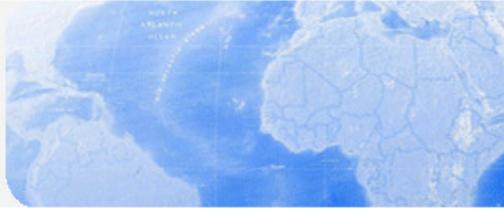




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International Parliamentary Institutions: Some Preliminary Findings and Setting a Research Agenda

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Abstract

This paper aims at exploring which factors may promote or inhibit the empowerment of international parliamentary institutions (IPIs). According to the literature (Cutler 2006), an IPI may be defined as an international institution that is a regular forum for multilateral deliberations on an established basis of an either legislative or consultative nature, either attached to an international organization or itself constituting one, in which at least three states or trans-governmental units are represented by parliamentarians, who are either selected by national legislatures in a self-determined manner or popularly elected by electorates of the member states. Their origin dates back to the creation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 1889, but they mushroomed after the Second World War, especially after 1989-1991 (new regionalism, also known as open regionalism especially in literature on Latin America), and today their presence is established almost everywhere in the world. However, they display sensibly different features in terms of institutional and organizational patterns, rules and procedures, legal status, membership, resources, functions and powers. In this sense, the study will mainly explore the formal and actual powers of IPIs, in particular consultative, budgetary, oversight and co-legislative, in order to analyse whether and how they develop over time. The question to be answered, then, is the following: what are the exogenous (structural) and endogenous factors that may account for the development of IPIs' powers? In this paper, some preliminary findings will be presented.

Introduction and research question

The emergence and growth of international parliamentary institutions (IPIs) is a phenomenon that developed mainly in the second half of the XX century. Nonetheless, the history of IPIs is even longer: their origins, indeed, date back to the creation of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in 1889. It began as an association of parliamentarians, led by Sir William R. Cremer and the French parliamentarian Frederic Passy, whose goal was to promote the creation of a permanent institutional structure for the peaceful settlement of disputes¹. With two exceptions, the IPU remained the only functioning IPI until 1945. One exception was the Nordic Inter Parliamentary Union, created in 1907 as a forum for co-operation between members of Scandinavian parliaments, which now takes place in the Nordic Council created in 1952. The other was the Empire Parliamentary Association, created in 1911 to connect parliaments from British dominions and self-governing colonies and renamed in 1948 the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association.

However, the real growth of IPIs started after the Second World War, when “the public demand for a better transparency of decision-making in international politics came to the forefront of political debates, especially in Europe” (Sabic 2008, p. 260). This was particularly evident at the Hague Congress of the European Movement held in May 1948 where a campaign for a unification of Europe was launched. Although the idea of unification did not receive widespread support, the Hague Congress adopted several recommendations aimed at deeper integration, including the creation of a European Parliamentary Assembly. Some Western European governments, headed by France, positively responded to this initiative and in 1949 the Council of Europe was established with an Assembly that had (only) a consultative role². In spite of these initial limitations, the Consultative Assembly, which in 1974 was renamed the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, was a milestone in the development of IPIs, since it was the first time that a parliamentary dimension was introduced in an international inter-governmental organization (IGO).

The Council of Europe’s structure also served as a model for the IGOs established during the Cold War period. Indeed, all key Western European IGOs got an inter-parliamentary component during that period: in 1951, the Consultative Assembly of the European Coal and Steel Community was created (since 1958

¹ In the Cremer and Passy’s plans, the IPU should have served mainly as an arbitrator in disputes among states. For an historical overview of IPU, see ZARJEVSKI 1989.

² The result of the negotiations did not quite meet the expectations of the supporters of unification, who had hoped for a parliamentary institution with legislative powers.

known as the European Parliament); the Western European Union introduced a parliamentary assembly as one of its main organs in 1954; in 1956, parliamentarians from NATO member states decided to form the North Atlantic Assembly, which in 1999 was renamed the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. Moreover, starting from the mid-60s, the notion of IPIs as a forum for facilitating dialogue and contacts among parliamentarians was increasingly pursued across other continents. Thus, the Latin American Parliament was created in 1964, the East African Legislative Assembly in 1967, the Arab Inter-Parliamentary Union in 1974, the Central American Parliament in 1975, the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organisation in 1977 and the Andean Parliament in 1979.

Finally, the number of IPIs rapidly increased in the late 1980s and 1990s, when fading ideological walls no longer represented an obstacle for inter-parliamentary cooperation (Sabic 2008). Sources in the literature report divergent data on IPIs, according to the different definitions and categorizations used and the reference year; however, numbers generally range from 40 (De Puig 2008) to about 100 (Kissling 2011). These IPIs, while having proper statutes and rules of procedure, show sensibly different features: they may be either structurally embedded in regional organizations or represent autonomous inter-parliamentary organizations, without an institutional inter-governmental counterpart; their members may be either appointed/elected by national assemblies of member states, or directly elected by their citizens.

Hence the research project, through a comparative analysis of the existing international parliamentary institutions, including their establishment, structure and functions, aims at identifying the exogenous (structural) and endogenous factors that may account for the development of IPIs' powers.

How to define an international parliamentary institution? A review of the literature

The broad theoretical framework for this project is represented namely by the “international democracy approach” in international relations. Since the 1990s, the question of democratic legitimacy of the international system has been increasingly tackled by scholars and researchers of international relations, who began to question the value of even the most democratic institutions at the level of nation-state where many decisions directly affecting citizens are progressively taken beyond its borders, or by international institutions that are not strictly subject to any democratic control or accountability (Beetham 2006). This gap between the national level, where democratic institutions have historically been located, and the global or (macro-) regional levels, where many decisions are now taken, is a major source of what is termed the international democracy deficit. This concept is well clarified in the following paragraph from the United Nations Report *We the peoples: civil society, the United Nations and global governance – Report of the Panel of Eminent Persons on United Nations–Civil Society Relations* (Cardoso Panel, 2004, p.8):

concerning democracy, a clear paradox is emerging: while the substance of politics is fast globalising (in the areas of trade, economics, environment, pandemics, terrorism, etc.), the process of politics is not; its principal institutions (elections, political parties and parliaments) remain firmly rooted at the national or local level. The weak influence of traditional democracy in matters of global governance is one reason why citizens in much of the world are urging greater democratic accountability of international organizations.

In view of this statement, theorists of the international democracy approach raised the issue of how to democratize the global political system beyond the formal principle of equal sovereignty of states (i.e. “one State, one vote”). According to Attinà (2003), scholars like Papisca (1995) and Falk (1995) based the opportunity to democratize the global political system upon the growth of nongovernmental actors and trans-national movements (international participatory democracy approach); others, like Held (1995), based the perspectives of democracy in the global system upon the emergence of an incremental model of a “cosmopolitan democracy” that combines national and world citizenship (international representative/cosmopolitan democracy approach). This latter model includes, among different cosmopolitan democracy tools, the establishment of *international / regional parliaments* entitled to create legal norms. Held, therefore considers IPIs as having the potential to establish themselves as contributors to a more democratic and transparent global governance.

