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Inclusive
Science and
European
Democracies

Agenda

WORKSHOP

Heated Debates across Virtual Voids:
Arguments, Affects and Deliberation Online



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ISEED Midterm Workshop Conference & General Meeting

**Heated Debates across Virtual Voids:
Arguments, Affects and Deliberation Online**



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Monday 31 October – Wednesday 2 November

Venues: Ni Muser, Bispegata 9A, 7013 Trondheim, Norway
& Campus Kalvskinnet, Akrinn Building (Sverres gate 12), Room U301

Hosted by

- Inclusive Science & European Democracies (ISEED)
- Dept. of Philosophy and Religious Studies (IFR)
- Dept. of Teacher Education (ILU)
- Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU)

Organised by

Sophia Efstathiou, Senior Researcher, Programme for Applied Ethics, IFR, NTNU and Elin Danielsen Huckerby, Researcher in IFR, NTNU.

In collaboration with

- Libe García Zarranz, Associate Professor in English, ILU, NTNU
- Gulabuddin Sukhanwar, Founder of Literature for Inclusion initiative at the Litteraturhuset (Trondheim) and Member of the Academic Committee for Literature at Arts Council Norway
- Eleonora Montuschi, ISEED coordinator, Full Professor, Dep. Of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage, UNIVE
- Chiara Ghirardo, ISEED project and financial manager, Dep. Of Philosophy and Cultural Heritage, UNIVE

Overview

This two and a half-day workshop is convened as part of the EU Horizon 2020 project *Inclusive Science and European Democracies* (ISEED). *The specific concern of this workshop is to attend to the dynamics of inclusion and exclusion in online debates, and the potential held by platforms for online engagement to serve as obstacles or tools for democratic inclusion.* We are particularly interested in how we might facilitate enlightened and inclusive debates on complex science-informed societal issues, such as climate breakdown or COVID-vaccination strategies. Given this aim, the relation between reason and emotion in such debates emerges as a pivotal locus of attention. Is the best approach to inclusion to aim for “rational” debate? How do affective reactions and responses serve to help us articulate, understand, and address such issues? What is the role of platform design and algorithm design in this? Will these tools always push towards polarisation, or might we put them to work to further inclusion, understanding, and political action?

This workshop is open to the general public (except for ISEED-related meetings), and we particularly encourage graduate students, early career researchers and members of the community of Trondheim and internationally to participate.

AGENDA

DAY 1: Monday, October 31

Ni Muser (Bispegata 9A) & Mangfoldhuset (Kongens gate 34)

WHEN & WHERE	WHAT	WHO
9:00-9:30 Ni Muser (Bispegata 9A)	Meet & Greet Coffee & Treats	Everyone!
9:30-09:45	Welcome	NTNU team: Sophia, Elin, & Libe
9:45-10:05	Ice breaker	Gibberish improv theatre
10:05-10:15	Break	
10:15-11:15	Keynote ‘Care, Vulnerability and Online Deliberation’ 40-min talk, 20 min discussion	Anastasia Kavada (Westminister) Chair: Sophia Efstathiou
11:15-11:30	Break	
11:30-12:30	Talk: ‘A community of inquirers: experts, lay experts and wisdom’ 40-min talk, 20 min discussion	Roberto Gronda & Pierluigi Barrotta (UNIFI) Chair: Eleonora Montuschi
12:30-13:30	Lunch	

13:30-14:00	Talk: 'Understanding polarisation online' 20-min talk, 10 min discussion	Bogna Nowak Gawronska (IRMiR) Chair: Giuseppe Veltri
14:00-14:30	Talk: 'A search for purity or a search for self-enlargement: Populism, Polarisation, and the Aesthetics of Self-making' 20-min talk, 10 min discussion	Elin Danielsen Huckerby (NTNU) Chair: May Thorseth
14:30-15:00	Coffee & Cake	
15:00-16:00	ISEED Steering committee meeting	ISEED Steering Committee members
16:00-19:00	Free Time - Dinner Break	
19:00-20:30 Mangfoldhuset Kongens gate 34	Panel Discussion: Inclusion and Deliberation Online <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we understand democratic inclusion? • What are the dynamics of exclusion in democratic debates online? • How can inclusion be supported or enhanced? 	Anastasia Kavada, Taina Bucher, Frederik Rosén, Gulabuddin Sukhanwar, George Gaskell, Elin Danielsen Sophia Efstathiou moderates Zoom link: https://bit.ly/3TWOIRO Meeting ID: 940 5705 2051 Passcode: 151713

