

HOW DO SELECTED CRITERIA OF THE AMERICAN AND GERMAN ELECTORAL SYSTEMS INFLUENCE THE PARTIES' OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE POLITICAL DECISION-MAKING PROCESS AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL?

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ABSTRACT

The present study deals with a participation analysis of the electoral systems of the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany, focusing on the participatory possibilities of voters to influence aspects of political decision-making processes through their participation in elections. For this purpose, a detailed examination of the electoral systems and their determinants as well as the highlighting of their differences is offered. In a final conclusion, it is shown that the party landscape in the U.S. differs significantly from the party landscape in Germany, both in terms of representativeness and in terms of the selection and diversity of political agendas. In essence, the electoral system in the FRG offers more participatory elements of political participation.

Keywords: Electoral System, USA, FRG, Parties, Participation, Differences.

INTRODUCTION

Maurice Duverger's studies "The Political Parties" paved the way for a correlation-based analysis between electoral system(s) and the design, structure and functionality of the party system.¹ Both a majority election and a proportional representation would lead to a multi-party system, but with different reciprocal dependencies between the parties.²

The sociological "Duverger laws" were later taken up by Giovanni Sartori and extended by his rules and then elaborated in turn into modified laws.³ Thus, in a well-structured party system, relative majority voting leads to a stable two-party system (Law 1). If, on the other hand, elections are held according to the rules of proportional representation, "a structured party system causes a concentration effect"⁴, which increases as a result of the level of the blocking clauses for the allocation of mandates (Law 4). Furthermore, proportional representation tends to lead to the emergence of a multi-party system.⁵

The present study aims to present a correlation between the electoral systems in the USA and Germany and the respective party participation in the political decision-making process at the

¹ Cf. Duverger, M. (1959): Die politischen Parteien, p. 221f., translated by Siegfried Landshut, Tübingen

² Ibid, p. 225.

³ See Giovanni Sartori (1997): Comparative Constitutional Engineering. An Inquiry Into Structures, Incentives and Outcomes, p. 97, New York

⁴ Träger, Hendrik (2013): "Die Auswirkungen der Wahlsysteme: elf Modellrechnungen mit den Ergebnissen der Bundestagswahl", p. 742f., in: ZParl Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen, ZParl, Jahrgang 44 (2013), Heft 4

⁵ Laws two and three do not play a role in this paper, nor does Duverger's hypothesis that absolute majority voting can lead to a multi-party system. Cf. on this Träger, Hendrik, op. cit.

federal level, based on these laws⁶. "Electoral systems are of considerable importance for the political decision-making process and for the transfer of political power."⁷

To this end, the distinctions between the electoral systems relevant to the work are first discussed and then explicative differences are worked out in a descriptive-comparative manner (Chapter 1). This is followed by a participation analysis based on the nomological evaluation of the relevant literature and the results of the first chapter (chapter 2), before a simple overview (chapter 3) concludes the context of the study.

Two levels are to be examined in particular to give structure to the course of the study: the level of votes and the level of mandates. The primacy, of course, lies at the level of votes and mandates and not at the level of candidacies, for example, since the electoral system is responsible for the "translation of the vote level into the mandate level".⁸ And although the electoral system and the party system are circularly linked⁹, the present work is limited to the radiant power of the electoral system on the party system and thus on corresponding governmental forms of participation of the parties themselves. At the level of candidacies, elite selection and the associated political influence are at least briefly discussed. For the personalised part of each election in the systems under study, differences between the US president and chancellor can be taken as a basis.

Furthermore, purely mechanical and not psychological effects of the electoral system are taken into account, since the "(...) psychological effect (...) already occurred during the casting of votes (...) and [is] not relevant for the conversion of votes into mandates".¹⁰ Parties, in turn, are interpreted in the sense of political sociology, as communication and mediation agencies that "carry societal interests into the state sphere"¹¹ and are necessary actors in the political decision-making process in the two democracies under consideration.¹²

METHODOLOGY

Based on a selection of basic texts according to criteria of validity and relevance, which, in addition to the primary works to be examined, contain the basic framework of the analysis makes it more comprehensive to differ between the two examined systems. The in-depth analysis of the literature requires the integration of further scientific texts and their evaluation.

