitutional agents of distortion’ (such as economic actors but also ideologies[[11]](#endnote-11)) vis-à-vis citizens that define the boundaries, procedures, and at least partially also the character of democratic spaces. According to Blühdorn, a defining feature of the post-democratic constellation is the broad societal basis for both sceptical views of democracy and the ubiquitous reproduction of a mere ‘self-illusionment’ of any democratic spaces that do form, which are not just corrupted by powerful elites, but reduced to a mere ‘simulation’ of democracy by all societal actors.[[12]](#endnote-12) The simulation achieves a pacification of citizens’ democratic expectations, yet without actually submitting to any authentic democratic control.

At the same time, however, a new group has emerged within this constellation that seeks not just to observe and describe, but to actively influence these democratic spaces: those democratic theorists and third-sector practitioners who see themselves as ‘democratic innovators’.[[13]](#endnote-13) The same time frame during which much writing *against* democracy was published and most public discontent voiced in the form of movements (such as *Democracia Real YA!* in Spain) is also the time frame during which normative democratic theory increasingly turned towards real-world experimentation with instantiations of its new concepts and forms of democratic engagement. Democratic innovations are institutionalised forms of citizen participation in political decision-making at strategic levels, explicitly seeking to engage lay citizens directly.[[14]](#endnote-14) Their defining feature is ‘deliberate action to introduce new ways of doing things’ – a strategic intervention by the ‘innovators’.[[15]](#endnote-15) A whole host of new forms of citizen participation has developed: The online database of *Participedia* counts as many as 213 different methods.[[16]](#endnote-16) Moreover, the dominant normative theory of democracy today, deliberative democracy, has brought forth numerous deliberative citizen events collectively known as ‘mini-publics’, which aim to instigate not just any citizen engagement, but the particular normatively inspired sorts that – albeit according to different definitions – fall under the banner of ‘deliberation’.[[17]](#endnote-17) In this literature, great enthusiasm and optimism abound for democracy even as a changing norm: Its richness of different and changing forms is taken as a sign of its vitality, not least because, as an essentially contested concept, democracy *requires* an open, contestatory discourse around its own meaning.[[18]](#endnote-18) However, within the post-democratic constellation, this enthusiasm might well be overhasty. Since not *all* change can be equally as good for democracy, its changing form can be a good sign for democrats only insofar as it stems from genuine impulses of democratic empowerment as opposed to powerful elites’ subverting its meaning to their own benefit. Were democratic innovations to end up as a mere simulation of democratic renewal as well, they would fall into the latter category, and take the wind out of the sails of any real empowerment against the failings of the existing order.

This article evaluates the promise of democratic innovations within this context. I argue that hope for democracy lies where democratic processes or institutions engender *empowerment*: a gain in previously marginalised groups’ productive power to challenge and redress coercive power others have over them.[[19]](#endnote-19) What threatens this is the post-democratic tendency for citizen involvement to become a mere *activation* instead, which can be defined as involvement that may have the appearance of empowerment, but takes place on the terms of the already powerful, and thus only serves to pacify democratic demands without actually succumbing to their bottom-up force. Thus, my analysis will focus on democratic innovations in relation to these two concepts. The difficulty of locating the promise and status of democratic innovations within the post-democratic constellation, I argue, is their innate ambiguity: Democratic innovations as such have the simultaneous potential to be *either* empowering or activating.[[20]](#endnote-20) As a result, democratic theorists’ practice today is contradictory, and potentially even counterproductive. While most theorists do state an aim of empowerment, the ‘innovation’ perspective alone cannot deliver on this, for it implies a short-term, orchestrated design approach in which elites retain control over the process, and which is therefore predestined to lead to activation.

The remainder of the article is structured as follows. I first retrace recent developments within normative democratic theory to show how the emphasis has shifted from empowerment towards activation. On this basis, I then focus specifically on democratic innovations, and analyse what makes them empowering or activating. This gives rise to my overall assessment of democratic theory and practice in the post-democratic constellation: confirming post-democratic trends even within democratic theory itself, yet still also seeing potential for new democratic spaces to evolve in a more genuinely empowering manner going forward. In concluding, I reflect on the role of democratic theorists and practitioners in facilitating this.

**Democratic theory between empowerment and activation**

Over the last few decades, democratic theory has seen a marked turn towards normativity,[[21]](#endnote-21) sparking a host of new democratic practices during the same time frame.[[22]](#endnote-22) The theories of deliberative and participatory democracy in particular have flourished in both theory and practice, and, in the case of deliberative democracy, become so dominant as to now constitute not just the ‘most successful’ model of democracy but one of the ‘most active’ areas of political theorising as such.[[23]](#endnote-23) Rejecting the existing model of liberal democracy as but a very ‘thin’ form,[[24]](#endnote-24) they bring nuance into the debate around post-democracy by suggesting ‘we should not and need not be *liberal* democrats’ only, but can look beyond the current model to both detect and theorise democratic life in altogether new forms and spaces.[[25]](#endnote-25)

Participatory democracy diagnoses a lack of democracy in everyday life, advocating a greater role for community bodies such as advisory committees, popular assemblies and town meetings.[[26]](#endnote-26) Emerging as a movement before it became a theory,[[27]](#endnote-27) the ‘participatory revolution’ that inspired such ‘new politics’ expressed a popular demand for democratic access to all societal institutions, from the workplace all the way to the global order.[[28]](#endnote-28) In the theoretical literature, participation in democratic processes at all levels does not only help bring out a common good orientation in public life,[[29]](#endnote-29) but also has an educative effect on citizens: ‘educative in the very widest sense, including both the psychological aspect and the gaining of practice of democratic skills and procedures’.[[30]](#endnote-30) Thus, participation, and an ‘active citizenship’, are advocated as being intrinsically good for citizens themselves.[[31]](#endnote-31) Contemporary theorists have shifted their focus towards more instrumental rationales for participation, such as to curb bureaucracy and tyranny,[[32]](#endnote-32) improve problem-solving capacities,[[33]](#endnote-33) defend against arbitrary power that fails to realise citizens’ actual interests, and thus generate better-informed and more legitimate decisions.[[34]](#endnote-34) In today’s practice, participatory democracy is realised mainly through town meetings, such as the well-known Chicago Police Department’s ‘beat meetings’ in which citizens ‘co-govern’ with the police by generating priorities and strategies, and ‘participatory budgeting’, which combines participatory forums at different levels to allow citizens to control and shape a proportion of a city’s budget – features which, arguably, constitute ‘empowerment’ in the sense of real citizen influence on public decisions.[[35]](#endnote-35) For Sherry Arnstein, citizen participation therefore ‘is a categorical term for citizen power. It is the redistribution of power that enables the have-not citizens, presently excluded from the political and economic processes, to be deliberately included in the future’.[[36]](#endnote-36)

