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Democratic Innovations and Political Parties: The Role of Ideology

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Abstract

Do left-wing parties carry out more democratic innovations than the rest or is this a widespread practice? Even if this question has appeared in a wealth of work, when we look at empirical studies, we do not find a clear response. To clarify this relationship, essential for understanding the bridges between representative democracy and democratic innovations, this study uses a knowledge-gathering strategy: systematized review. Our study universe is all English-language studies published between 1990 and 2021 that consider party ideology as a potential stimulant for the implementation of democratic innovations. The review of the sample of around 40 studies obtained shows that: 1) this literature uses disparate approaches to the issue, with little comparative emphasis and few inter-citations between them; 2) left-wing parties do not seem to implement more democratic innovations than the rest; 3) the role of left-wing parties does seem relevant for the early implementation of participatory budgeting.

Keywords

systematized review, political parties, ideology, democratic innovations

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Introduction

Both Western and Southern democracies have seen the landscape of the state-citizen relations altered by social, political and economic challenges since the 1960s (Norris 1999, Torcal and Montero 2006). Within this context, the concept of "participation" gained great popularity in the political vocabulary of the late 1960s: different collectives in different countries brought it to the table advocating for new spaces for citizenship (Pateman 1970). This process was paralleled by an increase in the implementation of participatory experiences, with an important expansion of democratic innovations around the globe from the 1990s and early 2000s onwards (Ramírez and Welp 2011, Baiocchi and Ganuza 2016, Morel 2017, OECD 2020). Democratic innovations can be defined as those procedures designed with the aim to increase and deepen citizen participation in political decisions outside elections (Smith 2009). These experiences can take many forms and have many names. In general, these can be grouped into four groups, according to their similarities: mini-publics, participatory budgeting (PB), referendums and citizen initiatives, and collaborative governance are its main "families" (Elstub and Escobar 2019).

Some of the most famous experiences include several developed by left-wing parties (Abers 2000, Williams 2008) and others by right-wing parties (Torney 2021). This is worth noting since democratic innovations are typically sustained, when not directly initiated, by governments or other public institutions (Warren 2009, Font et al. 2014). Here, several political actors may be relevant: from local councilors to mayors or intermediate political officials, among others. In this paper we will focus on the role of political parties, as the centerpieces of the political system (Lucardie and Vandamme 2022). They are, next to citizens, the main initiators of democratic innovations (Altman 2011, Leeman 2015, Sintomer et al. 2016). And, even if they are not initiators, they retain a great capacity regarding the implementation and functioning of the whole participatory process (Allegretti and Herzberg 2004, Budge 2006, Stolzenberg and Wampler 2018).

Previous literature has extensively studied the implementation of democratic innovations and the underlying factors that influence it (e.g., Banducci 1998, Breuer 2009, Kim 2016). Among political factors, party ideology has rarely been used as a potential explanatory factor of why participation takes place, even if it is recognized as a key factor for political actors' support of democratic innovations (Thompson 2019). Hence, when we turn to the literature looking for an answer about the relationship between parties' ideology and democratic innovations implementation, we do not find a clear response. How does ideology impact on parties' support for democratic innovations' implementation? Ideology is a relevant element in parties'

policymaking, and it is relevant for parties' discourses regarding citizen participation, with leftist parties more committed to talk about giving citizens more political influence (Verge 2007, Michels 2008, Pascolo 2020). However, it remains unclear whether this translates into the implementation of democratic innovations.

This study aims to address this research question through a knowledge-gathering strategy: systematized review (Grant and Booth 2009, Codina 2018). The compilation in Web of Science and Scopus of all those studies published in English between 1990 and 2021 that have considered party ideology as a potential driver of the implementation of democratic innovations (of any type) will allow us to answer these questions or, at least, to know in a systematic way what we know so far on this topic, and which are the questions that still need to be answered. To our knowledge, there is no systematic review that has addressed this issue before.

The article will proceed as follows: we start discussing the need to consider the role of political parties and their ideological orientation when studying the implementation of democratic innovations (section 2), and then we move to the explanation of how we have obtained the sample of studies analyzed here and their characteristics (section 3), as well as their main contributions to the debate at hand (section 4). Last section will serve to summarize the main conclusions and highlight those points that deserve further attention in the future.

