

DEMOCRACY WITHOUT SOLIDARITY: POLITICAL DYSFUNCTION IN HARD TIMES

Acknowledgements

This special issue of *Government & Opposition* emerged out of a unique learning opportunity granted by the editorial board of the journal to a group of students at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, DC, and Bologna, Italy. During the 2015–16 academic year, these students met with scholars on both sides of the Atlantic to discuss original research related to the wider theme of democratic dysfunction. Half of the presentations were made in Washington with a video conferencing connection to Bologna; the other half were made in Bologna with a connection to Washington. The events were also open to the public and attracted a range of other students, academics, policymakers and interested members of the local community.

Not all of the work that was presented was intended for the special issue. On the contrary, the editorial board was clear in its mandate that we build a wide selection of scholarship into the seminar series. Some of that work would be included in the collection; all of it would enrich the wider conversation. The students participated actively in critiquing the work, providing supplementary research and helping us to develop (and sustain!) the year-long conversation. They also helped us as editors in crystallizing the unifying themes that we set out in our introduction. Finally, they played a critical role in stimulating both editors and scholars to bring the collection together as tightly as possible.

As editors, we would like to extend a heartfelt thanks to our students: Matthew Brewer, Derek Brooks, Tea Ivanovic, Konstantinos Kanellopoulos, Kait Lavinder, Silvia Merler, Sasha Milentey, Sean Mills, Elizabeth Rust and Beth Smits (in Washington); Syed Jehangeer Ali, Alexander Bohurat, Ian Bugbee, Jennifer Carlson, David Groman, Jacqueline Fedida, Seva Karpauskaite, Robert McGillis, Benjamin Newman, Maddalena Perretti, Fotios Stravoravdis and Madison Wilcox (in Bologna). We would also like to thank the many scholars who participated in our discussions both in the seminars and at conferences where the work was presented, including Carlo Invernizzi Accetti,

Christopher Bickerton, Anna Grzymala-Busse, Jonathan Hopkin, Nikhil Kalyanpur, Kimberly Morgan, Abraham Newman and Mitchell Orenstein. The usual disclaimer applies.

In addition, we would like to thank Cristina Benitez, Dea Di Furia and Alessandra Nacamù for organizing the seminars, and Paolo Forlani, Lorenzo Righetti and Moe Elahi for ensuring that the transatlantic telecommunications functioned well enough for us to engage in lively seminar discussions.

Finally, we would like to thank Kathryn Knowles, who is Associate Director in the European and Eurasian Studies programme at SAIS, and Katharine Adeney, who is co-editor of *Government & Opposition*. This was an important experiment for both organizations. Their leadership is what made it work. Without their support and the support of Rosalind Jones and Jessica Cuthbert-Smith, this collection would not have been possible. We can only hope at this stage that the end result lives up to their expectations.

Erik Jones and Matthias Matthijs
Bologna, Italy – January 2017