

# **Elections to the Steering Committee of the Standing Group on Political Methodology**

## **Candidate Statements**

**August 2016**

### **Candidate 1: Jos Elkink <jos.elkink@ucd.ie>**

I am a lecturer in Social Science Research Methods at University College Dublin, and I specialise in statistical and computational methods in political science, with applications in voting behaviour and Russian politics and methodological work in spatial econometrics. My work appears in the Journal of Politics, Comparative Political Studies, Journal of Regional Science and Electoral Studies and I recently co-edited a volume The Act of Voting.

While my work focuses entirely on quantitative methods, it is my belief that social science can only thrive through diversity in methods and triangulation of findings. My for me most exciting research has involved the application of contemporary statistical techniques to a typical qualitative arena of study, the Kremlin, corroborating earlier qualitative findings. The intersection of qualitative and quantitative methods is where the most exciting methodological developments currently take place.

While it used to be a discipline that primarily incorporates methods from other fields, contemporary political science is at the cutting edge of research methods and contributes proactively to new techniques, e.g. in causal inference, text analysis, new case study methods, statistical network analysis, etc. Techniques developed within political science are being adopted by researchers in many fields. Political science methodology is gradually becoming a full fledged subdiscipline, with extensive engagement at international political science conferences.

My goal would be to stimulate the development, propagation and critical evaluation of new methodologies by European political scientists and to encourage the growth of methodology as a subdiscipline of political science.

### **Candidate 2: Bernd Schlipphak <bernd.schlipphak@uni-muenster.de>**

As a professor for empirical research methods I teach both quantitative and qualitative methods in traditional lecture formats as well as in student research seminars. My own research – situated at the intersection of International Relations, Political Psychology and Political Communication – currently focusses on the use of surveys, (survey) experiments and (automated) quantitative content analysis. As a member of the steering committee, my main goals would be twofold. First, I would like to establish an own Methodology section within the ECPR press program. Given that one of the current editors, Laura Sudulich, is highly interested in research methods, the timing for that seems ideal. Second, I would try to support workshops/conference formats which analyze methodological advances in other fields of PolSci – such as in IR or Comparative Politics – to bring colleagues and research interests from different sections together.

*[Note from the election committee: in the first call for self-nominations, personal statements were limited to 1,000 characters. Afterwards, we raised the limit to 3,000, but could not reach this candidate so as to let him extend his statement. We therefore encourage voters to consult the following page for additional information:  
<https://www.uni-muenster.de/IfPol/personen/schlipphak.html>]*

**Candidate 3: Theofanis Exadaktylos <t.exadaktylos@surrey.ac.uk>**

I am Dr. Theofanis Exadaktylos, Senior Lecturer in European Politics, Department of Politics, University of Surrey. I have a long history behind research methods since my doctoral days, and I continue to develop myself in that direction. I am interested in the practical applications and research design challenges that new methodologies bring on classic debates of political science and old methodologies bring on cutting edge research puzzles. I am fascinated by the transferability of methods across the diversity of the subfields of our discipline and I am a firm believer that creating methodological silos is constraining our vision of political science and international relations.

So far, I have co-edited a book on Research Design in European Studies with Claudio Radaelli (Palgrave) and I have contributed a number of chapters in edited handbooks on methodological rigour, innovation and applications. At the University of Surrey, I undertake the full overview of the training on research methods, across all levels of study, from introduction to methods for undergraduates to full research labs for our postgraduate researchers.

Through the Steering Committee of the Standing Group I hope to gain further insights from our broad community to understand the extent to which any methodological approach can further our research objectives and, to work to facilitate the dissemination of this understanding across members of the group. I aim to continue my efforts to increase awareness of the pluralism of approaches to different audiences and in a collaborative manner, and most importantly to early career researchers and doctoral students.

I have had the pleasure to see this Standing Group gaining new momentum, and through the fantastic responsiveness of our members, to help organize successful sections in three General Conferences (Glasgow, Montreal and Prague) as well as a collaborative panel in the ECPR Graduate Conference in Tartu. I have worked hard to recruit new members and expand our network, and I have represented the group alongside my colleagues to secure support of the ECPR and in other professional organizations. I want to continue to do so with your vote.

