Die neuen Autonomiestatute: mehr Paralyse als Praxis

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The new statutes of autonomy: more paralyses than practice

The article analyses first experiences with the new statutes of autonomy in Spain. These statutes were ratified during the years 2006 and 2007. However, till now, most of their prescriptions have not been implemented yet. Firstly, the article classifies the process of deliberation of the statutes (from consensual to majoritarian; including the failed attempts), and presents the general characteristics and the different and even contradictory interpretations of the process. Secondly, it analyses what may be considered the main reason for paralyses: the legal actions against the statutes and, above all, the Catalan statute, that were taken before the Spanish Constitutional Tribunal, and the reasons why no sentences have yet been delivered by the Court. Thirdly, the article describes how the handover of the competences was affected by the waiting for the court and the general elections of March 2008. An extensive fourth chapter deals with financing. It highlights the regional asymmetries of state investments in infrastructure, the debate on how to measure fiscal deficits, and the growing attraction of the Madrid Autonomous Community, as well as the hopes some statutes provoked to make good for past disregard (exemplified by the Catalan case), and how this may strengthen old grievances and further new ones. Finally, the article presents the dilemmas of the Spanish state of Autonomous Communities, where neither Spanish nationalism, nor the competing nation-building processes in the minority nations have fully succeeded. The different consequences this has for the main parties are explained. The article finishes with a tentative assessment of some of these developments, including the results of the March 2008 general election.