

# Ordinary citizens vs stakeholders: Which ‘public’ should participate in well-ordered science?

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My aim in this talk will be to explore ways to have a concrete influence on the shaping of the politicization of science and push it towards a more democratic direction, with a focus on the institutionalized modes of public participation to the definition of the research agenda.

I investigate those questions through the prism of the ‘public’ supposed to participate: how does the way it is conceived of influence the potential applicability of the normative philosophical accounts of the democratization of science? My intuition, and the thesis I want to expose and defend, is that the conception mobilized by one of the main proposals articulated this way, Philip Kitcher’s ideal of a *well-ordered science* (2001, 2011), is what ultimately prevents it from being ever successfully translated into facts. I will argue that it can therefore be seen as what I want to call a *counter-ideal*, namely: a theory which, if applied, would ineluctably backfire and lead to an aggravation of the very problems it intends to solve.

My argument builds on the classical distinction made by sociological and socio-epistemological accounts of public engagement between the figure of the *general public*, and that of the *stakeholder* (Lezaun et Soneryd 2007; Irwin 2006; Levidow et Marris 2001) to show that adopting one or the other has straightforward consequences on the concrete design of processes intended to implement them. The *ordinary citizen*, a disembodied individual able to think and act under a Rawlsian *veil of ignorance* (Rawls 1971), appears to be the key element leading to the institutionalization of the classical (Fiorino 1990), objectivist and discursive forms of public deliberation (Marres 2007) where participants are randomly chosen in order to best approximate this figure (Fishkin 2009).

The random selection of participants, however, is inevitably bound to leave aside people that do not constitute a significant fraction of society in terms of shared socio-demographic criteria, but are substantially more affected by the decision to be taken, and have way more at stake on those issues (Westphal 2014). Participative politics thus conceived have indeed more to do with tools in the engineering of the public acceptance of science (Levidow et Marris 2001; Felt et al. 2007) than with the idea of building a more active citizenship, and the institution of such processes is more than often used as a way to play against spontaneous associative mobilization (Bonneuil et Joly 2013; Lezaun et Soneryd 2007). Absorbed into disciplinary regimes of governmentality (Pestre 2008; Foucault 2004), deliberative forums are turned into new instruments of government (Rosanvallon 2008; Topcu 2013), and foster the very tensions they aim at alleviating.

The concrete application of model such as Kitcher's would therefore very likely lead to excluding the most affected from the deliberation, reducing the participative options offered to stakeholders, and potentially aggravating the problem of unidentifiable oppression he aims at solving.