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OPEN VOTING IN PRUSSIA AND DENMARK, OR: THE COMPLEXITY OF COMPARISON. SOME POST-ROKKANIAN REFLECTIONS(*)

Jørgen Elklit(+)

Abstract: One of the themes which occupied the late Stein Rokkan in a number of his writings was the impact of institutional changes on political development, especially on the introduction of full-fledged democracy. In the late fifties Stein Rokkan realized that the functions of various institutions, e.g. the safeguarding of the privacy of the electoral act, for political systems could be studied by way of comparison. The paper demonstrates that it is not possible to follow Stein Rokkan's proposal and carry out a systematic comparison of electoral systems and, in particular, of the introduction of the secret vote and its importance for mobilization and partisan choice in Prussia, the German Reich, and Denmark in the relevant period around the turn of the century.

INTRODUCTION

One of the themes which occupied the late Stein Rokkan in a number of his writings was the impact of institutional changes on political development, especially on the introduction of full-fledged democracy (e.g. Rokkan, 1970: 32)

This meant to Rokkan that both the development in a number of dimensions (in particular: extensions of suffrage, weighting of votes, and privatization of electoral preferences) and the sequencing of decisions crucial to political development were to be studied. It also meant that comparisons could not avoid becoming a central analytical tool - comparisons over time, between systems, within systems, and between subsystems across systems.

In the late fifties Stein Rokkan realized that the functions of various institutions, e.g. the safeguarding of the privacy of the electoral act, for political systems could be studied by way of comparison. His reading of some German authors in this period made him aware of the potential of comparing the Prussian system with the Reich for studying some of the effects of open voting as well as the unequal weighting of votes (Rokkan, 1961). He and Henry Valen had already then (Rokkan and Valen, 1960: 114; reprinted 1983: 267) suggested that a three-cornered comparison of Denmark, Prussia, and the German Reich should be carried out because that would be of the "greatest interest in the functional analysis of electoral institutions". The idea was that it would be possible to contrast records of turnout and partisan choice before and after the introduction of secrecy in the electoral systems and by doing so one would be able to throw light on the functions of this institution in political life.

The intention of this paper is to discuss this proposal of Rokkan's in order to see what kinds of problems the would-be analyst would confront.

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A central point for Rokkan was that the privatization of the voting act was an integral part of a democratic system. Most Western European countries had however, made provisions for the secrecy of the vote before or - at least - at the same time as suffrage was extended to the lower classes, and therefore the importance and functioning of this institution could only be studied by looking at systems with open voting, i.e. the public declaration of one's electoral preferences. Denmark and Prussia both had open voting as well as a fairly extended suffrage, so it was obvious that they should be included as cases in the study of the passing from open to secret voting as a means to understanding the institution of secret voting (Rokkan, 1970: 32).

The two systems both had a long prevalence of open voting (1849-1900 and 1849-1918, respectively). This also speaks in favour of their suitability for comparison. Rokkan also stressed the comparable social structures of the two countries. Furthermore, one can mention the influence of Prussia when, in 1848, the Danish electoral law was drafted. This also indicates that a comparison might be worthwhile. It is particularly interesting, however, to look at the period from 1893 (or maybe even later) to 1912/13. Not until then had the Danish Social Democratic Party its breakthrough, experiencing continuously growing support at each election, and not until 1903 did the Social Democrats in Prussia start to contest elections to the Abgeordnetenhaus in a more systematical way.

The comparison in question was thus obviously seen as an example of the so-called "most similar systems design" (Przeworski and Teune, 1970, 31-39; Kristensen & Nannestad, 1980: 183 ff.) Kristensen & Nannestad argue that this design is preferable when the idea of the comparison is to solve problems of control (as it is here), while the "most different systems design" is to be used when the aim is the generation of universal (or non-universal) hypotheses.

It should also be noticed that not until this period were Prussian electoral statistics published in such detail that they can be used for analytical purposes beyond the most simple ones. The question of periodization is also discussed by Schultze (1980: 81 f.).

