

**Reforming democracy in disconnected times:  
A deliberative systems approach**

Selen A. Ercan  
University of Canberra  
[selen.ercan@canberra.edu.au](mailto:selen.ercan@canberra.edu.au)

Carolyn M. Hendriks  
Australian National University  
[carolyn.hendriks@anu.edu.au](mailto:carolyn.hendriks@anu.edu.au)

John Boswell  
University of Southampton  
[j.c.boswell@soton.ac.uk](mailto:j.c.boswell@soton.ac.uk)

Paper to be presented at ECPR Joint Sessions  
Workshop WS05: Can Participatory Reforms Save Representative Democracy?  
10-14 April 2018, Nicosia

## **Abstract**

The capacity of participatory reforms to ‘save representative democracy’ depends in large part on how we define the challenges facing contemporary democratic institutions. In this paper we argue that at the heart of the current democratic malaise lie a series of dysfunctional ‘democratic disconnections’. Drawing on recent systems thinking in the field of deliberative democracy we diagnose three key disconnections facing representative democracy: i) disconnections between citizens and their elected representatives, ii) disconnections between multiple publics of in the public sphere, iii) disconnections between democratic will and policy action. These disconnections produce subtle forms of exclusion and coercion that scholars of democratic innovation currently overlook or elide. We argue that deliberative systems approach can help to address these disconnects, if it focuses on forging connections not only between participatory forums and democratic institutions, but also between citizens and elites, between citizens themselves in the public sphere, and between citizens and the processes that govern them. We use various case studies to illustrate different types of disconnections and to substantiate our argument about the need for greater connectivity in contemporary democracies. Developing practical means to foster greater connectivity opens up a much broader range of possibilities for thinking about democratic intervention in disconnected times.

## **Introduction**

There is growing interest worldwide in democratic innovations that engage everyday citizens in policy deliberations (e.g. Smith 2009, Grönlund et al. 2014) Yet studies show that in practice many of these participatory processes tend to operate at a distance from key actors, institutions and decision makers (e.g. Goodin and Dryzek 2006, Michels 2011, Fuji-Johnson 2015). To improve their connectivity, there has been a call to better embed or couple participatory forums to existing spaces and institutions in representative democracies (see, for example, Knobloch et al. 2015). In effect this reform agenda seeks to better connect participatory processes involving affected publics to relevant decision makers.

In this paper we argue that this forum-based approach to democratic reform has very limited capacity to repair many of the ills facing modern systems of representative democracy. Our concern with participatory forums is not that they can be piece-meal, tokenistic, top-down or even co-opt citizens, as others have argued (e.g. McQuarrie 2013, Lee et al 2015). Instead our argument is a broader one: that participatory forums alone can do very little to remedy some of the major disconnections plaguing contemporary democracies such as the disconnect between citizens and political representatives, between citizens in the public sphere and between citizens and the systems that govern them. While we recognise that participatory reforms can be useful for creating designed moments of inclusive public deliberation for specific policy issues (Dryzek and Hendriks 2012), they alone cannot address some of the systemic challenges facing modern politics.

As an alternative we turn to the recent systems thinking in deliberative democracy, which offers a productive pathway forward for understanding and remedying contemporary democratic disconnections. This is not just a normative argument but one grounded in our empirical observations of political practices in and around contested issues in various liberal democracies, including Australia, Germany, and the United Kingdom (see Hendriks 2011, Boswell 2016, Boswell et al 2016, Hendriks et al 2016, Ercan 2017, Ercan et al 2017a, Ercan et al 2018). We are currently articulating these empirically informed arguments in a book project that offers a new way of conceptualising and advancing connectivity in deliberative systems.

In this paper we sketch the central argument of our book, which is built on five key moves:

(1) Our starting point is the observation that forum-based (ie. institutional) proposals for ‘repairing’ representative democracy do not attend to some of the most significant disconnects found in most contemporary democracies, namely: i) disconnections between citizens and elected representatives; disconnections within public sphere, iii) disconnections within governance structures. These disconnections sit at the heart of the democratic crisis and pose serious challenges to implementing and sustaining any democratic reform initiatives, particularly those based on deliberative democratic ideals. The proliferation of deliberative forums across the globe is clearly good news for democracies. Yet this has happened seemingly in parallel with much more prominent bad news for democracies, and amid a widespread perception of democratic crisis and decline (Ercan and Gagnon 2015). There has been very little attention on how to link these innovative practices to broader socio-political trends that seemingly threaten the very foundations of a more deliberative form of politics.

(2) Next, we suggest that recent systems thinking in deliberative democracy offers a productive pathway forward for understanding and remedying these democratic disconnections. At its heart, deliberative democracy is a normative ideal that views collective decisions as legitimate to the extent that they have been considered and reflected upon the views those potential affected (Dryzek 2000). Although deliberative democracy is a theory of a democratic society at large, in practice it is often narrowly framed as the implementation of participatory institutions, such as citizens’ juries, participatory budgeting or collaborative forums, aimed at engaging citizens in political decision making (e.g. Fung and Wright 2003, Smith 2009, Nabatchi et al 2012). This framing has left the deliberative project open to the charge of naïve utopianism (see especially Achen and Bartels 2016). Focusing on this narrow understanding of deliberative democracy, sceptics have challenged the optimistic expectations about the feasibility of this approach for democratic reform. They have argued that deliberation in structured forums requires what is exactly missing in contemporary democracies: high levels of political participation and social capital (Parvin 2015).

(3) We then go on to argue that deliberative democracy can offer both a feasible and distinctive democratic reform agenda *if* it is conceptualised as something that is fostered well-beyond the

forum across entire democratic systems (see Dryzek 2016, Elstub et al 2016, Bächtiger et al forthcoming). A ‘deliberative system’ consists of differentiated yet linked components, ranging from highly structured assemblies and forums (such as legislatures) to loose informal social gatherings and public interactions (Hendriks 2006; Parkinson and Mansbridge 2012). These sites can vary in their intrinsic deliberative quality; some may be truth seeking, inclusive and egalitarian, while others may be exclusive and closed to competing discourses. Normatively what matters is that the system as a whole engenders public reasoning for collective judgments (Mansbridge et al 2012).

