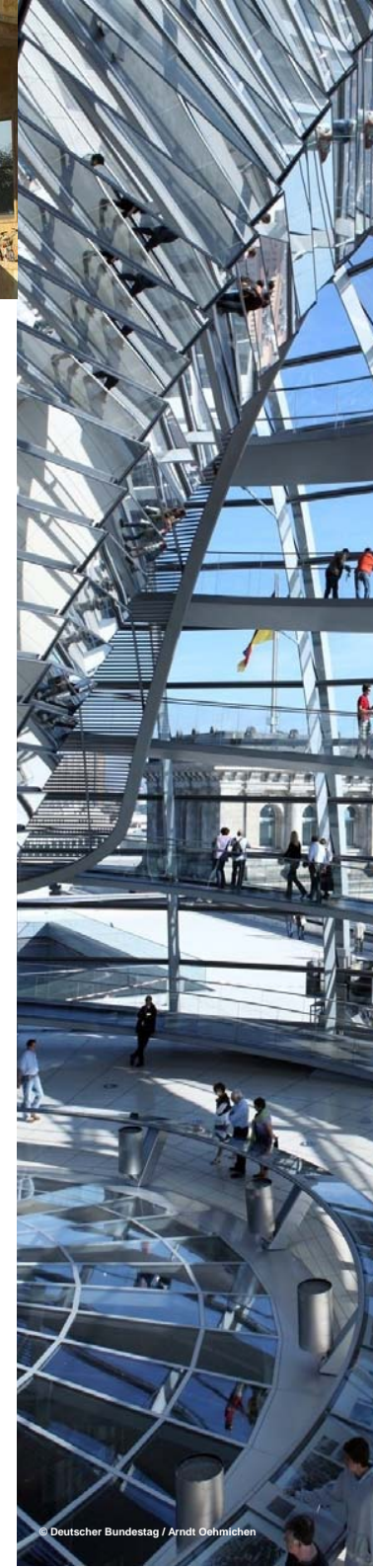




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Research questions of the project

This project firstly asks about *whom legislators represent* in the German Bundestag. Since Germany is widely considered a party democracy, we should expect that parties and partisan national voter coalitions play a significant role in this regard. Germany's mixed member system, however, also provides incentives to nominally elected legislators to cultivate individualized foci of representation. In this project we explore the extent to which members of the German Bundestag indeed cultivate individualized non-partisan constituencies. Furthermore, we explore the nature of these constituencies, and on whether they are geographically or socially defined.

The project secondly investigates *how legislators represent* in the German Bundestag. High levels of party unity in roll call voting are typically perceived to corroborate the existence of collectivist partisan styles of representation. However, there are opportunities in the Bundestag to individually participate in the legislative process and to cultivate individualistic styles of representation. This for example concerns questions to the government or vote explanations. The project assesses to what degree members of the Bundestag use these opportunities, to what extent they use it to cultivate individualized foci of representation, and whether this affects collective choices in legislative contexts.

The project thirdly digs deeper on the question *why legislators cultivate individualized foci and styles of representation*. Particularly, it asks about the role of campaign networks and communication as factors that mediate between electoral rules and legislative behavior. It gauges the extent to which individualized campaign strategies are reflected in the behaviors of legis-

lators and to what extent they might function as conditional mechanisms or independent factors in this regard. This issue is assessed using the German Candidate Study 2009, along with an analysis of the legislative activities of those candidates that have participated in the survey.

The behaviors of legislators and related trends towards more individualized patterns of representation are of significant academic and practical relevance. The project addresses most visible debates that among others concern the behavioral effects or electoral rules and the role of parties as crucial mechanisms of political representation. It also links the German case with comparative research on these important issues.

Methods of the project

The project combines qualitative and quantitative political science methods. In the *qualitative component*, we conduct 24 interviews with members of the 17th and 18th German Bundestag that have participated in the German Candidate Study 2009 and also draft in-depth case studies on these individuals. The *quantitative component* investigates the parliamentary activities of those 198 legislators of the 17th German Bundestag that have participated in the German Candidate Study 2009 using quantitative content analysis of parliamentary documents. In addition, the campaign styles of the 198 legislators are assessed on the basis of the Candidate Study 2009 using quantitative methods. The empirical analyses in the project are exclusively motivated by scientific concerns. Data on individual legislators are treated as confidential and will only be used in publications in anonymized forms.

The project context

The project is integrated both substantively and personally with the German Candidate Studies which were successfully conducted during the 2005 and 2009 German federal elections. Both projects were supported by the *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG) and were co-conducted by the project leader. There are additional links to the German Candidate Study 2013, which is part of the DFG-supported *German Longitudinal Election Study* (GLES).

Project Management

The research project is funded by *Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft* (DFG) and headed by Prof. Dr. Thomas Zittel.

Thomas Zittel is Professor for Comparative Politics at Goethe-University Frankfurt. He is the author or editor of several monographs and special issues. His research has been published in journals such as *West European Politics*, *Electoral Studies*, *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* and *German Politics*.