Paulina Tambakaki

Senior Lecturer in Political Theory

Centre for the Study of Democracy, DPIR

University of Westminster

32-38 Wells Street

London W1T 3UW

Email: tambakp@westminster.ac.uk

**Paper Title:** Rethinking Radical Democracy

*Abstract*

Over the course of three decades, vocabularies of radical democracy have pressed their stamp on democratic thought. Trading on the intuition that there is more to democracy than elections, they have generated critical insights into the important role that practices of pluralisation and critique play in bettering institutional politics. As a result, few would today deny the radical democratic contribution to democratic thought. What many might question, however, is its continuing traction. The paper probes this question, focusing on the divisions over the meaning and appeal of democracy within contemporary radical work. It argues that while the depth of these divisions offers good reasons for jettisoning references to radical democracy outside Laclau and Mouffe’s work, this would be a mistake. For it is possible to reconstruct and, ultimately reassert, radical democracy around the promissory rule of the many. The paper canvasses the features of this reconstruction and it discusses the benefits it brings to broader democratic thought.