

Early career scholars workshop

Transnational public participation and social movement activism

Ambiguities of global spread, professionalization and standardization

14-15.11.2013 in Lisbon

Call for papers, June 2013

The workshop is dedicated to questions linking transnational public participation research with transnational social movement activism research and pointing to dynamics of global spread, professionalization and standardization. It aims at discovering linkages, differences and ambiguities in both research fields and invites contributions from diverse disciplines. The workshop includes a public keynote dialogue between Dr. Mikko Rask, Finnish National Consumer Research Centre (confirmed), and Prof. Marisa von Bülow, Pontificia Universidad Católica, Chile and University of Brasília, Brazil (tbc) on linkages and challenges of transnational public participation and social movement activism. It concludes with a plenary discussion on political and societal relevance and implications of public participation and social movement research with Prof. Tiago Santos Pereira, University of Coimbra (confirmed), Portugal and Prof. Frank Fischer, Rutgers University, USA and University of Kassel, Germany (confirmed).

Outline of the topic

Designs and processes of participation, deliberation and activist forms become established globally addressing various policy issues and different policy levels. Social movement activist forms such as assemblies as well as ready-made templates and techniques for public participation such as citizen juries, consensus conferences, deliberative pollings, foresights, citizen budget forums etc. become developed worldwide and spread around the globe. However, they become more established in some regions while others remain less fertile for democratic and social innovations. The public participation design knowledge travels among experts, practitioners and citizens increasingly in a transnational and translocal setting.

The climate of uncertainty and risks of modernity, requirements of good governance and strong social movements are contextual factors increasing the demand for different/new models of participation. On the one hand this leads to standardization and homogenization of approaches around the world, on the other hand it faces the diversity of intellectual, cultural and political backgrounds that influence norms and values of what is seen to be the 'good', the 'right' and the 'efficient' participation.

The increasing spread of public participation principles and methods brings up ambivalent dynamics and dilemmas such as

* *Circulation of concepts, models and techniques:*

Different concepts of democracy and representation co-exist and built a fragmented meta-discourse as references for diverse fields of participation practices, at the same time single models and techniques circulate as best-practice. The concepts, models and techniques from diverse cultural, theoretical and normative backgrounds travel transnational and entangle in new combinations, not necessarily frictionless. .

* *Diversity and hybridization versus homogenization and standardization:* The spectrum of models and techniques is characterized by diversity and homogenization at the same time. New application problems or trends towards good governance, and calls for more democratization by social movements and protest groups bring new designs and techniques for participation. Existing models become modified to hybrids and single designs become dominant practices and de facto standards in the field, some of them even legally installed.

* *Specialized expertise and professionalization:* Expertise for public participation models and processes becomes more and more complex and specialized. It is stored in handbooks, academic publications and is openly accessible in specialized websites. Conferences and trainings are elements in this knowledge production chain and professionals such as facilitators, moderators, policy consultants, global activists and academics built their career on it. Participation becomes a matter of ‘experts.’

The workshop approaches reflection on the transnational formation and standardization of public participation with three foci:

- **Global spread of new action forms, practices and models for public participation:** How do action forms and practices travel, how are they modified and adapted, and finally how do they become established in a new context? How do transnational formation and standardization become established? How are they intermingled with the spread and the increasing diffusion and how do they shape the field of participatory innovations? It’s worth to raise questions of how norms and standards of designs and normative principles lead to automatism and establishment of potentially taken for granted approaches of public participation and challenge to look which mechanisms and forms of conformance, modifications and resistance to standards appear. Participatory Budgets, for example were practiced at a municipal level in Porto Alegre already in 1989 and from there spread worldwide. Social movement practices, e.g. the way deliberation is practiced in the assemblies of the Spanish 15M, often trace back to older social movement practices in other regions of the world. These practices are not simply copied, but constantly adapted.

- **Normalization and professionalism in expertise:** How do dynamics of transnational normalization and mainstreaming of public participation models go hand in hand with professionalism of experts of public participation? What about the role of experts mediating between citizens / stakeholders and decision makers / policy makers? Can we see trends towards commercialization of public participation practices and an evolving ‘participatory industry’ of participation consultants? How does this affect the spread and the legitimacy of participatory processes? For instance development agencies, like US Aid or GIZ (former GTZ), over a long time have generated a large expertise in how to improve participation in development projects which has gain acceptance as so-called expert knowledge but partly competes or contradicts with the local knowledge and cultural scripts for problem solving.

