THE POLITICS OF TIME

'Time out!': why we're talking about time, all the time

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Time is not a metaphysical dimension independent of human struggle and agency, but a set of practices through which social and political life is organised. Brexit, the Covid-19 pandemic and protests against racism can all be understood as timing struggles – clashes over the organisation of dynamic structures, institutions and relationships – that are imbued with political power but also the potential for resistance.

Augustine once confessed that 'time' was a word 'forever on our lips', but what did he know about eternity, having never lived through 2020?[1] The first month of any country's Covid-19 lockdown felt to most like a year; and the actual year itself seems to extend interminably and intolerably. We cannot stop talking about time these days. In addition to the ways that the pandemic changed our relationship to time, the ongoing Brexit process resounds with temporal rhetoric, and dauntless anti-racism protesters have invoked the weight of history to call for a new era of police accountability. These episodes attest to time's importance, and reflect an elevated importance for time over the past few years,

with both politicians and the wider population describing it as an overwhelming force, an ever-expanding now, a valuable and dwindling resource, a dimension of hope, a lever, even a herald of independence.

While doubtless unsettling, this current moment also offers an opportunity to scholars of time, providing a trove of empirical data about the socio-political importance of time. The sheer volume of time talk is noteworthy in its variety, but it also raises a question: Why now? Why are so many different people from all walks of life talking about time more than ever and – as we will see – never as before? We can learn much by tracking what they are saying, but we also need to pay attention to why and how they are saying it, if we want to emerge from this moment with a greater understanding of time's relationship to politics.

In what follows, I offer a brief explanation for why we are talking about time so much, followed by three examples. I begin by introducing timing theory, a distinctive approach to organising various time symbols in a very loosely unified framework. I then illustrate the importance of timing to our current politics by turning to Brexit, Covid-19, and the anti-racism movement.

Timing theory and the sources of 'time'

As I discuss in a new book, timing is a basic survival skill common across human societies.[2] It also means much more than the colloquial sense in which we often say 'nice timing'. Faced with myriad changes and experiences, we work *to time* them into a coherent, roughly serial whole that we can comprehend, understand, and ideally mould toward our purposes. Rather than referring to a mere matter of coincidence or *when* something happens, timing describes creative acts of synthesis that establish new relationships in dynamic environments. By timing, humans forge useful links and processes out of the otherwise chaotic welter of existence, and use these to encourage certain outcomes rather than others, reflective of specific priorities.

Timing theory also offers a unique explanation for the power and proliferation of time terms found in ordinary language and political discourse. Instead of presupposing time to be an autonomous external dimension in which human actions take place, timing theory shows how the times we have come to understand as preformed, given, absolute, and even metaphysical, are actually widely shared symbols of deeply embedded *timing regimes* – large-scale timing practices used unconsciously by swathes of people, which makes them seem independent of any human effort.[3] The times of our lives and of the universe, according to timing theory, spring forth from nothing more than the phrases and symbols that we long ago learned to use to discuss and imagine our most important shared timing efforts. Various references to time itself and our many other temporal terms thus function as *timing indexicals*,

or signatures of underlying timing efforts. In speaking of time or temporality, then, we work *to time* processes and events toward particular outcomes.[4]

Finally, timing theory offers perspective on periods of upheaval such as our current one. Significant changes require that societies must ensure their timing modes still enable effective links and practical interactions. Doing so may involve *re-timing*, or re-establishing useful relationships and processes; or more laborious attempts to time anew, to create novel timing modes in the face of unsettling events. We can turn this around, as well, and note that when time talk increases in frequency or creativity, this signals increased efforts to time, re-time, or time anew, important parts of society.[5]

Upheavals like Brexit, Covid-19, or the unravelling of race relations in several countries, with their catalogue of innovative time talk, are just the sort of phenomena that timing theory can help us understand. It does so by using the character and content of temporal discourse to read underlying timing efforts. When people talk about time as a problem to be solved, tried and trusted timing regimes are faltering or failing in some way. When they talk of time as a powerful resource, a creative wellspring, or a force that demands certain actions, this highlights timing efforts meant to upend and rewrite the status quo, to take current events and stitch them into new paths toward alternative futures. Increased time talk signals that some of the timing modes by which society unfolds are shifting, falling away, or being contested. People are not passive recipients of given time but rather active participants in crafting and changing time itself in order to fit their new realities.

