

Call for Papers: Special Issue on Innovations in local representative democracy--Dilemmas and perspectives

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Editors

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Innovations in local representative democracy: Dilemmas and perspectives

Public innovation is high on the agenda in many Western liberal democracies (Sørensen 2016). Until recently, research and public decision makers have mainly focused on public service innovation, but currently, we see a mushrooming of initiatives aiming to stimulate policy innovation by rethinking the institutional set-up for representative democracy (e.g. Smith 2009; Geissel and Newton 2012; Nabatchi and Leighninger 2015; Neblo, Esterling and Lazer, 2018). This trend is particularly manifest in local government.

Many of these institutional innovations aim to strengthen and accommodate closer dialogue between politicians and citizens. One of the key drivers behind this development appears to be that Western governments increasingly see citizen involvement as a precondition for solving many of today's complex policy problems (Warren, 2009). Moreover, we are witnessing a change in political culture. Today's citizens are anti-authoritarian, critical and competent and they demand more influence than the ballot box gives them (Dalton and Welzel, 2004).

In this context, institutional reforms that bring politicians and citizens together in a shared attempt to develop and implement public policies appear to be a promising response to the declining trust in government in many representative democracies (Pew, 2017; OECD, 2017). What is truly innovative about recent theoretical and empirical attempts to innovate democracy is that they look beyond traditional representative and direct forms of democracy and focus on the institutionalization of arenas that promote dialogue and collaboration between politicians and citizens. Some researchers refer to this emerging democracy as 'direct representative democracy' (Neblo, Esterling and Lazer, 2018), some talk about 'interactive democracy' (Rosanvallon, 2011, 2018), and others use the term 'hybrid democracy' (Sørensen and Torfing, 2018).

In theory as well as in practice, the contours of a new form of representative democracy appear to be emerging. Research endeavors to capture this development are still in their infancy. We know little about the extent of the new institutional innovations in representative democracy, or about the variety of institutional forms they take in different contexts and settings. Moreover, few studies illuminate how a closer dialogue between politicians and citizens affects their mutual relationship and the outcomes of the policy process. Finally, there is a pressing need to scrutinize the normative implications of the institutional innovations in question in terms of political equality, democratic accountability, and effective policy-making and governance of public affairs.

This special issue invites papers that contribute to theoretical and/or empirical knowledge about the form, content and impact of institutional innovations in local representative democracy. Of particular interest are papers that focus on democratic innovations that link traditional institutions of representative democracy to arenas where citizens and politicians engage with each other. A number of studies suggest that failure to link such forums appears to be a major weak point in hybrid democracy (Edelenbos and van Meerkerk 2016; Røiseland and Vabo 2016; Hertting and Kugelberg, 2018).

Practicalities

Authors should follow the Public Sector Innovation Journal guidelines for authors, at: http://www.innovation.cc/editorial-board/editorial_guidelines.htm

The special issue will be published in February 2020, Issue 25(1).

The time schedule is as follows:

31.01.2019: Abstract delivered (around 500 words)
15.02.2019: Feedback on proposed papers
15.05.2019: Full paper delivered for external review
01.08.2019: Feedback from external reviewers and guest editors
01.10.2019: Reviewed article delivered
15.10.2019: Final feedback from guest editors
15.11.2019: Reviewed article delivered – ready to be published

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