Deliberative democracy replaced participatory democracy as the dominant theory of democracy with a focus that is more explicitly critical rather than instrumental: Originating as a critical theory of democratic legitimacy, deliberative democracy is rooted in a concern for empowerment against domination by unjustified power.[[37]](#endnote-37) This demands not just any participation, but specifically deliberation – a narrower and more demanding definition of democratic communication. Jürgen Habermas talks of the domination caused by an intrusion of instrumental rationality into people’s ‘lifeworlds’, and sets the normative standard that no power or force but the ‘force of the better argument’ is a justifiable influence on political outcomes.[[38]](#endnote-38) John Dryzek builds on this critical theory foundation by similarly arguing only a communicative rationality has the potential to be democratising, and deliberation as the practice that realises communicative rationality is that which excludes all forms of domination.[[39]](#endnote-39) Even from a liberal (rather than critical) perspective, John Rawls casts the need for a deliberative standard of public reason in terms of this being the only form of communication that is ‘fair’ to everyone involved, in the sense of not systematically disadvantaging any particular group or individual – which would otherwise be dominating.[[40]](#endnote-40) Thus, the rise of deliberative democracy to become one of the largest areas of political theory brought democratic empowerment against elites and other forms of unjustified power into new focus. By normatively grounding a deliberative ‘right to justification’[[41]](#endnote-41) as a basis for objecting to authoritative acts that fail to meet this standard, the deliberative ideal of legitimacy explicitly ‘harbours an “emancipatory potential” … [in that] [i]t promises to hear otherwise powerless or oppressed groups and, insofar as their arguments are reasonable, to grant them influence’.[[42]](#endnote-42) Deliberative democracy is empowering, then, insofar as it counteracts domination in all of its forms, allowing those otherwise oppressed to exert a new influence on political outcomes by redressing the coercive power elites otherwise hold over them.

In recent years, the deliberative phase of democratic theorising has motivated experimentation with democratic innovations in practice to the point of becoming ‘exemplary in [its] combination of political theory and empirical research’, and ‘[d]eliberative ideas hav[ing] … attracted the attention of citizens, activists, reform organizations, and decision-makers around the world’.[[43]](#endnote-43) Its key innovation are so-called ‘mini-publics’, going back to Robert Dahl’s vision of a ‘“minipopulus” consisting of perhaps a thousand citizens randomly selected out of the entire demos [whose] task would be to deliberate, for a year perhaps, on an issue and then to announce its choices’.[[44]](#endnote-44) Out of this concept emerged a number of different deliberative mini-publics, including deliberative polls®, citizens’ assemblies, planning cells, citizens’ juries, consensus conferences and 21st century town meetings®.[[45]](#endnote-45) What the different types have in common is their aim to instigate deliberation amongst small groups of randomly selected, ordinary citizens broadly representative of the general population.[[46]](#endnote-46) Participants are given a ‘charge’, such as a specific question to address; they are provided with balanced information materials and the chance to consult experts on the topic; a trained facilitator ensures inclusivity and respectfulness in the discussion; and the deliberations, often in different stages, typically culminate in a collective report. One well-known mini-public, the British Columbia Citizens’ Assembly, was tied to a province-wide referendum on its final recommendation; in the case of the Danish consensus conferences, there is an expectation (although no legal requirement) for Parliament and political parties to respond to the mini-public’s report; but in most other cases, mini-publics remain purely advisory.[[47]](#endnote-47) Nevertheless, Goodin and Dryzek claim mini-publics are empowering in a ‘psychological and sociological’ sense, boosting citizens’ confidence and mobilising them to put pressure on the political system in other ways as well.[[48]](#endnote-48)

And yet, taking place as it does in the context of the post-democratic constellation, deliberative democrats’ normative concern with empowerment seems to have given way, over time, to a simulative ‘activation’ exercise more than a genuine realisation of the emancipatory deliberative ideal. As Böker and Elstub argue, the theory’s turn towards practical innovations has come with the danger of its losing the very normative and critical credentials that had made it such a turnaround within democratic theory in the first place.[[49]](#endnote-49) Since the ‘deliberative turn’ within normative theoretical circles has occurred almost at the same time as Blühdorn’s diagnosis of the ‘post-democratic turn’ in modern societies’ factual practice, this prompts the question whether deliberative democracy, instead of providing an effective response to the latter, could itself have fallen prey to this constellation’s covertly democracy-eroding tendencies.

Indeed, a closer look at the evolution of both participatory and deliberative democracy reveals such a change over time. In participatory democracy, despite its origins in emancipatory movements, both the focus on educative effects on citizens themselves and the breadth of different forms of participation – a significant number of which have little to do with empowerment[[50]](#endnote-50) – limit the theory’s critical import. In deliberative democracy, the shift towards seeking to implement the normative theory in practice meant the theory’s earlier focus on ‘large […] theoretical questions about the nature of democratic legitimacy [came to be] replaced by a growing interest in the nuts and bolts of deliberative institutions’[[51]](#endnote-51) – a turn towards ‘realpolitik’ within a formerly critical theory.[[52]](#endnote-52)

