Parliamentary Functions Portrayed on European Parliaments' Websites[*]

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Introduction

This article uses data from a pilot study on the websites of 15 parliaments in Europe to identify which parliamentary functions are portrayed on these websites. The pilot study undertook a contents analysis focused on four parliamentary functions: legislation, legitimation, representation and scrutiny, to ascertain the extent to which each of these functions is present on the websites analysed. This study is part of ongoing research and focuses here only on the contents of the websites, without integrating structure or style. We recognise that these are crucial to understanding a website, but we aim in this article to merely focus on content for a preliminary discussion of how parliaments portray the four parliamentary functions identified. Further research will integrate structure and style into the analysis. This analysis shows that legislation is the main focus of parliamentary websites in Europe and representation the one that has less devoted space. We also show that parliamentary websites tend to focus on parliamentary *outputs* to the detriment of parliamentary *actors*.

Assessing parliaments' websites through parliamentary functions

The internet plays an increasingly important role in communicating and forming public opinion, being a key tool in the relationship between political institutions and the public. Understanding how a central political institution such as parliament uses the internet is therefore crucial to address some of the challenges faced by today's democracies such as political apathy and distance between citizens and politicians. The potential importance played by information and communication technologies (ICT) for parliaments is shown by developments such as the Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, a joint venture between the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) and the Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU) together with a group of parliaments, which aims to promote and strengthen the development of ICT in parliaments across the world (Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, 2009). This initiative actively promotes and supports events, conferences, networks and studies in this area. ICT can potentially enhance parliament's work considerably by helping towards more transparent and accessible institutions, as well as promoting an active engagement of citizens in the political process.

And yet the implementation of ICT by parliaments is not always a straight forward process. By their very nature, parliaments are institutions where the implementation of rapid

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processes (such as the ones that characterise ICT) presents difficulties. Parliaments are collective and large institutions, which means that it may take longer to reach decisions; they are also public institutions and need to show transparency in decision-making. Again, this leads to long decision-making processes, often not very flexible and often far too broad to encompass agreement between different political views. In comparison to parties, for instance, the parliamentary institution brings a higher level of complexity in the application of ICT as it needs to obey to a much larger – but also more difficult to account for – drive. ICT brings therefore huge potential for parliaments, but also significant challenges. One of its biggest challenges is to conciliate what ICT can provide for in terms of enhanced democracy (with the expectations that derive from the rapid technological development) and the actual parliamentary decision-making process that underlie the way parliament adopt ICT. This is particularly clear when it comes to the parliaments' websites, raising a number of questions: to what extent, for instance, does a parliament's website correspond to what parliaments do and what citizens expect? Who decides what to include on a parliament's website and what its focus should be? Or, simply, what is the focus of parliamentary websites?

Throughout the 1990s European parliaments introduced and developed their own websites and, according to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, 87% of these parliaments were online by 1998 (IPU, 2000: 3). The question today is not whether they are online, but how they are online; that is, what is their focus. The basic features included in these websites have been identified in surveys (see the most recent and comprehensive in: Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, 2008). What remains unknown, however, is whether this expansion has brought an enhancement of parliamentary activity; that is, the extent to which (1) the websites reflect the work being developed in parliament and (2) the extent to which the online presence can actually enhance parliamentary activity. We propose to address these questions by focusing on key four functions played by parliaments in Europe and the extent to which their websites reflect these functions.

Parliaments in Europe play four key functions (in alphabetical order): legitimation, legislation, representation and scrutiny (Norton, 1998). If the internet is to enhance parliamentary activity, then it should enhance these four functions. Furthermore, the use of the internet should provide parliaments with a unique opportunity to overcome constraints resulting from institutional factors. The internet provides a cost effective and efficient means through which politicians can reach out to a very wide range of publics. It could therefore be a powerful tool to enhance parliaments' functions of legitimation, legislation, representation and scrutiny. In a world where the internet has become an integral part of peoples' routines, parliaments' websites can be much more than a mere information repository; they can be a key mechanism promoting active citizenship, as well as a more dynamic relationship with other stakeholders such as pressure groups.

However, we still know little about the detail of what these websites include and what they add to the institution itself. To what extent are the websites of parliaments in Europe adding value to these institutions? And what do the different experiences in Europe show us about how the internet has been used by parliaments? One key challenge arising from these questions is to ascertain whether parliaments' institutional factors have an impact on the way their websites are being designed and used. Parliaments in Europe are organised very differently according to institutional factors such as their method of election or their structure. Likewise, parliaments play different functions according to their institutional characteristics; some lead naturally to a more representative role (such as the single-member constituency based British House of Commons) other to a more legislative based role (such as the German

Bundestag). In order to fully evaluate parliaments' websites, and the role they play, one needs to take into account their wider off-line context (Leston-Bandeira, 2007). The very few studies on this so far have not examined the institutional context in which parliaments function (Coleman 2006, Norris 2001, Setälä & Grönlund 2006, Trechsel et al. 2003, World Centre for ICT in Parliament 2008). Focusing on parliamentary functions and the way these are portrayed on their websites is a first step towards providing a more integrated understanding of parliaments' websites and the extent to which these enhance, hinder or simply reproduce what parliaments do off-line.

