

Technical democracy and citizen participation participatory devices and the problems of public engagement

3 ECTS / SS16/17

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Modul: Projekt MA

Description:

Citizen participation is central to democratic life in technologically advanced societies. This course will introduce and critically assess a range of technical devices designed to expand and enhance citizen participation and democracy.

Almost everyday new technologies are developed that claim to expand opportunities for user and citizen participation in such projects: from smart energy meters to interactive museum exhibits and from open source software to “user friendly” computers, users and citizens are increasingly equipped with devices that promise them more power, voice and control over their lives and environments. We find many similar promises offered by state actors, NGOs and industry when experimenting with new participatory processes such as consensus conferences, citizen juries or hackathons. But, is participation just the latest buzzword adopted by governments, corporations and scientific elites when publicly justifying what they do? In what ways do these devices help us built more democratic societies? Can these developments enhance political participation in the major contemporary challenges we face like –e.g. climate change, energy futures, ageing populations or disease epidemics–?

In this course students will learn about the design of a range of participatory devices that they will critically assess from both technical and political perspectives. The course will enable students to engage with both the practical design of participatory devices and theoretical traditions that inform their development. Students will learn to critically evaluate the mix of expertise required to address the democratic challenges of advanced technological and industrial societies.

Lerarning Objectives:

1. To understand the challenges of democratic participation in technologically advance societies.
2. To critically assess the technical design and political theory that have informed the development of a range of contemporary participatory technologies.
3. To identify new opportunities for designing new participatory technologies and to evaluate their political potentials.

Methodology:

1. Five device-oriented workshops

Students will take part in a series of five design workshops each of which examine particular participatory technologies. Using a participatory design model developed in actor-network theory (ANT), each participatory technology will be examined according through the same process of: (1) problematization (what is the problem it seeks to address?), (2) role allocation (what does it make us do and what positions it creates?); (3) enrolment (how does it engage us?), and (4) mobilisation (how does it put us into motion?). In preparation for each workshop, students will be required to read pieces of news and to prepare materials for a session in which each of the participatory devices will be 'reverse engineered'.

2. Five theory-related seminars

Each design workshop will be followed by a seminar in which the political theory informing the design of the participatory technology will be discussed. Students will be expected to read the compulsory readings and come prepared for critical discussion about the political capacities and limitations of the participatory technology.

3. Assessment workshop (40%)

Students will attend a workshop session where they will present their ideas for the assessment (their proposed participatory technology), and receive feedback from both the lecturer and their peers. Students will be expected to present their idea in 10 minutes, according to the structure of the assessment.

4. Written assessment: participatory device for an ongoing controversy (60%)

Students will be asked to design or to analyse the use of a participatory technology for a contemporary controversy. The assessment will be written (3,000 words) but other materials may be produced/included (e.g. sketches, diagrams, prototypes), though are not compulsory. Assessments will draw on the materials and theories covered throughout the course. Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of both the practicalities of designing participatory technology and the relevant theoretical contexts.

Deadline for submission: 15.07.2016.

Requirements for passing the course:

To pass the course, students are expected to complete the following tasks:

Prepare and actively participate in workshops and seminars, read the materials set and engage in discussion.

Present their assessment proposal on participatory technology design to the lecturer and their peers in a workshop, in preparation for the assessment.

Write a final individual essay which will propose a participatory technology to address a contemporary controversy (set by the lecturers). The essay will outline the problem, discuss the relevant theoretical contexts, highlight a range of participation options and the relative merits of each, and propose their own participatory technology for addressing the controversy.

Acceptance of any assignments implies compliance with the following requirements:

Citations are always marked and referred to in the bibliography at the end of a text

No unauthorized copying or pirating of existing texts; plagiarism will not be tolerated!

Cover sheet with course title and number, name, student ID, title of assignment/topic and date

Style: A4 paper, 11 point font, 1 1/2 line spacing, page numbers in footer, author name and text

title in header

Proofreading and language checks before submission of texts

Grading Scheme:

40% oral presentation/ 60% final individual essay.

Grades are between 1 and 5, 1 being the best grade, 5 being a fail.

Schedule:

