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## Abstract

It is often suggested in the case of mixed-member electoral systems that legislators with close ties to the Single Member Districts (SMD) are more constituency-oriented than those with weaker ties. This article investigates the effect of three career-related variables (mandate type, tier of candidacy and the number of formerly held SMD mandates) on the constituency orientation of national representatives. The analysis relies on a comprehensive database containing MP-level career information and the number of locally relevant written questions submitted between 2010 and 2013 in the Hungarian parliament. Contrary to the expectations, the results suggest that SMD candidates who were elected on party lists tend to ask a larger number of questions with local relevance than SMD MPs. Furthermore, MPs with considerable SMD experience are found to be more constituency-oriented only among those who gained their mandates in an SMD.

## Keywords

Parliamentary questioning; Shadowing; Mixed-member electoral system; Local representation; Hungary; Single Member District

## **Introduction**

The link between electoral systems and service responsiveness is an extensively studied area of legislative studies. The main question is whether representatives elected under different electoral rules perceive their connection to their voters in different ways. Studies of legislator behaviour have found a strong connection between the rules of election and representational attitudes (Heitshusen, Young, & Wood, 2005; Pilet, Freire, & Costa, 2012), constituency work (Lundberg, 2006), pork barrel politics (Lancaster, 1986; Stratmann & Baur, 2002), campaign strategies (Zittel & Gschwend, 2008), legislative (Bräuninger, Brunner, & Däubler, 2012; Herron, 2002) and non-legislative parliamentary activities (Manow, 2013). This article investigates how the different characteristics of mixed-member electoral rules affect non-legislative parliamentary activities. This is tested on the number of locally oriented written questions in the Hungarian Parliament.

Mixed-member electoral rules produce various types of MPs who are likely to perceive local representation in different ways. First, due to the mixed-member system, at least two types of representatives are elected. While first tier MPs come from Single Member Districts (SMDs), list tier MPs gain their seats through party lists. Several scholars have shown that SMD MPs are likely to be more constituency-oriented than list MPs (Lundberg, 2006; Stratmann & Baur, 2002; Zittel & Gschwend, 2008). Second, in a mixed system that also allows candidates to be nominated on multiple tiers simultaneously (i.e. the same candidate can be nominated both in an SMD and in a party list), not only the type of mandate affects strategic choices of constituency-orientation but also the different paths into parliament. The difference between SMD and list candidates is expected to manifest in differences in their constituency-related activities (Manow, 2013). Furthermore, members may also differ in terms of their experiences as legislators. MPs with more SMD experience might perceive the utility of establishing constituency ties differently than representatives who always gained their mandates through party lists.

This article tests whether MPs, who have different electoral and parliamentary experience, indeed show differences in representing local issues in parliament. The degree of local orientation is measured by the number of constituency-related written questions. Hungary is a convenient choice to model those behavioural traits that are closely connected to system characteristics because the Hungarian electoral system creates three different mandate

types and it also allows for multiple candidacies and a considerable variation in terms of SMD experience.

The article first reviews the literature on constituency service in parliament which is followed by the formulation of the hypotheses. Next, the Hungarian case is introduced with a special focus on the institutional context. Then it goes on to discuss the data and the operationalization of the variables. This is followed by an empirical test of the hypotheses. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the findings and opens up new perspectives for future research.

### **Constituency service in parliament**

Scholars of legislative behaviour study different activities, apply diverse methods, and focus on a broad variety of explanatory factors. However, the majority of authors take Mayhew's view as a starting point and consider legislators as 'single-minded seekers of re-election' (Mayhew, 1974). This leads to the assumption that most of the activities of the representatives can be attributed to their ambitions for re-election.

Re-election may potentially be achieved through constituency orientation which would demonstrate to the local electorate that the MP cares about the district that he or she represents. There are several ways in which MPs can express local orientation to increase their chances for a personal vote. Most importantly, they engage in constituency service in the districts: they hold office hours, carry out ombudsman-like activities, and deal with local problems as well as respond to individual petitions (Cain, Ferejohn, & Fiorina, 1987; Fenno, 1978; Norris, 1997; Norton & Wood, 1990). However, MPs do not necessarily need to be present in their constituencies to show concern for local issues. As they spend most of their time in parliament, they need to differentiate themselves from other members there and demonstrate local orientation. The local relevance of bill initiation (Crisp & Ingall, 2002; Marangoni & Tronconi, 2011), membership in key committees (Manow, 2013; Stratmann & Baur, 2002), speeches (Hill & Hurley, 2002), parliamentary questioning (Martin, 2011) and the willingness to desert the party line at roll-call (Carey, 2007; Tavits, 2009) can reflect general concern about issues that are potentially important for the citizens of a particular location.

Traditionally, parliamentary questioning is regarded as a mechanism of *ex post* government accountability in a sense that questions addressed to government members enable legislatures to control government actions. However, questions also bear 'micro-functions' in that they allow representatives to publicize personal achievements and bring up constituency-related

issues (Bailer, 2011; Wiberg & Koura, 1994). In this respect, questioning serves as a tool of enhancing member visibility, and, indirectly, may yield votes at the next elections. As Russo and Wiberg put it, parliamentary questions ‘often have two dimensions, simultaneously acting as both a way to ask for information and a way to give information’ (Russo & Wiberg, 2010, p. 220).

Martin (2011) argues that there are several advantages of investigating parliamentary questions compared to other methods of measuring personal vote-seeking. Because of its substantial direct and opportunity costs, questioning requires firm resource allocation strategies. Therefore, it also reveals representational priorities. Furthermore, despite the cross-national variance in the strength of party control (Wiberg, 1995), written questions are less rigorously censored than roll-call behaviour, floor speeches and oral questions. Thus, they are more reliable indicators of individual strategies and preferences, not to mention the fact that questions offer direct, easily accessible measures without sampling bias (Martin, 2011).