Significant divergences however emerge in the literature as to the scope of influence and the practical purpose of these institutions. Slaughter, for instance, argues that IPIs (which she calls “legislative networks”) are rather weak (Slaughter 2004, pp. 104-130): they may have some success in certain areas (e.g. in addressing the “democratic deficit” in trade organisations, or as catalysts for regional co-operation), but it is also apparent that:

many existing regional “parliaments” or “assemblies” are quite ineffective — the kind of entities that spread skepticism about international law or institutions of any kind. At a deeper level, it is not actually clear what “effectiveness” should mean in this context. What should regional or global legislative networks be doing, and how will we know when they are doing it successfully? (Slaughter 2004, p. 106).

On the other hand, Cutler is more optimistic: in his view, IPIs are important actors because the international community has become a complex world society that is more networked than hierarchical, where IPIs “may accumulate more functions and encourage the creation of new international structures that mediate relations between member States and themselves” (Cutler 2001, p. 236).

However, these and other similar evaluations seem to be the expression of normative positions rather than the result of a thorough empirical analysis; in other words, they are more concerned about what IPIs may or should do, instead of what they are actually doing. The literature has in fact only recently started to investigate the actual powers and functions of IPIs from a global perspective (Malamud 2007, Marschall 2007, Stavridis 2007, De Puig 2008, Sabic 2008, Kissling 2011): these works surely have the merit of documenting (for the first time) what their powers are, but they have rarely come as far as exploring the determinants of such powers (partial exceptions are Malamud 2007, Malamud and Stavridis 2011). In the past, the majority of the works that introduced a comparative perspective in the analysis of these institutions essentially dealt either with their historical evolution or with problems of definition and categorization.

In particular, the first efforts towards a definition of IPIs were made by the Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments³, which adopted two reports on this topic during the 1980s⁴. In the second report submitted in 1989 by Heinrich Klebes, the then Clerk of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe introduced the term “international parliamentary institutions” as an umbrella definition to cover all categories of interparliamentary bodies. The categories were: *associations*, *assemblies* and *integrated assemblies*. IPIs that could be identified as an integral part of international governmental or supranational organisations were termed “integrated assemblies”. The term “assembly” is used where the members of the institution concerned are either directly elected or designated by national parliaments in such a way as to ensure fair political representation, while “association” refers to those institutions whose members may well be appointed by their national parliament without necessarily reflecting the distribution of political forces on the national scene. Consequently, the difference between these two latter categories seems to be based on whether the membership in an IPI reflects the political spectrum in the national parliament of a member State. Klebes himself admitted that there can be difficulties with this categorization: “it is not

³ The Association of Secretaries General of Parliaments is a consultative body of the Inter-Parliamentary Union, aiming at facilitating personal contacts between holders of the office of Secretary General or Clerks in any Parliamentary Assembly at the national or international level.

⁴ The first one was submitted in 1980 by John Priestman, then Clerk of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe. In his report, Priestman focused primarily on cooperation between national parliaments and what he called “international parliamentary assemblies”.

always easy to draw a sharp dividing line between assemblies and associations [...]. The difference is clear where parliamentary associations are based on individual membership” (Klebes 1989, p. 78).

Klebes’ usage of international parliamentary institutions as an umbrella definition has been generally accepted in the literature. However, as the number of IPIs began to increase and their variety expanded, the need for a more comprehensive working definition became evermore pressing. To capture the growth of IPIs in the past decades, Cutler offers a new, broader definition:

an IPI may be defined as an international institution that (1) is a regular forum for multilateral deliberations on an established basis of an either legislative or consultative nature, (2) either attached to an international organization or itself constituting one, (3) in which at least three states or trans-governmental units are represented by parliamentarians, (4) who are either selected by national legislatures in a self-determined manner or popularly elected by electorates of the member states (Cutler 2006, p. 83).

He also introduces different categories on the basis of membership, purpose, geographical scope and stage of development (Cutler 2001, pp. 209-215).

However, an important element is missing in the previous definition, since it captures only what IPIs are, but not what they do. Thus, Sabic introduces a slightly broader working definition of IPIs, which are understood as “institutions in which parliamentarians co-operate with a view to formulating their interests, adopting decisions, strategies or programs, which they implement or promote, formally and informally, in interactions with other actors, by various means such as persuasion, advocacy or institutional pressure” (Sabic 2008, p. 258). Moreover, he reduces to two the number of IPI categories: the first one consists of “international parliamentary organs” (IPOs), i.e. “organs of international governmental organisations composed of parliamentarians”; the second of “international parliamentary associations” (IPAs) as understood by Klebes, yet irrespective of their constitution and the extent to which their appointment reflects the political spectrum in national parliaments.

Finally, Kissling (2011) adopts a rather sophisticated approach based on IPIs’ legal status, identifying four different categories: inter-parliamentary government run / inspired NGOs⁵; international or regional

⁵ They encompass “loosely structured entities to associate parliamentarians at the regional, supra-regional or international level. [...]Those organizations are set up under national law and consequently lack international personality” (Kissling 2011, p.13).

parliamentary organizations⁶; international or regional parliamentary specialized agencies⁷; and parliamentary organs of international or regional organizations⁸.

These works, however, only deal with the analysis of IPI powers in a broad and generic way: hence, the goal of this research is to contribute to increasing knowledge of these institutions, firstly by exploring and describing their formal and actual powers; then, by trying to explain exogenous and endogenous determinants that enable their development.

Dependent variable: the “empowerment” of IPIs

To satisfy the objectives of the exploration, the research will not deal with *any* power belonging to IPIs; on the contrary, the focus will only be on those cases that mirror the traditional powers exercised by national legislatures. The goal is to understand which of them have been “acquired” by IPIs and how they have been adapted to the international environment. To this aim, the literature has identified the most significant ones (especially Rittberger 2005, Sabic 2008 and Kissling 2011) as supervisory / control, budgetary and co-legislative powers. This *trias* will be analysed in addition to consultative or advisory powers, common to many IPIs (Malamud 2007, Marschall 2007). The reason why the term “empowerment” is used here refers to the possibility that these powers are acquired or gradually increased over time.

Of course, in order to fully catch the variance among IPIs vis-à-vis these powers, the latter need to be operationalized. In the absence of any significant theoretical work with a global perspective in this regard, this operationalization may be carried out only after a first empirical survey of the existing IPIs’ formal powers, including at least an analysis of their founding documents, statutes and rules of procedures. The idea is to obtain, starting with initial checklists, ordinal measurements for each of the four proposed dimensions of IPIs’ empowerment, and to use them in order to create spider charts to see if there are dominant dimensions of powers, whether IPIs tend to display similar features and determine any outliers.

⁶ They are “institutions whose members are official in the sense that national or regional parliaments dispatch delegations to them. Parliamentarians cannot join freely except as members of such a delegation” (Kissling 2011, p. 15).

⁷ They are similar to international or regional parliamentary organizations, except for the fact that they are somehow integrated into an international governmental organization’s system (Kissling 2011, p. 26).

⁸ They are organs of international, regional or supranational organizations (Kissling 2011, p. 38).

