

An Absolute Majority for the SPD as an Unintended Consequence? The Land Election in Rheinland-Pfalz 2006

Kai Arzheimer / Harald Schoen

INTRODUCTION

On March 26, the citizens of Rheinland-Pfalz voted for a new parliament. The SPD won a large plurality (45.6 per cent) of the vote, while the CDU came second with only 32.8 per cent, its worst result ever. Amongst the smaller parties, only the FDP gained representation in parliament while the Greens (4.6 per cent) as well as the new leftist party WASG (2.5 per cent) could not overcome the five percent threshold. For the SPD, the plurality of the votes translated into a (bare) majority of the seats (52.5 percent), which allowed the SPD to form a government without the aid of another party.

While the result of the election was determined almost exclusively by factors on the Land level, its outcomes on the federal level were considerable. First and foremost, the election ended the string of devastating losses in Land elections for the SPD, which had started in 1999 and had contributed directly

and indirectly to the erosion of the government led by Gerhard Schröder. Since the Grand Coalition formed after the federal election of 2005 was controversial with many party members and the party's already low ratings in the polls kept falling for months, this may have very well prevented a premature end of the Grand Coalition government in Berlin.

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Moreover, the party's impressive victory further enhanced the reputation of Kurt Beck (Ministerpräsident since 1994), who had already played a prominent role in the party on the federal level and became its chairman in April 2006. Finally, the election brought an end to the last SPD/FDP coalition on the Land level. This may be of little practical importance for the balance of power in the Bundesrat for the time being. However, since SPD/Green governments, CDU/FDP governments or (as of lately) Grand Coalitions have been the dominant patterns of coalition formation in Germany for more than two

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decades, both pundits and politicians had always taken a special interest in this rather unusual constellation since it was living proof that other options were still feasible.

In this paper, we start with a sketch of the general political setup in Rheinland-Pfalz and an overview of the campaign. An analysis of the result follows. We end with a brief conclusion and an assessment of the election's immediate and future consequences.

THE SETTING: POLITICS IN A CONFESSIONALLY DIVIDED LAND

Rheinland-Pfalz (Rhineland-Palatinate) is a mid-sized Land in the south west of Germany with a population of just over 4 millions. Its head of Government (Ministerpräsident) is elected by the Land's parliament (Landtag). The electoral system closely resembles the federal dual-ballot system and is basically proportional. Rheinland-Pfalz was created by a decree of the French military administration in 1946 that merged former parts of Bavaria, Prussia, Hesse-Darmstadt and Hesse-Nassau with some smaller territories. Large parts of Rheinland-Pfalz are still rural, and only five of the Land's 118 towns and cities have a population of more than 100,000 inhabitants. Industrialization was confined to a few urban areas, and farming still plays a major role in the Land's economy.

The largest city and capital of Rheinland-Pfalz is Mainz with slightly less than 200,000 inhabitants. Like some other West German Länder, Rheinland-Pfalz started out as a very artificial structure. Administrative borders notwithstanding, much of the north still belongs to the hinterland of Cologne and Bonn in neighbouring North Rhine-Westphalia, and large areas in the southeast are rightfully considered as parts of conurbations in Baden-Württemberg. The Land's capital itself forms an agglomeration with Hesse's capital Wiesbaden, with both cities being part of the metropolitan Rhein-Main area around Frankfurt.

Moreover, the decision to merge these heterogeneous territories resulted in a clear confessional divide: While only about one third of the population belongs to the evangelic church, parts of the north east and of the south are predominantly protestant. On the other hand, the (bare) catholic majority of the population is concentrated in the north. In the rural areas around the diocesan city of Trier, still more than 80 per cent of the population are catholic. Before the 1970s, this divide was even more pronounced.

Because the respective conflicts between labour/capital and (catholic) church/state are the two most important amongst the cleavages which shaped the German party system,¹ this specific structure had an enormous political impact in the past. In the rural north, a stronghold of the

catholic Zentrumspartei from the 1870s until 1933,² even in the 1970s the CDU polled up to 75 per cent of the vote. On the other hand, support for the SPD was for decades largely confined to the few industrialized parts of the Land and the protestant areas.³ Given this specific setup, it is hardly surprising that the CDU played a dominant role in Rheinland-Pfalz even before the first elections 1947 and received more than 40 per cent of the vote on a regular basis.

