



Nordic Summer University



European Humanities  
University

**Study Circle 5:  
Patterns of Dysfunction in Contemporary Democracies  
Impact on Human Rights and Governance  
Joint Venture Between NSU and EHU.**

**CALL FOR PAPERS WINTER SESSION 2018**

**POPULISM AND DEMOCRACY**

The winter session will take place from **2<sup>nd</sup> to 4<sup>h</sup> of February 2018 at the University of Copenhagen (Amager Campus), Copenhagen, Denmark**

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**The deadline to submit proposals is 15<sup>th</sup> October 2017. Please send title and abstract to both coordinators**

Preliminary program to be announced: 15<sup>th</sup> December 2017 on [www.nordic.university](http://www.nordic.university) where you can also find more information about NSU. (See <http://www.nordic.university>)

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**For the winter session 2018 we would propose a special opening focus on:**

## POPULISM AND DEMOCRACY

An opening focus will head the program of the session sincerely welcoming other subjects related to our six themes in the program to follow.

The reason for populist movements are many and we have probably not understood these movements properly yet. Reasons vary from country to country, but there seems to be some standards such as hostility to globalization and distrust of the so-called establishment. There is a strong wish to be heard, that one's vote count, and a feeling that they have been forgotten. In many countries populism has been fuelled by fear of immigration and social instability. It is often seen as a challenge to representative democracy. This was clearly illustrated by the Brexit referendum, where a parliamentary majority to remain was defeated by a popular vote to leave.

Rosanvallon argues that bureaucracy together with the judiciary, the regulatory bodies and electoral representation have its own kind of legitimacy which is part of our general notion of democratic legitimacy. (Rosanvallon 2008) Populism, on the other hand, pretends to appeal directly to the people against politicians and technocrats, and research does confirm a gap between citizens and leaders. (Startin & Krouwel 2013) It has been argued that populism and technocracy actually reinforce each other by a common critique of party politics. (Bickerton & Accetti 2015, Leonard 2011) From a left-wing perspective Laclau proposes to short-circuiting party politics by constructing a political subject from a large range of social demands which is construed as the people and supposed to subvert and reconstruct society. (Laclau 2005) In its turn, this view has been criticized as the construction of an imaginary people without any fixed contours. (Zarka 2016)

Lately populism has surged as a consequence of the migration crisis. Elections in Austria and Germany have given very high scores to populist anti-immigration parties. Support for these parties is also high in Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Holland and France. What are the ideological suppositions of these parties? How should we understand them? It is puzzling that Mecklenburg-Schwerin, which receives so few refugees and experience an economic upturn (though still one of the poorer parts of Germany), is so anti-immigration? Are the Media responsible or should we look for some other reason?

### **Bibliography**

See end of CFP for bibliographical information.

## KEYNOTE SPEAKER

We are very honoured to announce that Professor Yves Charles Zarka has accepted our invitation to speak at the seminar. The title of the speech will be:

### **Who are the People in Populism?**



Yves Charles Zarka, born on the 14<sup>th</sup> of March 1950 in Tunis (Tunisia), is a philosopher and professor at the Sorbonne, Paris-Descartes University, holding the chair in political philosophy.

He was a research director at CNRS for many years, where he headed the Center for the History of Modern Philosophy and the Thomas Hobbes Center. He is the founder and director of the magazine *Cités*. He currently heads the centre PHILÉPOL (philosophy, epistemology and politics) at the University Paris-Descartes (component of the EA 4569 Ethics, Politics and Health) where the research efforts are organized around the concept of "the emerging world". His research focuses on democracy, the new environmental challenges, the new configuration of global power, cosmopolitanism, tolerance, etc. (From [https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yves\\_Charles\\_Zarka](https://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yves_Charles_Zarka) )

Yves Charles Zarka is both a philosopher and a historian of political thought. His focus is mainly on the establishment of the fundamental concepts of modern legal and political thought. His method combines philosophy and history questioning the texts of the past philosophically. The result is a philosophical historiography that belongs to another register than what is commonly known as the history of political ideas. He does not rest with the archaeology of sedimented political ideas in the successive phases of modernity, but endeavours more fundamentally to highlight speculative positions that govern policy concepts, which, ultimately, allow one to understand and evaluate the scope of these concepts.

