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# Thirty Years of Democratic Innovation in Latin America



Innovations For Democracy In Latin America

**Final Report** 



#### Thamy Pogrebinschi

THIRTY YEARS OF DEMOCRATIC INNOVATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA.

WZB Berlin Social Science Center

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# FOREWORD

Latin America has always scored badly in indexes and opinion polls designed to measure and compare democracies around the world. Indeed, democracy in the region has always been challenged by several representation deficits, all sorts of inequalities, and a fragile rule of law. Some countries are dealing with poverty and hunger, as well as high rates of crime and violence. The authoritarian past is still alive in some political practices and institutions. Presidential systems engender strong Executive branches, and quite often make room for populism.

Nonetheless, since most countries in the region transitioned to democracy about 30 years ago, Latin America has witnessed a continuous flourishing of institutions, mechanisms, and processes aimed at enhancing democracy through citizen participation. Those democratic innovations, created by governments and civil society alike, are both numerous and bold, and should not be ignored by the indicators and scores that assess democracy in the region. Many of them may not have great impact on public policy given that their results are not binding; others may suffer from the same problems as traditional political institutions. But altogether they constitute a landscape of political experimentation which is integral to Latin America's democracy, and not taking them into consideration will give only an incomplete assessment.

This conviction led me to design and found LATINNO. An attempt to map, measure, and compare democratic innovations across Latin America. A faith that such institutions, processes, and mechanisms of citizen participation could one day be considered as part of assessments of democracy in the region. A belief that the many contradictions that pull together Latin America's political narrative disclose its creative heterogenous coherence. And above all, a hope that mainstream concepts of democracy one day could expand to embrace the diversity and reality of the global South. LATINNO is the result of a collective endeavor. If I had to define it in three words, they would be persistence, engagement, and generosity. LATINNO exists today because I found along the way the most engaged students and generous institutions that could give it life. When I first designed the project, it was short-listed among the few finalists for a renowned European grant. However, as I was later notified, although they sought ground-breaking and high-risk projects, mine was too highrisk, because I most likely wouldn't be able find enough cases to build the proposed dataset. Five years later, we had gathered, documented, and analyzed over 3,700 democratic innovations in 18 countries – using about one-fifth of the sum of the missed funding.

This achievement is above all proof of how vibrant democratic innovation in Latin America is, despite the region's many political and social malaises. It is also the result of the engagement of 32 amazing team members and the enormous generosity of two institutions, all of whom I am profoundly grateful and indebted to. The Open Society Foundations believed in the idea since its inception and funded it through three subsequent grants. The WZB Social Science Center and its department Democracy and Democratization sheltered and supported LATINNO in many ways, from allowing me unrestricted freedom of research to always fulfilling every single need we had along the way. And finally, my cherished LATINNO Team, with each and every one of its many wonderful members over the years, is the real reason why this project endured and succeeded.

*Thamy Pogrebinschi* LATINNO's Founder and Coordinator

# INTRODUCTION

LATINNO is the first and so far the most comprehensive and systematic source of knowledge on democratic innovations evolved in Latin America. The LATINNO database has gathered data on 3,744 institutions, processes, and mechanisms involving citizen participation which were created in 18 Latin American countries between 1990 and 2020. Each democratic innovation has been carefully described and coded for 43 variables designed to understand their context, institutional design, and impact. Along with the quantitative data, qualitative information on each case has also been gathered, documented, and assessed.

The countries covered by LATINNO are: Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay, and Venezuela. The database also registers transnational cases where the same democratic innovation appears in more than one country in the region.

The LATINNO project and its database were designed to fill the gap in comparative knowledge about democratic innovations in Latin America. More than providing information on individual cases, LATINNO sought to underscore the diversity of new democratic designs and experimentations with citizen participation in the region. The data we have gathered and processed enables cross-country comparison over thousands of democratic innovations in 18 countries.

This final report comprises three parts. In the first part, you will find information about the project, its conceptual framework, methodology, and the dataset. The second part highlights some results, trends, and recommendations that draw on the LATINNO data. Finally, the third part presents a brief narrative of how democratic innovations have evolved in each of the 18 countries investigated, underlining some of the relevant cases contained in the dataset.

As for the findings and trends identified in the second part, it is important to note that they rely on aggregated data covering 30 years of democratic innovation in 18 countries. Latin America is however a very heterogenous region, and its sub-regions and countries have undergone varied historical processes over this long timespan which must be taken into consideration in further data analyses. The aim of this report is not to provide such analyses, but to highlight some features indicated by the aggregated data. As for how sub-regional contexts affect a narrative of democratic innovation in Latin America, see Pogrebinschi and Ross (2019).

#### For further information, please see:

Pogrebinschi, Thamy (2021) Codebook for the LATINNO Dataset. Technical Report. Discussion Paper SP V 2021-101. Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung

Pogrebinschi, Thamy (2021) Innovating Democracy? The Means and Ends of Citizen Participation in Latin America. Book Manuscript under Review.

Pogrebinschi, Thamy and Ross, Melisa (2019) "Democratic Innovations in Latin America". In: Handbook on Democratic Innovations. Stephen Elstub and Oliver Escobar (Eds). London: Edward Elgar Publishing.

Pogrebinschi, Thamy and Ross, Melisa (2019) "El abordaje metodológico del Proyecto LATINNO para la investigación sobre innovaciones democráticas. Contribuciones y desafíos". In: GIGAPP Estudios working Papers, 6/129, pp. 323-336.





# LATINNO'S ANALYTICAL **FRAMEWORK AND DATASET**

**CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK** THE MEANS OF PARTICIPATION THE ENDS OF INNOVATION **THE DATASET** 

WHAT IS A DEMOCRATIC INNOVATION?

# PART 1

# **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Democratic innovations are usually defined by the specialized literature as institutions specifically designed to enhance citizen participation.

LATINNO, however, considers that citizen participation is the means, and not the end, of democratic innovation. As a means, citizen participation may take four forms: deliberation, citizen representation, digital engagement, and direct voting.

What makes innovations democratic is their goal to enhance democracy by addressing its challenges through citizen participation. The ends of innovations are thus the improvement of the dimensions of democracy that require it in a given context.

In Latin America, the ends of democratic innovations are accountability, responsiveness, political inclusion, social equality, and the rule of law.

The means and ends approach lies at the core of LATINNO's research. The project's conceptual framework departs from normative theories to reconstruct concepts based on the empirical reality of Latin America. It understands concepts as "data containers" (Sartori, 1975): refined empirical facts that have been quantitatively and qualitatively defined and categorized.

LATINNO's research has shown that means of participation and ends of innovation combine in several different ways in order to address a variety of challenges within the representative system, shaping Latin America's democratic experimentalism (Pogrebinschi, 2013 and 2018).



Pogrebinschi, Thamy (2013) "The Pragmatic Turn of Democracy in Latin America". FES Study in Latin America. Berlin: Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung

Pogrebinschi, Thamy (2018) "Experimenting with Participation and Deliberation: Is Democracy Turning Pragmatic?" In: Latin America Since the Left Turn. T. Falleti and E. Parrado (Eds.). Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press

## WHAT IS A DEMOCRATIC INNOVATION?

LATINNO adopts the following definition of democratic innovations:

*institutions, processes, and mechanisms whose end it is to* enhance democracy by means of citizen participation in at least one stage of the policy cycle.

In order to qualify as a case and be included in the LATINNO dataset, a democratic innovation must necessarily match the following three criteria:

# Citizen **Participation**

1

It must take place through one (or more) of these four means: deliberation, citizen representation, direct voting, or digital engagement.

3

Its design must enable citizens and/or civil society organizations to participate in one (or more) stages of the public policy cycle, namely: agenda setting, formulation and decision-making, implementation, or evaluation.

(Pogrebinschi, 2021)



It must be designed to improve one (or more) of these five ends: accountability, rule of law, responsiveness, social equality, or political inclusion.

## **Impact on Policy Cycle**

#### THE MEANS OF PARTICIPATION

(Adapted from Pogrebinschi, 2021)

#### Deliberation

Deliberation in democratic innovations involves some form of communicative exchange among participants. This includes all forms of dialogue, interaction, and mutual communication in which participants have the chance to *voice* their needs and demands, as well as *hear* the position of others. Deliberation is usually directed towards problemsolving and will-formation and serves the purposes of coordination of different interests and stakeholders.

In Latin America, the most frequent types of democratic innovations whose primary means are deliberation are: citizen assemblies, deliberative councils, deliberative tables, participatory budgets, participatory planning, multi-level policymaking processes, and prior consultations.

#### **Citizen Representation**

Citizen representation as a means of participation within democratic innovations comprises three main forms. In the first, citizens and civil society organizations are selected to *speak on behalf of others*; in the second, citizens appoint themselves to *stand for the interests and values of others*; and in the third, regardless of formal authorization, citizens *act for others*, doing things in their stead.

In Latin America, democratic innovations that involve citizen representation include representative and management councils, citizen oversight bodies, innovation labs, and participatory policy implementation processes.

#### **Direct Voting**

Citizens may vote to directly decide or express their opinion on policy issues or concrete political matters. This includes the traditional instruments of direct democracy, namely popular recall, plebiscite, referendum, and citizens' initiatives. LATINNO also includes under this category other forms of consultation – implemented by either governments or civil society – where an opportunity for a manifestation of opinion or will is granted to those affected or interested in a given issue.

#### **Digital Engagement**

Digital tools are as diverse as the possibilities available to use them in boosting citizen participation. LATINNO does not focus on plain digital-based citizen participation (such as e-campaigning, e-petitioning, e-polling, e-voting, or slacktivism), but rather on digital mechanisms and processes designed to enhance democracy by actively engaging citizens in the pursuit of (one or more of) innovation's ends. **Digital democratic innovations** usually involve deliberation or direct voting as a secondary means of participation, and increasingly are expanding into forms of knowledge crowdsourcing.

In Latin America, digital participatory innovations include crowdsourced policymaking (and crowdlaw), collaborative administration, policymaking platforms, digital campaigns (such as hackathons and mappings), and digital oversight.

## THE ENDS OF INNOVATION

(Adapted from Pogrebinschi, 2021)

#### Accountability

Democratic innovations whose main end is to achieve accountability comprise all non-electoral forms of rendering governments, institutions, elected officials, and representatives accountable; that is, answerable and responsible for their actions and inactions. This can take the form of monitoring institutional performance, disclosing public information, sanctioning public agents, and the oversight of public services delivery.

#### Responsiveness

Responsiveness refers to forms of signal emission from citizens regarding their policy preferences, demands, opinions, and needs. Innovations aimed at improving responsiveness comprise forms through which these signals can be emitted from citizens and/or received by governments in order to be considered in their decisions.

#### Rule of Law

Democratic innovations can aim to secure, enforce, or strengthen the rule of law through diverse forms of enacting and enforcing laws and rights, granting both individual and public security, preventing and controlling crime, curbing potential abuses of state power, ensuring an independent administration of justice, resolving conflicts, and providing access to justice. Democratic innovations that fall into this category are also concerned with the protection of human rights.

#### **Political Inclusion**

Democratic innovations whose main end is political inclusion target the recognition and empowerment of those who have been historically excluded from the political process. These may be social, cultural, or ethnic minorities, as well as any other underrepresented groups, regardless of their proportion of the population (such as women). Groups of people who share a common characteristic (such as the elderly or youth), have a special need (such as persons with disabilities), or are affected by the same situation (such as migrants) also fall under this category. These innovations seek to ensure the presence of these groups in existing institutions, and also to create new spaces and processes in which they set the agenda and formulate new policies that are sensitive to their collective identities and interests.

#### Social Equality

Social equality is the main end of a democratic innovation when it aims to improve the living conditions, wellbeing, and capabilities of individuals, groups, and communities. These innovations provide spaces or mechanisms for the benefit of those in socially or economically disadvantaged situations. They may address social or economic policies, as well as basic rights and goods, with the ultimate goal of fighting poverty, reducing income inequality, and improving public service delivery.

