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Bundestag elections in Germany

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Held on 22 September 2013

Election analysis

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The Bundestag elections held on 22 September 2013¹

Election results and their chief determining factors

The **CDU** achieved a particularly good result, its best since 1994. The election results are above all a show of trust in Chancellor Angela Merkel. Since 2005, she has found a way of appealing to voters from all parties and has mobilised their support for the CDU/CSU union. This growth in support can only be explained by the way she has opened up the party to new voters. The Chancellor has reaped the benefits of her positive image and the high levels of confidence in her ability to find political solutions that are welcomed by broad swathes of the electorate. For CDU/CSU voters, the candidate was as important as the policies (38:36). For all the other parties, policies were much more important than candidates (Infratest dimap).

During the last term, the Union on the whole succeeded in consolidating its political core competences and gaining the trust of voters. It even managed to gain ground in the area of social justice, something that is quite remarkable in light of the SPD's strong image in this respect. The Union won 41.5 percent of the second vote, with 34.1 percent for the CDU and 7.4 percent for the CSU. The CDU gained 6.9 points, the CSU 0.9. In total, the Union gained 7.7 points. After the Union won 218 of its 239 seats directly in 2009, 2013 also saw an increase in the number of directly-elected candidates. 236 direct candidates won seats in the Bundestag, with another 75 gaining mandates via the regional electoral lists. As a result, the Union won 311 seats out of a possible 631 (+72 mandates).

¹ We would like to thank Forschungsgruppe Wahlen and Infratest dimap for providing us with the results of the election day poll.

The growth of the Union is also remarkable when viewed from a historical perspective. Chancellors who stand for a third term normally find it difficult to remind voters of their previous successes. Only Konrad Adenauer in 1957 managed to improve on his previous election results of 1949 and 1953, but under quite different conditions, because at that time the party system was slowly undergoing a process of consolidation. In winning a third term, Angela Merkel has succeeded in significantly improving the Union's results. The election results were an improvement on those of 1994 and also constituted a positive vote for the two main parties. Even though support for the SPD remains at a lower level, the two main parties combined have demonstrated clear growth.

The Union has also made above-average progress in some of Germany's major cities (with the exception of Duisburg). The strongest (two-digit) gains were seen in Baden-Württemberg, Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt. The districts with the best second vote results for the Union were almost exclusively in Bavaria (with the exception of Cloppenburg-Vechta). The Union's worst second vote result was in Berlin-Friedrichshagen-Prenzlauer Berg (15.4 percent).

Interestingly, Union voters in this election were generally quick to make up their minds about where to place their vote. 37 percent decided a long time ago and 18 percent said they always vote for the same party (average 14 percent; Infratest dimap).

Although the **SPD's** candidate was viewed relatively positively after his nomination, the party was unable to recover from the slump in support that was experienced during the campaign. This was clearly detrimental in a context where the majority of Germans wanted Merkel to continue as Chancellor and where personalities played a major role. The opposition also experienced problems in its core area of social democracy. It was unable to regenerate itself in terms of policy and regain public confidence

in its ability to act and find solutions. However, it recovered somewhat in comparison to the last election and in the end won 25.7 of the vote (+2.7 points).

The SPD will be sending 193 members to the Bundestag. Once again, the SPD experienced losses amongst its direct candidates. In 2005 it had 145 directly-elected MPs, whereas this figure dropped to 64 in 2009 and 58 in 2013. As a result, large swathes of Germany now have no directly-elected SPD MPs. In Schleswig-Holstein and Berlin the party has two direct mandates, with a further one in Rhineland-Palatinate and none in Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, the Saarland, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Saxony, Saxony Anhalt and Thuringia. With just a few exceptions, the SPD had its best performance in its traditional bastions of North Rhine-Westphalia. It achieved its best second vote results in Gelsenkirchen, Aurich-Emden, Herne-Bochum II, Duisburg II and Essen II, and its worst in Saxony.

The **Left** suffered clear losses with a drop of 3.3 points. The party won 8.6 percent of the vote, leaving them just a hairsbreadth (0.2 points) ahead of the Greens and allowing them to stake a claim as the country's third-strongest party. But it suffered dramatic losses in both rounds of voting. Apart from the 4 direct mandates in Berlin (which have almost always fallen to the PDS/Left), it lost 12 direct mandates, all of them to CDU candidates. Polls show that the Left have long suffered from the effects of their internal squabbles. Although there was little serious doubt that they would gain entry to the Bundestag via the direct mandate clause, it did for some time seem that the party was hovering around the five percent hurdle. It was only after it really mobilised itself towards the end of the campaign – probably thanks to its leading candidate² Gregor Gysi – that it was able to reactivate some of its potential.

The **Greens** will have been disappointed with their result of 8.4 percent, a drop of 2.3 points. In 2010 their star was beginning to rise and a poll carried out in April 2011 by Forschungsgruppe Wahlen in the wake of Fukushima placed them at 27 percent. But this was followed by a steady

decline in support, a trend that their campaign strategy was unable to turn around. Although the Greens are clearly perceived as the experts on the environment and energy, these areas were rather overshadowed in the campaign by social justice issues. Their manifesto had many similarities to that of the Left, though it was not quite so extreme. This message could have led to cognitive dissonance among voters (this requires investigation in other analyses). For the fourth time in a row, the Greens were able to defend the direct mandate of Hans-Christian Ströbele in Berlin Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. In Stuttgart I, Cem Özdemir was defeated by less than 5 points. The Greens focused on their leading candidates, Jürgen Trittin and Katrin Göring-Eckardt, while their first elected Green Minister-President, Winfried Kretschmann, stayed in the background.

For the first time in a parliamentary election, the **FDP** just fell short of the five percent hurdle. Its result of 4.8 percent represented a drop of 9.8 points. And because the party failed to achieve three direct mandates it will not play a part in the next parliament. After achieving its best ever result in 2009 (14.6 percent), 2013 turned out to be its worst. The 2009 result was largely due to a widespread desire among voters to put an end to the grand coalition, which encouraged considerable numbers of former CDU voters to support the FDP, but there was no such motivation in 2013. Early in 2010, the FDP quickly began to attract criticism after taking its place in government. Whereas the Union received almost exclusively positive feedback, the liberals found themselves drowning in negatives. In the end this led to it losing its role as the "functional party". Even the party's top leadership failed to appeal to voters. Although 49 percent of voters had pronounced themselves generally happy with Guido Westerwelle before the elections, parliamentary leader Rainer Brüderle gained a score of 28 percent, with party leader Philipp Rösler bringing up

² The Left nominated a front-runner from every conceivable wing of the party, so the nomination was teeming with eight candidates. However, only Sahra Wagenknecht and Gregor Gysi appeared on posters around the country.

the rear with 23 percent (DeutschlandTREND, September 2013). No other party has so many tactical voters as the FDP. 46 percent vote for the party for tactical reasons and 51 percent out of conviction (Infratest dimap).

The **Alternative for Germany** party (AfD) just fell short of the 5 percent hurdle with 4.7 percent. A one-issue party whose leaders made some controversial statements during the campaign, the AfD mobilised voters who are unhappy with current policies on Europe and the euro. Like all protest parties, it gained particular traction with previous non-voters. The AfD gained attention with its relatively professional national poster campaign. This was an impressive achievement for a party that was only set up in April and that, according to its own figures, already has over 16,000 members. No other "young" party has ever managed to campaign at this level. It also benefited from having a great deal of media coverage. However, outside its own supporter base, the AfD attracted a negative response (-1.4 all; Forschungsgruppe Wahlen). The Left achieved the same figure. However, AfD supporters gave them a score of 3.8. 61% of voters for the Pirates claimed their vote was based on "dissatisfaction with other parties", whereas this motivation is only given by 37 percent of AfD supporters. 60 percent of these said their vote was based on policy (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen). However, in the Infratest dimap survey, 57 percent named their motivation as being "disappointment". The AfD also only managed to mobilise three-quarters of its potential in the final weeks of the campaign (Infratest dimap).

Of the other small parties, the **Pirates** clearly failed to enter parliament by winning just 2.2 percent of the vote (+0.2 points). The surge in support experienced in 2011 that led to four seats in state parliaments has clearly ebbed away. Personal squabbles, public indiscretions and a narrow range of policies all made it difficult for the party to mobilise its potential voters. The **NPD** won 1.3 percent of the vote (-0.2 points). The **REP**

remained insignificant with just 0.2 percent.³ The NPD certainly fought an aggressive campaign, but here too, signs of personal weariness and attrition combined with internal conflicts over the party's direction hardly helped to motivate its potential voters. The Free Voters took part in the Bundestag elections for the first time, winning 1.0 percent of the vote and thus becoming eligible for state funding. Originally they wanted to fight the election with the Wahlalternative 2013 political group, which then in the spring of 2013 became the AfD. Some of the Free Voters' more well-known supporters moved over to the AfD.

Germany's **electoral laws** have changed since the last parliamentary elections. "Overhang" seats are now balanced by "compensation" seats so that the Bundestag is formed only via the proportion of second votes. There were 622 members in the last parliament. 24 of these were overhang seats (21 for the CDU and 3 for the CSU). The Union and the SPD were the only parties to benefit from the overhang seats⁴, but it was a different party at each election. And it was never out of the question that the Left could win overhang seats, because the number of these seats increased after reunification. The change in electoral law means that the effect of the overhang seats is reduced because they are balanced out by compensation seats. After the latest elections, the Bundestag comprises 299 directly-elected members and 299 members elected via the lists, plus any overhang and compensation seats. The size of the parliamentary group is decided solely by the second vote cast for the party. The fear that the compensation seats could result in parliament becoming overblown proved unfounded. Of the 631 seats in the Bundestag, 28 are compensation seats, so parliament has only grown by 9 members.