Why Ideology May Be Relevant

Despite the expansion described above, democratic innovations' implementation continues to be unequal because they are not always applied everywhere and for everything (Pateman 2012). While factors that can drive the implementation of these processes are diverse (from socio-structural elements such as the size of the municipality in which they take place to others such as learning from neighboring experiences), the central role of political parties in driving them deserves more attention. Indeed, some authors have argued that political parties' willingness is a prerequisite for democratic innovations' implementation (Nylen 2003, Goldfrank 2011, Cortés 2020).

Hence, the motives that could lead them to make this decision are relevant (Scarrow 1999, Gherghina and Jacquet 2022). These can be broadly divided into two groups: instrumental and normative (Font 2005, Bowler et al. 2006, Thompson 2019). Instrumental motivations are those that seek to achieve specific ends through the results derived from these procedures, using the participation as a mean to obtain a benefit or to avoid a risk (Gherghina 2019). Normative motivations are those related to the ideological commitment that political actors may

adopt to implement democratic innovations. The latter have been particularly linked to left-wing parties. The case of the Porto Alegre's Participatory Budgeting and its subsequent dissemination throughout Brazil was closely linked to the role of the *Partido dos Trabalhadores* (Workers' Party, PT) (Avritzer and Wampler 2008), opening this issue in the wider Latin-American context (Pogrebinski 2018). Other studies beyond the Latin-American case have also pointed out the relevance of leftist parties behind the implementation of democratic innovations (Ganuza and Gómez 2008, Williams 2008, Welp and Schneider 2011, Sintomer et al. 2016).

In fact, ideology has a central role for parties' policymaking activity. It has influence on economic policies – with leftist parties being more oriented towards more investment and redistribution of wealth – (Blom-Hansen et al. 2006, Magkonis et al. 2021), but more clearly in fields such as social policies. Leftist parties tend to spend more than right-wing ones in policies for the provision of human capital resources (such as education) (Boix 1996, Busemeyer 2009, Potrafke 2020) and are associated with welfare expansion (Esping-Andersen 1990), showing their commitment towards economic and social equality. Studies on democratic reform have shown similar patterns: leftist ideology and normative motivations towards the inclusion of minorities and underprivileged citizens matter for party preferences on democratic reforms (Bol 2013, Heinelt 2013, Núñez et al. 2017). The discourses on citizen participation of different parties show us that leftist parties have a greater discursive commitment towards democratic innovations (Verge 2007) and are more prone to talk about giving more influence on lay-citizens (Michels 2008, Pascolo 2020). The line of work on political representatives' perceptions of citizen participation reveals analogous findings: while leftist MPs tend to have a more favorable view of participatory democracy and accept a greater role of citizens in democracy, right-wing MPs are more reluctant to do so and prefer the usual procedures of representation (Bowler et al. 2006, Heinelt 2013, Junius et al. 2020, Rangoni et al. 2021, Gherghina et al. 2022).

It would therefore not be unusual to expect left-wing parties to be more committed to the implementation of democratic innovations as occurs for other public policies. These can be considered public policies that can (potentially) affect political equity: trying to encourage all voices to be heard (*inclusiveness*) and allowing greater influence and control over the decision-making process by citizens (*popular control*) (Smith 2009). Following the classical definition of left-right division (Lipset et al. 1954, Bobbio 1995), we could argue that there are certain political values that are more intricately linked to citizen participation than others. Those political values oriented towards improving collective welfare, reduce inequalities and increase socio-political capital of citizenry are expected to implement democratic innovations as a mean to

“democratize democracy” (Nylen 2003, Goldfrank 2011, Sintomer et al. 2016). More conservative and status-quo-oriented visions should be more reluctant to open participatory processes, insofar they consider that decisions should be taken by political representatives based on election results (Bowler et al. 2006, Heinelt 2013). Despite the existence of different political families, we will not go into this detail here, as the literature does not use this degree of distinction. We will include both Social-Democratic parties and the rest of the families to their left within what we call leftist or left-wing parties in this article. These political families are considered left-leaning as party families have attached historically to the left-right continuum, with their ideological positions relatively constant over time (Caramani 2005, Camia and Caramani 2009).

