ORIGINAL ARTICLE

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# Deliberative future visioning: utilizing the deliberative democracy theory and practice in futures research

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## Abstract

Broadly defined, deliberative democracy aspires the decision-making legitimacy by deliberation of equal citizens. As a response to the growing discontent with the representational governance, the normative and empirical development of the deliberative democracy theory addresses the increasing desiderata of public engagement beyond party politics and constituencies. Generating knowledge for the use of policy-making, foresight shares a common ground of participative and policy-impacting challenges with the deliberative democracy theory. In this article the prospects and mutual advantages of deliberative democracy (DD) alliance with the field of futures studies are discussed. The exploration strives to accentuate the societal policy-making advantages of the cross-disciplinary development. The article begins with introducing the deliberative democracy theory and the theoretical development, following with an account of some encouraging deliberative practices. A brief sketch of two recent projects enhancing participation detail the discrepancies in defining the concept. After examining the common epistemic ground of futures studies and social studies, the cross-disciplinary interface and shared key elements in policy-making impact are described. The article proposes a multi-voiced and future-oriented dialogue as a prerequisite for ameliorating societal preparedness and resilience in a world marked by proliferating uncertainty.

**Keywords** Deliberative democracy · Foresight · Participation · Policy-making

## The deliberative democracy ideal

The overarching desideratum of civic engagement has enhanced the public governance since the millennium, creating assemblages of diverse actors pursuing participation beyond representative politics. The innovative generation of participative practices, also referred to as *governance-driven democratization* corresponds to the general trajectory of democratic development.[1] The rapid development of citizen

engagement has occurred, perhaps surprisingly, beyond the realm of electoral democracy, in the administrative bodies of public policy [4]. Inclusive, participative practices are being accentuated, and reinforcing civic involvement pronounced to be a major objective of governance reforms. The domain of these various procedures (such as citizen juries, deliberative polling, and participatory budgeting to name but a few) have inherent limitations and advantages owing to their spatial location closer to societies and non-elected institutions, social movements, and civil society organisations. Viewed in general, the phenomena of enhancing civic engagement can be construed as a radical transformation of democracy. Governments encounter the inevitable transformation of civil advocacy that will eventually entail the re-examining of democratic norms and arrangement (e.g. [1, 4, 5]).

The proliferation of participative practices arises from the deep roots of political theories, particularly democratic systems and their advancement of deliberative decision-making. The advancement of deliberative practices stems from participatory properties, which are not free from representative relations. The progress of both forms of policy making is tied to the administrative *new public*

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[1] The call for refining participation can be seen to have grown along with people becoming estranged from traditional, representative democracy and political decision making. Political activity and policy making can be perceived as an isolated system separated from citizens. The concept of *democracy deficit* was first used by British scholars in the 1970s and since in various debates about the legitimacy of the EU and particularly the unsuitability of decision-making processes to meet the democratic standards of the nation states in Europe. Currently, the concept is used more extensively to refer to a failure to meet public expectations of democracy. [1–3]

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*management* reform, motivated by advancing the accountability and transparency of public policy making [6–8]. The concept of deliberative democracy (DD) is an umbrella term covering different forms of electoral democracy. Contemporary administrative sciences have however, embraced the term and emphasise its direct participative attributes (e.g. as it affects citizens, service users, and inhabitants), dissociating it from the Madisonian construction of representative filtering and *refining* of public opinion by elite deliberation. Instead of exercising the deliberation *for* the people, the DD theory encourages deliberation *by* the people [9]. From the DD theory perspective – and without ignoring the other attributes or methods of democracy (such as the rule of law or voting) – a political system's democratic status can be appraised by the status of its deliberative practices [10].

