

## **Constituency Service and Representation: The effects of remoteness and social deprivation**

**Abstract:** This note examines and tests the determinants of constituency service in the Chilean Chamber of Deputies. We argue that socio-demographic factors lead towards differences in the provision of constituency service. We use a new data set of meetings between legislators, constituents, and groups to provide evidence for two main hypotheses. First, Chilean deputies from more remote districts devote a higher proportion of their meetings to addressing local or personal issues from constituents (Centre-Periphery Hypothesis). Second, deputies from districts in worse socio-economic situations also provide relatively more constituency services of this type (Social Deprivation Hypothesis).

Keywords: constituency service; Chile; legislators; deprivation; remoteness.

What are the primary determinants of constituency service? Electoral institutions typically provide different incentives for legislators to foster their (personal) vote (Crisp et al., 2004), and it is uncontroversial to assert that meeting constituents in the district is a powerful tool to achieve that goal (i.e., Cain et al., 1984; Carey and Shugart, 1995). In the presence of those incentives, district socio-demographic characteristics matter when legislators decide when to adopt certain representational styles or roles. The relationship between district features and constituency effort is neat when the electoral rules are the same for all districts. In that context, two main factors from the literature stand out: the positive effect of a centre periphery dynamic -operationalized with the distance to the political centre of the polity—on constituency service or localism (i.e., Willumsen, 2019; Hlynisdóttir and Önnudóttir, 2018; Martin, 2011a) and the greater demand for constituency service when social and economic

deprivation is severe (Bäck, Baumann, and Debus 2019; Tromborg and Schwindt-Bayer, 2019; Saafeld, 2011). Because of data constraints, the literature has relied upon questionnaires or surveys with parliamentarians to produce results on the relationship between local constituents and legislators. In this note, we take advantage of recent data on Chilean deputies' meetings with individuals, lobbyists and organizations to provide direct observational evidence on constituency service in Chile.

That is how this note contributes to the empirical literature on legislator behaviour from a methodological point of view. The works on the Chilean case rely on non-legislative speeches to examine how legislators communicate with their voters back home (Alemán et al., 2018, Alemán and Micozzi 2021). We, instead, exploit data on legislator meetings records recently available in Chile, which provide a more direct measure of constituency activity. Further research may replicate our design and test similar hypotheses in different settings. Opportunities for such work arise as other countries in Latin America have recently begun registering and making publicly available records of meetings involving legislators and other authorities. One example is the case of federal authorities in Brazil, where the system of meeting records follows the Chilean model (El Mercurio 2022).

Being a geographically diverse country, Chile provides a case suitable for testing the determinants of constituency service within a political system. We build upon the literature and the Chilean experience to propose and test two hypotheses. One is that legislators from remote districts held more meetings with constituents to discuss local issues (Centre-Periphery Hypothesis). The other is that meeting constituents occurs more often with deputies from higher-poverty districts (Deprivation Hypothesis). Our results confirm that remoteness is a good predictor of the differences in constituency activity among Chilean deputies. However, we did not find support to reject the null hypothesis for the relationship between social deprivation and constituency service.

We organized the note as follows. In the next section, we present the background for our hypotheses in view of the relevant literature. Then, we describe the principal features of the Chilean case, focusing mainly on the new data resulting from implementing the Lobbying

Act in 2014. We also describe electoral incentives, geographical features, and historical background. The goal is to make clear why Chile is so convenient for unravelling the underlying process of constituency service. Next, we describe data and methods and present our major results. Last, we further discuss the implications of our findings.

### **Constituency service: background and hypotheses**

Among the activities that look to the district, attending requests for social help, services, roads, and helping individual constituents (casework) are the most prominent. Hereafter, we operationally understand constituency service as those “activities addressing the non-policy grievances or looking out for the non-policy interests of citizens in the member's district” (Crisp and Simoneau, 2018, 345). For example, surgeries produce contact with citizens, usually those with demands, grievances, or other claims (Cain et al., 1984, 114). Meetings with constituents, organizations, and groups from the district are here part of what constituency service encompasses.

