

## The Governance Report 2017

Hertie School of Governance. Published in 2017 by Oxford University Press.

### An overview of democratic innovations highlighted in the Report

Category	Tool/Strategy	Challenge	Basic proposition	Advantages/ Potential	Disadvantages/ Limitations	Where discussed
Government-initiated direct democratic innovations	Referendums	Distrust in representatives; perceived lack of legitimacy of political decision-making	Include citizens in decision-making processes on specific issue areas	+ Gives citizens the chance to voice their opinions beyond elections + Reinforces identification with democratic system	– Only affected or interested groups take part, imposing their views on all – Low turnout endangers legitimacy of vote – Does not engage those already disengaged – Only appropriate for certain issues	Ch. III (Smilov) Ch. VI (Haber) Ch. VIII (Merkel) Ch. XI (Offe)
	Deliberative citizens' assemblies e.g. mini-publics	Many less dominant voices not heard in government decision-making	Decisions should be made based on the better argument in broad consensus and without manipulation or domination of interests	+ Allows consideration of broader range of perspectives + More appropriate for ethical or moral questions than for distribution issues	– Organisational complexity limits application – Not always tied into decision-making	Ch. VIII (Merkel) Ch. IX (Della Porta & Felicetti) Ch. V (Pogrebinschi)
	Co-governance e.g. participatory budgeting, Brazilian national public policy conferences, Icelandic constitutional reform, British Columbia Citizens' Assembly	Gaining legitimacy for policy decisions	Structured and institutionalised decision-making on policy with citizen participation	+ Improves problem-solving capacities + Increases citizens' identification with decisions	– Can be hijacked by political leaders or other dominant participants	Ch. V (Pogrebinschi) Ch. VIII (Merkel) Ch. IX (Della Porta & Felicetti)

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Bottom-up citizen engagement	Repurposing of mass protest  e.g. mass protests in Eastern Europe such as on Maidan Square in Kiev, Ukraine	Corrupt practices, authoritarian tendencies, and self-entrenchment of majoritarian governments lead to erosion of democracy	Mass protests are no longer used as last resort in existential crises, but to show dissatisfaction with government, certain parties, and elites	+ Have become a quite powerful tool (revision of proposed policies or appointments after protests) + Open and inclusive structure allows everyone to participate	–Lose their role as weapon of last resort in existential crises –Become an instrument of routine opposition rather than a device for radical transformation of political system	Ch. III (Smilov)
	New ways of organising protests  e.g. <i>acampadas</i> such as the Occupy movement	Protests organised hierarchically leaving little room for an individual's meaningful participation and impact	Long-term occupation of significant public spaces with direct individual involvement  Assemblies, debates, and processes open to all	+ Privileges individual involvement, personal knowledge, and emotion over organised groups and expertise + Transparency and openness in non-hierarchical processes builds confidence in participation	–Difficult to move from protest to policy –Despite intentions, not necessarily long-term	Ch. IX (Della Porta & Felicetti)
	New forms of advocacy organisation through online platforms	Fast-paced public sphere and global events challenge conventional advocacy	Ad hoc, issue-specific mobilisation via online platforms, opening a new dimension of political participation through lower transaction costs of political information, communication, and action	+ Enables independent, grassroots or netroots, member-driven organisations with relatively few resources to mobilise significant support + Gives broader society access to information and participation	–Unlike mainstream media, no editorial control guaranteed –Does not automatically translate into action (clicktivism vs. offline activism) –Most effective when used in combination with conventional forms of advocacy –Anonymity brings out the 'worse I'	Ch. X (Hall) Ch. VIII (Merkel)

