

CFP Workshop:

Petitions and Petitioning: People Approaching Parliament

30 October-1 November 2024 (in-person), University of Jyväskylä (Finland)

For centuries, petitioning has served as an important means for people to approach institutions of power with grievances, requests, and political statements. In modern European history, parliament has been one of the most influential petition-receiving institutions. These practices provide an invaluable lens through which scholars can study the relationship between people and parliament and broader changes to ideas of representation, democracy, and the history of political culture. Indeed, petitioning differs from numerous other forms of contact between the people and parliament—such as voting, opinion polls, and party membership—in that petitioning in modern European history has traditionally been available to all groups of society and not just to those formally included in the realm of politics.

This workshop focuses on the tensions and transformations of the relationship between the people and their representatives by discussing how people across Europe (including colonial settlements and territories) have used petitions to approach parliaments from circa 1700 to the present. From the eighteenth century onwards, parliaments consolidated as powerful decision-making bodies, taking centre stage in most representative systems. As institutions whose power is often legitimised in their claim to represent the people, this workshop seeks to investigate how that relationship has developed alongside the development of parliaments in modern political history. More specifically, how have people approached these central institutions over the past three hundred years, how have the practices of doing so changed in the long run, and how are patterns of petitioning related to broader societal changes? What do these changes reveal about the changing conceptions of parliamentary representation?

To understand how these practices evolved across time and space and how different societal conditions have influenced them, we welcome papers on cases across the continent, including the colonial settlements outside 'geographical Europe.' Contributions are encouraged (but not restricted) to address some of the following questions:

- What sort of language and practices did petitioning involve, and which audiences did they seek to address? What means were used to convince parliamentarians?

- How were petitions received and treated in parliament? What institutional transformations resulted from the 'rise of petitions'?
- How has petitioning influenced how actors outside parliament perceive their relationship with 'their representatives' and vice versa?
- How was petitioning related to the emergence of other participatory practices, such as electioneering, voting, and party activism? How was it related to and influenced by the emergence of mass-parties and new social movements?
- How do transnational petitioning practices intersect with national political cultures? What do the differences in petitioning practices tell us about the broader differences between the political cultures of European states?

Paper proposals (250 words) and short biographies (250 words) are to be submitted to zachris.e.haaparinne@jyu.fi and anne.e.norgaard@ntnu.no by 1 September 2024. Applicants will receive a confirmation of acceptance by 9 September. For further information during summer (21 June – 31 July), please contact hela-harjoittelija@campus.jyu.fi.

The organisers will cover travel and accommodation expenses.

Pending on participants' interest, we hope the workshop will be a stepping stone towards producing a special issue on the theme in an academic journal.

The workshop is part of *Political Representation: Tensions between Parliament and the People from the Age of Revolutions to the 21st Century* (Academy of Finland Professor Project) and is organised by Zachris Haaparinne and Anne Engelst Nørgaard.