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## **The Potential of Participedia as a Crowdsourcing Tool for Comparative Analysis of Democratic Innovations<sup>1</sup>**

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Paper prepared for the PSA Annual Conference 2015

Participedia [www.participedia.net](http://www.participedia.net) is an open global knowledge platform for researchers and practitioners in the field of democratic innovation and public engagement. It represents an experiment with a new and potentially powerful way to conduct social science research: crowdsourcing data on participatory processes from researchers and practitioners from all over the world and making that data freely available for analysis. This paper reflects on the potential of Participedia to realize its long-term aim of answering the basic research questions: what kinds of participatory processes work best, for what purposes, and under what conditions? Initially the paper reviews the data model that informs Participedia and the types of comparative analysis it might enable. Our analysis draws on the Participedia data to explore the relationship between aspects of institutional design (including facilitation, forms of interaction and decision methods) across a range of democratic innovations represented on the platform. The study offers important insights on institutional design, but also on the potential for crowdsourcing data from disparate communities.

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Research on democratic innovations—institutions specifically designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political process—has intensified over recent years in an attempt to keep pace with a step-change in activity amongst public authorities and civil society organizations across the world (Fung, 2003; Gastil & Levine, 2005; Smith, 2009). What Warren (2009) calls “governance-driven democratization” has resulted in hundreds of experiments and variations on both traditional and new forms of public engagement (Bingham, Nabatchi, & O’Leary, 2005; Nabatchi et al., 2012).

Much ink has been spilled proffering explanations for this increase in participatory policymaking and the extent to which it represents a significant shift in the nature of contemporary governance. We are blessed with an ever-expanding range of studies of democratic innovations that begin to offer us insights into the conditions under which such institutions are established and sustained, the relationship between different design features and their effect on participants and organizers. What is particularly striking about this particular area of study has been the constructive integration of insights from both democratic theory and empirical social science (Dryzek, 2010; Fishkin, 2009; Mutz, 2006; Rosenberg, 2007).

Strides have been taken in a relatively short time period, but there are obvious limitations to current research. One significant challenge is to move beyond the case study research that continues to dominate the field. Ground-breaking work that attempts to capture the characteristics of the field provides insights into the ways in which different design choices affect the realization of democratic goods or qualities (Fung 2003; Smith 2009): important differences can be drawn between, for example, participatory budgeting that aims to mobilize politically marginalized citizens through popular assemblies (Wampler 2007) and mini-publics such as Citizens’ Juries (Crosby & Nethercutt, 2005; Smith & Wales, 2000), Deliberative Polls

(Fishkin, 2009), and other related practices (Hendriks, 2005) that gather together (near) random public samples to deliberate on controversial areas of policy. There is still a tendency to focus on case studies of causes célèbres that have particularly novel characteristics: participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre (Baiocchi, 2001) and the British Columbia Citizen's Assembly (Warren and Pearse 2008) being prime examples. But the literature has matured. There is a recognition of the ways in which the export of participatory budgeting beyond its Latin American roots has often led to a dilution of its more radical properties (Ganuza & Baiocchi 2012; Sintomer, Herzberg, Röcke & Allegretti 2012). Similarly, the literature on mini-publics not only highlights cases such as the Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review (Knobloch et al., 2013), where citizens are given a measure of political authority, but also goes beyond apparent success stories to examine failed (or normatively disappointing) efforts at participatory or deliberative governance (e.g., Kenyon, 2005). Just as there is increasing methodological sophistication in the analysis of democratic innovations (e.g., Neimeyer 2004), there are critiques of the structure and impact of particular designs and analytical strategies (e.g., Mutz 2006). Where research has moved beyond case studies and is explicitly comparative, it is typically handling a small or medium-sized sample (e.g., Ryfe, 2002; Wampler 2007; Ryan & Smith, 2012).

For two reasons, our capacity for systematic comparison remains limited compared to more established areas of political and policy science. First, the category of participatory democratic innovations remains relatively vague when compared to more traditional democratic institutions and practices, such as constitutions, elections, legislatures, courts, and public opinion. What counts as an innovation in participatory governance? We have only begun the task of categorising the full range of designs enacted around the world, and the creativity of practitioners and activists will ensure that any categorization is highly contingent. Our first

problem then is that we are still not sure what taxonomy of designs best represents the ever-changing population of participatory democratic innovations.

The second problem for systematic comparative analysis is that there exist no large-sample databases that capture relevant variables in the practice of democratic innovation. When political scientists focus on public participation, they tend to collect survey data of individual-level political activity, whether conventional or unconventional (Dalton, 1988, 2008).

Participation in democratic innovations rarely merits mention in such analyses, excepting the rare work that seeks to understand public deliberation, broadly construed (Jacobs, Cook, & Delli Carpini, 2009). Unlike the traditional objects of political science, no official records or statistics on the variety and spread of democratic innovations exist. Where single research groups have collected data, they tend to be geographically and temporally limited and for sound pragmatic reasons collapse the design of different innovations into a small number of generic types.<sup>2</sup>

### **Enter Participedia**

The lone exception to these patterns is the Participedia (PP) database, located online at [www.participedia.net](http://www.participedia.net). PP can be understood as an ambitious attempt to harness the potential of new technologies—and the interest and goodwill of research teams and practitioners around the world—to respond to the two aforementioned data challenges. PP is an open global knowledge platform in the field of democratic innovation and public engagement that was the brainchild of

