

**“Researching and Teaching the EU:
Best Practices and Current Trends in EU Scholarship”
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ABSTRACTS
(in alphabetical order)

Raphaella Berding, Graduate Student in the MA in EU Studies (MAEUS) program, University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign

“European Identity: an antidote to crises?”

“If I had to do it again, I would begin with culture” – Those are the words of Jean Monnet, one of the founding fathers of the EU. Indeed, the EU started as an economic project but the conversation about culture has become more intensive. Just recently, the European Commission proposed to make 2018 the European Year of Cultural Heritage. This happens at times, when public support for the EU is shrinking. In 1973, nine EU member states signed the “Declaration on the European Identity.” After the low voter turnout of 1979, European leaders realized about the low engagement of European citizens, and wanted them to become involved in the European project and its image to be strengthened. As a reaction to this, a working group for a “People’s Europe” made several proposals in order to reach that goal, such as Europe-wide standards and cooperation in Education, and traditional nation-building strategies like a flag, an anthem, or postage stamps in 1985. Fligstein (2012) argues that the EU uses European identity in order to solve crises. Indeed, opinion polls show that after the first initiative “European Capitals of Culture” which promoted and emphasized dialogue and cooperation between European citizens, was launched in 1985, people started to view the European Community in a more positive way again. In my project I will look at discussions of different EU initiatives in the framework of EU cultural policies, and examine the relationship between crises and EU identity politics. I hypothesize that the EU is referring to European identity in crisis situations, when people become more critical of the European project and their support for it shrinks.

David Cleeton, Economics, Illinois State University

“The Impact of the Euro on Domestic Savings and International Capital Flows”

This paper examines the impact of the euro common currency on the saving-investment relationship (known as Feldstein-Horioka puzzle) for a panel of 12 European Union countries. The findings for Pedroni (2004) and Westerlund (2007) panel cointegration estimates exhibit mix results over the entire sample period (1970-2012). However, the findings for the posteuro period (2002-2012) are insignificant. The Fully-modified Ordinary Least Square (FMOLS) post-euro period estimates for the saving-retention coefficient suggests that capital mobility has further increased since 2002. Moreover, the results show a declining trend of savings retention which validates the argument that the saving-investment correlation is more useful for explaining intranational capital mobility and current account dynamics.

Lucas Henry, Musicology, University of Illinois, PhD Student)

“Supranational Sounds: The European Commission's European Border Breakers Awards, the European Talent Exchange Program, and Construction of European Identities”

This paper explores 21st century European identity issues through analysis of the European Commission's European Border Breakers Awards (EBBA) and the European Talent Exchange Program (ETEP). The EBBA are given annually to ten popular music artists deemed to represent European transnationalism on the basis of international record sales, touring and broadcasting. ETEP is a network of festivals and artists that partners with the European Commission to facilitate transnational popular music performance and consumption throughout the entire continent. Created at the same time as the first wave of Eastern European enlargement of the European Union, EBBA and ETEP have occupied positions that enable reflection on an expanded European identity which encapsulates all citizens of the European Union. In concept, the awards are compatible with many recent examples of identity theory. However, analyses of the applications of EBBA and ETEP show that the plurality the Commission envisions is not totally represented in the awards' recipients and the festivals' participants, especially in terms of language and location. This paper concludes that both the European Border Breakers Awards and the European Talent Exchange Program could become useful tools for European identity construction by the Commission if they were to be more inclusive of artists found across the entire European Union, and more proportionally diverse in the languages performed by the award's recipients.

Elza Ibroscheva, Mass Communication, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

“When “likes” turn to “hate””: The role of social media in processing of “othering” of refugees in Bulgaria”

