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The Social Logic of Bounded Partisanship in Germany: A Comparison of Veteran Citizens (West Germans), New Citizens (East Germans) and Immigrants

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Discussion Papers

450

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**The Social Logic of Bounded Partisanship in Germany:
A Comparison of Veteran Citizens (West Germans), New Citizens (East Germans),
and Immigrants**

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Abstract

Drawing on data from the twenty year long German Socioeconomic Panel Study, we show that partisanship is bounded. Almost every West German, East German, and immigrant never supports one or both of the major parties and most people vary support for their party by claiming no partisan preference. Hardly anyone ever selects each of the parties at different points in time. Immediate social networks join with social class and religious factors to structure partisanship. The same social logic underpins partisan choice among West Germans, East Germans, and immigrants, though factors unique to each population are also present.

Keywords: partisanship, Germany, social contexts, partisanship in households, West Germans, East Germans, Immigrants, Probit Heckman Selection Model

JEL Classification: C34, D72, R29

Applied to politics, partisanship refers to a preference for a political party. Partisans tell themselves –as they reflect on politics –and others –in surveys and personal conversations – that they support a party. Acting on this self-understanding, they usually vote for the party’s candidates; they also usually take policy views in line with those of their party, and when they work in campaigns they assist that party. Partisanship lies at the heart of political behavior in established democracies.

Drawing on data obtained from the German Socioeconomic Panel Study (SOEP), researchers show that partisanship is bounded. Over time, most citizens never support one or both of the major parties and vary support for their party by also claiming no partisan preference. Hardly anyone ever selects each of the major parties at different points in time (Kohler 2002; Schmitt-Beck, Wieck, and Christoph 2002; and Zuckerman, Fitzgerald, and Dasović 2003; 2004; 2005; Zuckerman, Fitzgerald, Dasović, and Brynin 2002, who also find the same patterns in Britain). Relatively few Germans are stable partisan identifiers –in the classic image of the Michigan School’s concept of party identification (see for example Campbell, Converse, Miller, and Stokes 1960; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002; Miller and Shanks 1996). Hardly any behave as if they are consumers of the parties’ wares –who move from one party to the other as prices and evaluations of the merchandise vary, as rational choice theorists would have it (see for example Achen 1992; Fiorina 1981; 2002, and Kiewiet 1983; Shively 1977).

What accounts for these patterns? The evidence reaffirms that partisan choice reflects the analytical ties among religion, social class, and party that have characterized European politics for decades and that persist, even as indications of “individualized politics” appear.¹

¹ Representative recent examples of this voluminous literature include the essays in Dalton and Wattenberg 2000; Evans 1999a; Franklin, Mackie, Valen et al. 1992 as well as Clarke, Stewart, and

More fundamentally, however, it underlines the importance of immediate social and political networks as contexts for partisanship. Individuals choose political parties, by taking into account the perceptions, values, actions, and cues of other persons. The stronger and the more frequent the social tie, the more powerful is the influence² Along with a person's political interest, these interactions provide the social mechanisms that structure partisanship in Britain and Germany.

Here, we expand the analysis of micro-partisanship by using SOEP's data to compare three different populations: West Germans, East Germans, and immigrants. Of the total population of the Federal Republic of Germany, approximately 76 percent are West Germans, 19 percent live in the area of the former Communist Regime (the German Democratic Republic-GDR), and 5 percent are immigrants (Conradt 2001: 43-4; Lahav 2004: 262, and see the Appendix for a full elaboration). With regard to partisanship, the three groups differ in important ways. West Germans are veteran citizens of an established democracy. They are attuned to the country's multi-party competition that is dominated by the Christian Democratic/Social Union (CDU/CSU) and the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Indeed, after decades of democratic rule, the partisanship of West Germans looks much like those of other long-standing democracies (see Zuckerman, Fitzgerald, and Dasović 2003, 2004; 2005; Zuckerman, Fitzgerald, Dasović and Brynin 2002 for the comparison with Britain). Residents of the former German Democratic Republic (GDR) are also members of the German nation, but they are new citizens of the Federal Republic; they have little experience with its political

Whitely 1997; Dalton 2000; Gluchowski and von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff 1998; Norpoth 1984; Richardson 1991; Schmitt 1998; Schmitt and Holberg 1995, and Sinnott 1998. As we find strong class and religious effects on partisanship in both countries, we lend support to Evans 1999b, 1999c; Goldthorpe 1999a, 1999b; Kotler-Berkowitz 2001; Müller 1999; Weakliem and Heath 1999. Applied to Germany, see for example Dalton and Bürklin 2003; Falter, Schoen, and Caballero 200; Kohler 2002; Zuckerman, Fitzgerald, and Dasović 2003; 2004; 2005; Zuckerman, Fitzgerald, Dasović, and Brynin 2002.

² Classic sources of this approach are Berelson, Lazarsfeld, and McPhee 1954; Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet (1968); Huckfeldt and Sprague 1995. Zuckerman 2005a offers an intellectual history of the approach and the essays in Zuckerman 2005b exemplify recent research. See Baker 1974 for an early analysis of West German partisanship that emphasizes the importance of its transmission within the family.

parties and no history of democratic rule. Immigrants are not Germans; those born in member countries of the European Union may vote in local and European, but not German national elections; they have no direct role in German national politics (see the Appendix for more details). Still, all three have lived through the collapse of the East German regime and the Re-unification of the German state. They also have experienced the shift in government power from Kohl and the CDU/CSU government to Schroeder and the SPD. SOEP allows us to compare the partisanship of three different sets of persons living together under the same government.

As expected, the evidence shows that new citizens and non-citizens display lower levels of aggregate partisanship than do veteran citizens. Also in line with the classic literature, age related variables distinguish partisan support among West Germans, but they have no impact on the probability of supporting a party among East Germans and immigrants.³ No matter the different levels of partisanship in the three populations and the variable impact of age, very similar processes appear: just about everyone distinguishes a major party that they support with a variable level of certainty and a major party that they never support; few ever choose each of the major parties over time. At the same time and of theoretical importance, the immediate social and political circumstances of their lives help to account for their partisan choices among East Germans and immigrants as well as West Germans. Partisanship reflects a social logic.

German Socioeconomic Panel Study as a Source for the Analysis of Party Support

³ Converse 1969, 1976 provides the classic statement relating age to the development of partisanship. Niemi, Stanley, and Evans 1984, Niemi, Powell, Stanley, and Evans 1985, and Niemi and Barkan 1987 modify the argument to cases with new electorates, and for the application to the new democracy of Spain, see Barnes, McDonough, and Lopez Pina 1985. With the collapse of the Communist polities, the issue has re-emerged; see Brader and Tucker 2001 for a review of developments in Russia and for an effort to reframe the conceptualization of partisanship in new democracies. Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner 1991 and Cho 1999 link length of residence and partisanship among various immigrant groups in the United States. For an early comparison of West and East Germans, see the essays in Dalton 1996, especially Dalton and Bürklin 1996. Brady 2003 reviews the politics of immigrant incorporation in Germany.

SOEP⁴ interviews a large and representative sample of the population of the German Federal Republic, while over-sampling East Germans, and immigrants each year. Beginning in 1984 with the West Germans and immigrants and adding the East German sample in the months just before Re-Unification, it continues into the foreseeable future. No other panel survey encompasses so many years, and all others contain much smaller samples.⁵ Unlike almost all other studies of social and political networks, SOEP is a national –not local –study; it interviews everyone present over the age of fifteen, without relying on the reports of one member, and it follows persons who move into new households and then asks the battery of questions of all adults present there as well.⁶ The survey offers an extensive and detailed array of data for the exploration of micro-partisanship, as well as many other elements of German social, economic, and political life.

Consider how it permits the measurement of partisan support. The English language translation of the relevant question reads: “Many people in the Federal Republic of Germany [Germany, after 1990] are inclined to a certain political party, although from time to time they vote for another political party. What about you: Are you inclined--generally speaking--to a particular party?” Those who respond, “yes” – we define as party supporters. They are then asked, “Which one?” and handed a card that lists all parties with seats in the Bundestag.⁷ This defines party preference. The protocol repeats the set of questions in each and every one of SOEP’s waves. Because the opening question names no parties, it avoids problems of

⁴ Full descriptions of the survey may be obtained from the web site of the Deutsche Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung (DIW Berlin). We want to thank DIW and SOEP, and to note that they bear no responsibility for our analysis.

⁵ Closest in design and value is the British Household Panel Study (BHPS), which begins in 1991 and is also ongoing. See Zuckerman, Fitzgerald, and Dasović 2003; 2005; Zuckerman, Fitzgerald, Dasović, and Brynin 2002.

⁶ The survey follows respondents who move, but is less able to maintain contact with those who are in temporary housing, and people who move frequently (Kroh and Spiess 2004). As a result, even SOEP probably understates the level of instability in the responses to questions on partisanship.

