

ABSTRACTS*

Kolkmann, Michael: 2010 Congressional Election in the United States: Serious Loss for the Democrats, But Also a Gained Victory for the Republicans?

The 2010 Congressional election ended with a grave loss for the Democrats. Mainly four reasons were responsible for these results: first, due to their wins in 2006 and 2008, Democrats were electorally more exposed than Republicans; second, the Republicans benefited from strong sentiments against *Obama* and the Democratic agenda; third, Republicans succeeded in nationalizing the election; and fourth, President *Obama* and his fellow Democrats did not manage sufficiently to convince a majority of voters of the benefits of the passed legislation. Although President *Obama's* name was not on the ballot, the election turned out to be a national referendum on his first two years in office. Particularly the moderate middle got decimated in the election of 2010. The Blue Dogs lost half of their caucus, and several long term Democratic congressmen did not return to Congress. The tea party's results are mixed. While they managed to turn out conservative voters, they lost several Senate seats by running unelectable candidates. It is too early to predict the 2012 results, but Republicans will surely benefit from redistricting. In the end, it is safe to assume that the election will be decided by which state the economy will be in. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 229 – 246]

Gast, Henrik and Alexander Kühne: "Tea Party" Time in the United States? Composition and Impact of a Heterogeneous Movement.

Since 2009 there has not been a single movement with greater impact on politics in the United States than the Tea Party. It originated as a series of reactions to a succession of government bailouts and stimulus proposals in the heat of a global economic crisis. The followers are united in a continuous, loosely organized undercurrent of distrust in government and anti-establishment protest. The Tea Party does not have a central leadership but is instead composed of a loose affiliation of national and local groups determining their own platforms and agendas. That is why the Tea Party is often cited as an example of grassroots political activity, although it is also seen as an example of astroturfing. During 2010, Tea Party activism reshaped many GOP primaries and enhanced voter turnout, but achieved a mixed record in the Congressional election. The Republican sweep of the House of Representatives has focused attention even more on the Tea Party. But how long the movement will endure beyond the midterm elections remains uncertain. Activism, however, may well continue to influence dynamics in Congress and GOP presidential primaries. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 247 – 269]

Holste, Heiko: The Oracle in the Corn Fields. Or How the Iowa Caucus Really Works.

Since the 1970s, the Iowa caucus has been the kick-off of the US presidential primary season. At thousands of local gatherings across the state, Democrats and Republicans come together to choose delegates for party conventions by way of a complicated process. Al-

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though dubbed archaic by critics, the caucus' proponents point to it as the definition of grassroots democracy; this is because citizens can develop a personal sense of presidential candidates, who hold local events across the state during the months prior to the caucus. The Iowa caucus is the first vote on the parties' presidential candidates in the run up to the national nomination, and it serves to narrow the field. It is a rule of thumb that if a candidate does not land in the first three places within his party in Iowa, the candidate has no chance of gaining his national party convention's nomination; many campaigns end because of a poor showing in Iowa. The disproportionate influence that Iowans have is often criticized, but the state has held its ground to be "first in the nation". The next caucus will take place on February 6, 2012, and Iowa will set the course for determining Barack Obama's Republican challenger. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 270 – 285]

Hinz, Johannes: Parliaments' Role in the Deployment of British and German Armed Forces Abroad.

While in Germany this area is regulated by statute as required by the German constitutional court, it is British legal tradition that this power is vested exclusively in the executive as part of the Royal Prerogative. Recent calls for reform have brought forth several drafts of which that of a convention has found widespread support among political actors. The proposed convention differs from the German statute not only regarding its inception, but also regarding its legal status and enforceability as well as its scope concerning particular issues. Reasons for these differences can be traced back to characteristics of the British election system, to ideology and historic experience of war in the two countries and to colonial history. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 286 – 306]

Wendler, Frank: The Politicization of European Integration: Empirical Evidence from Debates About the EU in the German Bundestag and the British House of Commons.

