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**Charles University**

Areas of research from previous call (2020):

**Media Literacy and its reflection on communication during the COVID-19 pandemic**

garant PhDr. Jakub Končelík, PhD., Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism

Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism seeks a motivated post-doc with expertise in the field of media literacy education. We are looking for an independent researcher who will create her/his team or will collaborate with academics at the Institute.

Our goal is to analyze current media during the COVID-19 pandemic with a focus on media literacy, the object should be approached from an educational policy angle. Consequently, it should focus on analyzing two very interesting demographic groups - children and a very often neglected yet relevant group: seniors.

Their level of understanding to various measures which have been imposed by governments should be contrasted to the level of how it was understood through the media.

With the COVID-19 pandemic and a myriad of websites offering health advice, it would be extremely important to understand how media literate seniors are. This would involve a look at how and for what reasons they use the internet and to what extent they have a critical relationship with the content they engage with online.

The outcome of the fellowship

Expected outcomes are team collaboration leading to two publications in academic journals (Jimp), grant application, and collaboration with colleagues at the Institute, we offer the possibility to lecture and get involved with our Ph.D. students.

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Due date: **22nd July 2020**

Position available from: January 1, 2021

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### Innovative approaches to irregular conflicts

garant PhDr. JUDr. Tomáš Karásek, Ph.D., Institute of Political Studies

In an effort to further develop expertise in the area of irregular conflict, the Department of Security Studies seeks a post-doctoral candidate, with a Ph.D. preferably in Political Science, International Relations, Sociology, or Security Studies. The candidate is expected to exhibit a proven track-record linked to one or more of the following themes: civil war, (counter)insurgency, terrorism, radicalization, foreign fighters, as well as the terrorism and crime nexus. In the aforementioned context, the preferred research foci are micro-level research with emphasis on ethnographic methods (interviews, fieldwork) or quantitative methods. We seek innovative scholars with experimental leanings, willing to cross disciplinary boundaries. Expected outcomes of the post-doctoral fellowship include two high-quality journal articles (Jsc or Jimp), involvement in the training of Ph.D. candidates and mutually enriching interaction with other members of the Department. Upon further agreement, the post-doctoral fellow will also have an opportunity to be involved in existing teaching activities and is envisioned to prepare her or his general course on methodological approaches to the study of irregular conflict.

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### Politization of Society and Public Controversies

garant doc. PhDr. Zdeněk Uherek, CSc., Institut of Sociological Studies

The research topic focuses on varieties of the politicization of current societies. In sociology this general process has been identified since the collapse of communist regimes at the latest. It is related to a gradual erosion of the tried-out institutions of industrial modernity such as a social class, expert knowledge, modern city, and nation state-based democracy. Due to the interlinked influences of economic globalization, cultural amalgamation, and technological change, the very social structure of democratic societies has been undergoing a fundamental transformation resulting in new conflict lines between the winners and losers of these processes. The result is the return of political conflict to many spheres of society.



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In politics so-called losers of globalization constitute a new constituency for populist forces, which form to stop further international integration and globalization. There are new parties and movements being organized around the issues of political integration, migration, and sovereignty. There have been many radical movements and parties established all over the world. New patterns of civic engagement can be seen not only on the levels of national and international politics, but also in urban spaces. Their manifestation can also be studied in both political and non-political issues such as health care, sport, and urban planning. New data are welcomed on the level of collective actors involved in the new controversies, as well as on the level of general public opinion. Projects aimed at small groups or regionally limited communities are also accepted.

Both traditional tools of social research and new media-based tools of digital sociology can be utilized as well as well as ethnography and other types of in-depth introspection based on participant observation and other socio-anthropological methods.

Deep introspection and understanding of the social processes of today's society which responds dynamically to current events (migration crisis, pandemic, subsequent recession, etc.) requires the ability of scientific networking, collective information sharing and creating flexible working groups focused on cases that the postdoctoral applicant decides to study. The already proven ability of academic work in the spirit of current academic trends will be one of the main criteria for selection for a postdoctoral position.

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## Dynamics of sports journalism in Central and Eastern Europe

garant PhDr. Alice Němcová Tejkalová, Ph.D., Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism

Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism invites international post-docs to apply for a vacancy in the field of sports journalism research. The successful post-doc candidate will be a part of an established team researching sports journalism studies. The project would focus on dynamics of sports journalism within the Central and Eastern Europe. Sports myths and stereotypes (in relation to nationalism), celebritization and commercialization of sports journalism, especially connections between sports journalism and sports business are going to be analysed. All those topics strongly resonate



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within sports communication studies in broader European context, but have not been so far strongly mapped within CEE region.

Expected outcomes of the post-doctoral fellowship include two high-quality journal articles (Jimp), involvement in the training of Ph.D. candidates and mutually enriching interaction with other members of the team. Upon further agreement, the post-doctoral fellow will also have an opportunity to be involved in teaching activities regarding sports journalism.

