

IREb2014

CULTURE, SOCIETY AND POLITICS IN THE GERMAN-SPEAKING COUNTRIES

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Fall 2021

Week 4: German Politics & Economy

On the Agenda For Today



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- **The Federal Constitutional Court**
- **Political Participation**
- **German Political Parties**
 - CDU, SPD, Greens, Left, Alternative for Germany
 - Far Right Surge
 - Party Financing/Membership
- **The Bundestag (2017-2021)**
- **Federal Elections 2021**
- **The Current Parliament (2021-)**
- **Possible Coalitions**
- **The German Economy**
 - A Global Economic Power



The Federal Constitutional Court

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- Comprised of **two senates**, 8 justices each, in Karlsruhe
- **Court + Constitutional** organ
 - **Hears cases** referred to it by a lower court
 - Reviews the **constitutionality** of **legislation** (important political aspect)
 - Hears **constitutional issues** brought before it (also by individuals)
- Very **busy**



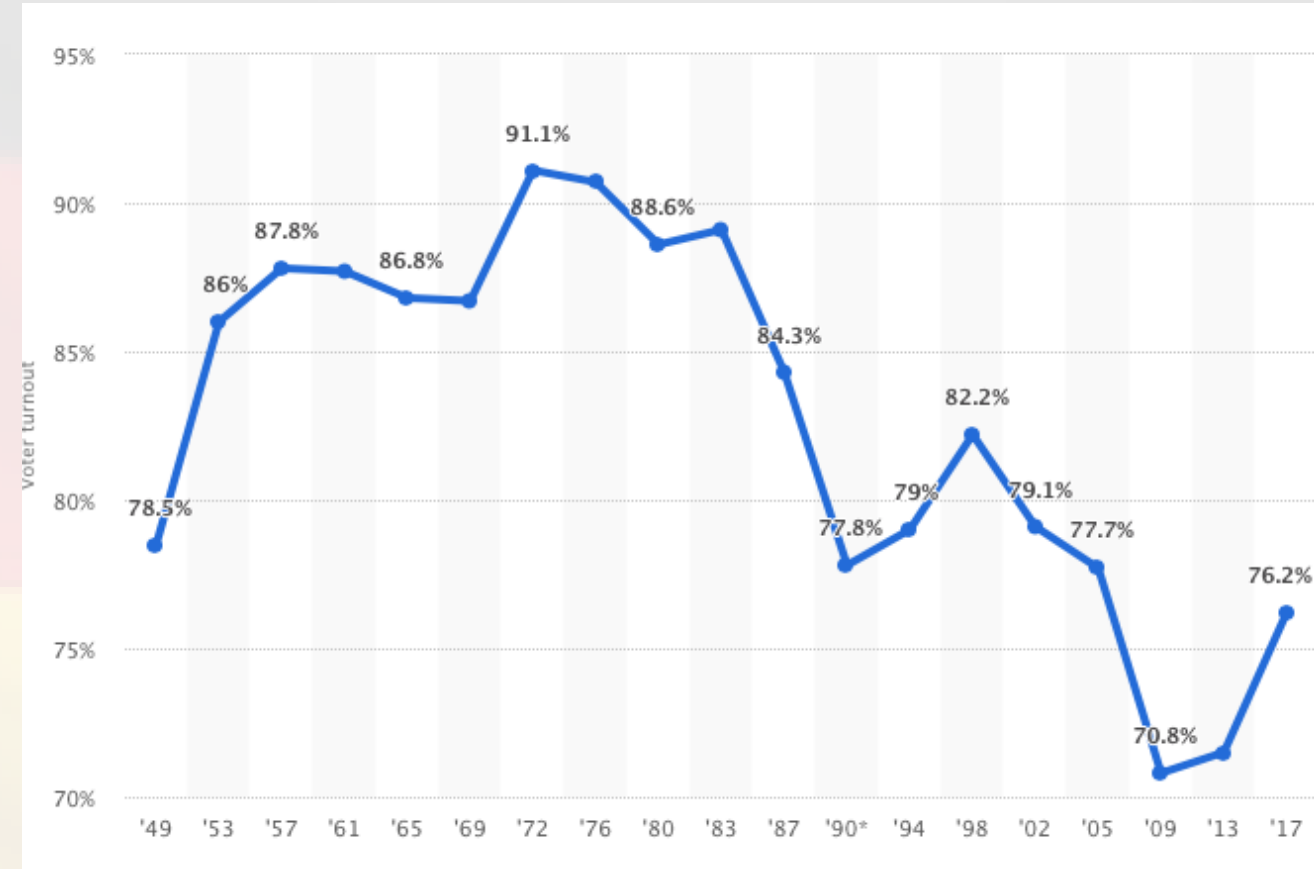
Political Participation



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- Democracy doesn't work without **political participation**
- **Forms of participation**
 - **Institutionalised** (constitutionally provided)/**non-institutionalised**
 - **Directly/indirectly** representative participation
 - **Conventional/unconventional**
 - Cheapest way to partake in the political process (In representative democracies) => **Vote!**

