

## New DiSP Young Researchers' Seminar Series

### A.Y. 2023-2024 | Semester I

The New 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.

**Thursday 5 October 2023, 12:30 – 14:00** | Room S03, basement of the Luiss Residence, Via Lisbona, 7

#### ➤ **Rebecca Perla Maria Iotti, PhD Candidate, XXXIX cycle**

“Countering Chinese Economic Coercion: analyzing the Factors Underlying its Success, and Countermeasure Strategies for EU/EEA Target States, 2001-2021”

**Abstract:** Chinese economic coercion, ambiguous and unilateral, and viable countermeasures for EU and EEA target states are a puzzle for sanctions literature. The counterintuitive specificities stem from the fact that, given that threats are useful if they are effectively communicated to the target, ambiguity in the declaration of upcoming coercion would be counterproductive. However, the PRC is oftentimes successful in coercing. Literature on countermeasures argues that actions from a sender induce similar retaliation from the target, but not all targets neither retaliate nor use similar measures. Thus, this proposal aims at investigating when Chinese economic coercion is successful, the factors affecting its success against EU/EEA targets, and the factors underlying target states' choice of designed counterstrategies. We aim at employing mixed methods and at developing a cross-national analysis of Chinese coercion against EU/EEA target states, from 2001, when China entered the WTO and can be considered integrated into international trade, up to 2021.

**Thursday 19 October 2023, 12:30 – 14:00** | Room S03A, basement of the Luiss Residence, Via Lisbona,

#### ➤ **Aslinur Inalci, PhD Candidate, XXXIX cycle**

“The Influence of EU Accession on Civil Society Organizations' Ability to Fight Corruption in the Western Balkans”

**Abstract:** Despite the long-standing EU engagement for the promotion of good governance and rule of law, corruption remains to be a continuous challenge in the Western Balkan six (WB6) - Montenegro, Serbia, North Macedonia, Albania, Kosovo and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Thus far, the EU's democracy support has only generated superficial and short-lived reforms, failing to meet the initial expectations that the prospect of EU membership would bring about robust and lasting transformation. While the EU democracy support in the Western Balkans continues to be a vibrant literature, the influence of EU accession on civil society organizations (CSOs) has grabbed less attention. To address this gap, this study seeks to analyze the influence of EU accession on CSOs ability to fight corruption in the Western Balkan states and hence aims to answer is: “How the EU

accession process influences civil society organizations' ability to fight corruption in the Western Balkan candidate states?"

➤ **Ilaria Lorusso, PhD Candidate, XXXXIX cycle**

"Making sense of EU's approach to Gender Mainstreaming in migration policy".

**Abstract:** This project aims at investigating the European Union's approach to the tool of gender mainstreaming (GM) in contested and politicized policy areas. Accordingly, the main research site of this proposal is EU migration policy. By building up on the scholarship of feminist institutionalism, and employing a reading of securitization of migration narratives embedded in feminist international relation theories, its purpose is double: first, it aims at describing the extent to which GM is applied unevenly across policies, both related to internal and external migration; afterwards, its objective turns to trace the impact that securitization narratives have on migration policies' negotiations, ultimately altering the way in which GM will be integrated in such legislative texts. It will do so by employing mainly qualitative methodologies such as Critical Frame Analysis (CFA) and theory-building process tracing. The project is relevant both academically and socially, as it would potentially fill in a literature gap concerning the gender-security nexus in migration phenomena and, at the same time, address the marginalized need of migrants' gendered experiences.