⁶ The author is aware that these laws are not scientifically tenable and thus do not imply any real regularities. However, they are also not regularly refutable, as they have to be examined on a case-by-case basis. Empirically provable, on the other hand, is the view that majority voting has a stronger concentrating effect, reducing the number of parties, than proportional representation. Cf. Nohlen, D. (1986): "Gibt es gesetzmäßige Auswirkungen von Wahlsystemen", p. 201, in: *Wahlrecht und Parteiensystem. Grundwissen Politik*. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden

⁷ Nohlen, D. (1986): op. cit., p. 40

⁸ Catón, Matthias (2009): *Wahlsysteme und Parteiensysteme im Kontext - Vergleichende Analyse der Wirkung von Wahlsystemen unter verschiedenen Kontextbedingungen*, p. 63, Dissertation at the Faculty of Economics and Social Sciences of the Ruprecht-Karls-Universität Heidelberg under the title "Kontextdimensionen in der Kausalbeziehung zwischen Wahlsystem und Parteiensystem".

⁹ Cf. Nohlen, Dieter (2002): "Elections and Electoral Systems", p. 241f., in: *Vergleichende Regierungslehre : Eine Einführung*, edited by Hans-Joachim LAUTH. Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag

¹⁰ Catón, Matthias (2009): op. cit.

¹¹ Jun, U. (2009): "Politische Parteien als Gegenstand der Politischen Soziologie", p. 235, in: Kaina V., Römmele A. (eds) *Politische Soziologie*. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften.

¹² Ibid.

Comparative description of the electoral systems USA and FRG

The connection between the electoral system and the political system is evident.¹³ First of all, it remains to be stated that the USA and Germany belong to two fundamentally different political systems.¹⁴ While the USA is described as a presidential federal republic¹⁵, Germany can be identified as a parliamentary democracy.¹⁶

Presidential means that at the head of the US state there is a person who combines the functions of the head of government and the head of state and therefore, as a monistic executive, embodies considerably more competences than the head of government¹⁷ does in Germany. The latter, in turn, acts as 'primus inter pares' of all department colleagues and is responsible to parliament.¹⁸ The latter, in turn, acts as 'primus inter pares' of all departmental colleagues and answers to parliament. Within the cabinet, however, his authority to issue directives is much more pronounced than is the case with the US president in Congress.¹⁹

A major difference, on the other hand, is in foreign policy competence. As 'Commander in Chief', the American²⁰ head of state unifies, in addition to his "omnipotent"²¹ office, that of Commander in Chief of the US Armed Forces. In Germany, the power of command lies with the Minister of Defence. However, this is only in peacetime, while in the case of defence this power is transferred to the Federal Chancellor.²²

Election of the President

The US electoral system provides for the US president to face an indirect popular vote.²³ Electoral men and women are sent for each state and together they constitute the Electoral College. This consists of 538 electors. Depending on the size of the federal state, different numbers of electors can be elected by the eligible voters in a relative majority election

¹³ Cf. Linhart E., Jankowski M., Tepe M. (2017): Welches Wahlsystem wollen die Wähler - Evidenz von einem Conjoint Experiment, p.1, Paper for the Annual Meeting of the Working Group on Action and Decision Theory of the DVPW in Mannheim on 8/9 June 2017.

¹⁴ Cf. Wissenschaftsdienst des Bundestages (2012a): The Electoral Systems of Germany and the USA: A Comparison, p. 5, WD 1 - 3000/071/12

¹⁵ Cf. Schmidt, M. (2011): Organising as a democratic function. The Mobilisation and Participation Strategy of the Obama Administration, p. 25, Lit. Berlin

¹⁶ Cf. Wissenschaftsdienst des Bundestages (2012a): op. cit., p. 6

¹⁷ For ease of reading, the masculine is used in this work. However, the author is emancipated to the extent that gender seems irrelevant to him anyway when it comes to describing competences, etc. The masculine form is not used in this work.

¹⁸ Wissenschaftsdienst des Bundestages (2012a): op. cit., p. 6

¹⁹ Ibid. The domestic policy competences of the German head of government and the US president are explicitly not discussed here. The most important difference within parliament is that the German head of government can be sure of a government majority in parliament, while the US president has to seek AD-hoc majorities in Congress. In the latter, in turn, there is no immediate factional discipline (although there has been a tendency since the mid-1990s), which makes an oppositional association of non-governmental parties (minorities), as is the case in Germany, unnecessary. The cabinet also has a completely different significance than in Germany, where it forms the government, whereas in the USA it is more an assembly of the most important ministers and senior officials with the president, but no legislative power emanates from it. See, among others, Kurt L. Shell (2005): Chapter Congress and the President, section "Constitution and Increase in Power", p. 230f., in: Peter Lösche, Hans-Dietrich von Löffelholz (eds.): Länderbericht USA. History, Politics, Economy, Society, Culture. 4th edition. Federal Agency for Civic Education

²⁰ What is meant from now on is US-American.

