



# **Republican Principles in Participatory Events: An Analytical Framework**

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# Abstract

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In recent years, there has been an increased interest in democratic participation, with a range of new initiatives and participatory tools implemented across the world - in local communities, for national debates, internationally and online. Despite their popularity and the widespread use of these initiatives there is, however, often little clarity about how the success of these initiatives should be determined. In this thesis I explore this question from a theoretical angle, advancing the idea that clear theoretical benchmarks and indicators are required to determine the success of any participatory initiative. To make this argument, I engage with the civic republican tradition, arguing that this approach offers an important set of benchmarks to evaluate participatory events. Specifically, I accentuate three core republican principles – civic virtue, common good and freedom as non-domination, which I argue can be used to evaluate participatory initiatives. Building on these principles, the purpose of the thesis is to develop an analytical framework for testing the degree to which participatory mechanisms accord with these values. I argue that by doing so, it becomes possible to evaluate the success of participatory mechanisms.

In seeking to promote civic republican benchmarks for evaluating participatory mechanisms, in this thesis I will argue civic republicanism shares commitments and core objectives with the theory of deliberative democracy in mutually beneficial ways. It is the synergies between the two theories that underpin the benchmarks of the framework I am devising. Specifically, they translate into benchmarks of popular control, inclusiveness, internal and external transparency, common good and civic education. Jointly, these six benchmarks form the republican framework for evaluating participatory events.

In addition to proposing an analytical framework for participatory events, I put forward a research roadmap, which serves as a guide for applying the framework in practice. This is done by operationalizing the benchmarks and providing an illustrative case study to demonstrate how the research process could be structured and carried out. Having reviewed the case, I conclude with recommendations for scholars and practitioners attempting to assess success of participatory events.

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# Introduction

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In 2010, a constitutional assembly took place in Iceland, with an aim to establish a new constitution for the country. What was special about this particular assembly was that for the first time, crowdsourcing and social media were used on a large scale to help gather ideas and recommendations from citizens, making the platform much more accessible for the general public. This process had several parts to it – citizens were engaged in assemblies, community meetings and online discussions. Finally, informed by these processes, an elected Citizen Council (Stjórnlagaráð) produced a new draft constitution. The draft constitution was later accepted by 67% of voters in a national referendum, but regardless of this success, was not ratified by the Althingi (The Icelandic Parliament). Despite being seen by many as a successful ‘pioneering case study of a crowdsourced law-reform process’ (Aitamurto and Landemore, 2015, 1), the reviews of the Icelandic Assembly have been mixed. Although praised for its accessibility (Oddsdottir, 2014, 1214), inclusiveness (Landemore, 2017) and ‘unprecedented level of civic participation’ (Fillmore-Patrick, 2013, 160), it has also been criticised for procedural design flaws (Landemore, 2013, 4), inconsistencies in the sample selection (McMenamin, 2018, 27) and the rushed manner in which the draft constitution was put together (Landemore 2017; McMenamin, 2018).

These contrasting reviews raise a number of questions about the success and purpose of the initiative. Was this assembly a success or not? Did it have a positive impact? To think about these questions systematically, it is necessary to understand what vision of democracy (if any) drove this initiative and what sort of outcomes it was looking to secure. If the Assembly was designed to allow citizens to make real decisions and draft a new Constitution for Iceland, then this initiative has failed. If, however, the initiative was designed to promote engaged citizenship, then it is likely to be viewed in much kinder terms.

What these kinds of judgements show is that it matters how we think about democracy and the role of citizens in democratic initiatives. Whilst democracy is often treated as a self-evident ideal, it is not by any means a monolith. Democracy, as an idea and as a political reality is contested, marked by conflicting interpretations and inconsistent

terminology (Barber, 2003; Crick, 2002, 7; Dahl, 2006; Held, 2006; Shapiro, 2010; Sartori, 1987; Sunstein, 2001; Weale, 1999). This ambiguity means that evaluations and judgements that we make of democratic practices may be based on different democratic goals and principles. And when democratic principles are cast in a general way without clarification, their force and implications may not at all be self-evident. Therefore, unless there are set benchmarks for designing and evaluating democratic initiatives (based on clearly defined principles), their success and contribution will be difficult to determine.

This thesis considers the potential for civic republicanism to provide such theoretical principles. Engaging in detail with this tradition, I will propose a set of benchmarks that can be used to evaluate republican principles in mechanisms of participation, such as the Icelandic Constitutional Assembly. This endeavour aims to contribute to current academic debates around democratic reform, but also to identify key principles that can guide the design and implementation of future programmes of democratic reform.

## **Civic Republicanism and Participatory Democracy**

As noted above, in this thesis civic republican tradition will provide the theoretical foundation of the framework of analysis for participatory mechanisms. In this sense, the approach adopted here is normative, model-specific and deductive, as I will be developing the benchmarks and indicators from the key principles of civic republicanism.

Civic republicanism is an old and rich tradition of political thinking and despite dating back to ideas proposed by Aristotle and Cicero, continues to carry theoretical significance today. While rightly criticised for its potential to be interpreted as oppressive (Honohan, 2003) and patriarchal (Kerber, 1988), political theorists such as Philipp Pettit (1997), Quentin Skinner (1993), Maurizio Viroli (1998), Cecile Laborde (2008) and Andrew Peterson (2011) have demonstrated that civic republicanism in its contemporary form continues to make important theoretical contributions to democratic practice and theory.

Although the tradition itself has developed and changed over time (an evolution of republicanism is described in more detail in Chapter 2), and has seen many variations and forms, this body of work shares a commitment to at least three key principles: freedom as non-domination, civic virtue and common good. These principles are seen to be particularly important within this thesis because they provide the basis for

benchmarks against which the success of any participatory initiative can be discerned. To briefly illustrate, in promoting the idea of freedom from non-domination, civic republicanism suggests that citizens must be free from arbitrary interference and have structural independence from the will of another (Pettit, 1997; Skinner, 1993, Larmore, 2001). This idea is particularly important for assessing participation, as it is through taking part in decision-making processes that citizens become free from arbitrary oppression. In practice, this means that citizens need to be a part of decision-making process and play a role in political life. While this does not mean that citizens would have to be involved at all times and on every occasion, the protection of their freedom requires regular involvement in public affairs.

For such participation to be possible, citizens will also need opportunities to develop and enhance their civic virtue. This notion stems from the belief that republican citizenship does not just provide individuals with entitlements, but also presupposes certain duties and commitments that reach beyond respect for the negative liberties of others (Cicero 1991, Rousseau, 1997, Skinner, 1984). This means that republican laws need to be supported by 'habits of virtue' expressed through 'good' citizenship, for the republic to work. These habits may take different forms, but should be rooted in active involvement, collaboration, and civic education. For participatory mechanisms, this means citizens should have an opportunity to learn and build knowledge not only about the issue at stake, but to also practice their argumentative, reflective, and analytical skills.

Finally, the notion of civic virtue is linked with the third core principle of republicanism – the common good. When exercising civic virtue, citizens should act with their community in mind – focusing not just on their own interests, or those of other citizens, but on the greater good of the republic. This means that any form of involvement is likely to be characterised by collaborative action, teamwork, and deliberative exchanges, to discover what the common good of a community is.

Jointly, these three principles underpin republican approach to politics. In the context of participatory mechanisms, I argue that they translate into specific benchmarks – popular control, inclusiveness, transparency, civic literacy, and community orientation or common good. Within this thesis it is argued that any initiative wishing to promote civic republican standards for participation will have to think about and uphold certain standards in order to promote these principles.

## **Deliberative Democracy**

To understand how republican principles can be translated into specific benchmarks for the analysis of participatory mechanisms, I will turn to a democratic tradition that has been analysing, designing, and promoting participatory mechanisms for nearly four decades. Starting from its early formulations in the 1980s and 1990s, deliberative theorists, in line with the tradition of republicanism, were concerned with securing the fundamental principle of citizens' autonomy as the foundation of their freedom (Florida, 2018, 41). They linked this principle with an ideal form of democratic practice in which citizens' private interests would be transformed and aligned with the requirements of common good. This would happen through reasoned public debate, which they believed embodied the civic practice of self-determination.

Deliberative democracy can be summarised effectively by using a helpful heuristic proposed by Stephen Elstub (2010 and 2015) of three generations of deliberative democracy. Where the first generation of deliberative democrats (such as Habermas, 1996 and Rawls 1971 and 1995) focused on normative justifications of the theory and its key components, second generation deliberative democrats (such as Bohman, 1998 and Gutmann and Thompson, 2000) built on these ideas and adapted them, taking into consideration the complexity of contemporary societies and the practical requirements that they entail. While deliberative democracy had initially been understood in terms of reason-exchange, rational arguments and reaching consensus by the first-generation deliberative democrats, contributions from second generation deliberative democrats no longer fixated on reaching consensus. Public reason was still important for them, but the predominant view now was that preferences will adapt to public reason and new information in an un-uniform manner (Elstub, 2010, 291). Finally, the third-generation deliberative democrats (such as Fishkin, 2011; Lafont, 2015 and Bächtiger & Parkinson, 2019) have focused on deliberative practice and explored how deliberative democracy can be institutionalised. With this focus, a large amount of work has been done to explore deliberative democracy empirically (for an overview of empirical studies of deliberative democracy, see Part I in 'Can the People Govern?' by Rosenberg, 2007) and the theory of deliberative democracy has become much more diverse.

The recurrent theme in all three generations of deliberative democracy is that democratic government should secure a central place for 'reasoned discussion in political life' (Cooke,



2000, 947). As such, it is essentially a democratic theory that prescribes that decisions should be made through a process that includes relevant actors and allows them to exchange reasons behind their judgments in the light of which their preferences can be transformed. The more equal this deliberative participation, the more democratic the system will be.

While civic republicanism shares this goal, it differs from deliberative democracy in that it does not stipulate on priority of the principle of deliberation over other principles. There is value in deliberation in that it allows the common good to be discovered and citizens' interests to be tracked, but it is not a starting point for civic republicanism or, put differently, it is not a required principle, but rather an ordering principle of participation (Saward, 2021, 82).

Nevertheless, while not proposing an identical democratic model and not always employing republican terminology, deliberative democrats share a number of commitments with the republican tradition, often emphasising the value of freedom, common good and civic virtue. Both traditions also emphasise the role of reason-giving in decision making, claiming that all those affected by the decision should have a chance to shape it and have equal access to popular control. It is because of the shared commitments to these principles that deliberative democracy (especially in its third-generation formulations) is particularly useful and insightful for developing a republican framework of analysis for participatory mechanisms. This is because deliberative democrats have a lot to say about democratic design in term of how collective decision making in participatory platforms can be enacted in different contexts and for different purposes. These contributions offer an insight into how certain theoretical principles can be practiced in different settings and as such, they give us an idea of what we should look for when determining success or failure of a particular participatory event.

## **Republican Analytical Framework**

To establish a theoretical framework for the analysis of participatory mechanisms, I believe it is useful to explore the synergies between deliberative democracy and civic republicanism more closely. A question could be raised at this point as to why we should focus on civic republicanism, when this theoretical tradition seems to share many goals

with democratic theory more broadly, but also with deliberative democracy more specifically. Why not just focus on these more widely discussed models of democracy?

I have turned to civic republican theory not because I wish to argue its absolute normative superiority to other theories (democratic or otherwise) or even that it provides the 'correct' theory of justice. I have turned to civic republicanism because it offers a theory of society that outlines how citizens should live and engage with one another, and I believe its key principles capture values that are useful for contemporary democratic theorising, especially when it comes to evaluation of participatory events. Furthermore, it is at its core a citizen-centred theory, which focuses on active involvement of citizens in decision-making and entails reason-giving and reason-sharing, so that the interests of citizens can be registered and tracked, and as a result the common good can be discovered. At the same time, civic republicanism is concerned with protecting everyone in the community, including the minorities, to make sure no citizen is stripped from their freedom (understood as non-dominance). As a result, civic republicanism embodies what Saward (2021, 61) calls democratic sensibility, which is indeed understood as general predisposition to value democracy. More precisely, civic republicanism commits to core democratic components (Saward calls this democratic minimum – see Saward, 2021, 62) of community, governance, equality, freedom, resources and constitution and then builds on this core, demonstrating a way how democratic practices can be improved and extended.<sup>1</sup> So it does have something very important to say about democratic practices and devices (such as participatory events), but it does not necessarily mean that it is normatively tied to liberal democratic state arrangements as we know them.

The reason that I then also turn to deliberative democracy is because as a theory it provides an extensive analysis of how principles of the kind civic republicanism puts forward can be enacted in practice, in numerous contexts, on different levels of decision-making and for different purposes. While it is narrower in its theoretical focus than civic republicanism, it provides a very rich and detailed insight into the nature and design of participatory events. So, the key goals and aspirations of the two theoretical traditions are, at the very least, overlapping – freedom and autonomy is, for example, only one of

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<sup>1</sup> I discuss republican theory and its commitment to these democratic components in more detail in Chapter 2 of the thesis.

the principles they share. Engaged participation, focus on the common good and civic education are also all identified as crucial components of political life in the two traditions.

While a number of political thinkers (Bohman, 2001; Brest, 1987; Emanuel, 1996; Bello Hutt, 2018; Peterson, 2009 and 2011; Weinstock and Nadeau, 2004) have similarly acknowledged the close relationship between the two traditions, the complementary nature of the two bodies of scholarship has not yet been explored with a reference to participatory mechanisms. I believe that addressing this relationship is necessary for developing a theoretical framework of analysis for participatory initiatives.

## **Contribution**

Following the normative aspirations set out in the section above, the ‘republican approach to politics’ is adopted in this thesis to contribute to the study of participatory democracy. Combined with the normative exploration of civic republicanism, in this thesis I will make contributions summarised below.

First, at the theoretical level, I will explore the complementarity of civic republicanism and deliberative democracy, proposing that the combined theoretical framework of these theories can be helpful for evaluating participatory events.

Second, at the empirical level, I will demonstrate how republican principles can be operationalised into benchmarks for measuring the success of participatory events. To offer vital insight into how to bridge the gap between theory and practice I will apply the republican analytical framework to an illustrative case study of ‘Democracy Matters’ Citizens’ Assembly in Sheffield (2015). By using a three-tier analytical framework that looks at the design, process and narrative of initiatives, I will demonstrate how the quality of participatory mechanisms can be assessed at their different stages. Through this analysis I will also offer practical lessons for other scholars seeking to measure republican quality of participatory events. Specifically, through this analysis I will demonstrate: a) how well republican principles can be realised in a participatory setting; and b) the success and the challenges democratic practitioners may face when organising participatory events. These insights will be of value to not only academic scholars, but

also democratic practitioners interested in advancing (and assessing) republican principles in participatory events.

An important contribution of the thesis is that it attempts to bridge theoretical principles with its empirical manifestations and demonstrates how it can be carried out in practice by providing an assessment of a case study. It is relatively rare for theorists to provide guidelines on how to operationalise their ideas into practical analytical frameworks. Nevertheless, I posit that theoretical principles and their empirical manifestations are both part of the same story when it comes to success of participatory mechanisms so the principles of republicanism and their potential institutional manifestations should be discussed jointly.

In conclusion, the purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate how principles of civic republicanism can be applied when setting up participatory events. Such analysis will: a) ensure republican principles are promoted and protected; and b) demonstrate that participatory practices can only be meaningfully improved and replicated when following a clear blueprint rooted in clearly defined theoretical principles.

## **Thesis Structure and Approach**

In order to advance the contributions discussed above this thesis will be structured in two parts. Chapter 1 will discuss and evaluate some of the existing analytical frameworks, demonstrating how the framework developed in this thesis addresses the limitations of these frameworks, while Chapters 2-4 will focus on the theories of civic republicanism and deliberative democracy. The aim of this part of the thesis is to outline the key tenets of the two traditions, identify their core ideals and demonstrate the potential of creating an analytical framework for the analysis of participatory initiatives.

As suggested so far, in this thesis I evaluate participatory events from a theoretical angle, proposing that clear theoretical indicators are needed to determine the success of these events. Specifically, I engage with the civic republican tradition, which, I argue, offers an important set of principles and benchmarks for the analytical framework I am looking to devise. To determine what benchmarks republicanism prescribes, I will engage with the key principles of civic republicanism (civic virtue, common good and freedom as non-domination) through conceptual analysis. I believe this is the most appropriate approach

because it allows me to review each republican principle separately, breaking them down into simpler components whilst simultaneously retaining a focus on the three ideals as a single (republican) set.

Conceptual analysis is a study of basic building blocks of whatever propositions we may form (Olsthoorn, 2017, 153). It helps researchers to elucidate and disambiguate complex ideas, to sharpen their thinking and importantly – to structure theories and guide their moral judgement (Blau, 2017, 10, Daigneault, 2012; see also Tähtinen & Havila, 2019, 533). There are two important elements to this approach, as is indicated by its name – it focuses on concepts and on analysis of concepts. The focus on concepts is needed because we first have to clarify the propositional content of the concept in question. Concepts, especially normative concepts, are likely to have more than one definition as there may be disagreement about their fundamental nature (think of terms such as justice, fairness or freedom), unlike terms, which can be understood as words that express the concepts, not necessarily saying much about their nature. This means that while people can agree on a meaning of a normative concept (e.g. what freedom as non-domination entails), they may defend incompatible principles of the same concept (you may criticise all domination and interference, while I may define domination as *arbitrary* interference only), thus endorsing a different normative standard.

Moreover, concepts not only can have many different representations in the world and different normative principles attached to them, there can also be a difference in the criteria of application for that concept in practice. For example, we can be in agreement on what inclusiveness means (citizen participation in governance, for example) and we can also be in agreement on the normative principle that inclusiveness must entail more than just citizen participation in elections. But then we can disagree on how this principle is applied – you may propose that inclusiveness must be extensive and should be reflected in daily participation of self-governance, while I may argue participation in deliberative assemblies once every few years would be sufficient for a state to be sufficiently inclusive. Whether the principle of inclusiveness is met or not in a specific case therefore relies not only on the meaning of the concept and the normative principles attached to it – it also depends on how we believe they should be applied in practice.

In the context of this thesis, 'concept' relates to the basic building blocks of the republican qualities I am looking to trace in participatory events. 'Analysis' on the other hand relates to an examination of these qualities to determine their nature, their structure, and most importantly – their essential features (Olsthoorn, 2017, 154). The main question that I am interested in is 'How do I recognise the enactment of republican principles in different participatory settings?'. To answer that question, I need to be able to identify representations that approximate what I mean when I say, for example, 'popular control' or 'inclusiveness'.

This is what I will attempt to do in Chapter 4.. I will put forward a set of definitions of each republican good (which are devised from the three key republican principles) and then identify the set of conditions that are necessary for these concepts to apply. The approach I have employed here mimics what Olsthoorn presents as a classic type of conceptual analysis (2017, 164) - extensional analysis. This method takes the following form:

**Step 1** is to propose a tentative definition of the concept by specifying the general class to which the thing to be defined belongs and then state the specific differences that mark it off from other species of that same general kind (this is known as differentiating);

**Step 2** is to come up with counterexamples, to test whether your initial definition captures the condition accurately for the concept to apply (if the counterexample is successful, then the definition must be tweaked);

**The final step** is to provide a clear, precise and plausible definition as well as operational criteria for application.

The method can be summarised in two final points. First, to locate and evaluate a republican principle (a concept) in a specific participatory setting, it is necessary to put forward an operational definition, which will then be applied to the case. It needs to be specific enough for the researcher to be able to recognise it, and at the same time it needs to be open and flexible, so as to not limit the breadth and depth of what is being measured (Maruyama and Ryan, 2014, 165). I will focus on this point in Chapter 4, where I will define each republican principle for participatory settings.

The second point is to state explicitly the criteria that makes something count as an instance of the specific concept evaluated. For example, it needs to be clear what criteria a participatory event must meet for it to be promoting the republican good of external transparency or what criteria must be met for the event to be inclusive under the republican reading. This part of conceptual analysis is carried out in Chapter 6, where I match each definition of republican benchmarks with possible representations that they may have in participatory settings. I will also consider counterexamples to show which representations would not match the republican standards, which I will discuss by introducing scales of different possible representations of republican principles.

To be clear, it may be helpful to summarise the terminology I will be adopting while carrying out conceptual analysis of republican principles. By principles, I mean core republican values of freedom as non-domination, civic virtue and common good – these are the key components that underpin republican thinking and that I argue should be the basis of the analytical framework I am devising. By benchmarks, I will mean the republican ‘goods’ that these principles prescribe – so, for example, to secure the principle of freedom as non-domination, I will be looking for the benchmark of popular control in participatory events. And then finally, I will be looking for indicators of these benchmarks – so, for example, participants having decision-making power of a policy will serve as an indicator that the benchmark of popular control is furthered in a participatory event, thus furthering the republican principle of freedom as non-domination.

To then demonstrate how this sort of analysis can be applied to an empirical case of a participatory event, I engage with the tradition of documentary analysis, and specifically with work on content analysis. This approach is adopted because although participatory mechanisms come in a range of forms it is almost always possible to identify documentary evidence related to them and which is available for analysis.

This empirical assessment will be the focus of the second part of the thesis. Chapters 6 and 7 specifically will turn to a reflection on how the republican theoretical framework I have devised can be applied in practice. In this part of the thesis, I aim to bridge the gap between theory and practice by showing how this framework can be applied. Using a case study approach (Chapter 5), in Chapter 6 I will outline how the framework offered in Chapter 4 can be operationalised for empirical study and in Chapter 7 present findings from an illustrative application of these techniques. This form of conceptual and

empirical study is somewhat unusual in the study of participatory events, but I argue that this blend of democratic theory and empirical study is critical if clear standards for design and evaluation are to be upheld.

In summary then, and to reiterate, the thesis adopts a two-part structure. Chapter 1 will review existing analytical frameworks, Chapter 2 will outline civic republicanism, Chapter 3 will outline deliberative democracy and Chapter 4 will draw on both traditions to identify a series of benchmarks that can be used to evaluate participatory events.

The second part will first (in Chapter 5) outline the methodological principles underpinning empirical analysis. Chapter 6 then outlines how documents can be analysed using the republican framework of analysis, whilst Chapter 7 offers an illustrative application of these techniques. Chapter 8 will conclude this thesis, by offering an overview of how a republican analytical framework can be applied to participatory events and will provide advice for scholars and democratic practitioners with advice, highlighting the benefits and shortcomings of this approach to evaluation of participatory events.



# Chapter 1:

## Evaluative Frameworks of Participatory Mechanisms: Benefits and Limitations

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The last 30 years have witnessed enthusiasm for participatory democracy around the world, with participatory mechanisms being organised locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally (Baiocchi and Ganuza, 2016, 6; Godwin, 2021, 213; Font, Della Porta and Sintomer, 2014, 42, Elstutb and Escobar, 2019). On some occasions, local governments have introduced participatory budgeting to improve the fiscal management of public administration facing financial constraints, in others, as in the case of British Columbia assemblies or Constitutional Assembly in Iceland, citizens were called upon to make a contribution to constitutional amendments.

Although it is hard to quantify the magnitude of participation (mainly because most forms of participatory innovation are 'often local, sometimes temporary, and highly varied' (Fung, 2015, 514)), these examples are not isolated, but illustrate an interest in democratic and participatory reform. Evidence that this is the case can be found in different forms. At the global level, the World Bank has invested \$85 billion in development assistance for participation in the last decade (Mansuri and Rao, 2013, 1). In addition, the website Participedia has shown numerous examples of participatory initiatives worldwide, showcasing almost 2000 different participatory case studies from across the world operating at local, national and international levels. There is also evidence of a growing industry around the promotion of participatory methods, with many actors providing training to promote the use of participatory tools (for examples see Jain and Polman, 2003; and training courses offered online by 'INVOLVE UK ', International Association for Public Participation and the Kettering Foundation ).

Alongside the rise of democratic innovations, academic interest in participatory mechanisms has risen as well. Elstutb and Escobar (2019), Florida (2018), Fung (2006, 2009), Fung, Gastil and Levine (2005), Setälä (2014) and Smith (2009) have all provided detailed overviews of various participatory practices, rigorously dissecting their design,

benefits and limitations. Less attention has, however, been paid to the question of how to evaluate and compare democratic innovations, and comprehensive frameworks of evaluation are rarely spelled out by academics or democratic practitioners.

Of course, there have been some important theoretical works which have provided frameworks for evaluations and comparisons. For example, Archon Fung (2015, 515) has proposed that participatory events can be analysed with the help of the 'democracy cube' formed by three axis – the role of participants, authority and power, and communication and decision mode. Graham Smith (2009) has alternatively proposed that analysis should focus on inclusiveness, popular control, considered judgement, transparency, efficiency and transferability. Brigitte Geissel (2009 and 2012) and David Beetham (2012) have also discussed the importance of evaluating new and old forms of citizen engagement in a consistent and comprehensive way.

What these contributions have in common is their focus on the participatory processes and procedures – they tend to assess the process, design and outcomes of participatory events, often using purpose-driven criteria, such as 'success', 'effectiveness' and 'impact'. But while being insightful and highly useful for the general understanding participatory democracy, the criteria used for these evaluations are insufficiently reflective of the normative/theoretical/ethical underpinnings of those criteria. Without such reflection, evaluations of the practical value of events can be fundamentally different and even contradictory.

In her volume on evaluating democratic innovations, Geissel (2012) claims that there will probably never be consensus about the 'yardsticks' or benchmarks for evaluations of participatory mechanisms amongst democratic theorists. While this may be true, it is nevertheless important to develop clear and robust standards for evaluating empirical evidence of participatory mechanisms. Participatory innovations should be seen as 'ideas in action' (Newton, 2012), meaning that for these practices to be implemented successfully, they should be based on coherent and definite theoretical principles. And while there may be very good reasons for any participatory event to be evaluated on its own terms, if we are to make any substantial claims about the success or effectiveness of the event, we need to have a clear definition of what it means for a participation exercise to be effective and/or successful. Neither effectiveness nor success are unidimensional, objective qualities, they are concepts that are open to interpretation and contention.

Therefore, any framework used for an evaluation of this kind, or indeed, a comparison of two or more participatory exercises, will have to ensure that key theoretical anchors are identified first. Think, for example, of a participatory event where participants are presented with a problem which they then must find a solution to. To determine whether the event has or has not been successful one would first have to define what the standard for success is. Is it the speed at which the participants solved the issue? Is it the number of solutions that the group identified? Is it the quality of these solutions? Is it the group's ability to reach consensus? Should we be focusing on the process or the outcomes of the event? To find an answer to this question, we should first clarify why participatory events are necessary and what democratic values they are securing. To illustrate this point in a more detailed manner, the remainder of this Chapter will review a few of the existing evaluative frameworks, highlighting their key focal points, as well as limitations. By doing so, I will point at the normative gap my framework is looking to fill.

## **1.1 Evaluative Frameworks for Participatory Events**

### **1.1.1 Graham Smith's Analytical Framework for Democratic Innovations**

In his book 'Democratic Innovations' Graham Smith (2009) presents an analytical framework for democratic innovations. The framework is rooted in a set of democratic principles, that can be used to compare the capacity of institutional devices to enact in different contexts: inclusiveness, popular control, considered judgement and transparency. Despite the focus on participatory institutions in his own study, for Smith, these principles are 'fundamental to any theoretical account of the democratic legitimacy of institutions' (Smith 2009, 12) although neither is it meant to be a definitive list of democratic goods (Smith 2009, 20), but rather just the significant ones. While Smith admits that 'democratic goods can be realised in compelling combinations that embody the ambitions of different theories of democracy' (Smith 2009, 19), he has done such an analysis for participatory democracy.

Smith (2009, 16) describes the four democratic goods he has selected in the following way:

'(..) inclusiveness turns our attention to the way in which political equality is realised in at least two aspects of participation: presence and voice. Popular control requires consideration of the degree that

participants are able to influence different aspects of the decision-making process. Considered judgement entails inquiry into citizens' understanding of both the technical details of the issue under consideration and the perspectives of other citizens. And finally, transparency centres reflection on the openness of proceedings to both participants and the wider public'.

Smith then explains the main reason for choosing these particular values is that no matter how much different models of democracy would clash and no matter how the different values are weighed and interpreted, it is difficult to conceive of an account that would not include these four democratic goods. Or, put differently, if a democratic theory were to overlook one of these values, it would be deemed severely deficient. Smith then also proposes that we complement the analytical framework by two additional institutional goods: efficiency and transferability, so that we are sure that the event in question works in practice and can be replicated in the future. Jointly, these 6 criteria forms Smith's framework.

While these are valuable insights and Smith defends them convincingly, there seems to be one more step missing for this analytical framework to be applied to specific participatory events in different settings. This is best captured in Smith's description of the four values he has selected for his framework: 'arguably, they are fundamental to any theoretical account of the democratic legitimacy of institutions, no matter how different their interpretations' (Smith, 2009, 20). This claim is problematic for two reasons.

First, these interpretations of democratic values are indeed varied, and this is not something that can be overlooked as insignificant. Different interpretations of theoretical values will entail different practical aspects and indicators, so what could be described as a successful event in terms of inclusiveness under one interpretation, might not be deemed successful under another. Conceptual clarity is necessary, if we are to disambiguate such complex values as inclusiveness and importantly – if we are to make a judgement about the success and effectiveness of a participatory.

The second issue, linked with the problem above, is that Smith is making a set of assumptions about the kind of democratic vision that he deems favourable. For example, when discussing inclusiveness, Smith notes that we need to consider the selection mechanism in our analysis as well as its link to the demos, while also being aware of how the institutional design can affect fairness, as the presence of citizens from politically

marginalised groups does not necessarily equate to equality of voice. This short description alone contains many assumptions about what democratic governance should look like – it seems to be describing model of representative democracy, where citizens are to be selected to participate periodically, and social stratification is considered when designing participatory events. While this is a perfectly reasonable proposal, normatively speaking, it lacks consistency. While Smith claims that the selected values would fit any model of democracy, his framework is developed with one particular model in mind, which should be discussed more explicitly for normative clarity.

Smith also poses a list of further questions that we should ask about inclusiveness, but then does not provide insight as to how the answers should be found to these. Smith (2009, 25) notes: ‘We need to consider the ways that institutional rules, norms and expectations can exclude or undermine the contributions of certain citizens.’ While this sounds reasonable, it is not providing clear instructions on how to make a judgment based on this consideration. In other words, his framework tells us what kind of values we should consider, but not how we should weigh and evaluate them, and which specific indicators would help us to make that judgement.

### **1.1.2 How to Measure the Impacts of Participatory Innovations on the Quality of Democracy: Brigitte Geissel**

Another important contribution to the discussion of participatory mechanisms is presented by Brigitte Geissel (2012). In her volume on evaluating democratic innovations, Geissel claims that there will probably never be consensus about the ‘yardsticks’ or benchmarks for evaluations of participatory mechanisms amongst democratic theorists, but emphasises the need to not lose sight of them either – a recommendation that is taken seriously in this thesis.

Geissel’s aim is to evaluate existing participatory mechanisms empirically, but she notes that this is not easy to do when we use criteria such as ‘legitimacy’ and ‘effectiveness’, because of the numerous interpretations and meanings these concepts may have. In addition to these criteria, different scholars have identified other criteria: openness, acceptance, quality of deliberation, publicity, representativeness, access to resources, early involvement, accountability, context, process, transparency, accountability and

outcome of resolving conflict as important for evaluation (see Papadopolous and Waring 2007, 455; Abelson and Gauvin 2006; Dalton et al 2006., Rowe et al 2004 93; Rowe and Frewer 2004, Beierle and Cayford 2002, 6; Renn et al 1995). Geissel furthermore notes (2012, 190) that the main aims and core functions of participatory mechanisms are equally unclear.

What many of these existing attempts lack, can be summarised in five main issues, according to Geissel (2009, 193). The first is that they are too abstract to be used empirically. The second is that they lack (often, any) theoretical background. The third issue is that some of the criteria may be problematic in themselves – for example, the criterion of openness is tricky, because open innovations in which participants self-select may provide less fair participation than close innovations with carefully selected participants and equality of access is not sufficient if equality of usage is grossly lacking. Geissel also is not convinced by inclusion of such criteria as publicity (see section on Graham Smith above), noting that a high level of publicity is not necessarily an indicator of an enhanced quality of democracy.

The fourth issue identified by Geissel is that the ex-ante and ex-post impacts are often not differentiated properly, meaning that the impacts that are predisposed by design a priori and the impact that can be measured after the end of the event are often grouped together. Geissel explains (2009, 194): ‘For example, the fact that consultative procedures are just consultative without a decision-making competency is part of the design and not an ex-post impact, it was mostly determined from the beginning that they will have no effect on public policies’. And finally, the fifth issue that Geissel notes (2009, 195) as potentially the most important one is that : ‘(..)criteria for the evaluation of success and prerequisites for success are often confused: for example, criteria such as ‘access to resources’ or ‘early involvement’ might be favourable for a successful event, but they cannot serve as criteria for the evaluation of the impacts of a participatory innovation.’ In other words, it is fundamental that the impact (success) and pre-requisites for success are scrutinised separately.

Geissel then suggests that in order to avoid these five problems, it is important to review input to and output of the participatory event separately, while also thinking about the quality of democracy it brings (or does not bring) about. For Geissel, this translates into four main democratic dimensions: legitimacy, impact of the outcomes, democratic

process and civic education. For each of the dimensions, there are benchmarks to look for - legitimacy would translate into inclusive equal participation and perceived legitimacy; democratic process will be evaluated by measuring the event's deliberative quality; effectiveness (outcomes) will be linked with identification and achievement of collective goals and civic education will be viewed in terms of improvement of knowledge and civic skills. However, despite this detailed review of limitations of the existing frameworks, Geissel does not go much further than this in her discussion. Each dimension is described in a very general way, with just one paragraph for each value, and with little justification for the values themselves. It remains unclear how these benchmarks would manifest in participatory events and how they could be recognised in different participatory settings.

### **1.1.3 John Gastil's Framework of Analysis**

Another example of an analytical framework for participatory events is John Gastil's framework (Gastil, Knobloch and Kelly, 2012) which was picked up in a recent OECD (2020) report on Innovative Citizen Participation and New Democratic Institutions. Gathering approximately 300 cases of deliberative practices to explore the current trends, this report identifies different models, analyses trade-offs and assesses benefits and limitations of these mechanisms, basing the judgement on principles of good practice (design integrity, sound deliberation, influential recommendations and impact on wider public) as proposed by Gastil (see OECD, 2020, Chapter 4). Overall, the success of the event in this case is linked to effectiveness and impact under this reading, but not much is said about the theoretical basis for these desiderata.

While Gastil's framework is developed specifically for deliberative public events, the core insights and concepts employed apply to participatory events as such. Gastil introduces his framework in the following way:

'a narrow focus on a particular aspect of the event, such as its deliberative quality; the exclusion of attention to important elements of deliberation, such as participant selection and speaking opportunities; an overreliance on first-person interviews and self-report data; selective vignettes that usually showcase specific participants' positive experiences; particularly compelling moments in an uneven process; the favorable summary judgments of officials or witnesses with no training in ethnography or evaluation; and the optimistic and unsubstantiated attributions of policy or cultural impacts, as proclaimed by public agency staff, columnists, or event organizers. Such reports lack credibility and comparability across projects, so they do little more than

continue to highlight the best-case potential of such processes to favourably impress participants, organizers, and officials. These reports tell only a fraction of the entire story, and event organizers do not reap the benefits of constructive criticism' (Gastil, Knobloch and Kelly, 2012, 206).

The criticism and the logic of reasoning here seems to be very much in line with that put forward by Geissel (see above). Indeed, as the chapter proceeds, a distinction is made between the process and outcomes of the events, followed by a brief reference to 'Pragmatic Theoretical foundations' that need to be considered when evaluating deliberative mechanisms. Gastil, Knobloch and Kelly note (2012, 2011) that we need a link between normative theory and democratic practice, but since the focus here is on deliberative events, the criteria put forward focuses on democratic values of deliberative democracy.

Similarly, as in other cases presented in this chapter, a swift move is then made from an overall (in this case deliberative) theoretical discussion to specific procedural principles. It is posited that there are in total four of them: 1) design integrity, 2) sound deliberation, 3) influential conclusions and actions and 4) long-term effects on public life. Not much is said as to why these particular values are selected, but where this framework differs from others is that for every value proposed, there is a list of benchmarks that should be located. For example, when considering democratic deliberation, the evaluation should be focusing on the following aspects: 1) creation of solid information base, 2) prioritising key values at stake, 3) identification of broad range of solutions, 4) weighing of pros and cons, 5) distribution of speaking opportunities, 6) ensuring mutual comprehension, 7) consideration of other ideas and experiences, 8) respecting other participants and 9) ensuring that the solution is one that best addresses the problem discussed and is non-coercive in nature (Gastil, Knobloch and Kelly, 2012, 2012). All other values are broken down into specific components in the same manner.

While this framework is indeed very detailed and provides a layered analytical approach, it applies only to a specific kind of participatory event and is very much focused on the process of deliberation. It makes a quick move to procedural assessment of deliberative events, but the democratic values as such are not discussed, despite an earlier emphasis on the importance of theory and normativity. A framework of this kind is undoubtedly useful (as indicated by the excellent OECD report that has picked up on it), but only for



cases when the researcher has a narrow focus on a particular aspect of the event, not on tracing specific democratic ideals.

#### **1.1.4 Archon Fung's Democracy Cube**

Archon Fung (2015, 515) has proposed that participatory events can be analysed with the help of the 'democracy cube' formed by three axis – the role of participants, authority and power, and communication and decision mode. These are rooted in three values of democratic governance – effectiveness, legitimacy and social justice.

Fung gives guidance to practitioners, emphasising in particular that they should consider the full range of design choices and use the democracy cube as their guiding principle for reflecting on these choices. These will, according to Fung, include what kind of participants will be present, how they will speak, how they will listen, how they will exchange the information (e.g., in small groups) and the different levels of empowerment that they will enjoy.

In terms of theoretical foundations of these axes, Fung is very brief. He explains that part of the justification for citizen participation in the first place is that it may enhance legitimacy in democratic governance (Fung, 2015, 515). He notes that in a representative democracy, (which seems to be a democratic model that he prefers or at the very least accepts as a given), legitimacy is usually achieved through political competition and elections. He then explains that because we have been witnessing a decline in rates of voting and public trust in government, we should explore the possibility that increased participation could serve as a remedy. Fung (2015, 515) notes:

“The hope is that such innovations can increase legitimacy by injecting forms of direct citizen participation into the policy-making process because such participation elevates perspectives that are more closely aligned with those of the general public and because that participation offsets democratic failures in the conventional representative policy-making process’.

This is all that Fung has to say on the value of legitimacy and it seems to be described more in terms of potential that participation can bring about democratic benefits (enhanced legitimacy) than an actual value that participation has. It may be that what Fung is implying here is that enhanced legitimacy is a democratic value that we should

always be looking for in participatory events, but if this is so, it is not made clear how this could manifest in a participatory setting.

The second value that Fung mentions is effective governance. He describes it in the following way: 'A second value that participatory innovation sometimes seeks to advance is effective governance. Governance is effective to the extent that governance arrangements are capable of solving the substantive problems that they are set to address: providing education, caring for the indigent, creating security, and providing public goods and services (2015, 516).' This is all Fung has to say about this value and it is hardly specific enough to carry out a proper evaluation of participatory mechanisms. It seems to be describing governance in general, but then it doesn't specify how this would be embodied in a participatory setting, except for one example that he provides, which is that more citizens could be involved into administrative agencies such as the police, school systems and environmental regulators. What this example seems to be implying is that as long as participatory events of this kind would be organised, the democratic good of good governance would be secured. But this begs the question of how this democratic good would apply in other types of participatory events, e.g. a citizens jury discussing constitutional changes. How would we determine whether it is or is not contributing to good governance? Would it have to be addressing specific common issues, or does any form of participation that has a problem-solving nature qualify?

The third and final value that Fung mentions is social justice. Out of the three, this is the one that is describe in most detail and most specificity. The main implication of this value is that participation should not be contributing to unjust outcomes and where possible, shifting the balance of influence away from the dominant minority groups (e.g., the wealthy, the industrially concerned). This is to be achieved by giving voice to those who are socially and politically marginalized. In practice, you could measure it by looking at the participant recruitment and selection methods and consider whether these have been considerate of the divisions and inequalities in the community.

Overall, Fung is providing a very helpful foundation for evaluating participatory events, but similarly to the accounts described earlier in the chapter, there is little specificity regarding theoretical foundations of the axis he proposes, or how they are to be located in different participatory settings.

## **1.2 Existing Frameworks of analysis: A conclusion**

A single chapter can of course do no justice to the existing debates on evaluation of participatory events. I have tried to reflect on a few most prominent ones, to demonstrate their logic, the important contributions that they are making, whilst also demonstrating the theoretical gap that I am looking to fill with my thesis.

As noted by Smith (2009, 13) evaluations of democratic innovations tend to be rather patchy, and the approach that tends to dominate this work implies searching for institutions that best 'fit' or express the basic principles of a particular theoretical model of democracy, examples including the defence of the citizen initiative and referendum as the expression of political equality and responsive rule amongst direct democrats (Budge 1996; Saward 1998). Smith describes this as a deductive approach to institutional questions within democratic theory and rejects it as he claims that this approach to the analysis requires us to commit ourselves to one particular theoretical position or a model of democracy and is not particularly successful at producing policy or institutional reforms.

While I agree with Smith in his assessment to an extent, I believe that it is nevertheless important to be very clear about the theoretical model we are looking to advance with our democratic practices, or else we risk over-focusing on the process rather than the aim of the participation as such and the evaluation of the events risks becoming circular.

