



CEVIPOL



**Vacancy PostDoc Researcher
ERC Project “Non-elected Politics. Cure or Curse for representative democracy?”**

Vacancy notice for a postdoc researcher in Political Science

The Department of Political Science at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) is hiring a postdoc researcher for the POLITICIZE project (ERC Consolidator Grant). The project has started in September 2018 and is financed for 5 years. The candidate recruited will be offered a 3-year mobility grant starting on September, 1st 2020 (to be discussed).

We are especially looking for a postdoc researcher with strong expertise in citizens' surveys and in experimental methods (survey experiments, conjoint experiments, lab experiments).

Interest for democratic innovations, the role of experts in democracies and citizens' attitudes towards democracy is needed, even if no previous research on these topics has been conducted by the applicant.

Synopsis of the POLITICIZE project

Evidence of a growing disengagement of citizens from politics are multiplying. Electoral turnout reaches historically low levels. Anti-establishment and populist parties are on the rise. Fewer and fewer Europeans declare they trust their representative institutions. In response, we have observed a multiplication of institutional reforms aimed at revitalizing representative democracy.

Two in particular stand out: the delegation of some decision-political making powers to (1) selected citizens and to (2) selected experts. But there is a paradox in attempting to cure the crisis of representative democracy by introducing such reforms. In representative democracy, control over political decision-making is vested in elected representatives. Delegating political decision-making to selected experts/citizens is at odds with this definition. It empowers the non-elected. If these reforms show that politics could work without elected officials, could we really expect that citizens' support for representative democracy would be boosted and that citizens would re-engage with representative politics? In that sense, would it be a cure for the crisis of representative democracy, or rather a curse?

Our central hypothesis is that there is no universal and univocal healing (or harming) effect of non-elected politics on support for representative democracy. In order to verify it, we propose to collect data across Europe on three elements:

- (1) a study of the detailed preferences of Europeans on how democracy should work and on institutional reforms towards non-elected politics,
- (2) a comprehensive inventory of all actual cases of empowerment of citizens and experts implemented across Europe since 2000,
- (3) an analysis the impact of the introduction of non-elected politics on citizens' attitudes towards representative democracy. For the first and third elements, we will rely use an innovative combination of online survey experiments and of panel surveys.

Profile

- Holder of a PhD in political science or related disciplines, obtained maximum 8 years ago
- Cannot have resided in Belgium for more than 2 years over the last 3 years (legal requirement for mobility grants)
- Research interest and/or expertise in democratic innovations, participatory democracy, experts' involvement in politics, opinion surveys, experimental methods
- Very good command of quantitative and survey methods for social and political sciences
- Expertise in experimental research, especially in survey experiments
- Good command of dataset management and statistical software
- Good command of data visualization tools would be an asset
- Good organizational and time management skills
- Ability to work in a team
- A good command of English, and French (or willingness to improve one's command of French during the scholarship)

Job description

This is a call for applications for a full-time mobility post-doc grant for three years.

The postdoc researcher will become an active member of the ERC-consolidator research project "Non-elected Politics. Cure or Curse for representative democracy?" (CureorCurse). The project is coordinated by Professor Jean-Benoit Pilet. It offers a stimulating working environment in a dynamic and international research team.

The researcher will be based at the Cevipol (ULB). He/she will have an office and relevant administrative support at ULB. She/he will have no teaching obligations. He/she will be expected to contribute to collective work on the project, and to present and publish individual or collective research outputs.

According to the experience of the candidate, the monthly net income will range around 2500 euros.

The Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB) is an equal opportunity employer.

Tasks

Within the project, the selected postdoc candidate will perform the following tasks:

- Contribute to the preparation and the fieldwork for the comparative survey of citizens' democratic preferences across 10 European countries. The survey would contain elements of survey experiments;
- Develop new ideas for surveys and survey experiments related to citizens democratic preferences and how they evaluate involving non-elected actors in policy-making;
- Manage the administrative tasks (reporting, tenders, ...) related to the survey.

STARTING DATE is September, 2020 (open to discussion).

INTERESTED?

Questions regarding the Postdoc scholarship can be addressed to Professor Jean-Benoit Pilet (jpilet@ulb.ac.be)

APPLICATIONS should include (in one single PDF document):

- a copy of the passport/ID
- a letter of motivation explaining the candidate's general interest for the project
- a full CV (including grades obtained for each study year, the title of your PhD thesis, and a list of publications, courses taken, and conference presentations)
- a short research statement presenting what line of research within the ERC project the candidate propose to conduct,
- Name, affiliation, email and phone number of two referees who can be contacted if necessary

The deadline for applications is August, 17th 2020.

A skype or face-to-face interview may be organized.

Please send the above documents electronically to Professor Jean-Benoit Pilet (jpilet@ulb.ac.be)

For more information on the project, visit our website
<http://politicize.eu/>