The essence of DD theory directs attention to the processes of decision-making and particularly inclusiveness, equality of the participants and the quality of argumentation. The basic presumption is to achieve decision-making legitimacy by the "appropriate public processes of deliberation by free and equal citizens" [11, 12]. A fundamental attribute of DD is its requirement for collective and appreciative argumentation preceding decision-making [12, 13]. An equal dialogue is accomplished by diverse deliberative arrangements where various viewpoints are expressed and valued as such, without being disparaged or dismissed. Ideally, after introductions given by various experts, such as scientists and economists, exchanging views on and profound reflections of the issue addressed, a conclusion, which all members of the deliberation can engage with, is reached and presented. [14, 15]

The definition of deliberation as a shared public discussion and a collective process of DD differentiates it from a conversation. Fishkin [9] outlines the quality of a deliberative process through five conditions:

- *Information*. Emphasises correct and relevant information given to participants as imperative for assessing the alternatives.
- *Substantive balance*. Highlights the evaluation of considerations as a basis of deliberation: the benefits or burdens of a policy, causality of a certain policy and the evaluative values to be considered.
- *Diversity*. Connects the deliberation and demographic diversity, respecting the heterogeneity of the population and therefore, the major positions in the public representation by participants in the discussion.
- *Conscientiousness*. Features the citizenry as a position with sincere preferences for the merits of the argument, free from electoral pressure.
- *Equal consideration*. Describes the evaluation of the arguments by their content, not by the social standing or prestige of the participant making the argument.

According to Fishkin, failure to adhere to any of the conditions above can lead to the conclusion reached being viewed as non-legitimate.

Most DD theorists embrace the Habermasian ideal of the "public sphere" [16] and accentuate the heterogeneity of the group involved in deliberative discussion to ensure the diversity of the arguments presented and to include a demographically representative population in the aspiration of optimal decisions. Chambers' [13] widely cited definition envisions the questions of inherent inequity in deliberative processes: "Although consensus need not be the ultimate aim of deliberation, and participants are expected to pursue their interests, an overarching interest in the legitimacy of outcomes (understood as justification to all affected) ideally characterizes deliberation." Nevertheless, observers have also questioned if a randomly selected group of ordinary people, at the end of the deliberative process, and after engaging in a "deliberative filter" of adequate expert introduction and superior quality deliberation, can necessarily be considered a mirror of society as a whole [9, 17, 18].

Some interpretations of DD theory do not mandate a universal agreement as an essential requirement for deliberation to function for democratic purposes, albeit a quarter century of experimentation in deliberative practices has proven the public's ability to make sound choices. Significant outcomes of DD are the confidence in a fair process and of being heard despite disagreement, or even exposing the underlying, fundamental conflicts and perspective differences without the objective of consensus. [19–21] James D. Hunter's [16, 22] illustration of the responsibilities of an individual engaged in the public debate encapsulates the mutual respect aspired in deliberative public sphere: "First, those who claim the right to dissent should assume the responsibility to debate…Second, those who claim the right to criticise should assume the responsibility to comprehend…Third, those who claim the right to influence should accept the responsibility not to inflame…Fourth, those who claim the right to participate should accept the responsibility to persuade."

Benjamin Barber [23] describes the deliberative process and its open-endedness, without a requirement for closure: "The public voice is deliberative, which means it is critically reflective as well as self-reflective; it must be able to withstand reiteration, critical cross-examination, and the test of time – which guarantees a certain distance and dispassion." Despite the inevitable need for different forms of power and coercion in a democratic society, conflicting interest and the questioning of injustice have an essential role in charting the areas of disagreement and in outlining the accurate public sphere [24].

## The systemic change

Since its introduction deliberative theory has changed appreciably. The initial, continuous wave is focusing on the

conceptual advancement of deliberation and DD; involving defining the theory, setting standards, and defending it. The second, empirical turn focused on the various implementations of DD, with less attention paid to the interdependence of single deliberative forums within a larger system. During this phase, studies of issues having an impact – whether positive or negative – on deliberative practices began to arise. The third, systemic turn in DD development has broadened the extent of deliberation, not as a one-off process but as a larger complex entity of the democratic system. This approach emphasises the interaction between different institutions and their opportunity to increase deliberative capacity in its entirety. The evaluation of the system comprises its extensive and distinct features, acknowledging the responsibility of decision making and legitimacy to be spread variably among its elements, appropriate for different cases [15, 25–27]. Three functions of a deliberative system to promote *legitimacy* of democratic decision making align with the general and intrinsic goals of deliberation [25]:

–   The *epistemic* function accentuating the claim for substantive and multidimensional information as the foundation of deliberative consideration,
–   The *ethical* function to maintain and advance mutual respect among citizens, and
–   The *democratic* function to promote inclusion as "a central element to make deliberative process democratic."

