

DiSP Young Researchers' Seminar Series

A.Y. 2022-2023 | Semester II

The DiSP Young Researchers' Seminars are held regularly in both semesters and they provide a forum for presentation of work in progress, be it by members of the PhD community, Postdoctoral fellows, or invited speakers, as well as an opportunity to discuss academic and administrative matters of mutual concern.

All seminars are held in Room S02, basement of the Luiss Residence, Via Lisbona, 7, 00198 Rome, unless specified otherwise.

Thursday 16 February 12:30-14:00

Dr. Enrico Ciappi (Postdoctoral fellow, Luiss University)

From WWII Planning to the Schuman Plan: the Role of Think Tanks and Public Diplomacy in Shaping Postwar Europe

Western Europe has represented a unique political arena in which US soft power has been tested. Indeed, the European integration process derived from a soft-power strategical design that has its roots in WWII secret planning and transatlantic diplomatic exchanges. More precisely, this study seeks to demonstrate that the origins of the first post-war European integration policies can be traced back to the plans elaborated by the New York-based think tank Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) since the outset of WWII.

While advising Roosevelt and Truman on foreign affairs, the CFR established an informal but influential network, gathering leading US experts and European policymakers like Jean Monnet. Although the interactions between these figures have never been studied, new findings reveal that the CFR-Monnet partnership proved instrumental in improving inter-Allied coordination, managing European recovery and framing the means and goals of Western European unity.

Eventually, this network of "wise men" worked together to create Europe's first supranational institution, the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC).

Yunis Mir (Visiting PhD Candidate, University of Warsaw)

Between populism and anti-populism: Changing patterns of the public discourse and the political communications style in the 2022 Italian Elections

Nowadays, certain markers indicate ambiguity of the political parties' ideological positioning in contemporary democracies. For instance, Anna Grzymala-Busse indicates that the syncretic policy positions of the centre-left and centre-right parties in Europe produced ideological weaknesses that alienate the voters, who find it harder to differentiate the mainstream parties (Grzymala-Busse, 2019). As a result, the political parties lose their prior ideological strength, so the lower ideological rigidity of the contemporary parties entails the increasing significance of the communication strategies that include the image, reputation, style of communication, and salience in the media outlets. Peter Mair boldly claims that party politics has passed, while the political systems are shifting from 'party democracy' to 'audience democracy' (Mair, 2013, p. 44). In practical terms, it means that the democratic competition would shift from ideological plain to communicational, accentuating the importance of images, messages, and ways to interact with the public. Hence, the vividness of the populist style of communication gains importance with the increasing ambiguity of the party ideologies. Luigi Curini's study indirectly confirms this notion as its findings suggest that the lower the ideological difference between the political parties the higher the propensity to use one of the populist political communication elements in its rhetoric – anti-elitism (Curini, 2020).

Contemporary populist parties more often harness social media sites (SMSs) to communicate with the public. The chief SMSs in Italy Facebook and Twitter amass a huge number of Italian users - 35.9 million and 11.2 million respectively (Statista, 2021). Those parties usually interpret the SMSs as an alternative to traditional media outlets, where the party can communicate with "the people" directly, assumingly minimising the distance from the voters. Furthermore, the amount of available information on the Internet increases, so the informer must stand out to be noticed. If the SMSs endorse the PPC, not only the populist parties might use some subframes of this style. Some recent findings are showing that non-populist political parties employ populist elements in the SMS

discourse (Bobbà and Seddone, 2022; De Bruycker and Rooduijn, 2021). It does not mean that the non-populist political parties adopt the populist ideologies as in that case they would lose the bulk of their anti-populist base. On the one hand, non-populist parties have to compete with populist parties on SMSs and this competition forces them to adopt some elements of this style. On the other hand, in 2019-2020 Movimento delle Sardine (Sardines movement) represents the reaction to the policies of the populist parties or so-called anti-populism. In particular, this movement proposed the technocratic logic instead of the populist (Hamdaoui, 2021). However, there is no in-depth research on the reasons behind adopting PPC by non-populist parties, the factors that influence PPC usage, and the continuity of anti-populist ideas.

This PhD thesis will attempt to fill this gap by analysing the populist political communication style during the 2022 Italian social media campaign on Facebook. The research goes beyond the assumption that only populist political parties harness populist style in political communications, by concentrating the attention on the ideologically non-populist political parties as well. The aims of the thesis are: to theorize the factors behind populist political communication usage in SMSs based on the Italian case, define which subframes of populist political communication style the Italian parties use in SMSs, explore the dependency of PPC usage from the campaign factors and determine the place of anti-populism in the electoral campaign.

Thursday 16 March 12:30-14:00

Dr. Lorenzo Federico and Dr. Salvatore Cusurri (Postdoctoral fellows, Luiss University)

Improving migration policies through data-driven historical analysis

Data collection is important to identify migration patterns and trends and provide humanitarian assistance to those in need. Migration data can be utilized, if accurate, as a basis for evidence-based policies.

