Inclusive Citizenship in a world in Transformation: Co-Designing for Democracy

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Citizens Reinventing Democracy

Inclusive Citizenship in a world in Transformation: Co-Designing for Democracy

D1.2 Database and Timeline on the history of participation and engagement

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

CG	Collaborative Governance
DESI	Digital Economy and Society Index
DIs	Democratic innovations
DMP	Deliberative Mini-Public
IOPD	International Observatory on Participatory Democracy
KNOCA	Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
PB	Participatory Budgeting
PG	Participatory Governance
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals

Executive Summary

The deliverable presents a timeline and database of sustainability-related, innovative, and inclusive participation and engagement practices in Europe since the early days of digitalisation.

To do so, the deliverable is based on newly assembled data on Democratic innovations (DIs) collected from publicly accessible sources, with a specific focus on their contribution to social and environmental sustainability. By mapping the dynamics of implementation of Democratic innovations across Europe, the deliverable provides valuable insights into the potential for these innovations to foster more inclusive and resilient societies in line with social and environmental development goals.

Methodologically the development of the database undertook a comprehensive approach to map cases of Democratic innovations across Europe. Utilising various open-access databases, the research team developed a systematic method for data collection and analysis. This process involved identifying relevant cases of Democratic innovations, categorising them based on specific criteria, like citizen involvement, scales of governance and policy areas, and analysing their geographical distribution and characteristics.

The resulting database and associated timeline of cases play how cases of Democratic innovations aim to contribute to sustainability by promoting more participatory and inclusive decision-making processes.

Therefore, the core findings of the research are presented in a manner of discussing the chronological (i.e., timeline) and geographical distribution of Democratic innovations in Europe. In terms of time distribution of cases of Democratic innovations in Europe, the report outlines the evolution of Democratic innovations in Europe from the late 1970s to the present, highlighting the increasing adoption of Democratic innovations across various formats. Deliberative Mini-Publics are the most widespread, with their adoption peaking between 2019-2021, partly due to digital tools facilitating broader implementation. The document also details the spread of Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance and Participatory Budgeting, noting a shift towards sustainability-focused Democratic innovations in recent years. Digital Participation practices, though less prevalent, have been steadily adopted since the mid-1990s.

In terms of the spatial distribution of cases of Democratic innovations across Europe. Countries with a high number of cases of Democratic innovations in the database, such as the United Kingdom, Germany, and Italy, demonstrate a long tradition or recent efforts in promoting citizen participation. Countries with a moderate number of cases, like Spain, Belgium, or Holland for instance, show a growing interest in DI practices, while countries with a lower number of cases of Democratic Innovations, mostly those in Eastern Europe, may be newer to these practices or focus on other democratic engagement forms. The analysis indicates that while High-range countries are hotspots for DI practices, a more nuanced understanding and additional qualitative research are needed to understand the disparities in the adoption of Democratic innovations across various European regions.

The analysis also reveals significant trends and patterns in the governance scale, citizen engagement, and policy areas of Democratic Innovations. Insights offered by the database analysis, indicate there is a clear preference for local-scale implementations, emphasising the challenges of scaling Democratic Innovations to broader contexts. Citizen engagement also varies across formats, with Participatory Budgeting engaging large groups, but also suggesting diverse inclusivity across Democratic Innovations. The relation between cases of Democratic Innovations and Policy areas displays a predominant focus in fields like Planning & Development, Environment, and Governance,

indicating the prioritisation of practitioners of Democratic Innovations in urban development, environmental sustainability, and political reform.

The findings also underscore the importance of digitalisation in facilitating the dissemination and impact of Democratic Innovations, pointing to potential areas for future innovation and development.

The deliverable concludes that the database allows us to have a significant understanding of Democratic innovations and their spatial distribution in Europe, their scale of governance as well as the more significant policy areas. It provides an original contribution to the literature of citizen participation through practices and events of participatory and deliberative democracy by bringing together data from multiple open-access sources collecting these practices. However, the database would gain from ongoing updates. Moreover, real number of cases of participatory budgeting are not reflected in the sources from which data was collected in our database. This is, perhaps, a major challenge to be overcome and improved in future attempts to update the database.

The database is available at the INCITE-DEM's ZENODO community, and can be found here:

https://zenodo.org/records/10830077

In summary, the report provides a comprehensive database of Democratic Innovations in Europe, which enables diverse analysis of the state of Democratic Innovations in Europe, offering valuable insights for policymakers, researchers, and practitioners interested in leveraging Democratic Innovations to promote sustainability and democratic engagement.

1 Introduction

Political and citizen participation, as well as civic engagement, encompass a wide range of activities where citizens engage, either by invitation or by their own initiative, with the policy- and decision-making process at various levels of governance as well as within communities. These concepts have a long history that reaches as far back as democracy itself (see Cunningham 2002). As some authors have argued, the role and extent to which citizens should be involved in public affairs has not always been clear or consensual among political philosophers. The debates among theorists of democracy in the mid-20th century are a case in point. During those decades, intense discussions between scholars were happening, pitting those like Schumpeter (1942), Dahl (1956) and Sartori (1962) who defended a more elitist conception of democracy against intellectuals like Pateman (1970) who advocated for participatory democracy.

In very broad strokes, according to the elitist conception of democracy, the role of citizens should be confined to periodically voting for political leaders, thus delegating the legitimate decision-making power to experts and elites. Democracy is thus restricted to a set of institutional arrangements that ensure fair and competitive elections and is built on a stark division of labour. Participatory democrats reject this narrow framework that divides the governed from the government and argue, instead, that citizens have the right to participate in the very process of decision-making. Supporters of this 'thin' (Barber, 1984) or 'thicker' conception of democracy defend greater citizen participation, not only for instrumental reasons (more legitimacy, better and more informed policies, etc) but also for normative reasons. In other words, full democracy is synonymous with self-government (Pateman 1970).

Regardless of where one stands on these differing conceptions of democracy, and the role of citizens therein, more robust ideas of citizen participation in public affairs have taken hold as is made evident by the widespread dissemination and adoption of specific categories like Participatory Budgeting and Deliberative Mini-Publics, not only in the more consolidated democracies of the Global North but also in developing countries in the Global South (Cornwall, 2008). More enthusiastic advocates of citizen participation go as far as to posit that such involvement can work as a remedy to the so-called democratic malaise that has been incubating in western democracies as a growing mistrust and dissatisfaction with the performance of conventional democratic institutions and politicians (Geissel, 2012). Advocates argue that, by bridging the gap between the government and the governed, citizen participation can be the answer for democracies to overcome this crisis (Smith, 2009; Elstub and Escobar, 2019).

As such, institutions or processes that enhance citizen participation in democracy, as outlined by Wright (2010), can be coupled with, as they aim to further, the goals of social and environmental sustainability by fostering equitable and participatory processes.

Historically juxtaposed against capitalism's injustices, they potentiate a deepening and broadening of democracy, aiming for societal empowerment and erosion of oppressive power dynamics. This democratic empowerment synergises with sustainability's conceptual evolution from the early 20th-century (nature) conservation to a comprehensive framework addressing environmental, economic, and social pillars. As sustainability's discourse has expanded over the past four decades, emphasising the need for a high quality of life for future generations amidst ecological challenges and polycrisis. Democratic Innovations (DIs), as epitomised by Smith (2009) and other scholars in the last decade (see: Elstub and Escobar, 2019 for an up-to-date overview on the concept), have played a crucial role in engaging citizens, particularly in marginalised communities, to actively participate in crafting inclusive and effective environmental and social policies.

In sync with the United Nations' (2015) emphasis on multi-level dimensions of sustainability, Democratic Innovations aim to contribute to inclusive policy making, directly aligning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) as the latest stage in sustainability's international understanding. This reflects a shift from early conservation efforts to a holistic approach considering ecological integrity and socio-spatial equity to assure future generations an active citizenship and a rightful say for a fairer, just, and dignified life.

It is against this background, that the concept of Democratic Innovations has emerged to help us think and explain these developments in democracy and citizen participation (Smith 2009). Democratic Innovations have been defined as institutions or processes (Elstub & Escobar 2019; Smith 2009), as well as mechanisms more broadly (Pogrebinschi, 2023), that employ deliberative and/or participatory (Smith 2009; Warren 2009) means to increase and diversify citizen's participation in the policy cycle (Elstub & Escobar 2019; Pogrebinschi 2023) with the overarching goal of improving the quality of democracy (Geissel, 2012; Pogrebinschi, 2023) by tackling specific contextual deficits (Pogrebinschi 2023).

Notwithstanding this innovative theoretical tool, scholars and practitioners are still missing valuable knowledge about the historical development of Democratic Innovations, and there is a need to learn more about how the implementation of Democratic Innovations in Europe has evolved over time. As such, it is necessary to map emerging trends and patterns across Europe from a longitudinal perspective. Specifically, the present research report, based on the database of cases of Democratic Innovations, seeks to 1) survey the timeline of adoption of specific categories of Democratic Innovations, including digital participation as a hybrid subset of Democratic Innovations; 2) the spatial distribution of Democratic Innovations across the European continent; 3) study how Democratic Innovations relate to different levels of governance; 4) survey patterns in terms of number of citizens involved in Democratic Innovations and the duration of this involvement; 5) analyse how Democratic Innovations relate to distinct policy areas as well as to sustainability; lastly 6) study the incorporation of digital tools in the design and implementation of Democratic Innovations.

Given these objectives, the present report is structured around 4 main sections, beyond this introduction.

Section 2, Democratic Innovations and Sustainability, discusses the concepts of Democratic Innovations and social and environmental sustainability, analysing their role in reinforcing democratic governance within the framework of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

Section 3, on methodology, outlines here the procedures for mapping Democratic Innovations across Europe, detailing data gathering from various open-access databases and the subsequent systematisation of information to identify patterns in the implementation of Democratic Innovations.

Section 4, Mapping Democratic Innovations in Europe, we discuss and interpret the main findings of our research according to the objectives outlined above, namely revealing chronological and geographical trends and patterns of Democratic Innovations, their governance scale, citizen engagement, and policy areas, with a focus on sustainability-linked initiatives. It also highlights disparities in the adoption of Democratic Innovations across different European regions, emphasising the need for further qualitative and quantitative research to understand these trends.

Lastly, in Section 5 we go through the main conclusions of our study, highlighting the dissemination, and impact of Democratic Innovations, with a focus on their relation to governance scales, citizen involvement, and policy areas.

2 Democratic innovations and Sustainability

In the burgeoning field of democratic governance, the past decade has witnessed a pivotal shift with the advent of Democratic Innovations. These Democratic Innovations, originally conceptualised by Smith (2009) and subsequently expanded upon by Elstub and Escobar (2019) and Pogrebinschi (2023), serve as designed institutions, processes, or mechanisms to deepen citizen participation in political decision-making. Embedded in the democratic ethos, they derive from deliberative and participatory traditions, aiming to enhance citizenry engagement in governance. Following this, it is possible to identify different definitional standpoints of Democratic Innovations that focus on governance-oriented approaches to participatory decision-making (Smith, 2009; Geissel, 2012; Warren, 2013) on the one hand, in contrast to those who advocate for an empirically based examination on the other. This latter group identifies Democratic Innovations as those initiatives that incorporate participatory elements at any point within the policy cycle (Pogrebinschi, 2023), while also expressing concerns regarding innovations that are overly hierarchical and institutionalised (Veri, 2022).

As such and taking into account these different contributions, we advance a working definition of Democratic Innovations as institutions or processes (Elstub & Escobar 2019; Smith 2009) that employ deliberative and/or participatory (Smith 2009; Warren 2009) means to increase and diversify citizen's participation in the policy cycle (Elstub & Escobar 2019; Pogrebinschi 2023) with the overarching goal of improving the quality of democracy (Geissel 2013; Pogrebinschi 2023) by tackling specific contextual deficits (Pogrebinschi 2023).

Considering this working definition and categories of Democratic Innovations that are singled out by authors mentioned above, this report delves into the various categories of Democratic Innovations, such as Deliberative Mini-Publics, Participatory Budgeting, Participatory and Collaborative Governance, and Digital Participation unfolding a longitudinal map of respective cases in the European context. The intention is to contribute to the understanding of their role in fortifying representative democracy based on intertwined dimensions of social and environmental sustainability as outlined by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

2.1 The concept of Democratic innovations

As mentioned in the introduction, the scholarship on the interconnection between citizen participation and democratic institutions has been innovated in the past decade with the arrival of the concept of Democratic Innovations that seeks to make sense of democratic governance.

Notwithstanding earlier references to the concept (see Saward, 2002), the current conceptualisation was first laid out by Smith (2009). According to this seminal contribution, Democratic Innovations are "institutions that have been specifically designed to increase and deepen citizen participation in the political decision-making process" (ibidem, 1). Smith highlights popular assemblies, mini-publics, participatory budgeting, direct legislation, and e-democracy as real-world applications of the concept. This analytical framework is built on top of normative values of inclusiveness, popular control, considered judgement, and transparency which democratic governance should aspire to fulfil.

More recently, Elstub and Escobar (2019) add that Democratic Innovations are both institutions and processes "new to a policy issue, policy role, or level of governance, and developed to reimagine and deepen the role of citizens in governance processes by increasing opportunities for participation, deliberation and influence" (p. 11). As such, Democratic Innovations are rooted in two main democratic traditions: deliberative (Dryzek, 2002; Fishkin, 2009) and participatory democracy

(Pateman, 1970; 2012). Democratic Innovations emphasise inclusive and informed discussions among citizens to reach collective decisions. Deliberative initiatives provide citizens with opportunities to voice their concerns and interests, consider alternative viewpoints, and develop informed opinions by fostering argumentation and the exchange of ideas (Habermas, 1989; Rawls, 1997). Therefore, the incorporation of mechanisms for direct citizen involvement, following participatory principles, strengthen citizen's sense of ownership, and this promotes active citizenship.

Based on empirical research, we identify three distinct main categories of Democratic Innovations: Deliberative Mini-Publics, Participatory Budgeting, and Participatory and Collaborative Governance. Nevertheless, as regards the latter, some authors do not distinguish properly between Collaborative and Participatory Governance. Other categories further compile referenda and citizens' initiatives, whereas digital participation emerges as a transversal category to the former instead of a category by its own. The three distinct categories of Democratic Innovations form the backbone of the present research report.

Deliberative Mini-Publics are small groups of citizens, albeit representative of their wider community, engaged in quality deliberations to provide informed judgments to decision-makers (Fishkin, 2009). Carson and Martin (1999) argue that Deliberative Mini-Publics are alternative spaces of democratic dialogue based on the random selection of citizens. Gastil (2000) underscores their structured approach for reflective policy judgments, while Grönlund and colleagues (2015) stress their role in making democratic processes more inclusive. Dryzek (2002) further adds that these forums are distinct from political elites, as they are largely randomised, which ensures societal representation for democratic discussion on complex issues. Deliberative Mini-Publics have increasingly gained international traction in several countries, especially in Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom with the diffusion of citizens' juries and consensus conferences (Smith & Wales, 2000). The impact of Deliberative Mini-Publics has been recognised by international institutions like the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

In turn, Participatory Budgeting provides mechanisms for ordinary citizens to engage in budgetary decision-making processes, often at the local level. Sintomer and colleagues (2012) view Participatory Budgeting as a form of democratic collaboration between citizens and civil society organisations for budget preparation, emphasising citizen participation and government accountability. Cabannes (2004) further expands on this by characterising Participatory Budgeting as a process where citizens are actively involved in budget formulation, decision-making, and project implementation. While in its original design in Brazil, Participatory Budgeting aimed at social justice and the inclusion of marginalised groups (Souza, 2001), as it spread globally, Participatory Budgeting has been adapted to suit other aims, namely more transparent public expenditures, and wider civic engagement (Stolzenberg & Wampler, 2018).

While both Participatory and Colaborrative Governance emphasises the involvement of citizens and other stakeholders in the policymaking process (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Heinelt 2018) differences between both approaches can be discerned. On the one hand, PG is characterised by a democratic approach in which individuals who are affected by policies have a voice and role in their decision-making (Fung, 2006). On the other hand, CG emphasises collaboration among diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, non-profits, and private entities (Ansell & Gash, 2008). In other words, PG primarily emphasises the involvement of policies' target groups and communities, whereas CG has an institutional bias involving diverse stakeholders, including governmental and non-governmental organisations. As for the problem-solving approach, CG focuses on leveraging diverse resources and skills for problem solving, while PG emphasises democratic decision-making.

Over the past ten years, academic discussions in the field of Democratic Innovations and its different categories have experienced a surge in innovative approaches, particularly post-2020. These approaches focus on redefining concepts and creating new classifications, highlighting the blending of traditional participatory and deliberative democratic methods. A prime example of this

hybridization is digital participation which is increasingly recognized to extend the reach of Democratic Innovations (Elstub and Escobar (2019, p.13). For instance, digital participation allows for processes like Participatory Budgeting to be conducted entirely online, from proposal submission to citizen consultation and voting. This concept of digital participation, or e-participation, as a hybrid subset of Democratic Innovations is assumed on research in its various applications in scholarly literature, using Sanford & Rose's (2007) framework, by themes like e-Governance, e-Accessibility, and e-Community. Studies show digital tools can bolster governance and public participation but face challenges like the digital divide (Schulz and Newig, 2015; Møller et al., 2019). For inclusivity, strategies to engage marginalised groups, such as those with disabilities, are essential (Trevisan, 2022). The importance of e-Community in policy co-creation has been underscored during COVID-19 (Godinho et al., 2021), while e-Decision-making and e-Deliberation studies reveal the transformation in citizen-government interactions and the need for sustained engagement (Barros and Sampaio, 2016; Mouter et al., 2021). Lastly, e-Inclusion stresses how participatory democracy innovations, especially digital tools, struggle to engage socio-economically disadvantaged groups (Mokre and Ehs, 2021) and engage youth in societal discussions (Pietilä et al., 2021).

