The EU is neither a state nor an international organization. It is a political system that somehow falls in-between these two conceptual containers and is hence in need of a proper designation qua polity. Our point of departure is that the EU that emerged from the crises of the last decade has undergone a mutation; hence, bears clear resemblance to what we would depict as a segmented political order. All political systems can contain segments; democratic states however have strong built-in de-segmenting arrangements (notably parliaments and various arrangements to ensure throughput legitimacy); hence, can rein in segments. In contrast, a segmented political order has segments as constitutive features of the political system. Such an order is marked by four core elements. First, there are stable constellations of governmental and non-governmental actors sharing a “cognitive bias” towards a specific understanding of policy problems and solutions, i.e. actors sharing a ‘segmental logic’. Second, this logic is ‘locked in’ by a distinct policy style marked by a limited and biased policy repertoire and a particular institutional configuration of function and territory. Third, this form of segmented political order is marked by significant constraints on own resources and has limited ability to develop own capacities; hence, is internally and externally vulnerable. Fourth, policy- and decision-making is marked by inadequate parliamentary oversight. A segmented political order is thus a lopsided political order in that the role of parliaments as the quintessential de-segmenting mechanisms is characteristically weak.

These features suggest that when confronted with new challenges, the process and pattern of intervention will leave a distinct mark. Intervention will often manifest itself in new organizational forms that will in turn be carriers and platforms of segmental logics. Given resource scarcity and capability constraints, these can be conceptualized as interstitial
organizations tapping into resources from multiple institutional domains and recombining these with the purpose of delivering policy solutions beyond the reach of established governance bodies and established frameworks of norms and procedures. Such arrangements will be prone to democratic deficits from the type of closure that is an inherent feature of policy-making within segmented political orders.

It follows from the above that whereas segmented political orders as all political orders learn, processes and patterns of learning are prone to bias and may exhibit pathological features (such notions as competency traps and failing forward may be relevant depictions).

This workshop will focus on organizational dynamics, broadly speaking. We are interested in contributions exploring organizational dynamics of how segments are formed and the mechanisms and processes of how they operate; what new organizational forms are emerging and how they operate in the EU’s system of governance; and the democratic implications that this type of order will engender for Europe.

Conveners: Jozef Bátor, John E. Fossum and Jarle Trondal

Programme

09.00 – 09.40 Jozef Bátor, John. E. Fossum, Jarle Trondal: On segmented political orders

09.40 – 10.20 Sergio Fabbrini: Dec-segmentation through Decoupling and Reforming the EU

10.20 – 11.00 Adrienne Héritier: The emergence and operation of interstitial organizations: Governing finance in Europe

11.00 – 11.20 Break

11.20 – 12.00 Jonathan Zeitlin: The Single Supervisory Mechanism in Action: Experimentalist Practices beneath a Hierarchical Veneer?

12.00 – 12.40 John Erik Fossum: The European Council – an EU Interstitial Balancer?


13.20 – 14.20 Break
14.20 – 15.00  Chiara Loschi: Experimental Border Management in the Context of EU Crisis Response in Libya and Ukraine

15.00 – 15.40  Viliam Ostatnik: Ukraine Crisis and Organizational Learning in the EU’s Foreign Policy Apparatus

15.40 – 16.20  Jozef Bátora: States, Interstitial Organizations and the Prospects of Adaptation of Liberal International Institutions

This event is organised in the framework of EU3D, a 4-year research project looking at the future of European integration, in particular differentiated integration. EU3D will specify the conditions under which differentiation is politically acceptable, institutionally sustainable, and democratically legitimate; and provide important knowledge on the conditions under which EU reforms may fail or succeed.

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EU3D is funded by the European Union’s Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Programme Grant Agreement No. 822419