

Federal Republic of Germany's Party System - Overview

“Germany is a democracy grounded in political parties. Many speak also about a Parties-State, often articulated as a critique of the overly dominant power of the parties... The Parties hold for all intents and purposes a monopoly in the recruitment for public functions and mandates at regional, national and European levels”.

<https://www.bpb.de/politik/grundfragen/parteien-in-deutschland/42035/rolle-und-funktionen>

Key Points

- Genesis in second half of 19. Century: four streams: Social Democrats, Catholics, Liberals, Conservatives;
- After WWII, three main parties dominated until the end of the 1970s: CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP (see *Overview* documents for each party).
- Since then, transformation into a pluralist, multi-party system with Greens, Linke, more recently AfD.
- German political system is extraordinarily stable and has experienced relatively little fragmentation.
- Recent rise of right-populist parties in Europe is mirrored in Germany with the AfD.
- The existence, rights and responsibilities of parties is constitutionally grounded in Art. 21. Of the *German Basic Law (Grundgesetz)*.