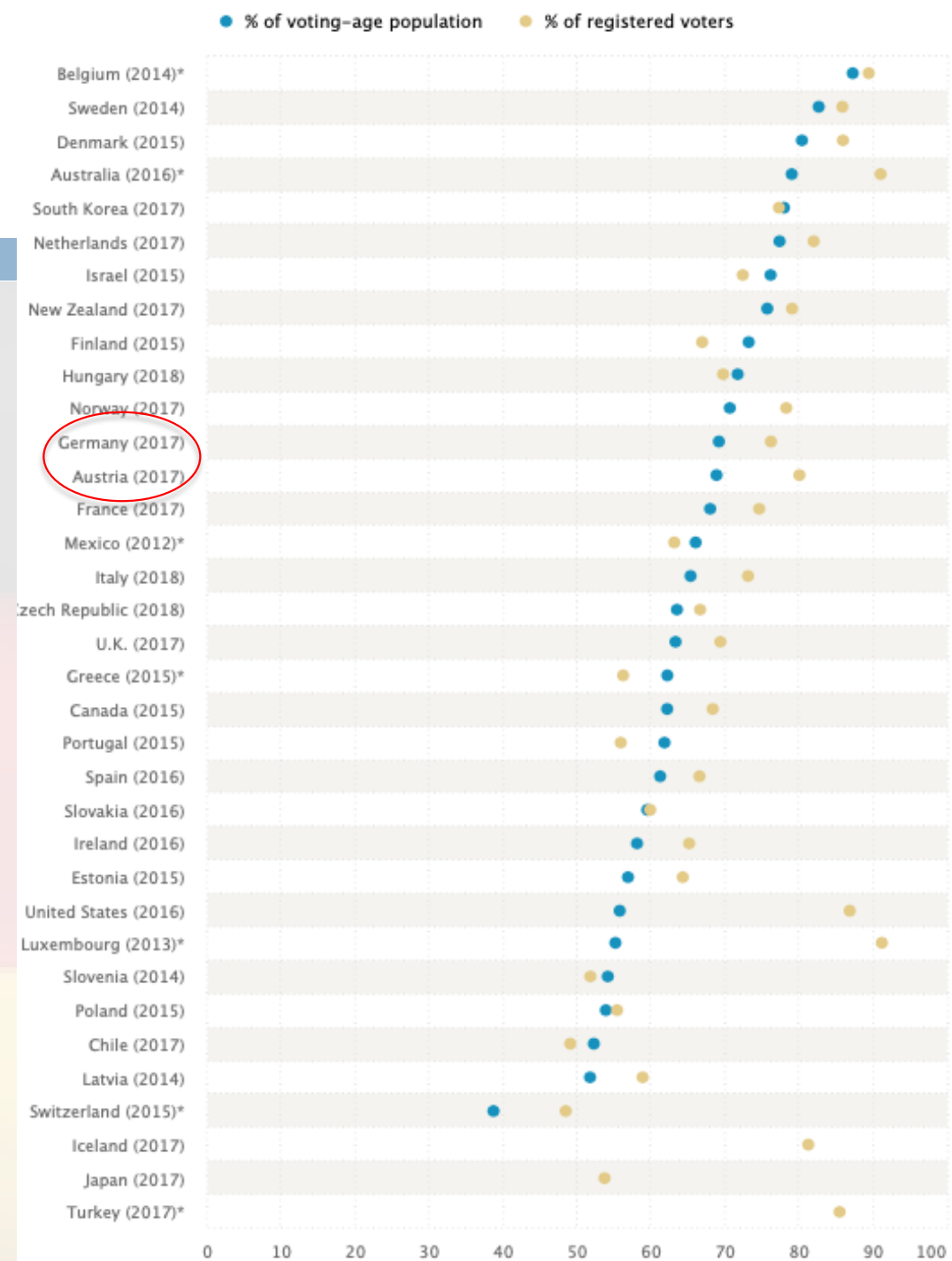
Voter Turnout, German General Elections



Political Participation

Comparative Voter Turnout

- **Germany (2017)** => 69.77%
- **Austria (2017)** => 68.79%
- **Switzerland (2015)** => Nearly 39%
- **US (2016)** => nearly 56%



To Summarize



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German Political Parties

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- **Major parties** => CDU (Christian Democratic Union), SPD (Social Democratic Party)
 - Neither can easily achieve a parliamentary majority

- Other parties:

- **CSU** (sister party to the CDU)
- **FDP** (Free Democratic Party)
- **Green Party**
- **Left Party** (*Die Linke*)



- Since 1966, all federal governments consisted of at least two parties
- **Current coalition** => CDU + SPD

German Political Parties- CDU

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- **'Christian Democratic Union of Germany'**
- Main **conservative** party, supports conservative social values, social market economy
- Originates in the Catholic Center Party, after WW2
- Traditionally supported by Catholics, nowadays also by non-Catholics/atheists
- **Leadership: Merkel** (Chancellor since 2005), **Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer (AKK)**, 2018-2020, **Armin Laschet**

The image shows the logo of the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU). The letters 'CDU' are written in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The logo is centered within a white rectangular box. The background of the slide features a geometric pattern of overlapping triangles in yellow, red, and black.