Government on the clock: Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic

Brexit

Over the past few years, the British government and parliament have made a number of temporal moves and remarks in pursuit of Brexit and in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. These highlight the ways in which powerful political actors can mobilise time and temporality to manage dynamic and complex situations. They also illustrate key rhetorical differences characteristic of different timing manoeuvres. In a pair of forthcoming articles, Ryan Beasley and I theorise such foreign policy-making moves as a form of timing, and identify different types of timing agents based on what temporal symbols politicians deployed in debates over Brexit.[6]

We contend that broaching withdrawal from the EU, securing and winning a popular referendum on the matter, and then realising Brexit over three years of debate, policy-making and decision-taking, required huge efforts to re-time – re-orient, re-order and re-establish – the UK's foreign relations with its nearest neighbours. Brexit grew through claims about dissatisfaction over the UK's position

in the EU, and promised a better alternative just over the horizon – if only decision-makers could discern how to leave while respecting the 'ticking Brexit clock', avoiding multiple hard deadlines, and specifying a feasible set of procedures to move from formal withdrawal to a 'future relationship with the EU' that would also usher in the era of 'global Britain'. Meanwhile, Brexit sceptics accused Theresa May's and then Boris Johnson's governments of 'playing for time' and 'running down' the clock, juxtaposed dithering and delay to looming deadlines as evidence that Brexiters were fundamentally un-serious about the challenges of changing the status quo, and asked repeatedly for detailed plans about how the government intended to accomplish a 'smooth and orderly' withdrawal.

Beasley and I found three types of timing agents at work in these debates: timing entrepreneurs, apparatchiks and malcon*temps*.[7] Timing entrepreneurs propound novel political relations and the policies that make it possible to break with the present (and, by extension, a shared past) and open up a different future. They seek to establish novel timing modes that will help events unfold toward different outcomes or forms of social order. Brexit's timing entrepreneurs envisioned a rosy future for a UK freed from the inconvenience of EU laws and regulations, charged opponents with 'dragging their feet' and invoked all manners of 'tremendous optimism' about the future to convince others of their proposals.

Timing apparatchiks concern themselves less with grand visions, and instead use existing mechanisms of policy-making to maintain or restore smooth functioning and stable order. They work on the order of procedural minutes and policy *minut*iae rather than the more abstract language of eras and 'the future'. Sometimes this requires repairing existing timing mechanisms – as when the Speaker of the House, John Bercow, repeatedly had to remind speakers of their 'timings' (the limits on how long they could speak). Different apparatchiks worked for and against Brexit. Pro-Brexit apparatchiks pondered how different processes and deadlines – many highly detailed – could be integrated toward a smooth, almost clockwork withdrawal. Apparatchiks sceptical of Brexit discussed the same topics, but less as mechanisms to be fixed than as pitiless gears that would grind away fuzzy visions of the post-EU future and expose Brexit as an albatross.

Finally, timing malcon*temps* work either directly against the current order or against a new timing proposal gaining steam. They point out why things are not working, or why policy positions will lead to ruin rather than renaissance. Brexit's entrepreneurs got their start as EU malcontemps, when they spent years inveighing against the UK-EU status quo and putting pressure on then-prime minister David Cameron to offer a referendum. Once Brexit became a popular reality, Remainers adopted the role of malcontemps to counter Brexiters' promises for the future with stark predictions of an isolated, impotent and impoverished island state, still subject to many EU regulations but without a voice in the European Parliament. Where timing entrepreneurs viewed PM May's triggering of Article 50 as 'starting the clock' on

UK's 'independence day', malcontemps gave this timing tactic a spatial gloss, as plunging the country over a 'cliff edge' without a deal if the government and its supporters did not get more serious, more forthright, and more careful with the work required to square numerous treaties and regulations, to produce new trade agreements, and to ensure no hard border on the island of Ireland.

These struggles openly acknowledged how important time had become to British foreign policy-making, as when the Conservative timing entrepreneur, Lord Howell, recommended that his colleagues pause to reflect on the border challenge: 'Is not one of the missing factors in all this the concept of time? Time is a great solvent.' He then noted that the UK would have over four years to address its border issues, so '[s]hould we not put the concept of time a bit more into this before rushing to judgments?'[8] Yet it was just this sort of casualness about upcoming deadlines and the passage of time that caused malcontemps like the Labour MP Yvette Cooper to charge that:

> I do not think the Government are credible in their use of time ... Time is a weapon that they use to somehow say that they can do everything incredibly quickly when they are using brinksmanship to get a vote through, but then they say the process will take an incredibly long time when they want to get the same meaningful vote through that we have already debated and rejected twice.[9]