(4) While the systemic approach to deliberative democracy offers a useful lens to build a broad democratic reform agenda, we contend current accounts of deliberative systems rely on idealised conceptions of undistorted communication and connection. We critically appraise existing systems accounts of deliberative democracy, highlighting their narrow and limited understanding of democratic connectivity. We contend that current accounts have been developed without adequate consideration of the recent developments in contemporary democracies, such as the rise of alternative forms of political participation, the digitalisation of politics, and the proliferation of the sites and modes of political communication. In short, existing accounts of deliberative systems do not take seriously the real-world limitations and opportunities available for democratic reform.

(5) In our final move we draw on empirical research to demonstrate how in practice, connections in deliberative systems are forged not only by coupling institutions, but also by the activities and relationships of actors, the performative effects of alternative forms of political participation, and through the iterative and often mundane processes of governing. Drawing on these empirical insights, we offer a more pragmatic and a multi-dimensional notion of *connectivity* that takes seriously connections forged by actors, different communicative modes, and procedures of governing. Importantly we argue that connected democratic practice is not just a matter of identifying and strengthening discursive linkages across sites. In drawing attention to these other modes of connectivity, we contend that the prospects for improving public deliberation in contemporary systems of representative democracy are more promising.

In this particular paper, we expand on the conceptual terrain underpinning our book’s analytical approach to understanding and addressing contemporary democratic disconnects. We begin by discussing three key disconnections afflicting contemporary democracies, and the failure of existing systemic accounts of deliberative democracy to adequately address these, and advance broad democratic reform. Next, we develop an alternative account of deliberative systems underpinned by the central idea of connectivity and its practical manifestation in various forms (and not only across sites/sequences). We pay particular attention to the connective potential of i) actors and their relationships, ii) performative effects of alternative forms of political participation and iii) processes with governance. We then briefly discuss two empirical examples of how these kinds of democratic connectivity are being initiated and forged in contemporary politics. We conclude by outlining the ways in which our deliberative systems account offers an effective and sustainable agenda for democratic reform.

## **Redefining the problem with democracy: From crisis to disconnects**

In recent years, we have seen a proliferation of (partly competing) diagnoses about the state of democracy in contemporary societies. Democracy is claimed to be in crisis as a result of various factors including: high levels of citizen disaffection with politics (Campus and Andre 2014); the gross lack of political literacy (Rapeli 2013); low levels of satisfaction and trust in governments and politicians (Hay and Stoker 2009); the decline in membership of political parties (Whiteley 2009); the increasing power of actors without electoral accountability, such as transnational institutions, central banks, or regulatory bodies (Vibert 2007); the failure, or ineffectiveness, of representation (Shields 2006); and the proliferation of complex governance arrangements that evade accountability and transparency (Runciman 2014). Observing these trends, many scholars have argued that contemporary democracy is confronted with a strong ‘political apathy’ as experienced particularly by younger generations.

Parallel to these negative diagnoses, there are also more positive and optimistic observations about the current state of democracy. The decline in conventional forms of participation has been accompanied by a rise in alternative modes of political participation (Dalton 2013, Vromen 2017). There has been increase in citizens’ ad-hoc involvement with various political issues, causes and online social movements, both face-to-face and online, reflecting ‘a shift in their approach to long-term allegiances and membership’ (Vromen 2017: 2). As Pippa Norris argues ‘like a swollen river flowing through different tributaries, democratic engagement may have adapted and evolved in accordance with the new structure of opportunities, rather than simply atrophying’ (Norris 2002: 216). On Norris’ account, what we observe is the diversification of: the agencies (the collective organisations structuring political activity), the repertoires (the actions commonly used for political expression) and the targets (the political actors that participants seek to influence) (Norris 2002: 215-6).

In line with these major changes, citizenship patterns are shifting from a pattern of ‘duty-based citizenship’ to ‘engaged-citizenship’ whereby ‘the repertoire of political action is broadening’ (Dalton 2008: 93). Most citizens now engage in politics in personalised, ad-hoc ways and by using everyday digitally based mechanisms to engage in politics (Vromen 2017). Examples of these emerging forms of participation include Occupy-type of protests, online activism triggering ‘connective’ as opposed to traditional ‘collective’ action (Bennett and Segerberg 2013), boycotting, buy-cotting, squatting, pingging, hacking, flash mobs, twitter-led mobilisations and political consumerism. Digital media technologies and social networking platforms such as Twitter and Facebook play clearly a key role in this context. Although the scholarly debate continues on the question of whether boycotting a particular product or clicking ‘like’ on Facebook can qualify as a political participation (e.g. Theocharis and van Deth 2016), these types of activities have certainly led to diversification and proliferation of participatory repertoires in contemporary democracies.

In this paper, rather than weigh in on either diagnosis, we redefine the problem with contemporary democracies in terms of three types of disconnections. Taking both sets of developments into account, we argue that there three core disconnections plaguing modern

democratic systems:

### ***Disconnections between citizens and elected representatives***

As noted above, in most liberal democracies citizens are disconnected from mainstream political processes (Stoker 2006); they are reluctant to join parties or vote, and they are increasingly distrustful of political elites (Dalton 2013). Membership in mass political parties is in decline eroding their capacity to act as effective vehicles for collective political representation (Whiteley 2011; Mair 2013). There is increasing distrust in political elites and established institutions, and this is giving rise to a generation of voters who prefer populist alternatives on both the right and left (Inglehart and Norris 2017). More significantly, citizens are disengaging from political parties and elections, creating perceived disconnects between elite representatives and the groups and publics they claim to represent. Such trends are deeply eroding the legitimacy of traditional institutions of representative democracy (Norris 2011, Mair 2013). We argue that the disconnection between elected representatives is an important connectivity failure in contemporary democracies, and one that deserves fuller consideration by deliberative democrats particularly in an era when citizens are relying less on political parties for collective representation.

### ***Disconnections within public sphere***

Many citizens today are rejecting formal politics and preferring instead to engage in politics in spaces that are familiar, fun, provocative and easy (Allen and Light 2015, Vromen 2017). So rather than join a political party or vote they might join advocacy groups, engage in protest movements, sign online petitions, connect and share via social media, write blogs, boycott products, participate in urban interventions or crowd-fund political issues (Marsh and Akram 2015, Theorcharis and van Deth 2016). Much of this explosion in informal political participation has been fuelled the uptake of information and communication technologies in the public sphere (Allen and Light 2015). The rise of alternative forms of political participation has meant a more robust civic life as citizens have far more opportunity to engage with issues that concern them. Yet at the same time the rise of alternative forms of political participation also meant a crowded and fragmented participatory landscape organised around numerous political issues. In particular, digitalised forms of political participation have been criticised for leading to fragmentation and polarisation in the public space (Sunstein 2017). The diversification of the sites and modes of communication are claimed to fragment the publics and increase ‘the burden on convergence ability in the public sphere’ (Rasmussen 2014: 1319). In some cases, the multiplication of voices becomes so extensive that it has become difficult, if not impossible, to imagine how ‘all these different voices melt into a reasonable discourse that can inform and legitimate and even rationalise politics’ (Rasmussen 2014: 1319) (as aspired by deliberative democrats).

