



# SPIRe Newsletter

Autumn / Winter 2023



After another eventful semester, with colleagues involved in the founding conference of the Political Economy of Aid Society, a public event on Mechanisms for Inclusive Dialogue in Peacebuilding, a conference on election campaigns and democratic norms, a public speaker on Uyghurs in China, and a conference on Gendered Dimensions of Hunger in Peacebuilding, it is an exciting time to provide you with the next edition of the SPIRe Newsletter. The student Politics and International Relations Society also provides a range of updates in this issue. We hope you enjoy this issue and look forward to staying in touch with you in future!

## New adjunct staff



SPIRe is delighted to welcome John Bell, the European Commission's "Healthy Planet" Director leading

research and innovation policy transitions on Climate Change, Bioeconomy, Food Systems, Environment, Biodiversity, Water, Circular Economy, Oceans and the European Green Deal, as Adjunct Full Professor in the school. We will greatly benefit from his expertise in an advisory capacity to the school and its research centres, as well as for guest lectures. We look forward to seeing promising research collaboration come to fruition in the coming years.

## Agonistic transitional justice

Emma Murphy defended her thesis on agonistic transitional justice on the 29th of September. Transitional justice, which includes a range of mechanisms such as trials and truth commissions designed to address a legacy of conflict, has historically been rooted in liberal peacebuilding principles. Despite critiques of this liberal approach, it has remained the dominant paradigm in transitional justice, due in part to arguments that there is no viable alternative. Emma's thesis refutes this claim by demonstrating the global empirical presence of an agonistic transitional justice in Northern Ireland, Colombia, and Uganda. The agonistic approach, which focuses on embracing contestation and multiplicity rather than trying to work towards consensus, offers a new model for institutional design in transitional justice; this agonistic model requires a

focus on diverse identity facets such as gender and provides a distinct approach to fostering gendered inclusion in transitional justice. Based on original interview data and archival analysis in the three cases, the study shows how agonistic transitional justice takes shape globally.



## Political Economy of Aid Society

From October 12-15, Samuel Brazys, Krishna Vadlamannati and Supriya Garikipati hosted the first annual meeting of the Political Economy of Aid Society (PEAS) at UCD. The event, supported by the Irish Research Council, SPIRe, and the UCD Center for Sustainable Development Studies attracted a mix of over 30 academic and policy experts to UCD for two days of discussion on current issues and research in the political economy of foreign aid. 12 participants then joined Samuel Brazys for a book workshop on his manuscript-in-



## Connected\_Politics lab meeting

On 1 December, faculty members, PhD students, and postdoctoral researchers involved in the Connected\_Politics Lab met to discuss their research projects and challenges. Nine PhD students and postdocs presented their progress and discussed substantive and methodological questions related to their social science projects and methodological approaches. The projects ranged from narratives in speeches on environmental politics, to higher education policy, politicians' responsiveness to local and national economic conditions, and the measurement of narratives in newspaper articles. The event was followed by a meet-up of faculty and students involved in the PhD programme in Quantitative and Computational Social Science at the UCD University Club.

progress, "The Invisible Handout: Aid, Trade and Unfinished Globalization." A great time was had by all, and participants are already looking forward to the 2nd Annual Meeting, scheduled for Zurich in June, 2024.

## EU-Korea security cooperation

As part of a joint project with the Korean Society for Contemporary European Studies, several European and Korean scholars were brought together for a project to assess the state of EU-Korea relations and write a series of papers. A European and a Korean scholar were paired across a number of policy fields to outline respective policies, to assess the current state of bilateral cooperation and to discuss opportunities for future collaboration.



Ben Tonra and Sea Won Chung (National University of Korea) collaborated to write on security policy. In their article "EU-Korea security cooperation: a new normative partnership?" which was published in the November 2023 issue of the Asia Europe Journal, the authors assessed

the accelerating diplomatic and security ties between the EU and Korea since the two formally launched their 'strategic partnership' in 2010. The paper asked three questions: first, what is the current shape of EU-Korea security cooperation; second, how is this cooperation developing and third, what is the future potential of this cooperation. In so doing, the paper revisited bilateral security cooperation with a focus on how shared normative ideas (inter alia democracy, rule of



law, commitment to multilateral institutions) are the bedrock of their bilateral relations. In the study, they identified the two partners as having an especially strong shared commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, human rights and cybersecurity. As the Union has focused increasingly on the strategic importance of the Indo-Pacific Area, and Korea strengthens its global engagement with like-minded partners, there is tremendous - if challenging - potential for increased security cooperation in an era of escalating geopolitical tension.

