

BENCE HAMRÁK
Research Fellow in Political Science

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PROFILE

I am a Research Fellow at the European University Institute. My research examines the conditions under which democratic accountability, representation, and resilience holds or collapses. I focus on the role of actors: citizens, civil servants, politicians and parties. I approach these questions through group psychology and group behavior, and affective and informational biases. I specialize in survey and experimental techniques.

[WEBSITE](#)

BACKGROUND

Research Fellow 2026-present

European University Institute, Florence, Italy

- *European Research Consortium (ERC) Project by Prof. Michael Bauer: Democratic Administration under Illiberal Rule: Impact, Resistance, Resilience*
- Studying civil servants' resistance to illiberal transformation of public administration through a social group-based approach, using surveys and experiments

Postdoctoral Researcher 2025-2026

University of Vienna, Vienna, Austria

- *European Research Consortium (ERC) Project by Prof. Christopher Wrátil: Multidimensional Representation*
- Developing survey experiments about emerging theories for citizen motivations for political representation

PhD in Comparative Politics 2021-2025

Central European University, Vienna, Austria

- Dissertation: *The micro-evolution of political identities*
- Defended with no revisions

MSc in Public Administration 2020-21

Leiden University, The Hague, the Netherlands

MA in Political Science 2018-20

Central European University, Budapest, Hungary

RESEARCH

Publications:

- **Hamrak, B.**, Simonovits, G.(2026). Status Quo Bias Drives Public Support for Drug Policy in the USA. *Nature Human Behaviour*. <https://doi.org/10.1038/s41562-026-02471-y>
- **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. (2026). How Identity Fragmentation Complicates Voter-Party Congruence. *European Journal of Political Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1475676526101200>

Work in-progress:

- Kovarek, D., **Hamrak, B.**. Do female leaders spur women’s political engagement? Evidence from a street-problem reporting platform in Slovakia. *Review and resubmit*
- **Hamrak, B.** Football and out-party animosity: Testing the ecological validity of the common in-group identity theory *Working paper*
- Bor, A., **Hamrak B.** Evaluating a Backsliding Democracy: Lay Perceptions vs. Experts Assessments in Hungary (Working paper)
- **Hamrak B.**, Wratil, C. Citizens’ Fundamental Motivations for Multidimensional Political Representation (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, 2026)

SOFTWARE

R, Python, Qualtrics, QuestionPro

LANGUAGES

English, Hungarian