Hypotheses

The research aims at identifying both the structural or exogenous factors establishing the *potential* for IPIs' empowerment, and endogenous ones, dealing with the actual conditions under which IPIs are assigned supervisory, budgetary, co-legislative and consultative powers by nation states or acquire and expand them through a favourable interpretation of existing rules (Hix 2002).

With regard to structural factors, the first two hypotheses are somewhat linked to the legal status of IPIs. In particular, since the considered powers traditionally pertain to national legislatures, it is expected that if IPIs' empowerment is activated or supported by a formal state decision to selectively delegate parts of its sovereignty to international actors, this process is more likely to be successful; otherwise it will remain limited and may encounter serious opposition. Accordingly:

H₁: IPIs established by an intergovernmental treaty are more likely to acquire and develop supervisory, budgetary, co-legislative and consultative powers.

The second hypothesis is based on the expectation that the parliamentary organs of international or regional organizations, given their inclusion within an intergovernmental system and their continuous interaction with their governmental counterpart, will have more incentives and chances to acquire and expand their rule-making, oversight and consultative powers vis-à-vis their related international organizations. Accordingly:

H₂: IPIs that function as organs of international or regional organizations are more likely to acquire and develop supervisory, budgetary, co-legislative and consultative powers.

If this hypothesis proves correct, the analysis will then specifically focus on parliamentary organs of international organizations, in an attempt to explain the significant differences that still exist among them. The idea, here, is that the empowerment of IPIs is not disconnected from the nature, aims and functions of the organizations they belong to, but it may represent a necessary and consequential corollary of broader international institutional reconfigurations (Rittberger 2005). In other words:

H₃: IPIs belonging to systems of regional integration are more likely to acquire and develop supervisory, budgetary, co-legislative and consultative powers than those parliamentary institutions embedded in organizations whose aims are limited to forms of cooperation, coordination or concertation among states.

These three hypotheses, if confirmed, will allow me to considerably reduce the scope of the analysis and only focus on parliamentary institutions belonging to integrative systems, since they are expected to display the highest potential in terms of empowerment.

These (and perhaps other) structural factors, however, while identifying the conditions that may be conducive to IPIs' empowerment, do not automatically translate into a uniform institutional design or bring about similar solutions across existing IPIs. Thus, with respect to parliamentary institutions belonging to integrative systems, an additional level of analysis will be introduced, focusing on specific endogenous factors that make the process of empowerment possible. Following Hix (2002) and Rittberger (2005), in particular, due attention will be devoted on the one hand to constitutional design or reform phases, during which governments formalize parliamentary powers through treaty rules; on the other, to the constitutional operational phase, when MPs seek a favourable interpretation of the treaty rules in order to preserve or strengthen their powers.

Finally, since this research deals with explaining, to a certain extent, institutional change, a necessary point of reference is represented by the literature on "new institutionalism" (Hall and Taylor 1996), whose different approaches offer distinct hypotheses about the creation, design and change of social and political institutions, treating them as dependent rather than independent variables. Consequently, I expect some explanatory cues from this literature that would account for the different levels of IPI empowerment, including references to the factor of time, path dependence and isomorphic processes.

Preliminary findings

Through the use of primary sources and literary references, a first empirical survey has been conducted on the founding documents, such as treaties, statutes and rules of procedure, of 76 different international parliamentary entities. This survey does not claim to be exhaustive, but it aims at providing the necessary "critical mass" of empirical evidence in order to: a) refine the current categorization of IPIs existing in the

literature; b) operationalize the dependent variable; c) test, in a preliminary way, some of the hypotheses dealing with structural determinants.

Refining the categorization of international parliamentarianism

International parliamentarianism materializes through both private associations, hereafter labelled as transnational networks of parliamentarians, and public institutions, the abovementioned IPIs (for a graphical display, see Figure 1 in the Annex).

The *transnational networks of parliamentarians* may be defined, following Cutler, as voluntary associations of national parliamentarians, acting not in their official capacity but rather as individuals taking private initiative, but who happen to be national parliamentarians, and then translate that activity into parliamentary functions within their national legislatures (Cutler 2006, p. 80). They are generally set up under national law. These networks may be further classified according to their purpose (general or specific) and to their universal or restricted membership⁹: the resulting typology is contained in Figure 2 in the Annex.

On the other hand, as far as IPIs are concerned, it is possible to distinguish between:

1. *International parliamentary organizations*: stand-alone parliamentary organizations, not formally affiliated with any intergovernmental organization, ruled by a formal founding act generally agreed upon by national parliaments (occasionally governments), whose members are national parliamentarians who act in their official capacity and have been designated as delegates by national legislatures. They meet on a regular basis, and the statute may provide for a formal structure (including a permanent headquarter), giving members the right to periodically elect a governing body and a secretariat in order to ensure the continuity of their work. These organizations may be further classified according to their purpose and membership (Figure 3 in the Annex);
2. *International parliamentary organs*: institutional branches of regional / sub-regional organizations, established through an intergovernmental agreement (either the same treaty as the international organisations they belong to, or a separate treaty), whose members may be appointed by national assemblies or directly elected to that office (see Table 1 in the Annex).

⁹ Restrictions in membership may be due to geographical or linguistic characteristics. This typology is borrowed from classifications of international organizations proposed by several authors. See, inter alia, AMERASINGHE 2005, pp. 9-12.

Finally, within IPIs, an additional category is emerging to deal with the phenomenon of inter-regional relationships. According to Cutler (2001) IPIs have already begun to coordinate interregional consultation and to consolidate interregional cooperation. In this domain, a possible subdivision into two forms of interregional parliamentary cooperation may be envisaged:

- 1- *Inter-regional parliamentary forums*: the Afro-Arab Parliamentary Dialogue, the *Acuerdo de cooperacion entre la Asamblea parlamentaria del Consejo de Europa (APCE) y el Parlamento latinoamericano (Parlatino)*, the Euro-Arab Parliamentary Dialogue, the Asia-Europe Parliamentary Partnership (ASEP) Meeting, and the EU-Africa parliamentary dialogue under the Joint Africa-EU Strategy;
- 2- *Institutionalized inter-regional parliamentary assemblies*: the ACP-EU Joint Parliamentary Assembly, the Euro-Latin American Parliamentary Assembly (EUROLAT) and the EURONEST Parliamentary Assembly (still in development).

However, they have not been included in the proposed categorization because the first group does not have a permanent character and the second can be considered mainly as a specific outcome of the EP's "parliamentary diplomacy" efforts, at least for the moment. In any case, their inclusion would require an ad hoc analysis which would go beyond the scope of this research (see, in this regard, Stavridis 2005 and 2007).

The effort of classifying various forms of international parliamentarianism matters because, as the empirical survey revealed the aforementioned categories display different functions and powers.

To begin with, transnational parliamentary networks are in no way endowed with supervisory, budgetary, co-legislative and even (formal) consultative powers; their function mainly consists in strengthening the ability of national parliamentarians to exercise their oversight functions at the *national level* in matters of an international nature, lobbying governments and national legislatures to accede to international legal instruments, as well as promoting confidence building and parliamentary socialization. Some of them have tried to establish strategic partnerships with international organizations (and obtained a formal consultative status¹⁰), NGOs and business companies, in an attempt to become more efficient and visible.

