

ABSTRACTS*

Kühne, Alexander: Is the “puzzle of representation” unraveled or not? Findings and lessons from various research approaches on representation.

Representation is a key issue for understanding the structure of modern democracies and is regarded as being essential for any large-scale nation state. Hence the concept of representation is a well-studied research topic in political science. Evaluating the contemporary literature on empirical and theoretical research shows four main findings in this field of study: (1) Since the 1960s the theoretical and the empirical studies on representation remain largely distinct, with little cross-fertilization or even cross-reference. The empirical research operates with more or less isolated approaches, particularly the role theoretical analysis, the rational choice approach, and the measuring of citizen-representative congruence. Likewise, the theoretical research has little influence on the empirical findings with the exception of *Hanna F. Pitkin's* classic work. (2) In the last twenty years the theoretical research has received a more pragmatic impulse. Especially an increasing number of studies on descriptive representation are focused on the practicability of their findings. (3) Looking from an international perspective, the large and systematic body of research on representation in the United States dominates the field. Step by step German scholars adopted and ideated a wide range of approaches and methodologies in the last decades. However, the most recent rational choice approach is rarely applied. (4) Moreover, comparative research on political representation continues to be underdeveloped. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 459 – 485]

Siefken, Sven T.: Representation at home. Conceptions and behaviors of Members of the German Bundestag in their district work.

Four central characteristics highlight the particular functional importance of electoral districts in the political system of Germany: First, districts are the organizational units through which direct mandates for the Bundestag are elected (election). Second – prior to the elections – this is where the MP candidates are nominated through local party conventions (nomination). Third, districts are an important source for specialist and everyday knowledge that can be used by the MPs in their parliamentary work (information). Fourth, they are a place of political communication, where the represented and the representatives interact (communication). Various expectations about the MPs' work result from these functional roles of the electoral districts in the German political system; i.e. the certain event type, the content of communication (policy or politics), the use of various communication channels (old and new media), role behavior and the influence of external factors such as the type of mandate (direct or list) or properties concerning the district itself. All of these aspects are investigated concerning the MPs work in their electoral districts based on observation and interview data gathered in the CITREP project between 2011 and 2012. Similarities and differences in comparison to previous research results are highlighted, thereby providing an overview of empirical knowledge on MP's everyday district work outside of election campaigns. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 486 – 506]

Schindler, Danny: Party politics on the ground. Members of the German Bundestag and their party work in the district.

Based on the assumption that there are various incentives for Members of the German Bundestag to reach out to their parties on the ground, the relationship between district work and party work at grass-root level is explored. It draws both behavioral data and interview data from the CITREP project (“Citizens and Representatives in France and Germany”) through which 64 Members of the German Bundestag were accompanied in their districts for three days each. The overall picture reveals a very tightly knit connection between German MPs and their local party organization. Although MPs meet

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a lot of different people in their district, local networking in quantitative terms is strongest with their party. However, party work consists of multiple forms and serves numerous functions. In general, the component of providing orientation outweighs that of gathering information. Investigating party-related activities beyond party meetings yields additional findings: In their districts MPs must often communicate as their party's representative but it is not uncommon to find them occasionally distancing themselves from their party as well. While parliamentary party competition extends to their districts moderately, personalized competition between MPs in the same district is almost absent. In sum, Members of the Bundestag sustain the German "parliamentary party democracy" even through their party activities at grass-root level. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 507 – 525]

Küpper, Moritz and Georg Wenzelburger: Career changers in the German Bundestag. An analysis of the non-standard careers from 1949 to 2009.

Most literature on political careers has been pre-occupied with analyzing standard political careers whereas the knowledge on career changers into politics is rather limited. The present contribution addresses this gap by quantitatively examining the peculiarities of non-standard careers in the German Bundestag (1949 to 2009). Comparing the group of career changers to "standard" members of parliament, the analysis yields some important results: career changers (1) have reached a higher degree of education (and are often professors) than their colleagues, (2) became often members of parliament directly after the foundation of the Federal Republic or during the 1970s and (3) are more frequently members of small parties (and especially the PDS/Left Party) than of the two catch-all-parties CDU and SPD. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 526 – 545]

Delius, Martin F., Michael Kofß and Christian Stecker: "Well, basically I respect the party line ..." – Intra-party dissent in the SPD during the Grand Coalition from 2005 to 2009.