Despite appearing in different categories, Democratic Innovations are expected to improve the quality of representative democracy (Geissel, 2012) by deepening and reimagining the role of citizens in decision-making (Smith, 2009; Elstub and Escobar, 2019) by engaging them in the formulation and implementation of public policies, as well as in the deliberation on public issues, which contribute to democratic governance.

2.2 The concept of Sustainability

The concept of sustainability was first defined 40 years ago during the 1980s. It is often conceptualised as a set of goals, associated with social and environmental values, to ensure a good quality of living for future generations (Purvis, 2019) – hence its more consensual operationalisation by the United Nations around the 16 Sustainable Development Goals. In the last few decades, the debate on sustainability has received increasing attention and nurtured the debate on what development can be pursued in the context of ecological destruction and socio-spatial deprivation (United Nations, 2015). Accordingly, sustainability should be ensured through multi-level changes around two main pillars: society and environment.

Social sustainability, as defined by the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), encompasses eradicating poverty (SDG 1) and hunger (SDG 2), ensuring healthy lives (SDG 3), inclusive education (SDG 4), gender equality (SDG 5), sustainable economic growth (SDG 8), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), sustainable cities (SDG 11), and the promotion of peace, justice, and strong institutions (SDG 16). It integrates environmental health, education, fair economic practices, and resilient social systems to build inclusive, equitable, and sustainable societies for all. This involves integrating these social objectives into the design of policy- and decision-making process with the aim of reaching social and gender equality in the participation of those involved.

In turn, environmental sustainability goals involve the preservation and conservation of natural resources, the protection of ecosystems, and the reduction of the negative impacts of human activity on the environment. As outlined in the United Nations' SDGs, it encompasses various aspects: sustainable water and sanitation management (SDG 6) to preserve natural ecosystems; transitioning to clean and modern energy (SDG 7) to reduce greenhouse gas emissions; promoting sustainable consumption and production (SDG 12) for economic growth without environmental degradation; urgent action against climate change (SDG 13) to protect ecological balance; conserving oceans and marine resources (SDG 14) for climate regulation and biodiversity; and protecting terrestrial ecosystems (SDG 15) for ecological stability and human well-being. The key aim of environmental sustainability is the achievement of a balance between human activities and the natural

environment, which ensures the long-term viability of ecosystems and the well-being of future generations.

Current sustainability discourse underscores the interconnectedness of the environment and the economy. The concept has evolved from a singular focus on conservation to a holistic view that includes economic and social dimensions. There has been a shift from global-scale concerns, such as climate change, to the importance of local actions and community-led sustainability initiatives. Moreover, there is an increasing trend of integrating sustainability into public policy and business strategies, emphasising corporate social responsibility and ethical practices. This evolution reflects a growing recognition of the need for a balanced approach to managing our planet's resources, ensuring environmental health, and promoting sustainable economic and social development.

A major component of sustainability is its emphasis on the importance of citizen involvement in policy decisions, showcasing its efficacy in crafting socially and environmentally sustainable policies (Handl, 2012), The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) is a case in point as it underscores the vital role of citizen involvement in shaping sustainable policies, aligning with Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) like Life on Land (SDG 15) and Life Below Water (SDG 14). Democratic Innovations like Participatory Budgeting and Deliberative Mini-Publics are recognised for their potential in integrating social and environmental sustainability. Experts emphasise the significant opportunity for Democratic Innovations to achieve sustainability goals (Souza 2001; Menegat, 2002; Cabannes 2006; Friant, 2019), highlight the need for public inclusion and governance, especially in addressing climate change and ecological crises (Geissel, 2023[1]; Smith, 2023[2]). While opinions vary, with some experts sceptical about the transformative impact of Climate Assemblies (Dean, 2023[3]), others see Democratic innovations as crucial for effective governance, policy transparency, and addressing political polarisation (Veri, 2023[4]).

[1] Expert interview with Brigitte Geissel in the context of the INCITE-DEM project by the ICS team on June 20, 2023.

[2] Expert interview with Graham Smith in the context of the INCITE-DEM project by the ICS team on July 11, 2023.

[3] Expert interview with Rikki Dean in the context of the INCITE-DEM project by the ICS team on June 28, 2023.

[4] Expert interview with Francesco Veri in the context of the INCITE-DEM project by the ICS team on June 20, 2023.

3 Methodology

In this section of the Report, we will outline the procedure and methodology employed to carry out the present mapping exercise of Democratic Innovations across Europe. As such the Section is structured as follows: in the first subsection, we will describe in detail the open access databases that were used to gather information on Democratic Innovations in Europe, as well as the process that was used to aggregate them. In the subsequent subsection the variables of interest will be described and justified as well as their operationalisation.

3.1 Gathering data on Democratic Innovations

To perform the main task of this research we relied on open access databases of real-world cases of Democratic Innovations. Specifically, these databases were Participedia, the OECD's database of Representative Deliberate Processes and Institutions, Knowledge Network on Climate Assemblies (KNOCA), G1000, and the International Observatory on Participatory Democracy (IOPD).

- Participedia is one of the major resources on Democratic Innovations for researchers and practitioners. The project was spearheaded by Archon Fung and Mark Warren (2011) and relies on a global network of dedicated advocates. Participedia is a crowdsourced platform where citizens can contribute to expand its archive either by uploading cases or editing existing ones. While its methodology is innovative and far reaching, it also generates problems since the available information is not always consistent across cases (Veri, 2022).
- The OECD's data on Representative Deliberate Processes and Institutions relies on desk research of deliberative practices across the globe. The OECD's researchers count on an extensive number of sources ranging from submissions to the OECD Innovative Citizen Participation Network (ICPN) and international Democracy R&D Network of deliberative practitioners, to academic publications, grey literature, and news articles. The cases are processed individually to ensure the quality of the data.
- KNOCA is a network of advocates and researchers which provides knowledge and advice to the wider community of policy makers seeking to design and implement Democratic Innovations, with an emphasis on environmental and climate themed Deliberative Mini-Publics. As part of their activities, KNOCA archives such Democratic Innovations around the world.
- G1000 is a Belgium based platform of practitioners which provides support to citizens and policy makers seeking to design and implement citizen participation initiatives at the local, regional, and national level. Like KNOCA, G1000 also archives cases of DI with a specific focus in Europe. This archive provides valuable information that informs this research's database.
- Finally, the IOPD is an international network of organisations, city administrations and research institutions dedicated to promoting knowledge on participatory practices. One of its activities is to archive cases of Democratic Innovation.

The information on Democratic Innovations provided by these sources was compiled and treated by the research team. After removing duplicate cases[5], the team arrived at a database of 1045 individual examples of Democratic Innovations, spanning the late 1970s to the present day across all countries in the European continent. This extensive database was subsequently analysed and categorised on a wide range of dimensions which we will describe in detail below, thus harvesting a database of Democratic Innovations in Europe.

Finally, it is critical to emphasise that the data depicted in the Figures in the next section, as well as the analysis that goes along with it, are derived from imperfect, albeit scientifically rigorous, public access databases. As a result, the accuracy with which each country's data is collected, as well as the degree of institutionalisation of Democratic Innovations in each of them, directly affects how many cases each nation has represented. It cannot be ruled out from our analysis that nations with more effective systems for gathering and reporting data on Democratic Innovations have de facto more cases, which is not the same as saying that those with fewer reported cases have fewer cases overall. One example of this is given by the collected cases of Participatory Budgeting, because literature reports a much higher number of cases in Europe (Dias et al., 2019; Falanga, 2023) than the number of cases registered in the sources from which we collected and assembled data into our database.

Furthermore, one must consider extra language bias given that most of the reporting in the databases from which we gathered the data is written in English.

3.2 Systematising data on Democratic innovations: Timeline and geographies of implementation

As we established above, a set of relevant dimensions to the mapping of Democratic Innovations in Europe was agreed and established by the research team. The first dimension relates to the mapping across the European continent of the specific categories of Democratic Innovations adopted. The following dimension relates to the geography and date of implementation of each individual case thus allowing us to trace the timeline of dissemination of such initiatives. Moreover, we seek to find patterns on how Democratic Innovations relate to different levels of governance. Are these innovations more widespread at the local or national level? Additionally, we also want to survey patterns in terms of number of citizens involved in Democratic Innovations and the duration of this involvement. Finally, we want to analyse how Democratic Innovations relate to distinct policy areas as well as to sustainability.

With these objectives in mind, we treated each DI collected from the open access databases as a unit of analysis which were categorised on the following variables:

- Each case was categorised as Participatory Budgeting; Deliberative Mini-Public; Participatory and Collaborative Governance. While not being a category of its own, we included the Digital Participation as an option of categorisation in order not to miss harder to classify cases such as digital platforms where citizens can upload comments or make suggestions. The coding options for this variable were mutually exclusive. Meaning that a case could not be both a Deliberative Mini-Publics and a Participatory Budgeting at the same time.

[5] A total of 253 cases were removed due to duplication in multiple sources.

- Country and locality where the Democratic Innovation were implemented. In cases where the practice was national in scale, the exact locality where it was not recorded, only the country.
- Total number of participants who were involved in the Democratic Innovation.
- The entire length of the Democratic Innovation, measured in days, was also documented. This was achieved by calculating the number of days between the starting and end date of the initiative.
- Level of governance in which the Democratic Innovation was implemented. According to our coding schema, Democratic Innovations could take place at the local level, meaning that the Democratic Innovation was restricted to a very specific territory such as a municipality. Cases could be classified as taking place at the regional level. Cases that take place at this level of governance are implemented across a wider number of territories administered by regional governments or metropolitan administrations. National level Democratic Innovations, as the name indicates, take place at the national level, and are, often, designed and implemented by state agencies or representative institutions. Categories in this variable were treated as mutually exclusive.
- Each case was classified according to its respective policy area. The available coding options were sourced from Participedia[6]. Categories in this variable were treated as mutually exclusive.
- Finally, each individual case was classified according to the presence of digital components in its design. These could be a specific online platform where citizens vote on proposals or the use of videoconferencing software during deliberations.

To extract this information from the collected cases, the INCITE-DEM research team read through the available sources provided by the open access databases. Due to this intensive and careful work of classification and systematisation of information, relevant patterns related to Democratic Innovations emerge.

[6] Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Mining Industries; Arts, Culture, & Recreation; Business; Economics; Education; Energy; Environment; Governance & Political Institutions; Health; Housing; Human Rights & Civil Rights; Identity & Diversity; Immigration & Migration; International Affairs; Labor & Work; Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice & Corrections; Media, Telecommunications & Information; National Security; Planning & Development; Science & Technology; Social Welfare; Transportation.

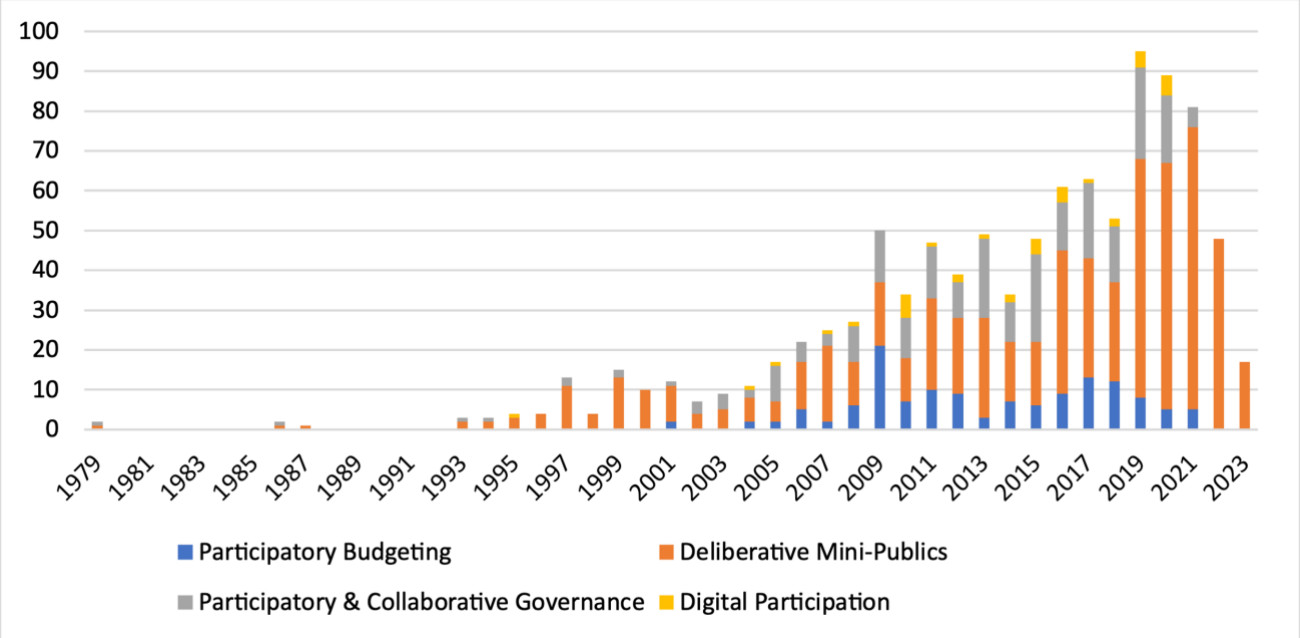
4 Mapping Democratic Innovations in Europe

In the following section, we will interpret the results of the analysis conducted for this report. The section will focus on dimensions outlined in the previous section, specifically 1) the chronological patterns of implementation of Democratic Innovations in Europe; 2) the spatial distribution of said implementation; 3) how Democratic Innovations relate to different scales of governance; 4) the patterns of citizen engagement in these Democratic Innovations and their duration; 5) the most relevant policy areas where Democratic Innovations have been employed in Europe, and finally 6) the rate of adoption of digital tools in the design and implementation of Democratic Innovations.

4.1 Patterns of implementation of Democratic Innovations across time in Europe

Figure 4.1 depicts the timeline of implementation of Democratic Innovations in Europe for the whole period for which we have data on. As we can see from the Figure, this timeline of Democratic Innovations in Europe can be traced from the late 1970s to the present day. As time moves forward, an increasing number of Democratic Innovations begin to be implemented by public authorities across the continent. This progressive rate of adoption is visible in all categories of Democratic Innovations, however not to the same degree.

Figure 4.1) Timeline of Democratic Innovations in Europe



Overwhelming, the most widespread Democratic Innovation format is Deliberative Mini-Publics with a stark 609 cases registered in the database across the period of analysis. As we can see from Figure 4.1, Deliberative Mini-Public are present in the whole period but have nonetheless become ubiquitous since the late 1990s reaching the maximum level of adoption in the 2019-2021, most likely due to the aid of digital tools such as videoconferencing software which has enable these practices to require less resources. The earliest registered example of this Democratic Innovation is a Planning Cells in Solingen, Germany (Diel & Renn, 1995). This was one of the first applications of the planning cells concept and it was aimed at receiving resident's input on how a waste disposal site should be

converted into a leisure facility for the community. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s more Deliberative Mini-Publics, through the Planning Cells concept, would occur in other German cities such as Leverkusen (1986), Hanover (1995), or Baden-Württemberg (1996). It was also during this time that the Danish Board of Technology was experimenting with the Deliberative Mini-Publics format to survey citizen's preferences on cutting edge issues such as genetically modified foods as well as various sustainability related issues (Joss, 1998). The format was also spreading beyond Western Europe as it began to be adopted by local administrations in Spain in the 1990s. Despite not being in Europe, in the early 2000s the Canadian province of British Columbia enacted a deliberative procedure wherein 160 randomly selected citizens discussed and deliberated on electoral reforms[7] (Lang, 2007; Warren & Pearse, 2008). Additionally, following the severe economic crisis, and its political consequences, which befell Iceland in the early 2010s, Icelandic parliament promoted a large-scale deliberative forum wherein citizens were tasked with the revision of the country's Constitution (Bergmann, 2016). However, it was the Constitutional Convention in Ireland in 2012-14 that skyrocketed the visibility and popularity of the format. This extremely successful implementation of Deliberative Mini-Publics tasked 66 randomly selected Irish citizens to discuss and propose amendments to the Irish constitution. In the 2010s this typology of DI would begin to be adopted in the UK profusely, in many cases with a distinct focus on environmental and climate issues.

The second format of Democratic Innovation In terms of implementation are Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance arrangements. With 252 registered cases in the database, this DI format is present sporadically since the beginning of the period of analysis but becomes more systematically adopted in the early 2000s. This coincided with official endorsements from international institutions such as the EU, which saw greater citizen engagement in policy- making – both at the level of member states and in the EU – as solutions to overcome growing citizen distrust in institutions and politics (Commission of the European Communities, 2001). It is noteworthy to point out that, unlike Deliberative Mini-Public, the presence of Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance arrangements fell significantly during the pandemic period. The first recorded example of Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance in our database is the establishment of a participatory democracy model of governance in the small Spanish town of Marinaleda in the Province of Seville which ostensibly became a self-governed and self-managed territory when a radical left-wing mayor assumed office in the 1979 local elections. Despite these early beginnings, the systematic implementation of this Democratic Innovation in Europe only started to take shape in the 2000s, consolidating in during the 2010s. The years with the most registered number of Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance cases in our database are 2019, 2015 and 2013.

The third most implemented Democratic Innovation in Europe is Participatory Budgeting. According to the data collected for this report, the earliest reported appearance of this Democratic Innovation in Europe happened in the Spanish city of Cordoba in 2001 (the first PB in Europe was in fact in 1994, in Italy[8]). Developed and implemented by the city's administration, this inaugural European Participatory Budgeting followed closely the model laid out in Porto Alegre – the original home of PB. From the early 2000s onwards, Participatory Budgeting saw a steady spread throughout the continent. 2009 established itself as the year when this Democratic Innovation was most popular

[7] Being set in Canada, this case is not featured in our database.

