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Candidates in the 2005 Bundestag Election: Mode of Candidacy, Campaigning and Issues

ANDREAS M. WÜST, HERMANN SCHMITT, THOMAS GSCHWEND and THOMAS ZITTEL

In 1973, Hans Meyer characterised Germany's electoral system for the Bundestag elections as '*teil-personalisierte Verhältniswahl*', a system of proportional representation ('*Verhältniswahl*') in which the overall seat share of each party is determined by the party vote share, but in which one half of all seats ('teil') in the Bundestag are filled by successful constituency candidates ('personalisiert').[1] As telling as this label is, Shugart and Wattenberg have made the classificatory term 'mixed-member proportional' (MMP) at least internationally more common.[2] From a candidate's perspective, to get elected to the Bundestag, they either need to win a seat in one of the 299 single-member constituencies, or need to be placed well on a closed, regional list of a party that qualifies for seat distribution.[3] However, a relative majority of votes in a constituency is not too easy to get. The big parties – the Social Democratic Party (SPD), Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and Bavaria's Christian Social Union (CSU) – are clearly advantaged, especially in their strongholds, and the Left.PDS has repeatedly been successful in some constituencies in the east of Germany

(primarily Berlin). Successful candidates not belonging to a big or regionally strong party have so far been exceptions. In the past, not even former foreign ministers Hans-Dietrich Genscher (FDP) or Joschka Fischer (Greens) were able to get close to a victory in their constituencies. Yet the repeated success of the Green Party's left-winger Christian Ströbele in Berlin suggests that – under certain conditions – personality (and possibly also incumbency), media coverage and a well-run personal campaign enable candidates of small parties to challenge the candidates of big parties.[4]

The easiest way for a candidate to get elected is being nominated in a constituency that a major party dominates. It is a well-known dictum that, in such strongholds, people would even cast their vote for a broomstick if the tag of the right party was attached. While – along with the erosion of party attachments – 'automatic' voting for any party candidate is certainly in decline, candidacy in a stronghold is still the most promising road into parliament. Almost as promising is placement at the top or at least high up on a party's regional list. An effect of the MMP system is that a high position on a small party's list, like that of the FDP or of the Greens, can be a safer way to get into parliament than running on the list of a big party. Since there are hardly any constituency winners of the FDP (the only one was in 1990) and of the Greens (only Ströbele in 2002 and 2005), the chances to get into parliament are quite easily calculable based on the expected vote share and position on the list. On a major party's list, even for top ranking candidates, the odds of success are wide open. The Bundestag seats for a party in each *Bundesland* are filled by constituency winners first, so if a party does perform marginally overall in a state but nevertheless wins most constituencies there, a top-seated candidate might fail to win a mandate. Therefore, most candidates both run in a constituency and are placed on a regional party list. While this strategy certainly enhances chances that big parties' candidates in particular will get into the Bundestag, it also has the opposite effect of the one just described. Even a middle position on a regional party list can lift a candidate of a major party into the Bundestag if many successful constituency candidates are listed higher. In 2005, for example, Andreas Schmidt of the CDU in North-Rhine Westphalia (NRW) was placed only 33rd on the party's state list, but nevertheless got elected from it because 11 other CDU candidates ranked above him captured their NRW constituencies. These winners are then no longer considered for the seat distribution by list, and list candidates ranked lower (like Schmidt in this case) move up. All in all, 24 CDU candidates in NRW got elected in a constituency at this election, and only 22 by list.

MODE OF CANDIDACY

Limiting our analysis to the relevant parties, i.e. to those represented in the Bundestag, we find that a majority (45 per cent) of their 2346 candidates in the 2005 election ran both in a constituency and on a party list. Exclusively running on a party list was the case for 37 per cent of the candidates, and only 19 per cent tried to get into the Bundestag by just running in a constituency. There is significant variation by party. As Table 1 shows, the sharpest distinctions between constituency and list candidacies can be found among CSU and Left.PDS candidates: only about one fifth of them were 'hybrids' using both modes of candidacy. By contrast, almost two thirds of FDP

TABLE 1
MODES OF CANDIDACY BY PARTY (ROW %)

Party	Constituency only	Constituency and list	List only	N
SPD	2	59	39	488
CDU	9	40	51	509
CSU	32	20	48	87
FDP	9	65	26	403
Greens	35	46	19	366
Left.PDS	38	21	40	487
Total	**19**	**45**	**37**	**2346**

candidates were hybrids, and more than half of the SPD candidates as well. For Green candidates, running both in a constituency and on a list was also the most common mode. The candidates of the Christian parties used the list candidacy most often. Finally, being a pure constituency candidate was the least preferred mode. Fewer than 10 per cent of the SPD, CDU and FDP candidates ran in a constituency only, while parties with an exclusive (CSU) or overwhelming (Left.PDS) regional appeal presented about a third of their candidates in constituencies exclusively (there is no such obvious reason for the Greens' equally high share of pure constituency candidates).

It would be an exaggeration to talk of first or second class candidates or MPs, but winning a constituency is certainly more prestigious than being 'just' a list MP. Therefore, we expect that constituency candidates tend to be older and more experienced than list candidates. A first indicator for this hypothesis is the relationship between mode of candidacy and incumbency. In 2005, 95 per cent of incumbents ran in constituencies, while only 58 per cent of the other candidates did. The most extreme case was the CSU, in which only 11 per cent of the new candidates were able to run in a constituency. The share of hybrids in particular was significantly higher among incumbents (77 per cent) than among new candidates (39 per cent). And the SPD shows the biggest difference: 96 per cent of its incumbents ran both in constituencies and on a regional list, but only 45 per cent of the new candidates did likewise. Two other indicators are compiled in Table 2. Based on the data of the German Candidate Study 2005 which we conducted in the late fall and early winter of 2005,[5] we are able to show that age and seniority do play roles for the mode of candidacy. Pure list candidates are younger and tend to have been in the party for a shorter period of time than constituency candidates. This was especially true for the biggest parties, the SPD and the CDU. So the opportunity to run in a constituency and the chance to become a constituency MP need to be earned.

