

### The legitimizing role of the leader Konrad Adenauer, 1949-1976

Merkl, Peter H.

Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Zur Verfügung gestellt in Kooperation mit / provided in cooperation with:  
GESIS - Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften

#### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Merkl, P. H. (1982). The legitimizing role of the leader Konrad Adenauer, 1949-1976. *Historical Social Research*, 7(1), 12-26. <https://doi.org/10.12759/hsr.7.1982.1.12-26>

#### Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de>

#### Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more information see:  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

THE LEGITIMIZING ROLE OF THE LEADER

KONRAD ADENAUER, 1949-1976

Peter H. Merkl<sup>+</sup>

This is an examination of the changing leadership image of Adenauer in the light of Institut für Demoskopie polls between 1949 and 1976. It seeks to relate the leadership role to the legitimacy of the Federal Republic in the eyes of the mass public, leaving aside other aspects of legitimacy for the time being. Three public opinion curves are plotted: Adenauer's general policy approval, the vote for his party, and his image as an historical figure which grew especially after he left office and after his demise. The posthumous public assessments of his leadership in 1968 and 1975 clearly relate his leadership to the legitimacy of the internal order and external stature of the system. These bits and pieces of evidence, finally, are contrasted with various hypotheses of legitimacy roles of leaders. Legitimacy is created when a) most people feel they never had it better; b) moderate parties engage in recurrent competition and a stable party system emerges; or c) when a leader manages to stay at the helm for a long series of years and, at the same time, is perceived to have tackled and solved major national problems.

"I have always said that the great statesmen you read about were all politicians. They become statesmen after they are in their graves."

- Harry S. Truman -

As Glenn Paige has shown in his immensely erudite survey of the literature on political leadership, (1) scholarly curiosity about the phenomenon of leadership has been as pervasive as the conceptual focus has been blurred. There are many suggestive formulations but no agreement on what it is or how it should be studied. From Max Weber to Karl Deutsch and David Easton, there have been, in particular, ideas about how "charisma" or "personal legitimacy" might contribute to the "diffuse support for authorities and regimes." (2) Lewis Edinger at an early point contributed interdisciplinary perspectives on the study of the "central actor's" focal position in juxtaposition to various counterpositions in the drama of large-group leadership, (3) a perspective we will come back to below. Lester Seligman and Dankwart Rustow, no less than Paige himself, called for a systematic political science approach to leadership, (4) one that would link personality to institutional study without getting sidetracked by the abstruse vocabularies of individual psychology or

---

Address all communications to: Peter H. Merkl,  
Department of Political Science, University of California  
Santa Barbara, Cal. 93106, USA

political behavior.

Where comparative theory fails to shine the light, the practice of comparative study always prefers to begin inductively with concrete cases. The role of Konrad Adenauer during the formative first 14 years of the Federal Republic lends itself particularly well to the study of the legitimizing role of leadership because

- a) there are excellent empirical data available on the mass perceptions of his image;
- b) a fair amount is known about his relations to German elites;
- c) there is by now the advantage of a certain distance in time;
- d) the nature of his "leadership tasks" and his success with them was clearly known to his audiences; and
- e) there is, happily, not much charismatic enigma or other mumbo-jumbo about the man and his role.

Before tackling the analysis of the concrete evidence, it is essential that at least a few theoretical assumptions be made explicit in order to guide this enterprise. We agree with Leon Dion that "leadership is a relationship best studied within the framework of the group process,"(5) and that ordinarily we ought to examine not only mass public opinion, but also the role of the communications media and of the leader's relationship to the elites in general and his party and allies in particular. However, the space available does not permit us to go into all this beyond the mere mention of it. Suffice it to stress in particular Adenauer's ability to win and maintain the support of the Christian Democratic movement (CDU/CSU) in whose organization and development he played a major part.(6) Without the rise of this mass movement to the right of the political center, he could never have succeeded. It should not surprise us to find the foundation of it as one of the "great achievements" for which the West German public posthumously gave him credit.

The other important precondition of legitimizing leadership lay in the correspondence between Adenauer's ideas and the "important group tasks...as perceived by the group members," to speak with Dion.(7) Adenauer's concept of Germany's options in the bipolar world after 1945 were already clearly formed at the end of World War II, as his correspondence has revealed. It only took circumstances and his own ambition to put the right man in the right spot for a fleeting moment in history. His ideas of West German integration into the Western alliance came just when the then omnipotent United States needed German cooperation and thus became a major vehicle for the rehabilitation of his country. Without this correspondence between opportunity and leadership, he would never have achieved greatness.