The effects of the introduction of the secret vote, e.g. on electoral participation, can also be studied within individual systems. In some cases this might be the best way of solving many of the problems of control. In most cases, however, within-nation comparisons can only be carried out for aggregates; if control problems can be handled satisfactorily, such comparisons might be a useful basis for backward conclusions, from the situation under secret to the situation under open voting (Elklit & Mitchell, 1983: 370 f: see also Bourke and DeBats, 1980: 246). It should be recalled that under certain circumstances it is also possible to compare the situations before and after the introduction of secret vote at the individual level, both as far as participation and partisan choice are concerned, as well as to throw light on open voting as such (Elklit, 1982; 1983).

The purpose of this paper, however, is to submit Stein Rokkan's proposal to a test in terms of an in-depth comparison between the three systems in questions; as a result, comparisons between systems will be central to the argument that follows.

Elements in the Prussian Electoral System

Since the Prussian 1849-system for elections to the Abgeordnetenhaus is probably less well known than the two other systems, some of its central features will be described here. Helpful reference works are Vogel et al. (1971) and Ritter & Niehuss (1980). For Denmark, see in particular Elklit (1983) and Elklit & Mitchell (1983).

The Prussian system of 1849 was part of the reaction after 1848 when a progressive electoral law had been carried through (v. Gerlach, 1908; Vogel et al., 1971). The Prussian electoral law of 1848 was even more democratic than the Danish one of 1849, which is normallly considered rather progressive - considering the time, of course.

The changes in the Prussian law of 1849 were mainly (1) that secret voting was abandoned and open voting was introduced, and (2) that voting was to take place according to which of three tax groups or classes the voter belonged. The system of indirect elections was not changed.

The election of electors took place in so-called Urwahlbezirke, i.e. small polling districts constructed in such a way that each of them had between 750 and 1,749 inhabitants. Normally this corresponded to 160-340 voters. Tax amounts in each polling district were then added up (the rules for this were not exactly the same throughout the period), and those voters who together paid the third of all taxes were then the first tax class, those who paid the second third upper were the second tax class, and those who paid the last third were the third and last tax class. In most cases, each of the three classes of voters in a polling district elected the same number of electors, one in the smaller districts, and two in the larger districts; thus the larger districts had 6 electors.

The income distribution was so skewed that on the average 3-4 per cent of the voters belonged to the first tax class, 10-12 per cent to the second, and 84-85 per cent to the third and last tax class. Due to an even more skewed income distribution in some parts of Prussia and in some of the polling districts it was not uncommon to find only one voter in the first tax class. He then appointed the elector (or even two electors in the larger districts). It also sometimes occurred that the second tax class comprised only one or two voters, so that he (or they) appointed one or two electors for that class. The third tax class counted all the remaining voters, in some cases n - 2 voters.

In all three classes the electoral decision system was that of absolute majority, and if no such majority was found in the first round, a second ballot was held with only the two leading contenders participating. If in the second round they had exactly the same number of votes, the decision was to be made by lot.

The election of electors in the polling districts was parallel to Danish elections to the Folketing when - in Denmark - a second round was held (Elklit, 1983; Elklit & Mitchell, 1983). The main difference - apart from the Prussian elections being indirect, the Danish direct - was that those in Prussia were organized after the tax classes in small size polling districts and in Denmark after municipalities, even though voting took place in one central locality in the constituency. The voters in both cases stepped forward, identified themselves to the returning officer, if he asked for it, and said in a loud and clear voice who they voted for; then the name of the preferred candidate was entered in the manuscript electoral register next to

the voter's name. Such lists from Prussia have been located in the provincial archives in Åbenrå (now in Denmark) and in Schleswig, but of course not in the central Prussian archives in Berlin. A reduced copy of two pages from the voting in the third tax class in the first polling district in the town of Sønderborg (also now in Denmark) from the election of electors in 1898 is seen on the next pages.

When the electors were elected, they themselves had to elect the representative of the whole constituency. This also took place in public by absolute majority and more than one ballot if necessary to produce an absolute majority. The tax classes had no formal role to play at this stage, but they were of course still important since the electors chosen by the rich voters in the first class together with the electors elected by the well-to-do voters in the second class could easily outweigh those elected by the voters in the third class.

