

Scholarship position (x3)

Name of the institution: University of Opole, Faculty of Social Sciences, Political Science Institute

Name of the position: Doctoral Scholarship
(available also for students in the final years of MA programmes)

Requirements:

We are looking for a person who:

- fulfils the NCN (Narodowe Centrum Nauki) requirements regarding the doctoral scholarships (see details below and <https://www.ncn.gov.pl/finansowanie-nauki/koszty-w-projektach/stypendia-naukowe>)
- demonstrates interest in the field of organised interest groups and knowledge of at least one of the three following fields: energy, health care, higher education.
- is fluent in English at the academic level.
- demonstrates sufficient knowledge of one of the following languages: Polish, Czech, Hungarian, Slovenian (or a closely related language, e.g. Serbo-Croatian or Slovak), at a fluency level enabling scientific investigation.
- demonstrates knowledge and skills in qualitative and quantitative research methods.

Tasks:

Research activities will be conducted in the framework of a research project (OrgIntCEE) entitled: “The Missing Link: Examining Organized Interests in Post-Communist Policy-Making” (Project DFG-NCN / Beethoven, nr 2016/23/G/HS5/01001), led by dr habil. prof. Rafał Riedel, and – on the German side – by prof. Michael Dobbins from the School of Social Sciences / Goethe University Frankfurt am Main.

The overall objective of the project is to explore the structures, democratic-participative incorporation and impact of organized interests in Central and Eastern Europe. The applicants will analyze the interest group landscape in three policy areas – energy, healthcare and higher education – in four post-communist countries: Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovenia. First the authors will develop a database of the “interest group ecology” in each policy area. The applicants then explore how interest groups organize civil society and contribute to the political preference aggregation process, while examining the structure of the interest group landscape. The main part of the analysis explores the clout that interest groups wield over policy outputs. Against this background, we derive a series of hypotheses based on *interest group-related*, *issue-related*, and *socio-economic* factors, which potentially condition the influence of organized interests in post-communist politics. To do so, we address the extent to which interest groups impact partisan preferences and then draw on the so-called “preference realization method”, according to which interest group preferences are measured against the initial government proposal, the official legislative bill and the final output. In parallel, we examine how European integration and EU accession have affected the structure, democratic-participative means, and impact of organized interests in CEE. Has European integration resulted in the consolidation and professionalization of domestic interest groups, ultimately strengthening their impact on policy output? Or has Europeanization prompted major interest groups to shift their activities to Brussels, thus increasing the clout of the state or previously structurally disadvantaged organized interests? To explore these questions, the applicants rely on comparative case studies based on the qualitative methods of process tracing and survey questionnaires.

The research project will tackle a scientific area that has been overlooked in both previous research on organized interests in comparison and on post-communist governance in generally, the latter of which has focussed primarily on formal political institutions and the consolidation of party systems. Specifically, the project will cover key new insights on the “nuts and bolts” of modern Central and Eastern Europe governance in the context of the political and socio-economic transformation and Europeanization. Moreover, the analyses will provide crucial insights on the emergence and evolution of civil society, which can be seen as a crucial prerequisite for functioning democracies. Thus, the project will contribute to our understanding of how societal demands are channelled into the political process and how societal organizations shape three of the most important policy areas for the long-term prosperity of nations - energy, health care and higher education.

Submission deadline: 3rd December 2017, 24:00

Form of submission: electronic - by e-mail to: riedelr@wp.pl

Conditions of the scholarship:

The successful scholarship holders will receive a monthly payment of 3000,- PLN

The research programme is scheduled for 36 months (periodical evaluations are planned every 6 months, conditioning the prolongation of the scholarship)

The planned beginning of the scholarship – January 2018

Additional information:

The scholarship will be subject to NCN regulations. The scholarship may be granted to a person who is enrolled in a PhD programme (official status of the PhD candidate) or is in the final stages of concluding a MA degree programme (final years of the MA programme).

The candidates are requested to send their application package (in Polish or English) to prof. Rafał Riedel including the following documents (integrated as one PDF file):

- CV
- cover letter,
- list of achievements – publications, grants, scholarships, prizes, internships and other elements proving the candidate's competences,
- (if available) copies of certificates documenting language skills

Recommendation letters from previous supervisors are welcomed but not obligatory.

The University is an equal opportunity employer. The University of Opole hence invites applications of qualified scholars whose candidacies will receive equal consideration irrespective of gender, ethnicity, physical handicap or other characteristics unrelated to expected performance in the advertised positions. Only selected candidates will be contacted in order to be invited to the further stages of the recruitment procedure.