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# Committee Assignments in Parliaments with Strong Party Groups - An Analysis of the Bundestag, the Tweede Kamer and Dáil Éireann

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## Introduction: Parliamentary Party Groups and Committees

Parliaments are present throughout the world and play a central role in almost all political systems. Although they are entrusted with important functions, visitors of parliaments are sometimes baffled when watching the actual public display of decision-making process of their elected representatives. These plenary sessions, which bring together all the members of parliament (MPs) to collectively take decisions in the plenary hall of the parliament, often portray a half-empty room, and (seemingly) disinterested legislators who only listen to the debates with one ear. The conclusion that is sometimes drawn is that legislators do not represent the demands of the citizens and, generally speaking, fail to fulfil the functions expected from them. Yet, this is a reductionist view of the internal working procedures of parliaments. Beyond the immediately visible plenary session, parliaments are remarkable and highly complex institutions which work through different venues in which decisions are prepared or even taken. Once constituted, parliaments and their members differentiate themselves in their daily operation to be able to fully exert the powers that are formally granted to them and to dutifully fulfil the functions expected from them. The plenary session is mostly simply the public display of the decisions taken in these other venues.

Conceptually, this process of differentiation into different positions can be thought of as *legislative organisation*. Within this process "resources and parliamentary rights [are assigned] to individual legislators or groups of legislators" (Krehbiel, 1992, p. 2). Mattson and Strøm (1995, p.62) distinguish the specialisation in terms of "hierarchy (functional differentiation) and specialisation (horizontal differentiation)". The process of differentiation is a universal phenomenon and there is a large variation in how parliaments organize themselves. One of the most important venues to study in this regard are differentiations of legislators with regard to parliamentary committees. Parliamentary committees are central venues and vital to the functioning of parliaments. Laundy (1989, p.96) notes that "all parliaments work to a greater extent or lesser extent through committees" (see also National Democratic Institute for International Affairs, 1996). Within legislatures, they are the prime organisational structures for the preparation of plenary sessions and documents and provide a focal point for parliament's activity. Committees are heavily involved in shaping collective outcomes.

An important 'gatekeeper' in the internal organisation of legislatures are *partisan groups* within the legislature. These consist of all members within the representative body who are "elected either under the same party label or under the label of different parties that do not compete against each other in elections, and who do not explicitly create a group for technical reasons only" (Heidar & Koole, 2000, p. 249). Parliamentary party groups (PPGs) put more or less severe constraints on the legislator. Strong parliamentary party groups can especially be found in legislatures of parliamentary systems of government which are heavily involved in the organisation of a legislature and the process of legislative organisation. Numerous parliamentary resources and positions are distributed through them, including committee seats. The question arises how strong parliamentary party groups organise their work in committees. An important issue in this regard is the *assignment process* of legislators to committees. The main research question is formulated as *what criteria explain the assignment process of committee members in legislatures with strong parliamentary party groups?*

The traditional view of committees being less relevant in parliaments with strong parliamentary party groups meant that the study of committees was largely confined to the U.S. Congress. Much scholarly attention has been devoted to this legislature, comparatively little to other legislatures. The discussion of parliamentary systems usually minimised the importance of legislative committees (Mezey, 1994, p.433). Due to this "Washington bias - which deems Congress, and Congress alone, as the only legislature worthy of study" (Nelson, 1974, p.120) our knowledge of committees in other legislatures lags behind. We are left with an incomplete picture about how committees work in legislatures with strong parliamentary party groups.

## Theories of Legislative Organisation: A congressional bias

The theoretical treatment of the process of legislative organisation, committees and the role of parliamentary party groups in this process is characterised largely by the distinction of the established United States literature versus the more recent non-U.S. literature. The extensive study of the U.S. Congress legislature has led to the development of three distinctive perspectives on legislative organisation. These theories are usually referred to as the *distributive*, *informational* and *partisan* theory of legislative organisation.

The *distributive* theory of legislative organisation derives its name from the shared notion that committees are established to provide legislators with means for the distribution of particularistic benefits to their constituents. At its core the distributive theory has the central assumption that legislatures are highly decentralised institutions which are dominated by geographical concerns (Shepsle, 1978; Weingast, 1979; Shepsle & Weingast, 1982; Weingast & Marshall, 1988; Munger, 1988). Legislators are ultimately interested in securing their own re-election. In order to facilitate this goal legislators engage in logrolling, i.e. the mutually beneficial exchange of influence in issues of high salience issues for their own advantage (*gains from trade*). This, however, creates a dilemma. After engaging in log-rolling and exchanging votes, legislators fear prospective defection. To solve this, legislators seek additional mechanisms to maintain their bargains. The distributive theory argues that institutions created by the legislature, and primarily the committee system, is the solution to this problem. By dividing policy areas in committees, a decentralised agenda control system is created. This gives interested legislators a chance to join their respective field and 'cluster' in committees. As mainly those legislators join a committee, who have a 'stake' in the committee's jurisdiction, the composition of committees is predicted to be highly unrepresentative of their parent body (Krehbiel, 1990, p.149).

The *informational* theory of legislative organisation opposes the distributive theory with regard to its central concepts and its predictions. This perspective departs from two assumptions of the functioning of Congress (see also Krehbiel, 1992): Policies are selected in the "presence of substantial uncertainty about their consequences upon implementation" (Gilligan & Krehbiel, 1990, p. 533) and policies cannot be enacted without the consent of the majority of the legislature's members. This emphasis on the uncertainty that legislators face in policy making has important ramifications for the internal organisation of legislatures. To reduce uncertainty Congress uses the "endogenously selected institutional devices and resources to exploit the special talents of its exogenously elected members" (Gilligan & Krehbiel, 1990, p. 533). Legislative institutions (such as committees) are the prime organisational means to provide the possibility for specialised information. The informational perspective argues that committees emerge to make legislative specialisation possible. Interested members can join them to obtain superior information about intended or unintended outcomes of bills. This minimises the occurrence of unintended effects. Committees are merely agents of the chamber and purely instrumental (Krehbiel, 1990, 1992; Gilligan & Krehbiel, 1990).

The two theoretical perspectives introduced so far, despite being contradictory in their predictions, share one common assumption: The absence of partisan organisation as major force in the organisation of the U.S. Congress. During the heyday of the discussion between informational and distributive theory, parliamentary party groups were not in the centre of the general discussion. Contradicting this view, a bulk of literature referred to as *partisan theory* of legislative organisation claims that parliamentary party groups are driving forces in Congress. Usually two types are distinguished, partisan cartel theory (Cox & McCubbins, 1993, 2007) and the theory of conditional party government (Aldrich & Rohde, 1997, 1998, 2000, 2001). The partisan theory views committees as the agents of the majority parliamentary party group leadership. The majority parliamentary party group leadership has several instruments at hand to control committees and affect committee decisions: the power to create and dissolve them, 'stacking' the deck in its own favour and by being able to control their resources. In the hands of central parliamentary party group authority, committees become part of the reward system to induce loyalty. Loyalty to the

parliamentary party group leadership is a substantive determinant of committee assignment.<sup>2</sup> It is assumed that especially in those committees that have an effect on the national perception of the party (i.e. those offering uniform externalities) the preferences of the committee members "will tend to have contingents that are microcosms of their party caucus" (Cox & McCubbins, 1993, p.199). There might, however, be a bias towards the most loyal MPs.

## **The Debate on Committees: A Review of the Literature**

Especially with regard to the theme of committee assignments, a rich body of literature is available on the U.S. Congress. In a lively scholarly debate new measures to determine outlying committees have been introduced and old ones have been challenged. After first focussing on the U.S. Congress researchers later turned to committee assignments in U.S. state legislatures (Overby & Kazee, 2000; Prince & Overby, 2005; Battista, 2006, 2009; Battista et al., 2012; Hamm et al., 2011) in order to broaden the focus. Some studies have found evidence in line with the predictions of the distributive theory (Masters, 1961; Fenno, 1966; Niou & Ordeshook, 1985; Shepsle & Weingast, 1981; Hall & Grofman, 1990), especially when taking into consideration constituency characteristics (Adler & Lapinski, 1997; Adler, 2000; Frisch & Kelly, 2004) and whether they match with the committee of the legislator. However, the argument that constituencies disproportionately benefit from the distribution of government money, when they are represented on the relevant committee, did not go unchallenged (see e.g. Goss, 1972; Rundquist & Griffith, 1976; Wilson, 1986). Several studies found empirical support for the informational theory (Krehbiel, 1990, 1993; Hamm et al., 2011). Overby and Kazee (2000) found only few outliers and the majority of committees are composed in such a way that they are representative of the floor (see also Overby et al., 2004; Prince & Overby, 2005). Research by Hall and Grofman (1990) provided support for the informational rationale of committee assignments who conclude that legislatures "tap the talents" (Hamm et al., 2011, p. 318) of their members. The role of parliamentary party groups across legislative periods has been highly disputed (Krehbiel, 1993; Hedlund & Hamm, 1996; Carsey & Rundquist, 1999; Hedlund et al., 2009; Snyder & Groseclose, 2000; Kanthak, 2009; Mooney, 2012), but partisan considerations were demonstrated in numerous studies (Hedlund & Hamm, 1996; Carsey & Rundquist, 1999; Kanthak, 2009).

Outside of the United States there was hardly any systematic research on committees in legislatures other than the U.S. Congress. It was not until the late 1990s that the study of committees gained momentum. In this sense a newly found interest in the underlying mechanisms of committee assignments can be attested. Research on committees outside of the U.S. Congress initially focused primarily on the European Parliament. This is not surprising. The committee system of the European Parliament is "one of the most distinctive and developed features of the legislature" (Settembri & Neuhold, 2009, p. 130). With numerous studies on the assignment of individual committee members (Bowler & Farrell, 1995; Whitaker, 2005; McElroy, 2006; Yordanova, 2009, 2011), which applied the congressional framework, the European Parliament is by now comparatively well-researched. National legislatures of parliamentary systems did not undergo the same systematic analyses for a long time. Although a large body of literature is available which presents anecdotal evidence of the assignment procedure, analyses similar to those of the European Parliament or even the U.S. Congress are scarce. A number of more empirical studies argued that committee assignments are affected by electoral rules or candidate selection procedures (Cain et al., 1987; Stratmann & Baur, 2002; Pekkanen et al., 2006; Crisp et al., 2009; Gschwend et al., 2009). More recent studies on committee assignments in national legislatures makes explicit usage of the congressional theories (Ciftci et al., 2008; Hansen, 2010, 2011; Battle, 2011; Fujimura, 2012;

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<sup>2</sup> Within this decision the jurisdiction of a committee plays an important role in deciding how strictly a parliamentary party group acts. Considering the external effects of each committee (i.e. who is affected) the authors distinguish committees with uniform externalities (national scale), targeted externalities (narrowly targeted, regional) and committees with mixed externalities.

Mickler, 2013; Raymond & Holt, 2014). These studies have shown great variation in assignment patterns across and within systems. The results are, however, hitherto inconclusive. As they all highlight different issues there is still a lot to learn about why committees are structured in the way they are.

### **Using Congressional Theories Outside of the U.S. Congress: A Defence**

As other studies which have analysed committee workings in parliamentary systems as well, this study builds on the congressional framework of distributional, informational and partisan theories of legislative organisation. As the congressional theories were originally developed against the backdrop of a particular legislature, one might object that their assumptions are specific to the United States and thus do not 'travel' well to other legislatures. Some scholars have argued against drawing too much on the congressional theories (Hansen, 2011; Yordanova, 2011). However, the congressional theories are the main perspectives on how committees work. Although committees legislatures outside the U.S. have since recently increasingly been in the scholarly focus, they lack an 'own' theoretical framework comparable to the U.S. theories. The knowledge and insight gained from a long-standing research tradition on the U.S. Congress and U.S. state legislatures can hardly be ignored and needs to be taken into consideration. Legislatures of parliamentary system of government which possess *strong parliamentary party groups* provide additional ground for thoroughly testing their predictions as they vary with regard to their internal organisation. Combining the rich literature on committees in the United States to the study of committees in other legislatures is therefore sensible. The predictions of the theories are not simply transferred, but are adapted to the new institutional setting. Several structural features need to be addressed when looking at differences between the system of the U.S. and the legislatures used for the analysis. These, I argue, do not fundamentally prevent the transfer of the congressional theories, but need to be accounted for.

A first structural feature which hinders a direct application to the 'new' institutional setting is the *different electoral connection of legislators*. In the United States clear connections between legislators and individual districts are established due to the reliance on single-member districts and the simple majority electoral system (usually labelled as 'first-past-the-post'). Although a few countries outside of the U.S. rely on the same electoral system as the U.S. Congress, usually those of the Westminster tradition (e.g. the House of Commons in the United Kingdom and Canada), the level of connectedness to individual districts is probably weaker compared to the U.S. In most countries outside of the U.S. the electoral connection of MPs is much weaker. The reliance on party lists in some electoral system limits the potential for electoral pay-off to a geographically defined constituency. MPs in the Knesset (Israel), the Národná rada (Slovakia) and the Tweede Kamer (Netherlands) where seats are distributed nationwide lack clear constituency links. Second, the influence of (by comparison) *strong parliamentary party groups* in the internal organisation of the legislatures needs to be accounted for. In legislatures of countries with a parliamentary system of government there is no question that parliamentary party groups are central actors in the inner workings of the analysed legislatures and have an important role in the assignment procedure and in committee proceedings. Parliamentary party groups and permanent committees are the two crucial organisational structures in parliaments, but the former clearly dominates the latter (Damgaard, 1995).