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<sup>2</sup> An impressive example is the work of the research teams led by Joan Font that have collected data on local participation exercises in regions of Spain (Font, della Porta, & Sintomer, 2014; Font & Smith, 2014). See <http://cherrypickingproject.wordpress.com>.

two prominent democratic theorists, Archon Fung and Mark Warren.<sup>3</sup> PP is the result of a collaborative effort across numerous research institutes and civil society organizations.<sup>4</sup>

The motivation for PP begins with the recognition that we are simply unaware of the range of democratic experimentation taking place across the globe. The scope, diversity and complexity of activity in this ever-changing field exceed the reach of any single research team using traditional data collection methods, no matter how well-funded and multi-national that team might be. Any data collection and collation strategy needs to recognise that knowledge of democratic innovations is highly dispersed, across different communities of practice who have organised, sponsored, evaluated or participated in such processes. These overlapping communities of practice include university researchers and students, public officials and administrators, civil society practitioners, activists, and lay citizens with first-hand experiences.

Initially based on MediaWiki software in 2009, PP migrated in late 2011 to Drupal, an open-source content management platform. PP principally consists of original articles on *cases* of participatory governance, such as the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly and participatory budgeting in Porto Alegre. PP also houses two other types of contribution: *methods*, such as entries on the general design of participatory budgeting, and *organizations*, such as the Participatory Budgeting Project, Involve and the Deliberative Democracy Consortium.

User-generated articles on cases have two main components.<sup>5</sup> The first is a text description. Contributors are free to structure information in whatever way they see fit, but the data entry form suggests a particular narrative structure to aid subsequent comparison and analysis of entries. Suggested categories are: purpose; history; originating entities and funding;

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<sup>3</sup> This explanation of the history and structure of PP draws and expands on Fung and Warren (2011).

<sup>4</sup> See <http://www.participedia.net/content/team>

<sup>5</sup> Methods articles also have the same structure, although less work has been undertaken to clean and restructure the fixed data fields.

participant selection; deliberation, decisions and public interaction; influence, outcomes and effects; analysis and lessons learned; secondary sources; external links; notes.

The second element of each case article is a set of structured data. PP requests data across a range of fields including: geo-coded location; dates of operation; policy area; geographical scope; number of participants; methods of selection, participation, deliberation and decision; sponsoring organizations and costs. Many of these variables capture dimensions of design choice. It is these structured data that form the basis of the search engine on the platform, which allows users to filter and limit search results. Users are able to download a CSV file of all fixed field data for all or selected cases.<sup>6</sup>

Both the text description and structured data are wiki-enabled, which means that other contributors are able to add or revise information, with previous versions available for comparison. The data collection method for PP is thus structured and decentralized. By offering a mixture of soft guidance and fixed data fields, PP relies on crowdsourcing data from users dispersed around the world. The ‘crowd’ for PP’s purposes is constituted by all those people and organizations around the world who have some experience (as participant, organizer, sponsor or researcher) of participatory initiatives. As of August 2014, PP had over 1700 users who registered and thereby gained the ability to add or revise content on the site. At that same date, PP housed 440 cases, 92 methods, and 356 organisations.

PP is well placed to respond to the two obstacles to systematic comparative research on democratic innovation. First, its data collection strategy means that many of the cases on the platform are not well known and have not been the subject of sustained academic analysis. Members of the Executive Committee of PP that represent some of the most well-established academics and practitioners in the field continue to be surprised by the appearance of cases of

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<sup>6</sup> For details on this aspect of PP, see <http://www.participedia.net/en/research>.

participatory governance of which they were previously unaware. This is without doubt one of the main virtues of the platform: for both academics and practitioners, contributions to PP have the potential to extend our imagination as to what is possible in participatory governance. PP is already disrupting established attempts to categorize the class of democratic innovations. It certainly offers variety when it comes to case selection for more in-depth studies.<sup>7</sup>

Second, the data captured in the articles provides the basis for systematic comparative analysis of democratic innovations both within type (e.g., participatory budgeting, mini-publics) and across types. The platform allows for systematic content analysis of text descriptions and/or statistical analysis of the datasets generated from the structured data fields.

### **Putting Participedia Data to the Test: Deliberative Attributes of Public Participation**

#### **Processes**

Thus far, the PP collective has focused on developing the usability of the platform and populating cases. In 2013, members of the UK team improved the download functionality and reliability for the fixed field data for cases.<sup>8</sup> At this point, the co-authors of this paper were able to undertake the first analysis of the dataset, both to provide feedback to the PP team about the quality of the data and to explore how the data might be used for future research.

#### **Democratic Deliberative Designs**

To give that initial data analysis more theoretical focus, we chose to test the capacity of the PP database to offer insight into deliberative forms of participatory innovation. Deliberative

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<sup>7</sup> That said, the majority of the contributions remain from North America and Europe, a fact reflective of the location of the most active research groups on the platform.

<sup>8</sup> To accomplish this task, Matthew Ryan (University of Southampton) and Graham Smith (University of Westminster) worked with the Drupal developers Affinity Bridge in Canada.

democracy has emerged as a prominent mode of analysis in contemporary democratic theory (Chambers, 2003; Dryzek, 2010), and experiments with deliberative public meetings and institutional reforms have proliferated in the past two decades (Gastil & Levine, 2005; Nabatchi et al., 2012). For example, Citizens' Juries, Planning Cells, Consensus Conferences, and similar processes share the common feature of using a small body of close-to-randomly selected citizens to study a particular policy question in depth over several days, with input from policy experts and advocates, before arriving at a final set of recommendations (Crosby & Nethercutt, 2005; Hendriks, 2005; Smith & Wales, 2000). Deliberative Polls have gathered hundreds of people, usually face-to-face, to collect a more statistically representative estimate of how the public's answers to traditional surveys would shift if citizens had just a few days to ask questions, hear from experts, and reflect on broad policy questions in the company of fellow citizens (Fishkin, 2009). Not all deliberative participatory processes rely on random samples, but each has its own discussion method of promoting rigorous policy analysis and maintaining democratic relations among its participants.