The following example shows how a representative was elected for Schleswig-Holstein's third constituency, consisting of two administrative counties, Stadtkreis Flensburg and Landkreis Flensburg, at the election of Autumn 1903. In many respects the constituency was fairly representative, but it has also been selected with an eye to the possibility of later comparisons with other constituencies in the same region which do not share the same characteristics.

The constituency consisted - as mentioned above - of two administrative counties (Kreise). The number of voters in each tax class in the two counties for all polling districts taken together is seen in Table 1. The two polling

Table 1. Number of Voters etc. in the Constituency of Flensbourg at the Election of Electors 1903

		Administrative County of Urban Flensbourg			Administrative County of Rural Flensbourg		
Number of polling districts		33			34		
Total number of electors		195[1]			163[2]		
		Abs.	Pct.	Voters / Electors	Abs.	Pct.	Voters / Electors
Voters in	1st tax class	251	3	4	378	4	7
	2nd tax class	862	9	13	1,017	11	18
	3rd tax class	8,479	88	130	7,857	85	148
Total number of voters		9,592	100	49	9,252	100	57

Source: Official election statistics.

1) This means that 31 or 32 of the 33 polling districts had the maximum of six electors.

2) This means that the average number of electors per district was 4.8. That figure implies that the number of districts with five electors (two in tax class 1, one in tax class 2, and two in tax class 3) was almost as high as the number of districts with four electors (two in tax class 2 and one in the other two tax classes). Therefore the distribution of electors in tax classes does not influence the voter:electors ratio.

Spndeborg 1898

1. Laufende Nummer.	2. Nr. der Urwählerliste.	3. Der Urwähler: Zuname.	Vorname.	Stand oder Gewerbe.	Wohnort und Haus-Nr.	4. Jahresbetrag der Staatssteuern und zwar: Einkommensteuer. (Für jede nicht zur Staatseinkommensteuer veranlagte Person ist hier ein Betrag von 3 M. in Anlag zu bringen.) M	Ergänzungssteuer. M	Gewerbesteuer vom Gewerbebetriebe im Umherziehen. M	Kommunalsteuern (Gemeinde-, Kreis-, Bezirks- u. Provinzialsteuern.): Realsteuern (Beitragssteuern, Zuschläge zu den vom Staate veranlagten Realsteuern und besonderen Kommunalsteuern u. Grundbesitz u. Gewerbebetriebe) M ₰	Personalsteuern (Zuschläge zur Staatseinkommensteuer u. besonderen Gemeinde-einkommensteuern einschl. Miethe- und Wohnungssteuern, sowie sonstiger Aufwandssteuern.) M ₰	5. Summe der von jedem Urwähler zu zahlenden Steuern. M ₰
87	109	Claudien	Wilh.	Lehrer	T 50	26				7 "	33 "
88	115	Runge	F. W.	Sattlermeister	" 52	12				21 "	33 "
89	116	Runge	Hans L.	Kaufm.	" "	12				21 "	33 "
90	85	Jürgensen	Chr.	Bäckermeister	" 37	6			16 "	10 50	32 50
1	11	Appel	H. J.	Lehrer	" 6	31					31 —
2	152	Dawartz	Julius	Drechsler	" 75	6			11 20	10 50	27 70
3	79	Blom	Hans	Radmacher	" 35	9				15 75	24 75
4	162	Helmer	Nicol.	Commis	" 81	9				15 75	24 75
5	142	Jacobsen	Hans	Former	" 68	9				15 75	24 75
6	102	Neck	J. H.	Commis	" 48	9				15 75	24 75
7	94	Runge	J. F.	Sattler	" 43	9				15 75	24 75
8	137	Schultz	Paul	Büreaugehülfe	" 65	9				15 75	24 75
9	58	Petersen	Friedr.	Sattler	" 28	6			8 "	10 50	24 50
100	103	Reinholz	Paul	Aktuar	" 49	16				7 "	23 —
1	110	Rambow	Johannes	Lehrer	" 50	21				" "	21 —
2	1	Winter dem.	A. A.	fr. Tischlermeister	" 2	6				10 50	19 70
3	43	Nielsen	Jens	Bauer eiert	" 21	3			8 40	7 "	18 40
4	149	Christensen	Jürg.	Mützen	" 73	3			14 80		17 80

Abtheilung.

