

Technologies of participation: democracy in the making, on site and at distance

Proposal for a special issue

Rationale for and aims of the special issue	2
Editors	4
Contributors	5
Provisional titles and abstracts of papers	6
Technologies of participation: opening the black box (<i>by Jason Chilvers, Jan-Peter Voß, Linda Soneryd, Brice Laurent, Sonja van der Arend</i>)	6
Democratic experiences and experiments (<i>by Brice Laurent</i>)	6
Participants remaking models (<i>by Sonja van der Arend</i>)	7
Ecologies of participation (<i>by Jason Chilvers</i>)	7
The travel of participation technologies (<i>by Linda Soneryd</i>)	7
Innovation journeys and constituencies of participation technologies (<i>by Jan-Peter Voß</i>)	8
Connecting inner and outer spaces of democratic practice (<i>by Ulrike Felt</i>)	8
Democracy in the making – on site and at a distance (<i>by Brice Laurent, Jan-Peter Voß, Jason Chilvers, Linda Soneryd, Sonja van der Arend</i>)	9
Constructing citizens and translocal assemblages of method (<i>by Alan Irwin</i>)	10
Performing realities of democracy “in vivo” and “in vitro” (<i>by Michel Callon</i>)	10
References	11

Rationale for and aims of the special issue

This proposed special issue develops novel theoretical and empirical perspectives on public participation. It establishes methods of participation as an object of empirical analysis with regard to the processes of their making and their working in practice. The latter goes beyond a well-established *evaluative* perspective on public participation methods which, at least implicitly, assumes specific aims and functions of public participation (e.g. Fiorino, 1990; Renn et al. 1995; Rowe and Frewer, 2000). In contrast, this special issue sets out to sketch and illustrate an *empirical* perspective on public participation in a more fundamental (or anthropological) sense which does not assume to know *a priori* what public participation actually is or what it is good for, even less how it could or should be done. It does instead approach the making and enacting of methods of participation as a practice that deserves to be studied open-mindedly, for the sake of understanding its patterns and dynamics as they emerge in social interaction. This is comparable to the ‘social studies’ approach to scientific knowledge and technology, and it shares with it the methodological relativism of studying the negotiation of claims with regard to the right definition, function and design of public participation ‘symmetrically’, without stepping in and taking sides in these battles. In fact, methods of participation can be framed as a specific type of technology that is used for generating legitimate judgement rather than immediately achieving some kind of material effect and which is not ostensibly physical in matter – a ‘social technology’ or ‘technology of governance’, so to say.

The collection takes forward nascent constructivist and co-productive perspectives on public participation methods which emerge at the intersection between science and technology studies (STS), governance and public policy studies, political theory and geography. Forms of participation are viewed as situated configurations of practices, procedures, subjects (or participants/publics), objects (or issues), material devices, settings, and, not least, of concepts of the public and democracy (e.g. Irwin and Michael, 2003; Irwin, 2006; Lezaun, 2007; Marres and Lezaun, 2011; Marres, 2012). Methods of participation gain special relevance as universal rules for the design of (elements of) such configurations. Studying the making, circulation and practical effects of participation methods thus offers a way to study the remaking of democracy, on site and at a distance.

We propose a carefully aligned set of papers to open up and advance this broader perspective. We position such methods as *technologies of participation*. These are defined as more or less formalized design rules for configuring the participation of citizens in processes of decision-making on public issues. In taking the social life of participation methods and their role as specific technologies of

governance as an object of study (Law et al. 2011; Voß 2007a: 174-182) papers in the collection *follow the processes of their making, their circulation across different sites of theoretical and practical articulation, their entanglement with emergent practices of participation in political situations, and the way in which they contribute to create a specific reality of democracy which extends across different sites.*

Together the papers in this collection develop a new repertoire for the analysis of political participation. It builds on and extends the research that has been done on economic markets, over the last decade or so, by extending a constructionist perspective on science and technology to the realm of the economy and the performativity of economics, consulting, and financial engineering (Callon 1998; Callon et al. 2007; MacKenzie et al. 2007; Muniesa and Lenglet 2013). With a focus on methods of participation we explore the extension of a constructionist perspective on science and technology to the realm of politics and the performativity of social and political science, policy advice, public affairs consulting, and the engineering of public authority.

