

# **What's new with the trial? Candidate-oriented voting in the 2021 German federal election**

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CDM Colloquium

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University of Konstanz  
West Virginia University

# Introduction

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# For the first time in the German Federal Election 2022...



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- The Greens nominated Annalea Baerbock as Chancellor candidate.
- From the duel to a triel.

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- The Greens nominated Annalea Baerbock as Chancellor candidate.
- From the duel to a triel.
- Did the triel significantly change the voting behavior?

## **Whether and to which degree party leaders affect voter decisions**

- The American voter: Candidate evaluation as relevant short-termed factor
- “Presidentialization” even in most parliamentary systems (Poguntke and Webb 2005)
- Increasing influence of party leaders on party vote over time, in particular from 60’s to 90’s (Garzia et al 2022)

# Personalization in the electoral process

## German case

- Consensus: Evaluation of chancellor candidates has significant effects on party choice.
  - The effects for the smaller parties are less pronounced (Jungmann et al 2022)
- Increasing influence of chancellor candidates over time?
  - Yes: Ohr (2000)
  - No: Brettschneider et al (2006), Pappi/Shikano (2001)
- Why dissent?
  - Different periods of time investigated: Ohr's analysis ended in the 1998 election which is well known for its highly personalized campaign.
  - Different statistical models: Binary models vs multinomial models (Pappi/Shikano 2001).
  - Different model specifications: What is the best control to sort out the leader effect?



# Personalization in the electoral process

## Questions to be addressed

- Is there a long-term trend in personalization after 1998?
- Was personalization in Bundestag Election 2021 more profound and structurally different from the previous elections?
- Can we provide a more solid causal evidence for personalization of electoral campaign and the impact of chancellor candidacy?

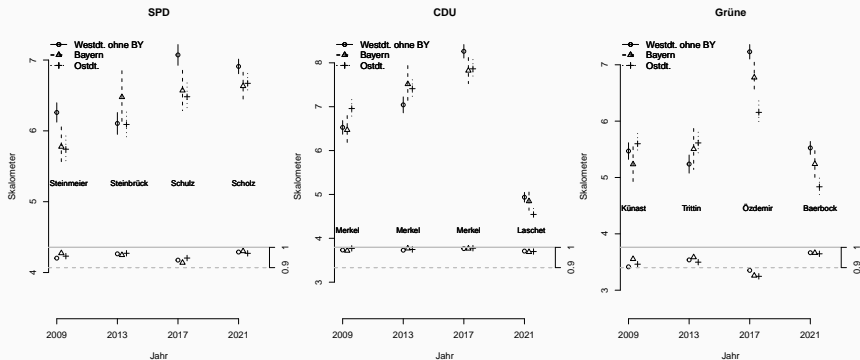
## Our analysis

- Replication of Pappi/Shikano (2001) by using GLES pre-election cross-sectional survey data in 2009-2021.
- Experimental data with manipulated presence of leading politicians on the ballot.

## **Evidence from survey data analysis**

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## Popularity and publicity of the candidates



The bottom of figure: Share of valid responses.

## Multinomial logit models

$$Y_{i,t} \sim \text{Multin}(p_{ij}, n = 1)$$

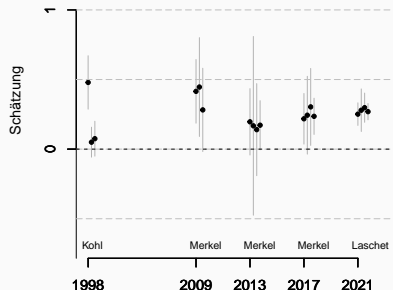
$$p_{ij} = \frac{V_i(j)}{\sum_k^K V_i(k)}$$

$$V_i(j) = \exp(\beta_{0j} + \beta_1 I(Y_{i,t-1} = j) + \beta_2 RP_{ij} + \beta_3 RC_{ij})$$

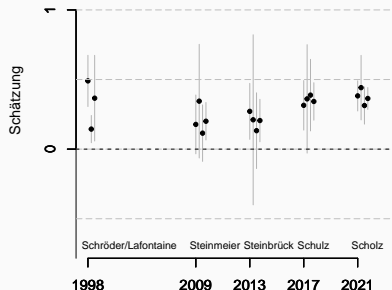
- $Y_{i,t} \in \{1, 2, \dots, J\}$ : Vote choice of Respondent  $i$  at the time point  $t$
- $RP_{ij}$ : Rating of Party  $j$  by  $i$
- $RC_{ij}$ : Rating of Party  $j$ 's leader by  $i$
- $I(A)$ : The indicator function for an event  $A$

