ABSTRACTS[*]

Lindner, Ralf and *Ulrich Riehm*: **The Modernisation of Petitioning Processes and the Application of New Media Technologies.**
During the last decade, the petitioning procedures in Germany as well as in several other countries have been subjected to a number of noteworthy reforms which promised to enhance the transparency and attractiveness of the petitioning process. The application of new media technologies played an important role in the institutional modernisation of petition systems as they provide the possibility to submit, publish, sign and discuss petitions online (so-called e-petitions). By introducing an e-petitioning pilot project in 2005, the German Bundestag is recognised as an international pioneer in this field. The article gives an introductory overview of the general petition procedures at the German Bundestag and the main political and individual functions of the right to petition. In addition, the main results of the scientific evaluation of the German Bundestag's pilot project "Public Petitions" are presented. Overall, the evaluation reaches a positive conclusion based mainly for one on the first tentative steps towards a higher degree of procedural transparency of the petitioning system and for another on the improved acceptance of the petition process through citizens and politicians. [ZParl, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 495 ff.]

Riehm, Ulrich and *Matthias Trénel*: **Public Petitions at the German Bundestag. Results of a Survey of Petitioners.**
Petitioning is one of the most important types of political participation. Yet, little is known about petitioners, their socio-demographic profile, their motivation and their assessment of the petitioning process. After the German Bundestag introduced public petitions that are submitted, signed and debated on the internet, a survey on 571 traditional as well as 350 public petitioners was carried out in 2007 as a part of a comprehensive evaluation study. Both petitioner samples display a higher than average degree of general political participation and internet use. Public petitioners are younger than traditional petitioners, but the group is still dominated by men and those with higher education to the same degree as among traditional petitioners. However, public petitions seem to meet petitioners' needs since most of them have proposals with implications for legislation rather than private matters and wish to present those in public. Considering that public petitions are still virtually unknown to the general public, their potential might be much greater than the current rate of use suggests. [ZParl, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 512 ff.]

Riehm, Ulrich, Christopher Coenen and *Ralf Lindner*: **On the Public Nature of the Petitioning Procedure at the German and the Scottish Parliament.**
The Scottish Parliament pioneered the introduction of electronic petitions, and the German Bundestag has the distinction of having been the first national parliament to introduce

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

such a system. These modernisations in terms of information and communication techno-
logy must each be considered in the context of differing institutional reforms of parliamen-
tary petitioning. One particular focus of interest is the public nature of petitioning whose
different aspects at the German parliament are scrutinized (access to the petition file, public
nature of the committee meeting, information content of the decision bill for the plenum).
Moreover petitioning in the Scottish and the German parliament is compared from the
perspective of their public nature. Scotland basically offers a fundamental and comprehen-
sive degree of public access in the entire petitioning procedure and its underlying docu-
ments, while Germany is cautiously opening towards more transparency but basically abid-
ing by the non-public nature of petitioning. [ZParl, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 529 ff.]

Schmedes, Hans-Jörg: **Daring more Transparency? Discussing a Statutory Lobbying
Register in the German Bundestag.**
The representation of societal interests is characteristic for parliamentary democracies. Since
the relationship between parliament, government and interest representatives in Germany
has so far not been the subject to any kind of transparency requirement, but instead is kept
in the dark, a prevalent public discomfort exists towards the activities of interest groups as
well as their alleged dominance. Based on demands for a statutory lobbying register, as in-
cluded in several parties' manifestos for the upcoming federal elections, the article discusses
the challenges of such a provision. After describing the statutory registration obligations
being in place in the United States and in Canada as well as the developments on the Euro-
pean level, it will discussed the shortcomings of the association listing that has been admin-
istrated by the President of the German Parliament since 1972. Furthermore, the article
outlines essentials of a potential lobbying register, with the most central element consisting
of an obligation to register with financial, organisational and client disclosure. Realising
these disclosure requirements would significantly enhance both transparency and legitimacy
of parliamentary decision-making. [ZParl, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 543 ff.]

Maier, Jürgen, Alexander Glantz and *Severin Bathelt*: **What Do Citizens Know About
Politics? Political Knowledge in the Federal Republic of Germany 1949 to 2008.**
From a normative point of view, well-founded knowledge about political affairs is a basic
requirement for democracy. So far however, only a few empirical studies have systematically
investigated the political knowledge of German citizens. Based on opinion surveys from the
years 1949 to 2008 it can be shown that the factual political knowledge of the German
public is settled on a moderate level. However, the knowledge level depends strongly on the
contents of the questions and the item format which is used. The citizens' knowledge is to
a large extent stable over time. Exceptions are the 1970s and 1980s when it was substan-
tially lower than in earlier or later periods. General differences between East and West
Germans were neither found for particular periods nor for particular topics. [ZParl, vol. 40,
no. 3, pp. 561 ff.]