³ THE RIGHT party, founded by right-wing extremist Christian Worch, gained 0.0 percent of the vote. However, it only stood on the North Rhine-Westphalia electoral list.

⁴ With the exception of 1953, when the DP won an overhang seat.

Turnout increased by 0.7 points to 71.5 percent. The fall in turnout that was predicted in the week leading up to the elections by media channels such as Spiegel magazine failed to materialise.

Public opinion during the government's last term

After the last parliamentary elections, and as early as winter 2010, the coalition found itself facing a negative wave of public opinion. This was mainly caused by the dramatic loss of confidence in the FDP after it was suspected of granting favours with regard to the issue of the "hotel tax". From then on, the FDP never managed to shake off these negative perceptions. 2013 saw some steady improvement in its ratings (measured on a scale of +5 to -5), but these still remained in the negative range (Fig. 1; Forschungsgruppe Wahlen). The Union also suffered from negative public opinion in 2010 but it went on to recover in 2010/2011 and its ratings grew steadily and remained in the positive range right up to the end of its term (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen).

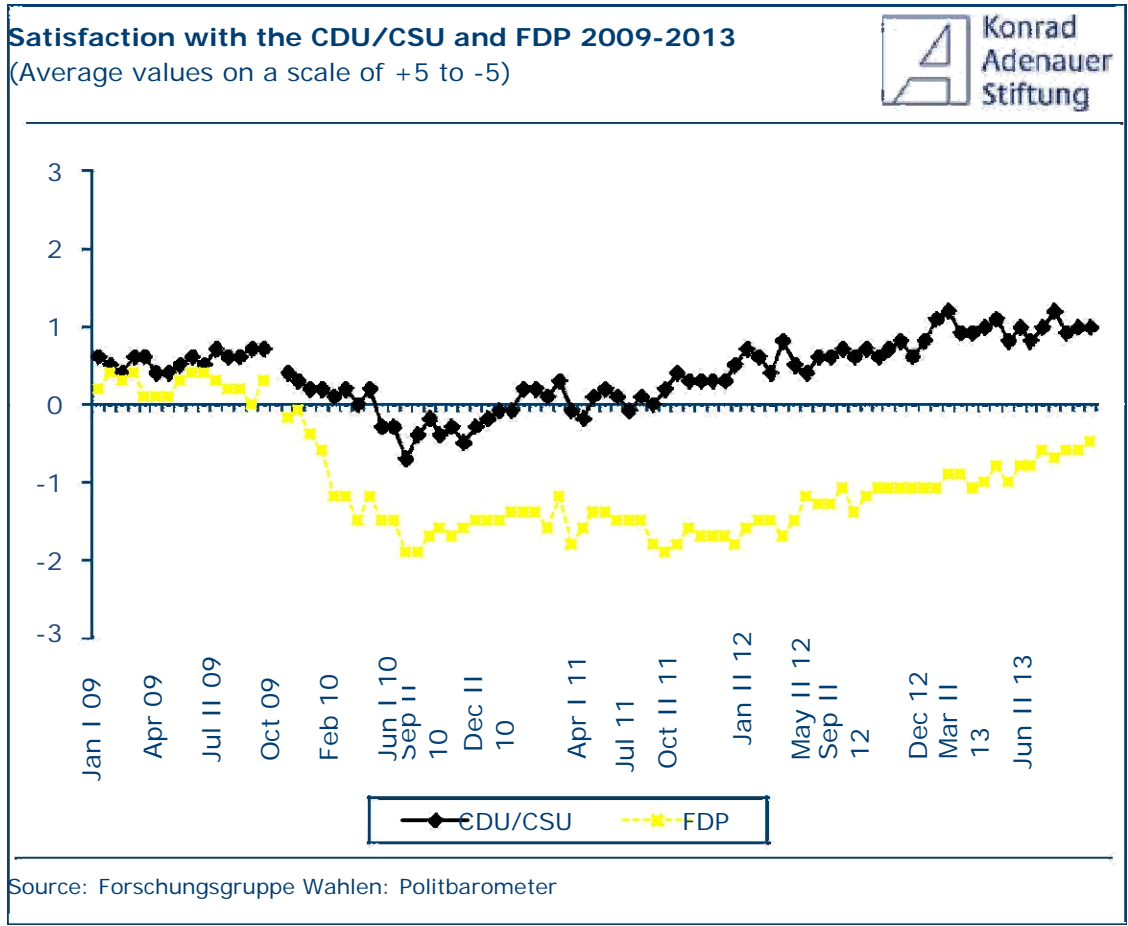


Fig. 1

During the whole legislative term, the FDP struggled to deal with negative public opinion. By the end, the Union was given a rating of 1.3 and the FDP a rating of -0.7. The opposition work of the SPD was rated at 0.8 and that of the Greens at 0.1, with the Left coming in at -0.8 (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen). But there were also some major differences between the ratings given for the federal government's work and public approval of the coalition parties. The Union's rating improved from 1.2 (2009) to 1.7 (2013). The FDP suffered a drastic loss of approval compared to 2009. Its ratings fell from +0.6 to -0.9 (Fig. 2; Forschungsgruppe Wahlen).

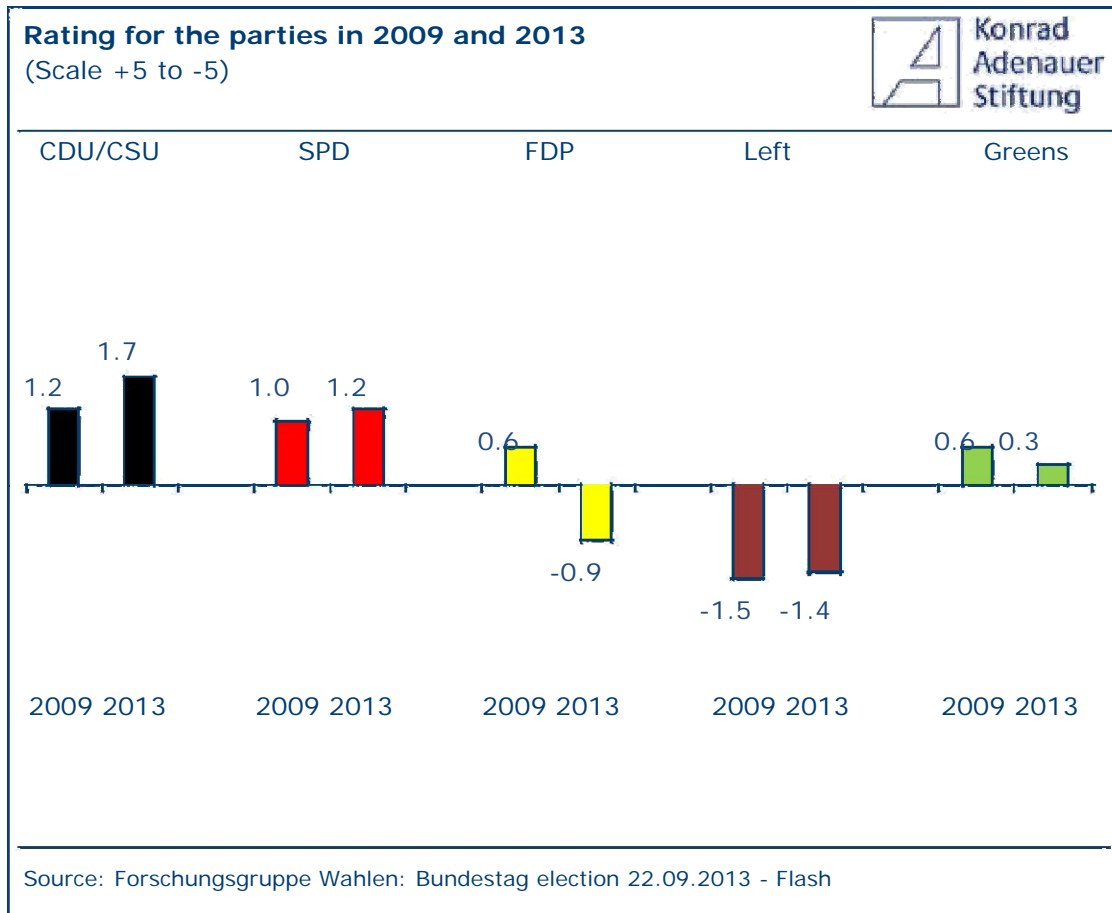
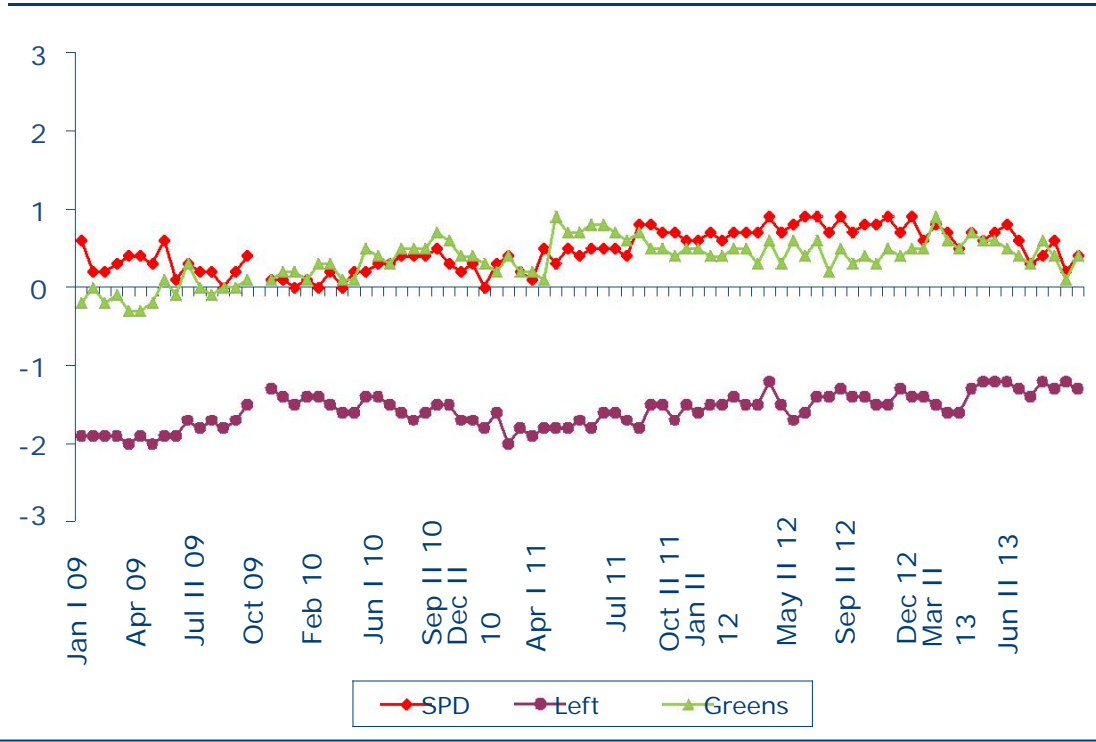


