

Measuring the Professionalization of Political Campaigning

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Abstract

This paper presents a new multi-dimensional empirical indicator that is designed to measure the growing phenomenon of professionalized campaigning among political parties. After outlining the conceptual and operational rationale for developing the index it is applied to the German party system during the federal election of 2005. The results show that the index captures considerable variance across parties in regard to their adoption of professionalized campaigning and reflections are offered as to the wider application of the measure within cross-national research. The utility of the index is then examined by comparing German party scores to a series of predictions (derived from the literature) about which parties would display higher or lower levels of professionalization. The close correspondence between the theoretical expectations and party scores provide an important initial endorsement of the index's validity and some interesting new insights into the party-level dynamics that may be driving the current wave of campaign modernization.

[Keywords: Parties, Professionalization, Campaigns, Methodology, Comparative]

Introduction

Over the past two decades a new style of political campaigning has been identified by a range of scholars working in the parties, elections and communication fields. Although it has been given a variety of labels including ‘Americanized’ (Negrine and Papathanassopoulos 1996), ‘postmodern’ (Norris 2000; Plasser and Plasser, 2002), ‘phase 3’ (Farrell and Webb 2000), ‘post-fordist’ (Denver and Hands, 2000) and ‘high-tech’ (Strachan, 2003) there is basic agreement among scholars over the essential ingredients of the new approach, which can be summarized as a ‘professionalization’ of the tools and strategies parties and candidates use to appeal to voters (Farrell, 1996; Gibson and Römmele, 2001; Lilleker and Negrine, 2002).

Typical components of the new approach include the increasing use of databases, direct mailing and telephone banks as well as new information and communication technologies (ICTs), most commonly the Web and email. These innovative modes of voter outreach are complemented by a significant expansion in the use of existing techniques such as opinion polls and focus groups to divine the voters’ latest thinking. As a result of these operational changes, parties’ and candidates’ orientation toward the electorate has become more personalized and targeted as well as more costly. From an internal perspective, parties are seen to be reconfiguring themselves organizationally and tactically, with power shifting upward and outward to leaders and external media and public relations consultants (Lilleker, 2005; Mair et al. 1999; Plasser and Plasser, 2002), and even more recently, to new ‘in house’ units of voter and opposition research (Farrell, 2006). Overall the new style of political campaigning has seen parties increasingly compared to business and commercial entities. Parties exist to market and sell their ‘products’ i.e. policies, to an increasingly fickle audience of voters or consumers (Butler and Collins 1994; Harrop

1990; Henneberg, 2002; Lees-Marshment, 2001; Lilleker and Lees-Marshment, 2005; Newman, 1994, 1999; Wring 1996; 2005).

While attempts to define the concept of the professionalized campaign and what constitutes political marketing in different contexts have featured prominently in this literature, explicit engagement with the methodological issues raised by these developments has not been so common. In particular, the development of standardized empirical indicators to measure the dependent variable in question – professionalized campaigning - at the party and candidate-level worldwide has been significantly under-developed. Empirical approaches to the topic have tended to focus on documenting the key changes to campaign practices over time within a single country, and/or implicit comparison within cross-nationally edited volumes (Esser, 2004; Kaid, 2004; Newman, 1999; Plasser 2002; Swanson and Mancini, 1996; Sussmann 2005). Such work has yielded a every rich and indepth understanding of the growth and development of these techniques in a wide variety of contexts. It has not however, proved as conducive to the type of large N comparative analysis that allows for more systematic investigation of causes and effects.

This paper seeks to help to close that gap by developing a new multi-dimensional indicator of professionalized campaigning that can be utilized in cross-national research. In particular we develop a zero to thirty point index that captures ten crucial dimensions of the practice of professionalized campaigning. In order to test the utility and validity of the new measure we apply it to the case of Germany in its most recent federal election of 2005. As a major Western democracy with a vibrant multi-party system and clear evidence of the use of professionalized techniques (Falter/Römmele 2002; Holtz-Bacha 2000; Pfetsch 2001; Ritter, 1997; Römmele 2002), Germany is seen as an ideal environment to test the index and the extent to

which it can capture variance in parties performance. As well as reporting the results and ranking of parties in terms of their campaign professionalization, we discuss the consequences of applying the index on a party by party basis and the identify the modifications that may be required when applying it cross-nationally.

In a final stage of the analysis, we demonstrate the potential significance of the findings by comparing the German party rankings to a set of predictions derived from previous theoretical work on this topic (Gibson and Römmele, 2001). In brief, this model of explanation draws on the extant literature to argue that a range of variables including a party's size, its ideological outlook, internal structure and electoral success play a key role in determining the extent of campaign professionalisation it undertakes. As well as providing an initial test of the index's validity, therefore, the paper seeks to offer new empirical insight into various party-specific factors that are promoting campaign professionalization.

This work is significant in that it moves discussion of campaign professionalization onto more methodological terrain, specifically confronting the question of how we can best measure this new form of campaigning. In 'road-testing' our proposed schema in a recent election in a major European democracy we produce a new source of empirical data that allows us to directly compare parties within (and potentially across) systems, in terms of their level of engagement with the new techniques. Finally, in probing these data from a theoretical point of view we help to identify some party-specific factors that may be linked to the campaign professionalization process more generally. As such the work presents a compelling case for further comparative research in the area and supplies the tools necessary to undertake such an analysis.

Operationalising the Concept of Professionalized Campaigning

As current studies of election campaigning make clear, professionalized campaigning is a broad and multifaceted phenomenon, and may emphasize different features in different contexts (Strombeck, 2007). Rather than attempting to provide a new and all-encompassing definition of the phenomenon, therefore, we seek instead to focus on identifying professionalization in more applied terms, as it links to various aspects of parties' and candidates' operation and organization. In particular, we identify four areas of party activity where professionalization-induced change seems most apparent: (1) the adoption of new tools and tactics (high-tech and computerized) and intensification of existing methods (opinion polls, focus groups); (2) a shift in the overall mode or style of campaigning, making it a more capital-intensive, aggressive or attack-oriented, and continuous; (3) a re-orientation in the relationship with the electorate toward a more interactive and individualized engagement; and finally (4) the re-structuring of power relations within the party with an increasing centralization of power particularly in the person of the leader, as well as some resurgence of the local level, specifically in relation to mobilising local turnout.

