

Call for Papers:

**Graduate workshop “Contextualizing Democracy: Culture, Capitalism, Inequalities”
With Alex Demirović**

University of Zurich, June 9-10, 2016

Democratic ideals and norms need to be substantially defined, interpreted, and adapted to actual contexts. Compromises between different actors, and between ideals and practices thus become necessary. This highlights the importance of context for democratic politics: Democracy is always bound to specific cultures, forms of economic organization, and power structures. This observation raises diverse and interrelated questions: Are there contexts in which democratic ideals cannot be realized? Does the realization of democracy require specific shared cultural values? To what extent do democratic norms of self-governance conflict with other norms and ways of life in real-existing democracies? Is a certain level of wealth required for democracy to function? If so, is it only achievable through a capitalist economy, or does capitalist economic freedom conflict with democratic freedom? What is the relationship between economic and political (in)equality? How much inequality can a democratic society bear? Can democracies cope with the challenges created by non-democratic norms, economic globalization, and growing inequalities – and how?

These questions, far from being settled, have important implications for real-existing democracies and processes of democratization. Our assumption is that appropriate answers should rely both on the most recent developments in social sciences and in normative political theory. The aim of this interdisciplinary workshop is thus to bridge the gap between democratic ideals and practices by enhancing the dialogue between political theory and empirical political science. The workshop is the third event in the series “[Democracy: Bridging Facts and Norms](#),” which is jointly organized by Zurich-based theoretical and empirical junior researchers in democracy studies from the [DemocracyNet.eu](#) network, engaged in the [NCCR Democracy](#) and the [Centre for Democracy Studies Aarau](#).

During this two-day workshop, young researchers will present and discuss their work in three different panels. All presenters will benefit from the feedback of the international expert Prof. Alex Demirović (Goethe-Universität Frankfurt), and of advanced scholars from the University of Zurich (Prof. Silja Häusermann, Prof. Urs Marti, and Prof. Stefanie Walter). Active participation from all the participants is expected. A public keynote speech by Prof. Demirović on capitalism and democracy will complement the academic panels.

For this workshop, we invite junior scholars (PhDs and Postdocs) to present their work on the relationship between democracy and (a) cultural norms, (b) capitalism or other forms of economic organization, and (c) globalization and socioeconomic inequalities. Both theoretical and empirical papers, either qualitative or quantitative, can be submitted. Furthermore, in order to discuss different approaches to democracy studies, we invite researchers from any discipline relevant to the topic, including but not exclusively, political science, philosophy, law, sociology, and economy, to send in their abstracts.

Abstracts of 300 to 500 words should be submitted to lukas.peter@uzh.ch by the 15th of March, 2016. Accepted presenters will be notified by the 31st of March, 2016.