

POLIS HDR CONFERENCE

# NEW VOICES IN POLITICS AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS RESEARCH



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UNIVERSITY

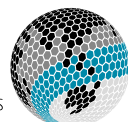


**FRIDAY 18 SEPTEMBER, 9am-4pm**

**Zoom ID: 917 062 3959**

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**Polis**  
POLITICS AND  
INTERNATIONAL STUDIES



**ADI**  
ALFRED DEAKIN INSTITUTE FOR  
CITIZENSHIP AND GLOBALISATION

POLIS HDR Conference

# New Voices in Politics and International Relations Research

Friday 18 September, 2020 | Zoom | Deakin University | Melbourne, Australia

## Welcome

Welcome to the second annual Polis HDR Conference. We recognised some time ago that there were very few opportunities for Deakin University HDR students in the disciplines of Political Science and International Relations (and related disciplines) to get together.

This conference is specifically designed to address this issue; an opportunity for you to meet like-minded students, to present your research, to listen to presentations from your colleagues, to receive advice from staff who have successfully navigated the PhD process and gone on to have stellar careers, and to discuss the various challenges and opportunities presented to HDR students in our field.

The theme of the conference 'new voices in politics and international relations research' is deliberately broad to enable us to engage in a wide and stimulating discussion of your research.

However, the overarching goal of the day is to continue to build a cohesive and coherent HDR research culture in Politics and International Relations at Deakin.

One key way for us to do this is for you to get involved in other Polis events. You can join Polis by sending an email to Benjamin Isakhan ([benjamin.isakhan@deakin.edu.au](mailto:benjamin.isakhan@deakin.edu.au)) and you can keep up to date on Polis events and activities via our Twitter account (@POLIS\_Deakin) and website (<https://adi.deakin.edu.au/polis>).

We sincerely hope that you enjoy the day and look forward to a rich and rewarding discussion.

Sincerely,

2020 Polis HDR Workshop Committee  
Benjamin Freeman | Sylvia Daravong | John Bourdouvalis  
Benjamin Isakhan

## Program

### Friday 18 September

#### 9 – *Welcome and Introduction*

- Benjamin Isakhan

#### 930 – Session 1: *Theorising Democracy and the COVID-19 crisis*

Chair: Benjamin Freeman

- Geri Grey: *The Hobbesian State and COVID-19*
- John Bourdoulvalis: *Will the Real Social Democracy Please Stand Up?*

#### 1030 – Session 2: *Policy Challenges in Australia I*

Chair: Sylvia Daravong

- Jonathan Drew: *Explaining Policy Change Dynamics: A Mixed Methods Approach*
- Natalie Dimmock: *Exploring the role of Parents & Citizens Associations in WA*
- Margarita Vladimirova: *Facial Recognition as an Inalienable Element of Your Identity*

#### 12 – Lunch

#### 1 – Session 3: *Policy Challenges in Australia II*

Chair: John Bourdoulvalis

- Fan Yang: *Translating 2019 Australian federal election on WeChat Official Accounts*
- Linda Wollersheim: *Community renewable energy in Victoria*

#### 2 – Session 4: *Democracy and Authoritarianism beyond the 'West'*

Chair: Linda Wollersheim

- Jack Jacovou: *Explaining the Electoral Success of Conservative Parties in Turkey*
- David Leek: *Democratic Degeneration and Authoritarianism in Africa*

#### 3 – Panel: *To Survive and Thrive: The PhD Experience and Beyond*

Chair: Benjamin Isakhan

- Umut Ozguc: *Surviving the PhD*
- Maria Rae: *Getting a Job, Building a Career*
- Amy Nethery: *Publishing and Winning Grants*

#### 355 – Final Thoughts

- Benjamin Isakhan

#### 4 – Close

## Abstracts and Biographies

### *Session 1: Theorising Democracy and the COVID-19 crisis*

#### **The Hobbesian State and COVID-19**

This paper addresses two issues: current concerns over the uses of state power in response to COVID-19, and Arendt's critique of the Hobbesian state, particularly as articulated by Runciman (2020). The current concerns relate to actions by the state to curtail liberties (e.g. mask-wearing), override economic/free market imperatives (mandatory industry shutdowns) and enforce obedience to law in new ways (e.g. military enlistment to enforce quarantine restrictions). The critique relates to the mechanization of politics – a pathology of modernity, according to Arendt's account, by which some essential aspect of the human and the political is sacrificed. The intimate interference of the state in human lives since COVID-19's onset, and its apparent though not uncontroversial acceptance on a wide scale, suggests a new relevance for Arendt's account of the Hobbesian state as a model or mirror of modernity. The paper outlines Arendt's account and applies it to contemporary state management of COVID-19.