DAY 2: Tuesday, November 1

Ni Muser, Bispegata 9A and Campus Kalvskinnet- Akrinn Building (Sverres gate 12)

WHEN & WHERE	WHAT	WHO
8:30-9:00 Ni Muser	Meet & Greet Coffee & Treats	Everyone!
9:00- 10:00	Keynote Title: 'Silent virtues for a noisy world' 40-min talk, 20 min discussion	Taina Bucher (University of Oslo) Chair: Magda Roszczynska
10:00- 10:50	Walk & Talk Workshop participants are invited to walk in pairs along the Nidelven river. We will be discussing questions identified after Day 1's sessions, in alternating pairs. 😊 Wear good shoes and warm clothes!	All workshop participants discuss in alternating pairs.
10:50-11:00	Break	
11:00-12:30	ISEED 4 case studies: presentations of short texts for videos, and video recording	ISEED empirical researchers esp. contributors from WP4 Chair: Giuseppe Pellegrini
12:30-13:30	Lunch	
13:30-15:30	ISEED General meeting: 'How do we connect ISEED Qualitative and conceptual work to our empirical work?'. Suggestions, strategies, solutions.	Eleonora Montuschi and all ISEED members

15:30-16:00	Coffee & Cake	
16:00-17:00 Kalvskinnet Campus, Akrinn Building, Floor 3: U301	ONLINE Webinar: 'Studying polarization: Experiences from the Polarization Lab' 30-min talk, 20 min discussion	Chris Bail (Duke University) Chair: Libe García Zarranz Zoom link: https://bit.ly/3fckciQ Meeting ID: 917 1432 6009 Passcode: 288261
19:00-22:00 Venue: Stammen Café Kongens gate 55	Dinner and Show by Gibberish Improv Theatre	Invited speakers and the ISEED team

DAY 3: Wednesday, November 2

Ni Muser, Bispegata 9A

WHEN & WHERE	WHAT	WHO
9:00-9:30 Ni Muser	Meet & Greet Coffee & Treats	Everyone!
9:30-11:00	ISEED Work in Progress An opportunity to present papers or talks in progress	ISEED members (participation is recommended, according to the travel needs of each participant)
11:00 - 11:15	Break	
11:15 - 12:15	General reflection & goodbyes	

Subject by Speaker in Program Order

Care, Vulnerability and Online Deliberation

Anastasia Kavada

What happens once we centre care and vulnerability in online deliberation? Care ethics prompt a reflection on how emotions could be managed in online deliberation, in terms of both their combination and sequencing. Attendance to the others' vulnerability is also based on active listening that can be viewed as a kind of caring. An emphasis on care further draws our attention to embodiment and to the necessity of caring for the civic body as a basic condition for participants to engage in online deliberation. Taken together, these insights can inform the ways in which we design and practice online deliberation.

Anastasia Kavada is a Reader in Media and Politics in the Westminster School of Media and Communication at the University of Westminster, where she leads the MA in Media, Campaigning and Social Change. Her research focuses on the links between digital media, social movements, participatory democracy, and campaigning for social change. Her work has appeared in a variety of edited books and academic journals, including *Media, Culture & Society*, *Communication Theory*, and *Information, Communication & Society*.

Understanding polarisation online

Bogna Gawrońska-Nowak

The polarisation of the media message on the Internet (creating echo chambers) is a commonly cited phenomenon. Its "popularity" often deprives it of its cognitive depth and makes it oscillate between an artefact, a truism, and an important social discovery. Nevertheless, little is known about the detailed characteristics of media polarisation, how and why it is exactly, and its relationship to the quality of the social fabric and social relations. Understanding the methods of defining and measuring polarisation and, at the same time, the bias of these methods appears crucial for correctly reading these patterns. Our preliminary content analysis regarding COVID shows that the discourse polarisation is not as obvious as it may seem.

