

(W)E-Democracy: will parliament survive the digital era?

Hopeful approaches to democracy in digital times

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In short

The 21st century democracy in Europe is in dire straits. Citizens feel disconnected with politics. Many people, especially youngsters, no longer see the traditional democracy as a good system of governance. Democracy like we know it today seems to be overdue for a profound upgrade. How can we reverse the erosion?

Democratic institutions haven't changed much since their formation in the 19th century. Even though our lives have been permeated by digital technologies, our parliaments and local councils have not. If we don't intervene quickly, our democracy is threatened to miss the digitalisation-train, and the gap between citizens and politics will grow even more.

Nonetheless our digitalized society offers a fertile breeding ground for citizens who organize themselves in innovative ways to participate in political decisionmaking. Digital initiatives like online knowledge centres and participation platforms pop up everywhere in Europe. For example, did you know that the mayors from Barcelona and Paris use digital platforms to actively engage citizens in outlining policy? What is the potential of these technologies to renew democracy? What are the challenges? What about participation by the elderly for instance? And how can local governments respond to these growing digital trends?

In this trend paper we explore new approaches to democracy.

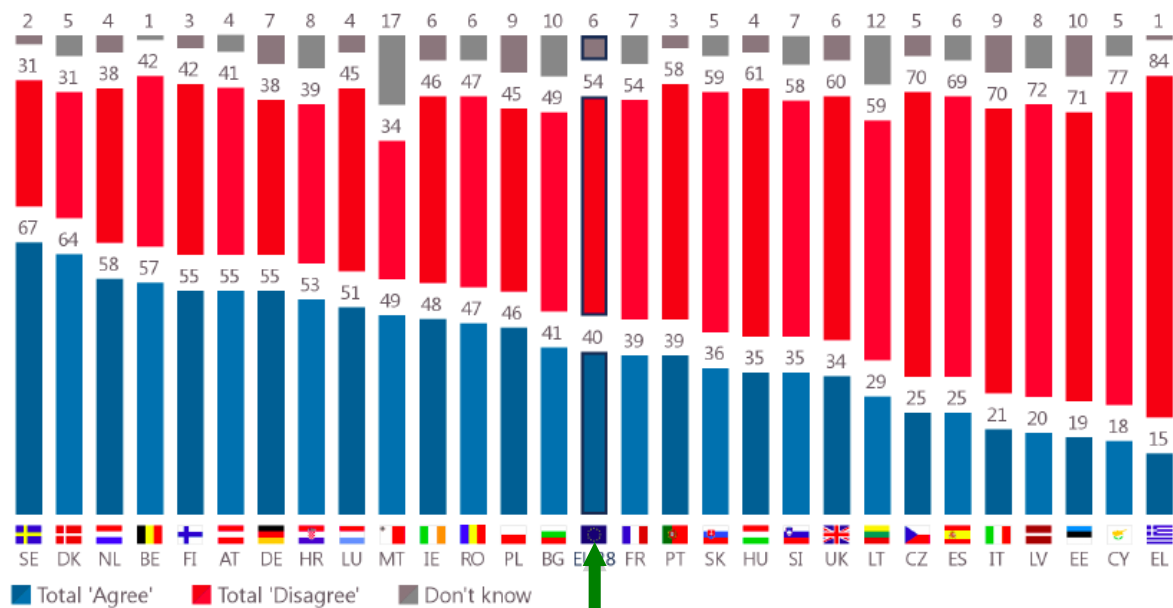
1. Introduction: a few alarming figures

FACT #1

No less than 54% of EU citizens do not agree with the statement 'My voice counts in the EU' (source: [Eurobarometer November 2016](#))

D72.1 Please tell me to what extent you agree or disagree with each of the following statements.

My voice counts in the EU (%)



FACT #2

There are significant differences among EU countries in terms of political participation (source: The Economist Intelligence Unit's Democracy Index 2016 versus 2015).

The Democracy Index is based on 5 categories: electoral process and pluralism, civil liberties, the functioning of government, political participation and political culture. Based on their scores on a range of indicators within these categories, each country is then itself classified as one of four types of regime: "full democracy", "flawed democracy", "hybrid regime", and "authoritarian regime". Check annex 2 for an overview of the indicators for 'political

