

Gemeinsam erfolgreich.

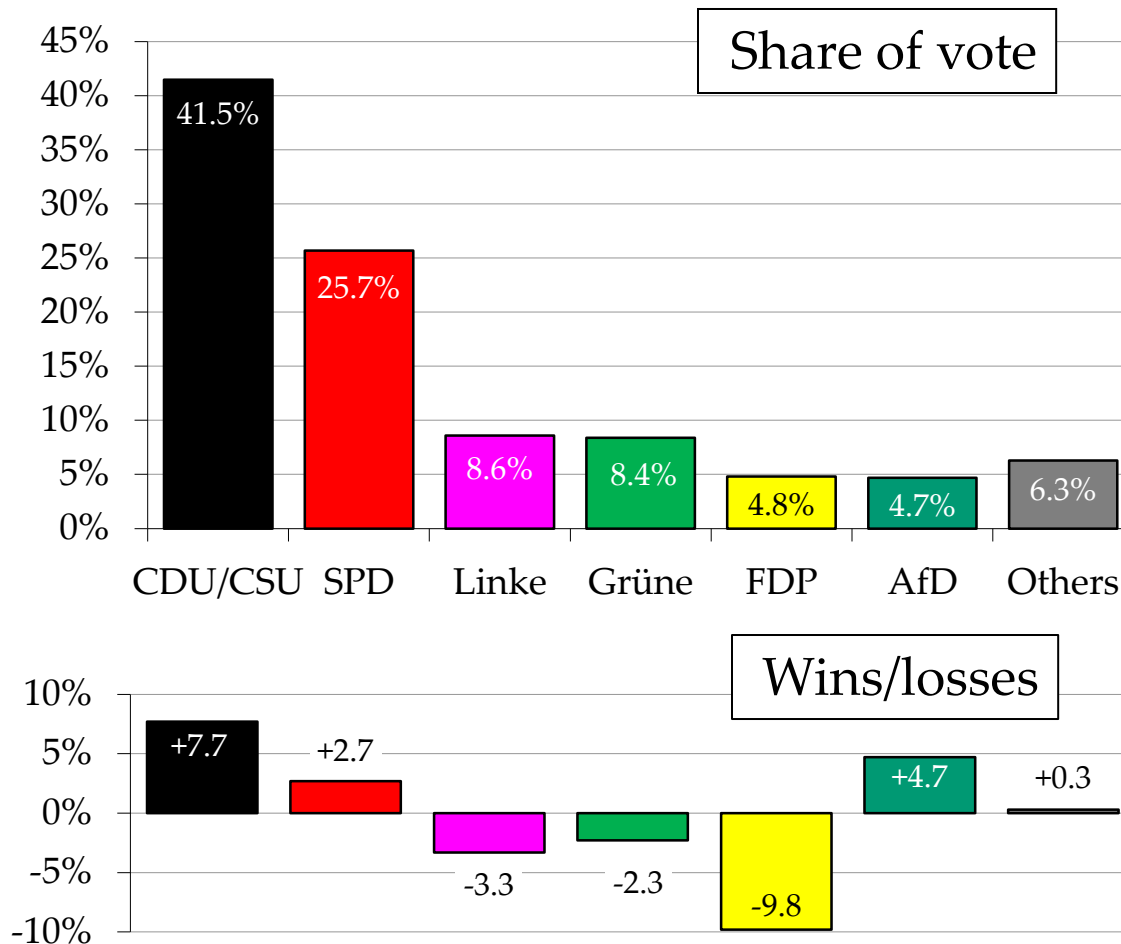
Für Deutschland.

A group of German politicians, including Angela Merkel, are celebrating on a stage. They are holding German flags and smiling. The background is blue with the CDU logo repeated. A speech bubble at the top right says "Für Deutschland." and a banner at the top says "Gemeinsam erfolgreich." The foreground shows a crowd of people, some holding up phones to take pictures.

Germany after the election: Moment of truth?

