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Day of Parliamentary Research

Transcript

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Elise Richter Lokal 2 and Theophil Hansen Lokal 3

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Program

Welcome and Opening

Wolfgang Sobotka
President of the National Council

Keynote: "What are parliaments for and how do they perform?" – Emma Crewe

Response to keynote speech
Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik

Discussion with Emma Crewe and Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik

Panel I: How do parliaments strengthen and/or undermine democratic resilience?

Panel II: What do plenary debates tell us about power relations and democratic culture?

Panel III: New ways of understanding and supporting (pre-)parliamentary decision-making processes?

Panel IV: How do MPs navigate between various kinds of pressure (public, party, voters)?

Poster Session

„Research Year in Parliament“

Presentation of the research project 2023

“Reception of scientific discourses in the debate culture of the Parliament” – Bianca Winkler

Presentation of the newly selected project 2024

Susanne Janistyn-Novák
Deputy Secretary General of the Parliamentary Administration

“Do parlamentarians listen to experts or citizens?” – Josef Lolacher

Panel Discussion

“Why does performance matter? Different perspectives on performance and parliaments”

Lotte de Beer (Artistic director of the Volksoper)

Emma Crewe (SOAS University of London)

Thomas Hofer (Political Consultant, H&P Public Affairs)

Moderation: Phillip Blom

Closing Remarks

Guided Tour and Drinks

Introduction

Christoph Clar (Parliamentary Administration): Welcome! Thank you so much for coming to the Austrian Parliament! We are really, really overwhelmed by the interest in parliamentary research and especially in this year's Day of Parliamentary Research 2024.

First of all we would like extend the very warm welcome to the President of the National Council Wolfgang Sobotka, whose opening remarks we will hear in a few moments. We are very happy to welcome all active and former members of the National Council and members of the Federal Council. We would also like to take this opportunity to thank Secretary General Harald Dossi who is hosting the Day of Parliamentary Research this year for the second time. Unfortunately he cannot be here today but the Parliamentary Administration is represented by Deputy Secretary General Susanne Janistyn-Novák. She is an essential driving force of our parliamentary research initiatives and you will see her later today on this stage.

And we would of course like to welcome the numerous representatives from science, from research, all of you, dear colleagues, dear audience to today's event. Thank you very much for coming!

The Day of Parliamentary Research is organized by the legal, legislative and research services of the Parliamentary Administration whose head Gerlinde Wagner is also here. Thank you for support as well!

My name is Christoph Clar, from most of you I have received one or two e-mails during the last weeks. You will definitely receive some more information from me throughout the day, so please stick around.

For now we are honoured that the President of the National Council Wolfgang Sobotka is opening this day with his welcome remarks. They will be in German, so if you want to switch to channel two – it is translated into English. Thank you very much

for this as well. Therefore, without further delay, may I please ask you to the stage, Mister President. Thank you.

Welcome by Wolfgang Sobotka (President of the National Council)

Wolfgang Sobotka: Meine sehr geehrten Damen und Herren – vor allem Vertreter der Wissenschaft, aber auch die Damen und Herren unseres Nationalrates! Frau Dr. Janistyn! Ich darf mich zuallererst bei Dr. Clar und seinem Team recht herzlich für die Ausrichtung dieses Tages bedanken.

Ich habe mir ein bisschen die Themen der Paneldiskussionen angesehen: Sie sind gerade das, was uns natürlich auch umtreibt.

Wenn wir vom Parlamentarismus sprechen, konnotieren wir das immer mit Demokratie. Wir haben in unserer Demokratiewerkstatt, oben über dem Plenarsaal, die Gebäude aller 192 oder 193 Parlamente weltweit en miniature, aber im richtigen Maßstab abgebildet, und wenn wir mit unseren jungen Teilnehmern der Demokratiewerkstatt über Parlamentarismus reden und sie Parlamente aus Belarus oder aus China sehen, dann kommt immer die Frage: Warum gibt es dort auch Parlamente? Das ist doch keine Demokratie!

Das heißt, das Parlament ist wesentlich älter als unsere demokratische Regierungsform – Ihnen das zu erklären hieße, Eulen nach Athen zu tragen.

Ich freue mich auf spannende Diskussionen. Ich darf nur von der politischen Seite noch einen einzigen Standpunkt einbringen – und ich werde darauf achten, dass ich die Zeit meiner Verspätung wieder einhole, damit Sie um 9.30 Uhr pünktlich starten können –:

Die Politik schätzt die Wissenschaft sehr. Gerade das österreichische Parlament bemüht sich, sich mit den einzelnen Themen, die allen Parteien ein Anliegen sind – nicht aus der singulären Betrachtung einer einzelnen Partei, sondern die für einen Commonsense sorgen –, auch in Form von wissenschaftlich fundierten

Argumentationen auseinanderzusetzen. Das betrifft bei uns im Besonderen die Frage der Inklusion, die Frage der Minderheiten, die Frage der zentralen wissenschaftlichen Themen wie Artificial Intelligence oder die neuen Formen der Genetik.

Eine besondere Frage ist natürlich auch: Welchen Gefahren und Herausforderungen haben wir als demokratisches Forum zu begegnen? – Aus der Sicht der österreichischen Vergangenheit heraus ist natürlich das Thema des Antisemitismus – heute in ganz Europa, ja weltweit – eine besondere Herausforderung für uns, weil, wie von der Forschung erwiesen, Antisemitismus per se antidemokratisch ist und sich uns in einer Breite präsentiert, wie wir das vor wenigen Jahren noch nicht erwartet hätten, obwohl wir – und da sei der Wissenschaft gedankt – das sehr wohl auch im wissenschaftlichen Bereich gesehen haben, nur hat man wie so oft letzten Endes nicht auf die Wissenschaft reflektiert.

So darf ich den Bogen schließen zu Ihrer Arbeit – ein herzliches Dankeschön dafür. Es wird an der Politik liegen, Ihre Erkenntnisse – die so entscheidend sind, auch wenn es darum geht, für eine Stabilität von demokratischen Strukturen, parlamentarischen Strukturen, die Grundlagen zu erarbeiten – auch in der täglichen Arbeit zu reflektieren.

Wir wissen aber, und das wird Sie nicht sehr glücklich machen, dass es in der täglichen Arbeit letzten Endes nie um die reine Umsetzung der Erkenntnis geht und dass wir immer wieder letzten Endes auch – und das gehört zur Demokratie dazu – darin scheitern, dass wir den Parlamentarismus, den demokratischen Parlamentarismus so leben, wie er ursprünglich gemeint ist.

Es gilt, die Medien – und das ist etwas, was mir in dieser Diskussion, auch in der Paneldiskussion, ebenfalls wichtig ist – als vierte Gewalt hier auch mitzunehmen, denn sie haben einen gewaltigen Einfluss nicht nur auf die Politik, sondern auch auf die Äußerungen hier im Parlament selbst und im Parlamentarismus im Besonderen.

In diesem Sinne wünsche ich Ihnen einen interessanten Austausch, aus welchen Ländern auch immer Sie kommen. Ich freue mich, dass wir so hervorragende Keynotespeaker und-speakerinnen haben. Herzlichen Dank!

Many thanks to you for coming from all over the world. It is a great honour for us, and it is an honour especially for the members of our administration. Therefore many thanks to you and your colleagues for being here in Vienna. I hope you have enjoyed your stay here and, when you get back, will have experienced that democracy and parliamentarism in Austria have a very good basis and that we like to do this fascinating research.

In diesem Sinne: Viele interessante Gespräche und einen schönen Tag!

Christoph Clar: Thank you so much, Mister President, for your remarks and also for the support of our initiative to bring more research into parliament.

Someone who has made many important contributions to the further development of this research you see here today is Emma Crewe. – Thank you so much for coming!

Emma Crewe is above all an anthropologist based as Soas University of London, she works on politics, governance, identity and organizations, especially in parliaments. She has spent a lot of time doing research on manners, rituals and politics in the UK. In the House of Lords already twenty years ago there have been some things published. She came back to the work of parliaments when she explored identity, culture and representation in the House of Commons from 2011 to 2013. She has published the stunning Anthropology of Parliaments in 2021. This said, please check out our great library which connects directly to the visitor's center and there is a shelf particularly dedicated to this day. It definitely contains this book from Emma Crewe and maybe also some of your books.

Emma Crewe was awarded the European Research Council (ERC) Advanced Grant for her project A Global Comparative Ethnography of Parliaments, Politicians and People. One of her co-investigators is also here today, Cristina Leston-Bandeira from the

University of Leeds. Thank you also to you for being here. Together they are currently editing an encyclopaedia on parliamentary studies.

We are particularly pleased that Emma Crewe is here today not only because of all her achievements and publications but especially because she brings new perspectives to this field, to this area of research. Those new perspectives hold great potential for initiating new discussions, concerning both new insights into how parliaments work and new approaches on how to look at parliaments.

The Day of Parliamentary Research is here to provide a space for these discussions and that is why we ask political scientist Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik to respond to Emma Crewe, to her keynote speech, directly following her keynote speech. So I may also tell you something about Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik: He is professor of Austrian politics in the European context at the University of Vienna. His research interests are among others Austrian politics, political parties, political elites, governments or the welfare state and social policy. Some of his most recent publications are about why people like technocrats, about the transformation of social democracy or about ambiguity and vagueness in party competition.

Among the courses he is currently teaching at the University of Vienna there is one seminar on the Austrian Parliament in light of quantitative data. And he is part of the team that cooperates with the Austrian Parliament on its so called showcases which is shown on one of the posters over there. The showcases are supposed to demonstrate how the data that is provided by the Austrian Parliament and its administration can be used for research for example. Based on these last points you can already assume that the approaches Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik is applying may be different than the approach of Emma Crewe. That is exactly why we are interests in what he thinks of Emma's thoughts and where they both find common ground or possible point of congruence.

Therefore following his response they will sit down together with Christoph Konrath, head of the department research and support in parliamentary matters, to discuss exactly those matters on stage today.

Now enough for the introduction, I have the honour of welcoming Emma Crewe as keynote speaker of this year's Day of Parliamentary Research. Referring to our theme of today's conference she will tell us her perspective on what are parliaments for and how they perform.

Emma, thank you so much for being here, the stage is yours.

Keynote speech: What are parliaments for and how do they perform?

Emma Crewe (SOAS University of London): Thank you so much for that fabulous welcome. Thank you for inviting me; I'm absolutely delighted to be here.

So, today we are interested in how parliaments perform – not an easy question. I'd like to try and approach this in a way that departs from the customary approach of evaluation of parliaments or the evaluation of any organizations.

My first point is: To evaluate, we can't isolate parliaments from wider society, as you say, from democracy and the intentions of democracy. So, we can't lose sight of the fact that parliaments are always at the fulcrum of something much, much bigger.

The second thing I want to talk about today is performance and the many meanings of performance that we need to think about before we make judgements.

Thirdly, I'll try and respond to this idea of thinking in a more open-minded way about methodology and what anthropologists might have to offer.

So, I'm an anthropologist. What does that mean? The shortest version I can actually think of is borrowed from Tim Ingold, a Scottish anthropologist, who says: It's like philosophy, but the people always stay in. So, you don't really get lost in abstractions if you are an anthropologist because it's a very empirical subject. The people always

have to be in your analysis – you don't lose sight of them – and what they are actually doing in a very everyday – the fashionable way of putting it is lived – experience, but in a very practical way: What are they doing when they are at work?

In my case, I'm fascinated by parliaments. To do this evaluation, as I was saying, I think you need to look at the much wider context that parliaments are in, but you also need to be more sustained and in-depth with your studies than journalists can afford to be. So, I'm not that proud of much of our particularly tabloid press in the UK, sadly. When they depict politics, as you know, they tend to go for the drama; they are obsessed about individual personalities; they want to catch attention, but they don't really want to sustain attention.

But they also get very involved in politics themselves. As you know, there's a lot of collusion between politicians and journalists. They are constantly on the phone to each other. Journalists get involved in attacking their own opponents and writing favourable articles about those that they prefer.

So, I think we do need researchers as a function of democracy to have a really close-up look and be as impartial as they can. If they can't be completely impartial – because it's very difficult to be impartial about politics; we all have our own politics –, then we should be honest about our own partiality. We need journalists, but, exactly as you both said, we also need researchers to have a really close look at what goes on in parliaments.

This is how I've been having a very close look. I started off in in the House of Lords. This was after a career in international development. I used to study international non-governmental organisations, particularly in East Africa and South Asia, but then I suddenly saw Labour incoming, what was going to be the Labour government in 1997; I saw that they were doing very interesting things in the House of Lords. I thought: Well, I'm interested in change. I'll go and watch and see what happens.

I was shocked to find that in the House of Lords peers are the happiest people I've ever met. I can't scientifically prove that, but they were so engaged and so relaxed in

comparison with the House of Commons, which is like a crazy city connected to the whole nation – very, very competitive and a much unhappier place, but also very exciting.

I couldn't completely lose my connection with the other parts of the world that I love, so I have also had large grants to commission and sometimes give to scholars, particularly in South Asia and South-East Asia and Eastern Africa, particularly Ethiopia, with my colleague Cristina Leston-Bandeira.

So we did that, but we are now, as Christoph mentioned, working on a kind of global comparative ethnographic approach to studying parliaments in six countries. My particular ethnography has just lately been – would you believe it – in the Texas State Legislature, which is truly wild. I'll need to come back and tell you some stories about that.

If you want to see what we've been doing, we have a sort of treasure trove of books, articles, blogs or whatever, which you can find on our website, but we have also got a virtual exhibition of painting, photographs, films and installations and innovative ways of trying to explain what goes on in parliament. This is the link for the virtual exhibition.

How do anthropologists study parliaments? What they do is that they go and get very close up and see what people actually do when they are working, by following them around, interviewing them, joining in, working for politicians where they can. I got very interested in the Westminster Parliament. This is in the House of Commons; this is a second study. I got very interested in the nature of work. The best way to try and explain how I studied is to give you an example of what I found.

When political scientists or political sociologists look at political work, two things happen. One is that they tend to, like wider public discourse, be quite negative about politics, but the other thing is that they tend to see political work in terms of separable roles. But when I actually watched politicians, I realized that it's very difficult to separate these roles in the everyday work that they do. So, we actually

realized that they are doing a whole mass of different things: whether they are representing their constituents or, in the same day, rushing to the chamber to go and speak on a particular law; they're involved in making legislation. Later the same day, they might be going to a select committee where they scrutinize government.

These familiar roles of representation – scrutiny, party political work, etc. – don't happen in a disconnected way. They're deeply entangled. So, I got interested in the skill that is involved with that. I think politicians, like all of us, have to be shapeshifters, constantly reading the audiences in front of them and communicating appropriately, but they do need to have some authenticity. Changeability is not complete, but they are jumping to different audiences, even in one day, or sometimes they are even performing all these different roles at the same time.

This is by a former minister, Rory Stewart, who said last week that he had to do "at least three different things, in three places, at one time. I was an MP serving constituents in the Cumbrian-Scottish border; I was also paid to be a parliamentarian, voting 350 miles south in Westminster; and also a minister, often abroad, moving through five different positions in four years. How do you balance" all these different roles?

I thought, well, hang on, what are the continuities? This is looking at politicians as if they are individuals, but we know that politics happens in groups. So, what are the patterns that are created by MPs? We can't just think of them as an aggregate of individuals. That would be a far too individualistic approach; and after all, I am an anthropologists, which is similar to a sociologist. We are obsessed about relationships, processes and patterns that are created.

I try to think of a way that kind of recognizes the messiness of politics. I got interested in these kinds of musical analogies for trying to describe the continuities. I think about how to systematically study what different groups of employees are actually doing, which is why I came up with this idea of riffs, rhythms and rituals.

Rhythms is actually the more unusual one because usually people, when they think about politics, think about ideology. But what about thinking about politics in a really embodied way? This is influenced the French sociologist and philosopher Henri Lefebvre. By the way, British anthropologists have a slight inferiority complex because the French anthropologists are just better. I've been very influenced by French anthropology and sociology.

Lefebvre points out that we really need to understand what bodies are doing: where are they moving around as individuals, but also as groups? If you study that in parliament, it's extremely revealing. Where are these bodies going? They are not just in the plenary; they are not just in the obvious sites which are depicted on the television. They are in the corridors; they are in the private meetings; they are in their constituency in the UK, having meetings which are called surgery meetings, like a doctor. Who politicians choose to meet – which other bodies, if you like – is incredibly revealing, as well as who they, as you say, exclude. So, the rhythms are very important.

The riffs are much more obvious. We all know about riffs: the ideology that can be expanded if you need to give a really long speech, or contracted if you need to give a really short one, and adjusted like a kind of musical melody – adjusted for different, different audiences.

But the more interesting thing for an anthropologist is to try and understand the rituals. We think of rituals as something that happens in religion, but you cannot have politics without rituals. You could not have the passing of a law without a ritual because people wouldn't agree to it. You have to have clear hierarchy, clear rules, a clear understanding of who speaks when. These can very often be contested in a parliament, which shows how incredibly important they are. We have things like points of order.

It's not a coincidence that the most important events are more heavily ritualized, like a court of law. When you are sending someone to jail, you couldn't do that without a

ritual. People wouldn't accept it; you would have a kind of anarchy. That's the kind of thing I was trying to study when I was doing anthropology of Westminster.

I want to come on now to this tricky business of measuring performance. I think performance tends to be thought about in three main ways – in both political science and also influenced by management studies; I teach management at a business school.

I think the first one is the most unusual but has been brilliantly explored by the political scientist Shirin Rai and her colleagues. She was at the time at the University of Warwick. That is to think about performance as performativity. I think it's Judith Butler who has made this particularly famous. We need to think about performativity in the sense of people not just communicating with each other but making the world not only through language but also through gestures.

These are Brazilian politicians; this is from our exhibition. A very brilliant political scientist in Brazil, Telma Hoyler, was studying the way people make politics through hand gestures. But of course, there are all kinds of bodily gestures and symbols, which are important in the way that people make politics and express antagonism or create alliances.

The second kind of performance is about whether or not individuals are doing well. If we think about performance management within organizations, we are often doing things like filling out forms, saying whether or not we have met our objectives as if it could just be attributed to us. From my point of view, it's a very problematic way of judging whether or not people are effective because people's performance is intimately connected with what other people are doing around them. So, there is a real problem with attribution in performance management.

But of course it's different for politicians because they usually don't have one boss – they have 50,000 bosses: the people who are electing them. So, how do they perform to these bosses, if you like? Well, now they get on digital platforms. As they often tell me in Westminster, you have to look busy above all. How can they be other than that? I think we have to have some sympathy for this pressure to look as if they are

achieving things, as well as whether they are actually achieving things, because it's not just looking good; it's also avoiding attack.

Increasingly, our politicians in Britain are intimidated. We have even had two MPs murdered in the last five years. Actually, this way of trying to keep winning support from your bosses, from those who elected you, is a very serious business, which, of course, Goffman has written about very brilliantly. I think this allows us to think somewhat sympathetically about the business of how politicians – but actually all of us, when we are working in organizations – have to perform to win support from others, both on the front stage and the backstage.

Finally, the last kind of performance that I think is commonly written about is more of a kind of systemic performance: How is a whole institution like parliament or government faring? How effective are they? In our project, the global ethnographic comparison in six countries, it focused our attention in a very painful way when Ethiopia descended into war, interestingly because Tigray, against the instructions of the federal government, held an election.

These are two paintings that were part of our online and physical exhibition. On the right, you can see the National Parliament in Ethiopia ignoring the war, as it was by most of the world, despite the fact that hundreds of thousands of people died and millions were displaced and continue to be in Ethiopia.

This is really the ultimate failure of a of a political system: when you go to war. We have common, less dramatic failures: the paralysis we saw in the UK with Brexit, which I think partly came about because the people who wanted Brexit very cleverly treated the referendum as if it was an election. In fact, it was only advisory. But once that vote, even though it was so marginal, had been made, people treated it as if it was an election. The public thought it was election-like. The politicians didn't have the courage to say: Okay, you voted for that; let's spend ten years really assessing whether this is wise.

In a way, again, I think that's low performance, but that is, of course, a very partial view. So, you can guess where I stand.

These three ways of thinking about performance are extremely common, but I want to introduce a fourth way of thinking about performance. I'm going to do this, finally, by explaining to you what I did in Texas.

The fourth way of thinking about performance, I hope, takes into account that you actually can't just think about what individuals are doing or the whole of parliament or government or the whole of a system, because the missing link there is that we need to see what's happening in relationships between people. We need to see the processes – the everyday processes, but cumulatively, longer term –, the processes of democracy and whether or not they are working or not.

That's what I want to talk about – not because I think it's the only way of studying performance, but because I think it's the one that's most neglected. To try and explain this, I'm going to tell you a little bit about Texas. Please do ask me more about it because anthropologists get very obsessed with their current fieldwork sites. I'm completely fascinated by this surprising part of the of the US.

I arrived on the 10th of January into the State Legislature in Texas. To my slight surprise, I had to go in the slow queue because I didn't have a gun. If you really want to get in fast, then you can go into the carrying queue because you then had an FBI check, so they don't need to check you so carefully, apparently. So, I went in the slow queue and went to my contact – this is the outer office in the middle – who then put me in the gallery. From then on, I found that Texans are the most friendly, hospitable, kind people I've ever encountered in my life.

I'm sitting in the gallery in a legislature that only meets once every two years, so it's really important to take into account that everything has to happen in an incredibly short amount of time. Not much happens for the first month or two because there are endless recognition rituals where people sit up in the gallery like this. This is not a typical audience, but I'll tell you about them in a second. People sit on the gallery

during the recognition rituals, but what's happening meantime is that they are drafting bills and forming committees.

Then it really gets towards the end of March, so the sort of rhythm of law-making starts to get intense. Mostly bills are killed between the end of March and the end of May, but a few pass. Of course, it's all about law-making because this is the US, so the executive is not in the legislature.

I talked to people in the gallery. The surprising thing about Texas is that in terms of public engagement – which is Cristina Leston-Bandeira's speciality; she is the real expert – it's extraordinarily impressive. If one thinks of the performance of the Texas State Legislature, the opportunity to give evidence – even in the Chamber of the Senate –to any of the committees, to walk into any office in the Capitol building and go and talk to a politician about the matter that you mind about, is extraordinary. I've never encountered so much public engagement.

However, there is a real unevenness between the hot-button issues and the more ordinary issues. The hot-button issue in the 88th session of the Texas Legislature was about trans. In the session before, they banned abortion, but in this session, the really fervent culture war was about stopping gender-affirming care for young trans people.

I talked to both sides. You can actually see both sides in this slide. Of course, they are symbolically represented: Some people are wearing red T-shirts saying "Save Texas Kids"; they are anti-trans activists. Then, there are other people who are dressed more colourfully and often in rainbow flags and the trans colours to indicate where they stand politically. You can see some pro-trans activists here who told me endless stories, lived experience. They are intensely, in a way, believers of the importance of subjectivity and the need to protect individual rights.

Here, they are having protests during any event that had to do with trans. There were large numbers of pro-trans activists in the Rotunda and all over the Capitol.

Here, in contrast, are some anti-trans activists who have become part of a state-level but also national-level ultraconservative movement, which is very generously funded, including by some Texas oilmen, but also well-organized by certain civil society organizations. They would continually pop up in the Texas State Legislature. They bused people from all over the state and even from out of state. Again, during the critical moments and the critical events, you would have hundreds and hundreds of people arriving in buses to perform their ideology.

The thing that was really striking about people performing their respective ideologies was how extraordinarily repetitive they were. So obviously, for the anti-trans activists, it's very informed by the Bible. It had a kind of scriptural quality to it.

The pro-trans activists also tended to repeat the same ideological framing. In a way, this was apparently impressive. This is a huge amount of political engagement, but it was at the same time deeply, deeply divisive. It's accentuating a polarization within Texan society that is becoming so bad that people are moving to residential areas where others will agree with them. How do we read that in terms of performance when we see what's happening in wider society?

The second important thing to tell you about performance is that the legislature, like most legislatures and parliaments, is not that representative. Hispanics, in particular, are chronically underrepresented. You can see the entire legislature – this is the House of Representatives and the Senate –: At the top, that's actually the representation of the different groups. At the bottom is what it would look like if there was proportionate reference at representation throughout society. We could talk about this later because it's interesting.

I'm not saying that you can have a precise representation of all groups because, of course, no person is only one identity; we are all many, many identities. Furthermore, you can't guarantee that all Hispanics, for example, are going to agree with each other, of course. So, representation is extremely complicated.

But what I think we can say is that, when people look at a legislature and they don't see their group there, this is extremely problematic. Their interest can often get overlooked if they are underrepresented.

The last thing I want to tell you – and the most surprising aspect of the Texas Legislature – is that it's incredibly cooperative amongst the politicians. There's a long tradition of bipartisan collaboration between the Democrats and the Republicans. The Republicans have a majority, but not enough to just do whatever they want. But there is also an ethos which they tell you about all the time with pride – with the exception of some people on the extreme ends of the political spectrum. But the vast majority of them tell you with pride: We are not like the rest of the US; we are not like Congress; we are not like most parliaments. We work together all the time.

What the people in society don't see, is that 90 per cent of the bills or so – that's not a precise figure – are passed in a bipartisan fashion. This partly happens because there are long gaps. In the House of Commons, for some reason, you ritually cannot have a pause. If you are not there to present your private members' bill or whatever, if you are not there at the right second, literally, if you are seconds late, it gets cut. You cannot have a pause in the House of Commons. They take immense pride in that.

In the House of Representatives it is very, very different. The speaker will frequently say: Okay, we'll have a recess now! – Very informal. It's in those recesses, it's in those gaps between business that people chat to each other. The Republicans and the Democrats, as you can see depicted here with their colours, sit next to each other; they choose to do this. They choose by seniority; they come in and choose their desk; they go down according to who's coming next. Very often they are advised: Yes, sit next to somebody from the other party because you are going to need them to get your bills passed!

Okay, I'm an anthropologist. Try not to be defensive about the fact that some people say, all we are doing is producing stories. I think I work with political scientists because – actually I'm working with them all the time – let's use another kind of

methodology to really make sure this is true. Politicians make all kinds of claims like the rest of us when we are trying to get something done, when we are trying to do something we are passionate about. So, you can't always take those claims as perfect depictions of reality.

I worked with Michelle Taylor-Robinson, who is a professor at Texas A&M University. We crunched the numbers. We put in all the bills – or actually she did all the work, so I really should give her credit. She put in all the bills to have a look at who was joint-authoring and who was co-sponsoring. The interesting thing was that on nearly all the bills except for the really hot-button ones, the very controversial polarizing ones, they nearly always had both parties at least co-sponsoring if not joint-authoring.

You can see here the connections between them; these are representatives. You can see in the middle that those people are constantly cooperating with each other. There are some outliers who don't cooperate with the other party, but you can see here: I mean, Representative Raymond in the top right quadrant is actually cooperating more with the other party than with his own side. It's true for some Republicans, but much, much lesser. Of course, the Democrats need to cooperate with the Republicans because the Republicans have a larger number of seats.

On the whole, this is the norm in the Texas Legislature. This partly happens because it's sustained, as I say, by the ethos, but also by an important key figure: Speaker Dade Phelan. He really minds about bipartisanship. They put him in, knowing that he would do what they had been doing for decades, which is putting the other party in as chairs of the committees. The committees have a big influence on which bill goes forward.

But he also did something which you could describe as sort of politically impartial, which was to back the attempt to impeach the attorney general for corruption, despite the fact that he comes from the same party. So, last month there was a primary. The ultraconservatives tried to get him out. There was a runoff; he only narrowly managed to get back in. So, whether or not he'll remain speaker is unknown.

The point about him is that he is a really important part of the story of why this bipartisan cooperation continues, but only because he has got a lot of moderate Republicans and Democrats supporting him. That is under threat because the ultraconservatives are incredibly well organized.

To conclude, let me end on a note of collaboration. I'm a great believer in collaboration in politics, but also in research. Of course, ethnography is always collaborative. You can't do it on your own; you have to get in there and talk to people. It does bring a different way of looking at politics. But I actually really think it's more interesting to do interdisciplinary ethnography. Ethnography is not a method; it's an approach to studying things within which you can have qualitative and quantitative methods.

Working with quantitative researchers, from my point of view as a qualitative researcher, is much more powerful than working on my own. So, the judgement of parliaments in terms of their performance, I've tried to argue, should only be done by taking one's time. I'm in favour of not rushing to judge, as another French anthropologist, Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan, advised. One should take one's time; one shouldn't isolate variables without seeing them in the wider context.

I think you get a richer picture of politics and more capacity for making these judgements if you bear in mind three entanglements. The first one I've talked about is the relationship between individuals, the wider system, but also the relationship between different components and different people.

The second entanglement is to understand parliament and how it relates to the outside world, not thinking of it in isolation.

The third one is seeing how the different kinds of political work that politicians do are entangled and sustained through relationships with each other.

I think my key take-home message is: Let's cooperate! – Thank you.

Response to keynote speech

Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik (University of Vienna): Dear Emma Crewe, thank you so much! Dear colleagues, dear members of this House, members of the Austrian Parliament, members of the Parliamentary Administration! Dear colleagues, scientists, academics, scholars and visitors!

Thanks for the opportunity to respond to this very, very insightful keynote speech by Professor Emma Crewe.

I should start my remarks by saying, or maybe reiterating what was already said, that I have probably been invited to do this response because I typically use a very different approach of looking at things, of studying parliaments and political institutions. The world that I usually inhabit is the world of large-scale quantitative data. It's a world where there is typically a very large distance between the researcher and the object of study, a world in which we assume that politicians, political actors behave strategically and rationally, and a world where we try to generalize from individual instances and cases and individuals to broadly applicable conclusions.

So, in response to this keynote speech, I asked myself: What can people like me learn from the approach that we just heard so eloquently presented? – To me , the obvious lesson, the most obvious lesson that we can take is: It becomes very clear, listening to this presentation, that we simply miss a lot. There's so much stuff that's going on. And even though the parliaments that we study are very formalized political settings, strongly rule-bound institutions where behaviour follows procedures and norms and rules to a large extent, there's still so much activity that's happening that is simply not amenable to standardization and quantification that we usually rely on in the world that I'm inhabiting.

That is especially true if we look at the contexts inside of parliament, where people behave – politicians, administrators, constituents –, where they act outside the institutionalized arenas that people like me often study, outside things that are easily countable and measurable, where categories are usually well-defined or where formal

rules strongly apply and constrain political behaviour. So, once we move outside these areas into the more personal, the more relational realm, the more informal realm that also exists inside parliaments, our vision then gets a little blurry and our concept gets fuzzy and our analytical tools just lose some of their sharpness.

While we still can see a lot about parliaments and the people that are active in them, there are certain limits to our understanding if we take this very standardized macro-level perspective that has always a lot of abstraction included. How and why parliaments and parliamentarians function and behave in the way that they do, some of that just evades our analytical grasp.

So, what can we do about this ? – One option, of course, is for all of us to become ethnographers. And yes, in some situations that will be the best methodological choice. But of course, in many instances it's unlikely to happen. There is, of course, still value in the more abstract, quantitatively based work, and people are not going to switch their methodological traditions and customs from one day to the next so easily in lots of cases.

That's why I want to highlight another lesson that I, for me personally, have drawn from Professor Crewe's presentation and her work: Even if researchers from my methodological tradition will never become full-fledged ethnographers, they would still be well advised to think about the materials, the documents, the data that we use to study parliaments and parliamentary behaviour, and especially the processes through which that data becomes available in ethnographic terms. These data – all the materials that we all know very well in our studies: minutes of plenary sessions, parliamentary questions, government bills, roll-call votes, even smaller things like interjections or calls to order in a plenary session –, all these are highly standardized objects, but of course that shouldn't conceal that there is always a big story behind those data.

So, if we try and think ethnographically, what do we learn? – I think it should lead us to ask the question: How is this information that we're using recorded? How is it put

into categories? How is it made available for public consumption and use? What are the organizational processes and the human relations, the human interactions, the performative acts that take place in order to produce the very polished standardized data that somebody like me would rely on to study parliaments?

Recently, I was lucky to have the opportunity to engage with members of the Austrian Parliamentary Administration. I was in the course of teaching a class at the University of Vienna together with Christoph Konrath, and we were in contact with members of the Parliamentary Administration to highlight for us and for the students in this class some of the story behind the data. And the people that we talked to, they produced much of the data that I and many others in research, in academia, use to examine what happens in parliaments. They are, for example, stenographers or they are the people overseeing topical categorizations and which labels are going to be put on certain pieces of legislation or a parliamentary question, or which labels are put onto stages in the parliamentary or legislative process.

These people, if you talk to them, can reveal a lot of the story behind the data, the life behind the data that is indispensable to understanding what is going on in these processes. The people who work in the Parliamentary Administrations are sort of the people that we rely on to turn the richness, the complexity, the weirdness and the uniqueness of human interaction in this political arena into these well-defined, clear-cut and very easy-to-handle objects and categories that we then use. In some sense, they are our ethnographic interpreters of what is happening in parliaments. For me, understanding their work is key to injecting some ethnographic thinking into even the most abstract quantitative analysis. And to achieve this requires – and here I want to echo what Emma Crewe said –collaboration. It requires not only collaborating between disciplines, but also collaboration across the gap between academia and research and the political practice.

