

APPLICATION FORM FOR PROSPECTIVE WORKSHOP DIRECTORS

If you wish to apply to direct a workshop at the Joint Sessions in Münster, Germany during 22-27 March 2010, please first see the explanatory notes, then complete this form, which will serve as the **cover sheet** for your workshop proposal. This form should be sent with your **workshop proposal** to the ECPR Central Services. You can do this by emailing both documents as an attached file (in word format .doc or rich text format .rtf) to the ECPR Central Services at ecpr@essex.ac.uk. Alternatively, you can print up the information and send it as a fax to the Central Services, fax: +44 1206 872500. **The deadline for applications is Sunday, 01 February 2009.**

Title of proposed workshop:

Contested Policies: European Socio-Economic Governance and the Global Economic Crisis

Subject area:

comparative political economic – EU governance

Abstract of proposed workshop. Maximum of 250 words (suitable for publication in the academic programme leaflet and on the ECPR web site):

Reactions to the global economic crisis raise fundamental questions for the study of European socio-economic governance. At the national level, the unprecedented efforts by European governments to restore stability to financial markets and counter deteriorating growth conditions provides a unique insight into how different models of capitalism adjust to change in an era of economic and financial globalisation. At the European level, the financial and real effects of the crisis provide the sternest test yet of Economic and Monetary Union and the EU's fledgling system of socio-economic governance. The aim of this workshop is to take stock of European responses to the global crisis, bringing together scholars of European socio-economic governance from a variety of disciplinary perspectives to challenge existing theoretical approaches in the light of fresh empirical evidence. An innovative feature of the workshop lies in its attempt to bring together two different strands of research literature which have co-existed largely separately from each other in the past. The first strand is associated with the so-called "varieties of capitalism". It has emphasised the importance of institutional complementarities and systems coordination for the performance of capitalist economies. This literature provides profound insights into comparative political-economy but has paid limited attention to policy coordination between distinct models of capitalism and the evolution of EU economic governance. The second strand of the literature focuses on EU socio-economic governance which has emerged in the context of EMU and the launch of the open method of coordination – drawing attention to the process and practice of policy coordination. While it had led to insights into new modes of governance and soft coordination mechanisms, this literature has explored policy-making in a non-crisis environment and paid less attention to substantial questions over policy choice against the background of diverging national models of capitalism.

Name of workshop director(s):

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Please note that the information above is VERY important, as it will be used in all future correspondence and, if the proposal is successful, printed in the academic programme.

The proposal should be typed with 1.5 line spacing on three/four A4 pages using this sheet as the first page, and should cover the points outlined in the explanatory notes/guidelines available on the ECPR website at www.ecprnet.org.

For further information, please contact:

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Contested Policies: European Socio-Economic Governance and the Global Economic Crisis

Workshop Proposal for the ECPR Joint Sessions, Münster 2010

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OUTLINE

The global economic storm that has raged since the collapse of the US subprime mortgage market raises fundamental questions for the study of European socio-economic governance. At the national level, the unprecedented efforts by European governments to restore stability to financial markets and counter deteriorating growth conditions provide a unique insight into how different models of capitalism adjust to change in an era of economic and financial globalisation. At the European level, the financial and real effects of the crisis constitute the sternest test yet of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) and the European Union's (EU) fledgling system of socio-economic governance.

The aim of this workshop is to take stock of European responses to the global crisis, bringing together scholars of European socio-economic governance from a variety of disciplinary perspectives to challenge existing theoretical approaches in the light of fresh empirical evidence. The point of departure for this exercise is that the global economic crisis constitutes a shock to European systems of socio-economic governance that is both symmetric – in the sense that national governments face a common set of challenges that are global in their origin – and asymmetric – in so far as the policy options open to national governments will be shaped to a significant extent by underlying models of capitalism. The overarching questions posed by this workshop are whether a coordinated response to financial instability, slowing growth conditions, burgeoning unemployment and mounting debt among EU member states is desirable or feasible at this time.

More specifically the workshop will assemble contributions focussing on one or more of the following core issues areas:

- comparative analysis of national responses to the economic crisis under different models of capitalism and their cross-border implications within the EU;
- coordinated responses to the crisis at the EU level and their implications for (debates on) national economic and social policies;
- alternative institutional options for EU-level policy coordination such as new forms of ad-hoc intergovernmental coordination as well as greater federalisation and supranationalisation; and
- the interaction between the economic and social dimension of EU and national policy-making at a time of rising unemployment.