In this thesis, my aim is to create a base analytical framework, that is not detached from its theoretical foundations, and can then be developed and built upon to be applied in different settings and to different participatory mechanisms. With that, I do not wish to reject or dismiss the work that the authors above have done – quite the contrary. Their contributions are useful and beneficial for numerous reasons. For one, such contributions are reducing undue scepticism about participation, deliberation and citizen involvement as such and improving our understanding of strengths, weaknesses, and impact of participatory projects. In addition, they provide basis for the work I am trying to do, and serving as helpful guides, especially when it comes to empirical application of my framework.

That said, when the evaluative frameworks of participatory events are vague or too general about the theoretical foundations they are rooted in, applying it to different

setting becomes difficult. Process-oriented evaluations (focusing on implementation, development and structure of the event), and outcome-orientated evaluations (focusing on the end results, consequences and whether the intended goals are met), even if carried out jointly, are still missing something important. Namely, they remain somewhat arbitrary, or even ad hoc when not grounded in a foundational theoretical framework, because there is a disconnect between the normative and the empirical assessment of a participatory mechanism.

The problem is that the result of such assessments risks drifting across a whole sea of different process- and outcome-related indicators. Without at least a basic clarification of key democratic goals and values, it will be difficult to reconcile conflicting values and priorities amongst democratic assessment carried out by democratic researchers.

With that in mind, in the next section of this chapter, I will set out my approach to developing an analytical framework for participatory events. In doing so, I will strive to avoid the two important omissions in the discussions described above – I will engage in detailed assessment of theoretical values and clarify how these normative anchors would manifest in empirical reality.

### **1.3 Developing a Republican Analytical Framework**

As noted above, existing evaluative frameworks for participatory events (such as those put forward by Smith (2009), Newton and Geissel (2012) and Gastil et.al. (2012)) have been crucial for developing deliberative democratic theory, focusing in particular on assessing process, design and outcomes of participatory events. While this work has provided valuable insights for democratic theorists and practitioners alike, I argue that they have problematically neglected to explicitly review the theoretical principles which underpin the different sets of evaluative criteria.

Purpose-driven criteria such as ‘success’ or ‘effectiveness’ are questionable because they can be understood in different and potentially incompatible ways. In the absence of clearly defined theoretical principles, decisions regarding the design and execution of a participatory event can be shaped by potentially different notions of the goal and purpose of participation. Indeed, without clear democratic benchmarks, some practitioners may assume the goal of participatory events to be widespread discursive participation among

citizenry to improve overall quality of democracy, whilst others may see participatory platforms as educational channels or 'training camps' for citizens, where participants get to learn and exercise their civic virtue wisely. Others still may see these events as channels for increasing popular control and levelling the balance of power. A participatory event can thus be designed and evaluated with reference to different democratic goals, which is why clear and definitive criteria with transparent theoretical underpinnings need to be specified.

In addition, it is also important for those seeking to compare and/or contrast two or more participatory events to acknowledge the intention and theoretical principles behind participatory events. Whilst it can be easy to assume that participative initiatives advance the same goals, this is not always the case. It is therefore important to be conscious of the values underpinning each participatory event in order to avoid comparing 'apples with oranges'.

That said, developing a framework that aims to embody republican principles (theoretical underpinnings) and benchmarks (their empirical manifestations) is no simple undertaking and needs to overcome a number of challenges. First, such a framework needs to be able to locate its principles in different settings (these could for example be participatory events or parts of these events). Since the principles will not manifest in the same way everywhere, a flexible approach is required to ensure that subtle differences in the form of participatory initiatives can be recognised and accommodated within analysis. In a sense, an analytical framework has to therefore be both broad enough to capture the principles in different settings and at the same time not be too broad, so that consistent interpretations of the principle would still be possible.

Second, such a framework requires an evaluative element so that judgements about the mechanism can be made and the presence of specific principles detected. In other words, it needs to have a method of measurement that can produce an evaluation. Establishing such a method is challenging as it will require either going into a detailed and layered analysis of every possible element of each principle and being very strict about each unit of measurement, or else establishing a more flexible unit of analysis (such as assigning scores to each principle that is located in a participatory event), to determine how well a participatory mechanism is 'performing'.

Finally, the third challenge is that once the measurement is established, the framework will have to clearly guide the researcher to interpret the evaluations, accumulating the data into either a final score or translate the findings into a final conclusion about how well the mechanism in question is at promoting republican principles. This may be difficult, as it will require an ordering of the principles, determining whether any of them are non-negotiable or quite the opposite – dispensable.

I propose that it is possible to address the three challenges by establishing a framework that is flexible and adaptive in its set-up and by recognising that the evaluations will always be contextual. My approach is rooted in the idea that it is only necessary to find an answer to one fundamental question of each principle identified, namely: ‘Does this benchmark manifest in this participatory mechanism?’. In responding to this question, I argue that there can only be three possible answers: ‘yes, it does’; ‘no, it does not’, or, in rare cases ‘yes, but only partially’. One of the key aims of this thesis is to establish guidelines for how these answers can be found. The approach I am taking to develop these guidelines and the analytical framework itself, is normative and deductive, which contrasts with the existing frameworks (see above) which are mostly exploratory and inductive. By doing so, I hope to address the shortcomings of these frameworks that I have identified above.

With this in mind, in this thesis I will turn to a tradition that has famously defended a citizen-centred approach to democratic politics with an emphasis on participation – civic republicanism. I will propose that its principles and practices are useful for the analytical framework that I am attempting to establish. By doing so, I will be focusing on a rather narrow and specific model of democracy – a civic republican model of democracy. There are number of reasons for turning to this tradition, which I will discuss in more detail in the upcoming chapters, but the key reason behind this choice is the fact that civic republicanism has something special to offer to this project. As Mark Warren rightly notes (2007, 273), democratic theories (or models) such as participatory, representative, and pluralist democratic models, focus on specific institutions that facilitate government by the people, while deliberative democracy seeks to advance a particular medium of political conflict resolution and organization. In contrast, those theories that are inspired by civic republicanism, are explicitly ethical in nature in that they present the democratic goods of civic virtues and communal solidarity and then seek the institutions as means to

these goals (Warren, 2007, 273, see also Held, 1996 and Habermas, 1994). This of course is not to say that civic republicanism is superior to all other theories. But because of its normative and ethical grounding, the implications of this citizen-centred theory of governance for participatory practices are to, I will argue, at the very least be taken seriously.

## Chapter 2:

# Civic Republicanism – A Rediscovered Model of Democracy

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In this chapter, I will introduce key tenets of civic of the civic republican<sup>2</sup> tradition. My aim here is not to lay out the republican theory of politics in great detail (this has already been done elsewhere more eloquently by Honohan (2003), Maynor (2003) and Laborde and Maynor (2009)). Instead, I strive to do two things with this chapter: 1) to describe the key principles (and their roots) of contemporary republican theory; and 2) demonstrate that we should be viewing these principles not only as relevant for contemporary discussions of democracy per se, but also as valuable for designing and evaluating participatory mechanisms. The aim of the chapter is to demonstrate that civic republicanism provides a particularly fitting set of values to shape the analytical framework I am seeking to devise for participatory events.

In order to further demonstrate the relevance of civic republicanism for my framework, we need to have a fuller understanding of the principles that republicanism promotes. Civic republicanism is a tradition that has come to be associated with a large and diverse group of political thinkers, including classical thinkers Livy, Machiavelli, Rousseau, Wollstonecraft, Madison to many more contemporary thinkers (see for example, Skinner 1990, Bellamy, 2007; Laborde, 2008, Peterson, 2011; Niederberger and Schink, 2013 and Pocock 2016). Even though so many different authors are associated with the tradition, there is no one undisputed canon of republicanism. Nevertheless, there are recurring principles that appear throughout the contributions from authors associated with the tradition, namely common good, civic virtue and freedom as non-domination. I will review each of them in turn, but to do this, I first briefly review classic and modern theories of republicanism to highlight its key principles and their development over time. I will explore the roots of civic republicanism, its consequences as presented by its key

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<sup>2</sup> Here and onwards, I use the terms ‘civic republicanism’ and ‘republicanism’ interchangeably.



authors and its implications for the modern-day democratic regimes, as defended by Philip Pettit.

## **2.1 From the Liberty of the Ancients to the Liberty of the (Early) Moderns**

While there is no undisputed canon of republicanism, there is nevertheless a general agreement that the key features of republican thinking first crystallised in the classical world of Greece and Rome (Held, 2006, Peterson, 2011, Honohan, 2003). In fact, these formulations have been so influential that many contemporary political theorists speak of republicanism in terms of its two main strands – the Roman (or neo-Roman) and Greek (or neo-Greek/neo-Athenian, also sometime Neo-Aristotelian) versions of civic republicanism (Pettit, 1997; Skinner 1990; Maynor, 2003; Nelson, 2006).

Each of these strands emphasises a different principle – self-governance in neo-Athenian tradition and rule of law in the neo-Roman strand of republicanism. The formulations of these principles not only provide a theoretical basis for each strand, but also have practical implications for governance and organization of the political community they prescribe. This section will therefore review both strands and by doing so will trace the roots of contemporary republican thought. This will be achieved by turning to key thinkers associated with the classical accounts of republicanism – Aristotle for the neo-Athenian republican thought and Cicero for the Roman republican formulation. Jointly, they form the core of civic republican thought, which remains relevant and definite for the contemporary republican accounts.

### **2.1.1 Aristotle and the Virtuous Citizen**

For Aristotle, the essence of being a citizen is to participate, to deliberate, to serve in office and to defend the polis. Because the human purpose (our *telos*) is to achieve excellence by being virtuous, the polis becomes the setting for our *telos* to be realised. This is because, for Aristotle, an important part of being virtuous is to ‘preserve the partnership’ with others:

[A]lthough citizens are dissimilar, preservation of partnership is their task, and the regime is [this] partnership; hence the virtue of the citizen must necessarily be with a view to the regime" (Aristotle, Politics, Book III, 1276b27).

Since all men are naturally political beings (Aristotle, *Politics*, xlviii-lix), the polis is crucial for their good life – only by living ‘in common’ will they achieve happiness. So being virtuous is not enough to have the good life – it will lead to excellence and happiness only if citizens live under the ideal regime: "In the case of the best regime, [the citizen] is one who is capable of and intentionally chooses being ruled and ruling with a view to the life in accordance with virtue" (1284a1). This means that for Aristotle, there are two conditions of ideal political community, one of which is having virtuous (i.e. self-governing) citizens, jointly making decisions that affect the polis.

The second condition is the ideal regime itself. In Books IV-VII of *Politics*, Aristotle sets out a typology of the six possible regimes and describes each of them in detail, listing them from the purest (a monarchy) to the most corrupted (a tyranny). He explores each of them in turn and concludes that, although the ideal regime ‘according to the prayer’ would see a community with equally moral and virtuous citizens ruling justly by holding office together (Aristotle, *Politics*, Book VII), he admits that this may not be possible in practice. The second-best regime for Aristotle is therefore polity – a regime whereby elements of oligarchy and democracy (and, where possible, aristocracy) are mixed and the power is shared between the rich (the few) and the poor (the many) – this is also known as the mixed constitution. This kind of arrangement would ensure that the political community is stable and fair, and no one group enslaves another. This is an idea later echoed in most formulations of civic republican theory which would generally defend a mixed constitution and fair and equal sharing of political power.

To ensure that the polity functions and is prosperous, both strong laws and institutions are important for Aristotle, but on their own, they will not be sufficient to achieve this. The moral character and active participation of the citizens are just as, if not more, important for sustaining the polis. As such, the Aristotelian view of the political community is based on a specific understanding of citizenship – one that rejects a solely legalistic, residence-based definition of citizenship and endorses a view that citizens should be active, moral and reflective in their judgements (Peterson, 2011, 34). The Athenian model, as described by Aristotle with these two conditions, serves as an important historical source for modern republicanism, demonstrating the importance of the public sphere and public debate. Furthermore, it promotes the principle that we

should develop an understanding of the good life and ensure that the state is set-up in a way that helps achieve this end.

### **2.1.2 Cicero: Freedom and the Rule of Law**

The second strand of civic republican thought originated in the Roman republic and the writings of Cicero, in particular in his works *De Re Publica* and the *De Legibus*. Republican theory has inherited a lot from Cicero's formulations, including the term itself (*res publica*, from Latin – the public concern). In this section, I will discuss the main ideas presented in Cicero's work and highlight some of its key differences from Aristotelian thought.

At the time when Cicero was writing (circa 55BC – 45BC), Rome was experiencing an upheaval and great rivalry in its politics and so in his work, Cicero was celebrating the structure, cohesiveness and virtue of the republican government which had formerly characterized the Roman republican state (Peterson, 2011, 38). Much like Aristotle, the political community was the most important association for Cicero. However, for Cicero freedom was not linked to self-governance in the same way as it was for Aristotle. Instead, it was linked to the rule of law, the state institutions and the status of a citizen. In his major work, *De Re Publica*, he argues that citizens can only be free if they are not subjected to domination and that only state institutions and the law can protect them against it. As Iseult Honohan (2003, 36) explains: 'rather than ruling in turns, the citizens were free for Cicero when they enjoyed the legal status of *libertas*, [a status which] was not the natural possession of individuals but a status acquired politically with citizenship in a republic' and protected through the rule of law.

The republic, according to Cicero, is what a large group of people (the *populus*) hold in common when they come together in agreement regarding justice and the common good – regardless of the form of government they adopt (DePalma Digeser, 2003). Cicero's famous phrase '*res publica, res populi*' (the commonwealth, the people) reflects this idea – it encapsulates the standpoint that emphasises a commitment to a community where citizens come together and agree about the laws and rights that are essential for justice when dealing with each other. They then maintain this agreement in pursuit of their common good (Radford, 2002, 58).

Similarly to Aristotle, Cicero also asserts that the active participation of citizens in political affairs is very important for a state to function well. However, he makes this claim not in reference to human flourishing and excellence as Aristotle did, but instead describes it as necessary for the protection of freedom. In other words, his reasons for promoting participation are instrumental, and not intrinsic.

Cicero adopts an instrumental standpoint in other elements of his thought as well, including his understanding of the civic virtue. Cicero understood it as the public spirit, characterised by justice, prudence, moderation and courage (Honohan, 2003, 33) and saw its value in terms of citizens' service to the state. Cicero (1991, 28) explains that: 'Those (...) who have adapted themselves to great achievements in the service of the political community, lead lives more profitable to mankind and more suited to grandeur and fame'. To be virtuous, therefore, is only reasonable – every citizen should strive to be involved, as it will benefit them directly and personally.

Cicero's works, although not as extensive and his standing not as elevated in history of Western political thought as that of Aristotle, are central to the historical development of civic republicanism (Peterson, 2011, 40). His ideas were pivotal for early modern republican thought, in particular for Renaissance thought in the Florentine republics, as exemplified in the works of Machiavelli. Furthermore, Cicero's commitment to freedom and the rule of law has been extremely influential for contemporary republican texts as well. Most notably, Philip Pettit's *Republicanism* (1997), *Republicanism: A Theory of Freedom and Government* (1997a) and *On People's Terms* (2012) use the notion of freedom as non-domination as their central tenet.

### **2.1.3 Machiavelli**

When considering classical republican thinkers, one author who has shaped the contemporary understanding of civic republicanism (including its formulation of civic republican theory of democracy) and its key tenets in a substantial way is Niccolò Machiavelli. His contributions have been recognised and discussed by nearly every contemporary republican scholar (see, for example, Maynor 2003; Pettit, 1997; Pocock, 2016; Skinner and Viroli, 1990) and his interpretations of the classical republican views have further influenced the republican writers after him.

Although *The Prince* is usually seen as Machiavelli's key contribution to political thought, I agree with contemporary scholars who have suggested that it is in his *Discourses* that Machiavelli offers a much more honest account<sup>3</sup> of his views (Held, 2006; Gilbert, 1965, Pocock 2016, Skinner 1981). *The Discourses* was written in a form of commentary to Titus Livy's first ten books on Roman history and suggested that lessons from its history: a) provided a source of guidance on how ideal republics should be shaped; and b) demonstrated that the success and failure of great republics are cyclical in nature. These cycles of change are, according to Machiavelli, driven by necessity and chance, and can only be contained by focused and dynamic political action. Unlike Marsilius of Padua before him or Hobbes and Locke after him, Machiavelli did not believe that there was any one principle of political organization that should be articulated and sustained by the government (Held, 2006, 40). Echoing the writings of Cicero, he believed that it was the task of politics to create order in the world – with the help of the rule of law and upholding of religious worship. The rule of law was particularly important for Machiavelli, since it ensured, in his view, that citizens would place the law above their own private interests. In other words, it is the law that would 'make the citizens good'.

It is not, however, just any one set of laws that will ensure that citizens are 'good' or, to use Machiavelli's term, that the *virtu* (understood as willingness to pursue civic glory) will be instilled in the people (Held, 2006, 41). The historical investigation of republics demonstrates, Machiavelli argues, that monarchies, aristocracies and democracies all deteriorate and that only a governmental system combining elements from all three, can ensure *virtu* is secured.

Furthermore, Machiavelli believed that mixed government would ensure that the liberty of citizens is protected. By drawing from examples of Greece and Rome, he posited that only communities that enjoyed such liberty would be able to grow in wealth and flourish:

'it is easy to understand whence the love of living under a free constitution springs up in peoples. For experience shows that no cities have ever increased in dominion or riches except when they have been established in liberty....it is not the pursuit of individual advantage but of the common good that makes cities great, and there is no doubt that

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<sup>3</sup> I use the word 'honest' here as it has been suggested that Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* to redeem himself in the eyes of the Medici family and views expressed in this work are therefore not necessarily ones he truly held. For a discussion of *The Discourses* and *The Prince*, see pages xx to xxvii by Mansfield and Tarcov (1996) in their introduction to *Discourses on Livy*.

it is only under republican regimes that this ideal of common good is followed out (Machiavelli, *The Discourses*, Book II).

Machiavelli believed that because republics allow greater freedom for their citizens, they are more flexible and will be better able to deal with cycles of deterioration that every community will inevitably experience over time. Furthermore, in republics, citizens 'neither arrogantly dominate nor humbly serve' (Machiavelli, 2009, 216), rather a balance of interests is kept between nobles and the general population, keeping them from pursuing purely sectional interests.

Machiavelli agrees with the view defended by Aristotle and Cicero that for this to work, the republic also needs virtuous citizens – ones who will place the common good ahead of their own private interests, ones who are ready to perform political service as well as military service and ones who will resist corruption (which is the biggest and most immediate threat to the republic).

Furthermore, following the ideas first formulated by Cicero, Machiavelli developed the claim that the primary value to be protected in a republic is political freedom and the end goal of a political community is to ensure that civically virtuous citizens avoid arbitrary rule. Placing limits on rulers, electing the officials and establishing a mixed government will be helpful for establishing conditions of independence, self-rule and 'glorious endeavour'. In other words, for Machiavelli, the law gives us our freedom, not simply because it restricts others, but because it coerces each individual to act in a particular way. Skinner (1990, 305) explains this point further:

'For a writer like Machiavelli, the justification of law has nothing to do with the protection of individual rights (...). The main justification for its exercise is that, by coercing people into acting in such a way as to uphold the institutions of a free state, the law creates and preserves a degree of individual liberty which, in its absence, would promptly collapse into absolute servitude.'

This observation brings us to the key contribution by Machiavelli to the republican tradition. It was the idea that freedom as non-domination should be at the heart of our political efforts and that we can protect that freedom by focusing on our duties, not our

rights.<sup>4</sup> Even though we may not be born public-spirited and thus may not naturally be drawn to ‘serving the republic’, the coercive power of the law will frame our actions and guide us: ‘It is hunger and poverty that make men industrious and it is the laws that make them good’ (Machiavelli, 1996. I.iii). As we will see in the remainder of this chapter, this idea has can be traced in contemporary republican accounts as well. It manifests in the belief that the system of governance and legal restrictions are the only things that will protect citizens’ freedom – without the ‘good laws’, citizens will be left at the mercy of those who govern them, without any protection from their arbitrary intervention.

## **2.2 The Civic Republican Revival: The Two Waves of Republicanism**

What I have done thus far in this Chapter, is presented key civic republican notions as captured in the works of Aristotle, Cicero and Machiavelli. These classical republican accounts provide a necessary insight to the historical development of the tradition that contemporary republican scholars have built their theories on. What they have shown is the importance of certain key and recurring principles within civic republican thought, namely: freedom, civic virtue and a concern for the common good.

Within the remainder of this Chapter, I want to demonstrate how these classical principles have been developed and adapted in contemporary political thought. To do this, I will begin with overviewing a body of literature that emerged in the 1980s and 1990s. In this period, civic republicanism experienced a revival in political philosophy. This renewed interest occurred in two waves, although a third wave has recently been noted to have started to emerge.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> You will see later in this chapter that in the contemporary accounts, such as one put forth by Pettit, both duties and rights are important, so this focus has shifted.

<sup>5</sup> Peterson (2011, 6-8) suggests that, although perhaps not yet developed enough to be considered ‘a wave’, there is now a trend whereby civic republican ideas are being identified within political debates in governments. Examples of this can be seen in the discourse and policies of two national governments in particular – first, in the agenda and reasoning of the Spanish Socialist Workers’ Party and second, in the politics and discourse of the New Labour governments in the UK between 1997 and 2010. Although these more recent developments can be seen as significant since they attest to the growing role of republican ideas, at the time of writing this thesis, this wave third wave as yet is not theoretically distinctive from earlier formulations of civic republicanism.

The first wave started to take shape as early as the 1960s, when a number of scholars took an interest in the history and the development of republican ideals and the classical republican texts. The main aim of these thinkers was to trace the republican tradition and demonstrate how its key tenets had developed over time (see, for example, Held, 2006; Honohan, 2003; Pocock, 2016; Raab, 1965; Skinner, 1990, 1998;). Initially, they focused on a specific interpretation of republicanism – one that was closer to the republican vision promoted by Aristotle. It was a political outlook centred on the idea of promoting a particular conception of a good life, understood as consisting of active citizenship, civic virtue and the elimination of corruption. In other words, this wave echoed the ideal of the ancient Greek polis – a setting that would arguably foster human flourishing. This interpretation has sometimes been referred to as ‘civic humanist’ and is associated with the writing of Hannah Arendt (1958; 1963), J.G.A. Pocock (2016; 1981) and P. A. Rahe (1992).

The second wave of literature moved beyond this interpretation. Works by Skinner (1984), Sunstein (1987) and Pettit (1997) emphasized an alternative interpretation of republicanism – one that was based on the Roman republican ideas. While still recognising the relevance of civic virtue and active participation, they moved away from the idea that these components were somehow intrinsically valuable to the good life and saw them as instrumentally useful tools instead. These principles were useful because they were able to secure and preserve political liberty which, in republican terms, meant independence from an arbitrary rule or freedom as non-domination. As indicated before, this view has roots in Roman jurisprudence and foremost in the writings of Cicero – as we saw in section 1 of this Chapter (see pages 30 and 31). Cicero, too, believed that political participation has instrumental, not intrinsic benefit.

Since then this interpretation has been advanced and discussed in numerous texts and studies, including normative recommendations for contemporary Western democratic states (for example, Honohan, 2003; Maynor, 2003; Peterson, 2011). At first, these appeals were made with reference to legal and constitutional theory in the US (Pangle, 1988; Michelman, 1986; Sunstein, 1987) but eventually expanded to other sections of public policy theorising in the 1990s (see Oldfield, 1990; Sandel, 1996; Pettit, 1997 and



later also Maynor, 2003, Laborde, 2008, Bellamy, 2009 and Peterson, 2011).<sup>6</sup> At the core of these efforts is the idea that republican doctrine (with its origins in the Roman Republic and writings of Cicero) can be re-claimed and re-configured to furnish a workable model in present-day politics (Honohan and Jennings, 2006, 1). The second wave republican scholarly works have argued that this reconfiguration should be rooted in principles of self-rule, non-domination and an orientation towards common good.

## **2.3 Philip Pettit: Freedom as Non-Domination and the Republican Democracy**

As noted in the previous section, republican political theory has undergone a resurgence in recent decades (McBride 2015, 349), beginning with an exploration of classical republican texts in the 1960s, and followed more recently by attempts to adapt classical republicanism for the contemporary world. In seeking to extract insights from this broad tradition of analysis, within this thesis I focus particular attention on the work of Philip Pettit, who is recognised as leading proponent of contemporary republicanism due to his sustained, in-depth and detailed advocacy of republicanism (Held, 2006, Honohan, 2003; Laborde; 2016, Maynor, 2003; McBride, 2015; Peterson, 2011). Focusing on neo-Roman republicanism, he offers a compelling vision of contemporary republicanism – a republican theory of justice, which is rooted in his understanding of republican freedom (see Pettit, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001 2003, 2006, 2012, and 2014). His contribution is especially relevant for this thesis, because Pettit considers how republican principles can be applied in contemporary democracies, and also discusses the benefits of citizen participation.

Pettit's writings belong to the neo-Roman strand of republicanism, which, as we have seen from the discussion of Cicero's republican thinking earlier in this chapter, is based on a specific understanding of freedom. In this view, freedom is defined as the absence of arbitrary domination over one's interests, goals and choices:

‘A person is free, and a person acts freely, just to the extent that she is not exposed, in the way a slave is exposed, to the arbitrary interference

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<sup>6</sup> Note that there are also thinkers who have drawn on republican themes but do not necessarily associate themselves with the tradition – see, for example, works by Hannah Arendt (1958), Pitkin (1981) and Benjamin Barber (1998).

of another: to the sort of interference that only has to track the arbitrium – the will or judgment – of the interfering power” (Pettit, 1998, 84).

Pettit develops the notion of freedom as non-domination further and, following the example set by republicans in the Roman tradition, distinguishes between two forms of domination within a polity—*imperium* and *dominium*. *Imperium* is understood as vertical in nature and refers to the domination of citizens by the state, whilst *dominium* is horizontal in nature and relates to the domination of one citizen, or group of citizens, over another (Pettit, 1997, 37). None are acceptable in a republic and so both will require institutional solutions to minimize the arbitrary interference with the citizens. Freedom as non-domination is therefore a key concept to consider when designing political institutions – it should be done in a way so that no citizen suffers from domination and so that they would be able to contest decisions that are being made on their behalf should they feel these decisions are not just. The key implication of this is that citizens need channels of participation to exercise their freedom and self-rule so as to protect their freedom from arbitrary power and external domination.

In this context, an important question emerges – how exactly and by which institutions and laws can government be stopped from interfering with its citizens in an arbitrary manner? In Pettit’s words:

‘How can the state be shackled so that we, its members, do not assume the status of debtors or slaves in relation to it, so that we not live in its power or under its dominatio but rather have the standing of free men and women who do not have to act in fear of, or in deference to, anyone?’ (Pettit, 2006, section 17).

First, Pettit believes that an answer to this question will in part lay in a coercive and centralised government. This government will have to strive to pursue the common good, not simply seek to further its own or sectional preferences. This, however, cannot simply be assumed to happen on its own, making it necessary to introduce several additional devices that will ensure citizens are protected from the sectional interests of those in power. These devices entail rule of law, enactment of law, dispersions of powers, limitation of tenure for those holding public offices, popular election and channels through which citizens can not only find out about the decisions of the state but also effectively challenge (contest) them (see Chapter 6 – *Republican Forms: Constitutionalism and Democracy* in Pettit’s ‘Republicanism’(1997) and Chapter 3 – *Political Legitimacy* in

'On the People's Terms (2012)) In short, what the republican state needs is a system of checks and balances, where state coercion is guided by the common good. Otherwise, domination or arbitrary interference will be impossible to be kept at bay.

In addition, Pettit also believes that even though modern day democracy is almost exclusively associated with the popular election of the members of the legislature, it should be instead understood in terms of contestatory models of governance (such as judicial review, ombudsman and similar). This does not mean getting rid of elections, but rather introducing (or strengthening) channels of contestation that are freely available to those who oppose decisions made by governing bodies. Those bodies are at the same time obliged to actively engage with those who are not convinced by decisions that have been made on their behalf:

"It must always be possible for people in society, no matter what corner they occupy, to contest the assumption that the guiding interests and ideas are really shared and, if the challenge proves sustainable, to alter the pattern of state activity" (Pettit, 1997, 63).

The notion of contestation is absolutely crucial to Pettit's project. For him, the republican state must not only seek to combat the effects of *dominium*, but it must also guard against the *imperium* of the government. As discussed, there are a number of constitutional conditions that Pettit proposes for the government to fulfil to be able to operate in a way that it isn't subject to manipulation on an arbitrary basis – including rule of law, the separation of powers and counter-majoritarian safeguards. Pettit explains further:

'[...] the only way for a republican regime to guarantee that this exercise of discretion is not hostile to the interests and ideas of people at large, or of some section of the community, is to introduce systematic possibilities for ordinary people to contest the doings of government. This points us towards the ideal of a democracy, based not on the alleged consent of the people, but rather on the contestability by the people of everything that government does. A contestatory democracy will have to be deliberative, requiring that decisions be based on considerations of allegedly common concern, if there is to be a systematically available basis for people to challenge what the government does. It will have to be inclusive, making room for people from every quarter to be able to press challenges against legislative, executive, or judicial decisions. And it will have to be responsive to the contestations that are brought against government decisions' (Pettit, 1997, 172).

Pettit's proposal for a contemporary republic is therefore based on a two-dimensional ideal of democracy. The two dimensions reflect two powers – one is authorial, the other – editorial, which jointly ensure that 'due place is made on the one hand for institutions of electoral democracy and, on the other, for procedural, consultative, and appellate resources of a piece with measures that traditional republicans have always emphasized' (Pettit, 1997, 297). The primary lesson of republicanism for Pettit, then, is that the republic should establish institutions that embody an ideal that is simultaneously electoral as well as contestatory. If institutions are based on this ideal, they would be able, Pettit claims, 'to guard against the danger of the state becoming a *dominus* by making it difficult for public policy not to be driven by common, recognizable interests. And they should also facilitate the emergence of the sort of policy designed to increase people's freedom as non-domination' (Pettit, 1997, 56). It is this arrangement that is discussed in most detail by Pettit (1997, 2000, 2012, 2014), other republican authors (Honohan, 2003, Maynor, 2003; Peterson, 2011), as well as critics of republicanism (see for example Southwood 2002 and Bellamy 2007).

Nevertheless, in Pettit's other, perhaps less well-known contributions, especially *On The People's Terms: A Republican Theory and Model of Democracy* (2012) and his chapters in *Deliberative democracy and its discontents* (2006) and *Debating Deliberative Democracy* (2003), he also adds that in addition to the list of checks and balances and contestatory mechanisms, there is another requirement that should be added for a well-functioning republican democracy. This is the requirement for the government (understood as legislative, as well as executive and judicial aspects of it) to always give reasons for what it does and that the particular reasons that they give should display consideration for the common good. This means that if a republic is not to dominate its citizens, then it ought to be a 'republic of reasons' (Pettit, 2003, section 20). For Pettit it means more than just the state branches being deliberative and presenting reasons for their decision to its citizens – it also means having citizens who are engaged in exchange of reasons. Pettit (2003, section 21) writes:

'It is in this image of a republic of reasons – a republic where the state, already checked by other measures, is forced to relate to its citizens as a co-reasoner – that the ideal of deliberative democracy is most persuasively grounded. This is why it has a natural appeal to the imagination, and a compelling place in the currency of political appraisal. [...] There is no hope of having a republic of reasons unless

deliberation regulates the way people debate and vote and unless the decisions made can be represented as rational positions.'

So it is not just any contestatory system that Pettit proposes here – it is one that is also characterised by deliberative engagement on behalf of both the government as well as the citizens. Democracy for Pettit then has to be a system that allows empowering of public reasons that are recognised by the people and their common valuations, rather than the 'will of [...] people considered as one collective agent' (Pettit, 2006, 60). What's more, if this is to be possible, two dimensions of control are going to be needed for determining any policy. First, it is going to be important 'that the public valuations rule', meaning people's support for certain initiatives need to be reliably identified before they are implemented. Second, it is going to be important that 'only public valuations rule' meaning that the decisions that are made and initiatives that are adopted are justifiable by reasons that are commonly recognised as important in the public sphere.

But to achieve this, some sort of consultative procedures will be necessary to track citizens' preferences (common good) and Pettit believes they will also at the same time reduce contestatory burdens of the republic (2006, 104). While contestatory ex-post discussions are pivotal for Pettit's vision, he believes that the state should also be required to make their proposals public for a popular discussion and feedback ex-ante. In in his chapter in *Deliberative Democracy and its Discontents* he says the following:

'[Procedures for consultation] would ease the contestatory burden in a democratic society by giving people an ex ante opportunity to raise questions about proposed laws and decrees and perhaps to help shape them, rather than restricting contestation to an ex post appellate form' (Pettit, 2006, 104).

What this then translates into is a democratic system where citizens have the opportunity to participate in (and deliberate about) popular elections, to contest the decisions that the government makes on their behalf and to express their preferences and ideas ex-ante to shape and direct governments decision-making. There is a further implication to this kind of arrangement, however. Pettit notes that a regime that is deliberatively regulated in this way, is likely to also operate in two time-scales:

'It will require the short-haul, highly charged process of campaign and election, proposal and counter-proposal, debate, division and contestation. But it will achieve its signature impact in the long-haul

process, as silently as gravity, whereby participants are wittingly or unwittingly led to establish only such policies and processes as conform to the norms of argument and association that prevail amongst them. Over this long haul, a deliberately regulated politics will generate and regenerate a supply of publicly valorised considerations. These will serve at any particular time to keep and indefinite number of policies and processes off the table, rendering them unthinkable and invisible. And they will combine from time to time to make certain existing policies and processes suddenly seem intolerable and in urgent need of repair.’ (Pettit, 2012, 270).

Importantly, what this quotation emphasises is another dual aspect of democracy that the republican vision entails. This is an aspect that sees deliberately regulated democratic regime as simultaneously ‘fast’ and ‘slow’. It’s fast when the engagement is referring to participating in elections, contestation and participatory events. It is slow, in that this participation imposes a ‘distinctive stamp’ on government in the long term, by pushing it in a certain direction.

Overall, Pettit claims that freedom as non-domination is the principle that should guide our thinking when designing our democratic institutions, whether we be focusing on ‘fast’ or ‘slow’ elements of a republic. To protect that freedom, we will need more than a mixed constitution and rule of law – we will also need to secure principles of common good (which will require tracking citizens’ preferences and interests) and civic virtue (which will require enabling citizens to collectively discuss their preferences and contribute to collective decision-making).

## **2.4 Contemporary Republicanism: Three Principles for Participation**

As noted in the sections above, civic republicanism is not a monolithic theory – different thinkers either emphasize different principles or have different views on the hierarchy of its core commitments. Pettit, as noted in the section above, emphasizes freedom as non-domination as the main principle of republican thinking and other principles (such as civic virtue and common good) are instrumentally useful, but not fundamental. Other authors disagree – Bello-Hut (2018), for example understands republicanism as a theory constituted by two principles, freedom as non-domination and civic virtue. For him, both principles go hand in hand and while other principles may be part of, he assumes these

two form the core of the theory. Peterson (2011) provides an alternative view and sees civic republicanism as an embodiment of committed citizenship and as a result emphasizes civic obligation, civic virtue and the common good.

My aim in this chapter is not to defend any one of these interpretations as superior to the others. No matter what their specific emphasis, we find a recurring interest in the principle of freedom as non-domination, a notion of common good (or public interest) and civic virtue (understood in terms of citizens' ability and willingness to participate in self-governance in some way) in all these contributions. With that in mind, I will review each of the principles in turn, discussing their meanings and implications for the political world and participatory events. These will then be used to identify benchmarks for ideal practice and offer a theoretical vision for certain types of participation over others.

#### **2.4.1 Freedom as Non-domination**

Freedom as non-domination is one of the key defining and organizing concepts of modern republicanism (Peterson, 2011, 15; Maynor, 2003, 33, McBride, 2015, 350). The key implication of having freedom as non-domination as a guiding principle in republicanism is that whatever state arrangements and institutions are brought into existence, they will have to function in a manner that does not interfere with its citizens in an arbitrary manner. With few exceptions<sup>7</sup>, the majority of the contemporary republican literature approaches this principle following Pettit's interpretation of freedom as non-domination and he has been the main proponent of the principle. I will review his position briefly in the remainder of this section.

In his work, Pettit explains that freedom cannot be viewed in purely positive or negative terms – it is more appropriate to view it in terms of absence of arbitrary dominance or 'an absence of mastery by others' (Pettit, 1997, 22). The focus here is on mastery, not interference, because not all interference is necessarily arbitrary, according to Pettit. Your freedom from interference will be restricted by systems of law, for example, but as long as these systems are fair, non-capricious and non-dominating of any citizen or any groups of citizens, that interference will be justified (Pettit, 1997, 5).

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<sup>7</sup> See for example, Sandel's (1996) and Oldfields (1990) work, were they discuss freedom as something that is achieved through self-government and participation, which then secures the 'good life' in Aristotelian sense of the word.

There are two dimensions to the principle of non-domination that Pettit discusses in his work – non-domination as a primary good and non-domination as an instrumental good for citizens. Each of these dimensions has implications for citizen participation. Instrumentally, non-domination brings benefits to people through their status as free citizens, which determines their relationship with the state and people around them. The key problem for this dimension of non-domination is the absence of certainty that citizens will not be interfered with arbitrarily. To use the analogy of the master and the slave<sup>8</sup> – you may be lucky in that the slave master treats you with kindness, but that kindness is not guaranteed or secured to last forever. Pettit (1997,85) describes it in the following way:

‘Freedom as non-domination requires us to reduce the capacities for arbitrary interference to which a person is exposed, while freedom as non-interference requires us to minimise the person’s expectation of interference as such. But this means that, while the non-domination ideal would tend to require conditions where certainty is high, the non-interference ideal is consistent with a great loss on this front. It is quite possible that the maximal non-interference possible for someone will be available under an arrangement where that person has to suffer much uncertainty. But it is hardly conceivable that the same is true for maximal non-domination that they might achieve.’

What Pettit refers to in this passage is the fact that, when the guiding principle in a society is freedom as (mere) non-interference, in practice this is likely to mean that there are attempts to reduce overall levels of interference, but there is never a guarantee that the state/those in power will not interfere ever. As long as there are any kind of power structures in place (and they are indeed unavoidable)<sup>9</sup>, individuals would have to endure high levels of uncertainty on the personal level regarding whether the state will interfere with them or not. Freedom as non-domination is different in that (in contrast to freedom as non-interference) it does not promise ‘leaving the citizen alone’, but only that she will be exempt from intentional interference on an arbitrary basis (Pettit, 1997, 84).

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<sup>8</sup> The theme of slavery is frequently used as an analogy in republican theorising. Pettit explains that in republican thinking, liberty is always case in terms of the opposition between *liber* and *servus*, citizen and slave: ‘The condition of liberty is explicated as the status of someone who, unlike the slave, is not dominated by anyone else. Thus, the condition of liberty is explicated in such a way that there may be a loss of liberty without at actual interference: there may be enslavement and domination without interference, as in the scenario of the non-interfering master’ (Pettit, 1997, 31).

<sup>9</sup> Pettit also briefly discusses the possibility of having no state structures at all and letting people defend their own freedom. This, Pettit argues, would likely lead us to the Hobbesian state of nature.



Furthermore, when individuals live under an expectation that arbitrary interference may occur, it is not just the uncertainty that makes their lives difficult. It is also the fact that they have to, to use Pettit's words 'keep a weather eye on the powerful, anticipating what they will expect of you and trying to please them, or anticipating where they will be and trying to stay out of their way; it is to have strategic deference and anticipation forced upon you at every point (Pettit, 1997, 86)'. This means that you can never 'sail on', without any concern, pursuing your own affairs freely or expressing yourself freely – you have to navigate through life having a certain strategy in mind. With non-domination as a guiding principle in society, this worry is lifted – as an individual, you know you are protected from arbitrary interference and so there is no need to 'stay on your toes in dealing with the powerful' (Pettit, 1997, 87).

In addition, non-domination promises to deliver a person not only from uncertainty and the need to exercise strategy with regards to the powerful, but also to make sure people share awareness that they are not exposed to the possibility of arbitrary interference of other citizens. This is an inter-subjective good, which ensures that people can 'look the other in the eye, they do not have to bow and scrape' (Pettit, 1997, 87) and they can thus see themselves as non-vulnerable to will of the other. The instrumental benefit then is the fact that when freedom as non-domination is secured, citizens will not live in a state of uncertainty in relation to their state nor to the citizens around them.

But Pettit also thinks that freedom as non-domination is a primary good in itself, a core principle for how we should live together. He discusses two key reasons for this. The first reason is very closely linked with instrumentality of non-domination discussed above. Understood as an antidote to uncertainty, non-domination is something people have a reason 'to want, no matter what else they want: something that promises results that are likely to appeal them, no matter what they value and pursue' (Pettit, 1997, 90). Non-domination therefore has the attraction of a primary good – it underpins all other goods. Furthermore, on the state level, securing freedom as non-domination means that there is no need to introduce additional desiderata (e.g. equality) if non-domination is already secured. This is because republican institutions already constitute freedom as non-domination and thus require institutions that perform well in regard to values like equality and welfare (Pettit, 1997, 81) – or else they would not be securing the freedom of everyone in the society.

This is then the root reason for Pettit (and other republican authors after him) to argue for non-domination as a political concern: it becomes a yardstick for all of our political institutions. Pettit believes (1997, 92-95) that individuals simply being aware that non-domination is beneficial for them on a personal level will not suffice – the state ought to advance it to via constitutional means, too. This is because you cannot rely on people having reciprocal powers sufficient for checking others’ interference – this is not something that occurs naturally. Put differently (ironically enough), this is the one point where contemporary republicans agree with Hobbes, because the assumption is that without appropriate state structures and a constitution, the level of uncertainty will be so high that each individual will seek to protect themselves against all interference (existing or potential) and the result of this is likely to be a war of all against all (Pettit, 1997, 94).