In the literature, this shift in the theory is typically presented as one of moving away from the early theory’s insistence on abstract, substantive principles, such as tying deliberation to the achievement of consensus, towards concepts more aligned with the actual political reality.[[53]](#endnote-53) The benefit of this – expressly celebrated by deliberative theorists of recent generations – is that the normative-theoretical concepts become more relevant to actual political practice, and can thus be implemented. Yet if this ongoing political practice is characterised by post-democratic tendencies, aligning deliberative democracy’s normative principles with real-world relevance is tantamount to diluting their original normative force; for ‘if deliberative democracy accommodates the features of social complexity too excessively, and comes to resemble the current institutional frameworks too closely, it will be more amenable to practice, but will cease to be a critical theory that offers a radical alternative to liberal democracy, and the distinct features of the deliberative model will be lost’.[[54]](#endnote-54)

Based on what has been theorised about the post-democratic constellation, the concrete danger to look out for are practices of ‘activation’ as opposed to ‘empowerment’, which would merely ‘simulate’ democratisation.[[55]](#endnote-55) Amidst the simultaneousness of both critique (or even ‘hatred’[[56]](#endnote-56)) of democracy and continued demand for it, what resolves this paradoxical situation is the – even unintended – *simulation* of new democratic spaces, which gives the illusion of meeting democratic demands yet actually stabilises the existing order.[[57]](#endnote-57) This analysis alerts to the fact that, in the post-democratic context, not all new instances and forms of democracy are actually empowering. Quite the opposite: No longer necessarily a sign of autonomous conquest of a new political space, ‘emancipatory’ participation has been discovered as a useful resource by political and economic actors, who ‘activate’ citizens to engage with participatory processes where it helps them achieve their ends.[[58]](#endnote-58) Such ‘activation’ is different from empowerment; unlike the latter, ‘activated’ instances of democratic engagement are not self-motivated and bottom-up, but instrumentalised by the existing elites to fulfil specific purposes and thus help perpetuate the given order.[[59]](#endnote-59) As such, conceptually, activation of citizen involvement is not just the opposite of empowerment, but in fact its most subversive (and thus, likely, effective) countermeasure: dissolving its emancipatory force *precisely by seemingly endorsing it;* and thus organising inclusion as a means only of further fortified structures of exclusion.[[60]](#endnote-60) The post-democracy lens here adds further nuance to extant distinctions such as Ricardo Blaug’s ‘incumbent’ versus ‘critical’[[61]](#endnote-61), Marit Böker’s ‘top-down’ versus ‘bottom-up’[[62]](#endnote-62), or Lyn Carson’s ‘invited’ versus ‘insisted’[[63]](#endnote-63) democratisation. Although specific cases in practice may always fall somewhere along a spectrum, these categorical distinctions are useful for identifying the momentum behind exercises in democratisation, which in turn alerts to any biases in the set-up. The majority of mini-publics originate in an authority’s agenda and initiative (Carson highlights the British Columbia Citizens’ Assembly as an example of such a top-down, ‘invited’ mini-public); and referring even to so-called ‘insisted’ deliberative spaces as bottom-up or unbiased can be misleading in that they – such as Carson’s example of the Australian Citizens’ Parliament – still follow the agenda of advocacy organisations, ‘invite’ citizens to a specific deliberation on a preset question, and grant professional consultants as significant a role as in government-initiated deliberation.[[64]](#endnote-64) The more specific conceptual distinction between activation and empowerment highlights what form bottom-up deliberation would need to take to actually add to democracy: The crux is the extent to which it takes place *on the terms and initiative of the otherwise disempowered* (as opposed to those already in positions of power – whether formal authorities or other societal elites – retaining the upper hand).

Thus, the question is to what extent (or under what conditions) the democratic innovations of participatory and deliberative democratic theory fulfil their original empowerment ambitions, or have, conversely, become merely simulative or ‘activating’ exercises instead. In recognition of the existence of elements of both activation and empowerment within new instances of democracy – and, indeed, their insidiously similar appearance – it is no longer sufficient to note a growth in democratic innovations as such to ascertain an increase in, or positive development for, democracy. Rather, careful case-by-case analysis is called for to determine the impact a specific instance has had in its given context; an impact that cannot be reduced to, or anticipated by, its being organised or designed in a certain manner.[[65]](#endnote-65) Against this background, the next section engages in further analysis of the particular phenomenon of democratic innovations from this angle.

**Empowering vs activating democratic innovations**

One difficulty with assessing the promise of democratic innovations is that the term covers such a broad range of different types of citizen participation; from those inspired by participatory democracy, to deliberative mini-publics, but also consultative governance- and stakeholder discourses. In Blühdorn’s analysis, they are simply summarised as ‘governance innovations’ and said to constitute ‘always a system stabilising element’ given their designed and controlled nature.[[66]](#endnote-66) As such, they are necessarily defined as ‘de-politicising’.[[67]](#endnote-67) This does not do justice to the much more diverse literature on democratic innovations within the normative theoretical literature, and in particular the deliberative kinds, which therefore warrant further analysis.

What is known in general terms as ‘governance innovations’ can indeed be seen as de-politicising. Governance denotes the inclusion of civil society and other non-state actors in decision-making, and thus a bridging of the public-private divide.[[68]](#endnote-68) However, in this literature, the relationships between the different societal actors are cast in remarkably power- (and thus domination-) free terms; in governance ‘partnerships’, the idea is that the different ‘stakeholders’ involved work together collaboratively to reach an efficient and effective solution to a specific policy problem. As such, stakeholder governance has rightly been criticised for failing to address power asymmetries and for diffusing any radical critique.[[69]](#endnote-69) However, with this focus, the governance literature is also rather distinct from the literature on democratic innovations in a more political sense, such as that inspired by participatory and deliberative democratic theory.

