



INSTITUT FÜR HÖHERE STUDIEN
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PADEMIA
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Call for Papers

PADEMIA Workshop

'Rethinking Representation? The Changing Environment for Parliamentary Democracy'

26 – 27 March 2015

Institute for Advanced Studies, Stumpergasse 56, 1060 Vienna

Parliaments have had a bumpy ride over the last years. While long accepted, even taken for granted, as the core institutions within our systems of representative democracy, their ability to represent citizens adequately has increasingly come under question. Within Europe's nation states, it is mainly the ability of parliaments to make collectively binding decisions that has come under criticism. This is due to the 'relocation of politics' (Bovens et al. 1995) to new arenas of decision making (see also Castiglione and Warren 2008): transnational and supranational arenas including new international, supranational or global actors, on the one hand, and collective decision-making arenas at and across different levels involving both semi-private and private actors, on the other hand. The involvement of such new actors in decision-making, who often lack both formal electoral authorisation as well as electoral accountability, creates a serious problem of 'power without corresponding representation' (Hupe and Edwards 2012) in terms of democratic legitimacy. In addition, scholars point to a decreasing legitimacy with regard to the input-side of parliamentary representation due to lower turnout in elections, diminishing party identification, and, at the same time, an increase in demands for group recognition undermining the representational link between political institutions and the citizens (Mair 2009), thus leading to 'representation without corresponding participation' (Hupe and Edwards 2012). Finally, staying with Hupe and Edwards' distinction, one can add another problem. The fact that traditional political institutions, and parliaments in particular, lose decision-making competencies to other arenas and actors while at the same time remaining the main institutions with regard to formally authorised and electorally accountable representation creates 'representation without corresponding power'.

The aim of the workshop is to address these challenges to parliamentary representation in the European Union from different perspectives:

The 2014 EP Elections - Challenges and Opportunities for Parliamentary Representation at the European Level

Turnout at the 2014 EP elections followed the downward trajectory established since 1979. Thus, the rising competences and the increasing political clout of EP are out of sync with political participation following the traditional mechanisms of representation. Rather, it seems that more and more direct deliberative forms of representation via civil society supersede the key actors of elections, i.e. political parties. However, what was new about the last EP elections was the attempt to politicize the elections with the crowning of front-runners – an attempt to address the ‘power without representation’ problem. Shortly after the elections the EP made it clear that it will not accept any Commission president not belonging to one of the big party families. After some haggling the candidate of the Conservatives was made Commission president designate – a staggering political victory for the EP. How, if at all, will this change dynamics within the parliament and between the supranational institutions? Does the EP enjoy a higher legitimacy now and what is it going to do with it?

Representatives and Representation in the European Parliament and in the National Parliaments

In face of the increased role of the European Parliament and the debated role of the national parliaments, the changing composition of the European Parliament and the interplay between national and European political careers have been observed. While Norris (1999) diagnosed a divided career pattern where the European Parliament and domestic careers are largely separate, Scarrow (1997) distinguished three different career types: the European Parliamentary career as a stepping stone to national politics, a genuine European Parliamentary career and the exit model where being a MEP is the closure of a political career. In the new millennium, national and European parliamentary careers have become even more connected and the various career paths have been reinforced: a European Parliament mandate can be a stepping stone for domestic politics as well as a trajectory for an extended position at the European level (Verzichelli and Edinger, 2005). The panel aims to explore the extent and the potential consequences of this interaction between national and European political careers.

Thus, we invite papers on the career trajectories of parliamentarians (in the form of country case studies, comparative papers, individual politicians' bios of particular significance - with theoretical implications about typologies especially between countries and parties). Has this type of „career complexity” become more common? Are there country-specific or partisan patterns in this respect? Are old and new member-states different? Second, we welcome exploratory analyses of the role behaviour of the different types of MEPs. While Hix (2004) has examined the effect of certain institutional variables such as electoral rules and candidate selection procedures on legislative behaviour, the individual-level explanations such as political past or future motivation are still to explore. Do MEPs with diverse career trajectories follow diverse roles, do they fulfil specific functions, do they act and behave differently, and altogether do they have special impact at the European level? A possible diversity of the behavioural aspects might have an impact on the understanding of representation in the European Parliament.

Challenges to Parliamentary Democracy at the National Level

Within the context of the EU, much of the debate on parliamentary representation focuses on the so-called 'de-parliamentarisation thesis'. According to the standard diagnosis, the process of European integration has led to the transfer of large areas of decision-making from the national arena to the EU level, resulting in a loss of legislative competences for national legislatures. Thus, for national parliaments, the problem of 'representation without corresponding power' is often seen as the most pressing. Others questioned the overall de-parliamentarisation thesis, and argued that instead of absolute 'losers', parliaments may be 'latecomers' to the integration process (Maurer and Wessels 2001). Accordingly, scholars have been increasingly interested in comparing the effectiveness of alternative scrutiny systems and in explaining the adoption of specific scrutiny models.

As a result, we already have a good understanding of the formal Europeanisation of national parliaments, i.e. of the scrutiny provisions they implemented to strengthen their influence on and control over their governments negotiating at the EU level. However, we so far still know little about other ways in which parliaments and MPs have reacted to European integration. Has European Integration had an impact on how national parliaments fulfil or should fulfil different parliamentary functions? How do MPs perceive their own role in EU politics and can we observe a Europeanisation of MPs' patterns of representation? In other words, how do they assess and deal with the 'representation without power problem'? And finally, is the policy-making power of national parliaments in EU affairs really so different compared to domestic policy areas?

Representation 2.0 - Theorising New Systems of Representation

For considerable time political theorists have devoted time to the question of adequate political representation in supranational polities. While there are some who see the standard model as the one, which only needs to be applied at the European model as a panacea for the twisted democratic European system, there are others who prefer deliberative, polyarchic or more direct forms of representation. However, representative systems can comprise various modes and various mechanisms of representation. Which modes of representation should be combined to link power and representation effectively, and what do different representative systems mean for the democratic quality of a polity? What advantages and disadvantages do 'mixed system' of representation entail?

Funding is available to support travel and accommodation expenses for speakers.

Please send your proposal including a title and abstract (400 words max) to the workshop convenors Katrin Auel (auel@ihs.ac.at) and Johannes Pollak (pollak@ihs.ac.at)

by 15 December 2014.