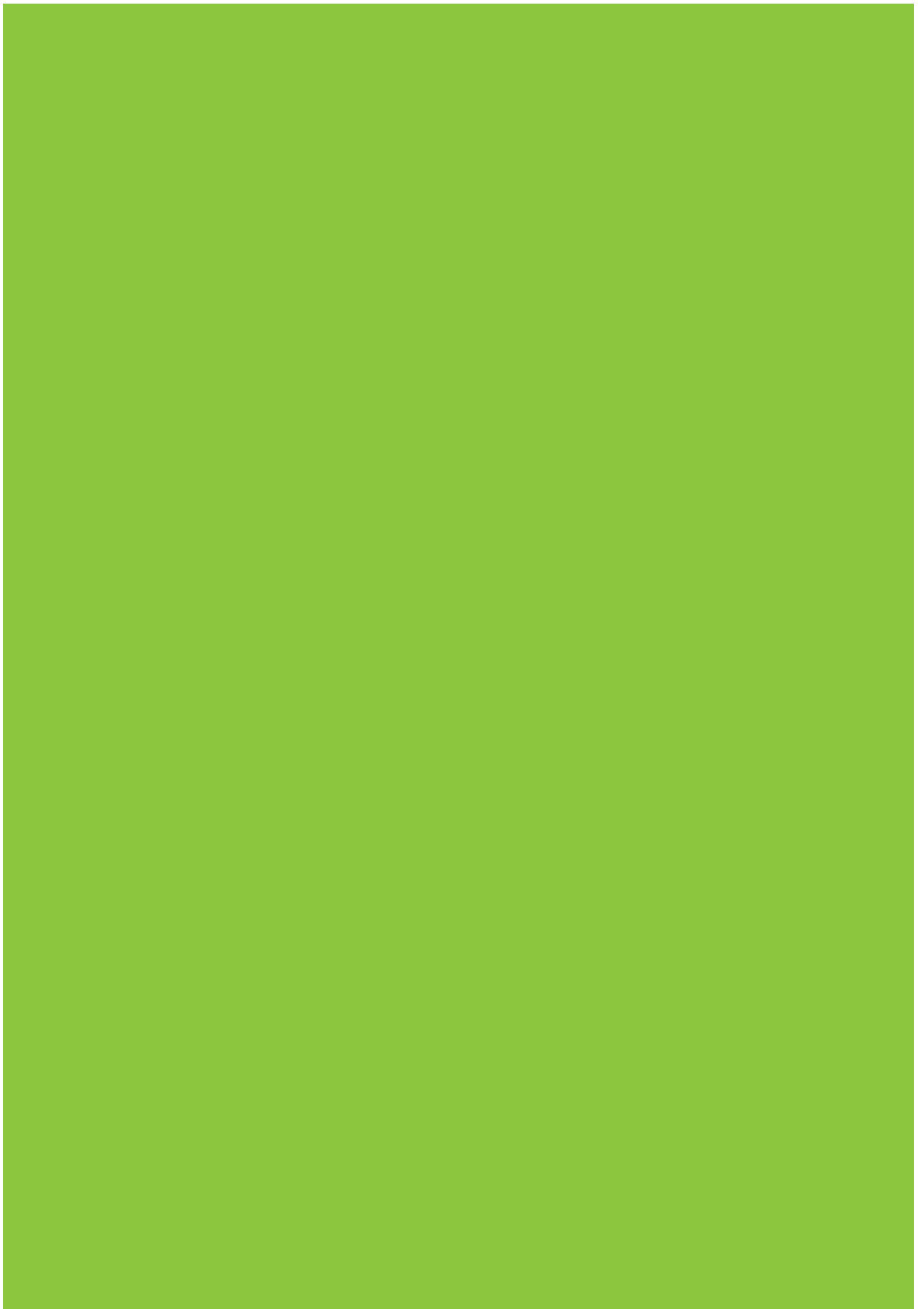# GERMAN GREENS IN COALITION GOVERNMENTS
A Political Analysis

by Arne Jungjohann

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German Greens
in Coalition Governments

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By Arne Jungjohann

About the author

Arne Jungjohann is an energy analyst and political scientist. He advises foundations, think tanks, and civil society in communication and strategy building for climate and energy policy. Previously, he worked for Minister President Winfried Kretschmann of Baden-Württemberg, the Heinrich Böll Foundation in Washington DC, in the German *Bundestag*, and in the family owned business. As its editor he launched the most influential English Twitter account on the German *Energiewende* (@ EnergiewendeGER). He co-authored 'Energy Democracy: Germany's Energiewende to Renewables' (Palgrave Macmillan 2016). Arne is a member of the Green Academy, a network with leading thinkers from science, politics and civil society which is facilitated by the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung. He is the founder of the local chapter of the German Green Party in Washington DC and lives in Stuttgart. He studied at Philipps University Marburg and at the Free University of Berlin.

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List of Abbreviations

BB   Brandenburg

BE   Berlin

BW   Baden-Württemberg

BY   Bayern

CdS   Chef der Staatskanzlei (Head of State Chancellery)

CDU   Christian Democratic Union of Germany

CSU   Christian Social Union in Bavaria

FDP   Free Democratic Party

HB   Hansestadt Bremen

HE   Hessen

HH   Hansestadt Hamburg

MEP   Member of the European Parliament

MPK   Conference of Ministers-President

NI   Niedersachsen

NW   Nordrhein-Westfalen

RP   Rheinland-Pfalz

SH   Schleswig-Holstein

SPD   Social Democratic Party

SSW   South Schleswig Voters' Association

ST   Sachsen-Anhalt

TH   Thüringen

SA   Sachsen

SH   Schleswig-Holstein

SL   Saarland

MV   Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

FOREWORD

How does good governance work? The question concerns the business of democratic politics. The part it plays in fostering faith in politics and transparent democratic culture should not be under-estimated. How it works and what is necessary is something that many people are unaware of, even those that are politically active. At the forefront of the discussion concerning the work of government is the obvious question about what topics are addressed and how they are dealt with. But how is the programme translated into coalition compromises? What instruments are needed – in the wide range between coalition agreement and informal yet binding rounds of negotiation? What personnel, what communication channels allow coordination between party and coalition work, between state parliament level and *Bundesrat* (Federal Council) level? How are conflicts dealt with?

Such questions are aimed at the organisational nature and the sequences of government political work. The purpose of the present study by the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung seeks to contribute towards clarifying this and stimulating learning processes in political education and counselling.

The governmental responsibility of the Alliance 90/The Greens party has grown more and more in the federal states in the last few years. With Berlin, it is now involved in 11 out of 16 state governments made up of coalitions of quite differing party-political orientations. Seeing itself as the party with a programme, it must prove that it is able to assert itself politically in such changing colour constellations at state and federal level, both in terms of specialised policy making as well as Realpolitik.

How do the Greens govern? As of yet the studies carried out by parties, government or coalitions contain no comparative research into the internal experience and practice of the everyday life of Green government in its state specific characteristics and similarities. We are therefore delighted to have found an academic author in Arne Jungjohann, who has shown great dedication and expertise in initiating, researching and compiling the present study on "how" the Greens have fared in their governance in the states and between the states and federal government.

The Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung has supported the research process through internal debates and workshops with stakeholders and academics. The present study together with the supplementary appendices is also available online.

We hope that by presenting an English version of this study together with the Green European Foundation, we can contribute to making this experience available to a broader audience, in particular our Green friends from so many countries around Europe. We hope that readers will also value the negative experience, because knowing of the mistakes of others can be very educational. We present this study also with humility since it is obvious that there is so much we have to learn how to do better in order to effect the fundamental change that we have been advocating since Greens started competing as a political party.

We sincerely thank Arne Jungjohann for his profound work and hope the study will contribute to instructive debates and learning processes.

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FOREWORD BY THE AUTHOR

The idea for this work came about in the summer of 2014. At that time I took a professional break to consider what I wanted to approach next. As a result of my work for the German Green Party in a wider sense[1] I had gained practical insight into the governance of coalitions at federal and state level. Many of my former green colleagues from the *Bundestag* parliamentary groups were by this time working for state ministries all over Germany. Whilst on the staff of the Baden-Württemberg state government I called many of them for advice or met them personally at party conferences. I wanted to hear from them how they would do this or that in their job. The exchange was always productive especially as no government or coalition resembles another and processes, whilst similar, are always different. I realised that much of the knowledge and experience made by individual actors has only been shared by chance in a personal exchange with others. There has been no systematic overview or evaluation of experiences in the every day life of government. Even a look at political science literature shows that there is no comprehensive study available that records and compares the governmental experiences of the Greens at state level. It was this insight above all that motivated me to record the experiences of the Greens in their everyday life in government. In this way decision-making processes above all become visible, transparent and commensurable. With these experiences and considerations I was greeted with open ears and interested support in the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung so that a study could be launched in cooperation. Internal debates and workshops with interviewees and academics formed part of the concept development and the evaluation of the interviews.

Research carried out on coalitions, on governing and on political parties has resulted in a number of studies that proved most helpful in providing a basis for this work. But first of all the insight into practical experience that my professional career has enabled me to gain, raised just those very questions that this study addresses. These career stages provided me with access to a wide network of contacts that proved helpful for the interviews and background discussions. The downside of this closeness to the object of investigation is without doubt the danger of a lack of distance, something from which no author in a similar situation, in spite of the very best intentions, can be immune. I have,

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1   My positions include legislative council to member of German parliament Reinhard Loske (1998-2007), Director of the Environment and Global Dialogue Program for the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung in Washington DC (2007-2012) and Head of Strategy Unit in the Baden-Württemberg State Ministry (2013).

first and foremost, been guided by a central objective, namely to present the reality with as little distortion as possible.

The study offers a comparative insight into the inner life of coalition governance. Using the Alliance 90/The Greens party as an example, it illustrates what informal structures in coalitions and in a party are employed for the purpose of coordination and conflict resolution in Germany's political system.

Why would this be of interest to anyone outside of Germany? Among its international peers the German Green Party can be considered among the most developed, professional and influential ones (Haas 2008; Jungjohann 2013). The English translation of the study is therefore intended to provide Green parties, and anyone interested in Green politics, access to the German Greens experiences from government participation. Even though political systems differ around the world, I am deeply convinced that the international green movement can benefit from the principal lessons the German Greens made, both failures and successes.

I would like to thank the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung for the good cooperation and Anne Ulrich and Eike Botta-Venhorst who were on hand to advise during the original study. Similarly Klaus Linsenmeier from HBS Brussels office provided helpful guidance for the English version of the study. My thanks also go to Stefan Tidow and Stephan Ertner for their valuable advice, to Sebastian Langer for the successful implementation of graphs and tables and to Alan Chamberlain for the translation. And I would especially like to thank my staff, Natascha Spörle, who supported me on the project from beginning to end. Not only was she an invaluable help with the research, evaluation and proof-reading of the study but also at the same time a creative sparring partner in the conceptual design of individual sections, graphs and tables. As author I accept full responsibility for any mistakes in the work.

Arne Jungjohann

1 Introduction

In Germany's consensus-oriented political system governing in coalitions is a matter of course. How coalition government functions, however, is "the least researched branch of coalition research" (Kropp 2008, 538). This is mainly due to the fact that information is often not accessible or available in any written form at all and that the relevant actors are in principle close-lipped and dependencies and rivalries exist between them. All in all, these factors lead to everything being shrouded in fog.

For smaller parties like Alliance 90/The Greens[2], coalitions – for the foreseeable future – offer the only possibility of governing. The erosion of the classic boundaries between the left and right camp makes the development in the states particularly interesting for coalition research (Switek 2013, 282), for numerous reasons. Firstly, the weakness of Germany's two main parties (the Christian Conservatives and the Social Democrats) forces all parties to enter into coalitions, even if they are not partners of choice. Secondly, the number of three-party coalitions has increased overall (Stüwe 2008, 26). The cooperation in such constellations is likely to require an increased need for harmonisation and coordination between the coalition parties. Thirdly, the way the state coalitions operate in the federal arena has become more complex as a result of the national political configuration of a Grand Coalition[3] in the *Bundestag*[4] lacking their own majority in the *Bundesrat*[5].

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2   Alliance 90/The Greens (German: *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen*) is a green political party in Germany. It was formed after German reunification in 1993, through a merger of the German Green Party (founded in West Germany in 1980) and Alliance 90 (founded during the Revolution of 1989-1990 in East Germany). In this text I will refer to 'the Greens' and 'the Green Party' when discussing Alliance 90/The Greens.

3   A Grand Coalition (German: *Große Koalition*) refers to the coalition between the SPD and the CDU, the two parties with the traditionally greatest electorate.

4   The *Bundestag* (Parliament) is a constitutional and legislative body at the federal level in Germany. Members of the *Bundestag* are usually elected every four years by all adult German citizens in a mixed system of constituency voting and list voting. The Chancellor is elected by the *Bundestag*. The government is accountable to the *Bundestag*.

5   The *Bundesrat* (Federal Council) is a constitutional and legislative body that represents the sixteen *Länder* (states) of Germany at the federal level. The Bundesrat participates in legislating, alongside the *Bundestag*, with laws affecting state competences and all constitutional changes requiring the consent of the body. For its similar function, it is sometimes described as an upper house of parliament along the lines of the US Senate, the Canadian Senate or the British House of Lords

1.1 State of the research and sources used

This study is positioned between party and coalition research. The existing literature on the German Green Party can be divided into four thematic areas: firstly, the historical origins and historical development of the German Greens (Poguntke 1987; Raschke & Heinrich 1993; Probst 2013a). Secondly, the Green parties and Green movements in Europe and the European Parliament (Rudig 1985; Müller-Rommel 1993). Thirdly, the experiences of the Greens at federal level between 1999 and 2005 in the red-green coalition[6] (Poguntke 1999, Raschke 2001; Poguntke 2003; Egle,Ostheim & Zohlnhöfer 2003; Egle 2007; Kronenberg & Weckenbrock 2011). And fourthly, the experiences of the Greens in certain areas at state level and here in particular coalition-related decisions in the states (Switek 2015), the party system (Schniewind 2012), the competition between the parties (Bräuninger 2009) and the individual state parliaments such as *red-green* in Hessen (Johnsen 1988) or *green-red* in Baden-Württemberg[7] (Gabriel and Kornelius 2011). However, there is no comprehensive study addressing and comparing the experiences of the Greens in government at state level. This study contributes towards closing this gap.

The central data base of this study is made up of 48 interviews and off-the-record discussions with leading politicians and senior staff of the Greens at federal level (federal party, *Bundestag* parliamentary group), at state level (*Deputy Minister Presidents*[8], party and parliamentary group chairs) and at European level. The discussions were held personally or by phone/Skype between September 2015 and April 2016. For the interviews social-scientific prototypes from qualitative, non-standardised expert interviews were used (Misoch 2014; Bogner et al. 2014; Kruse 2014). As a result differing perceptions and interpretations of complex political decision-making processes become apparent and can be put into a meaningful context. This method, however, also has its limitations. It is to be assumed that the flow of information is deliberately controlled by the interview partners out of strategic considerations. Some may have an interest in revealing certain information and withholding other information. In order to minimise possible distortions and obfuscations on the part of the interviewees, care was taken to ensure a balanced composition of differing perspectives (such as state-federal-European level; governmental-parliamen-

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6   A Red-Green coalition (German: *Rot-Grüne Koalition*) refers to a coalition between SPD and the Greens, where the SPD is the bigger partner. This is the former centre-left coalition of choice of both parties and their electorates.

7   A Green-Red Coalition (German: *grün-rote Koalition*) refers to the coalition of Greens and SPD where the Greens are the senior partner. The first and so far only green-red coalition was in Baden-Württemberg between 2011 and 2016.

8   The Deputy Minister President (German: *Vize-Ministerpräsident*) is the second man or woman behind the Minister President in a German state. In case the Minister President is unable to fulfil his or her duties, he or she can be represented by the Deputy Minister President. Within coalition governments, the Deputy Minister President is usually from the smaller coalition partner.

tarian-party-perspectives; both wings of the party[9]; and gender-balanced) (cf. list of the interviews).

For the interviews, guidelines were developed that were derived from studies on party and coalition research as well as from preliminary discussions with the senior staff of top-ranking Green politicians. The quotations used were authorised and their sources were referenced. Furthermore statements from the interviews and off-the-record discussions were taken into account in the analysis but without being collated or identified as such. By following the so-called *Chatham House Rules*[10] the source is protected, thereby providing the opportunity to speak freely without the risk of being held to account for any statements that may be made. It is this restriction alone, pertaining to source references, that has enabled the author to illustrate the object of investigation in depth.

For the purpose of the study the coalition agreements[11] of the *G-states*[12] were also evaluated as well as the careers of their respective top personnel and the make-up of governments and *State Representations*. The data collected for this purpose can be downloaded as appendices 1-6 as PDF files on the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung website (German-only).

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9   Within the Green Party there are two wings: Realos and Lefts. Realos (*realists*) refers to the faction within the German Green Party which is considered to be more pragmatic, government-orientated. It was formed in conflict to the Left (or previously Fundi) wing of the party. Today the Realo faction calls itself *Reformer*.

10   The rule comes from *The Royal Institute of International Affairs* and is above all adopted at meetings in order to allow participants free use of information received on the condition that neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speakers may be revealed. The original texts reads as follow: " When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), may be revealed" (Chatham House 2016).

