

Digitalisation and the Future of Democratic Theory

Panel at MANCEPT Workshops in Political Theory 2017

11-13 September, University of Manchester

--- New deadline for proposals: 5th June 2017 ---

Convenors:

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The development of digital technologies bears an increasing influence on society, and especially on political processes and democracy. Among the political spheres under transformation caused by digitalisation are – on the one hand – empirical issues, such as administrations, political campaigning, governance and participation. On the other hand, normative concepts of democratic theory like legitimacy, equality, or citizenship need to be revised or even substituted. This double-transformation puts the different democratic theories under different forms of pressure to adapt.

These developments require attention of the social sciences and democratic theory. So far, analyses have been mainly of an empirical or prognostic nature, and democratic theory has started to react to these analyses (cf. Philip Pettit, David Runciman). However, systematic and comparative perspectives on how different democratic theories are affected by digitalisation, and particularly which concepts or norms are under pressure are still wanting. In order to address this gap, we propose a debate in political theory concerning the influence of digitalization on democracy, and more specifically democratic theory.

Thus, we propose contrasting digitalisation with democratic theories in a comparative perspective as a *framework* for the workshop. On the one hand, digitalisation influences democracy. That concerns not only the different spheres of democracy (public sphere, governance, policy fields, etc.), but also how practical politics react to those developments. The critical question is, whether these changes are still explicable by democratic theories (such as liberal, republican, deliberative, radical, economic, etc.) or whether some of the changes cannot be considered within those frameworks anymore. Since most of the theories have been developed before the impact of digitalisation was fully conceivable, adjustments to what the digitalisation causes in policies are necessary.

The *questions* to be addressed in the workshop include, but are not limited to: How does digitalisation influence democracy? Which spheres of democracy (public sphere, governance, etc.) are affected? In what way can different democratic theories relate to these changes? For example, does communication in the public sphere leave the framework of most democratic theories? Do concepts like legitimacy or representation have to be transformed because of changes in public reasoning or participation modes? Is lowering the normative expectations a good way to react to the new realities?

What amendments have to be considered for these theories? Which democratic theory is particularly under pressure and which is able to preserve its norms? We invite submissions on these and related topics.

A publication is planned in accordance with the results of the panel.

Please **send your proposal** (no more than 500 words) **until 5th of June 2017** to alexander.weiss@hsu-hh.de and karoline.helbig@hsu-hh.de.

Please note that participants are expected to register and pay this year's fees of £230.00 for academics and £135.00 for graduate students and retirees. It is possible for current graduate students/retirees to apply for a bursary. The deadline for bursary applications will be the 16th June, and successful applicants will be informed by the 23rd June.

Dates:

5th June: Abstract Submission

9nd June: Notification of acceptance

16th June: Confirmation of acceptance

28th August: Submission of complete papers

Upon acceptance, all speakers concede to their papers being circulated among the workshop's participants.

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