Fig. 2

In contrast, the opposition parties found themselves undergoing a period of stagnation. Although the SPD and the Greens maintained their ratings in the positive range for most of the term, the Left remained ensconced in the negative range with just slight improvements towards the end of the period. Satisfaction with the Greens and the SPD declined towards the end of the term (Fig. 3). Overall, the SPD managed to improve on the previous elections, from 1.0 to 1.2. The Greens' rating fell from 0.6 to 0.3 and the Left stayed stable (-1.5 to -1.4; Fig. 2).

Satisfaction with SPD, Greens and Left 2009-2013
(Average values on a scale of +5 to -5)



Source: Forschungsgruppe Wahlen: Politbarometer

Fig. 3

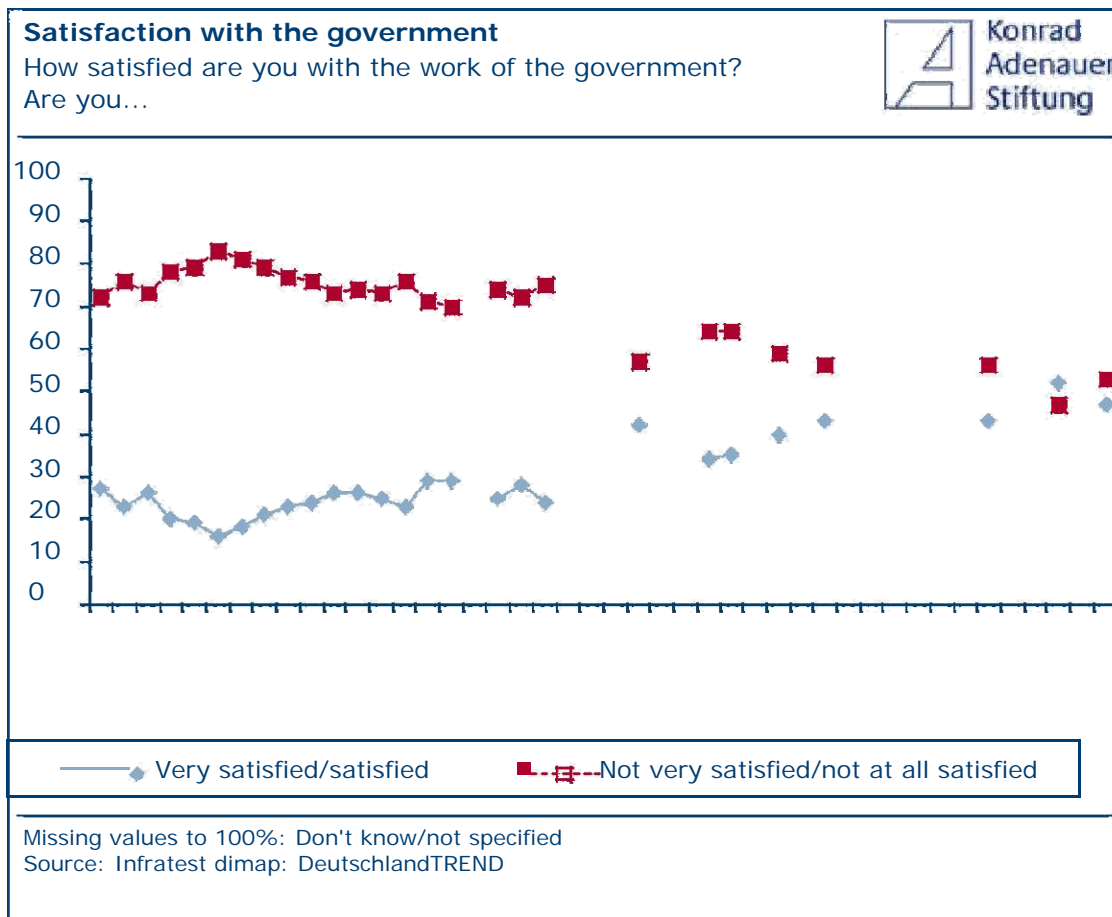


Fig. 4

Although grand coalitions traditionally gain the strong approval of voters, the coalition of the CDU/CSU and FDP managed to gain a positive rating from over half of voters at the end of the term (Fig. 4). Even the SPD/Greens coalition was unable to achieve such high approval levels.

As almost always happens, the picture was less clear when voters were asked about how they would rate future coalitions. A grand coalition normally attracts the most support (as is the case in these elections). Second place is then taken by either a CDU/CSU and FDP coalition or an SPD/Greens coalition, depending on how the polling institute phrases the questions, but with no significant differences (Figs. 5 and 6). Other permutations are named much less frequently. At the end of the election campaign, a grand coalition was favoured by 52 percent, CDU/CSU and FDP coalition by 36 percent, SPD/Greens by 33 percent, CDU/CSU and Greens 26 percent and SPD/Left/Greens 19 percent (Fig. 6). In 2009 the

CDU/CSU and FDP coalition was more popular than a grand coalition (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen).