By analyzing 162 roll call votes and interviewing six members of the parliamentary party of the SPD a potential trade-off between ideological dissent and party discipline in the parliamentary branch of the SPD during the Grand Coalition from 2005 to 2009 is investigated. The results only partially meet expectations about the "typical" dissenters: Dissent among members of the Parliamentary Left was indeed above average; as was dissent among members from East German constituencies. Directly elected parliamentarians dissented only slightly more often than those elected through party lists and significant dissent is only discernible among those elected in highly contested constituencies. As expected, members of the party holding a leading position dissented less often, whereas dissent among newly elected parliamentarians was above average. However, those newly elected usually go through a period of coordination which is completed by the end of their first legislative period in parliament. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 546 – 566]

Deiss-Helbig, Elisa: "I am one of you" – Exploring the relevance of social and political congruence between MPs and citizens regarding the feeling of being represented.

Regularly, the loss of public support vis-à-vis the elected representatives stimulates public as well as scholar debates. When trying to explain the phenomenon, scholarship points amongst other issues to the fact that the socio-demographic composition of parliament differs considerably from the distribution in society as a whole. Regarding the relation between citizens and representatives, the socio-demographic features of the latter can fulfill mainly two functions. First, they can serve as information short-cuts through which the voter can deduce to the representative's policy positions. Second, social congruence between voter and MP can also have a confidence-building function. Additionally, congruence between the citizens' party identification and the representatives' party affiliation are highly important for the representational link. Using an experimental design the impact of social and political congruence on the feeling of being represented is investigated. The results show that despite the ongoing thesis of a crisis of parties, it is still them who are a central intervening variable concerning the relationship between citizens and representatives. Nevertheless, the impact of social congruence on the representational link should not be underestimated. Congruence between the MP's and the citizen's

occupation – and, to a minor degree, also congruence regarding age – do impact positively on the feeling of being represented. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 566 – 580]

Dageförde, Mirjam: “Ideal representatives“? Exploring norms and practice of parliamentary representation from the citizens’ perspective.

The relationship between citizens and representatives is one of the core elements concerning political representation. Mainly, this relation is analyzed through investigating attitudes and behavior of MPs. By contrast, there is a lack of exploring the demands that citizens hold toward their representatives as well as the citizens’ perception of representation. Aiming to close this gap the norms that citizens hold towards their MPs and whether the electorate perceives that their demands are fulfilled are analyzed using role theory. The results reveal several gaps: Citizens’ expect MPs to be oriented mainly towards the interests of their constituency, their voters or the whole nation. Representing the party’s interests is considered to be less important. Nonetheless, citizens perceive that representatives mainly focus on party interests. Furthermore, the German citizenry states that MPs act more as trustee than as delegates, although the electorate demands a closer orientation towards voters’ interests. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 580 – 592]

Gabriel, Oscar W.: Failures of representation and the second transformation of democracy: Who wants direct democracy in Germany?

According to many theorists, a given political system conforms to the normative standards of democratic rule only if the members of a political community hold the belief that their preferences have an impact on political decision. This idea is crucial in the ongoing debate of the crisis of democracy and has led to the assumption that a decreasing responsiveness of representative democracies has led to a decline of regime support and to a parallel increase of demands for direct democracy. In the analysis of attitudes towards representation, the general belief of being well represented will be distinguished from more specific attitudes, i.e. the perception of appropriate representation of various concerns such as values and policy preferences and the attitudes towards being well represented by various institutions and actors. Thereby the impact of peoples’ feeling of being well represented in politics on support for the idea of direct or representational democracy is investigated, additionally asking whether and how the various sub-dimensions of attitudes towards representation mentioned before have an impact on demands for direct democracy. The general feeling of being poorly represented turns out as the most important determinant of support of direct democracy, but preferring an oppositional party is almost equally important. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 592 – 612]

Ley, Richard: Appointing the prime minister’s deputy as integral part of forming the government – General objectives and constitutional particularities in Rhineland-Palatinate.

