



HAL
open science

Random Selection, Democracy and Citizen Expertise

Annabelle Lever

► **To cite this version:**

Annabelle Lever. Random Selection, Democracy and Citizen Expertise. Res Publica, 2023, 10.1007/s11158-023-09589-0 . hal-04055092

HAL Id: hal-04055092

<https://hal.science/hal-04055092>

Submitted on 1 Apr 2023

HAL is a multi-disciplinary open access archive for the deposit and dissemination of scientific research documents, whether they are published or not. The documents may come from teaching and research institutions in France or abroad, or from public or private research centers.

L'archive ouverte pluridisciplinaire **HAL**, est destinée au dépôt et à la diffusion de documents scientifiques de niveau recherche, publiés ou non, émanant des établissements d'enseignement et de recherche français ou étrangers, des laboratoires publics ou privés.

Random Selection, Democracy and Citizen Expertise.

Annabelle Lever

Institut des Etudes Politiques (Sciences Po, Paris) and CEVIPOF

1 place St. Thomas Aquin, 75007, Paris, France

Annabelle.lever@sciencespo.fr

<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-3756-1835>

Abstract This paper looks at Alexander Guerrero's epistemic case for 'lottocracy', or government by randomly selected citizen assemblies. It argues that Guerrero fails to show that citizen expertise is more likely to be elicited and brought to bear on democratic politics if we replace elections with random selection. However, randomly selected citizen assemblies can be valuable deliberative and participative additions to elected and appointed institutions even when citizens are not bearers of special knowledge or virtue individually or collectively.

Keywords Democracy, Elections, Random Selection, Sortition, Lotteries, Citizen Expertise

Acknowledgements Many thanks to Cathrine Holst and Jakob Elster for inviting me to contribute to this special issue and to the reviewers at *Res Publica* for their helpful comments on a previous version.

Philosophers and political commentators sometimes suggest that randomly chosen citizens may be able to replace democratically elected legislators in whole or in part. (Abizadeh 2020; A. Guerrero 2014, 2021a and 2021b; Landemore 2020; Owen and Smith 2018; Vandamme and Verret-Hamelin 2017) Arguments commonly are a blend of moral, political and epistemic considerations, reflecting the fact that elected representatives are often themselves inexpert on the matters on which they have to decide, and that their selection may be the consequence of factors that are arbitrary epistemically and morally, although overdetermined politically once one considers the distribution of power and resources in society.

However, it is unclear that moral, political, and epistemic considerations single out lotteries as the privileged way to select political representatives. Even if lotteries were epistemically superior to either appointment or elections, there might be compelling moral and political reasons to prefer the latter when selecting people for legislative office, and to favour appointment over both elections and lotteries when selecting legislative advisors. (Landa and Pevnick 2021; Umbers 2021) Efforts to create more directly participative forms of local government may be democratically justified even if they are epistemically imperfect or less efficient than other forms of local government, given the importance of ideas of self-government to democratic ideas and ideals. (Dugrand 2020; Stone 2021a) So why suppose that democrats should favour lotteries over elections on epistemic grounds?

To answer that question, let's look at Alexander Guerrero's epistemic case for 'lottocracy', or government by randomly selected citizen assemblies. (A. Guerrero 2014; A. Guerrero 2021b; 2021a) Efforts to develop epistemic arguments for democracy tend to treat elections as a defining mechanism of democracy, and to suppose that the personal, civil and political rights required to distinguish democratic from undemocratic elections are essential to the epistemic virtues of democracy. (Misak and Talisse 2021; Talisse 2013; Lever and Chin 2019; Gerber 2021; Lever 2021) By contrast, Guerrero is not particularly interested in epistemic comparisons between democratic and undemocratic government and, instead, is chiefly concerned with dethroning the centrality of elections to contemporary democratic thought and practice. He believes that citizens can be sources of expertise – moral as well as technical and scientific – and that randomly selected citizens, invested with legislative power and authority, are an attractive and useful way to tap into that expertise. As we will see, Guerrero fails to show that citizen assemblies should

replace elected legislatures rather than *supplement* them, or that their democratic importance rests on their ability to elicit special expertise. Hence, this paper argues, while democracies need to provide more adequate support for citizen agency and wisdom, lottocracy is not necessary, and may well be at odds with, these goals.