So, to understand more and understand better, we need to talk to the people across institutional boundaries. I think that this Day of Parliamentary Research is an

important step to foster this exchange, and I want to invite you all and I hope that we can all make use of that today. – Thank you.

Discussion with Emma Crewe and Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik

Christoph Konrath (Parliamentary Administration): Thank you, Emma, thank you, Laurenz, for these thoughts you have shared with us. We have now about 15 minutes for a discussion among you. I really find it hard to start it because I'm so surprised that Laurenz, who is such a well-known quantitative researcher, is speaking about ethnography. But I know from the course that we hold together that we really share a lot and also try to give the students a fuller picture. But when I think of the course, I also realize that it can be very, very difficult for students to see this whole picture and to understand it. And it seems to be so necessary to break it down into small pieces and to give them sort of a toolbox to understand things.

This is something I would like to ask you both: How do you train the skills that we can on the one hand understand the big picture but also see how things can be interconnected? Because sometimes there is the risk that the big picture might become a journalist picture and you warned us of that.

By the way, we have a wonderful team of technicians here. We should acknowledge them. They take care of everything. *(Applause.)*

Emma Crewe: Can I answer your question and also respond to the challenge that Laurenz made about in a way how we work together or: Do I become quantitative and you become an ethnographer or do we collaborate? And how do we do this?

In a way, Christoph, I think part of what you're asking about is: How do we achieve an even higher standard of rigor, even when we're trying to do things which are very complicated like look at the wider context or look at these entanglements with a sense of proportion?

And I think part of the answer is to actually challenge one's own training to some extent. So I was trained in anthropology, which is a small, rather marginal discipline, to be so hypercritical of other social sciences – out of defensiveness, I think – and to say: Oh, what they're doing, they are the ones who are very powerful, you know, they're just trying to look like scientists. I mean, it was really disparaging, unnecessarily disparaging. And I think that's really seriously worth challenging because if you take these disparaging attitudes towards other disciplines, then you fail to learn from what they understand as rigor.

So the way anthropologists achieve rigor is partly by triangulation: endlessly, endlessly looking at things from many, many different angles, endlessly thinking of how different individuals and different groups have different views. So you have to be very careful not to overread what one person says, although it is idiosyncratic, although typical of wider pattern. So it all takes a very long time. We achieve rigor by taking sometimes 18 months. It gets quicker as you get more experience. But actually, sometimes that's not very useful and you want to be able to achieve very high rigor quicker.

So actually what's interesting about working with political scientists is that you are able sometimes to do things at much greater speed and in ways that are really, really reliable. So I actually think we can work together or we can even attempt each other's methods as long as it doesn't entail any kind of compromise in standards. And I think if we are going to work together, we have to keep talking about what we understand as rigor and how we achieve it and put to one side the training which tells us not to respect each other's disciplines.

Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik: Yeah, I think that is all true. I want to highlight another way of how we can maybe achieve this, another way that I haven't mentioned before where we can profit from collaboration. Parliaments are kind of the epitome of what a political institution is to a political scientist. Almost like if you think: What's a political institution?, of course it's: A parliament, that's an institution.

I think that means the study of parliaments is relatively well-established. It's also older than many other fields of research and political science, and it has ways of doing things that are very well established and have long traditions. And I think that means, not only in the methods, in the data that we use there are strong norms and expectations in the subfield, but also in the ways we theorize about it and we understand it.

And I think it's even more: I think sometimes the disciplinary boundaries are even stricter in some sense. It's sometimes even easier to import or to rely on a new methodological approach that you have seen elsewhere or learned elsewhere and to adapt it for your own purposes. I think it sometimes becomes even more difficult if people challenge the fundamentals of how you understand political behaviour in an institution like a parliament. And I think there it becomes of course more challenging and more difficult, but potentially even more fruitful to talk to each other and collaborate and look at the same behaviour and talk to each other, but like: Okay, so how would you explain this? How would you understand this? What is going on? What motivates the people to behave in the ways that they do? And there could be very different answers.

I think that is one avenue where I feel there is still a lot of potential.

Christoph Konrath: We have a lot of people in the audience that work in parliaments and are also confronted with this question of how parliament works and how parliament performs. But for them it can be very difficult to find an answer because there's a very strong demand on impartiality and objectivity, and also the expectation from politics to science or academic counselling is that it should be objective and impartial.

You both mentioned impartiality. I wonder what your take is on people who work in parliaments, who work with almost no distance to politics: How can they show that their work is also impartial and not sort of sided? Even when they talk about what

they do: How can they not get too personal but also not too abstract? What would you tell them?

Emma Crewe: I think that's difficult. I mean, the way I was trained was that it's impossible to be completely impartial because that would imply that you don't have any ideology yourself. How can that be possible? So, of course, it's quite common to find people that don't fit within a particular political party. I would include myself, I'm a bit maverick, but I have very strong views about things. And of course parliamentary officials in the UK, I find, do as well. But I think the answer is more in the judgements about where you can articulate your partiality.

We have something called the Study of Parliament Group, which Cristina Leston-Bandeira was chair of, and it's parliamentary officials and scholars who meet regularly and have conversations where it is possible to debate things like performance, which is very difficult to do without making judgements. And as soon as you make judgements, ideology comes into it. But it's extremely discreet, really, really discreet. I think actually there's still the need for discretion sometimes. Full transparency I don't think is always very helpful.

So I think while scholars have got the luxury to be reflexive and be more honest about their partialities in public, it's difficult for parliamentary officials. So I think then the decision becomes more about which audience you can be more honest about your partiality to.

Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik: I'm not sure I have a really good answer. I have noticed in my exchanges with people working in the Austrian Parliament that they have internalised this norm of impartiality to a really, really high degree. So I would consider myself to be relatively impartial or at least trying to approach the things that I look at in a somewhat neutral manner. Of course there's no way of overcoming implicit biases and one's own ideological backgrounds. It's a skin that you cannot get out of, in a sense.

I have still been surprised at how strongly this norm is in the thinking of people in the parliamentary administration, much more than I would have had it. Sometimes you collaborate, you discuss certain choices of how to present things like: Can you write this half sentence? Can you show this graph as it is? And then there are methodological or linguistic or language choices that you make that I wouldn't even spend two seconds thinking about. But the people here are so well trained in constantly thinking: Okay, could somebody understand this in a way, could that even in bad faith be misunderstood or misinterpreted in a partisan way or in a partial way?

At some point I was even a little like: How could you get the idea in this case that this could be something that's a partisan statement or something? So I was surprised. The interesting thing is that what I've sometimes seen is, and I think that's the way, for instance, journalists try to do this – I'm not sure it's a conscious choice, but I think it's something that happens –: Their strategy to deal with partisan actors is to become cynical. So cynicism is a strategy where you can avoid partisanship because you can draw a line between them and you and you are different than they are because they have all kinds of moral defects.

That's a different kind of dimension of being party to something or to the process. But I think that's not something that I've seen in the people who work here who are not at all cynical about the process that they're dealing with.

And I think it's also important as researchers to question whether sometimes there are things that you maybe can see as a researcher, that sometimes the empirical realities, whatever they are – we can talk about that –, are not impartial. So I think it's a gap that we have to navigate in that sense.

Emma Crewe: Can I continue on this? Because I think it's so interesting and important. I think there are different forms of impartiality and I think actually part of the imperative for us all comes back to research. I just wanted to make sure that's what we hear. We're all passionate about research. So I think one can inch towards being more honest about one's partiality, but only if you do exceptionally good research.

But I would make a distinction. I mean, recently I wrote an article about standards and ethics in parliament and how they were under attack by the former prime minister. Now, obviously as a parliamentary official you are going to get into trouble if you do that. I do not normally comment on political parties or on individuals, but in this case, I was so angry about Brexit and felt that the attack on parliamentary standards was so serious that it needed a really kind of systematic research. I spent more time writing that article than I did writing a whole book because I don't think you can take such a partial stand without really doing very, very careful research.

I wanted to relate to a topic that Cristina knows a lot better than I do, which is about public engagement. So there was a lot of, in a way, partial antagonism towards public engagement in the UK-Parliament 20 years ago, say. But I think part of the reason why there's been movement and a much more positive attitude towards it is because of the research that's been done, a mixture of experimenting, really finding out what are the kind of pros and cons, where are the risks, what works, what doesn't work.

So I think research is part of the answer to your question.

Christoph Konrath: Thank you. We have to come to an end. And that's one very last question, because I liked it, Emma , that you talked about acting as if. 100 years ago Hans Kelsen, the famous legal philosopher, worked more or less above us, because here was also the seat of the Constitutional Court. Hans Kelsen is known for his most distanced and abstract approach to law, but he was a committed defender of democracy and wrote about democracy.

His central theme is that in a democracy we have to act as if: as if everyone were represented, as if we would work together. And he was convinced that we need fictions to create and sustain this reality of democracy. So one last sentence from you both: How do you relate to fictions and performances? And how do you uphold this very important insight as a researcher? Because a journalist would say: I see through things and I can explain how it really is.

Emma Crewe: Shall I go first? I think it relates to what you were talking about in relation to cynicism: that the way to get away from cynicism is to inspire hope. And you can only have hope with imagination and thinking about the future as if it could be different. So I think that's fascinating. I'm going to go away and read him because I think it's such an interesting, as I say, sort of antidote to the negativity that we're really suffering from in politics.

Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik: I have two young kids. They're seven and nine , and they love everything that's fiction of course: stories, theatre, whatever, dressing up as, I don't know, Princess Elsa or somebody. And I think what we can learn from the idea of fiction in politics is: We should try at times to get out of the cynicism, of the over-strategizing about things and over-thinking what others have thought and playing three-dimensional chess in our minds to sometimes just stand there, look at things and try to be really naive, to have the courage to be naive at some point. That will at times help you to focus on what's really happening.

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Panel I: How do parliaments strengthen and/or undermine democratic resilience?

Discussant: Sven T. Siefken (Federal University of Applied Administrative Sciences, Berlin)

Presentations:

Wartime parliament in operation: Lessons learned from Ukrainian democracy

Stanislav Ivasyk (USAID RADA Next Generation Program; National University of "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy")

The concept of tailor-made laws and legislative backsliding in Central-Eastern Europe

Rebeka Kiss (University of Public Service, Budapest)

Parliaments' role in strengthening democratic resilience

Cristina Leston-Bandeira (University of Leeds)

Parliaments as an example of "generative artificial intelligence": The new parliamentary encyclopaedia

Giovanni Rizzoni (Italian Chamber of deputies Research Service; University of Rome)

Anna Rathmair (Parliamentary Administration): Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to panel number one called "How do parliaments strengthen and/or undermine democratic resilience?" My name is Anna Rathmair, I am with the Legal, Legislative and Research Services of the Austrian Parliamentary Administration and I'm happy to welcome you as the chair of this panel today.

We're looking forward to three interesting presentations by Stanislav Ivasyk, Cristina Leston-Bandeira and Giovanni Rizzoni. Unfortunately, Rebeka Kiss had to cancel. Our panellists will first present for 10 minutes each, after which the discussant Sven Siefken will share his thoughts on the presentations with us. The panelists will then have the opportunity to respond to these thoughts in a short discussion here on the stage. And afterwards, you in the audience will have the opportunity to ask questions or make comments. As we are relatively tight on time with a planned 75 minutes, I'd ask you to note down your questions so that you can ask them after the discussion.

So without further ado, I would ask Stanislav Ivasyk onto the stage, our first panellist. He is head of the Research Department of the USAID RADA Next Generation Program and he is also a Ph.D. candidate at the National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy.

Stanislav Ivasyk: Thank you so much. It's an honour but a challenge to open such an honourable panel.

I now want to present to you our research that we are conducting for the second time on the modus operandi of Verkhovna Rada of Ukraine, Ukraine's parliament, how it performs during the full-scale invasion of the Russian Federation.

As I mentioned, the research was conducted for the second time. The first cycle included the first one year and a half of the operation in the Ukrainian parliament, the second the research was on the 10th session of the parliament, roughly the last six months or so of the parliament, and we also compared the data we collected previously with this new research. Our methodology was the analysis of open data and the interviews with the wide range of stakeholders, civil society, MPs, parliament staff, etc.

So what were the key findings of the first study? – First of all, I want to stress that Ukraine's parliament, despite any security situation, constantly worked offline. It never turned to the remote settings, even in times of Covid, even now. Second, most decisions were adopted by political consensus. Some procedures were simplified to accommodate the need for securing the country with the needed legislation but most of the stages of the legislative process were still followed. One important – the last one – issue is that the level of transparency and openness was restricted due to security reasons. But this issue further developed and I will represent it in my further presentation.

So now I want to build my presentation and our discussions on the five key lessons that probably the Ukraine experience can give to you, to your parliament in case such an extraordinary situation happened – pray to god not, but still, you have to be prepared.

Lesson number one: War does not stop the politics. On this issue, I want to present the parliamentary affairs in Ukraine in three steps, three stages. The first stage was around three months, when the Russian forces were around Kiev, in the Kiev neighbourhood, the capital, and at that time, the parliament was under real threat of the Russian missiles, of the Russian land forces. In such a harsh situation the

parliament had to gather together for very short plenary meetings. The first plenary meeting was only 9 minutes, then it was a half an hour, an hour, but not longer because of the physical threat.

After the Russian forces were pushed back from Kiev, the second stage was like a combination. The parliament tried to, on certain laws, come back to its ordinary procedures but for extraordinary legislation it used very quick procedures. But now the parliament mostly came back to its pre-war lines of procedure. You can see that the average time of meetings per month is increasing. So now it's almost like pre-war sessions.

Another significant data: I will not name everything but on the right side you can see the percentage of laws that were adopted without discussion in the parliament. So during the first one year and a half 60 percent of the laws had to be adopted without any discussion in the parliament because it was a harsh situation, now it's only 30 percent of the laws. I want to stress that the statistics include even the procedural questions that are typically adopted without discussion. So we believe, it's not a very high percentage.

The second lesson is that war dictates the priorities and complicates planning. It could be an obvious conclusion, but you can't believe what surprises the war can bring. For example, the Ukrainian parliament didn't stop to adopt its annual legislation agenda, every year it does, but it overflowed with ad hocs and for the last legislative the agenda was performed only for 30 percent. Also, surprisingly enough, the main issues on the parliament's agenda are topics on economics, on war resilience of society, and security and defence issues are only in the fourth place. So you have to understand that most of the security issues will be decided by the executives. But still the legislature adopts a very important legislative framework for this issue. But first of all, the parliament recalled to the economy, economic development, industry and it was the first place on its agenda.

The third lesson is: The delegation of powers shall be balanced by effective parliamentary control. It also can be obvious, but you have to understand that in times of emergency there is a real need to extend the powers of the executive to deal with certain questions and issues in a very speedy way. But at the same time there should be a balance not to allow the room for a broader, much more broader discretion, even the backsliding into autocracy. So the parliament should shift. In the Ukraine it usually has a legislative function, but now it has to shift to the parliamentary control. And you have to understand that you have to have, even now, effective instruments of parliamentary control because Ukrainian parliamentary was not well prepared with this instruments. The lack of effective instruments of parliamentary control leads to certain bad situations in society, to the scandals.

One example, if I may, is the law on defence procurement. In the summer of 2022, the parliament allowed the government to regulate, as they say, particularities of the procurement. So it was a very broad discretion, but it lead sometimes to questions from society to some procurements, why, on the prices, even if it was the need for the national security. There was a lack of public trust, lack of control and lack of transparency. Therefore, the parliament has to quickly amend its legislation and introduce at least some mechanisms for parliamentary control and for transparency. It obliged the government to publish its reports on procurement, on the special asset platform procurements, it digitalized the steps of procurements and also it obliged the government to give it all the information, despite it is classified, so the parliament can perform its parliamentary control.

The fourth lesson is that the parliament should strive for transparency even in wartime, because the lack of transparency in public engagement could lead to the drop of legitimacy and to a raise of constitutionally questionable practices. And it's very important for the parliament to be legitimate in such hard conditions because its decisions have to be supported by society.

For instance, I will briefly skip to the example, I want to bring two examples of the legislation. It's a law on city-building and a law on criminal liability for military

personnel. These two laws were adopted very harshly by the parliament. It was the beginning of Russian aggression and the first law was adopted one day before its publication on the website of the parliament. And the society also had not access to the agenda of the parliament. So no one knew that this law would be discussed by the parliament.

It was a similar situation with the second law. The parliament hastily and quickly adopted the legislation and there was no room for the public discussion in the parliament and the stakeholders could not express themselves. Therefore, they had to address the president, file the electronic petition. The first law was never signed by the president until now and the second one was signed after 43 days pending for president's signature. It's the so-called president's pocket veto, a constitutionally very questionable practice because the legislation was adopted according to the constitutional norms – I will finish my conclusion now – and it's very harsh and debatable issue in the Ukrainian parliament and raised to the room for such a constitutionally questionable practice.

I have a limited time, so I will stop for now. I also can evaluate on the transparency, I have this issue, but maybe it will raise with the questions from the audience. – Thank you very much.

Anna Rathmair: Thank you very much. Our next speaker is Cristina Leston-Bandeira. We've already heard a few words about her. She's professor of politics at the University of Leeds in the UK. She's also chair of the International Parliament Engagement Network. Her research expertise lies on the relationship between citizens and parliaments. She has written extensively on the topic in a wide range of case studies from the European Parliament to the parliaments of Brazil and the UK. The floor is yours.

Cristina Leston-Bandeira: Thank you very much for inviting me to be here and being such great hosts. It's been an absolute pleasure to be here.

What I like to do is just do a reflection really about the role that parliaments may play in strengthening democratic resilience, which I know is a big topic and I just want to throw out a few a few ideas really. All the photos are mine. I came here as a tourist last year and obviously I went to the parliament and did a visit and I was absolutely fascinated with your with your building, as you'll see lots of photos in that, I love photos.

So why am I doing this reflection? I'm doing this in the context of huge challenges to democracy which we could be here a whole year talking about. But things like, you know, backsliding: democratic backsliding, institutions changing rules so that so that leaders have an easier way in parliaments.

Populism: We just have the elections to appear in parliament, I don't need to say any more than that. We just have quite chaotic types of elections happening this year in various areas of the globe, actually, we just had India, we have France and the UK in a few weeks.

But also a tendency for short-termism: We don't really have structures to think about the longer term. Increasingly, we take decisions the short term, thinking of those elections.

A deepening of inequalities which has been measured in lots of ways, that is happening: Whilst our quality of life is improving, inequalities is also getting deeper.

And the perennial crisis: I mean, if you, like me and Emma, live in the UK, it feels like we've been in crisis for quite a while. It's really exhausting really.

And in all of this, what we have is: Our systems, representative democracies, are not able to deal with this anymore. Why is all of this happening? Obviously there's lots of reasons for that.

But I also want to highlight some of our paradoxes. We live in a time where there's a declining of voter turnout. Wherever you look at, however you measure, sometimes it's higher, sometimes it's low but the general trend is of decline across the world,

actually; decline of party membership, traditional politics, decline of trust, increased scepticism towards politics, at the same time increased demands for political reform; increased misinformation, polarisation. I'm being so negative, I'm hoping to be more positive in a bit. But at same time, we also actually never had these many elections and that's partly why the turnout is quite low actually. We've never had this much participation. It's just it's not necessarily through the traditional ways and that's why that matters to parliaments. But there's lots of participation out there. Never had this much information, but it's how you control it and whether there are trusted sources of this information and who's dealing with that. We never had this much accountability in terms of monitoring, etc., never had this many political changes, there's actually studies looking at the reform of political systems, but also never had this many innovations. Some of you will be familiar with citizens' assemblies, for instance, it was a huge innovation we've had in recent years. There's lots of countries in Europe and elsewhere innovating with those. But that's just an example.

Within all of that, again, we have this sense that representative democracies are not necessarily sort of dealing with those crises. What I want to look at is about parliament's role in all of this. You've got photo there of the Scottish parliament, and I usually like to refer to the Scottish parliament because it was created at the turn of the 20th to the 21st century. It's a parliament that came in a different era, not the 19th century liberalism type of fights for parliaments, and it's a parliament which was very much focused on the citizen in terms of accessibility, transparency, participation and it's sort of a shift really of how parliaments position within society. Parliaments in terms of democratic resilience should be ideally placed to make that democratic connected. It should be there between citizens and governance.

When I look at the role of parliament, I sort of refer to the mediator parliament, which is how we have the parliament today in the 21st century, at the middle of an echosystem of communications between citizens, social movements, NGOs and government. But how effective are parliaments in actually mediating all those different interests and shaping policy? And it's in that context that it should play an important role in the democratic resilience, obviously through elections, because

legitimacy comes through elections, and we heard how important legitimacy is, for instance, in the case of Ukraine earlier. So that legitimacy is really important and election is what shapes it in our representative democracies. But it's also about the effective communicating and listening and that's the bit that our representative systems I think haven't got quite right yet. How do we keep our core representative institutions, processes, structures, but open up for listening mechanisms that actually work?

And this is here that I think we can nurture democratic resilience and that it's interesting to look at. So how can we look at that or what sorts of areas I'd be interested to look at? Mechanisms to nurture resilience: Again, you know, I could be here the whole day talking about this. This is just a few examples.

Traditional parliamentary processes like post-legislative scrutiny: It's really, really important to see how legislation is affecting population, is being seen by the population. So all of these traditional processes are really important.

But it's also about citizen-focused mechanisms, about enabling both the understanding of the institution – if people don't know what parliament is, they can't distinguish between government and they're not going to engage – and meaningful participation, participation not just for the sake of having it, but actually participation that can lead to other things. And by doing that, it's about really being part of a meaningful conversation.

Being part of the conversation is really, really important. I had a discussion earlier with some people from the parliament here. Discussions about society, about laws, about welfare, immigrants, health, environment are happening all the time. The challenge for parliament is to be part of those conversations, to be relevant in those conversation. And it is really hard but it's about moderating this conversation. The example you gave of that law where the public was not listened to in parliament, how it led to a petition and how eventually the president decided by himself, is a good example where those conversations were happening, but not in parliament.

But also something very important with parliaments is about reaching diverse audiences, going beyond the usual suspects. The research that I've done in a variety of parliaments: There's always the issue that we talk to the same people, the same people engage with us. But it's about engaging with those people who may even not understand what parliament is and that's when you start being more meaningful and relevant.

Going beyond the usual suspects really demands different tools, a variety of tools to access different publics, being pro-active in that work, but also being future generations-oriented. I had a discussion yesterday with some of the staff in the workshop and I know it's strange to talk about future generations, but it's really important to think beyond the short-termism of now and the next election. So it's about young people, but it's also about the people who haven't been born yet, to think about: What will be the consequences of our policy on welfare and climate change in generations to come? Just having spaces for reflection – we don't often have that.

There are lots of challenges though, obviously, I'm fully aware, and many more challenges besides what's in here.

Invisibility of parliament: Parliaments are invisible for the people out there. People know about government, about politicians, they don't necessarily know about parliament.

Media and social media as the key anchors for information: That's where people go for information. That's what shapes information.

The fast pace of politics: Parliaments are institutions for lots of reasons that are slow in the way they do things. And actually I'm more and more a defender of being slow, having space for reflection. But that's not the pace for politics.

We have politicians versus parliaments: There's often opposition between politicians and parliaments, often the politicians are the first people who criticise parliament and that is very difficult to manage.

But then also the bubble of parliamentary environments: We tend to have in parliaments a bubble environment, in that there's not necessarily much interaction contact with outside and it's to have a more proactive approach to get through that.

But also parliamentary resources: I know, every team I talk to, they would like to have 20, 100 more people to be able to do all of these things and it's not always recognized.

So I finish, just to summarize that, what this reflection is about: We do face huge challenges to democracy, which are not met by our traditional structured process. We need to think beyond that. But parliaments can play a key role in democratic resilience because they are at the core of that connection between citizen and governance. But we do need to think about more flexible, better resourced structures and processes which ensure the continuity, the scrutiny and the meaningful listening.

And that's me. Thank you very much.

Anna Rathmair: Thank you very much. You can please take a seat here and I invite Giovanni Rizzoni up to the lectern, please.

He's head of the Unit for Interparliamentary Cooperation and Institution Building at the Italian Chamber of deputies. Previously, he was head of the Research Service of the International Relations Service. He's professor at the Luiss School of Government in Rome. His most recent book is "Parliamentarism and Encyclopaedism: Parliamentary Democracy in an Age of Fragmentation".

Giovanni Rizzoni: Thank you very much for the invitation and congratulations for this remarkable initiative by the Austrian parliament.

I will focus on the one subject that is normally neglected in studying parliaments, that is, parliaments as knowledge system, how parliaments use and process knowledge and do produce new knowledge. Of course, today we have a big debate on how artificial intelligence is going to affect the labour market, health care, the way we will drive our car and so on. But very little attention is paid to how artificial intelligence will affect democracy and parliaments.

My point is that parliaments in a sense already are artificial intelligence systems because they are machines for thinking. I rely on the on the work of an American anthropologist, Mary Douglas, who wrote a remarkable book in the 80s on “How Institutions Think”. There is also parliamentary thinking, a style of parliamentary thinking. Parliaments do connect different people, do you use a huge amount of information and they connect different opinions, different interests, but they not only aggregate these components, but they give a new synthesis.

Parliamentary deliberation is something that is completely new in comparison with the original data. They deal with any subject. So they are artificial intelligence, general artificial intelligence. But the outcome is most of the times completely unexpected, even by the actors that are inside the parliaments. So they are really also generative artificial intelligence institutions.

In my opinion, one crucial pattern that is used – historically – by parliaments in order to perform this activity is the encyclopaedic pattern. I tried to explain this point in a book that I published this year about “Parliamentarism and Encyclopaedism: Parliamentary Democracy in an Age of Fragmentation”.

What do I mean by encyclopaedic pattern? – Modern parliaments were born between the 17th and 18th century in the same age as the rise of the big national encyclopaedias, the Chambers’s Cyclopaedia in UK, the Diderot Encyclopédie, the Konversationslexika in the German culture and so on. There is an interesting parallelism between parliaments and encyclopaedias. Why? And especially, which are

the main features? – I will stick to three main moments of the parliamentary encyclopaedia.

The 18th century encyclopaedia that has some features, for instance, the focus on the plenary hall, the capacity of representing the whole political spectrum in a circular way, in a way the distance from civil society because it was a self-sufficient environment. This is the way in which we call the parliament an aquarium that is transparent, but you don't interact with this environment. They were focused on the plenary, not on the committees, on rhetorical culture, on the humanistic culture that was the connecting culture of the parliamentarian class in this century. And they also generated the big libraries, the big parliamentary library, starting from the Library of Congress, the big encyclopaedic library of the world, but also in Germany, in Austria, in Italy and France and so on, and also the big parliamentary treaties, that is the thinking of the parliaments about themselves. They were the big theatres of politics. They also were shaped as theatres. We have very remarkable examples of this.

Then there is a paradigm shift in the parliamentary encyclopaedia in the 20th century. The parliaments are now focused on the committees, not on the plenary. The parliamentary elite is composed of political professionals, the rise of the politician as a professional. The political groups are the great innovation in the structure of the 20th century parliaments. So the parliamentary encyclopaedia in the 20th century is based on the double structure, on the one side the committees, the specialist committees, and on the other side the political groups. That is, there is a combination between expertise and politics. And this was the basic structure to make politics understandable. Parliaments are the big cognitive map of politics.

What about the current challenges to this model? – Now the political environment is much more liquid. The mass parties are no longer there, that is, the party membership is declining. The symbiosis between the press and the parliaments is also in crisis because now political information is much more given by the digital infosphere.

So what about the parliamentary encyclopaedia? – I maintain that the parliamentary encyclopaedia is still and more necessary today in order to foster democracy, in order to make democracy and politics understandable, even if parliaments so far rather stick to the traditional structures, that is committees, political groups and so on. But they have to innovate the encyclopaedia after the Wikipedian model, that is, an encyclopaedia that is much more shaped and fed from the bottom with a participative approach, also because contemporary public policies do have an encyclopaedic structure. Take the case of the of the Sustainable Development Goals: It's an encyclopaedia of the modern public policies. The same is the case for Europe, the big priorities of the resilience plans launched by the European Union.

So the parliaments have to innovate the encyclopaedia through two channels – I want to connect with Cristina's speech –: On the one hand, they have to include the expertise, scientific evidence in the legislative process. This is an indispensable approach. On the other hand, they have to include the common sense. They have to build the bridge between the scientific evidence and common sense. All the participative tools that were mentioned by Cristina are crucial in order to build the new parliamentary encyclopaedia.

We need the three great components to build the new parliamentary encyclopaedia: memory – because memory is still crucial for parliaments; they are the institution of memory –, reason – because they have to be the place for reasoning, for deliberative democracy – but also imagination. That is how to shape the new parliamentary encyclopaedia. – Thank you very much.

Anna Rathmair: Thank you very much. Thank you for this very interesting presentation so far. I would now like to ask Sven Siefken, our discussant, to join us on the podium and share his comments and questions with us, which the panellists can then respond to afterwards.

Sven Siefken: Thank you and thank you for these interesting presentations that bring in various perspectives on the topic of this panel. I will now give a few comments on

the overarching theme and also on the individual presentations. Then you will have time to react with a short statement or thoughts before we open it up for discussion in the audience.

Let me start with this general question: What is resilience? We all talk about resilience. We all talk about democratic resilience this time. But what exactly does it mean and what exactly should it mean? Resilience, if we look at the term, means springing back into form, not breaking under hard circumstances, so being able to bend but not break, for example, and then after these hard circumstances are over, to go back to an old form. – Just as a starting point, because I have the feeling everybody is talking about resilience these days and little thought goes into it; much like we talk about crisis these days, a lot of crises. When you try to think and nail it down: What actually is a crisis and what constitutes a crisis as opposed to a problem or a challenge?, then you actually find it hard to nail it down. But that's another topic.

The presentations here assemble various perspectives that can help us think about democratic resilience and go into that. But let's also first talk about parliaments. Of course, we all know what parliaments are. We all know that these are multi-functional institutions. They do multiple things, and some of them depend on the political system. That electoral function has already been mentioned, which is not at the key of a parliament, a legislature in a presidential system. But this is all nothing new to this particular audience. To a broader audience sometimes it needs to be pointed out that parliaments do more than just talk or more than just make laws.

The overarching topic of parliaments is that they contribute to legitimacy, to legitimacy of political decisions, to legitimacy of the political system. And this is exactly why we do have parliaments in non-democratic systems too, because they contribute to legitimacy. This can be a pure facade, of course, but that's why non-democratic rulers also establish some kind of parliament.

Of course, what we have to remember, and this has also been pointed out before in some presentations, parliaments are not unitary actors. Parliaments are defined by the

fact that they actually incorporate conflict, different perspectives. That is their role. We should always keep that in mind when we study parliaments, because sometimes in the way that we phrase it, we see parliaments as the whole parliament. But the reality, of course, as was mentioned, is: It's not the whole parliament, it's different actors with different motives that are opposed to each other in some regards and work together and foster compromise in others, and often they go back and forth between the two.

One more thing that has also been mentioned, but I think it's also really important: Parliaments are not just inside the parliamentary building. If we want to think about parliaments, we have to look at where they are and where they exercise influence in the entire political system. That's important as a starting point and that refers to the normal situation, too.

Now let's talk about these particularly challenging situations. All of us have experienced one in recent years. The Covid situation was exceptionally challenging, was a crisis worldwide, it happened everywhere and parliaments had to adapt. We have started a big research project about that, "Parliaments in the Pandemic", where we're comparing how parliaments have reacted to this particular crisis and how these reactions differ from each other or not, what patterns we can see.

We have one example here with a particular crisis of war, which has not been seen on the European continent to that degree for many decades. That is a very interesting case and I think the paper that you presented, that you have also written is also publicly available. You've shared the paper.

Stanislav Ivasyk: Yes. Thank you so much. The research is publicly available on our website. It's a long paper with also a short summary. So if you need all the data, all these interesting conclusions, you can find it.

Sven Siefken: It's a really interesting paper because it comes out of this particular situation, where also we as political observers, of course, overlook the role of the Verkhovna Rada. I was really surprised to see the continuity that you point out in this

wartime situation where, of course, everybody is looking somewhere else. As we've seen in Covid, in the beginning, everybody was looking somewhere else. And then you have this wonderful panel design where you repeat the study after a few years and also have an effect through this advisory process on parliamentary behaviour.

What is very important here, as you point out, is the continuity in the legislative function, a few changes in the control function, but similar to what we've seen in Covid, the communication function or the public engagement function, which has been neglected. And then as a consequence of this evaluation, additional stress has been put on that.