Given the interest in deliberative democratic ideas amongst democratic theorists and practitioners, our interest is in the extent to which design features that are conceptually associated with deliberative democracy and are present in well-known designs and case studies are prevalent amongst the population of democratic innovations as represented by the PP data set. Can we find associations between relevant design attributes such as selection mechanism, form of interaction, facilitation and decision methods? Is there a recognizable 'deliberative' segment in the practice of democratic innovations? Second, we are interested in the policy effect of these deliberative innovations: do they have impact on the policy process? Are there associations between the design variables associated with deliberative innovations and outcomes,

in particular the impact on the policy process? The evidence to date is rather limited, drawing as it does from case studies and small-N comparisons (Goodin and Dryzek 2006). Can we find effects in a larger sample?

The analysis that follows draws its inspiration from the variables described in an essay one of us co-authored on “Evaluating Deliberative Public Events and Projects” (Gastil, Knobloch, & Kelly, 2012). This synthetic approach to evaluation aims to provide a general framework for precisely this kind of comparative case analysis. The evaluative framework focuses on four basic principles of interest to both academics and practitioners: (1) design integrity, (2) sound deliberation and judgment, (3) influential conclusions and/or actions, and (4) long-term impacts beyond policymaking (Gastil et al., 2012, pp. 209-10).<sup>9</sup>

### **Descriptive Analysis of Three Key Features**

The PP dataset was analysed initially using just fixed-field variables to get a sense for the basic range of design features among the 304 cases available at the time of the analysis. We focused on three fixed-field variables that have theoretical significance for democratic deliberation. First, the presence or absence of facilitation was considered because deliberative designs often emphasize the role of facilitators in norm-setting, behavioural modelling, and the flow of interaction (Gastil, 2004; Kaner & Lind, 2007; Trel, 2009). Not surprisingly, a cornerstone study on the very meaning of deliberation turned to facilitators for their intuitive understanding of how the process works (Mansbridge et al., 2006). By contrast, conventional public meetings and participatory processes need not require the presence of a facilitator, owing partly to concerns about the undue

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<sup>9</sup> The fourth evaluative criterion lies beyond the scope of PP, which has cases written more proximate to the occurrence of the process. Even retrospective analyses in PP rarely have access to long-term impact data on participants, let alone on the larger communities where they live.

influence of facilitators and other meeting structures on the framing and scope of discussion (e.g., Chilvers & Burgess, 2008).

Second, the “discursive model” that informs interaction represents a key point of differentiation for public meetings (Dryzek, 1990; Leichter & Black, 2010; Warren, 1993). PP enables at least a crude comparison of those processes that rely on active modes of interaction (including discussion, dialogue, deliberation, or negotiation/bargaining) versus more passive modes (e.g., attending public lectures, receiving information), along with processes that have elements of both.

A third important variable in deliberative processes concerns whether participants have the chance to vote. The criminal jury, which stands as the most venerable deliberative citizen institution (Dwyer, 2002), helps fix in the public’s mind the idea that deliberation necessarily concludes with a verdict, or decision of some variety. Both in its classical and contemporary practice, deliberation distinguishes itself from other forms of public talk by focusing on reaching judgments (Zarefsky, 2008). Other forms of public participation in PP, however, do not include decision points, and we can distinguish among those that use a formal vote to reach decisions versus those that use a non-voting method of decision (e.g., those in which a lead facilitator simply records a “sense of the room”) versus those that yield no decision at all.<sup>10</sup>

We computed four frequency matrices of the 304 cases to provide a high-level characterization of the cases in PP (see Table 1). The first matrix, which crosses facilitation with whether the mode of interaction was relatively active or passive, shows that half of the cases in PP involve both facilitation and active interaction. The next most common category (16 percent of all cases) involves active interaction without facilitation.

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<sup>10</sup> Cases could also be coded as having multiple decision methods or unknown methods of decision making.

*Table 1 about here*

The second matrix, which juxtaposes facilitation and decision method, shows that one quarter of PP cases combine facilitation with a non-voting decision-making process—such as taking the sense of the room; whereas 17 percent combine facilitation with voting. The same share use facilitation in a non-decisional process (e.g., opinion polling and the collection of panelists' comments, as in Deliberative Polls).

In the third matrix, which crosses interaction mode with decision method, one quarter of PP cases combine active interaction with a non-voting decision method, followed by active interaction leading to a vote (18 percent of all cases), then active interaction with no decision (14 percent).

The fourth matrix crosses all three attributes—facilitation, interaction mode, and decision method. It shows that the three most common categories of PP cases combine facilitation with active interaction and then add a non-voting decision method (19 percent of all cases), voting (13 percent), or 'No Decision' (12 percent), the latter capturing institutions that are not designed to deliver a decision.

