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The Godesberg Programme and its Aftermath

A Socio-histoire of an Ideological Transformation in European Social Democracies

Abstract: The Godesberg programme (1959) is considered a major shift in European social democratic ideology. This article explores its genesis and offers a history of both the written text and its subsequent uses. It does so by shedding light on the organizational constraints and the personal strategies of the players involved in the production of the text in the Social Democratic Party of Germany. The article considers the partisan milieu and its transformations after 1945 and in the aftermaths of 1968 as an important factor accounting for the making of the political myth of Bad Godesberg. To do so, it explores the historicity of the interpretations of the programme from the 1950s to the present day, and highlights the moments at which the meaning of Godesberg as a major shift in socialist history has become consolidated in Europe, focusing on the French Socialist Party.

Keywords: Social Democracy, Godesberg Programme, socio-histoire, scientification of politics, history of ideas

In a recent TV show, "Baron noir," the main character launches a rant about the "f***g Bad Godesberg" advocated by the Socialist Party candidate. That the 1950s programme should be mentioned before a primetime audience bears witness to the widespread dissemination of the phrase in French political culture. "*Faire son Bad Godesberg*" [literally, "doing one's Bad Godesberg"] has become an idiomatic French phrase. It refers to a fundamental alteration in the core doctrinal values of a political party (especially social-democratic and socialist ones). In France, the expression has also long been used by advocates of change: the so-called "liberal" wing of the Socialist Party has long been calling for the party to find its own third way – mean-

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ing leaving behind its state-centred views and adopting a more market-friendly agenda. In France and Europe, the 1959 programme of the Social Democratic Party of Germany has become a political myth, a widespread shortcut to indicate a departure with the socialist tradition, in a way leading from a *Klassenpartei* (class party) to a *Volkspartei* (mass, or catch-all party).

What "Bad Godesberg" exactly means, and meant, is all but self-evident, and has varied considerably in the course of over 50 years of use. After the French Socialist Party adopted a new platform in 2010, the party leaders stressed that their programme was not a "bad Godesberg", but a "good Godesberg", an allusion to the frequent "neo-liberal" interpretation of the 1959 programme designed to undercut possible accusations that they were drifting to the right.

The reception of Bad Godesberg in Germany itself has not been systematically analysed, but it has certainly not been a linear process there either. One example sheds light on this controversial nature of the programme in its country of origin. After a career as a journalist (from 1927 onwards) and editor of the German News Agency (*Deutsche Pressedienst*), Fritz Sänger (1901–1984) was appointed in May 1959 as the secretary (and actual leader) of the commission tasked with proposing a draft for the Godesberg programme to be discussed and then adopted by the Party Convention in November of the same year. From 1961 to 1969, he sat in the German *Bundestag*. In the 1970s, he was one of the living "authors" of the 1959 programme. By 1974, Fritz Sänger had retired from German political life. On the much-publicized fifteenth birthday of the programme, a writer for *Vorwärts*, the SPD's magazine, asked him for a contribution. Fritz Sänger complied and wrote this letter:

> "Please find my article enclosed. I precisely stuck with the line that shows the continuity [*Kontinuierlichkeit*] of the SPD's programmes and I could not deal with "the change of the Party in Bad Godesberg" [*Wandlung der Partei in Bad Godesberg*] because such a change did not occur and should not have either, following the decisions of the steering committee and of the programmatic commission [of the SPD]. The word "change" [*Wandlung*] was used later on by comrades who were eager to read things on our opponents' lips that had not even been conceived [*dem Gegner etwas von dem Mund abzulesen, was das Gehirn nicht zuvor gedacht hat*]. Our opponents wanted a change but what we wanted was continuation [*Fortsetzung*] in updated forms."[1]

By claiming "such a change did not occur", Sänger, one of the main protagonists in the rewriting process of the draft programme, was taking a stance in a conflict of interpretation between those who argued that the Godesberg programme saw the SPD align with conservative worldviews and those who depicted it as an extension of the socialist doctrine.[2] He argued that at the time, Godesberg was not the change we perceive it to have represented. The same could be said if we look at the

headlines after the 1959 convention of Godesberg. On 13 November 1959, the front page of the leading paper *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* read "the SPD remains rooted in the tradition of the labour movement" [*Die SPD bleibt der Tradition der Arbeiterbewegung treu*]. The article summed up the inaugural address given at the convention by the party's president, Erich Ollenhauer. In his discourse, Ollenhauer did not directly speak of change – let alone a radical change – and when it came to Marxism, the article reported:

> "Ollenhauer labelled the *Communist Manifesto* the most important historical document of the socialist working-class movement but drew the audience's attention to the fact that Marx and Engels themselves acknowledged that this document was of limited value and that they considered it necessary to revise part of the *Manifesto*. He stated that the social democrats, now democratic socialists, wrote the new programme by using the Marxist method of sociological and political (but not dogmatic) knowledge. According to him, the SPD remains solidly rooted in the tradition of the labour movement."[3]

Here the question is not about whether an important change occurred, but rather about the temporality of that change. It may be that in 1959 the programme did not become the milestone in the history of socialism it now represents for us, contradicting our usual understanding of what happened. This disconcerting realization is worth exploring: a socio-historical analysis of the making of the 1959 programme and of its changing interpretations could shed new light on this major shift in the social democratic self-representation.

Scholarly literature has not tackled the question of meaning – it is taken for granted, even if Godesberg has circulated in many contexts. It is worth asking, however: did Bad Godesberg have the same meaning in 1959, in 1968, and in the 1990s? In the historiography (and to an even greater extent in political science scholarship), "Bad Godesberg" has been consistently depicted as a break with socialist tradition and Marxism. It is often linked with the narrative of the normalization/*Anpassung* of the social-democratic discourse[4] and of the modernization/"Westernization" or normalization[5] of Germany,[6] and reduced to that overarching process.

With some notable exceptions,[7] scholars have seldom opened the "black box" of the programmatic commissions – relying instead on the statements of party leaders – or have carefully examined the programme's production process, ignoring for instance the tensions between the programmatic commissions and the steering committee of the SPD. They have worked under the assumption that the text has a single and clear meaning, often linked with the idea that the SPD modernized itself into a "catch-all party" with maximized electoral potential. This may to some degree reflect the "intention" of the party as a whole, but it is far less certain that the individual actors of the writing process (scientists, journalists, activists in

various sub-organizations of the party, members of the steering committee, etc.) all pursued the same organizational goal and had the same understanding of how to achieve it. Because of this tendency to paint a big picture without paying attention to the details of the process, the historical interpretation of the meanings of Godesberg has taken very different directions: the "Westernization" approach emphasizing the role of war migrations has for instance little to do with the neo-liberal turn Godesberg epitomizes for Michel Foucault, who stressed its close ties with German ordoliberalism and the importance of actors without an international background such as Karl Schiller.[8]

Paying attention to the details of a process and depicting interactions and struggles is what characterizes *socio-historical* narratives. Developed in the 1990s, *socio-histoire* is a research movement in the French social and historical sciences.[9] It combines historical methods and sociological concepts (with a special reliance on Bourdieu's sociology) in order to analyse processes and to deconstruct ready-made and naturalized interpretations and categories. Socio-historians readily cross disciplinary borders, which is also what this paper does by mobilizing sociological concepts such as "legitimacy"[10] and "capital" – to distinguish between forms of social domination (relying on political, symbolic or intellectual capital).[11]

Socio-histoire emphasizes collective processes – i.e., sets of interactions – rather than individual decisions (in contrast with the dominant French political history of the twentieth century). By focusing on processes instead of "heroes" (the "authors" or "fathers" of the programme, the "reformists" or "traditionalists"), we can see Bad Godesberg not as an isolated event, but as part of a party routine. This routine consists of practices like the collective drafting of texts. It involves specific social types of actors (party theorists, party experts) gathered in the usual arenas (commissions, conventions). In this analysis, the programme is seen as an institution: it is the crystallization of the history of political parties in Germany since the nineteenth century. As such, programmes stabilize interactions, make them recognizable, predictable and repetitive: the way in which a programme must be written and adopted – and the people in charge of doing that – are partly determined by the history of this textual and political genre. In other words, the adoption of the programme in 1959 was not a standalone event: it was structured by similar past events.

Here, the focus on processes instead of individuals allows us to move beyond the widespread idea that Bad Godesberg was the "reformist" product of (future) "reformist" party leaders – seen as the heroes of traditional narratives on Bad Godesberg. It transpired in the early stages of my research that the reformist leaders did not in fact stand behind the programme. Neither Schmidt nor Brandt participated much in its preparation, and for a long time both were against adopting a new fundamental programme.[12] Furthermore, to explain a reform in terms of the reformism

to come (in a more or less near future) is both logically and chronologically unsound. Analysing the writing process in detail helps us avoid this kind of prolepsis by gaining awareness of the uncertainty of collective processes.

