

ABSTRACTS*

Weinmann, Philipp: Does the new German electoral system inflate the Bundestag with additional seats? A simulation analysis based on the reformed electoral law.

Starting from the assumption that, independent from a specific election result, the electoral system should place parliament under all conditions as close as possible to the regular size of 598, simulations have been run based on poll data since the election of 2009. Certain constellations would result in very large numbers of seats, hence, another reform of the recently reformed electoral law is up for discussion. The simulations show that two possible reform options indeed lead to smaller parliaments. While the consequences of introducing a single-vote-system are hard to predict, the calculation method suggested by *Richard Peifer* et al. exhibits less side effects and is principally recommendable. However, it would have to be combined with additional measures to avoid vastly oversized parliaments under certain conditions. The final section thus points to further reform options. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 719 – 741]

Träger, Henrik: The effects of electoral systems: eleven model calculations with the results of the German National Election 2013.

Electoral systems transfer data of votes into parliamentary seats. This happens in a specific manner and in principle it can be distinguished between majority systems und proportional representation systems. The various systems have different effects on the composition of parliament and the opportunities of possible coalitions to govern. In the case of a majority system or a proportional system without a threshold the German Bundestag would have a different appearance than it does now. To demonstrate to which in part drastically different results the various systems would lead eleven model calculations are conducted with the results of the German National Election 2013. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 741 – 758]

Rütters, Peter: Data on the social structure of German members of the European Parliament.

So far the social structure of members of the European Parliament (MEP) has not triggered much scientific interest apart from a short boom after 1979 when the European Parliament was directly elected for the first time. To start closing this gap, some basic data on German MEPs (to be more precise: MEPs elected in Germany) who have been elected for the last seven European Parliaments (1979 to 2009/2014) are compiled and some interpretations are offered. The tables present data on the age structure of 81 respective 99 (since 1994) German MEPs, their educational and professional backgrounds, on gender and on parliamentary careers in federal or national parliaments or in governments predating their election to the EP as well as information on the duration of the mandate. Despite the fact that the

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findings need to be treated with some reserve, some general conclusion can still be drawn. As in the federal parliament or in German Land parliaments, we find a remarkably high degree of personal continuity. German MEPs also perceive their mandate in a professional way and the EP as an influential institution. Moreover, the EP seems not to be just a stop over for another political career. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 759 – 782]

Rütters, Peter: Whereabouts of former German members of the European Parliament.

Hardly any research has been conducted on the reasons why members of the Bundestag or Land parliaments give up their mandate prematurely and little is also known on the career fate of former deputies. In an exemplary fashion these issues are investigated by analysing German members of the European Parliament (MEP) since the first direct election in 1979. All MEPs who gave up their mandate since 1979 during the legislative period are included in the study. Two major causes led to these terminations: incumbent MEPs either died or took over other political posts, e.g. in their national governments, in national or sub-national parliaments, in municipalities or in the EU administration. The situation of those deputies leaving the European Parliament at the end of the term turns out to be more complex. The empirical basis of this part of the study is formed by those members that left the EP at the end of the 6th term (2009) and that to a large degree were career politicians. Only very few of those MEPs had been voted out of office. More important were other reasons such as the wish to retire, not being nominated by a party, being placed on an unpromising place on the party list – to name a few. The career fates of former MEPs reveal that the majority of ex-MEPs continued to stay in politics. Only a small group gave up politics entirely (mostly due to age). Finally: Taking up a job “in the economy” was a rare exception in the group studied here in more detail. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 783 – 803]

Schröder, Hinrich: The Amendment of the Act on Cooperation between the Federal Government and the German Bundestag in matters concerning the European Union (EUZBBG).

The amendment of the EUZBBG had become necessary after the Federal Constitutional Court in its ruling of June 19 2012 had interpreted the information rights of the Bundestag under Article 23 paragraph 2 Basic Law wider than in the previous EUZBBG. In addition, the experiences made with the application of the accompanying laws to the Lisbon Treaty were incorporated into the amended law. Overall, the EUZBBG now contains a number of significant improvements compared to the previously applicable version. The newly worded definition of “Affairs of the European Union” is not only broad in its reach but also open for new developments of the term and thus the principles of information should ensure that the information rights of Parliament are guaranteed by ordinary law in the event of further integration steps. The daily cooperation between the Bundestag and the Federal Government is also facilitated by the detailed rules for documents to be provided. Finally, the modification of the commenting procedure gives the Bundestag the opportunity to exercise this right even more effectively than before. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 803 – 812]

Heynckes, Heinz-Willi: The Subcommittee on Local Government Affairs and the procedural requirements contained in the Rules of Procedure of the German Bundestag.