11   Coalition partners agree on rules as to their dealings with each other, most of which are set out in coalition agreements (*Koalitionsvertrag*). They determine the policy direction of the coalition, the ministerial responsibilities of the government, personnel-related decisions, regulations about voting behaviour in the state parliament, the cabinet and Bundesrat as well as mechanisms for dealing with conflict.

12   States with a coalition government which includes the Green Party are referred to as *G-states*. In political linguistic usage the terms *A-states* and *B-states* have been in use since the 1970s. They stand for states that are led by an SPD majority (A-states) and by a CDU/CSU majority (B-states). It is important to note that a G-state can be an A- or B-state at the same time.

1.2 Lead Questions and Composition of the Study

The aim of the study is to determine the experiences of the German Greens in government. It is above all intended to contribute to the analysis of informal political decision-making processes in coalitions and parties[13]. The lead questions are:

1. In which coalition constellations do the state associations of the Greens govern and how does this impact the governance ability of the party? *(Coalition Constellations)*
2. What ministries are the Greens responsible for in the *G-states* and what aggregated nationwide trends are emerging *(Departmental Responsibilities of the Greens)*
3. What structures of coalition management do the *G-states* make use of in their coalitions and in what way do they differ from each other? *(Coalition Management in the G-states)*
4. What informal structures are utilised by the Greens for coordination in the federal arena between federal-level Greens and the *G-states*? *(The Federal Arena)*

The study focuses on the state governments with Green participation that were formed between 2005 and 2015 and were still in existence in 2016. It therefore includes all the state governments with Green participation since 2007 with the exception of the *black-green* coalition[14] in Hamburg (2008-2010) and the Jamaica coalition[15] in Saarland (2009-2012). No interviews were conducted in the case of the coalitions which were set up following the state elections in spring 2016 (Baden-Württemberg (green-black coalition), Rheinland-Pfalz (traffic light coalition) and Sachsen-Anhalt (Kenya coalition[16]). They are only taken into consideration selectively where the coalition agreement made a quantitative appraisal possible. Similarly, the red-red-green coalition in the Berlin state parliament, which at the time of going to press had not concluded its negotiations, is left out of the equation. The time-frame investigated is in so far a sensible limit as with the federal elections in 2005 the situation of a "fluid five-party system" (Niedermayer 2008) was finally reached.

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13 What the study does not deal with are questions concerning coalition negotiations, formation and dissolution (for details see especially Switek 2015), the analysis of specific political fields or for instance the conduct of a ministry.
14 A coalition of CDU and Greens where the CDU is the senior partner.
15 The coalition of CDU, FDP and Greens. The three parties' colours reflect the Jamaican flag (black, yellow, green).
16 A coalition of CDU, SPD and Greens. The three parties' colours reflect the Kenyan flag (black, red, green).

2 Coalition Constellations

The formation of a coalition and its everyday life in government are strongly influenced by the actors involved. However, the state association of a party and its top-ranking personnel never act autonomously but have to consider structural and situational circumstances in their actions. In order to achieve a better classification of the key questions it is therefore helpful to take into consideration the coalition constellations the Greens are part of. At the time of the publication of this study the Greens are in ten state governments in seven varying coalition constellations (see Table 1):

▬ In four cases the Greens are governing with Social Democrats in a classic *red-green* coalition, the former centre-left coalition of choice of both parties and their electorates. In the last few years their relationship has been marked by growing competition and demarcation. Since the end of *red-green* in the federal government in 2005 both parties have been attempting to expand the sphere of activity allowed by their coalition policy. They present themselves to the electorate as competing with each other and weigh up their coalition options according to the respective political and regional circumstances (Probst 2013b, 361). In spite of their initial common coalition perspective the relationship between SPD[17] and the Greens before the federal election in 2013 was also completely marked by disassociation, especially in the final phase of the electoral campaign when both parties were trying to maximise votes in view of their poor power prospects (Probst 2015).

▬ In two cases the Greens entered into a coalition with the Christian democrats (CDU)[18], crossing traditional political camps. After the *black-green* coalition in the city state of Hamburg (2008-2010), Hessen is the first larger state where *black-green* is being put to the test. In Baden-Württemberg both parties have been governing since 2016 in a converse constellation as *green-black* with the Greens leading the coalition as the strongest party. Both coalitions are attributed to the CDU governed *B-states*[19]. The protagonists of both parties talk of a complementary coalition in which the coalition partners complement each other and have to deal with substantive differences

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17   The SPD is a social-democratic political party in Germany. It is the major party of the centre-left in German politics. The SPD is associated with the colour red.

18   The CDU is a Christian democratic and liberal-conservative political party in Germany. It is the major party of the centre-right in German politics and associated with the colour black.

19   *B-states* stand for those German states that are led by a CDU/CSU majority.

(Muschel&Böhme 2016). The fact that both the Hessen and Baden-Württemberg state associations are focused more on *Realpolitik*[20] than most Green state associations does not explain the formation of the respective coalition although it must at least have been conducive.

▬ As classic two-party constellations ever increasingly fail to result in a majority, in four out of the ten cases three partners have formed a coalition. In Germany's most northern state Schleswig-Holstein the Greens entered into the so-called *coastal coalition* with SPD and the *Southern Schleswig Voters' Association*. In Thüringen a *red-red-green* coalition led by the Left Party[21] was formed for the first time. In Rheinland-Pfalz in May 2016 the erstwhile *red-green coalition* was ousted in favour of the *traffic light coalition* of SPD, FDP[22] and Greens. The last *traffic light coalition* governed in Bremen from 1991 to 1995. All three coalitions should probably be assigned to the *red-*

Table 1: Coalition Constellations with the participation of Alliance 90/The Greens

Coalition Type	Number	State	Characteristics
Red-Green	4	Bremen, Hamburg, Niedersachsen, Nordrhein-Westfalen	Traditional coalition of choice.
Green-Black	1	Baden-Württemberg	New. Across traditional political camps. Green MP.
Black-Green	1	Hessen	New. Across traditional political camps.
Red-Red-Green	1	Thüringen	New.
Red-Green-Blue (Coastal Coalition)	1	Schleswig-Holstein	New.
Red-Yellow-Green (Traffic Light Coalition)	1	Rheinland-Pfalz	First traffic light coalition since 1995 (Bremen).
Black-Red-Green (Kenya Coalition)	1	Sachsen-Anhalt	New. Across traditional political camps.

Source: ArneJungjohann.de ©①⑤⊜

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20   Realpolitik (r*ealistic politics*) refers to realistic politics, including making compromises with political competitors in contrast to idealistic (unrealistic) politics.

21   The Left Party (Die Linke) is a democratic socialist and (far) left-wing political party in Germany. It was founded in 2007 as the merger of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) and the Electoral Alternative for Labour and Social Justice (WASG). It is associated with the colour dark red.

22   The Free Democratic Party is a liberal and classical liberal party in Germany. The party is traditionally considered centre-right, pro-market and with libertarian currents. It is associated with the colour yellow.

green camp. In Sachsen-Anhalt the situation is different. As a result of the *Grand Coalition* of CDU and SPD losing its majority there with the state elections in 2016, a *Kenya coalition* was formed for the first time with the Greens as the third and smallest coalition partner.

This shows a remarkable flexibility of the Greens at state level. It developed in parallel with the stabilisation of the five-party system. The multitude of coalition constellations beyond classic political camps reflects the independence that the Green state associations have been exercising for a long time. In this respect the Greens differ, for example, from the FDP whose state associations were for many years geared to the coalition strategy of the federal party leadership (Switek 2015, 73 and 321). It is precisely the formation of *black-green* in Hessen (January 2014) and *red-red-green* in Thüringen (December 2014) that is judged, within the Greens, as a boost for heterogeneity. The positive effect of this, according to the Secretary General of the federal party, Michael Kellner (2016), is that "as a result the internal party feuding between the various wings about the right sort of coalition is largely ended for the time being". In this way the party fulfils its claim to independence in implementing its policies in diverse coalition constellations as formulated at the conference of federal delegates after losing the federal election in 2013: "We are making Green policies independently and only then will we be looking for our partners" (Alliance 90/The Greens 2014). Of all the other German parties it is only the SPD that exercises at this moment a similar openness to different coalition constellations. Due to the various constellations at state level the Greens are extending their scope for action at federal level and also with a view to the federal election in 2017. The states have always acted as a testing ground for federal-level coalitions (Decker 2013, 42).

However, coalition diversity might also pose challenges since the aims as well as the understanding of the role of Green state associations can sometimes greatly differ from each other. The differences then become apparent primarily when the interests of the state associations need to be amalgamated for the party, for instance in the case of coordination for the *Bundesrat*[23] or for national election campaigns. In order to clear the 5 per cent threshold to enter parliament[24], smaller state associations such as Rheinland-Pfalz, Thüringen, or Sachsen-Anhalt always have to keep, in the first instance, their core electoral base in mind. During their time in government they are likely to spend their limited political capital particularly in implementing such projects that mobilise their base for the next election. The situation differs in other states. In Baden-Württemberg, where the Greens, as the strongest power in parliament,

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23 The *Bundesrat* is Germany's upper chamber. See also chapter 4: The Federal Arena.

24 Seats in the federal and in the state parliaments are, with few exceptions, only given to parties surpassing a five per cent election threshold. The clause is meant to minimize the risk of party fragmentation, which partially caused the incapacitation of the parliament in the Weimar Republic.

are trying to appeal to broad electoral strata and to establish themselves as the new people's party. They have to think big. The fact that they lead the coalition and appoint the Minister President[25] changes the party's self-perception. As the Head of Baden Württemberg's *State Representation* Volker Ratzmann sums up (2016): "The Greens are more than just a corrective of the mainstream". With regard to the federal election in 2017 the MEP and former chairman of the federal party, Reinhard Bütikofer (2015), sees the challenges facing the whole party as giving due consideration to "the varying regional situations, but not randomly so."

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25 The Minister President (German: *Ministerpräsident*) is the head of state and government of a German state. They are elected by their respective state parliaments. They represent their state in the *Bundesrat* and towards the federal government. The position of a Minister President is defined by the specific state constitution.

3 The Coalition Arena at State Level

Coalition partners agree on rules as to their dealings with each other, most of which are set out in coalition agreements. In addition to the policy direction of the coalition they determine the departmental[26] responsibilities of the government, personnel-related decisions, regulations about voting behaviour in the state parliament, the cabinet and *Bundesrat* as well as mechanisms for dealing with conflict (Kropp 2000). By their nature these rules on cooperation *can* be stipulated in the coalition agreement but *do not have* to be. Therefore the comparison of various coalition agreements is of only limited significance. The varying formulations, however, are a likely indication that coalition management differs from state to state. Even if they are not legally binding, coalition agreements are important for coalition stability. They help to formulate common aims and eliminate reciprocal prejudices from the outset in order to achieve a degree of predictability. This serves not only as security for the coalition partner as it results in an open declaration of joint projects but also fosters party-internal discipline (Miller 2011, 42).

Section *A – Departmental Responsibilities* below outlines the ministries the Greens are in charge of in the respective state governments and what overriding trends can thereby be deduced. The next section, *B – Coalition Management*, illustrates the key elements of the coalition management in which the actors participate.

3.1 Departmental Responsibilities of the Greens

Political science has hitherto been guilty of a generally accepted approach as to which factors explain the division of departmental responsibilities between the coalition partners and the exact distribution of individual ministries at state level. An overview of the distribution of ministries in German state governments since the Second World War (Pappi, Schmitt & Linhart 2008) nevertheless illustrates that this distribution is by nature similar in many of Germany's 16 states. Classic areas such as home affairs, finance or justice ministries are clearly comparable in their designation, their areas of competence and the spheres of operation allocated to them. They are similar in every state govern-

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26 A department is a ministry in the federal or state government. It is chaired by a minister of one of the ruling parties. Department and ministry are used as synonyms in the text.

ment. Even when they lose or gain responsibilities their designation generally remains unchanged.

It is more difficult comparing the distribution of the more recent ministries such as the combinations "employment and social affairs", "economic affairs and technology" or "family, senior citizens, and youth" as several operational areas overlap. The comparison of operational fields is also limited where closely connected policy fields are accorded different names (for example "environment" and "nature conservation" or "migration" and "integration"). Due to regional particularities some operational areas exist in only a few of the states (e.g. viticulture in Rheinland-Pfalz or ports in the city states of Bremen or Hamburg) or have a higher economic relevance in one state than in others (e.g. mining in Nordrhein-Westfalen).

New coalitions often try to mark their policy priorities through a new distribution of departmental responsibilities. In this way specialist areas are re-distributed, priorities of a ministry changed or an area of interest re-assessed by the establishment of a new department. In some cases focusing on a particular issue offers organisational advantages. For example, setting up a Ministry for the Energy Transition with responsibility for climate and energy can strengthen this policy field, because it is in the hands of a single department. However, this organisational advantage can be at odds with other considerations. It can therefore be assumed that coalition partners share the responsibilities for closely connected policy areas (e.g. energy/climate, economic affairs/finance, home affairs/justice, education/science) so that both sides bear the executive responsibility for a broader topic. A shared distribution can have a stabilising effect on a coalition as it fosters co-determination and calls for regular agreement at an early stage of policymaking due to overlapping areas of competence within the government.

The relevance of a department depends on its specific operational areas in the respective policy field, its size in terms of personnel and financial resources and its particular importance for the parties (Kropp 2001, 26). At state level, finance, home affairs and education are generally considered important areas that have a far-reaching effect. Compared with other policy areas in which federal legislation dominates, the states enjoy a relatively high degree of autonomy and the ministries a comparatively higher budget. Cross-stitch departments such as finance, justice and home affairs are considered generally influential. They allow for early access to inter-departmental information and on initiatives of the coalition partner. Over and above the main headings the departmental focus is also relevant, that is to say as to what specific areas of operation are covered by a ministry. A ministry for the environment that in addition to environment and nature protection is also responsible, for example, for agriculture, consumer protection and energy is considered a strong department.

The following picture emerges from the analysis of the departments and their operational areas of the ten *G-states* (cf. Appendix 1) and the interviews conducted for this study:

Table 2: Share of ministries held by the Green Party in the G-States

State Coalition	Election Result Greens, in %	Green Ministries (out of total)	Green Ministries in %	Green share in the coalition according to number of seats, in %
BW I (2011–2016) Green-Red	24,2%	5 (out of 11)	45,5%	50,7%
BW II (from 2016) Green-Black	30,3%	6 (out of 11)	54,5%	53,4%
HB I (2007–2011) Red-Green	16,5%	2 (out of 7)	28,6%	30,4%
HB II (2011–2015) Red-Green	22,5%	3 (out of 7)	42,8%	36,8%
HB III (from 2015) Red-Green	15,1%	3 (out of 8)	37,5%	31,8%
HE (from 2014) Black-Green	11,1%	2 (out of 9)	22,2%	22,9%
HH (from 2015) Red-Green	14,7%	3 (out of 12)	25%	20,5%
NI (from 2013) Red-Green	13,7%	4 (out of 10)	40%	28,9%
NW I (2010–2012) Red-Green (minority)	12,1%	3 (out of 11)	27,3%	25,5%
NW II (from 2012) Red-Green	11,3%	3 (out of 12)	25%	22,6%
RP I (2011–2016) Red-Green	15,4%	3 (out of 9)	33,3%	30%
RP II (from 2016) Traffic Light Coalition	5,3%	2 (out of 10)	20%	11,5%
SH (from 2012) Coastal Coalition	13,2%	2 (out of 8)	25%	28,6%
ST (from 2016) Kenya Coalition	5,2%	1 (out of 9)	11,1%	10,8%
TH (from 2014) Red-Red-Green	5,7%	2 (out of 9)	22,2%	13%

Source: ArneJungjohann.de

3 The Coalition Arena at State Level

1. **Relative to their share of the votes in the respective coalition the Greens account for a disproportionately large number of ministries.** Table 2 compares the number of ministries with the number of seats that the Greens hold in the respective coalition. It confirms the previous findings (Heinrich 2002, 53) that smaller coalition partners are often allocated a higher number of ministries than if it was based on the number of mandates. This is documented particularly clearly in the examples of the *red-green coalitions* in Hamburg and Bremen, the red-red-green coalition in Thüringen and the *traffic-light* coalition in Rheinland-Pfalz. In Niedersachsen the Greens even account for four out of ten ministries although they "only" have 28.9% of the seats in the coalition. Conversely Baden-Württemberg is the only case where the Greens – significantly as the larger coalition partner – account for a disproportionately low number of ministries.

2. **The number of ministries alone says little about the political room for manoeuvre in the cabinet. Equally important is the precise distribution of departments.** Two examples may illustrate the relevance of the distribution of departments. Let's first compare the Green departments in Thüringen and Sachsen-Anhalt. In both cases the Greens govern in a similar constellation: with an election result of under 6% they are the smallest of the three coalition partners in government. In Sachsen-Anhalt the Greens account for only one department, albeit the large Department of Environment dealing with the environment, energy, consumer protection and agriculture. In contrast to this, the Greens in Thüringen account for two departments (environment and justice). However, its Ministry of the Environment (dealing with energy and environment but not with consumer protection and agriculture) has a far smaller profile. The second comparison illustrates that the number of ministries does not necessarily indicate the breadth of responsibilities. In Hessen the Greens formally account for only two ministries – the environment and economic affairs. However, due to the broad sphere of their responsibilities the two ministers represent their state government in four committees in the *Bundesrat* (agriculture, environment, transport, economic affairs). In comparison to this there are four Green ministers in Niedersachsen yet at the same time they are also represented in only four committees (agriculture, environment, justice and science).

