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Towards Democratic Innovation in Israel: The Case for Citizens' Assemblies

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About the Author

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About the Program

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Against the backdrop of the Paris Agreement, the program invited policy professionals from Germany and Israel to explore issues relating to the transition to low-carbon economies, with the aim of fostering increased cooperation and exchange of ideas and knowledge between relevant stakeholders from academia, civil society and the governments of both countries. The opinions expressed in this policy brief are solely that of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of any of the program partners.

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1. Executive Summary

The erosion of liberal democracies is arguably a sign of our times. Autocratic politics, surveillance, and extremist ultra-nationalist populist tropes have gained ground in many countries around the world. So, too, has the urgency of the crisis of climate change become a defining feature of this era, requiring bold action to avert ecological and social disaster.

If we are to draw any lessons from the current coronavirus pandemic, one most certainly must be how it has exposed modern nation states' vulnerabilities and their general incapacity to plan for and grapple adequately with the complex "wicked problems" and escalated change in an interdependent global world. Crises on the scale of climate change are bound to be far more devastating than anything we have known. Can democracies, so grounded in the short term and so beholden to vested interests, tackle the immense, long-term challenges required to decarbonize economies and shift to sustainable societies?

The following paper posits not only that democracies can, but also that they must experiment and re-invigorate themselves to meet the challenges ahead. It presents the case for participatory innovative practices as an important pathway for democratic renewal and for bolder and more ambitious climate action in Israel. Specifically, we focus on one deliberative democratic format, the Citizens' Assembly, that has gained in popularity around the world of late, especially around climate-related issues.

The first section of the paper sets out to substantiate the global phenomenon of democratic erosion, including in Israel, the author's home country, arguing for the potential synergy between democratic renewal and action in the face of climate change.

The second section of the paper proposes that partial solutions to the challenges looming in both these spheres may in fact already be found at our doorstep, in the form of a “participatory turn” in the wider culture. This somewhat ironic but hopeful turn is not without pitfalls. We look at the purpose and intent of modes of public participation as well as the dangers and critiques that have been levelled at various attempts.

The third section takes a closer look at the surging field of democratic innovation, its rationale and how in practice it strives to increase a sense of ownership and include diverse voices and ideas, bringing “the wisdom of the many” to the table. These models seek to include deliberation and dialogue and promote creative solutions as means to overcome the “short-termism” and myopia that have so often led to wrong practices. We focus here on the Citizens’ Assembly model, which has gained prominence after being first enacted in Ireland in 2011. This is one of a “family” of innovative forms that promise to re-invigorate democracy, particularly in the sphere of climate change policy.

In the fourth section, we weigh the relevance and chart pathways for the convention of a Citizens’ Assembly in Israel, offering several policy recommendations to this end. The Appendix charts a kind of “route map” – proposing practical steps to building a collaboration initiative in Israel to bring this to idea to fruition.

2. Introduction

"The center cannot hold"

W.B. Yeats

The world is in flux. As I write these words in my apartment in Tel Aviv under lockdown, the threat of Covid-19 still looms large. Many questions arise: Will lessons be learned? Will democratic governments continue, as before, to float rudderless in the sea of impending cataclysms, showing little capacity to steer towards making the hard decisions for long-term planning that can ensure the well-being of humans and nature? Will people continue to pay the price of neo-liberal austerity, unprepared for the perfect storm that was inevitable? Undoubtedly, more crises still lie ahead. Chief among these, no doubt, will be climate disruption, a crisis far more complex and daunting than anything we have known.

The short attention span of our digital age has already blurred the memory of the most recent telltale signs: the burning of the Amazon rainforest and Australia's cities choking as unquenchable fires destroyed habitats, killing millions of animals. Ironically, coronavirus has given respite to nature, lowering pollution levels in the seas, land, and air.

Clearly, this is illusory. The fossil-fuel-driven global capital machine is revving to re-start. Times of crisis call for heroism and endurance, but also unveil fractures: democratic institutions under attack, extreme wealth inequality, racism, and polarization. All this is fertile ground for extremist politics. The "digital revolution" that brought us closer together also

threatens to tear us apart, casting its long shadow of incivility, stacked elections, super wealth, surveillance, polarized echo-chambers and a wounded capacity for empathy or solidarity. All this when what we need most is collective action.

Though somewhat of a sweeping generalization globally, this is, I believe, a reasonably apt description of the Israeli scene, where a deeply divided and polarized public has been gripped by unprecedented political stalemate after three elections in two years. The Prime Minister's indictment on corruption has fueled divisions, as trust in government and democratic institutions plummets further. The climate crisis ranks low in public awareness and is absent from most policy discussions and public debates.

As Winston Churchill is once said to have quipped, democracy seems the worst form of government, except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time. But not all democracies have proved equally competent and just with their citizens. Considering recent events, some may even muse whether Churchill's aphorism holds any truth at all. Democratic governments seem too cumbersome to respond with the haste required to meet a global emergency on the scale of climate change. Anchored in the short term and beholden to vested interests, how could they tackle the immense long-term challenges required to decarbonize economies and shift to sustainable societies?

Have the responses of China and other Southeast Asian countries to the pandemic not proved the efficacy of strong centralized authority that can limit personal freedoms when sweeping changes are necessary? Are democracies sliding

Democratic governments seem too cumbersome to respond with the haste required to meet a global emergency on the scale of climate change.

towards authoritarian rule as the curtailment of liberties is normalized under the guise of safeguarding public health and national security? These are no doubt some of the very “big questions” that will need sorting out as we consider how to reorganize the polis and global commons to better address the looming crises. If we wish to preserve our democracies and build sustainable, decarbonized societies in the 21st century, we will need to expand our notion of democracy beyond that of ballot box majority rule to one of partnership for an inclusive and fair culture of involvement and participation that gives citizens a greater stake in co-creating the transition.

I offer three observations at the outset of this paper: First, that we must acknowledge that democratic renewal and effective climate action are not distinct and separate realms, but rather inextricably linked and must be dealt with systematically. Second, engaging in transformations towards sustainability will mean that we must take hard look at how we organize our economies and societies. This hinges as much on questions of governance, politics, and the production of social goods such as trust, solidarity, justice, citizenship, and community, as it does on technology and expert knowledge. In short, the climate crisis requires that we place a robust democracy at center-stage in order to promote broad “buy in” and tap into the collective wisdom found at many levels. Third, more is required than merely tinkering at the edges of current policy and decision-making avenues. In the context of the climate crisis, the transformation towards sustainability calls for bold ideas and actions. In viewing democracies through the lens of transformation, we must discern, perfect, and implement practices that can leverage deep change: collective solutions and collaborations that provide an inclusive sense of belonging and agency for creating a sustainable future.

Let us then begin to imagine, for a moment, what if the two spheres of climate action and democracy could yield mutually beneficial solutions? What if we could construct democratic structures and processes that deepen citizen involvement in the solutions – one that can heal the broken cycle of inadequacy of short-term politics? What would such an inclusive process look like?