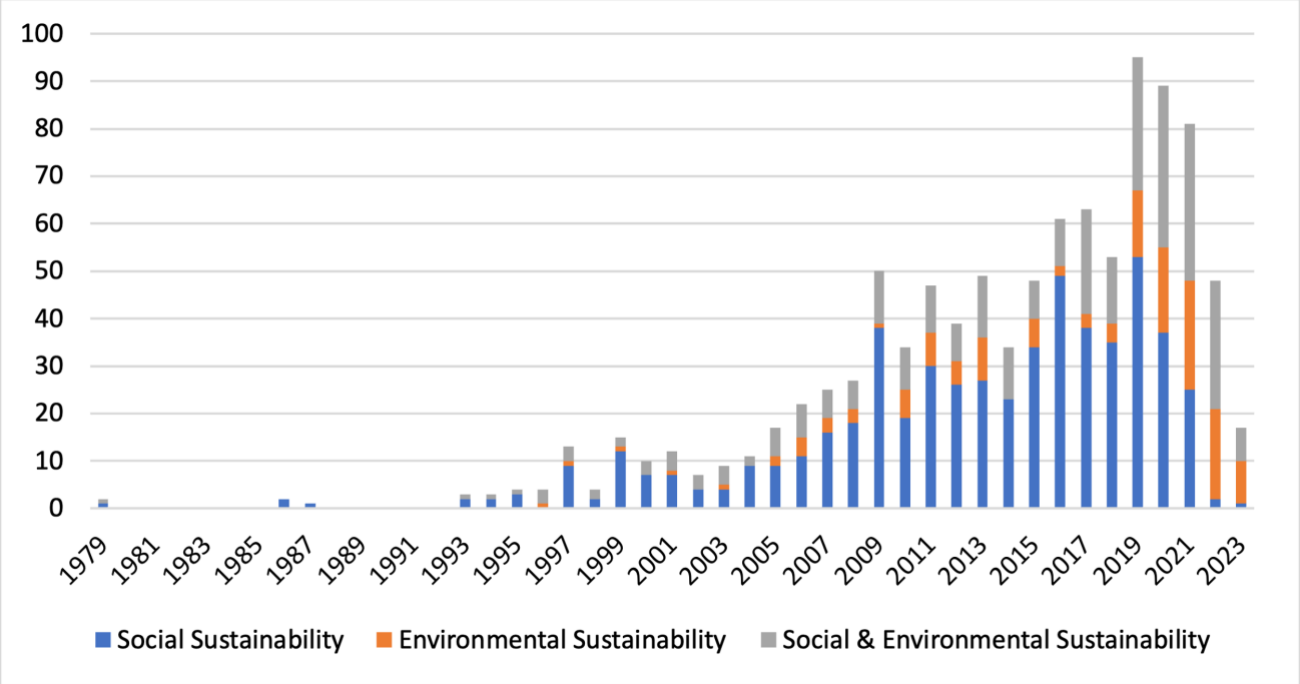
[8] Proving the limitations, or biases, of the databases from where we sourced our data, Italy, and not Spain, is in fact the birthplace of the earliest, and one of the most lasting, European PB experiments. Grottammare, a town on the Adriatic Sea, pioneered PB in Europe in 1994 and has experienced no fewer than four waves of such endeavours. Each wave is distinguished by unique characteristics that recent scholarly works have already pinpointed (Putini, 2010; Allegretti, 2010; Sintomer and Allegretti, 2009).

with 200 registered cases in Europe. Notwithstanding the fact that its popularity would decline afterwards, Participatory Budgeting remained a consistent format.

Lastly, while not being a fully-fledged Democratic Innovation, Digital Participation practices are the least present in our database. The first case of such practices registered in the database occurred in 1995 in Helsinki, Finland when the Municipality developed an online platform specifically dedicated to allowing residents to submit initiates to their local government. Despite these early beginnings, the adoption of Digital Participation tools would only begin to consolidate in Europe, albeit at relatively low numbers, during the 2010s.

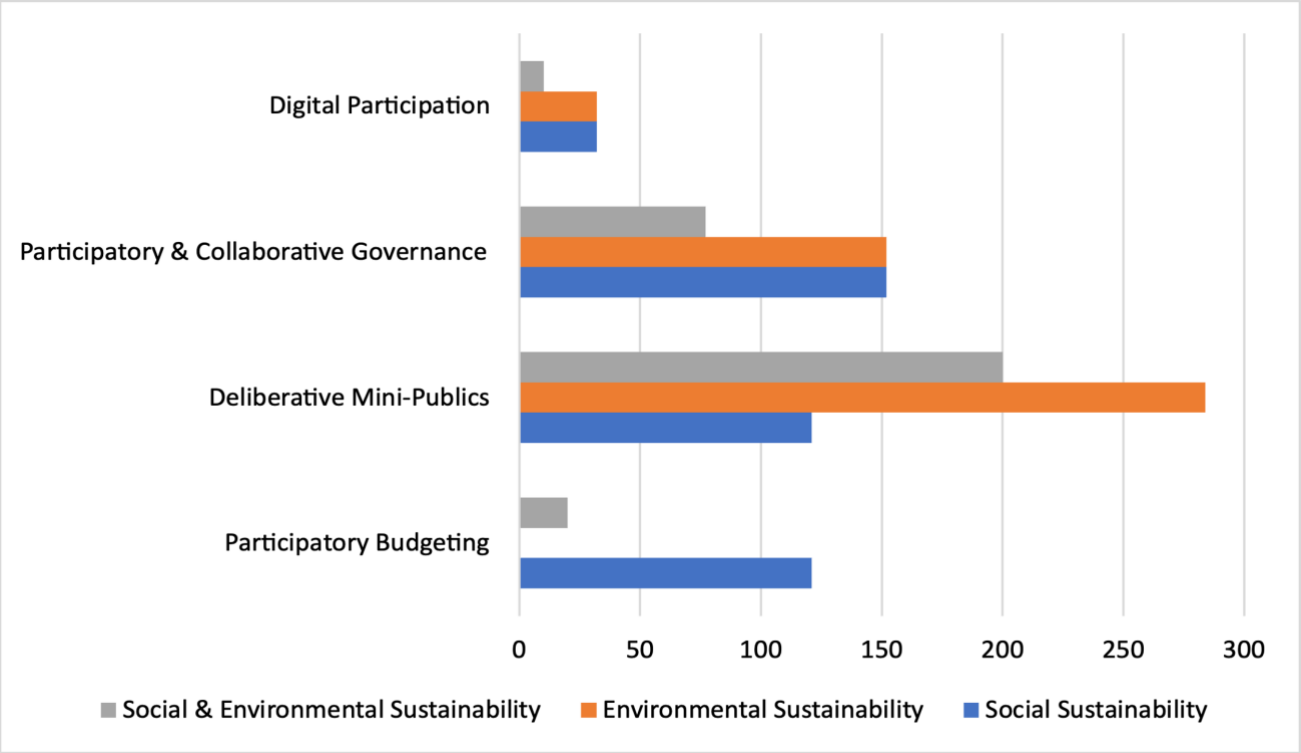
Figure 4.2, in turn, depicts the timeline of implementation of Democratic Innovations in Europe – like Figure 4.1 - but from the perspective of sustainability. As we can see from the Figure, Democratic Innovations which in some way promote social sustainability are the majority and are evenly distributed throughout the whole period of under review. Strictly environmental sustainability concerns are not as prevalent, but these nonetheless become common towards the end of the period, especially in 2019 to 2021. The same dynamics are observed when we look at Democratic Innovations that articulate both social and environmental issues.

Figure 4.2) Timeline of adoption of sustainability practices in Europe



In Figure 4.3, we proceed with a more refined analysis of cases reflecting themes or issues of social sustainability, environmental sustainability and both reflected together, now disaggregating those cases by categories of Democratic Innovations, we note below interesting relations.

Figure 4.3) Distribution of sustainability practices across the different categories of Democratic Innovations



Digital Participation: This category has the same number of cases focused on environmental sustainability and social sustainability. This suggests that digital participation is used in a balanced way to address both environmental and combined social and environmental sustainability issues.

Participatory & Collaborative Governance: This category has the highest representation in cases focused on social sustainability, with a matching number of cases of environmental sustainability. Cases that combine both themes are the least represented.

Deliberative Mini-Publics: There is a notable number of cases of Deliberative Mini-Publics that focus on environmental sustainability, being in this category that the latter has the highest number, with fewer cases addressing social sustainability (fewer than in all other categories of Democratic Innovations, if we exclude the Digital Participation). This suggests that Deliberative Mini-Publics are more commonly convened for environmental sustainability issues.

Participatory Budgeting: This innovation type has a substantial number of cases in social sustainability, the second highest, and a reduced number of cases for both social & environmental and interestingly none registered for environmental sustainability. This indicates that although Participatory Budgeting is a versatile tool used in different settings across Europe (Ganuza & Baiochi, 2012; Sintomer et al, 2012) addressing sustainability issues, it seems to be more oriented for social aspects.

This is aligned with original concerns in Porto Alegre (Santos, 1998; Cabannes, 2004), along with urban environmental sustainability, and social justice (Cabannes, 2006; Friant, 2019). This link seems to be more restricted to Participatory Budgeting cases in Latin America than European cases (Cabannes, 2021).

Social sustainability is a common focus across all types of Democratic Innovations, with initiatives addressing environmental concerns as well, either separately or in conjunction with social issues. The

distribution suggests that while environmental sustainability is an important aspect of Democratic Innovations, social sustainability is more frequently addressed. The combination of social & environmental sustainability themes, however, is less dominant than taken separately.

4.2 The Spatial Distribution of Democratic Innovations in Europe

Figure 4.4) Spatial distribution of Democratic Innovations in Europe



Figure 4.4. displays the spatial distribution of Democratic Innovations. Different tones of green indicate the number of cases (darker green for higher concentration of cases of Democratic Innovations, lighter green for fewer cases of Democratic Innovations).

It is hardly possible to identify regular patterns around Europe, and this likely to be related to different approaches to national and regional governance. Nevertheless, neighbouring countries (e.g., Spain, France, and Italy or the Scandinavian countries), as well as physical proximity of supranational organisations (e.g., the European Union in Belgium) may have some influence in the number of cases of Democratic Innovations. Democratic innovations.

There is a potential bias deriving from the number of cases in each country that can influence this data though. Moreover, political, economic, and cultural differences among member countries necessarily play a role in the implementation of Democratic Innovations. For instance, the UK has piloted participatory arrangements in planning and community development since the early 1960s, thus setting out the scene for a significant evolution of these practices in the country (Davidoff, 1965; Healey, 2006).

Countries with the darkest green shades[9]likely have longer traditions of democratic innovation or have recently made significant efforts to promote citizen participation in governance. These countries might be considered leaders in democratic innovation, possibly due to a combination of supportive policy frameworks, active civil societies, and funding for such initiatives. Countries like the United Kingdom (239 cases), known for their active civil societies, are represented with darker green tones, indicating a higher number of cases. In continental Europe, countries like Germany (136) and Italy (143) follow in this category, reflecting their commitment to innovative democratic practices.

Countries in the middle of the spectrum[10] may have a growing interest in Democratic Innovations. They might be in the process of developing these practices, experimenting with different models, or gradually expanding their application. In this medium green colour group, we have a quite diverse set of regional distributions spanning from southern Europe, like Spain (72) and France (94) to the Western European countries of The Netherlands (28), Belgium (76), Austria (56) and to Nordic Denmark (42).

Lighter green countries[11] may be newer to DI practices or have fewer resources to implement them widely. Alternatively, they also might focus on other forms of democratic engagement not captured by the database, such as direct democracy, or may be less meticulous and lack routinised practices in place of collecting and reporting their cases. In this group of countries, like the one before, we have a wide range of regional examples, figuring countries in southern Europe, as Portugal (27) to countries such as Sweden (6), Norway (1), Denmark (38), and Finland (10) that often exhibit strong democratic engagement and would be expected to be represented in darker green. In Eastern Europe, countries like Poland (16 – this being the country with more cases in this range), Hungary (4), Romania (2), and the Baltic states (Estonia (4), Latvia (2), and Lithuania (1)) due to more recent democratisation processes and varying degrees of civil society involvement in governance. Lastly, countries in Southeastern Europe, such as Greece (5), Bulgaria (2), and the nations of the former Yugoslavia like Croatia (4) have also fewer instances of documented democratic innovation practices.

This map provides a useful overview of the distribution of democratic innovation practices across Europe. Countries with darker shades are hotspots for these practices and could serve as case studies or models for others. However, for a more nuanced understanding, additional qualitative research and temporal analysis is needed to interpret the reasons behind the distribution and the evolution of DI practices across Europe.

Regarding room for further improvement and the present limitations of this research, it is important also to say that the map lacks granularity as it does not show sub-national variations or the intensity of practices within individual countries. Also, while the map shows the number of cases, it does not include any information on the quality or impact of the Democratic Innovations, which could be significantly different across countries.

4.3 Democratic innovations across different scales of governance

One of the major concerns of the scholarship on Democratic Innovations are the problems of scale (Parkinson & Mansbridge 2012). It is a commonly held belief that the local scale is a good laboratory

[9] This list of countries composed of the United Kingdom, Italy, and Germany.

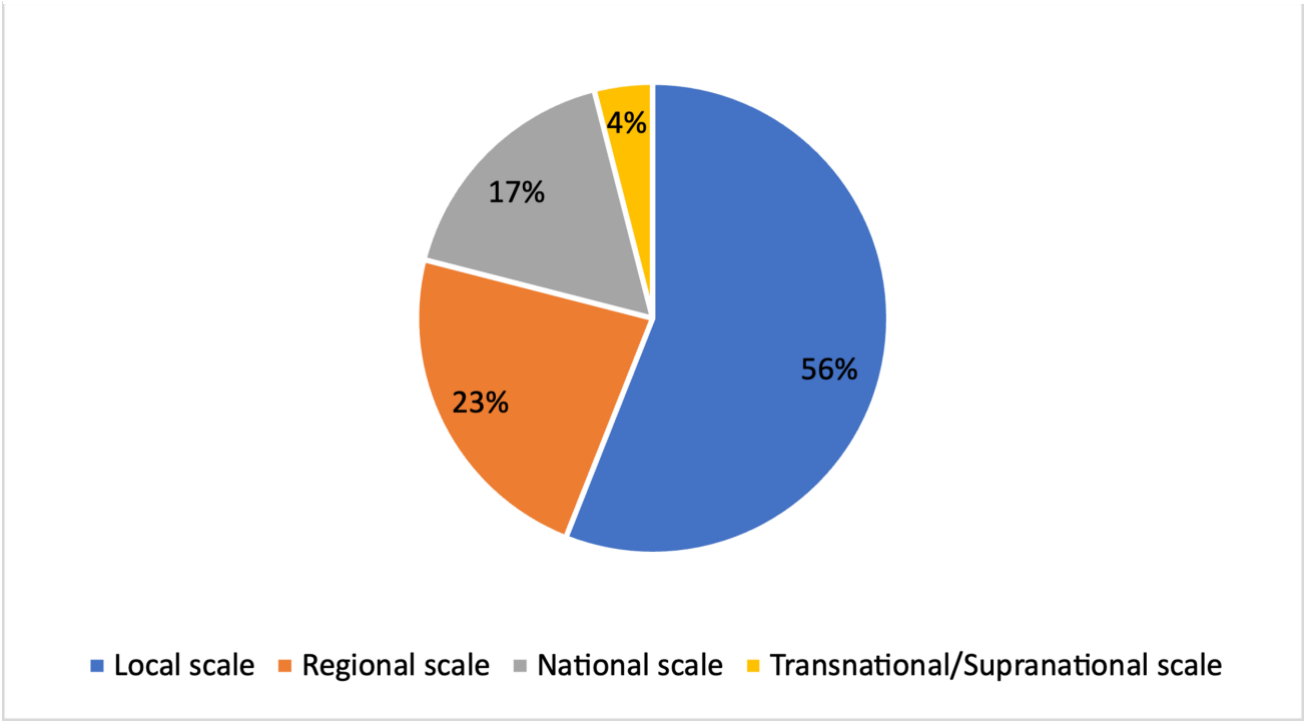
[10] This list of countries is composed of Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain.

[11] This list of countries is composed of Albania, Andorra, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Jersey, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Moldova, Norway, Poland, Republic of North Macedonia, Romania, Russia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, and Ukraine.

of democratic practices as the proximity between elected public authorities and organised civil society can foster innovation (Hirst 2005; Smith 2009). The research on Participatory Budgeting is indicative of this trend towards the local scale as the locus of Democratic Innovations (Falanga 2023). Notwithstanding this, some authors argue that this propensity towards the local scale can limit the scope and reach of Democratic Innovations, as is the case with complex issues related to environmental and social sustainability which often require political action at large scales of governance. When looking at Democratic Innovations across Europe, this issue is made more complex when we consider that different countries have different administrative arrangements, with some being fully fledged federal states like Germany, while others are unitary states like Portugal. This means that it is expected that Democratic Innovations in different countries will operate on different scales.

As we can see from Figure 4.5, our survey of Democratic Innovations indicates the largest segment of these initiatives, encompassing more than half of all registered cases, is designed, and implemented at the local scale. The regional scale comes up as the second tier of governance wherein Democratic Innovations have been employed in Europe. National level Democratic innovations are much less common according to the data collected for this report while initiatives that occur at the supranational or transnational level are diminutive. Overall, the survey of Democratic Innovations shows that there has been indeed a scaling-up problem with regards to participatory initiatives. The picture depicted by our data still shows that, despite some significant examples, these initiatives have not left confines of local communities.