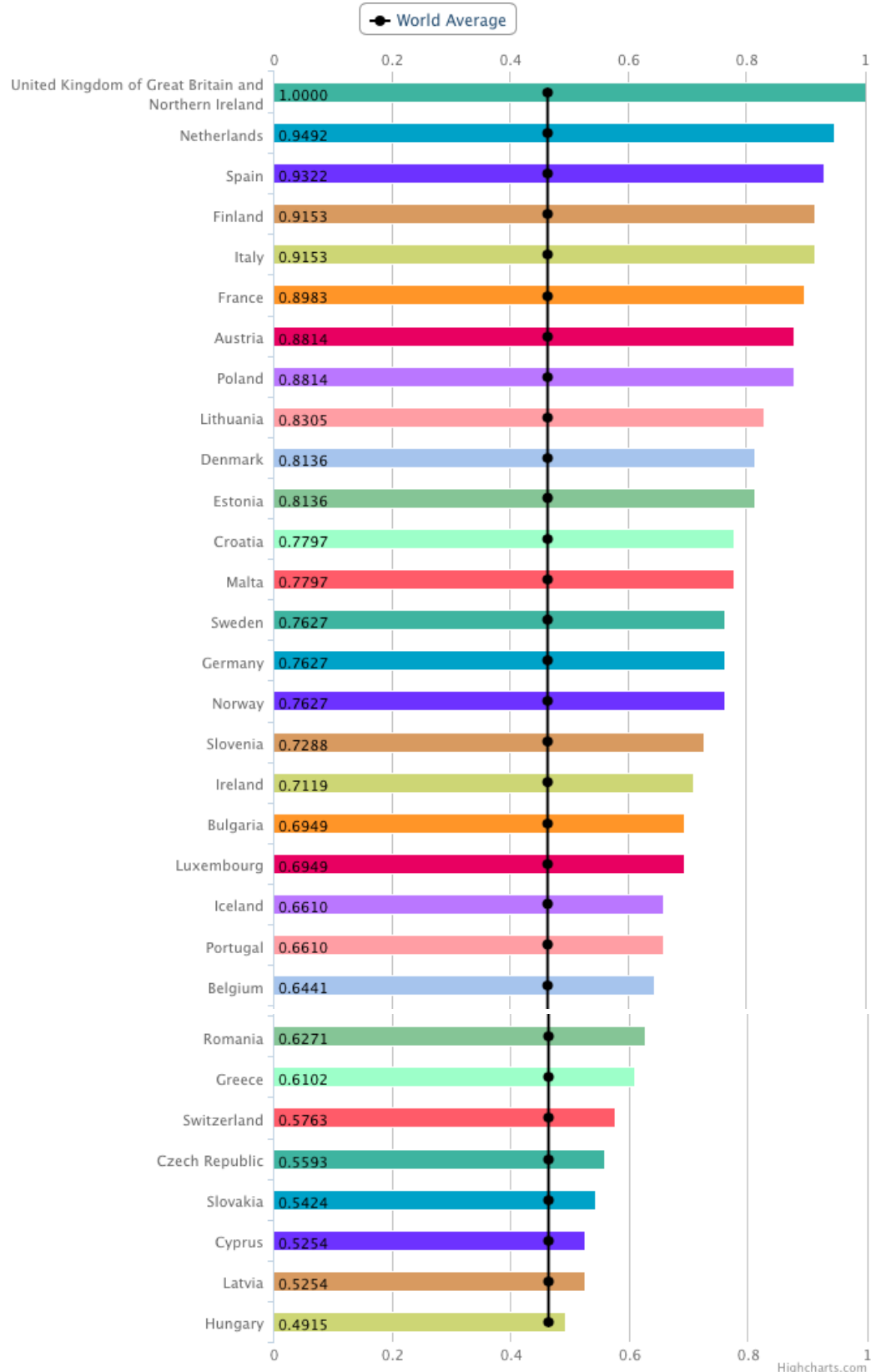
	Rank	Overall score	Electoral process and pluralism	Functioning of government	Political participation	Political culture	Civil liberties
Full democracies							
Norway	1	9.93	10.00	9.64	10.00	10.00	10.00
Iceland	2	9.50	10.00	8.93	8.89	10.00	9.71
Sweden	3	9.39	9.58	9.64	8.33	10.00	9.41
New Zealand	4	9.26	10.00	9.29	8.89	8.13	10.00
Denmark	5	9.20	9.58	9.29	8.33	9.38	9.41
Canada	=6	9.15	9.58	9.64	7.78	8.75	10.00
Ireland	=6	9.15	9.58	7.86	8.33	10.00	10.00
Switzerland	8	9.09	9.58	9.29	7.78	9.38	9.41
Finland	9	9.03	10.00	8.93	7.78	8.75	9.71
Australia	10	9.01	9.58	8.93	7.78	8.75	10.00
Luxembourg	11	8.81	10.00	8.93	6.67	8.75	9.71
Netherlands	12	8.80	9.58	8.57	8.33	8.13	9.41
Germany	13	8.63	9.58	8.57	7.78	7.50	9.71
Austria	14	8.41	9.58	7.86	8.33	6.88	9.41
Malta	15	8.39	9.17	8.21	6.11	8.75	9.71
United Kingdom	16	8.36	9.58	7.14	7.22	8.75	9.12
Spain	17	8.30	9.58	7.14	7.22	8.13	9.41
Mauritius	18	8.28	9.17	8.21	5.56	8.75	9.71
Uruguay	19	8.17	10.00	8.93	4.44	7.50	10.00
Flawed democracies							
Japan	20	7.99	8.75	8.21	6.67	7.50	8.82
United States of America	=21	7.98	9.17	7.14	7.22	8.13	8.24
Italy	=21	7.98	9.58	6.43	7.22	8.13	8.53
Cabo Verde	23	7.94	9.17	7.86	6.67	6.88	9.12
France	=24	7.92	9.58	7.14	7.78	6.25	8.82
South Korea	=24	7.92	9.17	7.50	7.22	7.50	8.24
Costa Rica	26	7.88	9.58	7.14	6.11	6.88	9.71
Botswana	27	7.87	9.17	7.14	6.11	7.50	9.41
Portugal	28	7.86	9.58	6.79	6.67	6.88	9.41
Israel	=29	7.85	9.17	7.50	8.89	7.50	6.18
Estonia	=29	7.85	9.58	7.86	6.11	6.88	8.82
Czech Republic	31	7.82	9.58	7.14	6.67	6.88	8.82
India	32	7.81	9.58	7.50	7.22	5.63	9.12
Taiwan	33	7.79	9.58	8.21	6.11	5.63	9.41
Chile	34	7.78	9.58	8.57	4.44	6.88	9.41
Belgium	35	7.77	9.58	8.57	5.00	6.88	8.82
Cyprus	36	7.65	9.17	6.43	6.67	6.88	9.12
Slovenia	37	7.51	9.58	7.14	6.67	5.63	8.53
Lithuania	38	7.47	9.58	5.71	6.11	6.25	9.71
South Africa	39	7.41	7.92	7.86	8.33	5.00	7.94
Jamaica	40	7.39	9.17	6.79	5.00	6.88	9.12

participation’.

FACT #3

There are significant differences among EU countries in terms of e-participation (source: VN E Participation Index).

