

PAUL A. KINDERMANN

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EDUCATION

London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) MPhil/PhD, European Institute Supervisor: Prof. Jonathan White; Assessor: Prof. Sara Hobolt	Oct. 2021 - Sep. 2025 (expected)
Goethe University Frankfurt MA, Political Theory, with distinction (1,0) MA, Philosophy, with distinction (1,0)	2016-19
University of Hamburg BA, Philosophy (major) and Political Science (minor), first (1,3) ERASMUS student at the University of Vienna, summer term 2014	2012-16

AFFILIATIONS

Princeton University Pre-doctoral Visiting Fellow (VSCR), Department of Political Science	Feb. - Apr. 2025 <i>Princeton</i>
European Parliamentary Research Service Research Assistant to the Director-General, European Parliament	2019-20 <i>Brussels</i>
Northwestern University Pre-doctoral Visiting Fellow, Department of Philosophy	2018 <i>Evanston/Chicago</i>
Columbia University Fulbright Visiting Student, Department of Philosophy & Political Science	2017 <i>New York City</i>

TEACHING

LSE, Department of Government Graduate Teaching Assistant	2022 - 2024 <i>London</i>
· GV251: <i>Government, Politics and Public Policy in the European Union</i> , undergraduate course	
Goethe University Frankfurt & University of Hamburg Teaching Assistant / Class Tutor	2014 - 2017 <i>Frankfurt/Main; Hamburg</i>
· BM1: <i>Introduction to Philosophy</i> , undergraduate course	
· <i>Introduction to Political Philosophy</i> , undergraduate course	
· <i>Introduction to Ethics</i> , undergraduate course	

FUNDING & AWARDS

UACES Fieldwork Scholarship, London: £ 1500	2024
Research Grant of the Otto-Brenner-Foundation, Frankfurt/Main: € 9800	2023-24
LSE Data Collection Fund, London, for fieldwork in Ireland: £ 450	2024
LSE PhD Studentship: tuition fees and full stipend, London	2021-25
Fulbright Scholarship: tuition fees and full stipend, Columbia University, New York	2017
Friedrich-Ebert-Foundation Studentship: undergraduate & graduate stipend	2013-18

Innovating democracy for the worse? The promises of citizen participation in Europe

PhD thesis in preparation (monograph), submission date in Sep. 2025

- Democratic innovations such as citizens' assemblies are increasingly promoted to rejuvenate liberal democracy. By expanding the role of citizens in public policy-making, they should increase the legitimacy of decision-making; many advocate them as a means to curb the rise of anti-system politics and authoritarian populism. Through a study of the EU, as an instructive case with broader implications, the thesis argues that this kind of institutional design may be innovating European democracy for the worse. It contends that the case for democratic innovation in the EU is marked by normative tensions and contradictions that have implications for the desirability of this form of institutional design more broadly and the potential to further democratise EU decision-making in particular. To develop its argument, the thesis integrates normative analysis and original empirical evidence, drawing on vignette-based group interviews in several European regions as well as a study of elites in the Brussels complex.

'Simulating democratic reform in the EU: Self-legitimation through participatory innovation'

Under review, presented at PSA 2024, Glasgow

- The European Commission has increasingly experimented with new forms of citizen engagement and is institutionalising deliberative mini-publics. Usually such initiatives can be understood as strategies of institutional legitimation, but the rise of direct citizen engagement presents empirical puzzles: its strategic utility for institutional actors seems elusive. This paper develops an alternative theoretical argument that conceptualises direct citizen engagement as a form of self-legitimation: Its instrumental value lies in justifying the work and authority of the Commission to the organisation itself. The second part of the argument maintains that participatory innovation can contribute to self-legitimation precisely because it does not realise democratic politics and control but rather simulates an authentic performance of democratic reform. The theoretical argument is grounded in three kinds of evidence: document analysis, network data on affiliations between actors in the field, and 45 elite interviews. The concluding part of the article discusses normative implications and avenues for further empirical research.