When one looks at the history of the individuals, their actions and strategies at a grassroots level ("*au ras du sol*"),[13] the overall coherence of macro-processes fades as the various uncertain tactics of individuals who do not know how the story ends or "who the killer is" come to light.[14] This point has already been made by Masaaki Yasuno, who noted the underestimated role of the traditionalist party leader Erich Ollenhauer in the production of the Godesberg programme.[15] Raising the question of how things came to Godesberg, and how the programme has been interpreted the way it is now, the socio-histoire developed does not consider the programme as the symbol of broader transformations of politics and society, but instead offers a sociological and historical analysis of the production of a political myth.

For the same reasons, foreign uses of the programme are a source of insights into the production of political narratives on what socialism or social democracy mean. The reference to Bad Godesberg was a rhetorical tool in the debates preceding the British Labour Party's 1995 revision of "clause IV". This clause, which had been enshrined in the party's constitution since 1918, insisted on common ownership of the means of production. In France, the reference to Bad Godesberg, imported by the "Second Left" in the 1970s, has historically been of importance in the Socialist Party's programmatic debates. As Godesberg forms part of the socialist heritage in Europe, it can usefully be analysed in a broader perspective, beyond the national angle, to highlight the plurality of the contextual meanings of the programme. German Social Democracy has indeed been the centre of socialist ideological production since the nineteenth century. Its role therefore cannot be underestimated. In order to highlight the contextual uses of the programme, its importation to France will also be discussed briefly here.[16] This discussion builds on research by historians like Anthony Burlaud, Mathieu Fulla and Mathieu Tracol, who examine the ideological transformations of French socialism with a focus on the long-term transformation of its political personnel.[17]

This paper seeks to present another perspective on the programme. It suggests that we should regard the text and its interpretations not as set in stone but as the emerging effect of individual uses and conflicts: the sense and meaning of the programme is never self-evident. Using the socio-historical approach, it retraces the process of the genesis of Godesberg, allowing for a better understanding of its appropriations in a variety of contexts (including national ones).

The analysis presented here draws on research conducted on political programmes in the 1920s (on the 1921 Görlitz Programme and the 1925 Heidelberg

Programme) found in the Bernstein archives (International Institute of Social History, IISH, Amsterdam, series N). To study Bad Godesberg specifically, I turned to the vast archival collections held by various institutions (including the Archive of Social Democracy in Bonn (AdsD) and the IISH). I also consulted publications, including pamphlets and scientific texts, authored by members of the programme's commissions. In 1955, under the leadership of Erich Ollenhauer (1901–1963, SPD president from 1952 until his death), the SPD established a programmatic commission entrusted with producing new party guidelines. In 1958, the party submitted a preliminary version of a text which was modified the following year before being put to a vote by SPD representatives at a convention in Bad Godesberg, in the suburbs of Bonn.

My research was facilitated by the party's bureaucratic tradition and by the involvement of actors used to interpreting and producing other texts, letters and memoirs in the preparation of the programme. While I did have access to archives, many of the participants in the production of Bad Godesberg have passed away, and the two individuals I spoke with had somewhat hazy memories of that time. Instead of subjecting them to an interrogation on the details of internal arrangements in the programmatic commission, I chose to engage them in open-ended conversation, allowed them to tell their life stories and shed light on their relationship with the party. Additionally, I thoroughly explored the private collections of actors involved in producing the programme in order to learn more about the official output and bureaucratic activity that surrounded its production and diffusion. Since my research strives to describe a collective process, it also relies on quantitative data (on activists and members of the Steering Committee of the SPD and of the Program Commissions of the Party before and after 1933/1945). Regarding the programme's reception, I have conducted a quantitative analysis of the press and of primary sources (party and university courses, publications).

This paper contextualizes the Bad Godesberg programme within the network of historically structured social relationships that gave rise to its meanings. The first part documents the production process of the 1959 platform, showing it to be embedded in the new set of relations between science and politics that arose in the Federal Republic of Germany after World War II. The second part underlines the impact of these relations on the programme's writing process. The third part analyses the interpretations of the programme in context, with a focus on the timing of its reception, and examines uses of the programme in France.

I. Writing the programme, unfolding the process: science and politics in the SPD

Who was the author of the Godesberg Programme? Many people have been described as its "fathers". Since the 1970s, those who helped draft the programme as well as biographers, social scientists and journalists have named a variety of authors; indeed, both scholarly and profane discourses on politics tend to search for individual authorship.

On 23 December 1966, Fritz Sänger wrote to Willi Eichler, lamenting that a newspaper had named him 'the father of the programme' in an article in honour of Sänger's 65th birthday. According to Sänger, the journalist should have written that not he but Willi Eichler had laid the programme's intellectual foundations.[18] Eichler has often been considered the 'father of the Godesberg Programme',[19] but discussions on its authorship have grown more complex over time. Harmut Soell's work on Fritz Erler[20] called for the recognition of Erler's role in its production. Based on Soell's comments, the press then began to question the "influence" of Herbert Wehner, who until the 1970s was considered a major contributor to the text.[21] In 2010, Maasaki Yasuno highlighted the role played by Erich Ollenhauer.[22] Historians have also attributed the section dealing with state order (*staatliche Ordnung*) to a number of different individuals.[23] This is also the case[24] for other economic sections of the programme, variously attributed to Karl Schiller and Heinrich Deist. The importance of Benedikt Kautsky has been mentioned often, but disputed just as frequently (Fritz Sänger, for instance, claimed that Kautsky's contribution to the production process had been non-existent).[25]

These diverging attributions all stem from what François Simiand called the myth of the "individual idol" – one of the most heavily criticized pillars of the *histoire événementielle* that the Annales school aimed at overthrowing.[26] Here, individual 'authorship' is applied to a genuinely collective process. Questions surrounding the 'role' or the (scientifically questionable) 'influence'[27] of different writers amount to paternity tests. These paternity tests are usually challenged because they do not take into account the collective nature of the text. Each part of it was written, corrected, and discussed by many individuals. This problem originates from an individualistic vision of the production of political ideas – leading readings to neglect basic dimensions such as temporality (one text produced over many years), the many party bodies involved (programmatic commissions, conventions, expert committees, steering committees, party federations, heads of trade unions etc.), the many ways individuals took stances on the text, the party's internal division of labour, and so on. Instead, the history of ideas usually overestimates the coherence of the written document. It attributes the text to an author whose "thought" is supposed to explain

the coherent "ideas" contained therein. In fact, programmes are arguably never this coherent. To quote Karl Mannheim, 'the individualistic conception of knowledge thus gives collective thought a [false] image'[28] because it fails to consider that political thought happens in collaborative processes. A founder of the French *Annales* School for history, Lucien Febvre (in his work on the thought of Joseph Proudhon) calls for the isolation of political theory from history and for the liberation of history from impossible inquiry into paternity.[29] His research agenda focused on the history of mentalities, 'consistently' challenging 'the notions of influence, kinship and paternity'.[30] Research on programmes should not project categories specific to art criticism and relating to the individual creativity of their writers.

By focusing on the division of collective programmatic labour in the party and not on the individual roles in the programme's production, I shed light on the contemporary stakes of programmatic work and on the crucial issue of the scientification (*Verwissenschaftlichung*) of politics in post-war Social Democracy. Two programmatic commissions prepared the draft ratified at the November 1959 Convention. The first commission was established in 1955. After its secretary, Willi Eichler, had submitted a draft first discussed at the 1958 Convention in Stuttgart, a second commission was created in May 1959, whose secretary and main participant was the aforementioned Fritz Sänger.

The composition of these two commissions, especially the first, reflect a significant historical shift compared to the programmatic commissions constituted in the 1920s for the Görlitz (1921) and Heidelberg (1925) basic programmes:[31] whereas party intellectuals prevailed in programmatic commissions in the 1920s, the 1955 commission was dominated by academics. The two programmatic commissions of the 1920s, Görlitz and Heidelberg, were essentially composed of party leaders without an academic background. 22% of the 41 members I listed from the Bernstein archive and the minutes of the 1921 and 1925 Conventions had a university degree (12.2% held a PhD), and 58% had pursued vocational training. In 1955, by contrast, 68% had a university degree and 56% held a PhD; 35% were professors or employees in research centres.

This was a very high number in comparison with other party bodies. 28% of the 72 members of the party's steering committee between 1945 and 1960 had a university degree. Under 40% of the Bundestag members did (1949–1961) – in 1949, the majority of the SPD members in the Bundestag had not gone further than secondary education.[32] Symmetrically, there were very few eminent politicians in the programmatic commissions of the 1950s. Where 94% of the members of the steering committee were members either of a regional or the national parliament, this was the case for 41% of the members of the 1955 commission –18% of whose members were simultaneously members of the steering committee. In the 1920s, most of the mem-

bers of the programme's commissions had a mandate or a position in a (regional or national) government (79% in 1921, 90% in 1925). Then the programme was handled by party leaders; the first commission of 1955 saw scholars take the lead.

This sociological shift was the local consequence of the "scientification of social issues",[33] leading to a growing role of the universities and experts with academic titles in the political process. While historians have observed signs of the scientification of social issues since the nineteenth century, and social science continued to play an important role during the Nazi regime,[34] the early stages of the Federal Republic witnessed the 'depoliticization' of politics and the increased participation of social scientists[35] (and economists in particular[36]) in the production of policies in the multiple arenas constituted around the federal government. As Gabriele Metzler and Alexander Nützenadel have shown, after 1945 politics in the Federal Republic tended to rely on scientific advisory boards, in particular following the participation of ordoliberal economists in state power.

