

The impact of political ideologies in the choice for democratic innovations¹

Carlos Rico Motos

Universidad Pontificia Comillas

cmrico@comillas.edu

Joan Font Fábregas

Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (IESA-CSIC)

jfont@iesa.csic.es

Abstract: Most of the research about participatory institutions has neglected the analysis of the role played by ideological preferences in their development. Do different political ideologies develop more/less or different participatory processes? Our starting point is the assumption that different views on the core values of democracy should lead to different positions concerning the role and expected benefits of citizen participation.

This paper presents a state of the art about the subject and develops a set of hypotheses regarding some specific questions. First, in case ideology matters, which is the crucial difference? Is this a matter of 'right versus left' or is there a particular type of left parties that have been particularly active in developing participatory institutions? Second, in case any difference exists, does it translate in the development of different participatory formats?

Analyzing data from Spanish municipalities in the period 2003-2010 we show that the party families that had a relevant presence in local administrations in this temporal frame –'New left' (IU), social democratic (PSOE), and liberal and Christian democratic (PP)– show more similarities than differences in the participatory activities they developed. However, differences are found related to the contents of the processes, the methodologies used and the constituencies mobilized.

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1. Introduction

Participation organized by public administrations has expanded globally in the last decades. Vindicated both for its ability to democratize public policies and for turning the citizen into a consumer who will guide administrative reforms, institutional participation has been the mechanism that has facilitated the change from a bureaucratic administration to a more flexible one. However, despite a common rhetoric on the citizens' right to shape public policies, participation can be grounded on divergent political horizons, ranging from a process of political democratization and citizen empowerment to an administrative orientation that frames citizen preferences as inputs that improve the policy-making. Thus, there is no clear agreement in previous research about whether participatory institutions represent a political choice mostly developed by left/alternative groups as some well-known cases –from Porto Alegre to Kerala– seem to suggest, or whether they are the result of social or managerial changes that could be adopted by any kind of government, as their support by international organisations suggests.

Democracy is far from being an undisputed agreement on values and institutions. Hence, it makes sense to expect different ideological approaches to citizen participation and its institutionalization. However, most of the research on participatory institutions has neglected the systematic analysis of the role played by ideological preferences and party families in their development. Addressing this gap, this paper explores the influence of political ideologies on the choice for participatory institutions. First, in case ideology matters, which is the crucial difference? Is it a matter of 'right versus left' or is there a particular type of left parties that have been particularly active in developing these institutions? Second, in case any difference exists, does it translate in the development of different participatory formats?

The paper begins with a theoretical reflection about the normative views on freedom in the main democratic traditions. Here, the foundational cleavage between the liberal and the republican models of democracy allows us to draw a basic genealogy of the different party families and their ideologies concerning the role and scope of political participation. Secondly, the paper presents the methodological strategy in our selected case: the Spanish local participatory institutions developed during the period 2003-2010. Thirdly, analyzing data from Spanish municipalities we show that the party families that had a relevant presence in local administrations in that period –'New left' (IU), social democratic (PSOE), and liberal and Christian democratic (PP)– show more similarities than differences in the participatory activities they developed. However, some differences are found related to the contents of the processes, the methodologies used and the constituencies mobilized. Finally, the discussion synthesizes the main findings on the impact of ideology in the promotion of participatory institutions, as well as some of their implications.

2. Theory: state of the art

When addressing the reasons that lead a political actor to promote participatory innovations, one of the explanations that intuitively emerge is the ideological one. Thus, our starting point is the underlying idea that different views on the core values of democracy led to different positions concerning the role, expected benefits and the resulting institutionalization of political participation.

The first step in this direction is based on the foundational divide between the liberal and the republican² models of democracy (Habermas, 1994; Held, 2006; Dahl, 1989). Initially, liberalism and democracy were different and, to a certain extent, opposed doctrines (Manin, 1997). While the liberal model, shaped by the thought of Locke, Constant, Montesquieu or Stuart Mill, seeks to secure the individual rights from arbitrary interferences (negative freedom), the republican model –born with Rousseau and developed by authors as Arendt, Skinner or Pettit– focuses on guaranteeing collective autonomy through the equal participation of citizens in the public realm (positive freedom). In the republican thought, freedom is not only an absence of interferences on the individuals' sphere of autonomy but self-governance, that is, the ability to act collectively within the frame of choices generated through social cooperation³. If for liberals the unlimited accumulation of power (also in the hands of a majority of citizens) leads to tyranny, the danger for republicans comes from material inequality and elite dominance over the people's general will.

From this cleavage two normative views on political participation arise. Broadly speaking, the liberal tradition promotes an instrumental view of citizen participation as a way to select experts to handle public affairs. Skeptical about the political competence of the average citizen, liberals are reluctant to substantive forms of political engagement beyond voting. They think that an extensive participation of ill-prepared individuals will undermine efficiency and, at worst, put fundamental rights (negative freedom) at risk (Sartori, 1987: 116-120). Assuming the tension between extensive participation and efficient decision-making, liberals prioritize the latter, defend the autonomy of representatives and rely on electoral accountability for elite control.

Republicanism, on the other hand, denounces the elitism of liberal representation, since it alienates the citizens from the public sphere most of the time (Arendt, 1958). This democratic radicalism, enhanced by the Marxist critique of bourgeois democracy, adopts in the late 1960s a new formulation through the model of *participatory*

² The term 'republican' designs here a conceptual model of democracy in political theory. See Wences (2016) for a detailed account of the classical republican thought.

