

RESEARCH CLINIC

General information

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| Supervisor: | Dr. Brandon C. Zicha (with Dr. Steve Lem visiting professor from Kutztown University) |
| Title of clinic: | Participation, Populism, Policy, and Party System Change |
| Number of students: | 8 |
| Major (<i>if applicable and approved by the Major Convener</i>): | GED (pending approval) |
| (Pre)requisites (<i>if applicable</i>): | For positions 1 & 2: Experience conducting and writing literature reviews. (ie: Intro Comp Pol and Foundations of Research Design) Positions 3 & 4: Foundations of Research Design, Quantitative Research methods Positions 5 & 6: Dutch speaking. Experience developing and conducting surveys preferred. Positions 7&8: Foundations of Research Design, Quantitative Research methods Coursework in Political Party Systems, Comparative Politics, strongly desired. |

Research context

The times seem to be changing. Recent political upheavals and party realignments have suggested that more than a mere ‘populist uprising’ is occurring. Party systems appear to be generally quite unstable, with traditional positions becoming increasingly flexible, and voters expressing far great dissatisfaction generally. More than merely leaving ‘mainstream parties’ voters seem to be hungry for a new type of politics - whatever that might be.

We set out on this process in a somewhat novel way, starting from Peter Mair’s insights about the hollowing out the party systems in the west and the decline of social capital, suggesting that the rejection of the party system is the result of systemic developments in party politics and policy that have given rise to legitimate grievances in the electorate that are expressed in a variety of ways, rather than the more typical narratives of exogenous factors like economic grievance, globalization, xenophobia, or other

factors that require reaction rather than action.

To do so, the research clinic will explore the relationship between party system change, populist party success, and the evolution of political issues, with a special focus on the objective and subjective connection between partisan and parties in comparative and cross time perspective, with special attention to the performance of Forum Voor Democratie in the Netherlands.

This clinic is a reorientation and restarting of an agenda between Dr. Zicha and Dr. Lem that began years ago, and which we are hoping to have enthusiastic and internally motivated students join to study the intersections of party politics, political organization, and party-policy dynamics.

The final two positions will focus on the dynamics of policy change in response to partisan changes in government, with a particular focus on responsiveness in both the United States and in cross-national comparison, focusing on general law production, wage laws, and immigration.

Students' tasks and activities

Students will be focusing on different aspects of the research project, ranging from evaluating and reporting on the relevant literature on the recent change in party systems (a literature largely dominated by a discussion of far-right parties), to collecting, organizing, and evaluating national level data on party position and organization, to developing surveys and interviews to be conducted in the field.

While subject to modification as the project unfolds:

For positions 1 & 2: Will be focused on reading and organizing literature relevant to the intersections of party organization, civic organization, and partisan affect.

Positions 3 & 4: Will focus on collecting data and examining statistically party system changes, survey data, and providing assistance with a number of ongoing projects related to party system change.

Positions 5 & 6: Students will help construct and then conduct surveys and in some cases interviews with voters and party members.

Positions 7&8: Students will work on a number of existing projects and further further projects on the subject of policy change and dynamics using statistical methods.