Graph 1: Green Ministries
Departments and governmental responsibilities of the German Greens in the states. As of July 2016.

Department	States
Environment	BW HB HH HE NI NW RP SH ST TH
Consumer Protection	HE NI NW RP TH
Agriculture and rural areas	HE NI NW SH ST
Integration and Migration	BW HB RP TH
Women and Equality	HB HH RP
Justice	HH NI TH
Science and Research	BW HH NI
Transport	BW HB HE
Finance	BW HB SH
Social Affairs	BW HB
Health	NW BW
Economic Affairs	HE
Education	NW
Europe and Foreign Affairs	
Interior and Home Affairs	
Labour	

Source: ArneJungjohann.de

3. **'Ecology is at the heart' – with ten ministries in the states the Greens are raising their profile as the party of the *Energiewende* and environmental protection.** The Greens have by far the most governmental responsibility in environmental protection – compared both with other parties in this policy area as well as other policy fields within their own party (see graph 1). In this way the Greens form a majority of their own, for example at the *Ministerial Conference on the Environment* in which the federal minister and the 16 state ministers participate.[27] The dominance in ecology policy becomes particularly apparent in coalitions in which the Greens are not only in charge of the environment ministry but also other ministries with explicit ecological responsibilities such as agriculture, transport and energy and where the respective coalition partner has no responsibility for any department dealing with ecological affairs (e.g. the *green-red coalition* in Baden-Württemberg, the *red-green coalition* in Hamburg, and the *black-green coalition* in Hessen). Federal Chairman Cem Özdemir (2016) hits the nail on the head in saying "Ecology is at the heart of our policies". With ten

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27 In Germany's federalism Ministerial Conference on specific policy fields (such as environment, labor, interior etc.) have the function of providing room for exchange of the federal minister with his/her 16 peers from the state level. The conferences have to adopt decisions unanimously.

ministries of environment, five for agriculture and consumer protection as well as three for transport throughout Germany, the Greens can use their position of governmental responsibility to implement their concepts for the ecological transformation of society and its infrastructures. In most of the *G-states* moreover, the policy area of energy is incorporated into the Department of Environment. The strong focus on ecological themes coincides with observations made since the early 1990s (Pappi et al. 2008). As a result of their self-perception as well as their public image and the competence attributed to them, the ecological question has long been seen as the key field of government work for the Greens. Even the coalition partners seem to assume that the Greens have a claim to the Department of the Environment in any case and have never disputed this with them in coalition negotiations. It is the predominant view within the party that it would be politically unwise not to showcase the centrepiece of their own programme and personal strength in government as well. "We are elected for ecology and this area of competence is consequently assigned to us", in the words of Secretary General Michael Kellner (2016). There is also the danger that if the Greens are not in charge of that area they will nevertheless find themselves in the trap of responsibility as their own grass roots will blame them for possible deficits (Heinrich 2002).

4. **Two factors explain Green areas of ministerial responsibility: The core competence of the party and the profile of its leaders.** Ecology as the party's core area of competence can, as stated above, explain to a large extent the areas of responsibility. But the political profile of the leading politicians also significantly influences the departmental selection. This could be substantiated in eight out of nine cases[28] of *Deputy Minister Presidents.* In Sachsen-Anhalt alone the Greens forewent the Department of Education as requested by the leading candidate in favour of the Ministry of Environment as the Greens only had the right to one department. Building a strong thematic profile in opposition times is the pre-requisite for leading Green candidates to successfully negotiate even those departments that are not normally associated with the Greens. Examples of this are Karoline Linnert in Bremen (finance), Sylvia Löhrmann in Nordrhein-Westfalen (education) and Tarek Al-Wazir in Hessen (economic affairs and transport). Their profile built up in opposition times had already sent a signal to the coalition partner during the election campaign that Green governmental participation was coupled with a corresponding department. Over and above the party's core area of competence and the political profile of their top candidates other factors such as coalition constellations, personnel details, ne-

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28   Not ten, but only nine cases are relevant here. Baden-Württemberg is not taken into consideration as Winfried Kretschmann, the leading Green candidate, did not have to negotiate his own ministry but became Minister President.

gotiating skills and the flexibility of all the negotiating partners account for the results of coalition negotiations.

5. **Apart from honing their core profile the Greens succeed in diversifying thematically and in taking over responsibility in further policy fields.** This is noticeable in policy fields such as integration and immigration (four departments across Germany), finance, justice, science and research (three departments each), women and equality[29] (three areas of operation each) and health and social affairs (two departments each). Representing these departments goes hand in hand with the development of personnel and political expertise from which the party as a whole should profit in the long run, for example in terms of the areas of competence allocated to them. By covering the wide diversity of issues throughout all the states the Greens are able to organise an informal distribution of tasks associated with national political legislative projects in the federal arena (see chapter 4).

6. **Greens see cross-section departments such as finance or justice as advantageous in the daily running of government.** Whilst being in charge of a cross-section department is always considered positive, the interviewees from the states stress above all the advantages brought by the Department of Finance. The mere fact of being a small coalition partner that cannot resort to the apparatus of government headquarters allows it access to the information of the other departments in good time and to demand compromises from the coalition partner. In the most extreme case it even makes it possible to veto an initiative of the coalition partner when it can be justified from a budgetary point of view. Overall finance is classified as important mainly due to political power considerations. "In this way you can take over responsibility and strengthen your position in the government" says Jürgen Trittin (2016), the former chairman of the federal parliamentary group and former Federal Minister of Environment.

7. **Europe, employment and internal affairs are the last blank spots of Green governmental responsibility.** The fact that Europe is completely left out of the Green portfolio of responsibilities seems at first unusual for a party which sees itself as a genuine European party. The MEP Reinhard Bütikofer warns that "the absence of European expertise is a real gap" (2015). However, the reason for this is that this sphere of activity is generally anchored within the *State Chancellery*[30]. It is only in the case of the *green-black coalition* in Baden-Württemberg[31] and in Schleswig-Holstein that it lies with-

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29 All state governments with the Green Party's participation have a ministry dealing with women and/or equality. The only exception is the *black-green* coalition in Hessen.

30 The State Chancellery (German: *Staatskanzlei*) is the department and administrative body of the Minister President of a state. As the center of the executive it coordinates the government's ministries and represents the state government towards the federal level.

31 At the time of the *green-red* coalition in Baden-Württemberg (2011-2016) the responsibility for Europe laid with the Green-led State Chancellery. However, the SPD provided the Minister for the Federal Affairs, European and International Affairs within the Chancellery.

in the scope of the Ministry of Justice. It is also conspicuous that as of yet there has never been a Minister for Home Affairs from the Green Party. In their own estimation, there has so far been an absence of key concepts on domestic policy and policing. This is, according to Baden-Württemberg's *Head of State Representation*, "the last item of fundamentalism on the green agenda" (Ratzmann 2016). The idea that a Green minister for home affairs would authorise police action against anti-nuclear power activists arouses mixed feelings within the party. However, in the meantime the Greens have at least discovered the issue of domestic security as a topic for themselves. The decision of the *Bundestag* parliamentary group (2016) to strengthen the police force is deemed "remarkable" (SZ 2016) as the Greens have been critical of the police since they were first formed. In the meantime the willingness to take on governmental responsibility in this policy area is growing. Federal Chairman Cem Özdemir (2016) argues "With an increase in responsibility the question of the Ministry for Home Affairs will arise". Moreover, in the same way as a finance portfolio, a Ministry for Home Affairs would also provide concrete advantages in the everyday workings of government: "With a Ministry for Home Affairs it is possible to exert a strong impact on rural areas and municipalities, especially in the larger federal states" (Trittin 2016).

3.2 Coalition Management in the *G-states*

Coalitions are temporary marriages of convenience. In an ideal situation they provide a government with a reliable majority in parliament over the course of a legislative period. However, coalition partners compete for votes even during the period of collaboration. Thus tension between competition and cooperation lies at the heart of coalitions. This calls for continual coalition management (Switek 2013, 277). The ability of coalitions to act depends heavily on informal decision-making processes and conflict-solving mechanisms. First of all they ensure commitment and predictability on the part of the partners. This is considered key to coalition success (Florack & Grunden; Heinrich 2002).

The coalition agreement provides an initial insight into the rules of coalition collaboration. Herein decisions regarding personnel and decision-making processes are generally laid down as well as policy issues. As part of the standard repertoire, it prohibits shifting majorities in parliament, establishes *coalition committees* and determines federal assembly clauses. There is no guarantee that any deals made in coalition agreements will be duly implemented or adhered to in practice. In this respect a coalition agreement is a mere corset

to be filled out with a living body in the course of the coalition (Kropp 2010; Meyer 2012)[32].

Part of the informal structures are regular meetings and agreements between senior personnel of the partners. This includes the minister president and his/her deputy, the chairs of the coalition parliamentary groups, and the state party chairs. In all of the cases examined here, the setups of these meetings are important pivots in coalition management.

The most common forms of informal decision-making processes for coalition management and the differences between the coalitions studied are identified below: (1) the *Bundesrat* clause; (2) coalition personnel and (3) the *coalition committee*.

3.2.1 The Bundesrat Clause

The *coalition agreement* regulates the voting behaviour of a state government in the *Bundesrat* in the case of political disagreements. A state government cannot split its vote, it can only cast a single vote. If the coalition partners cannot reach an agreement, the state has to abstain, which in the *Bundesrat* is equivalent to a no-vote. Although the agreements have no formal legal nature, they do, however, develop into a highly informal bond. If one partner is deviating from the agreement, this is usually the start or expression of a coalition crisis usually followed by a foreseeable end to the coalition.[33]

Bundesrat clauses are particularly relevant for *non-conforming alliances* where one partner participates in the federal government while the other is in opposition (Kropp 2010, 146).

In the formulation of *Bundesrat* clauses years of continuity across party political boundaries are recognisable. Nearly all of the *coalition agreements* studied, emphasise that the voting behaviour of the coalition in the *Bundesrat* should be geared to the "interests", the "good of the state", the "wording and spirit of the *coalition agreement*" or the "aims that have been jointly agreed". Questions of a controversial nature should only be raised if they are considered by one of the partners to be of "fundamental importance" (Kropp & Sturm 1998).

The majority of the cases examined here use wording based on this (cf. Appendix 4). Only the *coalition agreements* of Bremen and Thüringen go into

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32 In addition informal subsidiary agreements regarding the coalition agreement, about which there is however more speculation than actual knowledge, probably fulfil another important role in the functioning of coalitions. Most recently in July 2016 an internal written subsidiary agreement of Alliance 90/ The Greens and the CDU in Baden-Württemberg was published, specifying in 13 pages the policy decisions, financial commitments as well as procedural questions of the coalition (Alliance 90/The Greens Baden-Württemberg 2016).

33 In July 1995 Baden-Württemberg, led by Erwin Teufel (CDU), voted for a summer smog regulation against the will of its coalition partner, the SPD. This marked the first step towards a pre-election campaign. Teufel's stance was perceived as evidence of the termination of the coalition (Kropp & Sturm 1998, 117).

further detail. The Bremen agreement encourages "constructive participation with regard to central government and other states" and not "to neutralise its ability to participate in federal politics". Abstentions must be "the exception in the case of politically important issues" and the "different stances in federal policy matters held by the federal parties or parliamentary groups of both coalition partners should not constitute sufficient grounds for the state of Bremen to abstain" (Appendix 2c-e). However, the unusually extensive wording does not date from the present red-green coalition but was taken over from the previous government (Grand Coalition, 1995-2007). In practice, however, there is no noticeable effect on the voting behaviour of Bremen compared with the other *G-states*.

The *red-red-green* coalition in Thüringen also goes beyond the usual wording. It specifies that the voting behaviour in the *Bundesrat* should be perceived as being "in the spirit of constructive participation in relation to central government and other states". In an individual case "the interests of the state and its financial leeway" should be the yardstick for voting behaviour (Appendix 20). Moreover in the Thüringen coalition agreement there are extensive passages that stand out regarding the general behaviour of the coalition partners, for example the information policy of the *Minister President* vis-à-vis the coalition partners in respect of his participation in the *Minister Presidents' Conference*[34].

3.2.2 Coalition Personnel

For coalitions the rule of thumb is that parties themselves decide on their own ministers, who in turn choose the personnel in the respective department. Two positions in government headquarters are a common exception to this.

Firstly, small coalition partners usually appoint a deputy government spokesperson of the *State Chancellery*. His/her primary task is, in consultation with the government spokesperson, to inform the public about the work of the state government, that is to say, for example, holding press conferences, interviews and informal talks, issuing press releases, responding to media enquiries or dealing with the press at events. Secondly, the ministries appoint one or several advisers to the so-called *mirror unit*[35] in the State Chancellery. The task of the *mirror unit* is to ensure a constant flow of communication between the departments and government headquarters.

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34   The Minister Presidents' Conference (German: *Ministerpräsidentenkonferenz*, MPK) is an informal body of self-coordination of Germany's 16 states. Its members are the Minister Presidents and the Federal Chancellor. It addresses solely issues with federal-state-relationships that are not being dealt with in the Bundesrat, such as media policy or federal fiscal relationships.

35   German: *Spiegelreferat*

These persons are usually selected by consensus between the coalition partners or between government headquarters and ministerial units. Generally deputy government spokespersons and mirror advisers exercise no explicit function in coalition management in contrast to state secretaries appointed in the cross-stitch procedure and particularly in contrast to the strategy units created for coalition management.

Cross-stitch procedure in the case of state secretaries
The so-called *cross-stitch procedure* in the case of state secretaries (which are equal to the position of a deputy for the minister) is seen in political-scientific literature as an important control mechanism for conflict settlement (Miller 2011, 43). Hereby a state secretary[36] from the other coalition partner is assigned to a coalition partner's department. The assumption is that as a result of the *State Secretary*'s position the coalition partner is informed at an early stage of the intentions of the department. Any possible conflicts can be identified and solved in good time (i.e. before the cabinet). In the ten cases described here four *State Secretaries* were agreed upon in the cross-stitch procedure (cf. Appendix 1):

- *Green-Red* in Baden-Württemberg: minister for *Bundesrat* in the State Chancellery;
- *Red-Green* in Bremen: State Secretary in the Senate for Finance;
- *Red-Green* in Nordrhein-Westfalen: parliamentary *State Secretary* in the Ministry of Transport (who in 2012 changed to the Ministry of Environment where he assumed new areas of responsibility);
- *Black-Green* in Hessen: state secretary in the Ministry for Integration

The role of these *State Secretaries* for coalition management differs from case to case. In Bremen and Baden-Württemberg the state secretaries took over relevant tasks for the coalition management. In contrast, Nordrhein-Westfalen and Hessen may be seen as examples where the appointment of a *State Secretary* in a cross-stitch procedure is intended to highlight an issue and to balance ministerial resources.

Strategy Unit
In two *G-state* coalitions, in Schleswig-Holstein and Thüringen, a new strategy unit in the *State Chancellery* was created. Coalition partners appointed an adviser each for the units. Their function is to pass on information, identify possible coalition conflicts and work towards their solution, thereby meeting the need for greater harmonisation and coordination that comes with a three-party coalition as a matter of course. In Schleswig-Holstein the unit was created

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36 A State Secretary (German: *Staatssekretär*) is the permanent representative of a minister in a state ministry. The position can be considered as a deputy minister.

as compensation for the fact that the minister president granted the two coalition partners only one deputy government spokesperson in the *State Chancellery*. In Thüringen the Greens explicitly followed the Schleswig-Holstein model and successfully insisted on the creation of this unit in the course of the coalition negotiations.

In practice this unit can only take on the tasks outlined above when all the coalition partners accept its relevance, when it is provided with appropriate personnel and is integrated into the most important activities of the Chancellery. In both cases this only happens now and again.

3.2.3 Coalition Committees

A *coalition committee* is an essential body that is considered highly important in explaining the way in which coalitions govern (Kropp 2000, 170; Switek 2013, 281). Political scientists describe it as an informal[37] negotiating body that is flexible and also associated with formally responsible bodies and organs and obtains its stability through personal connections. It enables to link up the different arenas of government, party and parliamentary groups. It is only through this committee that coalitions can achieve a degree of decision-making ability at all (Rudzio 2008, 11-17). Studies show that the existence of *coalition committees* accelerates legislative processes and prolongs the durability of coalitions (Miller 201l). *Coalition committees* are considered especially important for smaller coalition partners as decisions are made by consensus, thereby enabling the quantitative inferiority in cabinet and parliament to be counter-balanced (Heinrich 2002, 57).

How do *coalition committees* differ in practice?

