

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

Jeanie Bukowski, *International Studies, Bradley University*
“A New Water Culture on the Iberian Peninsula? Evaluating Epistemic Community Impact on Policy Change”

Water management on the Iberian Peninsula is challenging due to geographic and climatic factors as well as past policy choices. Spain and Portugal share five major river basins and both states are subject to the requirements of a growing body of European Union environmental legislation, notably the Water Framework Directive. It is under these conditions of complexity, uncertainty, and interdependence that international regime theorists see a potential role for epistemic communities in impacting policy preferences. This approach generally assumes that an epistemic community may serve as a transmission belt of science into policy only if its members develop the relevant scientific knowledge apart from the policy process. That assumption is disputed especially in the science and technology studies (STS) literature, which considers such separation as both impossible and normatively unhelpful. This paper sheds light on this debate through an analysis of the transboundary epistemic community promoting a new water culture on the Peninsula.

David Cleeton, *Economics, Illinois State University*
“Will Juncker’s Investment Plan Work?”

The launch of a new 315 (\$390) billion investment plan by the European Commission under the leadership of its new president, Jean-Claude Juncker, has stirred new controversy over the proper mix of fiscal and monetary policy needed to revitalize the struggling EU economy. With the aim of giving a stimulative boost to short-term economic growth and job creation, the plan focuses on infrastructure investment and thus promises a second-round and longer-run effect of increased macroeconomic productivity. We will detail the current debate about why investment in the EU economy is stagnant in a era of historically low interest rates.

Elza Ibroscheva, *Mass Communications, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville*
“Female Bodies for Sale: Regulating the Advertising Industry and Its Portrayals of Women in Bulgaria”

The study examines the hypersexualization of the female body in Bulgarian advertising to explore how the trend of what media scholars call "porno chic" normalizes and in fact, in some aspects, glorify, the process of turning the female body into a commodity. By exploring the current framework for regulating the sexual content of ads and existing perceptions of the trend of "porno chic" in Bulgarian advertising, the study illuminates the micro-social processes of cultural signification and cultivation of the dominant views of sexuality as well the socially-mediated phenomenon that normalizes the use of the female

body as a currency in the business of selling sex. To complicate matters further, Bulgaria's hugely profitable and very loosely regulated advertising industry, while generating unprecedented record profits in the media sector, has become a prime target for criticisms from the European Union, which deemed the unbridled exploitive images of sexuality in advertising extremely problematic. In fact, in 2008 the European Parliament issued a scathing report on negative stereotyping in advertising, specifically naming Bulgaria/s alcohol producers as responsible for exploiting sexuality as a mainstream strategy of selling their products. The EU's recommendation focused on mandating the introduction of a self-regulation framework to address these issues. The study at hand examines how and if these recommendations have been heeded and what concrete measures, if any, have been put in place.

Serpil Kahraman, *Visiting Scholar, Economics, University of Illinois; Yasar University, Turkey*
“Regional Financial Inequality in Turkey: 1988-2013 – Does EU the make a difference?”

This study aims to provide a descriptive analysis of the evolution of regional and provincial financial inequalities in Turkey over the period 1988-2013. ESDA tools used in the analysis indicate the presence of a statistically significant non-random spatial pattern for the 2006-2013 period. LISA cluster maps reveal that the southeastern provinces of the country constitute a hot spot of credit activity in this period. Moreover the evolution of financial inequality indices as proposed by Lima and Resende (2008) suggests that this clustering has led to a reduction in regional financial disparities across the country over the period in question.

Maxime H.A. Larivé, *EU Center, University of Illinois*
“Doing Global Research on Perception: The Misunderstood Partner”

How does the world perceive the European Union (EU)? Which dimensions and policies should the EU design, implement, and/or adjust in order to solidify its relationship with its strategic partners across the world? How does the United States understand its relationship with its Atlantic neighbor, the EU?

These are some of the questions that inform a global project financed by the European Commission in order to study the perceptions of the European Union in 10 strategic partners across the globe. The results of this global study will contribute to informing the future EU public diplomacy by highlighting the way the EU is perceived abroad.