The study

To determine which parliamentary functions are portrayed on parliaments' websites, we undertook a pilot study which consisted of a contents analysis of the websites of 15 parliaments in Europe (11 national, three sub-national and one supra-national)[1]. This pilot study is part of ongoing research looking at the extent to which parliaments' websites have brought effective changes to parliamentary activity in Europe. This contents analysis was carried out in June 2008 and so it should reflect the websites at that moment in time. The pilot includes the following parliaments:

Country / Region	Electoral System[2]	Political System	Type of Democracy
Austria	PR list	Semi-presidential	Established democracy
Belgium	PR list	Parliamentary	Established democracy
Czech Republic	PR list	Parliamentary	New democracy
European Union	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
France	Majority	Semi-presidential	Established democracy
Germany	Mixed	Parliamentary	Established democracy
Ireland	PR STV	Semi-presidential	Established democracy
Northern Ireland	Mixed	n.a.	Established democracy environment
Poland	PR list	Semi-presidential	New democracy
Scotland	Mixed	n.a.	Established democracy environment
Slovakia	PR list	Semi-presidential	New Democracy
Spain	PR list	Parliamentary	New democracy
Switzerland	PR list	Parliamentary	Established democracy
United Kingdom	Majority	Parliamentary	Established democracy
Wales	Mixed	n.a.	Established democracy environment

The contents analysis sought to map the websites according to the four parliamentary functions identified above: legislation, legitimation, representation and scrutiny. More specifically we aimed to identify how each site addresses these functions, in terms not only of the type of information included for each function, but also the level of detail and emphasis given to each.

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[1] When bicameral, we have focused on the lower chamber.
[2] The electoral systems classification follows (IDEA, 2009). The political systems classification is according to (LeDuc et al, 2002) and (White et al, 2007); and the type of democracy is determined according to whether democracy has been in place for 50 or more years (Established democracy) or less than 50 years (New democracy).

The results analysed in this article refer in particular to a number of variables that have been dichotomised. These variables are all coded in the same way and aim to check whether a particular feature exists or not; if the feature exists it is coded as 1 (one), if it doesn't, then it is coded 0 (zero). This allows the creation of an index for each parliamentary function which eases comparisons across variables and case studies. Each index is an average of the relevant dichotomised variables; the closer to 0 (zero) the weaker the index, the closer to 1, the stronger.

The Legislation index assesses the amount of information given on bills and amendments, as well as the process associated to the consideration of each bill. It encompasses therefore variables such as whether information is given on the bill's author, for example, or whether links are given to its debate (for list of variables see Appendix – Coding Frame for Contents Analysis of Websites). All information available on the website which is specific to legislation should come under this index. The legislation function is the clearest one in terms of what parliaments are expected to do and also the most focused one. Its conceptualisation in terms of how this is portrayed on the site is therefore reasonably straightforward.

The Legitimation[3] index assesses features which provide for overall knowledge and understanding of the parliamentary institution. The function of legitimation helps to maintain political support for the political system and includes roles such as a general provision of information about the political system, but can also refer to processes of "safety-valve",[4] that is the release of tensions expressed in society. This is the function that raises the most difficulties in its conceptualisation. To a large extent the "safety-valve" function can only be portrayed with a synchronous analysis which looks at a *period* of time, rather than just a *specific point* in time; i.e. it would need to include a dynamic analysis, rather than just a static one. To assess the extent to which parliaments' website reflect their "safety-valve" function, one would need to analyse a period of time to account for features such as, for example, news releases on an important debate in parliament, or the hearing of a specific pressure group of strategic importance at a particular moment in time, as another example. Our Legitimation index does not include those features as it is based on a static contents analysis of the websites – that is, all websites were analysed at one moment in time rather than over a period of time. Our Legitimation index includes therefore features such as the historical and contextual information about parliament, access to key regulatory documents, but also the existence, or not, of a separate section for a younger audience.

This function is differentiated from the one of representation which focuses solely on the availability of links and information about representatives, be it MPs, parties and / or parliamentary groups. The Representation index therefore measures the extent to which parliaments foresee specific sections of their websites to the contact with and the activity and views of the parliamentary representatives. This could be in the form of links to MPs or parties' websites, for example, but also in terms of information on parliamentary activity organised and displayed according to these representatives. It also looks at the provision, or not, of online debate spaces such as blogs managed by representatives.

The variables under Scrutiny look at the existence, or not, of information and access to scrutiny tools such as written questions to the government, committees of enquiry or interpellations. The type of scrutiny tools available differs considerably from parliament to

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[3] By Legitimation we are following the concept as developed and employed by Robert Packenham in (Packenham, 1970).

[4] Again, the specific function of "safety-valve" follows the legitimation concept developed by Packenham (1970) and systematised by Norton in (Norton, 1990: 6).

parliament and the contents analysis took this into account. Where a scrutiny tool does not exist, this was not accounted for either way, being simply excluded from the index. This does not affect the value of the scrutiny index, as the average of the variables is calculated in terms of the number of variables input into the Index. The type of variables recorded for scrutiny are similar to the ones for legislation, such as the level of detail of information and access given to, for example, questions to the government; in terms of author of the question, availability of link to the actual question, link to the debate (or official parliamentary journal), and so on. Again, as for the other above functions, for more details see the Appendix, which includes the general Coding Frame used for this contents analysis.