The paper is structured as follows. First, it lays out Guerrero's case against elections and in favour of lottocracy, highlighting the ways in which it is meant to respond to democratic political ideals. It then turns to the appeal of randomly selected citizen bodies as deliberative and participative additions to electoral institutions and suggests how their combination might answer to Guerrero's concern with the moral and epistemic, not only the political, effects of institutions. The paper closes by emphasizing the importance of experimentation in constituting and organizing citizen assemblies. For the purposes of this paper 'citizen assemblies' refers to a deliberative body composed of randomly selected citizens selected to debate a matter of public interest. I therefore include in this description small 'minipublics', larger citizen assemblies that are meant to be purely deliberative and those, such as Guerrero advocates, which are a combination of single-issue legislative bodies or SILLS.¹

GUERRERO AND THE EPISTEMIC CASE AGAINST ELECTIONS

According to Alexander Guerrero, the use of elected representation is typically defended on epistemic and agential grounds and 'embod[ies] a kind of compromise' between these values.² For representative government to be justified agentially or epistemically, he believes, you need 'meaningful accountability' which, in turn, presupposes practices of informed monitoring and evaluation at every point in the representative chain. (161).³ Such meaningful accountability is undermined by citizens' pervasive and deep ignorance about issues of public policy, the workings of government, and their political circumstances. (159 -60) As a result, officials are readily 'captured' by the groups that they are supposed to regulate, (160-61) and citizens

¹ For more on the differences amongst types of citizen assembly see (Chwalisz 2021; OECD 2020)

² Guerrero's is a controversial, even tendentious, interpretation of representative democracy. For an alternative view see, for example, (Young 2002). Guerrero makes the same claim elsewhere: 'Electoral representative government embodies a compromise, exchanging political equality and broad distribution of political power for supposed epistemic benefit from the use of elected representatives'. (Guerrero 2021a)

³ all page references in the text are to Guerrero 2021b

regularly elect representatives whose lives are quite different from their own and likely to generate conflicts of interest between governed and governors. (161-2, 167-8) Democratic outcomes therefore tend to be epistemically poor; and these poor outcomes are exacerbated over time by the epistemically perverse incentives created by elections. Chief amongst those perverse incentives are short-termism, (164-5) dubious practices of blame-shifting and credit-claiming as well as the appeal to, and manipulation of, citizens' emotions (165-6) in the interests of poorly thought out, counterproductive and, even, dangerous partisan agendas. In short, Guerrero claims, 'Voter ignorance undermines meaningful electoral accountability. An absence of meaningful electoral accountability results in capture. And capture results in what might well be described as epistemic disaster' (163).

By contrast, Guerrero believes, a lottocratic system of government - particularly one organised based on multiple single-issue legislatures or SILLs, as he calls them - enables us to avoid the epistemic defects of elections without abandoning democracy for epistocracy. (169)⁴ Random selection enables a diverse group of citizens to participate in collective deliberation and decisions, based on learning from pre-selected experts - though Guerrero says nothing about how these experts are to be selected, by whom, and what weight assembly members are meant to put on expert opinion, as opposed to their own or each others'. Hence, according to Guerrero, citizens do not need to be particularly wise or virtuous to be capable legislators. Because citizens are randomly chosen and will be changed regularly via rotation, they cannot be captured by special interests, and will tend to be largely impartial and fair minded when considering public issues. (175) Finally, because citizens will be randomly selected, they will lack the hyper-partisanship that bedevils party-based electoral systems. They will also demonstrate epistemic humility, (175) because they cannot be said to have deserved their place in the legislature. In short, it seems that lottocratic political institutions foster equality in virtue and direct that equal virtue to politically useful purposes, while elections render citizens and representatives morally, politically and epistemically vicious. Democracy, then, requires us to replace elections with randomly selected legislative assemblies on epistemic grounds that *also* reflect the moral and political virtues of lotteries, as compared to elections. Hence Guerrero's critique of electoral

