

Luzern, 1. Oktober 2009

Laudatio von Prof. Dr. Christiane Schildknecht, Dekanin der Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaftlichen Fakultät zur Verleihung der Ehrendoktorwürde am Dies Academicus 2009 der Universität Luzern

Die Kultur- und Sozialwissenschaftliche Fakultät der Universität Luzern verleiht heute die Ehrendoktorwürde an Professor **Philippe C. Schmitter**.

Philippe Schmitter was born in Washington D.C., although his family has roots in Switzerland. Stations of his academic education were the Dartmouth College, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, the Institut Universitaire de Hautes Études Internationales in Geneva, from where he graduated, and the University of California at Berkeley, where he obtained his PhD. His professorial career includes positions at the University of Chicago, the European University Institute in Florence, the University of Stanford and then again at the European University Institute where he is currently Professorial Fellow. His paths have also regularly brought him to Switzerland, where he has held visiting professorships in Geneva and Zurich. He published many books and scholarly articles and he received many prestigious prizes. All these aspects usually serve to portray an outstanding academic's profile.

But rather than pursuing this well trodden path, please allow me a more personal take on Philippe Schmitter's outstanding contribution and personality. I was told that during the 1990s in Florence, he was driving a multicoloured VW Polo. Four aspects of this car are apposite to highlight the merits we associate with you and your work.

Firstly, permanence. Philippe Schmitter received numerous grants and prizes throughout his career. I just want to mention the first and the most recent prize: in 1968 he was granted the Dissertation Prize of the Department of Political Science at the University of California at Berkeley. Just last week, he received the prestigious Johan Skytte Prize in Political Science at the University of Uppsala in Sweden. This time span of 31 years of outstanding scholarly excellence certainly honours the permanence traditionally associated with the brand *VW*. The car's engine is solid and precise, just as the methodological

rigour of the empirical and conceptual work, which substantiate Philippe Schmitter's theoretical contributions. He seems to have a tireless engine, ready to run long distances. His work has traveled across continents, back and forth between Europe and the Americas, always up to new shores, and driven by an unabated productivity and genuine curiosity. With his work, Philippe Schmitter has traveled far within and beyond the discipline of political science, inspiring and orienting the work of other social scientists around the world.

Secondly, intellectual breath and lucidity. His VW is multicoloured, bright yellow, red, green, and blue. This polychrome appearance matches the outstanding intellectual breath of Philippe Schmitter's work. His writings span across the sectors of the political sciences: from comparative politics to European studies, from political theory to political economy. The car's colors are bright colors, not pastel ones. Indeed, in each of these fields, Professor Schmitter has left significant landmarks, posing new, challenging questions, and outlining innovative research agendas. On themes such as neo-corporatism, democratic transitions, regional integration processes within and beyond Europe, and, more recently, transnational democracy, the work of Philippe Schmitter has offered pioneering theoretical contributions and has put his stamp on every sub-discipline of the political sciences.

Thirdly, originality. This car is unique and cannot be mistaken. Philippe Schmitter's work has never followed scholarly fashions; it has established trends often well away from the discipline's mainstream. Rather, it opened up new conceptual frameworks and paths for empirical research.

Fourthly, modesty. Without a doubt, a Polo is not the car you would expect from a successful academic with well established contacts to the top ranks of economic and political elites in different parts of the world. Notwithstanding his steep professional career, Philippe Schmitter has managed to retain his personal integrity and upright personality. In his academic life, he takes the tasks of supervision, teaching and mentoring extremely serious. In his private life, he is a very helpful and engaged citizen.

The combination of theoretical innovation and empirical rigour reflected in Philippe Schmitter's work and the readiness to transcend narrow disciplinary confines is exemplary for the development of our Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Lucerne. It serves as an outstanding frame of reference and inspiration.