³ The conceptualization of the idea of freedom in the liberal and republican models is developed in Constant's classical comparison (1819) between the liberty of moderns and the liberty of ancients and also in Berlin's essay on negative and positive freedom (Berlin, 1969).

democracy (Held, 2006: 209-216; Hilmer, 2010: 45-51). Rooted in the republican thought, this proposal arises from the theoretical reflection of post-Marxist thinkers that see in citizen participation the solution to the legitimation crisis of capitalist democracies in the 1960s and 1970s. In the participatory model, drawn in the works of Pateman (1970), Macpherson (1977), Mansbridge (1980) o Barber (1984), the extension of citizens' engagement in the social, political and economic realms that affect their lives (positive freedom) becomes both a moral and a pragmatic solution that secures political inclusion, self-governance, elite control and also develops civic virtues. Against the liberal view, this model argues that citizen participation simultaneously optimizes the moral and epistemic value of democracy.

The normative tension between liberal representation and participatory democracy sets a starting point to address the impact of ideology on the choice for participatory institutions: addressing the ideology of each party family will allow us to grasp differences —between social democratic and radical left parties, for instance— than could remain unobserved if just narrowing the focus to the 'left-right' spatial axis.

Hence, in the following lines we will show where each party family stands with regards the 'liberal vs republican' cleavage and how this ideological position affects their approach to political participation. The scope of party families has widened due to the weakening of traditional cleavages since the end of the 20th century (Mair, 2013), but in this paper we will focus on the three families —'New left', social democratic, and liberal and Christian democratic parties— that form our universe in the Spanish localities in the period 2007-2011. Complementarily, we will also mention other party families —green and populist parties— currently on rise in the European scenario.

'New left' parties

This denomination (Held, 2007: 209) refers to those parties at the left of social democracy —also labeled 'radical left' parties (March and Keith, 2016)— that made of democratic radicalism a milestone of ideological redefinition after the collapse of the Soviet Union (Cohen and Fung, 2004). The failure of communism and the lack of clear economic alternatives in the early 1990s led many anti-capitalist parties to move political participation at the center of their political project. Political participation is normally placed at the center of post-materialist values because one of its main appeals is the development of autonomy and self-expression. The 'New left' reinvigorates participatory democracy arguing that the disruptive capacity of social movements preserves the purity of democracy against the professionalization and bureaucratization of politics (Vick, 2015: 206-207), so that grassroots movements constitute the guarantee of a democratic debate focused on persistent economic and social inequalities (Mouffe, 2005). This requires overcoming political representation or, at least, narrowing the autonomy of representatives (Verge, 2007: 162-165).

Therefore, 'New left' parties claim for re-launching democracy on a participatory, anti-elitist basis, and promote direct participation of citizens. Prioritizing the republican idea of positive freedom, citizen participation becomes the dominant value around which other values must be accommodated. Unlike the liberal model, this view does not assume a trade-off between efficiency and extensive participation, since it argues that the positive impact of participation in terms of inclusion, equality, civic virtue and social capital also entails epistemic benefits in decision-making.

Social democratic parties

Social democratic parties face the challenge of balancing their republican and liberal wings. On the one hand, the republican wing, updated with Pettit's (1999) proposal⁴, fosters positive freedom, understood as public intervention to eradicate the economic, social and cultural factors that perpetuate material inequality and the domination of some citizens at the hands of others. On the other hand, the liberal wing, updated with Giddens' *Third Way* (1998), aims to preserve negative freedom, that is, the space of civil society against an excessive invasion of public power, which implies a commitment to liberal institutions as separation of powers, multi-party system, private property and market economy as the mechanism for wealth generation, which is previous to any fair redistribution (Heywood, 2012: 125-136).

This mixed soul, liberal and republican, places citizen participation as a complementary strategy aimed at improving the bond between representatives and their constituents. Citizen engagement is desirable because it contributes to re-politicizing society and increases responsiveness to social demands as well as the legitimacy of decisions but, differently from the 'New left' parties, without altering the representative essence of democracy (Verge, 2007: 167-168). In this line, Font and Blanco (2005: 7) point out that the main difference between the social democratic ideology and the more radical view of democracy within leftist parties relies in the intensity with which, especially at the local level, the latter defend participatory mechanisms, as compared with a more secondary role (consultative, informative) in the social democratic agenda.

Center right: Liberal, Christian democratic and conservative parties⁵

Despite their ideological differences, both liberal and Christian democratic parties encourage private initiative in those sectors in which civil society can provide better

⁴ Pettit's neo-republicanism conceives non-domination as an intermediate situation between the non-interference of classical liberalism and the positive freedom of the republican tradition. Non-domination consists of the establishment of conditions that make people immune to arbitrary interference from other individuals or the conditioning created by natural limitations (Pettit, 1999: 98-99, 113-115).

⁵ Even if ideological differences exist, we will group the main families in the center-right in a unique group for analytical reasons. When referring in the empirical part to the Spanish People's Party (PP) we will most often use the category 'conservative' since it is still the most commonly used in Spanish politics, even if this party captures ideas and elites from the different center-right families.

services than state monopolies (Michels, 2008: 485; Heywood, 2012: 83, 213). These parties argue that political disaffection is not due so much to the lack of participatory channels as to governmental inefficiency in the implementation of public policies (Verge, 2007: 160). Thus, good governance would consist in a better performance of the representative system.