The most important constitutional executive organ of a German federal state is its prime minister. It is their obligation to appoint a minister as their deputy to ensure that all of their tasks and duties are continuously fulfilled even if they themselves are not available. The appointed minister though does not hold another office but only a second function. While the constitutions in Rhineland-Palatinate (article 105 paragraph 2 p. 3 LV-RP) and in Bavaria (article 46 LV-BY) rule that every appointment of a prime minister’s deputy needs the state parliament’s affirmation this is not the case for his or her dismissal. In this detail it differs from the appointment and dismissal of the state’s ministers (articles 98 paragraph 2 p. 4 LV-RP; 45 LV-BY). The possessive pronouns, used by the states’ constitutions as well as by the German Basic Law, to describe the deputy’s appointment obviously conjoint him or her to the prime minister. The resignation of the latter therefore unquestionably leads to the end of the former’s function of being the prime minister’s deputy but not to him or her being minister, since there is no Rhineland-Palatinate passage equivalent to article 69 paragraph 2 of the German Constitution. This particularity has already led to inaccuracies in two changes of government in the past, resulting in the fact that today’s prime minister of Rhineland-Palatinate, *Malu Dreyer*, has no legal deputy. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 613 – 628]

Strohmeier, Gerd: Can we rely on Karlsruhe? A critical reflection on the electoral law.

Democracy manifests itself in elections and their results, which are partially prejudiced by the electoral law. As a consequence, it is a great responsibility to decide about the electoral law and to create the framework for that decision. It is crucial to what extent the German Bundestag, which decides on the electoral law, can rely on the Federal Constitutional Court, which in turn creates the framework for that decision. This question is analyzed regarding surplus seats ("Überhangmandate"), the effect of negative voting weight ("Negatives Stimmgewicht") and voting rights of German expatriates ("Auslandsdeutsche"). The results show that the constitutional court has made a couple of U-turns over the past years, which have not been persuasively justified by the constitutional court. Moreover, the grounds for the rulings were partially contradictory, imprecise and inappropriate. Finally, the ruling of the constitutional court marks a rejection of the maxim of judicial restraint. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 629 – 644]

Karpen, Ulrich: Democracy and parliamentary control – Repelled in the cases of European Financial Stability Fonds and Fiscal Pact?

Various cases were lodged against the European Financial Stability Fonds (EFSF) and the European Fiscal Pact before the Federal Constitutional Court (FCC). In a temporary injunction procedure on September 12, 2012 the court refused to prevent the Federal President from ratification of the treaties: The court held in this summary procedure that the treaties are compatible with German constitutional law, demanded however that the Federal President added some reservations to the ratification, mainly for purpose of strengthening the rights of parliament. The FCC had to deal with fundamental constitutional issues such as democratic principles, parliamentarianism and sovereignty of the Federal Republic. At the centre of the FCC's reasoning stood the question at which point of European integration the state would lose its identity and find itself in a sort of federated system "Europe". This is the fifth of basic rulings of the FCC on this matter. It should be added that a few weeks later, on submission of a case by the Supreme Court of Ireland, the European Court of Justice held the treaty as conforming with the Lisbon-Treaty, namely not violating its "no bail out-clause" (November 27, 2012). There is no doubt that the decision of the FCC on September 12, 2012 is again a "highly political" judgment, which raises the question of "gouvernement des juges" in Germany. In the ongoing procedure of decision on the merits, the FCC held a two-day public hearing (June 16-17, 2013), which dealt primarily with the issue whether the European Central Bank is entitled to purchase state loans of the Euro-crisis-states on the secondary market. The final decision of the Court on the "package of saving the Euro" may be expected by end of 2013 or beginning of 2014. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 645 – 658]

Schultze, Rainer-Olaf: Governance – A new regime?

Since the 1980s there have been profound social changes resulting in new forms of governing within the terms of Governance. Taking these changes into consideration new forms of governing within the terms of governance are analyzed. The neo-democratic reform-agenda claims to emphasize both participative governing on the one hand and effective governing on the other. While the first is said to be achieved by strongly engaging members of the civil society, the second supposedly results due to governance-networks and rational negotiations. There is, however, a huge gap between ambitions and reality. Even though the governance-structures have strongly changed governing in representative democracies, the hopes associated with these changes could not be fulfilled. Parliaments are still losing power and influence; the abilities concerning organization and conflict of interests are still asymmetric and all attempts concerning neo-democratic transparency, accountability and participation by the civil society are, at least until now, vastly part of symbolic politics. If those hopes are ever to become reality, minorities as well as interests that are not or only partially disputable have to be empowered. This is only possible by implying a dual strategy combining representative-democratic electoral politics and participation by the civil society on the one hand and direct-democratic civil protest on the other. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 3, pp. 659 – 674]