



Research workshop

Political Representation in Democratic Systems

With a keynote lecture by Prof. Jane Mansbridge (Harvard Kennedy School)

September 9-10, 2019 | University of Zurich, Switzerland

Co-hosted by the [Doctoral Program Democracy Studies](#) and [DemocracyNet](#)

Call for Papers

Democracy studies have recently undergone a major change in the way of conceiving representation. Long understood as one political practice among others, representation has been reconceptualized in this new, “constructivist” turn as an inescapable feature of (democratic) politics and lawmaking processes. On the one hand, it is necessary to the emergence and evolution of interests and preferences within the population and to the mobilization of constituencies in political decision-making processes. On the other hand, it is a practice that is not reserved to elected politicians, but one performed by a much wider range of non-elected actors.

This paradigm shift has raised a variety of new theoretical and empirical questions within democracy studies, such as:

- How should “representation” and “representing” be defined? How to conceptualize it from a philosophical or legal perspective? How can we operationalize and measure it with empirical approaches?
- What does the framing of certain practices as practices of representation add to existing debates? Are political parties, elected politicians, and mini-publics all “representatives” in the same sense, or are there important distinctions? What is the relationship between “representative democracy” and representation?
- Who are the actors representing? Who are the actors represented? How can they be identified?
- What influences the success or failure of practices of representation, e.g., at mobilizing (new) constituencies, at making issues and interests salient, at framing debates? What legal and institutional mechanisms enable the emergence or sanction of democratic representative actors? How do practices of representation differ in democratic and in non-democratic contexts?
- Against what normative criteria should we evaluate instances of representation and representative actors? How should we understand demands for congruence or responsiveness on the part of citizens in relation to good representation? And what institutional arrangements can help realizing democratic representation?

These and other questions will be at the center of the Research Workshop “Political Representation in Democratic Systems.” This workshop aims at bringing together researchers from different disciplines (including, but not limited to, political science and political theory, law, philosophy, history, and sociology) in academic discussions about issues related to political representation. The workshop will offer junior researchers (PhDs and Postdocs) the opportunity to present their working papers or project proposals and to gain feedback from all participants as well as from advanced scholars based in Switzerland (TBA). It will also include a public keynote lecture on “Recursive Representation” by Prof. Jane Mansbridge (Adams Professor of Political Leadership and Democratic Values, Harvard Kennedy School).

Application

Junior researchers interested in presenting their work at the workshop are requested to submit an abstract of **max. 300 words** to Chiara Valsangiacomo (chiara.valsangiacomo@uzh.ch) by **June 10, 2019**. Submissions may include working papers or research project outlines. Selected participants will be notified by June 25, 2019.

The workshop will also be open to non-speaker participants at a later point in time. More information on how to register as such will be made available here: <https://democracynet.eu/ws2019/>.

Conditions of participation

Accepted speakers will be required to send their paper by August 27, 2019. Graduate students presenting or attending the workshop can be granted 1 ECTS for their participation; conditions include attendance at the entire workshop (including public lecture), active participation as well as either a presentation or the provision of written feedback to two speakers. The workshop is free of charge. Travel and accommodation are at the expense of participants. For outstanding international participants, funding to cover some travel and accommodation expenses is available. Please let us know as soon as possible if you wish to apply for such a travel and accommodation grant (chiara.valsangiacomo@uzh.ch).

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