Finally, we can take for granted the personality and special skills he had to have for his leadership role. He had to be very clever and tough, two of his often cited characteristics. Both of these are ambiguous in the eyes of the beholder and can easily turn into ruthless domineering. He also had to have that special ability to dramatize his own leadership before his people and the world,(8) to manipulate the media, to make the masses understand the complex strategies he was proposing and to retain the following among the elites he needed. His leadership style was unique but not particularly noteworthy unless we consider the fact that he had to follow and top the consum-

mate leadership act put on by Adolf Hitler, whose devastating effect had very likely soured the German public on any dramatic leadership other than the understated style of Der Alte, the grandfather image of better times.

#### I. PERIODS OF ADENAUER'S PUBLIC CAREER

One of the most common pitfalls in assessing the legitimizing role of a particular leader has always been the tendency to ignore the various stages of the person's public career and to treat it as one whole. When a leader has been in office for many years, in particular, this can be a fatal flaw of analysis. Konrad Adenauer's public career in the Federal Republic alone calls for careful periodization before we can apply any analytical scheme. There are probably many ways of doing this. But it seems sufficient for our purposes here to suggest a rough time schedule, as follows:

- a) Pre-history: Adenauer's public career in Imperial and Weimar Germany, including his brief reappointment in 1945 as mayor of Cologne.
- b) Extraparliamentary Party Career: His role in helping to organize first the Rheinland CDU and then the British Zone CDU, his first springboards to national leadership.
- c) Legislative Career Before September 1949: The Parliamentary Council 1948/1949.
- d) The Struggling Chancellor: 1949-1953.
- e) The Apogee of Power: 1953-1959.
- f) Gradual Decline: 1959-1963.
- g) Semi-Retirement: 1963-1967.
- h) Posthumous Apotheosis: 1968- .

The earlier phases of this career (a-c) were no doubt remarkable, but he was not yet sufficiently known or successful to have much of a public image or of an influence on the nations of legitimacy of West Germans. Of course, the Federal Republic itself was barely beginning to take shape in the constitutional deliberations of the Parliamentary Council. On the other hand, he had already been very active in building up the later governing party at least from his geographical base towards ever-widening circles and had played a major role in phases b) and c) in determining the alliances and enmities that have made up the West German party to this day.(9) In other words, he helped to shape the system in the minds of many partisans if not of the voting masses.

In phase d), then, Adenauer's public image underwent the great change which catapulted him from the relative obscurity of a provincial party leader to the status of a veritable demiurge of German recovery and international stature. It was in this period that he managed to forge a vital link to American patronage, restored Germany's international position, and came to benefit eventually from the economic recovery, all against considerable odds! At this point, the voters began to reward him with unprecedented support, beginning in 1953 and again in 1957, and foreign observers and statesmen began to praise him exorbitantly. To be sure, the stream of critical comments on his "Chancellor democracy" also began to flow from this time on and in inverse proportion to the consolidation of his political machine. There were not only complaints from political enemies, but

even more from disappointed erstwhile allies such as his bourgeois coalition parties which found themselves mistreated and ousted from power as soon as he did not need their support anymore, between the years 1955 and 1961.(10)

His decline began at about the time his foreign policy system began to go out of style, with the impact of Sputnik and detente. The most visible landmarks of this decline were the presidential crisis of 1959, when he toyed with the thought of making himself a DeGaulle-like German Federal President, and the humiliating wrangling over his survival as Chancellor in 1961.(11) In 1963, finally, he was forced to abdicate into semi-retirement as an elder statesman and not always loyal follower of the new Chancellor, Ludwig Erhard, with whom the public naturally began to compare him. As we shall see below, Adenauer's historic stature in the eyes of his countrymen really began to grow beyond his best electoral showing only after he left office. It reached its highest level with his death in 1967 and has remained at a high level to this day.

When we speak of Adenauer's role in legitimizing the West German system to the mass public, then, we are referring only to phases d) through f). While these years in power, and especially the first two phases, seem to have been the period during which he must have left this impression on the voting public, furthermore it took a substantial time lag for this legitimizing role to leave its mark on overt mass opinion. Thus the many observers may have been right who always warned us during Adenauer's most successful years that the seeming political stability of the Federal Republic was intimately tied to the success and prosperity of the whole enterprise and might disintegrate at the first sign of a serious economic or political crisis.(12) A sense of legitimacy seems to require considerable passage of time and a knowledge of crises weathered and eras having passed. Adenauer had to leave office and the Adenauer era had to fade away before its impact seems to have surfaced in the minds of the public.

