



RESEARCH SEMINAR

EU MULTI-LEVEL GOVERNANCE : CIVIL SOCIETY ACTORS, INTEREST GROUPS, POLITICAL PARTIES

1. Topic and aims of the Research Seminar

This research seminar is on governance in the EU, focussing on non-state (private, societal) actors, their role and concrete activities. The research seminar shall primarily deal with the three following types of non-state actors: (1) NGOs representing Civil Society (such as ATTAC, Greenpeace or Amnesty International) and promoting special concerns; (2) traditional interest groups (such as farmers' organisations, business associations, trade unions or organisations representing various sectors and professions); (3) political parties.

The aim of the research seminar is to analyse and evaluate the role and concrete activities of these actors in EU governance:

- As concerns NGOs representing Civil Society (amongst them "public interest groups"), they are primarily engaged in policy fields such as Environment, Social Affairs, Consumer Issues, Human Rights. They have grown in number considerably over the past two decades, have intensified their activities as a result of globalization, and have become recognised as actors and co-players in international politics (e.g. vis-à-vis WTO, Economic Summits) and in the EU system. Here they do a very special kind of lobbying, but they are also "instrumentalised" by the Commission (e.g. to mobilise support in the public, with respect to trade and investment issues; to inform and communicate with them via inclusion in WTO- or Climate Policy issues) and accepted as dialogue partners (e.g. creation of a special Contact Group between Commission and Civil Society). In the context of other EU activities (in various policy fields) these Civil Society organisations have been involved in policy or project implementation,
- As concerns traditional and well established interest groups, they are engaged in a large number of policy areas. Their respective activities can be labelled as "lobbying"; not in the sense of "pressure group" actions and behaviour, but as communication partners in an exchange pattern with institutional actors, especially the Commission, and, since recently, the European Parliament. This communication is institutionalised as well as informal and is regarded as functional (see the rapid growth of the number of such

lobby actors in Brussels and the emergence and existence of special networks with such actors as “members”). Besides member-state based interest groups, most of them have established transnational (EU-wide) organisations. As concerns their strategies, they can use the Brussels as well as the national route.

- As concerns political parties, they appear threefold: (1) as party groups in the European Parliament, determining its structure and the organisation of its work; (2) as parties at European level (which have grown in number considerably, following the 2004 Statute on parties at European level and their financing, modified and extended in 2007, 2014 and 2018); (3) as national political parties. The research seminar shall deal with the performance of political parties in these three forms (e.g. the pattern of relations between EP party groups; their strategies in inter- institutional relations, esp. vis-à-vis the Commission; their attitude towards specific issues on the EU agenda; their role in EP elections – esp. the role they have played in the 2009, 2014 and 2019 elections with a focus on the process of selecting the new Commission President (“Spitzenkandidaten“-procedure) and Commission members- or EU related referendums) and try to analyse their role and performance as agents and carriers of a politicization of EU politics (Euroseptic parties deserve special attention).

Research seminars are the framework in which the individual Master Thesis shall be written. In this research seminar each thesis should be an actor-related study, focussing on activities and performance of one actor or, more probably, various actors (they may form and appear as a “network”), involved in dealing with a particular issue in a specific policy field. The respective thesis, therefore, may be a case-study.

A Master Thesis should be more than only a descriptive analysis; it shall be based on or at least related to theoretical considerations and concepts. These can help to find a special focus for the analysis, to formulate the Research Question and a hypothesis (or hypotheses) which has (or have) to be tested and discussed. The major goal of the thesis will be to answer the Research Question and, in the light of the empirical findings, comment on the hypothesis/hypotheses. This research seminar will, therefore, at the beginning give a brief overview on theoretical concepts, relevant to do actor-oriented studies on “Governance in the EU”.

It is one major aim of the seminar that students acquire a better understanding of and insight into the complex governance structure of the EU by dealing in their research papers (the Master Thesis) with activities of these different types of non-state actors related to EU issues.

It is another major aim of this seminar that students – when collecting material for the empirical analysis of concrete cases and the activities of the respective actors – have to contact staff members in such organisations and in institutions, both at EU and at national level. The students will have to make appointments for interviews and look for documents and other primary sources in order to collect the necessary empirical material for the thesis. Such efforts will contribute to gaining practical experience in how to organise and manage such contacts and communication relations. The students will gain a better insight into the day-to-day management of EU policies as far as the involvement and contribution of these types of non-state actors are concerned. It is not only professional experience that the students can acquire; they may also establish contacts, which might be useful when they will be looking for a job or an internship.

2. Organisation and methodology of the Research Seminar

The seminar's major aims determine its organisation; these aims are:

- identifying topics which could be analysed in the Master Thesis and formulating the Research Question;
- experiencing concepts and methods adequate for the analysis and understanding relevant theoretical/conceptual approaches;
- producing a research paper (Master Thesis) on the chosen topic.

There will be plenary sessions and individual interviews; the focus will be on the interviews. Concrete date will be communicated in due time, later.