I think that's, again, very, very important to always remember: This communication function is actually the core function to create legitimacy. The core function that we often think of is: keep the legislative function running and keep control running, in that order. But what we should learn from this, from Covid, from your observations: Never neglect this communication and the engagement function, because that's what actually creates trust – trust by the people and legitimacy for the political system.

What I would pose as questions to you and your presentation and paper is: What comes out for the Verkhovna Rada of the interviews that you have mentioned with regard to the influence of parliament in these informal ways, outside parliament in decision making? Can you say anything about that that's not in the paper? Because you say, also for security reasons you limit yourself to the publicly available information. But can you say anything about the influence of parliament on policymaking, on decisions that are taken by the executive also in this wartime situation?

The second question is also for communication. This was not here in the presentation, but in the paper. You focus on parliament as a whole, that is setting up structures, and also on committees, a very interesting enhanced communication by committees, by the parliament, increased use of transparency, of streaming, of debates, etc.. What about the individual MPs, the individual MPs and the structures they use and the

parliamentary party groups, important actors: Can you tell us about how they are acting and what resources they have and use in this situation for that part of parliamentary communication?

What we see in the paper on Ukraine is a focus on the output and the communication in a crisis situation. Cristina Leston-Bandeira turns it around and looks more at the input into parliament, the input from society, public engagement, creating opportunities for gathering, input through new forms of institutions, and then also stressing the role of parliament as a mediator, bringing in voices, bringing them together.

What I think should also be added to this picture is this classic question of communication as a two-way street. So it's not just input, it's also outputs. On the other side, the leadership parliament explaining political decisions is not just a mediator, but also an institution that explains what it's doing and why it's doing it. This is a challenge, I think, to find that right balance. It's a challenge for every politician. We have done observations with MPs and their district work a few years ago. And we found this listening part is actually much more visible in the district work than the explaining part, the leadership part. But for successful communication and for creating legitimacy, obviously you need both. Otherwise the challenge might be that we have a wrong remedy for the situation because a parliament that is only listening and does not create the impression that is also getting things done is probably not going to create legitimacy. So basically, it's an old debate.

Finally to the very interesting perspective on parliaments as artificial intelligence systems: I really enjoyed this paper because it looks from a few levels up on a system from a very general perspective, a systems theory, I would call it. Thinking about it, when I started to read it, I was reminded actually of a book by the American psychologist Steven Pinker, "How the Mind Works" from 1997, where he uses the computer as a metaphor to explain the mind. Now you are using artificial intelligence as a metaphor to explain how parliaments work, and there is really value in thinking of it.

I see also at least two important challenges that refer to the role of parliament, when we look at the suggestions that you develop from your thinking. One is the Wikipedian model as opposed to the classic encyclopaedia. The classic encyclopaedia has a publisher. The classic encyclopaedia has reviewers for the article. The classic encyclopaedia has authority, and not just because everybody thinks it's right what they're doing, but there is a process of checking things and Wikipedia doesn't have that. This is why we still – at least I do – tell our students: You can look at Wikipedia, you can use it as a research tool, but it's not something that you can cite. Even if the information is correct, you have to double check that it's true by checking the original sources that have gone through this process. – This will be a challenge for parliament or maybe it's my misunderstanding of the Wikipedian model, because this is the question there of accountability. How do we keep accountability for decisions? Because that's at the core of legitimacy, to have accountability, because political decisions by parliaments are made under unclear situations where we do not know what's right or wrong. But the secret is there's accountability to those that have been elected to make these decisions. How can this get lost or might this get lost? Or maybe I misunderstood the model.

The second is the idea of having a more fluid committee structure, which has been done or is done in some countries, but many countries, most of the parliaments decide to mirror the executive departments or ministries quite exactly. That of course has its strengths because in this way you will have a very clear, again, division of labour to exercise control by having specialization in parliament too. If you have more fluidity only on the side of parliament and the executive part stays as it is, might this not actually strengthen the executive, because parliament is doing all its fluid stuff and the executive stays in their structures?

So to conclude and to give the floor back to you, I think at the core of democratic resilience for parliaments is that they need to strike the right balance between input gathering and producing and explaining outputs in this communicative process to also make the role of parliaments visible – as has been mentioned, sometimes they are invisible –, make it visible, make it clear, a challenge to all of us, and to communicate

this. So first to understand and then show it to the world, but also criticizing the term of resilience, learning from such crisis situations: They don't have to spring back to the original form. All these situations that we see are actually a great opportunity to learn and adapt to situations, not just go back to what was there before, but learn and make them better for the future, for the next crisis, for the next challenges, but maybe also for the normal situation, and then repeat the whole thing because the next crisis is going to come. – Thank you.

I would suggest that maybe each of you can have a short reaction and then we open it to the audience. Should we go in that order?

Stanislav Ivasyk: Thank you for your reflection and understanding the significance of the topic. I will go straight to your questions to save the time. What you mentioned, the influence of the parliament and its significance on the policymaking: First of all, I want you all to understand that the parliamentary process in Ukraine, even if sometimes it is not visible because of the obvious transparency limitations, is still taking place. In the Ukraine it's traditionally two readings and almost all legislation is considered that way: the initial reading and then amendments from the MPs.

In many, even most of the cases, the laws submitted by the government are significantly altered. Just one example, I believe the most significant, like from the society and recent society debate, is the law on military enlistment and conscription. It's obvious that in times of war, the government needs the manpower to enlist in its armed forces, so it drafted and sponsored to the parliament the law on this issue to strengthen the mechanisms for conscription. But on the other side, this law raises the question on the sustainability of economy, of labour force and on human rights. It was a very harsh, difficult debate in the parliament and the parliament greatly amended the legislation. It tried to balance this issue. There is no good solution to this issue and you can never write an ideal law, but at least they tried to and the parliament played its very significant role.

To the other question on the role of MPs: First of all, thank you for bringing the discussion on that level because we very often forget about MPs and think about the parliament as the whole structure. In this case I believe the most prominent input from the MPs is their ability to demonstrate their personal role to the society and to communicate with the people, especially in the constituencies. For instance, many MPs went to their constituency to work with the IDPs, study their needs. That's not very typical role for a member of parliament, but still they are very close to the people. It's very typical for the MPs that are originally from the occupied territories.

Some MPs even enlisted to the armed forces and took part in hostilities, demonstrating their courage. Elaborating on this issue, I want to refer to our opening discussion. You mentioned there are two types in academia, you can look on to people or you can look on the broader picture of the process. So when the government drafts some policies, it's looked at the very broad picture and the numbers. But when it comes to the legislator, the MPs bring their own understanding and the will of the people of their constituencies. In policymaking there is a similar process as in the example of academia: The government puts a very good, theoretically designed policy, as they say, but it's sometimes a break with the real understanding and real impact from the people. So that's the role and it's especially significant in the wartime.

Sven Siefken: Thank you. I would contradict you when you say it's not a typical role. Being close to the people is exactly part of this. Emma said, it's not role switching, it's entanglement, but it's a really important part.

Stanislav Ivasyk: I mean, that sometimes they even collected some needs for the services, provided legal advice, not just speaking to the people, but even sometimes administrating the needs. That's not very typical

Sven Siefken: Exactly what we saw in Germany, by the way, this is what happens in the UK, also very typical: MPs in their district do a lot of things that you wouldn't expect that they're doing. – Cristina.

Cristina Leston-Bandeira: Thank you very much. I've really enjoyed all three papers, actually. I think it's really interesting how the theme of democratic resilience can be approached in so many different ways but ultimately, as you say, is about thinking: How can these institutions change? We think we know what they are in terms of parliamentary researchers and people who work in parliaments because they've existed for centuries. But on the other hand, we have to accept that they have to change, they have to adapt to society.

Particularly, as you mentioned and I've tried to outline in my presentation, we've had so many crises and the question is: Is representative democracy still delivering? Through my reflection, what I'd like to do is actually not seeing the citizen view as an input or an output, but as a process, so actually integrating it into representative democracy.

Obviously representative democracy is really important. It's very important in terms of legitimacy, in terms of the elections, etc. But it's not enough, clearly we need something more. It's about having the malleability, the flexibility of bringing in those voices. But it's not just bringing the voices, it is about meaningful listening. You mentioned listening, and I would add the meaningful listening in there.

I've done many interviews with people who have, say, submitted petitions or submitted comments to bills or been involved in committees or whatever may be. Their sense of satisfaction is usually linked to the fact of: Do they feel they have been listened to? People understand there's disagreements. People understand that, you know, someone might not agree with you or there's a majority in a different way, but often what they really want is to be listened to, which is very subjective. But there are mechanisms like – I refer to something that sounds quite technical – closing the feedback loop, which is, giving a sense that you have been listened to is really important. That sort of thing I think parliaments are becoming more aware of doing but it is difficult to do. But we definitely have to address it because otherwise the public, the citizens just have their conversations in parallel systems, which is, you know, the bubbles in social media and not actually the real politics.

The other thing I just wanted to add is that this is not to, say, just opening the doors for participation. It's not that at all. It's more about thinking in a clever way: What are the mechanisms that enable politicians to consider those views in a way that is effective, that is inclusive within the process they have, whether it's in committee, whether it's in the plenary? But also it is about having the mechanisms that people can understand what the role of parliament is. So even things like information, the website are really important because if people don't know what parliament is, how are they going to have an appreciation of other things going on in there? So you can never have participation without information and understanding. The two of them are interconnected. And I think, sometimes the understanding is still not there. But I'll leave it at that.

Sven Siefken: Thank you. Yes, let's start really thinking about new terms except input and output. I remember when I was studying, one of my colleagues would always say: Well, there's input, there's output and there's putput. – We need to find a better word than putput for this process. That's very important, I think.

Giovanni Rizzoni: Just a word about democratic resilience. I would use a phrase of a great Austrian musician, Anton Webern, who said that living means to preserve a form. But the form is embodied in very different ways. So the preserving of the forms is compatible with a continuous innovation. Parliaments are like the boat of the Argonauts: At the end of the trip, every single piece of the boat was changed, but the boat was still the same. This is a metaphor for the parliaments. We need continuity because the preservation of democracy is connected with continuity but on the other hand, we need innovation, innovation of every single piece of the boat, of the parliamentary boat.

Just two words about your remarks, first about the Wikipedian model: Yes, Wikipedia is not reliable, but you know that a very important science journal made an experiment with the comparison between the articles Wikipedia and the articles of the Britannica. The comparison was made by experts that didn't know which articles came from which source, and the experts concluded that the reliability of the articles

was comparable. So the final outcome is really, Wikipedia is surprising most of the times.

Wikipedia is a participative model that can be very useful for gathering information but, of course, I don't want to replace the principle of accountability. Because at the end of the day, a decision is made by parliament and in parliament it's very clear, much more than in other institutions: the majority, the opposition who voted against. If you want to really understand what politics is and how politics work, you have to go to the parliaments. Because otherwise politics is in the air, in the communication, is a virtual thing but only in parliaments we measure the forces, we balance the forces, we get back to reality.

A final point about the committees: Yes, the committees have to stick to the government, they have to follow the government and so the departments are very important for the committees, but they have to also invent the cross-cutting committees, like the committees for the future that are now very popular and some other committees that are able to follow the transnational policies and cross-cutting policies.

Sven Siefken: Thank you very much. Now it's time to open it up for the audience.

Anna Rathmair: Thank you very much. Are there any questions, comments?

Question from the audience: Thank you very much to all panellists for the very interesting inputs. I was struck by the remarks of Giovanni Rizzoni about continuity. I wanted to know your thoughts and your answer to my question: Do you think that in times of crisis, when parliaments faced crises, people didn't get the idea of continuity of parliaments?

Sven Siefken: Should we collect a few questions, because we don't have so much time? Then we can do another final round here. Anymore comments or questions?

Question from the audience: Thank you so much for a wonderful discussion. I actually have two questions. The first one is about actually engaging people who are sceptical.

You know, we talk about communication and I think during Covid, we explained a lot and we actually built distrust – I mean, I come from America, so from an American perspective. What are your solutions or suggestions?

And then on the other hand, when we go to stakeholders and constituents, there are certain groups who are by definition marginalized and may not have knowledge, resources. How do we reach them? Do you think it is the function of the parliament and MPs to actually go and listen to those groups and constituents or not? I think ideological we'll say yes, but practically, you know, what would motivate them to do so? – Thank you.

Anna Rathmair: Thank you. We have one more question in the fourth row, in the middle.

Question from the audience: Also a heartfelt thanks from my side. My question addresses the topic of short-termism and future generations. How can we really make sure that within the parliamentary processes, future generations' concerns are really considered? Is it advisable or even necessary to include these concerns in an institutional way within parliament? If yes, how do we do it? And what's your opinion on future commissions or future commissioners, as in Finland, Israel, Hungary, etc.? – Thank you.

Anna Rathmair: Thank you. I would give the word to the panellists maybe at this point. So who would like to start?

Stanislav Ivasyk: I probably will not have time to elaborate on all the questions, but I will try to answer the first one because it's very important in Ukraine, according to many issues. First of all, the continuity of parliament in time of war, especially the Ukrainian parliament: Its elected term has ended almost one year ago because we had to have elections the previous year in October and we didn't. The first reason is according to the constitution. The constitution clearly prescribes, if there is a martial law, no parliamentary elections can take place and the parliament keeps sitting before

another parliament is elected after the cancellation of martial law. And that's the clear legal statement.

The second rationale why we do believe that this statement and this constitutional provision is really legitimate and keeps the country going in time of war: Because first of all, the parliament has exclusive power to issue legislation. In the Ukrainian constitution there is no possibility, even for a day, to give it to the government to adopt a bill. There are different approaches worldwide, but the Ukrainian constitution is really strict on that. Also the society believes that the parliament still has its legitimacy. The people do not have a high level of trust in the parliament – it's a tradition, unfortunately, in the Ukraine –, but they still believe that the parliament can perform.

I was once asked: Why don't you want to have an election? Don't you think it would be a benefit for the Ukraine to have an election right now? We have to answer this question: If we have election right now, many territories are occupied, many people are abroad and they cannot vote because they are abroad and we cannot facilitate the voting of 6 million people in the districts if they are abroad. So what is the quality of the parliament we will have? Definitely the best one is the one we have right now. The continuity of this parliament is a key role for resilience in times of crisis. Because if you let it go and step into the terra incognita of these unprepared elections, the constitutional system can break. It's the worst scenario.

The second question about the engagement: I believe it's the role of the parliament because the government is very limited in reaching all the people. And as I mentioned, the MPs are the representatives of the will of the people. If I have an opportunity, I want to refer to the point you mentioned about social media: For the parliament, it's one possibility how you can engage people. And the Ukrainian parliament understood it. When the war erupted, having the limitation on traditional media, the parliament of the Ukraine heavily dived into social media. It bore a lot of fruit because at the end of 2022, for example, the number of subscribers to the parliament's telegram channel rose by enormous 3,000 %. But now we see that the number of the parliament's

subscribers is decreasing or has a much more modest increase. You have to be constantly innovative.

That's one lesson – I was short on time, I need to two minutes to present that –, the lesson number five: You have to be very creative in your communication. Social media is one of the ways to display such creativity. But you know better than me that there are also threats and challenges in this sphere. – Thank you.

Anna Rathmair: I'm really sorry. We are, as of this minute, a bit out of time, so I will ask you to maybe give a short answer. Thank you very much.

Cristina Leston-Bandeira: Very quick, and we can always talk after. Engaging sceptical people is a huge challenge, but not addressing it just makes it worse. Those people are just going to get, you know, more sceptical, more and more. And you see the implications of that in the US, I think.

I think it is about two approaches: It's about information and understanding, developing that, having mechanisms where people understand the role of parliament, but it's also about opening up spaces for discussion. There's interesting things in Brazil, programs are developing, in terms of stimulating democratic conversations. The parliament is working with schools and its work in there is not telling them about first reading, second reading, the processes, but it's more about understanding that democracy is about discussion, different views and all that. So I think those are the approaches.

Marginalized communities: I'm so glad you asked me that and I'll talk to you after. My last project was exactly about that, I had focus groups with people from deprived areas and black and ethnic minorities. The way for parliaments to address that is to just reach out. And I absolutely believe that parliaments need to do that. If parliaments wait for those groups to come to them, they will not come. There's so many reasons for that, you know, it's not their priorities, etc.. But I can talk much more about that because I've got some really interesting findings on that.

Short-termism, future generations: Again, I can talk to you about that later. I think commissions for the future work really well. Future commissioners, like in Wales and all that, are all great, great innovations. The issue there I think is the political buy-in. So quite often you see these institutions, structures working in parallel with the politics, and if they're not connected to the actual who is in power, then they don't actually achieve a lot.

Now, obviously there is a specific role for them. They can't intervene on all policy going on. But I think that political buy-in and the integration is absolutely crucial for those institutions, you know, to work. But we can talk later.

Giovanni Rizzoni: Just a word about continuity: Yes, I think that parliaments can play a crucial role in ensuring continuity, especially in times of crisis. The very meaning of the word crisis means breaking, something that breaks the continuity. And we do need a connective institution. This was very clear in Italy during the Covid crisis. You know that we faced a very bad crisis with very strict measures on also the freedom of people, of movement and so on. And it was crucial to keep the parliament open. It was one of the few parliaments that kept meeting physically in the parliament. They took a risk but it was necessary in order to preserve the legitimacy of the institution and of the democratic continuity in in Italy. So this, in my opinion, is a very clear example.

As our Ukrainian colleague explained, also in case of war: In the Italian constitution the case of war is the only situation in which the mandate of the parliament – five years normally – can be extended. This is meaningful because you can't afford to have new elections, but you can extend the mandate of the parliament.

Anna Rathmair: Thank you very much. At this point, I would close this discussion, this panel. I want to thank all of you for your very insightful presentations. Thank you very much. Thank you, Sven Siefken, for putting it all together very beautifully. Thank you all for being here. I'm sorry we are out of time. I hope there are opportunities to talk face-to-face during the lunch break or even after. Thank you and enjoy your break.

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Panel II: What do plenary debates tell us about power relations and democratic culture?

Discussant: Katrin Praprotnik (University of Graz)

Presentations:

What parliamentary rhetoric tells us about changing democratic culture

Karin Bischof (University for Continuing Education Krems) / Marion Löffler (University of Vienna)

Words of power. A quantitative analysis of speeches of the Austrian National Council and their linguistic change on a temporal, geographical and political level

Albert Erik Gruber (University of Vienna)

Decoding discourse: Gender dynamics in German Bundestag debates (1949-2021)

Teresa Hailer (Heidelberg University)

Speech and spatial dynamics in the Austrian Parliament: The influence of seating row on speaking time and sentiment of members of the National Council

Nada Ragheb / Maria Schreiner / Julia Leitner (University of Innsbruck)

Julia Heiss (Parliamentary Administration): Ladies and gentlemen, welcome. Good morning. On behalf of the organizing team, I would like to welcome you to panel two: What do plenary debates tell us about power relations and democratic culture?

My name is Julia Heiss and I work for the Legal, Legislative and Research Services of the Austrian Parliamentary Administration, and I will be the chair of this panel. Today we will hear four thought provoking presentations by Karin Bischof, Albert Erik Gruber, Teresa Hailer and Nada Ragheb, Maria Schreiner and Julia Leitner. All

panelists will present for ten minutes each, after which the discussant Katrin Praprotnik will share her thoughts on the presentations with us.

The panelists will then have the opportunity to respond to these thoughts in a short discussion here on the podium. Afterwards you, the audience, will also have the opportunity to ask questions or make comments. I would ask you to note down your questions so you can ask them after discussion. I'm looking forward to an exciting panel.

I would now like to invite Karin Bischof to the podium to talk about her presentation that she prepared together with her colleague Marion Löffler. Karin Bischof is professor and head of the Department for European Policy and the Study of Democracy at the University for Continuing Education Krems. Her research interests relate to processes of change in democracy in Europe in a global context from an intersectional and feminist perspective. We are very excited for your presentation.

Karin Bischof: Thank you very much for your warm welcome and thank you for having me here today in this very interesting and exciting panel on plenary debates, democratic culture and power relations. I will elaborate in my presentation particularly on the nexus between democratic culture and plenary debates from a theoretical as well as from an empirical point of view, which ist based on a FWF-project I conducted together with my colleague Marion Löffler, who unfortunately cannot be here today. I only have ten minutes, so I will pinpoint just the most essential parts of our framework and some selected findings.

I will start right now with an observation, namely that in international media reception attacks on parliaments, such as the storming of the Capitol, which you can see on the left side, and on the Reichstag, which you can see on the right side, are very often described or have been described as attacks on democracy, as attacks on the heart of democracy or a destruction of democracy. You would find myriads of quotes like these in media coverage. And at the same time, parliaments also view themselves as the hearts of democracy, as we can see here in this picture. These observations also

resonate with our basic thesis that parliaments represent a symbolic center of representative democracies. This is based on theoretical considerations of political theorists and political scientists like Carrie Pollan and or social theorists Kari Palonen, Habermas and Werner Patzelt.

If we take this this serious, if parliament represents a symbolic centre of democracy, then what happens in parliament, be it rhetoric, rituals, performance, as we've heard before, is a very important object for democracy research and kind of a privileged analytical unit. So we in our project focused on parliamentary rhetoric and we tried to consider the broader context, historical context, the conflict-constellation-context, which Emma Crewe also addressed and the aspect of multiple addressing. As Max Weber put it: MPs always talk out of the window to the electorate – durchs Fenster hinaus.

According to this theoretical view, democratic political culture manifests, for example, in boundaries of the sayable as regards anti-semitism, in shifts in understandings of what is considered democratic and who is a legitimate part of the demos and who is not – firstly. Second, what follows from this is that researching parliamentary rhetoric over time, like we did it, from 1945 to 2020, also allows for analyzing shifts in democratic culture. So in our case study we tried to reconstruct those shifts in democratic culture, which, as I said, manifest in shifting boundaries of the sayable, shifting understandings of democracy. We tried to do so via/by reconstructing rhetorical strategies of dealings with anti-semitism.

I will be very brief on methodology, I just want to state that we developed an interdisciplinary approach, considering the wider, broader context, combining linguistics, political science, history and philosophy. The corpus was around 1400 plenary debates. So what did we find out? Basically, we identified four different strategies of dealing with anti-semitism. One is coding of anti-semitism, mainly by the anti-semitic code of the emigrant, which is Jewish expellees basically. This anti-semitic code worked as a defining other also for the formation of the Austrian model of social partnership and the Austrian model of consensual democracy. It proves to be a

sentiment or a clue for the former hostile camps to work together in this social partnership.

Second, we found a strategy of denial and trivialisation, which is marked by consensual silence. And we assert, and this comes only in the 80s, after the Waldheim-scandal, we've found strategies for reevaluating anti-semitism, a kind of sensitization toward anti-semitic utterances and and mindset. And with this also kind of instrumental philo-semitism. And forth, we found strategies of accusations of anti-semitism and as a reaction, aggressive defense against these accusations, very often marked by both Nazi or fascism cultural reproach.

So what do these strategies tell about democratic culture then? First of all, and this doesn't come as a surprise, boundaries of the sayable become increasingly narrow over time. This is not new, but we kind of carved out how this worked, how this process took place and how this anti-semitic coding contributed to the development of the specific Austrian model of consociation of democracy. So this is also something that is important for democratic culture.

Second: Until the Waldheim-scandal anti-semitism and distancing from anti-semitism was a matter of consensual silence. And only from the Waldheim-scandal on it was a matter of competitive democratic self-presentation. So this is also something that changes democratic political culture. In more or less the same period of time, we can observe that in part there is a shift from a formal understanding of democracy focused exclusively on institutions to a more quality oriented understanding of democracy, which also has to do with a change or mirrors a change in democratic culture. Last but not least, in the strategy of accusations of anti-semitism or the aggressive response to it manifests an ideological polarization which also has a lot to do with change, a shift in democratic culture. So these are some of the selected basic findings.

Maybe one comment to why we chose anti-semitism as our case study. You might ask: Why anti-semitism and why not, let's say, racism or sexism? This has two reasons.

First, it is well known in research that the development of Austrian parliamentarism was very strongly connected to anti-semitism. So in the pre-war period and in the inter-war period and also in the Habsburg Parliament, anti-semitism operated as a kind of universal strategy to delegitimize any political opponent and it did across all parties. It was interesting to see what happened after 1945 with this rhetorical political strategy anti-semitism.

Second: It is also obvious that political actors themselves increasingly identify anti-semitism, as also the President of the National Council did in the morning, with an anti-democratic mindset and behaviour. What has democratic culture to do with power relations? Maybe this is probably more important for the discussion afterwards. But in our results, in our research, we can detect three connections so to say.

Party political power relations are a crucial context of this competitive self-presentation in parliamentary rhetoric via distancing from anti-semitism and self-presentation. A second aspect is that an equality oriented understanding of democracy introduces societal power relations as a topic in rhetoric. And a third dimension is that parliamentary rhetoric mirrors societal power relations in general, in the sense of hierarchies, of belonging. So this are our results in a nutshell. If maybe a few aspects are not clear, we can get back to this in our discussion. For the time being I thank you for your attention.

Julia Heiss: Thank you very much for this very insightful presentation.

Next, I would like to invite Albert Erik Gruber to the podium. Albert studied German studies at the University of Vienna. His research focuses on corpus linguistics and the analysis of large amounts of text. We are very much looking forward to his presentation.

Albert Erik Gruber: Thank you. My name is Albert and I'm here today to talk about linguistic change. First, I will give a bit of context, what linguistic change in general is, and then I'll focus on my research about linguistic change in the speeches of the

National Council. Like I said, let's start with linguistic change in general. We experience this all the time, actively as well as passively. What does that mean? Actively means we choose to, for example, use words we've never used before, or we use them more often. This serves mainly three purposes: to impress others, to blend in with certain groups of our peers, or to sharpen the way we express ourselves. I'm not the best example here. Passively means we are influenced by all sorts of media, books, games, mass media or the people we interact with or listen to, politicians, co-workers and friends.

On a larger scale, a linguistic change often leads to controversy, especially if there is a dominant foreign language involved like English today or Latin and Greek in the past, and especially French in the 1800s and 1900s. Of course, this is not always the case. In Austria we had during the monarchy very massive influences from Eastern European languages, which did not lead to a big outcry about the changes involved. The changes can also be really subtle, for example, if you talk about neologisms like Bundespräsidentenstichwahlwiederholungsverschiebung or the recontextualization of words like Neuland. In those cases that also led to public discussions but the discussions came not from the linguistic change itself but from the underlying topics involved.

Linguistic change can come not only in the form of lexical change, but in all forms of change. Just like we change our pronunciation if exposed to other people who pronounce a word differently, or the shift in case usage. For example, the genitive is in massive decline. Another example would be the plural of words like pizza: the main plural in German at first was the same as in Italian – Pizza –, but over time Pizzas and Pizzen became the dominant plural.

Let's talk about my research and let's start with linguistic research in the Austrian Parliament and the National Council in general. The main focus is always on political affinities, rhetorical patterns and obvious phenomena in general. We tend to see a phenomenon and we research it. In theory there's nothing wrong with that but it's becoming a problem because when there are many patterns we don't see them at first

glance or we don't have the resources needed to be invested to look for all the patterns.

The second problem with this is that there has never been a complete database or corpus of all speeches of the National Council to look into. So we tend to research certain parts, may it be a political faction, may it be an agenda related topic etc. There was never a project that looked into all – the words spoken as a whole. My goal is, of course, to research a linguistic change on the one hand, but also to have – if I come across patterns that I can't deal with in my doctoral thesis – a tool to highlight patterns that might have been hidden to the view of researchers so others can maybe look into that.

My personal research will focus on four linguistic features: the use of dialect, of neologisms, of Austrian standard German – a.k.a. österreichisches Deutsch – and of everyday language.

For this I will build two databases, one for politicians – I'll talk a little later about that – and one for the speeches, the texts of the National Council. In the speeches database each word will be categorized based those four linguistic features. To categorize those, I will use linguistic history as well as prior linguistic research. I'll use databases, corpora and dictionaries, for example, to compare and to make an informed decision which will be categorized in which way. This will be a mostly automated process.

This branch of linguistics is called corpus linguistics. In corpus linguistics we focus on large quantities of text to look for patterns we've never seen before or patterns which are hidden, to draw conclusions about the corpus we investigate. It's a bit like having a large Excel-sheet with many numbers: You look for certain digits, in the worst case you can say that the digit occurred 200 times and in the best case you find maybe evidence for tax fraud. Because if you look into the numbers of a certain order, the digits tend to have a very specific proportion in which they occur.

Once the databases are finished there will be all sorts of questions, I and also others will be talking about in a moment. We can ask, for example: Does the use of

neologisms vary between parties? Is it more likely for a green female from Graz or a red male from Salzburg to use dialect? How does this differ between preplanned speeches, scripted speeches and the impromptu use of language?

In the database of politicians I will enter personal information about the politicians, about the members of the National Council from 1945 until today especially, but not limited to the party affiliations, sex/gender and the places of birth and living and as well their age. Combined with the four linguistic features I will research there are more than 40 combinations of personal and linguistic parameters to look into and draw conclusions.

Since it's very early in the project, I haven't even filtered databases yet. I have not too much to go into detail about findings but I'm really excited about this. My second goal also is to provide the databases. All my tools are public so other researchers can also use them because in our field it's really kind of a problem because we have neither the time nor the resources or the tools to look into corpora. I hope I will make a small change in regards to this. Thank you.

Julia Heiss: Thank you very much for your presentation. We look forward to what you will find out.

Next, I would like to invite Teresa Hailer to the stage. Teresa is a Ph.D. student at the chair of International and Development Politics at the University of Heidelberg. Her research interests lie mainly in political economy, especially in feminist economics, and the role of women.

Teresa Hailer: Thank you very much. Welcome to another presentation on plenary debates and power relations. The aspect that I look at here are general dynamics in German Bundestag debates, because it is one aspect to how power relates to discussion in parliaments. I look at the treatment that women face in parliaments through the instrument of heckles.

So why did I actually do this? As a motivation, I looked at complaints that female politicians made about sexist comments in parliament. On the upper left you see a citation of the former German chancellor Konrad Adenauer, who was wondering: Why do we actually need women in our cabinet? That pictures pretty well the image that women used to have in the beginning of the parliament. They complained about sexist behaviour such as sexual harassment. The conservative politician Richard Stücklen has been accused that he was checking whether his female colleague is wearing a bra in parliament – clearly sexism.

But apart from sexual harassment, female politicians also complained that they get interrupted relatively more often than their male colleagues. We have here a complaint of the former Social Democrat Renate Schmidt who said that she got interrupted 52 times in a 15-minute speech. But even today, female politicians such as Claudia Roth or Anne Spiegel also complain about heckling in parliament.

Even though interruptions are a common instrument in parliamentary discourse and they determine the debate, male politicians have been accused that they interrupt relatively more females than males on the floor. And as I said, interruptions are important, they determine the debate because I guess you all know that plenary debates are not just one speech after the other, but they are characterized by discussion. So interruptions are an important instrument here.

Before we dive into my research, I'll give you a brief literature review on that. There has already been research on the role of gender in politics, looking, for example, at the representation of females saying that they are less represented in parliaments, or focusing on different topics such as health or education, for example. Then other scholars focused on what happens when women actually make it into politics, what happens in political debates: women tend to talk about more feminine and less masculine topics, and they are less represented in debates. Another aspect of literature looks at interruptions in parliamentary debates, because as I said, they are quite an important tool. Other scholars looked at that from a party basis, saying, for

example: What happened when the right wing AfD entered the German Bundestag or entered the German federal parliament? What changed after that?

We're narrowing that down to do an analysis of interruptions through a gender lens. So there has been research with the focus on the interrupter saying that male politicians tend to interrupt relatively more often than female politicians. They are looking at the content of heckles, saying that the quality differs and that women face more sexist comments. And lastly, there has been one paper looking at interruptions on a gender basis during one sitting of the German parliament. But that was, as I said, only for one sitting. Then there has been a recent paper published this year by Ash et al. and they look at German federal parliaments and heckling there through a gender basis. There also has been another paper on U.S. congressional hearings, but that has a slightly different setting.

What hasn't been done so far is a larger quantitative analysis of heckling through a gender lens in the German parliament. And that is what I would like to guide you through now. So when we talk about the German parliament, we're talking about a period of 72 years here. So from the formation in 1949 till the last completed period in 2021, and as you may probably guess, a lot of things have changed in-between. So what you see here is parliament when it still used to be in Bonn. We're not in Bonn anymore, parliament moved to Berlin due to the reunification, and that was quite an important step.

What you see here on the right hand side is the first cabinet under Chancellor Adenauer. As you can see, there is no female minister. It took a while until there was one. What also has changed is the amount of MPs over time. We started with more than 400, now there's more than 700 members of parliament and also the share of women increase over time. They started with less than 40 women in the first period, and now there's about one third.