## II. THREE PUBLIC OPINION CURVES IN SEARCH OF AN EXPLANATION

Let us take a closer look at the changing public perceptions of the Adenauer phenomenon over time. Our data are the recurrent polls taken by the Institut für Demoskopie (IFD) of Allensbach (13) which has kept track of these perceptions since 1950, a year of crisis for the Chancellor of the young republic, of mass unemployment and painful economic readjustments under the still unproven "social market" policies of Ludwig Erhard. The outbreak of the Korean war particularly depressed the mood of war-weary Germany. The pollsters asked a representative, adult cross-section, "Are you by and large in agreement with Adenauer's policies?" The positive responses fluctuated all year around one fourth of the respondents and by November, 1950, reached a nadir of 19%, while 41% expressed their disapproval.(14) This poor rating continued through all of 1951. In June of that year, moreover, when his critics were asked for the reasons of their disapproval, their most prevalent criticisms turned out to be "he is too obsequious with the Allies" (19%), "lacks a social conscience" (15%), "too old" (12%), "too dependent on the church" (11%), and "his attitude towards German rearmament" (7%). When asked, "Would it be better if another man were to head the government?" a plurality of 35% said

yes, 33% no.(15)

With the end of 1951, his approval rate suddenly rose to between 30 and 40%. By mid-1953, it had broken the 50% level and, by the time of the 1953 parliamentary elections, it had topped out at 57%, while his CDU/CSU obtained a whopping 45.2% of the popular vote and a majority of the seats of the Bundestag. Throughout the years 1954-1963, the percentage approving of his policies in general remained between 40 and 55%, with occasional fluctuations.(16) There was a remarkable concurrence between his party's popular vote and approval of his policies, compare Diagram 1.

It should be noted that even at the height of Adenauer's success, the voting public was not as uncritical about his failings as might be supposed. Objections to his advancing age, for example, were a major factor as early as 1955 when 45% (vs. 31% who did not) would have "preferred a younger man at the head of the government." In 1956, 27% felt that he was "too old" and in 1959, when he was 82, 44% did so. The same percentage, 44% (vs. 34% who did not), would have preferred another man as Chancellor just prior to the 1957 elections, his greatest election victory ever. At the same time also, only 33% expected him to continue his successes while an equal number felt that his "greatest period is over but he will also achieve many great things in the future." By 1962, the desire for his resignation was shared by 67% of a representative sample.(17)

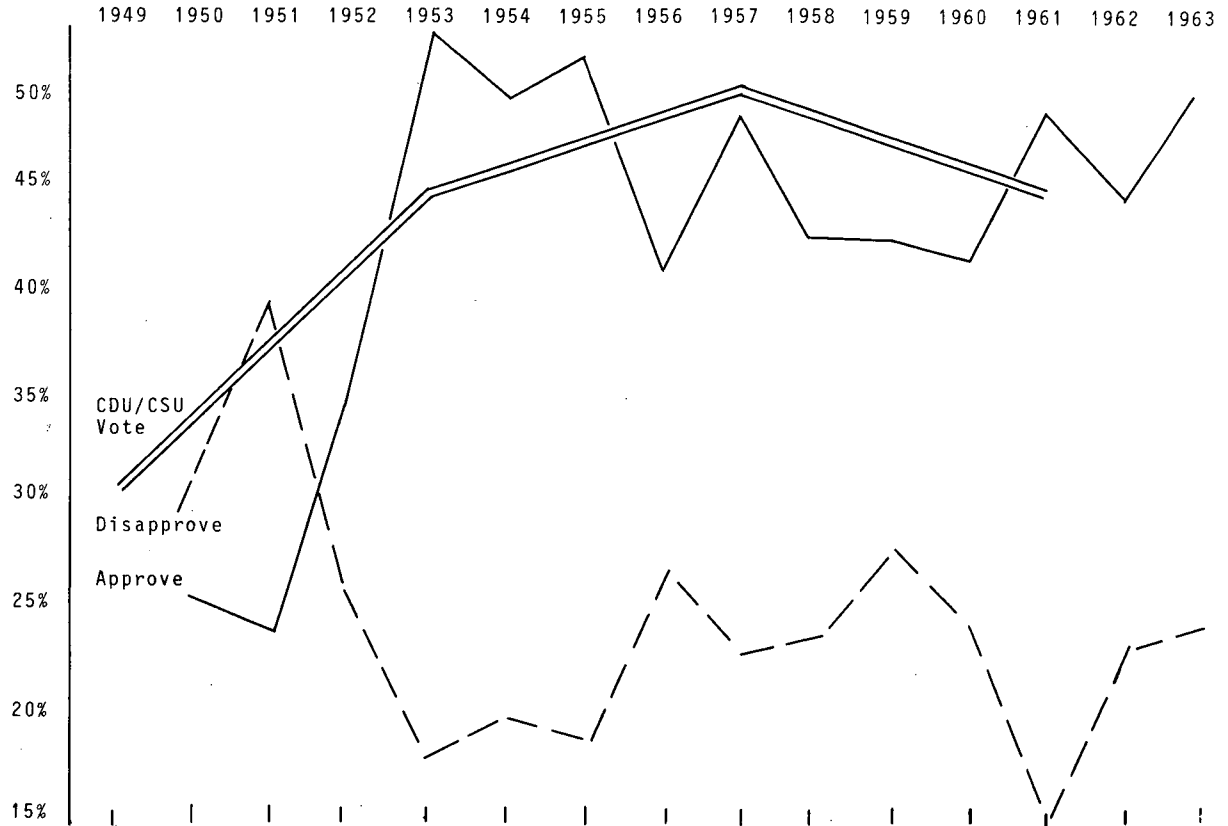
What exactly was it then that accounted for his sudden surge of support in 1952/1953? The IFD pollsters asked the public to select "the three points...most applicable to Adenauer" from a list, both before the 1953 elections and two years later. The consensus was on (18)

