**Germany Kommunalwahlen since 1990: Notes and issue summary**

**Final data**

* germany\_kommunalwahlen\_1990\_2021\_FINAL.csv: final data file in csv
* muni\_elec\_FINAL.RData: final data file as RData
* muni\_per\_year\_and\_state\_FINAL.csv: summary of how many AGS level observations there are per election-BL pair.
* Sources\_overview.xlsx: overview of where the raw data came from.

**Update 16/05/2024**

* Because Einzelbewerber and Wählergemeinschaften are not always available and if they are, they are not designated in a coherent way, we now calculate a ‘Other’ category:
  + Prop\_Other: (1- sum(prop\_CDU, …, prop\_FW)
  + Abs\_Other: (GültigeStimmen – sum(abs\_CDU, … , abs\_FW)
* Some states only have ‚Rohstimmen’ and not ‘gewichtete’ Stimmen, in which case one has to be careful with analyses because the number of total votes > the number of voters. Proportional vote shares take care of this, but absolute votes in those cases are hard to interpret consistently.

**Update 7/9/2023**

* Brandenburg: the data only had “Wählergruppen” and “Einzelbewerber”. I included Einzelbewerber as “Gemeinsame Wahlvorschläge“
* RLP: the data only had “Wählergruppen” and “Mehrheitswahl”. I included Mehrheitswahl as “Gemeinsame Wahlvorschläge”
* Thueringen: the data only had „Sonstige“, which I included as Wählergruppen. Gemeinsame Wahlvorschläge I coded as NA.

**AGS:**

1. **AGS before 2009:** There was a reform of the Gemeindeschlüssel in 2009. Hence, some AGS values before 2009 might not be matchable to today’s key. I tried to create a AGS\_after\_2019 variable by taking the latest available AGS and trying to match it to earlier election data using the Gemeindename, but this wasn’t very effective (as the Gemeindegrenzen or -names changed or aren’t written in a standardized format).
2. **AGS in RLP:** The identifier used in the unprocessed data we received from RLP doesn’t seem to match nicely onto the AGS identifier. This is now fixed (see lines 8356ff in the R code).

**Absolute vs gewichtete Stimmen:**

1. **General introduction:** The weighted party vote count (‘gewichtete Stimmenzahl/gew\_) is often used because voters can cast more than one *Stimmvorschläge*in Gemeinderats- and Kommunalwahlen. It is essentially just a way to be able to make results comparable across district when those districts have a different number of Gemeinderäte. That’s also why most of the files I collected distinguish between *Gültige Stimmzettel*and *Gültige Stimmen*. Weighted party vote count is calculated according to: gew\_A = (*StimmenParteiA (*i.e., abs\_)\* *gültigeStimmzettel*) / *gültigeStimmen*. Not all Länder explicitly state the weighted party vote and most use abs\_ votes to calculate vote share (i.e., *prop\_A* = *abs\_A*/ *gültigeStimmen*).
2. **Bayern:** The data we got from Bayern just included total ballots (*gültigeStimmzettel*), not total votes (*gültigeStimmen*). That’s why I had to use the gew\_ variable to calculate vote share. Abs\_A, in this case, would just be (prop\_A \* gültigeStimmen) / gültigeStimmzettel. This also means that we technically don’t have gültigeStimmen for Bayern, just gültigeStimmzettel (for simplicity, the respective column is still named ‘GültigeStimmen, though!).
3. **Sachsen-Anhalt:** The Gemeindeschlüssel before 2007 is not matchable to the newer format. We might have to find some alternative way of matching earlier election results to the current AGS framework. I can get in touch with their Statistikamt to ask if they have a way of doing this if you want.

**Freie Wähler, Einzelbewerber, etc.**

Note that these are not reported in a standardized way. Sometimes, they are reported as residual categories, sometimes they are reported as extra columns in a way that means it’s not easy to figure out how many people voted for candidates that are counted towards each category. I suggest not relying on these columns and instead computing a ‘residual’ category (1 – sum(prop\_SPD, prop\_CDU, ….)) to get a more robust measure of ‘vote share of candidates that didn’t run for one of the major parties.

**Other**

1. **Mecklenburg-Vorpommern 1999:** In Levenhagen, turnout > 1. This isn’t a processing error but due to an apparent mistake in the original data: the original dataset states that there were 158 Wahlberechtigte but 159 total voters.