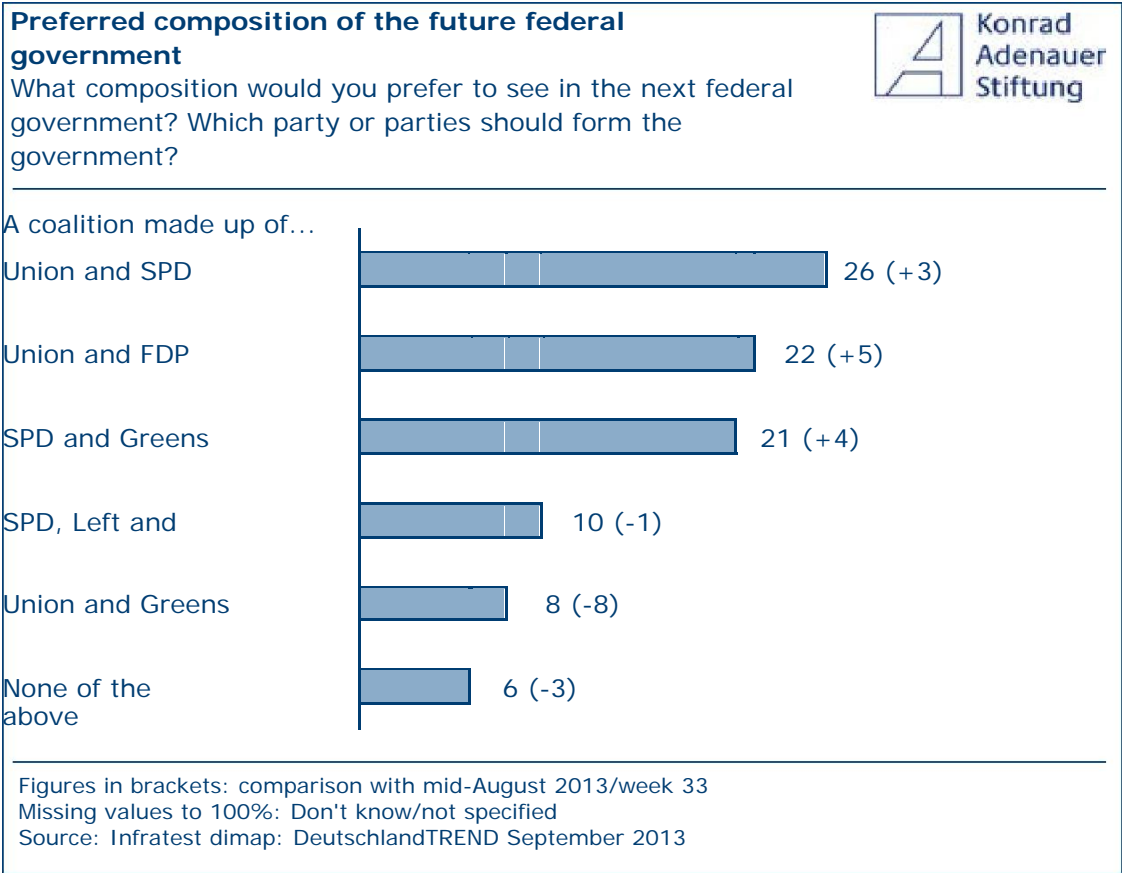


Fig. 5

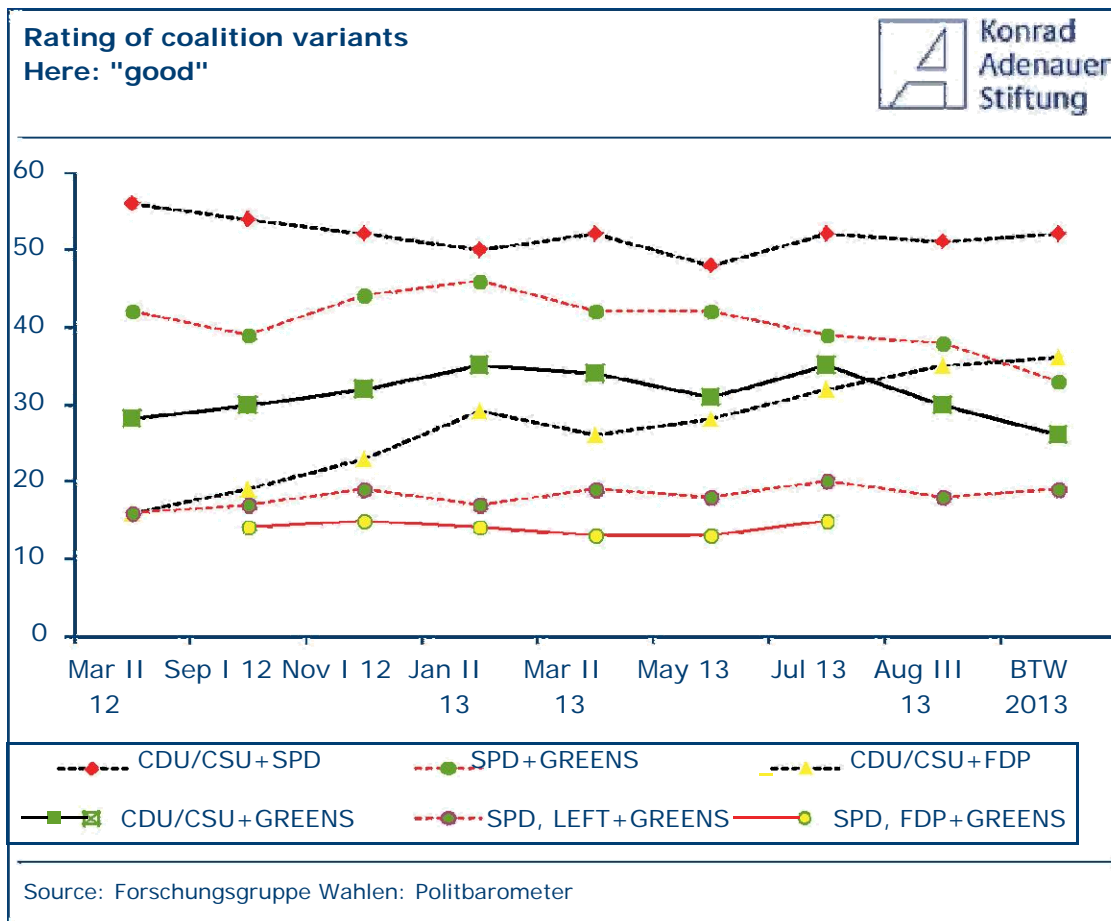
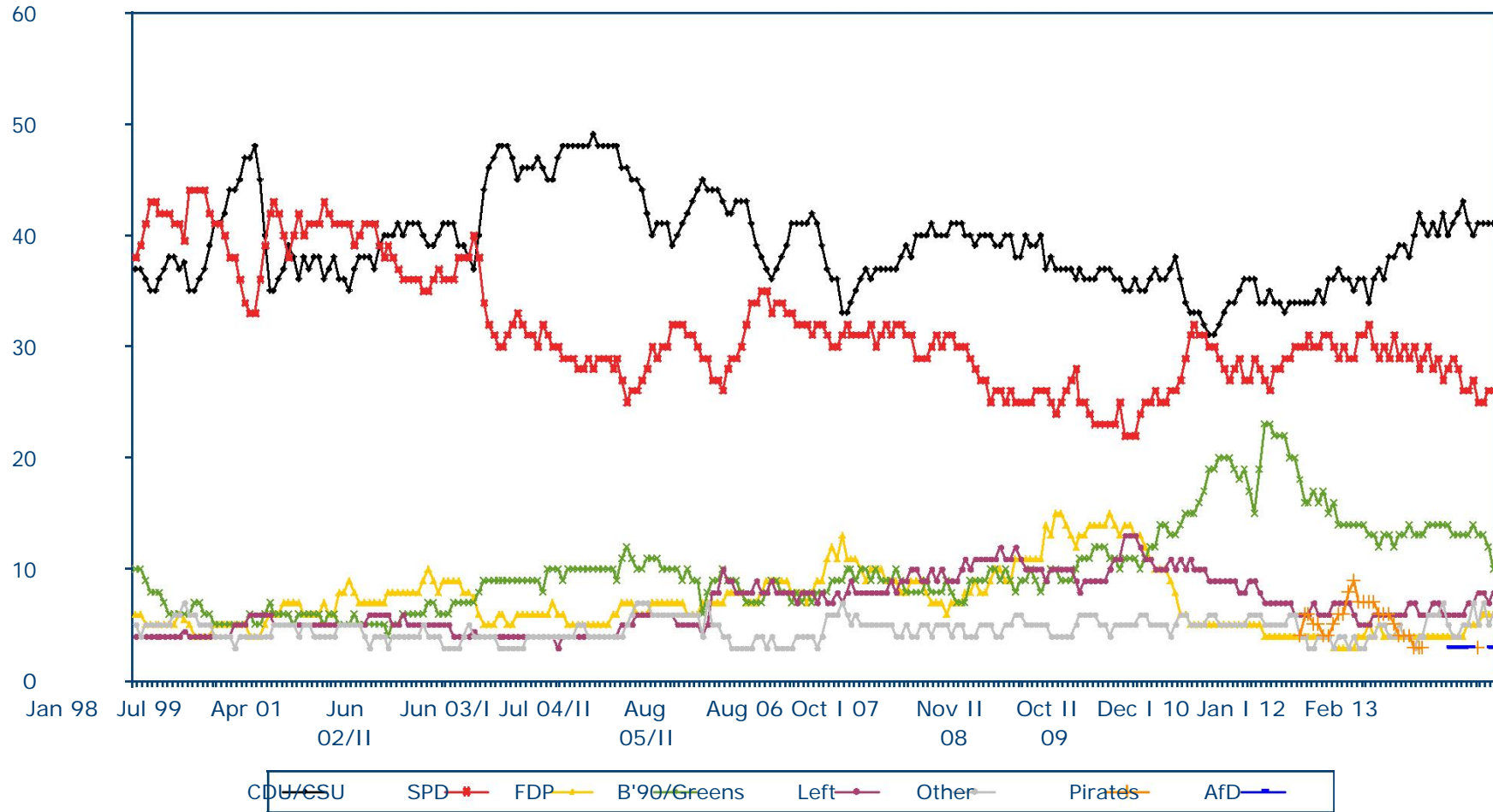


Fig. 6

The factors that cause approval of governments to decline, perhaps in mid-term, are well-documented and regularly-occurring phenomena. They are described as "mid-term effects" because they were first observed in the USA. So the strategic relevance of data at mid-term should be interpreted with some caution.

The Greens were the only party to benefit from the mid-term effect. Over 20 percent of voters felt they could vote Green over a longer period, leading to speculation about whether the Greens could become a new main party (Fig. 7). But before the Fukushima nuclear disaster in 2011, the Greens were beginning to sink in the approval ratings. They experienced a temporary bounce as a result of the accident, but this failed to halt their overall decline.

Projection (Jan 1998 - September II 2013):
 If the Bundestag election were to be held next Sunday...