	<u>February</u> <u>1953</u>	<u>January</u> <u>1955</u>
1) Adenauer is a good negotiator, has restored Germany's reputation	55%	70%
2) Adenauer wants to give us security against the East	47%	51%
3) Adenauer has ensured that we are better off economically	45%	55%

In the same poll, a negative consensus between 20% and 35% characterized him as "tyrannical," lacking a social conscience, and a warmonger, a package probably related to partisanship for the SPD. Further, 1956, 1957 and 1958 polls brought out very similar points on both sides, with blocs of opinions pro and contra German rearmament surfacing for the first time.(19) Thus, Adenauer had evidently been identified with the accomplishment of important national tasks by the public.

The most significant tip-off of Adenauer's surging support in 1953 was the response to a question, "Do you think that Adenauer primarily

Diagramm 1: "Do you approve of Adenauer's policies?" and CDU/CSU vote, 1949-1963



wants the best for Germany, or has he other interests that are more important to him?" (August, 1953): 66% of the sample (vs. 10% negative responses) felt he wanted the best for the country and this percentage was even higher among the better-educated (77%), FDP supporters (82%) and, of course, CDU/CSU supporters (94%).(20) He had, quite simply, won the confidence of the people in his sincere dedication to their interests and thus created the emotional basis for their turning over all their problems to his grandfatherly care.(21) As Leon Dion has pointed out, followers are unlikely to place their trust into a leader until they perceive him to be totally dedicated to the interests of the group.

Did Adenauer's gradual decline after 1957 leave documentable evidence in the IFD polls? Polls between 1955 and 1959, presenting a long list of characteristics, show an undertow of picque as the years went on. Positive features associated with him declined a little from 57% who thought him clever in 1955 (only 44% in 1959), diplomatic 55% (43%), industrious 43% (32%), purposeful 42% (35%), and likeable 30% (22%). Negative attributes rose perceptibly: Ambitious 35% (41%), cunning, wily 30% (35%), obstinate 20% (33%), relentless 15% (25%), and tyrannical 13% (23%). There was a notable edge to this trend which made the increasing popular demand for his retirement more plausible. But no sooner was he out of office, and especially after his death, than a new note came into play: appreciation of Adenauer as a historical figure. A poll of April 1968 with a list on "what were Adenauer's greatest achievements" clearly shows the shift from the earlier, pressing major policy topics to others of more reflective, human and historic scope (we underscored those most relevant to the legitimacy of the system)(22):

1) The repatriation of German POWs from Russia	75%
2) The reconciliation with France	70%
3) <u>Having helped Germany to return to respect and prestige in the world</u>	65%
4) The efforts towards a united Europe	48%
5) <u>Having made the Federal Republic a well-ordered and stable democracy</u>	47%
6) <u>Having helped to make the Federal Republic an independent state</u>	46%
7) The reconciliation with Israel, restitution to the Jews	38%
8) Incorporation of the Federal Republic into the Western Alliance, NATO	35%
9) The efforts toward the foundation and strengthening of the Common Market	34%
10) <u>Reincorporation of the Saar into the Federal Republic</u>	32%
11) <u>The efforts toward German reunification</u>	30%



