

Martin JEŘÁBEK (et al.)

## Srovnání politických systémů Německa a Rakouska – institucionální a systémové ukotvení

Plzeň: Adela – Grafické studio 2010, 215 pages  
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The book written by political scientist Martin Jeřábek and his team of younger colleagues tries to compare the political and institutional system of our two neighbouring countries – Austria and Germany. It must be stated that this topic is not typical for Czech political scientists. Only three Czech books focusing on these states are to be highlighted in this review. The first two were written by Petr Fiala (the present leader of the Civic Democratic Party) and the name of the first one is “Politický systém Spolkové republiky Německo” (published in 1994); his second book about Germany was published one year later but its core topic is political science in Germany. The third book that must be mentioned was written by Vít Hloušek in 2008 and is focused on cleavages, party systems and political parties in Austria from 1860 to 2006. I think crucial questions must be raised in this connection. Are the above mentioned books sufficient for students and researchers who are interested in political and party systems of Germany and Austria? Should researchers write more books about them? In my opinion, it is not enough even if there are various articles in Czech political journals or chapters in books about the discussed states.

The structure of his book is very simple. A short chapter is devoted to each topic, corresponding to the title. Their length is adequate and the reader is able to understand them without any deep knowledge of the German and Austrian political systems. The comparison in each chapter clearly shows differences and similarities. Nevertheless, the book includes some facts that are either false or less supported by other important facts. Let me mention some of them. The chart on page 64 shows the usage of the constructive veto of no confidence. The members of the German Bundestag voted for the first time in that specific procedure in 1972 but the Chancellor and his government were not forced to resign due to no-confidence. Elections that were held afterwards were a consequence of various factors and not a consequence of Art. 67 of the Basic Constitutional Law of the Federal Republic of Germany but according to Art. 68 of the Basic Constitutional Law. This should be explained in more details because the authors’ statement is confusing for readers. I think the way of voting procedure in the Bundestag should be enlightened, because of its inevitable lack (e. g. The deputies of the Bundestag receive small colourful pieces of paper before voting. Specific colour symbolizes either yes, or no. This piece of paper is thrown by the Bundestag member to a „bin” during voting.) The so-called „Hammelsprung” is

not mentioned either. Other problem of this book consists in the fact that information is repeated in different chapters.

Another confusing information can be found on page 112, footnote 321 stating that Baden-Württemberg includes only two historic lands. This German Federal Land consists of three historical lands, namely Baden, Württemberg-Baden and Württemberg-Hohenzollern

The Austrian extreme right-wing political parties are described in chapters about party systems and government. On the contrary, it is startling that German right-wing political parties are not mentioned at all, even if they experienced several successful Landtag elections. Their first successful era was in the 1960's when the National Democratic Party (NPD) was elected to Landtags in: Bremen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Hessen, Bayern, Niedersachsen, Schleswig-Holstein and Baden-Württemberg. The best result was achieved in Baden-Württemberg in 1968 where the NPD gained 9,8 % and 12 deputies of the Landtag<sup>1</sup>. The second rise of the extreme right-wing parties occurred in the eastern part of Germany in the second half of the 1990's. As the aim of this book consists in comparison of both countries, this party family should have been compared. It is harmful to the book that this new phenomenon was not discussed.

Although the book contains various mistakes it gives a good overview of the German and Austrian politics.

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<sup>1</sup> For further information see: Information des Bundeswahlleiters [http://bundeswahlleiter.de/de/landtagswahlen/ergebnisse/downloads/ltw\\_erg\\_gesamt.pdf](http://bundeswahlleiter.de/de/landtagswahlen/ergebnisse/downloads/ltw_erg_gesamt.pdf)