Digital platforms, used wisely, provide connection and tools, in ways once imagined only in fantasy and fiction. We live today in the most participatory of times, with endless avenues for sharing, communication, and consultation. But the digital sphere is not enough in itself, with dangers we can only slightly conceive. We must go beyond just effects of “giving voice” to providing contexts for inclusive dialogue, listening, deliberation to cultivate greater compassion, collaboration, and creative solutions to foster the common good and inform the making of policy and practices.

Fortunately, we don't need to re-invent the wheel. A growing body of evidence shows that innovative democratic practices are taking root throughout the world. The origins of these modes hark back to the democracy of the ancient Athenian agora. Experimentation is seeking to innovate and institutionalize participatory democratic structures in climate-related sustainability contexts. They can be found under different names: participatory, direct, deliberative or hybrid forms of democratic experimentation that look to enrich democratic forms. These are, in effect, attempts to quench the thirst of citizens to be involved, to have a say and not remain passive bystanders of unreceptive systems.

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One such form – the Citizens' Assembly – has shown encouraging results and is increasingly being adopted in climate-related and sustainability contexts. Inspired and informed by this format, this paper will begin to sketch out a possible scaffolding for this as an inroad to both democratic innovation and greater climate action in Israel.

3. Democracy and Climate Change: Conjoined Crises in the 21st Century

These are times of accelerated change, as human societies face both more pressing and complex problems. Arguably, two of the most daunting of them in the 21st century are the retreat of liberal democracies and the challenges posed by climate disruption.

It is a central tenet of this paper that the crises of climate change and democracy are intimately linked. We begin, then, with a view to identifying trends of democratic erosion around the world, and then specifically in Israel, before returning to register ways in which these impinge on climate change readiness and action.

3.1 *The Democratic Malaise*

The notion that we are witnessing a retreat, perhaps even the impending demise of liberal democracy, has become widespread.¹ There is much evidence to suggest that liberal democracies are indeed in crisis. Trust in elected leadership and government institutions has plummeted.² Divides are widening as right-wing populists target excluded groups and encourage their supporters to attack “corrupt politicians”, the “lying media”, “feminists”, “Jews”, “gays” and “elite conspiracies”. It is a slippery slope to nativist authoritarianism.³

This development appears to be driven by several factors: The BRICS effect – i.e. the destabilization of the established order caused by the rise of emerging regional powers such as Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa.⁴ The attrition of national sovereignty, wherein a few trans-national corporations wield

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more wealth and power than some nation-states, leaving some to posit that we now live in a “post-democratic” age.⁵ The erosion of political and civil rights – we are currently seeing an overall decline in political rights and civil liberties for the 13th consecutive year.⁶ Some hitherto liberal democracies – for example, Hungary and Turkey – have clearly taken a different path in recent years. Flawed elections and governance institutions in many countries are causing people to withdraw from participation, leaving the field open for extremist alternatives.⁷ Inequality and exclusion are growing as the gap between the super wealthy few and the rest increases. Transnational corporations wield unbridled influence in the national and international spheres, while marginalized and minority groups are excluded from many political systems.⁸ The stability and security paradigm, in which dissent is often conflated with terrorism, and threats to national security, whether real or imagined, are enlisted to restrict democratic freedoms in the name of security.⁹

3.2 Digital Effects

There are clear indications that the effects of digitalization are making matters worse, dampening earlier promises of “digital democracy”: web surveillance, bots, hyper commodification, digital violence, along with the extreme concentration of corporate wealth. With big data mining and the personal targeting of misinformation, such as practiced by Cambridge Analytica, which have purportedly influenced the outcome of elections and referenda, digital technologies seem to be anything but a guarantee for greater freedom and democracy.

Digitalization is heightening the polarization of the public in

many ways. News feed algorithms reinforce confirmation bias and create “echo chambers” from which diverging viewpoints and information are excluded, fueling incivility and intolerance. There is little debate of substance, and politics has come to resemble reality TV. Increasingly polarized political and media environments present a real challenge for science communication efforts around issues such as climate change, vaccinations, and evolution.¹⁰

Another fallout of the digital era is the quantitative overabundance inundating citizens and policymakers, making it more difficult to focus on what is important. This overload has much to do with the overall decline in civility and argumentative complexity.¹¹ In turn, declining civility among elected representatives decreases citizens’ trust in democratic institutions.

The retreat from factuality in the era of post-truth politics has severely undermined the traditional authority of science. As the public debate on climate change in the United States and elsewhere has shown, tribal and social identities now define the arbiters of truth, with political leaders who offer simplistic solutions to complex problems pushing to the fore.

All in all, this mélange of factors has exacerbated the failure of our democracies to address complex and long-term problems. Even before the digital era, our political systems tended to incentivize a focus on short-term benefits with an eye to winning re-election (a.k.a. “short-termism”). But developments over the last two decades have made it increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for career politicians and elected officials to adopt the longer view that is needed to tackle issues such as broken health systems and climate mitigation.¹²

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3.3 The Israeli Context: A Strained Democracy

Of course, these global trends play out differently in varying contexts. In Israel, the public mood is highly polarized, and comparative indicators suggest that democratic institutions are increasingly strained. Trust in political leadership is lower than ever.¹³ In comparison with other OECD states, Israel generally scores low on key indices of democracy. Israel, for example, ranks 28th on the Economist Democracy Index, which identifies the country as a “flawed democracy”, mostly due to its curb on civil liberties.¹⁴ It also ranks 51st globally on V-Dem’s Liberal Democracy Index, and scores even lower in the evaluation of deliberative and participatory components.¹⁵

These are troubling indications, but perhaps not surprising considering the current political impasse. With Israeli voters having faced a third (and possibly fourth) election in two years and PM Netanyahu indicted on corruption charges, the country faces an unprecedented democratic crisis that has been exacerbated by far-right populism and attacks on the legitimacy of the High Court and the rule of law.

Is Israel on a slippery slope to becoming an “illiberal democracy” of the kind that has emerged in Poland, Hungary and Turkey over the last decade? The answer to this question largely depends on whom you ask and where they are situated on the political spectrum. If anything, the current electoral deadlock reflects the thin and fragile veneer of agreement that exists in Israel around core civic values, as well as the need for vigilant protection over vulnerable democratic institutions in Israel.

3.4 Democracy and Climate Change: The Need for Joint Solutions

The severity of the climate change crisis needs no elaboration. Scientific consensus on this is well documented.¹⁶ The tenor of climate activism, however, has become more vociferous, sounding a siren of climate emergency. The protests of millions of young people in the Fridays for Future and the Extinction Rebellion (XR) movements relay dire messages, resounding Greta Thunberg's cry that "the house is on fire". "Short-termism" and policy complacency are being challenged for discounting the future of our children and those yet unborn.

How, then, are the problems of democracy and climate change inextricably tied? For one, weakened democratic institutions will find it hard to make the leap to ambitious changes (e.g. the adoption of a carbon tax, changes in energy and water use, consumption patterns, economic restructuring) without wide public acceptance and trust. Second, climate change has become the issue of contestation for populist authoritarian movements. Trump's climate apostasy, opposition to environmental protection and unholy alliance with the fossil fuel industry have signaled the way for right-wing populist leaders, such as Bolsonaro in Brazil or the AfD in Germany. What has become known as the "Thunberg effect" has unleashed a slew of venomous attacks on Greta, and on other activists throughout the world.

