

Sektion Vergleichende Politikwissenschaft

Digitale Jahrestagung

4. Oktober 2021, per zoom

Call for Papers:

Challenges to Comparative Politics – new topics, concepts and methods

Comparative Politics currently faces numerous challenges, as it has been emphasized by one important figure of the discipline recently. As Philippe Schmitter states, “Comparative Politics “should not and will not be the same as in the past”. He further underlines that "comparison is an analytical method that is probably the best available to promote valid and cumulative knowledge about policy, [but] [...] comparison has always had a practical objective, namely to provide useful descriptive information on how policies are conducted in countries other than one's own” (Schmitter 2016: 398). And it is precisely at this point that the current challenges are situated: the classical research subjects and fields of Comparative Politics are currently undergoing fundamental changes.

Political Science faces phenomena such as the breakdown of classical political systems and Western Party systems, a worldwide rise of populism, new social movements fighting against democracy, a renationalization, and an increasing role of diversity both in politics and societies. This also means that the classical research topics of Comparative Politics, but also established tools and approaches of analysis are put to a test. Approaches that are based on the idea of separated nation states have difficulties grasping global transnational interdependencies. Eastonian political systems models and concepts of modern mass parties reach their limits when confronted with new social movements that use social media and refrain from classical ways of activism and partisanship. The need to take into account these changes in comparative analyses has significant implications for the research process. As a consequence, the methodological and theoretical challenges involved and possible solutions must be discussed (Simonis et al. 2010, Schmitter 2016).

This state of the art is the basis for the conference. Comparative Politics currently faces a number of new theoretical, conceptual and methodological challenges – the new task is to include the changes and new developments in politics and society sketched above into the research subjects, methods and research designs. At the same time, due to technical developments and more interdisciplinary openness, Comparative Politics has new data and methods at its disposal.

All this also puts established standards and traditions in Comparative Politics to a test, raising questions such as the following: Which (new) theories, concepts, methods and approaches are needed in order to tackle the new challenges? Do we want to explain the new phenomena, or is it first necessary to understand them? In what way do we need to broaden the established toolbox in Comparative Politics? To what extent and in which fields can we continue to largely rely on quantitative methods and research designs that focus on large-n studies and/or variable testing? What are the potentials and limits of using the broad variety of qualitative and interpretative methods, starting with expert interviews and ending with ethnography and participant observation? To what extent and in which direction do we need to take into account new and (recently) available data and methods? In what way will they influence the development of Comparative Politics and research question we will ask in the future? And to what extent is Comparative Politics influenced by a Northern and Western tradition of theorising and thinking? In what respect do we need to integrate Non-Western approaches more thoroughly?

The next conference of the Section for Comparative Political Science will provide the opportunity to discuss these questions, as well as the concrete challenges to Comparative Politics. We would like to discuss the themes and topics that are currently relevant for Comparative Politics, asking to what extent these are new and in what respect they differ from previous ones. Furthermore we aim at discussing the theoretical and conceptual implications as well as the methodological challenges that follow from the new constellation. To discuss these and related themes, we welcome submissions for closed or open panels on topics such as:

- What are the current challenges to Comparative Politics – regarding topics, fields, approaches and new developments in politics?
- What are the related conceptual challenges?
- Which theoretical and methodological consequences follow from them?
- Which new approaches and new topics are to be taken into account?

The conference will take place as a digital event **on October 4th, 2021**.

The speakers of the Section as well as the DVPW Board would particularly like to give young scientists the opportunity to participate in DVPW events; we also would like to encourage women to actively participate in our conference.

We would be very pleased about your abstracts submissions up to may 31st, 2021. Please send them to the following address: Vergleichende-Politikwissenschaft@dvpw.de

Reference

Schmitter, C. Philippe. 2016. Comparative Politics: its Past, Present and Future. *Chinese Political Science Review* 1: 397-411.