

Members of the German Bundesrat: (How/Who/From where) do they represent?

Summary:

The German Bundesrat, as an institution, represents the German Länder, but its members are sometimes not considered to be representatives, due to their very specific mode of appointment. If the literature has debated this topic theoretically, little is known about how the members themselves perceive their mission. Relying on survey data of the members of the German Bundesrat and analyses of their career trajectories, this contribution aims at bridging this gap by exploring who the members of the Bundesrat are, and how they think of their action. We show that the members of the German Bundesrat do see themselves as representatives, primarily of their Land, but this is not where the story ends. Quite the contrary, we highlight the different representative relationships the members undertake, and put them in relation to their previous careers. We also show that they have a specific understanding of representation, one that is very focused on influence on law-making, and reasonably separate from communication, therefore presenting an image of the Bundesrat as a chamber that is not as technocratic as often depicted.

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