The literature has compared the prevalence of constituency service not only between different electoral systems (Cain et al., 1987; Crisp et al., 2004; Shugart et al., 2005) but also within systems. Specifically, scholars have explored the idea that demands for legislators' attention may vary with the type of district they represent (Norris, 1997; 34), even under the same electoral rules. Factors such as electoral insecurity and the characteristics of their districts may induce legislators to adopt roles, among which being a “good constituency member” stands out. It may be simply that legislators are socialised into their roles (Blidook and Kerby, 2011). Importantly, we can understand the relationship between legislators and constituents as the “interactional space” created by instances such as surgeries or alike (Hofstetter and Stokoe, 2018; Hofstetter and Stokoe, 2015). Certain types of districts may be associated with “job images,” thereby inducing roles (Clarke and Price, 1981) and behaviour. All this is compatible with the idea that the responsiveness of the parliamentarians towards their constituencies may follow not only electoral (extrinsic) but also “intrinsic motivations,” e.g. sense of duty or the satisfaction of providing constituency service and connecting with constituents (De Vries et al., 2016). Here, we focus on two district factors a priori associated

with the adoption of the constituency member role, which is empirically observable in more constituency service: remoteness (or centre-periphery) and social deprivation.

*Remoteness (centre-periphery).* Being distant from the political centre galvanises legislators to focus on activities that benefit their constituencies. The underlying positive relationship between constituency service and distance to the political centre follows a centre-periphery dynamic. We start by ordering the constituencies in a continuum, from the most localist to the most centralist. On the centralist side, we expect constituencies close to the political centre, where the link between representatives and voters is mostly on national policy concerns. On the localist side, we have peripheral areas where the relationship between legislators and voters focuses on constituency matters and grievances (Searing, 1985). These districts, where local interests predominate, place higher value on the level of attention and service their legislators provide (Vivyan and Wagner, 2016; Clarke and Price, 1981).

A demand-supply framework helps explain the centre-periphery dynamic that determines the legislator-constituent relationships. On the demand side, citizens from districts distant from the political and economic centre of the polity call for a territorially defined representational role from their parliamentarians (Thomassen and Esaiasson, 2006; 226). Typically, they face more barriers when seeking access to bureaucrats and their grievances are less prone to be represented by influential actors and covered by the media (Alemán, Micozzi, and Ramírez, 2018, 234). Furthermore, constituents from remote districts are more likely to “harbour distinct identities that bolster district orientations among the legislators elected by them” (André and Depauw, 2018, 264). For example, Wood and Young (1997) highlight that local cultures in remote constituencies in Ireland and Great Britain require their parliamentarians “to be more visible, here, among us” compared to areas more connected to the centre.

On the supply (agency) side, legislators adjust their behaviour to the demand of constituents about their role or to the local political cultures of remote constituencies. In polities with a neat and pronounced territorial division, parliamentarians from peripheral regions are more likely to assume that “part of their job is to provide extensive services to their constituencies” (Hlynisdóttir and Önnudóttir, 2018, 57). The literature has framed this association between

role definition and remoteness as part of the “working conditions” of parliamentarians, like in Brouard, Costa et al. (2013), who explore the case of the French members of the National Assembly.

The positive relationship between constituency service and geographical distance is not apparent when omitting the centre-periphery argument or the local cultures that shape the roles of representatives. Focusing only on the costs imposed by longer travel time may lead us to expect that the mere distance poses an obstacle for representatives to address constituency issues. If we follow this argument, we may expect either no relationship or a negative one between district remoteness and constituency service. An example is Fenno (1978), who employs precisely this reasoning in his renowned work on members of the United States Congress. He shows that legislators from more distant districts travelled home less frequently than those members of regions nearer Washington, D.C. Likewise, Studlar and McAllister (1996) use evidence from the Australian Parliament to show that representatives from areas more distant from the capital spend more time travelling and have less time to do constituency work.