## Gendered dimensions of conflict and violence

As part of her Irish Research Council-funded project on the Gendered Dimensions of Hunger in Peacebuilding, Caitriona Dowd welcomed research partners from the Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation (CSV) in Johannesburg to Dublin in November. The project's Liezelle Kumalo delivered a seminar in conjunction with the UCD Centre for Peace and



Conflict Research, sharing findings from a recent cross-national project exploring survivor-centred justice and accountability. Naledi Joyi delivered a seminar in conjunction with the UCD Centre for Sustainable Development Studies, drawing on a recently concluded project in South Africa. She discussed issues of access, ethics and power in relation to gender-based violence.

More information on the project:

[www.genderhungerpeace.com](http://www.genderhungerpeace.com)

## Inclusive dialogue

The public event, Mechanisms for Inclusive Dialogue in Peacebuilding, presented findings from the Talk4Peace research project focused on issues of inclusivity and transformative approaches in peace mediation. The seminar brought together researchers and practitioners to discuss the shifting landscape of international peace mediation in response to the increasing complexity of contemporary conflict. Keynote



speakers were Thania Paffenholz (CEO of Inclusive Peace), Bronagh Hinds (co-founder of the Northern Ireland Women's Coalition), and Walt Kilroy (Dublin City University). This event was organised in collaboration with the UCD Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies.

## UCD Politics and International Relations Society



## Career Pathways in International Politics

On October 11th, the society teamed up with UCD Careers Network to highlight the variety of career paths for UCD Politics students. The society was joined by Pól O'Gradaigh from the

European Commission, Elisha Duddy a former Schuman Trainee, Michelle Coen from UCD Careers Network, and our very own Vincent Durac on behalf of SPIRe. Student feedback to the society following the event was incredibly positive, and is testament to the variety of interests amongst both undergraduates and postgraduates within SPIRe.

## Women in Politics Panel

The society hosted a Women in Politics panel discussion on October 18th, with a variety of guests including Deputy Louise O'Reilly, Deputy Verona Murphy, and Deputy Marian Harkin amongst others. The panel discussed the experiences of women in politics, and provided advice for students who may hope to enter the

political sphere. The society makes an effort to continuously highlight timely and pressing topics within politics, and hope to continue highlighting groups underrepresented within the political system.

Society to host the Japanese Ambassador to Ireland, Maruyama Norio, as he graciously visited UCD. Ambassador Maruyama provided fantastic insight into the diplomatic work carried out by the embassy, and