Yet constituencies differ. Success is guaranteed in very few, but many provide a good opportunity for candidates of the SPD, the CDU and especially the CSU in Bavaria to make it into the Bundestag. So do the districts of candidates running exclusively in a constituency differ from those of the hybrids? We built four categories based on the 2005 candidate vote shares (first vote), ranging from 'no chance' (up to 25 per cent of the vote), 'minor chance' (25 to 40 per cent), 'major chance' (40 to 55 per cent) to 'can't lose' (more than 55 per cent). And if we cross-tabulate these categories with the mode of candidacy (Table 3), we see that constituency candidates without a list 'back-up' are advantaged over hybrids. The overwhelming majority of the former

TABLE 2
AGE AND YEARS OF PARTY ACTIVITY (MEANS; GCS 2005)

Party	Mode	Constituency only	Constituency and list	List only	N
SPD	age	(61)	47	40	177
	years in party	(29)	22	15	180
CDU	age	54	50	43	176
	years in party	27	25	16	175
CSU	age	(45)	(58)	43	29
	years in party	(26)	(27)	18	28
FDP	age	(45)	45	45	201
	years in party	(14)	14	16	298
Greens	age	43	42	41	201
	years in party	12	12	9	197
Left.PDS	age	52	47	46	222
	years in party	7	9	8	206
Total	**age**	**48**	**46**	**43**	**1006**
	years in party	**12**	**17**	**13**	**984**

Note: Means for N < 10 in parentheses.

are running in rather promising constituencies, while many of the latter have to fight hard for a victory. However, compared to the pure list candidates, hybrids are – on average – ranked significantly higher on the regional lists. And as Table 4 displays, this is the case for the candidates of all parties, with hybrids of the SPD, the CDU and the CSU being advantaged most. We read this result in at least two ways. First, many candidates spending time, energy and money running in less rewarding constituencies seem to be partially compensated by a potentially successful rank on a regional list. Second, a high place on such a regional list, which often indicates a certain prominence within a party, might also entail an obligation to run in a somewhat less promising constituency.

TABLE 3
SHARE OF FIRST VOTES BY MODE OF CANDIDACY (IN %; CATEGORISED RESULTS)

Party	Mode	< 25% no chance	> 25 to 40% minor chance	> 40 to 55% major chance	> 55 % not to loose
SPD	const. only	0	27	64	9
	const. and list	6	31	57	6
CDU	const. only	4	18	76	2
	const. and list	8	62	30	0
CSU	const. only	0	0	14	86
	const. and list	0	0	59	41
FDP	const. only	100	0	0	0
	const. and list	100	0	0	0
Greens	const. only	99	1	0	0
	const. and list	100	0	0	0
Left.PDS	const. only	98	2	0	0
	const. and list	97	3	0	0

TABLE 4
RANK ON PARTY LIST BY MODE OF CANDIDATURE (MEANS)

	Rank on party list (all candidates)		Rank on party list (GCS 2005)	
Party	**List only**	**List and constituency**	**List only**	**List and constituency**
SPD	32	17	34	17
CDU	34	13	35	13
CSU	37	12	(37)	17
FDP	20	17	21	18
Greens	13	9	13	10
Left.PDS	14	9	14	11
Total	**26**	**14**	**26**	**15**

Note: Means for N < 10 in parentheses.

Candidates of the SPD, CDU and CSU running exclusively in a constituency do seldom fail. The success rate documented in Table 5 also reveals that almost all candidates running only on a party list do not get elected. This also holds true for the small parties, the FDP and Greens, while the unexpected rate of success for the Left.PDS in this election certainly contributed to a slightly higher success rate for their exclusive list candidates. Nevertheless, most MPs (83 per cent) are hybrids, who could have been – and, in the case of the big parties, would have been – elected either way. It remains to be seen whether the campaigns of these candidates vary as well.

CAMPAIGNING

Most recent campaign research refocused our attention from the national to the local level. With an eye on the 1990s, Pippa Norris[6] detected a continuing shift from modern campaigning based on centralised party control, professional expertise and mass media communication (television) to post-modern campaigning. Post-modern campaigns pay more attention to the local level and exploit new technologies such as computers, direct mailing techniques and telephone canvassing to get into more direct and individualised contact with constituents to bring back the pre-modern heyday of candidates pressing flesh and working the streets via different means.[7]

TABLE 5
SUCCESS RATE BY MODE OF CANDIDACY (COLUMN %)

Party	**Constituency only**	**Constituency and list**	**List only**
SPD	82	73	1
CDU	91	66	1
CSU	100	94	5
FDP	0	22	2
Greens	1	29	1
Left.PDS	0	37	8
Total	**18**	**48**	**3**
N	80	509	25

The 2005 German Candidate Study aims to contribute to this debate by studying the role of rank and file candidates and the structure of local campaigns in Germany. We ask in particular questions such as: How much time and money do candidates invest in their campaigns? And how much do parties contribute to their campaign budgets? What means do candidates employ in their campaigns? Finally, what is the focus of their campaign: the candidate himself/herself, or the party?

The 2005 German Candidate Study goes further in exploring reasons for variance among candidates in the context of the German mixed-member electoral system. We expect, for example, that pure list candidates – and maybe especially those of major parties – spend less time campaigning and invest less money compared to those running in a constituency or as double candidates in a constituency and on a party list (a so-called hybrid). We also think that the parties are willing to support the latter more than the former, who are often only recruited to fill the regional party lists. It needs to be seen whether and to what extent patterns of personalised campaigning are evident among the different types of candidates.

