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*Who Wants Democratic Innovations,
and Why?*

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Who wants democratic innovations, and why?

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Commentators and academic experts alike have voiced increasing anxieties over the state and future of representative democracy in recent years. Their concern lends momentum to calls for democratic innovations, such as (more) direct democracy and deliberative citizen forums. We argue that the institutional design of decision making processes as well as each of these proposed reforms affect resulting decisions and have distributive consequences, rendering any innovation more attractive to some citizens than to others. At the same time, the different opportunities for participation that alternative processes and institutions offer (e.g. voting vs. deliberation) may have more appeal to some citizens than others, which poses a potential threat to the idea of democratic equality. However, research providing empirical findings concerning these questions is still very rare. On the basis of data from the German GESIS Panel, we seek to explore determinants of preferences over democratic innovations, focusing on the effects of individual characteristics and potential instrumental preferences. In light of our findings we conclude that while the call for democratic innovations should be taken seriously and the potentials of citizens participation should be used to revitalize democracy, any reform should be assessed in light of the old question “who benefits?”.

1. Introduction

Commentators and academic experts alike have voiced increasing anxieties over the state and future of representative democracy in recent years. It seems that the procedural consensus on which democracy is based is dwindling, with citizens increasingly withdrawing from established institutions and procedures. This diagnosis lends momentum to calls for democratic innovations, such as (more) direct democracy, deliberative citizen forums and stakeholder negotiations. While such calls are often and loudly heard, we still know rather little about “who wants democratic innovations, and why?”. This title of our paper obviously resembles that of a 2010 paper by Michael Neblo et al. (Neblo, Esterling et al., 2010) that raised the question “who wants to deliberate, and why?”. But while the research by Neblo et al. was primarily on the *behavioral* level, asking whether participants were interested in participating and assessing whether they actually turned up for deliberative events, we in this paper ask for *preferences* over democratic decision-making procedures and their causes.

Neblo et al. find that more citizens than presumed by deliberative democracy's critics are willing to participate in deliberative events and that those who are particularly interested in participation are also the ones who are "turned off by standard partisan and interest group politics" (Neblo, Esterling et al., 2010, p. 582). Similarly encouraging evidence is presented by Webb (Webb, 2013) who distinguished two types of disenchantment with politics: the first of these hold attitudes Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002) described as 'stealth'-democratic, while the second type supports democratic values, but is frustrated with democratic practice, thus resembling the 'critical citizen'-attitudes described by Pippa Norris (Norris, 1999, Norris, 2011). Whereas the latter group is positively disposed towards most opportunities for political participation, but in particular towards democratic innovations, stealth democrats tend to be negatively disposed towards established modes of participation as well as deliberation, but positively disposed towards referendums. This indicates that at least one of the currently discussed innovations has appeal even to a group that has largely withdrawn from politics.

However, although the behavioral dimension, i.e. the question of who is interested in alternative forms of participation and who actually engages in participation in such formats, is surely relevant for an estimation of the potential of deliberative democratic innovations, we think that procedural preferences are a distinct, but at least equally relevant issue that should be addressed by normatively, but especially empirically oriented researchers. For example, we know from research on direct democracy that those who most strongly support the introduction of direct democracy are least likely to make actual use of instruments of direct democracy. People with lower levels of formal education and or lower levels of income often favor plebiscitary decision-making, but are unlikely to turn out to vote (Schäfer and Schön, 2013). Where participation in deliberative events is concerned, Neblo et al. (2010) find that people in employment as well as with higher incomes are somewhat less likely to participate. However, this does not necessarily mean that these people are opposed to the introduction of deliberative procedures. Their unwillingness to take part in such events could reflect the time constraints connected with their full-time employment. In short, attitudes and behavior (as well as behavioral intentions) cannot and should not be treated in an identical way, but should be looked at distinctly with respect to their prevalence, but also their underlying mechanisms and determinants.

