

General Seminar

Personalised Politics in the Age of the Cartel Party: Opportunities for Participatory Renewal

Tuesday 12 November 2019

12.30-2.30 pm

Sciences Po, Salle du Conseil
13 rue de l'Université, 75007 Paris

The paper examines the prognosis for partisan politics in the era of the cartel party – and era in which party leaders reign supreme, party democracy is illusory and policy differences between parties are muted. It challenges the view that the personalisation of politics, or personalised politics, stands in opposition to political parties as organisations and threatens their role as mechanisms of linkage between citizens and the state. Rather, it explores the possibilities for partisan democratic renewal and increased citizen engagement that arise with a shift to more individualised, or personalised types of political participation. In doing so, the paper draws on perspectives from social movement and media and communications literatures to argue that personalised politics can be seen as a phenomenon that applies not only to political elites (party leaders, elected representatives, candidates etc.) but one that can also be used to understand the changing role and participatory preferences of party members, supporters and citizens. The paper is structured in three parts. The first outlines the characteristics and empirical markers of personalised politics, moving away from a focus on elites to the engagement profiles of individual citizens – both in the online and offline arenas. The second section examines how political parties have accommodated these new patterns of participation within their organisational arrangements, focusing on the key party functions of candidate selection, policy development and campaign communication. The final section explores how these new organisational structures and processes are reshaping the role of parties as mediators between citizens and the state, and the challenges involved in reconciling personalised politics with collective identity. The primary contribution of the paper is intended to be theoretical and conceptual, but the argument will be substantiated with a comprehensive range of comparative illustrative examples from various established democracies.



Speaker

Anika Gauja, University of Sydney

Anika Gauja's research interests broadly centre on the comparative analysis of political institutions in modern representative democracies. Her work to date has looked at the operation of political parties, assessing the continuing relevance of these institutions as mechanisms for citizen participation in politics and their ability to represent diverse and conflicting interests. She is particularly interested in how political parties adapt to organizational and social change. Anika Gauja also researches in the areas of comparative party law and electoral regulation. She has published in numerous international journals, including *Party Politics*, the *European Journal of Political Research*, *Public Administration*, *Environmental Politics*, *Governance* and the *International Political Science Review*. She is the author of *Party Reform* (Oxford University Press), *The Politics of Party Policy* (Palgrave Macmillan) and co-editor of numerous publications on party members and

electoral politics, including *Party Members and Activists* (Routledge) and *Double Disillusion: The 2016 Australian Federal Election* (ANU Press). Her next book will be *How America Compares* (Springer 2020), co-authored with Rodney Tiffen, Ross Gittens, David Smith and Brendon O'Connor.

She is currently undertaking research projects on party legitimacy and the dynamics of organisational change, the meaning of contemporary party membership, personalised politics, political participation and the politics of the Eurovision Song Contest.

Anika Gauja teaches in the areas of comparative political institutions, Australian politics and government, research methods and approaches, popular culture and politics, and political parties.

She is currently on the Editorial Boards of *Party Politics* and the *Australian Journal of Political Science*.

Discussion

Florence Ecornier-Nocca, Sciences Po, CEE

Florence Faucher, Sciences Po, CEE

Compulsory registration on the link above

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