When we're talking about what has changed in parliament over time, some things also stayed the same. What stayed the same are parliamentary debates and that is at the

core of my research. There are different types of parliamentary debates, such as examination of the government or so-called current hours, where they discuss current topics. They all follow a similar structure, which is quite strict, saying that the Elders' Council announces the speaking time or the numbers of speakers per fraction, and that is announced beforehand. Then it is up to the fraction to decide on the speaker so they can decide who of the fraction should say something on that topic. They also need to announce it beforehand so that is not a spontaneous reaction.

The only spontaneous instrument that there is are interruptions and that makes interruptions so important. By definition, interruptions are disorderly parliamentary behaviour, saying in other words, someone speaks without the permission to speak. They happen quite often, every one to 1.5 minutes and there's different motivations for interruptions, mainly because there's different types: some are supportive, others are disruptive. For supportive interruptions we can clearly say: Okay, I'm giving applause to the colleague from my own faction because I want to support them! Disruptive interruptions can weaken the self representation of the speaker, or also, as we discuss in the panel here, can be their demonstration of power.

Interruptions play a key role in here and that leads me to my empirical analysis where I look at the question: Does gender have an effect on response in parliamentary debates? I look at both the effect of supportive interruptions and negative interruptions, disruptive interruptions. Important to note is that the motivation can come from a normative point of view, saying that it's mainly just unfair to interrupt women relatively more often. But from a political economy point of view, we think that: Okay, if women get interrupted more often, then they are held back from stating their position, so they cannot make their point in parliamentary debates. And if they talk about different topics, they are prevented from promoting women's issues in parliament. So that is the idea here.

The key element of my research is data. I didn't watch every plenary debate over the last 72 years, but I took protocolls from the German Bundestag. They are publicly accessible and they are prepared by some political scientists around Blätte et al., who

put them in a digital format. They document all speeches but also all interruptions. You see that here on the right side. This is an excerpt of a speech by the left wing politician Jan Korte. You see the speech, but also the interruptions. He got applause and also a heckle down there. In total, that leaves me with more than 4000 sittings over 19 legislative periods and a total of more than 200 000 speeches, which is quite a lot of data.

So coming to my empirical analysis for the effect on applause, on positive reactions, we can see here that the female gender has a positive effect on applause, saying that women actually received more applause in the first period but this effect diminishes over time. When we talk about negative interruptions or heckles, the female gender has a negative effect on heckles in non-economic terms, that means that women actually receive less heckles and men. Both these results are in contrast to my initial hypothesis and to the anecdotal evidence that I presented in the beginning.

Then I started wondering: Okay, how can that be? And that brings me now to the last point, the constellation of interruptions. I do not only look at the gender of the speaker now, but also the gender of the interrupter. Important is that this only from the 19th period because it takes a while to extract all that from the data.

What we see here is that both male and female speakers get interrupted relatively more by men, which makes sense because two thirds are men. But still, the difference is significant: women get interrupted more by men, taking into account the larger representation of men. And now I wonder: Can we answer this cliché-question? Does the old right wing guy from the AfD interrupt the young leftist woman from the Green Party more? This is what I would like to answer.

Now I look at interruptions along gender, but also along the fractions. We see here that women from the Green and the Left Party get interrupted most by conservative men, while conservative and social democratic women get interrupted most by right wing men. So that is female speaker, male interrupter here. Now, keep that in mind, we look at female speaker, female interrupter and we cannot see the same pattern

because green and left women do not get interrupted most by conservative women. Conservative and social democratic women get interrupted most by green women, not by right wing women.

That leaves a lot of room for discussion and I'm happy to receive comments on that because that is where I would like to go, but I haven't figured out how yet. So please tell me. Thank you for your attention.

Julia Heiss: Thank you very much, Teresa, for this very eye opening presentation.

As the last speakers, I would like to invite three colleagues from the University of Innsbruck to the stage. All three of them are master's students at the University of Innsbruck. Nada Ragheb's main research interest is political communication, Maria Schreiner's research focus lies on foreign policy research, and finally, Julia Leitner's main academic interests are the complexities and potentials of the European Union. We are very much looking forward to your presentation.

Julia Leitner: Thanks for the warm introduction and the opportunity of speaking here today and presenting our work on speech and spatial dynamics in the Austrian Parliament. So what we analysed is the influence of seating row on the speaking time and sentiment of members of the National Council. I'm giving you a short overview: We will first start with some theory, followed by data and methodology, and afterwards we will present our analysis and some of our main results.

We focused our work on the research question: How does an MPs seating row affect their engagement in parliament? By engagement we mean speaking time and sentiment. So in theory, there exist some classical approaches to typify MPs, such as identification through interviews. Strongly related to that, there's Searing's motivational approach, basically focusing on the position of the individual and drawing a difference between backbenchers versus frontbenchers. An alternative approach to that, according to Müller and Jenny, is the categorisation of MPs based on routines and behavioural patterns laying a stronger focus on continuity.

In most of the cases, seating allocation depends on tradition and party strength but as we already heard today, there are some expectations, such as the U.S. Senate, where seats get allocated based on seniority. In general, we can say that front seats offer an improved visibility and direct access to the debate. That's exactly why larger parties occupy several front seats.

Followed by that we assume that seats can influence the behaviour of MPs and that there is a possible effect on voting behaviour and choice of words. According to that, our hypotheses are: The further to the front an MP sits, the longer they tend to speak. The further to the front an MP sits, the more negative their sentiment tends to be.

Nada Ragheb: So to give you a bit of context, we collected data from the 27th legislative period only, and our qualifying date is the 15th of December, which means this is the cut off date of our data collection. It's also important to note that there are speaking time limits for Austrian parliamentarians at the five, ten and 20 minute mark, depending on the type of speech. That has an effect on the distribution of the speaking time.

And also in the period that we analyse, parliament was temporarily holding its sessions at the Hofburg because the plenary hall and parliament were undergoing renovation. This also is something that we take into account in our analysis. During our period of analysis, there was no party leader among the SPÖ occupying a specific seat. We collected three data sets from this parliament's open data platform. There was the registry of MPs, which also included information on the mandate they hold and also their party affiliation. And we added some variables ourselves manually.

Then we also collected the metadata on the plenary sessions – all the information regarding when the plenary sessions took place and so on. And we collected the stenographic protocols correspondingly, also separately, and we restructured the data set for each speech to be our unit of analysis and we combined all three data sets so that we have each speech of a plenary session, the certain speaker and the corresponding text chunk from the stenographic protocol. Depending on the date of

the speech, we assigned the seat to the speaker based on either the seating plan of the Hofburg or the seating plan at parliament.

Maria Schreiner: Looking at the seating row distribution in share of party seats for the plenary hall, we found that over all five parties the seats were very similarly distributed, with the ÖVP as the largest club being an exception since they have the largest share of their seats in the last row.

Distribution looked very different in the Hofburg, where there are strong differences across the parties but also across the seating rows. On the left hand side you can see the distribution of speech durations for the sample we collected, and here it's noticeable that overall the duration is normally distributed. However, the speaking time limits of five, ten and 20 minutes are strong outliers.

And on the right hand side, you can see the distribution of sentiment scores, where it's noticeable that a score of two, which means somewhat negative, is the most common in all the speeches. We conducted our analysis in two parts. In the first part we analyzed the influence of seating row on speaking time for which we conducted a regression analysis. In the second part we measured the influence on sentiment, for which we first conducted a sentiment analysis of all the speeches and then did a regression analysis. In both cases, we controlled for a number of different variables.

Moving on to our results, the first part of our results and analysis shows that there does seem to be a connection/influence between seating rows and the speech duration. It's just very small, but you can see a decreasing average and also a decreasing time span for every row an MP sits furthest to the back. We also looked at party speech durations and we found that they were very differently distributed. However, FPÖ and NEOS overall had the widest distributions and longest speaking times.

What does this mean in numbers? For the seating row we found a significant negative effect of 0.24 on speech duration, which translates to about 15 seconds for every row an MP sits further to the back. We used the ÖVP as the largest club as baseline and

then calculated the divergences of the other parties. We found that being a member of the FPÖ has the largest effect on speaking time, of 0.8, which translates to about 50 seconds more per speech. In contrast to that, being a woman MP had a negative effect on speaking time, about 0.24, which also translates to about 15 seconds less compared to male MPs. Different party and parliament leadership and official functions had varying results.

Nada Ragheb: So the second part of our analysis looked at the sentiment which just means a measure for how negative the speech is. We referred to the German Political Sentiment Dictionary by Haselmayer and Jenny, which consists of 5001 negative words scored between 0 and 4; zero meaning not negative four meaning very negative. And we calculated per speech what the average sentiment score was. Looking at the distribution by seating row: The effect is even smaller than you can see at the speech duration. But if you look really closely, the average does consistently get lower the further behind an MP usually sits. So this suggests that there is some kind of pattern that people in the first row tend to have more negative speeches and people in the last row tend to have less negative speeches.

But the larger effect is actually caused by whether you belong to a government versus an opposition party. We basically grouped the parties based according to which group they belong to and you see here that the average is significantly higher for opposition parties, which means they have more negative sentiment. So if we look at this overall: Our analysis suggest that the effect of the seating row is small but significant. Being part of the opposition has, however, the largest effect, suggesting that being part of the opposition almost inevitably causes more negative sentiment. But also being a female MP largely corresponds with less negative speech sentiment.

Overall our research question was: How does an MPs seating row affect their engagement in parliament based on their speech duration and their sentiment? There's a mistake there, there should also be a tick for hypothesis one. It's only an exploratory analysis so more research is needed. But we would argue that both

hypotheses are plausible and more research is recommended in our view. Thank you very much.

Julia Heiss: Thank you very much for this interesting presentation. Now that we've heard all four presentations, I would like to invite our discussant Katrin Praprotnik to join us on this on this panel to share her thoughts and questions with us. Katrin is a political scientist at the University of Graz and scientific employee at the Institute of Strategic Analysis. Her research focuses on Austrian politics, political representation, voter turnout, as well as the formation and success of new political parties in Europe.

Katrin Praprotnik: Thank you a lot for inviting me and for giving me the opportunity to discuss these four really great presentations. Thanks a lot for your work and for sharing your work today. I'd like to start with how I see this day. I see this day as a really great opportunity for us to come together in the Austrian Parliament and to discuss – coming from different disciplines – what we are working on and improve our own work by discussing it.

So I would like to refer to two points that I also took from this first session that we heard today. These are first and foremost pictures of politicians, pictures of buildings. And so I think we all learned that especially buildings are very, very important because they shape how we as people, how politicians come together and work together. And this affects then our human behaviour.

The second point that I would like to highlight is that there is common ground among politicians or in politics. And if you remember, Professor Crewe reminded us of that, that a lot of laws are actually passed unanimously. So maybe it's also worth to, you know, step back a bit and also see the progress that is made unanimously in politics, despite all the differences that are there and that are legitimate. That is also the strength of our democratic system.

Having said that, I would like to come and reflect on the four presentations that we heard, the first one by Karin Bischof, which was exploring the nexus between parliamentary rhetoric and democracy to ultimately identify change in democratic

culture. I think this is especially interesting since all the parties in 2021 declared to support Jewish life in Austria and to combat anti-semitism, and then to look empirically at the rhetorics that we see in the Austrian parliament.

As we already know, politicians and the buildings where politicians discuss are important. Karin Bischof comes up with four main rhetorical strategies that are anti-semitism as rhetorical cement for coalition consensus, denial and trivialisation of anti-semitism, re-evaluating anti-semitism and instrumental philosemitism and strategies of accusations of anti-semitism.

What came to my mind when I read these strategies, I was wondering whether you also came across strategies that are positive in a sense of a clear stance to combat anti-semitism because the rhetorical strategies you exemplified leave me a bit pessimistic. Maybe you also came across some thoughtful, condemning strategies against anti-semitism that are used. The second point that did come to my mind is the future: What are your expectations based on the research and based the developments that you so clearly show in your data for the next legislative period?

I have to say, I would also like to hear a few more words on the methods that you used, how you then especially came to identify the patterns and the strategies that you have highlighted in your paper. This was something that I wasn't able to follow clearly with the work presented. Sorry, I have to to come back to that last point, because I'm not able to read my own handwriting anymore. Oh, yeah, now I got it. My last point also with respect to the future is on the strategies of how politicians deal with these strategies of anti-semitism. So how would other politicians go on and react to anti-semitic rhetoric in parliament? I think this angle could be very interesting as well and could also show how equipped politicians and so to say we as a society are to react to anti-semitism if we see it, if we hear it. Thanks a lot.

Karin Bischof: Thank you very much for your very interesting questions. I think your first point was about positive aspects regarding dealing with anti-semitism. This is actually an important development in the aftermath of the Waldheim-scandal

debates. There has been a sensitisation, linguistic sensitisation, and there has been also a shift in understandings of democratic culture in the sense that it was more equality oriented oriented. So anti-semitism has been viewed more critically. There was more criticism, criticism of coding, detection of coding and matters of minority discrimination and politics of the past have been taking into account. I think this was a very important development and it in part, I mean, you couldn't say this for everyone, was a very important shift in democratic culture, which allowed for the deciphering and naming of anti-semitic undercurrents.

About the methodological question: It was a relatively large time span. So what we did was to scan a very large number of plenary debates first and then find out about typical patterns for specific periods. We zoomed in on particular debates and we applied an interdisciplinary mix of methods like critical discourse analysis, including a historical approach, multiple addressing – how the electorate was or is addressed in parliament –, interactive competitive patterns in parliamentary rhetoric. We then zoomed into selected debates. This was basically our methodology.

Julia Heiss: Excuse me, can I just interrupt you for a second? Let's try to to make the answers a little bit shorter because we would also like to give the audience the opportunity to ask questions.

Karin Bischof: I can stop here. If you feel like this was not enough, we can discuss it afterwards.

Katrin Praprotnik: Thanks a lot for your answers to these questions.

I'm coming to Albert Grubers presentation. I would like to thank you for two reminders. The first one was the word Bundespräsidentenstichwahlwiederholungsverschiebung, wich I counted is 50 characters long, so the German language really is a nice language, and for the second reminder, language matters and the way how we talk, the kind of words that we use matter and it is possible to change the perception that people have regarding certain words.

Albert Gruber's talk was on the power of words and his work is on political affinities, rhetorical patterns and obvious phenomena in general. He's about to develop two very impressive databases, one on politicians and one on speeches in the National Council. Reading through your presentation and listening to your talk I was wondering whether you will develop certain or specific expectations, especially about socio demographics and what your expectations will be.

I also thought of one maybe additional variable that could make an effect, and that's the difference in experience of being parliamentarian; so not so much the age in general, but the time spent as a politician also in connection to other variables that you're discussing. The region someone is from may affect how someone talks in parliament. This will also be affected by the time – how long this person was in parliament, maybe was away from home, so to say, coming to Vienna and to to the parliament.

What I was wondering about: Is there a normative expectation regarding how politicians should talk? Should they engage in a rather formal language because it's the parliament or should they use the classical day to day language because that's a better way to represent people and to make people understand dumb politics – especially coming from the literature on representation. Of course, the second aspect I think is very important as well, that even in parliament or especially in parliament, when people listen to discussions in parliament, that they not only feel represented by the topics that are addressed here, but also by the way politicians talk and that they could really follow what they are talking about.

Maybe this might lead to further research, more work to come: It is whether you could engage in comparing the way people talk in parliament to the public discourse, mainly driven by the media. So maybe you can see similarities or differences between these two discourses. Thank you.

Albert Erik Gruber: Thank you. Regarding the first point, the expectations: I always try to not have expectations, but of course it's unavoidable. I would say the main

expectation I have is that scripted language is very different from how MPs talk – if they make comments or a discussion that is not scripted. Other than that, I don't really have expectations, firstly, because I haven't had too much time with the material until now, and secondly, because I really try to avoid it because I think to have expectations can be a hindrance.

The second question was about the experience: It's a very good point. I talked about it in my presentation, I always try to add new things. Also, it's getting out of hand a little bit. Speaking of the experience: It's a real good point to add. Thank you.

Julia Heiss: Sorry, I have to interrupt again, but we really need to look at the time. We also have the opportunity to engage even more in the lunch break and in the coffee break. So Katrin, if you could just summarize your points; we will then give the audience the opportunity to ask a few questions.

Katrin Praprotnik: Thank you very much for your response.

I jump to Teresa's presentation on the German Bundestag. Thank you for the second slide, I think we all need these reminders about how female politicians are perceived or treated sometimes in parliaments. I was wondering whether you plan to specify specific hypotheses. I was also curious if you have an expectation in regards to the decreasing applause in the sixth legislative period – thinking of the slides with the regression results.

I was also thinking about this pattern that you showed that actually less hackles occur over time, which kind of contradicted your expectation. It might have something to do with a larger number, a larger proportion of female politicians in parliament. Because I think this finding would nicely connect to the literature on descriptive representation where we also find that when having more female politicians in parliament discourse changes and in that way politicians change.

I'll go on to the fourth presentation before giving the word back. So thank you Nada Ragheb et al., thank you for your presentation on the seating row effect in

parliaments. I think this again connects nicely to this claim that buildings matter, But not only do the buildings matter, also the seating order within the buildings matters.

I was wondering a bit on the effect size because I think a lot of explanatory variables are also in the control variables as well. But again, this is maybe a good connection to remind us that parties are the strategic actors and when they decide who sits where, they already keep in mind the importance of each politician within the party and then allocate these people adequately to their seats.

I was also thinking about the variable of age and also time spent in parliament – I think this could be very interesting as well –, and also whether you have different expectations of the parties. I saw that they are quite unanimously using this strategy. I was also interested whether you find party differences.

One very final point, and then I'll stop: It's about the topics – whether it's not only the time or the negativity that politicians have depending on their role in parliament, but also the kind of topics that they are allowed to speak on. And maybe this varies parallel to the importance of a certain topic for party. Thank you very much.

Julia Heiss: Thank you very much, Katrin.

Questions from the audience: Do we have questions? – Yes, over there. If you could just mention your name and your organization, please.

Question from the audience: Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik from the University of Vienna. I would like to ask Karin Bischof a question. You said that anti-semitism in the first strategy that you identified was kind of a glue that stuck together members of the consensual politics that emerged in the postwar decades. That's what I understood. Can you just explain how – that's a very interesting thing that I've never at least consciously heard about –, can you elaborate on this a bit? Is this something that's kind of strategically employed to kind of create a commonality among these like very hostile to large camps?

Karin Bischof: Yes, exactly. That's exactly what I wanted to say. Relating to this negative foil of immigrants it allowed breaching this hostile experiences of the pre-war period or the interwar period. You can trace this rhetoric to where the consensual common work, joint work is emphasized. You find a lot of references to immigrants. It was particularly visible with Karl Czernetz, he was a left wing member of the Social Democrats and he was an immigrant, and he kind of was used as an enemy of of this creation of a consensual way of politics and of the social partnership.

Julia Heiss: Thank you very much. Do we have another question?

Question from the audience: My name is Matthias Reiter-Pázmándy. My question is: From this research on plenary debates, on the way parliament works, is there anything you find, where you would say processes within parliament, processes that organise parliamentary debates could be improved in a way that parliament and democracies work better? Or is the way they work rather a reflection of the culture and does it follow the culture in a way, so to speak and is it not so necessary to look into the organizational rules and processes as one might want to think? Thank you.

Teresa Hailer: Well, looking at my research on gender, I would say that it's rather a reflection of culture and a reflection of gender dynamics. I'm not doing policy work, which would be what you suggested, but I would say parliament kind of knows that because there's the president which can give calls to order. But otherwise I would say that behaviour might change over time, sure, but I think, in my personal view, there shouldn't be some like quota or more disciplinary measures to that because it is a reflection of culture – unless it's like really personal or really sexist or racist comments.

Julia Heiss: If there are no more questions I would like to say thank you very much to the panellists. I'm very sorry that we're running out of time. But as I said before, now we will have the lunch break just outside in the Säulenhalle, the colonnaded hall. Thank you very much for your active participation.

I would just like to say one or two more words on the program. The program continues at 1:15 pm. And I would ask those interested in panel three to go back to Lokal 2, which is downstairs. For those interested in Panel four, I would ask you to meet back here in room three after 1:00. All the information can be found in the program and the abstract booklet. Thank you very much. Have a nice lunch break.

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Panel III: New ways of understanding and supporting (pre-)parliamentary decision-making processes?

Discussant: Cristina Leston-Bandeira (University of Leeds)

Presentations:

Predicting tax treaty formation using machine learning: Implications for parliamentary practice

Dmitry Erokhin (International Institute for Applied System Analysis, IIASA)

Narratives of election promises in Austria

Katrin Praprotnik (University of Graz), Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik (University of Vienna)

Cartography of the legislative process in Germany

Sven T. Siefken (Federal University of Applied Administrative Sciences), Philipp Cartier, Frederik Kampe, Jule Helene Leinpinsel (all Gestaltungszentrale Politik e. V.), Kevin Settles (Institute for Parliamentary Research, Berlin)

Anna Rathmair (Parliamentary Administration): Welcome back everyone or welcome for the first time, if you haven't joined Panel I.

I hope you had the opportunity to talk a bit and recharge your batteries during lunch and that you're ready for the next round of interesting presentations, this time on the topic of new ways of understanding and supporting pre-parliamentary decision-making processes.

Once again for those who haven't been in a panel before: My name is Anna Rathmair. I am with the legal, legislative and research services of the Austrian parliamentary administration and I welcome you as chair of this panel today. We will have three interesting presentations: Dmitry Erokhin, Katrin Praprotnik and Sven Siefken. Unfortunately, Jeroen Kerseboom had to cancel due to illness.

As in the previous panels, our panellists will first present for 10 minutes each, after which the discussant, Christina Leston-Bandeira, will share her thoughts on the presentations and the panellists will then have the opportunity to respond to these thoughts. And a short discussion here ends up on stage, and afterwards you in the audience will have the opportunity to ask questions or make comments. Again, I would ask you to note down your questions if you have any, so you can ask them after the discussion.

That leaves me to invite Dmitry Erokhin up on the lectern. He's researcher in the Cooperation and Transformative Governance Research Group of the Advancing Systems Analysis Program at the International Institute for Applied Systems Analysis in Austria. His research interests include economic cooperation, digitalization, international business-taxation, climate-change adaptation and disaster risk-management. The stage is yours.

Dmitry Erokhin: Thank you and thank you very much for inviting me to participate in today's conference. It's a great pleasure and great honour for me and I would like to give a talk on the application of machine learning to support policy decision-making. And in particular, I will do it on the example of tax-treaty formation.

So first I will briefly introduce the topic of double tax-treaties, then explain the data methodology I'm using, present the results and then conclude my talk.

So talking about tax-treaty formation, as we all know, the main goals of signing tax-treaties are the promotion of trade and investment between countries by the elimination of tax barriers. But nowadays, even more important goals are also fighting tax evasion, double non-taxation through the inclusion of anti-avoidance provisions or also exchange-of-information provisions. But at the same time, it's not all about it, because tax-treaty formation is a very complex decision-making process, and also political factors, for example, policy diffusion, when countries follow their neighbours or their competitors, do play an important role.

And machine learning is especially suitable for solving such complex decision-making problems. And it can support negotiators who have limited capacities and also give advice on which treaties to pursue and also give advice on what neighbours or competitors are likely to do politically.

So in the literature, there are various reasons standing behind tax-treaty formation, various economic factors, also governance and policy indicators, international relations, also other factors, for example, whether countries in the country pair do have a common language. And there are also studies which look at which withholding tax-rates are negotiated. Mostly these are symmetries or asymmetries between countries, which stand for the bargaining power.

So in economics, starting recently machine learning has been playing a growing role. So here, just for an illustration, the number of papers on Google Scholar, which have machine learning and economics in them: We see that in 2010 there are about 10,000 papers. But now we have hundreds of thousands of papers.

Machine learning is especially useful for uncovering complex decision-making processes and in particular for policy-makers what is useful is often not to see a regression table: What is the effect of different indicators?, but the out-of-sample-predictability, so whether the findings can be generalized and used for making predictions.

So here we have a binary classification problem. We have country pairs that do have a tax-treaty and country-pairs that do not have a tax treaty. And so what we do is that we train the machine to distinguish between such country pairs based on 29 various features, including distance between the countries, trade between the countries, investment relationships and so on.

We train and test a variety of algorithms and we select the random forest algorithm to be the best-performing algorithm in terms of accuracy. What is actually a random forest? It is a collection of random decision-trees. Here you can see an example of such a decision-tree. When we look at the first variable that separates the tree into two branches, we will see that it is the sum of trade between the countries, which also seems quite intuitive. So if countries trade little, then in 90 percent of the cases they don't have a tax-treaty. If they trade a lot, then we see that the probability of having a tax-treaty increases to 60 percent. Then we can go down the tree. Again, it's only one of the examples. With other factors, we can differentiate between the different kinds of country pairs. When we summarize the decision trees that we have in the random forests, we can also list them in variables by their importance. When we look at the top five variables, again we see that it's quite intuitive. So it's trade and foreign direct investment between the countries that determine tax-treaty formation, it's distance between the countries, how far away they are located, and also these are asymmetries between the countries, so by FDI-difference and trade-difference. For example, it would show whether one country is a large trade partner and the other one is a small trade partner or vice versa.

So talking about the prediction accuracy of the random forest algorithm, we see that actually for the country pairs with tax-treaty, we have a median of over 80 percent, and for the country pairs without a tax-treaty, we have a median close to zero actually, which suggests that it performs quite well in terms when categorizing the countries.

Also, when we look at each predicted probability decile, we see that where the predicted probability is greater than 60 percent, then more than 90 percent of

country pairs do have a tax-treaty. So again, we suggest that the algorithm performs quite well.

And what can it actually be applied for? It can be applied to also make predictions and to see which country pairs are actually supposed to have a tax-treaty but don't have one yet. We selected 0.6 – 60 percent – predicted probability as a threshold. And we have looked at which country pairs should actually have a tax treaty. We found 59 such country pairs.

Then we also checked what happened with these country pairs afterwards, after our observation period, and actually many of them did sign a tax-treaty, many of them were in a negotiation, some had initialled a tax-treaty and so on.

Actually, before coming here I have also checked our data set for Austria. The country pair with the highest predicted probability for Austria was Austria and Bangladesh. There we had a predicted probability of 0.55. And then I I've checked the news and found a news-article from the 1st of May 2024 that actually Austria and Bangladesh started negotiations on a tax-treaty. It suggests, given our findings, that actually there is economic rationale behind that and Austria should proceed with signing a tax-treaty with Bangladesh.

Of course there are more country pairs where Austria is part which have a lower probability but the interesting thing is that we can actually see the probabilities for all countries in the world for Austria with which it should sign a tax-treaty.

Another interesting example here is actually Myanmar. It has one of the largest deposits of rare earth metals, which are very demanded for the green economy. But it has a civil war, a very unstable political situation. So it will be an attractive partner for signing tax-treaties from the economic point of view so we also find a high number for it.

To generalize this finding: So we look at what happened after 2019 when our observation period was over and actually we see that we had a statistically significant

higher median for country pairs that have signed a tax-treaty, were negotiating a tax-treaty or have initialled a tax-treaty than those that did not have any negotiations.

So to summarize, I would like to say that it is an illustration of how machine learning can be applied to support policy decision-making, given limited capacities of decision-makers, of negotiators. It allows to see which tax-treaties to pursue, but also which tax-treaties neighboring or competing countries may pursue and also react accordingly. And of course, it is only one of the many applications of machine learning for decision making, or also in particular for parliamentary research.

To give briefly one more example where I am also doing research on is the analysis of public opinion. So you can extract tweets, messages and so on and analyze what the public is thinking about different topics – what is the sentiment? –, and it can also support the decision-makers.

And with that, I would like to thank you for your attention, and I'm very much looking forward to the discussion afterwards. – Thank you.

Anna Rathmair: Thank you very much.

Our next presenter is Katrin Praprotnik. She's a political scientist at the University of Graz in Austria. Her research focuses on Austrian politics. She is editor of the open-access textbook: The Political System of Austria. Political Representation, Political Parties and Party Competition, Coalition Governance and Multilevel Politics.

Katrin Praprotnik: Thank you very much and thank you for this opportunity to speak to you today. I am now about to present joint work with my colleague Laurence Ennser-Jedenastik on the narratives of election pledges. This work is done within a larger framework, the Comparative Pledges Project, which is an international network of more than 60 researchers in 16 different countries and we all have the same goal: to better understand political parties' pledge-making and pledge-fulfilment capacities.

Before we start we then have to clarify: What is a pledge? A pledge in our scientific work is probably something different than you would say: It's a pledge by a political

party. We use this common definition of a pledge saying that a pledge is a statement committing a party to one specific action or outcome that can be clearly determined to have occurred or not.

What do I mean? A measure such as, for example, lowering the voting-age or an outcome that parties pledge to achieve, something like reduce youth-unemployment. So different types of pledges, but both measures and outcomes are understood as pledges. And we find these pledges only in electoral manifestos.

So for us, we have of course a scientific researcher's focus and give one main channel for our databases and these are the manifestos. All the commitments that we can find in these manifestos are pledges and that's what we are working with.

For this specific paper or research endeavour that we have here the following was our motivation: We perceived some kind of link in the stage of literature that we have here. Basically, it's two blocks: On the one side we have the theoretical contributions, and this is basically looking at democracy or the functioning of democracy from the mandate theory perspective and mandate theory or the different versions of mandate theory defined understand democracy in the following ways: That we have, on the one hand, political parties that make pledges, that we have, on the other hand, voters that decide based on these pledges and that lastly, in the final step, when parties reach governmental power, they aim to fulfil these pledges. And that's, so to say, the main linkage, the basic linkage in the democratic system: that we have political programs that voters base their vote on and that we then have political parties that try to enact these programs.

Of course, that's easier in a majority voting system, when you have one party moving on, having sole government responsibility, compared to proportional systems like in Austria, where at the end of the day you find two, in the future probably three parties sharing government responsibility and having to agree based on their programs on one specific coalition agreement to fulfil.

And on the other hand, we have empirical contributions, the pledge literature, and they would specifically look at these pledges, look at the pledges that then government parties – some also look at opposition parties' pledges –made in the run up to an election and check how many of them are really fulfilled, and also check: What are the factors that explain that a party is better able to fulfil these pledges?, and look at the country differences.

So this is basically what's out there, the theoretical understanding of how democracy representative systems should work on the one side and the empirical contributions that look at pledge fulfilment and help us to understand the mechanisms of pledge fulfilment.

What we do see here – and I apologize that you don't see it clearly here, I don't know, something happened with the presentation – is our research question, which would aim to fill this link between the theoretical and the empirical contributions, and that is: What is the history of pledges in Austria? Because the previous studies look at pledges from the beginning of a legislative period, from the election, until the end of the legislative period but they do not look beyond. They do not look whether some pledges might have been already there in the previous election or in two previous elections coming from different parties or from the same parties.

And we would argue that understanding this history of pledges and looking beyond one single legislative period helps us to understand electoral campaigns, to understand when parties switch potentially in their programs, when they promote new pledges compared to previous elections, helps us to understand coalition negotiations, so evaluating the relevance of pledges, maybe having a clue already what parties will really want to have in the coalition agreement based on their previous record with this pledge, and also coalition governments ultimately: What's the chance of a pledge being fulfilled?

We now have from Austria a rich dataset on pledges, the characteristics of pledges, pledge fulfilment, and this goes from the period 1990 to 2017. And what you see here

on this graph is basically: The election results is the wider period that we would like to include in the current project, moving beyond our basic look at how many pledges are fulfilled. And right on top of the graph, you see the coalition parties that are in power during our research period. So mainly our data focuses up until today on the ÖVP, the SPÖ and the Freedom Party, the FPÖ.

What we want is a better understanding of the quantitative data that we have here, and I think this also fits quite nicely to what we already learned during the day: using not only one method, but trying to look at probably even the same data from different perspectives.

On average, we find 153 different pledges per manifesto. I think this is good news and also, if you compare it to other international studies, it's actually quite a high number. So parties are willing to make specific, concrete pledges in their manifestos. It's not really an indication of increase in the number of pledges during this time looking from 1990. If we go farther back and look in the 1970s, we do find some kind of increase in these more recent manifestos from 1990 and onwards, which I guess is also driven by the fact that the manifestos simply got longer. But I guess, again, this is a good sign for the quality of the democratic process.

We also see, and I think this is quite interesting, that government parties increasingly pledge to maintain the status quo while opposition parties advocate change. So it's not only that government parties campaign on their political balance, what they did in the past, but also do pledge a lot of status-quo-pledges. If we go back into the history of these status-quo-pledges, these were previously reform pledges which then parties managed to fulfil and which then re-entered in the manifestos as a pledge to maintain the status quo. So there is a connection between the elections.

Also quite interesting: All the parties, the respective parties from the left, from the right, have a strong focus on the welfare state. I think this is also some kind of explanation: Usually when I then talk about fulfilment rates, people are always like: Oh, that's quite high! Parties do specifically choose which topics to address in their

manifestos, and especially a focus on welfare state where they would usually talk to expand the welfare state and not so much talk about potentially new taxes or stuff like that that might come in the next period.

