

Democratic Innovations: Processes and Institutions

Representative democracy has long been criticized for not living up to its promise of self-government. Universal suffrage has not prevented many citizens from feeling underrepresented. Beside the possibility of voting every once in four or five years, these citizens do not possess the time, energy or tools to raise awareness among decision-makers about their needs and concerns. Other, more powerful, economic players, however, often do fix themselves a seat at the negotiating table.

This asymmetry in real political influence is undermining the political trust in democratic institutions, and therefore calls for a more innovative approach to democracy. Many democratic innovations are currently being practiced, explored and proposed across the globe, varying from citizen councils and sharing commons, to workplace democracy. How should we conceptualize and evaluate such innovations? And will they save democracy or is their impact rather detrimental for it?

The aim of this seminar series is to examine the historical and social processes, institutional forms and legal design of democratic innovations. For instance, what democratic innovations are needed to effectively deal with problems that will have a major impact on future generations? How can innovative forms of democracy channel conflicts over competing interests while also fostering political trust? What theories and democratic ideals underlie these innovations? Should we regard them as alternatives for representative institutions, or rather as a means to reinforce them? Finally, how have efforts to improve or enlarge political participation worked out in the past, and what can we learn from those experiences for similar efforts today? These are among the questions addressed in the seminar series of the interdisciplinary research platform *Futures of Democracy* at Utrecht University.

Schedule	Speaker	Title
September 15, 2022 Polderkamer (Drift 6)	Core Team	Welcome to the seminar series, Introduction of the topic
October 20, 2022 Ravensteynzaal (KNG80)	Annemarie Kok	Een 'meervoudige democratie'?
November 17, 2022	Arthur Gwagwa	Self-determination as non-domination in the era of digital foreign interference
December 15, 2022 [online]	Samuel Bagg	What kinds of popular participation does deeper democratization require?
January 19, 2023	Serena Ferente	Political pluralism in medieval city-republics: theory and practice
February 16, 2023	Tom van der Meer	The role of political (dis)trust for democratic innovations

March 16, 2023	<i>Public event on Provincial Elections</i>	
April 20, 2023	Wim Blockmans	Long-term developments in the degree of political participation in premodern Europe
May 11, 2023	Hannah Werner	Climate change and the legitimacy challenge
June 15, 2023	David Stasavage	t.b.a.