German Political Parties- SDP



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- **'Social Democratic Party of Germany'** (center left)
 - Supporting social market economy, civil rights, European integration
- **Traditionally** representing the **working class**, trade unions widely supported in industrial cities
- **Used to be** Germany's **largest party** until the early 2000s' => Lost support due to labor market reforms
- **Leader: Olaf Scholz**
- Narrow **victory** over CDU following last month's federal elections (Sep 26, 2021)

SPD

Smaller German Parties



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- The **Alliance '90/Green Party**, formed in 1993
 - Supports **environmental** issues (alternative energy, sustainable development, green transport) & **pacifisms**
 - **Pacifism dropped** when the party joined the Federal government in coalition with SPD (1998)
- Voters are mainly urban, well-educated, rich
 - 'Realos' and 'Fundis'
- Support for the Greens tends to mirror the popularity of the larger political parties (opposite relation)



Smaller German Parties



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- **Die Linke** (the Left Party)
- Founded in 2007, but considered a direct descendent of the **Socialist Unity Party** (ruled East Germany until reunification)
- Supports Increased social investment, higher minimum wage, taxes for corporations and high earners, rejects military missions abroad
- **Never** been part of a federal government coalition
- Mainly supported by older voters from eastern Germany, former communist, protest voters

The logo for Die Linke, featuring the words "DIE LINKE." in a bold, white, sans-serif font on a red background. The letter "I" in "LINKE" has a unique design with a white triangle pointing upwards from its top bar.

Smaller German Parties



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- **Right-wing Alternative for Germany (AfD), 2013**
 - Nationalist, Euroskeptic



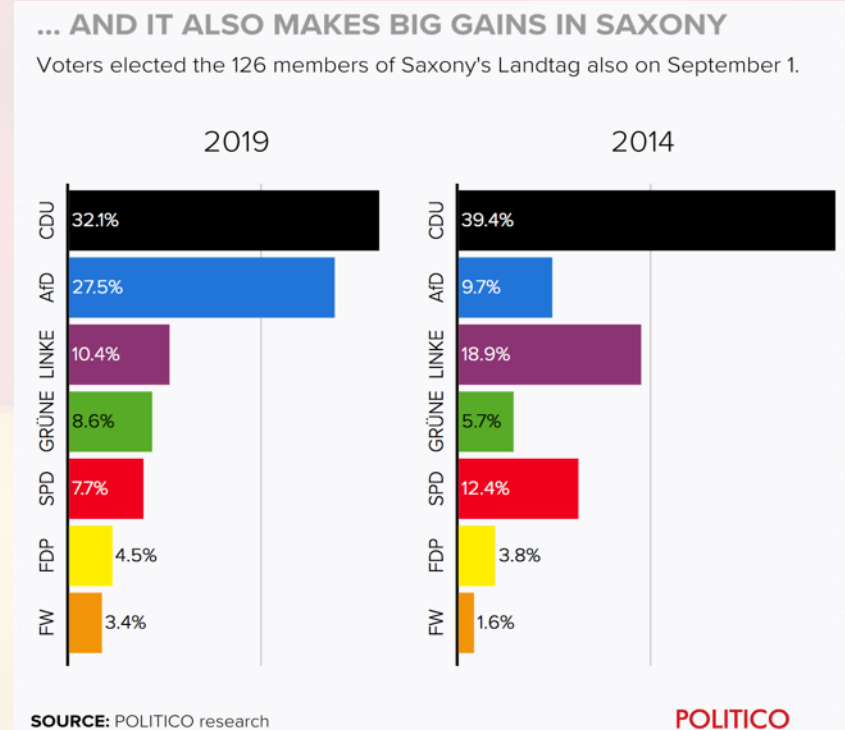
- Supports an **aggressive Anti immigration** policy, insists on the primacy of "traditional" German culture, questions the notion that climate change is man-made
- No specific voter base, scores best among middle income earners & East Germans
- Largest **opposition party** in the Bundestag

Far Right Surge



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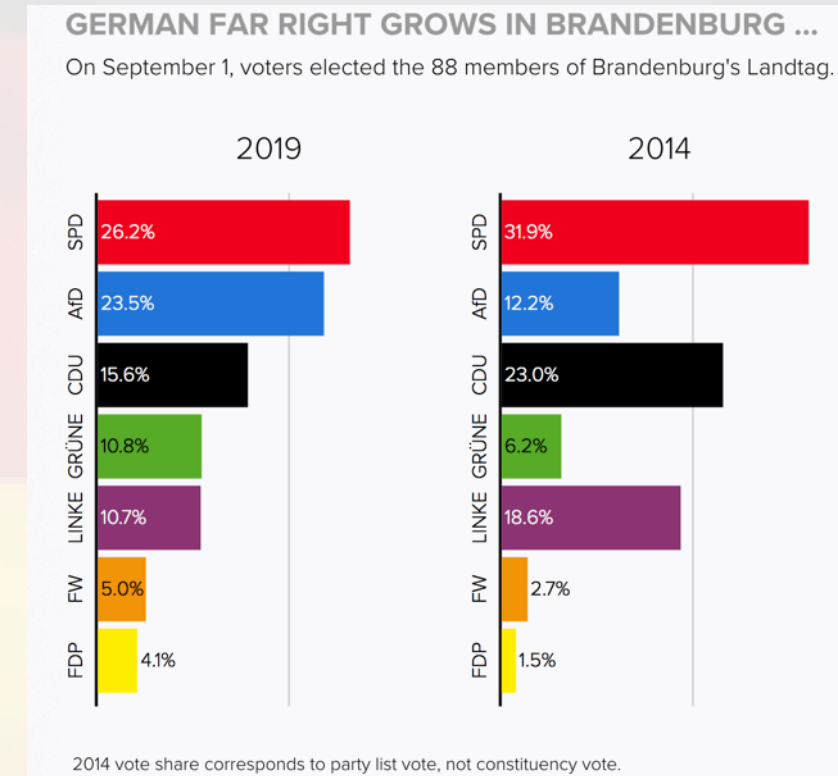
- October 2019 => German far right **surges** in eastern elections (Saxony + Brandenburg)
 - The AfD didn't win either state, but achieved its best-ever results in both => A **strong message to Merkel's centrist coalition**
- **Saxony** =>
 - The AfD nearly tripled its 2014 result
 - The CDU (ruled the state since German reunification) finished first (32.1%), but lost nearly one-fifth of its support compared with 2014 result



