

Call for Papers CONCEPTA RESEARCH SEMINAR

Comparing the Concepts of Representation

SciencesPo, Paris, Friday 18 and Saturday 19 November 2016

Organized by the Civic Constellation II project, Concepta: International Research School in Conceptual History and Political Thought, the CLAIMS project (ANR-DFG) and HiSoPo (AFSP)

Representation is a core concept in modern politics. Since the revolutions of the 17th and 18th century, representation has become the main principle organizing and legitimizing political systems. Social movements themselves are based on representation – of workers, of women, of minorities – as are aesthetics, linguistics or psychology. As a result of this centrality, the concept of representation can be hard to grasp; ubiquitous, its meaning is deeply contentious.

It is ever more so the case as we enlarge the scope of analysis from English to other languages. While in English or in French a single signifier, *representation* or *représentation*, can refer to several signified (incarnation, delegation, mental images, pictorial or theatrical reproduction and so on), Italian distinguishes between *rappresentazione* and *rappresentanza*, German between *Repräsentation*, *Vertretung*, *Darstellung* and *Vorstellung*, for example. And this is not to mention non-European languages, in which sometimes the Western concept of representation was imported (such as *daibiao* in Chinese).

Facing this plurality and ambiguity of meanings, several strategies are possible: one is exemplified by Hanna Pitkin's 1967 seminal work, *The Concept of Representation*, which delineates a single concept of representation – admittedly offering a range of interpretations – as 'the making present in some sense of something which is nevertheless not present literally or in fact'. While useful in political philosophy, this approach can lead to historical misconceptions. The purpose of this seminar is more aligned with another classic work, namely, Hasso Hofmann's 1974 *Repräsentation. Studien zur Wort- und Begriffsgeschichte von der Antike bis ins 19. Jahrhundert*. Accordingly, we intend to explore the plurality of ways in which the concept of representation is used in the languages of politics.

This Research Seminar will bring together scholars from different disciplines at all stages of their career to provide the first elements for a comparative history of political representation. As such, while the focus of the contributions will not necessarily be strictly linguistic and can include institutions and practices, authors will nonetheless be expected to take into account the discursive dimension of the studied phenomenon and to expose and discuss the meanings of the concept of representation in the context(s) of their study. Even if there is no preferred geographical or temporal setting, we will consider very favourably papers that study political representation in non-European areas.

Keynote lectures will be delivered by Dr. Rochana Bajpai (SOAS, University of London) and Prof. Yves Sintomer (Paris 8 University, IUF).

Language: English – no attendance fee.

To apply please send your paper proposal in a Word file, of up to 500 words, before **15 September 2016** to both convenors: Samuel Hayat, CNRS/CERAPS (samuel.hayat@univ-lille2.fr) and José María Rosales, University of Málaga (jmrosales@uma.es).

To prepare the sessions debates, enlarged abstracts/outlines/papers of up to 1500 words should be sent to both convenors by 28 October 2016.