²¹ Cf. Wissenschaftsdienst des Bundestages (2012a): op. cit., p. 6

²² Cf. Basic Law Articles 65a and 115b.

²³ Cf. Hübner E., Münch U. (2013): The Political System of the USA, Chapter VI, Beck Series

according to the respective state's share of seats in Congress (Senate and House of Representatives) (for example, California, the largest state, sends 55 electors and Wyoming only three). Maine and Nebraska must be mentioned as exceptional states.²⁴ Meetings of Electors are held 41 days after election day, at which the electors first elect the president and then the vice-president. Elections are held according to the "winner takes all" principle, i.e. all electors vote for the candidate who has won the most electoral votes in the state. In this way, there can be considerable deviations in the actual distribution of votes.²⁵ Whoever receives an absolute majority, i.e. the votes of 270 electors, is elected president.

Election of the Chancellor

In contrast to the indirect vote of the people on the mandate of the US president, in Germany the parliament elects the head of government without debate. At the beginning of each legislative period, one of the main tasks is thus the electoral function of the newly formed Bundestag.²⁶ The Federal President proposes a candidate from the party or coalition that has emerged victorious from the Bundestag elections (Article 63, GG). "In the first ballot, an absolute majority of the members of the Bundestag must be achieved"²⁷, which has been achieved in every first ballot in the history of the Bundestag to date.²⁸ The majority for the chancellor concerns all legal - and thus not only the present - members of parliament. At present, the majority is 355 votes (with 709 seats).

Election of the Congress

Congress is the legislative branch of government in the USA. It consists of two chambers, the House of Representatives with 435 representatives, one per constituency, and the Senate with 100 senators, two per state regardless of its size.²⁹ Every two years (midterm election), one third of the Senate is newly elected in a relative majority election (sometimes also absolutely) in the respective states.

The members of the House of Representatives are elected by relative majority vote for a two-year term at full strength. Even though American political science speaks of a semi-sovereign institution³⁰, the Constitution attests the body the "(...) legislative power (...) [which] [rests] in the Congress of the United States (...)"³¹. The task of the deputies is to represent their individual state or constituency in Washington. This means that local interests are in the foreground when it comes to voting or political decisions, and not, for example, the welfare of society as a whole or some other rather abstract national common good.³² As "political entrepreneurs"³³, every elected official seeks to use power and influence to get re-

²⁴ Cf. Lösche, P. (2008): Country Report USA. History, Politics, Economy, Society, Culture. 5th edition. Federal Agency for Civic Education

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Cf. Korte, K.-R. (2009): Wahlen in Deutschland, Zeitbilder, bpb, retrieved on 13.1.21 from <https://www.bpb.de/politik/wahlen/bundestagswahlen/62553/election-of-the-federal-chancellor>

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Lösche, P. (2008): Congress - fragmented legislature, retrieved on 15.1.21 from <https://www.bpb.de/internationales/amerika/usa/10649/kongress?p=all>

³⁰ Other powers, such as the president with his suspensive veto and the Supreme Court, which decides on the constitutionality of laws, participate partially in the legislative process.

³¹ Constitution of the United States of America, Article 1, retrieved 15.1.21 from <https://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/gov/gov-constitutiond.pdf>

³² Lösche, P. (2008): op. cit.

³³ Ibid.

elected. This does not include the support of the party under whose banner the parliamentarian is elected; rather, he or she must organise and finance his or her own election campaign.³⁴

Election of the Bundestag

Every four years, German citizens over the age of 18 elect members of the Bundestag by personalised proportional representation. The elections are general, direct, free, equal and secret.³⁵ The Bundestag consists of at least 598 members, 299 of whom are directly elected (first vote). With the second vote, voters can vote for a party's list of candidates. Once the 5 per cent threshold has been overcome, the proportion of second votes determines how many seats a party is entitled to in the Bundestag (proportional representation). If a party wins at least three direct mandates, the 5 per cent hurdle does not apply. If a party wins more direct mandates in a federal state than it is entitled to according to list proportional representation, overhang mandates arise.