So important and powerful were time symbols, and the timing possibilities that they enabled, that politicians also resorted to rhetorical invention. Brexit gave us brand new timing indexicals like 'flextensions' (flexible extensions offering the UK maximum latitude while comporting with EU law), 'sequenceology' (a criticism of proliferating withdrawal sequences), 'neverendums' (a criticism of calls for a second referendum), and 'Brexternity' (the counterpoint that the withdrawal process would not end for many years). And when the grand Brexit re-timing scheme finally seemed assured, entrepreneurs like Mark François insisted that Big Ben, the great parliament clock, must be repaired in haste so that it could 'bong' in Global Britain's 'independence day' – heralding the dawn of a new era by the very traditional use of a public time signal.

Covid-19

Brexit day had scarcely passed when politicians faced a new and only partially foreseen challenge, the spread of a novel coronavirus around the world. The Covid-19 pandemic forced policy-makers everywhere to problematise time, to consider different public health responses tied to specific timing regimes, and to acknowledge that time was of the essence for the foreseeable future.[10] The lag between outbreak in Wuhan, China, and arrival in far-flung countries saw numer-

ous government strategies – from somewhat open in Sweden,[11] to 'freezing the economy' in Denmark,[12] to aggressive track and trace in a number of countries, to a lengthy debate in the UK about 'herd immunity' and 'prevention' vs. 'mitigation',[13] to an extended period of delirium and delay championed in the US by Donald Trump.[14]

Regardless of whether lockdowns arrived in late winter or early spring, a key benefit was to 'buy time' by keeping health services from being overrun with patients and by giving politicians the chance to craft deliberative policy responses. Many critics in the UK and US later charged that those governments had 'squandered' the time bought by lockdown, handing out questionable consultant and technology contracts or pushing untested drug treatments instead of listening closely to public health experts and offering clear, steady messaging to their respective publics.[15] Against these charges, the UK government repeatedly claimed to be 'doing the right thing at the right time, guided by the best scientific advice'. Trump and Johnson both likened their efforts to those of 'wartime' leaders, invoking historically loaded terms like 'war economy', 'the Dunkirk spirit' and 'frontline heroes' to re-frame the pandemic as requiring exceptional measures and unity, rather than scrutiny or dissent.[16]

Meanwhile, health scholars analysed how quickly countries' infection or fatality 'curves' were flattening. This new vernacular of 'flattening the curve' not only introduced most of us to 'R numbers' and the concept of exponential growth; it also had the effect of re-setting the calendar to a new year, or month, zero – normally a technique reserved for revolutionaries like the French republicans or tyrannical regimes like the Khmer Rouge[17] – as it varied the y-axis by infection or fatality rate, but reliably plotted the x-axis as the number of days since a minimum number of initial infections or deaths. No wonder, then, that many now refer easily to 'the before time' of 2019.[18]

Policy-makers compared these curves against the economic costs of lockdowns to ascertain the timing and pacing of re-opening societies. Some, like conservative politicians in the US, doubled down on the wartime claim and began likening mass death as a necessary sacrifice for the sake of the economic present and future.[19] Others, like the devolved government in Scotland, adopted its own timing and messaging strategies, drawing ire from Conservative leaders who immediately appraised this as usurping the Johnson government's authority.[20] And powerful and ordinary individuals alike noted how lockdown and the constant thrum of updates, new guidance and Covid-19-related scandals sullied any normal sense of time's flow and tethered all experiences to the start of the pandemic or resulting lockdown: 'today is not Sept 1st it is March 184th'.[21]

Much as Brexit could not have unfolded as it did without decision-makers' time talk and timing gambits, Covid-19 is unimaginable without its distinctive timings and

temporal concerns. It is perhaps too early to say in this crisis which timing strategies will prove most effective in determining the near-term arc of whole societies. But what remains clear is that, in a period of unprecedented change characterised by massive uncertainty about present policies and future possibilities, people at all levels of society invoked – and thereby reproduced – traditional descriptions of time as something to be tolerated, placated, bought, or somehow overcome. These policy and pandemic examples attest to the challenge of timing periods of upheaval, but also to timing's centrality in social life.

Dissident times and radical timing proposals

A key claim of timing theory is that while it realises and confers social and political power, timing is not reserved exclusively for powerful elites. To be sure, context enables and constrains our capacity to time, but there remains significant latitude for creative actors, even within deeply entrenched timing regimes. This stems from the linguistic ubiquity of temporal language and the practical importance of timing to our daily lives in common, and from the fact that even the most familiar time symbols are never entirely fixed or decided but are instead produced and reproduced in each usage, which allows for some flexibility.