# THE DATASET

Beyond providing information on individual cases of democratic innovations, LATINNO has sought to underscore the diversity of institutions, processes, and practices that include citizen participation to improve democracy in Latin America. For this reason, instead of singling out each and every instance of a democratic innovation within different countries, we considered every institution, process, or mechanism as a single case and coded their number of instances. This allowed us to provide a more complete picture of democratic experimentation with citizen participation across the 18 countries.

Democratic innovations were coded according to three sets of variables that reflect their *context*, *institutional design*, and *impact*.

*Context variables* record background information. They register the place and moment in which democratic innovations were first created or implemented, their duration, the political parties in power when they were created (at all levels of government), and the parties' ideological orientation.

*Institutional design variables* reflect formal features of democratic innovations. These include who created the innovations, the

role of the state, the type of participants and the form of selection, the level and scope of implementation, the frequency with which they took place, the extent to which they were institutionalized and allowed to yield decisions, the means employed, the ends pursued, the policy issues dealt with, and the stages of the policy cycle affected.

Impact variables assess the actual implementation of democratic innovations. Whether they were really carried out – and if so, how many times/in how many places they took place – the number of participants involved, the extent to which they fulfilled their aims and impacted their ends, and whether outputs (results) and outcomes (policies) resulted.

With few exceptions, variables are of a categorical nature. They consist of a set of values based on qualitative features that aim to cover variation among the characteristics of democratic innovations. These values were initially developed in the pilot stage of the project based on their theoretical interest and were gradually adjusted/expanded to better reflect the empirical data.

Detailed information can be found in the **LATINNO Codebook**, available for download at EconStor.

CONTEXT	INSTITUTIONAL DESIGN		IMPACT
Country	Organization in Charge	Type of Participants	Number of Cases
Name of Innovation	Type of Organization	Mode of Selection	Volume of Participation
City / Region	Branch of State	Means	Implementation
Starting Year	Level	Ends	Fulfillment of Aims
End Year	Scope	Policy Issue	Output
Party in Office	Formalization	Type of Social Policy	Outcome
Orientation of Party	Frequency	Policy Cycle Stage	
	Decisiveness	Type of Design	
	Co-Governance	Kind of Innovation	

LATINNO's database covers as many cases as our team was able to find in each country before reaching a stage of data exhaustion. After a pilot project, we developed and tested a procedure to search, code, and assess information on democratic innovations.

Our sources to search and assess cases in each of the 18 countries included academic literature and research reports; national and subnational legislation; governmental institutions, civil society organizations, and international organizations; existing databanks, data pools, and impact assessments; political parties, politicians, activists, scholars, and the national and local media.

Data collection was preceded by the extensive training of our coders, who were constantly monitored and tested to ensure the validity and reliability of the data. Since the first version of the LATINNO dataset was made available in 2017 (comprising 2400 cases from 1990 to 2016), 1344 new cases have been added and the existing ones were updated.

In 2020 the LATINNO dataset was fully reviewed, expanded, and updated. In addition to that, the COVID-19 pandemic prompted us to create two new datasets.

PREPARATION	DATA COLLEC	CTION
Training of Coders	Literature & Sources Review	Case By Case Assessment
Coding Test	Qualitative & Q	uantitative Codi
EVALUATION		
	Intercoder Relia	bility
	Horizontal, Inte	ernal & Institutio

RIABL

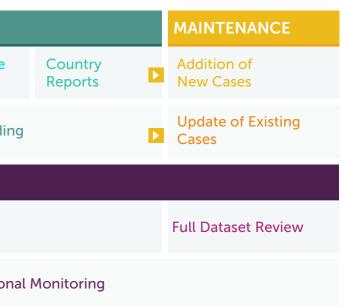
The first compiles democratic innovations that have relied on collective intelligence to address social, economic, political, and public health problems resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The second comprises all different kinds of civil society responses to the pandemic in the 18 countries we researched.

In addition to our website (<u>www.latinno.</u> <u>net</u>), all three datasets are available at the GESIS SowiDataNet|datorium after an embargo:

Pogrebinschi, Thamy (2021) LATINNO Dataset on Democratic Innovations in Latin America. Version 1.0.0. WZB Berlin Social Science Center. Dataset. DOI: <u>https://</u> doi.org/10.7802/2278

Pogrebinschi, Thamy (2021) Collective Intelligence Initiatives against COVID-19 in Latin America. Version 1.0.0. WZB Berlin Social Science Center. Dataset. DOI: https://doi.org/10.7802/2279

Pogrebinschi, Thamy (2021) Civil Society Responses to COVID-19 in Latin America Database. Version 1.0.0. WZB Berlin Social Science Center. Dataset. DOI: <u>https://doi.org/10.7802/2280</u>





**The LATINNO dataset comprises 3744** democratic innovations which were created in 18 Latin American countries between 1990 and 2020.

This map shows the total number of democratic innovations created in each of those 18 countries.



PART 2

# PAST, PRESENT, AND **INNOVATIONS**

**ELEVEN FINDINGS FOUR TRENDS** SIX RECOMMENDATIONS

# **ELEVEN FINDINGS**

Democratic innovations have grown steadily since 1990 throughout Latin America. After reaching a peak in 2015, they slowed down rapidly after 2016. The Covid-19 pandemic seems, however, to have reversed this downward trend – at least temporarily – in 2020.

This trend is similar for most countries, with a few exceptions like Peru and Venezuela which haven't witnessed such a clear rise and fall in democratic innovations. In addition, only a few countries seem to have not responded to the Covid-19 pandemic with democratic innovations, such as Bolivia, El Salvador, Mexico, Nicaragua and Uruguay – all of which saw the downward trend continuing into 2020.



Democratic innovation in Latin America has always been characteristically state-driven. Altogether, governments have been involved in the creation of 68% of all institutions, processes, and mechanisms aimed at expanding democracy by means of citizen participation since 1990.

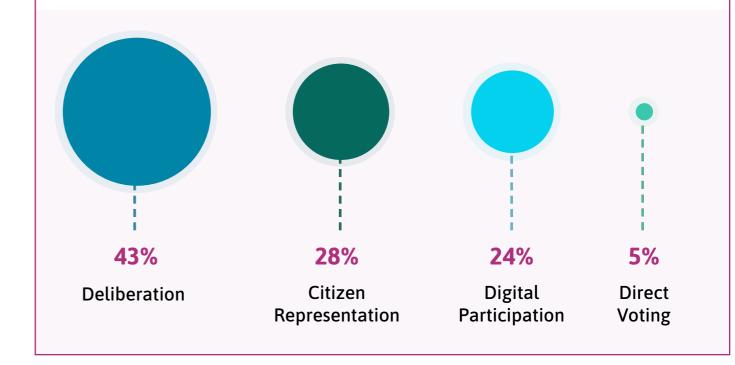
However, since 2016, this pattern has reversed and the role of governments in democratic innovation has decreased across the region; this has been particularly abrupt in a few countries, such as Brazil, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Uruguay.

The decrease in government-led democratic innovation is not simply a result of the end of the so-called left turn in Latin America. At the national level, left-leaning political parties have actually created altogether fewer democratic innovations than right-leaning parties did. At the sub-national level, however, left-leaning and centrist parties tend to play a greater role in democratic innovation, while right-leaning parties take a back seat.

These results indicate that state-led democratic innovations are not exclusively a product of left-leaning governments, and that citizen participation may be mobilized for the attainment of guite different goals.

Further data shows, for example, that at the national level right-leaning parties tend to design democratic innovations that aim to increase accountability, while left-leaning parties prioritize social equality.

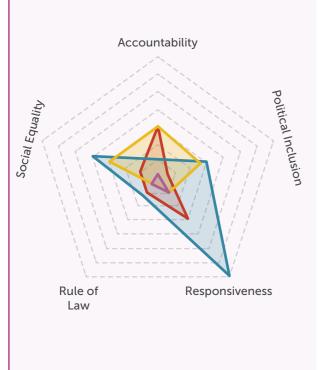
> Deliberation has for many years been the main means of participation in Latin America, being the primary means used in 43% of all democratic innovations. From 1990 deliberation increased progressively, but since 2015 it has seen a hasty downturn. Left-leaning governments strongly promoted deliberation, and the end of the left turn is one of the reasons it has decreased across the region in recent years.

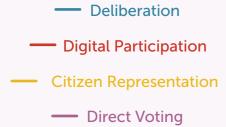




About half of all democratic innovations have been designed to make political institutions more responsive or governments more accountable. A little more than one-third sought to tackle inequalities, aiming at improving social equality and expanding political inclusion. Only 10% of democratic innovations in the region have been designed to address problems related to the (un)rule of law.

Cross-regional differences are relevant, though. Democratic innovations which aim to improve accountability and responsiveness are more frequent in South America, while those aimed at social equality and political inclusion are comparatively higher in Central America and the Andes. The countries that have created more democratic innovations to enhance the rule of law seem to be precisely (some of) those most in need of them, such as Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Venezuela.





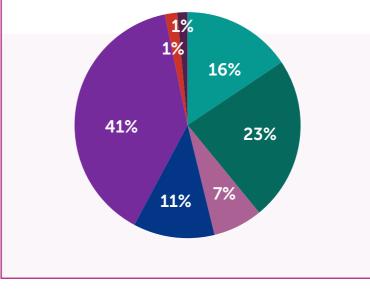
Deliberation is a crucial means of citizen participation when it comes to pursuing responsiveness and social equality through democratic innovations.

Digital democratic innovations are increasingly used to promote the accountability of governments and make political institutions more responsive to citizens' preferences.

In recent years, digital participation has tended to increase faster than deliberation as a means of enhancing responsiveness. If this trend continues, and if digital democratic innovations thrive in terms of impact, then deliberation may recede in the coming years. Citizens may be inclined to talk less with other citizens if they feel more heard by political institutions through digital means.

Democratic innovations in Latin America are not merely "invited spaces" of participation. As many as 43% of all institutions, processes, and mechanisms are totally open, and have no restrictions on participation. Ordinary citizens are restricted from participating as individuals in only 24% of all democratic innovations.

Still, 47% of democratic innovations do adopt some restrictive mode of selection of participants. Moreover, 43% of democratic innovations include no more than 50 participants. Although data on volume of participation is hard to collect and is thus available for only one-third of the cases in the dataset, the limited numbers of participants (despite the advantages this could bring to deliberation) are one more indication of eventual restrictions to participation, which are imposed mostly by institutions created by governments.



Civil society is progressively increasing its role in democratic innovation in Latin America. The number of democratic innovations created by civil society in 2020 is 62% higher than it was in 2010.

The growth of civil society follows the retreat of the state (although the latter is not the only factor contributing to the former). Between 2018 and 2020, governments were responsible for creating an average of 77 democratic innovations per year throughout the region, while civil society organizations were close behind with 67. Just ten years earlier, between 2008 and 2010, governments created an average of 81 democratic innovations per year, and civil society only 36.

#### Citizens

CSOs + Private Stakeholders + Citizens CSOs + Private Stakeholders Citizens + CSOs Citizens + Private Stakeholders **Private Stakeholders CSOs** 

Democratic innovations in Latin America have been designed in such a way as to impact all four stages of the policy cycle. About one-third (34%) include citizens in decision-making and policy-formulation, followed closely by 29% of democratic innovations that focus on agenda-setting. The increasing use of digital technology in democratic innovations leads to an increase in the number of cases that seek to engage citizens in policy implementation (19%) and evaluation (18%).



The Covid-19 pandemic has had (and will continue to have in coming years) an enormous impact on democratic innovation in Latin America. In 2020, 128 democratic innovations specifically designed to address problems resulting from the pandemic were created across the 18 countries. This number is almost as high as the average number of democratic innovations created in the region in each of the previous three years (159).

In addition to that, 309 other initiatives from civil society with the specific aim of mitigating the impact of the Covid-19 crisis (which do not fulfill all three criteria to be included in the LATINNO database as democratic innovations) were created in the first 100 days of the pandemic (between March 16 and July 1, 2020). These initiatives involved altogether at least 688 organizations (including CSOs, universities, professional associations, and collectives of citizens) throughout the region.

The Covid-19 pandemic has boosted civil society and digital technology: 54% of democratic innovations created in 2020 were introduced by civil society organizations, 85% of which have no government involvement at all. Moreover, 85% of democratic innovations handling the Covid-19 pandemic rely on digital participation.

