Original Article

At the grassroots of representation: District work of MPs in Germany

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Abstract German MPs spend a substantial amount of time in their home districts. Based on observation and interview data, this article aims to understand both the motivation and the effects of district work in Germany. The institutional setting of the German political system provides various incentives for MPs to conduct district work. What results from them is investigated by analyzing the activities in the district, MPs different communication styles, their casework, their party events and the influence of mandate types on MP behavior. Discussing how the activities in the district and those in parliament are related shows how crucial this link is for understanding modern representative democracies. Thus, in studying parliaments, a broad focus is in order.
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The Job of an MP in Germany

Popular criticism in Germany has it that members of parliament are part of a "classe politique" and often far removed from the day-to-day problems of ordinary citizens. Recently, a German journalist and commentator wrote a book about his experience watching all plenary debates for an entire year from the gallery; it left him deeply disappointed (Willemsen, 2014). He may have looked in the wrong place. Parliamentary scholars have pointed to the importance of the activities in committees and in the respective parliamentary parties' working groups (von Oertzen, 2006; Schüttemeyer, 1998). They have long argued that the real relevant steps in parliamentary decision processes are hard to see, while what is visible is sometimes not that relevant (Hübner and Oberreuter, 1977). For the British House of Commons, Russell and Cowley (2016, 122) have shown that "parliament is far

more influential than commonly assumed" when such processes are taken into account.

In their parliamentary work, German MPs are highly specialized in certain policy fields. The separation of labor for members of the larger parties CDU/CSU and SPD actually goes down to a quite detailed subdomain level. Day-to-day work of these policy experts takes place in committee sessions and their formal and informal preparation in the parliamentary parties' working groups and the policy networks of the respective domains. So it is not surprising that the plenary hall is rarely crowded.

Another important part of MP activity is also often overlooked: German MPs spend a substantial amount of time and work in their home districts. Detailed analyses of MP time budgets do not exist, but the overall estimate is that around 40% of their time goes into district work (Siefken, 2013, 486). Yet while work in the district is highly relevant for political practitioners, its importance has long been neglected in German parliamentary research just like Fenno (2007, 41) has noted for the USA. Notable exceptions are the works of Patzelt (1993, 1996, 2007) which are largely based on in-depth interviews.

Analyzing observation and interview data, this article aims to understand both the motivation and the effects of district work in Germany. It discusses the incentives for German MPs to conduct district work and then looks at their consequences for MP behavior. It also sheds light on activities that are harder to relate to these institutional incentives.

Data from the Project "Citizens and Representatives in France and Germany"

Empirical data were gathered in the project "Citizens and Representatives in France and Germany" (CITREP) during the years 2011–2013. It investigates the district work of MPs in France and Germany as well as citizen opinions about it and about representation in general. In Germany, 64 MPs were accompanied and observed in their districts between February 2011 and May 2012 and 67 MPs were interviewed.

The research design followed the approach of participant observation established by Richard Fenno in his studies of members of the US Congress. But instead of just "soaking and poking" (Fenno, 1978, 249) and then inductively analyzing the data, the observations proceeded in a more systematic fashion. CITREP employed a standardized report card where basic information about each observed event was recorded, for example: What type of event was it? How many participants were present? Was it a public event or not? What were the issues of discussion? How did the MP present himself? In that way, some metric but mostly ordinal data (on the Likert scale) were gathered. On top, there was room for writing down quotations

and impressions from the events. In this way, 618 events in Germany were observed with a net time of 969 h. Finally, each of the 20 trained observers was asked to write an open report about the complete observation of usually 3 days.

Toward the end of each observation, an extensive interview was conducted with the MP. It comprised 45 questions about representation in general and the role and organization of district work. That the MP and the interviewer had been traveling together for a few days helped because they had gotten to know each other and could discuss and reflect on the observed events. The interviews were taped electronically, transcribed and then sent back to the MPs for authorization so that they can be quoted by name. With three of the German MPs who accepted the observation request, it was not possible for organizational reasons to accompany them in the district, but they agreed to an interview. Thus, the total number for interviews is 67.