Methodology and Data

To better understand how ideology impacts on parties’ support for democratic innovations’ implementation, this study uses systematized review to approach the existing literature (Grant and Booth 2009, Codina 2018). As we do not yet have a sufficiently large database (both geographically and temporally) to assess this question, an alternative is to analyze a broad, varied, and complete body of studies that have addressed this matter. The systematization process will be explained using the SALSA framework (Booth et al. 2021). Tables will help us to summarize all the information extracted. More detailed information on the coding of all papers can be found in the Appendix.

The aim of the systematic literature search was to exhaustively find out the studies on democratic innovations’ implementation in relation to the ideology of political parties, reducing the chances of bias in the choice. To this end, we defined a search equation for both largest bibliographic databases in the field of Social Sciences: Web of Science and Scopus. Here we present one of them. Details on the search equations are available in Appendix 1.

TITLE-ABS-KEY ("citizen participation" OR "participatory institution\$" OR "participatory mechanism\$" OR "participatory instrument\$" OR "democratic innovation\$" OR "democratic institution\$" OR "local agenda" OR "advisory council\$" OR "participatory budget" OR "participatory democracy" OR "direct democracy" OR "refer?ndum" OR "mini-public\$" OR "deliberative forum\$" OR "citizen* jur*") AND ALL ("ideol?g*" OR "political party" OR "political parties" OR "party" OR "parties" OR "political elite\$" OR "political party of the ma?or" OR "ma?or's political party" OR "councillor\$" OR "political affiliation" OR "vote share")*

This search was refined using the filters of language (English only) and year of publication (1990-2021) but including all types of literature. We decided to temporarily limit the search since, as we have argued, it was in the 1990s that the implementation of democratic innovations received a great boost at the international level. We avoided excluding any concepts from the search equation (with the use of the Boolean operator NOT) because we were unaware of the types of biases that this could generate in the final sample, which is intended to be as exhaustive as possible. This search yielded 6140 studies, after eliminating duplicate papers between the two databases, papers in other languages, or book reviews.

To filter these papers and reach our final sample, we screened both titles and abstracts of each of these papers asking three filter questions. Where necessary, the key parts of the studies were read to find out an appropriate answer to these questions. The application of this "questionnaire" was done consecutively, in such a way that if a question was affirmatively answered, we moved on to the next one. If it was answered negatively, the coding of the case was stopped. We present below the three filter questions we used for this classification. In parentheses are the number of studies for which there was an affirmative response and, therefore, remained in the classification process after each question.

Q1: *Does the study address the study of any democratic innovation? (N=1134)*

Q2: *Does the study address the process of implementation of such democratic innovation? (N=214)*

Q3: *Does the study consider partisan ideological orientation as a (potential) explanatory element for the implementation of the democratic innovation? (N=32)*

This method was complemented by a "snowball" search of the references of all the papers finally selected, ensuring greater completeness. The whole process produced a final sample of 35 works that study the implementation of democratic innovations (as defined at the outset) and that consider the role played by partisan ideology on it. The next task, set out in the following section, was that of analysis and synthesis. To do this, we read those 35 works, coding their main methodological characteristics (Hart 1998) and their main conclusions or findings related to the relationship we are interested in. The remaining elements of interest that have not been coded will be presented in narrative form.

Characteristics of the Sample: Research Approaches

To better understand this literature, it is interesting to first look at the approaches to the relationship under study. We grouped studies in the systematic sample around a few categories, explained in more detail in the Appendix. The first thing to note is that neither the party ideology nor the implementation of democratic innovations have been coded in homogeneous ways.

Regarding party ideology, the focus has been on parties in power (21 studies using this approach), although sometimes also complemented in parallel with other issues. This approach analyzes government decisions, with a view that emphasizes the institutional sphere of the political context (e.g., Goldfrank and Schneider 2006, Tomor et al. 2021). Another common approach is the set of actors involved (9 studies): both governing and opposition parties, as well as including parties as other actors in the set of institutions involved in the implementation of democratic innovations. This approach tries to give an overview of the party system and how it is embedded in relation to other institutions, not only the decisions of the ruling party (e.g., Rodgers 2010, Dür and Mateo 2011). Other studies have opted to include the percentage of votes/seats of parties (either in power or not) as a way of operationalizing this variable in a quantitative way (5 studies) (e.g., Vatter 2000).