Science has played a part in the drafting of social democratic programmes since the nineteenth century. Party scientists and 'experts' are the product of specific sociohistorical configurations,[37] and the dominant form of intellectual capital in a party changes over time: before WWII, intellectual capital was drawn from the party institutions; after the war, it came from university grades and positions. With regard to the SPD, the rise of experts and the scientification of politics took very different forms in the 1920s and in the 1950s. In 1891, the Erfurt Programme, the party's first programme since it had been rehabilitated, was relatively unspecialized. Karl Kautsky produced the theoretical sections; the action-oriented section has been attributed to Eduard Bernstein.[38] The 1921 Görlitz programme was drafted by a number of experts who were assigned to work on specific thematic sections. During preparatory work for the programme, SPD theoretician Eduard Bernstein stipulated that the socialization of the law and the economy resulting from the revolution required a more specialized 'transformation of the programme's organization'.[39] According to Bernstein's notes, ten specialized committees were created (on economic policy, financial issues, social policy, constitutional issues, etc.).[40] Almost all ten committees produced a chapter on their subject matter.

In the 1920s, the commissions were composed of experts, largely trained as paid activists for the party and its satellite organizations. Their expertise did not only draw on academic training. It also came from their intellectual activities within the party, especially as journalists or as writers in the party's theoretical or specialized publications. The party press played the role of "universities" [*Hochschulen*] for the children of workers, to put it in August Bebel's terms.[41] Waltraud Sperlich has underlined the indispensable role of the party press in ensuring living conditions and intellectual training for the party's activists.[42] At the centre of the party's pro-

grammatic production, Kautsky described party journalism as a way "to rise to the function of party intellectual".[43] In the words of Kantorowicz, parties and media outlets were "Siamese twins".[44] In effect, the SPD controlled 144 newspapers in 1921 and 170 in 1925.[45] In 1921, a questionnaire sent to the party's 144 press outlets indicated that 300 of their writers worked for the SPD at the time.[46]

The programmatic commissions, composed as they were in the 1920s of 75% of individuals who had worked in the party's press for an average of 12 years, reflect this importance. In his memoirs, Wilhelm Keil (1870–1968), a member of the 1921 commission and long-serving member of the Reichstag (1910–1933), described his journalistic activity in the party press as the trigger for his political engagement.[47] Heinrich Cunow (1862–1936), who helped draft the general analysis portion of the 1921 programme, first joined the party in the 1890s, and became an employee of its theoretical body in 1898. Like three quarters of the 41 members of the programmatic commissions of the 1920s, he received his salary from the party's press agency. Within the theoretical journal's staff, Cunow specialized in ethnological studies, especially the Marxist questions of the origins of the family and the state.[48] A trained commercial employee at the beginning of his professional life, Cunow learned Quechua and Spanish and published a number of texts on Incan civilization[49] for the purposes of this endeavour. After 1918, he became a member of the constituent assembly and Prussia's *Landtag* and then branched off into an academic career, which he pursued until the Nazis came to power.

After the Second World War, the "ecology" of the SPD changed.[50] The social democrats did not succeed in restoring their former press system and the Party was obliged to cope with an independent press. This shift was lamented by some party members. The steering committee attempted to create new dependent newspapers (23 in 1948) in Western Germany but they did not survive. The *Sozialdemokrat*, created in 1946 and named after Bernstein's newspaper, filed bankruptcy in 1951 and so did the famous *Rheinische Zeitung,* named after Marx's newspaper. Furthermore, the professionalization of journalism, and the emphasis on independence[51] and neutrality, made it impossible to consider the journalists in the 20 remaining titles a pool of party theorists. Some newspapers were "close" to the SPD, and social-democratically oriented, but they were not, with the important exception of the *Neue Vorwärts* and (to some extent) *Neue Gesellschaft*, party newspapers.[52] Journalists were no longer necessarily members of the SPD and the chief editors alone were in contact with the SPD holding (*Konzentration GmbH*).[53]

The university, which made a little more room for social democrats, could provide party experts and thus the pool of scientific legitimacy considered necessary to the programmatic work. Playing a central part in the nomination of the members of the commission, Willi Eichler defended the presence of academics in the

1955 commission as a necessity, owing to the high level of competence and specialization required for the work to be done in this commission. He addressed a letter to Heinrich Albertz, the "refugees' pastor". A member of the commission himself, Albertz admitted that the strong presence of academics made a "weird impression" on him.[54] In response, Eichler simply argued that they "had to recruit people who had thoroughly researched specific questions, which as you know, today is increasingly linked with exercising an academic profession".[55]

The SPD, it must be said, enlisted an impressive amount of renowned social democrat professors in the commission given the scarcity of its resources at that time. After 1945, German universities were far from hotbeds of social democracy – social democrat professors were few and far between.[56] An internal document, produced by the SPD coordinator on cultural issues, listed 35 ordinary and 25 extraordinary professors who were either party members or sympathizers in 1951.[57] Fifteen of the 35 ordinary professors on this list participated in the 1955 commission. The composition of the programmatic commission is not the unique indication that academic expertise became ever more important. Parallel to the constitution of numerous scientific "councils" backing the Federal government, the SPD established its own expert groups. By the end of the 1940s, the SPD had 22 specialized committees (agriculture, economy, finance, law, reunification, etc.), up to two-thirds of which were composed of academics (professors, researchers or PhDs).[58]

Even when members were not scientists, they were aware of the scientification of politics and social issues. During our interview, the member of the 1955 commission Lorenz Knorr (b. 1921) described himself as a 'working-class intellectual'. In 1945, he left Czechoslovakia to settle in Bavaria, where he became involved in organizing the socialist youth movement. As the federal secretary of the Socialist Youth (*Sozialistische Jugend*), Knorr set up a scientific council for the organization, composed of academics, to provide a 'solid foundation' (meaning scientific) for pedagogical work and go beyond the mere 'representation of interests':

> *"XX: I also saw that you were the president of the Youth's scientific council …*
> LK: […] So I proposed creating a scientific council with a number of scientists, professors who worked with us, and I called up about ten people, ten professors and PhDs. They chose me as their manager, pretty much as the president of the council and they tried to provide more solid foundations for political pedagogical work.
> *XX: And could you describe these foundations? What was new? Why was it so important that scientists contribute to the discussion?*
> LK: In terms of politics, we wanted to know more about the disciplines and science in general, so that our policy would not be merely the representation of interests, so that everything would be on solid ground. We wanted to esta-

> blish our pedagogy so that every one of us was dealing with a specific scientist. I dealt with Kurt Löwenstein,[59] a social-democratic pedagogue from the Weimar Republic …"[60]

Scientification during that period related to the growing involvement of academia. University positions and titles mattered more than mandates and membership of the party's executive bodies when it came to participating in the commission.

II. Not "transformation", but "modernization"[61]

In the discussions of the 1955 commission, science was an argument, and scientific accuracy was paramount to the opinions voiced in the programmatic commission's debates. On 17 October 1957, Gerhard Weisser, a professor of economics and an active participant in the commission's work, was glad to report to the party president that the commission had made steps forward toward the "scientific foundation" of the programme. He noted the "scientific spirit" of its work.[62] On 7 June 1956, Dr. Eleonore (Lore) Henkel (1914–2017) warned against "giv[ing] in to the general disillusion with science" and called instead for the creation of a "scientifically indisputable" programme.[63] Documents show that members of the commission adopted a scientific posture: they used professorial methods (references to academic works and research, the quest for scientific accuracy). An example is University of Marburg professor of political science Wolfgang Abendroth (1906–1985) is an example. He took time to correct the text proposed by Eichler in 1958 on the basis of the commission's texts: he quoted Adorno and Horkheimer, noted in the margin that passages were "wrong", "absurd" (*Blödsinn*), "inaccurate" or on the contrary "good", and made reference to "numerous empirical pieces of work".[64] Obviously, the collaborators on the programme did not only conceive it as a purely scientific text. They wanted to express "values" in a part of the text – but in the pursuit of this goal, scholarly concerns mattered as the commission wanted to avoid criticism that the affirmation of values betrayed a lack of scientificity.[65]

The main strain between academics and the steering committee pertained to the complexity of the long draft that the commission proposed in 1958. The main criticism levelled at the commission's draft pertained to its alleged lack of clarity. The steering committee and participants in the party's 1958 Stuttgart convention shared this assessment, which was also voiced in *Vorwärts* and in letters to Willi Eichler. The programme was deemed as being "too high-brow" (*zu hoch*). [66] The district of Bad Oyenhausen reminded authors that the programme had to communicate its messages to more than "a few thousand graduates".[67] An opinion column for the par-

ty's newspaper, *Vorwärts*, pointed out: "We are not all academics" (13 March 1959). The author, a party activist, complained that this long and complex programme was useless for the purpose of engaging with workers. For their part, academics made technical accuracy a requirement of all arguments. Going against the grain, Heinrich Deist (1902–1964), a lawyer who specialized in economic issues on behalf of the SPD, defended the necessity of technical explanations during a meeting of the party's economic committee:

