

**Annual EU Studies Conference:
Researching and Teaching the EU:
Best Practices and Current Trends in EU Scholarship**

November 9-10, 2018

<http://europe.illinois.edu/eu-studies-conference/>

Organized by

The European Union Center, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

ABSTRACTS

(in order of appearance)

MAGDA GIURCANU, Teaching Assistant Professor, Political Science, East Carolina University
“In Search for an Electoral Link between the EU Electorate(s) and the EU proposals: Reality or Wishful Thinking?”

The literature on the Commission’s interaction with the legislative chambers has been built on the idea that voting procedures and national interests in the Council, and ideological cohesiveness in the European Parliament condition the success of Commission’s initiatives. Despite this large literature, we know very little about the potential conditional effects of transnational party promises on the Commission’s legislative proposals and (non)legislative acts. This lacuna with respect to the Euro-manifestos’ political role in the EU is very unfortunate given the recent changes in the Treaty of Lisbon and the political role EP elections have begun to play in the nomination of the President of the Commission. What are the priorities that the political groups of the European Parliament advertise in their Euromanifestos to reach out to outsiders and strengthen their political position vis-à-vis the Commission? Does the public expansion model of agenda-setting in the EU apply to the EP – Commission interactions? Building on the pledge literature, we expect the Euromanifestos to play an increasingly important role in setting the EU agenda particularly when convergence among priorities of different ideological groups is achieved. This article analyses whether this is the case by investigating (1) the policy emphases of transnational party pledges made at the 2004 and 2009 EP elections, and (2) the extent of agreement between such promises and the Commission’s priorities laid out in its Annual Policy Strategies and Working Programs. It investigates the potential conditional effect of transnational pledges when accounting for different Commission presidencies, the addition of new member-states, and the ideological orientation of Commissioners. A high degree of overlap between what is promised during EP elections and what is prioritized by the Commission would indicate that an electoral link between the EU electorate and EU policies actually exists, addressing thus concerns of EU’s democratic mandate.

PETIA KOSTADINOVA, Assistant Professor, Political Science, University of Illinois at Chicago
“Local Elections in Transition Societies: The Role of Party Promises”

This study discusses whether and to what extent such leaders make election promises during local campaigns, and how are such promises linked to the most pressing issues facing their municipality. It also addresses whether promise-making enhances the local

leader's sense of political autonomy and efficacy. The focus of the study are elected local and municipal leadership officials who run for (re)election during the October 25, 2015 elections, and it utilizes survey questionnaire distributed to 400 mayors and council members.

ZSUZSANA FAGYAL, Associate Professor, French & Italian, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (and **Victoria Bauer**, Graduate Student, EU Studies, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign)

“Languages of Innovation: National Identities and the Working Languages of the European Unitary Patent System”

In this paper, we report on a long-standing controversy surrounding the working languages of the European Unitary Patent System (EUPS). Assumed to take effect this year [1], the EUPS is expected to provide patent protection for innovations in up to twenty-six states of the European Union with the submission of a single request. Originally, in this new era of more effective supra-national coordination, the new patent languages were supposed to be filed only in the three most common working languages of the Union — French, German, and English — replacing the systems of national patents requiring costly translations. Unexpectedly, however, Italy and Spain objected to the status quo and claimed that leaving Italian and Spanish out of the EUPS hurts their national interests and distorts the competition. When, in 2011, the Council of the European Union gave the green light to the EUPS, the two dissenting states took the Council to court [2]. Using Extra and Gorter's (2008) 'constellation of languages' model that places the largest official state languages to the top of the language hierarchy in Europe, we argue that the fight for the status of Italian and Spanish as languages of innovation supports the idea of a less deterministic descending hierarchy of languages. Within such a framework, the actions of language groups and institutions contesting even the most rigid language regimes could be interpreted in a broader perspective, such as specific policy and planning measures for the diffusion of national languages in supra-national arenas of language use. [1]

<https://www.epo.org/lawpractice/unitary/unitary-patent/start.html> [2] Joined Cases C-274/11 and C-295/11, Spain and Italy v Council, Court of Justice of the European Union PRESS RELEASE No 47/13 Luxembourg, 16 April 2013. Extra, G. and Gorter, D. (2008). Multilingual Europe: facts and policies, Berlin, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.