Seeking to explore the determinants of attitudes towards democratic innovations, we want to direct attention to subjective expectations about the outcome effects of decision-making procedures and their potential reforms. Assuming that institutional design necessarily has (re-)distributive effects, each of the proposed direct democratic or deliberative reforms may be expected to affect resulting

decisions and outcomes, thus rendering the innovation more attractive to some citizens than to others. In other words: democratic innovations are likely to be supported or rejected at least in part on the basis of instrumental calculations. Moreover, it seems fair to expect that even beyond rational considerations, the different opportunities for participation that alternative processes and institutions offer (e.g. voting vs. deliberation) may have more appeal to some citizens than to others, depending on individual experiences and personality profiles. In this case, the link between procedural preferences and behavior may seem closer, as procedures are assigned intrinsic rather than purely procedural value: an open and extraverted person seems more likely both to appreciate the introduction of further opportunities for political participation and deliberation *and* to actually make use of these opportunities. However, the same open and extraverted person might value the prospect of a deliberative event *without* ever finding the time to actually participate.

In what follows, we will first present our theoretical considerations and hypotheses on the effects of instrumental preferences and individual dispositions on preferences over democratic decision-making procedures and innovations. We will then present our data base, which we will use to assess the empirical validity of our hypothesis. Data stems from a recent wave of the German GESIS Panel. A number of attitudes concerning democratic innovations was covered in that specific wave that we can use to assess the associations between socio-economic characteristics and personality traits on the one hand and procedural preferences on the other hand. Following the presentation and discussion of our results, we conclude that while the call for democratic innovations should be taken seriously and the potentials of citizens participation should be used to revitalize democracy, any reform should be assessed not only in light of the question “who wants to participate?” but also in light of the question “who benefits?”.

2. Instrumental preferences for democratic innovations: socio-economic status and distributive interests

Concerning diffuse and specific support for democratic government, Pippa Norris distinguishes an instrumental conception of democracy from a procedural and an authoritarian one (Norris, 2011, ch. 8). While the authoritarian conception is rare in Western democracies, the procedural conception, in which democracy is valued for intrinsic reasons, is most prevalent in countries with a long democratic tradition and among highly educated citizens. To explain this pattern, Norris suggests a kind of evolutionary development in citizens’ understanding of democracy, moving from a still essentially undemocratic authoritarian understanding via an instrumental one towards the most advanced and most democratic procedural understanding of democracy. However, even if procedural conceptions

of democracy are prevalent at a very general and abstract level, instrumental considerations may still play a significant role whenever it comes to more specific reforms of the rules of the democratic game. Hence, we may assume that distributive implications do play a role for procedural preferences and choices even in the most established and advanced democracies – especially given the fact that procedural decisions have long-term effects and place losers at a perpetual disadvantage (Landwehr, 2015). One could, of course, object that the distributive effects of specific institutional parameters of decision-making processes are not always transparent or foreseeable. For example, most people would view the inclusion of a representative with veto-rights in a stakeholder forum as a means to promote respective interests, but would not consider the fact that transaction costs in a large stakeholder forum with unanimity as a decision rule are typically too high to allow for any kind of decision. In fact, many stakeholder forums and deliberative citizen hearings have hardly any direct effect on political decision-making processes and are therefore ascribed a merely ‘experimental’ or even ‘simulative’ character. So how can preferences over innovations without outcome effects be motivated by instrumental preferences? At this point, we argue that *if* we do find significant effects of socio-economic background variables on procedural preferences, we need to explore their association with distributive effects and interests, taking into account that an instrumentally rational choice of procedure need not be the result of rational calculation, but could also be induced by respective cues and intuitions.

When it comes to attitudes towards democratic innovations, some hypotheses about effects of distributive interests on procedural preferences readily come to mind. Members of groups that constitute a majority within the electorate (or perceive themselves to be in such a majority) should in general favor elements of direct democracy as a means to push measures that are (or seem to be) halted by party politics and representative government through. In particular, the large majority of below-average income earners should (all things being equal) support direct democracy as a means to promote progressive redistribution or at least prevent regressive policies and welfare state cutbacks. In fact, this is T.H. Marshall’s story about the introduction of social rights: once full suffrage had been achieved, the majority of the poor could democratically establish the extension of citizen rights to social rights (Marshall, 1950). Although welfare state cutbacks under Reagan and Thatcher have dealt a heavy blow to this story as well as its underlying economic-voting assumptions (see Offe, 1987), respective hopes and fears may still prevail. In Marshall’s line of reasoning, we should also expect people on the left of the political spectrum to be more strongly in favor of direct democracy, as progressive redistribution is a goal of the political left. From that, we can derive our first set of hypotheses:

(H1): Below-average income earners are more likely, above-average income earners less likely to support direct democracy.