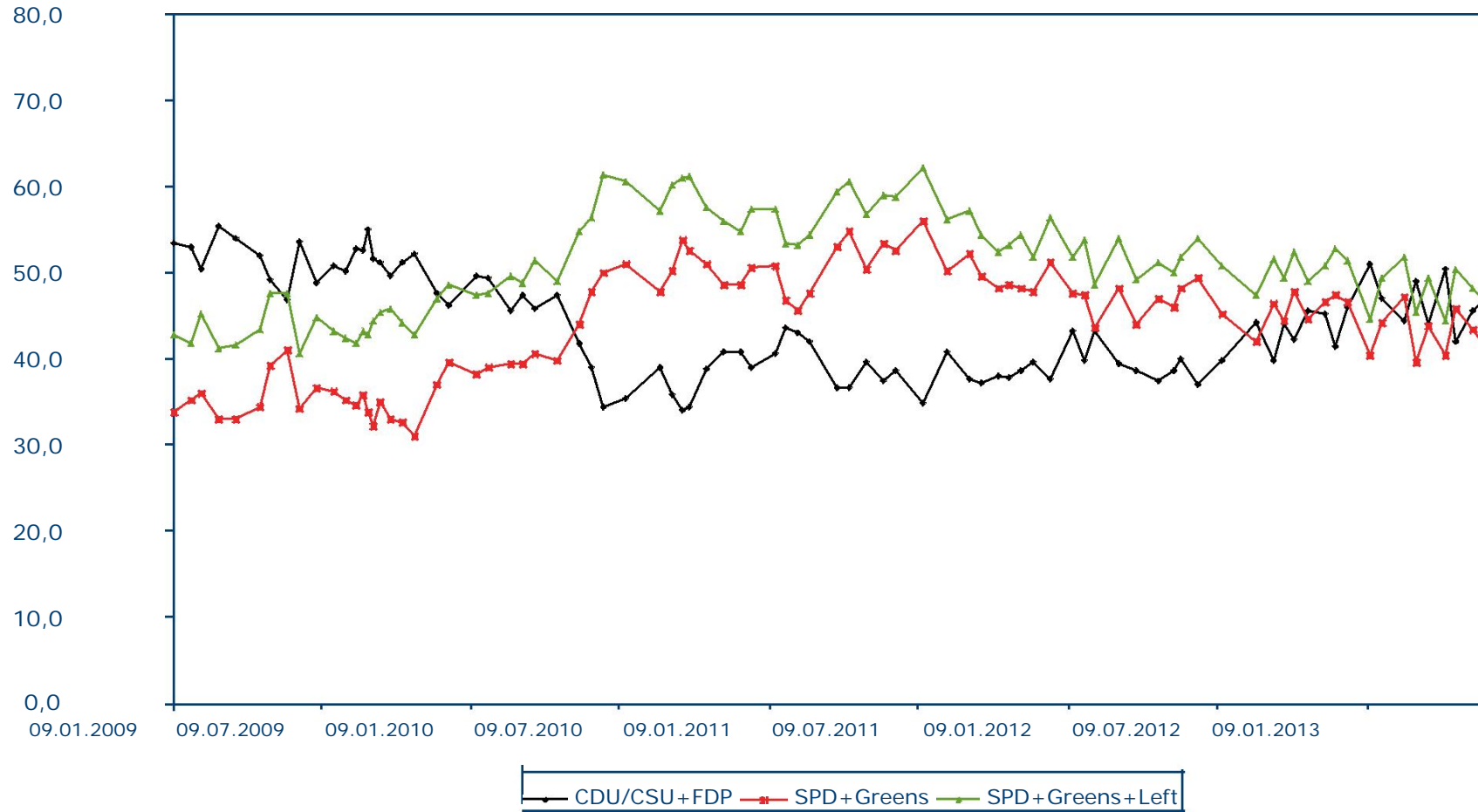
Source: Forschungsgruppe Wahlen: Politbarometer

Fig. 7

When looking back at this question in past years, it is clear how flexible and volatile, indeed almost fluid, the electorate has become. Political events can cause dramatic shifts of opinion, and once a party has lost the confidence of voters it can be very difficult to win it back. When one of the main parties has a major political crisis, the other main party usually makes a sudden jump in the polls, but the effect is generally not a lasting one.

Once the mid-term effect had faded, it became the hallmark of the election campaign that the two political camps were basically neck-and-neck. Every poll showed that neither the government nor the opposition was able to gain a clear advantage over the other.

Political mood since 2009:
CDU/CSU, FDP and the Left



Source: Forschungsgruppe Wahlen: Politbarometer

Fig. 8

The public mood also showed little appetite for change, although there was less enthusiasm for the FDP to continue in government (in September 2013 34 percent were of the opinion that the CDU/CSU and FDP coalition should continue in power; Fig. 9; DeutschlandTREND, September Extra 2013. However, the majority was in favour of the Union being in charge of the next government. So any desire for change was directed more at the FDP.

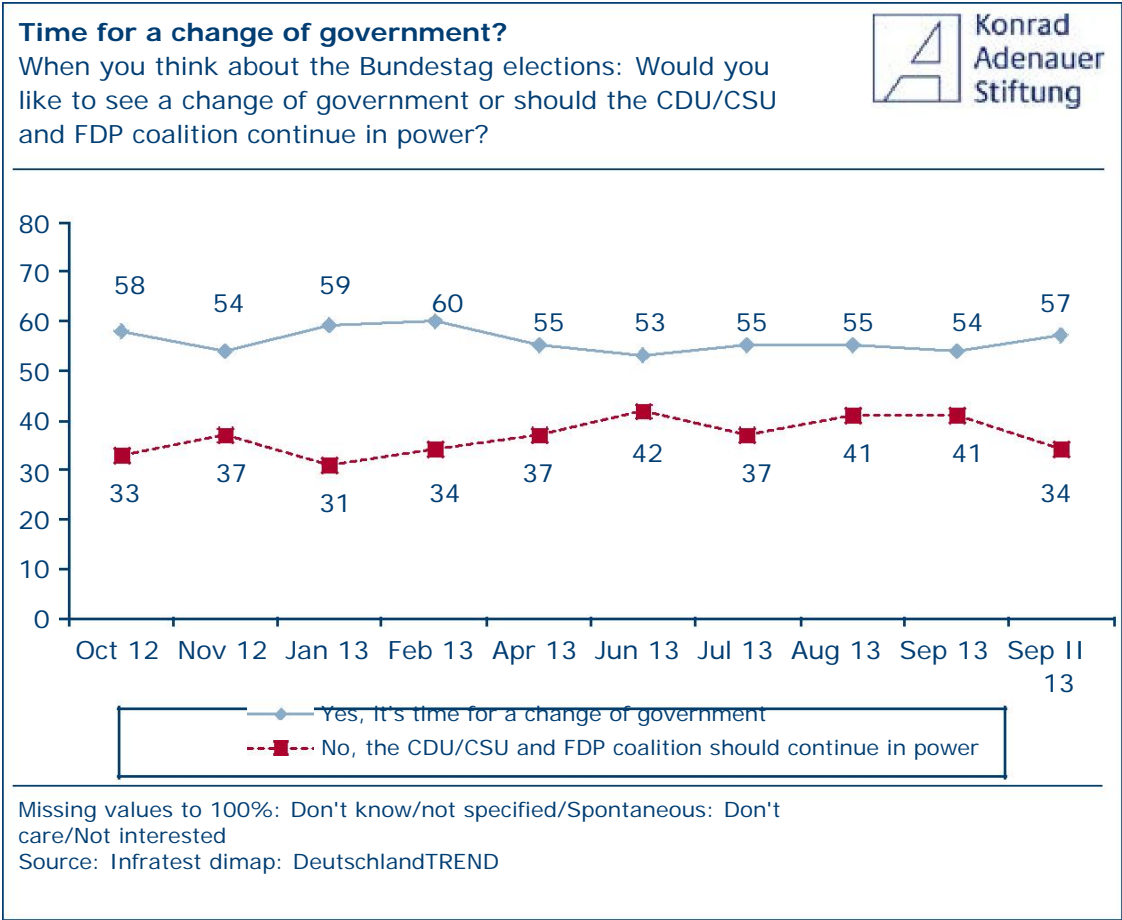


Fig. 9

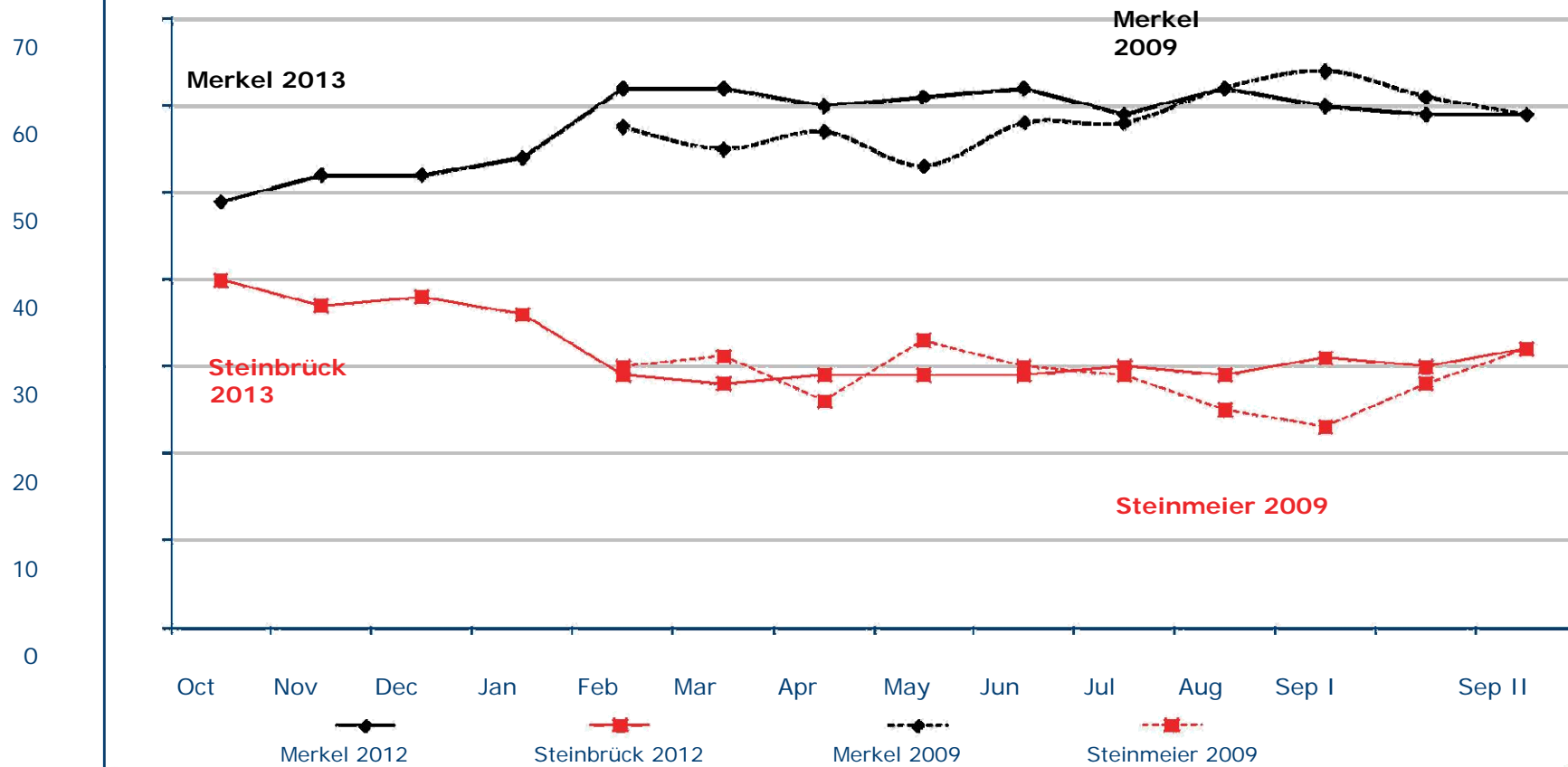
Deja-vu? The candidates' image and the personalisation of the election

Elections over recent years have seen an increase in the importance of personalities over parties. This is not a blanket trend and voters' favourites can still find themselves suddenly relegated to the opposition benches, but leading politicians who strongly polarise opinion or only

appeal to their own narrow supporter base nowadays find it increasingly difficult to survive with voters.