The Covid-19 pandemic has also triggered transnational democratic innovation. In 2020, the LATINNO project mapped a further 131 cases that simultaneously involve several countries in the attempt to address the many problems that have resulted from the pandemic.

to yield binding decisions.

Only 29% of all democratic innovations created across the 18 countries in the 30 years studied were officially sanctioned by constitutions or laws; 37% of them were backed up by governmental programs or policies, i.e., by administrative acts from the Executive branch; 34% had no formalization at all. Out of the 37% of all democratic innovations that were institutions (and not processes or mechanisms), 48% were not backed up by legislation and could be shut down at any time by presidents, as recently happened in Brazil.

Any measurements of institutionalization should hence also look to the ability of democratic innovations to yield decisions, and more importantly, binding decisions. And in this aspect, Latin America also scores quite badly. Only 15% of all democratic innovations yield binding decisions. And as many as 41% yield no decision at all.

Both lack of institutionalization and absence of binding decisions reflect on the impact of democratic innovations. Out of those which are institutionalized in some way (either through legislation or executive order), 36% have resulted in a policy, while among those that lacked any formalization only 15% have had policy impact. Moreover, 54% of democratic innovations that yielded a binding decision impacted on policy, compared to only 10% for those that yielded no decision at all.

One must keep in mind a few things here. First, evidence on the impact of democratic innovations is guite hard to collect and assess. There was reliable and available information on policy outcomes for only 32% of cases in the LATINNO dataset. Second, several processes initiated by civil society, as well as mechanisms that rely on digital technology, are, given their very nature, hard to institutionalize. Nonetheless, their contribution to democracy enhancement is relevant and their impact often very significant.



### The endurance and impact of democratic innovations in Latin America are strongly compromised by their lack of institutionalization and low ability

# FOUR TRENDS

The number of democratic innovations that rely on **digital technology** should continue to increase in the coming years at a faster pace than those that draw on deliberation, citizen representation, or direct voting.

Digital engagement may become the prevalent primary means of participation in democratic innovations. It may surpass deliberation, indicating a retreat of the deliberative wave that swept through Latin America in the 1990s.

Digital technology usually reduces some costs associated with participation, including those related to the time and mobility required to participate. However, without deliberation it may also reduce the quality of policies formulated and decisions taken by means of citizen participation.

Digital democratic innovations tend to be more impactful in the agenda-setting and evaluation stages of the policy cycle. Digital tools are already proving very helpful in enabling citizens to identify problems and propose solutions, as well as to monitor policy implementation and institutional performance. Processes and mechanisms that rely on citizen participation to improve democracy will likely be increasingly created by **civil society** in the coming years, and in some countries democratic innovation may be primarily driven by civil society and no longer by governments.

Three (not mutually exclusive) paths might be followed:

First, civil society may increasingly rely on digital technology, and this could make the implementation of their initiatives less dependent on governments and international organizations.

Second, civil society tends to play a greater role in the creation of democratic innovations aimed at political inclusion as it progressively embraces feminist, anti-racist, and environmental agendas.

Third, as state-led participatory institutions are no longer created or are shut – and in some countries they are restricted by barriers to free participation – civil society organizations tend to target representative institutions. They may increasingly push participatory innovations in and within Legislatures, as well as promote innovations in representation, such as activists' candidatures and collective mandates.

If those strategies succeed, civil society should become more empowered and emancipated, and may play an increasingly relevant role in enhancing democracy, especially in countries challenged by authoritarianism and populism. **Collective intelligence** will increasingly become a crucial tool to address complex problems and unpredictable challenges faced by democracies.

Governments should, especially in countries with low state capacity and high social inequality, as in most of Latin America, gradually resort to the crowdsourcing of information, data, and skills from citizens in order to address public problems.

Civil society tends to steadily become the main driver of such sourcing, gathering, and sharing of knowledge. Data will likely increasingly become a powerful source of knowledge, and if well managed, it can empower communities and groups.

Democratic innovations may progressively become catalyzers of collective intelligence, turning citizens into problemsolvers as they contribute their knowledge to address a variety of social and political problems.

Crowdsourced knowledge through collective intelligence tends to impact all five ends of democratic innovation. It will, for example, enhance:

**accountability**, by generating verified information and reliable data, reducing disinformation and misinformation, in addition to improving public policy, service delivery, and governments' responses to crises. **responsiveness**, by geolocating urban and rural problems, identifying citizens demands, as well as mobilizing resources to address all those issues.

rule of law, by monitoring law enforcement, addressing human rights violations, protecting the environment, and increasing public security.

political inclusion, by generating information and data on vulnerable groups and communities, and monitoring policies and actions that are focused on them, as well as enabling inclusive co-creation, coproduction, and collaborative processes such as citizen science and citizen journalism.

**social equality**, by identifying social needs, connecting demand and supply to address humanitarian issues, in addition to designing and implementing responses to problems such as poverty and hunger.

Collective intelligence displays vast potential to improve decision-making in democracies. It provides access to essential information and data that policymakers would otherwise not have. It enables evidence-based policymaking, which is crucial especially in democracies endangered by populism.

As citizen knowledge is crowdsourced and used in the formulation, implementation, and monitoring of public policies, a new form of expertise is generated, and a new source of democratic legitimacy might be built. What is today understood as democratic innovation should evolve and expand significantly over the next several years. Such **conceptual change** would seem to be unavoidable in the post-pandemic world, especially in face of the expansion of digital technology.

The Covid-19 pandemic has greatly hit citizen participation, the main concept we have always associated with democratic innovation. It has also affected the main form of citizen participation associated with democratic innovation, which is deliberation. And it has prompted the use of digital technologies to address public problems and enhance democracy.

The concept and practice of citizen participation has already considerably expanded in recent years as a result of advancements in digital technology. The Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated this process and may establish, for example, civic crowdsourcing, civic hacking, and microtasking as new and widespread forms of citizen participation.

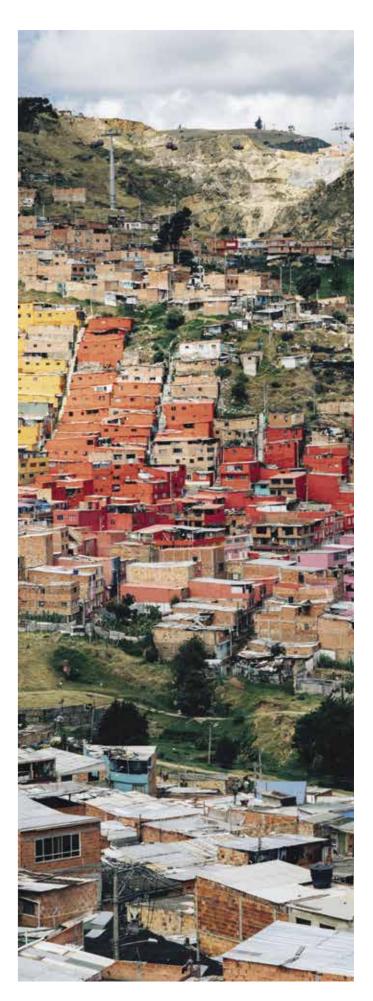
The design of democratic innovations will also likely adapt and evolve according to this changing empirical reality. Digital technologies multiply collaborative undertakings and enable them beyond territorial borders. We should see, for instance, the continuous and rapid growth of mapathons and hackathons, in which citizens collaborate to identify public problems, gather information and data, assess risks, and propose solutions to authorities over the course of a few hours or days. The ability of democratic innovations to problem-solve will be increasingly tested with issues that require a prompt political decision or action. Matters related to public health and the environment will likely increasingly concern citizens, as well as the sustainable development of cities.

Citizens are likely to increasingly engage in new, collaborative ways, such as by generating knowledge, designing solutions, and implementing responses themselves. They should also participate no longer simply as individuals or members of civil society organizations, but also as part of citizen labs, digital collectives, and as civic hackers.

The number of practitioners and activists who leave grassroots participation to "occupy" political institutions should also grow, as they present themselves as candidates in elections willing to pursue participatory policies and make representative institutions participatory from within.

All these potential changes, which are already beginning to be reflected in the recent LATINNO data, should not come without critical reflection. As citizen participation is increasingly defined and practiced as collaboration, co-production, crowdsourcing, and hacking, for example, it is crucial to ask how much active engagement is still involved and the extent to which democratic innovations are actually designed to enhance democracy.

It is worrisome that citizens may end up trapped in a renewed neoliberalism and become somehow exploited in their collaborative capacities, having their participatory skills captured and coopted for goals other than democracy enhancement. Just like in the 1990s several Latin American countries saw international organizations promote democratic innovations at the cost of turning citizens into clients and consumers, digital technology may enable governments to turn citizens into data producers, information givers, or problem reporters who have no real voice and whose demands are not heard.



# SIX RECOMMENDATIONS



While digital participation is a trend that cannot and should not be slowed down, digital democratic innovations should nonetheless integrate **deliberation as much as possible**, especially when they are designed to impact on the policy formulation and decision-making stage of the policy cycle. Deliberation is a crucial tool of will-formation, and as such it is irreplaceable. Whenever digital participation is combined with deliberation, this tends to result in better and more legitimate policies and laws, as some crowdpolicy and crowdlaw processes in Latin America already demonstrate.

While democracy is increasingly challenged by populism, and as authoritarian governments are elected and conservative forces advance throughout Latin America, it is crucial to institutionalize democratic innovations by enshrining them in the law, and to ensure that their decisions are binding. Legislation should also ensure that participatory institutions have the necessary resources to keep working regardless of government changes. Institutionalizing democratic innovations and making their decisions binding is also crucial to enhancing their policy impact.

3

In the face of frequent threats of suppression of the civic space in several countries in Latin America, the institutionalization of democratic innovations should include rules to prevent these from being co-opted by governments and misappropriated by political parties. It should also ensure the freedom and protect the rights of civil society organizations and activists, as well as prevent intimidation and violence against them.

4

The increase of digital democratic innovations should be accompanied by efforts to reduce the digital divide and expand internet access across Latin America. As long as digital inequalities persist, democratic innovations relying on digital technology will tend to, with few exceptions, deepen inequalities in citizen participation.

While citizen participation in all four stages of the policy cycle (agenda-setting, formulation and decision-making, implementation, and evaluation) is beneficial to democracy, democratic innovations focusing on policy-formulation and decision-making should especially be further expanded in order to increase policy impact.



As the Covid-19 pandemic has accentuated long-standing inequalities throughout Latin America, the design of new democratic innovations should in the coming years aim primarily at enhancing social equality and political inclusion, drawing on the success of many cases initiated in 2020 with the goal of addressing problems resulting from and deepened by the pandemic.

# **THE EVOLUTION OF DEMOCRATIC INNOVATIONS**

DOMINICAN R	ARGENTINA
E	BOLIVIA
EL SA	BRAZIL
GU	CHILE
но	COLOMBIA
	COSTA RICA



**IN LATIN AMERICA** 

PART 3

(With Melisa Ross)

REPUBLIC CUADOR ALVADOR ATEMALA **DNDURAS** MEXICO **NICARAGUA** PANAMA PARAGUAY PERU URUGUAY VENEZUELA

# ARGENTINA

In Argentina, citizen participation has evolved unevenly across the country. During the 1990s, the only participatory institutions adopted by the 1994 National Constitution were the Citizens' Initiative and Popular **Consultation**, which previously existed only at the subnational level. At the local level, participatory innovations were mainly aimed at improving housing, health, and social assistance by including those affected by policies in these areas in policy development.

In the context of the socioeconomic and political crisis of 2001, communities began to organize autonomously in response to poverty, unemployment, and deficiencies in basic public services. **Neighborhood Assemblies and** Popular Schools, for example, sought to solve local problems and

#### promoted horizontal, grassroots deliberation.

Between 2003 and 2015, Presidents Néstor Kirchner and his successor Cristina Fernández de Kirchner expanded democratic innovation at the national level. In 2003, Néstor Kirchner issued Decree No. 1172 to regulate access to public information and adopt forms of participatory policymaking. The norm established the legal basis for promoting public consultations at a national level. Deliberative processes were implemented in all regions of the country, such as the **Public Hearings to Reform the Civil Code and for** the Law Regulating Audiovisual **Communications Services** The Kirchner governments also improved political inclusion in social and cultural rights, bringing

## Innovations created per year





78% SUBNATIONAL 72% WITH THE GOVERNMENT

together interest groups and policymakers in the creation and implementation of participatory programs. Examples are the Audiovisual Technological Poles, the Cultural Points program, the participatory management of places of memory, or the **PROMEBA** (Neighborhood Improvement Program).

