

To what extent, and for what reasons, are Debates in the House of Lords usually of a higher quality, and conducted more courteously, than Debates in the House of Commons?

The British Parliament comprises two primary institutions, the House of Lords and the House of Commons. Throughout history, the House of Lords has been commonly regarded as a more refined and polite establishment, in contrast to the House of Commons, which has been more contentious and lively. This essay examines the degree to which and the underlying reasons for the superior quality and decorum of debates in the House of Lords compared to those in the House of Commons.

The House of Lords' composition contributes to the perceived superior quality of debates held therein. The composition of the House of Lords comprises individuals who have been appointed and are frequently distinguished professionals in their respective domains. Consequently, the House of Lords is frequently endowed with greater expertise on the matters under discussion. The House of Lords is widely regarded as a forum for more substantial and knowledgeable discussions (House of Lords Reform in the 2019 Parliament, 2023). During the discussion of the European Union Withdrawal Bill in 2018, it was observed that the House of Lords had a significantly higher number of members, approximately 180, who had previously served in ministerial positions, compared to the House of Commons, which had only 20 members with similar experience (BBC News, 2018). This level of expertise results in more informed and nuanced discussions.

Furthermore, the House of Lords exhibits a lesser degree of constraint in terms of party discipline and whip systems in comparison to the House of Commons. Consequently, the voting behavior of House of Lords members is more inclined towards their convictions rather than strictly adhering to the party's stance. Consequently, the discussions held within the House of Lords are inclined to encompass a comprehensive spectrum of political perspectives that are upheld by its constituents (Role and Work of the House of Lords, n.d.). This phenomenon results in a more equitable discourse and less biased toward a particular viewpoint. On the contrary, the House of Commons exhibits greater polarization between the ruling and opposition factions, resulting in more assertive and antagonistic deliberations (Oxford LibGuides: United Kingdom Law: Parliamentary Proceedings, n.d.).

Furthermore, the House of Lords demonstrates a relatively diminished level of concern with political vocations when compared to the House of Commons. Since Lords are appointed for life rather than elected, they are never subject to the same electoral constraints as Commons members (House of Lords Reform in the 2019 Parliament, 2023). Consequently, individuals who belong to the House of Lords exhibit a lower propensity to engage in grandstanding or exploit the debates to promote their political interests. In contrast, the House of Lords tends to adopt a more strategic perspective and evaluate the wider ramifications of the legislation under discussion (Presentation, Parliamentary Studies). As a result, there is a greater emphasis on reflective and careful discussions within the House of Lords, given that its members prioritize the efficacy of the legislation being enacted over political gains.

In addition, it is noteworthy to state that the number of individual in House of Lords are comparatively in smaller numbers than the House of Commons. Consequently, the House of Lords deliberations are frequently characterized by a higher degree of concentration and a lower

level of disorder. The House of Lords provides its members with an increased chance to participate in discourse, thereby decreasing the probability of disturbances such as heckling or shouting during deliberations (Oxford LibGuides: United Kingdom Law: Parliamentary Proceedings, n.d.). Consequently, discussions held in the House of Lords are inclined to be carried out decorously and respectfully.

Another factor contributing to the higher quality debates in the house of Lords is the variation of each house's roles. The House of Commons initiate and pass legislation, whereas the responsibility to review and amend the legislation rests on the House of Lords. Consequently, deliberations in the House of Lords tend to center more on the intricacies and ramifications of legislative proposals rather than the wider political concerns involved (Role and Work of the House of Lords, n.d.). This results in a more specialized and systematic discourse and less susceptible to political grandstanding.

The House of Commons is subject to greater levels of scrutiny in comparison to the House of Lords, potentially impacting the caliber of discourse during parliamentary debates. The House of Commons' members are under constant scrutiny from diverse stakeholders, such as the press and their electorate. Consequently, there exists a certain degree of pressure on individuals to prioritize political gains over engaging in constructive discourse. This phenomenon has the potential to result in discussions that are characterized by heightened disagreement and a diminished emphasis on matters of substance (House of Lords Reform in the 2019 Parliament, 2023). A report by the Hansard Society on the impact of social media on the quality of political discourse notes that social media, the internet and the 24-hour news cycle have all contributed to a climate in which politicians are judged on their ability to score points against opponents, rather than their capacity for reasoned debate (Hansard Society, 2018). The emphasis on point-scoring

may result in contentious discussions that prioritize personal attacks over meaningful discourse. By comparison, the House of Lords undergoes relatively less scrutiny, potentially creating an environment that facilitates constructive and unbiased discussions.

In general, multiple factors are responsible for the perceived superior quality and polite demeanor of deliberations in the House of Lords relative to those in the House of Commons. The House of Lords is unique due to its members' specialized expertise and knowledge, the lack of electoral restrictions, the chamber's smaller size, its unique role in the legislative process, and its esteemed reputation. Although there may be occasional deviations, it is generally observed that discussions held in the House of Lords are characterized by their substantiality, balance, and emphasis on the intricacies and ramifications of legislative proposals, as opposed to political maneuvering or ostentatious behavior. The distinct configuration and function of the House of Lords are instrumental in establishing its esteemed and revered standing as an entity within the British legislative body (Presentation, Parliamentary Studies).

References

Audit of Political Engagement 15. (n.d.).

<https://www.hansardsociety.org.uk/publications/reports/audit-of-political-engagement-15-2018>

BBC News. (2018, June 18). Emergency debate on Brexit powers held in Commons.

