Towards an ecosystem of citizen participation

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A theory of change
- Efficiency, efficacy and legitimacy of public decisions improves
- Populism has decreased in institutions and the public sphere
- Citizens understand the complexity of public decision-making
- Citizen participation and political engagement clearly shifts towards a technopolitical paradigm
• Elections
• Direct democracy
• Deliberative participation

• Internal participation
• Collaboration

• New intermediaries
• Infrastructures
• Open Government
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A theory of change

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Methodology
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Accountability
Consultations
Participatory budgeting
Deliberative processes

Crowdlaw
Citizen initiatives
Citizen councils
Co-management
Technology

AOC

Consorci Administració Oberta de Catalunya
Training

Generalitat de Catalunya
Escola d’Administració Pública de Catalunya
Ecosystem of citizen participation

Software Governance

Methodology

+ID

Technology

Training

+civil society organizations

+hackers

+facilitators

+artivists

+legal

+media

+politics
Shifts in meaning (i)

- Legitimization of (1) participation (2) at any level/commitment.
- Participation means not direct democracy (substitution), but dialogue (complementation).
Shifts in meaning (ii)

- “Horizontalization” of government-citizen in decision-making.
- Sovereignty over (1) agenda setting (2) institutions (3) the system.
- ICTs not as substitutes, but as enablers and boosters and to increase efficacy and efficiency.
Shifts in norms (i)

• Institutions as neutral enablers, as rich nodes, as hubs.
• All contributions matter: the power of granularity in participation.
• Dire change of culture within the Administration.
• (Digital) infrastructures are public, including its governance.
Shifts in norms (ii)

- Participation is binding and has an impact.
- Transparency as a PRE-requisite for policy-making.
- Against disenchantment and disaffection: no “listening” but “engaging”.
Shifts in power (i)

- Small in size, significant in qualitative terms.
- Agenda setting is now public/open/participated.
- Decrease of the layers of intermediation (openness of the rest).
- Total disclosure of the full process and outputs.
Shifts in power (ii)

- Real devolution of sovereignty:
  - From institutions to citizens.
  - From civil organizations to individual citizens.
  - From media to participants.
- A network of open participatory governments and citizenries?
Conclusions (i)

• Deliberation becomes the new democracy standard.
• Openness as the pre-requisite for deliberation.
• Accountability and legislative footprint to achieve legitimacy.
• Participation for more pluralism and stronger social capital (& GOTO 1)
Outcomes (ii)

- Lesser role of intermediation and traditional institutions.
- Major role of informed deliberation.
- Balance between institutions, experts/leaders and individual citizens in a new ecosystem of actors, roles and relationships: networks and communities with liquid and reconfiguring affiliation.
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