A cultural history of elections in the USA and Germany

Meanings and functions of elections in the 19th century

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At the beginning of the nineteenth century, elections in the German states did not play a significant role either in the business of government or in the lives of the population as a whole. The representative bodies of government, which normally consisted solely of the privileged classes (the clergy, the nobility and the city fathers), were often no longer convened or had been dissolved completely. The representative bodies, structured according to class, were seldomly created through elections and much more through birth or appointment (cf. Sternberger & Vogel 1969: 189 f.). Even the new state constitutions after 1815 perpetuated many class privileges. Where there were elected assemblies, suffrage was linked primarily to the level of tax paid or the amount of property owned (Weber & Wehling 2007: 59 f.; Brandt 1998). Also in the USA, a republic where each state independently determined its own suffrage, still at the beginning of the century there were many governmental positions which were by appointment only. Moreover, despite the 1787 constitution enshrining equality, the overwhelming majority of people were excluded from suffrage, since they did not meet property or tax requirements (Keyssar 2009: 854). Thus at the beginning of the nineteenth century, in Germany as well as the USA, elections belonged to the privileges of a minority. However, a century later, after the First World War, elections stood at the centre of political life, and in both countries the overwhelming majority of the population could vote. Both Germany (1919) and the USA (1920) introduced women's suffrage, and both ensured

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universal suffrage through the various components of the Australian ballot (uniform ballot papers, ballot boxes, polling booths, etc.).

Why, then, did elections become so important, not only in terms of determining who would enter office, but also in terms of their inclusion of more and more people, and therefore their increasing significance for people's lives? What functions did governments ascribe to elections, and what motives did those in power have when they introduced elections? What importance did people attribute to the vote? Since elections are a complicated interplay of legal, social and economic factors, of mentalities and philosophies, and are therefore also bound up with political decisions after all, I will develop in my project a cultural history of elections, one that combines practice with materiality and performance, without ignoring structural conditions (Petersen's contribution in this issue; Welskopp 1997: 44; Mergel 2005: 360-361). I will ask questions such as who observed or surveilled the voters. Were there ballot boxes, voting booths, uniform ballot papers, writing implements? Who was responsible for producing and distributing the ballot papers? What effect did the day of the week have on voting? Who had the householder's right at the polling station? In adopting a cultural-anthropological approach, I intend to interpret elections as a ritual which requires explanation. In doing so, I can focus upon the functions of, and the functions ascribed to, elections, functions which deviate from our normative, Western concept of democracy and which show »what electoral politics meant to many contemporaries« (O'Gorman 1992: 136; Nohlen 2009: 27-36; Jessen & Richter 2011). Although a cultural-historical approach to elections has already been called for a number of times (Neugebauer-Wölk 1984; O'Gorman 1989; Kühne 1993; Mergel 2005a and 2005b), such an approach remains in its early stages, particularly in German-speaking research (exceptions are Kühne 1994; Arsenschek 2003).

A cultural-historical view of the functions of elections reveals the ambivalence of the institution of voting (Bertrand et al. 2006). It is difficult to tell the history of the vote in terms of goals successfully achieved; rather, it is a history strewn with errors and reversals. As a consequence, I see the development of elections from within the framework of three

dichotomies. On the one hand, elections lead to more freedom, and on the other to more disciplining. On the one hand, to individualization; on the other, to de-individualization. On the one hand, to integration; on the other, to new modes of exclusion. The extension of the franchise, I argue, can only be explained when elections are seen not only as an instrument of power for the masses but also as an instrument of discipline wielded by those in power. Elections as a performative act can be read, that is, not only as a demonstration of power by the people, but also as a subjugation of the people to authority, a subjugation which was regarded as ›modern‹ and appropriate to the time. For such an approach it is necessary to use a horizontal concept of power. With Max Weber I will view power as the »chance to obey a particular order«,[1] an obedience which enables those being ruled to believe in the legitimacy of those who rule (*Legitimationsglauben*).

