Stony Brook University
The Graduate School

Doctoral Defense Announcement

Democracy and Its Others

By

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Today’s unprecedented levels of human migration present urgent challenges to traditional conceptualizations of national identity, nation-state sovereignty, and democratic citizenship. The instrumental valorization or vilification of foreignness for nationalistic ends has long-determined who is to be included within or excluded from “the people” of the democratic state. Against this instrumentalization, I argue that foreignness is an originary and constitutive element of sovereignty and democratic political identity which severs the links among nationality, political membership, and citizenship. Without calling for an end to sovereign self-determination, I argue that political representation and possession of rights are achieved through—not against—foreignness. If so, then new normative criteria for political inclusion and citizenship are required that reject local practices which deprive individuals of political membership solely on the basis of national citizenship.

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