Far Right Surge

■ Brandenburg =>

- The AfD finished second behind the ruling SPD with 23.5% (up from the 12.2% in 2014)
 - The SPD, which has dominated Brandenburg's politics for 30 years, reached 26.2%, compared with 31.95 in 2014
 - Merkel's party (CDU) won only 15.6% down from 23%
-
- Results appear to confirm **the fracturing of the electorate in eastern Germany**

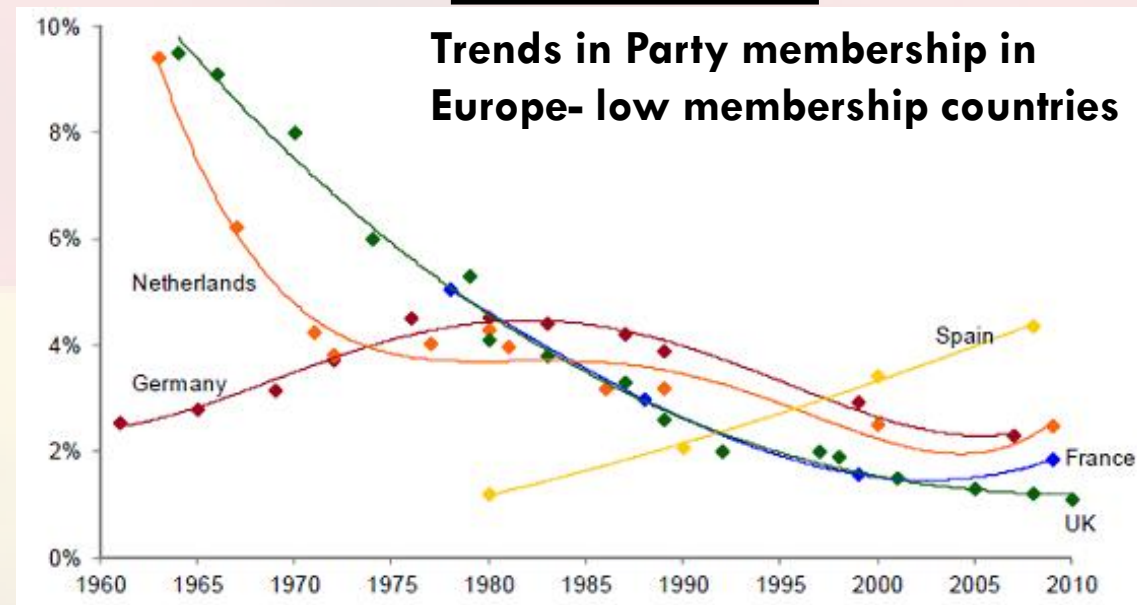
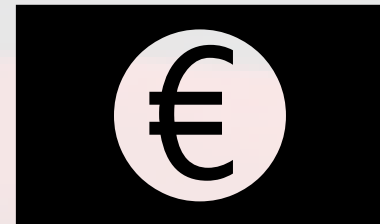


Party Financing/Membership



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- The **'Act on Political Parties'** regulates how parties are financed and the level of public funding they receive
 - The **extent to which the parties are rooted in society**
- Funding mostly comes from **membership dues + donations**
- Parties receive **free campaign advertising** on public television and radio stations for European, national & local elections
- Early 1990s => All major parties experienced a **decrease in membership**, possibly as a result of the increased **general distrust** of political parties

