https://doi.org/10.20901/pp.16.1.03

Submitted: 10.12.2025.
Revised: 24.4.2026.
Accepted: 27.5.2026.

STUDENT MOVEMENT AND THE CASE FOR RANDOMLY SELECTED LEGISLATURES

Miloš Kovačević
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade

Ivana Kovačević
Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade[1]

Abstract

The student movement in Serbia employs a repertoire of political actions that transcend conventional political participation in electoral democracies, including reliance on direct and deliberative decision-making, active resistance to recognizable leaders, and distancing from political parties. This paper examines the hypothesis that the mode of student organization reflects an implicit aspiration for alternative democratic models at the national level. We present results from a survey (N=274) conducted among students involved in faculty blockades during 2024-2025, measuring attitudes towards

1 Miloš Kovačević is a research associate at the Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. Email: milos.kovacevic@f.bg.ac.rs. ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9469-4848.
Ivana Kovačević is a master's student in sociology at the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade. Email: ivana99kovacevic@gmail.com, ORCID ID: https://orcid.org/0009-0007-7243-6355.
The realization of this research was financially supported by the Ministry of Science, Technological Development and Innovation of the Republic of Serbia as part of the financing of scientific research work at the University of Belgrade - Faculty of Philosophy (contract number 451-03-33/2026-03/200163).

representative and direct democracy. Findings show strong criticism of representative democracy, moderately positive perceptions of direct democracy, and recognition of its limitations. We argue that lotacracy, a system of randomly selected legislatures, represents a promising democratic innovation that responds to students' critique of representative democracy while addressing perceived limitations of direct democracy.

Keywords: student movement, direct democracy, electoral democracy, sortition, lottocracy, social movements, Serbia

1. INTRODUCTION

The dominant political culture is not static. It constantly reproduces itself through social practices that maintain its hegemony. Resistance to the dominant political culture, the challenging of its legitimacy, and counter-hegemonic struggle can be understood in more moderate or more radical terms, as *a war of maneuver* or *a war of position*. A war of maneuver involves conflict with groups that hold positions of power but does not delve deeper into the political culture. On the other hand, a war of position entails an ideological struggle for the supremacy of counter-hegemonic ideas, the creation of fundamentally different institutions, and the establishment of preconditions for forming new political subjects opposed to the dominant culture (Gramsci 1971, Hall 2016, 190).

In the broadest terms, the central question this paper attempts to answer is whether the Serbian student movement (2024-2025) is more accurately understood as a war of maneuver or a war of position. On the one hand, it is difficult to read a critique of the ideas underlying liberal democracy from the students' explicit demands (prosecution of political violence, ending the abuse of the legal system, increasing budget allocations for higher education, etc.). On the contrary, these demands presuppose the basic fairness and legitimacy of existing institutions, with the problem seen primarily as the absence of law enforcement due to their capture. By focusing solely on an analysis of the students' demands, one could conclude that the student struggle represents a form of social engagement

aimed at securing the rule of law, thus classifying it as a war of maneuver.

However, the *method* of student organization leaves a different impression. Direct democratic decision-making through plenums, extensive deliberations open to all students, distancing from political parties, anonymous public appearances, and the absence of recognizable movement leaders could be mere tactics without deeper meaning, employed for non-ideological reasons (fear of being targeted and facing regime retaliation, mobilization potential, the tradition of student organization from blockades in 2011 and 2014, etc.). However, this form of student organization can also be interpreted as *an implicit aspiration* to break with representative democracy and form radically different political institutions. By shifting the focus from the students' explicit demands to the implicit aspiration reflected in their mode of operation, the possibility opens up for interpreting the student struggle as a war of position.

The hypothesis with which we began our research is that the student struggle represents a war of position and that the student method of organization communicates a dissatisfaction with representative democracy and a readiness for democratic innovations that would meaningfully include ordinary citizens in politics. We interpret the moves by the student movement, which indicate an adherence to representative democracy (such as the demand for calling elections), as extorted, both due to the objective difficulty of applying deliberative and direct democratic decision-making in larger communities and due to a lack of familiarity with democratic alternatives that can function at the national level.

Despite extensive theoretical work on the crisis of representative democracy and normative proposals for democratic innovations, empirical quantitative research on whether contemporary social movement participants in Southeast Europe actually desire such alternatives remains scarce (Kralj 2024). This paper addresses this gap by providing systematic survey evidence on student attitudes towards representative democracy and direct democracy.

This paper makes two contributions. First, it provides empirical evidence on the democratic preferences of participants in a major contemporary social movement, contributing to the literature

on social movements as sites of democratic experimentation. Second, it assesses the potential relevance of lottocracy – a system of randomly selected legislatures – as a democratic innovation that responds to the critique of representative democracy while addressing direct democracy's limitations.

The paper consists of seven sections, including this one. Section 2 provides context on the student movement. Section 3 reviews relevant literature on social movements, the crisis of representative democracy, direct democracy, and lottocracy. Section 4 presents the methodology. Section 5 reports results. Section 6 discusses findings and limitations. Section 7 is concluding section.

2. THE 2024-2025 STUDENT BLOCKADES IN SERBIA

The student blockades began with the blockade of the Faculty of Dramatic Arts (FDU), University of Belgrade, as a reaction to attacks on students during a fifteen-minute tribute to victims of the Novi Sad railway station canopy collapse. They issued initial demands regarding the prosecution of perpetrators who attacked students and called on other faculties to join in solidarity. Soon, students entered the Rectorate building and held a plenum that agreed on blockades of the Faculty of Philosophy, the Faculty of Philology, and other faculties near Student Square. Four student demands were formulated and voted upon.[2] Subsequently, faculties across the University of Belgrade and University of Novi Sad organized plenums and joined the blockades, which eventually spread throughout Serbia.

2 The original four student demands were (1) publication of all documentation related to the reconstruction of the Novi Sad railway station that is currently unavailable to the public; (2) confirmation by competent authorities of the identity of all persons reasonably suspected of physically attacking students and professors, as well as the initiation of criminal proceedings against them and the dismissal of such persons if they are public officials; (3) dismissal of criminal charges against arrested and detained students at protests and suspension of already initiated criminal proceedings; and (4) an increase of allocated funds for state faculties by 20 percent. In April 2025, two additional demands were added: (5) a thorough investigation into the events of March 15, 2025, when a sound weapon caused panic among citizens during a peaceful protest, and (6) responsibility and protection for patients at the Urgent Care Center of the University Clinical Center of Serbia.