I am a current member of the SGPM Steering Committee, which I joined in 2013. Since then and joined by my four colleagues in our common efforts, the group has developed and expanded. We are proud that we have currently over 250 official members registered through the ECPR platform; that we created and developed our own webpage (<http://www.ecpr-methods.org/>) to provide more information and services to our members including valuable data archives, methods platforms and training opportunities as well as conference and job calls; and that we have also enhanced our outreach on social networks with a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ecpr.methods/>) that currently has 560 followers. We would very much like to continue our work on and for political methodology and hope to be given the opportunity to do so by the SGPM members in these elections.

**Candidate 4: Kathrin Thomas <Kathrin.Thomas@city.ac.uk>**

My name is Dr. Kathrin Thomas (<http://www.city.ac.uk/people/academics/kathrin-thomas>); I am Research Associate in the Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, City University London, and Research Fellow in the Department of Government, University of Vienna. My expertise is in substantive and methodological social research. For example, I am interested in measuring sensitive behaviour and attitudes, in social psychology as well as in social and political behaviour (esp. electoral politics). At the same time, I also engage in methodological research, exploring new data sources to correct for non-response bias in

surveys, exploring design effects, and novel questioning techniques. I also teach qualitative and quantitative research methods. I have previously worked as Research Associate on the Austrian National Election Study dealing with the survey research design, implementation, and management (including large N panel studies), as Lecturer in Research Methods in the Department of Methods in the Social Sciences at Vienna, and as Teaching Fellow in Politics and International Relations (including Research Methods) at the University of Aberdeen. I obtained my PhD as an Early Stage Marie Curie Fellow within the ELECDEM ITN on Electoral Democracy at the University of Exeter, where I engaged in intensive methodological training and also taught substantive and methodological courses. My vision is to increase the awareness and the sensible use of research methodology in politics and I consider the ECPR Standing Group for Political Methodology the perfect platform to do so. I hope to be able to help setting up collaborations of the SGPM with other groups in organising workshops, conference sections and panels; enhancing the awareness, evaluation, and development of qualitative and quantitative methods to conduct political research; strengthening the scholarly discussion about research methodology in a network of experts such as the SGPM members. This also includes training opportunities as well as provision of resources and training for teaching research methods.

I am a current member of the SGPM Steering Committee (SC), which I have joined in 2015. Since the current SGPM SC has taken over from the previous members in 2014, the group has been revived and has developed and expanded. We are proud that we have currently over 250 members who have officially registered through the ECPR platform; that we have created and developed our own webpage (<http://www.ecpr-methods.org/>) to provide more information and services to our members including valuable data archives, methods platforms and training opportunities as well as conference and job calls; and that we have also enhanced our outreach on social networks with a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ecpr.methods/>) that currently has 560 followers. We would very much like to continue our work on and for political methodology and hope to obtain a legitimate mandate to do so by the SGPM members in the first SGPM election.

**Candidate 5: Lea Sgier <SgierL@ceu.edu>**

My name is Dr. Lea Sgier, I am an assistant professor at Central European University (CEU) in Budapest (Hungary) and an associate researcher/lecturer at the University of Geneva (Switzerland). I have an extensive experience in teaching qualitative-interpretive methods at postgraduate and doctoral level: I am instructor at the Essex Summer School in Social Science Data Analysis and Collection (qualitative data analysis), the ECPR Winter School (qualitative interviewing), the Concordia Workshops in Social Science Research (WSSR) (discourse analysis) in Montreal, and the Swiss CUSO Doctoral Programmes. Since 2009, I have been a methodological advisor and trainer on two large scientific cooperation projects with the Western Balkans (RRPP) and the South Caucasus (ASCN). Through Central European University, I have also been involved in teachers' training in the field of methodology.

I teach and work mostly with qualitative-interpretive methods, most recently in the field of old age policy (comparative dementia policy in Switzerland, Scotland and Germany; home-based care policy), and now as co-investigator on a new project on elder people's citizenship in Switzerland. My other main field of interest is gender and politics (women in institutional politics).