⁴ Guerrero presents different accounts of the number of SILLs and the number of people involved in them, in Guerrero 2021b and 2021a.

democracy is meant to be compatible with, and to embody, democratic moral and political principles in ways that would not be true of epistocracy.⁵

THE LIMITATIONS OF THE EPISTEMIC CASE FOR LOTTERIES

Interesting though it is, Guerrero’s epistemic case for replacing elections by lot is not persuasive. Normatively, a lottocratic government seems ill-suited to democratic ideals of co-governance or co-rulership. The fact that everyone will have a formally equal, though very small, chance of being randomly selected for power scarcely answers to the democratic ideal that citizens should be able to see themselves as the authors, not just the addressees, of law. For all their defects, elections enable people collectively to decide who should form part of their legislature; create opportunities for citizens to influence the selection of candidates indirectly via their votes and more directly when primaries are used. Above all, elections guarantee a role for all citizens in politics without committing to a career of public service or political engagement and PR, as opposed to First Past the Post, emphasises that role.(Stone 2021a) By contrast, lottocracy is intentionally indifferent to citizen interests in shaping the political agenda collaboratively, and in competing for the trust and support of their peers to implement a public agenda. In these ways lottocracy seems an unsatisfactory expression of people’s interests in political agency –whatever one’s view of elections. (Lafont 2020; Ceva and Ottonelli 2021; Umbers 2021; Girard 2019; Destri and Lever 2023; Stone, 2016; 2021) Thus Guerrero’s confidence that randomly selected representatives will be humble seems rather a testimony to the very limited agency that lottocracy grants citizens, than a confident prediction of how the members of a sortition assembly will feel or behave once they start to grapple with the demands of office.⁶

⁵ See Guerrero 2021a on popular sovereignty and its demands for ‘consistent responsiveness’ to citizens (6).

⁶ See (Giraudet et al. 2022)p. 11: members of the French Citizens Convention on the Climate (CCC) were split on whether to press for a referendum on their proposals. ‘An argument commonly advanced by opponents of the referendum was that the general public would not be as «enlightened» in their voting as the members of the Convention had become’. By contrast, prominent members of the CCC’s governance committee and the guarantors’ college ‘more or less explicitly’ encouraged the demand for a referendum. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41599-022-01212-6>

In Ancient Greece, all citizens could take part in the assemblies, and the discussion and decision-making that went on there. By contrast, randomly chosen legislatures imply that most citizens will be permanently excluded from the law-making body of their society.⁷ Citizens' chance of being part of that law-making body would in no way reflect a publicly validated sense - however abstract, provisional and contested- of a collective good as citizens, let alone ties of trust, confidence or appreciation between those being represented and those supposed to represent them. (Cohen 1986; Young 2002; Mansbridge 2003) In this, lotteries differ not just from elections but from appointment. It is no surprise, then, that Greek democrats never considered lotteries an acceptable way to distribute and justify law-making power over others. Lotteries played a significant role in the allocation of executive and judicial power in ancient democracies, reflecting the importance they attached to ensuring that volunteers for special office had mathematically equal opportunities to be selected.(Owen and Smith 2018) However, neither formal equality of opportunity nor rotation were considered adequate, let alone sufficient, to determine membership of the law-making assembly.

More seriously from Guerrero's own perspective, lotteries seem worse than elections in ensuring accountability, in that democratic citizens facing a lottocratic legislature will have even less reason to concern themselves with political matters than they did before. (Landa and Pevnick 2021) Lotteries mean that most of us will have no say in who governs us, no chance to compete for political office, and a vanishingly small chance of making politically consequential decisions ourselves. We will be poorly placed to tell whether those holding randomly selected legislatures to account have done so adequately, and it will be all but impossible for us to tell whether they have done so in ways that fairly distinguish the individual and collective responsibilities of assembly members, thereby protecting their equality as citizens. The problem arises not just from collective ignorance but from the fact that randomly chosen assembly members owe each other nothing and have no prior ties of responsibility and trust. There therefore have every incentive to avoid hard or unpopular decisions if they can leave them to others. Hence, the combination of a randomly selected legislature and an ignorant citizenry makes it very likely that