Figure 4.5) Democratic Innovations at different scales of Governance

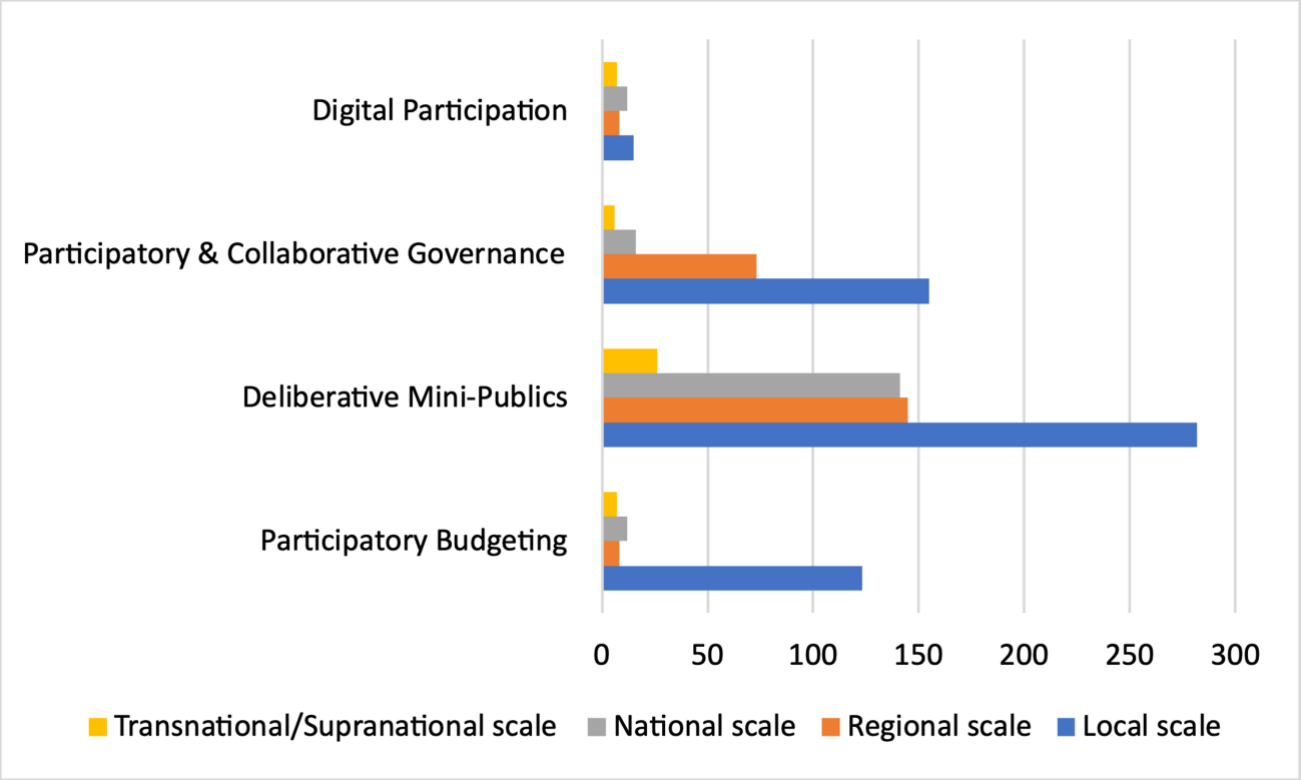


(The percentages depicted in Figure 4.5 are calculated based on the cases where we were able to gather the pertinent information on the scales of governance (n=1024)

The relationship between levels of governance and Democratic Innovations shows predominance of local arrangements (see Figure 4.6. below). Participatory Budgeting in Europe are mostly implemented at the local level with a residual number of regional cases. Deliberative Mini-Publics

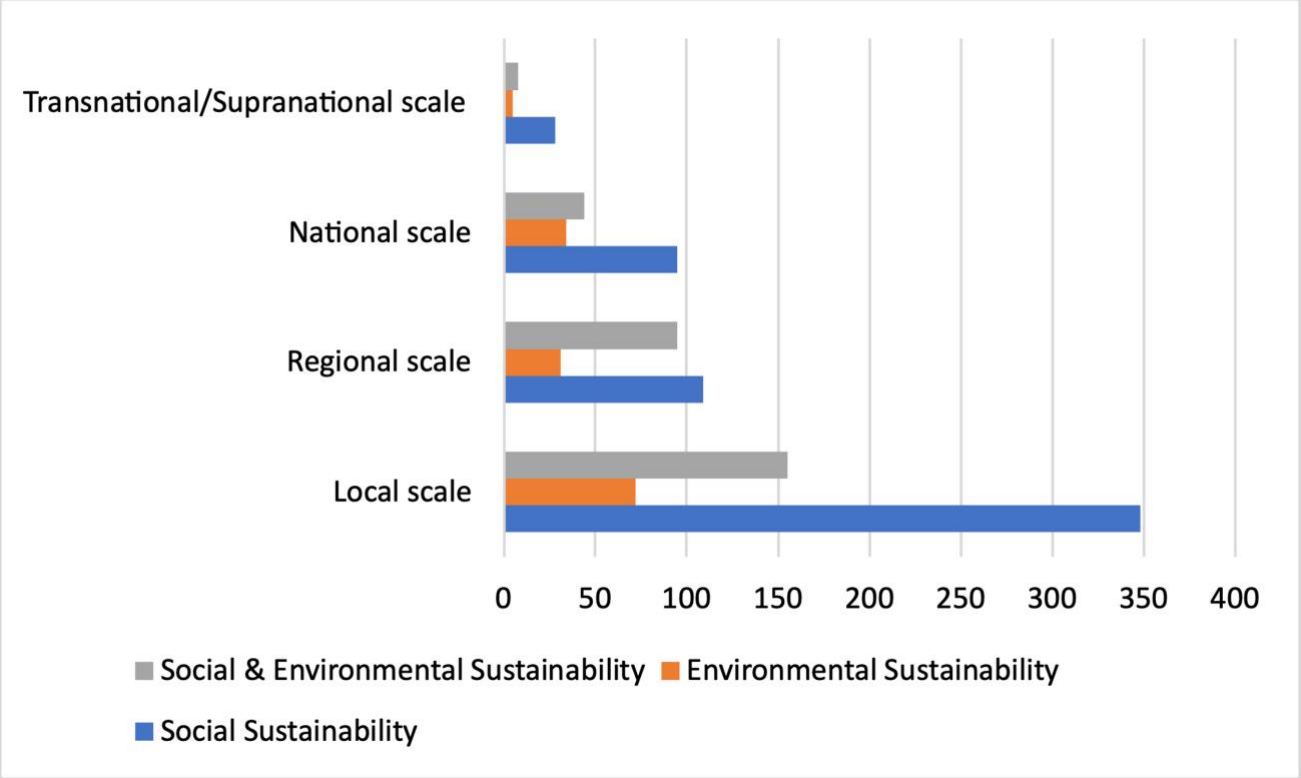
and Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance feature local cases but also regional and national ones. There is also some evidence about supranational and transnational Deliberative Mini-Publics. For example, the EU has been at the forefront of deliberative events targeted at discussing the political future of the Union (2018) and the EU citizen's dialogue event that took place in Passau, Germany in 2018, where randomly selected German, Czech and Austrian citizens discussed border regions, refugee, and social policies. Another relevant example is the set of Worldwide Views deliberative events on multiple issues from Biodiversity (2012), or Climate and Energy (2015).

Figure 4.6) Different categories of Democratic Innovations at distinct scales of governance



As we can see from Figure 4.7, the relationship between Democratic Innovations and sustainability does not show significant differences across levels of governance. Democratic Innovations that promote social sustainability are present to a larger degree in all levels of governance with most of these initiatives taking place at the local level, followed by the regional and national scales. The same pattern emerges with Democratic Innovations promoting both social and environmental sustainability. Regarding environmental sustainability, differences between regional and national levels are less pronounced.

Figure 4.7) The relationship between Democratic Innovations and sustainability at different scales of governance



Local level, and especially local governments are the locus of innovation. This is due to a variety of factors ranging from the proximity with organised civil society, and policy areas where Democratic Innovations are mostly implemented (see subsection 4.6). The idea that the local scale acts as a laboratory of democracy (Hirst 2005) wherein public authorities, civil society and social entrepreneurs act together to develop innovative solutions is confirmed by our survey.

4.4 Patterns of Citizen Engagement

The article "Participatory Democracy Revisited" by Carole Pateman (2012) offers an in-depth analysis through the examination of mini-publics and Participatory Budgeting. She critiques these approaches for being temporary despite their potential for significant citizen engagement in democratic processes. Pateman discusses citizens' juries, which typically engage 12–24 participants, and contrasts these with citizens' assemblies in Canada, which involve 103 to 160 participants over nearly a year, demonstrating a model for deeper, more sustained citizen participation. Additionally, the PB in Porto Alegre, which drew more than 35,000 participants annually at its peak, exemplifies broad civic engagement. The data from our database also confirms that PB is the DI that provides the most suitable design for inclusion of larger numbers of participants.

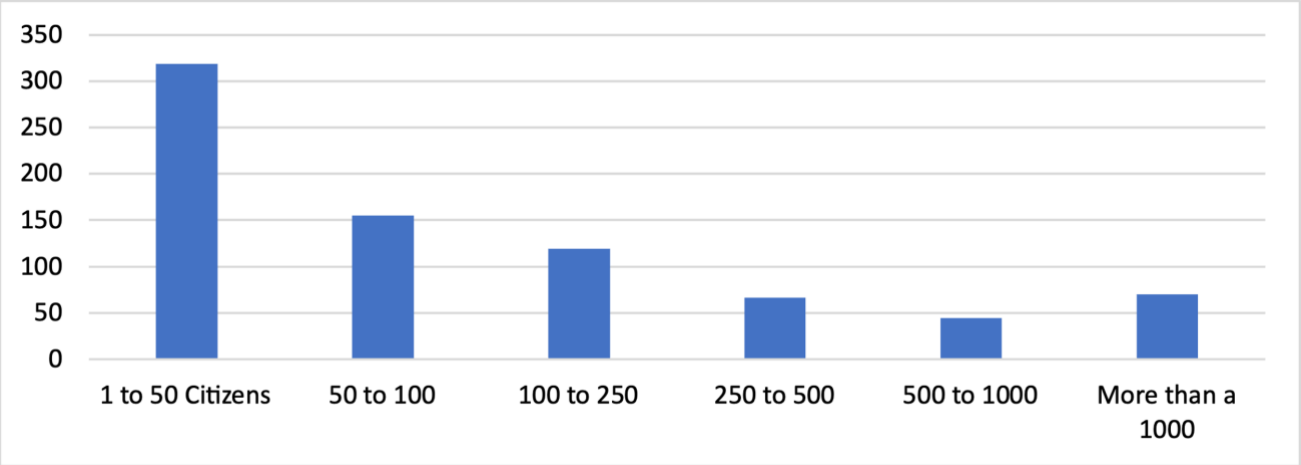
Despite a discussion on the number of participants, Pateman underscores the importance of embedding such participatory practices into governance, which is also discussed later in this section about duration of events (see subsection 4.4.2). The literature under the labels of system (Parkinson & Mansbridge 2012), institutionalisation and embeddedness, i.e., to go from single events to more meaningful and lasting engagements (See Bussu 2022; Dean et al, 2020).

4.4.1 Number of participants

The pattern in Figure 4.8 suggests that Democratic Innovations are associated with smaller numbers of citizens. Yet, it is worth mentioning that the number of Democratic Innovations in which 50-100 and 100-250 people are invited to participate are similar. Large-scale participatory cases are much less frequent, even though the Democratic Innovations that engage more than 1000 citizens are larger than Democratic Innovations that involve 250-500 and 500-1000 participants.

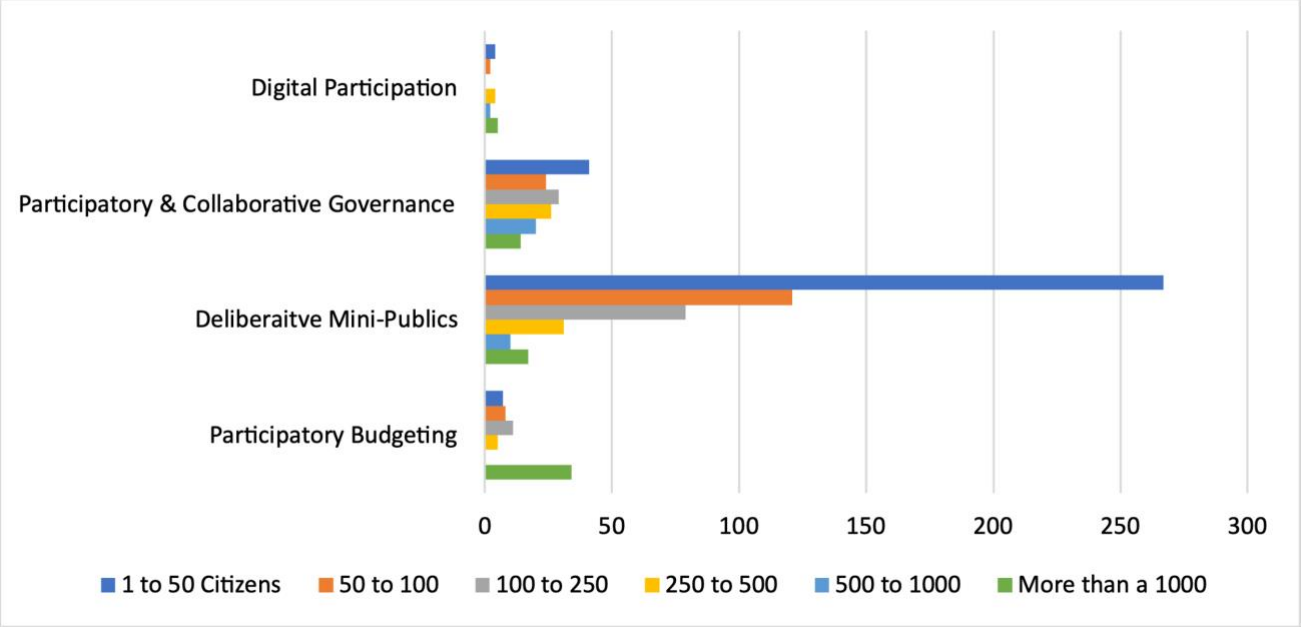
Figure 4.8 also shows how Democratic Innovations fit more to small-scale settings, which possibly reveals challenges in organising and managing large groups of people in such processes.

Figure 4.8) Number of participants in all cases of Democratic Innovations



Numbers of participants disaggregated per Democratic Innovation, as shown in Figure 4.9, indicate that, except for Participatory Budgeting, lower intervals of participants hold the greater number of cases.

Figure 4.9) Number of participants in different Democratic Innovation categories



Digital Participation: This category has a spread across almost all participant ranges, although with a low number of cases in all ranges. Despite the low numbers, this suggests that Digital participation initiatives are versatile, engaging both small and large groups, but are more common in smaller settings.

Participatory & Collaborative Governance: This type of innovation appears with more numbers in the 1 to 50 citizens range, however the distribution through all the ranges is never unbalanced, indicating these initiatives are versatile in involving low numbers and high number of participants.

Deliberative Mini-Publics: This innovation type has a significant number of cases in the 50 to 100 range and is also represented in the 1 to 50 and 100 to 250 ranges. There's a small representation in the 250 to 500 range and the following two ranges, suggesting that while these initiatives can scale up, they predominantly involve fewer than 100 participants.

Participatory Budgeting: This category shows a strong presence in the 1 to 50 range and a significant number of cases in the 50 to 100 and 100 to 250 ranges. There's a notable number of cases in the two ranges 100 to 500 and even more in the more than a 1000 range, indicating that Participatory Budgeting can engage a broader range of participants than other types of Democratic Innovations.

Figure 4.9 above illustrates diversity in scale, with Participatory Budgeting standing out for engaging large groups of people (Peixoto 2009; Peixoto et al 2017). Each type of Democratic Innovation seems to have a different 'sweet spot' regarding participant numbers, potentially reflecting different objectives and methods. Deliberative Mini-Publics and Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance tend to involve fewer participants, possibly due to their more intensive deliberative processes or the need for close collaboration, which can be challenging at larger scales. Digital participation shows high variability, which may be due to the scalability of digital platforms – which we will look at in more detail in subsection 4.6.