Overall, 10.8% of the members of the 17th Bundestag are included in the CITREP data. They were chosen by a systematic sampling to make sure that relevant criteria of MPs and their districts are adequately mirrored, for example: the rural or urban character of the district and the level of education there, or the seniority of the MPs and the type of their mandate. Nineteen such selection criteria were employed; according to them, the sample stands for the whole parliament.

The research design and the instruments of data collection were synchronized between France and Germany as much as possible, but it also left room for some country-specific variation. This article is only based on the data for Germany. For results of the French case see the article by Costa in this edition. Comprehensive project results will be published in 2017 (Gabriel *et al,* forthcoming) and include a detailed comparative analysis of the data on district work in France and Germany (Siefken and Costa, forthcoming).

District Work in Germany: Incentives, Motives and Practice

At first glance, district work might seem like a big waste of time for the specialized lawmaker of today. One might think that it diverts precious time from the complex intricacies of the policy work where all attention is needed. But the institutional setting of both the selection and the election processes in Germany provides a clear rationale for MPs to take care of their district.

The electoral law of Germany is classified as a system of mixed member proportional representation (MMP). In Germany, the term personalized proportional electoral law ("Personalisiertes Verhältniswahlrecht") is common because it stresses that the electoral system is really one of the proportional representations and includes strong elements of personalization. On the German ballot, there are two votes. The first one is cast for the direct mandate in the 299 single-member electoral districts. These districts are readjusted in every electoral period to account

for changes in population and municipal borders. Whoever wins the plurality of votes in a district receives the direct mandate. The second vote goes to a party list at the Länder level to fill at least another 299 seats, the list mandates. Every party with at least 5% of the votes overall or at least three direct mandates participates in the distribution of list mandates. In a rather complicated process, the mandates are assigned to parties at the Länder level so that the final composition of the parliament mirrors the proportion of the votes for each party in the federal election. In case more direct candidates of one party are elected in a state than there are seats for the respective party, overhanging mandates ("Überhangmandate") are created, which will subsequently be neutralized by compensation mandates for the other parties to make sure that the proportion of MPs to the second vote stays intact. That is why the size of the current Bundestag is not 598 but 630 mandates.

So electoral incentives from both systems exist for MPs in Germany: the personal vote resulting from the personalization of the direct mandates and the party vote resulting from the proportionalization through the list mandates. There is a clear incentive for MPs in Germany to compete for a personal vote. It provides the highest security for a seat in parliament and lets candidates' campaigns stray from their own party in case of negative national trends. In other words, MPs in Germany must take good care of their own voters in the district.

During the interviews, MPs stressed the importance of having a direct mandate mostly in the context of communication. An MP who was first elected through the list and in a later electoral period narrowly won the direct mandate with an advantage of less than 50 votes said one of the first things she did was to change her posters to "your directly elected MP". A longitudinal study of MP careers has shown that such switching between mandate types is very common. Only 23% of MPs can be classified as either pure direct or pure list MPs (Manow, 2012, 75).

In general, only MPs from the big parties CDU, SPD and CSU have a realistic chance to earn direct mandates. But there are exceptions in East Germany where candidates from the Left Party have been successful and one district in Berlin where an MP from the Green party has been directly elected since 2002 (when he was denied a good position on the party list and started a strong personalized campaign). Yet while the chances for success may be slim, it is common for candidates of the small parties to run for direct mandates. In fact, very few candidates exclusively run for list mandates. It may be a matter of a political "show of force" to cover all of Germany with direct candidates. Even if elected through the list, MPs present themselves as "representing the district XYZ." This leads to the situation that many districts in Germany have in fact more than one MP representing them; sometimes there are up to five MPs from one district in parliament: one of them directly elected, the others having run there and received a seat through their party lists.

The Definition of the District

In reverse, there are also districts where no MP from a certain party is present. The parties handle this by assigning so-called areas of service ("Betreuungsbereiche") to their incumbents. That is, the MP from a certain district is responsible for taking care of other neighboring districts as well. In the CITREP sample, 55% of MPs had such an area of service to take care of. Some parliamentary parties even list all MPs and their areas of service on their Web site. However, in interviews many stress differences to the "real" district[1]:

> Of course this is the district of my heart, but in any case the whole Eastern Frisia is part of the area that I have to look after. (MP Hans-Michael Goldmann, FDP)

> I am responsible for a wider area. However, the emotional relationship and the intensity of the attachment is much stronger with my own district. (MP Johannes Vogel, FDP)

Some MPs say they actively try to avoid such an impression. One MP who is responsible for three districts says:

> I really try to give good service to those three additional districts. My own district sometimes suffers from that, but it is important to me that the … SPD members in those other districts do not have the feeling, that I only represent them on paper. (MP Burkhard Lischka, SPD)

Therefore, while there is some variation, district work in Germany is certainly not limited to the geographically defined electoral district but extends beyond its borders.