⁷ Guerrero assumes that assembly members will be held to account by some body – judicial or lottocratic. However citizens, as the governed, will have no direct role in making that judgement and are therefore politically disempowered in ways that fit badly with democratic concerns for the agency and authority of citizens. (Destri and Lever 2023) See also (Stone 2024)

the legislature will be rife with collective action problems and apportioning blame for failures to act, as well as for misguided or foolish actions, will be hard, if not impossible. It is therefore difficult to see why lotteries would better secure democratic forms of accountability or agency than elections, or how they correct for suboptimal levels of knowledge, judgement and political interest.

More seriously, it is hard to know what moral, political or epistemic authority to attribute to the members of a randomly selected assembly, when their claims to collective wisdom, to moral virtue and to political capacity are collective only. As Peter Stone explains: ‘Elected representatives can say, we represent you because you chose us. Randomly-selected representatives can say, we represent you because we are indistinguishable from you. (The latter, but not the former, is inextricably a collective claim. *It is hard for a single randomly-selected citizen to claim to “represent” anybody.*)’ (my italics).(Stone 2021b). In the case of citizen assemblies, these problems have tended to be ignored – though Lafont has rightly emphasised the difficulty of determining the weight that we should put on less-than unanimous decisions; refs and the problem extends to forms of reasoning and intergroup decision based on participation in small groups, rather than the whole assembly. It is likely also to affect the relationship between assembly members and outsiders, such as experts, with their own source of authority.

Randomly-selected assemblies are, in principle, consistent with quite different relationships with experts. Assembly members can see themselves, and be seen by others, as checks on expert myopia and professional disagreement; they can be seen as drawing on, and making their own, the wisdom of outsiders, or they can simply defer to expert judgement.⁸ (Elster, this issue). In principle each of these might have democratic justification in some cases, but it is doubtful that any one of these will be justified morally and politically, let alone epistemically, across the board. The difficulty however, is to understand why anything other than deference to outside experts will be justified when assembly-members have no claims to wisdom in their own right,

⁸ For a helpful comparison of these possibilities relations between experts and randomly selected citizens see (Davies, Wetherell, and Barnett 2006) and the discussion pp 162 -5 of the contrasting models of student, watch-dog and co-governance in the context of the Citizens Council at NICE that lay citizens might have with the experts.

or how such deference is to be justified morally or politically, if one values democracy rather than epistocracy.

Despite Guerrero's confidence, then, it is hard to see randomly selected legislatures will enable us to avoid familiar problems in democratic theory and practice that affect elected, as well as appointed, institutions in democracies. Guerrero clearly hopes to make the prospect of serving in a randomly selected legislature as appealing as possible, and to make it more likely that the formal equality secured by lotteries transfers to the representative outcomes that lotteries create, although he plans to use unweighted lotteries for most SILLS, and might therefore expect poor uptake in invitations to lead to descriptively very unrepresentative results indeed. (170)⁹

However, he pays no attention to the *epistemic and moral burdens* that go with deciding on behalf of millions of others, when up to that point, one may have found the burdens of being a parent, a small employer, an employee, a teacher, even an administrator or local politician quite demanding enough. An impressively large salary, and help locating and relocating one's family (170) and other important material supports may simply not be enough to make such burdens bearable, let alone attractive to citizens if, as is likely, those selected can readily think of others – family members, co-workers, friends and acquaintances -who would better meet the moral, political and epistemic challenges of being a representative than they. It is therefore hard to believe that citizens' willingness to take up their legislative opportunities will be a dramatic improvement over the very low rates of voluntary participation that currently characterise most randomly selected advisory bodies. (Jacquet 2017; 2020). These range between just under 4 percent for the larger citizen assemblies and to average 15 percent across them all and explain Philippe Van Parijs' surprise that it could take 50,000 phone calls to create a body of about 700 people for a G1000 in Brussels.¹⁰

⁹ For further consideration of these issues see Lever, forthcoming.