Figure 4.10) Number of participants in cases of Democratic Innovations classified by sustainability

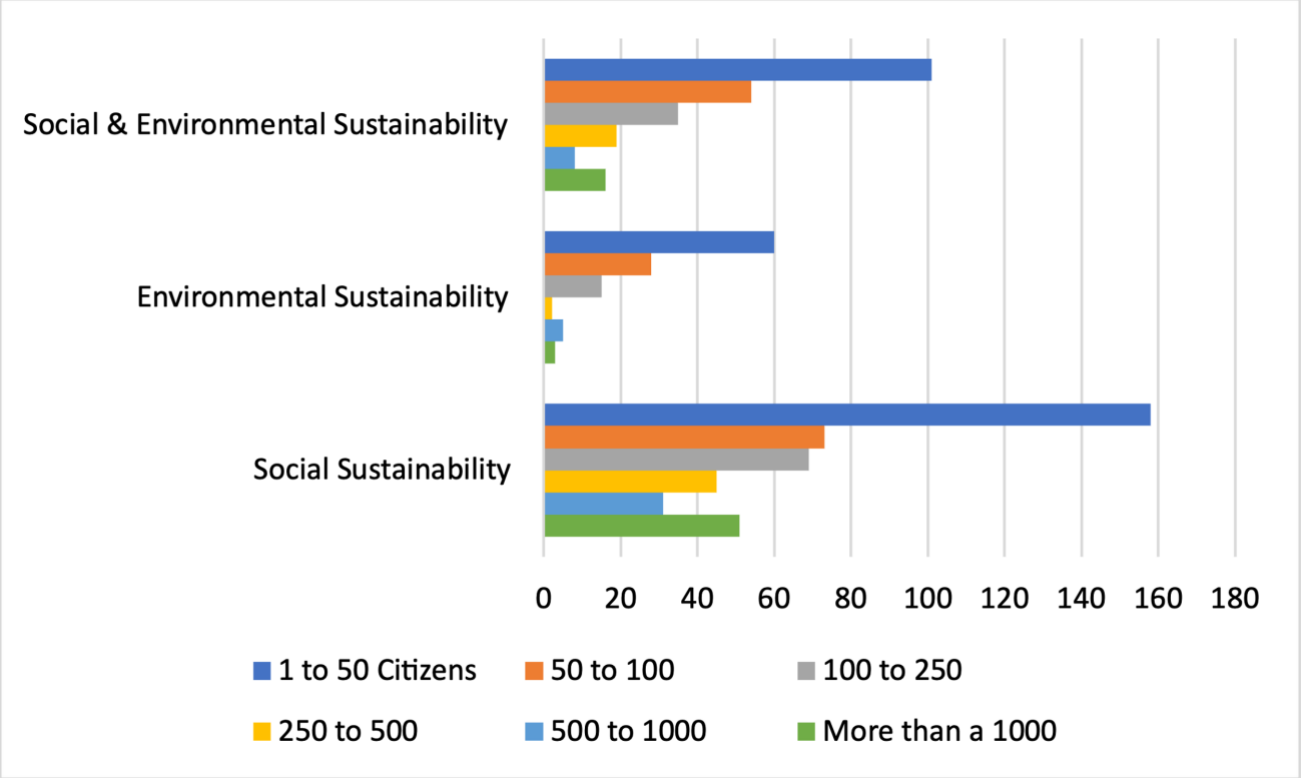


Figure 4.10 above displays the relation between the number of participants in cases of Democratic Innovations and their focus on sustainability: Social & Environmental Sustainability, Environmental Sustainability, and Social Sustainability. Each category in bars corresponds to different ranges of participant numbers.

Social & Environmental Sustainability: Cases classified here have the most balanced spread across all ranges of participant numbers, with a slightly higher frequency in the 1 to 50 citizen's range. This suggests that initiatives with a dual focus on social and environmental aspects attract a varied number of participants, but still mostly engage smaller groups.

Environmental Sustainability: This category also shows participation across all ranges but has a particularly high frequency in the 1 to 50 citizens range, indicating that environmental sustainability initiatives are typically small-scale in terms of participant numbers. There is some participation in the 50 to 100 and 100 to 250 ranges, but significantly less in larger participant categories.

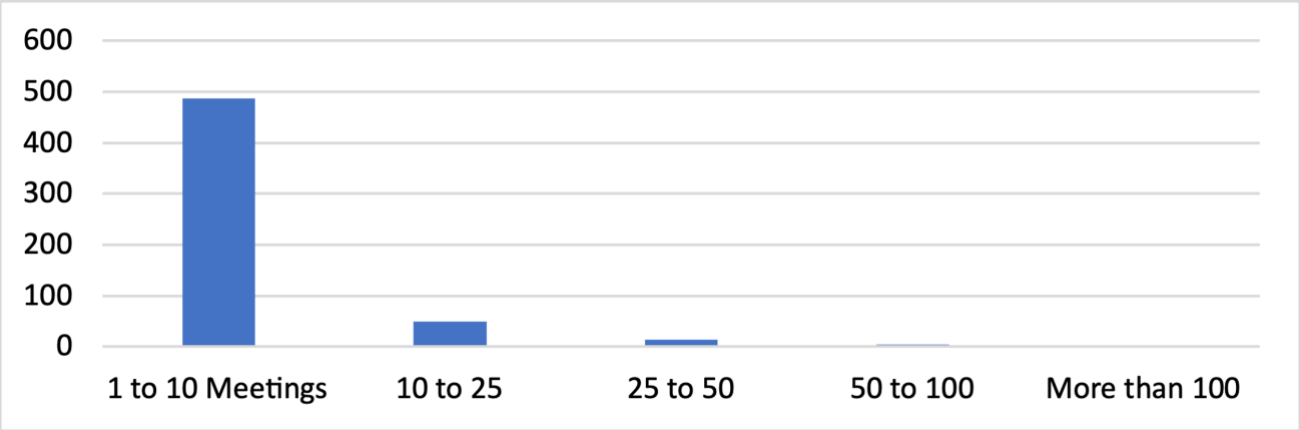
Social Sustainability: This category is represented mostly in the 1 to 50 citizens range, with a steep drop-off in frequency as the number of participants increases until the interval 500 to 1000. However, it is also in cases of Democratic Innovations classified by social sustainability where we can find a higher number of participants in the interval more than a 1000, registering more participants than the two intervals below (250-1000). The reason for this is given by the fact that Participatory Budgeting, which gathers more participants, has a stronger relation with social sustainability (121 cases in the database), in fact there are no cases of Participatory Budgeting in environmental sustainability and the only relation is found on cases classified with both social and environmental sustainability.

4.4.2 Duration of citizen engagements

To map the extension of civic engagement, we gathered data on the number of meetings that took place for each one of the cases in our database. By meetings we mean gatherings of citizens where they were actively engaged with the democratic process either listening to experts, expressing opinions and/or deliberating on relevant issues. These meetings could take place behind closed doors or in public. The number of meetings were then grouped into five separate categories based on their frequency: 1 to 10 meetings, 10 to 25, 25 to 50, 50 to 100, and more than 100 meetings. It must be noted that it was not possible to collect this information for all the cases. Indeed, the analysis conducted in this Section leaves out 475 cases out of 1045.

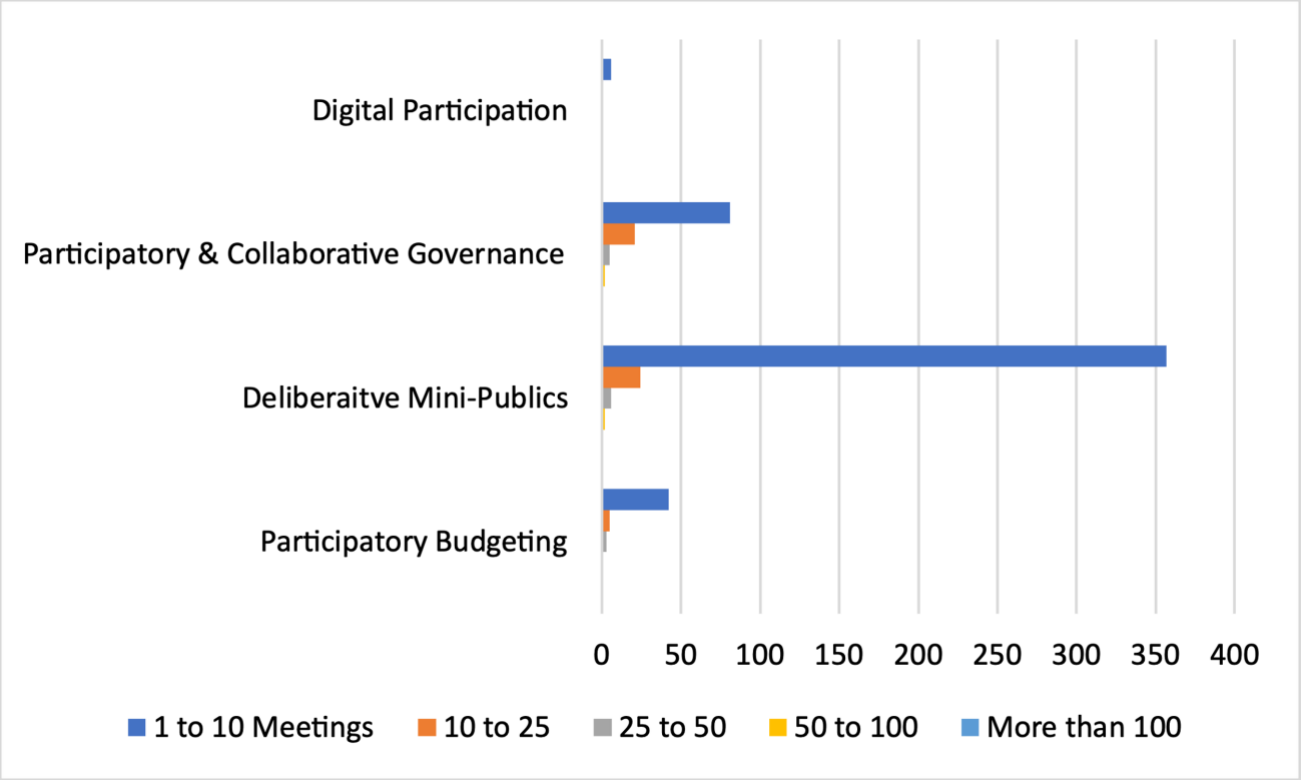
As we can see from Figure 4.11, the majority of Democratic Innovations in Europe tends to be short-term. Out of the total, 486 cases are included in the 1 to 10 meetings category. When we look more deeply at the data, we find that almost 65% of these cases do not take up more than 4 meetings – usually the duration of one or two weekends. Moreover, as the Figure 4.11 shows the number of cases that comprise extensive engagement tends to diminish as we move up in the scale – 50 cases in the 10 to 25 category, 14 in the 25 to 50, 5 cases in the 50 to 100 meetings bracket, and only a single case with more than 100 meetings category.

Figure 4.11) Distribution of Democratic Innovations according to the duration of the process



When we turn our attention to specific categories of Democratic Innovations, we find that the patterns overserved above hold across all of them.

Figure 4.12) Distribution of different categories of Democratic Innovation according to the duration of the process



As we can see from Figure 4.12, more short-term engagements with citizens are norm in all categories of Democratic Innovation with no substantial differences between them. We provide below an analytical description:

Digital Participation: This category has a very small bar in the range of 1 to 10 meetings, indicating that there are very few cases where digital participation methods were used in Democratic Innovation processes that had such a low number of meetings. There's no representation in other categories.

Participatory & Collaborative Governance: There is a moderate number of cases in the 1 to 10 meetings range, a smaller presence in the 10 to 25 range, and an even smaller representation in the 25 to 50 range. This suggests that Participatory and Collaborative Governance initiatives often involve a series of meetings, but the number of meetings doesn't tend to be very high.

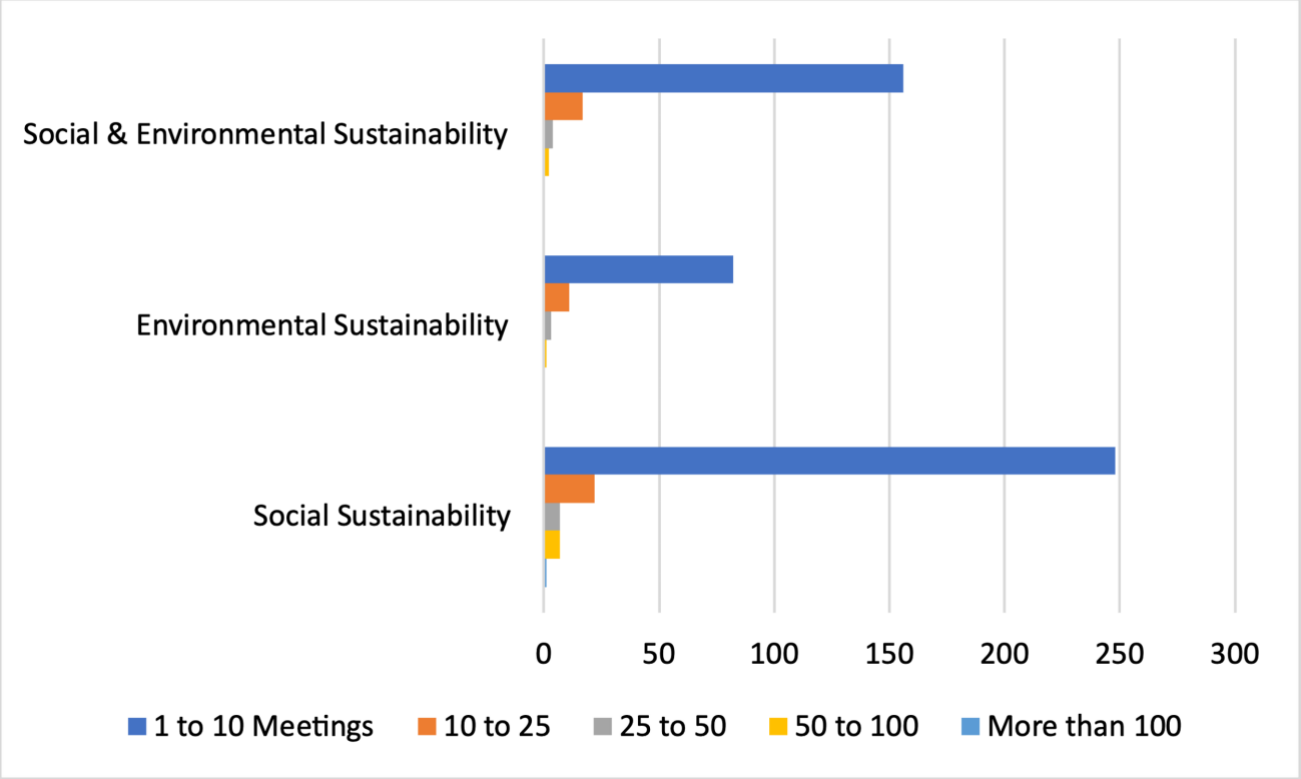
Deliberative Mini-Publics: Even more accentuated than Participatory & Collaborative Governance, there's a predominant presence in the 1 to 10 meetings, with a very small representation in the 25 to 50 and 50 to 100 ranges. This indicates that Deliberative Mini-Publics might also typically involve a limited number of meetings.

Participatory Budgeting: Like the categories before, this one shows the highest frequency in the 1 to 10 Meetings range and minimal presence in the 10 to 25, 25 to 50 ranges.

Finally, when we survey the relationship between the duration of Democratic Innovations and sustainability (Figure 4.13), we observe that there are no major differences between social, environmental sustainability, and initiatives that approach both in articulation. Overwhelming, we find that short-term engagements that do not go beyond 10 meetings are prevalent across the cases. All in all, the results substantially reinforce the idea that implementation of Democratic Innovations

in Europe has tended to one-off affairs that are unable to reach the full democratic potential that Democratic Innovations promise in terms of the institutionalisation and the embeddedness of these practices into the overarching governance of society (Bussu et al 2022; Dean et al 2020).

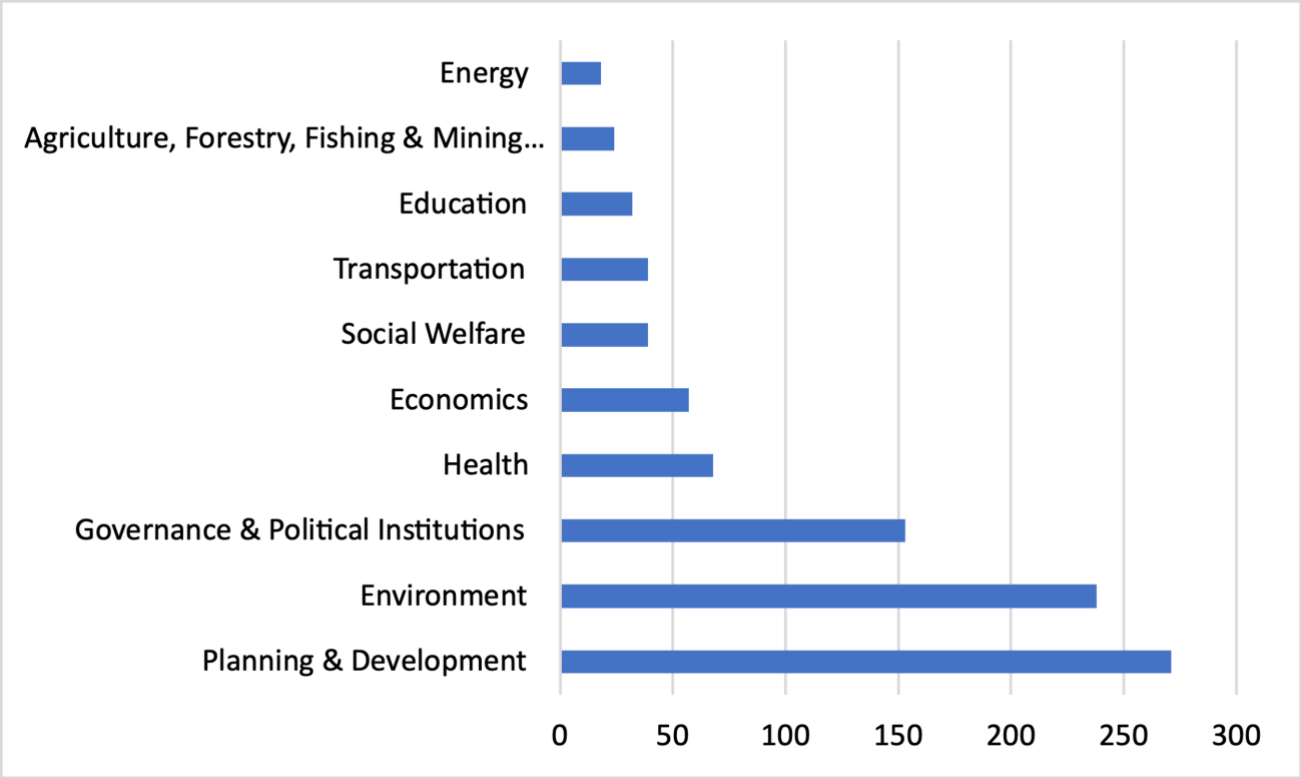
Figure 4.13) Distribution according to sustainability by the duration of the processes



4.5 The relationship between Democratic Innovations and policy areas in Europe

Democratic Innovations were classified according to policy areas covered by the internationally known website Participedia, one of the sources used for data collection. Figure 4.14 shows the distribution of Democratic Innovations from Planning & Development to Law Enforcement. Only the top 10 are displayed out of 22 options of different policy areas.

