

Research officer open position

SOLID Project

Policy Crisis and Crisis Politics, Sovereignty, Solidarity and Identity in the EU Post-2008

Vacancy Position: Research Officer (RO)

Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli is a partner of the research project SOLID, funded by the European Research Council. The project's leading institutions are the University of Milano (prof. Maurizio Ferrera), the European University Institute (prof. Hanspeter Kriesi) and the London School of Economics (prof. Waltraud Schelkle).

Within SOLID, the Feltrinelli Foundation will be primarily involved in data collection and data analysis.

Tasks. The RO to be recruited will be responsible for the following tasks:

- The automated construction of a systematic data set on social media debates related to the topics covered by the project
- The analysis of this data set
- The publication of academic papers based on this data set
- The production of infographics and periodic reports based on this data set
- The management of the project's website and other IT infrastructures

Requisites:

- A Phd in the social sciences and research experience
- An advanced knowledge of the tools required to collect and analyse digital data (e.g. webscraping, text-as-data approaches, Natural-Language-Processing, network analysis, programming in R, Python)

Starting date: as early as possible after the interview (September 2019)

Contract: collaborazione coordinata e continuativa, 2 years renewable.

The RO will have the title of SOLID Fellow and/or Visiting Fellow of a partner university.

Place of work: Milan and (mainly) Florence (EUI).

Interested candidates should send their application and motivation letter as described in the document attached.

Further information is available on request.

About Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli

Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli is a cultural hub, that connects a public library, an archive, research activities on citizenship, work, contemporary history and globalized economy, and a Multifunctional Room, where challenging issues meet arts.

Founded in 1949, first as a Library and then transformed into an Institute - the Foundation gathers the sources of secular thought and social movements and puts them at disposal of organizations, institutions and universities in a network that counts 350 institutes throughout world. Built around a heritage of 1.5 million documents, 250,000 volumes, 17,500 journals and 15,000 posters and affiches, the Foundation ranks on the international scene as a center of preservation and research on political, social, economic and cultural history, with particular attention to the study of contemporaneity.

Today's goal is to document the most urgent challenges of the present times, to understand and describe ongoing transformations and their impact on future scenarios. Globalization and sustainability, city and citizenship, democracy, new economies, work 4.0 are the subjects of analysis which, stemming from the historical roots, are studied in depth to find new solutions.

The Foundation, by means of uniting academia and citizenship, of collaborating with companies, startups and associations, offers public initiatives and debates, editorial and educational products, exhibitions and performances targeted to a wide and diverse audience.

About SOLID

The last decade has been a decennium horrible for the EU. Since 2008, the European Union has faced a series of unprecedented shocks: the Great Recession, the sovereign debt crisis and its dramatic social consequences, security threats linked to terrorism and conflicts in the MENA region (Middle East and North Africa), the refugee crisis and, eventually, Brexit. Supranational decision making was severely tested. From today's vantage point, we observe that policy performance has not lived up to its promises and potential, damaging public trust in the efficacy and transparency of the EU. And yet, despite "existential threats", we observe resilience. The EU and the euro have not fallen apart. At the apex of the crisis, EU leaders managed to agree on strategies for recovery. It is true that extremely vocal Eurosceptic formations have scored increasing success in a number of countries. But data show that in all member states – save the UK - there are still significant majorities supporting EU and integration.

SOLID aims at understanding how and why "doom" and "elation" can go together. The EU is still fragile and its durability remains an open question. New capacities were created during the long crisis. But it is not clear how robust they are and whether developing them further will encounter insurmountable obstacles, including resentment by citizens. We argue that the aforementioned sequence of sectoral/policy crises produced a "deep" political crisis which unsettled fundamental assumptions and practices regarding the exercise of authority and its legitimation. Over time, tensions and disagreements unleashed three foundational conflicts: conflicts over sovereignty (who decides), solidarity (who gets what when and why) and identity (who we are). The "crisis politics" that was deployed to deal with such tensions has constrained policy responses in their scope and effectiveness. Against all odds, however, the destructive spiral stopped short of driving the Union into self-destruction: a circumstance that still calls for an explanation. Only a thorough retrospective analysis of the political crisis can cast light on the nature of this unexpected resilience. We shall thus address the following research questions:

1. what made foundational conflicts emerge and escalate during the crisis?
2. which political dynamics were activated by each shock and lead to crisis policy making and crisis politics?
3. what coalitional dynamics operated during the euro area crisis, the social crisis, the refugee crisis, the membership crisis (Brexit and intra-EU separatism)?
4. how can we account for key episodes and decisions which underpinned resilience?

A key aim of the project will be to envisage scenarios and perspectives allowing for a durable and politically SOLID European Union.

SOLID is the result of the synergies which brought together prof. Maurizio Ferrera, Professor of Political Science at Università degli Studi di Milano, Hanspeter Kriesi, Professor of Political Science and Stein Rokkan Chair at the European University Institute, Prof. Waltraud Schelkle, Professor in Political Economy at the London School of Economics and Fondazione Giangiacomo Feltrinelli.