

**REDIRECT Online Workshop on
Inclusion/Exclusion in Representative Democracies**

**Thursday 29th February, 17.30-19.30 CET
16.30-18.30 UK / 9.30-11.30 MST**

The Workshop will explore the issue of inclusion/exclusion in representative democracy. To talk about inclusion/exclusion raises questions on the relationship between formal and substantive democracy, a distinction that is not the same of the one made by Hanna Pitkin's between formal and substantive forms of representation, though they touch on related questions. Unless one thinks of inclusion and exclusion primarily in terms of voting and standing rights, or of rights to freedom of speech and association; inclusion and exclusion raise important questions regarding social power, real equality, and the background conditions of democracy. Can democratic government work fairly and effectively in presence of egregious social and economic inequalities? Can all citizens have fairly equal opportunities for influencing collective decision making? Can minorities' rights and chosen life-styles be reasonably guaranteed? Can social and historical disadvantages, past exclusions, and institutional and cultural biases be corrected or alleviated by political representation in multicultural and diverse societies? Or, even more radically, is the politics of representation in complex, increasingly globalized societies any longer a meaningful instrument for democratic self-governing?

We shall explore some of these questions in conversation with Professors Suzanne Dovi (University of Arizona) and Petra Meier (University of Antwerp). Since inclusion and exclusion have played a particular role in the normative discussions and the empirical analyses of representation of women and other disadvantaged social groups, we shall start by asking them to give their personal assessment on the state of such discussions and of recent trends in the literature, reflecting also on the question of intersectionality, and the 'constructivist turn' in studies of political representation. What themes and controversies stand out at present? What are the most promising lines of enquiry?

In the literature on political representation, discussions of inclusion and exclusion of disadvantaged groups, have often started from Hanna Pitkin's classical distinction between, on the one hand, descriptive and symbolic forms of representation, which work as ways of 'standing-for' the represented; and, on the other, an 'acting-for' conception of representation. Pitkin's preference was clearly for the latter, since she regarded standing-for conceptions as lacking those characters of agency, judgement, and interaction that she thought necessary in democratic representation. Normative discussion of the politics of presence or inclusion have challenged Pitkin's position, re-evaluating descriptive and more recently symbolic representation. We shall discuss with Petra Meier about her research on gender representation and particularly on her recent work on the role of symbolic representation. With Suzanne Dovi we shall explore her views on why exclusion and absences are important in political representation not just in a negative sense but in a more positive normative sense, and why they should be made the object of more nuanced empirical research.

The conversation will be chaired by Dario Castiglione (Exeter) and Eline Severs (VUB), and open to interventions from all other participants.

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