

PSA Undergraduate Conference 2021 – Queen’s University, Belfast.

Politics and International Relations in a Time of Transitions. Friday 26th March 2021

Call for Papers

At home and abroad, the political landscape is changing. In the UK, the 2017 and 2019 general elections saw a return to two-party politics. Labour presented an unapologetically socialist manifesto, whilst the Conservative Party, under the premierships of Theresa May and then Boris Johnson, moved further to the ideological right in what some commentators have hailed as ‘the end of neoliberalism’. The most recent of those elections has forced political parties on the left of British politics, in particular, to re-evaluate what they stand for and how they can win back popular support in the future. Meanwhile, electoral competition between ‘young cosmopolitans’ and an ageing pro-Brexit population has highlighted divisions between younger and older voters, whilst a clear cultural divide also exists between provincial towns and big cities. Dealing with legacies of the past continues to be politically fraught, including the use and interpretation of artefacts and symbols in the public arena. New ways of doing politics and healing these divisions are sorely needed.

Internationally, divisions and transitions also characterise the liberal political cultures of the USA, France, Germany and Italy among others. In each of them is evidence of conflicting attitudes to borders and immigration, debates about protectionism and free trade, and the balancing of regionalism, nationalism and internationalism. Brexit has, more than anything, cast a spotlight on the sustainability of the European Project in general, and forced the European Union to consider how it might or must evolve in the future to accommodate the stretched social fabric of its constituent nations. Elsewhere, authoritarian regimes and populist leaderships continue to cement control in countries like Turkey and China, raising concerns over the protection of fundamental human rights as well as the fractured and fragile nature of peaceful international relations.

And, of course, recent critical junctures such as the Covid-19 pandemic and the latest Black Lives Matter campaign will have a lasting impact on all aspects of our lives and the societies in which we live, providing new challenges as well as opportunities to transition how we think about and study socio-economic organisation, democratic institutions and international governance, as well as the fundamental questions of justice and equality that provide the normative underpinnings to social scientific research.

The Political Studies Association invites contributions which interrogate, explain or explore any of these transitions and more. Abstracts should be **no more than 300 words**. Above all, this conference aims to give students of politics a chance to air new or developing research ideas, gain experience of academic presentations, and receive constructive criticism on both.

Please submit abstracts by Monday 11th January. Successful applicants will be notified by Monday 25th January.