The analysis below focuses on these four Indexes identifying the extent to which each function is portrayed on the websites of the 15 parliaments included in this study. The analysis below shows that, overall, legislation is the main function represented on parliaments' websites, and representation the least. We also try to ascertain the extent to which the focus of these websites – in terms of parliamentary functions – differs from the role played by the actual parliaments.

Legislation, Legitimation, Representation and Scrutiny on European parliaments' websites

Figure 1 gives the values of the Legislation Index per country. The closer to 1 the stronger the index, that is the more that parliament's website dedicates space to the function of legislation.
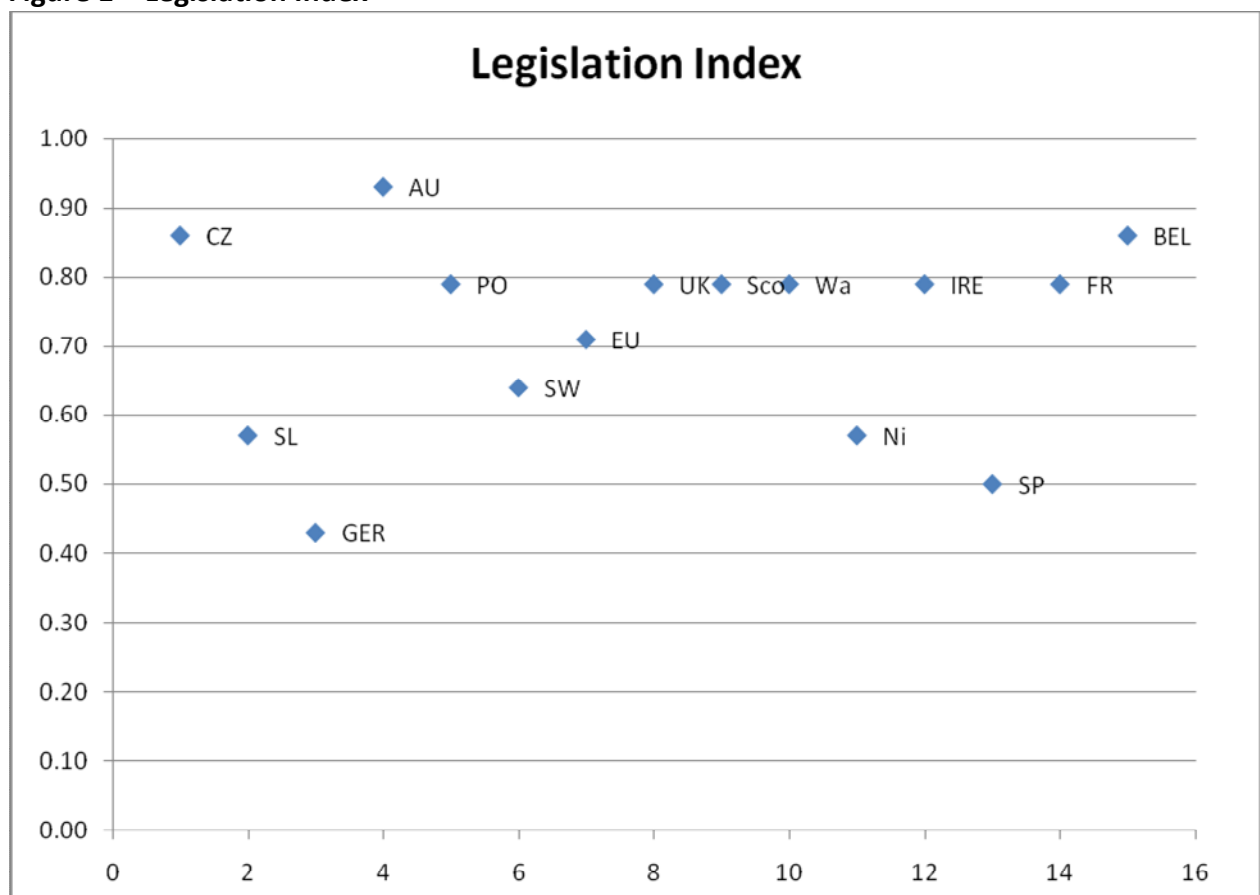
Figure 1 – Legislation Index

Figure 1 shows that Legislation has a strong presence on the websites of European parliaments. In many ways, this is not a surprising finding as one of the original functions for parliaments was the legislative role: to propose, amend and pass legislation. And even if a parliament does not have an effective role in passing legislation it does "giv(e) assent to binding measures of public policy" (Norton, 1992: 1), by providing the constitutional framework through which (in most cases) legislation is produced. Still, in reality, parliaments today "only rarely actually draft legislation" (Bergman et al, 2006: 117) and the other roles (such as scrutiny) actually take a much bigger part of daily parliamentary activity.[5] So, from that point of view, it is surprising that the Legislation Index is so high for the majority of our parliaments. Parliaments obviously perceive this as an important function that needs to be reflected on their websites.