Decision-making was established at both faculty and university levels. At the university level, decisions of faculty plenums are aggregated as "one vote, one faculty" at the Great Assembly of Delegates (VSD). The first two months of blockades were marked by mobilization, establishment of blockade structures (working groups and decision-making mechanisms), and specifying conditions under which student demands would be considered fulfilled.

As a result of plenum decisions across many faculties, students in the blockade established themselves as a self-organized actor, independent from political parties and governmental or non-governmental organizations. Students in public have never spoken in their own name but only in the name of their plenum, while the movement's Instagram page has published only content approved by a majority of faculty plenums.

There have not been recognizable leaders in public. The movement rotated delegates appearing in media and distanced itself from individuals speaking without plenum approval or acting outside plenum decisions. These features are interpreted in this paper as an embrace of horizontal organizing principles and a critique of the representative model.

Three key moments explicitly reveal the majority of students' attitudes towards decision-making mechanisms. First, the "Letter to the People of Serbia" in which students explicitly contrast direct democracy with representative democracy:

> Everything we students have achieved so far has been accomplished through self-organization based on the principles of direct democracy and plenum assembly. In contrast to the established model of representative democracy, where all power and responsibility are relinquished to elected representatives who shape our destinies instead of us – in direct democracy, everyone is equally consulted and equally responsible for what concerns them (...) The strength of the student movement lies in direct democracy, which, unlike representative democracy, is not susceptible to manipulation and corruption. Representative democracy is clearly incapable of resolving the multi-decade socio-political crisis of our country, while the model of direct democracy, based on our experience, has a good chance. (Students in Blockade 2025)

Second, the rejection of expert government. After extensive debate, students at the University of Belgrade voted against supporting an expert government. A plenum of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade explained the following:

> An expert government masks political decisions that concern everyone as some mystical science and expertise that no one without an expert title can understand. The cult of expertise silences 'non-experts,' and thus the field of politics becomes an arena of the chosen, not a free space for decision-making for everyone. (Plenum of the Faculty of Philosophy 2025)

The plenum further argued that advocating for an expert government would result in the marginalization of student demands and warned of the danger of abuse by actors interested only in gaining power, undermining direct democratic processes. These objections speak to how the interests of political representation are interpreted and how direct democracy is seen as a shield against capture. However, this position was not uniform across all blockaded universities. Other faculties voted in favor of an expert government, which illustrates the pluralism of views within the student movement.

Third, students have been postponing the demand for parliamentary elections. After more than five months of blockades, students eventually demanded snap parliamentary elections, stating that democracy is the only correct way out of the crisis and for fulfilling the demands. Unlike in previous opposition-led protests, where this was among the first demands, this came only after strategic networking with other social groups (teachers, lawyers, cultural workers) and calls for strikes across other sectors. This shows that the student movement employed, and presumably preferred, strategies that were not in the repertoire of political actions in all previous mass mobilizations. The survey data presented in Section 5 were collected in September 2025, allowing us to assess student attitudes after these key events.

3. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. SOCIAL MOVEMENTS AS SITES OF DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENTATION

Social movements differ based on the scope of their goals. Those movements that do not question the existing order are called reformist. They act by demanding changes in institutions or certain aspects of social life, but without challenging their underlying logic. In contrast, radical social movements seek to achieve deeper social changes that will transform the political, cultural, or economic aspects of society. Movements can also fall between these two categories (Pavlović 2009, 47). Based on its central demands, the student movement can be classified as a reformist movement. However, if its horizontal organization reveals a deeper challenge to the basic principles of representative democracy, then it possesses elements of a radical social movement.

The notion of prefigurative politics is the idea that movements' internal practices anticipate and model the kind of society they wish to create (Breines 1982). Movements from the New Left to the global justice movement to Occupy Wall Street have used consensus-based assemblies, rotating leadership, and direct democratic decision-making not just as tactics but as expressions of alternative political principles (Polletta 2002; Graeber 2013; Sitrin 2006). The French Yellow Vests movement similarly reflects the turn toward direct democracy in response to representative failures. Van Outryve (2023) shows that the movement rejected established representative institutions and instead championed local assemblies as a mechanism to reallocate power to citizens. Protest movements, even when motivated by immediate and situational grievances, can articulate a deeper and implicit critique of representative democracy while experimenting with alternative and more participatory forms of governance.

In social movement theory, framing analysis places at the center of attention the ways in which a social movement defines problems, offers solutions, and mobilizes supporters. Specific social problems are identified, then interpreted, and this process

constitutes framing. The analysis can be conducted on the basis of the movement's programmatic documents but also through surveys or questionnaires (Tomić 2009, 20). Our analysis of attitudes toward democracy could be useful for the diagnostic step, that is, the way in which the movement explains the causes and possible solutions to the problem.

If the student movement's organizational form reflects not merely tactical choices but an alternative democratic logic, this would support interpreting the struggle as a war of position rather than a war of maneuver. The present study tests this interpretation empirically through quantitative research conducted via a questionnaire, measuring whether students' attitudes towards democracy align with the values embedded in their organizational form. In his systematic literature review of research on social movements in Southeast Europe, Karlo Kralj (2024) concluded that qualitative methods, particularly semistructured and unstructured interviews, dominate the research field. By employing a quantitative survey, this study, therefore, addresses the identified gap in methodological approaches and encourages quantitative studies on a larger scale.

3.2. DEMOCRACY AND THE CRISIS OF REPRESENTATION

As Bernard Manin (1997) argues, central principles of representative democracy include periodic elections, the relative independence of representatives from their constituents, freedom of opinion, and the principle that public decisions must withstand open deliberation. While this system was seen as a solution to the problem of scale in mass societies, it has come under increasing scrutiny.

Social scientists have for decades documented citizens' distrust in the most significant political institutions, declining participation in electoral processes, and dwindling membership in political parties (Mair 2013; Norris 2011). Generally, apathy towards the sphere of politics is growing, as it is seen as reserved for the elites. These phenomena are described in the literature as a crisis of democracy or a period of post-democracy (Crouch 2004; Petrović 2021).

The Serbian context is generally characterized by low citizen participation in political life. The causes are mainly found in the underdevelopment of a participatory political culture, the acceptance of authoritarian values, the centralization of the political system, and low trust in institutions (Petrović and Stanojević 2019, 174).

As Landemore (2020) observes, the crisis of democracy can be traced not only to contingent external factors but also to fundamental flaws in the original design of representative democracy. Similarly, Urbinati (2016, 21) emphasizes that it is not a crisis of democracy *per se* but its representative form—a crisis of parliamentary democracy based on elections and political parties.