(H2): People on the left of the political spectrum are more likely to support direct democracy.

When it comes to deliberative innovations, the case is somewhat more complex. In an essentially Kantian tradition, deliberative democrats assume that in deliberative interaction, norms of reciprocity, authenticity and publicity permit only certain types of arguments, namely such that are based on generalizable and transferable reasons. Reasons of pure self-interest, which constitute a perfectly legitimate base for voting decisions, are clearly not transferable and thus ruled out in a deliberative forum.¹ This presumed logic of reciprocal justification is also at the heart of deliberative democracy's epistemic promise: decisions achieved in deliberative processes may be expected to be more conducive to a common good and hence more just because deliberation prevents selfish motives from driving decision-making. The underlying assumption that epistemic or moral progress may be equated with redistributive policies has been labelled 'progressive vanguardism' by Michael Neblo (Neblo, 2007). Neblo rightly criticizes the tendency among deliberative democrats to treat the transformation of preferences towards more liberal and progressive positions as an indicator for the success of deliberation. Nonetheless, citizen's expectations about the effects of deliberation may be driven by respective assumptions about the argumentative dynamics in deliberation: Those who are opposed to progressive redistribution because it threatens their very own interest in preserving their property should thus be opposed to deliberative innovations, knowing that their reasons to oppose redistribution are not transferable and expecting them to be less successful in deliberation.² In a nutshell, deliberation may, according to this rationale, be viewed as an instrument to promote a more egalitarian distribution against the interests of privileged groups. We will label the respective hypothesis "*deliberative egalitarianism-hypothesis*" and assume that:

(H3): People with preferences for redistribution (people on the left of the political spectrum) support deliberative innovations.

¹For a discussion of the role of self-interest in deliberation, see Mansbridge, Bohman et al., 2010.

² In fact, a beggar's (e.g. libertarian) arguments against redistribution are more likely to be successful in deliberation than a millionaire's, as the latter's will be de-legitimized by self-interest.

However, a number of authors have also criticized deliberative democracy as an inherently anti-egalitarian and elitist project. The *empirical* argument here is that those who typically hold privileged positions in society – white middle-class men with university degrees – are also the ones most likely to push their points in deliberative decision-making.³ As a result of their status and education, these groups are more likely to be eloquent and self-confident and will be more able to disguise a given self-interest behind (apparently) generalizable arguments. Aware of their discursive power, they advocate deliberative decision-making as a means to promote self-interests in order to preserve privileges. We label this general hypothesis “*deliberative elitism-hypothesis*” and test the following more specific hypotheses derived from it:

(H4): Men are more likely to support deliberative innovations.

(H5): People with higher incomes are more likely to support deliberative innovations.

(H6): People with higher levels of formal education are more likely to support deliberative innovations.

Finally, explicit beliefs about one’s own capacity to take part in and influence political decision-making processes may result in instrumental preferences over democratic innovations. Such beliefs are captured by the concept of efficacy, which in itself comprises an internal as well as an external dimension. Both of them are relevant in our context here. Internal efficacy refers to the self-estimated understanding of politics, while external efficacy refers to the perceived responsiveness of governments and politicians to citizens’ demands. Typically, internal and external efficacy beliefs are correlated. Still, somewhat contradictory hypotheses on the effect of internal vs. external efficacy on preferences over decision-making procedures seem plausible. Stronger beliefs in internal efficacy should in general bolster support for any kind of expansion of participatory opportunities, as individuals with such beliefs would see this as a further way to become self-efficacious. However, when such a belief is accompanied by high levels of external efficacy, people should not perceive a need to challenge or even replace politicians or representative forms of government, but should rather support it. In contrast, the combination of high levels of internal efficacy with low levels of external efficacy should lend to support to elite-challenging democratic innovations, most notably support for direct-democratic decision making (in the sense of limiting the current power of politicians). Hence, we hypothesize:

³ For the most-cited paper that makes this point, see Sanders, 1997. Iris Marion Young made similar, but more nuanced arguments: Young, 2002, Young, 2003.

