

## Call for Papers

### Early Career Research Workshop (PhD and postdocs):

## Revisiting Linkages between Citizens and Politicians in Contemporary Europe

**Date:** 19 November 2020, 9:00 – 15:00 CET

**Place:** virtual workshop on zoom

**Keynote speaker:** Prof. Dr. Fernando Casal Bertoa, University of Nottingham *Party System Closure: Alliances and Innovations in Europe between 1848 and 2017*

#### Workshop theme:

What is the nature of citizen-politician linkages in the 21st century? This question is highly relevant today due to the crisis of representative democracy, decreasing trust in political elites and democratic institutions. At the same time, established parties are faced with the threat of populism. Ideologically footloose voters and weakening of traditional cleavage structures undermine programmatic appeals typical for the post-War era in Europe. In an era of rapid economic changes and globalization that cut across national boundaries, the linkage mechanism between the represented and their representatives are transforming.

Herbert Kitschelt challenged previous research that posited the programmatic linkage to be the only mechanism capable of safeguarding accountability and responsiveness. Reflecting on the challenges of the globalized economy, dealignment, and the welfare state crisis, Kitschelt has shown how, in the absence of a functioning welfare state, clientelistic linkage can functionally substitute programmatic ties, especially in new democracies. The third - charismatic linkage - outlined by Kitschelt is brought to the fore by the recent rise of populism. Populists build personalized linkages with voters using direct forms of online communication to foster a closer relationship with the people that bypasses traditional political parties. Populists create an illusion of responsiveness while simultaneously eroding accountability.

COVID-19 pandemic represents a new and unparalleled stress test for the already eroded citizen-politician linkages. Democracies worldwide are facing a simultaneous challenge to public health safety, economy, and democratic governance. Safeguarding responsiveness and accountability are central to maintaining the health of democracy amidst pandemic. Responsibility and responsibility might clash as public health measures create burden for citizens (school closures) and the economy (fuloughs). Public safety measures, the increased importance of the executive, and the amplified role of experts (virologists, epidemiologists) might undermine accountability. Especially in the post-communist states, it is vital to prevent further democratic erosion amidst pandemic.

The workshop focuses on the nature of citizen-politician linkages. The core and the principal reference point is the book *Post-communist party systems: Competition, Representation, and Inter-party Cooperation* by Herbert Kitschelt, Herbert, Zdenka Mansfeldova, Radoslaw Markowski, and Gabor Toka. The book, published in 1999, examined the dynamic of citizen politician linkages in Eastern Europe. The workshop will reflect upon and revisit the events of two decades that have passed since the publication of this book through the lenses of citizen politician linkages. It will bring together a new generation of early career researchers and scholars of Central European politics in order to reflect on the book's legacy, impact, and relevance for today's research. It invites scholars to examine citizen-politician linkages before and during the COVID19 pandemic.

**We welcome papers that reflect on the nature of citizen-politician linkages in the 21 century and papers that critically evaluate the impact and relevance of the propositions outlined in *Post-Communist Party Systems* twenty years later. Best papers from the graduate and postgraduate cohort will be invited to present their paper during a second event (25-29 January 2021) with Prof. Herbert Kitschelt and the authors of the book.**

The discussions will be centered around three sets of broader topics:

(1) Where are we now?

How did post-communist party systems change in the last two decades? Do we need significantly readjust our initial expectations about their (relative) stability? Will the pandemic slow or accelerate the radical reshaping of post-communist party systems?

(2) How did we get here?

How did the nature of party competition and representation change in the light of increasing volatility, the emergence of new actors, and the rise of political violence? How does the pandemic affect the nature of party competition and representation?

(3) Where are we going?

What is the future of catch-all parties and social democratic parties? Are they able to adapt to the transformation of the political landscape resulting in fragmentation, polarization, and the dominance of identity politics? Will the pandemic be a turning point in terms of polarization, or will the politics reverse to the pre-pandemic domination of identity politics?

**The workshop is held online, in English, and registration is free.**

**The deadline for abstracts of 200–300 words is 30 September 2020. Prospective paper givers will be notified by 15 October 2020.**

The workshop is organized by Institute of Sociology of the Czech Academy of Sciences; Department of Political Science, Faculty of Social Sciences, Charles University; and Centre of Global Studies, Institute of Philosophy of the Czech Academy of Sciences.

The organizers are: Dr. Zdenka Mansfeldová, Doc. Dr. Michel Perottino and Dr. Petra Guasti.

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