



**Discussant comments on**  
**“Does participation make up for the democratic deficit?”**  
**by Bersch, Peh & Vilaça**

Guillermo Toral

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- This is **timely** and key to understand in a context of backlash against the administrative state, the power of experts, etc.
- The authors focus on a policy decision where we may expect conflict between democratic and bureaucratic sources of legitimacy – the protection of indigenous peoples to the detriment of infrastructure projects
- The paper presents the results of **a pilot online survey experiment**

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- Consider pre-specifying and testing hypotheses about **heterogeneous treatment effects by citizen type** (e.g., alignment with the federal government, attitudes about the civil service)

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  - Existing survey around an unexpected controversial decision by a federal agency, or conflict between an agency and Congress