Initially, Rheinland-Pfalz was ruled by an all party coalition which broke apart in 1948 and was subsequently replaced by a 'Grand' (CDU/SPD) government. After the land election of 1951, a CDU/FDP coalition was formed that lasted for 20 years. During this time, both major parties managed to broaden their electoral support slowly but constantly at the expense of the FDP. In 1971, the CDU won an absolute majority of the vote for the first time and subsequently ruled without a coalition partner. Moreover, the party was able to repeat that remarkable feat in the elections of 1975, 1979, and 1983. From that time on, Rheinland-Pfalz was considered one of the Christian Democrats' heartlands, not unlike Bavaria.⁴

Somewhat paradoxically, this achievement was caused by a *weakening* of the denominational cleavage. Ecological regression of electoral and census data on the district level shows that the CDU managed to keep its support amongst Catholics while making inroads into the protestant camp from the late 1960s on. In 1963, slightly less than 10 per cent of the Protestants voted for the Christian Democrats. 20 years later, this rate had almost tripled.⁵ Without this unexpected increase in support for the Christian Democrats, the absolute majorities of the 1970s would not have been possible. While there can be no conclusive evidence in the absence of survey data, it is safe to assume that this unexpected turn of affairs was facilitated by a policy of modernization pursued by Helmut Kohl, then one of the party's few 'young turks'.

Kohl's political career within the party had started in the late 1940s. Already one of the CDU's key figures on the Land level in the 1950s, he became chairman of the party's faction in the Landtag in 1963. In 1966, he was elected head of the party on the Land level as well and was designated to follow Peter Altmeier (who had been Ministerpräsident since 1947) in 1969. Kohl vastly reduced the number of (often tiny) boroughs and districts, allocated funds for the development of the Land's rural areas, initiated the foundation of two new universities.

Even more important was the reform of primary and secondary schooling.⁶ Though almost all Schools were run by the state, the constitution of Rheinland-Pfalz stipulated that schools should generally accept either catholic or protestant pupils. Moreover, even at schools that accepted Catholics and Protestants, pupils had to be taught exclusively by teachers belonging to their respective denomination. In rural areas where most schools were very small, these provi-

sions resulted in considerable hardships for pupils from the respective minorities, who had to commute long distances, only to be taught in large multi-age classes. The Kohl government responded to this state of affairs with an unprecedented program to build larger new schools in rural areas. Moreover, while the constitutional provisions on schooling had already been somewhat mitigated in 1964 and 1967, the CDU backed a major change to the constitution in 1970 and abandoned denominational separation in state-run schools completely.

Kohl gave up his office and became leader of the CDU opposition in the Bundestag in 1976. His successor was Bernhard Vogel, until then minister for education in the Land government and head of the party at the Land level since 1973. Vogel campaigned successfully 1979 and 1983, but in 1987, the CDU lost its absolute majority and formed a coalition with the FDP. This turn of events resulted in considerable strife within the party. In 1988, a majority of the delegates at a party conference declined Vogel another term as its head. The rebellion was led by Hans-Otto Wilhelm, one of Vogel's ministers who called for a 'renewal' of the party. Vogel resigned from his office as Ministerpräsident and was replaced by Carl-Ludwig Wagner. That cleavage between 'loyalists' and 'rebels' within the party has proven extremely durable. As of today, no leader of the CDU has managed to gain the party's unanimous support.

In the election of 1991, the SPD won a plurality of the votes (44.8 per cent) for the first time and formed a coalition government with the FDP which was led by Rudolf Scharping, while the CDU polled a humiliating 38.7 per cent. Scharping became leader of the SPD opposition in the Bundestag in 1994 and was replaced by Kurt Beck. In the election of 1996, the CDU's share stagnated while the SPD lost about five percentage points of the vote. While a CDU/FDP coalition would have commanded a bare majority of one seat in the Landtag, the FDP decided to continue the somewhat unusual co-operation with the SPD. Johannes Gerster, the CDU's shadow Ministerpräsident, became leader of the parliamentary faction in the Landtag but met fierce opposition within the party. In the following year, he ended his political career and was replaced by Christoph Böhr. Four years later, the SPD's support rebounded to 44.7 per cent of the vote, while the CDU lost another three percentage points. Massive internal strife notwithstanding, Böhr managed to keep his offices as head of the party at the Land level and head of the parliamentary group and ran again as top candidate in 2006.