In the latter category, while the broad term of ‘participation’ includes forms of consultation that are similarly collaborative in a non-political sense, it is *deliberative* democratic innovations (which are sometimes taken to include particular participatory innovations, such as participatory budgeting[[70]](#endnote-70)) that, given the normative theory’s emancipatory origins, present the ‘most likely’ case for genuine empowerment. Deliberative mini-publics differ from more conventional participatory exercises in that the desirability of, if not *need* for critical contestation is widely noted in the literature.[[71]](#endnote-71) After all, mini-publics are not seen first and foremost as strategic instruments through which a new form of democracy is simply put in place, but rather as more abstract experimental testing grounds in which the theory’s normative concepts can be further refined.[[72]](#endnote-72) Thus, the underlying argument, at least for normatively oriented theorists, is that any specific instance of ‘deliberation’ only ever constitutes a small and *potential* part of ‘deliberative democracy’ in its real and full meaning, and the outcome of specific deliberative encounters such as mini-publics must be seen as deliberately open, iterative, and subject to further challenge.[[73]](#endnote-73) ‘Officially’, therefore, deliberative innovations do represent an effort to institute explicitly *empowering* new forms of democracy, as demanded by the deliberative norm of legitimacy.[[74]](#endnote-74)

And yet, despite these often-heard reassurances, the record even of deliberative innovations is problematic.

On the one hand, the literature also stresses many ways in which mini-publics are ‘extremely useful to policy-makers’, and often takes the perspective of making demands on citizens as opposed to allowing citizens to make demands on those in power.[[75]](#endnote-75) Some theorists portray deliberation in mini-publics as a form of ‘public education’ that seeks to craft ‘better’ or ‘more ideal’ citizens.[[76]](#endnote-76) Even where they do present a channel for marginalised perspectives to be voiced, mini-publics do not have a good record of this voice leading to any greater influence on decisions, as the deliberative concept of empowerment would demand.[[77]](#endnote-77) This suggests mini-publics do lend themselves to, and are by some expressly used for, activation rather than empowerment; potentially providing ‘a strategic instrument for governments to *foster*, more than a channel for citizens to *constrain* their effective authority’.[[78]](#endnote-78) Amongst emphases of how positive mini-public participants tend to rate their experience being heard with the same frequency as concerns about commissioning bodies’ ‘cherry-picking’ only those recommendations that support their aims,[[79]](#endnote-79) misusing mini-publics ‘as a “fig leaf” of legitimation for predetermined outcomes’,[[80]](#endnote-80) or using mini-publics ‘to avoid more challenging ways of communicating’ with the authorities,[[81]](#endnote-81) it would not seem far-fetched to liken mini-publics to the pacifying, yet ultimately democracy-eroding features of a mere ‘simulative democracy’.[[82]](#endnote-82)

On the other hand, to recall, Blühdorn characterises instances of democratic engagement as ‘activating’ when they are initiated by existing political and economic elites rather than self-motivated and bottom-up, and used to fulfil specific purposes to their benefit rather than genuinely open-ended and driven by an emancipatory momentum *against* the given order.[[83]](#endnote-83) Together, these two parts of the distinction between activation and empowerment express that ‘genuine critique can by its nature not be engineered or forced’,[[84]](#endnote-84) and thus emancipation requires a ‘self-empowering’ potential within citizens themselves.[[85]](#endnote-85) From this angle, activation need not even be defined as being in the active interest of political and economic elites that might manipulate citizens towards a specific strategic benefit. Rather, it is whenever democratisation does not occur on citizens’ own terms that empowerment is undermined; for whatever other terms it then takes place on reflect – and thus help perpetuate by their very occurrence – those already in the powerful position to effect this.

This point is important to stress when it comes to democratic innovations. While there certainly are purportedly deliberative mini-publics that stem from a manipulative intent by their organisers,[[86]](#endnote-86) deliberative practitioners would probably insist these represent outlier cases, and the vast majority of mini-publics are genuinely aimed at democratisation. Yet even then, the defining feature of democratic innovations is their being artificially designed and carefully instituted. In Smith’s characterisation, for instance, democratic innovations are ‘institutions that have been *specifically designed* to increase and deepen citizen participation’; Fung even speaks of ‘recipes’ for different specific outcomes that can be achieved by different ‘design choices’.[[87]](#endnote-87) As such, *despite* their assurances, by virtue of having emerged out of the normative theory of deliberative legitimacy, of an aim of empowerment, deliberative mini-publics are always primarily activating in that they are ‘designed and controlled’, just as Blühdorn describes of governance innovations.[[88]](#endnote-88) Even if the substantive outcome is truly open, and organisers have the best intentions to be democratically accountable, the necessity nonetheless of timing, funding and running the event and circumscribing its scope, form, content and procedures still means mini-publics are not bottom-up forms of engagement, in which citizens could exert influence on their own terms.[[89]](#endnote-89) In fact, organising mini-publics is expensive and has become a highly professional and commercialised practice.[[90]](#endnote-90) As a result, Curato et al. find, an overly ‘“positive” approach to deliberation seems to be gaining ground among forum designers and deliberative practitioners’, emphasising appreciative, collaborative and respectful virtues within group discussions over critical contestation and justificatory demands.[[91]](#endnote-91) Hence, the more dominant such designed innovations become within the *overall* space of democratisation, the less will citizens’ own critical demands shape its unfolding – *despite* these being the key players that democratic innovators ultimately aim their well-intentioned efforts at.

Examples of this in recent practice include the citizens’ assemblies on Brexit and on climate change in the UK. Both would qualify as ‘insisted’ deliberations according to Carson’s criteria, but they still do/did not take place on any critical citizens’ own terms, and may even be skewing the public debate in a way that favours the government line.

The citizens’ assembly on Brexit – the UK’s exit from the European Union following a 2016 national referendum – was organised in 2017 by a number of partners as part of the ‘UK in a Changing Europe’ initiative, a non-partisan research unit based at King’s College London.[[92]](#endnote-92) Organised by reputable academics, it can be assumed to be credibly interested in supporting democratisation in an impartial manner. The organisers report that the citizens’ assembly, which considered the question what form Brexit should take, encouraged ‘open-minded deliberation’[[93]](#endnote-93) and offers a model of ‘high-quality democratic discussion’.[[94]](#endnote-94) However, in focusing only on choice between different Brexit scenarios – the kind of trade deal (if any) and immigration policies to be negotiated – the discussion left a highly salient perspective from the wider public discourse entirely off the agenda: to stop Brexit altogether. The focus on trade and immigration, as well as beginning the discussion with reflections on what members ‘wanted to be able to value about their country’[[95]](#endnote-95) (that is, a UK-centric starting point) certainly reflect the UK government’s own priorities. Thus, the citizens’ assembly may have been impartial and ‘insisted’ in the sense of not being government-organised, but its highly restrictive and preset agenda still ended up bolstering a very particular, government-sanctioned take on the issue, at the expense of the more critical stances within the public discourse.