(H7): People with a strong belief in internal efficacy will support any kind of democratic innovation.

(H8): Moreover, people with a strong belief in internal, but a weak belief in external efficacy will support elite-challenging, i.e. direct democratic reforms.

3. Individual dispositions and democratic innovations

While instrumental motives may certainly be expected to affect political attitudes and behavior, there is also a rich body of research showing effects of individual personality traits on political attitudes and behavioral intentions. To a significant degree, personality traits are causally prior to socioeconomic variables, in particular academic achievement, career success and income (see, for example, Judge, Higgins et al., 1999). So even if the instrumental variables that we have discussed before might in part reflect differences in individuals' personalities, it is still plausible to assess the independent effects of personality traits on political attitudes, even beyond those instrumental variables that are already included in our theoretical model.

One of the most frequently used measurement strategies for personality traits is the Big 5-inventory, which measures five central personality traits – extraversion (E), openness (O), conscientiousness (C), agreeableness (A) and emotional stability (ES) – on the basis of self-reports, using either a five, a ten or a fifteen-item list.

Existing research on the effects of personality traits on political attitudes and behavior reveals some interesting correlations: In Germany, voters on the left of the political spectrum (and particularly voters of the Green party) tend to be more extraverted and open, while voters of conservative parties are more conscientious, and voters of right-wing extremist parties are particularly low on openness and emotional stability (Schoen and Schumann, 2007). In the United States, openness is correlated with more liberal ideological attitudes, while all other traits are associated with more conservative attitudes (Gerber, Huber et al., 2010). Also, non-voters apparently tend to be less emotionally stable (Huber and Rattinger, 2005) and people with low trust in political institutions are also less emotionally stable, but at the same time more conscientious (Gabriel and Völkl, 2005, see also Dinesen, Nørgaard et al., 2014). Finally, people holding post-materialistic values are typically more open and extraverted (Klein, 2005). At the behavioral level, personality also seems to have effects: Dinesen and Nørgaard find that people high on extraversion and openness are more likely to

be union members, and Gerber et al. find that extraversion and emotional stability are associated with higher levels of participation in both elections and participatory procedures (Gerber, Huber et al., 2011).

In addition to such analyses that make use of the five dimensions of personality separately, psychologists have also attempted to find general personality types (taking – technically speaking – the form of certain clusters of the five underlying personality dimensions). One quite prominent suggestion has been that *three* distinct configurations of personality traits exist that can be derived from the answers to the Big5-inventory (see Specht et al. 2014 for an overview), namely *resilients*, *undercontrollers* and *overcontrollers*.

Resilients are characterized by above-average values on all five personality dimensions, i.e. extraversion (E), openness (O), conscientiousness (C), agreeableness (A) and emotional stability (ES). On the other side of the spectrum (characterized by below-average values), two different clusters emerge: while undercontrollers are characterized by low levels of conscientiousness (C) and agreeableness (A), overcontrollers are characterized by low levels of extraversion (E), openness (O), and emotional stability (ES), while having rather high levels of conscientiousness (C). Of course, such a clustering will never be perfect, so for any kind of empirical analyses, an additional “mixed” type will have to be included that comprises all individuals that do not fit neatly into one of those three categories.

