

Public defence Ph.D. in Political Science by Margareta Hanes

The public defence of the Ph.D in Political Science for Margareta Hanes will take place on **Wednesday March 21th at 2:30pm** in the Promotion room, building D, 2nd floor, room D2.01, VUB-Campus Etterbeek, Pleinlaan 2, 1050 Brussel.

The Ph.D thesis is called "The Separateness of Persons and Its Implications for Political Liberalism" (Promoter: Prof. dr. Patrick Stouthuysen).

Please confirm your attendance by Friday March 16th to [Carine Ladou](#).

Abstract:

John Rawls's political theory mainly addresses a question that has direct implications for all of us, namely the question of how a stable and just society can exist when there are major disagreements among individuals with regard to their commitments to values and conceptions of the good. Rawls answers this question by asserting that, in the context of value system pluralism, individuals would reach an "overlapping consensus" in their political arrangement. The individual would be asked to bracket her particular moral convictions with regards outcomes, but she would be free to include them in her arguments aimed at leading to a system of fair social cooperation. Although Rawls wants to ensure that personal autonomy and the system of a modern society are capable of residing under a framework of mutual interconnectedness, it is not clear that Rawls's considerations about fair social cooperation lend support to a conception of personal autonomy because he seems to merely acknowledge and recognize the individual's autonomy without implementing it in the sense of encouraging persons to express their autonomy. This dissertation highlights the view that Rawls's thesis de-personalizes the individual herself. My aim is to examine the roots of personal autonomy in order to argue that personal autonomy implies an account of the separateness of persons that goes further than the distinctiveness of persons, the rather descriptive conception that Rawls's views on a stable and just society is based upon.