¹⁰ It is not the case, for instance, that seven of them that have sought for a consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council, have been registered as "non-governmental organizations". In particular, the Parliamentarians for Global Action and the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development have a general consultative status; the Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa, the Inter-American Parliamentary Group on Population and Development, the Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development

As far as international parliamentary organizations are concerned, the way in which they are established may vary. In some instances, an inter-governmental treaty forms the basis of their establishment, as in the case of the Latin American Parliament (Parlatino). However, in the majority of cases, the institution is established by a decision of the parliaments involved or an international parliamentary treaty: examples are the Forum of the Presidents of the Legislative Powers of Central America (FOPREL), and the South Caucasus Parliamentary Initiative (SCPI). Yet some, such as the Amazonian Parliament¹¹, strive for the conclusion of an inter-governmental treaty. In terms of their powers, they generally have a deliberative capacity, consisting in the formulation of non-binding resolutions that at best can develop into soft law. Many of them have the right to conclude international treaties (Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas – COPA; FOPREL), private law contracts¹² (the Association of Pacific Island Legislatures – APIL; African Parliamentary Union – APU; Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean; SCPI), as well as headquarter (APU, IPU, Parlatino) or mission (IPU) agreements with states. Other powers include the dispatch of electoral observation missions (APU, COPA, NATO Parliamentary Assembly) and fact-finding missions (NATO Parliamentary Assembly), as well as the right to receive petitions from citizens (Parlatino). Vis-à-vis national parliaments, some have specific powers dealing with the harmonization of national legislations (AIPU, Asian Parliamentary Assembly), including the possibility to adopt framework conventions (FOPREL). Some international parliamentary organizations, although formally independent, have been establishing a form of working relationship with intergovernmental organizations, such as the Inter-parliamentary Union vis-à-vis the UN, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly vis-à-vis the NATO, and the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly vis-à-vis the ASEAN. In these cases, they have acquired some sort of consultative and oversight functions: indeed, they can adopt non-binding resolutions, proposals or opinions addressed to governments or governmental organs¹³. In response to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly's recommendations, the governmental branch has the duty to report to the parliamentary organization. Finally, some of them have also managed to establish strategic partnerships with the UN¹⁴.

and the Parliamentary Association for Euro-Arab Cooperation enjoy a special consultative status. Source: *List of non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council as of 1 September 2009, Doc. E/2009/INF/4*.

¹¹ The Amazonian Parliament since 1996 has started a process of institutionalization that is meant to lead to an international treaty, the “Tratado de Institucionalización del Parlamento Amazónico”. Besides institutionalization and international personality, this process is to set up the Amazonian Parliament as an advisory organ of the Amazonian Cooperation Treaty.

¹² The distinction between the right to conclude international treaties and the right to conclude private law contracts is not always easy to draw: , see KISSLING 2011, pp. 17-18.

¹³ The NATO Parliamentary Assembly may adopt these acts only in response to formal requests of governmental organs or of international organizations.

¹⁴ However, with regard the different status that distinguishes international parliamentary organizations from transnational parliamentary networks, the three concerned organizations (namely the Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean, the Latin American Parliament and the Inter Parliamentary Union) have a permanent observer status

As for international parliamentary organs, these have been created at regional and sub regional level, mainly in Europe, Africa and Latin and Central America. Europe, of course, has played a prominent role in this process, both because, as already said, it was the first to introduce a parliamentary dimension to an international governmental organization in 1949 (the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe), and because the European Parliament was the first supra-national parliamentary institution to be elected by universal suffrage in 1979. At the other extreme, the regional group of Arab countries shows the most “embryonic” institution: the Arab Parliament, established in 2010 after a five-year transition period, with only a (weak) consultative status in the Arab League. A substantial difference is notable between African and Latin-Central American regions: in Africa, the main regional organization – the African Union – has its own parliamentary branch (the Pan-African Parliament, established in 2004 by Article 17 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union), while in Latin America, the main regional organization, the Organization of American States, does not have a parliamentary assembly. However, in both these regions, several sub-regional parliamentary organs also exist. Unlike the previous categories, international parliamentary organs may be endowed, at the same time/simultaneously, with a certain degree of oversight, co-legislative, budgetary and consultative powers. The way in which these powers may vary among them will be illustrated in the next section, after a first operationalization of the dependent variable.

To sum up, even though transnational networks of parliamentarians and IPAs remain different from a legal point of view, when their powers are at stake, a sort of “incremental pyramid” can be envisaged, where each layer (represented by the different categories of international parliamentarianism) adds something to the functions and powers of the previous ones (Figure 4 in the Annex). At the basis, there are parliamentary networks, whose main functions are in fact similar to those of NGOs and interest groups, i.e. lobbying and exerting influence on governments and their parliaments for general or specific aims, strengthening the ability of MPs to exercise oversight functions at the *national level* in matters of international nature, and promoting confidence building and parliamentary socialization. In addition, parliamentary organizations may have a general deliberative power; the right to conclude international treaties, private law contracts, headquarters or mission agreements with states; the right to dispatch electoral observation and fact-finding missions; the right to receive petitions from citizens; specific powers dealing with the harmonization of national legislations; feeble consultative and oversight powers. Finally, parliamentary organs may add to these functions some sort of consultative, oversight, co-legislative and budgetary powers (with, however, significant differences among each other,).

at the United Nations General Assembly as “entities and organizations”. Source: *List of non-Member States, entities and organizations having received a standing invitation to participate as observers in the sessions and the work of the General Assembly as of January 2010*.

Operationalization of the dependent variable: a preliminary attempt

At this stage, a first preliminary attempt to operationalize the dependent variable has been made with respect to international parliamentary organs, since the survey showed that supervisory, co-legislative, budgetary and consultative powers mainly pertain to this category of IPIs.

Hence, the results of the empirical survey allowed me to generate a 4-point ordinary scale for each of the four considered dimensions, where 1 represents the weakest form of power and 4 the strongest one, as follows:

a. *Consultative power:*

1. The international parliamentary organ may deliver non binding opinions only upon requests by the inter-governmental / supranational branch
2. The international parliamentary organ may deliver non binding opinions on its own initiative, but only in some limited matters
3. The international parliamentary organ may deliver non binding opinions on its own initiative, in all matters of interest for the regional organization
4. It is compulsory for the regional organization decision-making bodies to consult the parliamentary organ before taking a decision; these bodies subsequently deliver an opinion, substantiating their choice to accept or reject the parliamentary organ's amendment.