RELATION TO EXISTING RESEARCH

The workshop brings together two disparate strands of the literature on European socio-economic governance. The first strand is associated with the so-called “varieties of capitalism”. This firm-based approach to comparative political-economy, which was pioneered by Hall and Soskice (2001) and refined by Hancké, Rhodes and Thatcher (2007), emphasises the importance of institutional complementarities within national political economies. A key insight of the literature is that public policies will be effective only if they complement coordinating capacities within the existing political economy. In the area of training policy, for example, policies to promote general skills might suit the need for transferable knowledge in a liberal market economy such as the United Kingdom but erode the sectoral-specific knowledge that are so essential to a coordinated market economy such as Germany. In the macroeconomic domain, the pursuit of activist macroeconomic policies might be less feasible in a coordinated market economy because a credible commitment to price stability holds the key to achieve cooperative wage setting in the presence of a small number of unions (Soskice, 2007: 98). Although it provides profound insights into comparative political-economy, this literature has paid limited attention to the case for policy coordination between distinct models of capitalism and the evolution of EU economic governance.

The second strand of the literature focuses on EU socio-economic governance which has received increasing attention in the literature over the past 8-10 years. In particular the emergence of soft coordination mechanisms in the context of EMU and the Lisbon Agenda and its open method of coordination has drawn attention to the process and practice of policy coordination (De la Porte/Pochet 2004; Hodson/Maher 2001; Jacobsson 2004). This stream of research particularly emphasises the role of deliberative and consensual elements as well as the potential for policy learning (Puetter 2006). More generally, soft coordination mechanisms were discussed with a view to generating commitment for joint coordination objectives and policy guidelines within an essentially decentralised policy framework within which member states still reserve the right to operate their own economic and social policy in accordance with the respective domestic model of capitalism (Trubek/Mosher 2003).

Although this literature has generated insights into existing coordination mechanisms the empirical research substantiating it has been largely generated in a non-crisis environment. Therefore, instances of ad-hoc coordination efforts and situations in which domestic models of capitalism become subject to increasing contestation themselves have remained largely absent from the discussion. Here, the proposed workshop will review existing research approaches in the light of new empirical research reflecting EU level and domestic responses to the crisis. At a conceptual level the workshop aims at providing a new interface between the varieties of capitalism literature and the literature on EU socio-economic governance, thus providing a new perspective on European responses to the global economic crisis.

PARTICIPANTS

The workshop is targeted at participants with a background in comparative political economy, domestic politics (e.g. partisan orientations towards socio-economic governance as well as EU-level coordination in this field), EU social and economic policy. Most importantly, the workshop seeks to integrate scholars with research backgrounds relating to a range of different member states including the new member states. In policy terms, the workshop similarly emphasises the areas of economic and social policy-making and encourages contributions which cut across both levels of European policy-making.

TYPE/FORMAT OF EXPECTED CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions should be based predominantly on new empirical research. A conceptual focus based on a critical review of prevailing approaches in the field is strongly encouraged and is intended to advance theoretical debate. Participants will be required to submit draft research papers prior to the workshop for circulation among participants (15-20 pages). In addition, participants would be expected to prepare an oral presentation of their research for a panel discussion format during the workshop.

FUNDING OPTIONS

The applicants intend to seek funding for the workshop with the ESRC, the Volkswagen Foundation, the University Association of Contemporary European Studies (UACES). The workshop directors will aim at securing their travel and accommodation costs through their home institutions at an early stage during the preparation phase.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

Dr Uwe Puetter is Associate Professor at the Department of Public Policy, Central European University, Budapest, Hungary. His main research interests are European socio-economic governance and institutional change in the enlarged EU. His most recent publications include a monograph on EU economic and social policy (*Die Wirtschafts- und Sozialpolitik der EU, Vienna/Stuttgart UTB 2009*) and a special issue on 'Expert committees in a Union of 27 – the formal and informal processes of institutional adjustment', *Journal of European Integration* 30(4), 2008.

Dr Dermot Hodson is Lecturer in Political Economy at the School of Politics and Sociology, Birkbeck College, University of London. His research interests focus on Economic and Monetary Union and new modes of EU policy-making. He has published several articles on these topics in refereed journals and is a co-author of *Adjusting to EMU* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

LITERATURE

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