

## APPLICATION FORM FOR PROSPECTIVE WORKSHOP DIRECTORS

If you wish to apply to direct a workshop at the Joint Sessions in Münster, Germany during 22-27 March 2010, please first see the explanatory notes, then complete this form, which will serve as the **cover sheet** for your workshop proposal. This form should be sent with your **workshop proposal** to the ECPR Central Services. You can do this by emailing both documents as an attached file (in word format .doc or rich text format .rtf) to the ECPR Central Services at [ecpr@essex.ac.uk](mailto:ecpr@essex.ac.uk). Alternatively, you can print up the information and send it as a fax to the Central Services, fax: +44 1206 872500. **The deadline for applications is Sunday, 01 February 2009.**

**Title of proposed workshop:** Populists and Public Office

**Subject area:** Populism, Political Communication, Party Politics.

**Abstract of proposed workshop. Maximum of 250 words (suitable for publication in the academic programme leaflet and on the ECPR web site):**

In recent years, populist parties across Europe have achieved their best ever results, taking up or consolidating positions in regional and national parliaments in some countries and entering governments at all levels in others. However, the presence of populists in elected assemblies/parliaments and in government (at subnational and national levels) raises a number of questions which this workshop will seek to tackle:

- *Policies:* Do populist parties modify their policies once in parliament/government and, if so, how? How are these changes/discrepancies communicated?
- *Relationships with other parties:* How do interactions with other parties change when in parliament/government? How do populists justify the decision to enter government? How do coalition partners justify the decision to invite populists into government? How and why is the decision taken to remove a *cordon sanitaire*?
- *Communication strategies:* How do populists communicate with their supporters, membership and the public while in parliament and government?
- *Electoral support:* What are the reactions in terms of electoral outcomes after populists have entered government?
- *Party organization:* How do party organizations change to meet the challenges of parliamentary and government participation?
- *Effects:* What does the rise of populist parties and their entry into government mean for European party systems and liberal democracy?

We welcome papers that discuss these issues, both from theoretical and empirical perspectives. We particularly hope to attract comparative papers examining populists not only across time and space within Europe, but also at different levels of government and varying stages of party development.

**Name of workshop director(s):** Dr. Daniele Albertazzi (Birmingham) and Dr. Duncan McDonnell (Torino)

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## ECPR Joint Sessions Workshop, Münster 2010

**Title:** *Populists and Public Office*  
**Directors:** Daniele Albertazzi (Birmingham)  
Duncan McDonnell (Torino)

### Outline of Topic

In recent years, populist parties across Europe have achieved their best ever results, taking up or consolidating positions in regional and national parliaments in some countries and entering governments at all levels in others. If we recall that the current decade began with Austria facing EU diplomatic sanctions due to the FPÖ's presence in central government (a situation which would be implausible now), we can see how quickly things have changed for populists in office across the continent. Not only are populist parties gathering more votes, but their presence in subnational and national government has been facilitated by the fact that, on the one hand, the *cordon sanitaires* erected by other party system members have weakened in many countries and, on the other, populists have been increasingly able to justify to their own supporters the decision to enter power alongside the derided 'establishment' parties.

The presence of populists in elected assemblies/parliaments and in government (at subnational and national levels) raises a number of new questions which this workshop will seek to tackle. These can be summed up under the following six headings:

1. *Policies.* Do populist parties modify their policies once in parliament/government and, if so, how? Where they conflict with those which have previously formed key parts of their appeal, how are these changes/discrepancies communicated?
2. *Relationships with other parties.* How do interactions with other parties change when in parliament/government? How do populists justify the decision to enter government? By the same token, how do coalition partners justify the decision to invite populists into government? How and why is the decision taken to remove a *cordon sanitaire* and enter coalition with populists?
3. *Communication strategies.* How do populists communicate with their supporters, membership and the general public while in parliament and in government? How do they maintain their distinct identity as separate from the rest of the political class, particularly when in government? How do they use the media to achieve this?
4. *Electoral support.* What are the reactions in terms of electoral outcomes after populists have entered government? Do losses/gains occur in their heartlands or elsewhere? How do parties react to such outcomes?
5. *Party organization.* How do party organizations change to meet the challenges of (a) participating in parliament/assemblies (at all levels) and (b) participating in government (at all levels)?
6. *Effects.* What does the rise of populist parties and their entry into government mean for European party systems and liberal democracy?