### ***Disconnections within governance structures***

Top-down attempts to inject greater interaction into complex governance webs, seen in the proliferation of innovative platforms for co-production, co-design, and collaboration, can jar against established practices of representative government. They can also compete with the

spread of bottom-up movements in civil society (see Blaug 2002), and more empowered forms of participatory governance (Fung and Wright 2003). Perversely in many contemporary policy settings there may be an abundance of policy networks and opportunities for collaborative governance but most of it is elite, highly fragmented, and disconnected from citizens (Papadopoulos 2012).

We suggest that it is possible to address these disconnects and improve connectivity in contemporary democracies by drawing on the recent systems thinking in deliberative democracy. System thinking in deliberative democracy, we believe, offers a useful way to better understand the nature of these disconnects, and to explore how they might be remedied. At its core, a deliberative systems understanding of deliberative democracy is all about connections (especially between affected publics and decision makers). However, connectivity is not a prominent feature in current account of deliberative systems and thus they fall short in addressing the pervasive democratic disconnects we outlined above. In what follows, we elaborate the reasons for this by critically appraising how three prominent accounts of deliberative systems define or assume connectivity. As a concept that is central to the functioning and legitimacy of any deliberative system, connectivity deserves greater attention and critical scrutiny.

### **Opening the black box of ‘connectivity’ in the deliberative system**

The systemic turn in the last decade has renewed a flowering of theoretical discussion in deliberative theory. The basic idea is that core norms of deliberative democracy—which we take here to be inclusion, respect and reflection (see Chambers 2009)—need not be associated with a single forum, and especially not equated with mini-public experimentation. Instead, the idea is that these norms might be distributed across a diversity of democratic settings within a broad system. This so-called ‘systemic view’ that is emerging as the orthodoxy in deliberative theory is by no means a singular and definitive one – it is one whose key authors’ have slightly different motivations and slightly different accounts. Indeed, there are by now numerous attempts to lay out distinctive versions of the deliberative system and their different implications (see for example Owen and Smith 2015). Here, we draw particular inspiration from John Parkinson’s (2016) recent analysis of the distinctive metaphors underpinning these variants, on the grounds that understanding the metaphors that thinkers draw on can provide important insights into key assumptions and elisions in their ideas.

Adapting Parkinson’s account, we can distinguish three key metaphors that deliberative systems’ theorists draw on. One employs the metaphor of democratic spaces, and imagines the deliberative system as one made up of spaces on a continuum from public to empowered or elite (e.g. Habermas 1996, Dryzek 2009). A second employs the metaphor of networks, and imagines the deliberative system as one comprised of complex series of interconnections among different democratic institutions and practices (see especially Mansbridge et al. 2012). A third—at least initially favoured by Parkinson (2006) himself—employs the metaphor of

stages and imagines the deliberative system as a cycle or process of key moments. As we elaborate in detail below, all three images of deliberative systems rely on a process of connectivity (across spaces, through networks, or along stages) that remains mostly implicit and under-developed.

### ***Connectivity in the spaces model of deliberative system—the idea of transmission***

The oldest model of the deliberative system—and one drawn particularly from the critical tradition of a messier, more generative ‘discursive democracy’ that the systemic turn moves back towards (see Dryzek 2010)—conceptualises democratic contestation in spatial terms. A deliberative system, in this sense, is one comprised of a range of differentiated spaces that foster and enable different deliberative and democratic goods. Key here is transmission. It is the successful transmission of ideas and claims between public (opinion-forming) and elite (decision-making) sites, and particularly from the former to the latter, that makes for a legitimate deliberative system. Especially important here are the works of Habermas (1996) on ‘dual-track’ model of democratic legitimation<sup>1</sup>, which prefigures deliberative systems, and Dryzek (2009), which builds on this account to provide the most comprehensive account of deliberative transmission to date. The core idea in these accounts is that for collective decisions to claim legitimacy, communication in the informal public sphere (public space) should be transmitted to formal decision-making sphere (empowered space). Transmission should primarily involve the movement of claims from more informal, open sites to the more formal, closed institutions.

As such, for both Habermas and Dryzek, transmission is what conceptually makes the proliferation of deliberative sites a *system*, and a *democratic* one at that. But their account of how this transmission can and should occur remains highly stylized. Even Dryzek’s more nuanced version leaves little analytical space to consider how ideas and claims get transformed across settings. Notably, too, recent efforts to operationalise his approach risk falling into the functionalist trap of a binary representation (ie transmitted or not transmitted) of complex democratic practice (see for example Beste 2016). More fundamentally still, these accounts of transmission seem to presume that a coherent form of public opinion can emerge (and be responded to in spaces of will formation). This, we suggest, seems unlikely in the context of an increasingly fragmented public sphere.

---

<sup>1</sup> Habermas (1996) constructs a ‘two-track’ model of democratic legitimation. In the first track, deliberation in the public sphere fosters ‘opinion formation’, where affected publics reach agreement on how to deal with complex and contested matters. The resulting opinions are then transferred, via the media, social movements and election campaigns, to the second track, comprised of binding assemblies of ‘will formation’ where laws are debated and passed.



