

Call for Papers: “Under pressure: Electoral and non-electoral participation in polarizing times”

Workshop at Freie Universität Berlin – 15-16 May 2020

Polarization around new lines of conflict and the emergence of radical, often populist challenger parties are indicating a fundamental restructuring of European politics. However, these social and political conflicts are not only visible in changes in the party system and electoral behaviour, but have an impact on and are driven by mobilization and participation in non-electoral arenas as well: in protests (online and offline), referendums, and (at least at face value) in non-political forms of civic engagement. Our guiding expectation is that only by analysing different forms of mobilization and their dynamic interaction, we can better understand the mechanisms and consequences of political change in contemporary European democracies. How do the new lines of conflict and polarizations shape various forms of political participation? How are recent protest movements integrated into existing cleavages? Or are they manifestations of completely new cleavages? What role do referendums play in further fuelling polarization and contestation? Is something like a new 'substructure' or intermediary system of party-political disputes emerging in civil society? What differences can be observed across time and countries? How do these changes affect the cohesion of European societies? These are questions that we would like to address in the proposed workshop.

The workshop aims to provide new answers to these central questions by bringing together established and younger researchers from various sub-disciplines of political science and sociology. This seems necessary as the analysis of electoral and non-electoral forms of participation and mobilization is still often carried out separately. More specifically, we expect contributions to engage with the concept of political polarization in elections, protests, referendums, or other sites of mobilization and examine participation across different arenas in a comparative framework. Potential contributions might also focus on the politicization of key contested issues, such as immigration or climate change in different arenas of contention, and how such conflicts spill-over to initially non-political sites of civic engagement, such as sports clubs, schools, or cultural events. We make no restrictions concerning the type or level of analysis: we look forward to receiving contributions that map out the "big picture" of political participation and mobilization or those addressing the mechanisms of engagement either at the individual or at the organizational level of analysis.

We invite proposals from the fields of political science, sociology, communication science and other relevant disciplines. The workshop is **open to scholars at all career levels** – we especially encourage junior colleagues to apply. Proposals (incl. title, abstract of max. 300 words, affiliation and disciplinary background of all authors) should be send to endre.borbath@fu-berlin.de no later than **7 February 2020**. **We will cover travel costs and accommodation for all presenters.** Furthermore, we are currently looking into the possibility for an optional joint publication as a 'Special Issue' in a peer-reviewed journal. We will present specific suggestions at the workshop based on initial inquiries.

Organizers

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