Third, and rather ironically, shifting politics are in many ways responding to the same systemic failures, but with very different conclusions. Both the climate movement and extremist populism blame policies that left so many behind in the era of

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neoliberal global economic hegemony. This legacy of widening socio-economic inequalities is easily exploited by populist movements, which can blame elites, fanning fear and hatred of the demonized Other, while promising a return to some “great” nativist past.

The rhetoric of climate change advocacy also sheds an uneasy light on the systemic failures of global capitalism, albeit with vastly different social and political implications. Policymakers and practitioners need to become far more cognizant of the grievances and needs of various population groups. This could help to prevent populist agendas from pre-empting and undermining climate mitigation and adaptation policies – as occurred in France when anti-government *gilets jaunes* (yellow vests) protesters took to the streets to oppose Macron’s proposed carbon tax, resulting ultimately in the convocation of the French Citizens’ Convention.¹⁷ As a consequence, a commitment to a “just transition” is becoming the lodestone of all climate change and sustainable development plans and policies. Equally, there is a growing awareness of the need for tools that will facilitate greater participatory engagement and allow marginalized populations to co-create, own and enact solutions in the face of the multiple risks and uncertainties. This, however, is not an entirely new sentiment. Public participation is very much a part of the current *Zeitgeist*. We turn now to take a closer look at this phenomenon and what it may hold for democratic renewal.

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4. Participatory Approaches and Democratic Innovations – Literature Review and Policy Options

Paradoxically, despite the erosion of liberal democracy charted above, new forms of democratic engagement are in fact on the rise. This “participatory turn”¹⁸ in culture has even led some to declare the existence of a “participatory revolution”.¹⁹ Public participation takes many forms: Stakeholder Consultation, Roundtable Events, Open Government, Citizen’s Assembly or Participatory Budgets, to name but a few of the growing volume of tools of engagement. The website *Participedia*, for example, lists over 2,000 entries, along with case studies and methodologies, testifying to the proliferation of public engagement.²⁰

4.1 *The Evolution of Participatory Practices*

The origins of participatory democracy can be traced to the ancient Greek *agora*, where citizens were chosen by lottery to assume positions of governance. The “participatory turn”¹⁸ must therefore be understood within the context of the wider cultural shifts of our time, the power of social media, and the primacy of identity and narrative. The emancipatory social movements of the 1960s expanded the notion of citizen participation to hitherto excluded voices (e.g. LGBTQ communities, environmental activists, gender equality champions, and indigenous people) and eschewed “top-down” development concepts in favor of community, social justice and dignity.²¹

The public today is polled and surveyed as never before by ubiquitous digital tools. Governments have made declarative commitments to public participation, on platforms such as the Open Government Partnership²² and the Aarhus Convention.²³ Sheila Jasanoff has described the shift to “technologies of humility”, countering the “technologies of hubris”, formerly the norm of modern science and technology policy regimes, integrating “the can-do orientation of science and engineering with the ‘should do’ questions of ethical and political analysis.”²⁴ Acknowledging the limits of prediction and control, technologies of humility confront “head-on” the implications of our lack of perfect foresight. They call for different expert capabilities and different forms of engagement between experts, decision-makers, and the public than in the past. They require not only the formal mechanisms of participation but also an intellectual environment in which citizens are encouraged to bring their knowledge and skills to bear for the resolution of commons-related problems.²⁵

This recasts a place for participation in its root sense of *demos*, the people in democracy, best encapsulated by Abraham Lincoln’s Gettysburg address, which called for a “government of the people, by the people and for the people”. More than just showing up at the ballot box, democracy, thus conceived, is a co-creative partnership.

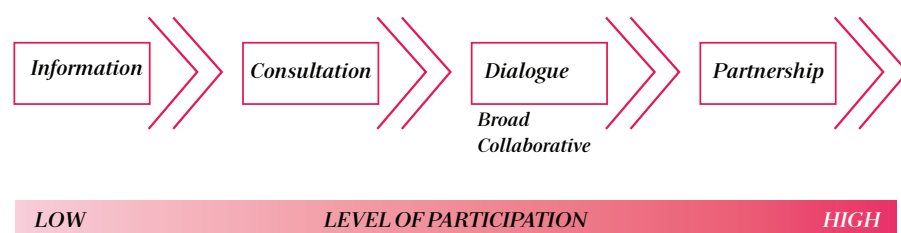
4.2 The Purpose of Public Participation

The deployment of participatory formats is often driven by a range of motivations, dependent on the espoused purpose, intention and interests of the conveners, as well as the chosen method for consultation and dialogue.²⁶ The extent to

which decision-makers are willing to listen, respond to and incorporate the ideas of citizens is, without doubt, a key factor shaping outcomes.

First outlined by Arnstein, the “*Ladder of Citizen Participation*” has retained its seminal place in the literature on participation. Growing out of community work in the 1960s, Arnstein categorized eight levels of citizen participation, with each rung of the ladder corresponding to the degree of citizen power: from manipulation, placation and therapy, to informing, consultation, partnership, and up to delegated power and citizen control.²⁷ In a similar model, civic participation is mapped out at four levels, from least to most collaborative (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. The Different Levels of Participation



The involvement of NGOs in the different steps of the political decision-making process varies based on the intensity of participation. There are four levels of participation sorted from least to most participative. Figure adapted from the Code of Good Practice for Civil Participation in the Decision-Making Process²⁸

4.3 Critiques and Concerns Regarding Public Participation

To be sure, participatory processes have become a trend, the bon ton that no project dares to do without. Often, though,

this amounts to little more than a ‘tick box’, or a tactic to derail local NIMBY (“not in my back yard”) opposition.²⁹ High-profile events can often fizzle out without genuine dialogue or response from decision-makers, ending up in disappointment.

There is a huge literature of debate and critiques around participatory formats, that go far beyond the limits of this paper. Reservations about public participation fall into three broad categories:

1. Concerns that participation processes are mere “window dressing”, co-opted by preordained political-economic interests.³⁰ Or as David Bollier and Silke Heilfrich describe, the public does not show sovereign political agency in a fuller sense; It merely “participates” on the terms that politicians, regulators, and other state officials have already found acceptable, giving the ultimate decisions a veneer of legitimacy.³¹
2. Doubts about whether citizens are up to the challenge of addressing complex social or scientific issues such as climate change, which require levels of expertise beyond the ken of most laypeople. In this perspective, only a benevolent expert (global) leadership, equipped with coercive powers, could possibly succeed. Citizens also often lack access, confidence, time, and language skills to engage meaningfully. Other reservations about the efficacy and efficiency of citizen involvement suggest that it would only slow things down and is prohibitively costly.
3. Ethical concerns regarding whether stakeholders

are prone to manipulation, and that participation is engineered often to persuade people to accept some risk or a certain policy or prior agenda.³² Consultative processes can lean in favor of power brokers or enclaves of like-minded elites or activists.³³

No doubt, these concerns warrant a strict code of professional ethics that can guide and monitor public participation along rigorous standards. Transparency and proper planning must be merged with honest communication and reflection to manage expectations and conflicts in an open manner.