In view of the *Sonderweg* theory, which again and again has been pronounced dead but shows strong signs of life in regard to elections, it is helpful to compare Germany with another country, and for that the USA is appropriate. Actually, a huge amount of literature on elections still puts forward for both Germany and the USA a kind of double *Sonderweg* thesis: the USA as the ›Land of Democracy‹, where equal voting rights had been implemented in the first half of the nineteenth century after pressure from below; and Germany, in contrast, as the land in which electoral participation had been prescribed from above (Rogers 1990: 3; Bensel 2004: 287, 295).[2] The research project will examine these assumptions in regard to the following regions: for Germany, the dominant Prussia and the liberal Württemberg with its agrarian-egalitarian society. For one, this will allow us to consider the ambivalent modernity of Prussia which, through the 1808 city orders, gave suffrage to a significant number of men, while at the same time only installing (from above) a constitution in 1849 and keeping the three-class system of suffrage until

1 »Chance, Gehorsam für einen bestimmten Befehl zu finden«.

2 Already the historian James Bryce explained in 1921 that the progressive suffrage in imperial Germany was irrelevant, see Bryce 1921: 23-26.

the First World War. Württemberg, in contrast, witnessed a smoother development with its quite progressive constitution of 1819 and its accompanying suffrage which was relatively egalitarian. In terms of the USA, my focus will be on the heated electoral culture of New York City which, due to its high number of immigrants, was constantly confronted to questions of integration and exclusion; and upon South Carolina, the American state with the highest black population, brutal racism, its particularly restrictive suffrage, and its dominance of the legislature (Bernheim 1889: 152; Ryan 1999: 573 f.; Hayduk 2006; Edgar 1998: 338 f.).

I start my investigation with the beginning of the expansion of the franchise. For Germany, that means the years following the wars of liberation of 1813; and for the USA, the 1820s during the Jacksonian Democracy, when politics turned into a mass phenomenon.[3] In Germany, the revolution of 1848/1849 meant a radical break in the practice of elections and, despite all reactionary attempts, suffrage in Germany widened through the new, partly imposed constitutions after 1848/1849. The introduction of universal and equal male suffrage, which was progressive by European standards, in the North German *Bund* (1867) and the German Empire (1871) developed its own momentum, which led to an increasing number of people voting. In the USA, the decisive break came in the middle of the century with the Civil War (1861-1865), which not only made possible the expansion of suffrage but also strengthened the tendencies to exclude. The decades preceding the turn of the century are characterized in the USA by a massive restriction of the franchise and a dramatic reduction in electoral participation (Burnham & Weinberg 1980: 51-58). My investigation will end with the introduction of women's suffrage in Germany (1919) and the USA (1920).

3 »König Friedrich an seine lieben getreuen Diener, Vasallen und Unterthanen«, 15.3.1815, Hauptstaatsarchiv Stuttgart (State Archive Wuerttemberg, hencefort HStASt) A 22, Bü 8; »Wahlordnung für die Wahlen der Abgeordneten«, 1819-1869, Report to the King, 5.3.1823, HStASt E 14 Bü 537; for the USA Silbey 1978; Keyssar 2009: 40; Seymour & Frary 1918: 290-291.

My most important sources are the complaints to the governing or parliamentary bodies that were made by the populace regarding voting procedures, and also government documents on how elections were organized, how complaints were dealt with, and how changes to voting procedures were discussed. Here can be found examples of ballot papers and suggestions on what ballot boxes should look like. These files, like the complaints concerning how elections were conducted, enable us to gain a microhistorical insight into the actual practice of elections. In the case of controversial elections or far-reaching changes to suffrage, such as the introduction of polling booths in 1903 in the German Empire, I will also refer to parliamentary debates and the press.