In the view of these parties, voting constitutes the main channel for citizen participation and the most efficient mechanism to hold public authorities accountable. On the other hand, in the period between elections, the representatives should be autonomous to make decisions based on their specialized knowledge. However, since they defend an instrumental rationale for participation based on 'epistemic elitism', these parties could be sympathetic to democratic innovations aimed at improving the quality of decision-making through a 'problem-solving' approach (Font and Galais, 2011: 15), as far as the primacy of political representation remains unchallenged.

Other parties: green and populists

Green parties place grassroots democracy at the center of their political agenda. The irruption of the environmental movement in the 1970s put these parties in the sphere of the 'New left', especially due to their shared discourse of democratic radicalism (Dobson, 2016: 62). Thus, the German greens, forerunners of political ecology in Europe, identified grassroots democracy as one of its founding principles (Goodin, 1992: 139), advocating the incorporation of citizen initiatives and referenda into the Basic Law (Dalton *et al.*, 2001: 143). Liberal citizenship, they argue, must evolve into an environmental citizenship (Dobson, 2003) that rejects the individualism and passivity typical of the representative model to assume a fair balance between rights and responsibilities (Arias, 1999: 192-193).

Regarding populist parties, their ideological core is an anti-elitist view that splits society into two homogeneous and antagonistic groups: the people, a collective moral actor endowed with an indivisible will; and a corrupt oligarchy that has hijacked democracy for its own benefit (Mudde, 2004: 543). Following this logic, populism clashes with representative institutions by stating that they cannot limit the popular will expressed through majority rule (Canovan, 1999). In this sense, populists share the democratic radicalism and a rejection of political mediation as opposed to 'true democracy'. This leads them to deny political representation and defend grassroots democracy, with special emphasis on direct democracy mechanisms such as referendums and citizen initiatives that allow the undistorted expression of the popular will (Rico Motos, 2019). Participation is justified not so much because of its epistemic value but because it 'democratizes democracy' even at the cost of –or precisely thanks to– stripping it of its 'liberal filters': intermediation, separation of powers, counter-majoritarian institutions, procedural formalism, etc. This illiberal and

anti-elitist core works as a point of convergence for both radical right and left populist parties, even if relevant differences between them also exist⁶.

Hypotheses

Broadly speaking, the former overview places 'New left', populist and green parties amongst those that enthusiastically embrace participatory views of democracy; while liberal, Christian democratic and conservative parties tend to support representative formulas, with social democratic parties standing somewhere in between. From here, one general ideological hypothesis unfolds:

HYPOTHESIS 1: the closer to the democratic radicalism of the republican thought, the greater the tendency to grant a high impact (more decision-making capacity) to the participatory mechanisms implemented.

Accordingly, the 'New left' parties within our universe should be the most prone to implement participatory processes with a more decisive character, i.e, closer to the higher positions of Arnstein's (1969) ladder, followed by social democratic parties.

Part of the previous research supports this idea. The work of Baiocchi and Ganuza (2014) represents one of the first serious attempts to address this issue applied to participatory budgeting. Their conclusion (based on extensive knowledge but not in a clearly defined set of coded cases) is that the left was responsible for the creation and promotion of this participatory mechanism, but this practice was then adopted by other conservative governments keeping only its communicative part and leaving aside its empowerment one. Nez and Talpin (2010) use a different strategy and discuss the set of participatory budgeting processes existing in France in 2005, highlighting the role played in the initial period by communist local governments. Other studies incorporate party ideology as a secondary variable among many. For example, Jäske (2017: 69) uses party as one of the variables to be considered and finds that "a larger proportion of Social Democrats in the local council also fuels the use of referendums". However, this strand of research is either based on a small N approach or it just incorporates party ideology as a secondary variable among others. Research that captures a) what parties do in government b) using a relatively large N strategy and c) with the relationship between party ideology and creation of participatory institutions as their central focus is quite rare.

⁶ Radical right parties are more restrictive in their sympathy for participatory democracy, showing support mainly for direct democracy practices (Lawrence *et al.* 2009; Mudde 2007; Webb 2013). Also, not always candidates and voters of radical right options converge on their preference and defense of direct democracy, with candidates seeming to be more willing to referendums than their own voters (Bowler *et al.* 2017).

Another strand of research captures a related but different question: the preferences for participatory institutions of party elites and/or voters. In this group, Donovan and Karp (2006: 681) find a positive relation between leftist orientations and support for direct democracy. In turn, Hibbing and Theiss-Morse (2002) show a very modest positive correlation in the US between right-wing orientations and support for a 'stealth democracy' model among voters. This relationship would be stronger in other European countries (Webb, 2013; Bengtsson and Christensen, 2014; Font *et al.*, 2015). Regarding party elites, in their study on Spanish mayors, Vallbé and Iglesias (2018) find a direct relation between leftist ideology and greater sympathy for participatory democracy and, as a consequence, a more favorable attitude to implement referendums or participatory budgeting. In contrast, right-wing mayors are prone to maintain the status quo of representative democracy (Vallbé and Iglesias, 2018: 66; Heinelt, 2013). These results are in line with the framing of citizen participation in party manifestoes in Spain (Verge, 2007) and Netherlands (Michels, 2008). Also at the Spanish local level, Font and Blanco (2005: 7) point out that radical left parties support participatory mechanisms with higher intensity than social democratic ones.