Thus far most of the work done to empirically document these changes has involved qualitatively rich contextual and historical studies of individual parties and/or countries. Efforts to do so within an explicitly comparative frame of reference have been less common.¹ One of the reasons for this deficit would appear to stem from the lack of an agreed upon set of empirical indicators that operationalize the concept. A key task and methodological challenge confronting those seeking to explain the spread of these practices within countries and worldwide, therefore, is to develop indicators that adequately capture the concept of professionalized campaigning in broader generic sense.

As an initial step in that process, in our earlier work we identified 12 key party activities or initiatives that appeared to be closely associated with the implementation of professionalized campaigning and that were directly observable. These were:

- Use of telemarketing
 - contacting own members
 - contacting outside target groups
- Use of direct mail
 - to own members
 - to outside target groups
- Presence of an internal internet communication system
- Email 'sign-up' or subscription list for regular news updates
- Outside campaign headquarters
- Continuous campaigning
- Use of outside public relations/media consultants
- Use of computerized databases
- Use of opinion polling
- Conducting opposition research

While a majority of the activities relate to the new tools and tactics dimension of professionalized campaigning, some of the items do capture other aspects of the new approach. Use of outside consultants for instance can be seen as tapping into the changes taking place in parties internal power distribution. Continuous campaigning and conducting opposition research are arguably better indicators of change in the more intangible area of campaign 'mode'.

Developing the Index

Having identified the principal activities associated with the professionalized campaign the next step is to convert them into measurable variables. Before doing this, the direct mailing and telemarketing items were consolidated so that each encompassed both members and voters. Thus, instead of 12 items or activities to be measured, we confronted ten. A second stage was to group items according to whether they relied primarily on objective data or subjective assessment by coders. Some items such as subscription-based e-newsletters and use of direct mail and telemarketing, are clearly more reliant on publicly accessible and verifiable sources of information. Others, such as continuous campaigning and conducting opposition research are less easily observable and rely on harder to gain 'insider' knowledge of the parties and/or more the subjective judgement of coders.

While no pre-determined maximum was placed on the scale used to measure each item, a scale of zero to three emerged as the most practicable and broadly applicable level of measurement to capture variance across the various activities. An increase in the score reflected an increasing level of engagement in the activity in question. Given that we had 10 variables in total this meant a maximum score on the overall index of 30. A full listing of the variables and the associated scoring system is provided in the Appendix.

Objectively measured variables:

(1) Use of Telemarketing and (2) Direct Mail: the more extensively a party engaged in these activities, the more professionalized it was considered to be. Levels of activity were assessed based on the proportion of the population that were contacted via such means. Over 50% of constituencies or 1% or more of the voting age population was given a top score = 3; Between one quarter and one half of constituencies or 0.5% -

1% of the voting age population = 2; and less than one quarter or 0.5% of the voting age population = 1; non-engagement in this activity = 0.

(3) Internal/Intranet Communication System: the more widely used this type of system is then the more professionalized the party is seen to be. Thus, if its use/access within the party included members, local and national staff then it was given a top score = 3; local and national staff only = 2; national staff only = 1; not available = 0.

(4) E-mail Subscription Newsletter: the more frequently produced and more targeted this service was then the more professionalized the party was considered to be. Thus scores were based on the frequency and range of options offered to subscribers – generic weekly newsletters and more targeted/individualized newsletters = 3; generic weekly newsletters only = 2; generic newsletters less frequent than weekly = 1; no service offered = 0.

(5) Outside Campaign Headquarters: an increasing trait of a professionalized party is the development of a separate management team that handles the election campaign. A fully developed version of this model is defined by having a set of personnel physically outsourced and placed in a separate location = 3; a dedicated unit or team working within the party HQ with regular meetings and a clearly defined personnel boundary = 2; a definable campaign team but less clear boundaries to the rest of the party HQ = 1; no obvious separate campaign team = 0.

(6) Continuous Campaign: this is possibly one of the most pervasive characteristics of the professionalized campaign but also one of the more difficult to judge. While initially it was considered to require a more subjective approach, the decision was made to use objective criteria as much as possible. Thus, a derived measure based on the timing of the activities captured by the other variables was developed. Specifically, where a party was engaging in between seven to nine of the

professionalized campaign activities to degree six months prior to the election a score of 3 was assigned; four to six of the activities were taking place = 2; between one and three of the activities = 1; where none of the activities could be observed six months prior to the election = 0.

Subjectively measured variables:

The more subjectively measured variables were also measured on a zero to three scale. The variables coded in this manner included use of outside PR/media consultants, computerized databases, opinion polling, and conducting opposition research. In general where the activity was partially engaged in a score of one was given, if it was extensively engaged in a score of two was assigned and a score of three indicated that the activity that was fully developed in the party. While it was difficult to give precise guidance as to what each of these levels constituted for each activity coders were provided with a working definition of what the highest score of three would constitute and then instructed to work downwards on the scale to judge whether the activity was extensively or partially engaged in.

(g) PR/media Consultants: this activity was considered to be fully developed where parties employed and made frequent/daily use of a range of media consultant(s) prior to and during the election. We were particularly interested here in the extent to which consultants were in a decision-making role on par with, or even above party officials. Where the PR agencies appeared to have, or at least share the balance of power with the party, this was given a score = 3; frequent or daily use of outside PR / media consultants, who have less power than the politicians of the party = 2; occasional use of PR /media consultants, who have less power than the politicians of the party = 1; no use of outside PR / media consultants = 0.

(h) Computerized Databases: this activity was considered fully developed if the parties were operating and made frequent/daily use at both national and local level of a national database to identify and target swing voters or those who might be most vulnerable to switching party, a score = 3 was assigned. If the party operates and makes frequent use of a national database at national or local level = 2; the party operates and makes occasional use of a national database at national or local level = 1; the party does not make use of a national / local database or does not have one = 0.

(i) Opinion Polling: this activity was considered to be fully developed if the party had established its own dedicated and professional survey research unit that conducted regular and frequent opinion polls both before and during the election campaign. These results would then be used to shape and direct the party's overall campaign strategy (score = 3). If the party frequently commissions polls from external polling institutes = 2; the party commissions polls from external polling institutes = 1; the party does not use opinion polling = 0.

