



European  
Sociological  
Association

**CPERN**  
The Critical Political Economy Research Network

## **ESA RN06 - Critical Political Economy Research Network (CPERN) Biennial report for 2019-2021**

Within the political economy academic community in Europe and beyond, CPERN has established itself as one of the most central platforms for promoting and discussing critical political economy perspectives and facilitating research aimed at understanding recent transformations of capitalism and capitalist societies.

CPERN consists of a lively community of scholars and activists in Europe and beyond and currently counts over 3500 Facebook members, nearly 2500 followers on Twitter and 1500 subscribers to its mailing list. CPERN members can use the various social media channels for scholarly exchanges, announcing new articles and books, as well as calls for papers, job openings, PhD positions or research funding opportunities. The CPERN board seeks to keep the mailing list and Facebook postings as non-intrusive as possible by ensuring that social media is exclusively used for and by CPERN members, rather than commercial publishers or conference organisers.

In the period 2019-2021, the Critical Political Economy Research Network (CPERN) has organised a range of successful conferences and panel sessions.

### **CPERN Board 2021-2024 (all board members continue in post from the previous board, 2019-21)**

**Chair:** David J. Bailey, Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Birmingham, UK  
**Vice-chair:** Yuliya Yurchenko, Senior Lecturer in Political Economy, University of Greenwich

#### **Board Members:**

**Bernd Bonfert**, Cardiff University  
**Alona Lyasheva**, Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv  
**Owen Worth**, Senior Lecturer, University of Limerick

### **Advisory Board 2019-2021**

- Monica Clua Losada (The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, USA)
- Bastiaan van Apeldoorn (VU University Amsterdam, the Netherlands)

- Dorothee Bohle (Central European University, Hungary)
- Ian Bruff (University of Manchester, UK)
- Jan Drahokoupil (University of Mannheim, Germany)
- Eva Hartmann (University of Lausanne, Switzerland)
- Laura Horn (Roskilde University, Denmark)
- Martijn Konings (University of Sydney, Australia)
- Phoebe V. Moore (University of Leicester)
- Magnus Ryner (Oxford Brookes University, UK)
- Susanne Soederberg (Queen's University, Canada)
- Angela Wigger (Radboud University, the Netherlands)

### Activities 2019-2021

#### **CPERN Mid-Term Workshop**

CPERN organised the Mid-Term Workshop, titled “What’s Next? Critical Political Economy at the End of Neoliberalism?” from 19 to 20 June 2020. This was initially planned to take place at the University of Limerick, but due to Covid-19 it was moved online and took place via zoom (see our Call for Papers below).

The workshop included 62 papers, organized into 17 sessions.

#### **What’s Next? Critical Political Economy at the End of Neoliberalism?**

**CPERN mid-term workshop – Call for Papers [now closed]**

**Friday 19 – Saturday 20 June 2020**

**University of Limerick, Ireland**

**For some, the rise of a populist-nativist political turn represents the end of neoliberalism. Certainly, the period of neoliberal growth has come to an end. This raises the question: what’s next, and what will the (next) crisis of neoliberalism look like? This depends as much on current developments as it does on what has happened in the past. These crisis tendencies are many. Whilst economic growth in many Western countries has come to a standstill, climate disasters have intensified in large parts of the globe, geopolitical tensions have peaked, and millions of lives have been disrupted by everyday crises of social reproduction and racialised violence. These are not isolated events; they are interconnected and mutually reinforcing.**

**It is, therefore, a matter of urgency for Critical Political Economy to theorize and chart the current conjuncture of global capitalism as the neoliberal period appears to be coming to an end, to explain where we are headed and to point towards social, economic and ecological alternatives. In short, we need to understand what crises we are in, what crises are still ahead of us, and what we can do to resolve and pre-empt them. We need a critical political economy for the end of neoliberalism.**

Conventional economics is unable to answer these questions. It has tried, and failed, to grasp the extent of capitalism and its crises, due largely to its inability (and often unwillingness) to consider or conceptualise capitalist relations in their fullest sense. Yet, capitalism cannot be understood without grasping the fundamental dynamics which constitute it: economic accumulation, social reproduction, environmental extraction, and forced dispossession based on gender, race and nationality (amongst other categories). The often compartmentalised ontologies, methodologies and resulting epistemologies of mainstream social sciences prevent scholars from capturing this complexity. We are left without an understanding of the causes, dynamics and implications of the multiple contemporary crises of capitalism.

We invite scholars and activists from across the field of critical political economy to contribute to the next CPERN mid-term workshop, where we will consider: **What's Next? Critical Political Economy at the End of Neoliberalism?**

We are especially keen for papers that address the following themes:

**The crisis of neoliberalism:** Are we seeing a crisis of (authoritarian) neoliberalism? What is driving this crisis? How should we conceptualise these crisis tendencies? What changes do they prompt? To what extent is this leading to a further erosion of democracy and a consolidation of authoritarianism? To what extent, and with what effect, are we witnessing the end of neoliberalism, and what is the post-neoliberal trajectory?

