

## **Abstract**

This bachelor thesis analyses the federal election result of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD) in 2009, in which the party scored its lowest post-war result. The author tries to describe the factors which caused this electoral disaster. From its establishment the SPD went through a lot of changes, as did the whole society. From a party of workers, who fought for their extended rights, the SPD became a party defending three fundamental values – freedom, justice and solidarity – for everyone. However, in the 1980s the party was forced to abandon the Keynesian economic model, to which she owed her success in the field of economics. It was necessary for the party to adapt to new neoliberal economic theories. After 16 years in opposition the SPD achieved a triumph in federal elections in 1998, when Gerhard Schröder became the new chancellor. Schröder was known as a supporter of the so-called Third Way. Under his leadership 1998 – 2005 the SPD was directed towards the political middle ground in an attempt to reach as many votes as possible. However, new political direction led to a crisis in the party and to a cleaving of the party left. Since 2005 the party has been dealing with several strategic problems, to which no answers have yet been found. This manifests in decreasing polling preferences, as the party is not able to distinguish itself from other parties. The SPD has found neither a long-term political strategy, nor a charismatic leader who would unite both party wings.