

# The Youth and Democratic Innovations: A Special Species in The Field?

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## Abstract

The Panel proposal is part of the Democratic Innovations Section

Studies in Western Europe draw a rather pessimistic picture of young people's engagement with democracy. While youth participation in formal (electoral) politics has been in decline for several years now, more recent studies show that young people are also increasingly skeptical of politicians and unsupportive of the democratic process. Faced with these challenges, initiatives in various shapes are being established to involve especially young people in politics, ranging from nationwide youth parliaments to mini-publics with young people, and from citizenship education in schools to local grassroots community initiatives. These democratic innovations could reinvigorate young people's engagement with politics in the long term. By socializing young people in the give-and-take of democratic politics, these democratic innovations are expected to encourage the development of political attitudes and civic skills among youngsters and to support them to become more engaged democratic citizens. Furthermore, the involvement of young people in democratic innovations has at least ostensibly the potential to channel their views into formal political decision-making.

However, research on democratic innovations involving young people is still in its infancy and this panel aims to explore this special species by asking questions such as: do young people take advantage of the new possibilities for political participation? What kind of young people do different kinds of innovations attract and how does this influence the existing participation gap in the general population? What do young people learn from these (first) political experiences? How does it change their political attitudes and behavior? How can these initiatives broaden their scope and/or influence the wider political system?

We welcome papers that tackle the broad issue of young people and democratic innovations, and we are open to both theoretical and empirical contributions from a wide range of countries.

To submit a proposal, you will need to create a MyECPR account and submit the following information by **14 February**:

- Your name, academic affiliation and email address
- The title of your paper
- An abstract of up to 500 words.

To suggest a paper for this panel, please e-mail an abstract to [Joke.Matthieu@vub.be](mailto:Joke.Matthieu@vub.be), [Janette.huttunen@abo.fi](mailto:Janette.huttunen@abo.fi), and [robin.lebrun@ulb.ac.be](mailto:robin.lebrun@ulb.ac.be). The deadline for sending paper proposals is 14<sup>th</sup> February 2019.