In order to apply the congressional theories to the new institutional setting the most fundamental adaptation is a redefinition of the role of parliamentary party groups. The assumption of non-restrictiveness of parliamentary party groups advocated by the informational and distributive theory needs to be relaxed for the analysis. Parliamentary party groups are the main gate keepers within legislatures. It can then be tested, whether parliamentary party groups allow for committees to be used in a distributional, informational or partisan rationale. In order to clarify these different rationales the basic concepts and predictions of each perspective have to be extracted. This has also been suggested by Krehbiel (1992, p. 21) who stated that "by highlighting differences we are able to

learn more clearly which exogenous features of the legislative environment are and are not capable of explaining variation in legislative institutions and their use".

The key concepts on the way how strong parliamentary party groups organize their work in committees in legislatures are formulated as following: Committees are either organised to offer particularistic benefits to groups outside parliament (*distributive rationale*), part of the reward system of parliamentary party groups to induce loyalty (*partisan rationale*) or provide means to deal with the workload of the chamber and improve the efficiency of the legislative process (*informational rationale*). By adapting the theories like this their predictions, I argue, are not broadened beyond reason. Rather, informational and distributive perspectives are well-suited to be incorporate into a parliamentary party group-centred context. These key concepts indicate valid strategies that can be pursued by parliamentary party groups are applied as heuristic devices for the further analysis.

### **Hypotheses Committee Assignments: Who Gets What and Why?**

The distributive theory highlights the autonomy of committees and the outlying nature of preferences of committee members. Committees are viewed to serve an interest of individual MPs. These individual legislators rely on the committee systems to serve their electorate and secure their own re-election. The electoral link of legislators is central and needs to be tested. A re-election principle in the assignment process means that those members of a parliamentary party group join those committees which correspond to an 'electoral demand' of a legislator. The first choice for testing this rationale is whether a 'district link' is present and whether high-demanders join committees in which they can serve their constituency.

**Hypothesis 1:** *Members are more likely to serve on committees that correspond to their electoral link with constituencies.*

In earlier studies (see Yordanova, 2009) the 'stake' in a committee was interpreted more liberally as serving 'external interests' by using ties to interest groups as drives to be assigned to a certain committee. This is used as a proxy of whether a MP is a possible 'high-demander' that can shift legislation into an area undesired by the parliamentary party group. These external interests are not involved in the election of an MP, but the general idea is nevertheless applicable: MPs can be high-demanders in a different way by serving interests outside parliament.<sup>3</sup>

**Hypothesis 2:** *Members are more likely to join committees that correspond to their external interests.*

The informational theory highlights the importance of specialised, efficiency improving committees. Contrary to the distributive theory, outlying committees are a major concern due to the feared agency loss. A "rational legislature is one that efficiently taps the special talents of its legislators" (Krehbiel, 1992, p. 136). This is a valid strategy not only for the legislature in general, but especially for strong parliamentary party groups and their members. Parliamentary party groups consist of a number of legislators with various background. It is expected that, in order to 'tap the talents' of their members, a parliamentary party group only appoints those members who are especially interested in an area and can specialize at low cost due to advantages in knowledge related to a policy area.

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<sup>3</sup> The question arises whether this is a realistic scenario. Why would parliamentary party groups allow for MPs to cater to those interests? Two points need to be made in order to address this. First, it is assumed that parliamentary party groups are aware of the possible negative consequences of such an assignment logic and carefully consider this. Instead of viewing this assignment logic as something 'shady' it should be highlighted that the connection to interest groups also brings expertise into the decision-making process. Parliamentary party groups might value this higher than the risk of possible negative outcomes. This is connected to a second issue. The test so far is merely an analysis on what explains committee assignments, not on what legislators can actually do. Parliamentary party groups still maintain other possibilities to affect the behaviour of legislators in committees. This is addressed in the last section of the dissertation. Understanding that legislators are assigned based on this rationale does not allow for conclusions on their behaviour.

**Hypothesis 3:** *Committees consist disproportionately of those members who can specialize at low cost due to their advantages in policy-related knowledge.*

The assignment of members can also be analysed in terms of the continuity of membership across terms. Consecutively assigning members to the same committee supports the claim of the informational theory that the committee system enables legislative specialisation among members. One might object that this could also be the case for a distributional or a partisan rationale. However, the underlying principle of re-assigning legislators is best understood in terms of an informational rationale. This has also been the interpretation in studies of the U.S. Congress. Re-assigning legislators creates an incentive toward greater legislative specialisation as members settle into the same committee slots to "cultivate expertise in a distinct policy field, and spend their time managing legislation and conducting oversight in that field" (Davidson & Oleszek, 1996, p. 135).

**Hypothesis 4:** *Members who have served on a committee in a prior legislative period are more likely to be assigned to the same committee.*

The partisan theory highlights the role of parliamentary party groups in controlling committees. With regard to selection criteria the theory highlights the proactive role of the parliamentary party group leadership. The party leadership controls committee seats as a valuable assets and 'reserves' seats on some committees for particular legislators. One of the factors which might structure this process is the number of legislative periods (parliamentary seniority). Parliamentary party group leaders are predicted to prefer experienced legislators to join particular committees and withhold other from serving on them. In terms of *which* committees are structured this way we can turn to the prediction of the partisan theory. The central assumption of the theory is the electoral success of a parliamentary party group. This means that the parliamentary party group leadership most likely 'reserves' seats on those committees whose policy-area concerns an important issue-domain of the party.

**Hypothesis 5:** *An increase in the number of legislative periods has a positive effect on being assigned to committees whose jurisdiction concerns an important issue-domain of the party.*

Parliamentary seniority can be used to test whether long-standing MPs have a higher chance of being assigned to more important committees. The partisan theory views committees as part of the reward system of parliamentary party groups. Research on the U.S. Congress showed that voting in line with the parliamentary party group leaders had a significant impact on the assignment of MPs to prestigious committees (Cox & McCubbins, 1993, see especially ch. 7). A more thorough test of this needs to include more fine-grained data on individual legislators and their *loyalty* to the parliamentary party group. When a committee's jurisdiction is important to the electoral success of a parliamentary party group, then this committee will not consist of high demanders. This might be detrimental to the party as a whole. Rather than being non-outlying and composed of high-demanders, the strategic hand of the parliamentary party group leadership is visible. Subsequently, legislators who are *ideologically closer* to the parliamentary party group are expected to be rewarded by the parliamentary party group leadership.

**Hypothesis 6:** *When a committee's jurisdiction concerns an important issue-domain of the parliamentary party group, the composition is not ideologically outlying, but representative.*

### **Case Selection for Small-n Focused Comparison of Committee Workings**

The 'baseline' case selection of the book consists of advanced democracies with a parliamentary system of government which possess *strong parliamentary party groups* (including France which is usually classified as semi-presidential because it has characteristics of both presidential and parliamentary

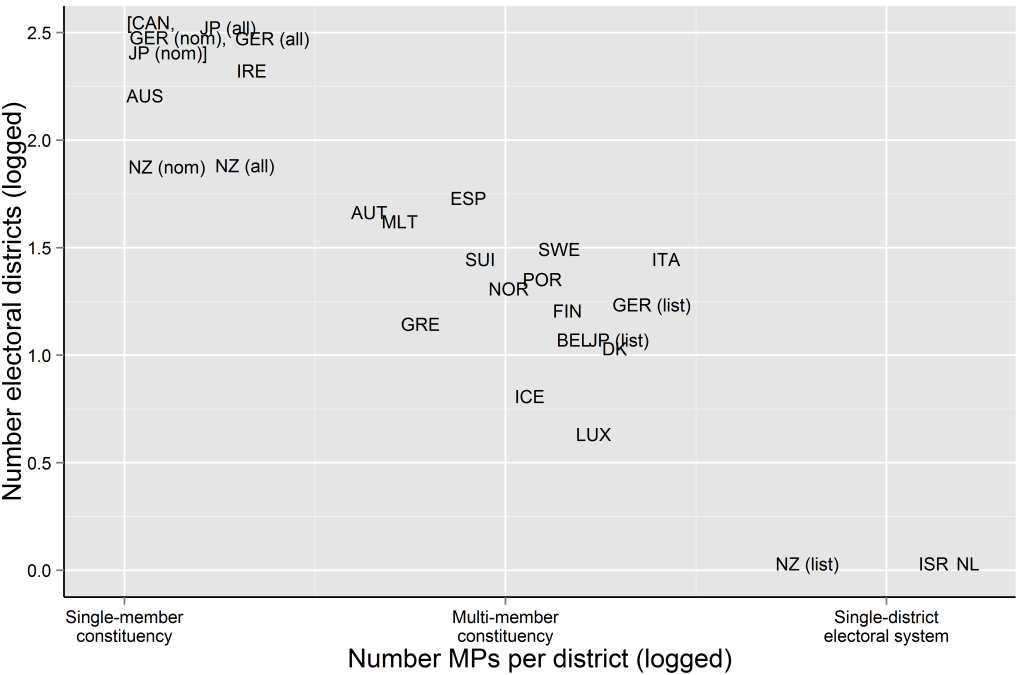
systems) which possess and institutionalised party system and have established a system of permanent committees and reasonable size<sup>4</sup> *How many and which cases* are analysed, is an essential part of the research project. One of the aims of the research project is to test the application of congressional theories of legislative organisation outside of their "home turf" to a situation in which parliamentary party groups are strong. Therefore, a variety of cases needs to be selected where parliamentary party groups are strong but which differ with regard to another key variable. Ideally, this *strategic* case selection includes a most likely case, where most of the explanatory power of congressional theories occurs, as well as less likely cases. This strategy provides some leverage to give the theories a thorough test.

A central issue in the scientific discourse on legislative organisation, and a reoccurring theme in all congressional theories, is whether internal structures such as committees allow individual legislators to serve their constituencies. The analysis aims to test the theoretical predictions across several cases *which differ with regard to the constituency focus of individual legislators*. The cases included in the focused comparison therefore comprise a parliament with members who have a clear connection to individual districts, a mixed member system (to test whether two assignment logics exist in the same legislature) and one without clear connections to particular districts (which takes away district related motivations). The electoral system, i.e. the set of rules converting votes into seats, is the primary factor which determines whether individual legislators have an electoral connection to a particular district. In order to establish the connection between an average legislator and districts in various countries information on the district magnitude of the electoral system was used. The number of MPs per district is certainly not a direct indicator of the connectedness which an individual MPs might feel towards a district, but it is a useful proxy to indicate how many legislators are responsible for individual districts. Figure 1 plots the mean district magnitude for all twenty-two legislatures.

Several clusters of electoral systems are visible. In the lower right-hand corner are those countries where there is no clear connection between individual legislators and individual districts. The 120 legislators in the Israeli Knesset, as well as the 150 legislators of the Dutch Tweede Kamer are elected in a single nation-wide district. The Dutch Tweede Kamer was chosen as a representative case of this group. Several countries apply mixed systems. This means that voters can cast two votes, one on a district candidate and one for a party list. Mixed-member majoritarian is used in the election of the Japanese House of Representatives (*Shūgiin*) while New Zealand and Germany use mixed-member proportional systems. From those countries, Germany was chosen as a representative case. The left-hand side of the plot clusters all legislatures in which *all* MPs are elected in single-member districts or in districts with a low magnitude. Within these legislatures MPs are assumed to have relatively strong local roots. These are all legislatures in which MPs are elected in single member districts (the British House of Commons, the French Assemblée nationale, the Australian House of Representatives, and the Canadian House of Commons) and small-n multi-member districts by Single Transferable Vote (the Irish Dáil Éireann and the Maltese House of Representatives). Despite the fact that no Teachta Dála (member of Dáil Éireann, TD) has a constituency for which he or she is uniquely responsible (district magnitude varies between 3 and 5), the legislators in this legislature are known to have very strong local connections. In a comparative study on constituency focus which includes several cases with strong local connections, Heitshusen et al. (2005) show that all legislators in these countries highly prioritize constituency work. Their data indicate that "half of Irish TDs and New

<sup>4</sup> The following cases are included (LH = Lower House in case of bicameral legislatures): *Australia*: House of Representatives<sup>LH</sup>; *Austria*: Nationalrat<sup>LH</sup>; *Belgium*: Kamer van Volksvertegenwoordigers<sup>LH</sup>; *Canada*: House of Commons<sup>LH</sup>; *Denmark*: Folketing; *Estonia*: Riigikogu; *Finland*: Eduskunta; *Germany*: Bundestag<sup>LH</sup>; *Greece*: Vouli ton Ellinon; *Iceland*: Althing; *Ireland*: (Dáil Éireann)<sup>LH</sup>; *Israel*: Knesset; *Italy*: Camera dei Deputati<sup>LH</sup>; *Japan*: Shūgiin<sup>LH</sup>; *Luxembourg*: Chambre des Députés; *Malta*: House of Representatives; *The Netherlands*: Tweede Kamer<sup>LH</sup>; *New Zealand*: House of Representatives; *Norway*: Storting; *Portugal*: Assembleia da República; *Spain*: Congreso de los Diputados<sup>LH</sup>; *Sweden*: Riksdag; *Switzerland*: Nationalrat<sup>LH</sup>. The latter restrictions are taken in order to prevent the inclusion of countries with high levels of volatility (high turnover rates cause problems regarding the building up of seniority and expertise) and unclear rules about the internal organisation of parliamentary party groups in non-institutionalised party systems. The size of committees is important, as too large committees prevent building up expertise as well.

