

## **Research workshop**

# **Democratic participation: theoretical and empirical perspectives**

**September 13-14, 2018**

**University of Zurich, Switzerland**

### **Topic of the Workshop**

Citizen participation is broadly understood as a constitutive element of democracy. Without people discussing public affairs and voting, representative democracies are hollowed out and decay. While some political actors and commentators lament the low political turnout in ordinary elections and the political disengagement of various groups of citizens (young people, minorities, lower classes), other ones experiment new ways to try and revive the civic flame. Innovative ideas to expand the narrow institutional frame of purely representative democracy and include more forms of political participation – such as participatory budgeting, mini-publics, political consumerism, workplace democracy, compulsory and facultative referendums, liquid democracy, town meetings, or judicial juries – have gained growing support both in academic and public discourse.

These contemporary debates on political participation raise numerous questions: What can be considered “political participation”? How should researchers approach democratic participation, both theoretically and empirically? What forms of participation are necessary for democratic systems? What is the relationship between participation and democratic decision-making? How can desirable forms of participation be promoted? Where are the limits to democratic participation? Who is excluded from political participation?

The workshop aims at exploring these issues from various theoretical and empirical perspectives, both in democratic and nondemocratic contexts. The Annual Research Workshop “Democratic participation: theoretical and empirical perspectives” provides a space for junior researchers to present and discuss their research on these and related questions from different theoretical and empirical perspectives.

### **Venue**

University of Zurich  
AFL-E-003  
Affolternstrasse 56,  
8050 Zürich (Oerlikon)

## General information

The research workshop is part of the doctoral program Democracy Studies, and is open for DPDS members, members of the Swiss PhD network DB and other interested PhDs and Postdocs. Doctoral students will be awarded 1 ECTS for successful participation, and 2 ECTS for participation and presentation.

The objective of this research workshop is twofold. First, we aim at fostering interdisciplinary academic discussions between DPDS students, members of the DemocracyNet network, and other junior researchers interested in the study of democratic participation. Each participant to the workshop will have the opportunity to present a research project or a working paper, and receive feedback from other scholars on their current research. Second, we aim at fostering collaboration and team-work among researchers by exchanging ideas, creating a network of researchers in the field, and sharing knowledge to initiate new projects. The afternoon of the second day will be devoted to developing new projects.

## Participants

Odile Amann (University of Zurich)	odile.ammann@rwi.uzh.ch
Hans Asenbaum (University of Westminster)	h.asenbaum@westminster.ac.uk
Palmo Brunner (University of Zurich)	brunner@ipz.uzh.ch
Christian Caspar (University of Zurich)	caspar@swissonline.ch
Flavia Caroni (University of Zurich)	caroni@ipz.uzh.ch
Claudia Chwalisz (OECD)	claudia.chwalisz@oecd.org
Alice el-Wakil (University of Zurich)	alice.el-wakil@zda.uzh.ch
Jean-Paul Gagnon (University of Canberra)	jean-paul.gagnon@canberra.edu.au
Jérôme Grand (University of Geneva)	jerome.grand@unige.ch
Deborah Kalte (University of Zurich, ZDA)	deborah.kalte@zda.uzh.ch
Johanna Huber (University of Geneva)	johanna.huber@unige.ch
Libby Maman-Burstein (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)	libby.maman@gmail.com
Elena C. Mitrea (Central European University of Budapest)	mitrea_elena-cristina@phd.ceu.edu
Henri-Pierre Mottironi (University of Lausanne / Sciences Po)	henri-pierre.mottironi@unil.ch
Brenda Ogembo (University of Birmingham)	BAO614@student.bham.ac.uk
Victor Sanchez-Mazas (University of Geneva)	victor.sanchez-mazas@unige.ch
Michael Strebel (University of Zurich)	michael.strebel@uzh.ch
Rebecca Welge (University of Zurich)	mail@rebeccawelge.eu

## About the organizers

DemocracyNet was founded in 2011 as a forum of exchange and collaboration for researchers and practitioners in the field of democracy studies in Europe. For more information about the workshop, DemocracyNet, its members and project activities please visit [www.DemocracyNet.eu](http://www.DemocracyNet.eu).