Systems thinking raises various questions on the position of deliberative practices in democratic systems, and also on the desirable equilibrium of deliberation and other practices of interaction [26]. Mansbridge et al. [25] use the range of discussions taking place on the functions of the EU as an example of a system constructing an entity by various elements: discussion among the governing elite, media, and national debates, with differences in deliberative intensity and quality. Despite their deliberative deficiencies, these incomplete parts provide complementary attributes for one another, and for the system as a whole.

In addition to the demands for authenticity and inclusiveness, DD must produce societal outcomes [28]. The systemic approach holds that deliberative practices are assessed not only by their deliberative or democratic qualities, but their efficacy in relation to their usage at various levels of policy hierarchies [18, 25]. According to Chambers [29] small-scale deliberative forums can only be evaluated in terms of their "full democratic import of deliberation" from a macro-level, system perspective. Even the most conscientiously built, internally promising arrangement can turn out to be flawed in respect of its legitimacy or democratic import when it is analysed in a larger political context [29, 30].

Parkinson [18] draws attention to the challenges inherent in the classical deliberative account of legitimacy ("the classical deliberative account of legitimacy is incomplete, because it cannot account for why non-participants should grant legitimacy to the outcome of any deliberative moment") and furthermore highlights the inability of a single event in fulfilling the requirements of legitimacy, democracy, and deliberation. He suggests rethinking the very core of legitimacy – comprising representation, publicity, and rationality – in order to see the legitimacy following from several deliberative forums in a wider deliberative system. Such relaxing of the tight constraints of DD designs makes it possible to view the policy-making process sequentially, and therefore to view decision making, agenda setting, discussion, and implementation incorporating distinct means to secure the optimal level of legitimacy.

## Deliberative practices

The discussion of DD practices has consistently encompassed the questions of participants as well as the manner and the extent of deliberation. Critical opinions have requested the implementation of deliberation be narrowed in restricted settings (such as courts) in order to achieve the ideal high-quality argumentation. However, in three decades of DD development, the perception of valued discourse has expanded to encompass various settings and means of deliberation, while still acknowledging the risk of "concept stretching" [31].

While accepting that it would not be possible to provide a comprehensive description of the content, some varieties of deliberative processes are reviewed below to illustrate their auspicious trajectory.

*Citizens Juries* (a registered trademark of the Jefferson Center), was among the first deliberative methods. The concept was developed in the 1970s and extensively used in the 1990s and early twenty-first century in a vast variety of sizes, topics, and geographical coverage. The method is differentiated from other similar concepts by the selection and number of the jury members (typically 16 to 24[2] citizens, randomly selected, and demographically balanced) as well as the duration of the jury process, which is typically five days. The objective of running the jury over several days is to provide sufficient time to learn about and discuss the relevant issue. The juries' impact on policymaking has advanced during the last decade both in the United States and Australia, partly due to public demonstrations (in Oregon, 2008) and certainly to a more systematic follow-up of the policy-making bodies commitment to the input of the juries [32, 33].

*Twenty-First Century Town Meetings* (created originally for the purposes of the *America Speaks* organisation) is a

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[2] Recent juries organized in Australia have had an average of 50 jury members. A citizen's jury of 350 residents was conducted in South Australia on the topic of nuclear waste storage [33, 40]

large-scale deliberative application of mini-publics with up to 5000 citizens assembled to deliberate on given themes for one day. The participants are recruited through targeted marketing, which aims to reach the margins of the population. The level of demographic representativeness is re-evaluated during the process. The discussions are facilitated in small groups and the participants use electronic pads to vote on emerging themes. America Speaks organised over 50 Town Meetings including some with significant policy impacts including those on reconstruction in New York following the 9/11 WTC terror attacks and in New Orleans following hurricane Katrina. A specific feature in the New Orleans deliberation was elements of it being executed via the internet owing to the scattering of New Orleans inhabitants after the hurricane [33, 34]. The same deliberation was also acknowledged to have fostered social trust and healing across societal divides [35].

*World Wide Views* (created by Teknologirådet in Denmark) is a process of deliberations for "global citizen consultation [that] provides decision-makers with a unique insight into the global public opinion on complex governance issues" [36]. The method has been used to discuss issues of global warming (4000 participants in 38 countries), biodiversity (3000 participants in 25 countries), and climate and energy (nearly 10,000 citizens in 76 countries). The method has also been applied in a local context, and has featured in various research such as that investigating *scientific citizenship* [37].