An even more clearly ‘insisted’ or ‘bottom-up’ citizens’ assembly, but with at best uncertain outcomes in terms of empowerment, is that proposed by the climate movement Extinction Rebellion.[[96]](#endnote-96) In a novel move for an environmental activist group, Extinction Rebellion ‘calls on the government to create and be led by a citizens’ assembly on climate and ecological justice’.[[97]](#endnote-97) Informed and overseen by leading academics, the citizens’ assembly would follow the accepted design and procedures of other prominent mini-publics; and originating in an activist movement, it is indisputably ‘bottom-up’. However, although it is unclear whether this is in direct response or unrelated, what formal authorities actually did was to organise a citizens’ assembly (‘Climate Assembly UK’, to be held in spring 2020) on ‘how the UK will reach its net zero emissions target, and what can be done by members of the public to help reduce carbon emissions’.[[98]](#endnote-98) From the analytical perspective of distinguishing between top-down or ‘invited’ and bottom-up or ‘insisted’ deliberation, not only is it telling that a citizens’ movement feels the need to ‘call on the government’ to run a deliberative process – that is, ‘insisting’ on a merely ‘invited’ space, and thus itself playing a part in the disempowering simulation game. But even if this mini-public will be run in an entirely impartial and well-meaning manner, its thematic remit has shifted the focus away from justice and Extinction Rebellion’s more radical demands towards the UK government’s priority of reaching its own particular climate target and a sense of personal responsibility – thus significantly diluting the radical environmentalist critique of the government and its policy line.

If democratic innovations’ turning into activation as opposed to empowerment – leading to this kind of diluting of radical critique *through* citizen-centred spaces – is the effect of the post-democratic constellation, it presents democratic innovators with a difficult conundrum. With their very self-understanding being one of proactively creating – that is, *designing* – institutional spaces for democratisation, their practice is inflicted with an irresolvable contradiction: The best they could hope to achieve is a non-malicious, yet still *status quo*-perpetuating form of activation, whereas the empowerment they are actually after would be not just out of reach, but further undermined precisely by their best attempts to achieve it. Deliberative practitioners might argue that some degree of influencing may be a lamentable but unavoidable fact of political life; and so long as it is non-malicious and overall still helps nudge the wider polity into a more deliberative direction, it might be worth it.[[99]](#endnote-99) Mini-publics could at least be designed in as open and critical a way as possible;[[100]](#endnote-100) and deliberative capacity fostered in the wider society in parallel to such specific deliberative processes.[[101]](#endnote-101) Yet while these may be plausible strategies in a ‘neutral’ societal context, within the post-democratic constellation they might well be a dangerously naïve way of looking at democratisation. In this context, in which citizens are already being targeted for manipulative activation purposes and deceived with a mere simulation of democratic spaces, empowerment is necessary even against such well-meaning, yet ultimately still top-down and elite-driven ‘democratic assistance’.

Normative democratic theory, in other words, must not ignore the reality of the post-democratic constellation. An application of its concepts of ‘activation vs empowerment’ has brought new nuance to the evaluation of democratic innovations, suggesting that *having the right intentions is no longer enough*: democratic innovators ought to be wary of seeking immediate outcomes through the ‘recipe-like’ approach of institutional design even when doing so with the aim of empowerment in mind. Without realising it, democratic theorists and practitioners may themselves have come under the spell of post-democracy, failing to recognise the mere simulativeness of their own approaches.

Is there a way out of this conundrum? A role for democratic innovations within a genuinely empowering project – proceeding on the affected citizens’ own terms? The next section reflects on the practice of democratic theory in relation to empowerment, to consider whether there is any space left for actual democratisation despite post-democratic conditions.

**A route towards empowerment in the post-democratic constellation?**

While democratic innovations like mini-publics undermine deliberative democracy’s critical impulse if they are used as mere vehicles to legitimate government authority,[[102]](#endnote-102) another way in which they can relate to the post-democratic constellation is in their injecting a general politicisation and sense of experimentation into an overall vibrant, open democratic space. Thus, although it would be wrong to see the direct and artificially engineered effects of designed innovations as democratising in their own right, some scholars are hopeful they might still fulfil a useful role when viewed in the context of the wider political space they take place in.[[103]](#endnote-103) What democratic innovators need to do for this, though, is not to make only discrete, top-down interventions such as mini-publics, but to *fight the post-democratic constellation* *itself*. Insofar as the terms ‘democratic innovation’ or ‘democratic innovator’ are so narrowly defined as to only denote the former, this trend, despite appearances, is highly problematic for democracy. Insofar as they can adopt a broader perspective, democratic innovation as an overarching practice (rather than specific innovation*s*, in the plural) can still support democratisation under certain conditions.

First, the deliberative perspective suggests the crux regarding empowerment to be its being tied to the own initiative of the oppressed. Whereas innovations in an activating sense focus on immediate outcomes through design, empowerment *cannot* be so ‘produced’; it can only self-evolve.[[104]](#endnote-104) Yet there are preconditions for this that democratic theory (as well as otherwise top-down governance and policy interventions) can help provide: an opening up of new democratic spaces through the politicisation of otherwise depoliticised issues; a widening of access to information and education; and maintaining a critical political discourse about equality and democracy itself. Only insofar as the practice of democratic innovation helps to politicise the *status quo* in this sense, fosters a general sense of openness, and draws attention to the pervasiveness of inequality and marginalisation in society can it play a role in supporting an empowerment-*conducive* wider context. The important point is a shift in perspective. Democratic innovators must note that empowerment does not happen automatically or necessarily through the right professional design, but requires a broader, *political* approach. Unless democratic innovators go beyond celebrating their own successes in the form of the outcomes of discrete mini-publics, but campaign for equality and empowerment *in all areas of society and through all channels available to them*, they are not credible as advancers of democratisation.

