



Institut für die Wissenschaften vom Menschen  
Institute for Human Sciences

## CONFERENCE - On Solidarity VII: The Character of the Public

March 9-11, 2012

ERSTE Bank-Lounge, Petersplatz 7 / 6<sup>th</sup> Floor  
1010 Vienna, Austria

### PROGRAM

The upcoming meeting will be devoted to opening a multi-year conversation on the theme of "Solidarity: The Character of the Public." Its purpose is to consider whether democracies best thrive when their citizens share a broadly common public space, pursue a broadly common public interest, and are governed by a state with the capacity to sustain these two aspects of collective citizenship.

It is the premise of modern democracies that the people ultimately rule, that they do so as citizens who are engaged through various means in a shared project geared to peacefully secure desirable if provisional outcomes that pursue normatively desired, and desirable, goals. Without the necessary reality and fiction of popular sovereignty, democracy is a hollow idea; what is required for such a public in the quest of enforceable policies and lawmaking, however, is contested by theorists and practitioners alike. The goal of this conference is to identify clusters of such basic questions in order to make them susceptible to systematic inquiry.

In cooperation with:



ERSTE Stiftung



Welt **Burg** Dorf



## **Friday, March 9<sup>th</sup> (ERSTE Lounge)**

**2:00 – 2:15 pm: Introduction**  
*Ira Katznelson (Columbia University, New York)*

**2:15 – 4:45 pm: The State and the Public Interest**

How can the public interest be defined? Does this rest with the sovereign people, or does it occur in the institutions of popular representation? Is it based on a collective and communal understanding that transcends the partial and particular and expresses itself in common conversations, institutions, and movements – or does it represent the outcome of deliberative and competitive democratic processes?

When are long-term political goals – like intergenerational justice, ecological sustainability, the stability of political decisions, the structure and transformation of energy supply, the design of the welfare system – more likely to be achieved? Which “model” of public interest provides a better space for “reason”, necessary to attain these goals?

**Introduction:** *Kurt Biedenkopf (Former Prime Minister of Saxony, Dresden)*  
**Comments:** *Ivan Krastev (IWM, Vienna)*  
*Alan Wolfe (Boston College)*

**4:45 – 5:00 pm: Coffee break**

**5:00 – 7:30 pm: Participation and Its Institutions**

How people in civil society engage with political life via key institutions and transmission belts, including political parties, social movements, journalism, interest and lobbying groups, and features of public opinion bears directly on the project's central issues. At stake is how we should understand the character, content, and consequences of the relationship between participation and these various institutional channels.

**Introduction:** *Sidney Verba (Harvard University, Cambridge, MA)*  
**Comments:** *Paul Dekker (Tilburg University)*  
*Maria Victoria Murillo (Columbia University, New York)*

**8:15 pm: Dinner upon invitation of the Federal Chancellor of Austria**

## Saturday, March 10<sup>th</sup> (ERSTE Lounge)

### **10:00 am – 12:30 pm: The Organization of Social Knowledge**

In the early 20th century, American Progressives, English New Liberals, and European Christian and Social Democrats all looked to modern social knowledge, grounded in the new social sciences, as sites within which to generate useful policy ideas based on putatively objective and factual bases. During the course of the century, totalitarian regimes tightly harnessed and controlled knowledge to explicit ideological purposes. In the democracies, over time, the character of policy ideas also became more tightly linked to advocacy, but in an open and competitive political universe. The implications of this shift deserve close examination.

**Introduction:** *Kenneth Prewitt (Columbia University, New York)*  
**Comments:** *Helmut Anheier (Hertie School of Governance, Berlin)*  
*Nicolas Lemann (Columbia University, New York)*

### **12:30 pm – 2:30 pm: Lunch upon invitation of ERSTE BANK**

### **2:30 pm – 5:00 pm: The Capacity of the Democratic State to Govern**

With the fragmentation of ideas about the public interest, of the channels of political participation, and the creation of policy-relevant knowledge, has the capacity of the state, as a site of neutrality and effectiveness, diminished? If so, what are the consequences for democratic vitality and success, including success in reproducing a sense of common solidarity?

**Introduction:** *Claus Offe (Hertie School of Governance, Berlin)*  
**Comments:** *Sven Giegold (MEP, Greens/European Free Alliance, Brussels)*  
*Olivier Zunz (University of Virginia, Charlottesville)*

## **Sunday, March 11<sup>th</sup> (Burgtheater)**

**11:00 am – 1:00 pm: Debating Europe - The State and the Crisis  
(Public Debate)**

There is something strange and disturbing about the current economic and political crisis in Europe. Democratic institutions are more transparent than ever but at the same time less trusted than ever. Democratic elites are more meritocratic than ever but more resented than ever. Our societies are more open and democratic than ever, but also more ineffective than ever in solving social and economic problems.

In the days of the Great Depression, the majority of people lost trust in the market but discovered trust in government. In the 1970s people lost trust in government but regained trust in the market. Today government and the market are equally mistrusted. Why is it that the failure of the market has resulted in a loss of confidence in the state? Will the current crisis bring the state back or will it mark the emergence of a new political consensus where the Right will oppose the welfare state and the Left will oppose the security state but at the end of the day there will be nobody left to bet on the state?

### **Participants:**

*Alfred Gusenbauer (Former Chancellor of the Republic of Austria, Vienna)*

*Christopher Lauer (Member of the House of Representatives, Pirate Party, Berlin)*

*Katherine Newman (Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore)*

*Lilia Shevtsova (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Moscow)*

### **Chair:**

*Ivan Krastev (Permanent Fellow IWM, Vienna)*

**1:00 pm – 2:30 pm: Lunch at the Burgtheater**

***END OF CONFERENCE / DEPARTURE***