

INTERPRETIVE POLICY ANALYSIS CONFERENCE 2021

Panel Title:

P25 - If Einstein had been a political scientist – the theory and analysis of ‘political space’ and ‘political time’

Panel Convenors

Dr. Thomas Jacobs, postdoctoral researcher, Centre for EU Studies (Universiteit Gent)

Craig Love, PhD candidate (University of Essex)

Submit your paper abstract to: t.jacobs@ugent.be; cmlovea@essex.ac.uk

Panel Abstract

The Global Financial Crisis of 2008 gave birth to a wide array of social movements and political struggles that proliferated across the world. From Occupy, the Indignados, and the movement of the Squares, and more recently, Extinction Rebellion and BLM movements, people are politicizing in new and unprecedented ways. The nature of this politicization has sparked academic interest in how political projects that contest the status quo relate to the dimensions of space and time. Political struggles play out across multiple levels, from local community activism and civil society organisations, to transnational movements, and in different and specific historical, social, institutional, and political contexts. Within each of these contexts, respective struggles are confronted with different constructions of ‘political space’ and ‘political time’; which together constitute a ‘political horizon’ that informs and shapes political participation, political strategy, and the possibility for political alternatives to the existing order.

But how should we begin to understand and conceptualize the notions of ‘space’ and ‘time’ within political science? What are the implications if we do not view these dimensions as pre-defined by a particular theory or methodology, but as contingent, varied, and flexible? What are the advantages of understanding ‘space’ and ‘time’ as research objects, instead of as fixed constants or independent variables? We believe that such a move would produce a wide range of interesting theoretical and empirical questions. What theories and methods can inform the study of ‘political space’ and ‘political time’? How do they relate to each other? What are the methodological challenges involved in the study of ‘political space’ and ‘political time’? What new knowledge can be generated by operationalizing these notions in empirical research on political struggles? How do ‘political horizons’ condition the political practices that play out within their reach?

This panel welcomes proposals that engage with the concepts of space and time in the study of political contestation, political strategy, and social movements. Both theoretical perspectives and empirical analyses are highly appreciated.

- We welcome proposals from a range of theoretical backgrounds, including but not limited to Critical Theory; Poststructuralist (Discourse) Theory; Social Movement Theory; Discursive and Constructivist Institutionalism; Commons, Feminist and Post-Colonial perspectives; as well as those that have an exclusively empirical focus.

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- We welcome proposals that engage with emerging and novel political practices in the context of social movements, civil society organisations, political parties, and more informal political projects. We encourage proposals that consider these themes within the context of the Covid-19 pandemic.
- This panel supports diversity and equality, and we encourage proposals from researchers of all backgrounds. As the panel convenors are Early Career Researchers themselves, we especially prompt Early Career Researchers to submit proposals.
- The panel will be structured in the traditional sense; with panel members giving a short presentation of their paper before opening the floor to questions and discussion on the papers and themes raised by the panel.