Dahl (1989, 108–30) develops five criteria, or ideal standards, for a fully democratic process that ensure political equality of citizens: (1) effective participation, (2) voting equality at the decisive stage, (3) enlightened understanding, (4) control of the agenda, and (5) inclusiveness. These criteria are supposed to "help us to arrive at judgments that bear directly on the relative worth or goodness of political arrangements" (Dahl 1989, 131), and this is how we use them here. The discussion about representative democracy in this subsection and direct democracy and lottocracy in the following subsections centers on their capacity to deliver enlightened understanding, effective participation, and control of the agenda.

Effective participation means that citizens must have adequate and equal opportunities to shape the agenda, express their preferences on outcomes, and provide reasons for supporting one decision over another throughout the decision-making process (Dahl 1989, 109). Effective participation ensures equality in political influence in the pre-voting stage, parallel to the equality that the one-person one-vote rule ensures in the voting stage. Closely connected with effective participation criteria is the control of the agenda, which means that citizens "must have the exclusive opportunity to decide how matters are to be placed on the agenda of matters that are to be decided by means of the democratic process." (Dahl 1989, 113). Deviations from these two ideal standards are associated with concerns that a particular model of democracy cannot ensure the representativeness of decision-makers and adequate protection from capture. When it comes to the criteria of

enlightened understanding, i.e., "adequate and equal opportunities for discovering and validating (within the time permitted by the need for a decision) the choice on the matter to be decided that would best serve the citizen's interests." (Dahl 1989, 112), this is an ideal standard associated with concerns about the lack of time and competence for decision-making, polarization, and compromised deliberation.

A central tension of the modern political situation is created by the problem of complexity. Given that most political problems are information-intensive, forming an informed personal judgment on societal issues requires a great deal of time. On the other hand, the power of an individual citizen to influence a political decision is so small that some theorists of rational choice concluded it is rational for voters not to form political judgments by conducting their own research (Downs 1957; Somin 2013). The excessive costs of informed monitoring and evaluation of political action result in the inability of citizens to effectively control their representatives. This increases the value of the representative's political position and makes them more attractive for capture due to lack of accountability to those they represent.

The epistemic argument for representative democracy – that representatives, having time and resources, are in a better epistemic position to promote the common interest – is undermined by the problem of complexity. Even in contexts where elections are free, regular, and fair, ensuring political accountability through elections is based on the assumption of informed monitoring and evaluation of representatives' results. Since whoever exercises control must have greater knowledge than the one being controlled, citizens cannot perform informed monitoring and evaluation when they, *ex hypothesi*, lack sufficient knowledge and time.

Representatives mostly come from privileged strata of society that do not understand the problems of average and marginalized citizens. The discretion of representatives in relation to the preferences of citizens thus does not result in epistemically higher-quality decisions in the interest of the voters but in political decisions that are not in their interest at all (Manin 1997). In the United States, Gilens and Page (2014) find no correlation between majority

preferences and policy outcomes once the preferences of the richest 10 percent are controlled for, suggesting that representative democracy has become more akin to rule by economic elites. As Guerrero (2024) argues, this absence of meaningful accountability leads to political capture, which has significant consequences for both the epistemic and agential capacities of political institutions. The discussion above informed our RD-Common Good and RD-Representativeness scales (see Section 4).

Critically, representative democracy may be structurally incompatible with the kind of deliberation that could mitigate polarization. As Mutz (2006) demonstrates, citizens face a fundamental trade-off of either engaging with dissenting others and benefiting from exposure to diverse perspectives or remaining politically engaged as partisans. Most people, when faced with disagreement in the political realm, recoil from engaging and retreat to the company of like-minded peers. Partisan political participation and deliberation do not go together. Political polarization among representatives is even higher due to rigid party ideologies that stifle creative problem-solving. Much partisan activity wastes resources on posturing rather than meaningful debate. Elected officials enter office with preset solutions, sometimes blocking even optimal policies just to deny the opposing party a victory (Edelman 1988).

These insights informed our RD-Polarization scale (see Section 4). Our first research question, "To what extent are students involved in the blockades critical of representative democracy across dimensions of representativeness, common good, and polarization?" is based on the theoretical framework discussed in this subsection.

3.3. STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS OF DIRECT DEMOCRACY

Direct democracy is not a single, unified concept. As Landemore (2020) argues, advocates of direct democracy fall into several distinct groups. One includes parties like Syriza and Podemos, which operate through elections but claim to maintain a direct connection to their electorate via liquid or delegative democracy. A second group argues that digital technologies have made direct

democracy feasible for mass societies. A third comprises social movements such as Occupy Wall Street, the Indignados in Spain, and the Yellow Vests in France, which understand direct democracy as leaderless, face-to-face assembly democracy implemented in small settings, with the possibility of federating such assemblies to cover larger communities.

The student movement in Serbia belongs to the third type. Its plenums are open and deliberative gatherings that aim to include all students in decision-making, rejecting formal leadership and hierarchical structures. This is assembly-based, face-to-face direct democracy practiced at the scale of a faculty or a university.

A central claim of direct democracy is that it includes all participants equally in decision-making. However, evidence on this claim is mixed. Kern and Hooghe (2018) find that educated citizens participate more actively in direct democratic processes, while less educated citizens show fatigue and declining participation. Stadelmann-Steffen and Dermont (2015) find that assembly-based direct democracy produces a different participatory electorate than ballot-based democracy. While income-based inequality is lower in assemblies, gender and age inequalities are substantially higher. Women participate at roughly half the rate of men, and young and elderly citizens are heavily underrepresented. This suggests that even when formal rules guarantee equal access, informal barriers related to time, confidence, and resources can undermine representativeness. In the context of student plenums, this raises empirical questions about who actually attends and speaks. These questions bear directly on the perceived representativeness of directly democratic bodies, which estimates our DD-Representativeness scale (see Section 4).

Evidence from referendum research on whether direct democracy produces decisions that reflect the common good is mixed. Leemann and Wasserfallen (2016) find that direct democracy increases policy congruence with voter expectations, particularly when elite and citizen preferences diverge. However, other studies (Lascher et al. 1996; Lax & Phillips 2012; Tausanovitch & Warshaw 2014) find no such relationship. Ladam (2020) offers a related but distinct finding that citizens perceive outcomes from ballot

initiatives as fairer than those passed through legislative processes, even when their personal evaluation of the outcome does not change. Mendez and Mendez (2017) and Towfigh et al. (2016) similarly find that direct democracy generates greater acceptance of political decisions, particularly for issues voters consider important. These findings suggest that direct democracy may enjoy a legitimacy advantage over representative systems—a perception that it serves the common good even when substantive effects are ambiguous. Whether this holds for small-scale assembly-based direct democracy is an open question that our survey addresses through the DD-Common good scale (see Section 4).