(j) Opposition Research: this activity was considered to be fully developed if the party had a dedicated unit within the party that conducted regular and frequent research into the opposition parties both before and during the election campaign. As with opinion polling the results of this research would then be integrated into the rest of the campaign, directly and/or indirectly guiding the strategy (score = 3). The party frequently commissions opposition research from outside = 2; the party occasionally commissions opposition research from outside = 1; The party does not use opposition research = 0

Data Collection

The data used to assign scores were collected primarily through a series of semi-structured telephone-interview of the campaign managers of the two main

parties that competed in the 2005 federal election, the Social Democrats (SPD) and Christian Democrats (CDU/CSU) as well as the two key minor parties, the Free Democrats (FDP) and the Greens. The ten variables and their coded categories as listed in the appendix were used as the basis for the interview questions. The interviews were conducted across the period October-November 2005. The personnel interviewed were Kajo Wasserhövel for the SPD, Volker Kauder for the CDU, Hans-Jürgen Beerfeltz for the FDP and Reinhard Bütikofer for the Greens. Interview data was transcribed and analysed by two coders each assigning scores according to the index.² In addition, media reports on the campaign strategy and online news sources were also consulted for further information, as well as party produced information as well.³

Applying the Index: Results

Below we discuss the findings on each of the indicators by party, the full set of scores are reported in Table 1. What we see from looking at the overall scores is that the SPD are ranked first as the most advanced in their use of professionalized campaign techniques. The CDU come a fairly close second and the FDP performing very strongly as a close third. The Greens, however, achieve a significantly lower score than the other three parties and are ranked lowest on the index.

Table 1 about here

SPD

The SPD as the incumbent party had to co-ordinate its campaign between the “Kanzleramt” (centre of government) and the party headquarters. A close co-operation between both units was guaranteed by Kajo Wasserhövel, Campaign Manager, and close colleague to the head of party (Franz Müntefering) at that time and Frank-Walter Steinmaier, Minister of the Kanzleramt. Overall the party

performed best on the index, its total score being 27. In eight out of the 10 variables being measured – use of telemarketing, use of direct mailing, internal IT, e-newsletter, use of outside PR, conducting opposition research, opinion polling and use of computerized databases – on the professionalized campaign index, the SPD received the highest score of three. In doing so, the SPD scored the maximum of three in each of the subjectively measured variables, whereas the party could not reach the highest score in two of the objective variables, external headquarter and continuous campaigning.

Objectively measured variables: The Social Democrats were extremely active in contacting target groups via telemarketing and direct mailing. Over 500.000 telephone calls based on a new web-based databank-system were conducted and reached over 55% of the constituencies. Direct mail was a fully integrated tool in the SPD campaign and was used to contact 60% of the constituencies – the target groups here were first-time voters as well as potential swing-voters. New ICTs played an important role in terms of organizing the campaign and mobilizing party members as the internal communication system was highly developed and was regularly used by party members, local and national staff. As well as being utilized for campaign coordination and dissemination of leaflets etc to the local level, the site offered information, a debate forum and the latest news updates for users. The subscription for the SPD newsletter was accessible for members as well as non-members and offered a wide range of individual options besides its informative character. Moreover a telephone hotline for questions concerning the campaign was installed working 24 hours, podcasting and weblogs were installed.

In addition, the campaign manager reported over 15.000 voluntary campaign workers had been recruited into the party via the internet. Following the practice

established in 1998 and maintained in 2002 the SPD also had a campaign organization unit named KAMPA. Unlike in 2002, however, KAMPA was not physically outsourced from the party headquarters but remained as a separate unit within it, divided into two wings – one dealing with the technical/resource aspects of fighting election campaign and the other, the political content. This ‘return’ to base meant that it did not score the maximum of three on this item but instead received a score of two.

The final objective variable investigated - ‘continuous campaigning’ - was scored as one, due to the fact that the SPD was observed to be extensively engaged in only two of the professionalized campaign activities, namely e-newsletter and internal communication system six months prior to the election. The SPD started to engage extensively in the use of media consultants and opposition research as well as opinion polling about two months before the election and most heavily used during the final phase of the election campaign – the “heiße Wahlkampfphase”.

Subjectively measured variables: On this second group of variables the dominance of the Social Democrats in the professionalized campaign stakes is clearly revealed. The SPD was the only party scoring three in each of the subjectively measured variables. In respect of media and Public Relations the party showed a strong performance. While in 2002 they had used one leading PR agency that was retained in 2005, they brought in a number of additional PR and advertising agencies to the campaign. The well-known Hamburg-based agency *Butter* was used to develop the overall strategy and advertising approach while *face2net* provided advice on the online aspect of the campaign and *compact-team* was responsible for organizing and coordinating events. The cooperation between the party and the media consultants was characterized as balanced, meaning that the agencies were involved in the decision-making process. The remaining items ‘opposition research’, ‘opinion polling’ and ‘use of

computerized databases' also played an important role in the SPD campaign and were strongly connected to each other. The party developed its own section/division within the KAMPA that was responsible for monitoring the Christian Democrats and Angela Merkel in particular, and for conducting regular survey research (SPD, Die Kampagne 2005, p. 41). The work of this special section was based on the daily use of a national database and the results from this research proved to be a corner stone of the campaign and were put to use in various communication channels. One clear example being the internet-page www.die-falsche-wahl.de.

CDU

Compared to the SPD, the CDU scored lower overall on the professionalized campaign index. Their overall score was 24 and only on five of the 10 items in the index did they receive the highest score of three. This was for opposition research, presence of an internal IT-system, the e-mail newsletter sign-up facility and the use of computerized databases.