### ***Connectivity in the networks model of deliberative system—the idea of coupling***

Building on, and perhaps surpassing Habermas and Dryzek in terms of orthodox thinking about the deliberative system, is the network metaphor in Mansbridge et al.'s (2012) influential 'manifesto' on deliberative systems. Continuing the trajectory from Habermas to Dryzek, Mansbridge et al (2012) share a focus on the spatial distribution of deliberative goods and functions. However, they steer clear of an explicit public/empowered dichotomy in favour of a yet more complex and interconnected 'network'. Their clear focus is on thinking through a form of institutional architecture that can link formal political institutions to more informal settings of citizen participation. Rather than transmission, however, they evoke the metaphor of 'coupling' for thinking about communicative connections in deliberative systems. For example, Mansbridge and colleagues (2012: 22) define a deliberative system as "a loosely coupled group of institutions and practices that together perform three functions... seeking truth, establishing mutual respect and generating inclusive, egalitarian decision making". Normative discussions on 'coupling' in deliberative systems have focussed largely around the strength of connections. On the one hand 'tight coupling' should be avoided where individual communicative sites in the system lose their self-corrective capacity and risk co-option (Mansbridge et al. 2012: 23). On the other hand, 'decoupling' represents a defect in the deliberative systems because it means that "good reasons arising from one part fails to penetrate into others" (p. 23). Between these extremes, lies the normative ideal where different parts of the system are loosely coupled such that they can accept ideas and reasons emanating from other parts in deliberative system through "processes of convergence, mutual influence and mutual adjustment" (p. 23).

Yet this crucial concept of coupling remains under-developed. It is unclear for example how different actors connect (or not) in a given deliberative system, and how these connections are affected by various pathologies inherent in contemporary deliberative systems, such as the dominance of elites (Papadopoulos 2012), inequalities in deliberative capacities (Christiano 2012) and the dangers of enclave deliberation (Sunstein 2017). Practically, too, further thought needs to be given to the role of agency in coupling. To date, concrete suggestions for coupling in deliberative systems have largely been proposed in institutional terms, rather than about forming and building relationships (e.g. Hendriks 2016).

### ***Connectivity in the stages model of deliberative system—the idea of sequencing***

An alternative to a focus on spatial or networked differential is a focus on how deliberative functions and goods are *temporally* distributed. The metaphor in play here is one of 'stages'. Bob Goodin's (2005) intentionally stylized account of 'Schumpeterian deliberation' is perhaps the best known. As part of an avowed attempt to better 'accommodate the ideal to the real', Goodin puts forward a notion of sequenced deliberative, whereby different deliberative norms are distributed along the way to develop a process as a whole that is 'good enough'. Goodin's intention is to provide a parsimonious and provocative account that might move deliberative theorists beyond an idealist mode, rather than to provide a true-to-life depiction of democratic

politics. But Goodin’s vision of sequenced deliberation also raises new questions or problems for further theoretical consideration. In particular, the implicit assumption underpinning this account is that the deliberative labour undertaken in one moment flows seamlessly to the next along the chain - first, parties filter through policy options; then, political leaders provide public justification of those choices; then, citizens vote on the basis of these justifications, and so on. Yet there is significant capacity for distortion and disruption at each point in the sequence. Indeed, swaths of empirical work in political science and public administration would tell us that distortion and disruption, not a seamless flow, is the norm (see for example Yanow 1993, Stone 2002, Patashnik 2008). In genuinely accommodating the ideal to the real, then, we need to consider these distortions and disruptions much more closely.

John Parkinson’s (2006) version of the ‘stages’ metaphor promises more nuanced insight into these dynamics. Grounded in real-world empirical study of health policy deliberation, Parkinson’s account brings the *political* complications of sequencing closer into view. He draws on the well-known cycle or stages heuristic in policy studies to explicate an ideal large-scale process of deliberation. Importantly, his account goes well beyond Goodin’s in recognising key roles for a multiplicity of actors to contest and scrutinise throughout this drawn-out process. Implicit here is recognition that sequencing is far from seamless. Yet, in his dependence on a highly stylized and widely criticised stages or cycle account of policymaking, Parkinson’s account needs further development in order to draw these dynamics of contestation and distortion out into the light.

Table 1: Unpacking connectivity in existing accounts of the deliberative system

<i>Account of the deliberative system</i>	<i>Importance of connectivity</i>	<i>Implied focus</i>	<i>Assumed ‘communicative miracle’</i>
<b>The spaces model</b> Habermas 1996 Dryzek 2009	Legitimacy depends on the effective <u>transmission</u> of ideas and claims from spaces of public opinion formation to spaces of will formation.	Building ‘deliberative capacity’ by enhancing the conditions for ad hoc activity in civil society and increasing the responsiveness of elite institutions.	That coherent and intelligible forms of public opinion will emerge and be transmitted faithfully.
<b>The networks model</b> Mansbridge et al. 2012	Legitimacy depends on the effective <u>coupling</u> of diverse democratic institutions.	Seeking innovative institutional practices and mechanisms that hit the sweet spot between co-optation and irrelevance.	That institutional tinkering can reshape engrained traditions, relationships and practices.
<b>The stages model</b> Goodin 2005 Parkinson 2006	Legitimacy depends on the effective <u>sequencing</u> of moments through a decision-making process.	Aligning and combining institutional procedures to ensure that deliberative goods accumulate through the process.	That democratic governance can be modelled in accordance with an orderly procedure.

Table 1 above summarises the models of the deliberative system, and their thinking around connectivity. All place emphasis on perfecting the structural architecture of democracy in a way that presumes, rather than seeks to open up or examine, this process of connectivity. As such, they have not gone far enough in adapting the ideal to the real. They remain dangerously reductive and stylized. Key here is a naïve dependence on a sort of ‘communicative miracle’ (see Hajer 1995) at odds with the fundamental disconnections afflicting democratic politics. Currently, analytic attention focuses largely on *institutional architecture* that can ensure a flow of ideas and claims across democratic settings. They gloss over or wish away some of the most important political dynamics in contemporary democracies that can enable or hinder connectivity.

The existing variants of the systems model crystallizing around particular metaphors—spaces, networks, or stages—attempt to capture the ideal distribution of deliberative and democratic norms (see Parkinson 2016). At the heart of each of these metaphors is an assumption that well-designed institutional mechanisms and governing practices will allow claims and ideas to move seamlessly across spaces of opinion and will formation, through networks of democratic settings and actors, or along complex and iterative stages of the policy process. The hope is in establishing ideal configurations that somehow connect the distinct sites, actors and moments through which deliberative functions are distributed. But everything we know about contemporary democratic trends would make pinning our hopes on stylized institutional architecture unwise. Democratic systems are afflicted by disconnections at each juncture that disrupt and distort flows of ideas and claims. Yet, to date deliberative democrats have given too little thought to how and where connections and disconnections actually occur in complex contemporary deliberative systems. Our novel contribution is to confront these prospects and limits head on. We argue that a more thorough-going account of connectivity—of what it entails, how it is vulnerable, and where it can be strengthened—can help to address these concerns.

