Workshop Proposal Outline form  
for prospective Workshop Directors for the ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops

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<th>Institutionalization and De-Institutionalization of Political Organizations</th>
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| Outline of topic: | Since the 1980s, hundreds of new political parties and countless other political organizations have been added to the established democracies of western European and Anglo-American democracies. And since the "fall of the wall," lots of new parties, pressure groups, and movements have been developed to participate in democratic processes in new democracies in multiple regions of the world. Many of these organizations have since fallen by the wayside, but many others have survived to this day and many of those have reached institution-hood. And some of those, of course, have since then decayed and de-institutionalized. Many of these developments have had marked consequences for the functioning and long-term stability of their political systems. Little wonder that "institutionalization" and its partner, "de-institutionalization," are once again becoming "hot topics" in the study of political organizations, assuming a level of importance attributed to them some time ago (when many new democracies were being established in the 1960s). |

While there have within the past two years been workshops focused on more general topics involving parties or interest groups (in 2015), and another on impacts of state regulation on parties and interest groups (in 2014), there has not in that period been a workshop focused specifically on the institutionalization of parties, interest groups, and other types of political organization. This proposed workshop is intended to help fill that important gap.

The primary foci of this workshop are the institutionalization and de-institutionalization of **political organizations**, including but not limited to parties, pressure groups, and political movements involved in democratic processes. Papers on individual organizations or comparing across organizations are both germane. (While there is an extensive literature on institutionalization of **party systems**, in new as well as in established democracies, studies of institutionalization of party **systems** are not covered by this workshop.) The central intent is to identify the factors and specific processes involved in taking organizations from birth to institution-hood, and in some cases from institution-hood to decay and eventually collapse, and to identify the situational factors which make certain combinations of factors and processes effective in some contexts and not others.

Because institutionalization is the central concept of this workshop, it is important that all workshop papers start on the same
"Institutionalization" has been used in the political science literature -- and even in just the literature on political parties -- to mean several different things. While some (e.g. Rose and Mackie, 1988) have equated a party's being institutionalized with being recognized as an institution by outsiders, others (e.g. Panebianco, 1988) have emphasized certain organizational attributes to the exclusion of external perceptions. Our approach for the workshop merges elements of each of the others, while at the same time maintaining a distinction between institutionalization and other related concepts such as organizational autonomy, organizational complexity, and centralization of power. For us, institutionalization is a multi-dimensional concept, encompassing (1) "internal" routinization of behavior, (2) "external" perception of the party as having ability to last, and (3) "objective" durability. (More detail on the three dimensions will be supplied to prospective authors.) It is possible to be "high" on one of these dimensions while "low" on one or both of the others. Each workshop paper should carefully identify which aspect(s) are of concern for that particular paper.

Relatively, for purposes of this workshop, the term "de-institutionalization" resembles Huntington’s concept of institutional “decay.” As such, de-institutionalization refers either to discrete instances or to whole processes of reversal from indicators of institutionalization, as when a party abandons routinized procedures, resumes features of “charismatic” parties, or behaves in ways which cause other political actors to doubt its leaders’ ability to endure or to deliver on promises. Again, a paper utilizing this concept should be clear which of these aspect(s) of de-institutionalization apply.

In addition to papers on institutionalization and de-institutionalization per se, studies of organizations which have gone far in some aspects of the institutionalization process but which have not achieved complete institutionalization are also germane to this workshop. This includes cases in new democracies where party institutionalization is not necessarily the desired outcome of central party actors (e.g. in Russia (Hale 2007) and the Philippines (Aceron 2009)).


| Likely participants: | Applicants for the workshop are likely to come from scholars interested in political organizations as organizations, whether those be political parties, pressure groups, social movements, or other types of political organization (including web-based). The topic will have special relevance to students of "new parties" and "new social movements," as well as to those explicitly interested in institutional development and decay. These are likely to include authors of recent work on the subject of organizational institutionalization (e.g. Arter, Kestila-Kekkonen, Basedau, Stroh, and Bolleyer, all of whom are cited in the REFERENCES below), and others who have explicitly expressed |
interest in the topic including Alexander Tan (University of Canterbury, New Zealand), Hilmar Mjelde (University of Bergen, Norway), Annabella Espana-Najeda (University of California, Fresno), Mariia Shagina (University of Luzerne, Switzerland), Samo Kropivnik and Simona Lipicer (both of University of Ljubljana, Slovenia). Other students of party organizations whose interests would be served by participating in this workshop include (but are certainly not limited to) Jan Sundberg (University of Helsinki), Susan Scarrow (University of Houston), David Farrell (University College, Dublin), Ingrid van Biezen (Leiden, The Netherlands), Thomas Poguntke (Dusseldorf), Elisabeth Bakke (University of Oslo). And the workshop will also appeal to scholars studying non-party and/or pre-party political organizations (e.g. Gyda Sindre (University of Bergen; rebel based movements turned parties), Michael Seeberg (South Denmark University; institutionalized civil society organisations and political parties in ‘unlikely democracies’) and Vegard Vibe, (University of Bergen; movements promoting LGT rights). The authors are especially interested in developing a group of participants inclusive of graduate students, other junior colleagues, and more senior scholars, and inclusive of participants from and a set of papers covering multiple geographic regions and levels of democratic development.

Type of Papers required:  
The workshop directors will welcome empirical papers (whether case study or comparative, single-country or cross-national) and also theoretical papers which directly contribute to development of testable empirical theory.

Funding:  
Coming from an associate member institution, Harmel will seek university funding for his travel and participation in the workshop. Svasand’s participation will be funded by the University of Bergen and we anticipate that any Nordic participants will be funded fully by their home institutions.

Robert Harmel is professor of political science at Texas A&M University, with Ph.D. from Northwestern University (1977). His primary research and teaching interests focus on political parties (both American and cross-nationally comparative), with past and current specializations in new parties (new politics and rightwing populist), how’s and why’s of party manifestos, explanations of party change (both in organizational structure and issue profile), and institutionalization/de-institutionalization of party organizations.

Lars Svasand is professor of comparative politics at the University of Bergen, with Cand. Polit. from the University of Bergen in 1972. His primary research and teaching interests focus on political party organizations in both established and new democracies, social movements, interest organizations, elections, and democratization (with special interest in Sub-Saharan Africa). In 2002 he published (with Vicky Randall) an article on "party institutionalization in new democracies" (see REFERENCES). Together, Harmel and Svasand have successfully co-directed two ECPR workshops in the past (most recently in St. Gallen in 2011), with the first resulting in a special issue of Party Politics Journal and the second likely to result in an edited book or special issue (with a possible special issue in the works as of this writing). In 1993 they co-authored an article on party leadership and party institutionalization (see REFERENCES.) They have also (with Hilmar Mjelde) just completed an as-yet unpublished book manuscript titled “The Institutionalization and De-Institutionalization of Rightwing Protest Parties: The Progress
Parties in Denmark and Norway.

References:


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**For further information**, please contact: Marcia Taylor, Conference Coordinator, ECPR Central Services, University of Essex, Wivenhoe Park, Colchester CO4 3SQ, Essex UK.