Second, therefore, democratic innovators’ stance must be a *critical*, not a productive or strategic, one. Insofar as designed interventions such as mini-publics succeed in achieving the organisers’ own strategic goals, by getting participants to comply with the deliberative ‘rulebook’, they further perpetuate the pernicious simulation and activation game at work in the post-democratic constellation. To counteract this, interventions need to do the opposite: *expose* the ways in which even purportedly democratic practices can delude and oppress citizens and be driven by power and interest. A critical approach then submits *itself* to citizens’ critical judgement, providing them with tools and resources for their own autonomous (self-)empowerment, rather than making interventions that remain carefully controlled.[[105]](#endnote-105) Unless a certain degree of critical deliberativeness and concern for democracy is already given within the wider socio-political context that any innovations take place in,[[106]](#endnote-106) even well-meaning democratic innovators can otherwise play *too* strong a role in democratisation. In order to create opportunities for empowerment, they must see their function as at most sowing the seeds for a diverse, spontaneous engagement with democracy within the society at large, not ‘providing’ democracy as a specific product with immediate, marketable impacts.[[107]](#endnote-107)

From this perspective, the post-democratic constellation, seen as an open-ended process of democracy’s changing form, is actually not all bad news. As long as citizens’ ‘anti-democratic feelings … [still] combine with radicalised democratic demands’, general concern for democracy remains, and democracy *as such* is therefore not threatened.[[108]](#endnote-108) From an optimistic angle, Blüh­dorn’s pessimistic outlook conflates too easily the current mistrust and critique of *existing* democratic institutions with a normative erosion of democracy *as such*.[[109]](#endnote-109) Democracy lives on such challenge and collective reinterpretation, signalling continued societal investment in democracy as a *norm of empowerment* against closure and domination. Discontent with democracy can motivate the broader interest in new practices that is needed for a more diverse pursuit of deliberative democracy. This is the crux of a productive way forward for democratic innovations in the context of the post-democratic constellation: Experimenting with new democratic spaces not with an expectation of conformity with instructions or support for existing structures, but, rather, with an eye to stimulating citizens’ own autonomous engagement with, including critique of, different forms of democracy and their implications. From this perspective, Blühdorn’s conclusion that the post-democratic constellation will not result in the end of democracy, but neither in its ‘recapture’ by the leftist intellectuals of the participatory revolution,[[110]](#endnote-110) is not deplorable. As long as democracy as such is still retained as an important norm of resisting domination, it demands a continuous process of societal contestation – continually reaffirming it as such a norm – that must itself be democratic and thus inclusive. The failure of one specific group to ‘seize’ the meaning of democracy must be seen as a healthy sign.

**Conclusion**

In analysing democratic innovations against the spectre of the post-democratic constellation, this paper has detected a worrying shift within democratic theory itself that matches the democracy-eroding tendencies within real-world modern democracies: the shift in focus away from genuine empowerment of oppressed citizens and towards practical exercises that merely ‘activate’ them in a way that benefits the already powerful. As sheltered as they might like to see themselves from such real-world developments, democratic scholars may themselves have been influenced by the post-democratic constellation, resulting in their own illusionment with regard to any real democratisation they achieve through their well-intentioned practice. Indeed, the focus on empowerment in the earlier theory yet activation in recent practice fits the new drive towards efficiency and impact in academic research, the rise of the ‘consultocracy’, as well as the incapacitation, even disenfranchisement of citizens that results from persistent inequality in all political and societal practice.

Thus, it is vital for democratic theory not to ignore the dangers of the post-democratic constellation affecting its own practice, by (inadvertently) turning well-meaning democratic innovation into a counterproductive simulation of real empowerment. Aspiring to become a ‘practical’ theory, as has occurred with the rise of democratic innovation, is dangerous in this regard. To counteract trends towards activation and simulation and promote real empowerment instead, democratic theorists and practitioners alike must see their innovations within a wider context of *democracy as itself a democratic project*, in need of continued normative and critical theorising not just by scholars, but by citizens themselves. This kind of self-understanding might then utilise the fruitful, society-wide inspiration that can come from innovation and experimentation, without risking to slip into a more short-term, simulative self-gratification. Under such conditions, democratic theory might well be able to free itself from the subversive elements of post-democracy and utilise it as an opportunity instead: as a soil on which democratisation can continue to evolve and remain alive; influenced by all numbers of actors and innovators, but with its *key* player – critical citizens – in the most active role.