THE CAMPAIGN: WALTZING BEFORE A BLIND (AND BORED) AUDIENCE?

The 2006 campaign set in after the Grand Coalition had been formed in Berlin as a result of the 2005 federal election. The new political constellation at the federal level had repercussions on the campaign at the Land level. To begin with, after the 2005 federal election the approval of the incumbent Land government increased considerably: while during 2004 less than 40 percent had been satisfied with the incumbents, at the start of 2006 the rate was 60 percent.⁷ Obviously, this implied considerably better conditions for being re-elected. Moreover, while in the years before CDU and SPD had fought many campaigns at the Land level about political issues from the federal agenda they downplayed federal issues in the 2006 campaign. As the federal Grand Coalition still enjoyed its honeymoon, at the federal level, both CDU and SPD postponed issues that might turn out to be controversial. As a consequence, the two major parties avoided any direct attacks. Therefore, the 2006 Rheinland-Pfalz election was certainly less of a national ‘barometer election’ than many prior Land elections in Germany.

The SPD fought a typical incumbent’s campaign. To benefit from a feel-good factor, it highlighting its achievements and claimed that Rheinland-Pfalz was a ‘climber Land’ (‘Aufsteigerland’). It attempted to draw the public’s attention to the Land’s economic performance, its relatively low rates of unemployment, and the successful conversion of former American military bases. Moreover, it pointed to improvements in childcare and the setup of full-time schools. The Social Democrats also promised to further improve education and childcare after the election.

The Social Democrats’ campaign was intensely personalized as Ministerpräsident Beck was part and parcel of it. He was praised for political achievements and portrayed as a likeable person being in touch with ordinary citizens. Moreover, the SPD attempted to make the Land election a personal plebiscite over Ministerpräsident Beck. It suggested voting for the SPD to keep Beck in office using the catch-phrase ‘The second-vote is Beck-vote’ (‘Zweitstimme ist Beck-Stimme’). Thereby, the SPD aimed at benefiting from Beck’s popularity.

The FDP fought a two-edged campaign. On the one hand, it campaigned for the continuation of the social-liberal coalition in Rheinland-Pfalz. Only days before the election, the party’s steering committee announced that it would renew its coalition with the SPD even if a FDP/CDU government would be feasible. Such a commitment was considered highly unusual. As it was an incumbent party, the FDP paralleled the SPD in highlighting past achievements. However, it drew more heavily on economic issues and did not personalize its campaign as strongly as did the SPD by focusing on Kurt Beck. On the other hand, the liberal

FDP addressed federal issues by attacking the Grand Coalition. First and foremost, it criticized the grand coalition for the decision to increase the VAT by three percentage points and urged the voters to cast a kind of protest vote against the federal government.

The CDU's campaign clearly differed from the Social Democratic campaign. As Böhr was quite unpopular even with those voters who supported the party and rather controversial within his own party, the CDU did not aim at fighting a personalized campaign. Rather, it attempted to benefit somewhat from the popularity of its federal leader, Angela Merkel, who enjoyed her honeymoon as federal chancellor. At the same time, it criticized the incumbents for adorning themselves with borrowed plumes by suggesting that the Land's low rates of unemployment stemmed from many citizens of Rheinland-Pfalz commuting to neighbouring Lands like Hessen. In the final stage of the campaign, the Christian Democrats changed their strategy somewhat by picking out the naturalization of immigrants as a central theme. They called for tightening measures so that immigrants could become Germans only after having attended a course, passed an exam and sworn an oath on the constitution.

The Greens that were in opposition both at the federal and the Land level addressed classical green issues as they focused on consumer protection, strategies against global warming, and renewable energies. As did other parties they dealt with education policy. At the same time, by focusing the campaign on top candidate Ise Thomas the Greens aimed more strongly at personalizing politics than they had done in previous campaigns.