Another variable that influences district work in practice is the size of the districts. While the population is kept roughly equal through adjustments at around one MP to 250,000 citizens, the geographic size can vary a lot. In urban districts with a high population density, moving around is easy. During the observations, an MP in Berlin managed to squeeze 13 appointments into a single day. In some rural districts in the Northeast of Germany meanwhile, driving times between events extended well beyond an hour. In fact, when asked whether it makes a difference that they represent an urban or a rural district, most MPs refer to the practical implications:

> I thank the Lord that I have an urban district and can reach almost everywhere by walking or biking. (MP Petra Sitte, Left Party)

> In my district, there are over 150 independent municipalities, so I have to deal with 150 local mayors. That is a lot of work – but on the other hand, I have multipliers in every village. (MP Ingbert Liebing, CDU)

Others also stress the challenges of the urban districts that are often much more diverse:

> One the one hand you have huge apartment blocks here, which makes home visits very different from doing that in single-family houses in a rural area. On the other hand, you also have much more differences between old and young, poor and rich … it is the biggest challenge to consolidate the approach to the differing target audiences. (MP Eva Högl, SPD)

So two caveats must be formulated: First, district work in Germany is not limited to the legally defined district; second, it may vary between districts.

Activities in the District

Looking at the day-to-day work in the district shows that there is a very wide range of different activities (see Figure 1). What clearly stands out in Germany is the strong focus on meetings with local public authorities. MPs spend a lot of time in meetings with mayors, local schools, kindergartens, fire departments – in other words: the whole range of the public sector. Clearly, in the district work of German MPs there is no limitation to federal agencies or federal issues.

This becomes more apparent in the observation of the content of MP communication: The local situation has a very high share in what MPs talk about

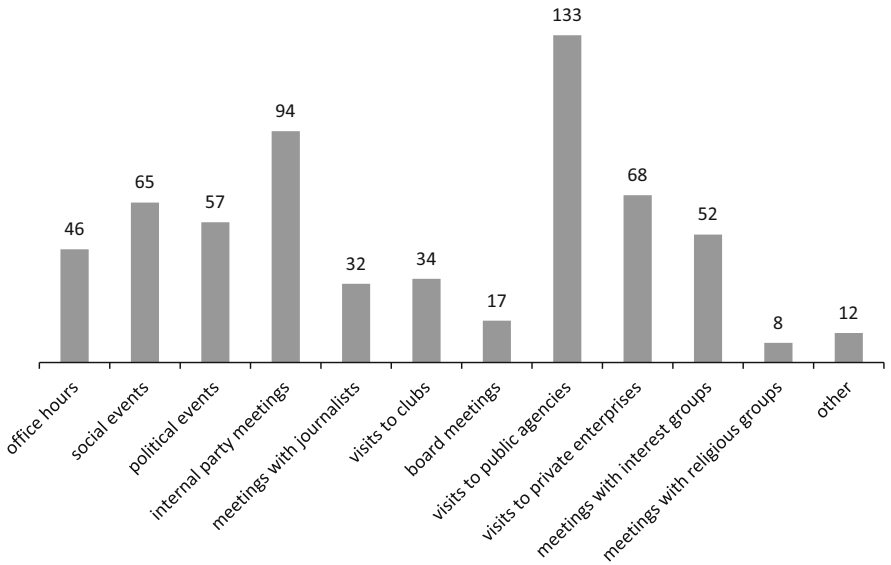

Figure 1: Type of events attended by MPs.
Source: CITREP, 618 observed events.

in their district work (see Figure 2), while social and cultural communication and non-political small talk are rare. It is also clear that communication of MPs has a lot of political content; there is no reason for worries of a depoliticization here. Policy issues are at the foreground, mostly in terms of policy goals ("what should be done"), followed by policy implementation ("how is it done"), while politics ("how do we get it done") has a smaller share.

