

ABSTRACTS*

Tremmel, Jörg: From social justice to intergenerational justice? An analysis of German parliamentary documents 2005 and 2009.

It can be assumed that the cleavage between generations is becoming increasingly important due to the thus-far unresolved environmental and demographic challenges. Accordingly, ‘intergenerational justice’ (IGJ) would be a justice category that has moved up on the political agenda. This hypothesis can be tested by looking at debates in parliament, since debates in parliament reflect shifts in social values. The article evaluates if members of the German parliament referred more often to IGJ (and related terms) in the run-up to the elections 2009 than they did in 2005. A further analysis is made as to whether the concept of ‘social justice’ (SJ) in the German Parliament was less often a subject of discussion. The results are broken down according to document type, political party and policy area. Among other things, the results show that IGJ is indeed discussed more often in 2009 than in 2005. Contrary to expectations, the use of the term ‘social justice’ and related concepts did not decrease. The further left on the political spectrum a party was, the more its members discussed SJ. For IGJ, the left-right division was less apparent. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 691 – 707]

Horst, Patrick: The new electoral law in the state of Hamburg: despite strong counter-productive effects barely chances for a major electoral reform.

In 2011, a new electoral system was employed in the state of Hamburg which gave voters multiple votes and the chance to split and amass them on parties and candidates as well. The new law was a legislative victory of the citizen initiative “Mehr Demokratie” (More Democracy) who pinned high expectations on the new electoral system with respect to a “better” political representation and participation. The results were disappointing: Only the descriptive representation of women, younger representatives and such with foreign descent improved. Yet these positive results of the new electoral law were far outweighed by its counterproductive effects: The working capacity of parliament and its parties was hampered. The election campaigns were further personalized and depoliticized. The new voting rules proved to be inappropriate for signifying coalition preferences. Voters were unable to cope with the far too complicated ballot structure and voting rules. Voter turnout did not increase but declined, while the number of invalid votes increased. In effect, a reform of the reform is inescapable. Since a major electoral reform seems politically not feasible, the author proposes a small and a mid-size reform option. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 707 – 724]

* Diese sind in deutscher Sprache zu finden auf www.zparl.de beziehungsweise www.politik.uni-halle.de/zparl.

Horst, Patrick: The election of the Hamburg State Parliament on February 20, 2011: Former "Hamburg Party" wins absolute majority again.

After the Greens quit the coalition with the Christian Democrats, everybody expected a change of government at the early election of February 20, 2011. Voters held much more favourable views of mayoral candidate *Olaf Scholz* and his party, the SPD, than of Mayor *Christoph Ahlhaus* and the CDU. *Scholz* could focus his election campaign on the general theme of "good governance" without delving too much into the details of intricate issues. The most exciting question of the election was if the Social Democrats would need a coalition partner for governing. Because *Scholz* managed to join forces with the port industry, the trade unions, and leading media companies in Hamburg, he won the absolute majority in the Bürgerschaft, Hamburg's state parliament. The Greens, who failed with their plans of a school reform and a city tram in the former coalition, could not convince the voters that they were needed as a coalition partner. They were sent back to the opposition benches, together with their former coalition partner CDU, the liberal FDP and the left-wing Linkspartei. Mayor *Scholz* and his governing SPD want to govern effectively without great visions, but did not renounce expensive campaign promises such as the abolition of kindergarten and college tuitions. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 724 – 744]

Holtmann, Everhard and Kerstin Völk: The land elections in Saxony-Anhalt on March 20, 2011: More continuity than change.

The results of the recent state elections in Saxony-Anhalt showed more elements of continuity than change: The proportions between the three greater parties, that is CDU, Left Party and SPD, remained by and large stable. And the swift agreement made by Christian Democrats and Social Democrats to prolong the black-red governmental coalition reflects the preference of a majority of the electorate that did not opt for change. More turbulence could be seen in the field of small parties: The Liberals failed to return to the state parliament, failing to achieve the required vote percentage. The Greens had a comeback, returning to the parliament for the first time since 1994. The extreme-right-wing-party NPD could not surmount the five-percent-threshold, due to an increasing turnout, compared with that of preceding state election. Though the number of voters claiming to be guided in their voting behavior primarily by regional aspects has grown, nationwide shifts in political moods nevertheless have influenced the voting in this East German state. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 745 – 764]

Gothe, Heiko: The election of the Rhineland-Palatinate state parliament on March 27, 2011: Partial change in power.