The second reason for viewing non-domination as intrinsically valuable is that it is a principle that gives humans an opportunity to exercise their innate nature of being discursive creatures. This argument relies on Pettit’s conceptualisation of human agency, which does not frequently appear in Pettit’s writings<sup>10</sup>, but is crucial for this thesis. What Pettit puts forward here is another reason for seeing non-domination is superior to freedom from interference, which at the same time has implications for emphasising active citizen involvement and exchange of reasons as crucial for the republic.

To illustrate his point, Pettit asks us to think of the standard way human agency is described in social science, referring to what he calls a decision-theoretic image, based on the Bayesian tradition (see Eells, 1982, Chapter 1). Under this view, there are two parts to agent decision making: one is credences (degrees of belief) and the other is his utilities (degrees of preferences). Jointly, these two components explain human agency – it is rationality that allows individuals to choose things or actions that will satisfy their preferences. Pettit (2004, 84) notes that despite this being a very commonly held view, it overlooks one broad, important aspect of human psychology. While human beings are decision-theoretic subjects who act on the basis of beliefs and desires, they are not just that. Quoting Habermas (1984, 1989), Pettit notes that while humans are decision-

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<sup>10</sup> This point is in fact only formulated in the context of republicanism once (see Pettit’s chapter ‘Discourse Theory and Republican Freedom’ in Weinstock and Nadeau’s *Republicanism: History, Theory and Practice* (2004)).

making subjects, their beliefs and desires evolve under the influence of discourse with one another, and indeed with themselves. Furthermore, while everyone has reason(s) to believe something and to desire certain things, the fact that agents have such theoretical or practical reasons for believing and desiring things does not mean that they can *see* the reasons they have for making such responses as reasons. In other words, they may not be aware of them and as a consequence, may be unable to form any further beliefs about what reasons they have and whether they are right or wrong.

The crucial point here is that this situation is likely to change when these agents are given an opportunity to be articulate in public domains (to share their reasons for having certain interests and preferences). In the light of such exposure, they are able to put themselves in positions, where they can reflect on their beliefs and reconsider them. In these public domains, they are able to exchange reasons with others and advise one another, although admittedly this requires them to have a common currency of expression amongst them.<sup>11</sup> What Pettit is trying to show is that humans by nature are discursive creatures and that non-domination is a principle that gives them an opportunity to exercise that part of their innate nature through participative means. Pettit (1997, 91) notes:

‘To be a person is to be a voice that cannot properly be ignored, a voice which speaks to issues raised in common with others, and which speaks with a certain authority: enough authority, certainly, for discord with what voice to give other reason to pause and think. To be treated properly as a person, then, is to be treated as a voice that cannot be dismissed without independent reason: to be taken as someone worth listening to. The condition of domination would reduce the likelihood of being treated as a person in this way (...)’.

With that in mind, he further notes that the republican conception of freedom is in sync with the discursive image of agency and naturally supports an ideal in which people have discursive relation to one another, where they can come together and form common interests by engaging with one another.

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<sup>11</sup> I will come back to this point later – it will be important when discussing citizens’ ability to communicate, to deliberate and to reason with one another, which is not a skill that everyone is naturally born with.

In terms of participatory events and citizen engagement, freedom as non-domination is mainly secured by ensuring that citizens have an opportunity to express their interests (jointly) and that the state then tracks these interests. Pettit notes:

‘Agents who have the power to choose, or not choose, to interfere with other agents without considering what the other’s will or judgements are, interfere with those agents in an arbitrary manner. Put another way, agents who have the power to interfere arbitrarily with other agents can, or cannot, at their pleasure, act in a manner that does or does not consider or track the interests of other agents.’ (Pettit, 1997, 55).

In the context of citizen engagement this means that a government is dominating its citizens, when it is not considering their interests and opinions, or as Maynor (2003, 38) describes it ‘they subject them to interference that is arbitrary [and] seek to maintain their position of power by subjugating the weak.’ Citizen engagement is necessary for citizens to vocalize their interests and give reasons for their preferences and so it is in the interests of those in power to provide them with opportunities for such engagement if they are to secure non-domination.

Furthermore, it should be noted that citizens are in the state of domination, even if the resulting arbitrary interference they experience is not particularly harmful. So, for example, it may be that there are no participatory or contestatory platforms for citizens to participate in and their interests are not tracked in any way, but that the government is very successful at guesstimating their interests and generally rarely act in a way that leaves the citizens unhappy and or feeling oppressed. The fact that their interests are not tracked still posits a problem as the general public in this case finds themselves in a slave-master relationship with the state. Should anything change in the status quo (people in power may change, or interests of the citizens may shift), they can easily find themselves in a much less favourable circumstance. The key to determining whether an act or a decision is or is not arbitrary therefore is not based on whether it is beneficial or harmful; it instead depends on whether or not citizens are consulted and their interests tracked. For this, then, open and inclusive forums are needed in the community which must ‘be able to accommodate a diverse and vocal populace that engages constantly with the myriad interests found in a republic’ (Maynor, 2002, 77).

This points to the need to have some sort of platform(s) where exchange of reasons can occur. These would have to be platforms where citizens’ interests can be tracked and at

the same time where they have an opportunity to have their voices heard. This would mean that a simple opinion poll (which would technically track citizens' interests and inform the state of their preferences) would not suffice – it would have to be platform where citizens can engage with one another and jointly express their interests that the government then records and takes into consideration.

That said, citizens also need to be able to talk to each other and it cannot be assumed that they will be naturally willing to or able to do that. This is why there are two further principles that are central to republican principles and that intersect with the principle non-domination. The first is civic virtue, which addresses the citizens' ability to participate in public decision-making and the second is common good, which relates to the distinction between individual interests and the benefit of the community as a whole. I will now discuss each of these principles in turn, demonstrating how they are linked to freedom as non-domination and what their relevance is in the context of participatory events.

#### **2.4.2 Civic Virtue**

In contrast with non-domination, there is not only no strict definition for civic virtue that all republican thinkers can agree on, there are in fact a number of rather different interpretations of what civic virtue is and how it manifests itself. Most authors agree however that civic virtue is a notion central to republican thought - Sunstein (1987) describes it as the 'animating principle of civic republicanism', Gey (1993, 806) – as a 'leitmotif of all civic republican theory' and Viroli (1999, 69) as 'foundation of republican government'. Loosely defined, it is a principle that relates to a particular role of a citizen and her orientation towards the public life in a community. In the context of republican theory, it can be described in two main ways.

The first is the classical, Aristotelian sense of the word, relating to development of the individual character of citizens. For Aristotle, for example, virtue was intimately linked with the notion of excellence, and in practice translated into looking at the totality of someone's actions to determine if someone is virtuous. So, 'civic' virtues in this context are not separated out from other virtues and the possession of the requisite general virtues is directly related to the civic 'realm'. In other words, this means that furthering civic virtue requires focusing on the improvement of individual character (for

contemporary accounts discussing this, see and MacIntyre, 1984 and Oldfield,1999, who discuss traits that citizens are to possess to be virtuous).

The second, more commonly used approach in republican literature is understanding civic virtue as those dispositions and characteristics that enable citizens to participate effectively in the public affairs and decision-making. Contemporary republicans typically reject the idea that there are *a priori* civic virtues, and instead look at what each community in question may need specifically. For example, Sandel (1996) thinks that the goals of the political community are determined and agreed by the community in question and are thus created, not discovered' (for similar accounts, see Peterson, 2003; Sunstein 1987 and Gey, 1993). In this case, civic virtue is seen as a pre-condition of citizen behaviour conducive to a well-functioning political community and it represents a set of principles for citizen behaviour which are 'valued because they permit active citizenship within the political community and as such protect and promote freedom as non-domination' (Selznick, 1992, 389-90).

In Pettit's work he puts forward a similar account on civic virtue, but abandons the classical language of 'virtues' and talks about civility instead (see Pettit, 1997, 246-257): 'The reliable enjoyment of non-domination, therefore, requires more than the existence of laws that stake out the areas in which you are to be proof against of interference; it requires that there are also socially established norms that give an added salience and security and lustre to those areas'. He gives an example, that there could be a situation where some form of government activity does not track interests of a particular group, but at the same time, this is not established as a fact in that particular community (they are not aware that this is happening and that it is an issue). In this case, Pettit argues, the only way this fact gets recognised is if there are people in this group, who are prepared to act on the behalf of the group. In this case, they are not simply complaining on their own behalf – they are displaying a form of civility that is rooted in concern for others in community (Pettit, 1997, 247). Pettit's translation of 'virtue' here is closer to decency and readiness to act, than what the classical republican accounts have suggested. Furthermore, there is no requirement for the citizens under this reading to internalize their civility – nor that they be civically virtuous in the private realm, which makes this approach much less demanding than the Aristotelian interpretation. It is not however

neutral – it does still require participation and being an active citizen in the general sense of the word.

Maynor (2003, 182) builds on Pettit's approach and describes civic virtue as something that an 'informed and active citizenry [need] if they are to act, and in turn be treated, in a non-dominating manner. [It] is understood as individuals' ability to cast their ends in a manner that does not interfere arbitrarily with others and an appreciation of how their actions impact on the whole of society'. Seen this way, civic virtue is socially functional – but, again, not necessarily individually advantageous for the citizen. Peterson (2011, 83) also agrees with this reading, but notes that this contemporary interpretation of civic virtue should be rebranded and called 'civic principles' instead of virtues, because this way, it better reflects 'a causal and mutually beneficial relationship between profitable citizen behaviour and the institutions and laws of the republican political community'.

What is common in both of these interpretations of civic virtue is that it is a principle that tells us something about individual citizens and their behaviour in a community that is needed for them to live and enjoy a good life. The key difference lies in that the neo-Aristotelian version of civic virtue is much more demanding and challenging in terms of what the conception of what the 'good life' entails exactly. In contrast, what is presented in the reading presented by Pettit, Maynor and Peterson (see section above) is that civic virtue is promoted without a particular conception of 'the good' and is therefore more flexible and adaptable. The citizens are, under this reading, expected to develop capacities and skills that they need to participate and follow (non-dominating) rules. This is how they contribute to strengthening the republican community and avoid domination. But at the same time, there is no real sense that developing these capacities (and following rules) makes citizens 'better' humans, nor that it is necessary for them to 'become better' in any one specific way. The goal here is to only make them better *citizens*, able to operate effectively in public life in a manner that is non-dominating.

As I noted in the introduction of this thesis, my goal is to develop a framework that is broad enough and flexible enough to be applied in different contexts and at the same time narrow enough for consistent interpretations of the principle to still be possible. In the context of the principle of civic virtue, the neo-Aristotelian reading of civic virtue is much too context-specific and demanding for this purpose. As Oldfield (1990) has demonstrated, there are good reasons for us to take this reading of civic virtue seriously, but in the

context of evaluating participatory events, it is not necessary to provide such detailed assessment of specific characteristics of citizens. No matter what our interpretation of what a 'good' republican citizen looks like and how she acts in her daily life, in the context of participatory events all that is needed is to ensure that she is able to exercise her civic skills to express her interests and engage with other citizens to formulate the interests of the community.

Extrapolating from these theoretical considerations, the scholarship suggests the importance of making sure that participants are able to communicate with each other by articulating and elucidating their views. This means making sure citizens have the necessary skills to express their own reasons that form their interests, and at the same time enable them to hear out others and accept the possibility of changing their views in the light of new information. They are then able to vocalize their interests in participatory platforms which then can be tracked for a fair, non-dominating decision-making process.

### **2.4.3 Common Good**

Common good is a frequently discussed notion in civic republicanism, both in its classical formulations as well as contemporary accounts. The first interpretation of common good is understood as the classic, Aristotelian concept of 'good life', which entails a particular type of living. Usually, this particular type of living requires being politically active, although there can be different views on whether this would be the one, ultimate good (see for example Oldfield, 1990) or one good amongst many (see for example Sandel, 1998).

Most contemporary republicans, however, reject this interpretation of the common good (see for example Maynor, 2003; Pettit, 1997 and Viroli 1998), arguing instead that citizens should be able to choose their own goals and have their own interpretation of what the good life is (as long as in doing so they are not arbitrarily dominating others). On this account, common good refers to the general welfare of the political community and is perhaps better understood as 'public interest' meaning that the common good is one that exists over and above individual and private interests (Peterson, 2011, 69). This idea is captured well by Benjamin Barber (2003), who explains that the common good prescribes a community of citizens, who are less united by homogeneous interests as they are by common purpose and mutual action in participatory institutions.



On this second, more frequently used republican approach, the common good is something that is forged within the political community, and not something that can be discovered in any kind of metaphysical sense. But this also means that citizens would have to come together and deliberate on what exactly the common good means to them. Sandel (1996, 274) describes it in the following way: '[republican self-government requires] deliberating with fellow citizens about the common good and helping to shape the destiny of the political community'. Sandel (1998, 263) calls this the 'politics of the common good' which is based on the idea that concern should be cultivated among the citizens for the whole community (as opposed to the individual), and thus promote dedication to the common good (see also Honohan, 2003, 156 for a similar depiction).

The principle of the common good is important, because it urges citizens to think beyond their individual and personal interests and instead consider them in the context of their communal relationships with others. This is not to say that the common good needs to be something that is static and is forced upon citizens. Competing versions of what a good life looks like that exist in contemporary societies are welcome under the contemporary republican readings, meaning that the common good is fluid and dynamic and what is in community's interest today might not be in its interest tomorrow. What is important though is that when citizens engage with one another in participatory platforms, they do so with a recognition that their freedom to not be dominated will be secured through their communal collaborative contributions to issues of public concern. This means making sure the common good is approached in a critical way – one that is not fixed, uncritical or dogmatic' (Peterson, 2011, 73).

In terms of participatory events, citizens should be not only able to discuss their interests and grievances in these platforms, but also to work together to set common goals and cooperatively decide on what is best for them. Pettit describes this requirement in the following way: '[t]he definition of common interests (...) holds that a certain good will represent a common interest of a population just so far as co-operatively admissible consideration support its collective provision (Pettit, 2001, 156-157 also Pettit 2000). So, purely self-serving interests will not be registered as legitimate for tracking – the interests have to be other-regarding. This would mean that citizens are involved in a way that allows them to take the time to consider any given issue from different angles, making sure that no individual citizen, nor citizen groups are dominated in an arbitrary

way. This is also crucial, because, without a focus on common good in participatory platforms, citizens will not be able to engage in what Pettit calls the 'tough-luck test' (Haugaard & Pettit, 2017, 36). The tough-luck test relates to cases where the state has to pass laws and policies that may displease some members of the community – such as constructing an airport or an incinerator in their vicinity. What the tough luck test requires is that citizens are able to see that 'even in such a case, you have no reason to feel resentment of the kind you would feel at the lack of goodwill displayed by another's choice' (Haugaard & Pettit, 2017, 37). The test will work if people are able to relate to one another and to the participatory platform they form and be able to jointly determine the benefit of the community. This of course is an ideal and as such may not work on every occasion, but in terms of participatory events, this means that citizens should at the very least be able to work on issues of public interest jointly, coming up with joint solution and exchanging reasons behind their preferences and interests.

#### **2.4.4 The Republican Vision for Participatory Events: A Conclusion**

Before I conclude this chapter, I want to summarise briefly what the republican vision for the modern-day democracy is and why we should view it favourably. First, the modern republican theory is based on a philosophy that is simultaneously personally motivating and politically feasible. In terms of motivation, it takes seriously the fact that individuals are often moved by self-interest rather than the benefit of the community and offers a justification for why individuals should care about other people in their community and spend their time on participatory events. Republicanism posits that citizens should actively participate in political life and concern themselves with the common benefit, because they have something to lose if they do not. What's at risk is their freedom and non-dominated status, which they lose if they do not engage with matters of public concern. At the same time, republicanism also focuses on political feasibility and gives 'a job specification for democratic institutions' (Pettit, 2012, 22) by demonstrating how these institutions can facilitate a fair and just form of governance for everyone. This includes having 'participatory spaces' where citizens can engage with one another and the state can track their interests, thus making sure that no citizen or citizen groups are interfered with arbitrarily.

Second, republicanism is a theory that emphasises the importance of both short term and long-term goals for democratic process. In the short term, citizens are expected to have

an opportunity to exercise popular influence over government on particular decisions that it makes, while in the long term the citizenry should be imposing a popular overall direction of government. It is this dual nature of participation that ensures key democratic ideals are sustained and fostered over time. In practice, this would mean that participatory events cannot be performative and formal only – they would have to take place with certain regularity and have direct ties with the decision-making process.

Third, it is a theory that is concerned with more than political legitimacy or principles of justice as its focal point. It is a theory that emphasizes the freedom of citizens as a guiding value for political communities, so that no person should live under the arbitrary rule of others. This freedom does not, however, only refer to citizens' relationship with the law and the government, but also recognises the importance of social justice and argues that inequality of any kind needs special attention in whichever institutional arrangements are chosen for democratic governance.<sup>12</sup> And while freedom (understood as non-domination) is one of the key guiding principles for civic republicanism, it is not the only good that matters. Rather, it is a gateway good that should guide the government's actions. This means that to promote freedom under a civic republican reading, the government will also have to safeguard citizens against division, disorder, intrusive regulation, misery and poverty as well as unfairness and inequality (Pettit, 2012, 3).

In practice, the republican vision translates into making sure that at every site of decision-making there should be provisions in place that would help citizens identify the considerations that are relevant to the decision and to also question those decisions (all of which would have to happen in a transparent manner and under freedom of information). They should also have equal opportunities to participate, be fairly treated and have a genuine chance to contribute to the decisions that are being made. Furthermore, in a republic in which no person is to be dominated and in which decision-making tracks citizens' interests, the publicly expressed considerations (or reasons) should be relatively neutral, in the sense that they should not favour any one sector or one particular interest over others. In every instance when a decision is made, the

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<sup>12</sup> Civic republican thinkers have put forward very detailed discussions of social justice and inequality in their writings – especially Pettit (see *Republicanism* (1997), 'On the people's terms' (2012) and 'Just Freedom' (2014)). While this is a very important part of contemporary republican theory of justice as a whole, it is slightly less important for this thesis, so discussing it in great detail is beyond of this thesis.

authorities are required to make it very clear what considerations are moving them (Pettit, 1997, 188).<sup>13</sup>

What I have done in this chapter is provide an insight into both the classic and contemporary versions of republican theory that these principles stem from. I noted earlier in the chapter that different authors emphasize different principles (for example, Peterson (2011) focuses more on civic virtue and education, while Pettit (1997) builds his whole theory on protection of republican liberty). However, all three elements recur in contemporary republican writing and tend to mutually endorse each other. As Pettit notes, the ideal of freedom as non-domination therefore calls for a democratic vision where reasons (or considerations for decisions) are weighed in a debate-based manner and reasoned deliberation (Pettit, 1997, 190). This is so, because in order for citizens to achieve the status of non-domination, they need to be able to participate in a conversation and engage with one another (and have civic skills for it) with the purpose to consider reasons that have common appeal in the community (common good). Any participatory platform will therefore have to have these three principles secured so as to bring to life the republican vision of common living. They will require that people have an opportunity to work together and thus relate to one another and the corporate bodies that they form in a way that allows them to live together free from domination and oppressive will of others.

A useful term that captures the three principles together is one mentioned earlier in the chapter (see page 39), by Pettit (2003, section 20), where he describes the state as a ‘republic of reasons’. On this vision, the state is forced to relate to the citizens as co-reasoners, so that the decisions that the state makes are not made arbitrarily but with citizens’ interests in mind.<sup>14</sup> To track those interests, platforms of participation will be

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<sup>13</sup> Pettit proposes that the way this is set up mimics what Cass Sunstein has described (1993a, 1993b) as a polity within which citizens have equal claims and powers and which is achieved by an arrangement where public matters are decided by deliberation on reasons that have common appeal (common good) – which points to participatory or deliberative democracy in one shape or form (Pettit, 1997, 189). Pettit rightly notes that Sunstein is not alone in this reading – Quentin Skinner (1996, 15) similarly argues that republican theory is characterised by dialogical reason and summarised by the key phrase of *adi alteram partem* – always listen to the other side. The appropriate decision-making model would therefore be one characterised by dialogue and willingness to negotiate.

<sup>14</sup> In his ‘Republicanism’, Pettit explains (1997, 187) that public decision making would have to be debate-based for it to be able to track the relevant interests and ideas of citizens and thus ensuring citizens’ non-dominated status. An alternative approach, such as bargaining, would not be appropriate since it would only be available to those with sufficient (bargaining) power to actually threaten other parties efficiently – ‘if you want to force a change of bargain, then you had better represent an interest

needed, where citizens have an opportunity to exercise their civic virtue and jointly work on their vision for the common good. Provided these three principles are secured, participatory platforms are likely to fare well under the republican vision.

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group which pulls some weight' (Pettit, 1997, 188). A debate-based setting is more attractive because it is open to anyone who can make a plausible case – you do not have to have any particular power, to reasonably challenge the 'popular line'. The key point is to present reasons for your argument and demonstrate that they are relevant for the common good of the community in question.

## Chapter 3:

# Beyond the Republican Revival: Deliberative Democracy

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Chapter 2 concluded with an overview the key principles evident within civic republican theory. Civic republicanism was described as providing a robust base for contemporary democratic theory – one that focuses on freedom as non-domination, civic virtue and common good and urges us to think of democratic society as a ‘republic of reasons’. In the context of this thesis, I am interested in how these republican commitments would translate into an analytical framework that could be applied to assess participatory events. As noted in the introduction of this thesis, this framework would be useful for both designing and evaluating participatory events.

Having identified three key commitments of civic republican principles that form the basis for my framework, I now wish to determine how these commitments would translate into practically applicable benchmarks for participatory mechanisms. To do this, in this chapter I engage in detail with scholarship on deliberative democracy. I will introduce deliberative democracy by discussing its key ideas, before moving on to discussing its synergies with republican theory.

My aim in this chapter is not to compare the two theories and prove the superiority of either one of them. Neither is it to demonstrate how deliberative democracy may fill gaps in republican theory, or vice versa. Instead, I wish to show that the two theories share a number of concerns and principles and that a civic republican analytical framework I am looking to devise can therefore draw insights from deliberative democracy. Where the last chapter outlined civic republican principles as the basis of this framework, this chapter shows why there is potential to see deliberative democracy as capable of advancing these ideals thus making it possible to subject participatory events to a civic republican inspired analysis. As noted in the introduction of this thesis, democratic design, developments and innovations do not occur in a vacuum and since republicanism and deliberative democracy seem to share a number of commitments and principles, I

argue it is useful to explore their complementarity for the purpose of devising a republican analytical framework for participatory events.

It needs to be emphasised though that, as is the case with civic republicanism, deliberative democracy is a very diverse tradition, with many different, sometimes opposing claims made by different deliberative thinkers (self-proclaimed or otherwise). It is beyond the scope of this chapter or thesis to review the whole tradition or to even select what I believe to be the soundest formulation of the theory. I will however introduce the core tenets of the approach, offering a concise description of each and locate synergies between civic republicanism and deliberative democracy.

### **3.1 Deliberative Democracy: Core Commitments**

'Deliberative democracy' as a term was first used by Joseph Bessette in 1980, when he wrote about it in opposition to elitist readings of the American constitution (Bessette, 1980). Since then, after what was labelled the 'deliberative turn' by John Dryzek (2000), interest in deliberative democracy has increased not only amongst academics, but also among democratic practitioners. It has been widely praised for its potential for enhancing and deepening democracy (see Benhabib, 1996, Cohen, 1989; Fung, 2003, Habermas, 1996; Mansbridge 2006 and 2007), and the number of books, articles and reports on the topic has been growing steadily.<sup>15</sup>

While a review of this body of literature shows that there is no absolute agreement about the definition of deliberative democracy (Carpini, Cook & Jacobs, 2004, 317; Burkhalter, Gastil and Kelshaw, 2002, 398; Florida, 2018, 305), in its most formal sense, deliberation is usually understood in light of its etymology<sup>16</sup> whereby deliberation entails the weighing of different potential solutions to an issue, exploring different arguments in favour and against these solutions, acknowledging the persuasive ones and criticising those that are not. Crucially, this process should lead to 'being convinced' of something

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<sup>15</sup> See, for example Cohen 1989; Dryzek 2000; Elstub, 2010 and 2014; Fishkin 2011; Gutmann and Thompson 2000 and 2009, Rosenberg, 2007; Landemore 2015, Leib & He, 2006; Manin 2005, Ryfe, 2005; Steiner, 2012; Warren & Pearse 2008. For a critical genealogy of deliberative democracy see Antonio Florida's (2018) book 'From Participation to Deliberation'.

<sup>16</sup> The term is traced back to before 1425 and was borrowed from Latin, understood as to 'weigh, consider well, apparently an alteration, perhaps influenced by liberare [...] to balance, weigh' - See Chambers etymological dictionary for a full definition (Chambers, 1998, 261)

and not simply ‘demonstrating’ something – it is about what is right or wrong, but not what is true or false (Carpini, Cook & Jacobs, 2004, 317; Floridaia, 2018, 5).

Deliberative democracy, as the name of the theory suggests, is also intrinsically concerned with democracy and while deliberation and deliberative practices are not dependent on democratic frameworks and may occur in non-democratic regimes as well, most authors discuss the two elements jointly.<sup>17</sup> Deliberative thinkers, especially those contributing to early formulations of deliberative theorising in the 1980s, often discuss deliberation in reference to existing democracies, contrasting it with representative/aggregative models of democracy (see for example Bohman 2003, Cohen, 1989, Elster 1997, Freeman, 2000, Parkinson 2003, Richardson 1997 and Sunstein 1991). Deliberative democracy on their reading was seen as superior to competitive pluralism and the strategic behaviour brought about by voting and bargaining. It promotes a certain kind of rationality and a way of thinking that, when applied to institutions of participation, resemble a forum instead of a market. The goal of deliberative democracy is therefore reaching an agreement in the form of consensus<sup>18</sup> and not a bargaining equilibrium. This focus on consensus requires citizens to go beyond their self-interest and personal preferences and focus instead on what is preferable to the group as a whole – the common good.<sup>19</sup>

This focus is captured well by Samuel Freeman (2000) who provides a definition of deliberative democracy which, he argues, most prominent deliberative theorists<sup>20</sup> would agree on. Freeman (2000, 382) describes deliberative democracy as an ideal of political relations, where political agents (or their representatives) aim to collectively deliberate and vote on their ‘sincere and informed judgements regarding measures conducive to the common good of citizens’. Political agents here are expected to view themselves and each other as ‘democratic citizens who are politically free and equal participants in civic life’.

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<sup>17</sup> Ethan J. Leib and Baogang He (2006) offer an interesting account on this in their edited volume “The Search for Deliberative Democracy in China”. In this book, Dryzek notes that even though China does not have liberal democratic institutions of the sort that we think can be home to deliberation, deliberative practices can be found in public sphere, designed forums and local governance (Leib & He, 2006, 33).

<sup>18</sup> Note that the notion of consensus is not embraced by all deliberative authors – see for example Karpowitz and Mansbridge, 2005, 348 and Dryzek and Niemeyer 2006.

<sup>19</sup> This point is, as has been shown, a core commitment of civic republicanism. See more on this in Chapter 2.

<sup>20</sup> By which he means Joshua Cohen, David Estlund, Jurgen Habermas, John Rawls, Cass Sunstein, Amy Gutmann and Dennis Thompson.



Freeman's definition also emphasises a background of constitutional rights and social means that are necessary to enable citizens to use the opportunities that they have to participate in public life. Freeman then writes:

'Citizens are individually free in that they have their own freely determined conceptions of the good, and these conceptions are publicly seen as legitimate even though they are independent of political purposes. Moreover, free citizens have diverse and incongruous conceptions of the good, which are constitutionally protected by basic rights. Because of this diversity citizens recognize a duty in their public political deliberations to cite public reasons – considerations that all reasonable citizens can accept in their capacity as democratic citizens- and to avoid public argument on the basis of reasons peculiar to their particular moral, religious, and philosophical views and incompatible with public reason. What makes these reasons public is that they are related to and in some way advance the common interests of citizens. Primary among the common interests of citizens are their freedom, independence, and equal civic status.'<sup>21</sup>

Although the specific formulations of deliberative democracy may differ, similar definitions to this one can be found in other deliberative theorists' work (see for example Cohen, 1989 and Gutmann and Thompson, 2000). The recurrent theme, captured here by Freeman is that deliberative-democratic government is one that secures a central place for "reasoned discussion in political life" (Cooke, 2000, 947). As a consequence, deliberative theorists believe in the capacity, right and opportunity of citizens to participate in decision-making processes and, though offering different practical solutions for furthering this aim, all emphasize the role of what they describe as deliberative, communicative or discursive power in democratic regimes.

When it comes to the question of where deliberation can occur and what mechanisms are best suited for deliberative participation, there is once again no agreement amongst deliberative democrats. Deliberative features can (and have been) incorporated into a very broad group of methods that include citizens' juries, planning cells, deliberative polling, consensus conferences, citizens' panels and many more<sup>22</sup> (Abelson et al, 2003).

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<sup>21</sup> Note how this quote echoes what Pettit says about 'republic of reasons' (see Chapter 2)

<sup>22</sup> Note that I am referring here to popular participation platforms for citizens – there is also a wide debate on how deliberative features can be used in state institutions and judicial branch of the government.

Furthermore, deliberation can also occur on different levels – micro, macro and local<sup>23</sup> (Lafont, 2015) and sometimes simultaneously on more than level. Although this may be seen by some as vague and non-specific, I argue that this variety of applications illustrate that deliberative democracy is a flexible and adaptable theory, fit for many different contexts. Gutmann and Thompson capture this idea well in the following paragraph:

“Deliberative democracy is different from other theories because it contains within itself not only the means of its own correction but also the possibility of its own fundamental revision. The provisional status of its own principles allows deliberative democracy to subject to critical scrutiny the content and conditions that it prescribes, as well as principles that other theories propose” (Guttmann and Thompson, 2000, 180).

On their reading of deliberative democracy, it is by definition a flexible theory, which allows correcting itself and modifying itself in meaningful ways. What this means in practical terms is that principles of deliberative democracy can be morphed so that they can be applied in many different environments, whilst still remaining committed to its core affiliations. While this is helpful for practical applications of deliberative theory, I argue that there are some non-negotiable minimal requirements for a practice to be deliberative: that deliberation should take a form of conversation between equals, where common views are forged in a sincere and informed conversation to arrive at decisions that affect the whole community.

Looking back at the last chapter, it is possible to already see some commonality between deliberative democracy and civic republicanism; and while not commensurate theories, there are clear elements and ideas that overlap between them. For example, republicanism places strong emphasis on participatory platforms that are available to

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<sup>23</sup> Micro level mechanisms, according to Lafont, focus on deliberation that concerns general political issues, usually in small groups of randomly selected participants. Mini-publics such as citizen juries, consensus conferences and deliberative polls would fall into this category. The main goal of these practices is to increase the quality of face-to face deliberation, and is much less concerned with enhancing mass participation in politics. Macro level deliberative mechanisms are instead more concerned with the inclusion of citizens in deliberation about more general issues and less bothered with the quality of deliberation. Citizens’ assemblies in British Columbia or the Icelandic Constitutions Crowdsourcing would belong in this category. Finally, local deliberative mechanisms are concerned with solving local issues – for example, allocation of a city budget or operation of a school (mechanisms like participatory budgeting would fall into this category). However, in contrast with the other two categories, these will be typically be less concerned with the deliberative processes themselves and less concerned with the will-formation in the broader public sphere (Lafont, 2015, 41).

everyone in the community for tracking their interests. These will be platforms where different views can be expressed and new ones forged, with the goal to arrive at decisions that benefit community as a whole. Deliberative democracy shares that emphasis and seems to be basing it on similar principles as civic republicans. I will explore these similarities further in the next section, where I turn to discussing synergies between civic republicanism and deliberative democracy. This section is aimed at illustrating why there is potential for deliberative democracy to be compatible with civic republican principles, and therefore provide the ground for and inform the analytical framework I am looking to devise.

### **3.2 Deliberative Democracy and Republicanism: Synergies**

In his article 'Beyond the Republican Revival' Cass Sunstein (1987, 1590) describes deliberative democracy as something that is 'characteristically republican' and says this:

“The republican revival is designed, above all, as a response to understandings that treat governmental outcomes as a kind of interest-group deal, and that downplay the deliberative functions of politics and the social formation of preferences. The basic republican commitments to political equality, deliberation, universalism, and citizenship have played a prominent role at central points in American constitutionalism. The contemporary tasks are to give content to these commitments and to spell out their implications for modern legal reform. To carry out these tasks, it will be necessary to go well beyond the republican revival.”<sup>24</sup>

Deliberation, Sunstein posits, is one of the basic commitments of contemporary republicanism, along with other key principles such as freedom and active citizenship. Under his reading, the central idea of republicanism is that politics has a deliberative dimension, which is also transformative. It is transformative, because it provides opportunities for preferences to form and change rather than simply accepts the existing ones (Sunstein, 1987, 1545). Sunstein is not on his own in this thinking. Other authors have made similar observations about the implications of contemporary republicanism

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<sup>24</sup> In his article 'Beyond the republican revival' Cass Sunstein in which he, as is demonstrated by the quote, invited republican theorists to go beyond mere appreciation of republican ideals and seek ways to apply them in practice. While Sunstein's referring mostly to public law in US in this article, his views have influenced many republican theorists after him to look for what this 'beyond' would look like (see, for example Peterson, 2011; Florida; 2018; Bello Hutt, 2018).

and made claims about politics being above all deliberative.<sup>25</sup> Bello Hutt (2018, 85) in particular emphasizes that deliberative democracy presents the best institutional means to prevent domination and claims that the instrumental links between the two theories need to be explored much more closely than they have been until now. Bello Hutt also admits that these links may not be immediately obvious, even though authors from both traditions frequently employ common categories and defend common values without explicitly recognising their doing so. See, for example Freeman's definition of deliberative democracy in the previous section of this chapter (pages 59 and 60). While Freeman discusses deliberation, the way he describes its purposes uses what can be described as typically republican language, especially in his references to the common good. Or consider, alternatively this quote by Gutmann and Thompson (2000, 61): "Deliberative democracy is a conception of democratic politics in which decisions and policies are justified in a process of discussion among free and equal citizens or their accountable representatives". On their view:

"a deliberative theory contains a set of principles that prescribe fair terms of cooperation. Its fundamental principle is that citizens owe one another justifications for the laws they collectively impose on one another.[...] The reasons are not merely procedural ("because the majority favors it") or purely substantive ("because it is a human right"). They appeal to moral principles (such as basic liberty or equal opportunity) that citizens who are motivated to find fair terms of cooperation can reasonably accept".

Even though they never refer to this principle being republican, this sentiment most certainly matches that of the classical republican thinking, where it is argued citizens should not live under laws that have been imposed on them without having an opportunity to contribute to their formation through hearing and giving reasons for or against these laws.

Freeman and Gutmann and Thompson are not the only authors who express ideas relating to civic republicanism – you can find similar references in works of Bohman (2012), Cohen (1986), Lafont (2015) and Mansbridge (1999). However, none of these authors specify the extent to which (if at all) they are relying on republican conceptions

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<sup>25</sup> For more classical accounts see Madison in *The Federalist* No 10 and 63 and Hamilton in *The Federalist* Nos. 9, 12 & 70, and for more recent accounts see J.G.A. Pocock (2016), 287-90; Pitkin (1967), 300-04, Southwood (2002) and especially Bello-Hut (2018).

of freedom as non-domination or any other republican values. Nevertheless, what this illustrates is that elements defining deliberative democracy can also be viewed as expressions of republican aspirations (Hutt, 2018, 87) and that often their goals are the same. What I will review in the remainder of this section are the common themes that both civic republican and deliberative thinkers emphasise frequently. To give this review some consistency, I will review them in the light of the central republican tenets of freedom as non-domination, civic virtue and common good, although these values are so closely linked, that an overlap between the three will be impossible to avoid.

### **3.2.1 Freedom as Non-Domination**

As was noted in Chapter 1 of this thesis, freedom as non-domination is one of the key guiding principles for civic republican thinking. In the deliberative democracy literature however, it is more common to refer to autonomy rather than freedom.<sup>26</sup> An individual citizen is seen as an autonomous, rational actor who can make choices based on her individual interests, but she is also at the same time a moral agent who is able to reflect and collaborate with others in the community. It is by following these reflections and through consideration of the interests of others and the common good that she is able to reorder the existing interests and to create new ones as well (Rosenberg, 2007, 7, see also Bello Hutt, 2018). In turn this leads to a necessary component of political equality (and inclusion – see section on civic virtue below), where all those who are affected by decisions, should have a say in how these decisions are made.

The curious thing about these connections is that both theories are at their core arguing for very similar democratic values and are both making very similar observations about democratic governance. And while autonomy in the deliberative context seems to be more akin to positive freedom understood as self-government and functioning independently, whilst republican theory emphasises freedom as non-domination, when it comes to citizen participation the effect these notions have are almost identical. For both theories, ideal democratic participation should involve an exchange of preferences

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<sup>26</sup> For an insightful discussion of the relationship between autonomy, deliberative democracy and democracy more broadly, see Chapters 2 and 3 in Elstub's (2008) book *Towards a deliberative and associational democracy*.

and interests between equals through self-expression and self-reflection, in the light of which new interests are then able to emerge.

According to Bello Hutt (2018, 98), the way deliberative democracy and civic republicanism view liberty (whether the focus is on autonomy or being free from domination), translates into a specific principle that is necessary for a republican deliberative democracy to work. According to Bello Hutt (see also Christian, 1996, 18), they view liberty as an egalitarian principle that emphasises the previously discussed link between freedom and inclusion (see page 37). As noted in Chapter 1, non-domination is secured in part through creating channels for citizen participation and making sure that the systems created are 'fair, non-capricious and non-dominating' of any citizen or any groups of citizens (Pettit, 1997, 5). In other words, to secure the republican principle of freedom, participatory platforms will have to be inclusive. Bello Hutt calls this principle *Equality of Access and Deliberation*.

Equality of Access and Deliberation is therefore a principle of political equality, which prescribes provision of equal access to deliberate to all citizens and claims that republican democracy is egalitarian insofar as it does not establish criteria that could 'count as decisive for treating some members of the polity as privileged citizens' (Bello Hutt, 2018, 98). It emphasises the deliberative nature of political process, where inclusion and reason-giving are essential. The usefulness of 'Equality of Access and Deliberation' in the context of this thesis lies in the fact that it concisely summarises the key focal points of the two theories and demonstrates that they have the capacity to uphold the same principles. It indicates that for a participatory mechanism to further deliberative and republican goals, it has to ensure everyone has equal access to the platform (which will have implications for who is invited to participate) and equal access to contribute (which will have implications for the participatory process itself) if it is to secure freedom as non-domination.

### **3.2.2 Civic Virtue**

As we have seen, in their search for remedies for domination, civic republicans turn to a form of politics, which requires citizens to participate in public dialogue with other citizens and where the topics of discussion would be matters of public concern. Deliberative democracy, too, emphasizes communicative power of citizenry as crucial,

and posits that a well-functioning and legitimate state should provide opportunities for citizens to participate through deliberative means.<sup>27</sup> Indeed, as Dryzek (2007, 241) notes, the first task of a deliberative forum is to produce a particular kind of communication. The exact content of that communication is however a matter of disagreement. Habermas (1984) for example focuses on his theory of communicative competence and rationality, rooted in 'co-operative search for a terrain of communicative understanding' (Florida, 2017, 84) where coercion, deception and manipulation are all ruled out from this communication. Gutmann and Thompson (1998), on the other hand, emphasise the principle of reciprocity as the guiding principle for communication. And Dryzek (2000) would allow any and all kinds of communication to be included, including rhetoric, gossip and jokes as long as it is capable of inducing some reflection. Nevertheless, at the more base level, deliberative thinkers seem to agree that they want this communication to produce *something* rather than nothing (Dryzek, 2007, 241). Dryzek recognises that on the first reading, this may look like an obvious statement, but he also explains that political communication in deliberative forums is sometimes treated by critics as 'cheap talk' or nothing more than simple signalling, which cannot produce anything at all – not even a recognition in other participants that alternative view may legitimately exist. 'Something rather than nothing' refers then to the communicative power that this type of conversation will have, according to deliberative democrats.

In republican thinking, the key idea here is that citizens should live in a 'republic of reasons' where they need to be able and willing to exchange reasons behind their preferences. The communication between citizens as well as between the citizens and the state are characterised not only by entitlements, but also by duties (Cicero, 1999, 17-19; Rousseau, 1997, 113; Skinner, 1981, 53). It relies on the 'habits of virtue' or good citizenship if the republic is to prosper (Pettit, 1997, 245). And so the citizens are expected to be concerned not only with their private interests, but with the preferences of other citizens, too (Sunstein, 1987, 1539).<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Note that deliberation thus functions as a justification as well as the condition for the legitimacy of the decisions that are adopted (Manin, 1987, 359; Gutmann and Thompson, 1996, 4; Bohman, 1998; J. Cohen, 1997, 67).

<sup>28</sup> This is something that Pettit is concerned about – that participation in participatory platforms of this kind will be seen by citizens as a sacrifice of their private lives and be exhausting. However, as Bello Hutt (2018) notes when discussing this concern – no deliberative democracy calls for a system where individuals engaged in deliberation are political activists and vote every day and every week on a

The 'something' that would therefore be produced through participation, under this reading, would be at the very minimum a shared view on a particular measure or policy reflective of the common good. An important point to remember here is that this does not mean that this shared view is going to be literally shared by everyone – as Pettit notes, dissensus is not only acceptable, but also desirable for civic republicanism (Pettit, 2012, 268) since citizens will rarely be in a complete agreement on every issue. As long as good reasons (meaning – based on common good and not dominating any one group or individual arbitrarily) can be provided for a decision, the interference that follows this decision will not be arbitrary. And while little is said in the republican literature apart from this more general sentiment identified by Pettit, there is no reason for communication in participatory platforms not to entail different types of communication, similar to what Dryzek has proposed in his work. All types of communication, including jokes and gossip may be fitting, as long as they are aimed at reflection and help the community trace their shared interests.