Social participation became highly formalized in Argentina, incorporating democratic innovations in legislation and regulation, although most cases have been implemented by local and regional governments. Subnational cases represent about two-thirds of all participatory innovations, but most of them are concentrated in Buenos Aires, Rosario, and a few other large cities. Local and regional political parties have encouraged citizen participation regardless of their political ideology.

Since 2016, there has been a regression in the role of governmen as promoters of democratic innovations. Under the presidency of Mauricio Macri (2015-2019), many innovations continued to exist formally, but stopped operating in

69% FORMALIZED

41% END: RESPONSIVENESS

	society became more active, making use of digital technology to create platforms and apps designed to monitor institutional performance. Apps were developed, for example, to control price regulation ( <b>Pricing</b>
đ	<b>Care App</b> ), monitor elections ( <b>Inspecting Argentina</b> ), and report crimes ( <b>Crime Map</b> ). The momentum reached by the #NiUnaMenos (#NotOneLess) movement has led to civil society initiatives developing several tools and innovations to improve women's safety and promote feminist legislation.
ıl	During the 2020 Covid-19 pandemic, regional governments created advisory bodies to develop local containment policies and digital mechanisms for data monitoring and transparency, contact tracing, and public information campaigns. Civil society organizations, in turn, created online platforms for mutual support among neighbors and hackathons
nts	aimed at improving living conditions during isolation.

ation Duving this powing a sivil

# BOLIVIA

In Bolivia, the 1994 Law of Popular Participation and the 1995 Law of Administrative Decentralization granted autonomy and resources to municipalities, opening the doors to a more democratic and participatory management of the local level in a still neoliberal national context. This legislation also reflected social movements' demands for greater inclusion, creating spaces for participatory planning and monitoring of public administration, such as the Vigilance Committees. At the national level, civil society was invited to several National Dialogues in 1997, 2000, and 2004, which were organized as multi-level processes aimed at establishing priorities for the future and debating poverty reduction policies.

The Movement Towards Socialism (MAS) won the 2005 presidential elections, bringing Evo Morales to the presidential office where he remained for the next 15 years. In 2009, he convened a Constituent Assembly, itself a highly participatory process, which recognized Bolivia as a plurinational state and also adopted, alongside representative democracy, participatory and community forms of government. The new Constitution made it possible to advance decentralization and recognized local forms of organization, giving communities a role in defining public policies. Thus, between 2009 and 2014, national and local governments promoted numerous participatory councils and tables, such as the Culture and Health Councils. These were

highly formalized, with regulatory frameworks embedded in legislation and administrative acts.

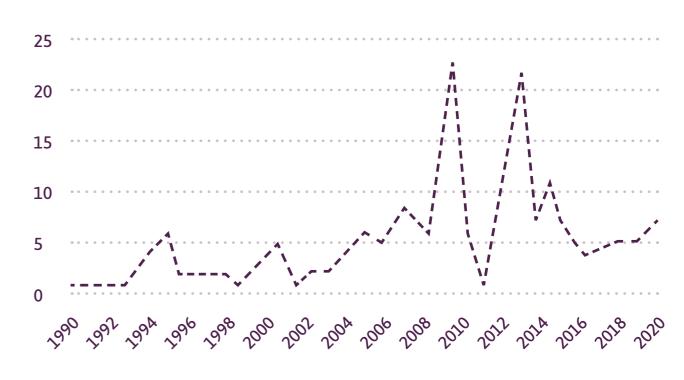
Citizen representation and deliberation are the most common forms of participation in Bolivia. Participatory innovations have focused mainly on improving access to basic goods such as health care. Furthermore, several institutions have been created for the protection of indigenous peoples and their languages and culture, considering that 62% of its population identifies as descendants of indigenous peoples and 36 nations inhabit the Bolivian territory. Examples are the Educational Councils of Indigenous Peoples and the Prior **Consultation with Indigenous Peoples** on hydrocarbon and gas exploration projects.

The protection of women's rights has recently become a prominent topic among participatory innovations in Bolivia, although mainly promoted in civil society initiatives. In 2019, the country recorded the highest femicide rates in South America, which motivated several organizations to evaluate the state's administrative and budgetary performance in terms of gender equality, such as the Women's Fiscal Justice **Observatory**, and to monitor the protection of women's rights, such as the Gender Observatory of Women's Coordinating Committee.



68% WITH THE GOVERNMENT

## Innovations created per year



## 155 Innovations

52% LOCAL LEVEL

27,310,660 PARTICIPANTS

# BRAZIL

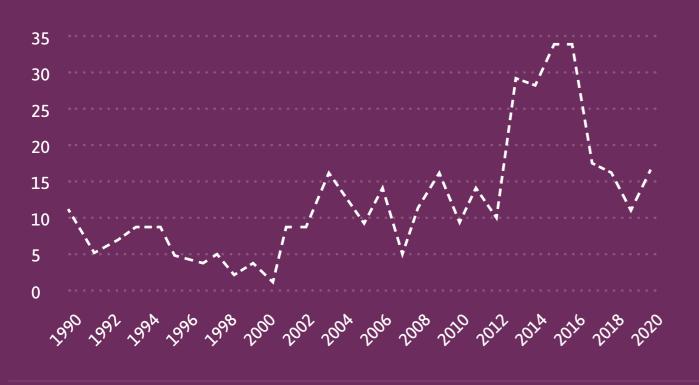
Considered the world's largest laboratory of democratic innovations, Brazil is the country with the largest number of innovations in Latin America. Brazilian civil society, very active in the transition to democracy, guaranteed its participation in several institutionalized spaces after the 1988 Constitution. The so-called "Citizen Constitution", besides ensuring that popular sovereignty is exercised directly (through Plebiscites, Referendums, and Popular Legislative **Initiatives**), laid the foundations for an entire institutional architecture of participation to be consolidated at the three levels of government.

At the local level, the autonomy granted to municipalities created the conditions for participatory institutions that combine deliberation and citizen

representation, and which play an important role in local management. As early as 1989, the concept of the Orcamento Participativo (Participatory Budget) created in the city of Porto Alegre allowed citizens to define priorities in the application of resources, thus seeking a fairer distribution of the municipal budget. Throughout the 1990s, a broad system of Municipal **Policy Councils** (for example, on Health, Social Assistance, Education, Defense of Children's and Adolescents' Rights, and **Environment**, among others) included representatives of civil society in the management of local policies.

At the national level, the two main participatory institutions are the National Councils and the National Public Policy Conferences, which combine deliberation and citizen





representation. In the Councils, suspended or weakened. Under civil society representatives engage Jair Bolsonaro, numerous national with government members at participatory institutions have different stages of the policy cycle, been extinguished through Decree while in the Conferences, citizens No. 9,759 of 2019, which was his participate in a staggered process first among other acts intended of national policy deliberation that to collapse Brazil's institutional begins at the municipal level. These architecture of social participation. institutions expanded greatly during Meanwhile, Brazilian civil society the government of Luiz Inácio Lula da has become the main actor in Silva (2003–2010), when they began introducing democratic innovations, to cover several new policy areas, often making use of digital tools. many of them aimed at promoting Examples are the pioneering use social equality and political inclusion. of machine learning to monitor In this context, the National Councils irregularities in deputies' expenses for the Promotion of Racial (Operation "Love Serenade"), and Equality, for Youth, for Combating several apps and online platforms **Discrimination and Protecting LGBT** developed to monitor and report Rights, for Indigenous Policy, and irregularities during the 2018 for the Rights of the Elderly, and elections (The Colour of Corruption, the National Conferences on Public **Elections without Fakes**, Policies for Women, for example, #EleicõesSemTruque). were created.

Digital participation was introduced early on in Brazil during the mandates of the Workers' Party, with important cases of collaborative online rulemaking, such as the Internet Civic Framework in 2009. and online platforms for citizen debate, such as **Participatório** and Participa.br.

After the impeachment of President Dilma Rousseff in 2016, participatory institutions declined dramatically in Brazil. During the interim presidency of Michael Temer, many were



During the Covid-19 pandemic, civil society also played an essential role in the face of denialism and misinformation promoted by the government. The Brasil.io platform was developed to offer accurate information on infections and deaths by collecting municipal data, while several citizen campaigns sought to connect communities and develop collective responses to the needs of the most vulnerable groups (Mapa Corona nas Periferias, Atados, Quilombos sem Covid).

# 36,387 Cases 111,931,879 PARTICIPANTS

# CHILE

Citizen participation developed rather late in Chile. Despite the important role of civil society in the country's democratization process, the political system established during the transition laid major barriers to the inclusion of citizens in public policies. During the 1990s, some councils with representation from civil society organizations emerged at the subnational level, such as the **Regional Councils** and the **Provincial Economic** and Social Councils, and urban management initiatives such as Chile Barrio or From Garbage to Rehabilitation.

In 2004, under the government of Ricardo Lagos, a draft bill for the Association and Participation Law was put forward by the National Executive. However, it was only enacted in 2011 as Law Nr. 20,500, which incorporates several instances of participation, such as **Civil Society Councils** (**COSOC**), **Public Hearings**, **Citizen Participation Units**, and **Participatory Dialogues**. From this moment on, Chilean civil society – which had withdrawn from political life since the transition, and lacked other channels for institutional engagement – began to introduce democratic innovations on its own. Despite these achievements, the inclusive capacity of these institutions is not as significant as in other countries.

By the end of Michele Bachelet's first term (2006–2010), an "Agenda for Citizen Participation" had been launched, and some participatory councils had been established within the executive branch, such as the **Presidential Advisory Council for Education Quality** created after the 2006 student

## Innovations created per year





demonstrations. In her second term (2014-2018), Bachelet issued a presidential instruction to enable citizen participation spaces in all public administration bodies. In this context, several institutions were created, such as the National **Council for Citizen Participation** and Strengthening of Civil Society alongside deliberative processes, such as the Citizen Dialogues for the Citizen Participation Plan. These attempts, however, could not avoid the critique of a "participatory deficit" during the Concertación governments, due to the merely consultative and informative nature of those institutions.

Still, it must be noted that President Bachelet also initiated a multilateral multi-channel deliberative process to prepare a constitutional reform, what would later become the centr demand of the 2019 mass protests. The process, organized from 2015 to 2017, comprised face-to-face mechanisms and an online platform (Constituent Citizens Platform). It took place at the provincial, local, and regional level, involving thousands of citizens in drafting a project for a new Constitution. However, the final document lacked parliamentary support and was not approved.

ר	Chilean civil society, for its part, has become more active since the 2011 protests, demanding important reforms, such as the self-convened <b>Citizen Plebiscite for Education</b>
	(2011), the Lobby Law Project (2013), and the Consultation "Change the Climate" (2019).
<b>y</b> ,	Civil society also adopted digital tools for participation early on. For example, during Bachelet's initiative for a constitutional
t	reform, civil society groups
y	organized their own innovations, such as the online debate
9	platforms <b>#NuestraConstitución</b> ( <b>#OurConstitution</b> ) and <b>Cabildeas</b> ( <b>Lobbies</b> ), and follow-up projects
t I,	such as the Observatory of the Constitutional Process in Chile.
-	During the mass protests of 2019 and 2020, digital tools also made it
al	possible to register police repression (Map of State Violence), debate social demands (Citizen Assemblies), and inform and organize participation
า	in the constitutional reform process planned for 2021 ( <b>Now It's Our Turn</b> <b>to Participate</b> ). They have also been
	essential for keeping civil society active and continuing the constituent
d	movement during the restrictions imposed by the Covid-19 pandemic.
u	

# **COLOMBIA**

Colombia's 1991 Constitution advanced the process of decentralization and autonomy of regions and municipalities, including citizen participation not only as a right, but also as a duty for all citizens. This mandate is complemented by Participation Law No. 134 of 1994. A highly institutionalized system of democratic innovations, many of which are enshrined in the law, has been built in the country on the foundations created by this Constitution. Such democratic innovations include the systems of Multi-level Councils in areas such as Education, Health, **Development, Science and** Technology, and Culture, among others.

