

# **RETHINKING CONSTITUENCY SERVICE: ELECTORAL INSTITUTIONS, CANDIDATE CAMPAIGNS AND PERSONAL VOTE IN HUNGARY & ROMANIA**

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*Submitted to*

Central European University  
Department of Political Science

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

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Budapest, Hungary  
September 2015

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## **ABSTRACT**

This dissertation is a study of the determinants and electoral consequences of one individual accountability mechanism: constituency service. Previous studies exploring the variation in the intensity of constituency service have ignored what happens during the campaign, focusing either on the electoral vulnerability of the parliamentarian or on socialization effects. Similarly, the literature overlooked how changing institutional incentives for cultivating a personal vote - either wholesale electoral system reforms or changes in marginal electoral provisions - affect the MPs' engagement in constituency service.

The dissertation analyzes for the first time the consequences that strategies and actions regarding the personalization of candidate campaigns and the local content of the campaign agendas have on the MPs' engagement in constituency representation. The study also investigates innovatively the impact that electoral reforms and changes in other personal vote incentives have on constituency service and on five types of responsiveness towards local interests.

In doing so I draw on longitudinal behavioral and attitudinal data on parliamentarians from Romania and Hungary, two countries in which the incentives for cultivating a personal vote have changed in different directions in recent years and in which elections are marked by comparatively high campaign localization and personalization. I use content analysis to identify parliamentary questions dealing with constituency issues and to classify their topic, and I rely on a variety of multivariate regression models and on matching for inferential analyses.

The first chapter identifies a differentiated impact of the type of seat on constituency service in Hungary and Romania, which can be interpreted as evidence that the degree of role specialization or contamination in mixed electoral systems depends on whether the proportional and the majoritarian channels of election are formally separated.

Chapter 2 shows that even in a context where MPs are highly controlled by their parties (Hungary) the candidates' personal campaign strategies and activities matter considerably for engagement in constituency service. The campaign - legislative behavior connection is also corroborated by the findings of chapter 4, which suggest that localized campaigning is one of the most important predictors of constituency service in Romania. Chapter 3 indicates that the 2008 Romanian electoral reform has not modified the level of engagement in constituency service, but it has increased substantially casework and allocation responsiveness. Moreover, the effects of a number of determinants of constituency service changed after the electoral reform (e.g. socialization effects vanish after the reform).

Chapter 5 shows that asking constituency questions mattered for the incumbents' vote shares at the most recent Romanian (2008 and 2012) and Hungarian elections (2014). The chapter argues that the electoral pay-offs of constituency service co-vary with the intensity of partisan evaluations and with the degree in which electoral system provisions enable citizens to sanction individual MPs.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This dissertation benefited enormously from the comments, suggestions and the constructive criticism of my supervisors, Zsolt Enyedi, Gabor Tóka and Carsten Schneider. I would like to thank especially Sergiu Gherghina, Shane Martin, Marina Popescu, Zsófia Papp, and Eszter Timar for their comments on earlier drafts of the dissertation. Zsófia Papp, Gabriella Ilonszki and Laurențiu Ștefan were extremely generous to grant me access to the Hungarian and Romanian parliamentary survey data sets and to the Hungarian parliamentary questions data set. I am grateful to Levente Littvay for his help with methodological issues, and particularly with the matching procedures.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Marina Popescu for giving me the opportunity to work on a number of projects (*Parlament Transparent*, *Openpolitics.ro*, *The Romanian Candidate Study*) which were extremely useful for my data collection efforts and significantly improved the quality of this dissertation.

I am also grateful to the participants at various academic events for their valuable feedback on chapters which I presented: The ECPR Summer School on Parliaments (2012, Lisbon), The ECPR Joint Sessions of Workshops (Mainz, 2013); the EPSA Annual Conferences, (2014, Edinburgh; 2015 Vienna), the APSA Annual Meetings (2014, Washington; 2015, San Francisco).

Valentina Dimulescu deserves a special mention not only for her excellent proofreading help but also for being particularly understanding and sympathetic with the struggles, soul-searching moments and long absences from home that marked my PhD life. Last but not least, this thesis is dedicated to my loving parents and my brother, who have believed in me and supported me unconditionally all these years.

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## List of abbreviations

### Romania

**ARD** – Alianța România Dreaptă – Just Romania Alliance

**FC** – Forța Civică – Civic Force

**PC** – Partidul Conservator – Conservative Party

**PDL** – Partidul Democrat-Liberal – Democratic-Liberal Party

**PNL** – Partidul Național Liberal – National Liberal Party

**PNTCD** – Partidul Național Țărănesc Creștin Democrat – Christian Democratic National Peasant Party

**PPDD** – Partidul Poporului Dan Diaconescu – People's Party Dan Diaconescu

**PRM** – Partidul România Mare – Greater Romania Party

**PSD** – Partidul Social Democrat – Social Democratic Party

**UDMR** – Uniunea Democrată Maghiară din România – Româniai Magyar Demokrata Szövetség – Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania

**UNPR** – Uniunea Națională pentru Progresul României – National Union for the Progress of Romania

**USL** – Uniunea Social Liberală – Social Liberal Union

### Hungary

**DK** – Demokratikus Koalíció – Democratic Coalition

**EGYÜTT 2014** – Együtt 2014 – Together 2014

**FIDESZ** – Fidesz - Magyar Polgári Szövetség – Fidesz - Hungarian Civic Union

**JOBBIK** – Jobbik Magyarországért Mozgalom – Movement for a Better Hungary

**KDNP** – Kereszténydemokrata Néppárt – Christian Democratic People's Party

**KTI** – Közösség a Társadalmi Igazságosságért Néppárt – Community for Social Justice People's Party

**LMP** – Lehet Más a Politika – Politics Can Be Different

**MLP** – Magyar Liberális Párt – Hungarian Liberal Party

**MSZP** – Magyar Szocialista Párt – Hungarian Socialist Party

**PM** – Párbeszéd Magyarországért – Dialogue for Hungary

## INTRODUCTION

The political prominence acquired in recent times by unelected national institutions, such as central banks, supranational bodies, such as the Troika, or by transnational corporations severely limits elected representatives in their choice of policies and in their implementation of popular mandates. This inevitably damages programmatic linkages and fuels the growing political cynicism and disillusion with democracy.

Given the enduring and rather ubiquitous nature of the contemporary challenges faced by collective accountability, the quality of individual linkages between voters and politicians becomes more salient than ever. The present dissertation will focus on one key individual accountability mechanism, constituency service, a topic which remained not only under-theorized (Heithshusen et al. 2005), but also under-researched especially outside the Anglo-Saxon world.

The potential positive effect of this type of linkage for citizens' attachment to the democratic system are emphasized by the fact that engagement in constituency representation is becoming more and more popular among voters (Power and Shoot 2012: 112). In an attempt to move beyond this exploratory stage, the dissertation proposes a novel theoretical model of the determinants and electoral consequences of constituency service and tests it using longitudinal data from Hungary and Romania. I chose to concentrate on these two Central and Eastern European countries, because, in recent times, the electoral incentives for cultivating a personal vote have changed in different directions and the elections are marked by relatively high campaign localization and personalization. Both elements: changes in personal vote incentives and the

degrees of campaign localization and personalization are central to my argument and have largely been ignored by the literature on the determinants and consequences of constituency service.

Thus, the existing literature has explained engagement in constituency service through three sets of factors pertaining to the theories which are usually mobilized to analyze legislative behavior: socialization theories, sociological institutionalism and rational choice institutionalism.

Socialization theories claim that constituency orientation derives from the MP's previous socialization in local politics and administration (Freeman and Richardson 1996; Norris 1997) or from their local roots and life experiences in the district (Shugart et al 2005; Tavits 2010). These accounts argue that MPs with such backgrounds will see constituency service as a priority because helping citizens with issues like housing or petitions was already part of their role as local politicians or civil servants, and they have a better understanding of local problems. Moreover, this type of research also emphasized as a major cause of variation in constituency service engagement the 'cultural differences across country or region in the expectations and demands placed on elected representatives' (Farrell and Scully 2007: 59; Bogdanor 1985; Katz 1997, 1999).

Sociological institutionalism theories refer instead to MPs' adherence to parliamentary norms and rules which create shared expectations about what is the appropriate behavior for an MP in a given institutional position at a given career stage. One such type of behavior is that associated with the role of 'Constituency Member' which is seen appropriate for backbencher (newcomer) MPs (Searing 1994). Having much fewer

formal responsibilities compared to their frontbench colleagues, these MPs are expected to look after their constituents' individual problems ('Welfare officers') or collective needs ('Local Promoters'). Oftentimes, the explanations provided by socialization and sociological institutionalism include a psychological or emotional component that emphasizes 'the intrinsic rewards of playing the role of Constituency Member: satisfying a sense of duty, a sense of competence...' (Andeweg 2014).

On the contrary, rational choice institutionalism theories emphasize instrumental motivations: the MPs who engage in constituency service do so strategically in order to maximize their re-election chances. In other words, irrespective of the country's dominant political culture or the political socialization of particular MPs, political entrepreneurs will engage in constituency service if there are votes to be gained. Moreover, the most active members should be those suffering from electoral marginality<sup>1</sup> (Mayhew 1974; Cain et al 1987; Strøm 1997; 2012; Dropp and Peskowitz 2012), provided that the institutional context allows voters to cast a personal vote.

Bordering the two types of neo-institutionalism are theories arguing that institutions mediate both what the MPs perceive as the appropriate behavior and the means that they can use strategically to follow their career preferences. In doing so they put a great emphasis on the incentives that institutions create for politicians to engage in service and the opportunities for voters to reward their representatives for this behavior. This include features of the electoral system such as the ballot structure or the district magnitude (Carey and Shugart 1995; Crisp et al. 2004; André et al. 2014b), the type of election in systems with multiple tiers (Heitshusen et al 2005; Lundberg 2007) and

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<sup>1</sup> Electoral marginality implies that the MP would have not won the seat if a relatively small number of (personal or party) votes would have been casted differently.

characteristics related to the country's centralized vs. federal structure or the existence of regional parliaments (Russell and Bradbury 2007; Patzelt 2007).

The next section introduces the theoretical model proposed by the dissertation and discusses its conceptual and practical relevance. Section two presents the rationales behind the case selection, while section three discusses the data and methods used in the study. Finally, the plan of the dissertation is described in the last section.

## **I.1 What is new?**

The theoretical model proposed by this dissertation incorporates insights from all the theoretical directions mentioned above, while also addressing two limitations of the existing literature. First, virtually all constituency service studies have concentrated either on the legislative arena or on pre-parliamentarian backgrounds of the politicians at the expense of what happens during the campaign. Second, most of the literature overlooked how changing institutional incentives for cultivating a personal vote - either wholesale electoral system reforms or changes in marginal electoral provisions - affect the MPs' engagement in constituency service.<sup>2</sup> The latter shortcoming prevents scholars from understanding whether electoral institutions are truly at the root of constituency service or cultural and societal aspects are more important - having also shaped the adoption of the electoral institutions in the first place (Farrell and Scully 2007: 58).

Figure I below illustrates the theoretical model proposed by the dissertation: the relationships between the main variables incorporated from previous research

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<sup>2</sup>One exception is the article of McLeay and Vowles (2007) which illustrates how the 1993 replacement of FPTP with a mixed member proportional system in New Zealand had resulted in a decline in casework.

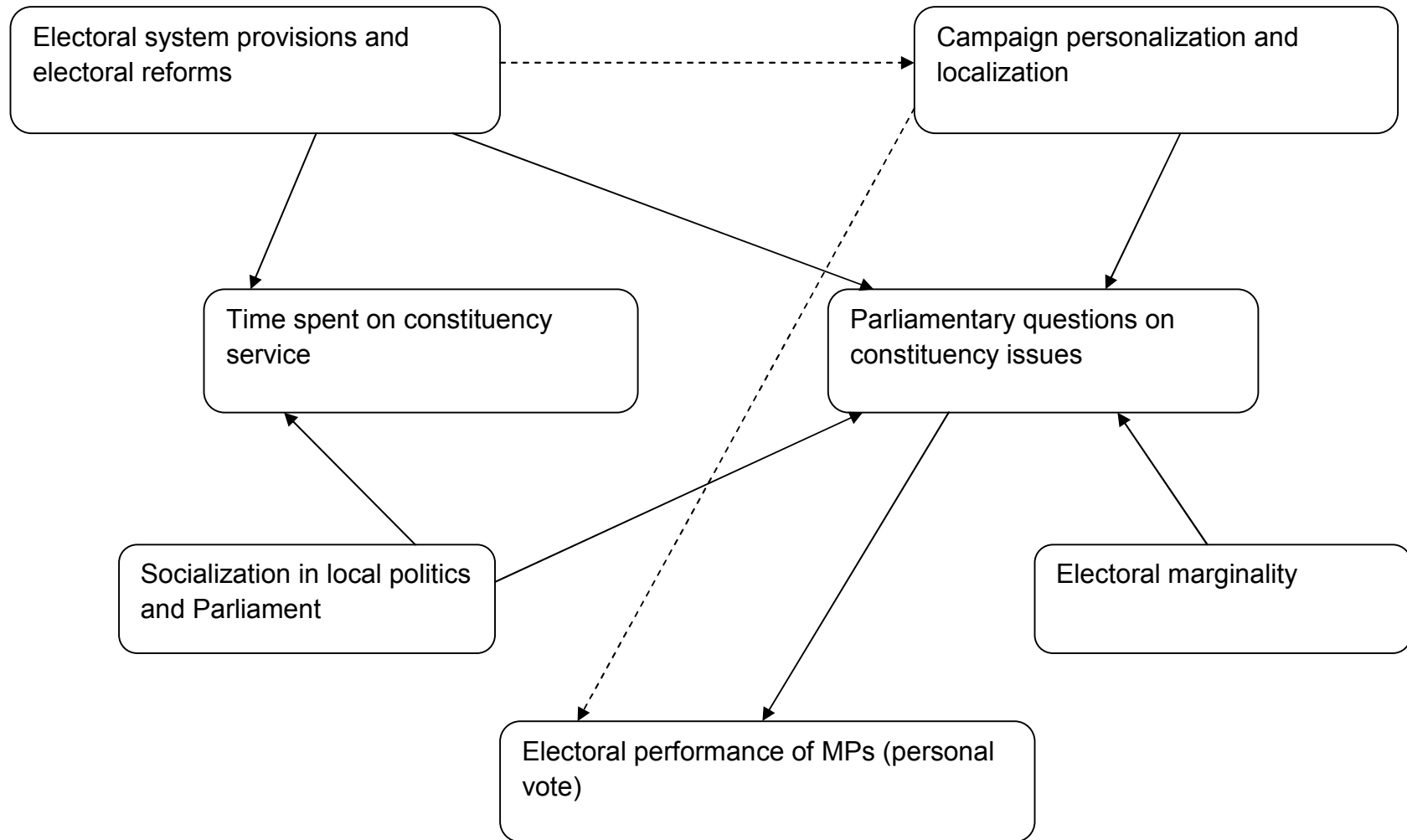
(socialization variables, electoral marginality) and the additional, original mechanisms hypothesized to contribute in shaping the way in which individual legislators engage in territorial representation and the consequences of this behavior. The topics connected through dotted arrows are not included in the dissertation but were investigated separately in articles I authored (Chiru 2015) or co-authored (Chiru and Popescu 2013). Together with the current monograph they constitute a track of empirical research which offers a more complete picture of the interaction between electoral institutions, campaigns, constituency service and vote decisions than the usual case studies or one-off comparative analyses of constituency service.

In order to grasp better the schematic illustration in Figure I, it is necessary to point out that the theoretical model of constituency service I propose is built upon three types of variables which can be thought of as forming three concentric circles: core independent variables, traditional determinants of constituency service and control variables.

First, there are the **core independent variables**: campaign localization and campaign personalization, the type of election, including shadowing effects, and the changes in electoral system characteristics such as the district magnitude or the number of MPs elected from same county.



**Figure I: Electoral and campaign determinants of constituency service and its consequences**



Thus, the dissertation analyzes for the first time the effects that actions, strategies and decisions regarding the focus of the candidate's campaign (personal vs. party) and the local content of the campaign agenda have on the MP's engagement in constituency representation. The campaign period has a great socialization potential: candidates who had won their seat by emphasizing local issues or their ability and willingness to look after the welfare of the district will be more likely to believe that they have received a mandate for local interest representation. Moreover, localized or personalized campaign behavior should also foster constituency service for rational or strategic reasons: having made efforts during the campaign to build a personal reputation, distinct from the party, these MPs will want to maintain and develop it as a valuable asset in the quest for future votes and offices (at party or state level).

The dissertation also investigates innovatively the impact that electoral system reforms and changes in other institutional incentives relevant for a personal vote have on constituency service and on the various types of responsiveness towards local interests: allocation responsiveness; casework responsiveness, symbolic responsiveness and responsiveness towards organized interests (Eulau and Karps 1978). In addition, attention is given to apparently marginal electoral provisions that can influence constituency representation such as the number of Single Member Districts in a county, or the existence of multiple candidacies and its potential to encourage shadowing.

Second, in addition to the core independent variables, I analyze the effect of **traditional determinants** of constituency service. The variables that form this second circle are: electoral security, experience in local politics and parliamentary experience (years of membership in Parliament and incumbency). Given that these variables represent the

baseline socialization and rational choice explanations for constituency service they are present in virtually all regression models.

Finally, the third layer is formed by the **control variables** which account for the political career of the MPs, their legislative behavior, their attitudes and their demographic characteristics. The stage and the past career experiences can shape a legislator's interest or need for engagement in constituency service. This is why I control for the following *political career* aspects: years of membership in party, party office, parliamentary office, party affiliation, whether the MP is a local or has been parachuted in the district and re-nomination certainty.

What an MP does in Parliament, from her interest and involvement in particular policy areas and committees, to her actions within the parliamentary party group is salient for the resources that she can invest in constituency service. Therefore, in terms of *legislative behavior*, I control for vote attendance, overall parliamentary activity, affiliation to parliamentary majority and party switching.

Various *attitudinal and ideological characteristics* of the MP can also mediate her interest for constituency service. In this category I include the ideological distance from the median party MP, the MP's representation focus and her attitudes towards party unity. Finally, I also control for the usual *socio-demographic* variables: gender, age.

This theoretical framework also informed the analysis of the second dependent variable of the present monograph: the electoral consequences of constituency service. Thus, another original contribution of the dissertation consists in theorizing and empirically testing in a comparative setting the conditions under which constituency service is likely to pay off electorally. I argue that the electoral value of constituency service is

contingent not only on the degree to which the electoral system enables the voters to sanction or reward politicians for their individual actions, but also on the strength of partisan evaluations at those elections: particularly the levels of incumbent unpopularity and voter polarization.

Beyond the theoretical relevance of refining the weak existing theories of constituency service orientation and its consequences in two distinct directions, the study has also practical relevance. More specifically, the results presented in the dissertation are directly relevant for those reforming electoral institutions or trying to improve the quality of political representation. Putting in place institutional incentives so as to induce engagement in constituency service is a desirable outcome as long as accountability is strengthened in the same manner.

Apart from an in-depth analysis of the causes and consequences of constituency service, this dissertation will also gather empirical evidence to answer a qualitatively different question: is constituency service a normatively desirable linkage or not, particularly in the context of a young democratic system?

One source of the negativity towards constituency service comes from the fact that such efforts could serve a particular clientele, which might not be representative of the whole citizenry and this might distort the aggregation of public preferences. Moreover, the MPs who engage in service may become too focused on parochial issues and either lose sight of the national priorities (King and Marian 2015: 150) or perceive distortedly national issues because of their local bias (Mezey 2011). Other scholars have argued that 'an excessive focus on individualistic pork-barrel local politics' could be detrimental to party discipline and government stability (Norris 2004: 234). In the same vein,

scholars who think that corruption is the number one problem of Eastern European politics tend to argue that the way to fight it is to have disciplined, centralized, ideological parties leaving little room for individual MPs' initiatives.

But citizens do care a lot about service and a system that does not use MPs to channel the particular concerns of citizens will be regarded as illegitimate. Moreover, I argue that constituency service promotes accountability in two ways. First, it does so through its information-sharing dimension, which was identified as one of the main constituency roles played by parliamentarians (Norton 2005: 178-179). Thus, MPs disseminate valuable information about how various state bureaucracies work, acting as brokers for their constituents (O'Leary 2011: 330; Clarke 1978). Also, beyond the traditional surgeries, more and more MPs use newsletters or local media outlets to publicize their activities and explain them to the citizens in their district (Saalfeld 2003a: 351; Jackson 2006; 2008). Such efforts to make political actions transparent to constituents are a key element of accountability (Kitschelt 2011: 2)

Second, another accountability-promoting effect of constituency service has to do with the delegation chain characteristic of modern democracies: 'casework has informational spin-offs for legislative oversight, as it reveals the quality of government services' (De Winter and Dumont 2003: 268). Thus, complaints or simple requests by voters following their unsatisfactory interactions with various governmental agencies are informative for MPs who can later on raise the issue during question time - most likely if they belong to the opposition (Rozenberg and Martin 2011) or at informal talks with their party fellows

who occupy cabinet positions. This helps keeping tabs not only on ministers but also on lower-ranked ministerial bureaucrats and other civil servants.<sup>3</sup>

## **I.2 Case Selection**

As it happens with almost all empirical research devoted to political representation (Rehfeld 2009: 219), scholars analyzing representation in Central and Eastern European democracies have implicitly equated ‘good representation’ with policy congruence between voters and their representatives – individual politicians or parties (Roberts 2009; Kitschelt et al 1999; Tworzecki 2003). Empirically more demanding models of representation (Mansbridge 2003; Rehfeld 2009) as well as non-programmatic linkages have generally spurred little research. The absence of constituency service studies is even more curious if one considers some of the dominant political attitudes of the citizens and other features of elite-mass interactions in the Eastern European political space.

Public opinion polls conducted in recent years have shown that Hungarians and Romanians tend to express low levels of trust in Parliament. At one point, only about one in five citizens declared they trusted the legislature (van der Meer 2010: 526) but this outcome was reached following different patterns. While in Romania the levels of legislative trust have been low throughout the entire post-communist period, in Hungary

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<sup>3</sup> Constituency service could also have the reverse effect: of reducing accountability when it undermines programmatic linkages. Unlike legislation which can create political divisions, when delivered non-contingently casework is likely to be popular among all voters in a district – thus creating incentives for MPs to de-emphasize policy stances and shirk from their legislative responsibilities (Mayhew 1974; Müller et al 2003: 22). Moreover, frequent travel to constituency can itself become an opportunity for leisure shirking (Strøm et al 2003: 711-12) – a form of agency loss in which desired outcomes are not achieved because of the agent’s lack of effort. Thus, the constituency service pretext seems to be among the most prominent explanations for the large absenteeism registered in the French Parliament (Dogan 2007).

citizens tended to have medium levels of trust in Parliament throughout the 1990s and early 2000s (Catterberg and Moreno 2005; Chiru and Gherghina 2012) but a steep decline took place afterwards because of increased economic problems and a wave of political scandals.<sup>4</sup>

This lack of institutional trust is not compensated by very favorable opinions of individual legislators. Thus, unlike in the United States where citizens tend to rate highly individual legislators (Mezey 2008), in Hungary and Romania a commonly held view is that MPs do not care about their district, they show up only during campaigns, promise all sorts of things, then disappear. The picture is frequently complemented by suspicions of corruption, which were fueled in recent years by an ever growing number of scandals involving MPs. A significant number of Hungarian MPs were accused and sometimes even imprisoned (see the case of the former MSZP MP, Gabor Simon) for not being able to justify large amounts of money, for undeclared assets or for having dodgy business deals with the state (Balogh 2014). Similarly, since 2008 various branches of the Romanian judiciary have made no fewer than 50 requests for the legislators to lift the parliamentary immunity of one of their colleagues on corruption charges (Toma et al 2015).<sup>5</sup>

Precisely this unfavorable environment for citizen - MP linkages makes, from a normative point of view, constituency service more needed in these two political systems than elsewhere. Thus, MPs' engagement in constituency service could help

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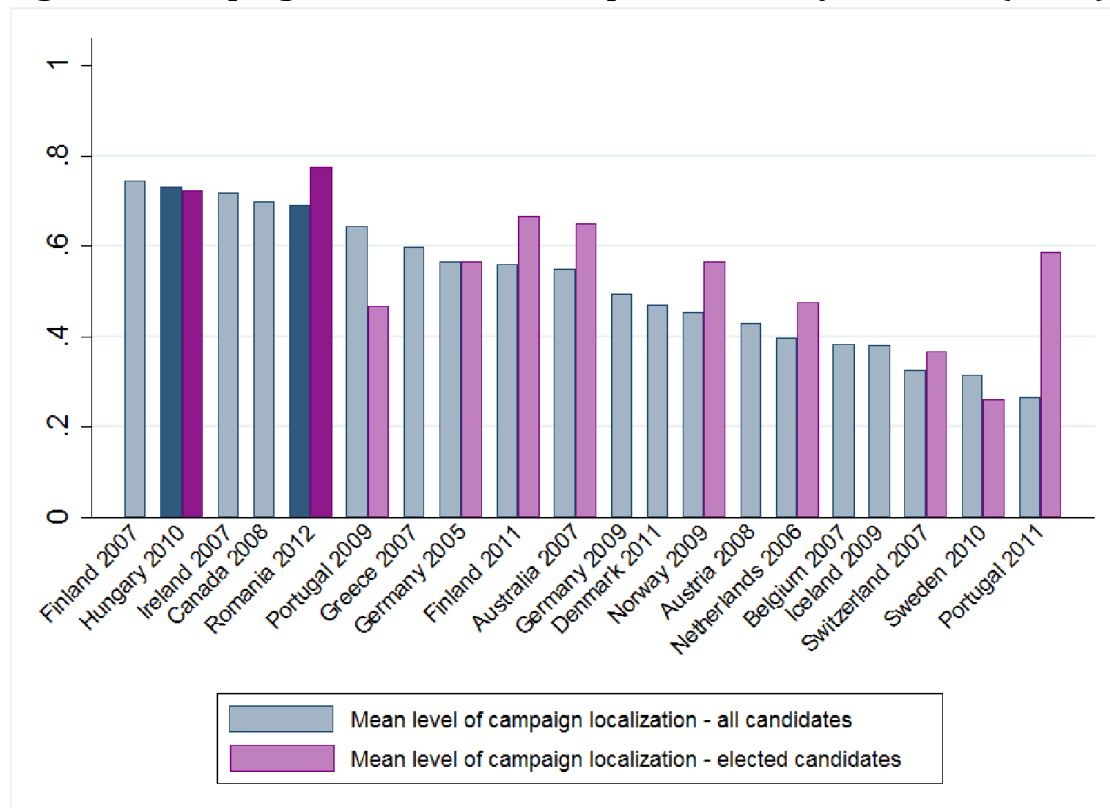
<sup>4</sup> More recently, some level of trust in Parliament was regained in Hungary. Thus, 31% of the Hungarian respondents of the Eurobarometer 82.3 (November 2014) declared they tend to trust their national parliament compared to only 18% of the Romanian respondents.

<sup>5</sup> In 29 of the 46 cases for which the procedure was finalized with a parliamentary vote, Romanian MPs had their immunity removed.

redress the negative image of the legislature and increase the attachment to democratic values and institutions.

Neither Hungary, nor Romania have a strong tradition of constituency service, nothing that would be even marginally similar with that of Ireland (O'Leary 2011) or other Westminster Parliaments. However, the selected cases stand out as countries where campaign localization and personalization are relatively common strategies in parliamentary elections. Figure II below compares levels of campaign localization using data from 20 campaign studies part of the Comparative Candidate Survey wave 1 (CCS1), i.e. those studies asking the candidates whether they raised constituency specific issues in their campaigns.

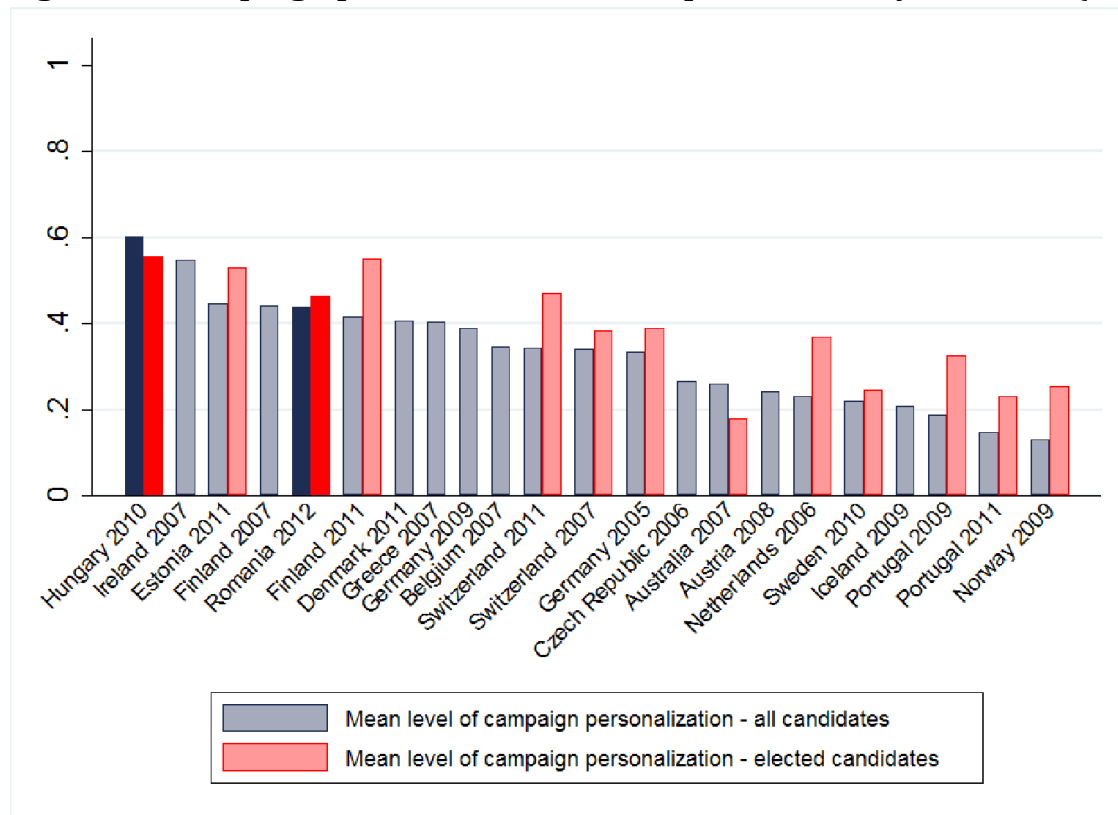
**Figure II: Campaign localization in 20 parliamentary elections (CCS 1)**





When looking at the complete samples it turns out that the Hungarian study includes the second highest share, and Romania the fifth highest share of candidates promoting a constituency agenda. If we compare instead only the elected candidates, the highest level of campaign localization appears in the Romanian study while the Hungarian sample occupies the second place.<sup>6</sup>

**Figure III: Campaign personalization in 22 parliamentary elections (CCS 1)**



Moreover, the level of campaign personalization is comparatively high in the two countries. Figure III above plots the mean level of campaign personalization as measured by the CCS1 question 'What was the primary aim of your campaign?', with a 0-10 scale in which the end points were labeled 'To attract as much attention as possible for my party' and 'To attract as much attention as possible for me as a

<sup>6</sup> There are fewer purple columns than navy because only 11 of the 20 campaign studies included information regarding the election outcome for the respondent, i.e. whether she was elected or not.

candidate'. Because some country studies used slightly different scales (e.g. 1-10; 0-11) I rescaled all answers on a 0-1 continuum.

If we compare the full samples Hungarian candidates seem to have personalized the most their campaigns, whereas the Romanian candidates occupy the fifth place out of 22 country studies. The two countries keep their positions when analyzing only the elected candidates for the 13 country studies that included the information regarding the election outcomes.

The case selection enables us to analyze the effects of electoral institutions on constituency service both through synchronic comparison, as the Hungarian electoral system is characterized by different channels of election and through diachronic comparison, by taking advantage of the 2008 Romanian electoral reform. Moreover, we have the opportunity to observe the possible consequences that changes in electoral regulations have for the electoral pay-off of constituency-oriented legislative behavior. During the analyzed period two major electoral reforms took place: in 2008 in Romania and in 2012 in Hungary.

Table I.1 below follows the theoretical framework developed by Carey and Shugart (1995) to synthesize the electoral incentives that legislators in the two countries had for cultivating a personal vote. As it can be seen, the values for 'ballot' - the degree of party control over candidate access to the ballot and the ranking of the candidates, and 'pool' - whether votes for one candidate are pooled to determine how many seats the party receives are 0 for the entire period. Consequently, what matters most for cultivating a personal vote is how small the district magnitude is.

The electoral reforms in the two countries went in different directions. In Romania the 2008 reform reduced substantially the average district magnitude as experienced by individual legislators: from 8.2 to 1, whereas the 2012 Hungarian electoral system change resulted in a massive increase in the average district magnitude, which is now 3.7 times higher than it used to be.<sup>7</sup>

**Table I.1: Electoral system incentives to cultivate a personal vote in Hungary and Romania (1990 - present)**

	<b>Ballot</b>	<b>Pool</b>	<b>Votes</b>	<b>District M.<sup>a</sup></b>
<i>Hungary 1990-2010</i>	0	0	1	12.2
<i>Hungary 2014</i>	0	0	0	44
<i>Romania 1990-2004</i>	0	0	0	8.2
<i>Romania 2008-2012</i>	0	0	0	1

<sup>a</sup> The average district magnitude values for the pre-reform periods in the two countries are taken from Wallace et al (2003), while for the post-reform period I computed them using the same formula.

Moreover, the 2012 Hungarian electoral reform also decreased in another way the incentives for a personal vote and its relevance: voters do not cast multiple votes anymore (across time, i.e. in the two rounds), which means candidates do not need to emphasize their personal reputation in the run-off<sup>8</sup> to appeal to voters outside their core group of supporters (Carey and Shugart 1995: 422).

Last but not least, given the importance of not selecting cases on (one end of) the dependent variable (Geddes 2003: 89-130), the MPs' engagement in constituency service in the two countries differs substantially and has also varied during the analyzed period. One indicator of this is the fact that there are substantially fewer parliamentary

<sup>7</sup> I consider the increase in the average district magnitude to be more important for the personal vote incentives than the fact that the ratio of SMDs relative to list seats has increased. I argue in this way because this swing in ratio happened at the expense of the regional lists, which were completely abolished and because of the domination of SMD contests by the governing party.

<sup>8</sup> However, one must also take into account the fact that in Hungary party leaderships always indicated their voters whom to support in the second round, making the candidates' personal appeals less relevant.

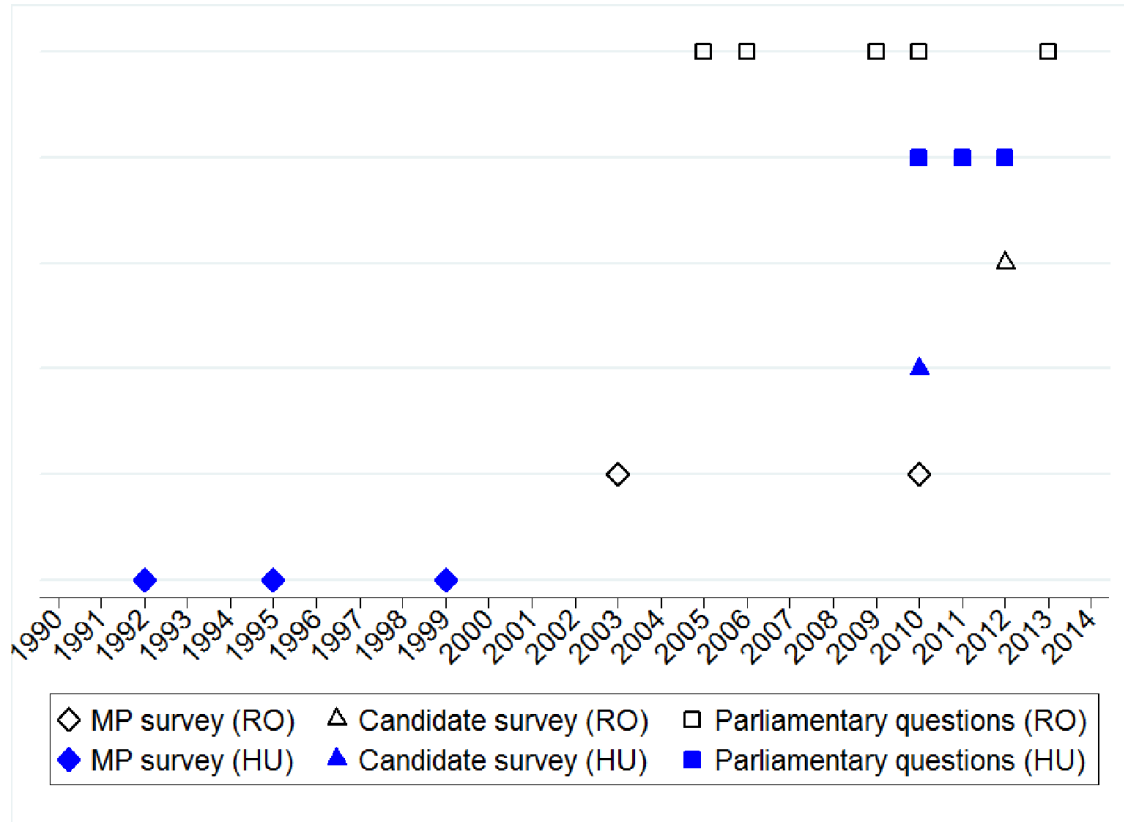
questions on constituency issues in Hungary compared to Romania (as illustrated by chapter 5). Moreover, in an analysis based on the PARTIREP survey, Hungary came 11 out of 15 countries in terms of the parliamentarians' average involvement in four constituency activities: publicizing pork barrel, holding surgeries, meeting constituents in their homes and attending events such as weddings or funerals during a fortnight (André et al 2014b: 174).

### **I.3 Data and Methods**

The period covered by the dissertation includes the transition era in both countries and has as end-points 2012 in Hungary and 2013 in Romania for the legislative behavior analyses, and the most recent parliamentary elections - 2014 in Hungary and 2012 in Romania - for the analyses which assess the contribution that constituency service can bring to a personal vote.

As it could be seen from Figure I above, I use two indicators for constituency service: the self-declared amount of time spent on such activities by legislators and the number of parliamentary questions on local issues that they ask. Figure IV below details the data used in the dissertation. Because throughout the dissertation the unit of observation is the individual Member of Parliament (MP), the data comes from five parliamentary surveys, two candidate surveys and several original parliamentary questions data sets covering eight years. These primary data sources are completed by information regarding the MPs' electoral fortunes, their political careers and socio-demographic characteristics.

**Figure IV: Data sets used in dissertation to measure constituency service**



I use computer-assisted and manual content analysis to distinguish constituency parliamentary questions from policy questions and to further categorize the topic of the constituency questions following the above-mentioned types of local responsiveness. I rely on a variety of multivariate regression models (OLS, negative binomial, zero-inflated negative binomial models, Poisson, logistic regressions etc) and on matching for the inferential analyses. In order to make the interpretations of the regression results more straightforward, I use Clarify (King et al 2000), with which I run simulations, compute quantities of interest and plot them.

## **I.4 Plan of the dissertation**

The dissertation is divided into five chapters, each advancing a series of novel theoretical arguments and testing them through various statistical analyses. The first four chapters deal with the macro (electoral institutions), meso (campaign context, party and district attributes) and micro level (socialization and career characteristics, electoral marginality, personal vote earning attributes) determinants of constituency service, while the fifth chapter analyzes the electoral utility of service in the two countries.

The first chapter examines the determinants of self-declared engagement in constituency service in the two countries using data from several parliamentary surveys. Alongside traditional explanations of such engagement, which include attitudes towards representation and socialization effects (in local politics and in Parliament) the multivariate analyses explore also the effects of electoral system provisions (such as the type of seat). It is necessary to start with the legislators' own attitudes and claims related to constituency work in order to understand the supply side of the relation and set our expectations realistically.