b. *Oversight power:*

The international parliamentary organ can

1. debate reports submitted by other bodies of the regional organization and express recommendation thereof
2. appoint (or concur to the appointment of) members of other bodies of the regional organization
3. express a veto over association or accession agreements
4. adopt motions of censure on the activities of other bodies of the regional organization

c. *Budgetary power:*

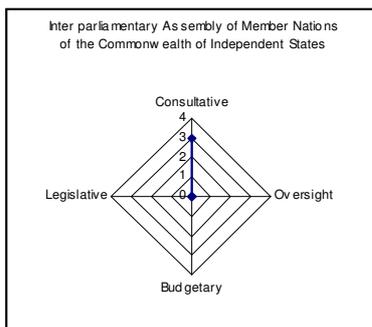
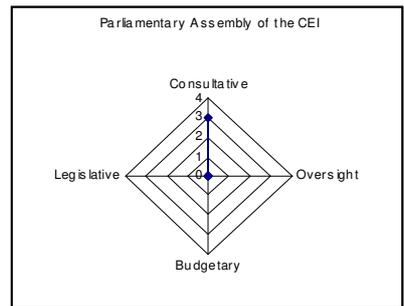
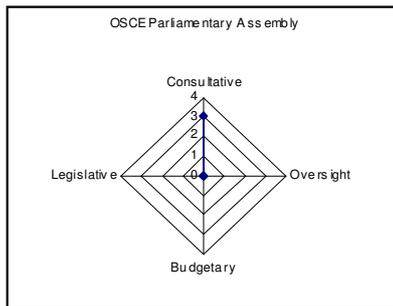
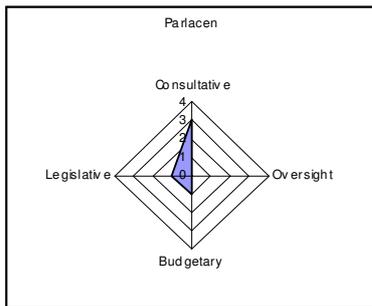
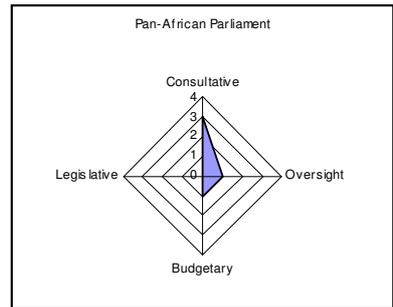
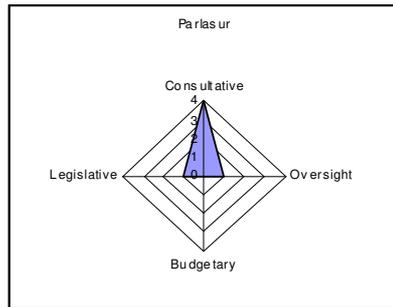
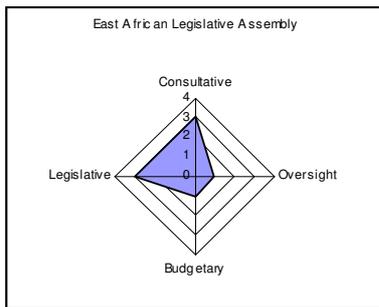
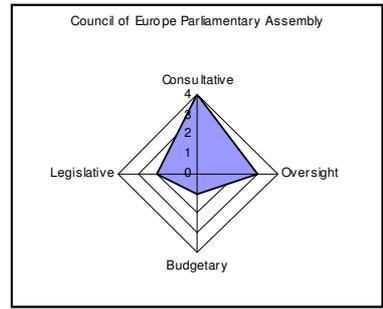
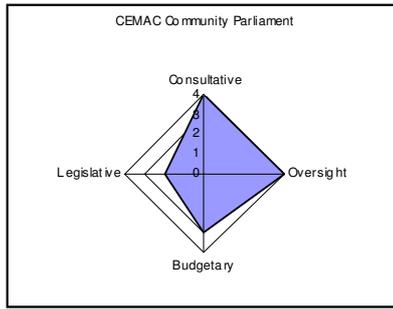
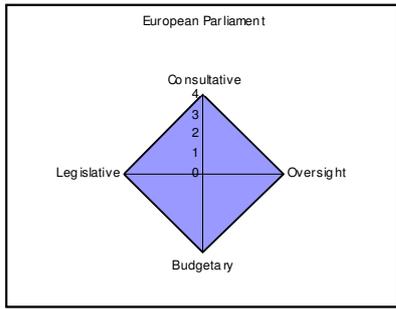
The international parliamentary organ can

1. debate the budget proposal of the organization and express non-binding recommendations
2. propose modifications for some expenditure items (within a rate of maximum increase)
3. propose modifications for all expenditure items
4. reject the budget proposal

d. *Legislative power:*

1. The parliamentary organ may request the decision making bodies to submit appropriate legislative proposals on any matter of interest for the regional organization
2. The parliamentary organ's assent is required in some specific matters
3. The parliamentary organ has a significant influence during the phase of proposal of a legislative act, including the right of proposal, in this way limiting the decision-making bodies' legislative autonomy; however, its amendments may finally be overruled by these bodies
4. The parliamentary organ is fully associated with the legislative procedure, on an equal basis as other decision-making bodies: it may propose amendments during all the phases of the legislative process and veto the adoption of legislative proposals if its amendments are not accepted.

These scales have been used to analyse a first small sample of 10 international parliamentary organs: the only IPI category that may be endowed with significant degrees of oversight, co-legislative, budgetary and consultative powers, from different macro-regions (European, African, American, and “Trans-regional”). The results are summarized in the following graphics:



Even though no decisive conclusion can be drawn from this small sample, a significant variance among the parliamentary organs as to the scope of their powers emerges quite clearly. The European Parliament, indeed, is the only one equipped with the full range of oversight, co-legislative, budgetary and consultative powers, acquired through a process of progressive empowerment over time (Rittberger 2005).

On the other end of the spectrum, we find a group of 3 parliamentary organs (OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Parliamentary Assembly of the Central European Initiative, Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States) that display only consultative powers and lack any legislative, budgetary and control powers on the activities of decision-making bodies. In particular, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly¹⁵ (OSCE PA) may adopt, by majority vote, non-binding declarations, resolutions and recommendations. The direct contacts between the PA and the OSCE decision making institutions are rather few, and include: the wilful appearances of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office and senior OSCE officials before the annual sessions of the PA to answer questions, the inclusion of PA representatives in an advisory capacity in all meetings of OSCE decision-making bodies, and the sending of the results of the PA annual session to the OSCE leadership (Beqiraj 2011, p. 50). Thus, it acts rather as a forum for facilitating dialogue between national legislatures and has been playing an important role in the consolidation of democratic institutions in OSCE participating states through the implementation of the political commitments endorsed by member states and the monitoring of electoral processes (Nothelle 2007). Similarly, the Inter-Parliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States¹⁶ (CIS IPA) may only adopt two kinds of non binding acts: recommendations for the member parliaments and the CIS institutions, and “model legislative acts” on different topics (citizenship, information, environment, criminal and civil codes etc.) that member states may implement on a voluntary basis. Finally, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Central European Initiative¹⁷ (CEI PA), by a two-third majority, may adopt recommendations at the end of its annual session (generally lasting two days), under the form of “Final Declaration”, which is ultimately sent to the

¹⁵ Established in 1991, it is composed of 320 parliamentarians representing the 56 participating states of the OSCE, elected by their national parliaments. The number of seats per country ranges from 15 allocated to the US to 2 seats allocated to Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco, and San Marino. It generally holds 3 main annual meetings: the annual session in July (no more than 5 days); the winter meeting (no more than 3 days); and the autumn conference (no more than 3 days).