Figure 1: Comparison district magnitude in twenty-two legislatures with strong parliamentary party groups



Source: Own data set; Some legislatures were placed slightly different to prevent overlap of the labels. For the countries which use a mixed system the data points were split into all legislators and those elected into parliament via the party list vote and the nominal tier. To my best knowledge the party votes in New Zealand are distributed on a national level which is why this case is situated there as well.

Zealand list MPs rank constituency focus at least at the medium rank" (Heitshusen et al., 2005, p. 42). This importance of the local sphere and strong constituency orientation of Irish TDs is also discussed by Farrell et al. (2012). This makes the Irish Dáil a good choice for a legislature with strong links of its individual legislators to their constituencies.

**Method**

The analysis of factors explaining committee membership makes use of a mixed method approach using quantitative and qualitative methods. The issue what explains MPs' committee assignments is first analysed by means of a statistical analysis to test the factors which are deemed relevant by congressional theories on legislative organisation. The statistical analysis of committee assignments is intended to find patterns in the assignment procedure and aims to understand which selection criteria explain why legislators serve on a particular committee. The assignment process is analysed by means of a multiple membership multilevel model (Browne et al., 2001). These models are part of the family of multilevel models which can be thought of a generalisations of linear regression, where intercepts and slopes are allowed to vary by group. This allows for an examination of relationships at multiple levels of analysis, be it data grouped within individuals, individual data nested within groups, and group data nested within higher-order entities, and statistically account for the inter-correlations which occur within a given group (Hofmann, 1997). In multiple membership models, lower level units are nested within multiple higher level units from the same classification. This model fits the data structures in which individuals are not 'neatly' clustered within one higher level group.

To validate the statistical analysis and to provide new insight into hitherto neglected factors the initial results are cross-checked with evidence from semi-structured interviews with legislators. The

interviews were conducted by the author in December 2014 (Ireland), January 2015 (Germany, three interview were conducted over the phone in February 2015) and in the period of April - May 2015 in the Netherlands. A total of 101 legislators were interviewed. The distribution is listed in Table 1. The table also lists the FDP although is not represented in the 18th Bundestag. In the course of an earlier study project the whips of each parliamentary party group in the 17th Bundestag were interviewed concerning the selection criteria (see Mickler, 2013). The FDP was still represented in parliament in this legislative period. These talks are also listed in this table in brackets (+1). In the Tweede Kamer, one *ambtelijk secretaris* of a parliamentary party group, who is involved in organisational matters, was interviewed. In Germany and Ireland legislators from every parliamentary party group were interviewed, including independent legislators who formed the Technical Group (TG) as an independent alliance. In the Netherlands, I was unable to schedule interviews with several smaller parliamentary party groups (*D66, GroenLinks, ChristenUnie, SGP and Partij voor de Dieren*). The insight with regard to the working procedure of opposition parliamentary party groups therefore rests solely on the evidence provided by legislators of the PVV, CDA and SP<sup>5</sup>

Table 1: Number interviewed legislators per country

Bundestag					Total
SPD	CDU/CSU	Die Linke	B90/Grüne	FDP	
17 (+1)	16 (+1)	10 (+1)	8 (+1)	(+1)	51 (56)
Dáil Éireann					
Fine Gael	Labour	TG	Fianna Fáil	Sinn Féin	
6	7	4	3	2	22
Tweede Kamer					
PvdA	VVD	SP	CDA	PVV	
12 (+1)	11	2	2	1	28 (29)

Source: Own data set.

## Data Set: Measuring Committee Membership and Operationalising the Variables

**The dependent variable: Actual assignments and transfers to specialised committees:** The data set for Germany contains the committee assignments and transfers of all MPs in the 12th to 18th Bundestag (n = 4281 assignments to a committee in this period, n = 1870 unique legislators). For all MPs in the respective legislative periods the individual committee assignments lists were obtained during a visit of the parliamentary archive in Berlin in April 2013. Data on committee assignments of the Tweede Kamer were obtained through a content analysis of committee minutes which list the committee members at the time of the meeting. Altogether n = 1175 legislators have been assigned to at least one committee in the analysed legislative periods. In the Dáil, detailed lists (with transfers) are available online for the 30th Dáil as well as the 31st Dáil (Houses of the Oireachtas, 2011). Committee membership lists for the 26th to 29th legislative period were obtained from the Journals Office of the Oireachtas. This office is responsible for recording day to day events, minutes etc. within the legislature.

**Advantages in knowledge concerning a committees' subject matter:** The informational rationale predicts that those members are assigned who can *specialize at low cost* in a given policy area. A legislators' prior education and occupation are valuable assets in this regard. Information on the educational and occupational background were obtained by coding legislators' biographies. The biographies of the Dutch MPs were obtained from the online biographic archive of the Parliamentary

<sup>5</sup> For the purpose of this conference paper, I will restrict the discussion mainly to the results of the statistical analysis.

Documentation Center (2015) at Leiden University (*Parlementair Documentatie Centrum*). For Germany information on the prior education and occupation of legislators was obtained from *Kürschner's Volkshandbuch Deutscher Bundestag* (Holzapfel, 1993, 1995, 1999, 2004, 2009, 2012, 2013) for the respective legislative periods. The data were cross-checked with the information listed on the website of the Bundestag. For the Irish *Dáil Nealon's Guide* (Kennedy & Nealon, 2002; Collins & Nealon, 2007; Collins, 2011; Nealon, 1992, 1997) was the primary source for the biographies of TDs. Missing information was obtained by consulting parliamentary party group or personal homepages. The job descriptions were assigned to each committee. This demanded a clear cut-off point when a prior education and occupation allow a legislator to specialize 'at low cost'. The guiding principle was whether prior education in a study program or job training, respectively a certain occupation *would give a legislator a relative advantage compared to a legislator who did not have such a training*. The amount of variation in occupational and educational background of MPs is remarkable and allowed for coding for every committee, even for such 'exotic' committees like those dealing with sports.

**Committee experience:** Committee experience was measured by pooling the membership to committees from *one* immediate prior legislative period to the next legislative period. Aggregating committee memberships across more than one legislative period would mean an inflation of positive codes. In case several committees were merged legislators of both committees are treated as having committee experience for the new committee. When committees were split up, then those legislators who served on this committee are coded to have committee experience for both of the new committees.

**Distributional rationale: Constituency demands:** The assumption that committees serve external interests of legislators who cluster in certain committees is at the very core of the distributive theory. This leads to the creation of outlying committees by disproportionately assigning high-demanders to a committees. Traditionally, the goal is to facilitate the re-election of legislators based on constituency characteristics and their demand. However, it was concluded that the concept of district demand is impossible to test in the statistical analysis. Scholars in the U.S. were able to define relatively clear district types with their highest electoral need. This proved to be highly difficult for legislatures outside of the U.S. For several committees good indicators for constituency demand were entirely absent. An obvious example are committees which deal with European Affairs, but also committees which deal with issues concerning women and family are difficult to match to certain constituency characteristics without over-stretching the concept. Another difficulty with the application is the fact that electoral districts are not a statistical unit in Germany. In order to conduct the test one would have to rely on higher level aggregated data and generalize over regions rather than districts. This, however, is not what the constituency-demand approach argues and would therefore be an inappropriate test. Instead of testing this assumption in the statistical model the issue of constituency characteristics is therefore addressed in the interviews with MPs.

**'High-demanders' and affiliations to outside groups:** All members of the Bundestag are obliged to indicate their responsibilities in enterprises and organisations (*veröffentlichungspflichtige Angaben*). The primary source were remunerated activities during the exercise of the mandate (*Entgeltliche Tätigkeiten neben dem Mandat*). The data is available online from 2005 onwards in the web archive of the Bundestag which offers monthly snapshots of the legislators' profile pages (Bundestag, 2015). For earlier legislative periods the respective print editions of the official registers (*Amtliches Handbuch Deutscher Bundestag*) were used (Bundestag, 1994, 1998, 2002). For the Netherlands the legislators are obliged to list side functions (*nevenfuncties*) in each legislative period. The data is only available since 1997 when a change was made in the Standing Orders of the parliament which obliges MPs to disclose their paid and unpaid side functions. The lists of side functions since 1997 were obtained by the office of the clerks (*Griffie*). All functions were coded (*voorzitter/lid raad van bestuur, advisory council, etc.*). In the *Dáil*, TDs are required to furnish a statement of their registrable interests to the Standards Commission each year<sup>6</sup>. The annual reports were obtained from the website of the

<sup>6</sup> This is regulated in the Ethics in Public Office Act, 1995 and the Standards in Public Office Act, 2001 and covers

Oireachtas. An external interest was only indicated when directorships and/or remunerated position were present. Simple membership of an organisation does not qualify as a sufficient external interest. Examples of interest group connections are union board chairmanships (committees dealing with labour issues), farmers' association (agricultural committees) or special interest group of the arms industry (defence, also foreign affairs).

**Parliamentary seniority:** A central theme of the partisan theory views committees as part of the reward system of the leadership and used for partisan 'stacking', i.e. that the parliamentary party groups actively influence the membership of the committee system to reflect the preferences of the leadership. Two possible strategies are seen as most likely: The first is to wield influence concerning the equal chances of legislators to be assigned to a committee and 'reserve' more important committees for more experienced legislators. By including it the analysis tests whether incumbents are disproportionately assigned to important committees and whether there is a 'greasy pole' which freshmen have to climb first in order to be eligible for those committees. To measure parliamentary seniority the number of legislative periods was counted. For Germany the data were obtained from *Kürschner's Volkshandbuch*, for the Dáil via *Nealon's Guide* and the homepage of the Dáil. The number of legislative periods of Dutch legislators is based on the information in the biographic archive of the *Dutch Parliamentary Documentation Center* (Parliamentary Documentation Center, 2015).

**Legislators' ideological distance to the parliamentary party group mean:** The second hypothesis of the partisan theory relates to the question whether the parliamentary party group leadership disproportionately allocates legislators to high-ranking committees who display a *firm adherence to the party (and the parliamentary party group) and its goals*. It is hypothesised that legislators who display a firm adherence by *being ideologically closer to the parliamentary party group mean* are disproportionately assigned to more important committees. A test of this rationale demands more fine-grained data on individual legislators'. Ideally, data would be obtained which would situate each legislator ideologically in relative distance to their colleagues of the same parliamentary party group. Obtaining such data is a central problem of legislative research (Loewenberg, 2008, p.488). Political science has developed various methods for estimating such programmatic positions of political actors and distinguishes three broad approaches (Debus, 2009): *voting behaviour of politicians, surveys of an elite or legislators' level*, or identifying the ideological position of relevant actors via (*hand-coded or automatic*) *content analysis of relevant documents*.

In this study, the ideological positions of legislators were estimated using the Wordscore technique (Laver et al., 2003), a computer-assisted content analysis method. Rather than relying on a sample of speeches and run the risk of a biased estimate, all speeches and questions given during the legislative period were used for the analysis. Table 9 lists the number of analysed legislative speeches per country. This all-encompassing approach, despite being relatively demanding in terms of computing time, gives a more precise estimation of each individual legislator relative to other members of the same parliamentary party group. Wordscore requires that the reference files get a score which serves as an anchor point in the estimation of the other 'unknown' documents. The reference texts are built by merging all speeches of all legislators of one parliamentary party group into a single file. For government parliamentary party groups, this also includes ministers. It is important to include the content of their speeches as well as they represent the line of the party in government. The parliamentary party group files (i.e. the reference texts) were scored using the party position scores of the Manifesto Research Group/Comparative Manifestos Project (MRG/CMP) (Volkens et al., 2014) for each election. They served as 'anchor points' to which each legislator was compared to. Conceptually, this makes sense as the aim of the estimation was to find the relative distance of each individual legislator to his or her parliamentary party group colleagues. The final score for each legislator was calculated as the absolute value of the difference of each legislator's score to his or her parliamentary party group's mean. A higher value thus implicates a legislator who is further away from his or her parliamentary party group mean and is expected to be less likely to be allocated to a more important

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company directorships and shareholdings, travel benefits, gifts, and property holdings over a certain value.

committee.<sup>7</sup> This approach made a calculation possible for almost all legislators.<sup>8</sup>

**Measuring the Relative Importance of Committee:** Several hypotheses relate an effect of factors to the importance of committees. This is of particular importance in order to check for partisan influences in the assignment process and whether committees are indeed 'under the thumb' of leaders. The distinction into high or low importance committees in terms of *issue saliency* is based on the interviews in the three legislatures. Legislators were asked which committees they see as important for their parliamentary party group. Most are shared across all parties, but slight differences occur with regard to highly salient issues. In the Dáil and the Bundestag, the committees dealing with the budget (*Haushaltsausschuss*, *Public Accounts Committee*) were unequivocally listed among the most important committees. Contrary to the Budget committees in the other parliaments, the equivalent in the Tweede Kamer (*Rijksuitgaven*) was never mentioned in the interviews as being particularly important. Committees dealing with financial issues and the economy are, across all parties very salient and are thus ranked as those of high importance.<sup>9</sup>

## Analysis and Results Committee Assignment: Who Gets What and Why?

The mixed membership multilevel models were estimated in R using the `lme4` package (Bates et al., 2015b, 2015a). The main analysis tests the effect on the *membership to committees (including transfers during the legislative period)*. For each legislative period two models were estimated: one *without* committee experience (In tables referred to as Model 1) and one *including* committee experience (in tables referred to as Model 2). A separate estimation allows for a clearer analysis of the more 'personal' characteristics of legislators, like their prior education and occupation. Descriptive statistics are shown in tables 10, 11 and 12 (Pages 29 - 31). Two group effects are fitted by including varying intercepts for committees and individual MPs.<sup>10</sup>

Table 2: Overview of placement of model summaries

Legislature	Full members (incl. transfers)	Deputy members (incl. transfers)
Bundestag	Table 5 (page 24)	Table 6 (page 25)
Dáil Éireann	Table 4 (page 23)	No deputy members
Tweede Kamer	Table 7 (page 26)	Table 8 (page 27)

## Results: Assignments to Committees in the Dáil, the Bundestag and the Tweede Kamer?

Based on the model summaries of the multiple-membership multilevel models the strongest effect across all countries refers to committee experience (hypothesis 4). The coefficients relating to this variable are significant for all legislative periods. There is compelling evidence for a pattern that

<sup>7</sup> The word frequency matrix needed for the analysis was set up using the '`tm` text mining package' in R (Feinerer, Ingo; Hornik, 2015). The computation of scores was done using the `austin` package (Lowe, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> In Germany scores were calculated for 98 per cent of the legislators (missing values for n=91 legislators). Similarly, the Netherlands only 40 legislators out of 1175 individual legislators who were assigned to a committee in the Tweede Kamer between 1994 and 2015 did not give a speech. There are multiple reasons on why a legislator might not have been given a speech, most likely reasons are a change to a executive office or dropping out of parliament. Legislators who could not be scored received the average of the parliamentary party group for the analysis. There were no missing values for legislators in the Dáil. This is a very high value and would not be able to be reached via surveys.

