



## Issue 6

June 2024

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# Methods of Normative Political Theory Newsletter

*The quarterly newsletter of the [ECPR Standing Group on Methods of Normative Political Theory](#)*

On behalf of the Standing Group on Methods of Normative Political Theory, we are happy to announce that the quarterly newsletter of the *Methods of Normative Political Theory* will appear at the beginning of March, June, September, and December. The newsletters will remain accessible on the standing group's [website](#). We are happy to receive your updates regarding new publications, calls for proposals, events, Summer / Winter PhD Courses and job advertisements pertaining to methods of political theory by email to [normativepolmethods@gmail.com](mailto:normativepolmethods@gmail.com).

## Editorial Team

[Ilkin Huseynli](#) is a doctoral candidate in political philosophy at the University of Milan under the supervision of Ian Carter and Nicola Riva. His thesis focuses on social freedom and investigates if the concept of *interpersonal freedom* is normatively relevant. Ilkin responds positively and aims at articulating why this is so, as well as in what ways this relevance can be understood. His works have appeared in *The Pluralist*, *Journal of Political Power*, and edited volumes by Springer and Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles.

[Esma Baycan-Herzog](#) is a lecturer in political theory at the University of Geneva, and affiliated member of the Swiss research consortium NCCR—On the Move. Recently, she received a *Chaire Hoover Honorary Fellowship* for a visiting research stay at UCL (Belgium) in Spring 2024. During the 2021-22 Academic year, she visited the Centre for the Experimental-Philosophical Study of Discrimination, Aarhus University, and the Pluralism, Democracy and Justice Research Group, Arctic University of Norway. Her research interests include ethics and politics of migration; political theory methodology; multiculturalism; ethics of digital societies; (sub-state) nationalism; legitimacy of international institutions and experimental political theory. Her current and future editorial experience includes special issues in journals such as *Ethnicities* and *Ethics and Global Politics*. Her publications found their home at venues in journals such as *Ethnicities*, *Danish Yearbook of Philosophy*, *Ethical Perspectives*, as well as contributions to edited volumes published by Brill, Nomos and ECPR Press.

[Edmund Handby](#) is a Postdoctoral Associate in the Department of Political Science at Duke University. His research examines methodological questions in the history of political thought, empirically informed political theory, and politics, philosophy, and economics. His work has appeared in *The Journal of Politics* and *The Journal of the Philosophy of History*.

## Contact Us.

### Editors:

Ilkin Huseynli

[ilkin.huseynli@unimi.it](mailto:ilkin.huseynli@unimi.it)

Edmund Handby

[edmund.handby@duke.edu](mailto:edmund.handby@duke.edu)

Esma Baycan-Herzog

[esma.baycan@unige.ch](mailto:esma.baycan@unige.ch)

### For an input at:

#### -Twitter

[@ECPR\\_PTMethods](https://twitter.com/ECPR_PTMethods)

Please contact: Marina Vahter

[marina.vahter@tlu.ee](mailto:marina.vahter@tlu.ee)

#### -Newsletter

Please contact the editorial team

[normativepolismethods@gmail.com](mailto:normativepolismethods@gmail.com)

#### -Website

Please contact Marina Vahter

[marina.vahter@tlu.ee](mailto:marina.vahter@tlu.ee)

<https://standinggroups.ecpr.eu/nptmethods/>

## Past Academic Events

**ECPR Joint Sessions Workshop – Critical Methods in the Face of Crisis: Analytical and Critical Political Theory in Dialogue, Lüneburg Germany.**



This year's **ECPR Joint Sessions Workshop** took place in **Lüneburg, Germany**, from 25 to 28 March 2024. Our workshop **“Critical Methods in the Face of Crisis: Analytical and Critical Political Theory in Dialogue”** built on the idea of bringing together different traditions of Political Theory in their shared concern about contemporary political crises such as the climate crisis or the crisis of democratic representation. We spent three days discussing how methods of critique in political theory can be refined, applied, or combined in times of crisis.

We had lively discussions of 13 presentations from a mix of long-standing members as well as first time participants in our Standing Group's activities. We also took short moments in the mornings to clarify the big picture goals of the workshop and reflect on the presentations' contributions to thinking about the idea and limits of 'critical methods'.

