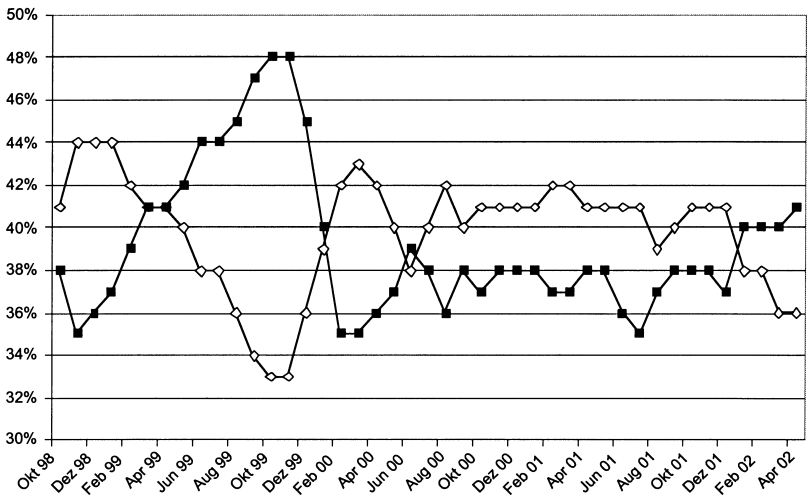
UWE JUN

The Changing SPD in the Schröder Era

Public opinion data gathered from the latest surveys on Germany's upcoming parliamentary elections have turned out to be disheartening for the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Without exception, the Social Democrats take second place and lag behind the Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) by several percentage points (Fig. 1).[1] Today, only a few months before the next parliamentary election, a repetition of the electoral victory to the extent of 1998 seems to be rather unlikely. We are therefore faced with the perplexing question

Fig. 1. The SPD and the CDU at the polls ("Sunday Question")



Source: Forschungsgruppe Wahlen: Politbarometer.

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of how the SPD could arrive at such a disadvantageous position given the historic electoral success of 1998, when the party achieved its second-best result at parliamentary elections since Word War II. Is the SPD powerless against a strong tendency of the German electorate to cast its ballot in favor of the CDU/CSU,[2] which has pervaded almost the entire history of the Federal Republic of Germany and has been described as "a permanent discrimination of the SPD against the CDU/CSU in the competition of parties."[3] Or is this situation just a snapshot without deeper consequences for the party?

Have the recent reform efforts on part of the SPD—which undoubtedly contributed to the electoral success of 1998—turned out to be useless or lacking in efficiency? Has the SPD failed to build up a new project of the democratic left? To answer these questions, this essay will investigate, first, the strategies the SPD employed to achieve a majority position in the voter market and, second, how the Social Democrats have been affected by changes in party competition. I will outline recent changes within the SPD and will ask to what extent the party has been able to counter the challenges resulting from the interaction of social, political, and media processes of change. It shows the changes to its communication strategies, the party's internal organization, and, finally, its programmatic agenda. I will argue that the SPD has changed most noticeably in the area of its representation toward the outside world. In particular, it has employed the media as a powerful force. The SPD recognized that professional communication strategies in modern media democracies have become a central factor in gaining and maintaining political power. Politics can present itself primarily by means of successful communication that can be used to develop and mobilize segments of the electorate. Communication in media democracies therefore to a large extent implies communication through the media. This form of communication can capture the attention of the majority of voters and, ultimately, win elections if it does so in ways that are professional, easily noticed, and plain enough to be understood by all electoral groups. I argue that, in order to gain the support of new groups of voters, the SPD has not only changed its communicative forms of presentation but has connected them with a new programmatic orientation. It is important that both communicate the party's future as well as present competency. However, while the SPD was successful in restructuring its communication strategy, this essay will show that the party's programmatic appeal was less convincing. In order to further strengthen the image of a

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modernized party, the SPD started to resume its organizational reform, begun in 1993, in an attempt to adapt to "modernization requirements."[4] The question to which extent the SPD's processes of change will have repercussions on the German party system as a whole, and what these changes will mean for the future prospects of the SPD, will be the subject of the concluding section.

The SPD's Processes of Change

Changes in Communication Strategy

Because of their organizational structure, political parties today reach a continually declining segment of the electorate via formal channels of their organizations.[5] Social ties have decreased noticeably and the possibilities for political parties to exert influence on their environment by means of personal communication have decreased considerably. Mass media have become the main source of political information for almost all social groups in Western democracies. If mass media choose not to take notice of an issue or event, it has virtually not taken place for the public. As a consequence, the forms of organization-centered party communication (communication within and by the party) have become superseded to a large extent by media-oriented forms of presentation.[6] Political parties use the mass media to present their programmatic agendas and candidates, a process that has gathered speed in the past fifteen to twenty years: "The process of mediatization of political actors, political events, and political discourse is a major trend in political systems of the 1990s."[7] Mass media are offering the necessary public forum for legitimation in the eyes of the voters. To large parties intent on recruiting voters from almost all social groups, they offer the advantage of large reach. This is particularly the case with television as the main medium for political communication.

The struggle for attention in the media meanwhile has become a political necessity for political parties. Because the media have enormously expanded in recent years, they penetrate almost all social sectors of society and continue to absorb an ever-increasing share of the time and attention of the public—the media have become an ever-present fact of life. Without mass media, it is no longer possible to mold public opinion for the simple fact that it is the media that determine public awareness of political actors and their daily ac-

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tions. Political actors are therefore forced to adopt the logic of the media, and political actors and political processes alike have so to speak become "media-infected."[8] The creation of a political public informed and molded by the media and the improvement of communication competencies by parties have become a central part of politics, especially in the realm of party competition.

Political parties have responded to the most recent challenges of social change (individualization, pluralization of lifestyles, shift of focus in values) and the changes of the media by professionalizing their communication departments, improving their communication performance, and designing modern communication strategies. This response is to be understood as a necessity for parties both to become and remain powerful political forces in a highly complex and differentiated media world: "Modern parties have been forced to adapt, with greater or lesser success, to the new communications environment if they are to survive unscathed."[9] For this purpose, political parties increasingly engage the services of external PR-consultants, marketing specialists, and other experts of persuasive communication.

The SPD has not ignored this general development of political parties. On the contrary, professionalization and personalization, the application of the latest media-suited methods of mass communication has become an integral part of the SPD since the election campaign of 1998.[10] The 1998 election campaign shall be considered as the starting point of the SPD's communication modernization and I will briefly discuss it here.

With its KAMPA election campaign center, the SPD in 1998 established a service center outside the party headquarters that closely cooperated with professional specialists from the areas of advertising, marketing, multimedia, event organization, and public-opinion polling.[11] Crucially, these forms of cooperation with professional agencies and public-opinion poll institutes continued even after the election campaign in order to ensure the expansion of effective and modern management and communication structures within the SPD. To party secretary (*Bundesgeschäftsführer*) Machnig, this direction of future party activities, which was increasingly pursued in the second half of the 1990s, is no longer reversible. In the future, logically consistent forms of media presentation shall be given at least the same priority as programmatic work. This is a bold proposal for a party that has conceived of itself for more than one hundred years as an essentially programmatic party. Medium to long-term campaign

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planning, expansion of the professionalization of the organization, campaign forms and communication lines, personalization as a strategic element of positive image creation, and a strengthening of Federal Chancellor Schröder, an increased use of symbols for the dissemination of ideas and values—these are all central elements of the SPD's communication strategy.[12] The coverage of issues perceived as deciding factors in elections can be added to this. To the SPD, this means to demonstrate competency in those areas of politics, and mainly with regard to those issues that are at the top of the agenda in media reporting. But also to be the subject of media reporting and not only its object, it is necessary for the SPD to try and concentrate communication and external presentation of content on "winner issues."[13] To achieve this, the party also relies on emotion, simplification, symbols, and state-of-the-art visual forms of presentation as well as marketing and advertising rules. In Machnig's words: "Political communication has to take into account the aesthetic rules of the media if it wants to achieve the goal of conveying security, reliability, and hope."[14] According to Machnig, it is necessary that the advertising measures of parties should match the standards of commercial advertising.

