

# INTRODUCTION



If we are successful in changing the economic attitude of the population by psychological means, then these psychological changes will themselves become an economic reality, and so serve the same purposes as other measures of economic policy taken so far.

Ludwig Erhard, 19 October 1955<sup>1</sup>

*Die Geschichte der Bundesrepublik ist vor allem ihre Wirtschaftsgeschichte.* (The history of the Federal Republic is above all its economic history.)

Werner Abelshauser<sup>2</sup>

**I**n the aftermath of the Second World War, Germany appeared destined to be a pauper among European nations. Its cities, factories, and transportation system had suffered massive damage during the war. It had lost its sovereignty and was subject to the rule of the four occupying powers of the United States, Great Britain, France, and the Soviet Union who were not keen on rebuilding the industrial might of a defeated Germany. During the immediate postwar years many Germans scraped to get by, enduring dreadful housing and relying on the black market to supplement the sustenance provided by their ration cards. But beginning with the 20 June 1948 currency reform, in which the new Deutsche Mark (DM) replaced the worthless Reichsmark (RM) in the three western zones of occupation, consumer goods seemed to appear magically from nowhere in shop windows. Subsequently, West Germany experienced fantastic economic growth through the 1960s in what has been called the *Wirtschaftswunder* (economic miracle). With rising demand for goods spurred on by the Korean War, West Germany saw its GNP increase by 67 percent in real terms between 1948 and 1952. From 1952 to 1958 the West German GNP continued to expand at a yearly rate of 7.6 percent in real terms and at a still robust rate of about 5 percent into the 1960s, a figure in line with the average growth of other European nations.<sup>3</sup> Workers' wages increased by 79 percent in real terms between 1949 and 1959.<sup>4</sup> West

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Germany literally rose from the ashes as its cities and factories were rebuilt, exports soared, and the West Germans' standard of living improved.

Politicians, economists, and historians have inextricably linked the story of West Germany's economic reconstruction to the nation's economic system, the *Soziale Marktwirtschaft* (social market economy). Emerging out of the ideas of neoliberal economists from the first half of the twentieth century, the social market economy forged a "middle way" between pure laissez-faire capitalism and the collectivist planned economy. The system sought to free up economic controls, such as price or wage controls, and allow the individual pursuit of self-interest and self-determination within the competition of the free market. At the same time, the government would regulate the market by establishing the "rules of the game" in order to curb monopolies and cartels and avoid the concentration of excessive economic power in the hands of a few. By containing the power of large capital to set prices unfairly, the system increased the power of individual consumers within the economy. But this economic theory had to be implemented within the harsh realities of the political world. It had to be transformed into an effective political tool. Leaders of the conservative Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU), most notably Konrad Adenauer, recognized the political usefulness of such a program and in the late 1940s pushed their party to adopt the social market economy as the basis of the party's economic platform. In addition, the supporters of the social market economy from a more academic and commercial background, such as Ludwig Erhard, the Federal Republic's economics minister in the 1950s, attributed West Germany's economic resurgence, characterized by the rise in productivity, exports, wages, and living standards, to the introduction of the economic system they espoused.<sup>5</sup> The social market economy was transformed from an economic theory, or even abstract economic policy, into the basis of a political party's propaganda and public image—and, in part because of the CDU/CSU's efforts, into an important element in the West German identity.

Erhard, Adenauer, and the CDU/CSU identified the start of the social market economy with the June 1948 introduction of the Deutsche Mark throughout the three western zones of Germany and West Berlin and the simultaneous lifting of economic controls in the so-called Bizone of the American and British zones of occupation. Almost immediately after its implementation, the currency reform achieved mythical status among West Germans, who tell stories of food and goods appearing almost magically within shop windows as the new hard currency ended hoarding and the black market ceased to be the center of daily commerce for West Germans. Many observers have likened West Germany's reconstruction in the 1950s to a "phoenix rising out of the ashes" after its nearly total destruction. Some elevate the Federal Republic's economic miracle to legendary status; their hero is Ludwig Erhard.<sup>6</sup> Revered as the father of the economic miracle, Erhard boldly predicted in the darkest hours of West Germany's economic despair that the nation would recover. Always pictured in newspapers and magazines with his self-assured smile and a cigar in his mouth, Erhard became a hugely popular icon within West Germany. He would often proclaim that West Germany's economic

success was, in fact, no miracle, but the product of sound policies and the West German hard work and spirit. Even today, more than fifty years later, politicians from all parties have invoked Erhard's legacy as the panacea for the challenges the Federal Republic faces in integrating the former East Germany into the western economy.<sup>7</sup>

Some historians and social scientists have argued that economic reconstruction and the ensuing growth of consumerism offered West Germans citizens during the 1950s and 1960s an escape from their Nazi past. The challenge of dealing with the moral burden of Germany's past faded from people's minds as they settled into the material comfort of the Federal Republic.<sup>8</sup> Economics, to a large extent, became the basis for a new West German identity. No wonder that in a nation forged in part out of the economic necessity to rebuild the western zones of occupation, its citizens identified with the economic benefits of the Federal Republic of Germany rather than with any political institutions or traditions. Revealingly, West Germany's constitution, the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law), was completely unknown to 51 percent of respondents of a 1956 public opinion survey.<sup>9</sup> During the 1950s more West Germans took greater pride in their nation's economic accomplishments than its government or political institutions. According to a survey from the late 1950s, 33 percent of West Germans touted economic success as a source of pride for their nation, while only 7 percent cited their government or political institutions.<sup>10</sup> For many West Germans the June 1948 currency reform had a much greater impact on their lives than the establishment of the Basic Law in May 1949.<sup>11</sup>

Looking back at the economic miracle years many fail to recognize that the acceptance and full introduction of the social market economy was by no means ensured. The Social Democratic Party (SPD) continually attacked Erhard and the CDU/CSU on grounds that their economic policy did not adequately take social concerns into account and allowed the old powers of monopolistic capitalism to reestablish their positions of power. In addition, the strain of an unfavorable balance of payments for West Germany during the Korean War led to what some economic historians have characterized as the reintroduction of a corporatist economic system that fatally undermined a competitive market in West Germany.<sup>12</sup> Meanwhile, throughout the 1950s Erhard engaged in an ongoing battle with heavy industry regarding the introduction of legislation limiting monopolies and cartels, which culminated in a relatively watered-down piece of anticartel legislation in 1957. Also in early 1957 the introduction of a "dynamic" pension signified the start of what could be seen as the West German welfare state—a concept abhorred by Erhard.<sup>13</sup> Furthermore, and most germane to this study, many West Germans were reticent during the 1950s to accept the free market and the ideas of the social market economy, particularly with the economic strain caused by the Korean Crisis.<sup>14</sup> Many parts of West German society, especially among the working class, regarded the reality of the economic miracle as not corresponding to its image. Consumption did not reach the heights that later public perception imagined. Goods such as the refrigerator that have come to symbolize a subsequent

perception of the economic miracle were during the first half of the 1950s available only to a limited number of people. For much of the immediate postwar period, West Germans struggled to meet basic needs; then, when reconstruction commenced by 1948/49, they continued to have a difficult time making ends meet in face of rising prices and the need to replace shelter and durable goods lost in the war. Not until the second half of the 1950s can one perceive a fully emergent consumer society in West Germany. Even then, many pensioners and single women “standing alone” were yet to experience the impact of West Germany’s economic resurgence.<sup>15</sup>

Visions of the 1950s and its economic miracle have maintained a powerful grip on the West Germans’ and later Germans’ sense of themselves and their nation. Subsequent views of the period have ranged from those of 1960s student protesters attacking what they saw as the restoration of old political and economic elites ensconced within the material self-satisfaction of the masses to the emergence in the 1970s of nostalgia for a period associated with a flood of consumer goods such as washing machines, the Volkswagen Beetle, blue jeans, and Elvis records.<sup>16</sup> If the popular media and museums are any indication, this view of the 1950s continues to predominate today.<sup>17</sup> However, even during the 1950s themselves, the meaning of economic reconstruction and the social market economy was heavily contested within the political realm. The image of West Germany as the “*Wirtschaftswunderland*” did not emerge naturally from the public’s sentiment, but instead had to be constructed and disseminated. The mass media, advertisers, and even government-supported trade fairs helped create the public perception of the economic miracle.<sup>18</sup>

Political parties also took an active role in shaping West Germans’ views of economic developments. Through an examination of election campaign propaganda and various public relations campaigns, this work explores how the CDU/CSU and conservative economic groups successfully constructed and sold a political meaning of the social market economy and the economic miracle. This creation of a political meaning and significance of economics contributed to conservative electoral success, constructed a new faith in market economics and what might be called economic citizenship by West Germans, and provided legitimacy for the new Federal Republic Germany itself. Clearly, the CDU/CSU and business organizations understood that hard, empirical economic statistics alone were not enough to move the citizenry, but that these economic realities must be attached to deeper political and cultural meanings—a lesson the rival SPD did not fully fathom. Overall, the task of selling the economic miracle was an important element in the establishment of the Federal Republic’s stable democracy during the 1950s. Indeed, the transformation of West Germany’s economy was paralleled by the emergence of a new political culture out of the rubble of the Nazi past and Allied occupation. This study seeks to illuminate the development of new electoral practices, centered on “selling” the economic miracle, that contributed to a strong party system resistant to the fracturing and weakness that doomed the Weimar Republic.