6. Steuerbetrag der Abtheilung. M.	7. Bei der Wahl der Wahlmänner hat der Urwähler seine Stimme gegeben in der ersten Abstimmung	in der zweiten Abstimmung	8. Bemerkungen.
	dem		* Dabei treten an Orten, wo direkte Gemeindesteuern nicht erhoben werden, anderen Stelle die vom Staate veranlagte Grund-, Gebäude- und Gewerbesteuer. ** Bezirkssteuern werden nur in der Provinz Hessen-Nassau erhoben.
	Lichtschneider	Lichtschneider	
	La Motte	La Motte	
	Lichtschneider	Lichtschneider	
	La Motte	La Motte	
	Lichtschneider	Lichtschneider	
	La Motte	La Motte	
	Lichtschneider	Lichtschneider	
	La Motte	La Motte	
	Drozmit	Drozmit	
	L Nielsen	L Nielsen	
	Drozmit	Drozmit	
	L Nielsen	L Nielsen	
	Drozmit	Drozmit	
	L Nielsen	L Nielsen	
		Drozmit	
		L Nielsen	
	Lichtschneider	Lichtschneider	
	La Motte	La Motte	
	Lichtschneider	Lichtschneider	
	La Motte	La Motte	
	Lichtschneider	Lichtschneider	
	La Motte	La Motte	
	Drozmit	Drozmit	
	L Nielsen	L Nielsen	

districts had almost exactly the same number of polling districts (33 and 34), but there were more electors to be elected in the town, since the town had more inhabitants and therefore more polling districts with six electors each than the rural Kreis. The town also had relatively more voters in the third tax classes because its income distribution was more skewed than was the case in the countryside. The percentage of voters in the third tax class of course varied from one polling district to another. Electoral participation in the tax classes is seen in Table 2.

Table 2. Turnout at the Election of Electors 1903 in Flensbourg. Per Cent

		Administrative County of Urban Flensbourg	Administrative County of Rural Flensbourg
Turnout in	1st tax class	69	45
	2nd tax class	55	29
	3rd tax class	32	11
Total turnout		35	14

Source: Official election statistics.

Table 2 shows the same picture as can be seen in almost any other Prussian constituency, i.e. very different turnout rates in the three tax classes - from 69 per cent in the town's first tax class to a modest 11 per cent in the third tax class in the countryside. Since voting took place locally in the 67 small polling districts, no distance factor can have caused these different turnout rates.

Published electoral statistics are not detailed enough to allow a close scrutiny of the transformation from votes for the various parties and candidates to the eventual election of one of them. One can, however, indicate the size of the Social Democratic vote (Table 3); it should also be noted that no Danish votes were cast in this election.

Table 3. The Social Democratic Vote 1903 in the Constituency of Flensbourg in each Tax Class. Percentage of Votes Cast

	Administrative County of Urban Flensbourg	Administrative County of Rural Flensbourg
Social Democratic votes in		
1st tax class	-	-
2nd tax class	2	0
3rd tax class	50	17

Source: Official election statistics.

347 of the 358 electors were able to participate in the election of the constituency's representative for the Abgeordnetenhaus. Published statistics do not allow a distinction between electors from the various tax classes or the two administrative counties. The National Liberal candidate in the first round got 164 votes from the electors, the Free Conservative 144, and the Social Democrat 37. No candidate had an absolute majority, and therefore a

second ballot was held between the two leading contenders. In the second round they both got exactly the same number of votes as in the first, 37 votes being declared invalid - obviously a Social Democratic demonstration against the electoral system as such. This meant that the National Liberal candidate was elected to the Abgeordnetenhaus as representative for Schleswig-Holstein's third constituency.

1903 also witnessed an election to the Reichstag, the national parliament. The Reichstag elections were direct elections in single member constituencies with an absolute majority system, i.e. maybe two ballots. The districting was not the same as for elections to the Prussian parliament, since the county (Kreis) of Åbenrå was added to the two Flensbourg counties to form Schleswig-Holstein's second Reichstag constituency. Turnout in this election was 71 per cent in the rural districts. 77 per cent in Flensbourg itself, and 80 per cent in the town of Åbenrå, i.e. much higher participation rates than we saw in Table 2 for the open, indirect and unequal election of electors. The Social Democrats now had as many as 5,743 votes (almost four times as many as recorded in Table 3), and 780 Danish votes were also recorded at this election - as compared to none at all in the election to the Abgeordnetenhaus.

