

# Added-value of Using Open Government Data in Citizen Participation

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## Abstract

One recognized benefit of Open Government Data (OGD) publishing by municipalities is improvements and new opportunities for public action transparency and citizen participation (CP). However, compared to OGD-driven economic value creation, the integration of OGD into CP projects has received little attention. As a result, there is still limited understanding of the value such CP projects deliver for the municipality publishing OGD and for the citizens. After analyzing unexploited data from a study we previously conducted, we identify qualities of CP projects associated with higher added-value for the municipality and the citizens.

## Keywords

Open Government Data, Citizen participation, Personal Construct Theory, Repertory Grid Technique

## 1. Introduction and Background

In a previous study, we identified archetypes of citizen participation (CP) projects using OGD and we researched where OGD and CP practitioners see the added-value of OGD in CP projects [1]. We employed the Repertory Grid Technique (RGT) and conducted interviews with 10 Belgian and Swedish practitioners to capture their viewpoint on the value added by OGD to CP projects. The idea of the RGT is to ask informants to work with a set of elements (i.e., in this case, CP projects using OGD) and to formulate pairs of constructs that they would use to differentiate the elements [2]. The informants are then asked to rate the elements on each construct pair and on a set of readily provided constructs. By comparing the similarity of the ratings given to the formulated constructs and to the provided constructs, it is possible to identify which informant-formulated constructs are the most important to explain the provided constructs [3], or, in other terms, when they think of the provided construct, what lies behind in the informants' mind. In [1], we report on the findings related to one provided construct, which is the added-value brought by OGD to the CP project. However, the data we collected includes two additional constructs, namely the added-value that by the CP project brings to the **municipality** and the added-value that the CP project brings to the **citizens**.

With this poster, we aim to give an brief account of findings not covered by our previously published article and to bring attention around the Repertory Grid Technique, which is very rarely used in Digital Government research. Using our research as a demonstration of this methodology, we would like to engage in discussions on how our field can benefit from it and its unique ability to elicit informant-generated constructs that can enrich the development of theories.

## 2. Results and Discussion

Using the same construct categories as in [1], we found different project qualities that are, according to the interviewed practitioners, associated with higher added-value for the municipality and for citizens

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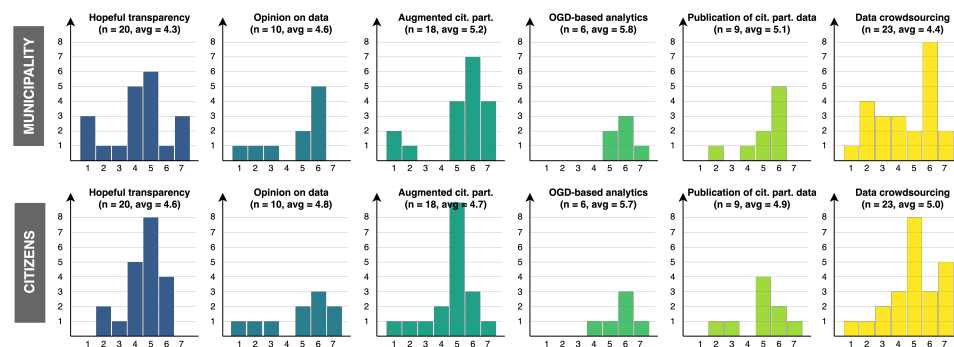
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(Table 1). It is noteworthy that several qualities differ across the two. In total, 86 projects were rated by the practitioners and sorted by archetype (see a description of the archetypes in [1]). Figure 2 shows the distribution of added-value ratings across CP project archetypes. Due to the different ways in which they can be implemented as well as viewpoint differences across practitioners, projects within the same archetype are associated with differing added-value. The case of the OGD-based analytics is especially interesting. Despite being the rarest encountered archetype, it scores the highest added-value for both the municipality and citizens. Lastly, we also found differences across Swedish and Belgian practitioners. While their ratings are similar on average on the added-value for citizens, Swedish practitioners rate the added-value for the municipality substantially higher compared to Belgians. Even though these findings were obtained from a limited sample of informants, they reveal promising research areas.

**Table 1**

Summary of CP project qualities associated with higher added-value for the municipality and citizens.

Category [1]	Higher added-value for the municipality	Higher added-value for citizens
Impact on citizens' daily life	More forward-looking issues	Issues impacting daily decisions of citizens
Scale of the participation	Local	Local
Involvement of citizens (independent from data)	Reduced number of citizens involved face-to-face that play an active role	Many citizens have the opportunity to participate on-line at different phases of the project
Theme of the participation	Specialized theme (e.g., tourism or environment)	Budget-related theme
Sought behavior	Data not discussed and used to take decisions	Data is discussed and used to give information or create something
Involvement of citizens (data-centric)	Data is obtained from citizens	Data from different sources is used to make citizens react
Data attributes	Geolocalized objective data subject to interpretation	Objective data subject to interpretation



**Figure 1:** Distribution of added-value ratings across CP project archetypes (n refers to the number of projects, 1 – 7 on the x-axis correspond to low and high added-value, respectively).

## Declaration on Generative AI

The author(s) have not employed any Generative AI tools.

## References

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