

Call for papers:

Workshop “Current Perspectives on Party Competition”

Date: 8-9 February, 2024
Location: MZES, University of Mannheim, Germany
Organizers: Lena Maria Huber & Anna-Sophie Kurella

We invite applications for the two-day workshop “Current Perspectives on Party Competition”, to be held at the MZES, University of Mannheim, 8-9 February 2024.

Contents

The political landscape has evolved significantly in recent years, marked by the emergence of new issues such as climate change, the refugee crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic, and conflicts like the Russian war in the Ukraine. This evolving political agenda is also related to an increased diversity and fragmentation of party systems, with the resurgence of radical and populist parties on the left and right of the political spectrum and the growing success of Green parties. These transformations present challenges and opportunities for political parties to restructure their constituencies, not solely based on policy grounds. They must decide whether to adjust their positions, shift their focus towards or away from new issues, or make appeals to distinct social groups. With increasing complexity of the policy space, certain segments of the electorate may seek symbolic representation and rely on their group identities as shortcuts or additions to their policy preferences. Analysing these developments is crucial for political science and holds societal and political relevance in light of the growing societal divisions in European democracies.

The aim of the workshop is to bring together scholars researching how parties compete for votes by their policy offers, their issue emphasis, and by their appeals to social groups, as well as the effect of these strategies on voters.

We invite contributions from scholars with different backgrounds and encourage paper proposals that employ innovative methodologies, empirical analyses, and theoretical advancements. We are open to both single-country and comparative studies in Europe. Topics of interest for contributions include, but are not limited to:

- I. Spatial models, party positions, and policy shifts
- II. Selective issue emphasis, issue engagement, and issue avoidance
- III. Social group and identity appeals
- IV. Consequences of parties’ electoral strategies on voters
- V. Methodological advances in studying party competition

The goal of the workshop is to systematize and deepen our understanding of the complex dynamics of party competition in contemporary political landscapes. We encourage contributions that integrate different perspectives, leverage new data, and/or employ computational and causal inference methods.

Costs and logistics

The workshop will be hosted at the Mannheim Centre for European Social Research (MZES), University of Mannheim. We will cover the costs for hotel accommodation and reimburse travel expenses for all presenters.

Applications and decisions

Please submit your application to mzes-parcomp@uni-mannheim.de by September 30, including:

- Title
- Abstract (max. 300 words), specifying theoretical argument, data, and methods
- Author(s), presenter name, and affiliation
- CV of the presenter

The timeline for the application process is as follows:

- Deadline for abstract submissions: September 30, 2023
- Accept/reject decisions: From October 16, 2023
- Deadline for the submission of papers: February 2, 2024

Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions you may have. And please feel free to share this call widely.

We look forward to your contributions and to seeing you at the University of Mannheim.

Best wishes,

Lena Maria Huber & Anna-Sophie Kurella