Objectively measured variables: The CDU could warrant the top score of three in only two out of the six variables, namely internal communication system and e-newsletter. The e-newsletter aspect of the campaign was considered as fully developed as that of the SPD in that it offered a range of newsletters to subscribers more tailored toward their particular interests, in addition to the generic weekly one. The internal communication system of the party was also strongly used in terms of coordinating the campaign between members, local and national staff. Via the internal communication system members were motivated and mobilized to support the campaign and were guided during their activities by local and national staff. In regard to telemarketing and the use of direct mailing we do observe extensive use and a reliance on databanks, however, the overall number of mailings sent out and contacts

made was significantly lower than observed with the SPD and both reached only about one third of the constituencies (scored two). Like the SPD, the CDU did not source out their campaign headquarters (ARENA 05) but kept it in the Konrad-Adenauer-Haus. The campaign was hierarchically structured, with the party organization retaining control over much of the decision-making. Thus, the influence of the campaign HQ was seen as advisory as the SPD and only scored two on the campaign index. As in the case of the SPD the CDU started to extensively engage in continuous campaigning late. Like the SPD they showed a constant activity in the two items e-newsletter and internal communication system during six months prior to the election, whereas about two months before the election the party began to engage in other professionalized campaign activities such as opposition research and opinion polling. As a result the CDU also received the score of one.

Subjectively measured variables: On these measures the CDU nearly performed as well as the SPD receiving a top score of three in all variables except use of media consultants which was scored with a two. The Christian Democrats relied heavily on consultants (advertising agencies Shipyard Nice Media and McCann-Erickson were the leading advertising companies), however, in contrast to the Social Democrats the overall CDU-campaign had a more hierarchical structure with the party exercising greater control over the final decisions. Consultants had to report to the campaign manager and the top candidate and were not as free to direct the campaign as with the SPD. Like the Social Democrats, opposition research played a very important role in the overall campaign strategy proved by the fact that the party established a special team within the campaign unit responsible for opposition research (Abteilung Medienbeobachtung). Moreover the party heavily relied on opinion polls also conducted by a special unit within the campaign headquarters. As the CDU was

barely defeated by the SPD in the 2002 election they knew about their realistic chance to win the 2005 election and extensively used national and local databases to identify swing voters who could turn the tide. These results then being integrated into the overall communication strategy of the election campaign.

The Greens

Overall the Greens scored significantly lower on the professionalized campaign index than the other parties. On no item of the campaign index did the Greens score higher than two, with an overall score of 13.

Objectively measured variables: The party did engage in a low degree of telemarketing and direct mailing (scored one) and contacts made to members and outside target groups were much lower than those made by the SPD and CDU. Telemarketing activities and direct mail only reached less than one quarter of the constituencies and did not play an important role in the Greens' campaign. Surprisingly, the Greens had no internal internet communication system, but offered the opportunity for people visiting their website to sign of for a generic weekly newsletter. Nevertheless this newsletter was for information dissemination only and did not show any individual or targeted features. The Greens also developed a campaign HQ that was integrated into the party headquarters; official campaign managers were Fritz Kuhn and Steffi Lemke. However, it was seen as occupying a minor role in terms of directing the campaign, particularly compared with the SPD. In contrast to the SPD and CDU the election campaign strategy of the Greens was mainly directed by those in the main party headquarters although the advertising agencies did some preliminary work in scoping out strategy. On this basis the party was assigned a score of one.

Rather surprisingly, given the lack of strong performance during the election across the range of indicators, the Greens were found to exhibit some clear aspects of a continuous campaign during the six months prior to the election and so scored two for this item. In particular, the Greens were found to have heavily engaged in opposition research and opinion polling as well as the use of computerized databases and direct mail in their pre-election campaigns like “Die grüne Bilanz” which highlighted Greens achievements in the government or “Weg vom Öl” which stressed the Greens commitment regarding energy policy. “Die grüne Bilanz” included a list of political achievements the Greens initiated and pushed during their coalition with the SPD. Both campaigns were started after the 2002 election, but were constantly updated, e. g. in the form of conferences and leaflets.

Subjectively measured variables: The Greens scored more highly on this range of variables. While they did not develop an ‘in-house’ opposition research team as part of their campaign strategy they did rely heavily on opposition research from outside and so was scored two. The party frequently commissioned polls from external polling institutes and therefore also received two for this item. The Greens only made occasional use of databases at the national and local level appearing to not as interested as the other parties in the identification of swing voters and so scored one. As in 2002, the Greens did utilize services of professional advertising agencies - “zum goldenen Hirschen” and “Kompaktmedien”, however, they were not considered to control and direct the campaign to the extent observed in the two big parties and obviously had less power than the politicians (scored as one).

The FDP

Although the FDP is a minor party its overall score of 21 reaches a level comparable to the two big parties SPD and CDU.

Objectively measured variables: As measured on these items the FDP can clearly compete with the two major parties and especially in terms of the internal internet communication system the FDP is as advanced as the CDU and scored three on our campaign index. The sign-in facility for a generic weekly newsletter can be found on the main menu of the party's website, but it does not show any targeted features and the possibility to choose from individual forms of newsletters (scored two). The FDP use of telemarketing was moderate as well and was dominated by the use of online-marketing, i. e. weblogs and banner campaigns: Via telemarketing over one quarter of the constituencies were contacted and so scored two. The FDP engaged in direct mailing especially to contact potential swing voters disappointed by the SPD/Greens government "Opfer rot-grüner Politik/Victims of the red and green politics)" and established an open election campaign discussion forum www.deutschlandprogramm.de where party members as well as non-members could state their ideas and opinions concerning the FDP election campaign. Over 50% of the constituencies were reached and so was assigned a three. The FDP campaign headquarter (FREIRAUM 05) was not physically sourced out and was integrated in the party headquarter in the "Thomas Dehler Haus" whereas Guido Westerwelle and Hans-Jürgen Beerfeltz were mainly in charge of the content and the realization of the election campaign, so that the direction of the campaign was apparently taken by the party headquarter (score of one).

Finally as an opposition party the FDP like the Greens show clear aspects of a continuous campaign. The continuous campaigning of the FDP was observed being at a high level including several campaigns against the grand coalition mainly on the special policy issue "unemployment". These campaigns were subsumed under the title "Freiheit braucht Arbeit" and dealt with issues such as tax cutting and the reduction of

bureaucracy. Like the Greens the FDP relied on opposition research, opinion polling, computerized databases and the means of direct mail to spread the information and so scored two for this item.