> "When people say that the programme is not understandable for the man in the street, this is not a valid argument against the programme. It is designed primarily for the party's permanent staff members and to provide these individuals with the facts, arguments and political reasons necessary for intellectual discussion. A programme is not a piece of propaganda."[68]

Heinrich Deist succinctly highlights the difference between how programmes are normally viewed, as elements in an electoral strategy, and their actual significance to him. In his view, the programme was designed to enlighten the party members and experts, who constituted the "implicit readers", [69] on the endeavours of the programmatic commission. The commission intended to provide a scientific basis for their political work. The programme was not a piece of propaganda designed for laypeople. We can likewise understand why the party's propaganda bureau was not associated with the programme's production in the early stages of its production. With this representation of what a programme had to be, Deist was close to Karl Kaustky's idea when the latter claimed that "no one will be able to understand our programme unless he is, to a certain extent, familiar with our ideas in one form or another: through reading texts, listening to speeches or participating in private discussions".[70]

The members of the 1955 commission wanted the programme to be a scientific milestone in socialist history, hence the attention to scholarship and the involvement of academics. Relationships between party leaders and scientists who singlehandedly wrote the 1958 draft were complex however. This explains some of the tensions that arose between the steering committee and the "professors' commission" and the following developments of the programme's preparation. The members of the steering committee barely participated in the work of the commission – Professor Weisser complained about this in a letter[71] – or were quick to voice their lack of interest in its academic work.[72] When it came to judging the programme, prominent members of the steering committee denounced its academic tone.[73] In May 1959, an editorial team, the so-called small commission, whose most active members (especially Fritz Sänger) were journalists, was formed in order to "simplify" the Stuttgart draft.

This simplification changed the text in many respects. The 1958 draft had been 121,000 characters long; it was trimmed down to 40,000. Furthermore the "small commission" replaced the *Zeitanalyse* (analysis of society) with a short literary preamble. Core ideas of the draft made it into the programme. The emphasis on collective economy (cooperatives) and on multilevel democratization (in the fields of economy, education, justice, the state etc.) were key points for specialists in political science and members of national and international scientific associations for cooperative economy (*Gemeinwirtschaft*). For some of them, their exile years were a formative experience that reshaped their concepts of emancipatory policies (German Educational Reconstruction Committee, Wilton Park).[74] Fighting the old and "new dependencies" that had arisen with the Industrial Revolutions and limiting the illegitimate power of corporations remained a core concern of the economic programme from Stuttgart to Godesberg. As "economic power is a political power" and required oversight, they did not recognize the "market economy" (or the "social market economy") as such. Free market economy (even social market economy) was discarded in the discussions as not being an "economic order [Ordnung]".[75] The programme is more complex, carving a place in a more general economic order for market economy which the Godesberg programme "approved", provided that the competition between different forms of companies – cooperative, state-owned and private companies – was guaranteed so that none would hoard political power. It was in this specific and genuinely political economy that the slogan attributed to Karl Schiller and coined for SPD's 1952 economic platform, "Market economy as much as possible, planning as much as necessary", took its meaning. Not only as a recognition of the market economy, but at the same time as a limitation of this market economy for the purposes of a social and economic order. The programme relied on the idea that power had to be divided to ensure the free development of individual personalities.[76]

The second commission in charge of the Godesberg programme was not assigned the task of liquidating socialist tradition. Its secretary Fritz Sänger took notes of his meetings with Erich Ollenhauer and provided numerous files documenting his work in the final phase of the programme's production. As a journalist, his main role was to make sure that the document was accessible and readable. This second commission was often referred to as "*Redaktionskommission*". Its mission was to tone down the first draft's overly intellectual language:

> "Bonn, 8 May 1959: EO [Ollenhauer] asked to have a 'quick talk' with me. […] A modest and realistic project must be written. I must speak with the men of praxis; the theorists have already 'done their job'. The programme must be useful for practical work even if it must remain a 'fundamental pro-

gramme'. EO insists on the fact […] that I must not get led astray by the specialists. […] The language shouldn't be too intellectual or flowery; it should be modern."[77]

In several letters written after the Godesberg moment itself, Sänger mentioned his attempt to shape a shorter and more easily understandable text. In 1972, he again wrote that Ollenhauer tried to avoid intellectualism, arguing that "political-sociological theory is not the mission of politics."[78] In his notes, Sänger never criticized the work of the commission for its substance, but rather for its complicated language and inaccessible form.

This simplification process revealed the impact of the division of labour between politics and science, which is subject to constant and uncertain bargaining, typical of party routines.[79] The members of the steering committee possessed the "political capital" and were the only ones who had the power to endorse the text as an official programme draft – which was a political act, performed by the steering committee presenting the party's delegates with a programme proposal. The last sequence of the programme's preparation left the experts little room to intervene. In the summer of 1959, when the second draft began to circulate among party leaders and officials, experts tried to bargain, but their action had little impact on the draft. However, social policy experts who declared themselves 'alarmed' by the project mobilized over the course of the summer.[80] They put forward motions to modify the text that the steering committee had submitted to the convention. In addition to technical adjustments, they had the chapters on "Social order" and "Economic order" merged so that the questions of trade unions and worker participation would not be considered purely economic matters. Nonetheless, for the most part, the members of the steering committee did not have specialized knowledge of the law, economics or social policy. By delegating the programme's writing to experts, they gave up a number of their prerogatives in order to ensure the programme's scientific legitimacy, which the party leaders asserted at the 1959 convention in Bad Godesberg.

At the time, however, few would have said that the programme embodied a "rupture with Marxism". To put it like Andrew Abbott, the path to the present seems evident when one has reached the end of the road, but the turns that led to it were not self-evident.[81] One member of the programmatic commission told me: "I was not aware that it was an important moment. We did not know. I do not want to speak for the others, though".[82] On 2 September 1959, Sänger he wrote this about a meeting with Ollenhauer (who seemed to be the only person to whom he reported):

"Private discussion with EO [Erich Ollenhauer] at his request. He is not satisfied with the discussion in the steering committee. Too many specific ques-

> tions. Too much ideology. He asks for an additional effort of simplicity and clarity. The continuity with the previous programmes must be clearly recognizable. No 'transformation' (*Wandlung*), but a 'modernization' (*Modernisierung*)."[83]

"No transformation", "no relapse into bourgeois ideology", as Sänger put it elsewhere:[84] this indicates that the programme did not initially signify the break from tradition and from Marxism as it does now. We can gain a better understanding of how the programme became a landmark text of European socialism by retracing the history of its reception – the construction of a transnational political myth.

III. The aftermath of Godesberg: a socio-histoire of the reception of a programme

Suzanne Miller said that in 1959 "Godesberg was delivered without being interpreted".[85] Although Miller (1915–2008) was not formally a member of the first commission, she participated in its work as a stenograph. She was also the wife of Willi Eichler. Many actors collaborated in writing the 27 pages of text that became the programme. It was the result of patchworking; for example, participants in the process cut out passages and pasted them over other bits of text with adhesive tape. Eventually the 1959 convention modified the text to a considerable extent.[86]

It cannot be assumed that the programme had a single clear meaning. Contextualizing the meanings of the text is arguably just as important as contextualizing its production. A political programme gains significance primarily through its social uses. The document's consistency and its meanings were the product of the *ex post facto* efforts of actors who took it upon themselves to "do something with words", as it were.[87]

This multiplicity of uses was evident in the trajectory followed by the 1959 programme. When the party first presented the programme to a broader audience, some newspapers voiced the opinion that it was in line with Ludwig Erhard's ordoliberal views.[88] Other (Christian-democratic) papers denounced its old-fashioned Marxism[89] or claimed that it was "Marx without the beard".[90] These divergent appropriations show how open interpretation processes are. The social-democratic press underlined the continuity with the socialist tradition: "Progress has come from tradition".[91] So did the members of the steering committee. During the Godesberg convention, an exhibition in the *Stadthalle* of Godesberg extolled the party's long history. Among other historical artefacts it displayed an edition of the *Manifesto*, manuscripts from Marx, nineteenth-century newspapers and photographs of former party leaders.

Fritz Sänger wrote the official commentary of the programme, which was then approved by president Ollenhauer and vice president Wehner. Just like the social-democratic press, the commentary highlighted the effort to modernize SPD doctrine while maintaining a large degree of continuity.[92] Sänger embedded the programme in the history of social democratic programmes. More specifically, he claimed that Bad Godesberg represented a continuation of the Heidelberg programme from 1925.[93] Furthermore, he explained that the new programme expressed the same philosophy as the *Manifesto* of 1848, modernized to speak to a 1959 audience. The SPD's 100th anniversary festivities also suggested the same continuity with the socialist tradition.[94] Each of these meanings must be understood in its specific strategic context – for the SPD leadership, the claim of continuity could well have been aimed at gaining the support of (rather older) party delegates[95] or members, for instance, and for conservative newspapers, accusing the SPD of remaining a Marxist party was a stigmatizing statement. Most importantly, all of the above was possible, in sharp contrast to our traditional understanding of Godesberg.