As for the other element under study, most papers (23) put the emphasis on the analysis of the first stage of development of a democratic innovation: implementation, although they may then delve into other related issues of interest (sustainability, success...). This approach is mainly associated with the analysis of the ruling party (16 out of 23), focusing on the role of governments in the causal mechanism for the implementation of democratic innovations (e.g., Pin 2020, Santos et al. 2020). Another line of work focuses exclusively on the frequency of use of participation (e.g., Barankay et al. 2003, Bohemke 2005) (8 studies), which is frequently analyzed through the percentage of seats/votes, a more quantitative measure (6 out of 8 times). This approach is often used in the study of democratic innovations that are not implemented by governments but by citizens, to find out the impact of the government's ideology on the implementation of these processes. Party support for the effective implementation of these procedures is an additional approach (e.g., Hartlinski 2019). As these studies focus on how either government or opposition parties deal with the situation of having to support (or not) democratic innovations' implementation in a broader context, they always analyze it considering the set of actors involved in the process.

Quantitative (18 studies) and qualitative work (16 studies) is almost equally prevailing in our sample, with only 1 study coded as mixed methods. Qualitative studies make cross-country

comparisons half the time (8 out of 16), something much rarer among quantitative works (2 out of 18). Comparative papers, thus, represent less than a third part of the sample (11 in total, also counting the mixed methods study). Among the different types of democratic innovations (Elstub and Escobar 2019), direct democratic practices are the most addressed in isolation (12 studies), followed by participatory budgeting (10 studies). However, PB has also been addressed in other 3 papers analyzing several democratic innovations, so its proportion is somewhat higher. Other procedures such as participatory planning (2), smart governance (1) or mini-publics (1) have also been addressed, while the rest of the studies analyze several democratic innovations at the same time (9).

The most striking characteristic is the few citations that occur among this set of studies. Vatter's (2000) (4) and Bohemke's (2005) (3) – both analyzing direct democratic institutions – are the only papers that have been cited more than once in the rest of the studies in the sample. These citations occur exclusively in other papers on direct democracy¹. One possible reason for this little dialogue could be that each paper has focused on the study of a particular democratic innovation (Elstub and Escobar, 2019), with few analyses that build bridges between the study of the implementation of different democratic innovations.

Party ideology and the Implementation of Democratic Innovations

After this overview of our sample, we address the substantive question of this paper: how does ideology impact on parties' support for democratic innovations' implementation? Section 2 showed how, grounded in a particular democratic conception, left-wing parties should be the main implementers of democratic innovations. But, if we look at quantitative papers on the sample (Table 1), we find mixed evidence: the same number of studies confirm and reject the existence of this relationship – while other study shows mixed results.

¹ In our sample, studies on PB have not cited the study of Sintomer et al. (2016) but have cited earlier versions of it.

Table 1. Democratic innovations' implementation and party ideology (quantitative works)

Characteristics of the analyses			Do leftist parties implement more democratic innovations than other parties?		
	Region	Type of democratic innovation	No	Yes	Depends on...
Bohemke (2005)	North-America	Direct democracy		x	
Damore, Bowler and Nicholson (2012)	North-America	Direct democracy		x	
McGrath (2011)	North-America	Direct democracy	x		
Seljan and Weller (2011)	North-America	Direct democracy	x		
Andersson and van Laerhoven (2007)	Latin-America	Various	x		
Avritzer and Wampler (2008)	Latin-America	PB		x	
Funk (2015)	Latin-America	Various		x	
Santos, Tanscheit and Ventura (2020)	Latin-America	PB		x	
Spada (2014)	Latin-America	PB		x	
Barankay, Sciarini and Treschsel (2003)	Europe	Direct democracy	x		
Borge, Colombo, and Welp (2009)	Europe	Various		x	
Colombo (2011)	Europe	Various	x		
Dür and Mateo (2011)	Europe	Direct democracy			x
Eder, Vatter and Freitag (2009)	Europe	Direct democracy	x		
Jäske (2017)	Europe	Direct democracy		x	
Kübler, Rochat, Woo and van der Heiden (2020)	Europe	Mini-public	x		
Premat (2009)	Europe	Various	x		
Vatter (2000)	Europe	Direct democracy	x		
Total			9	8	1