⁷ This question closely resembles the one used in the German national election and other political surveys, and the marginal results match these data as well (see Falter, Schoen, and Caballero 2000; Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002:164-203; Schickler and Green 1997:463; Norpoth 1984; Zelle 1998:70).

instrumentation that are associated with the traditional measure.⁸ It offers no answers to those who would not otherwise be able to do so. Because it also asks the respondents to describe themselves, it does not prejudge the issue of psychological attachment. After all, one may claim to support a party without identifying with that political entity. Because SOEP regularly taps party choices during and between electoral periods, political campaigns do not much influence the responses. Indeed, the evidence shows that persons are more likely to support a party in an election year than during off years. These questions offer reliable and internally valid measures of partisan support in Germany.

We address two related dependent variables: whether or not the respondent supports a party and which one is named. The parties vary across the three samples. Almost all West Germans who name a party select the CDU/CSU or the SPD, and so our analysis of this sample focuses only on these two parties, omitting the Free Democrats (FDP), the Greens, and others. East Germans add the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), the reincarnated and transformed ruling party of the East German state, and so we add this choice to this analysis. Immigrants, however, name only the SPD. These are the relevant parties for each of the samples.

The survey offers unparalleled opportunities to study the social logic of partisanship. By questioning each person in the household who is at least sixteen years of age, the data enable us to focus on the immediate and most intimate social ties: the social unit characterized by relatively high levels of trust and dependence, shared information and values, and the unit in

⁸ Most versions of the traditional measure contain wording like the following: “Generally speaking do you think of yourself as an X, Y, or Z?” where the letters indicated the names of particular political parties. This question implies identification and contributes a specific answer to the question, thereby prompting a response. Presented again and again in a Panel Study, it increases both the probability of an answer in each year and the same answer over time. Its use may offer another reason for the high levels of partisan stability found in Green, Palmquist, and Schickler (2002). See Zuckerman, Fitzgerald, and Dasović 2003; 2004; 2005 and Zuckerman, Fitzgerald, Dasović and Brynin 2002 for a full review of this issue and the related literature. Green, Palmquist, and Schickler 2002 insist on the value of the traditional measure, maintaining that only this question taps partisan identification. Because this paper is not the appropriate venue for a full discussion, we focus here on the more general concept partisanship, as defined above, without presuming that it entails a psychological attachment.

which political discussion –both direct and verbal and indirect and non-verbal –is most likely to occur. Similarly, it provides information on the distribution of partisanship in the German state in which each respondent resides. In addition, questions about voluntary work, social contacts, and trade union and other social memberships tap social ties beyond the household. There are several indicators of social class and a direct question about religious self-identification. Furthermore, there are assessments of several individual level political variables. Finally and of critical importance several questions offer particular information necessary for the analyses of partisanship among East Germans and immigrants. These data allow us to describe and model partisanship in the three populations.

Micro-Partisanship in Germany

Aggregate patterns

Figure 1 details the aggregate levels of party support for each year of SOEP, 1985-2002 for West Germans and immigrants, and 1992-2002 for East Germans. As expected, West Germans consistently display the highest levels. When East Germans enter the survey, their levels of aggregate partisanship are closer to that of the immigrants than to their fellow Germans. Over time, there are small differences in the distance among the three groups. East Germans and immigrants are less likely to support a political party than experienced voters, as the literature on the development of partisanship has long noted (see footnote 3). No matter the efforts by the political parties to gather the votes of East Germans and no matter their status as citizens with the right to vote, their aggregate level of partisan support hardly changes over the decade.

The figure also highlights growth and decline in the aggregate level of partisanship, another pattern in line with numerous observations of recent German politics (see for example Dalton and Bürklin 2003). For the first six years, the trend lines follow the expectations of the classic literature on partisanship (Converse 1969; 1976). The veteran citizens –the West Germans –display a relatively stable level of partisan support. Immigrants, in turn, show a

rising rate of acquisition of partisanship, also in line with the expectation of gradual increase with exposure to electoral competition. Re-Unification ends this familiar trend. First, it is followed by a drop in the aggregate level of partisanship among West Germans and immigrants, and as East Germans enter the sample, they are characterized by the same trend line. For all three populations, the 1994 election stops the slide, but for the West Germans and the immigrants it is also not followed by returns to previous high levels. Indeed, elections spike the level of partisanship for citizens, but not immigrants (see also Zelle 1998). Even as the transformation of the German state is followed by declines in the aggregate level of partisanship, the ebb and flow of national elections is associated with rises and drops in party support among citizens. During the data's nearly two decades, however, aggregate partisanship declines.⁹

Place Figure 1 Here

The panels of Figure 2 display levels of preference for the major political parties. Figure 2a details the relative standing of the CDU/CSU and the SPD among West Germans; Figure 2b focuses on the SPD among immigrants (as hardly any ever support another party), and Figure 2c displays the relative strength of the CDU/CSU, SPD, and the PDS among East Germans. Among West Germans and immigrants, German Re-Unification seems not to influence the relative perceptions of the parties. The trend lines suggest that few people reward Kohl's party for unifying East and West Germany. Similarly, few people appear to punish the CDU/CSU for the new taxes that were levied to pay for the transformation. Of note is the gradual and substantial increase of support for the PDS among East Germans. These results hint at the great distance between national events and the evaluation of the political parties. Changes—in the form of once in a life-time events or recurrent national elections—seem not much to affect the relative standing of the political parties.

⁹ As the SOEP data begin in 1985, they do not enable us to address directly the observation that partisanship has steadily declined since the early 1970s (Schmitt and Holberg 1995; Wattenberg and Dalton 2000, especially Table 2.1, p. 25). Our year-to-year evidence indicates short-term variations within a generalized decline in the aggregate level of partisanship.

Place Figure 2a Here

Place Figure 2b Here

Place Figure 2c Here

Individual Partisan Choices

We consider the dynamics of micro-partisanship by noting first how frequently people name the major parties, during the years for which SOEP provides data for all three populations, 1992-2002. Table 1 examines the responses of persons in the three sub-populations who were interviewed in all eleven waves. The first panel shows that large portions of the three samples –no matter their citizenship rights and personal political histories –never select one or the other or both of the major parties. It also shows that the three sub-populations are not bifurcated into those who always oppose one of the parties and always support the other; rather partisan support is a variable.¹⁰ Even among the West Germans –the group for which there is reason to expect the most stable responses –relatively few persons consistently name the same party. Table 1b shows that less than half ever name one of the major parties in any of the three samples; here the highest level is 46 percent of the West Germans who select the SPD at least once (1338/2939). Finally, Table 1c underlines the extent to which persons do **not move** from one major party to the other. Among West Germans, almost all of movement takes persons between the CDU/CSU and no party (and the Free Democrats, not shown in the table) or the SPD and no party (and the Greens, not shown in the table). Because East Germans name the PDS with increasing frequency, they move between each of the three parties and no preference; like the West Germans, hardly any travel from party to party. For the immigrants, all flows take persons back and forth between the Socialists and no announced party preference. Partisans preference is a variable not a constant, and it is almost always bifurcated between naming and denying the same party.

¹⁰ The relative dearth of recurrent selections further highlights the internal validity of the data on party support. Repeated questions do not seem to produce repeated answers; there is no evidence here of instrument effects in which the survey questions prompt the respondents' answers.

Place Table 1a Here

Place Table 1b Here

Place Table 1c Here

Table 1d offers a summary description of the aggregate patterns. The first row highlights the higher level of partisanship among West Germans than among East Germans and immigrants. Note also that, during these ten years, Germany's new citizens and its resident aliens most of whom are not citizens display the same rates of generalized partisanship. The next two rows detail the relative levels of preference for each of the major parties in each sample. The final row displays that among all three populations hardly anyone ever selects both of the major parties during the ten years. Put differently, more than ninety percent never incline towards at least one of the major parties.

Place Table 1d Here

Because most persons never select one or both of the major parties and because partisans almost never cross to the other side of the national political divide, correlations in partisan choice between points in time for each person are very high. Table 2 displays the tetrachoric correlation for persons in each of the three populations, across the different points in time. These parameters are correlations of latent continuous variables, which underpin the discrete observations of party support. Pearson correlations would mis-specify the association between these latent traits, because they treat discrete observations as continuous ones and they are sensitive to the different levels of measurement (see also Green, Schickler, and Palmquist 2002). These results, however, are best interpreted as additional evidence of the bounded nature of partisanship, not as demonstrations of constant partisanship. As we will demonstrate, the choice of party responds to particular social and political determinants; it is not an independent attachment.

Place Table 2 Here

The analysis supports several generalizations about partisan choice over time. Most everyone never supports one or both of the major political parties. Note the complement to this generalization: hardly anyone ever supports both of the major parties. Never supporting one party also does **not** imply always supporting another party. West Germans display much higher rates of partisan support than do East Germans and immigrants. Most West Germans name one of the major parties at least once and then vary their selections of that party with no announced preference, not the other major party. East Germans add the PDS to the names of parties that might be supported, as they also display a bifurcated choice set, and immigrants only move between the SPD and no party. 20-25 percent of West Germans who ever support a party, do so all the time, and if we include those who pick the same party all but one time, the fraction rises another 10 percent. Put differently, no more than 40 percent of the veteran citizens may be defined as constant supporters. As expected, even fewer East Germans and immigrants display behavior that conforms to a psychological identification with a political party, the kind of attachments suggested by the Michigan school's conceptualization. Most persons –citizens or not, West or East Germans or not –move among a bifurcated choice set of selections over time, without ever crossing over to the other party. Indeed, most individuals perceive two possible choices: Party A and no party or Party B and no party.