The time Bundestag candidates invested in campaigning during the last month of the 2005 election campaign is displayed in Table 6. The average was 40 hours per week, ranging from 35 hours on average for FDP candidates, to 53 on average for the CSU's. This big difference is surprising, since the CSU had a significantly higher share of pure list candidates, who would normally be expected to show less campaign activity. Yet the CSU's list candidates campaigned 44 hours per week on average, while the FDP's spent just 18 hours on the hustings. This is the lowest mean for any of the sub-groups based on party affiliation and mode of candidacy, but the SPD's and CDU's pure list candidates were not far behind. Constituency candidates clearly show a higher degree of campaign activity than do the list candidates. This holds true for all parties, with the hybrids of the larger SPD and CDU taking the lead, campaigning about 70 hours per week on average.

A very similar pattern can be detected by examining the campaign budgets of the candidates (Table 7). The extremes were, on one hand, €0 (60 cases total, spread across all parties, but with 53 being pure list candidates) and, on the other hand, €150,000 (spent by one CDU hybrid). Divided into subgroups by mode of candidacy, the average budget of about €10,600 ranged from €2,600 that a pure list candidate

TABLE 6
CAMPAIGNING TIME BY PARTY AND BY MODE OF CANDIDACY (IN HOURS, MEANS; GCS 2005)

Party	All candidates	List only	Constituency only	Constituency and list
CSU	53	44	(83)	(53)
SPD	52	22	(56)	70
CDU	41	20	66	71
Greens	36	25	31	44
Left.PDS	36	30	34	52
FDP	35	18	(39)	41
Total	**40**	**24**	**37**	**54**

Note: Means for N < 10 in parentheses.

TABLE 7
CAMPAIGN BUDGET AND ITS PARTY SHARE BY PARTY AND BY MODE OF CANDIDACY (MEANS; GCS 2005)

Party		All candidates	List only	Constituency only	Constituency and list
CDU	budget	21.457 €	3.824 €	39.700 €	37.019 €
	party share	20 %	27 %	8 %	16 %
SPD	budget	20.164 €	1.393 €	(16.800 €)	25.281 €
	party share	55 %	45 %	(60 %)	58 %
CSU	budget	18.769 €	9.716 €	(41.667 €)	(22.500 €)
	party share	4 %	5 %	(3 %)	(0 %)
FDP	budget	7.335 €	1.557 €	(3.625 €)	9.245 €
	party share	38 %	29 %	(50 %)	40 %
Greens	budget	5.489 €	1.034 €	5.290 €	7.197 €
	party share	70 %	30 %	80 %	73 %
Left.PDS	budget	2.682 €	1.076 €	2.270 €	5.190 €
	party share	48 %	40 %	51 %	52 %
Total	**budget**	**10.619 €**	**2.581 €**	**7.290 €**	**16.163 €**
	party share	**46 %**	**32 %**	**59 %**	**48 %**

Note: Means for N < 10 in parentheses.

spent on average, to about €16,200 that a typical hybrid spent. And there was even more variance by party affiliation. CDU and SPD candidates spent over €20,000 and CSU candidates only a little less on average for their campaigns. The budgetary level of the smaller parties' candidates differs significantly from the one of the *Volksparteien*. The average campaign of their candidates ranged from €2,700 (Left.PDS) to €7,300 (FDP). Hybrids in the big and small parties had a significantly higher budget than pure list candidates. The most money was spent by CDU candidates running in a constituency: on average, they gave out around €37,400, while pure constituency candidates disbursed even more – about €40,000 each.

Candidates were also asked what share of their overall personal campaign budgets came from their parties. This information is an important indicator of party support, on one hand, and candidate independence, on the other. On average, candidates were able to finance 46 per cent of their campaign by contributions from their parties, ranging from 32 per cent for list candidates to 59 per cent for pure constituency candidates, with the hybrids (48 per cent) in-between. This is a little surprising since we expected hybrids to receive the highest shares. Considering that their campaign budgets are higher than those of the pure constituency candidates, hybrids do in the end nevertheless get more money from their parties than the candidates running in a constituency only. There is also a noteworthy left–right divide. The SPD, Green and Left.PDS subsidise their candidates's campaigns to a greater extent than do the CDU and CSU, with the FDP in between. Yet it is not Left.PDS candidates whose campaigns are most heavily subsidised: the Green party covers over 70 per cent of their candidates' budgets (except for those only running from a list), which makes campaigning quite comfortable for them.

We also asked candidates whether they produced individual campaign material, independent of means provided by their parties. A majority of 54 per cent relied

TABLE 8
CANDIDATES EXCLUSIVELY RELYING ON CAMPAIGN TOOLS PRODUCED BY THEIR PARTIES (IN %; GCS 2005)

Party	All candidates	List only	Constituency only	Constituency and list
Greens	62	92	67	45
CDU	60	87	21	24
FDP	56	88	(70)	44
Left.PDS	52	72	39	44
CSU	48	65	(0)	(33)
SPD	41	78	(20)	21
Total	**54**	**81**	**48**	**36**

exclusively on party material, but this was not the case for all parties, and especially not if the mode of candidacy is also controlled for (Table 8). The bulk of list candidates across all parties relied on party campaign material, but most constituency candidates did not. The majority of candidates of the *Volksparteien* SPD, CDU and CSU running in a constituency produced some campaign material themselves, while about half of those representing smaller parties seem to have been satisfied with materials already available.