### **Redefining connectivity in the absence of ‘communicative miracle’**

We argue that deliberative democracy can offer a way of advancing and sustaining democratic reform if it is underpinned by a more bottom-up understanding and practices of connectivity. Rather than defining the deliberative system and the associated account of connectivity in a top-down manner, we adopt a more bottom-up perspective and focus on the actually existing forms of public deliberation. Our bottom-up perspective is inspired by Ellen Stewart’s (2016) concept of a citizen’s-eye view of the system; her point, which we extend here, is that *seeing like a citizen* provides a uniquely insightful perspective on the diverse range of settings entailed in complex modern forms of democratic governance. Contra the prevailing, top-down, architect’s-eye view, adopting this bottom-up perspective allows us to better identify the existing connections in deliberative system.

The bottom-up approach we take here considers the connective potential of various communicative activities that are already taking place in democracies. This approach allows us to develop a multi-dimensional understanding of connectivity -- defined as the multiplicity of ways in which actors, activities and practices in democratic systems relate to, and influence one another. Through our empirical studies of deliberative systems in local contexts in Australia we observe that there are multiple novel connections being made in contemporary democracies, that have yet to be appreciated by advocates of deliberative democracy and democratic reform more broadly. We argue that existing accounts of connection in deliberative systems need to be better attuned to the importance of agency, especially to relationships between elites and those they claim to speak for in many democratic contexts. Existing accounts also overlook the performative nature of alternative forms of communication in contemporary democratic politics, especially their capacity to connect multiple publics in the public sphere. And we argue they need to be better attuned to the iterative governing practices through which contemporary politics is channeled, especially the opaque practices 'downstream' in the policy process when vague commitments are transformed into action. Opening up the 'black box' of connectivity in this way can re-direct our analytic attention away from optimising participatory institutions and towards examining real-world practices of connection and disconnection in democratic politics. It can help us to conceptualise, study and steer deliberative systems in ways that more closely accord with core normative ideals.

Below we emphasise two particular forms of connectivity that are central to healthy deliberative systems and to the agenda of advancing democratic reform in disconnected times: actor-driven connectivity and performance-driven connectivity.

### *Actor-driven connectivity*

Deliberative democracy is fundamentally about connecting publics to those who make decisions. In reform proposals deliberative democrats have concentrated on institutional designs, and largely overlooked the agency both elites and citizens, and the impact of their relationships and networks on the broader system of public deliberation. For example, proposals for connecting citizens to those that govern have focussed on institutional optimisation both in terms of how to design processes to engage 'the people', and solving institutional jigsaws for 'where to put the people' in the governance process (e.g. Fung and Wright 2003; Nabatchi et al 2012, Smith 2009). Research finds that while such participatory mechanisms involving citizens might generate more inclusive and deliberative conditions for policy debate, they struggle to produce long-term democratic reform (e.g. Goodin and Dryzek 2006, Fuji-Johnson 2016, Michels 2011).

We contend that to facilitate sustainable long-term democratic reform deliberative practitioners and theorists need to consider a fuller variety of ways in which relationships between citizens and elites might be forged and strengthened. Here we take our cue here from recent contributions to the nascent literature on deliberative systems that recognise the importance of actors and agency in promoting and sustaining connections in public deliberation (see especially Mendonca 2016). We extend this line of thought to develop a clearer understanding

of the relationship between citizens and elites, and its crucial importance for deliberative systems in practice.

Actors and their relationships are an important resource for facilitating connections in contemporary deliberative systems. They can create and sustain connections because most actors participate in multiple spaces of public talk and deliberation. Actors can also be more flexible and adaptable than sticky institutions, and thus can become advocates for democratic experimentation and reform. More significantly, actors have agency and creative capacity to drive and resource novel democratic connections.

An exemplar of the capacity of actors to drive connections in modern politics occurred recently in the Australian federal electorate of Indi (in rural North-east Victoria). Against the backdrop of growing political disaffection, a group of local citizens mobilised and engaged the broader public in a reform process to strengthen relations between the electorate and their elected member (see Hendriks 2017). There were three phases to the citizens' reform process:

- i. In the first phase, a group of everyday citizens worked within the parameters of representative democracy to build relationships with local citizens, mobilising the community to improve political representation in the electorate.
- ii. In a second phase, the group of concerned citizens collectively took various steps to try and engage their unresponsive elected representative with her constituency. Eventually the citizens decided that the only way to strengthen local responsiveness was to put forward "one of them" as an alternative political candidate. They ran a strong community-driven campaign and their candidate was successfully elected.
- iii. In a third phase, Indi's (newly elected) representative has sought to reciprocate and strengthen relational connections with citizens in the electorate by listening and engaging with her constituents through various participatory activities.

To be clear this story of democratic reform is not the product of a large-scale social movement or protest effort that many scholars of deliberative democracy have in mind. Instead it occurred through the grass-roots efforts of a small group of concerned citizens who mobilised their broader community, with the aim of improving the receptivity and responsiveness of their local member.

Recent events in Indi are especially interesting for scholars of democratic reform they demonstrate how connectivity can be boosted within some of the oft-forgotten practices of representative democracy, such as candidate selection and active constituency relations. A group of citizens in the electorate of Indi were motivated to make representative democracy to work as it should, and so they set about strengthening connections between the broader citizenry and the local member. In other words, their connective efforts were conducted within the parameters of electoral democracy. They mobilised citizens not around a particular policy issue (as is the case in many oppositional social movements), but rather around the idea of improving the practice of political representation in the electorate. In this sense this was not

an ‘issue public’ creating a public sphere – as is oft celebrated in deliberative democracy (see Habermas 2006)—but a group of everyday people who mobilised their electorate to improve the way they are represented in Federal Parliament. In deliberative systems’ terms, connections were strengthened through the activities of both everyday citizens and elites.

### *Performance-driven connectivity*

Connections in deliberative systems are forged not only by the actors involved in it, but also by the different modes of communication used to develop and promote those claims, and to the ways in which they intersect (or fail to do so). Understanding connectivity in this way builds on a growing body of work across normative political theory and empirical political science which foregrounds the centrality of dramaturgy and performance in democratic politics (see Hajer 2009, Green 2010). The core argument here is that meaning is conveyed as much through non-speech acts and deeds as through talk and words in contemporary forms of democratic governance. As noted above, especially with the rise of alternative forms of political participation, we see increasingly more citizens voice their political concerns and express their preferences through a rich array of repertoires including various performative acts and images (see Hendriks et al 2016). Despite the changing modes of communication, current research on deliberative democracy continues to focus principally on textual and verbal speech acts while overlooking the role of non-speech acts especially in forging connections across the system.