The 15th legislative period and the election campaign have been influenced by a series of events putting pressure on Social Democrats and Christian Democrats. As a consequence of the Japanese nuclear catastrophe in Fukushima two weeks before Election Day, and the accompanying debate on nuclear energy in Germany, the topic also shaped the agenda in the Rhineland-Palatinate, even though there is no nuclear power plant located in this state. Furthermore, the desire for at least a partial change of government in Mayence was very high. The Greens were able to benefit from both factors, tripling their share of the vote and achieving a record result. Although a majority has been satisfied with the government of the

Social Democrats, its various policies were also held negatively against Prime Minister *Kurt Beck*. Therefore, “King *Kurt*,” who had been governing alone, suffered a record loss. The result is the first red-green coalition between the Rhine and Moselle. The Christian Democrats celebrated, although their result was just the second-worst ever. The top candidate of the CDU, *Julia Klöckner*, had solved the conflicts inside the CDU and presented herself as a promising personal alternative to *Kurt Beck* – thus eliminating two important factors for earlier defeats of her party. In the next five years, she has to earn her reputation as opposition leader in a variety of policy fields. The Liberals suffered a massive loss resulting from the bad reputation of the national party and the lack of credibility caused by the party u-turn in nuclear policy. After 24 years, they are no longer represented in the state parliament. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 764 – 783]

Gabriel Oscar W. and Bernhard Kornelius: The state election in Baden-Wuerttemberg on March 27, 2011: Break and Start of a New Era?

At the end of one of the most polarized electoral campaigns ever seen in the state’s history, it was quite clear on the eve of election day that a new government of the Green and Social Democrat parties would be formed. After an uninterrupted period as leading governmental party, the Christian Democrats had to move to the opposition, although they had succeeded in holding the position of the far strongest political group in the State of Baden Wuerttemberg. The severe losses of the liberal party were a decisive factor in bringing about the change in government. For the first time in the German electoral history, the Greens turned out as the second strongest political party in a state parliament, while the Social Democrats ranked third with an electoral result which was even lower than the party’s historically poor record in the previous election. The election result was brought about by a truly unusual constellation of factors. Apart from a widely held preference for a change in government, the Christian Democrats presented an extremely unpopular candidate for the Prime Minister’s office. Moreover, the political agenda of the electoral campaign was extremely unfavorable for the governing coalition. The most important issue of the campaign was the abolition of nuclear energy which has always been a Green issue. Regarding the second important issue, the reconstruction of the Stuttgart main railway station, the electorate was sharply divided, which partly favored the Greens and the Christian Democrats. Economic issues, normally falling under the issue ownership of the Christian Democrats didn’t play a role this time. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 784 – 804]

Probst, Lothar: The Election of the Bremen State Parliament (Bürgerschaft) on May 22, 2011: A Splendid Victory for Red-Green, a Disaster for the Opposition.

Confronted with an utterly divided and quarrelling opposition, the coalition partners SPD and Greens managed to achieve an overwhelming victory in the Bremen state election and to win a two-thirds majority of seats in the parliament. This success represents an exception among all governing coalitions in the state elections held during the super election year 2011. The opposition parties (CDU, the Liberal Party (FDP), and the LEFT), on the contrary, lost altogether 11.6 percent of the votes. For the first time in German state elections, the Greens left behind even the CDU, while the Liberal Party failed to cross the five percent hurdle. The victory of the governing parties can be traced back not only to the disas-

trous condition of the opposition parties but also to the positive evaluation of their competence in all relevant policy fields and of their government performance by the voters, and this despite of rather considerable financial and social problems in the state of Bremen. The SPD's vote increase can also be credited to their top candidate *Jens Böhrnsen*, who enjoyed high popularity and competence ratings. Considering the excellent result for the Greens, the analysis reveals that they benefited from their strong ecological profile after the nuclear catastrophe in Japan. It reflects the shift of power relations between the coalition partners in favour of the Greens that they claimed to hold three instead of two seats in the new Senate. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 804 – 819]

Reiser Marion, Claudia Hülsken, Bertram Schwarz and Jens Borchert: Freshmen talking and other sins – parliamentary socialization and legislative culture in two German state legislatures.

