

Toine Paulissen

Address: Parkstraat 45, 3000 Leuven (BE)

Nationality: Dutch

Date/Place of Birth: 02/12/1994 – Maastricht (NL)

Website: www.toinepaulissen.com

Mail: t.paulissen@tuta.com



RESEARCH INTERESTS

Disinformation; Comparative Politics; Political Communication; Polarization; Political Parties; Political Finance; Campaign Regulations; European Politics; Referendums and Initiatives

ACADEMIC POSITIONS

Part-time Lecturer | Dublin City University School of Law and Government

2025-present

- Principal teacher of two undergraduate modules:
 - o Money, Power & Democracy
 - o Comparative European Politics
- Responsible for module design, assignments, and grading

Postdoctoral Researcher | KU Leuven Voting & Democracy Research Group

2025-present

- Conducted research on effects of referendum campaigns - 1 peer-reviewed publication, 2 in progress
- Finished supervision of 3 MSc students, currently supervising an additional 7 MSc students
- Collaborating on COST application

Research Foundation Flanders (FWO) PhD Fellow in Fundamental Research | KU Leuven

2022-2025

- Conducted research on party spending in referendum campaigns - 5 peer-reviewed publications
- Supervised 11 MSc students (including 3 mentioned above)
- Collaborated on large data collection project regarding referendum campaign finance regulations
- (Co-)Authored 5 reports regarding Belgian elections in 2024 (local, regional, federal and European)

PhD Researcher and Teaching Assistant | KU Leuven

2021-2022

- Conducted research on lobbying and EU politics - 1 peer-reviewed publication, 2 book chapters
- Prepared successful funding application for FWO PhD fellowship mentioned above
- Provided assistance to courses on academic writing and presenting, European politics, party politics, and introductory courses to political science
- Led multiple seminars
- Provided editorial assistance on edited volume with Cambridge University Press
- Supervised 4 MSc students

VISITING POSITIONS

Affiliated Scholar | School of Politics and International Relations (SPIRe), University College Dublin, Ireland

Nov 2024 – Oct 2025

Visiting Scholar | Trinity Research in Social Sciences (TRiSS), Trinity College Dublin, Ireland

Feb – May 2023

EDUCATION

PhD in Social Sciences (Passed without corrections)

2021-2025

KU Leuven | Leuven, Belgium

- Thesis: “What Ends Justify the Means? Explaining Party Campaign Spending in European Referendums”
- Supervised by prof. Bart Maddens & prof. Steven Van Hecke (co-supervisor)

MSc: Comparative & International Politics

2017-2020

KU Leuven | Leuven, Belgium

- Thesis: “‘Bildung’ in Brussel. De organisationele vorm van hoger onderwijsrepresentatie in de Europese Unie” [Bildung in Brussels. The organisational form of higher education lobbying in the European Union]
- Supervised by prof. Steven Van Hecke

MA: Western Literature

2015-2017

KU Leuven | Leuven, Belgium

- Thesis: “‘Engagement in crisis? Een studie van Van den Broecks Terug naar Walden (2009) en Lanoyes Gelukkige Slaven (2013) in het licht van het thema ‘crisis’” [Engagement in crisis? A study of Van den Broeck’s Terug naar Walden (2009) en Lanoye’s Gelukkige Slaven (2013) in the light of the theme ‘crisis’]
- Supervised by prof. Dirk De Geest

BA: Linguistics & Literature – Specialisation Dutch-English

2012-2016

KU Leuven | Leuven, Belgium

PUBLICATIONS

Under Review (1)

- **Paulissen, T.** Direct but Divisive? Vertical Affective Polarization in a Salient Referendum Context. *Politics*.