A Multivariate Exploration of the Social Logic of Party Support

These patterns raise two primary questions: Why do some people support any party and why do they choose a particular party? Both of these assume binary dependent variables (whether or not a party is supported and the particular party that is named). We answer these questions by applying a Probit Heckman Selection model. This model has several strengths: it answers both questions at the same time and it offers a summary statistic which describes the strength of association between the answer to the first and second questions. Each analysis draws from all of the respondents' answers, presenting the results for an "average

year.”¹¹ The Rho statistic is the correlation between the error terms of equation (a) and (b). A significant coefficient indicates a relationship between the process to pick a party and the process to name a specific one. As a result, each table contains two sets of models: an analysis of the decision to support a party and analyses of the choice of party. Because we expect generalized partisanship to condition specific partisanship, using a simple probit model to account for the party named would bias the estimates. Estimating decisions simultaneously, while controlling for their correlation (the rho statistic), avoids bias in the analysis of the party choice equation. Given our interest in exploring the similarities and differences among veteran and new citizens and immigrants, we construct different models for each of the three sub-populations, always examining the absence or presence of partisan support and then modeling the choice of each party relevant to each population. All our analyses use the statistical program Stata 8.

We begin with the West German sample. First, we list hypotheses taken from the approaches to the study of partisanship in established democracies. We use a measure of age, in order to incorporate the expectation that party support in these polities responds to exposure to democratic politics. We also include age² in order to capture a curvilinear relationship between age and the measures of support. Two different but related hypotheses sustain this relationship. Life cycle effects expect both the youngest and the oldest cohorts to not display the lowest levels of political participation, and by extension party support. Also in Germany, generational effects would expect the oldest persons to retain traces of their socialization under the Nazis and display relatively lower levels of partisanship (see for example Norpoth 1984). Two variables capture different effects related to generalized notions of time. One measures the distance from SOEP’s first year, so as to capture the declining levels of aggregate partisanship that we (and others) have observed. The other

¹¹ The Heckman model is an ordinary cross-sectional model, i.e. it does not correct for the difference of within and between individual variances. We do, however, correct the standard errors by means of the Huber-White estimator of variance.

details the number of days from the closest election, because of the expectation that the decision to support a party rises as an election nears (see the Appendix for details on this and all the measures). We also include variables that assess the effects of various measures of socioeconomic status (income and income² –both controlling for the number of persons in the household –membership in a union (a surrogate for working class membership), and education, and social capital (union membership; social contacts, and membership in voluntary organizations). Finally, we include a measure of the respondent’s general level of interest in politics as a predictor of the decision to support a party.

Another set of variables allows us to tap our interest in the immediate social contexts of persons’ lives.¹² One measures the level of aggregate partisanship in the respondent’s region (Federal state). Another factor –of primary theoretical importance –depicts the level of partisanship among other members in the respondent’s household. Here, the analysis takes cognizance of a potential problem of endogeneity –mutual influence within a household. Following the lead offered by studies of “peer effects,” we use distinctions based on time and instrumental variables to address this problem (see for example Manski 1993; Sacerdote 2000). We lag by one year the predictor variables that detail whether or not there is a balance of persons in the household who are party supporters (and see the Appendix for the details of these measures). As a result, the dependent variable cannot influence the predictor variable. Households provide the most intimate of political contexts.

The second set of analyses focus on the choice of party. Here, we draw on classic theories of party preference as well as variables that tap our interest in the effect of household partisanship on the party selected. Following the debates in the literature on the social bases of German partisanship, we apply again the measures of social class and religion; these describe a person’s generalized position in the social and economic structure. Here, the

¹² See Baker 1974 for an early demonstration of the power of families on the development of partisanship among West Germans.

partisanship of the region measures the percentage that supports a particular party and household partisanship describes whether or not a majority support one or another of the major parties. Note that Zuckerman, Fitzgerald, and Dasović (2005) show that similarities within British and German household do not result from assortative mating –the tendency for like-minded persons –with regard partisan preferences. Note as well that membership in a union is not solely a measure of social class; it also highlights the probability that a person will encounter other persons of the same social class and –by implication –partisan preference. Various worries about the economy may be associated with partisan choices.¹³ These provide a set of variables for the analysis of partisan choice.

The models applied to the East Germans and the immigrants use the same variables. Here, we expect the age related variables not to affect generalized partisanship, because of the lack of variation in exposure to democratic politics by age. We also do not expect social contacts to influence partisanship, because interactions among East Germans and interactions among immigrants bring together persons with low levels of partisanship. These social ties reinforce the decision not to support a party. The analyses also include measures that are uniquely useful to the analysis of partisanship in these two groups. SOEP offers questions that speak directly to East Germans. In 1990 and 1991, the survey asks whether or not the respondents were members of the GDR administration; their views of democracy and of social security in the GDR, and their attitudes towards the transformation of the GDR, namely their worries about the new living conditions after Re-Unification. We also use questions designed for the immigrant population: number of years in Germany, language use (German relative to native tongue), whether or not they are citizens, and their country of origin.

We begin our discussion of the results by noting that only measures of social and political networks influence party support and party choice in all three samples, the veteran citizens

¹³ But note as well the potentially endogenous relationship between assessments of the economy and partisanship; see for example Erickson 2004.

(West Germans), the new citizens (East Germans), and the residents most of whom are not citizens (immigrants). Looking across all three tables indicates that the most immediate political context of persons' lives –the political preferences of others in their households – displays a strong and consistent effect. Put simply, the presence of others in the household who name a party always increases the probability of party support and persons who live with others most of whom support a particular political party have a very strong probability of also preferring that party. Conversely, where most of the others in the household do not support a party, the respondent is not likely to do so either. Household partisanship has both a positive and negative impact on party preference.

Similarly, party support and preference respond to the distribution of these factors in the respondent's region of residence, if not as strongly as it does to the household's politics. Note as well that union membership –a measure of social ties and social class –also influences partisanship in every model. Only these variables consistently and strongly influence the two parts of partisanship, and they do so after controlling for the effects of the other variables in each of the models –both those associated with long-standing theories of German partisanship and those of unique importance to each of the three populations. The rho statistic at the bottom of each table indicates that there is a correlation between the processes by which respondents support a party and the particular party preferred.

Another set of variables influences the probability that respondents support a party, if not the choice of the particular party, in all three populations. For everyone –no matter if they are veteran citizens or new entrants to the electorate, or not even citizens –the earlier in the history of the survey it is, the more likely are they to support a party. Similarly, the closer in time is the response to a national election, the more likely is the respondent to support a party. These results reaffirm the secular decline in the level of partisanship and the ability of national elections to pause this that we noted in Figure 1. Note as well that the individual level variable –political interest –influences the probability of party support. Consider,

however, that variation in the level education does not influence partisan support, once the analysis controls for the level of political interest and income, variables that follow from education. The more interested in politics is a person, the more likely is he or she to support a party.

Examining Table 3 shows that other variables also influence micro-partisanship among West Germans. As expected, the oldest and youngest persons are least likely to support a party. Here, we see two different effects at work: the tendency for young West Germans –like other young persons in established democracies –to display relatively low levels of partisanship. This too characterizes the oldest cohorts, but we cannot disentangle potential generational and life-cycle effects. Among those who do name a party, however, the probability of choosing one or the other of the two major parties rises with age.¹⁴ Different measures of social class and religious identification reaffirm the ties between the middle class and Catholics and the CDU/CSU and the working class and the SPD. To return to the social logic of politics, volunteer work and the number of social contacts also consistently affect the probability of supporting a party. Note as well that economic worries distinguish support for the two dominant parties.

Place Table 3a Here

Table 3b shows that as expected, East Germans display no association between age and the probability of supporting a party. These new citizens share the absence of a history of personal experiences with these political parties, and they enter the electorate at the same moment. Note as well that social contacts are also not associated with partisan support. Here, occupation and various economic worries have very different influences on the party supported than do these variables among West Germans. Note too that religious self-identification separates those who prefer the CDU/CSU from partisans of the SPD and PDS,

¹⁴ Because we focus only on the two major parties, we omit the tendency for young Germans to support the Greens.

even as religion increases the likelihood of supporting any party. Religious differences help to underpin the partisanship of East Germans. Finally, factors unique to this group –views of the GDR itself and the Re-Unification –also help to explain the party supported. Support for the PDS, the reincarnated dominant party of the GDR, flows from positive assessments of that regime and negative views of the transformation of the German polity.