However, participation is not always synonymous with deliberation. Here the deliberative model of democracy (Manin, 1987; Cohen, 1989) introduces complexity within the 'liberal vs republican' dichotomy (Habermas, 1994): although both participatory and deliberative democracy arise from the republican thought and its claim for positive freedom, each model diagnoses different deficiencies in liberal representation –lack of participation in the first case and lack of deliberation in the second– and, consequently, they diverge on the right course of action (Hilmer, 2010; Vitale, 2006). From this view, the ideological differences between party families would not necessarily translate into *how much participation* should be promoted, but rather in *what kind of participation* is desirable. Thus, assembly-based mechanisms or those that, as referendums or online consultations, promote extensive and direct participation would respond to a different rationale from that of citizen juries or deliberative polls, more focused on the reflective exchange of informed viewpoints at the cost of reducing participation (Dzur and Hendriks, 2018; Rico Motos, 2019). In essence, achieving a good deliberation may come at cost to extensive participation and vice versa (Cohen and Fung, 2004: 27), which resembles the trade-off between participation and efficiency in the liberal model.

Therefore, the ideological dispute would also take place within participatory institutions, since the choice for a certain type of participatory strategy would entail the prioritization of some values associated with participation over others. For example, implementing participatory budgeting would mean opting for a mechanism especially committed to an extensive and horizontal participation, which is closer to the ideal of positive freedom and citizen empowerment in the republican model. On the contrary, *minipublics* place special emphasis on selecting a sample of citizens who

can acquire specialized knowledge from which to deliberate on the question raised, even if that means reducing the extent of participation. As Font and Galais (2011: 15) point out, the participatory innovations aimed at improving the quality of decision-making through a 'problem-solving' approach could be especially attractive for liberal and Christian democratic parties.

HYPOTHESIS 2: the closer to the democratic radicalism of republican thought, the greater the tendency to promote mechanisms based on extensive and direct participation.

A number of studies point out that the ideological inclination implies a predilection for some participatory mechanisms and not others, even if most of this research lacks a large scale of cases to test the hypothesis. For example, left-wing mayors would support binding referenda and participatory budgeting, while right-wing mayors (which are prone to an accountability view of democracy) would tend to support the direct election of the mayor (Vallbé and Iglesias, 2018). On the other hand, the momentum of citizens' assemblies in the last decade, based on lottery and deliberation, has received a significant boost from conservative parties in Ireland and France. In this line, the study on citizen juries in Spain by Font and Blanco (2007) yields mixed results: in the Basque Country they were developed by moderate nationalist or coalition governments and the Catalan experiences were held in municipalities with ideologically different mayors.

The case of participatory budgeting (PB) seems to fit well in this picture. In the vast majority of European countries they were promoted by left-wing parties. In Spain, Italy and France, mostly left-wing local authorities introduced participatory budgeting (Sintomer *et al.* 2005; Geissel and Newton, 2012). In Spain, the PB was introduced by leftist parties and only very slowly would conservative parties promote it. By 2010, 76% of the processes implemented in Spain depended on the PSOE and IU. The Popular Party had initiated 14% of the experiences (Ganuza and Frances, 2012). However, there were some exceptions, such as Germany, with both conservative and liberal local governments taking up the idea. In Italy, the introduction of the PB was carried out by the left-wing parties in the early 2000s. They lost the subsequent municipal elections and the PB almost disappeared. However, in the subsequent wave of PB, as of 2009, the ideology of the municipalities was no longer decisive (Allegretti and Stortone, 2014). An explanation could be that only when an instrument has proven its effectiveness and does not imply key changes in the logic of governing, ideology ceases to be relevant and it can be promoted by all types of parties⁷.

⁷ Walker *et al.* (2015) identify the instrumental use of democratic innovations where elite rule is reorganized to accommodate greater openness and participation without disrupting hierarchies and power relations. That has been the case of PB, an instrument created by a radical left party that

Finally, ideologies could not correlate with the use of participatory institutions because other related intervening variables could be playing a more important role. Types of governments, electoral concerns or the possibility of using these institutions to expand the voice of their social allies are only some of the explanations that previous research has considered. Also, the development of participatory institutions could be explained by factors completely unrelated to partisan preferences: social and political changes in our societies would make participatory innovations a necessary tool which almost any government will sooner or later incorporate. In this case, the explanation of why participatory institutions develop would lie somewhere else, either as part of a general trend or as a result of other factors such as personal characteristics of policy makers, participatory traditions, external funding, pressures coming from a dense network of participation practitioners, etc. Among these alternative explanations, contextual variables that describe the characteristics of each polity like municipality size (Premat, 2009; Borge *et al.* 2009) should be considered.

3. Methodology: data and context

Local participatory institutions in Spain

A few Spanish municipalities were early comers and started organizing participatory institutions in the mid-eighties. However, these practices did not become relatively common until the last years of the XX Century (Navarro, 2004). Many of the first cases were developed in large cities, quite often led by progressive governments, but once they became more common practice, they extended also to smaller municipalities and to diverse political leanings (Ganuza and Francés, 2012). Compared to other countries where many of these institutions had been mostly promoted from below, in the Southern European context even if some of the pressure and inspiration came from social movements, their institutionalization was clearly led by municipalities (Alarcón and Font, 2014), providing them with a strong top-down style.

The period analyzed here (2003-2010) is the only one for which there is extensive information about the participatory institutions developed by a large set of municipalities. This period was still characterized by two dominant large parties (center-right, PP and Center-left, PSOE), plus a smaller left coalition (IU), with a small presence of independent candidates, except in small towns.

becomes universal once it is stripped of its most transformative features (Baiocchi and Ganuza, 2014). In the same line, Ramirez and Welp (2011) claim that the left would have lost the 'monopoly' of participatory democracy, as they show how an increasing number of parties from the center to the right have activated various participatory modalities.