Media hold a particularly important place in defining the political and social power structure. More importantly, they play a crucial role in articulating and interpreting the meaning of news events and matter of national importance--the media do not passively describe or record news events; instead, they actively reconstruct them, mostly based on their own ideological affiliations. These dynamics are further complicated when extreme rhetoric, widely circulating in the hugely popular networked world of social media, hinder the fostering of a “European” identity. Instead of serving as a common ground for mobilizing collective efforts towards national unity, these new mediated identities—as witnessed in the most recent member states of the EU, and specifically, in Bulgaria—imply a process of “othering” that fosters a sense of national unity not on the basis of who we are, but on the basis who we are against. In a world marked by an economic crisis, a growing fear of Islam and a closing-in-on-oneself, the media discourse on migration becomes more and more stigmatized, stereotyped and stamped by othering processes of distinction. This research explores the role of social media in the process of othering with two specific goals: first, to explore the political and socio-cultural environment which has allowed for the growth of ultra-nationalist rhetoric in Bulgaria, and second, to examine how the social media outlets have contributed to the growth of polarizing discourse often expressed in hate speech and other forms of mediated animosity towards the outside groups. This study would illuminate the trends in discursive unity and division fostered in the nationalistic ideologies of the current political climate and its astute articulation in social media as the public sites where expression of extreme view have been made not only easily accessible, but virtually free of censorship, control or mediation, a fertile ground for “e-hatred.” Specifically, types of mediated presentations of “the other”—be it Syrian refugees or Muslim minorities—on Facebook and Twitter will be examined in thematic dimensions and relational concepts in

order to “map” Bulgaria’s nationalist identity and its relation/opposition to the concept of the other.

Petia Kostadinova, Political Science, University of Illinois, Chicago
“Election Pledges by Euro-parties: linking the priorities of the European Parliament and the European Commission?”

This paper analyzes the extent to which election pledges issued during the 2004 and 2009 elections by four of the transnational parties that formed the largest EP political groups were reflected in European Commission pre-legislative initiatives, by the end of the respective electoral cycle. We start with summarizing the reasons, based on the literature on inter-institutional interactions within the EU, why we expect that the European Commission would consider the election pledges of the transnational parties during the pre-legislative phase of policy-making. We proceed with discussing why pledges made by some Euro-parties during this period would be more likely to be included in Commission pre-proposals than others, concluding the section with a list of hypotheses. The research design section describes the original dataset and related variables developed for this analysis. Our logistic regression results indicate a strong role of legislative decision-making rules in predicting which pledges would be included in Commission pre-proposals. We also find evidence of an EPP-ALDE ‘coalition’ in policy-priorities, especially after the 2009 elections, with the PES as the ‘opposition party’. Our findings that a significant portion of election promises by transnational parties are reflected in Commission pre-proposals speak directly to concerns about the democratic legitimacy of the EU’s unelected institutions. Further, the indications of a growing ‘competition’ between the political groups of the two largest transnational parties point to the emergence of another mechanism to address issues of democratic ‘deficit’ in the EU. Additionally, the article’s findings relate to the literature on the ever-changing inter-institutional relations among EU institutions, especially the role of the European Commission as the ‘driver’ of policy change. Indirectly, the research presented here also has relevance to studies of the success of Commission proposals once they have entered the legislative phase.

Kostas Kourtikakis, Political Science, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana)
“The Government Sponsored Network in European Union External Relations”

There is a long tradition in the literature on global governance of scholars examining the role of transnational networks in a variety of policy sectors, ranging from financial regulation to human rights. We argue that the European Union is an innovator in transnational network governance, because it is at the center of a hub of networks that are different in nature and operation from transnational networks already identified in the literature. More specifically, EU institutions are conscious and prolific producers of networks that connect private actors (businesses and civil society organizations) from EU member-states and third countries for the purpose of promoting EU interests and values. We call these structures “government sponsored networks,” to denote that even though they involve private actors, which participate in those networks voluntarily, the networks themselves are not spontaneous bottom-up creations. Instead, they are created with EU funding to promote objectives (policy diffusion, economic development, stability and security, etc.) espoused by governmental actors (in this case, EU institutions and EU member-states). We illustrate these points by examining comparatively transnational networks in EU relations with the United States and the European Neighborhood.