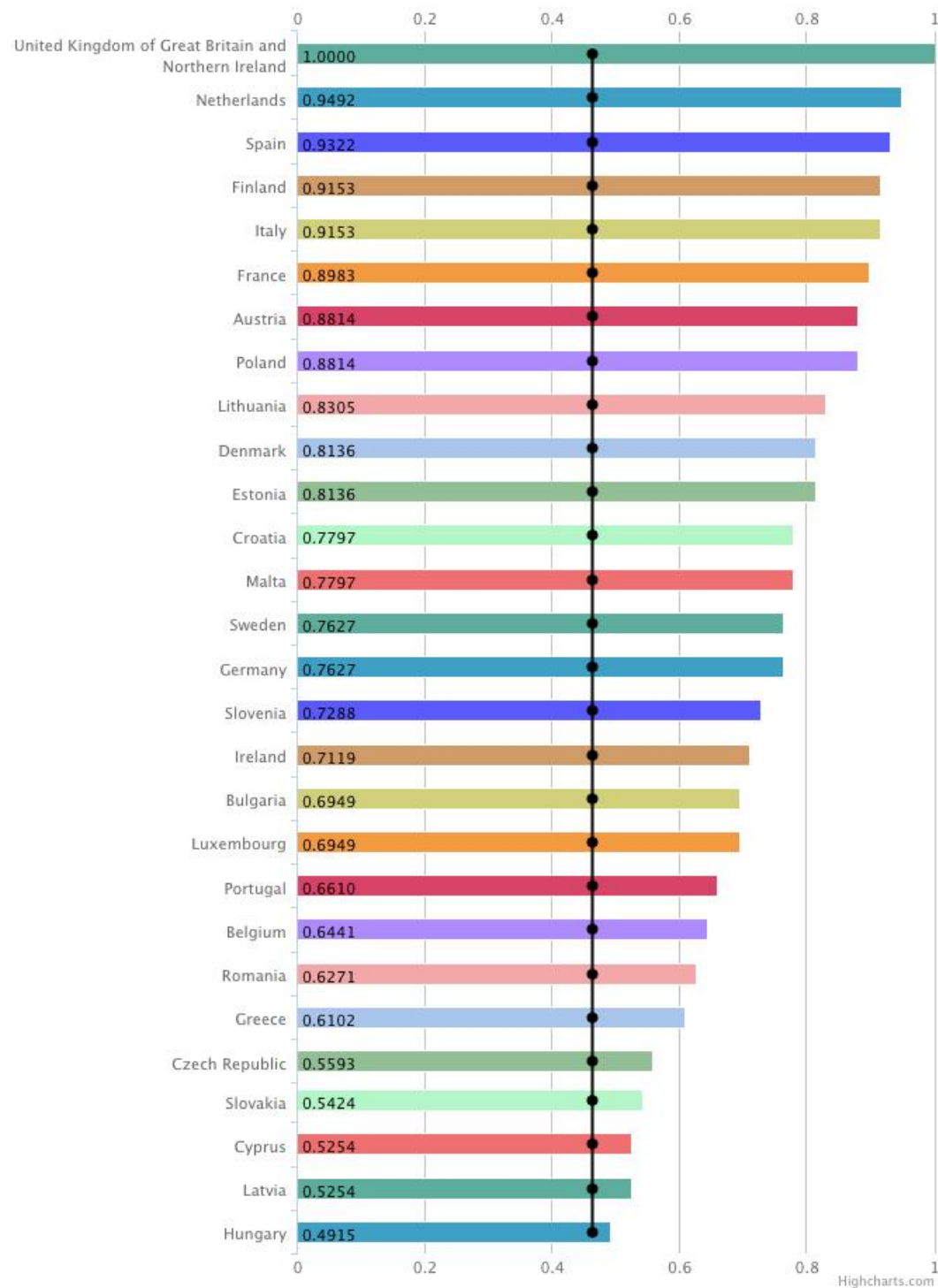
The VN EPI measures the use of online services to facilitate provision of information by governments to citizens (“e-information sharing”), interaction with stakeholders (“e-consultation”), and engagement in decision-making processes (“e-decision making”).



FACT #4

There are significant differences among EU countries in terms of Networked Readiness (source: [World Economic Forum Global Information Technology Report 2016](#)).

The Networked Readiness Index assesses the factors, policies and institutions that enable a country to fully leverage information and communication technologies for increased competitiveness and well-being.



2. Democracy on the move

The origin of our Western democracy derives from the Ancient Greeks. **Aristotle** already emphasized the basic principles that we still acknowledge today as the building blocks of our democracy, like freedom for every citizen, elections and the system of majorities. At the time, active citizenship was only reserved for male citizens though.

Between this description and the introduction of universal suffrage for all citizens lies a period of more than 2200 years. This is related to a number of factors whereby the increase of the population in modern society played an important role. What was executable for free men in the old Athens – to gather them at a square for public debate – is not feasible in countries with millions of inhabitants. Because of that, the Scottish philosopher **James Mill** described early 19th century the representative democracy as the *grand discovery of modern times*: it allows that the few represent the interests of the many in an efficient way. At least on condition that the many have the right to vote, so they can call the few in power to account. At the heart of this concept is the notion of passive citizenship: if a small group wants to be in politics, then the rest can devote themselves to their personal goals.

In the meantime, the parliamentary democracy is reaching its limits. Is the idea of passive citizenship in a highly educated society still justified? Are citizens still happy with filling out a vote once every five years? What about the powers of the government we elect, what is the influence of big companies and the financial markets? And a democracy locked up in countries and election cycles, how can it tackle ecological problems that transcend borders and concern future generations?

In addition, our modern society has been changing fundamentally since the advent of internet. Our society digitalizes; if democracy wants to remain operable, it will have to acknowledge this new reality and moreover, actively anticipate it. Research shows that youngsters for example follow the news increasingly through social media and less through classic media (source: www.apestaartjaren.be).

In this trend report we neither favour a blind faith in new technology – not every twitter-discussion leads to something good – nor an unfounded suspicion. We look at e-democracy as a down to earth necessity in digital times. Hereby we do however assume that a proactive approach can strengthen democracy, gather citizens for present-day forms of public debate and well-founded decisionmaking.

In other words, technological innovations first always disrupt existing practices; now it's important to appropriate them and deploy them in a sensible way that strengthens society. This time, will there be a *grand discovery of digital times*?

3. E-democracy

Vertical becomes horizontal

Thanks to digital technologies we can nowadays communicate, bank, study, read the news and so much more via computer or smartphone. This new digital society requires new forms of leadership, governing and interaction which allow societies to anticipate the impact of new technologies and to react quickly to changing circumstances. Citizens increasingly question traditional forms of representative democracy and expect more innovative processes of decisionmaking, both offline and online. So what is the best possible way to employ digital tools to strengthen democracy and its basic principles – freedom of expression, the right of initiative, the right to vote and equality? (How) can digital tools reduce the distance between citizens and politics, improve (the quality of) decisionmaking, make democracy more representative and increase transparency? How can political decisionmaking evolve from a vertical to a horizontal structure?

The answer is in the use of digital tools on the different steps of the existing **participation ladder**:

1. **Information**, or give citizens free access to public sector information
2. **Consultation**, or involve citizens top-down in the elaboration of and concertation on public policy and services to broaden and deepen the debate
3. **Decide together**, or empower citizens through allowing active participation from the bottom up and facilitating bottom-up input to the political agenda
4. **Draft policy together**; involve citizens in the thought process to develop policy
5. **Support** as government citizen decisions and initiatives

We can note that digital forms of step 1 are already well established. Most municipalities have a website with a wide range of useful public sector information. Also step 2 is catching on: local governments or parties consult citizens more often in a digital way on specific local topics. The challenge lies in the establishment of the three upper steps, with which several European cities are already experimenting.

