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The Political Psychology of European Integration

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Joseph Weiler Captivated his Audience in Alexandersalen



In front of a crowded Alexandersal, Professor Joseph Weiler, President of the European University Institute in Florence, argued in his talk 'Sleepwalking Again: Europe and the End of the Pax Americana 1914-2014' that America's global authority in both containing and restraining threats is diminishing. Consequently Europeans should not and cannot, as before, rely on the US as a guarantor of peace and security. Europe needs to find a way to fill the huge gap between Europe's security needs and the resources it is vesting in the area. The lecture was organised in cooperation with iCourts at the Faculty of Law, EURECO, and the student organisation International Debat (ID).

Seminar: British Exit from the EU?

On 16th of April CEP will co-host the seminar 'British Exit from the EU? Legal and Political Implications for Europe'. Experts on British relations to the EU are invited to address the consequences for the European Union, should British voters decide it is in UK's interest to secede from the EU.

The seminar will focus on the impact of a British exit, not only on the UK, but also on the other member states - including Denmark. The seminar concludes with an "ambassadors talk" between the British Ambassador to Denmark Vivien Life and Denmark's Ambassador to the UK, Claus Grube.



The event takes place in the run-up to the upcoming UK General Election in May. An election where the UK's position within the EU undoubtedly will play a key role. The seminar is organised in cooperation with Centre for Comparative and European Constitutional Studies (CESC), and is sponsored by EURECO, European Research at the University of Copenhagen.

[Read more about the event here.](#)

CEP-researcher wins internationally recognized award



Associate Professor Rebecca Adler-Nissen has received the International Studies Association's (ISA) 'the best book award within the field of International Political Sociology' for her book 'Opting Out of the European Union: Diplomacy, Sovereignty and European Integration'.

The International Studies Association (ISA) represents more than 100 countries and counts around 6,500 members. It is among the most acknowledged associations within the field of international relations.

LATEST RESEARCH

Adler-Nissen, Rebecca & Kristoffer Kropp (2015) 'A Sociology of Knowledge Approach to European Integration: Four Analytical Principles', in *Journal of European Integration*, 37(2):155-173.

Grøn, Caroline Howard & Heidi Houlberg Salomonsen (2015) 'Who's at the Table? An Analysis of Ministers' Participation in EU Council of Ministers Meetings', in *Journal of European Public Policy*.

Grøn, Caroline Howard, Peter Nedergaard & Anders Wivel (2015) *The Nordic Countries and the European Union: Still the Other European Community?*. London: Routledge.

Manners, Ian (2015) 'Sociology of Knowledge and Production of Normative Power in the European Union's External Actions', in *Journal of European Integration*, 37(2): 299-318.

Reher, Stefanie (2015) 'Explaining cross-national variation in the relationship between priority congruence and satisfaction with democracy', in *European Journal of Political Research*, 54(1): 160-181.

Rosamond, Ben (2015) 'Performing Theory/Theorizing Performance in Emergent Supranational Governance: The 'Live' Knowledge Archive of European Integration and the Early European Commission', in *Journal of European Integration*, 37(2): 175-191.

Adler-Nissen, Rebecca (2014) 'Power in Practice: Negotiating the international intervention in Libya', *European Journal of International Relations*, 20(4): 889-911.

Nedergaard, Peter & Mads Dagnis Jensen (2014) 'Uno, Duo, Trio? Varieties of Trio Presidencies in the Council of Ministers', in *Journal of Common Market Studies*, Vol. 52(5): 1035-1052

Rasmussen, Anne & Laura Baroni, Brendan J Carroll, Adam William Chalmers & Luz Maria Muñoz Marquez (2014) 'Defining and Classifying Interest Groups', in *Interest Groups and Advocacy*, 3(2): 141-159.

Sindbjerg Martinsen, Dorte & Ayca Uygur Wessel (2014) 'On the path to differentiation: upward transfer, logic of variation and sub-optimality in EU social policy', in *Journal of European Public Policy*, 21(9): 1255-1272.

Sindbjerg Martinsen, Dorte & Mads Dagnis Jensen (2014) "Out of Time? National Parliaments and Early Decision-Making in the European Union" in *Government and Opposition*, 50(2): 240-270.