A clear image uniformity of presentation and a unified message—all present in the election campaign 1998—appear to be important prerequisites for the successful implementation of communication strategies. However, what proved decisive was the fact that in the SPD's presidium, principal issues and operational decisions were coordinated and directed with the extraparliamentary party, the parliamentary group, and state governments.[15] This strengthening of the party leadership in the political process follows research findings that party leaders should, in order to adapt successfully to dynamically changing framework conditions, dispose of a relatively high degree of autonomy in order to be able to make strategic adaptations to changes in the voter market. This implies that especially in large parties the relevant leadership is more voter-oriented than other party segments such as activists and individual members. If political parties such as the SPD are regarded as "loosely coupled anarchies"[16] characterized by organizational variety and a relatively large amount of autonomy of individual organizational parts, their actions quite frequently run counter to systematic or efficient action. On the contrary, top-down models of party organization seem to be more suited to develop and ensure adequate strategies for parties to succeed against their competitors in media democracies. But since these do

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not satisfy the organizational variety of large modern parties, a greater degree of autonomy for party leaders in strategic and programmatic issues seems to offer a way out to produce organizational efficiency without negating participation claims that are mainly asserted at lower party levels. The introduction of intraparty plebiscitary elements can fulfill this function at the federal level. The party model, described by Machnig as a "network party" (*Netzwerkpartei*),[17] is by no means hesitant to respond to claims for more participation, thereby approaching the notion of political parties as "centralized election campaign organizations"[18] or "professionalized voter parties." Machnig makes his argument by placing professionalization in the forefront and simultaneously combining party leadership loosely with networks that are effective in the social sphere. The term that seems most appropriate here is "professionalized media communication party." In each of these models, party leadership disposes of comparably large maneuvering space in the conception of strategies.

However, to permanently secure these structures it is insufficient to implement them in an ad hoc and informal manner; they have to be permanently anchored in the organization by means of reforms. Accordingly, first steps were initiated by SPD secretary-general Müntefering by intraparty reforms under the slogan "democracy needs party."

Changes in Organizational Structure

The organizational reforms designed by Franz Müntefering under the title "democracy needs party"[19] consisted of a number of crucial elements. The concept of Social Democratic organizational reform dates back to the modernization of party structures under party chairman Björn Engholm in 1993 that were discussed under the label "SPD 2000."[20] There the primary task was to counter the emerging erosion of the SPD as a member party through greater inclusion of nonmembers in party work and more decision rights for members. The latter, however, just like the introduction of direct-democratic elements such as primary elections, member interviews, and member decisions, do not feature prominently in the "democracy needs party" program; they merely feature in the proposal to introduce preliminary elections for federal parliamentary candidates. To Müntefering, the opening of the party for nonmembers, the qualification of full-time members and mandate holders of the party, and the strengthening of the SPD's external presentation by increased communication and

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dialogue competency is of primary importance. Thus it is important to pay close attention to both the need to strengthen the ability of the SPD to act as a socially relevant organization and to adapt it to the requirements of the media society.[21]

Opening of Party Structures: The Müntefering plan calls for a "dialogue with interested parties, also with those outside the party" and proposes to take advantage of the political potential of those "who do not want to work in fixed structures."[22] More concretely, these aims find expression in proposals to reserve promising spots on the regional candidate lists for the federal parliamentary election in 2002 for presently inactive party members. This in effect eases the leap into professional politics for persons entering through the back door. In accordance with this, beginning with the federal parliamentary elections of 2006, even preliminary elections for the nomination of candidates are to be open to all persons from a constituency entitled to vote. Hitherto passive members shall also be increasingly included in party work by an extension of offers for participation, without, however, defining this aspect more precisely. This process of "flexibilization" of organizational structures shall apply to all levels of party work from the local to the federal level.

Qualification of Mandate Holders and Full-Time Staff: To the SPD, the qualification of party representatives, staff, and functionaries on an honorary basis to tackle changing political challenges is one of the main tasks of future organizational work. All full-time party staff will be "prepared for their new tasks as moderators and communicators,"[23] which mainly means to improve their presentation techniques and forms in the media. The same applies to numerous representatives of the party in parliaments and governments. The party plans to establish a "municipal academy" to train young political talents for leadership posts at the municipal level. Efforts to increase its recruiting competency will include qualification measures at various levels by means of a "professionalization of intra-party educational work."[24] Finally, to underline the goal of promoting young talents in the future SPD's parliamentary group, the party aims at including thirty members younger than forty ("30 out of 40").

Strengthening of Communication Competency: According to Machnig, party communication has to be modernized and professionalized. With regard to external party communication, this means that the SPD assert itself in the contested market for media attention. For internal party communication, the Internet shall increasingly be used as a means of information dissemination and ex-

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change. Under the catchword "digital party," the SPD subsumes a faster and direct form of internal communication by an intranet installed for this purpose by means of which the party headquarters are connected with divisions at the state, district, and county level and into which local party organizations will be integrated. Thereby an intraparty communication system will be set up that offers horizontal and vertical connection channels and interfaces and provides for permeability. But so far this system is hardly usable; it functions more as a top-down instrument of information transmission of the full-time staff and management area controlled by the party leadership.

In addition to improving its media communication competency, the SPD also strives to create avenues of direct communication. It does so by building up contacts with "politically interested citizens who are not bound to a particular party" and cannot be reached via "classical party structures,"[25] thereby connecting forms of direct communication with media communication. Nevertheless, it clearly gives precedence to the latter because, in contrast to concrete ideas in the media communication area, there are no precise proposals on how to organize the democratic discourse of party members in a more functional manner. The structural opening toward nonmembers and the increased inclusion of more passive members clearly reflect a trend toward professionalized and commercialized party activism in which the long-standing trend toward a declining significance of party membership is further intensified.[26]

Once again we can observe a lack of certainty in Müntefering's proposals: while he does not principally question the organizational structure of the member party, many of his proposals point to turning away from it, such as the introduction of preliminary elections, the increased inclusion of nonmembers in party activities, or the intensified turning to professional media communication, which, because of its structural preference for party leadership and external consultants, also serves to reduce opportunities for members to participate. As was the case at the time, once direct democratic elements with increased participation opportunities for individual members were introduced, the groups of middle and lower-level functionaries, the activists, would lose influence over decision-making processes.[27] In view of this media orientation, the member organization has become almost meaningless as an election campaign resource.[28] If leadership deprives active members of their exclusive participation rights, such as program development or nomination of candidates, it can consequently also move away from the model of

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the member party. Already in 1994, Leif and Raschke stated that the democratic member party is worn down in the contradiction between participational revolution and mass-media deformation.[29] As the old functionary party starts increasingly to dissolve, the organizational structure of the member party sees itself more and more being called into question.[30]

Müntefering's proposals were heatedly discussed within the SPD, in particular the question of whether this tendency was going to continue. Debates were most intense in the preeminent state of the old established functionaries of Social Democrats, North Rhine-Westphalia, where Müntefering as state chairman had instigated principal structural reforms and, through the dissolution of former district organizations, had asserted himself against the protectors of traditional structures. Especially Müntefering's proposal regarding preliminary elections for federal parliamentary candidates encountered great skepticism in the federal party and was rejected by the party chairmanship.