*Citizens' Initiative Review* (created in collaboration with Healthy Democracy Oregon and Jefferson Center) is a model institutionalized in the legislative process of the State of Oregon, where a citizens' initiative results in binding referendum after collecting a sufficient number of signatures. The reviews, with an assembly of randomly chosen citizens, address the contents of the initiative as well as the corollaries of the voting results in issues with considerable outcomes. Prior to the referendum, a review report is mailed to households. In scientific evaluation, the review results were found as a source of information, providing the public assistance to voting decisions and therefore, encouraged citizens to vote. [33, 34, 38]

*Deliberative Poll (*registered trademark of the Center of Deliberative Democracy) is a method created to supplement the deficiencies of traditional Gallup polls. Performed over 40 countries since 1994, topics covered in DPs have been various, such as healthcare, minority rights, employment and educational policy. The randomly selected participants (250–500) receive a questionnaire as well as an invitation to deliberate in small groups for one day. The conversation is based on a neutral summary of information, with an objective to illustrate the opponent perspectives. Next, the groups are further divided in smaller, facilitated groups, to avoid the domination of the conversation by a single participant. Pre- and post-event opinion polls measure the information assimilation as well as the opinion change. [33, 34]

*Participedia*[3] website was created to respond to the rapid development of participatory practices by offering an open access platform for researchers and practitioners "to catalogue and compare the performance of participatory political processes". To date, a number of 741 participatory cases are introduced on the website. The cumulative qualitative and quantitative data repository serves the development of best practices to enhance democracy. [39]

# Research and participation, an undefined union

The participative defects are correspondingly acknowledged in foresight processes and science in general [41]. The European Commission has attempted to address the problem through its "Science in Society" programme (SiS) and further, a framework for Responsible Research and Innovation (RRI) [42], an on-going process of "aligning research and innovation to the values, needs and expectations of European society" [43]. Despite overarching agreement on the advantages of a multi-stakeholder and public dialogue for scientific progress [44], the shortcomings of models and degrees in the public engagement regarding science and technology or decision-making practices offer a weak support structure for the domain. The culture of science communication is found to interconnect with these factors[4] [45].

Continuing the work of the MASIS (Monitoring Policy and Research Activities on Science in Society in Europe) project (from 2010 to 2012), the PE2020 project (The Public Engagement Innovations for Horizon 2020, from 2014 to 2017) aimed to "identify, analyse and refine innovative public engagement (PE) tools and instruments for dynamic governance in the field of Science in Society (SiS).[5] In the executive summary of the project report, the researchers accentuate the significance of non-government organisations in initiating PE processes. In addition to the strong involvement of third sector organised stakeholder groups, an even larger portion of actors in innovative PE were from a fourth sector, "actors or actor groups whose foundational logic is not in the representation of established interest, but rather, in the idea of social cooperation through hybrid networking". Deliberative processes were the most frequently used approach in the field of PE. [46]

The main objective of COST[6] Action 22 (COST A22, entitled "Foresight Methodologies – Exploring new ways to explore the future") was "to develop certain aspects of foresight

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[3] https://participedia.net/en
[4] The national reports of 37 European countries available at www.masis.eu.
[5] https://pe2020.eu/
[6] European Cooperation in Science and Technology, http://www.cost.eu/

methodology so as to ensure systematic use and optimum benefit." In the final report of a four-year-long programme, the significant aspect of the work was the assertion that "all methods in foresight are ultimately both enhanced and constrained by the interpretative process of a diversity of stakeholders, i.e. it is the integration of diverse perspectives, rather than diverse methods that is the methodological issue." The main finding of the work conducted in 24 countries and involving over 130 researchers and practitioners was the suggestion to develop interactive methodology in foresight knowledge creation [47].