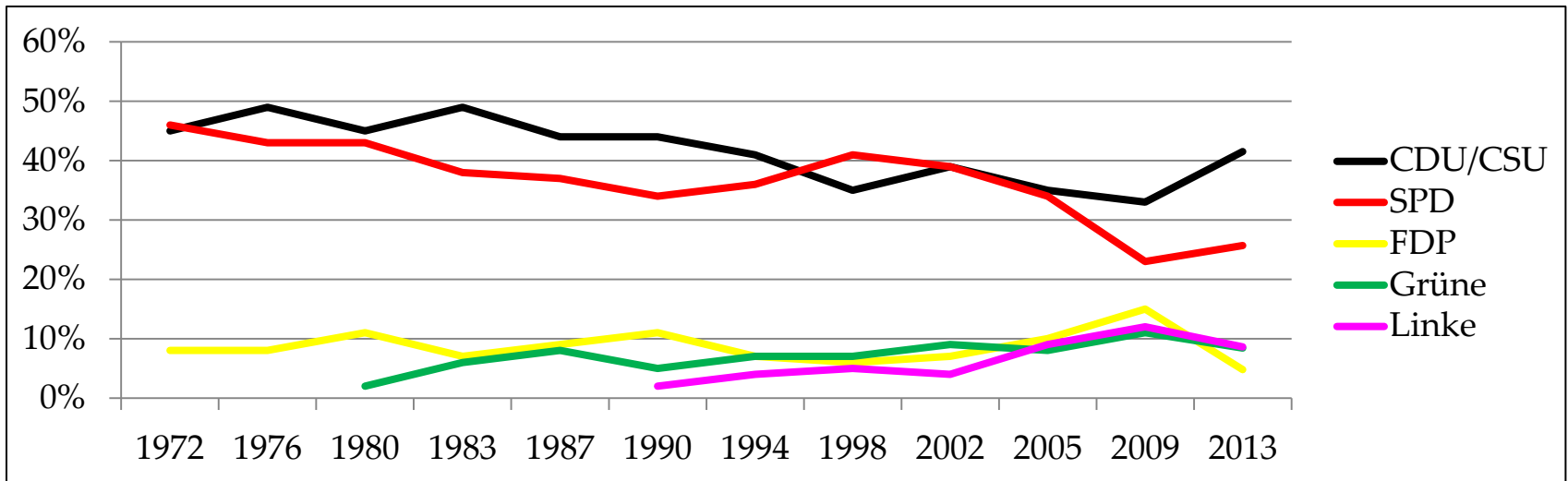
Achim Hurrelmann, Carleton University

Germany's 18th federal election -- Merkelmania?



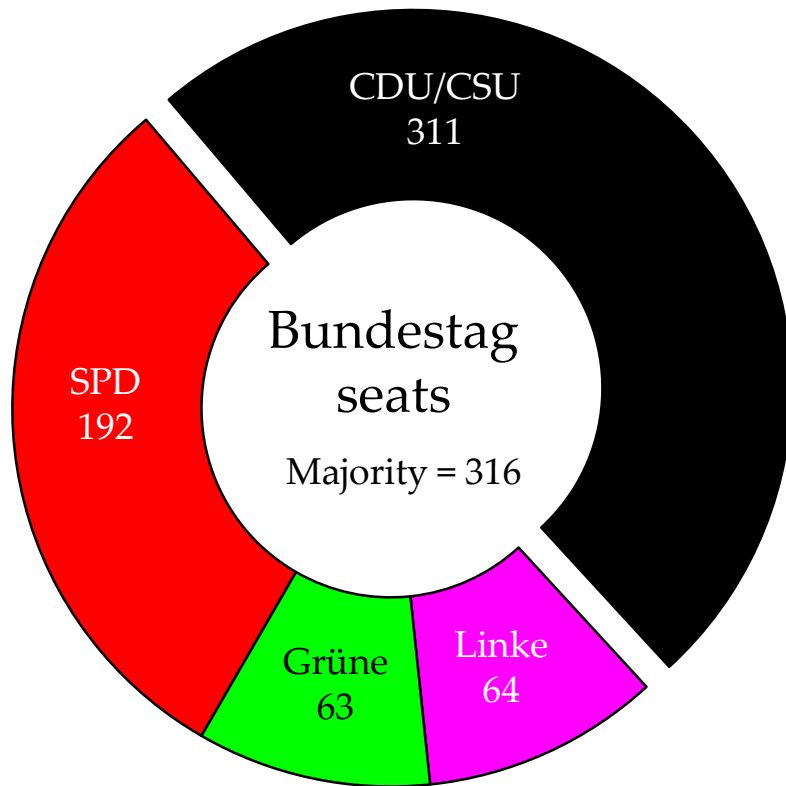
- Decisive victory for Merkel's CDU/CSU
- SPD makes few gains compared to 2009
- Merkel's coalition partner FDP voted out of Bundestag
- Euroskeptic AfD stays below 5% threshold