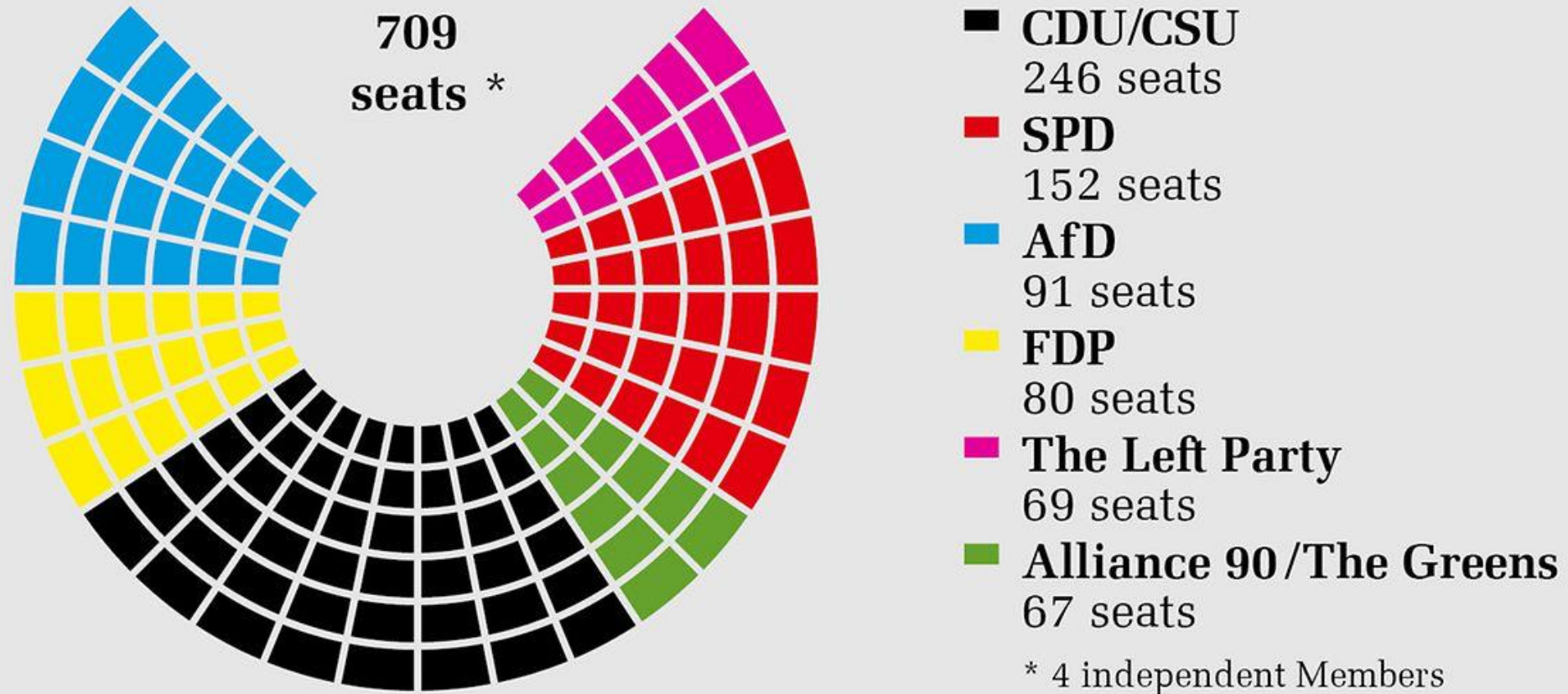


The Bundestag (2017-2021)



Distribution of seats in the 19th electoral term

Last updated: January 2019



The Bundestag (2017-2021)



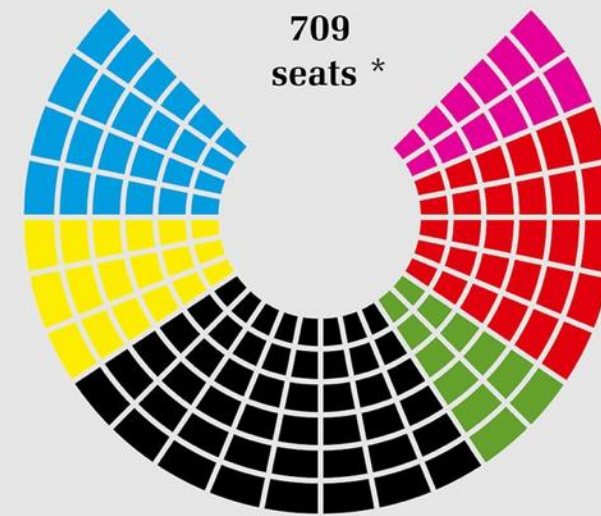
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■ A Political Shift =>

- AfD won seats in the parliament– first far-right party to do so since the 1950s'
- Merkel's (4th candidacy) CDU/CSU got the most mandates
 - Only received 33% support (no 'majority')- **why?**
Discontent with policies (immigration etc.)

Distribution of seats in the 19th electoral term

Last updated: January 2019



■	CDU/CSU	246 seats
■	SPD	152 seats
■	AfD	91 seats
■	FDP	80 seats
■	The Left Party	69 seats
■	Alliance 90/The Greens	67 seats

* 4 independent Members



The Bundestag (2017-2021)



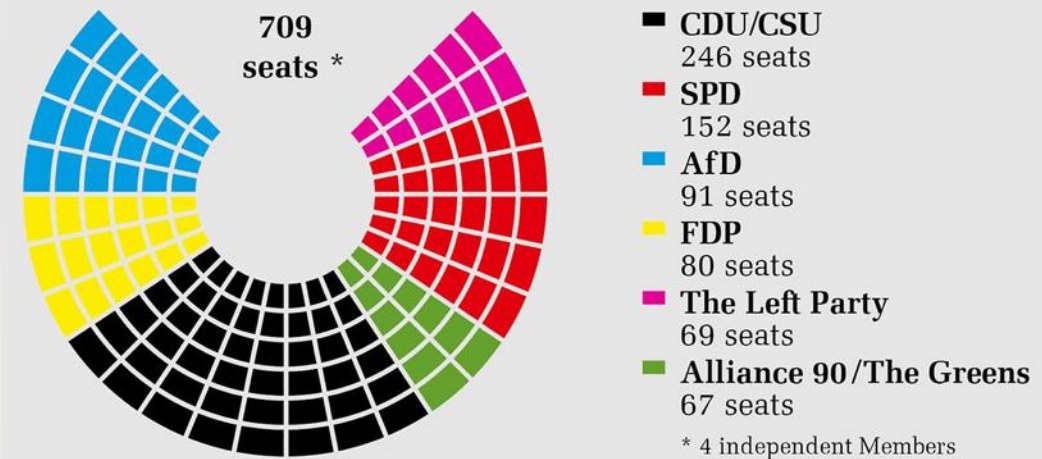
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Forming a coalition =>