SORIN NASTASIA, Associate Professor, Program Director for International Studies, Department of Applied Communication Studies and International Studies Program, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville

“Tensions Between Populist Discourse and the EU Framework: A Case Study on the 2018 Marriage Referendum in Romania”

In 2018, Romanians were asked by the government to participate in a referendum on whether the constitution should be changed to specify that marriage can only be between a man and a woman. Implicitly, this would have represented a ban of gay unions. The supporters of the constitution change, including such organizations as the Coalition for Family, attempted to make a populist and nationalist appeal focusing on the country's traditional and religious values. The opponents of the constitution change, who organized the NO campaign, made arguments related to Romania's standing as a European Union

member and to universal human rights. Opponents of the constitution vote also suggested the referendum was designed to distract the public from ongoing corruption scandals and court trials of the members of the conservative political party currently in power. Despite strong support in Romania for the Christian Orthodox church, and the unusual step by the government of extending the vote to two days instead of one, the call of those opposing the measure to boycott the vote was successful, and the turnout fell below the 30% needed to validate the referendum. Only approximately 20% of the eligible voters cast a ballot, and the majority vote among those casting a ballot was against the measure. This presentation, based on an examination of materials from key media venues in Romania as well as from social media platforms, will examine the discourses on both sides in regards to the referendum, highlighting the tensions between populist discourse and the EU framework, as well as the strategies that made the pro EU discourse successful in this case.

ELZA IBROSHEVA, Associate Dean and Professor, School of Communications, Webster University

“Turbo-Folk, Turbo-Sexism, and Turbo-Politics: The Emerging Cultural and Political Role of Pop-Folk Music in the Balkans”

The collapse of the communist regime signaled, among other things, a new attitude towards women’s bodies, ushering, in turn, an influx of pornography and other sexual taboos of the past. A particularly potent mix of women’s bodies on display and pornography in the same exact cultural junction was evident in the growing popularity of the musical genre of turbofolk. The music itself, which originated in former Yugoslavia as a unique mix of folkloric rhythms native to the region and trite musical chord from the 1980s and early 1990s popular disco, quickly became accepted and widely sought after as means of entertainment. The really fascinating fact about the turbo folk genre is that its most attractive performers were female and arguably were among the first women who displayed their sexuality publicly against the norms of proper socialist femininity. This is well illustrated in the case of the Serbian turbo-folk legend, Lepa Brena, who single-handedly set up a new standard of sexual behavior through her highly sensual performances and explicit lyrics. She also opened the gate for a number of aspiring young performers who perfected the genres of the turbo folk, while popularizing a very particular physical appearance for the female performer—extremely sexual, and in more recent times, artificially enhanced by plastic surgery and other cosmetic procedures, the turbo folk performer encompassed everything that the communist woman wasn’t—desirable, provocative, a femme fatale, which seductively crossed over a new breed of exotic sexuality infused with the rhythm of the Balkan region while readily mimicking a model of attractiveness directly borrowed from Western ideal. Excessively large breast, small waste, blonde hair, pouty lips, and glamorous makeup, all secured the instant success of the turbo folk genre. Coupled with the magnetic power of the market, where this specific look sells top dollars, the formula of turbo folk became an instant success. In this paper, I would like to trace the emergence of the female pop-folk performer in the region through a critical analysis of the chalgа genre and the particular image of the stars who headline this hugely popular music style, trying to map the engendering of a new standard of beauty and a new standard of femininity which while considered vulgar and trite by local cultural elite, has also become a universal measure of attractiveness, model for sexual behavior for young

women and a vessel for national mobilization. It has also become a tool of resisting outside influence, political or cultural, providing a way to claim ownership and independence over pressures and forces from outside, including Western Europe, thus becoming a common cultural denominator and often unexpectedly, an agency for political mobilization.

ISABEL SCARBOROUGH, Associate Professor, Anthropology Program, Department of Social Sciences, Parkland College

“Engaging with the European Union in the Community College Classroom: Pedagogy and Research Best Practices”

A recent study by the American Association of College Professors noted that community college faculty teach the bulk of introductory social science courses to the country’s undergraduate population. Further, the introductory textbooks used in these courses don’t always have the most current case studies for students to learn about relevant socioeconomic, political, and cultural issues of other world regions including the European Union. Given this situation, a group of seven faculty in Anthropology, Geography, History, Psychology and History at Parkland College undertook redesigning their courses to incorporate current scholarship on global issues and the EU. This presentation provides some preliminary results from this ongoing course design project and argues for the usefulness of participatory pedagogies including research method training. Post-course student evaluations and faculty reflections agree that engaging with the project modified material improved student success in the course. More importantly, students reported that acquiring this knowledge and skills contributed to the transfer process to four-year institutions.