<sup>9</sup> An overview with committees ranked as important for every legislature and every parliamentary party group can be obtained from the author.

<sup>10</sup> I would like to thank Michael Meffert and Zoltan Fazekas for their help with the analysis and interpretation of the models. All errors are the sole responsibility of the author.

legislators who have been on a committee in the prior legislative period are likely to continue on the same committee. Existing committee experience is by far the best predictor for committee membership.<sup>11</sup> The only case in which the variable does not pass the  $p = 0,001$  significance level is the 27th Dáil after the reform of the committee system. Looking at the list of analysed committees a range of new committees were established after the reform. This offered legislators more possibilities and is most likely the reason why many discontinued their membership. The frequent re-assignment of legislators to the same committees supports the informational rationale of committee assignments. By serving on a committee for the duration of multiple legislative periods, legislators "cultivate expertise in a distinct policy field, and spend their time managing legislation and conducting oversight in that field" (Davidson & Oleszek, 1996, p. 135).

The interviews in the three countries also underline this pattern of continuation of committee memberships (and portfolios in the Tweede Kamer) across legislative periods found in the statistical models. Based on the interviews, the strongest adherence to this informal rule is found in the Bundestag. It is difficult to push someone out of a committee who has served on it and would like to continue (e.g. Interview Bundestag, 150929B; 152901D; 150130B; 150129F; 150119A). However, this is always under the assumption that this legislator did a good job to the general satisfaction of the parliamentary party group and the parliamentary party group leadership (Interview Bundestag, 150119A). If this is the case then legislators had a "first option to buy (German: Vorkaufsrecht)" (Interview Bundestag, 150112A). Comparable responses were also obtained from legislators in the Tweede Kamer (Interview Tweede Kamer, 150423A and 150520D) and the Dáil (e.g. Interview Dáil, 141203D ; 141202A; 141209C). A legislator in the Dáil argued that if someone has served on the committee and would want to stay on the same committee then "efforts would be made to facilitate that." (Interview Dáil, 141202D). In the Tweede Kamer and the Dáil, legislators argued that there is a re-evaluation period after each election in which changes are possible. This contradicts the prediction of the distributional theory, as the parliamentary party group reserves the possibility to prevent a legislators from joining a committee in certain circumstances. This first result clearly supports the claim of the informational theory that the committee system enables legislative specialisation among members.

The adherence to such a procedure certainly makes sense. Re-assigning legislators to committees most likely contributes to the continuity of the committee's work schedule and makes the work for the legislator easier. This is also be beneficial to the parliamentary party group. The very specific and technical content of the policy making process takes time to get used to. Frequently being 'forced' to read into the content of an unfamiliar topic certainly has downsides. This strong impact of committee experience in the assignment process is an interesting first pattern which supports the informational rationale. However, committee experience is an 'acquired' skill by legislators due to their committee membership in the prior legislative period. The more 'personal' characteristics of legislators such as prior education, prior occupation and interest group affiliation but also their ideological closeness are discussed in the upcoming section.

### **The Effect of 'Advantages in Knowledge' of Legislators**

Based on the theoretical framework an *informational* logic of the assignment process is supported if the advantages in terms of knowledge of individual legislators increase the likelihood to be a member of the respective committees (hypothesis 3). The regression coefficients of prior education and prior occupation show a clear positive connection between a legislator's prior occupation and the membership to a committee in Bundestag (12th to 18th legislative period). This effect is remarkably stable across all legislative periods. Advantages in knowledge have a significant influence (continuously passing the  $p < 0.001$  threshold). The model summaries for the Dutch

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<sup>11</sup> How well the variable predicts the assignment to committees can also be underlined by comparing the AIK of model 1 and model 2 of every legislative period in terms of predictive power.

parliament also support a strong influence of prior education and occupation with regard to full members across all analysed legislative periods (Table 7, page 26). Both have a highly significant influence on being assigned to a committee as full member. This effect vanishes when analysing the assignment patterns of substitute members (Dutch: *plaatsvervangers*) (see Table 8, page 27). Although the effect is significant for some legislative periods, it cannot be concluded that advantages in knowledge structurally account for the assignments of substitute members in the Tweede Kamer.

Model summaries of the analysed legislative periods in the Dáil also confirm a relationship between a legislator's prior occupation and their membership to committees. Contrary to the Bundestag, no significant influence of prior education is visible. This is an interesting finding as the process in the Dáil allows (even after the evaluation of preferences) for parliamentary party group leaders to make assignments based on their best judgement. The role of the parliamentary party group leader was compared to that of a "football manager selecting his team" (Interview Dáil, 151204C, 141202C) in the interviews. Respondents across all other parliamentary party groups highlighted that the ultimate decision is made by the parliamentary party group leader (Interview Dáil,s, 141204C; 141205A). Given that the occupational background possesses some explanatory power this is an indication that the process within parliamentary party groups in the Dáil should not be understood as a top-down approach of dictating committee allocations without any consideration. Interviewed legislators usually indicated that they were assigned to topics which resonate with their strengths and highlighted the 'good call' by the parliamentary party group leader (see e.g. Interview Dáil, 151202B; 151203A; 151204A; 151209A; 151211A; 141203E). When asked whether it mattered that there is a link between between the occupational background and the committee of the TD, the legislator answered: "I would hope that this is the motivation behind it" (Interview Dáil, 140209A).

Based on these results a strong case can be made that legislators with relevant knowledge have a higher likelihood to be assigned to a relevant committee which is connected to the subject area. With regard to the effect of the advantages in knowledge, the predicted probabilities indicate how much 'real' advantage a legislator has. To present the results in a more 'intuitive' way predicted probabilities were calculated<sup>12</sup>. The discussion is limited to calculations for the last 'complete' legislative period before I conducted my fieldwork (Germany: 17th Bundestag 2009-2013; Netherlands: 2010-2012; Ireland: 30th Dáil 2007-2011 before mid-term changes) to give an impression of the magnitude of the effect<sup>13</sup>. The values with regard to prior occupation are 6,5 per cent (model 1) and 3,8 per cent (model 2). In the Dáil the predicted probabilities are 10,9 per cent (for model 1 and 2) with regard to prior occupation. In the 17th German Bundestag the predicted probability of being assigned to a committee in case of a relevant prior occupation is 6,3 per cent, holding all other variables constant at their means (model 1). When committee experience is included (model 2) this value is reduced to 4,1 per cent. These values may seem small at first sight but be seen in the context of a very complex assignment process. Across all models a significant effect of advantages in knowledge and the assigned committee is visible and it is highly significant.

The connection between occupational and educational background was backed up in the interviews. Respondents from all parliamentary party groups indicated that the occupational and educational background of legislators are often linked to their committees. Parliamentary party groups clearly try to 'tap the talents' of their legislators. In certain areas it is almost seen as a necessity to have a particular background knowledge. The committees and portfolios dealing with legal affairs (*Rechtsausschuss, Commissie voor Veiligheid en Justitie*) were mentioned as being particularly complex and technical (Interview Tweede Kamer, 150423B; Interview Bundestag, 150128H). With regard to legal affairs, a corresponding background is of great importance, if not a prerequisite. Although these rules are certainly not cast in stone and legislators were able to name exceptions with regard to these technical committees, it greatly enhances an MPs chances if previous

<sup>12</sup> This was done using the *Zelig* package in R (Imai et al., 2008, 2009).

<sup>13</sup> All predicted probabilities for all other legislative periods can be obtained from the author.

knowledge is present. In the Netherlands, such considerations also drive the composition of the candidate list. Next to regional variation, among those people "who are elected we need a jurist and an economist" (Interview Tweede Kamer, 150430B). This is strong evidence that parliamentary party groups are interested to 'tap the talents' of their members which supports the informational rationale (Interview Tweede Kamer, 150521D).

For the the Tweede Kamer, the smaller effect found in the analysis of full assignments as well as the non-finding of assignments of substitute members was addressed in the interviews. It became apparent that the explanation lies in a particularity of the Dutch system. Legislators in Tweede Kamer become spokespersons of the parliamentary party group first, not members of committees. MPs with a specific portfolios are allocated to the matching committee. However, the number of legislators occupying the portfolios and the number of seats on a committee usually do not match. Due to numerical necessity (VVD and PvdA have seven, respectively six seats on each committee) the other seats are filled with legislators whose portfolios have some rudimentary overlap but may not necessarily be close to the committee's jurisdiction. In any case, a part of the legislators who are formally members of a committee do not fully serve on them in a similar way as the spokespersons. This means that the analysed group of committee members is 'contaminated'. The 'randomness' of the results with regard to substitute members can be attributed to this.

### Committee Membership and External Interests

A *distributional* rationale predicts assignments to be driven by external interests (hypothesis 2). The statistical model tested this rationale via the presence of official functions in organisations and companies. The model summaries indicate clearly different approaches in how this is handled across the three legislatures. Based on the results it can be concluded that external interests do not drive the assignments in the Dáil.<sup>14</sup> Inspecting the data more closely shows that the non-effect of external interests can be explained through the very low number of interests which TDs have declared (see Table 3). With regard to the variable of interest *remunerated positions* and *directorships* are the primary indicators of an eventual external interest<sup>15</sup>. The overview indicates that the number of TDs who did not declare any remunerated position is very high (constantly above 95 per cent of legislators without *any* connection). This low amount of registered interests is striking. A possible explanation of this almost non-existence of links to interest groups might be found in the strong local roots of Irish TDs (see Farrell et al., 2012). This might urge candidates to be very cautious to give the wrong impression by having too many connections to interest groups at a national level.

Table 3: Percentage of Members of Dáil Éireann declaring 'Nil' in occupational income, directorships and remunerated positions (1998-2010)

	'98	'99	'00	'01	'02	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	'10
Occupational Income	45,4	46,1	46,0	46,4	43,4	43,9	47,2	48,5	38,7	45,7	44,9	49,4
Directorships	74,2	70,3	69,9	67,5	66,3	73,2	71,8	69,3	73,0	75,6	75,2	75,0
Remunerated Positions	95,7	95,8	96,9	94,0	96,4	97,0	100	99,4	100	97,0	97,6	97,0

Source: Own calculation, Register of Members' Interest obtained from <http://www.oireachtas.ie/viewdoc.asp?m=&DocID=1&CatID=20>, access date: March 17, 2014.

<sup>14</sup> One outlier to this general pattern is the 29th Dáil in which almost all of the very few TDs who have an external interest are assigned to a fitting committee. This overestimates the influence of this variable in absolute terms. This data anomaly occurs only in the Dáil in this particular variable and legislative period, all other variable provide enough variation for a meaningful analysis (see descriptive statistics on pages 29 - 31).

<sup>15</sup> The table excludes descriptive statistics on shares, land, gifts, property and services, travel facilities and contracts which were excluded for the coding.

In the Tweede Kamer, the model summaries for the multilevel models indicate a more complex picture when studying the various models. Looking at the models analysing full membership to committees across all parliamentary party groups (Table 7, see page 26) external interests have some explanatory powers when excluding committee experience (model 1). However, the effect vanishes when committee experience is included. Nevertheless, the variable passes the 5 per cent significance level in two legislative periods and the 10 per cent threshold in three legislative periods. Contrary to the full membership models, the models with regard to substitute members again indicate no effect of the variables. As discussed above, this is not surprising given the assignment process which is aimed to fill, but not to achieve the 'best' match. The evidence from the interview with legislators of VVD and the PvdA disclosed how the side functions of legislators (Dutch: *nevenfuncties*) are indeed a big concern in the assignment process (e.g. Interview Tweede Kamer 150521A; 150527B; 150521A)

*"It can happen that the parliamentary party groups says 'listen for a second...'. We had that recently with [...], the side functions were really close to the portfolio. That is not possible. (Interview Tweede Kamer, 150527B)*

Dutch MPs hinted at the 'blurriness' of the rule. In some policy areas (e.g. labour and health) the background is not problematic. In other areas, it is simply not done. In this sense even legislators indicated a "double standard" (Interview Tweede Kamer, 150506A). Interestingly, legislators frequently saw the problem of an assignment of the legislator less in terms of undesired policy output but rather in terms of a negative perception from the media and the voters and to self-protect the legislator and the parliamentary party group (see quote above from Interview Tweede Kamer, 150520E). Unfortunately, I was unable to determine during the interviews what is different about the Dutch media or the Dutch voter in order to explain why Dutch parliamentary party groups appear to be more vigilant against giving the wrong impression.