By contrast, we expect the relationship between constituency service and remoteness to be largely driven by the representational role that constituents from remote districts demand. Previous empirical evidence supports the observable implications of the framework we adopt in this article. For instance, comparative studies on the relationship between constituency service and remoteness show that as the travel time to the district increases, so does the constituency focus (Heitshusen et al., 2005). Along the same line, Woon and Young (1997) report that MPs in the UK and Ireland spend more time in activities in their constituencies when the distance between their districts and London or Dublin is greater. More recent evidence from Ireland and Chile also shows that legislators from remote districts (regarding the capital) are more likely to speak about their constituencies during parliamentary question time (Martin, 2011a; Alemán, Ramírez and Micozzi, 2018). Searing (1985) shows that UK's MPs from constituencies farther from London are more likely to embrace the constituency member role. Also, Willumsen (2019) accounts for "distant" MPs attending fewer votes at Westminster when compared to members from central constituencies. Therefore, we expect

deputies from remote districts to have higher electoral incentives or intrinsic (socially driven) motivations to adopt a stronger constituency role. We test the expected higher demand (and supply) for constituency services in remote districts with the following hypothesis:

**Remoteness Hypothesis:** *Chilean deputies from remote districts are likely to devote a higher proportion of their meetings to attending to local issues or personal requests from constituents.*

*Social Deprivation.* A second factor associated with constituency service is the socio-economic situation in the district. For instance, the UK representatives consider constituency social and economic conditions when crafting their speeches during parliamentary questions (Saafeld, 2011). Studying legislators' behaviour in Holyrood, Parker and Richter (2018) show that social deprivation incentivises voters to seek help, increasing casework. Similarly, recent evidence at the state level in the US shows that the contact of legislators with federal agencies correlates positively with the (district) poverty rate (Snyder et al., 2022).

By contrast, other comparative studies conclude that even when the positive connection between social disadvantage and constituency service seems straightforward, it is not always apparent. For example, using the British Candidate Survey, Norris (1997) finds an insignificant effect of variables like levels of council housing, unskilled working class, and pensioners on constituency orientation. Perhaps in constituencies with more demand for resources, voters concentrate their requests on other representatives, for example, local authorities.

In Latin America, there is evidence of social and economic deprivation affecting the incentives of politicians and parties. Calvo and Murillo (2004) account for low-skilled workers demanding more patronage than higher-income constituents. Tromborg and Schwindt-Bayer (2019) show that Latin American legislators from more deprived districts have incentives to prioritise the provision of constituency resources in their legislative activities. The rationale is that when there is less demand for resources, parliamentarians may spend their time on other forms of representation, different from the constituency service.

**Deprivation hypothesis:** *Chilean deputies from districts with higher levels of social deprivation meet relatively more often with constituents to address local issues or personal requests.*

Next, we describe the case of Chile and its suitability for testing our hypotheses.

### **The Chilean case**

Chile has historically been an archetypal presidential system where localism is particularly relevant for congressional elections while the executive concentrates policies at the national level. Even before the electoral reforms of 1958, the Chilean system presented a pronounced localism in parliamentary representation (Shugart and Carey 1992, 173-178). This tradition has also been present since the transition to democracy in 1990. Indeed, Chilean deputies manifest their preference for serving their constituents (PELA, 2005; Marenghi, 2009), which shows a ‘territorial conception’ of their roles.

The records of legislative lobbying activity in Chile date back to March 2014, when the Chilean National Congress passed the bill that regulates the representation of private interests upon elected authorities, officials, and civil servants (Law 20.730). The law aims to add transparency to the exchanges between organizations and individuals with officials and representatives. This legislation reaches a wide range of public officials such as ministers, service directors, governors, ambassadors, the president and vice president of the Central Bank, and high-ranking members of the armed forces. More important for our research design, the law also frames Chilean deputies and senators as subjects of lobbying.

In this note, we exploit the data from the registry that Law 20.730 mandates to study the relevance of constituency services like casework for legislators. For the National Congress, the law establishes that deputies and senators must report all their meetings with lobbyists, interest groups and individuals. The records of these meetings include information about the attending person, organization or group, their representatives (lobbyists) when applicable,

the date, and the issue discussed. The law also contemplates sanctions for those legislators who failed to report the mandatory information. This data provides a unique opportunity to test the type of hypothesis we propose. For instance, Morales and Belmar (2022) exploit meetings of Chilean mayors with citizens to test the relationship of meetings with the chances of reelection.