- Divided public support
- All parties ruled out a coalition with the AfD
- The only options for a **majority coalition** were:
 - “**Jamaican**” coalition (CDU/CSU, FDP, Green)
 - A **grand Coalition** (CDU/CSU + SPD)
- Coalition talks between the “Jamaican” parties broke, and for the first time **minority coalitions** were seriously discussed

Distribution of seats in the 19th electoral term

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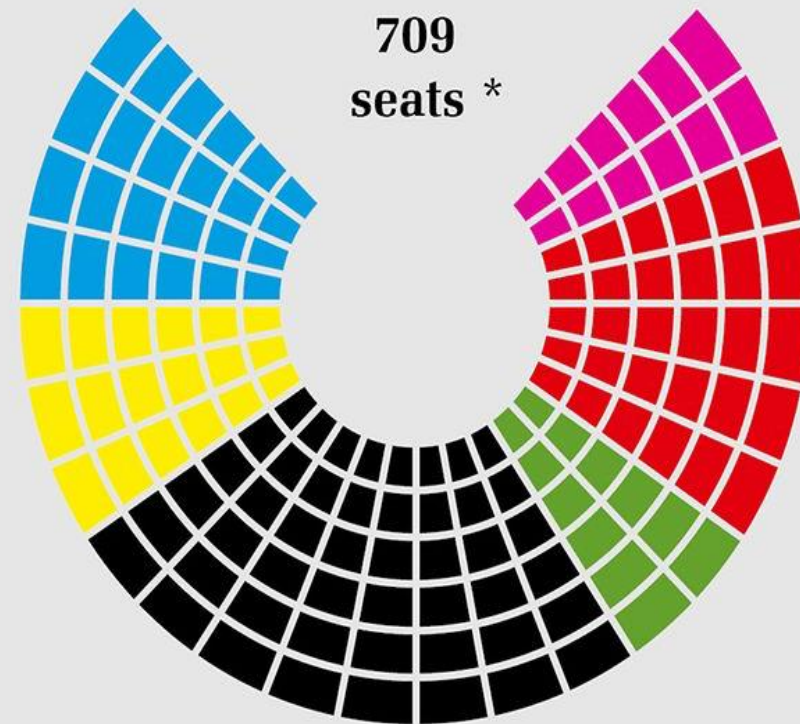


The Bundestag (2017-2021)



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- President Steinmeier publicly called for the leaders of all parties to go back to the negotiation table (unusual)
- The **CDU/CSU + SPD** agreed to **renew the grand coalition** and to re-elected **Merkel as chancellor**
- Does it make sense???



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Federal Elections 2021

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■ The Candidates =>



■ **Armin Laschet, Christian Democratic Union of Germany - CDU**

- Leader of Merkel's CDU + minister president premier of North Rhine-Westfalia
- Won the party's leadership despite being less popular among the public
- Had stumbled on the campaign trail



■ **Olaf Scholz, Social Democratic Party of Germany - SPD**

- Germany's current finance minister + vice chancellor
- Not very charismatic, emphasized experience, stability, continuity
- Mainstream positions (min wage, climate change, strengthening DE industry)

Federal Elections 2021

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■ The Candidates =>



■ **Annalena Baerbock, Alliance 90/The Greens - GRÜNE**

- A rising star with the Greens, could have been the next chancellor but came under fire for a lack of experience, plagiarism
- Tougher foreign policy line with Russia and China