Regarding the efficacy of publics' grasp of complex and urgent issues such as climate change, I would argue that this is a mistaken understanding of the nature of both sustainability and democracy. Sustainability is not a fixed outcome of privileged elite knowledge. It is, rather, an ongoing conversation of science and society for a collective future that is ecologically sound and committed to the greatest good for all. In other words, active involvement and dialogue are intrinsic to genuinely sustainable outcomes.

There is no indication that an authoritarian regime, even one composed of environmental experts, would be immune to the vagaries of human failures and political slips. Recent empirical comparative studies demonstrate that the quality of democracy, measured using a host of indicators, directly influences climate performance.³⁴ With all its limitations, public participation has already pushed the boundaries of representative or ballot-box democracy, opening opportunities for public involvement and engagement. We turn now to view how we might marshal this trend to begin to turn the tide of democratic erosion and to address systemic failures such as climate change.

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5. Democratic Innovation and Climate Change Transformation

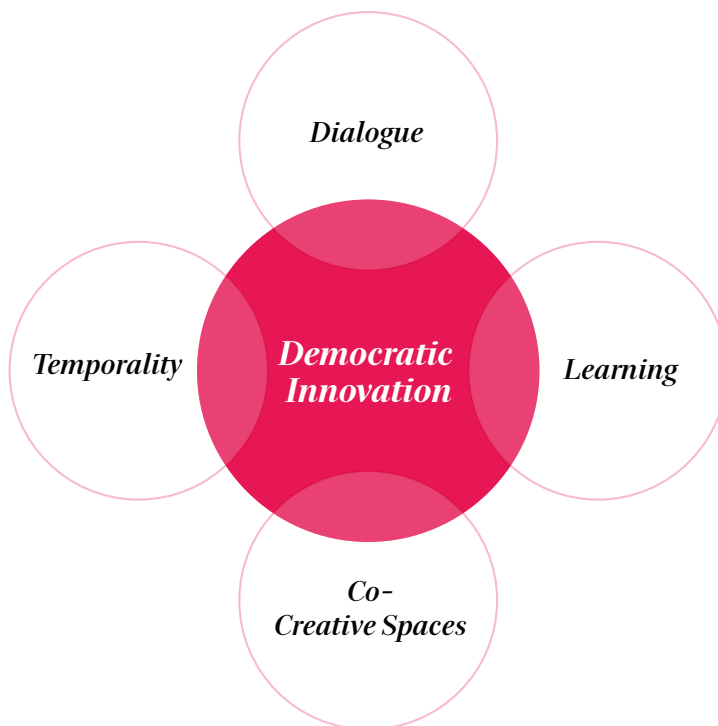
Scholars make the distinction between participatory democracy and deliberative democracy. The former stresses engagement, the latter allows space for dialogue and deliberation. Recently, the term “democratic innovation” has merged these two streams in an attempt to overcome the weaknesses of representative democracies charted earlier. As Elstub and Escobar prescribe: *“Democratic innovations are defined as processes or institutions developed to reimagine and deepen the role of citizens in governance processes by increasing opportunities for participation, deliberation, and influence”*.³⁵ In recasting and deepening citizens’ roles with new parameters for participation and agency, democratic innovations try to enhance democracy, break current limitations and experiment with new practices of co-creation and collaborative governance.

Numerous participatory platforms have been experimented with in recent years, including Citizen Juries, Citizens’ Assemblies, Consensus Conferences, Planning Cells, Citizen Deliberative Councils and Participatory Budgeting. Digital technologies are providing more options to expand decision-making, using procedures such as quadratic voting³⁶ to move beyond classic majority rule approaches. The utility and effectiveness of these tools must be matched to the goals and the quality of desired participation, but there is no question that they create opportunities to tap into more nuanced and relevant sources of knowledge imbedded in the “wisdom of the many”. One recent example is the initiative “Madrid goes out to the balcony”,³⁷ which invited citizens to present proposals for handling the Covid-19 crisis in the city.

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In considering participatory innovations, particularly in the context of climate change, four key dimensions need to be considered (see Figure 2): Inclusivity, Dialogue, Learning, and Temporality.

Figure 2. Key Dimensions of Democratic Innovation for Climate Policy Transformations



1. Co-Creative Spaces

Diversity is a defining feature of democratic society, and greater inclusion must become our guiding star. “Who do we invite to the table?” is a fundamental query, if we do not wish to limit participation to the “usual suspects” from the usual organizations and groups. Moreover, we must think reflexively about the invitation itself.

Are others being invited to some mainstream space (sets of beliefs / community / way of doing things), to which those previously excluded or marginalized are now invited? This can invisibly maintain an existing status quo of power relations between those who feel ownership of that space and remain in control, and those they invite in, who can feel like guests whose invitation could at any point be rescinded. This is not always conscious and obvious to those inviting.³⁸

This kind of reflexive inclusiveness demands vigilant awareness in order to co-create spaces where everyone can feel at home and take ownership of the process. This approach welcomes the collective wisdom, understanding and creativity of all present with regards to decisions and policies that will affect their lives, including the difficult changes needed for a just transition.

2. Dialogue for the Common Good

System change and new forms of governance require collective action based on multi-sectoral dialogue and collaboration.³⁹ If we take up this task in earnest, difficult conversations are bound to occur and are even welcome. This requires developing the capacity for “stretch collaboration” – situations when we must learn to collaborate with people we don’t trust or like⁴⁰ – to create a process of dialogue and deliberation where people who disagree may come to understand why others hold the position they do. Evidence shows that polarized positions can be attenuated with active, respectful listening and reflection, increasing trust, empathy, and understanding.⁴¹ These are spaces where common purpose can emerge.

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3. Deep Learning

Learning is fundamental to democratic innovations which aim to make complex, nuanced subjects understandable. Such innovations must strike a balance between expert knowledge, experience, and local knowledge. In addition, they must generate the opportunities to examine one's own assumptions and engage parts of the whole self that are often neglected in traditional political practices: intuition, feeling, and creativity.⁴² Refining democratic participation requires a transformational pedagogy for deep life-long learning.

This requires developing the capacity for “stretch collaboration” – situations when we must learn to collaborate with people we don't trust or like.