Place Table 3b Here

Table 3c applies the model to partisanship among immigrants in Germany. Again, the partisan balance in the household and the region affect both partisan support and the party named, as do gender and self-employment. These variables along with education, German citizenship, and the number of years that the respondent has lived in Germany influence party support, but not choosing the SPD. This implies a more general interpretation that meshes with the social logic of partisanship: the greater the number of social ties to persons who support (or are likely to support) a political party and the greater the level of commitment to Germany –as displayed by the descriptions of the household and region, union membership, political interest, education, citizenship and length of residence –the more likely is the immigrant to be a partisan (see Cain, Kiewiet, and Uhlaner 1991 and Cho 1999 for similar arguments applied to immigrants in the United States.) In turn, choice of the SPD is linked to working class occupations and the absence of religion, and country of origin, as well as the political preferences of the members of the respondents' households and states.

Place Table 3c Here

The concluding step in our analysis uses post-estimation techniques, drawing on the results of Table 3. Here, we present the predicted probabilities of selecting one or another of the major parties for persons with particular characteristics.

Table 4 highlights the powerful impact of a person's immediate political context on decisions to support one or the other of the major parties. In each case, household partisanship is much more important than the aggregate partisan preferences in the

respondent's region of residence. Put simply and directly, West and East Germans who live with others who favor one of the major parties are at least twice as likely to prefer that party as the mean respondent. The probability of picking that party hovers around 0.7. Among immigrants, where particularized partisanship does not much vary, the relationship is weaker but still powerful, making the selection of the SPD almost certain, with the probability approximately 0.85.

Place Table 4 Here

Our multivariate analyses highlight the other variables that sustain partisan choice in the three samples. Applying post-estimation techniques to these models allows us to detail the social and political contexts of partisan choice. Consider the results of different combinations of characteristics for the predicted selection of each of the parties in each of the three samples:

The predicted marginal probability of **SPD support (mean =0.36 for West Germans, 0.28 for East Germans, and .67 for immigrants)** of a person, who is

- a. West German, non-Catholic, member of a labor union, living in an SPD household in an SPD region: **0.90**.
- b. West German, Catholic, not member of a labor union, living in a non-SPD household in a non-SPD region: **0.12**. If this person lives in a CDU/CSU household: **0.02**.
- c. East German, atheist, member of a labor union, living in an SPD-household in an SPD region: **0.84**.
- d. East German, Catholic, not member of a labor union, living in a non-SPD household in a non SPD area: **0.13**. If this person lives in a CDU/CSU household: **0.02**.
- e. Immigrant, not a Catholic or Protestant, member of a labor union, living in an SPD household in an SPD region: **0.90**.

- f. Immigrant, Catholic or Protestant, not member of a labor union, living in a non SPD household in a non SPD region: **0.37**.

The predicted marginal probability **CDU/CSU support (mean=0.31 for West Germans and 0.19 for East Germans)** of a person, who is

- a. West German, non-Catholic, member of a labor union, living in a non-CDU/CSU household in non-CDU/CSU region: **0.07**. If this person lives in an SPD household: **0.01**.
- b. West German, Catholic, not member of a labor union, living in a CDU/CSU household in a CDU/CSU region: **0.86**.
- c. East German, atheist, member of a labor union, living in a non-CDU/CSU household in a non-CDU/CSU region: **0.06**. If this person lives in an SPD household: **0.01**.
- d. East German, Catholic, not member of a labor union, living in a CDU/CSU-household in a CDU/CSU region: **0.90**.

The predicted marginal probability **PDS support (mean=.15)** for an East German, who is

- a. an atheist, very positive about the GDR, living in a PDS household and PDS region: **0.90**.
- b. Catholic or Protestant, very negative about the GDR, living in a non PDS household in a non PDS region: **< 0.01**.

The results are clear, strong, and persistent: at the extremes of social and political context, persons are certain to support one of the major parties and certain not to support the others. Some of these findings are well-established, as scholars and lay observers of German politics have long observed an association between union membership and the lack of religiosity and support for the SPD and between Catholic religious identification and the absence of union ties and support for the CDU/CSU. Our research adds to this by uncovering and detailing the more critical importance of the partisan contexts in households for partisan

choice. These ties sustain the more abstract relationship between social class, religion, and partisanship.

At the same time, our research addresses the extent to which Germans live their lives in reinforcing political contexts. Table 5 presents the population distributions in each of the relevant social locations and how they overlap. Note most importantly that no more than one-third of the West German respondents live in partisan households. Note too that sixteen percent belong to trade unions. To follow this example, no more than one-fourth of the West Germans are members of trade unions who live in a household most of whose other members support the SPD. Similarly, the same percentage are Catholics most of whose other members support the CDU/CSU. Conversely, half the West Germans do not display the two variables that most strongly influence partisan choice. In turn, the generalized consequences are relatively easy to specify: variation in the social and political contexts of person's lives strongly influence their partisanship and the party chosen. But it is critical to underline that these factors are variables. Persons vary in the extent to which they live their lives so that they encounter persons whose party choices reinforce their own.¹⁵ When that happens, persons are certain to support the appropriate party; when it does not, the probability of support declines dramatically.

Conclusions

West Germans, East Germans, and immigrants to Germany all display bounded partisanship. Almost all never support at least one of the major parties and vary their support for their own party, by also claiming no party preference. Partisan choice is a bifurcated variable: to support or not support one of the major parties. Differences among the three groups appear: they vary in the extent to which they ever support a party: during a decade of annual observations, 1992-2002: 22 percent of the West Germans; forty percent of the East

¹⁵ See Huckfeldt, Johnson, and Sprague (2005); Zuckerman and Kotler-Berkowitz (1998) and Zuckerman, Fitzgerald, and Dasović (2005) for evidence of variations in political cohesion among intimate social networks in the United States and Great Britain, as well as Germany.

Germans and 43 percent of the immigrants never say that they incline towards a political party. While years of exposure to democratic politics would seem to account for this difference, the SOEP data do not show rising levels of generalized partisanship over time. Partisan support is more than the result of a gradual accumulation of interest in democratic politics.

Our analysis highlights the social logic of partisanship. For the respondents in all three samples –West Germans, East Germans, and immigrants to Germany –the social context of people’s lives affect both the claim to support a party and the particular party named. The partisan hue of a person’s household plays a particularly powerful role: where there is a balance in favor of party A, the respondent is highly likely to also prefer Party A and not name party B, its rival. The partisan composition of the state affects this prior as well. Reflecting well known understandings of the relationship among social class, religion, and German partisanship, union membership and religion also consistently affect party choice. No matter the differences among the West Germans, East Germans, and immigrants, both sets of factors strongly influence generalized and particularized partisanship. The analysis underscores the social logic of partisanship in Germany

Appendix - Measures for Tables 3-5

According to the German census bureau (http://www.desatis.de/e_home.htm go to population) in 2003, 82.5 million persons lived in Germany. 67.5 million were in the states that once composed West Germany and 15 million lived in the lands of the former East Germany. 7.3 million foreigners (excluding illegal immigrants) resided in the county, 6.9 million in the West and 0.4 million in the East. As a result, 60.6 million persons (73 percent of the total) were veteran citizens (labeled here as West Germans); 14.6 million (18 percent) were new citizens (East Germans), and 7.3 million (9 percent) were foreigners. The 1.9 million Turks provided the largest group among the foreigners.

The immigrants are “guest workers,” persons recruited to work in Germany from the countries of southern Europe, between 1955 and 1973. Almost all of these came from and remained in the working class. As noted in the text, Italians, Spaniards, and Greeks, but not Turks, may vote in local and European elections, even when they are not citizens of Germany. During the years 1980-2000, 3 million foreigners received German citizenship. In SOEP’s foreigners sample (Sample B), 96 percent of the foreigners in 1984 were not German citizens (not 100 percent because some foreigners lived with German citizens). In 2002, 75 percent of this sample were not citizens of Germany, indicating increasing levels of citizenship or co-residents with Germans, or both among this group. In 2002, SOEP asked non-citizens if they planned to apply for citizenship. Approximately 25 percent said they would. When asked if they would apply if they could also keep their original citizenship about fifty percent said they would do so during the next two years.

The measure of education uses the CASMIN Scale (Comparative Analysis of Social Mobility in Industrial Nations), which has been developed to allow for a cross-national comparison of educational degrees. This measure is widely used in sociology. It has been collapsed into three categories: low, medium, and high education. We have omitted those “in school,” because there are very few of these persons.

The following question defines political interest: “First of all in general: How interested are you in politics?” Then the respondents are offered the following choices: “Very interested [4 points], fairly interested [3 points], not very interested [2 point], and not interested [1 point].”

Religion is measured by a question that asks about “membership in a church or denomination.” It allows for five options: Roman Catholic, Protestant, Other Christian, non-Christian, and no religion.

Both time variables use days as the unit of analysis, not years. Age: we use a variable of the linear time trend (which is 0 for the first SOEP interview Jan 1 1984 and ranges to 20+

((last interview date in wave 20)). Distance from an election has been transformed to give more weight to days that are close to elections as compared to those that are in the middle of an election cycle.