The approach moves beyond the two dominant existing modes of studying political participation which centre on: (i) evaluation studies of participatory mechanisms and design largely based on normative theories of deliberative democracy (e.g. Rowe and Frewer 2000; Fung 2003; Gastil and Levine 2005; Goodin and Dryzek 2006); and (ii) the analysis of these efforts primarily as new technocratic forms of domination, partly inspired by a Foucauldian perspective (e.g. Rose 1999; Cruikshank 1999; Cooke and Kothari 2001; Swyngedouw 2005). Papers in this collection displace this opposition by focusing on the production of participatory practices and accompanying expert knowledge. They are situated within a growing interest in this topic within the field of science and technology studies (STS) (Gomart and Hajer 2003; Irwin 2006; Lezaun 2007; Lezaun and Soneryd 2007; Chilvers 2008; Braun and Schultz 2010; Felt and Fochler 2010; Laurent 2011a). Our collection goes beyond this work as it does not only study the performance of technologies of participation at specific sites of implementation. By also tracing technologies through the course of their making and along the paths by which they circulate around the world it takes this work an important step further (for a similar perspective cf. Voß 2007b for economic policy instruments). This brings the work into view that goes into *connecting* localized sites of participatory practice and allows us to map the translocal spaces that are formed through these connections.

While the major contribution of this special issue lies in providing new theoretical and empirical insights into technologies of participation, their circulation and effects, most contributions within it

will also reflect on the implications of this more reflexive perspective for future participatory practice in the domains of science, technology and the environment.

Editors¹

Dr Jan-Peter Voß is Juniorprofessor of Sociology of Politics at the Berlin University of Technology. He heads a research project on “innovation in governance” which studies the making of new forms of governance (Voß 2007a). Methods of citizen participation are one case area in this project. The annual “Forum Innovation in Governance”_which is organized through this project provided a platform for conceiving of and developing the proposed collection of papers. Jan has edited three special issues (Newig et al. 2007; Voß et al. 2009; Smith et al. 2010) and a book (Voß et al. 2006) which shaped the then emerging field of sustainability transition studies, especially with regard to aspects of politics and governance. His current work seeks to understand the trajectories of new forms of governance and how they relate with making of knowledge about governance.

Dr Jason Chilvers is Senior Lecturer at the University of East Anglia where he co-leads the Science, Society and Sustainability (3S) Research Group. He has been centrally involved for some time now in developing a new critical and reflexive mode of research into the expertise and technologies of participation, including publishing some of the first studies on the subject (e.g. Chilvers 2008) and through his recent directorship of a 2-year ESRC international seminar series on ‘Critical public engagement’ which has helped develop this field. He is currently completing an edited book from this series (with Earthscan-Routledge) and has edited journal special issues on subjects of direct relevance to this proposal (e.g. Chilvers and Evans 2009).

Dr Brice Laurent is a Researcher at the Center for the Sociology of Innovation at Mines ParisTech. His work analyses the mutual production of science and democracy, and focuses in particular on “technologies of democracy” (Laurent 2011a, 2011b). He has worked on the democratic issues raised by nanotechnology, and is currently involved in projects about the construction of experimental markets and democratic orders in sustainable technologies.

¹ Contact: Jan-Peter Voß, Berlin University of Technology, Dept. of Sociology, FH 9-1, Fraunhofer Straße 33-36, D-10587 Berlin, email: jan-peter.voss@tu-berlin.de, phone +49 30 314 25848

Contributors

All contributors are currently involved in research on the ‘social life’ of participation methods (editors also contribute papers, for details see above). Some are pioneers of this research perspective who have authored seminal articles. Work has already begun on the collection and there is funding (from the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research) for a workshop in Berlin, 27-28 February 2014, to discuss draft papers, thus enhancing the coherence and impact of the collection as a whole.