The rupture that the SPD and the party leaders clearly emphasized and defended at the time was the break with the East and Communism. The SPD used the expression "democratic socialism" to distinguish its version of socialism from Eastern-style "totalitarian socialism". This competition is notable: drawing a symbolic line between democratic socialism and Communism was crucial at a time when many of the SPD's satellite organizations had ties to East German socialism. Immediately after its adoption, the 1959 programme gave the steering committee a clear, quasi-juridical rationale to exclude numerous individuals and organizations suspected of having this kind of relationship with East German organizations. For example, the Socialist German Student League (SDS) came under suspicion from the steering committee because of allegations that its leaders had colluded with East Germany. Even if the tensions between the steering committee and the SDS predated it, formal adoption of the basic programme was used as an argument to pronounce the exclusion of the SDS in 1961. The case of the intellectual Wolfgang Abendroth, who gave his symbolic and financial support to the SDS, was similar. Even though in the early 1960s Abendroth stressed that he had remained a steadfast supporter of the programme long after its adoption,[96] the steering committee made a case against him in a 200-page document collecting every position of Abendroth that criticized the programme.[97]

At the same time, Communism was an ideological competitor of Western European socialism. It was not without reason that Ollenhauer or Sänger could not "abandon" Marx, because it would have meant giving up him and his legacy to the non-democratic Eastern socialists. Contextual elements appear to support the idea that this was a competitive period, including the 1963 commemorations of Marx's

death and the protracted feud between the SPD and the SED (*Sozialistische Einheitspartei*) over the Dietz name – the SED claimed the heritage of Social Democracy in the GDR and creating a Dietz Verlag in Berlin – and the back catalogue of this prominent publisher of socialist literature. In 1963, in a book in Dietz's honour, Erich Ollenhauer underlined the importance of this intellectual tradition by arguing that the SED "was wrong to claim the name of Dietz, socialism and Marx".[98] In 1959, socialists may have cited Christianism and humanism as sources of socialism, but they were not ready to give up on the Marxist tradition. The party leaders of the 1950s had been socialized in the Weimar Republic, and for them, Marxism and the Social Democratic tradition were dimensions of their political identity.

The main protagonists in the Godesberg story did not act like they were abandoning Marx and socialist traditions in 1959. A radical departure would have had too high a symbolic price to pay, even if that was what they were actually after rather than "modernization in continuity". That Godesberg ultimately took on a different meaning raises the question of the temporality of its reception. Attention to the temporality of reception is a necessary precondition for contextualizing the 'reading positions' of interpretative communities.[99] 'Bad Godesberg' was not an 'authoritative text' from the very beginning,[100] as SPD historian Peter Lösche observes: "For years [in the 1980s], the SPD was preoccupied with a debate on this [programmatic] matter, until finally the Berlin Program of 1989 emerged. The famous Bad Godesberg Program of 1959, at that time a symbol of the SPD's modernization, hardly interested anybody by the mid-1960s, while in the 1970s only a few left-wing activists bothered to refer to it at all".[101]

If we take a quantitative approach to the question of when 'Bad Godesberg' became an authoritative text, a similar pattern emerges. The graph below (figure 1) represents an approximation of the text's uses in a specific social realm. It is based on references to the programme in two weekly German publications from 1959 to 2012. The graph shows that these references peaked in the second half of the 1960s and in particular in the 1970s; they were less frequent between 1959 and 1966. In 1961, the programme was evoked three times (in connection with the exclusion of a student's association from the party and the dissidence of a member of the Bundestag). In the second half of the 1960s and to an even greater extent in the 1970s, the programme became a central political reference. The increase in references to the programme coincided with two sets of events: on the one hand, in 1966, the SPD joined a governmental coalition and in 1969 Willy Brandt became federal chancellor; on the other, internal tensions in the party grew as a result of the 1968 student movement and from intense political mobilization in universities during the 1970s. The increase in references to the programme reflects the usefulness of the text as a tool for the SPD to justify its change in strategy once it became part of the governing coa-

lition. 'Bad Godesberg' helped to organize meaning, serving as a sort of *a posteriori* prophecy. Journalists latched onto the programme to explain the strategy of forming a coalition with the Christian Democratic Union of Germany (CDU) adopted by the SPD in 1966. In other words, it helped to understand how a socialist party could accept participation in a bourgeois government.

Most importantly, polemical uses within the party itself shaped the programme's meaning. References to the programme reached their peak during the 1970s, when rival "interpretative communities" got hold of it to produce divergent readings – competing for authority over the text from both the left and the right. On the left, the question of whether their goals and strategies conformed to the programme was paramount because the programme could be used to justify the exclusion of members from the SPD. Activists on the left perceived this as a clear threat.[102] The Young Socialists ('Jusos') called for the establishment of 'the new economic and social order promised by the Bad Godesberg Programme'.[103] They criticized Willy Brandt's governmental policies as too capitalist-friendly. Thomas van der Vring (born in 1937, a teacher at Hanover's *Technische Universität*, and a member of the Young Socialist presidency in 1969) complained that "nothing could be expected from this government when it came to establishing a socialist order the likes of which was outlined in Bad Godesberg".[104] While other *Jusos* leaders were not all this upfront, the overall goal, the "new and better order" of the Godesberg programme was even mentioned in the militant's handbooks.[105] The same holds true for theoretical writings that sought to combine the programme and Marxism.[106] On the right, large-scale activist renewal[107] went hand in hand with the crumbling of bastions of the centre and right-wing social-democrat leaders. — This led to the birth of a reformist current within the SPD. Originally called the "Godesberg circle", it later became the "Seeheim circle" and mobilized philosophers and social science experts, both within the party and academia. The group promoted an interpretation of the 1959 programme that argued it was incompatible with Marxism.[108] A 1975 brochure explicitly denounced the left-wing appropriation of the programme as illegitimate and insincere.[109] As a result, the programme was subsequently identified with the party's right wing. These scholarly and political uses of the programme shed some light on how the careers of political theories function, academic analyses helping to establish and promote theories that initially tended to be a grab bag.

The history of the reception of Bad Godesberg is far from a solely German history. "Bad Godesberg" was one of the most influential socialist references of the twentieth century. It is a familiar term in many other countries, and plays an important role in handbooks on the history of socialism. In France, between 1987 and 2012, the newspaper of record *Le Monde* referred to "Bad Godesberg" nearly 100 times. Half of the articles were about the French socialist party and called for its reform. The trans-

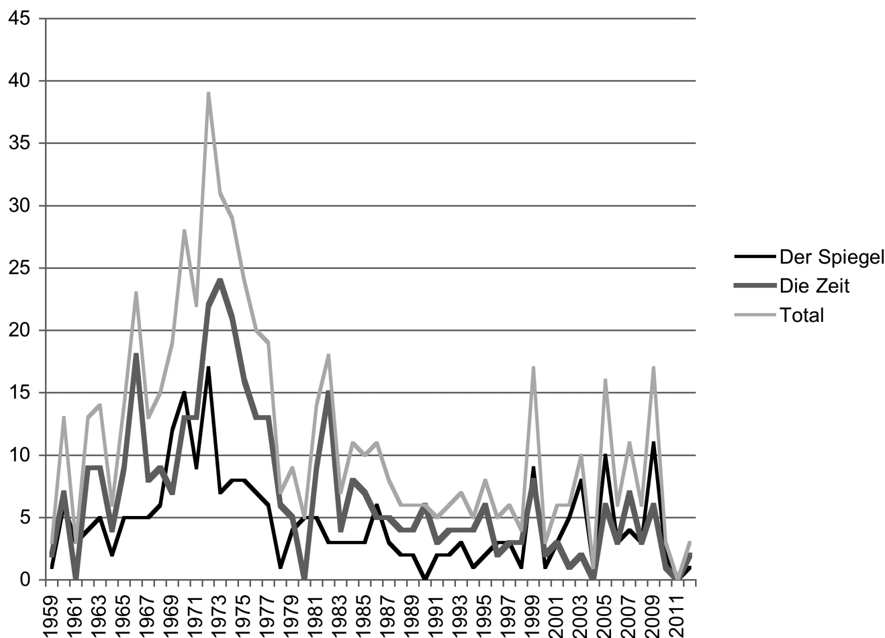

Figure 1: References to the Bad Godesberg programme in two German political weeklies (1959–2012, n =615 articles).

national history of the Bad Godesberg reference has so far remained largely unexplored. There is much to unpack, in particular in the way that the text managed to cross numerous borders, as actors twisted its meaning to introduce it into new reference spaces – indeed, "a text circulates without its context".[110] In the course of this circulation process, the programme has become a myth in the Barthesian sense:[111] a de-historicized discourse. This myth has often been used in support of efforts to develop a more economically liberal version of socialism.