| Workshops | |
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| <p>Date: 18.04.2016</p> <p>Time: 11:30-13:00</p> <p>Room: 370 Augustenstr. 46</p> | <p>Introduction: Technical democracy, citizens and participatory devices (LW & TC)</p> <p>Course overview.</p> <p>Introduction to the problems of democracy and citizen participation in technologically advanced societies. We will look at some ways the challenge of participation is being dealt with in architecture.</p> <p><i>References</i></p> <p>Lippmann, W. (1930). <i>The phantom public</i>. New York: Macmillan. Chapters 1&6</p> <p>Petrescu, D. (2005). Losing control, keeping desire. In P. B. Jones, D. Petrescu, & J. Till (Eds.), <i>Architecture and participation</i> (pp. 43–64). London: Spon.</p> <p>Till, J. (2005). The negotiation of hope. In P. B. Jones, D. Petrescu, & J. Till (Eds.), <i>Architecture and participation</i>. (pp. 23–41). London: Spon.</p> |
| <p>Date: 25.04.2016</p> <p>Time: 11:30-13:00</p> <p>Room: 370 Augustenstr. 46</p> | <p>Expert panels, citizen juries, consensus conferences 1 (LW)</p> <p>Seminar: How do societies deal with complex technoscientific issues and controversies that fall outside the remit of existing public and state institutions?</p> <p><i>References</i></p> <p>'Prologue' in Callon, M., Lascoumes, P., & Barthe, Y. (2011). <i>Acting in an Uncertain World: An Essay on Technical Democracy</i>. (G. Burchell, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.</p> |
| <p>Date: 02.05.2016</p> <p>Time: 11:30-13:00</p> <p>Room: 370 Augustenstr. 46</p> | <p>Expert panels, citizen juries, consensus conferences 2 (LW)</p> <p>Workshop: The Paris COP21 conference has been publicized as a major success for the consensus conference. How did it work? What was the procedure? What are the protocols? What problems did it face?</p> |
| <p>Date: 09.05.2016</p> <p>Time: 11:30-13:00</p> <p>Room: 370 Augustenstr. 46</p> | <p>Participatory sensing 1 (LW)</p> <p>Seminar on STS takes to participatory mapping and the forms of citizen sensing.</p> <p><i>References</i></p> <p>Monique Girard and David Stark, "Socio-Technologies of Assembly: Sense Making and Demonstration in Rebuilding Lower Manhattan," in <i>Governance and Information Technology: From Electronic Government to Information Government</i>, ed. Viktor Mayer-Schönberger and David Lazer (MIT Press, 2007), 145–76.</p> |
| <p>Date: 23.05.2016</p> <p>Time: 11:30-13:00</p> <p>Room: 370 Augustenstr. 46</p> | <p>Participatory sensing 2 (LW)</p> <p>Sensors are increasingly proposed as devices that enable citizens to participate in big urban problems from air pollution to noise monitoring. In this session we will discuss the different ways in which sensors are designed to facilitate citizen participation.</p> |
| <p>Date: 30.05.2016</p> <p>Time: 11:30-13:00</p> <p>Room: 370 Augustenstr. 46</p> | <p>Demonstrations 1 (LW)</p> <p>What is the different between technical and political demonstrations? In this week we will compare some very different forms of demonstration and map out those who participate in them.</p> |

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| <p>Date: 06.06.2016</p> <p>Time: 11:30-13:00</p> <p>Room: 370 Augustenstr. 46</p> | <p>Demonstrations 2 (TC)</p> <p>Seminar: STS takes on demonstrations as forms of participation through witnessing, validation, and testing.</p> <p><i>References</i></p> <p>Barry, A. (1999). Demonstrations: sites and sights of direct action. <i>Economy and Society</i>, 28(1), 75–94.</p> |
| <p>Date: 13.06.2016</p> <p>Time: 11:30-13:00</p> <p>Room: 370 Augustenstr. 46</p> | <p>Polling & public opinion 1 (TC)</p> <p>Workshop: <i>How do we use a survey form? How is it formatted? How do we write down in it? With what materials? In which spaces? Who uses it and for what? How do we compile it? How are we figured as users, citizens, or subjects through their use?</i></p> |
| <p>Date: 20.06.2016</p> <p>Time: 11:30-13:00</p> <p>Room: 370 Augustenstr. 46</p> | <p>Polling & public opinion 2 (TC)</p> <p>Seminar: STS take on voting, focus groups and critique of public opinion</p> <p><i>References</i></p> <p>Law, J. (2009). Seeing like a survey. <i>Cultural Sociology</i>, 3(2), 239–256.</p> |
| <p>Date: 27.06.2016</p> <p>Time: 11:30-13:00</p> <p>Room: 370 Augustenstr. 46</p> | <p>Participatory design 1 (TC)</p> <p>Workshop: <i>In groups we will design through a democratic/participatory process a democratic space. Later on each group has to demonstrate why it is democratic and discuss it with others.</i></p> |
| <p>Date: 04.07.2016</p> <p>Time: 11:30-13:00</p> <p>Room: 370 Augustenstr. 46</p> | <p>Participatory design 2 (TC)</p> <p>Seminar on STS takes to the materialization of participation and how the materials deriving from participatory design processes seek to be objects embodying the values of democracy.</p> <p><i>References</i></p> <p>Lezaun, J. (2013). Ergonomics of Democracy. In K. Cupers (Ed.), <i>Use Matters: An Alternative History of Architecture</i> (pp. 215–231). London: Routledge.</p> |
| <p>Date: 11.07.2016</p> <p>Time: 11:30-13:00</p> <p>Room: 370 Augustenstr. 46</p> | <p>Showcase: Reverse-engineer a participatory device of your choice or your creation for us! (LW&TC)</p> <p>Please prepare a 10 minute presentation of your proposed participatory technology device for this workshop; each presentation will be followed by 5 minutes of discussion.</p> |