Democracy and Demography:
The Body Politic and the Politics of Bodies, Past, Present, Future

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Conveners: Jeremy Adelman (Princeton) & Shalini Randeria (IWM Vienna)

This workshop tackles the emergent crisis of modern democracies. By spotlighting the ways in which divides over migration, reproduction, visas, and citizenship have polarized societies and intensified conflicts between and within states, we hope to foster a cross-national and inter-disciplinary dialogue about one of the neuralgic challenges of our times. In particular, we want to explore topics that arise when we merge debates about democracy with debates about demography – as human bodies, their surveillance and regulation, have become sites for public policy and yielded mechanisms to sharpen the line between included and excluded. Among questions we want to consider are: how have demographic changes affected democratic alignments? How have democratic fractures and allegiances affected policies that govern human mobility? How has the global migrant “crisis” affected ideas and policy practices that govern fertility – and vice versa? By bringing research on democracy together with research on demography, can we envision new agendas for international and collaborative social science? This workshop is intended to brainstorm ideas, not to formulate answers. Our aim is to open a dialogue across disciplinary and geographic lines, a dialogue that, we hope, contributes to our own individual thinking and opens up lines for potential future collaborative research.

Participant list:

Gadi Algazi (Tel Aviv)
Matthew Connelly (Columbia)
Ayça Çubukçu (Fung Princeton)
Dilip Gaonkar (Northwestern)
Susan Greenhalgh (Harvard)