From the 2000s onward the increasingly global adoption of technologies including the internet, mobile phones and satellite sensing have created new layers of data with which people on the move can be counted and sorted. Moreover, data analytics techniques which emerged over the same period make it possible to combine and analyse large, unstructured datasets in new ways. Different sources such as satellite data, mobile phone location records, video content from the web and geotagged social media posts can now be linked and analysed using analytics tools.

The assumption behind policy demands for more and better data is that if human mobility can be made more predictable, it also becomes more controllable (IOM and McKinsey & Company 2018). In this field is important to govern both data and migration. We are witnessing a datafication of migration statistics where our perception of reality becomes more technologically and statistically mediated as large-scale machine-readable, “born-digital” data are used to reflect patterns of human mobility. In a new twist, calls have been made on both the EU and the UN level for the use of big data analytics to track migration flows, explicitly for policy purposes, perhaps most notably the call for “big data for migration” (BD4M) (IOM and European Commission 2017). Applying such analytics has serious implications for the way migration is observed and the kinds of policy interventions that can be justified.

The research will be conducted with quantitative and qualitative methods.

On the quantitative side, we will work on how is possible to analyze migratory activities using large scale historic aggregated data, not on a case by case assessment, but through Big Data, via the creation of classification and/or predictive algorithms for migrations flows.

On the qualitative side, we will analyze whether the development and use of this data can affect states’ capabilities for the identification of individuals in need of protection, emphasizing the limits and risks posed by the unrestrained use of new technologies, notably with respect to the protection of migrants’ right to privacy and data protection and more important in the context of large movements of migrants and asylum-seekers, to ensure that these new technologies based on big data do not aggravate the risks of refoulement and extreme borders securitization. This information could be used to observe patterns and trends in strengthening or loosening states policies and regulations.

This is certainly an interesting development where more research is needed, because Big Data analytics technologies are promoted as cutting-edge solutions to ongoing and emerging social, economic and governance challenges. Meanwhile, states increasingly rely on digital and frontier

technologies to manage borders and control migratory movements, and the defence industry and military-intelligence sectors provide high-tech tools to support these efforts.

Thursday 13 April 12:30-14:00

Quentin Léonard Alexandre Borgeat (Visiting PhD Candidate, Université de Genève)

Fulfil your potential! Parties issue emphasis, potential voters and issue yield strategy

The issue yield theory aims to explain the post-ideological structure of the party competition, in which parties make compromise between supporters and the whole electorate. However, considering the preferences of individuals that will never vote for a given party downplays the accuracy of the given party's opportunities. Parties can potentially identify their opportunities by taking into account individuals that they may be able to convince. I propose a redefinition of the issue yield index based on the concept of potential party voters. I define them as individuals who do not vote yet for the party but express a higher probability to vote for the party than the mean probability to vote for all parties. Basically, the concept enables the identification of individuals that parties can convince to vote for them. I hypothesize that the issue yield model using potential electorate predicts more accurately parties' issue emphasis than the original model. I test this hypothesis by using the Issue Competition Comparative Project data. This framework bears implications on the definition of the issue yield and improves the empirical model by taking into account a group of voters between the median and the partisan voter. What's more, this paper challenges the hypothesis of a post-ideological area and enhances our understanding of parties' issue emphasis strategy.

Dr. Manfredi Valeriani (Postdoctoral fellow, Luiss University)

The National between Local and Global: the role of the State in the internationalisation process of cities

The role of cities in international politics is widely recognised in the literature. The new "glocal" dimension defines the link between the global and the local. However, while trying to investigate the role of cities on the international stage, researches sometimes miss the role of central governments as an intermediary, favouring the discourse of cities as an alternative to a state-centred governance. Focussing on the Italian case, the paper explores the various roles that the State can have in promoting or hindering the internationalisation of local authorities. Understanding how cities interact with their central governments in relation to their internationalisation is crucial to understand how cities internationalise and what their role is in different international frameworks.

Thursday 27 April 12:30-14:00

Dr. Alexandros Kyriakidis (Postdoctoral fellow, Luiss University)

The concept of policy conditionality in the EU financial assistance framework

Conditionality has been an extensively contested concept ever since its implementation during the Eurozone financial crisis in relation to the structural adjustment part of the financial assistance programs of a number of Eurozone member states (Greece, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Cyprus). Despite the fact that conditionality also existed prior to the crisis - primarily within the context of accession of new European Union (EU) member states (acquis communautaire) - its legal nature, extent of implementation, intensity, and attachment to financial assistance during the crisis was unprecedented, raising considerable challenges in terms of, inter alia, the legal EU operating framework. This does not only pertain to the nature of conditionality itself within the financial assistance framework, but also to the actors implementing it. The aim is to examine the above issues related to the concept of conditionality: where does it originate (in connection to financial assistance frameworks), how and by whom was it implemented during the Eurozone crisis, what was the impact on the legal *modus operandi* of the EU, and how has the use of conditionality expanded after the crisis?

