

Call for Papers
The State of Things
Symposium Date: July 4
Deadline for abstracts: May 13

Innovation and the contestation of epistemic boundaries has never been so urgent: we believe that early-career researchers are already prepared for this political and intellectual work.

In addition to the economic precarity that defines early-career research in an increasingly inhospitable landscape of financialization in higher education, ECRs face intersectional and compounding discrimination that can be amplified by professional hierarchy. Both politics and its theorists seem unable to account for the internal contradictions they've respectively fuelled; exclusivity and elitism continue to serve the reification of the status quo in the neoliberal university. The failure of this system to fully incorporate and render ECRs docile has created a space of opportunity for us to produce critical work.

Foregrounding equality, diversity, and inclusion as an epistemological frame will make a theoretical and practical argument for the generative capacity of inclusivity. This conference interrogates the ways both the form and content of our scholarship can affect, push, and pull. What are the generative capacities of the positions from which we write?

This question is wholeheartedly indebted to a tradition of Black and postcolonial feminist thought. Audre Lorde reminds us, as academics, that difference must be taken as a crucial source of strength rather than division, and calls us to interrogate the loathing of difference that animates our fear of the other (1978/2018). bell hooks offers an engagement with difference guided by a love ethic, a core facet of which is knowledge (2000/2001). Knowledge, here, isn't an empirical gathering of data or a detached, positivist search for "truth". Guided by a love ethic, we can learn about the experiences and needs of another (hooks 2000/2001): difference becomes a terrain on which we can forge community.

The conference theme revolves around the inclusion of historically occluded perspectives: we invite both reflexive interventions on a disciplinary level and work that challenges received modes of knowledge production. Here, we follow the lead of scholars like Robbie Shilliam who have published extensively on issues of race in international relations, recently editing a conversation between a range of theorists on their experiences of studying and living through categories of race and racism (2020). Kimberly Hutchings and Patricia Owens address the exclusion of women from the history of international thought, reclaiming their work to reconstruct new intellectual histories (2021). In addition to the ethical dimension, such work leads us closer to "the *positive unconscious* of knowledge" in Foucault's words, to *The Order of Things* that structures our scholarship (1966/2003 p. xi).

When engaging with ontologies and phenomenological experiences outside one's own, whether as a "case study" or through discussion, we ask you to centre hooks' ethic of care and Lorde's commitment to accountability. There is no "pure" revolutionary subject, and the Other is not a location from which to produce critique (Bhabha 1994).

This one-day symposium will provide a forum for these discussions (and beyond), taking place virtually. There will be opportunities for synchronous feedback, discussions, and socialising.

Submissions could engage with the following questions:

- To whom, and to what issues, could the discipline of political science respond more effectively? How can we start building those pathways?
- What happens when we locate “politics” outside of the epistemic (and geographical) boundaries of “political science”?
- How can we think *with* rather than *for* the Other?
- What methodologies might afford a more collective, playful, or dynamic study of politics?

Other themes could include:

- Positionality in research
- Different ways of knowing
- Marginalised methodologies
- Challenges and opportunities around cross- or interdisciplinary work
- Boundaries between academia and other spaces
- The translation of theory into practice

All proposals should be submitted to ecn@psa.ac.uk by **May 13**. Please indicate if you wish to be considered for participation in the symposium. Proposals for individual paper presentations should include an abstract under 250 words. These will be presented as pre-recorded videos. Proposals for roundtable discussions should include a short description of the theme and a list of participants. These will take place synchronously. Proposals for panels should include abstracts for each individual paper, and the names of the chair and discussant. These can take place through pre-recorded videos or synchronously.

We hope to receive a range of innovative, exciting work, and we look forward to seeing you (in any and all capacities) this July.