Particularly papers on Brazilian PB implementation show a quantitative relationship with PT presence in local governments (Avritzer and Wampler 2008, Spada 2014, Santos et al. 2020). Funk (2015) broadens it to leftist parties (not only PT) and other democratic innovations' implementation in Brazil (PBs, but also councils). This greater implementation of left-wing parties also holds for diverse democratic innovations in Catalonia (Spain) (Borge et al. 2009), for government-initiated direct democratic procedures in Finland (Jäske 2017) and US states (Damore et al. 2012)², and for citizen-initiated procedures in US states (Bohemke 2005). In contrast, especially studies on citizen-initiated referendums show that the occurrence of these democratic innovations is not related to leftist parties (Vatter 2000, Barankay et al. 2003, Eder et al. 2009, McGrath 2011, Seljan and Weller 2011)³. Studies focused on other democratic innovations in Latin-America (Andersson and van Laerhoven 2007), Switzerland (Kübler et al. 2020), France (Premat 2009) or Catalonia (Spain) (Colombo 2011) have also shown that there is no relationship between left-wing parties in government and greater democratic innovations' implementation. We can now look at the whole sample. Examining them, we find that slightly more than half of the studies reject the relationship between left-wing parties and the implementation of democratic innovations (Table 2).

This pattern appears even if most papers in this sub-discipline are biased towards the study of "best practices" (Spada and Ryan 2017), which could lead to a confirmation bias by selecting only those cases that satisfy the condition sought. In general, studies that confirm and studies that refuse the idea of leftist parties being more related to democratic innovations' implementation have different characteristics. Those studies that observe a relationship between democratic innovations' implementation and left-wing parties are half the time related to cases in Southern countries (involving Latin-American countries but also Asia) (7 out of 13 cases), are often the product of the study of PB experiences (8 out of 13) and have a quantitative approach (8 out of 13). Conversely, those papers that do not observe a specific ideological commitment towards participation are focused mainly on European or North-American cases (13

² The study of this issue for direct democratic institutions is made more complex, as these can be either government-initiated or citizen-initiated (Morel 2017). Studies comparing both types of procedures have indicated that it is the former that are more influenced by the weight of parties of different ideologies (Damore et al. 2011, Jäske 2017). However, Seljan and Weller's (2011) paper fail to find this relationship.

³ Vatter's (2000) paper is the only one to show a greater relationship between right-wing parties and democratic innovations' implementation. Studies that reject the relationship between left and democratic innovations' implementation do so because of the absence of this and not because they find the opposite relationship.

out of 19) and on direct democratic institutions (8 out of 19), with qualitative and quantitative approaches almost equally used (10 vs 9 cases, respectively).

Table 2. Left-Wing Parties and Democratic innovations (all works)

		Yes	No	Mixed results	Non- applicable	Total per category
Type of democratic innovation analyzed	<i>Direct democracy</i>	3	8	1		12
	<i>Participatory budgeting</i>	6	3	1		10
	<i>Participatory planning</i>	1	1			2
	<i>Smart governance</i>		1			1
	<i>Mini-public</i>		1			1
	<i>Various</i>	3	5		1	9
Region analyzed	<i>Europe</i>	3	10	1	1	15
	<i>Latin-America</i>	5	4			9
	<i>North America</i>	3	3			6
	<i>Asia</i>	1				1
	<i>Various (scattered)</i>	1	2	1		4
	Total general	13	19	2	1	

Debating the relationship

Notwithstanding, papers on the sample do not always respond to this question in a dichotomous way (in terms of yes or not) and a closer and more in-depth look shows that their conclusions add complexity to the answer. For example, literature on PB implementation in Brazil shows that the PT had a strong presence at the origin and initial years of the diffusion of this democratic innovation. However, over time, its weight as the main driving party diminished, as other parties

began to become interested in PB (Avritzer and Wampler 2008, Spada 2014). This chronological difference has also been shown for the European case (Röcke 2014, Sintomer et al. 2016, Schneider and Busse 2019, Falanga and Lüchmann 2020), with leftist parties in government leading early PB cases⁴: mainly Social-Democrats, but with a relevant relative weight of alternative left and post-communist parties. Furthermore, the paper of Santos et al. (2020) shows for the Brazilian case that the greater the presence of the most left-wing faction of the PT, the greater the probability of implementing the PB. Trends over time may have differed for each context depending on the specific weight and distribution of the different factions within each governing party, but the literature seems to point to a greater weight of left-wing parties in the early stages of implementation, at least in the case of the PB.

