

Workshop: Transfer of democracy discourses to society

Normative, empirical, and practical aspects

21 – 23 October 2019, 9 – 16.30, University of Zurich and Polit-Forum Bern

The workshop focuses on **fundamental questions of democracy**, researching the possibilities and challenges to transfer scientific discussions and insights to a broader public outside of academia. Fundamental questions of democracy are discussed with both empirical and normative approaches and include contributions of academic experts and practitioners.

As an exemplary topic, we put the **relationship between federalism and equality in democracy** centre stage. Issues of federalism – or more generally centralisation and decentralisation – and equality are relevant in all democracies, the issues may be in tension with each other, and they are especially topical in Switzerland's federalist political system. Challenges to federalism and equality are undergoing fast changes, why the combination of empirical and normative approaches is especially fruitful.

Transfer of up-to-date scientific discourse about federalism and equality to the society is both a need expressed by practitioners in Switzerland and a challenge, because it concerns the normative fundamentals of political systems. The workshop analyses the academic discourse from the point of view of civic education principles and practical challenges in order to contribute to an outcome that corresponds to the needs of practitioners and society.

Program and learning environment

The workshop consists of **academic exchange** about current research (among participants and with a keynote speaker), of a **visit of the current exhibition at the Polit-Forum Bern**, including a Q&A session with the responsible persons for the exhibition, and **working sessions**, where participants elaborate **draft concepts** to transfer academic knowledge, discourse and controversies about federalism and equality to a broader public in an interactive and mainly non-written setting (exhibition and non-formal education).

Academic experts as well as practitioners (representative from the Polit-Forum, Demokrative, workshop instructors) give feedback on these workshop outputs. The workshop partners aim to use concepts and approaches developed during the workshop for an exhibition and education offers in the future. Workshop participants will be invited to contribute.

The first and third workshop day (21 and 23 October) will be held at the **University of Zurich**.

The second workshop day (22 October) will be held at the **Polit-Forum Bern**.

Learning targets

- Participants reflect about the combination of empirical and normative approaches in federalism and equality research and in their own areas of research
- The participants reflect about the relevance of research in general and their areas of research in particular for a broader public and educational aims
- The participants learn about key concepts for the transfer of knowledge from research to an audience outside of academia
- The participants get to know the Polit-Forum Bern, a key platform for discussing and learning about democracy and politics outside formal educational institutions in Switzerland

Workshop instructors, guest academics and practitioners:

- Dr. Rebecca Welge, workshop instructor, www.rebeccawelge.eu
- Dr. Sabine Jenni, workshop instructor, representative of Demokrative – Initiative for civic education (see partners), www.sabinejenni.net
- Thomas Göttin, executive director of the Polit-Forum Bern (see partners)
- Dr. Paolo Dardanelli, guest academic, Reader in comparative politics at the University of Kent, UK
- Dr. Antoinette Scherz, guest academic, postdoctoral fellow at the University of Oslo, t.b.c.

Partners:

- Polit-Forum Bern, www.polit-forum-bern.ch: The Polit-Forum is a non-governmental but publicly funded association that provides a platform for dialogue and debate about politics. Located in a medieval tower two hundred meters from the Swiss federal parliament in Bern, it regularly organises exhibitions, hosts political debates and civic education workshops.
- *Demokrative – Initiative for civic education*, www.demokrative.ch: Demokrative is a non-partisan and non-profit Swiss association specialised in science-based civic education projects.

Workshop organisation:

The workshop is organised by the Doctoral Program Democracy Studies (DPDS) of the University of Zurich as part of the workshop series ‚Democracy as Concept and in Practice‘ which is co-funded by the University of Zurich and the Stiftung Mercator Schweiz.

Workshop coordinators:

Dr. Doreen Spörer-Wagner, spoerer@ipz.uzh.ch and Dr. Christian Ewert, christian.ewert@uzh.ch

Registration for the workshop:

The workshop addresses primarily DPDS doctoral students, but is also open to advanced master students, doctoral and postdoctoral researchers from other universities.

To register, please send an e-mail to Christian Ewert (christian.ewert@uzh.ch) and the workshop instructors (jenni@demokrative.ch and mail@rebeccawelge.eu). Please indicate in the email the academic grade of your studies (BA, MA, doctoral, postdoctoral) and your institution.