Bogna Gawrońska-Nowak is Associate Professor at Institute of Urban and Regional Development in Warsaw, Poland. She was a fellow and visiting researcher at the University of Padua and the University of Glasgow. She has expertise in using multidisciplinary quantitative research methods with a special focus on modelling instabilities and measuring policy effectiveness. She was consulting macroeconomic aspects of the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) implementation in Poland for the European Commission Representation in Poland. She has been a senior researcher and principal investigator in various research projects co-financed by well-recognised institutions: the National Bank of Poland, the National Centre for Research and Development in Poland, and the European Commission.

Her current research agenda and her research-led teaching focus on the study of public opinion dynamics and social representations and the development of research methods based on the Citizen Science approach.

'A community of inquirers: experts, lay experts and wisdom'

Pierluigi Barrotta & Roberto Gronda

The main thesis of our work is that scientific experts and laypeople can and must work together to solve the socially relevant problems that any democracy faces. Scientific experts and laypeople are the components of a community of inquirers, whose task consists in passing from the definition of a problem to its solution. The goal of our presentation is to offer a typology of the distinct roles and functions that scientific experts and citizens could perform in a public problem-solving inquiry. Whereas scientific experts must possess epistemic wisdom, members of the public also bring cognitive contributions of diverse kinds, at different levels of participation.

Pierluigi Barrotta is Professor of Philosophy of Science and holder of the Galileo Galilei chair at the University of Pisa. He works in philosophy and history of science, epistemology of economics and the social sciences, epistemology of environmental sciences, and dialectical rationality in science. Barrotta is currently carrying out research on the relationships between science and democracy, and the role played by scientific experts in democratic societies. On this topic, he has published the book *Scientists, Democracy and Society: A Community of Inquirers*, New York and Heidelberg, 2018.

Roberto Gronda is Assistant Professor of Logic and Philosophy of Science at the University of Pisa. He received his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Torino, and his PhD from Scuola Normale Superiore of Pisa. He is the author of *Dewey's Philosophy of Science* (Springer, 2020), and of several essays in philosophy journals. He is the editor of *Esperti scientifici e complessità* (Pisa University Press, 2020) and *Pragmatismo e filosofia della scienza* (Pisa University Press, 2017). His fields of research are the philosophy of scientific expertise, the history of American and Italian Pragmatism, and the philosophy of humanities.

'A search for purity or a search for self-enlargement: Populism, Polarisation, and the Aesthetics of Self-making'

Elin Danielsen Huckerby

Recent populism research suggests that understanding populism through how it creates a sense of unity is a more fruitful approach than established ideational or post-discursive, rhetorical approaches (Katsambekis 2022, Seongcheol 2021). How such unity is made then becomes a pivotal point. In this paper I use Richard Rorty's sketch of two antithetical forms of identity-making – 'a search for purity or a search for self-enlargement' – to examine the dynamics of communal self-making. I suggest that populist identity making is dominated by an aesthetics of purity that requires an underlying belief in the possibility of metaphysics (essences). Taking a pragmatist stance against metaphysics, I propose that to prioritise heightening anti-essentialist sensibilities in democratic cultures might be more vital than we currently presume.

Elin Danielsen Huckerby is Researcher in the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies Faculty of Humanities, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Norway. After a decade as a computer engineer in industry, she did an MA in literary studies in Bergen, before earning her doctorate from the University of Cambridge on the pragmatist philosopher Richard Rorty's uses of literature. She currently works for ISEED, examining how people narrate changes of heart on science-informed topics.

'Silent virtues for a noisy world'

Taina Bucher

At the centre of (deliberate) democratic theory lies a fundamental belief in the power of speech as the modus operandi of democratic life. Rather than measuring a well-functioning democracy through active participation and vocal citizenship, this talk shifts the attention to the significance of silence as an alternative for thinking about the boundaries and limits of democracy. Even if a model of non-communication is hard to sustain in a digital environment designed to compute everything, including seemingly silent data points (e.g., skipping, scrolling, hesitations), this talk examines the affirmative potentials of silence in a society that valorises values of voice and speech.

Taina Bucher is professor in media studies at the Department of media and communication, University of Oslo (UiO), and Head of the Screen Culture research and teaching cluster at the Faculty of Humanities, UiO. She studies the relationships and entanglements between algorithms, social and political concerns – examining how users experience and make sense of algorithmic power and politics. She is the author of *If...Then: Algorithmic Power and Politics* (OUP, 2018) and *Facebook* (Polity Press, 2021). She is currently working on projects on media silences, tech abuse in smart homes, and imaginary social media. Her current research focuses on the politics of silence in the networked media environment.