## Estimation results

CDU/CSU Spitzenkandidat/in



SPD Spitzenkandidat

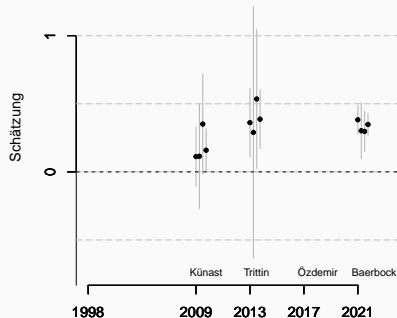


- No clear trend over time
- Less regional differences

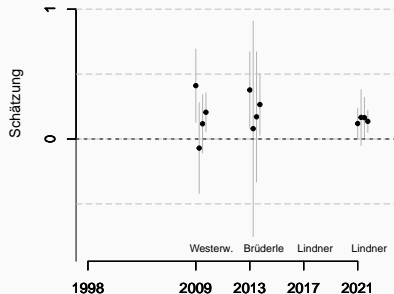
# Analysis of Survey Data

## Estimation results

Grünen Spitzenkandidat/in

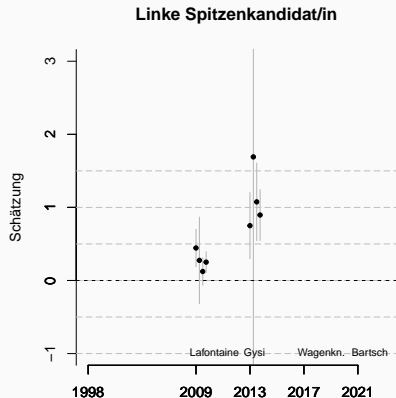


FDP Spitzenkandidat



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## Estimation results



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# Analysis of Survey Data

## Consequences: Vote decision in 2017 and 2021

'21	West Germany Vote in 2017 election						'21	East Germany Vote in 2017 election					
	S	C	G	F	L	A		S	C	G	F	L	A
S	72.8	18.0	17.2	12.4	20.6	15.0	S	71.4	23.1	22.0	10.3	18.2	4.9
C	2.3	58.9	1.9	19.3	2.9	11.7	C	6.0	47.9	0.7	9.0	2.8	6.9
G	17.9	7.3	72.7	10.6	23.5	0.8	G	10.1	7.4	67.4	6.4	14.4	1.4
F	3.8	12.6	5.5	52.3	3.9	9.2	F	3.5	15.7	2.8	70.5	3.9	8.3
L	1.3	0.9	2.7	0.5	46.1	1.7	L	5.5	1.3	7.1	0.0	58.6	2.1
A	1.9	2.3	0.0	5.0	2.9	61.7	A	3.5	4.5	0.0	3.8	2.2	76.4

Column percents.

Column percents.

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- In East Germany, Greens lost more voters to SPD than the opposite and won less voters from Linke.
- SPD could attract more previous CDU-voters than the Greens, in particular in East.

## **Evidence from an experimental data**

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## Effect of chancellor candidacy?

- Comparison over time: Just effect of e.g. Baerbock as person?
- Comparison should be Baerbock as ChC and Baerbock as non-ChC.
- We simulate this by presenting/not presenting Baerbock on the ballot as leading candidate of the party list.
- This should induce different levels of salience of Baerbock in decision making process.

# Experimental design

- Field period: August 2021
- 4110 subjects recruited by a Quota-procedure
- Each subject was confronted with three ballots sequentially.
- Within-subject manipulations
  - Candidate/party order on the ballot
  - District candidate information (name, incumbency, Dr)
  - Appearance of party leaders on the party list
  - Ballot design (simultaneous or sequential)
- Between-subject manipulations
  - Ballot design (simultaneous or sequential)

# Experimental design

## Stimmzettel für die Wahl zum Deutschen Bundestag Sie haben 2 Stimmen



eines/einer Wahlkreisabgeordneten

einer Landesliste (Partei)

- maßgebende Stimme für die Verteilung der Sitze insgesamt auf die einzelnen Parteien -

Erststimme

Zweitstimme

1	Dr. Lange, Andreas	CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands	<input type="radio"/>
2	Schulze, Jan	AFD	Alternative für Deutschland	<input type="radio"/>
3	Becker, Florian	DIE LINKE	DIE LINKE	<input type="radio"/>
4	Wagner, Birgit	SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands	<input type="radio"/>
5	Schmitt, Sandra	FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei	<input type="radio"/>
6	Hartmann, Michael	GRÜNE	BÜNDNIS 90/ DIE GRÜNEN	<input type="radio"/>

<input type="radio"/>	CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands Lisa Schmitt, Florian Bauer, Daniel Richter, Alexander Klein, Katharina Schneider	1
<input type="radio"/>	SPD	Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands Stefanie Weber, Mathias Wolf, Claudia Hofmann, Thomas Neumann, Susanne Wagner	2
<input type="radio"/>	GRÜNE	BÜNDNIS 90/ DIE GRÜNEN Annalena Baerbock, Robert Habeck, Birgit Becker, Sabine Schulz, Jörg Schwarz	3
<input type="radio"/>	FDP	Freie Demokratische Partei Christian Lindner, Wolfgang Kubicki, Peter Zimmermann, Christian Schmitt, Anja Schulze	4
<input type="radio"/>	AFD	Alternative für Deutschland Sven Müller, Peter Schmitt, Lukas Werner, Claudia Schulz, Birgit Schäfer	5
<input type="radio"/>	DIE LINKE	DIE LINKE Anne König, Lena Peters, Jan Becker, Daniel Fischer, Mathias Braun	6

# Experimental design

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## **A slightly different specification is needed:**

- Three immediately consecutive voting rounds.
  - Inclusion of vote decision in the last round can control all the party-related factors.
  - Short-termed party factors in the survey analysis can be assumed to be constant over the voting rounds.
  - → Exclusion of party rating.
- Since each round has the manipulation, the difference in manipulation between the current and last round is considered.
- We are not only interested in the mere exposure effect, but also the interaction with the leader rating.