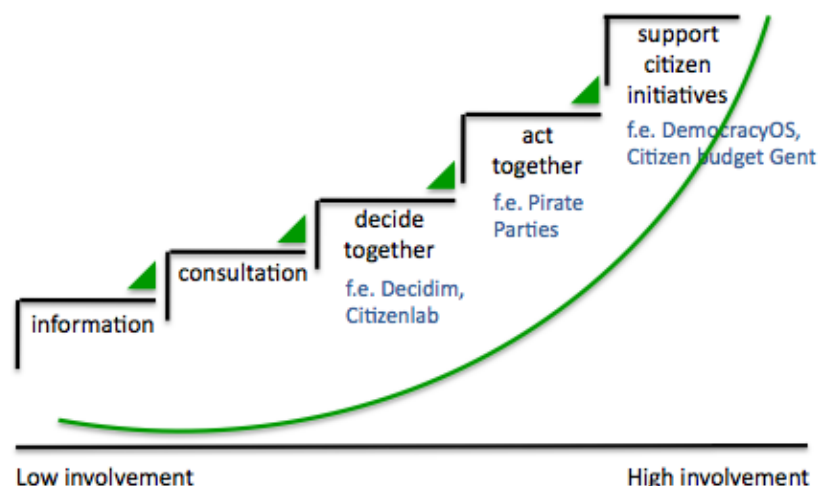


Fig. 1: Participation ladder according to David Wilcox (source: <https://brightanswers.eu>)

4. E-participation: case studies

Citizens currently feel less prompted to take part in traditional 'offline' forms of participation. Can the internet help to broaden engagement and develop new tools for participation? Several cities, civil movements and political parties in Europe are already experimenting with software platforms which allow more dialogue. Let's zoom in on Barcelona, Iceland, Paris, Hasselt and Gent.

BARCELONA - Decidim

Since the terror attacks of 2004 in Spain and the political protest that followed, the country has gone through a thorough political transition. The demonstrations of the 15 M Indignados Movement in 2011 and 2012 paved the way for a new form of policy. Extensive deliberation exercises rose within civic movements, political parties and institutions and went hand in hand with an intensive use of digital technologies. This made traditional institutions evolve towards social movement-like institutions. There was a high need for more openness, transparency and accountability.

Barcelona became a breeding ground for citizen initiatives, and the local elections of 2015 resulted in the victory of a political party that emerged from such citizen initiatives. It led to the steep rise of flexible ad-hoc collectives and networks as well as to the strengthening of traditional organisations which adapted to the new reality.

In February 2016, Barcelona launched '*decidim.barcelona*', a project about participative democracy built on an open source software platform. Its goal is to let citizens participate actively in an open and transparent way to the formation of a strategic plan for the period 2016-2019. It wants to give a leading voice to the citizenry and different neighbourhoods of Barcelona. The city collects proposals from citizens with a variety of interests and backgrounds, and fosters the participation of the least active collectives or collectives with more difficulties. It wants to foster a culture of collective construction of the city government and the citizen democracy, and to strengthen the foundations for future processes of citizen participation.

Today *decidim.barcelona* has more than 26.000 users and there are 10 projects in development phase. The city and its citizenry are for instance debating about the future of the old Teatro Arnau (see picture). The theatre closed its doors in 2000 and went from owner to



owner, until the city bought it in 2011. Today the theatre is in a state of severe negligence to the chagrin of local groups. Barcelona now calls its citizens to join the online debate and think along about the future possibilities for the theatre.

An other example is the revision of the local bus network. Within the framework of the Pact for Mobility of Barcelona, the city collects citizen proposals through *decidim.barcelona* and through local gatherings in order to improve the service and coverage of the bus network.

ICELAND – Pirate Party

The Icelandic Pirate Party was founded in 2012 by a number of internet activists and currently stands as Iceland's joint-second most popular party. Authenticity, transparency, open debate and participation are very important for them, and they deploy a mix of offline and online participation tools to meet these goals.

Everyone can for instance launch a proposal during physical meetings. When 5% of the attendants vote in favour of the proposal, it is published onto the online crowdsourcing portal x.piratar.is where all members can read or submit their comments alongside the proposal during one week, followed by a vote. When more than 50% of the members vote in favour of the proposal, it is then adopted as the official party position. Further adjustments or amendments remain possible through the same system even after the proposal has been adopted. Other participation tools offered by the party are a discussion forum and an internal online election tool.

In August 2016 the party counted more or less 2500 members. The x.piratar platform could count on 100 votes in 2015 and 2016, with often less than 50 contributions to debates. Although these figures may seem low, the votes and debates happen quite frequently. Since its creation in 2013, no less than 100 proposals were discussed and voted, and more than 7000 votes were cast.

PARIS – 'Madame Mayor, I have an idea' and DemocracyOS

In 2014 the new Mayor of Paris, **Anne Hidalgo**, launched an online participatory budgeting tool. Since 2015, Parisians can launch project proposals every year in January and February, for other citizens to comment on. From March till May a co-creation phase takes place for representatives of similar proposals, to develop and refine their ideas. Then, a selection of representatives of political parties, the City Administration, civil society and citizens pick out the best ideas. These are made public in summer for public evaluation. Each proposal gets support to campaign. In September, citizens can vote and the most successful ideas are included in the December budget. The realisation starts the following year.

In 2016, a total of no less than 158.964 Parisians have voted for a final selection of 219 ideas coming from 3.158 proposals. In response to the Mayors question which proposals the Parisians would like to see accomplished in view of a carbon neutral city by 2050 for instance, citizens voted en masse for the strengthening of the position of the bicycle in the city, a reduction of waste, for sustainable production and consumption and for more green in the city. The full report can be consulted here: <https://api-site.paris.fr/images/91103>.



Another successful example is **DemocracyOS**, an open source platform that aims to promote the participation of all in the political decision making industry. It was launched in 2012 in Buenos Aires and then quickly spread to other territories. DemocracyOS France for instance, was set up in 2015 to support civic movements, institutions, start ups, associations and any type of organization that is ready to embrace online participatory democracy by using a free, simple and powerful tool. DemocracyOS promotes a new culture of citizen involvement and favors the emergence of a civic tech ecosystem in France.

In 2016 the city of Nanterre used the tool to develop an online permanent agora by means of DemocracyOS. The open source digital space allows every citizen of Nanterre to debate, share, acclaim and build together projects. The main goal is to develop a participative city where citizens are at the centre of all political decisions.