The Subcommittee on Local Government Affairs was established in response to a growing public debate on the positioning of local authorities and how they are impacted by federal legislation. The Subcommittee was intended to give more weight to local authorities' concerns at the federal level. The procedure of setting up subcommittees is dealt with in § 55 of the German Bundestag's Rules of Procedure, which establishes a close link between the subcommittee's deliberations and the main committee. The members of the subcommittee are appointed autonomously by the parliamentary groups. In practice, the deliberations of the Subcommittee on Local Government Affairs were shaped by its dependence on the Committee on Internal Affairs, the establishing committee. In view of its position as a subcommittee dealing with a cross-cutting issue in which several committees play an important role, it would have been preferable for the Subcommittee on Local Government Affairs to have been set up as a joint subcommittee, granting each of the committees involved equal status. A body dealing with a highly specialised area is primarily useful if, in addition to providing more insights, it genuinely helps to ease the workload in the area concerned. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 812 – 828]

Harm, Katrin, Tobias Jaeck and Jens Aderhold: Local politicians overloaded? Work and stress apperception of council members in six local parliaments.

The political work undertaken as a member of a local parliament is demanding, sometimes difficult and more and more often linked to personal challenges and stress in terms of time management and organization. Although exogenous as well as endogenous reasons have been identified as causes of this stress, it is as yet unclear to what extent local politicians themselves actually perceive stress as mental overload. Our results show that the difficult circumstances or excessive time expenditure one experiences when working as a council member do not necessarily lead to the personal impression of being a burden to representatives, even though we were actually able to measure stress objectively. In fact, the staff report of the representatives perceiving a mental overload varies according to the local political framework. This can be proved on the basis of a multidimensional model. The sensation of being asked for too much is especially shaped by the way how the councilors perceive the local political framework, to what extent their expectations for their work are fulfilled, what other political positions they hold and where, and the effort they make to exercise their mandate's work. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 829 – 846]

Naßmacher, Hiltrud: Municipal elections under changed competitive conditions.

Municipal elections have been neglected in electoral research. This is due to the database that is extremely difficult to compose for all states in the federal system. After the latest mayoral elections in large German cities brought about meager results for the CDU, the media's interest in local elections grew. Does voting behaviour at the local level differ from that at other levels? Which factors are important? Using the latest election results of all cities with 50.000 and more inhabitants this article shows that long-term factors of voting behaviour in general elections are relevant as well at the local level. However, the major local actors, especially the mayor, activists in the political parties and the local media, create a special

environment in each municipality due to their skills, personality, capacity to communicate with people and professionalization. Mobilization of voters is much easier, if the governing elite has been able to create trust in the local political system. Institutional changes to enlarge participatory options for the people have only a small impact on mobilization of potential voters. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 847 – 872]

Schmidt, Carmen and Jan Knipperts: Political generations, demographic change and voting behaviour in the Federal Republic of Germany: fateful years for the German party system?

The demographic change leads to changing political representation of different age groups, their values and electoral behaviour. By analyzing the voting behaviour of different age cohorts in (West-)German society, this study seeks to explain the impact of demographic change on the German party system. The analysis of the representative statistical data from the official psephology and the German General Social Survey shows a strong variation in voting behaviour: While the post-war and baby boomer generations have strong ties to the two catch-all-parties SPD and CDU and a high turnout rate, the younger generations with a lower birth rate show much weaker ties to the big parties and a lower turnout rate. To date, the big parties in Germany could rely on the most populous post-war and baby-boomer generations. Given the demographic trends, however, this will become more difficult in the future and could lead to major changes in the German party system. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 872 – 891]

Dose, Nicolai and Anne-Kathrin Fischer: The loss of party members and the aging of parties: projecting number of party members until 2040.

With exception of the Greens all parties represented in the German Parliament suffer from a substantial loss of members. This is firstly due to the fact that more party members leave their party than join it, and secondly due to relatively high numbers of cases of death. While the balance of registrations and resignations is influenced among others by the popularity of the parties and by politically relevant events and thus are hardly to project, the amount of cases of death can be predicted to a certain degree. In the presented analysis this is done by referring to mortality tables and the known age distribution of party members. Especially the big parties will suffer a further substantial loss of members: In 2040 the Social Democratic Party and the Christian Democratic Party will have approximately 200.000 members each. The predicted losses will more than halve today's number of party members only due to rising fatalities. A further decline in the amount of members could be caused by a continuing negative balance of registrations and resignations. This development will have substantial impact on party activities. [ZParl, vol. 44, no. 4, pp. 892 – 900]