Title of workshop:
From the Outside In' – International Relations' Effects on Domestic Public Attitudes

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Extended Outline

Authors in Comparative Politics (CP) and International Relations (IR) have become increasingly interested in the domestic effects of international politics (but see already Gourevitch 1978). Surprisingly, however, these strands of research did not find their way into public opinion research. Increasing international interdependence which is accompanied by loss of national autonomy, we argue, is likely to have significant effects on public attitudes not only toward the international but also toward the national political system. Our workshop, which will be introduced in more detail in the following, aims at assembling quantitative as well as qualitative empirical research interested in the effects of the international level on political attitudes of citizens toward their national political context.

Given this focus of our workshop, the most relevant findings we can draw on stem from Comparative Politics (CP), more specifically from comparative analyses of European Politics. 'Europeanization' research has been primarily interested in the domestic effects of the increased transfer of decision-making and policy implementation capabilities to the European level. A broad variety of issues has been analyzed from a Europeanization perspective, e.g. the role of European issues in national (electoral or party) politics, the relationship between European and national jurisdictions as well as between European and national parliaments, and the effects of EU rules and norms on EU candidate and member countries. Most of these authors share the opinion that increased transfer of sovereignty may become problematic in terms of democratic legitimacy at the domestic level, because national electorates' potential to sanction undesired behavior of their political elites and, therefore, to hold them accountable decreases (see on the deficit Mair and Thomassen 2010; Bellamy 2010; Scharpf 2007, 2011; König 2007; to a fulminant critic: Moravcsik 2008).

Scholars from IR are also investigating the domestic effects of international institutions and organizations, e.g. on the norms, interests or the behavior of their member states (see Gheciu 2005; Checkel 2005; Grugel 2007; Solingen 2008; Greenhill 2010). By and large, two competing arguments regarding international politics and (domestic) legitimacy are proposed. On the one hand, authors like Robert Keohane and Andrew Moravcsik have started an intense debate on the democratizing potential of multilateral cooperation (Keohane et al. 2009, 2011; Gartzke and Naoi 2011; but see

already Pevehouse 2002 and Grugel 2007). They argue that multilateral organizations may enhance domestic democracy and legitimacy. On the other hand, authors like David Held, Jürgen Habermas, Ian Hurd, and Michael Zürn share the rather pessimistic perceptions of European Politics researchers – though on the international level (see Held 1995; Hurd 1997; Zürn 1998, 2004; Zürn and Stephen 2010; Habermas 2011). In their view, the decision-making power of international organizations such as the United Nations, NATO, the International Monetary Fund, and the World Bank has strongly increased; their influence on and autonomy from domestic politics has grown. As a result, these authors argue, powerful international organizations share a significant lack of accountability and legitimacy which may also affect public perceptions: citizens may perceive themselves as being overruled and no longer being involved in the process of decision-making and governing.

Unfortunately, these strands of research rarely find their way into public opinion research. Research on citizens' attitudes has so far been largely restricted to a bottom-up perspective, i.e. it has investigated the effects of national political events and attitudes on citizens' perceptions of the international level. Particular prominent examples for this perspective are studies on cue-taking and the use of heuristics for explaining citizens' attitudes toward the EU (see for recent work in this direction Boomgarden et al. 2011; Wagner 2011; Constantelos and Diven 2010; De Vries and Edwards 2009; Gabel and Scheve 2007; Steenbergen et al. 2007).