Programmatic and Policy Changes

Within the SPD, Giddens's idea of the "Third Way" has had a much smaller impact on the programmatic discussion than in the British Labour party. It was not until the publication of the so-called Schröder-Blair Paper,[31] in the spring of 1999, that a public discussion on the Third Way got under way. However, this discussion disappeared relatively soon after it had arrived at the forefront of public debate. Since then, the programmatic discourse of the SPD has been held almost exclusively within the party, without attracting much media attention. Although the party conference in Berlin in 1999 called for a commission to draw up a new basic program, which since then has discussed its ideas and proposals with employers, interest organizations, nongovernmental organizations, scientists, and international partner organizations, the public has taken no notice of its work. By taking this "courageous step"[32] of drawing up a new basic program, the SPD has tried to counter the often-heard criticism that the party exists in a programmatic vacuum.[33] The still effective basic program, the Berlin Program from 1989 (*Berliner Programm*), is in the eyes of its critics no longer in keeping with the times, is incoherent and, from the moment of its adoption, has been outdated, thereby being unable to serve as a compass for politics in the united Germany.[34] The Berlin Program is an attempt to reconcile the old

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and the new left. It combines the traditional social democratic values of the labor movement with the ecological and postmaterialist values of left-libertarian movements that have arisen from the student protests of the late 1960s and have incorporated new ideas concerning the role of the welfare state in an era of globalization. However, this mixture failed to improve the position of the SPD in the electoral market. Political scientists seem to concur that the conclusion of the Berlin Program was "robbed of all impact."[35] As Keynesian ideas were abandoned, so was the traditional aim of economic growth and the program failed to fill the void with a new consistent concept of social and economic policy. The SPD remained in a position between modernization and tradition.

Since the early 1990s, the modernization process has evolved slowly and incrementally. The Berlin Program did not play any important role in this process. For example, the phrase "Democratic Socialism," a key principle of the Berlin Program, has rarely been mentioned since the early 1990s and has been neglected since Schröder became chairman of the party. In the election programs of 1994 and 1998, as well as in the recent report of the program commission, the phrase was not even used. Economic and social issues were at the core of both election campaigns, in particular in 1998. Economic modernization and social justice (*Innovation und Gerechtigkeit*) were the main themes of the SPD in 1994 and 1998; the ecological impetus of the Berlin Program with its skeptical implications concerning economic growth and modern technology was taking a back seat. With the resignation of Lafontaine as party chairman, the modernizers and the supporters of the "New Politics group"[36] with their pragmatic attitude and stance were prevailing over the left.[37] These groups are more unequivocally oriented toward gaining and maintaining power than all other factions within the SPD. From their perspective, the parliamentary election in 1998 was an indication that they had chosen the better strategy because the party won votes from highly divergent segments of the electorate without losing votes from its electoral base.[38]

While the program commission of the SPD still meets to develop its new program on general principles under the executive direction of the deputy party chairman Rudolf Scharping, future SPD policy directions are reflected in the party's current discussion paper and its recent government policy.[39]

As the party of the *Neue Mitte*, the SPD as a party in government has taken on new ideas arising from Anthony Giddens's *Third*

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Way, without systematically integrating them in a coherent structure, neither in its programmatic concepts nor in its government policy. Classic social democratic topics such as traditional labor policy, a reform of codetermination structures between employers and employees in favor of trade unions, more protection against unlawful dismissal, legal claims to part-time working arrangements, and an extension of jobs that require contributions to the different social insurance funds (health, pensions, unemployment) are added to this. For instance, a change in law increased the payment of replacement wages in cases of sickness to one hundred percent. It is in this context that Schabedoth concludes that SPD policy is an attempt to define traditional social democratic and trade-union policies as an object of interest to the core electorate, thereby bolstering the party's electoral base.[40]

What are the main aspects of the SPD/Greens government policy? First of all, the policy of the SPD/Greens government coalition is different from that of New Labour because of its sustained adherence to the universalistic welfare state. The aim of the SPD is to hold on to the fundamentals of the present social insurance; reforms within the system should stabilize, not restrain it. The introduction of a state-subsidized private capital investment pension as a supplement to the public pension symbolizes such a system change within the boundaries of the universalistic welfare state. Because the SPD continues to conceive of social security as a basic social right, the social insurance system has to ensure economic security and the government has to balance and regulate the market for guaranteeing social security to all individuals. An active government, coupled with strong public institutions and a well-developed welfare state, therefore has to preserve the basic values of the left such as solidarity and equality.

A transition to an activating social investment state has been carried out only partly by the SPD. Pension reform with its strengthening of self-provision after retiring from the labor market is one part of the aspired encouragement of individual initiative; the SPD demands that individuals assume responsibility for themselves and their economic security. It is the role of the activating social investment state to support individuals to acquire knowledge and competence in order for them to make use of income opportunities in a self-reliant and socially integrated manner. Primarily, justice means access for all and equality of opportunity. The emphasis is on a new distribution of opportunities, not on equality of outcome. Accord-

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ingly, everyone shall have the same access to education, work, and information; participation in society is possible only on this basis and its implementation depends upon the guarantee of social rights and equality of opportunity. To secure participation is regarded as crucial for a forward-looking social policy. Nevertheless, the system of social security as a form of compensation for income and individual support has remained almost completely unchanged; it has only been supplemented with effective incentives to take a job or to receive guidance from the Employment Office.

It is the task of the welfare state to ensure access to second opportunities, to be understood as "help for self-help." But the SPD's proposal does not go as far as Giddens's proposal to construct a concept of positive welfare in which inefficient and too protective practices of the welfare state are abandoned and replaced by investments in human capital (education and training). While in Giddens's "Third Way" the individual loses the right to adequate social security benefits if he or she fails to seize existing opportunities—it is the task of the state to ensure investment in human capital, rather than security—the protective character of the state remains distinct in SPD policy. Giddens's guiding star of individual responsibility and flexibility can also be found in the government policy of the SPD and Greens, but it has not been pushed to the center of the various reform initiatives. Following this, the expansion of education as a main project of future government policy has not been pursued with much fervor by the SPD. According to Giddens, the state should support individual willingness for long-life learning so that it will become a matter of course to continue to learn and to gain qualifications in the future. It follows that research and education should be promoted more vigorously. Even though all elements of public and individual investment appear in the SPD's program, recognized by Wolfgang Merkel as the cornerstones of the Giddens model (education, lifelong learning, and the creation of a far-reaching equality of opportunity),[41] they are not equally valued.