A common hope is that direct democracy reduces political polarization by focusing citizens on policy content rather than partisan loyalties. The evidence is cautionary. Colombo and Kriesi (2017) show that citizens engage with policy information selectively, favoring material that confirms their existing partisan views. This tendency threatens to import polarization into direct democratic processes. However, this finding comes from research on mass referendums, where voters process information in isolation. Small-scale deliberative assemblies may operate differently. Face-to-face interaction, structured deliberation, and the need to articulate reasons to others may mitigate partisan bias. In response to these concerns, Merli (2020) proposes safeguards, including high-quality independent information and sufficient time for deliberation, measures that allow citizens to form more reasoned opinions. The student plenum model incorporates many of these safeguards, making it a potential case study for how direct democracy can manage rather than amplify polarization. This is measured through our scale DD-Polarization (see Section 4).

The relationship between direct democracy and deliberation has long been debated. Deliberative theorists traditionally view referendums as purely procedural mechanisms that count votes without fostering discourse. However, Gerber and Mueller (2018) analyze 500 speeches from the Swiss Landsgemeinde, an annual open-air citizens' assembly, and demonstrate that ordinary citizens can actively engage in public discourse. Teorell (2006) notes that town meetings come closest to the ideals of deliberative

democracy, where citizens make decisions based on arguments voiced in discussion. This finding is directly relevant to the student movement, as it employs an assembly-based form of direct democracy. Direct democracy and deliberation may therefore be compatible under appropriate institutional conditions, specifically when participants gather face to face, have opportunities to speak and listen, and are incentivized to provide reasons for their positions. This is estimated through our scale DD-Deliberation (see Section 4).

A key insight regarding the problem of complexity is that the epistemic burden of political decision-making arises from a misalignment between what citizens need to know (epistemic demand) and the time and incentives they have available to learn it (epistemic supply). Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) find that most people want systems that work well but do not wish to carry the constant burden of making decisions themselves. Barth et al. (2020) add that voters overstate their knowledge of policy measures, while Adam et al. (2018) identify no correlation between direct democracy and increased political interest or education. These findings suggest that direct democracy may demand capacities, time, attention, knowledge, and motivation that it does not necessarily cultivate. However, this evidence again comes primarily from mass referendum studies.

The body of knowledge required for political decision-making can be reduced by shrinking the size of the political community to a level where it is possible to establish direct democracy. Small-scale communities face fewer and simpler political problems than those with a larger number of members. In this way, the epistemic burden of political decision-making can be directly lightened, without any improvement in epistemic supply. Moreover, sufficiently small political communities have an advantage over large ones in terms of epistemic supply as well. The mere fact that the community is small not only reduces the number and complexity of problems to be solved but increases the proportion of problems with which citizens have direct experience and organic knowledge of the situation. Small-scale assemblies may reduce the epistemic burden by allowing citizens to learn from one another, ask

questions in real time, and deliberate over extended periods. On the other hand, Stadelmann-Steffen and Dermont (2015) found that assembly democracy demands more time than ballot participation. The student plenum experience offers a test case for whether direct democracy can function effectively when capacity demands are managed through structured, deliberative, small-scale settings. This discussion informs our DD-Citizen Capacity scale (see Section 4). Our second research question, "To what extent do students perceive direct democracy as addressing the limitations of representative democracy, and what limitations of direct democracy do they recognize?" is based on the theoretical framework discussed in this subsection.

3.4. LOTTOCRACY AS A POTENTIAL SYNTHESIS

The appeal of direct democracy in small political communities diminishes with the degree of their connectedness and dependence on other communities. Although direct democracy may be a good way to ensure governance in the common interest in small, isolated, and self-sufficient communities, this is not the situation in which modern multi-million-population states find themselves, nor even lower entities like cities, municipalities, local communities, universities, etc. Many political problems, even if their consequences can be felt locally, are not solvable at that level because their successful resolution requires coordination at the national, regional, or even global level. As Wright and Gastil (2019) conclude, "Whenever it is feasible, direct participatory processes may prove effective in grappling with various local public problems. However, at the broader societal level, the need for compromises arises."

Representative government emerged precisely as a social innovation believed to reconcile democracy with the size and complexity of modern nation-states (Dahl 1989). Today, when even nation-states face collective action problems in addressing climate and economic issues, and when it is increasingly clear that developing supranational institutions is necessary to address them, further fragmentation of political communities would further reduce the chances of successfully responding to pressing global problems.

Here, lottocracy comes in as a promising democratic innovation. The practice of selecting representatives by lot dates back to ancient democratic institutions. The ancient Athenians believed that in this way the *demos* retains political power in its own hands (Ober 1991; 2008). The revitalization of the idea of a legislature chosen by lot in a modern context received a significant contribution from Wright and Gastil (2019) and Landemore (2020). In Serbia, Novaković (2025) examines Bouricius's (2019) model of multi-body sortation and considers how random selection could be introduced in the political system. To date, the most developed and comprehensive version of a lottocratic system has been elaborated by Alexander Guerrero (2024).

According to Guerrero, lottocracy has seven basic characteristics: (1) instead of a general-purpose parliament of electoral democracies, the lottocratic system consists of several dozen single-issue, lottery-selected legislatures (hereafter: SILLs), (2) members of a SILL are chosen by lot among the adult citizenry; (3) members of a SILL undergo a learning phase about the topic they are to decide upon; (4) members of a SILL consult with stakeholders and advocates regarding the policy they plan to adopt; (5) independently or in cooperation with other SILLs, a SILL adopts and implements the policy it has developed; (6) structural assemblies, also composed of randomly selected citizens, are tasked with monitoring and organizing the SILLs; and (7) executive assemblies, composed of randomly selected citizens or officials they appoint, take over the duties that in electoral democracies belong to the head of state (Guerrero 2024, 149–50).

Lottocracy addresses the problems of representative democracy in several ways. Random selection excludes control of the electoral process by economic elites. Members serve one term, reducing the value of their position over time and thus the incentives for capture (Guerrero 2024, 290-2). Above-average earnings conditional on the obligation not to accept funds from third parties, combined with rewards for reporting attempted corruption, further reduce susceptibility to capture. The absence of elections also makes randomly selected citizens more resistant to pressure from corporate media, as a new term is not a likely option.