These very different turnout rates and very different results for various parties and candidates make it of paramount importance to ask if it is meaningful to compare the two kinds of elections. One of the points to consider is the many cases of non-congruent constituencies which call for much more complicated recalculations than the above example in order to have comparable units at the two levels.

Horst Nöcker of the Historical Commission of Berlin has, however, established a data bank for the two 1903 elections as far as Prussia is concerned. This data bank allows comparisons among almost identical units, i.e. he has reshaped the constituencies from the elections to the Abgeordnetenhaus to fit the Reichstag constituencies.

The difficulties met during such an undertaking are well-known and need not be repeated here. One has to accept this procedure and the inherent problems if systematical studies of the interplay of social and political structures at the two levels are on the agenda.

The Reichstag elections were - as mentioned above - direct elections in single member constituencies with an absolute majority system, i.e. mayby two ballots; they placed the voters in a situation where all the classical problems about participation, tactical voting, etc. had to be considered.

This, however, was almost nothing compared to the elections to the Prussian Abgeordnetenhaus. Here, the voters - in each tax class and each little polling district - had to consider if they could have their preferred elector (or pair of electors) elected, but also - if they succeeded in that - if their chosen elector(s) could contribute to the election of that representative who the voter eventually wanted to see elected. It should be noticed that in 1903 the average number of electors in a constituency was 294, ranging from 132 to 3,558. These considerations were of course of a rather imprecise nature, but they were so to speak basically of a positive nature ("How can my preferred candidate eventually be elected?"). They should, however, be combined with much more negative reflections on the two sets of risks connected with participating in open elections:

1. What implications - socially, economically, and in relation to one's career etc. - could it possible have to reveal one's true political attitudes, if they were not the same as expected or hoped for by one's social reference group or superiors? This should of course, on the other hand, be balanced by the advantages this could bring in other social circles.
2. What implications - of exactly the same negative nature - would follow from defecting from voting, which some people might suppose was done in order to conceal something? This should of course be weighted against the advantages of voting quite straightforwardly - i.e. as ecpected.

Thus the individual voter had - at least in theory - to carry out an analysis of relevant political and social structures as well as of issues, candidates, attitudes, etc. and then make an overall evaluation of gains and losses connected with voting in a certain way - or maybe not voting at all. This means that it is very arguable that analysis of rational electoral decisions-making might be a fruitful approach also in studies of elections in a more remote past (Himmelweit et al., 1981: 112 ff; Tonsgaard, 1984: 90-101; Popkin et al., 1976; Ferejohn and Fiorina, 1974; Mitchell, 1979).

Evert showed already at the publication of the election results (Erg. XXIII: 18) that participation rates were much higher in regions with linguistic, i.e. national, minorities or, especially after 1908, a high proportion of industrial workers - i.e. many Social Democrats (Erg. XXX: XIX; Hirsch, 1908). This is an indication of the influence of social structural and national-cultural relationships, and it also shows that the problems connected with open voting as such were neglected, if and when the preferred candidates had a good chance of being elected, or when it was considered politically appropriate for other reasons. This reasoning is, of course, in accordance with a number of points made by Tingsten in his work on political behaviour (1937).

It does not follow, however, that the presence of national minorities of some strength or a high percentage of industrial workers led automatically to high turnout rates and heavy support for national minority parties or candidates of the Social Democratic Party, respectively. Many other factors were also influential - confessional, traditional, and others as well - creating both at elections to the Abgeordnetenhaus and to the Reichstag a much more complicated picture as far as participation and partisan choice were concerned (see for instance Rohe, 1981). For this reason it is difficult - to say the very least - to give a coherent and satisfactory picture of the central features of the Prussian and German electoral systems and electoral behaviour in this period.

The outline presented above of the Flensbourg case in 1903 was mainly intended to show some general features of the system in a fairly typical constituency; this does not mean that it should be considered the representative Prussian constituency.