So as to be in a position to analyze the ambivalence of elections and of the functions ascribed to them, I will investigate the three dichotomies already mentioned (individualization/de-individualization, integration/exclusion, freedom/disciplining). These dichotomies can enlighten the investigation of the double *Sonderweg* thesis. Was it a case of freedom, individualization and integration in the USA, and disciplining, de-individualization and exclusion in Germany? If this is the case, we should be able to see that elections had different functions in the two countries. To what extent, for example, was universal and equal suffrage something that was imposed from above in Germany as a tool of disciplining, while in the USA it was demanded by the people from below as a basic human freedom?

Integration and exclusion

According to conventional research on democratic and competitive elections, the function of integration plays a central role, and the focus of such research is on the integration of the diverse interests of different groups (Sternberger & Vogel 1969: 15; Almond & Verba 1966). For this project it seems to be more interesting to focus on the social-integrative function of elections in regard to emerging states and nations. It is precisely here that an investigation into the performative aspect of elections can be fruitful, since performative acts such as rituals »create differences and therefore identity«, and they »make clear who belongs and who does

not« (Mergel 2002: 21). New states, such as Württemberg with its kingdom (›by Napoleon's mercy‹) lacking tradition and the emerging US states, saw as early as the first half of the nineteenth century how important to their own legitimacy it was to secure an acceptance of the masses that was ostentatious, as wide as possible and, as it was seen at the time, progressive (Keyssar 2009: 855; Brandt 1998: 87). On the other hand, the newly constituted populace united itself through the performative act of voting. The demand for elections therefore also regularly surfaced at crucial moments of nation-building, such as the Wars of Liberation against Napoleon in Germany and the 1848 revolution and the Civil War (Delbrück 1914: 45-46 and 57).[4] Many members of the Frankfurt parliament hoped that equal and universal suffrage would bring with it positive emotions towards the new *Reich* (Frensdorff 1892: 149). Indeed, one of the main reasons why universal and equal suffrage was introduced in the legitimately precarious North German Federation (*Norddeutscher Bund)* (1867) and in the German Empire (*Reich*) (1871) was the hope that it would have a positive effect on integration (Biefang 2009: 45-47).[5] Also, one of the most common reasons for extending suffrage in both the USA and Germany was to reward soldiers for their service or to recruit new soldiers. Wars, that is, prove to be a decisive factor in the widening of the franchise, and contemporaries explicitly connected the performance of soldiers or working women with their right to participate in elections.[6]

4 See »Amtliche Königliche Ansprache«, *Staats-Anzeiger für Württemberg*, No. 160, 6.7.1850, HStASt E 7 Bü 97.

5 »Fürst Bismarck und das Wahlrecht«, 14.9.1894, Bundesarchiv Berlin (German Federal Archive, henceforth BA) R 8034 II, 5073.

6 »An den König. Anbringen des Gesammtministeriums betreffendes Ergebniß der Landtagswahlen«, 14.7.1868, HStASt E 14 Bü 537; Minutes of the Reichstag, 6.7.1917, HStASt E 40/16 Bü 53; treatise »Arbeiterschaft und Kriegsentscheidung« (*christlicher Gewerkschaftsverlag*, Cologne), 30.10.1917, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin-Dahlem (Prussian Secret Archive, henceforth GStA PK) I. HA Rep. 169 C 80, Nr. 27; *Weser Zeitung* 17.10.1897; see for the USA Keyssar 2000: 59 and 81 f.

Nonetheless, the expansion of suffrage mostly led to new exclusions. In general, next to women and non-citizens the charitable poor, convicted felons, and those in debt were excluded from suffrage, and in the USA voters also had to be ›white‹. Suffrage always meant a definition and standardization of the voter. In the legal statutes, much space was given to defining those who belonged to the electorate and those who did not.[7] Suffrage required a definition of nationality, with all the exclusions that entailed (cf. Keyssar 2000: 90; Gosewinkel 2001). The mechanism of inclusion and exclusion was particularly clear in the southern states of America. The Confederates justified their ›*herrenvolk*‹ democracy‹ by referring vehemently to the constitution's principle of equality which, of course, was granted only to a white elite (Edgar 1998: 338 f.; Keyssar 2009: 855 f.; Hochgeschwender 2010: 19-20, 52)[8] and went hand in hand with a violent exclusion of Afro-Americans. In the whole of America, the extension of suffrage in the first half of the nineteenth century was probably only possible because the lower classes remained in any case excluded on the basis of race or, as in the North and the West, they only played a marginal role during that period.