Materials produced by the candidates individually were not consistently post-modern or even modern, but also in part pre-modern.[8] As Table 9 shows, flyers were the most common. Personal websites ranked second, followed by posters. Give-aways like pens and calendars, along with printed advertisements, ranked fourth. Finally, spots for the radio, television and movie theatres, along with direct mailings, were seldom mentioned. Yet this is not the whole story. There was a clear distinction between pure list candidates and all others, but not between pure constituency candidates and hybrids. Furthermore, the biggest differences between list candidates and others came with posters and advertisements, along with direct mailings. List candidates used the latter, post-modern tool more often than did constituency candidates, but relied less on the pre-modern tools. Consistent with this picture, there is no gap between pure list candidates and constituency candidates when it comes to personal websites. This indicates that the former rely more heavily on electronic campaigning,

TABLE 9
TOP 7 OF INDIVIDUALLY PRODUCED/ORGANISED CAMPAIGN TOOLS (MULTIPLE RESPONSES COMBINED)

		Mode of candidacy			Party					
Campaign tool	**All**	**List**	**Const.**	**List & const.**	**SPD**	**CDU**	**CSU**	**FDP**	**Green**	**Left. PDS**
Flyers	63	56	66	63	51	51	80	76	50	77
Website	29	31	29	28	25	25	33	24	53	24
Posters	25	7	26	28	19	18	27	36	24	27
Give-aways	14	9	13	16	20	31	33	8	4	9
Ads	14	4	12	17	17	21	27	15	11	6
Spots	4	0	3	5	10	4	7	2	1	1
Direct mailings	4	9	0	4	6	7	0	2	3	3

a finding that also certainly reflects their smaller budgets, as documented earlier. Finally, we also find variation by party groups. SPD candidates employed the widest variety of personal campaign tools, and a comparatively high share of candidates produced spots. CDU and CSU candidates used individual give-aways and ads the most, while FDP and Left.PDS candidates very often made use of the traditional flyer. A personal website was the favoured individual tool of Green party candidates, and the strategically important direct mailing was mainly recognised as important by some SPD and CDU candidates.

So not only was there personal campaigning by the candidates, but they also used different means and strategies to approach potential voters in an individual way. What do post-modern campaigns with their focus on the local level mean in terms of representation? Are individual candidates breaking loose of their respective party in the process of campaigning? Certainly not in a straightforward and most obvious fashion. Being asked to place the goal of their campaign on a ten-point scale ranging from 'attracting most attention for me as candidate' (1) to 'attracting most attention for my party' (10), the majority of the *Volksparteien* constituency candidates positioned themselves on the candidate side (Table 10). It is interesting that the hybrids were not more party-oriented than the pure constituency candidates, even taking into account that the means of scale values for the constituency candidates of the small parties are to some extent 'contaminated' by inclusion of candidates without any chance to win the constituency.[9] However, looking at the overall means, Bundestag elections are still primarily about party competition and not candidate contests, with candidates trying to attract voters to their parties and to their respective policies.

THE OVERALL CAMPAIGN AGENDA

Various issues are discussed during a campaign and during a legislative period. Candidates and especially representatives need to be responsive to the people's problems, but are not independent of the issue portfolios of their parties. With data of the 2002 German Candidate Study in which only constituency candidates and hybrids were interviewed, Schmitt and Wüst were able to show that the candidates are responsive to people's problems, with constituency candidates being more so than 'hybrids'.[10] The latter, however, seem to be ideologically more in line with their parties, so that

TABLE 10
FOCUS OF THE PERSONAL CAMPAIGN: CANDIDATE (SCALE VALUE 1) OR PARTY (10)? (MEANS OF SCALE VALUES; GCS 2005)

Party	All candidates	List only	Constituency only	Constituency and list
SPD	5.6	8.4	(5.0)	4.0
CSU	5.8	6.9	(3.3)	(4.0)
CDU	6.7	8.4	4.1	4.4
FDP	7.0	7.7	(6.1)	6.8
Greens	7.6	9.1	7.7	7.0
Left.PDS	7.9	8.4	7.9	7.4
Total	**7.0**	**8.3**	**7.2**	**5.9**

Note: Means for N < 10 in parentheses.

the mode of candidacy (and representation) correlates with issue emphasis and issue positions of the party electorates. These space-consuming analyses cannot be replicated here. Yet, we will take a look at the agenda of the candidates in 2005 compared to 2002, and we will also document the issue projections of the candidates for 2009. In an additional step, issue emphasis and issue positions of the candidates are analysed in a comparative party perspective.

Table 11 compiles the two most important issues the constituency candidates named in 2002 and in 2005, as well as the results for all candidates 2005 and their projections for 2009. To a great extent, the agenda of the candidates resembles that of the people (see Wüst and Roth in this volume). And it is an indicator of responsiveness that, except for two issues, changes in emphasis by the candidates' track changes in the electorate's priorities Unemployment, the budget and education became more important for both the candidates and for the people in 2005, while the economy, as well as war and peace (in 2002 the war on Iraq had been a hotly discussed campaign issue) lost importance. There are only three important issues with conflicting trends. The most important one was social policy. Voters in 2005 considered the complex of issues of pensions, health care and reform significantly more important (17 per cent) than they did back in 2002 (9 per cent). For candidates, social system reform had already peaked as an issue in 2002 (34 per cent); its importance decreased to 23 per cent in 2005, but these issues – along with the budget – remained the second most important problem for the Bundestag candidates. A second problem area, the impact of demographic change, was not important to voters in either 2002 or 2005, but by the later time period about 10 per cent of candidates mentioned it as important. Finally, globalisation was also not perceived as a problem by voters, but by some 3 per cent of the candidates.

Politicians are not independent of their parties and of the people, because election (and re-election) strongly depends on satisfying them.[11] To some degree, however,

TABLE 11
MOST IMPORTANT PROBLEMS OF THE CANDIDATES 2002, 2005, AND PROJECTIONS FOR 2009 (IN %, TOP TWO RESPONSES COMBINED)

	Constituency candidates only		All candidates	
Problem	**2002**	**2005**	**2005**	**–> 2009**
Unemployment	75	84	82	71
Social security systems	34	23	23	37
Economy	31	19	21	13
Budget	10	23	24	19
Peace & war	7	1	1	1
Education	4	6	7	7
Environment	4	4	3	7
Social justice	4	8	8	10
Demography	4	10	9	14
Taxes/tax reform	4	4	3	3
Globalisation	0	3	3	3

Note: Data are weighted by party vote shares.

both politicians and parties are not only delegates of the people, but also trustees – a role that requires leadership.[12] With respect to issues, leadership means to perceive not only today's issues but also tomorrow's. And some of the observed differences in issue saliency and in trends between the people and the candidates can well be attributed to the trustee function. Above all, demographic change and social security, but also the budget, social justice and the environment, are certainly issues with a long-term impact and possibly far-reaching consequences. It is comforting to see the candidates already naming these future issues, and it is even more satisfying to see them expecting that most will play a more important role at the next Bundestag election, expected in 2009. Drawing on what Mansbridge has labelled 'anticipatory representation', we might well expect politicians and especially MPs to put emphasis on the issues they perceive to gain importance up to re-election day.[13] If the candidates' judgment today is right, the personal record on these future issues will be of relevance in the next campaign, and will possibly help them to get re-elected.

