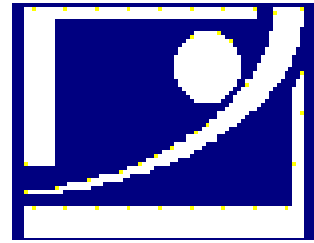


HUMBOLDT-UNIVERSITÄT ZU BERLIN



GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF  
SOCIAL SCIENCES



Europäische Akademie Berlin

Berlin, April 10, 2003

International, interdisciplinary Conference  
for PhD students and young academics on:

## The European Public Sphere

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with the support of Berlin Graduate School of Social Sciences, the Graduate Programme  
"The New Europe" at Humboldt-University, Berlin and the European Academy Berlin

### Call for Papers

During the past two decades European integration made great progress. Yet this progress came at the price of a growing democratic deficit, as many critics highlighted. The main charges were that European decision-making was not transparent, information for the general public was scarce, and the opportunities for citizen's participation were lacking, while at the same time the influence of the EU on people's everyday lives was constantly growing. Thus a major aspect of the EU's democratic deficit can be attributed to the lack of a public sphere, for it is the role of a public sphere to inform the citizens, to ensure scrutiny and to act as a forum for civic participation.

As we are heading for a European constitution the question of a European public sphere has become ever more urgent: Is there something like a European public sphere? How does it manifest itself? How does it work? How does it contribute to European democracy? Various research projects have been started to inquire into the European public sphere. Moreover, all over Europe a growing number of PhD students and young academics from the disciplines of communications, sociology, political science and history are working on this topic. The goal of the proposed conference is to convene for the first time all those who are interested in the European public sphere for an international and interdisciplinary exchange.

In order to inquire into the European public sphere, its emergence, its core characteristics, and most of all, how and if it fulfils its role in European democracy, it is crucial to have a clear concept. We propose to divide the current approaches into two perspectives:

1. The *vertical* perspective: Publics referring to the EU in one or many nation-states. These publics serve as a forum for the emergence of public opinion and participation, which may be characterised by top-down or bottom-up processes.
2. The *horizontal* perspective: A European public sphere through the transnational interconnection and the interweaving of networks of communication.

### 1. The vertical perspective: Publics referring to the EU

The vertical perspective is mainly interested in processes of building public opinion. Public opinion may be dominated by vertical top-down processes. Governments' spin-doctoring, PR-activities by the EU or government agencies serves this purpose. Alternatively, however, civic

participation may be strong in the formation of public opinion in a vertical bottom-up process. Inquiring into the European public sphere from this perspective, researchers focus on how public opinion on European politics emerges and who participates in the shaping of public opinion. Normatively, the quality of a European public sphere from a vertical perspective is assessed according to how open the access to the public sphere is, and how broad is the participation of civil society organisations. These criteria are considered to strengthen the legitimacy of a democratic European polity.

Empirically, the formation of public opinion on EU policy-making does not necessarily have to take place everywhere in Europe at the same time, but may be limited to a few national publics. The vertical perspective has been a guideline for many case studies of national public debates on EU-policies. These may range from the national perception of e.g. Eastern enlargement to "anti-European" campaigns by Eurosceptic movements. Public debates on how EU policies interfere with regional self-determination have been examined. Research from the vertical perspective thus focuses on changing patterns of protest and participation in the EU multilevel polity.

## 2. The horizontal perspective: A transnational European public sphere

A European public sphere consisting of transnational media like the Financial Times is limited to very elite publics. However, national publics are not completely sealed off from one another. Rather, there are manifold similarities and exchanges of information between national media from different countries. Therefore it is possible to inquire into a European public sphere through the research on national media.

This perspective may be called horizontal, for it compares national publics trying to elicit European commonalities, which are the result of horizontal exchanges between national public spheres. The process of the transnational interconnection and interweaving of communication in an emergent "European sphere of communication" greatly interests the adherents of this perspective. While examining the perception of European policy-making, they are more generally interested in the "intensification of communication" within Europe.

The horizontal perspective rests on the assumption that a shared polity will bring about intensified and increasingly more similar patterns of communication. Rather than looking for actors participating in a European public sphere, emphasis is placed on the diffusion of topics, frames and patterns of perception, which are fundamental for thinking about the EU in an ever more similar way, and for identifying with Europe.

### Proposal for a conference

#### Conference for PhD students and young researchers

For the first time we want to convene the young researchers who are working on this topic in various European countries. During the conference participants will be able to discuss their approaches and present their (preliminary) results, so as to gain insights and inspiration for their own research. Our goal is to enable the international and interdisciplinary exchange between this group of researchers, which we hope will eventually lead to an enduring scientific network on European integration and the question of a shared public sphere. A mailing list will be set up in the planning and preparation phase of the project, which will help with the communication.

- **Input by "Experts":** Two kinds of experts will be invited: Firstly, scholars from various disciplines, who specialise in questions of the European public sphere. Secondly, practitioners of the European public sphere such as EU correspondents of national or transnational media, as well as PR specialists of the European institutions.
- **Place and date:** European Academy Berlin ([www.eab-berlin.de](http://www.eab-berlin.de)), Nov. 28<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup>, 2003
- **Participants:** ca. 25 young academics / PhD students from the disciplines of Political Science, Sociology, Communications, and History; ca. 5 experts both academics and practitioners of the European public sphere.

- **Language:** English
- **Publication of the results:** It is planned to publish the contributions to and the results of the conference as a book. Details about the publication will be spelled out below.