Data collection

To test these hypotheses we use one quite extensive dataset including 287 municipalities from two Spanish regions (Andalucía and Madrid) and 717 participatory institutions, which are the basic unit of analysis. The dataset includes characteristics of each of these participatory institutions (participants, issues, methodologies, etc), as well as some traits of the municipalities (inhabitants, party of the mayor, etc).

The data was originally collected combining two different methodologies. The first one was web scraping during 2010, aiming to cover municipalities larger than 1,000 inhabitants. In Madrid the search included all municipalities above that size. In Andalucía, since a very large number of them existed, we stratified them by size and included almost half of them (400 out of 770 municipalities). Since the reality of the large set of Andalucía small municipalities might not be adequately represented with this first strategy (in 2010 many of them still had not a well-developed web page), we surveyed these same municipalities, with a combined CAWI-CATI mode of administration⁸. Both data collections strategies aimed at capturing participatory institutions created in the 2003-2010 period. In web scraping we captured each institution for which we found information (ranging from 1 to 10, median 6, except in the deviant case of Madrid city which had 34 cases). In the survey, we asked for the number of institutions developed and asked for details about two of them. When the participatory institution had a year cycle or had been repeated more than once, only the most recent one having complete information was collected.

The dataset includes 92 participatory institutions from Madrid, 108 captured through web-scraping in Andalucía and 517 captured through the Andalucía survey. Thus, the results do not represent a full census of all the participatory institutions existing at that time, but represent a quite extensive catalogue of them, including all their diversity, from the point of view of types of municipalities (excluding only the smallest ones where participation is often not formalized) and, most importantly, of quality and ambition of the processes⁹. Also, while Andalucía and Madrid do not represent the whole reality of Spain they are the two largest regions that do not have relevant regional parties and as such, are a good representation of those parts of the country where territorial tensions were not central, with one region more dominated by an urban-metropolitan configuration (Madrid) and the other including a large presence of small and medium municipalities (Andalucía). Graph 1 shows the distribution of the processes according to city size.

⁸ More details about the data collection process can be found at Font *et al.* (2014), Annex 1 and 2. A few cases in the original dataset were supra local institutions that have been excluded from the data used here.

⁹ A more extensive discussion of the data, its limits and its ability to represent the full reality of participatory institutions can be found in Galais *et al.* (2012).

The same definition of participatory institutions was used in both data collection procedures. However, the names provided for some of the survey collected institutions showed that respondents (most often, local employees of the participation department) used in practice a broader definition including social events where no public policies were being discussed. To prevent that these cases were too present in our universe we excluded from the analyses the 136 cases that combined two characteristics: belonged to the “other” category in the typology of participatory processes (see below) and were temporary (versus permanent) institutions. Thus, the final data used includes 581 cases.

Operationalization, variables and analytical strategy

Our main goal is to analyze the relationship between party ideology (captured through the party of the Mayor)¹⁰ and the type of participatory institutions developed. We organized our dependent variables in three main groups, related with who participates, how participation is developed and the contents of participation (what about). Details about the categories and distribution of each of the variables appear in Table 1.

- *Who*: we selected one variable capturing the ability to mobilize a larger population (number of participants) and two addressing types of participants (process addressed mostly to associations and process open to anyone wishing to participate).

- *How*: each of the participatory institutions was coded through a typology of the main types of participatory processes, including six categories: participatory budgeting, strategic planning, advisory councils, deliberative events, consultations and referenda and others. The analysis is based in the three categories (recoded to dummies) that have a sufficient number of cases and which show some relationship with the party variable at the bivariate level.

- *What about*: each of the processes was assigned a maximum of two main issues (policy areas covered as part of the public debate). We analyze the two categories (recoded to dummies) that have a large number of cases and show significant differences at the bivariate level in their relationship to party of the mayor.

For each of these variables we use a similar analytical strategy. We conduct a regression analysis (linear when appropriate, logistic in most cases), where party of the mayor is the main independent variable, using PSOE (as the largest response category, 58% of the cases) as reference category. For each of the dependent variables we run a first very simple model using only this variable. The second model for each of the

¹⁰ The four response categories correspond to the parties mentioned above: PP as representative of the center-right families in Spain; PSOE as representative of the social democratic left; IU as representative of the radical or ‘New left’ parties; and others.

variables introduces relevant control variables that capture potential differences in the datasets and their data collection procedures: region, number of inhabitants and data collection procedure (MoA, see details for each of them in Table 1). When it is analytically meaningful we introduce a third model that incorporates two dummy variables through which party influence could be acting in the long term: whether the municipality has a participation department (approximately half of the sample) and a Participation Plan (in less than 40% of the cases, used as a proxy for the degree of institutionalization and development of participatory institutions in the municipality). Only for one dependent variable (number of participants) we introduce an additional explanatory variable that has a large potential role: whether the process is open to the participation of any citizen or not.

4. Results

The bivariate analysis of most characteristics of local participatory institutions in Spain shows more similarities than differences across parties. Graphs 2 and 3 represent two of the partial exceptions to this pattern: even if all parties use different types of participation, participatory budgeting is more associated with the leftist IU, strategic planning with social-democratic PSOE and consultations and referenda with conservative PP, whereas the use of advisory councils or of deliberative institutions show very small differences. Also, regarding the type of participants, processes open to anyone wishing to participate are more common in municipalities governed by IU.