ISSUES: BRINGING THE PARTY BACK IN

According to the Responsible Party Model, viable party democracy requires a variety of distinctive and cohesive parties competing for office so that voters have a real choice at the polls. If the parties are all alike, or if there is only one to chose, this is clearly not the case. Cohesiveness is required so that parties, when elected to office, can effectively transform their election manifestos into government policies.[14] As party discipline has never been much of a problem in the German Bundestag (and can ultimately be ensured by the disciplinary instrument of the vote of confidence), we will concentrate on the question of distinctiveness of electoral choice options.

Are German parties distinctive enough to offer the voters a 'real choice'? Almost three decades ago, a group of German political scientists portrayed the German party system *Auf dem Weg zum Einparteienstaat* (on the road to a one-party state).[15] German citizens seem to have corroborated this verdict. In a series of surveys spanning the period between 1980 and 2005, representative samples of the German citizenry were asked approximately where they see the different parties on the left–right dimension. According to their perceptions, German party competition is characterised by a continuous process of depolarisation from 1980 on. Citizens perceive parties to have moved closer together.[16]

As intuitive as this finding may be, it could also reflect basic socio-political developments over the past quarter century, rather than actual depolarisation. Changes in the realm of mass communication – in particular, an ongoing personalisation in the transmission of political news – are perhaps the most obvious example that comes to mind.[17] This and complementary processes could have increasingly distorted public perceptions of where the parties stand and what they stand for.

A candidate survey like the one we are reporting on is a perfect instrument to investigate the question of distinctiveness of German political parties. Candidates standing for office in nation-wide legislative elections constitute a near-representative sample of their parties' top- and middle-level elite, of party- and parliament-centred politicians, of office- and policy-oriented officials, of old hands and newcomers, and thus of the various political generations, among other things.

Analysing these candidates' responses to our questions, we will first assess the differences and similarities between the parties in their emphasis on political problems. The question we try to answer here is: did German parties in 2005 differ in their 'political agenda' – i.e. in what they considered the really important political problems that needed to be addressed? Secondly, we will look at the ideological positions that German candidates take and determine how close or distant the parties are, how stable their positions are over time, and how they compare with voter perceptions of their party's position. Thirdly, we will substantiate those somewhat abstract left–right positions of party candidates by investigating their views on concrete issues and how they relate to the overall left–right dimension.

DISTINCTIVENESS IN ISSUE EMPHASIS

In the 2005 German Candidates Survey, respondents were asked to name the three most important political problems facing the country. Their answers were noted verbatim and coded according to a detailed coding scheme containing some 50 categories. Up to seven answers have been recorded and coded, and five answers have been given by a non-negligible number of respondents. The identification of some structure in those findings can be approached in different ways. In any case, it requires some reduction of information. For an in-depth analysis, we have chosen to combine the large number of coding categories into 15 'problem clusters', and to combine the multitude of answers of individual respondents to the open-ended question into a single 'mentioned-not mentioned' dichotomy for each of these clusters. The result is displayed in Table 12.

Interested as we are in the distinctiveness of electoral choice options, we see that parties differ significantly in their issue emphasis. But we also find that these differences are perhaps not very profound: an effort to predict the issue emphasis of individual candidates by their party affiliation turns out to be not very successful: on average, we explain some 5 per cent of the variance – more precisely, between 1 per cent (unemployment) and 18 per cent (environment). But this of course puts the focus on the candidates' emphasis on individual problem clusters, rather than the party specific 'configuration' of issue cluster emphasis.

A simple comparison of the rank-order of problem clusters between the parties (table not shown) indicates that there is more to it than the bivariate perspective reveals. Unemployment ranks first for every party, but they already differ systematically with regard to what comes next. Candidates of centre-right and right parties (FDP, CDU and CSU) put the state of public finances in second place, while candidates of centre-left and left parties (SPD, Greens and Left.PDS) stress social security issues. The third most important issue mentioned is social security for the centre-right, public finances for the SPD, environmental concerns for the Greens and economic problems for the Left.PDS. We could continue enumerating those observations. However, a more economical – that is, statistically more powerful – way to proceed is to reverse the above regression equation and predict the party affiliation of candidates by their issue emphases, rather than their issue emphasis by party their affiliation. The results of this approach are displayed in Table 13.

It becomes obvious that it is the configuration of problem perceptions that is characteristic of German parties, rather than their emphasis on individual problem clusters.

TABLE 12
TOP POLITICAL PROBLEMS AS SEEN BY THE CANDIDATES OF THE COMPETING PARTIES (FIGURES ARE % OF RESPONDENTS MENTIONING ONE OF THE CONSTITUENT PROBLEMS OF THE PROBLEM CLUSTERS IN UP TO 5 CODED ANSWERS)

	All	CDU	CSU	FDP	SPD	Greens	Left.PDS	sig[a]	0
Unemployment[b]	83	84	86	85	84	71	78	.051	.01
Social security[c]	52	44	41	48	57	52	76	.000	.06
Public finances[d]	39	50	59	50	31	21	22	.000	.07
The economy[e]	28	34	34	29	21	36	24	.003	.02
Family & offspring[f]	20	27	14	14	21	20	5	.000	.02
Education & science[g]	19	12	3	24	26	24	19	.000	.04
Natl. political process[h]	9	8	17	18	8	4	4	.000	.02
Environment[i]	8	2	3	2	7	44	11	.000	.18
Foreign politics[j]	4	3	0	1	3	2	19	.000	.06
Globalisation	4	2	0	2	6	9	5	.011	.02

Source: GCS 2005. N of cases is 1017 throughout. Data are weighted by party vote share to adjust for party strength.