Figure 4.14) Top 10 policy areas for Democratic Innovations in Europe



Planning & Development: This area dominates with 271 cases, indicating a significant focus on Democratic Innovations within urban planning, infrastructure projects, and development policies.

Environment: The second most prominent category, with 238 cases, suggests a strong engagement with Democratic Innovations in environmental policy, which could include issues like climate change, conservation, and sustainable resource management.

Governance & Political Institutions: With 153 cases, this category's prominence reflects initiatives in political reform and institution-building.

Health: Health policy has a moderate number of cases (68), encompassing public health initiatives and healthcare services reform.

Economics: The graph shows a fair interest in Democratic Innovations in the economic sector (57 cases), which could involve economic policy-making and financial regulation.

Transportation: Transportation shows a smaller number of cases (39), which include public transport policies and infrastructure.

Social Welfare: This area has the same representation (39 cases) as transportation, indicating democratic innovation efforts in social services and support systems.

Education: With fewer cases than social welfare (32), education related Democratic Innovations might involve stakeholder engagement in educational policy and institution governance.

Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Mining Industries: A small number of cases here (24) suggest limited link between democratic innovation practices in these sectors.

Energy: Energy policy has the least representation along with law enforcement (18 cases), pointing to emerging or less frequent democratic innovation activities in these fields.

It is also important to mention that the three policy areas that did not make top 10 but have close numbers to Energy, **Law Enforcement, Criminal Justice & Corrections** (13 cases), **Human Rights & Civil Rights** (11 cases) and **Immigration & Migration** (10 cases) are related with issues that concerned, particularly, under-represented groups in societies. The fact that the number of cases in these two areas seem to corroborate recent research that affirms that "participatory and deliberative institutions at present are explicitly exclusionary towards the experiences and oppression of members of many disempowered groups" or that "current democratic innovations are not fully inclusive of those who experience exclusion" (Wojciechowska, 2019, p. 2). Authors like Wojciechowska advocate for the need for moving away from single, 'one-off' inclusion acts and improve these institutions of participation through intersectional democratic innovations' that can increase the leadership of the less represented groups during events and contexts, namely through lessons from experiences of leadership in grassroots movements and bottom-up activism.

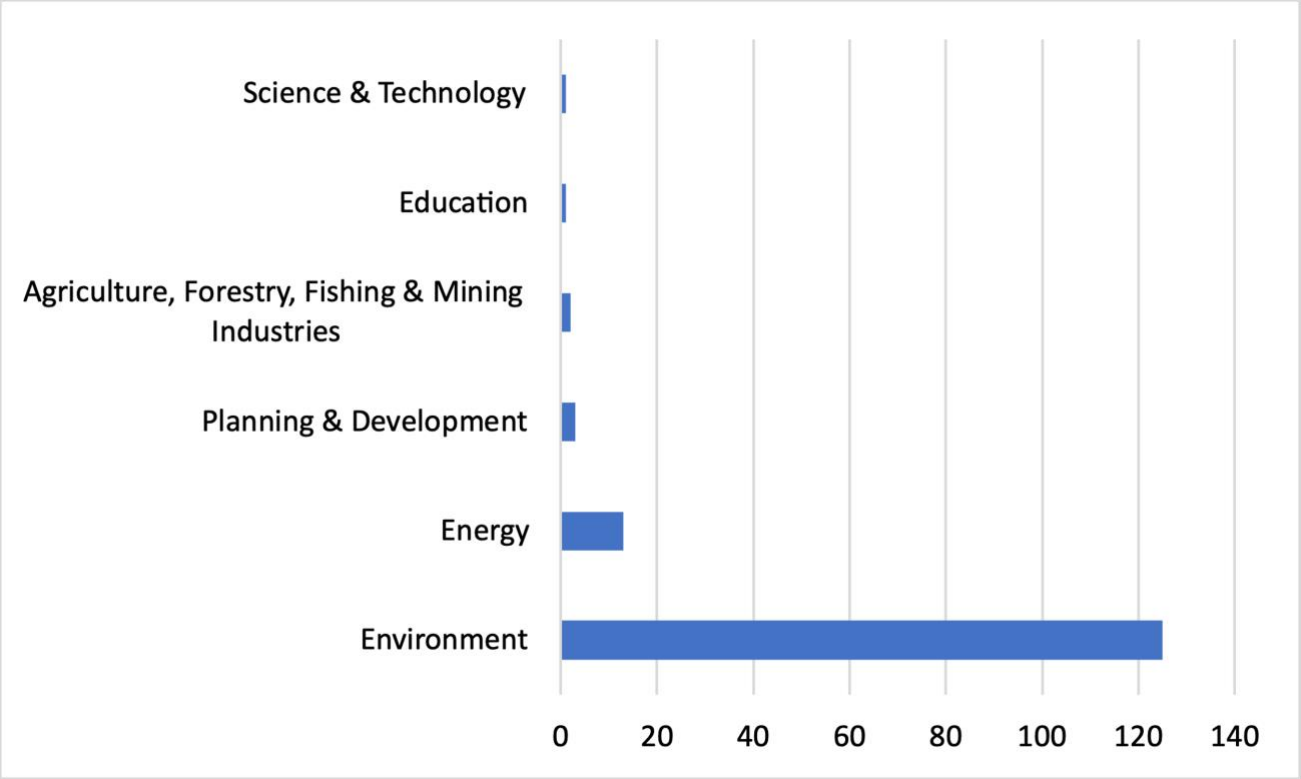
Priority is given to Planning & Development, Environment, and Governance, which is consistent with data on numbers of cases (see Figure 4.14 above). In urban planning and regional development, it is likely that the discussion with citizens is organised through a long period of time. As regards the environment, the last decade has seen a multiplication of processes concerning the climate crisis. Finally, Governance & Political Institutions reveal a fertile liaison between Democratic Innovations and the "democratisation of democracy" for more inclusive policymaking.

Considering the policy areas that capture, on a middle level, more cases, from Health to Education, it is important to point out that these are areas that constitute the backbone of Welfare State, which constitutes key issues of political interest for citizens (Finseraas, 2009; Schmiddt-Catran 2016) which tend to be more exposed to the positive and negative impacts of reforms in these areas. This fact can explain why there is considerable interest in using Democratic Innovations to include citizens in the discussion of issues in these policy areas. However, it is also noteworthy that they are not amid any of the top 3 policy areas of all cases of Democratic Innovations (see Figure 4.14).

The lesser focus on sectors like Agriculture, Energy, and Law Enforcement, suggests these areas are either newer to Democratic Innovations practices or face more challenges in implementing such practices.

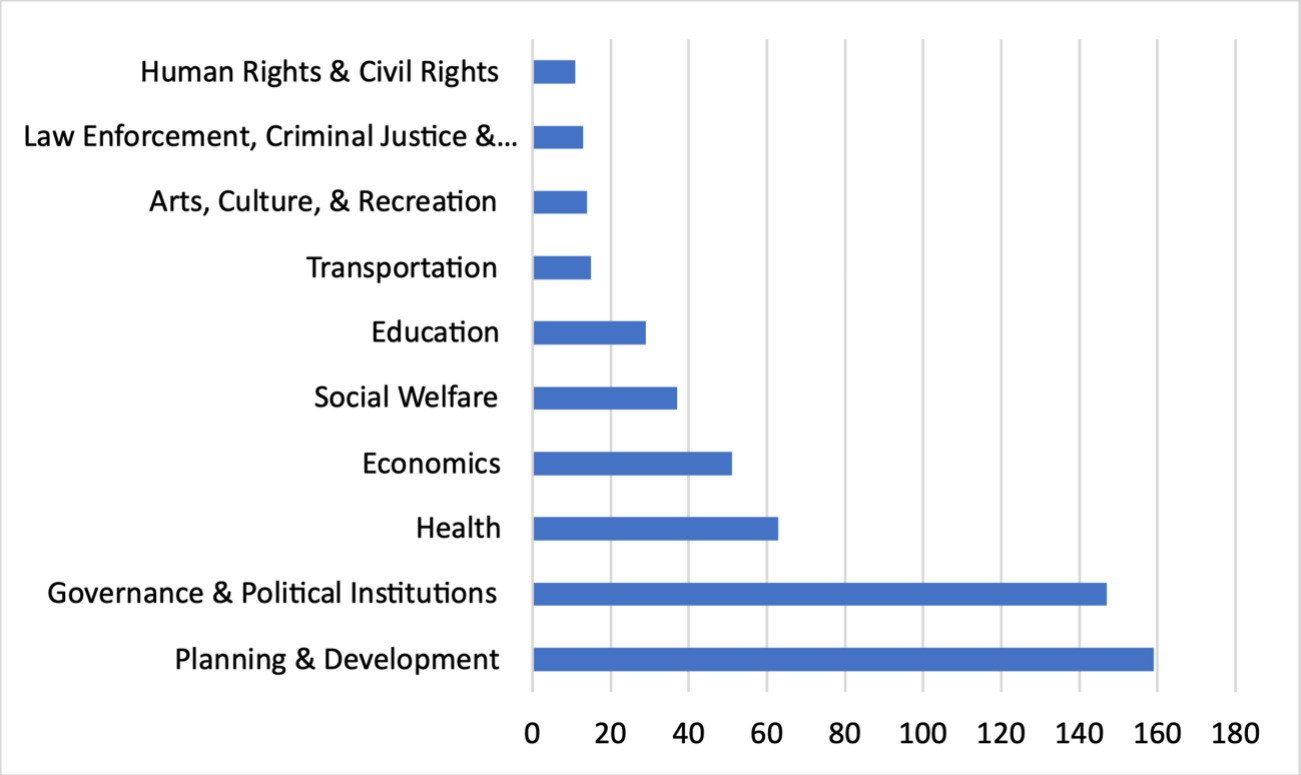
The next set of three Figures explore in more detail the classification of cases by policy areas, considering in separate and together the cases classified as displaying issues or themes that fall within the SDGs of Environmental Sustainability (Figure 4.15) and Social Sustainability (Figure 4.16).

Figure 4.15) Key policy areas for Democratic Innovations and Environmental Sustainability



Regarding Figure 4.15, unsurprisingly the large share of cases was classified on the policy area Environment (152 cases), followed by 13 cases on Energy and 3 on Planning & Development. Regarding the cases classified as Environment, the database shows that most of them are mini-publics that bring citizens to discuss and deliberate on how their localities, cities, regions can be more prepared to the climate crisis, can be climate resilient, prepare an ecological transition towards carbon neutrality but also better infrastructures (green mobility plans) and strategies of use of resources (water use, sewage systems and waste management, for instance).

Figure 4.16) Top 10 policy areas for Democratic Innovations and Social Sustainability



Likewise, Figure 4.16 presents Planning & Development and Governance & Political Institutions as the policy areas with higher concentration of cases, which follows in line with the first and third ranked policy areas in Figure 4.14. As stated before, considering the more general nature of these two policy areas it is expected that they concentrate the higher number of cases, as they usually, namely Deliberative Mini-Publics, deal with issues of improving the quality of life in the respective

Figure 4.17) Top 10 policy areas for Democratic Innovations and Social & Environmetal Sustainability

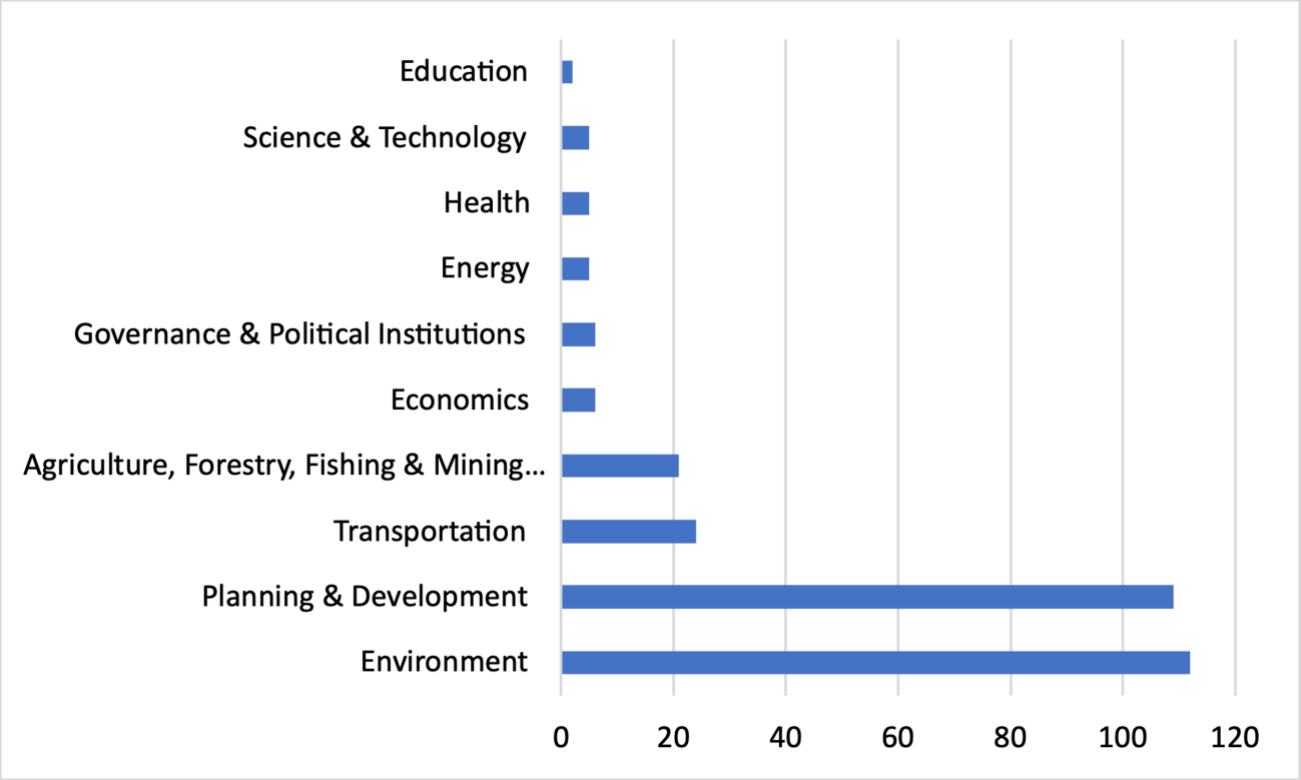
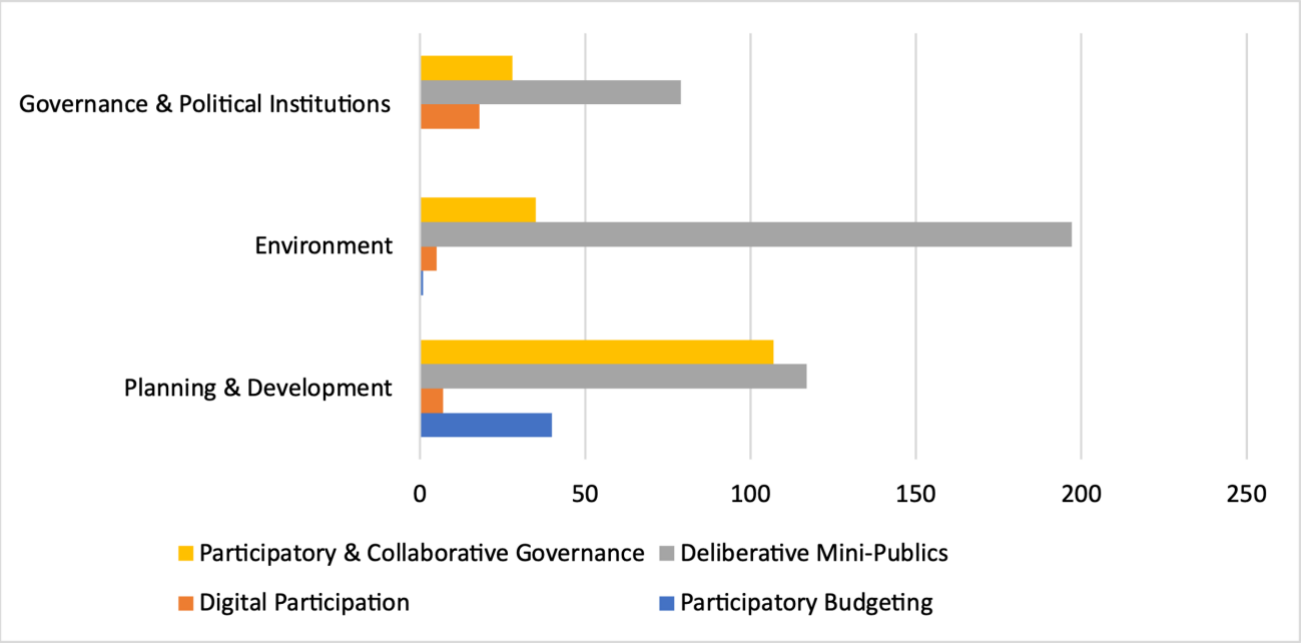


Figure 4.17 displays the top 10 policy areas of cases classified as Social & Environmental Sustainability. The cases of Democratic Innovations displayed in Figure 4.16 and classified as Environment are related with questions of equality and fairness in ecological transition. Regarding the cases classified as Planning & Development, they include environmental concerns with urban transformations and/or strategic development plans. As regards Transportation, cases are related with mobility plans where questions of electric mobility and carbon neutrality are included. The policy area of Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Mining tells of cases about the impacts on communities or societies that are economically dependent on the extracting and/or manufacturing industry but that ask for the conservation and preservation of natural resources.