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles (9)

- **Paulissen, T.** & Maddens, B. (2026) What Ends Justify the Means? Explaining Party Campaign Spending in Referendums in Europe. *European Political Science Review*.
<https://doi.org/10.1017/S1755773926100356>
- **Paulissen, T.** (2026). Why do Parties Participate in Referendum Campaigns? Evidence from Switzerland. *Party Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/13540688261431115>
- Jansen, L., **Paulissen, T.** & Van Hecke, S. (2026). Riding the Wave? The Impact of the Russian Invasion on MEP behaviour regarding EU Enlargement to the Western Balkan countries. *Journal of European Integration*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07036337.2026.2623429>
- **Paulissen, T.**, Jansen, L., & Van Hecke, S. (2025). Depoliticizing Transnational Cleavage-Related Issues Through Social Media Advertising: The 2022 Danish Defense Referendum Campaign. *Politics and Governance*, 13, Article 9229. <https://doi.org/10.17645/pag.9229>
- Jansen, L., **Paulissen, T.**, & Van Hecke, S. (2025). Power beyond borders? Analysing formal and informal tools of the European Parliament in EU enlargement policy. *Journal of Contemporary European Studies*, OnlineFirst. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14782804.2024.2448257>
- **Paulissen, T.** & Horncastle, W.R. (2024). Introducing the RefCFRI: A continuous indicator comparing referendum campaign finance regulation in 143 countries. *Politics*, OnlineFirst. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02633957241303708>
- **Paulissen, T.** (2024). Direct democracy and party behaviour in the Republic of Ireland: a campaign finance perspective. *Irish Political Studies*, 39(4), 570-593.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/07907184.2024.2371780>
- **Paulissen, T.** & Maddens, B. (2023). Referendum campaign financing by political parties: the case of the United Kingdom. *Political Science*, 75(1), 25–46. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00323187.2023.2238715>
- **Paulissen, T.**, Fraussen, B. & Van Hecke, S. (2022). Individual and collective representation: the organisational form of higher education lobbying in the European Union. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 14(1), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2022.2105372>

Book Chapters (2)

- Van Hecke, S., Wolfs, W. & **Paulissen, T.** (2023). The Life and Death of the Spitzenkandidaten: What Role is Left for European Political Parties? In: Costa & Van Hecke (eds.), *The EU Political System After the 2019 European Elections* (pp. 83–89). Palgrave Macmillan; Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12338-2_5
- Van Hecke, S., **Paulissen, T.** & Vande Walle, B. (2023). How Covid-19 Hit Brussels and Beyond: The EU's Crisis Management Tested by a Pandemic. In: Costa & Van Hecke (eds.), *The EU Political System After the 2019 European Elections* (pp. 381–400). Palgrave Macmillan; Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-12338-2_18

Miscellaneous (1)

- **Paulissen, T.** (2025.) Summary: What Ends Justify the Means? Explaining Party Campaign Spending in European Referendums. *Politics of the Low Countries*. <https://doi.org/10.54195/plc.24497>

Outreach (5)

- **Paulissen, T.** & Van Hecke, S. (2024). Referendum Moldavië: zelden zal een overwinning zo als een nederlaag hebben aangevoeld. *Knack*. Opinion Piece. <https://www.knack.be/nieuws/wereld/europa/referendum-moldavie-zelden-zal-overwinning-zo-als-een-nederlaag-hebben-aangevoeld/>
- **Paulissen, T.** (2024). Referenda? Bezint eer gij begint. *De Standaard* 14.03.2024. Opinion piece. https://www.standaard.be/cnt/dmf20240314_97128710
- **Paulissen, T.** (2023). Indyref2? Rejoin EU? Consider first reforming regulations on referendum campaign finance. *UKandEU*. Blog post. <https://ukandeu.ac.uk/indyref2-rejoin-eu-consider-first-reforming-regulations-on-referendum-campaign-finance/>
- **Paulissen, T.**, Fraussen, B. & Van Hecke, S. (2022). How higher education institutions seek to influence EU policymaking. *LSEBlog*. Blog post. <https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/europpblog/2022/09/02/how-higher-education-institutions-seek-to-influence-eu-policymaking/>
- **Paulissen, T.** (2021). Orbans referendum is geen democratisch instrument, maar een politiek geladen wapen. *Knack*. Opinion piece. <https://www.knack.be/nieuws/wereld/europa/orbans-referendum-is-geen-democratisch-instrument-maar-een-politiek-geladen-wapen/>

Editorial Contributions (1)

- Segers, M. & Van Hecke, S. (2023). *The Cambridge History of the European Union*. Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108780865>

Working Papers (3)

- **Paulissen, T.**, Vande Walle, B., Maddens, B. & Van Hecke, S. Inequality, Investment and Consumption in Direct Democracy: A Network Analysis of Donor Behavior in UK Referendum Campaigns
- **Paulissen, T.** & Jansen, L. Digital Party Competition and EU Enlargement: The Case of the 2024 Moldovan EU Membership Referendum.
- McMenamin, I. & **Paulissen, T.** When is Political Speech Political Finance?