Historic proportions of Merkel's victory



- Best result for CDU/CSU since 1990
- Gap to SPD rises to highest level since 1957
- Rise of small parties in 2009 more than reversed
- FDP voted out of Bundestag for first time since 1949

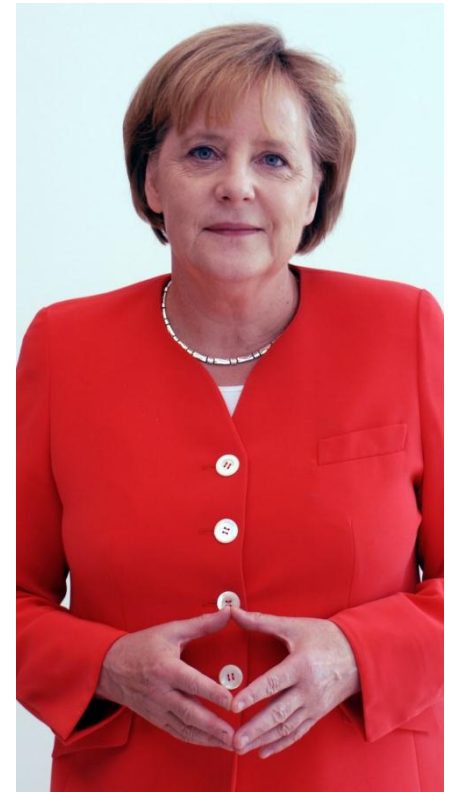
And yet: A Chancellor short of a majority



- CDU/CSU wins strong plurality of seats, but no majority
- Merkel will need support from the political left to govern
- Coalition options: Grand coalition (CDU/CSU plus SPD) or black-green coalition (CDU/CSU plus Greens)
- Minority government has been ruled out by Merkel
- Left-wing coalition has been ruled out by SPD and Greens

The post-political chancellor -- Why Angela Merkel is so popular

- As government leader, Merkel has largely succeeded in staying above the fray of political conflict
- Her public statements make governing appear as a matter of common-sense decision-making, not partisan battle
- Germany's strong economy, in spite of the Euro crisis, provided an effective argument in favour of this leadership style
- Her party's strategy of "asymmetric demobilization" robbed the opposition of campaign themes



