

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

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 European democracy? Troubling promises of citizen participation in the EU

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 and counteract the rise of anti-system politics. The PhD project focuses on the case of the EU, where such innovations are experimented with and claimed to address changing public expectations of more direct political engagement and a democratic disconnect between the EU institutions and European citizens. Integrating both original empirical research and normative analysis, I scrutinise these promises and develop an account of the democratic value of such innovations in the spirit of non-ideal theory. The thesis argues that the case for participatory innovation in the EU is marked by normative tensions and contradictions that have implications for the desirability of this form of institutional design more generally and the potential to further democratise EU decision-making in particular.

'Simulating democratic reform in the EU'

Manuscript for submission, presented at PSA annual conference 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 legitimisation, but the rise of direct citizen engagement presents empirical puzzles: its strategic utility for institutional actors seems elusive. Grounded in an exploratory empirical study, I propose a new theoretical account to explain this development. The institutionalisation of direct citizen engagement can be understood as primarily a form of self-legitimation, reproduced by self-referential practices of the actors who advocate, implement, and sponsor these processes: The design of the processes, their objective demand, as well as their performative value can be created by this field of actors themselves. 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'

Manuscript for submission, 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

LaTeX, Quarto, HTML

LANGUAGES

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