Although West Germany's economic resurgence since the Second World War has been a fundamental theme of its history, until relatively recently investigation of the social and cultural implications of economic reconstruction was curiously absent. Through the 1980s, much of the historiography of West Germany was dominated by political and diplomatic history that traced the creation of the Federal Republic's political institutions and its geopolitical position within the Cold War.<sup>19</sup> In conjunction with a more traditional political approach to the Federal Republic's history, historians, economists, and political scientists have fully explored the course of West Germany's rapid economic reconstruction.<sup>20</sup> These works have focused on such issues as the development of Erhard's economic ideas,<sup>21</sup> the implementation of the social market economy in the political arena,<sup>22</sup> and the postwar transformation of the West German political economy.<sup>23</sup> Economic historians particularly pursued the question of whether the social market economy truly reshaped prewar economic and social structures or merely represented the restoration of older capitalist practices.<sup>24</sup> In the 1970s and 1980s Werner Abelshauser built on the restoration paradigm by denying that the economic miracle of the 1950s was initiated by Erhard and the social market economy, or even by the influx of Marshall Plan money. Rather, he argued, after West Germany experienced a vigorous reconstruction period in the immediate postwar years, the nation fell into longer-term patterns of economic development dating from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.<sup>25</sup> Others have pointed to the importance of the international trading system, created in large part by the United States, as an essential component in West Germany's economic resurgence.<sup>26</sup> Most recently, more balanced accounts by historians such as A.J. Nicholls and James Van Hook have weighed the relative impact of domestic policies supported by Erhard and encapsulated in the concept of the social market economy versus the importance of historical and international economic patterns determining West Germany's economic growth. This approach is, undoubtedly, the most judicious approach to complex, interconnected issues. These recent works strongly counter the restoration paradigm by portraying Erhard in a mostly favorable light and contending that Erhard and his ideas represented a new strain in German economic thought. More importantly in these works, they underscore the relatively wide political space that West Germans possessed by 1948 in order to develop economic policy, albeit within an international context.<sup>27</sup>

To be sure, West Germany's economic history has been deeply researched, in terms of both tracing the country's economic growth and exploring its political economy. But academic discussions of economic systems and their impact reflect only one aspect of the significance of West Germany's economic reconstruction. Relatively untouched is a full exploration of the domestic political implication of its economic resurgence. Justifiably, almost all historians attribute a large portion of the CDU/CSU's electoral success in the 1950s to West Germany's economic success. But almost none of them investigate systematically and in depth how contemporary economic and political groups capitalized on West Germany's economic resurgence in elections. In other words, what meaning did political and

economic entities, including political parties, business associations, and official governmental organizations, attribute to the social market economy and the so-called economic miracle?

Recent scholarship has shed light on the cultural and social dimensions of politics in the era of the economic miracle. Much of this work seeks to transform and expand the concept of political culture by shifting focus from the mechanics of institutional political life to ways the creation of new political identities and consciousness shaped national politics. It was most directly through elections that these nascent identities influenced politics at the national level. In other words, these recent works highlight the interaction between the “politics of daily life” and formal, parliamentary politics—thereby demonstrating the interconnections between political, economic, social, and cultural history.<sup>28</sup> My work builds and expands upon such a fruitful reconceptualization of political culture. But instead of exclusively examining those cultural contexts outside of formal politics, it explores how political and national identities were molded and manipulated by the very political associations seeking to benefit from these newly formed identities. More specifically, during the 1950s, West German political and national identities were deliberately formed and shaped by the West German political leaders themselves. This was particularly salient for the CDU/CSU since as a new party, albeit one with roots in the Weimar-era Catholic Center Party, it had to create new constituencies and new political practices in the Federal Republic. In contrast, as a previously established party, the SPD looked to old approaches and leadership harking back to pre-Third Reich days.

Led by Konrad Adenauer, a former mayor of Cologne, a founder of the CDU in the British zone of occupation, and the future first chancellor of West Germany, the CDU/CSU expanded its share of the vote in each of the successive Bundestag (parliamentary) elections in 1949, 1953, and 1957. Economic reconstruction and economic policy embodied by Erhard along with the persona of Adenauer as a strong, steady leader were crucial elements in creating the CDU/CSU’s image over the course of the 1950s. Before the first Bundestag election in 1949, the CDU/CSU adopted the social market economy as its economic program and primary focus of its electoral campaigning. In large part, Adenauer supported the policy so that the CDU/CSU would not only integrate disparate elements within the party organization, but also win wider appeal at the ballot box, thereby branching out from its core following of Catholics whose loyalty stemmed from the Weimar traditions of the Catholic Center Party. The party could now appeal to other sociological groups, including some Protestants and pro-free market interests that might otherwise be attracted to a liberal or nationalist party. In addition, the adoption of such a policy would hinder a coalition between the CDU/CSU and the SPD, on both the federal and state levels, since the SPD was still calling for socialized planning of the economy in 1948/49. As the 1950s progressed and the West German economy expanded, the CDU/CSU learned how to sell Erhard and the party as bearers of the economic miracle. Economics became central to the CDU/CSU’s image as the party, and its economics

minister, Ludwig Erhard, came to personify the social market economy and the economic miracle. In part because of the CDU/CSU's electoral success, the SPD was pushed along its path of abandoning its Marxist doctrine in the Bad Godesberg Program of 1959.

Bourgeois parties other than the CDU/CSU proved unable to capitalize upon the economic miracle in elections and garner broad support. They thereby declined in importance relative to the CDU/CSU. In contrast to the CDU/CSU, the smaller splinter parties tended to be one-issue or regional parties. For example, the conservative Deutsche Partei (German Party, DP) was based predominantly in Lower Saxony and became associated with middle-class conservatism. Outside of Lower Saxony and limited areas of northern Hesse, the party possessed little national appeal. The bourgeois Gesamtdeutscher Block/Bund der Heimatvertriebenen und Entrechteten (All-German Block/League of Expellees and Those Deprived of Their Rights, GB/BHE) was limited to the single issue of defending the rights of the expellees from Germany's lost lands to the east. The liberal Free Democratic Party (FDP) was splintered into various factions, mostly between democratic and national liberals, which kept it from developing an effective national identity in the 1950s. Overall, the CDU/CSU was perhaps the only bourgeois party capable of crafting a self image that held broad appeal. In large part, the CDU/CSU's economic propaganda played a crucial part in attracting the party's broad-based support because the issue could be placed in myriad contexts—thereby generating a variety of political meanings.<sup>29</sup>

The word “propaganda” is often used synonymously with “lies,” “deceit,” and “distortion” (or at least as the antithesis of the “truth”) generated by one side on an issue. Yet propaganda is also a communicative process. According to one good working definition, “Propaganda is the deliberate and systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognition, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.”<sup>30</sup> It functions as a form of persuasion. But propaganda not only seeks to mold opinions; it also reflects the expectations, assumptions, desires, and fears of not only those who construct the propaganda but also society as a whole. The symbols and messages transmitted in propaganda serve as landmarks reflecting shifts in public perception of the world. Those creating effective propaganda attempt to shape messages that resonate within the public imagination. In this manner, propaganda both forms a society's views and is a product of that society's norms and expectations. An examination of the economic propaganda of the 1950s reveals the changing parameters of what was possible within political discourse regarding not just economics in particular, but also cultural politics in general. Propaganda on economics illustrates the developing political consciousness of West Germans and their thoughts regarding the new democracy, the more open, less class-based society, and the increasingly consumerist culture created after the Third Reich. This political campaign material functions particularly well as a mirror of developing West German perceptions of the Nazi past, the ever present communist alternative of East Germany, and the growing influence of America and mass culture.<sup>31</sup>

As Heidrun Abromeit demonstrated over thirty years ago in *Das Politische in der Werbung: Wahlwerbung und Wirtschaftswerbung in der Bundesrepublik*, West German election campaigns were not based upon programs and policy statements but revolved around the sale of political slogans and images as though they were goods. Over the course of the 1960s, so Abromeit argued, the Federal Republic's election campaigns became ever more geared toward projecting a party image, as opposed to making any factual appeal to the electorate.<sup>32</sup> In fact, Abromeit identified a dynamic that had already emerged in the early years of the Federal Republic, if not during the occupation period. The CDU/CSU outclassed its rivals in conceptualizing a party image for itself even before the first Bundestag elections. With the reemergence of a democratic political life after the defeat of the Third Reich, Adenauer quickly realized that his party had to accept a free market economic system in order to differentiate itself from the Social Democrats and to attract voters beyond the CDU/CSU's traditional Catholic base. The CDU/CSU's electoral successes relied in part on the party's skill in shaping a coherent vision of economic reconstruction and West German identity. Throughout his tenure as chancellor, Adenauer excelled in managing public perception and his party's image, a fundamental component of modern party politics.

