

ABSTRACTS*

Meyer, Holger and Ferdinand Müller-Rommel: The state election in Lower Saxony on October 15, 2017: wedding of convenience leads to first grand coalition after 50 years.

Since 1967, this was the first state election in Lower Saxony that ended up in a grand coalition consisting of two large parties: the Social Democrats (SPD) and the Christian Democrats (CDU). They formed a majority coalition government with 70.5 per cent of the vote and 105 of 137 seats in parliament. The electoral results of the three smaller parties that also entered parliament ranged between six and nine per cent of the vote. The electoral participation slightly increased up to 63 per cent, which is higher than the average voting participation in all of the last 13 German state elections. The very short election campaign was dominated by the “*Twisten*” case which led to the loss of the majority in parliament and early elections. In addition, key topics were clearly located in state policies such as education policy or internal security. The electoral behavior of social groups basically fulfilled all expectations and the predictions of contemporary electoral research. The cabinet consists of ten ministers plus the prime minister. While each party nominated five ministers, the prime minister belongs to the Social Democrats since they are the largest party in parliament. [ZParl, vol. 49 (2018), no. 1, pp. 3 – 22]

Schoen, Harald, Alexander Wuttke, Agatha Kratz and Maria Preißinger: A swing in the final weeks of the campaign: evidence from a multi-wave panel survey on the 2017 state election in Lower Saxony 2017.

The state election in Lower Saxony in October 2017 walked in the shadows of the preceding election on the federal level. In light of both campaigns’ temporal proximity, this study investigates the development of political attitudes towards the federal and the state level and their relative influence on voter behavior in Lower Saxony. We make use of a multi-wave panel survey of 1,346 eligible voters in Lower Saxony, which was carried out in the framework of the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES). Cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses show that a significant minority of respondents based their voting decision in the state election on state-specific considerations. State-specific attitudes varied strongly and to a large extent independently of attitudes towards parties and politicians at the federal level and went hand in hand with changes in voting intentions. The Lower Saxony SPD, in particular, was able to promote the popularity of its leading candidate, thereby leaving behind the CDU at the ballot boxes. [ZParl, vol. 49 (2018), no. 1, pp. 22 – 39]

Winkler, Jürgen R.: The state election in the Saarland on March 26, 2017: confirmation of the grand coalition led by the CDU.

Since the 1950s, the social structure and the political traditions of the Saarland have favored the electoral choice of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU). This time the CDU also benefited from the government’s positive performance. CDU and SPD campaigned to

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become the strongest force at the Saar. The governing Christian Democrats succeeded, the Social Democrats fell short of expectations and joined the second grand coalition as the second strongest party. Once again *Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer* was sworn in as the Prime Minister of the Saarland. While the Left Party lost some points and the Liberal Party missed the five-percent-hurdle again, the Greens and the Pirates were thrown out of the state parliament by the voters. Instead the AfD won three mandates. Especially unsatisfied middle aged men, workers and unemployed voters had been inclined to vote for the right-wing populists. [ZParl, vol. 49 (2018), no. 1, pp. 40 – 56]

Holtkamp, Lars and Benjamin Garske: The electoral success of immigrant-origin candidates in West and East Germany.

One fifth of Germany's total population has an immigrant/migration background. However, the share of elected representatives with such a background is much lower – at about five percent – and does not reflect Germany's social development. To measure the influence of a migration background the 'relative electoral success' in systems with accumulation and cross-voting in 90 municipalities is calculated. It varies strongly between the federal states. The positive effects of accumulation and cross-voting on votes of candidates with a migration background often stated for the city-state Bremen have to be considered as an exception. Candidates with a migration background in East Germany have a significantly lower relative electoral success than candidates in West Germany. This result can be interpreted as evidence for the existence of a more negative discriminatory political culture in East Germany. In addition, candidates with a migration background are more likely to be 'deselected' in smaller cities than in larger ones. [ZParl, vol. 49 (2018), no. 1, pp. 57 – 69]

Haußner, Stefan and Arndt Leininger: The AfD's success and turnout: is there a relationship?