Hungarian House Rules allow four question types in parliament: interpellations, written and oral questions as well as direct ones. Floor time for interpellations, oral and direct questions are strictly limited. However, the number of written questions is not restricted. Thus, the Parliamentary Party Group (PPG) controls the submission of those questions that target the plenary session but written questions remain in the discretion of individual legislators to channel their personal preferences. Given the relatively weak party control of written questions, in this study they serve as a measure of member efforts to represent the local area in parliament.

### **Mixed-member career incentives for local interest representation**

A considerable part of the personal vote literature ties constituency representation to electoral rules. The main argument is that the different rules represent different incentives for the pursuit of personalistic goals (Carey & Shugart, 1995). In contrast with countries where electoral rules strengthen the role of parties, systems that encourage the individual to emerge from the crowd of candidates generate higher level of personalization. Linking personal vote-seeking to electoral rules, Carey and Shugart identified several components of the electoral system that may influence the incentives to perform constituency service (Carey & Shugart, 1995; Shugart, Valdini, & Suominen, 2005). Electoral formula, ballot structure, district magnitude and candidate selection rules have all been demonstrated to structure member behaviour.

The case of mixed-member electoral systems is particularly interesting for students of the electoral formula as it enables to test the effects of two (or more) different sets of rules within the same electoral and cultural context. The notion of mandate divide refers to the observation that due to the different incentives offered by the different tiers, the willingness of SMD and list MPs to engage in constituency service also differs. The electoral fortune of district members is tied to the geographical area they were elected in, while closed list members are held accountable by the party rather than the constituency. It has been shown that mandate type affects MP's perceptions of pork barrel allocation (Lancaster & Patterson, 1990), and it makes a difference in how representatives perceive their roles (Klingemann & Wessels, 2001). Ward (1998) reports that the media refers to list members as second class representatives in New-Zealand. Bowler and Farrell (1993) theorize that list MPs work less in their districts because they are able to 'shirk' the demand for constituency service, whereas in SMDs all demand concentrates on a single MP.

Nevertheless, in systems that allow for multiple candidacies, party list representatives are often reported to be interested in working for the SMD they competed in. As a consequence, the difference between the constituency-orientation of SMD incumbents and list members will be less sharp compared to a mixed-member setup with no parallel nominations. For instance, in constituencies with a narrow electoral margin (marginal constituency), the second candidate might feel the need to act like the winner only because he or she wants to stay in competition for the next elections (Ingall & Crisp, 2001; Kumbhat & Marcian, 1976; Norris, 2004; Norris, Vallance, & Lovenduski, 1992; Soroka, Penner, & Blidook, 2009; Zittel, 2012). Additionally, empirical evidence suggests that even in non-marginal districts list MPs who previously ran for the SMDs often appear as the 'shadows' of SMD members, and set up local offices (Carman & Shephard, 2007) as well as engage in constituency service just like SMD MPs.

Based on the above, mixed-member systems permitting multiple candidacies lead to the emergence of at least three types of representatives. First tier MPs are bound to their constituencies through their offices. They are held accountable by the voters for their actions, as it is clear who to punish or reward if the district magnitude is low (Cain et al., 1987; Norris, 2004; Scholl, 1986). Assuming that SMD members prefer to be re-elected as SMD MPs over being elected from the party lists at the next elections, they seek to collect personal vote and engage in constituency oriented activities. The second type of MPs are those representatives who were running as SMD candidates, but were elected from party lists. Based solely on mandate type, these MPs should not be motivated to make extra effort to represent the local

area. However, SMD candidacy reflects their intention to become players on the lowest level of the electoral system, which is an incentive to pick up additional activities, like standing for local issues in parliament. Nevertheless, their willingness to do so will be less strong than the SMD members' calling to constituency service. The reason for this is that whereas at the next elections they cannot be held accountable by the voters for what happens in the district, SMD members suffer the direct consequences of being unsuccessful in local interest representation by losing their office as SMD MPs. The third group of MPs consists of legislators who were elected from party lists and were not nominated as first tier candidates. Members of this group have no office-driven or candidacy-related motivations to engage into extra activities to raise personal vote. They are not tied to the local level through their offices, nor do they enter the SMD-level competition. Thus, the following hypotheses describe the differences between the three types of MPs with regards to the degree of local orientation in parliament.

*(H1) SMD MPs submit a larger number of locally relevant questions than list representatives who were also nominated in SMDs.*

*(H2) SMD MPs submit a larger number of locally relevant questions than list representatives who were not nominated in SMDs.*

*(H3) List MPs who were nominated in SMDs submit a larger number of locally relevant questions than list representatives who were not nominated on the first tier.*

The first two hypotheses test whether there is a divide between SMD and party list MPs. Confirming both H1 and H2 would support the mandate divide, while rejecting either of them would suggest that SMD members do not necessarily outweigh list representatives in terms of locally oriented parliamentary questioning. Similarly, evidence that support H2 and H3 also underpins the 'shadowing' theory that implies that SMD candidates are more likely to be locally oriented than those who were not nominated in SMDs. However, if one of these hypotheses is not confirmed, the 'shadowing' theory would lack sufficient empirical support.

