

CALL FOR PAPERS

Panel on Public Participation and Democratic Legitimacy of Public Infrastructure Projects

International Research Seminar on Public Management IRSPM XII
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Panel Convenors

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Public infrastructure projects have often been decided by politicians, the public service and private consortia. The main focus is on creating an appropriate coalition of interests and acquiring the necessary budgets to realize the project. As a result, some important interests, issues and risks may not be considered. Accordingly, public infrastructure projects often encounter: the unexpected rise of new issues; resistance by residence and politicization; changes in scope, requirements and design; unanticipated developments; technological problems; and budget overruns.

Governments have responded to these problems by involving a wider range of stakeholders earlier in decision making processes. Their involvement may result in incorporating a broader range of interests, improving information and knowledge of local conditions, enhancing public value, and improving support. It is hoped that the result is less conflict and improved democratic legitimacy.

However, the methods by which stakeholders participate in these processes require further analysis. Sometimes, the outcomes of participation are disappointing and are not incorporated into decision making. Often there are problems relating to the way local interests are represented. Public participation does not automatically result in increased legitimacy.

This panel attempts to assess the main tensions between decision making, public participation and legitimacy of public infrastructure projects, including the development of theoretical and practical avenues to address these tensions.

Issues that papers in this panel may consider are:

What is the nature of the problems with the democratic legitimacy of public infrastructure projects?

What are the main theoretical and normative principles of public participation in infrastructure projects?

Which methods and tools are commonly used to support public participation in infrastructure planning?

What are experiences with the implementation of these principles, tools and methods in practice?

What the practical experiences and theoretical considerations regarding the contribution of these applications to democratic legitimacy of infrastructure projects?

Which factors underlie these successes or failure of these practices?

What are situational, sectoral or cultural contingencies influencing the application and outcomes?

What lessons can be drawn regarding the improvement of public participation methods and the democratic legitimacy of public infrastructure projects and the decision making processes in which they are initiated, developed and realized?

Case studies are encouraged of infrastructure projects are encouraged. Cross national or intersectoral comparative perspective are especially encouraged.

Abstracts

Proposals should be 1-2 pages, but definitely no longer than 2 pages (single-spaced, 12 point Arial font).

Proposals should be submitted, by the **15th October, 2007** to:

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The panel convenors will notify all proposal authors of their decisions by 22 November, at the latest. Full papers should be submitted by **1st February, 2008**.