Our data contains observations from two different electoral systems, before and after the 2015 reform.<sup>1</sup> In the period 1989-2015, Chile had a “Binomial System” where every district elected two members of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate, with 60 electoral districts for the former and 19 senatorial circumscriptions. To occupy the two seats, a list of candidates had to double the total vote of the list in the second place (Gamboa and Morales, 2016). Until the election for the 2014-2018 legislature (part of our data), the system was technically proportional, although with the lowest possible magnitude ( $M=2$ ). The binomial system gave incentives for political parties to form alliances resembling a two-party system, with two stable coalitions obtaining most of the seats. As a result, the electoral competition took place, most of the time, within each list of candidates (Rabkin, 1996). Hence, the system motivated fostering personal reputations, an effect reinforced by a ballot structure with open lists.

The new electoral system after the 2015 reform increased the number of deputies from 120 to 155 and senators from 38 to 50. Yet, it did not eliminate the underlying incentives for parliamentarians to foster personal reputations. Quite the contrary, some characteristics of the new electoral system may reinforce such incentives. For example, the number of candidates for a district varies between three and eight, and lists can present as many candidates as seats available plus one. Also, the new system maintains the ballot structure with open lists as well as the D'Hondt rule. As it stands, in the two electoral systems that our data covers, binominal and reformed, legislators have incentives to build personal votes. Nonetheless, in the open list system following the electoral reform of 2015, candidates tend to be elected with fewer votes on average, primarily because the districts are of greater magnitude. This feature may create more incentives for building personal reputations while in office. From the perspective of the party system, the electoral reform fostered a more lax

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<sup>1</sup> For a thorough description and analysis of the electoral reform, See Gamboa and Morales (2016).



electoral setting by boosting the chances for smaller parties to win seats, increasing party fragmentation (Alemán, 2023).<sup>2</sup>

The characteristics of the Chilean case suggest a relationship between district demographic features and the adoption of the constituency member role. We can start with the material relevance of territorial matters in Chilean politics, which is natural considering that Chile is one of the most stretched-out countries in the world (from north to south), with a length of 4,329km. This geographical feature intensifies the above mechanism whereby representatives from distant regions are more inclined to support decentralised representation to please their voters (Mardones, 2007). In Chile, the geographical factor has historically created a division of labour within the legislature. There is evidence whereby, before the democratic breakdown of 1973, legislators from larger urban districts had concentrated on policy and political debates, while members from rural and distant constituencies spent more time dealing with constituents' cases (Valenzuela, 1978). In parallel, social deprivation seems to motivate different approaches of parties and representatives to attend to the “comunas” in their districts (Belmar et al. 2023).

## **Data and Results**

The data comprises meetings held by Chilean deputies between December 2014 (when the law came into effect) and January 2020. The dependent variable used to test (the expectation of) *Constituency Service* is the number of meetings with a constituency focus held by each Chilean deputy in a legislative period<sup>3</sup> as a proportion of their total meetings. To classify a meeting as constituency oriented, we rely on its content, assigning value one when the legislator meets with individual members of the public or other specific groups to address demands related to the district or with particular requests; zero otherwise.<sup>4</sup> We also test our hypotheses with the variable "Const. Service in District", which only includes those

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<sup>2</sup> Alemán (2023) shows the electoral reform increased the number of competing parties in the subsequent elections.

<sup>3</sup> Between two elections.

<sup>4</sup> We also differentiate constituency-coded meetings based solely on the content of the observation (Table 2) from those that were also held within the borders of the constituency (Table 3).

(proportion of) constituency service meetings that took place within the district. We use proportions to capture the relative relevance that deputies assign to constituency service.

The independent variables are as follows. A first measure captures how distant the constituency is from Santiago, the capital city of Chile, which tests the hypothesis whereby legislators from more distant districts are more likely to meet their constituents to address local issues. We use two different variables for distance: *Distance travel time* by plane (in minutes) from the largest city in the district to Santiago and *Distance straight line* (in kilometres). These variables do not consider other potentially relevant characteristics, such as how easy or frequent is to access public transportation in remote areas. The estimates may help understand whether the constraint imposed by longer travel time or the centre-periphery dynamics explains deputy behaviour. *Poverty* is the poverty rate in the district and captures the incentives of legislators from deprived areas to perform a constituency role. A second independent variable that will test our Deprivation Hypothesis is *Rural*. This variable corresponds to the percentage of the population living in rural areas.

