

# Laudation

## For the 2025 EPSR Early Careers Prize

---

The Jury has chosen to award **Matthew Polacko** for the **2025 EPSR Early Careers Prize**. The jury reported the following:

The committee congratulates Matthew Polacko on being awarded the Best Article Prize for his outstanding contribution to the European Political Science Review with “Who Benefits from the Social Democratic March to the Middle?” The article combines conceptual clarity and methodological rigour, with contributions to theoretical debates on party transitions.

Polacko addresses a central puzzle in comparative politics: why social democratic parties have declined electorally in advanced democracies, and which parties have profited from this shift. He situates the study within the spatial theory of party competition and extends the moderation debate by asking not only whether social democrats have moved rightward, but who precisely benefits — and under what conditions.

He marshals extensive data from a sample of 21 advanced democracies, over 327 elections, spanning a period of time from 1965 to 2019.

The article reflects well the journal’s mission: it tackles an important contemporary question, applies innovative and rigorous methods, engages critically with theoretical debates, and appeals to a broad scholarly audience.

---

**Luana Russo, Susan Banducci, Andreas Dür**

---

**EPSR Early Careers Prize Jury**  
European Consortium for Political Research