But there are two further principles of participation that link the two traditions specifically through the notion of civic virtue. The first of these principles is linked with inclusion: both traditions emphasise that all potentially affected people should be included in decision-making. As we have seen, this is particularly important for republican politics, as those who do not have an opportunity to choose the laws by which they are governed are living under the domination of the state.

But it also has implication for the civic virtue of citizens. To participate, citizens will have to be able to identify, express and defend their preferences and recognise that doing so is in their own interest – or else they would be living under the domination of the state and/or other citizens who may be enjoying more influence in their community. This idea of a virtuous citizen has practical implications too: namely, that there will have to be an

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regular basis. In addition, the more recent deliberative literature (see for example Lafont, 2015 and Mansbridge 1999 and 2012) focusses on a systemic approach to deliberation – meaning that no one institution, process or agent are to be the focus of deliberative engagement. Instead, the focus is on their connectedness and interconnections between the different avenues of discussion that jointly form a functioning deliberative system.



element of civic education or training included in the participatory platform as it cannot be assumed that citizens will simply acquire these skills by themselves.<sup>29</sup>

The second related principle calls for intersubjective justification of decisions or, put differently, the reason-giving nature of participatory process. This principle is compatible with the idea that citizens should not be arbitrarily dominated by others and are instead guided by a more rational and, republicans would hope, communal way of thinking.<sup>30</sup> So it is not just any communication that is needed – while it can take any form as was suggested by Dryzek’s point above – it is communication that is focused on reason-giving and communal benefit. Bello Hutt (2018, 90) builds on this and explains what this link translates into in practical terms:

‘Both elements can be linked to republican virtue. The risk of domination is reduced insofar as citizens are provided with the tools for accessing the fora where collective decisions are adopted, and to the extent those decisions take their viewpoints and preferences into account through the justifications of the decisions adopted. But this requires that individuals have the actual possibility of accessing those fora and engaging in the creation of those norms, so that institutions are receptive to their preferences. This calls for the formal and material possibility of “being present” and having a voice, but also entails that preferences be formed and be, to the greatest possible extent, the result of the individuals’ own wills and not of the constraints imposed by their circumstances and/or by other individuals. Hence, individuals need autonomy and access to an inclusive hearing where those preferences and arguments can be aired, heard and considered.’

With this quote, Hutt is in fact referring to several additional shared elements of deliberative democracy and civic republicanism. The first one builds on the concept of inclusion mentioned earlier. For both republicanism and deliberative democracy, the idea of political power being shared is central and what this entails is a form of governance where individuals have an actual possibility to assess and participate in deliberative fora. But this cannot be a formal right only – there also has to be a material

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<sup>29</sup> Unless the state would be making sure all citizens acquire civic education through formal channels of education – for a detailed republican account on civic education see ‘Civic Republicanism and Civic Education’ by Andrew Peterson (2011).

<sup>30</sup> The connection of these two principles that deliberative democracy entails also allows civic republicanism to adjust the benchmark of civic virtue in the classical sense of the term, so that it no longer demands the same degree of sacrifice – prioritising the public life over the private life (Hutt, 2018, 90).

possibility to be present and have a voice. This then brings us back to the two types of domination emphasised by republican thinkers – dominium and imperium, where both need addressing if domination is to be kept at bay. Think, for example, of a parent with childcare duties who would have to find someone to watch their child to be able to attend a deliberative assembly and who may not be able to afford it. In such a case, even though they are formally able to attend, they are limited by their financial circumstances. This, for both theories presents a serious issue and points to the need for practical provisions such as remunerating participants for their time participating in deliberations, so that at the very least dominium of this particular kind would not present an obstacle to them.

### **3.2.3 Common Good**

As has become evident in the discussion above, civic virtue is a concept that can hardly be separated from the notion of the common good. Both notions are present in the deliberative democratic theory, too – although they are not always described with the exact same vocabulary. The core idea is very similar for both traditions however, which is that the citizens need to have the skills and motivation (civic virtue) to take part in participatory events by engaging in a certain kind of communication (giving reasons and sharing interests) that is based on shared interests and goals (the common good).

Peterson (2011, 57-76) recognises the link between civic virtue and common good and explains that the common good allows individual rights and collective concerns to become intertwined. So it is not that we necessarily seek Aristotle's eudaimonia (the good life - see page 29) when we engage in the public life of our community in some intrinsic sense, it is instead rooted in fact that it is in our very best interest to do so, as this engagement and concern with the common good is what ultimately secures our freedom. The author who addresses the link between republicanism and deliberative democracy via the notion of common good in the most direct manner is Joshua Cohen (1989, 2009a and 2009b), whose work is considered to be among foundational texts of deliberative democracy (Florida, 2018). In his 'Deliberation and Democratic Legitimacy' (see *Selected Essays*, 2009a, 19) Cohen identifies the following central points to the ideal of deliberative democracy:

- a. 'public deliberation is focused on the common good',
- b. this deliberation 'requires some form of manifest equality among citizens'; and,

- c. it 'shapes the identity and interests of citizens in ways that contribute to the formation of a public conception of common good'.

Cohen builds on these points and argues that in a well-ordered democracy, political debate is organised around alternative conceptions of the public good and citizens operating in the political arena ought not to take a narrow, group-based standpoint. Cohen writes:

'The deliberative democrat emphasizes that democracy is not simply about treating people as equals in a process of collective decision-making, or about fair bargaining among groups, but also about reasoning together as equals on matters of common concern (or it could be described as treating people as equals by relying on our common reasons as a basis for justification)' (Cohen, 2009a, 7)

Cohen also clarifies that there is no a priori common good defined outside of the deliberative process, and that deliberative civic practice constructs the common good:

'Deliberation, then, focuses debate on the common good. And the relevant conceptions of the common good are not comprised simply of interests and preferences that are antecedent to deliberation. Instead, the interests, the aims, and ideals that constitute the common good are those that survive deliberation, interests that, on public reflection, we think it legitimate to appeal to in making claims on social resources.' (Cohen, 2009a, 27)

What these quotes highlight is Cohen's commitment to public interest and common good that very much resembles republican commitment to the same.<sup>31</sup> Specifically, it is the focus on setting common goals and discovering common good together that is emphasised, in contrast with aggregative forms of discussion. The common good is neither pre-determined nor formed via the sum of all interests but is instead created through deliberation and sharing reasons that form citizens' interest. This is a view that is frequently expressed in the works of republican authors (see section 1.4.3 on common good) and deliberative democrats (see for example Bächtiger et al, 2010; Mansbridge et al, 2010 and Rosenberg, 2007) alike.

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<sup>31</sup> This is no coincidence – in his 'Deliberation and democratic legitimacy' (1989) makes a footnote reference to Sunstein's (1985) work (associated with the republican tradition, see page 56) and notes that he is inspired in his work by a recent discussion of the republican conception of self-government.

What Cohen also notes is that having these structures does not a guarantee that citizens will in fact think about the common good. They may well have the natural ability to transform their preferences (see Pettit's comment on human agency, page 39), but it does not mean that they necessarily will. For Cohen, 'this is not especially troubling, since there are no guarantees of anything in politics' (Cohen, 2005, 356).

Other deliberative authors (see Elster, 1997; List, 2011, Luskin, Fishkin and Jowell, 2002) have been more rigid on this point, especially in terms of evaluating the deliberative quality of a participatory events. To determine whether deliberation has gone well, the concept of transformative power has had an impact on much of the theoretical as well as empirical work on deliberation and a 'black box' approach is often taken to evaluate the success of the event in terms of how many people changed their mind as a result of it. The idea is that if the standard participant selection mechanisms are applied, appropriate institutions set up, and participants are seen to change their minds, then it is asserted (rather than demonstrated) that deliberation has produced good results (Parkinson, 2016, 1). But, as Dryzek (2007, 245) notes, the absence of preference change is not a sign of bad or unsuccessful deliberation – it may well be that individuals have upon reflection decided to stick with their original preferences. What is important here is that individuals are at least open to changing their preferences for different policy alternatives and are willing to reflect on them together with others (see Cohen – 2005). This reading is very much in line with the republican notions of a 'republic of reasons', common good and civic virtue as described by Pettit and others: dissensus is perfectly acceptable, as long as we at least attempt to view the issue at hand in the light of what the community needs so that the interests of citizens can be tracked.

### **3.3 Conclusion**

What I have attempted to do in this chapter is to show that deliberative democracy and civic republicanism share common goals and focus on very similar principles. At the very core, both traditions are focused on freedom, common good and civic virtue. I have tried to show this by using republican terms for the sake of consistency – so have described these values as freedom as non-domination, civic virtue and common good. While deliberative democrats may not employ the same exact terms, these democratic values as components of democratic legitimacy are at the heart of both theories. For both,

decisions are seen as legitimate when they are carried out in a certain way – when all citizens are treated equally in that they have the right, capacity or opportunity to participate in deliberation about the content of these decisions and as a result grant their reflective assent to their outcome (Dryzek, 2007, 242, see also Manin, 1987, 352; Cohen, 1989, 22; Benhabib, 1996, 68). In both traditions, ideal practice therefore entails equal access to all citizens so that they would be able to share in popular control and exercise their civic virtue. By doing so, the effects of domination would be minimised and their interests – tracked. I proposed at the beginning of this chapter that civic republicanism and deliberative democracy are mutually beneficial theoretical approaches. This chapter has shown the different ways in which they can be seen as such, with a particular focus on three key principles – freedom as non-domination, civic virtue and common good which I have shown to be frequent themes in both republican and deliberative democratic literatures. I believe that it is these three principles that should therefore be the starting point for developing the analytical framework I set out to develop. I will now turn to the next step of this exploration and discuss what practical benchmarks these principles would translate into in order that they can be empirically traced in participatory events. While the normative anchor for my framework remains civic republicanism, I will turn to deliberative democracy for guidance as and if necessary, when looking for empirical manifestations of theoretical values.

# Chapter 4:

## Benchmarks of Republican Participation

In the second chapter of this thesis, I demonstrated that, despite the breadth of the republican tradition, at its core, republicanism commits to three main principles – freedom as non-domination, common good and civic virtue. Any practical republican recommendations for political organisation, I suggested, would have to be drafted with these principles in mind. In Chapter 3, I showed that deliberative democracy shares these commitments and, whilst it is possible to observe some differences in emphasis, the core objectives of the two theories overlap in significant ways.

What this means for the project as a whole is that the synergies between the two theories should be viewed as a starting point for the analytical framework I am devising. My goal was to create a framework of analysis rooted in republicanism and I turned to deliberative democracy to gain insight into how specific principles can be turned into tangible benchmarks that can be located and evaluated in participatory settings. This chapter will propose how this can be done. I will seek to answer the following question: what key benchmarks should a republican framework of analysis for participatory events entail?

To answer this question, this chapter will outline the basis of an analytical template that will be explored and tested in subsequent chapters. I will consider common principles within civic republican thought and, by supplementing these with insights from deliberative democracy, will identify benchmarks that can be applied to assess the republican character of participatory initiatives.

Each of the sections will discuss the rationale of one of three key republican principles, give examples of what this principle might look like in practical terms, and finally, offer a scale of measurement that identifies a spectrum of some of the possible practices and outlines the different degrees that these options promote republican principles. It will first consider a principle that for many republican authors serves as a conceptual basis for republican theory as a whole – freedom as non-domination and will then discuss the two further republican principles: common good and civic virtue. At the same time, I will

also be revisiting the corresponding ideas from deliberative democracy outlined in the last chapter and build on these conceptualizations of republican principles to determine what benchmarks fit which principles.

Finally, in this chapter I will also highlight ideal realisations of each republican principle. At the same time, I will also consider other alternative variations of the same principle recognizing that in the context of modern-day complexities of our communities, it is helpful to provide a scale of options, rather than a strict tick-box analytical framework.

To be sure, the scales presented here are not meant to be exhaustive, but rather demonstrative of practical indicators of republican benchmarks. Other realisations of republican values are possible, and it is not a given that these manifestations will be easy to identify on every occasion. Furthermore, there may also be cases where more than one indicator is present (think, for example, of cases where the participant selection is organised in stages and different selection method is used at every stage). The scales are therefore meant to be flexible, merely providing guidelines for how the values under discussion might be applied in practice.

## **4.1. Freedom as Non-domination**

As I discussed in sections 2.4.1 and 3.2.1, freedom as non-domination lies at the core of modern republican theorising. As an ideal, non-domination is not something deliberative democrats have emphasised in their work in a direct way – autonomy, freedom and independent thought are all prominent conceptual ideas in deliberative thought. Nevertheless, despite the different formulations of freedom, previous chapters have shown that both republicanism and deliberative democracy share a commitment to protecting citizens' freedom.

It is my aim for this section to unpack the ideal of non-domination further to establish the desiderata it entails. I will proposition, that in the setting of participatory engagement it translates into four benchmarks– popular control, inclusiveness, internal transparency and external transparency that can be used to inform either the design or evaluation of participatory mechanisms. I will discuss them in turn in the sections below.

#### 4.1.1 Non-Domination and Popular Control

As shown in previous chapters, both civic republicanism (and deliberative democracy!) advance a vision of non-domination in which popular control is paramount. As identified above, this entails an interest to increase citizens' influence and control within decision making, effectively 'decreasing the distance' between the acts of voting to the decision being made. The emphasis here is on citizens making a meaningful contribution to decision-making.

As discussed in Chapter 2, Philip Pettit proposed that this can be done with the help of contestatory (ex-post) mechanisms of participation, as well as deliberative ex ante participation, which would allow for 'the emergence and empowerment of common desiderata & standards that are recognised as relevant on all sides' (Pettit, 2019, 35). To appraise what this means for the measurement of popular control it may be useful to take a closer look at different types of ex-ante participatory mechanisms and the role of popular control in them. Beginning this task, it is notable that numerous scholars have revealed how participatory opportunities can come in many forms, ranging from consultation to stakeholder participation (Arnstein, 1969; see also Fung, 2006). The amount of popular control in participatory mechanisms and the way it is distributed among participants can be affected by different factors including how much decision-making power they receive.

Think, for example of mechanisms like participatory budgeting where citizens are typically making direct decisions regarding distribution of significant portions of the community's budget (Smith, 2009, 34). In this case, citizens are decision-makers and aren't sharing that power with anyone else for that particular decision. But then you can also think of participatory events where the extent of authority is more limited and the main role of the citizens is to advise and consult with the local authority, for example, as is the case in some versions of small-scale citizen assemblies.<sup>32</sup>

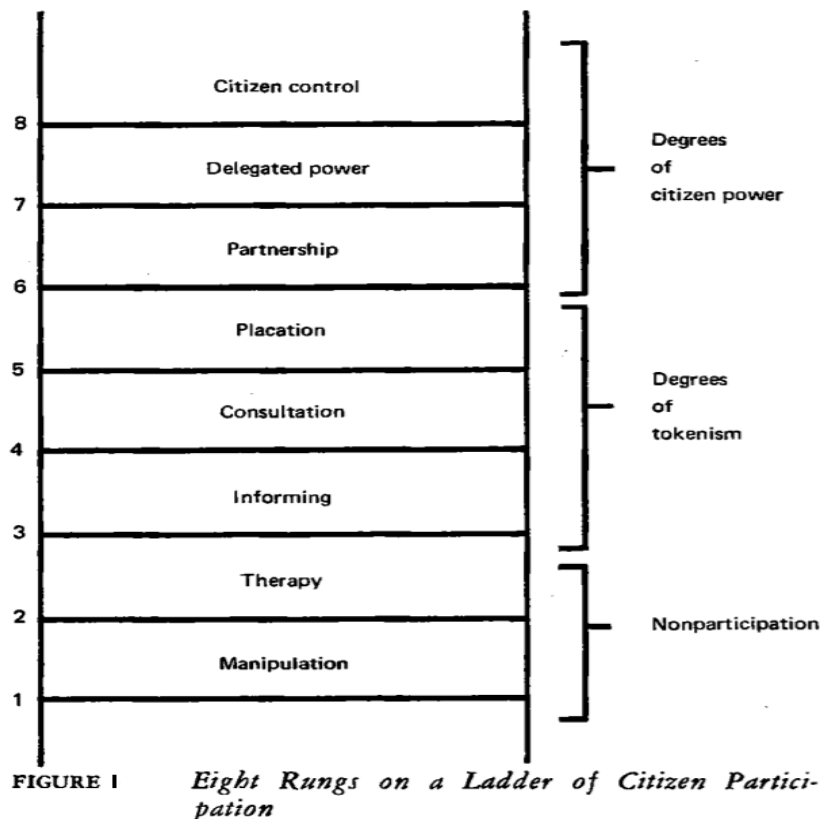
Each of these cases exemplify a different level of popular control. In the latter case, citizens have very little direct influence over the actual decision-making process, while in the former participants of participatory budgeting have the final say in how parts of

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<sup>32</sup> For a detailed typology of democratic innovations and their key features, please see Elstub and Escobar, 2019, 11-28)



community budget are distributed. In order to evaluate the degree to which a participatory event is promoting republican principles, it is then necessary to clarify the type of power that is required and put forward categories that can somehow capture the amount of popular control that citizens may have. One potential source for this could be Arnstein's (1969) work, where one such set of categories is identified in her Ladder of Participation (Figure 1):



*Figure 1: Arnstein's Ladder of Participation*

Arnstein's illustration juxtaposes powerless citizens with the powerful citizens in order to highlight the fundamental divisions between them (Arnstein, 1969, 217), creating a tool for measuring participation solely on the base of the amount of direct power that is attached to participation. I propose a slightly adapted version, which, although taking inspiration from Arnstein's work proposes a scale for measuring popular control that more directly reflects the principles of civic republicanism, identifying different roles that citizens may hold (Table 3).

Table 1: Role of the Citizens

Category	Definition
<i>Observers</i>	Citizens are observers – their role is to follow the process but have no influence over the final outcome of the process.
<i>Informants</i>	The role of the citizens is to provide information and evidence, but not to propose new policies or laws. In this way, their deliberative involvement may carry some influence over the final outcomes, but this is coincidental or dependant goodwill/openness of the actual decision-makers.
<i>Consultants</i>	The role of the citizens is to interact with decision-makers who are present – they can ask questions, clarify their position and make new proposals. These proposals are binding.
<i>Stakeholders</i>	The role of the citizens is extended to stakeholders – they have the power to propose ideas and makes decisions jointly with other stakeholders. Their ideas cannot be dismissed and are binding.
<i>Decision-makers</i>	Citizens are the decision-makers and have all the power to propose a new policy solution.

The list of different roles that citizens can have is useful because it allows those interested in promoting republican principles to assess the extent to which different forms of participatory tools are likely to advance them. This ability derives from the argument that the republican good of popular control is secured when citizens jointly exercise self-rule and when their decisions are taken into account by the government. This list is therefore concerned with the role that citizens play (which Arnstein’s framework lacks). If the participatory mechanism is citizen-oriented and participants’ views/decisions are picked up by governing bodies in some form or shape, then the mechanism is securing non-domination via an appropriate level of popular control. To illustrate, these different roles can be placed on a spectrum in the following way (Figure 2):



Figure 2: Role of the citizens in a participatory event

This scale shows that deliberative and republican principles can be enacted to different degrees – with some roles more or less commensurate with ideal principles. In the context of popular control, the three options on the right side of the spectrum

(consultants, stakeholders and decision-makers) are more commensurate with deliberative and republican principles, with those more to the right more closely realising the ideal. The two options on the left side of the scale – observers and informants – do not, however, align with these principles at all.

In terms of assessing participatory mechanisms, this scale can be applied to different forms of participation to determine how republican they are in terms of popular control. The key question here would be to find out what the role of participants was – so looking at what they were there to do, would be a good starting point. Another important thing to note here is that the format of the event by itself will not be a good indicator of popular control, except in the case of participatory budgeting, which is a format that will typically have participants as decision-makers. Other participatory events can have varying levels of popular control and the format by itself will not indicate the level of popular control the mechanism entails (for an overview of this, see Elstub and Escobar, 2019, 25).

Ensuring that a participatory event is perfectly aligned with the republican principle of popular control will however by itself not be enough to protect participants' freedom from domination. Even if the mechanism of participation gives participants full access to decision-making, this does not mean domination will be kept at bay. This is because it matters not only what role the citizens are playing in the process, but also which citizens are selected to participate in the first place.

#### **4.1.2 Inclusiveness**

I will now turn to another republican principle that is linked to the benchmark of popular control – inclusiveness, which, in the context of participatory mechanisms demand that a fair and inclusive participant selection method is employed.

The previous section identified the different roles citizens can have in participatory mechanisms and discussed how these roles constitute popular control. However, this scale does not tell us much about which citizens are participating in deliberation and how they are to be selected for this participation. As is demonstrated by the wealth of empirical cases in Participedia<sup>33</sup>, several different methods are currently employed to select participants for different participatory mechanisms. This section will clarify which

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<sup>33</sup> To review Participedia catalogue of participatory events, visit: <https://participedia.net/>, Last accessed: 28/03/2021.

types of these methods are most in line with republican principles and therefore further the benchmark of inclusiveness and for securing citizens' freedom from domination.

As Pettit (1997; 2012; 2014a; 2014b) has showed in his work, not all interference (including limiting citizens' access to deciding all laws) is necessarily arbitrary. If a representative system is established in a fair way, with the overall good of the community in mind, it does not necessarily have to be oppressive. Pettit also believes that in modern and complex societies, being involved in every step of the decision-making process of every decision may result in serious disruption of people's lives and interfere with their freedom by turning them into 'participatory machines'. Furthermore, including absolutely everyone in the decision-making would raise additional problems such as the discursive dilemma (Pettit 2001 and 2003), where perfectly rational agents may come up with mutually clashing, irrational decisions and potential domination of minorities. So even if they are spared from *imperium* in the sense that they make their own decisions, they would not be spared from other forms of domination. Because of this, including only a portion of the society through a fair selection method is not only acceptable, but indeed necessary to secure citizens' freedom. In practical terms, this would point to stratified selection methods, possibly with an element of rotation, so all citizens have an opportunity to participate at some point in their lives.

Following the approach outlined before, I will identify possible alternatives for inclusive participatory practice and then discuss each of these in turn to produce a scale denoting those most (and least) likely to advance republican principles. In undertaking this task, four additional models are drawn from the existing literature: random selection (with and without statistical representation), sortition and self-selection.

In much conventional theory it is argued, as in Mao and Adria (2013, 617-618) that random selection with stratification according to selected characteristics of population is the most appropriate method for public deliberation events. This is because random selection without stratification may cause groups to become exclusive and homogenous over time, losing cognitive diversity. Furthermore, purposive sampling allows organisers to filter, or screen participants based on their association with various interest groups, which otherwise might be completely excluded from decision-making process (and thus be dominated).

This approach, as presented by Mao and Adria (2013) presents a selection method hierarchy, where methods that come closer to statistical representation (i.e. reflect the community in all its detailed diversity in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, education, social affiliation and other demographic characteristics), are dominant within democratic theory (Fung and Wright, 2003; Fishkin 1991, Florida, 2018, Smith 2009). But it is also useful for the discussion of the republican vision of participation. I noted above that although our initial instinct could point in the direction of always having citizens play the role of decision-makers<sup>34</sup> (as it would remove the threat of imperium) it is not most fitting for a republican framework, as other forms of domination may still occur. Stratified selection methods seem to offer a more fitting alternative in modern societies that are too complex for citizens to be directly involved at all times, without at the same time giving up on important basic liberties. It is true that stratified selection methods, while designed to increase inclusive representation, paradoxically ensure that many more people are left out than included (Mao and Adria, 2013, 616). Nevertheless, for republican participatory events this is a fitting method, as long as the events are taking place with relative frequency and all citizens have an equal chance of being selected. Creating a mini-public, where participants will act not only as individuals but, where appropriate, as representatives of their interest/ethnic/national/linguistic groups is important for participatory events, since this ensures a conversation can be had about their shared interests and the common good of the community as a whole. This set-up would then ensure that a participatory mechanism is protecting their freedom through a representative form of inclusiveness, where other members of their community will be there to contribute to the tracing of the common good.

Another similar alternative is sortition or selection by lot, combined with rotation. This means that participants are selected by lot, but with a system in place that ensures that every citizen gets to participate some time – once a lifetime at the very least (Bourricious, 2013; Dowlen, 2008; Van Reybrouck, 2016; Przeworski, 2010). Sortition under this reading includes the key Athenian democratic principles of political equality (isonomia), the right to speak and contribute (isegoria) and a belief in the ability of a cross-section of people to deliberate, weigh arguments and make reasonable decisions (Bourricious, 2013, 2) – all of which are important notions for republicanism and deliberative democracy. In

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<sup>34</sup> In other words – have a version of direct democracy.

addition, it echoes Aristotle's idea of everyone being able to 'rule and be ruled in turn'. This could potentially be useful for securing the republican vision as it entails more than just having political power. This method thus fulfils the republican requirement because, to use Richard Bellamy's (2016, 671) words, it ensures that 'citizens (...) have equal stake in the totality of collective policies'. In addition, it ensures no individual(s) hold power for so long that it can corrupt them, which, again, is a popular republican idea that was famously discussed in detail by Machiavelli (2009). It may seem, then, that selecting participants via sortition would be the most suitable approach to select participants for the republican vision. However, returning back to the previously discussed complexities of the modern world, this may not always be possible, except perhaps in a small, local communities, where rotation in office could be possible to achieve.<sup>35</sup>

Another alternative would be a random selection method. By this I mean that the selection method may indeed be completely random, without any stratification/aiming to secure statistical representation. Having reviewed authors who have discussed deliberative platforms (Bächtiger, Dryzek, Mansbridge and Warren, 2018; Florida 2018; Geissel and Newton, 2012), I note that this may occur when statistical representation is difficult to achieve or fails when participants decide to withdraw in the last moment. The stratified sample is then dismantled, leaving the mechanism with a partially representative or simply random selection of citizens.

Finally, self-selection, although the least preferable option in an ideal republic, is nevertheless a possible method of selection. Without the element of rotation or any stratification, self-selection may mean that the same individuals could repeatedly volunteer to participate, which would damage the process of tracing the common good jointly. In a way, self-selection can thus be seen as an accumulation of decision-making power in the hands of a limited group of citizens, which, over time, could create a dominant group that could potentially interfere with citizens' freedom and dominate them. The lack of inclusion that self-selection entails, provides a poor foundation for just and effective public deliberation (Caluwaerts and Reuchamps, 2016; Escobar and Elstub, 2017) and presents significant risk for the republican vision of participation.

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<sup>35</sup> For a recent discussion of what this could look like in practice, see Van Reybrouck's (2016) book 'Against elections: The case for democracy'.

The different alternatives just discussed can then be summarised in the Table 2:

Table 2: Selection Method

Category	Definition
<i>Self-selection</i>	Selection-method used is self-selection – there is an open call to participate and anyone who chooses to be involved, can do so.
<i>Random selection</i>	Citizens are selected by random sampling, but avoiding any specific stratification methods.
<i>Sortition</i>	Citizens are selected by sortition – there is an element of lottery and an element of rotation, aiming to give every citizen an opportunity to be involved.
<i>Statistical representation</i>	Citizens are selected by a stratified random sampling method, aiming to statistically represent the community as it is, accounting for demographic groups in terms of age, gender, education, religion, culture, ethnicity and any other demographic characteristics that may be present in the community.

Furthermore, these different categories can further be arranged on a scale (see Table 2), indicating how likely or unlikely they are to secure republican benchmarks, with self-selection on the left side being least fitting and statistical representation and sortition on the right-hand side being most fitting for the republican benchmark of inclusiveness to be enacted.

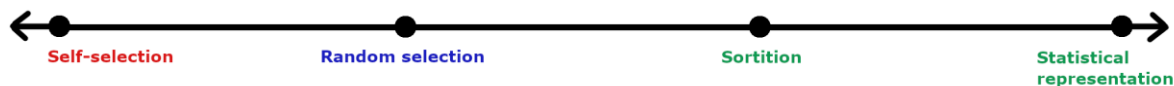


Figure 3: Selection Method

What this scale illustrates is that indicators on the right side of the scale (sortition and statistical (stratified) methods of selection) would meet the republican benchmark of inclusiveness most accurately. The key point here is that every citizen has to have an equal chance to be selected – so no particular groups are favoured in an arbitrary way. Note that there could be specific participatory events where a decision is being made that concerns a specific group in the society – e.g. rights of a small religious community. In this case, ensuring that they are represented in the event might mean that the number of participants from this group is disproportionate to other religious groups when looking at the community as a whole. In this case stratification to favour this group would not be

arbitrary, as it is in the interest of the community to have the interests of this religious group heard. In other words, the specific form of stratification may depend on the specific case and the context of the participatory event. However, some form of stratification will be necessary, to ensure that everyone has a chance to be invited to the table.

As I have tried to illustrate in this section, jointly with the benchmark for popular control, inclusiveness explains who the participants are, what roles they have in the participatory mechanism and how they are selected to participate. The remaining sections of the chapter will address a further two republican benchmarks, which are crucial for securing citizens' freedom from domination – internal and external transparency.

#### **4.1.3 Freedom as Non-Domination: Transparency**

Two republican benchmarks that are rooted in the ideal of non-domination have been discussed thus far – popular control and inclusiveness. Jointly, they explain who gets to participate and what this participation means in terms of political power. In other words, it tells us who is in the room when deliberation takes place and what their role is in the political system. The benchmarks discussed in this section will further specify what needs to happen when everyone is not included in deliberations and when everyone is not equally educated, trained and informed about the process as well as the content of the deliberations.

These benchmarks are two specific types of transparency: one internal and the other external. I will discuss each in turn.

##### *4.1.3.1 Internal Transparency*

There is a further benchmark needed for securing freedom as non-domination in participatory events. In addition to popular control and inclusiveness, this republican principle also requires that the mechanism of participation is internally transparent, which entails openness of the mechanism and the process to its participants. This means that participants should have a clear understanding about the process and its conditions – how the issue was selected, who is organising the event, how they were selected and how the outputs will influence political decisions etc. In other words, participants need to be made aware of their role in the decision-making process and the conditions under which they are participating, or else they will be limited in their ability to contribute



meaningfully and remain exposed to potential domination<sup>36</sup>. Internally, then, the more detailed information is provided about the process of participation, the better suited the mechanism for republican benchmarks.

A poor example of internal transparency would be to gather participants in the room for a deliberative activity, use their inputs as evidence for policy making purposes after the discussions, but never explain any of the implications of this process in detail, or provide them with information about who organised it. On the opposite end of the spectrum, a good example of internal transparency would be to provide participants with detailed information about the event, disclaiming sources of funding, the context of how the event was set up and what the expected results of the event are.

Building on this, a basic three stage scale can be devised which differentiates between participatory mechanisms that have no, limited, or detailed background information provided for the participants<sup>37</sup>. To specify the differences in more precise terms - 'No information' would see participants given no contextual information about their role, the organisers and the case/issue itself. Although unlikely to happen, it is possible to conceive of a mechanism where information is given to participants briefly and superficially only explaining the topic of discussion, but not on their actual role, the process and outcomes of deliberations. On the opposite side, we would have provision of detailed information, as in the cases of participatory events, where participants are given clear instructions about what is expected of them, who is organising the event and what the potential outcomes of the event would be. The final category of limited information would lay somewhere between the two – with some information revealed and others omitted (see Table 3).

*Table 3: Internal transparency*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<i>No information</i>	Citizens receive no information about the participatory process, organisers of the event and participants' role in the process.
<i>Limited information</i>	Some information is provided about one or more organisation elements of the participatory process.
<i>Detailed information</i>	Participants are provided with detailed background information

<sup>36</sup> Note that this is not the same as development of civic skills – I will discuss this point later in the chapter.

<sup>37</sup> This scale could be more detailed and demanding if researcher felt it necessary, but for the purposes of keeping the framework flexible and applicable to many different context, I will aim to keep the scales focusing on basic indicators only.

about the aim of the process, participants' role in it, organisers and their affiliations etc. Participants have an opportunity to ask questions about this at any point and are encouraged to do so.

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The table above describes the three categories that could be helpful for determining the level of internal transparency. However, since 'internal transparency' is constituted from different types of information, which can potentially be provided by different information sources, these categories do not translate neatly onto a straightforward scale and an additional step of explaining what kind of information is provided to the participants may be necessary for an evaluation.

In Smith's analysis of democratic innovations, he identifies three different types of information that are relevant for a mechanism to be transparent, which he explains in the following paragraph:

"Increasing opportunities for participation will draw citizens into unfamiliar institutional setting where they are faced with unusual demands, in the sense that they are asked to make judgements that may have significant public impact. The transparency of proceedings becomes a crucial consideration in at least two senses. First, in relation to the citizens who participate in the process, transparency requires that participants have a clear understanding about the conditions under which they are participating – for example, how has the issue under consideration been selected, who is organising the process, how will the outputs of the process affect political decisions?" (Smith, 2009, 21)

The questions Smith identifies here can be broken down into 4 different categories. Firstly, in terms of how the issue under consideration has been selected. This will include information that relates to political processes leading up to actual deliberation (wider political context) as well as information on the topic itself, so that participants are enabled to understand the content of the discussion. This information can come in the form of reports, executive summaries, policy briefs etc. Secondly, in terms of 'who is organising the process', information should be provided about the organisers, experts who may be invited to give testimonies, as well as information about the sources of funding that make the participatory process possible.

Finally, the answer to the final question of 'how will the outputs of the process affect political decisions' should be broken down into two sources of information. First, how the process of participation will be set up (this can be reflected in the draft agenda/schedule

documents, graphs that depict different stages of deliberation, short videos of how the process is set up etc) as well as the expected outcomes of the event. Second, what the outcomes of citizens' participation actually are – this would entail providing participants with feedback once the event has concluded. This kind of review can be summarised in a binary matrix of what is effectively a tick-box table for different sources of information, as is illustrated in the table below:

<b>Was information provided on:</b>	YES	NO
Organisers of the event		
Topic of discussion		
Participatory process and expected outcomes of participation		
Feedback (actual outcomes)		

Ideally, a participatory mechanism could respond with a 'yes' to all of these questions or at least as many of them as possible. The more positive responses a participatory event in question has, the more successful it is expected to be in protecting republican good of internal transparency. This can be summarised in the following way:

- 4 categories – participatory mechanism is fully transparent internally;
- 3 categories – participatory mechanism is nearly transparent internally;
- 2 categories – participatory mechanism is partially transparent internally;
- 1 categories – participatory mechanism is nominally transparent internally (see Figure 4).

*Figure 4: Internal Transparency*



What this scale illustrates is that providing information on all 4 categories is likely to ensure that the mechanism is going to secure the republican principle of freedom as non-domination (indicated with 'full transparency' on the right side of the scale), while providing no information on any of the categories will translate into the event being not

transparent ('no transparency' on the left of the scale). In the next section, I will discuss the final benchmark that should be promoted in order to achieve this goal.

#### *4.1.3.2 External Transparency*

External transparency is the final benchmark for the analytical framework of republican deliberation that is directly linked to the principle of freedom as non-domination. It refers to the idea that any mechanism should be open and accessible to the wider public. This is often referred to as 'publicity' and is crucial under a republican reading. Since other citizens are not always participating in deliberation (see section 3.1.1), they need to have links with the process in one way or the other to be aware of how the decision affecting them are made and to also be able to trace other citizens' interests. At the very least, they need to know about the existence of the mechanism and its outcomes, but preferably should also be able to follow the whole process. It is not enough for the participants to understand the conditions under which they are deliberating and what their role in the decision-making process is (internal transparency), the broader public should also recognise, understand and be able to scrutinize this process to create legitimacy and connect meaningfully with those who represent them in the participatory process, so as to minimise this particular form of republican domination as much as possible (see section 2.4.1 for a more detailed discussion on freedom as non-domination).

In practical terms, external transparency can be facilitated in a number of different ways. For example, basic information can be provided to the general public with a briefing document or a report that is published once the event has concluded. Social media or news reports can also be used to disseminate information, advancing the republican principles of common good and freedom as non-domination to different degrees. Ideally though, external transparency would be ensured through a completely open, accessible and interactive platform, where citizens who are not participating directly nevertheless have opportunities to interact with those who are. This is important for two main reasons.

Firstly, it ensures that the broader public has an opportunity to monitor and, if needed, contest the decisions that are made in the participatory process. Ideally, the participants would deliberate with the common good in mind, but this cannot simply be assumed. If there is a way for the general public to follow and reach out to the participants, it forms

an additional system of checks and balances. Secondly, if citizens are not participating, they should at the very least have a chance to learn about developments in the decision-making process, which is a necessary component of their civic education and for them becoming aware of reasons that other citizens in their community hold for choosing one public policy solution over another. If they were to be completely excluded from this process, it would constitute a form of domination, since interests of only a small group of community would be tracked.

In an ideal deliberative republic, everybody should therefore have an opportunity to follow and, where appropriate<sup>38</sup>, contribute to or contest the decisions of the participatory mechanism throughout the process. In terms of external transparency, the more accessible, open and interactive the mechanism is to wider public, the better the mechanism will be at endorsing republican principle of freedom as non-domination.

A good example of this would be a participatory event where citizens who are not participating can follow the event easily – this may be through social media channels, email correspondence or public broadcasting. Public radio translations, articles in national newspapers and even mail correspondence and leafleting can all be useful tools as well. Whatever the form, the key point is to make sure an external bond between participants of the participatory event and the general public is created and secured.

For a participatory platform to realise the republican benchmark of external transparency, it should be designed in such a way that allows for the members of general public to have full access to the information about the event (so everything that is on the list of information sources for internal transparency applies here as well). In addition, they should receive regular updates about the participatory process and have opportunities to engage with the platform interactively, meaning, not only to send in

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<sup>38</sup> Note that this is not the equivalent of direct democracy – everybody’s involvement is not going to be appropriate in all cases. The general public should be given a chance to follow the process closely and to contribute when such participations is appropriate, but this will be depend on the context and the content of the debates. In cases where sensitive and morally difficult issues are discussed, (such as abortion laws, animal rights or immigration), opening the platform to opinions of the general public, may lead to disrupted and chaotic deliberations. However, this does not mean that public debates about the deliberations should be somehow limited. If the platform is externally transparent, members of the general public can still discuss the process on their own public spaces, including social media platforms, for example. They are then not completely excluded from the process and be active observers, even if not participants.

comments and critical remarks, but to engage with the process and receive answers/ responses where appropriate.

On the other end of spectrum, we would find mechanisms of participation that provide either limited opportunities for observation or no information at all. This may mean that some information is provided publicly, but not necessarily on the mainstream media outputs, thus limiting opportunities for the general public to have access to the platform. Or it may mean that it takes place in secrecy and that nothing is provided at all.

To demonstrate the different approaches to external transparency, I have summarised the different options in Table 4.

*Table 4: External transparency*

<b>Category</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<i>Closed</i>	The participatory process is closed to the general public – there is no information available in the public sphere.
<i>Basic information</i>	Broader public has some access to information – there may an initial invitation in the local media or a report published after the process has ended, but no detailed information or opportunity to follow the debate is provided.
<i>Partial access to information</i>	For this category, some of the information will be available to the general public – it will cover more than the basic event details and may provide some updates, but the information will be limited and not opportunity to follow the debate in real time will be provided.
<i>Full access to information</i>	Members of the general public have full access to information about the event and have an opportunity to follow the process through regular updates. All discussion materials and background information is available and accessible to them.
<i>Open, interactive</i>	Members of the general public have full access to information about the event and have an opportunity to follow the process through regular updates. All discussion materials and background information is available and accessible to them and there us an opportunity to observe the process through regular updates, radio or video translations.

To illustrate the hierarchy of these different types of participatory mechanisms, the scale

in Figure 5 is helpful, with a closed mechanism on the far left as least favourable and an open, interactive mechanism on the far right as most favourable.



Figure 5: External Transparency

As before, this scale is, for the time being, providing a direction and the first step for the analytical framework. Nevertheless, it illustrates that a mechanism that ensure internal transparency is much more likely to decrease the overall levels of domination than one that is closed and hidden from the public view.

#### 4.1.3.3 Transparency: A Summary

Without both levels of transparency (internal and external), no participatory mechanism will be able to secure the republican principles of freedom as non-domination and the common good. First of all, internal transparency ensures that participants, who have been selected to participate, have a clear understanding about the process itself, their role in it, potential outcomes of the process and receive detailed information about the topic of discussion and its importance/relevance. In a way, this provides a primary set of tools for the participants to use that can then be applied to shape the participatory process itself. This toolkit then enables them to engage in meaningful deliberations and to discover solutions that are best suited for securing interests of the community as a whole (with a focus on the common good).

Second of all, external transparency ensures that the citizens outside the participatory process nevertheless have interactive channels of participation available to them that effectively links them to the citizens deliberating on their behalf. If constructed properly, this benchmark should significantly reduce the effects of domination inflicted upon the general public, which, according to republican dictum, will naturally occur when some citizens are selected to decide on their fellow-citizens' behalf.

Finally, applying this benchmark would help to avoid what Fishkin (2002, 2003) calls 'the problem of justification', which is rooted in the fact that the citizens in the broader population have not been involved in the participatory process and might hold very

different views (or no views at all!) from the participants who have been directly involved. In other words, the resulting gap between the deliberative opinion discovered in the participatory mechanism and the general opinion in the broader population may be so different from one another that it might be in best case difficult to understand or in the worst case completely unacceptable to the general public. This is a legitimate reservation, but again, can be addressed if the republican benchmark of external transparency is taken seriously and applied attentively.

