Call for paper.
Special Issue Ethics & Politics 1/2024
Reasonableness: old virtue for a new era
Eds: Benedetta Giovanola – Roberta Sala

benedetta.giovanola@unimc.it
sala.roberta@unisr.it

Reasonableness is a key concept in political liberalism. It is supposed to provide the standard for dealing with the 'fact of pluralism' and for reasoning together on political issues, including issues of justice. Following John Rawls, reasonableness can be interpreted both as a 'willingness to recognize the burdens of judgement', i.e., as a source of reasonable disagreement, and as a willingness to cooperate with others on terms that everyone can accept (Rawls 1993, 50 ff.). People's recognition of the burdens of judgement entails a virtue of epistemic modesty: they show themselves ready to recognize their own limitations and the limitations of everyone else. Based on this awareness, people can adopt a moral attitude towards others: because of the diminished confidence in one's own capacity to know and beliefs, we should be open and tolerant towards others (Badano, Nuti 2018; Giovanola, Sala 2022). Which implies that reasonable people should be able to adhere to a kind of democratic epistemic ethics that requires considering others as political equals (Leland, Van Wietmarschen 2012). If the above makes sense, it seems that the virtue of reasonableness in both related epistemic and moral meanings is deeply threatened by digital innovations and their pervasiveness in democratic life, and that reasonableness as a civic virtue proves to be an unreasonable demand in the current circumstances of our digital society (Galeotti 2022). Indeed, digital platforms lead individuals to lock themselves in echo chambers and filter bubbles and to be less and less available for the exchange of reason and democratic deliberation. Democracy itself is under attack, as it is increasingly turning into a democracy of the click, in which there is no room for debate or even argumentation, but only for the dry yes-or-no choice.
In this context, what about the role of reasonableness?

Our special issue aims at answering the above question and at exploring the role of reasonableness in the digital age. We welcome papers that focus on (but are not limited to) the following questions:

- Is reasonableness still an epistemic and moral virtue or is it an attitude that barely survives for a few old defenders of an outdated idea of democracy?

- How has the democratic citizen changed in this digital world?

- What virtues should underpin citizenship if it still makes sense to speak of virtues? Does it still make sense to invoke trust between political interlocutors?

- Is reasonableness still a reasonable aspiration in the digital age, or not?

We encourage contributions on, but not reduced to, these questions.

Deadline for submitting a paper: May 1st, 2024.
The paper must be accompanied by a separate paper containing (i) name and surname of the author/author, (ii) affiliation, (iii) title of the abstract and (iv) e-mail address. The paper should not exceed 8000 words.
The language is English.

References

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- Galeotti E. Is the Demand for Reasonableness Unreasonable? Biblioteca della libertà, LVII, 2022
- Giovanola B., Sala, R. The reasons of the unreasonable: Is political liberalism still an option? Philosophy and Social Criticism, 48(9), 2022
- Leland R. T., Van Wietmarschen H. Reasonableness, Intellectual Modesty, and Reciprocity in Political Justification. Ethics, 122 (4) 2012
- Liveriero F. The epistemic dimension of reasonableness. Philosophy and Social Criticism, 41(6) 2015
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