The anthology (Participation and Interaction in Foresight) [48] published in 2013 by one of the working groups of COST A22, consisting of 16 contributors in the field of foresight, presents an international assemblage of contemporary perceptions of participation, dialogue, and decision making in the field of foresight. In the discussion regarding participation, the foresight focal point transformation from governmental actors and expert advice only towards a broader range of stakeholders[7] is observed and evaluated. However, although the anthology acknowledges the stakeholder definition in policy-relevant research extending beyond the business organisational definition, and also the beneficial effect of including the non-scientific societal discourse in the foresight process, the true role of a wider audience seems to be limited to the framing or content building of the foresight exercise. The participative contribution of decision making is acknowledged in engaging the decision-makers in the foresight process. [49, 50] The role of interaction in foresight is approached by exploring the differences, objectives and means of dialogue and debate [50], and also intercultural communication as a means of dealing with cultural diversity and preventing the clash of civilisations [51]. While appreciating the value of manifold perspectives in complex and controversial issues, the role of foresight is understood "as a space for dialogue and exploration in contested territory, focusing on consensus and conflicts." The tension between "pluralities of social actors with plausible but often conflicting claims" is addressed by theoretical propositions of consensus, conflicts, and stakeholder negotiation and empirical experiences from a Danish consensus conference [52].

Interestingly – and given the fact that the compilation does not comprehensively cover the field of foresight – while introducing a thorough theoretical foundation for the relationship of participation and dialogue in foresight research, the anthology attempts no review of *public* engagement in research, and nor does it make any reference to deliberative practices. The notable differences in the outcome of the projects, both with a focus on participation, highlight the dissimilarity in its interpretation.

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[7] *stakeholders* defined in COST A22 homepage: "those with a stake in the future of the particular issue under study"

## The anticipated alliance of social sciences and futures studies

The aspiration of a closer liaison between social sciences and futures studies is far from novel. Eleonora Masini [53] saw futurists as society builders and valued articulators rather than observers, an emphasis that focuses on searching for and interpreting the seed of change based on the history of a society. More recently, Masini [54] cites the futures-oriented perspective as a prerequisite for interdisciplinary analysis empowerment in social sciences with reference to decision making at local, national, and international levels. Masini points out that both social sciences and futures studies need each other to cope with rapid change. Karlsen, Øverland and Karlsen [55] suggest theoretical assumptions embedded in sociology (such as complexity, anticipation, and change) can clarify and strengthen the theory of future studies. The theory of futures research and the practice of foresight could be solidified if their key concepts were explicated.

The role of future studies in focusing on specific fragmented issues of various disciplines is widely acknowledged, but expectations regarding the collaboration of future studies and social sciences strategically and in a more fundamental manner have proliferated [56, 57]. In his reconstruction of the guiding ideas of the foresight course, Poli [57] summarises some proposals in human and social sciences to alter their general perspective from a past orientation to the anticipative, future-oriented thinking of human behaviour and makes a significant observation of the unfortunate, "almost perfect mutual disavowal" between futures studies and social sciences. He also names the Discipline of Anticipation as a possible connection to reciprocal theoretical comprehension and empirical utilisation.

The growing complexity in our societies both impedes anticipatory futures exploration and prompts calls for more of it via interdisciplinary and multi-perspective collaboration. Foresight practices embedded in policymaking intensify the demand for the expansion of perspectives. In a report to the European Commission on foresight modelling, an expert group suggests addressing "the issues of cooperation and coordination across policy areas…as well as matters of institutionalization in contrast to the ad hoc implementation of foresight on a project-by-project basis" to create anticipatory governance and to unite foresight and decision-making practices [41]. Given current decision-making practices have been shown to be insufficient for envisioning the future beyond the economic and scientific, past-driven continuations, their capability to address prolific societal complexity must be reassessed. Such reassessment would require exploring not only the policy-making processes but the potential of a governance – futures research alliance.

It is acknowledged that in any approach or method addressing the future, the changes to be evaluated can

be complex and uncertain. Whether its purpose is to serve scientific research or decision making, a future assessment seeking to address the complexity through scenario-based approaches will be required to build at least one conceptual, systemic framework to capture not only direct and indirect drivers of change but a diverse combination of conditioning drivers (e.g. values, governance, and cultural elements) and the connections between them. In the process of building the framework, subjective perspectives and both historical and cultural factors to enhance mutual understanding are valued equally with scientific knowledge. Therefore, the process of choosing the stakeholders to be consulted in the creation of the framework and the interaction between all participants has an impact on the entire assessment process. In this process, professional knowledge of facilitation is an investment that will benefit the entire process. [58, 59]

## Deliberative democracy value in future studies

Mannermaa's [60] summation of contrasts – and "even paradoxes" – between prevailing representative democratic models and futures thinking illustrates a notable disparity (Table 1.). The 3rd column attempts to clarify the deliberative democracy theory and practices capacity to bridge the differences.