Subjectively measured variables: The FDP performed well on these variables. The item “opposition research” was scored as two, reflecting the fact that the FDP relied on frequently conducted opposition research from outside but did not establish an own section within the campaign headquarter. Concerning the use of advertising agencies the FDP is comparable to the Greens: The advertising agency “von Mannstein Communications” supported the FDP to develop and to realize the campaign strategy but was not considered to control and direct the campaign to the extent observed in the two big parties and so the party received a score of one for this item. The party frequently used databases on the national and local level but this item was not as extensively integrated into the overall campaign strategy as in the campaigns of the two major parties and so scored two on this item. Following the the two major parties, the FDP had its own analysis/polling unit within the campaign headquarters conducting daily opinion polls which were strongly integrated in the overall campaign strategy. This saw it assigned a maximum score of three.

Prospects for wider application of the index

Our measurement scheme has proved successful in that it has captured a significant degree of variance among a small number of parties in terms of how advanced they are in the use of professionalized campaign techniques. We divided our findings into those that were derived through the more objectively measured variables and those that were scored via more subjective methods. Our concern in doing so was to focus on the methodological aspects of the data collection rather than the findings *per se* (although these are discussed in the subsequent section of the paper). In doing

so our analysis has identified a number of issues for further consideration in any wider application of the index. Not surprisingly the objectively measured variables proved easier in general for coders to assign scores to, being based largely on numbers and frequencies. The use of telemarketing and direct mail could easily be scored (once campaign managers are willing to divulge statistics) and the e-newsletter function and the use of the internal communication system could be established from analyzing the party websites and/or confirmation via interviews with party staff. The item 'external headquarter' and 'continuous campaigning' were also quite easily scored based on the information of the interviews.

The subjectively measured variables raised some problems in terms of assigning reliable scores. While it was easy to establish whether the activity was taking place, the degree to which it was partially, extensively or fully developed was heavily dependent on the judgement of the coders. The assignment of each score was confirmed through inter-coder discussion, a time-consuming process. In addition we would expect the interpretation of these gradations (i.e. what is full, extensive and limited) to vary according to national context rather than conform to an absolute level. Thus, while it would be useful in one sense to offer more fully developed categories of measurement for these variables, it is also the case that we should not yet look to be overly prescriptive in the score assignment for these variables. As further use is made of the index in comparative context, then more explicit and country-specific criteria for these variables may be developed and built into the schema.

Interpreting the Findings? Testing a Party-centered Theory of Professionalized Campaigning

While we have developed and applied our new methodological index, it remains to be seen whether the scores produced accurately reflect levels of campaign

professionalization. In the final stage of this analysis we offer a preliminary test of the value of our index by comparing German party findings to expectations derived from the wider literature regarding parties' move to adopt the new style of campaigning. Generally speaking, accounts of the rise of professional campaigning see political parties as the conduits of change but have not sought to systematically elucidate the strategic or deterministic role that parties play in the process. In earlier work on this topic we advanced a model that sought to account for variance among parties in terms of the extent of their engagement in professionalized campaigning. Drawing on the extant accounts of professionalization across a variety of contexts we identified the party-specific factors that appeared to be most strongly associated with earlier and pro-active adoption of the new techniques. We also identified the key environmental factors played a particular role in mobilising or triggering a party's implementation of new campaign practice. Below we review that model and consider how well its predictions compare to our findings on professionalized campaigning in the context of the German 2005 federal election.

Party-Centered Theory of Professionalized Campaigning

As the term suggests, the party-centered theory of professionalized campaigning regards parties as vital actors in the move into this new campaign era (for a full exposition of the theory see Gibson and Römmele, 2001). In particular, four factors are identified as important in 'priming' parties in their move to embrace the new techniques:

(a) Vote-seeking as a primary goal: Almost by definition a party that has winning elections and gaining the most votes as its primary goal would be expected to be more positively disposed toward using these new techniques given how they allow parties to more quickly read and adapt to the whims of the electorate.

(b) Right-wing ideology: Having an ideological standpoint consistent with marketing and the use of outside consultancy also appears to be of some relevance. Parties with left-wing or more socialist agendas would be expected to be less positively disposed toward adoption of these 'business-type' practices than right-wing parties who would be seen as more open (Kavanagh 1996; Scammell 1995).

(c) Internal centralization: Parties with a more "top-down" internal structure and hierarchical culture have also been regarded as more likely to professionalize with greater ease, as they are better able to push through extensive structural and cultural changes required by professionalization, particularly the buying in of external expertise. (Mair et al. 1999; Norris 2000).

(d) Resource rich: Finally, while not necessarily explicitly stated in accounts of the rise of professionalized campaigning it is clear that parties would need to have sufficiently large resources to be able to mount this type of capital intensive campaign.

Once primed, a set of 'intervening' variables are then identified as the triggers to the move into, or escalation of the use of professionalized techniques by parties. Building on seminal work by Harmel and Janda (1994) on an integrated theory of party change a set of internal and external shocks were identified as crucial prompts to parties embarking this type of major or radical change. These were identified as loss of electoral support and leadership change:

(e) Electoral shock: For a party with vote-seeking as its primary goal change is considered most likely when its electoral support collapses. Certainly the campaign professionalization literature has noted the emergence of new marketing techniques after heavy electoral defeat (Harrop 1990:278). An additional point to note here is that

such a shock would even more acutely felt by incumbent parties who lost governing status as a result of their loss of votes.

(f) Leadership change: If the electoral shock occurs in tandem with a turnover in the 'dominant coalition' or leadership within the organization, then following Harmel and Janda, the chances of major change in a party becomes even greater.⁴

The theory is presented diagrammatic form in Figure 1, where the role of the party variables are contextualized within the framework of wider systemic factors

Figure 1 about here

Operationalising the Model

In order to test the model against our findings on the campaign professionalization index the independent variables also require operationalization. Building on our previous work these are defined as follows:

- (a) Vote-maximization as a primary goal: measured by status as a 'catch-all' party, defined as whether a party received over 35% of the vote (1 = catch-all, 0 = non-catch-all).
- (b) Right-wing Ideology: measured by a dichotomous variable with 0 = left and 1= right.
- (c) Centralized Internal Structure: measured by the power (number of people employed) of the extra-parliamentary organization (EPO) vis a vis the parliamentary party organization (PPO).
- (d) High level of Resources: measured by overall party income or expenditure in a given year.
- (e) External shock: governing incumbent losing office (=2) otherwise (=1) * % margin of loss at the previous election. If gained votes or remained at same level (= 0).