The armed conflict between guerrillas and paramilitary groups has doubtless marked political life in

## Innovations created per year



Colombia. Numerous participatory innovations started addressing the conflict and its impact long before the 2016 Peace Agreements. These initiatives, usually conducted by civil society and at the local level, have contributed to the documentation of crimes committed during this violent period, but have also provided space for dialogue and the vocalization of demands for peace and democratic reconstruction. Examples include the 1996 **Permanent Assembly of Civil** Society for Peace, the Territorial Constituent Assemblies in 1997, and, at the national level, the 2009 **National Agreement of Minimum Reconciliation and Peace** and the 2013 National Pact for Peace. On the government's part, efforts to reach agreements with communities include the National, Regional and Municipal Peace Councils from



1998 onwards, and the decentralized process "Territorial Peacebuilding from Below", from 2015 onwards. Once the Peace Agreements were approved, several institutions with civil society representation were created to implement and monitor compliance, such as the Women's Special Instance for a Gender Approach to Peace and the **Commission for the Clarification** of Truth, for Coexistence, and Non-Repetition (CEV). Independent citizen observatories have also been established, such as An Eye on Peace and Citizens Caring for Peace.

The democratic innovations initiated by the government have also focused on the political inclusion of minorities and disadvantaged groups through the creation of representative councils at all administrative levels. This is the case with the **National**, **Departmental and Local Disability** Councils, or the Afro-Colombian **Community Councils**. The main beneficiary group of nationwide participation policies, however, has been young people, who are involved in Youth Councils and Youth **Platforms**, decentralized assemblies that allow them to deliberate and

# 79,287 Cases

#### 45,972,030 PARTICIPANTS

influence the National Youth Agenda, and specific consultation processes, such as the Participation Process for the Regulation of Law 1622, Youth Citizenship Statute.

Colombian civil society has also become very active in overseeing public authorities, especially at the local level, where various monitoring networks have expanded. The tradition of social auditing began in the 1990s with the expansion of **Citizen Oversight Committees**, which allow citizen representatives to monitor and report on the performance of any state body. Another successful example is the Network of "How Are We Doing?" **Cities**, that involves local citizens in the evaluation of urban improvements made by municipalities, and which has expanded throughout Latin America. Colombian civil society has also been a pioneer in the use of digital technologies, for example to improve local management by connecting citizens with the municipal administration (Active Citizens, Open Bogotá), as well as to collaboratively monitor government actions (Political Map, SeamOS).

# **COSTA RICA**

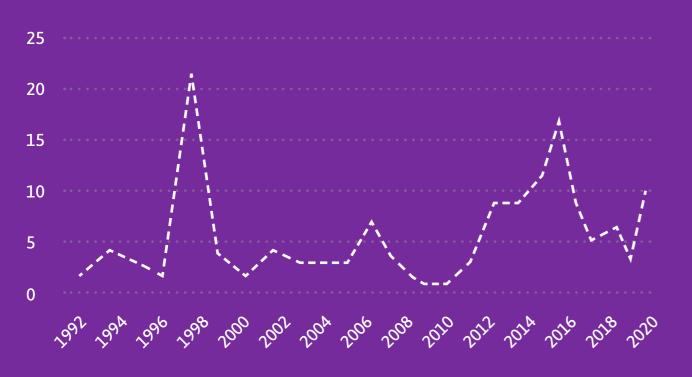
Costa Rica is an exceptional case in the region that combines a stable democracy with highly institutionalized participatory governance. Mechanisms of direct democracy, for example, were institutionalized very early on in the country. The 1844 Constitution incorporated the **Revocation** of Mandate, while the 1949 constitutional text incorporated the **Plebiscite**. On the other hand, the incorporation of the Referendum and the **Popular Initiative** into the Constitution and the addition of participation as a democratic principle only occurred in 2002-2003 under the new Article 3.

A large segment of democratic innovations in Costa Rica took place at the local level. This is due, primarily, to the approval of the

Municipal Code in 1998, which included the possibility of holding Assemblies, Public Consultations, and Plebiscites for the Revocation of Mandate at the cantonal and district level. These mechanisms allow local administrations to involve citizens in decisionmaking and urban management. Subsequently, the Decentralization Law of 2010 advanced the transfer of powers to local governments, including participatory mechanisms for social oversight and the definition of budgets.

The national government, in turn, has convened numerous deliberative roundtables with the participation of civil society organizations to resolve difficult political junctures and outline government policies. The Forum "A

## Innovations created per year



# **165** Innovations

50% DELIBERATION RESPONSIVENESS

70% END:

#### **Reasonable National Agreement**",

for example, was convened at the initiative of the National Executive t resolve the fiscal deficit in 1994, and the National Consultation Forum 1998 sought to establish a common governance agenda. In more recent years, deliberation with civil society and the private sectors has been promoted to reach government agreements. Examples are the 2014 National Dialogue Tables, which included citizens in the discussion and definition of policies on transparency, employment, quality life, and energy.

The country also stands out in the field of digital government and open data. Costa Rica is among the pioneering countries in the region in this area, developing a total of four **Open Government Plans** through participatory processes. At the national level, several dialogues on digitalization and data transparency have taken place, including

## 4,184 Cases

3,482,977 PARTICIPANTS

	citizens in the platform I Am Open Government, the National Open
o	Data Commission, and the Open
d	Justice Working Table. In addition,
in	civil society has promoted initiatives
	· ·
1	to monitor these advances, such
t	as through the <b>Open Data Index</b> .
,	The use of digital participation has
	also steadily increased since 2011
	alongside civil society's incipient
	leadership in the area.
	During the Covid-19 pandemic,
	citizens and civil society
~f	organizations joined forces to
of	develop digital tools to support
	online education and to facilitate
	humanitarian assistance. The Costa
	Rican government has been one
	of the few to bring together civil
n	society, the private sector, and
	medical professionals to participate
	in drafting responses to the
	pandemic through the Working
	Table for Humanitarian Assistance,
/	the Health Sector Roundtable, and
	the <b>Dialogue Table on Fiscal Crisis</b> .

# DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



Democratic innovation in the Dominican Republic developed alongside the modernization and decentralization of public administration initiated in the 1990s, which delegated powers to regional and municipal governments. Law Nr. 176-07 of the National District and Municipalities also created a multi-level and mandatory system of local participation, which includes Municipal Participatory **Budgets, Municipal Monitoring Committees, Development Councils and Development** Plans, Social Audit Commissions, **Open Town Halls**, and municipal Referendums and Plebiscites. The 2010 constitutional reform consolidated further direct democracy mechanisms, such as the **Popular Legislative Initiative** and the right to request public data and information.

However, local administrations have faced numerous challenges in fulfilling these legal mandates, including high rates of crime and violence, corruption, and citizen disaffection. Civil society has monitored the implementation of reforms in several municipalities, such as with the Local Democracy Watch between 2009 and 2012 and the Observatory for the Right to the City, created in 2010. In 2016, the government convened the Forums "Let's Talk about Municipal Reform" to discuss the progress and shortcomings of participatory institutions at the local level, and to give civil society an opportunity to identify its preferences and interests for future reforms.

Many innovations in the country are aimed at improving transparency and accountability. At the national level, the Dominican Republic is part of the first generation of Latin American countries committed to the Open Government Partnership, which it joined in 2011. The governments of Leonel Fernandez (2004–2012) and Danilo Medina (2012-2020) have committed to advancing the digitization of public administration and opening public data. They have held citizen consultations for four Open Government Plans to date, and opened

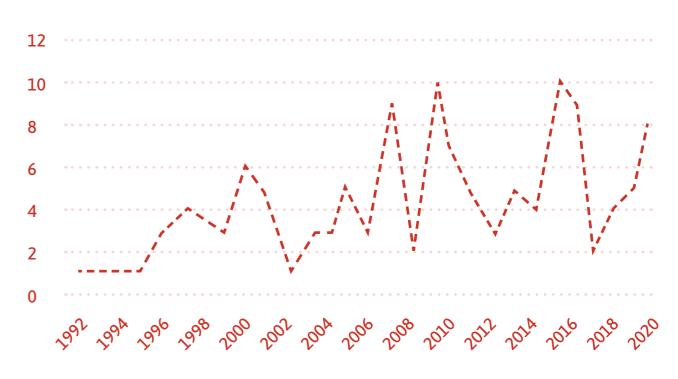
further channels for participation to include citizen preferences in policies on information and communication technologies. Examples are the **Digital Agenda** of the **National Commission for the Information Society (CNSIC)** and the **E-Consultations Portal of the Dominican State**.

Through decrees, these governments also facilitated the creation of **Oversight Commissions** to monitor, for example, compliance with the commitments of the **National Pact for Education Reform** (2013), as well as purchases made by the **Ministry of Public Works** (2014). In 2020, a **Covid-19 Citizen Oversight Commission** was also established as an independent body to monitor government

## **124 Innovations**

60%	62% NATIONAL
FORMALIZED	LEVEL

## Innovations created per year



procurement and contracting during the pandemic.

Digital participation has become the central channel for innovation in the country since the 2016 elections and the corruption scandals that sparked massive protests in 2017. Digital innovations are mainly promoted by civil society organizations and international organizations. Examples include the **2016 Electoral Oversight** online platform, where citizens could report non-compliance during the elections and provide information regarding allegations of electoral fraud, and Se Vigilante (Become an **Overlooker)**, a platform for citizens to register complaints over public services.

## 3,432 Cases

103,467 PARTICIPANTS

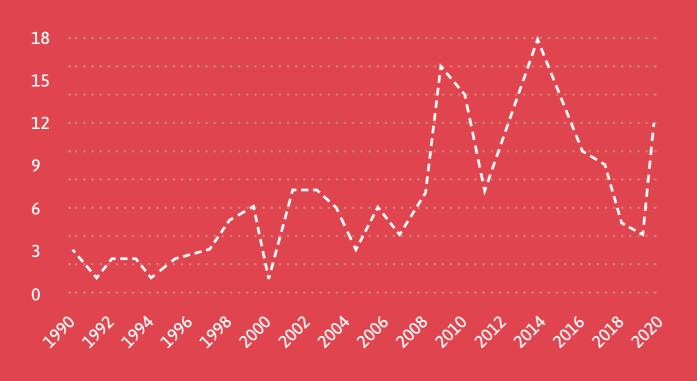
# ECUADOR

During the 1990s, democratic innovation advanced at a slow pace in Ecuador. The main participatory channels were national Popular Consultations, such as the consultations in 1994, 1996 and 1997, which submitted political and electoral reforms to the will of the citizens. A few Local Consultations to determine provincial autonomy were also held. Around the year 2000, some spaces for citizen representation were created at the national level, aimed at including traditionally underrepresented groups in the formulation of policies specific to the needs and interests of those groups, such as the National Council of Children and Adolescents (CNNA) and the Development Council of the **Nations and Peoples of Ecuador** (CODENPE).

Like other Andean countries, Ecuador underwent a constituent process at the turn of the century. The 2008 Constitution incorporated several rights and institutions of citizen participation, such as the **Council for Citizen Participation** and Social Control (CPCCS), the **Normative Popular Initiative** and the Revocation of Mandate. It also formalized the Citizen **Observatories** that had existed since the 1990s. During Rafael Correa's first two terms in office (2007–2013), numerous laws were passed expanding on the constitutional framework and regulating further participation mechanisms, such as the Participation Law (2009), which made public deliberation a principle of citizen participation.

Based on this new legislation, some

## Innovations created per year





national participatory institutions were adopted as spaces for deliberation between the government and civil society, such as the **Councils** for Equality (in the areas of Gender, Intergenerational Equality, **Disability, Peoples and Nationalities,** and Human Mobility). Their goal was to promote policies to combat discrimination. However, since their inception, these councils have been surrounded by criticism regarding their actual potential for participatory and inclusive decision-making.