Not only the average for the Legislation Index is by far the highest out of the four functions (see Table 1 at the end of this section), at 0.72, but also all except one (Germany, at 0.43) have a value of 0.50 or above. The low value for Germany is an interesting find that needs further investigation as this is a parliament generally considered as having an important role in legislation,[6] at least in comparison with its counterparts in Europe. This could be a case where the parliamentary website is not adding value to the parliamentary role, not giving a full picture of parliament's activity in this area. It could also reflect the fact that the German Bundestag is characterised as a "working parliament" (Saalfeld, 1998) – that is where parliamentary activity is focused on detailed amendment of legislation in committee based, a lot of which is not necessarily visible to the outsider. On the other hand Germany's Scrutiny Index is the highest one (together with Austria). Figure 1 also shows that Austria is the parliamentary website with the highest value for its Legislation Index, at 0.93 – very close to 1.00 indicating that their website has a very comprehensive cover for legislative outputs and processes. The majority of the parliaments are clustered around 0.80 (Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Ireland, Poland, Scotland, UK and Wales) confirming again the importance given to legislation on these websites. To note in particular the French case (0.79), a parliament known for its weakness and where government can pass considerable legislation outside parliament (Hayward, 2004; Thiébault, 2006); a parliament where the legislative role is therefore far from a strong one; and yet its website puts considerable focus on this role.

In terms of the institutional characteristics of these parliaments, there is no clear pattern in the way their websites score in the Legislation Index.

Figure 2 gives the values for the Legitimation Index by country and here the distribution of the values is rather different from the one above.

Figure 2 – Legitimation Index

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[5] See contributions to that effect in, for example, (Norton, 1998, Strøm et al, 2006; Wiberg, 1994).
[6] See, for example, (Norton, 1994; Saalfeld, 1998).

Legitimation Index
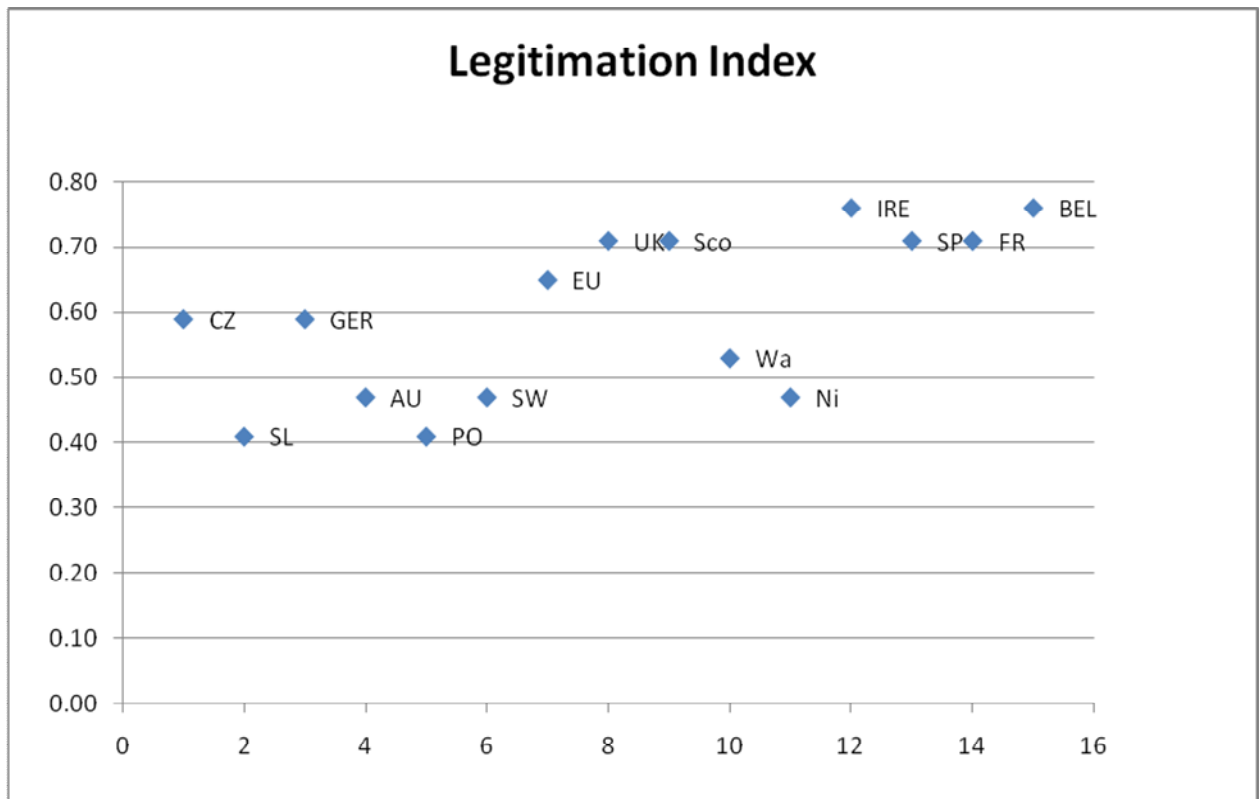
Overall, the values are still quite high, though considerably lower than Legislation, with an average of 0.59 (see Table 1). Interestingly the lowest values for Legitimation are to be found in new democracies Poland and Slovakia (0.41 for both) – where one may find a more compelling argument for a strong focus on legitimation in order to support the development of the new democracy. Belgium and Ireland give considerable importance to the Legitimation function displaying the highest values both at 0.76. To note the relatively high value again for France (0.71) indicating again that its website is a valued means of communication and enhancement of this institution.