Graphs 2 and 3 around here

Since these basic relationships could be the result of several confounding variables, we develop the regression analyses that show these relationships when controlling for some potentially important variables. Table 2 shows these results for the variables related to who participates. Regarding the number of participants, once controls are introduced we only find a larger participation in IU municipalities. Part of it is due to their most common usage of processes open to any participant (which shows a strong and clearly significant coefficient), but even in the most complete model (M3), the IU coefficient continues to be barely significant. A similar negative coefficient also appears for municipalities governed by other parties. When processes open to any participant are moved from being a control variable (M1-M3) to being the dependent variable (M9-M11), only having a IU mayor continues to be the only significant positive explanatory variable.

Table 2 around here

The explanatory variables are more diverse when we focus on the how related variables (Table 3). IU continues to be clearly related to the promotion on participatory budgeting as a specific type of participatory institution. The relationship is also clear for PP and consultations and continues to be strong even when all controls are introduced. Strategic planning, on the other hand, as Graph 2 showed, is a participatory institution especially used by social democrats: all other parties have negative coefficients at some point, even if for PP this becomes non-significant once controls are introduced¹¹.

Table 3 around here

Finally, variables related to the content of the processes show also some differences (Table 4). As we would expect given the results seen in Table 3, institutions dealing with budget (with often but not always correspond to using participatory budgeting), show the same relationship with IU. Possibly as the other side of the story (a party developing most of its participatory initiatives around a given issue will necessarily devote less to other issues), this party uses less often participatory institutions to discuss about economic development.

Table 4 around here

Even if some of the party related coefficients are significant, it is important to highlight that their substantive effects are relatively small. If we take for example one of the models with a relatively high R^2 (M3 in Table 2), the average participatory process organized in a municipality governed by PSOE (reference category) would have around 17 participants, whereas a similar process in a municipality governed by leftist IU this would increase to 27 citizens.

5. Discussion

Our analysis shows that the relationship between parties and the use of different types of participatory institutions is weak, but exists. Three political parties belonging to quite different ideological families ('New left', social democracy and center-right) develop participatory institutions that are not so different one from another. When differences appear, they are not dramatically strong, showing a certain degree of policy convergence among them, as it has happened in other policy areas.

The three largest Spanish parties did not develop in the early years of the XXI Century completely different patterns of developing participatory institutions. However, some

¹¹ Even if we control for effects of region and mode of administration, the large coefficients these variables present in this case (in contrast to others) deserve a cautious interpretation of this result.

of the differences hypothesized showed up in our results. Even after controlling for several potentially confounding variables, parties belonging more to the democratic radicalism of the republican tradition practiced more often intense participatory institutions as well as institutions aiming at a more extensive audience. This is especially clear for the leftist coalition IU, whose coefficients were often significant: they were able to mobilize more participants, aimed at larger audiences using more often procedures open to any participant and developed more often specific extensive procedures with decision-making capacity like participatory budgeting.

The results corresponding to other parties do not fit so clearly with our hypotheses. In the case of PSOE, their more common choice of strategic planning (Model 9 in Table 3) could correspond to the aim mentioned in our theoretical section of balancing citizen's voice with a significant role for representatives through the use of a participatory formula that combines citizen input with an enlarged role for experts and which gives considerable cherry-picking possibilities to political representatives (Font *et al.*, 2018: 630). The most common use of consultations and referenda by PP seems to openly contradict our Hypothesis 2. This result requires further research but it is likely to be related to the type of processes captured in this category, where non-binding consultations about non central policy issues dominate. In any case, we should not disregard other non-ideological interpretations: in a scenario where center-right parties decide to adopt participatory practices and where they perceive that most civil society groups are left-leaning, they could be strategically oriented to give voice to individual citizens.

Beyond the short-term correlation between party ideology and the choice of participatory institutions, our results have also explored, with mixed success, the idea of mid and long-term effects through the institutionalization of participatory practices. In fact, previous research suggests that short and mid-long term effects could be quite different, with left (republican) parties being more prone to adopt participatory institutions, but conservative parties accepting or even adopting them once they have proven not to be threatening for traditional power structures. Our results suggest a causal mechanism through which the expected differences in hypothesis 1 remain in spite of a tendency to policy homogenization: the mid and long effects of the creation of participatory institutions (participation departments in Model 6 of Table 3; or open processes in Model 3 of Table 2) that facilitate in the mid-term the creation of other participation outputs (consultations and large mobilization in these two cases).

Our results represent a significant contribution to knowledge about ideology and participatory institutions due to the lack of previous systematic research on this relationship in a large and diverse universe. We have contributed to clarify previous apparently contradictory findings by providing a picture that shows similarities in many aspects and differences in some particular choices. The data suggest that some

previous research showing large differences may be related to case selection and provide a biased picture of a reality with more policy convergence than expected.

However, the limits of our results are also clear. First, several of our measures could be enhanced so that some of our null results may be underestimating real differences. Second, we did not analyze here the amount of participatory institutions created, but previous research on a similar universe suggests that this approach leads to finding results more in line with our hypotheses (Font *et al.*, 2014). It could also be the case that the increase of electoral support of green, populist and other types of challenger parties may have increased these differences in the most recent period in the Spanish case. The external validity of these claims should be established with research in other countries, but the high degree of politicization of these policies in Southern Europe (Sintomer and Del Pino, 2014) seems to suggest that differences may be even smaller in other Central and Northern European countries.