Many democratic innovations promoted by the government at the national level sought the inclusion of indigenous and rural communities, as well as the improvement of living conditions and social equality. With the support of social movements, several participatory institutions were created to collaboratively define strategic objectives and governmental guidelines, such as the **National Council for the Equality** of Peoples and Nationalities, the **Plurinational and Intercultural Citizens' Assembly for Good** Living, and the Plurinational and **Intercultural Conference on Food** Sovereignty.

During Correa's third term (2013-2017), however, criticism of many

## 9,280 Cases

#### 39,934,297 PARTICIPANTS

of these institutions increased and many questioned the legitimacy of their decisions due to the proximity of citizens' representatives to the governing party, Alianza PAIS. Civil society began to introduce mechanisms to demand transparency and accountability in public administration, such as through the **Legislative Observatory** and the **Careful with Our Money** initiative. This trend was accentuated during Lenin Moreno's presidency (2017-2021), in a context of growing dissatisfaction with government measures and the economic situation. Finally, digital participation is incipient in the country, although its use by civil society and the private sector has increased since 2016. Some initiatives have taken the form of hackathons to develop urban mobility solutions at the local level (Hackathon for Public Transport), or transparency and public control platforms (Transparent Ecuador, **Compromisómetro**). Digital tools became more relevant during the Covid-19 pandemic, allowing citizens to connect with each other and develop responses to the humanitarian crisis (Citizen **CoLaboratory, Ecuador in** Solidarity).

# **EL SALVADOR**

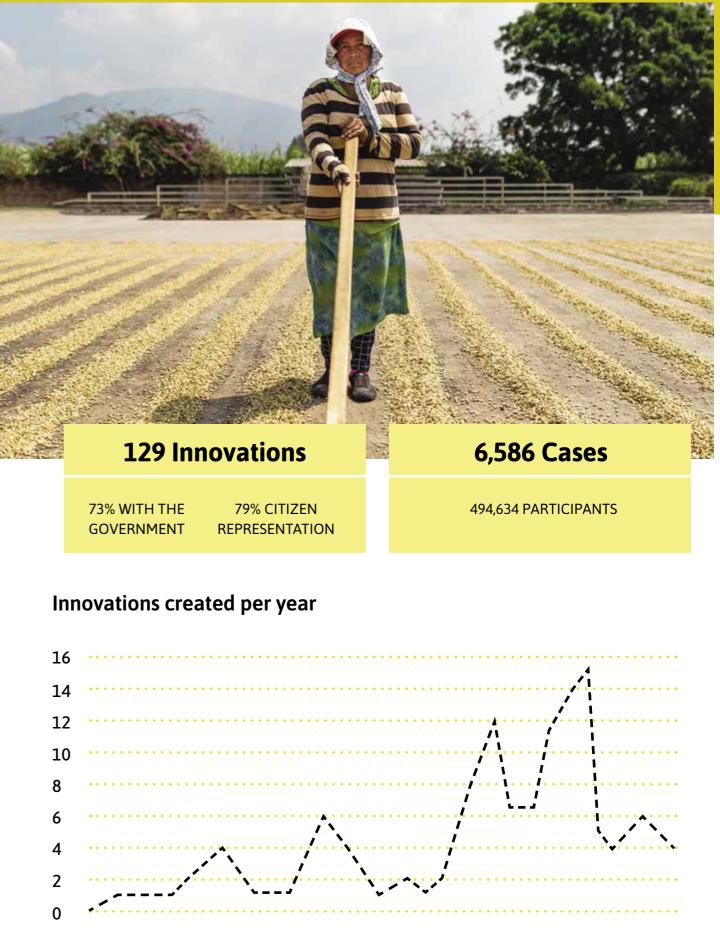
The 1992 Peace Accords initiated a series of political reforms that allowed the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) to enter the political sphere in El Salvador. In the following years, the party won several local elections, and began to introduce local participatory mechanisms for joint urban planning with citizens. Examples include the Zonal Coordination Boards and, from 2000 onwards, Participatory **Budgeting** and **Participatory** Territorial Planning. In later years, participatory resource management models were incorporated, such as the Mancomunal Water **Committees** and the **Citizen Controllership Committees,** where citizens can monitor the efficiency and transparency of local administrations. This development of subnational innovations was supported by the decentralization process, formalized in the Municipal Code of 2005, which also adopted mechanisms of local direct democracy, such as **Public** Hearings, Popular Consultation, and Neighborhood and Sectoral **Consultations**.

With the victory of Mauricio Funes of the FMLN in the 2009 presidential elections, the "electoral authoritarianism" that had followed the democratic transition was broken. From this moment on, the national government became the main actor in introducing democratic innovations. Initially, some innovations based on citizen deliberation and representation, such as the Economic and Social Council of El Salvador and the **Five-Year Development Plans**,

were expanded to the national level. Additionally, deliberation and consultation mechanisms were created, including specific groups in the development of public policies that directly affect them, such as the Permanent Table of Women and Family, of the Elderly, and of **People with Disabilities.** 

Despite these advances, major shortcomings of the Salvadoran democracy have endured and intensified over the last decade. High rates of poverty and social exclusion, gang violence, and mass emigration represent major barriers to citizen participation and to the quality of life of Salvadoran citizens – even more so under the authoritarian drift of President Nayib Bukele since 2019.

Despite these challenges, since 2017 civil society has become more active in the country. Citizen-led initiatives have focused on conducting audits of public spending, as in the Citizen Monitoring of the National Social Spending Budget and the Citizen **Observatory to the Court of** Accounts of the Republic; or on proposing digital mechanisms to improve accountability, as in the **Opening Data** initiative and in the GobData Elaboration Process, a web-based platform for requests for access to and use of public data. Digital technologies have been deployed by civil society to work on other issues, too, such as urban conditions (Sívar, TeclaApp) and monitoring corruption (Controle Cidadão).

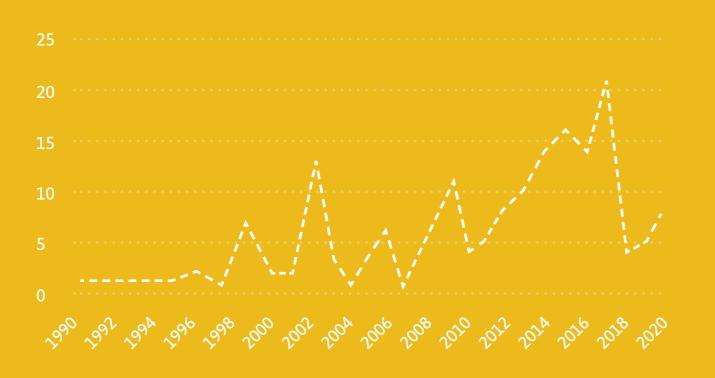




# **GUATEMALA**

In 1985, Guatemala's redemocratization began, and Government Agreement No. 15-86 kickstarted an early decentralization process that granted autonomy to municipalities. This legal foundation allowed for the creation of one of the country's first innovations, the **System of Development Councils** (SICODE). This system consisted of a highly institutionalized participatory architecture of interconnected deliberative councils at the subnational level (Community, Municipal, Regional, and **Departmental**) that include civil society representatives in the collaborative design, implementation, and evaluation of local development policies and budgeting. 12,819 development councils - only including those at the community level - had been created by 2010 across the country.

# Innovations created per year



The 1996 Peace Accords, which

ended the civil war and the Ixil

for future processes related to the recognition and inclusion

of indigenous peoples, such as

the Community Development Program for Peace, which

involved local communities in

the postconflict reconstruction

process, and for the creation of

spaces for clarification, such as the

Washington, and the International

**Intersectorial Dialogue Tables in** 

**Commission against Impunity in** 

However, the political inclusion of

indigenous peoples was denied in

the Constitutional Referendum

spaces for deliberation have been

created to advance the rights of

these communities, such as the

of 1999. Since then, numerous

Guatemala (CICIG).

genocide, served as a framework



44% WITHOUT THE 46% GOVERNMENT DELIBERATION

Community Consultations of Good Faith to condemn violations of ILO Convention 169. The government has also initiated a few dialogue processes with indigenous peoples in order to identify their demands and reach agreement on reform plans, such as with the Intersectora Dialogue Table on Indigenous Peoples in 2002, the Indigenous Peoples and Inclusion Roundtable in 2006, and the Agenda for the Development of Indigenous Peoples in 2010.

Another important issue for democratic innovations in Guatema is environmental protection and direct community management of natural resources. Mechanisms for concession and participatory co-management, such as the Forestry Communities, have been successful in this endeavor, as have collaborative planning processes, such as the 2003-2012 National Forestry Agenda, the 2009 Nation **Climate Change Policy**, and the 2016–2020 Environmental Pact. All these processes have resulted in the adoption of public policy guidelines. The deliberative aspect

## 45,525 Cases

#### 40% END: POLITICAL INCLUSION

2,766,083 PARTICIPANTS

əd	of citizen participation in Guatemala is also evident in the Water Law Commission, which is in charge of the formulation of a law to regulate water access and use through citizen participation. To this end, Water Dialogues were held in 2016, involving 1,881 participants from 17 different sectors.
e	In 2015, accusations of corruption and harassment led to massive protests demanding the resignation of President Otto Pérez Molina, and later his successor, Jimmy Morales.
ala	This marked the starting point in the mobilization of organized civil society, which has since assumed a much more central role than the government in organizing participatory processes. Since then, digital tools have been increasingly incorporated into citizen initiatives
2	to improve transparency and allow control over political processes. Thus, platforms such as Visible
al	Elections, campaigns such as #DateCuenta (Be Aware), and applications such as MP Elections were developed by citizen groups with the goal of monitoring the 2019 elections.

# HONDURAS



The institutionalization of citizen participation in Honduras finds its roots in the 1993 Constitution, which includes mechanisms of direct democracy such as the **Plebiscite** and the **Referendum**. During the 1990s, very few democratic innovations were introduced in the country. Some which were introduced included Open Town Halls, which allowed citizens to dialogue with authorities at the local level, and the National Council for Sustainable Development, which advises the president with the support of representatives from civil society, academia, and the private sector. In 2000, in a context of growing economic difficulties, some deliberative spaces were introduced at the national level with representation from civil society and the private sector to reach consensus on the road to economic recovery and improve democratic institutions. Examples were the **Economic and** Social Council and the National **Anti-Corruption Council.** 

A Citizen Participation Law was first introduced in 2006 after the election of Manuel Zelaya. It provides an institutional framework for different channels of dialogue and consultation with citizens, such as the Municipal and Regional Development Councils and the Community Roundtables for Citizen Participation, where civil society representatives meet with subnational administrations to articulate joint proposals. It also mandates consultations with civil society and the inclusion of groups in vulnerable situations as part of the Development Plans.

The institutional coup against Zelaya in 2009 led civil society to demand greater participation in political processes and public management. The governments that followed of Lobo Sosa and Juan Orlando Hernández responded by creating new consultative councils at the national level, such as the National **Councils for Education**, Youth **Policy, Competitiveness and** Innovation, Food and Nutrition, and **Employment**. These institutions bring together representatives from civil society and the private sector to discuss government guidelines. A Decentralization Law was also enacted in 2016 which incorporated civil society participation as a guiding principle for local administrations. In the same year, a participatory **Consultation** was held with Indigenous and Afro-

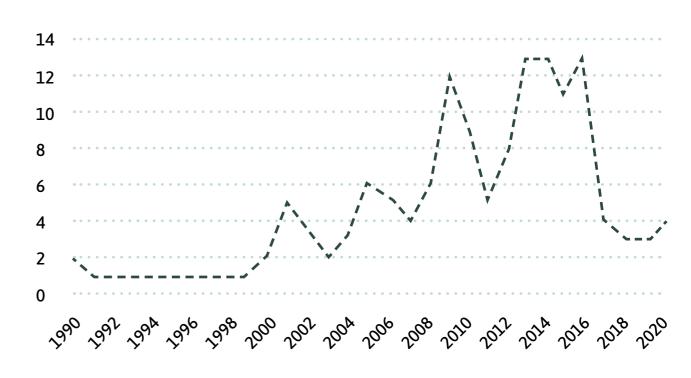
#### Honduran Peoples to collaborative draft a Law on Free, Prior and Informed Consultation.