4. Temporality and the Long Term

Psychological studies point to our myopic cognitive barriers to perceiving and acting on far-off future threats.⁴³ The dominant narratives of the industrial world are of no help: techno-science and economics are rooted in causation (the past) and in growth and profits (the present), respectively. These worldviews, at their core, undermine and “discount” the future, at the expense of the future and generations unborn.⁴⁴ The “presentist” bias of “short-termism” is nowhere more apparent than in politics. Democratic innovation today needs to reclaim new “timescapes” – incorporating a longer view towards responsibility for future generations. Happily, techniques of “futuring” and “visioning” are finding their way into planning processes, linking imagination with decision-making. This is essential to the task of re-imagining democracy, enacting what has been aptly called “long-termism” to competently handle the complexity of our world.⁴⁵

5.1 *The Growth of Citizens' Assemblies*

Citizens' Assemblies belong to the family of deliberative democracy formats convened to address complex issues. They are quickly becoming the “cutting edge” of democratic innovation, particularly, but not exclusively, around climate change action. Citizens' Assemblies and related formats have been on the rise around the world. The most celebrated example that popularized Citizens' Assemblies transpired in Ireland with the convening of a constitutional assembly on political reform in 2011. The Irish parliament expanded the mandate for a National Citizen Assembly to deliberate highly contested issues that were put to a referendum, such as abortion and same sex marriages. Citizens' Assemblies had been previously initiated on electoral reform in Canada (with less success) and later in the Netherlands on this topic. The UK convened one on social care reform in 2018.

Models of Citizens' Assemblies are being adopted across the world and are changing the landscape of democratic participation at the sub-national and local levels as well. In Belgium, for example, Citizen Assemblies of the German speaking community have been institutionalized as a complement to existing governance structures.⁴⁶ The Austrian State of Vorarlberg has similarly created a permanent structure for local randomly-selected civic councils, using the model of so-called “Wisdom Councils”.⁴⁷ The Polish city of Gdansk has created permanent Citizens' Assemblies to address issues of importance for the local community, such as flooding and violence against women.⁴⁸

Efforts to craft climate change policy have been a major impetus for the upsurge in Citizens' Assemblies. In 2017,

Citizens' Assemblies belong to the family of deliberative democracy formats convened to address complex issues. They are quickly becoming the “cutting edge” of democratic innovation, particularly, but not exclusively, around climate change action.

Ireland convened a Citizens' Assembly to create a national climate change policy framed around the question: "How can the State make Ireland a leader in tackling climate change?" After achieving a high degree of consensus, the Assembly drafted ambitious policy recommendations to be later integrated into the Irish government's climate action plan, including carbon taxes, transportation reform, and a commitment to complete divestment from fossil fuels.⁴⁹

The unequivocal demands of Extinction Rebellion and other climate advocates in the UK led Parliament to respond, with no fewer than six parliamentary commissions agreeing to set up a Citizens' Assembly of randomly-selected citizens to consider how to combat different aspects of climate breakdown and achieve net zero emissions.⁵⁰ The most recent example in France is the Citizen Convention on Climate, a 150-person randomly-selected body with an formal mandate, recently finished its work and presented its recommendations to Parliament on how France can reduce GHG emissions by 2030 by at least 40% compared to 1990, "in a spirit of social justice".⁵¹

Efforts to craft climate change policy have been a major impetus for the upsurge in Citizens' Assemblies.

5.2 Benefits of Citizens' Assemblies

Literature in the field points to a range of potential benefits associated with Citizens' Assemblies, many of which have been corroborated in practice (see Box 1):

Box 1. Potential Benefits of Citizens' Assemblies

- Invites people to come as citizens
- Distances from “filter bubbles” and Facebook “clicktivism”
- Provides time and space to study evidence and reach an examined opinion about an issue relevant to the common good
- Furthers listening and deliberation to examine one’s assumptions and previous positions
- Helps to democratize elitist worlds of research, data and evaluation
- Lends research a greater social impact
- Supports the development of other democratic goods and civic engagement
- Boosts inclusion and diversity
- Develops a longer-term perspective in decision-making

5.3 How Do Citizens' Assemblies Work?

Citizens' Assemblies are generally convened to address complex and often contested issues through deliberative democratic practices designed to foster reflection, informed debate, and decision-making. The purpose is to allow people to adopt more nuanced positions on the issues at hand, gain a better understanding of the trade-offs inherent in any given decision, and strive for recommendations that best reflect the common good.

There are no “rule books” or strict formal procedures for Citizens' Assemblies, but theory and practice have given rise to common practices and guidelines⁵² (see Box 2). These must, of course, be adapted to fit the specific circumstances, socio-political context, culture, theme, and mandate. A Citizens' Assembly usually comprises a group of 50 or more citizens brought together to discuss an issue or set of issues with the aim of reaching an agreement on what needs to happen. The people who take part are selected randomly by a process of *sortition*,

to reflect the diversity of the wider population (“mini-public” or microcosm of the public) in terms of its demographics (e.g. age, gender, ethnicity, social class, geography). This is preferably performed by an independent external body.

Sortition extends the scope of participation beyond the canvassing of “usual suspects” or “professional participators”, such as businesses, NGOs, unions, institutions, or other vested interest groups. Participants are not elected, nor are they chosen as representatives of sectors. Their role as citizens is to learn and examine the evidence and various positions around a problem and deliberate to reach agreement about steps that would be best for the common good.

Assemblies bring together citizens over several days or weeks to learn about a policy challenge, deliberate together, and recommend how to deal with it. The process is typically facilitated by an independent and apolitical organization, bringing in experts across a wide range of disciplines, competing interest groups and the voices of those personally affected by the issue in question. The process usually goes through three phases: learning, deliberation (in small groups and plenary) and decision-making/recommendations.

To succeed, Citizens' Assemblies need to be given a clear mandate before they begin. It is helpful to enlist a high-level sponsor for the process: Parliament or a government ministry. At the very least, there should be a clear commitment given ahead of time regarding how and when the government will respond to the recommendations. The legitimacy of such mini-publics lies in the fact that they are not driven by vested interests – in other words, lobbyists or professionals that have “stacked the deck” in

Assemblies bring together citizens over several days or weeks to learn about a policy challenge, deliberate together, and recommend how to deal with it.

favor of a pre-formed agenda – but are perceived by the wider public as citizens selected for an open and fair process, visibly committed to the common good.

An unbiased and careful facilitation process is a key factor in the success of the Assembly. Assembly members should have an equal chance to be heard, ask questions, and raise concerns. All the information and materials given to the Assembly members are shared publicly to reach informed and democratically legitimate judgements. Moderators must guard against “group-think”, creating premature consensus, or the “halo effect” of charismatic personalities, both within the group or outside. For this reason, the Assembly is often subdivided into smaller groups; discussions remain focused on the topic; and participants must justify their opinions and be respectful of each other.

Participants should also be given sufficient time during the Assembly to familiarize themselves with the various aspects of a question and be exposed to arguments representing contrary positions. The learning component of an Assembly is crucial and ideally includes the examination of essential resources, data, and meetings with experts and stakeholders to engage with, discuss, and reflect on a range of perspectives away from lobbying campaigns.

Box 2. Tips and Suggestions for Successful Citizens' Assemblies⁵³

The Dos and Don'ts of Citizens' Assemblies

The following are practical suggestions for convening citizens assemblies, based on good practices and experience reported from around the world.

