




The Post-crisis Legitimacy of the European Union

Innovative Training Network



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Popular disillusion with political elites, citizens' loss of economic and social status, and nationalist parties gaining ground seem to indicate a lack of legitimacy and trust in Europe

PLATO brings together European researchers to study the EU's post-crisis legitimacy. The innovative PhD programme trains future research leaders and experts who will contribute to solving key policy issues for Europe.

THE EUROPEAN UNION'S LEGITIMACY

A legitimate and well-functioning democracy is crucial to the stability and economy of European societies. PLATO examines the EU's responses to the financial crisis, raising new questions about the EU's legitimacy.

LEGITIMACY AND GOOD GOVERNMENT

Legitimacy is at the core of 'good government' and means the justified or rightful exercise of political power. If European citizens are to be free and equal as individuals, they must have democratic control of their own laws. Yet, there is no consensus as to how to ensure democratic legitimacy at the EU level.

Legitimacy means the justified or rightful exercise of political power

POLITICAL POWER BEYOND THE STATE

The EU is a multi-state, non-state political system that seeks to solve problems from beyond the state, and in a manner that transforms the very nature of political authority within the state itself. The EU needs to be legitimate with both member states and citizens. Existing theories of legitimacy must be adapted to the case of the EU as a distinct political system.

FROM FINANCIAL CRISIS TO LEGITIMACY CRISIS?

In the wake of the financial crisis, EU governments have spent taxpayers' money to rescue European banks, straining public finances and social protections in all EU member states. Core state powers of taxing, borrowing and spending have been transferred to the European Central Bank, the European Banking Authority, and other authorities created through new intergovernmental treaties. The increased powers of non-elected technocratic institutions in financial policy have raised new questions about the EU's legitimacy.

Did the way the EU handled the financial crisis contribute to creating a deeper legitimacy crisis



AREAS OF STUDY

PLATO generates new understandings of the EU's legitimacy crisis. 15 PhD projects study the legitimacy of the EU's crisis responses in a number of different areas.

To what extent were the EU's crisis responses contested by different actors?

- EU member states
- Sub-national authorities
- EU institutions
- Agencies, networks and courts
- Social partners/lobby groups
- Actors exposed to policy failure

Do the EU's crisis responses meet standards of democratic legitimacy?

- Parliamentary representation
- Anti-corruption
- Non-domination
- Political trust
- European identity
- Civil society
- Political competition
- Public sphere
- Elections

15 PhD candidates

9 partner universities

9 European countries

7 disciplines

4 years
2017-2020


30 supervisors

11 training partners
policy advice and consultancy sector, civil society and media

Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, The Netherlands, Norway, Poland, United Kingdom

political economy, political theory, political sociology, public administration, law, media and gender studies

3.9 mill. euro
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