

## The CDU and the Politics of Gender in Germany

### *Bringing Women to the Party*

This book develops the concept of the corporatist catch-all party to explain how the German Christian Democratic Union (CDU) has responded to changing demands from women over the past forty years. Otto Kirchheimer's classic study argues that when catch-all parties reach out to new constituencies, they are forced to decrease the involvement of membership to facilitate doctrinal flexibility. In a corporatist catch-all party, however, societal interests are represented within the party organization and policy making is the result of internal party negotiation. Through an investigation of CDU policy making in the issue areas of abortion policy, work-family policy, and participation policy, this book demonstrates that sometimes the CDU mobilizes rather than disempowers membership. An important lesson of this study is that a political party need not sacrifice internal democracy and ignore its members in order to succeed at the polls.

Sarah Elise Wiliarty is Assistant Professor of Government at Wesleyan University. Her research interests include political parties, women and politics, and Christian Democracy. Professor Wiliarty has published articles in *German Politics* and *Politics and Gender* and co-edited *The Transformation of Postwar Germany: Democracy, Prosperity and Nationhood* (1999, with John S. Brady and Beverly Crawford).

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*Bringing Women to the Party*

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*For Kevin, Patrick, and Geneva*

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