

BENCE HAMRÁK
Postdoctoral Researcher in Political Behaviour

University of Vienna
Rooseveltplatz 1/3, 1090, Vienna, Austria
bence.hamrak@univie.ac.at

PROFILE

I am a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Vienna. My research examines how institutions, events, and outcomes activate and change group identity through the lenses of affective polarization and minority group representation. In my other projects, I study the politics of democratic backsliding and competitive authoritarian regimes, and democratic accountability in complex or contentious issues and policies. I rely on quantitative methods and causal inference using experimental designs and observational data analysis.

WEBSITE

BACKGROUND	<i>Research fellow</i>	2025- present
	University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>European Research Consortium (ERC) Project by Prof. Christopher Wrátil: Multidimensional Representation</i>• Developing survey experiments about emerging theories for citizen concepts of political representation	
	<i>PhD in Comparative Politics</i>	2021-2025
	Central European University, Vienna, Austria	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dissertation: <i>The micro-evolution of political identities</i>• Defended with no revisions	
	<i>MSc in Public Administration</i>	2020-21
	Leiden University, The Hague, the Netherlands	
	<i>MA in Political Science</i>	2018-20
	Central European University, Budapest, Hungary	

RESEARCH

Publications:

- **Hamrak, B.**, Simonovits, G., Rusnak, A., Szucs, F. (2024). Why Politicians Won't Apologize: Communication Effects in the Aftermath of Sex Scandals. *British Journal of Political Science*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0007123424000292>
- Simonovits, G., Szucs, F., **Hamrak, B.** (2025). Door to door campaigns in an electoral autocracy: Evidence from Hungary. *The Journal of Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1086/735870>
- **Hamrak, B.**, Simonovits, G. Szucs, F. (2024). Equilibrium communication in political scandals. *European Journal of Political Economy*. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2024.102580>
- **Hamrak, B.** (2025). Identity After the Ballot: How winning and losing impact partisan identity and affective polarization. *Electoral Studies*. [10.1016/j.electstud.2025.102967](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2025.102967)

- **Hamrak, B.**, Jenne, E., Littvay, L., Simonovits, G. (2025). The public opinion effects of antisemitic elite cues. A sequential priming experiment on the Hungarian anti-Soros propaganda. *East European Politics*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21599165.2025.2548250>
- Mintal, J. M., Butzlaff, F., **Hamrak, B.**, Vancel, R., Borsekova, K. (Forthcoming). How Identity Fragmentation Complicates Voter-Party Congruence. *European Journal of Political Research*.

Work in-progress:

- Simonovits, G. **Hamrak, B.** (2025). Status quo bias drives public opinion on drug regulation. Review and resubmit at: *Nature Human Behavior*.
- Kovarek, D., **Hamrak, B.**. Do female leaders spur women's political engagement? Evidence from a street-problem reporting platform. *Review and resubmit*
- **Hamrak, B.** Football and out-party animosity: Testing the ecological validity of the common in-group theory *Working paper*
- Bor, A., **Hamrak B.** Evaluating a Backsliding Democracy: Lay Perceptions vs. Experts Assessments in Hungary (Working paper)

TEACHING

- Causal Methods and Policy Applications (MA): Practicum leader (2023-2025)
- Research Methods for Public Policy (MA): Teaching Assistant (2024)
- Survey Research (BA): Practicum Leader (2024)
- Applied Regression Analysis (ECPR Winter School of Methods): Teaching Assistant (2023, 2024)

ACHIEVEMENTS

- Advanced Doctoral Research Award, *Central European University* (2025)
- Praesidium Libertatis Scholarship, *Leiden University* (2021)
- Research Support Scheme grant for MA Thesis, *Central European University* (2020)
- Best MA Thesis Award, *Central European University*, (2020)

CONFERENCES

- European Consortium for Political Science Research (ECPR), General Conference/Joint Sessions (2022, 2023, 2025)
- CIVICA Political Behavior Conference (2024, 2025)
- Annual Conference of the Austrian Political Science Association (ÖAGPW) (2024)
- Annual Conference of the Italian Political Science Association (SISP) (2024)
- American Political Science Association (APSA) Annual Meeting (2023)

TALKS

- Eastern Europe as Laboratory of Change Workshop Series, Florence (EUI) (2025)
- Slovak Academy of Sciences, Institute of Sociology, Bratislava (2025)
- Political Behavior Colloquium, Florence (EUI) (2024)
- Democracy Institute Seminar, Budapest (2023)

SOFTWARE

R, Python, Qualtrics

LANGUAGES

English, Hungarian