

## General Meeting

Sarajevo, 19-20 September 2018

### WG 3 - Social Impact, Media Visibility and Participation of Political Science in the Public Sphere

#### REPORT

During the 3 WG sessions the following work has been done:

*Slot 1: 19 September, 11.30 a.m.*

After a brief round of opinions about the adoption of the agenda, the first session has been devoted to a deeper and substantial discussion of the provisional descriptive data elaborated before this General meeting. Of course, the analysis has been mainly focused on the questions, included in the first section of the interview, connected to the problem of the media and social visibility of the discipline. This preliminary analysis, introduced by José Real-Dato, concerns a bulk of 1248 completed questionnaires extracted on 17 September 2018. The relevant questions, included in section 1 (visibility and public involvement) have been analysed looking to their descriptives (frequencies, standard error distribution etc, and by a bivariate analysis centred on the following control variables: country, age, sex, and position (permanent/non-permanent).

In addition to that, a number of technical questions about missing data, labelling, discrepancies and contradictions have been discussed. This is a crucial and very timely discussion in the attempt to understand to what extent the future work of the WP will rely on the quantitative data from our survey and what we still miss in terms of qualitative explorations, additional data (media analysis, ect.) to be collected by a few flash surveys to be launched in the course of 2019, and/or via intensive analyses to be employed with the help of our members and even young SMTS holders. The brief descriptive analysis has also been useful to illuminate possible research questions to be dealt in the future in some of the WG's outputs – either as stand-alone papers or in a volume. Some of these questions refer to 1) the use of social media (Twitter, Facebook, etc.), 2) the (paradoxical) relationship between participation in the public arena and academic career and productivity, particularly among young scholars 3) the relationships between participation patterns and national media systems (supply/demand relationship), and 4) the ethics of public participation.

*Slot 2: 19 September, 4.30 p.m.*

This session has been devoted to the publication plan. We have three areas of action:

1. ***Speaking truth to whom? Political scientists' role in times of crisis***

This project, presented by José Real-Dato, aims at the production of a collective publication on the role and visibility of political scientists in times of crisis.

The special issue or symposium (depending on the final number of contributions) would focus on three main questions: a) What has been the contribution of European political scientists in relevant national debates dealing with the different types of crisis European countries have confronted during the last 10 years (since 2008)? What do they talk about? b) Has the visibility of political scientist increased during the crisis? c) What are the characteristics of these contributions compared with those made by academics in other neighbour disciplines (law, economics, sociology, history, anthropology...)

A good number of manifestations of interest have been collected (*see below*).

## 2. ***Political science and the crisis of Western-style liberal democracy***

This project, presented by José Real-Dato and Luca Verzichelli, aims at producing a collective publication on the social and public activities of European political scientists in the development of the debate on the surge of populism and the decline of liberal democracy.

More precisely, the main focus of this publication would be the role of national political scientists in public debates in those contingencies where some of the European democracies are experiencing the rise of political alternatives that have put the design and functioning of Western-style liberal democracy into question.

Such an analysis will take into consideration a multitude of phenomena that are changing the outlook of the European democracies today. Among them, the rise of populist parties and coalitions, the formation of Eurosceptic majorities in the public opinion and even in many institutional arenas, the introduction of restrictive policy measures in many fields, in the name of new paradigms focused on the demand of security and defence of national stances.

In order to give a concrete contribute to the special issue, all the authors would deal with **questions** such as: a. Which position(s) did political scientists adopt with respect to those parties or movements? b. Is the domestic political science community divided? If so, has this had any impact institutional impact? c. Could/did political scientists anticipate the course of events? d. Have they had any impact or influence in shaping the debate?

All these themes are certainly crucial and many WG participants look interested to that (see below). However, there is not a strong agreement on the core arguments to be developed in this publication. Some doubts about the opportunity of case study analyses on such a delicate matter have emerged. The WG has then decided to consider proposals within the frame of a possible special issue, but the final decision if launching a second SI on the theme of the role of political scientists and the crisis of liberal-Western democracy is postponed.

## 3. ***Stand alone publications and the room for an edited volume***

The meeting of the WG3 has then debated a number of further proposals (see also Slot 1). These are contributions to be presented to the next meeting and submitted both as stand-alone articles or chapters of a PROSEPS collective volume devoted to the visibility and social impact of political science. In particular, the WG has developed a vivid discussion about the

innovative use of social media by “academic” political scientists, the use of twitter and of other social networks, the different types of social and political engagement for Political scientists in Europe, the development of a social role of political scientists in different countries and areas of Europe.

*Slot 3: 20 September 9.15 a.m..*

The session started with a general resume of the WG3 perspective work. Giliberto Capano has attended this session, participating to the discussion about the future steps of the survey data analysis and commenting the proposals from the members of the WG3.

The provisional list of manifestations of interests is, at the moment of the closure of the Sarajevo meeting, as follows:

Special issue 1	Special Issue 2	Stand alone papers
	The Greek case	Survey-related papers
	The case of Romania	
		Social networks and political scientists
	Political science in the Balkans	
	The Baltic states	
The crisis in Finland		
		Paradoxes for young generations of PS
Rusia-West relationships (should check schedule)		Comparative case study Russia and other Central and European countries
	The case of Romania	
Introduction. The Spanish case	Coordination.	
The Spanish case		
	The Polish case	The Polish case
	The Greek case	
	The Polish case	The Polish case
	Coordination SP2 or volume	
Constitutional Reform in Italy		

Other authorships to be indentified for Special Issue 1 would cover the Brexit case, the migration crisis, and other.

Luca Verzichelli has reminded the WG3 participants about the short and long-term deadlines for the WG members. Concerning the production of the survey database, the schedule is the following:

- 20-25 September: action on president of PS European associations in order to maximise the responses.
- 25 September -10 October: new phase of depuration of missing or wrong addresses
- 15 October. Start of the 2<sup>nd</sup> reminder. This should be accompanied by the endorsement letter of PS associations’ president
- 1 November. Start of the 3<sup>rd</sup> reminder. This time accompanied by a new letter stating the formal end of the survey.
- 5-10 December. Closing of the dataset

- 10 January. Production of a working manageable file to be circulated to the WG leaders.[the date should be anticipated in case the data extraction do not entail heavy works of recoding and cleaning]
- Concerning the substantive work of the WG, the schedule is the following: Around the end of September 2018: circulation of advanced drafts of both the “call for Special Issue papers”
- Around 20 October 2018: collection of abstracts and submission of SI proposals
- March 2019 (reunion of the WG3): production of draft papers to be discussed during the meeting
- September 2019 (General meeting): revision of the papers and production of WG3 general report (including the data analysis on survey results)

The discussion has continued in joint meeting with the members of WG4. The main goal of the joint meeting was to assure the necessary country-expertise to cover the qualitative data gathering on the different “environments” for the transformation of the advisory role of political scientists in Europe. After a short but dense exchange with all the participants, the leader of WG3 have concluded that, overall, at least 24 countries could be covered by the expertise of the cost action members included in both the WGs.

Moreover, the work of data gathering – a simplified collection of national synopses on the country specificities on media and advisory roles, can be relevant also for the purposes of WG3, since each country expert will be asked also to give some basic information on the type of media environment and on the different legal and cultural constraints that can be found by those academics and independent scholars who decide to exercise their rights to serve as opinion makers or even as policy or institutional advisors.

Overall, the two WGs unified can count on a coverage of at least 24 European countries.

WG3 leaders should produce a template (based on the existing literature), to be incorporated in the common ground data to be provided to WG3 and WG4, in order to collect information about national media systems.