Yet, public opinion research should be well-suited for analyzing the effects of international actors and policies on domestic legitimacy as well given its broader concern for the stability and legitimacy of political systems. According to David Easton a political system can only persist if it is generally supported by citizens, i.e. if citizens ascribe a certain degree of legitimacy to the political system and its actors (Easton 1965: 220; see for an overview of concepts of legitimacy Braun and Schmitt 2009). Against this background, public opinion researchers typically investigate and measure this degree of support at the national level through a variety of indicators: e.g. trust in the institutions of the political system , satisfaction with the current political system, or agreement with the given norms and values of a political system (see e.g. Klingemann and Fuchs 1995; Newton and Norris 2000; Norris 1999). Sources of public trust or satisfaction with democratic institutions have been mostly found at the individual level, whereas explanatory factors at the contextual level have been less researched (but see e.g. Gabriel and Walter-Rogg 2008). Only recently, enabled through new statistical methods such as multi-level analyses, scholars have demonstrated that contextual-level indicators, e.g. the political or electoral system of a country, influence political support and started to theorize the underlying causal mechanisms (see e.g. Criado and Herreros 2007; Jason and Krieckhaus 2006; Peffley and Rohrschneider 2003). Hence, while there is a growing interest in public opinion research on the effects of international politics which we demonstrate below, the topic is still widely neglected.

Our workshop aims at addressing this neglect and challenges the predominant assumption in public opinion research by arguing that events, actors and policies at the international level can actually influence domestic public attitudes. Mainly inspired from IR research, this leads us to two diametric expectations. According to the argument of Keohane et al. (2009, 2011), who attribute the democracy-enhancing effects of multilateral cooperation mostly to its outcomes, international organizations might be cherished by citizens for increasing social welfare and for improving the control of (corrupt or unable) domestic political actors. As a consequence, this should also increase citizens' trust (especially in developing countries or new democracies) in their political institutions

and actors as well as their satisfaction with the domestic system's performance (1). While this seems reasonable from a purely output-oriented legitimacy perspective, authors focusing on input-oriented legitimacy are much more skeptical. They agree that citizens are increasingly aware that today some major political problems cannot be tackled at the national level anymore, but require international or even global solutions, e.g. the global financial economic crisis, climate change but also security problems such as international terrorism). However, these authors argue that output-legitimacy may not be sufficient – even if international actors are successful in solving global problems –, but that input-legitimacy remains restricted to national governmental actors which may be publically perceived as powerless and ineffective. As a result of this asymmetry, citizens come to perceive themselves excluded from the political process. They lose trust in all actors (at the national as well as the international level) and, eventually, their satisfaction with democracy declines (2). This negative effect on public perceptions should be all the more pronounced, if the output-legitimacy of international actors is deficient, i.e. if they are not able to fulfill the duties citizens ascribe to them.

Prima facie, both of these theoretically derived expectations regarding the effect of international politics on public opinion seem plausible and need to be subject of empirical research. First empirical findings on the topic seem to suggest a stronger explanatory power of the second argument, but demonstrate also effects in accordance with the first argument. Virginia Chanley (2002), for example, studies changes in the U.S. public opinion after 11 September 2001. She finds an increase of public trust after 9/11 and traces this development back to a changed focus from domestic to international concerns (for similar approaches see Davis and Silver 2004; Greenberg et al. 2004; Hetherington and Suhay 2011). Roth et al. (2011) analyze the effects of another important international event on domestic public opinion. The authors show that the financial crisis has had significant effects on the development of trust in national institutions. First, in the direct aftermath of the financial crisis in 2008, the immense decline in the real economy is associated with a temporary increase in citizens' trust. Second, however, these effects disappear when analyzing the entire crisis period. These results present evidence rather for the second argument. Also in line with the latter, research in American Politics furthermore shows that feelings of threat generated by international terrorism strongly shape domestic political attitudes, promoting more radical and conservative positions among citizens (Kushner Gadarian 2010; Nacos et al. 2007). Furthermore, empirical evidence suggests that a feeling of being threatened territorially leads African citizens to lose trust in national political actors (Hutchison 2011), that EU attitudes can shape individual voting behavior in national elections (Jackson et al. 2011), and that international politics are crucial to understand the relationship between Islam and politics at the domestic level (see Rubin 2011). Finally, the attitudes of American citizens are strongly influenced by foreign sources of information (Hayes and Guardino 2011).