Economic worries: 1=no worries, 2=some, 3=very worried.

Questions on volunteer work and social contact are found in the context of how persons spend their time and are asked most every second year. Here is the wording: Now some questions about your free time. How frequently do you do the following activities?

- volunteer work in clubs, associations, or social services
- visit with friends, relatives, or neighbors

Answers range from never to weekly. Because the time use variables are over dispersed on the category "never," we recoded them to binary variables of "no=never" and "yes=else."

For the immigrants: command of German relative to mother tongue = (German speaking + German writing) - (mother tongue speaking + mother tongue writing); range: -8 to +8, values denote that respondent's command of German is better than his/hers command of mother tongue. Data on this variable has been collected in at least every second wave.

For the East Germans: (a) positive view of the GDR and (b) skepticism about the transformation, we generated two additive scales based on (a) respondent's satisfaction with democracy in the GDR and respondent's satisfaction with social security in the GDR and (b) respondent's worries about the "new" living conditions surveyed in 1990 and 1991. We tested the "scalability" of these items by means of a non-parametric probability scaling model for polychotmous items called Mokken-scaling.

Political preferences in the household: In order to create this summary score for each member of the household (*excluding the primary respondent*), we first assign a party support score for each household member for each wave of the surveys. These first -stage values were 1 for SPD support, 2 for the CDU/CSU, and 0 for no party or third party support. If an

individual lives alone, their family support value is set at zero. For West Germans, the PDS category is set at 0, as are the CDU/CSU and PDS for immigrant.

Political preferences in the region: first we calculate the percentage of general partisanship in each Federal state (range 0-1). Then, we calculated the percentage of support for each party in each Federal state, given the level of general party support. For example, in a state in which 60 percent of the respondents supported a party and 15 percent supported the CDU/CSU, 25 percent supported the CDU/CSU in the state ($0.15 * 1/.6=0.25$).

Religious denomination and union membership as stable traits are surveyed infrequently in the SOEP. The data presented in Table 5 on religion come from 1977 and those on union membership from 1998 (data on union membership). As the table refers to a short panel of two data points and not the whole range of years of the SOEP, numbers of observations are lower than in previous tables. This is particularly true for the West German and immigrant sample (starting in 1984) as these are plagued in 1997 by higher overall attrition rates than the East German sample (starting in 1990) (Kroh and Spiess 2004).

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Figure 1 Partisanship in Germany 1984 - 2002, SOEP

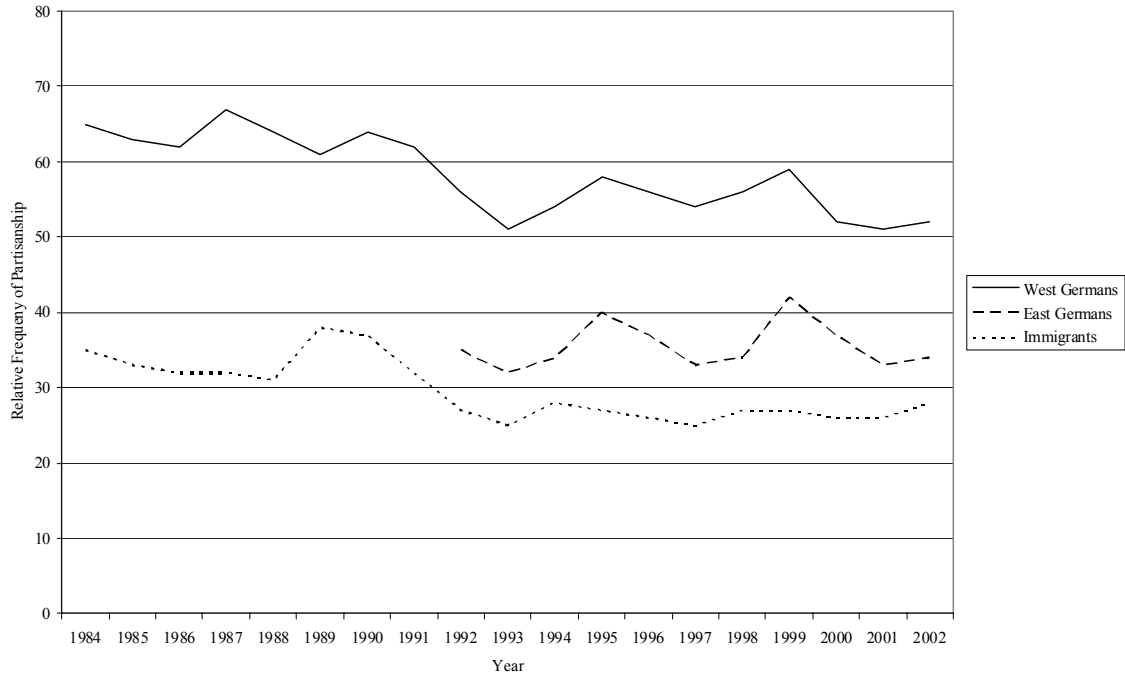


Figure 2.1 Party Support for the SPD and CDU/CSU among West Germans 1984 - 2002, SOEP

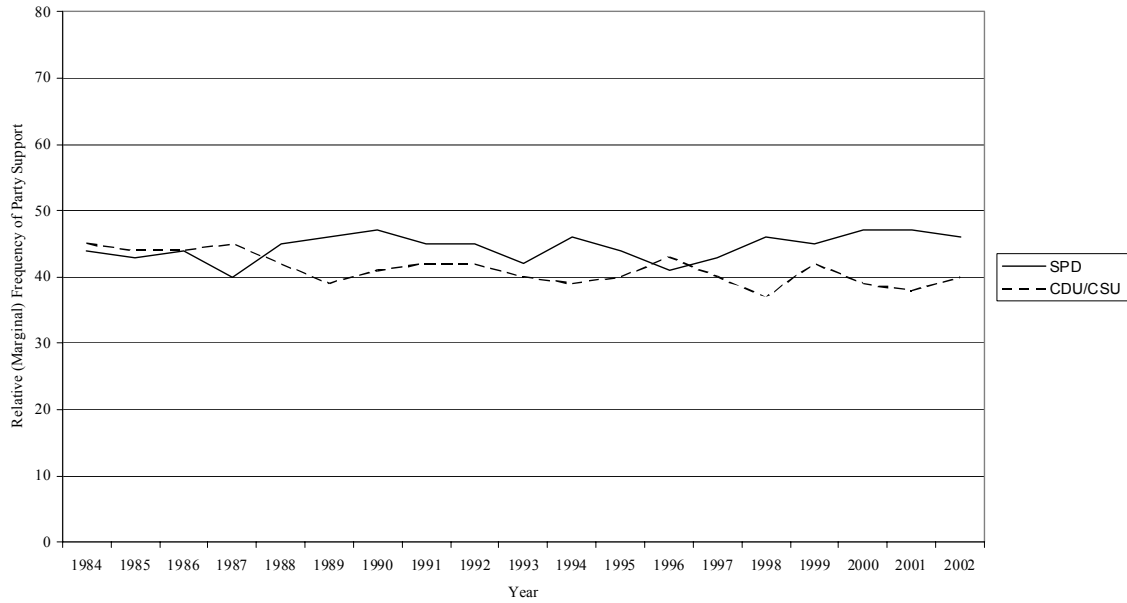


Figure 2.2 Party Support for the SPD, CDU and PDS among East Germans 1992 - 2002, SOEP