Since the emergence of the right-wing-populist party "Alternative für Deutschland" (AfD) and its first participation in the German federal election in 2013, the party has taken part in all subsequent state elections as well as in the 2014 European elections and scored some notable electoral successes. At the same time, in some of these elections turnout increased significantly leading to the assumption that the AfD benefited from the increased voter turnout and to the claim that the AfD is one of the main causes behind the turnout increases. The article deals with the previously under-researched topic of the structural consequences of the emergence of populist parties on political systems. Analyzing electoral returns from federal, state and European elections at the administrative district level, we do not find a clear connection between AfD's success and voter turnout. Only in some cases such as the 2017 federal election and in some state elections in 2016, a moderate mobilizing effect of the AfD can be observed. The results point to an increased polarization of political participation rather than a strong mobilization through the AfD. [ZParl, vol. 49 (2018), no. 1, pp. 69 – 90]

Schroeder, Wolfgang, Bernhard Weßels and Alexander Berzel: The AfD in state parliaments: bipolarity as a structure and a strategy – between a parliamentary and a “movement” orientation.

Before making it into the Bundestag in 2017, the party “Alternative für Deutschland” (AfD) had been present in 13 state parliaments. This study focuses on the AfD parliamentary groups profiles, on AfD’s parliamentary performances and the impact they have on their respective parliaments as well as on how the representatives of the other factions in parliament deal with AfD’s presence. These questions are investigated on the basis of official and otherwise published materials, information on parliamentary activities, and, in particular, expert interviews with representatives of the AfD and of other parties in parliament. Two divergent orientations can be found among the state parliament AfD factions: On the one hand parliament-centered, on the other “movement” oriented. Whether strategically designed or not – currently this bipolarity ensures both the electoral success and the parliamentary presence of the AfD. Political professionalization is very much at an early stage. Instead of emphasizing the committee work, the AfD relies heavily on the parliamentary plenum as a platform for its public relations primarily via social media. [ZParl, vol. 49 (2018), no. 1, pp. 91 – 110]

Patzelt, Werner J.: Pegida demonstrations and German democracy.

Ever since November 2014, the Dresden PEGIDA demonstrations have caused heated discussions in Germany. Oftentimes they were motivated by serious concerns about new challenges for German democracy by resurging anti-democratic foes. But how did “Pegidians” really think about democracy? Which factors shaped their views and understanding of how well democracy performed in Germany? How did they differ between “Pegidians” and their fellow citizens? In this article, detailed answers are provided. They are based on all available data, including four studies by the author. [ZParl, vol. 49 (2018), no. 1, pp. 111 – 128]

Reuband, Karl-Heinz: Pegida in the “Valley of the Ignorant”. Conceptions of democracy among Dresden’s and Düsseldorf’s citizens and the participants of Pegida protests.

While the GDR still lasted it was nearly impossible to receive West-German television stations in Dresden. Several authors have assumed that undemocratic orientations have therefore survived there longer and have made Pegida possible. On the basis of representative surveys among Dresden’s and Düsseldorf’s population (1998, 2000) and a survey among Pegida participants (2015/16) it is analyzed to which extent these assumptions prove to be true. The effect of receiving West-German television turns out to be a minor one and the differences between citizens’ attitudes in Dresden and Düsseldorf are gradual. The democratic concepts Pegida participants hold only deviate slightly from these. The greatest difference lies in their greater emphasis on direct democracy by means of referenda. [ZParl, vol. 49 (2018), no. 1, pp. 129 – 147]

Klein, Markus: More democracy measures, less civic participation? The destruction of Hesse's local participation culture during the "Decade of Democratization Amendments".

Until the end of the 1980s, voter turnout in local elections in the state of Hesse was relatively stable at just under 80 percent. In the years that followed, it decreased by about 30 percentage points. This decline took place mainly during the 1990s and has settled at a level of just under 50 percent. In this period fundamental reforms of the communal constitutions were carried out in West Germany's federal states, known as the "Decade of Democratization Amendments". Direct elections for mayors and district administrators were introduced as well as local referendum, and proportional representation with open lists. These measures aimed at strengthening civic participation at the local level. However, the empirical analysis shows that they have in fact triggered a decline in voter turnout in local elections. The reasons for this are the higher burden of democratic participation resulting from these reforms as well as the significantly increased complexity of the electoral system in the elections to the local councils. [ZParl, vol. 49 (2018), no. 1, pp. 148 – 171]