If we look at the starting position of the candidates for the position of Chancellor, we are reminded of the situation in 2009. Neither Frank Walter Steinmeier nor Peer Steinbrück was able to shake Angela Merkel's approval ratings. Merkel is in a league of her own when it comes to attracting consistently high levels of approval as a Chancellor. Whereas Steinmeier and Steinbrück could hope for the support of around one-third of voters in a direct vote, the Chancellor's support was hovering around 60 percent (Fig. 10).

Who would you prefer to be Chancellor? (Compared to 2009)



Source: Forschungsgruppe Wahlen: Politbarometer

Fig. 10

After Steinbrück announced his candidacy, his approval ratings among women collapsed dramatically while Merkel made steady gains. There has rarely been such a wide disparity between male and female voters when it comes to their preferred candidate. Over recent years, the voting behaviour of men and women has generally been balanced and there have only been differences of a few points between the parties. The last DeutschlandTREND survey carried out by Infratest dimap showed that 58 percent of women and 50 percent of men favoured Angela Merkel; for Peer Steinbrück the figures were 28 percent of women and 40 percent of men. This means there is a whole 30 points difference in the female vote for the two candidates. It is unusual for election analysts to come across such huge differences. An equally important factor is Merkel's approval levels among supporters of the opposition parties. 16 percent of SPD supporters, 22 percent of Left supporters and 30 percent of Greens supporters actually preferred the incumbent candidate (DeutschlandTREND, September 2013). In the run-up to the election, 70 percent of voters were satisfied with the Chancellor's work and 59 percent with the government's work (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, Sept 2-8, 2013)

If we compare the approval ratings for Merkel and Steinbrück, Merkel has a clear advantage, even outside the parties' own supporter bases. CDU/CSU supporters stand firmly behind her, whereas her challenger only received the support of 78 percent of SPD supporters, even at the end of the campaign. Even amongst supporters of the Left, 43 percent preferred Merkel to remain as Chancellor (Steinbrück was also preferred by 43 percent). Amongst the Greens, 39 percent were in favour of the incumbent. The question of personality was also of great importance to FDP supporters at the election, with 90 percent preferring Merkel (Fig. 11, Forschungsgruppe Wahlen). When asked solely about the Chancellor's work in office, her approval ratings were even higher. The majority of supporters of all parties believe that Angela Merkel is doing a good job.

Even opposition supporters respect her achievements: 77 percent of Greens supporters, 67 percent of SPD supporters and 56 percent of Left supporters share this opinion (Fig. 12).

