



PUBLIC LECTURE

co-organised by the Department of Methods in the Social Sciences at the University of Vienna, the Department of Political Science at the Institute for Advanced Studies and the Section “Comparative European Politics” of the Austrian Political Science Association (ÖGPW)

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Linking Citizens and Parties

Wednesday, 25 November 2009, 16:30
IHS, Stumpergasse 56,
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Do political parties respond to shifts in the preferences of their supporters, which we label the partisan constituency model, or to shifts in the mean voter position (the *general electorate model*)? Cross-national analyses – based on observations from Eurobarometer surveys and parties’ policy programmes in fifteen countries from 1973-2002 – suggest that the general electorate model characterizes policy shifts of mainstream parties. Alternatively, when we analyze the policy shifts of Communist, Green, and extreme nationalist parties (i.e. “niche” parties), we find that these parties respond to shifts in the mean position of their supporters. These findings have implications for spatial theories and political representation.

Lawrence Ezrow gained his BA at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and his MA and PhD at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Since 2007 he is a lecturer at the University of Essex. His research interests include comparative political representation, Western European politics, elections, political parties, voting, party strategies, political institutions and quantitative methodologies. His articles have been published in the *American Journal of Political Science*, *British Journal of Political Science*, *European Journal of Political Research*, and *Journal of Politics*.