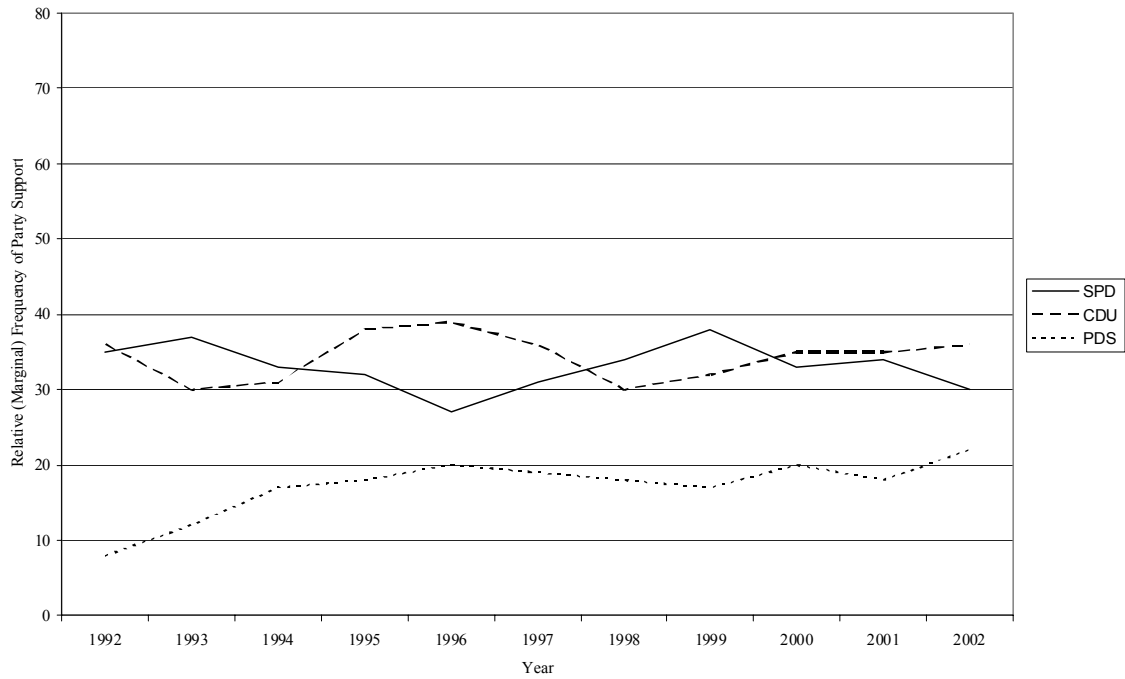


Figure 2.3 Party Support for the SPD among Immigrants 1984 - 2002, SOEP

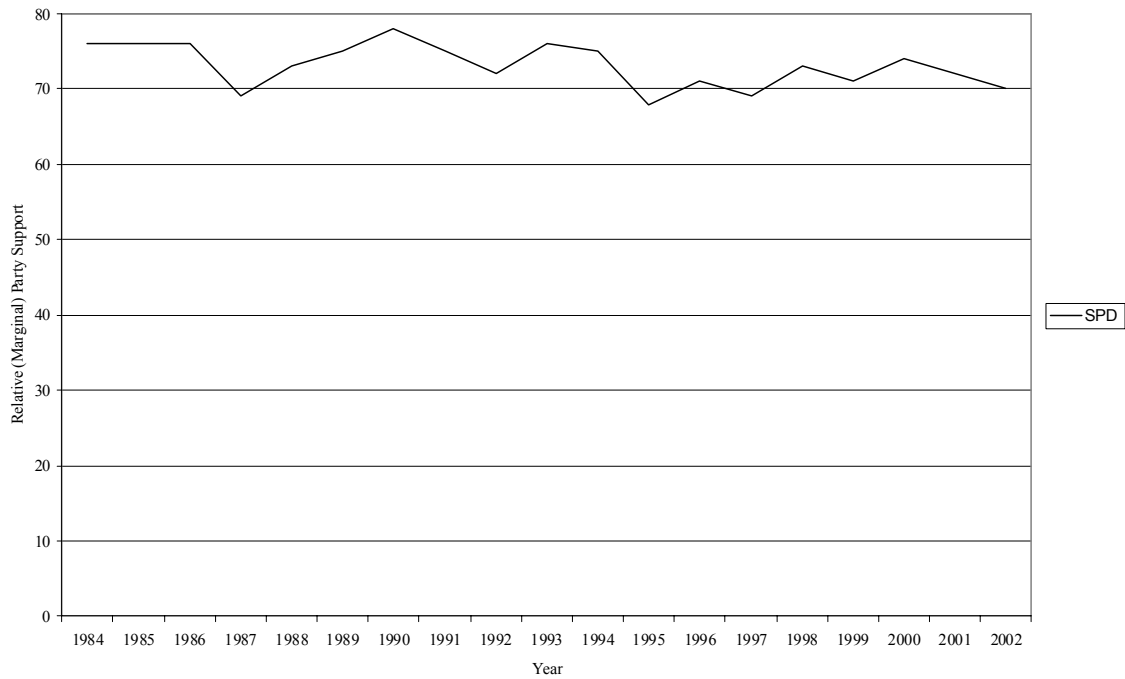


Table 1a Relative frequency of partisanship 1992 – 2002

	West Germans			East Germans				Immigrants	
	CDU/CSU	SPD	None	CDU	SPD	PDS	None	SPD	None
0	0.61	0.54	0.30	0.70	0.63	0.83	0.13	0.50	0.07
1	0.06	0.07	0.10	0.07	0.11	0.05	0.08	0.13	0.05
2	0.03	0.04	0.07	0.05	0.05	0.02	0.05	0.08	0.04
3	0.02	0.03	0.06	0.03	0.04	0.01	0.04	0.04	0.02
4	0.02	0.02	0.05	0.03	0.03	0.01	0.04	0.03	0.04
5	0.02	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.05	0.03	0.04
6	0.01	0.02	0.04	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.05	0.04	0.04
7	0.02	0.02	0.05	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.05	0.04	0.05
8	0.02	0.03	0.05	0.02	0.01	0.01	0.06	0.02	0.05
9	0.03	0.03	0.05	0.01	0.02	0.00	0.09	0.03	0.08
10	0.04	0.05	0.07	0.02	0.02	0.01	0.12	0.04	0.13
11	0.11	0.12	0.14	0.04	0.03	0.03	0.23	0.03	0.39
N	2939	2939	2939	1533	1533	1533	1533	747	747

Source. SOEP.**Table 1b** Relative frequency of partisanship 1992 – 2002 of those who ever pick this party

	West Germans			East Germans				Immigrants	
	CDU/CSU	SPD	None	CDU	SPD	PDS	No PI	SPD	None
1	0.16	0.15	0.15	0.23	0.30	0.28	0.08	0.25	0.05
2	0.07	0.09	0.10	0.15	0.14	0.15	0.06	0.16	0.04
3	0.06	0.06	0.08	0.08	0.10	0.08	0.05	0.08	0.03
4	0.05	0.05	0.07	0.08	0.08	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.04
5	0.06	0.05	0.05	0.06	0.05	0.06	0.06	0.07	0.04
6	0.04	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.08	0.05
7	0.06	0.05	0.07	0.04	0.05	0.03	0.06	0.07	0.05
8	0.06	0.06	0.06	0.07	0.04	0.04	0.07	0.04	0.05
9	0.07	0.07	0.07	0.04	0.05	0.02	0.10	0.07	0.09
10	0.10	0.11	0.10	0.06	0.06	0.05	0.14	0.07	0.14
11	0.29	0.26	0.20	0.13	0.09	0.20	0.27	0.06	0.42
N	1150	1338	2061	463	571	258	1322	377	698

Source. SOEP.

Table 1c		Relative frequency of partisanship-combinations 1992 – 2002		
	West Germans	East Germans	Immigrants	
CDU/CSU & SPD	0.06	0.07	-	
CDU/CSU & PDS	-	0.02	-	
CDU/CSU & None	0.26	0.26	-	
SPD & PDS	-	0.05	-	
SPD & None	0.30	0.32	-	
PDS & None	-	0.13	-	
CDU/CSU & SPD & PDS	-	0.01	-	
N	2939	1533	-	

Source. SOEP.

Table 1d		Relative frequency of partisanship 1992 – 2002.		
	West Germans	East Germans	Immigrants	
Never supporting the CDU/CSU or the SPD	0.22	0.40	0.43	
Never supporting the SPD but sometimes the CDU/CSU	0.33	0.23	0.07	
Never supporting the CDU/CSU but sometimes the SPD	0.39	0.30	0.43	
Sometimes supporting the CDU/CSU and sometimes the SPD	0.06	0.07	0.08	
Total	1.00	1.00	1.00	
N	2939	1533	747	

Source. SOEP.

Table 2a	Intra-individual tetrachoric correlations of partisanship among West Germans 1992 – 2002										
	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
CDU/CSU											
1992	1.00										
1993	0.93	1.00									
1994	0.92	0.95	1.00								
1995	0.93	0.93	0.95	1.00							
1996	0.92	0.92	0.94	0.96	1.00						
1997	0.92	0.93	0.93	0.95	0.96	1.00					
1998	0.91	0.92	0.93	0.94	0.94	0.96	1.00				
1999	0.91	0.91	0.92	0.93	0.94	0.94	0.95	1.00			
2000	0.88	0.90	0.91	0.92	0.91	0.92	0.93	0.94	1.00		
2001	0.88	0.88	0.89	0.91	0.92	0.91	0.92	0.93	0.94	1.00	
2002	0.90	0.89	0.90	0.92	0.93	0.92	0.93	0.94	0.95	0.95	1.00
SPD											
1992	1.00										
1993	0.92	1.00									
1994	0.92	0.93	1.00								
1995	0.92	0.92	0.93	1.00							
1996	0.90	0.91	0.92	0.94	1.00						
1997	0.90	0.90	0.91	0.93	0.95	1.00					
1998	0.88	0.88	0.90	0.92	0.92	0.94	1.00				
1999	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.90	0.92	0.92	0.93	1.00			
2000	0.88	0.88	0.78	0.91	0.92	0.93	0.93	0.95	1.00		
2001	0.87	0.87	0.87	0.90	0.92	0.90	0.92	0.93	0.94	1.00	
2002	0.85	0.86	0.86	0.89	0.89	0.88	0.90	0.91	0.93	0.94	1.00
None											
1992	1.00										
1993	0.81	1.00									
1994	0.80	0.84	1.00								
1995	0.80	0.81	0.84	1.00							
1996	0.78	0.79	0.82	0.85	1.00						
1997	0.77	0.78	0.82	0.85	0.87	1.00					
1998	0.76	0.75	0.82	0.81	0.82	0.86	1.00				
1999	0.75	0.76	0.79	0.78	0.81	0.82	0.85	1.00			
2000	0.74	0.76	0.77	0.79	0.79	0.81	0.82	0.85	1.00		
2001	0.73	0.69	0.75	0.76	0.80	0.78	0.81	0.82	0.83	1.00	
2002	0.71	0.71	0.73	0.75	0.77	0.76	0.78	0.80	0.83	0.86	1.00

Source. SOEP. *N* = 2939.