As the 1950s progressed, the CDU/CSU proved particularly adept at incorporating new campaigning techniques into its electoral repertoire in order to sell itself as the party of the economic miracle. The CDU/CSU's approach to electoral politics represented the creation of a more "Americanized" political culture in the sense that campaigns became less overtly ideological and increasingly based on a party's image or particular issues, and also because the CDU/CSU borrowed many electioneering techniques from the United States. Especially important was the use of public opinion polling to take the pulse of the nation, as well as to help devise political campaigns so that public opinion could be best exploited. In addition, by the 1957 election, the CDU/CSU was beginning to employ professional advertising agents to shape political campaigns and create a party image and identity that resonated within West German society. This change in the West German political culture entailed what could be called the "consumerization" of politics in the sense that CDU/CSU leaders and their advisers increasingly conceived of politics as the selling of a brand-name good imprinted with the identity of the producer, above any pretense of convincing the electorate of the merits of a rigid ideological program. Campaign advertisements were tested and modified to make sure that they appealed to the voters' tastes and predilections. The goal was to capture the widest market possible by securing the support of the party's core following while reaching out to various social classes and religious groups. In a sense, campaigns were more consumer/voter oriented at the expense of the producer/party focus on ideology that had characterized past elections, especially in the Weimar Republic.

To be sure, the influence of advertising on campaigning had precedents in German history. In its rise to power in the late 1920s and 1930s and especially in the creation of the "Führerkult" surrounding Adolf Hitler, the Nazi Party con-



ceived political propaganda as a form of commercial advertising. The party unmistakably represented its identity with the symbol of the swastika, relentlessly repeated slogans, and its main brand name, Hitler, to reach the broadest audiences.<sup>33</sup> But the Nazis lacked the means, or indeed, the desire, to know exactly the views of the voters. They still retained a party ideology meant to move the amorphous and undifferentiated masses without the exact tracking of the views of different social classes. In any case, with anything associated with Nazism being discredited, or at least considered taboo, during the postwar years, the CDU/CSU looked to the American model.

While one would not expect a conservative party led by a man in his seventies to embrace these communicative tools readily, the CDU/CSU and Adenauer led the way among West German parties in adopting new polling and advertising techniques. New methods in public opinion polling and political advertising equipped the CDU/CSU with the tools to translate its conceptions of the economy into electoral success. With these advantages, the party was much more effective than the SPD in its ability to identify key sociological groups of swing voters, to determine their collective political views, and to garner their votes by tailoring specific electoral appeals to them. By adopting this approach to campaigning, the party secured support from relatively diverse elements of the electorate that otherwise might have been missed and furthermore gobbled up the votes that were shed from the declining splinter parties. As a result, the CDU/CSU became a prototype of the “*Volkspartei*” (catch-all party) that would dominate West German politics in the future.<sup>34</sup> Faced with the success of the CDU/CSU, the SPD had no choice by the late 1950s but to take up both polling and modern political advertising as part of its transformation into a catch-all party. With both direct and indirect American influence, CDU/CSU and Adenauer were conceptualizing politics and elections in a manner different from both the Weimar past and their main competitor, the SPD. Throughout the 1950s, the SPD struggled to adjust to the new political terrain being shaped by the CDU/CSU. While the CDU/CSU captured a mass market of the electorate, the SPD continued to thrive only in their niche market of the working class.

The social market economy and the economic miracle proved to be effective political “products” because they were seen as going beyond politics by a nation that was exhausted from political ideology. In their classic study of comparative political cultures from the early 1960s, Gabriel Almond and Sidney Verba offered insights into that phenomenon. Many West Germans, they noted, were relatively well informed and participated in the political process—witness for example that 78.5 percent of the electorate voted in 1949 and 87.8 percent in 1957. However, the authors observed that contemporary West Germans held a detached and almost practical attitude toward politics. Political discussions by West Germans tended to be very limited.<sup>35</sup> As the philosopher and critical theorist Theodor Adorno commented in 1959, the West German democracy appeared healthy, “[b]ut democracy has not domesticated itself to the point that people really experience it as their cause, and so consider themselves agents [*Subjecte*] of the politi-

cal process.”<sup>36</sup> Public opinion polling from the period tended to bear these views out. A June 1952 survey from the Institut für Demoskopie indicated that only 27 percent of respondents were interested in politics, while 41 percent reported being not particularly interested and 32 percent not at all. Generally in the 1950s only about 17 percent of those asked said that they sometimes discussed politics.<sup>37</sup>

This reluctance to engage politically is no surprise, considering Germany’s recent history of the collapse of democracy with the Weimar Republic, the rise of Nazism, and life under a dictatorship. But this perspective also sheds light on the project of selling the economic miracle. The meanings of economic reconstruction were easily constructed within a number of different political contexts, such as West Germany’s anticommunist stance, the creation of a new Christian West Germany following the Nazi past, and the incorporation of consumerism into West German society. With a multiplicity of political meanings associated with economics, the issue thereby reached the maximum number of potential “consumers.” Economic reconstruction and the rise of consumerism were perfect political products because they were issues that did not challenge the political reticence expressed by most West Germans. They appeared on the surface to transcend self-interested party politics and instead got to the heart of what it meant to be West German. In the end, Adenauer and the CDU/CSU’s political message merely encouraged the citizens’ passive acquiescence in the construction of the new Federal Republic.

The creation of a new West German political culture that borrowed campaigning methods from the United States contributed to the stability of the West German democracy and its political party system. In his 1956 analysis of the relative strength of newly founded Federal Republic of Germany, the Swiss journalist Fritz René Allemann proclaimed “*Bonn ist nicht Weimar*” (Bonn is not Weimar). The question of why the Federal Republic’s democracy has proved successful, whereas Germany’s first attempt with democracy was not, has been an important topic for political scientists and historians ever since. In 1965 Ralf Dahrendorf argued in *Society and Democracy in Germany* that Nazism and Germany’s defeat in World War II produced a “social revolution” that cleared the way for a modern society unencumbered by traditional values and loyalties—a process particularly hastened by the mass relocation across Germany of millions of refugees and those bombed out their dwellings.<sup>38</sup> Undoubtedly the legacy of the Third Reich was crucial in the development of West Germany’s democracy. However, domestic changes during the early years of the Federal Republic—such as the transformation of the West German social structure accompanying a higher standard of living and greater economic and social mobility, the development of vibrant political parties, and the impact of the Basic Law—have all been crucial factors contributing to the consolidation of the West German party system and the stabilization of the Federal Republic’s democratic government.<sup>39</sup> Others have stressed the importance of international developments, such as the preference given by the three Western powers to moderate parties, especially by the licensing of the CDU/CSU, SPD, and FDP during the 1945–1949 occupation period, as a step that

afforded these parties a decisive advantage in the early elections of the Federal Republic.<sup>40</sup> Clearly structural changes in Germany's legal and political system have also contributed significantly to the strength of the Federal Republic's party system. Perhaps most importantly, the condition that a party must garner at least 5 percent of the vote to enter the Bundestag has hindered the splintering of the party system that afflicted the Weimar Republic. Also, the Basic Law recognizes the importance of political parties. Article 21 of the document underscores the importance of parties in forming and expressing the political will of the people. As a result, West Germany's political system has been described as a "party state" in which the parties direct and make the important political decisions.<sup>41</sup>

A crucial factor in the stabilization of the West German party system was the emergence of broad-based, moderate parties—which in some measure reflected the influence of American polling and advertising techniques. The creation of such a party system has been linked to the breakdown of specific sociological subcultures supporting particular political parties, a crucial change from the Weimar Republic. This weakening of voting subcultures allowed the creation of "catch-all" parties that collected votes from varied sociological subcultures. In contrast, political parties during the Weimar Republic tended to be based upon narrow segments of society with relatively parochial interests, thus making the creation of broadly based parties difficult, and often times, the building of a coalition all but impossible. For many parties election campaigns were centered on getting out the vote from their base as opposed to attracting new voters. The Nazi Party was the first German political party to attract voters from all social classes and interests, enabling it to achieve enough electoral success to seize power.<sup>42</sup> Although its origins lay in the Catholic Center Party of the Weimar Republic, the CDU/CSU was conceived as an interconfessional party that sought to bridge the divide between Catholics and Protestants. Believing that such a party was essential for creating a stable party system and a strong bourgeois bloc against the Social Democrats, Adenauer quickly understood the usefulness of the social market economy and the economic miracle for integrating divergent social, religious, and economic groups into one bourgeois party. Perhaps this is most clearly shown by the religious affiliation of CDU/CSU voters: a bit more than 35 percent of the party's votes in the 1950s came from Protestants, whereas the Catholic Center Party during the Weimar Republic relied almost exclusively on Catholic voters.<sup>43</sup>