■ **Christian Lindner, Free Democratic Party - FDP**

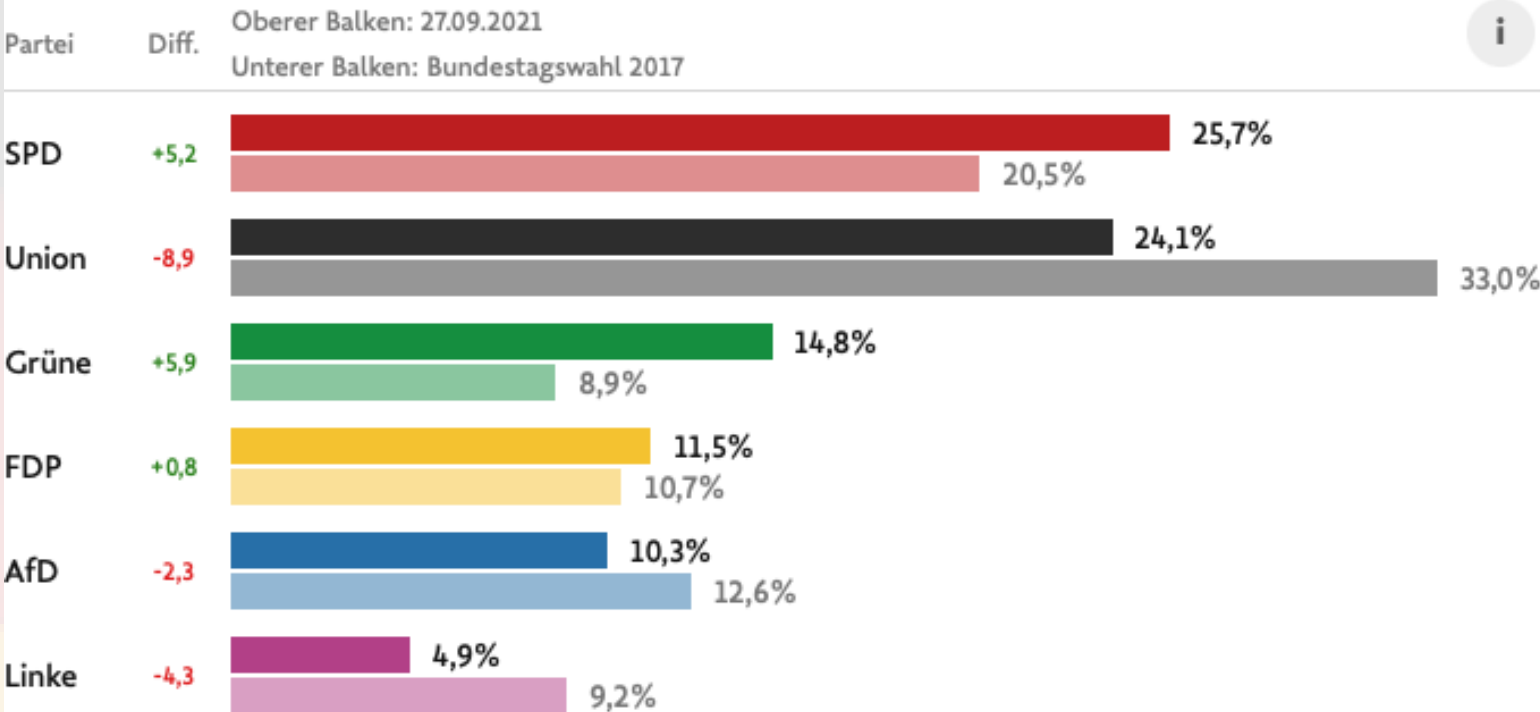
- A likely key figure in coalition talks



■ **Janine Wissler and Dietmar Bartsch, The Left - DIE LINKE**

- Co-leaders of the 'problematic' left party
- Bartsch wants to dissolve NATO

The Current Bundestag (2021)



Sitzverteilung
Bundestagswahl 2021, Deutschland
Vorläufiges Ergebnis



Possible Coalitions

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Parties	Seats won	Second vote %
■ SPD Olaf Scholz	206	25,7 %
■ CDU/CSU Armin Laschet	196	24,1 %
■ GRÜNE Annalena Baerbock	118	14,8 %
■ FDP Christian Lindner	92	11,5 %
■ AfD Alice Weidel, Tino Chrupalla	83	10,3 %
■ DIE LINKE Janine Wissler, Dietmar Bartsch	39	4,9 %

Traffic Light Coalition



SPD + GRÜNE + FDP

Grand Coalition - No longer an option...



SPD + CDU/CSU

Germany Coalition



SPD + CDU/CSU + FDP

Possible Coalitions

24

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Kenya Coalition



SPD + CDU/CSU + GRÜNE

Red-Green Coalition



SPD + GRÜNE

The Social Democratic Party (SPD) says the Greens would be its preferred coalition partner. And the Greens also say it's the alliance it wants. It's unclear whether the two parties would have enough seats in the new parliament to form a government on their own.

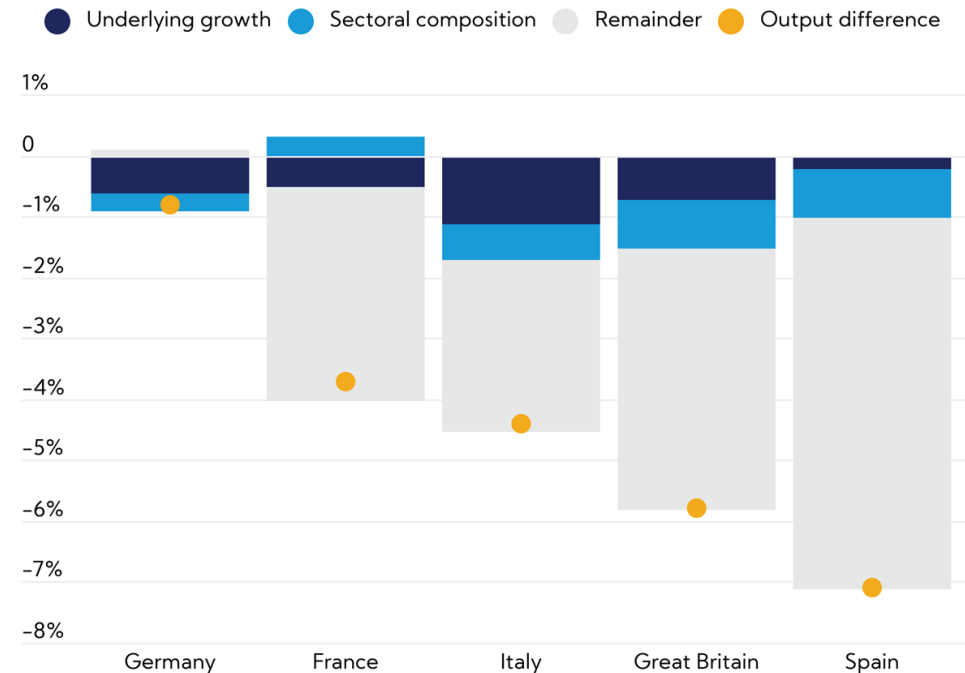
The German Economy



- Third largest economy in the world (**global economic power**), largest economy in **Europe**
- **Mixed Economy**
- Government provides healthcare, insurance, education
- Strong manufacturing base, **leading exporter**
- Remarkable achievements in post-war economic development
- Hit hard by the pandemic, yet a **robust recovery is expected**

