

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. 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 the proposed workshop:

Electoral change in the 21st Century: de-alignment or re-alignment?

Subject area:

Elections, parties, socialization, value change

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

Patterns of party choice are changing across new and established democracies. The structuring effect of long term predictors of the vote (such as social class, religion and left-right) seem to weaken and short term factors (such as issues, leader evaluations and evaluation of government performance) seem to become more important. Or are we perhaps witnessing a process of re-alignment along new cleavages, such as a socio-cultural dimension that structures conflicts over immigration policies and European integration? To the extent that we witness patterns of re-alignment or de-alignment, are these general developments that affect all generations equally, or do we witness such patterns particularly among the youngest generations? These are the topics we are concerned with in this workshop.

We invite papers with a focus on electoral change, preferably distinguishing between generations. Given the aim of the workshop, priority will be given to comparative studies or studies that otherwise seek generalized explanations for new patterns of voting. We particularly welcome papers that compare between voting patterns in old and new democracies.

Name of workshop director(s):

(maximum of 2 persons)

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Please note that the information above is VERY important, as it will be used in all future correspondence and, if the proposal is successful, printed in the academic programme.

The proposal should be typed with 1.5 line spacing on three/four A4 pages using this sheet as the first page, and should cover the points outlined in the explanatory notes/guidelines available on the ECPR website at www.ecprnet.org.

For further information, please contact:

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Electoral change in the 21st Century: de-alignment or re-alignment?

The topic

“Political parties created democracy and modern democracy is unthinkable save in terms of parties” (Schattschneider, 1942: 1). Yet, modern democracies are going through a transition period, which pose challenges to the central role of parties, and to their relation with the electorate. The position of parties changes, first of all, by increasing levels of education and emancipation of citizens, who will not always support the same party in elections. At the same time, ideological convergence of the larger parties along the left-right dimension makes it easier for voters to switch, but also for parties to compete along issues that are not structured by left-right. Moreover, when parties are ideologically less distinct, voters may evaluate parties more and more by their performance, rather than by their ideological positions. Increasingly, we see political parties and their leaders who do not seek a mandate based on party ideologies, but based on concrete promises to achieve specific preset targets. The electoral mandate thus seems to shift from parties to leaders and from the input to the output side of the political process.

Yet, we know that these kinds of changes do not take place overnight. People get “set in their ways” as Franklin (2004: 216) put it. Certain behavioural patterns, deep-rooted values, as well as political attitudes tend to be very stable. Therefore, “generational replacement is one of the main driving forces behind social and political change” (Hooghe, 2004:331). Aggregate political changes may be the result of new generations entering the electoral arena with different attitudes, different party loyalties, different sets of values than the older generations they replace. Therefore, studies of electoral change should try to distinguish between changes that are affecting all generations, and changes which are due to generational replacement.

This workshop focuses on these questions. Do we see patterns of electoral competition becoming less structured (i.e., patterns of de-alignment), particularly among the youngest generations? Is there a shift from long-term predictors of the vote (such as class, religion and ideology) to short term ones (such as issues, evaluations of leaders and evaluations of government performance)? Or do we see realignment along new cleavages, such as the conflict between winner and losers of globalisation?

Relation to existing research

Most electoral researchers accept the fact that the ‘frozen’ cleavages of Lipset and Rokkan (1967) started to melt not long after these authors coined the term. According to Franklin et al. (1992: 385): “One thing that has become quite apparent is that all of the countries that we have studied showed a decline [...] in the ability of social cleavages to structure individual voting choice”. These changes in the ways in which people arrive at their electoral decisions were largely caused by de-confessionalisation and individual emancipation (e.g., Knutsen 2001; Achterberg 2006). Even if voters would still be voting on the basis of their structural positions, the decline of church attendance in the 1970s would lead to a steady loss of Christian democratic parties (e.g., Knutsen 2004). Additionally, as a result of individual emancipation more and more voters no longer vote for the party of ‘their social group’ (e.g., Evans 1999). In response to these changes, political parties began to seek support not exclusively on the basis

of identification with the social group whose interests they claimed to represent, but also among other social groups in society. Voters, in turn, voted increasingly on the basis of political issues, and various scholars noted that the decline of structural voting went hand in hand with an increase in issue voting (e.g., Rose and McAllister 1986; Franklin 1992).

Issue voting is complex (e.g., Carmines 1991; Carmines and Wagner 2006). Even the politically most interested citizens do not have much detailed knowledge of the positions of parties on all kinds of political issues. Therefore, voters who want to base their vote choice on substantive issues often use party ideology as a cue to decide which party to vote for. Many prior studies have shown that across various European systems the behavior of parties and voters alike has been structured largely by a left-right dimension, which until the 1990s remained the dominant ideological dimension in many of these countries (e.g. Fuchs & Klingemann 1990; Klingemann, Hofferbert & Budge 1994; Van der Eijk & Franklin 1996; Hix 1999).