#### **Geri Grey**

*Paul Geri Gray (Geri) is an MA researcher at Deakin who has recently submitted a thesis on 'Hannah Arendt and Immigration Detention', supervised by Professor Baogang He. Geri earlier graduated as Bachelor of Arts (Honours) from Monash University, majoring in English Literature with a minor sequence in Philosophy. Geri has had a professional career in mainstream media, including 12 years as a senior columnist on the Herald Sun, and in speechwriting, currently working as Speechwriter for the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Melbourne. Geri has published one book, Nightmare of the Prophet (Freedom Publishing, 2004).*

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#### **Will the Real Social Democracy Please Stand Up?**

In the preceding decade we have seen the consequences of an inadequate response to global financial instability continue to erode the efficacy of democratic politics. Growing skepticism of globalisation and divisive forms of populism, alongside increasing inequality and social precarity, are now framed by the immense challenges of an unprecedented global pandemic. Unlike in 2008, these challenges cannot be dealt with by simply propping up financial markets and transferring the economic burden on to society. The pandemic has highlighted the centrality of people and not markets to the functioning of global capitalism. The question then becomes what kind of economy will emerge as the world adjusts to Covid-19 realities. This paper examines how Covid-19 has amplified the need for social democracy to break out of its centrist torpor and provide far reaching solutions to entrenched social, political, economic and environmental issues. First, it provides a comparative analysis of the role of the state after the GFC and the during the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. Second, it considers some possible pathways and the social, political and economic consequences of different solutions. Finally, it argues that whilst the pandemic represents an opportunity to rebuild democratic institutions and the economy in an



inclusive fashion, without a significant rethinking of the role, capacity and function of public institutions we are more likely to see a continuation of the status quo.

### **John A. Bourdouvalis**

*John A. Bourdouvalis is a PhD candidate with the School of Humanities and Social Sciences at Deakin University. His dissertation involved examining the future of social democracy and progressive social mobilisations since the 2008 Global Financial Crisis. John's research focuses on critiques of neoliberalism, post-Marxism, social democracy, democratic theory and political economy. He is particularly interested in the effects of neoliberal austerity on democracy in Southern Europe after the Global Financial Crisis, and the progressive movements that have emerged in response.*

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## *Session 2: Policy Challenges in Australia I*

### **Explaining Policy Change Dynamics: A Mixed Methods Approach**

How we should analyse policy change is a key problem with which political science has wrestled, over time. The range of typologies of policy change that a single analytic model must explain is one reason for this. Policy change in the Australian political system which combines parliamentary and federalist elements, for instance, will behave differently from the gridlocked Federalist US system. A typology of policy change that is not well accounted for in theoretical frameworks are times of significant policy change, otherwise known as “turning points”. A turning point is when abrupt, punctuated change breaks the relatively stable rate at which policy changes over time, which leads to a very different and lasting rate of change. My research project will examine Australian agenda attention trends with the goal of investigating policy change dynamics. To achieve this, I will code a new political party manifesto dataset which will then be analysed. Causal mechanisms that lead to specific turning points will then be examined by a subsequent small-N case study analysis. This mixed methods approach will provide different and complementary perspectives in the project's overarching aim to better understand turning points.

### **Jonathan Drew**

*Jonathan Drew is a second year PhD student at Deakin University, Australia. He holds a Master of Public Policy (RMIT University), a Graduate Diploma of Arts (Advanced) – Public Policy & Management (University of Melbourne) and a Bachelor of Arts (Professional & Creative Writing) (Deakin University). He has published in the Australian Journal of Political Science and Political Studies Review.*

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### **Exploring the role of Parents & Citizens Associations in Western Australia and the private contributions of parents to public education: A preliminary study**

The research aims to assess the extent to which Parents & Citizens Associations (P&Cs) may contribute to the privatisation of public schools. P&Cs are voluntary organisations associated with schools that parents can choose to be financial members of and/or contribute their time, skills and money to. As there is a gap in the available data, the

research will target five lines of enquiry around contributions by West Australian P&Cs to schools relative to the school budget. It will also look at whether there is a difference between primary schools and high schools, and schools in different socio-educational areas, in their contributions. It is anticipated that the project, whilst preliminary in nature, will be part of a larger project that looks at the impact of parental contributions on equity, access and the quality of public education. The Review of Funding for Schooling – Final Report (known as the Gonski Report, 2011) looked at changes to school funding based on equity but the implementation of those changes failed to take into account parental contributions. As a consequence, this area of research has the potential to impact public policy through developing a greater understanding of parental contributions and areas of reform, privatisation and equity.