Jean-Philippe Mathy, French & Italian, School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics,
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
“Where is Charlie Now? Solidarity and Dissent After the Paris Attacks”

Where is Charlie Now? Solidarity and Dissent After the Paris Attacks. Jean-Philippe Mathy, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign A semiotic analysis of both the reception and rejection of the globalized logo "Je suis Charlie" following the Paris attacks of January 2015 shows that the intended meaning behind the message was far from being shared by everyone in France and in the world. The statement belongs to a long line of rhetorical strategies of identification with the victims of violence or oppression, as in John F. Kennedy's famous "I am a Berliner" speech during the Cold War. Many participants in marches and funerals soon expanded this strategy of universalization by combining apparently incompatible markers of identity, as in posters with statements such as: "I am a journalist, I am Jewish, I am Muslim, I am Christian, I am an atheist, I am a police officer, I French, I am human." However, subversive versions of the slogan ("I am not Charlie," "I am Kouachi," "I am not a terrorist, etc.") revealed other processes of subjectivization aimed at contesting, destabilizing, and subverting the logo's original intent. Conflicting instances of self-identification and dis-identification with the statement "I am Charlie" showed that the two liberal notions of tolerance and free speech originally associated with the logo were in fact highly incompatible in the eyes of many. Subsequent large scale attacks in Paris (November 2015) and Nice (July 2016) failed to generate the type of massive reaction associated with the Charlie movement. Where did "Charlie" go? Some answers to this question have to do with state policies, others with the inevitable divisions inherent in democratic politics, others with the escalation of violence in the following months. Far from encouraging the public to take to the streets in solidarity with the victims, as they had done in January, the French authorities in November declared all demonstrations illegal to prevent any further violence in public places. Riots did erupt in Paris, however, but they had nothing to do with the massacres at the Bataclan Theater and elsewhere. They were motivated by the convening of the Paris Climate Conference and opposed police forces and radical environmental activists, as if, ironically, everything was back to politics as usual. Far from reactivating the powerful narrative of national and international solidarity associated with the "I am Charlie" movement, the increasingly repressive stance of the French state in the face of terror after the November attacks only led to an increasingly raucous debate, following the institution of the state of emergency and the resistance to the government's proposal to deprive French citizens convicted of terrorist activities of their nationality. The aftermath of the events in Nice was marked by yet another type of response: the government tried to keep the circumstances of the attack as secret as possible as both the national and local authorities faced growing criticisms of the way they had (mis)handled security. As the targets of violence have become more and more random, and the victims apparently more disconnected from its ideological roots of terror, the collective manifestation of public solidarity has gradually given way to the disenchantment of civil society and the state management of insecurity.

Sorin Nastasia, International Studies; Applied Communication Studies, Southern Illinois
University –Edwardsville
“The European Union Brand”

The European Union has long held itself out as an alternative economic and political model for the world: a successful experiment in economic integration, intergovernmental decision making, and peaceful resolution of long-standing territorial disputes. According to Eurostat and Pew Research Center data, these soft power attributes have been tested during the

Euro crisis when, for the most part, the EU's reputation remained strong. However, recent issues related to the migrant crisis and the Brexit have raised questions of whether the European Union is still a strong brand that can survive such tests. Based on various archival and survey data sets, this presentation will examine the successes, challenges, and opportunities regarding the European Union brand.

Erik Tillman, Political Science, DePaul University
“Authoritarianism and Support for Radical Right Parties”

Recent research has identified the importance of dispositional factors on public opinion and party support in various political systems. This study examines the effect of authoritarianism—a disposition characterized by a high need for security, an adherence to traditional norms and social roles, and strong in-group attachment—on support for populist radical right (PRR) parties in West European political systems. The programmatic emphasis of the radical right on the maintenance of national cohesion against immigration and multiculturalism, on the preservation of sovereignty against European integration, and on the maintenance of traditional ‘national’ values are likely to appeal to those scoring high in authoritarianism. However, prior research has found mixed evidence of a relationship between authoritarianism and radical right support using data from earlier eras. This study examines data from recent national and cross-national election studies to identify whether authoritarianism predicts support for radical right parties and, if so, which components of the authoritarian disposition drive PRR support. The results point to a consistent relationship between authoritarianism and PRR party support. Additionally, in-group preference and security values predict PRR support while conformity and traditionalist values have no significant effect. In addition to improving our understanding of this phenomenon, this research also helps to link the study of the European radical right to developments in the United States.