Prof Michel Callon is Professor of Sociology at the Center for the Sociology of Innovation at Mines ParisTech. He is a leading scholar in the field of Science and Technology Studies, and has worked on issues of expertise, politics and markets. His English books include *The Laws of the Markets* (Callon 1998), *Market devices* (Callon et al. 2007), *Acting in an Uncertain World* (Callon et al. 2009).

Prof Ulrike Felt is Professor of Social Studies of Science and head of the STS department at the University of Vienna (Austria). She has published widely in the fields of sociology of science and its reception by various publics. She was rapporteur of the expert group on science and governance to the Science, Economy and Society Directorate of European Commission D.G. Research.

Prof Alan Irwin is Acting President and Dean of Research at Copenhagen Business School. He has published widely on issues of science and technology policy, scientific governance, risk, and science-public relations. His books include *Citizen Science* (Irwin 1995), *Misunderstanding Science?* (Irwin and Wynne 1996), *Sociology and the Environment* (Irwin 2001), and *Science, Social Theory and Public Knowledge* (Irwin and Michael 2003).

Dr Linda Soneryd is Associate Professor and Lecturer in sociology at the University of Gothenburg. Since she finished her PhD thesis in 2002, her research has focused on public participation in environmental decision-making and lay-knowledges and expertise as well as how highly formalized forms of participation shape ‘publics’ or ‘stakeholders’ in relation to controversial issues such as nuclear waste management, GMOs and mobile phones.

Dr Sonja van der Arend is a critical student of innovations in environmental governance. Her dissertation (2007) analyzes the rise and demise of ‘interactive policy making’ in the Netherlands. As a postdoc researcher, she studied the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive, which

obliges the institution of ecological standards, economic policy analysis and public participation in water management (e.g. Arend & Behagel 2011).

Provisional titles and abstracts of papers

Technologies of participation: opening the black box *(by Jason Chilvers, Jan-Peter Voß, Linda Soneryd, Brice Laurent, Sonja van der Arend)*

This paper sets out the notion of, and main rationales for studying, technologies of participation through a review that situates this emerging research area in wider literatures of citizen participation, and the empirical/constructivist turn in studies of participatory democracy. We outline how the interdisciplinary field of scholarship on citizen participation has grown around normative theories of deliberative democracy and a Foucauldian inspired critical theoretical repertoire. A third strand of research analyses forms of participation as open-ended social experiments in themselves which produce publics, expertise, citizenship, and eventually democracy. We consider the importance of this more reflexive mode of analysis but draw out a shortcoming in this literature relating to its focus on isolated experiments. This opens up questions about circulating technologies of participation and their ongoing construction, maintenance and modification. It is here that we can position the individual chapters of the collection.

Democratic experiences and experiments *(by Brice Laurent)*

Controversy over nanotechnology is considered as an example, in order to identify “experience” and “experiment” as two modalities of making democratic realities. The notion of “experience” was discussed by American pragmatists such as James and Dewey when pointing to shifting social and technical identities in interaction with situations. “Experiments” involve the replication of already known “technologies of participation” as analyzed in the social studies of science for scientific experiments. The paper studies four cases of working towards public representations of nanotechnology and discusses them with regard to the two modalities of democracy in the making and how they are intertwined. Going from experience to experiment implies a separation of technologies from the issues on which they are applied. This provides a perspective for studying the construction of democratic order through the standardization of the instruments on which it is based.

Participants remaking models *(by Sonja van der Arend)*

Both a deliberative democratic and a Foucauldian view on participation expect technologies of participation to have a real impact, either in an empowering or a disciplining way. This paper seeks to challenge the empowerment-discipline dichotomy in a study of the construction of participatory practices in spatial planning. It presents a case study which reports the activities and experiences of participants in a planning process in the southern part of the Dutch ‘Randstad’ area. It shows how civil society members deal with ongoing innovations in the forms of spatial governance and thus (co-)construct their own roles as participants and create new modes of spatial planning themselves. The paper underlines the value of a practice based approach to leave a focus on isolated instances of implementing technologies of participation and to move towards an analysis of interfering strategies and projects. This shows how democracy is made and remade in multi-sited governing practices.