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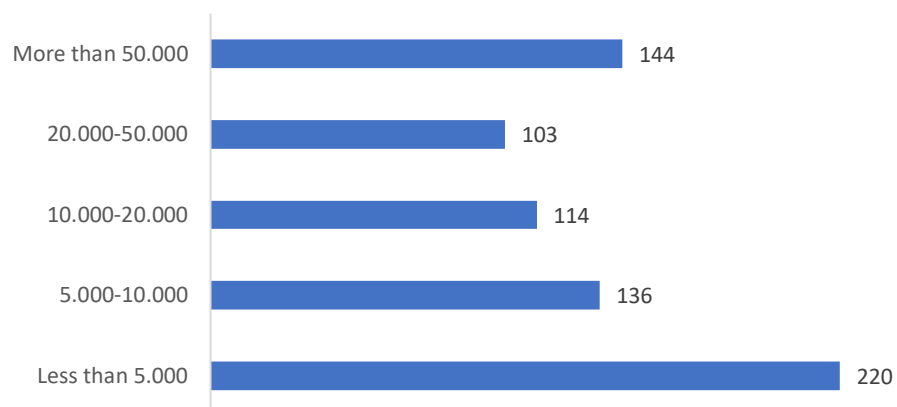
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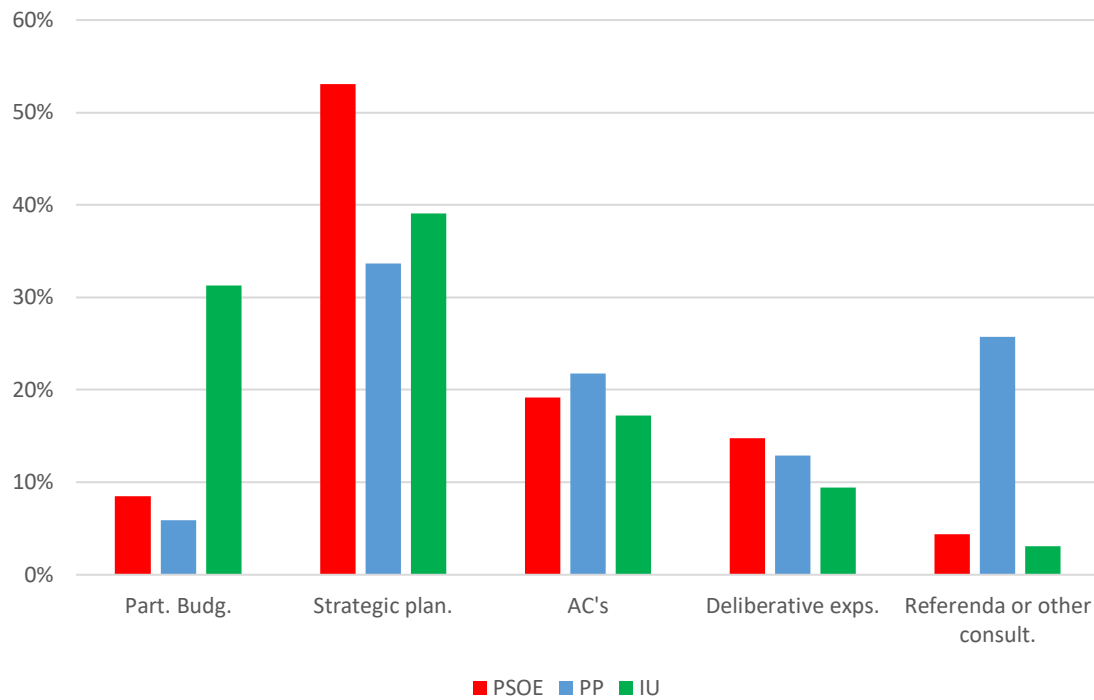
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Graph 1. Experiences by number of inhabitants of the municipality