Best, Volker: Strategy of Demonstrated Honesty of the CDU/CSU in the Bundestag Election Campaign in 2005.

The Bundestag election campaign in 2005 brought about an innovation: the strategy of demonstrated honesty, pursued by the CDU/CSU. After a short review of the CDU/CSU's other campaign strategies, the difficulty of honesty in politics is discussed and requirements are delineated that a successful honesty campaign has to meet. The CDU/CSU had ostensibly taken upon themselves the burden of a campaign poor in promises and rich in social cuts. While the party's plan to hide vague and dishonest aspects of its program behind blunt social cuts could have worked for the most part, the CDU/CSU ultimately failed to reap the benefits of refraining from making large campaign promises through much more manifest dishonesties in the running of the campaign. Surely, the failure of the CDU/CSU in 2005 does not indicate that abstaining from offering unrealistic promises must necessarily backfire, but it should serve parties as a warning against proclaiming honesty as their main campaign theme. [ZParl, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 579 ff.]

Manow, Philip and Martina Nistor: When is a List-Position Safe? An Empirical Investigation of the Elections to the German Bundestag from 1953 to 2002.

For all national German elections since 1953 and for each position on one of the parties' state lists the probability to get elected into parliament is calculated. Identifying safe list positions allows us to analyse parties' nomination strategies. Given that the large majority of all Members of Parliament run both on a list and in a district, we can investigate how parties combine (un)safe districts with (un)safe list positions. Thereby insight is gained into the relative attractiveness of list- versus district-candidatures, into the potential for parliamentary 'role differentiation' between list- and district-candidates and into the effectiveness of the basic democratic sanctioning mechanism – voting representatives out of office. [ZParl, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 603 ff.]

Behnke, Joachim: Surplus Seats in the German Federal Election 2009. An Estimation based on Simulation.

Surplus seats emerge, if one party gains more constituency seats in one Bundesland than it is entitled to according to its number of the so-called second votes, which are essential for the proportional distribution of the seats. The Federal Election of 2009 seems to be especially prone to the emergence of surplus seats and it is highly probable that more surplus seats will emerge than ever before. One reason for this is the great loss of votes for the Social Democratic Party (SPD), which is consistently predicted by all survey institutes. Based on simulations it is shown that the numbers estimated by current polling data promote the emergence of surplus seats in favour of the Christian Democratic Party (CDU) to an unprecedented extent, assuming the usual patterns of split-ticket-voting. If, however, partisans of the left party Die Linke change their voting pattern towards supporting more strongly SPD candidates with their first vote, then the SPD could be the party profiting most from the surplus seats, in spite of – and absurdly even because of – its immense loss of second votes. [ZParl, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 620 ff.]

Linhart, Eric: **Possible Effects of Parallel Voting Systems in Germany. Theoretical Considerations and Simulations.**

Lately, various authors have been discussing the replacement of the German 'personalisierte Verhältniswahl' (system of personalized proportional representation) by a parallel voting system. In its ruling, the German Federal Constitutional Court called for a new electoral law excluding negative vote values while explicitly seeing a parallel voting system as an option. Given this ruling it needs to be discussed how well the personalisierte Verhältniswahl is in sync with the electoral system's objectives and how a parallel voting system or a proportional representation system with a five percent threshold would fare in Germany. Indeed, the German electoral system succeeds in representing the voting population, but fails in concentrating the party system, although it includes majoritarian components. A proportional representation system should be able to fulfil these functions to the same degree as the personalisierte Verhältniswahl, yet it is less complicated in its construction and easier to understand. Parallel voting systems are expected to better balance the representation and the concentration principle. Both alternatives solve the problem of negative vote values. [ZParl, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 637 ff.]

Fritzsche, Erik: **Parliamentary Party Unity in the Mirror of Political Science. State of Research and Necessary Extensions.**

Parliamentary party unity is an important determinant for the functioning of types of government and the political competition. While in the parliamentary type the government stability directly depends on high levels of party unity, in presidentialism different levels of party unity may produce different outcomes. Thus, it is important to find out what causes party unity. In a critical review of the available international literature the existing theoretical models as well as comparative and single case studies are presented. The noticed lack of theory building comparative work shows very common problems of comparative research. Nonetheless, it also demonstrates problems of international legislative studies. Not only international data regarding many important aspects of parliaments and legislatures are missing, but also a research program that may obtain these data is out of sight. [ZParl, vol. 40, no. 3, pp. 661 ff.]