I am committed to promoting a rigorous, reflexive and creative use of qualitative-interpretive methods in political science research. If re-elected, I would like to contribute to the Steering Committee's efforts on three fronts in particular: 1) promote qualitative

methods in their diversity, through collaborations, panels and conference sections (following up our successful section on Discourse Analysis at the ECPR General Conference 2015), and training events; 2) strengthen existing collaborations in the field of methodology, within the ECPR (SG on Politics and Gender etc.) and outside (existing networks in Europe, North America and Asia); 3) use existing networks and collaborations with East Central and South Eastern Europe and the South Caucasus to try and involve more scholars from these regions into ECPR networks.

I have been a member of the SPGM Steering Committee since 2013. Since then, the group has been revived and has developed and expanded. We are proud that we have currently over 250 members who have officially registered through the ECPR platform; that we created and developed our own webpage (<http://www.ecpr-methods.org/>) to provide more information and services to our members including valuable data archives, methods platforms and training opportunities as well as conference and job calls; and that we have also enhanced our outreach on social networks with a Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/ecpr.methods/>) that currently has 560 followers. We would very much like to continue our work on and for political methodology and hope to carry on with the support of the SGPM members through these election.

**Candidate 6 : Philippe Blanchard <P.Blanchard@warwick.ac.uk>**

I have been applying, developing and teaching methods continuously for the last fifteen years. My interest lies in methodological innovation at large, beyond schools and churches. I have focused on cutting-edge developments in multivariate statistics, sequence analysis, interviewing, questionnaire design and content analysis, and the transformation and renewal of these methods under the effect of the flow of data on new objects, in new formats and on bigger scales that has been available from the 2000s. I also have interest in ethnographic methods, discourse analysis, visual analysis, data visualisations, and survey analysis at large. My purpose in applying to the SGPM Steering Committee is to carry on promoting a global and comprehensive development and diffusion of methods for the study of politics. This involves: being present at ECPR General conferences and Joint sessions of workshops; liaising with other ECPR Standing groups as well as with method-oriented groups in other political science associations; reinforcing the presence of our fast-growing community in the discipline. All along, I believe in methods and methodology that are tightly dependent on exciting and imaginative research questions; methods are useful, as long as they do not take themselves as their own objective. I am also keen on keeping all methodological traditions under the umbrella of a unique standing group, instead of splitting them as is the case in the USA.

More information can be found on [my personal webpage](#) about my institutional responsibilities at Warwick, as well as within the ECPR and the IPSA. I recently co-authored “Comprehensively Mapping Political Science Methods: An Instructors’ Survey” (*International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 2016), “Le cœur des affaires de la zone euro. Une analyse structurale et séquentielle des élites économiques transnationales” (*Cultures et Conflits*, 2015) and *Advances in Sequence Analysis: Theory, Method, Applications* (Springer, 2014).

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**Candidate 7: Tomas Zwinkels <Tomas@zwinkels.co.uk>**

I am Tomas Turner-Zwinkels, a socially engaged young political sociologist that loves bad ideas. I am keen on exploring policy issues with theoretical scrutiny, exciting data and rigorous methodology. I Graduated with honors curriculum for from the interdisciplinary Beta Gamma bachelor and with highest honors (summa cum laude) from my research master at the ICS in Groningen. At the moment I am finalizing a PhD project in which he studies "career pathways to power" in the Dutch national parliament. As of September 2016, I will be starting a postdoc position at the University of Basel to study the political careers of members of parliament in the Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland. This project is funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation and involves collaborations with the University of Basel (Stefanie Bailer - ICS Marie Curie Fellow in 2000), the University of Geneva (Simon Hug) and the University of Bremen (Philip Manow). Next to these academic activities I am member of the 'Dutch National Think Tank' co-owner of webhoster 'Mindconnect' and the data-mine-semi-manufacturer 'CodeThing'.

I have been an active member of the ECPR Standing Group on Political Methodology for about 10 months now. In this period I have learned a lot about the inner working of the ECPR and from the other members of the steering committee. I have contributed to the group with my ICT knowledge and methodological knowhow. I would continue to fresh new bring energy into this group. When elected I would invest further into growing the group its online presence. My key aim will be to further increase the groups its impact by 1) by putting emphasis on methodological standards and 2) through the facilitation of high quality training and top-notch conference contributions.