➤ **Mark Andreas Felix, PhD Candidate, XXXVXIX cycle**

"Climate Change and Structural Injustice: How Their Links Shape Effects and Approaches"

**Abstract:** Climate change effects are increasingly being felt and observed, with many of them being harmful. Crucially, these negative effects are not distributed equally between people and regions—rather, historically-grown and unjust structures shape how these effects materialise in the first place, and how they are subsequently distributed and experienced. My research project reflects on the appropriate methodology given this context and applies it to the areas of adaptation and mitigation. It aims at providing input for theoretical and practical work on climate change and reflects on the conundrum created by the tension between complexity and urgency. Most work in political theory brackets the role of historically grown and unjust structures, and instead focuses on identifying what an ideal distribution of burdens or emission rights would look like given a specific conception of justice. My work begins with a methodological critique of this approach: drawing on authors such as Charles Mills, Serene Khader, and Anne Phillips, I argue that such an ideal approach starting with justice necessarily fails to account for the complexity of real-world contexts. Theory on climate change should instead be informed by a cross-disciplinary, context-aware, and intersectional approach beginning with injustice. Subsequently, I apply this approach to reactions to climate change – principally adaptation and mitigation – and identify connected structural injustices. I then delve into the implications these links hold for theoretical, procedural, and practical engagements with adaptation and mitigation, and how they reflect on positions in the literature. When taking a step back, another problem becomes visible: while a more fine-grained and contextual approach adds analytic clarity to conceptualising the problems at hand, it simultaneously complicates finding and implementing solutions. How, in turn, should this be balanced against the urgency of and resource-requirements for action? Given the complexity, contextuality, and urgency of real-world climate change problems, and their connection to structural injustices, it is likely that

all possible solutions are insufficient and less-than-ideal. As such, I expect that the focus should shift from just final policies to just implementation and decision procedures.

**Thursday 26 October 2023, 12:30 – 14:00** | Room S03A, basement of the Luiss Residence, Via Lisbona, 7

➤ **William John Atkinson, PhD Candidate, XXXIX cycle**

“Emotions and elections: the effects of anger and anxiety on voter behaviour”

**Abstract:** The academic and social case for taking an emotional perspective on voter behaviour makes too much sense to ignore in this political age – democratic order is being upended by the anger of populism, meanwhile fears about global crises like climate change and nuclear war have arguably never been greater. 30+ years of research in this field suggests that voters connect to politics primarily on an emotional level. Yet, few studies have reconciled the findings of this work into a model that can be used to explain the votes cast in an election. This proposal revisits the question “what connects the short-term cognitive effects triggered by emotional state to voter decision-making in elections?” with three insights which have yet to be explored in conjunction by existing work: Firstly, emotions affect the way voters process political information by conditioning the depth and content of human thought (‘active’ effects). Secondly, this affects the downstream formation of political opinions / behaviours that endure long after the emotional state has finished (‘latent’ effects). Thirdly, to understand how emotions impact election outcomes, it is necessary to measure the ‘latent’ effects – for example, how people vote – in the context of real elections. These insights inform a theoretical framework which comes to three hypotheses about the ‘latent’ effects that anger, and anxiety have on H1) political awareness, H2) support for / against policies, and ultimately, H3) the votes cast in an election. These hypotheses could be tested with the quantitative analysis of pre- / post- election survey data.

**Dr. Stellamarina Donato, Postdoctoral Fellow, Luiss University**

“Women’s and Gender Agency. A Comparative Analysis of Italy, Spain, Tunisia, and Morocco”

**Abstract:** This research project aims to explore the intersections of women’s and gender agency in Mediterranean countries. The study compares the cases of Italy, Spain, Tunisia, and Morocco, using mixed methods research to collect and analyze data from multiple sources. The study also seeks to provide insights into the complex interplay of cultural, social, and economic factors that shape gender inclusion and women's agency in the region. Furthermore, it will pose specific attention to social media practices and affordances to promote gender inclusion in the EU-MENA (European Union. Middle East and North Africa) region.

**Dr. Flavia Canestrini, Postdoctoral Fellow, Luiss University**

“ ‘People’s sanctions.’ Non-state actors and financial markets in the anti-apartheid movement, 1977-1987.”

**Abstract:** The presentation will discuss the economic practices of the U.S. Campaigns Against Bank Loans to South Africa and the one against Investments in the 1980s. Thanks to the growing market integration and financialization, financial interactions became in the 1980s a field of confrontation

where private non-state actors, such as banks, could play a key, indeed decisive, role as enforcers of sanctions. The anti-apartheid movement learned about them and used this information to act locally through coordinated lobbying and local statutes, but with a global reach, becoming themselves foreign policymakers. In this new field, non-state actors redefined the liberal script of international diplomacy by showing how complex and potentially porous this newly integrated financial markets could be. The Reagan administration's attempt to oppose them proved the importance and the rising concerns of the Executive over the role that private actors or States and municipalities could play in the international arena, but also the limits the administration had in opposing such actions.

