

## **ECPR General Conference – Hamburg – 22-25 August 2018**

### ***Section: Connecting Social Movement Studies and Political Participation Research***

#### ***Panel title: From social movement participation to informal (political) participation and vice-versa ?***

It seems that more and more people are engaging in informal forms of political participation, characterized by a low level of coordination, more or less ad hoc forms of organization, and a focus on specific issues outside the realm of institutions and organizations. Targeted citizen actions in urban spaces, “dumpster diving”, hosting of refugees in Europe are some examples of these practices. These informal modes of participation have been termed “individual collective action” or “personalised politics”; they are individualized actions that combine both personal and social transformations, but they are not isolated acts; they are rather a diffuse and highly decentralized movement. How these forms of participation are related to social movements activism (and vice-versa)? Is it a sign of bigger changes affecting political engagement and even relations to politics?

Indeed, citizens engaged in these actions are directly practicing the changes that they would like to pursue, and are not addressing demands to the government. Their actions are very localized and concern day-to-day life. While these actions express a desire for social change, there is no explicit political message targeted to public authorities or political adversaries. Furthermore, these forms of participation, which may be more or less widespread and simultaneous, are nonetheless poorly coordinated with other similar actions, as is the case with social movement organizations’ activities. Finally, these forms of action do not seem to seek collective and public recognition, as is the case with the women’s, Indigenous or LGBT movements, for example. Nevertheless, the political dimension may be strongly present, especially for people who see the transformation of their private lives as a strong political commitment.

The aim of this panel is to gather people interested in questions related to the transformation of political participation and activism. More specifically, we would appreciate papers that propose to discuss the following: (1) the different terms and concepts used to refer to informal political participation; (2) the relationship of informal political participation and social movements; and (3) the relationship of informal political participation to the “traditional” forms of politics, or institutions. On each of these dimensions, informal participation represent an analytical and theoretical challenges that we consider highly relevant to think about political participation and activism.

Please consider submitting an abstract (max 500 words) by January 20, 2018 by sending an e-mail to : [laurence.bherer@umontreal.ca](mailto:laurence.bherer@umontreal.ca) and [pascale.dufour@umontreal.ca](mailto:pascale.dufour@umontreal.ca)

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