Ecologies of participation *(by Jason Chilvers)*

This paper introduces and explores the notion of ‘ecologies of participation’. It identifies the need to move beyond dominant imaginations of participation as discrete one-off interventions at particular sites, and from an exclusive focus on established technologies of participation to explore how they interact with locally situated participatory practices. This perspective emphasizes diverse, co-evolving, and interconnected assemblages of participation, subject to multiple forms of mediation, which co-exist and constitute a diverse reality of participation and the public in any particular political situation. Such ‘ecologies’ are empirically explored by tracing diverse forms of public engagement in low carbon energy transitions in the UK, including applications of established ‘technologies of participation’ by formal authorities as well as more spontaneous and citizen-led initiatives and protests. The analysis highlights how the mediation of heterogeneous participatory assemblages produces particular exclusions and effects, how this is contingent on the interconnections and boundary work between situated participatory experiments, and how technologies of participation impact on local democratic realities.

The travel of participation technologies *(by Linda Soneryd)*

This paper explores the travel of technologies of participation across particular political situations. It focuses on how a particular method can be more or less connected to a specific issue, i.e. how technologies of participation “mediate” publics and issues. A case of stakeholder involvement in nuclear waste management in Sweden will be used to exemplify this: RISCUM emerged as a

participation technology through a range of experiments in the area of nuclear waste management in Sweden where it travelled through different organisations and stages of the nuclear waste management programme. At the core of RISCUM are 'safe spaces' for stakeholder dialogue. Depending on the situations where RISCUM was put to work, this had led to a separation between issues and stakeholder involvement through e.g. a role-play for negotiating fictive issues or a focus on issues that the nuclear waste company did not open up for public discussions. The paper follows the RISCUM model as it travelled to the Czech Republic, showing how some parts of the participation technology changed and others were kept stable in this new context, and what this implies for linkages with particular issues of concern.

Innovation journeys and constituencies of participation technologies *(by Jan-Peter Voß)*

This paper sets out to broaden the analytical view on methods of participatory governance to follow the long-term and multi-sited processes of their making. This is to go beyond a study of technologies "at work" in particular political situations and to turn to their *innovation journeys*, the processes through which they become articulated, stabilize and are brought into circulation. We trace innovation journeys of the "planning cell", "citizen jury" and "consensus conference" since the first articulations of these methods in the 1970s. This shows how they link experiments in different situations (which are related to issues as diverse as the planning of local infrastructure or protection of the Earth's biodiversity, and embedded in political settings of the North and the South, on municipal level and at the United Nations). The journey also takes us to sites where methods are developed as abstract technical models, such as dedicated research institutes and consultancies, professional associations, research projects, and laboratory experiments for testing deliberative designs. Sites of model-making are linked with each other and with sites where methods are "applied". The paper focuses on how *constituencies* of certain technologies of participation take shape, and how they establish themselves as social loci of expertise on participatory governance. We conclude with a view on the emerging topology of a translocal space of democracy in the making.

Connecting inner and outer spaces of democratic practice *(by Ulrike Felt)*

Over recent years there has been a substantive "model traffic" concerning technologies of participation across countries and issue spaces. In this process, some countries have become central in defining what good participatory practices are, while others got staged (or stage themselves) as "participatory periphery" and as consumers of "best practice" methods. As such exercises have come to be seen as important extensions of contemporary technoscientific democracies (in some cases

even as efforts in "democratizing democracy"), the above mentioned modes of ordering also becomes an assessment exercise in "democratic quality". As much as for technoscientific innovations a discourse on leaders and those "lagging behind" has gained importance, we can claim to observe a similar phenomenon in the field of participatory exercises as a social innovation.