The article analyzes the interaction between newly elected deputies and an established legislative culture. Legislative research has largely ignored the socialization processes among new legislators and their effects. These processes are studied for the state legislatures of Baden-Württemberg and North Rhine-Westphalia, based on a qualitative panel design. The interviews reveal both the new deputies' clear personal goals and their unclear expectations about parliamentary procedures. The gap between individual ideas and institutional norms is filled by the deputies' adapting to established rituals and rules of the game. As an expression of the legislative culture, these norms and rules are transmitted by the traditional socialization agents within the parties. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 820 – 834]

Westle, Bettina: Political knowledge in Germany. A comparison between the Turkish immigrant population and indigenous Germans.

On the basis of a telephone-survey in 2008/09, a wide range in political knowledge of the population is shown. There are no significant differences between native-born Germans in West and East, but a lower level of knowledge exists among immigrants from Turkey, especially among those who do not have the German citizenship. Feelings of being personally affected, identification with the country, education, and access to the media are especially important factors influencing the individual level of political knowledge. Political knowledge itself is shown to be a relevant determinant of political attitudes and political participation, even when controlling for education and political interest. Therefore, it is a matter of some urgency that this field of research, so heavily neglected in the past, be given more attention in the future. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 835 – 850]

Schmitz, Constanze and Andreas M. Wüst: What moves parliamentarians of immigrant background? Findings in large German cities.

The article deals with parliamentarians of immigrant background in German city councils and city state parliaments. Twenty-four semi-structured interviews have been conducted providing information on the immigrant parliamentarians' personal background and experiences in the respective parties and parliamentary groups. The results do especially point to differences by political affiliation. Parliamentarians of the political left have more often de-

cided by themselves to join party politics while those of the center-right have been more frequently recruited by parties. Across political camps, respondents say that ethnic background plays an important role for nomination. While for politicians of the political left, religion is considered to matter rather in personal than in political life, those of the center-right more often say it also matters politically. Moreover, although tensions between bourgeois politicians and their parties or parliamentary groups are perceived to be caused by personal or cultural differences, left politicians are more frequently confronted with ideological differences. Quite often, parties expect politicians of immigrant backgrounds to deal with migratory issues, but all in all, politicians are not complaining about ethnic-specific discrimination by their parties. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 850 – 862]

Rüters, Peter: What we talk about, talking about the Federal President. ... on the way to presidentializing of the government system?

Federal President *Horst Köhler*'s refusal twice to certify laws agreed on by Parliament has caused serious consideration about a new definition of the President's position inside the political system. The President's interventions seemed to prove him "a supplementary, case-dependant veto-player" (*Lhotta*). These actions are said to increase his competence in political decision-making and are interpreted as a tendency towards the "presidentialisation" of the office. With regard to a typological classification of the political system of the Federal Republic, this could mean that it should no longer be looked at as a parliamentary system of governing, but rather as a subject of "Hybridisation." In contradiction to this new view, close empirical examination points out that attempts by German Presidents to upgrade their executive competences have been fruitless ambitions. Systematical analysis of all laws of Parliament, the certification of which had been refused by the President or became subject to his public objection, reveals that the Federal Presidents concerned (*Köhler* included) handled this instrument with considerable care. The assumed "presidentialisation" of the governmental system must be placed beyond empirical verification. Moreover, there yet is no sufficient reason to abandon the typological classification of the political system of the Federal Republic of Germany as a parliamentary system of governing by constructing an "anti-majoritarian hybridisation". [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 4, pp. 863 – 885]