Yet, the Federal Republic retained many continuities from the Weimar period, especially the persistence of certain social subcultures determining voting behavior. This is especially apparent in the case of Catholics transferring their loyalties from the Center Party to the CDU/CSU. In the 1953 Bundestag election, the CDU/CSU was able to attract 52.3 percent of the Catholic vote, a figure comparable to the 55.3 percent that the Center Party garnered in the 1924 Reichstag election. In addition, support for the CDU/CSU in terms of religious affiliation has remained constant from 1949 to the present, with around 65 percent of its votes coming from Catholics and about 35 percent from Protestants. Today, however, only one third of CDU/CSU votes come from practicing Catholics and

Protestants, reflecting the larger trends of secularization in the Federal Republic as whole. This constitutes a major change for the CDU/CSU, since church attendance was the strongest indicating factor in voting behavior, especially for the CDU/CSU. In the 1953 election, for example, over 58 percent of CDU/CSU voters attended church regularly—a measure of religiosity. At this time the CDU/CSU could legitimately claim to be the “Christian party” in the West German political system.<sup>44</sup>

Undoubtedly, religious factors were extremely important in determining voting patterns, but they do not tell the full story of how the CDU/CSU was able to obtain its share of the votes. Despite the importance of religion to its core constituency, after the 1949 Bundestag election, the CDU/CSU did not stress the party’s Christian roots in its national-level campaigning. By the mid to late 1950s the CDU/CSU sensed the declining importance of religiosity in shaping voting behavior. In fact, the CDU/CSU’s party leadership consciously shied away from a strategy of self-identifying solely as the “Christian party” for fear of scaring off nonreligious voters. Instead, the concepts of the social market economy and the economic miracle were consistent components in the party’s electoral propaganda. This was not a haphazard strategy on the part of the CDU/CSU. Indeed, the CDU/CSU leaders, especially Adenauer, realized that religious West Germans were a core segment of its constituency that was unlikely to leave the Christian Democratic camp. The key to electoral success was to attract voters who did not solidly support the CDU/CSU. On the basis of polling data, the CDU/CSU knew by 1953, and surely by 1957, that a large percentage of its vote was assured by the religiosity of its constituencies—both Catholics and Protestants. But 42 percent of CDU/CSU voters attended church irregularly, seldom, or never. It does not appear that such voters would necessarily be attracted to the CDU/CSU because of its status as the “Christian party.” Watching his party’s popularity in the polls swing in tandem with the public’s confidence in the economy, Konrad Adenauer was keenly aware of the economy’s impact on West Germans’ perceptions of politics and political parties.<sup>45</sup> With the CDU/CSU’s base of religious West Germans remaining solid, the party used Adenauer’s leadership and economic success in the 1957 Bundestag election to gain a majority of 50.2 percent of the second ballots (votes for political parties rather than individual candidates), up from 31 percent in 1949.<sup>46</sup> From this perspective, a relatively small minority of the voters wielded disproportionate power in the voting booth by boosting the CDU/CSU from its previous plurality to a majority of the seats in the Bundestag.

The party’s seemingly incompatible religious and secular support raises the question of how the CDU/CSU managed to hold on to its religious roots and belief in the establishment of a connected, organic West German community, while adapting to new realities of consumerism, materialism, and mass culture. Party propaganda demonstrates that the meaning of the social market economy and the economic miracle created by the CDU/CSU was by no means unchanging during the 1950s. In fact, the process of selling the economic miracle highlighted the

shifting relationships within the CDU/CSU between adherents of antimaterialist and materialist views of the economy. Maria Mitchell has argued that following the conclusion of the war, Catholics in the CDU/CSU, often associated with the prewar Catholic *Sozialpolitik* (social policy), railed against liberalism, unfettered capitalism, secularism, nationalism, and consumerism as having prepared the ground for the growth of Nazism. By the late 1940s, this antimaterialist stance was joined with anti-Marxist sentiment to form the basis of the CDU/CSU's interconfessional alliance between Catholics and Protestants. This position rejected the materialism of socialism and the unfettered state power of Marxist regimes in Eastern Europe, and envisioned a new, Christian Germany as a bulwark against these threats. The acceptance of the social market economy by way of the Düsseldorf Principles in July 1949, Mitchell has argued, represented the culmination of a Christian, antimaterialist view of the economy that preserved individual freedom from state coercion, but also avoided the excesses of nineteenth-century liberalism.<sup>47</sup> Undoubtedly, the combination of antimaterialism and anti-Marxism formed a crucial element in the CDU/CSU's identity throughout the 1950s and worked as a powerful integrative force within the party.

This volume argues that propaganda from the first federal election in 1949 and the early 1950s reflected an antimaterialist conception of the economy as the CDU/CSU and conservative business interests stressed economic reconstruction as a precondition for the primary goal of reestablishing an organic, Christian society. They strongly differentiated such a society from the godless East German regime. By the end of the 1950s, however, the CDU/CSU image-makers had refashioned the predominately antimaterialist definition of the social market economy in the face of the realities of the burgeoning, consumerist economic miracle. Although the anti-Marxist stance continued to play an important role in the CDU/CSU vision of economic reconstruction, election campaign propaganda couched the social market economy in more materialist terms. Individualistic desires for production and consumption, campaigning materials reveal, were to be fulfilled through the party's economic policies. By the time of the 1953 and 1957 Bundestag campaigns, the CDU/CSU, through its use of Economics Minister Erhard, was clearly downplaying any Christian, antimaterialist concerns in its appeals to the electorate. Instead the party offered the voters opportunities for individualistic consumerism—albeit while associating this consumerism with the establishment of the West German nation itself. Together these propaganda strategies suggest that the meaning of a Christian Democratic economy for public consumption was indeed not static, but rather went through a period of constant redefinition and negotiation as the Federal Republic's social and economic conditions evolved in the late 1940s and early 1950s.

This process could be described as a gradual transition from the ideological, Christian antimaterialism of the early CDU/CSU to a more pragmatic materialism based on the social market economy and the economic miracle that could appeal to a broad, multi-class audience. All the while, however, the CDU/CSU and business public relations campaigns transformed and directed the conception of

consumerism from something that was identified as American, alien, and threatening to German culture, to something that was fundamentally West German and provided a sense of security. As Uta Poiger and Maria Höhn have shown in their respective studies of rock and roll in the two Germanies and the American military presence in Rhineland-Palatinate, social conservatives, often members or associates of the CDU/CSU, reacted sharply against consumerism and the perceived accompanying decline of morals during the 1950s. However, the efforts of these political leaders, who saw themselves as defenders of a vision of a Christian *Abendland* (Occident), were increasingly muted by Cold War liberals who argued that Western consumerism was an essential part of creating a vibrant and stable West Germany as a bulwark against the Soviet Union.<sup>48</sup> This work shows that a similar process of taming and co-opting consumerism was at work in a directly political realm, ironically by the very party that at its founding had sought to establish an antimaterialist, organic West Germany.

From such a perspective, this project contributes to the growing literature on the impact and interpretation of American culture in West Germany. As Poiger has pointed out, much of the early literature dealing with Americanization fell under two paradigms: “modernization” and “cultural imperialism.” The modernization approach saw a triumphant United States transforming West Germany’s political, economic, social, and cultural practices into a system that rejected a totalitarian past and was modeled on a democratic, market-driven United States. In contrast, the cultural imperialism approach viewed American culture as penetrating and manipulating West German traditions for the colonizers’ own gain. Poiger and more recent literature have pointed out a shortcoming of both paradigms in that they assumed West Germany was a passive, blank slate without considering the nation’s particular conditions and the agency of the West Germans themselves in rebuilding their society.<sup>49</sup> No doubt, American political techniques represented an approach that was new in West Germany, but it functioned within the particular West German context of past political practices, visions held by political leaders of a new democracy emerging out of the legacy of the Nazi past, and a rapidly changing West German society. West German political leadership refashioned and interpreted new political techniques within the realities of the Federal Republic. Unexpectedly, the right interpreted and adapted new political techniques more effectively than the left. As Diethelm Prowe has recently argued, Americanization presented conservatives with the political space to effectively reintegrate themselves into West German society and political life, but at the same time it helped democratize West Germany by promoting political stability and curtailing older authoritarian, conservative traditions.<sup>50</sup> To be sure, during the 1950s the West German democracy was characterized by a conservative, hierarchical vision of Adenauer and the CDU/CSU, but the crucial democratic political structures were established upon which the more active civic participation of the 1960s was based.