Chapter 2 analyzes the link between the usage of strategies and activities that contribute to a personalized or localized campaign and the frequency of asking constituency questions in the complex setting of the mixed Hungarian electoral system (pre-2012) shaped by its several possible combinations of types of candidacies and types of parliamentary seats. In this way two key hypotheses: the campaign connection and the role of different channels of elections and candidacy are tested in a context in which individual legislative behavior is highly controlled by parties.

The third chapter uses a before-after research design to investigate whether the 2008 electoral reform in Romania has modified the MPs' level of engagement in constituency service, the types of responsiveness towards constituents and the determinants of constituency service. In order to accurately evaluate the effect of the electoral system change on constituency service engagement levels and types of responsiveness, I match the pre- and post-reform legislators. This chapter is central to the dissertation because it offers the possibility to assess constituency service levels and determinants in a changing institutional environment, and thus make a much stronger causal inference.

Chapter 4 investigates the campaign - constituency service connection in Romania. This is a hard test given a number of political and party organizational aspects - the low local electoral competitiveness and the specific legislative recruitment party strategies - that might inhibit the development of a linkage between campaign promises and parliamentary behavior.

An analysis of constituency service would not be complete without an assessment of its electoral consequences. The last chapter investigates the overall electoral value of parliamentary questions dealing with local issues at the most recent elections taking place in Romania (2008 and 2012) and Hungary (2014). Thus, the chapter evaluates the incumbency advantage at the three elections, the relationship between constituency questions and candidacy and re-nomination decisions as well as the direct electoral payoffs of constituency service.

# **CHAPTER 1: SURVEYING CONSTITUENCY SERVICE - A PRELIMINARY ANALYSIS OF SERVICE RESPONSIVENESS IN POST-COMMUNIST DEMOCRACIES**

## **1.1 Introduction**

It is not an exaggeration to say that the Central and Eastern European (CEE<sup>9</sup>) Parliaments were in the driving seat of the democratization process in its initial stage (Agh 1998). Not only did they assume the momentous role of drafting the rules of the new political game, but they were also deeply involved in policy formulation (Olson 1997). Such a situation was possible mainly because of the parties' organizational weakness and the unconsolidated nature of other interest representation mechanisms (Olson and Norton 1996: 3), partially caused by their subordination to the Communist parties for half a century.

However, Parliaments were not able to maintain for long their privileged - 'coordination' position (Ilonszki 1996; Ilonszki 2007) and became, some sooner than others, typical 'arena legislatures' (Kopecký 2001; Ionescu 2011). Nevertheless, the loss of influence and autonomy vis-à-vis the external environment (mainly parties and executives) were paralleled by the gradual increase in the professionalization of membership and staff (Ilonszki and Edinger 2007; Crowther and Matonyte 2007), the development of complex committee systems (Olson and Crowther 2002) and the adoption and enforcement of standing orders (Mansfeldova et al 2004). Although there were important variations from a legislative body to another, it has been agreed, by and large, that these parliaments became 'fairly stable and institutionalized' (Olson and Norton 2007: 175).

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<sup>9</sup> By Central and Eastern Europe I understand the ten post-communist countries that have joined the EU until 2007, i.e., the Visegrad countries, the Baltic States, Slovenia, Bulgaria and Romania.



In Western Europe, and particularly Britain (Cox 1987) scholars have noticed a gradual shift away, during the last century from, “a politics based on the delivery of particularistic goods to constituents toward one dominated by cohesive electoral and legislative parties that offered competing policy programs” (Kam 2009). In contrast with the well documented institutional developments mentioned above we know next to nothing about how the linkages between the Central and Eastern European (CEE) legislators and their constituents have evolved in the same period of time. This is so because the “constituency representation” or “home style” (Fenno 1978) studies are almost completely absent from the scholarship on Parliaments in Central and Eastern Europe (for the only exceptions see: Judge and Ilonszki 1995, Pettai 2005 and Papp 2014).

Political parties in the CEE region exhibit neither strong nor stable programmatic orientations (Frye 2002; Roberts 2009). Still there is a need to answer the question regarding the level of these MPs’ engagement in delivering goods and services to their electoral districts. Beyond this preliminary descriptive approach, inevitable for an understudied topic, the **research question** guiding the current chapter is: what are the determinants of individual variation in constituency service in Central and Eastern Europe? This study will attempt to surpass the lack of solid knowledge by analyzing comparatively elite survey data, focusing mainly on the determinants of MPs’ engagement in constituency service in two CEE countries: Hungary and Romania.<sup>10</sup>

The theoretical relevance of this comparative endeavor stems from applying and further refining the weak existing theories of constituency service orientation, developed from single case studies (Heithshusen et al. 2005), in the similar socio-political context of the

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<sup>10</sup> I would like to thank Zsófia Papp and Laurențiu Ștefan for granting me access to Hungarian and Romania elite survey data sets.

post-Communist transition. Moreover, the research can contribute to our broader understanding of electoral and legislative politics in CEE, by evaluating the micro-foundations and the strength of the linkages between constituents and MPs.

The introduction is followed by a section which discusses the literature which guided the chapter, while also presenting the hypotheses that will be tested and the main arguments behind them. The next section deals with the research design: the rationales behind the case selection, the datasets employed, the operationalization of the main variables, and discusses a number of relevant descriptive statistics. The fourth section includes the bi-variate tests and regression analyses ran separately for each parliament. The conclusion synthesizes the main findings and points to future avenues of research.

## **1.2 Literature Review and Hypotheses**

In this chapter I employ a definition of constituency service that incorporates not only service responsiveness<sup>11</sup> - usually labeled as 'casework', but also allocation responsiveness, usually labeled 'pork barrel', local symbolic responsiveness and responsiveness towards local interests. Thomassen and Esaiasson (2006: 219) have identified two essential features of this type of representation: first, it refers 'to specific interests instead of policy issues of a general nature'; second, it does 'not necessarily ask for an act of Parliament. Individual MPs can pursue these interests by approaching responsible government ministers or civil servants.'

The chapter will concentrate on four causes of variation in engagement in constituency service: the MPs' foci of representation, their experience in local politics, how disciplined

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<sup>11</sup> Following the conceptualization of Eulau and Karps (1977), service responsiveness refers to the manner in which legislators deal with their constituents' miscellaneous, non-legislative requests, usually on a case by case basis.

their legislative behavior is and the type of seat they won. The mechanisms and the processes behind these factors correspond to the socialization, institutional and rational choice explanations of parliamentary behavior that were briefly discussed in the introductory chapter. Generally, the existing literature points to a positive effect of a constituency-oriented representation focus and of experience in local politics for engagement in constituency service, whereas for the other two factors the findings have been more mixed.

The degree to which MPs would engage in representing their constituents and the form this process would take was often thought to covariate with the legislators' understanding of their role (Searing 1994). This follows to a certain extent the classic conceptualization of role orientations introduced by Wahlke et al. (1962) and in particular the 'focus of representation'<sup>12</sup> idea. Thus, constituency service would be more appealing for MPs who believe they are first and foremost the representatives of the territorial constituency which elected them as opposed to representatives of the party or of the entire nation. More important, the 'role paradigm' posits that the driving force behind the representatives' engagement in constituency service is to be found in the psychological rewards derived from it (Searing 1985; Radice et al. 1987). Helping constituents with housing, other social welfare issues or running small errands in favor of local authorities give meaning to the job of representative, especially when the MP is a newcomer, a backbencher or someone without committee responsibilities.

*H.1: MPs who see the constituency as their main focus of representation will engage more in constituency service.*

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<sup>12</sup> The other half of the typology, concerning the legislators' 'styles of representation', or the triad trustee-delegate-politico (i.e. representation following own judgment vs. mandate vs. contextual decision) proved of little empirical value (Andeweg and Thomassen 2005).

Prior political experience at local level was also emphasized to favor service responsiveness since the MPs are more acquainted with the region's specific problems and linkages with local authorities and voters are already in place (Freeman and Richardson 1996). Experience in local government or regional executive bodies might also foster a particular understanding of the representation role which, once the politician is elected to Parliament, is just extended to the national level (Norris 1997: 33-34). In Hungary, the positive relation between local politics experience and constituency service should be even stronger than in other Parliaments because legislators could hold until recently a dual mandate (Lengyel and Ilonszki 2010; Várnagy 2012; Ilonszki and Schwarcz 2013). Thus, mayors and local councilors could retain their seat after winning an MP seat and because of their unique position in the two elected bodies, they could attract more help requests from district voters.

*H.2: MPs with local politics experience will engage more in constituency service.*

The compartmentalization thesis (Kam 2009: 104) maintains that because of labour intensity, opportunity costs and economies of scale<sup>13</sup> legislators will perceive dissent and constituency service as mutually exclusive strategies of vote winning. However, recent empirical findings from the Westminster systems contradicted this thesis: dissenting votes are in fact associated with higher levels of constituency service (Kam 2009: 112). One way to research this possible puzzle avoiding the methodological drawbacks inevitable for comparative studies of roll-call voting is to concentrate on the

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<sup>13</sup> The fact that dissent on salient issues reaches larger electorates at once than the one-on-one citizen meetings held for casework.

question: 'Do MPs who claim to always follow the party line in roll call voting engage more in constituency service?' Engagement in service is likely to encourage MPs to seek cross-partisan deals that would benefit their constituents. On the one hand, MPs that break more often the party line could do so because their party's policy option contradicts local preferences or in exchange for government funds for their constituencies - when they are members of opposition parties. In these cases, lower discipline would go hand in hand with constituency service orientation. On the other hand, it could be that in CEE the compartmentalization process goes beyond democratically legitimate boundaries, with party leaders tolerating their MPs' cultivation of local clientelistic relations in exchange for unquestioned party loyalty.

*H.3: MPs claiming to always follow the party line will engage more in constituency service.*

The type of seat won by a legislator comes frequently with a series of normative expectations from party leaders, fellow parliamentarians and voters about the appropriate legislative and non-legislative behavior associated with that mandate. These expectations about the seat foster legislative specialization at various levels, from committee assignments (Stratmann and Baur 2002) to constituency service (Ilonszki 1994; Bradbury and Mitchell 2007). Thus, MPs who won single-member districts or got elected due to a large number of preference votes are expected to cater for their voters and try to maintain and increase their support through constituency service (Cain et al. 1987). On the contrary, the public as well as party leaders would expect national list parliamentarians to specialize in particular policy areas, while being

allowed the privilege of not running errands too often for voters. However, other studies have argued that electoral systems with multiple tiers of election are actually conducive not towards legislative specialization, but to a process of role contamination (Reed 1999; Norris 2004; Ferrara et al 2005; Crisp 2007). The latter would consist either in all MPs adopting the behavior that is dominant, irrespective of their mode of election or in the prevalence of mixed roles. The specialization thesis seems more likely to be corroborated in the Hungarian case where there is a clear institutional separation between the types of seats, in contrast to Romania, where all MPs are tied to an SMD, a provision more favorable for role contamination.

*H. 4: The type of seat will shape engagement in constituency service in Hungary but not in Romania.*

In addition to the hypothesized effects<sup>14</sup> a number of control variables are included in the models. They refer to attributes of the MP, such as incumbency, gender and age or contextual/ strategic factors: re-nomination certainty and the number of MPs elected from the same county (in Romania).

I expect less engagement in constituency service from older MPs because they are often senior politicians who can rely on a reservoir of goodwill from their constituents

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<sup>14</sup> Another classical argument links electoral vulnerability to constituency service: MPs elected by thin margins will chose strategically to build a 'home style reputation', so as to broaden their basis of support, gain the trust of the people in their constituency and ensure an easier reelection (Fenno 1978; Bianco 1991; Cain et al. 1987: 49; Norton 2002). Nevertheless, one needs to emphasize that the vast literature centered on the US Congress that tried to connect the levels of service and allocation responsiveness with electoral security produced rather mixed results. For this reason and because of the impossibility to identify the respondents of the Hungarian surveys and their shares of votes, I will not test a hypothesis linking constituency service to small electoral margins.

due to a record of service and pork directed in the past to the constituency (Bennett and Di Lorenzo 1982).

For women MPs the expectations with respect to engagement in constituency service are rather contradictory. On the one hand, given their under-representation in the two Parliaments (Chiva 2005) it would be reasonable to think that the few women MPs will concentrate on gender-specific issues and as a result will be more policy driven. On the other hand, existing theoretical and empirical studies have argued that female representatives tend to engage more in constituency service because of their life experiences and their tendency to emphasize their obligations to the community (Thomas 1992: 170; Richardson and Freeman 1995).

Incumbents are likely to spend less time on constituency service than newcomers because they have a higher visibility and they can also rely on past record of service and allocation responsiveness.

If constituency service is mainly driven by a prospective logic of ensuring an easier reelection, then the MPs' degree of certainty with respect to re-nomination as candidates at the next elections should matter for engagement in service. Whereas in most Western post-industrial democracies nearly all incumbent MPs are re-nominated ex officio, things are not as straightforward in CEE. First, scholars have emphasized the extremely low re-nomination rates exhibited by the region's parliamentary parties compared to those in established democracies (Gherghina 2014a). Thus, constantly less than 60% of the region's MPs get to stand for re-election (Gherghina 2014a). Second, the MPs themselves do not seem to value too much a parliamentary office if we take into account the number of parliamentary resignations, at least in Romania

(Chiru 2013). Moreover, for an MP motivated by a progressive ambition (Schlesinger 1966) and who is targeting an office outside the legislature, it does not make any sense to invest time and energy in constituency service, unless that political position is at district level.

Last but not least, an additional control variable for the Romanian models is the number of MPs elected from the same county: this number is equivalent to the district magnitude <sup>15</sup> before the electoral reform. Thus, in counties that elect fewer representatives, MPs might receive more casework requests from voters of their party than in counties where there are multiple MPs from the same party and partisan voters do not need to constantly petition the same parliamentarian. <sup>16</sup>

### **1.3 Research design**

By analyzing survey data from the Hungarian and Romanian Parliaments a number of aspects that could influence constituency orientation are factored out. First, both legislatures experienced high turnover rates, i.e. around 40% or above on average, for most of the period (Ilonszki & Edinger 2007: 156, Chiru 2010b). Turnover is important for constituency representation, first and foremost because it prevents the prevalence of seniority feelings, associated in the literature with low levels of service responsiveness (Hibbing 1993; Shomer 2009). Second, beyond the similarities in institutional evolution discussed in the introduction, all these parliaments followed a rather uniform pattern regarding their professionalization. More specifically, they evolved from a nearly

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<sup>15</sup> Unfortunately the Hungarian surveys did not include the names of the counties which elected the county list MPs. Consequently, it was impossible to impute the district magnitude.

<sup>16</sup> An alternative explanation is related to the division of labor in the PPG: holders of executive office and party leaders are elected disproportionately from the larger counties and especially from Bucharest, which has more SMDs than any county.



complete lack of resources in the first (two) mandate(s) (Ostrow 2002: 201; Ilonszki 1995a: 198; Roper & Crowther 1998: 420), meaning no staff for individual MPs, no copy machines, no offices and, more importantly, little available information, to a privileged and prosperous position nowadays. Moreover, many of the expenses related to constituency service (travel, office rent, and staff wages) are now partially or completely reimbursed (Chiru 2010b).

The Hungarian data comes from three parliamentary surveys, conducted during the first (Borsos 1992), second (Ilonszki 1995b) and third term (Ilonszki and Kurtán 1999), thus covering a period of twelve years: 1990-2002. The first parliamentary study surveyed 117 MPs (a response rate of 30%), 131 MPs (34%) responded to the second survey, while 97 parliamentarians (25%) participated in the third survey.

The Romanian data originates from two surveys conducted in the lower chamber of the Parliament, the Chamber of Deputies<sup>17</sup> (Stefan 2003; 2011). The first survey gathered answers from 177 MPs - 52% of all legislators at the time. The second had a similar response rate: 170 of 334 (51%).

The fact that these surveys were conducted at different points in time during the two countries' transition process (the first three terms in Hungary, third and fifth terms in Romania) is not a problem for the comparability of the results, but is actually appropriate given the delayed democratic consolidation in Romania in the first decade after the 1989 Revolution.

Given the varying purposes for which these investigations were undertaken initially, not all the questions of interest for the study are present in each survey. However, there is

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<sup>17</sup> This is the largest chamber of the Romanian Parliament and the more professionalized one compared to the Senate in terms of logistical resources, organizational capabilities and staff.

still enough common ground so as to make comparisons feasible, i.e. items about representation focus, level of political experience, the way in which the MPs have gained their mandates or party discipline attitudes are present in all the questionnaires under scrutiny. More important, all surveys employed in the multivariate analyses contain questions about the time spent in the constituency – this representing a direct measure of the outcome of interest, although not an ideal one given possible non-response bias and other potential measurement problems (Dropp and Peskowitz 2012: 221).

The constituency focus variable is a dummy derived from classical questions asking directly about representational roles and their importance. Only those MPs who chose the constituency focus as their primary role, or rated it with the highest importance were coded as 1. Because data on the length of local politics experience was not available for all samples, I also use a dummy variable in this case, indicating whether the MP had spent time in political offices at local or regional level before her election as representative.

The type of seat is measured through a series of dummy variables. For the Hungarian models these indicate if the MP got elected from a county or national list (the reference category in the models being an SMD seat), whereas for the Romanian models I use a dummy illustrating whether the MP had won plurality in the SMD or she received the seat after finishing second, third or fourth.

The variable measuring MPs' attitudes towards party discipline is based on the following items: 'An MP should vote along the party line on key issues, even if she would lose votes because of it' (Hungary); 'An MP should vote along the party line, even if s/he

disagrees' (Romania). The answers were dichotomized so as to accurately include the group of those MPs always ready to toe the party line, no matter the costs.

The item on re-nomination asked: 'How certain are you that your party will re-nominate you at the next parliamentary elections', and the MPs could choose between: 'very certain', 'somewhat certain' and 'still unsure'. For more details regarding the operationalization of all variables, see the codebook in Appendix Table 1.1.

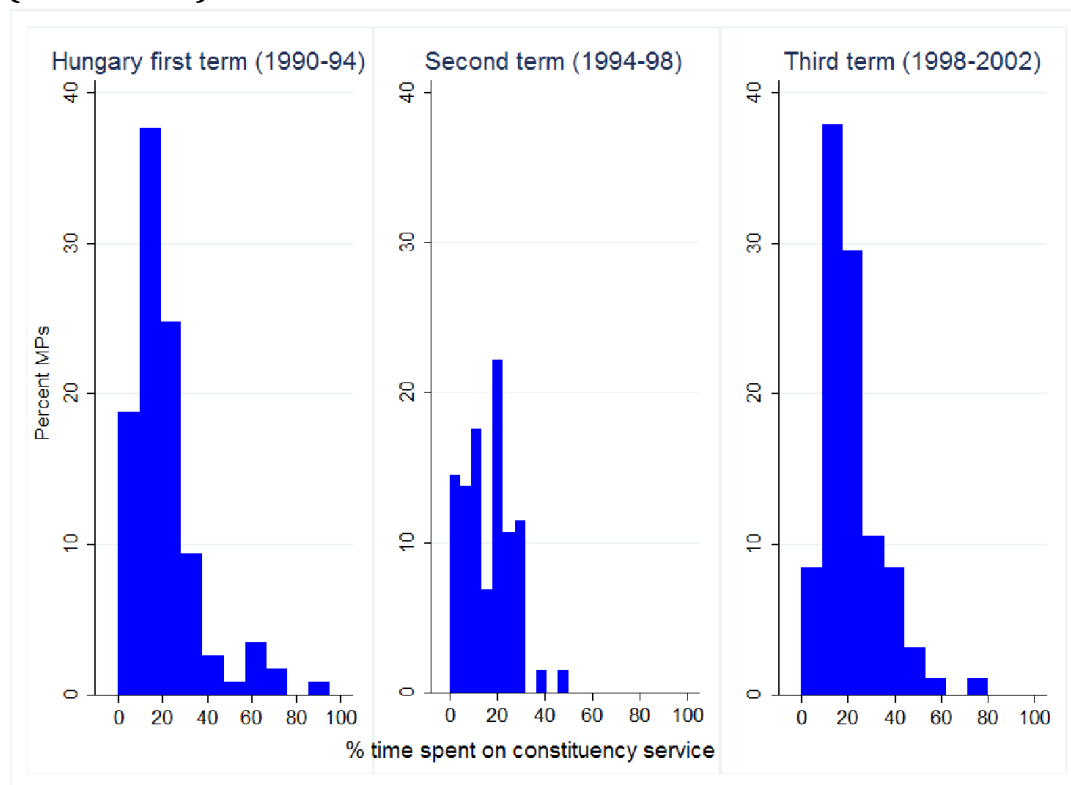
Table 1.2 in the Appendix presents a number of relevant descriptive statistics for the dependent variable and covariates for all the samples used in the multivariate regressions. A number of interesting patterns are worth mentioning. First, experience in local politics is quite common among the MPs: between 44% and 67% of them having held office at local level in the past. Second, in each sample around one third of the respondents consider themselves first and foremost representatives of their constituencies. Third, more than 40% of the respondents in each sample claim they are ready to toe the party line irrespective of their own opinion or the prospect of losing votes. Fourth, as expected, given the high turnover rates, incumbents represent a minority, while women are severely underrepresented (as they were also in the MP populations in the two countries): their share varies between 8 and 12%.

#### **1.4 Constituency service in Hungary**

Figure 1.1 below shows that the time spent on constituency service by Hungarian MPs has varied relatively little in the first three terms after the regime change, with the notable exception of a temporary drop in the second term. Thus, the mean time spent on service was 19% of the time (standard deviation 16.4) in the first term, 15% (s.d.

10.9) in the second and 21% (s.d. 13.4) in the third. The MPs who spent more than a quarter of their time doing constituency service represent a minority: 21% in the first term, 15% in the second and 24% in the third. In each of the three samples there are significant differences in the engagement in constituency service between the MPs elected in SMDs and those elected from party lists, the former devoting always more time to this type of activities.<sup>18</sup>

**Figure 1.1: Distribution of time spent on constituency service in Hungary (1990-2002)**



<sup>18</sup> In the 1992 sample, the SMD MPs spent on average 25% of the time on constituency service as opposed to the 14% spent by list MPs, while the corresponding shares were 21% vs. 9% in 1995 and 27% vs. 15% in the 1999 sample.

### **1.4.1 Validation<sup>19</sup>**

The time spent on constituency service is positively correlated with the frequency of surgeries i.e. sessions of (mostly) individual meetings with citizens usually held by MPs in the electoral district. The relationship is present for all three legislative terms for which we have data. Analyzing the distribution of the data on surgeries indicates that there was a slight but steady increase in the number of meetings Hungarian MPs organized with their constituents in the first three parliamentary cycles. Table 1.1 below illustrates that the time spent on constituency service is also positively correlated in all three samples with constant visits to the constituency and with setting up a local parliamentary office.

**Table 1.1: Correlates of time spent on constituency service in Hungary**

	First Term	Second Term	Third term
Frequency of surgeries	0.36*** (N=114)	0.41*** (N=128)	0.31*** (N=87)
Constant visits to district	0.25*** (N=117)	0.23*** (N=131)	0.23*** (N=94)
Local parliamentary office	0.23*** (N=117)	0.14*** (N=131)	0.14** (N=94)

\*Cell entries are Spearman's Rho coefficients for the frequency of surgeries and Somers' D for the rest.

Because information on important variables was missing from the inaugural term, the following regressions were run only on the samples from the second and third Hungarian Parliaments. Their results are presented in table 1.2 below. First, it must be emphasized that the two models performed relatively well since the amount of explained

<sup>19</sup> Ideally, the validation of the self-declared levels of engagement in constituency service would imply analyzing objective legislative behavior measures. This was possible in the Romanian case but not for the Hungarian data sets from which all identification information of the MPs was deleted by the research team conducting the surveys.

variance is between 29% and 39%. Second, two of the initial hypotheses are corroborated. Thus, MPs who declare that they are primarily representatives of their constituencies appear to spend between approximately 4% and 10% more time dealing with constituency service related activities compared to their colleagues.

Moreover, the type of seat one wins makes a big difference: SMD parliamentarians engage much more in helping their district voters than county list MPs and national list representatives. One might think that the last comparison does not make much sense given the fact that national list MPs are not ‘tied’ to a territory. However, a considerable proportion of the list candidates get also to run in SMDs (Benoit 2001; Papp 2011; Chiru 2015) and previous studies have also shown that ‘shadowing’ is a common reality in the Hungarian Parliament: list MPs who have lost SMD battles tend to introduce significantly more parliamentary questions on local issues (Montgomery 1999: 514).

**Table 1.2: Determinants of service in Hungary: 1994-2002 (OLS models)**

	Second term	Third term
Constituency focus	3.76* (2.21)	9.59*** (3.25)
Local political experience	-0.47 (1.79)	-1.74 (3.57)
County List MP	-6.70*** (2.07)	-8.48*** (2.79)
National list MP	-14.66*** (2.18)	-7.51* (4.15)
Disciplined legislative behavior	-2.12 (1.69)	-2.29 (2.82)
Incumbent	-1.44 (1.75)	
Woman MP	4.99*** (1.83)	2.25 (4.90)
Constant	20.55*** (2.83)	23.75*** (5.08)
R <sup>2</sup>	.388	.294
N	119	89

\*Significance at \* p<.10; \*\* p<.05; \*\*\* p<.01

\*\* Robust standard errors in parentheses

The results of the regression ran on the sample from the second term show that county list MPs tend to spend 7% less time on constituency service compared to district MPs, whereas for national list MPs the difference amounts to almost 15%. Similarly, county list MPs elected in the third term appear to devote 9% less time for constituency activities than district MPs, while national list MPs spend 8% less time on such matters compared to the same reference category.

Local politics experience, the degree of declared party loyalty and incumbency<sup>20</sup> do not significantly affect the Hungarian MPs' engagement in, or avoidance of constituency service. For the last control variable the situation is more interesting. Thus, in the second parliamentary cycle, women MPs devoted considerably more time (up to 5%) to their electoral districts than men legislators, a result which corroborates previous findings regarding gender effects on constituency service.

## **1.5 Constituency service in Romania**

The Romanian case was made more interesting by the change in electoral system. From 2008 onwards, an original mixed member proportional system was implemented after five elections held under a closed list proportional representation system, in which each county was a multi-member district. The reform meant that all MPs are now elected in SMDs: some directly after obtaining an absolute majority of votes and others

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<sup>20</sup> Regrettably, the survey conducted in 1999 does not include information regarding the incumbency status of respondent MPs.

through the redistribution of party votes at county and national level<sup>21</sup>. It is necessary to mention that one of the objectives of the reform was actually to strengthen the linkages between the MPs and their constituents. Because of the lack of adequate survey data it was not possible to compare the MPs' constituency service orientation from the PR era with that in the Parliament elected after the reform.<sup>22</sup> Instead one can analyze whether the electoral system change brought modifications in the MPs' focus of representation, which, as we have seen so far, is one of the key predictors of service responsiveness.

**Table 1.3: Foci of representation before and after the electoral reform**

	2003	2011
Own voters	8%	38%
Constituency	49%	17%
Party	21%	14%
A certain social group	1%	2%
All citizens in the country	21%	29%
N	166	133

Source: Stefan (2003; 2011)

Table 1.3 above shows that compared to the MPs of the third parliament (2000-2004) the parliamentarians elected in SMDs in 2008 saw themselves more as representatives of either those who personally voted for them, or of all the citizens in the country. If the first choice seems rather natural given the new rules of the game, the second is explainable mainly by the considerable number of MPs that got their seats after vote redistribution at national level (Chiru and Ciobanu 2009), something which represents a de facto reminiscence from the previous electoral system<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>21</sup> The two stages of vote aggregation and mandate allocation at county and national level were also present in the former closed list PR system.

<sup>22</sup> Chapter 3 will do exactly this, but using legislative behavior data from the two periods.

<sup>23</sup> In the PR era mandates were allocated in two stages: first at county level based on the Hare quota for the particular MMD and then at national level using D'Hondt divisors for the unused party votes and the mandates that were not allocated in the first round. We do not have data for the 2000 elections, but at the



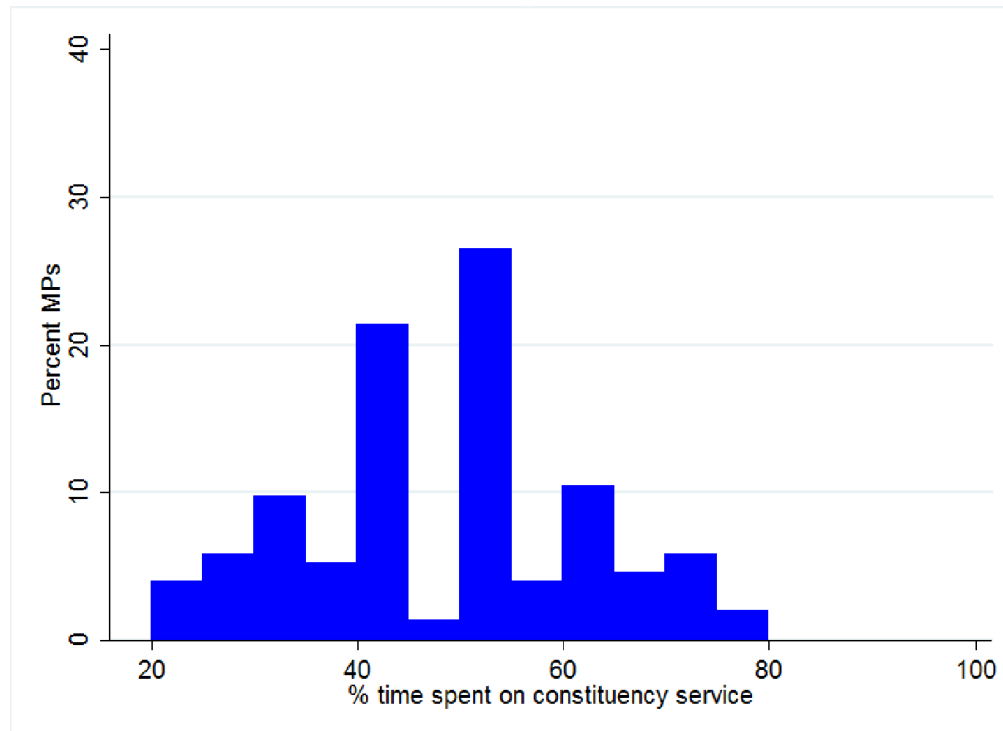
Moreover, if we combine the first two categories of MPs who see themselves the representatives of voters and constituency – both of which might induce engagement in constituency service - there is only a marginal difference between the two samples (57% vs. 55%). This seems to imply that overly optimistic expectations with respect to the degree of actual change in the MPs' behavior vis-à-vis their districts ought to be rejected. Also, this could be interpreted as evidence that parliamentary socialization theories, which privilege the long term perspective and advocate that behavioral change happens slowly and is conditional on other factors related to the political environment, have more leverage in explaining constituency service than the rational choice perspective. The latter would predict an immediate adaptation of the MPs towards more constituency-oriented roles. Nevertheless, these are only preliminary insights derived exclusively from self-declared attitudes and as such they constitute insufficient material for definitive conclusions. For this reason, in Chapter 3, I, will also examine the patterns of constituency service before and after the reform by using behavioral data.

Moving back to the information available in the 2008-2012 MP sample, one has first to observe the high proportion of working time the MPs claim they are spending in their constituencies: in average 46% (standard deviation: 14). Figure 1.2 below displays the distribution of responses, emphasizing what seems to be the enthusiasm of Romanian MPs for constituency service.

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1992 and 1996 contests, the share of MPs who got elected in the second stage, i.e. after the redistribution of party votes at national level, was 44% and 40% respectively.

**Figure 1.2: Distribution of time spent in constituency in Romania**



### ***1.5.1 Validation***

Before discussing the results of the multivariate analyses, I present a brief validation exercise involving the dependent variable and both attitudinal and behavioral data. First, it turns out that the time spent on constituency service is positively correlated with the importance the MPs assign to working on constituency issues, with Spearman's  $\rho = 0.41^{***}$  ( $N=155$ ) and negatively correlated with the importance they assign to committee work: Spearman's  $\rho = -0.14^*$  ( $N=155$ ).<sup>24</sup>

But does this self-reported behavior have anything to do with actual legislative behavior on behalf of constituents? The answer is yes, since the variable is also positively correlated with the number of parliamentary questions and interpellations dealing with

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<sup>24</sup> Given that I am interested in the degree of association between a continuous and an ordinal variable the most appropriate nonparametric measure is Spearman's  $\rho$  (Gibbons 1993).

constituency issues put forward by the MPs in 2009-2010 at Pearson's  $R= 0.22^{***}$  (N=150).

After this successful validation exercise, one can place more confidence in the results of multivariate models presented in Table 1.4 below. The first model excludes the re-nomination certainty variable – gaining in this way 21 additional observations. Although the direction is the one hypothesized for all independent variables, only one acquired a significant impact. Thus, experience in local politics increases by approximately 5% the time spent on constituency service activities. Some scholars have argued that, with the passage of time, this type of socialization has become more and more common for Romanian MPs (Stefan and Grecu 2013)<sup>25</sup>. This claim is also corroborated by my own data: the share of the MPs elected to the Chamber of Deputies after having held office in local politics has increased from 38% in 2004, to 53% in 2008 and to 61% in 2012<sup>26</sup>. If the above-mentioned positive effect is not just cohort-specific, the trend of having more local politicians elected as MPs will result in a constant increase in constituency service supply.

In line with our hypothesis, the most disciplined MPs – those claiming to always follow the party line at roll call votes are associated with an increase in the time spent working in the constituency but the effect does not reach the conventional levels of statistical significance.

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<sup>25</sup> Ilonszki and Schwarcz (2013) emphasized the same trend with respect to the post-1989 Hungarian legislatures.

<sup>26</sup> For the 2004-2008 and 2008-2012 legislatures the figures are based on the whole population of MPs elected to the Chamber of Deputies, whereas for 2012-2016 I rely on a sample of 126 deputies who participated in the Romanian Candidate Study (Popescu and Chiru 2013).

**Table 1.4: Determinants of constituency service in Romania 2008-2012 (OLS models)**

	Model 1	Model 2
Constituency focus	0.76 (2.58)	4.86* (2.54)
Local political experience	4.47* (2.40)	7.02*** (2.62)
Type of seat	4.17 (3.03)	3.24 (3.29)
Disciplined legislative behavior	4.65 (3.09)	-0.38 (3.32)
N MPs from same county	0.23 (0.26)	-0.01 (0.21)
Incumbent	-3.11 (2.97)	-6.09* (3.12)
Re-nomination certainty		-5.78*** (1.72)
Woman MP	1.46 (3.50)	1.61 (4.31)
Age	-0.35*** (0.11)	-0.27** (0.12)
Constant	53.48*** (6.80)	65.19*** (7.65)
R <sup>2</sup>	.132	.204
N	134	113

\*Significance at \* p<.10; \*\* p<.05; \*\*\* p<.01

\*\* Robust standard errors in parentheses

As expected, younger MPs spend more time in their constituencies, although the effect is relatively small. The difference might have to do with the fact that, due to their influence within the parties, some veteran MPs have better access to safe seats for future elections. Thus they do not have to perform constituency service in order to secure additional votes in the district.

The constituency focus variable in the second model becomes statistically significant when controlling for re-nomination uncertainty. Thus, MPs who see the constituency as their main focus of representation seem to be spending on average 5% more time working in their district.

Once again, experience in local politics has a significant positive effect on time spent on constituency service: it increases engagement in such activities by 7%. In turn, incumbents seem to invest less time in meeting with their voters and doing constituency service than newcomers, the effect amounting to 6%.

Similar to the first model, winning the plurality of votes and a disciplined legislative behavior do not influence the self-declared degree of involvement in constituency service. Moreover, in neither models does the number of MPs elected from the same county, i.e. what represented the district magnitude in the PR era, make a difference for the self reported engagement in constituency service.

A rather strong effect has to do with the beliefs the MP holds with respect to the likelihood of having access to the party label for the next election, i.e. endorsement for a new candidature. Thus, one category increase in the uncertainty of re-nomination deflates the time devoted to constituency service by almost 6%. This could be explained by the fact that MPs who are unsure of re-nomination have either given up and are in the process of searching alternative office opportunities or jobs outside politics, or they concentrate on other activities that could convince national leaders of their qualities and good work, given the latter's key role in the Romanian parties' legislative recruitment processes (Stefan 2004; Chiru 2010a).

The second model also corroborates the finding that younger MPs spend more time on constituency service. Unlike in Hungary, in Romania there is no gender difference with respect to the time spent on such extra-parliamentary activities.

## 1.6 Conclusion

Legislators in both countries declared they spend a significant part of their time dealing with constituency service. This suggests that MPs perceive such actions as a normatively desirable behavior, something that is part of their jobs as representatives and an activity that is appreciated by voters. Moreover, their willingness to openly admit spending considerable time on constituency issues decreases the likelihood that this involvement in local affairs would include clientelistic exchanges or corruption.

One key finding of the chapter is that the MPs' self-declared representation focus is a significant predictor of constituency service in both Parliaments, a result which vindicates the recent resurgence of representation role research in legislative studies (Blomgren and Rozenberg 2012; Andeweg 2014; Chiru and Enyedi 2015).

The great weight the type of seat has upon constituency service in the context of the mixed-member electoral system of Hungary is suggestive of the importance of macro-variables - not only institutional ones, but also factors related to political culture (e.g.: the degree of localism in a society). This is certainly a direction worth pursuing by subsequent comparative analyses. Moreover, the fact that the proxy variable for the type of seat does not make a difference in the Romanian case suggests that mixed electoral systems which do not formally separate the proportional channel of election from the majoritarian one (i.e. mixed systems without party lists) are more prone to legislative role contamination than to role specialization.

The fact that MPs who have doubts about their re-nomination are less active when it comes to constituency service (in Romania) points not only to the relevance of

candidate selection practices, but also to both parliamentary professionalization in general, and the parties' ability to nurture career parliamentarians in particular.

The most important limitation of this chapter is the fact that it relies exclusively on the MPs' own evaluations of their constituency service. The next chapters surpass this problem by relying exclusively on an objective measure of constituency service: the frequency of parliamentary questions and interpellations on constituency related issues.

## **CHAPTER 2: PERSONALIZED CAMPAIGNING AND CONSTITUENCY SERVICE UNDER MIXED ELECTORAL RULES**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Although a salient component of the parliamentary delegation and accountability chains (Strøm 2000), the connection between individual campaigning and parliamentary behaviour has been largely ignored by scholars engaged in empirical political research. Previous ‘campaign personalization’ studies have only documented the extent, modes and sources of personalization (Zittel and Gschwend 2008; Marsh 2009; De Winter 2009; Arter 2009; Zittel 2014; Selb and Lutz 2014; Cross and Young 2014; Papp 2015a; Chiru 2015) and their influence on voting behavior and the candidates’ electoral success (Eder et al 2014; Gschwend and Zittel 2014; Engeli and Lutz 2012).

In an innovative study, Hennl and Zittel (2011) maintained that campaign patterns mediate the effects of electoral systems on individual representation. In other words, electoral systems offer varying incentives to personalize campaigns, which in turn ‘contribute to greater individualism in legislative contexts’ (Hennl and Zittel 2011: 2). Nevertheless, the authors did not test their hypothesis on legislative behavior data but on MPs’ self-declared foci of representation.

The present study is the first to match data on legislative responsiveness towards local interests with information on the campaign strategies and activities the MPs had engaged in as candidates. Since one of the most frequent contents of campaign personalization is represented by promises related to issues on the local (constituency) agenda and self-depictions as the best equipped candidate to advance local interests,



the study investigates the impact of this type of political communication on constituency service.

Accordingly, the central research question of the study asks: 'How much does campaign individualization influence engagement in constituency service in a mixed electoral system?' The latter contextual element is chosen in order to better isolate the impact of varying electoral incentives for the campaign-behavior connection, while holding constant other factors that would affect a cross-systems design. The 'background' selected is the Hungarian Mixed-Member-Majoritarian system: I combine data from the 2010 Hungarian Candidate Study with parliamentary questions and interpellation data from the subsequent first two and a half years of mandate.