Compared to this strict handling of Dutch parliamentary party groups, the results for the Bundestag present a different picture. Across all legislative periods there is a highly significant effect of external interests with regard to full members (Table 5). With regard to substitute members the effect is also significant with the exceptions of the complete models of the 12th and 16th Bundestag (Table 6). Looking at the predicted probabilities the effect external interests is even stronger than the occupational background (9,8 per cent in model 1 compared to 6,2 per cent for the occupational background, model 2: 4,3 per cent; occupational background 3,8 per cent).

The interviews in Germany confirm that there is no strict rule regarding side functions comparable to those in the Tweede Kamer. Being connected to interest groups is not seen as problematic *per se* (e.g. Interview Bundestag, 150115C). However, interviewed legislators in the Bundestag mentioned that there are examples which 'go too far'. A frequently given example was a conflict of interest from having been a production manager at an armament manufacturer in combination with the Defence Committee or the Budget Committee (Interview Bundestag, 20140119A). However, there is an invisible line when conflict situations become problematic and cases are looked at individually. Interviewed legislators were able to recite frequent examples of such assignments like the general employee organisation head (German: *Gesamtbetriebsratsvorsitzender*) of the Frankfurt Airport and the Traffic Committee (Interview Bundestag, 151401C), the president of the German Labor Union and the Social and Labor Affairs Committee (Interview Bundestag, 151401E) or an operative of the Association of Statutory Health Insurance Physicians (German: *kassenärztliche Vereinigung*) and the Health Committee (Interview Bundestag, 150114I).

The strong influence of the variable is striking. Based solely on the results, one might be tempted to interpret this result as 'shady', especially since the side functions and additional incomes of German MPs have been subject of discussion in the media in the past (see e.g. Reyher, 2010; Elmer & Hebel, 2015; Tillack, 2012). A recent calculation by '*abgeordnetenwatch.de*', an internet portal aiming to increase transparency in German government, estimated that German legislators receive *at least* 21,4

Million Euro annually through their side functions<sup>16</sup> (for more details see Reyher, 2015). However, all that can be concluded from the statistical model so far is that a significant share of the *assignment process* of German legislators is connected to the side functions they have.

During the interviews, a respondent also provided an interesting insight by suggesting that only those legislators will not get a problem "who are in the mainstream of the parliamentary party group" (Interview Bundestag, 150113B). This is additional supporting evidence that parliamentary party groups are aware of the negative effects and might reserve the right to act. In all parliamentary party groups such cases are looked at individually and it is carefully considered whether the expertise that is brought along is beneficial or whether there are potential harmful effects. This could lead to not assign a legislator to a particular committee. This has important ramifications when discussing the applicability of the distributional theory. 'Outlying committees' may be created. There is no hard line which prevents the combination of external interests and committee membership altogether, but parliamentary party groups still remain the main principal and preserve the right to step in.

### District Characteristics and 'Outlying' Committees

A second variable related to the *distributional* rationale are *district characteristics*. During the interviews legislators were asked whether this factor plays a role in the assignment process. The evidence of this section solely relies on the self-report of legislators during the interviews. During the interviews in the Dáil the constituency link was a re-occurring factor and frequently mentioned which supports the prediction of the distributive rationale of committee assignments. Constituency work is clearly reflected in the choice of committees. A frequently cited underlying reasoning was that it is a TDs' "job [...] to represent its constituency" (Interview Dáil, 141202A). The committee is a part of this. Being on a committee that represents the interests of a constituency was characterised as "very, very typical" (Interview Dáil, 141202A). Based on the assessment of a respondent, the assignment process in the Dáil can best be described as "a mixture, I suppose, of personal interests, educational background or professional background and then kind of a constituency impact as well" (Interview Dáil, 141208B). TDs were able to point to general links between constituency characteristics and a fitting committee. As an example, TDs from an urban constituency were seen to be more interested in the urban planning and housing committee (Interview Dáil, 141203D) or the justice committee (Interview Dáil, 141204B) due to crime rates. TDs from inner city areas with a higher unemployment rate would tend to the Committee on Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation whose task includes finding new ways to promote job creation (Interview Dáil, 141204C).

The Bundestag represents a mixed-member case. Half of the legislators are elected in nominal districts while the other half is elected via party lists. It was included in the analysis as a case in order to test whether two 'assignment logics' exist. It should be noted that it would be too simplistic to make a 50/50 'clear' cut between those two groups. Despite being the one group with a clear *electoral* connection to single districts, legislators elected in a district have "no monopoly on constituency representation" (Saalfeld, 2008, p.219)<sup>17</sup>. Legislators frequently run as dual candidates by being placed on the party list and running in a district. Zittel and Gschwend (2007) calculate that in the 2005 federal election, around 45 per cent of the candidates ran in both a nominal district and on the party list<sup>18</sup>.

When asked in how far the connection to electoral districts (German: *Wahlkreise*) plays into the consideration for committees, legislators generally answered affirmative (e.g. Interview Bundestag, 150119B, 150119A; 150115D, 151901C). No legislator denied such a connection even if it was not applicable to him or her personally. Some committees, i.e. those dealing with agriculture, traffic,

<sup>16</sup> The calculations are not exact, as the Bundestag requires legislators to indicate the remunerations in steps, i.e. step 1 is everything between 1000 and 3500 Euro, step 2 until 7000 Euro and so on. Step 10 indicates a salary over 250.000.

<sup>17</sup> See also the analysis conducted by Gschwend et al. (2009)

<sup>18</sup> Only 18 per cent ran only in one of the 299 electoral districts and 37 per cent only via a party's list (see (Zittel & Gschwend, 2007, p. 988).

energy, etc. are more prone to such connections. Reasons given had mostly recourse to the constituency characteristics (Interview Bundestag, 150119B; Interview Bundestag, 150119B), i.e. rural areas and the committee dealing with agriculture or the constituency being an important traffic junction and the transport committee (Interview Bundestag, 150115D). Like in the Dáil, the presence of particular institutions was seen to motivate some legislators to particular committees, e.g. army barracks and the Defence Committee (Interview Bundestag, 150114E, also 150119B) or power plants and the committee dealing with energy policy (Interview Bundestag, 150127A).

Although considerations were expected to be absent in the Dutch Tweede Kamer, several legislators indicated that local considerations play a limited, but noticeable role. Parliamentary party groups try to make sure to have some regional spread when drafting the lists (Interview Tweede Kamer, 150520D, also 150423A, see also Thomassen & Andeweg, 2004). Some legislators mentioned that they have a local connection which structures their work. One legislator noted that in his province (Brabant) "it is expected from me to put the most important topics from that region on the political agenda. And I take that extremely serious. My colleagues from Groningen and Friesland and Limburg do the same thing." (Interview Tweede Kamer, 150423A). In general, the interviews confirmed that for the majority of legislators local considerations did not play a role in their portfolio or committee work.

As the district appears to play a significant role in the assignment process in the Bundestag and the Dáil the questions arises how important committee work is for the legislators in serving his or her constituency. The distributional theory is very clear on why legislators choose particular committees: They want to be re-elected and committee membership facilitates this. Interestingly, although the interviews suggested that it influences the allocation process, Irish as well as German legislators were sceptical about the added value of committee work for their re-election chances. In terms of electoral success one Irish respondent argued that committees "have no value" (Interview Dáil, 141205B). Voters, it was argued, are not generally interested in committee work and would not engage in them. What happens in committee is seen as the nuts-and-bolts of policy-making (Interview Dáil, 141205A). Legislators frequently highlighted that within their districts they are not the specialised experts that they are in their parliamentary party group. Rather they need to have a universal view on matters. One legislator described their role as the "Eierlegende Wollmilchsau" [literally: 'oviparous woolen milk dispensing sow', best translated as jack of all trades] (Interview Bundestag, 151201A; also mentioned in interviews 151401A and 150130D). One might object that, because these are self-reported estimates from legislators about their constituents, they should be interpreted with caution. However, legislators are very capable to give an assessment about this. The assessment was shared by a number of legislators and is based on their interactions with their constituents. Legislators know exactly what types of questions they receive in their frequent discussions with voters in their district.

### **Evidence of a Leadership-Controlled Composition of Committees?**

No significant impact is visible in the model summaries of the Dáil with regard to those variables which are related to a *partisan* rationale (hypothesis 4 and 5). Neither the interaction effects between high importance committees and the ideological distance between a legislators, nor the number of legislative periods served have a significant effect. Some outliers with regard to ideological distance from the parliamentary party group mean can be found in the models of the 27th Dáil under the 'old' committee system and of the 30th Dáil, but even here the effect is not strong. The interviews in the Dáil underline this and provide little evidence that these factors play an important role. Legislators rather highlighted the occupational background as well as the constituency link. The only frequently mentioned factor in which parliamentary seniority plays a role was with regard to the distribution of chairmanships (Interview Dáil, 141202B).

In the Bundestag the ideological distance from the parliamentary party group mean significantly affects the assignment to high or low importance committees. Although not highly significant the effect found in several legislative periods and is also present when committee experience is included.

The findings are much more diverse with regard to the number of legislative periods. Only in the 12th, 13th (model 1), 17th (model 1) and 18th Bundestag the variable has a significant effect. Contrary to the assignment patterns of full members, which can at least partially be linked to partisan considerations, the assignment of substitute members cannot. Conceptually, this is not surprising. If a parliamentary party group might decide to intervene with regard to high importance committees, the choice to do so for full members is much more logical. With regard to the other partisan variable, the negative coefficient of the interaction of ideological distance from the parliamentary party group mean and high importance committees indicates that the probability to be assigned to a high importance committee actually *increases* with growing ideological distance from the parliamentary party group. This completely reverses the prediction of the partisan theory. Based on this data it is even more likely to be assigned to a high importance committee, the further away a legislator is ideologically from the mean of the parliamentary party group. The hypothesis that ideological closeness determines the assignment to important committees is therefore rejected. With regard to the number of legislative periods the results indicate an interesting pattern. In terms of statistical model, some evidence is visible for the effect of the number of legislative periods. This was also highlighted in the interviews in the Bundestag which confirmed that a certain hierarchical order is present (e.g. Interviews German Bundestag, 150130B; 150212A; 150120A; 150202A; 150119B). However, this is not a fixed rule which would trump factors like a fitting aptitude of a legislator. Legislators frequently argued that a "mixture" is aimed for (Interview Bundestag, 150128B, also 150129A). There is no evidence of 'reserving' seats for experienced legislators. On the contrary, the system can best be described as self-selection with restrictions.

In the Tweede Kamer there is little evidence that partisan influences occur with regard to committees of high and low importance. With only two exceptions in the 1998 legislative period none of the partisan variables pass common significance levels. Contrary to the Bundestag and the Dáil in which the coefficients mostly point into the same direction across all legislative periods (two exceptions in each of the legislatures) there is a less stable pattern in the Tweede Kamer. Based on the model summaries the effect is reversed in many models compared to the prior legislative periods. It is difficult to see a meaningful pattern in the data. Interviewed legislators backed this general impression from the statistical analysis, but several legislators hinted at the existence of an hierarchical principle (e.g. Interview Tweede Kamer, 150527A, 150423A, 150430B).

The implications of these results with regard to the theoretical framework are mixed. It is clear that the parliamentary party group leadership coordinates the assignment process (usually through the whip). Legislators who wish to serve on a committee need to go through these 'gatekeepers'. However, in terms of autonomous decisions of the parliamentary party group leadership, the evidence is more nuanced. There is no evidence of a clear distinction between legislators and a 'greasy pole' that freshmen have to climb in order to 'qualify' for a more important committee. The effect is also not stable across all legislative periods but is only significant in half of the analysed terms.

### **'Beyond the Theoretical Framework': Country-Specific Influences**

Apart from cross-checking the results from the statistical analysis and the variables deduced from the theoretical framework, the interviews also aimed to discover new, more country-specific influences and patterns. Although the respondents supported the central variables, some other factors were also mentioned. In all legislatures, respondents pointed towards a "tradition" (Interview Dáil, 141202A, 150130G, Interview Tweede Kamer, 140208B) that former ministers would not join the corresponding committee after their term is over. In the Bundestag one respondent argued that it is seen as 'bad style' and frowned upon to join a committee if one has worked in the ministry as minister or under-secretary of state. Although this is not an iron rule, it restrains the number of possible assignments and is therefore noteworthy.

A more general gate-keeping principle for central portfolios in the Tweede Kamer refers to the placement of the candidate list for Dutch MPs. This was a frequently mentioned issue during the

interviews (Interview Tweede Kamer, 150423, 150430B). It was argued that those who are relatively high on the list would more often get bigger dossiers than legislators who are new or lower on the list (Interview Tweede Kamer, 150430B). The adherence to the list principle is not only applicable in the case of initial assignment, but is also applied when central portfolios become available in the course of the legislative period (Interview Tweede Kamer, 150604A).

