



DEPARTMENT OF
POLITICAL SCIENCE
Faculty of Arts
Charles University

Call for Abstracts
Graduate Student Workshop

Non-electoral Representation in Contemporary Democracies: A Challenge for Representative Democracy?

Keywords: theory of representation, non-electoral representation, democratic representation, populism, technocracy, protest movements, social movements, social media, digital communication

The challenges contemporary representative democracies face – a decline in electoral turnout, a crisis of political parties and a rise of new political (populist) movements, a call for direct democracy, etc. – put the “representative”, or even the “democracy”, in *representative democracy* into question. However, the scholars of the so-called *representative turn* argue that what appears to be a crisis of representation is due to our limited view of political representation as a product of electoral procedures. Hence, they understand political representation as a process taking place also outside of such procedures, taking, therefore, a non-electoral form and producing non-elected representatives. Political actors thus enter political field claiming to be, or being claimed as representative(s), in spite of the fact their representative claims cannot be legitimised by election. Yet these non-electoral representatives – in the form of individuals, diverse social or protest movements, organisations, expert groups and more – participate in shaping the field of politics. Nowadays, they do not even rely on mass media to communicate their claim but may profit from seemingly unmediated social media channels. The workshop thus focuses on what appears to be a proliferation of non-electoral representative claims in times of digital communication, the forms of non-electoral representation and the questions arising regarding its role in contemporary representative democracies.

The possible questions to be addressed may include:

How to understand non-electoral representation, and what forms does it take on?

How can non-electoral representation channel opportunities provided by social media and digital communication?

How is the relationship between the represented and their non-elected representatives constructed?

What possible measures, if any, to propose as criterion of (democratic) legitimacy or accountability of non-elected representatives?

What are the possibilities and limits of non-electoral representation in shaping the field of politics?

How may electoral representation and the various forms of non-electoral representation interact, and what impact does it have on contemporary representative democracies?

We invite **graduate students** interested in this topic. We welcome **theoretical** and **empirical** papers dealing with **theories of representation** (focusing on **non-electoral representation** particularly),

democratic theory, populism, technocracy, protest movements, social movements, and digital communication.

The deadline for abstracts (no more than 250 words) is **23rd December 2022**. Abstracts are required in English.

Date of Workshop: **23rd January 2023**

Venue: Room V 407, Department of Political Science, Charles University, Faculty of Arts, Voršilská 1, Prague

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