A closer look at the discussions with political content shows how the local situation stands out. It makes up almost half of the observed communication with a large and very large share (see Figure 3). This is followed by federal issues, issues at the state level, local affairs and constituency questions. Some statements from MPs illustrate this:

> I get active upon request: If there are any problems, sorrows or needs in my district, I will try to deal with them. (MP Stefan Liebich, Left Party)

> I am responsible for the people here, in all their facets, mostly with a federal point of view, but also very much in concrete counseling, as soon as I am asked for it. (MP Dieter Wiefelspütz, SPD)

The content of communication makes it very clear that MPs in the federal political system of Germany are not limiting themselves to the political area of their own formal responsibility. In fact, they are better understood as multilevel representatives. This may well be a consequence of the particular model of German cooperative federalism: Contrary to settings of dual federalism, where responsibilities are clearly separated, in Germany much of the responsibility for implementation is on the state and local levels, while most policy making is done on the federal level. So while at first glance, MPs may stray far outside "their own" responsibility in discussing local issues, in fact they may be gathering feedback for policy making in their own domain.

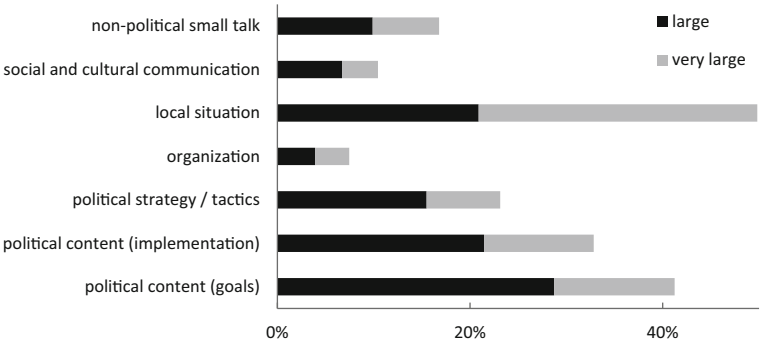

Figure 2: Share of communication content in MPs' district work.
Source: CITREP, 536 observed events.

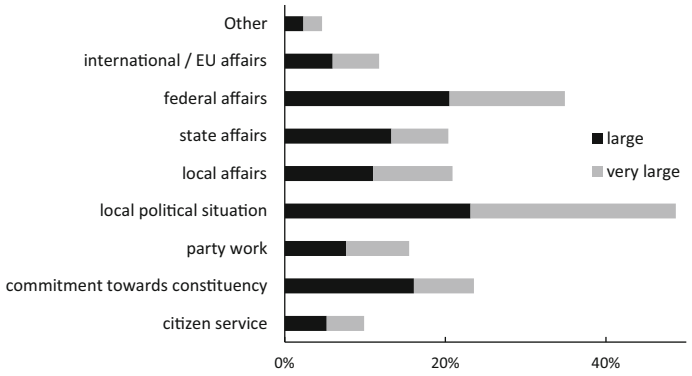

Figure 3: Topics of political communication in MPs' district work.
Source: CITREP, 536 observed events.

Listening and Leading in the District

Indeed, when asked about district work in general ("What is the most important thing you do here in the district?"), MPs strongly stress the feedback and information-gathering functions (see Figure 4): Serving as a contact person and listening to the people are mentioned most often, for example:

> I try to get as many impressions from real life here and carry them to Berlin in order to make them a base for my political decisions and my political work there. (MP Josip Juratovic, SPD)

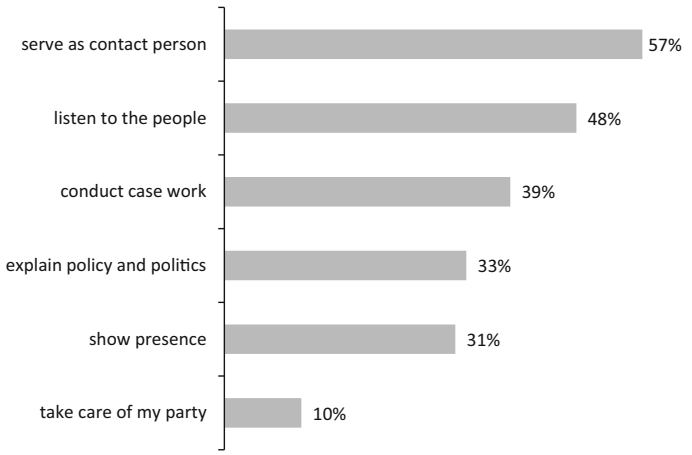

Figure 4: Most important things MPs say they do in the district.
Source: CITREP, 67 interviews and 146 interview statements; MPs could mention more than one.