A simple consequence of mixed-member electoral rules is that MPs elected on the different tiers might have experiences on other levels, too. For example, a party list representative who serves his or her fifth term may as well be a four-time SMD member who lost the seat due to bad electoral fortune. Yet, the literature discussing the relationship between former legislative experience and parliamentary activities in mixed-member systems does not offer many guidelines in this respect. Nevertheless, it would be reasonable to argue that election inconsistency significantly affects how members behave. First, past SMD experience

indicates that the given member has an established connection with the district, which may lead to the emergence of intrinsic motivations of carrying out constituency service. If we accept that representational roles are learned roles rather than rational strategies (see Zittel, 2012), then varying personal election history may also affect how members act in the interests of their former constituencies. Those who have substantial experience in representing the local level might be more active in locally oriented questioning regardless of what positions they currently fill in the parliament simply because doing so became more of a habit for them rather than a rational, vote-seeking consideration. Second, even if one does not account for the possibility that member activities are driven by such intrinsic motivations, election history may still play a role in determining constituency-orientation. Manow (2013) argues that in order to map the full range of motivations we should consider the different ways in which MPs enter the legislature because this may also reveal future election preferences. Although Manow discusses candidacy on the various levels of the German electoral system, it is plausible to expect that overall legislative experience affects future ambitions in other contexts, too. This is especially relevant in the case of former SMD representatives who have a longer history of serving as first tier MPs. Therefore, the fourth hypothesis states that (H4) *the longer the SMD-level legislative experience, the larger the number of locally relevant questions.*

In order to be able to establish the connection between system-related career factors and questioning behaviour in parliament, electoral rules should comply with several criteria. First, MPs have to be elected from multiple tiers. Second, candidacy on more than one tier should also be permitted. Third it is essential that MPs have varying experience on the SMD-level. The next section demonstrates that the Hungarian electoral system bears all the above features thus it is a convenient choice to test the hypothesis.

### **The Hungarian case**

Until the change of the electoral law in 2011, Hungary had a three-tier mixed member electoral system with partial compensation (Shugart & Wattenberg, 2001). 176 representatives were elected from single member districts (first tier) under the rules of absolute majority in the first, and relative majority in the second round of election. A further 146 legislators gained their mandate from 20 multi-member constituencies (second tier) of which territories aligned with the 19 counties and the capital city of Budapest. Lastly, 64 MPs began their service as national list representatives (third tier) by utilizing the surplus votes

from the first two tiers. Members from both the second and third tiers were elected from closed party lists.

An important feature of the Hungarian electoral system is that candidates have been allowed to be nominated on multiple tiers simultaneously. About 40 percent of candidates between 1990 and 2010 ran on at least two tiers of the system. In 2010, 45 percent of list MPs were nominated in SMDs. In addition, there was also a substantial variation with regards to SMD experience because 37 percent of legislators elected in 2010 gained SMD mandates in the past, among which 60 percent held either regional or national list mandates in 2010.

### **Data and variables**

The article analyzes questions submitted for written response to the Hungarian Parliament between May 2010 and January 2013. Only individual questions entered the dataset, multi-authored ones were not taken into account. The sample thus consists of 4,145 questions. Constituency-orientation is defined in three distinct ways. First, *undefined localism* refers to localism in the broadest possible sense: did the questioning MP mention any local area or issue irrespective of whether he or she is connected to that local area through mandate or candidacy?. In this respect, issues that concern a particular geographical area smaller than the whole country are considered local. Second, *county-related localism* refers to the county in which the MP was either elected on the first or the second tier, or nominated as an SMD candidate. In this case, questions that relate to the county where the questioning MP was holding a mandate (SMD or regional list) or was nominated as an SMD candidate were coded as local. Third, *constituency-related localism* relates to the constituency of election. Consequently, only first and second tier members are included for whom the single member district and the county serve as constituency. Thus, the definition of the constituency varies with mandate type: it is the SMD for SMD members and the county for regional list representatives. After determining whether the different questions touch upon undefined, county and/or constituency-related local issues<sup>1</sup>, the data was aggregated in a way that the

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<sup>1</sup> Note that these categories are not mutually exclusive. One question can be considered local along all three types of localism defined in the paper. For example, for an SMD MP, a question related to his or her constituency will be coded as local not only in the category of constituency-related localism, but in the other two as well. Also, questions cannot be coded without the context, which is in this case the questioning MP's electoral information. In the course of creating the research design, up to 50 questions were coded by multiple researchers (including the author) to assess how complicated the coding can become. During this trial period we simplified the codebook up to a point where all senior researchers agreed that it is straightforward enough to work with one

related dependent variables measure the number of local questions submitted by the given MP.

As for the independent variables<sup>2</sup>, two indicators test the effects of those career factors on local orientation that are directly related to electoral rules. First, *SMD positions* distinguishes among mandate types by introducing a category for (1) SMD members, (2) list representatives running in SMDs in 2010, and (3) list MPs not nominated on the first tier. Second, *SMD experience* entails the number of past electoral terms served as an SMD representative.

To estimate the net effect of the above factors on the number of locally relevant written questions one has to control for additional variables. First, regardless of the ballot structure the incentive to free-ride increases with *district magnitude* (Cain et al., 1987; Norris, 2004; Scholl, 1986). Seddon et al. show that small constituencies ‘increase the needs for legislators to internalize the consequences of redistributive policies’ (Seddon, Gaviria, Panizza, & Stein, 2002, p. 14), which makes them more willing to represent the direct interests of the district in the legislature. Others argue that the higher the number of MPs representing a constituency, the less likely that each individual representative will be able to claim credit for those resources that the given district receives from the state. In other words, pork barrel politics is a less effective vote-attractor if the district magnitude is high (Lancaster, 1986). This especially applies to the case of closed list systems, where the rank of candidates on the party lists is pre-determined by the party (Shugart et al., 2005). If, as in Hungary, party lists are closed, then legislators elected in counties with larger magnitude are expected to submit a smaller number of locally oriented written questions.