¹⁶ Established in 1995, it is composed of the delegations of the parliaments of the 9 CIS countries (Russia, Belarus, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan). It meets twice a year and operate on the basis of consensus. It includes a number of standing committees and a governing body (the Council).coordinating its activity.

¹⁷ Established in 1999, it consists of 76 representatives of the national legislative assemblies of the 18 CEI member states. It includes three committees in the following areas: policy and home affairs; economic affairs; cultural affairs.

attention of the meetings of Foreign Affairs Ministers and Heads of Government of the CEI for consideration.

With regard to legislative powers, the East African Legislative Assembly¹⁸ (EALA) appears to be the only one, in addition to the European Parliament, to be endowed with the right of initiating bills. Once a bill has been enacted by the Assembly¹⁹ and assented to by the Heads of State or Government, it becomes an act of the Community. However, EALA's legislative powers are weakened by the fact that it generally meets once a year to deal with matters of great magnitude, and that its drafted bills necessarily require assent by the Heads of State or Government (Adar 2011). The EALA also has oversight (debating audit reports) and budgetary powers; with regard the latter, the Secretary General of the East African Community initiates the process of preparing the draft and submitting it to the Council of Ministers for consideration. The Chairperson of the Council then reads the budget in the EALA, which is formally responsible for debating and approving it. However, the EALA does not have the right to revise the budget but merely to debate and approve it (Adar 2011).

In other circumstances, consultative powers are complemented by a significant deal of oversight functions: this is the case, for instance, of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) Community Parliament and the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

The CEMAC Community Parliament²⁰ is one of the youngest international parliamentary organs: inaugurated in April 2010, it has held, up to the present²¹, only two ordinary sessions (October 2010 and February 2011). The Community Parliament's Convention holds some important oversight²² functions

¹⁸ Established by art. 49 of the 1999 East African Community Treaty, it was formally inaugurated in 2001. The membership of EALA currently stands at 52, with 9 representatives from each of the five EAC member states (Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi) and 7 ex-officio members (consisting of Ministers of each member state responsible for regional cooperation, the Secretary General of the EAC and the Counsel to the Community; however, they are not entitled to vote in the Assembly). Members are indirectly elected to their positions for 5 years (and are eligible for re-election once) by their respective national Assemblies, though not from the ranks of those Assemblies. The EALA is organized in 7 standing committees and holds its proceedings once a year for no less than 80 days for plenary and 40 days for committees.

¹⁹ Decisions in the Assembly are guided by a majority vote of the representatives present and voting.

²⁰ The CEMAC Parliament is composed of a total of 30 deputies, equally representing the six CEMAC member states (Gabon, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Republic of the Congo and Equatorial Guinea). According to art. 5 of the Parliament's Convention, CEMAC deputies shall be elected through direct universal suffrage for a period of 5 years. The current members have however been sent from the national parliaments, in line with a temporary arrangement. However, the function of CEMAC deputy is incompatible with the one as national parliamentarian, national or CEMAC civil servant, national government representative or as judge in the CEMAC Court of Justice.

²¹ August 2011.

²² The CEMAC Community Parliament's oversight functions represent a problematic case for the proposed dependent variable, operationalization: indeed, it is the only IPI, up to the present, that can express a veto over association or accession agreements (point 3 on the ordinary scale) and pass non-confidence votes (point 4 on the

(art. 15-19), which consist of assessing the Action Programmes of the newly appointed CEMAC Commission, and, once a year, the Commission's annual report on the CEMAC evolution and functioning. When carrying out this task, the Community Parliament identifies any irregularity in the way in which the Commission carries out its mission, it can (gradually) seize the CEMAC Council of Ministers; address the CEMAC Commission; pass a vote of non-confidence (*motion de censure*) against it or address the CEMAC Heads of State. After being informed of the vote of non-confidence, the Conference of Heads of State can invite the Commission to resign. The Community Parliament participates in the CEMAC decision-making process mainly on a consultative basis: indeed, it has no direct legislative powers, but can invite the Commission to develop or modify existing Community policies or initiate new ones (art 27 of the Parliament's Convention). In addition, it has an advisory power on Additional Acts, regulations and directives, and must be consulted on a number of topics, including the adhesion of new member states; association agreements with third countries; Community sector policies; the right to settle and freedom of movement of people, goods and services; the election procedures of the Parliament's members; as well as all CEMAC taxes and levies (art. 25). As to new memberships, agreements with third countries and the right to free movement of people, the Parliament's assent is mandatory. Finally, once a year, the CEMAC Commission has to submit the CEMAC budget draft, previously elaborated by the Council of Ministers, to the Parliament (art. 28); the Parliament may propose any amendments (art. 29).

Similarly, the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe²³ (PACE) has significant oversight functions, including the right to elect the Secretary General of the Organization and the judges of the European Court of Human Rights. Moreover, it is endowed with the so-called "accession power", compelling the Committee of Ministers not to include a new member state against the will of the Assembly²⁴. This power has been mainly exerted vis-à-vis countries from the former Communist bloc that

ordinary scale), without the possibility of concurring in any way to the appointment of members of other CEMAC bodies (point 2). Additional checks will be necessary in the future.

²³ Established in 1949 as the Consultative Assembly, it was renamed as Parliamentary Assembly in 1974. According to art. 25(a) of the Council of Europe's Statute, the PACE is composed of 636 parliamentarians elected or appointed by the national parliaments of its 47 member states. The number of seats allocated to each state delegation is proportional to the population: the largest delegations are those of France, Germany, Italy, Russia and UK (18 members), the smallest ones are Andorra, Liechtenstein, Monaco and San Marino (2 members). However, the PACE is organised into transnational party groups, rather than national party delegations. At the moment, there are 5 political groups: Alliance of Liberal and Democrats for Europe (ALDE), European Democrat Group (EDG), Group of the European People's Party (EPP/CD), Socialist Group (SOC), and Group of the United European Left (UEL). It holds four annual plenary sessions, for a period not exceeding a total of 31 days, and has 10 committees assuring the continuity of its work.

²⁴ Art. 26 of the Council of Europe's Statute, which distributes seats among the parliamentarians of member states, cannot be changed without the consent of the Assembly. In the resolution (51)30A adopted on 3 May 1951, the Committee of Ministers further decided that before inviting a state to become a member or an associate member of

sought membership in the Council of Europe because it was generally perceived as an obvious step toward fulfilling the political criteria for membership in the European Union. To obtain a positive opinion, applicants were required to abide by the Statute of the Council of Europe, as well as the key European human rights conventions and agreements. In particular, on 4 October 1994, accession to the European Convention on Human Rights and its additional Protocols became a compulsory membership criterion²⁵. It is worth underlining that this new criterion was initially introduced by a PACE initiative that had received no explicit authorisation by the member states; moreover, the Assembly has started to monitor states' compliance with these new requirements even after they had been granted formal membership at the Council of Europe. A number of new countries, which have joined the Organization since 1989, have been subjected to such monitoring, including Russia due to human rights violations in Chechnya, and the Ukraine, when it refused to introduce a moratorium on all executions²⁶. Old members have also been included in this procedure: Turkey, for instance, was subject to monitoring between 1996 and 2004 for its human rights record. Beyond its oversight function, the PACE has also a relevant consultative role. In particular, by a two-thirds majority vote, it can submit policy recommendations to the Committee of Ministers and express opinions on issues put to it by the Committee of Ministers, such as those relating to draft conventions, the Council of Europe budget, the implementation of the Social Charter and the drafting of new legislation. However, despite this consultative role and the importance of the Assembly's membership criteria, the Committee of Ministers has, over the years, been quite reticent in granting the PACE a greater participatory role in the decision-making and budgetary processes (Sithole 2011). The most recent PACE requests for increased involvement²⁷ have been rejected by the Council of Ministers²⁸.