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**Notes**

1. Crouch, *Post-Democracy*; Crouch, ‘The March Towards Post-Democracy’; Blühdorn, *Simulative Demokratie*. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
2. Smith, *Democratic Innovations*; Geißel and Joas, *Participatory Democratic Innovations in Europe*; Geißel and Newton, *Evaluating Democratic Innovations*; Goodin, *Innovating Democracy*; Saward, *Democratic Innovation*; Fung and Wright, ‘Deepening Democracy’; Carter and Stokes, *Democratic Theory Today*; Dryzek, *Foundations and Frontiers*. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
3. Fishkin and Mansbridge, ‘Introduction’, 6; Offe, ‘Referendum vs. Institutionalized Deliberation’, 15. [↑](#endnote-ref-3)
4. See, e.g., Curato et al., *Power in Deliberative Democracy*. [↑](#endnote-ref-4)
5. Offe, ‘Referendum vs. Institutionalized Deliberation’, 15. [↑](#endnote-ref-5)
6. Crouch, Post-Democracy, 1-2. [↑](#endnote-ref-6)
7. Crouch, ‘The March Towards Post-Democracy’, 71. [↑](#endnote-ref-7)
8. Offe, ‘Referendum vs. Institutionalized Deliberation’, 15-6. [↑](#endnote-ref-8)
9. Blühdorn, *Simulative Demokratie*; Blühdorn, ‘The governance of unsustainability’; Blühdorn, ‘A massive escalation’. [↑](#endnote-ref-9)
10. Butzlaff, *Die neuen Bürgerproteste*, 11-2. [↑](#endnote-ref-10)
11. Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*, 21. [↑](#endnote-ref-11)
12. Blühdorn, *Simulative Demokratie*, 176-80; Blühdorn, ‘Das Postdemokratische Diskursquartett’, 52, 59, 66-7. [↑](#endnote-ref-12)
13. Goodin, *Innovating Democracy*; Smith, *Democratic Innovations*; Saward, *Democratic Innovation*; Fung and Wright, ‘Deepening Democracy’. [↑](#endnote-ref-13)
14. Smith, *Democratic Innovations*, 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-14)
15. Newton, ‘Curing the Democratic Malaise, 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-15)
16. https://participedia.net/, last accessed 11/08/2017. [↑](#endnote-ref-16)
17. Ryan and Smith, ‘Defining Mini-Publics’; Goodin, *Innovating Democracy*, 11-19. [↑](#endnote-ref-17)
18. Dryzek, ‘Can There Be a Human Right’; see also Newton, ‘Curing the Democratic Malaise’. [↑](#endnote-ref-18)
19. Curato et al., *Power in Deliberative Democracy*. [↑](#endnote-ref-19)
20. Böker, ‘Justification, critique and deliberative legitimacy’; Curato and Böker, ‘Linking mini-publics to the deliberative system’. [↑](#endnote-ref-20)
21. Böker and Elstub, ‘The Possibility of Critical Mini-Publics’. [↑](#endnote-ref-21)
22. Smith, *Democratic Innovations*; Geißel and Joas, *Participatory Democratic Innovations in Europe*; Goodin, *Innovating Democracy*; Saward, *Democratic Innovation*. [↑](#endnote-ref-22)
23. Pateman, ‘Participatory Democracy Revisited’, 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-23)
24. Barber, *Strong Democracy*. [↑](#endnote-ref-24)
25. Dryzek, *Discursive Democracy*, 18 (emphasis added). [↑](#endnote-ref-25)
26. Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory*; Barber, *Strong Democracy*. [↑](#endnote-ref-26)
27. Floridia, *From Participation to Deliberation*. [↑](#endnote-ref-27)
28. Blühdorn, ‘Das Postdemokratische Diskursquartett’, 53. [↑](#endnote-ref-28)
29. Baber, *Strong Democracy*. [↑](#endnote-ref-29)
30. Pateman, *Participation and Democratic Theory*, 42. [↑](#endnote-ref-30)
31. Parry, ‘Introduction’, 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-31)
32. Ibid., 19. [↑](#endnote-ref-32)
33. Geißel, ‘On the Evaluation of Participatory Innovations’, 11. [↑](#endnote-ref-33)
34. Smith, *Democratic Innovations*, 5. [↑](#endnote-ref-34)
35. Ibid., 31-4; Fung, ‘Recipes for Public Spheres’, 346, 365. [↑](#endnote-ref-35)
36. Arnstein, ‘A Ladder of Citizen Participation’, 282. [↑](#endnote-ref-36)
37. Böker and Elstub, ‘The Possibility of Critical Mini-Publics’, 129; Curato et al., *Power in Deliberative Democracy*. [↑](#endnote-ref-37)
38. Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms*, 306. [↑](#endnote-ref-38)
39. Dryzek, *Discursive Democracy*; Dryzek, *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond*. [↑](#endnote-ref-39)
40. Rawls, *Political Liberalism*. [↑](#endnote-ref-40)
41. Forst, *The Right to Justification*. [↑](#endnote-ref-41)
42. Knops, ‘Delivering Deliberation’s Emancipatory Potential’, 594. Rostbøll, ‘Dissent, Criticism, and Transformative Political Action’. [↑](#endnote-ref-42)
43. Curato et al., ‘Twelve Key Findings’, 28. [↑](#endnote-ref-43)
44. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, 340. [↑](#endnote-ref-44)
45. Ryan and Smith, ‘Defining Mini-Publics.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-45)
46. Goodin and Dryzek, ‘Deliberative Impacts’, 221; Setälä and Smith, ‘Mini-publics and deliberative democracy.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-46)
47. Smith, *Democratic Innovations*, 74; Goodin and Dryzek, ‘Deliberative Impacts’, 226. [↑](#endnote-ref-47)
48. Goodin and Dryzek, ‘Deliberative Impacts’, 234. [↑](#endnote-ref-48)
49. Böker and Elstub, ‘The Possibility of Critical Mini-Publics’, 130. [↑](#endnote-ref-49)
50. See Arnstein, ‘A Ladder of Citizen Participation’. [↑](#endnote-ref-50)
51. Chambers, ‘Rhetoric and the public sphere’, 329. [↑](#endnote-ref-51)
52. Böker and Elstub, ‘The Possibility of Critical Mini-Publics’, 131. [↑](#endnote-ref-52)
53. Bächtiger et al., ‘Disentangling Diversity in Deliberative Democracy’; Elstub, ‘The third generation of deliberative democracy’. [↑](#endnote-ref-53)
54. Elstub, ‘The third generation of deliberative democracy’, 305. [↑](#endnote-ref-54)
55. Blühdorn, *Simulative Demokratie*; Blühdorn, ‘Das Postdemokratische Diskursquartett’. [↑](#endnote-ref-55)