### **Preliminary Schedule**

#### **Friday: Concepts of a European Public Sphere**

1. **Discussion on "Concepts of a European Public Sphere" with 3 experts**  
(e.g. sociologist/political scientist Prof. Dr. Bernhard Peters, University of Bremen, former federal constitutional judge Prof. Dr. Dieter Grimm, Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, and historian Prof. Dr. Dr. h.c. Hartmut Kaelble, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin.)  
Guiding questions: How can we define a European public sphere? Which are the normative and theoretical presuppositions that we assume? How can we operationalize these concepts?
2. **Participants' workshop on concepts** (4 working groups):  
On the bases of a one-page paper that has been prepared in advance (bullet-points: How do I define European public sphere and how do I operationalize it/ inquire into it? Which are the normative presuppositions?), the participants' own concepts of the European public sphere shall be discussed in groups of 5 to 7 participants. The results will be presented to the other groups in a subsequent plenary session. The experts' comments are most welcome.

#### **Saturday / Sunday: The vertical and the horizontal perspective of the European public sphere**

1. **The vertical perspective: Publics referring to the EU**  
**Introductory presentation: e.g. Prof. Dr. Jürgen Gerhards**, University of Leipzig:  
Can a European public sphere be manufactured "from above", or will it grow "from below"?  
**Participants' papers** on topics like:
  - New Regionalism (e.g. Scottish or Catalan media discourses on European Integration)
  - Protesting publics (e.g. pro- and anti-European campaigns in Britain and elsewhere)
  - The Europeanization of collective protest
  - Print-Media as political actors in the UK
  - British and German labour unions in the European public sphere
  - National discourses on EU topics (e.g. discourse on enlargement in the Netherlands)
  - Manufacturing the Europeanization of the public sphere (PR by national governments and European institutions)
2. **The horizontal perspective: A transnational European public sphere**  
**Introductory presentation by a practitioner:** e.g. a journalist working for transnational media (such as Arte, Euronews, FT): Producing news for a transnational European public.  
**Participants' papers** on topics like:
  - Transnational elite publics vs. nationally oriented mass publics?
  - Issue-specific European publics
  - Transnational media (e.g. the role of the internet)
  - Mutual exchanges: direct quotations etc. ( e.g. Mutual observation between France and Germany)
  - Convergence of agendas, levels of relevance, frames of reference in national media (Europeanisation of discourse on economic policies, of Turkey's accession)
  - Transatlantic vs. European Publics
3. **Final discussion of the results** (possibly in four working groups and plenary session)
  - Concepts of the European public sphere: Similarities and differences
  - Vertical perspective: Participation in the European public sphere - conclusions
  - Horizontal perspective: Transnationalisation of the European sphere - conclusions
  - Comparison and final conclusions: What do we know about a European public sphere as of today?

## Call for papers

We are inviting contributions on the European public sphere by young researchers and Ph.D. students working on the European public sphere in various disciplines.

In order to enhance the intense exchange of approaches and ideas, we expect the participants to prepare the following contributions (mandatory):

- 1) A one-page **discussion paper for the "workshop on concepts"** on Friday: In this paper the participants should outline very briefly their definition of a European public sphere, the normative and theoretical presuppositions and their operationalisation of the concept, i.e. how they go about in their research.
- 2) A presentation for the sections on Saturday and Sunday. Two formats are recommended:
  - a) Either: A **short ten-minutes presentation** in bullet-points.
  - b) Or: A **longer twenty-minutes presentation**. These presentations should explicitly address the question of a European public sphere, and refer to which of the two perspectives on the European public sphere (horizontal / vertical) is more prominent in the respective piece of research. Given the limitations of time and physical endurance, we encourage the participants to opt for the brief version of the presentation. A video beamer and a projector are available at the European academy for the participants to visualise their findings.

## Cost

Currently we are applying for financial support to cover accommodation, food and travel (up to a certain limit). As we do not know as of now whether we will be successful, the participants are encouraged to ask for financial support from their own institutions. The conference fee will be at approximately EUR 25 for participants from Berlin who do not need accommodation, and at approximately EUR 50 for participants from other places in Germany and abroad.

## Information we need

We need the following information in order to consider you for participation in the conference **by May 15**.

Please copy this list into an e-mail, to be sent to: [agenda\\_europa\\_public@yahoogroups.de](mailto:agenda_europa_public@yahoogroups.de)

Name:

E-mail-address:

Address details:

Institution:

Thesis topic:

Thesis adviser:

Topic of the paper to be presented:

Proposed section (i.e. vertical or horizontal perspective):

Interest in contributing to a possible publication(see below): Y/N

Proposed title of the article for publication:

A (short, preliminary) summary:

**By October 15** we need to receive the discussion paper, and the presentation, so we can finalise the schedule.

## **Information on the planned publication**

As the conference will be held in English, we have discussed the issue of an English publication and collected some expertise. We have reached the conclusion that it appears more feasible to us to edit a German-language publication with intermittent English articles (that may or may not be translated, depending on the publisher's requirements). Therefore we would like to ask the German-speaking participants to prepare the article for publication in German.

Please submit the title and a three-sentence description of your proposed article for publication **by May 15**. We will need this rather soon, so we can prepare a proposal for potential publishers.

### **Format of the paper to be published**

- 15 pages (incl. footnotes, bibliography)
- If possible, in German (new spelling).
- For non-native speakers of German it may be in English.
- A file with more detailed description of the common format will be sent out after our negotiations with the publisher.

## **Schedule for those interested in the publication / Deadlines**

### **By May 15:**

Please submit title and a three-sentence description of your proposed paper (as mentioned above).

### **By October 15:**

Please submit the final version of your article for publication.

**Comments and suggestions on the agenda and format of the conference are welcome.**

## **Organization committee: [agenda\\_europa\\_public@yahoogroups.de](mailto:agenda_europa_public@yahoogroups.de)**

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