Yet any concrete participatory exercise has to be understood as a space where transformations on two levels happen: (1) in a first move the very technology of participation imported from a different democratic environment has to find its fit with a specific historically rooted technopolitical culture and with specific understandings of democratic practices, while also striving for acquiring the status of an "recognizable political object"; (2) in a second move, citizens, through appropriating such spaces of debate, valuing and deliberation, perform important transformation work through relating these temporal inner spaces of democracy to their wider concerns of democratic procedures, to the way societal choice is organized and to their role as citizens.

Reflecting these transformation processes on both levels from the point of view of a country which is often seen as (and partly sees itself) a 'participatory periphery' when it comes to technoscientific issues – Austria – will be at the core of this paper. This will be done by analysing (1) policy statements on technoscience related participatory exercises and (2) different spaces of citizen debate on scientific and technological developments.

Democracy in the making – on site and at a distance *(by Brice Laurent, Jan-Peter Voß, Jason Chilvers, Linda Soneryd, Sonja van der Arend)*

We take building blocks from the previous papers for outlining an analytics of democracy in the making. Our ambition is to sketch out a conceptual and methodological repertoire for studying ongoing practical work of crafting and reconfiguring arrangements of political representation across different sites and in their connections and mutual implications. We develop this perspective with a view to circulating technologies of participation, but also other forms of connections. Sites can be connected by established instruments of representative democracy that are inscribed in circulating objects and devices, or upcoming and expanding methods of participatory governance, together with the expertise of dedicated bodies of professionals. Sites can also be related through circulating representations of public issues. The separation between instruments and issues requires constant work. Different technological and issue spaces enact versions of democracy in long-term genealogies. Democracy in the making is to be understood as an entanglement of such genealogies in situated political struggles.

Constructing citizens and translocal assemblages of method *(by Alan Irwin)*

This commentary piece discusses the above papers against a background of existing research on civic engagement with science, public policy and participatory governance. It critically discusses the use and achievements of a wider perspective on democracy in the making, one that explicitly accounts for the connecting of sites through technologies of participation and otherwise.

Performing realities of democracy “in vivo” and “in vitro” *(by Michel Callon)*

A second commentary takes the broader venture of science and technology studies and its encounters with sciences and expertises of society and governance as a background for positioning and discussing an emerging focus on technologies of participation. The move to follow connections between sites, which is advanced by this collection, is related with studies into the performativity of economics and networks of experiments “in vivo” and “in vitro”.

References

- Arend, S.H. van der, & J. Behagel (2011) *What participants do. A practice based approach to public participation in two policy fields*. *Critical Policy Studies* 5 (2): 169-186.
- Braun, Kathrin, and Susanne Schultz. 2010. "'... a certain amount of engineering involved': Constructing the public in participatory governance arrangements." *Public Understanding of Science* 19 (4):403.
- Callon, Michel. 1998. *The Laws of the Markets*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Callon, Michel, Pierre Lascoumes, and Yannick Barthe. 2009. *Acting in an uncertain world: an essay on technical democracy*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Callon, Michel, Yuval Millo, and Fabian Muniesa. 2007. *Market devices*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Chilvers, Jason. 2008. "Environmental risk, uncertainty, and participation: mapping an emergent epistemic community." *Environment and Planning A* 40 (12):2990 – 3008.
- Chilvers, Jason, and James Evans. 2009. "Understanding networks at the science–policy interface." *Geoforum* 40 (3):355-62.
- Cooke, Bill, and Uma Kothari. 2001. *Participation: The New Tyranny?* London: Zed books.
- Cruikshank, Barbara. 1999. *The will to empower: Democratic citizens and other subjects*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- Fiorino, Daniel. 1990. "Citizen participation and environmental risk: a survey of institutional mechanisms." *Science, Technology and Human Values*, 15, 226–243.
- Felt, Ulrike, and Maximilian Fochler. 2010. "Machineries for Making Publics: Inscripting and Describing Publics in Public Engagement." *Minerva* 48 (3):319-38.
- Fung, Archon. 2003. "Survey article: recipes for public spheres: eight institutional design choices and their consequences." *Journal of Political Philosophy* 11 (3):338-67.
- Gastil, John, and Peter Levine. 2005. *The Deliberative Democracy Handbook: Strategies for Effective Civic Engagement in the Twenty-First Century*. San Francisco, CA: Wiley & Sons.
- Gomart, Emilie, and Maarten A. Hajer. 2003. "Is that politics? For an inquiry into forms in contemporary politics." In *Social Studies of Science and Technology: Looking Back, Ahead*, ed. B. Joerges and H. Nowotny. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Goodin, Robert E., and John S. Dryzek. 2006. "Deliberative impacts: the macro-political uptake of mini-publics." *Politics & society* 34 (2):219.
- Irwin, A. 2006. "The politics of talk." *Social Studies of Science* 36 (2):299.
- Irwin, Alan. 1995. *Citizen science: a study of people, expertise and sustainable development*. London: Routledge.
- . 2001. *Sociology and the environment: a critical introduction to society, nature, and knowledge*. London: Polity Press.
- Irwin, Alan, and Mike Michael. 2003. *Science, social theory and public knowledge*. Berkshire: Open University Press.
- Irwin, Alan, and Brian Wynne. 1996. *Misunderstanding science? The public reconstruction of science and technology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Laurent, Brice. 2011a. *Democracies on trial. Assembling nanotechnology and its problems*. PhD Thesis. Paris: Mines Paris Tech, Centre de Sociologie de l'Innovation.
- . 2011b. "Technologies of democracy: Experiments and demonstrations." *Science and Engineering Ethics* 17 (4):649-66.
- Law, John, Evelyn Ruppert, and Mike Savage. 2011. "The Double Social Life of Method." In *CRESC Working Paper Series*. Milton Keynes: Centre for Research on Socio-Cultural Change, Open University.