Figure 4.18) Top 3 policy areas by categories of Democratic Innovations for all cases



The relationship between environment and Deliberative Mini-Publics points to the growth of climate assemblies (see also Duvic-Paoli, 2022). Deliberative processes seem to fit better to the purposes of participation on environmental issues (both confirmed by Figure 4.19 and 4.21). In the other policy areas, Deliberative Mini-Publics hold high frequency in Planning & Development as well, followed by Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance. Likewise, Governance & Political Institutions are mostly debated in Deliberative Mini-Publics and Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance. Finally, Participatory Budgeting is most frequently associated with Planning and Development, which confirms literature on Participatory Budgeting and urban related interventions.

Figure 4.19) Top 3 policy areas by categories of Environmental Sustainability related Democratic Innovations

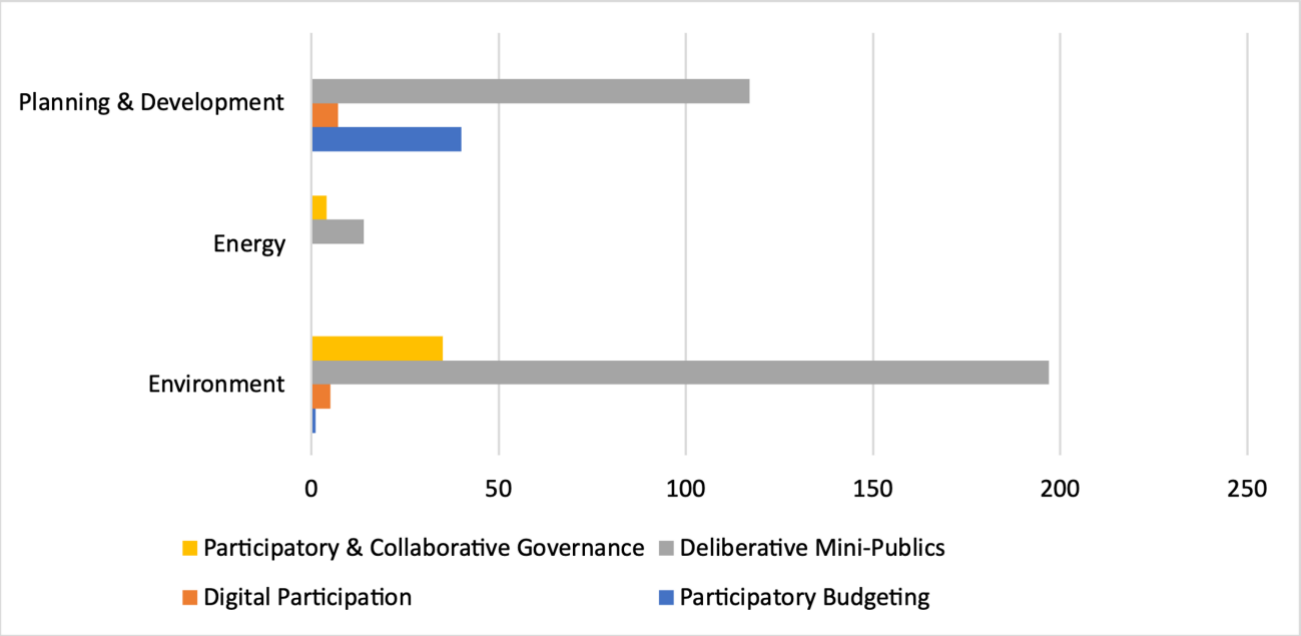
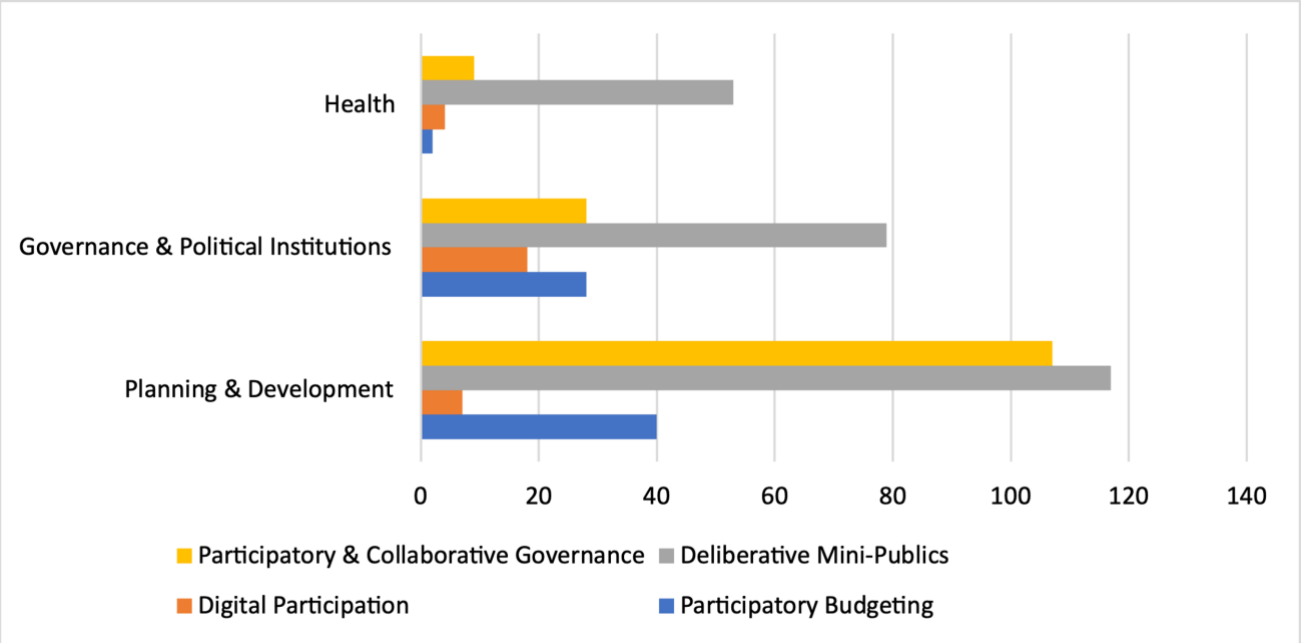
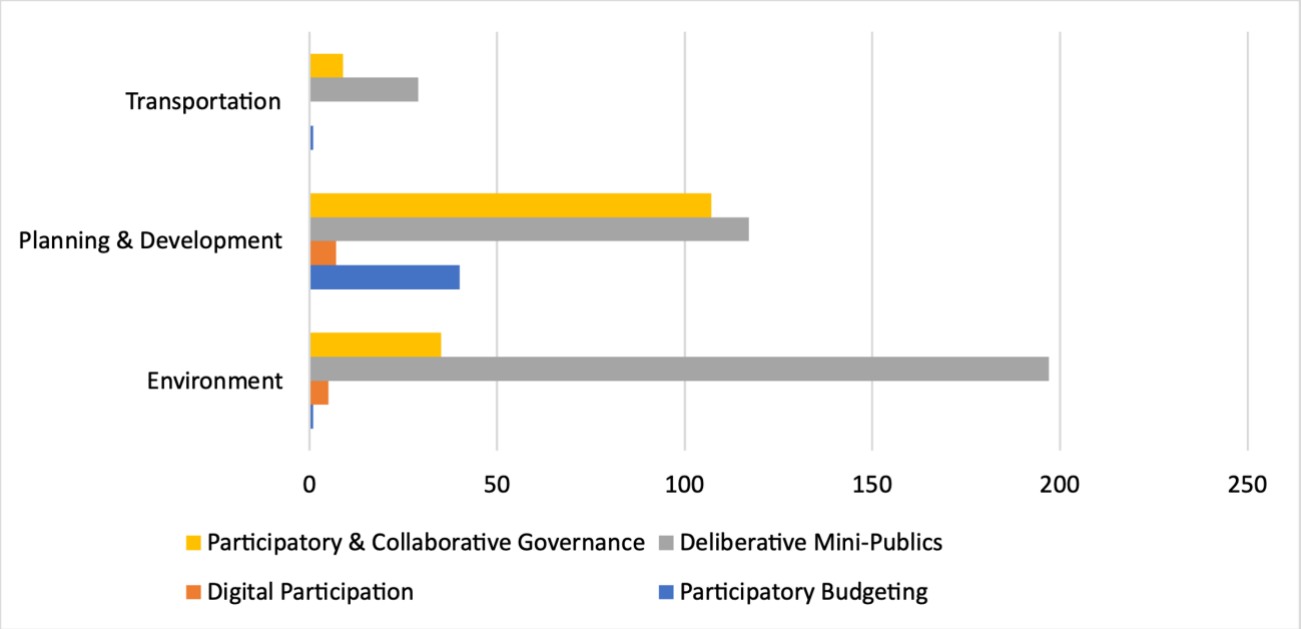


Figure 4.20) Top 3 policy areas by categories of Social Sustainability related Democratic Innovations



In the cases classified as Social Sustainability (Figure 4.20), it is worth highlighting the relationship between the policy area of Health and Deliberative Mini-Publics. While for the Governance & Political Institutions and Planning & Development, the occurrence of cases is distributed among all the categories of Democratic innovations, Health is mostly concentrated in Deliberative Mini-Publics. This can be related to the specificity of this policy area and the need for expert inputs in this specific institutional design.

Figure 4.21) Top 3 policy areas by categories of Social & Environmetal Sustainability related Democratic Innovations

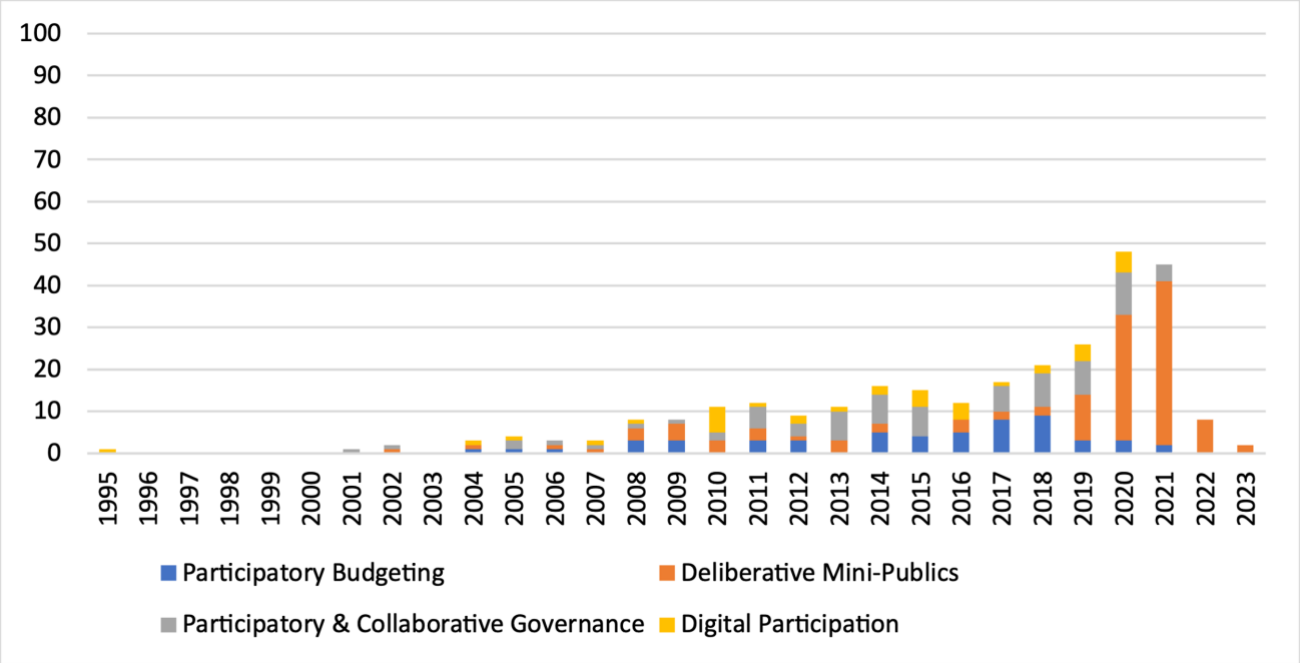


When looking at the relation between Democratic innovations and environmental & social sustainability, results mimic Figure 4.19, as the policy area on Environment has a predominant relationship with Deliberative Mini-Publics, and Planning & Development distributed among Deliberative Mini-Publics and Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance. Transportation takes the 3rd rank when considering Environmental and Social Sustainability.

4.6 The digitalisation of Democratic Innovations

Here we focus on the degree of digitalisation in the design and implementation of Democratic Innovations. Digital components are here understood as tools aimed at facilitating specific procedures of Democratic Innovations. For instance, an online platform created for the purpose of allowing citizens to submit ideas and proposal to a Participatory Budgeting initiative (Peixoto, 2009; Peixoto et al., 2017), or the use of videoconferencing software to expedite deliberations during a Deliberative Mini-Public (Freis & Eilders, 2015). To survey the dynamics associated with the incorporation of digital tools in Democratic Innovations in Europe, we opted to calculate the percentage of incorporation against the total number of cases in each country. This allows us to retrieve from data substantial differences between countries in the implementation of Democratic Innovations, thus giving us a better picture on the incorporation of digital tools, as shown in Figure 4.25 with Democratic Innovations from 1995 to 2023. The results of this exercise are depicted in Figure 4.22.

Figure 4.22) Timeline of the integration of digital components in Democratic Innovations (percentages)



Participatory Budgeting: There is a steady increase in the use of digital tools from 2008 onwards, with significant growth observed from 2014 to 2018, indicating that Participatory Budgeting have embraced digital tools more robustly in recent years. However, there is also a decrease in registered cases of Participatory Budgeting with digital tools, curiously in the years of the COVID-19 pandemic (2019-2021).

Deliberative Mini-Publics: The use of digital tools in mini-publics has been relatively consistent since the early 2000s, with slight fluctuations. However, there is a noticeable spike in recent years, especially between 2019 and 2021, suggesting a recent surge in digital engagement within these groups or the need to use virtual arenas during the pandemic years.

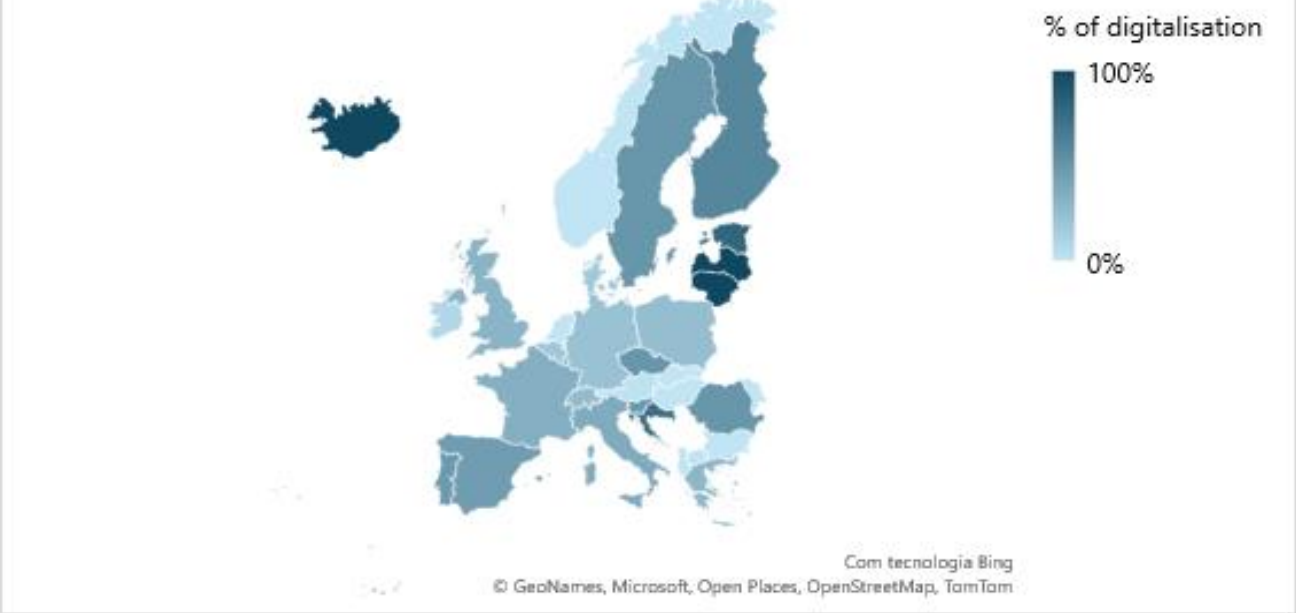
Participatory & Collaborative Governance: This category has seen moderate use of digital tools over time since 2011 through 2020, perhaps indicating a shift towards more digital integration in governance models on the turn of the first decade of the 21st century.

Digital Participation: The trend for digital participation starts off around 2007 and then always registers occurrences until 2020.

The growth in the use of digital tools across Democratic Innovations, especially after 2017 and peaking during the pandemic, suggests that digital tools are today an integral part of Participatory Budgeting (Peixoto 2009; Peixoto et al 2017), Deliberative Mini-Publics (Freis & Eilders 2015), and Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance. Digital tools allow for adaptive responses to global events that necessitate remote engagement and reflect a border advancement of new technologies in contemporary society.

Regarding the spatial distribution of the integration of digital components in Democratic Innovations, the Figure 2.23 provides interesting inputs.