Given the diversity of institutional forms classified as democratic innovations, it is unsurprising that only a proportion of the cases exhibit basic deliberative attributes of facilitation and active interaction, with an orientation toward a decision. In other words, deliberative democratic designs may predominate in discussions of participatory and civic innovation (e.g., Nabatchi et al., 2012), but they represent only a subset of the cases appearing in the PP database.

### **Deeper Analysis of Deliberative and Participatory Process Features**

Analyzing a limited number of fixed data fields can provide only so much nuance in making case comparisons. To dig deeper into the PP database, a purposive sample of 81 cases was selected from the PP dataset for further analysis, with the goal of ensuring inclusion of cases in a rough proportion to the percentages displayed in each cell of the matrices.

From a codebook (Richards & Gastil, 2013) based on the Gastil et al. (2012) evaluative framework, twenty nine variables were generated from the PP case articles by using the fixed-field data associated with the cases and content analysis of the text description. For the variables based on text descriptions, codings responded to descriptive statements about the cases using five-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (“strongly disagree”) to 5 (“strongly agree”).<sup>11</sup> Appendix A describes each variable in detail; Table 2 provides summary statistics and brief descriptions appear in the analysis, as needed.

*Table 2 about here*

### **Associations among Design Attributes**

The majority of variables generated from the PP data can be conceived broadly as attributes of the design of democratic innovations. They focus on one of the following: the selection mechanism of participants; the form of interaction between participants; the way in which participants come to a decision or recommendation; and/or the intended purpose of the process.

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<sup>11</sup> Content analysis was performed by a single coder using Neuendorf’s (2002, pp. 53-54) ‘descriptive’ method. The unit of analysis was an individual case on PP. For each case, a three-step procedure was used. First the coder analyzed the fixed field data for the case, and coded the variables *Interaction type*, *Facilitation* and *Decision method*. Second, the coder read the text of the case. Third, the coder coded each variable in the codebook (Richards & Gastil, 2013).

Correlations among the variables indicate that the PP data confirm some theoretical expectations about the design of democratic innovations. Many of these associations are shown in Table 3. For example, if we focus on the variable *Discussion, dialogue or deliberation* as a characteristic of an initiative we find positive associations with three variables related to the selection of participants that capture diversity and inclusiveness and/or ensure presence of particular groups: *Random, Stratified* and *Representative sample*. This resonates with the literature on deliberative democracy (theory and practice) where a strong emphasis is placed on realizing political equality by ensuring institutions are designed to overcome traditional differentials of political participation. This may be achieved through sampling techniques (Fishkin, 1991) or strategies that actively mobilize traditionally marginalized social groups (Young, 1990).

*Table 3 about here*

Similarly we find positive associations between *Discussion, dialogue or deliberation* and variables that tell us something about the quality of democratic talk in these events: *Facilitation, Sufficient time to make decision* and *Limits on debate in favor of other forms of interaction*. The first two variables are relatively self-explanatory, and the third indicates that the procedures of the event provide for ‘non-debate’ forms of communication; potentially less confrontational modes of engagement that include (for example) use of small group discussion, focus groups, submission of questions to experts and politicians and individual interviews. In many cases, interaction means more than a traditional conception of debate (see Zarefsky, 2008).

It is no surprise that similar patterns are found for *Facilitation* for the same selection criteria and design characteristics. This reflects the growing evidence that facilitation (often referred to as moderation in online participation exercises) can be critical for the promotion of more deliberative exchanges (Moore, 2012). Placing limitations on debate arguably requires active intervention to promote different forms of engagement between participants, as noted by those who worry about such power (e.g., Chilvers & Burgess, 2008; Wright, 2006). Facilitation is also positively associated with the observed/reported conduct variable *Full spectrum of solutions considered*, which counts as a measure of deliberative quality in group discussion (Gastil, 2008).

These relationships between design variables are very much as deliberative theorists and practitioners might expect, but two further sets of associations generate particularly interesting insights. First, the relationship between deliberation process models and decision methods used in engagement exercises is contested both practically and theoretically. For example, there is some theoretical concern that mechanisms of collective choice may generate opinion polarization: movement towards and adoption of more extreme positions. According to proponents, this tendency is avoided in Deliberative Polling by simply collecting and collating individual opinions through surveys (Fishkin, 2009; Sunstein, 2000; Smith, 2009, pp. 99-100). Practitioners crafting more intensive deliberative designs, by contrast, see virtue in permitting sustained social interaction and influence among participants, especially where the aim of such designs is to realize collective recommendations or action (e.g., Carson et al., 2013; Crosby & Nethercutt, 2005; Knobloch et al., 2013).

The PP case data provide some context to this debate. We found that the presence of discussion, dialogue or deliberation is negatively associated with inconclusive decision methods

(*No Decision Made*), where the latter is a variable constructed from fixed-field data including techniques such as opinion polling and the collection of panelists' comments (without the requirement of coming to agreement). In other words, in the case set we analyzed, the presence of intensive deliberative structures was more likely to lead to decision making amongst participants than were other varieties of interaction.

The second association is a positive one between *Discussion, dialogue or deliberation* and *Intended purpose: consultation*. This indicates that deliberative processes are being designed to inform decision makers of the perspectives of participants, rather than giving them decision making powers. This comports with what we know about conventional practice (Carson et al., 2013; Fishkin, 2009), as well as some critical assessments of deliberation (e.g., Pedrini, 2014). This issue is one that we can explore in more depth by analyzing the dependent variable *Influence on policy* that was generated through the content analysis of case descriptions.