For a long time, Bad Godesberg and the word "social democrat" had been associated with the "Deuxième Gauche"(second left)[112] under the leadership of Michel Rocard. This faction competed with a majority led by François Mitterrand. Its members criticized the party leadership for being economically "collectivist" and referred to German and Scandinavian social democracies as models. They contributed to making the reference to social democracy a model for the French Socialist Party. A number of studies conducted by Deuxième Gauche intellectuals shaped the perception of the programme as a social-democratic agenda, essentially characterized by a mixed economy and co-operation between social partners.[113] *Qu'est-ce que la social-démocratie?* embodied this line and the work concluded with excerpts from the 1959 programme.[114] In this special issue of *Faire*, a monthly journal for social-

ism and self-governance, intellectuals (such as Pierre Rosanvallon) and leaders of the Deuxième Gauche proposed a synthesis of social democracy and self-governance – a core idea advocated by the Parti socialiste unifié (the organization in which Michel Rocard began his political career before joining the Socialist Party in 1974). The Deuxième Gauche introduced Bad Godesberg alongside ambitious theorizations of social democracy[115] as a means to legitimate a socialist minority through a prestigious foreign reference.

As the reference to Bad Godesberg and social democracy rose to prominence by the end of the 1970s, the Godesberg Programme was named but often stripped of all context, and the programme reduced to a shortcut to signify the doctrinal renewal of the Parti socialiste. "Bad Godesberg" has come to serve as a call for an *aggiornamento* (even for political journalists), and as an instrument to heighten the stakes of conventions and new programmes: for instance, the Toulouse convention was branded a "little Bad Godesberg" by Jacques Delors.[116] References to "Bad Godesberg" were made at times of tense conventions or electoral defeats (such as 2007) to call for party reform. The fundamental socialist programme adopted in 1991 (the "programme of the Arche") was seen as a French version of Bad Godesberg, albeit one with no real posterity as hardly anybody referred to it.[117]

Being imported and appropriated by a political faction, the Deuxième Gauche, Bad Godesberg and more broadly the label of social democracy remained controversial within the Socialist Party until the 2000s. The programme embodied not only a struggle between self-declared modernists and a traditionalist *arrière-garde*, but between market-oriented socialism and equality-oriented socialism, that is: between right and left in the party. Up to the early 2000s, the label was commonly used to describe more economically liberal party leaders, such as former minister and prospective presidential candidate Dominique Strauss-Kahn, who was branded the proponent of a "social-democrat revolution".[118] The departure of some in the left wing of the party who joined Jean-Luc Mélenchon after 2008 and the presidency of François Hollande certainly contributed to broadening the use of the label of "social democracy" within the party. In November 2013, François Hollande visited the SPD convention in Leipzig for the 55th anniversary of the SPD programme. In 2014, he called himself a social-democrat, which journalists analysed as the advent of the French Bad Godesberg: "55 years after the SPD, François Hollande has done his Bad Godesberg" and completed the "social-democrat turn" of the party.[119] In France, "Bad Godesberg" has thus long been a form of identity-building: of drawing ideologically consistent lines inside and outside the party. Such foreign appropriations of the programme – the international meaning of Bad Godesberg – have arguably diluted the term in Germany, limiting the scope of its possible meanings there.

Conclusion

A political myth (connected to the SPD's success story of the 1960s), Bad Godesberg has been used as a reference to normalize "ruptures with tradition". This analysis of the Godesberg 1959 event and its aftermath highlights long-term structural changes in European social democracy, drawing on the in-depth study of the composition of the party elite. I have analysed the programme as a window into the social relationships that play out in the process of programmatic work.

This paper also emphasizes the scientification of politics, and the growing influence of experts and academics in the SPD after World War II. Experts and academics replaced the working-class intellectuals of the former SPD. It paved the way for a fairly strict division of labour within the party that ultimately led to the externalization of its intellectual output. Tellingly, in the 1980s, the president of a programmatic commission complained that some leaders thought "that the party is composed of two groups of activists: those who produce texts and those who file them away with a smile, smoothly going back to their political activities without changing a thing, despite what the writers might believe".[120]

Notes

1 Bonn, AdsD, Fritz Sänger, box 59: letter to Hermann Schueler (Vorwärts journalist), 29 September 1974.
2 Bonn, AdsD, Fritz Sänger, box 59: letter to the editors of Stern, 21 September 1974.
3 "Ollenhauer nannte das Kommunistische Manifest das hervorragendste historische Dokument der sozialistischen Arbeiterbewegung, machte jedoch Zuhörer darauf aufmerksam, dass Marx und Engels selbst später ihre Aussage für nur begrenzt gültig gehalten und eine Revision bestimmter Teile für notwendig erklärt hätten. In der Anwendung der Marxschen Methode der soziologischen und politischen – aber nicht dogmatischen – Erkenntnis seien die Sozialdemokraten jetzt als demokratischen Sozialisten zu ihrem neuen Grundsatzprogramm gekommen. Die SPD bleibe fest in der Tradition der Arbeiterbewegung."
4 Diane Parness, The SPD and the Challenge of Mass Politics, Boulder, Col. 1991; Otto Kirchheimer, Deutschland: der Verfall der Opposition, in: Otto Kirchheimer: Politische Herrschaft. Fünf Beiträge zur Lehre vom Staat, Frankfurt am Main 1967, 58–89.
5 Beatrix Bouvier, Zwischen Godesberg und Grosser Koalition: der Weg der SPD in die Regierungsverantwortung, Bonn 1991, 332.
6 Julia Angster, Konsenskapitalismus und Sozialdemokratie. Die Westernisierung von SPD und DGB, Oldenburg 2003; Heinrich Winkler, Der lange Weg nach Westen, vol. 2, Munich 2000, Denis Goeldel, Le tournant occidental de l'Allemagne après 1945. Contribution à l'histoire politique et culturelle de la RFA, Strasbourg 2005.
7 Kurt Klotzbach, Der Weg zur Staatspartei. Programmatik, praktische Politik und Organisation der deutschen Sozialdemokratie, Bonn 1996; Masaaki Yasuno, Die Entwicklung des Godesberger Programms und die Rolle Erich Ollenhauers, Bonn 2010.
8 Michel Foucault, Naissance de la biopolitique. Cours au Collège de France 1978–1979, Paris 2004, 90.
9 See: Nicolas Offenstadt, Socio-histoire, in: Christian Delacroix et al., eds., Historiographies I. Concepts et débats, Paris 2010. On socio-histoire, in German, one can refer to: Sandrine Kott/Emmanuel

Droit, eds., Die ostdeutsche Gesellschaft. Eine transnationale Perspektive, Berlin 2006 – especially here: Jay Rowell, Socio-histoire der Herrschaft. Einführung, 26–24; Jens Gieseke, Zur Socio-Histoire von Herrschaft und Alltag im Staatssozialismus, 104–109.

10 Michel Offerlé, Illégitimité et légitimation du personnel politique ouvrier en France avant 1914, in: Annales ESC 39/4 (1984), 688–714.

11 See: Pierre Bourdieu, Propos sur le champ politique, Lyon 2000; Bourdieu, Les trois états du capital culturel, in: Actes de la recherche en science sociale 30 (1979), 3–6 or Bourdieu, Les règles de l'art. Genèse et structure du champ littéraire, Paris 1992.

12 In the minutes of the steering committee of 26–27 May 1959, Helmut Schmidt declared that there was no use for a fundamental programme: a declaration of principles would be enough. On 5–6 July 1959, Willy Brandt declared that it was the wrong time to discuss a new programme and doubted its usefulness to the party. On 21 July 1959, the president of the party, Ollenhauer, decided against postponing the convention.

13 Jacques Revel, L'histoire au ras du sol, in: Giovanni Levi, Le pouvoir au village. Histoire d'un exorciste dans le Piémont du XVIIe siècle, Paris 1989, I-XXXIII; Jacques Revel, ed., Jeux d'échelles. La microanalyse à l'expérience, Paris 1996.

14 Giovanni Levi, Un problema di scala, in: Sergio Bologna, ed., Dieci interventi sulla storia sociale, Turin 1981, 75–82, 76.

15 Yasuno, Entwicklung.

16 On the influence of German social democracy in the development of French socialism in the early twentieth century, see for instance: Emmanuel Jousse, *Réviser le marxisme?*, Paris 2007.

17 Mathieu Fulla, Les socialistes français et l'économie (1944–1981), Paris 2016; Anthony Burlaud, Les Socialistes et la rigueur, Université de Paris I – Sorbonne 2011; Mathieu Tracol, Changer le travail pour changer la vie. Genèse des lois Auroux (1981–1982), Paris 2009.

18 Bonn, AdsD, Fritz Sänger, 59, letter to Willi Eichler, 23 December 1966.

19 Thomas Meyer, Willi Eichler, Vater des Godesberger Programms. Eine Erinnerung zum 20. Todestag, in: Neue Gesellschaft. Frankfurter Hefte 38/11 (1991), 1048–1049.

20 Hartmut Soell, Fritz Erler. Eine politische Biographie, Bonn 1976.

21 Stehen und fallen mit der roten Fahne?, in: Der Spiegel, 23 August 1976.

22 Yasuno, Entwicklung.

23 Martin Wieczorek, Martin Drahts Rolle bei den Beratungen über das Godesberger Parteiprogramm der SPD, in: Michael Henkel/Oliver Lembcke, eds., Moderne Staatswissenschaft. Beiträge zu Leben und Werk Martin Drahts, Berlin 2010, 177–195; Dieter Gosewinkel/Adolf Arndt, Die Wiederbegründung des Rechtsstaats aus dem Geist der Sozialdemokratie (1945–1961), Bonn 1991.