Figure 4 drafted in first part of this section, together with Figure 5 sketched in the second half, provide democratic scholars and practitioners with two tools of measurement of (republican) transparency in participatory mechanisms. Jointly with the previous two republican benchmarks (popular control and inclusiveness), they provide guidance for the institutional design of participatory mechanisms and describe their selection methods, role in the decision-making process and the general set-up. These four benchmarks will be at the heart of all participatory mechanisms in modern societies that wish to adhere to republican standards, with the only exception of when direct democracy is established – in that case, only the benchmark of popular control will matter.

## **4.2 Civic Virtue: Civic Education and Competence Building**

Following the discussion of the three benchmarks building on the republican principle of non-domination, I will now turn to another theoretical ideal that is defended in both republican as well as a deliberative theory – civic education and competence building, as captured by the principle of civic virtue.

The republican approach to virtue formation through education and participation has, as shown in Chapter 1 (see page 29), ancient roots, going back to Aristotelian thought and the notion of eudaimonia, but it can also be said to be anchored by certain assumptions about individuals and their cognitive capacities. One such assumption is that citizens have the capacity to engage in rational exchanges with others and for logical inference that follows those interactions.

This view is shared with the theory of deliberative democracy and further assumes that individuals are ‘broadly equal in their ability to exercise these capacities so as to: (1) self-



direct in a manner consistent with their own overarching sense of the good; (2) engage others in a manner that recognizes the perspective and integrity of those others; and (3) participate in argument in a logical, reasoned manner' (Rosenberg, 2007, 87). However, it is important not to assume that this will occur naturally. When participatory mechanisms are set up, there needs to be special emphasis on educational tools that participants are provided with. This is because, as research in behavioural and cognitive psychology indicates (Tversky and Kahneman, 1982), people may often utilize cognitive shortcuts instead of engaging in logical and rational reflection and problem solving, and often have trouble with abstract thought and probabilities (Smelsund 1963). Put simply, people often may jump to simple conclusions without rationally weighing of all relevant arguments.

The varying levels of knowledge and competencies among the participants may constitute a form of domination, where some of the participants' lack of access to education, training and information restricts their ability to engage in self-government. The republican solution to this barrier<sup>39</sup> is to invest time and resources to provide as much information about the topic as is possible prior (and throughout, if necessary) the deliberative sessions, as well as providing support in terms of cultivating participants' civic abilities, such as argumentation, rhetoric and deliberative skills, thus contributing to citizens' civic education. Having this element in the mechanism will not only ensure deliberative quality but limit the effects of inequalities that may restrict participants in the form of *dominium*. Neglecting this republican good may counteract some of the other positive elements of a participatory mechanism: simply bringing citizens together in a participatory setting may not produce the positive outcomes that we may wish to secure. Participants need to be equipped with the necessary tools and skills to use this setting effectively.

In practical terms, this benchmark is linked with the idea that it is not enough to simply gather a group of people in a room, present them with a problem to be solved and expect that this alone will promote democratic values or maintain democratic legitimacy. The participation that citizens engage in needs to not only have a purpose and a direction, it

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<sup>39</sup> I refer here to decision-making participatory events and how they can promote education and literacy. The republican approach to the issue as a whole is of course much broader than this and will include forms of civic education and the promotion of certain cultural norms.

also requires citizens to have certain skills and competencies, so that they can use the participatory platform for expressing their interests and reasons behind their decisions. This concern is the focus of this benchmark of republicanism – education and civic literacy so that they can exchange their preferences and reasons and participate meaningfully in the norm-formation.

Both concepts – education and civic literacy - are important for republicans. They are concerned with education, and more specifically with civic education because they are fundamentally interested in how citizens learn to become active, engaged members of their political communities (Peterson, 2011, 24) or, put simply, how they exercise their civic virtue. The ideal republic should provide channels through which citizens can educate themselves and exercise their virtue and the formation of this virtue can involve a range of interrelated mechanisms, including schooling, participatory exercises and volunteering.

A good practice of this benchmark would therefore see organisers of deliberative initiatives investing in intensive skills-building training exercises, such as trial deliberations that would help participants develop capacities and competencies to deliberate effectively. This could take form of a trial assembly, where participants of deliberations meet prior the actual deliberation, to go through a training exercise with a mock issue to solve. As they discuss the sample problem, training would be provided to them, to offer them practical tools to solve arguments more efficiently. A poor example of civic training would see citizens simply arrive on the day of deliberation and engage in debate without providing any prior practice.

An ideal republican participatory mechanism would embrace full civic education: take as much time and invest as much resources as necessary to develop the necessary skills and competencies, so that all citizens can participate effectively in the participatory processes. The main focus here is on building competencies and ‘upskilling’ its participants, so that their differences in terms of educational level and abilities are minimised or, preferably, diminished. This would be achieved through prior training sessions, focusing on argumentation, critical thinking and discussion skills.

This, and potential alternative categories can be summarised in Table 5.

Table 5: Civic capacity building

Category	Definition
<i>No capacity building</i>	No skills training and competency development is provided.
<i>Basic capacity building</i>	Basic competency and skills training is provided in terms of information.
<i>Partial capacity building</i>	Partial competency building is offered, including, for example, short training sessions of practice-related tools prior the participatory process.
<i>Extensive capacity building</i>	Extensive capacity building in the form of training sessions and providing guidance is offered.
<i>Full capacity building</i>	Full civic competency building is provided, investing all the time and resources necessary to eliminate any shortcomings participants may come in terms of civic competencies (ability to engage in rational argumentation, consensus-orientation, rhetoric etc).

These different approaches can be then aligned across the scale of priority with ‘no capacity building on the far left being least favourable and ‘full civic education’ on the far right being most favourable.



Figure 6: Civic capacity building

Applying this scale of evaluation would demonstrate the extent to which the participatory event in question commits to the republican benchmark of civic education and competency building. The more effort is invested in equipping citizens with the necessary skillset to deliberate, the more likely the mechanism will be to successfully fulfil this benchmark. The more successfully a mechanism fulfils the benchmark of civic education, the closer it will come to advancing and promoting civic virtue.

### 4.3 Common Good: Teamwork

Having reviewed non-domination and civic virtue, I will finally turn to discuss the principle of common good – a notion which is explicitly presented and discussed in detail in both the theory of deliberative democracy as well as the civic republican tradition (see

section 3.2.3). As I noted in Chapter 2, the idea that there should be a sense of other-directedness and consideration for common good among citizens is not only valuable but indeed fundamental to political life and decision making, has been emphasized repeatedly by deliberative democrats as well as civic republicans. In this section, I want to turn to what this emphasis means for the design and evaluation of participatory events.

As was discussed in section 3.3 of this thesis, one of the aims of all deliberative practices and most participatory practices is to make sure each participant has an opportunity to discuss their views and have their view considered equally to other views expressed. It was also noted that this principle is essential for discovering the common good in the republican sense – weighing all opinions equally is the first step towards discovering the ‘true’ common good without placing forms of *dominium* over the participants of the deliberations. For this to happen, it is therefore important that the opinions of all participants, different social perspectives, and cultural views have an opportunity to be expressed and considered seriously by decision-makers. It is equally important that participants have an opportunity to develop ties to one another, by working together and developing a sense of civic identity which is linked with the common benefit of their community.

A simple opinion poll or expression of preferences will therefore not suffice, since such engagement is susceptible to the dominance of raw private interests, not the good of the community, which is far too dangerous for republicans and deliberative democrats alike. Furthermore, it is the participatory process and engagement with other participants that facilitates discovery of the common good – internal deliberation alone cannot grant access to this republican principle. This section will build on this idea and claim that not only should all opinions receive equal consideration, they should also be community-oriented and, where possible, be aligned with one another. The following paragraphs will unpack this claim in more detail.

First, it is important to note that what is described here as the common good is not something that exists independently of citizens and needs to be ‘discovered’ or ‘unveiled’ in some metaphysical sense. It is instead *constructed* through common deliberation and teamwork, which promotes ‘enlarged mentality’ (Hanna Arendt’s (2013) term), enabling participants to imaginatively place themselves in the position of others and distance themselves from their private interests. The participatory event thus constructed

becomes a platform where citizens can test, articulate, defend and act on their judgements, which in turn builds empathy and fosters civic virtue and literacy.

The participatory event will therefore adhere to republican principles if it contains elements of teamwork and prompts participants to exercise collective judgment to reach a community-oriented resolution to the issue at stake. The structure of the mechanisms will prompt participants to stop thinking of deliberation in an individualized way and to refrain from debating in an identity and individual preference-oriented manner. In other words, the ideal participatory event would encourage participants to engage with one another as individuals of a community (with their own ideas and opinions) and yet not act as mere representatives of their demographic groups<sup>40</sup>, which is a key difference from more traditional interpretations of deliberative democratic theory.

At this point, it is crucial to note that for the particular version of republicanism I defend in this thesis, the commitment to collective judgment does not necessarily entail reaching a consensus on every instance, which is an important departure from other, more traditional formulations of deliberative democracy (Habermas, 1996; Cohen, 1989, Dryzek 1990). This is because the republican commitment to freedom as non-domination requires that no participant be subjected to *dominium* form of arbitrary interference. For example, if participants are pushed to reach a consensus, many of them might end up being subjected to peer pressure or manipulated by participants more skilled in rhetoric and argumentation. This, for a republican constitutes a form of arbitrary interference – an unacceptable form of domination. Instead, it is far more important to ensure that participants have an opportunity to work together and discuss the types of solutions that would benefit the whole community, all the while remembering that no individual or groups in the community should be interfered with arbitrarily as a result. To illustrate what this could look like in practice, let me outline a few examples.

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<sup>40</sup> In a recent discussion of measuring deliberativeness, Bächtiger and Parkinson (2019) address this idea. They explain that measuring deliberativeness will depend on the context, the communities and the issues discussed. They give the following example: “On a great many issues, deliberativeness in the context of a settler society, for example, will be measured more validly by the degree to which indigenous claims are heard and taken seriously, and the degree to which the colonizers have changed tack, not the other way round. In turn, such changes may require indigenous deliberation in enclaves among themselves but activism and resistance against settler governments, not requiring them always to deliberate with those governments (Maddison 2017).” This is to note that any measurements that we may be revising need to be flexible and context sensitive.

A participatory event which fared poorly in terms of community orientation/interest-alignment would be a platform where participants are simply gathered in a room, introduced to a topic/question and then asked to either fill in an individual questionnaire expressing their preferences or simply asked for individual inputs responding to questions of ‘Does-anyone-have-anything-they-would-like-to-share?’ format. These kinds of platforms, sometimes used in local level urban planning meetings (Melo and Baiocchi, 2006; Simmons, 1994; Wolsink, 2007), are only nominally aligned with republican principles, since they technically provide a platform where active participation could occur, but need not necessarily use it for exchange of arguments, let alone teamwork and collaborative activities.

On the other end of the spectrum, a positive example of this benchmark would be a participatory platform, where participants have an opportunity to work jointly on different tasks, seeking solutions to problems, which are presented to them in the format that is community oriented. So, for example, instead of posing the question: ‘What, in your opinion, is the best solution to this problem?’ it would instead prompt participants to jointly seek an answer to a question: ‘What does your team see as the best solution for your community?’ It is important to note here that the framing of the questions should be transparent (as, once again, required by the protecting their freedom from domination), straightforward and personal accounts are not to be excluded, when participants want to share them. Quite the contrary – as the benchmark demands, every opinion, even if not community-oriented, should have an opportunity to be expressed (as long as the discussion remains mutually respectful, does not include hate speech and incite violence).

This part of evaluation is linked with the assumption that the common good can only be discovered in joint deliberation. The different alternatives would then range from having no engagement with other participants to having limited group discussion, to finally having activities that include teamwork and joint problem solving. These activities are expected to prompt participants to see each other as members of the same community or ‘team’ and thus contribute to the discovery of the common good. These different alternatives are summarised in Table 6.

Table 6: Teamwork

Category	Definition
<i>No engagement</i>	Participants do not engage with one another.
<i>Individual participation</i>	Participants may deliberate individually and express their views in front of others, but there is no element of teamwork or joint deliberation/problem solving. There might be some discussion, but this would mainly take the form of bargaining and negotiation at best and arguing and complete disagreement at worst.
<i>Limited teamwork</i>	There is an element of teamwork and community orientation, perhaps an exercise or two, where participants are encouraged to come up with a solution/proposal together for the community as a whole. This may occur at the early stages of the process, where participants may be encouraged to think about the community as a whole, but this approach is then not actively endorsed throughout the rest of the discussion.
<i>Teamwork</i>	The participatory process is mainly based on teamwork and joint problem solving – participants are encouraged to collaborate and share their ideas, coming up with joint solutions. There is clear evidence that participants are prompted to consider the good of the community and not only their personal preferences.

These alternatives can then further be arranged in a hierarchical scale from least favourable for a republican vision to the most favourable (see Figure 7), with ‘no engagement’ on the far left being the least favourable for the republican benchmark of joint deliberation and the ‘teamwork/joint problem solving’ on the far right being most favourable. Consequently, the more teamwork focused the event, the more likely the participatory event is to secure the community orientation and interest alignment in deliberation.

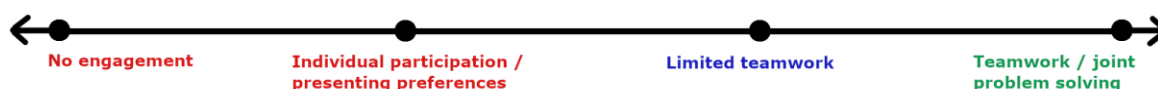


Figure 7: Teamwork

This scale can be used to evaluate to what extent a participatory event adheres to the benchmark of community orientation. This, according to republicanism as I have presented it, can be demonstrated by the presence of community-oriented teamwork activities in the participatory event that jointly help participants to: a) align their own personal preferences to those of other participants; and b) to jointly align their common

interests to the community as a whole. In other words, it allows participants to discover one of the key republican principles – the common good.

By drafting this scale, I am also making a couple of assumptions that will need to be tested by applying this scale to a participatory event. For one, I assume that interest alignment, equal consideration of all views and community-orientation in debates can all be combined and implemented by a sufficient amount of teamwork and joint problem solving. This assumption relies in part on the argument that Pettit describes as civility, which he associates with the conduct of citizens in supporting public institutions and pursuing the common good (Pettit, 1997; see also Edyvane; 2017) and in part on the argument of communicative power as put forward by deliberative democrats (see page 56). Jointly, these two points then link to the idea that when citizens find themselves in a deliberative space which is designed with the common good in mind, it is with the help of communicative power that they can build civility amongst themselves and towards the decisions they jointly make. Furthermore, this resonates with the republican idea that civic virtue needs to be fostered by actively participating in the political life. By focusing on republicanism endorses what Hannah Arendt captured in her early reworking of the Athenian agora – what matters is ‘doing in common’ and not simply attempting to ‘be the same’ (Arendt, 2013).

As this demonstrates, there is an overlap between the republican principles – it is not possible to neatly separate the focus on common good from the emphasis on the civic virtue. In practical terms, it means that a well-designed participatory event putting a lot of work into promoting common good is also much more likely to provide a well-functioning platform for the flourishing of civic virtue.

## **4.4 Conclusion**

In its introduction, this thesis set out to explore how contemporary republican theory can shape an analytical framework that could be used for designing and evaluating participatory events. The first two chapters of the thesis discussed republicanism and deliberative democracy, as well as their synergies and commonalities. It was the task of this chapter to demonstrate how republican commitments to freedom, common good and



civic virtue translate into practical recommendations through the medium of deliberative practices.

In this chapter, I have put forward a set of criteria that can jointly create an evaluative analytical framework, which will be used to determine the extent to which participatory mechanisms can actually realise republican principles. This was done by addressing each of the republican principles – non-domination, civic virtue and common good, proposing that they translate into benchmarks of popular control, inclusiveness, transparency, interest alignment and civic education. I also sketched basic evaluative scales for measuring these benchmarks, identifying their least and most favourable manifestations. The ‘pool of manifestations’ that I have used here however, is not exhaustive. Instead, these are the manifestations, or benchmarks that are most likely to be observed. There are others, that could further republican principles, and many more still that would be very far from embodying them. Furthermore, there may be cases where some of the benchmarks are overlapping or where hybrid elements are present, especially in the case of inclusiveness. Each of the hybrid cases would have to be reviewed separately to determine their republican quality, weighing them against the key republican principles of non-domination, civic virtue and common good.

Each of the sections addressed one specific republican principle, explaining what they entail when considered in the context of participatory events. I covered three specific things – the rationale (why this republican principle is important and what it entails in practice), an indication of what examples of good practice could be (to illustrate how these goods can manifest themselves) and a basic tool of measurement (to illustrate what evidence should be sought to evaluate participatory events).

In total, this analysis put forward 6 tools of measurement with 6 scales, providing some guidance for analysis of participatory events. While this analysis is extensive in terms the description of the benchmarks, it needs to be operationalized before it can be applied to case studies of participatory events. It is the purpose of the remainder of this thesis to turn to this task and, using the conceptual basis for operational indicators put forward in this chapter, to create a much more nuanced framework for the republican analysis of participatory events.

# Chapter 5:

## Methods

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In this chapter, attention will shift from theoretical principles to empirical enquiry, with the explicit aim to provide detailed guidance on how to apply these ideas.

In order to operationalise the ideas presented in the previous chapters in this part of the thesis I turn attention to how it is possible to locate and evaluate the theoretical markers I have identified within empirical practices. Whilst a range of methods could be used, within this study I engage with a tradition of documentary analysis, and specifically with work on content analysis. This approach was adopted as although participatory mechanisms come in a range of forms, it is almost always possible to identify documentary evidence with which to analyse the form of an initiative. Whilst interviews or observations would therefore be viable alternative modes of analysis, I have chosen to look at documentary evidence to provide an accessible and widely replicable approach that can be taken up widely by other scholars to study contemporary or historic participatory techniques.

In focusing on documentary analysis, this thesis advances an interpretative epistemological approach that recognises the significance of the researcher in producing knowledge. The researcher, under this reading is not a remote observer, but rather a part of the knowledge-creation, which is a process best understood as interpretation of social behaviour within a particular context (Benton and Craib, 2001, 75-91). In the context of this thesis, the version of interpretivist epistemology that my approach draws most on is hermeneutics – a theory of meaning emphasizing close, detailed reading of text to acquire a deep and profound understanding of that text, while simultaneously trying to gain an understanding of what the text represents (Lawrence, 2014, 103).

In terms of methodology, I draw on a particular tradition of documentary analysis known as evaluative content analysis. While commonly applied quantitatively, interpretive, qualitative versions of content analysis are also employed to study text. Here, instead of

treating a document as a mere container of content, a researcher would consider the document in its context, taking into account its creation, reception and distribution.<sup>41</sup>

## 5.2 Evaluative Content Analysis

To apply the republican benchmarks I have devised, I have chosen to use the method of evaluative content analysis (ECA), a term coined by Mayring (2010) and further developed by Kuckartz (2014). ECA belongs to the methodological family of qualitative content analysis<sup>42</sup> and as such is a systematic technique used to analyse the informational contents of textual data (Mayring, 2010).

This method was selected as it focuses on analytical categories as tools of analysis, which fits the analytical framework I have built in a unique way. As noted in the section above, the conceptual analysis of republican principles has allowed me to identify specific republican benchmarks, which then serve as indicators for evaluation of participatory events. Having clearly defined categories of evaluation is the starting point of ECA, from which it then moves on to assess, classify and evaluate the content of a document. Unlike thematic analysis, which focuses on identifying, systematizing, and analysing topics and sub-topics, ECA uses pre-defined categories to then locate and identify them in a text (see Mayring, 2010, 101–109). This has already been done in Chapters 2-4 by conceptually analysing key principles of republicanism and their synergies with key principles of deliberative democracy.

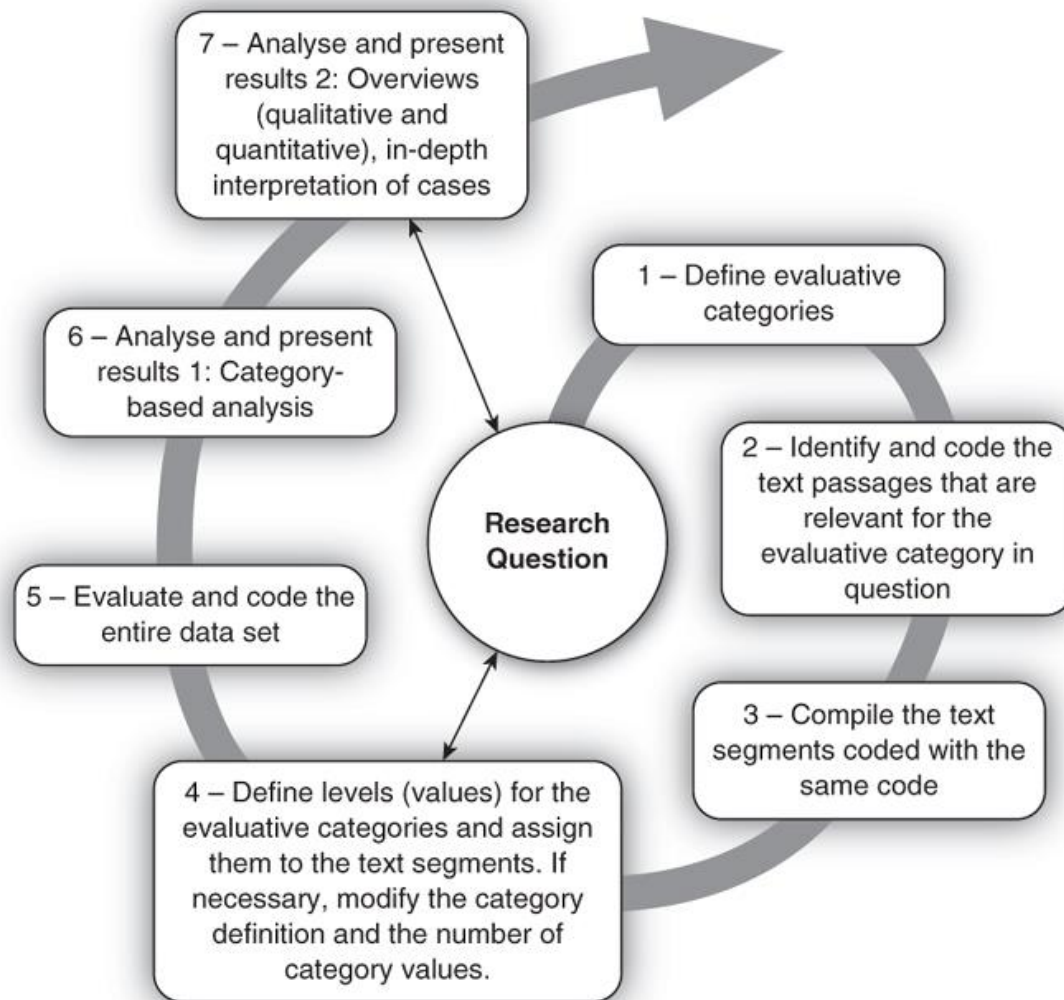
In terms of applying the method, I follow a seven-step process of analysis which is based on a method first proposed by Mayring (2010) in his book *Qualitative Content Analysis* and developed further by Kuckartz's (2014) *Qualitative Text Analysis: A Guide to Methods, Practice & Using Software*. The approach has similar phases to thematic qualitative content analysis, which include: a) working with text; b) building categories; c) coding; d) analysing and e) presenting results. The key difference is that in thematic analysis, categories are developed as the document is analysed by creating new topics/categories. ECA is different in that it begins with already defined evaluative categories, which is

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<sup>41</sup> For examples of qualitative content analysis, see Pansardi & Battagazzorre (2018) and Hall and Steiner (2020).

<sup>42</sup> For an overview of qualitative content analysis, see Hsieh and Shannon (2005).

fitting for the purposes of this thesis, since the categories have already been identified – they now need to be traced. The process of analysis is captured by Kuckartz (2014, 89) in Figure 8:



*Figure 8: Kuckartz's (2014) Process of Evaluative Qualitative Text Analysis in Seven Phases*

Adapting the categories to fit the approach taken in this thesis, 7 steps of analysis are required to transform my theoretical analysis into empirical insights.<sup>43</sup> First, and following the process conducted in Chapters 2-4 scholars must establish evaluative categories. As outlined in the last chapter, my analysis has identified the importance of 6 criteria, mapping differences in the degree to which each criteria advances republican

<sup>43</sup> In this section I will describe how analysis of this kind can be carried out in general terms and that other scholars could adapt and use for similar analysis. I will then demonstrate what it can look like in practice in chapter 6.

principles, but these categories need not necessarily be scalar – they can also be fixed and definite. The key point here is to define and clearly label them before starting the coding process.

Before moving to coding, scholars should also identify and gather the documents that will be used for analysis. These can be any relevant textual documents – interview or observation transcripts, research reports, correspondence materials and other relevant sources can all be used for the assessment. Once the documents have been gathered, the coding process can begin.

The coding is done by identifying and coding the text passages that are relevant for each evaluative category (in the context of this thesis these would be the indicators established in the previous chapter). In this phase, the entire data set is processed – every text passage that contains any information related to category in question should be coded accordingly. Step three then requires the researcher to compile all the relevant text segments that are coded with the same code (for example, ‘popular control’) and carry out an initial category-based review, meaning that the relevant text passages belonging to the category in question are compiled into a list (or a table, if preferred) and use it as a basis for the evaluative work. Following this, step four is to define the level of how fitting the segment is to the definition of category or in the context of this thesis, it would mean determining which points on the scales (indicators) the passages match to.

Step five, as presented in Figure 8, allows for updating and amending the categories should this be necessary. In the context of this thesis, this step would not be necessary, as the evaluative categories are fixed. However, in cases where the categories are not fixed and the researcher is not referring to a specific set of theoretical principles, this step may be necessary.

Step six of the ECA is the first part of analysing and presenting results, paying special attention to category-based analysis. In the context of my thesis, this would mean focusing on each republican principle separately, determining whether it manifests in the participatory event or not. As outlined in the previous chapter, in the context of this thesis, three classifications or answers are of interest to the key question of evaluation (Does *this principle* manifest in *this* participatory event?) – ‘yes’, ‘no’ and ‘partially’. My aim here is to keep this step as simple as possible, asking only whether the event in

question does or does not further the specific benchmark I am looking at. That said, depending on what categories are used and what the key question of analysis is, other scholars may choose to use a more nuanced approach of application.

The final step is to analyse and present the results of the case as a whole, by presenting an overview of the findings and interpretation of what they entail. In this thesis, it would mean determining the final republican quality of the case, but in other cases it would mean describing the overall evaluation of the categories, taken together. Depending on the key aim of the research, this step may also be left out, especially when the categories do not relate to a specific overarching framework or theory.

### **5.2.1 Evaluative Content Analysis and NVivo Software**

In order to keep a record of all the relevant text passages and group them more easily according to the indicators, different software programmes, such Atlas.ti, Ethnograph, NVivo and Qualrus are available for researchers (for an overview of computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software, see and Dalkin et al, 2021, Di Gregorio and Davidson, 2008 and Sinkovics and Alfondi, 2012). For purposes of my thesis, I have selected NVivo as the most suitable program due to its user-friendly layout and coding facilities that allow the researcher to keep notes and memos for each passage that is coded. It also allows the researcher to easily conduct key word searches, which is useful for the approach I have adopted. The key words are illustrative in my approach and are used to check documents after inductive coding to identify any passages that may have been missed. NVivo has this functionality and allows the researcher to conduct this check quickly. That said, other software programs offer similar functions, so using NVivo is by no means a requirement – any computer-assisted qualitative data analysis software that has a coding function will work for ECA.

## **5.3 A Single Case Selection: Rationale for a Case Study Methodology**

As noted throughout this thesis, my main aim is to develop a republican framework of analysis for participatory events. I have thus far identified the key republican benchmarks and indicators (or in the context of this chapter – evaluative categories), that, I have argued, should be used as defining elements of the framework. I have also

proposed in this chapter that the republican benchmarks should be applied with the help of ECA, which will allow to evaluate a participant event by republican standards.

To demonstrate what this process would look like in practice, I have selected a (single) case study that could serve as an illustration of this evaluative process. In general terms, case studies as a method allows for studying a phenomenon closely and intensively in one or multiple settings and is well suited for examining a phenomenon closely. It is also a method that allows us to link the micro level to the macro level, and to link the specific to the abstract (Vaughan, 1992). In other words, it can help to clarify our thinking and allow us to link theoretical ideas with the specifics of the cases that we assess.

In addition, case study as a method has several additional strengths. Not only does it help us to bring the theory and empirics together, it also enables us to calibrate or adjust the measures of our abstract concepts to actual lived experiences and widely accepted standards of evidence (Neumann, 2014, 42). Furthermore, case studies are useful for research projects that are concerned with developing theory. As the research becomes familiar with the details of the specific case, we can create new theories, and reshape the existing ones as the more intricate details of social processes and cause-effect relations become more visible (Walton, 1992, 129). This visibility then allows us to develop a more nuanced explanation that can capture complexity of the phenomenon in question.

Although not as popular in political theory, as in political science and business research (Bhattacharjee, 2012, 93), single case studies are most useful for applying, testing or building theories (Yin 2009, 47-52). In the case of this thesis, it is useful for applying an analytical framework and testing its functionality.

As such, the case study serves as a plausibility probe or, in other words - an illustrative study. This is a type of case study that illustrates theoretical concepts with empirical evidence. In some cases, pre-existing theory can provide conceptual 'empty boxes' that are then filled with evidence from an empirical case, which then confirms, modifies or rejects the theory (and this can take the shape of a general model, an analogy or a sequence of steps) (Neumann, 2014, 42). That said, it should be noted a single illustrative case study is not a method that will provide a strong test or verification or build a generalised explanation. This however is not the aim of the thesis, so this drawback would not take away from the thesis.

The illustrative case study employed here will be seen as a plausibility probe. As Levy (2008, 6) notes, a plausibility probe is comparable to a pilot study in experimental or survey and it allows the researcher to sharpen their hypothesis (or theory) and to refine the operationalization of measurement of certain variables, or, in the case of this thesis – certain republican goods. As such, the case study in this context is not used to make any claims about generalizability of the findings, but rather to illustrate the process of applying my framework.

In addition, choosing a single case allows me to engage in an in-depth investigation of how the analytical framework can be applied in a real-life setting and as such it further contributes to the theoretical work I am engaging in in this thesis. As single case design is typically used at the outset of theory generation (Bhattacharjee, 2012, 94) it is uniquely suited for the aims of this thesis.

#### **5.4 Case Study: Democracy Matters, Citizens Assembly on English Devolution (2015)**

The illustrative case study I present is an analysis of a citizens' assembly entitled 'Democracy Matters'. This initiative took place in 2015 and was focused on democracy and devolution in the UK. Funded by the ESRC and organised by 'Democracy Matters' – an alliance of university researchers and CSOs, led by Professor Matthew Flinders at the University of Sheffield, this project involved two citizens' assemblies – Assembly North (taking place in Sheffield) and Assemble South (taking place in Southampton). The main objectives of the project were to assess whether citizens' assemblies could strengthen democracy in the UK and how citizens' assemblies could be best run. It also aimed to investigate what the general public in England thought about devolution and decentralisation plans as covered in the Cities and Local Government Devolution Act, especially when given an opportunity to learn about and debate the issue.

The Assembly North focused specifically on how South Yorkshire should be governed. The participants met over two weekends in October and November of 2015, discussing if a new regional South Yorkshire authority should be set up and if so, what form it should take. The event was small in scale and gathered 32 South Yorkshire citizens who were



randomly selected from the South Yorkshire region (Sheffield, Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham).

This case was selected for analysis primarily because of its expedience and the accessibility of data. As a Sir Bernard Crick Centre PhD student, I had an opportunity to be a member of the 'Democracy Matters' team and participate in 'Assembly North' as a facilitator of the deliberations. While my role at the event did not entail any research or participant observation, following the event and in line with the development of my thesis, I was able to secure access to the documents surrounding this case. This opportunity was key to enabling my analysis. Whilst there are a growing number of participatory initiatives around the world, researchers can still confront challenges of data access as many initiatives do not retain public records or may be unwilling to disclose documents due to commercial or proprietorial incentives. For these reasons the availability of documents for this case provided a strong incentive for analysis. I was able to secure access to both internal planning documents shared with me by the organising team and publicly available documents.

Furthermore, 'Democracy Matters' provides a rather typical example of a participatory event. Citizen assemblies' model is a form of mini-publics, which has gained popularity across the world in last few decades (see Chapter on mini-publics by Harris, in Elstub&Escobar, 2019), and as such provides a typical example of a participatory event to serve as a plausibility probe – it is not in any way atypical, extreme, deviant or unusual and is thus helpful for testing the analytical framework I have developed.

In choosing to analyse this initiative, it is important to reflect on the potential implications of my involvement in this assembly and the steps I took to mitigate any potential biases' within my document analysis. I recognise that my involvement could lead me to judge the initiative more or less favourably. But because I have taken a theory-driven approach and because I am looking for a set of specific indicators derived from theory and conceptual analysis, my evaluations had clear guiding principles that would not leave much room for a personal and subjective colouring of the evaluations. I believe that applying ECA judiciously will ensure that my perception of the event will not come into play. In addition, to ensure that no biased judgments are made against the initiatives, I have described each step of analysis in as much detail as possible to ensure transparency of my analysis.

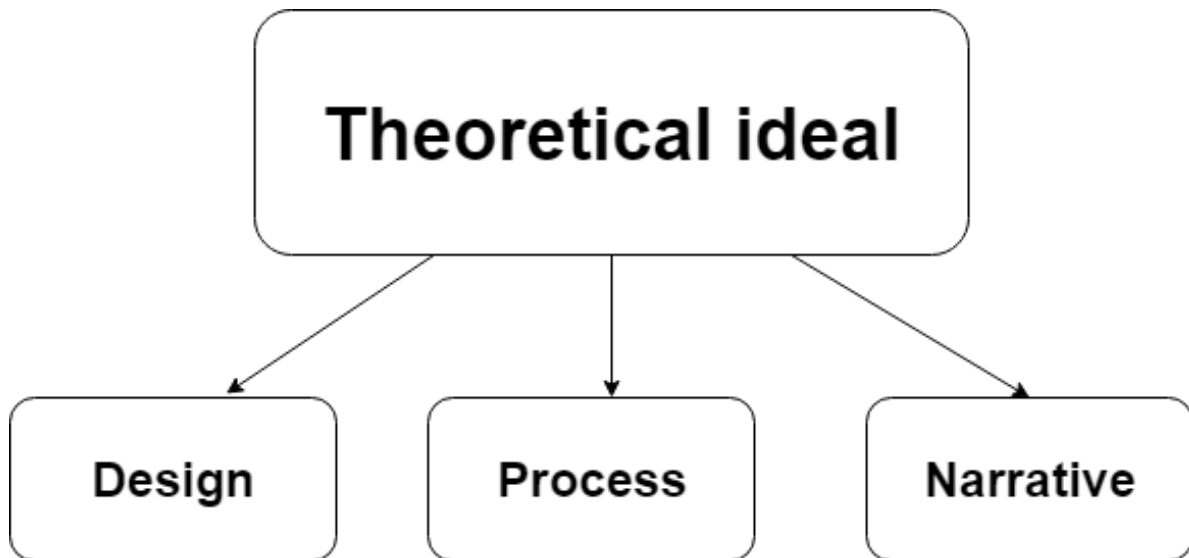
## 5.5 Analytic approach

In operationalising my analytic framework, I focus on documentary analysis. For scholars seeking to adopt this approach, it is important to collect as extensive a range of documents relating to the specific initiative as possible. Documents of interest can be categorised in three main groups: documents that relate to the design stage of the event, documents that relate to the process of the event and documents that contribute to the narrative of the event. These distinctions reflect Mark Brown's model (1996) for performance measurement in business management, which is helpful in explaining which different types of documents are relevant and how they can be informative.

Although commonly considered as homogenous processes, participatory events can be analysed from a range of different perspectives – making it important to clarify what is being looked at and what sources need to be gathered to make an assessment at each level. This point is particularly evident in Brown's work. Originally drafted for evaluating business performance, Brown distinguishes between different stages of a process, breaking down aggregate processes by highlighting important differences in input, process, output and outcomes. Brown designed his model for performance measurement in response to the perceived weaknesses of traditional measurements' systems at the time, which had traditionally adopted a narrow or uni-dimensional focus (Neely, Mills and Platts, 2000). In contrast, Brown's model highlighted the differences between input, process, output and outcome in any process – and hence the need to analyse each separately. Brown uses an analogy of baking a cake to explain this approach – input measures would be concerned with the amount of flour, quality of eggs etc, process measures would be concerned with oven temperature and length of baking time, output measures would be concerned with the quality of the cake and outcome measure would be concerned with the satisfaction of the cake eaters (Brown, 1996).

In a similar manner, any attempt to assess the republican credentials of participatory events needs to recognise the various moments and types of indicators that can be focused on by analysts. As processes, participatory events are not static, and as such can be evaluated at different times (at the beginning, middle or end of a process), and using different sources (such as planning documents, participant testimonies or evaluative reports). Recognising these points, I propose that analysis is conducted with an adapted version of Brown's model in mind. In this version, three different levels of assessment are

identified (detailed in Figure 9) that are classified as focused on ‘design’, ‘process’ and ‘narrative’.



*Figure 9: Brown's model (adapted)*

First, the design level refers here to participatory events as a designed process. When academics or practitioners set out to create a deliberative initiative they lay out the ideals underpinning the project at hand. Whilst plans can change or circumstances can alter plans, it is possible to, first, study the relationship between stated intentions and republican benchmarks. This can be done by consulting sources such as funding bids, project applications, design drafts, planning documents and interviews with organisers that offer insight into the intentions of organisers. The main question asked at this level is therefore: ‘To what extent does the design of the mechanism reflect republican benchmarks?’

Second, the process level of analysis assesses participatory events as an enacted process. This focuses attention on the practical experience of an initiative, considering how it operated in practice. This directs attention to the actual conduct and process of the mechanism, prompting the analyst to look at documents, testimonies and observational data of the mechanism at work, such as participants’ briefing packs, policy recommendations, white papers, proposals, reports produced by participants, PowerPoint presentations, interviews with organisers, moderators, facilitators, participants etc. Here, attention is focused on the degree to which republican principles are embodied in the practical application of this mechanism, posing the question: ‘To what extent did participatory event reflect republican principles?’.

Third, the narrative level of analysis assesses how participatory events are discussed and presented after they have occurred. Presented through project reports, media commentary and reflection, this level of analysis considers how organisers and observers understand and articulate how the initiative worked. The main sources of documents for analysis will be produced by organisers after the event has concluded and will include general reports, executive summaries, blog-posts on official event websites etc. The main question to be asked here is: ‘To what extent is the participatory event perceived and described as reflective of republican benchmarks?’

These different levels are of interest because it suggests that republican indicators may be presented to greater or lesser degrees at different stages (or in different types of documentary evidence) for the same initiative. Making this distinction therefore allows scholars to consider whether plans, practice and subsequent narrative provide a consistent picture of the republican characteristics in evidence.

Having identified these three different levels of analysis it also becomes important to identify documents within these categories. It should be noted that it is possible to conduct analysis at only one of these levels – collecting and analysing, for example, only documents about design or evaluation. However, for the purposes of this thesis, and to illustrate the insights to be gained through comparative analysis at each level, Chapter 7 classifies republican practice at each stage.

Applying this logic to the chosen case study I identified 77 documents (for the full list of documents, please see , page 204). In order to illustrate how these texts were subject to analysis, the next chapter turns to provide an overview of how I identified indicators by which to assess each benchmark within these texts. Then, in Chapter 7, I turn to present the empirical evidence from this case itself to show how these indicators can be applied to reach a judgement about the republican nature of each stage of this participatory initiative.

## Chapter 6:

# A Republican Analytical Framework for Participatory Events

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The first part of this thesis was dedicated to identifying democratic values that we can use to evaluate participatory events. I proposed that civic republican theory offers a fitting theoretical frame for this project and suggested that its commitment to freedom as-non domination, common good and civic virtue are values that should form the base for the analytic framework.

In Chapter 4, I outlined the basis for my analytical template: discussing each republican principle, identifying specific benchmarks for participatory events and locating indicators of different forms of democratic practice that fulfil these benchmarks to different degrees. In Chapter 5 I proposed that the framework should be applied using the ECA method to determine whether republican benchmarks are present in the participatory event in question. As noted in Chapter 5, the first step of ECA is to define the evaluative categories – these have been identified in Chapter 4. Following this, step two is to locate and assess the relevant passages in the documents. While Chapter 4 identified the benchmarks for each republican principle and indicators of alternative practices, it did not provide guidance as to how these should be operationalized and recognised in analysis. The purpose of this chapter is to provide that guidance and offer a framework that allows the republican credentials of participatory events to be assessed.

To do this, I will return once more to the scales that I introduced in Chapter 4 and provide guidance on what coding would entail. Since ECA entails highlighting the relevant passages in documents and coding them according to the categories that are being assessed, I will also provide some additional guidance in the form of potentially useful keywords, which can be helpful when locating the relevant passages. I do not attempt to provide an exhaustive list of words that will necessarily highlight all the relevant information on every occasion (attempt to do so is beyond the scope of this thesis), but rather emphasize what researchers should be looking for when analysing the document.

## 6.1 Popular Control (Freedom as Non-domination)

As noted in Chapter 4, the notion of popular control is crucial for a civic republican vision as it secures republican freedom, which can only truly be achieved if no person is dominated by the laws she has not chosen herself. However, that is not to say that citizens are required to be decision-makers to avoid domination at all times. In fact, being sole decision-makers may be unfavourable in some cases, as instead of lifting domination, it can increase it, by oppressing minorities (tyranny of majority). As proposed by Pettit (See Chapter 2 ,), we should instead have specific avenues of participation, where citizens can contribute to decision-making in meaningful ways and where their interests can be traced and the common good located. Participatory events provide one such avenue and they do not necessarily need to include complete control over the decision-making.

