Economic Integration and Political Fragmentation?
Parties, Interest Groups, and Democratic Capitalism in Eastern and Western Europe

Badia Fiesolana, Sala del Capitolo
June 11-12, 2010

The process of economically integrating Europe – a project supported by national governments in both east and west – is well under way. Yet the economic integration of European economies has gone hand in hand with increasing signs of dysfunction in European politics. Scholars of political economy have observed this trend in the falling membership of unions and employers’ associations and the hollowing out of some of the core institutions that supported coordinated market economies in the past. Scholars of party systems have observed the failure of mainstream national parties to respond to the cleavage over European issues that appears to be a new structural feature of domestic politics across the EU.

These are both fundamental problems of political representation, but scholars in these two literatures seldom speak to each other. Moreover, those whose work focuses on the new member-states of the Union and those who work on the more established western European democracies often maintain parallel rather than integrated conversations. The goal of this workshop is break down this artificial barrier and to draw together scholars working on these issues from different angles to hold an extended discussion of the common challenges currently facing European capitalist democracies.

Our goal is to get established scholars to reflect on a shared theme, rather than to present work in progress per se. Thus our format will be to call for the production of “proto-papers”: documents of no more than five to eight pages that consider the state of field and the state of the world in given realms of politics and political economy, rather than recapitulating the latest research finding (though recent findings are by no means excluded from such a format!). Discussants will be asked to do just that: provoke discussion. Our goal is not to be a way-station on the road to ten polished and published articles, but to be the workshop that launches fifty new lines of inquiry.

Friday, June 11

9:30-9:45 Opening Remarks: Pepper Culpepper and Laszlo Bruszt

9:45-11:15 Party-Political Implications of Economic Dualism and Immigration
This panel will investigate how parties and party systems are responding to the increasingly insider/outside character of European models of economic governance and welfare systems as well as to the (simultaneous and linked) problems of immigrants and their integration into politics and society.

Presenters: Silja Häusermann, University of Zurich
Sean Hanley, University College London

Discussant: Pepper Culpepper, EUI

11:15-11:30 Coffee Break
Does the Delivery of Public Policy Change Parties and Party Systems over Time?
Parties that govern face a host of multilateral commitments and economic changes that significantly limit their room to innovate in the policy arena. Meanwhile, they try to continue their role of representing constituencies whose belief in their ability to effect policy change is in decline. What does this mean for the role of political parties over time? Are social partners in a position to take up the representational slack, or are they embedded in their own legitimacy crisis? If so, what are the possible avenues of political representation we might expect to replace these dinosaurs?

Presenters: Peter Mair, EUI
Anna Grzymala-Busse, University of Michigan

Discussant: Stefano Bartolini, EUI

Lunch, EUI Mensa

How the EU Changes the Possibilities of Domestic Politics (Interest Groups and Political Parties)
For much of the postwar era, political parties and interest groups represented overlapping means of channeling the demands of the citizenry. Faced with the delegation of many policy competencies to the European Union, national level parties and social partners have a reduced claim to be able to channel those demands to actual policy-makers (the ECB is only the most egregious example of this trend). What are the organizational responses of parties and unions faced with this state of affairs?

Presenters: Philippe Schmitter, EUI
Dorothee Bohle, Central European University and EUI

Discussant: Wade Jacoby, Brigham Young University and EUI

Dinner, TBA

Saturday, June 12

Civil Society and Democratic Performance
To what extent does the proliferation of new networks of social organization offer a way out of the legitimation crisis facing existing institutions? Some scholars have argued that new forms of participation offer fewer links between the state and the citizen, and as such no longer play the integrating role they once did. Many social capital theorists still think network participation is the greatest invention since sliced bread. What are the frontiers of research on the connection between societal organization and democratic performance?

Presenters: Grzegorz Ekiert, Harvard University
Bela Greskovits, Central European University

Discussant: Laszlo Brusz, EUI

Coffee Break

Frontiers of Research: What we know and what we need to find out

Presenters: Laszlo Brusz, EUI
Pepper Culpepper, EUI
Sven Steinmo, EUI

Lunch, Pizzeria San Domenico