Lottocracy addresses the problem of complexity by limiting each SILL to a single policy area. As Guerrero (2024, 152) states: "If people only have to become competent and relatively well-informed with respect to one policy area, that is a much more manageable epistemic burden, and we should have more confidence that randomly chosen citizens will be up to the job." Compared to elected or randomly selected representatives operating in a general-purpose legislature working within a single area of public policy significantly reduces the power of randomly selected citizens, thereby also reducing incentives for capture.

For the student movement, lottocracy is theoretically relevant because it combines certain features of representative and direct democracy. If students are critical of representative democracy but also recognize direct democracy's practical limitations, lottocracy emerges as a coherent alternative that addresses both concerns. Because of that, openness towards lottocracy has been measured through all scales (see Section 4). Our third research question, "Is there openness to lottocracy as a potential alternative?" is based on the theoretical framework discussed in this subsection.

The literature reviewed above predominantly draws on studies of social movements, representation, direct democracy, and lottocracy in other countries. However, no study has systematically examined student attitudes toward representative and direct democracy in the context of the current Serbian student movement and its plenum-based organization. It is therefore unclear how students with direct experience of assembly-based direct democracy perceive their strengths and limitations. Our survey addresses this gap by measuring student attitudes towards direct, representative democracy and, indirectly, towards lottocracy.

Also, as already noted in Section 3.1, the systematic literature review detected a lack of quantitative research on social movements in Southeast Europe, with 79% of papers employing qualitative methods (Kralj 2024, 219). Our research addresses this gap by adopting a quantitative survey approach to examine student attitudes toward various forms of democracy.

4. METHODOLOGY

Based on the theoretical framework, we formulated the following research questions:

RQ1: To what extent are students involved in the blockades critical of representative democracy across dimensions of representativeness, common good, and polarization?

RQ2: To what extent do students perceive direct democracy as addressing the limitations of representative democracy, and what limitations of direct democracy do they recognize?

RQ3: Is there openness to lottocracy as a potential alternative?

As detailed in Section 3, each scale operationalizes specific theoretical claims from the literature. Attitudes were operationalized through scales measuring the following dimensions:

Attitudes towards representative democracy:

- RD - Representativeness of the general population
- RD - Representing the common good
- RD - Polarization (scale proved unreliable; individual items reported)

Attitudes towards direct democracy:

- DD - Representativeness of the general population
- DD - Representing the common good
- DD - Polarization
- DD - Deliberation
- DD - Citizen capacity[3]

Table 1 situates discussed concerns, such as capacity, representativeness, and susceptibility to capture of decision-makers, polarisation, and importance of deliberation, in Dahl's (1989) principles

3 All items used a 5-point Likert scale (1 = complete disagreement, 5 = complete agreement). Reliability (Cronbach's alpha) for all scales except polarization in representative democracy was above 0.6.

of optimal democracy (effective participation, agenda control, and enlightened understanding). Additionally, it connects them with our scales and research questions.

Table 1: *Connections among elements of a good democratic process, concerns, scales, and research questions*

Criteria of a democratic process	**Concerns**	**Scales**	**Research questions**
Effective participation and control of the agenda	Decision-makers reflect the general population	RD-Representativeness	RQ1
		DD-Representativeness	RQ2
			RQ3
	Possibility of capture minimised	RD-Common Good	RQ1
		DD-Common Good	RQ2
			RQ3
Enlightened understanding	Polarization minimised	RD-Polarisation	RQ1
		DD-Polarisation	RQ2
			RQ3
	Optimal deliberation	DD-Deliberation	RQ2
			RQ3
	Decision-makers have time and expertise	DD-Capacity	RQ2
			RQ3

Each scale reflects some of Dahl's elements of a good democratic process and discussed concerns. RD-Representativeness, DD-Representativeness, RD-Common Good and DD-Common Good reflect effective participation and control of the agenda, i.e., they measure the extent to which decision-makers are representative of the general population and susceptible to capture. DD-Polarization, RD-Polarization, DD-Citizen Capacity, and DD-Deliberation reflect enlightened understanding, i.e., they measure the extent to which conditions for high-quality decision-making are present (time, expertise, absence of polarization, and presence of deliberation).

Since we presumed that the model of lottocracy is not familiar to most respondents, the openness towards this democratic model was not measured directly, but through attitudes towards direct and representative democracy. The openness towards lottocracy was measured through a specific respondent profile, which included positive attitudes expressed on scales DD-Representativeness, DD-Common Good, DD-Polarisation, DD-Deliberation, and negative attitudes expressed on scales RD-Representativeness, RD-Common Good, RD-Polarisation, and DD-Citizen Capacity. In this way, it captures criticism of representative democracy and generally positive attitudes towards direct democracy, except for the time and expertise decision-makers have at their disposal, which is exactly the shortcoming that lottocracy aims to address, while simultaneously preserving other elements of direct democracy.

The target population consists of students who participated in faculty blockades at universities in Belgrade and Novi Sad, through involvement in faculty plenums and/or attendance at protest actions. The population size cannot be determined, as there is no record of blockade participants. The research was conducted via an online questionnaire distributed in group chats of participants in blockades that every faculty used for organisational purposes, that is, on a non-random, target sample of 274 respondents. Data were collected in September 2025.

The sample has an equal gender distribution. Students from the University of Belgrade dominate, as do students of social sciences and humanities (37.2%) and technical and technological sciences (30%).

The rest of the sample consists of natural sciences and mathematics (12.2%), medical sciences (9.4%), arts (6.5%), and others (5%). Regarding ideological self-placement: socialism (33.2%), uncommitted/cannot place (30%), liberalism (27%), conservatism (8%).

According to the type of participation in the blockades and frequency of attending plenums, students who attended plenums and participated in working groups or only attended plenums (76.9%) dominate over those who mainly attended student protests and actions. Those who attended plenums regularly, or 10 or more times, constitute over 80% of the sample, while those who did not attend plenums or attended less than 10 times constitute the remainder.[4]

Several methodological limitations should be noted. The sample is non-random, which limits generalizability. The sample constitutes approximately 0.5% of the estimated student population in blockades. Students who completed the survey may differ from those who did not. We have described the structure of the sample for recognition of potential biases. Findings should be interpreted as indicative of attitudes among actively engaged students rather than representative of all students included in the blockade. Also, findings capture attitudes at a single moment (September 2025). We cannot determine whether respondents' attitudes preceded participation in blockades or were developed through them, nor can we determine the movement development after the research is conducted.

5. RESULTS

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics for all scales.