¹⁰ Fabre et al can be found in open access at <https://halshs.archives-ouvertes.fr/halshs-03265053>. Philippe Van Parijs notes of the G1000 process in Brussels: 'What surprised me was first, that about 50,000 phone calls were needed in order to end up with 700 odd people actually turning up...and that what emerged to the outside world as the tangible outcome of the event reflected only to a minute extent the discussions on which the day was spent'. (p 51 in pdf available to download at <https://rethinkingbelgium.eu/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Re-Bel-e-book-14.pdf>)

Finally, Guerrero's account of the failings of democracy draws almost solely on American evidence, and on epistemic critiques of democracy, such as Jason Brennan's, (Brennan 2016) (Achen and Bartels 2016) that are one-sided, indifferent to the causes of American pathologies and to the prospects of remedying them. Following Brennan, Guerrero claims that 'hyper-partisanship' means that we end up treating our political parties as sports-teams, and rooting for them accordingly. (166). This conclusion is more extreme than the relatively low key claim that 'Group attachments and social identities drive our thinking about politics, rather than the other way around'. (166) That position, after all, is not particularly irrational if we are concerned with group-based inequalities of power and resources, (as Guerrero appears to be). Focusing on the situation of the groups to which we belong can give our politics a consistency over time and a basis in fact that would be difficult if we were influenced simply by the last information we heard, or claims about the situation of others that we are in no position to assess.

Moreover, the account of electoral politics on which Guerrero draws makes it difficult to understand why people might form, support and stay attached to political parties when they have sports teams, churches and other associations through which they can satisfy their competitive desires and demands for emotional attachment. Its perspective on political partisanship is ill-suited to explaining cross-party cooperation, and the extent to which it varies within and between democracies. In the UK, for instance, voters in national elections are often keen to coordinate across party lines so that first past the post does not result in the election of people's least favoured candidate simply because they disagree on who is best. In the USA and in France voters sometimes engage in 'split-ticket' voting, favouring the candidate of one party for the Presidency and another for legislative or gubernatorial elections. It is difficult to understand how and why such behaviour occurs if people's attachment to their political party is unconditional and unreflective. In short, the picture of electoral democracy, on which Guerrero draws, is unpersuasive once one leaves aside a highly stylised view of contemporary American politics, and is notably indifferent to the different ways in which electoral rules can be framed in a democracy, thereby affecting the opportunities, habits of thought and behaviour of citizens. (Mráz and Lever 2021)

Even the view of partisan sporting attachments, appealed to by Guerrero and Brennan, is one-sided and condescending. People who passionately support their own team may applaud the

accomplishments of their competitors; and may deplore unfair rules or poor arbitration for diminishing the quality of competition – its ability to display participants’ skills - and not simply its consequences for who wins. Guerrero pathologises competition as a motivation to develop, display and appreciate citizen virtues, and to bring them to bear on collective ends. But Durkheim is not alone in noting that competition can facilitate cooperation by mutually dependent individuals, and that the cooperative use of competition can generate principles for organising and structuring it. (Durkheim 1997) . Partisan political competition, then, is not inherently at odds with democracy, nor will replacing elections with lotteries enable us better to identify the competitive features of politics. On the contrary, unwillingness to provide a place for legitimate competition over political ends and means is likely to lead to unfair decisions that pathologise disagreement or wish away scarce resources.

CITIZEN ASSEMBLIES AND MORAL EXPERTISE

Still, even if one doubts that citizens assemblies should be politically authoritative, they have a variety of moral, political and epistemic properties that make them appealing. Specifically, they have an educative and participative function that is important if one thinks of citizens as bearers of politically relevant knowledge.¹¹ Citizens’ lived experience is likely to make them differentially sensitive to, and knowledgeable about, the strengths and weaknesses of their collective institutions and the scope for remedying those weaknesses. (Young 2002, chs 2 and 4) Their lived experience, professional habits, and training may enable them to perceive the morally salient features of particular situations quickly and effectively in ways that would be less obvious to others. (see Jakob Elster in this issue). Such skills – essential in situations where triage is required – may be relatively common in more mundane circumstances, given the need to maintain safety in farms, factories and families and to ensure that large numbers of strangers can