Graduate Student Research Presentations

JUSTIN D. PIERCE, Graduate Student, Political Science, University of Illinois at Urban-Champaign

“European Identity and Expansion: The effects of Accession of New Member States on European Identity”

The development of a common European identity is important for the legitimacy and further integration of the European Union. I argue that the EU’s expansion has worked against the building of a stronger common identity. Optimal Distinctiveness Theory’s understanding of identity would predict a decrease in European identity with an increase in the number of member states. As membership increases, the definition of the identity expands as well. As a result of this expansion, membership in that group identity becomes less able to balance human needs for distinctiveness and inclusion. The 2004 “Big Bang” expansion was a large change in the domain of EU citizenship, and thus who is “European”. A binomial logistic regression model, using Eurobarometer data, provides evidence for a decrease in the likelihood that a respondent self-identifies as European after the 2004 expansion, compared with before. These results suggest a previously missed cost of EU expansion, namely it weakens a sense of common European identity. This finding provides a cautionary note as the EU looks to expand further.

ALBERTO MIGUEL BURGOS-RIVERA, Graduate Student, EU Studies, University of Illinois at Urban-Champaign

“Straight to Brussels or Through Their Respective Member State: The Outermost Region’s Political Representation in the European Union”

The Outermost Regions of the European Union are among the European Union’s least developed regions. Given their particular sets of challenges, such as distance from the European continent and low levels of economic development, these regions are always taken into consideration in European policy-making as stated in Article 349 of the Lisbon Treaty. While their particular challenges and status have been recognized in EU treaties, their political representation varies in regard to its Member State and their state composition. As subnational political units, the Outermost Regions also have political representation in both the EU institutions and their respective member states. However, given that their respective member states have varied levels of political decentralization, their political participation in EU affairs vary between member states. Taking the EU member states of France, Spain, and Portugal and their respective Outermost Regions such as the DOM and TOMs, the Canary Islands, and Madeira and Azores as case studies; this research project seeks to answer how its member states decentralization affect the Outermost Regions political representation in the European Union.

GENIE MELAMED, Graduate Student, EU Studies, University of Illinois at Urban-Champaign
“Determining Factors for the Success of Regional Autonomy in EU Member States”

The research question to be considered here is whether the European Union’s three-tier federal structure is conducive to movements for greater regional autonomy within EU member states. Two-tier federalism involves a governmental relationship between a central state and its regional parts in which specific governmental functions are delegated to each. Three-tier federalism involves a governmental structure in which there are not only regions and a national state, but also a supra-national institution that encompasses both of these. Governmental authority is divided between the three levels of governance. The European Union is the world’s leading example of a functioning three-tier governmental system. The case studies examined in this paper are divided into four categories. The first category includes regions for which a national government accepts greater regional autonomy and the region seeks to advance the level of its autonomy through the assistance of European Union institutions. The case study selected is Flanders. The second category includes regions for which the central national government accepts greater autonomy but the region does not seek the assistance of EU institutions to advance the level of its autonomy. The case study selected is Scotland. The third category includes regions for which the central national government opposes greater autonomy and the region seeks to advance the level of its autonomy through the assistance of European Union institutions. The case study selected is Catalonia. The fourth category includes regions for which the central government opposes greater autonomy and the region does not seek to advance the level of its autonomy through the assistance of European Union institutions. The case study selected is the Åland Islands. The indicator for determining whether a national government accepts the principle of greater regional autonomy is whether the central government has enacted laws increasing the competencies delegated to the regional government. The indicator for determining whether a region seeks the assistance

of the European Union is whether the region tries to influence EU policy on behalf of its autonomy efforts either as part of a regional representation within a governmental body of the EU or through efforts to influence EU policy from the outside. The success of a region in raising its level of autonomy will be measured by determining whether it has increased its “independent fiscal ability,” defined as the capacity of a regional government to implement the governmental programs that it has enacted into law through regional taxing authority, automatic transfer payments from the central government, or both. The hypothesis to be presented is that the EU’s three-tiered federal structure does not have the effect of promoting autonomy movements within an EU member state; instead, the key factor in the success or failure of a region’s efforts to achieve greater autonomy is whether these efforts are accepted or opposed by the national government. Based on this hypothesis, it is anticipated that Flanders and Scotland will be successful in achieving greater autonomy while Catalonia and the Åland Islands will be unsuccessful.