4 According to data from the Republic Statistical Office, enrolled students at all levels of study for 2024 at the University of Belgrade number 89,299, together with the University of Arts 91,000, and in Novi Sad 42,552—approximately 132,000 students total. The estimate at the beginning of the blockades was that 85% of students from all universities support the blockades, meaning 112,200 students. If we assume that half the students at least occasionally attended plenums, our basic aggregate is approximately 55,000 students. In that case, the sample constitutes approximately 0.5% of the basic aggregate, which would allow 95% confidence for a random sample. However, our sample is non-random, and findings should be interpreted accordingly.

Table 2: *Descriptive statistics of attitudes towards dimensions of representative and direct democracy*

Scale (Dimension)	AM	Mdn	SD
Attitudes towards representative democracy (RD)			
RD - Representativeness of the general population	3.80	3.80	0.69
RD - Representing the common good	4.05	4.17	0.64
Attitudes towards direct democracy (DD)			
DD - Representativeness of the general population	3.54	3.75	0.79
DD - Representing the common good	3.34	3.50	0.86
DD - Polarization	3.47	3.50	0.93
DD - Deliberation	3.85	3.83	0.70
DD - Citizen capacity (knowledge, time)	3.65	3.71	0.66
Legend: AM - Arithmetic mean; Mdn - Median; SD - Standard deviation. Range: 1 = complete disagreement, 5 = complete agreement.			
Note: Higher scores on scales 1-2 indicate greater criticism of representative democracy. Higher scores on scales 3-6 indicate greater support for direct democracy. Higher scores on scale 7 indicate greater perception of problems with citizen capacity for decision-making in direct democracy.			

5.1. ATTITUDES TOWARDS REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY

Representing the common good (M=4,05, Mdn=4,17): The scale that measures the representativeness of the common good and the possibility of democratic control has the highest average of the entire research, while the median is even higher. The attitudes of the students show that they are very critical of the ability of representative democracy to represent the general interest as well as towards the question of having democratic control over the performance of political representatives.

For example, the attitude that in representative democracies politicians represent the interests of the rich more than the interests of the citizens is supported by 82% (completely by 47.8%) of respondents, while with the attitude that elected officials in Parliament mainly represent the interests of the citizens, 81% of respondents disagreed (completely disagreeing 45%).

The attitude that leads to more divided responses is that citizens who are uninterested in being leaders are less prone to corruption when compared to those who show interest, with the support of 40% of students.

Representativeness of the general population (M=3,8, Mdn=3,8): This scale has a lower average than the previous one but still shows a strong recognition of the representative system as elitist. Thus, the statement with the highest support (86%) on this scale is that even the electoral systems of developed democracies favor those who possess the financial resources and a high social status. Significant ideological differences[5] emerged on this scale with high effect ($\eta^2 = .141$). Liberal respondents had significantly lower scores (approximately 3.4) compared to socialist respondents (approximately 4.0), suggesting liberals are less convinced that representative democracy is inherently elitist.

5 In order to examine the existence of a general ideological pattern in attitudes toward democracy, a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was applied, where the independent variable was ideological orientation (conservatism, liberalism, socialism, undecided, and none of the above), while the dependent variables encompassed six dimensions of attitudes. Multivariate tests showed a statistically significant effect of ideological orientation on the dependent variables, with a medium effect size (Pillai's Trace = .276, $F(24, 1048) = 3.239$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2 = .069$)

When it comes to the *polarization* in representative democracy, the scale has shown itself to be unreliable, so we will show a few individual statements made by students relating to this element of the representative model. The statement on the role of media in the polarization of society, that in most developed democracies the media reports objectively, is supported by 20% of respondents, whereas disagreement is expressed by around 56%, while the rest are undecided. The statement, which has more pronounced support (71.6%), claims that the media in most contemporary democracies contribute to the demonization of people with differing political views, while only 9.6% of students expressed disagreement with this attitude.

The attitude toward the role of political parties in the polarization of society is recognized in support of the following individual statements: 82% of respondents agreed with the statement that the struggle between political parties for power makes the division of "us" and "them" too pronounced. While the more extreme phrased statement, "If there were no political parties, citizens with differing views would find common ground more easily," has an approximately normal distribution of responses, which leans slightly towards support (38% agree, 29.5% undecided, and 32% do not agree).

The criticism of representative democracy is very pronounced. Based on the data provided, it is more strongly pronounced than the support for direct democracy. With the statement that representative democracy is the best form of government of the country, despite its flaws, 42.1% of respondents disagreed, while 31.7% were unsure, and 26.2% agreed. This shows us that, even though a complete rejection of representative democracy is not as pronounced as the stated attitudes on its flaws, a skepticism towards representative democracy is dominant. This is even more clearly confirmed when we compare this statement to the one we posed on direct democracy: „I would like it if decision at the state level could be made through direct democracy." With this statement, 60.4% of students agreed, while 15.8% were undecided, and the ones who disagreed numbered 23.7%. The percentage of disagreement approximately corresponds to the percentage of those who believe that the representative system is the best one, while part

of the undecided respondents on the question of representative democracy spilled over towards supporting direct democracy as desirable.

5.2. ATTITUDES TOWARDS DIRECT DEMOCRACY

Direct democracy receives moderate support. Almost all scales mean above 3.5 and all medians above 3.5.

Deliberation (M=3.85, Mdn=3.83): This is a direct democracy scale with the strongest support. Statements with highest support (~78%) are "Discussion at the plenum is important to me; it helps me get informed and form an opinion" and "Direct democracy encourages citizens to get involved in solving community problems." Also, on this scale, a difference between ideological orientation groups is observed, with a medium effect size ($\eta^2 = .083$). Conservatives, compared to all other groups, have significantly lower scores on this scale (3.318), and this pattern appears consistently only with a smaller effect on the scales examining the ability of direct democracy to satisfy the general interest and to ensure that all parts of society participate in decision-making. Conservatives show distrust in direct democracy, as well as in representative democracy.

Representativeness (M=3.54, Mdn=3.75): 82% agree that direct democracy allows voices from different life experiences to be heard. 69.4% agree that plenum decisions adequately reflect the will of the majority. However, 42% agree that "even when decisions are made directly democratically, they will not be in the interest of the most vulnerable"—with 35.6% undecided, suggesting recognition that direct democracy does not fully solve inclusion of vulnerable groups. One possible reason for this attitude is students' awareness that participation in directly democratic formats is based on the availability of free time, initiative, self-confidence, and will to participate, which not everyone has (in sufficient measure). Moreover, these preconditions for participation correlate with economic and social inequalities, which degrade the inclusivity of the process and the quality of decision-making (Elster 1985, 37).