Attempting to document the relation between campaign personalization and individual representation in Hungary does not amount to 'a least likely design' but is nevertheless particularly challenging. Despite evidence regarding significant individualization of political communication during campaigns (Chiru 2015) and the incentives provided by the dominant SMD component of the mixed electoral system, legislative behavior appears highly party-dominated. Not only is voting dissent extremely rare (Ilonszki 2000) but also previous empirical studies have failed to find any evidence that the electoral incentives associated with the different type of seats have any influence with respect to breaking the party line at roll call votes (Ishiyama 2000: 890-892; Thames 2005: 296).

Moreover, the initiation of private member bills is controlled to some extent by the parliamentary party group leadership and even the usage of parliamentary questions and interpellations – which is the least controlled activity in most parliaments (Martin

2011a) – has been partially orchestrated for party objectives. This refers mainly to the practice of majority MPs to table questions and interpellations that do not attempt to scrutinize but to advertise governmental policies (Ilonszki 2007: 54). Nevertheless, by comparing the degree of control exercised by party leaders on parliamentary votes and questions, it becomes immediately evident that it is more appropriate to measure constituency orientation by analyzing the content of parliamentary questions than by looking at roll-call behavior.

The introduction is followed by a review of the scholarship that inspired the study, the hypotheses of the research and the arguments behind them. The third section presents the research design: the data, the variables' operationalization and the methods used. Next, I introduce the findings of the content analysis of parliamentary questions and interpellations. This is followed by the presentation of multivariate analyses and by further analyses of the main effects based on simulations. The conclusion synthesizes the main findings and their implications for the legislative behavior literature.

## **2.2 Theoretical framework**

Much of the scholarship on parliamentary questions, starting with the influential volume edited by Wiberg (1994), assumed that they are primarily 'a mechanism for holding the executive branch accountable' (Martin 2011a: 262) by exploring 'individual and collective ministerial responsibility' (Blidook and Kerby 2011: 328) while having 'little application to cultivating relationships with constituents' (Martin 2011a: 262). The latter aspect has been researched only recently and mostly in electoral systems that do not lead to different channels of election (Soroka et al 2009, Blidook and Kerby 2011,

Russo 2011, Martin 2011b, Chiru and Dimulescu 2011; for a partial exception see: Bailer 2011).

Similarly, the constituency service literature has mostly ignored the actions and promises made by candidates and MPs in electoral campaigns, despite the fact that a localized campaign can serve both as an indicator of constituency orientation and as a cause of such orientation later on. Thus, it is extremely intuitive to think that personal vote earning efforts (Carey and Shugart 1995) start originally at the campaign level. At best, these theories have seen the campaign as the moment when incumbents advertise efforts already made on behalf of their constituents (Mayhew 1974).

A third category of studies analyzed how electoral systems shape both campaigning and legislative behavior (Hazan 2001; Mayorga 2001; Crisp 2007; Rich 2013). Thus, authors such as Rich (2013) who looked at three East Asian legislatures, have shown that in mixed electoral systems the type of seat influences the MPs' campaign style, and later on their behavior in the Parliament. But they did not make the additional step to analyze the connection between campaigning style and legislative behavior, or whether the campaign mediates the incentives that the electoral institutions provide for the preferences and work of parliamentarians.

I argue that the amount of time and energy put into campaigning on local issues, meeting local party activists and campaign personalization will lead to a similar level of engagement in constituency service. One reason for this is that the MPs who had put a lot of effort into this type of campaigning would most likely perceive their electoral victory as a mandate for local interest representation. Also, having invested time in creating a personal reputation, distinct from the party, these MPs will want to maintain

and develop it as a valuable asset in the quest for future votes and offices (at party or state level). Therefore, their parliamentary work agenda will include contacts with, and work on behalf of party activists and constituents. Beyond such rational calculations, a successful campaign focused on local agenda and local party networks could also play a socialization role, especially for newcomer MPs. For them, acting on the demands and needs of constituents and local party activists will be seen as the appropriate thing to do, the dimension that gives meaning to the job of representative beyond being a cog in the machine of party (collective) representation.

Moreover, even if one is skeptical of the causal arguments that explain constituency service through campaign experiences and activities, we should be able to find at least evidence in support of the correlational perspective that campaigning on local issues and engaging in service are two dimensions of constituency orientation that manifest itself together. But why should one even test this linkage between individual campaigning and legislative behavior, and why is such a linkage normatively desirable? Should not we simply rely on the assumption that they go together by default? I argue that there are two relatively strong counter-expectations both having damaging consequences on individual representation from a normative point of view.

First, there is the usual case for politicians, which also affects heavily programmatic linkages: not acting upon or delivering on what was promised (Mansergh and Thomson 2007; Thomson et al 2012). The second case, which can be equally problematic, would imply acting 'on behalf of constituents' without having requested a mandate for it. The absence of local issues from the campaign could indicate the MP does not want to attract attention to his constituency-related activities because they are not normatively

sound (e.g. clientelistic exchanges) and as such would not be appreciated by voters. In this scenario what appears to be constituency service might at times amount to responsiveness to business interests in the constituency which could actually prove detrimental to the constituents themselves.

After having introduced these counter-expectations the next paragraphs will discuss in detail the modes and mechanisms through which campaign strategies and activities can influence constituency service engagement, while also presenting the competing alternatives advanced by the legislative behavior scholarship.

One of the main areas of interest in the burgeoning literature on campaign individualization is the overall campaign norm, measuring how personalized as opposed to party-centered was the strategy chosen by the candidate. As De Winter and Baudewyns (2012) pointed out, the attributes the candidates decide to emphasize when shifting campaign focus from the party to themselves vary heavily. However, one of the usual suspects, along with leadership skills and other political or personal qualities, is their ability or past efforts to cater for the constituency (Hennl and Zittel 2011). Being a local or having ties with the constituency is another frequent type of content used to personalize the campaign message (Shugart et al 2005; Evans 2014), particularly since voters love local candidates (Arzheimer and Evans 2010; Cambell and Cowley 2014). The candidates for whom campaign individualization meant primarily presenting themselves as the 'right person' for representing territorial interests, might feel that their election amounts to a direct mandate for constituency service. On the long term, following the campaign promises and engaging in non-legislative district oriented activities could turn out to be a safety net for re-election, divorced from party fortunes.

*H.1: The more individualized her campaign, the higher the number of constituency service questions raised by the MP.*

With the potential exception of party leaders' effects there seems to be little evidence for a personal vote in Hungary (Enyedi and Toka 2007). However, rather than limiting themselves to simply adhere to their party's national policy manifesto, a large number of parliamentary candidates promise solutions to local problems during campaigns (Chiru 2015). Of course, politicians who have been nominated in electorally safe districts or those who had built a reputation of policy experts may not feel the same urge. Once in office, the candidates promoting a local agenda can nevertheless be expected to engage more in advocating the problems of their constituency given the increased media coverage of parliamentary activities<sup>27</sup> as well as the development and popularity of parliamentary monitoring tools in the region (Mandelbaum 2011). Beyond the re-election drive that motivates a constant transformation of issues from the local campaign agenda into parliamentary initiatives and documents, localized campaigning should also foster constituency questions because it is a proxy for the MP's awareness of local problems.

*H.2: Candidates who had promoted a local agenda during the campaign will ask as MPs a higher number of constituency service questions.*

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<sup>27</sup> In Hungary two news portals cover extensively the MPs' parliamentary questions and interpellations: [www.gondola.hu](http://www.gondola.hu) and [www.hvg.hu](http://www.hvg.hu). Additionally, the questions and interpellations are also presented on the national and county branches' party websites – especially those of JOBBIK, MSZP and KNDP, and on the MPs' weblogs and social media accounts.

Time is generally a scarce resource for politicians, but this should be even more the case during electoral campaigns. Decisions to organize certain events and not others and to meet certain people and not others speak simultaneously about two crucial aspects. First, they reveal the candidate's ideas about how she will win the necessary votes to get elected and where these votes are most likely to, or should come from. Second, these decisions speak about which issues the future MP would consider as priorities in her representation work. When a candidate chooses to spend considerable time meeting local party members and activists, it can be assumed that both sides can turn to each other later on during the parliamentary term. The party members and activists could ask the MP whom they helped to get elected to advance their interests in various ways, from putting local problems on the national agenda to mediating interactions with central authorities. At the same time, these activists could be an invaluable source of information about policies or political processes that go wrong at local level, and have a potential to embarrass the government. Moreover, candidates that need to invest a lot of time into meeting party activists might also be in a rather weak position in relation to the local party organization. Promoting local issues into Parliament and running other errands could be used in this case by the MPs as means of consolidating this relation, and persuading the local party branch of their qualities.

*H.3.: The more time devoted to meeting local party activists during the campaign, the higher the number of constituency service questions raised by the MP.*

The three hypotheses discussed until this point form the core theoretical argument for which campaigns should matter for engagement in constituency service. Additionally,

the analysis also considers six control variables that have been emphasized by the existing scholarship on constituency service determinants. The first two refer to the electoral system incentives and the psychological consequences derived from them.

The Hungarian Parliament was elected until the 2012 electoral reform through a mixed-member majoritarian (MMM) electoral formula. According to this formula 176 MPs were elected in SMDs, a maximum of 152 were elected in MMDs (county lists) and at least 58 through a national, 'compensatory list', that aggregated the surplus votes and distributed also any seats not allocated in the county tier (Benoit 2001). Multiple candidacies were allowed: politicians could run in districts as well as on county and national party lists.

As discussed in the first chapter, the type of seat the candidate wins in electoral systems with multiple tiers of election has attached to it a series of normative expectations from voters, party leaders and fellow parliamentarians about the appropriate legislative and non-legislative behavior associated with that seat. On the one hand, MPs who won single member districts are expected to look after their voters and try to maintain and increase their support, particularly through constituency service (Cain et al. 1987). On the other hand, the overriding expectation towards list parliamentarians is that they specialize in particular policy areas, while being allowed the privilege of not engaging in constituency service. Beyond these normative expectations, the same type of specialization should also be fostered by the parliamentarians' strategic understanding of their re-election prospects provided by the electoral system. In the Hungarian case, scholars were successful in documenting the linkage between the MPs' channels of election and attitudinal differences with respect to



representation roles (Judge and Ilonszki 1995; Papp 2011; Enyedi 2011; Chiru and Enyedi 2015) but evidence about differences in actual behavior remains scarce (for the two exception see: Montgomery 1999; Olivella and Tavits 2014). Because of these aspects I expect directly elected MPs to ask a higher number of constituency service questions than list parliamentarians.

It was quite common for the Hungarian parliamentary elections before the electoral reform that a majority of candidates ran both in single and multi-member districts. Given this context, the logic of candidacy could interfere with and be superior to the 'seat logic' and the expectations vis-à-vis the seat that were discussed already. The legislative studies literature has theorized and illustrated empirically instances of 'shadowing behavior': list MPs that engage in constituency service in the single member electoral district they lost (Lundberg 2006; Norris 2004; Zittel 2009). The explanations offered for this behavior include the desire of such MPs to win the direct seat at the next elections, the need to maintain and cultivate local electorates as well as the demand factor (Papp 2011). Thus, strongly partisan citizens would prefer to approach an MP of their preferred party who does not represent the district rather than turn to their 'official' representative from another party (Lundberg 2006). Shadowing was already documented for Hungarian list MPs in the first post-communist decade, precisely with respect to interpellations on local issues (Montgomery 1999: 514). Therefore, I expect list MPs who have lost SMD battles to raise more constituency-related questions than the rest of their colleagues.

Generally, incumbents are expected to be less concerned by their re-election and therefore less interested in constituency service than newcomers for two reasons. First,

because they can, hypothetically, rely on a reservoir of voter goodwill due to a record of service and pork directed in the past to the constituency (Bennett and Di Lorenzo 1982; Heithshusen et al. 2005: 37). Second, because it is likely that they have built the necessary intra-party relations to ensure an advantageous re-nomination. In Hungary it seems that parties systematically choose to secure the election of their high-level cadres by nominating them to eligible positions at all three levels (Benoit 2001). All the reasons mentioned above for the incumbents' decreased engagement in constituency service should apply even more to veteran MPs.

Another factor that needs to be controlled for is political experience at local level. MPs who acted as mayors or local councilors are in a better position to engage in casework and constituency service in general because they are knowledgeable of the region's specific problems and connections with local authorities and voters are already in place (Freeman and Richardson 1996). At the same time, scholars speak about a socialization effect because experience in local government appears to also foster a particular understanding of the representation role which subsequently with the election in Parliament, just transfers to the national level (Norris 1997: 33-34). Moreover, the relationship was also corroborated by a case study that used constituency-targeted parliamentary questions as the main indicator for service (Russo 2011: 296-299).

I also control for the MPs' ideological profile, more precisely for their ideological distance from their party. The expectation regarding ideological distance is that those MPs who see themselves further away from the median member of the party on the left-right scale are more likely to devote time to policy issues than to running errands for their constituents.

## 2.3 Research design

Most of the MP data comes from the Hungarian Candidate Study<sup>28</sup> (Enyedi 2010) which was conducted four months after the April 2010 general elections. A number of 432 politicians responded, out of which 241 were elected candidates (56% of all). Overall, the response rate was 32%, a figure in line with the completed samples of other elite surveys. Almost equal shares of responses were received via face-to-face interviews (217) and from the online survey (215). Only the responses of 234 MPs<sup>29</sup> were used in the analyses, because 7 of them could not be identified. The sample party representativeness is relatively high as it can be observed from table 2.1 below.

**Table 2.1: Representativeness of the MP sample**

	<b>FIDESZ</b>	<b>KDNP</b>	<b>MSZP</b>	<b>JOBBIK</b>	<b>LMP</b>
Population	58.70	9.61	15.32	12.21	4.16
Sample	61.61	5.69	16.11	14.69	1.90

Direct questions were introduced in the Hungarian Parliament as a form of executive scrutiny by the 1994 standing orders (Ilonszki 2007: 53). MPs have four types of parliamentary questions at their disposal: interpellations, oral questions, written questions and spontaneous questions<sup>30</sup> (*Standing Orders*). Interpellations are the most powerful because of the follow-up they require: ‘if the MP does not accept the answer he was given, the National Assembly takes a vote, and if this vote is negative, the issue

<sup>28</sup> The study was part of the Comparative Candidate Survey: <http://www.comparativecandidates.org/>

<sup>29</sup> This figure represents 60.6% of all parliamentarians.

<sup>30</sup> This study analyzes questions and interpellations belonging to all categories but the written ones. I took this decision because the written questions are the least covered by the media and thus the least likely to be noticed by constituents.

raised in the interpellation comes back to the plenary in the form of a report submitted by the investigating committee' (*Standing Orders*).

The parliamentary questions and interpellations were collected from the official website of the Parliament. In order to enhance measurement reliability the decision whether a question or interpellation could be considered a constituency service act was made by applying the framework for coding localism<sup>31</sup> developed by the Comparative Policy Agendas Project (Baumgartner et al. 2006) and adapted by Martin (2011a).

The independent variables' operationalization is relatively straightforward, being presented in detail in the Appendix Table 2.1. The only variable in need of additional explanations is the one measuring ideological distance. This uses the absolute difference between the MP's self-placement on the 0-10 left-right scale and the party's perceived ideological position on the same scale. The latter is represented by the mean of the party placement scores assigned by all the candidates of the respective party.

Beyond the content analysis of the parliamentary questions and interpellation, the hypotheses are tested using negative binomial regressions. This was the most appropriate method for modeling (Cameron and Trivedi 2013) given the nature of the dependent variable – count data and because of its over-dispersion<sup>32</sup>. Moreover, in order to make the interpretation of the results straightforward I use incidence rate ratios (exponentiated coefficients), run margins and make simulations with Clarify (King et al 2000).

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<sup>31</sup> See Appendix 2.2 for the detailed scheme.

<sup>32</sup> The mean: 1.004 (questions for every MP) is significantly smaller than the variance: 1.904.

## **2.4 The content and partisan distribution of parliamentary questions**

Martin (2011a: 475-476) proposed a comprehensive list of reasons for which parliamentary questions should be considered a particularly useful measure of constituency service. First, they are the consequence of a decision to prioritize goals in the context of scarce resources (i.e. questions imply costs of documentation, staff fatigue, MP's own time etc.). A second advantage is that generally the party leadership does not control them. Then, all MPs can be included, hence there is no bias of self-selection or sample representativeness. Fourth, questions are a direct observation of service not affected by the normative or memory issues that might interfere in the case of self-declared evaluations. Finally, the data are readily available and replication is possible.

I would also add another positive feature: the public character of the questions makes them less suitable for corruption deals, although this possibility cannot be completely excluded as the 'cash for questions affair' in the United Kingdom (Hencke 1994) has shown. However, when corruption suspicions emerge the media can easily dig up connections between MPs and business interests from the parliamentary questions the later had asked.

In Romania such a story surfaced when several environmental activists and NGOs accused President Iohannis of using the very same arguments of an Austrian company, Schweighofer-Holzindustrie in his official re-examination request sent to the Parliament regarding the bill that would establish a new Forestry Code. The company is the largest purchaser of Romanian timber and a hidden camera investigation showed the company is eager to buy even illegally cut timber (Gotiu 2015). One of the presidential advisors, a

former MP, was accused of being behind the presidential support for the company's point of view, because he had asked a parliamentary question in 2008 on behalf of Schweighofer (*Digi24* 2015). The question asked for a solution to a conflict over forest exploitation in one of the localities that were part of the MP's constituency. It must be said that the question also referred to the problems the conflict was causing to ordinary citizens and it was fairly balanced, not taking an obvious side. Beyond the fact that most parliamentary questions have a limited news-worthiness for national mainstream media such events emphasize that they are not completely under the radar of public scrutiny.

The 234 Hungarian MPs in the sample have asked in the first two and a half years of mandate (May 2010 - December 2012) 871 parliamentary questions and made 414 interpellations. 58% of these MPs never raised a constituency related issue, whereas almost one third (32%) did not table any question or interpellation whatsoever.

After content-analyzing all of the 1285 questions and interpellations, it resulted that only 235 of them (18%) can be considered constituency service acts. For a comparison, in Ireland – which has a much more candidate-centered electoral system Martin (2011b) found that 45% of the written parliamentary questions submitted between 1997 and 2002 addressed a constituency issue, while in the Italian 15<sup>th</sup> Legislature (2006-2008) elected under a closed list PR system Russo (2011) found that 39% of all parliamentary questions could be considered 'constituency oriented questions'. This comparative under-engagement in constituency service is a finding in itself and would deserve a separate analysis, which would have to account for the institutional differences, particularly the questioning procedures.

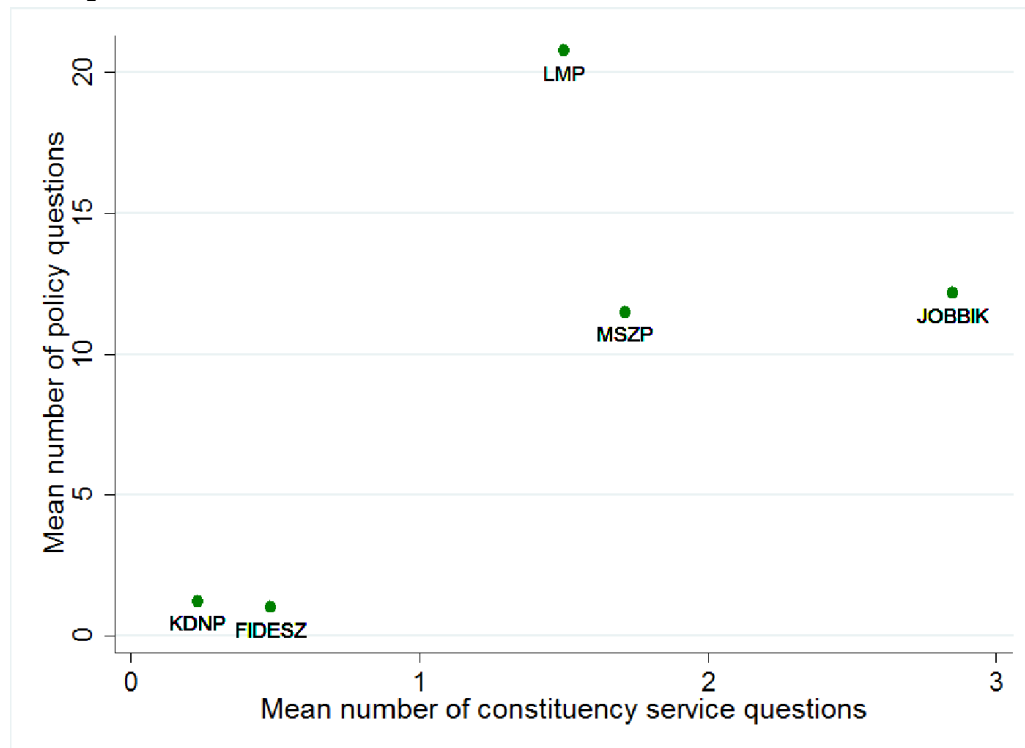
A non-negligible share (12%) of the service questions raised local issues from other counties than the ones those MPs were elected from. In most of these cases, incumbent MPs inquired about things happening in the constituency they represented in the previous term. Interestingly enough, this implies that some ties are maintained despite changing the county or running only on the national list. For the others, such questions could represent the first step in building a relationship with the local party organization in view of a future candidature in that county.

More than two thirds of the constituency service questions (68%) were asked by opposition MPs.<sup>33</sup> Actually, the MPs of the 'Movement for a Better Hungary' (JOBBIK) asked alone 40% of all questions and interpellations targeting a territorial issue. They are followed by the representatives of the ruling centre-right party, FIDESZ, with a share of 31%, but as it can be seen from Figure 2.1 below, the mean number of interventions of these MPs is the second last in the Parliament.

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<sup>33</sup> With respect to the policy questions and interpellations, the share of MPs' belonging to the governmental majority amounted to 15.8%. Although it seems that the practice of advertising governmental policies through questions has survived its share appears much lower than the one observed during the third term (1998-2002) by Ilonszki (2007: 54).

**Figure 2.1: Partisan Distribution of Parliamentary Questions and Interpellations**



The MPs of the Socialist Party (MSZP) tabled roughly one quarter (26%) of the constituency-related questions, whereas the shares of the green party, 'Politics Can Be Different' (LMP) and the junior coalition partner, Christian Democratic People's Party (KDNP) amount to 3% and 1% respectively.

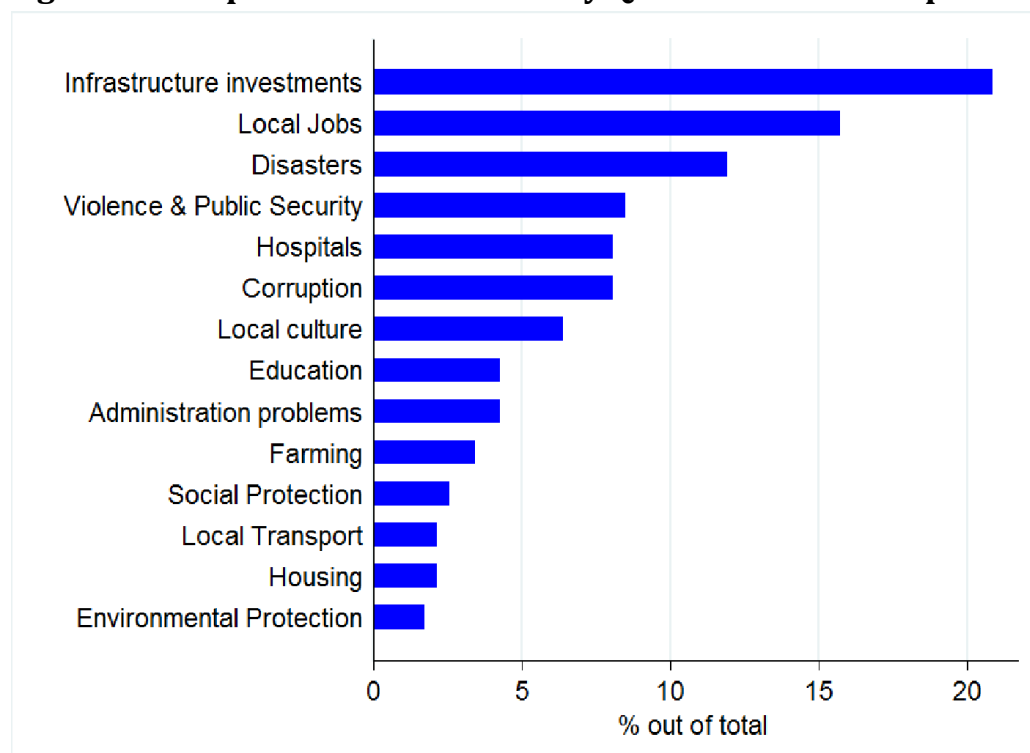
There is a moderate correlation: Pearson's  $R=.354^{***}$  between the number of policy questions and interpellations addressed by the Hungarian MPs and the number of the same type of interventions dealing with constituency service issues. This implies that there is a limited specialization in terms of asking parliamentary questions in the Hungarian Parliament and that the most active members engage in both policy-making activities and constituency service.

Figure 2.2 below presents the content and frequency of the constituency related questions raised by the Hungarian MPs, aggregated into 15 categories. More than one



in five (21%) were interventions asking for or about current developments regarding infrastructure investments in their districts or counties: cycle lanes, roads, highways, railroads, dams, bridges, parking spots or airports. The second most common topic (16%) referred to local job creation, state aid for factories and local industries with problems, closing factories and power plants, but also to local workers' rights (such as miners) and helping their professional reconversion.

**Figure 2.2: Topics of the Constituency Questions and Interpellations**



Almost 12% of the questions and interpellations asked about safety or compensation measures following natural calamities (the floods in Borsod, Szabolcs-Szatmar or Heves counties; the storm in Bekes; the drought in Heves) or man-made disasters (Budapest acid air pollution, the Ajka – Veszprem red sludge disaster or the Csepel –

Budapest sludge). On fourth place we find a group of questions targeting cases of violence and public security (9%): crimes in border counties, asking for the establishment of a new police station or for more policemen, problems made by the paramilitary Hungarian Guard, a case of terrorism, opening a prison in the neighborhood, police ineffectiveness or police abuses (such as loan sharks helped by police). Jobbik MPs deserve a special mention within this category: they frequently pointed to violent crimes and increasing crime rates in their constituencies, connecting them every time with the Roma minority.

Another relatively common topic (8%) was represented by corruption scandals involving local authorities or subjects of local interest: frauds with EU money, blackmailing of mayors, disadvantageous privatizations, prearranged auctions or tenders. The same number of interventions questioned the closing or financial problems facing local hospitals and clinics or emphasized the need for local health care units or resources (e.g.: ambulances). 6% of the questions and interpellations pointed at problems of local cultural institutions (closing museums, theatres or clubs, Budapest radio frequencies scandal, architectural heritage deterioration, maintaining rural cinemas, local NGO funding) and cultural events (local commemorations).

Next come the questions related to local educational and research institutions: closing schools and university departments, problems of local religious high schools, the absence of non-clerical education units in some areas, politicization of school leadership. An equal proportion (4%) dealt with problems and abuses of local authorities: debts incurred by city halls and hospitals, a case of release of personal information.

MPs also intervened on behalf of farmers in their constituencies over land lease issues and other problems with local authorities or to talk about social protection cases: a local camp of refugees, disadvantaged and beggar children, pensioners or persons with rare illnesses. The least frequent questions and interpellations had to do with local transportation problems (trains being delayed or cancelled; local bus company providing bad services; unfair highway fees) housing issues (squatting, problems of heating, local gas prices) and environmental protection (wildlife in a hunting resort; the opening of an incinerator; airplane noise and pollution).

## **2.5 Campaign choices, logic of candidacy effects and the partisan dimension**

The analysis is carried out in two stages. In the first stage, I use multivariate tests (i.e. negative binomial regression models) to test the hypotheses. The second stage includes further analyses of the effects of the main independent variables that keep constant all other factors and a discriminant validity test: a replication of the multivariate models with policy question as the dependent variable.

Table 2.2<sup>34</sup> below presents the findings of the three negative binomial regression models estimating the number of questions and interpellations dealing with constituency issues. The cell entries in table 2.2 are incidence rate ratios, while the original model with the un-standardized coefficients and robust standard errors is presented in the Appendix table 2.3.

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<sup>34</sup> In models not shown here, I have also controlled for the influence of self-declared foci of representation, level of nomination, district magnitude, local and regional party office, having a dual mandate (MP and mayor or MP and local councilor) and gender. None of these variables produced a substantial effect and I chose to present only the most parsimonious models.

Before analyzing the findings it must be said that alpha, the estimate of the dispersion parameter is significantly different from 0 in all cases, which confirms that choosing the negative binomial over the Poisson regression was the appropriate methodological decision. Moreover, I used the 'countfit' command (Long and Freese 2005) to assess the model fit and the choice of the negative binomial model instead of a zero-inflated negative binomial model.

**Figure 2.3: Model fit test - Negative Binomial vs. Zero-Inflated Negative Binomial (residuals plot)**

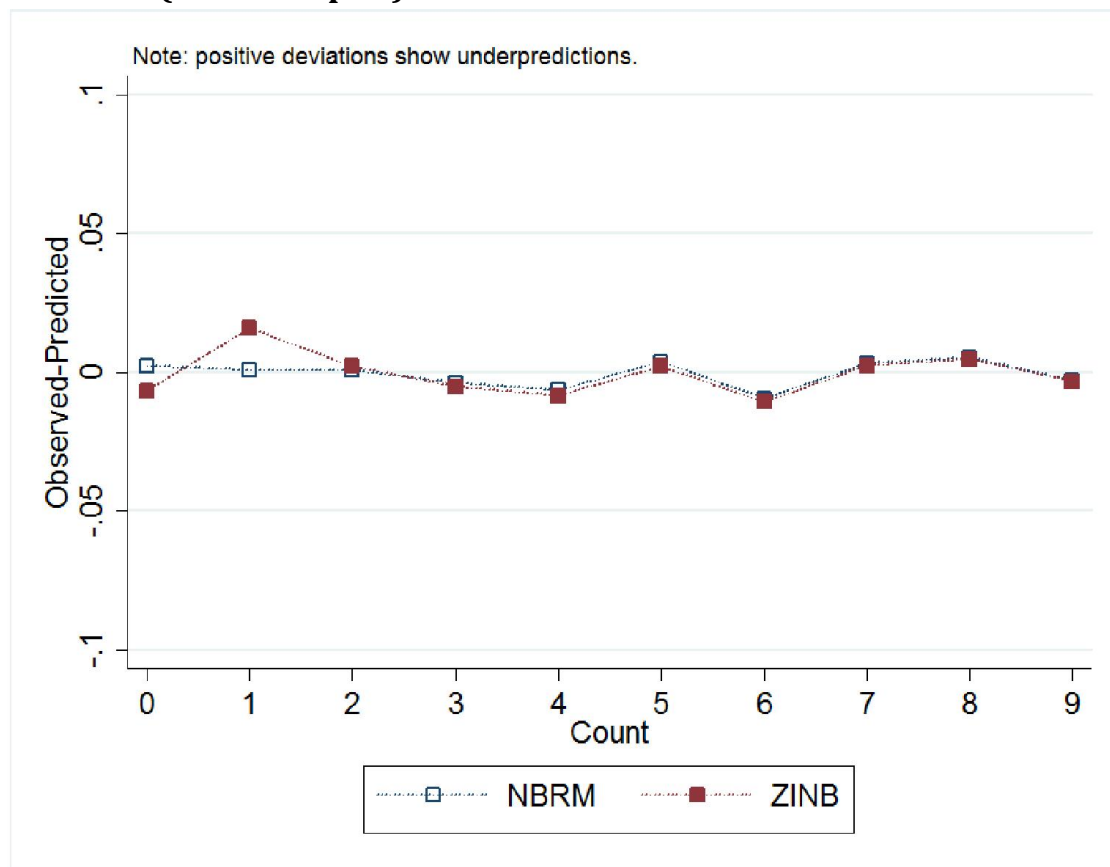


Figure 2.3 above compares the residuals from the tested models: these are very small, which indicates a really good fit. The negative binomial model appears slightly better than the zero-inflated negative binomial model: the former is overall closer to the 0 line.

Additional tests using the AIC and BIC statistics also suggested that the choice of the negative binomial model is preferable to the zero-inflated model.

The estimates reported in Table 2.2 are incidence rate ratios, thus all the coefficients below 1 imply a negative effect of the variable on the frequency of asking constituency questions, while coefficients above 1 imply a positive effect.

**Table 2.2: Determinants of the Number of Constituency Service Questions (Negative Binomial Regressions)<sup>35</sup>**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Campaign norm	1.148***	1.029	1.055
Constituency agenda	1.631*	1.103	1.179
Meeting local activists	1.475***	1.367***	1.362***
County list MP <sup>36</sup>	3.837***	0.885	0.783
National list MP	3.925***	0.717	0.617
Years in Parliament	1.038	1.045*	1.039
Incumbent	0.470**	0.386***	0.561*
Shadowing MP		7.888***	1.804
Local politics experience		1.021**	1.027***
Ideological distance		0.805**	0.744***
KDNP			0.719
MSZP			3.161
JOBBIK			8.157***
LMP			4.657*
Lalpha	-0.125	-0.698	-0.930
Alpha	0.882***	0.497***	0.395***
Maximum Likelihood R <sup>2</sup>	0.242	0.352	0.386
Observations	211	199	199

\* Significance at \* p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

\*\* Cell entries are incident rate ratios.

The baseline model emphasizes the importance of campaign activities and strategies while also presenting a counterintuitive finding. First, one point increase on the scale of campaign individualization brings an increase in the rate of constituency service

<sup>35</sup> Regression diagnostic tests showed that the models are not affected by multicollinearity – they display very small variance inflation factors.

<sup>36</sup> The ‘type of seat’ variable is introduced as two dummies as the theory requires for nominal independent variables in negative binomial regression models.

questions of 15%. Second, MPs who promoted local issues in their campaigns seem to ask significantly more constituency questions. The model also corroborates the third hypothesis: a positive effect is associated with meeting local activists during the campaign. These results will be analyzed in more depth in the next section.

With respect to the control variables, a particular counterintuitive effect stands out. Thus, MPs elected from county and national lists seem to engage almost four times as much in the representation of geographically defined interests as those elected from single member districts (the baseline category). However, there is a peculiar mechanism at work behind this effect that the second model will reveal.

There seem to be no substantial differences in questioning patterns according to the number of parliamentary experience. Also, incumbents are less eager to cultivate a personal vote: they ask 2 times less constituency questions than MPs who are elected for the first time or return to Parliament after a break of one or more terms.

Introducing three additional controls in the second model: a dummy for shadowing MP, and variables measuring experience in local politics and the ideological distance from the party turns insignificant the campaign norm and the degree of campaign localization, although both still point in the hypothesized direction. This is not surprising given that the type of candidacy (especially the lowest tier in case of multiple candidacies) and experience in local politics are among the main predictors of campaign styles and contents in Hungary (Chiru 2015). On the contrary, meeting local activists during the campaign remains an important predictor of asking constituency questions, the magnitude of the effect being similar to that resulting from the first model.

The second model also reveals the considerable effect of 'shadowing'. Thus, parliamentarians who ran in SMDs and lost are particularly keen to build a reputation of constituency servants. They initiate eight times more parliamentary questions and interpellations having a local dimension than the rest of their colleagues. This effect was actually driving the unusual finding in model 1: after controlling for 'shadowing' both categories of county and national list MPs appear less active with respect to territorial representation than SMD representatives. In the Hungarian context shadowing was at least partially a rational behavior: a few MPs could reasonably hope that they will be able to win at the next elections the SMD they lost in 2010 due to an erosion in the FIDESZ vote. This applied particularly to the MPs of the Socialist Party (MSZP) which has been the governing party from 2002 until 2010.

Socialization into local politics also appeared to be a significant predictor of constituency service engagement. Thus, if one would compare MPs who have never held a local political office with their counterparts who have had 10 years of such experience, the latter's rate of parliamentary questions over local issues would appear 20% higher.

The last control variable included in the second model, ideological distance, entails a negative effect on constituency service. The effect is small but significant: running margins showed that 1 point difference on the left-right scale decreases the number of parliamentary questions and interpellations dealing with local issues by a factor of 0.3. One possible explanation could be that MPs less interested in policy and more in non-legislative aspects of representation tend to see themselves more ideologically congruent with their parties.

The last model accounts for the partisan differences in questioning patterns. On the one hand, it appears that JOBBIK MPs ask eight times more locally oriented questions than the FIDESZ parliamentarians, whereas LMP MPs seem 5 times more interested in constituency issues. On the other hand, only the representatives of the coalition junior partner, KDNP, display a weaker propensity to intervene on behalf of their constituents, but this effect failed to reach statistical significance. The findings regarding the JOBBIK and LMP parliamentarians are somewhat surprising given that in Hungary MPs of smaller parties knew they have no chance to win SMDs, therefore one would expect them and their parties to be more ideologically radical and more focused on the national policies. However, the situation might be explained by a change in strategy: after these parties have managed to clear the threshold for parliamentary representation using the ideological radicalization strategy, the next step can be for them to become competitive on the SMD level.<sup>37</sup> Another possibility is that FIDESZ and MSZP compete mainly on formulating the best national policies and on imposing their interpretation of the high level issues on the national agenda, and as a consequence the SMD issues are left for the small parties.

Just four of the other variables display significant effects when introducing the party dummies: the frequency of meeting party activists during the campaign, incumbency, experience in local politics and ideological distance, all pointing in the expected directions. Unsurprisingly, the shadowing effect disappears when controlling for the partisan affiliation. This can be related straightforwardly with the fact that FIDESZ and KDNP won together 173 out of the 176 SMD seats.

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<sup>37</sup> The two strategies are not mutually exclusive as illustrated by the fact that most of the local questions asked by JOBBIK employ explicit ideological frames and narratives.



## 2.6 Further interpretation of results and robustness checks

To make the interpretation of the main findings more straightforward I used the STATA program Clarify (King et al 2000), with which I run simulations based on the first model. In this way I generated the expected values of the dependent variable against the values of the two non-dichotomous independent variables, while keeping all other variables at their mean. I chose the first model to have a clearer image of the maximal effects of campaign decisions and activities on constituency service.