One particularly powerful example (that we draw on in further detail in our book) that demonstrates how performative action and non-speech acts can forge connections in public deliberation is offered by the political efforts of an Australian citizens’ group, Knitting Nannas Against Gas (KNAG). KNAG is a decentralised protest group opposing coal seam gas (CSG) mining in Australia in highly performative ways. Its members are unassuming older women (‘nannas’) seeking to contest an issue (CSG) on their own terms by gathering and knitting in public spaces including in front of politicians’ offices, work sites, on the street and in rallies. KNAG uses colour to create and maintain a consistent protest setting despite the fact that they stage their activities in different locations. The strong colours of yellow and black are central to KNAG’s protest identity. These are not only colours of dangers and warning, but they are strongly associated with the anti-CSG movement across Australia, largely due to the protest activities of the large national alliance group, Lock the Gate. At any KNAG gathering, members typically dress in yellow and black to attract attention. When they sit down to knit they work with yellow and black wool to craft scarves, beanies, or protest triangles.

We centre our analysis of KNAG on one regional group that formed in opposition to the proposed Narrabri Gas Project, located south of the town of Narrabri, 500km north-west of Sydney.<sup>2</sup> We employ a dramaturgical analytic framework to study the staging and setting, casting and scripting of KNAG’s non-speech acts in public sphere including the gathering and knitting, and the use of colors, symbols and images (after Hajer, 2005). Our dramaturgical analysis reveals that KNAG uses a wide variety of non-speech acts to attract attention, mobilize

---

<sup>2</sup> The proponent of the Narrabri Gas Project (NGP), the energy corporation, Santos, proposes to develop 850 gas wells across a project area of approximately 1,000 square kilometres. The controversy surrounding the NGP is highly polarised, with anti-CSG groups (farmers and environmentalists) pitted against pro-CSG groups (mining companies, some local businesses and the State government).

collective action, and to influence the decision-making process (Ercan et al 2017b). The key non-speech acts include gathering and knitting together, being present, the use of ‘the nanna’ character, as well as the creative and playful use of colours yellow and black. Together, these activities enact various performative connections in the deliberative system in ways that have not been appreciated before by the scholars of deliberative democracy. More specifically, we find that they enact connectivity (i) across ideological divides, (ii) with everyday people and (iii) with future generations by using nanna and kids’ images in their performances.

What is noteworthy from a deliberative perspective is that all these connections (facilitated by non-speech acts) are not only among like-minded individuals and groups. In the case of KNAG these connections occur beyond the enclaves. They bring together women with different socio-economic backgrounds, life experiences, ideologies, and political motivations, and facilitate the building of new alliances. And these connections prove to be more sustainable alliances than it is usually the case for instance with the ‘issue publics’. The group’s use of colors, symbols, images support the formation and maintenance of this project identity across ideological differences. All these artifacts are also seen by non-members as distinguishing features of KNAG activates, helping the group to receive validation and thus legitimacy from boarder publics.

## **Lessons for democratic reform in disconnected times**

We contend that a deliberative systems approach underpinned by *a more pragmatic and multi-dimensional notion of connectivity* offers useful guidance to democratic reform in at least three important ways.

First, our multi-dimensional approach facilitates *a broader understanding of public deliberation and democratic innovation*. It rescues deliberative ideals from their popular association with a narrow form of democratic innovation and reintroduces the broader democratic context into view. Our arguments expand conventional understandings of public deliberation well beyond ‘the forum’ and encourage advocates of democratic reform to think about how existing political activities such as representation, advocacy and mobilisation (both online and offline) might be more inclusive and deliberative. It also provides analytic scope for considering the role of disruptive and non-speech based forms of political expression (such as performances, symbols, visuals or even silences) which play an important role in facilitating and shaping contemporary public deliberation (Hendriks et al 2016, Rollo 2016). As such, the deliberative systems approach proposed in this paper offers a broader range of possibilities for intervention and reform, including alternative ways through which citizens themselves are seeking to change democratic practices and institutions through their everyday, ad-hoc participation.

Second, our pragmatic approach *acknowledges and work with the complexities of democratic governance*. It shifts the focus from abstract institutional architecture or the reductive binaries

(eg. transmitted vs not transmitted) to the complexities of democratic governance and changing patterns of political participation. Existing research in deliberative democracy tends to overlook these development as continues to focus on face-to-face deliberative encounters in structured forums. It has yet to take seriously the diverse modes and spaces where public discussions and debates are enacted: online, via social media, through performative actions, films and visuals. Connectivity across these diverse media is inevitably complex. It cannot be equated with legislative responsiveness to public opinion. It cannot be addressed merely through innovative coupling of elite and citizen-oriented institutions. It cannot be measured through network analysis of recurring claims or agendas across political institutions, rather it requires new methodological approaches (such as dramaturgy) for its empirical investigation.

Third, our approach *shifts the gaze away from institutional design recipes to the central role of agency/citizens and relationships in forging connections and advancing democratic reform*. While we fully appreciate that there are good reasons for the long-standing emphasis in deliberative democracy on institutional design, especially for boosting the inclusivity and deliberative quality of policy debates (Drzyek and Hendriks 2012). More pragmatically, we acknowledge that in many cases institutional design is one of the few levers to pull generate democratic reform. However, as we have argued in focussing primarily on innovative institutional designs, deliberative democrats have failed to fully appreciate the capacity of different actors – including elites and citizens – to generate democratic reform in their own terms. In contrast, our approach takes seriously that actors have agency; and many, such as the citizens of the electorate of Indi, are taking creative steps to foster democratic connections that might seem institutionally impossible. Moreover, the deliberative systems account put forward in this paper focuses our attention on the reciprocal bonds that lie at the heart of effective democratic relationships (Dobson 2014). In this context, both constituents and representatives can exercise agency to reform dysfunctional democratic relationships.

## **Conclusion**

Deliberative democracy can be viewed as a significant reform movement (Gastil and Levine 2005). Most visibly, this movement is manifested in micro-level democratic innovations that involve the participation of ordinary citizens. ‘Mini-publics’ such as citizens’ juries, citizens’ assemblies, consensus conferences, and deliberative polls have been well studied and widely celebrated and indeed in some quarters are seen as defining deliberative democracy. This narrow framing made deliberative approach easy target for critics such as Pateman (2012), who berates them for leaving the larger structure of limited democracy untouched, and not doing much to broaden citizen participation.