Preparation

- Invest in the preparation process. Create a broad coalition of support, partnerships and shared understanding as to the theme, purpose, intentions, goals, and methods of the assembly.
- Emphasize the fundamental intent: to support and complement democracy with greater public participation, deep-learning, deliberation, and dialogue.
- Enlist a high-profile mentor (Parliament, the President, high-level politician or public figure) to raise awareness for the citizens' assembly and gain legitimacy.
- Create a multi-sectoral non-partisan public advisory council from civil society, academia, and politics.
- Select a question regarding a meaningful issue that lies at the heart of debate and concern for the future.
- Develop a consensus on issues of compensation for participants.
- Keep the process non-partisan and enlist the support of all parties.
- Do not disparage parliamentarians; enlist their support. Consider integrating them into the assembly.
- Guarantee the Assembly's mandate and secure the government's commitment to review them and respond.
- Create a communication strategy to ensure high visibility of the citizens' assembly in the media, enlisting key opinion and thought leaders.

Methodology

- Agree upon methods for reaching collective decisions (e.g. majority vote, consensus, sociocracy, concertation).

- Use unbiased professional facilitation and moderation team to co-create the agenda.

Selecting participants

- Use random sortition of participants reflective of the population, by an unbiased external agency.
- Strive for radical inclusion, asking “who is not around the table?”

Outcomes

- Share on-going activity transparently, for example, using streaming or interim reports.
- Look to scale multi-level processes, not just isolated “pilots”.
- Create an ongoing learning process and/or constructive evaluation.
- Institutionalize this practice rather than using “one-off” assemblies as a “quick fix”.

6. Could a Citizens' Assembly Work in Israel?

*"This is a Jewish state,
what are you talking to me in Arabic for?!"*

MK Kathrin Shitrit (Likud)

*"Shut your mouth! Who are you to tell me not to speak in
Arabic, you piece of garbage"*

***MK Ahmad Tibi (Joint Arab List)**⁵⁴*

Increasing polarization and incivility in public life in Israel underscores the need to re-imagine new models of democracy. This section explores how the celebrated "Startup Nation" ethos of Israel might be expanded to include democratic innovation.

6.1 Assets

Beyond its current enchantment with high technology, Israel has shown a penchant for change in the past that could be harnessed to heighten citizen participation. In 2000, for example, Citizens' Conferences were convened, using the Danish consensus conference model with a group of 20 carefully selected non-expert citizens, to explore options for the future of transportation in Israel. This deliberative democracy event received quite a lot of media coverage at the time, resulting in a consensus document of recommendations that was presented to the then Minister of Transport. This format was tried two more times shortly afterwards but was subsequently discontinued.

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This “participatory turn” has been pursued further since then, and the use of stakeholder consultation and participatory methods is now widespread; so much so that the Prime Minister’s Office has established a Public Engagement Division.⁵⁵ A number of expert bodies have grown to design and facilitate multi-stakeholder consultation and engagement – organizations dedicated to mentoring the creation of innovative models of dialogue and cooperation across sectors. *Sheatufim*, for example, adapted and tailored the “collective impact” collaborative model for Israel, becoming the backbone organization for social and economic initiatives, such as the 5X2 Initiative, whose aim was to broaden inclusion and excellence in education in the fields of mathematics, physics, chemistry, and technology.⁵⁶ The awareness of the importance of public participation is on the rise in government offices, often on sustainability and climate related issues. One prominent example is the “Israel 2050”, a multi-stakeholder planning process, now underway, designed to create a road map for decarbonization in Israel.⁵⁷

However, as important as these examples may be, participatory collaborative policy creation between civil society and government remains, for the most part, the exception rather than the rule in Israel. Nonetheless, the examples above are important precedents, marking a potential for advancing democratic renewal. With greater public demand and political will, margins could be widened and disaffection transformed, in order to create partnerships and to generate “out of the box” solutions.

Participatory collaborative policy creation between civil society and government remains, for the most part, the exception rather than the rule in Israel.

6.2 *Barriers to Change*

Four principle barriers could block change for democratic renewal. First, though innovative in spirit in several areas (e.g. Hi-Tech, Agritech, pharmaceuticals and Defense & HLS technologies), the fruits of the “Startup Nation” have not been spread equally across Israel, and are concentrated in Tel Aviv and the center of the country.⁵⁸ We must be wary of reinforcing this trend and widening gaps within the country. Second, innovation could easily be dismissed in times when “democratic” has become synonymous with a “leftist agenda” that threatens an embattled Prime Minister’s political survival. Third, issues such as climate change are still widely perceived as abstract and distant threats and would struggle to capture the public’s attention. Fourth, civil society is rarely invited in Israel to collaborate on decision-making on issues of importance. A gulf of suspicion and mistrust separates the sides, making direct or deliberative democracy unimaginable.⁵⁹

6.3 *Crisis as Opportunity*

One of the major lessons to be learned from the Irish example is the way in which a democratic crisis turned into an opportunity for innovation. The economic crash and political crisis in 2011 resulted in a downturn in the public’s trust in government institutions and heightened tensions around contested issues. Out of this crucible grew a willingness to try something new, giving rise to the first Citizens’ Assembly on political reform. Despite initial doubts and skepticism, citizens demonstrated that they could deliberate intelligently, and produced recommendations that helped to move out of deadlocked conflicts. The ensuing success encouraged Irish lawmakers to expand Citizens’ Assemblies to deal with a range of issues.

One of the major lessons to be learned from the Irish example is the way in which a democratic crisis turned into an opportunity for innovation.

The current climate in Israeli politics, and the ensuing health and economic crises, all share some distinct similarities with the Irish example. It is a fraught and highly-polarized situation. “Politics as usual” is patently not working. People may be more willing to try something new, with a chance to win consent across the political spectrum to embark on an experiment for democratic innovation in Israel.

6.4 *Weighing the Options*

It is important to consider and weigh out different pathways and contextual factors vis-à-vis selecting the right question for citizen deliberation and participation, and where intervention could best impact systemic blocks and failures. Here are four overarching questions that can assist in the development and design phase of an inaugural Citizens' Assembly in Israel:

- 1.** What systemic complex social/political/economic/environmental problems can be addressed?
- 2.** How can the Assembly exemplify inclusive democratic innovation in Israel?
- 3.** What successes can be easily harvested to ensure willingness and motivation for continuity?
- 4.** What potential benefits could be accrued to impact policy change?

6.5 *Where to Begin?*

A balance needs to be struck between issues of urgency and high public relevance and issues likely to promise a successful outcome in the short term. Given that climate change is still not widely perceived as a volatile and urgent issue on the

Israeli scene, it may not be the best place to start. Instead, it could be wiser to engage with the climate challenge through relevant regional and local issues, for example: “How should we restore life to the Haifa Bay region?”, which is marred by oil refineries, heavy industry and a high incidence of pollution-related diseases. Or perhaps the theme of the food system and health. These themes are inherently regional or sectoral, but could easily be scaled up. Such topics may be immediately marginalized and tagged as the “liberal-green agenda”. Yet choosing even more contentious and emotive issues, such as “how can we re-start the peace process?” or “how can we close income gaps and create greater equality in Israeli society?”, is likely to stir up attention but also runs the risk of being overly-charged and polarized.

