

Abstract

Both the Bavarian and Austrian societies have been undergoing a broad process of change since 1945: they have experienced a long period of economical growth, a rise of standards in terms of social welfare and education, and thus a value change and a switch to at least partly postmaterial society. Accompanying this change, however, there has also been more public disapproval towards the official policies, the number of people going to the polls has sunk and so has the number of people who are likely to become involved in party politics. Particularly the big, dominant *catch-all* parties, such as CSU (Christian Social Union of Bavaria) and ÖVP (Austrian People's Party), have been losing their voters and members.

As the thesis shows, the developments in both societies are quite similar, as the political culture of Bavaria and Austria – in spite of certain differences – shares many common characteristics. Also, both CSU and ÖVP did partly manage to adapt to the new circumstances, particularly in terms of party funding. Anyway, they did not fully follow the pattern of cartelisation to pursue this adaptation. This reveals the link between postmaterialist change and the development to cartel party to be only partly valid; however, both theories have proved to be helpful in understanding processes taking place in both Bavarian and Austrian societies from 1945 until today.