Sceptics have questioned the feasibility of this approach in advancing democratic reform at times when it is most needed. Some have argued that at times of declining rates of of political participaton and trust, a deliberative idea of democracy putting emphasis on the need for inclusive deliberation is not a realistic route to reform democracy (e.g. Parvin 2015). Contrary to these views, and the narrowly framed notion of public deliberation, we have argued that



deliberative democracy can offer a distinctive and feasible reform agenda, if it is underpinned by a pragmatic and multi-dimensional view of connectivity that takes seriously connections forged by actors and different modes of communication. Our empirical examples demonstrate the form and function of these alternative forms of connectivity, and their potential to address some of the key disconnections in contemporary democracies. Our normative proposal backed up with rich empirical insights (here presented briefly due to space constraints) invite the scholars and practitioners of democratic reform to conceptualise public deliberation in broader terms, and to adopt a more bottom-up perspective in their efforts to identify and address the problems facing democracies.

## References

- Achen, C. H. and Bartels, L. M. (2016) *Democracy for Realists: Why Elections Do Not Produce Responsive Government*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Allen, D. and Light, J. S. (eds.) (2015) *From Voice to Influence: Understanding Citizenship in a Digital Age*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Bächtiger, A., Dryzek, J., Mansbridge, J. and Warren, M. (eds.) (forthcoming) *Oxford Handbook on Deliberative Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Bennett, W. L. and Segerberg, A. (2013) *The Logic of Connective Action: Digital Media and the Personalization of Contentious Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Beste, S. (2016) 'Frame representation: A content-based approach for the assessment of deliberative systems', *Journal of Legislative Studies*, 22(3): 295-328.
- Blaug, R. (2002) 'Engineering democracy', *Political Studies*, 50(1): 102-16.
- Boswell, J. (2016) 'Deliberating downstream: countering democratic distortions in the policy process', *Perspectives on Politics*, 14(3): 724-37.
- Boswell, J., Hendriks, C. M., and Ercan, S. A. (2016) 'Message received? Examining transmission in deliberative systems', *Critical Policy Studies*, 10(3): 263-83.
- Campus, A. S. and Andre, J.G. (2014) *Challenges to Democratic Participation. Antipolitics, Deliberative Democracy and Pluralism*. Lanham: Lexington Books.
- Chambers, S. (2009) 'Rhetoric and the public sphere: Has deliberative democracy abandoned mass democracy?', *Political Theory*, 37(3): 323-50.
- Christiano, T. (2012) 'Rational deliberation among experts and citizens', in J. Parkinson and J. Mansbridge (eds.), *Deliberative Systems: Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp.27-51.
- Dalton, R.J. (2013) *Citizen Politics: Public Opinion and Political Parties in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Los Angeles: Cq Press.
- Dalton, R.J. (2008) 'Citizenship norms and the expansion of political participation', *Political Studies*, 56(1): 76-98.
- Dobson, A. (2014) *Listening for Democracy: Recognition, Representation, Reconciliation*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dryzek, J. S. (2016) 'Reflections on the theory of deliberative systems', *Critical Policy Studies*, 10(2): 209-15.
- Dryzek, J. S. (2010) *Foundations and Frontiers of Deliberative Governance*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Dryzek, J. S. and Hendriks, C. M. (2012) 'Fostering deliberation in the forum and beyond', in: Fischer, F. and Gottweis, H. (eds.), *The Argumentative Turn Revisited: Public Policy as Communicative Practice*. Durham, Duke University Press, pp. 31-57.
- Dryzek, J.S. (2009) 'Democratization as deliberative capacity building', *Comparative Political Studies* 42, 1379-1402.
- Dryzek, J.S. (2000) *Deliberative Democracy and Beyond: Liberals, Critics, Contestations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Elstub, S., Ercan, S.A., and Mendonca, R. (2016) 'The fourth generation of deliberative democracy', *Critical Policy Studies*, 10(2): 139-51.
- Ercan, S.A., Hendriks, C.M., and Dryzek, J.S. (2018) ahead of print. 'Public deliberation in an era of communicative plenty' *Policy and Politics*.

- Ercan, S. A., Hendriks, C. M., and Boswell, J. (2017a) 'Studying public deliberation after the systemic turn: The Crucial Role for Interpretive Research', *Policy and Politics*, 45(2):195-212.
- Ercan, S.A., Hendriks, C.M., and Dryzek, J.S. (2017b) 'Performing protests in public deliberation: a dramaturgical analysis of Knitting Nannas', presented at the Annual Meeting of American Political Science Association, San Francisco, 29 Aug-1 September.
- Ercan, S. A. (2017) 'From polarisation to pluralisation: A deliberative approach to illiberal cultures', *International Political Science Review*, 38(1): 114–27.
- Ercan, S.A. and Gagnon, J-P. (2014) 'Crisis of democracy: Which crisis? Which democracy?', *Democratic Theory*, 1(2): 1–10.
- Fung, A. and Wright, E.O. (eds.) (2003) *Deepening Democracy: Institutional Innovation in Empowered Participatory Governance*. London: Verso.
- Fuji-Johnson, G. (2015) *Democratic Illusion: Deliberative Democracy in Canadian Public Policy*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.
- Gastil, J. and Levine, P. (eds.) (2005) *The Deliberative Democracy Handbook: Strategies for Effective Civic Engagement in the Twenty-First Century*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Goodin, R. E. and J. Dryzek. (2006) 'Deliberative impacts: The macro-political uptake of mini-publics', *Politics and Society*. 34 (2):219-44.
- Goodin, R. E. (2005) 'Sequencing deliberative moments', *Acta Politica*, 40: 182–96.
- Green, J. E. (2010) *The Eyes of the People: Democracy in an Age of Spectatorship*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Grönlund, Kimmo, André Bächtiger, and Maija Setälä, (eds.) (2014) *Deliberative Mini-Publics: Involving Citizens in the Democratic Process*. Colchester: ECPR Press.
- Habermas, J. (2006) 'Political communication in media society: Does democracy still enjoy an epistemic dimension? The impact of normative theory on empirical research', *Communication Theory*, 16(4): 411-26.
- Habermas, J. (1996). *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. MIT Press.
- Hajer, M. A. (2009). *Authoritative Governance: Policy Making in the Age of Mediatization*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hajer, M. and Wagenaar, H. (eds.) (2003) *Deliberative Policy Analysis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hajer, M. A. (2005) 'Setting the stage: A dramaturgy of policy deliberation', *Administration & Society*, 36(6): 624–47.
- Hajer, M.A. (1995) *The Politics of Environmental Discourse: Ecological Modernization and the Policy Process*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Hay, C. and Stoker, G. (2009) 'Revitalising politics: have we lost the plot?', *Representation*, 45 (3): 225–36.
- Hendriks, C.M. (2017) 'Citizen-led democratic reform: innovations in Indi', *Australian Journal of Political Science*, 52(4): 481-99.
- Hendriks, C. M. (2016) 'Coupling citizens and elites in deliberative systems: The role of institutional design', *European Journal of Political Research*, 55 (1): 43-60.
- Hendriks, C. M., Duus, S., and Ercan, S. A. (2016) 'Performing politics on social media: The dramaturgy of an environmental controversy on Facebook', *Environmental Politics*, 25(6): 1102–25.

