**IPSA World Congress, Istanbul, July 23-28, 2016/ Open Panels/ RC33**

**Wars and the Development of the Social Sciences**

Convenor: Thibaud Boncourt (Centre Européen de Sociologie et de Science Politique (CESSP) t.boncourt@gmail.com

The “new sociology of ideas” (Charles Camic, Neil Gross) and recent approaches to the history of sciences (inspired by Bruno Latour or Pierre Bourdieu) have all insisted on the necessity to take into account the impact of non-scientific events on the development of sciences. In line with this idea, several scholars have sought to analyse the development of the social sciences in relation to political events – and, especially, conflicts. A growing number of studies have thus looked at the way in which wars led to the development of particular disciplines, the spread of some paradigms and methods, the immigration of scholars, and even the politicisation of knowledge itself. Studies have also looked at the influence of Cold War dynamics, triggering a debate about the existence of a specific “Cold War social science”.

This panel seeks to gather papers that explore the relationship between wars (Cold or not) and the development of the social sciences, at both the intellectual and social level. Together with the panel on “political regimes”, it aims to promote original studies of the influence of political factors on the history of political science and other social sciences. It welcomes contributions based on theoretical reflections and/or empirical studies of one or several social sciences disciplines. Comparative efforts taking natural sciences into account are also encouraged. Papers may be based on qualitative and/or quantitative data.

**The Politics of Political Science: Political Regimes, Power and the Discipline(s)**

Convenor: Paulo Ravecca (York University) paulorav@yorku.ca

Knowledge is entrenched in power relations. Therefore, the exploration of political science’s development becomes purposeless without the analysis of the socio-political role of the discipline. This panel gathers epistemological and empirical interventions that unpack the power dynamics within and around political science in the national or transnational milieu. At the most abstract level the question is how politics and power dynamics affect our discipline and vice versa. More concretely, the focus is on the relationship between liberalism, political regime(s) and political science. Thus, together with the panel on “war and the development of social sciences" this session will offer innovative perspectives on the political dimension of social science in general, and political science in particular. Studies of national cases, comparative analyses and theoretical reflections will be accepted. Critical theory based approaches are particularly welcomed.

**Objectifying the Subject: Reflections on the Nature of the Study of Political Science in Africa**

# Convenor: Joleen Steyn Kotze ((Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University) joleensteynkotze@gmail.com

A key academic activity of political scientists is reflecting on what we do: the growth of political science as a discipline, its strengths and weaknesses, its relevance to a broader public, how we conduct our trade through different methodological and epistemological approaches, and a measured impact we are able to make through our work. We reflect on competing political science communities, very often highlighting methodological and epistemological differentiations as diverse regions may have developed unique regional characteristics that relates to the study of the political in specific contexts. Within these competing political science communities, there seems to be lack of reflection and engagement on African political science. While Africa is very often the subject of many studies within a diverse range of sub-disciplines within political sciences, we, as Africans, have not really reflected on African political science as an object of enquiry. Can we speak of an African political science? How do we characterize African political science? What of the relevance on African political science? And, what of epistemology and research that make a real impact on advancing an African agenda? This panel invites contributions that seeks to develop a reflection on African political science, its character, role and relevance in an African context, but its position within the global political science community.

**The Use of Literature in the Study of Politics**

Convenor: [Richard Gbemudia](https://istanbul2016.ipsa.org/profile/mr-richard-gbemudia-university-ibadan-agege-nigeria) (University of Ibadan)  
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This panel examines how Literature can be used in the study of politics. Political Science as an academic discipline within the Social Sciences is concerned with the systematic study and analysis of politics with the aim to explain and predict political phenomenon. Disciplines within the Arts and Social Sciences are not fully taken cognizance of in the study of politics therefore questioning the interdisciplinary nature of the discipline. In the discourse and analysis of politics, literature as a discipline helps in the understanding and explanation of political phenomenon as literary works are written within different circumstances and writers are influenced by these circumstances. Writers such as George Orwell, Chinua Achebe, Athol Fugard, Charles Dickens, Wole Soyinka have been influenced by the socio political conditions of their environments and this has reflected on their writings. Relating Literature to the study of Politics is not a paradigmatic shift, but rather an extension of an interdisciplinary strategy for parsing complex problems. The methodological rigor praised by Political Science can be blended with the open-endedness characterizing literary studies. Hence, through the reading of literary works different aspects of politics can be understood which will in turn enhance the explanation, understanding and the prediction of political phenomenon.