

Democratic Innovations

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You first

- What is ‘democracy’?
- What role do citizens play in ‘democracy’?
- What are the challenges in engaging citizens in political decision-making processes?

The sceptical voice

- “Participation will be unequal”
- “There will be no impact on final decision making”
- “Citizens don’t know enough to make good judgements”
- “Participation is too expensive and time-consuming”
- “Citizens don’t want to participate”
- “It only works at the local level”



Why does it matter NOW?

- A ‘democratic malaise’?
 - High levels of alienation from formal politics
 - Professionalisation and public misunderstanding of politics
 - Differential participation exacerbates inequalities
 - Informal politics vibrant?
- What are weaknesses of (1) elections; and (2) consultation exercises as modes of citizen engagement?

Remember the good ol' days?



Deliberation

- decision making should not only be concerned with aggregating preferences, but also the nature of the processes through which these preferences are *formed*.
- Problems:
 - Domination
 - Assumptions about consensus
 - Competence?

What does democratic innovation look like?





#NOTREBUDGET

MADAME LA M J'AI UNE IDÉE

Jusqu'au 15 mars, proposez v
pour le budget national



ORÇAMENTO PARTICIPATIVO

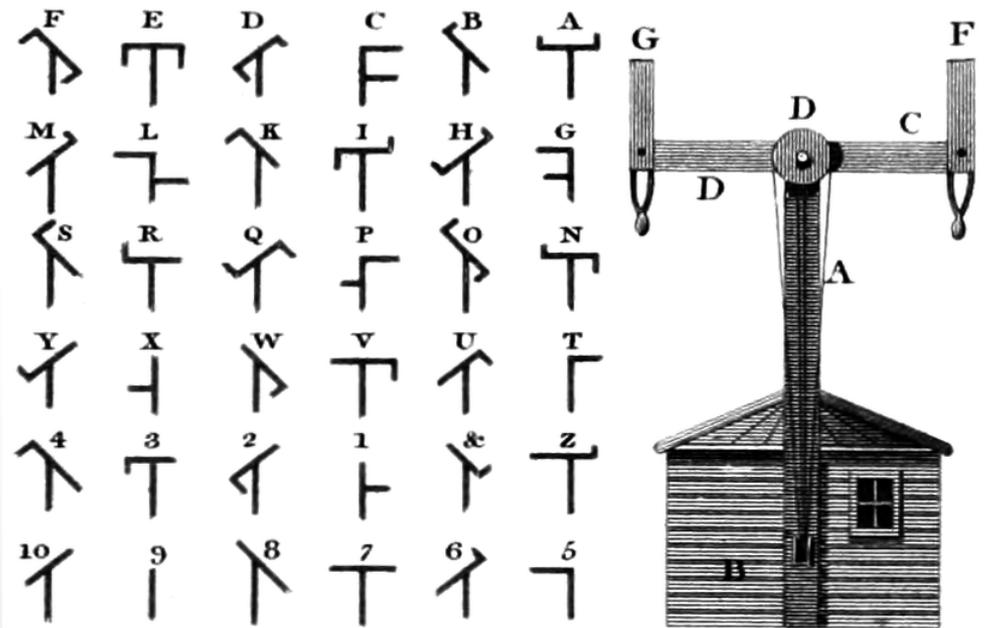


Citizens' Assembly
on Electoral Reform



E-democracy, e-government and civic tech

- Do current examples of the use of information and communication technology (ICT) lead to effective citizen engagement in the political decision making process?
- What are the opportunities / challenges of e-democracy?



Examples of e-democracy innovations

- 21st Century Town Meetings
- Open discussion forums
 - Typically asynchronous dfs increasingly used by public authorities as method of consultation
- Restricted discussion forums
 - Secure, moderated sites for ‘hard to reach’ communities (e.g. Womenspeak, HeadsUp)
- Online deliberative poll (ODP)
 - Randomly selected citizens in small groups using voice-activated software
 - c.f. mini-publics
- ICT-enabled direct legislation and transparency monitoring
 - E-voting and petitions
 - Fix my street

Challenges for popular control, inclusiveness, competence and effectiveness in online innovations

- Digital divide and digital literacy
- Flaming and anonymity
- Lack of commitment to responsive for a by authorities
 - Places high demand
- Fragmentation of public sphere
- Purpose – monetisation v democracy
- Domination of moderators and gatekeepers
- Crowdsourcing and representing data
- Lots of bluster about online/offline communication
 - Multi-channel participation

Read more

- Smith, Graham. 2009. *Democratic Innovations: Designing Institutions for Citizen Participation*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Dalton, Russell J. 2004. *Democratic Challenges, Democratic Choices: The Erosion of Political Support in Advanced Industrial Democracies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, especially Chapter 9.
- Stoker, Gerry. 2006. *Why Politics Matters: Making Democracy Work*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, especially Chapters 2 and 5.
- Dahl, Robert. 1989. *Democracy and its Critics*. New Haven: Yale University Press, Chapter 1 'The First Transformation'
- Pateman, Carole. 1970. *Participation and Democratic Theory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, especially Chapters 1, 3, 4.
- Sanders, Lynn. 1997. 'Against Deliberation'. *Political Theory* 25(3): 347-76
- Bryan, Frank. 2004. *Real Democracy: The New England Town Meeting and How it Works*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Lang, Amy (2007). 'But Is It for Real? The British Columbia Citizens' Assembly as a Model of State-Sponsored Citizen Empowerment', *Politics and Society* 35, 1: 35-69
- [Participedia.net](http://participedia.net)
- Coleman, Stephen. 2004. *Connecting Parliament to the Public via the Internet: Two case studies of online consultations*. *Information, Communication and Society* 7 (1):1-22
- Wright, Scott. 2006. *Government-run Online Discussion Fora: Moderation, Censorship and the Shadow of Control*. *British Journal of Politics and International Relations* 8 (4):550-68.
- Tiago Peixoto @participatory; democracyspot.net
- Paolo Spada <http://www.spadap.com/>