- **Their members.** *Coalition committees* usually consist of the chairs of the parliamentary group and the party, and senior members of the government. The number of participants usually varies from 6 to 12. In most cases the committee is chaired by the minister president (Kropp & Sturm 1998, 113).
- **Cycle of Meetings.** Many *coalition committees* are permanent bodies and agree to meet regularly e.g. at the beginning of each plenary week. Others are called on an ad-hoc basis in conflict situations when there is a difference of opinion between the coalition partners. The advantage of regular meetings is that the participants are able to build up trust, and gains and losses over the course of time can be balanced out. The rhythm should be dictated by the function that the committee is intended to carry out.
- **Their function.** As a steering body a *coalition committee* can informally prepare the cabinet meetings but can also be convened to settle current conflicts. It can serve to control its own ministers through the party, deter-

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37 Structures of informal governance are generally characterised by the fact that they are not public, not documented in writing, not fixed, not legally binding and do not appear in the constitution.

mine political leadership and bring about the acceptance and compliance of the parties (Miller 2011, 238-239). *Coalition committees* can also help to promote the public profile of the partners. In this case committee meetings are publicly documented by press conferences, as for example in the case of *red-green coalition* at federal level (1998-2005). "My interpretation is that the *coalition committee* was nothing more than an alibi at that time. Decisions were taken elsewhere" (Bütikofer 2015)[38].

In order to be able to assess the value of a *coalition committee* in practice it must be ranked relative to the other mechanisms of coalition management. In some cases the committee takes over a central role in coalition management; in others it is just one more body amongst others. In some coalitions, for example, the close cooperation of the parliamentary group and party chairmen constitutes the principal axis of *coalition management* (Kropp 2000, 172).

Evaluating the interviews about the *coalition committees* of the *G-states* paints a mixed picture. They differ, and in some cases significantly, with regard to the cycle of meetings, the membership and above all their function in coalition management. It is, however, possible to make some generalisations.

All *G-states* have established a classic *coalition committee*. In each case it was already agreed in the coalition agreement that an appropriate committee should be set up. The number of participants varies from 8-18. The *coalition committee* is generally made up of the leading politicians of the government, parliamentary groups and parties: the minister president and his deputy, the head of *State Chancellery*[39] as well as the parliamentary group and party chairperson. Although decisions are made unanimously, attention is paid to the fact that the coalition partners are nominally equally represented.

In most cases smaller top-level talks were established in addition. As a rule, for each coalition partner only one member of government and the parliamentary group chair take part in them, that is to say four people in the case of two-party coalitions. In most cases the head of *State Chancellery* participates as secretary. In contrast to this the party chairs are not necessarily involved. The names of these meetings vary from state to state. They are, for instance, referred to as 'core cabinet', 'non-round' or 'town-hall round'. In most cases they serve as a strategic centre of the coalition where conflict that has escalated to its final stage is dealt with.

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38 At the time of the red-green federal government (1998-2005) coalition committee meetings were often seen as evidence that the coalition would be entering into dispute. Therefore the SPD especially ensured that no regular meetings took place and that conflicts between the coalition partners were settled instead either by the Federal Chancellor or his/her deputy or between the parliamentary group chairmen.

39 The Head of State Chancellery (German: *Chef der Staatskanzlei, CdS*) is a political appointee and the highest ranking civil servant in the State Chancellery. Considered as the right hand of the Minister President the position is comparable to a Chief of Staff. His/her main responsibility is to coordinate the cabinet.

A combination of *coalition committee* and top-level talks forms the prototype of coalition management. In six out of the ten cases examined, coalitions set up a (larger) *coalition committee* and in addition established (smaller) rounds. Both bodies complement each other in their functions of coalition management. In the confidential top-level talks, politically sensitive questions are likely to be resolved and the leaders of the coalition partners can make compromises without the danger of losing face. On the other hand, a committee with a higher number of participants can act as a stabilising factor for the respective coalition if it includes more of the top-ranking leaders of the coalition partners, thereby promoting acceptance of compromises.

Comparing *coalition committees* and top-level rounds of the ten *G-states* suggests three general conclusions:

1. **No Patent Solution: effective coalition management is tailor-made.** No coalition is like another. Each one has to find the best way to create informal structures for the day-to-day workings of government that suit the political culture of the state and its bureaucracy, the participating parties and the leading personnel involved. Thus, for example, the coalitions in Bremen and Hamburg operate a coalition management that is dominated by the executive. Whether or not this is due to the "Hanseatic mentality" or the fact that both are city-states remains an open question. In contrast, the coalition in Schleswig-Holstein apparently manages without setting up any small top-level round. Its coalition management is characterised by a large *coalition committee* on the one hand and on the other by "decentralised decision-making" across multiple axes. These two variants differ significantly from the prototype structures of coalition management but nevertheless appear to function well for the coalitions in question. In addition, in all of the examples the coalition management displays a certain degree of dynamism. The informal structures are not static but change over the course of the legislative period as, for example, certain procedures first have to establish themselves whereas others are rejected. Changes might also occur due to shifts in the power relationships of those involved.

2. **Organisational principles of the Greens hamper effective coalition management.** In the case of the Greens the functions of government member, parliamentary group and party chair are spread over at least four people: first, due to the *dual leadership*[40] of the party; second, due to the separation *of office and mandate*[41]. As most *coalition committees* enjoy equal represen-

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40 Dual leadership (German: *Doppelspitze*) is a core principle of the Green party. It ensures that at least one woman is leading the party or parliamentary group in parliament (state and federal level). In addition it allows a representation of the internal wings of the party. With the exception of Hamburg, all state party associations examined here apply the dual leadership principle.

41 The principle of separation of office and mandate results in Green Party chairs not being allowed to be member of a parliament at the same time. The principle is applied in varying strictness by the federal and state associations of the German Green Party.

tation, coalition partners compensate for the 'preponderance' of Greens by adding participants. Having a large number of participants, however, undermines the objective of creating an atmosphere of confidentiality, thereby encouraging the formation of further, smaller rounds. Consequently, the Greens need to put more effort into involving the party in decision-making processes and subsequently keeping it informed.

3. **Effective governance and political staging are at odds with each other.** When informal coalition bodies function effectively and very little information about the negotiations leaks out, the result can also be that neither their own party nor the general public are aware of any political achievements. In Rheinland-Pfalz, for example, the leadership of the *red-green coalition* (2011-2016) resolved their differences relatively quietly in the small top-level round. On the other hand, the *coalition committee* set up in the coalition agreement kept desperately looking for issues to deal with. It was also a challenge for the party's internal opinion formation that it was not always clear what Green successes the *Deputy Minister President* and the parliamentary group chairman had negotiated. The example illustrates that effective governance and public political staging can be at odds with each other. One possibility of counteracting this is to set up the *coalition committee* with a specific view to public staging, as is practised, for example, by the *coastal coalition* in Schleswig-Holstein.

4 The Federal Arena

Two features of German federalism stand out especially in the subject matter of this work. Firstly, the particular nature of 'executive federalism' highlights the dominant role of state governments as compared to state parliaments. Secondly, the relationships between the federal government and the states form a system of 'cooperative federalism' that is characterised by mutual dependence (Blätte & Hohl 2013, 209). These facets mean that the Greens are now strongly represented as active negotiating partners in the coordination between *Bundesrat* and *Bundestag*. The Greens find themselves "in a strategically advantageous position to make use of their participation in nine state governments at present [...] and also to have their political demands taken on board and to assert their party-political interests" (Träger 2016, 187).

This section addresses which informal structures the Greens have created for party-internal coordination in the federal arena. The term federal arena here does not mean a precisely defined place as set down in the constitution. It rather refers to an arena for party-internal policy formation in respect of concrete decisions in bodies such as the *Bundesrat* but also for the development of the wider strategic direction of the party. The internal dispute concerning the Greens' party programme naturally goes beyond this and includes party organs and structures such as the federal delegates' conference, states' council, women's council, federal working groups and membership ballot votes (Switek 2015, 133ff).

4.1 State governments in the *Bundesrat*

Members of state governments form the *Bundesrat*. Their behaviour in the *Bundesrat* is determined both by party-political differences as well as by the states' own interests. Conversely the role of the states in the *Bundesrat* may well have an effect on the party state associations (Leber 2014, 41). In any case the voting of a state government in the *Bundesrat* – that is to say the position on, approval and endorsement of draft bills, the convening of the *conciliation committee* and the introduction of their own initiatives – cannot solely be explained through the existence of *conforming and non-conforming coalitions* (Kropp 2001, 201)[42]. State governments do not follow at any cost the direction that their respective federal parties favour.

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42 A non-conforming coalition refers to a coalition in a state where one partner is in the federal government, while the other is in opposition on federal level.

The *Minister Presidents* do not see themselves as the extended arm of party headquarters but think "in questions of doubt always rather of their own interest as party leader and head of state government than of the welfare and the troubles of the party as a whole" (Leunig&Träger 2102, 304).

In federal legislation the *conciliation committee*[43] plays a crucial role. An analysis of the period from 1949-2009 shows that the *conciliation committee* was convened in around 12 per cent of all legislative initiatives (Träger 2012, 45). It is convened particularly often when the majority in the *Bundesrat* is determined by opposition governments (diverging majority). When there are parallel and unclear majorities in the *Bundesrat* and *Bundestag*, conflicts between federal government and the states are dealt with less often in the *conciliation committee* (Leunig 2003, 222). At the time of the *Grand Coalition* under Chancellor Merkel (2005-2009) the *conciliation committee* for example was convened in only around 3 per cent of all cases (Träger & Thiel 2012, 265). This can be explained, on the one hand, by the fact that the *Grand Coalition* pushed forward few legislative proposals affecting major state legislation. On the other hand, the relevant state actors were involved in good time by means of informal processes and bodies (e.g. federal *coalition committee*, commission for federal reform) (Stüwe 2008, 31). Consequently other partly informal bodies and negotiating structures replace the *conciliation committee* as the decision-making arena (Leunig 2003, 242).

It can be seen that decision-making processes have been shifting towards informal structures since 2013, the beginning of the second *Grand Coalition* under Chancellor Angela Merkel. The *conciliation committee* has only met twice in three years within this legislative period (Conciliation Committee 2016).

4.2 *Bundesrat* Schedule

The plenary of the *Bundesrat* meets every three to four weeks on Fridays. The *Minister Presidents* and the authorised representatives of the state governments take part in the plenary sessions. The sessions are prepared by the respective *State Representations* in a three-weekly rhythm consisting of committee week, coordination week and plenary week (see also Schrenk 2010; Behnke 2015).

In the **Committee Week**, three weeks before the plenary session, the sixteen specialist committees of the *Bundesrat* advise on the submissions in hand. In these committees it is the departmental principle that by and large applies: that is to say the representatives of the state ministries vote in the committees in line with the views of their heads of department. The *state representation* advisers review the state votes collected in from the committees, complementing this with an overview of the voting behaviour of the other states. In this way the

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43 The conciliation committee (German: *Vermittlungsausschuss*) is a joint *Bundestag* and *Bundesrat* committee in which both institutions have the same number of representatives. It meets to broker compromises between the two chambers.

lines of conflict within state governments and between state governments are manifest by Friday or at the latest by Monday morning.

The **Coordination Week** is dedicated to state-internal coordination between the responsible and advisory departments. The aim here is for the state government to reach a common position. This is not always easy in view of diverging policies and sometimes party-political interests of the department (particularly when each ministry is led by a different coalition partner). This internal state-coordination is overlapped and partly influenced by the simultaneous cross-state coordination of the parties in Berlin. At the end of the week the questions that remain open are those that can be resolved solely at state secretary or cabinet level.

If state-internal coordination is in the foreground of the coordination week, cross-state or federal-state coordination dominates the **Plenary Week**. In the cabinet meeting the state governments define their positions regarding most of the items on the agenda. For a very few questions which cannot be resolved in the cabinet 'a free rein' is agreed. In the middle of the week an official *A-B-G-states* conflict line[44] becomes apparent, the issues of which have to be coordinated at a political level.

The final coordination within the parties takes place on the Thursday of the plenary week and finishes at the highest political level in **Fireside Talks** held by *A*-, *B*-, and *G-states*. It is the aim of each party to succeed in presenting a harmonious and united front in spite of possible conflicts of interest between state governments, federal party and *Bundestag* parliamentary group. The effort associated with coordination is noticeably greater at times of multiple coalition constellations in the states.

The CDU/CSU meet at the so-called **Merkel round** hosted by *Bundestag* Parliamentary Group Chairman, Volker Kauder, in which the Chancellor also takes part. The venue for the meetings rotates between the *State Representations* of the CDU/CSU-led federal states. Hessen's Minister for Federal and European Affairs is coordinating the *B-side*. Taking part in these meetings are all Minister Presidents from CDU/CSU and the *Deputy Minister Presidents* of those states in which the CDU co-governs as the small coalition partner. Other members of the round table include, moreover, the chairmen of the CSU[45], the general secretaries of the CDU and CSU, the head of Federal Chancellery and its federal/state coordinators (Funk 2014).

Up to 2012 the former Minister President of Rheinland-Pfalz, Kurt Beck, was the *Bundesrat* coordinator of the SPD. On his departure the SPD party chair and role of host moved temporarily to Nordrhein-Westfalen as it is the most populated federal state with an extensive administrative system (Sattar,

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44 This means the party-political conflict lines between the A-side, the B-side, and the G-side. The line between them is blurred in so far as a G-State with the Greens as a small coalition partner is nevertheless attributed to the A- or B-side as they are the larger coalition partners.

45 The CSU is the Bavarian sister party of the CDU. In Bavaria one can vote only CSU, not CDU. In the federal parliament, CDU/CSU form a joint parliamentary group.

Burger & Holl 2012). In the meantime Hamburg, with the former SPD General Secretary and present Lord Mayor Olaf Scholz has taken over an important role in coordinating the *A-states*[46]. Along with the SPD minister presidents, also taking part in these meetings are the *Deputy Minister Presidents* from those states where the SPD acts as the junior coalition partner. Three federal party representatives also participate in the talks: the party chairman, the general secretary and the treasurer. The *Bundestag* parliamentary group is represented by its chairman and the parliamentary secretary (Sturm 2013).

4.3 Green Coordination in the Federal Arena

In order for a party to achieve an outward united appearance with regard to important legislative initiatives in the Bundesrat, complex coordination procedures among those involved are essential across vertical and horizontal lines: with the coalition partner, between the state governments, the *Bundestag* parliamentary group and the federal executive committee of the party (Kropp 2001). In the case of the CDU/CSU and the SPD there is a long tradition of informal *Bundesrat* cooperation between the states and at federal level. For the smaller parties such as the Greens it was a long-accepted tradition that they would meet on an ad-hoc basis if need be (Schrenk, 2010, 366).

This has changed and can be traced back to the growth in Green governmental involvement which results in an increase in administrative and programme-related resources at state level and a stronger voice in the *Bundesrat*. The Greens have become aware that resources – time and personnel – are needed for the coordination processes, as stressed for example by Anja Siegesmund (2016), the Minister of Environment in Thüringen: "G-state coordination does not function by itself. Professional structures are just half the battle".

An overview of the *Bundesrat* majorities in the 18th legislative period (cf. Table 3) illustrates that the number of votes of *G-states* has continued to grow since the beginning of the *Grand Coalition* in October 2013 from 29 votes. In 2016 the Greens are participating in government in ten states and have 45 out of a total of 69 votes in the *Bundesrat*. The absolute majority is 35 votes. No political camp (such as *red-green*, *black-yellow*, or even a *Grand Coalition*) has a majority. State governments that coincide with the ruling coalition on federal level (*R-states*) only manage 20 votes. In order to implement their proposals the *Grand Coalition* therefore relies on the votes of at least three *G-states* that contribute at least 15 votes (or only 11 votes if the government of Brandenburg votes with the *Grand Coalition*). Consequently, the Greens enjoy an influential veto position, which makes inner party coordination more important.

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46   A-states stand for those German states that are led by an SPD majority.