### **Policy Impacts and Process Design**

Whereas there may be many reasons to run a deliberative exercise, including empowerment of participants, community building and public awareness, for many a particular interest is in the extent to which such processes shape policy decisions (Barrett, Wyman, & Coelho, 2012; Goodin & Dryzek, 2006; Hajer & Wagenaar, 2003). To explore this question, we calculated correlations between each of the design attributes, on the one hand, and *Influence on policy*, on the other (see Table 3). We find a strong positive statistical association between *Intended purpose: Co-governance* (sharing power) and *Influence on policy*, and between *Intended purpose: Exercise some power of decision* (combination of co-governance and make final decision) and *Influence on policy*. The significance of the latter association is due entirely to

*Intended purpose: Co-governance*, which is a component of *Intended purpose: Exercise some power of decision*. That cases having these intended purposes manifested an influence on policy is consistent with expectations (or it may indicate that the case authors coded the intended purpose on the basis of the outcome).

Three other variables in our sample had statistically significant correlations with influence on policy. *Intended purpose: Raising public awareness* is *negatively* associated with influence on policy: an unsurprising finding. However, a more surprising finding is that the representativeness of the sample (a variable developed through content analysis of cases) is *negatively* associated with the influence of a democratic innovation on policy. In other words where policy effect is found, participants tend not to be adequately representative of the affected constituencies or stakeholders. A related result appears in the *negative* association between stratification—a technique aimed at rendering samples representative—and influence on policy. These findings are clearly in tension with the ‘all-affected principle’ (Goodin, 2007) that guides many deliberative democrats’ assessment of the legitimacy of participatory designs. This stress on the realization of political equality appears to have had little or no resonance with actual policy processes.

What appears as a failure of engagement exercises with deliberative characteristics to have policy effect is reinforced if we return to the correlations between design variables shown in Table 3. Here we find that the variables *Intended purpose: Co-governance* and *Intended purpose: Exercise some power of decision* are significantly associated with neither *Discussion, dialogue or deliberation* nor *Active interaction*.<sup>12</sup> While *Discussion, dialogue or deliberation* is positively associated with *Intended purpose: Consultation*, this does not seem to lead to any

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<sup>12</sup> Correlation of *Intended purpose: Co-governance* and *Active interaction*:  $r = 0.12$  (n.s.). Correlation of *Intended purpose: Exercise some power of decision* and *Active interaction*:  $r = 0.018$  (n.s.).

noticeable policy effect. The deliberative design of public engagement and policy influence appear to be orthogonal to each other—a potentially gloomy finding for many deliberative theorists and practitioners who often place great emphasis on integrating deliberative designs into political decision-making processes.

Further reinforcement (if needed) of the marginalization of deliberative processes from political power comes from correlations of the variables *Intended purpose: Co-governance*, *Intended purpose: Make public decisions*, and *Intended purpose: Exercise some power of decision*, which are all positively and significantly associated with the *Decision method: Voting* variable (a variable that had no significant association with characteristics of deliberative design).<sup>13</sup> Again this runs counter to insights within deliberative democracy where much store is placed on deliberation prior to voting to ensure that preferences are well-considered. Putting this finding alongside the lack of policy effect of deliberative designs suggests that (at least for the cases in this sample), public authorities appear to have a preference for plebiscite-like methods when their aim is to empower citizens to share or take power in policy decisions.

### Conclusion

PP represents a significant development in our understanding of the scope and range of democratic innovations around the world. It promises to deliver insights into how to better categorize the variety of cases that constitute this field of study. Our analysis of the deliberative attributes of participatory processes provides evidence that both the textual and fixed-field data can support large-N systematic comparative analysis.

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<sup>13</sup> Correlation of *Intended purpose: Co-governance* and *Decision method: Voting*:  $r = 0.246, p < .05$ .  
 Correlation of *Intended purpose: Make public decisions* and *Decision method: Voting*:  $r = 0.31, p < .01$ .  
 Correlation of *Intended purpose: Exercise some power of decision* and *Decision method: Voting*:  $r = 0.41, p < .01$ .

There remain a number of challenges that PP must face if it is to establish itself as the authoritative database for the study of democratic innovations and participatory governance. First, even though the platform is wiki-enabled, the extent of peer review is relatively limited and this raises questions about data quality. Second, while the current number of cases (440 at the time of writing) is impressive compared to our prior knowledge of the field, more work is needed to ensure more systematic upload of cases; a more even geographic spread beyond the current concentration on cases in the Europe and the US; and an understanding of the nature of the sample that is represented on the platform, given the absence of population data. Research has already been undertaken into better understanding the motivations of different potential contributors (whether adding new cases or reviewing existing material), especially practitioners from civil society and public authorities who are less likely to contribute (Hall, Jamieson, & Smith, 2014). The current ‘build-it-and-they-will-come’ attitude needs to be replaced with a more focused and nuanced engagement campaign. Equally, the functionality of the platform needs to be improved: its rather dry academic style needs to be complemented with, for example, new tools for data visualisation.

These criticisms and areas for attention should not undermine the fact that PP remains an ambitious international project that is already engaging the broader academic and practitioner communities and generating useful data for analysing the field. But like other crowdsourcing projects, it will only succeed if researchers and practitioners around the world continue to support its basic mission, engage with the development of content and use the data to inform analysis and hopefully more effective democratic practice.

