

Introduction

Studies in Social and Political Thought is the house journal of the Centre for Social and Political Thought at the University of Sussex. It was founded in 1999 by faculty members Andrew Chitty in Philosophy, William Outhwaite in Sociology, and a group of post-graduate students in SPT. It has been almost entirely run by Sussex graduate students since that date.

In 2010 it was re-launched with a prestigious International Advisory Board all of whom have been very supportive of the journal. It has published peer-reviewed articles by graduate students from Sussex and from Universities all over the world, alongside peer-reviewed articles by internationally renowned academics working in the broad area of Social and Political Thought.

In 2016 the journal moved to an on-line Gold Open Access format with a special issue (Volume 25) on Pathologies of Recognition co-edited by Chris Ferguson, Arto Laitinen, Arvi Särkelä and Heikki Ikäheimo. Volume 26 followed with a retrospective issue celebrating some of the best articles to appear in the Journal over its history. Technical issues held up the publication of Volumes 26 and 27 however a new platform is proposed for the journal in 2018 intended to solve the technical issues that have affected the last two issues.

Volume 27

Although not intended as a 'themed' issue, when reading the essays published together in Volume 27, related themes do emerge of precarity, conflict and response. The precarity of democratic form and praxis as it is both theorised and attempted in charged moments of historical specificity, and the precarity of societies and individuals navigating the historico-political contexts of their lives, is set alongside theoretical and practical political approaches framed to counter this.

The interrelated concepts of precarity, vulnerability and precariousness are distinguished by Emily Cousens. She addresses what she concludes is a key concept within feminist ethics, Judith Butler's theory of vulnerability: where contingent power relations accord differential values to persons, she concludes that Butler's theory makes an important contribution. Teppo Eskelinen's essay 'Social Justice and Financial Capitalism: Some Notions on Risks, Hierarchies and Value' fills a lacuna in current theory. He explores the potential impact upon the project of social justice of the inequitable allocation of risk produced under financial capitalism. Eskelinen concludes that theories of justice geared to address productive capitalism fail to identify the specific effects of the different logic of risk allocation in financial capitalism and require revision.

Kolja Möller casts Austro-Marxist Otto Bauer (1881-1938) as a 'Red Polybius' whose theory of a democratic republic is part of his wider anacyclotic political theory and is thus able to encompass a history of conflicting, rising and falling political forms. He critiques the role of conflict in contemporary theories of radical democracy through the lens of Bauer and the Viennese Marxism of the 1920s and 30s to suggest that Bauer's reframing of political Marxism offers a rich source of theoretical material for theorists of contemporary crises in western democracy. Javier Zamora García's Gillian Rose prize winning essay 'From the "indignados Movement" to power politics: a critical study of the theoretical underpinnings of "Podemos"' explores via the work of Chantal Mouffe and Ernesto Laclau, how the thinking that informed the leadership of *Podemos* although intended to create stronger democratic elements within prevailing liberalism, was ultimately tied to the political logic of liberal democracy so that the political result, rather than being informed by the politics of left-wing populism, was still saturated with premises found in realist theories of democracy such as Shumpeter's.

Volume 27 also contains a wide-ranging interview with the political philosopher Alessandro Ferrara. The interview reflects all the main threads of Ferrara's intellectual life and in particular ranges over his initial response to 'the linguistic turn' in his work on authenticity, his reading of Rousseau, exemplarity, and reflective authenticity. The interviewer Jacob Kowalski invites Ferrara to offer responses to how his philosophy speaks to current economic and environmental challenges and to locate his work beyond the bounds of Western political philosophy. In the reviews section this interview is paired with a review of Ferrara's *The Democratic Horizon* by his interviewer Jakob Kowalski.

This issue is rich in reviews. In addition to Kowalski's review of Ferrara's text, James Gordon Finlayson reviews Kenneth Baynes *Habermas*; Neal Harris reviews the second edition of Stephen Eric Bronner's *Moments of Decision: Political History and the Crises of Radicalism*; Erika Herrera Rosales reviews *Society of the Query Reader: Reflections on Web Search* and Onur Acaroglu reviews Jody Dean's *Crowds and Party*.

We encourage submissions for future issues of the journal on topics across the whole spectrum of Social and Political Theory and its history, from new and established authors, graduate students and faculty. We would like to take this opportunity to thank all the contributors to SSPT, and in particular the primary editor of recent issues Chris Ferguson and outgoing reviews editor Valentinios Kontoyiannis for their energy and commitment to keeping the journal vibrant and for maintaining its excellent record as a platform for

debate in Social and Political Thought. Valerie Whittington (incoming editor) and James Stockman (incoming reviews editor), both current PhD students at Sussex, are taking on their work.

Valerie Whittington, Chris Ferguson, and James Stockman

Editors