While the Brexit and Covid-19 episodes highlighted how elites use time to manage emerging situations and craft policy solutions to novel problems, we can find the dissident, creative power of timing in two sets of remarks from ongoing anti-racism protests in the US. On 23 August 2020, in Kenosha, WI, policeman Rusten Sheskey shot a black man named Jacob Blake seven times in the back from point-blank range, in front of his children, without plausible cause or provocation. Blake survived, but is paralysed for life. A week later, as he lay handcuffed to his hospital bed – without any charges being laid – Blake's sister, Letetra Widman, warned well-wishers, 'Don't be sorry'.[22] Instead, she asked them to join her in appraising her brother's assault from a unique perspective on family, community and time, which placed several episodes from her life along a timeline of state injustice:

> this has been happening to my family for a long time, longer than I can account for. It happened to Emmett Till – Emmett Till is my family. Philando, Mike Brown, Sandra, this *has been happening* to my family, and I've shed tears for every single one of those people that it happened to. *This is nothing new.* I'm not sad. I'm not sorry. I'm angry, and I'm tired. I haven't cried one time. I stopped crying years ago. I am numb. *I have been watching police murder people that look like me for years.*

After using her platform as Blake's sister to re-interpret 'family' as a lifelong collective of suffering, Widman went further, emplotting the current moment in the longer history of civil rights. 'I'm also a Black History minor', she continued, 'So not

only have I been watching it for the 30 years I've been on this planet, but I've been watching it *for years before we were even alive*. I'm not sad, I don't want your pity. I want change.'

Letetra Widman's brief and powerful remarks echoed the eulogy given by the Reverend Al Sharpton only months earlier for George Floyd, who had been murdered on 25 May 2020. A Minneapolis policeman, Derek Chauvin, knelt on his back for some nine minutes until he suffocated, as Floyd protested 'I can't breathe' and called for his deceased mother, and as other police officers looked on. Rev Sharpton delivered his eulogy on 9 June to a packed congregation at a highly charged moment. Tellingly, he framed his remarks with what is probably the most famous temporal verse in the Bible, Ecclesiastes 3:1: 'To every season there is a time and purpose under heaven'.[23]

Even more conspicuously, Sharpton used this verse as the springboard of a rhetorical *tour de force* predicated on the demand to decisively *re-time* racial politics and American policing. He first implied that the wider public did not quite grasp the time: 'When we see what is going on in the streets of this country … *you need to know what time it is*.' To tell the time accurately, Sharpton argued, white people everywhere must understand that:

> George Floyd's story *has been* the story of black folks. Because *ever since 401 years ago, the reason we could never be who we wanted and dreamed of being was because you kept your knee on our neck*.

From this backdrop of four violent centuries, Sharpton extracted a timing imperative: 'It's time for us to stand up and say in George Floyd's name, "get your knee off our necks"'. Importantly, this was not due solely to outrage about Floyd's murder; the time had come because the current situation was uniquely opportune for 'dealing with accountability in the criminal justice system'. Echoing Eccl. 3:1 repeatedly, he argued that this moment was unique because he had seen marches 'where in some cases young whites outnumbered blacks … [where] they went in front of the Parliament in London, England and said "it's a different time, and a different season"'.

Sharpton then seemed to digress into an aside about mundane matters of time reckoning, recalling

> I was late last October for an appointment because the time changed and I was still, my watch was on the wrong time, you know once a year time goes forward, and if you don't … move your watch, you're going to find yourself an hour late, not because your watch was wrong but you had your watch on the wrong time.

But it was all a setup for a grand finale in which he used daylight savings time to re-time President Donald Trump's racism as retrograde and anachronistic: 'I've

come to tell you that sitting in Washington, talking about militarising the country … I've come to tell you, you can get on the TV, *but you on the wrong time*!' Trump, and his white supremacist supporters, were behind the times, as Sharpton thundered to a temporal crescendo:

> Time is out, for not holding you accountable. Time is out, for you making excuses. Time is out, for you trying to stall. Time is out, for empty words and empty promises. Time is out, for you filibustering and trying to stall the arm of justice. This is the time. We won't stop. We going to keep going, until we change the whole system of justice.

