



STIFTELSEN
Riksbankens
Jubileumsfond

CINEFOGO
CIVIL SOCIETY
AND NEW FORMS
OF GOVERNANCE
IN EUROPE



ÖREBRO UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND
POLITICAL SCIENCES

NORMATIVE IMPLICATIONS OF NEW FORMS OF PARTICIPATION FOR DEMOCRATIC POLICY PROCESSES

THE STIFTELSEN RIKSBANKENS JUBILEUMSFOND
CONFERENCE ON CIVIL SOCIETY
GRYTHYTAN INN, SWEDEN, MAY 8-10, 2008

CALL FOR PAPERS

Objectives

Enhancing citizens' and associations' participation in democratic policy processes have been proposed as useful ways to overcome the so-called crises of politics (declining electoral turnout, decreasing trust in conventional political actors, etc). In this context both direct and indirect forms of participation besides the representative systems have been suggested. An increasing number of referenda, consultation processes, transfer of responsibilities for certain geographic or functional areas, and deliberative fora are introduced in all EU member states. However, these are only a few examples of a renewed and diffused interest in getting citizens and civil society organizations involved in public policy making. Simultaneously, new governance systems evolve at European, national, and local levels and across multiple levels, which include new actors from civil society while excluding others.

From a normative point of view, the inclusion of individual and social actors in decision-making processes raise a number of important questions about political representation, participation and legitimacy. What weight should conclusions reached through participative consultations be given in decision making? How representative can civil society organizations claim to be? Is participation bought at the expense of accountability?

This conference aims at addressing the broad theme of new forms of participation interfacing recently acquired empirical knowledge with a normative perspective. In particular, we are interested in assessing the normative implications of the institutionalization of participatory devices for democratic policy-making, requirements of representativeness and accountability and public control over binding collective decisions.

Issues of particular interest

In key note speeches as well as in workshops normative implications of new forms of participation for democratic practices will be addressed. Papers highlighting the following issues, either theoretically or empirically will be particularly appreciated:

- Does the well-established decision-making process in representative institutions change as a consequence of the institutionalization of participatory devices? In that case how?
- What kinds of formal relationships are established between elected representatives and consulted social actors?
- Which conceptions of participation and representation are emphasized by relevant institutional and social actors?
- What are the repercussions for established understandings of political accountability when civil society actors are involved?
- To what extent are governance networks able to compensate for weaknesses in established representative structures and processes? And, if so, at what cost?
- To what extent does the evolvement of governance network entail increasing rule by traditional forms of government?

Deadline for abstracts of papers

An abstract of no more than 200 words have to be submitted before January 20th, 2008 to pia.brundin@sam.oru.se. A committee consisting of Professor Erik Amnå (Örebro University), Professor Peter Esaiasson (Göteborg University), Professor Marilyn Taylor (University of the West England) and PhD Adrienne Sörbom (Stockholm University) will evaluate the proposals and inform the candidates of acceptance on February 20th, 2008. The final papers have to be distributed not later than April 30, 2008.

Who

The conference is open to all members of the CINEFOGO Network as well as for other interested colleagues. PhD students are particularly encouraged to apply.

Where

The conference will be held at the Grythyttan Inn, established by Queen Christina in 1640. It is situated at Campus Grythyttan, hosting Örebro University's Department for Restaurant and Culinary Arts. For more information, please see <http://www.grythyttan.com/English.htm>

Organizers

The conference is collaboratively organized and funded by Stiftelsen Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (www.rj.se), the CINEFOGO Network of Excellence on Civil Society and New Forms of Governance in Europe (www.cinefogo.org), and Örebro University (www.oru.se)

Costs

The conference will be free for paper-givers, while travel and some accommodation costs will be covered by each individual participant. Some bursaries will be available for PhD students.

Further information

- Concerning professional matters, please contact Professor Erik Amnå, Örebro University, Department of Social and Political Sciences, SE-701 82 Örebro, Sweden, erik.amna@sam.oru.se
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- Regarding administrative and logistical matters, please contact Conference Coordinator Monica Wettler, Örebro University, Event Service, SE-701 82 Örebro, Sweden. monica.wettler@adm.oru.se.
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