

Call for Papers – PVS Special Issue 2018

Sebastian Bukow / Uwe Jun (Eds.)

Change and Future Viability of Party Democracy in Europe

The PVS* Special Issue 2018 addresses the change and future viability of party democracies in Europe. Contributions can analyse parties as organisations or aspects of party systems / party competition. Analyses of *party organisations* might focus on the decreasing organisational power of parties (and related reforms), the emergence of new party types and deficiencies in representation. Analyses of *party systems and competition* might focus on issue-related and structural factors (supply- or demand-side of party competition as well as interlinking approaches are welcome).

Parties as organisations

International research on party organisation mainly focuses on European parties and various aspects of political party development. A first stream ties up with the broad debate concerning (new) types of political parties. This raises questions about how parties should be grasped theoretically-conceptually, especially with regard to new or once again relevant party types. Since, for instance, questions about the consequences of declining memberships are directly connected to the conceptual understanding of parties as membership-based organisations, recent developments can only be empirically captured if based on solid theoretical foundations. According to central models of party organisation, professional politicians rather than party members are the core of party organisation, which is of theoretical-conceptual importance. In this context, the aspect of media influencing political parties should also be taken into consideration. Other approaches focus on changes in partisan support: Due to the increasing digitalisation of participation and communication, do sympathisers increasingly play the party members' role? In consequence, what does that mean for political parties? For example, one could raise the question which challenges do party organisations face. Besides the traditional theoretical-conceptual research, the empirical research on party organisations which analyses various facets of party organisation within political parties, should be addressed in particular. This especially includes comparative research, such as comparative analyses based on a party's constitution or on formal data, aiming at analysing the *official story*. Furthermore, the *real story* can be examined by research focussing stronger on party culture and, for instance, analysing patterns of democracy within political parties and their impacts. Researchers might find empirical evidence for theoretically/conceptually developed party types and support for different types of families of parties (inter alia in the context of tendencies of nationalisation).

Party systems and competition

Highly dynamic European integration and transformation processes as well as the latest European crises have strongly expedited (comparative) research on party systems and party competition. Hence, articles in this field should primarily focus on questions about similar and different explanatory patterns of system change in European comparison. Comprehensive analyses should reveal changes in party systems and party competition,

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outline their prospective effects and their consequences for the functioning of party democracies. For example, articles could tie up with research discussing conditions and processes that contribute to the emergence of new parties and their survival (or failure). In this virulent debate, aspects of research on party organisation and party systems are related to one another. This includes recently discussed representation gaps that are used electorally by new parties (supply side). Moreover, the interface between election research and party research could contribute to the development of party democracies (demand side) by using election analyses or analyses of voting behaviour. Thus, essential conclusions for the future viability of party democracies can be drawn. In this context, one could think about the decoupling of parts of the electorate, for instance by economic criteria, and subsequent impacts on parties, party competition, and party democracies. Besides, one could follow up on the debate about to what extent the established patterns of competition dimensions (socio-economic or socio-cultural) still have explanatory power. For this purpose, studies about the hypothesis of party difference fit in as well as programme analyses and conceptual papers about competitive dynamics in party democracies. The formation of a government is likewise important for the viability of party democracies, therefore, dominant tendencies of fragmentation lead to unprecedented forms of coalitions. Articles should challenge international research on coalitions and, in that way, make an enriching contribution to this issue.

Additional perspectives

In addition, articles from a different research field focussing on one of the aforementioned topics are also welcomed. References to comparative democracy research, research on elections, participation, or political culture, that discuss the question of political involvement, keeping the party-democratic promise of democracy and representation as well as the overall future viability of democracy, are conceivable. Furthermore, the debate about the presidentialisation of parliamentary democracies, that directly addresses the parties' role and associated processes of partisan involvement, are compatible. There are further interconnections with different areas of comparative policy research. Especially political agenda setting, the implementation of policies and so forth highly depend on partisan supply side within party democracies. Processes of polarisation as well as the increased rise of populist parties might be relevant in this case. This is not only relevant for nation-state oriented studies, but particularly for studies dealing with the European Union. As an example, the interconnection of changes in party competition patterns and the future viability of party democracies is illustrated by the financial / budgetary crises as well as the crisis of the European Union due to the refugee crisis.

Paper proposals

Papers can primarily be of theoretical-conceptual, methodological and/or empirical nature. Comparative analyses are particularly interesting. Articles that focus on one of the following questions, dealing with parties as organisations or party systems / competition, are highly desirable:

- (1) Which theoretical-conceptual approaches are suitable to grasp and explain the changes mentioned analytically and convincingly?
- (2) Which methodological approaches are suitable for comparative analyses and how should established methods and procedures be improved?
- (3) What is the current empirical state of party democracies in Europe in general and, in particular, their transformation? How can we explain the trends outlined?

Please send paper proposals (max. 6000 characters) by 31 December 2016 to both editors:

Dr. Sebastian Bukow, Heinrich-Heine University Düsseldorf, bukow@uni-duesseldorf.de

Prof. Dr. Uwe Jun, Trier University, jun@uni-trier.de

Full papers (first draft) must be prepared by 15 September 2017, since an authors' conference will take place at Düsseldorf 13 & 14 October 2017 (travel cost reimbursement under consideration). Final papers need to be submitted by 31 December 2017 for being reviewed. Articles should be written either in English or in German.