For example, the mixture of protection and activation in the SPD's policy can be seen in the *Kombilohn-Model* ("combined earnings model") or "Jump," a program designed for unemployed youth. This program provides for state-subsidized jobs for young people under the age of twenty-five who have been unemployed for more than three months or are poorly qualified. Instead of taking a subsidized job, they can participate in education programs to improve their skills. A reduction or even a deep cut in social security benefits in

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the event that the unemployed refuses both options, as has been the case in Britain, was not implemented in Germany to any significant degree. The *Kombilohn-Model* was introduced at the beginning of 2002: unemployed persons and recipients of social assistance (*Sozialhilfeempfänger*) receive a subsidy to their social insurance contributions and higher family allowances for a maximum of three years if they take a low-wage job. With the so-called *Job-Aqtiv-Gesetz* ("active job law"), the state pays allowances for the employment of former unemployed persons in temporarily vacant positions, qualification programs for less qualified or older employees, people in irregular employment, and single parents who are taking part in qualification programs. A reduction of social security benefits is in store for all these groups if they reject the various job offers, though this is rarely implemented. The SPD application devotes little space determining the new relation of state and civil society, a relationship that Giddens considers central. In the recent report of the program commission, a political division of labor between the state and civil society is proclaimed without, however, assuming concrete form. Merely one supplementation of the social state and its instruments by civil commitment is mentioned: voluntary work shall be revalued. Democratization of society with a transparent and more open organization of the public sector and efficient administration and the role of the state as risk-manager are not mentioned. Under the plan of its secretary-general Müntefering, the SPD nevertheless advocates a stronger emphasis on forms of direct democracy, such as petitions for plebiscites and referendums or the right to put forward legal initiatives. It also calls for a strengthening of the family as the basis of societal life and deems the equality of the sexes as important as financial incentives for raising children. The program commission calls for the introduction of all-day child-care facilities in all areas of the country to find better ways to combine parenthood and employment.

In the future, it is envisaged that the SPD's policy be characterized by a so-called "lasting national strategy" that will comprise all social and political areas. Policy will be designed for the long term, in particular budgetary, environmental, and consumer protection policy, and will be informed by long-term considerations.

Another main strategy of the SPD/Greens coalition government's policy can be observed in the establishment of consensus meetings to create a result-oriented culture of dialogue among politics, science, the economy, and the public.[42] These reform- and result-oriented meetings, mostly initiated by the government, are

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intended to neutralize ideological divergence, bring closer together the different interests through a bargaining process, and generate consensus-oriented solutions in different policy areas. Norms, principles, problems, and procedures of this process are to be balanced between the different actors in order to achieve mutual accordance and cooperation. At the end of the process are joint solutions and the potential for action. In this process, the government primarily assumes the part of a moderator that gives social actors their public space through making available to them its organizational resources.

The best-known and most important forum is the so-called *Bündnis für Arbeit* (Alliance for Employment), which forges trilateral agreements among federal government, employers, and employees in the areas of wage determination, labor market and economic policy, and codetermination of workers. From the government's perspective, the forum's overall goal is to increase the competitive capacity of Germany in the context of globalization by simultaneously increasing economic efficiency and employment.[43] Priority is attached to paid work: it shall function as the basis for organizing one's life and open up opportunities in life. The government saw these trilateral discussions as an efficient way to pass resolutions, to reduce mass unemployment, and to increase flexibility in the labor market. But conflicting strategies and a polarized atmosphere between employers and trade unions revealed the limitations of this corporatist strategy. While other forums such as the one on immigration, the ethics commission, or the initiative for exiting nuclear energy can be evaluated as rather successful, the results from the *Bündnis für Arbeit* are modest indeed: neither could structural unemployment be reduced substantially nor has the flexibility of the labor market been increased. Social and economic policy inertia on both sides—trade unions and employers—is responsible for this result. The capacity of the government turned out to be insufficient. The obstructions, which are partly set up by the German political system with its various veto players, were too high to overcome.

Other policy provisions and instruments for achieving economic efficiency showed varying degrees of success: budget discipline and consolidation at the national level has been contrasted with additional expenditure on the part of the federal states (*Länder*) and local communities (*Gemeinden*). Tax reductions for enterprises and employees have been partly neutralized by increases in indirect taxes (in particular for energy and oil products with the ecological tax reform), while the limitation of the social security system (especially

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pensions and health) has been counterbalanced by demographic developments. Since 2001, an economic recession has led to a deterioration of the labor market. The successes of the Schröder administration thus are limited. To some extent this result can be explained by the lack of coherence of SPD policy: in its government policy as well as in its programmatic drafts, various assessments and tendencies have not been transformed into a conclusive comprehensive concept. Three closely connected reasons are responsible for this shortcoming:

1. *Insufficient preparation of policy contents and programmatic appeal as a party in government.* The "pragmatic policy reforms"[44] could not refer to any coherent programmatic reform made during the years in opposition. This was prevented by personnel turnover and reformatory efforts that were too ambitious. A not insignificant number of drafts, which had been compiled as an opposition party, were not sufficient or not realizable because of administrative difficulties or inaccuracies with regard to its contents. The often-changing chairmen of the party during the nineties (Engholm, Scharping, Lafontaine, Schröder) were either in charge for periods of time too short to successfully implement fundamental programmatic changes or had no deeper interest in programmatic development. One of the reasons for this attitude can be attributed to the need to overcome inner party opposition, an undertaking that can stretch over long periods of time. Inner-party consolidation stood in the foreground of the actions of the different party chairmen. Another reason underlying this behavior is the relatively strong position of the SPD in the second chamber of parliament (*Bundesrat*), which gave the SPD opportunities to contribute to shaping policy, so that the use of power instruments or the solution of everyday problems in politics overlapped with the discussion of programmatic basic questions.
2. *Prevailing pragmatism of government policy because of electoral and strategic imperatives.* To gain the support of a majority of voters, the SPD is dependent on highly differentiated voter groups, a fact that has motivated Chancellor Schröder and his consultants to consider carefully the results from qualitative and quantitative opinion research. The SPD's preferred style of governing, "leadership and consensus" (*Führung und Konsens,* Steinmeier 2001), shows that the profile of the SPD

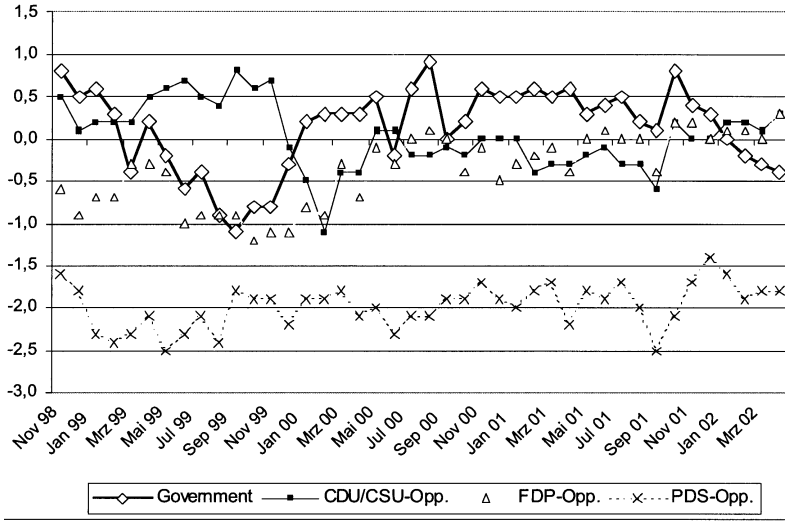
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as governing party is less oriented toward coherent programmatic principles than toward credible and majority-producing projects and issues that are able to determine the political and media agenda, win the votes of these different groups, and promise better opportunity. Applicability, not programmatic principles, determines the policy of the Schröder administration. The enforcement of majority-producing issues means not claiming an opinion-leading position, but rather standing on the top of the majority opinion with arguments, guided by only some key principles, in order to obtain the support of these groups. In the SPD the prevailing view considers that in media democracies basic programs or coherent policy concepts have no significant impact on voters. Key values, images, and the assignment of competence to a party in policy areas are considered more important.