### **Natalie Dimmock**

*Natalie Dimmock is a lawyer with a keen interest in social sciences. With qualifications in psychology, mediation and management, she has written and presented papers in the legal field. A current HDR Masters student in Politics and Policy, Natalie intends to continue her policy studies with a sharp focus on education as the necessary tool for people to be good citizens, good thinkers and great contributors to society.*

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### **Facial Recognition Imminence: Face as an Inalienable Element of Your Identity**

Privacy is a word that never has never been used as often as in the last few years. Even if we can hide our passwords and fingerprints, we always have to show our face, our main asset. Politicians all over the world are pushing forward with suggestions on the implementation of facial recognition technology in order to gain more control and power. In December 2019, facial recognition was banned in Europe for five years, and we should consider this time as the last chance for legislators and academics to define the future framework and regulation of the application of this technology, which will inevitably come into common usage. Unfortunately, Australia is running out of time, as the Privacy Act will be reviewed at the end of 2020, but there are still many issues to be discussed in the broader platforms related to the use of facial recognition technology. Questions of concern started to be raised two decades ago, and now the situation is not very promising. China is using facial recognition technology for payments, at the train stations, subway stations, public toilets and for the Social Credit System. Will it bring safety to the civil societies or endless control without limits? Prevention of misuse of such instruments should be carefully reviewed. First should be the defined legal concept of one's face. For that there should be used relevant laws on privacy and a socio-legal approach. Based on that, there should be improvements proposed for legal regulation on the development of facial recognition surveillance systems.

### **Margarita Vladimirova**

*Margarita Vladimirova is currently a PhD candidate in the Faculty of Business and Law at Deakin University. She received an LL.M. and Mediator's training from the University of the Pacific, McGeorge School of Law (took double load of courses both for U.S. Law and Policy and for Experiential Teaching) and first PhD in law from Kazan Federal University. Margarita was teaching in China for 5 years, where she received the Law School's Outstanding Teacher Award every time it was open for a competition. At that time she developed courses for*

*contract law (comparative), legal negotiation and arbitration, moot court, international maritime law and related classes. She has also published numerous law articles on international commercial arbitration and mediation in Russian language and a book about mediation agreements. Prior to entering academia Margarita Vladimirova served as an arbitration lawyer for more than 10 years.*

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### *Session 3: Policy Challenges in Australia II*

#### **Translating 2019 Australian federal election on WeChat Official Accounts**

WeChat is the primary digital communication platform for Mandarin speakers globally. WeChat Official Account (hereafter WOA) is an information broadcasting function on the platform. With the introduction of WOAs in 2013, Chinese media entrepreneurs in Australia employ the platform function to produce and disseminate news information for Chinese migrant communities. This paper seeks to address the question: how did WOAs engage in the representation of the Australian federal election in 2019. 318 articles published by Australia-based WOAs from February to May are collected and qualitatively analysed. The focus of the timeframe was informed by two major political party leaders starting to engage with Mandarin-speaking voters in February and the finalisation of the election in May. I argue that WOAs in Australia translated federal election into Mandarin to engage with the electoral campaign and familiarise Chinese migrants with Australian politics. Analysis of data suggests that published content on WOAs was predominantly liberal-leaning and was configured by three different types of content: sponsored and non-sponsored political advertisements, and campaign-related media coverage which was extracted and translated from Australian media reports. This paper contributes to understanding public diplomacy and election communication among Australian-Chinese.

#### **Fan Yang**

*Fan Yang is a PhD candidate at School of Communication and Creative Arts, Deakin University, and a sessional lecturer at RMIT. Her doctoral thesis focuses on the content production practice of the news-focused WeChat Official Accounts in Australia.*

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#### **What does the future of community renewable energy hold in Victoria?**

Renewable energy (RE) is key to climate change transitions for carbon abatement needed for Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement, now and into the future. But whether policy settings favour Big [Grid] Energy or facilitate both large-scale and small to mid-scale community-led renewables projects may impact the speed and depth of transitions. It is argued that small to mid-scale projects owned, developed and/or operated by renewable energy communities (RECs) are key to distributed regional energy systems, community support and buy-in and localised grids. The paper analyses both national and subnational policy frameworks impacting on midscale community energy development and interrogates how RECs are enabled or hindered, and what this might mean for timely, effective, penetrative change away from fossil fuels. This paper discusses the key policy facilitators/barriers drawing on a Victorian case study of Hepburn Wind, Australia's first

community-owned wind farm that commenced operation in 2011. By means of qualitative discourse analysis, the research (1) analyses underlying assumptions about the role of midscale RECs in key national and subnational energy policy documents, and the prevailing power structures dominating policy, regulatory reforms and energy markets. (2) It analyses the impact of national-state policies on the selected case study as Hepburn Wind transitions to Hepburn Energy and plans to add 7MW of solar to its 2-turbine 4 MW wind turbine grid-connected energy generation.