Analyzing the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion reveals striking parallels between the two countries, and these parallels become even more evident if we continue our investigations on a regional level. While in Württemberg after 1819 there was, despite the mixed democratic and social composition of the second chamber, a relatively egalitarian male suffrage (Scherer 1848: 819), in South Carolina blacks, who made up more than half the population, were excluded from all forms of participation. Similarly to Württemberg, though, there was a broad agrarian middle class in the north and west states of America, and, in both cases,

7 »Königliches Recript in Betreff der Wahl der Vertretung des deutschen Volks«, 11.4.1848, HStASt E 30, Bü 49; election law for the parliament (*Reichstag*) of the North German Federation, 13.5.1868, BA R 101, Nr. 3342; for the USA Bensel 2004: 26; Keyssar 2009: 855; also Heinsohn 2010; Geulen 2004.

8 South Carolina Department of Archives and History (henceforth SCDAH), S165013, box 100; and S165024, boxes 1-3.

society approximated to the liberal ideal of a largely homogeneous civil society, an ideal which German liberals in the first half of the century regarded as a prerequisite for suffrage. In the southern states of America, in contrast, suffrage for slaves was as unimaginable as suffrage for unpropertied farm labourers in Prussia's *Ostelbien*. Despite the American rhetoric of equality, both Prussia and South Carolina were dominated by a small minority of estate owners and accordingly planters (Edgar 1998: 339). It seems that America's extension of suffrage followed the same logic as it did in German states: suffrage only for a financially and socially independent class. In those areas of Prussia where society was relatively egalitarian, a liberal suffrage could be introduced: with the city suffrage of 1808 Prussia proved to be especially progressive. Prussia's population was simply too heterogeneous for those in power to want to introduce a uniformly equal franchise. And the same was true of the USA. In contrast to Prussia, though, the federal US government did not have to stipulate voting rights centrally, since this task was left to the individual states. Comparing the situation with other countries also reveals how strongly the inclusion/exclusion mechanisms were in operation everywhere: while in Württemberg around 14 percent of the total population could vote, the Chamber of Deputies in France and the House of Commons in England were elected by only three percent of the population (Brandt 1998: 84; Schäfer 2009: 55).[9] The central government in these neighbouring countries did not consider it appropriate to extend the franchise to include the masses of the unpropertied and the impoverished. And, while voting rights in many Western European countries were extended relatively continuously in the second half of the century, the governments of the US states limited them in response to the increasing heterogeneity of the population and the growing presence of an unpropertied working class, brought to America by the processes of industrialization and mass immigration (Keyssar 2009).

9 Cf. »Wahlordnung für die Wahlen der Abgeordneten in die II. Kammer der Ständeversammlung«, 1819-1869, Report to the King, 5.3.1823, HStASt, E 14 Bü 537.

The exclusion of Afro-Americans from suffrage, which continued up until the second half of the twentieth century, is, however, hardly comparable to the exclusion of lower social classes. Rather, it appears in some respects to be just as puzzling a phenomenon as the long-lasting discrimination against women, and is possibly connected to the belief that women and blacks were different by ›nature‹. To contemporaries, the difference appeared to be not a construct, not a product of current traditions or of a backward belief which even conservatives at some point would no longer accept, but as something obvious, as natural or even as God-given. Bruno Latour's linkage of culture and nature and his call for ›nature‹ to be judged according to its own law are relevant here (1995; cf. DuBois 1999; Sneider 2008). Despite the somewhat shared situation of women and blacks, Southern suffragists (a late and rare emergence) feared that their call for suffrage might be intermingled with the African-Americans' request for the right to vote; they asked for the right to vote as whites, not as human beings, and were anxious not to challenge the »white supremacy« (Johnson 1972: 369-370 et passim).