For our own empirical analyses, we want to make use of these general personality types. We assume that democratic innovations appeal more or less to people with specific personality profiles. This “appeal” may be associated with an intention to actually make use of the respective innovation, i.e. to vote in a referendum or attend a deliberative event, but could also be based on expectations about other citizens’ behavior and motivation. For example, a person who is generally trusting (high in agreeableness and emotional stability) might support deliberative innovations even if he or she does not intend to participate in respective events due to time or other constraints – simply on the basis of positive expectations about other citizens. Similarly, an open and extraverted person who expects to derive instrumental and intrinsic benefits from political participation might wrongly assume that everybody else would derive the same benefits. Assuming, on the contrary, that for most people, the confrontation with and involvement in politics entails a significant degree of frustration and disappointment, the very same traits that reflect resilience more generally are likely to positively affect support for additional opportunities to participate. We thus expect “resilient” personality types to show stronger support for democratic innovations. “Overcontrolling” types, by

contrast, might be expected to show a flight-reaction to the impositions of politics and prefer the kind of democracy that Hibbing and Theiss-Morse have described as “stealth democracy” (Hibbing and Theiss-Morse, 2002). “Undercontrolling” types generally tend towards the flight- rather than the fight-reaction in the face of challenges and are generally more prone to violence, including political violence. Preferences over democratic innovation are difficult to predict for this type, although a tendency towards decisionistic procedures such as referenda rather than deliberative ones could easily be made plausible here. We thus hypothesize:

(H9): Resilient personality types, i.e. Individuals with an open, agreeable, extraverted, conscientious and emotionally stable personality profile are more likely to support democratic innovations, regardless of whether these take a direct-democratic or deliberative form.

4. Data and Operationalization

To empirically test our hypotheses, we make use of data collected in the framework of the GESIS panel. The GESIS Panel is an academic infrastructure for data collection. It offers researchers a possibility to collect primary data within a probability-based omnibus access panel. Data collection is organized in such a way that the resulting data are representative of the German speaking population aged between 18 and 70 years (at the time of recruitment) and permanently residing in Germany. The panel was initiated in 2014 and then encompassed about 4900 panelists. All data collected is immediately open for academia to conduct secondary research.⁴

For the purpose of the present paper, we make use of questions asked in wave BD of the panel which was fielded in August/September/October 2014.⁵ 4512 panelists were invited to take part in this wave, a total of 4035 actually took part in the survey. Included in this wave is a module named “Citizens Conception of Democracy and their Political Participation in Germany” that was originally proposed and designed by Brigitte Geissel and Sergiu Gherghina (Goethe-University, Frankfurt). It comprises a range of questions that focus on ways in which democratic decisions should be taken,

⁴ See <http://www.gesis.org/en/services/data-collection/gesis-panel/> for further information about the panel and its sampling.

⁵ The official link to this wave is GESIS (2014): GESIS Panel extended edition. GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA5664 Datafile Version 5.0.0, doi: 10.4232/1.12115; Details concerning this wave can be found here: <https://dbk.gesis.org/dbksearch/download.asp?db=E&id=54835>

what the (relative) roles and weights of citizens, politicians and experts should respectively be and to what extent citizens should take part in political discussions, deliberation, and decisions.

Given the focus of our theoretical expectations, we limit our analysis here to a subset of items and focus on those that cover direct-democratic as well as deliberative democratic innovations most directly. As a consequence, we shall use two dependent variables: We use the item “Citizens decide on important political topics”⁶ as an indicator of respondents’ support for direct democracy. Respondents were asked to rate this form of decision-making on a scale from 1 (“very poor”) to 6 (“very good”). In contrast to that, preferences for deliberative modes of decision-making are included by way of the following item: “Foster discussions among citizens about important political issues and include them in decision-making”⁷ (with the same scale of possible answers as before). Both items were recoded to a range from -2.5 to 2.5 with higher scores indicating that panelists prefer a stronger role of citizens in general or in decision-making or want more deliberation.

Our explanatory variables, of course, follow from our theoretical hypotheses derived above. To test for effects of respondents’ sex, we use a dummy variable indicating whether a panelist is male or not. We include a threefold variable for respondents’ formal level of education; distinguishing people with a university-entrance diploma, people with a completed secondary education and those with lower level of formal education. People were asked to state their personal income based on a pre-defined list providing 15 different income groups. We have used the middle of these groups (ranging from 0 to 7500 Euro of income) and will use this as a metric variable.