There are two ways to measure the local embeddedness of an MP: *local political positions* and *place of birth*. With regards to the period under investigation, Hungarian electoral rules permitted multiple-office holding: MPs were allowed to run for positions in local governments. As voters seek to elect candidates who are familiar with the peculiarities of the local area (Putnam, 1976; Shugart et al., 2005; Tavits, 2010), holding multiple offices may serve as an important asset during election time. However, when elected, representatives might pursue different agendas and focus on issues that are related to their local areas (Russo, 2011), thus submit a larger number of local questions. Second, *place of birth* might also affect how representatives bring local issues to the parliament. Having been born in the constituency

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coder per question. Questions were coded manually by two MA-students using the electoral information on the questioning representatives. The progress of the coders was closely monitored. Questions that appeared to be more difficult to code were discussed among the coders and the author,

<sup>2</sup> For a complete list of independent variables and descriptive statistics see Appendix 1.

strengthens the connection between the MPs and their electoral districts. Legislators are expected to ask more local questions if they represent districts where they were born.

Furthermore, seniority also plays an important role in constituency service. Based on Norton and Wood's intra-generational hypothesis, *newcomers* to the Parliament are more constituency-oriented because they still need to build up their local voter base (Norton & Wood, 1990). This hypothesis (also formulated by Fenno (1978)), however, is drawn from the logic of pure SMD systems. Under closed list Proportional Representation (PR) rules, candidates have to secure the party's support instead of the voters' (Heitshusen et al., 2005). Due to rather centralized candidate selection on the SMD tier and the role of the closed party lists in the Hungarian electoral system, newcomers are expected to be more constituency-oriented, and ask a larger number of local questions.

Wahlke et al. (1962) argue that the parties play an important role in the socialization of legislators. Those who climbed the 'corporate ladder' to reach high positions in their party acquired attitudes that direct the individual's focus of representation to the party (Zittel, 2012) instead of the constituency. Thus, *party leaders* are expected to be less concerned about local issues in parliament. Additionally, they also have less time to engage in constituency service compared to backbench representatives. The same reasoning applies to the case of MPs with leadership roles in parliament. The positions of the speaker, vice-presidents, leaders of the PPG and committee chairs require a lot of time and resources that prevent legislators from focusing on particular local problems. Therefore, MPs serving in any of the above *positions in parliament* are likely to produce fewer local questions.

Traditionally, parliamentary questions are considered as tools for ex post government control. Therefore, it is expected that *government MPs* tend to ask fewer questions than representatives of the opposition. Assuming that the localness of the questions is distributed evenly among the two groups of MPs, opposition MPs should submit a larger amount of local questions.

Last, but not least, *electoral margin* also plays a substantial role in explaining member efforts. It is theorized that the narrower the electoral margin, the more representatives are encouraged to carry out constituency service (Ingall & Crisp, 2001). A fierce competition in the constituency makes electoral outcomes dependent on the candidates' ability to attract personal vote. Thus, compared to safe districts, uncertain electoral results increase the willingness to engage in constituency-centred activities.

## **Results**

The dependent variables of this analysis measure counts: the number of local questions submitted by the given MP. The variance largely exceeds the mean<sup>3</sup> (over-dispersion) in the case of all three dependent variables. The most commonly used tool to model over-dispersed count variables is the negative binomial regression (Cameron & Trivedi, 1998; Long, 1997). Table 1 shows the results from the models explaining the number of local (undefined) and constituency-related questions. Entries are incidence rate ratios (IRR), which means that values greater than 1 indicate positive effects, while coefficients that are smaller than 1 represent a negative connection between the related independent and dependent variables

As for the factors that are not directly related to the hypotheses of the analysis, only the party seems to play a role in the frequency with which Hungarian MPs submit local questions. Taking questions with any local relevance into account (Model 1 in Table 1), opposition MPs, on average, pose more of them than their government peers. This also implies that the local representation function of written questions is closely related to government scrutiny. Not only do opposition MPs submit more questions to scrutinize the government, but they outweigh government parties with regards to the extent of local questioning as well. As the effect of being related to any particular local area is already controlled for (SMD positions, SMD experience and local political positions), the effect of political sides are not necessarily related to the MPs personal involvement (i.e. direct ties to the constituency) in representing local interests. It is more likely that opposition MPs who submit written questions aim to exert government control but they frame their inquiry as a locally relevant question. Nevertheless, being a government MP does not have any significant effect on the extent of local orientation in the case of those questions that have a more specific local content (i.e. relate to a more strictly defined local area; see Model 2 in Table 1).

[Table 1 about here]

Turning to the effects of variables that are related to the mixed-member system design, both *SMD positions* and *SMD experience* are significant (see Model 1 and Model 2 in Table 1). It was expected that SMD representatives do more for their local areas than list MPs because the local electorate may hold them responsible for the well-being of the district. Thus they need to advertise their work as the district's elected legislators in order to establish the

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<sup>3</sup> Undefined localism: Mean = 1.98, Variance = 52.7, Constituency related localism: Mean = 1.44, Variance = 38.5, County related localism: Mean = 1.45, Variance = 38.9

accountability linkage. However, the results contradict this basic intuition: list representatives who were running in SMDs at the preceding election ask more locally oriented questions than SMD MPs. Furthermore, list MPs who were not nominated in SMDs bring fewer local questions to the agenda than constituency members.

The strong effect of SMD candidacy reveals how losing candidates perceive their roles as representatives<sup>4</sup>. These MPs need to find ways to ‘shadow’ their competitors and drafting written questions is a relatively costless way to do so. Moreover, the submission of written questions also reveals that they are willing to invest at least a part of their resources into pursuing goals that are not directly related to their current status in parliament<sup>5</sup>.