¹¹ Jack Bridgewater’s judgement is well taken, that the Brexit referenda might have proceeded more smoothly, and with greater legitimacy and acceptance of its results had the referenda been preceded by a citizen’s assembly, as in the case of the Irish referenda on abortion. As Bridgewater says, ‘Serious consultation, via sortition, would have increased our knowledge of public preferences about the EU...Equally, knowing that there was this system in place beforehand would have placated the fears of politicians and the public, as we would have had a better understanding of our democratic choices, rather than having to project our own individual preferences onto the result’.
<https://www.democraticaudit.com/2018/06/01/the-irish-citizens-assembly-on-the-8th-amendment-is-a-model-for-participatory-democracy-which-other-democratic-countries-should-follow/>

interact safely when sharing public facilities and spaces. In short, in the course of their lives citizens can be expected to have acquired forms of morally significant expertise that are often implicit, different from the expertise acquired by others and relevant to public policy. (Weale 2007)

If so, randomly chosen citizen assemblies can constitute a welcome addition to democratic deliberation, participation and education, even if they lack authoritative power themselves. Citizen assemblies can be institutionalised in such a way that citizens from all parts of the country can take part in them should they so wish, (in this the geographically dispersed climate assemblies in the UK differ from the single Paris-based CCC in France) and so that the results of citizen deliberation from one assembly can form part of the deliberations of other assemblies, as well as by the general public and legislators. Although it is customary at present for Citizen Assemblies to reach their public conclusions as a group – rather than issuing majority and minority reports - they do not need to be unanimous materially to contribute to public debate. In so far as assemblies are used to elicit citizen judgement on morally complex matters, it should be expected that citizens will disagree with each other and that their disagreements will be as important for the justification of policy as their agreements.(Lafont 2020;) (Ingham 2013)

Citizen assemblies are used to deliberate on a variety of quite different matters. Some are extremely local and practical, others are explicitly national, such as debates on national strategies for reducing greenhouse gases. (OECD 2020, pp 121 -148) Their rationales are rather different too. Sometimes, they seek to tap local knowledge and expertise, and to facilitate responsiveness by local politicians to the needs of their tax payors and electors, as with the greater Cambridge, UK citizens' assembly.¹² At others, appeals to citizen deliberation appear to be an effort to break a political deadlock where legal reform is desirable, but where politicians are unwilling or unable to anticipate public opinion for fear of being branded morally insensitive or worse. Ireland's assemblies on abortion and gay marriage are examples of this and, as Gray suggests, citizen assemblies might have a similar beneficial role on gun control and universal healthcare, in the

¹² For more on the assembly see https://www.sortitionfoundation.org/case_study_cambridge

USA.¹³ Assemblies can also be used to anticipate future policy debates – to provide a form of both alerting and ‘sounding out’ the public on challenges that lie ahead – for example on biotechnologies, but also in the rationing or distribution of scarce, but important resources like healthcare. Freed of electoral incentives, they can provide the long-term perspective that it is hard for politicians to adopt;(see Philippe van Parijs in Van Reybrouck et al. 2014) and if numerous enough and persuasive enough, can create the electoral pressure that politicians need (or seek) in order to take difficult decisions, but which councils of the ‘great and the good’ on the one hand, or pressure-groups on the other, are often unable to generate themselves. It was once thought that the legitimacy and efficacy of democratic elections would be undermined by the use of directly democratic forms of decision-making, such as referenda, because their principles of legitimacy appear so different. That has not proved to be the case. (el-Wakil 2020; Stone 2021a) Hence, the framework of electoral democracy appears sufficiently capacious to accommodate a variety of types of citizen assembly as supplements to legislatures, professional civil servants, ad-hoc commissions of experts, and the panoply of voluntary associations that inform, persuade, mobilise and link together individuals and government.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that citizens have forms of moral expertise which citizen assemblies can elicit and use as contributions to democratic policymaking. However, there is no need to turn citizens into experts – with special access to moral knowledge or special claims to epistemic and political authority – to suppose that they are entitled to take part in public affairs not merely as political partisans, but as people with no fixed political identities and loyalties. If Guerrero is wrong to suppose that the worst features of the American political system are an inevitable consequence of treating elections as tools of democracy, contemporary democracies could benefit from more appealing, inclusive, and deliberative forms of citizen engagement than are currently available.