In terms of political attitudes, people were asked to locate themselves on an 11-point left-right scale; concerning efficacy, two items were included in the survey to measure internal as well as external efficacy respectively. An average score based on the respective two items was used for both dimensions; additionally an interaction term comprising internal and external efficacy will be included to specifically test our hypothesis H8. Finally, a ten-item list is included in the GESIS panel to include the Big5-inventory, which works satisfactorily well for our present purposes. If forced to extract five factors, a factor analysis yields the five theoretically expected personality dimensions. To qualify as a “resilient” respondent, panelists had to give above-average answers on all five

⁶ Original version: „Bürgerinnen und Bürger entscheiden über wichtige politische Themen“.

⁷ Original version: „Diskussion der Bürger über wichtige politische Themen fördern und in Entscheidung einbeziehen“.

dimensions.⁸ To make our set of explanatory variables more easily comparable in relative terms, all independent variables were re-scaled to a range from 0 to 1. OLS regression is used to estimate the effects of the independent variables on respondents’ attitudes towards democratic reforms.

5. Empirical Results and Discussion

Table 1 provides a first overview for the two dependent variables that are used here. Three things became immediately clear: People are quite open for democratic reforms, as can be seen from the fact that both mean values are larger than zero, indicating that support for the respective reform exceeds opposition. Secondly, people are specifically open for more discussion and deliberation. The respective mean value is considerably larger than the one concerning direct democratic innovations.⁹ Thirdly, there is no consensus in society concerning democratic reforms, as the standard deviations displayed in the final column show. Some people seem more open to democratic reforms than others. Hence, we will now turn to testing our hypotheses to see whether they can help us understand *who* actually is in favor of (which kind of) democratic reform and who is not.

Table 1: Descriptive Results concerning Attitudes towards Democratic Reforms

Item	N	Mean	Std.Dev.
“Citizens decide on important political topics.”	3918	0,28	1,34
“Foster discussions among citizens about important political issues and include them in decision-making.”	3921	1,18	1,08

Note: Range from -2.5 to 2.5 for both items; higher values indicate a preference for more citizen participation/deliberation/decision-making.

Table 2 provides the results from a set of OLS regressions. As one can see, the resulting patterns for the two forms of democratic innovations indeed differ. Still, there are four independent variables that exert a significant influence on both attitudes, namely the location of individuals on the left-right-axis, both types of efficacy as well as “openness” as a personality trait. Substantially, we see that people on the left side of the ideological spectrum are more open to democratic innovations: This effect is very robust and substantial in size – and it is even more so for deliberative than direct democratic modes. At the same time, we also see that people who perceive the political system and its central actors – politicians – to be responsive, i.e. have a level of external efficacy, see less need

⁸ We have tested other operationalizations of „resilient respondents“, e.g. using the middle point of the scale as an identifier. Our results are not affected by this choice.

⁹ This tendency is further corroborated by the fact that a majority of respondents opts for deliberation when asked to indicate a preference in a direct comparison of deliberation and direct democratic decision making (wording of the relative item: “Which position is closest to your own: ‘it is important in politics that issues are discussed and extensively debated’ vs. ‘It is important in politics that decisions are taken rather than focusing on discussion and debate’”).

for reform. Along with a higher level of external efficacy goes a much weaker support for direct democratic innovations, but also – although to a lesser degree – weaker support for deliberation. Of course, this also implies that democratic innovations (and especially direct democracy) are seen as a potential cure for perceived deficiencies of the current representative system. Self-efficacious people are more supportive of both kinds of innovations, although the effect is much weaker than the one observed for external efficacy. So both kinds of efficacy play a role – but an interaction between the two does not: the respective term fails to reach conventional levels of statistical significance. Finally, we see – hardly surprising – that open-minded people are open for democratic innovations.