Besides the weight of their factions, leftist seminal cases could have acted as spaces of “contagion” of participatory knowledge. In Brazil, municipalities close to others where PB was implemented increased their probabilities of PB adoption⁵ (Avritzer and Wampler 2008, Spada 2014), thus increasing the likelihood of non-leftist parties to implement PB. The distribution of actors presents at each place and the “contagion” effect they can cause with their policy practices should be considered. Literature on policy diffusion show that the ability to learn from neighboring experiences is conditioned by the negative predisposition of those in power towards that policy. However, this barrier can be overcome if there are successful experiences nearby or if these have been carried out by governments of the same ideological orientation (Butler et al. 2015, Schleiter et al. 2021). Therefore, if the early implementation is initiated by left-wing parties, it is more likely to be transferred to other areas where the left also governs. But once the process of expansion of the implementation of democratic innovations has begun, learning from other governments can blur initial ideological commitments.

While still linking a progressive vision to the establishment of democratic innovations, some studies find instrumental interests in parallel to normative ones. Political parties may be interested in presenting themselves as participative agents (connecting with their stated progressive ideals), but also in building support networks and benefiting their supporters (Pin

⁴ Some countries such as Germany, Poland or Great Britain did not follow this trend, with a more equal momentum between parties of different ideologies (Sintomer et al. 2016).

⁵ Similarly, Jäske (2017) and Kübler et al. (2020) found that cases implemented in neighboring municipalities increased the likelihood of adopting both government-initiated referendums in Finland and mini-publics in Switzerland.

2020)⁶. Democratic innovations' implementation can also serve as a mean to renew internally in the face of adverse socio-political conditions (with a long-term view) (Devika 2016). Hartlinski's (2019) study on legislative-initiated nationwide referendums in Poland is along this line. While ideological background of the implementing parties was present, this was not the case for all. Other motives such as the search for electoral success or legitimacy for previously implemented policies were more relevant. Hence, the motives of political actors to implement democratic innovations need not to be purely normative.

In fact, other authors emphasize partisan strategic motivations as main drivers of implementation. For example, although in Rio Grande do Sul (Brazil) the PT advanced in PB's implementation, other parties promoted other "budgetary institutions" to compete with PB and, therefore, with PT. Each governing party promoted the institutions whose characteristics most favored its electoral, ideological, and political interests (Goldfrank and Schneider 2006, Rodgers 2010, McGovern 2013). This has also been observed in the study of direct democratic procedures (Sitter 2009, Dür and Mateo 2011, Paxton 2020). Indeed, democratic innovations can be seen as policy-oriented procedures: political parties may implement them to find solutions to acute policy problems in the face of an increasingly adversarial context (Kübler et al. 2020). Thus, although instrumental motivations may be linked to ideological motivations, they can also spur the implementation of participation without an ideological commitment.

Differences between cases may be due to the differential strategies that parties follow to adapt to their specific contexts. In fact, as noted above, most of the studies that do not find any relationship between leftist parties and the implementation of democratic innovations analyze European or North American cases. And although papers that do find this relationship include both cases from Southern countries as well as from other European and North American countries, it is the Southern-based literature in our sample which argue more clearly for the normative motivations of leftist parties there: those experiences that aim to deepen democracy in a transformative and redistributive sense share the presence of a strong, programmatically left-wing party closely linked to civil society organizations (Bräutigam 2004, Heller 2012, Avritzer 2017). Behind all this could be the different starting points (from 1990s) between the two groups of countries in terms of democratic capacity and depth, political and socio-economic equity, as well as the mobilization of civil society to improve these conditions (Goldfrank 2011, Levitsky and

⁶ Sintomer et al. (2016) and Avritzer (2017), even recognising an ideological link, also indicate the instrumental utility for those leftist parties implementing PB. Damore's (2012) paper also raise this issue for direct democratic institutions.