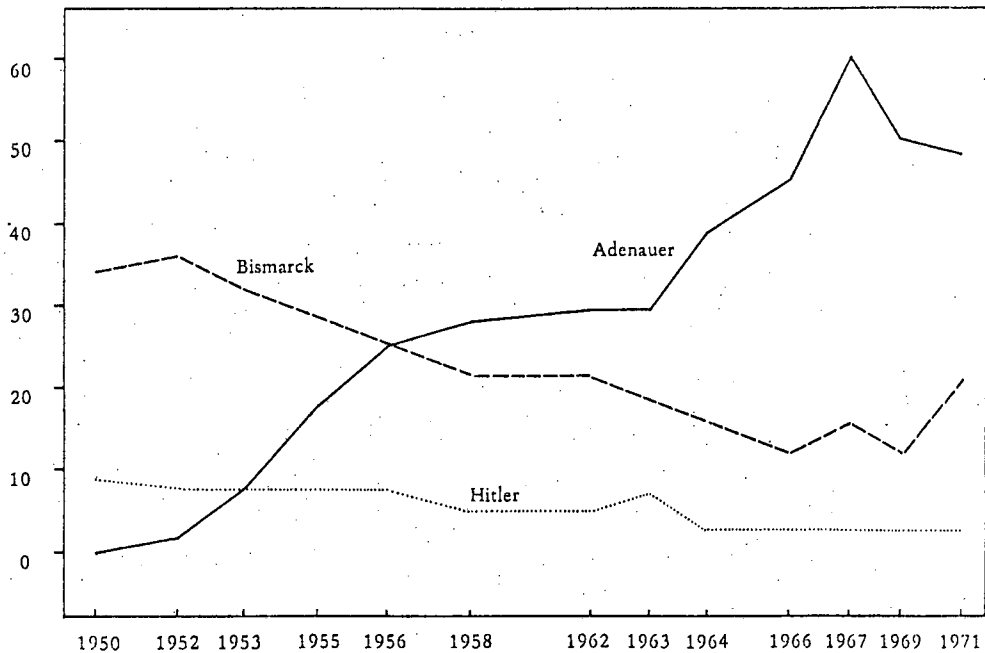
- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| 12) Having been unyielding toward Russia, Communism          | 28% |
| 13) <u>The foundation of a great people's party, the CDU</u> | 24% |
| 14) <u>Building up the Bundeswehr</u>                        | 22% |
| 15) <u>Fighting for the "social market policy"</u>           | 22% |

This imposing list calls for a closer look. It is made up of three distinctive types of issues: a) conscience issues which try to assuage the passions of the past (1 and 7), b) legitimacy issues which will be examined more closely below (3, 5, 6, 10, 11, 13 and 14), and c) issues relating to Germany's new role in Europe and in the world (2, 4, 8, 9 and 12). The conscience issues are obviously of the broadest application and could be compared, for instance, to the concern with U.S. POWs and MIAs after the Vietnam war. They have overtones also of the leader's total dedication to the self of the nation. The European, Franco-German, and NATO issues have a strong bearing on the legitimacy of the new Federal Republic because of Adenauer's peculiar strategy for German rehabilitation: He resolved the gigantic hangover of misguided German nationalism (which also relates to 7, restitution to the Jews) by Europeanizing all German "national" questions. Thus questions 2, 4, 9, 10 (Saar), and even the thorny rearmament issues 8 and 14 became prerequisites for the foundation of West German legitimacy. The very high support for reconciliation with France shows the emotionally strategic role of being accepted (albeit reluctantly) by the "archenemy" in the West. Even the Saar appears on the list, which was intended to be Adenauer's national sacrifice to mollify the French and turned into a policy failure for him though the outcome was accepted all too willingly by the Germans. The reverse side of the coin of Western acceptance was the rejection of the Eastern side of Germany, of Soviet influence (#12) and, in another curiously inverted formula, credit for efforts toward German reunification which, of course, is in direct conflict with the common criticism that Adenauer did little for reunification.

Of the legitimacy issues proper, the most central are 5, 6 and 3. Internal order and stability, national independence, and international respect are facets of the sense of legitimacy which cover its essence. In the preamble to its 1949 constitution, the Federal Republic had solemnly looked forward to its eventual replacement by an all-German state and for twenty years had been moaning about the fatal flaw of the German division. (23) This was an overwhelming manifesto of legitimacy, and it was associated with Adenauer by one half to two thirds of the public in 1968.

The last of the three curves (the first was general policy support and the second the CDU/CSU vote during his tenure) is that of the public perception of Adenauer as a historic figure (Diagram 2) contrasted to other German statesmen. It is a simple picture: The responses naming Adenauer "the great German who has done the most for Germany" rose from zero (24) and began to top the slowly declining curve of the diehards still naming Hitler only in 1953, the year of his first great landslide. In 1953, it will be recalled, his policy approval had broken the 50% mark and the CDU/CSU vote had risen to 45.2%, thanks to him. (25) Between January 1956 and October 1958, curiously at a time when his general policy approval began to dip below

Diagram 2: "In Your Opinion, Which Great German Has Done The Most for Germany?"



50% even though he still won his biggest election victory in 1957 (50.2%), the public perceptions of his historic stature caught up with those of the towering figure of Bismarck, the founder of the Reich. Still, only 26% of the public gave him that accolade at a time when his vote and policy approval ran nearly twice as high. (26) The rise of the historic image then occurred mostly during his years of semiretirement, possibly highlighted against the floundering of his successors Erhard and Kiesinger amid various economic and political crises. (27)

The Institut für Demoskopie took another look at the Adenauer image in December of 1975 and noted with surprise that the numbers expressing an opinion had grown (85% to 93%) and most of the features attributed to him had become sweetened over time: Considerably more people called him clever, purposeful, ambitious than in 1959 and fewer regarded him as domineering, ruthless, or egotistical. Better yet, the 1975 respondents thought of qualities few could discover in him back in 1959 such as honest, kind and charming (liebenswert). By this time also, his historical stature as the "great German who did the most for Germany" had been confirmed further in polls in April 1975 and April 1976, which gave him 43% and 51% respectively, while Bismarck dropped to 14% and 10%.