The methodological foundation of the study, conducted by researchers in each strategic partner, was grounded into three dimensions: first, an overarching literature review; second, media analysis of the three most preeminent national newspapers (two general and one business); and third, interviews of 15 individuals across seven target groups.

This presentation will discuss the way the research was conducted in the specific case of the United States. And importantly, it will attempt to address the following question: what will the EU learn from the way Americans portray, perceive, and understand their Atlantic neighbor?

Aaron Russell Martin, *Political Science, Loyola University Chicago*
“Party Group Switching in the European Parliament: Developing a Multi-level Theory”

Within the European Parliament (EP), the primary political unit—the one that controls committee assignments, rapporteurships, and the passing of legislation—is the party group. Party groups are closely associated with party families, and these families have historically established ideological positions and policy preferences (Mair and Mudde 1998). Given these facts, the current research project asks the question: Why do roughly 15 percent of all members of the European Parliament (MEPs) switch party groups per Parliament? When compared to the percentage of party switching

in national parliaments, of the twenty states examined, only Brazil has a higher average rate of political re-affiliation (O'Brien and Shomer 2013).

This paper reviews the literature relevant to party switching in national parliaments and the European Parliament, paying close attention to the causal mechanisms identified as motivating switching in both institutional settings. The goal is to develop a theory of party group switching that goes beyond individual-level explanations based purely on vote-, office- or policy seeking behavior (Müller and Strøm 1999). Following Mainwaring and Scully's (1995) example, the theory considers how the level of party system institutionalization affects MEPs' motivation to change party groups. It proposes that the EP is dominated by a two-tier party system that has the characteristics of being both closed and non-competitive (Mair 1997) while also fitting into Sartori's (2005) categorization of a pragmatic-hegemonic party system. Recognizing that the three largest groups vote unanimously on issues concerning European integration (Bowler and McElroy 2015), this analysis argues that the collusion between these party groups crowds out any meaningful legislative competition. This cartel of party groups (Blyth and Katz 2005; Rose and Borz 2013) therefore leads to an overinstitutionalized core and an underinstitutionalized periphery. The hypothesis therefore states that switching should occur most frequently among the marginal party groups while the core party groups remain relatively stable.

This theory contends that party group switching in the EP is a symptom of a much larger problem—a non-competitive party system dominated by a cartel of ideologically centrist, pro-integration party groups. Because the peripheral party groups have no blackmail power (Sartori 2005), and they have no avenues for traditional opposition, they shift to a purely Eurosceptic opposition of principle (Mair 2007), destabilizing the chamber while also attempting to delegitimizing the entire integration project (Taggart and Szczerbiak 2008). As Schmidt (2013) argues, no matter how open and transparent elections are, and no matter how much support policies receive from the electorate, “negative throughput” arising from structural bias and unequal treatment of members within the parliament, taints both input- and output-oriented legitimacy. Therefore, this paper argues that party group switching is directly related to questions of the democratic deficit and the legitimation crisis that have plagued the EU since Maastricht.

Juan Ramon Rivera Sanchez, *Visiting Scholar, EUC, University of Illinois; Law, Alicante University, Spain*

“A Proposal of Social Clause on TTIP”

Free Trade between UE-US is an essential decision to improve working conditions on both regions because ninety per cent of worldwide growth is expected outside of Europe. On this path, when Transatlantic Trade be got might be a serious bid to harmonize the labor law in these regions representing around fifty percent of goods and services exchange's inside World Trade Organization.

On the one hand, it is necessary to note proposal research's activity under consideration here is complex from a labor law perspective and, thus, is an original study in the point of view the features involved in the negotiation process which requires to rethink new situations that did not exist around the so-called “Social Clause” in the Agreements Free Trade signed during last fifty years.

In this sense, the study of the "Social Clause" in its traditional version has been the adoption of trade deals being uneven powers, that is, a major trading power such as US or European Union with developing countries. The adoption of free trade agreement between two of the major powers of world trade becomes huge challenge as the Negotiators Parties as the Lawmakers whether decide to get a balance agreement at least remain “status quo” at the industrial and labor relations in both sides Transatlantic Ocean. Therefore, the main concerns would be the forecast evolution wages, the collective rights of employees, even the future treatment of the health care might be matter of this Agreement of Trade and Investment.