3. *Heterogeneity of members and voters*. Because of its heterogeneous organizational structure, which became even more so after the dissolution of formerly powerful groups and factions in the 1990s, the party leadership was more occupied with inner-party consolidation than with sharpening a programmatic profile. During the election campaign in 1998, the SPD succeeded in bringing together these heterogeneous voter groups and various milieus with leaders—Lafontaine as party chairman and Schröder as chancellor—with different policy ideas, without reaching an agreement about future concepts. Although Schröder was successful against Lafontaine afterward and Lafontaine resigned early after the election (with the consequence that the left wing of the party became almost marginalized), heterogeneity still characterizes the SPD. Schröder had to take into consideration the attitudes, opinions, and interests of the various groups within the party and its different voters, not only for strategic and tactical reasons but also in order to strengthen his own position as party leader. As a result, the modernizer Schröder was at the same time the protector of the welfare state. Pragmatism seemed to be the solution to these sometimes antagonistic expectations that Schröder had to reconcile. At the beginning of the election campaign of 2002, Schröder clearly dominates his party, though "leadership and consensus" seems to be his motto as party chairman, too. However, this applies more to his efforts to reconcile different policy positions rather than his leadership style.

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Fig. 2. Satisfaction with the performance of government and opposition



Source: Forschungsgruppe Wahlen: Politbarometer.

To sum up: the SPD still prefers the traditional universalistic, corporatist-statist welfare state without developing fundamental innovations. The party aims at promoting self-responsibility and social inclusion, though it has had no substantial achievements so far. A reduction of state regulation is also hardly noticeable and the German welfare state still shows a high degree of jobless growth. We are left to ponder the question of what social and economic actors will be able to increase employment in the future? In the public sector, the number of persons employed can hardly be increased further. An activating labor market policy and experiments with subsidized low-wage areas are to be understood as merely supplementing measures. In accordance with the conception of the "Third Way," government policy has the tendency primarily to reduce the role of the state to take on tasks neglected by the market, such as the creation of infrastructure measures and the promotion of education and training. However, under the special conditions of Germany's federal system, both are enforceable only with the cooperation of the executives of the federal states.

Different approaches and tendencies are still noticeable in the government's program, though a clearly coherent orientation of its policy can be identified only rudimentarily. As a result, there is grow-

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ing dissatisfaction in the electorate with the performance of the government (see Fig. 2).

It is clear that the coalition government does not intend a lasting dismantling of the welfare state and that the SPD has taken the path of the moderate consensual welfare state.[45] Even though it aims for autonomy and participation, the coalition government has not yet made any major progress. The planned pension reform, with a strengthening of individual provision for old age after retirement, and the already established tax reform can, nevertheless, be cited as two examples that show the coalition government is not only prepared to carry out drastic reforms but also to enforce them in the face of political opposition.

The Changed Position of the SPD in the German Party System

After discussing changes in communication strategy, the reforms of the party's organizational structure, and programmatic changes, I shall now briefly analyze the altered position of the SPD in the competition of parties. The changing position of the SPD in the party system is not only determined by the party itself but is the consequence of several factors, including the changes within other relevant parties and changing interactions between the individual parties. These in turn are codetermined by general and political developments. I will concentrate only on factors that directly concern the SPD and not on the recent overall development of the German party system.

Electoral Gains of 1998 and Its Consequences

In 1998, the SPD for the second time became the strongest party in the history of the Federal Republic in federal parliamentary elections. With a proportion of 40.9 percent of second votes, it was 5.8 percentage points ahead of the CDU, which is so far the SPD's greatest lead in elections to the *Bundestag*. The desire for a change of government and the CDU's loss in competency in election-deciding political areas, especially in East Germany,[46] were reasons for this development, just like the favorable positioning of the SPD on key issues, the popularity of its chancellor candidate, and the successful election campaign. The election campaign of the SPD in 1998 can be seen as extraordinarily successful, whereby special mention has

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to be made of its differentiated target-group appeal tailored to individual groups of voters and the imaginative spots and slogans with which it was possible simultaneously to address vastly divergent groups of voters. In particular, "the election was won in the center-oriented, middle-aged middle class in the west, and manual workers in the east, groups of weakly attached voters whose loyalties to the SPD can be expected to be shallow."[47]

The SPD thereby simultaneously owes its success to its image as *Partei der neuen Mitte*, with which it was able to bring on board decisive nonaligned voter groups from the new middle classes, and to its image as the "social justice" party, whereby it managed to mobilize its own loyal voters. In 1998, groups organized in trade unions voted to a great extent for the SPD. For the first time since the Schmidt era, the SPD also won back again the rarely party-aligned voters of the lower middle classes to the detriment of the CDU. The strategy of the "SPD of the modern center" proved to be a success for the party insofar as it managed to integrate extremely different groups of voters. Nevertheless, this heterogeneity of its electorate is at the same time a structural problem for the SPD. As a governing party, it has to make policies that take into account different needs and comply with the interests of extremely disparate groups of voters if in the medium term it does not want to lose its majority position to the Christian Democrats. To achieve its goals, the SPD must gain the support of a host of diverse social groups, ranging from blue-collar workers to salaried professionals.[48] The SPD strategists have to keep in mind that the center-left victory of 1998 seems to be the result of situational factors, far from signifying a structural realignment.[49]

Linking different groups of voters into a majority coalition was accomplished in the parliamentary elections of 1998 by means of symbolic contents and personnel: Schröder, candidate for chancellor, and the then party chairman Lafontaine represented different groups of voters and different political platforms that were united by the SPD slogan "Innovation and Justice." As the central figure of the election campaign, Schröder stood for innovation, with his economic competency and future orientation, and thus was perceived by voters to be more modern in outlook than the incumbent Kohl. Lafontaine, on the other hand, appearing as number two, embodied the social conscience of his party.

In the meantime, the SPD has also developed structures that meet the requirements of daily government routines together with a more efficient control center of government work: representatives

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of the chancellery, extra-parliamentary party, parliamentary party group, and important state governments now come together for regular informal meetings. In addition, the center of the so-called "situation briefings" of the party in the chancellery is formed by the chancellor and the undersecretary in the chancellery and long-standing Schröder confidant Steinmeier, chairman of the parliamentary party group Struck, and SPD secretary-general Müntefering. Communication with the chancelleries of the state governments headed by the SPD always takes place on Mondays before the meetings of the executive committee and party executive.

It is to the SPD's benefit that the CDU and CSU so far have not developed a coherent opposition strategy. Their opposition rather tends to the competitive side[50] but in the eyes of many lacks clearly distinguishable alternatives to the government's policies. Others see the Schröder administration's willingness to compromise as more obstructive than constructive.