Mannermaa anticipated the disparities to proliferate as a consequence of increasing societal dependencies and complexity. He states, "without futures-oriented discussion on values, goals and visions it is not possible to 'take over' the future. - - Instead of discussing desirable visions of the future we produce a lot of instrumentally rational talk on means - - Real futures thinking, however, requires that in order to be able to effectively discuss means (competition) you need to clarify your goals." He also calls for the development of "the ideas, models, technologies and practices of democracy in such a way that democratic decision-making would be more future-oriented and more capable to govern rapid change phenomena". [60]

DD practices often appear as micro-level practices and come across as being prone to be subsumed by and acceptance of representative systems. Local deliberative processes are usually generated and framed by governmental authorities and affected by the electoral cycle [61–63]. While remaining non-institutionalised in various – and especially strategic – levels of governance, the instrumental contributions of deliberative practices can be itemised: instead of competing for influence with decision-making apparatus, deliberative systems can add value to governance by contributing to communication between the administrative layers. Moreover, deliberative

processes can advance policy making through setting the agenda rather than by targeting policy resolution [61].

The experiences and considerable findings in deliberative experiments show their possibilities in strengthening the capacities of the marginalized groups [64]. The variety of solutions to include demographically reflecting population in policymaking has been presented since introducing the ideas of inclusive democracy. DD theory efforts to increase the decision-making legitimacy have produced a variety of mini-publics to encourage the missing participants to involve themselves in policy deliberation. The extensive rumination of the insufficiencies of inclusion have however, mainly considered the inclusion of citizens with physical impairment or disabilities. Less attention has been paid to the inclusion of groups with social disparities and their experiences, crucial in strengthening societal resilience. [65] The highly normative comprehension of deviancy approaches it from administrative supremacy, focusing on controlling the menace to society while a type of perspective to deviancy could be their divergent interpretations of the society as well as facing the society's implicit undercurrents and bringing them explicit. It is also a prerequisite for understanding the unsatisfactory present and the previous unsuccessful efforts to maintain or increase the well-being of the society.

One of the deliberative outcomes less frequently examined is its contributive value of advancing people to become a public. The process of deliberation creates a collective public by interconnecting and filling partial perceptions. In the dialogic formation of collective will – as well as the collective memory – of society, public opinion surpasses the aggregation of private opinions accomplished by voting or polling [19]. Jacques Derrida [66] offers an apt description of the distinction: "public opinion is *de jure* neither the general will nor the nation, neither ideology nor the sum total of private opinions analysed through sociological techniques or modern poll-taking institutions." In the process of addressing the concerns of a community, people construct a vision of a community and the values it is founded upon [19].

While appreciating the systemic values of representative practices, the quintessential essence of DD as a theory is its aspiration to convert the concept of democracy from the aggregation of individual votes to an inclusive dialogue between distinct ideas. Recent research documenting the impact of public deliberation on welfare decision making has exposed the complexity of the linkage as well as the challenges in conceptualising the use or uptake of outcomes flowing from deliberative practices, referring not only to policy change but development in institutional culture. Abelson et al. [67] describe this arduous interconnection: "Even when fully supported, public deliberation operates within a complex array of organisational settings and political structures that shape the degree and manner in which it is likely to exert