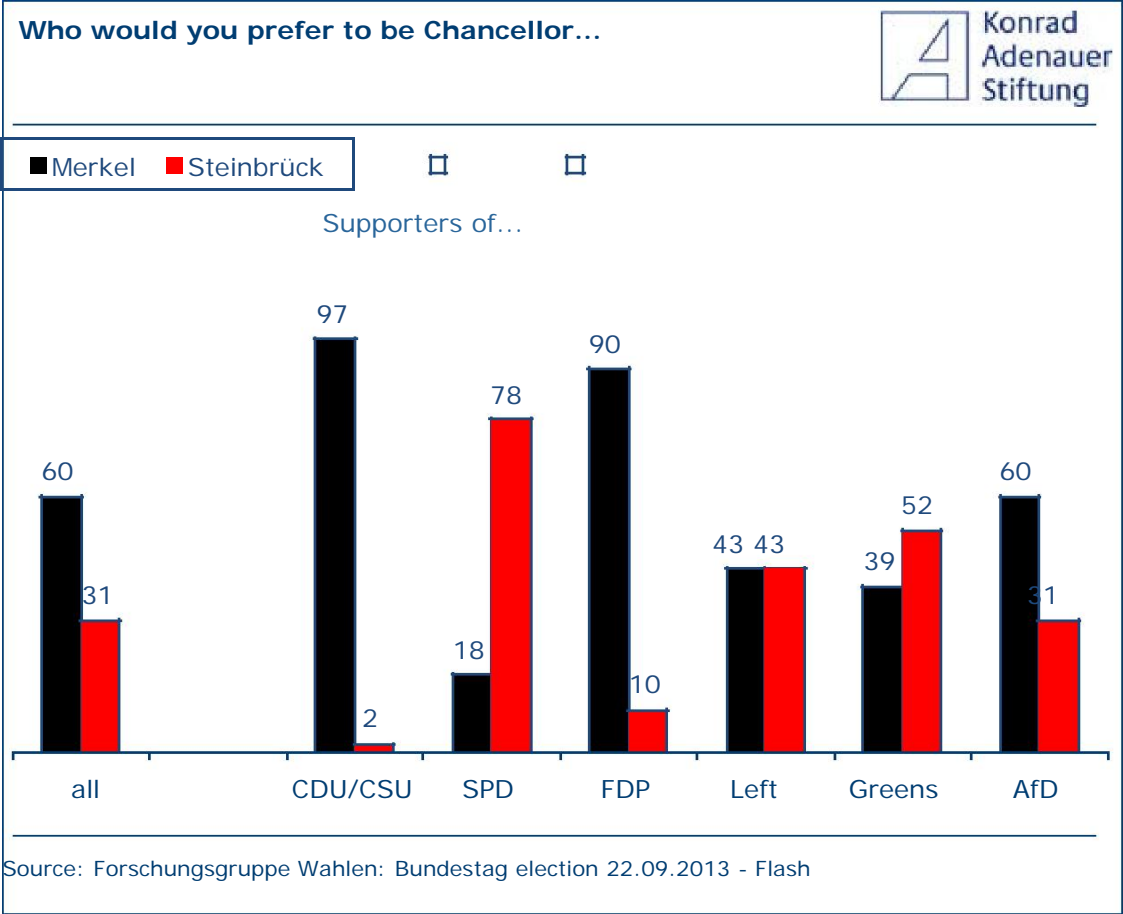


Fig. 11

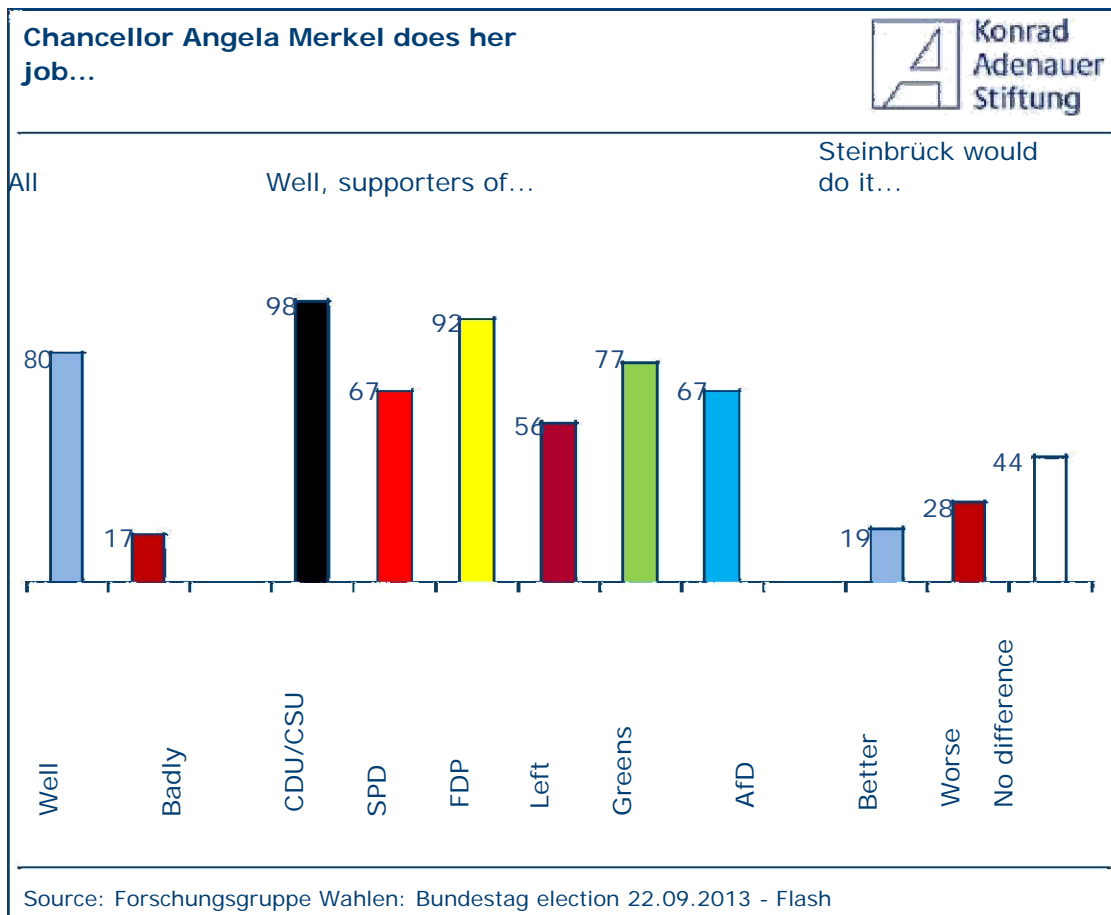


Fig. 12

Against this backdrop, it is hardly surprising that the Chancellor is rated significantly better in every area (except for social justice) than her challengers. She comes across as more likeable, more credible and more assertive, and voters have more confidence in her ability to handle the euro crisis and create jobs. She is also considered to have greater knowledge and understanding of the issues. Merkel also lies 22 points ahead of her opponent on the issue of her general ability to handle future problems (Fig. 13; Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, Politbarometer September I, June 24-30 2013, and pre-election polls). In another poll, the challenger was unable to outdo the Chancellor in a single area (apart from the SPD banner issue of social justice) (see Fig. 14 Infratest dimap). However, it is interesting that Steinbrück comes out ahead of Merkel in the area of social justice, though only by a small margin. Over the last few months some polls have even shown Steinbrück as being behind Merkel for short periods

in this respect. This is a sign that he was unable to adequately cover this core area of social democratic policy.

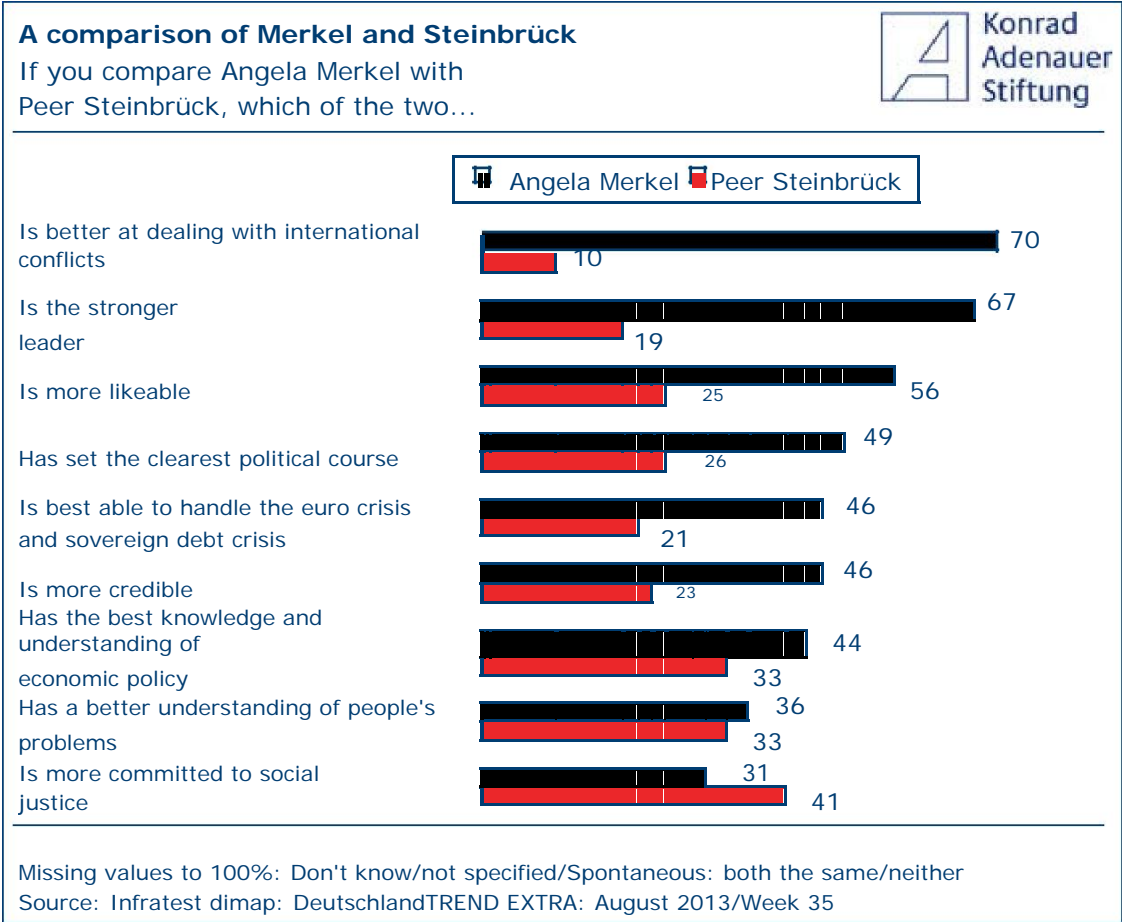


Fig. 13

| | Merkel | Steinbrück |
|---|--------|------------|
| More likeable | 52 | 18 |
| More credible | 40 | 13 |
| More assertive | 54 | 17 |
| Create more jobs | 41 | 11 |
| Handle the euro crisis better | 42 | 12 |
| More committed to social justice | 26 | 34 |
| Has greater knowledge and understanding of the issues | 40 | 13 |
| Better able to handle future problems | 38 | 16 |

Source: Forschungsgruppe Wahlen: Bundestag election 22.09.2013 - Flash

Fig. 14

Issues and expertise

Long before the Bundestag elections, the polls were showing a shift in the importance of certain issues. The former (understandably) overriding concern about how to fight unemployment declined markedly, particularly since the improvement in Germany's economic climate. Researchers are now a little vague about what they are measuring when they ask voters about their main concern. The results of several qualitative surveys carried out by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung over recent years give the impression that politics is now seen in a very selective way. Of course the "major" policies are still discussed and the main issues are part of voters' considerations, but they only feel really involved in politics when they themselves or their immediate surroundings are affected. This is not exactly a new insight. One of the consequences may be that there are now very few particularly polarising campaign issues and that politics is viewed from a great distance. In a survey carried out by the Konrad-

Adenauer-Stiftung, 21 percent of respondents said they are affected by political decisions, whereas 77 percent said they feel unaffected. A further 3 percent had no opinion⁵. Of course this does not necessarily apply at all times and to all elections, but there is nevertheless a visible trend.

In 2009 and 2013 there was no single issue that dominated the campaigns. The generally positive undertones in the economy certainly played a major role. According to Allensbach⁶, in 2013 26 percent of those surveyed expected the economy to take a downturn, whereas in 2009 the figure stood at 64 percent. 10 percent feared for their job security. The current economic situation is rated as positive by two-thirds of respondents (Fig. 15). And only a minority are worried about future trends. 68 percent believe Germany is well positioned to face the future (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen), an increase of 19 points over 2009, and 46 percent rate the general economic situation as good (2009: 9 percent; Forschungsgruppe Wahlen).

⁵ In a representative survey, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung polled 2,074 people to find out more about basic political attitudes and perceptions of politics in Germany. This telephone survey was carried out from 17 September to 2 October 2012 by the Forschungsgruppe Wahlen.