And also, and this makes it a bit more difficult to this decision in democratic systems to differentiate and to compare the programmes: We see that a lot of pledges are connected within the party, but not across parties. So parties tend to do different pledges on different political problems and not so much in direct relation to each other, and this is also why we need the media, why the media is so important in the political debate: Because the media then could go: Okay, we know your propositions and this policy area, but what about in this other area? Because we want to compare the programmes.

If you look at the fulfilment rates – do I have still time?, 1minute, okay –, I just show you this figure because I think maybe you have an aha-effect here as well: We have around 55 percent of the pledges that are at least partially fulfilled if this party enters a government. And we also can see the factors that increase pledge fulfilment, such as maintaining the status quo, included in a coalition agreement, sole responsibility for the ministry, also positive economic growth helps and if the legislative term is not prematurely terminated, so it also helps if parties have time – such fulfilment takes time as well.

If we then go on further and group all this data to our stories, then we see, in the first row we can have political parties that propose a pledge not only in one election but in several elections. This is actually what we see a lot. But as I said before, the connection between the pledges, that's not as strong. And we can also see multiple parties that promise the same pledge or even contradictory pledges in some instances.

I know I'm out of time, but just one example. Think about the long-term insurance rule, the "Hacklerregelung", that was part of the 2008 manifestos. Then we had the free play of forces and then parties decided to prolong this long-term insurance rule

until 2013. Then it kind of was not part of the electoral competition anymore. It re-entered in 2017 in some party manifestos. In 2019, again, we had the free play of forces and the ÖVP, the FPÖ and the Social Democrats voted in favour of prolonging this Hacklerregelung. And in 2020, the Hacklerregelung again was abolished. But it is symbolic, as an example, that some part of the pledges really stays around and comes back. Pledges have a history.

So to conclude: I think we can learn a lot from these narratives, from pledges in the electoral campaigns. We see the switches from reform pledges to status-quo pledges. We see in coalition negotiations that it's hard to get something if your future government coalition partner set to pledge the exact different thing. We can also see in coalition governance the capacity to fulfil some pledges reappear in each and every elections, but parties are not able to fulfil it.

And I still say, and this is my final point before I would conclude, that it is important that these kinds of pledges are in the manifestos as well, because as we all know, we have proportional electoral systems, we have coalition governments, but if you look at the manifestos, this is also really the place where a political party can say: And this is the kind of world that I imagined and this would be my program if it was my sole responsibility to enact it.

Thank you very much.

Anna Rathmair: Thank you very much.

Last but not least, I would like to invite Sven Siefken to the lectern. He's professor of political science at the Federal University of Applied Administrative Sciences in Germany and senior fellow at the Institute for Parliamentary Research in Berlin. He's vice chair of the Research Committee of Legislative Specialists in the International Political Science Association and editor of the Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen, the German Journal for Parliamentary Affairs.

Sven T. Siefken: Thank you and hello once again. What I would like to present now is an ongoing research project that we've been working on. It's called Cartography of Legislation. As you see, it is an interdisciplinary – and I must add here: truly interdisciplinary, not just on paper – research project because we're bringing together researchers from political science – that would be a few colleagues and myself – with researchers that have a completely different background in design studies. So this is a collaboration with people who have studied at universities of arts. Frederik Kampe is here as one of them. These two academic disciplines have very different approaches, obviously to the same topic, there is interest in this topic, otherwise we wouldn't be working together on it. Then we also are in close interaction with political practice.

We have run a couple of workshops, which is more than just gathering information, but really interaction here with practitioners in the German Bundestag, in the parliament and parliamentary administration, with MPs, with MP staff, with people from the chancellor's office, with people from the ministry of justice, because they are also interested in what we are doing. So this is something of practical relevance.

I want to talk about what we do, why we do it, and what difference it can make. We will see. We're not quite yet there. We're talking about legislation and everybody knows what legislation is. When I talk to students, I start out by asking them: How many laws do you think the German Bundestag makes in each electoral term? Think about those laws that have been discussed in the past. And then there's a moment of silence and people start guessing and they come up with: Well, maybe it's 60, maybe it's 70 or something like that. Then they get shocked with the fact that the numbers are more like 500 laws that are passed by the Bundestag in each electoral term, which is four years.

So there's continuous activity there. And also in the current coalition, you see that here, the 20th government. Those of you who are familiar with German politics know that currently there's a lot of conflict going on and currently there is the general feeling that there is stalemate and it's difficult to get things done. But when you look at the numbers: At half the term, you are actually almost where you usually are, which

doesn't say there are not some things where laws get stuck in the process, but it's not the fact that it's not working and continuing here.

So what we want to look at is the process. Of course you could say, well, the process has already been nicely illustrated, and it has. These are some nice illustrations that you can find for political education by the Bundestag or in other textbooks. I like to take these – I particularly enjoy to take them to the Bundestag when I sometimes have meetings or presentations there – and say: They're all very nice and beautiful, but they're wrong. And they agree after I have explained why I think they're wrong: because they all start with a legislative initiative into parliament. So there's a draft bill that is submitted to parliament. According to these illustrations, that's where it starts.

But we all know, those of us who have been involved in policymaking or have observed policymaking, that this is somewhere in the middle or towards the end of the policymaking process. When there is a bill, a draft bill, a lot has already happened. And this is the goal of this project that we are working on.

A typical legislative process looks like this: Almost everywhere there is the initiative phase that I was talking about. There is a committee phase. There's a decision phase in parliament. And then there's the promulgation phase, which officially, by signing of the president or the monarch, puts it into power.

But there is this blue box here, the pre-parliamentary phase, something that is happening before. This is what we are looking at. Unfortunately, I see that this presentation also has been garbled a little bit by artificial non-intelligence but I hope I can still present it.

What we are trying to do, first of all, is to go into the details of this whole process. You see it here and you also see it, if you are interested, over there on the left screen. We can zoom in there in the break and look a little bit closer. We're actually working on paper over there. You see one of the papers that we're working on that we're taking to policymakers to discuss with them.

So this is what is going on before a bill is submitted. If we look at it here: the parliamentary phase, that's the grey box, that is what we all know about, which is highly formalized, which is happening in parliament, but the blue box, which is happening before it gets submitted to parliament, that is what interests us. In Germany we have three ways, three initiators: the government, the parliament itself or the Bundesrat, the "Länder"-level in Germany that can submit bills, and they all have different processes of developing these.

So we are looking at this really step by step but our overarching goal is not to get all the details right, our method is to zoom in on this detail level, but then we want to zoom out and get a comprehensive image and try to make sense of this process. In this way we can separate the process into a few major steps.

So there is, if we go backwards, parliamentary phases we have talked about. Then there is the initiative preparation by the government in parliament or in the Bundesrat, from the "Länder"-level, from the state level. But something must happen before, somebody must decide: We're writing now! And that's what we call the agenda-setting phase. You see there is a circle and this is exactly what we're trying to look at by talking to people: Who is actually making these decisions, when and how?

And when we talk to practitioners and ask them these naive questions, they say: Oh, well, that's very complicated. That's very different from each individual bill. And we say: Yeah, of course! Tell us how it is in your opinion. We want to have the complexity in order to then get out some generalizations.

And even before that, this agenda setting – somebody decides, okay, we do this now –: Who is actually creating the entire menu to choose from? This is what we call the impulse phase. And there we go to elections: electoral manifestos, to coalition negotiations. So the basic idea here is, on this very detailed level, to track the process from the idea to find a law in a bird's eye perspective, looking at the entire system, not limiting ourselves to parliament.

What can this be good for? Well, first of all, it can be good for understanding these complexities and it can also be good for tracking different actors' involvement. For example, where is the parliament in this process? I've been saying there is the parliamentary phase back there. Yes, correct. But as I mentioned in my earlier comments, we have to look for parliament outside the parliamentary building. And so when we try to highlight it, yes, the parliamentary initiative, this is also parliament, but we see it also: Parliament is strongly involved in other places of this process, in the coalition negotiations, in the formation of party manifestos, even in interaction during the preparation of governmental initiatives.

We can likewise ask: Where is public engagement happening here?, Where is this opening up to the public?, because we have a process, this process of preparation, especially the executive preparation, which is largely done inside the executive ministries. And so we tend to think: Well, it's opening up in the end when there's a plenary debate, but when there's a plenary debate, basically the positions are already clear. But when we look more carefully, we see there's actually a lot of places early on, at the end of the process, but also when we look more closely in the middle of the process, where public engagement is happening. And the question is now: Who is engaged with? Is it interest groups? Is it broader public? But we see these places and we can track them.

These are just two examples. And what we want to go at in the end, as I said, is also to get the whole thing more simple. This is just a starting point of this what we call ideation, semantic ideation from the designer's perspective. If we want to – and this would be my ultimate goal – be able to have the whole – this is now about three meters long – poster on one postcard like this that we could all stick into our pockets and say in 30 seconds: How does an idea become a law?, then this would be a big progress for our own understanding, but also for political education, explanation of democracy. We're not quite there yet. We're still grappling with the details, but that's the idea of the project.

Thanks a lot for the opportunity.

Anna Rathmair: Thank you very much for that presentation.

I would now like to ask our discussant, Cristina Leston-Bandeira, to join us on the podium and share her comments, questions, thoughts, ideas with us – you can sit wherever you like. The panellists can respond to her comments or questions afterwards.

A few words about her: She's professor of politics at the University of Leeds in the UK. She's also chair of the International Parliament Engagement Network and her research expertise lies on the relationship between citizens and parliament. She has written on the topic in a wide range of case studies, European Parliament, the Parliament of Brazil and the UK, for example.

The stage is yours.

Cristina Leston-Bandeira: Thank you very much, Anna, and thank you very much for the three paper-givers. It was really, really interesting.

I'm hopefully not going to make comments for very long and ask lots of questions because we saw this morning that there's lots of questions in the public. So I think it would be nice to have time for that. But I just wanted to share some reflections about what your three papers made me think about and try to link in to the topic and what we've done this morning also.

So I think it's really interesting how you all three come from very different perspectives, but look at new ways of understanding and supporting parliament decision-making progress, which I think links very well with this morning's discussion about resilience. We've talked a few times about the importance of being innovative and being flexible and bringing new ideas and that's exactly what we've seen here.

One of the things also that I think came very strongly in all three papers and I don't know if it's because I've got my own biases of always looking at relationship with citizens, but actually you all situated parliament within society in general. You all looked at how does it relate to what's happening out there rather than just the

internal parliamentary process. And if we wanted to look at new ways, I think that's definitely something that we need to do.

I've just had an edited book published which Emma has a chapter in it called Reimagining Parliament, and it's something I'm really keen on at the moment: How can we reimagine context, how can we reimagine institutions? And by either combining with design approaches or looking at more over time in terms of pledges or looking at machine learning, how can we look at that?

So I think all of the papers have very specific suggestions for that. So I'll just finish with some reflections on each paper and sort of give you a question each, if that's okay. And then we can open up.

On the first paper, Dmitry, I found really interesting about machine learning: I've actually done some research with people who know about machine learning and I know nothing about it, but it was really interesting because we were able to look at reactions on Twitter to parliamentary debates, and these were parliamentary debates to petitions and it gave us a completely different idea of how people were perceiving that. So I totally understand what you mean by trying to look at complex information and trying to find a pattern in there. That's something that parliaments really struggle to do often because they don't have the resources but it can help with decision making, it can help to understand what's there.

So one of the questions I have to you I suppose is quite fundamental about the danger of missing out to nuance: So what advice would you do? If we talked about bringing practical lessons to parliamentary officials, and it's a really, really useful tool, you demonstrated that really clearly: What about the nuance of arguments, the nuance of ideas and narratives? You know, is there a danger of missing that out? And what would be your response to that ?

And then, Katrin, really, really interesting: I was really surprised with the 55 percent, too, thinking: My goodness, that's really high, actually she should be quite happy with that! But I was also intrigued with your comment about the average being 153 and

you said that's good, and I was thinking: Why do you think that's good? And my question there, and I totally understand why you say that, but I'm just trying to challenge you a little bit on that thinking: This morning we talked about short-termism and populism and it's actually quite easy to come up with a long list of pledges which people like but are very short, not complex. They don't have that complexity we talked about.

So should we actually have more manifestos that have fewer pledges but more difficult to achieve? So how do we solve that paradox? Because your research is more, it's almost the other way round, isn't it? We want lots of pledges and lots of them being fulfilled. What about if it's the other way round?

And, Sven, I really like, as you probably imagine, I love things like that with design and I'm totally in it. And naturally I was looking what you're saying and again, it's about putting parliament in that ecosystem that I was talking about this morning, that parliament is not isolated from society and obviously the parties are very important too, which you don't necessarily talked too much about, you referred to, besides interest groups and all that.

And my question would be: When I looked at it, I thought, yeah, all makes sense to me and I love it. But it's two things: One is: Should you have a post-parliamentary phase? And if you have a post-parliamentary phase, where's the designer? Are you the designer, more or less? So in my mind, actually, rather than a process like that, should it be a circle? Do you know what I mean? So it's sort of keeping informing and coming back to the pledges is the same thing and a policy doesn't exist in a vacuum. It evolves, it develops, people adapt to it, people find problems and then it comes back again. So should it be a circle?

Thank you.

Dmitry Erokhin: Thank you very much for the question. I really like the way how you summarized it. The main idea is how we can help decision makers, given their limited capacities. And talking about the nuance: I think that here we should think about new

issues in several ways. First, we have social changes and also economic, political, historical changes. And when we look at this particular issue of tax-treaty information, let's say 50 years ago, then maybe we would find different drivers behind it. Maybe we will see that actually these were colonial ties between the countries that drove tax-treaty formation. So we need to keep up to date and to see what is changing.

And the other issue is that new technologies are emerging. To give an example from a different area: I'm also doing research on misinformation. So, for example, I have a paper on the Covid-19 conspiracy theories and there it's also not static and it's dynamic both on the side of fighting against, on combating misinformation – new technologies, AI-tools are implemented to do it – but also we see new technologies on the other side. We see new ways of misinformation, proliferation.

So here as researchers and also as practitioners, we need to keep up to date with new developments both on the technological side, but also on the social side of the issue so to see what processes are going on really in the technology, but also in the society.

Katrin Praprotnik: Thank you very much also for your first remarks. I think this will definitely go into the paper, this argument of going beyond parliament to understand policymaking, which is present in all the papers that we have seen here today.

I would like to stress one more time that not every broken or not fulfilled pledge means bad representation, because, of course, all the manifestos that we look at: None of these manifestos has a parliamentary majority behind it because we have the coalition governments. And also: Things change, and this is, of course, some kind of limitation to this approach as well, because we look at the manifestos and this is our starting and finishing point, so to say. This kind of design does not allow for dynamics that potentially a pledge might not be relevant any longer to a political party, maybe because opinions changed within their voter groups as well. So this is of course a possibility and why it also means that not every broken, not fulfilled pledge is bad representation, which is also something that we have to take into account when evaluating this 55 percent of pledge fulfilment.

The second point, fewer but more difficult to achieve pledges might be better: To comments on that, one is rather methodological, so we have to come up with a method, with an approach that is objective in the sense that if I code pledges and I code fulfilment of a pledge and then a colleague of mine does the same thing, in the end of the day we would come to the same evaluation of this process. This, of course, means that we have to be really specific and technical: What is a pledge ? And we also need already the criteria of pledge-fulfilment given from the political party written down in the manifesto, which in the end of the day makes pledges really, really small and not the big stuff like: We want to have a fair society or a better society or better education.

But I would still argue that at the end of the day all our tiny little pieces of the puzzle make up for the big picture that a party or that one can then frame under: This is a better society!, because of these single pieces. Thank you.

Sven T. Siefken: Let me just pick this up because the link between what we're doing and the manifestos are the coalition negotiations that are happening. And actually, this is something where I've done a lot of research on in Germany. We can actually identify the pledges to 453 pledges in the last coalition negotiations in Germany. This is now Germany. The coalition contract has 173 pages. So it's a very detailed coalition contract. Nice for methodological reasons for political scientists. When I talk to practitioners in the in the parties, they say: It's too long! We actually prefer, like in the 1960s, ten pages where we set out the basics and then we can do what we do!

But there are reasons, and I don't want to open this now, for this differentiation in the in the process of coalition formation and negotiations. But I'm with you. I think it's too long. It would be better to have it shorter and less detailed. But this is what we're looking at and of course this is where the parties come in. So like I said: Where is parliament? Where is public engagement? You can in the same way say: Where are the parties?

The big question that you are asking: Should it be a circle?, is something that we have been going in circles about, without coming to a clear conclusion. Of course it's a circle and this connects the whole thing to policy analysis, another disciplinary subfield where we know very well the policy-cycle model.

And I'm also very careful because what we put up here, even though it's opening up beyond what people usually look at: We still put up something that looks like a linear process. We are rationalizing, at least optically, the whole process as if there was a straightforward way from an idea to a law. But at the same time, we know what politics really looks like. There are things happening, there are external events, there are dead ends, there are surprise manoeuvers et cetera And our idea is to be able to use them exactly for this model, exactly for showing surprise manoeuvers, for showing external events and the dynamics.

But yes, for the final image we might well end up with a circular model, we'll have to see. But all ideas are welcome and we're very happy to see it back there from a workshop, also to paint into this picture and draw arrows et cetera because we're still looking for the answer.

Cristina Leston-Bandeira: Do you want me to open the discussion? Are you opening the discussion?

Anna Rathmair: I don't mind. Whatever you would prefer. Would you like to ask the panellists a few more questions or would you rather open it for the audience?

Cristina Leston-Bandeira: I think I'd like to open to the audience.

Can I just make a comment? I don't know if everyone is aware here, but we're going through general elections in the UK and all the parties have been launching their manifestos. Last week – or was it this week? –the Reform Party launched their manifesto. Do you know what the Reform Party is? It used to be the UKIP, the Brexit. It's led by Nigel Farage.

What I found interesting about it was he didn't call it manifesto. The whole publicity about the launch was not about the policies, it was about the fact that he explicitly did not want to call it a manifesto because manifestos are lies to the people and people don't trust politicians any more. So he calls it a policy contract or something.

I found that interesting as approach but I think manifestos are such a crucial tool of our politics, exactly for the reasons you know, pledges, it's why you present yourself for. When you have politicians who want to be elected and they come and change that language and turn it into something else, that's when the rules of the game are changed. And you're thinking: Okay, it's no manifesto. So does that mean I can't go and count your pledges after?

You won't be surprised: We have something amazing which is called the Institute for Fiscal Studies. Their goal is actually to count all the manifesto policies and say if it makes sense or not. And they looked at it and say it made no sense whatsoever what they had promised in it. But I don't think that would surprise anyone here.

I just wanted to tell that story about Nigel Farage and his not-manifesto manifesto.

I think we should open for questions in the public really.

Anna Rathmair: Are there questions in the audience? Please.

Question from the audience: Thank you. Hello, good afternoon, everybody. My name is Lorenz Tripp. I'm a PhD student at the University of Graz. I would like to address my question to Mr. Siefken because I'm also conducting research in a very similar field. As you said, I'm trying to make sense of this pre-parliamentary process of the legislation process, which kind of seems like a black box for us outsiders when we try to make sense of it.

So I was wondering: What kind of methods are you using to make sense of it? I understood you are conducting interviews. Maybe you could elaborate on your methodology. Thank you.

Anna Rathmair: Would you maybe like to answer that directly?

Sven T. Siefken: Okay. Thank you. We can talk about it in detail, but we basically started out by reviewing the legal documents because there are standing orders of parliament, standing orders of the government, standing orders of the parliamentary party groups, so that's the basic part, and then conducting individual interviews, and basically by tracing this process and then doing workshops where we are bringing different people together.

So these are the methods that we're using for the moment, for gathering the data. And for analysing, of course, then we really come into more creative methods that I'm also sometimes amazed with – what the tool box of the designer shows. But maybe you can add.

Frederik Kampe: Yes, maybe I can add. That's where the interdisciplinary approach we are having comes into play, because one important part is that we immediately start with the visualization of what we are collecting, which data we're collecting. So we're not writing a text, but we are making a visualization and it helps a lot in finding new connections we didn't expect because there are a couple of legal frameworks around it, but it's a part of a culture that has grown by practices, not necessarily by rules. And therefore this visualization helps a lot and it's an ongoing topic.

Sven T. Siefken: Yeah, that's important. There's no text for the moment. We're just working on the poster. We started out working on the wall in the office in the art school. When I walked into this colleague's office, professor's office, I was blown away what a professor's office could look like. And then somebody popped in their head and said: Sorry, I need the chainsaw. Can we have that? And they told me this is normal, this happens sometimes, we need chainsaws here.

Anna Rathmair: Thank you. Are there any other questions?

Question from the audience: Thank you for this fascinating discussion. One question struck me as a result: What is and could be the role of the parliament in this pre-

legislative process? We all agree that the idea for the legislation, the agenda setting comes from different actors: from the politicians, when they make pledges, from the government, when they have the formal structures, and from the parliament itself.

So one option: Could parliament be a platform for such pre-legislative activities, a platform for discussion, for agenda setting? Or alternatively: If we agree that all the actors have their own platforms, their own procedures, could the parliament be the watchdog or the controller if all the standards of the pre-legislative process are followed and send back the legislation or whatever. Or can be combine both options?

Sven T. Siefken: That's a great question and really at the core of what we want to say. First of all, of course, a parliament is not a unitary actor, as I said earlier here, but when we look at the influence in that image where we have the little boxes, it's MPs from the parliamentary majority and we're talking here, of course, of Germany. What we can say is only about Germany. We know that every parliament works differently, so this is about Germany, and in Germany we have a very high differentiation of labour. The MPs, according to their committee membership, focus on less than the committee topic. They are assigned rapporteur responsibilities. So they have very small responsibilities and they get intense expertise in these areas.

And if we talk about preparation of laws in the ministries, these exchanges with those people from parliament occur all the time. They happen. They are in there. The MPs on the rapporteur level and on the speaker level, exchanging in bill drafting with people in the ministries who are working on these bills, and also in the earlier stages.

So in that way this is an answer about the German Parliament. Probably, when we're done with Germany, we will start with all the other parliaments and see how they differ. But the specialization gives parliament a lot of potential influence and every MP on their own level of expertise. And of course it also depends on their own skills, on their own understanding. Sometimes I talk to MPs and I show them this – I show this to everybody that I see and I say, look, this is what we're working on – and they say: This is really great. We would need that. We have 30, 40 percent new MPs in

every parliament and they often don't understand what's going on in the pre-parliamentary phase because they're not political scientists. There's very different mechanisms.

So I see the role already. The reality is that parliament is everywhere, but I found it interesting in your paper when wrote about the way that Werchowna Rada is making a legislative program at the beginning of the term, if I remember right. We don't have that. The functional equivalent is probably this coalition contract that I that I talked about. So: complex answer, but, yeah.

Anna Rathmair: Please, Mr. Rizzoni.

Giovanni Rizzoni: Another question about visualization, because I think that it's crucial. Parliaments, in a sense, are the great maps of politics, they make politics visible. There is a growing interest of using visual information for communicating, but also for understanding parliamentary work, also in my parliament. And it's crucial to combine design and content at the same moment, that is, you don't have a text and then you translate the text into a visual format but to have the two professions work together. My question is about artificial intelligence, because we are experimenting with new tools of multimodal artificial intelligence, in the sense of combining the huge visual information that is produced by parliament with textual information in order to provide a new form of cartography of politics, of parliamentary activity.

Have you ever considered these tools in your work?

Cristina Leston-Bandeira: Can I suggest also that Dmitry may have a word to say about that because in terms of the machine learning, the work that he's doing, actually links really well with your point.

Sven T. Siefken: Yes! Yeah, we've been thinking about connections to different disciplines and of course obviously one possible use – and we've been talking also with people in the Bundestag administration about this – is the ongoing process of e-legislation. So what's happening in Germany right now is that they're trying to put the

whole legislative process across institutions into one system that they're developing, which is then going to be electronic. And we're bringing in perspectives here that they themselves - - They know about the realities of the informal and cultural et cetera, but they are basing this mostly on the legal setting. So this is an interesting connection. We don't exactly know on both sides how and if we can integrate this, but one of our ideas is to set this up in the end, not just as the small postcard, but as maybe a website, an interactive website, and ideally, if we had a lot of money and time for it, even in a way where we could track, live track, an actual legislative process and see where things are, where from manifesto to coalition contract to this circle there decisions are made and where laws get stuck.

Right now in this whole process, I would say there is about 20 or 30 bills that are stuck somewhere for different reasons. Some of them have been there for years now – so to map this. But of course, then again, there's the question: Is there interest in that kind of transparency on the side of political decision makers? And this could be taken one step further by integrating artificial intelligence, because much of the data in the Bundestag is already machine readable and is accessible. So if we could connect these systems, then this could all be automatic, But I'm a little bit sceptical if it's going to happen. We'll see.

Dmitry Erokhin: Thank you. I will maybe add shortly that of course there are different ways you can apply artificial intelligence and also sub-branches of artificial intelligence like machine learning or natural language processing. For example, you can use this to read this manifestos, to make predictions for the outcomes of different votings, so for many, many different issues. But of course, you need to be cautious and you need to take into account many issues such as biases inherent in this algorithms or also some ethical issues, in particular when you analyze some text, some information which was written by someone, you need to be very cautious about the ethical, the data protection issues, what you actually feed into the algorithm.

But I think that parliaments should keep pace with the time and also apply these new technologies in their work, but be cautious about the limitations and all the ethical issues.

Anna Rathmair: Thank you. We have time for one more question. Please, Mr. Szabo.

Zsolt Szabó: Thank you so much. My name is Szabó Zsolt. I'm from Hungary where I'm a constitutional law scholar, and I have two quick issues as to the manifestos: At least you have manifestos, whatever you call them, but it's a great thing that there is something written. You know, in some countries there are oral pledges. And am I right that you examined only the written ones in official manifestos? So that that's just maybe a comment, not a question, but that would be also interesting, to see the media and what is being said and not written. It's another level of pledges.

And as to the visualization, it's a great thing. I'm just wondering about a small slice of the whole issue, a thing which I am thinking about nowadays, and that's omnibus legislation. You know, those Christmas tree bills or whatever you call them, garbage bills, there are many names of them in the literature, many things are put together in a whole package.

Of course you should not think about laws as there's the one policy idea which runs through the whole process, but sometimes there are very cross-cutting things halfway, an idea drops in, another actor jumps in. So I'm just wondering how these things could be put into your visual model, where at the end of the day, the outcome will be much, much different from how it started. Thank you.

Katrin Praprotnik: Thank you very much for the comment on the manifesto. I do think it's really important to have these manifestos. Also working at the subnational level: I always find it a bit of a pity if we do not find manifestos but this is actually another future research endeavour that we not only take the static manifesto into account, but also then look how these pledges are reported by the media and also maybe reported by the media over time to also get a better understanding of the salience:

You have a pledge and whether it disappears after the election or whether it stays also in the public discourse.

Coming back to what you said before: Whatever they call it, I think it's really interesting. In Austria, we have a new party that also refuses to call their manifesto manifesto, but menu by the Beer Party. And when the party presented its manifesto, its programme, it always denied to make this reference. And I think it's somehow the second step of a development that we already saw earlier when new parties emerged and these new parties refused to call themselves a party, but they called themselves teams and alliances. So maybe this is just the second step that we now see that not only the party is no longer a party, but the manifesto is no longer a manifesto to tackle this dissatisfaction with politicians in a lot of societies.

Sven T. Siefken: He probably got the idea from Newt Gingrich in 1994 with the Contract with America. And I agree, this is part of the populist rhetoric that they're different, and contract seems to be more binding than manifesto.

But to come to the omnibus legislation question: I was reminded of a quote by Otto von Bismarck, the chancellor from pre-democratic times. He said that there are two things that you don't want to watch how they are made: sausages and laws. And this is a quote that the current minister in the head of the chancellor's office – not the chancellor, but the minister as head of the chancellor's office – likes to reiterate and repeat.

So the process is messy. We're rationalizing it. But the way that we can go about is to look exactly at these decisions that are made, because somebody must decide at some point of time: Are we putting different things together? And we can ask: Where is this decision made? Who is making that decision? Is it upfront? Is it in the back? The same way that a decision is made, do we make something as a governmental initiative or as a parliamentary initiative? Or sometimes what happens in Germany is there's a governmental initiative, all is done, and in the end they decide: Well, we initiate this now through parliament because it's going to be a faster process.

So all of this: It can be helpful to track. The challenge will be to get to generalizations. But again, this is my warning that the process is messy. We are not saying it is straightforward, but this view will help us to decipher the messiness, which includes all of this omnibus legislation, dead-end legislation, external events that happen. All of that can be can be tracked in here, but we don't want to say it always works like that.

Anna Rathmair: Thank you very much for your presentations, for the discussion, for the interest from you in the audience.

I would now like to take the opportunity for a minute to draw your attention to the posters that are over there. I think we also have a slide that shows the posters.

So as my colleague Christoph Clar already mentioned, we have a few very interesting posters over there. Dr. Siefken also mentioned their poster over there. So please take the opportunity to talk to the authors of the posters, also to our colleagues from the parliamentary administration. Our colleague Friedrich Sindermann will now also be there to answer your questions regarding the budget visualizations.

There will be coffee as well. So I think this will be a nice break for you now. Anything else to say? I think I can open up the break now and we see you back at 3 p.m. Thank you very much.

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Panel IV: How do MPs navigate between various kinds of pressure (public, party, voters)?

Discussant: Christoph Konrath (Parliamentary Administration)

Presentations:

Political changes of position under public pressure – using the example of party donations in Austria

Nina Bianca Dohr (Andrássy University Budapest)

Silent conflict in parliament. Investigating the role of absences in scaling MPs' ideological positions under conditions of high party unity

Fabian Habersack / Marcelo Jenny (University of Innsbruck)

A less likely, but increasing phenomenon? Parliamentary party switching in Germany

Danny Schindler (Institute of Parliamentary Research, Berlin)

Where do we go now? Explaining preferences for the location of capitals

David Willumsen (University of Innsbruck)

Julia Heiss (Parliamentary Administration): Hello and welcome back! I hope you had the opportunity to recharge your batteries during the lunch break and are ready for the next interesting round of presentations.

Again, on behalf of the organizing team, I would like to welcome you to panel four: „How do MPs navigate between various kinds of pressure [...]?" My name is Julia Heiss and I work for the Legal, Legislative and Research Services of the Austrian Parliamentary Administration, and I'll be the chair of this panel.

Today we will have four presentations by Nina Bianca Dohr, Marcelo Jenny, Danny Schindler and David Willumsen. All panellists will put forward their presentation for approximately ten minutes each, after which the discussant Christoph Konrath will share his thoughts on the presentations with us. The panellists will then have the opportunity to respond to these thoughts in a short discussion here on the podium. Afterwards, you and the audience will also have the opportunity to ask questions or make comments.

I am looking forward to a very interesting panel, and I would like to invite Nina Bianca Dohr to talk about her presentation. Nina is a PhD student in the field of political science at the Andrássy University of Budapest and has a master's degree in law from the Collegium Intermarium Warsaw with a focus on human rights. Her research

interests are in Austrian party financing and the interplay between media and politics. – Thank you.

Nina Bianca Dohr: Thank you for the introduction. Welcome also from my side to this afternoon. I would like to start by saying I'm in my first year of the PhD studies, so I might not have all the answers to all the questions that you might have later on, but I will try my best.

The topic of my dissertation is „Political Changes of Position Under Public Pressure – Using The Example of Party Donations in Austria" to illustrate the topic. – Okay, now I know how it works.

So, the problem definition and my research questions are: Do political positions change under public pressure or not? How does public opinion affect the agenda setting of political parties? Does it affect it, does it not – and if yes, how does that work?

My initial hypotheses suggest that there is resistance from the political parties to tighten party laws, especially when it comes to financing, but there have been instances of regulatory changes in party donations that challenge this assumption.

The scientific methodology that I use encompasses interdisciplinary approaches to theoretical grounding and empirical investigation, and I take from the field of communication sciences and also of the decision-making theory. So, McCombs and Shaw's agenda-setting approach suggests that the role of media shapes the public opinion and influences political agendas and vice versa, and on the other hand I want to use Cohen's trash can model, which offers more insight into the decision-making processes within the political context itself.

The theoretical framework is necessary to understand the dynamics of the political positions, public pressure itself and also the agenda-setting.

Right now I am still in the document literature analysis – in the middle of it, actually –, and later on I plan to have qualitative, semi-structured expert interviews with people

you might know, if you are from Austria, from the TV: Stainer-Hämmerle, Peter Filzmaier – all those people; I'm in contact with them. They support me with their literature research already, and they and their networks will be interview partners of mine.

So, here a short overview of my dissertation project: As I said, right now I am in the literature and document analysis to make sure that I have a good background for myself, to further on work on the interviews and to find in the end in my media response analysis as well: How do the interview results and the literature match up or not? Is there some common ground and how does one affect the other or not?