Graph 2. Type of institutional design by political party



Graph 3. Types of participants

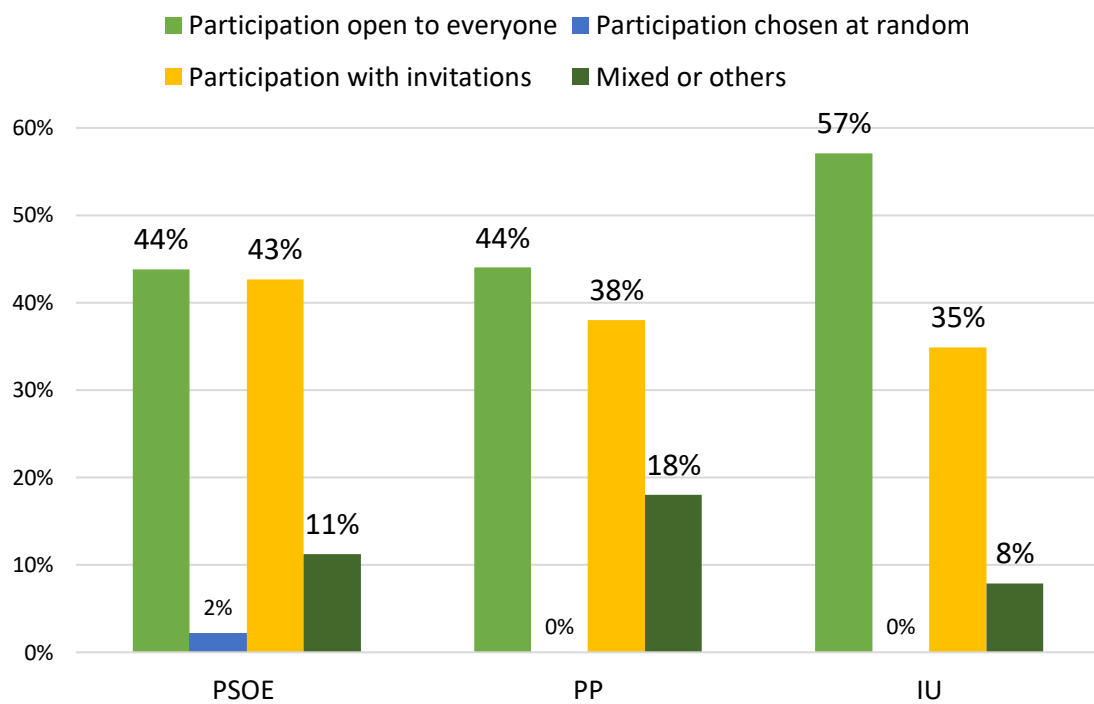


Table 1. Variables used: categories and descriptive statistics

Variable <i>Reference category in regression</i>		Min	Max	Average/ Proportion Yes (when dummy)	SD	Response categories
Independent	Political party PSOE (centre-left)	1	4			Categorical: 1 PP; 2 PSOE; 3, IU; 4, Other
	Region	1	2			Categorical: 1 Andalucia, 2 Madrid
	Inhabitants	1	5	2,86	1,52	1: less than 5.000; 2: 5.000-10.000; 3: 10.000-20.000; 4: 20.000-50.000; 5: more than 50.000
	Mode of administration	1	2			Categorical: 1: survey; 2: data mining
	Participation Department	0	1	,56		Categorical 0: No; 1: yes
	Participation Plan	0	1	,45		Categorical 0: No; 1: yes
Dependent: who	Number of participants	1	8	3,97	1,97	1: Less than 10, 2: 10-24; 3: 25-29, 4: 50-99; 5: 100-299; 6: 300-499; 7: 500-1000; 8: more than 1.000
	Addressed to associations	0	1	,23		1: Addressed to associations; 0: Not addressed to associations
	Open to anyone	0	1	,48		1: Open to anyone; 0: other
Dependent: how	Participatory budgeting	0	1	,28		1: Participatory budgeting; 0: other
	Consultation	0	1	,35		1: Consultation; 0 other
	Strategic Planning	0	1	,34		1: Strategic planning; 0: other
Dependent: what about	Development	0	1	,25		1: development; 0: other
	Budget	0	1	,23		1: budget; 0: other

Table 2. Explanatory factors of Who variables¹²

	<i>Number of participants</i>			<i>Addressed to associations</i>		<i>Open to anyone</i>		
	M1	M2	M3	M7	M8	M9	M10	M11
	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>PP (Cons)</i>	,16**	ns	ns	,82***	ns	ns	ns	Ns
<i>Left</i>	,12*	,13**	,10*	ns	ns	,51*	,49*	,48*
<i>Other</i>	ns	ns	-,10*	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns
<i>Region</i>		ns	ns		ns		ns	ns
<i>Inhabitants</i>		,19***	,22***		,29***		ns	ns
<i>MoA</i>		ns	ns		,85**		ns	ns
<i>Part Dep</i>			ns					ns
<i>Part Plan</i>			ns					ns
<i>Open</i>			,31***					
<i>R2</i>	0,04	0,09	0,18	0,03	0,18	0,02	0,02	0,03
<i>n</i>	446	446	446	581	581	581	581	581

Note: *** p < ,001; ** p < ,01; * p < 0,05

¹² Number of participants is a linear regression. The other dependent variables are logistic regressions.

Table 3. Explanatory variables of How variables (logistic regressions)

	<i>Participatory budgeting</i>			<i>Consultation</i>			<i>Strategic Planning</i>		
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9
	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>
<i>PP (Cons)</i>	ns	ns	ns	2,09***	1,46***	1,47***	-,52*	ns	Ns
<i>Left</i>	1,49***	1,61***	1,60***	ns	ns	Ns	ns	-,58*	-,58*
<i>Other</i>	ns	ns	ns	ns	ns	Ns	-1,66**	-1,47*	-1,47*
<i>Region</i>		ns	ns		ns	Ns		-1,71***	-1,66***
<i>Inhabitants</i>		,37**	,32*		ns	Ns		ns	Ns
<i>MoA</i>		ns	ns		ns	Ns		1,87***	1,85***
<i>Part Dep</i>			ns			1,25*			Ns
<i>Part Plan</i>			ns			Ns			Ns
<i>R2</i>	0,8	0,14	0,15	0,17	0,28	0,3	0,04	0,17	0,18
<i>n</i>	581	581	581	581	581	581	581	581	581

Table 4. Explanatory models of What about variables (logistic regressions)

	<i>Development</i>		<i>Budget</i>	
	M1	M2	M3	M4
	<i>B</i>	<i>B</i>		
<i>PP (Cons)</i>	-1,06***	ns	ns	ns
<i>Left</i>	-,84**	-,89**	,65*	,67*
<i>Other</i>	ns	ns	ns	ns
<i>Region</i>		-1,56**		ns
<i>Inhabitants</i>		ns		,17*
<i>MoA</i>		ns		-,83**
<i>Part Dep</i>				
<i>Part Plan</i>				
<i>R2</i>	0,05	0,09	0,03	0,06
<i>n</i>	581	581	581	581
Note: *** $p < ,001$; ** $p < ,01$; * $p < 0,05$				