Table 2: Determinants of Attitudes towards Democratic Reforms

	Citizens Decide		Foster Discussions	
	1	2	1	2
Sex: Male	0,126*	0,113*	0,041	-0,015
Educ: Secondary	0,010	0,023	0,033	0,040
Educ: Univ.Entr.	-0,109+	-0,090	0,079	0,089+
Income	-0,403**	-0,414**	-0,003	-0,004
Left-Right	-0,246*	-0,256*	-0,598***	-0,630***
Internal Eff.	0,274*	0,301*	0,384***	0,397***
External Eff.	-0,955***	-0,968***	-0,591**	-0,598**
Internal Eff. X External Eff.	-0,076	-0,042	0,006	0,043
Extraversion	0,122		-0,080	
Emotional Stab.	0,091		-0,178+	
Conscientiousn.	-0,006		0,306**	
Openness	0,269*		0,439***	
Agreeableness	-0,015		0,218*	
Resilient		0,072		-0,002
Constant	0,324+	0,549***	0,859***	1,344***
N	3160	3160	3158	3158
Adj. R ²	0,046	0,045	0,046	0,035

Note: unstandardized regression coefficients from OLS regressions; all independent variables recoded to a range from 0 to 1; higher values indicate a preference for more citizen participation/deliberation/decision-making. For the final one, higher values indicate a preference for deliberation over deciding; significance levels:

For all other independent variables, we see diverging patterns. Male respondents are more open to direct democratic innovations, while there is no gender difference with respect to deliberation. Concerning education, we see diverging, non-robust patterns. Income does have the expected negative effect on support for an extension of direct democracy – in fact, the effect is quite strong. There is no effect of income on support for deliberation. Finally, with respect to personality factors, we do not find any effect for direct democratic innovations (beyond the reported one for openness). Concerning deliberation, we do find additional effects: Agreeable people are more open for deliberative rounds as are conscientious people. What cannot be shown is an effect of the overall personality type: resilient people are not more supportive of democratic innovations.

Overall, we see that attitudes towards democratic innovations are influenced by a number of factors, depending very much on which dimension one looks at. As table 3 shows most of them are in line with our theoretical expectations. The one hypothesis that is rejected by these results is the deliberative elitism-hypothesis: neither men, high-income earners nor people with higher education are more likely to support deliberative innovations.

Hypothesis	Direct Democracy		Deliberation	
	Expected Direction	Confirmed	Expected Direction	Confirmed
H1: Below-average income earners are more likely, above-average income earners less likely to support direct democracy.	-	Yes		
H2: People on the left of the political spectrum are more likely to support direct democracy.	-	Yes		
H3: People with preferences for redistribution (people on the left of the political spectrum) support deliberative innovations.			-	Yes
H4: Men are more likely to support deliberative innovations.			+	No
H5: People with higher incomes are more likely to support deliberative innovations.			+	No
H6: People with higher levels of formal education are more likely to support deliberative innovations.			+	No
H7: People with a strong belief in internal efficacy will support any kind of democratic innovation.	+	Yes	+	Yes
H8: Moreover, people with a strong belief in internal, but a weak belief in external efficacy will support elite-challenging, i.e. direct democratic reforms.	+	(Yes, but not interactive)		
H9: Resilient personality types, i.e. Individuals with an open, agreeable, extraverted, conscientious and emotionally stable personality profile are more likely to support democratic innovations, regardless of whether these take a direct-democratic or deliberative form.	+	(No, only for certain dimensions)	+	(No, only for certain dimensions)

Still, it has to be acknowledged that our understanding of these innovations remains rather poor. If one looks at the model fit of our models, we can explain only four to five per cent of the variance. So while we are able to explain some variation among the population, a lot of work remains to be done in this respect.