By reinforcing the Legitimation function on their websites these parliaments are giving particular importance to disseminating what these parliaments stand for and in educating citizens about the role played by parliament in their political systems and history. These may be seen as examples where the parliamentary websites are likely to be adding value to the parliaments' legitimation role. The internet presents excellent opportunities for this function, as it allows for a much more effective dissemination of what parliament is about then any other means of communication offer.

Figure 3 gives the values for the Representation Index by country and shows surprising results. Representation is the function with the lowest average out of all four functions, with a mean value of only 0.47 (see Table 1). This may be seen as counter-intuitive as one would imagine that the main aim of a parliamentary website would be to reinforce the role of representation. Partly, this may be due to the conceptualisation of this function. In many ways everything to do with parliamentary activity is about Representation and therefore it would be difficult to isolate variables that express this function. Still this Index reflects the level of detail given to access and information about MPs, parties and parliamentary groups. Even if this needs to be interpreted with care for each case study taking into account their method of election (which can lead to a higher focus on the MP individually considered or on the party), the Index does reflect what is

visible on the websites: that access to parliamentary *output* is privileged in detriment to access to the parliamentary *actors*.

Figure 3 – Representation Index

The parliaments with the lowest value for the Representation Index are Northern Ireland (at the very low value of 0.27) and Ireland (at 0.33 – though here the Legitimation Index was very high). More surprising is the value for Spain which is the highest of Representation at 0.67. This is surprising taking into account the proportional representation closed list d'Hondt system that elects Spanish MPs. This electoral system tends to lead to strongly centralised party systems, where the party channel of representation tends to dominate (rather than individualised by MP or even parliamentary group). This also tends to lead to a more distant relationship with citizens in terms of the representative mandate (Oñate, 2005; Norton and Leston-Bandeira, 2005). Could this be seen as a case where the parliamentary website adds value to the parliamentary role? Evidently considerable effort has been put into using the website to make the representative link more visible, through information and links relevant to both individual MPs and the parliamentary groups; to note, for example, the direct links to MPs' individual blogs and personal websites.

Figure 4 shows the Scrutiny Index by country. This is the Index with the fewest differences between case studies[7]. As Table 1 shows, the standard deviation for Scrutiny is the lowest one at 0.08, which indicates very few differences in the level of attention given to scrutiny between the websites of our case studies. This is clear in Figure 4 which shows that the majority of the case studies congregate around the value of 0.50. The two countries that stand out are Austria and Germany with the highest values for Scrutiny at 0.68 in both cases. The parliamentary

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[7] The Scrutiny Index does not include data yet for the following case studies: Belgium, France and Spain.

website which seems to have the lowest focus on scrutiny is the British one, which may well correspond to its parliamentary role. Still, taking into account that the function of scrutiny seems to be the main priority in recent parliamentary developments in Europe (see Norton, 1998, Strøm et al, 2006; Wiberg, 1994), it is surprising to find such low values. The information about the activity of scrutiny is surely present on parliaments' websites, but it is the way this information is presented that is not very prominent, particularly when compared to legislation. The scrutiny function does not seem to receive as much attention as the legislative one in the way parliaments' websites are organised.
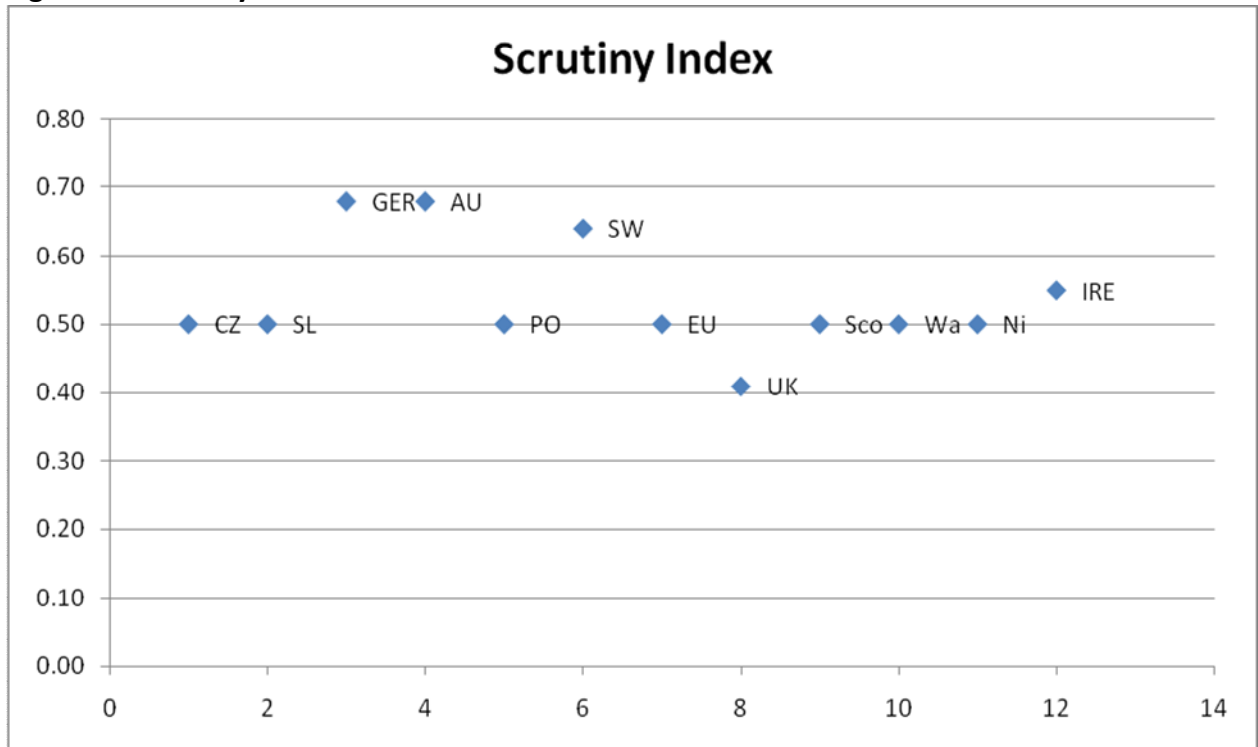
Figure 4 – Scrutiny Index