So right now, the questions I ask myself a lot while reading is: How are Austria's parties and politicians financed? Where does the money come from, where does it go to? And which areas are particularly susceptible to political corruption – if there are areas that are susceptible to it? And which role does media play in this whole context of financing? And right now, if you already work in this topic as well, Hubert Sickinger is a name, that will appear over and over again, as he is one of the Austrian experts in political financing.

This is an overview of the political financing in Austria. How are parties financed? – On the one hand, they have membership fees, they get donations, they have a parliamentary group financing and also party taxes from the mandatories that work for them; there are borrowings and state party financing.

The main expenditures that can be found are costs of election campaigns, salaries and the financing of the politicians and their workers.

There is a nice chart of the Austrian Parliament, that gives an overview of the key aspects of the financing and how transparency can be guaranteed by the political parties. So on the one hand, again, you have the financing – the donations, the sponsoring, the membership fees –, and in order to have transparency, the parties are on the other hand registered and they have to submit different reports in certain

amounts of time. They have to publish how much money they spend on election campaigns, and there are also regular audits happening.

The legal basis is the Political Parties Act 2012, which is the basis, on the one hand, to establish political parties, and it contains the fundamental provisions on the amount and distribution of public funding for political parties. It regulates the limitation of election advertising expenditures and the permissibility of the donations that the parties can receive. And what was interesting for me, was that there was a definition of related organizations earlier in the law, and now it was also extended to include related organizations of related organizations, making sure that parties don't found many, many different organizations again, where they could easily get more donations, as that seemed to have been an issue before – but I'm not fully there yet.

Why is the political financing important? Parties, as all other businesses, need resources for their operations – they organize events, they disseminate information and they manage their public relations. But political parties receive also state support to ensure that they can work well in the parliamentary democracy that we have. And the main idea and intention behind this state financing is to prevent reliance on donors or interest groups. So it should not be the case that the parties need to get the money from outside, as they might be even more influenced by that. And it should be safeguarded that the political processes work in integrity.

Some changes that were made to the law were that the election advertising expenditure has been limited, meaning that each party may spend a maximum of approximately 7.4 million Euro on election advertising for a national or European election, there have been limitations and more strict rules on the donations – which donations have to be with a name, which can still happen anonymously –, there has to be a disclosure of the income and expenses, there are sanctions that would play a role if parties do not follow the law, and there is the Court of Auditors that does more checks now.

And now, the question is: Does public pressure and the media, public pressure in general play a role? We do have a lot of media-centred campaigns. I think if you think back: Some weeks before the EU elections, we had a lot of different campaigns played through the media a lot, and it's becoming more and more the case now with social media, even more than it used to be. And here the agenda-setting approach plays a role as it's the weighting and evaluation of issues by the media that have an influence on voters, especially among swing voters. That's what Rhomberg found in his research.

So the question is: How do this agenda-setting, the media and the politics, how do they interfere? And there I found a model – I don't know how well you can see that –, how the political players, the mass media, advertisement and in the end the voters, how much influence they have on each other or not. And in the first bar you would see that the political players do not have as much influence on the media as they might have on the other areas, which is one thing that I want to do more research on.

Now my next steps – and I'm still in the very beginning of my PhD – is to redraft my outline, make sure that I have the press releases that I need, that I do my literature research even more thoroughly, sorting out what might be too much, and start writing the first chapters, preparing for the interviews and making sure that it's all working in the next three years.

This would be it from my side. – Thank you.

Julia Heiss: Thank you very much for this very promising project.

Next, I would like to invite Marcelo Jenny to the podium, who will hold a presentation that he prepared together with his colleague Fabian Habersack. Marcelo is professor at the Institute of Political Science at the University of Innsbruck. His research interests include political communication, electoral research, political parties and parliamentarism in a comparative perspective. – Thank you.

Marcelo Jenny: Thank you. This is a joint work with Fabian Habersack. This is work at a very early stage, so don't be too harsh with me. I think we have an interesting topic. We have good data but the data set is not yet at the stage where we can do really good work with it. And we thought we had a nice methods tool, which in the end turned out it's not as nice as I thought. – Okay.

Our topic is conflict in parliament, silent conflict in parliament, that can be expressed by not being present in parliament. Usually, the norm is: You expect MPs to be present in parliamentary sessions. You have to have a minimum number to be able to conduct parliamentary business and reach valid decisions, and oftentimes the government controls a pretty narrow majority in parliament, so they have to maintain high presence at least of their own MPs to be able to get their political will through.

If you talk about absenteeism in parliament, there are good non-political reasons why MPs are not present in a session due to time conflicts. Parliaments go a long way to minimize these kinds of time conflicts, for example by putting parliamentary sessions within one week. So if you have to attend to electoral district matters, you have a different week. You have committee weeks, you have plenary weeks and you have weeks for your district work. Sometimes things happen: health reasons. For health reasons, you're excused from attending a session.

But there are also political reasons why you're not present. For example, because you want to deny the legitimacy of a parliamentary decision. There are lots of historical examples – I think of Irish MPs expressing their discontent, their political protest with Westminster Parliament by being elected to parliament, by participating in elections, but then not attending the sessions to express their protest.

You can try to do it to obstruct political business, parliamentary business. We have probably seen in media reports instances of these kinds of protesting. If a whole parliamentary party group leaves the session, that might be enough to still be able to conduct, but sometimes it might already be enough to stop conducting further parliamentary business.

And the one reason that we were most interested in is: It might be a way how individual MPs deal with cross-pressure – cross-pressure coming from their parliamentary party group on the one hand and from, for example, constituency interests or interest group interests that might point them towards: We want you to vote yes!, and the parliamentary party group wants you to vote no. How do you deal with this kind of cross-pressure? Either you follow one of these two reference groups or you stay away from the vote and solve the conflict in this way.

I have started here already. One way of dealing with it is: You vote, for example, against the party line and follow the constituency interests. That's something very loud, especially in the Austrian context where we expect high levels of parliamentary party group cohesion. Whenever an MP votes against the party line, that's loud, that leads to media reports.

You can make it even louder: You can use a loudspeaker by announcing it in advance, ahead of the session. That leads for sure to media reports.

You can try to do it silently, that means you stay away from the vote. In some parliaments you can use abstention. That's not possible in the National Council – we don't have that tool –; in other parliaments it is possible to vote abstain: I don't have to take a yes- or no-position, I can take a neutral position in the vote. It's not possible in the National Council, so if you want to do that, you have to leave, stay away.

Staying away in a kind of cross-pressure situation is helpful for you as individual MP, but it might be also helpful for your parliamentary party group because one of the alternatives that you don't want to have is this kind of loud situation. So, it's face-saving for both: It's face-saving for the individual MP and for his or her party group – and in the best case, it's a stealth protest in a sense for some parts of the public because nobody notices that this kind of thing happened, that you stayed away. I think the fine line is when you go back to your constituency, you tell them: I didn't vote for that. You told me: No, you should not do it!, and I didn't do it. – So at least

your constituents: If that manoeuvre has a political gain for you, at least to them you have to communicate it and hope that the national media don't pick it up.

So that's where the methods interest came in. There are methods how to use voting data for the ideological scaling of members of parliament developed in the US Parliament. So that's a context with much lower levels of party group cohesion, and there these tools work very nicely to establish either a one-dimensional left-right-scaling of MPs or a two-dimensional scaling. It has been used for a few European parliaments, but to my knowledge it has not before been used on voting data from the Austrian parliament. So we just thought: Let's try and see what comes out of it!

We had a nice dataset covering two and a half years – all the votes, so not only final votes on legislative decisions, not the typical dataset you see most often in the literature, that is, only the final, most important votes, it's all votes. So that covers also pretty trivial matters as well as the most important votes that you have in parliament. That's the key weakness currently of the dataset: that we're right now not able to distinguish nicely between the levels of importance.

Our expectations were as follows: We tried to use this scaling method to see, how differentiated the singular MPs will come out in the graphs. The more they vote against, how the main body of their party group votes, the more they should stand out. That was our expectation.

And we thought: Well, if somebody does that, it should be typically not somebody from high in the party hierarchy, but rather somebody – yes, a backbencher. Following Searing's theory that has been already mentioned today, it should be typically backbenchers who care much more about constituency interests that have an interest here.

Distance from constituency: That's the same argument: The farther you're away from the capital, the more there should be the potential for variation between what your national party wants and what your regional or local party wants.

And when does it get politically most important? – Well, when there are regional elections, when that might be a topic that is of regional interest. So that's why we included the closeness of regional elections that increases the salience of constituency issues.

And then the fourth one is the government-opposition divide. Who should care about high parliamentary party group cohesion? – It's the government parties. They need the support from their MPs, whereas opposition party groups, if their members are not present: Well, there is the norm, they should be present, but if they are not, they don't have to care that much about whether they are there or not.

Julia Heiss: Sorry to interrupt you, but we need to keep the time in mind.

Marcelo Jenny: Okay, I'm running out of time.

Julia Heiss: Thank you.

Marcelo Jenny: Okay. – That's the types of behaviour. We have the ones who are excused, and you see, there is a sizable number of absences. That's for two years, the development over time. And that's the results of regression analysis. You see absences, here operationalized in seat rows. If the argument holds that the frontbenchers are the more prominent members of the party group, you'll see they're more absent. It's strange: The backbenchers are actually the ones who are more present.

On the other hand, you have also something non-intuitive. The ones from the provinces or from the "Länder" are the ones who attend the votes much more often than the ones from the capital. So these MPs and the ones close to Vienna have a higher propensity to not attend the votes.

Here you have what we expected: The closer to an election, the higher the absences. I think you can think of alternative explanations than what we said here.

Absences by government parties are much lower than by opposition parties.

And here – quickly – what these classification methods brought. You see the clusters of the MPs. This provides a nice clustering, having the government parties much closer to each other and the three opposition parties more differentiated because there are issues where they go with the government line and where they oppose, and it's not the same issue, so that's why they move apart. – That's the second method, which gives basically the same things.

And then we try to deal with the absences: How do you interpret absences? Either it's a yes vote or a no vote. And as soon as you do that something changes, because in the previous thing it's just missing data – you don't deal with it at all, it's just missing in your dataset –, but our argument was: There is a reason why you're absent. So you should fill it with a message – that's the wrong direction –, and that's what we did here. And as soon as you do that, it differentiates your parliamentary party groups – that's what we wanted –, but if you look at the names that are most distant from their party groups, it's not the ones we expected because most often it's very prominent people in the parliamentary party group.

So, starting out from: It should be backbenchers from far away constituencies that are most likely to be absent due to our idea of cross-pressure conflict, the reality is completely different. It's the most prominent MPs who are most likely absent, most often from the capital or near the capital, and what bugs us really the most right now is: It's such a frequent phenomenon.

Our idea just doesn't work. There's so much noise, there are so much absences in votes, you're not really able to identify the few cases that were our primary interest. – Thank you.

Julia Heiss: Thank you very much for this interesting presentation.

Next, I would like to invite Danny Schindler to the stage. Mr. Schindler holds a university diploma in political science from the Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg and the University of Kraków. He's a founding member and since 2023

the director of the Institute for Parliamentary Research, which wants to contribute to anchoring and developing the democratic order in society. – Thank you very much.

Danny Schindler: Hello from me. Thank you so much for the invitation. It's a pleasure to be here. My topic and my presentation focus on the issue of party switching in German parliaments or, to be more precise, on changes of parliamentary party affiliation, which is an interesting topic for mainly two reasons: Firstly, there's an increase in relevant research on a lot of different countries, but there are no studies on Germany, which might be regarded a less likely case given its rather stable party system, and secondly, those changes are usually considered as impairing democratic representation – so this gap is relevant, for example, by undermining the link between voters and parties and voters and politicians.

So the question is: To what extent do German MPs abandon their group? To answer that question, we compiled a data set that includes all changes – both at the federal level and at the state level – since German reunification. It's also a bit work in progress, but we can have a first glance at the data today.

Those changes, to begin with, add up to 517 cases, so there really is something here. And if we look at the types of changes, you can see that exits is the largest group, and exits here means that MPs leave the group voluntarily – so there's no dissolution of the group, no collapse of the group, they were not expelled from the group. They leave their group voluntarily and they become independent; they do not switch to another group but they stay at least for a while independents.

Switching: Direct changes to other PPGs is the second largest category with 86 cases, and then the other categories follow: Independents create a new PPG, a parliamentary party group – that's the abbreviation – or independents enter into an existing parliamentary party group, a PPG gets dissolved or dissolves itself, which creates a lot of independents, MPs are expelled from their group or a PPG collapses due to resignation of individual MPs or other reasons. – So the bottom line here is:

Yes, there are some switches to other groups, but usually those changes lead to more independents in parliament.

You can also consider the changes over time. As you can see here, there are some peaks, for example in the early 90s, when eastern German party systems were quite volatile, you have another peak in 2017, which is driven by the AfD, that observed a lot of resignations back then, and the most recent peak is mainly due to the dissolution of the Left Party parliamentary group in the German Bundestag in the wake of a controversy around its most prominent figure Sarah Wagenknecht who shortly afterwards founded her own party.

For comparing the differently sized parliaments, we can investigate the ratio of changes, so this is the number of changes according to the total number of MPs in parliament, and darker colours here stand for higher ratios.

I think we mainly arrive at two findings: First, three eastern states show the highest values for those ratio of changes – which does not come as a surprise –, and secondly, the city states of Hamburg and Bremen follow closely – which is interesting, since they are the only states in Germany that use open list electoral systems which provide incentives to cultivate personal votes. So this might play a role in that respect.

To further consider the timing, we divided the electoral period into three equal parts, as revealed here. So switches to other parties directly mostly happened in the first part of the electoral term, while the bulk of changes takes place mid-term, so to say, and switches to other parties in the last part of the parliamentary cycle, maybe to leave the sinking ship, are not that frequent.

We also coded the reasons for those changes, and as you can see here, the most frequent reason is a personal dispute within the group. Often this refers to appointments for different positions – for example an MP in the Left Party group in the State Parliament of Hamburg left its group because she wasn't re-elected to the leadership board – and other such cases.

Another category is policy-related issues, which is a very broad category, including also conflicts concerning the general orientation of a party and conflicts concerning coalition formation issues and such things.

As you can see, there are some other categories. Maybe the candidate selection category is very interesting here. There is the most prominent case – maybe you know that – the one of Elke Twesten, a member of the Green Party group in the state-level parliament of Lower Saxony, who was not renominated as a parliamentary candidate for the upcoming election, and what she did then, was to switch party groups from the Greens to the Christian Democrats – with the effect, that the governmental majority in parliament, consisting of the Social Democrats and the Greens, lost its wafer-thin majority and early elections had to be called. So that's a very prominent example that shows that sometimes such switches really do matter.

We also examined the direction of changes. – Yes, changes from government party to another government party are rare exceptions – there is only one case in 33 years, so the bulk of changes takes place within the opposition camp from an opposition party to another opposition party, or to become independents – which is maybe caused by the fact that the opposition is provided with less disciplinary mechanisms in comparison to the government parties.

We also looked at the direction of those direct switches: On the left-hand side you see the parties that lost MPs and on the right-hand side parties that gained MPs. Maybe we can say, that the Christian Democrats benefitted most, as they lost seven and gained 13 in the end, and the Greens had the highest losses: They lost eleven and only gained four MPs – but we have to bear in mind that most MPs leaving their party group become independents, so they are not included in this figure here.

Another important question, if you look at the literature, is: Do those changes pay off politically?, and the clear answer for the German case is: No, they don't pay off, because we can say, that almost nine out of ten MPs changing their party affiliation do not show up in parliament again, so they do not re-enter their parliament or any

other parliament in multi-level Germany. So, changing your party affiliation is really not a promising move in Germany.

To wrap up, we can say, that those changes in Germany happen more often than expected, they mainly occur within the opposition and they are caused primarily by disputes on a personal level within the group, within the party, and of course – as we saw – they break political careers in the end. I would also argue that the numbers do not provide a cause for concern: The functioning of parliaments is not affected so far. But it's interesting to see what happens in the future because we observe this light upward trend, and it's interesting to see whether this will continue in the near future. – Thank you.

Julia Heiss: Thank you very much for this very thought-provoking presentation.

I would like to invite David Willumsen as the last speaker to the stage. He is assistant professor at the University of Innsbruck. His research interests centre on comparative politics and political institutions with a focus on advanced industrial democracies.

David Willumsen: Thank you for the introduction, thank you for having me. What I am doing in this paper is: I want to understand people's preferences regarding the capital. Every country needs a capital: Where should we put it? This is a question that for a variety of reasons I'm fascinated by and I want to know: Where should we put it?

As a starting point, I can tell you that we're kind of in the wrong place; not the parliament building – it's beautiful, it's wonderful, I love what you've done with it – but the parliament in Austria is in the wrong place: The parliament should be here. This is where the parliament should be, and there's a really good reason for this, a very strong normative reason for this: It matters where a parliament is, and when that's true – in a democracy the basic justification is always going to be equality of citizens –, the centre is the place to put it because that doesn't advantage some people over others. Any other location advantages someone unfairly over others.

A reason is: Constituency location matters, we know this from the academic literature. It influences how politicians behave, it influences political outcomes, it influences how satisfied voters are with democracy. – Constituency location matters.

And there is, as I said, a very strong normative desire or argument, that we should say: It should be in the centre. – However, if we think about what people want, they of course want power to be closer to them, because there are advantages to being close to power. So we can say, people might be motivated by wanting it to be in a central location, but of course they also have selfish interests – they want to be close by –, and this is one of the things I look at in this paper: There's a tension here: Do people go for, you know, the right thing to do – Ybbs an der Donau, by the way – or do they go for: I want what's near to me?

What makes it also interesting is that capitals can be moved. It's not that difficult, especially when you compare it to what – if you read the political science literature – we will advocate: wide-ranging constitutional changes, knowing that these are basically impossible to achieve. All you need are buildings, essentially. There aren't really that many people, who work for the key institutions in Austria. 12,000 people work in the ministries. It's not that many people, compared to the kind of decisions we otherwise take in democracies.

There is a problem with it. I can't really observe often, how people think, I can't really ask voters and I certainly can't ask MPs about it because this is hypothetical. There are trade-offs involved, it's a complicated question. I can't just go out and make a survey, so what I did instead in this paper is: I looked basically everywhere I could for cases where there were explicit votes, explicit decisions on where to take the capital.

Surprisingly, very often capitals are moved without there being an explicit decision about it or using secret votes, so I have four cases: I look at Germany 1991; Berlin versus Bonn; I look at Thuringia 1991 – by the way, when the East German "Länder" were re-established, four of them did not have an explicit vote; two of them had a secret vote, two of them didn't have a vote in parliament, it was just decided;

Thuringia was the only one where they actually recorded how people voted. I also look at the vote in Switzerland in 1848 – when they established essentially the federal system, they needed a capital; they hadn't had one before –, and finally, I look at Lower Austria in 1986. Lower Austria didn't have a capital of its own, it was Vienna. It was decided to ask the people: Do you want your own capital?, and if so, you could write down where. – So we have this extremely fine-grained data on a very large share of the population of Lower Austria saying: Where do we want the capital to be?

And for all these importantly, I can observe where people live, so I can start calculating: Where do they live relative to the options they're considering?, I can start to see: How does essentially geographic distance matter for their decision-making process?

To illustrate this: This is, for example, Germany: These are the 299 single-member districts in 1991 or the 1990 election, and what this basically shows, is: It's just a relative distance to the two options Bonn and Berlin. The yellow diagonal is the people who are equidistant, and then, as you move away from that, you get closer to one or the other, and you would expect, as you move towards Berlin, you would become more likely to favour Berlin and vice versa.

And so as the first thing, just to illustrate this, I plot how people voted unto where their seat was, so the single-member district MPs, and there's a very clear geographic pattern here: It's very clear that closer to Berlin, you're likely to favour Berlin, closer to Bonn you're likely to favour Bonn.

And because in Germany the other half of the MPs were elected over a list, the vast majority of them also contest in single-member districts. You can repeat the process for them, and again: It's a bit less clear, but the pattern remains.

We aggregated up to the "Land" level. We can see here by delegation, it's very clear: Northeast, very much Berlin, southwest, very much Bonn. And in a model of the decision – a nice binary choice –, then essentially here I just illustrate the probability of voting for Bonn or Berlin. If you are very close to Bonn, that's over on the left, you

are relatively unlikely to vote for Berlin, whereas if you're close to Berlin, you're almost certain to vote for it. – That's true for the legislators.

It's also true for the voters: We got surveys of voters where they were asked this, and we find again this pattern: The probability of preferring Berlin goes up massively, as you live closer to Berlin. This is only east – ah, sorry – west German voters. Then, of course, you have the Berlin voters who are both geographically and preferencewise outliers, but if you take them out, we have the same pattern. In the former GDR they also did this survey, and I also find the pattern even there, within the GDR: Distance to Berlin mattered for whether they wanted it to stay in Bonn or not.

In Thuringia you can see here, maybe it's a bit small for you to see on the screen, but again, we find this very clear pattern of people voting for the city closest to them. And here Erfurt, the eventual winner, benefitted massively because it's the one that has no one to the West competing with it, whereas Weimar – the close competitor – was squeezed in the middle. Over 90% of the votes cast for these two options were for Weimar or for Erfurt.

We take that as a kind of a binary choice, we repeat the process from before, and again we find the exact same process: The closer you are to a city, the more likely you are to support it.

Switzerland: We find here again strong patterns; three cities that were competing: Bern, Lucerne und Zurich, and there's a nice bit of variation here – more than in the others –: Especially the southeast seems to be split to a large extent – that's because they refuse to vote for Lucerne, which is closest to them.

But again, we can take the trade off, because something like 94 percent of the votes were either for Bern or Zurich. We take that as a binary choice, and this is again, what we find: Over on the left are the ones close to Zurich: When you're close to Zurich, you're almost certain to vote for Zurich; if you're close to Bern, you're voting for Bern. This is true of the lower chamber; it's true of the upper chamber.

Finally, in “Niederösterreich” we also see really strong patterns or geographic patterns. So here, for example, we have the support for Baden. It’s down there, and it is very clear: Its support is extremely concentrated geographically. Especially when it contests with, for example, Krems, we find this pattern.

You know, it’s in the paper: There are six options – five cities plus Vienna, the status quo –, and they all look like this.

I can then calculate: What are the chances of someone, of the vote supporting the “Gemeinde”, based on the distance to each of the options. Here we have, for example, for Sankt Pölten: If you live close to Sankt Pölten, you are very likely to vote for it; if you live far away, over here, you’re not voting for Sankt Pölten. This is also true for Vienna – higher baseline: Lots of people didn’t want any movement at all, but again – and this is true –: I have this pattern for all six of them. I won’t show them all for you.

So, to summarize: Proximity matters here. This is consistently what I find for the legislators and, finally, for the voters. They are driven by this, every one of them. This is an important predictor. Even when I control – sometimes, when I can’t control a bunch of other things –, it remains the case.

And it’s selfish preferences. I play around, looking for: Do people vote for the centre – you know, the centroid, the most central location? – And the answer is: No. That doesn’t really seem to give you an advantage itself, an incentive. This is sad news; the good news is: If you have fair geographic representation and everyone votes selfishly, you will end up with the geographic centroid. It’s the median outcome. So it should actually prevail.

And then finally – just, you know, there’s lots of room for improvement –: Germany, somewhat ironically, moved - - Bonn is closer to the centroid than Berlin is, so they actually made it worse. Germany should be Fulda, by the way. France is extremely far away, and, of course, also Austria.

So thank you for listening and I look forward to your comments.

Julia Heiss: Thank you very much for this very interesting presentation.

Now that we've heard all four presentations, I would like to invite our discussant Christoph Konrath to join us on the podium, to share his thoughts and questions with us.

Christoph is Head of the Research and Support in Parliamentary Matters Department here at the Austrian Parliamentary Administration. He is also coordinator for the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation, and Christoph also teaches regularly at the university with a focus on Parliament and democracy. – Thank you, Christoph.

Christoph Konrath: Thank you, and thank you very much for the four presentations, that sort of give us an insight in ongoing projects. It's like reporting from your workplace, what you do and how you do it, and also the kind of challenges you face.

Listening to all for presentations, I thought about mapping and exploring politics. This is something that I find very interesting, also from my professional background, as we see that politics are so complex and often so difficult to understand for people outside, that we need a kind of map or to help people to orientate themselves, to find out what and why politicians do something, and a kind of mapping exercise that helps parliaments, individuals and the public to find their place and to understand their role and maybe even find out where they are.

I think that this is a question that also lot of parliamentarians face: to try out what you can do and why you do something, and with maps and orientation points you can ask: Can you find a place where you see what the others are doing or where you can be seen? Nowadays, we all are used to Google Maps and having a photo in which we can scan in.

So this is what may sound abstract, but we saw a lot of maps and we saw a lot of graphs here, and this is something that I was thinking of.

And there are also maps of how politics is sustained and how it is financed and: Where does the money sort of come from? This is what we had in the first presentation.

Now I try to make some comments on each presentation and have a question, but I would like us all to keep this sort of the map of politics in our minds and how to orientate there and how to find a place.

Mrs. Dohr, you said that you are just at the beginning of a very interesting topic because the financing of politics and political parties is hotly debated in Austria, and the interesting thing is, that we don't have a lot of literature. You had one name, and basically it's this expert that is always asked, but on an international level there's a lot of talk about financing politics and reasons for decisions that are often taken on their own behalf.

And when we look at the picture from a global perspective, we see that there are lots of reasons that politicians could do what they want to do, and we would expect this also in Austria because of the very strong party system. Marcelo and I wrote a short contribution last year, and we said, the interesting thing about Austria is, that so many changes occur and that there is evidently public pressure but we don't know so much about sort of the individual decision-making and how the public pressure affects politicians. It would be interesting to learn, what are your thoughts about this and how you will research this.

Nina Bianca Dohr: Thank you for the question.

Christoph Konrath: Okay, you have to leave, so maybe you can just answer the question.

Nina Bianca Dohr: That's why I wanted to do research on the topic: Because I also feel that there is a huge lack of information, especially compared to international other resources – but I do not have the answer yet. So that's definitely something I

want to find out in the next years, and I hope to find more experts than the one that I mentioned on the topic.

Christoph Konrath: You're sitting next to one, and I would take the opportunity to connect. Marcelo Jenny really knows a lot about those things.

Marcelo, I liked your take on the silent conflict because it's something that is always there in parliaments, but it's so hard to sort of identify it. I think – you did not mention this in the presentation –, you used photographs of votes. This is a very interesting thing to do because it's also kind of this mapping exercise that I was thinking of. So for all those, who are not aware of this: For about two years or three years, a news site took pictures of the plenary in Austria and tried to document all votes. It was, of course, unofficial, and we as a parliament can't do this, but this is an interesting thing, and at one point it even led to the identification of a vote that went wrong. This is why the Austrian Parliamentary Administration would, I suppose, like to have electronic voting at some time, because the more parties you have, the more complicated it gets.

You had very interesting results but I think that the hard task is ahead, and I wonder how you will sort of interpret your results, because we do document absences from sittings but we do not document absences from individual votes, and we have the cases where people speak out loud and we have a lot of cases where we just don't know: Maybe someone went for coffee or also had a meeting.

This is something that is interesting because when a parliament like the Austrian parliament meets only rarely and has two, maximum three sitting days per month, parliamentarians do a lot of other things and there might be votes that are more important and votes that are less important for them, and they, say, continue to do this other task, and I wonder how you will compare it with parliaments that just assume the presence of members, like the German Bundestag does or the Finnish parliament, where it's not necessary to be present and a lot of other things happen besides the plenary. So this would be interesting to know.

And I have to say that I was really surprised by the presentation and the paper by Danny Schindler, because I did not expect this scale. In Austria, in the last ten years we had a lot of discussions about changes and we've introduced very strict rules because it led to so many practical problems, and I was not aware that it happened so often in Germany.

What I would be interested in is, if you have observed discussions about the reasons for a change and how people react to it – this is also because it's not just the places that change, the affiliations of members change and sort of in parliament and outside it can become very difficult to orientate yourself, to know: Where is someone now and why is he or she there? And how does it affect the functioning of the parliaments that you looked at?

And finally to David Willumsen: This was also very interesting; it's such a different approach and with such exceptional cases. But when you come to think about it, it's a very interesting method to locate parliamentarians and to see where they stand when and what affiliations they have. And this is, I think, of such particular interest in the context of many presentations that we have today, that is: How do parliamentarians relate to citizens, whom do they speak for? Is it mostly along party lines or does the region come into play? And when do they speak out on regional matters? And I can think of many more examples that could be researched using your approach, as a lot of parliamentarians today in many countries understand themselves as sort of regional representatives being close to the citizens and their needs and wanting to be there. So it's also the question of how to divide your time between the capital or the seat of the parliament and how to be able to meet people.

And I was just thinking: More than a year ago we made materials for an exhibition of the Austrian Parliament, which is touring all the provinces, and one exhibit was a calendar of one month of a member, and we tried for a long time to come up with such a calendar, and it was very much about being present where one lives or where one works. And the interesting thing is: We got so many reactions from parliamentarians, that we sort of captured it and this is how they see themselves, but

also that we could illustrate how difficult it is for them to be always on the move, and this is something that – I think – could be a kind of idea for future research, using these methods.

So once again, thank you very much and thank you for drawing such interesting maps of politics, and I'm curious to know what you think about my comments. – Thank you.

Julia Heiss: Before we gather questions from the audience: Would you like to respond to Christoph's questions? Maybe if I could ask you to keep it relatively short, so we have enough time for questions from the audience. – Thank you. Maybe, Marcelo, you want to say something?

Marcelo Jenny: I just say: Thank you and I will save the time.

Julia Heiss: Okay. – Mr. Schindler? Do you want to say something? – Okay. Thank you very much.

Do we have questions from the audience? – Yes. One moment. If you could just please mention your name and the organization you're coming from. That would be kind.

Question from the audience: Melanie Sully. – On the parliamentary party switching, I'd like to follow up on what Christoph just mentioned –: In your slides you said, it had no real impact on parliamentary functioning, which I suppose means it has not paralyzed parliament. I don't know what you mean exactly by that, but have you done any work on how it may have affected the balance of power in committees or speaking time or interpellations, that kind of thing?

Danny Schindler: Thank you very much, and I can come back to your question in a way: I would argue, the functioning of parliaments is not affected so far, but the main reason for this is that a lot of MPs change to be independent MPs, so they do not change to other party groups. They become independent MPs, and as an independent MP, you do not have that much rights in German parliaments, and also when it comes

to committee assignments, to leadership positions in parliament and other means of parliamentary participation.

And this is in a way the interesting thing: It is totally irrational to change your party affiliation. If we think about politicians as rational actors, and this is what political science and literature usually assumes, it doesn't really make sense to leave your party. You won't be re-elected, you won't be renominated in another party because then you need a long-standing track record to be within the new party, to be renominated, and you have to be re-elected. This doesn't take place, so it's not that clever, but maybe there are other reasons.

Politicians are not only office seekers and vote seekers, they change for more principled reasons. This might be an option.

And I would – coming again back to the start – argue, it is not affecting the legislative business, at least in comparison with other countries. If we look in the international literature, we have cases like Brazil or Italy where we have 30 percent of MPs usually changing each legislative term, so there's a lot of more instability. We have higher numbers than expected, but in an international comparison, they are still on a low level, and we have to keep in mind that most of them become independents. That's why the impact is not that huge so far.

Julia Heiss: Thank you very much. – Any more questions from the audience? – Yes, thank you.

Question from the audience: Thanks. – My name is Kathrina and I'm a student of social and political studies. I wanted to ask David Willumsen a question. I thought it was so interesting, this thought experiment of sort of relocating the capital. I think that's something that is really refreshing and new in a way, but I was thinking – because you mentioned it to be normatively desirable to make it sort of in a way, that everyone should have equal access to power, but then, if we sort of think about the perfect democracy in normative terms, wouldn't there be so many things you would have to put up for a vote, for example the voting system or – I don't know –

citizenship or who is included in the demos. There would be so many more questions that would come up, if we sort of opened that avenue, right?

And then I was thinking: Even if we would put it up for election or for a vote, wouldn't most people probably vote for the status quo? Isn't there always a bias for the status quo and stability and continuity?

So I mean, the cases where there were votes about the location of capitals, all of those were under special circumstances, right? So, would you think that, if we would put it up for election now in Austria, that people would even vote selfishly for like the closest location or wouldn't the people just vote for Vienna and for the status quo?

David Willumsen: Thank you. – I think, I mean, this question of, you know, opening Pandora's box with the perfect democracy is, of course, true. Democracy isn't ideal, we never quite reach it. I think, with this in particular, the argument for: Is there a best electoral system? – No. We will all agree there, there isn't one we can all agree on. I think the normative argument for a central location is – I have not come across one that actually would question that. It's something we may not think about, but the alternative is, some citizens are advantaged over others. And if you look at modern political theory, the underpinning for democracies is always equality. So there is that.