Turning to the effect of *SMD experience* (H4), a natural consequence of mixed member rules is that it offers members an extended set of opportunities to get elected. In certain cases this leads to a career of discontinuity in terms of the kind of mandates the MPs hold throughout their careers. Changing political fortunes may leave experienced SMD MPs in list positions and bring multiple-term list representatives to take over the SMD seats. The models presented in Table 1 support the fourth hypothesis and suggest that MPs with a longer history of constituency representation submit more locally targeted written questions.

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<sup>4</sup> Data from the first round of the Comparative Candidates Survey support the results with regards to the role perceptions of SMD candidates. 230 MPs were surveyed in 2010. 51.5 percent of SMD candidates claimed that representing their constituencies is the most important task they undertake as Members of Parliament. In comparison, only 23.4 % of legislators who were not nominated on the first tier chose the constituency (Cramer’s  $V = .253^{***}$ ).

<sup>5</sup> It has to be mentioned that the 2010 elections established a unique situation in the Hungarian parliament. Fidesz and KDNP (the government parties) were able to secure two-third of the seats because they were extremely successful in the first tier competition. Consequently, list legislators who did run in SMDs are almost exclusively opposition MPs. This aspect does not seem to cause any problems in the model in terms of inflating the standard errors too much ( $VIF < 4$ ). Especially as in Model 1, both variables have significant effects. In Model 2, government MPs have a larger coefficient than in Model 1, but the standard error grew in a more substantial manner. The main question here is that whether the effect of being a government MPs is incorporated in the effect of SMD positions. Based on the logic of multivariate analysis, coefficients display net effects. This means, that the effects of the individual variables are interpreted as if everything else would remain unchanged. However, one should be careful with the interpretation of such data. In Model 2 (Table 1), the coefficient for list MPs who ran in SMDs is 6.67 (SE=5.05). In a model that does not control for government MPs, the same coefficient would be 9.45 (SE=5.19). Thus, SMD positions explain a great deal, and including the control variable for government MPs only changes its effect to some extent. Nevertheless, this does not mean that we do not have to be careful when drawing the conclusions from these results. One would need to extend the analysis to additional electoral terms to entirely separate the effects of these two variables.

To test whether the strong effect of SMD experience is consistent over groups of MPs with different SMD positions, interaction terms were introduced (Table 2) into the models presented in Table 1.

[Table 2 about here]

The results of Model 3 highlight that although experience has an overall positive effect on the number of local questions, in the case of undefined localism the magnitude of its effect is conditional upon mandate type and candidacy. The interaction between *SMD positions* and *SMD experience* reveals that in the case of list MPs, the number of formerly held SMD mandates slightly decrease the frequency of submitting locally relevant questions (see dashed and dotted lines in Figure 1). This indicates that SMD experience does not overwrite incentives created by current positions (i.e. by being a party list MP): list MPs will not submit more questions just because they have extensive SMD level experience. A stronger effect is associated with *SMD experience* within the group of SMD MPs. The longer they serve in the single member districts, the more locally oriented they appear (see solid line in Figure 1). This suggests that more experienced SMD legislators value the power of parliamentary questioning which serves for them as a means of interest representation and advertising their achievements.

[Figure 1 about here]

In relation to SMD candidates and their constituency oriented behaviour, it is often suggested that marginality plays an important role in determining whether SMD candidates decide to strengthen their positions within the SMDs. In constituencies where competition is fierce, both winners and losers are encouraged to work hard to either keep or take over the district. In safe constituencies, however, incentives to work hard will be considerably lower for all competitors. Table 3 shows the results of the negative binomial regressions estimating the number of questions that are related to the county<sup>6</sup> of nomination in the case of SMD

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<sup>6</sup> The data does not allow matching list members with the SMDs they were nominated in. Information is available only on whether they touched upon issues related to the county where the SMD is located in. For the sake of consistency, county-related localism is taken into account in the case of SMD members as well. However, it should be noted, that in the latter case constituency- and county-related localism are in perfect correspondence.

candidates. Although electoral margin matters, the effect does not point to the expected direction in Model 5. On the contrary, localness intensifies with an increasing margin.

[Table 3 about here]

The interaction term in Model 6 that controls for the difference in the effect of the electoral margin in the cases of winners and losers is not statistically significant. This means that the effect of margin does not vary between MPs with different SMD positions. Not only do losers work harder when the electoral margin increases, but also winners make more effort when their seat appears to be safer. Safe seats represent great prestige in Hungary for both the incumbent and the party. These districts are also the most important to keep, as a defeat in a safe constituency transmits a quite negative message to the voters of the party. Thus, incumbent MPs are motivated to work harder in these SMDs to make sure that nobody would threaten their position in the electorate. Similarly, for the challenger, it is crucial to perform better in these constituencies. Breaking the dominance of the incumbent or just narrowing the popularity gap increases political strength. Furthermore, as the votes for the losers pool to the national list tier and add to party votes, vote maximizing SMD candidates can contribute to party success even if they do not stand a chance in their constituencies as individual candidates.

[Table 4 about here]

The final step in testing the effect of SMD positions on the local orientation of parliamentary questioning is to control for the number of MPs representing the same geographical area (*district magnitude*). To do this, county-related questions have to be taken into account. District magnitude in this case shows the number of legislators elected in the same county, first and second tier mandates included. It is assumed that the larger the number of MPs representing the same district, the more they are able to ‘shirk’ the demand for constituency service thus the smaller the number of county-related questions. However, results of Model 7 (Table 4) do not seem to support this assumption: district magnitude is not associated with local orientation. Nevertheless, the interaction term in Model 8 suggests that district size interferes with how SMD positions affect the number of county-related questions. Figure 2 visualizes the interaction between *SMD positions* and county-level district magnitude. The

solid line reveals that the growing number of MPs hardly influences the county-related localness of SMD members. The difference between small and large counties manifests in different intensities of localism only in the case of regional list MPs who were also running for SMD seats.