We also use a few controls. *Vulnerability* measures the normalised difference between the electoral safety threshold of each legislator and their actual share of votes.<sup>5</sup> A positive value shows a vulnerable deputy, a value of zero shows one who got the fair vote, and a negative value indicates they had votes to spare. *Political Experience* equals one for a legislator who previously held a relevant office, either at the national or subnational level, zero otherwise.<sup>6</sup> *President Alignment* equals one when the legislator belongs to the same electoral coalition as the president; zero otherwise. *Female* equals one for a female legislator, zero otherwise. Table 1 summarizes the main variables. For instance, on average, almost 15% of all meetings involving a typical deputy in a legislative period are to attend constituents' issues. Importantly, almost 80% of the constituency service meetings take place within the district.

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<sup>5</sup> Vulnerability equals one minus Electoral Safety. Electoral Safety is the actual vote share of a deputy candidate divided by the Electoral Threshold in their district. In turn, the Electoral Threshold results from dividing 100% by the number of seats in the district plus one. It measures the vote share that would secure a seat regardless of the performance of the list they are in. The same measure of Vulnerability applies to both electoral systems, pre- and post-2015. We thank Ricardo Gamboa and Marcel Aubry for sharing the data on the electoral vulnerability of Chilean deputies.

<sup>6</sup> The relevant offices are the ministry, mayor, or governor. Table 1 displays the descriptive statistics.

The source of *Constituency Service* is the registry of audiences mandated by Law 20.730 and reported by the Chamber of Deputies in January 2020 ([www.camara.cl](http://www.camara.cl)). For legislator profiles and electoral records, the sources are the Library of the National Congress ([www.BCN.cl](http://www.BCN.cl)) and the official website of the Chamber of Deputies ([www.Camara.cl](http://www.Camara.cl)). *Poverty* uses data from the household surveys CASEN, 2015 and 2020, Observatorio Social, MDSF. The source of *Rural* is the National Institute of Statistics, INE, base 2017 (<https://www.ine.gob.cl/>). The main source of *Distance* is <https://www.geodatos.net/>.

**Table 1. Summary statistics (by legislator and legislative period)**

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
Total Meetings	276	23.475	26.145	0	294
Constituency service (%)	276	14.936	18.296	0	92.857
Const. serv. in district (%)	276	11.689	16.032	0	85.714
Distance straight line (km)	276	415.522	491.685	0	2189
Distance travel (min)	276	92.395	54.132	0	220
Poverty (%)	276	10.236	6.278	.957	31.563
Rurality	276	10.789	13.618	0	52.561
Vulnerability	275	.251	.328	-1.13	.91

We use a Generalised Linear Model that accounts for the dependent variable (*Constituency service*) being a proportion with binomial distribution. Table 2 shows the result of the regression analysis of *Constituency Service (as a proportion of total meetings)* on *Distance (to the Capital) travel*, *Distance straight line*, *Poverty* and *Rural*. Because the data cover two legislative periods (most first period and part of the second), some legislators appear more than once in the data. We then cluster the standard errors at the deputy.

**Table 2. Constituency service on remoteness, distance and deprivation**

Constituency service (proportion of total meetings)	(1)	(2)
Distance travel (min)	-0.00184 (0.00190)	-0.000876 (0.00189)
Distance straight line (km)	0.000841*** (0.000206)	0.000819*** (0.000195)
Poverty	-0.0508*** (0.0157)	-0.0512** (0.0245)
Term 2018-22	1.230*** (0.180)	1.073*** (0.186)
President alignment	No	0.742*** (0.156)
Rural	No	0.00182 (0.0118)
Pol. Experience	No	0.0891 (0.158)
Vulnerability	No	0.225 (0.282)
Female	No	0.278 (0.203)
Constant	-3.559*** (0.432)	-3.842*** (0.474)
Observations	276	275

Note: \*\*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*  $p < 0.05$ , \*  $p < 0.1$ . Clustered standard errors (by deputy) in parentheses. The sample size is 276 instead of 275 because Deputy Miguel Alvarado lacks Vulnerability since he was appointed (and not elected) to replace Deputy Jorge Insunza. Results are similar when we use the same 275 legislators in both models.