## **Relation to Existing Research**

Despite the existence of numerous texts on the rise of populism in Europe (Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2008; Mény and Surel, 2000 and 2002; Mudde, 2007), there has been very little scholarly work devoted to how populist parties have behaved once they have taken their place in parliament and especially in government, whether at national or subnational level. What has been done consists mostly of individual articles, book chapters and conference papers based on single country case-studies (e.g. Mazzoleni, 1999; Lucardie and Voerman, 2003; Heinisch, 2003; Albertazzi and McDonnell, 2005) rather than comparative work (however, see Albertazzi, 2009). While the recent publication by Deschouwer (2008) does provide some very useful insights relevant to this theme, it focuses however on new parties in government for the first time, rather than on populists in elected office (at all levels) or on parties which have returned to government or on party system issues such as the *cordon sanitaire* and the reactions of mainstream parties. Similarly under-studied has been the question of how populists communicate with their supporters and use the media and whether this changes before and after taking office. In fact, the only work in English (or, to our knowledge, any language) devoted to the topic of populism and the media is that by Mazzoleni, Stewart and Horsfield (2003) which, however, does not focus on the specific context of Europe.

Finally, while Paul Taggart's (2004: 270) observation that 'populist politicians, movements or parties emerge and grow quickly and gain attention but find it difficult to sustain that momentum and therefore will usually fade fast' may apply to 'flash-in-the-pan' cases such as that of the Lijst Pim Fortuyn in Holland and New Democracy in Sweden, it is also true that contemporary populists in many European countries have become significant and durable members of their national party systems. In particular, amongst the likely pitfalls for populist parties, many scholars at the beginning of this decade had argued that the pressure of entering government was too much for populists. For example, Mény and Surel (2002: 18) asserted that 'populist parties are by nature neither durable nor sustainable parties of government. Their fate is to be integrated into the mainstream, to disappear, or to remain permanently in opposition'. As we have seen across Europe in this decade, however, this has not always been the case by any means and one of the key objectives of this workshop is therefore to discuss why that is so.

## **Participants**

The workshop aims to bring together scholars working on a range of relevant topics, including populism, party organizations, party systems, coalition bargaining and formation, political communication, media studies, local and regional politics. We anticipate participants from all areas of Europe given the recent success of populists in both established and new democracies and we will seek to ensure that there is a good mix of countries represented. Similarly, we envisage – and will strongly encourage - applications from scholars at all career stages. Through this workshop, we hope to create a network of researchers from across the continent working on the topic, many of whom will not have met before this workshop.

The following scholars conducting research on the workshop theme in different countries, spanning Western and Eastern Europe, have already said they intend to submit a paper proposal if the workshop

is accepted: Sarah De Lange (Amsterdam), Susi Meret (Aalborg), Jens Rydgren (Stockholm), Olga Wysocka (EUI). It should also be noted that this workshop has the support of the ECPR Standing Group on Extremism & Democracy. If accepted, we will seek the support of the Standing Groups on Political Parties, Local Government and Politics, and Southern European Politics (along with any other relevant groups and lists) in order to ensure the widest possible circulation of the call for papers.

### **Type of Paper**

We welcome papers that discuss the issue described above, both from theoretical and empirical perspectives. We particularly hope to attract comparative papers examining populists not only across time and space, but also at different levels of government and varying stages of party development.

### **Funding**

Participants will be advised to seek funding from their home universities and relevant agencies in their own countries. For example, workshop attendees from the UK will be encouraged to apply for a British academy overseas conference grant.

### **Biographical Note**

**Daniele Albertazzi** is a Senior Lecturer in European Media at the Department of Italian Studies, University of Birmingham. Daniele has recently co-edited (with Duncan McDonnell) *Twenty-First Century Populism: The Spectre of Western European Democracy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008) and (with Clodagh Brook, Charlotte Ross and Nina Rothenberg) *Resisting the Tide - Cultures of Opposition in the Berlusconi Years* (NY, Continuum, 2009). His main current research interests are Italian and Swiss politics and populism in Europe.

**Duncan McDonnell** is a post-doctoral researcher at the Dipartimento di Studi Politici in the University of Turin. In addition to the co-edited volume *Twenty-First Century Populism*, he has published recently on Italian local politics, the Lega Nord and populism. He is the co-editor (with James Newell) of the forthcoming *Party Politics* special edition 'Outsider Parties in Government in Western Europe'. His main current research interests are populists in government and the transformations in Italian local democracy.

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