I noted in Chapter 4 that for this republican benchmark to be fulfilled, the final outcomes of participation would have to be tied somehow to the decision-making process. I also proposed that this can viewed by determining what role citizens play in the process and suggested the following scale (Figure 10), where on the left hand side there is the most withdrawn role citizens can assume, while on the right side citizens play the role of decision-makers.



*Figure 10: Role of the citizens in a participatory event*

For the republican version of this principle to be promoted, three roles can be acceptable in participatory settings (which promote republican benchmarks to greater or lesser extents). First, citizens can be decision-makers, as in the case of participatory budgeting events (see an example of good practice below<sup>44</sup>). Safeguards would have to be put in place to avoid the tyranny of the majority in this case e.g. by ensuring the platform is open and inclusive of everyone and that the selection method (discussed later in the chapter) is stratified to allow for minority presence in the deliberations.<sup>45</sup> Second, citizens could

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<sup>44</sup> Full report available at: <https://www.wcpp.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/08/PPIW-report-participatory-budgeting-evidence-review-july-2017-final.pdf>, Last accessed: 28/03/2021.

<sup>45</sup> Please see Chapter 3, section 3.1.1 'Popular Control' for a more detailed discussion on this point.

also be stakeholders, where the decision is made jointly with decision-makers and other groups, such as experts and industry representatives. Third, citizens could also be consultants. If the mechanism is set up to gain insights from citizens and these are then used to shape policy or a decision is made on the basis of these contributions, then it would meet the republican benchmark of popular control.

### ***Good Practice Example 1. Participatory budgeting in Wales***

In 2017, several participatory budgeting events in Wales took place. The report of the event describes citizens' role in the following way:

“Colwyn Bay Town Council allocated £50,000 to PB to prioritise projects for young people whilst Denbighshire County Council ran a PB project for local residents to spend £25,000 in Ruthin park. Coedpoeth Community Council used PB to help allocate their Community Council funds. The Community Safety partnership in Blaenau Gwent asked residents to submit project proposals of up to £3,000 which were then allocated via a PB process.”

This section describes the role of local residents and their role in the participatory process using the keyword of ‘fund allocation’ which indicates that citizens had the power to make the final

There also may be cases where the value of popular control is partially promoted – this would happen in cases where the participants act as informants – either to the general public or the decision-makers (or both). The purpose of their involvement is to provide information and evidence, not to propose new policies or laws. Their deliberative involvement may carry some influence over the final outcomes, but this is likely to be coincidental or dependant on goodwill/openness of decision makers. The evaluation will therefore be based on the design and purpose of the event and on the link between the citizens and the decision-makers it is establishing. If a participatory event is intended to only serve as a democratic exercise to educate citizens, then it will not have promoted the value of popular control. If, on the other hand, the final proposals/findings afterwards get picked by a decision-maker and gets worked into a policy document, this would make for a contribution to limiting domination. This category therefore will have to be assessed on case-by-case basis.

Analysis of this benchmark aims to locate citizens in the mechanism, determining what role they hold in terms of decision-making power. To this end, it can be helpful to focus on keywords which refer to participants making decisions, allocating funds and being in

control. For example: *allocating (funds); budgetary/policy decisions; being in charge, being responsible for, being in control; being in/having authority; deciding; determining; directing; distributing (funds); making executive decisions* are all keywords that may be indicative of participants' role being that of decision-makers. Keywords describing collaboration, such as *consultation, contribution, cooperation, joint deliberation, dialogue, discussion, seeking solutions* can be an indicator that the role of the citizens is that of stakeholders or consultant. Finally, keywords that describe citizens giving evidence, such as *deposition, giving evidence, hearing, interviews, interviewing, audit, investigation, evidence, opinions raised, presentation, testimony, testifying, statement, public opinion, public thought, voices (heard)* can serve as an indicator that the role of citizens is predominantly that of consultants or informants. What will determine the final evaluation though, is having evidence for citizens' role and the amount of popular control that is attached to the event. By themselves, these keywords cannot serve as a guarantee that the researcher will immediately locate the relevant passages, but they can help. However, if no keywords describing citizen activity and their role appear in the document, this may be problematic, in terms of evaluating the benchmark of popular control.

## **6.2 Inclusiveness (Freedom as Non-domination)**

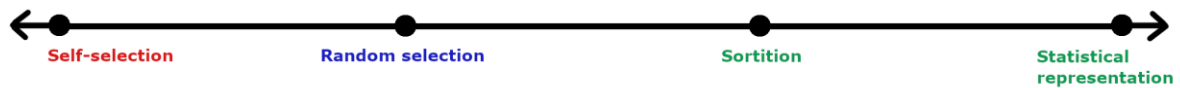
In Chapter 4, inclusiveness was conceptualised as the accessibility of a participatory mechanism or the way in which citizens are included or selected for the participatory event(s). Inclusiveness by republican standards describes a political system where no citizen is systematically excluded from the decision-making process, which (jointly with provision of popular control) ensure they are not dominated in an arbitrary way. This does not mean that all citizens need to be included at all times and for every decision made as in the case of pure direct democracy. Instead, it means that all citizens should have an equal opportunity to be selected or, in cases when they are not, that their interests are still represented and thus can be traced by the decision-makers.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> For a more detailed discussion of republican benchmark of inclusion, see Chapter 3, section 3.1.2 'Inclusiveness'.



As was discussed in previous chapter, selection methods can be reflected on a scale according republican preferences in the following manner (Figure 11):



*Figure 11: Selection Method*

From these options, two are particularly fitting for the republican project. As discussed in Chapter 2 and Chapter 4, participatory events play an important role for the republican vision – not only do they provide citizens with an opportunity to shape decisions that affect them, they also allow for their interests to be traced by the decision-makers, which is necessary if the policies they devise are to be rooted in the common good.

Stratified random selection provides the most suitable selection method for contemporary democracies, since it allows a lot of variation and flexibility in terms of which voices are present and thus can ensure no minority group is excluded from the discussions (see an example of good practice below<sup>47</sup>). Note here that in perfectly homogenous communities (which do not exist) stratification would not be necessary and random selection would be suitable too. For heterogeneous communities, using a stratified random selection method would help to mirror the society as a whole, representing different demographic groups – age, gender, ethnic, religious and linguistic groups, income level, education, professions and others.

As was discussed previously, sortition (with a necessary component of rotation) would also be suitable. Here it would have to be ensured that every citizen in the state has an opportunity to participate at some point – so the participatory platform itself would have to be permanent. Other methods, such as self-selection or including absolutely everyone at all times would not be suitable, as these methods cannot ensure freedom from

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<sup>47</sup> Full report of the British Columbia Citizens' Assembly is available at: [https://citizensassembly.arts.ubc.ca/resources/final\\_report.pdf](https://citizensassembly.arts.ubc.ca/resources/final_report.pdf), Last accessed: 28/03/2021.

domination (in the case of direct democracy) and effective tracing of interests for common good (in the case of self-selection).

### ***Good Practice Example 2. Citizens' Assembly in British Columbia***

Citizens' Assembly on Electoral reform in British Columbia took place in 2004. The members of the assembly were chosen at random from the province's 79 electoral districts – 200 from each district (100 males and 100 females). These 200 people were then grouped by age and gender to produce a list representative of the provincial population.

The 15,800 selected participants were invited to participate, and those who responded were grouped again by electoral district, gender and age. In the end, a total of 23,034 letters produced a positive response from 1,715 men and women. This pool provided basis for invitations to one of the 27 selection meetings held across the province, to which 964 people showed up. Names of those who were eligible and wanted to participate were put in a hat and 158 participants were selected at random. A review of the selected participants demonstrated that the province's First Nations people were not represented and to address this, government reviewed terms of reference, so that representatives of the aboriginal community would be included. People who were not selected in the first round were canvassed to determine their aboriginal status and the names of those whose status was confirmed were put in the hat again and selected at random.

Determining where a mechanism would be placed on the scale in most cases should be straightforward, since most practitioners and academics (see for example, Escobar, 2015; Fishkin, 2015, Gastil, 1999 and Williams, 2014) explicitly state what their selection method was, whether it was adapted somehow and what their reasoning behind choosing this method was. Nevertheless, paying attention to certain keywords can be helpful to locate the relevant passages. For example, when looking for an indication of stratified selection method, the following keywords may be used: *age; bracket of population; cross-section; diversity; demographic quotas; ethnicity; gender; education; income; interest in topic; marital status; occupation; race; religion; representation; recruitment; stratified random selection; random selection with sample; stratification; sex; selection; social class; stratified sampling; targeted selection; quotas, work status*. Most of these relate to the specific stratification categories and, depending on the context, other categories may be relevant as well. As for sortition, keywords are likely to be referring to register that was used for selecting participants, similarly to what is done in the case of citizens jury (Delannoi and Dowlen, 2016). The keywords could potentially include: *address register, electoral register, citizen register and lottery, random, rotation, selection, sortition,*

*summons*. More generally, research should try to locate sections that discuss participants and how they were selected. As noted above, the context and the content of the participatory event will have a role to play here, so the researcher should make sure to pay attention to the community as a whole, too. This is because a stratified random selection method may have been used in an ethnically divided community to select different participants, but stratification had been applied to different age groups, not ethnic groups, thus ignoring this important distinction. In such cases, the value of inclusiveness would not have been promoted, since some ethnic groups may be left out, leading to their interests not being tracked and their freedom from domination not protected.

### **6.3 Internal and External Transparency**

As noted in Chapter 4, transparency is conceptualized under the republican framework as openness, accountability and honesty and is characterised by information-sharing with participants (internal transparency) and the general public (external transparency). To evaluate this republican principle, both sets of information should be consulted. However, analysis will have to be carried out in two separate steps, since the focus for each is different.

In terms of internal transparency, if the event is to advance the republican principle, participants should have access to full information about the event process and its conditions, including how the issue was selected, who the organisers of the event are and how outputs of deliberations are expected to influence decision-making. In other words, participants need to have a clear understanding of their role in the process. Internally, then, the more information is provided about the process (including the organisers) and participants' role in it, the better placed the event is to meet the republican benchmark of internal transparency.

At the same time, information about the process of participation should also be available to the general public. Republican principles require citizens to be free from domination from laws that they have not chosen for themselves. This can be achieved by including citizens in the decision-making process by either making the decisions jointly with them or by tracking their interests to make sure the decisions are made with these interests in

mind. However, if not everyone in the community is present when the interests are being tracked, those who are excluded need to have links with the process in one way or the other. At the very least, they need to know about the existence of the mechanism and its outcomes, but preferably be able to follow the whole process. The remainder of this section will provide some guidance that will be helpful for assessing these two forms of transparency.

### 6.3.1 Internal Transparency

It was proposed in Chapter 4 that since internal transparency is constituted from different types of information, which can potentially be provided by different information sources, these categories do not translate neatly onto a straightforward scale. Instead, it is appropriate to see what kind of information is provided to the participants. In addition, it will be necessary to also look for what kind of information is absent or left out, which will, in this case, be more telling about the extent to which the mechanism is transparent internally. The evaluative scale devised in Chapter 4 captures this (Figure 12):



Figure 12: Internal transparency

As indicated by the scale, a good example of this would be a participatory event which ensures full transparency by providing participants with detailed information on all the relevant categories. The first of these categories is information about the organisers of the events, where information should be provided on the individual as well as institutional level, including the history and activities, goals and aims of the institution or organisation hosting the event. Importantly, information on how the event was financed should also be disclosed as well as information on any partnering institutions/organisations that were involved in the organising process.

Secondly, information on the topic of the deliberations should be provided. All the policy-relevant data fits into this category – background documents, briefings, any relevant statistical data, policy alternatives, maps and other relevant information. In addition, the event schedule should be flexible enough to respond to any questions of clarification that may surface during the discussions.

Information on the participatory process is the third category of internal transparency that should be paid attention to. This category includes information about the participatory process – what is expected of the participants, what the timeline of the process is, what the daily and hourly schedule is expected to look like and similar information. This ensures that participants know what to expect and what is expected of them.

Finally, feedback should also be provided to the participants. This category includes any communication with the participants after the event has concluded. This can include, for example, informing them about how the recommendations produced by participants have been used/ what effect it has had on the decision-making process.

### ***Good Practice Example 3. Citizen Juries in Scotland***

In 2014, Citizens Juries deliberative event took place to determine key principles for deciding about future wind farm development. All the relevant information was included in the participant handbook, which included the following categories:

- About the project
- Jury timetable
- Why is this research important?
- What will happen on the two citizens' jury days?
- How will what you say be recorded and stored?
- When will the results be published?
- What will you get out of taking part?
- Who is funding the citizens' jury?
- Who else is in the room?
- Who are the researchers?
- Biographies: Facilitators and Organisers
- Form you have been asked to fill in
- Further reading and resources
- How to use resource list
- Glossary of terms
- Glossary of energy sources
- Research institutions

In addition, the event included a hearing from expert witnesses and jury members had an opportunity to ask them questions that had not been covered in the handbook. Furthermore, participants were invited to the report launch event a while after the discussions had concluded. Feedback and outcomes of the discussions were presented at this event and participants had an opportunity to ask further questions and learn about other deliberative events that had taken place as a part of the project.

A good example of internal transparency would cover all of these categories (see Good Practice Example 3<sup>48</sup>). Should any of these categories not be covered at all, the benchmark of internal transparency would not be seen as fully promoted.

To determine whether participants were provided with all the relevant categories, it will be helpful to review documents such as briefing documents, final reports and websites of the events, which usually contain all the relevant information and links to further reading. To locate information on the organisers of the event, keywords such as *background; financed by; history; more information; organised by* and *organisers* can all serve as indicators. For information on the topic: *background information; context; data; definitions; history; glossary; policy alternatives; statistics; timeline* and *vocabulary* can all indicate that background information is provided. In terms of the participatory process of the event, the following keywords can be helpful to locate the relevant passages: *agenda; golden rules; guidelines; plan; program; procedure; process; schedule; timeline* and *'your/participant role'*. Finally, to locate passages in documents that are describing feedback given to participants, the following keywords can be useful: *aftermath, announcement, consequences, contribution, decision, development, effects, feedback, final report, follow-up, information, news, outcomes of deliberation, policy recommendation reaction, response, results, update*.

The presence of these keywords provide an indicator that the organisers had taken transparency seriously and were providing participants with opportunities to learn as much as possible about the event, the topic and the organisers themselves. However, as before, the mere mention of these does not serve as a guarantee – there would have to be some evidence there that the relevant information was actually provided to the participants.

### **6.3.2 External Transparency**

External transparency describes how accessible information about the participatory process is to the general public. In practical terms, external transparency can be facilitated in different ways – with briefing documents, reports, through social media and

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<sup>48</sup> Full information on the event, including participant handbook can is available here: <https://www.climatexchange.org.uk/research/projects/citizens-juries-on-wind-farm-development-in-scotland/>, Last accessed 28/03/2021.

news reports. In communities where a multitude of technological solutions are freely available to everyone, live-streaming or radio-translation would provide an attractive solution to ensure near-complete external transparency. Ensuring that a participatory mechanism is transparent and accessible to the general public advances the republican principles of common good and freedom as non-domination to different degrees.

In Chapter 4, the following scale was devised to demonstrate the different levels of external transparency that a participative event may have:



Figure 13: External transparency

The key point here is that the mechanism should be open and accessible to the wider public. While other citizens are not always participating (see section 3.1.1), they nevertheless should have links to the process in one way or the other to be aware of how decisions potentially affecting them are made and to also be able to track other citizens' interests. If the majority of population have no idea the participatory event is happening, then they are in no way connected to the interest-tracking process, which poses a problem for the republican principle of freedom as non-domination (see page 38 -41).

#### **Good Practice Example 4. Irish Assembly**

A good example of a participatory event receiving a high score on the scale is the Irish Citizens' Assembly in 2016. Deliberations and the Assembly's public proceedings were live-streamed and stored in a dedicated YouTube channel afterwards, so that anyone could (and still can) have access to the recorded video material. In addition, the Assembly official website had regular updates in their news section and useful materials in the 'resources' section.

In most cases, a summary of the event is published after the event in a form of briefing document or a report. In other cases, social media or news reports are used to disseminate information, advancing the republican principles of the common good and freedom as non-domination to different degrees. At the ideal, external transparency would see a completely open, accessible and interactive platform, where citizens who are not participating directly nevertheless have opportunities to interact with those, who are

(see below an example of good practice<sup>49</sup>). To locate the passages that could be describing external transparency, the following keywords could be of use: *follow, find out, for general public; information; public, publicity, transparency, live-streaming, monitor, news, observe, public, updates, transparency, watch, witness*. These keywords are likely to indicate that external transparency was ensured at the event. If, however, there is no evidence that the general public was informed about the event, the event would not be matching the republican benchmark of external transparency.

## 6.4 Civic Virtue: Civic Education and Competence Building

As was discussed in Section 3.2, civic literacy (or civic skills) is closely linked with the core republican principle of civic virtue. Under a republican framework, civic literacy is understood in terms of a skillset necessary for meaningful participation and civic activism, such as argumentation and discussion skills as well as critical thinking. One of the aims of civic education therefore is to make us better at participating and deliberating: listening respectfully, reflecting on our preferences, being willing to change our views and seek communal good. As exercising these skills is what constitutes civic virtue, participative events should provide a level of competence-building for its participants. This is because without the necessary toolset to engage in participation and discussion, it will be difficult if not impossible for citizens to participate in a meaningful way. Bearing in mind participants may come from diverse backgrounds and have a varied skillset, it is crucial that, in an effort to ‘upskill’ participants to a more equal level, deliberative practice has an element of competence building if it is to adhere to the republican principle of civic virtue.

A good example of this would be having a form of trial assembly, where participants meet prior the actual event to go through a training exercise with a mock issue to solve. As they discuss the sample problem, training is provided to them, to offer them practical tools to solve arguments more efficiently (see Good Practice Example 5<sup>50</sup>). At the other side of

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<sup>49</sup> Detailed information on the Irish Citizen Assembly is available at: <https://www.citizensassembly.ie/en/previous-assemblies/citizens-assembly-2016-2018-/>, Last accessed: 28/03/2021.

<sup>50</sup> For a review of the event, please see case review on Participedia, Available at: [https://participedia.net/case/5008/edit#\\_ednref14](https://participedia.net/case/5008/edit#_ednref14), Last accessed: 28/03/2021.



the spectrum, a poor example would be to not have any competence building elements at all.

### **Good Practice Example 5. Participatory Budgeting in Paris**

Participatory budgeting in Paris has been linked with so-called ‘civic workshops’, which offer free courses in project management, digital tools, public speaking and information on how the city works. In addition, participants can benefit from the ‘Citizenship Card’ program, which gives them access to public events, museums, guided visits of municipal services and different education workshops. Card holders are also invited to Citizens meetings, where they can discuss issues of citizenship with experts and academics.

It was proposed in Chapter 4 that the teamwork element of civic education is illustrated with the following scale of measurement (Figure 14):



Figure 14: Civic competence building

As illustrated by the scale, extended and full capacity building is fitting with the republican vision. To foster the development of civic skills, participants could, for example, be provided with educational materials (readings, video material, online exercises, PowerPoint presentations and similar), that they could review before attending the event.

To locate the relevant section in the event related documents, there are keywords that can be useful for analysis, which include: *analysis; argumentation; consultation; civic competency; civic literacy; coaching; consensus-orientation; deliberation; debate; discussion; education; evaluation; evidence; exercise; findings; foundation; guidance; interpretation; instruction; inquiry; investigation; judgement; learning; opinion; practice; preparation; rational argumentation; reasoning; rhetoric; scrutiny; skills; teaching; training*. If the keywords appear in the document, especially when describing competence-building and civic skills, it can serve an indicator that the event has been organised with civic education in mind. This can manifest in a number of ways, but would most likely take the form of a training session, provision of education materials or

exercises aimed at developing a particular skill, for example participants developing a set of rules for respectful deliberation.

## **6.5 Common Good: Teamwork**

As noted in previous chapters, common good is a core principle of both deliberative democracy as well as civic republicanism. It is an ideal that entails a certain understanding of what counts as a good decision, which is one that is made following a procedure that does not favour one specific group in a community, but instead allows the weighing all opinions and interests equally. This means that the opinions of all participants, different social perspectives and cultural views need to be expressed and considered in an equal and fair way. In the context of participative events this is in part ensured by a fair selection method (discussed later in the chapter) and in part by design elements that shape participation, such as giving every participant a chance to speak for equal amount of time.<sup>51</sup>

There is, however, a further consideration that is crucial for the value of common good to be secured. As noted before (see page 52, also page 96), the common good is not something that exists independently of the participants and it cannot be discovered in some metaphysical sense. It is instead constructed through common deliberation and teamwork, where participants share their views and at the same time try to identify common goals and possible routes that can be taken to achieve those goals. While overcoming disagreement may not always be possible, it is nevertheless crucial that participants are given an opportunity to work together with the purpose to develop ties to one another and set common goals. An opinion poll or a simple expression of individual preferences is not sufficient for this purpose as it offers no opportunity to look for

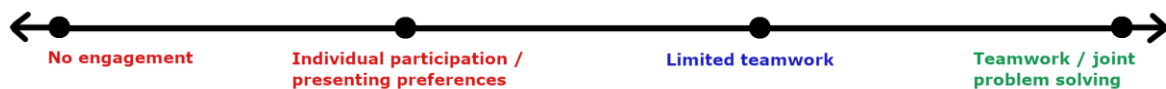
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<sup>51</sup> The exact design elements will depend on the topic and the type of participatory event that is assessed. The analytic framework I am devising in this thesis is to be used for evaluation of participatory events in terms of republican principles. For the framework to be applied in a systematic way, the benchmarks I have put forward thus far chapter should not be too broad so as to allow for a consistent interpretation. On the other hand, the criteria should be broad enough to be measurable in a wide range of participatory contexts, be it deliberative poll, participatory budgeting or a citizens' assembly. It is for that reason that while it is helpful to illustrate what these principles can look like in participatory settings, it is not possible nor desirable to isolate specific design elements as these will vary from context to context.

commonality. It also does not allow for a change of an opinion in the light of new information.

The participatory mechanism will therefore adhere to republican principles if it contains elements of teamwork and prompts participants to exercise collective judgment to reach a community-oriented resolution to the issue at stake, to foster a communal way of thinking and cooperation. Even though organizing activities in teams by itself will not guarantee that cooperation will occur (especially in deeply divided societies and in the presence of deep conflict and disagreement), providing mere opportunity for cooperative behaviour to develop is important for securing republican principles of freedom as non-domination and the common good. In other words, republicanism does not require being blind to conflict and disagreement, only that opportunities are provided for participants to make steps to overcome their differences for the sake of cooperation (for a more detailed discussion of this point see sections 1.4.3 and 3.3).

In the previous chapter it was proposed that the teamwork element of community orientation is illustrated with the following scale of measurement (see Figure 15):



*Figure 15: Teamwork*

As the scale illustrates, teamwork is the most favourable form of activity for participative events and it needs to be present for the republican principle of the common good to be fostered. While it does not mean that it is the only type of activity allowed at participative events, it does require that the time participants spend at the event are predominantly spent working together, rather than individually.

A good example of this would be a participatory event where teamwork is present in all stages of the process. The event could, for example, have an ice-breaking introductory activity, where the participants interact and get to know each other, followed by group deliberation on the topic throughout the process and a joint debrief session after the decision has been made. A facilitator may be present to help the participants of the event

to navigate through these stages, but only in order to provide support. Participants should remain the main actors at the event (for an example, Good Practice Example 6 <sup>52</sup>).

### ***Good Practice Example 6. Oregon Citizens' Initiative Review***

Citizens' Initiative Review's (Oregon in 2016) planning documents indicate that most of the activities were to be carried out in a group – the plan included a group BINGO! game, where participants had to interact to get to know each other, group deliberations on the topic throughout the process and joint debrief discussions after hearing witnesses. In addition, all the final output-document templates were drafted in the first person, stating: 'We [leave blank] members of the Citizens' Initiative Review support Measure [xx] for the following reasons (...)' indicating that the final output of the deliberative process is planned to be a group effort. In addition, the guidelines of the event stated that: 'CIR is a group process. You will spend a lot of time together examining tough issues, and you may find that you do not always agree. It is critical that we demonstrate to one another that we are here to listen and learn and to hear one another, and to do that we must show respect to one another throughout the review.'

Finally, the moderator planning document indicates that out of 44 activities that were carried out during the deliberative process, 14 were carried out in 'large groups', 5 in 'small groups', 4 in 'two groups' and 10 were informative 'presentations', 3 Q&A session, 2 'moderated' activities, 2 'pair' activities and only 4 'individual' activities. This demonstrates that the activities were predominantly organised in groups.

On the other end of the spectrum, an event where participants participate individually and express their views in front of others without any element of teamwork or joint discussion (or problem solving) would not provide an opportunity for common values and goals to be constructed. There might be some discussion in the form of a plenary debate, but this would only allow participants to express their point of view, instead of encouraging them to work together, which simply would not be sufficient to meet this republican benchmark.

From a researcher's perspective, to determine whether a participative event promoted the common good through teamwork one would have to review the available documents describing the activities of the event. To find the relevant sections in these document,

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<sup>52</sup> Oregon citizens initiative Review: The full set of planning documents are available here: <https://psu.app.box.com/s/c0ufshjlm7vrd2ao7x5isk0os2vik7d4/folder/11423912053>, Last accessed: 28/03/2021.

locating keywords that describe teamwork and joint problem-solving is helpful. These may include the following: *collaborate; collectively; come up with an answer together; cooperate; coproduce, 'in your groups, discuss X'; jointly; 'talk to each other about X'; team up; teamwork; together; share ideas; share views; 'work together to X'* or similar instructional terms which demonstrate that participants were asked to work together on something.

## **6.6 Applying the Framework**

This chapter has provided guidance on how republican principles can be located through documentary analysis. Taking each benchmark and series of indicators in turn, I have used illustrative examples and suggested informative key words to guide researchers attempting to apply this framework through documentary analysis. A few further points need to be made that relate to the process by which this coding is used to reach judgements about the overall republican credentials of a particular initiative.

First, as outlined in the previous chapter, it is likely that researchers will gather a number of sources within the three categories outlined in the last chapter. This raises the possibility that different sources could come into conflict, meaning that they might suggest different evaluation for the same benchmark. For example, looking at the design stage, a funding application may indicate that participants will be given an extended training in argumentation, whilst a planning email suggests that only limited training will occur. To arbitrate between such documents researchers should seek, where possible, to identify additional sources pertaining to that stage and code in accordance with the kind of practice most extensively referred to. In this case, for example, if three other documents suggested that extensive training was planned, then this code would be assigned. If additional documents are not available, researchers may consider conducting additional research such as interviews, to allow a judgement to be determined.

Second, it is important to draw a distinction here between clashes between documents within the same category (i.e. design) and clashes across categories (i.e. design and process). In this latter case researchers may expect a degree of variation to occur. It could, for example, be that what is intended by the organisers at the beginning of the planning process is not always enacted in the same way in the actual event due to funding

restrictions. Similarly, an organiser may offer a positive narrative picture after the event that does not match the practice reported at the time. These possibilities make it important for researcher to clarify how an initiative is being evaluated, what type of documents are being assessed and what implications this particular approach to analysis has. As noted in Chapter 5, the Brown-inspired model adopted in this thesis (see Figure 9, page 109) encourages researchers to unpack the insights offered by different categories of documents to gain insight into the design, process and narrative of any participatory event. At this level, therefore, there is no need to reconcile such differences, rather they should be noted as an interesting point of analysis.

Third, the evaluation of each benchmark should not occur in a vacuum, but be considered in context. For example, internal transparency is a benchmark that will be crucial for all participatory events unless it was to occur in a permanent participatory platform where all the information regarding the organisers is already known – in such cases only the information on the topic and updates if something suddenly changes, need to be provided. One could also conceive of a participatory event that is organised and run by citizens themselves; in cases like that, most of the categories from this benchmark would not apply. Similarly, some deviation from the republican benchmark of civic virtue (indicated by competence building) could in principle be acceptable as well. Think for example of a community that has long participatory traditions and civic education is part of the school curriculum. A participatory event in such community would potentially not have to put strong emphasis on civic skills training as it already would be provided to them through other channels and it would be sufficient to have a short review of key competencies to ensure everyone is on the same page, but extensive training would not be needed. On the other hand, communities that have not previously been exposed to active participation, deliberation, dialogue and argumentation before, would potentially struggle without an extensive training and wouldn't be able to participate effectively.

There is also a further consideration regarding the application of the framework. Chapter 4 of this thesis has put forward 6 specific benchmarks, which should be present in participatory events for them to be seen as furthering republican principles and this chapter has provided further guidance on how they should be applied. While an argument could be made for determining an overall republican quality of a participatory event and calculating a summative score, this is not something that I have attempted to do in this

thesis. A formula for one final 'score' of republican quality would require a more narrow approach and restrict my analysis too much. As noted before, this framework I am devising is simultaneously broad 'enough' and not too broad on purpose, so that it can be applied in many different contexts and at the same time not be misinterpreted. What I am interested in, is how an initiative ranks at each level for each benchmark to better understand their empirical manifestations. I will therefore adopt a transparency approach which will show the areas in which an initiative is more or less aligned with republican principles. As such, this framework provides guidelines that will have to be adapted slightly for each individual case. The key point will remain this: in every participatory event, domination should be minimised, common good traced and civic virtue fostered. If the mechanism demonstrates attention to these values by fulfilling the benchmarks identified in this chapter, it will have demonstrated its commitment to republican principles. I will therefore now turn to an illustrative example, describing a step by step analysis of a participatory event according to the framework I have just introduced.

## Chapter 7:

# Republican Benchmarks in ‘Democracy Matters’

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I began this thesis by reviewing some of the existing evaluative frameworks and emphasised that what they were lacking is a detailed assessment of theoretical values and a clarification of how these normative anchors would manifest in empirical reality. In the previous chapters I have presented a republican evaluative framework for participatory events, describing the key values, their matching benchmarks and the indicators that a researcher should be looking for when carrying out an assessment. It is now the task of this chapter to test the framework and to demonstrate how it can be applied to an empirical case.

Chapter 6 put forward a roadmap for how republican principles could be operationalized and applied to participatory initiatives. Building on that, this chapter will provide an illustration of how to evaluate a participatory event in practice. All six benchmarks (popular control, inclusiveness, common good, internal transparency, external transparency and civic education) will be located and evaluated in relation to a real-world example of participation in the form of the ‘Democracy Matters’ citizens’ assembly. The purpose of this analysis is two-fold. First, it is to demonstrate how this framework can be applied, and second, to evaluate the republican credentials of this particular initiative. In advancing these objectives, my aim is not to put forward a rigid and immovable template of how participatory initiatives should be analysed. The process of devising and applying an analytical framework is exceedingly complex because of the numerous specificities and particularities of each participatory event (it cannot, for example, be presumed that a common set of source documents can be accessed or that different organisers of participatory events will use consistent language when describing their practices). In this chapter, I therefore offer this example to demonstrate how to bridge the gap between theory and practice, whilst acknowledging that the specificities of each case and analytic process may require adaptations to this basic template.



As noted in Chapter 5, I will use ECA to evaluate each benchmark of my framework. I have completed step 1 of the method (defining analytical categories (benchmarks and indicators) that are to be evaluated) by carrying out conceptual analysis of each republican principle, identifying six separate benchmarks and indicators of these benchmarks in Chapters 4 and 6. Each of these now need to be located in the documents gathered relating to 'Democracy Matters'. As prescribed by ECA, I will do this by reviewing each document separately first. Guided by the indicators I have put forward, I will highlight the relevant passages and compile the sections under matching codes – popular control, inclusiveness, internal transparency, external transparency, common good, civic education. While doing so, I will also pay attention to the type of documents I am considering and group them according to the groups I identified in Chapter 5 (design, process and narrative categories of documents) to make sure no inconsistencies occur between them. I will then evaluate each set of highlighted sections to find an answer to this question: 'Is *this* republican benchmark met by 'Democracy Matters' deliberative assembly?' Finally, I will review the six separate evaluations of republican benchmarks jointly to determine extent to which 'Democracy Matters' can be described as fulfilling republican principles, highlighting the areas in which these principles are more or less evident.

## **7.1 Popular Control**

As noted in Chapter 6, for the republican benchmark of popular control to be promoted, three roles can be acceptable for citizens in participatory settings – they can be decision-makers (as is the case in participatory budgeting), stakeholders (where the decision is made jointly with decision-makers and other groups, as is sometimes the case in public consultations) or consultants (when the mechanism is set up to gain insights from citizens and these are then used to shape policy). To determine the role of participants in 'Democracy Matters: Assembly in the North', I followed the step-by-step plan set out above to determine the role citizens played in the event – decision-making, stakeholder, consultative or that of informants. As suggested in Chapter 5, this analysis is carried out by inductive coding of the relevant passages. The keywords are then used to identify the relevant passages and references that relate to these three categories that may have been missed in the first round of coding. I will review the documents by group – first looking

at the design documents, then reviewing process documents and finally assess the output (narrative documents).

### 7.1.1 Popular Control in Design documents

In the 10 design documents I had access to neither popular control nor decision-making was discussed directly. The event was described as ‘a public, deliberative event’ where citizens will be ‘given an opportunity to discuss their views on devolution in England’. References were made to the value of the event, especially its academic value, with suggestions that this assembly will provide a great opportunity to learn more about participatory events. Academics were described as the key beneficiaries and one of the five core aims of the event was to ‘explore the challenges of co-production and achieving ‘impact’ in manner that be written-up and fed back into the broad social science community as methodological training and insight’. At the same time, the project proposal also considered benefits for the non-academic audiences as illustrated by the below text in Fragment 1: (from here on – my emphasis in fragments):

#### *Fragment 1: ESRC Research Grant Proposal:*

‘In terms of the **policy-making community, civil servants and local government officials will benefit** from being able to draw upon the **insights and lessons-learned** in convening and managing a large-scale citizens assembly. Beyond the institutional and procedural lessons this research will also **examine and explore the politics of public engagement** in the sense of managing participant expectations, framing the outputs, maximizing political listening as well as political voice, and the challenges of managing the nexus between feeding the outcome of the deliberative mechanism back into established political frameworks. (...) The second far **broader group of potential beneficiaries include the broader general public**, both directly and through the large number of civic-action and third-sector groups that are already signed-up to this project (...). If the **benefit for policy makers and politicians is likely to be more policy focused** then the benefit to the public is likely to be no less important in the sense of cultivating a broad public debate about democratic life and reform in the UK. The citizens’ assemblies will be high-profile innovations – nothing on this topic or of this scale has ever been conducted before – and one of the interesting elements of this project will to assess the broader public and media debates that this project ignites.

What the highlighted sections in this text fragment demonstrate is that the key envisaged benefit for the general public is the cultivation of public debate on democratic life and

reform in the UK – but this does not seem to entail any direct link to *decision-making*. For the policy-making community, the key benefit is described as getting experience and insights on how participatory events function and the benefits that they can bring about. The grant proposal also mentions that the findings of the event will ‘underpin future government policy in the area by feeding the results of the project directly into Whitehall, Westminster, Holyrood and Cardiff Bay’ (see quotes from the documents in Fragments 2 and 3 below). This link to government institutions is however only mentioned once in the design documents and it isn’t clarified how this would be carried out.

*Fragment 2: ESRC Research Grant Proposal:*

**Two pilot assemblies based around the theme of decentralization** in the UK will be organized as a **‘proof of concept’ exercise** that will influence the decision on a far larger government-commissioned Constitutional Convention in the future. Such ‘proof of concept’ research is necessary in order to **avoid over-simplistic assumptions and uninformed prejudices about the relevance and suitability of transferring forms of deliberative engagement** that may have worked well in other countries to the British context.

They will address the question of **how civic engagement can be delivered**, where power should lie across and within the nations of the UK and will be organised **as a ‘proof of concept’ exercise** with **significant potential** to influence the next UK government's decision on how to commission and execute a Constitutional Convention.

*Fragment 3: ESRC Research Grant Proposal:*

This project has five core aims:

1. to learn from those deliberative assemblies that have been conducted on constitutional issues outside the UK and recent deliberative exercises within the UK, in order to reveal 'best practice' for design of a UK-wide process;
2. to use this comparative best practice to inform the design and deliver two contrasting Citizens' Assemblies in the UK as pilots that demonstrate the value and capacity of public-led democratic innovations.
3. **to explore the political legitimacy of recommendations stemming from deliberative assemblies to judge their contribution to democratic decision-making;**

4. to underpin future government policy in this area by feeding the results of the project directly into Whitehall, Westminster, Holyrood and Cardiff Bay;

5. to explore the challenges of both 'co-production' (in a political context) and achieving 'impact' in a manner that can be written-up and fed back into the broad social science community as methodological training and insight.

The fragments above indicate that the role of the participants in terms of popular control does not fit any of the categories on the scale I have proposed (see page 113). This is because the event is not linked with any decision-making process at all – it is claimed that the insights will be shared with decision-makers, but this intention is not specifically linked to a particular policy or a decision that is being made – nor are any government representatives required to become familiar and react to the recommendations produced in the assembly.

To make sure, I carried out an additional keyword search in NVivo to locate any other relevant sections in the documents to see if they highlight sections that might be referring to popular control. Searching for the keywords in the decision-making category and the stakeholder category, no matches were found. As to the informant category, the keywords 'discussion' had five matches and 'dialogue' had two. The highlighted sections that came up described how the process will be organised, without any reference to the role of citizens. For example, it noted that research will be conducted during the assemblies: 'Plenary sessions and selected small-group **discussions** will be recorded and subsequently content analysed using an adapted version of the Discourse Quality Index' (ESRC Research Grant Proposal, p.16). None of the sections highlighted by the keyword matches added any information relating to the citizens' role in the event. As a result, considering the design documents of the event only, 'Democracy Matters: Assembly in the North' shows that it was designed as a discussion platform and would thus not meet the republican benchmark of popular control or indeed align with any of the other indicators on this scale.

### 7.1.2 Popular Control in Process Documents

Turning to the second set of documents, a total of 49 documents describing the process of 'Democracy Matters' (see the full list of documents in 00) were gathered for analysis. Out of these, I identified 4 documents with informative discussions on this point. Three of

these documents were informative letters that were sent to the participants – the initial recruitment letter, an ‘update letter’ that was sent to the selected participants to further explain their role and tasks and a FAQ document that was sent the participants after they had been selected. Although these documents were drafted prior to the event itself, they contain the only references that participants received in terms of their role in the overall decision making process. The final document making an indirect reference to participants’ role was a PowerPoint presentation that was shared with the participants at the beginning of the event (see Fragment 4: below).

***Fragment 4: PowerPoint Presentation for Participants (Day 1)***

The way we are governed in the UK is changing. This is not an academic debate, it is happening. There are more opinions to consider than just devolution deals. But whatever we decide needs to be democratic. Otherwise it will not be legitimate and will not take root.

Our title is ‘Democracy Matters’ because:

We are discussing issues related to democracy.

Democracy is central to our way of life.

In these documents the citizens’ role was not discussed in a direct way, but references were made to the main goal of the event. For example, the PowerPoint presentation shown to the participants at the beginning of the Assembly (see Fragment 4 above), explained that the title of the project was ‘Democracy Matters’ because, ‘We are discussing issues related to democracy’ and ‘Democracy is central to our way of life’. However, it did not explain what the outcomes of these discussion would be and whether they would have any real and direct impact to the actual decision-making process in the UK, nor did they describe how citizens’ contributions would be used once event had concluded.

In the letters sent out to participants their role was described as ‘meaningful’ and it was emphasised that through their participation, they would ‘shape the future of Sheffield’ and ‘change the future of our democracy’ (see fragments 5, 6 and 7 below). However, despite this message expressed in the letters, nothing was said about the actual decision-making power that the citizens would have. From the available information, the initial analysis of documents suggests that citizens would have the role of informants, since the

references that are made to their tasks describe the event as an opportunity ‘to voice your view’ on how decision should be made and that ‘these voices will be taken straight to the current corridors of power’ (see fragments below), but then it isn’t clear whether what level of influence would their recommendations actually have.

*Fragment 5: Invitation Letter to Potential Participants*

Your opportunity:

To be a part of the first citizens’ assembly of its kind to be held in the UK;

To play a **meaningful role in changing how out politicians make decisions;**  
**To shape the future** of the Sheffield city region.

*Fragment 6: Invitation Letter to Potential Participants (FAQ Section)*

About the project:

We would like to start by thanking you for considering our invitation to be part of a unique opportunity **to change the future of our democracy**. If you choose to join us, you will be part of the first-ever citizens’ assembly of its type to be held in the UK. Not only will this provide **the chance to voice your view on how politicians should make the decisions** that influence everyday life, but you can be confident that **these voices will be taken straight to the current corridors of power**.

*Fragment 7: Invitation Letter to Potential Participants:*

There are also indirect benefits through the opportunity to be a part of the first citizens’ assembly of its kind to be held in the UK, **to play a meaningful role in changing how our politicians make decisions about you, and to shape the future of your local region**.

To confirm this evaluation, I conducted an NVivo keyword search. It failed to locate any references to participants as decision-makers or stakeholders. Similarly, keyword search for the consultant category found no indication that role of the participants would be consultative – keywords of ‘discussion’ and ‘working on’ were mentioned frequently, but none of these mentions were linked with citizen’s role in the assembly – only the activities that were part of the schedule. Only one match from the ‘informant’ keyword category was located in the documents, which was already indicated in fragments above – namely,

‘to voice’: ‘(...) you can be confident that these voices will be taken straight to the current corridors of power’.

As a result, I conclude that the evaluation of the preliminary process-related document review is confirmed: participants’ role did not match any of the indicators on the popular control scale. While they were able to deliberate on devolution in UK, there was no evidence of decision making.