Table 1 gives a summary of descriptive statistics for the four Indexes as commented on above:

Table 1: Minimum, Maximum, Mean and Std. Deviation for the Four Indexes

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Legislation Index	15	.43	.93	.7190	.14404
Legitimation Index	15	.41	.76	.5961	.12746
Representation Index	15	.27	.67	.4667	.10983
Scrutiny Index	12	.41	.68	.5379	.08411

The analysis function by function shows that, overall, Legislation is the main function that parliaments choose to focus on in their websites and that Representation is the least important one. This is an important finding that needs further investigation, in particular taking into account the differences between institutional contexts of each parliament. But, in any case, this

finding supports one of the conclusions reached at the workshop *Parliaments in the Digital Age* (Leston-Bandeira and Ward, 2008: 49). Parliaments face an inherent paradox in establishing their websites: as an institution representative of all citizens, parliaments (and their non-party staff) are bound by a-partisan ethics. What the institution of parliament promotes needs to be fair to all political forces represented in parliament. The issue of neutrality is therefore very important and is reflected on parliaments' websites. This explains also that parliaments' websites tend to focus on parliamentary *outputs* rather than the parliamentary *actors*. However, parliamentary politics in Europe is about party politics. And by making their websites neutral, and not a vehicle for the political discussions, parliaments may not be reflecting the politics arena which is often what leads citizens to engage with politics. Figure 5 maps all four Indexes in one graph:

Figure 5 – Indexes for the Four Parliamentary Functions
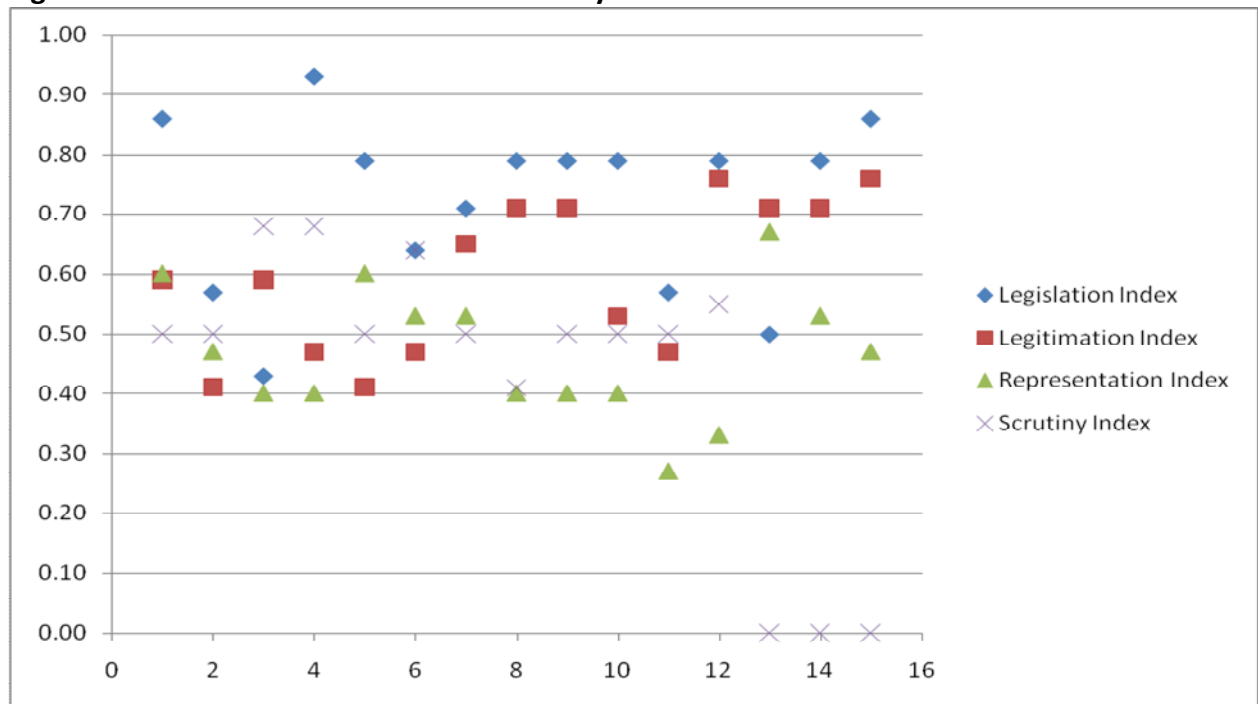
This preliminary analysis also shows that in most of the case studies there are considerable differences between the several Indexes. No case study dedicates its website to all four functions at the same way, having usually one or two functions that dominate to the detriment of the other two. Likewise, there does not seem to be always a correspondence between what parliaments do and what is portrayed on their website. This raises a number of questions, namely about the process of deciding the contents (and how this is organised) of a parliamentary website. To what extent, for example, are parliaments' websites the result of evolving options and decisions, or to strategic plans? To what extent are the politicians themselves involved in these decisions, or parliamentary staff? To what extent is staff directly involved in parliamentary activity part of the decision-making process relating to the websites? These are questions that need to be addressed and which go beyond the contents of the websites analysed in this pilot study.

