

Transnational Partisanship and Constituent Power in the European Union

Workshop, University of Amsterdam, 15-16 November 2018
Convenors: Fabio Wolkenstein & Markus Patberg

With its increasing interest in partisanship and constituent power, political theory has recently started to pay attention to previously neglected dimensions of democracy. The nascent partisanship literature focuses on the potential contributions that partisan forms of political organization can make in terms of contestation, representation, deliberation, and public reason. Research on constituent power, on the other hand, is concerned with the questions of who holds the right to determine the structure and competences of political systems; what principles of democratic legitimacy should guide constitutional politics; and which procedures and institutions enable the exercise of founding authority.

Both debates have significant implications for normative-theoretical scholarship on the European Union. Recent advances in the partisanship literature focus on the potential of cross-border communities of commitment to promote the development of democracy in the European Union, and have also given rise to the idea that partisan agents might transform the EU polity through forms of ‘principled disobedience’. The debate about constituent power is animated by similar concerns, though it prioritizes the more fundamental question of who should be regarded as the EU’s ultimate source of authority entitled to decide issues of constitutional design. Its focus is therefore less on questions of mobilization, contestation and disobedience than on the question of what follows from particular allocations of constituent power for the democratic legitimacy of higher as well as ordinary lawmaking in the EU.

Despite addressing related phenomena and raising similar questions, the two strands of research have largely developed independently so far. In view of the European elections 2019, the goal of the workshop is to bring them into conversation and to examine possible connections as well as conflicts between transnational partisanship and constituent power in the European Union. Are they complementary or rival categories? What are their potential contributions to EU democracy? To what extent do they enable us to analyze and evaluate empirical developments, for example the origins of European integration, recent movements and initiatives such as DiEM25 and Pulse of Europe, or intra- and extra-institutional resistance against ‘Emergency Europe’? How do they contribute to our understanding of the EU constitutional order, the nature of EU citizenship, or the representative functions of EU institutions?

This workshop is co-organized by the NWO-funded project “Democratising Europe through Transnational Partisanship” (University of Amsterdam) and the DFG-funded project “Reclaiming Constituent Power? Emerging Counter-Narratives of EU Constitutionalisation” (University of Hamburg).

Attendance is free. Limited number of places available. Please register before 1 November 2018 (wolkenstein@ps.au.dk). Venue will be communicated.

Program

Thursday, November 15, 2018

- 13.30 – 13.45 Welcome & Introduction
- 13.45 – 15.45 Session 1: European Citizenship: Rights and Parties
“Transnational Partisanship in the EU: Opportunities, Incentives and Obstacles”, Lucy Kinski (University of Düsseldorf)
“Not up for Grabs! How to Robustly Protect the EU’s *Pouvoir Constituant Mixte*”, Dimitrios Efthymiou (University of Frankfurt)
Comment: Jan Pieter Beetz (Utrecht University)
- 15.45 – 16.15 Coffee break
- 16.15 – 18.15 Session 2: European Parliament: Representation and Agency
“The EU’s Constituent Power and Partisanship in the European Parliament”, Jelena von Achenbach (University of Gießen)
“EU Constituent Power and Collective Agency: Lessons from the Experience of the European Parliament”, Ben Crum (VU Amsterdam)
Comment: Antoinette Scherz (University of Oslo)
- 19.30 Dinner

Friday, November 16, 2018

- 09.00 – 11.00 Session 3: European Protest: Disobedience and Popular Sovereignty
“Transnational Partisanship and Principled Disobedience in the European Union”, Jonathan White (LSE)
“Constituent Partisanship: Articulation, Activation, Exercise”, Peter Nielsen (University of Hamburg)
Comment: Natasha Basu (University of Amsterdam)
- 11.00 – 11.30 Coffee break
- 11.30 – 13.30 Session 4: European Transformations: Ordinary and Extraordinary Politics
“Transnational Partisanship and Networked Constituent Power in the EU”, Fabio Wolkenstein (Aarhus University/University of Amsterdam)
“Extraordinary Partisanship in the European Union”, Markus Patberg (University of Hamburg)
Comment: Astrid Seville (LMU Munich)
- 13.30 End of workshop