Addressing Martin Luther King III in the audience, Sharpton proposed to return to Washington on 28 August, the anniversary of King's father's famous 'I Have a Dream' speech, to 'tell them: "This is the time to stop this"'.[24] For Sharpton, as for Widman, unprecedented change would 'make America great *for the first time*', and he used this commitment to speak directly to George Floyd beyond the grave, telling him 'go on home George. Get your rest George, you changed the world … We're going forward George!'. The congregation's response nearly drowned out Sharpton's closing lines: 'Time out! Time out! Time out!'

Widman's spare statement and Sharpton's unsparing eulogy highlight that, for black people in America, there had never been a 'long arc of history' bending toward justice. Therefore, they worked to re-time Blake's shooting and Floyd's murder as parts of the extended, *foundational* injustice of American life, an enduring legacy of the country's 'original sin' of slavery. Against such a durable institution as American white supremacy, hopes and prayers, tears and pity, would not be enough. Only a more radical approach to the present held any hope, and it depended on first re-timing current events in order to push politics toward a more equal and just future.[25]

Conclusion

It can sound banal to say 'these are unsettling times', but the number of unique, evocative, and powerful timing indexicals discussed above suggests that, indeed, we are living through an unprecedented quantity and quality of disruptive change. Timing theory finds that such periods make elevated or brand new timing demands on decision-makers, policy wonks and ordinary people, as societies struggle to manage or adapt to dynamic situations that are often unfolding faster than they can keep up. Moreover, these periods put multiple vectors of politics in play, bring long-simmering issues to a boil, and generally challenge us all to imagine new ways of persisting and co-existing. This is not to argue that timing efforts and temporal discourse are 'fungible' – readily and equably transferrable between actors;[26] rather, it is to see timing as a survival skill available to and productive for a huge range of

people, regardless of their formal political power. Almost anyone *can* time, and in a variety of creative ways, even if not everyone can time the same way, with the same effect, across situations. We might say that timing offers a relatively open source of 'protean power', a productive yet contingent form of influence and possibility, to all walks of life.[27] Adeptness at recasting the overarching frames of reference or singular ideas by which we organise social life or coordinate policy; or at linking current happenings to specific interpretations of the past and future (or different sequences of past events); or at changing political momentum by delay, deliberation or scrutiny – all these timing tactics can help politicians and activists alike to leverage the political potential of good timing.

In our protracted now, nations, governments and societies are struggling to maintain the timing of important aspects of life while also attempting to re-time other aspects in novel ways. Timing is work, and re-timing and new timing is very hard work. Uncertainty, complexity, and the spectre of mass casualty act as anxiety multipliers here. So, just as life depends on good timing, we should not be surprised that it seems as if time is forever on our lips during shared experiences of disruption. But we can also remember that while it may seem 'out', time is never really over.

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Notes

1 Augustine, *Confessions*, Westminster Press 2011, bk.11§22.
2 This section summarises arguments developed in Andrew R. Hom, *International Relations and the Problem of Time*, Oxford University Press 2020, chps. 1 and 2.
3 Our unthinking use of standardised clocks epitomises this.
4 Hom, *International Relations*, pp43-48.
5 Hom, 37-43.
6 Ryan K. Beasley and Andrew R. Hom, 'Foreign Policy in the Fourth Dimension (FP4D): Locating Time in Decision Making Processes', *Foreign Policy Analysis*, forthcoming; Andrew R. Hom and Ryan K. Beasley, 'Constructing Time in Foreign Policymaking: Brexit's Timing Entrepreneurs, Malcontemps, and Apparatchiks', *International Affairs*, forthcoming.
7 For more, see Hom and Beasley, 'Constructing Time in Foreign Policymaking.'
8 Hansard (Lords), 3 October 2019, col. 1859.
9 Hansard (Commons), 14 March 2019, cols. 607-608.
10 The times and timing efforts of the Covid-19 response in the UK form one of the key themes of a new large project that Ryan Beasley and I are developing.
11 https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2020/05/12/swedens-coronavirus-strategy-is-not-what-it-seems/.

12 Derek Thompson, 'Denmark's idea could help the world avoid a great depression', *The Atlantic*, 21 March 2020: https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/03/denmark-freezing-its-economy-should-us/608533/.

13 Noel Titheradge and Faye Kirkland, 'Did "herd immunity" change the course of the outbreak?', *BBC News*, 20 July 2020: https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-53433824; see also Clare Wenham, 'The UK was a global leader in preparing for pandemics. What went wrong with Coronavirus?,' *Guardian*, 1 May 2020: http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2020/may/01/uk-global-leader-pandemics-coronavirus-covid-19-crisis-britain.