“Gurkentruppe” -- Why the FDP lost so badly

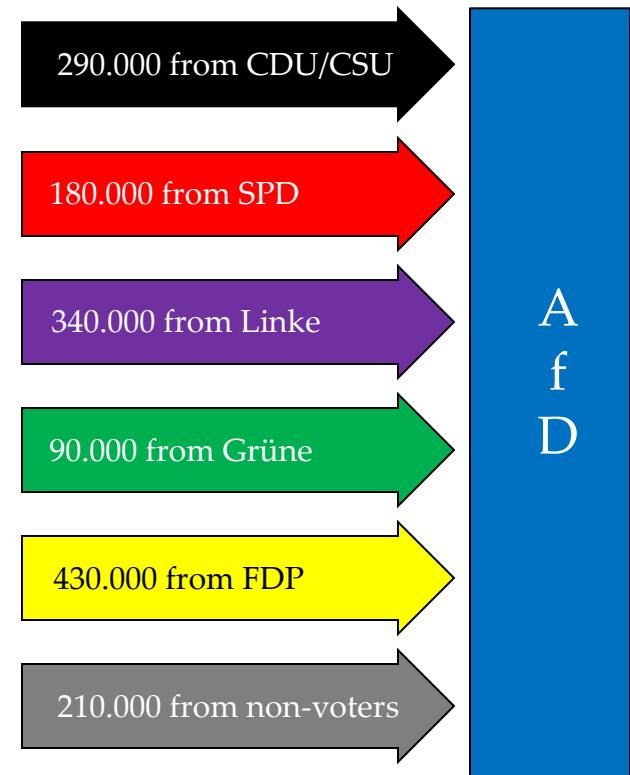


FDP leader Philipp Rösler (right) with top candidate Rainer Brüderle (left)

- The FDP entered the government in 2009 with many promises (especially large-scale tax reductions), but few of these became government policy
- The FDP leadership was weakened by infighting, as well as damaging media revelations against top candidate Rainer Brüderle
- A change in electoral rules made strategic votes by CDU/CSU supporters for the FDP less attractive; FDP lost more than 2.1 million votes to CDU/CSU

Professors to the rescue -- Why the AfD was (not more) successful

- Alternative für Deutschland (AfD), initiated by economics professors, is the first serious Euroskeptic party in German politics
- AfD leaders are former CDU/CSU and FDP supporters, but party won votes across the political spectrum
- AfD did better in East Germany (5.8%) than in West Germany (4.4%)
- AfD brought forward some populist positions, especially on migration, but it lacked genuine populist appeal



Source: Infratest dimap

Moment of truth (I) -- Who dares to govern with the “praying mantis”?

- Merkel’s last two coalition partners – SPD (2005-09) and FDP (2009-13) – got little credit for their contribution to her government and suffered bad electoral defeats
- Both potential junior partners after this election – SPD and Grüne – are skeptical of forming a government with the CDU/CSU
- Minority government or new election cannot be ruled out entirely