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**Table 1. Interaction Mode by Facilitation by Decision Method (with examples of each combination)**

	Voting ( <i>n</i> =83)	Non-Voting ( <i>n</i> =104)	Multiple Methods ( <i>n</i> =8)	No Decision ( <i>n</i> =74)	Unknown ( <i>n</i> =35)
<i>Active Interaction (n=199)</i>					
<i>n = 41</i>					
Facilitated ( <i>n</i> = 152)	Australia's First Citizens' Parliament (Canberra, Australia)	<i>n</i> = 58 Municipal Health Councils (Brazil)	<i>n</i> = 4 Our Budget, Our Economy (USA)	<i>n</i> = 35 Wenling City Deliberative Poll (China)	<i>n</i> = 14 La Bottega del Futuro (Casamassima, Italy)
<i>n = 17</i>					
NOT Facilitated ( <i>n</i> = 47)	<i>n</i> = 14 National Public Policy Conferences (Brazil)	Community-Managed Clinics and Health Watch Committees (Bangladesh)	<i>n</i> = 1 Recife Participatory Budgeting (Brazil)	<i>n</i> = 8 Ora Facciamo I Conti (Legium Region, Italy)	<i>n</i> = 7 Bridgeport (Connecticut) Community Conversations (USA)
<i>Passive, Non-Interactive (n=51)</i>					
<i>n = 5</i>					
Facilitated ( <i>n</i> = 18)	<i>n</i> = 2 NHS Virtual Participation Groups (UK)	Alternative Public Hearings in Andhra Pradesh (Vizag, India)	<i>n</i> = 1 NHS Virtual Participation Groups (UK)	<i>n</i> = 8 Programa Quiero Mi Barrio: Población Santa Adriana (Chile)	<i>n</i> = 2 OpenParlamento (Italy)
<i>n = 7</i>					
NOT Facilitated ( <i>n</i> = 33)	<i>n</i> = 9 Rural Plebiscite Experiment (Indonesia)	Bolivian Democratic Development (Bolivia)	--	<i>n</i> = 10 Participación... en la revisión del PRC... (Chile)	<i>n</i> = 7 Conseils de quartier (France)
<i>Both Active and Passive (n=54)</i>					
<i>n = 8</i>					
Facilitated ( <i>n</i> = 34)	Participatory Budgeting (Tower Hamlets, London, UK)	<i>n</i> = 11 Portsmouth Listens (NH, USA)	<i>n</i> = 1 NH Public Conversations on Outdoor Rec. (USA)	<i>n</i> = 10 Europolis: Participation and citizenship... (Europe)	<i>n</i> = 4 Imagine Durban (South Africa)
<i>n = 6</i>					
NOT Facilitated ( <i>n</i> = 20)	<i>n</i> = 9 Indonesia Direct Democracy Experiment (Indonesia)	<i>n</i> = 6 Citizen Councils of Grenoble (France)	<i>n</i> = 1 Bicycle Activism (Bucharest, Romania)	<i>n</i> = 3 Agenda para el Desarrollo Social (San Pedro Garza García, Mexico)	<i>n</i> = 1 Participation for sustainable envir. dev. and social integration (Santiago, Chile)

Note. Total facilitated groups *n* = 204; total not facilitated *n* = 100.

Table 2

*Descriptive statistics for variables used in Participedia case analysis*

<b>Variable</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Min.</b>	<b>Max.</b>
<b>Fixed Data Fields in Initial Analysis</b>					
Active Interaction*	81	0.67	0.47	0	1
Mixed Interaction*	81	0.14	0.34	0	1
Discussion, Dialogue, or Deliberation*	81	0.77	0.43	0	1
Decision Method: Voting*	81	0.37	0.49	0	1
Decision Method: Non-Voting*	81	0.37	0.49	0	1
No Decision Made*	81	0.20	0.40	0	1
Facilitation*	81	0.63	0.49	0	1
<b>Discussion Variables</b>					
Experts Had Relevant Knowledge	29	3.69	1.07	0	5
Opportunity for Developing New Solutions	31	3.10	0.47	2	4
Time Provided to Consider Pros and Cons	26	3.15	0.46	2	4
Trained Facilitators	39	3.79	0.70	3	5
Limitation of Debate	41	3.90	0.30	3	4
<b>Intended Purpose</b>					
Consultation*	81	0.42	0.50	0	1
Co-governance*	81	0.26	0.44	0	1
Make Public Decisions*	81	0.09	0.28	0	1
Exercise Some Power of Decision*	81	0.35	0.48	0	1
Direct Delivery of Public Services*	81	0.03	0.16	0	1
Raise Public Awareness*	81	0.31	0.47	0	1
Community Building*	81	0.10	0.30	0	1
Develop Individual Capacities*	81	0.04	0.19	0	1
Other*	81	0.03	0.16	0	1
<b>Sampling Method</b>					
Random Sample*	76	0.29	0.46	0	1
Stratified Sample	66	1.39	1.75	0	5
Representative Sample	51	3.10	0.70	2	5
<b>Policy Decision Making and Influence</b>					
Sufficient Time to Make Decision	28	2.00	1.44	0	4
Full Spectrum of Solutions Considered	42	3.26	0.45	3	4
Influence on Policy	60	3.63	0.80	2	5

*Note.* N = 81 individual *Participedia* cases, though some variables could not be coded for particular cases. \* indicates a variable based on fixed-field data from *Participedia* dataset. Other variables created through content analysis of case text description.