Coalitions and Perspectives on the German Party System

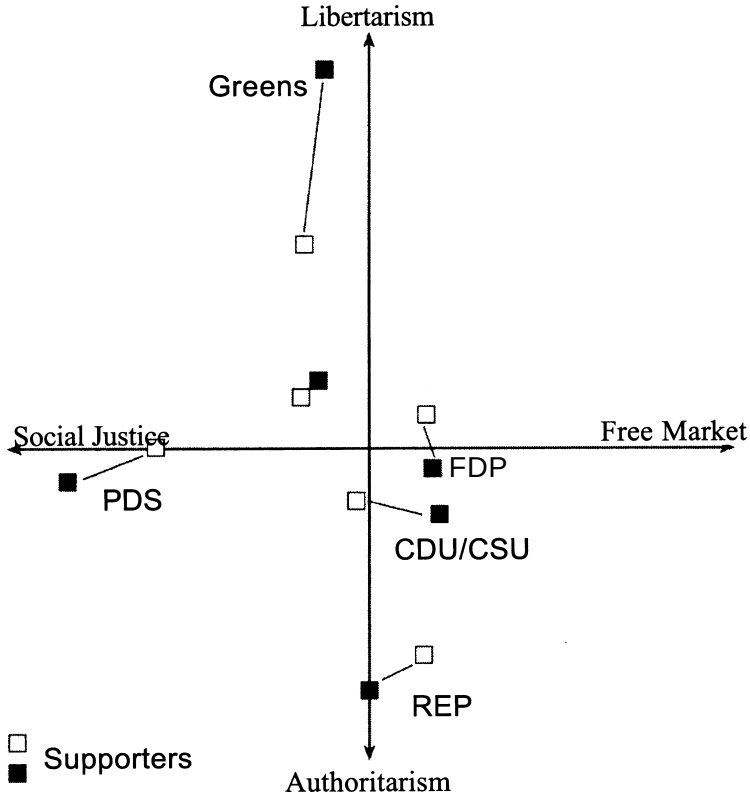
The coalition government of SPD and Greens is the first in the history of the Federal Republic in which both coalition partners moved directly from opposition into government. Even though the formation of the red-green coalition government was also the one that was most likely among all possible coalition variants, the leadership of the Social Democrats had kept open the coalition question before the election and had also taken into consideration other options, such as a grand coalition with the Christian Democrats or the formation of a government with the Liberals (FDP). Only a coalition with the Socialists (PDS) was precluded. But a majority within the SPD then clearly advocated the formation of a coalition with the Greens, to whom they were relatively close programmatically in spite of some normative differences in the eco-libertarian area,[51] especially in the market-justice dimension (Fig. 3).[52]

The pragmatic attitude of the Greens during the coalition negotiations, the joint opposition experience of both parties, and the dominant position of the *real*-political wing in the parliamentary party group of the Greens had a positive impact on the SPD during the coalition-building process.

The fact that the SPD has various coalition options and also exercises them in the federal states (at the state level, it governs with the CDU, just as it does with the F.D.P., PDS, and Greens) can

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Fig. 3. Structure of the German party system (value orientations of party supporters and members)



Source: Raschke 2001.

be attributed to its strategically central position within the structure of the German party system. In comparison with all other relevant parties, it is the only one able to enter into various coalitions. Regarding the PDS, the SPD now as before distances itself at the federal level; meanwhile, the PDS still has not clearly defined its coalition policy. All other relevant parties are clearly more restricted than the Social Democrats in coalition options. Thus the SPD has profited most from the changes of the West German party system after the completion of political unification insofar that it has moved into a core position from which it can easily reach parliamentary majorities. The other parties of the left, the PDS and Greens, are its exclusive coalition potential since both parties have ruled out a coa-

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lition with the Christian Democrats, and vice versa. The center-right, the CDU and FDP, is thereby at a disadvantage in the competition of parties because it is dependent on its own majorities or has to consider the SPD as its coalition partner. In the medium term, no fundamental change in this constellation is expected. Because of the present structure of the German party system, it may be anticipated that in spite of the convergence of the FDP and SPD, both in terms of symbolic message and contents (which incidentally also finds expression in changes in party chairman from Lafontaine to Schröder and Gerhard to Westerwelle), the SPD aims at a continuation of the present coalition government. In the end, the Greens are not only closer to the SPD with regard to content, but, according to Raschke's research results, suffer from structural weaknesses in their ability to assert themselves vis-à-vis the larger coalition partner. All of this may have prompted Chancellor Schröder to take the surprising step of announcing in public at a relatively early stage that a continuation of the coalition with the Greens is likely after the coming election.

The East German Federal States and the Overall Development of the SPD

In comparison with the West German *Länder,* the SPD in the East German federal states is anything but a large party with many members. Karsten Grabow characterizes the organizations of the East German state parties of the CDU and SPD as "election-professionalized framework associations"[53] whereby the SPD lacks the character of a people's party (*Volkspartei*) to a greater extent than does the CDU. With about 27,000 members, the SPD does not have a mass basis in the new federal states and is to a great extent represented and dominated by a small number of outstanding personalities in the executive and legislature.[54] Also at the voter level, the SPD's profile in East Germany is different compared to that in West Germany: in the parliamentary election in East Germany, the SPD for the first time gained a majority among the traditional workforce. At the same time, in the socially balanced structure of the electorate,[55] the social democratic mainstream and the social democratic intelligence classes dominate, while social-democratic postmaterialism groups are absent, and the SPD is losing potential voters to the social democratic populism of the PDS. Factors that after the fall of the Berlin Wall were initially assumed to benefit the SPD, such as

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the "definitely more left"[56] political culture of East Germany, the large number of people who do not subscribe to religion, and the small number of Catholics, turned out to be false. This is because the SPD has a strong competitor on the left of the party, the PDS, and the rather weak party alignment in the East. Traditional party loyalties are present only to a small degree in the East German federal states. All this results in a lower number of loyal voters for the SPD in a regional three-party system, in which, according to Kießling, the main conflict runs between the CDU and PDS,[57] which in terms of coalition building places the SPD in a favorable center position. But the SPD profits from this advantageous constellation with a view to potential coalition building only if it is successful in winning as many groups of voters as possible. The results of the last regional elections in Thuringia, Saxony, and Saxony-Anhalt, with absolute majorities for the CDU and a CDU/FDP coalition, demonstrate that the structures of the SPD that place the party at a competitive advantage by no means do so automatically. The ongoing pressure with regard to mobilizing voters, its weak anchoring in social structures, and its restricted recruitment of personnel (especially at the municipal level) contribute to the SPD's unstable situation in East Germany. It cannot be much of a consolation to the SPD that the CDU's situation is similar. In fact, the SPD in the new federal states corresponds more to the model of a professionalized media communication party, "electoral professional party,"[58] or "professionalized voter-party."[59]

It may be a little too early to designate the East German parties at the state level as models for the future development of parties throughout Germany. But the development of parties points in the direction of professionalized media communication parties. The formation of these parties is the consequence of social-structural and media change, which has been, for instance, accompanied by a slow dissolution in party memberships and the simultaneous loss of members as a resource for election campaigns, in addition to a professionalization and centralization of communication and a concentration on issues instead of programmatic coherence.

The gradual dissolution of party membership is one of the central challenges of the SPD. As is the case with the CDU, the SPD has recorded a permanent decline in members (Table 1); in the last ten years the number of SPD members declined by twenty percent. In addition, an increase in the percentage of old members is evi-

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dent, while the lack of young people is dramatic. The number of young members in the SPD (sixteen to thirty) dropped from 10.8 to 2.8 percent from 1974 to 1999; the number of new members under thirty is below that of the fifties.[60] As Walter put it, "The majority of social-democratic members has turned gray and tired, they are more melancholy than certain about the future of politics."[61] Even though this negative development is true for all parties in Germany, it is especially noticeable in more recent SPD history because in the early 1970s the wave of new SPD members was mainly under thirty. The SPD has undergone a smooth transition from this structure of old members to the executive level: the party leadership is clearly dominated by a group of those above fifty, while younger members only provide a leadership reserve.[62] This generation gap could in the medium term pose a leadership problem to German social democracy.

Table 1. Members of the SPD

Year	Members
1948	844'653
1960	649'578
1970	820'202
1976	1022'191
1990	919'129
1992	885'958
1993	861'480
1994	849'374
1995	817'650
1996	792'773
1997	776'183
1998	775'036
1999	755'066
2000	734'667
2001	717'513

Source: SPD.

