



Dissident Voices in Theorising Europe: Another Theory is Possible

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Workshop 01

Short title: Dissident Voices in Theorising Europe
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Another Theory is Possible: Dissident Voices in Theorising Europe

The past decade has witnessed a yawning chasm open between scholarly attempts to theorise European union and the political realities of the European Union in crisis. The decade that has witnessed the ascendancy of political systems analysis, neo-liberal assumptions of efficiency and Europeanisation studies within Europe has also seen the failure of intergovernmental attempts to reform the EU, economic crisis across Europe, and a collapse in popular support for the European project.

Dissenting voices that attempt to theorise Europe differently and advocate another European trajectory have been largely excluded and left unheard in mainstream discussions over the past decade of scholarship and analysis. Dissident voices in European Studies are those that seek to actively challenge the mainstream of the study of Europe. Theorists working from a dissident perspective adopt a variety of ontological, epistemological and methodological standpoints. What they share is their starting point that the study of Europe has a dominant set of discursive, intellectual and academic practices which they seek to challenge. The dominant practices of study seek to privilege particular methodologies, approaches to analysis and have determined a dominant set of practices in the study of Europe. As indicative of the standpoint of theorists working from a dissident perspective are assertions that issues of gender and socio-economic power structures have been pushed to the sidelines of the study of Europe in favour of a focus on institutions, policy-making processes and a normative agenda focusing on institutional and policy efficiency.

What this workshop seeks to explore is the array of dissident perspectives. These dissenting voices in theorising Europe may not provide problem-solving theory for addressing the EU's many crises directly. What they do is to open up different possibilities and understandings of the EU. At the same time it is clear that notions of what problems need solving and how to solve them have been severely circumscribed. The special issue is polyphonic in seeking a broad range of dissenting voices from different cultural settings. Hence contributors are intended to be found from different national arenas where the question of what constitutes mainstream theoretical work is varied. Similarly, it is anticipated that contributors come from a wide variety of theoretical perspectives, with no preference given to any one approach, whether critical theory or not. Attempt is also made to include differing disciplinary, interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary paradigms, ranging from international political economy through sociology to gender studies and postcolonial theory.

The purpose of the workshop is not to definitively address an one analytical problem in EU studies, neither is it to establish a new school or paradigm in EU studies. Instead the aim is redress the gap between theoretical scholarship and political realities that has opened over the past decade – that another Europe is possible and one that challenges predominant ideas about both the EU and the field of EU studies. The workshop hopes to explore that by allowing for dissident voices in theorising Europe another Europe, and another theory, is possible indeed probable.