In 2016, a total of 1559 people got involved on the platform. Citizens, elected representatives and associations have debated and cast their vote on seven topics. For example, people were invited to discuss the transformation of the former paper mills which future needed to serve different goals: creating employment, maintaining

the environmental and urban landscape and preserving historical memories. People of Nanterre were very concerned about the project and the civic mobilization for this topic was particularly considerable as the city decided to include the consultation in a legal framework. More info can be found here:



<https://participez.nanterre.fr/>

HASSELT – online platform for ideas (via Citizenlab)



Citizenlab launched in 2016 together with the City of Hasselt an online platform for ideas to enhance digital two-way communication between the city and its citizens. In this respect, Hasselt collected for three months ideas for the reconstruction of its city park **Kapermolen**.

Via the platform, the city wanted to offer visitors of the Kapermolen park the possibility for more interactive, more accessible and faster participation, and to give voice to each interested citizen.

GENT – the citizen budget + crowdfunding Gent

In 2015 the City of Gent introduced a new form of co-decisionmaking for subsidies. Every year the city makes 55.000 euro available for the co-financing of non-profit projects that make use of the Gent crowdfunding platform. A jury of experts within and outside the city administration selects projects and co-finances them for 25%, 50% or (exceptionally) 75% up to 5.000 euro at most. Those resources are only paid after successfully crowdfunding the remaining amount. The citizens from Gent mobilize their neighbourhood online to collect resources. This then counts as proof of the social support for the project. This way, citizens in Gent decide digitally which projects the city supports.

Then in 2016, the City of Gent launched a digital platform for citizens to build the city together: the citizen budget. With the city mission as its guideline, they invite all citizens from Gent, whether they be organized in a movement or not, to propose projects that help tackle the challenges in the street or neighbourhood. More than 200 proposals currently have been declared admissible. After the summer of 2017, every citizen from Gent who is 14 years of age or older, can co-decide which projects become reality by voting online for the 3 proposals of their preference. The citizen budget subsequently gets allocated in the form of a subsidy.

5. Challenges

Successful examples of e-participation often have a few characteristics in common. The direct link between citizens and policymakers for instance, a clear engagement from involved politicians, the support of local (civil society) organisations, the mix of online and offline participation methods and the high degree of transparency. But even though our examples from Iceland, Barcelona, Paris, Hasselt and Gent are like music to our ears, in reality citizen participation is often a bumpy road with many challenges. The cost for the design, management, promotion and visibility of such platforms is often significant, and the human capital needed to process the input too. Moreover, it is crucial that all layers of the population are reached and involved and that also more complex topics can be discussed, but how? Let's enter a few challenges in more detail.

Challenge #1: everybody in

One of the main obstacles for citizen participation is inclusion. From different European online platforms that have been described in the 'Digital Democracy' report (2017) of the British foundation **Nesta**, it appears that e-participants are often highly educated and male. The demographic structure of the society is barely reflected. But then how can all layers of the population be involved? The answer lies partly in a good mix of online and offline participation options in view of a larger/more representative pool of ideas. **Youngsters** for instance are by far a target group who are currently abstaining on politics, but at the same time they are the biggest internet users and so they have a lot of potential as policymakers of the future. To reach all layers of the population, a mix of online and offline tools can be a solution.

Civil society organisations play an important role in making civil concerns politically relevant for those citizens who have too little power as individuals or small communities. Civil society organisations can evolve in the direction of **digital social movements** and act as a catalyst for more citizen participation. Thus, individual participation and representative participation can go hand in hand. More extended concertation with citizen movements, political parties and institutions, and a more intensive use of online and offline participation tools are a must. Digital tools serve above all as a valuable resource and should not be a reason for us to hide from each other behind computer screens.

Challenge #2: management and quality monitoring

A second challenge is the processing of information. More participation and thus a larger pool of ideas implies adjusted infrastructures for the processing and evaluation of this increased input. Moreover, more participation doesn't necessarily lead to better quality of decisionmaking. Are a limited amount of high quality contributions of experts to be preferred to thousands of contributions from the public that can only be processed laboriously? It depends of the methods and the anticipated outcome, but crucial is that it has been predetermined for everyone, and not in the least for the citizen. Moderation therefore also needs to happen as transparently as possible to avoid control or manipulation. If not we are at risk of disappointment and of citizens dropping out.

An ideal tool for the processing and evaluation of big data is currently being found in algorithms. These are intelligent infrastructures and decisionmaking processes who no longer depend on individual officials, because of which transparency becomes essential. Dataprocessing for participative purposes requires vigilance with the use of algorithms because they can paint a distorted or ambivalent picture of reality.

Challenge #3: digital citizen rights and privacy

Together with the digitalisation of our society we can also witness an increase of the extent of electronic data collection: through social media, bank transactions, webshopping, gps, or cameras with license plate and even face recognition.

Fundamental rights like privacy and the protection of data no longer seem to be for granted. Information is being gathered and saved endlessly, and internet users lose control over their online profiles. How far can a government go in the collection of big data is a matter for discussion. Where are the limits of legitimate use of data now that large surveillance mechanisms have increasingly become the new normal? Big data are eagerly deployed in fighting terrorism for example, by wiretapping phones, localisation through unmanned cameras, license plate recognition,... Can the same techniques be used to track down tax frauds?

Also in the quest for online democratic interaction of citizens with society, a few requirements are needed: safe and trustworthy infrastructure, an adapted policy framework that allows for people to exercise their citizenship in a digital way (freedom of expression or protest), but also a sufficiently comprehensible infrastructure so that citizens can use it in an informed and transparent way. These points seem self-evident but often aren't so (yet).

Challenge #4: social justice

An era that is more and more driven by datacollecting technologies also contains risks when it comes to social justice. Datacollecting technologies can definitely be useful when they are for instance built in city infrastructures to solve problems like air pollution, poverty etc. (cfr. so-called 'smart cities'). Often however, they are also developed as a tool for social and economic control, by watching users, and predict or even manipulate their behaviour through algorithms. By doing so, they can pose a serious threat to personal autonomy, equal rights and democratic participation. People should for instance not be discriminated on the basis of an (over)simplified combination of complex personal data (medical data, financial situation, religious background, criminal past etc.) Careful attention to this topic is indispensable when designing digital platforms, and governments should monitor this actively to protect the citizen.