Individualization and de-individualization

The modern act of voting represents on its own the tense relationship between individualization and de-individualization: the more suffrage became extended, the clearer became the problem posed by the sheer mass of voters. Amongst millions of votes, the single vote counted for nothing, even though the whole procedure was constituted of individual votes. The materiality of the secret ballot was designed to ground electoral legitimacy upon the rationality of the individual person. This notion was based on enlightenment ideas, at the centre of which (in particular in the work of Hobbes and Rousseau) was the concept of the natural equality and freedom of the human being. The polling booth can therefore be seen as the epitome of the individualized citizen, as the »place of the modern« (Mergel 2005b: 343-344), since it was there that the citizen could present her- or himself as a rational, individualized subject and no longer as an object belonging to and determined by the collective mass. What counted now was the rationality of the individual person, and not tradition, external influence, cultural ideas and feelings, or community.

Paradoxically, though, it was only with the advent of mass participation with its belief in the rationality of equal individuals that demagogy and vote-rigging in all its lurid forms occurred, from alcohol to wild promises and threats, all the way to bribes. The extension of the franchise was, then, always accompanied by the (understandable) fear of demagogy (cf. O'Gorman 1992). In many parts of the USA elections became the business of high crime in the second half of the century. The famous, or infamous, ›election machines‹ ensured the desired electoral outcomes. Regarding the growing corruption, a New York politician stated in 1889 that »the popular will is still being defeated at elections« (Bernheim 1889: 134).

However, vote-rigging should be defined not only in negative terms. Instead, if we take a cultural-historical approach we can see it as raising a number of important questions. Was it not that initially corruption and manipulation ensured the continuing functioning of the old elites in the regulation of power when, for example, gang bosses in New York controlled elections, when leaders in the mid-West produced ethnically homogeneous electoral results, when factory owners and religious ministers gave instructions on whom to vote for or even made threats (cf. Welskopp 2010: 479)? If the mass of voters were so pliable, did this mean that they were simply not ready for their role as modern voters? How should farm labourers, who previously had no rights and no time for politics, overnight become individuals with the right to vote? Recent quantitative studies of village elections in China have shown that people are much more interested in elections for their concrete advantages (such as bribes) than for their democratic standards (for example, as open competitions, Lu & Shi 2009). Corruption, then, served as an important tool, one that made voting attractive for a wide mass of people. And that perhaps explains why in the USA the culture of voting was so unusually vibrant during the period of greatest corruption, while in Württemberg, with its functioning rules and regulations, it remained less so (Bensel 2004).

Freedom and discipline

If we take a critical perspective on the process of modernization, we can see individualization as also playing a central role in the modern project of disciplining. What counts is no longer the local or religious communities or the prevalent traditions but the state alone, to which each individual belongs directly (Bertrand et al. 2006: 4). What this perspective places at the centre, however, is not the exercising of power by the ›little man‹, whose vote in any case disappears into the sea of votes (Falter & Schoen 2005: 26), but the subjugation of the voter to the norm. Indeed, elections during the whole of the nineteenth century were linked to the education of the individual, especially by the liberals (Nipperdey 1983: 739). The early German liberals resisted a general and equal franchise as long as the masses remained uneducated. For the liberals, then, education was the key to developing a modern society. It was logical, therefore, that they should have wanted to link suffrage with ownership or tax, since only those who had money could afford to be educated.