In Honduras, the management of natural resources and the environment has motivated several participatory processes. Among the most widespread of the innovations on this issue are the Water Council which have been implemented some 5,000 times throughout the country. They are spaces for citizen participation and community management of public services at the level of villages and municipalities. In more recent years, deliberative spaces have been created to debate measures to counter the impact of climate change, such as Participato Agroclimatic Committees at the regional level and Consultations or Mining Concessions with citizens at

## **138 Innovations**

69% NATIONAL	80%
LEVEL	DELIBERATION

## Innovations created per year



ely	the local level.
	Like other Central American countries, Honduras joined the
	Open Government Partnership in
	2011, and has produced four <b>Open</b>
	Government Plans since then.
3	They were developed in multiple
S	stages of collaborative planning
ls,	with civil society. Regarding citizen-
	led initiatives, several observatories
	on the democratization of public
	administration have been created,
y	such as the Social Observatory of
he	Decentralization (OSD), as well as
	observatories to monitor compliance
	with government commitments,
е	such as the National Observatory
	of Climate Change for Sustainable
ory	Development (ONCC-DS) and, more
	recently, the <b>Observatory of Anti-</b>
n	Corruption Criminal Policy (OPCA).
at	

## 6,245 Cases

660,305 PARTICIPANTS

# **MEXICO**

In Mexico, decentralization reforms were initiated in the 1980s while still under a one-party regime. The reforms gave rise to the first deliberative spaces for joint planning with civil society at the local and regional level, for example through the Municipal and State **Committees for Development** Planning. In the 1990s, some deliberative spaces with civil society representatives were created at the national level, such as the Advisory Council of the National **Commission for Human Rights and** the National Advisory Council for Sustainable Development.

With the victory of the National Action Party (PAN) in 2000, democratic innovations expanded at a rate that made Mexico one of the countries with the most participatory institutions in the region. Numerous councils were

established at the national and subnational levels, such as the **Councils for the Prevention of Discrimination, Human Rights** Monitoring, the Development of Indigenous Peoples, Water, and Sustainable Rural Development. Despite their prolific creation, several studies point out shortcomings in the implementation of these councils and in their participatory nature, as well as a lack of articulation between the subnational and federal levels.

Over the past decade, the government has attempted to respond to citizen demands by incorporating mechanisms for citizen representation and deliberation to address issues such as corruption, impunity, organized crime, and human rights violations. The National Anti-Corruption System, for example,

## Innovations created per year





## 329 Innovations

40% WITHOUT THE 36% WITH DIGITAL GOVERNMENT PARTICIPATION

brings together civil society with members of the government to strengthen transparency, while **Public Forums for National Peace** and Reconciliation have allowed citizens to voice their concerns about violence and crime. Digital tools we also implemented to create spaces for exchange and convey citizens' preferences to the government, such as Make Your Law, You Evaluate, ar **GOB.MX/CONSULTAS.** 

At the local level, Mexico City has set the scene for ample experimentation between the state and civil society. In addition to a tradition of citizen consultations where inhabitants can directly decide on different issues, innovative models have been implemented such as the **City** Lab, where citizens propose and implement urban improvement measures; HackCDMX, a hackathon where citizens proposed solutions based on open data provided by the local government; and ConstituciónCDMX (CDMX

**Constitution**), a platform to collaboratively draft the city's new political Constitution.

With the election of Andrés Manuel López Obrador (AMLO) in 2018, direc democracy mechanisms gained new momentum. There were, for exampl

22.364.184 PARTICIPANTS

	<b>Consultations on the Construction</b>
	of the Texcoco International Airport
	and the Public Consultation for
	the Commissioning of the Morelos
	Thermal Power Plant, and, like other
ut	consultations initiated by AMLO,
re	their results were binding. However,
	the government's participatory
	mechanisms have been criticized for
h	their poor organization and for taking
nd	place outside of existing institutions,
	thus adding to the uncertainty about
t	the validity and legitimacy of their
n	results.
	Mexican civil society has always been
	a central actor in the introduction of
	democratic innovations and the early
	incorporation of digital participation
	in the country. Several initiatives are
	noteworthy; those for: monitoring
	public actions (NarcoData, National
	Citizen Observatory), electoral
Ì	and institutional performance
	(Your Count, No More Fraud),
	documentation of the impact of
	violence (Pawah!, We Are Missing
	More), response to natural disasters
	(Sismo MX), monitoring of public
	services (Dodgy Work), as well as
	deliberative forums at various levels
	to discuss gender policies (Gender
ct	Legislative Agenda 2019), among others.
/	oulers.
e,	

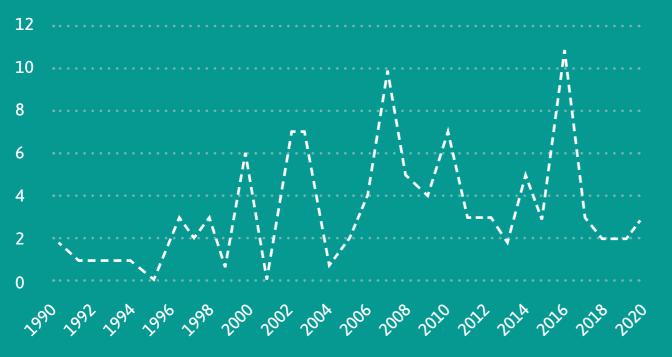
# NICARAGUA

In Nicaragua, the democratic transition was initiated with **Open Town Halls**, deliberative processes that preceded the 1987 Constitution. In them, civil society demanded universal suffrage and participation rights. With the Peace Accords that same year, the legal framework for decentralization was formalized, including civil society participation in the design, development, and evaluation of public policies at the subnational level. In this context, for example, Municipal Town Halls were implemented, allowing local governments to submit their plans and projects for debate with the community.

In 1990, the Regional Autonomous **Councils** were established as spaces for dialogue between the government, indigenous

peoples, and Afro descendants, to collaboratively develop public policies. In the following years a few deliberative bodies were created at the national level, such as the National Council of Education, which included civil society in the formulation, implementation, and evaluation of educational plans and programs, and the 1997 National Dialogue, which involved civil society organizations in the process of political reform, resulting in 112 thematic agreements. During that time, at the local level, mechanisms for the collaborative implementation of public services with community participation expanded, including initiatives such as the Proactive Community **Policing Model**, which to date has included some 100,000 citizens in efforts to reduce crime in local communities.

# Innovations created per year





## **109 Innovations**

47% WITHOUT THE GOVERNMENT

DELIBERATION

In 2003, the Citizen Participation Law institutionalized several new participation mechanisms, such as the Citizens' Initiative and **Consultations** at all levels, and formalized existing ones, such as **Municipal Assemblies, Developmen** Councils, and Citizen Petitions. The **Councils of Citizen Power**, a space for participation and coordination with civil society to combat poverty and social inequality, were embedded within this legal framework. These bodies communicate the needs of local communities to the central government in order to include their demands in decision-making processes.

Daniel Ortega's presidency, which began in 2007, is becoming less and less democratic. His government has advanced some participatory bodies at the national level, which, however, have been criticized for their clientelist character and their being controlled by party activists, including the Councils of Citizen Power themselves. As the space for democratic innovation in the country has narrowed, civil society has become more active. With the support of international organizations, it has established numerous observatories to monitor institutional performance,

## 13,473 Cases

#### 1,149,032 PARTICIPANTS

1	n	ł	k	

such as the **Observatory of Human** and Autonomy Rights, of Sexual and Reproductive Health, and of Violence. At the local level, international agencies have supported initiatives to monitor compliance with participatory budgeting (My Municipal Budget, Our Budget **Observatory**).

Since the government's violent response to the 2018 protests, civil society has mainly organized in alternative spaces. One example are the 2018 National Dialogues, from which the government withdrew, and that then continued independently. This process resulted in the National Agenda, a reform catalog to recover democratic stability developed through a multi-level dialogue. Further initiatives were organized to monitor political violence, such as the International Observatory for Human Rights. In 2020, faced with the government's denial of the pandemic, civil society organized a **Citizen Observatory of Covid-19 in** Nicaragua, and a Multidisciplinary Scientific Committee to address the population's lack of information about infection rates and health and hygiene measures.

# PANAMA

In Panama, citizen participation preceded democratic institutionalization. In the **1992 Referendum**, Panamanians voted for a new Constitution, and in 1993. the Bambito Encounters were held preceding the first democratic elections, and bringing together representatives of political parties and society to agree on the 1994 electoral process. During the 1990s, a system of national councils was consolidated, designed to include civil society in the formulation of various social policies. Those councils comprised the National

Council of Women, the National Council of Family and Minors, and the National Council of Public Policies for the Youth.

Democratic innovation has been driven mainly by the government, often supported by international agencies. In particular, the national executive branch has been the main actor responsible for the implementation of participatory processes and mechanisms, which have been introduced frequently through national regulations and programs. At the regional and

178 Innovations	6,586 Cases	
80% WITH THE 63% NATIONAL GOVERNMENT LEVEL	3,261,249 PARTICIPANTS	
Innovations created per year		





local level, outstanding cases of participation are the Watershed Committees and Advisory Council which bring together representative of government, civil society, and the private sector to seek consensual decision-making and concerted action on the administration of water resources.

In addition, Law Nr. 6 of 2002 established the government's obligation to promote participation and Law Nr. 29 of 2009 decentralized public administration. This legislatic has allowed for the expansion of innovations in the following years. This is evident, for instance, in the capital Panama City, where urban management decisions have been submitted to Public Hearings and **Community Meetings for residents** to discuss local problems and vote for solutions. Additionally, the **Prior Consultation of Indigenous Peoples**, contemplated in regional legislation since 1997, was finally adopted at the national level via new legislation in 2016.

The Panama Canal is often a focus of attention in the country's political life, and several participatory planning processes have addressed issues related to it. In 2001, the **Immediate Action Plan** included citizen representation for the development of a management plan for the canal watershed, and in 2006 the **National Concertation** 

<b>ls</b> , es e	for Development dialogue process allowed citizens to influence the decision to allocate one- third of Canal revenues to public investment. The 2006 Referendum also submitted to popular vote the construction of a third set
er	of locks on the canal, while the Interinstitutional Commission of the Panama Canal (CICH) includes
ı, ed	representatives of civil society organizations in monitoring the canal's management.
on	Another prominent topic in Panama is youth participation. A total of 14% of all innovations in the country aim to include children and adolescents in defining policies that affect them and in monitoring their rights. Initiatives range from
5	the participatory elaboration of the Plan of Action with Panamanian Youth in 1997 and the creation of the Observatory of Children and Adolescents' Rights in 2014, to the most recent Inter-Institutional
W	Strategic Plan for Youth 2015– 2019 and the establishing of the National Council on Childhood and Adolescence in 2019.
al	Finally, the country has an important tradition of direct democracy. In addition to referendums to approve constitutional reforms, more than 100 <b>Citizen Initiatives</b> for legislation have been submitted to the National Assembly.

# PARAGUAY

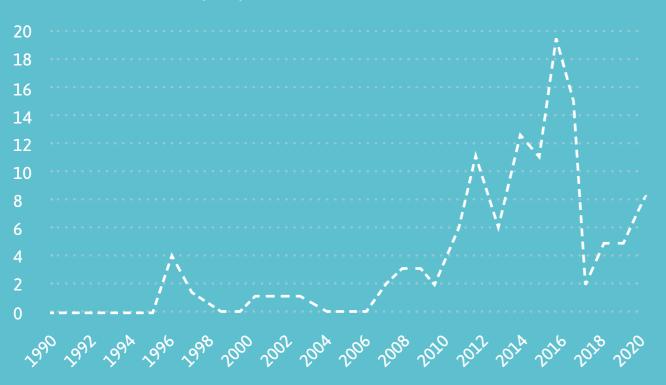
Citizen participation developed late in Paraguay. With the end of Alfredo Stroessner's military dictatorship in 1989, the 1992 Constitution laid the foundation for the rights to civil association, and for a decentralization process that would only come into effect in later decades. During the 1990s, however, a national system of multi-level Health Councils was established that had a positive impact on public health services, thanks to its collaboration with civil society organizations that were active directly in each community.