IZABELA KANTOR, Graduate Student, International Studies, DePaul University
“Democratic Backsliding in Post-communist Europe: The Case of Poland”

From the 1990s and into the early 2000s, Poland was seen as the greatest example of postcommunist transition into democracy in Central and Eastern Europe. Democratization allowed for free and fair elections in the country, which resulted in several relatively successful government transitions from 1990 onward. Additionally, Poland’s GDP increased substantially, civil society institutions flourished, higher education thrived, and the media, specifically newspapers, was able to criticize the government and hold it accountable for corruption. This positive democratic progress even granted Poland a spot within the European Union. However, looking at the current state of the country, one can argue that this conclusion was made far too quickly. In 2018, Poland is classified as a “mildly authoritarian” state. How and why did this transition happen? What has created this backslide of democracy in Poland? This paper will explore these questions since this issue threatens not only the security of the European Union, but also the world at large as populism continues to spread globally. The findings reveal that this deterioration is the result of the Law and Justice (PiS) party’s unconstitutional reforms that have weakened the Polish constitution, judicial independence, media neutrality, citizens’ rights, and much more. These reforms, coupled with Poland’s long history of foreign intervention, have created an environment in which authoritarianism has thrived, thus deteriorating democracy in the state. Keywords: Democratic backsliding, Poland, illiberal democracy, European Union, populism.

KATHERINE BROWN, Graduate Student and Research Associate, FBI Working Group,
Department of Public & International Affairs, University of Pittsburgh
“The Single Voice Dilemma: EU Elite Actor Responses to the Ukrainian Crisis”

Has the European Union consolidated its voice on the Ukrainian issue? A highly integrated institution like the European Union can benefit from having a single voice – it shows solidarity, strength and demonstrates a higher level of commitment to its policies. When the European Union does not (or cannot) produce a single voice, it can signal to outside actors that policy may change, policy is not supported, or in the worst-case scenario – that member states can be swayed into choosing a policy that is not perhaps in the European

Union's long-term goals and beliefs. The Ukrainian Crisis has demanded a strong response from the European Union, as member states closest to the conflict feel increased tension and see a surge of geopolitical integration politics in the region from the Russian government. However, member states and their leaders have not produced the same response, or even show energetic support for the EU's response to the crisis. By comparing leader's responses to the Ukrainian Crisis, I find that while Western leaders like Emmanuel Macron and Angela Merkel do work closely to curate a similar response, leaders in the southern portion of the European Union show little regard for the severity or importance of the crisis, and almost appear to be tagging along on consolidated responses like sanctions. The result is not a single voice, but possibly a diminishment of EU relevance, as the strength of response comes from the strongest and most vocal supporters of NATO, not the European Union. For outside actors, like Russia, the response indicates uneven support for the Ukrainian Crisis response, and that some member states are open to persuasive arguments from outside the European Union.

KYLE SHISHKIN, BA/MA Student, Economics and International Relations, University of Chicago

“Euromaidan: The Sociopolitical History of the Revolution”

Since the end of the Soviet occupation on August 24th, 1991, conglomerate oligarchical establishments have taken both economic and political control of Ukraine. These establishments have since maintained covert systems of corruption, which have led to the privatization of large segments of state capital. After President Yanukovych's announcement of Ukrainian integration with Russia in December of 2013, as opposed to the European Union, a wave of increasingly brutal protests and government counteractions — referred to as Euromaidan Revolution — swept across Ukraine. Through a round of qualitative interviews with acting media reporters and eyewitnesses, a quantitative statistical data gathering, and a review of the current literature, this research analyzes the sociopolitical context of the Revolution. It asks: Which socio-political forces have instigated mass civil agitation? and What were the primary driving motives of the protesters during the transition to the Revolution's violent stages? The study shows that the protests began primarily as a response to the unpopular integration agreement, deep-seated frustration with the apparent corruption of the incumbent Yanukovych administration, as well as a sense of overall political disenfranchisement. The driving forces of the protesters were a belief in the advent of change, enhanced by popular local and international support and recognition. Thereby, through an evaluation of the causes and sustaining forces of Euromaidan, the work encourages a further study of Ukraine's transition from political quietism to civic engagement, and illuminates the underlying trajectory of civil movements and revolutions worldwide.