So far four analytical dimensions have been introduced, and they will be used in Table 4 below where the considerations presented are summarized schematically. The four dimensions are:

Open versus secret voting;
indirect versus direct voting;
low versus high degree of politization of elections;
unequal versus equal voting rights.

Table 4. Comparison of Turnout (in per cent) Around the Turn of the Century in the three Systems. Four Analytical Dimensions

Voting		Open				Secret			
Elections		indirect		direct		indirect		direct	
Degree of politization		low	high	low	high	low	high	low	high
Voting Rights	unequal	Preussen: Abgeordnetenhaus, 3rd class 1893-1913 3-30%	50-85%						
	equal			Denmark: Folketing, 1892-1900 55-70%	65-85%			Germany: Reichstag 1893-1912 55-75%	70-90%

Note: Percentages indicate levels.

Only 6 of the 16 cells in Table 4 can be filled in. One thing that this table does show is that, due to the number of analytical dimensions, it is rather doubtful if these electoral systems can be compared directly. But if it is done, nevertheless, then the conclusion is straightforward: The combined effect on participation of the unequal voting right and the indirect way of election to the Prussian Abgeordnetenhaus (and, related to this, also on partisan choice) was indeed considerable, especially when the degree of politization was low. The combined effect of these two factors is so strong that the question of open versus secret voting loses some of the importance that it otherwise has. So one therefore has to ask if we can compare this Prussian electoral system with other electoral systems in any meaningful way - especially when the focus is mainly to look at open versus secret voting in order to throw light on the importance of electoral secrecy for political development.

It is of course necessary to look at those constituencies where some mobilization had taken place - as indicated by the proportion of voters participating - for instance more than 50 per cent. Only in these constituencies would it be meaningful to look for patterns between elections in the Reich and in Prussia or to look for connections between structural factors and the behaviour of voters. If data from all constituencies were brought into such an analysis, a not negligible number of constituencies would have to be excluded from the analysis. The reason for this exclusion would be a very

low participation rate at both elections. If, e.g., a Prussian constituency had 10 per cent of its voters participating in a given election and its corresponding Reichstag constituency had 60 per cent participating in the next national election, it would - at least theoretically - be a possibility that not one single voter from one type of election did also participate in the other type of election.

A scrutiny of all constituencies reveals that only regions with high concentration of the Polish minority, i.e. Western Prussia, Posen, and Silesia systematically had high participation rates in this period, while the participation rate in very few other constituencies (in Berlin, Northern Schleswig, and a few other places) did pass the 50 per cent mark for the most numerous class of voters, the third class.

This picture does not change if one takes all the three classes together: Going through Prussian electoral statistics makes it possible to conclude that less than 10 per cent of all constituencies had a turnout of more than 50 per cent when all three tax classes are taken together (as a weighted sum). Almost all constituencies with a turnout above the 50 per cent mark were Polish-dominated. Towards the end of the period, however, there is a tendency for this figure to increase.

By concentrating on the most politizised of the Prussian constituencies, the problem of comparability can be reduced. It was still open, unequal, and indirect elections which had high participation rates only if there were strong national minorities (i.e. in the main where such minorities were local majorities) or a strong working class movement, and as a consequence of such social structural factors a considerable social pressure which helped the voters to overcome the pressure against voting "anti-system" (Parking, 1967; Himmelweit et al., 1981: 13,113).

In order to get a better understanding of a constituency with high turnout in the election of electors, the constituency of Haderslev (Schleswig-Holstein's first constituency for elections to the Abgeordnetenhaus) has also been looked at. Normally, this constituency had the highest turnout of the constituencies in Northern Schleswig. Again the data used here concern the 1903 election.

There probably is no need to go into details as far as polling districts, number of electors, tax classes, etc. are concerned. Table 5 shows the partisan division at the election of electors (EE) in 1903. The table also gives the results of the Reichstag elections (RE) 1902-07 as well as the 1908 election of electors in order to have a base line for comparisons. The German parties are placed together, in one group only; it should be noted that the 1902 and 1906 elections were by-elections. All votes not explicitly registered as either Danish or Social Democratic are counted as German.

Table 5 shows a high turnout both in the rural and the urban parts of the constituency at all four elections to the Reichstag. It reveals a stable following for the Danish candidates at the same four elections to the Reichstag, and also shows a marked difference between the rural and urban parts of the constituency.