**Figure 2.4: Changes in the number of constituency PQs based on campaign personalization**

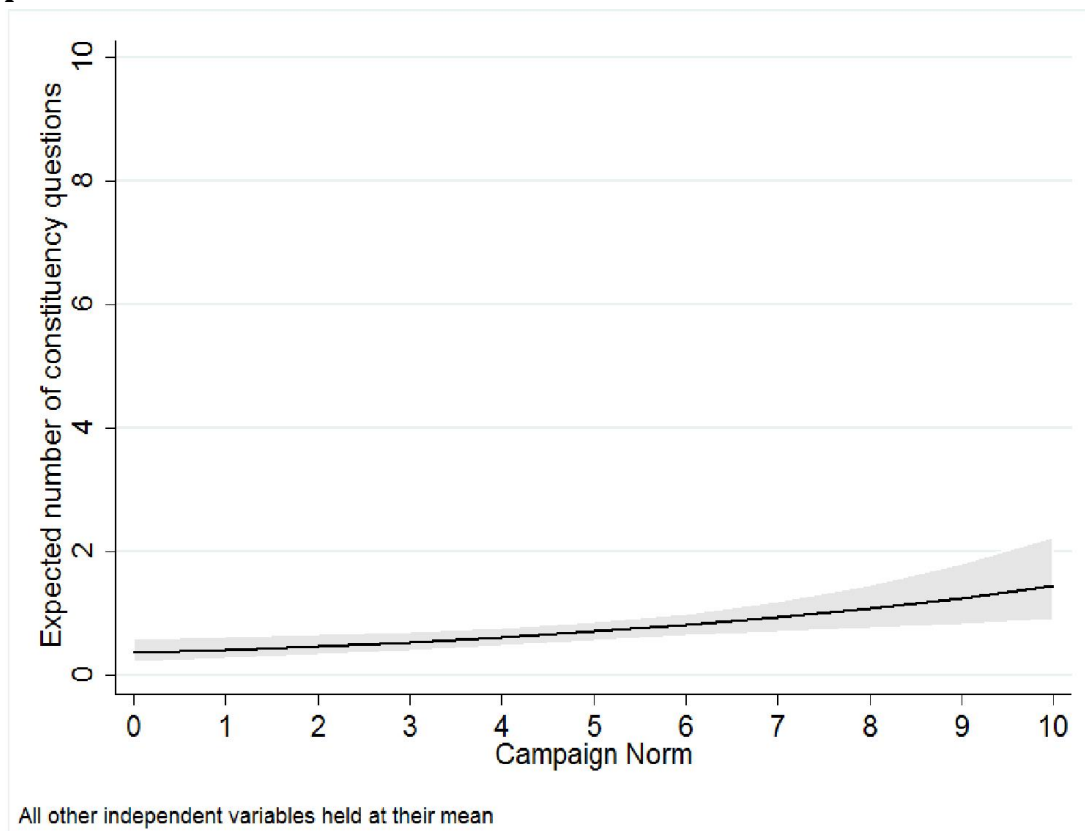
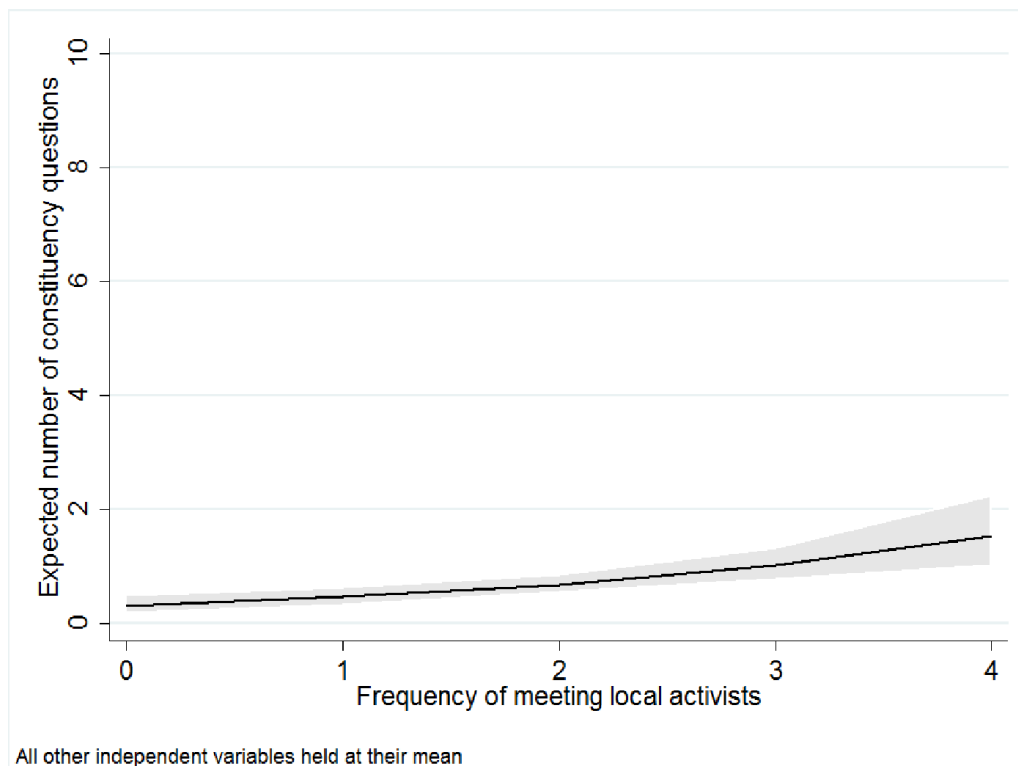


Figure 2.4 above plots the expected number of constituency questions with confidence intervals against the values of campaign personalization. MPs who ran a campaign totally centered on their party are expected to ask zero constituency questions, all other things being equal. At the other end of the scale, MPs who had candidate-centered campaigns will ask on average around two constituency questions, all other things being equal.

Similarly, figure 2.5 below plots the expected number of constituency questions with confidence intervals against the frequency of meeting local activists during the campaign. The magnitude of the effect is extremely similar to that of campaign norm.

**Figure 2.5: Changes in the number of constituency PQs based on meeting local activists**



Thus, MPs who spent no time meeting local party activists during the campaign ask zero constituency questions, all other things being equal. At the other end of the scale, MPs who got involved the most in this activity raise on average around two constituency questions, all other things being equal.

A counterargument to the connection between campaign activities and asking constituency service questions could be that this is in fact only a spurious correlation: hyperactive MPs who try to build a reputation could simply put more effort into their campaigns and then also maintain a very high level of engagement in various parliamentary activities. If this is true then we should also see a strong empirical link between the three campaign related variables and the number of policy questions asked by Hungarian MPs.

Re-running the regressions in Table 2.2 with the number of policy questions as dependent variable showed that campaign decisions and campaign activities have virtually no influence on asking policy questions. Thus, the campaign norm and localized campaigning do not matter in any of the models presented in Table 2.3 below, whereas the time spent meeting local activists during the campaign is statistically significant in only one of the three models. These results corroborate the claim that the analyses measure the connection between campaign activities and constituency service and not that between campaigning and asking parliamentary questions in general.

**Table 2.3: Determinants of the Number of Policy Questions (Negative Binomial Regressions)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Campaign norm	1.057	1.015	1.023
Constituency agenda	1.375	0.778	0.912
Meeting local activists	1.169*	1.095	1.061
County list MP	5.305***	1.470	0.871
National list MP	16.092***	3.537***	1.734
Years in Parliament	0.955	0.979	0.956
Incumbent	1.281	1.415	1.585
Shadowing MP		4.762***	1.717
Local politics experience		0.985	0.988
Ideological distance		1.026	0.967
KDNP			1.237
MSZP			5.259***
JOBBIK			4.519***
LMP			11.089***
Lnalpha	0.314	0.131	-0.045
Alpha	1.369***	1.140***	0.956***
Maximum Likelihood R <sup>2</sup>	0.398	0.457	0.502
Observations	211	199	199

\* Significance at \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

\*\* Cell entries are incident rate ratios.

## 2.7 Conclusion

The most significant contribution of this study is that it illustrates empirically for the first time the explanatory power of campaigning strategies and activities for engagement in constituency service. This is done within the scope of a quasi - least likely design, in which individual behavior is highly controlled by parties.

The fact that one campaign activity - the frequency of meetings with local party activists remains a significant predictor for the number of constituency questions even after controlling for all other personal and institutional factors seems to suggest that in Hungary MPs are first and foremost responsive to their party branches on local issues

and that their connection with the local party is probably one of the main channels for articulating local interests.

Another important finding is that the campaigning and electoral system variables emerged simultaneously as significant predictors of legislative behavior, which could mean that campaigns are more than just a mediating factor for the connection between the incentives created by the electoral formula and the representatives' actions.

Studies linking campaign and legislative arenas definitely have the potential to improve our understanding of how individual accountability actually works. A desirable complementary line of research would be to content-analyze actual promises on local issues made during campaigns and then evaluate the degree in which they match with the content of constituency oriented parliamentary questions and bills sponsored by the same MPs. Future research could also move beyond the constituency linkage focus of this research and analyze whether campaign choices influence the MPs' roll-call voting behavior or their policy-making activities.

## CHAPTER 3: IMPROVING MPs' RESPONSIVENESS THROUGH INSTITUTIONAL ENGINEERING? CONSTITUENCY SERVICE IN TWO ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

*'At the 2008 elections [after the electoral reform] candidates felt under a magnifying glass, they sensed the need to present a 'CV', a portfolio of things they have done or will do for the citizens in the SMD'.*

S., political marketing professional<sup>38</sup>

### 3.1 Introduction

Solving constituents' problems and promoting the interests and economy of the constituency are the two tasks<sup>39</sup> of legislators that voters appreciate the most. Or at least this is what Members of Parliament believe according to a worldwide survey conducted by the Inter-Parliamentary Union (Power and Shoot 2012: 112). The same survey emphasized the general increase in the demand, diversity and complexity of constituency service in recent times (Power and Shoot 2012: 59-71).

One would expect different institutional configurations to shape how citizens and politicians perceive the saliency of the items on the 'to do list' of the representatives. The incentives provided by the electoral system seem to occupy a central position - an assumption so widely held that it may explain why electoral reforms have become so popular in the last decades in both young and consolidated democracies (Renwick 2010). Sometimes electoral changes are introduced specifically to improve the representatives' accountability towards their constituencies and this chapter will assess

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<sup>38</sup> Personal communication, June 18th 2015.

<sup>39</sup> The other options were: law-making, holding government to account, financial oversight, working with civil society organizations and supporting political party line.

the results of such a reform, while giving thorough consideration to distinguishing between the types of responsiveness that are fostered in the process.

In 2008, after five electoral cycles under closed list PR, Romania switched to a mixed-member proportional electoral system. In the PR era each of the 42 counties was a multimember district, with district magnitude varying between 4 and 28. The reform meant that all MPs are now elected in SMDs: some directly after obtaining an absolute majority of votes and others through the redistribution of party votes at county and national level. This particular electoral system reform was specifically promoted in the media as an encouragement to vote for people not parties, in order to increase individual accountability and the quality of MPs (Chiru 2010a; Coman 2013).

Moreover, focus groups organized at the time showed that citizens hoped the electoral reform would strengthen the linkage between the representatives and their constituencies, through two mechanisms. First, the MP would be obliged to keep more in touch with their voters and second, the electoral reform would facilitate the election of more local candidates and the reduction in parachuted MPs, i.e. politicians who were imposed by party leaders on eligible positions in counties with which they had no connection previously (Badescu et al 2008).

Taking into account these aspects the central research question of this chapter is: 'To what extent is possible to increase individual accountability towards local interests through electoral reform in a context in which legislators were socialized in the party-centered closed list PR system?' More precisely, the chapter will test whether the reform increased the overall engagement in constituency service activities or whether it had a differential effect on the various types of constituency-oriented responsiveness

(e.g. casework, allocation responsiveness, organized interest representation). Additionally, the chapter will explore the theoretically plausible changes in the main determinants behind the engagement in constituency service under the two electoral laws. The former can be understood as direct effects of the reform while the latter as indirect or redistributive effects.

The chapter proceeds as follows. First, I review the literature on the relations between electoral systems and constituency service and the case-specific scholarship dealing with the consequences of the Romanian electoral reform. Based on these elements I formulate hypotheses targeting the two types of effects discussed above. The second section presents the research design: the data collection and coding efforts, the variables' operationalization and the methods used. The third section analyzes the frequency, the types and the addressees of the constituency questions asked in the two periods. The next section presents the details of the matching procedure and discusses the findings of the multivariate analyses performed separately on the matched data set and on all MPs in order to assess the direct and redistributive effects of the electoral reform. The concluding section looks back at the hypotheses and compares them with the findings while also pointing to further directions of research.

### **3.2 What should we expect?**

Radical electoral reforms are rather unusual in consolidated democracies. This is why legislative scholars need most of the time to compare different countries in order to disentangle the effect of various electoral formulas and district magnitudes on the MPs' constituency service orientation (Crisp et al 2004; Heitshusen et al 2005; Pilet et al



2012; André and Depauw 2013). A single case study using a before – after (electoral reform) design<sup>40</sup> has the advantage of keeping constant other factors that might intervene in the relationship such as political culture aspects related to the degree of localism in a certain society (Bogdanor 1985: 299) or a centre-periphery cleavage (Valen et al 2000).

Previous studies have used a before - after research design to analyze the impact of the Romanian electoral reform on the MPs' voting cohesion (Coman 2012; Gherghina and Chiru 2014), on their willingness to stand for re-election (Chiru et al 2013) and on their co-sponsorship patterns (Neamtu 2011; Chiru and Neamtu 2012). For the purpose of this chapter it is interesting to note two particular findings. First, Coman (2012: 216) concluded that after the reform MPs were more likely to initiate legislation and to address parliamentary questions than under PR. Second, the replacement of closed list PR with an SMD-based mixed system did not bring more cooperation on bill initiation between MPs representing constituencies located in the same county (Chiru and Neamtu 2012). However, no study has assessed directly whether the electoral reform has achieved its goal of strengthening individual territorial representation. The chapter will fill this gap by analyzing the possible direct (measured via changes in the total number of local questions and in the types of local questions) and indirect or redistributive effects of the electoral reform (measured via changes in the determinants of constituency questioning). In doing so the chapter follows a least likely case design (Gerring 2007: 233-237) because the reform was introduced after an almost two decades long PR socialization and it maintained two rounds of proportional

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<sup>40</sup> For a similar approach see the study of Muñoz-Portillo (2012) who analyzed the patterns of particularistic bill initiation by Honduran MPs before and after the switch from closed to open list PR.

redistribution, thus preserving certain leverage for the party in deciding who gets elected. Therefore, it would be remarkable if under these circumstances one could still document that the reform brought a shift in focus towards constituency service or towards certain types of constituency-oriented responsiveness.

There are rather ambivalent expectations with respect to the effect that the electoral reform had on the total number of constituency questions asked by each Romanian MP. On the one hand, the fact that each seat was attached to an SMD has contributed to the localization of electoral campaigns (Popescu and Chiru 2013). A development in this direction was that many MPs and their campaign staffs have organized focus groups with SMD citizens to learn about issues which are high on the local agenda and include them in the campaign, while door to door campaigning also became much more frequent after 2008. These campaign activities can in turn inspire a legislative behavior focused on the needs and wishes of the constituency, as illustrated by the dissertation's chapters on this phenomenon in Hungary and Romania. Moreover, the reform could also bring more constituency questions through a change in the expectations about the appropriate representational roles that an MP should play. Last but not least, the reform could have a positive effect by facilitating the election of locals and politicians with local experience, mechanisms which will be discussed in more detail when introducing the hypotheses on specific individual determinants of engagement in constituency service. On the other hand, the long PR socialization and the fact that MPs still have to please party leaders for nomination in an SMD that can facilitate election directly or in the redistribution stages could negatively affect the time spent on asking constituency

questions. We could also fail to observe any difference in the frequency of local questions after the reform for a very different reason. Thus, the talk about the electoral reform, and its popularity among voters might have incentivized MPs, even before the actual change of the electoral system, to use parliamentary questions to raise awareness about, or attempt to solve problems in their counties. Another factor that could drive behavior in the same direction during the PR era is the increased localization of Romanian politics after 2000, a process marked by the parties' heavy reliance on 'local barons' for voter mobilization and party funding. These are controversial local political entrepreneurs that have used 'patrimonial rule' (Culic 2006: 80) and clientelist networks (Chiru 2010a; Ganev 2013) to consolidate personal power and advance their political and business interests. Given their role in legislative recruitment (Chiru 2012) one could expect that some MPs would act as agents of these barons, pursuing local interests in the parliamentary arena, before the 2008 reform.

*H.1.: MPs elected after the electoral reform will ask more constituency questions than those elected before.*

One of the main conclusions of the theoretical model built by Bawn and Thies (2003) which assessed incentives created by electoral systems and nomination procedures, was that election in SMDs makes legislators much more responsive to unorganized voters and less responsive to organized interests, compared to MPs elected through closed-list proportional representation. A similar conclusion was also reached by empirical studies conducted in Scandinavian countries (Esaiasson and Heidar 2000) and the Netherlands (Thomassen and Andeweg 2004: 65). Consequently, it is

reasonable to expect after the electoral reform a growth in the number of parliamentary questions which deal with problems of individual constituents, at the expense of representing the interests of organized interests.

It is also more likely that the introduction of SMDs would make legislators more interested in inquiring about the state of public work projects and other state investments in their counties. This derives from the fact that, in the new electoral setting the campaign logic, both in terms of promises and credit claiming is likely to be re-focused on the welfare of their district, rather than on national policies. Empirically, the concern of individual MPs with financial allocations directed towards their counties has increased as indicated by the rise in amendments brought after the electoral reform to the draft budget law: from under 1000 until 2008, to 5016 in 2009 and 11400 in 2011 (Lupea 2013: 8).

*H. 2: More constituency questions will be based on citizens' petitions or will inquire about local infrastructure investments after the electoral reform than before.*

Next, we will discuss the hypotheses related to the indirect or redistributive effects of the electoral reform. Under closed list PR, the incentives to develop a personal reputation vary inversely proportional to district magnitude (Carey and Shugart 1995). This hypothesis was corroborated by comparative legislative studies with respect to the MP's likelihood of adopting a constituency representation role (André et al., 2011), the importance given to representing individual constituents (Farrell and Scully 2007) as well as to the time a legislator spends in her district (André and Depauw 2013: 17). Besides, district magnitude was shown to influence in the same manner the likelihood

that legislators exhibit personal vote earning attributes such as being local (Shugart et al 2005) or having local politics experience (André et al., 2012). In turn, these attributes, as we will discuss below, are also among the usual factors cited as determinants for a constituency servant profile.

*H.3.a: The smaller the district magnitude the more constituency questions an MP will address under closed list PR.*

After the electoral system change, there is zero variance in district magnitude, but the number of MPs elected from the same county should still be important for non-legislative behavior. First, in smaller counties, a partisan voter who would like to address a petition to an MP from her party would have considerably fewer options (possibly limited to one) compared to large counties that elect many MPs. Second, because it is very likely that casework and pork-barrel activities would target the whole county and not only the SMD, credit-claiming can be much more effective in smaller counties, where the boundaries of the two units coincide to a higher degree. On the other hand, a reverse effect might be possible because the electoral system introduced an element of intra-party competition: candidates not winning directly the seat compete for the ‘redistributed’ seats with co-partisans. The criterion on which these seats are allocated is the raw number of votes received by each candidate. However, because there is significant variation in the number of voters that live in each district within a county, the real intra-party competition is for nomination in a more densely inhabited

SMD<sup>41</sup>, thus for the favor of party gatekeepers. The nominations<sup>42</sup> at both the 2008 and 2012 parliamentary elections have shown that politicians understand this key feature of the electoral system.

H.3.b: *The fewer legislators elected from the same county the more constituency questions an MP will ask after the electoral reform.*

Experience in local politics is generally considered a fine predictor for constituency service engagement. One of the main mechanisms behind the relationship builds on the connections that the MP has developed at the local level with voters, officials and other politicians (Freeman and Richardson 1996; Tavits 2010: 218). These networks may be activated as parallel channels for service and casework demands. Another mechanism has to do with the norms regarding representation roles that politicians may bring with them in the national legislature after being socialized in local politics (Norris 1997: 33-34). In the context of the constituency-centered Romanian electoral reform differentiated effects can be expected for the pre and post 2008 MPs. Since the SMD-based formula favored candidates with high name recognition and political and business connections at local level, a significant increase in the number of local politicians elected as MPs was likely and this could probably diminish the overall importance of this type of career background. Also, the explanation regarding the projection of local representation roles into national politics could be affected by voters' expectation that after the reform all MPs, irrespective of their background, would develop a constituency servant role.

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<sup>41</sup> In the first phase of allocation of mandates that were not won directly, the candidates of a party in a county compete against each other based on the raw number of votes they received and not on the corresponding percentages. The latter would cancel out the differences in districts' population size.

<sup>42</sup> Well-known MPs as well as resource-rich newcomers have struggled and most often succeeded to be nominated in these more densely inhabited districts.

*H.4: MPs having local politics experience will ask more constituency questions than the rest before the electoral reform but not after.*

As already indicated, being a local, i.e. someone from the territory to be represented is considered by legislative scholars one of the most important personal vote earning attributes. In contrast, MPs who were imposed as candidates by the party leadership and who have never lived or worked in the district are likely to perceive fewer incentives to pursue a constituency agenda than local representatives. They may lack prior knowledge about local problems and are badly positioned with respect to the networks that would help them to acquire such knowledge. This is so because parachuted politicians are not usually in the best relations with the local party branch for obvious reasons. In the absence of local credentials and given the cost of acquiring them, it is reasonable to expect that these politicians would either try to develop other valence advantages, such as policy expertise or better name recognition (Stokes 1992; Groseclose 2001), or to preserve their privileged relationship with party leaders. In Romania, the large scale of the candidate ‘parachuting’ phenomenon (Stefan 2004) was one of the main criticisms raised against the closed list PR system by citizens and civil society activists. Once again one could expect a differentiated effect for the MPs elected after the change of the electoral system, but unlike in the case of local politics experience, this relationship should be stronger after 2008 than during the PR era because of the likely election of fewer parachuted candidates. Thus, those politicians who manage to secure nominations despite the preference of post-reform selectorates for local politics experience and name recognition (Chiru 2010a) and also to get elected

despite the rhetoric against 'parachutism', most probably enjoy the type of resources discussed above (i.e. policy expertise, good relations with party leaders) and do not need to cultivate a personal vote based on constituency service.

*H.5: Parachuted MPs will ask fewer constituency questions compared to local MPs and the effect should be stronger after the electoral reform than before.*

Politicians having served as MPs several terms under closed list PR are much more likely to see the party leadership as their main principal at the expense of voters (Bawn and Thies 2003) and organized interests in the constituency. Under such electoral rules and given also that in Romania legislative recruitment was generally centralized (Stefan 2004) office and re-election depended almost exclusively on party leaders. Moreover, these veteran MPs were socialized as national politicians and at the same time they were more likely to have specialized in a national policy area. For all these reasons they should have been more reluctant to engage in local representation during the PR era. Because the electoral reform empowered an additional principal, composed of voters, party members and activists in the constituency, parliamentary socialization is less likely to matter for service after 2008. Thus, both newcomers and veteran MPs are faced with the need to show some responsiveness to the new principal if they fancy re-election. The slip into irrelevance of parliamentary socialization for individual behavior after the Romanian electoral reform was also illustrated with respect to roll-call voting dissent: this variable significantly decreased dissent before 2008 whereas it did not have a significant effect afterwards (Gherghina and Chiru 2014).



*H.6: The longer the parliamentary experience the fewer constituency questions an MP will ask before the electoral reform but not after.*

Longer party socialization is likely to have a similar effect as parliamentary experience: decreasing engagement in constituency service during the PR but not after. Thus, politicians who were socialized to believe that pleasing the party leadership is the only way to get elected have a smaller probability of developing a strong constituency orientation. Longer party membership is probably a factor as salient in the intra-party competition for nomination in a more densely-inhabited SMD as it was in the competition for an eligible list position before 2008, but the possibility to increase the chances of directly winning a seat by catering to voters should look equally appealing to newcomers and party veterans. Last but not least, this indicator of organizational socialization, a less demanding one than parliamentary experience is needed given that the Romanian legislature had in each term a turnover rate larger than 55% (Chiru 2013).

*H.7: The longer the party membership length the fewer constituency questions an MP will ask before the electoral reform but not after.*

In addition to the hypothesized effects I control for electoral security, the average parliamentary vote attendance, party switching, party leadership positions, the government-opposition status, as well as the MPs' gender and party affiliation.

Lack of electoral security could trigger more engagement in constituency service in SMD-based systems than under closed list PR. In the former case, MPs elected with a

small margin can hope to improve their re-election prospects by cultivating a personal vote (Carey and Shugart 1995) through casework and allocation responsiveness. In contrast, under an electoral system where voters cannot change the list order, the rational thing to do for marginal MPs would be to try to convince national party leaders that they deserve a better position on the ballot. Maintaining high parliamentary voting cohesion and/or developing policy expertise are definitely better arguments in such a situation than engaging in constituency service (Hennl 2013).

The average vote attendance is relevant in order to see whether the most active MPs are also the ones who care the most about local issues. Party switching is another variable that needs to be controlled for although it was relatively constant in the two legislative cycles: 23% of the MPs changed their affiliation between 2008 and 2012 as opposed to almost 24% in the previous term (Popescu et al 2014). The planning and negotiations implied by such a radical move can be detrimental for the time allocated for constituency representation. Moreover, defecting towards the end of the term to parties that could ensure better re-election prospects makes superfluous constituency service efforts. A less plausible explanation is that, in the aftermath of the reform, party switching could also be motivated by the desire to have better access to pork for constituents.

Holding a leadership position could matter for engaging or not in the representation of local interests. Local party leaders acquire more knowledge about constituency problems because of their meetings with other local party officials such as mayors or county councilors. On the contrary, national leaders and Parliamentary Party Group

(PPG) leaders are expected to be more interested in shaping national policies, and also to invest more time in party affairs at central level.

Opposition MPs are likely to ask more questions than government parliamentarians because they are supplementary motivated by the desire to embarrass the executive. Dummies are also introduced to control for differences in parties' size, profile (e.g. ethnic parties) and attitudes towards the electoral reform. Finally, because of life experience differences, male MPs may engage less in constituency service than female representatives (Freeman and Richardson 1996).

### **3.3 Research Design**

The primary data includes 4644 questions and interpellations asked by the 312 members of the 2004-2008 Romanian Chamber of Deputies and 7843 questions and interpellations submitted by the 313 deputies of the next legislative term.<sup>43</sup> These are all the questions and interpellations asked by the MPs in the first two years of their respective legislative cycles. I chose to focus only on the first two years of each legislative cycle because after midterm there are a substantial number of resignations.

The resulting 12487 questions and interpellations<sup>44</sup> were analyzed in a two stage process. First, a user-written software matched, using fuzzy matching, the text of parliamentary questions and interpellations with geographical names<sup>45</sup> from the county where the MP was elected. The program assigned a score ranging from 0 to  $N$ ,  $N$  being

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<sup>43</sup> Prime Ministers as well as MPs who served for less than 5 months of the analyzed period were excluded.

<sup>44</sup> In order to account comprehensively for the questioning activity the dataset includes both oral and written questions and interpellations.

<sup>45</sup> The geographical names were imported from the most comprehensive international (GeoNames) and Romanian databases (SIRUTA).

the number of associations found. Second, all the questions were manually checked to decide whether the initiative or the parliamentary question did indeed refer to local issues and to code the type of local topic it was referring to. In doing so I applied the framework for coding localism<sup>46</sup> developed by the Comparative Policy Agendas Project (Baumgartner et al. 2006) and adapted by Martin (2011a).

A binary logistic regression performed on 10911 parliamentary questions and interpellations indicated that the software was able to correctly assign as local or not 83% of them. I also coded manually whether the parliamentary questions and interpellations referred to local issues from other counties than the one represented by the MP.

The parliamentary questions data was matched with substantial and socio-demographic data about the MPs and their counties. The data on parliamentary voting attendance was retrieved from the parliamentary tracker Harta Politicii, from Alexandru et al (2012) and from the official website of the Chamber of Deputies.

### ***3.3.1 The operationalization of variables***

The durations of parliamentary experience and party membership are measured in years until the moment of the 2004 and 2008 elections, respectively. Local politics experience is a dummy indicating whether the MP acted in the past as a local or county councilor, mayor or prefect. 'Parachuted MP' is another dummy, constructed after reading the MPs' official biographies. This variable is coded as 1 if the MP represents a county where she never lived or worked in the past.

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<sup>46</sup> See Appendix 2.2 for the detailed coding scheme.

In order to have a measure of electoral security that is comparable across the two electoral systems I adapt the indicator proposed by Olivella and Tavits (2014). Thus, electoral security is computed as the difference between the party list share of seats (for the 2004 term) or the candidate share of votes (for the 2008 term) and Lijphart's (1999) effective electoral threshold, which is  $\frac{.75}{M+1}$  where M is the district magnitude. Because of the resulting differences in scales the values were standardized using Z scores. In addition to this measure, a second proxy is used for the post-reform model: a dummy variable indicating whether the MP has won plurality in the SMD or she received the seat after finishing second, third or fourth.

MPs are considered local or national party leaders only if they held such office at the time of the 2004 and 2008 elections, respectively. The reference time for the PPG leadership and party switching variables is the entire period analyzed from each term (i.e. 2005-2006 and 2009-2010).

Average vote attendance is computed as the percentage of parliamentary votes the MP has attended. For the first term, the reference category is represented by the 3593 votes casted since the introduction of electronic voting in February 2006, whereas for the second term the computation concerned all final votes cast between mid December 2008 and late June 2012. For more details regarding the operationalization of all variables see the codebook in the Appendix table 3.1.

### ***3.3.2 Methods***

All parliamentary questions and interpellations were content analyzed to establish their constituency or policy orientation as well as the type of local topic addressed in the case

of the former. In order to answer the questions about the effect of the reform on the frequency of all constituency questions and on specific types of constituency questions corresponding to the various forms of responsiveness I preprocessed the data using genetic matching (Ho et al 2007).

Because of the nature of the dependent variable – count data and its over-dispersion<sup>47</sup> the most appropriate method for statistical modeling is the negative binomial regression (Cameron and Trivedi 2013). I use incidence rate ratios (exponentiated coefficients) and plot them using 95% confidence intervals. Additionally, margins are computed in order to make the interpretation of the results more straightforward.

### **3.4 Constituency questions' frequency, content and addressees under two electoral rules**

#### ***3.4.1 Constituency PQs and the time spent in the district – a brief validation exercise***

Before analyzing how many questions and interpellations referred to local issues, it is worth asking whether this indicator is also a good proxy for other constituency service activities that the MPs engage in outside the Parliament. An educated intuition would be that a legislator cannot be a hard-working constituency servant without ever addressing local-focused parliamentary questions. It was possible to test this intuition by using survey data collected from approximately half of the deputies elected after the electoral system change (Stefan 2010). The bivariate test showed that, indeed, the number of constituency parliamentary questions is mildly positively correlated with the percentage of time the MPs claim to spend in their constituencies: Pearson's  $R = .160^{**}$  ( $N=150$ ).

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<sup>47</sup> The means 7.913 and 11.147 (local questions for every MP in 2005-2006 and 2009-2010, respectively) are significantly smaller than the variances: 292.645 and 1322.946.

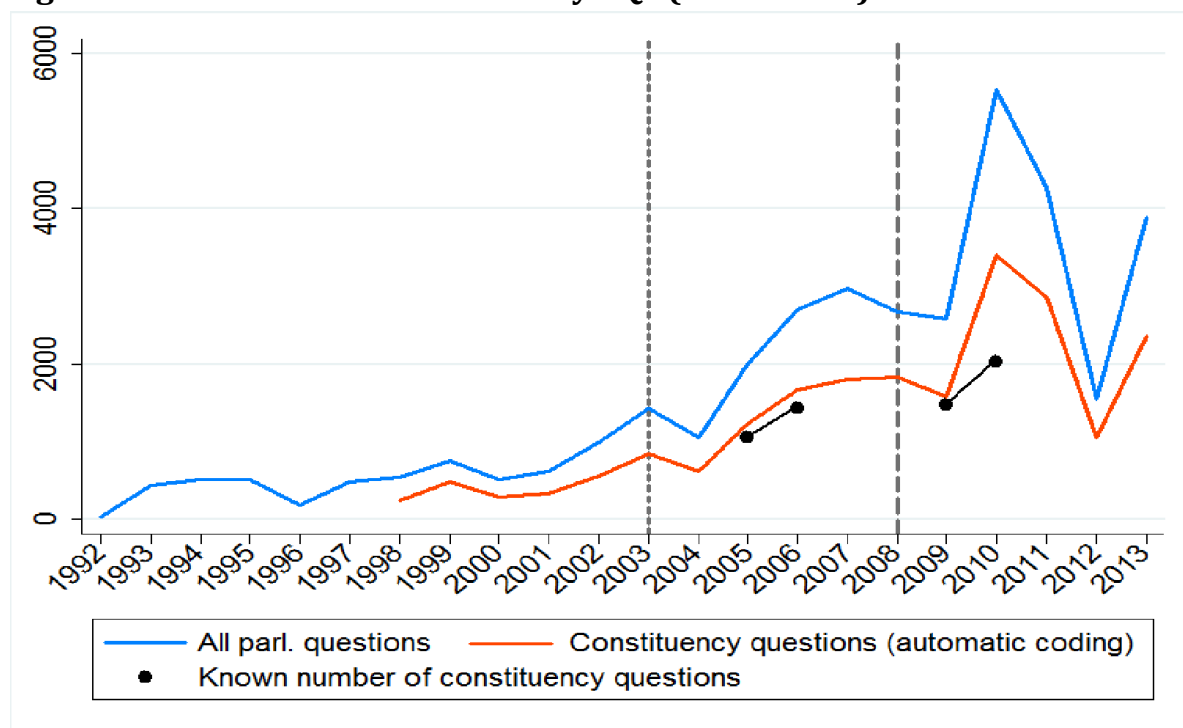
Nevertheless, the weakness of the correlation casts some doubt on how sincere some MPs were with respect to the time spent in the district and generally on the usefulness of this variable as an indicator for engagement in constituency service.

### ***3.4.2 Using parliamentary questions for constituency service before and after the reform***

In Romania, each MP has the right to submit questions and interpellations to any member of the cabinet or head of state agency, who are obliged to answer within two weeks (Regulamentul Camerei Deputaților). Similar with the general upward trend in non-legislative activities of Western European MPs in the last decades (Green-Pedersen 2010), parliamentary questions and interpellations have become more and more popular with Romanian MPs with each legislative term. Thus, in the Chamber of Deputies their number has increased constantly from 2238 in 1996-2000, to 4023 in 2000-2004, then to 10184 in 2004-2008, and finally to 13812 in 2008-2012.

Figure 3.1 below illustrates the longitudinal dynamic of parliamentary questions and interpellations, taking into account the total number put forward every year and the number of constituency-oriented questions. Only the questions from the last 16 years could be automatically coded because the copies of the parliamentary questions and interpellations are available online starting only from 1998.

**Figure 3.1: Evolution of Constituency PQs (1998-2013)**



Interestingly enough, the first sharp growth in the number of constituency questions corresponds to the year, 2003, in which the first serious parliamentary attempts were made to change the electoral formula to a more-candidate oriented system (Popescu 2005). Moreover, the talk about electoral reform that continued throughout the entire 2004-2008 term was paralleled by a steady increase in the use of questions and interpellations for local issues. One can also notice that in parliamentary election years there is a constant decline in the number of constituency questions the MPs ask.

Overall, 53% of the 4644 questions and interpellations asked in the first 2 years of the 2004-2008 term referred to matters from the MP's county. The equivalent proportion for 2009-2010 is 45% but from a total of 7843 questions and interpellations. At the same time, the number of local questions referring to issues in other counties than the ones represented by the MPs remained relatively constant: 302 in the first half of the term before the electoral reform and 327 in the corresponding period of the next term.



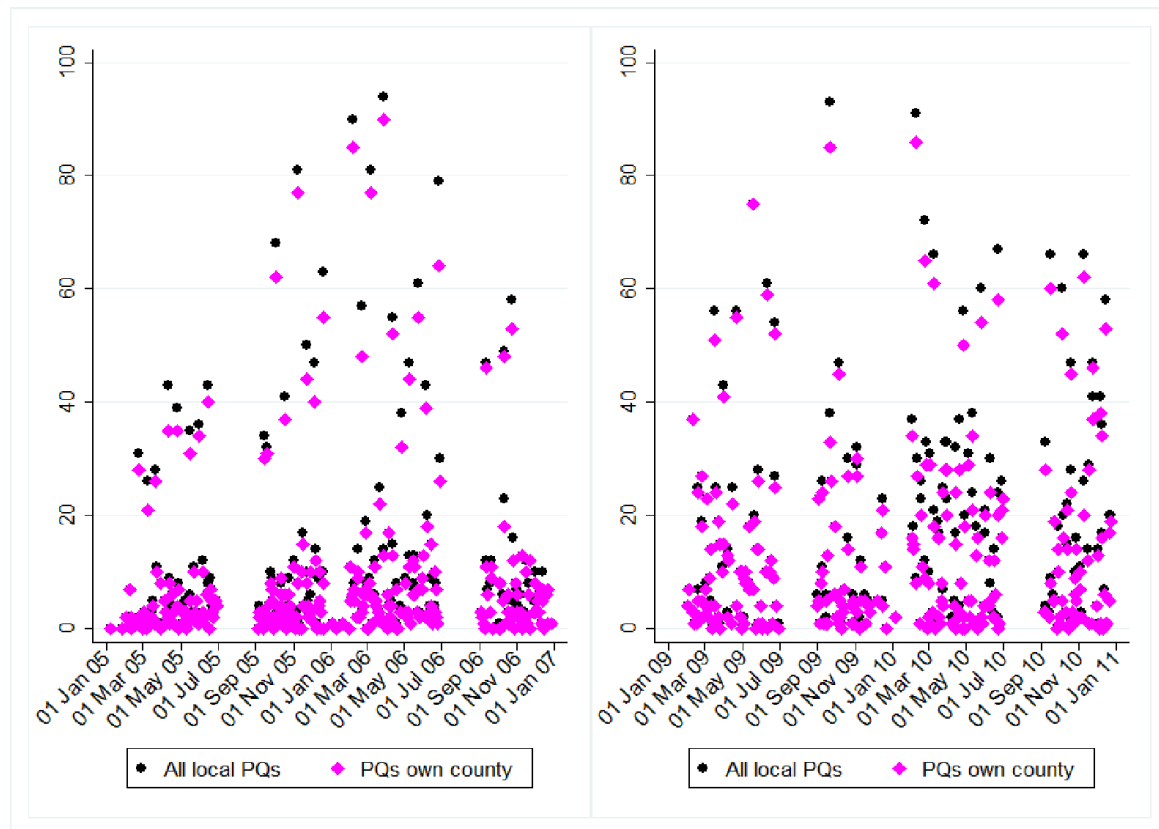
It is necessary to emphasize this unusually high importance given to local issues by MPs elected in a closed list PR system. To put the finding in a comparative perspective, the 53% is way above the corresponding share of constituency questions, 39%, found by Russo (2011) in the Italian 15th Parliament (2006-2008) elected under a similar electoral system<sup>48</sup>. Furthermore, the proportion is even higher than the 45% local oriented questions counted by Martin (2011b) in the Irish Parliament of 1997-2002, that was elected under the Single Transferrable Vote system. Nevertheless, if one considers raw numbers, the difference is huge in favor of the 166 members of the Irish Dáil who have asked 54606 constituency questions during that term Martin (2011b: 478).

Compared to Figure 3.1, Figure 3.2 below zooms in, focusing on the daily number of local questions and interpellations asked during the first two years of the terms elected before and after the reform. The mean number of constituency-oriented parliamentary questions has increased from 8 for the 2005-2006 legislators to 11 for the 2009-2010 MPs.

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<sup>48</sup> All but one of the 630 seats are allocated through closed list PR, but the system follows a majoritarian logic: a bonus of seats is allocated if the coalition or political party that received the highest number of votes failed to win 340 seats.