In the 2006 election, a newcomer entered the political stage of Rheinland-Pfalz. The Wahlalternative Arbeit & Soziale Gerechtigkeit (WASG) ('Electoral Alternative Labour & Social Justice') that had been mainly formed by union members and former Social Democrats in 2005 campaigned for votes in Land elections for the first time. Its campaign focused heavily on one issue by criticizing both federal and Land policies for infringing the principles of social justice. The WASG's issue-based campaign thus called for leftist protest votes

Wrapping things up, the 2006 Rheinland-Pfalz campaign differed considerably from many prior campaigns at the Land level. While in many prior Land elections controversies between CDU and SPD over federal issues had dominated campaign communication, in this case the two major parties did not attack each other severely, and if so, they chiefly referred to Land issues. What is more, the major incumbent party fought a personalized campaign focusing on Ministerpräsident Beck as a popular sovereign. Thus, the Land campaign preceding the Rheinland-Pfalz election on March 26 lived up its name more than many other Land campaigns as Land politicians and Land issues dominated campaign communication. At the same

time, presumably due to the lack of fierce controversy fuelled by national issues the campaign turned out to be not very exciting. Overall, the public's and even the media's interest in the election was considered unusually low.

THE OUTCOME: AN UNEXPECTED ABSOLUTE MAJORITY FOR THE SPD IN A FORMER STAMMLAND OF THE CDU

In the 2006 election, turnout and volatility were lower than in any prior Land election in Rheinland-Pfalz. Just 58 percent of those eligible to vote actually cast a vote. Thus, in 2006 a long-term downward trend of electoral participation continued: While until the end of the 1980s turnout approached at least almost 80 percent starting in the 1990s it declined steadily by roughly 20 percentage points, with the eight-points-drop in 2001 being extraordinary large. At the same time, the Pedersen index of volatility⁸ equalled 3.6, indicating that the result of the 2006 election resembled the outcome of its 2001 predecessor quite closely. This finding is the more remarkable as in many other German Länder volatility had tremendously increased from the 1990s onward as compared to the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, in this respect, the 2006 election in Rheinland-Pfalz did not follow the national trend.

Table 1: The outcome of the 2006 and the 2001 Land elections in Rheinland-Pfalz

| | 2006 | 2001 |
|---------|------|------|
| Turnout | 58.2 | 62.1 |
| SPD | 45.6 | 44.7 |
| CDU | 32.8 | 35.3 |
| FDP | 8.0 | 7.8 |
| Greens | 4.6 | 5.2 |
| WASG | 2.5 | -- |
| Others | 6.7 | 6.9 |

Entries are vote shares of the Landesstimmen.

As pre-election surveys had indicated that a considerable majority of Rheinland-Pfalz citizens approved of the incumbent government and did not think that it was time for a change,⁹ it comes as no surprise that the vote shares of both incumbent parties rose somewhat compared

to the 2001 election. What is more, the SPD managed to achieve its best result ever in Rheinland-Pfalz Land elections. Somewhat paradoxically, the SPD gained in the strongholds of CDU, FDP and the Greens while losing ground in its own strongholds where the WASG made some inroads.¹⁰ At the same time, it lost a considerable number of votes in its traditional social base, i.e. among workers and the unemployed, while it gained in other social groupings like the self-employed.¹¹ As a result, the SPD's success was accompanied by a further wearing off of the traditional social outline of its electorate.

It appears that several factors contributed to the SPD's success in the 2006 election. To begin with, it was considered the most competent party in policy domains voters considered to be important, with child care, family, and social justice among them. However, as compared to the 2001 election SPD's lead in policy terms had decreased, and in some domains, including labour policy that a large of the electorate considered most important, it had actually vanished.¹² By contrast, Kurt Beck was much more popular with the electorate than his challenger Christoph Böhr, and his lead had increased considerably since 2001. If voters had to choose the Ministerpräsident directly Beck's voters would have outnumbered Böhr's voters by more than three to one.¹³ Moreover, the SPD received more Landesstimmen (or Zweitstimmen) than Wahlkreisstimmen, though for the SPD and the CDU generally the reverse pattern is found.¹⁴ As the patterns of ticket-splitting indicate, the SPD received a considerable number of second votes from citizens who voted for the CDU with the Wahlkreisstimme and also did quite well among voters who cast their Wahlkreisstimme for the FDP or the Greens.¹⁵ These findings suggest that the slogan 'Zweitstimme ist Beck-Stimme' was quite effective in garnering votes.

