

New Participatory Spaces

Insights from State and Social Movement Practices

Host: Centre for the Study of Democracy, University of Westminster, London, UK

Date: 4th – 6th May 2017

Keynote speaker: *Donatella della Porta*, Cosmos, Scuola Normale Superiore, Italy

Other speakers: *Graham Smith*, University of Westminster; *Dorothee de Nève*, University of Giessen, Germany; *Tina Olteanu*, University of Giessen, Germany

We are witnessing the rise of new forms of citizen participation within and beyond state institutions resulting in a vivid sphere of political activity. This phenomenon is reflected in current academic research. On the one hand, the study of *democratic innovations* is rich in empirical findings on novel participatory formats all around the world, such as mini-publics and participatory budgeting, sponsored typically by state agencies. On the other hand, research on new social movements, citizens' initiatives, and unconventional forms of participation such as flash mobs, online protest, and hacktivism, examines practices of collective action in open assemblies, online discussions, smart mobs etc.

However advanced the research in both fields, academic conceptualisations rarely consider both forms of participation in comparison. The notion of *participatory spaces* is an exception to this rule (Busse 2016, Cornwall 2004, Gaventa 2007). Here state and civil initiatives are conceptualised as *invited spaces* enabled by governments and *claimed spaces* generated by citizens. While differentiations are drawn, nevertheless these two broad forms of participation have family resemblances conceptually and practically and there are opportunities for meaningful comparative analysis.

The interdisciplinary symposium invites doctoral and postdoctoral researchers working on participatory spaces to come together to generate new and deeper understandings of these novel forms of organisation. Papers may focus on participatory spaces within and/or beyond state institutions and/or interrelations between these spaces. Theoretical and empirical, qualitative and quantitative contributions from all disciplines addressing, but not necessarily limited to, the following questions, are welcome.

Decision making

- Which methods and modes of voice and decision making are employed in invited and claimed spaces? What are the implications of these different methods and modes?
- How are communication and decision-making process organized? Facilitation, mediation, different phases, input from external experts?

Hierarchies

- How do invited and claimed spaces deal with social hierarchies and facilitate inclusion of marginalized groups like women, sexual and ethnic minorities, young, old, people with disabilities?
- How do invited and claimed spaces address internal hierarchies between followers and leaders, experts and laypersons, moderators and participants?

Technologies

- Which tools and techniques do invited and claimed spaces employ to enable communication and decision making? In which spaces does communication take place?
- How are online technologies employed? How do online and offline modes of communication interrelate?

Representation

- Which modes of selection, representation and identity construction do invited and claimed spaces employ?
- How are identities constructed in both physical and virtual space?

Please send an extended abstract of around one page in length no later than **17 February 2017** to H.Asenbaum@westminster.ac.uk and address any questions to this email.