Since the electoral law reform of 2013, this can no longer cause a negative voting weight³⁶, as so-called compensatory mandates are granted to the other parties according to their share of the second votes in order to accurately reflect party proportional representation.³⁷ In contrast to the Congress, parliamentary groups play a special role in the Bundestag. Parliamentary group strength means that 5 per cent of the members can join together and, for example, launch a legislative initiative alongside the Federal Government and the Bundesrat.³⁸ Further rights go hand in hand with parliamentary group status.³⁹

The MPs in turn elect the Federal Chancellor and the Federal President and thus determine the government.⁴⁰

Participatory analysis

At this point, some descriptive elements from the first chapter will be discussed, so that an overall view of party participation in political decision-making can be offered in a country comparison.

USA

In the USA, the first law⁴¹ is confirmed by gerrymandering, among other things.⁴² In this case, the majority parties in the individual state legislatures impose a restructuring of the constituency geometry in order to majoritise the voters of their own party. Since this constituency manipulation occurs primarily in majority voting systems⁴³, the electoral system and the parties play a central role, at least in this respect.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ www.bundestag.de

³⁶ Negative voting weight means that more second votes for a party can lead to fewer seats in the parliament.

³⁷ Hettlage, M. (2011): How do we vote in 2013?: published and unpublished contributions to the reform of electoral law at the federal and state levels, pp. 119ff, Lit.

³⁸ Ibid., p. 51

³⁹ The right to deputy speaker posts, the right to representation in committees, right of motion, to name a few.

⁴⁰ Cf. Election of the Bundestag, retrieved on 16.1.21 at <https://www.bpb.de/politik/grundfragen/24-deutschland/40438/wahl-bundestag>

⁴¹ Cf. Decker, F. (2011): Regieren im "Parteienbundesstaat". Zur Architektur der deutschen Politik, p. 131, VS-Verlag

⁴² Cf. Oldopp, B. (2014): Das politische System der USA, p. 175, Springer Verlag

⁴³ Cf. Korte, K.-R. (2017): Merheitswahl, retrieved on 16.1.21 at <https://m.bpb.de/politik/wahlen/wahlen-in-deutschland/249422/mehrheitswahl>

Overall, however, the influence of US parties on the political decision-making process can only be described as weak on the basis of the descriptions elaborated in Chapter 1. Thus, the relative majority election regularly leads to a two-party system, which, including the guarantee of existence, provides Republicans and Democrats with only a few competences outside the election campaign.⁴⁴

Accordingly, parties see themselves more as "big tents" whose attributes can be limited by the lack of an agenda and the task of mobilising voters and providing campaign support for their candidates.⁴⁵ "The active participation of parties in the process of political decision-making has traditionally been part of accepted practice in the USA, but it has never been constitutionally legitimised at the nation-state level as it is in Germany."⁴⁶ Thus, in principle, the only task left to the national party is to nominate a presidential candidate every four years. "The national nominating convention, consisting of delegates from the individual states, is formally the highest authority of the party (...)."⁴⁷

Due to the electoral college principle and the "winner takes it all" principle, the US presidential election records erosive disproportionalities at the level of converting votes into mandates. Since the Electoral College elects the presidential candidate by absolute majority vote and thus automatically disregards all votes of the losing opposing candidate, it can happen that a candidate becomes president without having a majority among the voters. In 2016, Hillary Clinton received 2,864,974 more votes than Donald Trump. The latter, however, won by a clear vote of the electoral college (306 to 232).⁴⁸ Further biases emerge when one looks at the structure of electoral rolls in the USA. While in Germany every citizen is automatically registered through the municipal authorities, US citizens have to actively engage in a sometimes complicated registration process.^{49,50} This has a negative impact on voter rates. For example, barely more than 40 per cent of eligible Americans vote for Congress. In a presidential election, voter turnout oscillates around 60 per cent. This is also the reason why, to date, a left-wing or socialist party has no serious chance of being elected, since it is mainly the more educated and wealthier classes that dominate voter registration. Thus, the "conservative bias" is unlikely to change much in the future.⁵¹ In this respect, the participation opportunities of non-Democrats and Republicans are visibly diminishing.⁵²

In contrast to Germany, US parties are financed by donations, which on the one hand explains their proximity to the wealthier classes, but at the same time inhibits any ideological

⁴⁴ See Fabbrini, S. (2007): *Compound democracies. Why the United States and Europe are becoming similar*, p. 134, Oxford University Press.