Notes: (a) significance of F and eta square are from analyses of variance with the problem mentioning s as the dependent variable and party adherence as the predictor. (b) includes unemployment and creation of jobs. (c) includes social security systems, social harmony ('*sozialer Frieden*') dwellings and rents, Hartz 4 (a reform of the previous government combining unemployment and social benefits under a single authority), pensions, health insurance, and 'other' social problems. (d) includes taxation, public depth, and inflation. (e) includes the economic situation, energy policy, energy prices, 'other' economic problems, economic development, and ideological statements on the economy and social policy. (f) includes family, family aid and family policy, demographic deficit, children and youth policy. (g) includes education, apprenticeship and schooling, and science and research. (h) includes '*Reformstau*' (i.e. the inability for political reforms): East–West differences; elections, campaigns and political conflict; bureaucracy; and '*Föderalismusreform*' (i.e. the reform of competences of the different actors in the federal system). (i) includes environment protection, pollution, and consumer protection. (j) includes peace and war; security policy; defence and Bundeswehr (the national army); foreign policy; foreign deployment of German military forces; the Iraq war. Note that 5 'problem clusters' did not make it into the 'top-ten list': these are Europe/the EU; infrastructure; bad politics; foreigners and immigration; and law and order.

TABLE 13
WHAT THE ISSUE EMPHASIS OF CANDIDATES TELLS US ABOUT THEIR PARTY AFFILIATION (FIGURES ARE SIGNIFICANT EFFECT COEFFICIENTS – EXP (B) – FROM MULTINOMIAL LOGISTIC REGRESSIONS)

	CDU	CSU	FDP	SPD[1]	Greens	Left.PDS
Unemployment						
Social security	1.6[2]	2.3				0.5
Public finances	0.5	0.4	0.5			
The economy	0.5	0.5	0.6		0.5	
Family & offspring	0.6					3.8
Education & science	2.5	10.2				
Natl. political process			0.4			
Environment	4.4				0.1	
Foreign politics						0.1
Globalisation	4.1					

Model fit: Chi square = 367,103; df = 50; sig = .000. Pseudo R squares: Cox and Snell .303; Nagelkerke .316.

Source: GCS 2005. Weighted data are analyzed. (1) SPD is the reference category. (2) Read: a CDU candidate is 1.6 times more likely NOT to mention social security as one of the important problems than an SPD candidate is.

The multivariate regression is highly significant and quite powerful. The SPD as the largest individual party (after the 2005 election, chancellor Schröder deduced a mandate to form a government from this fact) was chosen as the reference category for this analysis. Effect coefficients indicate that candidates of parties on the left of the SPD differ less in their problem perceptions from SPD candidates than do candidates of parties from the right of the SPD.

Social security issues are mentioned significantly less often by CDU and CSU candidates, and more often by candidates of the Left.PDS. Public finances are more important to CDU, CSU, and FDP candidates, as is the economy. Green candidates are also more worried about the economy than are SPD candidates. Family and offspring are more important to CDU candidates but less important to those of the Left.PDS. Education and science is less important for CDU and much less important for CSU candidates. FDP candidates are more concerned about the national political process. Green candidates mention environmental problems significantly more often than SPD candidates, while CDU candidates mention them much less often. Foreign policy problems, and here in particular questions of German troop deployments, are much more important to Left.PDS candidates than to SPD candidates, and in fact more important to them than to anybody else. Globalisation, finally, is clearly less of a concern for CDU candidates (and CSU candidates do not mention it all).

Candidates of the previous junior coalition partner, the Greens, largely stress the same problems as SPD candidates do, while candidates of the current coalition partners, CDU and CSU, are often found to be concerned about different things than the Social Democrats. This is perhaps why few are really happy with the current Grand Coalition. Left.PDS and FDP are, equidistant, somewhere in between.

Pseudo R squares and, at their base, the notion of explained variance are often criticised as concepts that are alien to logistic regression. While this may be so, their advantage is that they convey for many a rather concrete impression of the explanatory power of a model that goes far beyond of what 'proportions of correctly classified cases' can tell. Using these measures, we find that knowing the problem emphasis of candidates standing for office in legislative elections gives us quite a good handle to identify which party they belong to. Based upon this, we come back to the research question formulated above. We now know that the candidates of German parties in 2005 differed significantly in what they considered to be the really important political problems. Moreover, we found distinct party-specific configurations of issue emphases, that is to say: distinct partisan agendas.

IDEOLOGICAL DISTINCTIVENESS

Do we find evidence of the process of ideological depolarisation that was identified in earlier work? Table 14 sheds some light on this question. A first observation is that average voter perceptions of party positions are quite accurate: Party candidates locate themselves where voters perceive them to be located. This suggests that depolarisation indeed took place, and that German party competition in 2005 is less ideological than it was in 1980. On the other hand, the party affiliation of German candidates is even today a powerful predictor of their ideological

TABLE 14
MEAN LEFT–RIGHT SELF-PLACEMENTS OF PARTY CANDIDATES (2002 AND 2005) AND MEAN VOTER PERCEPTIONS OF PARTY POSITIONS (2005) (FIGURES ARE MEANS OF AN 11 POINT SCALE RANGING FROM 0 = LEFT TO 10 = RIGHT)

	CDU	CSU	FDP	SPD	Greens	PDS	Sig.	Eta sq
Party candidates 2002	6.1	7.0	5.3	3.2	2.8	1.1	.000	.60
Party candidates 2005	6.6	7.0	5.3	3.1	2.9	1.0	.000	.68
Voters' views 2005	6.3	7.0	5.7	3.3	3.2	1.0		

Source: The *German Candidate Survey 2005* and the *German Election Study 2005* (Kühnel et al.) are analysed. The data are weighted.

self-perception: 68 per cent of the variance in left–right self-placements of candidates can be accounted for if we know nothing beyond their party affiliations.