(f) Internal event: no change in leader since the previous election (=0) new leader since the previous election (=1)

Applying these measures to the German system we can see from Table 2 that a significant amount of variance can be observed even among this small sample of parties. While the SPD and Greens are broadly classified as left-wing, the CDU and FDP are seen as right and centre-right in their orientation. In terms of their status as vote seeking parties, using our proxy measure of 'catch-all' both of the two major parties SPD and CDU fall under this label. Almost without exception they have gained over 35% of the votes in the elections of 1998-2005 (although the SPD won only 34.3% in the election of 2005). In addition, while the SPD had a slightly higher level of party income than the CDU, both are well-resourced and able to provide the financial support necessary for professionalization. This in contrast to the two minor parties that are only equipped with about one fifth of the income of the two major parties. While we were not able to locate precise and up to date figures regarding the proportion of parliamentary to extra-parliamentary staff for each party. The literature that exists on this topic, however, has argued that the SPD and the CDU exhibit comparable levels of internal hierarchy and centralization (Detterbeck 2002). The FDP is also considered quite centralized, while the Greens have traditionally been among the least centralized of the German parliamentary parties (Raschke 2003).

In terms of the intervening variables we can see that the SPD is the only party to have suffered a significant loss of votes, as well as a leadership change since the last election. Although the CDU failed to gain office in 2002, their overall support level actually increased from its low point of 1998. The SPD, however, became an incumbent in serious jeopardy. Both the Greens and FDP saw an improved electoral

performance in 2002 although the Greens, like the SPD, underwent leadership change subsequently.

Party ranking and Theoretical Expectations

Bringing these independent variables to bear, therefore, we would expect both the SPD and CDU to score well on the professionalized campaign stakes as well-resourced, centralized, vote-seeking parties. Between the two, however, one might expect the edge to be given to the SPD in that, despite being a left-wing party, it has experienced both trigger events of an electoral shock and leadership change, while the CDU experienced neither. The finding that the SPD score most highly, therefore, seems to support our theory in this regard and indicate that while ideology may play a role it may be that intervening factors are most crucial in advancing the uptake of professionalized campaigning within a party.

Among the minor parties, the Greens as a small less well-resourced left-wing party, focused on intra-party democracy rather than maximizing its vote share (Raschke 2003) would not be expected to exhibit low levels of professionalized campaigning. Looking at our findings from Table 1 again it is clear that these expectations are borne out with the Greens occupying the lowest ranking in the professionalized campaign stakes. Although the party did experience a degree of leadership turnover since 2002, with Claudia Roth gaining the leadership prior to the 2005 election, this does not appear to have led to any marked uptake in the new techniques. The FDP in ranking third on the campaign professionalization index also corresponds broadly to our expectations. The FDP is a small, centre-right party and more electorally oriented party than the Greens. However, its very close proximity to the scores of the two main parties does present something of a challenge to our theory of well-resourced catch-all parties as the primary exponents of professionalized

campaigning. Had the FDP suffered a serious electoral shock or undergone leadership flux since 2002 then one might have argued that this would help explain their strong performance on the index. However, the party suffered neither, managing to increase their vote share to over eight percent in 2002 under the stable leadership of Guido Westerwelle. One possible explanation may be that the FDP, although classified a 'policy-seeking' party in terms of its primary goal (Poguntke, 1999; Saalfeld, 2003), has played an unusually prominent role in government formation, having only being out of office for 5 of the 16 legislative periods.⁵ This record has been breaking down more often in recent years, however. Thus, while it may be sustaining and even improving its level of popular support, it may be suffering from a version of electoral shock in that it had become an incumbent but seems to have lost the ability to regain office. Whether the FDP results prove to be an exceptional minor party case or indicate the need to have our electoral shock variable incorporate a longer history of incumbency is a question for future studies to address.

To sum up, therefore, the findings produced by the campaign professionalization index (as applied to a German parties) do appear to correspond to a number of theoretical expectations (derived from the wider literature) about the types of parties that would be more or less likely to adopt the techniques. As such our analysis has yielded an interesting basis for future exploration and expansion of the dynamics behind why some parties are more advanced in this regard than others. Wider roll-out of the measures to other countries is required before any generalizations can of course be drawn. In addition more precise measures of some of the independent variables would be needed, as well as incorporation of systemic level factors such as the electoral system, campaign finance regime etc. that have been identified as influencing take-up across countries.

Returning to our original focus - the dependent variable or the campaign professionalization index itself – the central goal of this analysis has been develop a measure of this concept that can be utilized in cross-national research. While we have thus far applied it in only one country we consider this type of detailed validation and public methodological scrutiny is essential if it is to be accepted and applied more broadly. The current analysis has shown the measure to be successful with all component variables yielding meaningful scores allowing for inter-party ranking and comparison. While further work may be needed in regard to developing the subjectively measured indicators for use in cross-national research to ensure compability with local conditions, we consider the index as it presented here to offer a significant step forward in terms of the methodological groundwork necessary to embark on wider and deeper analysis of this growing phenomenon of professionalized campaigning.

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Table 1: Professionalized Campaigning Index Scores by Party

Campaign item	SPD	CDU	Greens	FDP
Telemarketing	3	2	1	2
Direct mail	3	2	1	3
PR/media consult.	3	2	1	1
Databases	3	3	1	2
Opinion polling	3	3	2	3
Opposition res.	3	3	2	2
Intra-net	3	3	0	3
E-newsletter	3	3	2	2
External HQ	2	2	1	1
Continuous camp.	1	1	2	2
Total score	27	24	13	21

Table 2: Priming and Intervening Variables

	CDU†	SPD	FDP	Grüne
Right-wing ideology	1	0	1	0
Catch-all Party	1	1	0	0
Election 2005	35,2 %	34,3 %	8,1 %	9,8 %
Election 2002	38,5 %	38,5 %	8,6 %	7,4 %
Election 1998	35,2 %	40,9 %	6,7 %	6,3 %
Overall party income €				
1998	125.933.043	152.224.835	24.677.934	28.488.083
1999	129.487.251	153.019.910	23.059.639	25.687.032
2000	127.986.529	146.003.980	22.429.971	22.950.318
2001	128.129.453	156.438.668	25.149.847	23.315.790
2002	141.591.077	158.772.598	31.540.943	26.333.732
2003	139.723.283	179.845.155	27.771.885	26.178.672
External Shock (Electoral loss in 2002)	0	2.4††	0	0
Internal Shock (Leadership change since 2002)	0	1§	0	1§§

Notes:

† Election results reported for CDU/CSU

†† Calculated as (1 (Incumbent) * 2.4 (Margin of loss in last election)).