6. Recommendations

Advocates of digital democracy typically find more citizen involvement a good thing. A healthy democracy indeed requires participation of its citizens, on different levels as the participation ladder shows us. Countless experiments show that more digital interaction between governments and citizens can lead to fruitful results that strengthen democracy. But it is important to give serious thought to the challenges and pitfalls, namely:

1. Citizens should get the **information** they need to be able to participate in a valued way
2. Participation platforms have to be **user-friendly** and **open source**.
3. Digital isn't the only form. **Traditional ways** of outreach and engagement remain important in working towards maximum **inclusion**.
4. Citizens should get the feeling that their **contribution** really matters, if they want to feel motivated to participate.
5. This is why **transparency** is so important. Insufficiently thought out participation initiatives can cause a lot of harm, like apathy and disappointment with citizens and further erosion of their trust.
6. Digital democracy is **not cheap** and is not an easy fix. It requires money but also people and their expertise for qualitative information gathering and efficient **data processing**.
7. Moreover, increased data collection calls for reflection about **civil rights** like **privacy** in a digital environment. The digitalization of democracy should not lead to new forms of inequality or exclusion. And destructive behaviours like **trolling** should be ruled out.
8. Last but not least, the **support of policy makers** is indispensable to be able to achieve policy results effectively.

When these conditions are met, governments will be better prepared to climb with citizens the last three steps of the **participation ladder**, to make decisions together, act together and have faith in giving citizens more autonomy.

What's next?

Can digital tools make democracy attractive again by providing new possibilities for people to participate?

Can digital tools improve the quality of decisionmaking for parliaments, city councils, political parties and governments?

Can digital tools improve the legitimacy of our democratic institutions and processes?

Yes and no.

Digital participation is only a part of the solution for the crisis in which today's representative democracy finds itself. The digital gap should also be closed. It is important to know what exactly are the reasons behind citizen participation. Sometimes it is easier said than done. Nonetheless, in many respects, it would be a real progress to turn digital democracy into the new normal, by anticipating new technologies to a maximum, and closing current gaps. It is important to understand what works in a digital democracy, and what not. For that reason, sufficient attention needs to be spent on impact and evaluation, according to the rule 'learning by doing'.

In short, digital democracy could be quite a trump card but it also has its limitations. That is why more concrete experiments are important in Flanders. The Flemish Government could for instance organise a contest for citizens and municipalities to launch participative projects.

6. Annexes

1. E-participation platforms

What follows is an overview of some popular participation platforms, with a brief explanation and where possible a screenshot. For further details we like to refer you to the respective websites.

1. LOOMIO.ORG

Origin: New-Zealand

Characteristics: open source, free for local communities and local use

Users: National Assembly for Wales, P2P Foundation, OuiShare, Taiwan's Ministry of Economic Affairs, London School of Economics (for crowdsourcing the British constitution).

The screenshot displays the Loomio web interface. On the left, a discussion thread titled 'Make all enspiral accounts public' is visible. It includes a text input field, a 'comment' button, and several user comments. A green box highlights the discussion section with the following text: '1. Discussion: Users engage on the topic, exchange ideas and information, and identify key points leading to a possible decision. Keep all discussion in one place. New people can easily catch up. No more searching through long email threads. Users can change their minds over time, and are naturally motivated to understand each other's concerns and move towards a shared understanding.' On the right, a 'Current proposal' is shown. It details the proposal: 'We make all enspiral accounts viewable to people in the organisation' and 'Closing in 7 days'. Below the text is a pie chart showing the voting results: 'Yes (10)', 'Abstain (2)', 'No (4)', and 'Block (0)'. A green box highlights the proposal section with the text: '2. Proposal: A user from the discussion identifies a clear course of action the group could take, and raises it as a proposal to see if the group is in agreement.' Below the pie chart, there are four icons representing different positions: thumbs up, hand, thumbs down, and a red hand. A green box highlights the decision section with the text: '3. Decision: Users select a position and can briefly state why. Clearly see how the group feels and identify any sticking points. Visually demonstrates how the group feels.' The bottom of the screenshot shows a list of 'Positions' with user names and their comments.

Position	Count
Yes	10
Abstain	2
No	4
Block	0

2. CITIZENLAB.CO

Origin: Belgium

Characteristics: paying, for-profit

Users: the Cities of Aalst, Hasselt, Oostende, Sint-Niklaas, Geel, Schiedam



3. AIRESIS.EU

Origin: Italy

Characteristics: open source

Users: mainly local italian organisations

The screenshot displays the Airesis website interface, which is organized into several main sections:

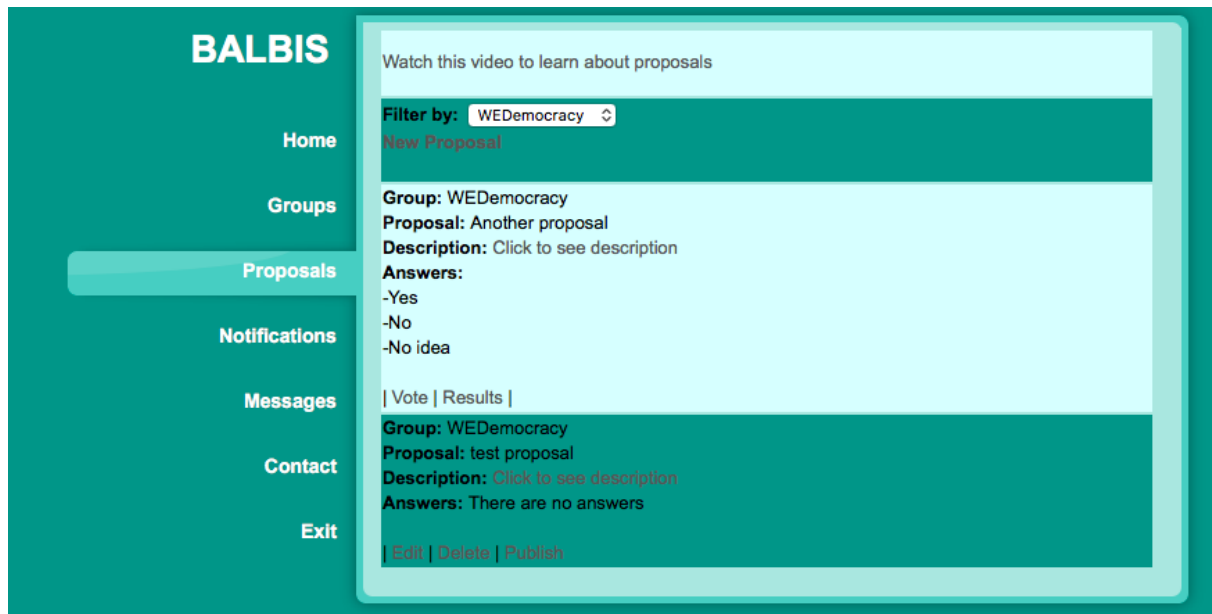
- Header:** Includes a navigation bar with "GROUPS", "Airesis - Open space", "PROPOSALS", "BLOGS", "GROUPS", "CALENDAR", and "TAGS". It also features a blue bar with the "AIRESIS" logo and icons for globe, heart, question mark, "LOGIN", and "JOIN US".
- LAST PUBLIC PROPOSALS:** A section titled "LAST PUBLIC PROPOSALS" with a "PROCEED TO PROPOSALS" button. It lists four proposals with progress bars: "PARTECIPA ED ELENCA I PROBLEMI DA RISOLVERE IN SICILIA", "ON- NELLO MUSUMECI DEVE CANDIDARSI ALLA PRESIDENZA ANCHE SE IL CENTRO-E", "Convegno sulle misure antisismiche", and "Let's choose the venue for our IO retreat 19th - 23rd June".
- LAST POSTS FROM BLOGS:** A section titled "LAST POSTS FROM BLOGS" with a "PROCEED TO BLOGS" button. It lists five blog posts: "Should we Try and Use this?", "E POI SI LAMENTANO DELL'AGGRESSIVITA ECONOM", "DALL'OLIO DI PALMA ALLO ZUCCHERO", "ESPOSTO DEI 5 STELLE REGIONE CAMPANIA", and "Look fresco con calore, ma con cappuccio".
- MOST ACTIVE GROUPS:** A section titled "MOST ACTIVE GROUPS" with a "SHOW ALL GROUPS" button. It lists two groups: "AMICI DI BEPPE GRILLO IN SARDEGNA" and "CITTADINI ☆☆☆☆ - ITALIA".
- NEXT EVENTS:** A section titled "NEXT EVENTS" with a "SHOW CALENDAR" button. It shows a calendar for March and May with events: "Votation Regolamento gruppo" in March and "09:00h-22:00h" in May.