In our call, we had asked **five questions**: 1: How do current methods of critique fail to address domestic and global crises? 2: Which methods of critique are especially apt in times of crisis? 3: Do we need different methods for different crises, e.g. with regard to climate and democratic representation? 4: How do we connect analytical and critical theory to craft methods capable of addressing the current crises? 5: Can such connections maintain the distinctive qualities of both traditions of political theory?

During the workshop, it became clear that many of us already combine elements of analytical and critical approaches to political theory (e.g. in versions of ideology critique or genealogy). How to translate these combinations into “new” methods turned out to be a more challenging question. Some presentations directly addressed the suitability of new methods and approaches for addressing current crises, whereas others reflected more about how established methods could be improved to be more useful in addressing current crises.

After the presentations we continued our conversations each day while walking through Lüneburg (special thanks to Jonathan Floyd!) taking in the unique architectural style of the city, and while savoring the offerings of local cuisine and brewing culture.

It was a wonderful opportunity to connect and further institutionalize the ‘methodological moment’ in Political Theory - and we would be happy to assist future directors in planning the next ECPR Methods Workshop!

## Upcoming Academic Events

### ECPR General Conference

12-15 August 2024

University College Dublin, Ireland

The 2024 ECPR general conference in Dublin, will take place this August. The section proposal “Methods on Normative Political Theory”, endorsed by the standing group, has successfully found its place in the program. Section chairs, **Simon Stevens** (De Montfort University) and **Esma Baycan-Herzog** (University of Geneva) proposed 7 different thematic panels exploring methodological topics on experimental methods, public political philosophy, political theory and other disciplines, fictional narratives and storytelling, general vs theme-specific methodologies and more. Simon and Esma are looking forward to see all former and future methodologist friends! You can find the program [here](#).

The program will also feature a keynote address from **Professor Lisa Herzog**, as well as responses from **Jonathan Floyd** and representatives from the other political theory groups in the ECPR, as part of a roundtable discussion. The abstract for Lisa’s talk is:

#### Why Theorize During a Climate Crisis?

*Why be a political theorist in times of the climate and biodiversity crisis? While theorists have long contributed to discussions about climate justice, in this talk I suggest that the “anthropocene” (or arguably, “capitalocene”) raises far more fundamental questions about how to understand the political, social, and economic realms and their interrelations. Some of the most basic assumptions about how these realms are organized need to be challenged, and this requires theory. To do so, political theory benefits from crossing three boundaries: the boundary between political theory and other social scientific disciplines, the boundary between Western and other traditions, and the boundary between the academic world and broader public discourses. I will exemplify this approach by discussing some questions about value creation in the economic realm and who has the political right to decide about it. I argue that to turn our societies onto a sustainable path requires a thorough-going democratization – of the economy, but also of democracy as it currently exists as a political system – , and discuss the role that political theorists can play in this project.*

### ECPR Course - How to do Political Philosophy: Methods and Methodology, Jonathan Floyd

In early August, Jonathan Floyd will be running an online ECPR signature course on How to do Political Philosophy: Methods and Methodology. This course explores a wide range of ways of doing political theory, together with their risks and rewards, as well as daily interactive tasks, all of which involve connecting the particular interests of each student with the particular methodological challenges those interests encounter. Topics covered range from conceptual analysis, to critical theory, to reflective equilibrium, and beyond

The course will be held from **5-9 August**, with **registration closing on 22 July 2024**. More information and registration can be found at <https://ecpr.eu/Events/285>

## Recent Publications

Aytac, Ugur. 2024. "[Big Tech, Algorithmic Power, and Democratic Control.](#)" *The Journal of Politics*, Online First.

Bender, Felix. 2024. "[Morality in the Refugee Regime? Arguing for More \(Political\) Realism in Admitting Refugees.](#)" *Perspectives on Politics*, Online First.

Cass, Devon. 2024. "[The Distinctiveness of Relational Equality.](#)" *Politics, Philosophy & Economics*, Online First

Dowding, Keith and Brad R. Taylor. 2024. "[Algorithmic Decision-Making, Agency Costs, and Institution Based-Trust.](#)" *Philosophy & Technology* 37(68).

Leader Maynard, Jonathan. 2024. "[The Logic of Idealization in Political Theory.](#)" *American Journal of Political Science*, Online First.

Perez, Nahshon. 2024. "[Empirical Political Theory: A Template for a Research Design and a Qualified Defense.](#)" *Political Studies Review*, Online First.