⁴⁵ Cf. Wissenschaftsdienst des Bundestages (2012b): *Party Democracy in the USA: Membership and Participation Practices and Nomination Procedures among Democrats and Republicans against the Background of the Current Presidential Election Campaign*, p. 4f., WD1 - 3000/074/12

⁴⁶ Ibid. S. 6

⁴⁷ Mewes, H. (1986): *Einführung in das politische System der USA*, S. 141, Müller

⁴⁸ Cf. Resch, A. (2016): *Clinton receives almost 3 million votes more than Trump*, NZZ, retrieved on 16.1.21 from <https://www.nzz.ch/international/wahlen-in-den-usa-clintons-vorsprung-steigt-auf-2-millionen-stimmen-ld.130231>

⁴⁹ The accompanying problem of "voter fraud" induced by the dominant party, depending on the state, will not be discussed in detail here.

⁵⁰ Cf. Wissenschaftsdienst des Bundestages (2012a): *op. cit.*, p. 7.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Another major problem is the "lost votes", i.e. the invalidity of ballot papers that have been cast but are incorrect in form. Cf. Wissenschaftsdienst des Bundestages (2012a): *loc. cit.*

clout.⁵³ This compulsion to economic pragmatism is also reflected in the selection of elites within the parties, because here only the candidate's ability to acquire third-party funding counts as the overriding criterion.⁵⁴ This principle is almost antithetical to large parts of the stratificational structure of US society, but it also makes it possible for skilful outsiders to gain a majority of delegates.

Another significant difference between Germany and the USA is the degree of cooperation required between the parties in forming a government. In the party duopoly in the USA, one of the two major parties usually succeeds over the other, which regularly leads to absolute majorities in Congress. Thus, the USA can be said to have a competitive (party) democratic system, which, however, also has consensual features due to the constitutionally established 'checks and balances' and the presidential system.⁵⁵

Germany

In Germany, the fourth law is confirmed by the personalised proportional representation that follows the principle of 'proportional representation', which, apart from the basic mandate clause, is interwoven with the five per cent hurdle for the final entry of parties into the Bundestag.⁵⁶ Thus, minor parties are not considered further. Nevertheless, in a pluralistic multi-party system (since 2017), the Bundestag can be constituted of six parties and seven non-partisan MPs, as is currently the case.⁵⁷ "Parliamentary states with proportional representation as a basis tend to have a multiparty or multi-party system (...)."⁵⁸

Since party financing in Germany has been regulated by the state since 1959 and the parties have "(...) monopolised the formation of political will for themselves (...)"⁵⁹, the German parties, in diametrical contrast to their American counterparts, can concentrate primarily on the programmatic shaping of political agendas.⁶⁰ In order to win votes, the parties must optimise their integrative power as highly structured organisations with clearly positioned leadership and a professionalised party apparatus.⁶¹ Due to the convergence of the parties⁶² in terms of content, the compulsion for polarisation is visibly breaking down. Since 2015, however, the socio-political conflict "between left-wing liberal, multiculturally (...) oriented values on the one hand and conservative to authoritarian values emphasising national identity (...) on the other"⁶³ has shaped the party landscape in Germany. In 2017, for example, the AfD (12.3 per cent), another opposition party, entered the Bundestag, which only partially focused on political-economic and sociological challenges in terms of content.

Such a position of "minor parties", which are also established at the state level⁶⁴, would be unthinkable in the USA. There, the political will could at best be influenced by agenda-

⁵³ Ibid., p. 11

⁵⁴ Ibid., p. 12

⁵⁵ Cf. Schmidt, M. (2011): op. cit., p. 30

⁵⁶ Cf. Wissenschaftsdienst des Bundestages (2012a): op. cit., p. 7

⁵⁷ Cf. distribution of seats in the 19th German Bundestag, accessed 16.1.21 at https://www.bundestag.de/parlament/plenum/sitzverteilung_19wp

⁵⁸ Wissenschaftsdienst des Bundestages (2012a): op. cit., p. 8

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Cf. median voting model at <https://www.wipo.uni-freiburg.de/dateien/ws1011/NPOeUEb1>

⁶³ Niedermayer, O. (2020): Das deutsche Parteiensystem im europäischen Vergleich, retrieved on 17.1.21 from <https://m.bpb.de/politik/grundfragen/parteien-in-deutschland/201874/europaeischer-vergleich>

⁶⁴ Cf. Wissenschaftsdienst des Bundestages (2012a): op. cit., pp. 14-18.

setting.⁶⁵ The transfer of voters' will into political programmes therefore appears to be more direct in a proportional representation system, since citizens can more easily find a party that corresponds to their wishes.