What further problems confront the SPD? To be capable of winning a majority, it must be able to perform the balancing act of integrating totally different segments of the electorate and responding to the moods of nonaligned voters who are influenced by media. This task has to be solved by increased public communication: in the future, flexible, differentiated, and permanent communication has to assume the role in social democratic majority formation that

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was previously played by the linking forces of trade unions and worker associations. These groups previously emerged on their own and were permanently regenerated in social democratic groups of voters. Forms of media communication with an inclination toward simplification, emotionalization, and symbolism will doubtless play an important role in the SPD strategy for mobilizing broad sections of the electorate. Not only is the incorporation of media logic and policymaking along aesthetic lines an integral part of the party's communication strategy, but also its ability to participate in public political discourse and use forms of direct internal and external communication. With this communication strategy, the SPD can prove that the demands on policy for both content and media presentation are not principally contradictory—that decision and presentation policy can supplement each other and do not necessarily have to move into opposite directions. If the SPD places too much value on media presentation forms, it runs the risk of demotivating its membership, of losing the substance of its programmatic identity, and of appearing in the end as only an "election campaign machine." With its strategic flexibility and its multifaceted appeal, which resulted in a favorable electoral positioning and coalition alignment, the SPD is in an excellent position from which to win future elections. But to keep this strategically good position, the party has to combine convincing public policy and governing strategies, social democratic identity, and a successful image through political marketing and political communication. Its public policy and governing strategies seem to be the weakest points.

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Notes

1. Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Politbarometer 04/2002;* Renate Köcher, "Angst vor der Zwei-Klassen-Medizin," *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung,* 17 April 2002, 5.

2. Eva Kolinsky, "Das Parteiensystem der Bundesrepublik: Forschungsthemen und Entwicklungslinien," in Oskar Niedermayer and Richard Stöss, eds., *Stand und Perspektiven der Parteienforschung in Deutschland* (Opladen, 1993), 45ff.

3. Richard Stöss and Oskar Niedermayer, "Zwischen Anpassung und Profilierung: Die SPD an der Schwelle zum neuen Jahrhundert," *Aus Politik and Zeitgeschichte,* Band 5/2000: 3.

4. Franz Müntefering, "Demokratie braucht Partei: Die Chance der SPD," *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* 31 (2000): 337.

5. See also the empirical results of Thomas Poguntke, *Parteiorganisation im Wandel: Gesellschaftliche Verankerung und organisatorische Anpassung im europäischen Vergleich* (Wiesbaden, 2000).

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7. Gianpietro Mazzoleni and Winfried Schulz, "Mediatization of Politics: A Challenge for Democracy?" *Political Communication* 16 (1999): 249.

8. Ulrich Sarcinelli, "Politikvermittlung und Wahlen—Sonderfall oder Normalität des politischen Prozesses? Essayistische Anmerkungen and Anregungen für die Forschung," in Hans Bohrmann, Otfried Jarren, Gabriele Melischek, and Josef Seethaler, eds., *Wahlen und Politikvermittlung durch Massenmedien* (Wiesbaden, 2000), 24. See also Ulrich Sarcinelli, "Parteien- und Politikvermittlung: Von der Parteien- zur Mediendemokratie?" in Ulrich Sarcinelli, ed., *Politikvermittlung und Demokratie in der Mediengesellschaft: Beiträge zur politischen Kommunikationskultur* (Wiesbaden, 1998), 273ff.

9. Pippa Norris, John Curtice, David Sanders, Margaret Scammell, and Holli A. Semetko, *On Message: Communicating the Campaign* (London, 1999), 41.

10. Cf. Heinrich Oberreuter, "Personalisierung und Professionalisierung: Wahlkampf 1998," in Heinrich Oberreuter, ed., *Ungewissheiten der Macht, Parteien, Wähler, Wahlentscheidung* (Munich, 1998), 12: "The SPD completely relies on professionalization and personalization in accordance with American-style election campaigns as this found expression in the perfected media-effective production of the Leipzig party convention"; Stöss and Niedermayer, "Zwischen Anpassung und Profilierung," 5: "The election campaign of the politically-programmatically exhausted Union parties, conducted extremely confrontative and in the 'Cold War' style, was answered by the SPD with a professional campaign which applied qualified and clever mass communication methods to aggressively defend their reform projects." Franz Walter, "Vom Betriebsrat der Nation zum Kanzlerwahlverein," in Gert Pickel, Dieter Walz, and Wolfram Brunner, eds., *Deutschland nach den Wahlen* (Opladen, 2000), 229: "The election campaign was perfectly directed and one hundred per cent contemporary."

11. Matthias Machnig, "Die Kampa als SPD-Wahlkampfzentrale der Bundestagswahl '98," *Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen* 12 (September 1999): 20–39.

12. Matthias Machnig, "Von der Kampa zur Netzwerkpartei: Politisches Themenmanagement und Kampagnenarbeit der SPD," in Werner Albrecht and Claudia Lange, eds., *Kommunikationsstrategien für Non-Profit-Organisationen* (Gütersloh, 2001), 131.

13. Machnig, "Die Kampa als SPD-Wahlkampfzentrale," 29.

14. Machnig, "Von der Kampa zur Netzwerkpartei," 130.

15. Ibid., 132.

16. Peter Lösche and Franz Walter, *Die SPD: Klassenpartei, Volkspartei, Quotenpartei* (Darmstadt, 1992), 192ff.

17. See in greater detail Matthias Machnig, "Auf dem Weg zur Netzwerkpartei," *Die Neue Gesellschaft/Frankfurter Hefte* 47 (2000): 654–60; idem, "Vom Tanker zur Flotte: Die SPD als Volkspartei und Mitgliederpartei von morgen," in Matthias Machnig and Hans-Peter Bartels, eds., *Der rasende Tanker: Analysen und Konzepte zur Modernisierung der sozialdemokratischen Organisation* (Göttingen, 2001), 101–17.

18. Peter Mair, Wolfgang C. Müller, and Fritz Plasser, "Die Antworten der Parteien auf Veränderungen in den Wählermärkten in Westeuropa," in Peter Mair, Wolfgang C. Müller, and Fritz Plasser, eds., *Parteien auf komplexen Wählermärkten: Reaktionsstrategien politischer Parteien in Westeuropa* (Vienna, 1999), 392.

19. Müntefering, "Demokratie braucht Partei."

20. See Uwe Jun, "Inner-Party Reforms: The SPD and Labour Party in Comparative Perspective," *German Politics* 5 (1996): 58–80.

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21. Andreas Kießling, "Politische Kultur und Parteien in Deutschland: Sind die Parteien reformierbar?" *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte,* Band 10/2001: 33.

22. Müntefering, "Demokratie braucht Partei," 340.

23. Machnig, "Von der Kampa zur Netzwerkpartei," 142.

24. Müntefering, "Demokratie braucht Partei," 340.

25. Ibid., 339.

26. Klaus von Beyme, *Parteien im Wandel: Von den Volksparteien zu den professionalisierten Wählerparteien* (Wiesbaden, 2000), 152.

27. Cf. Uwe Jun, "Inner-Party Reforms," in von Beyme, *Parteien im Wandel,* 37; Kießling, "Sind die Parteien reformierbar?" 36.

28. Karsten Grabow, *Abschied von der Massenpartei: Die Entwicklung der Organisationsmuster von SPD und CDU seit der deutschen Vereinigung* (Wiesbaden, 2000), 307.

29. Thomas Leif and Joachim Raschke, *Rudolf Scharping, die SPD und die Macht* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1994), 200.