Polarization (M=3.47, Mdn=3.50): 64.4% agree that "by voting directly on political questions, citizens are less focused on which 'side' proposed something and more on the concrete proposal." The more strongly worded statement "direct democracy contributes to reducing enmity between supporters of different political options" is supported by 48.2%, with 22.7% undecided. Thus, direct democracy is viewed as more capable of dealing with these issues than representative democracy, but not as completely free of these deficiencies.

Representing the common good (M=3.34, Mdn=3.50): 63.6% agree that "decisions made through direct democracy would be in the interest of the majority of citizens." Even higher support is found at the experiential level for student plenums, where 70.6% agree that "decision-making through plenums protects the student struggle from interest groups or self-interested individuals." However, 57.2% agree that "interest groups would easily find a way to spread their influence even if decisions were made directly democratically," with 26.6% undecided. This indicates that direct democracy is understood as more successful in enabling democratic control and realizing the common interest, but the power of certain groups to implement their particular interests is seen as a difficult problem to solve.

Citizen capacity (M=3.65, Mdn=3.71): 64.8% agree that direct democracy is too time-consuming. 66.2% agree with the statement that "it is hard for a citizen to be deeply informed on most political questions if that is not their job." Approximately 56% agree that at plenums, students are often not well-informed about decisions. Nevertheless, 60.2% agree with the statement that "every citizen who wants to decide on questions relevant to them can find the time." This scale is negatively correlated with other direct democracy scales (r = -.34, -.28, -.25), indicating that those who more strongly support direct democracy are less likely to recognize it as resource intensive.

Students were also given statements on the decision to participate in the parliamentary elections, as well as to rate their trust

in the ability of a certain political body to fulfill the students' demands. The attitude that the decision to participate in the parliamentary elections was a good one is mostly supported (58%), while those who are undecided number 18.7%, whereas 21.2% are against. This not-particularly-convincing majority is better understood if we take a look at the level of support given to the statement "I would like if we had found a different means of fulfilling our goals than to demand parliamentary elections." This attitude is supported by 50.8% of students; 16.9% are unsure, while the rest disagree. This situation points to the fact that this decision to participate in the parliamentary elections was in large part viewed as non-ideal, although adequate in the given circumstances.

Students expressed most trust in a government formed from a student list. Least trust was given to a party-based transitional government. "Expert government" and "a body constituted of randomly chosen citizens" received very similar levels of trust. The expert government option is characterized by more polarized attitudes (more respondents who say they have no trust at all and more respondents who would completely trust this body), while the lottocratic alternative received more moderate (dis)trust (more respondents who would somewhat trust this body and fewer respondents who have no trust at all). A lottocratic body is second-ranked in desirability when considering the total number who would partially or completely trust it.

6. DISCUSSION

Students expressed strong criticism of representative democracy across multiple dimensions, with the strongest criticism directed at its failure to represent the common good (M=4.05). Students showed moderate support for direct democracy, with the strongest support for its deliberative aspects (M=3.85) and recognition of its limitations regarding citizen capacity (M=3.65). The survey data support the interpretation that the student movement's organizational form reflects not merely tactical choices but genuine dissatisfaction with representative democracy and openness to direct democracy. Students are not simply demanding better

implementation of existing rules. They are questioning the fundamental logic of electoral representation. The high criticism of representative democracy (M=4.05 for the common good scale) combined with majority support for direct democracy at the state level (60.4%) suggests an implicit aspiration for alternative democratic institutions.

The finding that students recognize direct democracy's limitations (capacity scale M=3.65) while strongly criticizing representative democracy is theoretically significant. This combination of preferences—rejection of electoral representation combined with awareness that direct democracy is practically demanding—is precisely the preference profile that lottocracy is designed to satisfy. Lottocracy offers the representativeness and anti-capture features of direct democracy while solving the scalability and capacity problems through single-issue bodies, learning phases, and structured deliberation. The moderate trust in lottocratic bodies (comparable to expert government) is encouraging given the concept's unfamiliarity.

The finding that 39.9% do not support the decision to participate in elections while 50.8% wish another means of fulfilling demands had been found indicates that this decision was perceived as tactical rather than ideal. This indicates that adherence to representative democracy was coerced by the objective difficulty of applying direct democracy at larger scales.

7. CONCLUSION

In this paper, we have examined the Serbian student movement's mode of organization as an implicit aspiration for alternative democratic models. Our survey of 274 students involved in faculty blockades shows strong criticism of representative democracy and moderate support for direct democracy with recognition of its limitations.

These findings support interpreting the student struggle as not merely a fight for rule of law within existing institutions but an experiment in alternative democratic practice that communicates a vision of more participatory, deliberative, and less elite-dominated

politics. The movement's organizational form is not just tactically innovative, but it embodies a different democratic logic.

Lottocracy emerges as a theoretically coherent response to the dissatisfaction with electoral representation, combined with awareness that direct democracy is practically demanding. Our findings suggest that democratic innovations drawing on sortition principles merit serious consideration as responses to the crisis of representative democracy.

Several directions for future research emerge. First, longitudinal studies could track whether participation in movement-organized direct democracy changes attitudes toward representative institutions over time. Second, studies presenting detailed lottocratic proposals to movement participants could more precisely measure its desirability. Third, qualitative interviews with students could explore the meaning they attach to direct democracy and their understanding of its relationship to state-level governance.

References

Adam, Elisenda C., Dimitrious Kagiaros and Stephen Tierney. 2018. "Democracy in question? Direct democracy in the European Union." *European Constitutional Law Review* 14(2): 261–282.

Altman, David. 2019. *Citizenship and Contemporary Direct Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Barth Jay, Cragi M. Burnett and Janine Parry. 2020. "Direct democracy, educative effects, and the (mis)measurement of ballot measure awareness." *Political Behavior* 42(4): 1015–34.

Bouricius, Terrill G. 2013. "Democracy through multi-body sortation: Athenian lessons for the modern day." *Journal of Deliberative Democracy* 9(1). doi:10.16997/jdd.156.

Breines, Wini. 1982. *Community and Organization in the New Left, 1962-1968: The Great Refusal*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

Colombo, Céline and Hanspeter Kriesi. 2017. "Party, policy – or both? Partisan-biased processing of policy arguments in direct democracy." *Journal of Elections, Public Opinion and Parties* 27(3): 235–53.

Crouch Colin. 2004. *Post-Democracy*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Dahl, Robert. 1989. *Democracy and Its Critics*. London: Yale University Press.

Downs, Anthony. 1957. *An Economic Theory of Democracy*. New York: Harper & Brothers.