**Economic policy at the end of neoliberalism.** 'Normal' economic policy seems to have ended. Ultra-loose monetary policy seemingly has no end in sight. Public debt is both problematised and accepted as necessary. New innovations in industrial policy, a Green New Deal, and suggestions of a return to redistribution, all appear to be on the agenda. All of this raises the question of what economic policy looks like at the end of neoliberalism.

**Environmental crisis:** How does capitalism affect our planet? What are the implications of the destruction of our eco-systems? What do alternatives to unsustainable growth look like? Can environmental crises transcend capitalism?

**The role (and crisis) of social reproduction:** How do we understand social reproduction in our current end times of neoliberalism? Critical political economy has often neglected the sphere of social reproduction, but lately has begun to pay great attention. Why? And how successful have we been?

**Exclusions/otherings:** What are the gendered and racialized dimensions of contemporary global capitalism? How have neoliberal pressures towards individual competition and self-optimization altered people's mental well-being? What impact does austerity have on the availability of care?

**Resistance and Alternatives:** How, if at all, are both resistance and everyday struggles for survival putting neoliberalism at risk? How, if at all, can social struggle, resistance, and/or social movements play a part in shaping the post-neoliberal future?

We are interested in all of the above, and more, and wish for the workshop to cover a wide range of topics. We welcome scholars and activists with an interest in critical political economy, from a variety of

countries, social backgrounds, and disciplinary affiliations, regardless of whether they are in academia or not. We are particularly committed to promoting the participation of PhD students, early career scholars, and activists. Limited funds will be available for scholars and activists in precarious situations (who cannot get other sources of funding) to support travel and accommodation costs. Please inform us if you may require help with funding when you send us your abstract.

There is no fee for attending the workshop. The conference language will be English.

Abstracts of around 250 words should be submitted to [cpern@criticalpoliticaleconomy.net](mailto:cpern@criticalpoliticaleconomy.net) by 31 January 2020.

We hope that you will find this Call interesting – please also share with colleagues and students who might not yet be part of the CPERN community!

Feel free to contact us if you have any questions regarding this Call, or the conference in general.

Many thanks,

The CPERN Board

David Bailey, Bernd Bonfert, Alona Lyasheva, Owen Worth, Yuliya Yurchenko

The Critical Political Economy Research Network is Research Network 06 of the European Sociological Association.

### **Early Career Scholar Writing Workshop**

On the day before the 2020 CPERN workshop we held a writing workshop for early career scholars (PhD students and recently completed PhDs). This was an opportunity for those working on attempts to secure their first publication. Participants were paired with a more established scholar in the field of critical political economy, in order to receive detailed feedback with the goal of facilitating the writing and publication process.

The workshop included papers given by 9 early career scholars, with several of the papers included in the workshop already having gone on to be published in journals, including in *Globalizations* and *Industrial Relations Journal*.

### **CPERN Monthly Online Workshops**

As part of adapting to the pandemic and lockdowns, we began to hold monthly CPERN workshops on the zoom platform. The first one took place in January 2021, and are now ongoing. During the 2019-21 period, the following monthly workshops took place:

January 2021 *A Critical Political Economy of the Populist Right, After Trump?*

Owen Worth (University of Limerick), Mònica Clua-Losada (University of Texas – Rio Grande Valley), Yuliya Yurchenko (University of Greenwich)

February 2021 *A critical political economy of the European Union under covid capitalism*

Laura Horn (Roskilde University), Muireann O'Dwyer (University of St. Andrews), Etienne Schneider (University Vienna)

March 2021 *A critical political economy of disruption and resistance*

Alke Jenss (Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institut), Clemence Fourton (Sciences Po Lille), Nikolai Huke (University of Kiel), Alona Lyasheva (Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv)

April 2021 *Neoliberal transformations and the state, before and after Covid*

Adriano Cozzolino (University of Campania "L. Vanvitelli"), Davide Monaco (University of Manchester), Aleksandra Piletić (University of Amsterdam)

May 2021 *Comparing (covid) capitalisms: forefronting crises, conflicts and contradictions in critical political economy*

Ian Bruff (University of Manchester), Reecia Orzeck (Illinois State University), Jana Bacevic (Durham University)

June 2021 *Climate Catastrophe and the Capitalist State*

Andrea Brock (University of Sussex), Oscar Berglund (University of Bristol), Madelaine Moore (Bielefeld University)

July 2021 *Covid responses and the threat to Higher Education (co-hosted with EAEPE, SASE, ESA CPERN, BISA IPEG, and IIPPE)*

Charlie Dannreuther (Leeds University), Henry Giroux (McMaster University), Laura Horn (Roskilde University), Sam Dallyn (Leicester Business School)

## **ESA Biennial Conference 2021**

The CPERN call for papers for the ESA Biennial Conference in Barcelona/Zoom, held from 31 August to 3 September 2021, was sent out under the title *Covid Capitalism: advancing critical political economy, accelerating progressive alternatives*. See below the CfPs. We included 81 papers, organized in 22 sessions (including the Business Meeting). We also co-hosted one of the semi-plenaries, Semi-Plenary 02: "Alternative Futures Beyond Neoliberalism: Inside and Outside of the European Union", at which Toni Hastrup and Angela Wigger spoke.