6. Discussion: Instrumental or intrinsic preferences over democratic innovations?

Our analysis of preferences over democratic innovations does find some interesting evidence for instrumental motives behind respective preferences. First, our hypothesis that people on the left of the political spectrum are more supportive of democratic innovations has been confirmed. This

openness towards reforms that widen the opportunity for political participation may be part of a more general post-materialistic value orientation or frame of mind. However, it could also be due to the impression that existing institutions are less responsive to leftist political preferences than alternative, more participatory ones would be. As the positive effect of left-wing attitudes is particularly strong where deliberative innovations are concerned, we see evidence for our *deliberative-egalitarianism hypothesis*: deliberation is valued as an instrument to promote progressive redistribution against the interests of privileged groups. The competing *deliberative-elitism hypothesis*, by contrast, can be rejected. This is in keeping with a second finding, namely the negative effect of external efficacy beliefs on support for democratic innovations. Citizens who experience existing institutions as responsive to their preferences and opinions see less of a need for innovations. In other words: they have a stronger, instrumental preference for maintaining the institutional status quo. The negative effect of high income on citizen decision making, which might have been even stronger if the question had explicitly addressed direct democracy, points in a similar direction: In this case, the age-old fear that majority rule threatens the privileges of advantaged groups may be seen to reappear.

While we thus find some significant evidence for instrumental preferences over democratic innovations, there remains a large residuum of unexplained variance in our models. How to account for this? In the tradition of John Stuart Mill, political participation must be viewed not only as a means to an end, but also as an end in itself. Even if not every single individual in society might subscribe to this view, it seems highly plausible that such views are present in at least some, but perhaps major parts of society. In particular where procedures rather than substantial policies are concerned and where the effects on the own distributive interests are less transparent and foreseeable, intrinsic valuations of decision-making procedures may become decisive. We believe that our analysis does – due to restrictions in the available data – indeed ignore a central determinant of preferences over democracy and its potential innovations: normative conceptions of democracy and procedural justice. In an established democracy like Germany, where what Pippa Norris terms a “procedural” conception of democracy dominates “instrumental” and “authoritarian” ones, citizens may be expected to assign democracy an intrinsic value and to assess democratic innovations in light of their compatibility with the democratic norms they hold and in light of their likely effects on the functioning of the kind of democracy they approve. What thus seems to be required in order to more fully account for preferences over democratic innovations is an exploration of citizens’ normative conceptions of democracy.

The European Social Survey (ESS) 6 from 2012 constitutes an important step in this direction. However, the ESS measures support for one specific normative conception of democracy, namely a liberal-democratic one. Support for this liberal-democratic conception is high in most established democracies and many of the respective items produce little variation. The strong support for most of the statements used to measure the liberal-democratic conception of democracy in the ESS may thus be interpreted as a kind of minimal procedural consensus, which is certainly essential to democracy. Nonetheless, such a minimal procedural consensus might still allow for a number of different, more specific conceptions of democracy that are associated with preferences over specific democratic procedures and potential innovations. A proper assessment of the democratic deficit that consists in the gap between expectations of and experiences with democracy and of the potential of democratic innovations to reduce it requires a more complete picture of the *different* normative conceptions of democracy held by citizens. Some important steps in this direction have already been taken. Font et al. argue that citizens' process preferences capture three conceptions of democracy, a participatory, a representative and an expert-based one, none of which is essentially un-democratic (Font, Wojcieszak et al., 2015). Bengtsson and Christensen show that these conceptions are associated with patterns of political participation (Bengtsson and Christensen, 2014). Given that stealth democratic attitudes have been shown to affect procedural preferences, and in particular, tend to be associated with preferences for direct democracy (Webb, 2013), it seems promising to identify further attitude constellations that influence preferences for deliberative innovations or representative decision-making. Collaborative, multi-national, large-scale survey research would be a clear research desideratum in this regard.

However, any assessment of the potential of democratic innovations to cure the ailments of representative democracy must also take into account the fact that like all other institutions and decision-making procedures, these innovations will have outcome effects and benefit some groups and interests more than others. This is why any appeal for innovations should answer the question "who benefits" and defend the claim that the biases that are necessarily entailed in any institution are defensible and not partisan ones. One way to explore potential biases is a closer analysis of the constituency for specific innovations and the instrumental and intrinsic motives for which people support innovations. A second way is an institutional analysis of procedures and outcome effects. Such analyses should not solely focus on complementarities between established representative institutions and innovations, but also consider potential conflicts and contradictions between them, asking not only "who benefits?" but also "who loses?" in respective reforms.

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