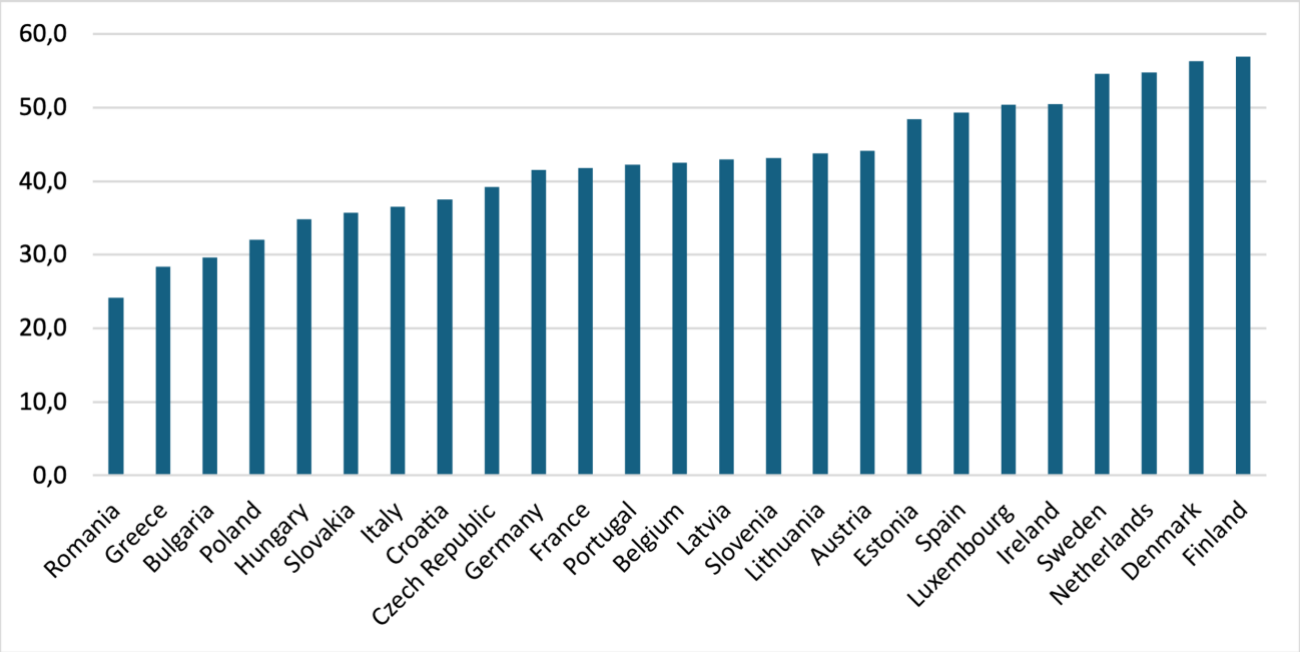
Figure 4.23) Spatial distribution of the integration of digital components in Democratic Innovations



Digital integration across Europe is visualised through different tones of blue. Darker shades of blue indicate higher levels of digital component integration in Democratic Innovations. The Baltic, Sweden, and Finland, along with Iceland, are the most digitally integrated in terms of use of digital components in Democratic Innovations, which may be indicative of a long-standing investment on digital governance.

When we cross-reference this output with data from Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI) of the European Commission (Figure 4.24), which measures EU countries' digital performance across five dimensions (Human Capital, Connectivity, Integration of Digital Technology, and Digital Public Services), we find interesting correlations in the years 2017 to 2022, as shown in Figure 4.27. Countries that show a darker shade of blue tend to have higher scores on DESI. For instance, Finland, Denmark, the Netherlands, and Sweden score highly in terms of Human Capital and Digital Public Services, which means that these countries are not only integrating digital technologies into democratic processes but also ensure digital skills and services in public administration.

Figure 4.24) Average value of the DESI index between 2017-2022 in Europe



Source: Generated by the authors using the data from the European Commission's DESI for the years 2017 to 2022

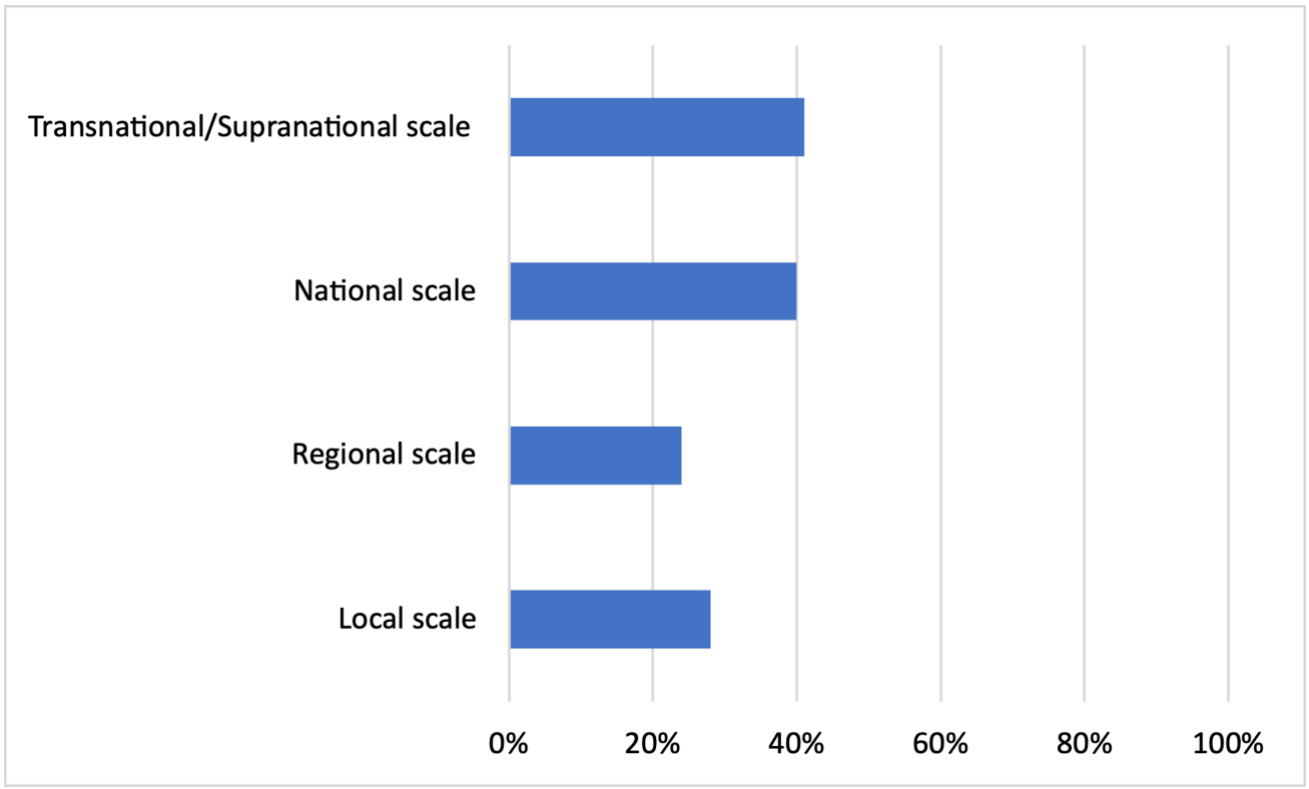
In contrast, countries in Southern and Eastern Europe, such as Romania, Bulgaria, and Greece, display lighter shades of blue on the map, which correspond to lower scores in the DESI. Low rates of Human Capital and Digital Public Services indicate challenges among population and public administration.

The cases of Spain and Portugal, on the one side, and Germany on the other, provide interesting exceptions to regional trends in digital integration within Europe. While Southern European countries show lower levels of digital integration, Portugal and Spain stand out with relatively higher scores on the DESI. This could be indicative of successful digital policies and investments made in these countries for connectivity infrastructure and digital public services (OECD, 2021; IMF, 2023). Germany is often perceived as a technological and economic powerhouse in Europe. However, it holds lower rates in digital integration compared to Scandinavian and Benelux neighbouring countries. A strong economic and industrial fabric does not necessarily relate to digital integration in Democratic Innovations (OECD, 2018), possibly because the public sector digitalisation walks at a slower pace. Nevertheless, despite regulatory caution (Wagner, 2013), improvements on the digitalisation of the public sector in Germany were significantly improved during the pandemic (Hartig-Merkel, 2022).

In conclusion and notwithstanding the exceptions mentioned above, there seems to be a clear trend where Northern and Western European countries lead the integration of digital components in Democratic Innovations, with strong performance in digital public services and human capital. Southern and Eastern European countries, in contrast, lag behind this trend.

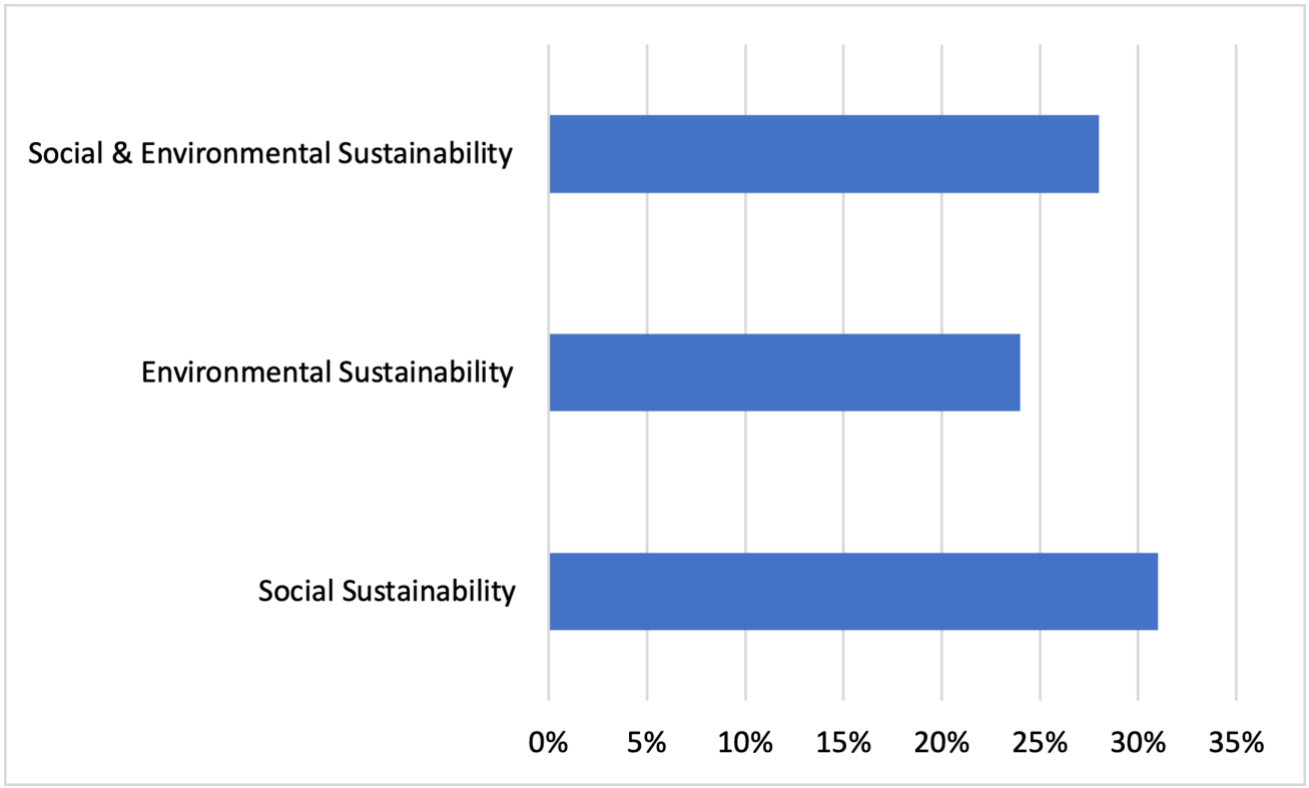
By crossing information on the incorporation of digital tools in the design and implementation of Democratic Innovations on different scales of governance, higher degree of digitalisation is found at the transnational and supranational level, as well as the national one. As shown in Figure 4.25, over 40% of the cases hold digital features in their institutional design. The application of digital tools is referred to as a way to “scale up” Democratic Innovations (Mikhaylovskaya, 2024), which is corroborated by our data. Downwards to local and regional levels of governance, we find that digital tools in Democratic Innovations are less frequently used (24% at the regional level and 28% at the local level).

Figure 4.25) The integration of digital tools in Democratic Innovations in different scales of governance (percentages)



Digital tools in Democratic Innovations and sustainability illustrate that social sustainability holds more than 30% of Democratic Innovations employing digital features. As shown in Figure 4.26, the use of digital tools is slightly less prevalent in Democratic Innovations that articulate Social and Environmental Sustainability (28% of cases), and when looking at environmental sustainability only, there is even less frequency (24% of cases).

Figure 4.26) The integration of digital tools in Democratic Innovations in different sustainability practices (percentages)



5 Conclusion

The main objective of this report is to provide a timeline and database of Democratic Innovations in Europe across an extended period. Through a quantitative approach, which relied on open access databases such as Participedia, the OECD's database on Representative Deliberate Processes and Institutions among others, we collected 1046 real-world cases of DI. Every single one of these cases was then carefully studied in order to 1) survey the timeline of adoption of specific categories of Democratic Innovations, including digital participation as a hybrid subset of Democratic Innovations; 2) the spatial distribution of Democratic Innovations across the European continent; 3) study how Democratic Innovations relate to different levels of governance; 4) survey patterns in terms of number of citizens involved in Democratic Innovations and the duration of this involvement; 5) analyse how Democratic Innovations relate to distinct policy areas as well as to sustainability; lastly 6) study the incorporation of digital tools in the design and implementation of Democratic Innovations. Through this extensive empirical exercise, we were able to extract relevant insights on the development of Democratic Innovations in Europe.

Regarding the implementation of specific categories of Democratic Innovations, our research shows that it has evolved over the past decades. Notwithstanding the implementation of other categories like Participatory Budgeting and Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance, Deliberative Mini-Publics have become the most widely used Democratic Innovation in Europe. Since the first experiments with Deliberative Mini-Publics in the late 1970s, as we trace their development, we can see a notable surge in the 1990s which peaked in 2019-2021. This trajectory was most likely aided by the success of examples like the Irish Constitutional Convention, the dissemination of videoconferencing software as well as the popularity of Climate Assemblies. A turn towards more deliberative practices has definitely taken shape in Europe.

The analysis of the database also outlines the distribution of civic participation and engagement across Europe, revealing different groups of countries based on the frequency of cases. The group with higher incidence of cases include countries like the UK, Germany, and Italy, highlighting long traditions (particularly in the case of the UK) in promoting Democratic Innovations. The group with a moderate number of cases indicate growing interest in Democratic Innovations across diverse European regions. Finally, the group with lower number of cases suggest either new engagement in innovations to stimulate citizen participation in democracy or fewer resources for widespread implementation of Democratic Innovations.

Our research emphasises the need for nuanced understanding and additional research to fully grasp the distribution and impact of Democratic Innovations, as there is limited information on the quality and conditions for success of these practices. It also highlights the predominance of Democratic Innovations at the local level, suggesting untapped potential at the transnational/supranational level, particularly within the EU context.

Considering the scales of governance where Democratic Innovations have been designed and implemented, we find that it is mostly at the local level that innovation takes place. Our analysis aligns with the idea that the local scale can be a laboratory of democracy where experiments take place due to factors such as the proximity between civil society and public authorities as well as to the prevalence of Democratic Innovations as solutions to urban planning and community development problems. However, further research needs to be conducted to understand the variation between different countries as to establish more generalisable explanations for the phenomenon.

In terms of the relations between participant numbers across Democratic Innovations and sustainability, we found that Democratic Innovations more frequently recruit small groups of

participants. However, Participatory Budgeting stand out as they manage to engage wider groups of participants, exceeding 1000 people in some cases. In contrast, Digital Participation, Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance, and Deliberative Mini-Publics generally involve few participants, which reflects difficulties for the institutional design of those Democratic Innovations in managing larger groups. The text also examines Democratic Innovations' focus on sustainability, revealing that initiatives often engage small groups, especially in Social and Environmental Sustainability, with Participatory Budgeting playing a significant role in attracting larger numbers of people for Social Sustainability efforts.

Regarding the duration of Democratic Innovations in Europe, the analysis shows that most cases consist of short-term engagements, often not exceeding four meetings, suggesting a preference for brief, concentrated interactions. A significant inclination towards one-off or short-term projects is retrievable from our data. This trend is evident across 486 cases categorised within the 1 to 10 meetings range. As engagements lengthen, participation drastically reduces, with a mere single case reported with more than 100 meetings. This pattern persists across Democratic Innovations, including Digital Participation, Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance, and Deliberative Mini-Publics, all showing a preference for a small number of meetings. Furthermore, the study examines the duration of Democratic Innovations in relation to sustainability themes, finding no significant variation between initiatives focused on social, environmental, or combined sustainability goals. Overall, the findings suggest a gap between the democratic potential of Democratic Innovations discussed in the main literature and the implementation of practices that fall short of favouring long-term interactions, more strongly embedded within governance structures.

With respect to digitalisation, increasing integration of digital components in Democratic Innovations across Europe reveals a trend across Democratic Innovations, particularly from 2017 onwards. The growth during the pandemic indicates a response to global events in combination with technological advancements. Spatial analysis shows Northern and Western Europe leading digital integration, attributed to higher digital skills and advanced public services. Southern and Eastern Europe lag behind, although Spain and Portugal are an exception. Additionally, digital tools are more prevalent at larger levels of governance, pointing to their role in scaling up Democratic Innovations.

The analysis highlights the significance of Democratic Innovations across various policy areas, particularly emphasising Planning & Development, Environment, and Governance due to their broad societal impact and participatory needs. Planning & Development lead in the database with 300 cases, reflecting urban and regional strategic focus.

The Environment follows with over 250 cases, addressing climate change and sustainable management, which underscored the critical role of citizen engagement in environmental policies. Governance & Political Institutions, with 151 cases, highlight the potential for political reform. The relationship between policy areas and Democratic Innovations presents a strong link between environmental issues and Deliberative Mini-Publics, and a more balanced distribution of social sustainability issues through Deliberative Mini-Publics and Participatory Governance and Collaborative Governance , but also a strategic use of Participatory Budgeting in Planning & Development, highlighting the diverse application of Democratic Innovations in addressing Environmental and Social Sustainability.

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