Roberts 2011, Pogrebinschi 2018). For leftist parties in Southern countries, democratic innovations – especially PB, and particularly on its initial moments – could have been a political opportunity to “deepen democracy”, implying (in some cases) a normative commitment to its implementation. In other places (or in other moments), more careful and instrumental calculations could lead parties (leftist but not only) to democratic innovations’ implementation.

Conclusions

To date, literature on citizen participation has rarely addressed how ideology impacts on parties’ support for democratic innovations’ implementation. This paper conducted a systematized literature review to understand how this relationship works, arguing that a greater commitment could be expected from left-wing parties, as pointed out by several strands of literature on political parties and on citizen participation. The analysis of quantitative papers disconfirms our general expectation. This conclusion holds even if we look at the whole sample, although its diversity makes it difficult to draw categorical conclusions. Further analysis of the results and conclusions of the papers in the sample adds several nuances to the answer.

First, even if part of the studies in our sample point to leftist parties as more committed to democratic innovations’ implementation, chronology may be relevant: at least for participatory budgeting, leftist parties have been more often early implementers. Second, it is not easy to discern between normative and instrumental motivations behind implementation: both types of motivations are deeply combined in most cases, even when leftist parties are found as more committed. Third, considering the context in which the implementation of democratic innovation(s) is analyzed becomes crucial: differential strategies that parties follow to adapt to their specific contexts (based on their needs/interests) may explain differences between cases.

These findings have two main implications for the broader fields of political parties and citizen participation. First, drawing attention to the relevance of party ideology for participatory processes. As much other literature has shown (e.g., Scarrow 1999, Touchton and Wampler 2014, Gherghina and Jacquet 2022), it is relevant to consider the role of political parties in democratic innovations. Ideology, as a driver for many of their decisions, can play an important role and should not be forgotten. Second, even though the role of party ideology may be relevant, it needs to be studied within its context. Political parties, as actors with interests of their own, are also exposed to a delicate game of balancing acts within representative democracy (Budge 2006,

Lucardie and Vandamme 2022). The context in which they make their decisions is important to understand the real weight of ideology in them.

However, one question remains unanswered: what is the relationship between the ideology of political parties and its capacity to implement democratic innovations that can profoundly affect political equity and improve state-citizen relations? The capacity of governments to do so can hardly be measured according to the number of experiences implemented, as it varies from one experience to another (Dias 2014). In addition, not all democratic innovations have the same capacity to affect political equity, nor will they do so in the same way (Smith 2009). The same democratic innovation applied in two different places will generate different impacts depending on the context (Goldfrank 2011, Avritzer 2017). Despite being the most common approach in the broad literature on policy diffusion (Butler 2015), the study of implementation is not sufficient to answer the proposed question. Delving into the design and decision-making process prior to implementation may be relevant to understanding the whole relationship (Howlett 2018). For this, differential characteristics of democratic innovations and its contexts should be considered in further research.

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Appendix 1: Search equations for each database

The search equations for each database were as follows:

Scopus:

TITLE-ABS-KEY ("citizen participation" OR "participatory institution\$" OR "participatory mechanism\$" OR "participatory instrument\$" OR "democratic innovation\$" OR "democratic institution\$" OR "local agenda" OR "advisory council\$" OR "participatory budget*" OR "participatory democracy" OR "direct democracy" OR "referendum" OR "mini-public\$" OR "deliberative forum\$" OR "citizen* jur*") AND ALL ("ideology*" OR "political party" OR "political parties" OR "party" OR "parties" OR "political elite\$" OR "political party of the mayor" OR "mayor's political party" OR "councillor\$" OR "political affiliation" OR "vote share")

WoS⁷:

ALL=("citizen participation" OR "participatory institution\$" OR "participatory mechanism\$" OR "participatory instrument\$" OR "democratic innovation\$" OR "democratic institution\$" OR "local agenda" OR "advisory council\$" OR "participatory budget*" OR "participatory democracy" OR "direct democracy" OR "referendum" OR "mini-public\$" OR "deliberative forum\$" OR "citizen* jur*") AND ALL=("ideology*" OR "political party" OR "political parties" OR "party" OR "parties" OR "political elite\$" OR "political party of the mayor" OR "mayor's political party" OR "councillor\$" OR "political affiliation" OR "vote share")

⁷ The search at the WoS database was carried out in the Core Collection, as the search in All Databases (although more extensive) prevented the search for keywords in the whole body of the text. It also did not allow downloading in Excel format all the bibliographic information from the searches, making the rest of the steps more difficult. Searching at WoS more extensively (in the body of the text) than in Scopus and considering the level of overlap between the two databases (around 70%), it is possible to collect texts that the Scopus search has not reported.