Table 2 tests our hypothesis using Constituency service as a proportion of total meetings, regardless of the actual location of the meetings. Model (1) includes only *Distance* (to the Capital) *travel*, *Distance straight line* and *Poverty* as regressors. It shows that the Distance to the Capital correlates positively with *Constituency Service* only when we measure distance in straight-line kilometres. Instead, travel time to the capital is non-significant. That means that for larger distances (in kilometres), the expected proportion of constituency-oriented meetings increases. The coefficient is statistically significant at the 1% level. Since the travel distance is not statistically significant, we find a robust indication that the mechanism linking remoteness to constituency service does not follow from

constraints imposed by longer travel time but rather led by a centre-periphery dynamic. *Poverty* correlates negatively with the response variable, which goes in the opposite direction of what the deprivation hypothesis predicts. In Model (2), we added to the estimation the control variables *Term 2018-22*, *Political Experience*, *Vulnerability*, *President Alignment*, and *Female*. As a second specification for our *Deprivation Hypothesis*, we also added the independent variable *Rural Remoteness* as a straight-line distance is still (statistically) significant at the 1% level. The estimate of *Poverty* is negative, with 5% significance. *Rural* is non-significantly correlated with *Constituency Service*. *Rural* and *Poverty* are strongly and positively correlated<sup>7</sup>. *Distance straight line* is negatively correlated with these variables for deprivation, although the correlation is weak. Table 3 tests our hypothesis using Constituency service as a proportion of total meetings, only when the meeting took place within the borders of the district. The results are qualitatively similar, except for *Poverty* in Model (2), which estimate is not significant.

**Table 3. Constituency service in district on remoteness, distance and deprivation**

Const. service in district (proportion of total meetings)	(1)	(2)
Distance travel (min)	-0.00242 (0.00198)	-0.00136 (0.00201)
Distance straight line (km)	0.000783*** (0.000215)	0.000738*** (0.000208)
Poverty	-0.0457*** (0.0166)	-0.0441 (0.0275)
Term 2018-22	1.442*** (0.217)	1.282*** (0.226)
President alignment	No	0.659*** (0.174)
Rural	No	0.000427 (0.0142)
Pol. Experience	No	0.0901 (0.174)
Vulnerability	No	0.190 (0.317)
Female	No	0.265 (0.211)

<sup>7</sup> The correlations between Rural, Poverty, and Distance straight line (Remoteness) are as follows. Rural-Poverty: 0.74; Rural-Remoteness: -0.05; and Poverty-Remoteness: -0.23.

Constant	-4.198*** (0.527)	-4.383*** (0.549)
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Observations	276	275
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Note: \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1. Clustered standard errors (by deputy) in parentheses. The sample size is 276 instead of 275 because Deputy Miguel Alvarado lacks Vulnerability since he was appointed (and not elected) to replace Deputy Jorge Insunza. Results are similar when we use the same 275 legislators in both models.

We also estimate the average marginal effects from the regression of Model (2) in Tables 2 and 3. These estimates allow for more intuitive interpretations than the coefficients in the Generalised Linear Model. The marginal effects of *Remoteness measured as straight-line distance in kilometres* are 0.0000939 in Table 2 and 0.0000702 in Table 3: a thousand extra kilometres from the capital translates into (roughly) 10 percentage points of additional constituency service meetings and 7 percentage points of more constituency oriented meetings in the district. Travel time is not significantly different from zero. The *Poverty* estimate is negative when the dependent variable is the proportion of constituency-oriented meetings (opposite to the expectations from the Deprivation hypotheses); and not significantly different from zero when the dependent variable only counts constituency service meetings in the geographical area of the district. *Rural* is non-significant for explaining none of the two measures of proportional constituency service.

The control variable *Legislative Period* has positive coefficients across all models, while a deputy in the *Presidential alignment* registered proportionally more meetings with constituents. Overall, we show that remoteness is relevant in explaining the constituency service in the Chilean chamber of deputies. However, there is not enough evidence for the effect of deprivation as measured by poverty and rural. Our results are robust to a series of alternative measures for deprivation, such as the lack of health coverage or housing deficit (See Appendix, Tables A1 and A2).