Lately, Yves Charles Zarka has moved more and more into another area: namely changes in politics and contemporary society: power structures and forms of government, law and history, politics and justifications, new forms of war and terrorism. The magazine *Cités* should specifically think through these issues by combining the return to the real city with openness towards a possible future city. Since political philosophy has no meaning apart from the experience of this contemporary crisis, Yves Charles Zarka also endeavours to produce historical-political analyses of the fractures in the contemporary world. (from <http://edph.univ-paris1.fr/zarka.html> )

Other themes are:

## **2. Globalization and democracy**

Economic globalization is made responsible for the loss of jobs; critics claim that benefits have been taken away by the elite. Who profited from globalization and where certain stretches of society abandoned along the road? What would the European societies have looked like without globalization? Politically, free trade and liberalization of capital movements have prompted some to ask whether democratic decision-making decides anything any more. Are politicians only adapting to circumstances they do not control. This reproach has been directed against globalization as such and the EU in particular. The EU treaties have established free trade and movements of goods, services and persons as a basic principle. The WTO imposes rules of free trade on all its members. Does this engage the member countries in fierce competition leading to lower levels of pay and working conditions? Are democratic institutions no longer able to decide about the kind of society which should be instituted? How should we cope with this in terms of justice?

([http://opendemocracy.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?](http://opendemocracy.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9c663f765f28cdb71116aa9ac&id=1b0a762d04&e=20c21a5d20)

[u=9c663f765f28cdb71116aa9ac&id=1b0a762d04&e=20c21a5d20](http://opendemocracy.us1.list-manage.com/track/click?u=9c663f765f28cdb71116aa9ac&id=1b0a762d04&e=20c21a5d20)) Are governments powerless faced with multinational corporations such as Google? The latest EU tax complaint against Google will say something about the balance of power between government and corporations.

This problem also concerns labour law and collective bargaining. Existing structures are challenged by competition from the outside and it is difficult to maintain higher standards, if products, services and persons from the outside can propose cheaper solutions. This was poignantly illustrated by the Polish plumber during the French referendum on the EU Constitution Treaty. The fear of the Polish plumber probably decided for a no to the treaty. Should democracies then be autarchic republics as Plato recommends in the Republic? They have, of course, never been like that, but support for democracy, political participation and interest in politics can wane if democratic decision-making is no longer seen as pertinent.

## **3. The Digital Revolution and democracy**

Will digital, AI, robotic and other technologies maintain or advance democracy, or will they constitute an indispensable tool for emerging autocracies or totalitarian ideologies? The digital revolution enables global gossip, plebiscites, polls and populism which challenge representative democracy. The careful scrutiny of proposals for new legislation and its consequences, which at least ideally is part of representative democracy, is run over by various direct expressions of popular sentiment. Can these expressions no longer be channelled through these representative processes? Is the speed of the information flow simply too fast and reactions too immediate for representative democracy to connect with people? (See Andrew Sullivan

<http://nymag.com/daily/intelligencer/2016/04/america-tyranny-donald-trump.html>)

Is the huge importance of the media fuelling this process, and what kind of manipulation does control of media allow within these processes to the detriment of democracy. Enormous amounts of money and investments are involved in the news and information services so crucial for the good functioning of democracy. In the early times of European democracy the press was generally motivated by political interests in this or that party or part of the population. Today the media might have a stand, but they are often more preoccupied with the audience. To this it will be said that media has to be independent and private ownership secures this independence. This independence should secure pluralistic sources of information, but if all are running after some statistical idea of the audience, information delivery could become rather monotone.

## **4. Security and democracy**

Terrorism, social instability and other threats have considerably augmented measures of control and surveillance leading to growing interference in the private life of citizens. The scandal surrounding the NSA monitoring of internet activity and collection of big data concerning telephone conversations did attract much attention, but other measures such as increasing video surveillance, checking of credit card data and the like has considerably enhanced the monitoring of the individual as well. Will such measures fragilize the citizen in relation to the control the very same citizen should exercise on its own democratic institutions and politicians? Are we about to construct the infrastructure for authoritarianism ready for take over when the political situation is ripe or have we found a reasonable compromise between security concerns and democracy? (Priest & Arkin, 2011; Andersen, 2016)

## **5. Democratic Deficit in the EU and Global Governance**

Several Nordic countries and all the Baltic countries are members of the EU. Questions of democracy in these countries are therefore linked to the EU. Is the EU undermining national democracies? How does EU participate in the regional and local levels? Many authors have argued that the European Institutions have a democratic deficit (for example Føllesdal & Hix 2005), but others like Moravcsik (2002) and Majone (1998) have maintained that Europe is sufficiently democratic and compares reasonably well with democratic institutions elsewhere like those in the US. (Cf. Kreppel 2006) Arguing that the EU is legitimate or could become legitimate by some odd reform will not necessarily be sufficient to make people believe that it is legitimate. Normative ideas about legitimacy like the one's espoused by Simmons (1999) and Buchanan (2002) are, of course, interesting in their own right, but they will not necessarily tell us very much about the challenges facing the EU. One might very well wonder whether a more democratic Europe or other institutional changes would silence Eurosceptics or make them enthusiastic followers. It seems like their real grievances lies elsewhere even though any argument ready at hand will be brought to use. The real problem might not be that there is any particular fault with the EU institutions, but rather that some other source of legitimacy is more appealing to many people. Many Eurosceptics to the right or the left sees the EU as an obstacle to their own project whether it is socialist one hammering into the single market and globalization in general, or Catholic conservative blaming EU for upholding a secular society protecting abortion and equal rights, or a nationalist one protecting home grown culture and community through sovereign rights.