Occasionally, progressives at the time – in Germany as well as in the USA – also hoped that the act of voting would itself have an educative function. In the 1860s, the New York politician Henry Ward Beecher said that »to have an ignorant class voting is dangerous«, but »to have an ignorant class and not have them voting is a great deal more dangerous«, and that »nothing so much prepares men for intelligent suffrage as the exercise of the right of suffrage«.[10] According to a liberal German newspaper in 1897, the de-individualization through elections and election campaigns recalls »the modern anonymity of the army« (*Weser Zeitung* 17.10.1897). However, in the same way the army »was encouraged to focus on educating for the independence of individual soldiers, so it can also perhaps be hoped that the electorates and the individual voters can

10 Cited in Keyssar 2000: 89; for the educational role of elections see Below 1909: 50-51, 75-78; »An den König. Anbringen des Gesammtministeriums betreffend es Ergebniß der Landtagswahlen«, 14.7.1868, HStASt E 14 Bü 537; note to the Ministry of Interior, Stuttgart, 26.1.1850, HStASt E 7 Bü 97, Ständeversammlung; »Angriffe gegen das Dreiklassenwahlrecht«, *Die Post* 6.10.1897, BA, Reichslandbund R8034, II, 5075, 10.

become used to behaving as independent beings«. In 1868, government officials in Württemberg reassured the King after the (for them) disappointing state election (*Landtagswahlen)* results that extending the right to vote had been worthwhile. According to the officials, the people first had to learn, as they had learnt in previous extensions of the franchise, how to deal appropriately with their new right: »Only gradually have these elections delivered satisfactory results, and we should not give up the hope, particularly not now, that in the future election results will be more satisfying, especially when the conservative party, like the democratic party, recognizes the need for sound organization.«[11] Elections and their results were understood by the ruling class as belonging to the business of government, and manipulation from above was part of the culture of elections into the twentieth century.[12]

Therefore, manipulation was recognized as being part of the educational programme of elections. In the 1850s, Prussian members of parliament rejected a formal complaint concerning electoral manipulation by officials on the basis that it was »precisely a duty of government to protect public opinion in its natural and pure state from being misled by the machinations of the political parties«.[13] Again, it was not too different in South Carolina. There, after Reconstruction Era, the racist Democratic Party started to organize the elections and managed to keep blacks away from the ballot.[14] On the other hand, during reconstruction, the Radical

11 »An den König. Anbringen des Gesammtministeriums betreffendes Ergebniß der Landtagswahlen«, 14.7.1868, HStASt E 14 Bü 537.

12 »An den König. Anbringen des Gesammtministeriums betreffendes Ergebniß der Landtagswahlen«, 14.7.1868, HStASt E 14 Bü 537; to the Committee on Privileges and Elections, 1826, SCDAH S 165005, Item 00094; US District Attorney's Office, Newark, to A. J. A Kerman, Attorney General in Washington, 11.11.1870, National Archives and Records Administration (henceforth NARA) RG 60, Entry A1 9, Cont. 112 and other letters in this box; Edgar 1998: 352.

13 »Bericht der Kommission zur Berathung des Antrages des Abgeordneten Grafen v. Schwerin«, 28.7.1856, GStA PK I HA Rep. 169 C 80, Nr. 7.

14 E.g. SCDAH L04036 or L04017; Voters registration (Act of 1896), SCDAH S 213104.

Republicans used their authority to manipulate elections and used laws to eliminate hostile voters from the registration books.[15]

Through the act of voting, each citizen expressed acceptance of the rulers, and each citizen contributed publicly and actively to their legitimacy. The Social Democrats' frequent boycott of elections (cf. Welskopp 2000: 462-508) undoubtedly also had something to do with their desire to escape from the process of legitimation. The disciplining effects show themselves not only in Germany but also in the USA where, in the 1860s, a conservative politician could claim that »it is safer, easier, and more practicable to govern ignorant people as fellow-citizens than as subjects« (cited by Keyssar 2000: 113). In America, too, then, the right to vote was determined from above. Alexander Keysaar emphasize how in the USA workers and blacks demanded the right to vote, but also how their demands were met only when the elites saw an extension of the franchise as being opportune and compatible with their own interests. Indeed, when the lower classes fought violently for suffrage in Rhode Island in the 1840s, they lost this battle ignominiously to those in power (Keyssar 2000: 71-76).

