

Europe's Political and Economic Crisis: Still Thinking with Arendt?

Workshop hosted by the Centres for Advanced International Theory and Global Political Economy, and the Leverhulme Project on Women and the History of International Thought
University of Sussex

May 25, 2018
[Jubilee Building 115](#)

Background

This one-day workshop seeks to place the European Union's political and economic crisis in international and historical context, with an emphasis on political economy and its relation to the conceptual frameworks within which the EU operates. The event is part of series of initiatives aimed at understanding the current political and economic crisis of the European Union through a critique of the EU's "competitiveness, jobs and growth" narrative, drawing on the thought of German-American political thinker, Hannah Arendt. Funded through the Joint Research Centre at the European Commission, the project is led by Nicole Dewandre, an in-house researcher at the European Commission, with expert advice from Professors' Patricia Owens (Sussex), Lars Rensmann (Groningen), and Jonathan Charteris-Black (UWE, Bristol).

In a two-day [workshop in Brussels](#) in November 2018, Nicole Dewandre presented a series of ideas/papers proposing 1) that the crisis of the EU can be analyzed as a misuse of metaphors (Dewandre and Gulyás, 2017). This contributes to the EU's loss of connection with both reality and meaning; and 2) that Hannah Arendt's political thought provides a conceptual framework that may help to overcome these problems. Drawing on Arendt, Dewandre (2018) has developed a different discourse and set of metaphors around a notion of EU citizens as 'relational selves'. This alternative conceptual framework, she argues, 'opens a path for a subtle but radical and far-reaching shift in policy orientations across policy areas'.

The purpose of the Sussex workshop is to explore the underlying relations of political economy that help to generate and reproduce troubling conceptual frameworks and metaphors in EU policy. Participants will discuss whether and how the "competitiveness, jobs and growth" narrative, and associated metaphors, is related to a particular way of organising global economy and what this means for a project of reconceptualization. The discourse of neoliberal economics is at the core of the EU's crisis of political legitimacy. Does there need to be a concomitant transformation of the underlying political economy on which existing discourses and metaphors are based if citizens and policy-makers are to understand themselves as 'relational selves'? Might there be untapped resources within Arendt's thought to engage in a more powerful critique of neoliberal governmentality that could be inserted into debates within the Commission via Nicole's Dewandre work and initiatives within the EU bureaucracy itself.

The workshop participants are experts in the fields of global political economy, sociology, philosophy, and international relations history and theory. Participants have been asked to speak for 10 minutes in response to the workshop theme, as two essays by Dewandre (including one co-authored by Orsolya Gulyas, also of the European Commission); and a short literature review compiled by Klemens Huber (2018).

Workshop Schedule

10.00 Tea/coffee

10.30 Introductory remarks

Patricia Owens, Nicole Dewandre

11.00 - Session 1 - Situating the EU's conceptual framework within neoliberal economy

Earl Gammon, Andreas Antoniadis, Nicole Dewandre

12.15pm - LUNCH

1.15pm - Session 2 - Hannah Arendt and the critique of political economy

Kim Hutchings, Philip Walsh, Patricia Owens

2.30pm - COFFEE

3.00pm - Session 3 - Thinking the EU differently

Kalypto Nicolaidis, Andrea Cornwall, Orsolya Gulyas

4.15pm - Concluding discussion, next steps

Nicole Dewandre, Patricia Owens

5.00pm - Seminar Ends

6.30pm - Dinner at [Mange Tout](#), 81 Trafalgar Street, Brighton, BN1 4EB

Participant biographies

[Andreas Antoniadis](#), Senior Lecturer in International Relations and Development, University of Sussex

[Andrea Cornwall](#), Professor of Global Development and Anthropology, University of Sussex

[Nicole Dewandre](#), Advisor, Joint Research Centre, European Commission

[Earl Gammon](#), Lecturer in Global Political Economy, University of Sussex

[Orsolya Gulyas](#), Advisor, Joint Research Centre, European Commission

[Klemens Huber](#), Doctoral researcher in International Relations, University of Sussex

[Kimberley Hutchings](#), Professor of Politics and International Relations, Queen Mary, London

[Kalypto Nicolaidis](#), Professor of International Relations, University of Oxford

[Patricia Owens](#), Professor of International Relations, University of Sussex

[Philip Walsh](#), Associate Professor of Sociology, York University, Toronto

Directions

A map of campus and directions of how to get to Jubilee Building can be found [here](#). The workshop will be in room 115.

References

Nicole Dewandre and Orsolya Gulyás (2017) Critical Metaphor Analysis of Metaphor Analysis of EU Policy Documents between 1985-2014

Nicole Dewandre (2018) 'Beyond Jobs, Growth, and Crisis: Rethinking EU Politics and Policy-Making with Hannah Arendt', *Philosophy Today* (forthcoming special issue on 'Arendt in the Present')

Klemens Huber (2018) 'Literature review of Hannah Arendt and economics in a European context'