In many respects, the issues of Americanization, changing political and social practices, and gender intersected in the selling of the economic miracle. With the

disruption of gender roles and demographic imbalances caused by defeat, a gendered analysis of economic propaganda sheds light on the challenges of creating political identities in postwar Germany. The female experience, especially that of the *Trümmerfrauen* (rubble women) who cleared the destroyed German cities, became symbolic of the experiences of Germans as a whole during these “crisis years” and acted as a redemptive influence in the creation of a new West German national identity. The image of the rubble women helped express the painful memories of the rape by mostly Soviet soldiers of hundreds of thousands, if not millions of German women at the end of the war. In addition, the concept of the rubble women also helped contain what many saw as the moral degeneracy of German society centered on women’s prostitution and fraternization with Allied soldiers after the war—often acts stemming from the need to acquire the basic elements of survival for a woman’s whole family.<sup>51</sup> The rubble women came to symbolize hard work, economic reconstruction, and a literal clearing away of the visible remnants of the recent past. They captured the nation’s imagination, in part because contemporary accounts depicted them as selflessly performing tasks outside women’s usual duties. But the experience of West Germans was fundamentally transformed during the 1950s by the burgeoning economic miracle. During this period, new gender roles for women based upon consumption superseded those of the postwar years and became important elements in a uniquely West German national identity. Through their roles as consumers within the free market system, women participated in what was defined as a most fundamental aspect of West German citizenship and helped establish the Federal Republic as a nation.<sup>52</sup>

Both popular consensus and political-economic discourse in West Germany during the economic miracle years redefined women as images of *Trümmerfrauen* were replaced by those of consumers, homemakers, and mothers. However, it was not just women’s roles that were being transformed. The construction of a female “consumer citizen” would have proven impossible without the creation of the equal counterpart of the male “producer citizen”—contributing, as some historians have recently suggested, to a “remasculinization” of West Germany as men’s roles changed from POWs and soldiers to producers, providers, and fathers.<sup>53</sup> This gendered understanding of West Germany’s economic resurgence during the 1950s intersected, in fact, with the West Germans’ sense of themselves and their nation as a whole. The creation of ideal economic roles of female consumers and male producers laid the foundation for a new, gendered West German national identity that offered an escape from the recent past through economic reconstruction.

However, this gendered discourse on economics was not only central to the development of the public image of ideal gender roles and national identity in the new West German society; it also had direct political implications as well, especially in the realm of the political mobilization of the electorate. During the 1950s the CDU/CSU and business public relations organizations shaped and manipulated the meaning of economic reconstruction as a gendered experience in order to create new political identities that contributed to their own power. Their propaganda in the Federal Republic’s early Bundestag campaigns helped create a

lasting political meaning of West Germany's economic rebirth that constituted a key factor in the CDU/CSU's electoral success. In addition, these propaganda campaigns reaffirmed, following the upheaval of war and collapse, what the CDU/CSU portrayed as stable, traditional gender roles and situated the "natural" roles of female consumers and male producers within a larger political discourse on the nature and development of West Germany's economy and society.<sup>54</sup>

As a result of the loss of men in the First and Second World Wars, West Germany experienced what was called a *Frauenüberschuss* (surplus of women). One survey from October 1946 reported that for every 100 males, there were 126 females. Since several million prisoners of war had not yet returned to Germany, this imbalance was even greater among West Germans of marriageable age. A 1946 census estimated that for every 1,000 marriageable males, there were 2,242 potential mates. Even in the mid 1950s, the imbalance between male and female remained; in 1955 women still made up over 53 per cent of the population in West Germany and West Berlin and outnumbered men by over 3 million.<sup>55</sup> This demographic imbalance in West Germany had a crucial impact upon elections in the newly-formed Federal Republic. Most dramatically, in the 1957 Bundestag election there were about 2.4 million more female than male voters out of the 31 million ballots cast in all, meaning that women accounted for almost 54 percent of all valid ballots. In this election, just under 54 percent of women voted for the CDU/CSU, in contrast to about 45 per cent of all men, thereby providing the party with 50.2 percent of the vote. Clearly, women were the crucial factor in giving the CDU/CSU the only absolute majority ever achieved in the Federal Republic of Germany.<sup>56</sup>

In a 1956 analysis of the role of women in politics, Gabrielle Bremme argued that women's religious background determined their voting patterns. Prior to the Second World War, Germany was 62.7 percent Protestant, 32.4 percent Catholic, less than 1 per cent Jewish, and about 4 per cent other.<sup>57</sup> Because many of Germany's predominantly Protestant regions now lay in East Germany, the Federal Republic in 1950 was a little less than 46 per cent Catholic.<sup>58</sup> Given the significant influence Catholicism had within its cultural milieu, Bremme contended that women voted predominantly for the conservative CDU/CSU because the party had its roots in the Weimar Republic as the Catholic Center Party.<sup>59</sup> Although it defies precise quantification, the impact of Catholicism on women's voting behavior was undoubtedly significant. But the CDU/CSU also secured crucial support from Protestant female voters.<sup>60</sup> Moreover, in the second half of the 1950s the CDU/CSU stressed West Germany's rising economic fortunes and the accompanying growth in consumption as a means of garnering the female vote—especially from women who were not religious—while appeals on Christian or cultural grounds became increasingly muted.

Overall, the CDU/CSU's appeals evolved from speaking to the Christian woman to targeting the consuming woman. First, in the 1949 campaign, the CDU/CSU utilized what it presented as natural economic gender roles as a political metaphor for the nation's revival and regeneration. The party represented West



Germans' supposed return to the roles of female housewife and male breadwinner as a signal that the nation's emergence out of complete social and moral chaos and distress was a consequence of its policies. Second, after the economic shocks of the Korean War, the accompanying rise in prices of consumer goods, and redoubled demands for socialization by the Social Democrats, propaganda campaigns led by West German industry situated men and women as students of the free market. The campaigns instructed West Germans on their proper roles within the free market in precisely gendered terms as consumers and producers—but not for the ultimate goal of satisfying individual wants. Instead, the propaganda depicted these roles as being essential for the creation of a balanced, organic society that spread the benefits of the social market economy to all. Third, by the middle of the 1950s, the CDU/CSU propaganda not only underscored more prominently the economic upswing and the rising consumerism enjoyed by individual West Germans, but also used economic success as a means of defining the “true” Germany, the Federal Republic of Germany. Production and consumerism were portrayed not only as goals for their own sake, but also as civic duties that defined and strengthened the newly formed West German nation. In all, the CDU/CSU proved itself adept at creating gendered electoral appeals that consistently depicted the female consumer and male producer, while at the same time changing the basis of these appeals from an antimaterialist, ideological foundation to a materialist position that embraced the consumerism of the economic miracle. This was no haphazard strategy on the part of the CDU/CSU, but rather a conscious effort to appeal to segments of the electorate that could be swayed to support the party. This conceptual shift proved particularly significant when combined with new campaigning techniques that allowed the CDU/CSU propaganda to target and more effectively reach an intended audience—especially the crucial female swing voters.

Propaganda on economics not only reflected conservative conceptions of gender roles, but also underscored the vision of a more homogeneous, middle-class society, what the prominent 1950s sociologist Helmut Schelsky termed the “*nivellierte Mittelstandsgesellschaft*” (leveled middle-class society). Class conflict, he argued, seemed to be less sharp than during the interwar period as members of the proletariat moved into the middle class in step with rising wages, expanding pensions, and growing consumerism.<sup>61</sup> Schelsky probably overstated his view of West German society, for historians such as Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywottek have shown that this “deproletarianization” did not fully develop as class identities and status continued to remain strong during the Federal Republic's formative years. They point out that educational opportunities still depended upon social status and affluence. In addition, they find that income and consumption did not reach high levels until the late 1950s.<sup>62</sup> Volker Berghahn has identified a similar reconstitution of the bourgeoisie during the postwar era.<sup>63</sup> To be sure, class identities did not melt away as some contemporarily observers posited. However, as Schildt and Sywottek noted, West German society was slowly transforming during the period into a “modern” society characterized by the rise of a consumer

culture, increased leisure time, the introduction of new household technologies affecting day-to-day life, and eventually an openness to such changes in West German values. Clearly, West German society went through a period of “modernization,” particularly during the late 1950s and early 1960s.<sup>64</sup>

In its propaganda on economics, the CDU/CSU sold a vision of the “levelled middle-class society,” or as Schildt and Sywottek described it, a “modern society,” in which all members of society benefited from the social market economy. As a party trying to establish broad-based support, the CDU/CSU also sought to undermine old, proletarian identities that benefited the Social Democrats. The fact that the CDU/CSU defined the 1948 currency reform, which supposedly put all West Germans on equal financial footing, as the birth of West Germany itself underscores the importance of the social market economy and the economic miracle in creating the “imagined community” of the Federal Republic. These economic developments ran parallel to, and were mutually supportive of the contributions of Cold War tensions in creating a sense of West Germanness. As mentioned earlier, within this context consumerism was not projected as something threatening, degenerate, or self-indulgent but rather became integrated into the very narrative of the development of the Federal Republic. It was a part of the vision of West Germany that the CDU/CSU was creating: Western, free, open, more equal, and to some extent liberal. However, at the same time this West German society also was to be an organic community, avoiding both the atomization of society in the United States and the godless communist alternative to the East. Economic success in West Germany was not a goal for mere certain individuals, but supposedly advanced the aim “Prosperity for All.”

