

The 2019 Annual Scientific Meeting of the International Society of Political Psychology
Empowering citizens in illiberal times:
The political psychology of oppression and resistance

Where: Intercontinental Hotel, Lisbon, Portugal

When: 12-15 July 2019

President: David P. Redlawsk (University of Delaware)

Conference Program Co-Chairs: Angie Bos (College of Wooster), Shelley McKeown Jones (University of Bristol)

Submission Deadline: 1 December 2018

As we come close to concluding the second decade of the 21st century, challenges to liberal democratic order have become a defining political feature. While non-democratic states have never disappeared, there seemed an inexorable march toward liberal democracy (at least in the “west”) following the end of the US/Soviet Cold War. Recent events, however, have challenged that: authoritarian populist leaders have been democratically elected in a number of countries, leading to potential reversals of liberal democratic ideology. The irony, perhaps, is that democracy itself has sown the seeds that have flowered into illiberal times.

Leaders around the world are demonizing intellectual elites in service of authoritarian populism. Academics in Turkey who have asserted academic freedom have been arrested, tried, and convicted of subverting the state and supporting terrorism. In Hungary, a concerted attack on a western-oriented University continues. Similar stories are playing out around the world, including in the United States, where academics are often under siege from both the extreme right, and the extreme left.

This environment leads to challenging questions for political psychologists, not just about the academic freedom we cherish, but about underlying issues relating to nationalism and identity, the appeal of authoritarianism in unsettled times, and the very nature of what populism is and how it has been used. Exclusionary attitudes toward the “other” seem to represent a clear repudiation of liberal democracy and pluralism; understanding the wellsprings and consequences of these attitudes seems paramount.

At the same time, while the populist backlash seems to be on the rise, many groups and individuals are challenging oppression, and speaking out. In the United States and beyond, #BlackLivesMatter and #MeToo have been prominent examples, among many others, demonstrating the power of collective voice and of social media. In January 2017, an estimated 7 million people participated in the Women’s March, with more than 650 marches worldwide. And there have been coordinated efforts at both elite and mass levels to stymie the election of more populist leaders in efforts to resist the wave.

The effects of social media and worldwide communications, then, may work both ways: allowing authoritarians to find their audience, but supporting collective action in resistance. Political psychologists can and must speak to these critical issues at this important moment in history, as well as join forces in pursuit of political and academic freedom. We are particularly interested in papers on collective resistance, individual factors that predict protest, social identity, and group consciousness as mobilizing forces, within these contexts. We seek to recognize and understand both the academic and social realities of our times.

We invite you to participate in the 2019 ISPP Annual Scientific Meeting in Lisbon, Portugal. The ISPP Annual Meeting brings together scholars across disciplines and epistemologies using a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches. The conference goal is to engage with new research from psychology, political science, sociology, economics,

anthropology, biology, geography, communication, history, philosophy, and other disciplines. Proposals for traditional panel papers are welcome, as are proposals for symposia, roundtables, blitz presentations and posters on any topic in political psychology, in addition to the theme described above

We wish to bring about an inclusive and enriching intellectual exchange between political psychologists from different backgrounds in order to reach a better understanding of the dynamics of society and politics in the world today, to outline possible societal change, and to discuss how political psychologists can contribute to such change.