As the instrument of standardization and disciplining, elections correlated with the formation of modern states and also with the replacement of unequal and hierarchical societies based on personal dependencies by the impersonal administrative state based on »bureaucracy's standardizing omnipotence« (Geisthövel 2008: 25, 57-58; Raphael 2000). The sources that I have seen up to now show how electoral technology and the modern bureaucratic state developed together. In order to establish electoral registers, each election became also a census. Everyone entitled to vote normally had to have lived in one place for one or more years. However, controlling the place of residence of subjects is the bureaucratic state's central instrument of power. The pre-1848 Württemberg bureaucracy established the electoral registers for the privileged, too: to have the right to vote, even members of the nobility had to demonstrate

15 Voter registration reported to the military government, 1867-8, SCDAH S213102; Abstract of voter registrations, 1867, SCDAH S 213103.

that they were respectable citizens who were prepared to submit themselves to the drastically complicated regulations.[16] Elections were a strict state ceremony to which the participants had to submit themselves. When the Social Democrats did participate in elections, they informed their voters in great detail about what they had to do in the election and what they should refrain from doing – thereby demonstrating their own domestication. With the advent of prohibition, elections became part of the fight against alcohol; the candidates' and election managers' oaths required to abstain from alcohol; »all barrooms and drinking saloons shall be closed on the day of election«, as Governor of South Carolina, Robert K. Scott, declared in 1870.[17] A German newspaper described elections as »anonymous«, as »a great machinery« with »complicated technology«; elections had, and here there was even an undertone of criticism, lost their former »liveliness and directness« (*Weser Zeitung* 17.10.1897).

For the USA, it can indeed be ascertained that the overexuberant and ›undisciplined‹ feelings gradually disappeared from the polling station and its surroundings. Wild expressions of annoyance, impulsiveness, violence, and spontaneous protests came increasingly to be seen as illegitimate and illegal (Bensel 2004). The establishment of elections always also implied steering protest along the correct participatory tracks and thereby making a taboo of protests by the lower classes. In terms of such disciplining, Germany appeared to be decades ahead of the USA. The sources indicate that in Württemberg modern electoral regulations such as the secret ballot had already shaped electoral practice in the pre-

16 Cf. »Königliches Oberamt Leonberg, Präsidium des königlichen Regierung des Neckar-Kreises«, 16.4.1839 and other records in HStASt E 146 Bü 7604; lists in HStASt E 7 Bü 97; »Königliches Recript in Betreff der Wahl der Vertretung des deutschen Volks zum Zweck der neuen Begründung der Verfassung Deutschlands«, 11.4.1848, HStASt E 30, Bü 49.

17 Candidates' pledge and expense reports, 1906-1908, SCDAH L 02014; Proclamation by His Excellency Robert K. Scott, Governor of the State of South Carolina, 19.8.1870, SCDAH S 155013-1.

1848 period.[18] Elections as a public festival, as carnival, as drinking time – apparently that was never the case in Germany, in contrast to both the USA and England (Dinkin 1977; O'Gorman 1989). Germans during the Empire considered their electoral practices to be especially well-ordered and free of corruption and were dismissive of the apparently manipulative and chaotic way that elections were run in other countries such as England and the USA (Delbrück 1914: 10-13, 73-74). Nonetheless, electoral standards established themselves in the West in the course of the century, and the material conditions of elections were brought into line everywhere. It is little wonder that electoral practice in the form of the secret ballot should have spread with the idea of the nation state and of bureaucracy, and become part of global uniformity (Christopher Bayly).

18 Cf. about the secret ballot »Ansprache an das Volk auf dem Lande«, undated, 1850, HStASt E 7, Bü 97 and further documents in this file.

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