Despite the fact that many West Germans did not necessarily participate in the fruits of the economic miracle, especially during the early 1950s, the CDU/CSU and conservative business associations succeeded at sensing and managing expectations of rising consumerism and exploiting the perception that the West German society was being transformed. In fact, much of the public opinion polling upon which Schildt and Sywottek based a large part of their work were the same data that contemporarily conservative political and business leaders used in formulating their propaganda campaigns. In a broader sense, the adoption of American political advertising and public opinion polling could be described as part of the very process of modernization that Schildt and Sywottek observe. In contrast, the SPD was not as successful in adapting to the perceived economic, sociological, and cultural transformation underway during the 1950s. The party continued to generate propaganda that spoke for the most part almost exclusively to its working-class constituents and lacked a broad-based appeal. Until the SPD abandoned its Marxist doctrine with the 1959 Bad Godesberg Program, the SPD was unable to become the *Volkspartei* that the CDU/CSU had become under Adenauer. Clearly, the heightened importance of consumerism within West German society and culture was crucial in the creation of the CDU/CSU’s political image and the evolution of political discourse on economics. However, without the rising living standards enjoyed by many West Germans, the CDU/CSU’s efforts to

capitalize upon the expanding economy would all have been for naught. In its own way, the CDU/CSU projected a definition of consumerism that was tied not merely to satisfying individual desires, but also to the very core concept of what it meant to be West German—thereby creating a common bond among the citizens of the young Federal Republic that helped avoid the social tensions that had torn the Weimar Republic asunder and engendering a level of civic passivity among the citizenship.

In many ways, this volume speaks to a broad range of scholars, including those engaged with the history of politics and the history of society and culture in the Federal Republic. Politics of the everyday and formal politics do have a nexus: these two worlds meet when political parties attempt to appeal to the electorate. This is the realm that I explore in this work. Chapter 1 discusses the economic thought behind the social market economy and examines some of the main thinkers who contributed to the development of the intellectual basis of this economic policy. In addition, the chapter investigates how the ideas of the social market economy were transferred into political practice during the immediate postwar years. Particularly important are the currency reform and economic reforms of June 1948, after which the economy in the western zones of occupation began to operate increasingly on a free market basis. Chapter 2 explores party politics and the CDU/CSU's adoption of the social market economy. The 1949 Bundestag election revolved around the question of "*Markt oder Plan*" (Market or Plan) which the CDU/CSU fully exploited to its advantage. It portrayed itself as capable of leading responsible government, as evidenced by the end of West Germany's desperate conditions after the currency reform. Meanwhile, it associated the rival SPD with life before the currency reform: scarcity, ration cards, and domination by a burdensome Allied bureaucracy.

Chapter 3 discusses the impact of the Korean crisis upon the West German economy. It focuses upon the reorientation of public opinion toward the free market and the social market economy as a consequence of price increases caused by the Korean boom. During this time public opinion polling revealed a drop in public support for the free market and West Germans' growing fear of their economic future. Of particular importance was West German political and economic leaders' reading of the results of these surveys: they also began questioning the political feasibility of retaining the social market economy. Chapter 4 examines one of the first responses to the souring of public opinion toward the Adenauer government's economic policy. After the Korean crisis, the *Gemeinschaft zur Förderung des Sozialen Ausgleichs* (Society for the Promotion of Social Compromise), also known as *Die Waage* (The Weigh Scales), an organization funded by West German industry, instituted what has been labeled the Federal Republic's first modern public relations campaign. Its purpose was to promote Erhard's social market economy through a series of ambitious advertising campaigns. With campaigns costing tens of millions of Deutsche Marks, *Die Waage* was one of the first organizations in West Germany to apply public opinion polling and American advertising techniques toward a political goal. *Die Waage* not only helped cre-

ate an understanding of the social market economy that linked economic freedom to political freedom; its advertisements also served as political propaganda for Erhard and somewhat more indirectly, the CDU/CSU.

Chapter 5 examines the 1953 Bundestag election campaign. This chapter discusses how the economic miracle was molded for use in a number of different political contexts. As prospects of German unification diminished and the Soviet Union suppressed the 17 June 1953 uprising in East Berlin, geopolitical issues and the threat of communism came to the fore in this election. Within this context, the CDU/CSU utilized both West Germany's economic reconstruction and the social market economy as symbols of West Germany's ability to defend itself against the threat from the East. In conjunction with this position, the CDU/CSU red painted the SPD as politically unreliable because of its support of the planned economy. In addition, before the 1953 election the CDU/CSU-led government developed a wide net of institutions influencing public opinion, centered around the Federal Press and Information Agency. The result was that, together with the Federal Press Agency and *Die Waage*, the CDU/CSU employed a barrage of propaganda campaigns outside of its direct efforts that battered the SPD throughout the election season. It was during this election that more American-style campaigning techniques were first implemented in West Germany.

Chapter 6 discusses the CDU/CSU's greatest electoral triumph, the 1957 Bundestag election. This was the peak of the CDU/CSU's electoral success, when it became the first and only party ever to achieve a majority of the federal vote (50.2 percent). It was at this point that the development of CDU/CSU's campaigning techniques came to full fruition. Demographic surveys, public opinion polling, and advertising agents were fully utilized in order to construct a party image for the consumption of the West German electorate. Erhard and the economic miracle proved to be easily molded into the main themes of the campaign: stability and prosperity, concepts summed up by one of the campaign's main slogans: "*Wohlstand für Alle*" (Prosperity for All). In addition, in the 1957 election campaign the CDU/CSU began connecting its economic policies to the consumer goods that were now becoming available to West Germans, such as fashionable clothing and electrical appliances. As this chapter demonstrates, the SPD's crushing defeat in this election spurred it not only to reform its platform, but also to revamp its propaganda techniques to be more like those of the CDU/CSU.

The 1957 election campaign marked the highpoint of Adenauer's government. The stunning CDU/CSU victory ensured the retention of the social market economy. The terms of debate had shifted so decidedly that there was no going back to the support of a planned socialist economy. But more importantly perhaps, West Germany had established a stable political party system. The splinter parties were quickly fading from the political scene as they collectively garnered only slightly over 10 percent of all votes cast in the election. The West Germans emerged from the 1950s as just that: West Germans. By this point reunification was not a plausible option in the short run. A new, West German identity had been forged.

It was an identity based in large measure upon economic success, consumerism, and the Deutsche Mark. Ultimately these enduring symbols, not the *Grundgesetz* or a stable democracy, were what lured East Germans into West Berlin when the Wall came down on the fateful night of 9 November 1989.

## Notes

1. Ludwig Erhard, *Prosperity through Competition*, trans. Edith Temple Roberts and John B. Wood (New York, 1958), 178.
2. Werner Abelshauser, *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945–1980* (Frankfurt am Main, 1983), 8.
3. Karl Hardach, *The Political Economy of Germany in the Twentieth Century* (Berkeley, 1980), 161, 186, 193.
4. Alan Kramer, *The West German Economy, 1945–1955* (New York, 1991), 218.
5. Perhaps the most famous effort to link the economic miracle and the social market economy was Ludwig Erhard's book, *Wohlstand für Alle* (Düsseldorf, 1957).
6. One example of the lasting impression Erhard and the economic miracle made on the German consciousness was illustrated to me during my research in Germany. A poster in my bank, advertising a new savings plan, depicted the stereotypical portrait of Erhard slightly smiling with a cigar in his mouth along with the slogan proclaiming, "Have your own economic miracle!" presumably to take place if one entrusted one's money into this savings plan. How many Americans, I wondered, could identify a secretary of the treasury from the 1950s, let alone know him so well that an advertising campaign could be based upon him.
7. The hundred-year anniversary of Erhard's birth in February 1997 saw a wave of publications on the man. See for example "Der Talisman der Deutschen," *Der Spiegel*, 3/1997, 92–103. In addition, in the winter of 1997 a changing exhibition entitled "*Markt oder Plan*" at the Haus der Geschichte reflected a popular mythology surrounding the economic miracle. See the exhibition's book *Markt oder Plan: Wirtschaftsordnungen in Deutschland, 1945–1961*, Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (Frankfurt am Main, 1997). Leaders of both the CDU/CSU and the SPD evoked the social market economy as a way out of West Germany's economic troubles in the late 1990s. See a pair of articles commemorating Erhard in the *Handelsblatt*, Günter Rexrodt, "Konsequent auf den Wettbewerb setzen," and Oskar Lafontaine, "Soziale Marktwirtschaft—Der Weg aus der Krise," *Handelsblatt*, 23 January 1997, 15. In addition, a number of Erhard biographies have appeared in roughly the last decade. See the harshly critical biography by Volker Hentschel, who portrays a bumbling Erhard whose success depended more upon luck than talent in *Ludwig Erhard: Ein Politikerleben* (Munich, 1996). Alfred C. Mierzejewski's *Ludwig Erhard: A Biography* (Chapel Hill, 2004) presents a much more positive view of Erhard's unyielding support of the free market as leading to West Germany's economic resurgence, even if Erhard proved himself to be ineffective within the political realm.
8. Herman Glaser, *Kulturgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Zwischen Grundgesetz und Großer Koalition, 1949–1967*, vol. 2 (Munich, 1986), 59–98. See also Theodor W. Adorno "What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?" in *Bitburg in Moral and Political Perspective*, ed. Geoffrey Hartmann (Bloomington, 1986), 114–126, for more on the West German silencing of the recent past.
9. Heinz Rausch, "Politisches Bewußtsein und politische Einstellungen im Wandel," in *Die Identität der Deutschen*, ed. Werner Weidenfeld (Munich, 1983), 130.