¹³ Broockman and Skovron (2018) find that state lawmakers ‘systematically misperceive public opinion in similar ways’, whether Democrat or Republican and ‘This holds true, even after controlling for turnout rates, lobbying, and other biases, as well as the representative having consistent access to polling data’. It seems as though representatives fear that, whatever the polls say, voters will punish them if they take a more favourable stance on healthcare and gun control than the status quo. Quoted in Gray, 2021, (online first, p. 11)

However, while citizen assemblies are a potentially exciting addition to the participative and deliberative repertoire of democracies, Philippe Van Parijs is right to insist on ‘modesty’ in respect to the claims that can be made for them. (van Parijs 2014, p 52) When so few who are called to participate are willing or able to take part, ‘no claim to representativeness can be made’ for these assemblies. Current uses of group-based weighted lotteries when selecting citizens for assemblies, tend to essentialise groups – implying that members’ similarities *qua* women, for example, must be more important than the differences amongst them to their political representation. (Spelman 1988) A great deal more thought is also necessary to avoid tokenism in the treatment of the very disadvantaged, whose distinctive perspectives on matters of public controversy may require attention to the combination of silencing and subordination to dominant perspectives that Iris Marion Young referred to as ‘cultural imperialism’. (Young 2011, 59 - 63)¹⁴ In short, attributing moral expertise to citizens is not ridiculous, although there is much room for improvement in the theory and practice of sortition assemblies and randomly selected citizens have no monopoly on political wisdom or virtue.

- Abizadeh, Arash. 2020. Representation, bicameralism, political equality, and sortition: reconstituting the second chamber as a randomly selected assembly.” *Perspectives on politics*, 1–16. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592719004626>.
- Achen, Christopher H., and Larry M. Bartels. 2016. *Democracy for realists: why elections do not produce responsive government*. Princeton university press. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9781400882731>.
- Brennan, Jason. 2016. *Against democracy*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press.
- Ceva, Emmanuela, and Valeria Ottonelli. 2021. Second-Personal Authority and the Practice of Democracy. *Constellations: an international journal of critical and democratic theory*.
- Chwalisz, Claudia. 2021. Eight ways to institutionalise deliberative democracy.” OECD Publications.
- Cohen, Joshua. 1986. An epistemic conception of democracy. *Ethics* 97 (1): 26–38.
- Davies, Celia, Margaret Wetherell, and Elizabeth Barnett. 2006. *Citizens at the centre: deliberative participation in healthcare decisions*. Bristol: Polity Press.
- Destri, Chiara, and Annabelle Lever. 2023. Egalité démocratique et tirage au sort. *Raison Publique*.
- Dugrand, Maud. 2020. *La petite république de Saillans: une expérience de démocratie participative*. France: Editions du Rouergue.

¹⁴ For more extensive discussion of these issues see (Lever 2022) <https://theconversation.com/citizen-assemblies-and-the-challenges-of-democratic-equality-189353> and (Lever 2023) forthcoming.