**Covid Capitalism: advancing critical political economy, accelerating progressive alternatives (RN06)**

**European Sociological Association (ESA) Conference in Barcelona, 31 August – 3 September 2021, Barcelona.**

**The contradictory and destructive tendencies of capitalism have landed the world in the Covid-19 pandemic and saddled it with the worst recession in living memory. More than ever, we need a critical political economy that can both ask questions of, and provide answers to, global capitalism's doomed project for humanity; while also addressing the failure of conventional social sciences to grasp the complexity of our global crises.**

**This catastrophic fiasco of productivist capitalism is set against (and reinforces) the backdrop of our broken planetary metabolism.**

**Global capitalism's contradictions are now evident to all. They already invoke political, social and economic reactions – albeit in sometimes contradictory forms. From proposals for a Green New Deal to Extinction Rebellion, Black Lives Matter, and the Women's Strike.**

**In academic and political spheres, alternative epistemologies and praxes are sought, with desperation, frustration and zeal. To transform (re)production processes, we require a rethinking of our economic models. We need alternative models of care to the racialized, sexed, gendered, and classed provisions that crumbled under the COVID context.**

**Overlapping forms of poverty and indebtedness – including of time, digital resources, fuel, transport, and finance – have combined with unemployment and a lack of healthcare to define a world that can be either won or lost. We see opportunities for both our emancipatory visions and for a far right politics of hate.**

**It is in this historic opportunity that we seek a critical political economy that will accelerate the momentum of progressive movements and contribute towards the production of an ecosocialist world built on principles of deep sustainability – economic, social and environmental. And in doing so, negate the productivism of capitalism and its intrinsically racialized, sexed and gendered discrimination.**

**We especially (but not exclusively) invite abstracts on:**

**Theorising Covid capitalism**

**Capitalism and the climate crises**

**Are we there yet? The Greatest Recession to come?**

**Understanding the financial rescue(s), the lack thereof, and the impact of “QE infinity”**

**Alternative epistemologies for alternative political economies**

**Dissent and resistance under Covid Capitalism**

**Gender, sex, care and the household during and after “the lockdown”**

**Isolation, psychological health crisis, cities/slums**

**Transforming production and globalised exploitation**

**Beyond a Global South and North**

**We are interested in all of the above plus more, and wish for the conference to cover a wide range of topics. As such, we seek contributions from scholars and activists with an interest in political economy research, regardless of their disciplinary affiliation and whether they are in academia or not. We also hope to attract a diverse range of participants, from a variety of countries and backgrounds.**

**Notes for contributors**

**Deadline for submissions: 15 February 2021**

**Abstract submission is OPEN!**

**[CPERN Website](#), [Mailing list](#), [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#)**

CPERN thrives through its active and inspiring community of scholars and activists, collaborations with other organisations and welcomes future cooperation with other ESA Research Networks. All the CPERN activities are communicated through the **[website](#), [mailing list](#)**, our **[Facebook](#)** page, or **[Twitter](#)**.

We currently count more than 3500 Facebook members, nearly 2500 followers on Twitter and 1500 subscribers to our mailing list. CPERN members can use the various social media channels for scholarly exchanges, announcing new articles and books, as well as calls for papers, job openings, PhD positions or research funding opportunities. The CPERN board seeks to keep the mailing list and Facebook postings as non-intrusive as possible by ensuring that social media is exclusively used for and by CPERN members, rather than commercial publishers or conference organisers.

### **Publications**

CPERN editorial board co-authored a publication in the European Sociologist, titled: 'Covid-19, Critical Political Economy, and the End of Neoliberalism?'. This can be found here: <https://www.europeansociologist.org/issue-45-pandemic-impossibilities-vol-1/political-economy-and-politics-covid-19-critical-political>

### **Finance**

For the 2019 period, we were allocated received €2.660 euros from the ESA - €2.000 generic support, of the ESA 2018 grant and €660 from the RN membership fees.

The funding we had received from the ESA was transferred directly to the University of Greenwich.

Due to Covid-19 there was less need for spending and so most of the money was spent on supporting registration costs for those on low incomes or without institutional support, for attendance at the 2021 ESA conference (RN06 stream participants).

The breakdown of spending is as follows:

| <i>Income</i> | <i>Expenditure</i>                               |
|---------------|--|
| €2660         | £1288.74 ESA registration costs (9 participants) |
|               | £99 CPERN website hosting costs                  |
|               | TOTAL: € 1,619.75/£1387.74                       |
| Balance:      | €1040.25 (in credit)                             |



As we have two mid-term workshops scheduled before the next ESA conference (due to the extended cycle by one year), we can use this remaining credit to help fund attendance at the next two mid-term workshops.