**Figure 3.2: Total Local and Own County PQs asked daily in 2005-6 & 2009-10**

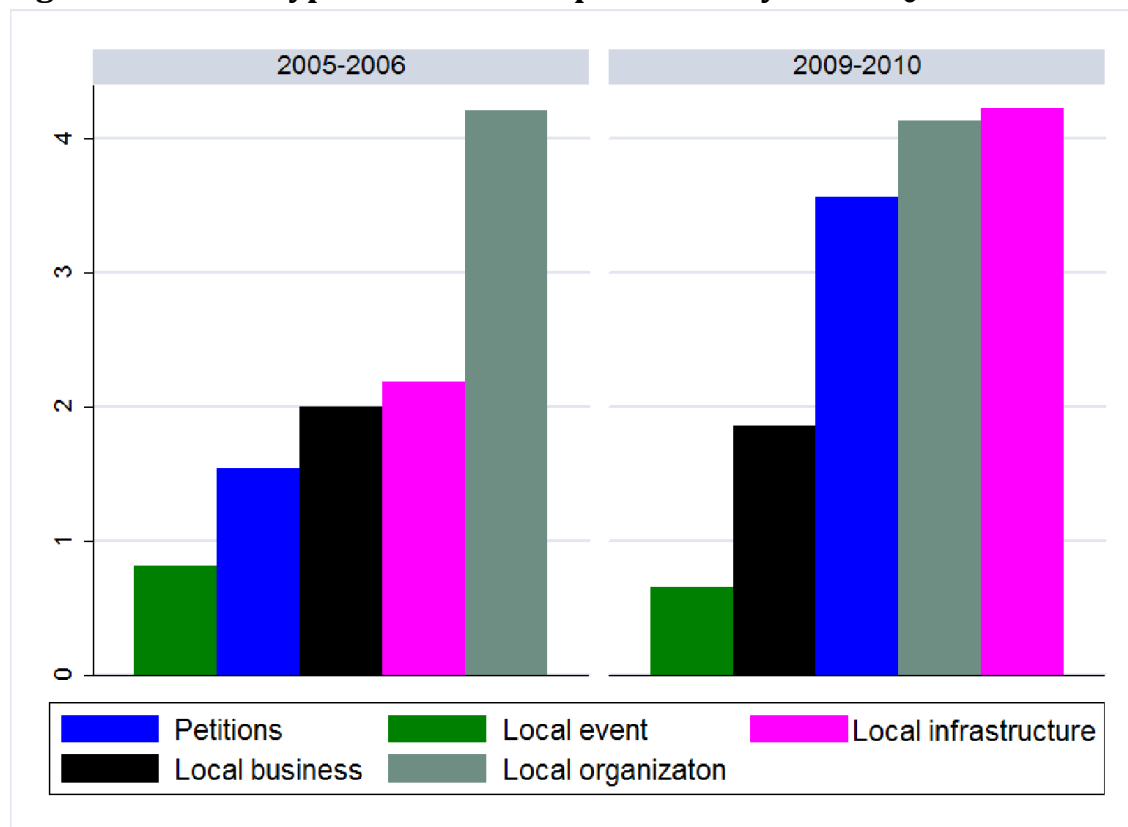


However, this increase is mostly due to a small number of MPs: 4% of the 313 legislators have asked together 1743 local questions and interpellations. This number amounts to almost half of all constituency questions asked in 2009-2010 and is equivalent to 71% of the local questions raised by the 2005-2006 MPs. Moreover, the proportion of MPs that have not asked any constituency questions remained virtually the same in both legislatures, at approximately 32%.

### ***3.4.3 Accounting for constituency question types: from allocation responsiveness to symbolic representation.***

Five categories were used to assess the topic of the constituency questions. All those dealing with requests or cases surrounding individuals living in the MP's county were labeled 'petitions'. The local organization category comprises both problems of local authorities and institutions (city halls, health agencies, hospitals etc) and issues concerning local NGOs. If the question referred to public works such as repairing roads, school or hospital infrastructures in the MP's county then it was included in the local infrastructure category. Last but not least, I coded whether the issues mentioned in questions related to local businesses (e.g. problems of local farmers or industries) and local events (e.g. a local festival). The five categories correspond roughly to the major types of actions that constituency service can be deconstructed to: casework (petitions), allocation responsiveness (local infrastructure questions), symbolic representation (questions about local events) and representation of local organized interests (with a further distinction between business and non-business interests).

**Figure 3.3: What types of issues are promoted by local PQs?**



A two sample T Test showed that the mean number of parliamentary questions asked about local facilities (i.e. investments in roads, water sewage, educational or medical infrastructure) has increased significantly from 2.2 in the term before the electoral system change to 4.2\*\* in the 2008-2012 term. Thus, it seems that this type of parliamentary tool is increasingly used for allocation responsiveness i.e. pork barrel, or for clientelistic purposes. Generally, this evidence represent a first partial corroboration of the hypothesis that the interest of individual MPs for financial allocations directed towards their counties has increased after the electoral reform.

As expected, given the partisan bias in the allocation of governmental funds for local investments in Romania (Volintiru 2012) opposition MPs asked twice as many local infrastructure questions than MPs who were part of the parliamentary majority.

In addition, the average number of questions and interpellations following petitions of citizens, or discussions with them at surgeries more than doubled: from 1.5 to 3.5. Possible explanations refer to the fact that after the electoral reform and the enhanced logic of individual representation and accountability citizens feel more entitled to petition their representative, but it could also be that the SMD-elected MPs are organizing more surgeries and are generally more accessible. The most frequent topics of the questions based on petitions referred to pension recalculation, property restitution and citizenship issues.

This development can generally be regarded as positive but there also obvious limitations associated with it. Interviews with MPs have emphasized that most of the requests, made at surgeries by Romanian citizens, fall beyond an individual MP's prerogatives (Coman 2013; Ionascu 2013: 234-236). This was corroborated by an MP assistant who told me that: 'many of the citizens who come to the surgeries have judicial problems, MPs cannot help them that much; citizens also come to complain about what the mayor is doing or not doing'<sup>49</sup>. From a normative point of view this trend could also be problematic if it fosters patron-client relations (between the MP and underprivileged voters) or corruption. On a different dimension, the increase in one-to-one interactions with constituents has implications on the time that legislators can spend on other constituency activities.

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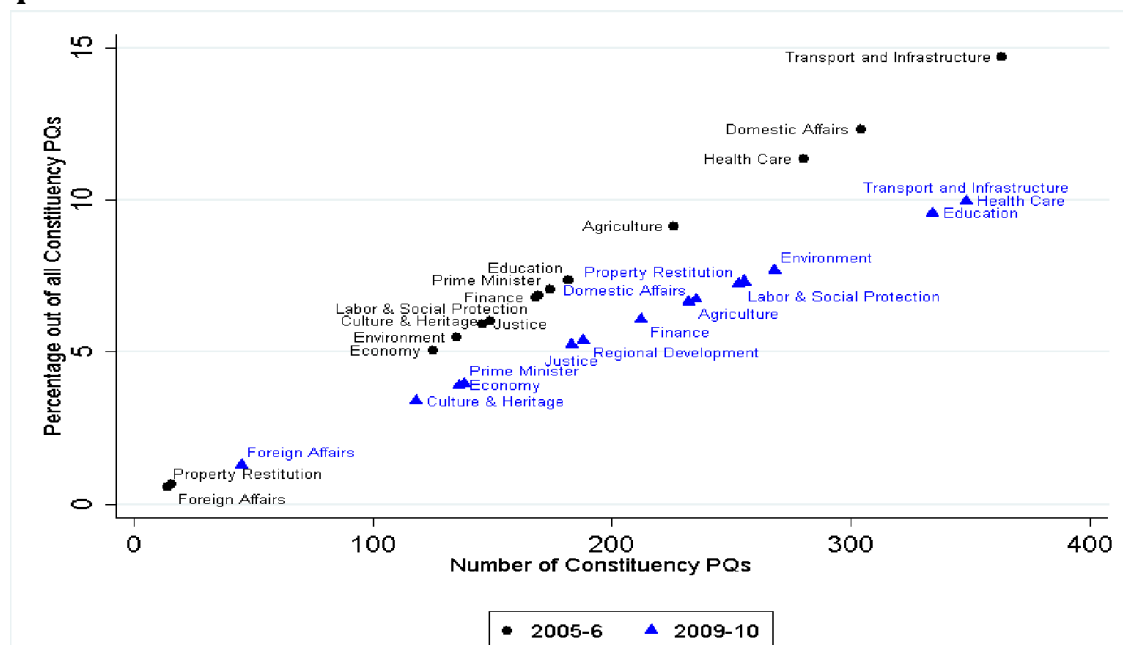
<sup>49</sup> Interview made on June 18th 2015.

For the other three categories there are virtually no changes in the quantity of questions and interpellations asked. These preliminary findings regarding the changes in the patterns of constituency questioning following the electoral reform will be re-tested much more comprehensively via multivariate regression models ran on the matched samples.

### 3.4.4 Constituency questions' addressees

Figure 3.4 below indicates the number and the corresponding percentages out of all constituency questions received by ministries and national agencies in the two periods analyzed. As it can be seen all the members of the executive, including the Prime Ministers, are questioned on local issues.

**Figure 3.4: Which departments and agencies received most constituency questions?**



Not surprisingly, given the topics' distribution mentioned previously, the Transport and Infrastructure Department received most constituency questions in both legislative cycles. In most cases, the departments were asked more constituency questions after 2008 than previously. Two of the four exceptions are explained by the creation in 2008 of the Regional Development Department which took charge of some of the public works investments previously supervised by the Transport and the Domestic Affairs departments.

Another important difference has to do with the large increase in both the raw number (approximately 18 times higher) and the proportion of constituency questions addressed after the electoral reform to the Property Restitution Agency.

### **3.5 Multivariate analyses**

#### ***3.5.1 Matching parliamentarians***

In order to isolate the impact of the electoral reform - which can be considered the treatment - the pre- and post-reform MPs needed to be matched on all relevant characteristics that could influence their engagement in constituency service. In line with the advice in the literature the variables affected by the treatment – in our case local politics experience, party leadership office and party affiliation – were excluded from the matching model to avoid post-treatment bias (Ho et al 2007: 216; Stuart 2010: 5). The judgment was that local politicians (i.e. those having served in local political offices or being local party leaders) were much more likely to get elected as a consequence of the electoral reform, since the SMD-based formula favored candidates with high name recognition and political and business connections at local level. Moreover, one could

also expect different probabilities of winning a seat for politicians of parties that have opposed the reform (PRM) compared with those which have supported it (PDL and PNL) (Gherghina et al 2013).

The matching procedure which achieved the best balance was genetic matching. It was implemented using the 'Matching' (Sekhon 2011) and 'rgeoud' (Mebane and Sekhon 2011) R packages. Out of the 313 treated cases (i.e. MPs elected after the electoral reform) 308 were matched to 135 of the 312 control units (i.e. MPs elected in the last term before the reform). Thus, less than 2% of observations in the treatment group did not receive matches and were discarded.

Table 3.1 below evaluates the closeness of the matched groups by using summary statistics and two balance tests. Both tests are based on the rule that absolute standardized differences of means should not be higher than a 'caliper': .25 of the standard deviation of the control group (Stuart 2010: 12; Ho et al 2007: 220).

**Table 3.1: Matching balance summary statistics and tests**

Pretreatment covariates	Means Treated	Means Control	SD Control	Mean Diff.	Std. bias (I)	Std. bias (II)
District magnitude	9.546	9.455	6.282	0.091	1.480	0.014
Parachuted	0.097	0.078	0.269	0.020	0.048	0.072
Years in Parliament	2.556	2.305	3.757	0.251	0.688	0.067
Years in party	8.916	9.688	4.920	-0.773	0.457	-0.157
Electoral security	0.001	-0.023	0.923	0.024	0.206	0.026
Party switcher	0.114	0.114	0.319	0.000	0.080	0.000
PPG leader	0.081	0.046	0.209	0.036	0.017	0.171
Average vote att.	71.065	71.144	16.247	-0.080	3.982	-0.005
Government MP	0.737	0.750	0.435	-0.013	0.096	-0.030
Male	0.890	0.906	0.293	-0.016	0.057	-0.055



The first measure of bias is computed by subtracting the absolute value of the mean difference of the treated and control groups from what amounts to a quarter of a standard deviation of the control group. The result should be positive and this is the case for all variables.

The second measure of bias is computed by dividing the mean difference of the treated and control groups to the standard deviation of the control group (Lyall 2010). This standardized difference of means should not be higher than 0.25 (one fourth of a standard deviation) and indeed this rule is met for all the variables. The relatively good balance achieved is also illustrated by the distribution of propensity scores in Figure 3.5: there is an adequate overlap between the propensity scores of the two matched units.

**Figure 3.5: Distribution of propensity scores after matching**

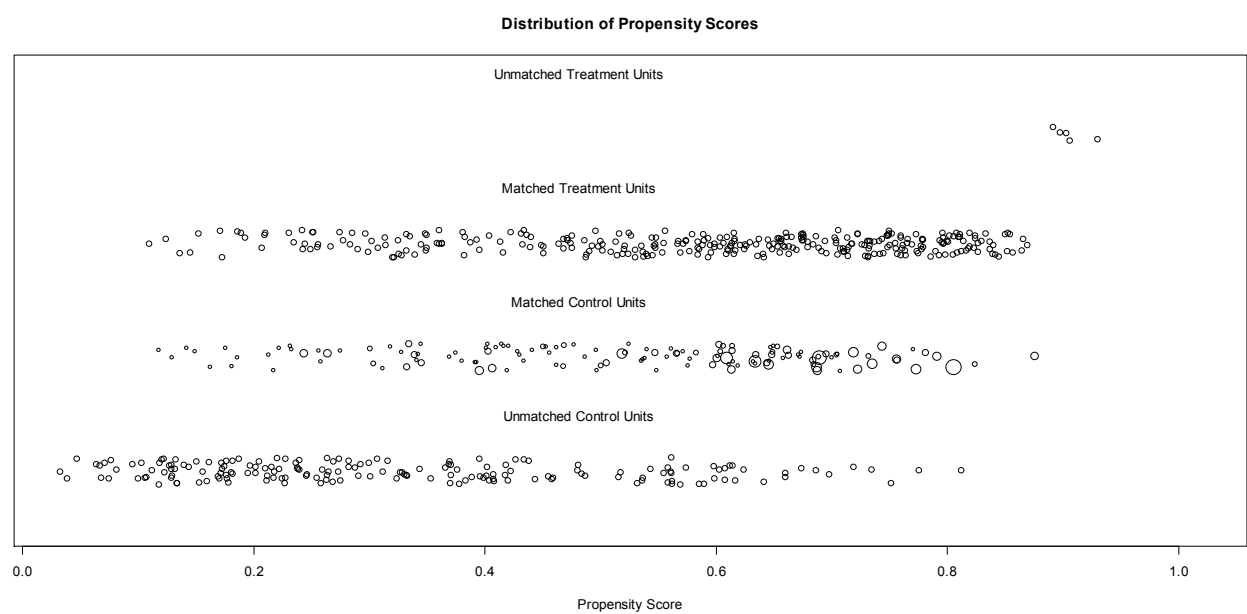


Table 3.2 below includes the results of the negative binomial regressions run using the matched data set. Neither in the baseline, nor in the full model accounting for the total

number of constituency PQs did the treatment variable achieve statistical significance, although the estimates point in the expected direction.

Thus, it appears that by itself the reform has not increased the number of constituency-oriented parliamentary questions. Because of this, it is safe to reject hypothesis 1 and to consider plausible the explanation regarding the effect of the talk about reform. An additional explanation can be discovered by comparing the findings of the other five models presented in table 3.2, which assess whether the treatment influenced the usage of constituency questions for different types of responsiveness.

First, these models fully corroborate hypothesis 2: MPs elected after the electoral reform ask in average 1.8 times more questions and interpellations following citizens' petitions and 1.7 times more questions and interpellations referring to local infrastructure issues from their district, respectively. Therefore, we can conclude that the electoral reform has increased significantly both casework and allocation responsiveness.

Second, for the other types of responsiveness the effect of the reform is rather negative, but does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. These opposing effects could cancel out when one only considers the aggregate number of constituency questions. This fact emphasizes the mistake that virtually all studies have committed in failing to differentiate between parliamentary questions based on the triggering mechanisms or the type of actor whose interests are being represented and defended.

**Table 3.2: The impact of the electoral reform on constituency service and types of local responsiveness**

	All local PQs (M1)	All local PQs (M2)	Local petition PQs	Local infrast. PQs	Local event PQs	Local business PQs	Local org. PQs
<i>MP elected after reform</i>	1.309	1.204	1.771**	1.678**	0.769	0.755	0.995
District magnitude/ N. MPs same county		0.920***	0.913***	0.945***	0.965*	0.946***	0.927***
Local politics experience		1.461*	1.279	1.727***	1.435	1.681**	1.526**
Parachuted		0.244***	0.207***	0.409***	0.738	0.267***	0.392***
Years in Parliament		0.995	1.018	0.966	0.968	0.984	0.984
Years in party		0.991	0.963	1.015	1.011	0.983	0.972
Electoral security		0.963	0.962	0.963	1.035	1.060	1.080
Party switcher		0.789	0.322***	1.137	1.136	0.990	0.824
Local party leader		0.706	0.418**	0.940	0.480*	0.741	0.736
National party leader		0.646	0.609	0.799	0.617	0.791	0.760
PPG leader		1.485	1.359	1.500	1.249	1.487	1.753*
Average vote attendance		1.020**	1.027**	1.002	1.011	1.019**	1.019**
Government MP		0.819	1.225	0.564**	1.025	0.977	0.863
Male		0.755	0.561*	0.756	0.620	1.277	0.683
Lalpha	1.142	1.003	1.484	1.009	1.339	1.202	1.025
Maximum Likelihood R <sup>2</sup>	.005	.125	.148	.124	.033	.087	.095
Observations	443	443	443	443	443	443	443

\* Significance at \* p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

\*\* Cell entries are incident rate ratios.

\*\*\*Observations were weighted with the weights assigned by the genetic matching

The following section will concentrate on the possible redistributive effects of the reform, more precisely on hypotheses 3 to 7 which sought to establish whether the various constituency service determinants have different effects under the two electoral systems. These tests will be conducted using the entire samples of MPs.

### ***3.5.2 Redistributive effects of the electoral reform***

To make easier the understanding of the incidence rate ratios presented in Table 3.3, Figure 3.6 below illustrates the estimated effects using 95% confidence intervals.<sup>50</sup> Intervals that cross the vertical line corresponding to an odds ratio of 1 imply that the corresponding effects have not reached the 95% statistical significance level.

The Carey and Shugart (1995) district magnitude hypothesis is corroborated in the Romanian closed list PR context. Thus, running margins indicated that an MP who represented a multi-member district with the magnitude of 4, such as Covasna, asked on average 1.5 times more local questions than a parliamentarian from Prahova (magnitude 12) and 3 times more constituency questions than a Bucharest MP (magnitude 28).

After the electoral reform a similar phenomenon takes place: thus the higher the number of representatives elected from the same county (i.e. what represented the district magnitude prior to the reform), the lower the MP's engagement in constituency service. Running margins with the same parameters as in the above example indicated that an MP from a county that elects 4 representatives in the Chamber of Deputies asked on average 2 times more local questions than an MP from a county with 12 representatives

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<sup>50</sup> This was done with the help of the user written STATA command *parmest* (Newson 2003).

and 9 times more such questions than a Bucharest MP (the capital is divided in 28 SMDs).

This finding makes sense because it seems MPs still perceive the entire county as their constituency. A proof in this direction is the fact that only a very small fraction of the local questions refer strictly to issues which happen in the electoral district that elected them. One could explain this situation as a result of inertia or of adaptation to the demand side of politics forming at the other end of the representation chain: citizens petition and visit the surgeries held by MPs from their county, but not necessarily their district (Coman 2013: 484).

**Table 3.3: Determinants of the Number of Constituency Questions Before and After Reform**

	2005-6	2005-6	2009-10	2009-10
District magnitude/ N. MPs same county	0.956***	0.950***	0.911***	0.903***
Local politics experience	1.617***	1.593**	1.150	0.921
Parachuted	0.356***	0.349***	0.217***	0.218***
Years in Parliament	0.909***	0.909***	1.014	1.011
Years in party	0.949***	0.957**	1.022	1.021
Electoral security	0.954	1.079	0.889	1.186
MP won plurality	-	-	-	0.531*
Party switcher	1.124	0.931	0.769	0.797
Local party leader	1.234	1.258	0.749	0.826
National party leader	1.172	1.222	0.538	0.481**
PPG leader	0.531	0.407**	1.390	1.625
Average vote attendance	1.010*	1.009	1.026**	1.040***
Government MP	0.601***	0.350**	1.105	0.509
Male	0.638**	0.636**	1.045	1.014
PDL		1.754		0.796
PNL		2.198*		0.680
UDMR		1.669		0.065***
PC		2.987**		8.748***
PRM		2.127*		-
Lalpha	0.740	0.713	1.113	1.007
Maximum Likelihood R <sup>2</sup>	.210	.225	.127	.204
Observations	312	312	313	313

\* Significance at \* p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

\*\* Cell entries are incident rate ratios.

The same model was also run alternatively with the number of constituency questions corresponding to each of the five types of local issues as dependent variable. For each of these regressions the effect of district magnitude remained negative and statistically significant. Thus, allocation responsiveness, involvement in casework or in the representation of organized interests in the constituency – all decrease as district magnitude increases. These additional findings corroborate with legislative behavior data the results of the analyses based on self-reported parliamentary data, authored by André and Depauw (2013: 14).

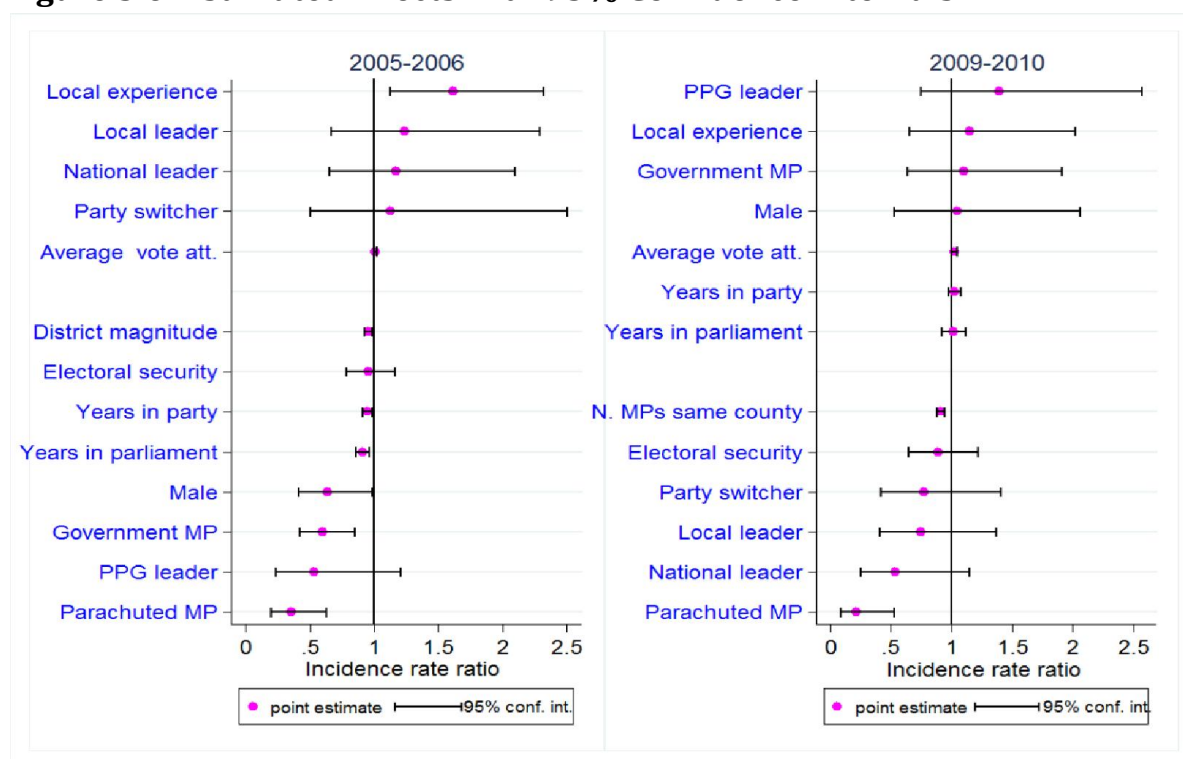
As hypothesized local politics experience makes a difference for submitting constituency questions only before the electoral reform. Thus, the pre-reform MPs that had experience in local politics appear to have submitted 1.6 times more local oriented questions and interpellations than the rest.<sup>51</sup> The electoral system change facilitated, as expected, the election of more politicians with a record of work in local politics: after 2008, 53% of the MPs are in such a position compared to 39% in 2004.<sup>52</sup> This increase as well as the change in the expectations regarding representation roles have probably diminish the importance of this variable. For the latter part of the explanation it is also important to note the fact that the other two socialization variables also fail to make any impact on constituency questioning after the electoral system change.

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<sup>51</sup> Unfortunately, the unavailability of detailed data on the duration of MPs' local political careers prevents one from assessing more exactly the impact that this variable has for the involvement in constituency service activities.

<sup>52</sup> A T test showed that the difference is highly statistically significant.

**Figure 3.6: Estimated Effects with 95% Confidence Intervals**



Before the electoral reform MPs representing other counties than those where they lived asked in average almost three times less constituency questions than local MPs. The number of parachuted MPs has not declined dramatically after the electoral system change, the difference amounting to only 4 observations: from 34 to 30 parachuted MPs. Nevertheless, the effect of this variable is indeed stronger after the reform: the parachuted MPs asked in average almost 5 times less local questions than the local MPs. The profiles of the MPs who make up this group corroborate the explanation advanced earlier for the sharpening of this effect after the reform: parachuting became the privilege of resource-rich politicians, who do not need to cultivate a personal vote based on casework and constituency service. Thus one finds on this list actual or former ministers (e.g. V. Ponta, C. Popescu-Tariceanu, D. Chitoiu, E. Nicolaescu, R. Stroe, M.

Voicu), politicians specialized in various policy domains (I. Iancu) or MPs who have strong ties to party leaders (M. Mitrea, R. Turcan, R. Negoita, A. Saftoiu).

As hinted already, and in line with our expectations, the socialization variables have an impact only on the pre-reform patterns of constituency questioning. Thus, running margins showed that MPs who were absolute newcomers in the last Parliament elected under closed PR asked in average 2.6 times more constituency questions than their colleagues who had already been in the legislature for 10 years before their 2004 election. In the post-reform models, the odds ratios for this variable are very close to 1, which indicates an insignificant relationship. A similar story emerges with respect to the effect of party socialization. Thus, during the PR era, a 10 year difference in party socialization translated into 1.7 times fewer constituency questions for party veterans as opposed to newcomers. The effect disappears altogether after the electoral system change.

As expected electoral security did not influence engagement in constituency questioning when the MPs were elected under closed list PR, but contrary to our expectations the effect does not appear either after the electoral reform. Nevertheless, introducing another proxy: whether the MP won or not the plurality of votes in the district, does make a significant difference for the post-reform model. Thus, compared with MPs who finished first the SMD race, their colleagues who received the seat despite attracting only the second, third or even fourth share of votes in the district are two times more active in submitting questions on local issues. The MPs who failed to win the plurality can definitely be included in the category of electorally insecure, and all the mentioned arguments for which they should engage in building a personal reputation apply.



However, their constituency service responsiveness might also be a psychological consequence of the electoral system – since the media as well as the public tended to treat them as second class MPs (Chiru and Enyedi 2013). Assessing the degree to which this unintended effect of the electoral reform is motivated by pragmatic calculations, psychological reasons or both could constitute an interesting avenue for further, qualitative research.

In three of the four models presented in Table 3.3 parliamentary party switching appears to decrease the engagement in constituency service but the effect does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. Thus, it seems extremely unlikely that the wellbeing of the district was ever one of the major motivations for switching or that it became one after the electoral reform.

Being a local party leader<sup>53</sup> does not have a significant effect on the submission of local questions and interpellations, irrespective of the type of electoral system used. National party leaders appear twice less likely than the rest to engage in the representation of local interests after the electoral reform, whereas the same effect is registered for PPG leaders during the PR era.

The reform has not changed the relation between plenary session participation and constituency service engagement. Thus, both before and after 2008 the most active

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<sup>53</sup> Related to local party leaders, in models not included here I controlled whether the president of the county council was from the same party as the MP. These politicians, labeled 'local barons' by the media, are entitled to distribute funds for local projects and they also concentrated a large amount of informal power. The expectation was that MPs sharing the same party affiliation would need to a lesser extent to turn to members of the cabinet to advance local interests since they can use the party relation with the president of the county council. The findings did not support the argument.

MPs when it comes to plenary vote participation tend also to be the ones asking more constituency questions and interpellations.

Opposition MPs appear to ask more local questions than their colleagues who are members of the parliamentary majority but the effect reaches statistical significance only for the first two models. The explanation for the absence of the effect in the second legislative term has probably to do with the fact that in 2009 the cabinet was a grand coalition formed by the two largest parties at the time, PDL and PSD.

Similarly, the expectation that female MPs would ask more constituency questions than their male colleagues is corroborated only for the pre-reform models. The party dummy controls do not produce many surprises. The MPs of the Hungarian ethnic party, UDMR are the least interested in constituency service, which seems logical given their prioritization of collective policies for their community. With the partial exception of PNL deputies, MPs of the small parties (PRM, PC) tend to submit more constituency questions than the rest.

### **3.6 Conclusion**

Table 3.4 below summarizes the main findings of the chapter and compares them with the effects hypothesized initially. Thus, all but one of the hypotheses were corroborated. The most important finding is that the reform has not modified the frequency of all local questions, but it has increased substantially the amount of local questions triggered by casework and allocation responsiveness.

Moreover, the effects of a number of determinants of constituency questioning changed after the electoral reform. Thus the introduction of SMDs virtually canceled the impact of

previous socialization (either institutional - in party or Parliament, or in local politics) and increased the negative effect of 'parachuted' candidatures.

**Table 3.4: Review of hypotheses and findings**

	Total Number of Local PQs		Local Petition PQs		Local infra. PQs	
	<i>Hypo.</i>	<i>Finding</i>	<i>Hypo.</i>	<i>Finding</i>	<i>Hypo.</i>	<i>Finding</i>
Electoral Reform	+	0	+	+	+	+
District magnitude/ N. MPs same county	-/-	-/-				
Local politics experience	+/0	+/0				
Parachuted	-/--	-/--				
Years in Parliament	-/0	-/0				
Years in party	-/0	-/0				

\*Legend: + positive effect; - negative effect; -- stronger negative effect; 0 no effect; / before and after the reform

Moving beyond hypothesis testing, the findings also emphasized the importance of subjective understandings of the constituency and of the type of seat an MP was able to win. For the former the entire county remained the reference point, despite the introduction of SMDs. For the latter, winning the seat without winning the SMD battle makes MPs devote more time to asking constituency questions, an effect which is not fully accounted by their electoral marginality.

This chapter speaks directly to the literature on electoral system reforms by collecting various dimensions of change in the behavior of legislators, by distinguishing between the effect of the talk about reform and that of the reform itself and by illustrating the power of unintended consequences (e.g. the local orientation of the MPs winning seats after redistribution). All these elements uncover a much more complex picture than the

one usually assumed not only by the actors of such reforms: politicians and civil society activists, but also by the scholars dealing with them.

Additionally, the chapter also made a contribution to the literature on local parliamentary questions by illustrating how important it is to differentiate them based on the responsiveness mechanism or the type of actor whose interests are being represented and defended.

Obviously, electoral reforms do not consume all their effects over night, while some of the effects already consumed might not be observable with this type of data. Future research would certainly benefit from bringing into picture more qualitative insights with respect to the MPs' motivations and their perceptions of the electoral reform effects on voters' expectations and the legislative behavior standards with respect to constituency service.

The next chapter will analyze the constituency questioning behavior of the second cohort of legislators elected under this original mixed member proportional system in 2012, accounting also for the campaigning strategies of these parliamentarians.

### *Epilogue*

In late June 2015 the Romanian Parliament reverted the 2008 reform by adopting a bill which states that legislators would be once again elected via closed list PR. Party leaders across the political spectrum argued that the new change will reduce campaign costs, will strengthen the parties and the ties between the candidates and the parties, will help select MPs of a better quality, improve parliamentary professionalization and will produce a smaller, fixed number of MPs (Badea 2015; Barbu 2015; *Hotnews* 2015).

Ironically and in staunch contrast with the findings of this chapter, in arguing the need to return to the closed lists the leader of the second largest party criticized the SMD-elected MPs for not engaging enough in constituency service: 'The quality of the current legislature is really weak. The [MPs'] commitment to work on behalf of their constituencies does not exist. I don't know many MPs who hold surgeries at their parliamentary office' (Ilie 2015, my translation).

It is rather obvious that the party leader's reference to the alleged low levels of constituency service is one of a strategic nature, which has been made hoping that it would convince as many voters as possible that the 2008 electoral reform failed to reach one of its primary goals: strengthening the constituent - MP linkage. In turn, the general public would find it easier to accept the return to the closed list PR system that was repudiated by virtually all parties at the time of the 2008 reform.

## **CHAPTER 4: CAMPAIGN PERSONALIZATION AND CONSTITUENCY SERVICE UNDER LIMITED PARLIAMENTARY PROFESSIONALIZATION**

### **4.1 Introduction**

Previous legislative studies have illustrated the link between campaign behavior and policy positions taken by legislators through roll call voting, bill initiation and co-sponsorship, especially in the Congress (Sulkin and Swigger 2008; Sulkin 2011). Moreover, scholars have analyzed the extent to which legislators keep the policy promises made during campaign (Sulkin 2011) or take up the main issues their challengers had campaigned on, in what is usually called 'issue uptake' (Sulkin 2005). Other studies have analyzed the manner in which legislators present and explain their work to constituents between campaigns, via the so-called 'presentational styles' (Grimmer 2013). However, no study has linked campaign behavior with the degree of MPs' involvement in constituency service. Drawing on an original dataset that combines the responses of 173 Members of Parliament (MPs) participating in the 2012 Romanian Candidate Study (Popescu and Chiru 2013) with their patterns of asking parliamentary questions in the first year of the legislative cycle, the present chapter does exactly this, following the theoretical model developed in the chapter on campaigns and constituency questions in Hungary.

This chapter goes one step further than the usual studies of candidate campaigning (Zittel and Gschwend 2008; Karlsen and Skogerbø 2015; De Winter and Baudewyns 2014; Eder et al 2014; Cross and Young 2014; Chiru 2015), which assess the degree

and the determinants of campaign localization (i.e. promoting a constituency agenda) and personalization (a candidate-centered as opposed to a party-focused campaign), by analyzing whether the two campaign characteristics influence the constituency service engagement of elected candidates. Thus, the central research question of this chapter asks: 'To what extent does campaign individualization and localization influence engagement in constituency service in a system with limited parliamentary professionalization potential?'.

For a number of reasons, which include peculiar legislative recruitment strategies and low local competitiveness in parliamentary elections and which will be detailed below, a clear and strong connection between personalized campaigning and engagement in casework and service is not particularly likely in Romania. Nevertheless, the various statistical tests included in the chapter indicate that this connection is present, fact which amounts to a theoretically valuable puzzle. Another interesting finding is that although there is no parliamentary specialization in terms of asking policy questions as opposed to constituency questions, the campaign decisions and activities only influence the engagement in constituency service.

The introduction is followed by a discussion of the theoretical framework and hypotheses of the study. The next section includes the research design: the variables' operationalization, a discussion of descriptive statistics and of the methods. This is followed by a brief presentation of the contents of the campaign pledges and of the topics of the parliamentary questions that deal with local issues. The analysis presents the results of the multivariate tests, i.e. negative binomial regression models. This is complemented by a section comprising further analyses of the main effects based on

simulations, a number of robustness checks and explanations regarding the mechanisms which drive the findings. The conclusion synthesizes the results of the study and points to further directions of research.

## **4.2 Theoretical framework**

Tracy Sulkin (2005: 4) argued convincingly that studies analyzing the linkages between the electoral and legislative arenas have been absent for a long time because of the division of labor in contemporary political science between the scholars studying voting behavior and campaign effects and those focusing on legislative behavior. Moreover, when such a linkage was integrated in legislative theory it happened only through a conception of forward looking, re-election oriented behavior: legislators cultivate a personal vote, accumulating locally relevant achievements that they will exploit in the next campaign (Mayhew 1974). Thus, until very recently retrospective theories of how campaign experiences shape legislative behavior after election have been totally absent (Sulkin 2005: 4-5).

Adapting the traditional instrumentalist, rational choice perspective to include formative campaign experiences, one could argue for the need to close the circle and take into account a complete campaign - legislative behavior - campaign sequence. Thus, MPs should follow up on the constituency related promises they made in the previous campaign by engaging in service, which in turn will help them consolidate their reputation and increase reelection chances. On a different dimension, it should be easier for them to do this than to achieve policy responsiveness. For the latter an MP would have to mobilize colleagues or convince party leaders to support the



implementation of policy promises - a much more complex game of collective bargaining and collective action (Shepsle and Weingast 1994).

In this chapter, the main interest lies on the behavioral consequences of two types of campaign experiences: the extent in which the overall strategy is individualized, emphasizing candidate qualities as opposed to being party-focused and the degree of localism or district-specificity in the candidate's campaign agenda. The former is commonly known as 'campaign norm', while the latter is usually referred to as 'constituency agenda' (Zittel and Gschwend 2008).

Before discussing the main arguments and hypotheses we will introduce briefly a number of contextual factors that could shape the relation between campaigning and legislative behavior in Romania. Unlike in Hungary, in Romania the original mixed member electoral formula adopted in 2008 does not clearly separate MPs into list and district parliamentarians. This means all MPs are formally tied to a Single Member District<sup>54</sup>, which they have to look after. Although voters perceive constituency service favorably in both countries (Ilonszki and Schwarcz 2013: 60; Badescu *et al* 2008) a clear, strong connection between personalized campaigning and engagement in casework and service is not very likely in Romania.

The campaign connection could be weaker in Romania than in other countries because of the continuous decrease of competitiveness at local level in parliamentary elections: in most of the country's towns and villages one of the three major parties (PSD, PDL and PNL) tends to monopolize the votes. The share of localities in which the first-ranked

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<sup>54</sup> At the 2012 elections there were 100 cases in which two mandates were allocated in the same 'single member district', and 4 cases in which three politicians got to represent the same district. This happened because of the proportional character of the electoral law and the fact that Social Liberal Union (USL) won directly the vast majority of districts.

party has won less than 40% of the votes has plummeted from 65% in 1996 to 19% in 2008 and 4% in 2012 (Ciobanu 2013: 246-247). Thus, campaigning implies in many cases speaking to captive audiences of voters mobilized primarily through patronage and clientelistic mechanisms, which the major parties have developed in the last two decades (Popescu and Soare 2014: 405; Protsyk and Matichescu 2011). Such audiences are less likely to evaluate the incumbent MPs based on their individual merits and activities or the number of campaign pledges they fulfilled.

Another reason for which the campaign - legislative behavior connection should be weaker in Romania has to do with party strategy. When faced with the prospect of spending a term in opposition, parties tend to use the Parliament as a shelter for local and national elites who have lost their executive offices (Stefan and Grecu 2013: 212). This can prevent parliamentary professionalization<sup>55</sup> and the development of constituency ties.

The structure of opportunities does not seem to be conducive to long parliamentary careers and parliamentary professionalization, fact which could damage the legislator-constituents relation. Thus many Romanian MPs prefer to continue their career in local or county politics particularly as mayors or presidents of county councils, as opposed to seeking parliamentary re-election (Stefan and Grecu, 2013). Indeed, a considerable number of MPs have resigned in the last two legislative cycles to run for such positions. The position of county council president is the most attractive since it implies deciding on the use of large amounts of money and the attribution of sizable public contracts.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> The Romanian Parliament had throughout the 1990s a rather subordinate role and serious difficulties to reach the required level of professionalization (Roper 2004).

<sup>56</sup> In the case of large counties the presidents are even more influent than a minister (Mihalache and Huiu 2012: 207).

Equally detrimental to the campaign - constituency service type of accountability could be the fact that at least some Romanian MPs' spend their time with extra-parliamentary business deals, which are not only formally incompatible with their parliamentary status, but also frequently illegal. Some scholars went so far as to claim that 'often what drove politics forward in Romania was the desire by highly motivated and resourceful people to channel public money into private hands' (Gallagher 2009: 7), which seems to be partially confirmed by the relatively large number of MPs involved in corruption scandals (Young 2011: 147; *Hotnews* 2014).

Last but not least, some authors emphasized the limited potential for a personal vote in Romania (Fesnic and Armeanu 2014) which could have a direct effect on the rationality of investing effort to fulfill personal campaign pledges. Indeed, it appears that only 15%<sup>57</sup> of the respondents of a post-electoral survey (Romanian Electoral Study 2012) said that who the candidate was mattered for their vote decision at the 2012 parliamentary elections.

If one would consider that most of the contextual factors discussed above lead MPs towards particularistic behavior, then it must be emphasized that it is not the kind of particularistic behavior that would benefit constituents or that could derive from campaign pledges. Moving beyond the context-specific counterarguments, what mechanisms should be present in order for the connection between candidate campaigning and constituency service engagement to work? The next paragraphs will deal with two distinct types of such mechanisms.

