

## ABSTRACTS\*

***Brunsbach, Sandra: Do women matter? Female MPs as representatives of women's interests in the German Bundestag.***

An increasing proportion of women in national parliaments are often seen as leading to an improved substantive representation of women. This assumed relationship between the descriptive and substantive representation of women will be analyzed on the basis of a comparison between the 11th and 15th German Bundestag. Member of Parliament surveys of 1988 and 2003 and an analysis of committee protocols reveal that female MPs emphasize the substantive representation of women more than their male colleagues do. However, a doubling of the proportion of women in parliament and most parliamentary parties has not lead to a clear improvement in the substantive representation of women. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 3 – 24]

***Louise K. Davidson-Schmich and Kürschner, Isabelle: Have gender quotas reached their limits? An examination of the 2009 German federal election.***

As quotas spread across parties in the 1980s and 1990s, the number of women in the Bundestag rapidly increased. During the past decade, however, the percentage of female MdBs has stagnated at approximately a rate of one third. Using the Federal Election Office's (Bundeswahlleiter) data on candidates for the 2009 Federal Election, we investigate whether this stagnation is due to a lack of quota implementation or to incomplete quota adoption. Although German parties' quotas are voluntary mechanisms with no official sanctions for violations, parties complied with their quotas in terms of promising places on the 2009 electoral lists. The limited number of women in the Bundestag can be attributed to the fact that some parties have not adopted quotas, and hence send few women to the Bundestag, and to the fact that even parties with quotas for party lists do not nominate many women for their constituency seats, which are not subject to gender quotas. To increase the number of women in the Bundestag, then, quota-less parties would likely need to adopt quotas and all parties would need to nominate more female candidates for promising direct mandates. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 25 – 34]

***Holtkamp, Lars, Sonja Schnittke and Elke Wiechmann: The stagnation of women's parliamentary representation – The situation in German major cities.***

After a surge in women's parliamentary representation, this decade is marked by stagnating figures. Women's representation in German parliaments has leveled off at about a bare third, and gender parity seems beyond reach for the time being. The empirical analysis suggests that stagnating figures are chiefly attributable to the political parties' nomination be-

\* Diese sind in deutscher Sprache zu finden auf [www.zparl.de](http://www.zparl.de) beziehungsweise [www.politik.uni-halle.de/zparl](http://www.politik.uni-halle.de/zparl).

havior, whereas discriminatory effects of the electoral behavior cannot be substantiated. Nomination patterns, in turn, empirically depend on institutions which are established by the parties themselves, such as fixed quota systems and electoral rules. Thus, nomination patterns are intentionally malleable towards gender parity, as it is assumed by rational choice institutionalism. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 35 – 49]

***Hoecker, Beate: Political representation of women in EU member states.***

Even after the first decade of the 21st century, politics is still a male domain: the average representation of women in the parliaments of EU member states is as low as 24 per cent and only 27 per cent of the cabinet members are female. However, the single state data differ widely, on the one hand confirming the leading role of the Nordic states and on the other hand it shows the deficits of the new EU member states concerning female political representation. The varying degree of representation can be explained by the specific constellations of institutional, cultural and socio-economic factors. Generally speaking representation of women in legislatures is fostered by the early establishment of women's suffrage, an egalitarian political culture, proportional representation and a high female activity rate while, on the contrary, the late establishment of women's suffrage, prevailing traditional gender roles and mixed member proportional representation proves to be typical for states with a low degree of women's political representation. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 50 – 65]

***Derichs, Claudia, Hala Kindelberger and Christine Holike: Female parliamentarians in the Islamic world – Subservient deputies?***

Parliaments in Muslim majority states are generally considered as weak institutions. They are only partially elected, hold a consultative status and rarely function as a legislative body. Even weaker than the influence of parliament as an institution seems the influence of female deputies on the body's decision-making process. This widely shared perception raises the question of a potential connection between 'Islam' as religion/way of life and parliamentary representation of women in the 'Islamic world'. Our findings, which are empirically based on studies in the regions of the Middle East and North Africa as well as South and Southeast Asia, do not entertain the idea of an unequivocal, causal relationship between the societal and political importance of Islam and the poor political representation of women. A country's gender ideology, which shapes the relationship between the sexes, is composed of numerous elements that are historically and culturally bound and thereby, often become reflected in a religious rhetoric. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 65 – 81]

***Schmidt, Carmen: The historic change of power in Japan with regard to the voting system and the voting behavior.***

The Democratic Party of Japan's (DPJ) major victory at the August 2009 Lower House election ended more than half a century of almost uninterrupted rule by the conservative Liberal Democratic Party. The voting system was as much decisive for the outcome of the election as the parties' strategies to coordinate the terms of candidacy in the single seat constituencies. The dealignment of the electorate has concurrently promoted regime change,

and the mobilization of undecided voters played a key role in the past elections. Multiple scenarios are conceivable for the future development. We may see a viable and stable two-party-system with short-term factors such as candidate characteristics and specific policy issues becoming increasingly prominent in determining the voting results. However, since the voting system favors a multiple party system, it is predictable that there will be more than two parties in the future. Stable coalitions between ideological camps are not within sight. In fact, the DPJ's internal ideological divide and its inability to create stable voter alignments might favor party splits which can lead to new party constellations and coalitions. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 82 – 95]

***Reetz, Axel: The Baltic States between stability and instability. The fifth parliaments in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.***