56. Rancière, *Hatred of Democracy*. [↑](#endnote-ref-56)
57. Blühdorn, *Simulative Demokratie*, 179; Blühdorn, ‘Das Postdemokratische Diskursquartett’, 52. [↑](#endnote-ref-57)
58. Blühdorn, ‘Das Postdemokratische Diskursquartett’, 58. [↑](#endnote-ref-58)
59. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-59)
60. See ibid., 67. [↑](#endnote-ref-60)
61. Blaug, ‘Engineering democracy.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-61)
62. Böker, ‘Justification, critique and deliberative legitimacy’. [↑](#endnote-ref-62)
63. Carson, ‘Creating democratic surplus through citizens’ assemblies.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-63)
64. Carson, ‘Creating democratic surplus through citizens’ assemblies’; Hendriks and Carson, ‘Can the market help the forum?, 299. [↑](#endnote-ref-64)
65. Curato and Böker, ‘Linking mini-publics to the deliberative system’, 186. [↑](#endnote-ref-65)
66. Blühdorn, ‘Das Postdemokratische Diskursquartett’, 64 (my own translation). [↑](#endnote-ref-66)
67. Ibid., 66. [↑](#endnote-ref-67)
68. Geißel, ‘On the Evaluation of Participatory Innovations’, 11; see also Bexell and Mörth, ‘Partnerships, Democracy, and Governance’; Glasbergen et al., *Partnerships, Governance and Sustainable Development*. [↑](#endnote-ref-68)
69. Schouten et al., ‘On the deliberative capacity of private multi-stakeholder governance’, 42. [↑](#endnote-ref-69)
70. Ryan and Smith, ‘Defining Mini-Publics.’ [↑](#endnote-ref-70)
71. Curato et al., ‘Twelve Key Findings’, [↑](#endnote-ref-71)
72. Dryzek, *Foundations and Frontiers*, 6-9. [↑](#endnote-ref-72)
73. Cf. Chambers, ‘Rhetoric and the public sphere‘, 324; see Böker and Elstub, ‘The Possibility of Critical Mini-Publics’, 139-40. [↑](#endnote-ref-73)
74. Böker, ‘Justification, critique and deliberative legitimacy’. [↑](#endnote-ref-74)
75. Delap, ‘Citizens’ juries’, 39; Böker, ‘Justification, critique and deliberative legitimacy’, 28. [↑](#endnote-ref-75)
76. Fishkin et al., ‘Deliberative polling and public consultation’, 665; Luskin et al., ‘Considered Opinions’, 460; Normann Andersen and Hansen, ‘How deliberation makes better citizens’; Newton, ‘Making Better Citizens?’. [↑](#endnote-ref-76)
77. Setälä and Smith, ‘Mini-publics and deliberative democracy’, 9. [↑](#endnote-ref-77)
78. Böker, ‘Justification, critique and deliberative legitimacy’, 29 (emphases in the original). [↑](#endnote-ref-78)
79. Smith, *Democratic Innovations*, 93. [↑](#endnote-ref-79)
80. Niemeyer, ‘Scaling up deliberation to mass publics’, 177. [↑](#endnote-ref-80)
81. Delap, ‘Citizens’ juries’, 39. [↑](#endnote-ref-81)
82. Blühdorn, *Simulative Demokratie*. [↑](#endnote-ref-82)
83. Blühdorn, ‘Das Postdemokratische Diskursquartett’. [↑](#endnote-ref-83)
84. Böker, ‘Justification, critique and deliberative legitimacy’, 31. [↑](#endnote-ref-84)
85. Susen, ‘Between emancipation and domination’, 85. Note that the need for self-empowerment does not render governance- or policy-driven efforts at creating empowerment obsolete: Policy frameworks and political structures are key inasmuch as they create (or obstruct) the preconditions for empowerment, and can give decisive impulses. They cannot, however, replace bottom-up empowerment entirely. [↑](#endnote-ref-85)
86. See, for example, Joly et al., ‘Quand les candides évaluent les OGM’, 14; Freschi and Mete, ‘The political meanings of institutional deliberative experiments’, 20. [↑](#endnote-ref-86)
87. Smith, *Democratic Innovations*, 1 (emphasis added); Fung, ‘Recipes for Public Spheres’. [↑](#endnote-ref-87)
88. Blühdorn, ‘Das Postdemokratische Diskursquartett’. [↑](#endnote-ref-88)
89. Neblo, *Deliberative Democracy between Theory and Practice*, 182; Böker, ‘Justification, critique and deliberative legitimacy’. [↑](#endnote-ref-89)
90. Delap, ‘Citizens’ juries’, 41; Hendriks and Carson, ‘Can the market help the forum?’. [↑](#endnote-ref-90)
91. Curato et al., ‘Appreciative and contestatory inquiry’, 2. [↑](#endnote-ref-91)
92. The Constitution Unit, *A Considered Public Voice on Brexit*. [↑](#endnote-ref-92)
93. Ibid., 6. [↑](#endnote-ref-93)
94. Ibid., 8. [↑](#endnote-ref-94)
95. Ibid., 7. [↑](#endnote-ref-95)
96. Extinction Rebellion, ‘The Extinction Rebellion Guide to Citizens’ Assemblies’. [↑](#endnote-ref-96)
97. Ibid. [↑](#endnote-ref-97)
98. UK Parliament, ‘Parliament sends 30,000 invitations for citizens’ assembly on climate change’. [↑](#endnote-ref-98)
99. Niemeyer, ‘Scaling up deliberation to mass publics’, 179. [↑](#endnote-ref-99)
100. Ward et al., ‘Open citizens’ juries’; Böker and Elstub, ‘The Possibility of Critical Mini-Publics’. [↑](#endnote-ref-100)
101. Curato and Böker, ‘Linking mini-publics to the deliberative system’, 186. [↑](#endnote-ref-101)
102. Setälä and Smith, ‘Mini-publics and deliberative democracy’, 11. [↑](#endnote-ref-102)
103. Curato and Böker, ‘Linking mini-publics to the deliberative system’; Niemeyer, ‘Scaling up deliberation to mass publics’. [↑](#endnote-ref-103)
104. Böker, ‘Justification, critique and deliberative legitimacy’. [↑](#endnote-ref-104)
105. Hammond, ‘Deliberative Democracy as a Critical Theory’. [↑](#endnote-ref-105)
106. Böker and Elstub, ‘The Possibility of Critical Mini-Publics’; Curato and Böker, ‘Linking mini-publics to the deliberative system’. [↑](#endnote-ref-106)
107. Hendriks and Carson, ‘Can the market help the forum?’ [↑](#endnote-ref-107)
108. Blühdorn, ‘Das Postdemokratische Diskursquartett’, 52 (my own translation); see also Newton, ‘Curing the democratic malaise’, 4. [↑](#endnote-ref-108)
109. E.g., ibid., 51. [↑](#endnote-ref-109)
110. Ibid., 61 (my own translation). [↑](#endnote-ref-110)