Regional list representatives give more effort in districts with fewer legislators, but if district magnitude grows, the number of written questions declines. More importantly, in large counties, the differences between the different types of MPs seem to fade. Whereas the difference in local questioning is considerable in smaller counties, with increasing district magnitude the number of county-related questions rapidly converges to the level of SMD MPs and list members who were not nominated on the first tier.

[Figure 2 about here]

## **Conclusion**

One of the main conclusions of the above analysis is that written questioning seems to be the losers' tool for constituency service: less successful parties and candidates channel government scrutiny and constituency orientation through written questions. However, localism serves as a tool of government control only if questions touch upon local issues that are not directly related to the area of election or candidacy of the MP who submits the question. This means that questions without any relevance for the questioning MP's background also serve scrutiny functions. Nevertheless, with a more direct relationship between the MP and the area to which the questions are related, the scrutinizing function becomes less clear. It indicates that this particular form of questioning can be considered an existing tool of getting across local messages in Hungary. In this sense, the dependent variables of this analysis measured local orientation independently from other functions of parliamentary questioning (e.g. government scrutiny).

The analysis supports the hypothesis suggesting that SMD MPs submit a larger number of locally relevant questions than list representatives who were not nominated in SMDs. Furthermore, SMD candidacy makes a difference within the group of list MPs as well: list MPs nominated in SMDs are significantly more active in local questioning than list MPs who were not running in SMDs. However, list members with SMD candidacy are more active than SMD MPs in terms of submitting locally relevant questions. This leads to the rejection of H1 which stated the opposite. This finding also indicates that the mandate divide does not structure the questioning behaviour of Hungarian MPs. The local orientation of SMD

representatives is prevalent only if we compare them with list MPs who were not competing on the first tier. In spite of a more clear-cut accountability linkage, SMD winners do not put extra effort in representing their constituencies through written questions. SMD candidacy appears to be a better predictor of questioning efforts.

However, analysing only one aspect of constituency service is not sufficient to conclude that the mandate divide does not prevail in Hungary at all. The reason why it is difficult to find robust relationships between certain types of activities and the explanatory factors is that MPs maintain different portfolios when it comes to constituency representation (André & Depauw, 2013). It is certainly more plausible to argue that for SMD MPs written questioning is not considered as an important part of this portfolio. It also involves that these results highlight the practice of parliamentary questioning and less so the mandate divide itself. Written questions are part of a portfolio of activities used to express local concern in the case of those who lost in the SMDs. Due to its unrestricted availability, written questions are convenient tools for members who cannot step up as SMD representatives. Shadowing becomes stronger in non-marginal constituencies, which shows the great political value of the single member districts in Hungarian politics. Even MPs with modest chances of winning the district engage in locally oriented parliamentary questioning to increase the party vote and demonstrate their own capability.

It was also expected that past SMD experience is positively related to constituency-orientation in parliament. Indeed, more experienced MPs asked more locally oriented questions. Interestingly, legislative career paths influence the relationship between mandate type and the local focus of the questions as well. SMD MPs become more active with increasing experience, while in the case of list members, a more articulate SMD past does not coincide with a larger number of local questions. This indicates that career inconsistencies (i.e. serving as a list member with considerable SMD experience) do not influence behaviour in parliament, but rather consistencies (i.e. being an experienced SMD member) are the key factors in assessing the effect of former experience.

The above analysis highlights that system-specific electoral factors matter in locally oriented written questioning. In fact, they appear more important than factors that are independent from electoral rules. However, it also underlines the circumstantial character of the mandate divide. The most common conception with regards to mixed-member electoral rules is that SMD members are more locally conscious than party list MPs. Although one cannot reject this hypothesis on the basis of the above analysis, the results demonstrate that different types of MPs might perceive the usefulness of different types of activities in various

ways. Written questioning in the Hungarian parliament is perceived as a useful tool by SMD candidates who shadow their elected colleagues. Furthermore, the relatively low goodness-of-fit measures of the models suggest that much of the variance remains unexplained. Future research might benefit from extending the analysis to multiple electoral terms as well as taking different tools of local representation into account to cover a full portfolio of member activities aiming at local representation.

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**Table 1: Negative binomial regression models explaining the number of locally relevant questions**

Variables	Model 1 All MPs Undefined localism	Model 2 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> tier MPs Constituency related localism
SMD positions <sup>a</sup>		
List MP & SMD candidate	2.86 (1.48)**	6.67 (5.05)**
List MP & not SMD candidate	.39 (.18)**	.25 (.14)**
SMD experience	1.55 (.26)**	1.77 (.38)***
Local political position	.85 (.26)	1.09 (.47)
Place of birth		1.13 (.46)
New MP	.69 (.24)	.61 (.29)
Party leader	1.36 (.44)	1.51 (.68)
Position in parliament	1.44 (.67)	.54 (.40)
Government MP	.30 (.12)***	.65 (.41)
Intercept	1.83 (1.08)	.58 (.48)
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> (Nagelkerke)	0.185	0.183
LL Intercept only model	-538.93	-342.33
LL Full model	-501.03	-313.72
N	401	326

\*\*\*p< .01, \*\*p< .05, \*p< .1

Entries are incidence rate ratios (IRR) with robust standard errors in parentheses.