- Lezaun, J. 2007. "A market of opinions: the political epistemology of focus groups." *The Sociological Review* 55:130-51.
- Lezaun, J., and L. Soneryd. 2007. "Consulting citizens: technologies of elicitation and the mobility of publics." *Public Understanding of Science* 16 (3):279.
- MacKenzie, Donald A., Fabian Muniesa, and Lucia Siu. 2007. *Do economists make markets?: on the performativity of economics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Muniesa, Fabian, and Marc Lenglet. 2013. "Responsible innovation in finance: directions and implications." In *Managing the Responsible Emergence of Science and Innovation in Society*, ed. R. Owen, J. Bessant and M. Heintz. Chichester: Wiley.
- Newig, J., J. P. Voß, and J. Monstadt. 2007. "Governance for sustainable development: coping with ambivalence, uncertainty and distributed power." *Double Special Issue of the Journal of Environmental Policy and Planning* (9 (3/4)):185-92.
- Renn, Ortwin, Thomas Webler and Peter Wiedemann eds. 1995. *Fairness and Competence in Citizen Participation: Evaluating Models for Environmental Discourse*. Kluwer: Dordrecht.
- Rose, Nikolas S. 1999. *Powers of freedom: reframing political thought*: Cambridge University Press.
- Rowe, Gene, and Lynn J. Frewer. 2000. "Public participation methods: A framework for evaluation." *Science, technology & Human values* 25 (1):3-29.
- Smith, Adrian, Jan-Peter Voß, and John Grin. 2010. "Innovation Studies and Sustainability Transitions." *Special Section in Research Policy* 39 (4).
- Swyngedouw, Eric. 2005. "Governance innovation and the citizen: the Janus face of governance-beyond-the-state." *Urban studies* 42 (11):1991.
- Voß, Jan-Peter. 2007a. *Designs on governance. Development of policy instruments and dynamics in governance. PhD thesis*. Enschede: University of Twente.
- . 2007b. "Innovation processes in governance: the development of 'emissions trading' as a new policy instrument." *Science and public policy* 34 (5):329-43.
- Voß, Jan-Peter, Dierk Bauknecht, and René, Kemp. 2006. *Reflexive Governance for Sustainable Development*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar.
- Voß, Jan-Peter, Adrian Smith, and John Grin. 2009. "Designing long-term policies." *Special Issue of Policy Sciences* 42 (4).