



Promoting E-Rulemaking in the EU through Deliberative Procedures

Reporting

Project Information

PEREDEP

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[Project website](#)

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Coordinated by

DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY



Ireland

Periodic Reporting for period 1 - PEREDEP (Promoting E-Rulemaking in the EU through Deliberative Procedures)

Reporting period: 2018-08-02 to 2020-08-01

Summary of the context and overall objectives of the project

The project “Promoting E-Rulemaking in the EU through Deliberative Procedures” (PEREDEP) was based at the Institute for Future Media and Journalism (FuJo) at the School of Communications at

Dublin City University with Dr Anastasia Deligiaouri as a post-doctoral Marie Curie Research Fellow and Dr Jane Suiter Associate Professor at the School of Communications and Director of FuJo as the supervisor. PEREDep is an interdisciplinary project standing at the crossroads of political science (with specific attention to deliberation theory and participatory democracy), media studies (with specific attention to new media theory and e-participation) and specifically law making procedures in the EU. Its innovative character lies in the effective combination and implementation of deliberation, law making and policy making procedures for the purpose of strengthening the citizen's voice in the EU and more precisely in law making procedures and policies. It assesses the potential and limitations of 'e-rulemaking' in the European Union.

The project addresses two major topics: responsible citizenship and the prerequisites for qualitative civic participation in an e-rulemaking initiative in the EU following-deliberative procedures. In order to do so, it has examined the preconditions for meaningful and effective political participation that can have an impact on policy making in the context of e-rulemaking. It has analysed in depth the Better Regulation Agenda of the EU. As PEREDep has been developed on both theoretical and empirical dimensions it has produced results that advance both theory and practice.

Objectives and overview

More specifically, the project's research objectives were:

- to develop a novel theoretical approach on e-rulemaking that will delineate the preconditions of effective citizens participation and examine the impact of deliberative procedure on policy making with the development of an innovative Policy Impact Tool (PIT)
- to conduct a virtual e-rulemaking deliberative experiment that would assess in practice empirical insights from the theoretical part
- to liaise via consultations and discussions with EC dedicated agents and DGs and acquire round knowledge from both theory and practice in order to inform its outcomes and produce policy recommendations for successful implementation of an e-rulemaking instrument in the EU

This project has developed a novel theoretical approach to the pre-conditions for meaningful and effective political participation in the specific context of e-rulemaking. It has offered robust theoretical foundations to current and future EU efforts to promote e-participation in law and policy-making and has inquired into how deliberative e-rulemaking can advance the democratic legitimacy of decision-making processes and have an impact on policy making in the context of the Better Regulation Agenda of the EU. The project tested the theoretical conclusions with empirical methods (e.g by running a virtual workshop) and had consultation with policymakers and other actors. In this way the outputs of the project apart from having contributed to the academic discipline of deliberative democracy have also provided critical developments on an empirical level that may inform the workplan of the European Commission in relation to citizens' engagement and more citizen-centred policy making,

Work performed from the beginning of the project to the end of the period covered by the report and main results achieved so far ✓

First, the project has produced an in-depth theoretical elaboration of e-rulemaking through a consideration of the US e-rulemaking initiative and the most recent developments in deliberative democracy and the procedures of online deliberation. The theoretical part engaged with a thorough study and examination of the EU's 2015 Better Regulation Agenda in order to identify how e-rulemaking was already operating and the problems that occurred. The inquiry was enriched with policy oriented discussions accruing from the first study visit to the EU institutions and the relevant bodies. In the context of the theoretical development of e-rulemaking the project has introduced a new legitimacy criterion in e-rulemaking procedures, "functional legitimacy". Functional legitimacy is an overarching coherence principle that governs e-rulemaking from its design to its evaluation and it is present in all stages of e-rulemaking. It can potentially lead to the selection of different input, throughput and output modes according to the rationale of each e-rulemaking process.

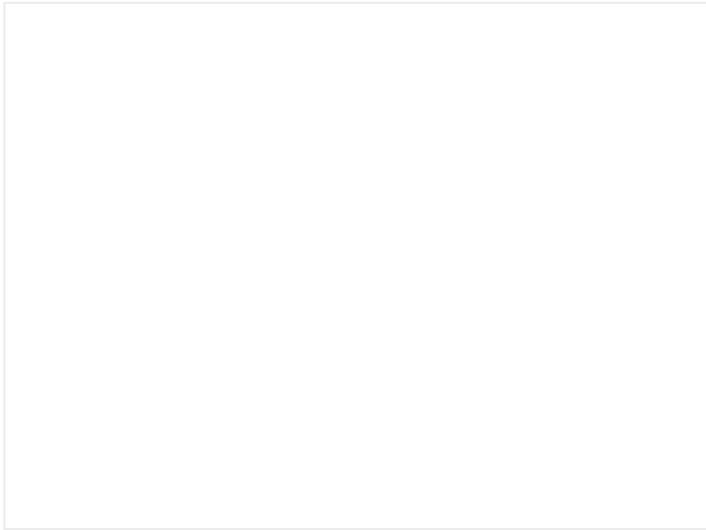
Second, in order to meet the project's objectives and address concerns regarding the policy effect of such initiatives, the project has developed a Policy Impact Tool (PIT) for deliberative e-rulemaking which consists of a framework of key indicators that can define whether citizens' deliberations and input have a policy potential and can produce a tangible policy impact. Following the elaboration of the theoretical framework the researchers collaborated with computer scientists at Dublin City University, in order to develop a platform capable of testing the theoretical assumptions of the project. A platform which builds on the theoretical assumptions of the project was developed, the "Deliberative E-rulemaking platform". The functionality and deliberative quality of the platform was tested with a small scale pilot study with participants from all over Europe. The platform has introduced some new features in e-rulemaking (e.g a dedicated field for justification of arguments) and has conducted a 5-day deliberation on European climate Law offering valuable remarks and insights on the future design of these initiatives in order to produce tangible outcomes

Progress beyond the state of the art and expected potential impact (including the socio-economic impact and the wider societal implications of the project so far)

The project reached beyond theoretical developments and has also strengthened the EU's approach in relation to citizens engagement with law making and policy making. It has highlighted important research results regarding the shortcomings of existing initiatives, it has underlined practical issues that impede the successful implementation of e-rulemaking especially under the complexity of the EU context and has paved the way for features and procedures that succeed in meaningful citizens' engagement. It has developed one novel theoretical criterion for e-rulemaking (functional legitimacy) and a Policy Impact Tool, an innovative framework for the evaluation of online deliberations that can be further developed and realised via software.

The socio-economic impact and the societal implications of the project are long term and not easily understood in a short-term vision. If policymakers inform their practice with the research results produced by the project then the democratic deficit and the communication gap between Brussels and periphery can be reduced. Going further, a well-developed and functional e-rulemaking procedure in

the EU could inform EU policies with a citizens' perspective and support a model of enhanced participation which, consequently would strengthen legitimacy in decision making procedures. A broader impact refers to the contribution of the project in designing, delivering and evaluating deliberative procedures in general which is one of the focus areas in EU policy making.



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