Table 3: Bundesrat majorities in the 18th legislative period (Grand Coalition in the federal government, 2013-2016)

States (votes in the Bundesrat)	1. Oct. 2013	18. Jan. 2014	13. Nov. 2014	05. Dec. 2014	15. Apr. 2015	25. Apr. 2016	12. May 2016	18. May 2016
BY (6)	CSU							
BE (4)	SPD/CDU							
MV (3)	SPD/CDU							
SL (3)	CDU/SPD							
SA (4)	CDU/FDP	CDU/SPD						
ST (4)	CDU/SPD					CDU/SPD/Greens		
HH (3)	SPD				SPD/Greens			
TH (4)	CDU/SPD			The Left/SPD/Greens				
HE (5)	CDU/FDP	CDU/Greens						
BW (6)	Greens/SPD						Greens/CDU	
RP (4)	SPD/Greens							SPD/FDP/Greens
HB (3)	SPD/Greens							
NI (6)	SPD/Greens							
NW (6)	SPD/Greens							
SH (4)	SPD/Greens/SSW							
BB (4)	SPD/The Left							
R-states votes of Grand Coalition	27	27	31	27	24	20		
Mixed states votes	13	8	4	4	4	4		
G-states votes	29	34	34	38	41	45		
G-states votes needed by the R-states for a 35 vote majority	0	0	0	4	7	11		

Source: ArneJungjohann.de

In order to carry out the complex business of Green party coordination between the states and the federal level, informal *G-coordinators* are employed in the *State Representations* in Berlin. Together they form the *G-coordination*, the engine room of Green politics in the federal arena. They function as a two-way hinge mechanism for their government: on the one hand, (and provided that they are employed in their role as policy advisers) they represent their department and thereby the state in a certain *Bundesrat* committee; on the other hand, they keep their ministry and the *State Chancellery* up to date on the debate in the *Bundesrat*.
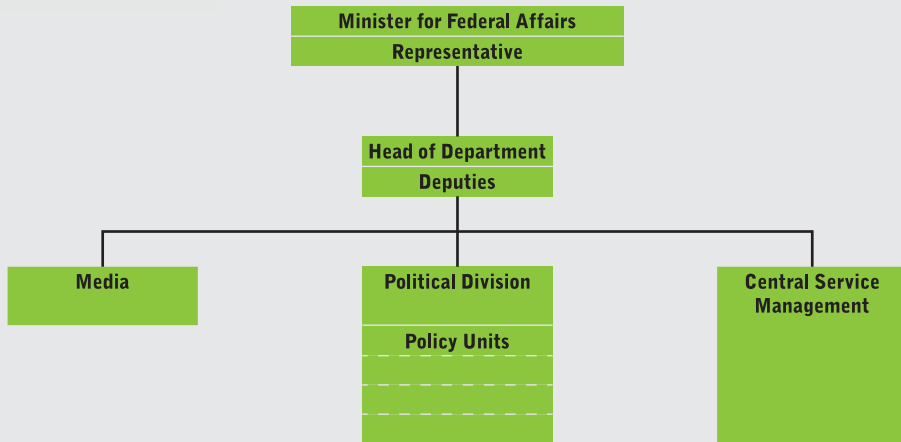
The task and the role of State Representations

"With the *State Representations* in Berlin, the German governmental system has recourse to unique political institutions. [...] Their principal task is to act as voting spokespersons and to represent their state in the *Bundesrat*. In addition they anticipate political developments affecting the policies of their own state – they serve as listening posts and mouthpieces in the course of policy-formation and decision-making processes, organise contacts that benefit the state and showcase the diversity of their state in the nation's capital. [...]

Each *State Representation* is traditionally headed by a representative of the state government. According to state tradition or political constellation this person holds the rank of minister or *state secretary* with cabinet status (so-called politician solution) or of a *State Secretary* without cabinet status or of a senior civil servant (so-called civil servant solution). [...] Especially in the case of the politician solution there is, in addition, a head of service responsible for the management of the department.

A team consisting of expert and coordination advisers is available to help the representative or head of service in fulfilling his or her tasks. The advisers are either directly included in the budget as permanent personnel employed through the *State Representation*'s appointment scheme or delegated from their departments to the *State Representation* in Berlin. [...] (They possess) enormous and detailed legislative knowledge that they make use of in the interest of their state, against the background of diverse hierarchically and also party-politically developed structures. Apart from this 'political' personnel, each *State Representation* engages personnel for the organisation and implementation of a generally very extensive and substantively differentiated range of events" (Schrenk 2010).

Graph 2: Set-up of a state representation of a state government
Schematic illustration

| Minister for Federal Affairs |
| Representative |

| Head of Department |
| Deputies |

| Media | | Political Division | | Central Service Management |

| Policy Units |

Source: ArneJungjohann.de ⓒ①⑤⊜

The formal status of the *G-coordinators* in their respective *State Representation* (cf. Graph 2 and Appendix 3) differs from state to state. In the cases studied here, roughly three variants can be identified as to which position *G-coordination* is linked with: (1) as a ministry adviser in the specialist department, (2) as coordinator of the political department at the intermediate level and (3) as head of department or his deputy at the highest political level beneath the representative who is normally appointed by the large coalition partner (cf. Graph 2; Appendix 3). A noticeable new feature related to this is the appointment of Volker Ratzmann as *State Secretary* and *Head of State Representation* of Baden-Württemberg. Within the *G-states* he is the only *Head of State Representation*[47] and consequently the Greens' most senior civil servant negotiator in the federal arena.

For the *G-coordinators* it is crucial to maintain a close and cooperative exchange with the *Bundesrat* advisers of the specific ministry in their home state. These are normally closely attached to their executive or have a direct line of communication to the respective head of department. Consequently, without intermediary heads or deputy heads of department, communication generally flows rapidly between the state capital and the *G-coordinators* in the *State*

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47 The Head of State Representation (German: *Bevollmächtiger der Landesvertretung beim Bund*) is representing a state government on the federal level. The position is a political appointee. His/ her main responsibility is to coordinate the state government's work in the committees and plenary of the *Bundesrat* and represent the state governments towards the federal and other state governments.

Representations. From the point of view of the Greens, this close-knit feedback offers advantages for policy organisation in contrast to the other parties.

Incoming ministers often underestimate to what extent the federal policy of a state comes via the *State Representation*. Such "deficits in steering expertise" (Kropp 2010, 118) usually only occur when a party without governmental experience encounters an already experienced governing party, with ministerial structures at its disposal, in the coalition negotiations. This is confirmed by Federal Chairwoman Simone Peter with regard to her experiences in the Saarland state government (2009 – 2012): "When I was a minister in the *Jamaica coalition*, the Greens proved to be at a strategic disadvantage because the personnel manning in the *State Representation* was inadequate. Awareness of this intensified as participation in state governments increased" (Peter 2016). In an ideal situation these political positions will already have been agreed in the coalition negotiations.

G-coordination serves to identify and solve possible dissent between the Green actors so that they vote in unison on the important issues. In case no common ground can be found, it at least works towards achieving coordinated communication with a view to preventing differences between the actors being aired in public. Internal coordination further includes tasks such as sifting through *Bundesrat* motions, reducing the number of policy-relevant questions in preparation for the *G-fireside* and predicting future key issues so that the *G-fireside* can deal with them ahead of time.

To deal with these diverse assignments effectively cross-state thematic task-sharing amongst the personnel is arranged in the *G-coordination*. These areas of responsibility are checked at irregular intervals as to their current relevance, especially after elections when new *G-states* join the coordination. The division of tasks is naturally linked to the ministerial areas of responsibility of the *G-state* in question. Through the areas of responsibility of its Minister of Migration and Family Affairs, Irene Alt, Rheinland-Pfalz had taken over the role of coordination for refugee policy. On the other hand, Nordrhein-Westfalen is responsible for European policy, as the position of *G-coordination* is anchored in the relevant specialist department. Working groups have been set up for some policy areas where the Greens have responsibility for several departments nationwide respectively (for example environment/energy, agriculture and justice).

In addition to the main political issues there is also task-sharing between the *G-states* in respect of party and coalition politics. As a result of the cooperation with their coalition partner, the *G-states* have access to a flow of information from other parties. For example, the Greens in Hamburg and Nordrhein-Westfalen are kept informed about the coordination of the SPD in the *Bundesrat* through the social-democratic *Minister Presidents* of their state coalitions. As Deputy CDU Federal Chairman and close confidant of the Chancellor Merkel, the *Minister President* of Hessen, Volker Bouffier, provides the *G-states* with an important means of access to the debates in the CDU/CSU camp. In the oppo-

site direction, he can report on the positioning of the *G-states* to the CDU committees. The *Deputy Minister President* of Hessen, Tarek Al-Wazir (2016), therefore sees new channels of information between the *B* and the *G* side which did not exist in the past. A similar situation may well apply to Baden-Württemberg since the inauguration of the *green-black* coalition in 2016.
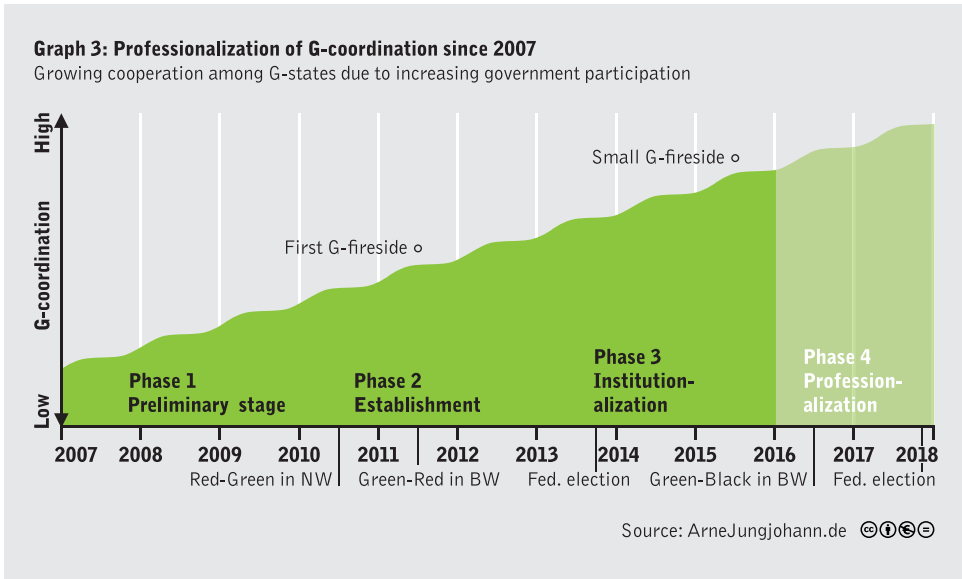
4.4 Development of *G-coordination*

How the structures of the federal coordination of the Greens have developed is traced below. The development of *G-coordination* has gone through four phases (cf. Graph 3):

4.4.1 Phase 1: Preliminary Stage (2007-2010)

The beginnings of the *G-coordination* date back to between 2007 and 2010. At that time the Greens were only in government in Bremen (*red-green*), Hamburg (*black-green*) and Saarland (*Jamaica coalition*). The fact that it was a question of three different constellations with different coalition partners complicated coordination between the Green states and the federal Greens. In addition, the three states are comparatively small and therefore have few administrative resources at their disposal, thereby reducing coordination to a minimum. In the case of Hamburg and Saarland the coordination was carried out by employees in the respective state capital (and not as it is common practice now, in the *State Representation* in Berlin).

The first coordination between federal and state levels was initiated at the time by the Green parliamentary group in the *Bundestag* which took over the service function of organising telephone conferences and of providing the states with expertise. As one federal-level senior advisor recalls: "At that time it was a very small and loose association. As a result the *Bundestag* parliamentary group played a relatively important role in this coordination between federal and state level".

This phase can be seen as the forerunner of actual *G-coordination*. The start of the *red-green* (minority) government in Nordrhein-Westfalen in May 2010 marks a decisive turning-point for Green coordination. The circle of *G-states* was joined by an influential state with considerable resources that in the following years played an important part in stabilising and professionalising the *G-coordination*. Looking back, the time of government participation in Nordrhein-Westfalen was also important in that it was able to compensate for the premature end of *black-green* in Hamburg that shortly followed in November 2010.

Graph 3: Professionalization of G-coordination since 2007
Growing cooperation among G-states due to increasing government participation

High

G-coordination

Small G-fireside ○

First G-fireside ○

Low

Phase 1
Preliminary stage

Phase 2
Establishment

Phase 3
Institution-
alization

Phase 4
Profession-
alization

2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
		Red-Green in NW		Green-Red in BW		Fed. election		Green-Black in BW		Fed. election	

Source: ArneJungjohann.de ⓒⓘⓢⓔ

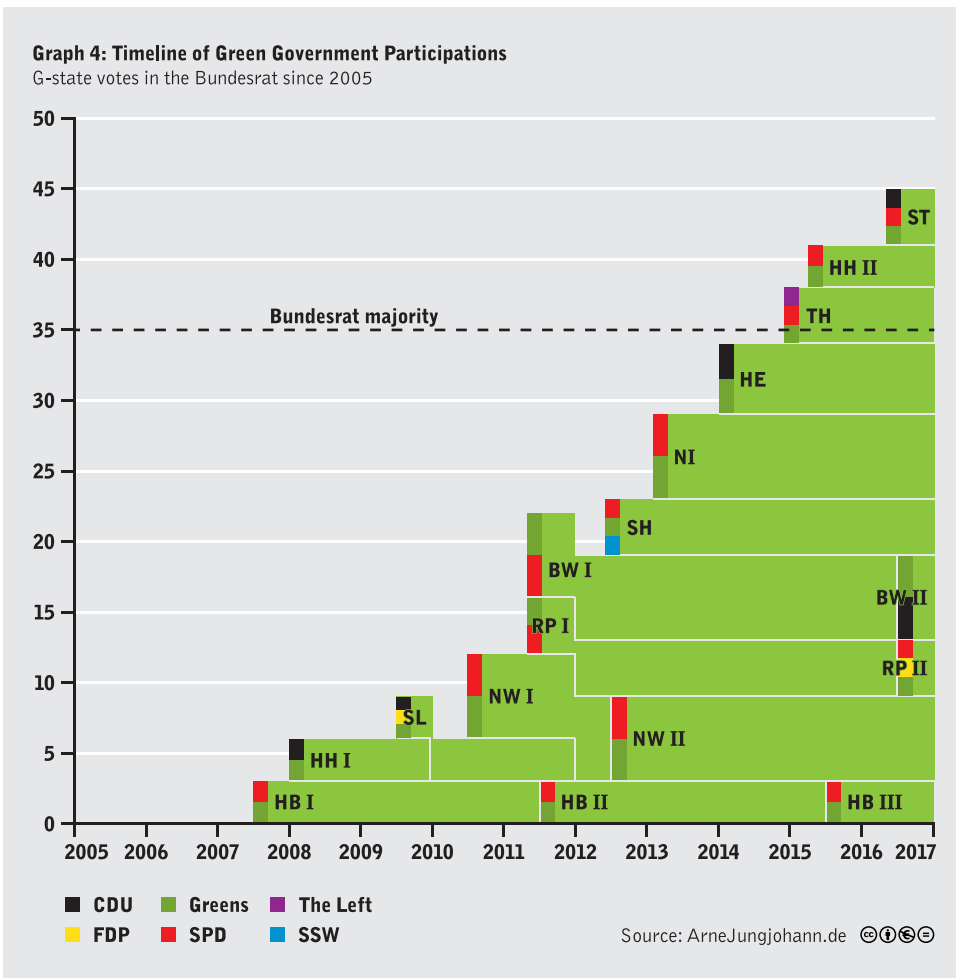## 4.4.2 Phase 2: Establishment (2011-2013)

As a result of government participation in Nordrhein-Westfalen the voting weight of the *G-states* increased in the *Bundesrat*. This consequently led to a greater need for Green internal coordination. At the same time the Greens in the Nordrhein-Westfalian government became influential actors in *G-coordination*, accounting for the largest state association of the party and the largest number of delegates of a state body in the *Bundestag* parliamentary group. Government participation also meant the Greens had access to greater resources in terms of administration and personnel.

In their coalition negotiations the Nordrhein-Westfalian Greens had created the personnel-related conditions for taking over *G-coordination*, laying claim amongst other things to the position of deputy head of the *State Representation* and a further political position as head of a department. The fact that from now on *G-coordination* was de facto increasingly organised by Nordrhein-Westfalen was met with little enthusiasm on the part of the Green *Bundestag* parliamentary group. "But in the course of further government participation with more and more states the balance of power became clear", recalls one G-state coordinator.

The telephone conferences were now replaced by regular meetings in Berlin. The first round took place in the *State Representation* of Nordrhein-Westfalen on 10. February 2011. At first there was disagreement concerning the venue as the *Bundestag* parliamentary group favoured the Parliamentary Society near the Reichstag. The actual name '*G-fireside*' was first mentioned in the second meeting on 14. April 2011. If at first the *G-fireside* only took place occasionally, the rhythm of the *Bundesrat* was adopted from autumn 2011.

Initially the willingness to attend varied greatly, as summed up by the chairman of the parliamentary group at the time, Jürgen Trittin (2016), "For some Greens the state parliamentary meetings were more important than coordination for the *Bundesrat*."

With state elections in spring 2011 Rheinland-Pfalz (*red-green*) and also Baden-Württemberg (*green-red*) joined the circle of *G-states* (cf. Graph 4). With the mounting *G-state* influence in the *Bundesrat* the need for party-internal co-ordination increased again, as stressed by Party Chairman of Nordrhein-West-falen, Sven Lehmann (2016): "Before 2011 there was not much to coordinate. This became all the more important from 2011 onwards."