Vasev, Nikolay & Karsten Vrangbæk (2014) 'Transposition and National-Level Resources: Introducing the Cross-Border Healthcare Directive in Eastern Europe', *West European Politics*, 37(4): 693-711.

Wind, Marlene (2014) 'Who Is Afraid of European Constitutionalism? The Nordic Distress with Judicial Review and Constitutional Democracy', *iCourts Workingpaper*, 12: 1-20.

RESEARCH COLUMN

The Political Psychology of European Integration – being mindful of Europe

-By Ian Manners, Professor, Department of Political Science, University of Copenhagen



In an era of European crises over political legitimacy, economic austerity, and collapse of confidence in the EU the topic of European integration has become a very emotional subject. The anger which protesters demonstrate against economic austerity, the hate which nationalist far-right parties express for the EU and fellow Europeans, and the passion with which supporters of the EU argue for greater integration and enlargement are today central to understanding European integration. Being mindful of Europe - reflecting on the ways in which psychology and politics are deeply implicated in understanding European integration is no longer an option; it is a necessity.

Strangely there has been little systematic attempt to bring together the analysis of psychology with that of politics in the study of European integration. A step towards addressing this absence of engagement can be taken by briefly surveying what political psychology and European integration have to say to each other in the understanding of the European Union. Political psychology is understood as the bidirectional interaction of political and psychological processes. European integration is understood as the economic, social and political processes of mutual accommodation and inclusion by European states and peoples.

The most common approach has been from conventional psychological approaches which tend to read European integration from the perspective of individual psychology. These approaches have been heavily embedded within individual poll data and public opinion studies. For example, the common use of Eurobarometer data tends to suggest that national identities and opinions are fairly homogenous and fixed for any one member state. However, closer examination of variation over time and variation between regions within a member state argues in the opposite direction – that identities and opinions exhibit considerable variation over time and space, raising some fundamental questions about the ‘essentialisation’ or commonplace stereotyping of national identities in political language.

In contrast to the work of conventional psychology, social psychology has historically been stronger in Europe, reflecting the effect of the collective on the construction of identity. Social psychology has some interesting things to say about European integration, including the argument of Brigid Laffan that shared loyalty, rather than an all-or-nothing shift of loyalty, is more likely than any radical transformation of identity. Laura

Cram takes this idea further to suggest that rather than the ‘heroic nationalism’ of national identity projects, a social psychology of the EU reveals a banal Europeanism where the EU is a facilitator for diverse understandings of collecting identities at an everyday level.

Social constructionist approaches to political psychology have very broad origins in hermeneutics, phenomenology, symbolic interactionism, and post-structuralism. For example, social constructionist political psychology has provided some thought-provoking analyses of European integration by applying notions of ontological security. The search for ontological security helps explain the need for a secure space to call home, particular for those Europeans who are part of migrant, transnational or diaspora groups.

The origins of political psychology as a discipline are to be found in psychoanalytical work where political psychology is about the struggle between desire and order and the challenges of balance. For example, Julia Kristeva’s psychoanalysis suggests that European integration symbolises broad processes of coming to terms with, coordinating, and cohabiting with difference and diversity – processes of reconciling and recognising plurality and strangeness in oneself and others. The rise of the far right across the EU and their portrayal of abject foreigners are important from the perspective of Kristevian psychoanalysis. The projection of otherness onto individuals and the social groups they represent is so strong precisely because they are also an abjected and disturbing part of European selves. Finally, critical political psychology provides a crucial arena for trying to understand the dissatisfaction and alienation that many Europeans feel towards politics, politicians, government and the EU in the twenty-first century. Critical political psychology helps explore concepts of political identity by addressing how events on the global stage interact with the local and the particular. This approach is most important when studying the political psychology of antidemocratic, nationalistic and destructive political patterns, whether found in minority or majority populations.

In conclusion, there is clearly both potential for greater engagement between political psychology and the study of European integration, but more importantly a necessity for such an engagement in order to better understand contemporary Europe. It is clear that engagement must meet the fundamental definition of political psychology – it must be a bidirectional interaction of European political and psychological processes.

The researcher column is written in turn by the researchers at the Centre for European Politics. The column does not represent a common CEP-position

NEWS FROM CEP

The last couple of months CEP has welcomed a number of **new researchers**.

[Read more about all our researchers here.](#)

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