The assumption of a "politicization" of European integration has received much attention, yet there is a lack of empirical evidence on the thematic objects and political cleavages of public debates about Europe. Against this background, the article investigates the contentiousness of debates about the European Union at the level of national parliaments, a subject previously neglected in research about the Europeanization of national parliaments. Based on the computer-aided manual coding of ten debates in both the German Bundestag and the British House of Commons between 2005 and 2009, the analysis finds that a relatively broad range of subjects related to the EU has become politicized, including the economic dimension of European integration but also "constitutional" questions such as the reform of the EU Treaties. Moreover, different modes of interaction between political parties can be observed at different thematic and institutional levels of the debate, confirming the relevance of government/opposition politics at the level of "domesticated" debates but indicating the emergence of atypical position patterns of parties in debates about supranational institutions and policies. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 307 – 325]

Harle, Isabella and Christian Stecker: Initiatives of the Bundesrat between Partisan Politics and Länder Interests.

In order to participate in the legislation of the federal level, the Länder may introduce bills in the Bundestag through the Bundesrat. To assess to what extent these initiatives are influenced by party political conflicts, all 1332 bills introduced in the Bundesrat between 1972

and 2005 are analyzed. It can be seen that only half of these initiatives reach the status of a formal Bundesrat's initiative. This success rate is strongly influenced by the majorities in the second chamber. Under governmental control the Bundesrat blocks 75 per cent of all initiatives from Länder whose government parties sit on the benches of the opposition in the Bundestag (O-Länder). In times of opposition majorities in the Bundesrat only 30 per cent of all initiatives by R-Länder are adopted as a Bundesrat's initiative. This pattern clearly corroborates the prominent finding that the Bundesrat's legislative activities are heavily influenced by party political conflicts. The high success rate of cross-party initiatives, however, indicates that a minor share of initiatives is motivated by issues of territorial representation. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 325 – 334]

Klecha, Stephan: Complex Coalitions and Their Avail for Political Parties.

Leaving aside the exceptional constellation between the CDU und CSU on the federal level, complex coalitions as alliances between three or more parties are rare in the political system of the Federal Republic of Germany. The parties also did not need to experiment with that idea at the end of the consolidation phase of the Federal Republic before reunification. With the transition into a fluid five-party-system such coalition patterns once again are gaining importance. The parties' hesitant acquaintance with the changed coalition constellation is eventually due to the experiences they have already made with it. With the help of the two criteria government participation and success at an election after a complex coalition, respectively its initiation, it becomes clear that it may be rational, especially for small parties, to show restraint in participating in complex coalitions. In contrast, parties holding the office of minister-president have advantages when negotiating complex coalitions. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 334 – 346]

Stoy, Volquart and Josef Schmid: The Rise of the Left Party – Or What Happens When Loyalty Disappears.

A model based on *Albert O. Hirschman* ("Exit, Voice and Loyalty") explains the decision of party members to split off. Contrary to social structural or elite-centered approaches, an actor-centered approach treating the dissatisfaction of party members as the independent variable is seen more fruitful. Dissatisfaction of party members is a regular feature of political life. Striving for an improvement of their own situation, party members can opt for different alternatives of which the formation of a new party is only one. We identify five options available to dissatisfied party members (silence, voice, retreat from politics, formation of a new party, and change to another party) and show which factors determine a specific choice. By applying this theory to the dissatisfaction within the German Social Democratic Party (SPD) in the wake of the Agenda 2010 reforms, it can be shown why the WASG (Labour and Social Justice – The Electoral Alternative) and subsequently the party Die Linke was formed. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 346 – 364]

Gärtner, Wolfgang: "Parlamentsspiegel". Change and Development of the German System of Parliamentary Documentation 1957 to 2006.