24 Franz Barsig, Freiheit und Sozialismus. Der lange "Marsch" der SPD nach Godesberg, in: Roderich Klett/Wolfgang Pohl, eds., Stationen einer Republik, Stuttgart 1979, 93–110, 98.

25 Bonn, AdsD, Fritz Sänger, 59, letter from Wedigo de Vivanco (a doctoral student in Italian history) to Fritz Sänger, 6 January 1976 (marginal notes by Sänger).

26 François Simiand, Historical Method and Social Science, in: Review (Fernand Braudel Center) 9/2 (Fall 1985), 163–213 (Original: 1903); cf. too: Peter Burke, History and Social Theory, New York 2005, 10; James Millhorn, François Simiand. French Sociologist and Economic Historian, in: Kelly Boyd, ed., Encyclopedia of Historians and Historical Writing, vol. 2, London/Chicago 1999, 1095–1096.

27 'To think in terms of influence blunts thought by impoverishing the means of differentiation' (Michael Baxandall, The Patterns of Intention, New Haven 1985, 59).

28 Karl Mannheim, Idéologie et utopie, Paris, Éditions de la MSH, 2006 (1st ed.: 1929), 24: quoted in: Karim Fertikh, Le genre programmatique, in: Revue française de science politique 64/5 (2014), 36–60, 49: translated by Sarah-Lou Raillard.

29 Lucien Febvre, Une question d'influence. Proudhon et le syndicalisme contemporain, in: Revue de synthèse 19/2 (1909), 179–193, 191.

30 Philippe Poirrier, Les enjeux de l'histoire culturelle. L'histoire en débat, Paris 2004, 148.

31 The statistics below rely on lists of members found in the minutes of the commission and subcommittees of the 1955 commission, from the Bernstein archive (Görlitz) and from the minutes of the 1921 and 1925 conventions.

32 Heinrich Best/Christopher Hausmann/Karl Schmitt, Challenges, Failures, and Final Success: The Winding Path of German Parliamentary Leadership Groups towards a Structurally Integrated Elite 1848–1999, in: Heinrich Best/Maurizio Cotta, eds., Parliamentary Representatives in Europe 1848–2000: Legislative Recruitment and Careers in Eleven European Countries, Oxford 2000, 138–195; Bernhard Wessel, Germany, in: Pippa Norris, ed., Passages to Power. Legislative Recruitment in Advanced Democracies, Cambridge 1997, 76–97.

33 Lutz Raphael, Die Verwissenschaftlichung des Sozialen als methodische und konzeptionelle Herausforderung für eine Sozialgeschichte des 20. Jahrhunderts, in: Geschichte und Gesellschaft 22/2 (1996), 165–193.

34 Carsten Klingelmann, Soziologie und Politik. Sozialwissenschaftliches Expertenwissen im Dritten Reich und in der frühen westdeutschen Nachkriegszeit, Wiesbaden 2009.

35 Gabriele Metzler, Konzeptionen politischen Handelns von Adenauer bis Brandt. Politische Planung in der pluralistischen Gesellschaft, Paderborn 2005.

36 Alexander Nützenadel, Die Stunde der Ökonomen. Wissenschaft, Politik und Expertenkultur in der Bundesrepublik (1949–1974), Göttingen 2005.

37 The sociohistorical diversity of political expertise in terms of programmatic production has been studied in France. Cf. Christian Le Bart, Les partis politiques: quelle capacité programmatique?, in: Les Cahiers français 364 (September–October 2011), 38–42; Philippe Zittoun, Partis politiques et politiques du logement. Échanges de ressources entre dons et dettes politiques, in: Revue française de science politique 51/5 (October 2001), 683–706; Marie Ymonet, Les héritiers du Capital. L'invention du marxisme en France au lendemain de la Commune, in: Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales 55 (1984), 3–14.

38 Ingrid Gilcher Holtey, Das Mandat des Intellektuellen. Karl Kautsky und die Sozialdemokratie, Berlin 1986.

39 Cf. Adolf Braun, Das Programm der Sozialdemokratie. Vorschläge für eine Erneuerung, Berlin 1920, in particular the introduction and chapter by Eduard Bernstein, Zur Frage eines neues Programms der sozialdemokratischen Partei Deutschlands, 24–33, 25.

40 Amsterdam, International Institute of Social History (IISG), Bernstein collection, N2.

41 August Bebel quoted by Friedrich Stampfer, Erfahrungen und Erkenntnisse: Aufzeichnung aus meinem Leben, Cologne 1957, 27.

42 Waltraud Sperlich, Journalist mit Mandat: Sozialdemokratische Reichstagsabgeordnete und ihre Arbeit in der Parteipresse 1867 bis 1918, Düsseldorf 1983.

43 Karl Kautsky, Erinnerungen und Erörtungen, The Hague 1960, 305.

44 Ludwig Kantorowicz, Die sozialdemokratische Presse Deutschlands: eine soziologische Untersuchung, Tübingen 1922, 3.

45 Rudolf Stöber, Deutsche Pressegeschichte, vol. 3, Konstanz 2005, 247.

46 SPD, Protokoll Parteitag Görlitz, 1921, 37–39.

47 Wilhelm Keil, Erlebnisse eines Sozialdemokraten, vol. 1, Stuttgart 1947, 55.

48 Heinrich Cunow, Die Marxsche Geschichts-, Gesellschafts- und Staatstheorie, vol. I and II, Berlin 1920 and 1921. These volumes feature numerous references to primitive peoples, used to criticize or nuance the ethnological conceptions of Marx and Engels in the name of scientific truth (vol. II, 291, 313–314, for example).

49 For instance: Heinrich Cunow, Die Verfassung des Inkareichs, in: Die Neue Zeit 14/29 (1896), 75–81. His book on the question was published posthumously: Geschichte und Kultur des Inkareiches: ein Beitrag zur Kulturgeschichte Altamerikas, Amsterdam 1937.

50 Bourdieusian political science uses the term "ecology" to convey the idea that a party cannot be reduced to its formal institutional boundaries. It is actually porous and its members have many ties and interactions with society, which form its "ecology". The concept bears similarities with that of "milieu" in German political history, see: Frédéric Sawicki, Les réseaux du Parti socialiste. Sociologie d'un milieu partisan, Paris 1997.

51 See the correspondence between the Party leader Ollenhauer and Fritz Sänger at the time: "Journalists must be informed, not dictated to": Bonn, AdsD, Steering Committee – secretariat Ollenhauer, 387: letter from Sänger to Ollenhauer (21 September 1957).

52 See: Detlev Brunner, 50 Jahre Konzentration GmbH. Die Geschichte eines sozialdemokratischen Unternehmens 1946–1996, Berlin 1996.
53 See: SPD Konzern, in: Die Zeit, 2 October 1964.
54 Bonn, AdsD, steering committee, Willi Eichler 0 1699: letter from Heinrich Albertz (5 March 1955).
55 Bonn, AdsD, steering committee, Willi Eichler 0 1699: letter to Heinrich Albertz (15 March 1955).
56 Rolf Wiggerhaus, L'Ecole de Francfort. Histoire, développement, signification, Paris 1993, 421.
57 Amsterdam, International Institute of Social History, Wolfgang Abendroth, box 59 (SPD office for cultural matters).
58 SPD Jahrbuch, 1958/1959, 249.
59 Kurt Löwenstein (1885–1939) received his PhD in philosophy in 1910. He turned to socialism during the First World War and joined the SPD. He became a member of the Reichstag in 1920, and was largely seen as a prominent pedagogue in the Weimar Republic's educational movements.
60 Interview with Lorenz Knorr, 31 July 2012, translated by Sarah Lou Raillard (cf. Karim Fertikh, genre programmatique), 52.
61 Bonn, AdsD, Fritz Sänger, box 53.
62 Bonn AdsD, steering committee – secretariat Eichler, 0 1699: letter from Weisser to Eichler (24 February 1958).
63 Bonn AdsD, Heinrich Deist, box 39: minutes of the meeting of the sub-commission for fundamental questions (7 June 1956).
64 Amsterdam, IISG, Wolfgang Abendroth, box 730, copy of a letter to Willi Eichler (3 March 1958).
65 Bonn, AdsD, Walter Menzel, box R 42: minutes of the sub-commission for fundamental questions: presentation by Gisbert Rittig (25 May 1956).
66 Bonn, AdsD, steering committee, secretariat Eichler, box 168: recommendation for the programme (constituency of Marktbreit, June 1959).
67 Bonn, AdsD, steering committee, secretariat Eichler, box 0 1706: recommendation for the programme (constituency of Bad Oeynhausen, June 1959): "Nicht für einige tausend Intellektuelle allein".
68 Bonn, AdsD, Heinrich Deist, box 44: minutes of the January meeting of the SPD's economic policy committee (26 February 1959), 3: "Wenn gesagt werde, der Entwurf sei für den einfachen Mensch nicht lesbar, so sei das kein Argument gegen das Programm. Dieses sei in erster Linie für die Funktionäre und interessierten Mitglieder der Partei abgesehen und sollte diesen Tatsachen, Argumente und politische Ableitungen für die geistige Auseinandersetzung liefern. Ein Programm sei keine Propagandaschrift".
69 Wolfgang Iser, Der implizite Leser, Stuttgart 1976.
70 Karl Kautsky, Die proletarische Revolution und ihr Programm, cited by Albrecht Langner, Introduction, in: Karl Kautsky, Texte zu den Programmen der deutschen Sozialdemokratie. 1891–1925, Cologne 1968, 19, translated by Sarah Lou Raillard (cf. Fertikh, genre programmatique, 53).
71 Soell, Fritz Erler, 323.
72 Bonn, AdsD, steering committee, secretariat Eichler, box 0 1699 B, letter from Fritz Erler to Ollenhauer (3 May 1956).
73 Fritz Erler denunced "Eichler's council of professors, who are responsible for an almost unreadable text": cf. Harmut Soell, Fritz Erler, 323.
74 Cf. Julia Angster, Konsenskapitalismus.
75 Bonn, AdsD, Heinrich Deist, box 44, minutes of the meeting of the programmatic commission (10 May 1957).
76 Cf. Karim Fertikh, Le "nouvel ordre" du programme de Bad Godesberg. Sociologie d'une construction sociale de l'économie, in : *Lien social et Politiques* 72 (automne 2014), 39–56.
77 Bonn, AdsD, Fritz Sänger, box 53: "EO hatte zu einem 'kurzem Gespräch' gebeten. […] Es müsse ein Entwurf 'ganz nüchtern und realistisch' geschrieben werden. Ich soll mit den Praktikern reden, nicht mit Theoretikern, die 'haben ihre Arbeit getan'. Das Programm muss für die praktische Arbeit brauchbar sein, wenn es auch 'Grundsatzprogramm' heißen solle. […] Er mahnt, ich soll mich 'nicht von Spezialisten ablenken' lassen […] Die 'ewige philosophische Diskussion' müsse jetzt beendet sein. Keine Intellektualistischen und farbenreichen Formulierungen, moderne Sprache."