Appendix 2: Table A1. Sample coding information

Variable	Categories	Information on coding
Democratic innovation analyzed	Direct democracy	These categories were used based primarily on how the authors defined the democratic innovation studied. We cross-checked these definitions with the categorizations proposed by Elstub and Escobar (2019) to obtain the narrowest possible categorization. Some papers analyzed more than one type of democratic innovation at a time, making it more difficult to classify them exclusively in one category.
	Participatory budgeting	
	Participatory planning	
	Smart governance	
	Mini-public	
	Various	
Region(s) analyzed	Europe	Under the label of Europe, we included countries pertaining to the European Union plus others such as Norway, Switzerland, and United Kingdom, which have many ties with the EU and share geographic, economic, cultural, and political traits with the rest of countries included. Asia only includes India. North America only includes USA cases. Latin-America includes Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Chile and Perú. Cases analyzing countries from several of these regions were included in the last category.
	Latin-America	
	North America	
	Asia	
	Various (scattered)	
Country(-ies) analyzed	-	The country in which the relationship between the implementation of democratic innovations and partisan ideology is studied in each paper (can be more than one).
Comparative	Yes	Whether the study looked at more than one country.
	No	
Approach	Quantitative	Quantitative studies usually have a circular structure that starts from theory and returns to it following a typically deductive approach. The reality to be analyzed is usually verified using representative samples and statistical means. Qualitative studies usually use an inductive approach, relating theory and results in an open and interactive way. The approach is usually carried out on individual cases and through more flexible data analysis. Both types of studies establish a different relationship between theory and research (Corbetta 2007). Mixed studies combine both approaches.
	Qualitative	
	Mixed	
Party ideology is considered for...	Ruling party	Studies that have used the ruling party as a form of operationalization, either through the political affiliation of the incumbent or the political party in government.

The study on parties' activity focuses on...	Ruling party and share of seats/votes	Studies that, in addition to the above, used complementary measures relating to the electoral weight of parties.
	Ruling party and its internal composition	Studies that, in addition to the above, used complementary measures relating to the internal composition (factions) of the ruling party.
	Actors involved	Studies that address political parties (whether in government or not) that promote the implementation of a democratic innovation among the set of political and institutional actors involved in the implementation process.
	Share of seats/votes	Studies that used the electoral weight of parties as a form of operationalization.
	Implementation of participation	Studies focusing on the presence of democratic innovations and their causes.
	Implementation and frequency of use of participation	Studies that, in addition to the above, were also interested on the number of democratic innovations implemented.
	Frequency of use of participation	Studies focusing on the number of democratic innovations implemented.
	Party support of participation	Studies that analyze parties positioning (advocacy or rejection) or active involvement in their implementation, but not government decision-making.

Appendix 3: Studies included in the systematized review

Andersson and van Laerhoven (2007)
Avritzer (2017)
Avritzer and Wampler (2008)
Barankay, Sciarini and Treschsel (2003)
Bohemke (2005)
Borge, Colombo, and Welp (2009)
Bräutigam (2004)
Colombo (2011)
Cortés (2020)
Damore, Bowler and Nicholson (2012)
Devika (2016)
Dür and Mateo (2011)
Eder, Vatter and Freitag (2009)
Falanga and Lüchmann (2020)
Funk (2015)
Goldfrank and Schneider (2006)
Hartlinski (2019)
Heller (2012)
Jäske (2017)
Kübler, Rochat, Woo and van der Heiden (2020)
McGovern (2013)
McGrath (2011)
Paxton (2020)
Pin (2020)
Premat (2009)
Röcke (2014)
Rodgers (2010)
Santos, Tanscheit and Ventura (2020)
Schneider and Busse (2019)
Seljan and Weller (2011)
Sintomer, Röcke and Herzberg (2016)
Sitter (2009)
Spada (2014)
Tomor, Przeybilowicz and Lelex (2021)
Vatter (2000)