

# INTERPRETIVE POLICY ANALYSIS CONFERENCE 2021

**Panel title:**

*P20 - The Spatial Politics of Governance*

**Panel convenors:**

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Politics is profoundly affected by how we imagine, talk about and embody space. In the current political conjuncture, our experiences of space and time appear to be undergoing particularly dramatic transformations (Daley *et al.*, 2017). From protest movements reclaiming public space to the reach of global finance and crisis, our political landscapes are being reworked in both foreseeable and unexpected ways. New digital technologies are developing trans-national networks, triggering new forms of resistance, solidarity and violence, while territorial borders are being simultaneously transgressed, fortified and distorted (Castells 2012; della Porta & Parks 2016, Allen, 2016). The rescaling of the state towards new forms of urban and regional governance through fragile narratives twinning local empowerment and global competitiveness runs up against questions over democratic representation and the splintering of established political allegiances (Evans *et al.* 2013, Flinders & Wood 2015; Hajer 2009).

Such transformations have led to renewed interest in how space and time are co-constituting the sites and practices of governance, their contestation and potential re-imagining. Struggles over societal and economic futures have been conceptualised as peppered with spatial processes and imaginaries, from interlocking global-local networks (Swyngedouw 1997), to decentred governance straddling centre and periphery (Griggs & Sullivan 2014), and tensions between the fixity and flow of policy models as they are circulated and embedded (McCann 2011). It is now widely acknowledged that space and time are intertwined with practices of politics, with the production and reproduction of spaces, in which the everyday of politics becomes embedded (Dikeç, 2015). Furthermore, it is now widely recognised that demands and grievances need to be understood through the prism of multiple spaces and times, while the construction and strategic deployment of space is increasingly understood to be a key feature of policy practice and statecraft (Papanastasiou, 2019; Lorne *et al.* 2020). But what do such assertions mean beyond saying that space matters in the governance of contemporary societies? More importantly, how are concepts of scale, place and territory brought into being and contested in and through spatialised practices of governance? And how might we begin to imagine and construct alternative political spaces of democratic governance?

This panel invites papers which engage with these questions in order to shed light on the spatial politics of governance. We are interested in receiving contributions which analyse processes relating to issues that include state restructuring, urban and local governance, the construction of borders and boundaries, and the spatial politics of trans-national networks and governance.