As with turnout, the CDU's vote share continued to decrease though politicians and pundits alike thought that it had hit rock bottom in 2001 already. In 2006, the CDU received less than a third of the votes cast while it had garnered at least 45 percent from 1955 to 1987. Compared to the 2001 election, the CDU lost more votes in their strongholds, mainly rural constituencies with high rates of Catholics, than on average and many of its former voters abstained.¹⁶ Thus, it appears that the CDU's devastating result stemmed from problems of mobilising the party's traditional electoral base for the fourth time in a row. Top candidate Böhr presumably contributed considerably to this failure as the public considered him to be detached and therefore preferred incumbent Kurt Beck to him. Moreover, controversies within the CDU that have troubled the party for the last fifteen years may have hampered the party's mobilisation and appears to have caused the public to disapprove of the party's performance at the Land level.¹⁷

Both the Greens and the WASG did not manage to pass the five percent threshold. In the 2006 election, the Greens did worse than in any Land election since 1987. They lost votes in their strongholds and the main beneficiary of the Greens' bad performance was the SPD who received more than half of the votes of those 2001 Green voters who refused to vote for the Greens again.¹⁸ As it had received 5.6 percent in Rheinland-Pfalz in the 2005 federal election, the leftist WASG hoped to enter the Land parliament in 2006. However, though it made some inroads into the SPD's regional strongholds and social base,¹⁹ the WASG garnered only 2.5 percent of the Landesstimmen and managed to overcome the five percent threshold in only two constituencies.²⁰ Its failure to enter the Land parliament was presumably due to the absence of federal issues, notably social security, in the campaign and the SPD's success in making the election a plebiscite over the popular incumbent Ministerpräsident.

The SPD's plurality of votes translated into a majority of seats, so that the SPD was no longer in need of a coalition partner to form a government. On 18 May 2006, Kurt Beck was reelected as Ministerpräsident. Interestingly, he received 54 of 101 votes though the SPD held only 53 seats in the Land parliament, implying a CDU or FDP representative cast his or her vote for Beck. In his government declaration on 22 May 2006, Ministerpräsident Beck announced several policy measures, including salary cuts for recruits in the civil service, financial improvements for all-day schools, and the introduction of tuition fees for university students from outside Rheinland-Pfalz.²¹

Table 2: The government of Rheinland-Pfalz after the 2006 Land election

| Portfolio | Incumbent |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Prime Minister | Kurt Beck (SPD) |
| Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Science, Advanced Training, Research and Culture | Prof. Dr. Jürgen Zöllner (SPD) |
| Minister of Labour, Social Affairs, Family, and Health Care | Malu Dreyer (SPD) |
| Minister of Education, Women and Youth | Doris Ahnen (SPD) |
| Minister of Finance | Ingo Deubel (SPD) |
| Minister of Domestic Affairs and Sports | Karl-Peter Bruch (SPD) |
| Minister of Justice | Heinz Georg Bamberger (SPD) |
| Minister of Environment, Forests, and Con- | Margit Conrad (SPD) |

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| sumer Protection | |
| Minister of Economics, Traffic, Agriculture and Viniculture | Hendrik Hering (SPD) |

By and large, Ministerpräsident Beck kept his cabinet and changed his government team chiefly in response to the FDP's withdrawal from the government (Table 2). To begin with, the Minister of Science, Jürgen Zöllner, became Deputy Prime Minister. Hendrik Hering, Land Secretary in the Ministry of Domestic Affairs, became Minister of Economics, while the president of the Higher Regional Court at Koblenz, Heinz Georg Bamberger, became Ministry of Justice. In addition to vacancies that had resulted from the FDP's withdrawal, Land Secretary of Finance, Ingolf Deubel, became Minister of Finance. Interestingly, only four of the eight ministers are members of the Landtag, though in parliamentary systems regularly parliamentary factions are the primary source for recruiting members of the cabinet.