## Fiscal policy

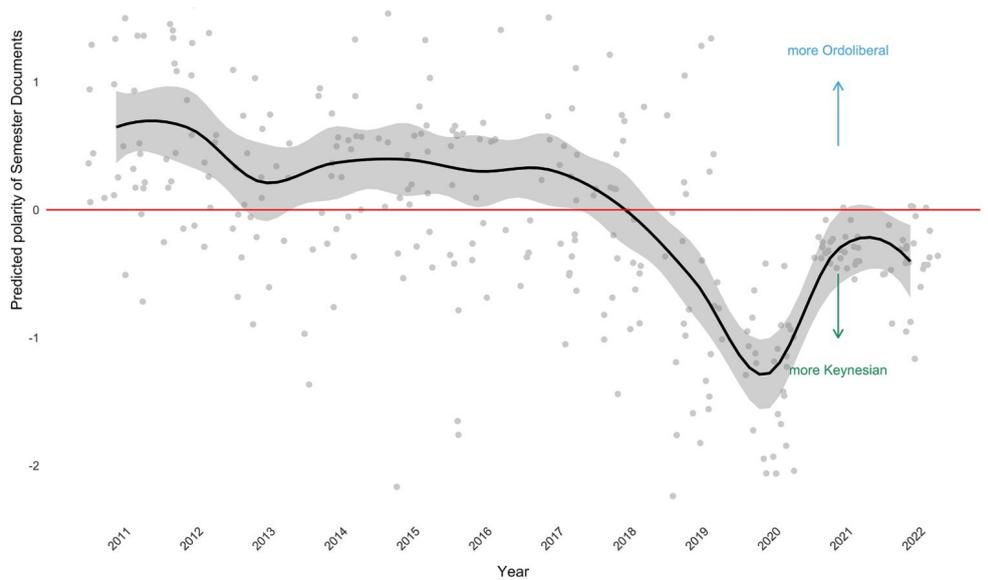
Rachel Graham recently finished a Masters in Public Policy in UCD and completed a thesis on EU fiscal policy and economic ideology using quantitative text analysis methods. The thesis ended up being published in a peer-reviewed journal, in collaboration with SPIRe colleague Martijn Schoonvelde (who since then moved to the University of Groningen) and Marij Swinkels. The research findings demonstrate a gradual shift in ideas from an ordoliberal to a Keynesian direction, especially during the overlapping Von der Leyen and Covid-19 crisis years. Their results underscore the reactive nature of the Commission's economic ideology; crises, as well as member states' economic conditions, shape the direction of its fiscal policy recommendations.



## Gearing Up to the US Elections

In collaboration with SPIRe, on November 8th the society held an event providing insight into the upcoming US elections. Coordinated by Joseph Lacey, a panel consisting of Susan Herbst from University of Connecticut, Carole Coleman of RTE, and SPIRe's own Graham Finlay discussed the most pressing issues for the US elections. The event was a huge success and the society looks forward to many more such collaborations with SPIRe!

commended the society's ongoing efforts to highlight various aspects of the political world.



## Talk with the Ambassador of Japan

On November 20th, the society collaborated with UCD Japanese



## Uyghurs in China

On December 5th the UCD Centre for Asia-Pacific Research, which is housed in SPIRe, hosted an event evaluating the repression of the Uyghur minority in China and the global response since 2014. The event, China's Repression of Uyghurs and the Global Response After a Decade of the 'Strike Hard' Campaign featured prominent activist Rushan Abbas discussing her work and experience, including the imprisonment of her sister. Abbas is the Executive Director of the US-based non-profit Campaign for Uyghurs. David O'Brien, scholar of



China's ethnic minority politics at Jagiellonian University in Poland, discussed the scholarly evidence about the repressive campaign and focused on Ireland's response. Over 60 people attended the hybrid event, including 35 in person and Q&A followed the panellists' remarks. The event was covered in the Irish Times.

## Election campaigns

To kick off a large ERC-funded research project by Joseph Lacey, a conference was organised on 12-13 December on election campaigns and democratic norms, with many participants from both SPIRe and top universities in Europe and the US. Over the last decade or more, election campaigns have been changing. The

availability of big data and the tools of social media are increasingly shaping how campaigns are run, while the emergence of new electoral challengers in many democratic systems has altered the strategic nature and communicative content of contemporary campaigns. This conference brings together empirical and normative scholars working on election campaigns, with a particular focus on the relationship between contemporary campaigns and democratic norms.

## Stay engaged!

As an important part of our strategy for the coming years, we want to significantly increase engagement with our alumni network. You can stay in touch with us through our new LinkedIn group:

[www.linkedin.com/groups/12728409](http://www.linkedin.com/groups/12728409)

In addition to this, we now also have a new mailing list for alumni of the School of Politics and International Relations - and its original constituent units, the Department of Politics, the Centre for Development Studies, and the Dublin European Institute - which you can sign up to here:

[www.ucd.ie/spire/about/alumni](http://www.ucd.ie/spire/about/alumni)

Please note that subscription to the SPIRe alumni list is entirely voluntary. It is different from UCD's general alumni list. Any request under GDPR to end communication on the UCD general list will not affect membership on the SPIRe list. You can withdraw separately from the SPIRe list at any time.



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