For comparison with contemporary rivals, there were the historic curves of Ludwig Erhard and Willy Brandt. Erhard's curve had started at 4% in 1962, peaked at 9% in 1966 (the time of his fall) and then declined again to 4% in 1967 and 2% in 1976. Brandt's historic stature had first been acknowledged with 2% in 1969, when he became Chancellor, rose to 11% in 1975, when he resigned, and still stood at 8% in 1976. (28) Unfortunately, there was no poll taken in 1972 when he was at his zenith with his Ostpolitik. Brandt's image has to be seen not only against the background of the Ostpolitik with which 47% (vs. 23% who were satisfied) professed disappointment by the end of 1975. Brandt and Adenauer (29) have to be understood in the context of the momentous shift of opinion on East and West which occurred in the early seventies: Whereas West Germans had always seen the West as in the long run stronger than Russia, this balance changed after 1969. Polls of 1973 and 1975 produced only 14% and 13%, respectively, who thought that in fifty years America would be stronger than Russia, while 32% and 37%, respectively, took the opposite view. 57% (vs. 6% who did not) thought in February 1976 that the East was already stronger today. And 49% (vs. 25% who wanted to fight for their way of life even if it meant a nuclear war) thought that it would be better to avoid war even if it meant living under Communism. (30) This deeply-rooted German fear of war was hardly new, (31) but the balance of the opinions on this "better-red-than-dead" question had been rather even in 1955, 1956, and 1959, and leaning toward fighting rather than submitting to the Soviets. Thus, Adenauer's policies aligning the Federal Republic with Nato and against the East must seem like a great mistake to today's West German public while Brandt's policy of detente makes more sense. What does all this have to do with Adenauer's legitimizing role with regards to the political system? His post-retirement and posthumous image continues to be linked with the establishment of a West German sense of legitimacy. In December 1975, the pollsters again came up with the list of his "greatest achievements" and received responses similar to those of eight years earlier: (32) (Legitimacy issues underscored):

1) The repatriation of German POWs from Russia	66%
2) <u>Having helped Germany to return to respect and prestige in the world (no. 3 in 1968)</u>	64%
3) The reconciliation with France	62%
4) <u>Having made the Federal Republic a well-ordered and stable democracy</u>	54%
5) <u>Having helped to make the Federal Republic an independent state so soon (no. 6 in 1968)</u>	53%
6) The efforts toward a united Europe	43%
7) Incorporation of the Federal Republic into the Western Alliance, NATO (no. 8 in 1968)	39%
8) <u>Reincorporation of the Saar into the Federal Republic (no. 10 in 1968)</u>	37%
9) <u>Foundation of a great people's party, the CDU (no. 13 in 1968)</u>	37%
10) <u>Efforts toward German reunification (no. 11 in 1968)</u>	34%
11) <u>Having been unyielding towards Russia, Communism</u>	34%
12) Reconciliation with Israel, restitution to the Jews (no. 7 in 1968)	31%
13) Efforts toward the foundation and strengthening of the Common Market (no. 9 in 1968)	30%
14) <u>Fighting for the "social market policy"</u>	30%
15) <u>Building up the Bundeswehr</u>	30%

What is remarkable about this reiteration of the eight-year old question is that, while the conscience and European issues have somewhat declined, the questions of legitimacy have gone up by a substantial margin. More Germans than ever credited Adenauer with having given the Federal Republic legitimacy in its domestic order and in the eyes of the world. Oddly enough, his unyieldingly anti-Communist course and rearmament also received higher ratings in spite of the new willingness to seek an accommodation with Soviet might. His role in the foundation of the state-building party of the first twenty years, the CDU, likewise received an even higher rating than eight years earlier.

### III. LEGITIMACY EQUALS FLESHPOTS, PARTIES, AND THE RODEO

Even if we grant that legitimacy can grow from the successful tenure of leadership by one prominent figure, it would still be of great interest to know just how this process works. There are several likely approaches. A number of years ago, we argued two of these theories, a fleshpot theory and a party competition theory of legitimacy. The fleshpot theory was also based on public opinion data, namely the responses to the question at what time the country had been best off. In 1951, more than one half of those polled still felt it had been before 1933, and especially in the "good old days" before 1914, while

the rest (save 1/50 who said "now") opted for the 1933-1939 period. By 1959, better than four in ten said "now," while less than half dreamt of the past. By 1964, the number saying "now" had grown to 62% and only one fourth was still living in the past. This prosaic vote of confidence in the present was not to be scoffed at, although it had its vulnerable point in the possibility of economic crisis. In fact, perhaps it was only after the system had weathered its first recession in 1966/1967 that one could consider it enduring. There were also other supporting data such as the six out of seven Germans--as compared to only 2/3 of Frenchmen, one half of Americans, and 2/5 of Englishmen--who were satisfied with their country's position in the world.(33)

