



The German National and Subnational Parliaments in the EU Multi-level System: Winners of the financial crises?

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Parliaments in the EU system and financial crisis I

Thesis:

A new form of representative democracy appears in the EU. It is allocated over different political levels in the EU system.

The new form of multi-level democracy is „not working“ regarding the financial crisis.



Parliaments in the EU system and financial crisis II

Agenda:

- The emergence of a „multi-level parliamentary system“ after the Treaty of Lisbon
- The financial crisis as a typical phenomenon of „Post-Parliamentarism“?
- German National and Subnational Parliaments and the financial crisis: empirical research



The multi-level parliamentary system after the Treaty of Lisbon I

Lisbon as “the Treaty of the Parliaments”

- European Parliament strengthened in recent decades
- the role of national parliaments in the EU policy-making discussed and strengthened since Maastricht Treaty (1993)
- Subnational parliaments are mentioned for the first time
- Interparliamentary cooperation is strengthened



The multi-level parliamentary system after the Treaty of Lisbon II

Cooperation between parliaments as the main innovation of the Treaty of Lisbon concerning parliaments

- cooperation between parliaments – particularly national parliaments and the European Parliament (Art. 12 TEU; Protocol on National Parliaments /on Subsidiarity Control)
- subnational parliaments are mentioned in Art. 6 Protocol on Subsidiarity Control, but gain no rights directly
- German national parliaments are improving interparliamentary relations
- German sub-national parliaments are taking the opportunity, they are reforming their rights in EU affairs and cooperate



The multi-level parliamentary system after the Treaty of Lisbon III

Theoretical approaches to catch interparliamentary relations:

- catalogues of parliamentary functions appoint “cooperation” only recently
 - “Mehrebenenparlamentarismus” (Maurer 2002)
 - „national parliaments in EU multi-level governance“ (Auel/Benz 2005, 2007)
 - „multilevel parliamentary field“ (Crum/Fossum 2009)
 - „multilevel representative democracy“ (Benz 2011)
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- closely linked with expectation to bring more legitimacy of EU policy
 - a kind of contrasting strategy vis-à-vis parliamentary control of executives



The financial crisis as a typical phenomenon of „Post-Parliamentarism“? I

“Post-Parliamentarism Thesis”: Parliaments as “losers”
(Anderson/Burns, Abromeit, Benz):

- complexity of issues, experts, non-state actors
- governance in networks without hierarchy
- supranational and global decision-making
- relations between parliaments and executives in multi-level systems
- gap between parties/politicians and citizen



The financial crisis as a typical phenomenon of „Post-Parliamentarism“? II

Financial crisis: a typical case of post-parliamentarism?

- complexity of issues: agencies and European Central Bank
- logic of governance in networks without hierarchy – faced by logic of markets (new relation between market and state?)
- supranational and global decision-making, parliaments are informed later on
- relations between parliaments and executives in multi-level systems: intergovernmental decision-making
- gap between parties/politicians and citizen because of a lack of information, new distrust, suspicion vis-à-vis the EU, call for disintegration



The financial crisis as a typical phenomenon of „Post-Parliamentarism“? III

Financial crisis: empirical results in Germany

- Bundestag and Bundesrat (national parliaments) are strengthened by decisions of the Bundesverfassungsgericht
- Although the Landtage (subnational parliaments) become very active players almost no debates on financial crisis in the context of EU policy (debt brake, decision of Landtagspräsidentenkonferenz)
- almost no cooperation on issue of financial crisis between the Landtage
- some symbolic politics like public debate on help for Greece in the Bundestag



Conclusiones

- new concept of a „multi-level parliamentary democracy“
- representative democracy in the multilevel system of the EU is conceptualized through interparliamentary cooperation
- subnational parliaments as part of the „multilevel parliamentary field“
- the idea doesn't work concerning the financial crisis
- expectations too high? – „unfulfilled promise of interparliamentary cooperation“ (Raunio 2009)



Thank You

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