One way to get around difficulties concerning unity and cultural diversity is through the implementation of the subsidiarity principle which has potential for a better understanding of the evolution of democracy. Subsidiarity creates an area of public action for the individuals giving them both responsibility and a definite personality. This important principle of EU law should be implemented creatively. It is an important fact that the subsidiarity principle is uncommon in Eastern Europe, something which merits further investigation.

Global governance as it is today is not democratic. The UN has, of course, a general assembly, but the Security Council has the last word. Should we try to democratize this institution or heed Kant's words that a universal republic would be the worst tyranny? (Kant, 1917) Could global governance be democratized in other ways, through social movements, ONG's or other? Should we rather count on some kind of global constitutionalism? (Peters, 2015) Others like Thomas Pogge and Allen Buchanan would consider global governance in terms of justice rather than democracy. (Pogge, 2002; Buchanan, 2004) Are there limits to democracy and how should democracy fit into global governance? It seems that some people feel estranged from a complex and opaque global system, which impacts their daily life in ways which are difficult to discern. Are there limits to how global we can get, or should we accept that democracy has a limited applicability?

There are important difficulties in the system of representation on the global level. What kind of representation should one use in the global system of governance? What is the connection between social complexity and global governance? How can global actors participate in global governance? How should religious communities and churches participate in global governance?

## 6. The Elite-People Gap

To conclude we should consider the elite-people gap. Does it really exist? Who are the elite? Is this just a manipulating term? Do we rather have split societies, where some parts have profited while others were left behind? Is this phenomenon generational? Is it rather due to new yearnings of democracy, which the traditional model cannot fulfil? Should we consider new forms of democracy or political participation? Do illiberal democracies manage to fill the gap trading security (social, internal, external) against obedience? Is the elite-people gap somehow inherent in liberal democracies?

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## Practical Information

Location: Copenhagen, Denmark

Hotel/accomodation (2 nights / double rooms – extra charge for single rooms if available) and dinner Friday evening is covered by the seminar.

**Please indicate whether you need a hotel room/accomodation.**

Fee: 50 €, 372 DKK, 477 SEK, 470 NOK, 6272 ISK (Cover expenses for lunch two times and dinner Friday evening)

The fee should be paid immediately after registration to this bank account (bank fees are at the charge of the participant):

Please notice that fee or other costs will not be reimbursed if the participant cancels.

### Den Danske Bank (Gl. Kongevej Branch)

Konto:	Seminar - 3106756686
Registreringsnummer:	3106
IBAN kontonummer:	DK6730003106756686
BIC (SWIFT-adresse)	DABADKKK

Owner the account:

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27 rue Saint Jacques  
F-75005 Paris

**Please indicate your name on the bank transfer to identify payment.**

Travel expenses are reimbursed partly on the basis of an economy ticket. We will try to reimburse all with the same percentage. Please keep your receipts, boarding cards, etc. Please book your tickets in good time in order to keep expenses low. Please take out a cancellation insurance. We cannot reimburse transport, if you have to cancel.

**Please indicate a preliminary paper title and a short abstract.**

Please register to these email addresses: [chrom@cegetel.net](mailto:chrom@cegetel.net), [oleg.bresky@ehu.lt](mailto:oleg.bresky@ehu.lt)



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Approximately 1800 students are enrolled in European Humanities University (1/3 high residence students and 2/3 low residence), 249 (99 full-time and 150 part-time) faculty members conduct teaching and research activities in EHU within Historical, Socio-political, Law and Media academic departments and 10 research centers (see: <http://www.ehu.lt/en/research/centers-laboratories-and-institutes>).

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These and other opportunities make EHU a unique place for young people from Belarus and the region. The commitment of EHU's faculty, students, staff, and donors is an important signal to Belarusian authorities and society that there is an alternative to state ideological control. For Belarusians who seek the freedom to think creatively and critically—to study, learn, teach, and conduct research without ideological restrictions—EHU provides a home away from home.

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Through two yearly seminars the cross-disciplinary study circles fertilise collaboration between academics, build up networks and contribute to create research agendas throughout the Nordic/Baltic countries as well as establishing contacts "abroad". The research in the study circles is documented in publications link: [NSU-Press](#)

The two yearly seminars take place in the Nordic/Baltic countries. In the winter each study circle organize their own seminar; in the summer all circles are brought together for also enhancing further cross-disciplinary collaboration. Furthermore, the summer meeting is also the political organ of NSU inviting all participants to exercise their influence on the activities of NSU.

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