Graph 4: Timeline of Green Government Participations
G-state votes in the Bundesrat since 2005

Source: ArneJungjohann.de

As a result of its political weight it was clear that Baden-Württemberg with its *Minister President*, Winfried Kretschmann, would take on a leading role among

the *G-states.* After the surprising entry into the Stuttgart *State Chancellery,* Kretschmann himself saw his main priority, in the first instance, as asserting himself in the state as head of government. It took some time to become acquainted with the chancellery and the personnel and to adapt procedures to suit his own ideas. At the same time Kretschmann was leading an unusual coalition, in which the SPD was only reluctantly prepared to adapt to its role as the junior partner. Moreover, he had left the *Bundesrat* business to the SPD. For them as a junior partner to appoint the Minister for *Bundesrat* Affairs was somewhat unusual when compared with other states. The ruling had only come about as the SPD convincingly argued that only a minister from their party would be able to call on *A-state* coordination, so crucial for *Bundesrat* business.
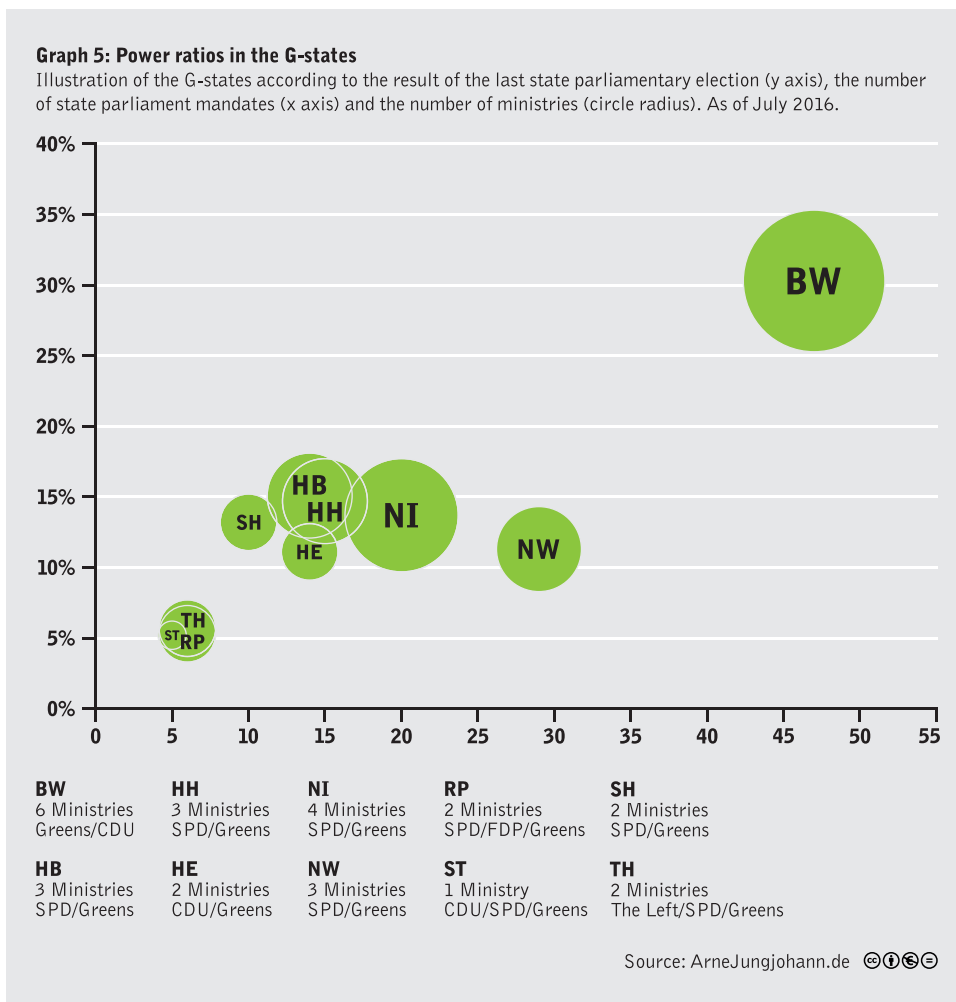
These afore-mentioned reasons resulted in a stalling of the federal political impact of the Baden-Württemberg Greens. It was only a year after winning the state election that they took charge of the Department for Political Affairs in the *State Representation* with Volker Ratzmann, the former chair of the Green parliamentary group in Berlin's state parliament. For many years Ratzmann formed part of the nationwide network of Green parliamentary group chairmen and -women, which was to prove an advantage for his position and acceptance as a future *G-coordinator*. With the credentials of a former leading politician, Kretschmann highlighted the importance of *Bundesrat* business.

Ratzmann's entrance also raised the question how the *G-coordination* was to be organised in the future. On the one hand, it was clear that Baden-Württemberg had to be assigned an important role. On the other hand, there was some controversy in the Green party about subordinating itself to a *G-state* that in respect of political questions and the orientation of its party wings differs significantly from party chapters such as Bremen or Nordrhein-Westfalen. "There are states that - based on their location, size and also political orientation - are better suited organising agreements amongst the states", according to Bremen's mayor, Karoline Linnert (2016).

Within the Green party and its state associations Baden-Württemberg is indeed a political heavyweight. Graph 5 compares the *G-states* according to the results of the respective last state elections, the number of representatives in the state parliament and the number of Green ministries in the respective coalition. Its placing basically illustrates what personnel resources and access to information the state in question has at its disposal. Admittedly this simplified illustration of Green internal strength ratios has only limited validity.[48] Nevertheless, it

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48 The number of ministries, without taking into consideration the areas of operations, is only of limited significance as to the influence and room to manoeuvre in the government. For example the Greens in Hessen only formally account for two ministries in contrast to four in Niedersachsen. Notwithstanding, the Greens in both of these state governments are represented in four specialist committees of the *Bundesrat* respectively. In addition, other criteria apart from the three that were chosen could have been taken into consideration in order to convey the strength ratios of the *G-states*, for example the number of members of the state party, the number of members of the *Bundestag* in the state group etc.

shows the special status enjoyed by *Minister President*, Winfried Kretschmann and the Greens in Baden-Württemberg in comparison to the other *G-states.*

Graph 5: Power ratios in the G-states
Illustration of the G-states according to the result of the last state parliamentary election (y axis), the number of state parliament mandates (x axis) and the number of ministries (circle radius). As of July 2016.

BW	**HH**	**NI**	**RP**	**SH**
6 Ministries	3 Ministries	4 Ministries	2 Ministries	2 Ministries
Greens/CDU	SPD/Greens	SPD/Greens	SPD/FDP/Greens	SPD/Greens
HB	**HE**	**NW**	**ST**	**TH**
3 Ministries	2 Ministries	3 Ministries	1 Ministry	2 Ministries
SPD/Greens	CDU/Greens	SPD/Greens	CDU/SPD/Greens	The Left/SPD/Greens

Source: ArneJungjohann.de

The agreement that was finally reached on the organisation of *G-coordination* envisaged task-sharing between Nordrhein-Westfalen and Baden-Württem-berg. Nordrhein-Westfalen took over the first part of the three-week coordi-nation, in particular the professional preparation of *Bundesrat* business in the committee week. In contrast, Baden-Württemberg organised the political coordination of the *G-states* in the plenary week. The change in task-shar-ing also resulted in a change in the hosting of the *G-fireside*. From now the meetings took place in the Baden-Württemberg *State Representation* on Thursday evenings.

Even if between 2011 and 2013 the political weight of the *G-states* rose as a result of increased government participation, the nationwide political climate and consequently the federal Greens dominated the discussions in the *G-fireside*. The *black-yellow coalition*[49] in the federal government faced a *red-green* majority in the *Bundesrat*. This camp constellation marked the election campaigns for the state parliamentary elections in Schleswig-Holstein (May 2012) and Niedersachsen (January 2013), and the federal election (September 2013).

The imminent federal election had a disciplinary effect on its own ranks. The time was marked by a very obvious – and publicly visible – confrontation of the two political camps. SPD and Greens wanted to use their majority in the *Bundesrat* to challenge the *black-yellow coalition*. The *conciliation committee* met comparatively often, 13 times alone in 2013. This constellation placed the federal Greens in an objectively strong role. Finally, the dominant role of the federal parliamentary group in the party-internal relationship between federal and state Greens was reinforced by the election of Katrin Göring-Eckardt and Jürgen Trittin, the former chairman of the Green federal parliamentary group, as top candidates. As a result, the discussions in the *G-fireside* became significantly more political, with an increased need for coordination. In particular, federal political initiatives in the *Bundesrat* (e.g. on civil partnership or migration) played a central role.

Nevertheless the varying perspectives of federal and state Greens clashed with each other time and time again in the *G-fireside*. From the point of view of the *G-states* the federal Green camp had excessive expectations as to how the *G-states* could act party-politically in the *Bundesrat* or how they could assert a Green position in their respective coalition. The situation is summed up by Bremen's mayor, Linnert (2016): "The federal Greens are often disappointed about what we as states do in the *Bundesrat*. Conflicts arise due to the fact that we have to act in the interests of our state and that we are tied to the majorities with the result that truly Green policy-making is impossible".

All in all, *G-coordination* established itself fully in the years from 2011 to 2013. The working structures were consolidated and the participation of the members became more mandatory. The *G-fireside* firmly established itself as an informal coordination body between federal and state Greens on Thursday evenings. Their debates became increasingly more political. The *G-coordinator*s gradually took over the daily business that had previously been organised laboriously within the state ministries. The absolute increase in government participation resulted in the growing importance of the *G-states*. After the start of the *red-green* coalition in Nordrhein-Westfalen the states took over *G-coordination* from the *Bundestag* parliamentary group. The shared *G-coordination* leadership of Baden-Württemberg and Nordrhein-Westfalen that was agreed in

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49 A coalition between the CDU and the FDP. This is the former centre-right coalition of choice of both parties and their electorates.

2012 simultaneously marked the beginning of the growing power influence of the *G-states* as opposed to the federal-level Greens.

4.4.3 Phase 3: Institutionalisation (2014-2015)

The federal election in 2013 marks a break in the federal/state balance of power in the Green party. Following a remarkable series of election successes for the party as a whole since the federal election in 2009 – with representation in all state parliaments, considerable government participation and the first Green *Minister President* – "the federal election in 2013 was supposed to be the 'cherry on the cake' of this Green electoral success story" (Probst 2015, 135). However, the meteoric success was followed by a crash down to 8.4 per cent, whereby the Greens not only failed in their aim at government participation but also entered the German *Bundestag* for the third time as the smallest parliamentary group.

In the inner-party dispute the defeat was chalked up above all to the federal side. Many Greens in the state governments were dissatisfied with the thematic focus on raising taxes in the election campaign. "There were rows in the party after the federal election. Also between the state and federal Greens," as Baden-Württemberg's Head of *State Representation* recalls: "The pragmatism of everyday government and the programmatic decisions of an opposition party clashed" (Ratzmann 2016). On the federal side a drastic generation change took place: Jürgen Trittin and Renate Künast resigned from the chairmanship of the *Bundestag* parliamentary group and Party Chairwoman, Claudia Roth, and Secretary General, Steffi Lemke, resigned their posts. The resignations weakened the federal side as opposed to the *G-states*, as Reinhard Bütikofer (2015) explains: "Following the departure of Jürgen Trittin and Claudia Roth there was no one left at federal level who could stand up to the clout of the states". The bloodletting in respect of the leading personnel and the role as smallest opposition partner facing an omnipresent *Grand Coalition* with overwhelming majorities were the remaining factors for the decreasing party-internal political influence of the *Bundestag* parliamentary group. At the same time the unspoken agreement ran out, that in 2013, the year of the federal election, the demands of the federal Greens would take priority. In turn, the interests of the states came to the fore in 2015 and 2016, also in view of the upcoming state parliamentary elections.

With the inauguration of the *Grand Coalition* in Berlin there was also a change in the federal political conflict situation, which placed the *G-states* in a stronger negotiating position vis-à-vis the federal government. At the commencement of their time in office, the *Grand Coalition* only had 27 votes in their favour in the *Bundesrat* and consequently 8 fewer than required for a majority. In contrast, the six state governments with Green participation had 29 votes in the *Bundesrat* (cf. Table 3). The *Grand Coalition* was not necessarily reliant on the *G-states* for a majority as long as they had secured the agreement of other mixed states for their proposals. This, however, changed with the estab-

lishment of the r*ed-red-green coalition* in Thüringen in December 2014. Since that time it has only been possible to organise a majority with the agreement of the Greens.

Over and above this, the new coalition constellations such as *black-green* in Hessen (from January 2014) and *red-red-green* in Thüringen (December 2014) made the practice of coordination more complex between the federal government and the *Bundesrat*. Breaking out of the classic camp constellation meant that the controversial disputes between federal government and states were hardly ever settled in the *Bundesrat*. "The Bundesrat business was far less contentious than it had been in the previous legislative period", recalls Jürgen Trittin (2016). In the first three years of the *Grand Coalition* the *conciliation committee* met twice, firstly concerning the Third Act to amend the Regionalisation Act and secondly inheritance tax (Conciliation Committee 2016). With the loss of the federal election and the resulting consequences for the personnel, the establishment of the *Grand Coalition*, the complex majority ratios in the *Bundesrat* and the growing confidence of the state Greens, the power structure balance within the party shifted in favour of the state Greens.

The growing confidence of the *G-states* after losing the federal election may well be seen as epitomised in its refugee policy. In the dispute over the question of the safe countries of origin the only state to vote for a reform of the right to asylum proposed by the *Grand Coalition* was the state government of Baden-Württemberg under Winfried Kretschmann. Green government members from Rheinland-Pfalz, Niedersachsen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Bremen and Niedersachsen had abstained and Schleswig-Holstein voted against the compromise. To the annoyance of his party friends and against the policy position of the federal party and the *Bundestag* parliamentary group, Kretschmann made the compromise with the CDU/CSU possible after all (Soldt 2014).

4.4.4 Phase 4: Professionalisation (from 2016)

Whilst structures for internal federal/state coordination have been built up and established in the last few years, 2016 heralds a further step in professionalisation. This concerns on the one hand the internal procedures but even more so the outward effect of *G-coordination*.

For one thing the *Bundesrat* became more diverse and colourful following the state parliamentary elections in March 2016. Meanwhile the 16 state governments with eleven different coalition models are represented in it. All political camps are far from having a 35-vote majority. The CDU and SPD co-governed states together with CSU-led Bayern account for merely 20 of the 69 votes. The *Grand Coalition* is therefore still short of 15 votes from outside the *black-red* block for a majority, that is to say at least three large federal states (cf. Table 3). As a result there is the increasing necessity for the *Grand Coalition* in the federal parliament to find compromises and to enter into new alliances.

In the past all the *G-states* sided with the *A-states* camp. Since the election of *green-black* in the spring of 2016 Baden-Württemberg (like *green-red* before) is no longer attributed to the *A-side*, just like *black-green* Hessen. In preparation for the *Minister Presidents' Conferences* and the preceding Conferences of Heads of State Chancelleries (CdS Conferences) Winfried Kretschmann and his *state secretary* consequently take part in the preliminary discussions of the *B-states*. This is moreover a potential lever whereby the Greens can feed through their policy positions into federal legislation.

The issues that are especially relevant for the *G-states* from a political point of view are dealt with as before by *G-coordination*. The choice of issues relevant to coordination, the organisation and preparation of the G-line for recommendations relating to coordination and harmonisation continues to remain in the hands of Nordrhein-Westfalen. As long as the issues are of fundamental political importance or contain considerable potential for conflict, the question of coordination is dealt with in the *G-fireside* or in the small *G-fireside*, which was founded in 2015. The latter is further evidence of professionalisation. *Minister President* Kretschmann and the nine *Deputy Minister Presidents* meet there in a small circle, often with the chairs of the federal party, the *Bundestag* parliamentary group and representatives of the German Greens in the European Parliament.

This phase of professionalisation is marked by the fact that after the state parliamentary elections in 2016 the states have again experienced a growth in their importance in the internal party power structure. Nonetheless, the upcoming federal election in September 2017 might well be influencing Green internal coordination. Even if this time the two camps are not confronting each other, the Greens' election campaign is likely once again to raise the question as to whether they are able to demonstrate their right to play a constructive part in federal politics by voting cohesively in the *Bundesrat* and to prove their ability to govern. To achieve this, the *G-states*, as in 2013, would need to subordinate their interests to the federal side for the sake of a successful election campaign. In view of the differences that have been noted most recently in respect of issues such as wealth tax, trade policy (TTIP and CETA) and refugee policy, it remains to be seen whether they will succeed.

Table 4: Development of G-coordination since 2007

	Phase 1 (2007–2010) Preliminary Stage	Phase 2 (2011–2013) Establishment	Phase 3 (2014–2015) Institution-alization	Phase 4 (from 2016) Profession-alization
Organisation by	Fed. parliamentary group	NW	BW/NW	BW/NW
Number of participants in the G-fireside	low	medium	high	very high
Voting weight of the G-states in the Bundesrat	low	medium	high	very high
Green relevance in the federal arena	small largely irrelevant for majority formation in the Bundesrat	medium to high black-yellow in the federal government vs. red-green majority in the Bundesrat	high Green veto power min. 2 G-states for a majority in the BR	very high Green veto power min. 3 G-states for a majority in the BR «on equal footing»
Green internal distribution of power	federal-side dominant few G-states with limited resources	federal side with a strong opposition role as a result of camp confrontation, Green leading candidates of the Fed. parliamentary group, Fed. election campaign dominated, power perspectives G-states becoming more influential	Fed. parliamentary group the smallest opposition again, personnel reconfiguration G-states acting more independently, leadership role through BW	G-states dominant BW special role election of leading candidates by direct vote Fed. election 2017

Source: ArneJungjohann.de ©①⑤⊜

4.5 The Greens in the Federal Arena: conclusions

1. **The influence of the Greens in the federal arena has grown noticeably.** With the increase in government participation in ten state governments (mid 2016), the influence of the *G-states* and consequently of the Greens as well has grown noticeably in federal legislation. In order to implement its proposals in the *Bundesrat,* the *Grand Coalition* relies on the votes of at least three states with Green government participation. The influence of the Greens will remain relatively strong in the future, even in case of lost state parliamentary elections.[50] The participation of *Minister President* Kretschmann in the meetings of the *Minister Presidents' Conference* as well as the preceding Heads of *State Chancellery* Conferences is a factor in the growth of Green influence. As a result of these possibilities for intervention, the importance of party-internal harmonisation and coordination has grown enormously.