- Durkheim, Emile. 1997. *The division of labor in society*. Simon and Schuster.
- Gerber, Dominik. 2021. Democracy and epistemic egalitarianism. *Raisons politiques* N° 81 (1): 49–63.
- Girard, Charles. 2019. *Délibérer entre égaux : Enquête sur l'idéal démocratique*. Vrin.
- Guerrero, Alexander. 2021a. The Epistemic case for non-electoral forms of democracy.” In *The Routledge handbook of political epistemology*, edited by Michael Hannon and Jeroen de Ridder, 1st ed., 419–29. Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2021. | Series: Routledge handbooks in philosophy: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429326769-49>.
- . 2021b. The epistemic pathologies of elections and the epistemic promise of lottocracy. In *Political epistemology*, edited Elizabeth Edenberg and Michael Hannon, 156–79. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192893338.003.0010>.
- Guerrero, Alexander A. 2014. Against elections: the lottocratic alternative. *Philosophy & public affairs*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/papa.12029>.
- Ingham, S. 2013. Disagreement and epistemic arguments for democracy. *Politics, philosophy & economics* 12 (2).
- Jacquet, Vincent. 2017. Explaining non-participation in deliberative mini-publics. *European journal of political research*.
- . 2020. *Comprendre la non-participation: les citoyens face aux dispositifs délibératifs tirés au sort*. 1er édition. Peter Lang AG, Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften.
- Lafont, Cristina. 2020. *Democracy without shortcuts: A participatory conception of deliberative democracy*.
- Landa, Dimitri, and Ryan Pevnick. 2021. Is random selection a cure for the ills of electoral representation? *Journal of political philosophy* 29 (1): 46–72. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jopp.12219>.
- Landemore, Hélène. 2020. *Open democracy: reinventing popular rule for the twenty-first century*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Lever, Annabelle. 2023. Equality, elections and lotteries. *forthcoming Danish yearbook of philosophy*
- . 2022. Citizen assemblies and the challenges of democratic equality. *The Conversation* 5.12.2022 <https://theconversation.com/citizen-assemblies-and-the-challenges-of-democratic-equality-189353>
- . 2021. Democracy and Truth. *Raisons politiques* N° 81 (1): 29–38.
- Lever, Annabelle, and Clayton Chin. 2019. Democratic epistemology and democratic morality: the appeal and challenges of Peircean pragmatism. *Critical review of international social and political philosophy* 22 (4): 432–53. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13698230.2017.1357411>.
- Mansbridge, Jane. 2003. Rethinking representation. *American political science review* 97 (4): 515–28.
- Misak, Cheryl, and Robert B. Talisse. 2021. Pragmatism, truth, and democracy.” *Raisons politiques* N° 81 (1): 11–27.
- Mráz, Attila, and Annabelle Lever. 2021. Synthesis of democratic political systems and institutions in Europe. 870996-3.1. www.redem-h2020.eu.
- OECD. 2020. Innovative citizen participation and the new democratic institutions: catching the deliberative wave.” Paris, France: OECD Publishing.

- Owen, David, and Graham Smith. 2018. Sortition, rotation, and mandate: conditions for political equality and deliberative reasoning." *Politics & society* 46 (3): 419–34.
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0032329218789892>.
- Parijs, Philippe van. 2014. Electoral democracy and its rivals." in *The malaise of electoral democracy and what to do about it*, 47–61. Brussels: Re-Bel.
- Spelman, Elizabeth V. 1988. *Inessential woman : problems of exclusion in feminist thought*. Boston, Mass.: Beacon Press.
- Stone, Peter. 2016. Sortition, voting, and democratic equality." *Critical review of international social and political Philosophy* 19 (3): 339–56.
- . 2021a. Democracy in Ireland: theory and practice. In *The Oxford handbook of Irish politics*, edited by David M. Farrell and Niamh Hardiman, 89–106. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- . 2024. Popular rule without popular sovereignty." *Democratic theory* 11 (2).
- Talisie, Robert B. 2013. Sustaining democracy: folk epistemology and social conflict." *Critical review of international social and political philosophy* 16 (4): 500–519.
- Umbers, Lachlan. 2021. Against lottocracy. *European journal of political theory* 20 (2): 312–34.
- Vandamme, Pierre-Etienne, and Antoine Verret-Hamelin. 2017. A randomly selected chamber: promises and challenges." *Journal of deliberative democracy* 13 (1): 5.
<https://doi.org/10.16997/jdd.271>.
- Wakil, Alice el-. 2020. Supporting deliberative systems with referendums and initiatives. *Journal of deliberative democracy* 16 (1): 37–45. <https://doi.org/10.16997/jdd.403>.
- Weale, Albert. 2007. What is so good about citizens' involvement in healthcare? In *Health democracy: the future involvement in health and social care*, edited by Edward Anderson, Jonathan Tritten, and Richard Wilson, 37–43. London: Involve and NHS National centre for involvement.
- Young, Iris Marion. 2011. *Justice and the politics of difference*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton university press.