4. BALBIS.NET

Origin: Spain

Characteristics: free

Users: smallscale initiatives



5. DEMOCRACY OS

Origin: Argentina, copied in France

Kenmerken: open source

Users: OpenCop21, City of Nanterre, the Mayor of Paris

The screenshot displays the Democracy.im web application. On the left, a sidebar lists several proposals, including 'A Programme for Government', 'Going Forward', 'Make Political System Education', 'Fitness to work', and 'Should DoI negotiate further concessions from the Steam Packet?'. The main content area on the right shows the details of the 'Should DoI negotiate further concessions from the Steam Packet?' proposal. It includes a link to a PDF document, a question 'Do you support Recommendation 7?', a quote from Tynwald, and a link to view the original text. Below this, it shows '119 Participants' and a pie chart representing the voting results.

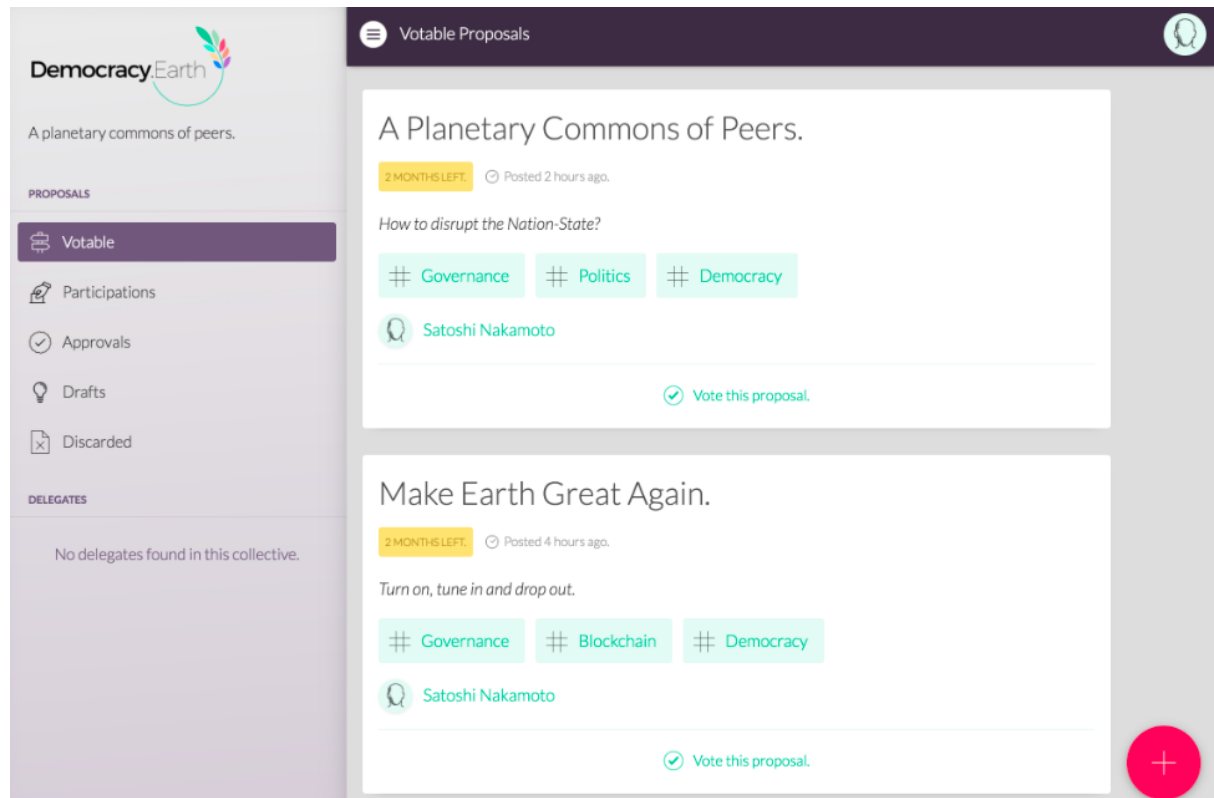
Vote	Percentage	Count
YES	61.21 %	71 votes
NO	31.9 %	37 votes
ABSTAIN	6.9 %	8 votes

6. SOVEREIGN.SOFTWARE by DEMOCRACY.EARTH

Origin: United States

Characteristics: open source, blockchain

Users: Democracy Earth, DemocracyOS




7. REPRESENT.ME

Origin: United Kingdom

Characteristics: open source

Users: citizens and groups

 **Represent**

DASHBOARD

QUESTIONS

OPENSURVEYS

NEAR YOU

GROUPS





TOPICS

RESULTS

PEOPLE

Take a tour

Feedback

Search

Freedom of religion is important because:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Golden_Rule

☐ I sometimes feel persecuted for my beliefs and I don't like it

☐ It's not important

☐ My beliefs are not threatened by the beliefs of others




Is this question important to you?