> The most important thing is to be present and available for discussion: Where does the shoe pinch? Where can we improve things? That is to theoretically think about solutions but also practically look at the problems. (MP Andrea Wicklein, SPD)

Following the systems analysis model of David Easton (1965), all of them can be understood as soliciting and collecting input from society. But representation is an interactive process that not only requires information gathering; it also needs the explanation of political decisions, i.e., the policy and politics of them. Surprisingly, German MPs stress this leadership or output function far less than the input perspective; only in a third of the statements are such issues brought up, for example:

> My task is to try to break down the information from the Bundestag in a way that the people understand it. (MP Petra Ernstberger, SPD)

> I try to carry the political decisions we take in Berlin into the population, to explain them and serve as a transmission belt. (MP Annette Widmann-Mauz, CDU)

But in general, it is clear that in their own view, MPs in the German Bundestag value their input function higher than the output function: More than political leaders they are political listeners. The statements in the interviews may be distorted by effects of social desirability resulting from a simplistic or mechanical understanding of representation. Asked about their understanding of parliamentary representation

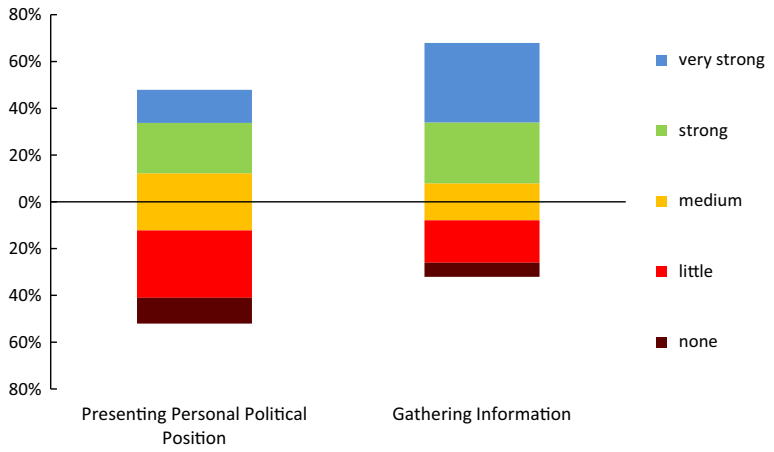

Figure 5: Leadership or information gathering in district work.
Source: CITREP, 479 observed events.

- 32 MPs (out of 67) stress the need to gather information about the interests of the people,
- 25 put the decision making at the forefront,
- 23 see elections as a defining moment,
- 23 MPs focus on feedback and
- 21 stress the accountability resulting from this,
- but only 11 MPs name leadership as important.

In the German context, leadership ("Führung") might also still carry a negative connotation so that MPs avoid the term. When asked directly, whether providing orientation or gathering information is a more important task of an MP, a balanced picture emerges: 36 MPs say, both are equally important, 15 stress leadership, 13 listening.

Checking MP statements with their actual behavior shows that in practice, the information-gathering activities do indeed prevail. In 60% of the observed events, gathering information plays a strong or very strong role in observed MP behavior, while in only 36% MPs were (very) strongly presenting their personal political positions (see Figure 5). In their district work, German MPs do indeed act largely as "input specialists" (von Oertzen, 2006, 254).

So in the case of leadership or information gathering, real behavior of MPs and their own interview statements match quite well. But there are also topics where this is clearly not the case: One of them is party work (MPs say that it is less important than mirrored in their behavior); the other is casework (MPs say it is more important than mirrored in their behavior). These two activities will be discussed in the following sections.