We also note that average left–right positions of party candidates are remarkably stable over time. Our respondents from 2005 see their ideological position almost exactly as did their predecessors of 2002. While this is true in general, there is one significant exception: candidates of the CDU on average moved moderately to the right (from a mean score of 6.0 in 2002 to 6.6 in 2005).[18] This shift increased again the ideological distinctiveness of German party elites, and party affiliation in 2005 is a somewhat stronger predictor (68 instead of 60 per cent explained variance) of candidates' left–right self-placements.

Left–right ideology is often seen as a political code, as a shorthand notion for a great number of more specific issue positions.[19] Moreover, this code is a dynamic system that incorporates shifting content, so that 'left' and 'right' do not mean the same thing in different times and at different places.[20] The 2005 German Candidate Study includes an effort to further explore these dynamic processes, asking questions on 12 position issues that try to tap two sub-dimensions of the overall left–right,[21] plus an open-ended question on individual meaning associations with 'left' and 'right'. Most of this is beyond the scope of the present contribution.

How distinct are German parties if we look at the series of 12 concrete position issues rather than the emphasis that these parties put on current political problems and their overall left–right position? Table 15 shows that none of these 12 issues separates the parties as powerfully as the overarching left–right dimension does. While there are significant differences between the parties in each of the 12 issues, two do not really vary a lot: German parties and their parliamentary candidates tend to agree that 'women should be given equal treatment in job applications', and that 'individual rights and freedoms must be respected under all circumstances'. On the other issues we find larger inter-party differences, most notably so on the 'new left' issue of gay marriages (eta squared = .58) and the 'old left' issue of redistribution of wealth (eta squared = . 59).

In concluding this section, we turn to the question whether these issues do indeed contribute to the meaning of left and right among German parliamentary candidates. Here we find remarkable variations in our findings. If we look at German parliamentary candidates in general, ten of our 12 issues correlate substantially with the left–right dimension – the exceptions being the women's issue and the one about individual

TABLE 15
ISSUE POSITIONS OF PARTY CANDIDATES IN THE GERMAN FEDERAL ELECTION OF 2005 (FIGURES ARE MEANS ON A 5-POINT AGREE-DISAGREE SCALE, AND P AND ETA VALUES OF ANALYSES OF VARIANCE WITH PARTY AS THE PREDICTOR)

	All	CDU	CSU	FDP	SPD	Greens	Left. PDS	Sig.	Eta sq
Immigrants should adapt to customs of country	2.7	1.7	1.7	2.6	3.1	3.7	3.8	.000	.40
Politics should stay out of the economy	3.4	2.8	3.1	2.1	4.0	4.0	4.4	.000	.37
Stronger measures to protect the environment	2.5	3.1	2.9	3.3	2.1	1.4	1.6	.000	.38
Law should recognise same-sex marriages	2.7	4.2	4.4	2.5	1.8	1.4	1.5	.000	.58
Women should be given equal treatment in job applications	1.3	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.2	1.2	1.3	.000	.05
Stiffer sentences for people who break the law	2.9	2.2	2.4	2.9	3.2	3.7	3.6	.000	.22
Social security should be a prime goal of government	2.3	2.8	2.8	3.2	1.8	2.2	1.3	.000	.32
Income and wealth should be redistributed to ordinary people	3.0	3.9	4.1	4.2	2.2	2.3	1.2	.000	.59
Immigrants are good for the economy	2.4	2.9	3.3	2.3	2.1	1.8	2.1	.000	.24
Provide military assistance to the war on terror	3.2	2.4	2.7	3.0	3.6	3.8	4.7	.000	.29
Respect individual rights and free doms under all circumstances	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.2	1.8	1.5	1.5	.000	.07
Promote opening of world markets to the benefit of all	2.7	2.4	2.5	1.7	2.9	3.0	3.8	.000	.21
Left–right self-placement	4.4	6.6	7.0	5.3	3.1	2.9	0.9	.000	.68
Weighted N (average)	1000	290	80	360	100	90	90		

rights and freedoms, i.e. the two issues where the positions that candidates take hardly vary between the parties (see Table 16).

These rather robust overall correlations with the general left–right dimension, however, almost disappear if we change the analytical frame and look at them party by party. Among candidates of the CDU, FDP and Left.PDS, no single substantial correlation remains. Among SPD candidates, left- and right-wingers differ, issue-wise, only in the question of gay marriages. Among Green candidates, being to the left or to the right is associated with two issues: redistribution and pacifism. The one big exception here is the CSU candidates: in their case, five out of ten substantial overall issue-ideology correlations remain substantial even within the party.

This seems to suggest that competitive parties, but not regionally hegemonic parties, are able to reach agreement on a variety of general issues, so that intra-party

TABLE 16
THE ASSOCIATION BETWEEN ISSUE POSITIONS AND LEFT–RIGHT SELF-PLACEMENTS OF CANDIDATES STANDING FOR OFFICE IN THE GERMAN FEDERAL ELECTION OF 2005 (BIVARIATE PEARSON'S R >.3 ARE DISPLAYED)

	All	CDU	CSU	FDP	SPD	Greens	Left. PDS
Immigrants should adapt to the customs of country	−.61						
Politics should stay out of the economy	−.53		−.46				
Stronger measures to protect the environment	+.54		+.42				
Law should recognise same-sex marriages	+.68				+.35		
Women should be given equal treatment in job applications							
Stiffer sentences for people who break the law	−.46						
Social security should be a prime goal of government	+.49		+.52				
Income and wealth should be redistributed to ordinary people	+.70		+.52			+.44	
Immigrants are good for the economy	+.45		+.58				
Provide military assistance to the war on terrorisms	−.52					−.31	
Respect individual rights and freedoms under all circumstances							
Promote opening of world markets to the benefit of all	−.35						
Weighted N (average)	1000	280	80	100	350	90	90

ideological conflict is limited and perhaps restricted to strategic and personnel issues. The Bavarian CSU, a 50 per cent party in most constituencies, has to internalise ideological and issue competition that characterises inter-party relations elsewhere. That is perhaps the price of size.