The party competition theory was based on the common experience that the competition of moderate parties by itself trends to legitimize the system and the rules of the game. If two rivaling movements fight each other for leadership in the system, each of them implicitly accepts the system as a legitimate arena. There is also a great deal of prima facie evidence that Adenauer's electoral successes had an enormous impact on the SPD, forcing it out of its ideological shell until, in 1959, it became a people's party. Quite typically for the legitimizing process, the SPD found that it first had to accept the major outlines of Adenauer's policies before it could present meaningful options and alternatives. In the end, the SPD as a people's party proved more than a match for the CDU/CSU, and thus was able to replace the latter at the helm of the state. From that day on, in 1969, the Federal Republic had left the egg shells of Adenauer's alleged authoritarian rule behind and become an alternating party system.(34)

Since we are discussing the party system, it should also be noted how Adenauer's political machine in its build-up managed to strengthen and simplify the party system. He eliminated one by one most of the other bourgeois parties, or forced them into becoming client parties of the CDU/CSU. His policies helped to absorb the potentially explosive political mass basis of the millions of eastern refugees and other malcontented elements, such as former Nazis. Extremist parties of the right and left simply had no chance against the mighty Adenauer machine. For a new republic with the legacies of Weimar and the Third Reich, this organizational build-up was obviously better for the developing legitimacy than a splintering of political forces would have been.

Last but not least in the partisan arena, we need to juxtapose Edinger's central actor, Adenauer, to the rivals he had in his own party and in the opposition. The personal confrontations between Adenauer and Kurt Schumacher alone, with their contrasting styles and bitter invective, helped to create a whole political world between their clashing personalities. Even his old-fashioned Wilhelminian authoritarianism in a way helped to restore the German faith in democracy which had served them so poorly in the Weimar Republic. To quote David Conradt, (35)

Adenauer did make a major contribution toward the institutionalization of the Federal Republic in that he convinced most citizens that a "republic" could be strong and effective, that strong state authority and firm leadership could operate within a democratic framework and give West Germans what they desperately wanted in the postwar period: security

and economic prosperity. Through his authoritarian, paternalistic style, he sold West Germans on the Second Republic.

Finally, there is the rodeo theory of the legitimizing leader. The longer the leader can stay in the saddle of the bucking politics of a new country, the greater the leader's contribution to the legitimacy of the system. Short-term leaders hardly have time to make themselves known. Anyone staying atop a new republic for as long as Adenauer did--nearly as long as the entire Weimar republic lasted--must leave his or her mark on the system. After all, this is how the monarchic dynasties of old acquired legitimacy. And if he, on top of his endurance, takes on and resolves important and major tasks perceived by the public, such as giving the system external security, prosperity, and international respect, he has created a "working system," as legitimate as they come.

#### FOOTNOTES

- 1 The Scientific Study of Political Leadership, New York: Free Press, 1977.
- 2 David Easton, A Systems Analysis of Political Life, New York: Wiley, 1965, pp. 302-307.
- 3 See his "Political Science and Political Biography," Journal of Politics 26, (1964), 423-439 and 648-676; Kurt Schumacher: A Study in Personality and Political Behavior, Stanford University Press, 1965; Political Leadership in Industrializing Societies, New York: Wiley, 1967; and "The Comparative Analysis of Political Leadership," Comparative Politics 17 (1965), 253-269.
- 4 See Seligman's Recruiting Political Elites, New York: General Learning Press, 1971, and his earlier Leadership in a New Nation: Political Development in Israel, New York: Atherton, 1964. Also Rustow, Philosophers and Kings: Studies in Leadership, New York: Braziller, 1970.
- 5 "The Concept of Leadership: An Analysis," Canadian Journal of Political Science 1 (1968), 3.
- 6 For details, see especially Arnold J. Heidenheimer, Adenauer and the CDU: The Rise of the Leader and the Integration of the Party, The Hague: Nijhoff, 1960 and Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, Konrad Adenauer und die CDU der britischen Besatzungszone, Cologne: Eichholz, 1975, p. 4 fn. where the literature is listed.
- 7 Dion, p. 6. The most pressing of these, in the eyes of the public, consisted in helping the nation find its way out of the abject devastation and humiliation in which it found itself as a result of the Third Reich's policies.
- 8 Dion, p. 8.
- 9 See especially Heidenheimer, pp. 61-72, 115-177. We shall come back to this point below.
- 10 In short order, Adenauer separated the cabinet ministers of his coalition parties, the Refugee party (BHE), Free Democrats (FDP), and German party (DP) from their respective parties who were either

absorbed by the CDU/CSU or sent to the opposition benches. There were also complaints from inside the CDU and from the Bundestag, which believed that he was not honoring his constitutional duty to keep Parliament informed of his actions.