14 'US "wasted" months before preparing for Coronavirus pandemic', AP NEWS, 5 April 2020: https://apnews.com/090600c299a8cf07f5b44d92534856bc.

15 Alan Tovey, 'Dyson set to have ventilator contract cancelled', *Telegraph*, 24 April 2020: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/business/2020/04/24/dyson-set-have-ventilator-contract-cancelled/; Matthew Field, 'Cracking the code: doubts linger as new Covid Tracing App seeks to learn lessons', *Telegraph*, 15 August 2020: https://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/2020/08/15/cracking-code-doubts-linger-new-covid-tracing-app-seeks-learn/.

16 Naomi Adedokun, 'Coronavirus "Dunkirk Spirit" praised as British labs re-purpose to carry out COVID-19 Test', *Daily Express*, 2 April 2020: https://www.express.co.uk/news/uk/1263881/coronavirus-uk-news-bbc-radio-4-today-covid-19-tests-paul-nurse-francis-crick-institute; Costanza Musu, 'War metaphors used for COVID-19 are compelling but also dangerous', *The Conversation*, 8 April 2020: http://theconversation.com/war-metaphors-used-for-covid-19-are-compelling-but-also-dangerous-135406.

17 See, respectively, Matthew Shaw, *Time and the French Revolution: The Republican Calendar, 1789-Year XIV*, Royal Historical Society 2011; Andrus Ers, 'Year Zero: The Temporality of Revolution Studied Through the Example of the Khmer Rouge', in Hans Ruin and Andrus Ers (eds), *Rethinking Time: Essays on History, Memory, and Representation*, Södertörns högskola, Huddinge 2011.

18 Ben Zimmer, '"The Before Time": A sci-fi idea that has made its way to real life', *Wall Street Journal*, 19 June 2020: https://www.wsj.com/articles/the-before-time-a-sci-fi-idea-that-has-made-its-way-to-real-life-11592580133.

19 Matt Ford, 'Trumpworld embraces the Death Wish economy', *The New Republic*, 25 March 2020: https://newrepublic.com/article/157052/donald-trump-economic-nihilism.

20 Paris Gourtsoyannis, 'Scottish political figures hit back at suggestion Nicola Sturgeon was seeking to upstage PM', 12 March 2020: https://www.scotsman.com/health/scottish-political-figures-hit-back-suggestion-nicola-sturgeon-was-seeking-upstage-pm-2448929.

21 https://twitter.com/mariumqaz/status/1300687045971640320?s=20.

22 All Letetra Widman quotes taken from Guardian News, *'I Don't Want Pity, I Want Change': Jacob Blake's Sister Gives Emotional Testimony*, 2020: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGZncHP5V0A&feature=youtube (all emphases added); see also

Maxwell Burkey and Alex Zamalin, 'Patriotism, black politics and racial justice in America', *New Political Science*, Vol 38, No 3, 2016: https://doi.org/10.1080/07393148.2016.1189031.

23 All Sharpton quotes taken from PBS NewsHour, *Rev. Al Sharpton Eulogizes George Floyd during Memorial in Minneapolis*, 2020, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=giIS5f_yF9k (all emphases added).

24 That date would also mark the 30th anniversary of the release of Living Colour's second album, *Time's Up* (Epic 1990) in which the all-black hard rock band used their double-platinum credentials and various temporal tropes to raise issues unheard of in the genre, like race ('History Lesson', 'Pride' and 'Type'), police killings of black men ('Someone Like You'), sexual politics ('Under Cover of Darkness') and global warming (title track); see also Ron Hart, 'Living Colour reflect on "Time's Up" at 30', *Spin*, 28 August 2020: https://www.spin.com/2020/08/living-colour-times-up-interview/.

25 Widman's and Sharpton's timing language recalled an offshoot of the #metoo movement, the Time's Up initiative against sexual harassment in the workplace, see: https://timesupnow.org/; see also Karlo Basta, '"Time's Up!": framing collective impatience for radical political change', *Political Psychology*, Vol 41 No 4, 2020.

26 David A. Baldwin, 'Force, fungibility, and influence,' *Security Studies*, Vol 8 No 4, 1999: https://doi.org/10.1080/09636419908429389.

27 Peter J. Katzenstein and Lucia A. Seybert (eds), *Protean Power: Exploring Uncertain and Unexpected World Politics*, Cambridge University Press 2018; see also Hom, *International Relations*, pp16-17.