In summary, this proposal pretends to offer on Employment Law trends once upon the Social Clause work up, even whether Transatlantic Trade negotiators decide put off the table the Social Clause, it would be very convenient analyze that performance and its legal effects:

1. First, one of the main purposes of analysis is related to determining the meaning and scope of the presence, or, maybe, the absence of the "social clause" in the process of negotiation of the Free Trade Agreement EU and USA (hereinafter TUSUE). In either case, it is necessary to analyze the legal effects of the result of the bargain process TUSUE would be produced within European Union and American system whether a section of social clause is incorporated such as dealing by the negotiating parties.
2. Second, it is necessary to proceed to the determination the contents the negotiators parties of USA and EU have to incorporate to the negotiating table to favor, in social clause: *"the full development of the standards are international protection of the rights of workers in respect of the reference set by international treaties from the ILO, reference parameter in USA, even if these may be, in some cases substantially exceeded through proper negotiation of conditions of international trade"*.
3. Anyway, the deals obtained inside the TUSUE ought to compel to act many new rules in force in Europe and America on collective law, minimum wages even health care could be modified in states of the United State and member states of the European Union. It would be very convenient establish the procedures on both regions. Specially, the question would be complicated in European Union each country has its own sovereignty.
4. Another issue structure of this research proposal would be to design and analysis the effects on the labor law and protection social during the transition period whatever the prevalent model of labor relations adopted in TUSUE. Thus, if the pursued referent was the core labor standards from USA, probably the European Labor Law would start a relevant race to the bottom in the protection social the negotiators and Europe Union should manage.
5. On the opposite side, if the reference was the European model of protection social during transition period, the American unions, employees and institutions else may ask acting new rules could become in the race to top conditions of social protection causing extensive rejection by most employers in the United States

Kolja Raube, *Visiting Scholar, Economics, University of Illinois; Centre for European Studies, KU-Leuven, Belgium*

"Interparliamentary Cooperation in EU External Action"

In this presentation, I will focus on inter-parliamentary cooperation in the recently established Inter-Parliamentary Conference for the Common Foreign and Security Policy and the Common Security and Defence Policy (Conference). In other words, the focus is on the cooperation between national parliaments and the European Parliament in the context of EU external action, and, more specifically, the Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) of the European Union (EU or Union). In light of its peculiar status as a parliamentary conference in a decidedly intergovernmental domain, such as

CFSP and CSDP, the Conference has been seen as a test case for further inter-parliamentary and parliamentary settings in EU governance.

Paskal Zhelev, *Visiting Scholar, Economics, University of Illinois; International Economic Relations and Business, University of National and World Economy (UNWE), Bulgaria*
“The EU through the lenses of its poorest member state - evidence from Bulgaria”

In a recent report commissioned by the World Bank (2012) it was stated the EU has invented a “growth machine”, taking in poor countries and helping them become high-income economies. In the 1990s Bulgaria started the process of transition to a market economy following a strategy of “Return to Europe” with a main goal accession to the EU. The European integration was probably the only priority on which a broad consensus among the major political parties and in society at large existed. It was hoped that integrating in the club of rich European countries would provide all the necessary conditions for fast catching up economic growth – improved legal and institutional framework, transfers from the pre-accession and later the Structural and Cohesion Funds for modernization of the economy and the infrastructure, large inflow of FDI and new technologies, etc. Indeed Bulgaria has made some progress in catching-up over the past decade. Nevertheless, the gap in GDP per capita vis-à-vis the average EU level remains significant and Bulgaria lags behind all its peers also in terms of productivity. The economy has specialized in predominantly labor- and raw-material intensive goods with very few high-tech exports. Increased emigration and population ageing has reached a level that demolishes the economic potential and destabilizes Bulgarian society in the medium and long run. The country faces a serious threat of falling into a “middle income trap”. *The objective* of this paper is to look at the European integration experience of Bulgaria and to put to discussion both the economic benefits and disadvantages connected with it.