This workshop was organized in cooperation with and thanks to the generous support of the Doctoral Program “Democracy Studies” (DPDS) of the University of Zurich. To learn more about the program, please visit <https://www.ipz.uzh.ch/en/studium/phd/structured/democracy-studies-program.html>.



## Program

Thursday, 13 September (Room AFL-E003)

09:00-09:30 Arrival, Registration, Coffee

09:30-10:00 Opening: Welcoming and presentation of DemocracyNet

10:00-12:00 **Panel I: Forms of political participation**

*Chair: Deborah Kalte*

**Christian Caspar**, University of Zurich

*Participation and the communicative morphology of democracy*

Discussant: Victor Sanches-Mazas

**Henri-Pierre Mottironi**, University of Lausanne / Sciences Po Paris

*From medieval town meetings to shareholder's assemblies: how can we explain this institutional isomorphism?*

Discussant: Odile Amman

**Brenda Ogembo**, University of Birmingham

*Participating in Participation or Influencing Policy Outcomes? Examining the Effects of Public Participation in Kenya's Sub-National Legislatures*

Discussant: Libby Maman-Burstein

12:00-13:15 Lunch

13:15-15:15 **Panel II: Democratic legitimacy of non-elected actors**

*Chair: Henri-Pierre Mottironi*

**Libby Maman-Burstein**, Hebrew University of Jerusalem

*Regulatory Agencies: More Independence, More Democracy?*

Discussant: Elena Cristina Mitrea

**Jérôme Grand**, University of Geneva

*Social and political participation: the normative gap*

Discussant: Hans Asenbaum

**Odile Ammann**, University of Zurich

*The Participation of NGOs in Swiss Politics: A Legal Perspective*

Discussant: Christian Caspar

15:45-17:00 **Panel III: Conceptualizing democratic systems**

*Chair: Palmo Brunner*

**Victor Sanches-Mazas**, University of Geneva

*A division of labour of democratic systems? Disentangling normative and functional dimensions*

Discussant: Claudia Chwalisz

**Hans Asenbaum**, University of Westminster

*The End of Democratic Theory? A Challenge to the Problem-based Approach*

Discussant: Jérôme Grand

18:30 **Public Lecture by Jean-Paul Gagnon** (Main building, room: RAA-G-15)

*A return to basic research in the study of democracy*

20:15 Workshop dinner (location TBA)



Friday, 14 September (Room AFL-003)

09:00-10:15 **Panel IV: Political consumerism**

*Chair: Palmo Brunner*

**Johanna Huber**, University of Geneva

*Variegated political participation: new insights from food consumption and production experiences*

Discussant: Deborah Kalte

**Deborah Kalte**, University of Zurich

*How political is veganism? An empirical evaluation of a possible unconventional form of political participation*

Discussant: Johanna Huber

10:45-12:00 **Panel V: Enabling citizens and civic engagement**

*Chair: Deborah Kalte*

**Claudia Chwalisz**, OECD

*Using behavioural insights to engage citizens in policymaking: Government of Jersey case study*

Discussant: Brenda Ogembo

**Elena Cristina Mitrea**, Central European University of Budapest

*Educating the Future Citizens: Attitudes towards Citizenship among Lower Secondary Students*

Discussant: Michael Strebel

12:00-13:15 Lunch

13:15-14:15 Exchange session: Creating, editing and running a peer-review journal,  
with Jean-Paul Gagnon, editor of *Democratic Theory*

*Chair: Henri-Pierre Mottironi*

14:30-16:30 Working Session: DemocracyNet project mapping with Rebecca Welge  
i.) academic collaborations  
ii.) transfer projects

16:30-17:00 Wrap-up and evaluation

17:00 End of the meeting, departure