**Table 1** Modified from Mannermaa 2006:3

| Futures thinking* | Prevailing (representative)democracy* | Value added by DD |
|---|---|---|
| Long range; decades or more Multisectoral systems thinking | Short range; parliamentary cycle (frequently four years) Sectoral "not my job" -thinking | - Detaches (when required) the issue from the temporal and structural linearity expectations of policy formation - Advances the multisectoral, deliberative participation of expertise, citizens and administration - Offers a variety of methods of serving diverse participative purposes |
| New modes of thinking and organizing societal activities are born from the conditions of the information society and its followers Complex societal reality; difficult to perceive the big picture | Modes of thinking and organizing societal activities (eg. political party structure) comes from the agrarian and industrial eras Simplifying issues; political temptation to sell easy solutions to the citizens | - Allows the issues to function as outliers of pivotal attendance: participation beyond constituencies - Addresses complexity by a wide range of spectrums - Offers theoretical and practical experience in conscious involvement and facilitation of varied expertise (margins) and polarized groups (enclaves) |
| Perseverance – "sometimes it is necessary to abstain now in order that the better fruits could come later" Change – accelerating change, unpredictable surprises Visions; goals and value discussions producing them | Short-sightedness - "we want prizes and satisfactions now" Status quo, "stick to your position", predictable trends Modern information society has blurred old ideologies, new ones are still unborn | - Provides a theoretical background and design for ○ constituting societal values to function as a basis of societal policy-making ○ tolerating uncertainty by exploring possibilities beyond restraining limits ○ promoting the emerging or undercurrent issues to surface ○ ideological dialogue with emphasis on scientific and societal perception outside or inside political preferences |
| Proactivity – "we make the future"; futures analysis of the key factors in the operating environment and our own inspiring visions form a basis for our strategies to take over the future | Opportunism or passivity – we "drift into the future"; inspiring ideological visions of the future of our societies are lacking | - Advances societal proactivity by contributing to multi-voiced and future-oriented dialogue |

*Original columns

tangible influences on policy making and other aspects of collective problem-solving."

Regardless of how advanced the current, various forms of participative practices are, they eventually collide with the intrinsic power premises of our societies. Foresight understood as "an interactive approach producing shared visions of the future and joint actions in consequence" entwines the process of foresight to its implementation. Simultaneously, it comprises a complex entity with a broad set of impact with possible (counter) effects in the environment for implementation by the policy/strategy structure and drivers. The objective of stakeholder consensus to advance the implementation of foresight exercise can create inherent prioritization in the foresight methodology and outcome. [68]

Blacksher et al. [69] propose a minimum definition of public deliberation that encompasses the essential elements that not only illustrate the goals of deliberation, but the broad understanding reached in the theory and practice of DD. These components encompass a fruitful foundation for a discussion in deliberative procedures' value for future studies:

–    the provision of balanced, factual information that improves participants' knowledge of the issue
–    the inclusion of diverse perspectives to counter the well-documented tendency of better-educated and wealthier citizens to participate disproportionately in deliberative opportunities and to identify points of view and conflicting interests that might otherwise go untapped, and
–    the opportunity to reflect on and freely discuss a wide spectrum of viewpoints and to challenge and test competing moral claims.

## Conclusion

The concept of participation is widely addressed, yet restrictedly comprehended. Various models to study and explain the phenomena and motivation of the civic engagement in micro and macro levels from both individual perspective and on the country context have been developed. Referring to Verba et al. [70] the conclusion of individual's reasons for non-participation is "because they can't; because they don't want to; or because nobody asked". Underlying factors influencing this summary consist of individual resources, interest in politics and a sense of efficacy as well as the mobilization [71]. The participatory threshold is reduced by the increase and availability of information and web-based engagement, already concretizing in the rapid growth of 4th sector involvement. "Because nobody asked" shows the participatory shortcomings to be not only an indictment of reluctance on the part of the citizens, but the disinclination of the elitist system to utilize nor to empower them.

Whereas the participative development of democracy embraces the broad spectrum of perspectives in decision-making, science in general, having a tradition to pursue the unanimity of the knowledge elites in scientific findings, requires accentuating its socio-political activity. In addition to exploiting the communitarian culture and intelligence, ordinarily unattainable by empirical methods, future-oriented approach is reciprocal: advancing the societal understanding of the possible and probable to picture the desirable. The advanced state of DD theory and the variety of practical implementation offer a broad base to aspire inclusive futures deliberation.

Roy Amara [72] articulated the future images as the reflections of our basic perception of basic values, social interaction, ecological thinking and the purpose of our lives. In his opinion, the main elements of the futures studies should be structured on participatory of common people in making decisions and considering their affects to our future. Almost four decades later, human and social scientist are reassessing their orientation to futures thinking and anticipatory attitude. This brings a welcome opportunity to use the future in the present to conjoin the scientific capacities and truly inclusive, participative deliberation to support societal policy-making. The mission of researching common good and its foundations as a mission of futures studies is increasingly justifiable in the current realities of the societies influenced by prolific complexity, alienation, instability and indifference. Viewed from this essential perspective, an appraisal of aligning the development of DD practices with future studies is worth contemplating.

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