If we then look at the open, unequal, and indirect elections of electors, we find a substantially lower turnout: In the town of Haderslev itself as much as 35-40 per cent lower, in the rural districts on the average 20 per cent lower - and this in one of the constituencies with the highest turnout in all Prussia!

Table 5. Turnout and Party Strength at Elections 1902-08 in the County of Haderslev, Separately for the Town and the Countryside. Per Cent of all Voters

	RE 1902	RE 1903	EE 1903	RE 1906	RE 1907	EE 1908
A. Haderslev						
Danish	27	28	-	29	29	9
German	47	46	48	45	47	34
Social Democratic	8	9	-	9	9	1
Total (= turnout)	82	83	48	83	85	44
Voters	1,722	1,671	1,748	1,683	1,740	1,853
B. The Countryside						
Danish	59	59	44	59	60	52
German	23	22	17	23	24	15
Social Democratic	1	2	-	2	2	-
Total (= turnout)	83	83	61	84	86	67
Voters	ca. 9,666	10,187	9,135	10,175	10,203	9,678

Source: Official election statistics; Hansen, 1938; Lassen, 1976.
Note: Differences between number of voters at the different elections are due to differing eligibility regulations. Voting age at the election of electors was 24, at the Reichtag elections 25. The constituency also included Sønderborg at Reichtag-elections; Sønderborg-figures are excluded here.

The "Danishness" of the constituency is a main factor in explaining the low German voting figure in the rural districts and for 1908 in Haderslev itself. In the countryside it is natural to consider it a consequence of the open voting system. However, the effect is more visible in the town, where a little more than one quarter of the voters chose the Danish alternative at the secret Reichstag elections, while nobody in 1903, and only 9 per cent in 1908, publicly admitted that they identified with the Danes.(1) Exactly the same picture emerges as far as the Social Democratic voters are concerned.

The costs - social as well as other - connected with voting for a Danish candidate at the election of electors were so considerable in Haderslev itself that they obviously kept many potential Danish voters back. This was probably also caused by the fact that everybody in the town knew that the Danish majority in the countryside eventually would ensure the election of the Danish candidate. The same picture is seen at the parallel elections in Åbenrå and Tønder, but not in Sønderborg.

Comparisons within the confines of individual constituencies illustrate that open voting per se probably had an influence of its own on turnout and/or partisan choice, even in constituencies with a high turnout. This makes it all the more important to combine analyses at the system level with analyses at lower levels to see if conclusions reached at higher levels also hold at the lower levels. This is especially important in a German context since regional and local variations make it difficult to reach conclusions which hold across time and space (see, e.g., Schultze, 1980: 83; Rohe, 1981).

If one agrees with Himmelweit and her associates (1981) and sees the voters' decision as dependent on three sets of factors - attitudinal, traditional, and social - then we have found that the social factors (together with politico-strategical considerations) were the most influential at the open election of electors in the three towns mentioned above. They made a considerable proportion of the Danish group abstain, who at Reichstag elections were influenced to vote for the Danish candidate by attitudinal and traditional factors.

In the context of this arguments is it not decisive if one can tell how this pressure, this influence, was exerted on some voters. Sometimes the social pressure against voting Danish was exerted in a most subtle way - at other occasions it certainly was less subtle. It is well known from the literature and the press that Prussian civil servants tried to influence the Danish-identifying population in various ways because they themselves had been under pressure to have the following of the anti-system parties minimized as much as possible. And discussions in public - both in Berlin and locally all over Prussia - must have made it understood by even the most slow-witted that to vote otherwise than the way the State wanted involved certain risks. There is some reason to suppose that this pressure by far exceeded what was seen Danish open elections in the same period.

There has been a tendency to look at the influence of civil servants mainly in connection with elections to the Reichstag, i.e. in connection with secret elections, even though the system with ballot papers distributed in advance made secrecy somewhat illusory (Lassen, 1976). It seems obvious too that the exertion of influence must have been much more widespread at the open elections of electors. It is in any case not difficult to find records in the Prussian Secret State Archive (Geheime Staatsarchiv) in Berlin - especially for the areas where the Polish minority lived - which demonstrates very obviously the keen interest in the functioning of the electoral system at all administrative levels (including the government). These records also demonstrate that the consequences of both the open voting and of the partitioning of the voters in the three tax classes were fully understood and appreciated. Indirect voting was not considered an element of the same importance for the electoral system.