I don't expect tomorrow Christoph goes to his bosses and goes: I saw this presentation – we should definitely move! I'm not expecting that – maybe, you know, after the elections.

And then, how would people vote? So I think, the problem of doing this is: If you do it by – because, I am sure, yes, there is going to be a status-quo bias because, of course, there are costs involved. You also saw it with "Niederösterreich": Vienna was favoured by, you know, something like 45 percent of the people. It was relatively close that it even moved at all, and that was a case where the capital wasn't even located in the political unit – not that rare, actually. So I think: Yes, the practicalities of overcoming it is not minor.

The problem is: If you put it to a vote, then you get into a thing like: What decision-making rules do you use? Because in “Niederösterreich” the question was first: Yes/No, and only then: Where? And if they had chosen another process of doing it, the outcome would probably have been different. If the people in Baden and Wiener Neustadt had been more strategic, they would have just voted: No, knowing they were never going to be the winners, and then they would have stayed with Vienna, which is much closer to them.

So the question is: Can we make this, can I make this happen? – I don’t think I can make it happen. I think, if people take it seriously – I think it’s worth considering every now and then, there should be nothing, that is never questioned – and, you know, living in Tirol, I tell you: Not everyone will vote for Vienna. I mean, there may be a status-quo bias, but there is also a – you know, I’m not from Tirol, but I notice there is resentment. Centre-periphery dynamics are real in a lot of countries, and it’s very clear that part of it is also like: Those people far away in Vienna!, and they are far away. It takes a long time to get here from Tirol.

And you know, when you think about what you mentioned about, you know: How do they spend their time? I mean, those legislators – what is it? It’s four hours 15 with the train, if you start out, if you live in Innsbruck: That’s time you’re not really spending on anything else. You know, maybe you can do a bit of work, but it’s not ideal either. So I do think there’s a strong normative argument, there’s a practical argument to it as well – I also recognize, that the practical problem of overcoming this is very substantial –, but I mean, that’s: If we political scientists thought that, you know, we only did things, where we thought the politicians would listen, I mean, we would just go home very quickly, because we realize that they don’t listen that often – but sometimes they do.

So anyway – I will stop here.

Julia Heiss: I think you want to reply to this.

Christoph Konrath: I just want to add two points. One: It's not just a question of the capital, but a lot of countries have questions about sort of relocating certain state bodies, like courts or administrative units. We have been confronted with this question again and again from members of the Bundesrat, the Federal Council, who really have a strong interest in this. And then they want to have data on Switzerland and Germany, and they see that, okay, there are some courts and other state bodies all over Germany, but actually, they think they are quite far apart. There has been a keen interest in regionalization, but there have been no moves.

And the other thing that came to my mind – a solution that is quite often overlooked, but I find it's a very creative one – is the Czech one, where you have the parliament in Prague and you have the constitutional court, that is a very strong constitutional court and an important political actor, in Brno, and this is something that – when you go to the Czech Republic or when you speak about the Czech Republic – comes up very often because you can draw a different map of politics and the political system by having sort of two gravitating centres and also by gravitating and balancing the legislative and the sort of judicial function, which I find is a very interesting move in this context.

Julia Heiss: Thank you. – Do we have another question, maybe one last question from the audience? – Yes, thank you.

Question from the audience: Thank you. I'm a student of political science at the University of Innsbruck, and I also wanted to ask David Willumsen: If you were to change the formulation of the question – it's no longer the hypothetical: Where would you like your parliament to be?, but it's rather: Do you think it's unfair, the parliament is far away from you?, do you think that you might observe a change over time, particularly between periods of history, where there was no digital communication, versus now, where maybe there is a bit more transparency? Do you think that this would be something you could measure?

David Willumsen: I think it's really interesting, when you mention - - So there is this thing, you know, because you mentioned digitalization as one thing, but also, of course, you know, the meaning of distance is measured in time: How far away is something when you think about it? What we think is always going to be: Oh, it takes 15 minutes!, and so, you know, Innsbruck is far away now; 200 years ago, it was far away, so I could imagine that it changes over time. Digitalization helps, but I don't think it would necessarily be a kind of a panacea that solves everything.

I think you're very right: If you frame the question, if you ask people: Do you want a new capital?, then there'll be: Hm!, but if you ask people: Do you think this is fair?, then it becomes quite different.

I think what also Christopher mentioned, you know, Austria is, especially for a supposedly federal state – I mean, everything is in Vienna. Even things that have to do with the mountains are located in Vienna, and you think to yourself: Why? I think there is no reason for this whatsoever.

I mean, even if you say: Okay, we must have, you know, certain bodies in the same city – I certainly think about the, you mentioned it, constitutional court in Germany in Karlsruhe; in part to avoid that they actually know each other and they talk to each other, but there is no reason: Why can't the police, why can't the national police, the "Bundespolizei", why can't that be somewhere else? Why can't this be, you know, all these things? There is simply no reason. And I think it does also breed a certain form of resentment to it. – You know, look at the UK, where everything, everything is in London, but why?

You know, even if you say: Okay, we're not moving parliament, but what about everything else? Why does the ORF – oh, now I get really popular, but why can't we move the ORF to "Kärnten"? I mean, they work digitally.

So I think, I could imagine over time it matters. We're trying to get data on this going back in time. The problem is, getting data going back in time. Because of this thing with distance measured in time, what we want to look at is Spain, which in a very

relatively short period of time rolled out an entirely new high speed rail network, and all of a sudden regarding travel time Madrid moved much closer to the provinces. And we would love to be able to get data, you see, like: Did this actually matter? Because that's something that, yeah, would of course also underpin the argument a little bit, if we can show: Yes, it does matter, if people can say: Okay, now, you know, Madrid is closer, we feel closer to the source of power.

I do think that it is something that's like: You know, often we spend a lot of time in capitals – you know, I did so, too, before I moved to Innsbruck –, and then I moved there, and then I realized: Oh, wait, this is a real thing! You know, it never occurred to me that: Oh, power is far away!, and then I realized, people feel: Yeah, it's those people in Vienna!, and I don't think that's particularly helpful.

Julia Heiss: Okay, since we're running out of time anyway, I would like to once again thank you: Thanks to the panellists and the discussant for these valuable inputs and also to you in the audience for your active participation.

So now we have time for a coffee again. Also, I would like to draw your attention to the upcoming Poster session, which will be in Lokal two, downstairs. We will have three or four very interesting posters, and you will also have the opportunity to talk to the authors, and they will explain their posters to you.

Then the program will resume at 3 o'clock downstairs in Lokal two.

Please remember to take all your belongings with you, because we won't be back in this Lokal, so this will be closed. – Thank you very much.

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Research Year in Parliament

Christoph Clar (Parliamentary Administration): Welcome back all together in our main location! We've heard so many interesting presentations and discussions, but there are two more, let's say, highlights of today's programme left. For the grande finale of

this year's Day of Parliamentary Research, we've invited particularly interesting and outstanding guests to the podium, who are supposed to help us to kind of expand our perspectives as we want to respond to the call for listening to and cooperating with actors and experts from outside the scientific community. We want to engage in a discussion with them about different perspectives on the connection between performance and parliaments.

However, before we get to that point, we are very, very happy and proud to focus on a particular initiative of the Parliamentary Administration. It's actually one of three so-called main columns of our efforts to facilitate the development of and the networking among parliamentary research. For those who do not know it already, I'm happy to introduce to you one of the initiatives that was launched last year, the so-called Research Year in Parliament.

What is the Research Year in Parliament? – It is awarded once a year, based on the decision of a scientific advisory board, which consists of our Deputy Secretary General Susanne Janistyn-Novák as well as four distinguished scholars from different disciplines, and then the Parliamentary Administration supports this selected research project on a topic relevant to Parliament for one year.

Researchers from all academic disciplines are invited to submit their idea – so watch out for the next call to be published this year, at the end of this year –, and we do not only support their project with a certain amount of money, but especially with the expertise and experience of the Parliamentary Administration, of the experts that are working in the Parliamentary Administration, as well as with access to our knowledge resources and, if possible and wanted from all sides, also with access to various stakeholders in the Parliament.

So, in the next, let's say, 40 minutes we have the honour of getting to know the newly selected project and the researcher who was chosen in 2024. It will be announced by Deputy Secretary General Susanne Janistyn-Novák.

But first, we are very, very pleased that Bianca Winkler presents the preliminary results of her research project. It deals with the “Reception of scientific discourses in the debate culture of the Parliament”, and it was the first ever project to be selected for the Research Year in Parliament.

Bianca, thank you for being here. The floor is yours.

Bianca Winkler (University of Vienna): Thank you very much, Christoph Clar, and thank you all in the Parliamentary Administration for supporting me throughout this year. It was an honour to be the first person to conduct the Research Year in Parliament, especially because there was a very welcoming environment and I felt supported with all the questions I might have. We met almost monthly to discuss the forthgoing of the project, and this is something that I, as a sort of an independent researcher, had never experienced before. So this was really for me personally the best part of the project.

But anyhow, I’m a historian and I was interested for a long time in the history of science or especially in this gap between science and humanities that is not really verbally expressed in German because we talk about “Wissenschaften”, but for me as a historian, it came out through my study already that historians mean something completely different when you talk about “Wissenschaft”, or their “Wissenschaft”, than others, especially ones that have a sort of science approach in mind.

So this is something I’ve been specialized in for the last ten years. And so I was interested in the question: What do politicians actually mean when they talk about Wissenschaft? Do they have this scientific thinking in their minds, or do they more resemble a broader approach – like the German word “Wissenschaften” actually represents all the cultural studies and so on.

Throughout my research, I dropped over some English-speaking accessors to this topic, and I found out that in the English-speaking world people talk about research, not about science, when they investigate what I tried to find out. And of course, the

findings are very diverse, because I think research is even more broad than "Wissenschaften". – I'll come to that, all right.

The basic assumption I set out was the question: In how far is "Wissenschaften" in parliamentary debates exclusively reserved to a kind of science?, because during the Covid-19 pandemic we heard sentences like: Wir müssen auf Wissenschaftler hören!, which in English would mean: We have to listen to the scientists!, but in German it is quite open what kind of "Wissenschaftler" are actually referred to. And I tried to find out if, for example, debates about Covid-19 pandemic management are the dominant theme when it comes to scientific discourses. – I can spoil that here: It's not, interestingly. It's quite far-spread over different topics.

The second question that popped up, especially when I started to conduct interviews with the Wissenschaftssprecher – the science spokespersons – of the parties of the Austrian Parliament. I had the opportunity to conduct interviews with them, and then I thought about in how far science or Wissenschaft is used as a kind of rhetorical utilization to give your argument a more kind of epistemic authority or power because you refer to an institution that's - - – not.

This idea of rhetorical utilization was brought forward a lot, as I figured out, by an American scholar named Carol Weiss, who did a lot of evaluation studies in sociology. And this was something I came about asking myself, and I have to spoil that here: I cannot really answer this question if it's majorly used as a rhetorical utilization, because – as you will see.

So, I set out trying to have a quantitative approach which came to certain limits. So I expanded the methods to a variety of different exploitations. I did interviews with stenographers of the Parliamentary Administration. I had these talks with the Legal, Legislative and Research Services, the RLW, and I also did the research in the database of the Parliament, where I was also supported by computer specialists there. And they told me a lot about the limit of the algorithm and how representative the results of the search engine might be. And so I figured out that the initial idea I had, of

constructing kind of word clouds with some words I intuitively associated with science, did not really or was not really able to answer my question.

So I kind of switched over to tracking the history or etymological shifts of certain words or trying to figure out what certain words mean in different contexts. And these findings I then discussed in in-depth interviews which were very informal also with the Wissenschaftssprecher:innen of these four parties mentioned here.

Coming from history, I have a very concrete idea of what a discourse is, and that might be something that's necessary to explain to non-historians, actually. So for me, words change their meaning by speakers and by different contexts in which they are spoken out. This is why we can kind of track what is meant with "Wissenschaften" from 1950 to 2020: Is it the same or does it change ? – And I found one very interesting word shift I'm going to show you later.

And since the keynote speech today was about the anthropology of parliaments: I also come from a more anthropological view on the world. So I see parliamentary discourse at least partially representative for what societal opinions might be, especially when the parliamentarians that talk about Wissenschaft, for example , are not Wissenschaftler themselves. So, right, if they're not scientists, then their opinions might reflect way more a kind of general opinion than if they would be.

I also draw on some theories that have been explored on epistemic governance of scientific world views. So I figured out during my year that there is actually a lot of research going on from where legislators draw their knowledge, and: Is there some epistemic authority or moral authority of science, and in how far is it threatened by populists today? – I also dig a little bit into this research literature that is, at least for me, completely new. And I conceived the act of speech. So, my sources were mainly the Stenographic Reports of the parliament, the active talking about a topic. – I have to clarify that I considered the speech as an expression of some sort of truth, which is kind of societally constructed, right? So, drawing on Habermas, we have to have in mind the truth of a word when we say it and to reach also the - - Sorry, it would be

easier for me in German. Okay, never mind. – So, I also tried to put the words into the context in which they were spoken to kind of reconstruct the idea of science that might be behind it.

What I did find out was that in the talking about Wissenschaften, there is not really a difference between methodological, institutional or ideological meanings. So this is something you as a researcher have to discover through going into the depth of the material, which is why I had problems really getting a quantitative result that says something. So for example, when I looked up "Wissenschaft" or "Forschung", I couldn't find anything of worth to me. So I more concretely looked at words like "Studien" or "experts", but also with "Studien" we have a problem, because "Studien" also means what you do what the university – right? –: studies; it's the same problem in English.

So I started out with counting all these words and then trying to get in-depth contexts, and didn't really find a lot. But what I did find was that there is a lot of reference from politicians that we need experts, we need studies. So that kind of points a little bit into the importance of science overall in political discourse.

What I did find was that the word "Evidenz" had an impressive career in the last years. The graph starts, as you can see *(referring to a Powerpoint presentation)*, in 1918, where it was mentioned five times a year on average, and basically it meant keeping things in stock, originally. So, evidence was of soldiers or horses. And then in the 1960s – this is this first spike you see here –, the meaning changed towards information. If you remember: 1960s, Cold War, so keeping information in stock might have been part of this new use of evidence. And then it declines in the 1970s and 1980s, and then it just spikes up after 2015. And this peak point that you see is in 2021, which is double as much as has ever been talked about evidence, and here it's clearly this medical evidence that we've heard of so much during the Corona pandemic.

So what is interesting is, suddenly, this career of the word and also the shift in the meaning. As I found out, that medical use of evidence also only dates back to the

1990s when initiatives were trying to found evidence-based medicine, which mostly refers to doing meta-studies that kind of evaluate the success of different medical treatments. The term then was adopted quite fast into pedagogy, Bildungswissenschaften in general, so educational studies – that's the word –, where they also orientated very much on this medical idea of evidence, and now it is basically the only way evidence is used in the political discourse. But if you come back to the adjective "evident", you can still find some use of this original meaning.

I found that is interesting, at least it points to some rhetorical significance of a scientific world view. So maybe, or probably, it has more weight today to rely on scientific studies than it used to have, or more importance also to bring them up in political discourses or parliamentary discourses. But you cannot really give an overall impression because Austrian parliamentarians do share a quite wide interpretation of this "Wissenschaften" or science. I had interviews with people who share this clearly scientific world view of a straight way that science is the only way we can explain the world and that have a kind of you-can-do-everything-with-maps idea, and also the other side that gives credit also to other methods of perceiving the world.

As the last impression I want to give you: In my interviews, I asked for five to ten terms with which the politicians would describe science – and this is what I got out of it. And the interesting thing is: None of them mentioned the same word. – Thank you very much.

Susanne Janistyn-Novák (Deputy Secretary General of the Parliamentary Administration): Thank you, Bianca Winkler, for your presentation. We are looking forward to the final results of your research work. We also hope that this approach will serve as a basis for further work on parliament-related topics and that we will be able to exchange further ideas in the future. As Bianca Winkler's project was the first part of the initiative for research here in the Austrian Parliament, we were excited from the very beginning to see how the cooperation will develop. I'm happy to say that it developed very well and we learned a lot.

I would like to highlight three different levels on which the project has made an important contribution. First, there is of course the gaining of knowledge. The project provides interesting insights into political developments in Austria and shows how these developments both affect plenary debates and are expressed in plenary debates. Therefore it is an important contribution to current debates in parliamentary research.

Second: Throughout the project we got a lot of insights into methodological challenges and possibilities in regards to dealing with the extensive amount material provided by the Austrian Parliamentary Administration. Only through direct engagement with the material, it becomes clear how much potential there is in these resources.

This brings me to the third level: We experienced how important it is to facilitate the cooperation from external researchers, who focus entirely on their research and bring in their views from the outside, with experts from inside the parliamentary administration who know the material and its production processes better than anyone else.

Bianca Winkler has had the opportunity to meet with colleagues of various departments, such as the Legal, Legislative and Research Services, Stenographic Reports, Presidential Affairs and ICD-operations. It was great to see how both sides benefit from the meetings and the discussions. This said, I can assure you that we will take many of these experiences and findings with us to our cooperation with the next project, which I'm very pleased to present right now.

As I already mentioned at the beginning of this program point, the research year in the Austrian Parliament is one of the initiatives of the Parliamentary Administration and its Legal, Legislative and Research Services and was launched in 2022/2023 to support the development and networking of parliamentary research. We are very pleased that our efforts were already successful when we received twice as many submissions this year, including very interesting proposals from international scholars.

One of them is here today because the scientific advisory board of the research year in Parliament assessed his project idea as particularly interesting and relevant. We expect valuable findings for the Austrian Parliament, its administration and for parliamentary research as such. As chair of the advisory board, it is my honour to provide you with a few details about the project and the research behind the project.

Josef Lolacher, an excellent academic, will be our researcher of the upcoming research year in the Austrian Parliament. Just let me give you a short overview about his academic career. He studied political science at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich. He graduated with a Master of Politics at the University of Oxford and he is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the same place. He has already been awarded several scholarships and academic rewards, for example from the Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, from the German Academic Exchange Service or from the Lincoln College at the University of Oxford. His thesis is dealing with the question: Do members of parliament listen to experts or ordinary citizens? – The role of expert knowledge and public opinion in the decision making of MPs. This will be the main question within the project of the research year in parliament.

I will now make some remarks on his research project. The research project is part of a comparative study of how members of parliament draw on different types of knowledge when making political decisions. Josef Lolacher wants to integrate insights from political science, behavioural economics and psychology to develop a theoretical model of how MPs respond to both public opinion and expert knowledge and how they integrate those inputs to reach political decisions.

The findings of the project should also help to explain the difference between parties and between different national contexts. Overall, the aim of the research project is to rethink parliaments as a knowledge institution. Josef Lolacher is convinced that the project's findings will be relevant to both academic and non-academic debates about the role of evidence in policymaking. I'm very happy that he is here today. He can tell you more about his work and how to fulfil its claim.

From my side: I thank you all for being here. Thank you for your interest in the research year in the Austrian Parliament. I do hope that you have already gained and will gain even more interesting insights into current parliamentary research. On this point I want to especially thank Christoph Konrath, Christoph Clar, Anna Rathmair, Julia Heiss and their team for preparing this conference as a source of knowledge. I also want to thank Iris Lechner and her team for organising this conference. Last but not least: Thank you very much, our colleagues from the technical support to make this conference real.

I'm very much looking forward to the final panel discussion where our keynote speaker Emma Crewe, the artistic director of the Volksoper Lotte de Beer and the expert in political communication Thomas Hofer will discuss the question: Why does performance matter? – Different perspectives on performance and parliaments. Philipp Bloom, historian and author, will moderate the discussion and I'm sure it will open new perspectives for us all but.

Once more congratulations, Josef Lolacher. I invite you to the stage, please present your project.

Josef Lolacher (University of Oxford): Thank you very much for this very kind introduction and for awarding me this research fellowship. This is truly a great honour. I'm really looking forward to this opportunity.

In my research project which has the working title "Do parliamentarians listen to experts or ordinary citizens?" I seek to investigate the role expert knowledge and public opinion play in the decision making of members of parliaments in Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom. In particular, I am interested in how MPs decide on policies when expert knowledge and public opinion conflict or –in other words – when parliamentarians are drawn and pulled in different directions by experts on the one hand and ordinary citizens – their constituents, party supporters and so on – on the other hand.

My research contributes to broader debates about the role of expert knowledge and public opinion in democratic representation and it speaks to this long standing debate about what it does mean to be a good representative. Is a good representative someone who actually follows the will of the people or acts and governs in the interest of the people?

In recent years representative democracy has come under fierce attack from two very different sides. On one side populists have accused representatives of disregarding voters' preferences and bypassing the people in policy making. So the standard argument is MPs are out of touch with the normal people – they don't listen, they don't know what people want. On the other side a technocratic critique emerged; technocrats criticize politicians for merely following public opinion polls, for valuing short term electoral success more than actually developing long term strategies based on scientific evidence, based on expert advice.

MPs have consequently faced conflicting demands. While one side advocates for greater consideration of citizen preferences and citizen involvement in policy making, the other pushes for greater reliance on expert. The buzzword is evidence based policy making – whatever this means. As a consequence, MPs find themselves very often in this field of tension between responsiveness on the one hand and responsibility on the other hand. As elected representatives of the people and for the people they are expected to weigh the current demands of the voters against the long term welfare of the people.

This argument has been made before with regard to political parties, especially by the late Peter Mair, who said that mainstream parties actually fail to reconcile these two tensions. I think it also applies to individual MPs, who are constantly faced with these conflicting demands. For example, in recent years public opinion has often been at odds with scientific evidence and expert advice on issues such as climate change, Covid 19 or, not at least, Brexit.

However, little is known about how individual politicians actually decide and about those complex decision making situations. We don't know to what extent politicians take new information into account, especially if this information is at odds with their prior beliefs. We don't really know what type of information politicians consider as valuable and what explains into individual differences in their decision making.

The overall goal of my work is therefore to study the decision making behaviour of political elites, specifically national MPs, under conditions of uncertainty, that is, when they lack certain information and ambivalence or ambiguity prevails – when there is conflicting information or it's just not clear, that means when there are different inputs and they have to come up with a decision.

Before I dive into my research objectives and the research design, let's perhaps have a brief look at the state of the art and previous research. There has been a rise of elite surveys and experiments in political science recently, which has led to a growing literature that examines the decision making behaviour of political elites. However, quantitative research on elite decision making is still in its infancy and studies are scattered across different research traditions.

Specific research focusing on political elites' responsiveness to either expert knowledge or public opinion has often been inconclusive. There's a handful of studies which investigate whether policymakers actually update their prior beliefs and positions when they receive information on constituents' opinions, facts or expert evidence. However, the empirical results so far have been mixed. While some studies actually suggest that policymakers update their prior beliefs when they receive new information about constituents' opinions or facts, the bulk of studies suggests that political elites are biased in the processing of new information, protect their own preferences on voters and suffer from a range of other cognitive biases.

Existing studies have also tended to neglect that politicians are usually simultaneously confronted by different inputs. So it's not just that they receive new information on public opinion or facts, in most cases they receive information from different groups,

also from interest groups of course, and have to decide whom to trust. My research project addresses this research gap. In particular, I have three core research objectives:

First, I would like to identify and analyze MPs updating of prior beliefs and positions. The guiding research question in this first, mostly descriptive part of my work is: To what extent do MPs update the prior beliefs in response to new information? And how does the decision making vary when public opinion and expert knowledge conflict?

In a second step I would like to go beyond this and focus on inter-individual differences: How do individual MPs differ from each other?, and answer the question of: Why are some MPs more likely to follow the advice of experts than others?, and: Why are some MPs more likely to follow public opinion instead of expert evidence?

I plan to explore whether individual differences such as age, gender, education, or also psychological dispositions, for example a need for closure – the capacity to deal with ambiguity in your life –, shape MPs' decision making.

At the core of my project is the assumption that MPs differ considerably in their tendency to follow experts or the public. Anecdotal evidence abounds, and historians have written about this for decades, if not centuries. However, political science has so far struggled to measure this in a rigorous way and to quantify this inter-individual differences in elite decision making.

In my project I would like to use a set of variables from the political science, but also from the political psychology and behavioural economics literature to explain this variation. And then, in a third step, I would like to explore cross-party and cross-country variation, because there are good reasons to believe that MPs from different parties and also from different countries actually differ in how they interpret their representative role, in how they interpret the role of technocrats and public opinion in their everyday decision making.

How do I want to achieve this? Well, my study is a comparative study and, it has been mentioned before, this is also my doctoral dissertation. I look at three countries in particular: Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom. These are all three parliamentary democracies, which are really interesting to study in itself. However, they are also interesting from a theoretical point of view because they differ in terms of size, in the type of democracy, in the clarity of responsibility, but also in the institutionalization of scientific advisory boards to parliamentarians.

I plan to look at three policy areas in particular: environmental, health and welfare policy. In each of these policy areas I would like to pick one decision making scenario where public opinion and expert knowledge actually align and one where it conflicts. I plan to collect direct data from national MPs through elite surveys which will feature embedded survey experiments – that's the quantitative part of my research. To further validate my research findings I plan to conduct complimentary qualitative interviews with a group of selected MPs in each of these three countries.

Collecting direct data from MPs is notoriously difficult. However, I think it's valuable because the context in which MPs have to make decisions is just fundamentally different from that of ordinary citizens. We expect that they have more expertise because they have to deal with these issues and with a strait between responsiveness and responsibility every day. And we also know from previous research that MPs differ quite significantly in their personality traits, obviously also social demographics and so on from ordinary citizens. So it's difficult to answer these questions with what political scientists call convenient samples. So we can't just ask undergraduate students: How would you decide in this decision making scenario?, and then extrapolate from these findings to how MPs would actually decide.

Furthermore, actually asking MPs these questions both in an online survey and then also in qualitative interviews should help me and us to bring these research findings to policymaking circles and to feed these insights back into the political process, because I think it's much more likely that politicians take these research results and findings

seriously if it's the MPs themselves that have been studied and are the subjects of my analysis.

Overall, I would like to make three major contributions to existing work on elite decision making. I would like to make one theoretical, one empirical, and one methodological contribution. First, theoretically, I would like to bring together two literatures which so far haven't really talked to each other, the one from political science on representation and the role of evidence in policymaking and the one from political psychology and behavioural economics on opinion adaptation and individual decision making. By doing this, I aim to present a set of new arguments on how MPs actually differ in their decision making behaviour. I also would like to explore and theorize what kind of information parliamentarians request from experts and also from parliamentary research services.

Secondly, I will provide another comparative account of the knowledge use and decision making behaviour of national MPs as I said in three liberal parliamentary democracies. I will collect a large body of original data on MPs attitudes towards democratic representation or technocracy. That should help us to explain why politicians differ in their decision making.

And third, by combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches this research project should provide us with some more nuanced assessment of MPs' decision making behaviour. I plan to provide experimental evidence instead of simply self-reported data. I will do this specifically by conducting survey experiments that randomly assign politicians to evaluate new policies when given uncertain information, ambiguous information, both or neither.

Last but not least, what are the practical implications of this research project? Well, generally exploring the impact of public opinion and expert knowledge on elite decision making is of great importance because these are two of the most important inputs that elected politicians must incorporate in their everyday decision making. My research should therefore also have broad implications for our understanding of

politics, but also the policymaking process, and should have benefits for the Austrian Parliament in particular.

In general, I would like to help to provide both experts and citizens with theoretically informed strategies on how to communicate more effectively. Also, I would like to contribute to a better understanding of the demands MPs place on experts and the extent to which they request knowledge from institutions such as the parliament's research services. Moreover, I would like to improve the provision of expert knowledge to parliamentarians in parliamentary settings. And last but not least, I would like to share best practice examples from other parliaments with the Austrian parliamentary administration.

Thank you again. I'm looking forward to your questions over coffee and the subsequent break. – Thank you.

Christoph Clar: There's not enough time to talk and discuss and ask questions – sorry for that. But I hope this will change a little bit – maybe next year, but also later today, of course.

Thank you so much, Bianca Winkler. Thank you so much, Deputy Secretary General. Thank you so much, Josef Lolacher. We are very much looking forward to your research project and the cooperation.

Panel discussion: Why does performance matter? – Different perspectives on performance and parliaments

Panellists:

Lotte de Beer (Artistic director of the Volksoper Wien)

Emma Crewe (SOAS University of London)

Thomas Hofer (Political Consultant, H&P Public Affairs)

Moderation: Philipp Blom

Christoph Clar (Parliamentary Administration): And that brings us now to the final highlight and conclusion of this year's Day of Parliamentary Research. The main actors of this program point have already arrived, so I keep myself to a few words only.

As we started out with Emma Crewe's keynote on the performance of parliaments and we listened to her discussion with Laurenz Ennser-Jedenastik about how to assess and analyse parliamentary processes, we now aim at both: closing the circle, but also opening up new perspectives, new questions, new strands of discussion. We do not presume that we can send you home after this day with a lot of answers, but we hope that this day contributed to developing a lot of questions.

As the Deputy Secretary General has already announced, we are very happy that the following guests have agreed to join the discussion dealing with the question: Why does performance matter? Different perspectives on performance and parliaments. We have invited guests for this discussion, not all of whom are part of the parliamentary research community, but they all deal with performance and politics in their own way and in their own function and they all express themselves publicly in their own different ways concerning these and related issues.

I am very happy to introduce you to the moderator of this discussion, Philipp Blom. He is historian, he is author of several novels, a well-known journalist, he hosts radio programs and he told me that he didn't want the introduction of his person to be too long, so I leave the stage to him. He will introduce the panellists.

Thank you, Philipp Blom, for being here and welcome to the Austrian Parliament!

Philipp Blom: Well, good afternoon and thank you for this kind and brief introduction.

I'm very happy to greet and welcome to the stage – and I ask you, just come and join me on stage – Lotte de Beer, director of the Volksoper in Vienna, who is joining us between two rehearsals for Carmen – so thank you, Lotte, for making the time –, Emma Crewe, a distinguished anthropologist of parliament, and Thomas Hofer, a political journalist from H&P Public Affairs.

Let me just say a few words about our panellists:

Lotte de Beer has won many prizes and distinctions. I will not mention them all now – you can find out for yourselves. But what I really found interesting is her understanding of theatre, because of course, if we speak about performance, performance is a multifaceted word. Politics tend to be performative. But we also want to measure the performance of a parliament. And yes, there is an aspect of theatricality and I think it will be interesting to find out in the discussion how important this aspect is.

This will also involve Emma Crewe, who has researched on the British Parliament, but here is Lotte de Beer speaking about theatre saying theatre doesn't find answers, but we can think aloud about life's questions. Sometimes we can ask them confrontationally, sometimes we juggle them loosely, other times we may deliberately avoid them. Almost always the music that resounds in the Volksoper is music from an earlier time but the theatrical images are always from today and what we tell as our stories is of eternal value. So we can reflect aloud on the past and the present and the future of mankind together.

Emma Crewe has worked for Oxfam and other nongovernmental institutions, and she told me earlier, that was so frustrating that to understand power, she wanted to understand the people who wield it, and therefore she went into the most theatrical place in Britain, which is not the Royal Shakespeare Company, but the British House of Lords. There she has observed people in power up close, and she will tell us what she has observed.

Thomas Hofer is a political analyst, a politologist, but also a prolific author. He has published many books, partly co-authored with Barbara Tóth, and one of them has got the beautiful title for which I think you deserve special congratulations: "Strategien, Schnitzel, Skandale" – strategies, schnitzels and scandals. Please welcome our panellists!

I think this is a really interesting question: the question of performance of politics. And Emma Crewe, you also wrote that our times are becoming more and more wild but also more regulated, which is an interesting juxtaposition. And I have a suspicion those two belong together.

But to kick off this discussion, I'd actually like the three of you to react to one sentence that has preoccupied me greatly over the last few months. It's a sentence written half a century ago by a German constitutional judge with the beautiful name of Ernst-Wolfgang Böckenförde who said that a liberal parliamentary democracy rests on assumptions, it cannot guarantee itself. This sounds a little bit cryptic, but I think it is a very important observation, an observation that we are seeing played out in all democratic countries at the moment: that the assumptions which are necessary to keep a democracy running crack and fragment, and what is left is the legal framework that can be exploited in many ways and regarded in many ways.

Just to give you one example of this in this beautiful country – I'm explaining this more for our international guests –: In this country we have a constitution and a real constitution. The constitution is what is written by Hans Kelsen after whom also the restaurant is named. But the real constitution is a little bit like common law in Britain, it is what people have always done, what the accepted convention is.

I'm telling you this as a little warning, because in Austria, if the minister of justice wants to name new judges, the real constitution says he gets a suggestion from the Association of Judges with three names and the minister can pick one. In the constitution, it says the minister of justice appoints judges which means that we could be in Poland or Hungary in three easy steps. This is the difference between the constitution and the real constitution. This is the difference between the actual legal framework and the assumptions that underpin it that cannot be guaranteed.

Emma Crewe, you are writing busily. This is also at the heart of your work. What do you make of this sentence?