RESEARCH FUNDING

Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) PhD Fellowship for Fundamental Research. **2022-2026**
Grant 1119125N: Referendum Campaign Finance & Political Parties in Europe. 130 000 EUR.

Research Foundation – Flanders (FWO) Long Stay Travel Grant. **2023**
Grant V412823N: Ireland 2023. 4 950 EUR.

AWARDS

Part of third cohort of the Europaeum Scholars Programme, a two-year leadership and policy course spread out over eight week-long modules hosted at different top European universities. ([LINK](#)) **2022-2023**

Laureate of Third Prize of Wilfried Martens Thesis Prize 2021 ([LINK](#))

INVITED TALKS

Political Finance Regimes in Comparative Perspective: Belgium vs. The World. **November 2024**
Guest Lecture, KU Leuven, Leuven

Charting the European Referendum Finance Landscape: Comparing Referendum Political Finance Régimes. Guest Lecture, KU Leuven, Leuven **November 2023**

Regulated Equality or *Laissez-Faire*? The Political Finance of Referendum Campaigns. **February 2023**
Monday Seminar Series, Trinity Research in Social Sciences (TRiSS), Trinity College, Dublin

What is the use of Referendums? Guest Lecture, KU Leuven, Leuven **April 2022**

Referendums: Democracy *pur sang* or political instrument? Guest lecture, KULAK, Kortrijk **December 2021**

CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

2025 (3): Council for European Studies Conference for Europeanists, Philadelphia, USA; International Political Science Association (IPSA) General Conference, Seoul, South Korea; Polarization in Contemporary Politics, Lisbon, Portugal.

2024 (7): APSA Virtual Conference; ECPR Joint Sessions, Luneburg, Germany; Political Parties and Referendums, Glasgow, UK; Belgian-Dutch Political Science Conference, Maastricht, The Netherlands; Biennial Conference of the ECPR Standing Group on the EU, Lisbon, Portugal; European Political Science Association (EPSA) General Conference, Cologne, Germany; ECPR General Conference, Dublin, Ireland.

2023 (2): American Political Science Association (APSA) General Conference, Los Angeles, USA; Belgian-Dutch Political Science Conference, Leuven, Belgium.

2022 (1): Düsseldorf Graduate Conference on Party Research (GraPa)

SERVICE AT CONFERENCES

Co-organizer of Politics (the journal) workshop on “Polarization in Contemporary Politics” at Lisbon University **2025**

Chair & co-organizer of the panel “Direct Democracy in the Digital Age: Navigating Party and Voter Dynamics in Digital Referendum Campaigns” at ECPR General Conference, Dublin **2024**

Chair of the panel “Digital Authoritarianism: Trends and Practices” at ECPR General Conference, Dublin **2024**

NON-ACADEMIC WORK EXPERIENCE

Project Manager | European Service @ Province of Vlaams-Brabant, Leuven, Belgium **Sep – Dec 2020**

- Managed INTEREG-project Housing 4.0 Energy
- Responsible for achieving deliverables and tasks, contact with project partners, and setting agenda of and leading monthly steering group meetings

Marketing & Sales Manager | Begijnhof Hotel, Leuven, Belgium **Sep 2018 – Dec 2020**

- Digitalisation of internal processes
- Change management
- Design and build website and communication campaigns
- Provide training materials for staff

SKILLS & COMPETENCES

- **Technical skills:** Programming (R, RStudio), structured framing & thematic analysis, website building
- **Soft skills:** project management, leadership, teamwork, writing, public speaking
- **Languages:** English (near-native), Dutch (native), French (moderate), Spanish (beginner but learning)