The Central American Parliament²⁹ (Parlacen) represents an interesting case, first of all because, unlike the vast majority of IPIs, its members are directly elected through universal suffrage “respecting a wide

the Council of Europe, or in the case of the suspension or expulsion of a member, it would first consult the Assembly. Without its opinion, the Committee would not make a decision about the membership.

²⁵ Assembly's Opinion No.182 of 4 October 1994, concerning the Principality of Andorra's membership.

²⁶ In 1997, the Assembly decided to consider annulling the credentials of the Ukrainian parliamentary delegation under Rule 6(9). See: PACE, Amendment No.5, *Honouring of the commitments by Ukraine to introduce a moratorium on executions and abolish the death penalty*, Document Nos. 7974 and AS/JUR (1997)47, 23 December 1997.

²⁷ PACE, Recommendation 1567 (2002) on the Parliamentary scrutiny of international institutions, 25 June 2002.

²⁸ Reply of the Committee of Ministers to Parliamentary Assembly Recommendation 1567(2002), “Parliamentary scrutiny of international institutions,” 22 January 2003.

²⁹ It was originally set forth by the Declaration of Esquipulas I, adopted by the presidents of Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Panama and the Dominican Republic on 25 May 1986. The following year, the Constitutive Treaty of the Central American Parliament and other political instances was adopted by the five states during the Esquipulas-II meeting of the Central American Presidents. It held its inaugural session in 1991. At the beginning, it was totally disconnected from any other regional organism, and should have served as a focal point for

political and ideological representativeness” and “in a democratic and pluralistic system that guarantees free[...]elections on terms of equality” for all parties³⁰ (Constitutive Treaty of the Central American Parliament, art. 6); and secondly, because it has experienced a reduction of its formal powers over time (a single case at this stage of the research). Indeed, the 1987 Constitutive Treaty of the Parlacen confers upon it consultative powers (art. 1 presents the Parlacen as an instrument “of examination, analysis and recommendation of issues of common interest”), a weak legislative power (that of proposing draft treaties and agreements among member states) and some oversight powers, i. e. to examine the annual work programme of integration organisms and to elect and remove the highest executive official of all the institutions that belong to the Central American Integration System (SICA), as well as to nominate and hold accountable a myriad of technical administrators (art. 5 and 29). This latter competence, however, which has never been exercised due to the lack of ratification of the Treaty by Costa Rica, has been formally removed by the 1991 Tegucigalpa Protocol establishing the SICA.

Finally, the Mercosur Parliament³¹ (Parlasur) has a significant consultative power, but rather weak legislative and oversight powers. Indeed, it can adopt declarations, recommendations and reports on any matters dealing with the development of the Mercosur integration process; moreover, as to bills requiring national legislations’ approval, Mercosur decision making bodies are bound to consult the Parlasur before their adoption. As to the legislative function, the Parlasur may submit draft regulations to the Common Market Council, or proposals for national rules to member states’ parliaments, in order to promote the harmonization of national legislations. However, neither the Common Market Council nor national parliaments are bound to legislate according to the Parlasur’s proposals. Its oversight function basically

reconciliation and peace in the Central American region. However, the Tegucigalpa Protocol, establishing the Central American Integration System (SICA), included it among the main institutions of the Organization. The Protocol was adopted during the 11th meeting of Central American Presidents in December 1991, and entered into force in 1993. The Parlacen is composed by an equal number (20) of representatives for each of the 6 current member states, as well as the President and first Vice-President of each country after the end of their term (Constitutive Treaty of the Central American Parliament, art. 2). According to its Rules of procedure (art. 49), the plenary session holds its meetings on a monthly basis, generally during the last 15 days of each month. Beyond the plenary, there are 12 permanent committees.

³⁰ At the moment, 6 parliamentary groups act in the Parlacen: Democratic Centre (CD), Democratic Alliance of Central America (ADC), parliamentary group of the Lefts (GPI), Democratic Convergency of Central America (CDC), Democratic Integration, Central American and Caribbean Innovation Group.

³¹ It was established by the Decision No. 49/04 of the Mercosur Common Market Council; its Constitutive Protocol was adopted in 2005 and entered into force in 2007. Nowadays, it has 18 representatives from each of the four member states (Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay), serving a four-year term of office, appointed by national parliaments. However, as from 2011, its members should be elected directly through universal suffrage. In particular, according to the transitory dispositions annexed to its Constitutive Protocol, between 2011 and 2014 the Parlasur elections will be held on the basis of each state’s agenda; as from 2014, these elections will be held simultaneously in all the countries According to a criterion of attenuated proportionality, the composition of the Parlasur will be as follows: Brazil, 36 members; Argentina, 32; Paraguay and Uruguay, 18 members each. It holds its ordinary session on a monthly basis and has 10 permanent commissions.

consists in requesting reports from other Mercosur bodies and assessing the President's working plan and performance at the beginning and end of each semester. On the other hand, the Parlasur has no budgetary powers, since it is only notified about the execution of the previous year's budget by the Mercosur Secretariat.

Similarly, the Protocol relating to the Pan-African Parliament³² (PAP) states that its ultimate aim is to evolve into an institution with full legislative powers whose members shall be elected through universal suffrage. This should have happened after the first term (i. e. 2004-2009) of its existence; however, since 2009 no significant changes have occurred. Consequently, the PAP still essentially exercises a consultative power: it may adopt opinions and recommendations on any matter, including its own budget and the budget of the African Union, either on its own initiative or at the request of other African Union institutions.

Conclusion: results so far... and expectations

In connection with the stated hypotheses, preliminary findings may be summarized as follows:

1. IPIs not established or recognized through an intergovernmental treaty are in no way endowed with oversight, co-legislative, budgetary or consultative powers; only IPIs established on such bases have some chance of acquiring and increasing such powers (H_1);
2. IPIs that are stand-alone organizations, although established through intergovernmental treaties, may at best display some oversight or consultative powers; only parliamentary organs of regional or sub-regional organizations may be endowed with some degree of oversight, co-legislative, budgetary and consultative powers at the same time (H_2);
3. In order to overcome the first structural factor inhibiting their empowerment, some IPIs not established on the basis of an intergovernmental treaty actually strive for the conclusion of such a treaty (H_1);
4. In order to overcome the second structural factor inhibiting their empowerment, IPIs actually try to set up strategic partnerships with regional or sub regional organizations (H_2).