As mentioned, campaign individualization is understood first and foremost as a strategy of focusing the campaign on the candidate and her qualities as opposed to the party's

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<sup>57</sup> This share increases to 18.5% if we exclude the missing cases.

policies and record (Zittel and Gschwend 2008). Local ties with the constituency, such as residence or a local political career, are oftentimes the type of qualities candidates want to emphasize when they choose to personalize their campaigns (De Winter and Baudewyns 2014: 6). The second part of the argument is that candidates who had personalized their campaigns in this manner will be more likely to maintain and foster the personal vote they have received, by engaging in constituency service. Vice versa, a campaign focused on the party can go hand in hand with policy specialization and interest in national politics issues. In this case, it would be more reasonable to expect the MP to ask more parliamentary questions and interpellations dealing with nationally relevant issues and policies and less with local matters.

On the other hand, campaign personalization does not necessarily imply references to local credentials and it could be that candidates individualize their campaigns as part of the overall party strategy (Karlsen and Skogerbø 2015). However, this is rather unlikely in the analyzed case because the process of campaign individualization in Romania was strengthened by the electoral reform via two processes. Thus, the reform has introduced an element of intra-party competition between candidates with the same affiliation, who now fight against each other for a party seat in the redistribution stage (Roescu 2013). Furthermore, according to the country's most known political marketing consultants the reform has increased the direct communication of candidates with voters as opposed to integrated party campaigns in which mediated communication played an important role (Tudor 2008: 174-180).

*H.1: The more individualized the campaign strategy, the higher the number of constituency service questions raised by the MP.*

Promising to increase the welfare of the district and following up on these promises through constituency questions can be considered a normatively positive scenario, falling in the category of what Jane Mansbridge labeled 'promissory representation' (2003: 515), or traditional accountability (Mansbridge 2003: 525). In Romania promises related to the welfare of the district have become more and more common in the candidate campaigns for an MP seat, particularly after the 2008 electoral reform (Tudor 2008: 180; Chiru and Ciobanu 2009: 224). The perception of several observers, including journalists and civil society activists, was that many of these promises are more appropriate for a mayoral candidate than for someone running for the national Parliament (Mosneagu et al 2008: 8). The frequency and precise character of candidate pledges referring to the constituency is likely to bring a particular type of legislative behavior. Thus, we would expect a large number of MPs that had run such localized campaigns to ask local oriented parliamentary questions. Conversely, the minority of MPs who afforded not to make any district or county-related promises, are certainly less likely to need, from a re-election perspective, to engage in constituency service.

*H.2: Candidates who had promoted a local agenda during the campaign will ask as MPs a higher number of constituency service questions.*

Beyond the two hypotheses, the theoretical model takes into account seven other factors that the relevant scholarship considers influential for engagement in constituency service: the type of election or electoral vulnerability, the number of MPs

elected from the same county, incumbency, parliamentary seniority, experience in local politics, ideological distance from the party and party affiliation.

In non-preferential, low district magnitude systems, electoral vulnerability makes MPs spend more time in their district (André et al 2015). In the Romanian context the less vulnerable MPs are those who have received the seat after winning the district race. At the 2012 elections 71% of the deputies and 74% of the senators were in the position to gain their seat after obtaining the plurality of votes in the district (King and Marian 2014: 312). A dummy variable controlling for the type of election is introduced in the model.

I also control for two factors that previous chapters have highlighted as important determinants of the parliamentary representation of local interests. First, the chapter on the effects of the Romanian electoral reform on asking constituency questions has emphasized that after 2008 the number of MPs elected from the same county has virtually the same effect as district magnitude in the PR era: the higher the number, the lower the engagement in constituency service. Second, the chapter on the Hungarian parliamentary campaigns and constituency questions has shown that incumbents submit more constituency questions than newcomers. In Romania the situation might differ because of the higher rate of turnover (Chiru 2010a) and because multiple candidatures, which make easier the re-election of incumbents in Hungary, are absent.

The theoretical model also includes two career path control variables. On the one hand, parliamentary seniority is likely to decrease the engagement in constituency service because the veteran MPs have been socialized under closed list PR, which is conducive to a legislative behavior in which MPs are first and foremost agents of the party, not of the constituents (Bawn and Thies 2003; Gherghina and Chiru 2014;

Dudzinska et al 2014). On the other hand, a local politics background should have the reverse effect, fostering the engagement in constituency service (Russo 2011: 296-299).

Ideological distance from the party was shown to influence the Romanian legislators' representational roles (Chiru and Enyedi 2014) as well as the Hungarian MPs' likelihood to ask constituency questions (see previous chapter), and because of this I introduced it in the model. Last but not least, I control for the partisan affiliation of the MPs since different party organizational cultures and electoral contexts (e.g. high incumbent party unpopularity) can influence both the degree of campaign personalization (De Winter and Baudewyns 2014, Eder et al. 2014) and the engagement in constituency service (André et al 2014b: 170).

### **4.3 Research Design**

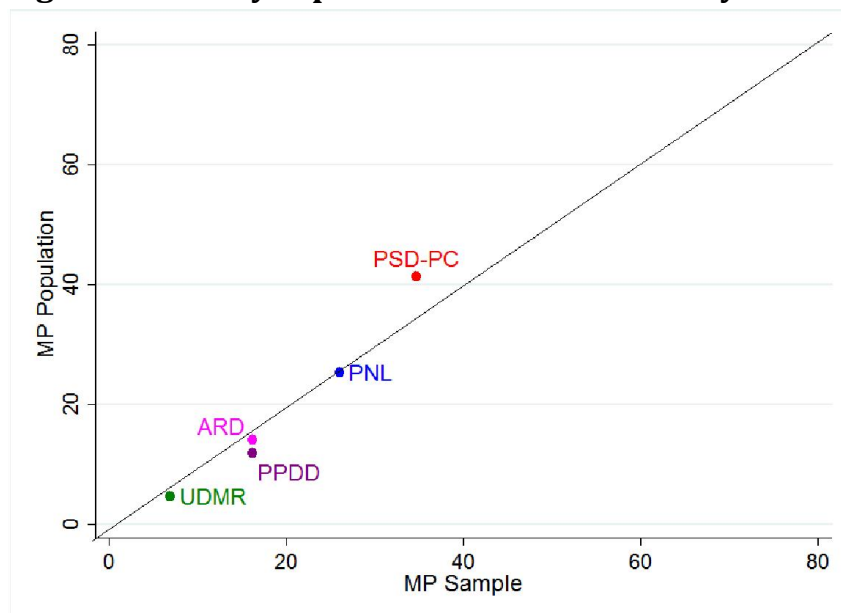
Within the framework of the Comparative Candidate Survey, the Romanian Candidate Study (Popescu and Chiru 2013) targeted all the 1802 candidates of the parties and alliances which won seats at the December 2012 parliamentary elections: The Social Liberal Union (USL)<sup>58</sup>, The Just Romania Alliance (ARD)<sup>59</sup>, the People's Party Dan Diaconescu (PPDD), and the Democratic Alliance of Hungarians in Romania (UDMR). Overall, 407 candidates answered the survey, the response rate being 23%. Most responses were received via the online survey (393) and only a few (14) via self-administered paper questionnaires.

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<sup>58</sup> The Social Liberal Union (USL) was the pre-electoral coalition formed by PSD, PC, UNPR and PNL that won the 2012 elections.

<sup>59</sup> The Just Romania Alliance (ARD) was the pre-electoral coalition formed by the former incumbent party, PDL with two small non-parliamentary parties, the Civic Force (FC) and the Christian-Democratic National Peasant Party (PNTCD).

**Figure 4.1: Party representativeness of surveyed MPs**



Approximately one in five respondents was an incumbent (81) and 234 were non-elected candidates (58% of all). Figure 4.1 above illustrates the high degree of party representativeness of the sample of elected candidates. The only MPs that are slightly under-represented are those of PSD-PC. Overall, the completed sample of the candidate survey was also highly representative of the population of candidates with respect to gender and incumbency status, the deviations ranging between 3.1 and 5.1%.<sup>60</sup>

For the purpose of the present chapter, the responses of the 173 elected candidates (both deputies and senators) were matched with data on their parliamentary questions. Thus, all the parliamentary questions and interpellations they asked in 2013 were coded to establish whether they referred to issues concerning their district and to categorize their topic. In doing so I applied the same two stage coding process described in the

<sup>60</sup> I used the Duncan Index of Dissimilarity (Duncan and Duncan 1955) to measure the differences between the completed sample and the population distributions of party affiliation, gender, incumbency status and election outcome. Table 4.2 in the Appendix presents the findings.



chapter on the effect of the Romanian electoral reform on constituency service. Thus, the automatic coding was followed by manual checking and coding of the local topics according to the type of responsiveness they embody. Once again I used the framework for coding localism developed by the Comparative Policy Agendas Project (Baumgartner et al. 2006) and adapted by Martin (2011).

#### ***4.3.1 Operationalization of variables, descriptive statistics and methods***

A number of clarifications are needed about the operationalization of three variables beyond the explanations presented in the variable codebook from Appendix 4.1. Given that the sample includes both members of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, the variable 'Number of MPs in the same county' is equal to the total number of deputies and senators in that county. Local politics experience is the sum of the number of years the MP had a local political office (e.g. local or county councilor, mayor etc.). Ideological distance is computed as the absolute difference between the MP's self-placement on a 0-10 left-right scale and the party's perceived ideological position on the same scale. The latter is represented by the mean of the party placement scores assigned by all the candidates of the respective party.

Table 4.1 below presents descriptive statistics for the dependent, independent and control variables. These statistics shows that most MPs had promoted constituency-specific topics in their campaigns and that a slightly party-centered campaign norm prevailed.

**Table 4.1: Descriptive statistics of dependent variable and covariates**

	Mean	Std. deviation	Min.	Max.	N
Number constituency questions	7.37	14.94	0	119	173
Campaign Norm	4.65	2.50	0	10	166
Constituency agenda	0.78	0.42	0	1	166
MP won plurality	0.66	0.48	0	1	173
N. MPs same county	17.51	11.31	6	52	173
Years in Parliament	2.73	4.54	0	22	173
Incumbent	0.34	0.48	0	1	173
Local politics experience	3.42	4.70	0	22	173
Ideological Distance	1.34	1.10	0.04	5.59	153

Moreover, the table makes clear that asking constituency questions is a rather common parliamentary activity. Finally, it seems 'the average' MP in the sample has less than three years of parliamentary experience, was involved for approximately three and a half years in local politics before entering the legislature and is quite close ideologically to his party.

Because of the nature of the dependent variable – count data and because of its over-dispersion<sup>61</sup>, the appropriate method for modeling was the negative binomial regression (Cameron and Trivedi 2013). Moreover, I use incidence rate ratios (exponentiated coefficients) run margins and make simulations with Clarify (King et al 2000) in order to make the interpretation of the results straightforward.

#### ***4.3.2 The content of campaign pledges addressing local issues***

Parliamentary election campaigns are relatively short in Romania - they last only one month, but there is still long enough time to make plenty of pledges with respect to local and national politics. Figure 4.2 below presents a word cloud<sup>62</sup> made from the

<sup>61</sup> The mean: 7.37 (local questions for every MP in 2013) is significantly smaller than the variance: 223.06.

<sup>62</sup> The word cloud was made with Wordle, tool available at: <http://www.wordle.net/>

responses given by the surveyed candidates to the question: 'If you raised any constituency-specific issues during the campaign, what were the most important ones?'.<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 4.2: Local campaign agenda themes in the 2012 Romanian elections**



The most frequently mentioned issues were the modernization of local infrastructure (roads, running water and sewage etc.), the creation of local jobs, the reopening of local hospitals (68 hospitals were closed in 2011 as part of the governmental austerity program), solutions for solving farmers' problems (e.g. finalizing the land registry or building public warehouses) and the development of local tourism. In answering this question some of the MPs referred explicitly to initiating or modifying existing laws that have relevant consequences on the local communities they represent.

### 4.3.3 The content of parliamentary questions

The 173 Romanian MPs in the sample have asked in the first year of the legislative cycle 2736 parliamentary questions and interpellations. One third (34%) of the MPs

never raised a constituency related issue, whereas 22% did not table any question or interpellation whatsoever.

The content analysis showed that 1275 questions (47% of all) referred to constituency issues. Another 113 questions (4%) tackled local issues from other counties than the one electing the MP. This high cumulative percentage emphasizes the extent to which parliamentary questions are used as a tool for local interest representation in Romania as compared to other parliaments, particularly in Western Europe. A comparative study found that the share of oral parliamentary questions on local issues is 15% in the Netherlands, 13% in France and 12% in Germany (van Santen *et al* 2015: 60).

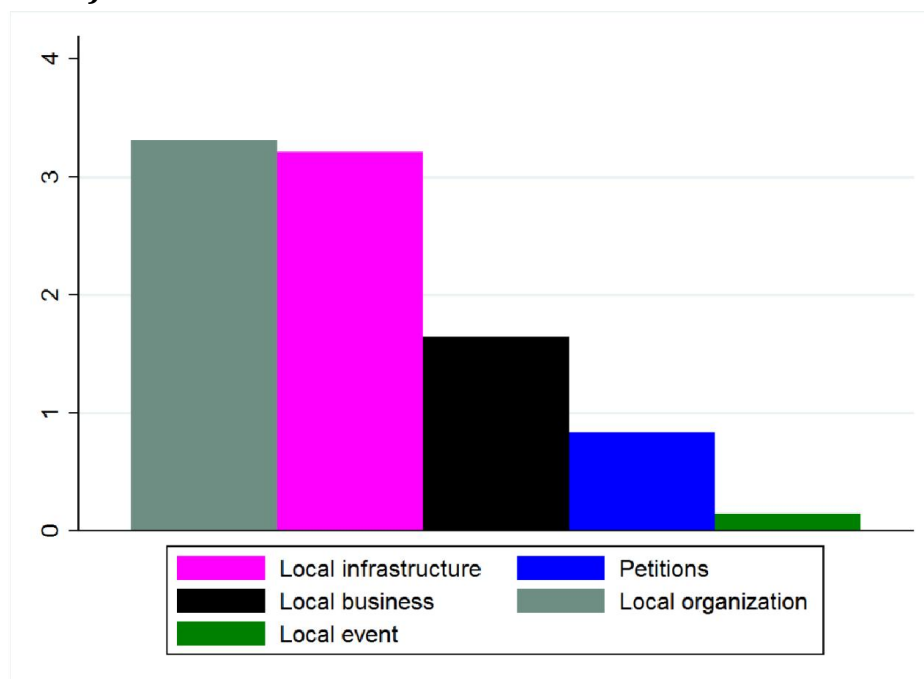
In the Romanian sample there is a much higher correlation between the number of policy questions and interpellations and the number of constituency questions: Pearson's  $R=.666^{***}$  than in the Hungarian one: Pearson's  $R=.354^{***}$ . This implies that there is virtually no division of work in terms of asking parliamentary questions and that the most active members engage in both policy-making activities and constituency service. A positive interpretation of this finding would be that in Romania constituency orientation does not mean a parochial profile, of a politician interested solely in satisfying local interests. Moreover, it remains an empirical question whether the candidates who personalize and localize their campaigns also ask more nationally focused questions. As the last section of the chapter will show, such a relationship is not present in the data.

The constituency questions were further analyzed in order to establish to which of the five categories or types of responsiveness they belonged: petitions (casework), local infrastructure questions (allocation responsiveness), local organizations and local

business questions (interest representation), local cultural events (symbolic representation).

Two conclusions can be drawn from Figure 4.3 below: some topics are much more frequent than others and there is a great match with the campaign agenda topics illustrated in Figure 4.2. Thus, on average each MP asked 3.2 parliamentary questions about local facilities (i.e. investments in roads, water sewage, educational or medical infrastructure) and 3.3 parliamentary questions about local organizations.

**Figure 4.3: Topics of the Constituency Questions and Interpellations (Romania 2013)**



Next come the questions about local business (a mean of 1.6) and those that draw on citizens' petitions (a mean of .8). Very few constituency questions had to do with local events or symbolic representation. Overall the frequency and order of the topics are highly similar to those in the first term elected after the electoral reform (see Figure 3.3

in previous chapter). The only exception refers to the smaller number of questions based on petitions asked in 2013 compared to the previous term.

Returning to the second point, the dataset contains several cases of perfect content overlap between local campaign topics and the subject of constituency PQs. To give just one example, an opposition MP from Bihor who participated in the Candidate Study mentioned 'Repairing the DN 76 (National Road 76) Oradea-Deva' as the local topic he campaigned on at the parliamentary elections. In 2013 the same MP submitted 3 interpellations (one to the Transport Ministry and the other two to the Infrastructure Projects Department) asking for the modernization works to this road, which were abandoned in July 2012, to be continued.

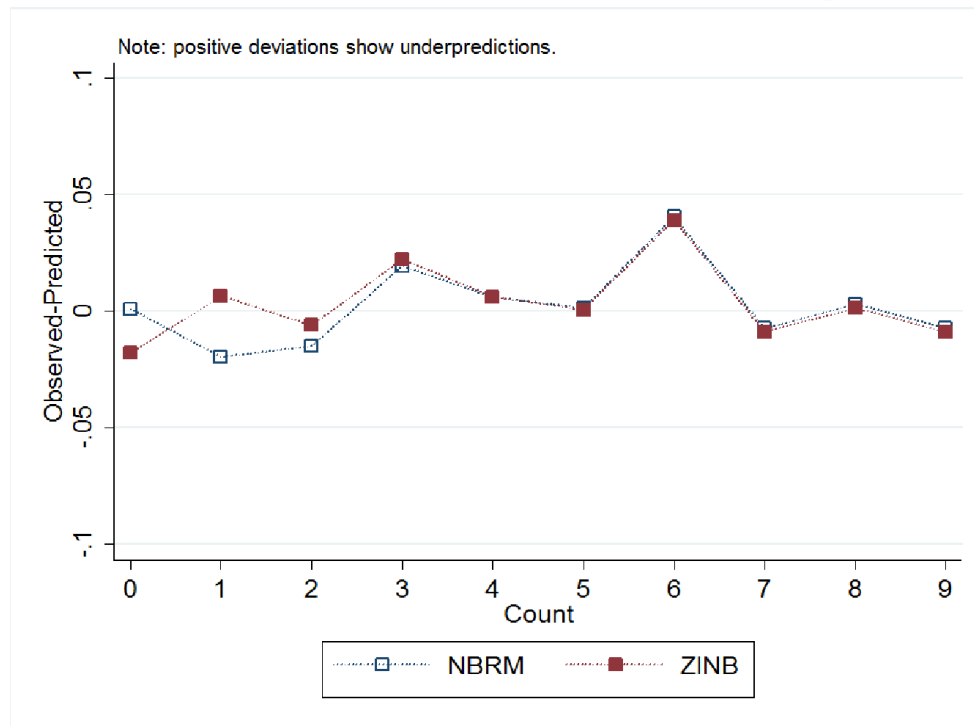
#### **4.4 Constituency service enhanced by the style and content of campaigning**

As already mentioned, the analysis is carried out in two steps. In the first stage, I use multivariate tests (i.e. negative binomial regression models) to test the hypotheses. The second stage includes further analyses of the effects of the main independent variables that keep constant all other factors and a discriminant validity test: a replication of the multivariate models with policy question as the dependent variable.

Before interpreting the results presented in table 4.2 let us discuss the model fit and the choice of the negative binomial model instead of a zero-inflated negative binomial model. I used the 'countfit' command (Long and Freese 2005) to assess the two and create the figure 4.4, which compares the residuals from the tested models. As it can be seen the residuals are rather small, which indicates a good-fitting model. The negative model appears slightly better than the zero-inflated negative binomial model: the former

is closer to the 0 line in 4 cases out of 9, whereas the latter only in 3. Additional tests using the AIC and BIC statistics also suggested that the choice of the negative binomial model is preferable to the zero-inflated model.

**Figure 4.4: Model fit test - NBRM vs ZINB (residuals plot)**



The cell entries in table 4.2 are incidence rate ratios, while the original model with the un-standardized coefficients is presented in Appendix 4.3. The regressions show a rather mixed effect of an individualized campaign strategy: only in the first model the variable reaches conventional levels of statistical significance. On the contrary, the coefficient for campaign localization is significant in all models. More than three quarters (77%) of the elected respondents of the Romanian Candidate Study promoted topics related to the constituency in their campaigns and the negative binomial regressions suggest this agenda is also reflected in their parliamentary questions. Thus, the second hypothesis is fully corroborated: MPs who have talked about local issues in their

campaigns ask more constituency questions than their colleagues who did not focus on local issues at the time of their candidacy. The effect is robust to the three different model specifications. The magnitude of the main effects will be analyzed in more depth in the next section.

**Table 4.2: Determinants of the Number of Constituency Questions 2013 (Negative Binomial Regressions)<sup>63</sup>**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Campaign Norm	1.091*	1.067	1.054
Constituency agenda	1.697*	1.840*	1.779*
MP won plurality	0.628*	0.733	0.660
N. MPs same county	0.954***	0.961***	0.958***
Years in Parliament	0.943	0.950	0.950
Incumbent	2.827**	2.736**	2.639**
Local politics experience	1.008	1.008	1.017
Ideological Distance		0.818*	0.838
PSD-PC			3.610**
PNL			3.216*
PDL			3.110
PPDD			2.836
Lalpha	0.872	0.862	0.827
Maximum Likelihood R <sup>2</sup>	.126	.128	.153
Observations	166	152	152

\* Significance at \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

\*\* Cell entries are incident rate ratios.

A number of effects<sup>64</sup> which were emphasized by previous chapters are also corroborated by the 2013 data. Thus, MPs who failed to win the plurality of votes in their SMD ask 1.6 times more local questions than their more successful colleagues. The effect disappears after introducing party dummies, which is hardly surprising given that PSD-PC and PNL MPs have won their seats directly in the vast majority of districts.

<sup>63</sup> Regression diagnostic tests showed that the models are not affected by multicollinearity – they display small variance inflation factors. Moreover, it must be said that likelihood-ratio tests computed for each regression showed that alpha, the estimate derived from the log-transformed over-dispersion parameter (Lalpha) is significantly different from 0, which confirms that choice of the negative binomial model over the Poisson regression.

<sup>64</sup> The results presented in Table 3 do not change significantly if observations are weighted based on the size of their parliamentary party group.



Moreover, MPs who have fewer colleagues from the same county tend to engage more in constituency service. Running margins showed that MPs from counties which elect 4 representatives ask 1.4 more constituency questions than MPs from counties with 12 representatives.

Another interesting finding is that incumbents seem better able than newcomers to recognize the electoral advantage brought by constituency service. On average, incumbents asked between 2.6 and 2.8 times more constituency questions than the rest. This efforts could help build local name recognition and explain the considerable incumbency advantage registered at the last two elections, which varied between 12% in 2008 and 9% in 2012 (Chiru 2014b). Also, the finding is at odds with the situation in the Hungarian Parliament, where the newcomers tend to ask more constituency questions.

Similar to the findings of the Hungarian case study, more ideological MPs engage less in representing local interests. Thus, a higher ideological distance decreases the likelihood of engagement in constituency service through parliamentary questions. The magnitude of the effect is not very large: 1 point difference on the left-right scale decreases the number of parliamentary questions and interpellations dealing with local issues by 1.2, whereas a 2 point difference translates into a decrease of constituency questions by a factor of 1.5.

Parliamentary seniority and local politics experience both point in the expected direction: senior MPs exhibit lower service engagement and local politicians higher, but the effects did not reach conventional levels of statistical significance. Last but not least, MPs of the parties forming the government at the time tend to ask more local questions

than the opposition MPs, UDMR being the reference category. This rather unusual finding - given that opposition MPs tend to ask more parliamentary questions in general (Vliegenthart and Walgrave 2011), has in the Romanian context two explanations. First, the UDMR MPs are traditionally more interested in representing the interests of the Hungarian community as a whole, including the so-called internal Diaspora ("szorvany"), than particular local interests from the county where they received the seat. Moreover, the UDMR parliamentary party group (PPG) includes a number of veteran MPs who have developed significant policy expertise and are highly active in parliamentary policy debates.

The second explanation has to do with the characteristics of the PPDD MPs. After the 2012 elections PPDD was the second largest opposition party, and the first new party to gain parliamentary representation since 1992. More than half of the 68 MPs of this populist, anti-establishment party were active in other parties, some of them being 'professional' party hoppers, while the rest of the PPG is composed of journalists, local businessmen, lawyers and other professionals that had no previous political involvement (Gherghina and Miscoiu 2014: 8-9). Given this heterogeneous collection and opportunistic habits, the PPDD MPs were less likely to be interested to develop a strong local connection with voters. By June 2014, 71% of their MPs had switched to other parties, the party group in the Senate disappearing because less than 7 Senators (the membership threshold for a PPG) remained affiliated with the party.

## 4.5 Robustness checks and further discussion of results

Two T tests showed that there is a significant difference in the total number of parliamentary questions between the surveyed MPs and those that did not participate in the Candidate Study. Thus, the surveyed MPs tend to ask almost twice as many parliamentary questions than the rest: means of 14.5 vs. 8.8 parliamentary questions and interpellations for deputies and means of 21.1 vs. 13.3 parliamentary questions and interpellations for senators. However, another T test emphasized that this difference in overall number of questions does not translate in a significant difference in the number of constituency questions: the mean number of constituency questions introduced in 2013 by the 47 surveyed senators was almost 7, while for the rest of 128 senators it was 5.8.<sup>65</sup> Therefore, it can be safely concluded that the sample does not suffer from a self-selection bias with respect to asking constituency questions.

I used Clarify (King et al 2000) to run simulations based on the first model. I chose the first model to have a clearer image of the maximal effects of campaign personalization on constituency service. Figure 4.5 below plots the expected number of constituency questions with confidence intervals against the values of campaign personalization. MPs who ran a campaign focused exclusively on their party are expected to ask around four constituency questions, all other things being equal. At the other end of the scale, MPs who had candidate-centered campaigns will ask on average more than ten constituency questions, all other things being equal.

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<sup>65</sup> The probability for a difference in means larger than 0 was far from statistical significance with  $p=.76$ .

**Figure 4.5: Changes in the number of constituency PQs based on campaign personalization**

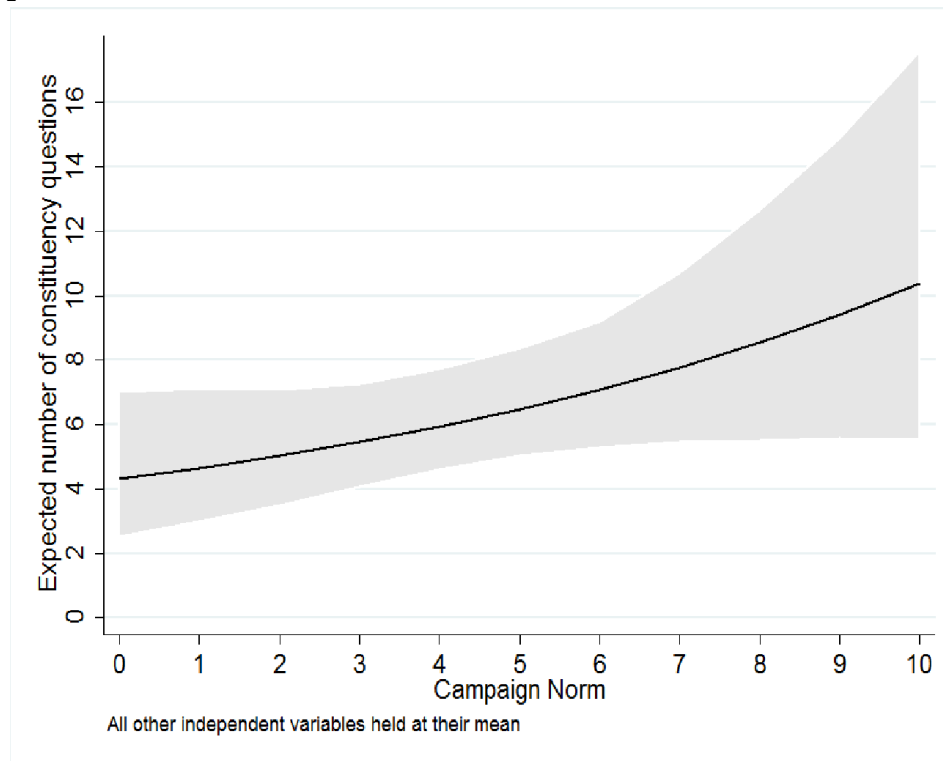
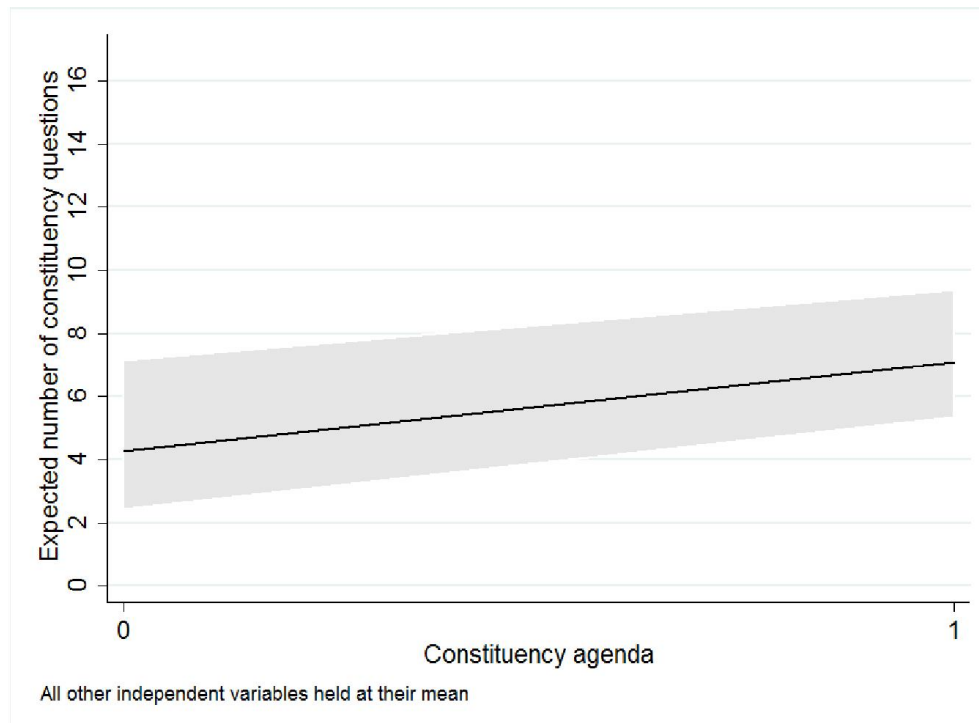


Figure 4.6 below plots the expected number of constituency questions with confidence intervals for campaign localization. MPs who did not raise local issues in their campaign are expected to ask around four constituency questions, whereas their colleagues who engaged in localized campaigning will ask on average around seven constituency questions, all other things being equal.

**Figure 4.6: Changes in the number of constituency PQs based on campaign localization**



Re-running the models with the five different types of constituency questions as dependent variables showed that the general positive relationship between local agenda and constituency service is mainly driven by the fact that the MPs who campaigned on local issues ask more questions that refer to local business and local organizations. Also, the MPs who had a more individualized campaign style tend to ask more questions related to local business.

The regressions in table 4.3 below indicate that campaign activities have virtually no influence on the number of policy questions asked by Romanian MPs. Thus, localized campaigning does not matter in any of the models, whereas the campaign norm is statistically significant in only one of the three. These findings corroborate the claim that we actually measure the connection between the style and content of the campaign and

constituency service and not that between campaigning and asking parliamentary questions in general.

**Table 4.3: Determinants of Policy Questions 2013 (Negative Binomial Regressions)<sup>66</sup>**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Campaign Norm	1.086	1.102*	1.054
Constituency agenda	1.611	1.467	1.267
MP won plurality	0.789	0.764	1.934
N. MPs same county	0.978*	0.983	0.985
Years in Parliament	0.946	0.950	0.952
Incumbent	2.896**	2.914**	2.790**
Local politics experience	0.969	0.970	0.977
Ideological Distance		0.743**	0.693***
PSD-PC			2.435
PNL			0.962
PDL			5.694*
PPDD			2.923
Lalpha	1.041	1.054	0.980
Maximum Likelihood R <sup>2</sup>	.089	.108	.159
Observations	166	152	152

\* Significance at \*  $p < 0.10$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$

\*\* Cell entries are incident rate ratios.

## 4.6 Conclusion

The chapter illustrates that localized campaigning is one of the most important predictors of asking constituency questions, even in a context in which there is low local electoral competitiveness and specific party strategies limit the parliamentary professionalization potential.

<sup>66</sup> Regression diagnostic tests showed that the models are not affected by multicollinearity – they display small variance inflation factors. Moreover, it must be said that likelihood-ratio tests computed for each regression showed that alpha, the estimate derived from the log-transformed over-dispersion parameter (Lalpha) is significantly different from 0, which confirms that choice of the negative binomial model over the Poisson model.

The style of campaigning, i.e. how personalized as opposed to party focused the campaign is, seems also to contribute to engagement in constituency service, although the evidence is more mixed than for localized campaigning. Thus, despite the already mentioned factors that could impede the integration of the campaign and parliamentary arenas, it seems rather safe to conclude that in Romania there is a connection between campaign behavior and legislative behavior.

A too strong connection between localized campaigning and legislative behavior could be linked with the normative concerns expressed in the literature about MPs that are too parochial. Apparently, these politicians spend too much of their time trying to obtain satisfaction for local demands (Thiébault 2006: 330), their perception of national issues is distorted by their local bias (Mezey 2011) and they might amplify tensions between national and local interests. However, these negative features are not very likely in the Romanian case mainly because the MPs who put considerable effort into in constituency work are also very active in policy debates.

The analyses on the 2013 MP sample also corroborate two significant findings revealed by the previous chapter with respect to constituency-oriented behavior in the first Parliament elected after the electoral reform (2008-2012). First, the number of MPs elected from the same county acts in the same way as district magnitude under the previous electoral system: the higher the number, the smaller the interest for service and specifically, for constituency questions. Second, MPs elected after failing to win the plurality of district votes are much more active in representing local interest compared to their more successful colleagues. These findings emphasize the importance for

constituency service of apparently marginal electoral regulations as well as of electoral vulnerability.

Future studies could monitor actual, instead of self-reported campaign behavior in order to make a stronger case for the linkage between constituency campaigning and service. Furthermore, content analyzing the campaign pledges of the candidates and of their main challengers and comparing their topics with the issues addressed by constituency questions could be an additionally fruitful direction of research. The anecdotal evidence presented in this chapter<sup>67</sup> seems to confirm the existence of a substantial content overlap.

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<sup>67</sup> See the 'DN 76' example on page 116.



## CHAPTER 5: REASSESSING THE PERSONAL VOTE PARADOX: THE ELECTORAL VALUE OF CONSTITUENCY SERVICE

### 5.1 Introduction

Despite the salience political scientists tend to project on it as main discrimination criterion for assessing the merits of various electoral systems, or as a key explanation for political events, 'direct evidence of a personal vote' is largely missing (Shugart 2005: 46), or to be more precise, proofs of 'electoral rewards for cultivating a personal vote' are scarce (Martin 2010: 370).

Like most other issues in individual legislative behavior research, interest in the electoral consequences of constituency service first emerged in the United States. Most of the empirical work carried on the topic in the United States in the late 1970s and in the 1980s found little or mixed statistical evidence for a positive effect of constituency service on the electoral success of incumbents (Johannes and McAdams 1981; McAdams and Johannes 1988; Rivers and Fiorina 1989). However, American legislators strongly believed that constituency service pays off electorally<sup>68</sup> although they were unsure about the size of this effect (Mayhew 1974).

More recent work argued that the contradictory results appeared mainly because of the methodological shortcomings of these studies and were instead able to point to more consistent evidence for the relation, even if this was rather indirect, drawing on aggregate levels of support (King 1991) or analyzing voters' perceptions of incumbents

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<sup>68</sup> This belief is widely shared by legislators from many other countries (Mezey 1979; Clarke 1978).

instead of actual vote shares (Parker and Goodman 2009; Box-Steffensmeier et al 2003).

These studies and others on the same topic conducted outside the U.S. have used a large variety of indicators to measure constituency service. They range from self-reported activity from survey data (Martin 2010) to local bills (Box-Steffensmeier et al 2003), franking (Parker and Goodman 2009), legislative budgets for constituency service (King 1991), budget amendments (Ames 1995; Arter 2011), trips home (McAdams and Johannes 1988; Parker and Goodman 2009) and district office expenditures (Parker and Goodman 2009). However, none has looked at the electoral impact of parliamentary questions on local issues. The chapter fills this gap by drawing on parliamentary question data coded systematically for their relevance to constituency welfare, distinguishing in the process five types of local issues.

This chapter contributes directly to the growing scholarship attempting to reveal evidence of personal vote, by testing for the first time the electoral value of a type of legislative behavior which targets directly constituents and constituency welfare. Thus, the central research question of this chapter is: 'to what extent asking parliamentary questions on constituency issues helps Members of Parliament (MPs) gather more votes at the subsequent elections?'. Secondary research questions addressed in the chapter are: 'Does asking constituency question help MPs win re-nomination?' and 'What types of constituency questions produce the largest electoral pay-offs, if any?'.

To answer these questions I analyze how the parliamentary questioning behavior of incumbent MPs affects their electoral performance in the most recent elections taking

place in Hungary (2014) and Romania (2008 and 2012).<sup>69</sup> These three elections are highly relevant because the potential for a personal vote varied considerably. This happened due to changes in electoral system provisions and in the degree in which partisan evaluations left any space for a personal vote.

I propose a tripartite analysis that starts by investigating whether asking constituency questions influences candidacy and re-nomination decisions, then it assesses whether this behavior brings a vote bonus and finally, it attempts to disentangle the electoral value of five different types of constituency questions.

The introduction is followed by the theoretical framework and hypotheses of the study. The next section includes the research design: a presentation of the data and their collection, of the variables' operationalization and main descriptive statistics. This is followed by a brief section on how parliamentarians disseminate their constituency questions. Next come the multivariate analyses which are organized in three complementary parts. The first investigates the incumbency advantage at the three elections and evaluates the relations between constituency questions and candidacy and re-nomination decisions. The second part discusses the effects of the total number of constituency questions on the electoral performance of the incumbents running for re-election. The third part investigates the electoral value of the five different types of constituency questions. The conclusion synthesizes the main findings of the chapter and points to further directions of research.

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<sup>69</sup>Unfortunately, for Hungary parliamentary question data was available only for the most recent legislative term.

## 5.2 Theoretical framework

The direct electoral utility of constituency service rests on two main arguments: it increases the legislator's visibility in the district and it makes constituents aware of their representative's responsiveness. Thus, constituency work helps legislators attract public recognition as constituents become more familiar with the name of their representatives (Hinckley 1980; Box-Steffensmeier et al 2003; Cover and Brumberg 1982) and learn about their responsiveness to local needs and demands (Fiorina 1981; Cain et al 1984; Park 1988).

More specifically, even if the parliamentary questions on local problems do not trigger governmental action and actual solutions, MPs can still claim credit for putting these issues on the agenda (for a similar argument regarding the electoral payoff of bill initiation see: Däubler et al. 2014). Asking constituency questions can be also framed as acting upon salient issues that other politicians have neglected.

Furthermore, this type of publicity can help representatives build the image of 'caring, active or otherwise good constituency MPs' (Bowler 2010: 481). Thus, more constituency questions will give voters the cue of a hard-working representative looking after the welfare of the district, irrespective of the actual outcome of these questions, in the same manner in which in the United States the frequency of legislator credit claiming for distributive spending is much more important than the actual size of the spending or whether the legislator even had anything to do with the spending (Grimmer et al 2014).