**Thursday 9 November 2023, 12.300 – 14:00 | Room 105, Via Romania**

**Dr. Marco Bevilacqua, Postdoctoral Fellow, Luiss University**

**"Is the Rule of Law Protecting the EU Budget or Vice Versa? A Study on European Conditionality Through a Comparative Approach."**

**Abstract:** The presentation will show the complex relationship between the European Union and the Member States, especially when it comes to the main issue of preserving the financial and economic unity. It is still early to assess the consolidation of the emergency measures introduced in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, but the multiannual financial framework (MFF) for the period 2021-2027 has been modified in the light of the Recovery and Resilience Facility – integrated by NextGenEU – which is indeed a clear consequence of the pandemic effects. What has been still happening in the EU governance is that, since the 2012 Fiscal compact, the emergencies and crises should be considered as triggering factors for a European governance change. In this sense, by recalling the case studies of Hungary and Poland it will be pointed out that there is a stronger connection - than it would seem to appear - between conditionality mechanisms and the protection of European funds that are disbursed to the Member States. More precisely, there is an interconnection between the rule of law, the European budget, the principle of solidarity and the principle of mutual trust. Hence, this research proposal would try to answer the question whether the focus on the protection of European funds can be considered as a response to the repeated emergencies and crises of the last twenty years. Another question not secondary is whether new spending conditionality mechanism may be considered as a tool to buy substantial reforms in the domestic government, towards a new phase of the EU federalization. For these purposes, in view of the fact that European conditionality appears to be deeply intertwined with the dynamics of the Union's budget management, the comparison to other federal systems - such as United States and Germany - will allow to understand whether there will be the chance for European democracy to step forward to a union of federal States.

**Dr. Celeste Bonnamy, Postdoctoral Fellow, Luiss University**

**"The Brussels effect and the cultural industries: How the protection of culture through digital regulation affects the "geopolitical European Union"**

**Abstract:** This project investigates how the "Brussels effect" (Bradford, 2020) in the governance of new technologies contributes to the emergence of a "geopolitical European Union" by looking at the place given to cultural industries in digital policy-making. It seeks to answer the following

research question: How does the "Brussels effect" on digital regulation go beyond the diffusion of norms and values and potentially contribute to building a geopolitical EU? The "Brussels effect", whereby the EU exports its values through its rules to respond to outsiders' market power, is intriguing as it seeks to safeguard "EU values" through rulemaking. A prime example is the General Regulation on Data Privacy, which established a global privacy protection standard. This normative foundation has prompted the EU to assume the role of content provider while the USA and China offer hosting platforms. As a result, the EU advocates for cultural industries to safeguard content production against the market dominance of non-European Big Techs. This new geopolitical dynamic has fuelled the interplay between culture and the market, wherein the protection of European cultural industries against non-European Big Techs' market power plays a crucial role in both internal market-building and external action. In a nutshell, the working hypothesis is that the "Brussels effect" has a broader impact than merely diffusing norms and values; it also contributes to building a geopolitical EU by renewing cultural industries as a market and identity for the EU on the global stage. To test this hypothesis, I will undertake a comparative analysis of two recent EU regulations that directly impact non-EU market players: the Digital Service Act (DSA), adopted in 2022, and the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Act, still in the legislative procedure. The methodology will involve an in-depth qualitative analysis of data collected through the creation of a corpus of documentation and a series of semi-structured interviews.