CONCLUSION

The 2006 Rheinland-Pfalz election resulted in minor changes of the parties' vote shares that in turn had considerable political consequences. For the first time since 1983, only three parties entered the Land parliament. Moreover, by increasing its vote share a little bit, the SPD managed to get a majority of seats in the Land parliament of Rheinland-Pfalz that for a long time had been considered a CDU Land. As a consequence, though it had campaigned for the continuation of the social-liberal coalition and gained in votes the FDP is no longer a governmental party. Thus, it is a governmental party in only three Lands (Baden-Württemberg, Niedersachsen and Nordrhein-Westfalen) and is no longer capable of inhibiting constitutional amendments by the federal Grand Coalition in the Bundesrat. Looked at from this angle, the outcome of the Rheinland-Pfalz election implies that the Grand Coalition now has less difficulties in implementing its policies. As regards the CDU, the Land election resulted in another reshuffle of its leadership: Christoph Böhr resigned and Christian Baldauf became the leader of both the Land party and the CDU faction in the Land parliament.

Its major political repercussions notwithstanding, the outcome of the 2006 election by and large resembled its 2001 predecessor. Principally, it confirmed that Rheinland-Pfalz is no CDU stronghold anymore. As in every Land election since 1991, the Christian Democrats did not manage to become the strongest party. Instead, they trailed by 13 points behind the SPD. Do the SPD's successes in several subsequent elections imply that Rheinland-Pfalz has become a Social Democratic heartland on which the SPD can count without any effort? The an-

swer is no as the SPD's 2006 success did not entirely result from durable factors but from short-term factors that may be unique to this election. To begin with, the Grand Coalition at the federal level appears to have suspended the conflict between SPD and CDU over federal issues, so that the Land campaign lived up to its name clearer than many of its predecessors. Moreover, the CDU's failure appears to have been caused by intra-party controversies and a top candidate that the public considered as being inadequate. At the same time, the SPD's outstanding result was related to its popular top candidate. Obviously, these factors are not by necessity durable, so that future elections may exhibit considerably different results. In 2011, when the next regular Land election will be held, at the federal level the Grand Coalition may be replaced by a coalition that is not formed by both SPD and CDU. Thus, federal issues may play a major role in the campaign. Moreover, as Christoph Böhr will not be the CDU top candidate in 2011. His successor might be more popular with the voters than Böhr and might even manage to unite the CDU behind himself. Looking at the SPD, it is far from clear that Kurt Beck will still be Ministerpräsident and run for re-election in 2011 as he might become member of the federal government or the Bundestag after the next federal election, presumably held in 2009. If so, it is a moot question whether the public will consider his successor likable and competent. Even if Beck were still Ministerpräsident he could be considerably less appealing than in 2006 as voters could regard him as chairman of the federal SPD being responsible for federal policies they do not like. If federal issues re-entered the Land campaign some of the non-voters might also be mobilised. If so, small parties that had considerable difficulties in the rather Land-centred 2006 campaign could be quite successful in garnering votes. Moreover, the social structure of the Land should still the CDU. While the Christian Democrats have not been able to mobilise their traditional constituency for quite a long time, there is no evidence of a realignment that would benefit the SPD. Thus, the outcome of 2006 election appears to be a snapshot that does not tell us much about the outcome of future Land elections.