Edelman, Murray. 1988. *Constructing the Political Spectacle*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Elster, Jon. 1985. *Sour Grapes: Studies in the Subversion of Rationality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Gerber, Marlène and Sean Mueller. 2018. "When the people speak – and decide: deliberation and direct democracy in the citizen assembly of Glarus, Switzerland." *Policy & Politics* 46(3): 371–390.

Gilens, Martin and Benjamin Page. 2014. "Testing theories of American politics: elites, interest groups, and average citizens." *Perspectives on Politics* 12(3): 564–581.

Gramsci, Antonio. 1971. *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*. New York: International Publishers.

Graeber, David. 2013. *The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement*. New York: Spiegel & Grau.

Guerrero, Alexander. 2024. *Lottocracy: Democracy Without Elections*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Hall, Stuart. 2016. *Cultural Studies 1983: A Theoretical History*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Hibbing, John R. and Theiss-Morse, Elizabeth. 2002. *Stealth Democracy: Americans' Beliefs About How Government Should Work*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Kern, Anna and Marc Hooghe. 2018. "The effect of direct democracy on the social stratification of political participation: inequality in democratic fatigue?" *Comparative European Politics* 16(4): 724–44.

Kralj, Karlo. 2024. "Research on Social Movements in Southeast Europe: A Systematic Literature Review." [In Croatian] *Croatian Sociological Review* 54(3): 193–222. doi:10.5613/rzs.54.3.1.

Ladam Christina. 2020. "Does process matter? Direct democracy and citizens' perceptions of laws." *Journal of Experimental Political Science* 7(3): 232–37.

Landemore, Hélène. 2020. *Open Democracy: Reinventing Popular Rule for the Twenty-First Century*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Lascher, Edward L., Michael G. Hagen and Steven A. Rochlin. 1996. "Gun behind the door? Ballot initiatives, state policies and public opinion." *Journal of Politics* 58(3): 760–75.

Lax, Jeffrey R. and Justin H. Phillips. 2012. "The democratic deficit in the states." *American Journal of Political Science* 56(1): 148–166.

Leemann Lucas and Fabio Wasserfallen. 2016. "The democratic effect of direct democracy." *American Political Science Review* 110(4): 750–62.

Mair Peter. 2013. *Ruling the Void: The Hollowing of Western Democracy*. London: Verso.

Manin, Bernard. 1997. *The Principles of Representative Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Mendez Fernando and Mario Mendez. 2017. "The promise and perils of direct democracy for the European Union." *Cambridge Yearbook of European Legal Studies* 19: 48–85.

Merli, Frenz. 2020. "Illiberal direct democracy." *Vienna Online Journal on International Constitutional Law (ICL-Journal)* 14(2): 199–210.

Mutz Diana. 2006. *Hearing the Other Side: Deliberative versus Participatory Democracy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Norris Pippa. 2011. *Democratic Deficit: Critical Citizens Revisited*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Novaković, Goran. 2025. "Random selection of political representatives: an alternative to elections in Serbia". [In Serbian] 175–199 in *Super election year 2024*, eds. Dušan Vučićević and Marko Veković. Belgrade: Serbian Political Science Association. doi: 10.18485/fpn_saborp.2025.18.ch8.

Ober, Josiah. 1991. *Mass and Elite in Democratic Athens: Rhetoric, Ideology, and the Power of the People*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Ober, Josiah. 2008. "What the ancient Greeks can tell us about democracy." *Annual Review of Political Science* 11:67–91.

Pavlović, Vukašin. 2009. *Social Movements and Changes* [in Serbian]. Belgrade: JP Službeni glasnik and JP Zavod za udžbenike.

Petrović, Jelisaveta, and Dragan Stanojević. 2019. "Political Activism in Serbia" [in Serbian]. In *Stratification Changes in the Period of Capitalism Consolidation in Serbia* [in Serbian], edited by Mladen Lazić and Slobodan Cvejić, 167–186. Belgrade: Institute for Sociological Research, Faculty of Philosophy, University of Belgrade and Službeni glasnik.

Petrović, Luka. 2021. "The political struggle over concepts: the crisis of democracy" [In Serbian]. *Politička revija* 70(4): 213-232.

Plenum of the Faculty of Philosophy. 2025. "The Plenum of the Faculty of Philosophy in Belgrade Explained What the Problem with the Expert Government Is" [in Serbian]. *Danas*, April 7th.

Polletta, Francesca. 2002. *Freedom Is an Endless Meeting: Democracy in American Social Movements*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Sitrin, Marina. 2006. *Horizontalism: Voices of Popular Power in Argentina*. Oakland: AK Press.

Somin, Ilya. 2013. *Democracy and Political Ignorance: Why Smaller Government is Smarter*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Stadelmann-Steffen, Isabella and Clau Dermont. 2015. "How exclusive is assembly democracy? Citizens' assembly and ballot participation compared." *Swiss Political Science Review* 22(1): 95–122. doi:10.1111/spsr.12184.

Students in Blockade. 2025. "A Letter to the People of Serbia." *Student Blockades*. March 9th. Accessed April 16, 2026. https://blokade.org/sr-lat/vesti/pismo-narodu-srbije/

Tausanovitch, Chris and Christopher Warshaw. 2014. "Representation in municipal government." *American Political Science Review* 108(3): 605–41. doi: 10.1017/S0003055414000318.

Teorell Jan. 2006. "Political participation and three theories of democracy: a research inventory and agenda." *European Journal of Political Research* 45(5): 787–810. doi: 10.1111/j.1475-6765.2006.00636.x

Tomić, Đorđe. 2009. "Social Movements: Questions, Concepts, Theories and Methods" [in Serbian]. In *Society in Motion: New Social Movements in Yugoslavia from 1968 to Today* [in Serbian], edited by Đorđe Tomić and Petar Atanacković, 12–28. Novi Sad: Cenzura.

Towfigh, Emanuel V., Sebastian J. Goerg, Andreas Glöckner, et al. 2016. "Do direct-democratic procedures lead to higher acceptance than political representation?" *Public Choice* 167(1): 47–65. doi: 10.1007/s11127-016-0330-y

Urbinati, Nadia. 2016. "Reflections on the meaning of the 'crisis of democracy'." *Democratic Theory* 3(1):6-31. doi: 10.3167/dt.2016.030102.

Van Outryve, Sixtine. 2023. "Realising direct democracy through representative democracy: from the Yellow Vests to a libertarian municipalist strategy in Commercy." *Urban Studies* 60(11): 2214–30.

Wright, Erik Olin, and John Gastil, eds. 2019. *Legislature by Lot: Transformative Designs for Deliberative Governance*. London: Verso.