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Electoral reform	Automatic voter registration  US-specific issue	Registering to vote creates a hurdle to participate in an election	Create automatic voter register based on other public records (e.g. drivers licenses, social security rolls)	+ Removes the burden of registering from voters + Increases access to voting + Reduces administrative errors	– Potential for errors in registering ineligible voters	Ch. IV (Kuo)
	Non-partisan blanket primaries (top-two primaries) and ranked choice voting  US-specific issue	Low turnout in primary elections often produces candidates who are more ideologically extreme than the average voter, thereby leading to partisan polarisation	Open primaries, with a large number of candidates and the top two candidates moving forward to the general election regardless of their party affiliation	+ Creates incentive for candidates to appeal to voters across the spectrum + Votes are not ‘wasted’ compared to first-past-the-post system	– Primary election results may not fully reflect the party preferences of the voters	Ch. IV (Kuo)
	Voter ID laws  US-specific issue	Perceived or potential voter fraud	Require specific forms of identification—some easier to acquire than others—before validating a person’s vote	+ Ensures validity of voting process	– Creates hurdles for certain socioeconomic and racial groups – Can restrict fair and universal access to elections	Ch. IV (Kuo)
	Non-partisan commissions to draw voting district boundaries	Gerrymandering: drawing of district boundaries to favour a specific political party or candidate and to ensure specific electoral outcomes	Non-partisan redistricting commissions are tasked with drawing constituency boundaries	+ Prevents manipulation of district boundaries to deliberately advantage one party, candidate, or socioeconomic group	– May not completely eliminate partisan tactics	Ch. IV (Kuo)

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Electoral reform (continued)	Lowering voting age	Young people are tuned out of politics	Lowering voting age on national or subnational level	+ Gives voice to young people who may be affected in the long run by outcomes and policies + Encourages youth to engage in politics and to become habitual voters	– Young voters might still lack motivation to participate or they might seek alternative forms of participation	Ch. VI (Haber)
	Quotas  e.g. for gender, language, minority groups, regional representation	Certain groups in society are underrepresented in legislative bodies	Increase participation of disadvantaged groups by guaranteeing their representation	+ Increases actual representation of underrepresented groups + Encourages members of those groups to run for office	– Free choice of voters is restricted – Votes are ‘wasted’ on candidates that cannot take a seat because of the quota	Ch. VI (Haber)
	New/other forms of voting  e.g. online, absentee, early voting	Voters who are unable to vote in person on election day de facto surrender their voting right	Allow citizens who are not able to cast their vote in person on election day to participate in elections by other means, such as mail-in ballot, online voting, voting from abroad, or voting prior to election day	+ Allows people to exercise their right to vote + Increases voter turnout	– Certain forms are vulnerable to manipulation and fraud (especially online voting)	Ch. IV (Kuo) Ch. VI (Haber)

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Institutional provisions	Safeguard institutions for governing emergencies e.g. Investigatory Powers Tribunal (UK), FISC (US)	In times of emergency, governments may expand their power in far-reaching terms, endangering civil rights and liberties	Install institutions, laws, and procedures to review or limit power extension  Assess rightfulness of government action after the fact	+ Ensures accountability of leaders, if not during, then at least after the fact + Offers clear guidance in balancing need for security and protection of liberties + Limits time of power extension to duration of emergency + Prevents rollback of gains achieved prior to emergency	– Need for confidentiality might hinder oversight, at least during an emergency	Ch. VII (Atanassow & Katznelson)
	Party-media hybrid  e.g. Berlusconi in Italy, Ataka and National Front for the Salvation of Bulgaria (both originating in a regional TV network)	Distrust in elected representatives and the state	Politicians/media personalities make use of their media exposure as political capital  Political parties emerge out of media programmes	+ Creates greater possibilities for broad communication between politicians and the populace	– Campaign financing is strictly regulated, while media financing is not checked – Uncritical and unfiltered dissemination of political messages – Fears stoked through tendentious and partisan reporting	Ch. III (Smilov)
	Unelected, independent expert bodies  e.g. central banks, watchdog NGOs, anti-corruption agencies	Need for independent supervision of government, especially where traditional institutions are distrusted	Provide other channels of oversight and representation beyond elections and parliament  Often recommended or mandated by law or by external institutions such as the EU or donor agencies	+ Distances important functions from partisan influence or manipulation + Draws in apolitical or non-political expertise + Provides additional opportunities for making political leaders accountable	– Positions in supposedly independent supervisory agencies may be filled with loyalists	Ch. III (Smilov) Ch. XI (Offe)