### **Linda Wollersheim**

*Linda Wollersheim is a PhD Candidate at Deakin University working with the ARC Centre of Excellence for Electromaterials Science (ACES) undertaking a comparative study that explores key policy and regulatory settings impacting on community access, operation and ownership of renewable energy (RE) technologies in Australia and Germany. My work examines the discursive framing of RE policies and regulatory reforms, focusing on the practical implications for renewable energy communities, the underlying assumptions about transition pathways and the prevailing power structures dominating policy, regulatory reforms and energy markets. My research explores concepts and practices of energy justice and energy democracy with an empirical focus on the role of communities in enacting low carbon transitions.*

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### *Session 4: Democracy and Authoritarianism beyond the 'West'*

#### **Explaining the Electoral Success of Conservative Parties in Turkey**

Different features of the Turkish electoral system, such as malapportionment, the district and national threshold, and the contingency mandate have historically enhanced the disproportionality of Turkish elections and benefitted conservative parties in Turkey. Using the Gallagher Index (GI) and a D'Hondt method calculator, I determine the historical disproportionality of Turkish elections between 1961 and 1999 and generate simulated election results showing the outcome of each election were these different mechanisms of the Turkish electoral system removed. My study shows that conservative parties in Turkey have, on average, benefitted from the Turkish electoral system at the expense of secular parties.

### **Jack Jacovou**

*Jack Jacovou is a PhD candidate at Deakin University in Melbourne, Australia. His research focuses on analysing Turkey as a hybrid regime from 1960 until 2002. His previous research has assessed Turkey as a hybrid regime from 2002 onwards. As part of this, he analysed the role the Turkish electoral system played in enhancing the electoral success of the AKP.*

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#### **Democratic Degeneration and Authoritarianism in Africa**

The 1980s third-wave democratization of the African continent was an era envisaged for transformations towards democracy, and away from authoritative regimes that were frequently marked by unfair elections, military coup d'états, declining economies and



widespread political uncertainty. The post-Cold War era which signified the downfall of the single-party state promoted by Communists and Marxists ideals from Eastern Europe motivated embracing of western democratization. These internal and external variations justified a nuanced optimistic democratization process in Africa. But approximately three decades later, the perceived reality has a pessimistic, and a rather paradoxical narrative that is characteristically regressive. Out of the 54 African countries, 22 countries are classified as authoritarian regimes in 2019. This accounts for approximately 40% of the total continent's systems of governments. 15 countries account for the continent's 27% circa under hybrid regimes, while 6 countries, 11%\* account for regimes types of flawed democracy, and 1 country, about 1%\* represents the continent's only full democracy<sup>2</sup>. Hence, the significance of examining why authoritarian regimes still exists three decades after embarking on an ambitious democratization process stimulates concerning questions: Why Africa is still presenting more authoritarian regimes than democratic ones? What instrumental limitations are holding Africa back from democratizing in the aftermath of colonialism? Why are some African countries transitioning towards democracy and others not? These are fundamental questions for understanding the current state of political affairs in Africa. This paper will present three possible scenarios (presidentialisation and political institutions; political participation and; the role of dogmatic political cultures) to explain and discuss this phenomenon of tenacious authoritarianism.

#### **David Leek**

*David Leek is currently a PhD candidate in the field of Humanities and Social Science at Deakin University. He holds a master's degree in Politics and Public Policy from Deakin University, and a Bachelors' degree in Social Science, majoring in Security and International Relations from Swinburne University. He also holds three other postgraduate degrees from Deakin University (GradDip Professional Political Practice, GradCert International Relations and GradCert International and Community Development). His current research focuses on Presidentialisation in Africa with case studies from three African countries; Ghana, Rwanda and South Africa. Even though his research is informed by the theoretical framework of presidentialisation, he will use some of his discipline's main concepts such as political authority, democracy, personality politics, colonialism and leadership.*

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