

ECRP II

European Collaborative Research Projects

**Political Communication
Cultures in Western Europe –
A Comparative Study**



European Collaborative Research Projects in the Social Sciences (ECRP)

The ECRP scheme was developed in 2000, in cooperation with national research councils and funding organisations, as a mechanism to promote scientific collaboration and networking in the social sciences in Europe. The scheme offers opportunities to conduct problem-driven, multinational research on any topic within the social sciences that demonstrates suitability for cross-border collaboration. Projects need not be exclusively European in their focus.

- The ECRP scheme operates in the responsive-mode and its annual Call for Proposals is open to applications on any topic in the social sciences.
- The ECRP scheme comes under the umbrella of the EUROCORES scheme, which provides a flexible framework for national funding organisations to support European-level research in and across all scientific domains.
- Participating national research funding organisations provide the research funding; from 2009 they also support the ESF's coordination of the scheme and additional dissemination and capacity-building activities in the funded projects.

EUROCORES (European Collaborative Research)

The aim of the European Collaborative Research (EUROCORES) scheme is to enable researchers in different European countries to collaborate in areas where greater scale and scope are required for Europe to reach the critical mass necessary for top-class science in a global context. The scheme provides a flexible framework for national basic research funding and performing organisations to join forces to support excellent European research in and across all scientific areas.

Until the end of 2008 scientific coordination and networking support was funded through the EC FP6 Programme, under contract no. ERAS-CT-2003-980409. As of 2009, the national funding organisations provide funding for the scientific coordination and networking in addition to the research funding.

www.esf.org/eurocores

Political Communication Cultures in Western Europe – A Comparative Study

The objective of the international study **Political Communication Cultures in Western Europe** is to analyse the attitudes, norms and values that drive the relationship between political actors and journalists, and thereby to detect the underlying patterns of political communication behaviours in Western democracies. Taken together, these orientations can be summarised as the “political communication culture” of a country.

By surveying 300 members of the political and media elites in each of several countries, the study aims to systematically map out the existing types of political communication cultures in Western Europe and to detect similarities and differences across countries.

In the first phase of the project, surveys were carried out by eminent political communication scholars in eight Western European countries:

Austria, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and Switzerland. In the second phase of the project, the survey is being conducted in France.

The project is carried out under the auspices of the EUROCORES-ECRP II (2006) programme. Funding is provided mainly by the national research councils and funding agencies of the participating countries (see p.7 for the full list of funding organisations supporting the ECRP II programme).

Project Website:
www.communication-cultures.eu

POLITICAL COMMUNICATION CULTURES

in Western Europe

www.communication-cultures.eu



Project Phases

Phase 1: Development of the Questionnaire

To find out about the attitudes of the political and media elites to the process of political communication, a standardised quantitative questionnaire has been developed which includes items relating to attitudes to: (1) the underlying structural conditions of the political and media system; (2) the influences of public opinion; (3) the generation and the framing of political issues and the techniques of issue management; and (4) the normative orientations of the actors to their mutual relationship.

Phase 2: Identification of Relevant Samples

For each country, an individual sampling scheme has been developed which allows identification of the envisaged number of 300 members of the political and media elite. All sampling schemes follow a positional approach. The political elite is comprised of politicians in elected office, party elites and political spokespersons. In some countries, members of interest groups and the administration are included as well. The media elite consists of the most important journalists reporting on national politics in each country.

Phase 3: Field Work

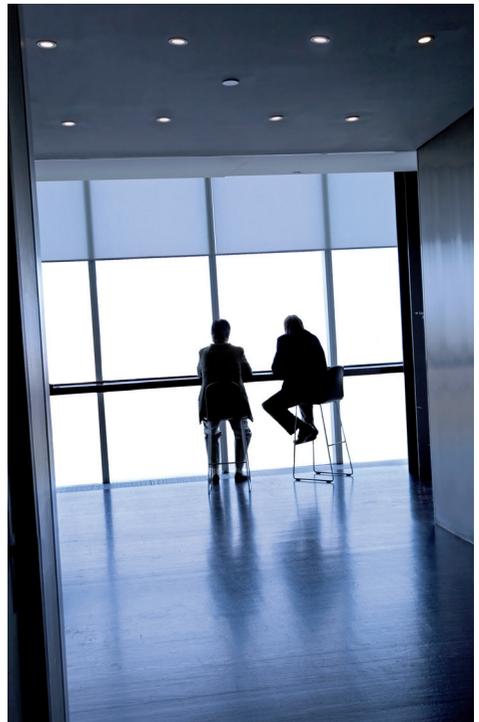
The interviewing process itself takes place from spring 2008 to summer 2009. For the interviews, the participating country teams will work with renowned research institutes in their respective countries. Interviews will be conducted mainly by telephone (CATI), supplemented by face-to-face interviews.