10. Respondents could provide multiple answers. Gabriel A. Almond and Sidney Verba, *The Civic Culture: Political Attitudes and Democracy in Five Nations* (Princeton, 1963), 64.
11. Forty percent of West Germans polled in March 1949 indicated that they were indifferent to the future of the West German constitution. In contrast, only 12 per cent of West Germans polled in June 1948 were undecided about whether they were happy the currency reform was carried out. Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, eds., *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966* (Westport, CT, 1967), 222 and 227.
12. See Werner Abelshauer, “The First Post-Liberal Nation: Stages in the Development of Modern Corporatism in Germany,” *European History Quarterly* 14 (1984): 285–317; and “Ansätze ‘Korporativer Marktwirtschaft’ in der Koreakrise der frühen fünfziger Jahre: Ein Briefwechsel zwischen dem Hohen Kommissar John McCloy und Bundeskanzler Konrad Adenauer,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 30, no. 4 (1982): 715–756.
13. See Volker Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German Industry, 1945–1973* (New York, 1986); and James C. Van Hook, *Rebuilding Germany: The Creation of the Social Market Economy, 1949–1957* (Cambridge, 2004).
14. Distrust of the free market is clearly illustrated in public opinion polls from the time. In October 1952 only 29 percent of respondents to an Institut für Demoskopie survey supported the free market, down from 41 per cent in March 1949. *Das Soziale Klima*, Institut für Demoskopie, 1948–1951, ZSg 132/154, Bundesarchiv Koblenz (hereafter BA Koblenz); and Elisabeth Noelle and Erich Peter Neumann, eds., *Jahrbuch der öffentlichen Meinung 1947–1955* (Allensbach am Bodensee, 1956), 234.
15. See Arnold Syworteck, “From Starvation to Excess? Trends in the Consumer Society from the 1940s to the 1970s,” in *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968*, ed. Hanna Schissler (Princeton, 2001), 341–358.
16. See Axel Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und “Zeitgeist” in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre* (Hamburg, 1995) in which he discusses the “discovery of the 1950s,” 16–21.
17. The Haus der Geschichte museum in Bonn, which opened in 1994, portrays the 1950s in a decidedly nostalgic tone. See the museum catalogue, *Haus der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, ed., *Erlebnis Geschichte: Deutschland vom Zweiten Weltkrieg bis heute* (Bonn, 1995). See also articles in a 1999 edition of *Der Spiegel* entitled “50 Jahre Bundesrepublik: Das deutsche Wunder,” especially “Die Flegeljahre der Republik: Der Aufstieg aus den Nichts,” *Der Spiegel*, 17 May 1999.
18. See Jeff R. Schutts, “Born Again in the Gospel of Refreshment? Coca-Colonization and the Re-making of Postwar German Identity”; and S. Jonathan Wiesen, “Miracles for Sale: Consumer Displays and Advertising in Postwar West Germany,” in *Consuming Germany in the Cold War*, ed. David F. Crew (Oxford, 2003), 121–150 and 151–178 respectively.
19. For a good introduction to the historiography of West Germany, see Rudolf Morsey, *Die Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Entstehung und Entwicklung bis 1969* (Munich, 1995). Especially important were questions dealing with the establishment of the Federal Republic’s democratic government and its geopolitical position between the capitalist and communist superpowers. By the middle of the 1980s this path of inquiry had been exploited so that broader syntheses could be written. Perhaps most notable was the five-volume overview of the Federal Republic, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik*, edited by Karl Dietrich Bracher, Theodor Eschenburg, Joachim C. Fest, and Eberhard Jäckel. The works most pertinent here are: Theodor Eschenburg, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Jahre der Besatzung, 1945–1949* (Stuttgart, 1983); and Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Die Ära Adenauer, 1949–1957* (Stuttgart, 1981).
20. For one of the first works on this subject in English, see Henry C. Wallich, *Mainsprings of the German Revival* (New Haven, 1955).
21. See Christoph Heusgen, *Ludwig Erhards Lehre von der Sozialen Marktwirtschaft: Ursprünge, Kerngehalt, Wandlungen* (Bern, 1981); Horst Friedrich Wünsche, *Ludwig Erhards Gesellschafts- und Wirtschaftskonzeption: Soziale Marktwirtschaft als politische Ökonomie* (Stuttgart, 1986).

22. See A. J. Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility: The Social Market Economy in Germany, 1918–1963* (Oxford, 1994); Gerold Ambrosius, *Die Durchsetzung der sozialen Marktwirtschaft in Westdeutschland, 1945–1949* (Stuttgart, 1977); Hentschel, *Ludwig Erhard: Ein Politikerleben*; and Mierzejewski, *Ludwig Erhard: A Biography*.
23. See Charles S. Maier, *In Search of Stability: Explorations in Historical Political Economy* (Cambridge, 1987); Volker R. Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German Industry, 1945–1973*; and Christoph Buchheim, *Die Wiedereingliederung Westdeutschlands in die Weltwirtschaft, 1945–1958* (Munich, 1990); in addition to Van Hook, *Rebuilding Germany: The Creation of the Social Market Economy, 1945–1957*.
24. See Van Hook's excellent discussion of the literature dealing with the Social Market Economy and West Germany's political economy, *Rebuilding Germany*, 1–18.
25. See Werner Abelshausen, *Wirtschaft in Westdeutschland, 1945–1948: Rekonstruktion und Wachstumsbedingungen in der amerikanischen und britischen Zone* (Stuttgart, 1975) and *Wirtschaftsgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945–1980*.
26. See especially Buchheim, *Die Wiedereingliederung Westdeutschlands in die Weltwirtschaft, 1945–1958*.
27. See Van Hook, *Rebuilding Germany* and Nicholls, *Freedom with Responsibility*.
28. Robert G. Moeller, ed., *West Germany under Construction: Politics, Society, and Culture in the Adenauer Era* (Ann Arbor, 1997), 2–3; and Schissler, *The Miracle Years: A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968*. The selections in these books represent some of the best and most work in the social and cultural history of postwar West Germany.
29. For an overview of the political parties in West Germany, see Richard Stöss, ed., *Die Parteien der Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1945–1980* (Opladen, 1983).
30. Garth S. Jowett and Victoria O'Donnell, *Propaganda and Persuasion* (London, 1992), 4.
31. Recent works in German have examined political propaganda and its implications for politics and society. See Ute Daniel and Wolfram Siemann, eds., *Propaganda: Meinungskampf, Verführung und politische Sinnstiftung, 1789–1989* (Frankfurt am Main, 1994); and Gerald Diesener and Rainer Gries, eds., *Propaganda in Deutschland: Zur Geschichte der politischen Massenbeeinflussung im 20. Jahrhundert* (Darmstadt, 1996).
32. Heidrun Abromeit, *Das Politische in der Werbung: Wahlwerbung und Wirtschaftswerbung in der Bundesrepublik* (Opladen, 1972).
33. Sabine Behrenbeck, "Der Führer: Die Einführung eines politischen Markenartikels," in Diesener and Gries, *Propaganda in Deutschland*, 50–78. See also Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth: Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (Oxford, 1987).
34. See Dorothee Buchhaas, *Die Volkspartei: Programmatische Entwicklung der CDU, 1950–1973* (Düsseldorf, 1983); and Gordon Smith, *Democracy in Western Germany: Parties and Politics in the Federal Republic* (New York, 1986), 88–114.
35. Almond and Verba, *The Civic Culture*, 312–313.
36. Adorno "What Does Coming to Terms with the Past Mean?" 118.
37. Noelle and Neumann, *The Germans: Public Opinion Polls, 1947–1966*, 209–210.
38. See Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany* (New York, 1967).
39. See Marie-Luise Recker, "Bonn ist nicht Weimar: Zur Struktur und Charakter des politischen Systems der Bundesrepublik Deutschland in der Ära Adenauer," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 44 (1993): 287–307; Karl Rohe, *Wahlen und Wählertradition in Deutschland: Kulturelle Grundlagen deutscher Parteien und Parteiensysteme im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Frankfurt am Main, 1992); Christopher S. Allen, ed., *Transformation of the German Political Party System: Institutional Crisis or Democratic Renewal?* (New York, 1999); and Richard D. Partch, "The Transformation of the West German Party System: Patterns of Electoral Change and Consistency," *German Studies Review* 3, no. 1 (1980): 85–120.
40. Daniel E. Rogers, *Politics after Hitler: The Western Allies and the German Party System* (New York, 1995). For more on the United States' influence on the development of West German politics, see Thomas Alan Schwartz, *America's Germany: John J. McCloy and the Federal Republic of Germany* (Cambridge, 1991).