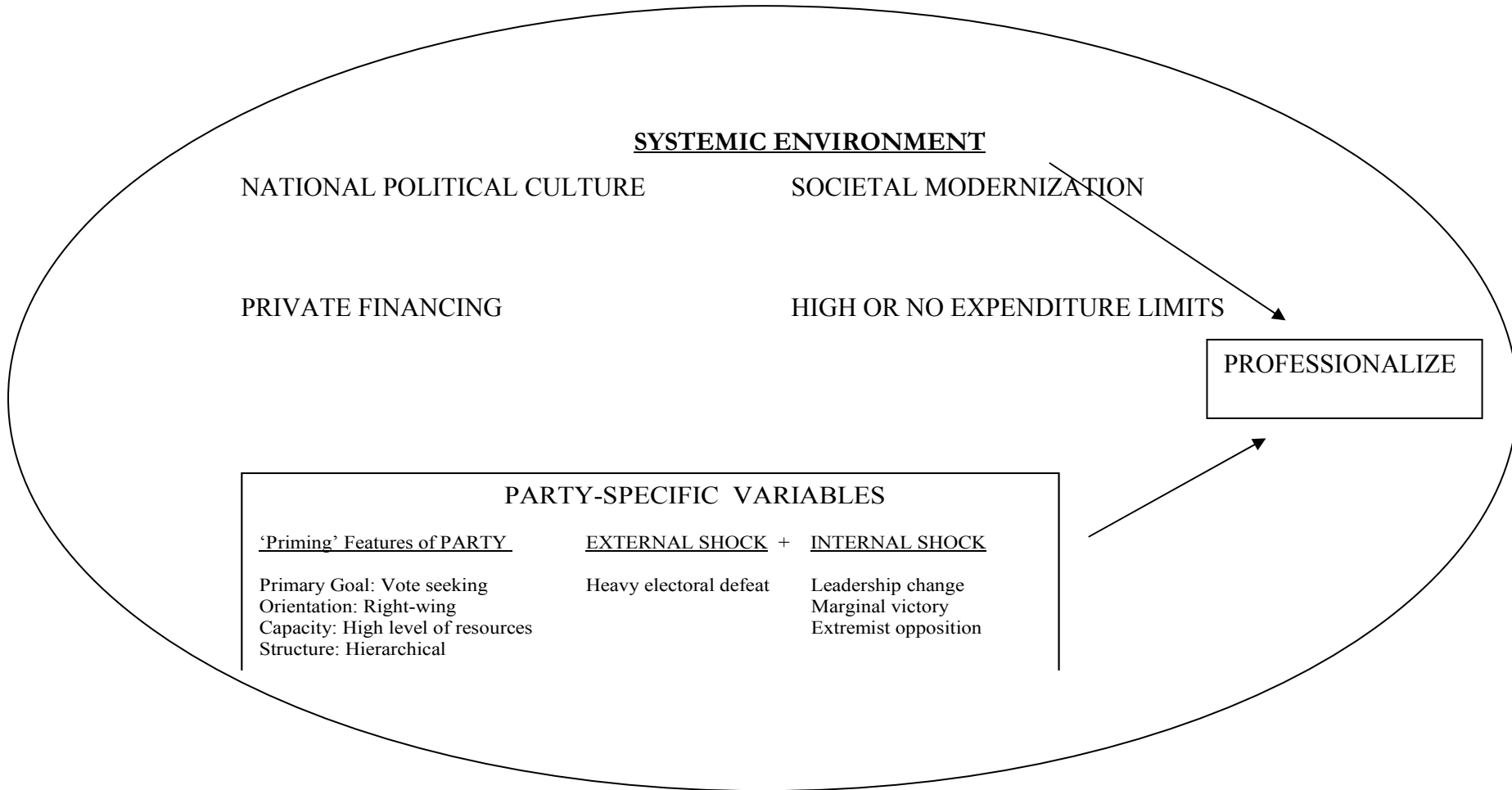
§ Franz Müntefering appointed/elected Party Leader in February 2004

§§ Reinhard Bütikofer/Claudia Roth appointed/elected Party Leader in October 2004

Sources: Election Data: <http://bundeswahlleiter.de/bundestagswahl2005/historie>

Party income: Statements of accounts of the parties (Rechenschaftsberichte der Parteien 1998-2003) Available on www.spd.de; www.cdu.de; www.fdp.de; www.gruene.de.

Figure 1



APPENDIX

CAMPAIGN PROFESSIONALIZATION INDEX. FULL SCORING SCHEME

General points

The professionalized campaign is a multi-dimensional variable comprised of ten items:

- (1) Use of telemarketing for contacting own members and outside target groups
- (2) Use of direct mail to own members and outside target groups
- (3) Presence of an internal Internet communication system
- (4) E-mail sign up or subscription list for regular news updates
- (5) Outside headquarters
- (6) Continuous campaigning
- (7) Use of outside public relations/media consultants
- (8) Use of computerized databases
- (9) Use of opinion polling
- (10) Conducting opposition research

Each item is measured on a scale of 0 - 3. Item scores are then summed to produce an overall total score of campaign professionalization for each party. The maximum possible score is 30.

Individual item measurement

Two basic approaches are taken with regard to applying the measurement scales.

- (i) The first and more straightforward approach clearly defines the specific activities or extent of an activity that constitutes a score of 0, 1, 2 or 3. Items a) to f) were coded in this way: *telemarketing, direct mail, use of an intra-net, email sign-up, and outside HQ, and continuous campaigning.*
- (ii) The second approach relies more on the subjective judgment of coders as to the extent to which they considered a given activity was taking place. This was necessary either because of the inherent difficulty of specifying or quantifying the extent to which the activity is taking place within a party, or the difficulty of obtaining the specific numeric data needed from the parties to make a more objective judgment.
0 = no evidence of the activity taking place at all.
1 = activity was seen as partially engaged in;
2 = extensively engaged in;
3 = the activity that was fully developed in the party.