2. **The Greens have successfully built up informal structures to coordinate in the federal arena.** For a party to present an outwardly united front in respect of legislative initiatives in the *Bundesrat*, complex coordination work and consolidation thereof on the part of those involved across vertical and horizontal levels is required: between the state governments, the *Bundestag* parliamentary group and the federal board of the party. Meeting the requirements of these tasks requires time and personnel. During their first government participation after 2007 the state Greens still lacked that sensorium needed to take the appropriate steps in respect of personnel. At that time the *Bundestag* parliamentary group provided the boost for nationwide coordination. Meanwhile the states are organising this coordination with their own personnel. As a general rule the Greens, as the smaller coalition partner in two-party coalitions, demand at least the posts of departmental head or his deputy in the respective *State Representation* in the federal government.

3. **On the way to equal footing: The Greens are professionalising their coordination structures in the federal arena.** In view of the fact that formal party structures cannot manage this, the Greens created informal structures for the purpose of coordination between state governments, *Bundestag* parliamentary group, federal party and German Green Members of the European Parliament. This is epitomised in the *G-fireside* for the political level and *G-coordination* for the issue-related level. The structures have been built up step by step over the last ten years and have gone through a process of professionalisation: work structures have been consolidated, areas of competence agreed upon and participation in the *G-firesides* has become more mandatory and the debates more political. These structures are not static but continue to develop permanently. The Greens are thereby catching up with the CDU/CSU and SPD, who have been making use of similar structures for decades.

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50 Next regular state elections are coming up in Saarland (March 2017), Schleswig-Holstein and Nordrhein-Westfalen (both May 2017).
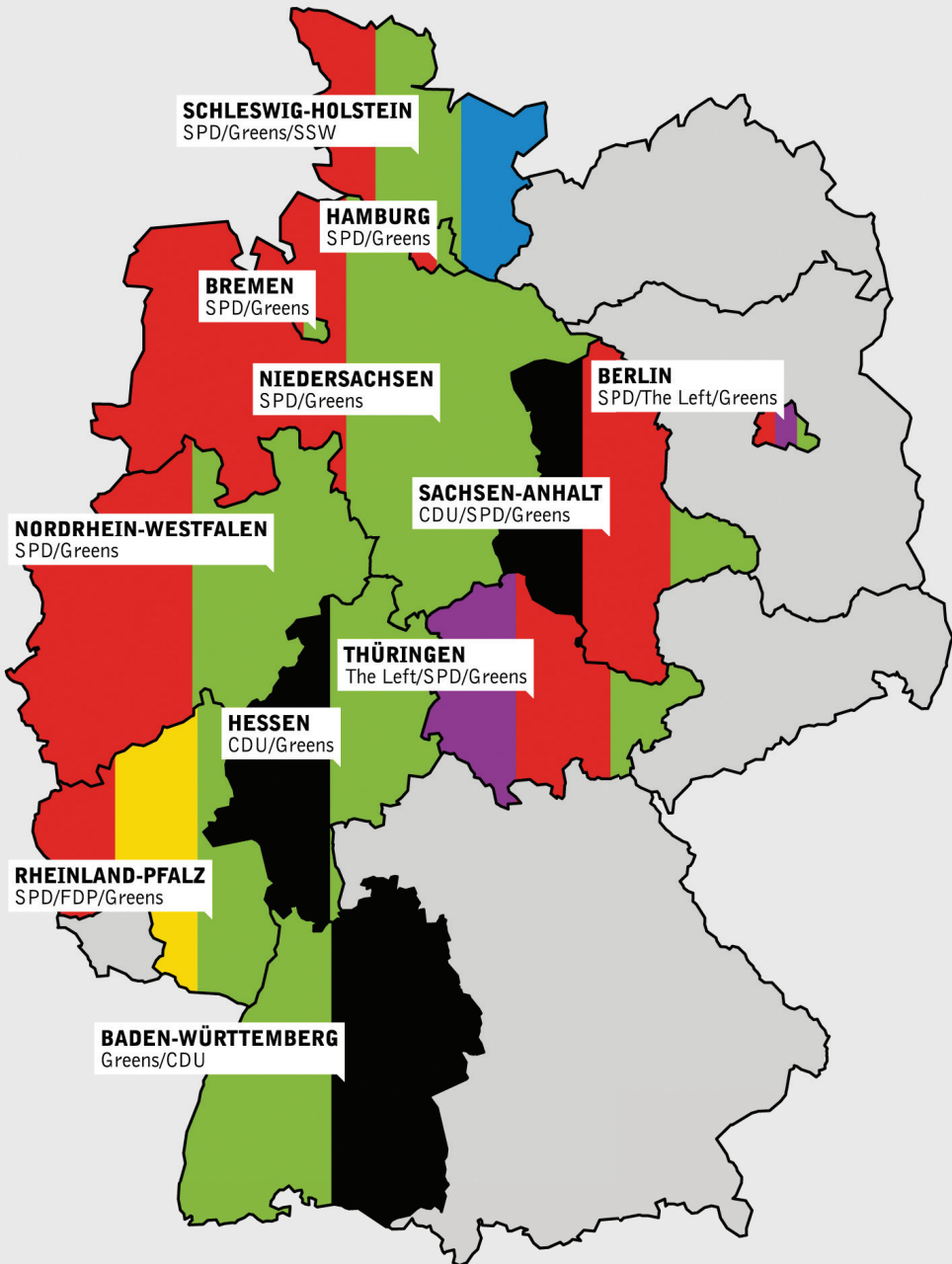
4. ***G-coordination* is the engine room of Green politics in the federal arena.** In order to carry out the complex business of federal/state coordination for the Greens, so-called *G-coordinators* are employed in the *State Representations*. Together with colleagues from the *Bundestag* parliamentary group and the federal board they form the *G-coordination*, which is the engine room of Green politics in the federal arena. In the case of the *G-states*, the willingness to cooperate is very distinct as it offers clear advantages. In this way for example, there is cross-state thematic task-sharing, whereby individual states take over control, above all, of the issues that are the domain of 'their' departments. The fact that the two large states, Baden-Württemberg and Nordrhein-Westfalen, provide a service for the others by assuming a secretarial function for the coordination also speaks for the professionalisation and the pronounced spirit of cooperation. It is, however, probably also encouraged by the fact that the Greens in the other *G-states* are the small coalition partner with hardly the resources at their disposal for a similar preparation of the *Bundesrat.*

5. **By creating the small *G-fireside* the Greens illustrate that they are flexible and adaptable enough to govern effectively.** The increase in government participation with a leadership and organisational structure that spreads power over several shoulders owing to the dual leaderships and segregation of office has stretched the Greens' ability to steer their coordination processes to the limit. For example, the *G-fireside* now has more than 50 participants which makes effective decision-making in conflict situations virtually impossible in an intimate atmosphere. And it is only the creation of the small *G-fireside*, in which the *Minister President* and the nine deputy minister presidents as well as the leading members of the federal party, the *Bundestag* parliamentary group and the German Green Members of the European Parliamenttake part, that makes short coordination processes and decision-making paths possible.

6. **The *Deputy Minister Presidents* of the Greens carry out important functions for their respective coalition and state party that go beyond formal task descriptions.** For the coalition partner the *Deputy Minister President* is the most senior negotiating partner and therefore deals with conflict that has reached its final level of escalation. Moreover, unless otherwise decided at Green internal level, his or her department time and time again takes over the function of mini government headquarters that keep watch over the activities of other departments for the small coalition partner. Within his or her own ranks – the ministerial colleagues, the state parliamentary group and the state party – a leadership role naturally falls to the *Deputy Minister President*. For *Bundesrat* and *G-coordination* the *Deputy Minister President* is the central actor of his or her state government or his state association. Green *Deputy Minister Presidents* inherently form part of the long-standing leading personnel of their respective state associations and have, in the majority of cases, throughout their many years in opposition as chairmen or

-women of their state parliamentary groups, built up networks and political capital, shown an ability to assert themselves and developed into all-rounders.

7. **Criticism: the relevance of the Minister Presidents' Conference.** Traditionally, and typically for Germany's consensus orientated federalism, the *Bundestag* and *Bundesrat* are the arenas for finding compromises between the federal coalition and the state governments. However, during the current *Grand Coalition* led by Chancellor Angela Merkel, political decision making processes have slowly shifted away from these arenas to the *Minister Presidents' Conference* (MPK). The MPK is an informal element of Germany's federalism, not mentioned in the country's basic law. Originally it was set up to establish cornerstones between the federal coalition and the states once or twice a year, providing a broad direction for the country's policy-making. But meanwhile the MPK meets much more often. Detailed legislative proposals are agreed upon and then for the most part merely adopted by the *Bundestag* and *Bundesrat*. Most Greens are highly critical of this development, especially from a democracy-theory point of view. Through Winfried Kretschmann's participation in the MPK, Green influence has grown in federal policies. For a long time, the MPK was a black-box meeting for them as the small coalition partner. But with a better understanding today, the Greens insist on government headquarters involving them at least in the preparation and follow-up of MPK business.

8. **The party-internal power structure has shifted in favour of the states.** Initially it was the federal level that dominated, with the *Bundestag* parliamentary group above all dominating the coordination between federal government and the states in the case of the Greens. It initiated *G-coordination* and dominated, at least until the federal election in 2013, the discussions in the *G-fireside*, even though the political weight of the *G-states* was growing due to increased government participation. This was principally due to the federal political climate generally and the confrontation of the two camps, played out via the *black-yellow* federal government and the *red-green* majority in the *Bundesrat*. The lost election, at the very latest, saw the states taking over the reins in handling Green internal coordination. If the power perspective of the Greens participating in the next federal government had a disciplinary effect, the *G-states*, some of which had to weather state parliamentary elections themselves, were no longer willing to put aside their interests any longer. They urged for more independence and furthermore the generation shift weakened the *Bundestag* parliamentary group. Moreover, the establishment of the *Grand Coalition* heralded the end of the typical camp confrontation. Coordination procedures for the *Bundesrat* became more complex. The *Grand Coalition* delegated more and more of the procedures to the Conference of Minister Presidents so that the federal/state coordination procedures placed even more burdens on the executive.

Graph 6: The G-states across Germany
Coalitions with participation of the Green Party. As of December 2016.

SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN
SPD/Greens/SSW

HAMBURG
SPD/Greens

BREMEN
SPD/Greens

NIEDERSACHSEN
SPD/Greens

BERLIN
SPD/The Left/Greens

SACHSEN-ANHALT
CDU/SPD/Greens

NORDRHEIN-WESTFALEN
SPD/Greens

THÜRINGEN
The Left/SPD/Greens

HESSEN
CDU/Greens

RHEINLAND-PFALZ
SPD/FDP/Greens

BADEN-WÜRTTEMBERG
Greens/CDU

5 German Greens in Coalition Governments: Summary and Outlook

The experience of green governance can currently be summed up as follows:

- **By the end of 2016 the German Greens reached a peak in government participation.** The Greens co-govern in 11 out of Germany's 16 states (Länder).[51] In 10 cases they are the junior partner. In Baden-Württemberg the Greens are the strongest party and lead the coalition. Though this rise in power over the last ten years can be considered a major success, it doesn't mean there were no setbacks. Some of these coalitions were formed despite falling election results. In some state elections the Greens even failed to enter parliament. On the federal level, the Greens have been in opposition since 2005. Overall the many state governments with Green participation, called *G-states*[52], present a snapshot, which naturally cannot be interpreted as a prognosis for upcoming elections. Participation in the federal government, which cannot be ruled out for the time after the federal election in the fall of 2017, could also mean a further increase in governmental responsibility.
- **Flexibility: The German Green Party fulfils its claim to independence by implementing its policies with a wide range of coalition partners.** The Greens show a remarkable flexibility in forming coalitions with different partners at the state level. At the time of writing, the Greens were governing in seven varying coalition constellations. This multitude of coalition constellations beyond classic political camps reflects the independence that the Green state associations have been exercising for a long time. In this respect the Greens differ from other German parties. With forming both centre-right coalitions (such as *black-green* in Hessen in January 2014) and centre-left coalitions (such as *red-red-green* in Thüringen in December 2014) the party fulfils its claim to independence by implementing its pol-

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[51] This analysis was concluded by November 2016. In the meantime the Greens have yet joined another state government. Together with the Social democrats and the Left Party they formed a coalition in the state of Berlin.

[52] States with a coalition government which includes the Green Party are referred to as *G-states*. In contrast, state governments led by Social democrats are called *A-states*, those lead by Christian Democrats are called *B-states*.

icies in diverse coalition constellations. Due to the various constellations at state level the Greens are extending their scope for action at federal level and also with a view to the federal election in 2017.

▬ **Hardly surprising: The Greens are the party of ecology and contribute this core competence to every government they participate in.** As a result of their self-perception but also their reputation, the ecological question has long been seen as the strength of the Green Party's government work. The prominent view within the party is that it would be politically unwise not to show-case the centrepiece of their own programme and personal strength in the government as well. Consequently, the Greens are in charge of the Ministry of Environment in every coalition they joined. They thus have by far the most governmental responsibility in this policy area – both in comparison with the other parties and party-internally in comparison with other policy areas. With ten Ministries of Environment, five for agricultural and consumer protection, and three for transport, the Greens are able to implement their concepts for the ecological restructuring of society within their sphere of governmental responsibility.

▬ **Thematic Diversification: Thanks to their leading personnel and the large amount of government participation, the Greens have broadened their policy focus.** After ecology, the profiles of high ranking Green politicians explain the party's ministerial responsibilities. Thanks to top candidates, the Greens took over those ministries that are not considered typically Green, such as education in Nordrhein-Westfalen, economic affairs and transport in Hessen, and finance in Bremen. As a result of the wide range of government participation, the Greens have succeeded in diversifying thematically and in taking over responsibility in a range of policy fields, such as: integration and migration (four departments); finance, justice, science and research (three departments each); women and equality (three); and health and social affairs (two). Representing these ministerial departments goes hand in hand with developing capacities with respect to staff and policy-making, from which the party as a whole should benefit in the long term. In contrast, the policy fields of European affairs, employment/labour and home affairs are blank spots of Green governmental responsibility. Meanwhile, the Greens are starting to realize that cross-cutting ministries such as finance and justice offer advantages in the everyday governmental life. Precisely because it is a small coalition partner that cannot resort to the apparatus of government headquarters, a cross-over department assists it in becoming involved in the operations of other ministries and thereby exerting influence at an early stage in the policy formation process.

▬ **Quite conventional: In their government participation, the Greens fall back on a classic form of coalition management: the coalition committee.** All ten *G-states* have established a *coalition committee* in the classic sense. It is composed of top politicians from the government, parliamentary groups and parties, ranging from 8 to 18 participants. Additionally smaller top-lev-

el rounds have been set up in most cases. Generally, for each coalition partner only one government member and the parliamentary group chairperson take part in these rounds. It is assumed that they serve as a strategic centre for the coalition in question. It is the place where conflict that has reached its final level of escalation is resolved. Both bodies, the large *coalition committee* and the small top-level round, complement each other in their function: in the intimate top-level talks, politically sensitive questions are likely to be resolved. Here, the leaders of coalition partners can form compromises without the danger of losing face. In contrast, a committee with many participants can exercise a stabilising function for the coalition if it includes members of the leadership from the coalition partner, thereby creating acceptance for common resolutions.

▬ **No Patent Solution: Coalition management is always tailor-made.** As no coalition is like any other, the mechanisms of coalition management differ and sometimes greatly. Each coalition has to find the best way for itself to create informal structures for the day-to-day workings of government that suit the political culture of the state and its management, the political parties and the leading personnel involved. In addition, a certain dynamism is recognisable in coalition management: the informal structures are not static but change over the course of the legislative period. Procedures have to be established first. Some are rejected, and power relationships shift among those involved.

▬ **Friction loss: Some organisational principles of the Greens hamper effective coalition management.** In the case of the Greens the functions of government member, parliamentary group and party chair are spread over at least four people: first, due to the *dual leadership* of the party[53]; second, due to the *separation of office and mandate*[54]. As most *coalition committees* enjoy equal representation, coalition partners compensate for the 'preponderance' of Greens by adding participants. Having a large number of participants, however, undermines the objective of creating an atmosphere of confidentiality, thereby encouraging the formation of further, smaller rounds. Consequently, the Greens need to put more effort into involving the party in decision-making processes and subsequently keeping it informed.

▬ **Increased power: The influence of the Greens has grown noticeably in the federal arena.** With increased government participation, the influence of the *G-states* and consequently also that of the German Green Party has grown noticeably in federal legislation. In order to implement its propos-

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53 The *dual leadership* principle ensures that at least one woman is leading the party. In addition it allows a representation of the internal wings of the party. With the exception of Hamburg, all state party associations examined here apply the *dual leadership principle*.

54 The principle of *separation of office and mandate* results in Green Party chairs not being allowed to be member of a parliament at the same time. The principle is applied by all state party associations researched here with one exception. In Hessen both state party leaders are also members of the state parliament.

als in the *Bundesrat*, the *Grand Coalition* now relies on the votes of at least three states with Green government participation. Even if the Greens lose future state parliamentary elections, their influence will remain strong for the foreseeable future. The participation of Winfried Kretschmann, Germany's only Green *Minister President*, in the *Conference of Minister Presidents* (MPK) and similar events (such as the Conference of Heads of State Chancelleries) also increases the Greens' influence. As a result of these possibilities for intervention, party-internal coordination is of enormous importance for the Greens.