The dispersion parameter alpha is different from zero in all of the reported models (p<.01).

a Control variable: SMD MP

**Table 2: Negative binomial regression models explaining the number of locally relevant questions with interactions (SMD experience\*SMD positions)**

Variables	Model 3 All MPs Undefined localism	Model 4 1 <sup>st</sup> and 2 <sup>nd</sup> tier MPs Constituency related localism
SMD positions <sup>a</sup>		
List MP & SMD candidate	5.08 (2.81)***	10.69 (8.69)***
List MP & not SMD candidate	.59 (.27)	.36 (.20)*
SMD experience	1.95 (.37)***	2.06 (.48)***
SMD experience*List MP& SMD candidate (interaction term)	.46 (.15)**	.47 (.23)
SMD experience*List MP & not SMD candidate (interaction term)	.33 (.14)**	.00 (.00)
Local political position	1.07 (.35)	1.26 (.56)
Place of birth		1.22 (.49)
New MP	.65 (.22)	.57 (.26)
Party leader	1.21 (.38)	1.31 (.60)
Position in parliament	1.51 (.71)	.54 (.41)
Government MP	.26 (.10)***	.56 (.38)
Intercept	1.40 (.82)	.53 (.44)
Pseudo R <sup>2</sup> (Nagelkerke)	0.203	0.201
LL Intercept only model	-538.23	-342.33
LL Full model	-496.83	-310.65
N	401	326

\*\*\*p< .01, \*\*p< .05, \*p< .1

Entries are incidence rate ratios (IRR) with robust standard errors in parentheses.

The dispersion parameter alpha is different from zero in all of the reported models (p<.01).

a Control variable: SMD MP

**Table 3: Negative binomial regression models explaining county related localism in relation with the county of nomination (SMD candidates only)**

Variables	Model 5	Model 6
SMD Winner	.04 (.04)***	.04 (.04)***
Electoral margin (centred)	89.63 (118.55)***	41.81 (70.31)**
SMD Winner*Electoral margin (centred)		4.41 (12.33)
SMD experience	1.32 (.29)	1.27 (.26)
Local political position	1.09 (.41)	1.13 (.41)
New MP	.39 (.19)*	.37 (.18)**
Party leader	1.96 (.67)*	1.92 (.64)*
Position in parliament	.57 (.32)	.55 (.32)
Government MP	4.29 (4.06)	4.01 (3.91)
Intercept	3.06 (1.39)**	3.16 (1.43)
Pseudo (Nagelkerke) R <sup>2</sup>	0.16	0.16
LL Intercept only model	-377.47	-377.47
LL Full model	-354.53	-354.42
N	275	275

\*\*\*p < .01, \*\*p < .05, \*p < .1

Entries are incidence rate ratios with robust standard errors in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered by SMD (176 clusters were created).

The dispersion parameter alpha is different from zero in all of the reported models (p < .01).

**Table 4: Negative binomial regression models explaining county related localism in relation with the county of election (SMD and regional list MPs only)**

Variables	Model 7	Model 8
SMD positions <sup>a</sup>		
List MP & SMD candidate	6.25 (4.58)**	5.11 (3.48)**
List MP & not SMD candidate	.24 (.10)**	.25 (.11)**
District magnitude (logged and centred)	.84 (.19)	1.21 (.38)
District magnitude * List MP & SMD candidate		.14 (.06)***
District magnitude * List MP & not SMD candidate		.68 (.38)
Place of birth	1.21 (.36)	1.05 (.30)
SMD experience	1.75 (.49)**	1.74 (.48)**
Local political position	1.09 (.33)	1.08 (.33)
New MP	.59 (.23)	.61 (.24)
Party leader	1.48 (.48)	1.17 (.39)
Position in parliament	.56 (.18)*	.65 (.20)
Government MP	.64 (.42)	.55 (.33)
Intercept	.60 (.46)	.75 (.54)
Pseudo (Nagelkerke) R <sup>2</sup>	0.188	0.201
LL Intercept only model	-344.97	-344.97
LL Full model	-315.56	-313.23
N	326	326

