

Call for Papers, EWIS 2023, Amsterdam, 12-14 July

Existentialist Explorations in IR

Conveners: Maja T. Greenwood, Edinburgh University, and Bahar Rumelili, Koç University.

This workshop gathers prospective contributors around developing an edited volume on existentialist approaches to international politics. It builds on the section on “Political Existentialism: Fear, Anxiety and Freedom in the face of the Apocalypse”, co-organized by Uriel Abulof and Bahar Rumelili in EISA-PEC 2022 conference in Athens. Existentialist approaches foreground the distinct features of our humanness, namely the existential anxieties that stem from our living in awareness of our mortality and in search of meaning for our existence, and studies their reflections in domestic and international politics. The edited volume is developed for publication in the Frontiers in International Relations (FIR) Springer book series.

Interest in Existentialism and its implications for politics has been growing in recent years leading to the formation of an emerging research agenda in IR producing insights that warrant deeper exploration. Specifically, IR scholars have paid increasing attention to how existentialist concepts such as subjectivity, anxiety, freedom, time, and mortality influence and even shape how we think and talk about world politics. In this workshop, we seek to further the development of an existentialist framework and research agenda framework for exploring how distinct features of our humanness condition the responses of individuals, groups, and states to all areas of political life. We invite papers that theoretically and empirically assess whether, why and how existentialism may offer a fresh agenda for political science. As the existentialist canon includes foundational feminist and post-colonial work such as that of Simone de Beauvoir and Frantz Fanon, it provides a resource for challenging and diversifying IR and we particularly welcome contributions highlighting the work and influence of non-Western, feminist, and queer thinkers. We welcome contributions from scholars at all stages in their career that explore themes including but not limited to:

- How insights from existentialism provide ways of finding meaning in crises and anxiety
- What it means to be authentic, and how to act authentically in a post-truth society
- How to think about responsibility and care in a time of pandemics, environmental catastrophes, and nuclear threats
- How political existentialism intersect with the construction of various issues as risks, threats, and dangers, the constitution of various actors as subjects of security
- How existentialism may provide ways to help liberalism out of its current impasse
- How authenticity and meaning provide strategies to rethink concepts and theories
- How anxiety and existential crisis facilitate extremist worldviews and mobilization
- How ontological (in)security intersect with existential uncertainty and fear
- When and how political leadership have faced existential moments by turning to determinism, fatalism, and essentialism to avoid existential ambiguity and choice
- Existentialist methodological and conceptual paths to study lived political experiences

Submission deadline: 5 February 2023, <https://eisa-net.org/ewis-2023/> Please address questions to: Maja Touzari Greenwood, mtjg@diis.dk