Table 2b	Intra-individual tetrachoric correlations of partisanship among East Germans, 1992 – 2002										
	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
CDU											
1992	1.00										
1993	0.88	1.00									
1994	0.84	0.88	1.00								
1995	0.83	0.84	0.88	1.00							
1996	0.82	0.82	0.87	0.92	1.00						
1997	0.83	0.82	0.88	0.92	0.93	1.00					
1998	0.79	0.79	0.87	0.92	0.92	0.94	1.00				
1999	0.74	0.76	0.84	0.88	0.88	0.90	0.93	1.00			
2000	0.78	0.76	0.85	0.90	0.89	0.90	0.90	0.95	1.00		
2001	0.76	0.72	0.82	0.85	0.85	0.87	0.87	0.90	0.94	1.00	
2002	0.76	0.74	0.79	0.84	0.84	0.89	0.88	0.93	0.94	0.92	1.00
SPD											
1992	1.00										
1993	0.83	1.00									
1994	0.81	0.86	1.00								
1995	0.78	0.82	0.87	1.00							
1996	0.76	0.77	0.85	0.90	1.00						
1997	0.76	0.82	0.87	0.87	0.91	1.00					
1998	0.77	0.78	0.85	0.85	0.88	0.89	1.00				
1999	0.69	0.75	0.78	0.81	0.78	0.80	0.84	1.00			
2000	0.74	0.79	0.84	0.84	0.86	0.87	0.90	0.88	1.00		
2001	0.70	0.73	0.77	0.78	0.78	0.80	0.83	0.85	0.91	1.00	
2002	0.70	0.74	0.81	0.79	0.78	0.81	0.77	0.84	0.88	0.91	1.00
PDS											
1992	1.00										
1993	0.98	1.00									
1994	0.96	0.97	1.00								
1995	0.96	0.95	0.93	1.00							
1996	0.95	0.94	0.95	0.94	1.00						
1997	0.94	0.94	0.94	0.93	0.95	1.00					
1998	0.96	0.94	0.93	0.94	0.95	0.96	1.00				
1999	0.93	0.92	0.90	0.93	0.92	0.94	0.95	1.00			
2000	0.93	0.94	0.92	0.91	0.92	0.95	0.94	0.96	1.00		
2001	0.90	0.99	0.89	0.90	0.91	0.94	0.93	0.94	0.95	1.00	
2002	0.92	0.90	0.87	0.89	0.91	0.92	0.92	0.94	0.95	0.96	1.00
None											
1992	1.00										
1993	0.75	1.00									
1994	0.71	0.82	1.00								
1995	0.67	0.71	0.76	1.00							
1996	0.68	0.71	0.75	0.81	1.00						
1997	0.69	0.76	0.81	0.80	0.85	1.00					
1998	0.67	0.71	0.78	0.79	0.80	0.86	1.00				
1999	0.61	0.67	0.70	0.72	0.75	0.78	0.83	1.00			
2000	0.67	0.70	0.75	0.74	0.77	0.81	0.84	0.85	1.00		
2001	0.64	0.64	0.70	0.71	0.72	0.78	0.78	0.83	0.86	1.00	
2002	0.63	0.66	0.69	0.69	0.72	0.75	0.75	0.80	0.84	0.86	1.00

Source. SOEP. $N = 1533$.

Table 2c	Intra-individual tetrachoric correlations of partisanship among immigrants 1992 – 2002										
	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
SPD											
1992	1.00										
1993	0.73	1.00									
1994	0.72	0.74	1.00								
1995	0.78	0.78	0.81	1.00							
1996	0.79	0.75	0.83	0.90	1.00						
1997	0.70	0.70	0.77	0.81	0.83	1.00					
1998	0.64	0.68	0.68	0.76	0.83	0.82	1.00				
1999	0.65	0.71	0.70	0.79	0.80	0.75	0.82	1.00			
2000	0.61	0.67	0.68	0.76	0.79	0.74	0.75	0.81	1.00		
2001	0.66	0.67	0.65	0.73	0.82	0.74	0.79	0.83	0.81	1.00	
2002	0.63	0.60	0.57	0.66	0.71	0.67	0.72	0.79	0.81	0.86	1.00
None											
1992	1.00										
1993	0.71	1.00									
1994	0.74	0.77	1.00								
1995	0.77	0.80	0.82	1.00							
1996	0.77	0.73	0.82	0.89	1.00						
1997	0.71	0.70	0.78	0.80	0.83	1.00					
1998	0.68	0.69	0.72	0.80	0.80	0.79	1.00				
1999	0.69	0.72	0.72	0.80	0.76	0.74	0.83	1.00			
2000	0.62	0.69	0.74	0.74	0.75	0.71	0.77	0.83	1.00		
2001	0.65	0.67	0.69	0.73	0.81	0.75	0.81	0.82	0.82	1.00	
2002	0.62	0.61	0.61	0.67	0.68	0.66	0.73	0.78	0.79	0.85	1.00

Source. SOEP. $N = 747$.

Table 3a Partisanship among West Germans 1985 – 2002

	Party Support Model		CDU/CSU Model		SPD Model	
Variables in all models						
Intercept	- 3.08***	(0.14)	- 1.63***	(0.15)	- 1.69***	(0.16)
Gender (1 = female)	0.01	(0.02)	- 0.10***	(0.03)	0.04	(0.03)
Age	0.03***	(0.00)	0.02***	(0.00)	0.03***	(0.00)
Age ²	- 0.00***	(0.00)	- 0.00*	(0.00)	- 0.00***	(0.00)
Time trend (1985 – 2002)	- 0.02***	(0.00)	- 0.02***	(0.00)	0.01***	(0.00)
Religion						
<i>None / Other</i>	-		-		-	
Catholic	0.03	(0.02)	0.50***	(0.04)	- 0.30***	(0.04)
Protestant	0.02	(0.02)	0.03	(0.04)	0.05	(0.04)
Occupation						
<i>Blue Collar</i>	-		-		-	
Self Employed	0.07*	(0.04)	0.52***	(0.06)	- 0.72***	(0.06)
White Collar	0.04*	(0.03)	0.15***	(0.04)	- 0.21***	(0.04)
Not Employed	0.02	(0.02)	0.13***	(0.04)	- 0.28***	(0.04)
Equivalence income	0.00**	(0.00)	0.01***	(0.00)	- 0.01***	(0.00)
Equivalence income ²	- 0.00	(0.00)	- 0.00***	(0.00)	0.00***	(0.00)
Union Membership	0.13***	(0.02)	- 0.37***	(0.04)	0.44***	(0.04)
Variables in Party Support Model						
Education						
<i>Low</i>	-					
Medium	0.00	(0.02)				
High	0.07*	(0.04)				
Political Interest	0.51***	(0.01)				
Voluntary Work	0.11***	(0.02)				
Social contacts (friends, family, etc.)	0.10***	(0.03)				
Party support in federal state	1.46***	(0.14)				
Party support in household in t-1	0.64***	(0.01)				
Distance to national elections (ln(days))	- 0.02***	(0.01)				
Variables in Party-Specific Models						
Worries about national economy			- 0.03*	(0.01)	0.08***	(0.02)
Worries about own economic situation			- 0.07***	(0.01)	0.05***	(0.01)
CDU/CSU/SPD preference in federal state			1.22***	(0.20)	1.55***	(0.21)
Party pref in hh at t-1 (Ref. no or 3 rd party)						
Majority of CDU/CSU preference			1.35***	(0.03)	- 1.06***	(0.04)
Majority of SPD preference			- 0.97***	(0.04)	1.15***	(0.03)
ρ			0.29***	(0.04)	0.27***	(0.04)
N			22631		22631	
Log Likelihood			-90252.49		-92136.92	

Source. SOEP. Adjusted robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance level. *** p < 0.01 ** p < 0.05 * p < 0.10.