BBC News. <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-44522940>

House of Lords Reform in the 2019 Parliament. (2023, January 9). House of Commons Library. <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-9700/>

Oxford LibGuides: United Kingdom Law: Parliamentary Proceedings. (n.d.).

<https://libguides.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/law-uklaw/parliamentaryproc>

Parliamentary Studies. (n.d.). Presentation.

Role and work of the House of Lords. (n.d.). UK Parliament. Retrieved May 16, 2023, from <https://www.parliament.uk/about/faqs/house-of-lords-faqs/role/>

What are the main characteristics of the EU Parliament and how is it involved in the EU's policymaking?

The European Parliament (EP) is a pivotal entity within the European Union (EU) and is essential in the EU's policy formulation procedure. Over time, the entity in question has undergone a process of evolution and possesses distinctive attributes that set it apart from domestic legislative bodies and other global institutions. The present discourse aims to examine the fundamental attributes of the European Union (EU) Parliament and its participation in the policymaking process of the EU, as per the information furnished.

The European Parliament (EP) is the sole institution within the European Union (EU) elected directly. It comprises 751 European Parliament members (MEPs) appointed for a duration of five years. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are democratically elected by European Union (EU) citizens in their respective member states, with the allocation of MEPs to each member state being proportional to their population size.

Multilingualism is a prominent feature of the EP. The parliament offers interpretation services during meetings and ensures that all official EU languages are represented in the translation of documents. This unique feature distinguishes it as the only parliament worldwide that functions in more than three languages. This characteristic enables Members of the European Parliament to engage in communication with one another using their native language, thus fostering the advancement of cultural and linguistic diversity.

The EP must also operate in three locations rather than having a single seat. These are Brussels, Strasbourg, and Luxembourg. This is to ensure that no member state dominates the EU.

However, this has resulted in significant criticism, with many questioning the high cost of this arrangement and the carbon footprint it leaves.

Regarding supervisory powers, the EP can hold the Commission accountable through its power to summon the Commission to answer questions and explain its policies. The EP can also adopt resolutions that express its position on EU policies and external relations.

The EP's budgetary powers allow it to scrutinize the EU's budget and decide its allocation. This includes approving the EU's annual budget, negotiating the multi-annual financial framework, and deciding on the EU's expenditure in various policy areas.

The European Parliament consists of 751 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), who EU citizens directly elected for five-year terms. Unlike national parliaments, the EP cannot propose legislation but holds the European Commission accountable. The EP elects the President of the Commission and can accept or reject the Commission as a collective. It can also force the Commission to resign, providing a mechanism for democratic oversight.

One distinctive feature of the EP is its fixed term of office. Unlike most national parliaments in European countries, the EP cannot be dissolved for early elections. This stability allows for continuity in policymaking and ensures that MEPs can fulfill their roles without the risk of sudden changes in the political landscape.

Several notable characteristics characterize the EP's involvement in the policymaking process. First, it is the world's most far-reaching experiment in transnational democracy, where international diplomacy is complemented by transnational democracy. Second, it operates within the unique institutional system of the EU, which combines supranational powers with intergovernmental cooperation. Third, the EP's existence has been controversial, with opposition

from some politicians in Member States. Despite these challenges, the EP has evolved and expanded its role and powers since its first election in 1979.

As the Member States prescribe, the European Parliament functions across three distinct locations instead of a singular seat. The parliament is characterized by its multilingual nature, offering interpretation services during meetings and translating all documents, rendering it a distinctive multilingual institution. In contrast to national parliaments, the European Parliament does not give rise to a government formed directly from a majority, nor do its elections aim to effect changes in an executive body. The European Parliament's dimensions have expanded in tandem with the European Union's enlargement, and its constituents represent a diverse array of political parties that align with various European groupings.

The Members of the European Parliament (MEPs), as individual representatives of the European Parliament (EP), hold considerable sway in shaping the policymaking process. The members of this particular body are elected through a direct electoral process and exhibit a high turnover rate. They also frequently possess significant experience from their respective national parliamentary systems. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) enjoy autonomy and liberty in their decision-making process, as they are not constrained by directives or obligated to adhere to a binding mandate. Individuals exercise their voting rights based on personal preferences while also playing a role in shaping the political stance of their respective groups. Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) can pose inquiries to either the Commission or the Council, introduce proposals for resolutions or written statements, and propose modifications to any written material within a committee. Additionally, they possess the entitlement to provide elucidations of their vote, pose inquiries about the functioning of the leadership of the

Parliament, propose modifications to the Regulations of Procedure, and issue individual declarations.

The European Parliament works through committees that focus on various subject topics. The European Parliament's legislative, budgetary oversight and agenda-setting committees analyze reports and opinions. The committees mostly discuss Commission or Council drafts. They can also start reports.

A case study of the European Parliament's role in ending the Northern Ireland issue illustrates its role in EU policymaking. The European Parliament (EP) helped reconcile nationalists and unionists in Northern Ireland by elevating their voices. The European Parliament's proposals for resolution, collaborative initiatives with the European Commission, and studies on Northern Ireland's situation helped promote peace and stability. The European Parliament allowed Northern Ireland authorities to voice their concerns, encouraged political collaboration, and gave the issue a European perspective by framing it within the EU.

References

The European parliament (EP). (n.d.). Presentation