**Thursday 23 November 2023, 12.300 – 14:00** | Room S03A, basement of the Luiss Residence, Via Lisbona, 7

**Dr. Giovanni Lella, Postdoctoral Fellow, Luiss University**

“Democracy and Political Representation. France, Italy and the Reforming of the European Parliament in the 1980s (1979-1992)”

**Abstract:** This project aims to examine the attitudes of France and Italy towards the attempts at institutional reform of the European Community in the 1980s, focusing specifically on the question of strengthening the powers of the European Parliament. Through the adoption of a comparative perspective, the purpose is to analyse whether, to what extent and for what underlying reasons Rome and Paris have favoured the strengthening of the Strasbourg Assembly, in an attempt to remedy the “democratic deficit” from which the European institutions have suffered since their creation. Indeed, both as the representative body of the national parliaments and as the democratically elected European Parliament, the Strasbourg Assembly has in many ways failed to ensure a level of political representation comparable to that guaranteed in the member states. Hence the need to analyse the debate and negotiations on the institutional reform, starting with a series of initiatives – including the “Genscher-Colombo Plan” and the “Spinelli project” – and leading up to the two Intergovernmental Conferences (1985 and 1991) that amended the Treaties of Rome leading to the creation of Single European Act (1986) and the Maastricht Treaty (1992). Ultimately, the main research interest is to assess if and how – in front of the globalisation and the emergence of new transnational and supranational actors – the two countries have tried to find a European solution to the evolution of the very concept of political representation.

**Dr. Uğur Bulgan, Postdoctoral Fellow, Luiss University**

## “Transitional Justice: Domestic, International or Global?”

**Abstract:** Transitional justice (TJ) is the field of study that investigates philosophical, social, political and legal questions raised in the aftermath of extended periods of conflict and/or repression to establish peace and reconciliation. It offers conceptions of justice and related mechanisms to overcome the division between former victims and perpetrators. The literature neglects the international dimension of TJ and fails to address the justified ways of reconciling the international and domestic dimensions. Combining the conditions for domestic justice and stable international peace and cooperation raises questions on how to balance: (1) realistic vs. principled assumptions; (2) TJ and standard debates in global justice; and (3) cultural pluralism and international human rights paradigm. In order to answer these questions, I propose taking a step back and analysing the transitional circumstances in relation to (1) the temporal dimension of transitional situations; and (2) the structural-ness of the victim groups. Such an analysis of TJ would allow us to have a matrix of transitional situations. Each of these situations should be evaluated in terms of the rule of law, relational capabilities, political trust, and hope. By doing so, we can draw a thorough picture of the injustice for diagnostic purposes and theorize justice conception and related mechanisms based on the specific features of the injustice. This, I argue, would allow an interplay and justified trade-offs between different paradigms (domestic, international and global) without necessarily establishing an omnipresent hierarchy.

**Thursday 07 December 2023, 12.300 – 14:00** | Room **S02**, basement of the Luiss Residence, Via Lisbona, 7

### **Dr. Elisabetta Mannoni, Postdoctoral Fellow, Luiss University**

“The responsive-responsible dilemma meets the climate crisis: A comparative longitudinal analysis of the relationship between public opinion and party positions on the environmental issue”

**Abstract:** Despite climate change being an increasingly salient and critical issue political actors at all levels have been urged to contribute tackling for decades, the positions of most political parties in electoral democracies today does not seem to mirror that salience nor that willingness to commit to contributing to environmental protection. This looks puzzling, given that parties should face less of a conundrum between responsiveness and responsibility on the issue of environmental protection, since taking more pro-environmental stances should allow them to be both responsive to the demands of a public opinion that is more concerned about the issue today than even before; and responsible for intergenerational fairness and towards the obligations and commitments agreed upon with the international community. Hence, the main goal of this research is to answer the questions, How does the tendency of political parties to act more responsively or responsibly vary regarding the issue of environmental protection? Which factors can explain such variance? Looking at European countries from the early 1990s until today, this research aims to systematically investigate how the stances of parties on the issue of environmental protection reflect to the positions of the electorate in their countries on the same issue, to understand, first, to what extent parties have so far been responsive to the demands of public opinion; and secondly, whether their stances might have constituted more of an act of responsibility – and responsibility towards whom.

*waiting for further info:*

**Steffie Mbsessa Benite, PhD Visiting Candidate**