Table 3b Partisanship among East Germans 1992 – 2002

	Party Support Model		CDU Model		SPD Model		PDS Model	
Variables in all models								
Intercept	- 2.26***	(0.28)	- 1.44***	(0.35)	- 1.98***	(0.34)	- 2.16***	(0.44)
Gender (1 = female)	- 0.11***	(0.03)	0.03	(0.06)	- 0.13**	(0.06)	0.10	(0.07)
Age	0.00	(0.01)	0.05***	(0.01)	0.04***	(0.01)	- 0.06***	(0.01)
Age ²	0.00	(0.00)	- 0.00***	(0.00)	- 0.00**	(0.00)	0.00***	(0.00)
Time trend (1992 – 2002)	- 0.02***	(0.00)	- 0.02***	(0.01)	0.01	(0.01)	0.03***	(0.01)
Religion								
<i>None / Other</i>	-		-		-		-	
Catholic	0.32***	(0.06)	0.64***	(0.10)	- 0.23*	(0.12)	- 0.46***	(0.17)
Protestant	0.07**	(0.04)	0.48***	(0.06)	- 0.18***	(0.06)	- 0.64***	(0.09)
Occupation								
<i>Blue Collar</i>	-		-		-		-	
Self Employed	0.06	(0.07)	- 0.12	(0.12)	- 0.52***	(0.12)	0.36**	(0.15)
White Collar	0.00	(0.04)	- 0.26***	(0.08)	0.04	(0.08)	0.26**	(0.10)
Not Employed	0.04	(0.04)	- 0.15**	(0.07)	- 0.04	(0.07)	0.26***	(0.09)
Equivalence income	0.00	(0.04)	- 0.00	(0.00)	- 0.01	(0.00)	0.00	(0.01)
Equivalence income ²	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)	- 0.00	(0.00)
Union Membership	0.08**	(0.03)	- 0.21***	(0.06)	0.17***	(0.06)	0.09	(0.07)
Member of the GDR Administration	- 0.00	(0.04)	- 0.09	(0.06)	- 0.04	(0.06)	0.06	(0.08)
Positive View of GDR	- 0.01	(0.01)	- 0.09***	(0.02)	- 0.07***	(0.02)	0.22***	(0.03)
Skepticism about Transformation	- 0.01	(0.02)	- 0.17***	(0.03)	0.06**	(0.03)	0.12***	(0.04)
Variables in Party Support Model								
Education								
<i>Low</i>	-		-		-		-	
Medium	- 0.04	(0.04)						
High	0.02	(0.05)						
Political Interest	0.55***	(0.02)						
Voluntary Work	0.15***	(0.03)						
	0.10	(0.06)						
Party support in federal states	1.71***	(0.31)						
Party support in hh at t-1	0.77***	(0.03)						
Distance to national elections (ln(days))	- 0.06***	(0.01)						
Variables in Party-Specific Models								
Worries about national economy			- 0.10***	(0.03)	0.04	(0.03)	0.08**	(0.04)
Worries about own economic situation			- 0.04	(0.03)	- 0.02	(0.03)	0.04	(0.05)
CDU/SPD/PDS preference in state			2.05***	(0.30)	1.95***	(0.31)	2.04***	(0.57)
Party preference in hh at t-1 (Ref. else)								
Majority of CDU preference			1.48***	(0.07)	- 1.00***	(0.09)	- 1.00***	(0.12)
Majority of SPD preference			- 0.70***	(0.08)	1.17***	(0.07)	- 0.78***	(0.09)
Majority of PDS preference			- 0.85***	(0.15)	- 1.17***	(0.11)	1.52***	(0.10)
ρ			0.42***	(0.06)	0.10	(0.07)	0.19**	(0.08)
N			3792		3792		3792	
Log Likelihood			-21188.22		-21895.14		-19586.28	

Source. SOEP. Adjusted robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance level. *** $p < 0.01$ ** $p < 0.05$ * $p < 0.10$.

Table3c Partisanship among Immigrants 1985 – 2002

	Party Support Model		SPD Model	
Variables in both models				
Intercept	- 2.15***	(0.38)	- 1.20**	(0.53)
Gender (1 = female)	- 0.15***	(0.05)	- 0.11	(0.08)
Age	0.00	(0.01)	0.02	(0.02)
Age ²	- 0.00	(0.00)	- 0.00	(0.00)
Time trend (1985 – 2002)	- 0.04***	(0.00)	- 0.01	(0.00)
Religion (1 = Catholic/Protestant; 0 = else) ¹	- 0.00	(0.06)	- 0.29***	(0.11)
Occupation				
<i>Blue Collar</i>	-	-	-	-
Self Employed	- 0.27**	(0.11)	- 0.45***	(0.17)
White Collar	- 0.00	(0.08)	- 0.19	(0.13)
Not Employed	0.04	(0.04)	0.00	(0.11)
Equivalence income	0.00	(0.00)	- 0.00	(0.00)
Equivalence income ²	- 0.00	(0.00)	0.00	(0.00)
Union Membership	0.21***	(0.04)	0.16**	(0.07)
Country of Origin				
<i>Turkey</i>	-	-	-	-
Yugoslavia	- 0.02	(0.06)	0.28***	(0.11)
Greece	- 0.09	(0.06)	0.06	(0.12)
Italy	- 0.04	(0.07)	0.39***	(0.13)
Spain	0.12	(0.08)	0.37**	(0.15)
Variables in Party Support Model				
Education				
<i>Low</i>	-	-	-	-
Medium	0.08*	(0.04)		
High	0.14	(0.11)		
Political Interest	0.84***	(0.02)		
Voluntary Work	0.25***	(0.05)		
Social contacts (friends, family, relatives)	0.05	(0.08)		
Party support in federal state	0.93***	(0.30)		
Party support in household at t-1	0.81***	(0.04)		
Distance to national elections (ln(days))	- 0.03*	(0.02)		
German Citizenship	0.46**	(0.19)		
Command of German (relative to mother tongue)	0.01	(0.01)		
Years living in Germany				
- 10years	-	-		
10 – 20 years	0.13**	(0.06)		
20 – 30 years	0.18**	(0.08)		
30 + years	0.39***	(0.10)		
Variables in the SPD Model				
Worries about national economy			0.01	(0.04)
Worries about own economic situation			0.05	(0.04)
SPD preference in federal state			1.76***	(0.57)
SPD preference in household at t-1			0.70***	(0.06)
p			0.31***	(0.06)
N			3595	
Log Likelihood			-11622.46	

Source. SOEP. Adjusted robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance level. *** p < 0.01 ** p < 0.05 * p < 0.10.

¹Because other religion is almost always Muslim and because that overlaps with a Turkish country of origin, we have opted to focus the religion variable on Catholics and Protestants v none and other.

Table 4 Predicted marginal probability of party preference by household and regional context.	Pr(CDU = 1 PI = 1)	Pr(SPD = 1 PI = 1)	Pr(PDS = 1 PI = 1)
West Germans			
Party preference in Household			
No Party / Third Party	0.22	0.27	-
Partisan HH	0.72	0.71	-
Party preference in Region			
25%	0.25	0.25	-
50%	0.36	0.38	-
Extremes			
No/Third Party HH & Party Size 25%	0.17	0.17	-
Partisan HH & Party Size 50%	0.76	0.73	-
Average	0.31	0.36	-
East Germans			
Party preference in Household			
No Party / Third Party	0.15	0.24	0.14
Partisan HH	0.67	0.68	0.66
Party preference in Region			
25% (10% for PDS)	0.14	0.23	0.12
50% (10% for PDS)	0.28	0.40	0.16
Extremes			
No/Third Party HH & Party Size 25(10)%	0.10	0.20	0.11
Partisan HH & Party Size 50(20)%	0.77	0.79	0.69
Average	0.19	0.28	0.15
Immigrants			
Party preference in Household			
No Party / Third Party	-	0.62	-
Partisan HH	-	0.84	-
Party preference in Region			
25%	-	0.52	-
50%	-	0.69	-
Extremes			
No/Third Party HH & Party Size 25%	-	0.46	-
Partisan HH & Party Size 50%	-	0.85	-
Average	-	0.67	-

Source. SOEP. Post-estimation analysis is based on models reported in Tables 3 a to c.

Table 5 Social and Political Contexts of Party Choice.

	West Germans	East Germans	Immigrants
Member of Labor Union	0.16	0.17	0.15
Religion			
Catholic	0.42	0.04	0.33
Protestant	0.42	0.24	0.05
Other/None	0.16	0.72	0.68
Partisanship in Household			
CDU/CSU	0.20	0.13	-
SPD	0.19	0.09	0.19
PDS	-	0.06	-
Else/None/Single-Person HH	0.61	0.72	0.81
Number of Observations	5471	3528	1673
Member of Labor Union & Religion			
Catholic	0.39	0.06	0.38
Protestant	0.40	0.22	0.04
Other/None	0.21	0.73	0.58
CDU/CSU HH	0.13	0.13	-
SPD HH	0.29	0.09	0.20
PDS HH	-	0.09	-
Else HH	0.58	0.70	0.80
Number of Observations	852	567	252
Catholic (West Germans) & CDU/CSU HH	0.27	0.22	-
Catholic & Protest. (Else) SPD HH	0.15	0.07	0.19
PDS HH	-	0.03	-
Else HH	0.58	0.68	0.81
Number of Observations	2292	928	621

Source: SOEP. See the Appendix for details on the data used in this table