- ¹ Pappi, Franz Urban (1973), 'Parteiensystem und Sozialstruktur in der Bundesrepublik', *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 14: 191-213.
- ² Kai Arzheimer, '50 Jahre Wahlen in Rheinland-Pfalz', in: U. Sarcinelli, J.W. Falter, G. Mielke, B. Benzner (eds), *Politische Kultur in Rheinland-Pfalz*, (Mainz: v. Hase & Koehler, 2000), p. 243.
- ³ Arzheimer, Kai and Cornelia Weins (1997), 'Zerfallen die sozialstrukturellen Bindungen an die Union - zum Beispiel in Rheinland-Pfalz?' *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* 28: 203-215.
- ⁴ Arzheimer, '50 Jahre Wahlen in Rheinland-Pfalz', p.236-241.
- ⁵ Arzheimer, '50 Jahre Wahlen in Rheinland-Pfalz', p. 249.
- ⁶ Schaaf, Erwin (1996), 'Schulpolitik, Schule und Hochschule', in: H.-G. Borck (ed), *Beiträge zu 50 Jahre Geschichte des Landes Rheinland-Pfalz*, (Koblenz: Landesarchivverwaltung), p. 315-344.
- ⁷ Cf. Infratest dimap, *LänderTREND Rheinland-Pfalz März I*.
- ⁸ Cf. Mogens N. Pedersen, *The Dynamics of European Party Systems: Changing Patterns of Electoral Volatility*, in: *European Journal of Political Research* 7, 1979, pp. 1-26.
- ⁹ Cf. Infratest dimap, *LänderTREND Rheinland-Pfalz März I and Infratest dimap, LänderTREND Rheinland-Pfalz März II*.
- ¹⁰ Cf. Statistisches Landesamt Rheinland-Pfalz, *Landtagswahl Rheinland-Pfalz am 26. März 2006, Teil 1: Analyse der Wahlergebnisse in der Wahlnacht*, Bad Ems: Statistisches Landesamt Rheinland-Pfalz, p. 51-57.
- ¹¹ Cf. Viola Neu, *Landtagswahlen in Baden-Württemberg, Rheinland-Pfalz und Sachsen-Anhalt am 26. März 2006*, Berlin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, p. 10.
- ¹² Cf. Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Wahl in Rheinland-Pfalz. Eine Analyse der Landtagswahl vom 25. März 2001*, Mannheim, pp. 49-53, Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Landtagswahlen in Baden-Württemberg, Rheinland-Pfalz und Sachsen-Anhalt*, p. 3, Neu, *Landtagswahlen*, p. 44. (http://www.forschungsgruppe.de/Ergebnisse/Wahlanalysen/News_LTW06.pdf).
- ¹³ Infratest dimap, *LänderTREND Rheinland-Pfalz März II* and Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Landtagswahlen in Baden-Württemberg, Rheinland-Pfalz und Sachsen-Anhalt*, p. 3 (http://www.forschungsgruppe.de/Ergebnisse/Wahlanalysen/News_LTW06.pdf).
- ¹⁴ This general pattern at least partially can be explained by the incentives stemming from the electoral system. To the Landesstimme a system of proportional representation applies while to the Wahlkreisstimme a first-past-the-post-system applies so that small parties have no reasonable chance of winning the district mandate and some supporters of small parties thus refuse to cast a Wahlkreisstimme for their preferred party and rather vote for the SPD or the CDU.
- ¹⁵ Cf. Statistisches Landesamt Rheinland-Pfalz, *Landtagswahl Rheinland-Pfalz am 26. März 2006, Teil 2: Repräsentative Wahlstatistik*, Bad Ems: Statistisches Landesamt Rheinland-Pfalz, p. 46.
- ¹⁶ Cf. Neu, pp. 15-17 and Statistisches Landesamt Rheinland-Pfalz, *Landtagswahl Rheinland-Pfalz am 26. März 2006, Teil 1: Analyse der Wahlergebnisse in der Wahlnacht*, Bad Ems: Statistisches Landesamt Rheinland-Pfalz, pp. 52-53.
- ¹⁷ Cf. Neu, p. 46.
- ¹⁸ Cf. Neu, pp. 15-17.
- ¹⁹ Cf. Neu, p. 10, 17 and Statistisches Landesamt Rheinland-Pfalz, *Landtagswahl Rheinland-Pfalz am 26. März 2006, Teil 1*, pp. 51-57.
- ²⁰ Interestingly, in four constituencies it received more than five percent of the Wahlkreisstimmen.
- ²¹ Cf. 'Im Auftrag der Menschen: Gemeinsam den Aufbruch gestalten'. Regierungserklärung von Ministerpräsident Kurt Beck am 30. Mai 2006.