



Germany, West — Va-PoReg Country Report

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[officially known as the Federal Republic of Germany]

05/08/1945 End Right-Wing (Fascist) Autocracy/Start Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by USA, Electoral Democracy, United Kingdom, (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy, France, Liberal Democracy]: On this date, the Nazi regime ended with an unconditional surrender (Shirer 1960, Casey et al. 2020: 7). On 06/05/1945, the Allies issued a unilateral declaration that proclaimed their supreme authority over German territory.¹ The four powers asserted joint authority and sovereignty through the Allied Control Council (ACC). Germany east of the Oder-Neisse line was assigned to Poland. The four occupying powers wielded government authority in their respective zones and carried out different policies toward the population and local governments. In practice, the Soviet Union began implementing elements of a Marxist political-economic system in its zone, which led to growing tensions with the other Allies.² Therefore, beginning on 05/08/1945 a occupation regime of United States, France, United Kingdom is coded for Germany, West and an occupation regime of USSR is coded for Germany, East. Alternative approaches would be to code all four occupation regimes separately or conversely code one occupation regime for the whole of Germany. The American and British zones merged as of 01/01/1947, forming the Bizone, which later included the French zone, becoming the Trizone. This cooperation among the Western Allies contrasted with the increasing estrangement with the Soviet Union, culminating in the Berlin Blockade from June 1948 to May 1949.³ According to our observations and LIED no multiparty executive and legislative elections were held during this period. In addition to that, political liberties were absent per LIED. V-Dem does not treat the first years of West Germany in their data.

08/14/1949 End Direct Rule Occupation Regime [by USA, Electoral Democracy, United Kingdom, (Monarchical) Liberal Democracy, France, Liberal Democracy]/Start Liberal Democracy: On this date, free and fair founding elections were followed by an uninterrupted series of free elections. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU) won the elections and led by Konrad Adenauer proceeded from this point on until his resignation in 1963 as prime minister. The CDU continued to provide the prime minister (Ludwig Erhard 1963-1966). Kurt Georg Kiesinger (CDU) led a grand coalition with the SPD. Willy Brandt was the first prime minister from a different party than the CDU, namely the SPD being elected prime minister. Until 1982, the SPD continued to provide the prime minister and in 1982, the CDU led by Helmut Kohl took over in a coalition with the FDP and remained in governmental power until Germany's reunification in 1990. The changes in governmental power underscore the competitive character of the national elections in West Germany.⁴ To be represented in parliament, a party must receive five percent of the vote or at least a minimum of three direct mandates. Political parties are – with the rare exception of forbidden extremist parties – are able to operate freely, and the political landscape is characterized by various competing parties. All citizens over the age of 18 may vote or stand for election.⁵ On 10/03/1990, the Länder constituting East Germany became part of the Federal Republic of Germany. From this date on, Germany West is referred to as Germany in the dataset. However, the democratic regime spell started on 08/14/1949 continued. Although the German constitution grants the constitutional court the ability to prohibit parties, this measure has only been used twice in the history of post-war democratic Germany. In 1952 the decision was made to ban the SRP on the grounds of it being the successor party to the Nazis NSDAP. In 1956 the only other instance of a party being banned applied to the communist KPD.⁶ Based on our observations, multiparty executive and legislative elections

were held during this period, which aligns with the observations of LIED. Elections after 1949 are categorized as competitive by LIED. V-Dem's EF&FI and CEI score them as free, fair and clean. According to FH, for the assessed regime period, the country is categorized as free with a score between 2 and 4, which corresponds to our interpretation of free. Moreover, political liberties are achieved ever since 1949 (LIED, V-Dem PCLI). Based on Polity5's assessment, during this period, the executive was either equal to or subordinate to other institutions, demonstrating strong constraints on decision-making authority. For the relevant regime period, V-Dem's JCE and LCE are both interpreted by us as indicating comprehensive constraints on the executive.

10/03/1990 End Germany, West [Liberal Democracy]: Unification of Germany, West and Germany East.

For the time after 10/03/1990, see Germany.

Additional sources (Bessel 2003, Beyme 2004, Lepsius 1978, Lindner/Schultze 2010, Todd 2002, Wendt 2000)

Notes

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allied-occupied_Germany

² https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allied-occupied_Germany

³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Allied-occupied_Germany

⁴ <http://www.chisols.org/narratives.html> , see narratives for version 5.0, German Federal Republic_R, German Federal Republic_V.

⁵ <https://freedomhouse.org/country/germany/freedom-world/2023>

⁶ https://www.bundesverfassungsgericht.de/EN/Verfahren/Wichtige-Verfahrensarten/Parteiverbotsverfahren/parteiverbotsverfahren_node.html

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