It is therefore also likely that a coalition government will have to be formed in order for parliamentary majorities to emerge. In this way, not only are different political directions integrated, but also the degree of disproportionality turns out to be lower than in the American first-past-the-post system.⁶⁶ Thus, concordance democratic determinants are combined with a broad representation of the electorate in the political decision-making process at the federal level.⁶⁷

The right of the Federal President to propose a candidate for Chancellor in the Bundestag and the subsequent election of the MPs also normally illustrates the will of the electorate.⁶⁸ This means that due to the concentration of the party system on the victory of one party⁶⁹, the Federal President in principle has no other option than to put forward the candidate who, according to the election results, will probably unite the most parliamentarians. Due to the high level of factional discipline in Germany⁷⁰, the parties are of great importance here when it comes to choosing the head of government.

In contrast to the Congress election, voter turnout for the Bundestag election in Germany has been at a high level since 1949. 70 per cent in 2009 marks the minimum to date.⁷¹ Thanks to automatic voter registration and the electoral principles guaranteed in Article 38 of the Basic Law, there are no conspicuous disproportionalities in the representation of voters' will in Germany comparable to the electoral system in the USA.⁷² For this reason alone, it can be stated that German parties have a significant influence on the formation of political will and that the reason for this, at least in a partial analysis, is to be found in the electoral system.

CONCLUSION

Partial analysis is the keyword in this work. The research process of the thesis has a strongly abstracting component, since no universal statements can be made on the connection between electoral systems and party forms of participation in the political decision-making process if

⁶⁵ Ibid., p.18

⁶⁶ Cf. Korte, K.-R. (2017): op. cit.

⁶⁷ Other determinants influencing the political system, such as corporatism and competitive democratic elements, are deliberately not discussed, as they are not directly related to the research question. Nevertheless, these are very much present in Germany. Furthermore, competitive democratic influences on party-political calculation, for example in the Bundesrat, are not discussed. Cf. Bandelow, N. (2004): Ist die Bundesrepublik Deutschland eine Verhandlungsdemokratie, retrieved on 17.1.21 from <https://user.phil.hhu.de/~bandelow/kldetp03.pdf> and Scharpf, Fritz W.: Die Politikverflechtungsfälle: Europäische Integration und deutscher Föderalismus im Vergleich, in: Politische Vierteljahresschrift, 26, 1985, pp. 323- 356.

⁶⁸ Cf. Woyke, W. (2013): Wahlen durch den Deutschen Bundestag und die Bundesversammlung, p. 101, in: Stichwort: Wahlen. VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, Wiesbaden

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Cf. Saalfeld, T. (2005): Determinants of factional discipline. Germany in international comparison, p. 65,,in: Ganghof, S; Manow, P. (eds.): Mechanismen der Politik: strategische Interaktion im deutschen Regierungssystem, Campus Verlag.

⁷¹ Cf. Statista (2020): Voter turnout in federal elections in Germany from 1949 to 2017, retrieved on 18.1.21 from <https://de.statista.com/statistik/daten/studie/2274/umfrage/entwicklung-der-wahlbeteiligung-bei-bundestagswahlen-seit-1949/>

⁷² Cf. Korte, K.-R. (2009): op. cit.

only complexity-reducing subsystems are taken into focus. The present result should therefore not be interpreted as empirical, but nomological, citing previous scientific emphasis (cf. Chapter 1).

Taking these aspects into account, the roles of the parties in the USA and Germany at the respective federal level differ strikingly. In the USA, for example, the parties lack representativeness and thus, in purely mechanical terms, the ability to shape the political will of large sections of the electorate. The description of the election and the tasks of the president and the congress also make the distribution of competences clear. Here, too, the parties, the parliamentary groups, tend to play a subordinate role, since absolute majorities are regularly formed and there is no opposition in the German sense. Henceforth, there is no compulsion to cooperate and thus, at least at the party level, rather little concordance.

In the German political landscape, on the other hand, parties play an important role, as they not only represent the majority of the will of the electorate (at least in terms of proportional representation alone), but also exert a direct influence on the broad-based formation of political will among the population through consensual democratic elements. In view of the two laws, the determinants to be examined such as electoral votes and mandates, the German system can be said to have a great party-political effect in this way.

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