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## Actors and democratic processes in Central Europe and the rise of new threats

garant doc. Michel Perottino, Ph.D., Institute of Political Studies

During the first twenty years following the revolutions in Central Europe in 1989, we witnessed and analysed the consolidation of democracy (construction and stabilization of institutions, the institutionalisation of the parties and the party system, and so on). During this period, political science research focused mainly on questions such as transformation from the communist regime to democracy, on Europeanisation, and so on. But during the last decade, delineated approximately by the beginning of the economic and financial crisis, but also strongly influenced by the migration crisis, the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, we face some new questions or renewed one. Therefore, we are provided with the opportunity to study new themes and to change the scope of research. New phenomena have developed within our countries, including but not limited to novel concepts such as illiberal democracy; or some renewed ones, such as populism in its various forms, especially, but not only, linked to the new situation that arose with the coronavirus.

We are searching for a post-doc candidate that would focus on the general topic of the evolution of Central Europe from one or more national point(s) of view. The candidate should focus on specific aspects of this large phenomenon, such as political institutions in a broad sense, political actors (especially political parties) and political processes (including for instance the depoliticization of societies).



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The candidate should be equipped with a strong theoretical and methodological background and be able to do field research in the considered countries. We can consider comparative research with some other relevant Western European cases, but the crux of the research has to lay within the Central European region.

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## The Social Life of COVID-19a

garant doc. PhDr. Dino Numerato, Ph.D., Institute of Sociological Studies

The Post-Doctoral Fellowship holder will develop and carry out a research project focused on the multiple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Drawing on the theoretical traditions of the sociology of scientific controversies and the sociology of public problems, the Post-Doc will investigate the socio-political dynamics of human life surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Post-Doc will explore how different social actors (medical experts, public health authorities, pharmaceutical companies, Nation-States, transnational associations and corporations, politicians and political parties, as well as scientists, journalists, citizens and activists, etc.) have, individually and collective, produced accounts of the virus itself as well of its social, economic and political implications. Furthermore, the research project will analyse the interaction of the virus with bodies, human behaviours and social institutions. In a more general vein, the project will thoroughly investigate how different facets of the social life of COVID-19 are defined as public problems.

By examining the varieties of social constructions of certainty in the uncertain times, the research project will deal with the questions of scalability or time. More specifically, the following questions will be addressed: How this virus leads us to rethink the ties between the different scales of human agencies, from individual to global and environmental? Furthermore, how does this virus change the way we perceive our activities in the past, present, and future?



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Although focusing on the COVID-19 case, the aim of the Post-Doctoral Fellowship will be broader. The examination of the specific COVID-19 case will contribute to the knowledge development in the areas of sociology of scientific controversies and the sociology of public problems. By participating in the research project, the Post-Doc will contribute to the development of one of the major research areas developed at Charles University under the framework of “Politicization of Society and Public Controversies.”

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## **Environmental Communication and the Construction of Nature**

garant doc. Nico Carpentier, Ph.D., Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism

Environmental Communication is a growing subfield of Communication and Media Studies, with its own academic association (IECA) founded in 2011, and a plenitude of academic publications and journals. As climate change and environmental issues have forcefully demanded our attention, and communication is recognized as being part of both problem and solution, there are strong academic and societal needs to further strengthen this field, and fill some of the gaps that still trouble it.

This project aims to contribute to the strengthening of Environmental Communication by infusing it with the study of what is behind (and embedded within) communication, namely the discursive constructions of the environment and nature, and the ways that these discursive constructions circulate within a diversity of media outlets. Here, we have to keep in mind that a multitude of discursive constructions about nature exist (ranging from anthropocentric perspectives to so-called biocentric perspectives), and that they engage in discursive struggles with each other, in order to try to achieve a hegemonic position. These discursive constructions also have very material dimensions, as they can motivate and legitimate the destruction of natural resources through their over-exploitation, or can inspire a variety of activist interventions to try to counter this (some of which produce strong antagonisms and can thus be highly problematic as well). As the human-nature relations are currently being rethought and reconfigured, through these discursive struggles, studying how media communicate these different discursive constructions about nature is innovative and necessary at the same time.



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The project will focus on 1/the identification of the discursive constructions of nature in the coverage of selected (mainstream and alternative) media outlets, 2/the analysis of (the media representation of) their discursive struggles, and 3/the role of media in facilitating (or disallowing) the communication of these constructions and their struggles. As a post-doc project, it will profit from the support of a local team of the Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism (ICSJ), that is involved in (and funded by) the Mistra Environmental Communication Research Programme. Through its involvement in this research programme, the ICSJ team is already doing research on Swedish media (and artistic) representations of the environment and climate change. At the same time, this post-doc project will also benefit the local team, as it will allow us to move away from a too exclusive focus on Sweden and to enrich our work with a multi-country approach.

