

# How to Make Parliaments More Influential in Policymaking

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# Outline of the keynote speech

## **The goal**

- to increase the relevance and influence of parliaments

## **Obstacles**

- particularly agenda-setting firmly in the hands of executives
- institutions matter – but institutional reforms are often difficult to implement
- politicization and polarization are not (alone) enough, as the plenary is not the key forum for political communication

## **Solutions**

- revitalize political parties
- invest in inclusivity and future-oriented approaches
- increase cooperation between parliaments and scholars

# Revitalizing political parties

- Maybe an old-fashioned argument, but strengthening the resources of parties (or their party groups) reduces the informational advantage of the executive
- “We propose that political parties increasingly face what we call the imperative of expertise. Stemming from the ‘realities’ of contemporary policymaking, the expertise imperative strongly incentivises parties to recruit and promote political staff based on their skills and competence rather than partisan loyalty alone. ... More than anything, Finnish party elites see the cultivation of expertise as an attempt to regain lost ground in *policymaking* – a party function whose relevance has been undervalued in party organizational research.”
- Increase participatory mechanisms inside political parties – links citizens indirectly with parliamentary processes

# Invest in inclusivity and future-oriented approaches

- Parliamentary committees by and large hear ‘usual suspects’ – larger NGOs, big companies, trade unions etc.
- Public engagement remains weak: a need to engage with a broader range of actors from marginalized groups to ordinary citizens
- Future-oriented governance (future committees or other mechanisms that consider the interests of future generations) is more inclusive and can nudge the whole political system towards more long-term policymaking – Chile, Finland, Estonia, Lithuania...
- Congreso Futuro – organizing events on future-oriented themes is a form of agenda-setting and public engagement

# How (political) science could help

- Provide sufficient resources for research services ([European Parliamentary Research Service](#)) – parliaments can also independently produce information
- Invest in comparative approaches that facilitate the adoption of ‘best practices’: scholars and parliaments could do a whole lot more together – both at the level of individual countries and international / European organizations (e.g., IPU, COSAC etc.)
- Quantitative turn in political science: so much easily available data that scholars no longer visit parliaments or talk to MPs...
- Involve scholars in parliamentary work, such as through the [Riksdag scholarship for doctoral students in political science](#)

ChatGPT  
/  
"future-  
oriented  
parliament"