Conducting Casework

In the interviews, 39% of German MPs mention casework as a rather important part of their district activities (see Figure 4), for example:

> The most important thing in the district is to work off the citizens' request – concrete requests that are brought forth during office hours or in personal talks with me. (MP Jens Ackermann, FDP)

> It has great importance because the MP is seen as a caretaker. It is good like that and my experience is that not only voters or party members use this help but rather the directly elected MP is seen as a contact person for all, who helps along and explains … In one way or the other it happens every day. (MP Annette Widmann-Mauz, CDU)

> It makes up a big part of my work and the work of my staff. We receive a lot of letters from citizens and normally answer all of them. (MP Uwe Beckmeyer, SPD)

In other countries such as the UK or the USA, it has long been an established routine for MPs to deal with individual responses to citizen requests and they often have a highly differentiated staff and established routines to handle it professionally (Petersen, 2012). In its recent Global Parliamentary Report, the Inter-Parliamentary Union and UNDP warned parliaments and parliamentarians of the danger to overdo their constituency service activities. They recommend a more strategic approach to them (IPU and UNDP, 2012, 7).

One occasion where a lot of casework is conducted is the MP office hours or surgeries. They are time slots in the district offices when individual citizens can get appointments to discuss all kinds of concerns. Most MPs conduct these so-called Bürgersprechstunden on a regular basis in their districts. And the observations provide ample examples of the variety of often personal issues that MPs have to deal with. For example, one citizen recited a "poem to a rusty cemetery gate" that he had written; another reported that he was harassed by the former secret services of the DDR and by the parliamentary police. A district staffer outright stated: "Half of the visitors during office hours are lunatics" (anonymous). But other events consisted of very pragmatic help in dealing with bureaucratic problems, making phone calls on behalf of people, giving legal advice, suggesting procedures or referring to lawyers or other possible positions of help.

Yet the quantity of casework in Germany still seems comparatively low. This is phrased carefully for lack of reliable comparative data. But the observations show a much smaller part of actual casework than the interview statements suggest. Office hours are certainly not on the top of the list of German MP activities; in fact, they make up only 7% of the observations and incidentally also 7% of the observation time. When looking at the content of communication, less than 10% of events have a high or very high share of casework (see Figure 3).

Bringing together casework activity in Germany with other variables, there is evidence that most explaining factors found in the USA also work in Germany (Siefken, 2014, 18): New MPs conduct more casework than senior ones, those from parties of the left are more active in casework than those from the right, MPs in districts with socioeconomic troubles – such as a high joblessness – perform more casework than others. So there are push factors (controlled by MPs) and pull factors (caused by the district properties) for casework. While all in all, casework is not a very important activity of German MPs, it seems to grow: An interview study from 20 years ago showed a share of casework time at around 2% (Patzelt, 1996, 483), so the fivefold increase to ten percent is quite remarkable.

Party Work in the District

Only 10% of MPs mention "taking care of my party" as an important activity in their district work (see Figure 4). But internal party meetings are the second most frequent activity in the district (see Figure 1). Controlling for the time spent in the

different event types, party meetings actually share the top position with visits to public agencies (Schindler, 2013, 512).

Looking at the institutional incentives in Germany, this is not surprising. First of all, parties still play a very important role in electoral decision making in a country where party identification remains above 60% of the population. Secondly, political parties provide the key structure, content and staff for electoral campaigns of individual candidates. And thirdly, they nominate the candidates both for direct mandates and for list mandates.

Candidates for direct mandates are nominated by the local party in the district, either through a convention of all party members or a meeting of delegates. Thus, it is crucial to uphold good relations with the party base. Indeed, it happens occasionally that incumbent MPs are not renominated because of an estrangement from their party base in the district (Schindler, 2013: 507). Local party leaders play an important role in the nomination process when they support – or prevent – candidacies (Reiser, 2011: 241).

Likewise, the political party at the state level has an important role in assembling the party lists for the list mandates. They are compiled in state party delegate conventions where votes are held for every slot on the list. Looking at the nomination processes within the parties shows that it has become a de facto precondition for achieving a competitive nomination high on the party list to run for a direct mandate (Reiser, 2011, 241). In the 15th electoral period (2002–2005), a full 94% of MPs in parliament had run for a direct mandate (Schüttemeyer and Sturm, 2005, 548). In the CITREP sample for the 17th electoral period (2009–2013), 98% had run for a direct mandate, even though only roughly half (52%) eventually did get directly elected in a district. So in reality, state and local parties are the crucial bottleneck for all MPs to be nominated in the first place. It is thus no surprise that they spend a lot of time with party work.