The Baltic States re-established their independence after the breakdown of the Soviet Union in 1991. Over the past 20 years several elections were held, but not simultaneously so that the political context after joining NATO and EU is always different. In the West often perceived as unity, the Baltic States show more and more differences. In spite of governments being “re-elected” for the first time in Estonia and Latvia the forming of different coalitions reveal the continuous instability of the party systems. This finds further proof in the fact that spill-over effects of integrating Baltic deputies into party families or known ideologies in the European Parliament did not occur. Elections in the Baltic States always result in surprises. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 96 – 117]

***Jochem, Sven: The Swedish parliamentary election of September 19, 2010 – The logic of an eroding social democratic stronghold.***

For the first time since World War II in the election of the Riksdagen, a centre-right coalition was re-elected in 2010. Compared to the results from 2006, there were only marginal changes of power relations. Nevertheless, the right-wing populist Sweden Democrats could enter the parliament for the first time, thereby enforcing a centre-right minority coalition. The Social Democrats, leading a red-green party alliance, had to experience their worst electoral result since 1920; they have lost their hegemonic position in the party competition. The Conservative Party could establish itself as the second major party of the centre, and currently, they have superb strategic options. It seems that block competition in the Riksdagen has temporarily been interrupted after the election in 2010. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 117 – 130]

***Szabó, Máté and Ágnes Lux: The Hungarian parliamentary election of April 2010: Two-thirds majority, reshaped party system, consequences for the political culture.***

The year of 2010 was the first time in the post-communist history of Hungary when one party/party alliance won a two-third majority of parliamentary seats. This means new possibilities for huge changes but also ambivalent outcomes. For the first time ever, Hungary holds the EU-Presidency from January 1 to June 30, 2011, putting the country in the lime-light. The Hungarian electoral system with its mixture of proportional and majority elements clearly contributed to the overwhelming majority won by FIDESZ in 2010. An ac-

count is given of the parliamentary parties, with special attention to the newcomer green and radical right formations, of the election campaigns, strategies and programs and of the attitudes of voters and their sociological backgrounds. The forming process of the government is discussed as well as the new structure and possible ways of future changes in the political arena. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 131 – 147]

**Sándor Kurtán and Gabriella Ilonszki: Parliamentary party group profiles after the Hungarian elections in 2010: Are the parliamentarian elites isolated?**

The 2010 elections are regarded as critical elections in Hungary because the two big parties of systemic change (MDF and SZDSZ) have dropped out of parliament while two new parties (Jobbik and LMP) have gained seats for the first time. The extent of this transformation may be somewhat doubted when focusing on the Members of Parliament. The level of incumbency fell below 50 per cent, which represents a turn indeed. Formerly, incumbency had constantly increased and reached 70 per cent by 2006, reflecting party consolidation and elite freezing. The 2010 parliament represents change with regard to some socio-demographic features (it is much younger, less educated, and more Budapest-based than the former ones) but, and more importantly, it shows the same profile in fundamental respects: The share of MPs with local positions and with party leadership functions has further increased. This reflects the same selection criteria and also forecasts the same performance criteria as before: excessive partisanship and representation incoherence (i.e. simultaneous positions in the national parliament and on the local level, for instance as mayors). While the new parties' MPs are mostly amateurs, the old parties (FIDESZ, KDNP and MSZP) although they occupy highly different numerical and political positions have followed the old trends in selection and in their views on the working of parliament. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 147 – 165]

**Niclauff, Karlheinz: SPD parliamentary party and reform policy: How much co-leadership was possible in preparing the “Agenda 2010”?**

With the government statement “Agenda 2010” of March 2003 Chancellor *Schröder* proposed a comprehensive social and economic reform design. The political implementation of this program resulted in regulations still controversial today. Since the Agenda was prepared within the inner circle of the Chancellor's office, the question arises in how far the Bundestag participated in this decisive policy statement. Were the governing parliamentary parties able to influence the content of the Agenda? Had they at least been informed about the proposed reforms? The SPD parliamentary party minutes show close cooperation between government and parliamentary party in the field of financial policy. The parliamentarians, however, only knew a rough outline of the socio-political part of the Agenda. Changes in the social system, which later on led to vehement controversies, were obviously not discussed within the parliamentary party. The initiative to policy change originated solely from the government's top ranks. The SPD parliamentary party, on the other hand, participated in the reform legislation resulting from the Agenda. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 166 – 185]

***Strohmeier, Gerd: The need for electoral reform – and its alternatives.***

Different models of electoral reform were presented in ZParl 2/2010. They are all designed to avoid the effect of inverted votes, but in different ways and with different implications. The different models of reform are divided into two groups: models that keep the conjunction of party lists and models that remove it. The former either have significant unwanted implications or are not suitable at all. The best alternative for preserving the structure of the German electoral system and removing the effect of inverted votes – without major unwanted implications – is an electoral reform that removes the conjunction of party lists. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 186 – 193]

***Holtmann, Everhard: Direct election of prime ministers in the German Länder – A critical rejoinder to Frank Decker in ZParl 4/2010.***

From several points of view, electing prime ministers directly in Germany seems problematic: First, a shift to the “presidential” pattern of regime would be consequently followed by the abolition of the five-percent-threshold at Länder elections, because the German Supreme Court has judged correspondingly with reference to the logic of local politics. Second, a directly elected prime minister probably would be confronted with a greater veto potential caused by more fragmented parliaments. Third, future divided powers would make it necessary to establish a special bureaucracy assisting the members of parliament. Last but not least, a directly elected head of the executive branch may be tempted to play a role “above party politics”, and by this damaging the public standing of party competition. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 1, pp. 194 – 205]