- **The making and shaping of public participation models:** How are transnational formation and standardization shaped by the social construction of public participation

(models)? The knowledge production of public participation models provides a range of approaches on public participation. This includes competing alternative models for participation, controversies over authority of normative conceptions for democratic quality and efficient policy making and competing legitimacy claims of models and actors involved. The framing of ‘the public’ (the role of representation, self-selection versus random-selection), ‘the right way to talk’ (for instance based on rationality, consensus oriented) and the desired outcome of participation (activating citizenship, preventing social resistance, empowerment of marginable groups) includes implicit diverse normative conceptions of democracy and politics and shapes the reality the models are used in. This is why the look into the making of public participation models becomes crucial.

Related to these themes we are especially interested in papers that deal with empirical examples which give insights into designs or forms for participation, deliberation and social movements activism that make global claims or travel across different localities. Examples are the World Wide Views, pan-European approaches on participatory processes (European Citizen Consultation, Meeting of Minds, Europolis, etc.) or large-scale processes such as the Australian Citizens’ Parliament, recent developments of transnational and global social movements, the World Social Forum and its regional forms (the continental ones, country specific and local social forums, etc.), transfer of action forms (related to the Occupy Movement, Pussy Riot, Femen, etc.) and models of democracy from below (as for example participatory budgeting approaches, deliberative pollings, foresights), development of internal meeting cultures, and practices to overcome unequal participation due to status differences or language by these social movement actors.

Target audience:

The workshop welcomes conceptual, theoretical and empirical contributions from early career scholars (including PhD-candidates and Post-docs) addressing one or more of these foci. Contributions combining different research perspectives on participatory and deliberative policies and social movements engagement, from public policy and governance studies, interpretative policy analysis, organizational studies, urban and planning studies, innovation studies, science and technology studies, geography and anthropology are explicitly welcomed.

Publication plans:

The workshop aims at providing an appropriate spirit and format supportive in particular for ambitious early career scholars who are interested in publications. Therefore experienced scholars as discussants shall help to elaborate manuscripts towards publishable papers. Selected authors will be invited for international peer reviewed publication activities afterwards.

Submission procedure:

Extended abstracts should be no longer than 300 words, written in English and contain a clear outline of the argument, the conceptual, theoretical and/or empirical framework, methodology and results. Abstracts for empirical papers further should include a brief description of the data used. They should be sent to nina.amelung@tu-berlin.de not later than 18th of August 2013.

Special Events: Lisbon is one of Europe's most exciting cities which we would like to introduce to the participants of the workshop with the special focus on its social movements and public participation activities. Therefore we meet for a 'reception' on Wednesday, October 13, the evening before the workshop starts at MOB, a cultural centre run by two activist groups the Precários Inflexíveis ("The Inflexible Precarious Workers" an association that fights on behalf of the precarious workers) and Group Hassan (a cultural initiative, offering e.g. Hip Hop courses)). Further we offer a walk through Mouraria, a revitalized district in the historical center of Lisbon which tells us a story about the ambiguities of activating residents from diverse cultures and identities for public participation.

Venue:

The workshop will take place at CESNOVA – Centre for Sociological Studies of the Universidade Nova de Lisboa – and CIES - Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology of the University Institute of Lisbon.

Time planning:

Deadline for abstracts: 18th of August 2013

Announcement selected abstracts: after 15th of September 2013

Deadline for papers: 31st of October 2013

Workshop: 14th and 15th of November 2013, reception on 13th of November, guided Lisbon tour on 16th of November

Organisation:

The Phd-Workshop is hosted in collaboration of CESNOVA at Universidade de Nova and CIES at Instituto Universitário de Lisboa. The concept is developed by Nina Amelung, Innovation in Governance Research Group at Technische Universität Berlin / CESNOVA at Universidade Nova de Lisboa and Dr. Britta Baumgarten, CIES - Centre for Research and Studies in Sociology, University Institute of Lisbon.

Management team (alphabetical order): Nina Amelung, Dr. Britta Baumgarten, Madalena Corte Real, Cristina Oliveira

Scientific committee (alphabetical order): Nina Amelung, Dr. Britta Baumgarten, Prof. Breno Bringel, Prof. António Moniz, Prof. Beatriz Padilla, Dr. Mikko Rask and N.N.

Conference fees and support for travel costs: There is no workshop fee planned. Accommodation and lunch/ dinner costs are individual costs. Unfortunately we cannot offer travel reimbursement, but help with information about funding programs.

Contact:

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