## Discussion

In this note, we have examined and tested the factors affecting the provision of constituency service in Chile. We exploit Law 20.730, passed in 2014, to measure how often Chilean

deputies meet with their constituents. We identify meetings where deputies address local issues or personal requests from other types of contacts with groups, lobbyists or other individuals to produce a measure of local activity reported by each deputy during two legislatures.

Our results show that legislators from more remote districts meet proportionally more with constituents to deal with local or personal issues. Remoteness is a relevant driver for the embracing of the constituency member role. Rather than posing an obstacle for deputies to attend constituency issues (as Fenno observed in the US House of Representatives) remoteness creates a demand for a territorially defined representation role.

As it stands, we do not support a positive relationship between social deprivation and constituency service. A feature of the Chilean institutional setting may explain such an outcome. In Chile, the executive controls the agenda and distributive mechanisms at the national level. Meanwhile, local authorities have direct control over the allocation of projects and benefits at the municipal level, following a clientelism logic (Morales and Belmar 2022). Hence, higher demand for resources from deprived constituencies may go towards local representatives and executive authorities rather than legislators who lack the prerogatives to introduce spending bills or particularistic projects. As noted above, this feature resembles Westminster politics, where MPs have a limited chance of embracing clientelism or particularism (Martin, 2011b). This feature may explain why in both Chile (as this note shows) and the United Kingdom (Norris 1997) constituency service and social deprivation are not positively correlated. The nature of social deprivation and remoteness provides a further explanation of their divergent effects on constituency service. While centre-periphery

is a persistent and rooted feature of constituencies, enduring for decades and thus influencing local political cultures and identities, social deprivation, measured by poverty or unemployment rates, is more contingent on policies and the overall economic situation.

By examining records of meetings recently available, we exploit a new and more direct source of information about legislators' constituency activity. In doing so, we contribute to previous research examining data such as travel logs to disentangle constituency service in Colombia (Ingall and Crisp 2001). The evidence from Chile might also help understand this type of representation in other Latin American countries with similar political systems.



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**Appendix.**

**Table A1. Robustness: Housing**

Dependent	(1) Constituency service	(2) Const. service in district
Distance travel (min)	-5.91e-05 (0.00201)	-0.00104 (0.00221)
Distance straight line (km)	0.000873*** (0.000257)	0.000852*** (0.000288)
Housing deficit <sup>+</sup>	0.00373 (0.0369)	-0.0156 (0.0400)
President align.	1.139*** (0.190)	1.333*** (0.230)
Term 2018-22	0.748*** (0.156)	0.666*** (0.174)
Rural	-0.0135* (0.00751)	-0.0128 (0.00889)
Pol. Experience	0.127 (0.157)	0.133 (0.166)
Vulnerability	0.197 (0.278)	0.172 (0.310)
Female	0.293 (0.203)	0.281 (0.210)
Constant	-4.421*** (0.513)	-4.744*** (0.574)
Observations	275	275

<sup>+</sup>Housing deficit at the municipal level Ministerio de Vivienda y Urbanismo. Robust standard errors in parentheses \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.

**Table A2. Robustness: Health coverage**

Dependent	(1) Constituency service	(2) Const. service in district
Distance travel (min)	6.32e-05 (0.000223)	-0.000670 (0.00206)
Distance straight line (km)	0.000119*** (3.10e-05)	0.000791*** (0.000225)
Health coverage <sup>++</sup>	-0.000452 (0.000619)	0.000190 (0.00494)
President align.	0.0961*** (0.0205)	0.666*** (0.175)
Term 2018-22	0.119*** (0.0194)	1.337*** (0.233)
Rural	-0.00122** (0.000610)	-0.0126 (0.00893)
Pol. Experience	0.0124 (0.0191)	0.125 (0.170)
Vulnerability	0.0286 (0.0335)	0.170 (0.310)
Female	0.0336 (0.0269)	0.276 (0.211)
Constant	-0.0998* (0.0578)	-4.877*** (0.699)
Observations	275	275

<sup>++</sup>Health coverage measured at the municipal level, Source: Sistema Nacional de Información Municipal <http://www.sinim.gov.cl/>. Robust standard errors in parentheses \*\*\* p<0.01, \*\* p<0.05, \* p<0.1.