30. Peter Lösche, "Die SPD nach Mannheim: Strukturprobleme und aktuelle Entwicklungen," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte,* Band 6/1996: 27.

31. German Chancellor Schröder and British Prime Minister Blair signed a paper that was in most parts written under the control of former Schröder consultant Bodo Hombach and by Peter Mandelson, one of the closest confidants of the British prime minister, to outline a guide for a future social democratic policy. It is published under the title "The Way Forward for European Social Democrats." For an analysis of this paper, see Charlie Jeffery and Vladimir Handl, "Blair, Schröder, and the Third Way," in Lothar Funk, ed., *The Economics and the Politics of the Third Way* (Hamburg, 1999), 78–87.

32. Chancellor Schröder in his introduction to the report of the Commission for a new basic program ("Grundsatzprogrammkommission"), Wegmarken, 2.

33. Stöss and Niedermayer, "Zwischen Anpassung und Profilierung," 9.

34. See Franz Walter, "Führung in der Politik: Am Beispiel sozialdemokratischer Parteivorsitzender," *Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* 7 (1997): 1318.

35. Stephen Padgett, "The German Social Democrats: A Redefinition of Social Democracy or Bad Godesberg Mark II," in Richard Gillespie and William E. Paterson, eds., *Rethinking Social Democracy in Western Europe* (London, 1993), 36.

36. Gerard Braunthal, *The German Social Democrats Since 1969: A Party in Power and Opposition* (Boulder, 1994), 350.

37. Klaus Dörre, "Die SPD in der Zerreißprobe auf dem 'Dritten Weg,'" in Klaus Dörre, Leo Panitch, and Bodo Zeuner et al., *Die Strategie der "Neuen Mitte": Verabschiedet sich die moderne Sozialdemokratie als Reformpartei?* (Hamburg, 1999).

38. See the detailed analysis of the parliamentary elections in 1998: Matthias Jung and Dieter Roth, "Wer zu spät kommt, den bestraft der Wähler: Eine Analyse der Bundestagswahl 1998," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte,* Band 52/1998: 3–18; Wolfgang Gibowski, "Social Change and the Electorate: An Analysis of the 1998 Bundestagswahl," in Stephen Padgett and Thomas Saalfeld, eds., *Bundestagswahl '98: End of an Era?* (London, 2000), 10–32. See the various election analyses in Heinrich Oberreuter, ed., *Umbruch '98: Wähler, Parteien, Kommunikation* (Munich, 2001).

39. The very character of a government coalition with the participants forced to compromise for government cooperation gives rise to the assumption that the complete reasserting of the positions of a party on the government policy are nothing but an illusion. On the other hand, a government has to implement policy under more restrictive conditions than can be formulated by political parties.

40. Hans-Joachim Schabedoth, "Die deutsche Sozialdemokratie auf schwierigem Reformweg," in Wolfgang Schroeder, ed., *Neue Balance zwischen Markt und Staat: Sozialdemokratische Reformstrategien in Deutschland, Frankreich und Großbritannien*

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(Schwalbach, Ts., 2001), 194. See also Wolfgang Schroeder, "Ursprünge und Unterschiede sozialdemokratischer Reformstrategien: Großbritannien, Frankreich und Deutschland im Vergleich," in the same volume.

41. See Wolfgang Merkel, "Die Dritten Wege der Sozialdemokratie ins 21. Jahrhundert," *Berliner Journal für Soziologie* 10 (2000): 102.

42. Cf. Frank Walter Steinmeier, "Konsens und Führung," in Franz Müntefering and Matthias Machnig, eds., *Sicherheit im Wandel: Neue Solidarität im 21. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 2001).

43. Joachim Raschke, *Die Zukunft der Grünen* (Frankfurt, 2001), 420.

44. Franz Müntefering, "Die Politik der Mitte in Deutschland," unpublished paper, January 2002, 3.

45. Micha Hörnle, *What's Left? Die SPD und die British Labour Party in der Opposition* (Frankfurt: 2000), 468.

46. Cf. Uwe Jun, "Die CDU: Behutsamer Übergang in der Zeit nach Kohl," in Gert Pickel, Dieter Walz, and Wolfram Brunner, eds., *Deutschland nach den Wahlen: Befunde zur Bundestagswahl 1998 und zur Zukunft des deutschen Parteiensystems* (Opladen, 2000), 207–26.

47. Stephen Padgett, "The Boundaries of Stability: The Party System Before and After the 1998 Bundestagswahl," in Padgett and Saalfeld, *Bundestagswahl '98*, 94.

48. Gerard Braunthal, "The SPD Leaders in Power and in Opposition," in Peter H. Merkl, ed., *The Federal Republic of Germany at Fifty: The End of a Century of Turmoil* (New York, 1999), 121.

49. Padgett, "Boundaries of Stability," 94.

50. Cf. Ludger Helms, "CDU/CSU-Opposition im 6. und 14. Deutschen Bundestag," *Zeitschrift für Politikwissenschaft* 10 (2000): 511–38.

51. For details of the election programs, see Charles Lees, "The Red-Green Coalition," in Padgett and Saalfeld, *Bundestagswahl '98*, 174–94.

52. According to Joachim Raschke, "Sind die Grünen regierungsfähig? Die Selbstblockade einer Regierungspartei," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, Band 10/2001: 26. According to Raschke, a party system consists of two dimensions: "an eco-libertarian dimension with the counterpole of authoritarianism and a dimension on which market- and justice-related values confront each other ."

53. Grabow, *Abschied von der Massenpartei*, 293.

54. See ibid., 172ff.

55. For the social structure of the electorate, see Tilo Görl, "Regionalisierung der politischen Landschaft in den neuen Bundesländern am Beispiel der Landtagswahlen 1999," in Brandenburg, Thüringen, and Sachsen, *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* 32 (2001): 94–123.

56. Andreas Kießling, *Politische Kultur und Parteien im vereinten Deutschland: Determinanten der Entwicklung des Parteiensystems* (Munich, 1999), 103.

57. To Kießling, the main conflict line in the East German federal states runs between the followers and the opponents of the old order (supplement 148 here).

58. Angelo Panebianco, *Political Parties: Organization and Power* (Cambridge, 1988).

59. Von Beyme, *Parteien im Wandel*.

60. Numbers given by Elmar Wiesendahl, "Keine Lust mehr auf Parteien: Zur Abwendung Jugendlicher von den Parteien," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, Band 10/2001: 8.

61. Franz Walter, "Die deutschen Parteien: Entkernt, ermattet, ziellos," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte*, Band 10/2001: 4.

62. Chancellor Schröder about Ute Vogt, thirty-seven-year-old top candidate of the SPD at the regional elections in Baden-Württemberg, who is also chairper-

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son of the internal affairs committee of the German federal parliament. This title could also apply to other ambitious young SPD politicians; for example, to Mr. Gabriel, leader of the state of Lower Saxony, Mr. Bury, state minister in the federal chancellery, or Mr. Scholz, party leader of the federal party in Hamburg.

63. Thomas Meyer, *Die Transformation der Sozialdemokratie: Eine Partei auf dem Weg ins 21. Jahrhundert* (Bonn, 1998), 101.

64. Sarcinelli correctly refers to the fact that the "rules of attention" by the media and the public and the decision rules of politics are not congruent. But policy has to satisfy both requirements simultaneously, that is, produce legitimation by communication and "legitimation by procedures" (Luhmann). The consequence of a one-sided shift would certainly result in a loss of legitimatization. See Sarcinelli, "Politikvermittlung und Wahlen," 19–30.

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