'Studying polarization: Experiences from the Polarization Lab'

Chris Bail (online talk)

Chris Bail is Professor of Sociology and Public Policy at Duke University, where he directs the Polarization Lab. He

studies political tribalism, extremism, and social psychology using data from social media and tools from the emerging field of computational social science.

Suggested Readings

- Bail, Chris, *Breaking the social media prism: How to make our platforms less polarizing* (Princeton, Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2021)
- Bucher, Taina, *Facebook, Digital media and society series* (Cambridge: Polity, 2021)
- Bucher, Taina, *If ... then: Algorithmic power and politics, Oxford studies in digital politics, 1* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018)
- Kavada, A., & Poell, T. "From counterpublics to contentious publicness: Tracing the temporal, spatial, and material articulations of popular protest through social media." *Communication Theory*, 31(2), 2021, 190-208.
- Kavada, Anastasia. "Creating the collective: Social media, the Occupy Movement and its Constitution as a Collective Actor." *Information, Communication & Society*, vol. 18, no. 8, 2015, 872-886.
- Kavada, Anastasia. "Engagement, Bonding, and Identity across Multiple Platforms: Avaaz on Facebook, YouTube, and MySpace." *Mediekultur: Journal of Media and Communication Research*, vol. 28, no. 52, 2012, 28-48.
- Einsiedel, Edna and O'Doherty, Kieran (eds). *Public Engagement and Emerging Technologies* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2013)
- Montuschi, Eleonora. "Using Science, Making Policy: What Should We Worry About? *European Journal for Philosophy of Science*, vol. 7, no. 1, 2017, 57-78.
- Montuschi, Eleonora. "Scientific Evidence vs. Expert Opinion: A False Alternative?" *Notizie di Politeia*, vol. 32, no. 126, 2017, 60-79.

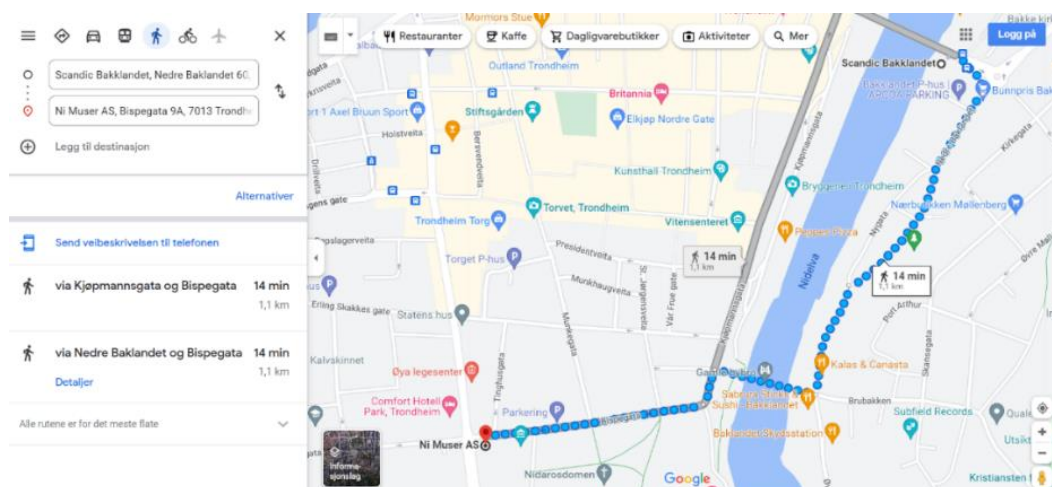
Hotel booking

We have a block booking for our meeting at Scandic Bakklundet for invited speakers and ISEED members.

Please ring or email and confirm your reservation yourself.

- Tel. +47 729 02000
- Email bakklundet@scandichotels.com

Walk from Scandic Bakklundet to Ni Muser



ISEED maps and explores how inclusive science can support European democracies.

For more information, comments or suggestions feel free to contact the Communication and Information Architect Sarah Santos at: sarahsan@ntnu.no

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