An indirect positive effect of constituency service emphasized by the literature is that it scares off high quality challengers (Cox and Katz 1996: 479): the latter will be reluctant

to enter in a competition with an incumbent who has developed a reputation for service, through casework and allocation responsiveness. Thus, facing weaker opponents such as incumbents will lose fewer votes. The relation between constituency service and challengers has been also documented in the Hungarian case, with respect to intra-party competition. Thus, roughly 53% of the Hungarian MPs responding to the PARTIREP Survey agreed that reducing the efforts they make to assist voters in their dealings with public authorities would result in facing 'serious challenge in the candidate selection process', whereas only 31% disagreed.

Last but not least, an alternative mechanism through which constituency questions could boost the electoral performance of MPs has to do more with candidate nomination practices and leadership decisions than with grateful constituents. Thus, party leaders at national and county level could acknowledge and value the constituency service efforts of MPs and nominate them in districts where they have a better chance of winning more votes. This would imply switching districts or parachutism, which is not at all uncommon in Romania (Stefan 2004; Chiru 2010a). Moreover, the redistricting that took place in Hungary before the 2014 elections could have facilitated this process.

*H.1: The more constituency questions MPs ask, the more votes they will receive at the subsequent elections.*

Beyond the aggregate effect of the number of constituency questions it is also necessary to assess the electoral value that different types of local questions have. Some constituency questions might be more efficient in attracting votes than others due to voters' preference for a particular type of responsiveness (e.g. allocation

responsiveness versus casework responsiveness or symbolic responsiveness) or to economies of scale.

Thus, citizens who contacted the MP and received help (Hinckley 1980, Parker and Goodman 2009) in the form of an information requested through a parliamentary question or of forwarding their petition to state agencies via the same tool, will certainly be more likely to develop a good opinion of their representative and support him or her for re-election. However, the magnitude of the electoral payoff of this type of constituency questions is bound to be limited to the citizens involved and their families. Other legislative scholars (Fenno 1978; André and Depauw 2013: 990) have also noted the reduced electoral efficiency of the MPs' one on one interactions with citizens - the kind that usually lead to parliamentary questions about individual problems - and the fact that they are time consuming. On the contrary, well advertised constituency questions about local infrastructure or local business have a much larger vote gaining potential because of the higher number of citizens concerned by such problems or positively affected by the proposed solutions.

*H.2: The electoral value of the five types of constituency question will co-vary with the type of audience they reach.*

In a nutshell, the relevance of personal vote at any given election depends on electoral system regulations that enable citizens to reward or punish individual politicians (Carey and Shugart 1995) and on the degree in which the strength of citizens' partisan evaluations<sup>70</sup> leaves any space for them to take into account in their vote decisions the merits and reputations of individual candidates. Both types of factors mentioned

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<sup>70</sup> Usually, these evaluations concern the performance of incumbent parties.

(electoral system provisions and the strength of partisan evaluations) varied considerably at the three elections analyzed and this variation translates in a different potential for a personal vote which is bound to mediate the electoral value of constituency questions.

To begin with, the 2008 elections were the first<sup>71</sup> organized in Romania under an original mixed member proportional system in which all MPs were to be elected from SMDs (Chiru 2010a). The introduction of the single member districts and the emphasis put by the electoral reform on strengthening citizen-representative linkages made a personal vote more likely than ever. This was also facilitated by a political context less polarized than in other years: the 2004-2008 legislative cycle had overseen substantial economic growth, the 2007 European Union accession, and also a number of redistributive measures taken by the PNL minority government.

After the 2008 elections the two largest parties, PSD, PDL, formed a grand coalition which lasted only one year. From 2010 PDL governed in a coalition with smaller parties (UDMR and UNPR) and chose to implement a series of harsh austerity measures in the wake of an economic crisis whose obvious signs were not acknowledged previously. These austerity measures and a series of corruption scandals made PDL extremely unpopular, and the party lost power in April 2012 following the first successful no-confidence vote in Romania's history.

In this context, the December 2012 Romanian parliamentary elections were marked by the PDL's huge unpopularity and by the formation of the Social Liberal Union (USL), an alliance between the other two major parties, PSD and PNL. As a result, USL obtained

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<sup>71</sup> The previous five rounds of elections that took place since 1989 were conducted under Closed List Proportional Representation.

around 60% of the votes and won directly a high number of seats with a majority of votes in the SMDs (Chiru and Popescu 2013; King and Marian 2014). All these elements support the intuition that the potential for a personal vote was considerably higher at the 2008 elections than in 2012.

The 2010 elections shook the Hungarian politics transforming what was perceived as a very stable two party-system (Enyedi and Toka 2007; Toka and Popa 2013) into a dominant party system with a weak and fragmented opposition (Enyedi 2015; Toka 2014). FIDESZ-KDNP changed both the Constitution and the electoral system in a one-sided manner that avoided consensus building and followed its own interests (Toka 2014). The new electoral system adopted in November 2012 abolished the county party lists and replaced the majority run-off formula with First Past The Post (FPTP) for the district seats. The reduction in Parliament size, from 386 to 199, meant that 106 seats were allocated via FPTP in SMDs while the rest were distributed through Closed List Proportional Representation on the basis of national party lists. The elimination of the run-off decreased the incentives for a personal vote and its relevance: voters do not cast multiple votes anymore (across time, i.e. in the two rounds), which means candidates do not need to emphasize their personal reputation in the run-off to appeal to voters outside their core group (Carey and Shugart 1995: 422). Another disincentive for cultivating a personal vote brought by the electoral reform was the increase in average district magnitude as experienced by individual legislators (Wallack et al 2003) from 12.2 to 44<sup>72</sup>.

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<sup>72</sup> I used the weighted average district magnitude formula introduced by Wallack et al (2003) which multiplies the proportion of MPs elected via each tier by their district magnitude and then adds up the results. At the 2014 elections this meant the following computation:  $106/199*1 + 93/199*93 = 43.99$ .



The electoral reform introduced a bias favoring FIDESZ via the change in the allocation and proportion of list seats, the elimination of the runoff for SMD elections, the change in constituency boundaries and through giving non-resident citizens the right to vote (Toka 2014). After many failed negotiations a center-left coalition was formed under the label 'Unity', but it remained extremely divided, mainly because of personality clashes between the leaders of the five component parties: MSZP, DK, PM, MLP and EGYÜTT 2014 (Mudde 2014).

As a consequence of the institutional engineering<sup>73</sup> and the weakness of the main alternative, FIDESZ won in the April 2014 parliamentary elections all but 10 SMDs and a new constitutional majority. All in all, the Hungarian citizens' perceptions of the institutional reforms and nationalist economic policies implemented by FIDESZ (Johnson and Barnes 2014) and of the divided opposition were bound to shape their voting decisions, leaving little space for a personal vote. To sum up, the three samples stand for different values regarding the relevance of personal vote and we should see the strongest positive effect of constituency questions at the 2008 elections in Romania, followed by the 2012 ones, whereas at the 2014 Hungarian elections the personal vote should be virtually irrelevant.

*H.3: The more the electoral system provisions and the strength of partisan evaluations favor a personal vote the more will constituency questions bring votes to MPs.*

In addition to the hypothesized effects, I control for the effect of six variables: overall parliamentary effort (an index of five parliamentary activities salient for each legislature),

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<sup>73</sup> FIDESZ needed two times fewer votes per parliamentary mandate than Unity and three times fewer than JOBBIK and LMP, the other two parties managing to win representation (Mudde 2014).

electoral security at the previous elections, parliamentary experience, parliamentary office, gender and party affiliation. Plenty of studies failed to uncover any positive impact of parliamentary activity levels on electoral success or re-election (Sheafer and Tzionit 2006; Däubler et al. 2014; Akirav 2015), while others did (Bowler 2010). Nevertheless, it is extremely important to control for this variable in order to be confident that the analyses actually measure the electoral consequences of constituency service, and not just a proxy for the effect of parliamentary activity levels. The other variables are standard controls for models of personal vote, capturing vote earning attributes of the MPs as well as the overall space for such a vote, i.e. factoring out the votes MPs receive only for their party label.

### **5.3 Research Design: data, variables, descriptive statistics.**

The Hungarian parliamentary questions data set (Ilonszki and Papp 2014) covers all the 5776 oral and written questions submitted between May 2010 and the end of the 2012. Roughly one fifth of these (21%) - 1207 were constituency questions. Similarly, the Romanian data includes all the questions and interpellations asked by the members of the Chamber of Deputies in the first two years of the 2004-2008 and 2008-2012 terms. This amounts to 4644 questions and interpellations asked by the 312 members of the first term and 7843 questions and interpellations submitted by the 313 deputies of the next legislature.<sup>74</sup>

The election results were retrieved from official datasets issued by the Central Electoral Bureau in Romania and the National Election Office in Hungary. For Romania

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<sup>74</sup> Prime Ministers as well as MPs who served for less than 5 months of the analyzed period were excluded.

additional electoral data was collated from the *Romanian Electoral Data* platform. Data on the MPs' parliamentary activities (number of bills, amendments, questions, speeches, statements etc.), number of terms served and parliamentary office holding was collected from the official websites of the two legislatures.

### ***5.3.1 The operationalization of the variables***

For the Romanian models the parliamentary activity index includes the number of bills, questions, motions, speeches and political declarations made by the MP during the four years of legislative cycle. I follow Gherghina (2014b) in weighing each bill and motion three times higher than the other types of activity. For Hungary, the index includes the number of bills, bill amendments, questions, resolutions and political declarations. Based on the effort they require each bill is weighed 3 times higher than a question, resolutions and political declarations are weighed 1.5 times higher than questions, while each bill amendment is weighed 3 times lower than a question.

Given the 2008 electoral reform in Romania the variable measuring electoral security at the previous election is operationalized differently for the two time points. For 2008 I use the difference between the position of the candidate on the party list and the number of seats her party won in that county at the 2004 elections. For 2012 the model includes a dummy variable indicating whether the MP has won plurality in the SMD in 2008 or she received the seat after finishing second, third or fourth. For the Hungarian model the variable indicates whether the MP has won a direct (SMD) seat at the 2010 elections.

The reference time for the dummy variable 'parliamentary office' is the entire term. This variable indicates whether the MP has been a committee chair or vice-chair, or had a

leadership position in the parliamentary party group (PPG) or at House level. Last but not least, parliamentary experience measures the number of years the politician served as MP before the election under investigation. For more details regarding the operationalization of all variables see the codebook in the Appendix Table 5.1.

### ***5.3.2 The 'typical' MP and the content of the constituency questions***

The 'typical' MP in the three samples asked 4 constituency questions in Hungary and between 9 (2008) and almost 11 (2012) in Romania. Their mean vote shares varied between 35 - 36% (Romania 2008 and Hungary 2014) and 47% (Romania 2012). The parliamentary experience levels are rather similar: on average the Romanian MPs had been in the legislature for 6.5 (2008) up to 6.7 years (2012) before the analyzed election, whereas the average incumbent running for re-election in an SMD in Hungary in 2014 had 8.6 years of such experience. Holding a parliamentary office was an experience shared by one third (Romania 2012 and Hungary 2014) up to almost half of the incumbent candidates (Romania 2008). For the complete descriptive statistics see the Appendix table 5.2.

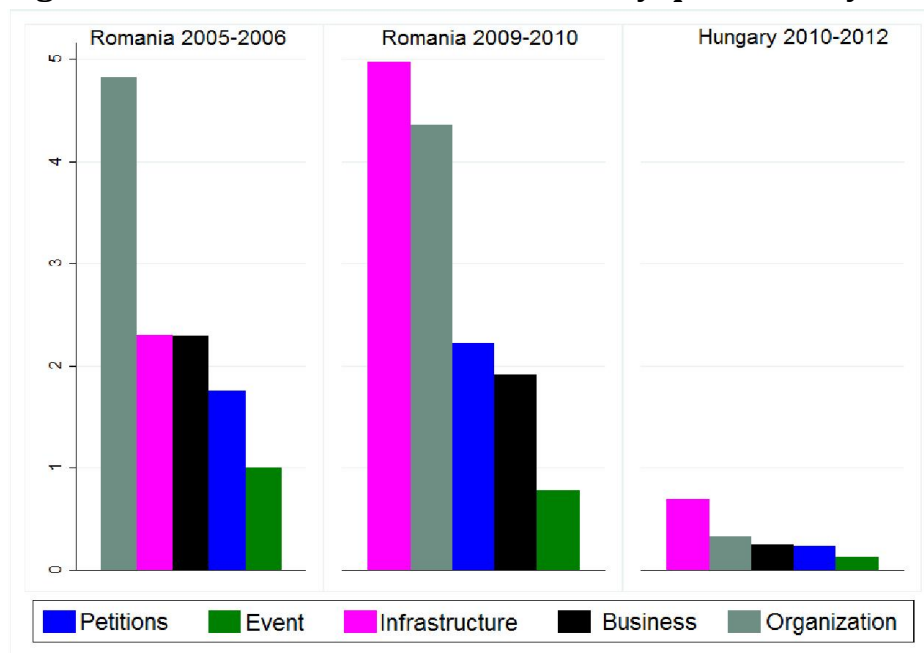
Last but not least, Figure 5.1 below illustrates the mean number of the five types<sup>75</sup> of constituency questions asked by the MPs that ran for re-election in the three cases. All questions dealing with requests or cases surrounding individuals living in the MP's county were labeled 'petitions'. The local organization category comprises both problems of local authorities and institutions (city halls, health agencies, hospitals etc) and issues concerning local NGOs. If the question referred to public works such as

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<sup>75</sup> Both myself and the coders of the Hungarian parliamentary questions data used the same framework for coding localism and local issues developed by the Comparative Policy Agendas Project (Baumgartner et al. 2006) and adapted by Martin (2011).

repairing roads, school or hospital infrastructures in the MP's county then it was included in the local infrastructure category. The last two categories included questions related to local businesses (e.g. problems of local farmers or industries) and local events (e.g. a local festival). The five categories correspond roughly to the major types of actions that constituency service can be deconstructed to: casework (petitions), allocation responsiveness (local infrastructure questions), symbolic representation (questions about local events) and representation of local organized interests (with a further distinction between business and non-business interests).

**Figure 5.1: Mean number of constituency questions by issue**



The figure highlights first and foremost the difference in the frequency of asking constituency questions that exists between the two Parliaments. Beyond this, one can observe the salience in all three contexts of questions about local infrastructure and local organizations. Also, questions about events taking place in the constituency are the least frequent of all.

## 5.4 How do voters learn about constituency questions?

The first two hypotheses presented above are partially dependent on voters learning or at least hearing about the constituency work of their representatives. Although research on the so-called 'presentational styles' (Grimmer 2013), i.e. how legislators present and explain their work to constituents, is lacking in Romania and Hungary, our analysis of online resources and parliamentary surveys revealed that the MPs in the two countries are quite active in this respect, frequently trying to reach out to voters as well as to local and national media. One could legitimately be skeptical about such efforts given that, generally, the media in the two countries are perceived as having a weak political information commitment (Popescu and Toka 2012), while sizable parts of the electorate display relatively low levels of political knowledge (Borbath et al 2014).

Nevertheless, in Romania many MPs highlight on their websites the number and content of their parliamentary questions dealing with issues from their constituency<sup>7677</sup> and local newspapers also cover this type of activities (e.g. *Ziarul Văii Jiului* 2014; Burniche 2015). The coverage is often triggered by press statements released by MPs for the local media following actions on local issues.

Such activities are also always advertised during campaigns: *'It is very common that campaign materials such as leaflets contain both the number of local questions and interpellations and their topics, so that voters can find out directly at election time about*

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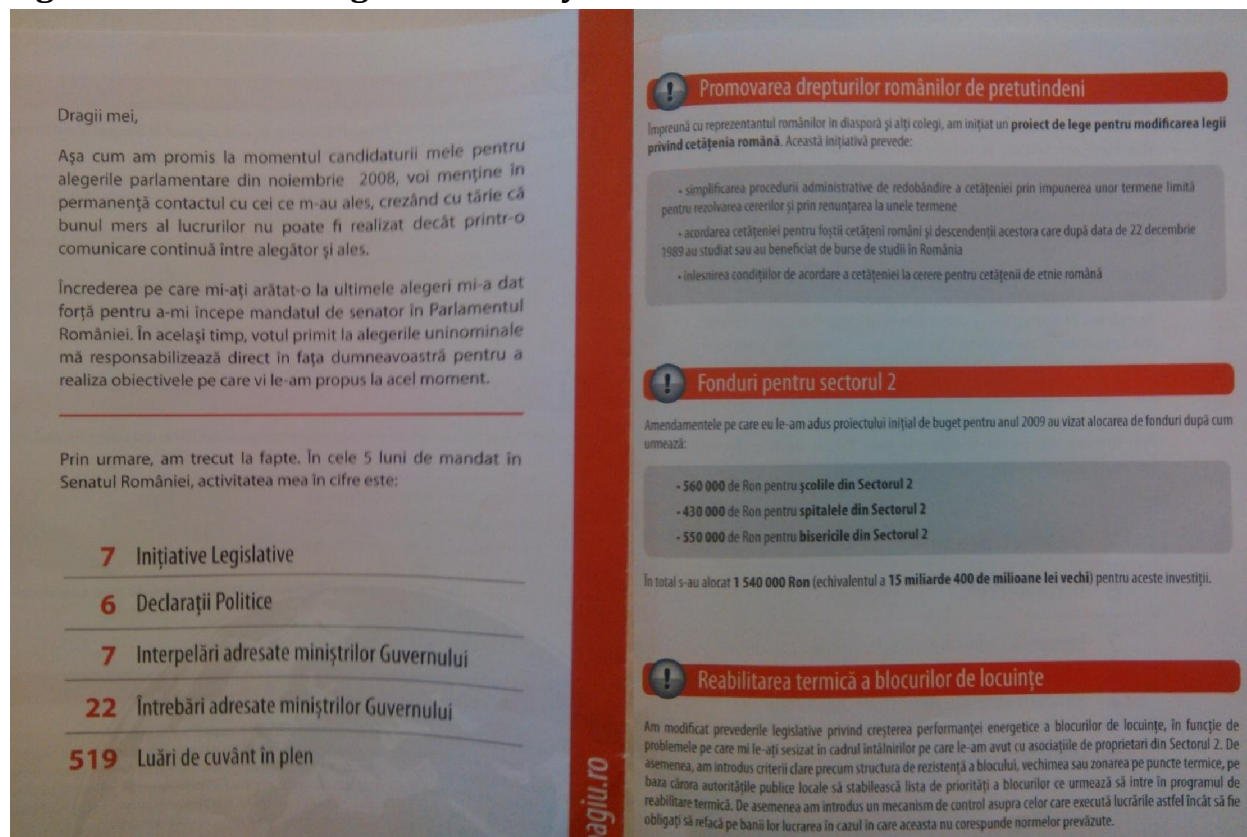
<sup>76</sup> <http://www.andreeapaul.ro/blog/2014/04/doua-intrebari-parlamentare-depuse-pentru-oseni-in-aceasta-saptamana/>

<sup>77</sup> <https://florianbodog.wordpress.com/2014/04/22/intrebare-parlamentara-privind-penalitatea-cet-oradea-pentru-neconformarea-la-schema-ets/>

*the constituency service efforts of the MPs'*, told me S., a political marketing professional working closely with a number of Romanian MPs.<sup>78</sup>

Some MPs send their constituents this kind of 'activity reports' leaflets also in inter-election periods, as it can be seen from Figure 5.2 below. This is a picture of a leaflet issued by a Bucharest Senator after 5 months since her re-election. The left half contains the numbers of her questions, speeches, initiatives and other parliamentary activities, while the right half of the leaflet mentions, among other things, the value of the budgetary amendments she made to earmark money for schools, hospitals and churches in her district.

**Figure 5.2: Advertising constituency service via leaflets**



<sup>78</sup> Interview made on June 18th 2015.

The MPs' practice of advertising parliamentary questions on personal websites and social media accounts is also present in Hungary. There, two national news portals cover extensively the MPs' parliamentary questions and interpellations: [www.gondola.hu](http://www.gondola.hu) and [www.hvg.hu](http://www.hvg.hu). Additionally, the national and county branches' party websites – especially those of JOBBIK, MSZP and KNDP also present parliamentary questions.

Further evidence on media coverage of questions and the mechanisms behind it comes from a parliamentary survey. Thus, based on the answers given by Hungarian MPs to the PARTIREP Survey, it seems that on average they inform the media about almost two thirds (64%) of their initiatives: bills, written and oral questions. Furthermore, the MPs estimated that the media covers, on average, 55% of these initiatives.

## **5.5 Constituency questions, re-nomination decisions and the incumbency advantage**

Two parliamentary surveys conducted in 2010 showed that in both countries substantial shares of MPs consider the constituency as their main focus of representation: 47% in Hungary and 31% in Romania (Chiru and Enyedi 2015).<sup>79</sup> However, the conventional view is that national party competition is what drives voting behavior in both countries (Enyedi and Toka 2007; Pop-Eleches 2010), therefore finding evidence that constituency-centered legislative behavior is rewarded by voters would be remarkable in itself.

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<sup>79</sup> The distribution of the other preferences was the following: 12.8% of the Hungarian MPs and 43.6% of the Romanian MPs chose 'party' as their main focus of representation, while the 'country' (all citizens) the option was preferred by 40.5% in Hungary and 25.8% in Romania.



Of the 355 Romanian politicians who were members of the Chamber of Deputies at one point in time during the 2004-2008 legislature and who could have ran for re-election in 2008 only 230 did so. In 2012, 219<sup>80</sup> of the 312 members of the Chamber of Deputies who could have ran for re-election, did participate in the contest.

Similarly, of the 403 Hungarian politicians who served as MPs at one point during the 2010-2014 legislative cycle only 277 ran for re-election. Of these, 164 ran both in SMDs and on the national lists, while 108 ran solely on the national lists. For the 106 SMDs competed 169 incumbent MPs.<sup>81</sup> Most of them (96) were nominated by the governing coalition of FIDESZ and KDNP. Next came JOBBIK which nominated 35 incumbent MPs as district candidates. The Unity electoral alliance nominated 33 MPs as SMD candidates. Finally, LMP had 4 MPs among its district candidates and KTI had 1.

In Romania there is a positive correlation<sup>82</sup> between the number of constituency question asked in 2005-2006 and whether the MP ran for re-election in 2008: Somers'  $D=0.173^{***}$ . For 2012 the relation appears much weaker, Somers'  $D=.050$  and does not reach conventional levels of statistical significance.

Similarly, the number of constituency questions asked are positively correlated with running for re-election in a SMD at the 2014 Hungarian parliamentary elections: Somers'  $D=0.071^*$  and negatively correlated with running for re-election on the national party list: Somers'  $D=-0.062^*$ . All these elements indicates that both MPs and party

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<sup>80</sup> The regression analyses presented below include only those MPs running for re-election in the Chamber of Deputies: 185 in 2008 and 203 in 2012.

<sup>81</sup> Hungarian list MPs that ran for re-election in an SMD are included in the regressions on the electoral value of constituency questions.

<sup>82</sup> Given that we are interested in the degree of association between an ordinal and a nominal variable the most appropriate nonparametric measure is Somers' D (Gibbons 1993).

gatekeepers base at list partially their candidacy and re-nomination decisions on the politician's history of constituency service.

In Hungary, the separation of the two types of candidature: party list and SMD, and the parliamentary work specialization associated with it becomes more clear if we investigate the relation between questioning behavior and list placement. Thus, as shown in table 5.1 below (OLS regression), asking local parliamentary questions does not improve at all the Hungarian MPs' placement on the national party list<sup>83</sup>. The same is true of the overall parliamentary effort.

**Table 5.1: Determinants of list placement of incumbent MPs (Hungary 2014)**

<i>Constituency Questions</i>	0.278 (0.342)	0.344 (0.369)
Parliamentary activity Index	-0.049 (0.034)	-0.040 (0.031)
Years in Parliament	-1.297 (0.825)	-2.245** (0.890)
Parliamentary office	-20.949** (9.900)	-22.319** (9.581)
Woman	-1.259 (13.589)	-13.670 (12.898)
Party list length	0.712*** (0.109)	
FIDESZ-KDNP		130.659*** (7.891)
Unity		77.415*** (11.702)
JOBBIK		27.146*** (4.555)
LMP		65.332*** (21.127)
Constant	-65.096*** (28.657)	16.245*** (5.178)
R <sup>2</sup>	.219	.268
Observations	272	272

<sup>83</sup> List length is introduced as a control variable because it varied considerably for the five parties. Thus, it had 279 positions for FIDESZ-KDNP, 203 for JOBBIK, 198 for Unity, 132 for LMP and 47 for KTI.

What matters instead is the length of parliamentary experience and more importantly, whether the MP had a leadership position at the committee, parliamentary party group or House level. A negative effect means the variable helps the incumbent receive a better position, closer to the top of the list i.e. a smaller number. MPs that held a parliamentary office are placed 20-22 positions higher up on the list compared to backbenchers.

The votes the MPs gain for their constituency service are without doubt part of their incumbency advantage. Therefore, evaluating the magnitude of the incumbency advantage can be considered a first indirect assessment of how electorally useful it is to ask constituency questions. To make it clearer, the absence of an incumbency advantage implies that the constituency questions have no electoral utility. Its existence, on the other hand, does not mean that constituency questions are relevant. This is so because the incumbency advantage could derive from the resources incumbents have at their disposal or from other types of responsiveness towards constituents such as pork-barrel activities.

To estimate the incumbency advantage in the two countries<sup>84</sup> I ran regression models that include as control variables: the number of candidates running in the district, the candidate's gender and a series of dummies for party affiliation. The latter refer to the parliamentary parties and those non-parliamentary parties that would gain representation in the election analyzed. The models use robust standard errors clustered by SMD.

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<sup>84</sup> For Hungary the analysis is restricted to the MPs that ran for re-election in SMDs.

Table 5.2 below suggests that there is a relatively strong incumbency advantage in Romanian parliamentary elections.<sup>85</sup> One would expect the existence of such an advantage especially if we consider what happened during the PR era. In every single election from 1992 until 2004 Romanian parties chose to nominate their incumbents on better list positions than newcomers (Chiru 2014a).<sup>86</sup>

**Table 5.2: The electoral fortunes of incumbents in Hungary and Romania**

	<b>Vote % Ro. 2008</b>		<b>Vote % Ro. 2012</b>		<b>Vote % Hu. 2014</b>
<i>Incumbent</i>	11.967*** (1.413)	<i>Incumbent</i>	10.218*** (1.532)	<i>Incumbent</i>	2.107** (0.799)
N. candidates	-0.365*** (0.125)	N. candidates	-0.272*** (0.094)	N. candidates	-0.017 (0.018)
Woman	-1.058* (0.566)	Woman	-0.513 (0.551)	Woman	-0.129 (0.167)
PSD-PC	27.174*** (0.881)	ARD	12.144*** (0.683)	FIDESZ-KDNP	42.673*** (0.952)
PDL	28.545*** (0.768)	USL	51.754*** (1.273)	Unity	25.289*** (0.743)
PNL	14.158*** (0.686)	PPDD	11.653*** (0.394)	JOBBIK	19.926*** (0.638)
UDMR	3.416*** (0.771)	UDMR	2.617*** (0.603)	LMP	4.438*** (0.248)
PRM	0.368* (0.217)				
Constant	4.729*** (0.857)	Constant	3.822*** (0.606)	Constant	0.666** (0.283)
R <sup>2</sup>	.662		.831		.950
Observations	2038		1690		1512

\* Significance at \* p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

\*\* Robust standard errors clustered by SMD in parentheses.

<sup>85</sup> This partially corroborates the findings of King and Marian (2015). When using a very narrow definition of incumbency that considered the MP an incumbent only when she was running for re-election in the same SMD, their regression analyses found no incumbency advantage at the 2012 elections. However, they report a positive effect for incumbency more broadly defined i.e., having been an MP irrespective of county, and even more so for the number of terms served by an MP. Their analyses also controlled for the party share of votes at the previous election in the district.

<sup>86</sup> Moreover, of the 86 re-elected respondents of a mid-term parliamentary survey (Stefan 2011) 23 declared that incumbency mattered decisively for their re-selection, whereas 40 said it mattered to a certain extent. Only 12 said it mattered very little or not at all, whereas the rest did not respond.

Before interpreting the findings presented above it is important to note that if we exclude the candidates of the non-parliamentary parties from the regression models the incumbency advantage levels remain the same for both the Romanian and the Hungarian models.

Our expectations were corroborated by the results presented in Table 5.2<sup>87</sup>: in 2008 the Romanian incumbents' vote share was on average 12% higher than that of newcomers. In 2012 this advantage amounted to 10%. This is very similar to the average incumbency advantage (8%) estimated for recent Congressional elections (Gelman and Huang 2008: 444).

Conversely, at the most recent Hungarian parliamentary elections the magnitude of the incumbency advantage was much smaller than in Romania, at 2%. Moreover, if we compare the performance of incumbents and non-incumbents within the four parliamentary parties and coalitions, only the MPs of the Unity alliance<sup>88</sup> and those of LMP<sup>89</sup> did significantly better than their newcomer colleagues. Given these preliminary results we expect constituency service efforts to pay off electorally for Romanian MPs and considerably less for Hungarian politicians.

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<sup>87</sup> The Romanian models include all the candidates running for seats in the Chamber of Deputies, because the analyses of the constituency service effects of votes focus only on MPs from the Chamber of Deputies. However, the incumbency effect is extremely similar for Senates candidates: amounting to 9.33% in 2008 and 7.4% in 2012.

<sup>88</sup> The incumbents of Unity received on average 29% votes vs. 25%, the mean of newcomers, difference significant at a p value of 0.02.

<sup>89</sup> The mean difference between the share of votes of LMP incumbents and newcomers was 4%, with a p value of 0.004.

## 5.6 The electoral value of constituency questions

As it can be seen from the model fit of the regressions presented in Tables 5.3 to 5.5, most of the vote in the two countries is explained by the party affiliation of the MP. Nevertheless, there is still some room for a personal vote as emphasized by the effects of the variables capturing parliamentary activities and roles.

**Table 5.3: The impact of constituency questions on vote (Romania 2008)<sup>90</sup>**

	Vote % (1)	Vote % (2)	No. votes (1)	No. votes (2)
<i>Constituency Questions</i>	0.142*** (0.034)	0.096*** (0.027)	44.179*** (9.834)	32.735*** (9.131)
Parliamentary activity index	-0.006*** (0.001)	-0.003*** (0.001)	-1.515*** (0.418)	-0.830*** (0.305)
Years in Parliament	1.197*** (0.330)	0.939*** (0.291)	335.962*** (84.385)	303.213*** (83.024)
Parliamentary office	2.569 (2.521)	2.026 (1.909)	582.992 (678.243)	420.553 (579.966)
Electoral security 2004	3.385*** (0.785)	2.115*** (0.643)	692.317*** (228.507)	372.425* (203.073)
Woman	-2.762 (3.377)	-3.385 (2.979)	-773.491 (948.531)	-833.997 (875.121)
PNL		-9.858*** (2.892)		-2342.626** (919.257)
PRM		-33.319*** (2.198)		-8166.049*** (747.926)
PSD-PC		0.612 (2.225)		-275.507 (755.926)
UDMR		5.682 (7.280)		167.971 (1723.183)
Constant	22.227*** (2.826)	30.094*** (2.626)	4810.207*** (745.731)	6814.499*** (814.922)
R <sup>2</sup>	.154	.462	.133	.395
Observations	185	181	185	181

\* Significance at \* p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

\*\* Robust standard errors in parentheses.

<sup>90</sup> The difference in the number of observations arises from the exclusion from the second models of the 4 MPs who ran as independent candidates.

At the first elections organized Romania in SMDs after 1989 (see Table 5.3 above), one constituency question brought the MP seeking re-election between 33 and 44 votes or an increase of 0.10 or 0.14 in vote percentage. The effect is rather remarkable, especially since the index of parliamentary activities produces a negative effect.<sup>91</sup> Moreover the positive contribution of constituency questions is also robust to other, more comprehensive model specifications. Thus, in models not shown here I also controlled for local politics experience, party switching and average parliamentary vote attendance and the effect of constituency questions remained virtually the same.

The regression findings displayed in Table 5.4 below show that the positive effect of constituency questioning was also registered at the 2012 elections. Nevertheless, the expectation formulated by hypothesis 3 is also corroborated, this effect being smaller than in 2008. As mentioned already, the 2012 election were marked by the huge unpopularity of the former governing party and by the formation of a pre-electoral alliance between the other two major parties. Given these elements one would expect more than ever voters to reward or punish candidates based on their party affiliation, while considerations about individual MPs' activity record to be mostly ignored.

Indeed, the models including the party affiliation dummies have a very high explanatory power: they account for 68 up to 78% of the variance. However, the importance of constituency service for winning votes remains a valid finding. Thus, for each additional constituency question asked an MP running for re-election received between 16 and 32

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<sup>91</sup> The fact that more engagement in parliamentary activities brings fewer votes is puzzling, even if the effect is extremely small. Moreover, it turns out that the most active MPs are those that were elected from the safest list positions at the 2004 elections (Pearson's  $R = 0.462^{***}$ ). Given that this electoral security tends to reproduce itself (see the positive large effect of 'Electoral security 2004' in Table 3) parliamentarians who were elected by small margins are better off investing time in non-legislative (constituency service and pork barrel) rather than legislative activities.

votes, the equivalent increase in vote percentage varying between 0.04 and 0.11. In contrast, the overall parliamentary effort does not make a difference, which is in line with the findings of other research on personal vote (Däubler et al 2014: 18).

**Table 5.4: The impact of constituency questions on vote (Romania 2012)<sup>92</sup>**

	<b>Vote % (1)</b>	<b>Vote % (2)</b>	<b>No. votes (1)</b>	<b>No. votes (2)</b>
<i>Constituency Questions</i>	0.106*** (0.037)	0.040*** (0.013)	31.960*** (11.367)	16.364*** (5.517)
Parliamentary activity index	-0.002* (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	-0.291 (0.317)	0.206 (0.183)
Years in Parliament	1.331*** (0.298)	0.715*** (0.210)	358.880*** (83.694)	225.668*** (69.131)
Parliamentary office	-3.954 (3.164)	-0.856 (1.773)	-1033.267 (841.833)	-317.913 (561.678)
MP won plurality 2008	7.149* (3.857)	9.448*** (1.979)	2415.846*** (920.208)	2930.472*** (557.267)
Woman	-2.137 (4.617)	0.257 (2.323)	-44.516 (1106.150)	552.624 (573.851)
ARD		-39.359*** (1.425)		-9205.914*** (448.606)
UDMR		-19.737*** (6.160)		-5173.753*** (1648.154)
PPDD		-40.560*** (3.649)		-9672.518*** (1067.406)
Constant	33.285*** (4.120)	49.492*** (2.478)	6769.740*** (986.867)	10555.650*** (685.463)
R <sup>2</sup>	.108	.784	.127	.680
Observations	203	203	203	203

\* Significance at \* p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

\*\* Robust standard errors in parentheses.

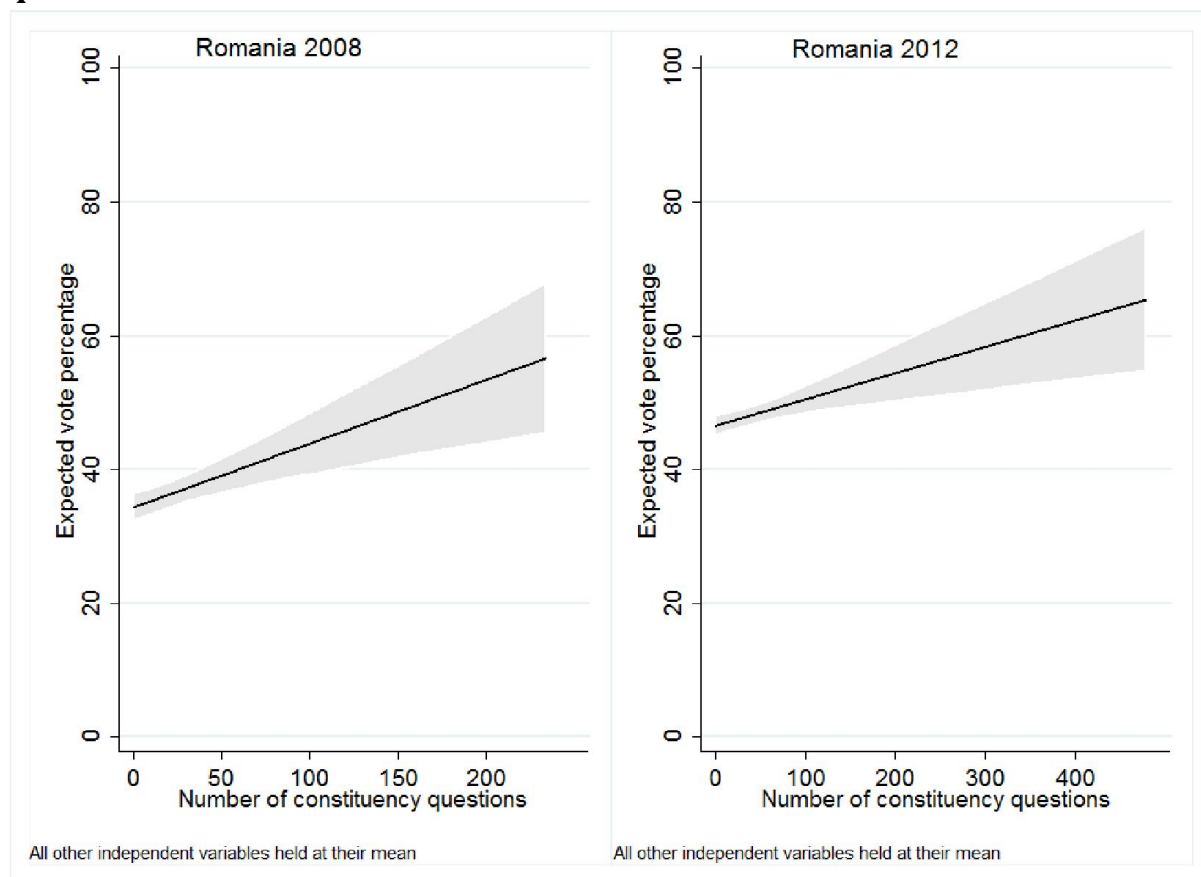
In order to make the interpretation of the main findings more straightforward I used the STATA program Clarify (King et al 2000), with which I run simulations based on the second model in tables 5.3 and 5.4. In this way I generated the expected values of vote

<sup>92</sup> In a model not shown here I also controlled for the vote percentage obtained by the MP at the previous election. The magnitude of the main effect remained extremely similar. For the Romanian 2008 regressions I could not do the same because the 2004 elections were organized under closed list PR, whereas for the Hungarian model, the redistricting that took place with the 2012 electoral reform made such a control variable inappropriate (Prior 2006).



percentage against the number of constituency questions, while keeping all other variables at their mean. Figure 5.3 below combines the plots obtained in this way for the two Romanian elections: the expected vote percentages are presented with 95% confidence intervals. In both cases the increases in vote share are remarkable.

**Figure 5.3: Changes in vote percentage based on the number of constituency questions**



As expected, given the context of the 2014 elections the Hungarian models including the party affiliation dummies have a very high explanatory power: they account for 74 up to 77% of the variance. The models which include only variables related to the parliamentary activity and political background of the MPs have also a good fit: they

explain between 53 and 60% of the variance. However, one should keep in mind that the variable 'MP won SMD 2010' is virtually equivalent to a dummy for affiliation to FIDESZ-KDNP. This is due to the fact that in 2010 the candidates of the alliance won all but 3 SMDs.

The most salient finding of Table 5.5 is that constituency questions did not help Hungarian MPs win more votes at the 2014 parliamentary elections. On the contrary, in three of the four models this variable has a negative effect. Thus, it seems that each additional constituency question decreases the vote share by 0.1% or 70 up to 80 votes.