Table 3

*Pairwise correlations between key design features (discussion/dialogue/deliberation and the presence of facilitation) and all other variables in the Participedia case analysis*

	Discussion / Dialogue / Deliberation Employed	Facilitation Used	Influence on Policy
<b>Fixed Data Fields in Initial Analysis</b>			
Active Interaction	0.659***	0.380***	0.084
Mixed Interaction	0.134	-0.069	-0.131
Discussion, Dialogue, or Deliberation	1.000	0.420***	-0.056
Decision Method: Voting	-0.058	-0.100	0.038
Decision Method: Nonvoting	0.183	-0.047	-0.057
No Decision Made	-0.238**	0.060	0.076
Facilitation	0.420***	1.000	0.094
<b>Discussion Variables</b>			
Experts Had Relevant Knowledge	0.173	-0.198	-0.108
Opportunity for Developing New Solutions	0.123	0.009	0.199
Time Provided to Consider Pros and Cons	0.122	0.042	0.313
Trained Facilitators	0.100	0.347**	-0.015
Limitation of Debate	0.380**	0.380**	0.081
<b>Intended Purpose</b>			
Consultation	0.235**	0.186*	-0.057
Co-governance	0.062	0.045	0.359***
Make Public Decisions	-0.141	-0.037	0.063
Exercise Some Power of Decision	-0.027	0.020	0.377***
Direct Delivery of Public Services	0.088	-0.043	-0.104
Raise Public Awareness	-0.072	0.014	-0.266**
Community Building	0.183	-0.003	-0.013
Develop Individual Capacities	0.109	0.015	0.106
Other	-0.100	-0.043	0.060
<b>Sampling Method</b>			
Random Sample	0.235**	0.367***	-0.089
Stratified Sample	0.393***	0.207*	-0.371***
Representative Sample	0.372***	0.340**	-0.320**
<b>Policy Decision Making and Influence</b>			
Sufficient Time to Make Decision	0.817***	0.270	0.202
Full Spectrum of Solutions Considered	0.151	0.282*	0.272
Influence on Policy	-0.056	0.094	1.000

*Note.*  $N = 81$  Participedia cases. Figures are pairwise Pearson correlation coefficients, with the presence

of the two key design features coded as “1” and their absence coded as “0”. Two-tailed significance levels indicated by \*  $p < .10$ , \*\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*\*  $p < .01$ .

## Appendix A: Description of Variables

The variables below appear in the same order as shown in Table 2.

### Fixed Data Fields in Initial Analysis

*Active interaction* is a nominal, dichotomous variable, with values of 1 (meaning that the *Participedia* Interaction Type field is coded exclusively with one or both of “Discussion, Dialogue, or Deliberation” and “Negotiate & Bargain”) and 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* Interaction Type field has some other coding or codings).

*Mixed interaction* is a nominal, dichotomous variable, with values of 1 (meaning that the *Participedia* Interaction Type field coding includes one or both of “Discussion, Dialogue, or Deliberation” or “Negotiate & Bargain,” AND one or more of the Interaction Types other than “Discussion, Dialogue, or Deliberation” and “Negotiate & Bargain”), and 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* Interaction Type field has some other coding or codings).

*Discussion, dialogue, or deliberation* is a nominal, dichotomous variable, with values of 1 (meaning that the *Participedia* Interaction Type field coding included “Discussion, Dialogue, or Deliberation”), and 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* Interaction Type field did not include “Discussion, Dialogue, or Deliberation”).

*Decision method: Voting* is a nominal, dichotomous variable, with values of 1 (meaning that only value in the *Participedia* Decision Method field is “Voting”) and 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* Decision Method field contains some other value or values).

*Decision method: Non-voting* is a nominal, dichotomous variable, with values of 1 (meaning that the *Participedia* Decision Method field contains only one or both of “Sense of the room” or “Other”) and 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* Decision Method field contains some other value or values).

*No decision* is a nominal, dichotomous variable, with values of 1 (meaning that the *Participedia* Decision Method field contains only one or both of “N/A” and “Opinion Surveys”) and 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* Decision Method field contains some other value or values).

*Facilitation* is a nominal, dichotomous variable, with values of 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* Facilitation fixed field is coded “No”) and 1 ( meaning that the *Participedia* Facilitation fixed field is coded “Yes”).

### **Coded Discussion Variables**

*Experts had relevant knowledge* is a discrete, ratio variable with values of 0 (meaning that, based on the coder’s reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the variable is not applicable to the case), 1 (meaning that, based on a reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the coder STRONGLY DISAGREES with the statement: “The subject-matter experts possessed knowledge or expertise relevant to the issue”), 2 (meaning that the coder DISAGREES with the previous statement), 3 (NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES with the statement), 4 (AGREES with the statement), 5 (STRONGLY AGREES with the statement).

*Opportunity for developing new solutions* is a discrete, ratio variable with values of 0 (meaning that, based on the coder’s reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the variable is not applicable to the case), 1 (meaning that, based on a reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the coder STRONGLY DISAGREES with the statement: “Sufficient time was reserved for identifying new solutions”), 2 (meaning that the coder DISAGREES with the previous statement), 3 (NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES with the statement), 4 (AGREES with the statement), 5 (STRONGLY AGREES with the statement).

*Time provided to consider pros and cons* is a discrete, ratio variable with values of 0 (meaning that, based on the coder's reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the variable is not applicable to the case), 1 (meaning that, based on a reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the coder STRONGLY DISAGREES with the statement: "Panelists were given sufficient time to evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed solutions"), 2 (meaning that the coder DISAGREES with the previous statement), 3 (NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES with the statement), 4 (AGREES with the statement), 5 (STRONGLY AGREES with the statement).

