**EWIS 2022 Call for Workshop Papers: Role-playing Games and World Politics**

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The study of popular culture and world politics (PCWP) has become an integral subfield of world politics and international relations. Despite the increased attention to the construction and representation of politics in cultural outputs like movies and television series, the media of role-playing games has so far been largely neglected in the field. At the same time, role-playing games have become a prominent part of popular culture, calling for research on the representation of politics in and through them. This EWIS workshop seeks to amend this omission, gathering together researchers interested in the politics of all types of role-playing games within IR and fields beyond it.

In its traditional table-top form, roleplaying games offer a particularly interesting object of study for PCWP research. Here, the narrative framing of the game material and (possible) guidance by the game master interacts with the participatory storytelling of the players. A similar interactive process defines live-action role-playing games, where players play out the events based on material (usually) produced by the game writers, in a setting prepared to support the playing experience. Even digital roleplaying games, perhaps the form closest to more traditional media of popular culture, have their own immersive, player-defined viewpoint that makes them different from other digital games studied in the field of PCWP.  Combined, these types of games provide for several novel points of views for PCWP studies.

Political representations and imaginaries in role-playing games have become an increasingly important source that shapes the socio-political world. Topics like the reproduction of racist stereotypes through fantasy races, presentation of political utopias and dystopias in game worlds, and the representation of political action, oppression, and resistance in politically themed games all demonstrate the power of the media to influence people’s understanding of politics. Role-playing games also interact with wider popular culture through the imaginaries within roleplaying game material that can become politicized and adopted by political movements. This can be seen, for example, in the way how far-right movements have re-appropriated the (originally satirical and dystopian) aesthetic of Warhammer 40k as idolized images that are used in internet memes. The imaginaries of role-playing games are an essential part of today’s popular culture, requiring research that recognises their unique characteristics as an interactive, participatory, and immersive form of media.

The workshop invites contributions that study digital, table-top, or live-action role-playing games on a wide range of themes, including – but not limited to:

* Representation of political systems in role-playing games
* Imaginaries of power relations like oppression and resistance in role-playing games
* How cultural conditions of role-playing games render world politics sensible and legitimate (or insensible and illegitimate)
* Political critique and satire in role-playing games
* Politics of aesthetics and visuality in role-playing games
* Postcolonial, Feminist, and Queer perspectives in role-playing games
* The politics of racialization in role-playing games
* The use of role-playing games in political praxis (e.g. war gaming and crisis simulation)
* The embodied experience of playing role-playing games
* The interconnections of game studies and PCWP through role-playing games