Conclusion

Based on a pilot study which undertook a contents analysis of the websites of 15 parliaments in Europe, this article set out to identify the parliamentary functions that are portrayed on these websites. This showed that Legislation is by far the main priority of parliamentary websites in Europe, despite the fact that there is considerable literature showing that parliaments' effective role in legislation is in fact very weak. This focus on legislation is visible on a number of documents and policies that advise on parliaments' websites, such as the draft new Guidelines for Parliamentary Websites issued in November 2008 for discussion (Global Centre for ICT in Parliament, 2008), as well parliamentary staff's discourse on their websites.[8] Part of this focus could arise from the complexity of legislation (though that would also apply to scrutiny), but there also seems to be a drive from parliaments towards that focus on legislation – as if there is a common understanding that this is what parliaments do and that this is what citizens want to know about. To note also the low focus on representation which is partly explained by the fact that parliaments' websites tend to concentrate on *parliamentary outputs* rather than *parliamentary actors*, and even less on *political actors*. To a large extent this is linked to parliaments' nature as collective and public institutions that need to be seen as a-partisan.

Despite the fact that this analysis did not take into account the style and structure of parliamentary websites, focusing instead on contents, it did highlight the main parliamentary functions portrayed on parliaments' websites in Europe. It showed that often there is not a match between what parliaments do – their role – and what their websites show. To that extent it is not always clear if parliaments' websites are in fact enhancing parliamentary activity, though examples such as the French case seemed to indicate an enhancement of parliamentary activity through the variety of information it provides on its website. This analysis also raises questions about the processes that lead to the decision of what a parliamentary website should include. To what extent is this the realm of politicians, parliamentary staff, technicians, or all? To what extent are parliaments planning strategically the role of their websites or to what extent are these websites simply the result of ad-hoc decisions? These are questions to raise in future research together with a more comprehensive analysis of parliamentary websites.

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APPENDIX

CODING FRAME FOR WEBSITES CONTENTS ANALYSIS

Level 1 - Content[9]

Legislation	Is legislation output available? (Yes-1; No-0)

Is legislation output available? (Yes-1; No-0)
If yes, where? (First page link-1; Second page link-2; More than second-3)
Number of clicks to get to legislation (number)
Info given on legislation
        - Original proposal (Yes-1; No-0)
        - Author(s) (Yes-1; No-0)
        - Link to author's biography (Yes-1; No-0)
        - Amendments (Yes-1; No-0)
        - Debate (Yes-1; No-0)
        - Committee debate (Yes-1; No-0)
        - Link to relevant committee
        - Plenary debate (Yes-1; No-0)
        - Committee reports (Yes-1; No-0)
        - End result bill (Yes-1; No-0)
        - Link to other relevant organisations associated with bill? (Yes-1; No-0)
Are these stages integrated? (Totally-1; Partly-2; Not at all-3)
If committee's main role is legislation:
        - do committees have a separate section? (All do: 1; Most do:2; A few do: 3; None does: 4)
        - is access given to committee reports? (Yes-1; No-0)
General assessment of way information about legislation is given (open)

Legitimation   Is there historical information about the parliament? (Yes-1; No-0)
Is there historical information about the political system and politics? (Yes-1; No-0)
Is information given to the Constitutional context? (Yes-1; No-0)
Is access given to the key regulatory documents? (Yes-1; No-0)
Is there a layman explanation about the constitutional system? (Yes-1; No-0)
Is there a layman explanation about parliament's role? (Yes-1; No-0)
Is there a section for young people? (Yes-1; No-0)
If yes, is this a separate web domain? (Yes-1; No-0)
If yes, include small explanation of how this works. (open)
Is there access to the verbatim record of parliamentary debates-Plenary? (Yes-1; No-0)

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[9] The contents analysis also included two other levels, on Style and Structure, but these are not analysed in this article.