*Trained facilitators* is a discrete, ratio variable with values of 0 (meaning that, based on the coder's reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the variable is not applicable to the case), 1 (meaning that, based on a reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the coder STRONGLY DISAGREES with the statement: "The procedures provide for trained facilitators to moderate discussions among panelists"), 2 (meaning that the coder DISAGREES with the previous statement), 3 (NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES with the statement), 4 (AGREES with the statement), 5 (STRONGLY AGREES with the statement).

*Limitation of debate* is a discrete, ratio variable with values of 0 (meaning that, based on the coder's reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the variable is not applicable to the case), 1 (meaning that, based on a reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the coder STRONGLY DISAGREES with the statement: "The procedures sufficiently limit the debate format to allow for other forms of communication"), 2 (meaning that the coder DISAGREES with the previous statement), 3 (NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES with the statement), 4 (AGREES with the statement), 5 (STRONGLY AGREES with the statement).

**Fixed Field Variable: Intended Purpose**

*Consultation* is a nominal, dichotomous variable with values of 1 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Consultation” is coded “Yes”), and 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Consultation” is coded “No”).

*Co-governance* is a nominal, dichotomous variable with values of 1 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Co-governance” is coded “Yes”), and 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Co-governance” is coded “No”).

*Make public decisions* is a nominal, dichotomous variable with values of 1 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Make Public Decisions” is coded “Yes”), and 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Make Public Decisions” is coded “No”).

*Exercise some power of discretion* is a nominal, dichotomous variable with values of 1 (meaning that either *Co-governance* or *Make public decisions*, or both, have a value of 1), and 0 (meaning that both *Co-governance* and *Make public decisions* have a value of 0).

*Direct delivery of public services* is a nominal, dichotomous variable with values of 1 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Direct Delivery of Public Services” is coded “Yes”), and 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Direct Delivery of Public Services” is coded “No”).

*Raise public awareness* is a nominal, dichotomous variable with values of 1 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Raise Public Awareness” is coded “Yes”), and 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Raise Public Awareness” is coded “No”).

*Community building* is a nominal, dichotomous variable with values of 1 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Community Building” is coded “Yes”), and 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Community Building” is coded “No”).

*Develop individual capacities* is a nominal, dichotomous variable with values of 1 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Develop Individual Capacities” is coded “Yes”), and 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Develop Individual Capacities” is coded “No”).

*Other* is a nominal, dichotomous variable with values of 1 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Other” is coded “Yes”), and 0 (meaning that the *Participedia* fixed field for “Other” is coded “No”).

### **Fixed Field Variable: Intended Purpose**

*Random sample* is a nominal, dichotomous variable with values of 1 (meaning that according to the text of the *Participedia* case the sample was randomly selected) and 0 (meaning that according to the text of the *Participedia* case the sample was not randomly selected).

*Stratified sample* is a discrete, ratio variable with values of 0 (meaning that, based on the coder’s reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the variable is not applicable to the case), 1 (meaning that, based on a reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the coder STRONGLY DISAGREES with the statement: “The sample was stratified or otherwise adjusted to make it generally representative of all of the major demographic groups in the population”), 2 (meaning that the coder DISAGREES with the previous statement), 3 (NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES with the statement), 4 (AGREES with the statement), 5 (STRONGLY AGREES with the statement).

*Representative sample* is a discrete, ratio variable with values of 0 (meaning that, based on the coder’s reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the variable is not applicable to the case), 1 (meaning that, based on a reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the coder STRONGLY DISAGREES with the statement: “The sample adequately represents individuals or

groups who are stakeholders regarding the issue being deliberated”), 2 (meaning that the coder DISAGREES with the previous statement), 3 (NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES with the statement), 4 (AGREES with the statement), 5 (STRONGLY AGREES with the statement).

### **Policy Decision Making and Influence**

*Sufficient time to make decision* is a discrete, ratio variable with values of 0 (meaning that, based on the coder’s reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the variable is not applicable to the case), 1 (meaning that, based on a reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the coder STRONGLY DISAGREES with the statement: “Panelists received sufficient time to make their final decisions”), 2 (meaning that the coder DISAGREES with the previous statement), 3 (NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES with the statement), 4 (AGREES with the statement), 5 (STRONGLY AGREES with the statement).

*Full spectrum of solutions considered* is a discrete, ratio variable with values of 0 (meaning that, based on the coder’s reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the variable is not applicable to the case), 1 (meaning that, based on a reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the coder STRONGLY DISAGREES with the statement: “On the whole, the panelists’ discussion explored a full spectrum of solutions to the issue”), 2 (meaning that the coder DISAGREES with the previous statement), 3 (NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES with the statement), 4 (AGREES with the statement), 5 (STRONGLY AGREES with the statement).

*Influence on policy* is a discrete, ratio variable with values of 0 (meaning that, based on the coder’s reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the variable is not applicable to the case), 1 (meaning that, based on a reading of the text of the *Participedia* case, the coder STRONGLY DISAGREES with the statement: “The group’s decision or information about the group’s post-deliberation attitudes and opinions, *influenced policy*”), 2 (meaning that the coder DISAGREES

with the previous statement), 3 (NEITHER AGREES NOR DISAGREES with the statement), 4 (AGREES with the statement), 5 (STRONGLY AGREES with the statement).