⁶ Allensbacher Archiv, IfD surveys 10032 and 11004

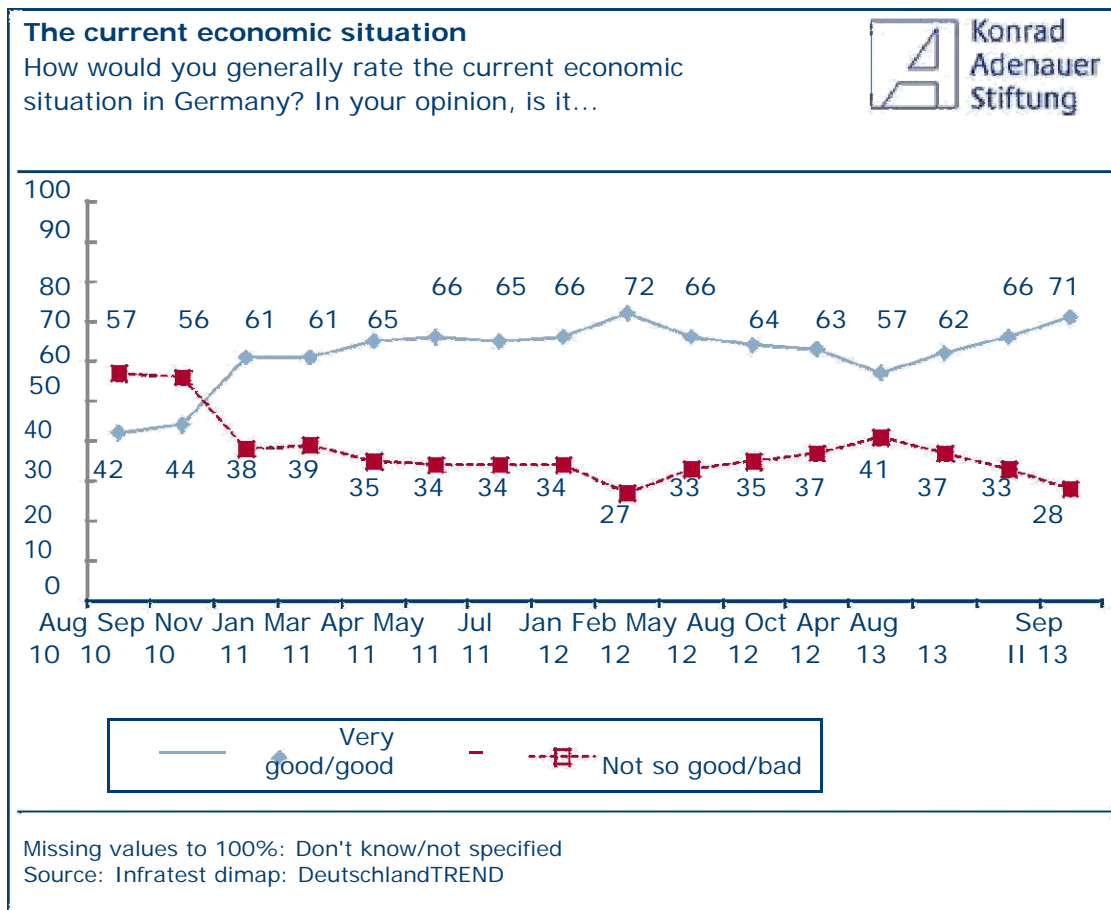


Fig. 15

In the run-up to the elections, Forschungsgruppe Wahlen pinpointed the following issues as being important to voters when deciding where to place their vote: jobs (25 percent), wages/cost of living (18 percent), euro/financial crisis (16 percent), pensions (15 percent) and social justice (12 percent). In August Infratest dimap asked about the following issues: fair wages and working conditions; good pensions; safeguarding personal standards of living; future energy supplies; future fiscal policies; the future of the euro and the political controversy about surveillance by the intelligence services. The answers ranged between 57 and 17 percent. This certainly does not reflect a clear agenda of issues.

However, when it comes to the ability to handle problems, this presents a different picture (Fig. 16). Here, there is a clear difference between the parties. The Union is given a high vote of confidence on all the main

issues of economic policy. 57 percent trust it to drive the German economy forward, and 54 percent believe it is better equipped to handle international conflicts. 48 percent believe in its ability to create and safeguard jobs, and 46 percent are happy with its budgetary and financial policies. A further 42 percent feel it has the euro and sovereign debt crises under control. The Union is well ahead of the SPD in all these areas, which gained no more than 30 percent in any of the sections and generally scored well below this figure.

The SPD even remains weak in its traditionally strong areas (Fig. 16): 40 percent rate it highly on social justice (Union 26 percent), and on health policy it is only 4 percent ahead of the Union. Compared to 2009 (in those areas that can be compared in this survey), the SPD has not gained the confidence of voters on a single issue. At best, it has held its own or has even seen deterioration in its already weak 2009 position. It has even lost 4 points on social justice, while the Union has gained 7 points in this area. The other parties have also clearly lost ground compared to 2009 (DeutschlandTREND September 2013). There was also no difference in the results of the polls conducted by the Forschungsgruppe Wahlen in the run-up to the elections (Fig. 17). The only area where the SPD came out ahead of the Union was on social justice, and here the difference was only marginal. The two main parties were neck-and-neck in one area only: family issues. The difference was particularly striking when it came to how the two parties would handle future problems. Compared to the previous election, the Union increased its rating by 10 points to 39 percent, whereas the SPD remained at a very low level (2009: 18 percent; 2013: 20 percent).

Ability of the various parties

I will now list a range of policy issues. Please answer for each of them which party you would trust to best handle these issues.

| | CDU | None of the above | | | | |
|--|------------|-------------------|-----------|------------------------|------------|-----------|
| | FDP | Left | Greens | parties/ Don't know | | |
| Driving the German economy | 57 (+3) | 21 (+1) | 4 (±0) | 1 (+1) | 2 (-1) | 1 (-4) |
| Handling international conflicts | 54 | 20 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 15 |
| Safeguarding and creating jobs | 48 (+5) | 26 (-3) | 2 (-1) | 3 (+1) | 3 (±0) | 1 (-3) |
| Conducting sound budgetary and financial policies | 46 (±0) | 25 (+2) | 3 (-1) | 2 (+1) | 4 (±0) | 1 (-2) |
| Taking control of the euro and sovereign debt crises | 42 (-3) | 18 (+4) | 1 (±0) | 2 (+1) | 2 (+1) | 3 (-2) |
| Conducting sound educational policies | 38 (-1) | 30 (+2) | 3 (-1) | 4 (+1) | 7 (-2) | 1 (+3) |
| Conducting sound fiscal policies | 33 (+2) | 29 (-1) | 6 (+1) | 4 (+2) | 3 (-1) | 2 (-3) |
| Conducting sound family and child policies | 32 (+4) | 32 (+1) | 2 (±0) | 5 (+1) | 11 (-4) | 1 (±0) |
| Safeguarding pensions in the long term* | 31 (-1) | 31 (-6) | 2 (+1) | 5 (+2) | 3 (±0) | 2 (+3) |
| Conducting sound health policy | 29 (±0) | 33 (+3) | 4 (±0) | 3 (+1) | 8 (-3) | 2 (±0) |
| Committing to social justice | 26 (+4) | 40 (+2) | 2 (-1) | 8 (±0) | 5 (-4) | 1 (-2) |
| Working to ensure affordable energy | 23 | 23 | 2 | 4 | 22 | 25 |

Figures in brackets: Comparison with June 2013/*Comparison with December 2012
Missing values to 100%: Other party/not specified
Source: Infratest dimap: DeutschlandTREND September 2013

Fig. 16

Which party is best able to resolve the problems of...



| | CDU/CSU | SPD | Greens | None of the above |
|----------------|---------|-----|--------|-------------------|
| Jobs | 40 | 22 | | 13 |
| Economy | 47 | 17 | | 17 |
| Euro crisis | 38 | 19 | | 6 |
| Pensions | 29 | 25 | | 18 |
| Social justice | 26 | 35 | | 7 |
| Taxes | 32 | 27 | | 8 |
| Family | 30 | 29 | 9 | 6 |
| Energy | 22 | 10 | 35 | 8 |
| Future | 39 | 20 | 3 | 15 |

Source: Forschungsgruppe Wahlen: Bundestag election 22.09.2013 - Flash

Fig. 17

Voter movement figures⁷

In the Bundestag elections there were considerable shifts between the parties and also movement among former non-voters. The strongest shifts occurred between the Union and the FDP. 2,110,000 voters moved over to the Union from the liberals. The second-largest shift was from the Green camp to the SPD, numbering 550,000 voters. But the social democrats also gained significant new support thanks to an influx of 530,000 former FDP voters.

An unusually large number of voters shifted from the Greens to the Union in these latest elections. Voter shifts between these two parties are normally much more modest. This time round, the Union gained

⁷ Infratest dimap

420,000 votes in this way. It seems likely that the Greens' plans on taxation played a role in this shift.

Voters who abandoned the Left generally went to the SDP (-370,000). The FDP also lost out significantly to the AfD, with 430,000 former voters changing their allegiance. But Left supporters were also tempted by the AfD, with 340,000 moving over to the new party. 410,000 former non-voters also cast their votes for the AfD.

Three parties benefited from the increased turnover. 1,130,000 former non-voters voted for the Union, 360,000 for the SPD and 210,000 for the AfD. All the other parties suffered due to their supporters not turning out to vote.

Voting behaviour in the Bundestag elections among different sections of the population⁸

This election also proved to be a reflection of the main trends in voter behaviour. Caution should be exercised when trying to make a "forensic" interpretation of social structures. Social structures provide only a partial explanation for people's voting behaviours. Percentage differences of less than 5 points do not really count as a difference, so we will only be describing the main trends. The tables provide more detail if required.

As voters grow older, they tend to lean more towards the two main parties. The Union's most loyal voters are women aged 60 and above (53 percent), whereas the SPD appeals more to men over 60 (30 percent) (Infratest dimap). The Greens are more popular with younger voters, but

⁸ The results produced by Infratest dimap and Forschungsgruppe Wahlen are summarised here and only referenced when specific figures are quoted.

their support has ebbed away here at an above-average rate. The Union particularly increased its support among middle-aged voters, whereas the SPD did particularly badly with this age group. The FDP lost votes fairly consistently across all age groups. The Left also lost voters across all groups. The AfD attracted below-average support from older women.

The differences in the parties' gains and losses across voter groups by education were insignificant. At this election, the two main parties continued to attract voters with low or medium levels of education, with the SPD in particular attracting voters with lower education levels. The Greens are disproportionately popular with voters with high levels of education. Voter education levels have little effect on support for the other parties.

The Union made significant gains with self-employed voters, a group that abandoned the FDP in numbers. It also increased its support among farmers (+16 points, Forschungsgruppe Wahlen). Civil servants are also more likely to vote for the Union, and the Greens also attract above-average support among this sector. 44 percent of civil servants vote for the Union and 13 percent for the Greens. The strongest (though not the largest) group of voters for the Left is the unemployed, but the party experienced a slight drop in support among working people.

The Union made above-average gains among Protestants (+10 points), resulting in support from 42 percent of Protestants and 52 percent of Catholics (Infratest dimap). The Greens and the Left are slightly ahead among voters with no religious denomination. Church-going Catholics are traditionally an important supporter base for the Union, and these

elections showed that this is still the case. 72 percent of Catholics who attend church frequently⁹ vote for the Union (Forschungsgruppe Wahlen).

Differences between the new and old states are reflected in the different performances of the parties, but the structures remain largely comparable. The only striking result is that the AfD is particularly popular with men aged 25-45 and with employed voters in the new states.

⁹The number of Catholics who attend church frequently make up two percent of the exit polls.