In the Bundestag one factor is not yet accounted for which deserves special mentioning: the influence of the regional factions (German: *Landesgruppen*) within a parliamentary party group. Although their role in the distribution of positions within parliamentary party groups is not 'newly discovered', but has been acknowledged by other scholars (Petersen, 2000), the interviews gave additional evidence for their influence in the assignment to committees. The role of the regional factions is especially important in the larger parliamentary party groups of SPD and CDU/CSU (e.g. Interview Bundestag, 150129B; 150127B; 150128D; 152901C). In the parliamentary party groups of CDU/CSU and SPD and especially with regard to central committees, every regional faction tries to make sure to be represented on all committees. This does not translate into a clear proportional representation, there is "no automatism" (Interview Bundestag, 150127B) in the applicability of the principle. Nevertheless, there is a tendency that larger regional factions have a substantial claim for a minimum representation on a committee. In the CDU/CSU-parliamentary party group the role of the regional factions is highly institutionalised due to negotiations in the called 'carpet dealer convention' (German: *Teppichhändlerrunde*). The chairmen of the regional factions have a strong interest to enforce their legislators' list of wishes. In the SPD this intermediate step of involving the regional faction in a separate meeting is not present. Here, legislators directly talk to their whip who takes the regional spread into consideration. However, the chairmen of the regional factions also engage in classical lobbying during this process (Interview Bundestag, 150112A).

As has been indicated above, such mechanisms are not very strong in assignment process of the two opposition parliamentary party groups. The regional factions do not play a role in the smaller parliamentary party groups. Within these parliamentary party groups, several legislators pointed to the influence of political wings. This was most prominent in the Green Party in which the 'Fund-Realo' distinction plays a role in the assignment process (Interview Bundestag, 150114I; 150129E; 150227A, for more information on this internal strategic dispute see e.g. Doherty, 1992). Legislators from both smaller parliamentary party groups in the Bundestag indicated the presence of gender considerations (Interview Bundestag, 150116A). In the case of the Left, interviewed legislators also pointed to the presence of a double-quota, East-West and women-men. However, while the women-men quota is 'set', the East-West quota is merely "striven for" (Interview Bundestag, 150126A; 150129A) as the application of both principles in small committees is numerically impossible.

## **Conclusion: Specialisation and Committee Experience Paired with Country-Specific Patterns**

The assignment of legislators is a crucial stage in the workings of committees. Processes of legislative organisation take place in an extremely complex environment in which many factors are considered. One of the fundamental conclusions of this study is that there is no guideline on the allocation of committee seats in the three analysed legislatures. Simple aggregation of characteristics and circumstances does not lead to the certain assignment of a legislator to a particular committee in a 'deterministic' fashion. The goal of this analysis was to cut through the noise and determine regularities and patterns.

As other studies which have analysed committee workings, this study built on the congressional framework of distributional, informational and partisan theories of legislative organisation. Despite heightened interest there is not yet an 'own' theoretical framework available comparable to the U.S. theories. Some scholars have been sceptical about the merit of the congressional theories of legislative organisation and have called for an discontinuation of a heavy reliance on these theories. However, - to borrow the famous statement from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe - *why look so far afield when*

*there is so much close at hand?*<sup>19</sup>. Rather than developing a new framework, it was argued that the knowledge and insight gained from a long-standing research tradition on the U.S. Congress and U.S. state legislatures cannot be ignored and needs to be taken into consideration. Combining the rich literature on committees in the United States to the study of committees in parliamentary systems is sensible.

Certain adaptations were made to account for the different institutional setting. Most prominently, the role of parliamentary party groups as central gatekeepers in the process was acknowledged. The approach used in this study is not radically new and I do not want to overstate my contribution with regard to an innovation of the utilisation of the theories, but attempts were made to go beyond the existing literature in terms of the scope of the analysis.

One of the central findings of this study is that the congressional theories, despite being developed against the backdrop of a particular legislature, have merit for the study of legislative organisation in other legislatures. The concepts and expectations led to a deeper understanding of the processes in the analysed legislatures. Although the concepts were not equally applicable in all countries, the results from the statistical analysis in the Bundestag, the Tweede Kamer and the Dáil, uncovered certain patterns. This was generally backed up during the interviews. When asked about the rationales and the corresponding factors there was not a single respondent who did not support at least one of them.

The analysis relied on evidence from a statistical analysis and interviews. This was a fruitful combination. The initial results obtained from the statistical analysis laid the foundation for the interviews conducted in the course of this study. A statistical model can at best be an approximation to reality. This is why the analysis did not rely solely on the results of the model but cross-checked them with interviews of each chamber. A restriction to the statistical analysis would have run the risk of a biased interpretation of the patterns. Several outliers were identified which were addressed during the course of the interviews. Solely relying on interviews have risked to only partially understand the statements of legislators. Especially in the D'ail the evidence of the statistical analysis was of great help and served as an orientation point. Given that the leadership makes assignment with relative high autonomy in some parliamentary party groups, some legislators were also unsure about the factors that play a role.

*Author: "What kind of criteria are used in the assignment process of legislators to committees?"*

*TD: "It is very difficult to know because [the parliamentary party group leader] does not tell us." (Interview Dáil, 20141202A)*

Trying to summarize the performance of congressional theories in the parliamentary party group-centred context of the three analysed legislatures there is strong evidence that informational rationales prevail across all legislatures. Especially committee experience weighs heavily into the assignment process. Once a legislator has been a member of a committee, he or she has a relatively strong standing in the next legislative period. This is always under the prerequisite of him or her having done a good job. With regard to the more personal characteristics of legislators, advantages in knowledge greatly increased the likelihood of a legislator to be assigned to a corresponding committee.

With regard to external interests, the Bundestag is by far the least restrictive and the Tweede Kamer the most restrictive. In the Dáil the non-finding is due to the very limited amount of reported directorships in organisations and foundations. This is, however, an interesting finding in itself. If there are no data to support this claim, then external interests cannot be an important factor for parliamentary party groups to consider. Especially the practice in the Bundestag raises the question about the further implications of such a system. Constituency characteristics can be linked to large portions of the assignment process in the Dáil and to a certain extent in the Bundestag. These are the two legislatures in which this factors was expected to be play a role. They were largely absent

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<sup>19</sup> Translated from the German original phrase "Warum in die Ferne schweifen? Sieh, das Gute liegt so nah".

in the Tweede Kamer, but some legislators mentioned the influence of regional considerations. The evidence for this part solely relies on the self-report of legislators. The interviews pointed towards the existence of a principle with regard to constituency characteristics in the assignment process. This is important evidence for a distributive rationale. However, the rationale has its limitations in terms of whether it actually *matters* in terms of electoral benefits. The connection to the districts is a *central* part of the theory but it is explained as serving a re-election purpose of legislators. The first prediction is fulfilled (the assignment is driven by constituency considerations), but there is very limited evidence from the interviews that legislators experience a 'boost' in terms of added value for the next election from their committee membership. Voters perceive committee work not with the same importance and centrality it has for the content-related work of legislators. In this sense there is a clear limit to the predictions of the distributional theory.

Partisan considerations were hardly visible in the statistical model. One possibility for this non-finding could be that the effect of the variables are tested in the 'wrong' place. The models tested whether there is a structural difference between committees which deal with topics which are electorally more or less salient. This is linked to the re-election goal of parties. However, committees can also be distinguished in terms of other logics. It might be that other committees or portfolios which have a higher internal *prestige* (i.e. the Foreign Affairs Committee) indicate such an effect. Another explanation is that the amount of partisan 'stacking' is indeed limited in the analysed legislatures. The interviews provided evidence that, in some cases, more experienced legislators have higher chances to be assigned to more 'central' committees. No legislator argued that such considerations are valued higher than advantages in knowledge. This is an important finding. When transferring the congressional theories to a countries with strong parliamentary party groups, the absence of a 'tight' grip of the parliamentary party group leadership is unexpected.

Table 4: Model summaries multiple-membership multilevel model of committee assignments in the Dáil (27th - 31st legislative period)

	<i>Dependent variable:</i>											
	Committee membership including transfers (only TDs)											
	27th Dáil		27th Dáil		28th Dáil		29th Dáil		30th Dáil		31st Dáil	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Fixed effects:</i>												
Prior education	0.440* (0.250)	0.430* (0.250)	-0.120 (0.270)	-0.120 (0.270)	0.210 (0.250)	0.120 (0.240)	0.140 (0.240)	0.140 (0.240)	0.120 (0.210)	0.140 (0.210)	0.490* (0.260)	0.490* (0.260)
Prior occupation	0.720*** (0.250)	0.680*** (0.250)	0.540** (0.250)	0.540** (0.250)	0.530** (0.230)	0.560** (0.230)	0.810*** (0.230)	0.780*** (0.230)	0.840*** (0.190)	0.780*** (0.190)	0.720*** (0.260)	0.690*** (0.260)
External interest					-0.290 (0.540)	-0.240 (0.540)	1.200** (0.630)	1.200** (0.630)	-0.032 (0.770)	-0.170 (0.790)	-0.160 (1.100)	-0.066 (1.100)
Committee experience		1.600*** (0.300)			0.390 (0.470)	1.400*** (0.220)			0.890*** (0.200)	1.300*** (0.180)	1.400*** (0.300)	1.400*** (0.300)
High imp. com's	0.510 (0.460)	0.530 (0.480)	0.380 (0.300)	0.380 (0.300)	0.460** (0.230)	0.430* (0.230)	0.070 (0.240)	0.070 (0.240)	0.440* (0.230)	0.430* (0.240)	-0.500* (0.300)	-0.560* (0.300)
Ideol. distance	0.018 (0.014)	0.019 (0.014)	0.005 (0.012)	0.005 (0.012)	0.009 (0.015)	0.006 (0.015)	-0.007 (0.015)	-0.007 (0.015)	-0.034 (0.030)	-0.045 (0.030)	-0.006 (0.037)	-0.010 (0.038)
Number LPs	0.012 (0.038)	0.011 (0.039)	-0.052 (0.033)	-0.052 (0.033)	-0.012 (0.033)	-0.022 (0.032)	-0.006 (0.034)	-0.006 (0.034)	-0.012 (0.025)	-0.016 (0.025)	-0.034 (0.059)	-0.084 (0.064)
Ideol. distance * HICs	-0.041* (0.021)	-0.041* (0.021)	-0.012 (0.019)	-0.012 (0.019)	-0.040 (0.028)	-0.044 (0.028)	-0.016 (0.034)	-0.016 (0.034)	-0.120* (0.070)	-0.110 (0.072)	0.064 (0.060)	0.077 (0.061)
Number LPs * HICs	-0.065 (0.056)	-0.073 (0.057)	0.003 (0.050)	0.003 (0.050)	-0.073 (0.051)	-0.075 (0.052)	-0.040 (0.057)	-0.040 (0.057)	-0.011 (0.049)	-0.026 (0.051)	0.024 (0.094)	0.048 (0.099)
Constant	-2.000** (0.330)	-2.100*** (0.350)	-1.900** (0.200)	-1.900** (0.200)	-1.900** (0.150)	-1.900** (0.150)	-2.100*** (0.150)	-2.100*** (0.150)	-2.000** (0.120)	-2.100*** (0.120)	-2.100*** (0.180)	-2.100*** (0.180)
<i>Random effects:</i>												
Individual legislators	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Committees	(0.546)	(0.595)	(0.227)	(0.234)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.052)	(0.066)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Observations	1,240	1,240	1,764	1,764	1,980	1,980	2,112	2,112	2,835	2,835	1,309	1,309
Log Likelihood	-548.000	-536.000	-698.000	-697.000	-804.000	-786.000	-744.000	-736.000	-1,017.000	-994.000	-458.000	-448.000
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,116.000	1,094.000	1,415.000	1,417.000	1,631.000	1,595.000	1,511.000	1,496.000	2,057.000	2,013.000	937.000	921.000
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	1,167.000	1,150.000	1,470.000	1,477.000	1,692.000	1,663.000	1,573.000	1,564.000	2,122.000	2,084.000	994.000	983.000

Note: \* $p < 0.1$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ . Standard errors in parentheses.

Source: Own data set.