41. David P. Conradt, *The German Polity* (White Plains, 1986), 85–88.
42. For a discussion on this topic, see Thomas Childers, *The Nazi Voter: The Social Foundations of Fascism in Germany, 1919–1933* (Chapel Hill, 1983); Richard Hamilton, *Who Voted for Hitler?* (Princeton, 1983); and the *Central European History* issue on the topic “Who Voted for Hitler?” *Central European History* 28, no. 1, (1984).
43. Karl Schmitt, “Religious Cleavages in the West German Party System,” in *Elections, Parties, and Political Traditions: Social Foundations of German Parties and Party Systems, 1867–1987*, ed. Karl Rohe (New York, 1990), 179–202.
44. *Ibid.*, 179–201; and Karl Schmitt, *Konfession und Wahlverhalten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland* (Berlin, 1989), 193–225. See also Franz Pappi, “Parteien und Sozialstruktur in der Bundesrepublik,” *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 14, no. 2 (1973): 191–213. Christof Wolf argues that when examining voting behavior, the division should not be seen as between Catholic and Protestant, but instead as between religious and nonreligious. See Christof Wolf, “Konfessionelle versus religiöse Konfliktlinie in der deutschen Wählerschaft,” *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 37, no. 4 (1996): 713–734.
45. See the polling figures in Gerhard Schmidtchen, *Die befragte Nation: Über den Einfluss der Meinungsforschung auf die Politik* (Freiburg im Breisgau, 1959), 163.
46. All figures given in this work reflect the second ballot results. West Germany had a mixed electoral system that combined the plurality system, in which the candidate with the most votes “takes all” in a single-member district, and the proportional system, whereby a party’s number of seats in parliament is proportional to its percentage of the popular vote. In West Germany a voter casts ballots for single candidates in individual constituencies and for party lists. In the 1949 election a vote for a candidate would automatically be counted as a vote for that candidate’s party. Starting in 1953, voters cast two ballots—one for a candidate and another for a party list. The total number of seats for each party in the Bundestag was calculated through a formula that distributed seats proportionally to the number of votes a party received overall. For more on the development of West Germany’s election laws, see U. W. Kitzinger, *German Electoral Politics: A Study of the 1957 Campaign* (Oxford, 1960), 17–37.
47. See Maria Mitchell, “Materialism and Secularism: CDU Politicians and National Socialism, 1945–1949,” *The Journal of Modern History* 67, no. 2 (1995): 278–308 and “Christian Democracy and the Transformation of German Politics, 1945–1949” (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1989).
48. Uta Poiger, *Jazz, Rock, and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley, 2000); and Maria Höhn, *GIs and Fräuleins: The German-American Encounter in 1950s West Germany* (Chapel Hill, 2002).
49. Uta Poiger, “Commentary: Beyond ‘Modernization’ and ‘Colonization,’” *Diplomatic History* 23, no. 1 (1999): 45–56. See Berghahn, *The Americanisation of West German Industry, 1945–1973*; Jeffrey Diefendorf et al., eds., *American Policy and the Reconstruction of West Germany, 1945–1955* (Washington D.C., 1993); Michael Ermarth, ed., *America and the Shaping of German Society* (Providence, 1993); Jessica C. Gienow-Hecht, *Transmission Impossible: American Journalism as Cultural Diplomacy in Postwar Germany, 1945–1955* (Baton Rouge, 1999); Petra Goedde, *GIs and Germans: Culture, Gender, and Foreign Relations, 1945–1949* (New Haven, 2003); and Reiner Pommerin, ed., *The American Impact on Postwar Germany* (Providence, 1995). For the influence of Taylorism in Weimar Germany, see Mary Nolan, *Visions of Modernity: American Business and the Modernization of Germany* (Oxford, 1994). For the impact of the United States in other areas of Europe, see Richard Kuisel, *Seducing the French: The Dilemma of Americanization* (Berkeley, 1993); Richard Pells, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hate, and Transformed American Culture Since World War II* (New York, 1997); and Richard Wagnleitner, *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War: The Culture Mission of the United States in Austria After the Second World War* (Chapel Hill, 1994).
50. Diethelm Prowe, “The ‘Miracle’ of the Political-Culture Shift: Democratization Between Americanization and Conservative Reintegration,” in Schissler, *Miracle Years*, 451–458.



51. Elisabeth Heineman, "The Hour of the Women: Memories of Germany's 'Crisis Years' and West German National Identity," *American Historical Review* 101, no. 2 (1996): 354–395.
52. Erica Carter, *How German Is She? Postwar West German Reconstruction and the Consuming Woman* (Ann Arbor, 1997).
53. Robert G. Moeller, "'The Last Soldiers of the Great War' and Tales of Family Reunions in the Federal Republic of Germany," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24, no. 1 (1998): 129–145; Uta G. Poiger, "A New, 'Western' Hero? Reconstructing German Masculinity in the 1950's," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24, no. 1 (1998): 147–162; Heide Fehrenbach, "Rehabilitating the Fatherland: Race and German Reconstruction," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 24, no. 1 (1998): 107–127.
54. See Hanna Schissler's overview "Women in West Germany from 1945 to the Present," in *From Bundesrepublik to Deutschland: German Politics after Unification*, ed. Michael G. Huelshoff, Andrei S. Markovits, and Simon Reich (Ann Arbor, 1993), 117–136.
55. Helga Grebing, Peter Pozorski, and Rainer Schulze, *Die Nachkriegsentwicklung in Westdeutschland: 1945–1949, A: Die Wirtschaftlichen Grundlagen* (Stuttgart, 1980), 19; Robert G. Moeller, *Protecting Motherhood: Women and the Family in the Politics of Postwar West Germany* (Berkeley, 1993), 27–28; Statistisches Bundesamt, *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland, 1958* (Stuttgart, 1958), 17.
56. *Statistisches Jahrbuch, 1958*, 108–109.
57. Klaus Gotto and Konrad Reggen, *Kirche, Katholiken und Nationalsozialismus* (Mainz, 1980), 121.
58. Statistisches Bundesamt, *Bevölkerung und Kultur, Volks und Berufszählung vom 6 Juni 1961* (Stuttgart, 1962), 27.
59. Gabrielle Bremme, *Die Politische Rolle der Frau in Deutschland: Eine Untersuchung über den Einfluß der Frauen bei Wahlen und ihre Teilnahme in Partei und Parlament* (Göttingen, 1956), 78–94.
60. The CDU/CSU received 36 per cent of its vote from Protestants. Schmitt, *Konfession und Wahlverhalten in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 214–215.
61. See Helmut Schelsky, *Wandlungen der deutschen Familie in der Gegenwart: Darstellung und Deutung einer empirisch-soziologischen Tatbestandsaufnahme* (Dortmund, 1953); Ralf Dahrendorf, *Society and Democracy in Germany*; and Josef Mooser, "Abschied von der 'Proletariat': Sozialstruktur und Lage der Arbeiterschaft in der Bundesrepublik in historischer Perspektive," in *Sozialgeschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Beiträge zum Kontinuitätsproblem*, ed. Werner Conze and M. Rainer Lepsius (Stuttgart, 1983), 143–186.
62. Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywotek, "'Reconstruction' and 'Modernization': West German Social History during the 1950s" in Moeller, *West Germany Under Construction*, 413–440.
63. Volker R. Berghahn, "Recasting Bourgeois Germany," in Schissler, *The Miracle Years*, 326–340.
64. There have been a number of important works by Germans interested in the rise of consumer culture and the "modernization" of West Germany during the 1950s. See Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten: Freizeit, Massenmedien und "Zeitgeist" in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre*; Axel Schildt and Arnold Sywotek, *Modernisierung im Wiederaufbau: Die westdeutsche Gesellschaft der 50er Jahre* (Bonn, 1993); and Michael Wildt, *Am Beginn der "Konsumgesellschaft": Mangelersparung, Lebenshaltung, Wohlstandshoffnung in Westdeutschland in den fünfziger Jahren* (Hamburg, 1994).