'The many-public: Challenging the empirical legitimacy of democratic innovations'

Working paper, accepted for presentation at MPSA 2025, Chicago

- Citizens' assemblies and other deliberative mini-publics (DMPs) are promoted as means to rejuvenate liberal democracy. Advocates and scholars of DMPs maintain that these forms of direct citizen engagement are externally legitimate: that their process is likely to find public acceptance that is meaningfully different from the legitimacy enjoyed by legacy institutions. Based on the synthesis of different strands of empirical evidence and an original qualitative study, we challenge this proposition. We conduct 34 vignette-based group interviews in selected regions of three purposively sampled Western European countries (Germany, Ireland, and Italy) to understand how different social groups react to and form opinions on DMPs. Against this background, the study re-analyses observational and experimental evidence on public perceptions of DMPs to argue that it is implausible to interpret support for these processes and their outcomes as judgements of political legitimacy. As sponsored forms of participation, DMPs can mean many yet contradictory things to different groups of citizens and in different political contexts. Extrapolated to real scenarios of political opinion formation and decision-making in Europe, the study's results challenge the theoretical expectations of deliberative theory regarding the potential of DMPs to rejuvenate public confidence in the democratic process. The conclusion discusses avenues of further empirical research to test the studies' arguments.

'The role of regional parliaments in EU democracy: A problem-based approach'

Working paper, presented at CES 2022, Lisbon

- The reforms of the Lisbon Treaty introduced new political rights and instruments for regional parliaments with legislative competences in the EU. Especially since Lisbon, we find a prevailing narrative that regional parliaments should be empowered and more involved in the EU because of their potential to (further) democratise the Union. However, it remains theoretically ambiguous how their involvement actually induces this democratic added value. Against this background, the paper outlines a normative analysis of the democratic role of regional parliaments in the EU: Drawing on democratic theory and comparative legislative studies, I develop a problem-based approach to analyse which regional parliamentary function could serve which democratic purpose in the multilevel system. Applying this approach, I then highlight a key issue of regional parliamentary empowerment: Juxtaposing accountability vs. responsiveness functions, I discuss the problem of false equivalence of different parliamentary functions — which is suggested by typologies that equate regional parliamentary roles in a multilevel parliamentary system.

PUBLICATIONS (PRIOR TO PHD)

2021 | ‘Assessing the role of regional parliaments in the EU: Parliamentary functions and problems of democratic legitimacy’, in: G. Abels (ed.) *From Takers to Shapers? Challenges for Regions in a Dynamic EU Polity* (Occasional Papers 43), (Tübingen: EZFF)

2021 | ‘Demokratisierungsstrategien in der Debatte zur Zukunft der EU: Perspektiven regionaler Parlamentsabgeordneter’, with S. Meyer, in: Hilpold/Raffeiner/Steinmair (eds.) *Rechtsstaatlichkeit und Solidarität in Österreich und in Europa* (Vienna: Facultas).

CONFERENCE AND WORKSHOP PRESENTATIONS (SELECTED)

Midwest Political Science Association, Annual Conference, Chicago, IL Apr. 2025
Paper presentation: ‘The many-public : Challenging the empirical legitimacy of democratic innovations’

German Political Science Association, Annual Conference, Göttingen, DE Sep. 2024
Panel organiser/chair: ‘Participation professionals: Designing democracy with citizen engagement’

Political Studies Association, Annual Conference, Glasgow, UK Mar. 2024
Paper presentation: ‘Simulating democratic reform: The added value of citizen engagement in the EU’

CIVICA Summer School, European University Institute, Florence, IT Sep. 2023
Paper presentation: ‘Democratic capital in the EU: Advocating and designing citizen participation’

CES, International Conference of Europeanists, Lisbon, PT Jun. 2022
Paper presentation: ‘What role for regional parliaments in the EU?’

ECPR Joint Sessions: Transnational Parliamentarism, online May. 2021
Paper presentation: ‘The future of EU democracy from a regional perspective’, with S. Meyer

FIELDWORK

Italy, Ireland, Germany: (focus) group interviews in urban & rural areas Oct. 2023 - Aug 2024

Belgium, France: elite interviews & participant observation in the EU Feb. 2022 - Dec. 2023

TECHNICAL SKILLS

MaxQDA: Qualitative data analysis and mixed-methods

R: Data wrangling, analysis, and visualisation

Qualtrics: Survey design and fielding

LaTeX, Quarto, HTML

LANGUAGES

English (fluent), German (native), Spanish (advanced), French (beginner)