**Table 5.5: The impact of constituency questions on vote (Hungary 2014)**

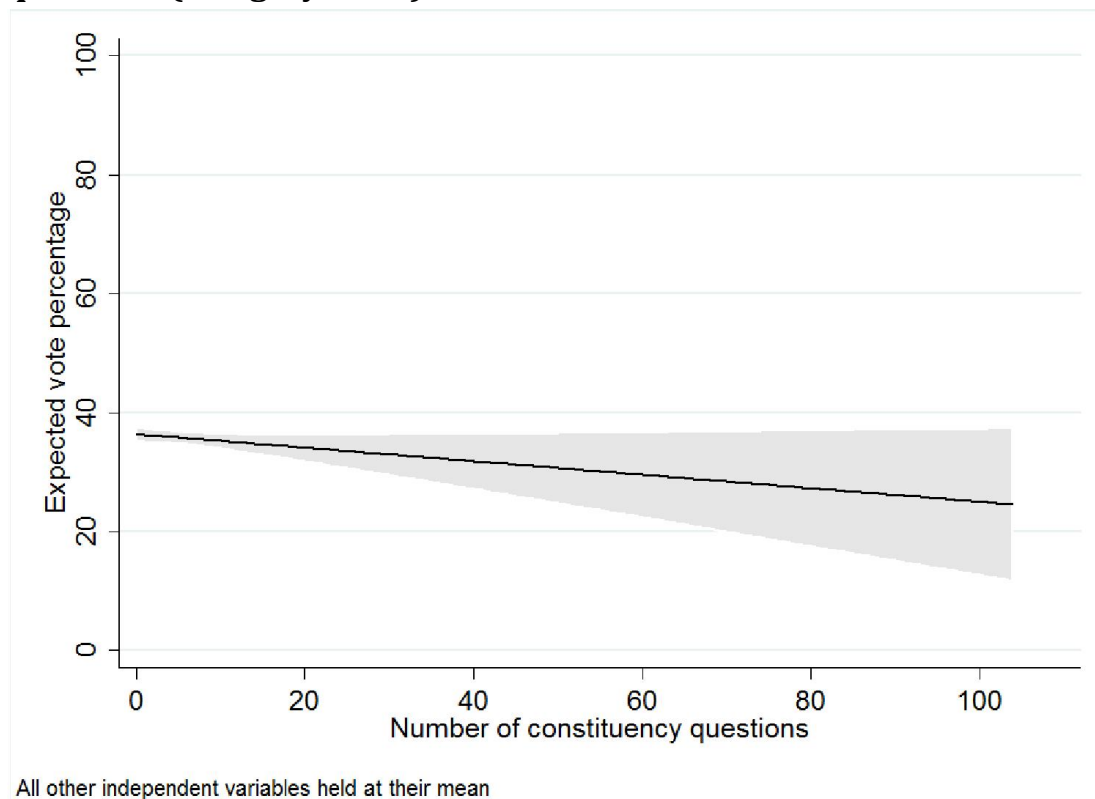
	Vote % (1)	Vote % (2)	No. votes (1)	No. votes (2)
<i>Constituency Questions</i>	-0.088 (0.074)	-0.113* (0.061)	-70.625* (36.237)	-79.665** (30.954)
Parliamentary activity index	-0.001 (0.008)	0.005 (0.006)	0.717 (4.158)	4.401 (2.835)
Years in Parliament	0.226** (0.102)	0.019 (0.091)	136.137** (54.171)	38.248 (50.109)
Parliamentary office	1.621 (1.500)	2.704** (1.062)	743.626 (757.058)	1252.585** (574.656)
MP won SMD 2010	18.253*** (1.953)	2.361 (2.241)	7577.439*** (984.161)	-969.186 (799.239)
Woman	-6.345** (2.925)	-3.250 (2.356)	-2480.814** (1233.850)	-979.751 (918.453)
Unity		-15.031*** (2.750)		-8465.971*** (1226.204)
JOBBIK		-21.294*** (2.542)		-11412.710*** (1008.732)
LMP		-35.212*** (3.446)		-17600.390*** (1539.498)
KTI		-42.245*** (2.208)		-20870.910*** (813.903)
Constant	24.992*** (2.034)	42.159*** (2.252)	11436.730*** (1063.294)	20552.770*** (858.810)
R <sup>2</sup>	.596	.767	.526	.740
Observations	169	169	169	169

\* Significance at \* p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

\*\* Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Figure 5.4 plots the results of the simulations made with Clarify (King et al 2000), based on the second model in table 5.5. All other independent variables were held at their mean and the expected vote shares are bounded by 95% confidence intervals. A full switch from asking no constituency questions to the highest number of questions in the dataset (104) seems to bring a decrease of around 11% in vote share.

**Figure 5.4: Changes in vote share based on the number of constituency questions (Hungary 2014)**



The very special nature of the election with its limited potential for a personal vote, discussed above is certainly part of the explanation for this finding. Beyond this peculiarity, one also to keep in mind that electoral competition was extremely party-centered in Hungary throughout the post-communist period. Thus, in an article that analyzed the impact of the Hungarian candidates' personal vote earning attributes on

their vote shares at five parliamentary elections held between 1994 and 2010 Papp (2015b: 10) found that '[p]arty vote share alone [at county level] explains 93% of the overall variation in candidate vote share'.

Within the boundaries of this limited personal vote potential, one key factor at the 2014 elections appears to have been the better name recognition of senior MPs, and MPs who held parliamentary leadership positions. These MPs gained significantly more votes than their colleagues while they were not among the most active in asking constituency questions. They had also better access to nominations in safer, or at least more party-friendly districts given the traditional choice of Hungarian parties to secure the re-election of their high-level parliamentary cadres (Benoit 2001; Ilonszki and Schwarz 2013). The non-significance of the overall parliamentary effort also suggests that resources such as good relations with party gatekeepers or the higher visibility that comes with being a veteran MP or holding a parliamentary office were overall more important for electoral performance than actual parliamentary activities.

Then, why do Hungarian MPs even bother to ask constituency questions? Constituency service engagement might be motivated by the desire to keep track of the real problems the citizens face, and by the psychological satisfaction derived by MPs from it and less by electoral gain. Thus, 47% of the Hungarian MPs responding to the PARTIREP Survey agreed that reducing the efforts they make to assist voters in their dealings with public authorities would result in 'losing a significant number of votes', whereas 53% thought their party would lose votes. Instead, 88% agreed that a result of the same action, i.e. a reduction in casework would result in 'los[ing] touch with the problems voters face in their daily lives'.

A number of robustness checks emphasized the reliability of the findings reported above. First, if we run the regressions only with the MPs that sought re-election in the same county they represented the effect of constituency questions and its magnitude remains extremely similar for all three cases. Second, if we adopt a more demanding definition of electoral success and replace the vote percentage dependent variable with a dummy reporting whether the incumbent was re-elected or not the results are relatively similar. Thus, at the 2014 Hungarian elections constituency questions did not make a difference for re-election, the same being true for the most recent (2012) Romanian parliamentary elections. In contrast, in the case of the 2008 Romanian elections running margins based on the logistic regression model showed that each additional 10 constituency questions increased by 4.2% the chance of being re-elected.

#### ***5.6.1 Types of constituency questions and electoral success***

Table 5.6, 5.7 and 5.8 below explore the effect of each of the five types of constituency questions on vote share at the three elections. Starting with the 2008 Romanian elections, the most important finding is that all categories of local questions bring a vote bonus to the MPs issuing them.

Somewhat unexpectedly the largest electoral payoff seems to be associated with questions dealing with local events. The second largest effect is more in line with our expectations: each question addressing local infrastructure problems brought an increase in vote share larger than half a percentage point. The other three types of local questions produced smaller positive returns.

**Table 5.6: Types of constituency questions and vote (Romania 2008)**

	Local petition PQs	Local infrast. PQs	Local event PQs	Local business PQs	Local org. PQs
<i>Type of local question</i>	0.225*** (0.047)	0.572** (0.231)	1.037*** (0.314)	0.196*** (0.054)	0.192** (0.058)
Parliamentary activity index	-0.003*** (0.001)	-0.003*** (0.001)	-0.003*** (0.001)	-0.002** (0.001)	-0.003*** (0.001)
Years in Parliament	0.895*** (0.289)	0.989*** (0.292)	0.929*** (0.289)	0.890*** (0.290)	0.946*** (0.292)
Parliamentary office	1.972 (1.908)	2.048 (1.897)	1.861 (1.893)	2.152 (1.928)	1.939 (1.905)
Electoral security 2004	2.029*** (0.641)	2.196*** (0.648)	2.251*** (0.650)	2.010*** (0.652)	2.085*** (0.639)
Woman	-3.218 (3.022)	-3.241 (2.911)	-3.708 (3.026)	-3.334 (3.003)	-3.447 (2.997)
PNL	-9.936*** (2.881)	-9.971*** (2.846)	-9.786*** (2.921)	-10.056*** (2.890)	-9.809*** (2.915)
PRM	-33.416*** (2.208)	-33.351*** (2.186)	-33.355*** (2.174)	-33.321*** (2.194)	-33.500*** (2.183)
PSD-PC	0.979 (2.242)	-0.336 (2.296)	0.616 (2.200)	0.938 (2.234)	0.572 (2.217)
UDMR	5.500 (7.310)	5.745 (7.190)	5.861 (7.250)	5.612 (7.344)	5.568 (7.266)
Constant	30.803*** (2.513)	29.549*** (2.690)	29.993*** (2.599)	30.722*** (2.537)	30.091*** (2.653)
R <sup>2</sup>	.460	.468	.466	.458	.462
Observations	181	181	181	181	181

\* Significance at \* p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

\*\* Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Table 5.7 below reveals that at the 2012 the effects of the various types of constituency questions were somewhat different than those emerging from the 2008 elections. Thus, the questions about local organization and those based on petitions failed to bring any electoral advantage. The other three types of constituency questions did produce some electoral benefits for the MPs introducing them, but, overall these effects appear smaller than in 2008. Once again, questions about local events seem to be the most useful, followed by questions about local business.

**Table 5.7: Types of constituency questions and vote (Romania 2012)**

	Local petition PQs	Local infrast. PQs	Local event PQs	Local business PQs	Local org. PQs
<i>Type of local question</i>	0.127 (0.082)	0.062*** (0.016)	0.448** (0.215)	0.205* (0.104)	0.067 (0.060)
Parliamentary activity index	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)	0.001 (0.001)
Years in Parliament	0.719*** (0.212)	0.707*** (0.209)	0.714*** (0.212)	0.719*** (0.211)	0.712*** (0.212)
Parliamentary office	-0.969 (1.823)	-0.734 (1.763)	-1.046 (1.809)	-0.942 (1.802)	-0.842 (1.794)
MP won plurality 2008	9.205*** (1.960)	9.589*** (2.001)	9.348*** (1.981)	9.285*** (1.968)	9.206*** (1.974)
Woman	0.087 (2.293)	0.220 (2.310)	0.198 (2.300)	0.333 (2.342)	0.107 (2.310)
ARD	-39.386*** (1.438)	-39.354*** (1.428)	-39.547*** (1.389)	-39.453*** (1.415)	-39.536*** (1.409)
UDMR	-19.923*** (6.176)	-19.755*** (6.150)	-19.986*** (6.171)	-19.711*** (6.175)	-19.880*** (6.174)
PPDD	-40.757*** (3.723)	-40.062*** (3.579)	-40.819*** (3.661)	-40.394*** (3.582)	-40.654*** (3.683)
Constant	49.872*** (2.410)	49.478*** (2.474)	49.788*** (2.420)	49.652*** (2.451)	49.858*** (2.427)
R <sup>2</sup>	.783	.784	.784	.784	.783
Observations	203	203	203	203	203

\* Significance at \* p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

\*\* Robust standard errors in parentheses.

The magnitude of these effects and of those presented in Table 5.6 corroborate partially our second hypothesis. Thus, constituency questions which target the problems of individual constituents produce smaller or no electoral returns compared to questions which deal with infrastructure (both models) or local business interests (the 2012 model).

Table 5.8 below corroborates to a large extent the findings of the models on the Hungarian 2014 elections which included all constituency questions. Thus, in none of the five models did the variable measuring a specific type of local question produce a significant effect. The only category of constituency questions which seems to have a

positive effect on vote is the one that deals with petitions and problems of individual constituents. This effect, amounting to almost half a percentage point, is very close to conventional levels of statistical significance but does not reach them. For all the other types of constituency questions the direction is negative but the effects are not statistically significant.

**Table 5.8: Types of constituency questions and vote (Hungary 2014)**

	Local petition PQs	Local infrast. PQs	Local event PQs	Local business PQs	Local org. PQs
<i>Type of local question</i>	0.405 (0.250)	-0.295 (0.177)	-0.124 (0.471)	-0.169 (0.309)	-0.430 (0.269)
Parl. activity index	0.001 (0.005)	0.004 (0.005)	0.002 (0.005)	0.002 (0.005)	0.003 (0.005)
Years in Parliament	0.005 (0.095)	0.025 (0.093)	0.014 (0.094)	0.015 (0.096)	0.024 (0.094)
Parliamentary office	2.920*** (1.061)	2.622** (1.109)	2.941*** (1.067)	2.945*** (1.063)	2.747** (1.087)
MP won SMD 2010	2.211 (2.556)	2.328 (2.246)	2.286 (2.250)	2.288 (2.243)	2.273 (2.233)
Woman	-3.007 (2.350)	-3.242 (2.370)	-3.091 (2.368)	-3.112 (2.371)	-3.198 (2.379)
Unity	-15.165*** (2.779)	-15.215*** (2.761)	-15.282*** (2.775)	-15.358*** (2.781)	-15.453*** (2.761)
JOBBIK	-21.569*** (2.546)	-21.451*** (2.534)	-21.467*** (2.560)	-21.474*** (2.540)	-21.398*** (2.523)
LMP	-34.653*** (3.604)	-34.871*** (3.519)	-34.753*** (3.585)	-34.813*** (3.581)	-34.881*** (3.536)
KTI	-41.930*** (2.220)	-42.115*** (2.214)	-41.948*** (2.215)	-41.979 (2.210)	-42.093 (2.200)
Constant	42.368*** (2.277)	42.182*** (2.260)	42.269*** (2.266)	42.264*** (2.260)	42.229*** (2.247)
R <sup>2</sup>	.765	.766	.763	.763	.765
Observations	169	169	169	169	169

\* Significance at \* p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

\*\* Robust standard errors in parentheses.

Moreover, in all models the only personal vote earning attribute that actually increases the MP's vote share is having a leadership position in the last legislature. This is in line



with our explanation regarding the importance in Hungary of resources such as visibility and good relations to the party leaders as opposed to actual parliamentary activities.

## **5.7 Conclusion**

The chapter evaluates for the first time the electoral consequences of initiating constituency questions. It does so in a comparative perspective, using data from three elections in which the potential for personal vote varied considerably. The evidence derived from our analyses suggests that engagement in constituency questioning matters for re-nomination in Romania in 2008, and for the type of candidature in Hungary (2014). This factor does not matter instead for candidate list placement in Hungary, which indicates that the labor division and specialization associated with different types of candidatures (list versus SMD) reinforce each other on the long term.

The multivariate regression analyses showed that in all three samples the effect of constituency questions is clearly distinguishable from that of the overall parliamentary effort of the MPs. Each additional constituency question brought Romanian MPs between 16 and 44 votes at the last two elections.

The analyses also corroborated the argument that that the electoral utility of constituency questions depends on the degree in which the electoral system provisions and the strength of partisan evaluations at the particular election favor a personal vote. Last but not least, the results regarding the electoral payoff of the five types of constituency questions are rather mixed, but generally it seems that MPs are better off asking questions targeting a larger audience (e.g. about local infrastructure or local events) rather than asking questions about individual problems.

The fact that politicians campaign on their constituency service efforts and that citizens reward them for such activities, at least in Romania, can be interpreted as evidence that what we study is genuine accountability, a positive finding, given the various normative concerns that non-programmatic linkages usually trigger (e.g. the specter of clientelism).

Further studies could investigate in more detail the mechanisms through which constituency questions help MPs win more votes. In doing so, one promising line of research would be to rely on survey data measuring not only citizens' perceptions of their representatives but also their knowledge of the latter parliamentary activities.

## CONCLUSION

The quality of the linkages between citizens and elected representatives shapes not only the functioning of democratic representation, but also the meaning that actors attribute to it. Beyond their immediate consequences for a politician's popularity, for the citizens' level of partisan attachment or their trust in particular political institutions, these linkages can also influence perceptions regarding the overall legitimacy of the system.

This dissertation aimed to investigate comparatively the determinants and electoral consequences of one the most common types of non-programmatic linkage, engagement in constituency service, in a manner that goes beyond the usual emphasis on electoral vulnerability, socialization effects and subjective understandings of parliamentary roles. Thus, I proposed a theoretical model that takes into account the ways in which campaign choices (i.e. the degree of campaign localization and personalization) shape the MPs' engagement in casework, while adopting a longitudinal research design to track how changes in institutional incentives to cultivate a personal vote influence constituency service and its electoral value. This final section will review the core findings of the dissertation, discuss their broader implications, address the main limitations and propose a few possible directions of further research.

One of the key findings of the study points to the salience of campaign decisions and strategies for the legislators' engagement in constituency service even in contexts in which individual parliamentary behavior is highly controlled by parties (Hungary) or contexts marked by low local electoral competitiveness and specific party strategies limiting the potential for parliamentary professionalization (Romania). Irrespective

whether candidates localize and personalize their campaigns as part of a party-coordinated marketing strategy or completely independently (Zittel 2014), these actions are matched to a non-trivial degree in the two countries by post-election constituency service efforts.

The dissertation also contributes to the literature on the issue of personal vote by revealing instances in which efforts to cultivate such a vote are rewarded electorally, and by discussing the conditions under which an electoral connection, between a representative and her constituents, is likely to be strong. The latter have to do mostly with the intensity of partisan evaluations at those particular elections and with the degree to which electoral system provisions such as the number of votes, the ballot format or the district magnitude, enable citizens to reward or punish individual actions of their MPs. Of course, these are preliminary and rather exploratory findings that need to be re-tested in a large-N comparative study that can account for additional unobserved institutional or party-system related effects.

Another finding highlights the value of distinguishing between different types of responsiveness towards local interests and constituents, in order to assess correctly the effects of institutional engineering processes which aim to increase individual accountability. Thus, the Romanian 2008 electoral reform did not increase the overall engagement in constituency service (as measured by the frequency of constituency questions), but it did enhance casework responsiveness and allocation responsiveness, all other things being equal.

Additional conclusions that speak to the literature on electoral reform stress the need to take into account what the MPs see as their constituency when evaluating their

responsiveness to local interests following a re-design of electoral boundaries. In the Romanian case this referred to what the parliamentarians perceived as the geographical reference category of the representation relation. More specifically, it had to do with the answer to the questions: 'What is the territory which is going to be represented?' Does it correspond to the newly drawn SMD or to the older county-based structure?'. Beyond the influence of the demand side (see the examples of voters contacting MPs from their county, but not necessarily from their SMD), rational calculations regarding where would the incumbent run for re-election (in the same SMD or a different one), as well as habitual, routine casework practices are likely to shape these answers.

## **6.1 Implications**

This dissertation has three main implications: for the research on individual accountability, for the study of parliamentary behavioral consequences of mixed electoral systems and for normative democratic theory. First, the study has significant implications for the theoretical and empirical research on individual parliamentary accountability. Even when it comes to the literature on the US Congress or on the parliaments of other advanced industrial democracies, research on this topic remains scarce and more often than not it fails to take into account a number of key dimensions such as the match between individual campaign pledges and parliamentary actions, the mediating role of the party selectorate and the contextual elements that shape the voters' assessment of their representatives' efforts.

This study illustrates how the content and the style of individual campaigns can shape the politicians' responsiveness towards constituents and local interests. Moreover, our findings show under what circumstances are voters more likely to reward MPs for their constituency work, and they are also informative with respect to how party leaders evaluate such records when it comes to the re-selection and the type of nomination (e.g. list placement) an incumbent receives.

Another implication of the empirical results of the dissertation concerns the debate regarding the role specialization vs. the role contamination effects of mixed electoral systems. Despite their usage of very different kinds of mixed systems, one of which lacks party lists and a formal separation of seat types, I found in both countries evidence of contamination, which is driven at least partially by electoral vulnerability.

Unlike in classical mixed systems where MPs elected due to the (list) party vote are expected to be less interested in constituency work and to develop various policy specializations, in the Romanian case, MPs who received their seat after failing to win the plurality of district votes are much more active in representing local interests compared to their more electorally successful colleagues. This is a substantial effect for both cohorts of legislators elected after the 2008 reform, and, as shown in chapter 3, it cannot be attributed only to electoral marginality. For MPs in such a situation, the expectations coming from the local political environment and the subjective understanding of their role are highly relevant.

In the Hungarian case, elements of seat-related specialization and contamination coexist. The elite survey and behavioral data from Hungary suggest SMD MPs are more active in constituency service than list parliamentarians, but at least with respect to the

latter type of data, a shadowing effect is stronger. Thus, MPs who lost the SMD battle but were elected via county party lists are significantly more active in asking constituency questions.

Finally, this study brings a number of positive news for normative democratic theory. First, the fact that large numbers of MPs in the two countries act on their individual campaign promises at least on local issues is rather refreshing, especially when referring to the functioning of parliamentary delegation and accountability chains in young democracies. This kind of responsiveness, which remains largely unobserved by national media, could help increase the trust of ordinary citizens in their representatives and in the legitimacy of the political system. Moreover, if the citizens' demand is what drives engagement in constituency service, one can posit that policy representation will occur when larger parts of the electorate in these young democracies would clearly demand such efforts from their representatives, even though the coordination problems and organizational costs would be higher for individual politicians.

A second encouraging finding is the fact that normatively desirable outcomes such as strengthening the linkage between representatives and constituents can be partially manufactured, at least, through institutional engineering. Thus, the evidence examined by the chapter on the Romanian electoral reform offers a more optimistic conclusion in this respect than that of previous similar studies (see especially: Bogdanor 1985: 299).

Third, our individual level data does not corroborate the usual negatively-charged hypothesis regarding the trade-off between policy orientation and constituency orientation, which implies that constituency servants are parochial MPs uninterested in policy issues. Nevertheless, the fact that the MPs are active on both fronts does not

necessarily mean that they are excelling in either - to reach such a conclusion one would also need to assess directly the level of policy specialization and professionalization of the MPs.

The fourth positive aspect is that, despite their rational ignorance and limited interest in parliamentary activities, voters are able, at least under some institutional configurations, to reward the MPs who put more effort into representing their constituencies. Exploring the types of cues that help voters achieve this beneficial outcome is certainly a direction of study worth pursuing.

## **6.2 Limitations**

Like any other piece of academic research, this dissertation suffers from a number of limitations that need to be acknowledged. To begin with, legislative scholars have often argued that one personal vote seeking mechanism or action can be substituted for another (André et al 2014a: 237; Mitchell 2000). Accordingly, some MPs might not ask questions on local issues but may be very efficient at securing governmental funds for their constituencies. From this perspective, the fact that this dissertation relied on only one type of constituency service activity - parliamentary questions on constituency issues - is certainly a limitation. Nevertheless, the fact that in both countries the frequency of constituency questions is positively correlated with the engagement in other parliamentary activities (such as sponsoring bills or issuing political statements) is reassuring with respect to the content validity of our measurements and results.

Second, a relatively similar limitation refers to the problem that the variables measuring the degree of campaign localization and personalization are based solely on self-



reported data. The candidates' recollection of their campaign goals, decisions, and actions might be biased because of the outcome of the election, because of the time passed since the campaign, or what they considered to be the 'appropriate' answers.

A third limitation comes from the fact that because of the nature of the data used it is impossible to know with certainty the extent to which what we consider constituency service follows in fact a patron-client relationship. Constituency service and clientelism are frequently used interchangeably in empirical narratives of political systems as diverse as Belgium (De Winter and Dumont 2003) and Japan (Curtis 1992: 228). However, the overlap – even if perfectly justifiable for those cases at a certain point in time – should not be generalized. In fact, legitimate constituency representation becomes clientelism only when the services target exclusively or more often than not partisan supporters of the MP. Such a situation would diminish the positive effects discussed above with respect to accountability. Thus, as normative scholars would argue, the accountability of patron-client relations is false accountability, given that it violates fundamental liberal democratic principles such as universalism and the political equality of rights (Piattoni 2001; Hopkin 2006). However, the fact that in Hungary and Romania MPs do not hide their constituency activities but are proud to present them to voters and campaign on them, limits the possibility that what we observe is in fact a normatively undesirable linkage. Moreover, even if some of the revealed engagement in constituency service might be a disguise for corruption or clientelistic relations, the overall levels of engagement in constituency representation definitely invalidate the common view that politicians in the two countries do nothing beyond particularistic exchanges or actions that serve themselves.

Last but not least, it must also be acknowledged that the capacity to generalize the findings from the two cases to more consolidated democracies which have highly institutionalized and professionalized legislatures is relatively limited, especially in the light of the 2012-2013 democratic backsliding taking place in the two countries (Sedelmeier 2014).

### **6.3 Avenues for further research**

A direction of research that could expand the preliminary results presented here regarding how campaigns shape substantive representation at individual level would be to analyze the content of campaign pledges put forward by both elected candidates and their main challengers and compare their topics with the issues addressed by bills, parliamentary questions or speeches within the legislative body.

Similarly, a follow-up study that would bear both theoretical and practical relevance could examine how different electoral system incentives shape the connection between personalized campaigning and constituency service that this dissertation revealed. One of the main expectations is that the connection should be even stronger under electoral rules that favor intra-party competition, i.e. candidates who compete against co-partisans for election.

As already mentioned, the findings concerning the conditions under which efforts to cultivate a personal vote are rewarded electorally would benefit from being re-tested in a comparative, large-N setting. A different but related direction would be to analyze more in depth the demand side of the electoral connection and the mechanisms behind

this connection, and in particular to investigate the voters' actual knowledge of their representatives' parliamentary activities.

Given that parliamentarians all around the world devote more and more time to constituency service (Power and Shoot 2012), an additionally valuable stream of study would be to evaluate the implications of this type of activity for party organizations. Previous studies have shown that re-nominating parliamentary incumbents reduces electoral volatility (Gherghina 2014a), and casework engagement might be one of the mechanisms behind this finding. Conversely, too much focus on the needs and wishes of their constituents might impede the development of policy expertise and the professionalization of parliamentary party groups.

## APPENDICES

### ***Appendix 1.1: Variable Codebook***

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Operationalization</b>
Time spent in constituency	% time spent in constituency on constituency service activities.
Constituency focus	1 = constituency focus chosen as primary role or rated highest; 0 = other representation roles preferred
Local politics experience	1 = The MP held political office at local or regional level; 0 = no experience in local politics.
County list MP (Hungary)	1= The MP was elected from a county list; 0 = The MP was elected from an SMD or from the national, compensation list.
National list MP (Hungary)	1= The MP was elected from the national, compensation list; 0 = The MP was elected from an SMD or from a county list.
Type of seat (Romania)	1= The MP won the plurality of votes in the SMD; 0 = The MP finished second, third or fourth in the SMD.
N. MPs same county	Number of MPs elected from the same county
Disciplined legislative behavior	1= The MP always votes according to the party line; 0 = The MP would break the party line if he would disagree with it or if he would lose votes by following it.
Incumbent	1 = the MP was re-elected; 0= the MP was not a member of the previous legislature.
Re-nomination certainty	1 = very certain; 2 = somewhat certain; 3 = still unsure.
Woman MP	1 = female; 0 = male.
Age	Age in years.

**Appendix 1.2: Descriptive statistics of dependent variable and covariates**

	Mean	Std. deviation	Min.	Max.	N
Time spent in constituency Hu. 1995	15.427	10.926	0	50	131
Time spent in constituency Hu. 1999	20.811	13.399	0	80	95
Time spent in constituency Ro. 2011	46.280	13.703	20	80	150
Constituency focus Hu. 1995	0.377	0.487	0	1	122
Constituency focus Hu. 1999	0.396	0.492	0	1	91
Constituency focus Ro. 2011	0.306	0.462	0	1	147
Local politics experience Hu. 1995	0.435	0.498	0	1	131
Local politics experience Hu. 1999	0.670	0.473	0	1	97
Local politics experience Ro. 2011	0.562	0.498	0	1	162
County list MP Hu. 1995	0.308	0.463	0	1	130
County list MP Hu. 1999	0.299	0.460	0	1	97
Type of seat Ro. 2011	0.728	0.446	0	1	162
National list MP Hu. 1995	0.185	0.389	0	1	130
National list MP Hu. 1999	0.216	0.414	0	1	97
N. MPs same county Ro. 2011	8.889	5.668	4	28	162
Disciplined leg. behavior Hu. 1995	0.562	0.498	0	1	130
Disciplined leg. behavior Hu. 1999	0.604	0.492	0	1	96
Disciplined leg. behavior Ro. 2011	0.800	0.401	0	1	160
Incumbent Hu. 1995	0.344	0.477	0	1	131
Incumbent Ro. 2011	0.296	0.458	0	1	162
Woman MP Hu. 1995	0.077	0.268	0	1	130
Woman MP Hu. 1999	0.103	0.306	0	1	97
Woman MP Ro. 2011	0.117	0.323	0	1	162
Re-nomination certainty Ro. 2011	1.746	0.668	1	3	134
Age Ro.2011	49.056	10.434	29	73	162

**Appendix 2.1: Variable Codebook**

<b>Variable</b>		<b>Operationalization</b>
Campaign individualization		0 = The goal of my campaign was to attract the most attention to my party... 10 = Attract the most attention to my candidacy.
Constituency agenda		0 = no issues related to electoral district, 1 = the campaign promoted constituency specific issues
Meeting Activists	Local	0 = I did not meet any, 1= I spent between 1 to 5 hours per week meeting local party members, 2=5 to 10 hours per week..., 3=10 to 20 hours per week..., 4= more than 20 hours per week...
Type of seat		1= Single Member District, 2= county list, 3= national, compensation list.
Years in Parliament		Years of membership in Parliament prior to the 2010 elections.
Incumbent		0= the MP was not a member of the 2006-2010 legislature; 1 = the MP was re-elected
Shadowing MP		1= MP ran in a Single Member District and lost, 0= MP won the Single Member District or ran only on a county and/or national list
Local politics experience		Years of office as mayor, local or county councilor.
Ideological distance		0 = perfect congruence between the MP's and the party ideological position... 10=maximum ideological distance.

## **Appendix 2.2: Coding Scheme**

To qualify for localism, a parliamentary question or interpellation should present at least one of the following characteristics:

- a. Did the member mention a geographic constituency specifically? For example, did the member say, 'in my constituency', or identify by name the constituency?
- b. Did the member mention a geographical location that the coder can confirm is within the geographical constituency of the member?
- c. Did the member mention a constituent or particular case surrounding an individual, reasonably assumed to be a constituent?
- d. Did the member mention a particular building or facility that the coder can confirm to be located in the geographical constituency of the member?
- e. Did the member mention a particular organization that the coder can confirm to be located in the geographical constituency of the member? If the organization is country-wide and the question is not specifically related to the part of the organization in the member's constituency the coding does not designate a local question.
- f. Did the member mention a particular business that the coder can confirm to be located in the geographical constituency of the member? If the business is country-wide and the question is not specifically related to the part of the business
- g. Did the member mention an event, such as a local festival, specifically taking place in the geographical constituency of the member?

**Appendix 2.3: Original models (un-standardized coefficients)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Campaign norm	0.138*** (0.040)	0.028 (0.040)	0.054 (0.044)
Constituency agenda	0.489* (0.295)	0.098 (0.272)	0.164 (0.265)
Meeting local	0.389*** (0.086)	0.313*** (0.078)	0.309*** (0.082)
activists			
County list MP	1.345*** (0.253)	-0.122 (0.419)	-0.245 (0.438)
National list MP	1.367*** (0.249)	-0.333 (0.518)	-0.483 (0.502)
Years in Parliament	0.038 (0.031)	0.044* (0.025)	0.038 (0.025)
Incumbent	-0.754** (0.319)	-0.952*** (0.284)	-0.579* (0.312)
Shadowing MP		2.065*** (0.466)	0.590 (0.678)
Local politics experience		0.021** (0.009)	0.026*** (0.008)
Ideological distance		-0.217** (0.096)	-0.296*** (0.098)
KDNP			-0.329 (0.595)
MSZP			1.151 (0.712)
JOBBIK			2.099*** (0.746)
LMP			1.538* (0.823)
Constant	-2.633*** (0.384)	-1.465*** (0.421)	-1.766*** (0.439)
Inalpha	-0.125 (0.255)	-0.698 (0.365)	-0.930 (0.397)
Alpha	0.882*** (0.225)	0.497*** (0.181)	0.395*** (0.157)
McFadden's R <sup>2</sup>	0.242	.352	0.386
Observations	211	199	199

\* Significance at \* p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

\*\* Cell entries are un-standardized coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses



### ***Appendix 3.1: Variable Codebook***

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Operationalization</b>
District magnitude/ N. MPs same county	District magnitude at the 2004 elections; number of MPs elected from the same county.
Local politics experience	1 = the MP was in the past local or county councilor, mayor or prefect; 0 = the MP never held local office.
Parachuted	1 = the MP represents a different county than the one where he lives; 0 = the MP represents the county where he lives.
Years in Parliament	Years of membership in Parliament before the 2004 or 2008 elections.
Years in party	Years of party membership before the 2004 or 2008 elections.
Electoral security	The difference between the party list share of seats (for the 2004 term) or the candidate share of votes (for the 2008 term) the effective electoral threshold - standardized with Z scores.
MP won plurality	1 = the MP won the plurality of votes in the SMD, 0 = the MP finished second, third or fourth in the district.
Party switcher	1 = the MP left (in 2005-2006 or 2009-2010) the party for which he got elected; 0 = the MP did not change party affiliation during the analyzed period.
Local party leader	1= The MP had a party leadership position at local level at the time of the 2004 or 2008 elections; 0 = no local party office.
National party leader	1= The MP had a party leadership position at national level at the time of the 2004 or 2008 elections; 0 = no national party office.
PPG leader	1= The MP had a leadership position in the PPG during the analyzed period; 0 = no PPG office
Average vote attendance	% parliamentary votes the MP has attended since the introduction of electronic voting: 2006-2008, 2008-2012.
Government MP	1 = the MP was member of the parliamentary majority; 0 = the MP was member of the opposition during the analyzed period.
Male	1 = male; 0 = female

***Appendix 4.1: Variable Codebook***

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Operationalization</b>
Campaign Norm	0 = The goal of my campaign was to attract the most attention to my party... 10 = The goal of my campaign was to attract the most attention to my candidacy.
Constituency agenda	1 = the campaign promoted constituency specific issues, 0 = no issues related to electoral district
MP won plurality	1= MP won the plurality of votes in the SMD, 0= MP finished second, third or fourth
N. MPs same county	Number of MPs elected from the same county
Years in Parliament	Years of membership in Parliament before the 2012 elections
Incumbent	1= the MP was a member of the 2008-2012 Parliament, 0= the MP was not a member of the 2008-2012 Parliament.
Local politics experience	Years of office as mayor, councilor, or other local office
Ideological distance	0 = perfect congruence between the MP's and the party ideological position... 10=maximum ideological distance

***Appendix 4.2: Representativeness of the Romanian Candidate Study***

		Absolute frequency		Relative frequency	
		Population	Sample	Population	Sample
Party	USL	452	116	25.1	28.5
	ARD	452	109	25.1	26.8
	PPDD	446	83	24.7	20.4
	UDMR	452	99	25.1	24.3
	<i>Duncan Index of Dissimilarity</i>	<b>5.1</b>			
Gender	Female	252	71	14	17.4
	Male	1550	336	86	82.6
	<i>Duncan Index of Dissimilarity</i>	<b>3.4</b>			
Incumbency	Incumbent	307	82	17	20.1
	Newcomer	1495	325	83	79.9
	<i>Duncan Index of Dissimilarity</i>	<b>3.1</b>			
MPs	Elected candidates	570	173	31.6	42.5
	Unelected candidates	1232	234	68.4	57.5
	<i>Duncan Index of Dissimilarity</i>	<b>10.9</b>			

The Index ranges from 0 (perfect similarity) to 100 (perfect dissimilarity)

**Appendix 4.3: Original models (un-standardized coefficients)**

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3
Campaign Norm	0.087* (0.050)	0.065* (0.052)	0.053 (0.056)
Constituency agenda	0.529* (0.310)	0.610* (0.340)	0.576* (0.343)
MP won plurality	-0.465* (0.275)	-0.311 (0.282)	-0.415 (1.055)
N. MPs same county	-0.047*** (0.014)	-0.040*** (0.014)	-0.043*** (0.014)
Years in Parliament	-0.059 (0.047)	-0.052 (0.049)	-0.051 (0.048)
Incumbent	1.039** (0.420)	1.007** (0.438)	0.971** (0.425)
Local politics experience	0.008 (0.031)	0.008 (0.031)	0.016 (0.032)
Ideological Distance		-0.201* (0.121)	-0.176* (0.138)
PSD-PC			1.284** (0.635)
PNL			1.168* (0.679)
PDL			1.135 (0.959)
PPDD			1.042 (0.967)
Constant	1.945*** (0.466)	1.946*** (0.505)	0.986 (1.002)
Inalpha	0.872 (0.127)	0.862 (0.134)	0.827 (0.136)
Alpha	2.391*** (0.305)	2.369*** (0.318)	2.287*** (0.310)
McFadden's R <sup>2</sup>	.126	.128	.153
Observations	166	152	152

\* Significance at \* p < 0.10, \*\* p < 0.05, \*\*\*p < 0.01

\*\* Cell entries are un-standardized coefficients with robust standard errors in parentheses

**Appendix 5.1: Variable Codebook**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Operationalization</b>
Constituency questions	Number of questions on issues from the county represented by the SMD.
Parliamentary activity index	For Romania: Number bills*3 + N. motions*3 + N. speeches + N. declarations + N. questions. For Hungary: Number bills*3 + N. resolutions*1.5 + N. declarations*1.5 + N. questions + N. bill amendments*0.33.
Years in Parliament	Years of membership in Parliament.
Parliamentary office	1 = the MP has been a committee chair or vice-chair, or had a leadership position at PPG or at House level; 0 = the MP had no parliamentary office.
Electoral security	Romania 2008: the difference between the number of seats the party list won in the county at the 2004 elections and the candidate list position; Romania 2012: 1= the MP won the plurality in the SMD in 2008, 0= the MP finished second, third or fourth; Hungary 2014: 1 = the MP won the SMD in 2010, 0= the MP won a list seat.
Woman	1 = female; 0 = male
Incumbent	1 = the MP ran for re-election; 0= the MP was not a member of the previous legislature.
N. candidates	Number of candidates running in the SMD.
Party list length	Number of candidates running on the national party list.

***Appendix 5.2: Descriptive statistics of dependent variable and covariates***

	Mean	Std. deviation	Min.	Max.	N
Vote % Romania 2008	34.656	18.006	0.550	89.350	185
Vote % Romania 2012	46.896	22.092	4.731	87.657	203
Vote % Hungary 2014	35.936	13.018	0.528	60.623	169
N. constituency questions Ro. 2008	9.049	19.872	0	234	185
N. constituency questions Ro. 2012	10.759	26.885	0	295	203
N. constituency questions Hu. 2014	3.947	9.308	0	64	169
Parl. activity index Romania 2008	313.438	618.245	30	7603	185
Parl. activity index Romania 2012	346.382	700.919	36	8802	203
Parl. activity index Hungary 2014	123.659	153.827	3	881.833	169
Years in Parliament Romania 2008	6.547	3.749	4	18	185
Years in Parliament Romania 2012	6.720	4.254	4	22	203
Years in Parliament Hungary 2014	8.639	5.730	2.53	24	169
Parliamentary office Romania 2008	0.481	0.501	0	1	185
Parliamentary office Romania 2012	0.300	0.460	0	1	203
Parliamentary office Hungary 2014	0.314	0.465	0	1	169
Electoral security Romania 2008	1.222	1.674	-1	11	185
Electoral security Romania 2012	0.793	0.406	0	1	203
Electoral security Hungary 2014	0.515	0.501	0	1	169
Woman Romania 2008	0.103	0.304	0	1	185
Woman Romania 2012	0.123	0.329	0	1	203
Woman Hungary 2014	0.071	0.258	0	1	169

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