### 7.1.3 Popular Control in Narrative Documents

As I concluded from having reviewed design and process documents of the event, documents did not contain language that indicated the republican benchmark for popular control had been met, although a few indirect references were made to participants’ views being shared with politicians. Overall, participants were informed about their role in the Assembly and were provided with detailed briefing materials to help them debate the topic, but not much was said about the role of the Assembly in the wider context of decision-making process in the UK. The review of documents relating to narrative gave similar results, although the role of the citizens was described in a manner that could be coded as ‘informants’.

17 documents were reviewed, with 9 of these relevant for this section: a general report of ‘Democracy Matters: Assembly in the North’, 7 press releases and 2 website information files. A total of 43 passages were coded as relevant for indicators of this benchmark. This mostly took the form of describing the purpose of the event and the role of the citizens in it. For example, in the early pages of the report, one of the aims of the assembly was described as ‘creating the space for citizens to inform themselves about the issues and debate with another’ (Flinders et al., 2016, 3).

The highlighted sections (see Fragment 8 below) illuminated four further points. First, the report indicates that decision-makers were informed about the results of the discussions. The organisers describe this as a ‘high level of engagement and impact’, including the following effect:

#### *Fragment 8: General Report (page 51)*

[C]ross-party and senior level **endorsements**, such as such as the Chair of Parliament’s principal constitutional committee, the Public Administration & Constitutional Affairs Committee; referencing of the assemblies in the

Communities and Local Government Select Committee inquiry into the Cities and Local Government Devolution Bill; **support from and continued contact** with local MPs in Hampshire and South Yorkshire; **support** from senior figures within most major British parties (Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, Green, Scottish National Party); use of the **project as a case study** in the All Party Parliamentary Group on Decentralisation, Devolution and Reform inquiry headed by Lord Kerslake; and **invitations to submit oral evidence from the project** before the House of Lords Constitution Committee. Events are [also] due to take place with a range of organisations including the Local Government Association and the Centre for Cities.

This section suggests that there was a link between the assembly and the government and there was at least partial awareness of the event among government officials and politicians. Nevertheless, to have an awareness of the event or being presented with its findings is not the same as informing decision-making process or citizens acting as consultants, so again – none of the indicators on the scale seem to apply in this case.

The second observation from the report review is that the event was organised as ‘a response to party manifestos calling for a national citizens’ convention’ (Flinders et al, General Report, 2016, 8). This indicates that the topic and the format of the event were designed strategically, to ensure it can play a meaningful role in the wider landscape of political decision-making in the UK. Nevertheless, apart from the fact that the topic of the assembly was being discussed at the time more widely and was thus of importance in the political context, this does not have an impact on the role of the citizens participating in ‘Democracy Matters’.

Third, the document review also indicated that experts and politicians were invited to the event (to provide expertise in the case of North Assembly and to participate in the South Assembly), which can be seen as an opportunity to influence them. Even though this may have an indirect impact on future decision-making, it would have to be dependent on the participating politicians’ goodwill, which when judged against the republican benchmark of popular control is not sufficient. Think back to the slave-master analogy, where having a kind master is not enough for domination to be lifted. Your freedom should not be dependent on their goodwill, but should instead be prescribed by your status as a free citizen, and in this case – by your role in a participatory event. Therefore, the mere fact the politicians were present, does not mean that the indicator of ‘informant’ (or any other indicator on the scale) would be fitting on this occasion.



In addition, a few additional fragments (see Fragments 9, 10, 11 and 12 below) further confirm that the assembly did not match any of the indicators for the republican benchmark of popular control:

*Fragment 9: General Report (page 3)*

By creating the **space for citizens to inform themselves** about the issues and **debate with each other**, this project has shown the potential for a new kind of democratic politics.

*Fragment 10: General Report (page 10):*

[Aim is] to investigate **what member of the public in England** think about devolution when they are actually given the **opportunity to learn** about and **debate** the issue in detail.

*Fragment 11: General Report (page 18)*

Citizens' assemblies differ markedly from traditional consultations, focus groups, and even many events labelled as 'citizens' juries' in the degree of attention they pay both to building members' knowledge of the issues in hand and to **ensuring members can deliberate freely and carefully upon the available options**. The assemblies' discussions were structured in order to advance these purposes.

*Fragment 12: Press release*

In the UK's first ever Citizens' Assembly (...) residents voted in favour of a Yorkshire-wide regional assembly as their preferred model of devolution, and called on local politicians to negotiate with the Government for a much more ambitious and democratic devolution deal.

Observations made earlier, paired with fragments highlighted in the fragments above, indicate that participants were neither observers, informants nor consultants, and certainly not stakeholders or decision makers in 'Democracy Matters'. Their participation was at best educational and experimental and it did not have any impact on the decision-making process in the UK.

Notably though, the general report also indicated that the authors of the report were aware of the difficulties caused by the lack of a formal mandate when discussing the impact of the event. This is recognised as a key challenge, illuminating two specific difficulties – firstly, the risk of a decrease in interest and willingness to participate, since

there was no clear effect of the outcomes of deliberations to the actual policy decisions. The second difficulty was the suspicion that the project could be consigned to ‘political oblivion, if it did find a way to demonstrate its relevance to topical political issues’. The report stated that both challenges were addressed effectively in the following fragment (see Fragment 13):

*Fragment 13: General Report (page 52)*

The first challenge was dealt with by ensuring that as **many local and national politicians as possible were brought into the process** and these **endorsements and words of encouragement were shown to the assembly members. Letters were sent** from the House of Lords to the participants and **videos made showing the support of local MPs**, with **written messages** of support being posted on the website. Moreover, **local politicians**, especially those involved directly in the City Deals **attended the assemblies and fielded questions from the participants**. The second challenge was met by **opening avenues of communication** with both the Department of Communities and Local Government and the Cabinet Office to **impress upon them the importance of this project as an experiment** in democratic participation. Through our wider political engagement strategy with parliamentary committees, opposition political parties, the Scottish Government and a range of civil society organisations it has been possible to ensure that the **assemblies have fed into numerous reports** and will inform thinking on diverse issues from political (dis)engagement, to local government reform and wider constitutional issues. So, in spite of **not having official government support**, this project has still been able to **help shape policymaking** and continues to do so.

This fragment is interesting because here a narrative seems to be built around decision-making and the role of participants in it. The point that the assembly will shape policymaking despite having no formal mandate is not discussed in other documents – it is only mentioned in the General Report, one time. Nevertheless, despite this observation, the role of the citizens in the event does not change, when measured against the republican benchmark of popular control. Their role remains neutral and cannot be evaluated against the scale I proposed earlier in the thesis because of the lack of focus on decision making of any kind (either by citizens or others). To confirm this initial assessment, I carried out an NVivo keyword search to make sure no relevant sections were left out of the evaluation.

In this case, the keywords from decision-making and consultant categories did not appear in the report in relation to the participants' role in the event. Keywords from the informant category, on the other hand, appeared in the documents frequently, especially 'to debate' and 'to learn' as well as 'express views' and 'opinions', indicating that the role of participants was to learn, form opinions, discuss and make recommendations. For example, here is a short section from the description of the event: 'In some cases [deliberation] process was slightly truncated, either because time was short or because members felt they had already debated these matters sufficiently. Through this process, members were able to come to recommendations as to their optimal arrangement for local and regional governance in South Yorkshire' (Flinders et al, 2016, General Report, 21). When considered as a stand-alone quotation, it indicates an intent to inform decision-making, but when considered in context, 'recommendations' in this case refers to the final document the participants were creating. It was meant to summarise their group view on devolution and regional governance in South Yorkshire and, while in principle it had the potential to inform the decision-making in the future, was not linked to any specific policy, law or future reform and therefore would not match any of the indicators for the republican benchmark of popular control. The rest of the sections highlighted in the keyword search are similar in content and described what the participants were doing during the event, not their role. The keyword search thus did not add anything to the initial evaluation – the narrative documents from 'Democracy Matters: Assembly in the North' indicate that the role of the citizens was that of informants and thus did not align with any of the indicators identified on the scale for the benchmarks of popular control.

#### **7.1.4 Popular Control in 'Democracy Matters': Conclusion**

The most important observation to note before summarising findings for this principle is that documentary analysis showed that 'Democracy Matters' was first and foremost a 'proof of concept' exercise, which would demonstrate to: a) policy makers, that deliberative assemblies can (and should) be an important element of democratic governance; and b) the general public that their views and ideas had the capacity to inform decision-making by politicians. While none of the indicators I identified in Chapters 4 and 6 featured in the documents, by applying the scale to the documents I found evidence that the organisers were trying to produce recommendations, which

potentially could inform decision-making in the future. That said, the documents showed no ambition to advance republican benchmark of popular control. The ‘Democracy Matters’ project was never designed to promote any degree of decision-making. Therefore, it did not meet the republican benchmark of popular control from the outset. However, there is some evidence of mixed messages in the documents, especially at the narrative stage (see Fragment 13: , page 140).

The documents indicate that the final recommendations drafted by the Assembly were shared with a number of politicians. However, they were under no obligation to review them and take them into account. The review showed that there was a shift in terms of what each group of the documents demonstrated in terms of the popular control benchmark (see Table 7 below). While the design and process documents did not refer to citizens’ role or decision-making specifically and showed that the event was planned to be an educative and experimental platform, the narrative documents were more focused on the impact ‘Democracy Matters’ recommendations would have and claimed that it would shape policy-making. Since no other indication of how exactly this would take place was given, it is not clear whether how the process of informing decision-makers would unfold, but the intent is nevertheless captured in the General Report (see Fragment 13).

*Table 7: Summary of Indicators of Popular Control in ‘Democracy Matters’*

<b>Design</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Narrative</b>
-	-	Informants

## **7.2 Inclusiveness**

Within republican thinking, inclusiveness is conceptualised as the accessibility of a participatory mechanism and the way in which citizens are selected for the event. As discussed in Chapter 4 (see section 3.1.2) and Chapter 6 (see section 5.2) inclusiveness by republican standards means ensuring that no citizens are systematically excluded from the participatory processes. Paired with popular control, inclusiveness ensures citizens are not dominated in an arbitrary way.

As noted in Chapter 2, modern republican theory does not require that all citizens be included at all times and participate every time a decision is made. Ensuring no domination occurs does not require absence of all intervention in citizens' lives, it just requires absence of arbitrary, systematic intervention. In the context of participatory events, this means that everybody should be given an equal opportunity to be selected and in the cases that they are not selected, that their interests are still represented and are subsequently traced by the decision-makers.

As I proposed in Chapter 6, sortition and stratified random selection are therefore the practices most aligned with republican principles. To determine how inclusive 'Democracy Matters' was by republican standards, I will review the documents by following the same step-by-step process as I did for evaluating popular control.

### **7.2.1 Inclusiveness in Design Documents**

In the design documents of Democracy Matters, three passages were coded as referring to the selection method of the participants, all in the same document – ESRC Urgency Grant Document (see Fragment 14: ). The first two of the highlighted passages mention 'random lottery' as the planned selection method and the second adds that this will be carried out through a stratified random lottery. In Chapter 6, I indicated that 'lottery' is a keyword that may be associated with sortition, which is one of the preferred participant selection methods for furthering republican benchmark of inclusiveness. The reason this keyword is important, is because it is one of key elements in sortition – 'lottery' refers to random selection of participants and it is paired with rotation, which ensures every citizen has an opportunity to participate at some point in their life. This then calls for a permanent deliberative body, where participants rotate. It is evident from the grant proposal that this is not what the organisers of 'Democracy Matters' were setting up – the application explained that this was a 12-month project, with 4 months' period dedicated to the overall span of the event and there was no indication that organisers were interested in establishing a permanent forum.

**Fragment 14: ESRC Grant Proposal: Fragment 14**

Table 1. Pilot Citizens Assemblies: Design Plans

	<i>Southampton</i>	<i>Sheffield</i>
Members	40	40
Mixed Assembly(1)	Yes	No
Selection (2)	Random Lottery	<b><u>Random Lottery</u></b>
Length	4 months	4 months
Involvement of Politicians (3)	Yes	No
City Devolution Plans Announced (4)	No	Yes
Agenda	Fixed	Fixed
Independent Chair	Yes	Yes
Decision making	Simple majority	Consensus
Output	Submission to Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee	Attempt to utilize e-petitions system

In a mixed assembly one third of the members will be either politicians or individuals nominated by the main political parties.

**Selection** of members will take place through a stratified random lottery conducted by [...] YouGov. This relates to membership. Politicians will be called to give evidence before both assemblies but will only be members in Southampton.

In December 2014 it was announced that Sheffield had followed Manchester’s lead in signing a devolution deal with the Government that would give the combined authority more power over economic development, transport, skills and housing; but – unlike in Manchester – no Mayor for the city region will be created.

The third passage coded as relevant to inclusiveness is made later in the same grant proposal document, when listing criteria for measuring effectiveness of the event. It explains that deliberations in the event should be inclusive ‘in order to ensure that all participants and sections of society are fairly represented’. However, no detail is provided about how this representation will be secured. In the other design documents analysed, no references were made to the selection method at all.

To make sure no other references were made, I conducted a keyword search according to the criteria presented in Chapter 6 , which only highlighted the word ‘lottery’ again. As discussed, since in this case it was not paired with rotation (there was no continuation to the project), it did not match the republican preference for sortition. It does however seem to suggest that ‘Democracy Matters’ matches the category of random selection with

stratification – although not enough information is provided in these in these documents to make that judgement confidently<sup>53</sup>. Based on the available data however, ‘Democracy Matters’ would be classified at the design stage as aligned with the ‘stratified random selection’ indicator of the inclusiveness benchmark.

### 7.2.2 Inclusiveness in Process documents

As noted in Chapter 5, the category of process documents is the one with the largest volume of items. However, despite the wealth of documents available for analysis, I was only able to code three passages as relevant for the benchmark of inclusiveness (see Fragment 15 below). The first reference appears in a planning meeting notes’ document, which states that the selection method was being discussed and that more information was needed. It also mentions the polling company ‘YouGov’ potentially being involved in the process, but no additional information is given on how exactly the participants would be selected.

*Fragment 15: ‘Project Overview’ section on the Assembly Webpage:*

How can I be involved?

**Participants will be identified randomly** by polling company YouGov to **reflect the demographics and diversity in each region** – so you can’t volunteer to be a part of an assembly without receiving an invitation.

The second passage relevant to the selection method is the ‘Project Overview’ section on the Assembly website, published before the event. It explains that participants will be selected randomly, that demographics of the region will be taken into account and that the selection process will be carried out by polling company ‘YouGov’. Two further passages were coded as well (see Fragments 16 and 17 below):

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<sup>53</sup> I noted in Chapter 4 (see page 127) that in cases where an evaluation is difficult to do and no additional documents are available, researchers may consider conducting additional research, such as interviews. In this case, it was not possible to arrange interviews nor are any other documents available, but these are the avenues other scholars may choose to take in similar cases.

*Fragment 16: Project meeting Planning Notes*

The selection of members of the public to sit on the two assemblies was discussed. A decision was taken to approach [named academic] to get some ideas and costing about the potential role of YouGov.

*Fragment 17: Letter to Participants*

Why have I been chosen? You have been chosen to be part of this project by a process of **random sampling**. The international polling company, YouGov, were commissioned to draw from **their nation-wide database** to identify potential participants in the regions around Sheffield, Southampton, Portsmouth and the Isle of Wight. Based on your answers to questions about **age, gender, employment and ethnicity** in their online surveys, you have been selected to represent the **cross-section of members** in your community.

The fragments above give more insight into how the selection process was organised. Fragment 17 is from a letter that was sent to potential participants at the beginning of the recruitment process. As indicated above, participants were told that they had been selected by a process of random sampling. Mentions of ‘random sampling’, ‘cross-section’ as well as ‘age’, ‘gender’, ‘employment’ and ‘ethnicity’ could potentially indicate that organisers used a stratified random selection method. However, under a closer inspection, it is apparent that the selection method does not fit the republican benchmark of inclusiveness as ‘stratified random selection’. This is for two main reasons.

First of all, there are only 4 demographic characteristics identified for the sampling – age, gender, employment and ethnicity. This disregards many other demographic categories that are crucial for achieving statistical representation such as the level of education and income, citizens with disabilities, religion and social class. More importantly however, the original database that was used for sampling (YouGov<sup>54</sup> national database) does not include all citizens of the general public, but only those who have been involved with YouGov before (by filling in a survey, for example, and agreeing to be contacted again), meaning citizens that are already at least somewhat civically active. Because of this limitation, the selection method used for ‘Democracy Matters’ is neither completely

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<sup>54</sup> YouGov is an international research data and analytics group. Company website is available here: <https://yougov.co.uk/>, Last accessed: 28/03/2021.



stratified, nor random. The original selection pool that YouGov used consisted of people who had previously been involved with YouGov, which makes this pool of active citizens not representative of the general public.

Outsourcing selection process to ‘YouGov’ may be part of the reason for there being a lack of detail in the process documents regarding the selection method. Selecting participants can be seen as largely a ‘behind the scenes’ activity, which concerns the staff and the organising team more than it does participants and therefore, unless participants express interest, may not be discussed at length. Furthermore, reviewing other available documents showed that in the case of ‘Democracy Matters’ the organisers were actually interested in participants’ views on whether they saw the event as inclusive. This was demonstrated by the fact that the daily questionnaire given to participants included two statements about the diversity of the group (see Questionnaire Fragment 18 below).

*Fragment 18: ‘Democracy Matters’ Questionnaire:*

Fig. 10 Questionnaire, Day 2, ‘Democracy Matters’ Citizens’ Assembly in the North, Sheffield, 2015

**Questionnaire Day 2**

**DEMOCRACY MATTERS ASSEMBLY NORTH ↑**

ID \_\_\_\_\_

**SECTION 1**

We hope that you have found the first weekend of the Assembly interesting. Before you leave, please can you complete the following survey questions? We would like to start by briefly asking your thoughts on how you feel discussions in Assembly North having been going so far.

**1. How much do you agree or disagree with each of the following statements? PLEASE CROSS ONE BOX IN EACH ROW**

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
Those people whose lives are most impacted by the issues we discussed were well-represented in this assembly.						
The assembly was diverse enough to consider all perspectives						

Whilst this survey indicates that the organisers were interested in participants’ experiences and impressions, its presence does not affect the overall evaluation of inclusiveness. If to be evaluated by the scale I have proposed, none of the indicators (self-selection, random selection, sortition and stratified random selection) fits quite right for

'Democracy Matters'. I have already noted that it does not fit the indicator of stratified random selection or sortition, but it does not match the other two either. It does not match random selection, because the selection process was not truly randomised for the community as a whole, as the selection pool was the YouGov database. It was not self-selection either, even though participants could choose whether to accept the invitation by YouGov or not. It could be argued that, because the participants had at one point interacted with YouGov, they had volunteered to do so, and hence had in a way self-selected. And yet, this does not express their commitment to this participatory event, so it does not match the indicator fully. The key factor for this republican benchmark remains the presence of citizens i.e. that they are invited to the table, but they cannot simply be invited from one selected group of society, or else they are given preferential treatment.

To confirm the evaluation, I conducted a keyword review in all available process-related documents, but no additional references to selection methods were found. The final evaluation for inclusiveness in 'Democracy Matters' process-related documents therefore remains as indicated above – not matching any of the indicators on the scale but displaying some elements of self-selection and random selection.

### **7.2.3 Inclusiveness in Narrative Documents**

In comparison with the design and process related documents, the narrative documents gave a much more detailed insight into the recruitment process. Within the general report, 45 passages were coded as related to the selection method of participants, with a total of 8 mentions of obstacles to recruitment and changes to the initial recruitment plan. Many of the references described the composition of the participant group and limits of the stratification (see a selection of highlighted sections in Fragments 19, 20, 21 and 22 below).

#### *Fragment 19: General Report (page 36)*

The first key criterion for a citizens' assembly is that its **membership should be representative of the wider population**. Advocates of citizens' assemblies argue that they can achieve a higher degree of representativeness than other types of political forum.

*Fragment 20: General Report (page 38)*

As we know from the **demographic analysis** of participants, the **assembly was predominantly white** and composed of **older participants**. Both assemblies detected this problem (around 50% of participants disagree that those mostly affected by the issue were represented in the assembly and that the assembly was diverse enough to consider all perspectives), and **in the North the participants requested a specific inquiry to understand why it had been difficult to engage minorities**. As seen from our **demographic analysis it is simply impossible to statistically represent the smallest minorities in assemblies of 32**.

*Fragment 21: General Report (pages 44-45)*

[...] our **limited financial resources** placed **considerable constraints on the recruitment process** that we could employ (...) which would clearly have rendered the whole project unsustainable. We chose to treat this as an opportunity to assess the degree to which a lower-cost recruitment process could deliver the desired outcomes. If citizens' assemblies are to become part of regular political practice, it is important to consider ways in which the costs associated with them.

*Fragment 22: General Report (page 55)*

[...] for a range of reasons the **social diversity** in both **assemblies was not as representative of the broader society** than would be necessary if these pilots were, for example, 'up-scaled' to the national level.

Narrative documents indicated that the original aim was to recruit 90 participants, split evenly between the two assemblies. For the Assembly in the North, the aim was to have 45 citizens (the second Assembly of the project was to include 30 citizens and 15 politicians). The report also explains that a competitive tender process was carried out to select 'YouGov' to then recruit the participants. The recruitment was based on YouGov's existing panels in the area, comprised of around approximately 5,000 potential participants.

The report also provides more detail on the goals and specific steps of the recruitment plan (see General Report, pages 13-17). Three main goals were identified – to help respondents to make well-informed decisions about whether they wanted to participate; to recruit the required number of participants and ensure diversity among them; and to increase likelihood that selected participants will attend the event. To ensure that all

three objectives are achieved, a five-step recruitment plan was developed (Flinders et al, General Report, 2016, 13)

First, potential participants were invited to fill in a survey (here and below in this paragraph, I am referring to information provided in section 2.1. of the report<sup>55</sup>, 'Recruitment Procedures'), which included 'generic questions, including whether respondents were aware of citizens' assemblies, whether they would like to participate in an assembly near where they lived and whether they were available on the proposed dates'. In addition, it also asked about participants' attitudes to politics, as defined in the British Election Study, which was later used to analyse the types of participants who eventually did (and didn't) express their interest to take part. Those participants who expressed interest in the first survey, were then invited to fill in a second survey, which focused on more specific questions about their potential participation – e.g. whether they would be able to commit to both weekends of the assembly. Those participants who responded positively and agreed to be contacted by YouGov with additional information were selected for the next step of recruitment. The third step was to email respondents with detailed information about the assembly in their area, which included practical information (date, time, transport, accommodation, catering potential compensation and a FAQ sheet, university ethics requirements). The fourth step was then to contact all potential participants two weeks prior the assembly to confirm their attendance. The final step was to contact participants a few days before the assembly meeting to confirm once more that they were still coming and to also allow for some last-minute questions and clarifications. A positive response to the final email was used to confirm the final number of participants.

The general report notes that, initially, organisers had nearly reached their recruitment targets – 45 participants had been recruited, scoring well with gender balance, but falling behind for equal distribution of age (only six people under the age of 40) and ethnicity (only person from Black and Minority Ethnicity). Two days before the event, the number dropped to 42 and to 32 participants actually attending the assembly.

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<sup>55</sup> The General report is also available online: <https://citizensassembly.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/Democracy-Matters-2015-Citizens-Assemblies-Report.pdf>, Last accessed: 28/03/2021.

The organisers recognised this as a problem, describing the final recruitment outcomes as ‘falling short of their goals’ – young adults were underrepresented (age groups of 56-65 and 66+ were over-represented) and there was divergence from the ethnic composition of local populations. In addition, the assembly participants as a group differed significantly from the general population in terms of their general interest in politics and the level of political participation – the group considered themselves as highly attentive to politics and active in politics (the self-evaluation of the group had a mean of 9.5 on a scale 0 to 10 and 94% of participants had voted at the 2015 elections). The organisers concluded that ‘a bigger sample was necessary for future events or, alternatively, a targeted over-sampling for minorities could solve these issues’.

The overall evaluation of inclusiveness as described in the general report, can be summarised with the help of the following quote:

*Fragment 23: General Report (page 37)*

‘We **did not achieve the degree of representativeness that we would have hoped for** in terms of gender, age, ethnicity and political interest but in relation to political affiliation representations was fairly diverse. The **challenge of representative recruitment is therefore a core research finding** of this project in the sense that even a five-stage process involving a specialist polling firm and member of the research team struggled to ensure a full complement of assembly members.

This quote indicates that the organisers’ goal was to achieve a high degree of representativeness (akin with the indicator of stratified random selection), but that in practice they failed to secure this goal, an outcome that was described as problematic. However, even if this had been achieved, inclusiveness would still not have been secured according to the republican interpretation, since the initial pool of participants was limited and consisted of only those citizens in YouGov database.

For the purposes of consistency and certainty, I carried out a keyword search to make sure no other references are missed in the general report and the press releases. No references to other selection methods were found in any of the documents. The final evaluation therefore remains as above – the republican benchmark of inclusiveness was not met, as none of the indicators on the scale appeared in the document analysis. While defined as random stratified selection method in the narrative documents, stratification

did not in fact occur, as participant pool was not truly random. The final evaluation for inclusiveness in ‘Democracy Matters’ narrative documents therefore most resembles targeted selection – not matching any of the indicators on the scale, but perhaps displaying some elements of self-selection and random.

#### 7.2.4 Inclusiveness in Democracy Matters: A Conclusion

When looking at each group of documents, the findings of analysis indicate a discrepancy (see, page 152). While design documents indicated that organisers were aiming to achieve a stratified sample of participants, process and narrative documents demonstrated that this was not achieved – not by organisers’ nor by republican standards. Instead, the selection method was more in line with targeted selection, which, to use indicators on the scale, contained elements of self-selection and random sampling. It therefore does not fit the scale neatly, but it does nevertheless show that there was an intention to create a sample that is as close to random stratified sample of the Yorkshire community possible. If the initial pool is as small as 5,000 people and only represents a limited group of citizens, the final sample is in no way a mini-public, but rather a group of citizens chosen at random. Under the republican framework, participants selected in this way account for a self-selected group with an added level of stratification (targeted selection) and therefore ‘Democracy Matters’ cannot be evaluated as meeting republican standards when it comes to inclusiveness.

*Table 8: Summary of Indicators of Inclusiveness in ‘Democracy Matters’*

<b>Design</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Narrative</b>
Stratified random selection	Targeted selection (self-selection/random selection)	Targeted selection (self-selection/random selection)

### 7.3 Internal Transparency

It was stated in Chapter 4 (see section 4.1.3.1) and Chapter 6 (see section 6.3.2) that internal transparency in the context of participatory events translates into a set of different types of information, which can be grouped in four main categories – organisers of the event, topic of the discussion, information on participatory process and feedback (or outcomes). If information is provided on these categories, it serves as an indicator that the event has met the republican benchmark of internal transparency and that

participants were provided with opportunities to learn as much as possible about the event, the topic and the organisers themselves. To make this evaluation, the scale approach does not work in this case in the same way it works for other benchmarks – instead of looking for specific indicators on the scale, I will be looking for categories of information, which are: ‘organisers of the event’, ‘topic of discussion’, ‘participatory process and expected outcomes of participation’ and ‘feedback (actual outcomes)’. The presence (or lack of them) of these categories in the documents will then serve as evidence for choosing an indicator on the scale (ranging from ‘no transparency’ to ‘full transparency’ – see page 119).

### 7.3.1 Internal Transparency in Design Documents

In the available design documents, there were very few references to categories identified as crucial for internal transparency. Out of the four categories of information only two were covered – the topic of discussion (two coded passages) and information about the participatory process (one coded passage) (see Fragments 24, 25 and 26 below).

#### *Fragment 24: ESRC Urgency Grant Document*

Then they will **receive training on** Decentralization and Devolution from the academic team covering (1) **the existing arrangements** for sub-national governance in England and elsewhere, (2) **issues to bear in mind when judging options**, and (3) **options that have been proposed** by political parties, the LGA, pressure groups, and others

#### *Fragment 25: ESRC Urgency Grant Document*

Over the second weekend, assembly members will **hear from advocates of a diverse range of models**, including party and pressure group representatives, and members of the public

#### *Fragment 26: Planning Meeting Minutes’ Document*

During the first weekend, the members of each assembly will receive an **introduction to the work of the assembly and the nature of deliberative processes**. They will begin with a short deliberative exercise to formulate the **values underlying the deliberation process**.

These passages suggest that organisers felt they needed to provide information to participants and ensure that they were comfortable with the overall participatory

process. However, there are no references in these documents to the other two categories of internal transparency ('organisers of the event' and 'feedback'). If this is measured against the republican framework, it does not meet the benchmark of internal transparency fully. Assuming only two of the categories of information would be provided, the evaluation according to the scale proposed in chapter would label 'Democracy Matters' as partially transparent.

### **7.3.2 Internal Transparency in Process Documents**

In contrast to categories of popular control and inclusiveness, internal transparency was easier to locate in the process documents as a number of direct references were made to the specific categories of information. Passages coded as relevant to internal transparency were found in a total of 21 documents of the process stage of 'Democracy Matters', reaching a total of 35 coded sections of text. All four categories identified in Chapter 4 (organisers of the event, topic of discussion, participatory process and expected outcomes, feedback) were mentioned in the documents, although some of them were covered in more detail than the others.

The key point to keep in mind for this benchmark is that indicators are not directly determined: each point on the scale is determined by how many categories of information are covered by the organisers. If all four categories are covered, then the benchmark of internal transparency would be fully secure, if two out of four categories were covered, internal transparency would be partially covered.

The bulk of the coded passages in this category were about the topic of the discussion – a total of 17 passages in 12 documents were coded (see Fragment 27 below for an overview). These included 5 participant briefing packs with background information, schedule documents and internal communication documents.



*Fragment 27: Participant Briefing Pack*



Furthermore, in addition to the textual documents, video materials were also made available to the participants and the general public on the website of the event. The topics covered in the videos included the following: [‘City deals explained’](#), [‘Definitions’](#), [‘A Devolution deal’](#), [‘The local government system in England today’](#), [‘A regional assembly’](#) which all contributed to the category of ‘topic of discussion’, so it shows that one out of four categories for the benchmark of full internal transparency was secured in ‘Democracy Matters’. In terms of the other three categories for determining the indicator on the scale, these were not covered in the same kind of detail.

When it came to the feedback category of information, 3 passages were coded in the process related documents but only one of these described what is going to happen after the event. Even then, description was not particularly clear (see Fragments 28 and 29):

*Fragment 28: Letter to participants*

What happens when the study ends? Your formal involvement in the research will cease at the end of the second assembly. However, **you will be invited to**

**attend an informal celebration** event at a later date, while **you may be contacted by the research team to participate in post-assembly media or other research activities**. Both require additional consent and in no way does signing this form obligate you to participate in either of these opportunities.

*Fragment 29: Letter to participants:*

Reports, resources and information will be made available on the project website (<http://citizensassembly.co.uk>) before, during and after the assemblies. This will be the main means **to inform participants about the results of their participation and the findings of this research**. A full report on the project is expected to be made available online in early 2016.

For example, it is mentioned that participants may be invited to an informal celebration event, but it is not clear if any feedback about decision-makers' responses would be presented at this event. Therefore, even though there is an indication of communication after the event, there is no evidence that feedback will be provided, which in terms of the scale I introduced in Chapter 6 would suggest that the highest standards of civic republicanism are not met.

The next identified category is information on the participatory process and the expected outcomes of participation. This category is referenced 11 times in 4 documents and is described in quite a lot of detail (see Fragment 30 below).

*Fragment 30: Letter to participants*

The assemblies will involve both large group and small group activities. These activities will draw on a range of experts, advocates and researchers to inform your thinking and decision-making. All activities in the citizens' assemblies will be audio recorded to enable researchers to analyse proceedings. Your signing this form gives consent for your contributions to be used in research in a way that will not identify you publicly (unless the research team contacts you and you provide additional consent). Of course, you are free not to participate in discussions throughout the assembly if you wish.

(...)

This will be followed by the first session where the Assembly Chair will introduce themselves to the group as a whole. It will be his/her role **to guide you through the two weekends of assemblies. The assemblies will involve**

**large group sessions, hosted by the main facilitator, and small group discussions, where an individual facilitator will be assigned to the 45 participants of up to nine people.** These small groups will be audio recorded and notes taken, however, the identities of participants will be coded in these notes and during transcription so that the identities of participants remain confidential.

**You will be expected to participate in all four days of your assembly across two weekends. Opportunities to participate in online discussion and deliberation will be available between the assemblies, and while you are encouraged to be involved, this is not a mandatory requirement of participation.**

The letter sent to the potential participants stated that ‘the assemblies will involve large group sessions, hosted by the main facilitator, and small group discussions, where an individual facilitator will be assigned to the 45 participants of up to nine people. These small groups will be audio recorded and notes taken, however, the identities of participants will be coded in these notes and during transcription so that the identities of participants remain confidential.’ In addition, internal communication documents indicate that participants were repeatedly encouraged to ask questions and clarify any points regarding the participatory process and their role in it. This indicates that the category of information related to participatory process was covered in ‘Democracy Matters’ and the participants received the necessary information.

Finally, information about the organisers of the event and the funding were mentioned in the documents, albeit briefly – 3 passages were referring to the funding of the project (see Fragment 31 below) and 1 reference was made on the organising team.

***Fragment 31: Letter to participants***

This research is funded by a grant from the UK Economic and Social Research Committee along with financial and in-kind contributions from four universities and the Electoral Reform Society. This research is not-for-profit.

The research team on this project are academics from the University of Sheffield, University of Southampton, University College London and Westminster University, while the project is also being supported by the Electoral Reform Society.

Even though the information in this fragment is not particularly detailed, it provided participants with the basic information that they needed to know who had organised and funded the event. This means that information in the category ‘organisers of the event’ was covered in ‘Democracy Matters’.

According to republican scale I proposed in Chapter 6 , every indicator of internal transparency-related information should be covered for the participatory event to be marked as fully transparent internally. Although the provided information does not have to be extensive on every occasion, the mere mention of the category is not sufficient either. For example, simply mentioning ‘feedback’ will not be sufficient, as was the case with ‘Democracy Matters’ for this category. For it to count as feedback, there would have to be an explicit description of how communication will be organised after the event and whether the participants will be informed about the impact of ‘Democracy Matters’. We saw earlier, that the final report was to be presented in ‘the current corridors’ of decision-makers but, for republican benchmark of internal transparency this link will not count for much if citizens are not aware of this exchange. For this reason, the category of feedback is not seen as covered in ‘Democracy Matters’. The other three categories were addressed in more detail (especially information on the topic) and, as indicated in Chapter 6 – 3 out of 4 categories would result in evaluating ‘Democracy Matters’ as nearly-fully transparent internally.

### **7.3.3 Internal Transparency in Narrative documents**

As discussed before, the republican benchmark of internal transparency requires the presence of four types of information. In the narrative documents of the ‘Democracy Matters’ Citizens Assembly a total of 68 passages referring to these types of information were coded, all of them in the general report of the event. Out of these, 13 passages were coded as relevant for participatory processes and general information about the participatory mechanisms and 12 more passages described the specific way in which ‘Democracy Matters’ was set up. For example, the two-weekend structure was explained in detail (see Fragment 32):

#### *Fragment 32: General Report (19)*

‘[...] the two-weekend structure allowed us to test out various features of long-form deliberation. The learning, consultation, and deliberation phases could be

clearly delineated and given worthwhile time. The gap between the weekends allowed the assembly members to reflect on the issues in their own time, reading briefing papers and discussing matters among themselves via our Facebook group.'

Similarly, citizens' assemblies were described in a lot of detail in the general report, explaining their purpose, typical set up and examples of previous successful case studies (see Fragment 33):

*Fragment 33: General Report (page 8)*

**A citizens' assembly is a group of citizens selected at random from the population (but 'stratified' to increase representativeness) to learn about, deliberate upon, and make recommendations in relation to a particular issue or set of issues. They are not politicians or representatives of civil society organisations or other groups—instead citizens' assemblies build on the idea of 'deliberative democracy': not just providing regular citizens with opportunities to participate directly in decision-making, but also enabling those citizens to engage with the issues in a thoughtful and informed way.**

The citizens' assembly model has gained increasing attention around the world with major assemblies on constitutional issues being held in countries including Canada, the Netherlands, and the Republic of Ireland (the latter also including politicians as participants alongside citizens). A similar model—citizens' juries—has also been used by a number of local authorities in the UK to explore the public's view on very specific issues. **This project was therefore the first major attempt in the UK to explore the capacity of the public to engage in broad and complex areas of constitutional policy on a larger scale.**

Out of the four categories, the category covered in most detail was 'the organisers of the event' with 18 passages making references to it in the general report. Not only did these include organisers' names and affiliations, they also included descriptions of contributions made by different members of the team. For example, consider the following section of the report (see Fragment 34):

*Fragment 34: General Report (page 4)*

The two chairs of the assemblies, Peter Henley and Len Tingle, fulfilled their roles with good grace and humour over the residential weekends and the professional facilitator, Titus Alexander, played a key role in overseeing within

the assembly activities. In light of the contemporary nature of this project and the rapidly changing political backdrop against which the assemblies were designed and delivered we are particularly grateful for the expert advice of Mark Sandford (House of Commons Library) and for his assistance in drafting a number of background and information papers. Mark was a constant source of information and inspiration for the project team.

The topic of discussion was also mentioned many times: a total of 21 coded passages made references to points of discussion and the information provided to the participants. For example, the report explained that briefing material handouts were prepared ahead of the assembly with experts, policy officers and practitioners and were then shared with participants before the event (see Fragment 35):

*Fragment 35: General Report (page 23)*

The research team **prepared briefing materials ahead of the assembly meetings with the assistance of experts, researchers, policy officers and practitioners**. These were made **available to the assembly members online** before the first weekend, and **hard copies were provided on the first morning**. These papers summarised current local government arrangements, outlined a variety of reform options, and provided other background information (see Appendix D for full list). A number of ‘plain language’ introductory videos were also made and placed online. These materials were resources for members to use as they wished: it was never assumed in scheduled activities that members had read them.

Finally, the lowest number out of all the internal transparency references were made to the feedback category of the benchmark. Although no direct references were made to the feedback of the outcomes of the event, the general report did have a section on ‘Post-Assembly Activity’:

*Fragment 36: General Report (page 24)*

3.3 Post-Assembly Activity

77. While a positive member experience of citizens’ assemblies is a contribution to stronger democracy in itself, ongoing democratic activity is also an important measure of the success of the assembly pilots. **Assembly members have been able to maintain their involvement since the conclusion of the second assembly weekend in a variety of ways:**

a) After the assembly meetings ended, we merged the two assemblies' Facebook groups in order to **create an online community able to discuss ongoing developments in devolution policy.**

b) Many **members have pursued opportunities individually to engage their local elected representatives** or their local communities with the issues that the assemblies discussed and with the concerns many members shared with the current devolution proposals.

c) We organised a **further event** at St George's House, Windsor Castle in January 2016. This was an opportunity for members of the two assemblies to **meet each other and share experiences**, for the research team to thank assembly members for all their work, for further information to be recorded on members' post assembly experiences, and **for key messages to be transmitted to external stakeholders.**

In this section, it was stated that many members had pursued opportunities individually to engage with their representatives and that they were provided with an opportunity to share these via a Facebook group that had been set up for them as well in person when meeting in Windsor Castle in January 2016. However, there was no indication in the general report that participants received regular updates regarding the impact of their participation in 'Democracy Matters', which would mean that the Assembly did not provide feedback on outcomes to the participants. This means that, according to the scales introduced in Chapter 6, 'Democracy Matters' can be evaluated as nearly-fully transparent internally.

#### **7.3.4 Internal Transparency in Democracy Matters: Conclusion**

The internal transparency scale put forward in Chapter 6 offered five options of evaluation: no transparency, nominal transparency, partial transparency, nearly full transparency or full transparency. By evaluating design documents only, internal transparency was marked as partial. Both process and narrative documents provided more insight for evaluation and the benchmark of internal transparency was evaluated as nearly fully transparent (see Table 9 below). Reviewing the documents in the process document group showed that only one category of information was missing, namely the category of feedback and outcomes. Evaluating narrative documents pointed at the same conclusion – while other categories of information were addressed, feedback and outcomes were not. Design documents in comparison contained very little information on what the plans for internal transparency were. Nevertheless, even though the

evaluation of the design documents is less fitting the republican benchmark of full internal transparency, the other two categories of documents provide more convincing evidence that ‘Democracy Matters’ was internally nearly fully transparent.

*Table 9: Internal Transparency in ‘Democracy Matters’*

<b>Design</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Narrative</b>
Partial internal transparency	Near-full internal transparency	Near-full internal transparency

## **7.4 External Transparency in ‘Democracy Matters’**

External transparency refers to the relationship between the participatory event and the general public. So, while internal transparency calls for the event to be transparent towards the citizens who are participating in the event by providing them with the necessary information, external transparency calls for the same to be true when it comes to those who are not directly engaged in the event.

