



European
Sociological
Association



Social Movements Midterm conference 2020

“Democratic struggles: contention, social movements and democracy”

Call for papers



organized by

**ESA Research Network 25 Social Movements
ECPR Standing Group on Participation and Mobilization
University of Tartu**

at

Johan Skytte Institute of Political Studies
University of Tartu, Estonia
27-29 of May 2020

Conference organizers: Joost the Moor (Stockholm University), Katrin Uba (Uppsala University and University of Tartu, local organizer), Katerina Vrablikova (University of Bath), Mattias Wahlström (University of Gothenburg), and Lorenzo Zamponi (Scuola Normale Superiore)



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Many democracies experience turbulent developments. Some countries undergo erosion of democratic institutions, sometimes connected with rising authoritarianism and illiberalism, some face broad public dissatisfaction with politics, providing a hotbed for populist movements. Unresponsive political elites and power centers outside democratic control, exercising power over processes and goods of fundamental human importance – such as climate change, migration and access to decent housing – create a landscape where it seems increasingly difficult to exert influence from below. What is the role of protest and social movements in those processes? How do movements deal with problems of representation and the volatile concept of ‘the people’? How do movements regarded as an anti-democratic or populist threat and those active in the name of fostering democracy mobilize? Are today’s democracies deteriorating or do the current developments signify the very principle of democracy as an ongoing political contestation between mass and elites? The conference will address various questions related to social movements and democracy as well as other key questions in current social movement research. Specifically, it will focus on issues, such as: contentious politics in the context of democratic backsliding; how movements strengthen and challenge democracy; youth activism; social movements and democratic innovations; framing and narratives in collective action; radicalism and populism; repression and political violence; internal structure of social movements; collective action in non-democratic regimes; radical right, housing, and climate change mobilizations; democratic citizenship and rights activism. Submissions focused on other key questions in current social movement research that are not related to the conference theme are encouraged as well.

We invite submissions from a variety of theoretical and disciplinary perspectives and using a variety of methodologies. The midterm conference aims to bring together distinguished scholars and younger researchers not only from sociology and political science, but also from related disciplines, including economics, geography, anthropology, psychology, history, international relations, and area studies that rely on different approaches using qualitative and/or quantitative empirical research as well as political theory to address these and other topics. Submissions to do a presentation via Skype will be also considered.

The conference will feature key note speeches by:

- Antoaneta Dimitrova (Leiden University)
- Swen Hutter (Freie Universität Berlin)
- Walter Nicholls (University of California, Irvine)
- 1 key note TBA

The deadline for applications is the 15th of January 2020.

Participants can apply for one or more roles:

- a) presenting a paper,
- b) organizing a panel and have a panel chair presentation (without a paper),
- c) presenting a project in a PhD mentoring session,



- d) being a discussant in a PhD project mentoring session,
- e) attending the conference without a presentation

To apply for the conference, please send an email to socialmovements2020@gmail.com indicating the type(s) of participation listed above you are applying for:

- a) For paper presentation, send an abstract of no more than 250 words. Abstract should include the research question or a specific research puzzle, the main argument of the paper, approach and methods used to address the puzzle. If you want to present your paper in a specific panel (listed below), indicate the panel that in your application.
- b) For organization of a panel, send a short outline of a panel (a title and a few sentences describing the contents and contribution of the panel), a short bio of the panel chair, and the details of some potential participants (who will still need to apply individually with a paper).
- c) For a presentation of a PhD project in a mentoring session send an abstract of no more than 250 words including “mentoring session” in the title of the email.
- d) For a discussant in a PhD project mentoring session, send a short bio and areas of your expertise.
- e) For attending without a presentation, describe in a few sentences why you are interested in the topic of the conference.

You can apply for the following panels:

- Polarization a double-edged sword? Conflict and cooperation in protest and party politics. Chaired by Jacquélien van Stekelenburg (VU Amsterdam)
- The rise and spread of traditional values: social movements against liberalism. Chaired by Ondrej Cisar (Charles University)
- The ties that fight. Collective action networks between online and offline spaces of contention. Chaired by Elena Pavan (University of Trento)
- Advances in protest event research. Chaired by Swen Hutter (Freie Universität Berlin)
- Title TBA; Chaired by Walter Nicholls (University of California, Irvine)
- Title TBA; Chaired by Antoaneta Dimitrova (Leiden University)

Applicants will be informed of the outcome by email no later than the 25th of January. Those offered places must confirm their participation within 15 days, after which places may be offered to applicants on the reserve list. **Paper presenters** are required to submit a max. 7000-8000-word paper no later than 20th of May 2020, papers should be sent to socialmovements2020@gmail.com. **Presenters of a PhD project** are required to submit research proposals up to five pages upon which they would wish to receive feedback no later than 20th of May 2020 to socialmovements2020@gmail.com. They will be coupled with two senior scholars who are specialized in the proposal’s subject, and who will read the proposal. The young scholar will get 30 minutes with each senior scholar to receive feedback and to get to know their more senior colleagues.



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The Conference has no fees and will provide most lunches and dinners. We are happy to offer 3 travel and accommodation grants (400 euro) to selected participants. Historically underrepresented groups, such as women, people of color, young scholars, individuals with disabilities, and scholars based outside Western Europe and North America are strongly encouraged to apply for the travel and accommodation grants. Please indicate in your submissions whether you would like to apply for these grants, and if so, please provide a short statement of your financial situation. The allocation of the grants among those with a convincing need for financial support will be decided based on an assessment of the quality of the submitted abstract.

Traveling to Tartu

For more details on how to travel to Tartu, see: <https://www.ut.ee/en/welcome/arrival-estonia>

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