Table 5: Model summaries multiple-membership multilevel model of committee assignments in the Bundestag 12th to 18th legislative period (full members incl. transfers)

	Dependent variable:													
	Committee membership (only full members including transfers)													
	12th Bundestag		13th Bundestag		14th Bundestag		15th Bundestag		16th Bundestag		17th Bundestag		18th Bundestag	
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Fixed effects:</i>														
Prior education	0.412** (0.106)	0.253** (0.117)	0.466*** (0.105)	0.466*** (0.123)	0.331** (0.135)	0.208 (0.151)	0.477*** (0.112)	0.503*** (0.129)	0.591*** (0.119)	0.439*** (0.141)	0.521*** (0.109)	0.491*** (0.126)	0.418*** (0.112)	0.337*** (0.127)
Prior occupation	0.914*** (0.107)	0.942*** (0.119)	0.825*** (0.112)	0.446*** (0.136)	0.802*** (0.150)	0.770*** (0.168)	0.842*** (0.118)	0.742*** (0.137)	0.775*** (0.112)	0.621*** (0.136)	0.921*** (0.111)	0.838*** (0.131)	0.724*** (0.116)	0.455*** (0.135)
External interest	0.966** (0.111)	0.658** (0.128)	1.065*** (0.120)	0.866*** (0.148)	1.285*** (0.105)	1.146*** (0.121)	1.145*** (0.110)	0.813*** (0.133)	0.590** (0.129)	0.332* (0.161)	1.249*** (0.096)	0.879*** (0.116)	1.192*** (0.098)	0.989*** (0.113)
Committee experience		3.347*** (0.109)		3.875*** (0.110)		3.359*** (0.105)		3.601*** (0.114)		3.959*** (0.119)		4.133*** (0.127)		3.618*** (0.118)
High imp. com's	-0.008 (0.158)	0.003 (0.185)	0.047 (0.173)	0.111 (0.196)	0.223 (0.181)	0.190 (0.216)	0.071 (0.168)	-0.078 (0.217)	-0.027 (0.184)	0.042 (0.228)	-0.265 (0.162)	-0.255 (0.180)	-0.077 (0.165)	0.038 (0.182)
Ideol. distance	0.005 (0.010)	0.003 (0.011)	0.012* (0.006)	0.012 (0.007)	0.007 (0.009)	0.004 (0.010)	-0.005 (0.011)	-0.001 (0.012)	-0.002 (0.012)	0.014 (0.012)	-0.028 (0.020)	-0.020 (0.021)	0.004 (0.008)	0.004 (0.009)
Number LPs	-0.136*** (0.024)	-0.261*** (0.029)	-0.107*** (0.027)	-0.278*** (0.037)	-0.099*** (0.027)	-0.179*** (0.032)	-0.127*** (0.031)	-0.289*** (0.039)	-0.095*** (0.028)	-0.207*** (0.036)	-0.119*** (0.028)	-0.290*** (0.037)	-0.135*** (0.032)	-0.318*** (0.041)
Ideol. distance * HICs	-0.062** (0.025)	-0.051* (0.026)	-0.027* (0.014)	-0.028* (0.017)	-0.028 (0.018)	-0.021 (0.021)	-0.012 (0.019)	-0.022 (0.022)	-0.033 (0.025)	-0.038 (0.027)	0.053** (0.025)	0.049* (0.027)	-0.026 (0.017)	-0.038* (0.019)
Number LPs * HICs	0.110*** (0.042)	0.101** (0.049)	0.048 (0.048)	0.053 (0.060)	0.001 (0.047)	-0.055 (0.059)	0.061 (0.049)	0.055 (0.065)	0.050 (0.047)	0.035 (0.061)	0.107** (0.046)	0.097 (0.060)	0.124** (0.051)	0.061 (0.065)
Constant	-2.740*** (0.083)	-2.749*** (0.097)	-2.877*** (0.099)	-2.965*** (0.112)	-2.912*** (0.103)	-3.035*** (0.120)	-2.822*** (0.102)	-2.890*** (0.125)	-2.907*** (0.107)	-3.088*** (0.130)	-2.881*** (0.097)	-2.895*** (0.107)	-2.914*** (0.095)	-2.844*** (0.105)
<i>Random effects:</i>														
Individual legislators	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)
Committees	(0.110)	(0.184)	(0.0.192)	(0.193)	(0.208)	(0.268)	(0.082)	(0.193)	(0.155)	(0.228)	(0.136)	(0.081)	(0.091)	(0.000)
Observations	15,168	15,168	13,356	13,356	14,388	14,388	11,520	11,520	12,201	12,201	12,537	12,537	12,650	12,650
Log Likelihood	-3,296.687	-2,853.157	-2,900.056	-2,256.429	-3,053.771	-2,571.191	-2,492.328	-1,986.581	-2,617.163	-2,028.214	-2,691.925	-2,091.281	-2,610.232	-2,146.377
Akaike Inf. Crit.	6,615.374	5,730.314	5,822.112	4,536.857	6,129.541	5,166.382	5,006.656	3,997.163	5,256.327	4,080.427	5,405.850	4,206.562	5,242.464	4,316.754
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	6,699.270	5,821.837	5,904.609	4,626.854	6,212.857	5,257.272	5,087.526	4,085.385	5,337.829	4,169.338	5,487.650	4,295.799	5,324.363	4,406.099

Note: \* $p < 0.1$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ . Standard errors in parentheses.

Source: Own data set.

Table 6: Model summaries multiple-membership multilevel model of committee assignments in the Bundestag 12th to 18th legislative period (substitute members)

	Dependent variable:																	
	Committee membership (only substitute members including transfers)																	
	12th Bundestag		13th Bundestag		14th Bundestag		15th Bundestag		16th Bundestag		17th Bundestag		18th Bundestag					
Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2					
<i>Fixed effects:</i>																		
Prior education	0.480** (0.105)	0.325** (0.109)	0.328** (0.105)	0.228** (0.110)	0.334** (0.124)	0.228* (0.128)	0.545** (0.109)	0.442** (0.116)	0.482** (0.117)	0.351** (0.124)	0.253** (0.111)	0.141 (0.117)	0.164 (0.123)	0.058 (0.131)				
Prior occupation	0.384** (0.113)	0.308** (0.117)	0.703** (0.112)	0.479** (0.118)	0.390** (0.143)	0.290* (0.149)	0.508** (0.120)	0.442** (0.128)	0.365** (0.116)	0.164 (0.125)	0.580** (0.116)	0.378** (0.123)	0.643** (0.126)	0.372** (0.136)				
External interests	0.290** (0.130)	0.032 (0.137)	0.519** (0.134)	0.395** (0.141)	0.715** (0.112)	0.541** (0.118)	0.673** (0.120)	0.393** (0.131)	0.331** (0.134)	0.150 (0.145)	0.627** (0.104)	0.233** (0.112)	0.800** (0.111)	0.486** (0.119)				
Committee experience	2.037** (0.088)	2.107** (0.090)	2.037** (0.088)	2.107** (0.090)	2.037** (0.088)	2.107** (0.088)	2.037** (0.090)	2.107** (0.090)	2.037** (0.088)	2.107** (0.090)	2.037** (0.088)	2.107** (0.090)	2.037** (0.088)	2.107** (0.090)				
High imp. com's	0.159 (0.164)	0.207 (0.175)	0.203 (0.166)	0.214 (0.165)	0.421** (0.173)	0.343* (0.177)	0.325* (0.171)	0.286 (0.205)	0.087 (0.175)	0.075 (0.215)	0.116 (0.163)	0.163 (0.172)	0.080 (0.174)	0.192 (0.186)				
Ideol. distance	0.007 (0.010)	0.010 (0.010)	-0.004 (0.007)	-0.007 (0.008)	-0.005 (0.009)	-0.008 (0.009)	0.005 (0.010)	0.006 (0.010)	-0.007 (0.012)	0.002 (0.012)	0.011 (0.012)	0.016 (0.013)	0.005 (0.008)	0.004 (0.009)				
Number LPs	-0.075** (0.022)	-0.146** (0.025)	-0.087** (0.027)	-0.162** (0.030)	-0.043* (0.025)	-0.076** (0.027)	-0.050* (0.028)	-0.140** (0.032)	-0.025 (0.025)	-0.066** (0.028)	-0.066** (0.026)	-0.148** (0.029)	-0.002 (0.028)	-0.093** (0.033)				
Ideol. distance * HICs	-0.024 (0.020)	-0.020 (0.020)	-0.004 (0.013)	-0.002 (0.013)	-0.006 (0.016)	-0.001 (0.017)	-0.006 (0.017)	-0.006 (0.018)	-0.009 (0.022)	-0.003 (0.022)	-0.023 (0.024)	-0.034 (0.026)	0.004 (0.014)	0.004 (0.015)				
Number LPs * HICs	0.059 (0.039)	0.030 (0.043)	0.011 (0.046)	-0.027 (0.051)	-0.023 (0.042)	-0.065 (0.047)	-0.014 (0.046)	-0.089 (0.055)	0.029 (0.042)	0.012 (0.048)	0.038 (0.043)	-0.009 (0.050)	0.017 (0.049)	-0.067 (0.058)				
Constant	-2.746** (0.089)	-2.803** (0.094)	-2.728** (0.097)	-2.762** (0.096)	-2.799** (0.101)	-2.866** (0.102)	-2.928** (0.105)	-3.021** (0.121)	-2.866** (0.103)	-3.036** (0.124)	-2.769** (0.096)	-2.788** (0.099)	-3.188** (0.100)	-3.246** (0.106)				
<i>Random effects:</i>																		
Individual legislators	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)				
Committees	(0.186)	(0.195)	(0.191)	(0.139)	(0.218)	(0.202)	(0.150)	(0.230)	(0.156)	(0.275)	(0.175)	(0.157)	(0.141)	(0.106)				
Observations	15,168	15,168	13,356	13,356	14,388	14,388	11,520	11,520	12,201	12,201	12,537	12,537	12,650	12,650				
Log Likelihood	-3,524.669	-3,296.756	-3,098.334	-2,866.130	-3,456.733	-3,253.436	-2,645.069	-2,363.706	-2,859.108	-2,611.122	-2,985.703	-2,725.181	-2,528.681	-2,286.328				
Akaike Inf. Crit.	7,071.338	6,617.512	6,218.669	5,756.260	6,935.467	6,530.872	5,312.137	4,751.412	5,740.216	5,246.244	5,993.406	5,474.363	5,079.362	4,596.656				
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	7,155.234	6,709.035	6,301.166	5,846.257	7,018.783	6,621.762	5,393.007	4,839.634	5,821.718	5,335.156	6,075.207	5,563.600	5,161.262	4,686.001				

Note: \* $p < 0.1$ ; \*\* $p < 0.05$ ; \*\*\* $p < 0.01$ . Standard errors in parentheses.

Source: Own data set.

Table 7: Model summaries multiple-membership multilevel model of committee assignments in the Tweede Kamer 1994 - 2012 (full members including transfers)

	Dependent variable:												
	Committee membership (only full members including transfers)												
	Tweede Kamer '94 - '98		Tweede Kamer '98 - '02		Tweede Kamer '02 - '03		Tweede Kamer '03 - '06		Tweede Kamer '06 - '10		Tweede Kamer '10 - '12		
Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2		
<i>Fixed effects:</i>													
Prior education	0.405* (0.211)	0.379*** (0.143)	0.355** (0.149)	0.437*** (0.154)	0.371** (0.161)	0.555*** (0.128)	0.479*** (0.139)	0.987*** (0.130)	0.897*** (0.141)	0.725*** (0.131)	0.575*** (0.142)	0.531*** (0.145)	0.436*** (0.148)
Prior occupation	0.623*** (0.194)	0.978*** (0.122)	0.898*** (0.128)	0.607*** (0.135)	0.458*** (0.141)	0.575*** (0.118)	0.496*** (0.127)	0.513*** (0.124)	0.456*** (0.134)	0.464*** (0.123)	0.312** (0.133)	0.563*** (0.132)	0.485*** (0.138)
External interest	0.161 (0.308)	0.444** (0.198)	0.364* (0.209)	0.339 (0.248)	0.100 (0.264)	0.528** (0.224)	0.320 (0.249)	0.451* (0.244)	0.300 (0.272)	0.373* (0.213)	0.391* (0.232)	0.707** (0.339)	0.511 (0.363)
Committee experience			1.573*** (0.131)		1.587*** (0.168)		2.168*** (0.135)		2.200*** (0.156)		2.523*** (0.148)		1.904*** (0.155)
High imp. com's	1.166*** (0.409)	-0.029 (0.217)	-0.074 (0.242)	0.163 (0.366)	0.285 (0.387)	0.624** (0.245)	0.738*** (0.268)	0.009 (0.240)	0.025 (0.252)	-0.101 (0.251)	-0.220 (0.281)	0.084 (0.318)	0.212 (0.316)
Ideol. distance	0.007 (0.026)	-0.068*** (0.024)	-0.053** (0.026)	-0.004 (0.015)	0.003 (0.015)	-0.009 (0.011)	-0.007 (0.012)	0.017 (0.013)	0.019 (0.015)	-0.057** (0.025)	-0.054** (0.025)	-0.062* (0.036)	-0.059 (0.039)
NumberLPs	0.049 (0.058)	0.005 (0.045)	-0.168*** (0.055)	0.081** (0.037)	0.038 (0.040)	0.050 (0.038)	-0.066 (0.045)	0.009 (0.041)	-0.149*** (0.049)	0.003 (0.045)	-0.209*** (0.052)	0.071 (0.049)	-0.028 (0.056)
Ideol. distance * HICs	-0.031 (0.047)	0.062* (0.036)	0.064* (0.038)	-0.038 (0.038)	-0.037 (0.037)	-0.025 (0.024)	-0.028 (0.025)	-0.027 (0.028)	-0.030 (0.029)	-0.058 (0.053)	-0.070 (0.057)	0.106* (0.062)	0.124** (0.063)
Number LPs * HICs	-0.162 (0.104)	-0.021 (0.084)	-0.003 (0.096)	-0.112 (0.087)	-0.147 (0.093)	-0.151* (0.079)	-0.198** (0.091)	0.021 (0.078)	0.021 (0.086)	0.009 (0.082)	0.062 (0.095)	-0.133 (0.106)	-0.169 (0.118)
Constant	-3.425*** (0.266)	-1.858*** (0.123)	-1.890*** (0.136)	-1.922*** (0.179)	-1.996*** (0.194)	-1.982*** (0.130)	-2.035*** (0.141)	-1.984*** (0.131)	-1.936*** (0.145)	-1.783*** (0.144)	-1.693*** (0.153)	-2.102*** (0.174)	-2.175*** (0.176)
<i>Random effects:</i>													
Individual legislators	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.248)	(0.369)	(0.408)	(0.369)	(0.295)	(0.336)
Committees	(0.710)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.451)	(0.505)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.172)	(0.217)	(0.228)	(0.001)
Observations	2,535	2,670	2,670	2,400	2,400	2,928	2,928	2,916	2,916	3,116	3,116	2,533	2,533
Log Likelihood	-580.383	-1,129.882	-1,058.848	-1,094.338	-1,051.394	-1,286.080	-1,157.958	-1,278.729	-1,173.818	-1,345.472	-1,186.217	-1,035.292	-961.669
Akaike Inf. Crit.	1,182.767	2,281.763	2,141.696	2,210.677	2,126.787	2,594.161	2,339.917	2,579.458	2,371.637	2,712.944	2,396.434	2,092.583	1,947.338
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	1,246.984	2,346.551	2,212.374	2,274.292	2,196.186	2,659.964	2,411.702	2,645.215	2,443.372	2,779.432	2,468.966	2,156.792	2,017.383

Note: \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01. Standard errors in parentheses.

