

## Democratic innovations in unlikely places

14.-15. January, 2021

Virtual Workshop hosted by the  
Technical University of Munich

### Workshop theme

Representative democracies around the world are experiencing symptoms of crisis: the rise of populist parties, the polarization of public opinion, growing feelings of political apathy, and declining levels of public trust in democratic institutions and principles. This pushed many democratic theorists to focus on “democratic innovations” to deepen and diversify the opportunities for citizens to participate in governance. The most common types of “democratic innovations” include popular assemblies, mini-publics, participatory budgeting, referenda, and digital participation. Most of these “democratic innovations” took place in the “political sphere” as traditionally understood. In this workshop, we also aim to explore the potential of “democratic innovations” in unlikely places. By unlikely places, we mean contexts that are usually thought of as “apolitical”, “undemocratic”, or political in different ways. These contexts can include schools, workplaces or bureaucracies (traditionally understood as non-democratic), but also contexts in which only certain forms of democracy, but not others (e.g. only voting, but no deliberation or vice versa) took traditionally place (unions or even political parties might be examples). The workshop aims to explore the following questions: How can new democratic practices be implemented in contexts that are shaped by organizational pressures, legal constraints, and professional norms that are seemingly at odds with democratic practices, or at least certain kinds of democratic practices? What topics, problems, and decisions should be decided democratically in these unlikely places? And in what ways (if any) can “democratic innovations” in unlikely places work as an antidote to the current crisis of representative democracy?

### Program

The workshop will be held virtually via Zoom. Please write to [l.m.herzog@rug.nl](mailto:l.m.herzog@rug.nl) if you wish to participate, to receive the link. Spaces are limited and will be allocated on the basis of first come, first serve.

*Thursday, 14. January 2021*

14:00 – 14:10          Welcome

14:10 – 15:00          Gerald Beck and Robert Jende, Munich  
*“Democratic practices in Repair-Cafés and Open Workshops”*

15:00 – 15:10	Break
15:10 – 16:00	Udit Bhatia, Oxford <i>“Party Constitutionalism: Freedom of Speech within the Party”</i>
16:00 – 16:10	Break
16:10 – 17:00	Rikki Dean, Frankfurt <i>“Deliberating like a State”</i>
17:00 – 17:10	Concluding remarks

*Friday, 15. January 2021*

14:00 – 14:10	Virtual arrival
14:10 – 15:00	Christian Gelleri, Würzburg <i>“Democratization of money and credit”</i>
15:00 – 15:10	Break
15:10 – 16:00	Dorata Stasiak and Dirk von Schneidemesser, Potsdam <i>“Scripting, situating, and supervising: The role of artefacts in collaborative practices”</i>
16:00 – 16:10	Break
16:10 – 17:00	Alexander Krüger, Munich <i>“Islands of Deliberative Capacity in an Ocean of Authoritarian Control? The Deliberative Potential of Self-Organised Teams in Firms”</i>
17:00 – 17:15	Concluding remarks

Convenors:

Lisa Herzog, [l.m.herzog@rug.nl](mailto:l.m.herzog@rug.nl)

Alexander Krüger, [alexander.krueger@hfp.tum.de](mailto:alexander.krueger@hfp.tum.de)