Phase 4: Data Analysis

After having completed phase 3, the responses will be thoroughly analysed using statistical methods. In doing so, truly comparative conclusions can be drawn about the state of political communication culture in Western Europe. We expect to identify various types of political communication culture and link them to specific institutional settings and actor constellations.

Phase 5: Dissemination of Findings

After completing the project, the relevant findings will be published together in a book. Dissemination of findings will also take place via scientific journals as well as presentations at international conferences. The results, however, will not only be of academic value, but will also give insights of practical relevance for politicians and journalists themselves. It is therefore envisaged to additionally disseminate the findings in conferences in the national capitals of the participating countries in order to discuss them with practitioners in the field.



Investigators

Germany

Project Leader Professor Barbara Pfetsch is Professor of Communication and Director of the Institute for Media and Communication Studies at the Free University of Berlin, Germany. She previously held a position as Professor of Communication Studies at the University of Hohenheim and as a senior researcher at the Social Science Research Centre Berlin (WZB). She was a Fellow at the J.F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and the Centre for German and European Studies at Georgetown University, Washington D.C.
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“ **Political Communication Cultures in Western Europe** is a comparative study which aims to analyse the relationship between political elites and the media in several Western European countries. We investigate the attitudes, norms and values that generate the milieu in which politicians, communication advisors and journalists interact on a daily basis.

All in all, more than 2000 politicians, professionals and journalists will be interviewed in a standardised survey. By highlighting the specific milieus of political communication we expect to make a major contribution to understanding the representation of politics in modern Western media societies.

Our study is funded through the European Science Foundation's European Collaborative Research Projects scheme in the Social Sciences (ECRP) which is an ideal format for conducting comparative research across Europe. With the support of the ESF the project brings together some of Europe's most renowned researchers in political communication. By coordinating and supporting our network the ESF provides us with a unique opportunity to study the cultures of political communication across Europe. ”

Professor Barbara Pfetsch

Institute for Media and Communication Studies
Free University of Berlin, Germany

THE FOLLOWING NATIONAL FUNDING ORGANISATIONS SUPPORT THE ECRP II PROGRAMME:

Fonds zur Förderung der wissenschaftlichen Forschung (FWF)

Austrian Science Research Fund, Austria

Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen (FWO)

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Research Promotion Foundation (RPF), Cyprus

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Czech Science Foundation, Czech Republic

Forsknings- og Innovationsstyrelsen (FIST)

Danish Agency for Science Technology and Innovation, Denmark

Suomen Akatemia/Finlands Akademi (AKA)

Academy of Finland, Finland

Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS)

National Centre for Scientific Research, France

Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG)

German Research Foundation, Germany

The Icelandic Centre for Research (RANNÍS), Iceland

Irish Research Council for Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS), Ireland

Fonds National de la Recherche (FNR)

National Research Fund, Luxembourg

Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek (NWO)

Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research, Netherlands

Norges Forskningsråd (NF)

Research Council of Norway, Norway

Ministry of Science and Higher Education

Poland

Ministerio de Ciencia e Innovación (MICINN)

Ministry of Science and Innovation, Spain

Forskningsrådet för arbetsliv och socialvetenskap (FAS)

Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research, Sweden

Vetenskapsrådet (VR)

Swedish Research Council, Sweden

Schweizerischer Nationalfonds zur Förderung der Wissenschaftlichen Forschung (SNF)

Swiss National Science Foundation, Switzerland

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The Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey, Turkey

Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)

United Kingdom



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