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## Artificial Intelligence and Journalism

garant doc. Mgr. MgA. Filip Láb, Ph.D., Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism

Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism at Charles University seek a post-doctoral candidate in the field of Artificial Intelligence and Journalism. The candidate is expected to exhibit proven track-of-records linked to one of the following topics: AI and newsgathering, AI and news production, AI and news distribution or AI journalism ethics. We are looking for innovative scholar with potential to bridge the divide between social and technological domains. Expected outcome of the fellowship two journal articles (Jsc or Jimp) and involvement in the PhD training. Upon further agreement post-doctoral fellow will also have an opportunity to be involved in teaching.

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**Kitsch and class on social networks: disgusting, bizarre and odd in do-it-yourself cultural practices and its online extensions**

garant PhDr. Irena Reifová, Ph.D., Institute of Communication Studies and Journalism

The proposed topic follows up and expands the project on mediated social inequalities supported by Czech Science Foundation which established focus on representation of class and class-driven uses of media as one of the themes under study at the Institute of Journalism and Communication Studies. Whereas the existing research on class in media (mainly in Reality Television programs) aimed to map diverse aspects of the working class which stimulate stigmatisation and shaming, the proposed project strives to narrow down the focus and shed light on the connection between class and cultural capital as it is played out in the environment of social media and internet discussions.

As the to-date research proved, class-based shaming is often triggered not only by material and financial deficiencies of the working-class subjects but also by their (putative) lack of symbolic skills mitigating their navigation through complex realities of the globalised world (understanding of advertising, financial institutions, media, mastering foreign languages, cosmopolitan knowledge, etc.). This conclusion provides an impetus to the idea that interconnection between class and cultural capital as it materialises in online media contents and uses deserves further attention.

The proposed project would look at the category of taste (lack of it) in do-it-yourself practices, hobbies and creative activities which people follow in their private leisure time and simultaneously make publicly available via online platforms. The social media and other online contents relevant to this study would encompass pictures and texts presenting outputs of do-it-yourself practices which are found distasteful, ridiculous or disgusting by other users of the online platforms. These exchanges are typically found in the areas of cooking, decorating homes, making one's own fashion garments or jewellery, amateur photography, etc. Special focus will be put on the contents which are found extreme, freak and "hitting the new lows", such as pictures presenting cakes and food styling in the shape of male and female genitals or baby shower cakes mimicking the birth scenes. The project would analyse the contents in connection to how these particular contents are received by the online users. The main research focus would be on classed and gendered (the pertained subjectivities are often referred as "tvořilky", "bydlenky" or "vařilky") perspectives in reading of the above-mentioned do-it-yourself works which are found to be distasteful and/or bizarre.

The project would start from the theoretical background set by Pierre Bourdieu, who coined the concept of "cultural capital" as the dispositions and resources on the grounds of which distinctions between classes are formed and reshuffled. Beverly Skegg's works on class as cultural category will be pivotal steppingstone as well. Another inspiring and more focused theoretical angle is Imogen Tyler's (2013) perspective on classed subjectivities and bodies as rendered through the concept of abjection and waste.

**References:**

Bourdieu, Pierre (1984). *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*. Harvard University Press: Cambridge, MA.



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Skeggs, Beverly (1997). *Formations of Class and Gender*. Sage: London.

Skeggs, Beverly (2004). *Class, Self, Culture*. Routledge: London.

Tyler, Imogen (2013). *Revolting Subjects: Social Abjection and Resistance in Neoliberal Britain*. London: Zed Books.

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## **International relations in the time of uncertainty**

garant doc. PhDr. Jan Karlas, Ph.D., M.A., Institute of Political Studies

During several previous decades, world politics rested on an evolving, but still rather persistent type of an international order. This order was to a large extent based on the dominant position of the United States (USA). Yet it also involved several important normative elements, represented by liberal principles, intensive global economic cooperation, or international institutions. To a high extent, the US-led order was sustained by the demand coming from the other states, which saw it as an enabling arrangement for dealing with global problems such as the spread of weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, global economic crises, or environmental degradation.

At this moment, this order that has so far characterized international politics is facing several important challenges. One of the factors that weaken it is the increasing activism and influence of some of the developing countries. Those countries often hold different views about the appropriate form of international order, putting a greater emphasis on the principles of sovereignty and justice. The unipolar arrangement is also questioned by the changing distribution of power in the international system, marked by the decreasing position of the USA and the strengthening of the so-called rising powers. Last but not least, a part of the turbulent development can be attributed to social and ideological changes taking place in the developed countries.



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Within this topic, we are searching for a post-doc candidate that would identify and explore an important issue that has to do with the contemporary transformative processes in international politics. The candidate should definitely dispose with a strong theoretical and methodological background. This background should enable him/her to contribute to the international academic debates. As for a concrete research topic, we are rather flexible. The concrete topic would need to be in some way connected with the changing characteristics of world politics. In this context, we welcome proposals that may deal with the cooperative, as well as conflictual aspects of world politics. In terms of issue areas, we are ready to consider proposals that may be concerned with security issues, international economic relations, or any other substantive field of the contemporary international relations.