The Mandate Divide

Based on the two types of mandates in the German electoral system, it has been argued that there are also two types of MPs: one that is more focused on his district (direct mandate) and one that is more focused on the party (list mandate). Studies have shown differences between direct and list MPs in committee assignment (Stratmann and Baur, 2002), campaign communication (Gschwend and Zittel, 2012, 374) and their presentation of self (Marcinkiewicz and Tepe, 2012). Yet a later study based on a larger data set showed that committee membership is changing a lot and that in a broader perspective, such systematic differences cannot be upheld (Heinz, 2010, 526).

Based on how parties deal with the nomination process, the suggestion, that there are two types of MPs depending on the type of mandate, is difficult to sustain. MPs usually keep a strong allegiance to the district that they were running in if not

directly elected. It has thus been argued that the double candidacies lead to a "contamination" of the incentives (Ferrara *et al,* 2005, 44).

The CITREP observation and interview data do not support the two mandates hypothesis either. Looking at relevant indicators, for example the share of citizen service or focus on the constituency, no clear differences between MPs of different mandates are found (see Figure 6). In fact, directly elected MPs had a somewhat lower share of service to individual citizens and showed slightly less commitment to the district in their communication – the reverse of what would be expected.

Other indicators such as the event type showed no systematic variation either. While there is a slightly higher number of public events by directly elected MPs (12%) than MPs elected through the list (8%), party events are at the same level of 15% for both (Siefken, 2013, 496).

Among MPs, there are different opinions concerning their mandate types. One MPs who used to hold a direct mandate and was elected through the list later said:

> My district work is not affected by this at all. Either way, there is high involvement. Nobody makes such a distinction in the district, except maybe in the protocol of welcoming addresses in public events [where a directly elected MP would be greeted first, STS] – that may be important to you or not. But otherwise, there is no difference. (Ernst Dieter Rossmann, SPD)

Yet quite some MPs stress that there is a difference either in their own or in their opponents' behavior based on the mandate type:

> [My competitor] is an MP from the Green party. And the Greens are almost never directly elected. That is why [she] is not doing any district work. (anonymous MP)

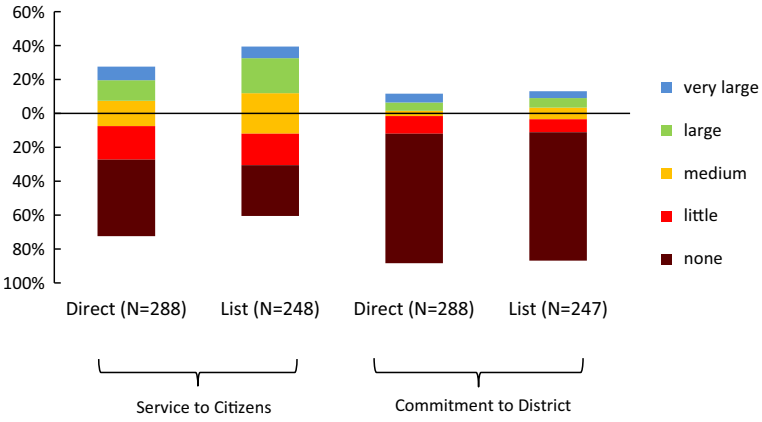

Figure 6: Citizen service and constituency orientation of MPs with different mandates.
Source: CITREP, 535 observed events.

> I am elected through the list, that is why I feel strongly as a representative of my party and am obliged to our party platform. If I was not, I could have run as an independent. (Halina Wawzyniak, Left Party)

Earlier research has also shown that in their own estimate, MPs assign some importance to the mandate type (Patzelt, 2007, 58) and that there is a variation in what they say they do in the district (Klingemann and Wessels, 2001, 292). Yet in their actual observed behavior, such differences are not relevant. It is worth investigating this disconnects between perception and behavior of MPs.