78 Bonn, AdsD, Fritz Sänger, box 59, letter to Walter Fabian (31 January 1972): Erich Ollenhauer "wollte vermeiden, dass […] soziologisch-politologische Theorie die politische Aufgabe überdecke".
79 Michel Offerlé, Les partis politiques, Paris 1987, 71.
80 Bonn, AdsD, Ludwig Preller, 44–93, letter from 16 July 1959 to Walter Auerbach (copy).
81 Andrew Abbott, Temporality and Process in Social Life, in: Time Matters. On Theory and Method, Chicago 2001, 209–239.
82 Interview with Claus Arndt, 13 July 2013.
83 Bonn, AdsD, Fritz Sänger, box 53.
84 Bonn, AdsD, Fritz Sänger, box 59: letter to Gerhard Weisser (22 August 1978): "Kein Rückfall in die bürgerliche Ideologie".
85 Interview with Suzanne Miller, quoted in Diane Parness, SPD, 48.
86 According to my own calculations, the convention altered 35% of the paragraphs in the programme. It altered the meaning of 28% of the paragraphs (the SPD no longer "bejaht" but "achtet" churches, private property is no longer a foundation of the economic order, but has a right to be protected to the extent it does not prevent the realization of a fair social order, a unified labour law must be written, etc.).
87 To paraphrase John Austen, How to Do Things with Words, Oxford 1962.
88 Bayerischer Rundfunk, Pravda: cf. Bonn, AdsD, Willi Eichler, box 170: press.
89 Wille zur Macht, in: Politisch-Soziale Korrespondanz 12 (1959), 3–5.
90 Union in Deutschland, 19 November 1959.
91 Die Debatte, no. 11, 1959. In a piece entitled "Neues SPD-Programm noch Geheimsache", the Hamburger Abendblatt claimed that the SPD's new programme continued the tradition of the working-class movement but did not seek to achieve its goals in a Marxist-like struggle (Hamburger Abendblatt, 4 September 1959, 15).
92 Fritz Sänger, Grundsatzprogramm der SPD: Ein Kommentar, Bonn 1960, 1962.
93 Fritz Sänger, Soziale Demokratie. Bemerkungen zum Grundsatzprogramm der SPD, Bonn 1960, 15.
94 See for instance: Carlo Schmid, Hundert Jahre Sozialdemokratische Partei, Festvortrag Hannover 1963.
95 47% of the delegates at the Godesberg convention were over 51 years old, and only 8% were born after 1929.
96 Amsterdam, IISH, Wolfgang Abendroth, box 735: letter to Erich Ollenhauer, 23 November 1960 and file composed to defend his case in court (1962).
97 Bonn, AdsD, Carlo Schmid, Box 1408: "Wolfgang Abendroth und das Grundsatzprogramm".
98 Erich Ollenhauer, Der Verleger und Politiker, in: Gustav Schmidt-Küster, Ein Leben für das Politische Buch. Ein Almanach zum 120. Geburtstag von Johannes Dietz, Bonn 1963, 9–15, 15.
99 Martin Barker, On Being Ambitious for Audience Research, in: Isabelle Charpentier, ed., Comment sont reçues les œuvres? Actualités des recherches en sociologie de la réception et des publics, Grenoble 2006, 27–42, 33.
100 The Godesberg Programme remains an exceptional text. Many programmes do not find such a position in the canon. Although the SPD's 1989 programme ultimately replaced Godesberg, five years after its adoption, the president of the committee in charge of drafting the programme, Hans-Jochen Vogel, complained that "the Berlin Programme is pretty much treated like a top-secret document within the party" (Sozialdemokratischer Pressedienst, 15 December 1994).
101 Peter Lösche, Is the SPD Still a Labour Party? From "Community of Solidarity" to "Loosely Coupled Anarchy", in David E. Barclay/Eric D. Weitz, eds., Between Reform and Revolution: German Socialism and Communism from 1840 to 1990, Oxford Books, 1998, 532–545, 539.
102 Schon ausgepunktet, in: Der Spiegel, 1 March 1971.
103 Strampeln muss man, in: Der Spiegel, 11 May 1970.
104 Thomas van der Vring, Schwein geschlachtet, in: Der Spiegel, 15 December 1969.
105 Juso Hochschulgruppen Schulkommission, Jusoschulung, vol. 1, Bonn 1974, 86.
106 Peter von Oertzen, Sozialdemokratische Grundsätze (1973), in: Hermann Weber, Das Prinzip Links: Beiträge zur Diskussion des demokratischen Sozialismus in Deutschland. Eine Dokumentation, Berlin 1990, 278–280.

107 In 1973 one-third of all party members belonged to the Young Socialists. Between 1969 and 1973, the Party gained between 75,000 and 155,000 new members every year. For the first time, blue-collar workers were in the minority among new members: Siegfried Heimann, Die Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands, in Richard Stöss, Parteienhandbuch, vol. 2, Opladen 1984, 2025–2116, 2073.

108 Titled "Bad Godesberg and the Present", the Seeheim Circle's manifesto was devoted to proving this incompatibility (Godesberg und die Gegenwart. Ein Beitrag zur innerparteilichen Diskussion über Inhalte und Methoden sozialdemokratischer Politik, Bonn 1975). Other texts attempted to make the same argument, including the following philosophical interpretation from the Seeheim Circle: Alexander Schwan/Gesine Schwan, Sozialdemokratie und Marxismus. Zum Spannungsverhältnis von Godesberger Programm und marxistischer Theorie, Hamburg 1974.

109 Godesberg und die Gegenwart, 28.

110 Pierre Bourdieu, Les conditions sociales de la circulation internationale des idées, in: Actes de la recherche en sciences sociales 145/5 (2002), 3–8.

111 Roland Barthes, Mythologies, Paris 1957.

112 Christelle Flandre, Socialisme ou social-démocratie? Regards croisés français allemands, 1971–1981, Paris 2006, 231 and Vincent Duclert, La "deuxième gauche", in: Histoire des gauches en France, vol. 2, Paris 2005, 175–189.

113 Among others: Alain Bergounioux/Bernard Manin, La social-démocratie ou le compromis, Paris 1979.

114 Michel Rocard et al., Qu'est-ce que la social-démocratie?, Paris 1979.

115 Bergougnioux/Manin, social-démocratie.

116 Michel Winock, La gauche en France, Paris 2006, 248.

117 Ibid., 463.

118 Renaud Dély, Le PS ne peut plus vivre en vase clos, in: Libération, 17 novembre 2006. A so-called "social-democrat manifest" was prepared to support Strauss-Kahn's candidacy. This manifest was written by two intellectuals, one of them, Alain Bergougnioux, being one of the central intellectuals of the Deuxième Gauche since the 1970s: Alain Bergougnioux/Alain Baumel, Contribution au manifeste social-démocrate (2006).

119 http://eurojournalist.eu/55-ans-apres-le-spd-hollande-fait-son-bad-godesberg/, 28 August 2014, (consulted 16 October 2017).

120 Erhard Eppler, Grundwerte für ein neues Godesberger Programm, Hamburg 1984, 8.

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