Since 2010, with Municipal Organic Law No. 3,966, further participation mechanisms have been created in the municipalities. The law expanded the urban management capacities of the Neighborhood **Community Boards** and allowed

citizen consultation through **Municipal Public Hearings.** Some participatory planning and implementation processes for neighborhood projects are concentrated in the capital city of Asunción: Asu Viva, a deliberation process for the implementation of a Sustainable Development Plan; **Clean Asunción**, through which waste separation and recycling are carried out with the support of neighborhood commissions; and **ASU Challenge**, a digital platform where residents can prioritize infrastructure works.

Unlike other countries in the region, the national government has played a minor role in the introduction of innovations in Paraguay. During Fernando Lugo's government (2008-2012), some participatory mechanisms were

## Innovations created per year



implemented to improve indigenou education, such as the **Qom People** Literacy Project, or to create more consultative councils at the nationa level, such as Concultura within the National Secretariat of Culture.

Civil society, in contrast, has been active in developing participatory mechanisms, especially in recent years. At the national level, they hav focused mainly on monitoring public administration and accountability. Examples are Paraguayoite, a citize monitoring organization of the distribution of resources from the National Fund for Public Investment and Development, and Nañomoirű, a social auditing initiative of the Tekoporã conditional cash transfer program.

In 2012, organized citizens promote **Na Puá for a Citizen Participation** Law, a debate process to promote a participation bill in parliament. Since 2014, civil society has also mobilized to improve data protection and cybersecurity in response to a bill on online data retention. The



us e's al ne	<b>#Pyrawebs</b> campaign organized in-person and online deliberation forums, and succeeded in getting the bill rejected. The campaign was followed by a collaborative drafting of a <b>National Cybersecurity Plan</b> in 2015, and later by the creation of the <b>Antipyrawebs Observatory</b> .
	The 2017 political crisis seems to
ve	have had a negative impact on
lic	the development of participation
	in Paraguay, but civil society
en	has started to recover. In 2019,
	for example, when the national
	government obtained international
nt	funds to modernize and digitalize
i,	public administration, a new citizen
	campaign was organized under
	the hashtag <b>#DigitalAgendaPY</b> ,
	demanding participation in decision-
ed	making on the use of these funds.
	And in 2020, during the Covid-19
	pandemic, civil society organizations
	promoted several digital initiatives to
	face the challenges arising from the
on	health emergency in the country.

## **124 Innovations**

# PERU

In Peru, participatory innovations were highly formalized early on. After the 1993 constitutional reform, a Citizen Participation Law was enacted in 1994, followed by the Decentralization Law in 2002, and by the introduction of a mandatory, multi-level Participatory Budgeting system in 2003.

The country's turbulent political history has persistently challenged representative institutions, but the crises have created the context for multiple collaborations between the state and civil society. One example is the transitional government of 2001, which used deliberative roundtables with civil society to overcome the political crisis following Fujimori's resignation. In this period, relatively broad capacities for decision-making and implementation of public policies were delegated to civil society representatives, as in the **Committees for Agreement on the Fight against Poverty**, the **National Agreement** process, and the **Governance Forum** that was subsequently established.

Deliberative innovations have also been implemented for the management of natural resources, the protection of reserves, and the recognition of the rights of indigenous communities. The National System of Protected Natural Areas (SINANPE) of 2001 created various forms of participation for the management of natural areas and promoted dialogue roundtables with indigenous groups and the private sector to reach agreements on resource exploitation. The Baguá conflict in 2009 further

## Innovations created per year



## 262 Innovations

38% WITH CIVIL SOCIETY 20% FOR MINORITY 8% FOR INDIGENOUS GROUPS PEOPLES

motivated the incorporation of prior consultation mechanisms, leading to the collective drafting of Forestry and Wildlife Law Nr. 29763 of 2011, followed by the legal framework for Prior Consultation with Indigenous or Native Peoples also drafted in close collaboration with representatives from indigenous communities.

In more recent years, corruption scandals involving numerous former presidents and politicians have led civil society and international organizations to develop digital platforms to monitor officials, increase accountability, and improve transparency in an effort to combat corruption and impunity. Examples are the **Observatories of Legislative Performance, Justice**, and **Regional Governors**. In response to the crisis of legitimacy caused by such scandals, Peruvian citizens were called to vote in a

Peru



ıl	<b>Referendum in 2018</b> on whether to ban the re-election of congressmen, regulate party financing, introduce a bicameral system, and create an authority to control the judiciary.
5,	Peruvian civil society is quite active compared to other countries in the
JS	region and has been responsible for introducing numerous innovations, including the early introduction of
	digital tools. These initiatives have
r	focused on various social issues, providing access to basic goods, and improving service delivery in a highly unequal society with elevated rates of poverty and informal employment. Due to the severe impact of the Covid-19 pandemic in Peru, civil
	society has also led joint efforts to bring together government, international organizations, and communities to address the serious deficiencies created or exacerbated by the crisis.

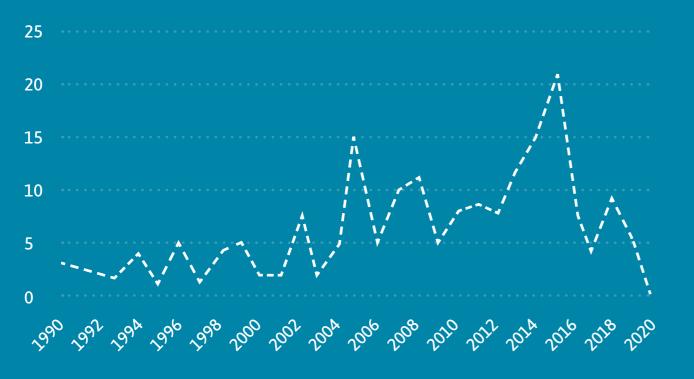
# URUGUAY

Uruguay is among the most consolidated democracies in the region, with relatively low rates of inequality and a strong party system. The last military dictatorship ended in 1984, and Uruguayan democracy took on a participatory character when the Frente Amplio, a coalition of center-left popular forces, won the presidential elections in 2005. In previous years, the party had already turned Montevideo, the country's capital, into a laboratory for participatory processes. The national governments of FA's Vázquez (2005–2010 and 2015–2020) and Mujica (2010– 2015) implemented most of the democratic innovations in Uruguay. Although a large number of them were initiated by the national executive, many innovations were

nonetheless implemented at the local and regional level.

In 2009, Law Nr. 18,567 on Political **Decentralization and Citizen** Participation laid the foundation for a complex architecture of consultative councils and deliberative roundtables at the local level. The additional legislation ensured that these spaces expanded, took root in the institutional system, and would remain active for a long time. Several of these participatory institutions at the local level focus on the political inclusion of historically marginalized groups, creating channels of direct communication with the government and including those groups in public policymaking. One prominent example was the early creation of several bodies for the

## Innovations created per year





protection of women's rights, ranging from the 1996 National Monitoring **Commission** to the 2007 National Gender Council (CNG). These space brought together representatives of civil society organizations and government officials and were essential in advancing gender equality reforms in the country. Afro descendants, youth, and the elderly have also been the subject o participatory innovations aimed at improving their living conditions.

Uruguay is also recognized for its extensive use of direct voting mechanisms, adopted by the 1967 Constitution and implemented frequently since the democratic transition in 1984. Referendums and plebiscites have primarily served to expand access to rights and goods, as in the 2004 Water Plebiscite,

## **192 Innovations**

74% WITH THE 60% NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

LEVEL

Uruguay

ing g	which made access to water a human right. In recent years, conservative forces have also cast referendums
ces	to take on consolidated rights. Examples include the two failed
of	attempts in 2019: to <b>Repeal the Law</b> <b>Recognizing and Protecting the</b> <b>Rights of Transgender People</b> , and to <b>Militarize Public Safety through</b> <b>Constitutional Reform</b> , both via <b>Referendums</b> .
	As in other countries, civil society-led projects have increased in Uruguay in recent years, relying on digital tools to create collaborative platforms to

to create collaborative platforms to promote local development (For My **Neighborhood**), to monitor political party funding (Who Pays?), and to report on environmental issues (Environmental Reports UY).

## **13% Direct Voting**

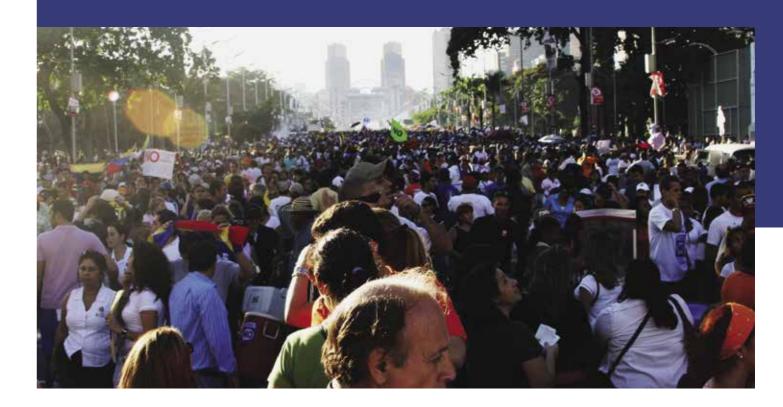
**OVER 15 MILLION VOTES** 

# VENEZUELA

In Venezuela, the 1999 constitutional reform challenged the traditional model of representative democracy by devising a participatory scheme rooted in local communities. Initially, Hugo Chávez promoted important political reforms, such as the creation of new powers of the state based on direct citizen representation. Between 1999 and 2007, his government promoted new legislation to encourage local participation, building the idea of a "communal state" through the 2002 State Planning and Public Policies Law, the 2005 Municipal Power Law, and the 2006 Communal Councils Law, among others.

On this legal basis, participatory innovations were expanded at the municipal level, especially in planning, resource management, and service delivery. Several of these new institutions have been widely replicated across the country. Community Councils, for example, have spread to more than 30,000 localities with an estimated 8 million participants by 2009, and Venezuelan municipalities have created more than 8,000 Technical Water Boards. Local innovations were also created for the provision of basic goods, such as Urban and Rural Land Committees. However, research has shown that many of





these participatory spaces have been changed since 2014, as dramatic co-opted by the government for socioeconomic crises and mass clientelist purposes. to citizen initiatives. Civil society The political use of citizen organizations have dedicated their participation has also affected the mechanisms of direct democracy, backsliding and the shortages in widely used by the government to public goods and service provision. promote controversial reforms and The political opposition, in turn, has weaken political opponents. This was tried to implement participatory the case with the **Constitutional** projects in response to these crises, **Amendment Referendums of 2007** opening up spaces for critics to the and 2009 and the Revocations regime. Examples include the 2017 of Mandate to oust Hugo Chávez National Consultation against the in 2003 and 2004. Since Chávez's Maduro-led constitutional reform, death, Nicolas Maduro's regime has or the Committees for Aid and continued to undermine democratic **Freedom**, which seek to organize standards. When mass protests community mutual support while began on the streets in 2014, the fostering grassroots opposition government attempted to regain organization. popular support by proposing a

emigration have become an obstacle efforts to monitoring the democratic National Peace Conference to In Venezuela, digital participation dialogue with the private sector has grown little compared to other and civil society. However, this did countries in the region. Democratic not make any progress given that innovation has steadily declined since opposition forces were not present. 2016, and civil society has almost exclusively led the few initiatives that Many of the participatory innovations have emerged in the context of the in Venezuela were implemented by country's severe humanitarian crisis.

the national government. This has

# **LATINNO IN NUMBERS**



- 5 Years of Work
- 3.744 Democratic Innovations Coded for 43 Variables
  - **18** Countries Researched
  - **32** Research Assistants
    - 27 Master Students5 Doctoral Students
    - 70% Women!
  - 27 Presentations in13 Cities in 8 Countries

- 29 Publications in 4 Languages
  1 Book Manuscript
  8 Book Chapters
  5 Articles in Academic Journals
  15 Media Articles
  - **3** Research Grants
  - **1** COVID-19 Pandemic... But still,
  - 2 New Datasets on Responses to the Pandemic!

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