Smaller output loss

Germany outperformed many of its European peers in 2020. (GDP growth relative to the US)



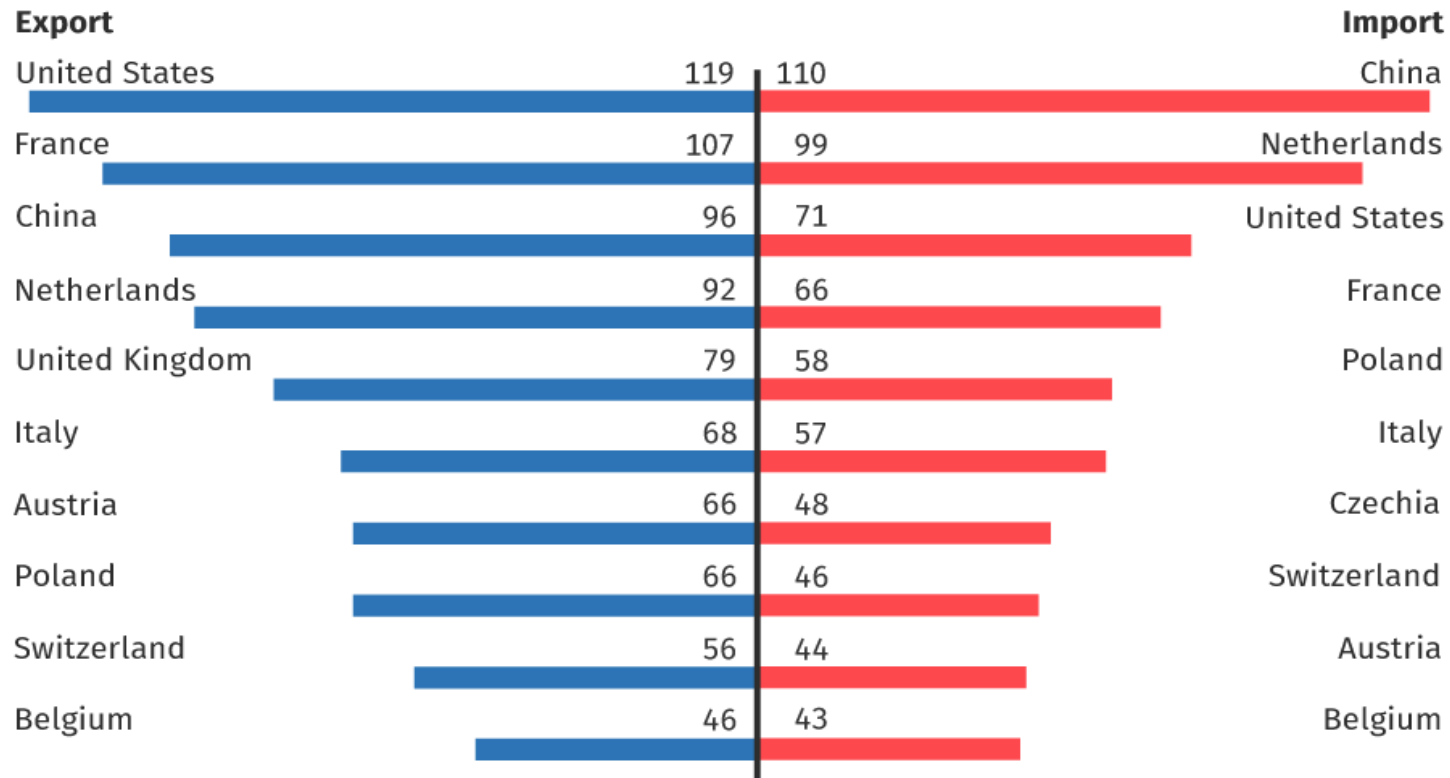
Source: IMF staff calculations.

A Global Economic Power



Germany's major trading partners, 2019

Euro billions



Preliminary result

- Mostly regional partners (+ China, USA)

- Top three export goods:
 - Motor vehicles
 - Machinery and equipment
 - Chemicals and chemical products

A Global Economic Power



- Main exporter, **produces much more than it consumes**
- Needs markets! => Free trade within the EU
 - EU's most **politically & economically influential** member state
 - **Benefits** from its Eurozone **membership** + adoption of **Euro**
- Pre-financial crisis (2008), **Growth <1% annually, why?**



A Global Economic Power



- Pre-financial crisis (2008),
Growth <1% annually, why?
 - Modernization of Eastern Germany-expensive!
 - High **unemployment** + **aging** population



Next Session... READING WEEK



- **The German Economy**
 - The Nord Stream 2 Pipeline
- **German Foreign Policy**
 - German US Relations
- Martin Luther and the **Protestant Reformation**
 - The **Catholic** counter

Reformation

- Large-scale **Effects** of the **Reformations**
- **Religious Wars** in the Holy Roman Empire



Thank You For Your Attention!

Questions???