All in all, the issue deserves further research. The evidence suggests that there are not two distinct types of parliamentarians in Germany but that the "countervailing electoral incentives" resulting from the electoral system (Bawn, 1999, 491) may instead be integrated by MPs themselves, not by the Bundestag as a whole (Manow, 2012, 75).

District and Parliament

As argued above one might expect district work to be seen as a necessary burden for MPs. While their work in parliament is highly specialized along and within policy domains, in the district they serve as generalists for all issues political.

But when asked how these two important arenas of their activities are linked together, a high share of 66% of MPs stresses the importance of their district activities for their work in parliament. And only 14% of MPs say that it is of little importance. Vice versa, the relationship is less clear: 47% say there is a strong importance of the parliamentary specialization for district activities, but 31% say it is low. So all in all, in the MPs' estimate it is clear which direction influence between activities in the district and in parliament mostly run: from the district to parliament (Figures 7, 8).

The more detailed analysis of interview statements shows that MPs particularly value the district work for providing feedback from reality (30%), but also to get a feeling of the general mood in the district (16%) and to gather information (15%) or receive new input (13%) (Siefken, 2013, 499). How exactly the channeling of input into the political system works was not investigated in the present project but is well worth studying (Poyet and Siefken, forthcoming). Apart from providing input into the legislative process about new demands and current support (Siefken and Schüttemeyer, 2013, 175), district work may also be an important means for the internal control of the legislative experts by their peers from the same party (Schindler and Siefken, 2013). When we asked one MP after a district event, where she had taken a lot of notes and promised to "take things to Berlin," how exactly she was going to get the results of the meeting into the political process, she replied: "That is a very good question" (anonymous MP).

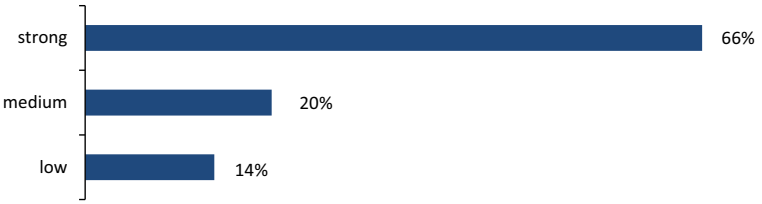

Figure 7: Importance of work in district for work in parliament.
Source: CITREP, 62 interviews.

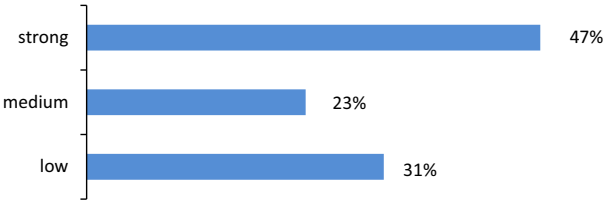

Figure 8: Importance of work in parliament for work in district.
Source: CITREP, 62 interviews.

The Perspective on MPs Beyond Borders

Understanding MP activities in the district is crucial for investigating modern representative democracy at work; the narrow research focus on members of parliament should thus be generally widened to that on the representatives of the people.

The institutional incentives resulting from the electoral system help to explain district activities especially with regard to MPs' individual choice on where to put their time and energy. They also determine the important role of the political parties for MP activities. The influence of institutions becomes quite clear in a comparative perspective. Yet institutions alone are not sufficient to fully explain MP behavior, and the district activities of German MPs cannot be grasped with a narrow focus on their motives for reelection and renomination. In fact, information seeking is widespread among German MPs in their district work.

For a full picture, not only interactions inside and outside parliament need to be taken into account but also inside and outside the domain of policy specialization of an MP. Of particular interest for further research and for a better understanding of democracy at work is the interaction between all of these perspectives.

German MPs clearly transgress the borders of their immediate policy responsibility in their district work. Horizontally, MPs deal with all kinds of policies beyond their specialization in parliament. This may also provide an internal check

on the policy experts of their own parliamentary party. Vertically, they deal with all kinds of issues from local to state and federal issues. Representation must thus be understood as a multilevel process.

Finally, the analysis has shown that it is helpful to integrate the methods of interviews and observation. While for some issues, interview statements are an adequate source, they can also be blurred or even misleading, especially when effects of social desirability come into play.

Note

1 All interview statements were authorized for attribution unless quoted as "anonymous." Translations to English language by the author.

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