In 1957 the "Interparlamentarische Arbeitsgemeinschaft" began to produce a weekly publication called "Parlamentsspiegel" (Mirror of the Parliaments) to inform the professionally interested organizations, lobbyists and individuals about the proceedings, especially the legislation of all German parliaments (Bundestag, Bundesrat and Land parliaments). The

weekly sheets were condensed to yearbooks. The publications never achieved cost recovery and the parliaments had to allow an annual grant for the survival of the valuable publication. In 1964, it was planned to end the “Parlamentsspiegel” but the German parliaments decided to continue the publication under joint responsibility. The Landtag in North Rhine-Westphalia took over the project while all Land parliaments contribute to its funding. Until the late 1990s the system of parliamentary documentation was continually modernized by introducing data processing and producing data bases and data recall facilities. In the year 2000, the “Parlamentsspiegel” was fundamentally changed, when the central documentation of the parliamentary documents by documentalists was given up and a database was developed instead to which the 16 documentation units of the German parliaments now transfer the metadata records including the electronic version of the documents. Database research can be done comfortably through the internet via www.parlamentsspiegel.de. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 384 – 397]

Trüdinger, Eva-Maria and Uwe Bollow: Meanings Change as Time Does. Purport and Change in Meaning of the Political Labels Left and Right in an inner German Comparison.

About 20 years after the German reunification the article examines which contents are associated with the ideological labels of “left” and “right” by both East and West German citizens, using survey data from 1991, 1997/8 and 2007. Furthermore, it discusses the inner German dynamics that lead to the current perception of these expressions. Distributive and socio-economic issues for instance are on the increase for the term “left”, whereas associated qualities of the opposite term fluctuate without showing a clear trend. While East and West Germans have similar understandings of “left”, there is a significant difference in what respondents attribute to “right”: In the eastern part of the country people more often refer to issues of extremism in their statements, whereas a more heterogeneous picture can be drawn in West Germany. As both groups have converged in their understandings of the label “left”, their conceptions of “right” have increasingly drifted apart over the last decade, showing the flexibility of the scheme in regard to its contents. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 398 – 418]

Behnke, Joachim and Florian Grotz: The Electoral System between Normative Justification, Empirical Evidence and Political Interests. A Comment on Gerd Strohmeier and Franz Urban Pappi / Michael Herrmann.

To eliminate the “negative weight of votes” effect of the German electoral system, *Pappi* and *Herrmann* have recommended a reform model in which the Länder party lists are detached from each other and the seats for each party list are allocated separately. However, this suggestion is not suitable for several reasons. First of all, the *Pappi-Herrmann* model would not eliminate the essentially problematic effect of the current electoral system, i.e. the emergence of surplus seats. These seats cannot be considered a desirable “majority bonus” for constitutional reasons. Furthermore, the argument that surplus seats favor those government coalitions that have been announced by the respective parties before the polls proves to be untenable for empirical reasons. Surplus seats may rather reverse earned majorities of other party coalitions and thereby undermine the legitimating function of parliamentary elections. Viable reform options include a reduced share of single-member districts or the introduction of two-member districts, complemented by compensation seats for the other

parties. In so doing, the “negative weight of votes” effect and the emergence of surplus seats could be eliminated at the same time. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 419 – 425]

Lübbert, Daniel, Felix Arndt and Friedrich Pukelsheim: A House-Size Adjustment Procedure to Preserve Proportionality: Another Option to Resolve the Problem of “Negative Weight of Votes” in the Election Act for the German Bundestag.

In a July 2008 decision the German Federal Constitutional Court called upon the German Bundestag to amend the Federal Election Act in order to remove the occurrence of “negative weight of votes”. To this end, an adjustment procedure is proposed that operates in three steps. The initial step calculates an initial seat apportionment in just the same way as is done currently. If the initial step leads to surplus seats, a subsequent adjustment step increases the house size until the initial apportionment is completely carried by proportionality. The final step then performs the sub apportionments of the nationwide seats of a party to this party’s Land lists by augmenting the allocations from the initial step. The procedure promises numerous advantages over other alternatives that have been proposed, notwithstanding a few disadvantages. Variants are available, though, where the disadvantages are toned down in one way or the other. [ZParl, vol. 42, no. 2, pp. 426 – 435]