Another option would be to convene an initial Citizens' Assembly to address electoral reform – an issue of broad concern to a diverse spectrum of the population. Like in Ireland, the pervasive sense of public frustration from political incapacity could encourage people to try something new. This initial experimentation must, however, strive for exemplary standard of public visibility and be perceived as an inclusive and fair process that amply demonstrates the concrete benefits to be accrued from citizens donning a future-oriented perspective, unconstrained by vested or political party interests. As capacity and confidence grow, the next steps could be to expand assemblies to address complex issues such as crisis preparedness or climate change. Ultimately, a leadership mechanism must be set up to decide what issues are to be addressed, in accord with the formal mandate received by the Assembly (see Appendix).

A balance needs to be struck between issues of urgency and high public relevance and issues likely to promise a successful outcome in the short term.

6.6 Beyond Gradualism – Institutionalizing Change

Finding the right scale for dissemination is essential. On the one hand, local projects can impact citizens directly and are a way of creating quick, small successes at relatively low budgets and risks. On the other hand, local pilots may not attain the visibility needed to impact at a larger scale. Ideally, democratic innovation should be practiced at multiple levels of Israeli society, from the local, to the regional, urban, and national contexts. This multi-tiered approach is reminiscent of the concept of Future Councils, developed by Nanz and Leggewie, which offer citizens a permanent role in planning and decision-making by establishing a “fourth branch of government”.⁶⁰ There are also similarities to the European Citizen Jury, proposed to allow citizen involvement in democracy on long-term issues of importance. Models such as these and others being developed around the world offer a wealth of experience on ways to re-invigorate democracy by infusing it with the collective wisdom of citizens. This is an opportunity too for Israel to set up a “social-learning laboratory of democracy”, to bring together the know-how, learning, and experience that will help leverage democratic innovation in Israel.

7. Conclusion

The time is ripe to convene a National Citizens' Assembly in Israel. The current constitutional and political crisis has opened a window of opportunity – as will the post-Covid-19 reality – a time where new ideas can germinate. But in order for the Assembly to be successful, it will need to strike a formidable balance between receiving a formal mandate from decision-makers and straddling the deep fault lines in Israeli society in a most inclusive way that can attain legitimacy in the public eye.

But we should have no illusions, given the highly polarized state of Israeli society (e.g. left/right, periphery/center, Ashkenazi/Mizrahi, Jewish/Arab, religious/secular), this initiative will face immense challenges. Certain populations will be much harder to enlist (e.g. disabled, ultra-orthodox, elderly, young, migrant workers, non-Hebrew-speakers), requiring special efforts to create conditions to facilitate participation. Many barriers, but certainly not all, can be remedied by proper planning to allow for a truly heterogeneous and diverse group. A concerted effort is required to “naturalize” forms of democratic innovation, translating Citizens' Assemblies into the language, cultures and local needs of Israel. Perhaps, by refreshing the logic of democracy and tapping into collective wisdom, a re-branding of Israel as a “social Startup Nation” could be a fitting re-framing or upgrade of the essential features of agility and innovativeness already found in the culture.

As I have tried to show, many insights can be garnered from experience around the world with Citizens' Assemblies. Some are worth re-iterating: the need to carefully select the right overarching question or issue of broad interest and to secure a formal high-level mandate from the government or parliament

The time is ripe to convene a National Citizens' Assembly in Israel. The current constitutional and political crisis has opened a window of opportunity – as will the post-Covid-19 reality – a time where new ideas can germinate.

to endorse the Assembly and its recommendations. This experiment must go beyond the novelty or gimmick effect and come to be seen rather as a gateway to a commitment to “long-termism” and to enlisting the collective intelligence of citizens to solve complex social, political, economic or environmental problems. Striving for maximum inclusivity beyond usual partisan and sociological dividing lines, the Citizens’ Assembly must aim to achieve a high degree of visibility and transparency, enabling Israelis of all sectors and groups to identify themselves and their needs in the convening of the “mini-public”. The use of appropriate sortition methods to randomly select participants will be vital to achieving this.

Ultimately, the end goal must be to nurture a commitment to civic participation in Israel that goes beyond the scope of sporadic consultation; one that strives to institutionalize ongoing mechanisms of genuine government-civil society dialogue. This could ultimately become a permanent dynamic structure set up for shaping public policy – a “fourth branch of government” that complements and works in concert with the legislative, the executive, and judiciary. Ongoing learning and experimentation will surely be required, dedicated to co-creating and disseminating initiatives at the local, regional, and national levels – a kind of “social-democratic laboratory” for re-inventing the “social Startup Nation”.

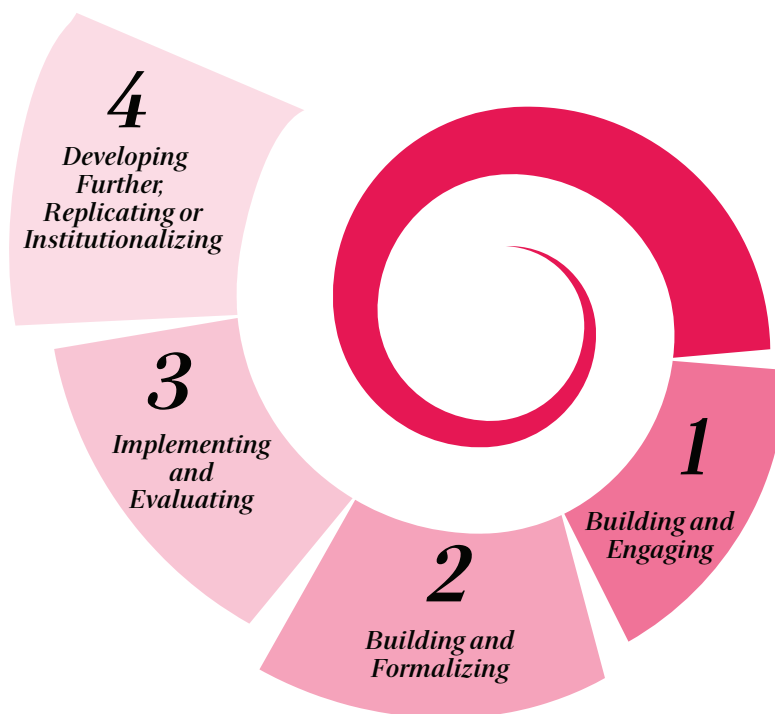
As this paper has tried to portray throughout, there are many potential benefits to be reaped in Israel by expanding democratic participation. But mistakes will be made; this is the nature of innovation. Prediction will often fail us in a complex world. But we don’t need a crystal ball or more scientific reports to confirm what we already know: This is an imperative – the future is now, time is short and the stakes are too high not to try.

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8. Appendix: Proposed Route Map for Citizens' Assemblies in Israel

This section outlines a practical proposal towards founding Citizens' Assemblies in Israel. Based on the recommendations and advice gleaned in the above paper, it charts an initial “route map”, to be further refined by the collaborative partnerships needed. I rely here on a model formulated by Petra Kuenkel,⁶¹ drawing on her iteration of four phases for leading dialogical change through transformative design processes (see Figure 3). It is one path towards reaching the goal, but no doubt many others are possible. As Kuenkel's model iterates a pathway whose assumptions are both transformative and dialogical, it offers a relevant point of reference for democratic innovation.