## Multinomial logit models

$$Y_{i,t} \sim \text{Multin}(p_{ij}, n = 1)$$

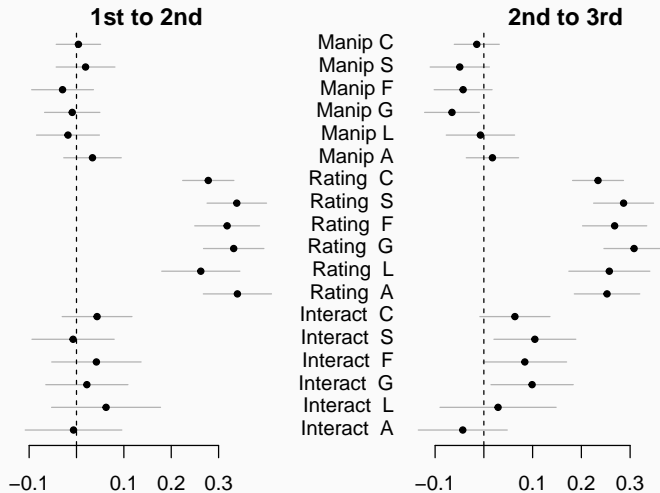
$$p_{ij} = \frac{V_i(j)}{\sum_{k=1}^J V_i(k)}$$

$$V_i(j) = \exp [\gamma_{0j} + \gamma_{1j}I(Y_{i,t-1} = j) + \gamma_{2j}(MC_{ij,t} - MC_{ij,t-1}) + \gamma_{3j}RC_{ij} + \gamma_{4j}(MC_{ij,t} - MC_{ij,t-1}) \cdot RC_{ij}]$$

- $Y_{i,t} \in \{1, 2, \dots, J\}$ : Vote choice of Respondent  $i$  at Round  $t \in \{2, 3\}$
- $MC_{ij,t}$ : Manipulation of the names on the party  $j$ 's list for  $i$  at the time point  $t$ . If the national leaders are displayed, one; otherwise zero.

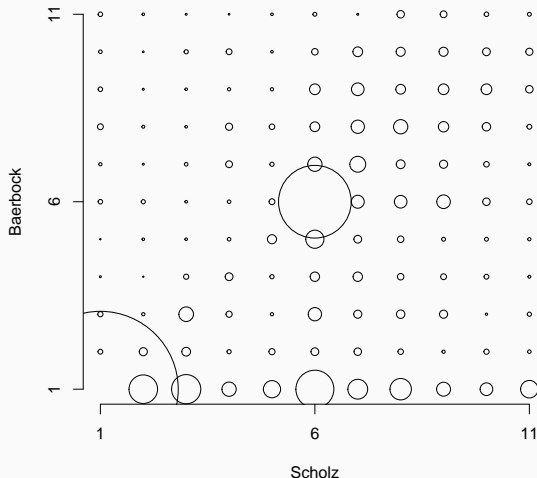
# Experimental results

## Estimation results



# Experimental results

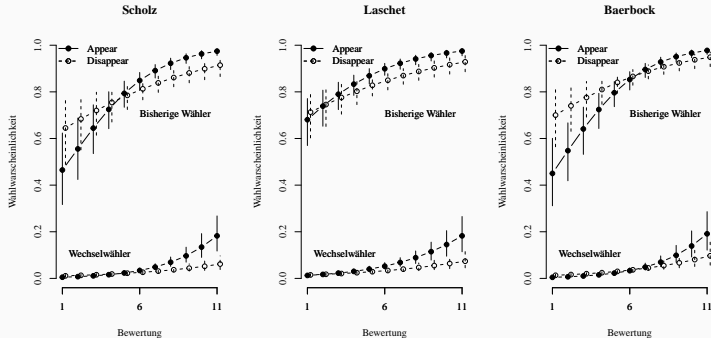
## Joint distribution of the evaluation of Scholz/Baerbock



- More respondents rate Scholz positively and Baerbock negatively.
- The opposite pattern is much less.

# Experimental results

## Population-Averaged Predictions (3rd round)



- Those who find Scholz positive and saw him on the ballot got more attracted to vote for SPD
- Those who find Baerbock negative and saw her on the ballot desert the Greens.

## From Duel to Trial

- Nominating a chancellor candidate could contribute better visibility, but did not bring voters to the Greens.
- Disapproval of Baerbock even pushed off the previous voters to SPD, in particular in East Germany.
- Nomination of a chancellor candidate is double-edged. With an unpopular candidate, the party becomes worse off.