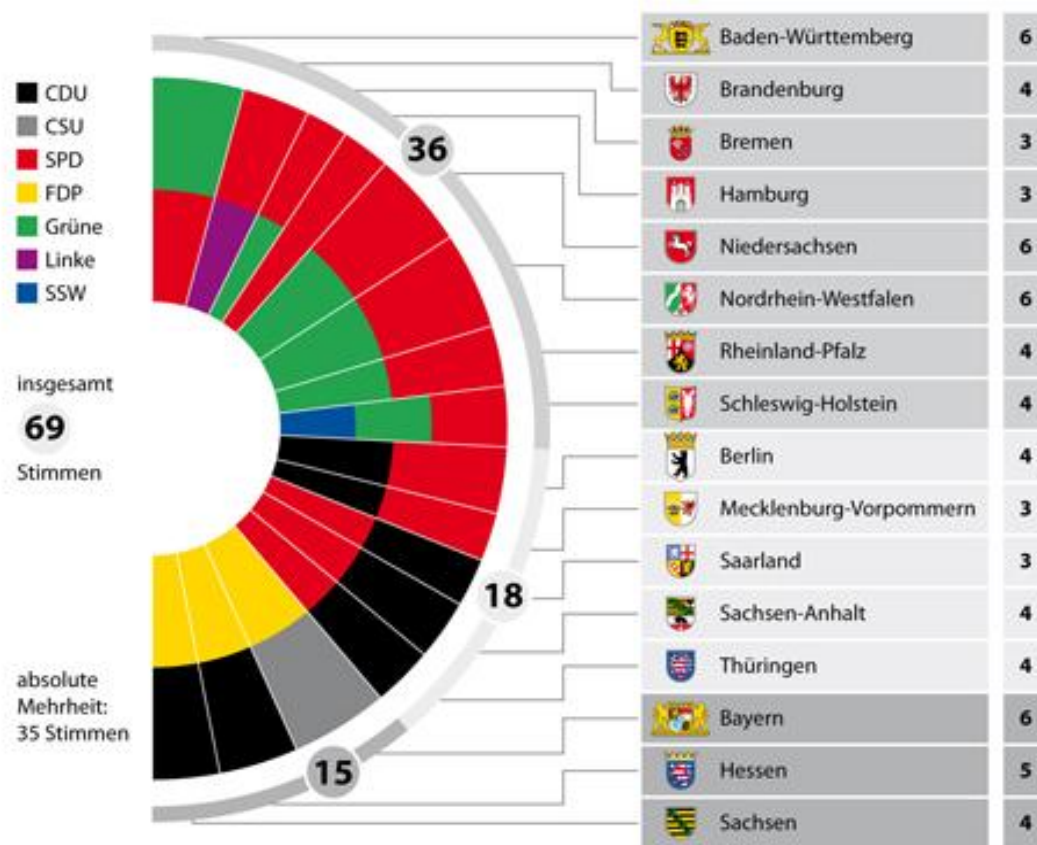


Potential vice chancellors?
SPD leader Sigmar Gabriel
(right), Grüne top candidate
Katrin Göring-Eckardt (left)

Government options

	Why could it come about?	What are the obstacles?
Grand Coalition (CDU/CSU plus SPD)	Tested model; programmatic differences between CDU/CSU and SPD are bridgeable; public opinion favours this option; SPD sees itself as party of responsible government; its federal leaders are office-seeking	Significant opposition among SPD members and leaders at <i>Länder</i> level; SPD already has significant role in federal governance via Bundesrat majority

Bundesrat -- An SPD-dominated chamber



- Since 2009, CDU/CSU has lost five *Länder* to SPD and Greens
- There is now a red-green majority in the Bundesrat
- This gives SPD co-governing role on federal legislation
- Grand or Black-Green Coalitions do not have Bundesrat majority

Government options

	Why could it come about?	What are the obstacles?
Black-Green Coalition (CDU/CSU plus Grüne)	Both CDU/CSU and Greens have an interest in exploring new coalition options; some convergence on issues like renewable energy, values-oriented approach to politics	Untested model; cultural differences and mistrust between CDU/CSU and Grüne; Grüne leadership is in disarray; coalition might split Green party

Government options

	Why could it come about?	What are the obstacles?
Minority government (CDU/CSU alone)	Neither SPD nor Grüne are eager to govern with CDU/CSU, but size of Merkel's victory clearly gives her a mandate to form a government; issue-by-issue compromise on legislation is necessary anyways because of SPD Bundesrat majority	Untested model; desire for stability; need for longer-term planning

Moment of truth (II) -- Why not use a leftist majority?



Linke politicians Sahra Wagenknecht, Gregor Gysi, Katja Kipping (from left)

- SPD and Grüne have ruled out cooperation with Linke at the federal level, citing especially their positions on foreign policy and the EU
- Linke is internally divided between a more pragmatic and a more dogmatic wing; the former dominates in the East, the latter in the West
- Left-of-centre majorities are unlikely if Linke is permanently excluded

Moment of truth (III) -- Realignment in the centre-right?

- CDU (more so than CSU) faces vacuum in program and personnel once Merkel's star fades
- Merkel's shift to the middle creates opportunities for mobilization to the right of CDU/CSU
- Coalition with SPD or Grüne would further exacerbate this development
- FDP is not dead yet, but faces strong competition from AfD, which could receive boost in Euro-elections 2014



AfD leader Bernd Lucke

Moment of truth (IV) -- Policy challenges for the new government

- EU/European financial crisis: Further bailout packages and/or debt haircuts; promote growth in Southern Europe; banking union
- Labour market policy: Protect labour market flexibilization brought by Agenda 2010 reform but fight excesses/abuses
- Infrastructure: Build energy grid needed for shift towards renewable energy; invest in education and transport infrastructure



Given the difficult process of government formation, it will likely take months until these issues can be tackled.