To assist them the coders were given a working definition in each case of what a score of '3' or fully developed would constitute for a given activity and they were then instructed to work downwards on the scale to judge whether the activity was extensively or partially engaged in. Items seven through g) through to j) were coded in this way: *use of outside PR/media consultants, computerized databases, opinion polling, and conducting opposition research.*

Items 1 - 6

(1) Use of telemarketing and (2) direct mail

These were scored on the basis of the proportion of the population that were contacted via this means

3 = over 50% of constituencies or 1% or more of the voting age population;

2 = between one quarter and one half of constituencies or 0.5% - 1% of the voting age population;

1 = less than one quarter or 0.5% of the voting age population

0 = non-engagement in this activity = 0.

(3) Presence of an internal intranet communication system.

This was scored based on how widely available within the party

3 = if users included members, local and national staff;

2 = local and national staff only

1 = national staff only

0 = not available

(4) E-mail subscription newsletter.

This was scored based on the frequency and range of options offered

3 = generic weekly newsletters and more targeted/individualized newsletters;

2 = generic weekly newsletters only;

1 = generic newsletters less frequent than weekly

0 = no service offered

(5) Outside Headquarters.

This was scored on the extent to which the campaign team were physically located outside of the main party HQ:

3 = a fully outsourced model where personnel were in a separate location;

2 = a dedicated unit or team working within the party HQ with regular meetings and a

clearly defined personnel boundary

1 = a definable campaign team but less clear boundaries to the rest of the party HQ;

0 = no obvious separate campaign team = 0.

(6) Continuous campaign

This was identified by assessing the extent to which the professionalized campaigning items constituting the index were in place six months prior to the election.

3 = the party was extensively engaged in between seven to nine of the professionalized campaign activities six months prior to the election.

2 = the party was extensively engaged in four to six of the activities.

1 = the party was extensively engaged in one to three of the activities.

0 = none of the activities could be observed six months on then a score of 0 was assigned.

Items 7) to 10)

(7) Use of outside PR/media consultants.

This activity was considered to be fully developed where parties employed and made frequent/daily use of a range of media consultant(s) during the election. We were

particularly interested here in the extent to which consultants were in a decision-making role on par with, or even above party officials. Where the PR agencies appeared to have, or at least share the balance of power with the party, this was given a score of three.

3 = Frequent / daily use of outside PR / media consultants, who have or at least share power within the party.

2 = Frequent / daily use of outside PR / media consultants, who have less power than the politicians of the party.

1 = Occasional use of PR / media consultants, who have less power than the politicians of the party.

0 = No use of outside PR / media consultants.

(8) Use of computerized databases.

This activity was considered fully developed if the parties were operating and made frequent/daily use at both national and local level of a national database to identify and target swing voters or those who might be most vulnerable to switching party.

3 = The party operates and makes very frequent / daily use at national and local levels of a national database to identify and target swing voters and uses voter information gained via other campaign techniques to refresh and expand the database during the campaign.

2 = The party operates and makes frequent use of a national database at national or local level.

1 = The party operates and makes occasional use of a national database at national or local level.

0 = The party does not make use of a national / local database or does not have one.

(9) Use of opinion polling.

This activity was considered to be fully developed if the party had a dedicated and professional survey research unit within it that conducted regular and frequent opinion polls both before and during the election campaign. Those results would then be used to help direct and shape the party's overall campaign strategy.

3 = The party has a dedicated and professional survey research unit within it, that conducts very frequent / daily opinion polls during the campaign. The results are used to help direct and shape the party's overall campaign strategy.

2 = The party frequently commissions polls from external polling institutes.

1 = The party occasionally commissions polls from external polling institutes.

0 = The party does not use opinion polling.

(10) Conducting opposition research.

This activity was considered to be fully developed if the party had a dedicated unit within party that conducted regular and frequent research into the opposition parties both before and during the election campaign. As with opinion polling the results of this research would then be integrated into the rest of the campaign, directly and/or indirectly guiding the strategy.

3 = The party has a dedicated and professional survey research unit within it, that conducts regular and frequent opposition research before and during the election campaign.

2 = The party frequently commissions opposition research from outside.

1 = The party occasionally commissions opposition research from outside.

0 = The party does not use opposition research.

Notes

¹ The rise of the so-called ‘shopping model’ has moved this literature toward a more explicitly comparative approach with countries seen as selectively importing components of American campaigns that best suit their contextual environment. In addition the work of Norris in *Virtuous Circle* (2001) is important in initiating cross-national research on the topic. Her checklist of ‘campaign indicators’ associated with the postmodern style (paid advertising, leader debates) completed for OECD countries (Table 7.2 pp.153) in particular offers a very useful overview of the systemic features associated with professionalized campaigning. Her data is almost a decade old at this point however.

² Discrepancies were minimal and where inter-coder consultation took place with a common score being agreed upon.

³ Campaign manuals consulted: Kampagne SPD; Programm von Bündnis 90/Die Grünen; FDP-Wahlprogramm; Regierungsprogramm CDU/CSU 2005-2009.

Campaign manuals available on:

<http://kampagne.spd.de/servlet/PB/menu/1053380/index.html>

<http://www.regierungsprogramm.cdu.de/>

http://www.bpb.de/methodik/C7EQBJ,0,0,Sachinfos_zur_Bundestagswahl.html

http://www.gruenes-wahlkampfportal.de/unser_programm.7.0.html

⁴ We had originally hypothesized that a more marginal victory for an incoming leader might mean a faster move toward professionalization since the personalizing and centralizing traits of the new campaign style would afford them the opportunity secure their position in the party more quickly. However, it is clear that this could also work in the other way in that a new leader with a decisive victory would be in a better

position to implement the type of radical changes to party operation that professionalization entails. Thus, the hypothesized effect here is unclear. Given the difficulties associated with establishing the margin of victory in a party leadership contest, however, we consider that such data would be highly problematic to obtain for each organization in a given system.

⁵ 1957-61; 1966-69; 1998-2002; 2002-2005; 2005