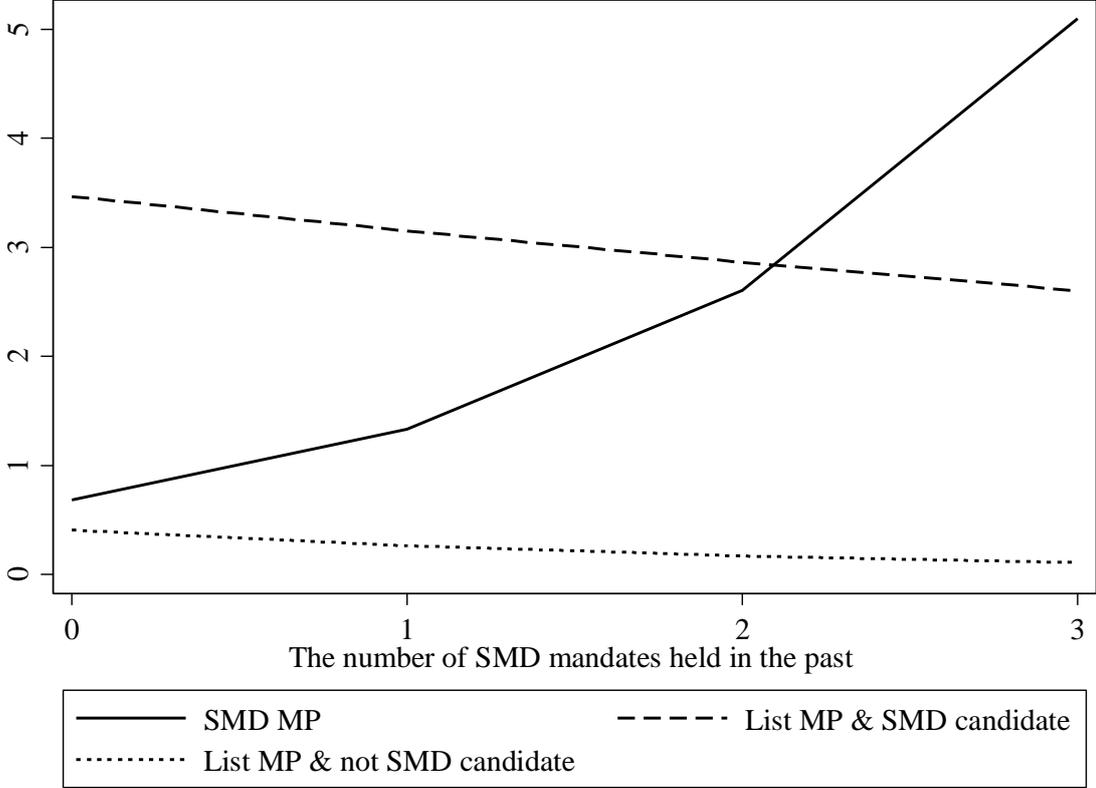
\*\*\*p < .01, \*\*p < .05, \*p < .1

Entries are incidence rate ratios with robust standard errors in parentheses. Standard errors are clustered by county (20 clusters were created).

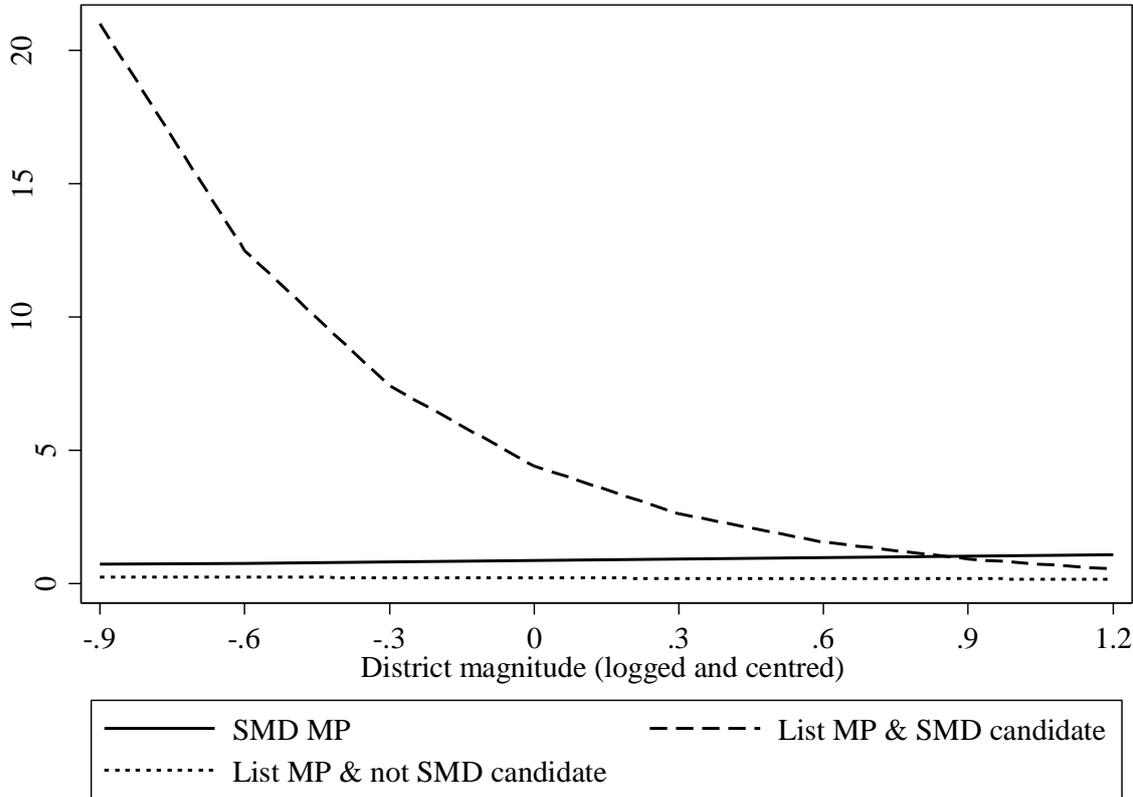
The dispersion parameter alpha is different from zero in all of the reported models (p < .01).

a Control variable: SMD MP

**Figure 1: The interconnectedness of former SMD experience and SMD positions in explaining undefined localism (marginal effects)**



**Figure 2: The interconnectedness of district size and SMD positions in explaining county-related localism (marginal effects)**



## Appendix 1. List of variables in the analysis

Variables	Variable coding	Number (Percent)	Mean (Std. dev.)
Undefined localism	The number of questions mentioning any local issue		1.98 (7.26)
County related localism	The number of questions mentioning county related issues		1.2 (5.72)
Constituency related localism	The number of questions mentioning constituency related issues		1.2 (5.69)
SMD positions	1 = SMD MP 2 = List MP & SMD candidate 3 = List MP & Not an SMD candidate	179 (44.6) 100 (25.0) 122 (30.4)	
SMD experience	The number of terms served as an SMD representative excluding the current term		.61 (1.07)
District magnitude	The number of seats available in a given county including SMD and list positions		24.4 (18.13)
Local political positions	0 = No local political position 1 = Mayor and/or member of the local council	218 (54.4) 183 (45.6)	
Place of birth	0 = Born outside the electoral district 1 = Born within the electoral district	237 (49.7) 164 (50.3)	
New MP	0 = Senior legislator 1 = New MP	213 (53.2) 188 (46.8)	
Party leader	0 = Not a national party leader 1 = National party leader	262 (65.4) 139 (34.6)	
Position in parliament	0 = No parliamentary and committee leadership position 1 = Fills in parliament leadership position and/or committee chair	362 (90.3) 39 (9.7)	
Government MP	0 = Opposition MP 1 = Government MP	128 (31.9) 273 (68.1)	
Electoral margin	Vote difference between the SMD winner and the second place candidate divided by the number of valid votes cast in the given constituency		.29 (.12)