Emma Crewe: I write because it's a sort of habit of a researcher, but it also stops me talking too much, though. But I am fascinated by that sentence. What I make of it is partly that it's widely assumed that parliament is responsible for making liberal democracy work. But the reason why we can't leave it just up to parliamentarians is because I think it's absolutely crucial to have citizens as engaged as possible.

So during the day today, we've been talking quite a lot about various innovations to encourage citizen engagement. So what the parliamentarians are not doing is simply performing to please people. But the problem is, I think there are huge misunderstandings about what's actually going on in the political domain, what politics actually means as a form of work. And part of what I think is misunderstood is the way it's performed.

So I'm really interested to understand more about performance with people who actually work in theatres and operas like yourself. Because what is confusing for people in politics is they take it literally. So if I could give an example from the House of Commons, because after the House of Lords, I went to the House of Commons: One of the rituals that is completely misunderstood is Prime Minister's question time.

We are famous for having this gladiatorial-like noisy event that takes place once a week and even people in Britain think that's typical, so they think that performance is significant and tells us this is politics in Britain. It's actually 0.5 percent, it's not even 1 percent of what goes on. It's an extremely atypical ritual and it's not actually about tribalism really, as far as the politicians are concerned, it's not actually about fighting with the other side. That bit of it is quite delicious. They absolutely love the clean process of expressing antagonism in the way that Chantal Mouffe described.

That's actually quite good politics. You've got clear sides. Inevitably they're going to undermine each other because it's a competitive process, politics, but actually that's not really what it's about. What it's about is talking to the cameras and trying to explain to the public you're the credible party. Even more important, it's one of the rare rituals where you can kind of drum up loyalty from your own side.

So people, ministers or frontbench people, have said to me, when I've said to them: Why do you sound so noisy – you know, some people really don't like it –, why don't you just tone it down a bit?, they say: It's really hard because they're baying for it behind you. All these people behind you are really demanding that kind of performance. They tick you off afterwards, if you sound very calm and measured, they say, no, no, no, this is hopeless, this is not going to get us anywhere.

So what I'm getting at is that one of the strains I think that our democracies are under is a sort of chronic series of misunderstandings about what's going on, and people turn against it and think it's negative and become cynical because they take it too literally – if that makes sense.

Philipp Blom: Thomas Hofer, you are a political strategist, you are in political communication. What about those misunderstandings about how politics work? What role do they play in your work as a communicator?

Thomas Hofer: Well of course a big one. I think, also concerning my branch, the field that I'm working in, there are a couple of misunderstandings because they're referring to the quote you just gave, which is a great one, of course. It is depicting very well the developments of 50 years past – or of the 50 years since the quote.

I think what we are focusing on mainly, even though I'm not working for politicians or parties, is that you really have this trend towards negativity. Emma, what you mentioned from the House of Commons is pretty common also in Austria, we see that too. It's more like parliament is a stage where you perform, where you try to reach your audience and be it via some social or unsocial media channels. If you look at some parties, you can see how well they build their own media channels without the critical filter of journalists, which is a troubling sign of our time, I think.

I think this trend for negativity really is spiralling the whole thing down. I think it's really devastating for the system. I think the quote also refers to that. But here's the thing: Referring to my branch or my community of political communication there are basically two big emotions in political communication – one is hope and the other

one's fear. I don't want to say that, I'm sad to say it, but it's easier to spur fear than to create hope. And that's, I think, one of the main reasons why we're going so much towards negativity, it's an easy sell. You really need a very good communicator on top or also in the second row, whatever, to really create the feeling of hope. It rarely ever happens. And of course, the fragmentation of the media landscape contributes to that development. I think that's really troubling.

To sum it up – I don't want to be too long with my first statement –: I see it that way, that we are developing from democracy to a kind of e-mocracy, and I'm not talking about an online application here, I'm talking about the dominance of emotions. I think that's a problem that can be seen in parliaments all over the world. We can see a trend or a tendency that facts and figures are not undisputed anymore. Everybody makes up their own facts and figures. The most prominent example for that would probably be Donald Trump. But you saw similar developments also in Austria and other European countries during the pandemic.

If we look at it, this was really a post-factual kind of discourse. I don't want to call it discourse, but everybody is, of course, trying to get to their constituencies and spur those emotions even more. And this is certainly something that plays out in the parliamentary reality too. I think that's really the problem and I think that makes the quote you gave at the very start even more dramatic than it probably was 50 years ago.

Philipp Blom: Lotte de Beer, let me turn to you, because you are the performance professional here, with this sentence that democracy rests on assumptions it cannot guarantee itself. I think many people would understand the theatre as one of the places where those assumptions can be strengthened, where citizenship, mutual respect, a sort of decency are dramatized on stage. Do you think this can really perform an important role in society? Or is it subsidized theatre playing for the middle classes who believe in that any way?

Lotte de Beer: No, I don't. I don't think that a cynical truth is true. I think you're very right about the function of theatre. To react to your initial sentence: It made me go back to my theatre school time where postmodernism, storytelling, post-traumatic storytelling was explained to me and we used to believe that there was one truth. Now we know that – this was preached to us – there are many truths next to each other.

I think that's an interesting thought in storytelling and in dramatic art, but combined with social media, this pulling back into your bubble of truth and having the idea that a debate consists of actually two monologues that bounce off each other and radicalize and just become more and more certain of themselves: I think that's a big, big problem in politics and in the world.

My chance as a theatre maker is to radically connect. I have an auditorium with 1300 people that come from all sorts of different bubbles. I'm very, very privileged with the Volksoper. I inherited an audience that is very far away from my own background, political ideas, my ideas on our society. I bring in new audiences with different ideas. I have them on a seat for three hours and I engage them in an exercise in empathy. It's three hours in which you sit in the dark together with 1300 other souls. Your heartbeats are being synchronized by the same music. That is an emotional language, and you're living and emoting with someone, with a protagonist, who is not you, who is a different person with a different truth, with a different background, et cetera.

This is a way not to divide, not to preach, not to convince, but to connect on an emotional level and to be able to live three hours of your life from a different point of view. I think that's exactly what we need in this society.

Philipp Blom: Emma Crewe, this is a literal performance, but politics is also concerned with ritual, with ceremony, with symbol – very importantly –, and these things are slightly at odds with egalitarian democratic ideals. There's always a friction between these two. How does that work and how important is ritual and symbol for political power in an enlightened, egalitarian society?

Emma Crewe: I think ritual has a very different resonance in Germany in particular – for obvious reasons. So it has a sort of history and culture to it that's very, very different in different nations. I actually wrote a book about rituals in parliaments with a German political scientist called Marion Müller. She felt that the turn away from ritual in Germany is very problematic because it dampens down the drama and the interest.

Actually the truth about the British parliament is that most of the time it is extremely boring, it's not always like Prime Minister's Questions. But the point about rituals is, as I was saying earlier today, that you cannot have important decisions either in parliament about passing laws or you can't send someone to jail in a court of law without having a ritual by which I mean a clear hierarchy, at least temporarily. So in a sense, you can't have egalitarianism without temporary hierarchy, because if you don't have some kind of hierarchy, then you can't have someone presiding – as you are now – as the speaker who decides on the process. So you do have to have a lot of regulation with these incredibly politically charged moments.

I want to come back to something you said about subjectivity, if I may, and make a connection between subjectivity, objectivity and working towards equality. I think we're stuck – I would take what you're saying sort of even slightly further – between two different visions of truth. One is an endless series of subjectivities and the other is the idea that there's only one objective truth. I talked about this in relation to Texas, because the ultra-, ultra-conservatives believe in one truth. They're originalists: it comes from the Bible and it comes from the original constitution. But on the left, you've got Democrats who – further left – only believe in a series of subjective truths. You can't get a serious political debate, I don't think, and you can't work towards equality unless you get beyond this.

So I go back to the pragmatists. The pragmatist philosophers say that this is a false choice. We don't need to choose between subjectivity and objectivity, we need to work towards objectivity. We never get there, but we need to understand each

other's subject truth and come to temporary positions where we do share something in common because otherwise we're just fragmented.

There's a philosopher called Rahel Jaeggi who writes about alienation. I think you get alienation if you just see yourself as separate beings with separate truths. To come back to your point about hope: To get hope or justice or equality or any of these things we have to be able to get beyond one position to another position to get to a third position.

Lotte de Beer: I think what is happening to the people who are seeing everything in a subjective way is that very often they're stuck in reacting to the stories of fear that are told by the other party. So you have a really good story from one radical point of view, and then you have a very rational and reasonable answer to that. That's not sexy. I think what we need to at least do is tell active stories and not just be in the reactive corner.

Philipp Blom: Thomas Hofer, I find this idea about truths and hierarchy very interesting because many truths about the interpretation of a novel are maybe all equally valid. But many truths about the change of a tax system or the construction of a road can still only lead to one kind of tax system, and one road is either built or not built.

Now, in our democracies, especially in our digitized democracies, with social media, people more and more strongly believe that they're entitled to their personal truth but the societal outcome of all of these personal truths needs still to be one reality.

Thomas Hofer: I think that's the base of the problem, to refer to the two ladies who really pointed down to one thing. My favourite letter to the editor appeared, I think, three years ago in "The Times". It was very short, it was like that: Ladies and gentlemen, I profoundly disagreed with a lot of op-eds and generally with the articles in Saturday's edition! Please keep up the good work!

I think this is a very valid point because it explains what you two referred to. And I think it's so much in the center of it all because if we also ask ourselves: How open are we to two different kinds of roads or concepts? How do we come up with an idea? That refers to one central thing but it is also valid for parliaments because this is the platform – and that's very important – where we can really negotiate what we should do as a society. As you pointed out in your question, we're losing those platforms, maybe including this one here, which is the central platform, as I said.

I think we're not enough aware of this. We're at a very crucial point and time, simply because of what I said before about negative and even dirty campaigning. This development will be even spurred much more. You can see it in the American election cycle right now, at this very moment, in the campaign 2024, where AI is really spurring this trend towards negativity, towards manipulation of pictures, of images, also of moving images where no one, maybe also including us here in this room, will be able to say what's right and what's wrong.

The problem of authentication of content will be a huge development. And of course, if you add on to this and look at the media crises that we have not only in Austria, maybe especially in Austria, but also, of course in many other democracies much larger than ours, you can see that we're coming into an environment where it's getting harder and harder to come up with not only: how do we get to a decision?, but also to legitimize this decision. I think this is really something and we are altogether not equipped to give a good and valid answer to this.

Philipp Blom: Let me pick this up and perhaps sharpen it a little bit more. We're talking about performance here, and I would claim that performance relies on a thick layer of culture. A performance needs to be readable. We need to be able to relate to it. We need to know the structure of the stories. We need to know the likely protagonists that make a story readable.

Now, Emma Crewe wrote that our times are becoming wilder, but also more regulated, and that made me think of the latest book by Olivier Roy which is called in

English “The Crisis of Culture”. It’s called in the original French – I think, much better – “L’Aplatissement du monde”, the flattening of the world. His basic point is: In our neoliberal, globalized, highly mobile societies we are losing culture and replacing it with regulation.

One image that makes it very clear is: If you look at Youtube videos of archival films of old cities, Paris, London or Vienna, and you see a busy traffic intersection, there are horse carts and there are other carts and there are bicycles, there are a few early motor mobiles, there are of course plenty pedestrians – the women are wearing long dresses and the men are wearing suits –, but what you do not see are street signs or stoplights. All the cultural practices are implicit.

If you go on a street today: People are wearing what they want, but there are dozens of street signs telling them exactly what to do, where to go, how fast to go, where not to go et cetera. And you see the complete change of the implicit understanding of a society and of social interactions. Is that a wild over-interpretation?

Lotte de Beer: No, I love that interpretation and I’ve seen it in practice in Amsterdam, where there was a square like that, the central station, all the taxis, all the buses, all the bikers were insane in Amsterdam, all the pedestrians, and there was a boat, and they tried to regulate, but there were accidents, accidents, accidents, and everybody was in a rush. They decided to take all the street signs away and said this is everybody’s. And all of a sudden people slowed down, got off their bikes, let people in front. And it was that that is such a great tool: Let’s take the rules away and just rely on our humanness and remind ourselves on our own responsibilities again!

I don't know if that fits into your - -

Philipp Blom: I think, absolutely.

Emma Crewe, the anthropologist’s view of this?

Emma Crewe: Yeah, I want to relate back as well to this need to be able to negotiate because I think both the wildness and the overregulation make it very difficult to

negotiate. So I think this is still relevant to parliaments, but sometimes one can go sideways, and I just want to go sideways into my university SOAS, where the academics in particular were feeling incredibly overregulated, you know, managerialism, means that we are all becoming kind of administrators a lot of the time.

We want to push back a lot of the regulation that comes down from government, but also from different departments of the university. I'm going to be very respectful of my colleagues, but it causes huge conflicts. We had a kind of facilitated session recently in the senate, in our governance body. It's a kind of parliament because there were factions who were finding it impossible to listen to the other faction's truth. So the conflict was very deep and had been building for years and years and years.

I worked with this amazing facilitator called Kiran Chauhan, who I teach with management in a business school. He just facilitated like magic, and he got people talking to each other in different configurations over a few days. At the end of it I said to him: How did you do that, Kiran, how did you get us all talking in this completely different way? – I mean, they were so cynical about it at the beginning, and at the end of it, they said: God, that was really humane, thank you!, and this is, I mean, very unusual in SOAS, believe me.

And I said to him: How did you do it?, and he said: through narrative! – So it goes back to something you were saying earlier, by continually making people go back to where we come from, the different factions, SOAS and the individuals. Where have we come from and where are we now? What are we stuck? Why are we stuck at this moment and where are we heading to? So giving people a continual sense of movement made it possible for them to listen to each other in a completely different way. We came up at the end, by the way, with a lot of very practical decisions about how to work differently. I don't know if that'll work, but we reached agreements in a way that we haven't for many years.

So there's something about pushing back on both the wildness, which can come from intense conflict, if it's not facilitated, but also this overregulation. We don't have to accept it.

Philipp Blom: We don't have to accept. Thomas Hofer, how can we re-engage in an overregulated world where we feel that, shall we say, cultural legibility is leeching out of this world?

Thomas Hofer: First of all, I'm giving you a politician's answer now, and I'm saying, I'm coming back to your question in a moment. Let me say something else first - -

Philipp Blom: You are really glad I asked you this question?

Thomas Hofer: I'm really coming back to your question. Just to add on to what was said before in terms of regulation. This is also a political narrative. If you look at one very prominent Austrian party leading the polls right now, the Freedom Party: The narrative is exactly what you refer to. The narrative is overarching. Several themes right now that are prominent and important are freedom versus suppression and overregulation, if you look at Covid for example and the policies employed back then and embraced back then, if you look at, of course, migration, which is their core issue, if you look at the so called wokeness movement, if you look at climate change and policies leading to that.

So this is a very concrete narrative. I've just wanted to refer to that because I think it has real consequences, and that's why it's so important to have a narrative. By the way, what is, I think, contributing to the problem we face in Austria here very much at the moment is that the narrative of the second republic is sliding away – this is having an aspirational tendency towards improving, towards moving up the social ladder, whatever it might be for any single person. Other parties like the Social Democrats, like the People's Party are not reacting to that. I don't know why, but there's not the strength anymore to have a counter-narrative, if you want to say so.

I'm not taking sides here, I'm just trying to analyze who's got a narrative, who's working with those trends you've just explained and who's not. And what we also see – coming back to your question –, I think this concept of conflict is so important. Of course everybody, or not everybody, but a lot of parties and fractions are really seeking this kind of conflict.

And there's also something that I would call expanding the political – I don't mean it in a military way – combat song. If you look at how some politicians try to have conflict with journalists for example, overreacting to trigger words that are in questions and then playing it out, you know, within minutes, as we've seen three weeks ago at a rally of one party, throughout their channels. You can see where they want to go to. It's not conflict of interest or of different convictions or of whatever – they are looking for this in order to spur those emotions.

So I think we should be aware of that. And, as I said before, it's going to be a problem when it comes to authentication. I'm telling you just one example to make it clear. If the scandal of Ibiza wouldn't have happened or wouldn't have surfaced five years ago: What would have happened in the future, in five years? What would have happened if you would have been or were Mr. Strache? What would you have said in five years? You would say that's fake, that wasn't me, I wasn't there, I was somewhere else, that's not the shirt I was wearing – whatever.

Try to prove him wrong in five years when we will be used to really manipulated videos, when we will be used to a world where we can't really tell, at least not at the first moment, if that is a manipulated video or an authentic one. I think that's really shaking up the base. We're all, you know, standing on right now. I think we're not in a position right now, today, where we can really see the full scope when it really plays out in reality.

Philipp Blom: One of the important things about rituals and narratives is that they're shared. How important is that for society to have points of shared ritual, of shared moments? Because Thomas Hofer mentioned it, narratives are becoming brittle.

There are, if I may say this as a private person here in Austria, not many parties that have strong narratives. The Freedom Party would be one. It's not the kind of narrative I like, but it's a strong narrative. If you look at other major parties, the narratives are very brittle, also very old partly. Now, if political forces run out of narrative, how is it possible to re-energize this in a society? Because I think that without a narrative, the society is simply a bunch of people living in one space and competing for resources.

Lotte de Beer: It's incredibly important. I think we like to look at events in our life and turn it into much more of a consistent narrative than it might be. And it gives us a feeling of safety, of belonging, of purpose. I think if you just get born and you live and you die and you think that's it, a lot of us would probably jump off this world. So we construct a truth, we construct a purpose, whether that is religious, or for me, I believe I'm changing the world through theatre. That's why I get up and even when I'm tired, I'm going on.

Of course, there are strong narratives. Absolutely, it's just the problem is that the narratives are becoming so exclusive for little groups. You're noticing it also in language. I did "West Side Story", which is a piece that is very popular, where a lot of people, a lot of different people want to watch. It's a story about two groups not accepting each other and fighting each other. There was a scene which I found important and but also a scene that I wanted to warn people about because it had sexual violence. We said: Should we use a trigger warning? And then I thought: If I use the word trigger warning, half of my audience thinks this is a woke bullshit thing. If I do not use the term trigger warning that the other half of the audience is going to think: Conservative assholes who don't care! – It's really unbelievable how we're alienating people just in our use of language. So I'm trying to be creative. Even if I mean trigger warning, I don't have to use the words trigger or warning, I can describe it.

So I'm trying to use very inclusive language to start at a source where everybody can come with, I call it Trojan horses. I know that there is a way of storytelling, that there is a way of using visuals, that the curtain opens and either my conservative part of the

audience thinks: Ja, so soll Operette sein!, and the other half of the audience goes: Oh, boring, langweilig!, or the other way around. But you can use that aesthetic so that hearts are opened and then put in a narrative that might not be in the comfort zone but the hearts have already opened and you could catch them in.

So I think we have to on one hand find stories for everybody but always think: Who am I reaching? How can I get their attention? How can I make it fun, make it sexy, make it important? Go for the heart and then try to connect in a narrative.

Philipp Blom: Emma Crewe, you want to say something. Please go.

Emma Crewe: I just wanted to respond to that because I think that's so fascinating. For me, theatre is partly about confronting our prejudices. So in a way it's a shame if we're losing that capacity. But anthropology is basically about that too. That is the disposition you are trained to have as an anthropologist. Traditionally, you take yourself from your own culture. It could be in your own country, but it's more exciting to go somewhere else, so you tend to go somewhere else; I first went to India, to the Himalayas. And you become like an infant again. You have to think again about everything you've learnt. It completely demolishes all your assumptions and all your prejudices. And you not only have to try and learn about another culture, but you realize what you've learned to become socialized into your own culture. It's as if we've kind of, you know, lost this capacity to think about our own prejudices. We're becoming very, very entrenched in our own positions and I mean, maybe we can learn to at least improvise.

So I think the answer to your question about narrative, shared and different, is: We can't choose between those two. You know, I mean, life would be miserable if we were all the same. And anyway, it's impossible to be all the same. We are inevitably all going to be different. So we're always encountering each other as different and having things in common. And so I think, Politicians need to be able to do both. The Chantal Mouffe point is: We need to be able to make choices. We talked about manifesto pledges. We need parties to demarcate themselves from each other. We

need to know what they stand for as opposed to what they stand for. So we need a sort of aggregate of difference represented by parliaments, but we also need commonalities.

I just want to quickly say that the most moving debate I've ever heard was about assisted dying. It was a backbench debate, it was kind of run by the backbenchers in the UK parliament, so inevitably it had less competitiveness in it. But the reason why it was so moving is because people came from literally opposing positions about whether or not we should be allowed to have assisted dying. But they told personal stories, which was so powerful. Each side literally wept at the stories of the other side. And they listened with rapt attention in a way which they don't always. We need to get that rapt attention possibility back.

Philipp Blom: I'm feeling your rapt attention and I'm grateful for that and I'd like to throw open the debate to you and ask you whether you got questions.

But before that, I just can't resist to ask Emma Crew another question, a very British question, to bring us back to the theme of performance, which is, after all, the theme of this debate. In the British political landscape at the moment you've got the bizarre situation that you've got a party in government that had a very strong narrative, but whose performance was so disastrous that nobody wants to hear of them anymore. You've got the rival, the Labour Party, who says: We're all performance, we don't have a narrative! We don't have any convictions or ideas! We are just people who are really good at sorting practical stuff out, so don't be afraid of us! – And now, in something that used to be, for all intents and purposes, long a two party system, you all of a sudden have a third party that's only narrative and no performance because they never had to perform. Reform is a new party and actually a party, I believe, without members. It's only Nigel Farage, who is the only official member, like Geert Wilders in the Netherlands, who is leading a one-man party. How is the balance between performance and narrative and this curious democratic situation?**Emma Crewe:** I think he's got loads and loads of candidates. Cristina knows much more. *(Cristina **Leston-Bandeira:** There's one MP!)* – Okay, so there's one existing MP. I mean,

you've summarized it absolutely perfectly. I can't really add very much except to say that I don't think you couldn't read situations and say: If that one's performing well or if that one's got a good narrative or so, then it's going to translate into this output. That's why we can't just use a kind of linear formula to anticipate what happens in politics.

There is also just the rhythm of the fact that people in Britain anyway, get very, very tired of seeing the same old politicians portrayed in exactly the same way for years; at least after ten years we start to get really sick of them. So it's partly just the rhythm becoming utterly fed up with the same faces. But we do also have – this is where my partiality will show very strongly – a sense of deep betrayal about the promises that were made. I talked earlier about how the Brexit-Referendum was kind of pretending it was an election. The promises that were made were a case of extraordinary wildness and people are suffering as a consequence. So that that's partly why the current lot will get thrown out.

Philipp Blom: The answer, as we all know and heard yesterday from the British government, is: Bring back Boris Johnson! – That's an interesting thought.

How important is performance in a parliament and also what is – in politics – the difference between performance and performativity? Your questions are very welcome to our three panellists. Who would like to make a start? – Please.

Question from the audience: Thank you very much for this amazing talk.

I was asking myself the whole time because you were jumping around and then coming back to, I think, the topic sensitivity. You were talking about the humanness we find in Amsterdam, also about the question how we are judging media that's maybe manipulated. Finally, you said what I think is the interesting point: the aesthetic and the question about an aesthetic experience is turning and leading us to a static judgement which ultimately constructs or builds culture, community and society.

So I was asking myself: Is the capacity that is missing maybe a lack of aesthetic competence? Are we not good at it anymore in trying to connect on a basis of empathy with other people to then find an intersubjective way, if we stick to the theory that judgment binds us together and that it ultimately creates a narrative? I would like to especially hear from you what you think about this hypothesis.

Lotte de Beer: The way you phrased the question actually made me think that an aesthetic is always a way of telling a narrative or a truth. And I think our current way of using aesthetics is to express who we are, our truths. And I think if you look back on other eras, the other perspective is used: Who am I talking to? What do they need to come towards my truth? That would be my answer, that the aesthetics should be chosen from the point of view: How do I reach the different persons that I want to interact with? How do I get them from where they are? How can I wheel them in by an aesthetics to come to that truth? For that, you need to know what your truth is, what your story is, and you need to be interested in the person that you're talking to, to connect on an aesthetic level, yeah, and then start your story.

Philipp Blom: Another question, please. Your microphone is coming.

Question from the audience: Thank you very much for your inspiring talk. I can agree to every sentence that was said on the stage. But in my mind there is one question I can't answer and maybe you can help me. We are talking about politicians and that they face very complex situations, very complex challenges, and we expect them to have quite a lot of competencies.

They should be able to communicate, they should be able to tell a really strong story and so on and so on. In my mind, there is one question: Don't we face the danger that we are expected to be the one person who is answering all that needs to be answered? I think in history we didn't have experiences with these expectations. That is what I wanted to ask you.

Philipp Blom: If I may put that in a different way: Are we expecting too much from politicians? Are we expecting politicians to have all the competencies a human being can have? Are we setting ourselves up for disappointment?

By the way, you mentioned that we haven't had such great experiences with charismatic leaders. That may be true, although some people seem to not agree on that these days. What is the relation between charismatic leaders – who seem to answer this – and a functioning democracy?

Thomas Hofer: It's a grand question and I think there are a couple of truths to it. One thing is – and of course, I would say that we expect too much, of course, from a single politicians – wat effect that has. Of course, politicians 30, 40 years ago had it much easier at least in the media landscape, and I'm not talking about questions coming from journalists, but, you know, everybody being able to comment on certain developments instantly. This instant way of communication is much harder for politicians nowadays.

What does it do to those politicians? We talked about fear early on. It places fear in themselves, they don't trust what they believe in anymore. They don't come up with their own concepts or programmes anymore because they fear that those programmes or ideas might be dismantled the second day after they speak out loud.

What we have, and I think this contributes to this tendency towards one party, one mostly man, it can be a woman too, of course, saying: Okay, this is the simple truth, let's follow a couple of basic principles and we'll be fine again! This is, of course, totally wrong. But going back to this thing, we always think it's about agenda setting and about politicians shaping the agenda. I think that's not true anymore.

In the current world, it's more agenda surfing than agenda setting. Politicians are reading polls and poll numbers – I love polls, I'm not a pollster, but it's fine –, but they're not reading them correctly. How should you read a poll? You have a look: Where is the public? Okay: What do I think? What are my ideas? How can I connect – as you pointed out in your last statement – how can I connect? How can I get a

majority for what I believe? This is not happening anymore. That's – you know, one for all, cookie cutter, which is, of course not true – in general the attitude: I have a look at where the majority is, and there I am too. There is a saying, at least in America: You can't lead from behind! This is a contradiction in itself and I think it spurs the idea that there should be someone somewhere who tells me what we should do as a society and this is the simple answer.

What I was talking about right now is kind of a paradox but I think this tendency towards agenda surfing, trying to be on the safe side could also be seen during the pandemic and then the management of the pandemic. Politicians looked at: What do people want now? What if it was like in the summer five years ago: Then we see that two months later it's totally opposite of that. So this is, I think, part of the problem that leads to this tendency which is certainly troubling.

Lotte de Beer: What I'm also interested in, because: Charismatic leaders – we often choose narcissists, who believe in themselves, who believe that they can flamboyantly lead, and we notice only much too late that actually they're not great leaders because they don't serve the people.

I'm noticing – and I'm wondering if this is also happening in the political world – that our ideas of leadership are now being challenged. I see, for instance, orchestras who used to only want a very male maestro who ruled with fear, and I feel that orchestras start to understand what a very connecting, a very empathetic leader – who doesn't identify as a leader on the first look – is, and I see how an orchestra suddenly becomes a very responsible, a very connected, a very sensitive tool who play their hearts out for someone with a very different leadership skill. And I wonder if the way we portray politicians gives us enough possibility for that.

Philipp Blom: I think that's a wonderful thought. These inherited role models are stereotypes that we expect people to fulfil. I can't resist telling one story about somebody Emma Crewe probably knows very well: an old British parliamentarian called Tony Benn, who was a curious case because he actually resigned from the

House of Lords and gave back his aristocratic title to sit in the House of Commons for the Labour Party.

I spoke to him as a young journalist when he was already in his eighties, and he told me: So tell me, young man: Why is democracy important? – And I started stuttering all the normal things about shared power and so, and he said: Yes, yes, that's all true, but it's got nothing to do; the only thing that makes democracy important is an unbloody changeover of power! – Which I found a very sobering and very important thought that brings back democracy really to the basis of power and how power works. And democratic leaders may always be disappointed, because very probably through these election processes you don't get the most charismatic and the most amazing people, but the stability may well be worth it.

We have time for one last question. Who wants the dubious honour of the last question? – The lady with the white blouse. Could you please take the microphone to her?

Question from the audience: I was wondering, and I think that sort of touches on a few questions that were asked and a few remarks that were made: What is the tension or is there a trade-off or a paradox between our ideas of freedom and the need for narratives and an aesthetic way of bringing people in? Because I think, also in the Freedom Party, for example, there is always this narrative of: We need to be free, and everyone needs to have their own truth, and we need to do whatever we like! – But then we have no incentive of actually building a narrative and of actually being together. And on the one side, democracy relies on personal rights and freedoms, but then on the other hand, we need some shared emotional bond in order to have a functioning democracy.

And where do we go from here? Because there was this liberal promise that we have rights and freedoms, and in a way we have achieved all that now and we all wear different clothes on the street. But on the other hand, we have all these traffic lights and all these signs telling us what to do, because we cannot go freedom until the very

end because then we're all just separate individuals coexisting. Right?**Philipp Blom:** The tension between freedom and a culture that binds.

Emma Crewe: I mean, I'm not sure that we do all have rights and freedoms in the UK at all, and I think – this also answers a little bit your question – one of the hugely difficult, contradictory forms of work that the elected politicians have to do is entailed in this claim that they make to represent whatever it is, 50,000 people or even 100,000 people or whatever, even more in India.

But that's not literally possible. You can't make a whole constituency feel free. You can't promote the rights of all. You simply do not have time. So you have to make these terrible choices. And I think one of the sort of neglected skills that we should sort of demand and one of the processes that we should demand is all about being more accountable. And it's not just about listening to your constituents or educating them and telling them what to do, but it's about getting into debates about your question. What would it mean for my constituency to feel a greater sense of freedom or to have rights of different groups upheld?

So I think getting into debate about that question is actually long, long overdue. Just at the moment we're dealing with all these crises that you've been talking about, AI and climate and whatever, so it's not easy, but that's the task ahead.

Thomas Hofer: To make it a little more complicated than that: First of all, I think, referring to your question, the Freedom-Party-frame is actually not about freedom. That's what they say. Of course they say that's freedom versus suppression and it's a beautiful frame and it's done very well in terms of political communication, but I think the truth is something else. I think it's not so much about freedom, it's more like – and I'm trying to alter a film title: Back to the Future – the Freedom Party's message is – and it might be true for Donald Trump and others on a different stage – Forward to the Past, in order to have more control again. Because there are – and don't forget, I think that's a basic truth – a lot of fears out there about what's about to come. You feel like you lost control.

And if you look at the constituents and the constituencies who are really referring to this message, I think that's more at the core. Of course, in the outside, it's about freedom, but it's, I think, more about control, about security, about not giving up what we used to have, what we understood, what we knew, what was understandable in our cultural, whatever framework.

So I think there's a difference – sorry to make it more complicated – between what the frame is on the outside and what it really refers to in the end.

Philipp Bloom: Lotte de Beer, I can't resist asking you this as a last question, because freedom in the usual sort of philosophical discourse always comes as a counterweight of responsibility.

Lotte de Beer: Yeah, and for me, it's the same thing.

Philipp Bloom: And that is my question, because you're not only running a theatre, but artists set huge store by their artistic freedom, but at the same time, if you work in a large ensemble, your freedom is very brutally curtailed by rehearsal times, where you have to stand at which moment and which lines you're going to say or sing. So how does this tension of freedom and responsibility or actually just connectivity work in a large ensemble, be it a theatre or a state?

Lotte de Beer: Great, that's exactly what I was going to add to this discussion. For me, the flipside of freedom is responsibility. The one cannot go without the other. That's what I teach my six year old. If you want to earn a privilege, you'll have to add another responsibility. That's what I'm noticing as a Dutch person who comes from a more egalitarian society into an Austrian organization. I'm giving them freedom, but then immediately they notice: Oh shit, now I'm responsible for it! I have to carry part of that shitty responsibility!

As an actor, the more you are restrained by very clear: If you do this and then I give you the glass of water on number three!, then the more freedom you will experience at the moment that you're doing it, because then you're free from that organization

and you can completely be in the moment. But also: If we have a dialogue and I play it the way we agreed to do it together with the director, I'm not imposing on your freedom. I could also think: Ha ha, I'm doing this dialogue like this!, but it really takes away from your freedom. So yeah, freedom and responsibility go together like horse and carriage.

Philipp Bloom: Freedom and responsibility go together. I thank you all for your kind attention and for your active participation. And I thank you for giving us all plenty of food for thought. I think there are some concluding remarks and then the seriously good news: There are drinks. So I thank you all and have a wonderful evening.