In sum, there are strong, but contradictory theoretical expectations concerning the effects of international politics on domestic public opinion and there is scarce, but growing empirical evidence that international politics indeed affect citizens' attitudes toward the domestic political system and specifically towards items related to domestic legitimacy: trust in political actors, satisfaction with governmental performance, the political system and democracy itself. Our workshop, therefore, invites contributions which analyze these public opinion items in one form or another as their dependent variable. In order to test the two arguments outlined above against a broad spectrum of empirical findings, we do not want to restrict the workshop to the European case only, but particularly welcome researchers looking beyond European borders. We therefore call for empirical

papers which analyze – quantitatively or qualitatively – the effect of international actors (e.g. the United Nations, NATO, IMF, regional organizations, but also international terrorists), their behavior (e.g. bargaining, military interventions, allocation of development aid) and their policies (e.g. diffusion of norms, democratization, liberalization of international trade) on citizens' attitudes toward domestic politics. By discussing the topic from the perspective of public opinion research, we pursue three major goals: We want first, to establish a new network of researchers, since authors from different research fields seem to be highly interested in the topic, but remain largely unconnected so far. Second, our aim is to discuss research problems (theoretical as well as empirical) and possible solutions to them. And last but not least, depending on the quality of our enterprise, we aim at publishing the outcomes of the workshop as a volume or special issue on the state of the art-research on the topic.

External Funding

Biographical Note of Workshop Directors

Daniela Braun is Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science (Comparative Politics), University of Munich. Her research focuses on public opinion and comparative politics. Recently, she finalized her dissertation thesis on political trust in new European democracies, where she presented findings on the development of popular trust towards national institutions in Central and Eastern as well as in Southern Europe. In addition, the dissertation includes new conceptual approaches on the measurement of different trust dimensions.

Bernd Schlipphak is Assistant Professor at the Department of Political Science, University of Salzburg. His research concentrates on the role of public opinion in International Relations, including the legitimacy of regional organizations as well as citizens' perceptions of international organizations. Recently, he published a paper on assessing attitudes toward regional organizations (Schlipphak and Menniken 2011) as well as his dissertation thesis on the effects of media and party framing on citizens' attitudes (Schlipphak 2011).

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[1] In the following, we understand ‚the effects of international politics' as a label including the effects of international actors, their policies and their actions.

[2] See on these topics for example De Vries 2010; Dechezelles and Neumayer 2010; Neumayer 2009; Clark and Rohrschneider 2009; Chandler 2003; Rittberger and Schimmelfennig 2006; Maurer 2009; Neunreither 2005; Schimmelfennig and Sedelmaier 2005.

[3] An extensive state of research on the trust literature as well as a critical discussion of the theoretical foundations of the trust concept can be found in Braun (2012).

[4] In the case of new European democracies, it has been shown empirically, that trust in representative institutions is higher in the immediate aftermath of regime transformations – although public trust declines in the subsequent period of democratic consolidation (see Braun 2012).

[5] In a recent article, Fritz W. Scharpf discusses the effects of fiscal crisis management in the European Monetary Union on national domestic politics. He concludes that "where the Commission's requirements [following market-liberal prescriptions] would violate politically salient interests, preferences and values of national constituencies, compliance may again undermine democratic legitimacy." Thus, "[i]n a worst case scenario, therefore, attempts to save the euro through the policies presently enacted may either fail on their own terms, or undermine democracy in EU Member states as well as endanger European integration itself." (Scharpf 2011: 195).

[6] As a consequence, the increase of international interdependence, of transfer of sovereignty to international actors and therefore of being overruled by international actors might even result in the wish of certain groups of citizens to return to closed and autonomous nation-states with strong leaders. This has been e.g. observed empirically in changing political party systems caused by effects of globalization and denationalization that has created a division between 'winners' and 'losers' in Western Europe (described extensively in Kriesi et al. 2006, 2008).