*Figure 3. The Dialogical Change Model for Transformative Process Design*⁶²



Phase 1: Initiating and Engaging Potential Stakeholders

This phase requires wide dialogical engagement of stakeholders to create a collective way forward for this initiative. Several disparate and distinct steps are necessary for crafting an ecosystem that buys into the idea and is oriented towards the common goal of creating a Citizens' Assembly to leverage democratic innovation in Israel. The following key actions are envisioned in this phase:

- Map potential stakeholders who may resonate and have interest aligned in this direction (civil society organizations, politicians, decision-makers).
- Map high-profile potential mentors to support this process (Parliament, PM office, President, academia) through membership in a Steering Committee or Advisory Board.
- Create a short-form policy brief that outlines the key ideas presented here.
- Present the policy paper in various fora targeting a wide range of stakeholders.
- Approach and engage in dialogue with civil society organizations, government actors, and think tanks working at the nexus of democracy and climate change (both or either), for an initial sounding to explore forming a coalition or consortium to launch democratic innovation platforms.

(initial mapping: Israel Public Policy Institute (IPPI), *Mitvim* Foreign Policy Think Tank, *Tovnot* Digital Participation Platforms, The Innovation Authority, Israel Democracy Institute, Sheatufim, JDC)

- Engage funding bodies and philanthropies whose missions resonate with these ideas and values.
- Funds allowing, launch a study tour of potential key stakeholders that include site visits to Citizen Assemblies in process and/or meetings with leading practitioners across the world (in person or online).
- Convene a launch conference or workshop dedicated to setting up a Citizens' Assembly addressing climate change.
- Convene a public advisory board for democratic innovation and a steering committee of the collaborative initiation phase.

Outcomes of Phase 1:

1. A core group of players is formed, with a strong collective intention to take responsibility to plan, lobby for, and launch the first Citizens' Assembly.
2. A growing community of learning and practice coalesces, with shared awareness of the current dysfunctionality and need for democratic innovation.
3. Funding and resources are secured to launch an initial Citizens' Assembly.
4. Public advisory and steering committees draft a route map, planning design for the Citizens' Assembly in order to gain traction and build a broad-based coalition to support the plan.
5. A final proposal for the Assembly is presented to stakeholders and key players: the Knesset, different parties, Israel Innovation Authority, civil society.

Phase 2:

Formalizing Mechanisms of a Collaborative Ecosystem

The importance of this phase lies in creating the best forms of organizational/institutional structures and communication mechanisms that will allow learning and implementation to be sustained into the future.

This phase will attend to building the formal mechanisms and infrastructure for this initiative. It requires winning agreement regarding consultation, cooperation and communication mechanisms, also clarifying the division of roles and responsibilities of each of the core partners in the implementation process. An agreed work plan must be drafted with a clearly delineated mechanism of how the Assembly will operate. This will include agreed upon goals and objectives of the Assembly, the choice of facilitation team and methods of deliberation, learning, and dialogue and decision-making tools to be implemented. A decision must be reached early on regarding the overarching scope and theme of the Assembly. In addition, the Assembly will need to invite experts and use a variety of knowledge sources – these must be identified and liaised with to ensure their incorporation. Parallel to this, socio-economic criteria must be formulated for the sortition selection process of a representative “mini-public”, and a non-partisan body enlisted for the job. A communication strategy and funding sources need to be clarified.⁶³

A key steppingstone at this stage is securing in advance the formal mandate for the Assembly and the status of its recommendations upon completion. It is important to guarantee that the initiative is not perceived as “belonging”

to any one organization or political camp, thus affording an inclusive wide-angle collaboration ecosystem for citizen involvement. As such, I envision an independent collaborative structure that can provide backbone organizational services viewed as neutral and non-partisan.

Outcomes of Phase 2:

1. Secured approval and formal mandate for implementation of first Citizens' Assembly by high-profile figure.
2. Agreed upon overarching theme and issue for the Assembly to deliberate.
3. Funding is secured for the first three years of the initiative.
4. Governance structure and mechanisms are devised and working groups are set up to plan and implement the agreed upon democratic innovations.
5. Development of communication strategy is completed.
6. Agreed upon sortition/selection process and backbone services for the documentation and the facilitation of the Citizens' Assembly.
7. Secured commitment from Knesset and/or government coalition to review and respond to the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly.
8. The overall program for learning (experts, inputs) and deliberation is crafted and approved by the advisory board.
9. A learning lab is set up to monitor and evaluate the implementation space for ongoing innovation and learning.

Phase 3: Implementing the First Citizens' Assembly

This phase is about getting things done. It is proposed that the first Citizens' Assembly of 100 participants will be randomly selected and run either by a backbone organization or by an independent non-partisan body. It will operate over the designated period and number of meetings planned. Adjunct services will also be put into place, i.e. communication and delivery. Learning and evaluation of the process will be promoted.

Outcomes of Phase 3:

- 1.** Learning lab documents dialogue and harvests insights through summary evaluations, reviews, and reflections.
- 2.** The results of the deliberations are widely communicated by the learning lab through streaming, the media, drafting reports.
- 3.** Two festive formal events hosted in the Knesset: launch of the Citizens' Assembly and presentation of its recommendations.
- 4.** Acknowledgement and appreciation of the contributing participants.
- 5.** A summary evaluation report is issued.

Phase 4:

Further Development, Replication, and Institutionalization

This phase is dedicated to scaling up: taking the learning and insights from implementation to the next level. The foundational team must develop a long-term strategy for

sustaining structures, including a budget and framework to engage stakeholders at different levels of governance (local and regional future councils or assemblies) on a permanent basis.

It is quite likely that phases of activity will overlap, and many more initiatives will emerge as a positive atmosphere for innovation and experimentation takes hold. It is important, nevertheless, to ensure that the inaugural Assembly's achievements are widely disseminated through media outlets, academic articles, evaluation reports, etc. This will set the stage for the institutionalization of structures for participation and foster further learning, improvement in methodologies and innovation for years to come.

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The Israel Public Policy Institute (IPPI) is an independent non-profit policy think-tank and a multi-stakeholder dialog platform. Through its research activities and programs, IPPI contributes to the ideational renewal of public policy, developing new ways to address the transformation processes and challenges that are shaping the face of our societies in the 21st century. Based in Tel Aviv with representations in Berlin and New York, IPPI works with a global network of actors from government, academia, civil society, and the private sector to foster international, multi-sector, and interdisciplinary cross-pollination of ideas and experiences.

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The Heinrich Böll Foundation is an independent global think-and-do-tank for green visions. With its international network of 33 international offices, the foundation works with well over 100 project partners in more than 60 countries. The foundation's work in Israel focuses on fostering democracy, promoting environmental sustainability, advancing gender equality, and promoting dialog and exchange of knowledge on public policy issues between experts and institutions from Israel and Germany.

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