As noted in Chapter 4 (see section 3.1.3.2) and Chapter 6 (see section 5.3.2), external transparency is an important benchmark in the republican framework, as it is linked with other benchmarks that jointly secure freedom as non-domination (popular control and inclusiveness) in participative settings. This is because where only a representative sample of population is involved, an overwhelming majority of the general public is by definition excluded from the participatory process. While republicanism does not call for direct democratic participation on every occasion, the citizens who are not participating are in part losing their ability to exercise self-rule, their opportunity to exercise their civic virtue and foster their civic literacy, as well as their chance to formulate common good of the community directly. Therefore, it is not only important to ensure the participants are selected with a random stratified selection method (so that group preferences are still present at the event), it is equally important that the general public has access to the platform of participation via full access to information about the process and an opportunity to follow the process through regular updates. This way, they are participating, even if indirectly, and fostering their civic literacy.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> There is one further consideration to be mentioned here, although it goes beyond participatory settings. A key component of republican state are channels of contestation. Participants are expected to have



As noted in Chapter 4 (see section 3.1.3.2), in practice, external transparency can take many different forms – with briefing documents posted online, social media updates, live-streaming, radio translation and other means. In terms of locating information on external transparency in the available documents, the key guideline is to search for passages that describe the links between the event and the general public and to find out what information was shared. Where members of the general public have full access to information about the event, and also have an opportunity to follow the process and receive updates about it, the event would be seen as meeting the republican benchmark of external transparency. On the opposite end of the spectrum, where the participatory event is closed to the general public and there is no information available in the public sphere, the benchmark of external transparency would not be met.

#### **7.4.1 External Transparency in Design Documents**

In the design documents of ‘Democracy Matters’, 4 text passages were code as relevant to the benchmark of external transparency. The references to external communication are not too specific in the available documents and the subsequent keyword search did not feature in the design documents of the assembly either. For example, the ESRC Urgency Grant document says that ‘this research is based on the notion of ‘talking to multiple publics in multiple ways’ and will therefore ‘have both academic and non-academic outputs’ but does not specify what shape and form these outputs would take and whether they would be available prior, during or after the event. However, in a reference in the planning meeting minutes’ documents, it is noted that ‘An important issue to consider is how to get national public input into these regional events in a meaningful way. We discussed some sort of web platform’, which suggests that as the event started to take shape, the organisers recognised the need for the participatory platform to remain open to the general public and the citizens’ inputs.

Furthermore, an intention to get the general public involved in some form is clearly presented in the ESRC Urgency Grant Document (see Fragment 37: below), which states

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venues through which they can challenge any decision that are made on their behalf. Participatory events would be no exception. If the citizens who are not participating in the participatory event notice that the recommendations given by their fellow-citizens are in fact in tension with the needs of community, there would be channels available through which these recommendations could be contested. If there is no external transparency, other citizens simply would not know what has happened. The overall domination in that community would thus be increased, not minimised.

that the project will employ a 'triple writing' approach to project outputs (academic, practitioner and general public oriented writing) to make the findings accessible. In addition, the document also states that the organisers will make a documentary where the whole process (from securing the funding for the event until presenting the reports to Parliament) will be tracked and presented.

*Fragment 37: ESRC Research Grant Proposal*

More specifically, this project will adopt a system of 'triple writing' in which all outputs are written-up and disseminated as academic outputs (generally through international peer reviewed journals), then re-written as shorter and more accessible practitioner notes (and submitted, for example, as evidence to a select committee or government department) and then **finally translated into a much shorter and sharper blog post or newspaper article in order to maximize the 'reach' of the research findings**. A documentary will also be made about this project that follows the whole research process from the day funding is secured to the day that the final reports are submitted to Parliament. **This film will then be posted on-line as a learning tool and will also be submitted to the Sheffield International Documentary Festival in 2016.**

What these references suggest is that the organisers were keen to engage with the general public and not only make the platform open and accessible, but also to present the event outputs as learning tools for all those interested.

The design documents indicate that some information was to be presented to the general public once the event has concluded (the triple writing approach to output generation), although not much is presented here in terms of concrete plans. However, since there is an indication that 'Democracy Matters' was planned to have the general public involved and at least some of the information would be shared, at the very least partial external transparency would be reached by 'Democracy Matters'.

#### **7.4.2 External Transparency in the Process Documents**

Only 3 passages were coded in the process related documents referring to external transparency and all of them were located in a single internal communication document (see Fragment 38 below). No further passages were coded as relevant to external transparency in the process documents, apart from the mention of 'website' in one of the planning documents and a discussion point in a draft schedule, which includes a small

debate with participants to agree on the information that would be going out to media in the form of the press release.

*Fragment 38: Internal Communication document*

(...) we emphasize that between the weekends we will be opening up the discussion to national debate by inviting online submissions, and that members will be able to hear about those submissions at the start of the next weekend.

Since the documents demonstrate that this was a closed event with no radio or video translations, the Assembly would not fit the most fitting republican indicator on the scale introduced in Chapter 6 - full information and observation. Before determining whether 'Democracy Matters' fit any of the other indicators on the scale, I applied a keyword search to content that was posted on the website, which demonstrated that although organisers had said that the website was their key platform for external communication, it provided only partial access to information. This highlighted passages which included all participant briefing packs, official press releases and information about the project team, but did not provide regular updates, day-to day schedules and guidelines for discussion.

Because of the limited information available on the website and the lack of evidence that the event was widely advertised nationally, 'Democracy Matters' would therefore match the description of 'partial access', as some (but not all) information was provided. To achieve 'full information and observation', the organisers would have had to provide regular real time updates (for example, there would be an opportunity to watch the debates live online) and to make sure all documents that are available to the event participants, are also available to the general public.

#### **7.4.3 External Transparency in Narrative Documents**

In the narrative documents, 6 passages were coded as relevant to external transparency, all of them occurring in the General Report. All of the references described external transparency as an important factor in the successful execution of the events and suggested that high standards of external transparency were met. For example, it noted that a special Nexus Officer was appointed for the project with the task to grow the network of contacts for the event (including civil society organisation and politicians) and

to feed findings and updates of the event into mainstream, local and online and online news and comment outlets (see Fragment 39):

*Fragment 39: General Report (page 23)*

The research team prepared **briefing materials ahead of the assembly meetings** with the assistance of experts, researchers, policy officers and practitioners. These were made available to the assembly members online before the first weekend, and hard copies were provided on the first morning. These papers **summarised current local government arrangements, outlined a variety of reform options, and provided other background information (see Appendix D for full list). A number of ‘plain language’ introductory videos were also made and placed online.** These materials were resources for members to use as they wished: it was never assumed in scheduled activities that members had read them.

Much of the first weekend of each assembly was devoted (after introductory and community-building activities) to **learning**. Plenary sessions were used to **convey core information about current local governance arrangements and a range of reform options**. The exact nature of these sessions varied with the style of the discussion leader, but we mixed up approaches to maintain interest, energy and engagement, particularly when the matters being discussed were complex or when members tired towards the end of the day. These plenary sessions were interspersed with small-group discussions, allowing members to reflect on what they heard and relate it to their own perspectives.

Furthermore, the report stated that there was a widespread dissemination of press releases using the Electoral Reform Society’s existing media network and building new contacts with local outlets. The report mentions ‘82 recorded media hits’ between the 11<sup>th</sup> September and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 in blog posts, newspaper articles as well as television and radio discussions (see Fragment 40):

*Fragment 40: General Report: (page 51)*

There was **widespread dissemination of press releases and broader information** to the ERS’s existing media network as well as building contacts with local outlets. The role of the respective chairs of the assemblies as the BBC political editors of Yorkshire and the South of England facilitated features on the Assemblies on the Sunday Politics in their different regions. Overall there were 82 recorded ‘media hits’ between the 11<sup>th</sup> September and 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2015 in various formats including blog posts, newspaper articles as well as television and radio discussions. Some of the newspaper outlets included the

Financial Times, The Guardian and Sheffield Star, while there was also considerable interest from political bloggers (such as OpenDemocracy) and industry news vehicles (such as university websites and local government commentators).

The report also emphasised the importance of the website, where all the briefing materials and updates were posted. This, according to the organisers, was the key channel of communication with the general public: 'it was felt that in order to increase wider public engagement with the Democracy Matters project the website could act as a hub that would allow the general public to access the same resources as the assembly members. The briefing papers that were produced for the assemblies were accordingly made available on the website' (Flinders et al, 2015, 47).' From the information provided in the general report, 'Democracy Matters' fits into the 'full access to information' indicator of the framework, since coded sections describing access to information were mentioned in every one of the 6 passages previously identified. No keywords from indicating observation was available were found in reference to the general public.

#### **7.4.4 External Transparency in 'Democracy Matters': A Conclusion**

As noted in Chapters 4 and 6, external transparency can be secured to different degrees in participatory events – the event can be closed off to the general public or the access to information can be limited, partial and full. When the general public is given access to the same information as participants and have an opportunity to follow the event in some way (via, for example, regular updates), the event will be seen as fully externally transparent.

As was the case with evaluating internal transparency, the process documents were more telling about what was actually shared with the general public during the event, than the other two document categories. However, an interesting point coming out of the analysis is the fact that the evaluations were different at different stages – in the design documents external transparency was evaluated as partial, in the process documents it was evaluated as partial as well, and in the narrative documents it was evaluated as full (see Table 10 below).

What this discrepancy suggests is that republican benchmarks may be advanced to different degrees throughout the participatory process, as demonstrated by the benchmark of external transparency. While at the design and process stages the

benchmark of external transparency was partially met in ‘Democracy Matters’, the narrative stage documents demonstrated that the benchmark was met much more fully.

*Table 10: External Transparency in ‘Democracy Matters’*

<b>Design</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Narrative</b>
Partial transparency	Partial transparency	Full Transparency

## **7.5 Common Good in ‘Democracy Matters’**

As discussed in previous chapters (see page 52, also page 96) common good under the republican reading is not something that exists independently of participants in some metaphysical sense. It therefore isn’t discovered as much as it is constructed when participants share reasons behind their judgements and work together towards a common goal. Overcoming disagreement will not always be possible, but participants should still be given an opportunity to work together and develop ties to one another and set common goals. The key benchmark for an orientation towards the common good in participatory settings is therefore teamwork (joint participation or deliberation) and the indicators on the scale I identified in Chapters 4 and 6 were individual participation (presenting preferences), limited teamwork or teamwork and joint problem solving. To evaluate the ‘Democracy Matters’ in terms of this benchmark, I was looking to code against any of these indicators, but it is the latter two that are most aligned with republican principles.

### **7.5.1 Common Good (Teamwork) in Design Documents**

In the case of ‘Democracy Matters’, two passages were coded as relevant for the benchmark of teamwork in the design document, one in the ESRC Urgency Grant document and the other in the ESRC Research Grant Proposal. These passages indicate that ‘some work will be done in plenary sessions supported by a chair and an academic advisor, while much of the deliberation will take place in small-group discussion’. This fits with the general model of deliberative assemblies that the organisers adopted – one that has three main phases: learning, consultation and deliberation. For the learning phase, documents indicated that citizens would learn from experts and for the consultation and deliberation they would work in teams, a point evident in the following fragment (see Fragment 41):

*Fragment 41: ESRC Urgency Grant Document*

The work of each assembly will be divided into three phases: learning; consultation; and deliberation and decision. During the learning phase, assembly members will hear from and question experts in order to understand the options and the arguments for and against them. In the consultation phase, members will engage with activists, politicians, representatives of civil society, and ordinary citizens to hear and discuss their views. In the deliberation and decision phase, members will consider the options and draw conclusions. In each phase, **some work will be done in plenary sessions supported by a chair and an academic advisor, while much of the deliberation will take place in small-group discussions** supported by a team of trained facilitators.

If the approach described in this fragment was taken throughout the event, then ‘Democracy Matters’ would meet the republican benchmark of teamwork fully, matching the ‘teamwork’ indicator on the scale. The second coded passage gives an indication that ‘Democracy Matters’ will be set up with consensus in mind, meaning that the process will be designed so that the participants have an opportunity to debate and come to an agreement (see Fragment 42 below):

*Fragment 42: ESRC Research Grant Proposal*

**Table 1. Pilot Citizens Assemblies: Design Plans**

	<i>Southampton</i>	<i>Sheffield</i>
Members	40	40
Mixed Assembly(1)	Yes	No
Selection (2)	Random Lottery	Random Lottery
Length	4 months	4 months
Involvement of Politicians (3)	Yes	No
City Devolution Plans Announced (4)	No	Yes
Agenda	Fixed	Fixed
Independent Chair	Yes	Yes
Decision making	Simple majority	<b>Consensus</b>
Output	Submission to Political and Constitutional Reform Select Committee	Attempt to utilize e-petitions system

What this fragment implies is that the final decisions regarding the recommendations (assembly outputs) will be made by participants trying to reach a consensus. This could potentially provide further evidence for evaluating ‘Democracy Matters’ as meeting the republican benchmark of teamwork, since participants would be asked to come to agreement, which could constitute joint problem solving; after all, it is hard to imagine that a consensus can be reached unless participants are engaging with one another in some way. Design documents can therefore be evaluated as demonstrating that

teamwork was planned to be a part of the event and would therefore be meeting the republican benchmark of teamwork.

### 7.5.2 Common Good in Process Documents

In terms of teamwork, 24 passages (in 5 documents) were coded as relevant for the benchmark of common good. These were mostly descriptions of schedules and planned activities for different days, where time slots were reserved for group activities and joint problem solving, for example (see Fragment 43: ):

#### *Fragment 43: Internal Communication*

(...)there is also now a short game where **members (in their groups)** receive cards with different policy matters on them and try to work out which level of government (or other authority) is responsible for them; this is introduced partly to get the members thinking about the status quo arrangements before they are formally introduced, partly to give an opportunity for standing up, and partly to create time for processing of the feedback from the previous session.

The coded passages indicate that many of the activities were planned to be carried out in teams, which would mean the indicator of teamwork was met. To be sure, I applied a keyword search in NVivo, which highlighted 5 additional references to 'community' or 'communal' which were located in 3 documents (mostly briefing documents), but these were only used as general descriptors of the topic and did not refer to joint discussions or setting common goals. No other references appeared in the process-related documents.

To evaluate the teamwork element in 'Democracy Matters' I took a closer look at the schedules, to determine which indicator ('limited teamwork' or 'teamwork') on the scale would be a more appropriate descriptor for 'Democracy Matters'. The aim here was to determine what proportion of the day was spent working in teams. As noted in Chapter 6, initiatives that exhibit higher degrees of team work are more aligned with republican principles, so I was looking for evidence that at least for half of their time in 'Democracy Matters' the participants were working together. If the daily schedules are broken down into hourly slots, only 2 hours or 25% a day were spent in team work in a 9.00- 17.00 working day in the first weekend of 'Democracy Matters'. For the second weekend, that average time spent working in teams went up to a little with 2 hours 45 minutes (34%) spent in teamwork in day 1 and 1 hour and 55 minutes (24%) in day 2. This means a large



proportion of the day is still spent on organisers giving presentations and plenary discussions. Because of this, the Assembly would be evaluated as promoting teamwork, but since it is not used for most of the activities, the evaluation would match the indicator of 'limited teamwork' as only some of the activities are carried out in the form of joint problem solving.

### 7.5.3 Common Good in Narrative Documents

In the narrative documents of the 'Democracy Matters' Assembly, 6 passages were coded as matching the indicator of teamwork. In these passages, group activities and discussions were presented in a positive light, emphasizing the benefits that such approach brings and demonstrating that teamwork was a key component of the 'Democracy Matters' set-up(see, for example, Fragment 44: )

#### *Fragment 44: General Report (page 19)*

First, we ensured that assembly business alternated between plenary **and small-group sessions**: that is, between periods when all **members of the assembly worked together**, and other periods when **small groups of members—typically between five and seven—discussed matters among themselves**. We generally used plenary sessions, for example, to deliver presentations, as well as to receive feedback from the groups. We used **small-group sessions to allow members to discuss their reactions to presentations, undertake collective tasks, consider questions they would want to put to expert witnesses, and develop their own thinking**.

(...)

Giving them the **space to speak within small groups was therefore important. Small-group discussions also allowed a depth that was harder to achieve during plenaries**. In addition, switching between session types was often valuable in lifting energy levels. For example, in the final part of the first day of Assembly North, a highly interactive presentation style was introduced in order to re-energise the room after a difficult earlier session.

The general report presents similar results to the process documents – it suggests that small-group sessions where participants worked together were used frequently, but that they were balanced out with presentations and other types of activities, which seems to be indicative of 'limited teamwork' indicator, according to the common good evaluative scale.

To make sure, I carried out an NVivo keyword search which highlighted additional sections referring to community orientation/formation (a total of 7 passages in the general report). See for example Fragment 45: :

*Fragment 45: General Report (page 19)*

These specific design elements were parts of a broader **strategy for building and maintaining community** that rested on three main pillars: regular reinforcement of the **significance of member involvement**; constant positive and personal contact; and ready access to refreshments.

Even though this fragment shows that organisers had appreciation for community-orientation and were looking to build meaningful relationships, it nevertheless is not referring directly to teamwork and therefore does not affect the evaluation of the benchmark and the evaluation would have to be based on the initially coded passages of the documents. As demonstrated, when community was mentioned, it was described in connection to the 'broader strategy for building and maintaining community' in the assembly or, in other words it was emphasized as a necessary competent for successful participation and decision-making. It was also shown (see Fragment 44), that the participants did work in teams a lot of the time, which then point to the direction of the 'teamwork' indicator for the benchmark of common good.

#### **7.5.4 Common Good in 'Democracy Matters: A Conclusion**

It was noted in Chapter 6 (see section 5.5), the value of common good is not something that can easily be traced and evaluated in participatory events, since it also is not something that can be easily and straightforwardly be promoted. As emphasized previously, the common good is not a doctrine, or something that is objectively good for everyone everywhere. The common good is something that benefits the community as a whole, all the while making sure that no one is dominated as a result. In the context of participatory events, the indicator most aligned with republican principles is teamwork. Evaluating 'Democracy Matters' on this benchmark resulted in inconsistent evaluations at different document categories, or stages of the participatory process. While design and narrative documents indicated that the indicator of teamwork was met, the process related documents demonstrated that teamwork was limited (see Table 11 below). This is because while the participants had an opportunity to work together (the process related documents highlighted that the participants collaborated and discussed the topic

in small groups.), more time was (proportionally) spent listening to presentations in plenary.

*Table 11: Common Good in 'Democracy Matters'*

<b>Design</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Narrative</b>
Teamwork	Limited Teamwork	Teamwork

## **7.6 Civic Virtue: Civic Education and Competence Building**

The notion of civic education (literacy) in the context of republican values is linked with the ideal of civic virtue. In order to be able to participate in civic life and decision-making, one should be able to engage with other citizens through deliberation and discussion and have the ability to think critically and evaluate different arguments presented in participatory platforms. Civic education should also help us become better listeners – be respectful to others, reflect on our preferences, accept that our views could change and seek communal good in joint deliberation. It cannot be presumed that citizens have these skills without prior exposure to participation and working together. Furthermore, since participants are most likely going to come from diverse backgrounds and therefore have varied skillsets, it is crucial to have an element of competence building, where participants get to learn and practice.

In Chapter 6, I proposed that in participatory events this republican value should be present in a form of full or at least extended capacity building. Other alternatives on the scale indicated no capacity building, basic capacity building or partial capacity building, none of which are suitable for furthering the republican principle of civic virtue. I will now review the documents from 'Democracy Matters' to determine the extent to which the documents suggest the republican benchmark of civic virtue was evident.

### **7.6.1 Civic Education and Competence Building in Design Documents**

After a review of design documents, only one passage was coded as relevant for the competence building indicator. The Planning Minutes' document of 'Democracy Matters' stated the following (see Fragment 46: ):

*Fragment 46: The Planning Meeting Minutes (24.04.2021)*

During the first weekend, the members of each assembly will receive an introduction to the work of the assembly and the nature of deliberative processes. **They will begin with a short deliberative exercise to formulate the values underlying the deliberation process.** Then they will **receive training** on Decentralization and Devolution from the academic team covering (1) the existing arrangements for sub-national governance in England and elsewhere, (2) issues to bear in mind when judging options, and (3) options that have been proposed by political parties, the LGA, pressure groups, and others.

This passage indicates that some training will be provided, including an exercise that would allow participants to discuss the underlying values of the deliberative process. This matches the indicator of partial capacity building, which was described in Chapter 4 (see page 94) as ‘short training sessions of practice-related tools prior the participatory process.’

Apart from this point, no other references are made to the civic literacy in this or the other design documents for ‘Democracy Matters’. Even though the mechanism is described as having a learning phase (see the section above), the only content that is explicitly mentioned in this phase is hearing evidence from experts to better understand the topic and arguments in favour of different devolution options. This may contribute to participants’ civic skills in an indirect way, but this is insufficient for a full or extended civic training. An NVivo keyword search did not highlight any additional sections that would be relevant. Therefore, according to the civic virtue scale provided in Chapters 4 and 6, civic education and capacity building could be described here as partial: there was an intention to provide basic competency training in terms of information about the process and discussing ‘the process of participation’.

### **7.6.2 Competency Building in Process Documents**

In the process related documents, 14 passages were coded in 5 different internal communication documents (mostly extended draft schedule documents for facilitators). In these passages, some of the rationale behind the Assembly activities were explained in more detail, demonstrating how they are intended to contribute to participants’ civic skills training (see Fragment 47).

*Fragment 47: Internal Communication document*

[Objective of the activity is] to help members **develop confidence to speak up during both small-group and plenary sessions**, and to develop confidence that their voice is legitimate and that they have a legitimate and important role in the assembly process as a whole;

[Objective of the activity is] to enable members to **develop understanding of the options that are available and of the ways they might go about evaluating these options**; these objectives are pursued both by teaching members about options and what is known about them and by encouraging members to reflect on their own experiences;

What this fragment illustrates, is that the organisers had thought about the purpose of each activity and the skills that it aims to develop. However, this approach mostly sees development of civic skills as a by-product of activities, rather than a dedicated stand-alone training with the purpose to ensure all participants are given support for developing skills they will need during these very same activities. It does not meet the aim of this republican benchmark, because even though participants were involved in some skill-enhancing activities, these took place during the event, not at the beginning of it or prior the event.

There is, however, another passage in a draft schedule document, which indicates that some training was provided (see Fragment 48: ):

*Fragment 48: Internal Communication document*

Weekend 1. Learning and Consultation Schedule

The objectives of this weekend are:

**to familiarize members with processes of deliberation and give them a sense of ownership over the ground rules;**

to help members develop confidence to speak up during both small-group and plenary sessions, and to develop confidence that their voice is legitimate and that they have a legitimate and important role in the assembly process as a whole.

The document indicates that there was time dedicated for discussing ground rules and to introduce participants to the process of participation. This would then fit the description of basic competence building, which prescribes (see page 94) that basic competence

building and skills training is provided in terms of giving participants information about the participatory process.

### **7.6.3 Civic Education in Narrative Documents**

In the final report of 'Democracy Matters' no passages were coded as matching any of the indicators for civic competence building. Even though the report included schedules of the event, no specific activities were pointed out as specifically planned for the enhancement of the civic skill of participants. As indicated in the introduction to this section, the general report emphasised the ideal of an active citizenry, but no links were made to capacity building exercises that should be organised alongside participatory events. So, for example, the general report stated that the 'Democracy Matters' project had two main aims which guided its design: 'Firstly, to assess whether the creation of citizens' assemblies could improve the operation of democracy in the UK and to build knowledge on how such assemblies might best be structured and run and secondly, to investigate what members of the public in England think about devolution when they are given the opportunity to learn about and debate the issue in depth (Flinders et al, 2015, 43)'. There was, however, no mention of the skill that participants of events such as 'Democracy Matters' may require to participate effectively. Therefore, based on the narrative documents of the Assembly, 'Democracy Matters' cannot be described as promoting civic skill and competencies. This would fit the indicator of 'no capacity building.

### **7.6.4 Civic Education and Competence Building in 'Democracy Matters': Conclusion**

Compared with evaluations of other republican values, evaluation of civic education was more challenging and at the same time less time consuming as there were fewer passages to code in each category of documents. The only sections that made more direct references to civic competence building were found in internal communication documents, which were circulated amongst the organisers, not participants. Apart from that, participants of the event did not have access to educational materials, training sessions or any other learning tools that would help them develop their skills to then be able to participate in the event more efficiently.

In terms of document groups, each group demonstrated a different indicator (see Table 12 below). Design documents indicated commitment to partial civic training while process documents – to basic competence building. Narrative documents showed that this was not brought to life – no competence building was carried out (at least not when judged against republican benchmarks). The way civic skills were described demonstrate that they were seen as a useful by-product of citizens’ involvement instead of matching the indicator of giving participants the training before or at the beginning of the event, so that they are able to participate actively and meaningfully.

*Table 12: Competence building in ‘Democracy Matters’*

<b>Design</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Narrative</b>
Partial competence building	Basic competence building	No competence building

## **7.7 ‘Democracy Matters’: Conclusion**

This chapter set out to fulfil two objectives: first, to provide an illustrative application of this analytical framework; and second, to draw some empirical conclusions about the republican credentials of this specific initiative.

In relation to the first objective, the above analysis has illustrated how an initial evaluation of a participatory event can be carried out in cases when research had access to a set of event-related documents. In this case, I gathered design, process related and narrative documents, which I used to determine whether republican benchmarks were promoted at different stages in this particular case. Conducting analysis in this way allows for a more detailed analysis of how this particular initiative was designed, implemented and subsequently described. Indeed, within the findings above, important variations emerged when consulting different types of document (see Table 13 below).

Table 13: Discrepancies between document groups

	Design	Process	Narrative
<i>Popular Control</i>	-	-	Informants
<i>Inclusiveness</i>	Statistical representation	Self-selection/Random selection	Self-selection/Random selection
<i>Internal Transparency</i>	Full transparency	Near-full transparency	Near-full transparency
<i>External Transparency</i>	Partial transparency	Partial transparency	Full Transparency
<i>Common Good</i>	Teamwork	Limited teamwork	Teamwork
<i>Civic Virtue</i>	Partial competence building	Basic competence building	No competence building

These variations are informative for scholars interested in evaluating participatory initiatives as they suggest that intentions, practices and subsequent narratives are not always identical but can vary. Whilst it was not the intention of this thesis to explain these variations, it is possible to imagine a range of possible explanations. It could, for example, be that practical barriers prompted differences between the levels of evaluation, where the goals initially set by the organisers were too ambitious for the available amount of funding or time. It could also be that the variations in the focus and form of documents gathered lead to different degrees of emphasis being placed on these ideas. For example, writing a research proposal for a specific funding body will require a specific focus (often this will be built around the research outputs), specific language and length of descriptions, which means that a funding application may not always necessarily reflect everything that the organisers wish to achieve and as a result contain different indicators than a general report of the same event. In other cases yet, it may be that those involved in initiatives have incentives to narrate a positive story or design and process. These possibilities are not examined within this research but present a fruitful avenue for future analysis. For the purposes of this thesis, however, this chapter has aimed to illustrate how these different categories of document can be coded, and why this analysis is informative.



In terms of the empirical findings relating to this case, this analysis set out to examine the extent to which civic republican principles were reflected in the rationales evident within three categories of document. Rather than producing a single judgement, what my analysis has instead revealed is that there were interesting variations in the degree to which republican benchmarks were examined that varied according to the type of document analysed, and the benchmark under consideration. This allows me to make two different kinds of observation.

The first refers to the consistency for each benchmark in the scoring assigned at each level. As evident in Table 13, no benchmark had consistent evaluations across the board and the inconsistency levels varied from benchmark to benchmark. For example, for civic virtue, the evaluations decreased from an indicator close to the republican ideal (partial competence building) in design documents, to one further away from that ideal (no competence building) in narrative documents of 'Democracy Matters'. Similarly, for the benchmark of inclusiveness, the design documents indicated that a statistical representation would be achieved, but the process related and narrative documents demonstrated that this aim was not achieved. Furthermore, when it came to the benchmark of popular control, design and process related documents indicated that the role of the citizens in 'Democracy Matters' did not match any of the indicators on the scale, as the event was not linked to the decision-making process in a direct way. However, the way popular control was described in the narrative document analysis demonstrated that citizens would be described as informants. There are a number of reasons as to why these kinds of discrepancies occurred, which can range from practical obstacles encountered by the organisers of the event that kept them from realising the goals they initially had set, to a known or unknown exaggeration of the event's positive outcomes on the behalf of the organisers. To determine the reasons behind these differences though, further research would have to be conducted to make a judgment of this kind with any certainty.

The second observation refers to extent to which different document categories were aligned with republican principles. Overall, none of the document categories demonstrated a particularly positive or negative evaluation of republican benchmarks – each had benchmarks that came close to the republican ideal and each had benchmarks that were placed at the opposite end of the scale. That said, the narrative documents, especially the general report, provided a more positive overview of the event, especially

when it came to the benchmark of popular control, common good and external transparency.

What these observations reveal is that the commitments to republican principles can shift during the different stages of the event and that enactment of these principles can also be captured in documents in a number of different ways. It also indicates that for a clearer and more confident evaluation, further research (such as interviews or observations) may be necessary for those indicators that are not captured in the documents in a straightforward way, such as, in the case of 'Democracy Matters', inclusiveness and competence building.

As noted in Chapter 5, I chose the case of 'Democracy Matters' to use as a plausibility probe to serve as kind of a pilot for testing how a republican analytical framework can be applied to participatory events. My aim therefore was not to make any claims about generalizability of the findings, but rather to demonstrate the process of applying my framework. I believe that it has not only served its purpose as an illustrative case but has also illuminated a path for further research of participatory events.

# Conclusion: Lessons from Republican Analysis of ‘Democracy Matters’

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I started this thesis by referring to the 2010 Icelandic Constitutional assembly which, even a decade later remains a widely discussed participatory event due to its accessibility, inclusiveness and unprecedented level of civic participation, but which at the same time has been criticised for design flaws, lack of impact, inconsistencies in the sample selection and the fact it did not in the end lead to adoption of a new constitution. My interest in this case was not particular to Iceland or this specific initiative, but rather related to the question of how it is possible to evaluate the success or shortcomings of participative mechanisms.

As noted in the opening Chapter of the thesis, the analytical framework that I set out to revise was to fill a specific gap in the existing literature, where the frameworks of analysis were often either lacking theoretical depth and specificity or accepting a specific democratic model (often that of deliberative democracy) as a given. My aim was not to dismiss these efforts, but to instead make a contribution to them and demonstrate how a republican framework for analysis could be developed, what benchmarks and indicators it would entail and how it could be applied in practice.

To this end, I first identified theoretical principles and then developed these into an analytic framework that outlined benchmarks and indicators for ideal democratic practice. To create this framework, I turned to two traditions that have both defended a citizen-centred approach with an emphasis of active participation and reason-giving – civic republicanism and deliberative democracy. After reviewing their key tenets and identifying synergies between the two theories, these insights were synthesised into practical benchmarks that ought to guide the application of the framework.

Engaging in-depth with the civic republican tradition, analysis, in Chapter 2 identifies three republican principles to serve as the basis of the framework: freedom as non-domination, common good and civic virtue. Drawing on these insights as well as contributions from review of deliberative theory outlined in Chapter 3, these principles are further developed in Chapter 4, identifying 6 benchmarks (popular control, inclusiveness, internal and external transparency, common good and civic virtue) and a

series of indicative scales that enable assessing the degree to which republican benchmarks are advanced in participatory initiatives. Chapters 5 and 6 provide the methodological foundations for this form of analysis – helping to bridge the gap between theory and practice by showing how to apply these ideas empirically. In Chapter 7 I then provide an illustrative application of this approach to a case study of ‘Democracy Matters’ – a citizens’ assembly on devolution that took place in Sheffield in 2015 – showing how different categories of the document in question could be coded and inferences drawn.

## **Contribution**

In terms of thesis contribution, I set out to make at least three explicit contributions. First, at the theoretical level, my aim was to explore the complementarity of civic republicanism and deliberative democracy. In setting that goal, I did not aim to suggest an absolute normative superiority of republicanism nor the explicit pairing of these theories. Instead, I was guided by my view that mutual synergies between both traditions capture important principles that are useful for both theorising about contemporary democracies in general, as well as evaluating participatory events in particular. The reason to likewise examine deliberative democracy rests with its value as a theory that has provided extensive analysis of how principles similar as those endorsed by republicanism, can be enacted in practice. While deliberative democracy is narrower in terms of theoretical focus, it nevertheless offers a very rich and valuable insight into the design and general characteristics of participatory events. Neither republicanism, nor the complementary nature of republicanism and deliberative democracy has yet been investigated in reference to participatory events, which remains a significant omission in the literature I set out to fill.

The theoretical analysis of this thesis confirms that civic republicanism and deliberative democracy share goals and focus on the same principles to guide the development of both theories, namely common good, civic virtue and freedom. For both theories, decisions need to be carried out in a certain way to be legitimate, which entails treating all citizens equally and ensuring they all have the right, capacity and opportunity to participate in deliberation about the decisions made on their behalf. For both, the themes of freedom, civic virtue and common good frequent in the literatures. For both, participatory events are seen as important channels of civic engagement.

Second, I set out to make a contribution at the empirical level, aiming to demonstrate how republican principles can be operationalized into benchmarks for measuring the success of participatory events. Chapters 4 and 6 provide a detailed review of this operationalization pointing to certain considerations that should be made when applying the framework to participatory events in practice. These considerations are further built on in Chapter 7, where I apply the framework to a specific case study, which serves as a plausibility probe for the framework devised. The aim was to show how the framework can be applied to a case, at the same time confirming that such an empirical application *can be* made. In doing so, a number of observations emerged that I hope will be helpful to anyone wishing to engage in similar evaluations of various participatory events.

The first observation relates to the fact that different documents used for analysis may relate to different stages of the participatory event<sup>57</sup> and as a result, the evaluation of benchmarks and indicators may differ depending on which document is assessed. Taking this into consideration, I carried out the analysis by considering each set of the documents separately, grouping them by design, process and narrative levels of the event to avoid potential inconsistencies. Carrying out analysis in this way meant that it was possible to focus on the variations in the degree to which the republican principles were promoted depending on the document group. The main finding emerging from this analysis suggested that no benchmark had a consistent evaluation across the board for 'Democracy Matters' and that inconsistency levels varied from benchmark to benchmark. In addition, I found that none of the document categories demonstrated a particularly positive or negative evaluation of republican benchmarks, although narrative documents, especially the general report, provided a much more positive overview of the event, especially when it came to the benchmark of popular control, common good and external transparency. In sum, commitments to the enactment of these principles can also be captured in documents in a number of different ways.

Finally, the third contribution of this thesis relates to its attempts to bridge theoretical ideals with their empirical manifestations by operationalizing republican principles into a practical analytical framework. As noted in the introduction of the thesis, I posit that theoretical principles and their empirical manifestations are both part of the same story

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<sup>57</sup> See Section 4.5, page 108 for a more detailed discussion on the different document types that were used for the analysis of the case.

when it comes to success of participatory mechanisms so the principles of republicanism and their potential institutional manifestations should be discussed jointly. This thesis is the first step towards telling this 'story' and as more participatory events will be assessed by applying the framework, more insight will be acquired about the empirical manifestations of republican principles and benchmarks.

These three contributions will be of use to academic and practitioners alike. For academic theorists, an insight to evaluation of practice will provide a more nuanced understanding of the theoretical principles. For practitioners a review of theoretical ideals and principles will be of use when looking to design participatory initiatives to advance specific democratic ideals.

## **Limitations of the Study and Future Research**

While this thesis offers innovative theoretical and empirical insights to the study of political participation, some limitations need to be acknowledged. The first relates to the fact that an illustrative case study is used to show how my proposed framework can be applied. Ideally, an empirical application would benefit from the opportunity to evaluate two or more participatory events proposing a comparative perspective. It would likewise have been useful to gather observational data and be present in all stages of the event to gain additional insight into how different republican principles are enacted in practice and to be better positioned to evaluate organisers' intentions and participants' experiences when it comes to the design of the event

The second limitation relates to the fact that this thesis only examined the key republican principles – common good, civic virtue and freedom as non-domination. While I have clearly demonstrated that these three ideals form the core of republican theory, there is potential to take a closer look at other principles, too – such as social equality and justice, political legitimacy, role of contestation and the advantages of having a mixed constitution.

At the same time, these limitations also illuminate a wealth of possible avenues for future research. First, the flexibility of the framework enables its application for the purposes of conducting a comparative study of participatory events, which would provide a more insightful evaluation of republican principles in different settings. Second, the framework

is also applicable to conducting an in-depth observational study, which would allow to carry out a very nuanced and rich analysis of republican benchmarks at different stages of the event. Finally, future research should focus on assessing why the evaluations vary depending on the document or the particular stage being examined. The reasons behind this variation could be rooted in practical obstacles, the different types of documents themselves or that those organising the initiatives have incentives to narrate a positive story of both the design and process of the event. Further research on the topic could provide some clarification on the matter – especially if the researcher is able to gather observational data and be present in all stages of the event.

## **Impact and Relevance**

I wish to conclude with a final reflection on the overall relevance of this thesis for the study of participatory events. In the context of a wealth of initiatives and participatory tools being implemented across the world, it is crucial to not only focus on purpose-driven evaluations of these events to determine their success, but to also consider their theoretical underpinnings and the core principles they set out to enact. It may well be true, as Geissel (2012, 209) suggests, that there will never be a consensus about the yardsticks for such evaluations due to a ‘variety of hopes, sometimes contradictory’ attached to these events and ‘actors involved expect[ing] participatory innovations to solve a mixture of problems’. However, while I agree with this observation, I also argue that this lack of consensus should not lead us to abandoning the search for ‘the yardsticks’ altogether. Quite the contrary, I have proposed that it is *necessary* to develop clear and robust standards for evaluating empirical evidence of participatory mechanisms. This is because purpose-driven criteria such as ‘success’ or ‘effectiveness’ on their own will not suffice for a complete analysis of participatory mechanisms, because they have the potential to be understood in incompatible ways. Same is also true of many theoretical principles typically associated with democratic processes (think for example of freedom, or equality) which are similarly often contested and understood in multiple ways. It is therefore necessary to have a set of clearly defined principles, before an evaluation of a participatory event can be conducted.

To this end, I have developed a framework based on a specific (republican) vision for civic participation and I believe its key principles capture values that are useful for

contemporary democratic theorising. As a whole, this thesis demonstrated not only what this vision entails and how such a framework can be devised, but also how it can be applied to participatory events by offering an illustrative case study. This thesis thus offers a guide for practitioners and scholars alike for evaluating the impact and success of participatory events in their own future research.



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# **Appendix A: List of Documents for ‘Democracy Matters’ Case Study**

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## **Design Documents**

1. ESRC Application (draft)
2. ESRC Application (full)
3. ESRC Additional Funding Statement
4. ESRC Presentation
5. ESRC proposal (Impact)
6. ESRC Urgency Grant
7. Follow-On Funding Application
8. Justification of ESRC funding variation
9. Political buy-in (design)
10. Research focus description

## **Process Documents**

11. Agenda weekend 1
12. AN programme - weekend 1
13. AN programme - weekend 2
14. Assembly Daily Audit
15. Assembly North PowerPoint Slides
16. Assembly North 2 Participant requests - questions
17. Assembly Roles and Responsibilities post

18. Assembly timeline
19. Assembly timeline2
20. BriefingPacks\_Background
21. BriefingPacks\_Building Blocks
22. BriefingPacks\_Introduction
23. BriefingPacks\_Local Government Today
24. BriefingPacks\_Reform Options
25. Chair briefing document
26. Day 1 PPT Presentation
27. Day 1 team plan (for organising team)
28. Day1\_Questions AssemblyNorth
29. Day2\_Questions AssemblyNorth
30. Democracy Matters Communication Plan
31. Democracy Matters - Draft schedule
32. Democracy Matters - Draft schedule2
33. Democracy Matters Facilitator briefing
34. Democracy Matters PICF Forms (consent forms)
35. Democracy Matters YouGov FAQ
36. Email communication (between organisers)
37. Facebook engagement strategy
38. Final Invitation letter to Participants
39. Letter to Participants (Offer Document)
40. Keeping in touch doc
41. Participant Info Sheet (YouGov invitation)

42. Post Small Group Talent Survey (facilitator brief)
43. Promotional banner (we need YOU)
44. Rolling notes Weekend 2 (afternoon)
45. Rolling notes Weekend 2
46. Simple protocol for note taking
47. Voting Results PPT
48. Weekend 1 schedule 2015-10-14-1 (with comments)
49. Weekend 2 schedule 2015-11-04 (with comments)
50. Welcome day 1
51. Welcome day 2
52. Who decides – Conversation game for Yorkshire Assembly
53. YG Day 0 Selection Survey
54. YG Day 1 Exit Survey
55. YG Day 2 Exit Survey
56. YG Day 3 Entry Survey
57. YG Day 3 Exit Survey
58. YG Day 4 Exit Survey
59. YG Day 1 Entry Survey
60. YouGov Recruitment Options

## **Narrative Documents**

61. Article YP by Brenton Possner
62. Assembly Comparison Chart (North and South)
63. Citizen participation and changing governance\_ cases of devolution in England'  
(article on DM)

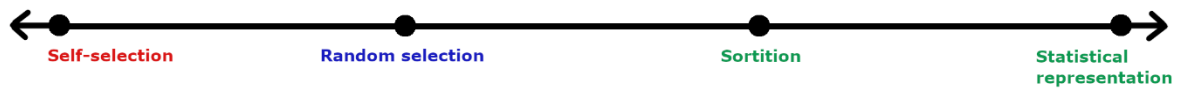
64. Crick Website Information on 'Democracy Matters'
65. Democracy Matters Final Report
66. Democracy Matters More (Application)
67. 'Devolution, Evolution, Revolution...Democracy? What's really happening to English local governance?' (Article on DM)
68. Draft Impact Case Study - Democratic Innovation
69. Final Sheffield Citizens Assembly Weekend PR
70. John Penrose Letter of Support
71. Lessons for practitioners
72. Ministerial Letters Citizens Assemblies Draft
73. Pedagogy and Micropolitics (research article on DM)
74. Public overview of 'Democracy Matters'
75. Sheffield City Council (on expertise)
76. The Star article on 'Democracy Matters'
77. White Rose Chapter

# Appendix B: Scales of measurement

## Role of the citizens in a participatory event



## Selection method



## Internal Transparency



## External transparency



## Civic Virtue



## Common Good