³² It is one of the 9 Organs provided for in the Treaty Establishing the African Economic Community, signed in Abuja (Nigeria) in 1991. It was then established by art. 17 of the Constitutive Act of the African Union (July 2001), while its composition, powers, functions and organization have been defined in the Protocol to the Treaty establishing the African Economic Community relating to the Pan-African Parliament (July 2001). It held its inaugural session in March 2004. Its 230 representatives are elected by the legislatures of the 46 member states of the African Union. Each national legislature is represented by 5 national parliamentarians. It meets in ordinary session at least twice a year; each ordinary session may last up to one month. It has 10 Permanent Committees in order to give continuity to its work.

Future research will aim at refining the preliminary operationalization of parliamentary empowerment in order to analyse a broader sample of international parliamentary organs; moving beyond a formal analysis of parliamentary organs' powers, trying to investigate how and to what extent these powers may develop and are effectively implemented by parliamentary organs. Specific case studies will be used to explore the impact of different forms of regional integration on the empowerment of these institutions (H₃); and identify additional structural and endogenous factors accounting for IPIs' empowerment.

Figure 2 – Transnational Networks of Parliamentarians

		Membership	
		Universalist	Restricted
Purpose	General	Parliamentarians for Global Action Parliamentary Forum for the Community of Democracies	GLOBE International
	Specific	Parliamentary Forum on Small Arms and Light Weapons Parliamentary Network on the World Bank Climate parliament Global Parliamentarians on Habitat Global Organization of Parliamentarians against Corruption International Parliamentarians' Association for Agriculture and Fisheries Parliamentarians for Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament Parliamentarians Network for conflict prevention and human security	Asia Pacific Parliamentary Forum Coalition of African Parliamentarians against HIV and AIDS European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development Association of European Parliamentarians for Africa African Parliamentary Poverty Reduction Network Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development Indigenous Parliament of America Inter-Parliamentary Forum of the Americas Forum of Africa and Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development Inter-American Parliamentary Group on Population and Development European Interparliamentary Space Conference

Figure 3 – International Parliamentary Organizations

		Membership	
		Universalist	Restricted
Purpose	General	Inter-Parliamentary Union	Parliamentary Assembly of the Mediterranean International Ass. of French-speaking countries Baltic Sea Parliamentary Conference Baltic Assembly African Parliamentary Union Parlantino Forum of the Presidents of the Legislative Powers of Central America Parliamentary Confederation of the Americas Association of Pacific Island Legislatures Arab Inter-parliamentary Union ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly Parliamentary Union of the Organisation of the Islamic Conference Member States Asian-Pacific Parliamentarians' Union Asian Parliamentary Assembly
	Specific		NATO Parliamentary Assembly Conference of Parliamentarians of the Arctic Region Amazonian Parliament Forum of Asia Pacific Parliamentarians for

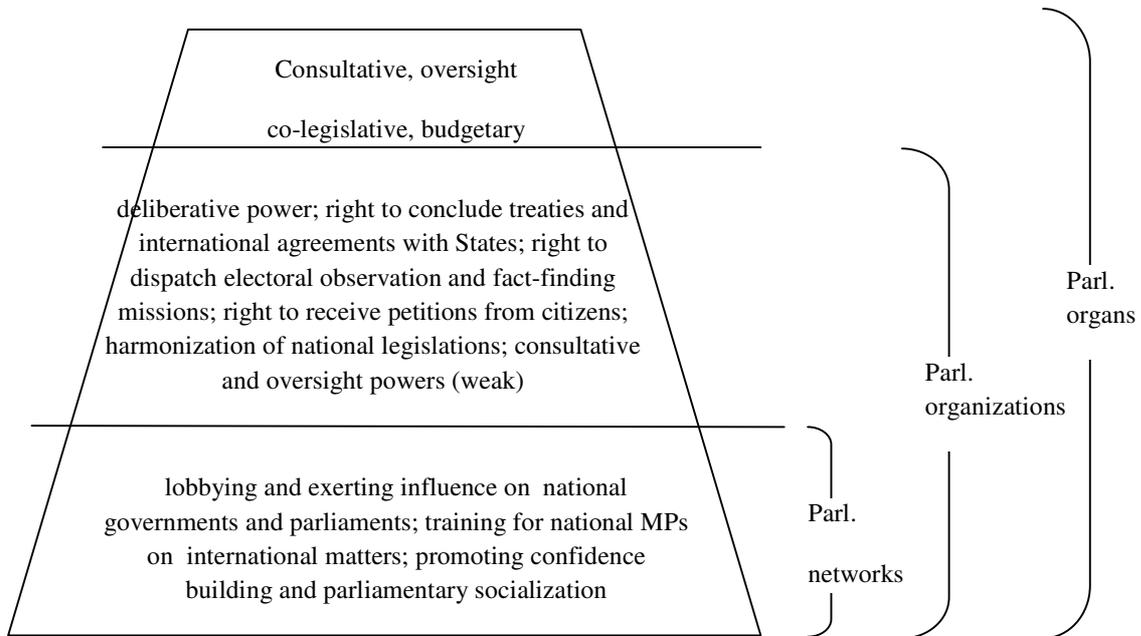
Table 1 – International Parliamentary Organs

Name	Related governmental organization	Foundation
European		
Council of Europe Parliamentary Assembly	Council of Europe	1949
European Parliament	European Union	1952
Nordic Council	Nordic cooperation	1952
Benelux Interparliamentary Consultative Council	Benelux Economic Union	1955
EFTA Parliamentary Committee	European Free Trade Association	1977
Parliamentary Assembly of the Central European Initiative	Central European Initiative	1999
African		
Consultative Council of the Arab Maghreb Union	Arab Maghreb Union	1989
SADC Parliamentary Forum	Southern African Development Community	1997
Comité Interparlementaire de l'Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA)	Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine (UEMOA)	1998
East African Legislative Assembly	East African Community	2001
ECOWAS Parliament	Economic Community of West African States	2002
Pan-African Parliament	African Union	2004
CEMAC Community Parliament	Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa	2010
Network of Parliamentarians of the Economic Community of Central African States ³³	Economic Community of Central African States	2002
American		
Parlandino	Andean Community	1979
Parlacen	Central American Integration System	1991

³³ At the present moment (august 2011), it has not been formally inaugurated yet.

Parlasur	Mercosur	1994
Assembly of Caribbean Community Parliamentarians	Caribbean Community and Common Market	1996
Trans-regional		
OSCE Parliamentary Assembly	OSCE	1991
Inter parliamentary Assembly of Member Nations of the Commonwealth of Independent States	Commonwealth of Independent States	1992
Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation	Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization	1993
Interparliamentary Assembly of the Eurasian Economic Community	Eurasian Economic Community	2000
GUAM Parliamentary Assembly	GUAM – Organization for Democracy and Economic Development	2004
UfM Parliamentary Assembly	Union for the Mediterranean	2004
Parliamentary Assembly of the Organization of the Collective Security Treaty	Organization of the Collective Security Treaty	2006
Parliamentary Assembly of the Community of Portuguese Language Countries	Community of Portuguese Language Countries	2007
Arab Parliament	League of Arab States	2010

Figure 4 – International parliamentary powers



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