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Original Citation

Monro, Surya and McDaid, Shaun (2015) Democracy and Transgender. In: 4th European Conference on Politics and Gender, 11th - 13th June 2015, Uppsala University, Sweden. (Unpublished)

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Democracy and Transgender

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Aims and objectives

- Aims and objectives: To explore different forms of democracy in relation to trans* in Europe, as follows:
 - electoral democracy
 - participative democracy
- ❖ Acknowledgements: All research contributors; ESRC (funded PhD and subsequent research), Diane Richardson

Electoral democracy

- Literature on trans and electoral democracy is in its infancy
- Different electoral systems may affect the election of trans* parliamentary candidates
- However, the nature of the political party may be more important

Participative democracy

- Participatory democratic mechanisms may form a fruitful means of trans*political engagement
- For example, in Spain and in the UK, various consultative structures are in place
- However, there are difficulties with participative democracy (e.g. under-resourcing, 'loudest voices', co-option, wider social context)

Illustrative quote

“it feels really quite problematic trying to get funds, simply from the fact that the funds in [region of] Wales are all focused very much on one little area, and you can’t really run a group, apart from the problems that [interviewee’s partner] mentioned, because we are quite a small minority, you probably wouldn’t get more than sort of, I mean we’ve got sixty registered members, we occasionally get others who come and drop in, erm, but as I say if you split that up in about six, you’ve got about ten members per area [laughs]” (Trans Group Organiser, Wales, in Richardson and Monro 2012)

Concluding thoughts

- There is a need for more research about trans* people and democracy.
- Trans people need to be represented politically – in both descriptive and substantive ways
- Trans* has implications beyond the trans* populations – for example, if binary gender quotas are in place, what happens with non-binary trans* people?

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