These questions were discussed quite often in the Abgeordnetenhaus, when various electoral reforms were proposed, when mandates were approved, or when election complaints came on (Verhandl.d.Hauses d.Abg., various years).

CONCLUSION

The above discussion has - as I see it - demonstrated that it is not possible to follow Stein Rokkan's proposal and carry out a systematic comparison of electoral systems and, in particular, of the introduction of the secret vote and its importance for mobilization and partisan choice in Prussia, the German Reich, and Denmark in the relevant period around the turn of the century.

The main reason for this negative result is the small number of cases and the fact that the systems in question vary along too many central analytical dimensions; in particular the combination of unequal voting rights and indirect elections - found only in Prussia - was a factor of considerable importance.

Case studiès of a few selected localities in Northern Schleswig - one of the Prussian regions best suited for analysis because turnout here was not too

low - have further demonstrated that open voting itself under certain circumstances could be a factor of considerable significance for the voter's decision. But even in these cases it is not fruitful to go on to comparisons with pre-1901 election figures from Danish localities.

Nevertheless, one can argue that both difference in turnout between elections to the Reichstag and the Abgeordnetenhaus and the records in the official archives clearly demonstrate that the pressure on the voters as to how they should vote was much stronger in Prussia than in Denmark. This means that the openness of elections was utilized much more directly and consciously in Prussia and that, consequently, the introduction of the secret vote would have much more significance in that system than in Denmark.

Even though the argument of this paper has been that a comparison of the three systems along the lines proposed by Rokkan is not advisable, then the initial problem still remains: What impact did the privatization of the electoral act - considered to be a major institutional change - have on political development?

An obvious thing to do would be to reduce the number of analytical dimensions trying in this way to address the problem of more variables than cases. But the number of cases would under all circumstances be too small, and the process would probably involve an oversimplification of matters which would limit the use of the results.

The only way out of this impasse seems to be a shift to another analytical level, i.e. from comparisons between systems to comparisons within systems. It should be possible to find enough comparable cases within each of the systems in question to solve the problems of control reasonably well (for an example, see Elklit & Mitchell, 1983: 371, as well as Table 5 above).

It might then be that the overall pattern from the analysis within one system of change from open to secret voting, controlling for as many factors as considered necessary, would parallel results from the analyses of other systems, where one maybe would not find it necessary to control for exactly the same factors.

This mode of comparison - i.e. comparison across systems of within-system results and patterns - might be the only way to tackle the problem of comparing some rather important aspects of political development in Prussia, the German Reich, and Denmark, as Stein Rokkan urged us to do.

FOOTNOTES

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1 No effort was made to see if the 5 per cent registered in 1903 as having voted for candidates or unknown political standpoint (Erg. XXIII: 227) were Danish, since even that would not have changed the above conclusion.

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Pr. Staats-Ministerium, Rep. 90, A, VIII, 1a, 1, Nr. 306
Pr. Min.des Auswärtigen, III. Hauptabt., Nr. 1431, 1433

B. Landesarchiv Schleswig-Holstein (Regional Archive of Schleswig-Holstein), Schloss Gottorf, Schleswig
Abt. 301, Nr. 804 1-3, Abg.Haus, all.gem. 1898-1913
Abt. 309, Nr. 8345, Landtags- und Reichstagswahlen 1893-1913
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Abt. 320, Hadersleben, Nr. 83, Landtagswahl 1913
Abt. 320, Apenrade, Nr. 89, Wahlangelegenheiten 1875-1908

C. Landsarkivet for de sønderjyske Landsdele (Regional Archive of North Schleswig), Åbenrå
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D.B. Nr. 1,2,3,3a,4,6,6a,6b,8,8a-c
Haderslev-Landradsarkiv
Fag 53, Nr. 2 and 7
Sønderborg Landrådsarkiv
Nr. 2189-90, 2192-95, 2197, 2199, 2201-02
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