Dr. Flavia Lucenti (Postdoctoral fellow, Luiss University)

The 'China Threat'. Stereotypical thinking in the US competition with China

Once Donald Trump was elected, the idea of the 'China Threat' gained popularity. Nonetheless, this was not a novelty. Since the early nineties, IR scholars have pointed out that China would convert its economic resources into a military force with which to turn against the US. In this regard, the article explores if the concept of the China Threat results from stereotypical representations rooted in US academic thinking and then shared at the government level. The analysis proceeds by adopting a three-stage approach. First, it draws a theoretical framework that intertwines a constructivist perspective from IR theory with social psychology, referring to Social Representation Theory and theories of stereotypes. Second, focusing on the expressions 'Thucydides' Trap' and 'New Cold War', it describes how the China Threat has been elaborated in the US scholarly agenda. Finally, it discusses how the China Threat has found an outlet in the Trump administration's narrative.

Thursday 11 May 12:30-14:00

Anna Ascani (PhD Candidate, Luiss University)

International Influence on National Education Systems: the Italian Case From a Comparative Perspective

My research aims to answer the following questions: has the Italian education system been influenced by international actors and factors? If yes, can we still consider it accountable to the democracy it lives in? And, as sub-questions, what does it mean in theory and empirically? First of all, we will try to clarify how the Italian education system actually works in terms of organization and goals, focusing on "cycles", compulsory education and autonomy of the schools. We will, then, examine the reforms that have occurred in about twenty years, from the end of the 1990s (with Minister Berlinguer) to the "Buona Scuola" law (with President Renzi). We will, therefore, analyze how the Italian education system responds to its Constitutional references (articles 3rd, 33rd and 34th), and why the European Education Area constitutes both a new challenge and an opportunity. In fact, we will focus on the evaluation and monitoring of the system, that depends on benchmarks and goals (competence-based learning and OECD standards, above all) that have never been openly discussed in Parliament and are not directly linked to the Italian Constitution as well. We will focus, then, on the relationship that exists between several reforms of the school system and two (linked) external elements: international evaluation and EU recommendations. The second chapter is dedicated to analyzing this kind of influence, starting from OECD-PISA tests (looking at their history and development), and to examining the changes that have occurred in EU policy, which started by leaving member states to define education policies on their own, but has now shifted to a strategic framework for cooperation on education and training, and to a kind of soft power operating through funding. We will then compare the Italian system to those of two other European countries: Finland and Germany. We will see how the influence of international evaluation operate there, conditioning both the reforms and the public debate. We have chosen Finland and Germany because, given the difference between the governance of the two education systems (centralist in Finland and federalist in Germany), we can find anyway the same kind of influence of international factors and actors. In the third and final chapter we will focus a bit more on the concepts, briefly clarifying what we mean when we talk about accountability in Public Systems, which is the link between this kind of accountability and democracy and explaining the relationship between accountability and education in a democratic environment. We will use Dewey's ideas as a fundamental reference, but then we will shift to a post-Deweyan approach, because democracies can no longer be considered a national fact as they were when Dewey wrote his masterpieces. Nowadays we see more and more (formal and informal) relationships operating between national democracies and international actors and factors, that must be considered. In the education field this fact is particularly important, because education have always been considered by the governments – even in the EU member states – a national prerogative. As we said, this is not true anymore. For these reasons, we will introduce the idea of a "transversal" accountability to be used when we talk about education in an "open system", given the

interaction between several authorities – at different levels (national, European, international) - in defining benchmarks and monitoring the systems.

Finally, we will conclude with policy advises for making the Italian education system work better in an environment that is influenced by many factors and need a public and open discussion.

Dr. Anna Pirri Valentini (Postdoctoral fellow, Luiss University)

Art export controls: how much cultural heritage policies tell us about the «strength» of a State?

Among the freedoms recognized as fundamental by EU law is the right to property; the protection of the latter is referred to by the Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms signed in 1952 and taken up, subsequently, also by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union in Article 17 of which it states " Everyone has the right to own, use, dispose of and bequeath his or her lawfully acquired possessions. No one may be deprived of his or her possessions, except in the public interest and in the cases and under the conditions provided for by law, subject to fair compensation being paid in good time for their loss. The use of property may be regulated by law in so far as is necessary for the general interest". Controlling the export of works of art means the possibility for a State to prevent a person owning a property having a cultural interest from taking it permanently outside its borders, whether the export is due to commercial or personal reasons.

The occasions on which a State intervenes to block the export of a work of art must be motivated by the existence in the good of a particularly important interest for the nation but, at the same time, this regulation highly impacts the possibility for the country to play a role within the international art market, which worldwide is gaining in importance.

Beyond the normative data that determines the regime of public control over the export of works of art, the presentation seeks to highlight another aspect that profoundly affects the actual ways in which a State imposes limits on the enjoyment of private property. It will be highlighted how the strength or weakness of a state can be measured not so much in the breadth and pervasiveness of its regulatory provisions, as in its ability to plan and execute them in a transparent and impartial manner. The way in which controls on the international circulation of works of art are carried out, as well as the type of administrative organization envisaged -both at the level of the institutional set-up and the internal organization of the offices or commissions charged with receiving and evaluating export requests- play, therefore, a fundamental role in determining the effectiveness of one national regime. Comparing three different examples, an attempt will be made to understand how Italy, France and England can be considered strong or weak states in this perspective.