Organisational details and time-table

1. First session (30 September 2021): Brief introduction with explanation of the seminar's subject, suggestions for possible types of thesis-topics and recommendations on how to get the thesis-project started.
2. Second session (in November 2021); exact dates will be communicated): Individual Interviews (at least 20 minutes for each student) on the basis of the following: Each student is expected to indicate the envisaged topic (or: alternative topics) plus some remarks (esp. on the Research Question) on the thesis project (half page will be sufficient); this should be handed in a couple of days before the interview. On the basis of the feed-back and exchange of views during the individual interview, each student should elaborate an outline of the thesis project which will be dealt with in the second round of individual interviews (starting in early January 2022)..
3. Third meeting (in early January 2022) with (1) a plenary session, dealing with theoretical and conceptual, and, not to forget, practical aspects (focusing on the strategy how to collect all kind of information and material needed as the empirical basis for the Thesis); (2) Individual Interviews on the basis of the thesis outlines to be elaborated by each student (see remarks under "Second session").
4. There will be, from February to mid-April 2022, at least three more sessions with Individual Interviews (approx.. 30 minutes each). The students are expected to elaborate – form session to session – revised and improved/extended outlines which will be discussed in the interviews. In addition, there will be one or two very brief plenary sessions.

3. Seminar work requirements

Each student is expected to

- attend regularly and participate actively in all plenary sessions and come to his/her individual interviews with the professor;
- prepare (for the individual interviews) outlines of the thesis project, as explained above;
- write the thesis.

4. Thesis Defence and marks

There will not be a formal exam but a thesis defence (see the departmental rules).

The final mark will be based on the overall quality of the thesis; performance in the thesis defence will be taken into consideration.

5. Introductory bibliography*

The following titles shall give only a first orientation. Further titles will follow in the seminar, related to individual thesis projects.

- BACHE Ian and GEORGE, Stephen, *Politics in the EU* (Oxford UP 2011, 3rd ed.), chs. 2, 3, 4 (on theory), and 23 (on Organised Interests) (01.05.00 007 GEOR)
- CINI Michelle (ed.), *EU Politics* (Oxford UP, 2010, 3rd ed.), chs. 8 (B. Rosamond on New Theories of European Integration) and 13 (R. Eising on Interest Groups and the EU). (01.05.00 007 CINI)
- DELWIT Pascal, KULAHCI Erol & WALLE Cedric van de, "The Europarties: Organisation and Influence", in *Centre d'étude de la vie politique of the Free University of Brussels (ULB) 2004*, available at:
<http://www.ulb.ac.be/soco/cevipol/Books%20Presentation/The%20Europarties.htm>
(First published: Delwit Pascal, Erol Kulahci, Cédric van de Walle (eds.), *Les fédérations européennes de partis. Organisation et influence* (Bruxelles: Editions de l'Université de Bruxelles, 2001).
- DÜR, A./MATEO, G., Who lobbies the EU? National interest groups in a multilevel polity. In: *Journal of European Public Policy* 7/2012, pp.969-987
- *Journal of European Public Policy* 8/2008: Special Issue «The Role of Political Parties in the EU»
- *Journal of European Public Policy* 4/2015: Special Issue «Legislative Lobbying in context the politics and polity determinants of interest group politics in the EU
- KLÜVER, Heike: Informational Lobbying in the EU: The effect of organisational characteristics. In: *West European Politics* 3/2012, pp.491-510

- KLÜVER, Heike: *Lobbying in the EU: Interest Groups, Lobbying Coalitions and Policy Change*. Oxford UP 2013
- ROWE, Carolyn: *Regional Representation in the EU: Between Diplomacy and Interest Mediation*. Basingstoke 2011
- GREENWOOD, Justin, *Interest Representation in the European Union* (Houndmills, Palgrave Macmillan, 3rd edn. 2011) (04.20.03 002 (3) GREE)
- KOHLER-KOCH Beate/QUITTKAT Christine/KURCZEWSKA Urszula, *Interest Intermediation in the EU Revisited: Report on a Survey Study* (Mannheimer Zentrum für Europäische Sozialforschung MZES, Mannheim 2013, ISSN 1437-8574)
- RICHARDSON Jeremy (ed.), *European Union : Power and Policy-making* (Routledge 2006, 3rd ed.), chs.1 (J. Richardson on Policy-making in the EU), 12 (S. Mazey and J. Richardson on, *Interest Groups and EU policy-making*), 13 (M. Keating and E. Hooghe on Regions and the EU Policy process) (01.05.00 007 RIC)
- ROSAMOND Ben, *Theories of European Integration* (Macmillan 2000) (01.05.00 005 ROSA)
- SMISMANS Stijn (ed.), *Civil Society and Legitimate European Governance* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2006) (04.20.04 007 (3) SMIS)
- SCHENDELEN Rinus van, *Machiavelli in Brussels. The Art of Lobbying the EU* (Amsterdam: AUP, 2002) (04.20.03 002 (3) SCHE)
- WAARDEN Frans van, "Dimensions and Types of Policy Networks", in *European Journal of Political Research*, 21:1/2 (1992), pp. 29-52 (P-04.20.00 006 EJPR)
- *West European Politics 2/2014: Special Issue: "Responsive and Responsible? The Role of Parties in Twenty-First Century Politics"*

*This bibliography has been put together by the Professor. The formatting of the references does not necessarily correspond to the referencing rules applicable in the Department.