However, there are reasons to expect that the left/right dimension has partially lost its capacity to structure the behavior of parties and voters. An important development is that the largest parties have converged on the left/right dimension (e.g., Pennings and Keman 2003). Now that the Third wave social democrats have accepted the basic principles of free market capitalism, the larger political parties are less distinct in left/right terms. If there are smaller left/right distances between parties, left/right ideology is less useful as a cue for voters on which to base their choice. The meaning of left/right is, of course, not just in terms of socio-economic policies. New issues, such as environmentalism and immigration have, to a large extent become integrated in the left/right dimension, at least at the party level. However, the new right-wing populist parties that often successfully mobilized support by politicizing immigration policies, often refrain from using the left/right dimension to indicate their political position because they do not want to be seen as 'extreme-right'. Moreover, at the level of voters attitudes towards immigrants are almost uncorrelated with left/right positions (e.g., Van der Brug and Van Spanje, 2009). So, if voters want to affect immigration policies by their vote, they cannot use their own left/right positions as a cue. The combination of these two developments –parties converging on the left/right dimension– and new issues not being structured by left/right– leads to the prediction that left/right ideology will lose its capacity to structure voting behavior.

However, as stated before, these kinds of changes do not take place overnight, and therefore studies of political change also analyze these issues against the background of “generational replacement”: changes affecting all generations versus changes which are due to generational replacement. Hence, the consequences of generational replacement have been explored for value change (e.g., Inglehart, 1984; Flanagan, 1987; Altemeyer 1996; Tilley, 2005), electoral turnout (e.g., Miller, 1992; Lyons and Alexander, 2000; Blais et al., 2004; Franklin, 2005; Wass, 2007), political trust or political support (e.g., Dalton, 2004; Van der Brug and Van Praag, 2007; Hooghe and Wilkenfeld, 2008), and strength of partisan attachments as well as realignment (e.g., Beck, 1976; Carmines and Stimson, 1981; Claggett, 1981; Franklin and Ladner, 1995; Bartels, 2000; Tilley, 2003).

But hitherto, rather little research exists on the extent to which determinants of party choice differ across generations. One of the few examples is the comparative study of Franklin et al. (1992), which showed that the decline of structural voting is to some extent dependent on generational replacement. However, that study is by now rather outdated, so that it is time to take a fresh look at patterns of

realignment and de-alignment across different countries and generations. As new (trend)datasets are nowadays available research papers can analyze these issues from a broader comparative and historical perspective.

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Type of paper

The workshop seeks empirically based papers with a focus on electoral change, preferably distinguishing between generations. Given the aim of the workshop, priority will be given to comparative studies or studies that otherwise seek generalized explanations for new patterns of voting. We particularly welcome papers that compare between voting patterns in old and new democracies.

Participants

Electoral research is one of the most established sub-disciplines in political science. Numerous scholars around the world are working on explanations of electoral change. At the general conferences of the ECPR panels on electoral research have always been very successful and we are confident that the proposed workshop will bring together 20 scholars from different universities. This workshop proposal is endorsed by the ECPR standing group on "Public Opinion and Voting".

Furthermore, with the recently launched COST-Action of the European Commission "The true European voter" this topic has become even more important – especially from a comparative and historical perspective – and hence we expect several papers from electoral research groups, which have signed up for the COST-Action.

Funding

We will actively seek sources of funding and would kindly welcome suggestions from the ECPR about possibilities to apply for additional funds.

Bibliographical note

Wouter van der Brug (1963) holds a Chair in Political Science in the Department of Political Science at the University of Amsterdam since February 2007. His research interests focus on comparative research in collective political behavior, in particular electoral behavior, right-wing populism, political communication, political trust and support, and political parties. He publishes regularly in international political science journals, such as the *European Journal of Political Science*, *Party Politics*, the *British Journal of Political Science*, *Comparative Political Studies*, *Political Behavior*, *West European Politics*, *Electoral Studies* and *Acta Politica*. His most recent book publications are "The Economy and the Vote" (co-authored by Cees van der Eijk and Mark Franklin), published in 2007 by Cambridge University Press, and an edited volume (co-edited by Cees van der Eijk) called "European Elections and Domestic Politics", published in 2007 by the University of Notre Dame Press.

Sylvia Kritzinger (1974) is Professor of Social Science Methodology at the Department of Methods in the Social Sciences of the University of Vienna since September 2007, with a particular focus on quantitative methods. Previously, Sylvia Kritzinger has been Assistant Professor at the Institute for Advances Studies (IHS), Vienna, one of Austria's postgraduate research and training institute. She has published in the fields of European integration, public policy, individual attitudes, public opinion and party politics. Her publications include articles in journals such as *Science*, *Comparative European Politics*, *Journal of Public Policy*, *European Union Politics*, *Government & Opposition* and *Journal of European Policy*. She is Principal Investigator of the recently established Austrian National Election Study. She is also a Steering Committee Member of the *European Science Foundation* scientific program 'Quantitative Methods in the Social Sciences' (QMSS).