- Hendriks, C. M. (2011) *The Politics of Public Deliberation. Citizen Engagement and Interest Advocacy*. Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Hendriks, C.M. (2006) 'Integrated deliberation: reconciling civil society's dual role in deliberative democracy', *Political Studies*, 54: 486–508.
- Inglehart R. F. and Norris, P. (2016) 'Trump, Brexit and the rise of populism: economic have-nots and cultural backlash', *Faculty Research Working Paper Series*. Harvard Kennedy School.
- Knobloch, K. R., Gastil, J. and Reitman, T. (2015) 'Connecting micro-deliberation to electoral decision making: Institutionalizing the Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review'. In A. Przybylska, S. Coleman, & Y. Sintomer (eds.) *Deliberation: Values, process, institutions*. Peter Lang Publishing.
- Lee, C.W., McQuarrie, M., and Walker, E.T. (eds.) (2015) *Democratizing Inequalities: Dilemmas of the New Public Participation*. New York: NYU Press.
- McQuarrie, M. (2013) 'No contest: participatory technologies and the transformation of urban authority', *Public Culture*, 25: 143–175.
- Mair P. (2013) *Ruling the Void: The Hollowing out of Western Democracy*. Verso: London.
- Mansbridge, J., Bohman, J., Chambers, S., Christiano, T., Fung, A., Parkinson, J., Thompson, D. F., et al. (2012) 'A Systemic Approach to Deliberative Democracy', in J. Parkinson and J. Mansbridge (eds.), *Deliberative Systems: Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 1–26.
- Marsh, D. and Akram, S. (2015) 'Political participation and citizen engagement: beyond the mainstream', *Policy Studies*, 36(6):523-31.
- Mendonça, R. F. (2016) 'Mitigating systemic dangers: the role of connectivity inducers in a deliberative system', *Critical Policy Studies*, 10(2):171-90.
- Mendonça, R. F. and Ercan, S. A. (2015) 'Deliberation and protest: Strange bedfellows? Revealing the deliberative potential of 2013 protests in Turkey and Brazil', *Policy Studies*, 36(3): 267–282.
- Michels, A. (2011) 'Innovations in democratic governance: how does citizen participation contribute to a better democracy?', *International Review of Administrative Sciences*, 77 (2):275-93.
- Nabatchi, T., Gastil, J., Weiksner, G.M., and Leighninger, M. (eds.) (2012) *Democracy in Motion: Evaluating the Practice and Impact of Deliberative Civic Engagement*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Norris, P. (2002) *Democratic Phoenix: Reinventing Political Activism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Norris, P. (2011) *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Owen, D. and Smith, G. (2015) 'Survey article: deliberation, democracy, and the systemic turn', *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 23(2): 213–34.
- Papadopoulos, Y. (2012) 'On the embeddedness of deliberative systems: Why elitist innovations matter more'. In: Parkinson, J. and Mansbridge, J. (eds.), *Deliberative Systems: Deliberative Democracy at the Large Scale*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 125–150.
- Parkinson, J. (2006) *Deliberating in the Real World. Problems of Legitimacy in Deliberative Democracy*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Parkinson, J. and Mansbridge, J. (eds.) (2012) *Deliberative Systems: Deliberative Democracy*

- at the Large Scale*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Parvin, P. (2015) 'Is deliberative democracy feasible? Political disengagement and trust in liberal democratic states', *The Monist*, 9(4):407-423.
- Patashnik, E. M. (2008) *Reforms at Risk: What Happens After Major Policy Changes are Enacted*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Pateman, C. (2012) 'Participatory democracy revisited', *Perspectives on Politics*, 10 (1): 7-19.
- Rapeli, L. (2013) *The Conception of Citizen Knowledge in Democratic Theory*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Rasmussen, T. (2014) 'Internet and the political public sphere', *Sociology Compass* 8(12): 1315-29.
- Rollo, T. (2017) 'Everyday deeds: Enactive protest, exist, and silence in deliberative systems', *Political Theory*, 45(5): 587-609.
- Runciman, D. (2013) 'The crisis of British democracy. Back to the '70s or stuck in the present?', *Juncture* 20 (3): 169–77.
- Shields, J. G. (2006) 'Political representation in France: A crisis of democracy?', *Parliamentary Affairs*, 59 (1): 118–137.
- Smith, G. (2009) *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Stewart, E. (2016) *Publics and Their Health Systems: Rethinking Participation*. Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke.
- Stoker, G. (2006) *Why Politics Matters: Making Democracy Work*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Stone, D. (2002) *Policy Paradox*. New York: WW Norton & Company.
- Sunstein, C.R. (2017) *#Republic: Divided Democracy in the Age of Social Media*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Theocharis, Y. and van Deth, J. W. (2016) 'The continuous expansion of citizen participation: a new taxonomy', *European Political Science Review*, 1-25.
- Vibert, F. (2007) *The Rise of the Unelected*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Vromen, A. (2017) *Digital Citizenship and Political Engagement: The Challenge from Online Campaigning and Advocacy Organizations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave.
- Whiteley, P. F. (2011) 'Is the party over? The decline of party activism and membership across the democratic world', *Party Politics*, 17(1): 21-44.
- Yanow, D. (1993). 'The communication of policy meaning: implementation as interpretation and text', *Policy Sciences*, 26, 41-61