- 11 See this writer's "Structure of Interests, Equilibrium, and Leadership: Adenauer's Survival as Chancellor," *American Political Science Review* 52 (1962), 634-650.
- 12 This common refrain was dropped only in about the mid-sixties when this writer recalls hearing the opposite comment from many quarters. The right- and left-wing opposition of the latter part of the sixties was related to economic and political difficulties but did not notably involve more than a rather small fringe of students and especially vulnerable groups.
- 13 See also Erich P. Neumann and Elisabeth Noelle, *Statistics on Adenauer: Portrait of a Statesman*, Allensbach: IFD, 1962, p. 37: During the first honeymoon period, his policies still enjoyed an approval rate of 23% plus another 23% of approval with reservations (December 1949).
- 14 This was considerably worse than the approval/disapproval ratios of Erhard in September 1966 (28:46) and Willy Brandt in March 1974 (33:45) in their darkest hours respectively. Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, "Konrad Adenauer, die öffentliche Meinung und Wahlen," in Helmut Kohl, ed., *Konrad Adenauer 1876/1976*, Stuttgart: Belser, 1976, p. 149.
- 15 Ibid.
- 16 Diagram 1 was derived from the mid-year figures and averages of the annual tables, *ibid.*, pp. 155-157.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 150. In December, 1963, 52% of CDU/CSU voters repeated this sentiment. See also Neumann and Noelle, p. 77.
- 18 *Statistics on Adenauer*, 45.
- 19 *Ibid.*, pp. 53, 54, 56. There were also large blocs criticizing him for inflation and a failure to pursue reunification.
- 20 *Ibid.*, p. 23.
- 21 See also the childlike formula, "Despite all current difficulties, Adenauer will find a way and in the end manage everything for the best" endorsed by 58% (vs. 13% who rejected it) in October of 1954. *Ibid.*, p. 49.
- 22 Noelle-Neumann, 159, and "Der grosse Kanzler," *IFD Pressdienst*, April 1968, Table 2.
- 23 See also this writer's "Politico-Cultural Restraints on West German Foreign Policy: Sense of Trust, Identity and Agency," *Comparative Political Studies* 3 (1971), 450-453.
- 24 In January 1950, he was not named at all among such figures as Bismarck (35%), Hitler (10%), Frederick the Great (7%), Hindenburg (6%), and the Kaiser (3%). In August 1952, he polled 3% behind all of these and it was only after the 1953 landslide in November 1953 that he was tied with Hitler at 9%, behind Bismarck with 32%. *Statistics on Adenauer*, pp. 139-142. Still, in December 1954, in a one-on-one confrontation with Bismarck he lost out 11:54%.

- 25 There was also another parallel early curve, responses naming him "the most capable German politician at the present time," which gave him 19% in November 1951, 26-27% at the turn of the year 1951/1952, 33% in August 1952, and 51% in June of 1953. This level declined only in 1959 (26-28%). Statistics on Adenauer, pp. 123-133.
- 26 Statistics on Adenauer, pp. 146-147. In another poll in May 1958, 53% rated him "among the really great men of our century," Ibid., p. 149.
- 27 See also the earlier interpretation in this writer's Germany, Yesterday and Tomorrow, New York: Oxford University Press, 1965, pp. 274-276, and G.R. Boynton and Gerhard Loewenberg, "The Evolution of Public Perception of Adenauer as a Historic Leader: Test of a Mathematical Model of Attitude Change," in Social Science History 1 (1976), 79-100, especially the conclusions, pp. 95-96.
- 28 Noelle-Neumann, "Die Verklärung: Adenauer und die öffentliche Meinung 1949 bis 1976," in Dieter Blumenwitz et al., eds., Konrad Adenauer und seine Zeit, Stuttgart: DVA, 1976, vol. II, 529 and 553.
- 29 On the other hand, when the public was asked to name "the most able, the greatest politicians" of the last thirty years in February of 1976, Adenauer swept the field with 47%, while Brandt was third with 7%, after John F. Kennedy (11%), but ahead of Winston Churchill (5%), Erhard (3%), and even Charles DeGaulle (2%).
- 30 Ibid., pp. 549-551.
- 31 See this writer's German Foreign Policies, West and East, Santa Barbara: Clio Press, 1974, pp. 18-22.
- 32 Noelle-Neumann, "Die Verklärung," p. 552.
- 33 See this writer's Germany: Yesterday and Tomorrow, pp. 336-337.
- 34 See Ibid., pp. 272-276. As Willy Brandt remarked on American television during a visit in the early 1960s, "Adenauer contributed a good deal to the stabilization of our democratic system."
- 35 The German Polity, New York: Longman, 1978, p. 145. Conrad credits 1) the total absence of a credible alternative to what the Western occupiers established in 1949, and 2) the performance of postwar system with achievement of legitimacy, Ibid., p. 51.