CONCLUSION

Using data that are somewhat extraordinary among the ones usually utilised in electoral research, we were able to take a look at candidacy, campaign and issues from the perspective of the candidates themselves. What we found, to varying degrees, confirmed, updated and challenged established knowledge about electoral competition. In the candidacy section, we learned about the crucial role that 'hybrid' candidates play, ranging from their number, their favoured list ranking, their campaign activities, their chances up to win to their final success rate. In contrast, a majority of the pure list candidates run

low-key campaigns, probably reflecting their rather low expectations of success. Pure constituency candidates differ very much by party affiliation: Within the *Volksparteien*, which are able to offer them constituencies with a high probability of winning, these candidates are very active and often almost indistinguishable from the hybrids. Yet pure constituency candidates are not found to be the group of most party-detached candidates.

The crucial role parties continue to play in the German 'party democracy' has been elaborated in our issue section. Despite the ongoing process of depolarisation, parties and their candidates remain clearly distinguishable from each other, both in terms of issue emphasis and issue positions. We were further able to present evidence for the stability of the left–right dimension, and of its strong influence on issue positions. With the exception of CSU candidates, who – due to the hegemonic position of their party – seem to internalise inter-party conflict in quite a few issue areas, left–right positions of the candidates do correlate strongly with issue positions taken by their respective parties.

The German Candidate Study will enable us to continue the analyses presented here, as well as to explore other aspects of the campaign, the role of issues, and the process of representation. Two preliminary conclusions can be drawn from our analyses. First, we found that the campaigns of the candidates differ by mode of candidacy and party affiliation, while the latter often depends on whether a candidate has a chance to win in a constituency (which in most cases means belonging to a Volkspartei). Second, we found that Germany's party democracy still rests on ideologically and issue-wise distinct parties which – in one school of thought at least – is a central precondition of well-functioning electoral representation. The personalisation and individualisation of campaigns may increasingly alter electoral competition, but this seems to happen within and for the parties, rather than in opposition to them.

NOTES

1. Hans Meyer, *Wahlsystem und Verfassungsordnung. Bedeutung und Grenzen wahlsystematischer Gestaltung nach dem Grundgesetz* (Frankfurt: Metzner, 1973), p.26.
2. Matthew Sobert Shugart and Martin P. Wattenberg (eds), *Mixed-Member Electoral Systems: The Best of Both Worlds?* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
3. A party can qualify by either receiving 5 per cent of all party votes or by winning three constituencies. For a detailed description of Germany's electoral system see Dieter Nohlen, 'Germany', in Dieter Nohlen, Matthias Catón, and Philip Stöver (eds), *Elections in Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).
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6. Pippa Norris, *A Virtuous Circle. Political Communication in Postindustrial Societies* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
7. See e.g. the contributions to *Party Politics* 9/5 (2003); see also Andrea Römmele, *Direkte Kommunikation zwischen Parteien und Wählern: Professionalisierte Wahlkampftechnologien in den USA und der BRD* (Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher Verlag, 2002).
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9. Zittel and Gschwend, 'Der Bundestagswahlkampf 2005'.
10. Hermann Schmitt and Andreas M. Wüst, 'Direktkandidaten bei der Bundestagswahl 2002: Politische Agenda und Links-Rechts-Selbsteinstufung im Vergleich zu den Wählern', in Frank Brettschneider et al. (eds), *Bundestagswahl 2002: Analysen der Wahlergebnisse und des Wahlkampfes* (Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag, 2004), pp.303–25.
11. Hanna F. Pitkin, *The Concept of Representation* (Berkeley: University of Berkeley Press, 1967), p.209.
12. See Edmund Burke, *The Writings and Speeches of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke* (London: Oxford University Press, 1906), vol.2, p.89; Heinz Eulau and John Wahlke, *The Politics of Representation* (Beverly Hills: Sage, 1978); Werner J. Patzelt, *Abgeordnete und Repräsentation. Amtsverständnis und Wahlkreisarbeit* (Passau: Rothe, 1993), pp.27ff.
13. Jane Mansbridge, 'Rethinking Representation', *American Political Science Review* 97/4 (2003), pp.515–28.
14. American Political Science Association, 'Toward a More Responsible Two-Party System', *American Journal of Political Science* 42/1 (1950), pp.55–96; Evron Kirkpatrick, 'Toward a more responsible two-party system', *American Political Science Review* 65/4 (1971), pp.165–77; Norman R. Luttbeg, 'Political Linkage in a Large Society', in Norman R. Luttbeg (ed.) *Public Opinion and Public Policy: Models of Linkage* (Homewood, Ill.: Dorsey, 1974); Warren Miller, et al. (eds), *Policy Representation in Western Democracies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Hermann Schmitt, *Politische Repräsentation in Europa* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2001).
15. Johannes Agnoli et al., *Auf dem Weg zum Einparteienstaat* (Wiesbaden: WDV, 1977).
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17. Andrea Römmele, 'Personen oder Inhalte. Politikvermittlung in deutschen Wahlkämpfen', in Jürgen W. Falter et al., *Wahlen und Wähler. Analysen aus Anlass der Bundestagswahl 2002* (Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag, 2005), pp.414–33.
18. This move to the right could also have been observed on the voters' side, cf. Dieter Roth and Andreas M. Wüst, 'Abwahl ohne Machtwechsel: Die Bundestagswahl 2005 im Lichte längerfristiger Entwicklungen', in Eckhard Jesse and Roland Sturm (eds), *Bilanz der Bundestagswahl 2005: Voraussetzungen – Ergebnisse – Folgen* (Wiesbaden: VS-Verlag, 2006), pp.43–70.
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21. See for example Gary Marks et al., 'Party Competition and European Integration in East and West: Different Structure, Same Causality', *Comparative Political Studies* 39/2 (2006), pp.155–75.