Is there access to the verbatim record of parliamentary debates-Committees? (Yes-1; No-0)

Is there a search engine integrated in this access? (Yes-1; No-0)

Evaluation of search engine user friendliness and usefulness. (open)

Is there live coverage of Plenary debates? (Yes-1; No-0)

Is there live coverage of Committee debates? (Yes-1; No-0)

If yes, is there an archive of plenary/committee debates? (Yes-1; No-0)

Is there a News item? (Yes-1; No-0)

If yes, how frequently is this updated? (open)

Is there an identification of the main actors to contact in parliament? (Yes-1; No-0)

Is membership of committees given? (Yes-1; No-0)

General assessment of way information about legitimation is given (open)

Representation Is there information about MPs? (Yes-1; No-0)

Is there a list of MPs? (Yes-1; No-0)

Are individual profiles for MPs available? (Yes-1; No-0; or a percentage record such as: 1:No; 2: For under 50%; 3:For 51% -70%; 4: for 71%-95%; 5: for 96%-100%) *Leading then to a dichotomised variable built on the basis of this one*

If yes, include small explanation of what this includes. (open)

If yes, how frequently is this updated (on average; or consider putting the most and the least updated)? (1: every new parliament; 2: every new year; 3: every six months; 4: from six to on month; 5: less than one month; 6: every week)

Is the email contact of each MP given? (1:No; 2: For under 50%; 3:For 51% -70%; 4: for 71%-95%; 5: for 96%-100%) *Leading then to a dichotomised variable built on the basis of this one*

Is parliamentary activity listed for each MP? (1:No; 2: For 51% -70%; 4: for 71%-95%; 5: for 96%-100%) *Leading then to a dichotomised variable built on the basis of this one*

Are there links to the outputs of parliamentary activities of the MPs? (ex: debates, legislation, scrutiny activity)

Are there personal websites of MPs within parliament's site? (1:No; 2: For under 50%; 3:For 51% -70%; 4: for 71%-95%; 5: for 96%-100%) *Leading then to a dichotomised variable built on the basis of this one*

Are links given to MPs' personal websites hosted outside parliament? (1:No; 2: For under 50%; 3:For 51% -70%; 4: for 71%-95%; 5: for 96%-100%) *Leading then to a dichotomised variable built on the basis of this one*

Are there personal blogs of MPs within parliament's site? (1:No; 2: For under 50%; 3:For 51% -70%; 4: for 71%-95%; 5: for 96%-100%) *Leading then to a dichotomised variable built on the basis of this one*

Are links given to MPs' blogs hosted outside parliament? (1:No; 2: For under 50%; 3:For 51% -70%; 4: for 71%-95%; 5: for 96%-100%) *Leading then to a dichotomised variable built on the basis of this one*

Are links given to MPs' facebook or myspace sites hosted outside parliament? (1:No; 2: For under 50%; 3:For 51% -70%; 4: for 71%-95%; 5: for 96%-100%) *Leading then to a dichotomised variable built on the basis of this one*

Do parties have a section within the parliament domain? (Yes-1; No-0)

Are links given to parties' websites? (Yes-1; No-0)

If yes, where? (open)

Do parliamentary groups have a section within the parliament domain? (Yes-1; No-0)

Are links given to parliamentary groups' websites? (Yes-1; No-0)

General assessment of way information about representation is given (open)

Scrutiny   Is scrutiny output available? (Yes-1; No-0)

If yes, where? (First page link-1; Second page link-2; More than second-3)

Number of clicks to get to scrutiny (number)

Info given on written questions

- text of the question (Yes-1; No-0)
- Author(s) (Yes-1; No-0)
- Reply (Yes-1; No-0)
- Integration between the above (Yes-1; No-0)

Info given on oral questions

- text of the question (Yes-1; No-0)
- Author(s) (Yes-1; No-0)
- Reply (Yes-1; No-0)
- Link to debate (Yes to audio debate:1; Yes to written record of debate: 2; Yes, both of the previous ones:3; No:4)
- Integration between the above (Yes-1; No-0)

Info given on interpelations

- text of the interpelation (Yes-1; No-0)
- Author(s) (Yes-1; No-0)
- Link to debate (Yes to audio debate:1; Yes to written record of debate: 2; Yes, both of the previous ones:3; No:4)
- Integration between the above (Yes-1; No-0)

Info given on Committees of enquiry

- separate page for com. of enquiry? (Yes-1; No-0)
- text of original enquiry (Yes-1; No-0)
- Author(s) (Yes-1; No-0)
- Proceedings in separate page? (Yes-1; No-0)
- Link to debate (Yes to audio debate:1; Yes to written record of debate: 2; Yes, both of the previous ones:3; No:4)
- Integration between the above (Yes-1; No-0)

If committees' main role is scrutiny:

- do committees have a separate section? (All do: 1; Most do:2; A few do: 3; None does: 4)
- is access given to committee reports? (Yes-1; No-0)

General assessment of way information about scrutiny is given (open)