Source: Own data set.

Table 8: Model summaries multiple-membership multilevel model of committee assignments in the Tweede Kamer (substitute members including transfers)

		Dependent variable:											
		Committee membership (only substitute members including transfers)											
		'94 - '98		'98 - '02		'02 - '03		'03 - '06		'06 - '10		'10 - '12	
		Tweede Kamer		Tweede Kamer		Tweede Kamer		Tweede Kamer		Tweede Kamer		Tweede Kamer	
		Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2	Model 1	Model 2
<i>Fixed effects:</i>													
Prior education	0.436 (0.288)	0.159 (0.136)	0.120 (0.139)	0.101 (0.173)	0.051 (0.176)	-0.064 (0.132)	-0.135 (0.135)	0.115 (0.137)	0.035 (0.140)	0.226* (0.134)	0.075 (0.138)	-0.099 (0.160)	-0.155 (0.162)
Prior occupation	0.979*** (0.251)	0.389*** (0.119)	0.281** (0.122)	0.280* (0.150)	0.193 (0.153)	0.090 (0.117)	0.022 (0.119)	0.115 (0.124)	0.093 (0.125)	0.258** (0.123)	0.191 (0.126)	0.361*** (0.136)	0.284** (0.138)
External interest	0.146 (0.395)	-0.450** (0.224)	-0.578** (0.230)	0.020 (0.284)	-0.063 (0.289)	0.149 (0.229)	-0.018 (0.229)	0.234 (0.238)	0.135 (0.237)	0.007 (0.224)	-0.081 (0.230)	-0.317 (0.452)	-0.365 (0.452)
Committee experience			1.131*** (0.118)		0.811*** (0.149)		1.067*** (0.108)		0.826*** (0.113)		1.415*** (0.121)		0.770*** (0.139)
High imp. com's	-0.062 (0.373)	0.189 (0.196)	0.196 (0.212)	0.082 (0.326)	0.059 (0.332)	-0.393* (0.218)	-0.433* (0.226)	-0.237 (0.221)	-0.223 (0.226)	-0.036 (0.275)	-0.097 (0.284)	0.108 (0.343)	0.214 (0.339)
Ideol. distance	-0.013 (0.045)	-0.057*** (0.020)	-0.047** (0.020)	0.031** (0.014)	0.037** (0.015)	-0.025** (0.012)	-0.022* (0.012)	-0.001 (0.014)	-0.0003 (0.014)	-0.015 (0.021)	-0.021 (0.020)	-0.054 (0.035)	-0.054 (0.036)
NumberLPs	-0.139 (0.101)	-0.033 (0.040)	-0.149*** (0.047)	-0.067 (0.049)	-0.127** (0.055)	0.002 (0.039)	-0.076* (0.041)	0.066* (0.039)	-0.025 (0.042)	0.072* (0.043)	-0.116** (0.048)	0.010 (0.051)	-0.065 (0.056)
Ideol. distance * HICs	0.064 (0.067)	0.055* (0.031)	0.050 (0.032)	-0.039 (0.027)	-0.040 (0.027)	0.016 (0.020)	0.016 (0.020)	0.019 (0.024)	0.016 (0.024)	-0.003 (0.034)	-0.002 (0.034)	0.004 (0.065)	0.010 (0.065)
Number LPs * HICs	-0.231 (0.212)	-0.109 (0.080)	-0.111 (0.088)	0.140* (0.076)	0.153* (0.080)	0.090 (0.065)	0.102 (0.069)	0.072 (0.068)	0.066 (0.078)	0.001 (0.071)	0.025 (0.078)	-0.018 (0.098)	-0.046 (0.104)
Constant	-3.882*** (0.287)	-1.196*** (0.106)	-1.211*** (0.114)	-1.860*** (0.200)	-1.925*** (0.207)	-1.098*** (0.127)	-1.152*** (0.130)	-1.494*** (0.127)	-1.476*** (0.129)	-1.826*** (0.176)	-1.769*** (0.176)	-1.835*** (0.220)	-1.829*** (0.203)
<i>Random effects:</i>													
Individual legislators	(0.963)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.281)	(0.376)	(0.363)	(0.362)	(0.347)	(0.334)	(0.412)	(0.353)	(0.326)	(0.318)
Committees	(0.001)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.524)	(0.521)	(0.000)	(0.000)	(0.106)	(0.131)	(0.473)	(0.467)	(0.575)	(0.449)
Observations	2.535	2.670	2.670	2.400	2.400	2.928	2.928	2.916	2.916	3.116	3.116	2.533	2.533
Log Likelihood	-364.651	-1,374.477	-1,329.090	-1,033.414	-1,018.698	-1,579.015	-1,530.540	-1,533.157	-1,506.595	-1,449.741	-1,378.468	-1,057.380	-1,042.458
Akaike Inf. Crit.	751.303	2,770.954	2,682.180	2,088.829	2,061.397	3,180.030	3,085.080	3,088.313	3,037.191	2,921.483	2,780.935	2,136.760	2,108.917
Bayesian Inf. Crit.	815.520	2,835.742	2,752.858	2,152.444	2,130.795	3,245.832	3,156.865	3,154.071	3,108.927	2,987.970	2,853.467	2,200.969	2,178.963

Note: \*p<0.1; \*\*p<0.05; \*\*\*p<0.01. Standard errors in parentheses.

Source: Own data set.

Table 9: Number of analysed legislative speeches per country

Country	Plenary sessions	No analysed speeches and questions
<b>Bundestag</b>		
12th (1990-1994)	243	46028
13th (1994-1998)	247	44559
14th (1998-2002)	253	40885
15th (2002-2005)	187	31619
16th (2002-2005)	233	44353
17th (2005-2009)	253	60809
18th (2009-May 2015)	107	20721
<b>Dáil Éireann</b>		
27th (1992-1997)	435	191843
28th (1997-2002)	422	226100
29th (2002-2007)	555	296515
30th (2007-2011)	348	245980
31st (2011-March 2015)	503	297769
<b>Tweede Kamer</b>		
1995-1998	291	140620
1998-2002	301	157121
2002-2003	97	25979
2003-2006	387	153738
2006-2010	378	155742
2010-2012)	232	86432
2012- March 2015	281	151020

Source: Own data set. For Germany the data set also includes speeches which were placed on record (*zu Protokoll gegebene Reden*) as well as all 'Explanations of vote' (Erklärungen nach Paragraph 31 GO). The plenary minutes of the Tweede Kamer were obtained from the publications of the parliament listed on [www.officielebekendmakingen.nl](http://www.officielebekendmakingen.nl). In the Dáil, the data contains all speeches, questions asked during Question Time on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays and also all written questions addressed to ministers for written reply. During question time, each TD is allowed to ask the Minister only two questions. There is no limit to the number of written questions. TDs frequently use written questions. In 2010, Ministers answered over 35,000 written questions. With regard to the legislative periods which were still 'on-going' during the research, the end point was fixed at mid-2015. The last analysed plenary session in the Tweede Kamer was the one which took place on 24th March 2015 (66th), in the Dáil 31st of March 2015. In the Bundestag it was the 107th plenary session end of May 2015. The Tweede Kamer and the Dáil were analysed in April and May. This allowed for the inclusion of April and May in the Bundestag which was analysed as last parliament.

Table 10: Descriptive statistics of the data set on committee assignments, Bundestag

	Prior education	Prior occupation	External interests	Committee experience	Ideological distance	Number LPs
12th Bundestag (n = 632 legislators)						
nbr.val	632	632	632	632	632	632
nbr.null	36	34	632	336	0	0
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0.01	1
max	1	1	0	6	28.87	10
sum	596	598	0	522	2189.09	1715
13th Bundestag (n = 636 legislators)						
nbr.val	636	636	636	28	636	636
nbr.null	18	37	370	0	0	0
nbr.na	0	0	0	608	0	0
min	0	0	0	1	0.00	1
max	1	1	1	1	68.06	9
sum	618	599	266	28	2929.13	1670
14th Bundestag (n = 654 legislators)						
nbr.val	654	654	654	654	654	654
nbr.null	26	52	336	247	0	0
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0.01	1
max	1	1	1	5	46.39	9
sum	628	602	318	570	2384.11	1798
15th Bundestag (n = 576 legislators)						
nbr.val	576	576	576	576	576	576
nbr.null	22	47	268	212	0	0
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0.01	1
max	1	1	1	4	43.61	9
sum	554	529	308	548	2501.99	1558
16th Bundestag (n = 581 legislators)						
nbr.val	581	581	581	581	581	581
nbr.null	20	45	211	215	0	0
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0.01	1
max	1	1	1	4	45.87	10
sum	561	536	370	470	1613.04	1648
17th Bundestag (n = 597 legislators)						
nbr.val	597	597	597	597	597	597
nbr.null	23	49	220	262	0	0
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0.00	1
max	1	1	1	4	34.69	10
sum	574	548	377	448	837.9	1617
18th Bundestag (n = 575 legislators)						
nbr.val	575	575	575	575	575	575
nbr.null	22	41	220	254	0.00	0
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0.00	0
min	0	0	0	0	0.01	1
max	1	1	1	5	57.42	11
sum	553	534	355	487	2387.47	1450

Source: Own data set.

Table 11: Descriptive statistics of the data set on committee assignments, Dáil Éireann

	Prior education	Prior occupation	External interests	Committee experience	Ideological distance	Number LPs
27th Dáil (n = 124 legislators)						
nbr.val	124	124	124	124	124	124
nbr.null	43	2	124	78	1	29
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0	0
max	1	1	0	4	47	10
sum	81	122	0	59	1111	368
27th Dáil (post reform) (n = 127 legislators)						
nbr.val	127	127	127	127	127	127
nbr.null	45	2	127	94	2	30
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0	0
max	1	1	0	1	49	14
sum	82	125	0	33	1178	402
28th Dáil (n = 133 legislators)						
nbr.val	133	133	133	133	133	133
nbr.null	40	2	110	79	5	35
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0	0
max	1	1	1	5	33	10
sum	93	131	23	104	719	367
29th Dáil (n = 132 legislators)						
nbr.val	133	133	133	133	133	133
nbr.null	40	2	110	79	5	35
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0	0
max	1	1	1	5	33	10
sum	93	131	23	104	719	367
30th Dáil (n = 140 legislators)						
nbr.val	140	140	140	140	140	140
nbr.null	48	5	132	60	1	40
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0	0
max	1	1	1	5	13	9
sum	92	135	8	173	366	338
31st Dáil (n = 119 legislators)						
nbr.val	119	119	119	119	119	119
nbr.null	37	9	112	82	3	68
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0	0
max	1	1	1	5	13	9
sum	82	110	7	67	394	120

Source: Own data set.

## Descriptive statistics of the data set on committee assignments, Tweede Kamer

	Prior education	Prior occupation	External interests	Committee experience	Ideological distance	Number LPs
Tweede Kamer '94 - '98 (n = 169 legislators)						
nbr.val	169	169	169		169	169
nbr.null	29	10	84		2	87
nbr.na	0	0	0		0	0
min	0	0	0		0	0
max	1	1	1		24	7
sum	140	159	85		565	212
Tweede Kamer '98 - '02 (n = 178 legislators)						
nbr.val	178	178	178	178	178	178
nbr.null	28	9	96	85	0	0
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0.01	1
max	1	1	1	9	23.59	9
sum	150	169	82	464	454.98	381
Tweede Kamer '02 - '03 (n = 160 legislators)						
nbr.val	160	160	160	160	160	160
nbr.null	29	8	104	84	0	0
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0.00	1
max	1	1	1	6	23.88	9
sum	131	152	56	196	471.76	343
Tweede Kamer '03 - '06 (n = 183 legislators)						
nbr.val	183	183	183	183	183	183
nbr.null	25	4	123	68	0	0
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0.02	1
max	1	1	1	7	31.16	10
range	1	1	1	7	31.14	9
sum	158	179	60	324	979.16	458
Tweede Kamer '06 - '10 (n = 172 legislators)						
nbr.val	172	172	172	172	172	172
nbr.null	23	10	116	83	0	0
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0.00	1
max	1	1	1	7	28.94	9
sum	149	162	56	290	727.38	395
Tweede Kamer '10 - '12 (n = 164 legislators)						
nbr.val	164	164	164	164	164	164
nbr.null	23	8	107	73	0	0
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0.035	1
max	1	1	1	11	26.938	7
sum	141	156	57	341	428.313	369
Tweede Kamer since '12 (n = 149 legislators)						
nbr.val	149	149	149	149	149	149
nbr.null	25	5	124	61	0	0
nbr.na	0	0	0	0	0	0
min	0	0	0	0	0.04	1
max	1	1	1	8	16.07	8
sum	124	144	25	271	347.40	336

Source: Own data set.

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