▬ **Professionalisation: The Greens have built up informal structures to coordinate with each other – at the state and federal level.** For a party to present an outwardly united front for legislative initiatives in the Bundesrat, complex coordination and consolidation across vertical and horizontal levels is required: between the state governments, the *Bundestag* parliamentary group and the federal board of the party. Meeting these demands requires time and personnel. During the first government participations after 2007, the Greens still lacked the experience needed to set the appropriate course in respect of personnel. In the meantime, however, they have professionalised their coordination structures in the federal arena. Working structures have been consolidated, areas of responsibility agreed upon, and the participation in the *fireside rounds* has become more mandatory and the debates more political. These structures are not static but continue to develop permanently. The Greens are therefore catching up with the CDU/CSU and SPD, who have been making use of similar structures for decades. There is, however, one difference: with the Greens, the states coordinate, whereas for SPD and CDU/CSU the federal level. It is the *G-fireside* and *G-coordination* that most epitomise professionalisation (see below).

▬ **Cooperation in the engine room: the *G-coordination*.** In order to carry out the complex business of federal/state coordination for the Greens, so-called *G-coordinator*s are employed in the *State Representations* in Berlin. Together with colleagues from the *Bundestag* parliamentary group and the federal board, they make up the *G-coordination*. It is the engine room of Green politics in the federal arena. Among this senior staff the willingness to cooperate is very pronounced as it obviously offers advantages. For example cross-state thematic task-sharing is agreed upon, whereby individual states take over control of the issues that are the domain of 'their' departmental areas. The fact that the two large states, Baden-Württemberg and Nordrhein-Westfalen, provide a service for the others by assuming a secretarial function for the coordination, also speaks for the professionalisation and the pronounced spirit of cooperation.

▬ **Informal and effective: By creating the *Small G-fireside*, the Greens prove their ability to learn and adapt.** The increase in government participation in combination with a leadership structure that spreads power over several shoulders has overextended the Greens' ability to steer their coordination

processes. As a result, the *G-fireside* now has more than 50 participants, which makes effective decision-making in conflict situations virtually impossible in an intimate atmosphere. The creation of the small *G-fireside* (which, in fact, is not that small with the *Minister President*, the nine *Deputy Minister Presidents*, leading members of the federal party, *Bundestag* parliamentary group, and representatives of the German Green Members of the European Parliament) allows for quick coordination processes and decision-making paths. Here, Green Party leaders can regularly exchange views amongst each other.

— **Leadership role: Green Deputy Minister Presidents exercise diverse functions for their coalition and state party.** For the coalition partner, the *Deputy Minister President* is the most senior negotiating partner and therefore deals with conflict that has reached its final level of escalation. Unless otherwise decided internally, his or her department also acts as the junior government headquarters, keeping watch over the activities of other departments for the small coalition partner. Within the ministerial colleagues, the state parliamentary group and the state party, a leadership role naturally falls to the Deputy. For *Bundesrat* and *G-coordination*, he or she is the central actor in state governments and the party's state association. They inherently form part of the long-standing personnel of their state associations and have generally built up networks and political capital, shown an ability to assert themselves, and developed into all-rounders throughout their many years in opposition as chairmen or -women of their state parliamentary groups.

— **Criticism: The relevance of the Minister Presidents' Conference.** Traditionally, and typically for Germany's consensus orientated federalism, the *Bundestag* and *Bundesrat* are the arenas for finding compromises between the federal coalition and the state governments. However, during the current *Grand Coalition* led by Chancellor Angela Merkel, political decision making processes have slowly shifted away from these arenas to the *Minister Presidents' Conference*. The MPK is an informal element of Germany's federalism, not mentioned in the country's basic law. Originally it was set up to establish cornerstones between the federal coalition and the states once or twice a year, providing a broad direction for the country's policy-making. But meanwhile the MPK meets much more often. Detailed legislative proposals are agreed upon and then for the most part merely adopted by the *Bundestag* and *Bundesrat*. Most Greens are highly critical of this development, especially from a democracy-theory point of view. Through Winfried Kretschmann's participation in the MPK, Green influence has grown in federal policies. For a long time, the MPK was a black-box meeting for them as the small coalition partner. But with a better understanding today, the Greens insist on government headquarters involving them at least in the preparation and follow-up of MPK business.

- **Powerful executives: The Green Party internal power structure has shifted in favour of the states.** Initially federal/state coordination was dominated by the federal level, especially by the *Bundestag* parliamentary group. It initiated the *G-coordination* and dominated, at least until the 2013 federal election, the discussions in the *G-fireside*, even though the political weight of the *G-states* was growing due to increased government participation. Back then, two political camps fought: the *black-yellow* federal government on the centre-right and the *red-green* majority in the *Bundesrat* on the centre-left. The Greens lost the federal election in 2013. The states were taking over the reins in handling Green internal coordination. If the power perspective of Green participation in the next federal government had a disciplinary effect at all, the *G-states*, some of which faced parliamentary elections themselves, were no longer willing to put aside their own interests. The states urged for more independence, and a generational handoff after the federal election of 2013 weakened the federal parliamentary group relative to the states. Moreover, the establishment of the *Grand Coalition* heralded the end of the aforementioned confrontation of the two political camps. The coordination procedures for the *Bundesrat* became more complex. The *Grand Coalition* delegated more and more of these procedures to the MPK, so that federal/state coordination placed even more burdens on the executive.

The Greens' success of rising government participation depends on factors that cannot be replicated at will. Challenges are waiting ahead. For example, the *G-states* profit from their experienced executive leaders, who have gathered more than ten years of experience in top political positions – first as party and parliamentary group chairs and now as *Deputy Minister Presidents*. How does the party bring about political successors if top leadership withdraws following lost elections? Moreover, in most cases the Greens entered government after years of opposition, during which time they developed a substantial programme for when they would be in government. Government participation changes the nature of the party by focusing on policy implementation based on *Realpolitik* and defending what has so far been achieved. How can a party with a specific platform succeed in regenerating its programme? How can party and government functions successfully interact? Also, the *G-coordination* currently depends on strong *G-states* (like Baden-Württemberg, Nordrhein-Westfalen) providing organisational resources. How does the coordination need to be adjusted if Greens from those states move back into parliamentary opposition?

Finally, the German Greens also have to prepare themselves for the possibility of re-entering the federal government – which will mean an adjustment in the intraparty federal/state relationship. Most recently they have chosen Cem Özdemir and Katrin Göring-Eckardt as the frontrunner team that will lead the party into the upcoming federal election. Both are viewed as pragmatics who are unlikely to let ideological objections get in the way of govern-

ment participation, opening up a range of different coalition options. However, in most recent polls the Greens have dropped below ten percent. Prospects to join a coalition after the election look dim at this point. The Greens have to ask themselves what effect participation in federal government would have on how the federal and state Greens understand their respective roles. How the formal and informal structures of the party would have to be adapted to a change of this kind is, however, a research topic that will have to be addressed elsewhere.

APPENDIX

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GLOSSARY

Alliance 90/The Greens or the Greens (German: *Bündnis 90/Die Grünen* or *Grüne*) is a green political party in Germany. It was formed after German reunification in 1993, through a merger of the German Green Party (founded in West Germany in 1980) and Alliance 90 (founded during the Revolution of 1989-1990 in East Germany).

A-states, B-states In political linguistic usage the terms A- and B-states have been in use since the 1970s. They stand for states that are led by an SPD majority (A-states) or by a CDU/CSU majority (B-states). Those states in which Alliance 90/The Greens have a share in, but not necessarily lead the government have been referred to as *G-states* for several years. It is important to note that a G-state can be an A- or B-state at the same time.

Black-Green Coalition (German: *schwarz-grüne Koalition*) refers to the coalition of CDU and Greens where the CDU is the senior partner.

Black-Yellow Coalition (German: *schwarz-gelbe Koalition*) refers to the coalition between the CDU and the FDP. This is the former centre-right coalition of choice of both parties and their electorates.

Bundesrat (Federal Council) is a constitutional and legislative body that represents the sixteen *Länder* (states) of Germany at the federal level. The Bundesrat participates in legislating, alongside the Bundestag, with laws affecting state competences and all constitutional changes requiring the consent of the body. For its similar function, it is sometimes described as an upper house of parliament along the lines of the US Senate, the Canadian Senate or the British House of Lords.

Bundestag (Parliament) is a constitutional and legislative body at the federal level in Germany. Members of the Bundestag are usually elected every four years by all adult German citizens in a mixed system of constituency voting and list voting. The Chancellor is elected by the Bundestag. The government is accountable to the Bundestag.

CDU (Christian Democratic Union, German: *Christlich Demokratische Union*) is a Christian democratic and liberal-conservative political party in Germany. It is the major party of the centre-right in German politics. It is associated with the colour black.

Coalition committee (German: *Koalitionsausschuss*) is an essential informal body for the governance of coalitions. It enables discussion between coalition partners including representatives from the government, the party and

the parliamentary groups. Decisions within coalition committees are made by consensus, which makes them particularly useful for the smaller coalition partner(s). Coalition committees might differ according to their members, their cycle of meetings, and their exact function.

Coalition agreement, treaty (German: *Koalitionsvertrag*) coalition partners agree on rules as to their dealings with each other, most of which are set out in coalition agreements. They determine the policy direction of the coalition, the ministerial responsibilities of the government, personnel-related decisions, regulations about voting behaviour in the state parliament, the cabinet and Bundesrat as well as mechanisms for dealing with conflict.

Coastal coalition (German: *Küstenkoalition*) refers to a specific coalition in the state of Schleswig-Holstein, formed by the SPD, the Greens, and the SSW.

Conciliation committee (German: Vermittlungsausschuss) is a joint Bundestag and Bundesrat committee in which both institutions have the same number of representatives. It meets to broker compromises between the two chambers. It is convened particularly often if Bundesrat and Bundestag have diverging majorities.

CSU (Christian Social Union, German: *Christlich-Soziale Union*) the CSU is the Bavarian sister party of the CDU. In Bavaria one can vote only CSU, not CDU. In the Bundestag (federal parliament) CDU/CSU form a joint parliamentary group.

Department is a ministry in the federal or state government. It is chaired by a minister of one of the ruling parties. Department and ministry are used as synonyms in the text.

Deputy Minister President (German: *Vize-Ministerpräsident*) is the second man or woman behind the Minister President in a German state. In case the Minister President is unable to fulfil his or her duties, he or she can be represented by the Deputy Minister President. Within coalition governments, the Deputy Minister President is usually from the smaller coalition partner.

Die Linke (Left Party) is a democratic socialist and (far) left-wing political party in Germany. It was founded in 2007 as the merger of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS) and the Electoral Alternative for Labour and Social Justice (WASG). It is associated with the colour dark red.

Dual leadership (German: *Doppelspitze*) is a core principle of the Green party. It ensures that at least one woman is leading the party or parliamentary group in parliament (state and federal level). In addition it allows a representation of the internal wings of the party. With the exception of Hamburg, all state party associations examined here apply the *dual leadership principle.*

FDP (Free Democratic Party, German: *Freie Demokratische Partei*) is a liberal and classical liberal party in Germany. The party is traditionally considered centre-right, pro-market and with libertarian currents. It is associated with the colour yellow.

Five Percent Threshold (German: *Fünf-Prozent-Hürde*) seats in the Bundestag and in the state parliaments are, with few exceptions, only given to parties surpassing a five percent election threshold. The clause is meant to minimize the risk of party fragmentation, which partially caused the incapacitation of the parliament in the Weimar Republic.

Fundis (see **Realos**)

Grand Coalition (German: *Große Koalition*) refers to the coalition between the SPD and the CDU, the two parties with the traditionally greatest electorate.

Green-Black Coalition (German: *grün-schwarze Koalition*) refers to the coalition of Greens and CDU where the Greens are the senior partner. The first and so far only green-black coalition is in Baden-Württemberg since 2016.

Green-Red Coalition (German: *grün-rote Koalition*) refers to the coalition of Greens and SPD where the Greens are the senior partner. The first and so far only green-red coalition was in Baden-Württemberg between 2011 and 2016.

G-coordination refers to the internal coordination of Green actors across political levels, including state governments, the federal parliamentary group, the federal party and MEPs. It serves to solve possible dissent and work towards achieving coordinated communication to prevent differences being aired in public.

G-fireside is an informal coordination body between federal and state Greens. It meets on Thursday evenings during a plenary week of the *Bundesrat.*

G-states states with a coalition government which includes the Green Party are referred to as G-states (see also A-states and B-states).

Head of State Chancellery (German: *Chef der Staatskanzlei, CdS*) is a political appointee and the highest ranking civil servant in the State Chancellery. Considered as the right hand of the Minister President the position is comparable to a Chief of Staff. His/her main responsibility is to coordinate the cabinet.

Head of State Representation (German: *Bevollmächtiger der Landesvertretung beim Bund*) is representing a state government on the federal level. The position is a political appointee. His/her main responsibility is to coordinate the state government's work in the committees and plenary of the *Bundesrat* and represent the state governments towards the federal and other state governments.

Jamaica coalition (German: Jamaica-Koalition) refers to the coalition of CDU, FDP and Greens. The three parties' colours reflect the Jamaican flag (black, yellow, green).

Kenya coalition (German: Kenia-Koalition) refers to the coalition of CDU, SPD and Greens. The three parties' colours reflect the Kenyan flag (black, red, green).

Ministerial Conferences (German: *Fachministerkonferenzen*) on specific policy fields (such as environment, labour, interior etc.) serve the function to

provide room for exchange of the federal minister with his/her 16 peers from the state level. The conferences have to adopt decisions unanimously.

Minister President (German: *Ministerpräsident*) is the head of state and government of a German state. They are elected by their respective state parliaments. They represent their state in the *Bundesrat* and towards the federal government. The position of a Minister President is defined by the specific state constitution.

Minister Presidents' Conference (German: *Ministerpräsidentenkonferenz, MPK*) is an informal body of self-coordination of Germany's 16 states. Its members are the Minister Presidents and the Federal Chancellor. It addresses solely issues with federal-state-relationships that are not being dealt with in the *Bundesrat,* such as media policy or federal fiscal relationships.

Mirror unit (German: *Spiegelreferat*) is a unit within the *State Chancellery* that coincides with the tasks of a ministry – it mirrors those tasks. The responsibility of the mirror unit is to ensure the exchange of information between its ministry and government headquarters.

Non-Conforming alliances or coalitions refer to coalitions in a state where one partner is in the federal government, while the other is in opposition on federal level.

Realos *(realists)* refers to the faction within the German Green Party which is considered to be more pragmatic, government-orientated. It was formed in conflict to the *Left* (or previously *Fundi*) wing of the party. Today the *Realo* faction calls itself *Reformer.*

Realpolitik *(realistic politics)* refers to realistic politics including making compromises with political competitors in contrast to idealistic (unrealistic) politics.

R-states are state governments that coincide with the ruling coalition on federal level.

Red-Green coalition (German: *Rot-Grüne Koalition*) refers to a coalition between SPD and the Greens, where the SPD is the bigger partner. This is the former centre-left coalition of choice of both parties and their electorates.

Separation of office and mandate principle (German: *Trennung von Amt und Mandat*) the principle of separation of office and mandate results in Green Party chairs or Ministers not being allowed to be member of a parliament at the same time. The principle is applied in varying strictness by the federal and state associations of the German Green Party.

SPD (Social Democratic Party, German: *Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*) is a social-democratic political party in Germany. It is the major party of the centre-left in German politics. The SPD is associated with the colour red.

SSW (Southern Schleswig Voters' Association, German: *Südschleswigscher Wählerverband*) is a regionalist party in the state of Schleswig-Holstein in the very north of Germany, bordering Denmark. The party represents the Danish and Frisian minorities living in the state. Securing the rights of the Danish minority, the SSW is not subject to the Five Percent Threshold.

State Secretary (German: *Staatssekretär*) is the permanent representative of a minister in a state ministry. The position can be considered as a deputy minister.

State Chancellery (German: *Staatskanzlei*) is the department and administrative body of the Minister President of a state. As the center of the executive it coordinates the government's ministries and represents the state government towards the federal level.

State Representation (German: *Landesvertretung beim Bund*) of a state government in Berlin. Its principal task is to represent the state in the preparation of the Bundesrat. In addition they serve as listening posts and mouthpieces in the course of policy-formation and decision-making processes, organise contacts that benefit the state and showcase the diversity of their state in the nation's capital.

German Greens in Coalition Governments
A Political Analysis

The Alliance 90/The Greens Party has succeeded in taking over governmental responsibility in the majority of the 16 federal states. This is a great success for the party. However, in order to remain successful and to encourage general confidence in politics, a sober look at the factors which led to the success and which will continue to do so in the future is required. How does good governance work? How does government participation change the decision-making processes and the political objectives of a party? How does good co-operation between those responsible in federal and state government function?

In this study the political scientist, Arne Jungjohann, has analysed Green government participation of previous years and in answering the questions above arrives at interesting conclusions.