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**A Special Issue on Democracy**  
**Edited by Howard A. Doughty and Monica Dowling**

“Democracy” is an essentially contested concept. Its meaning has changed over time and varies from place to place. While the meaning of democracy varies, it is important to develop common cross-cultural criteria in order to understand and, define it from different perspectives. This is not “just semantics,” for without workable definitions, we will literally not know what we are talking about.

This symposium is therefore open to papers on the theory and practice of democracy. What does it mean? What are its origins? How has it evolved? An exploration of these philosophical and historical questions will set the context for substantive contributions concerned with contemporary innovative public sector practices.

Of special interest are democratic innovations directed toward building a civil society, increasing popular participation in political decision making and improving the quality of public policy and measurable outcomes in the public sector. Dissenting perspectives critical of democratic beliefs and behaviour will also be considered.

This issue will cover related topics such as the growing role of non-governmental organizations and the social media in influencing public policy, holding authorities accountable and thus influencing concepts of democratic participation.

Formal and informal institutional innovations directed at opening up governance to citizen involvement are also important. Case studies of democratic initiatives in which efforts have been made to bridge the gap between the government and the governed, instances in which individual lives and the lives of communities have been enhanced are particularly welcomed. These initiatives could include community education, social services or transport and planning.

The editors of this Special Issue are Howard A. Doughty, Seneca College, Canada, [howardadoughty@yahoo.ca](mailto:howardadoughty@yahoo.ca), and Monica Dowling, The Open University, United Kingdom, [m.s.dowling@open.ac.uk](mailto:m.s.dowling@open.ac.uk).

Please submit proposals for papers, identifying the issue of the journal to which you are submitting, to the Editor-in-Chief, Eleanor Glor, [Eglor@magma.ca](mailto:Eglor@magma.ca) by 1 March, 2013. The deadline for final submission, also to the Editor-in-Chief is 30 September, 2013.