

“Crisis” and transformations of contemporary representative democracies

In the recent years, different political institutions, media and scholars have raised caution that modern democracy is in crisis because of the lack of citizens' interest in politics.

However, many researchers criticize this idea because it assumes that all citizens are equally interested, competent enough and actively aware enough to discuss politics. Moreover, interest in developing new forms of civic participation is on the rise. New technologies have multiplied the possibilities of political discussion and participation. In addition, deliberative democracy, participatory democracy and electronic democracy are more frequently practiced and new social movements are emerging.

Thus, is the term “crisis” a legitimate and accurate characterization of the situation? Shouldn't we rather identify some transformations of representative democracies? What are the main changes that are occurring, their factors and their effects on the state and political institutions? What are the methods to study these changes?

University of Paris 1 and Stanford University are organizing two complementary conferences. The first conference, organized in Stanford University, will focus on “democracy in crisis and responses to this crisis”. The second conference, organized in Paris, will focus on “transforming representative democracies and moving beyond democracy in crisis”.