No

Yes


Discuss


Public


  


★ internet


An open internet is our greatest force for peace














Is this question important to you?

No

Yes

Discuss

Public

important ge2017 innovation technology data privacy government

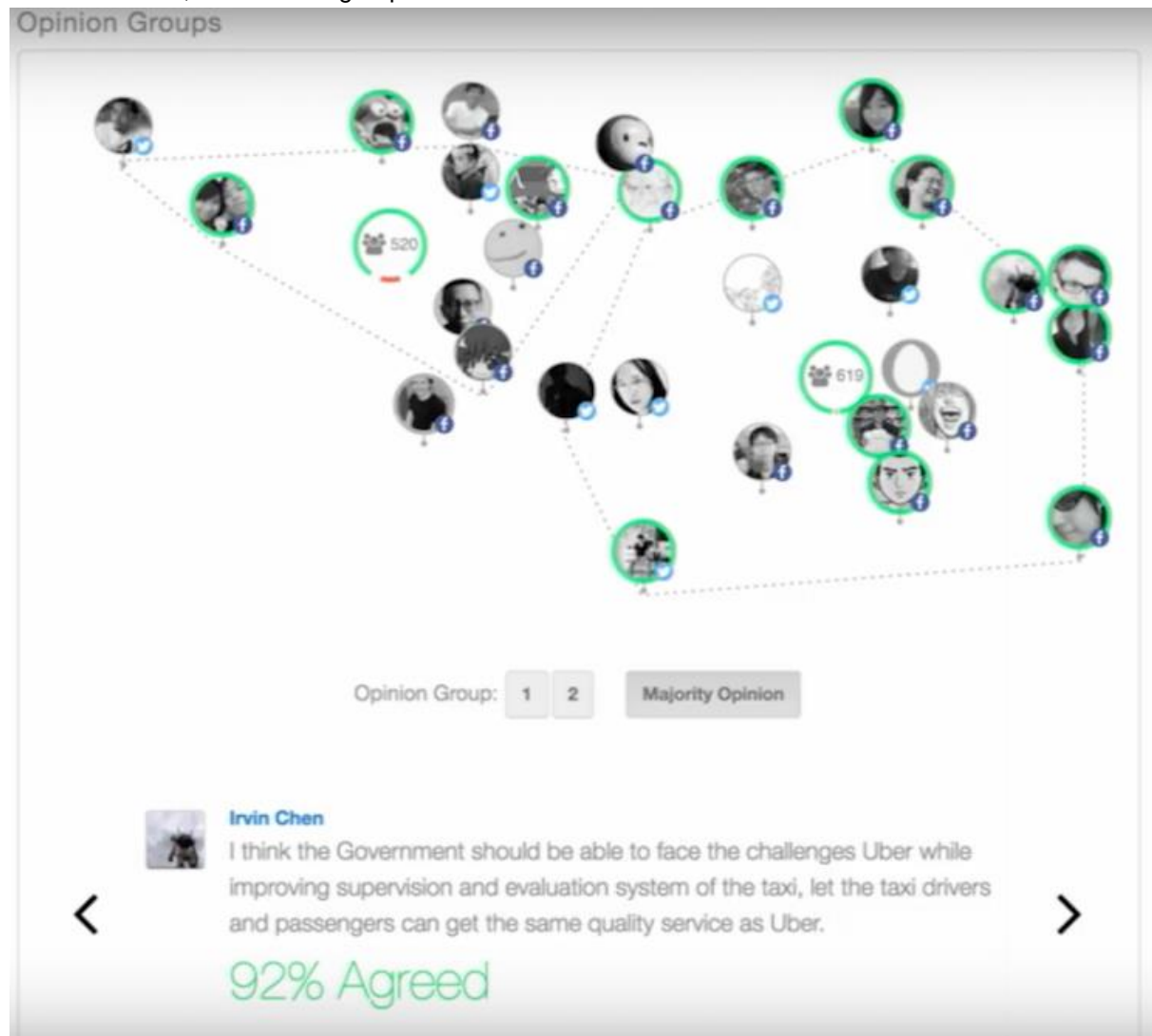
23

8. POL.IS

Origin: United States

Characteristics: open source.

Users: vTaiwan, citizens and groups



9. BACKFEED.CC

Origin: Israel

Characteristics: open source, blockchain

10. DCENTPROJECT.EU

Origin: United Kingdom (Nesta Foundation)

Characteristics: open source, blockchain

Users: decidim.barcelona, better reykjavik, decide Madrid, Decisions Helsinki

2. Indicators of political participation according to the EIU 2016

1. Voter participation/turn-out for national elections. (Average turnout in parliamentary elections since 2000. Turnout as proportion of population of voting age.)

1 if above 70%. 0.5 if 50%-70%. 0 if below 50%.

If voting is obligatory, score 0. Score 0 if scores for questions 1 or 2 is 0.

2. Do ethnic, religious and other minorities have a reasonable degree of autonomy and voice in the political process?

1: Yes.

0.5: Yes, but serious laws exist. 0: No.

3. Women in parliament.

% of members of parliament who are women.

1 if more than 20% of seats. 0.5 if 10-20%.

0 if less than 10%.

4. Extent of political participation. Membership of political parties and political non-governmental organisations.

Score 1 if over 7% of population for either. Score 0.5 if 4-7%.

Score 0 if under 4%.

If participation is forced, score 0.

5. Citizens' engagement with politics.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate. 0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who are very or somewhat interested in politics.

1 if over 60%.

0.5 if 40-60%.

0 if less than 40%.

6. The preparedness of population to take part in lawful demonstrations.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate.

0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of people who have taken part in or would consider attending lawful demonstrations.

1 if over 40%.

0.5 if 30-40%.

0 if less than 30%.

7. Adult literacy.

1 if over 90%.

0.5 if 70-90%.

0 if less than 70%.

8. Extent to which adult population shows an interest in and follows politics in the news.

1: High.

0.5: Moderate.

0: Low.

If available, from World Values Survey

% of population that follows politics in the news media (print, TV or radio) every day.

1 if over 50%.

0.5 if 30-50%.

0 if less than 30%.

9. The authorities make a serious effort to promote political participation.

1: Yes.

0.5: Some attempts.

0: No.

Consider the role of the education system, and other promotional efforts. Consider measures to facilitate voting by members of the diaspora.

If participation is forced