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1) INTRODUCTION

Is there a fundamental difference between East and West Germany, when it comes to voting behaviour? This question may seem superfluous to some, if not most political scientists familiar with electoral behaviour, political participation, and political culture in Germany, for if there is anything electoral studies in the past two decades have substantiated on the basis of numerous paired comparisons, it is the fact that “Germany's electorate is deeply divided between East and West”¹, as Jeffrey Kopstein and Daniel Ziblatt have put it already ten years ago. This widely held view applied to the first all-German federal election in 1990 and it applies to the most recent parliamentary election, held on the 22nd September 2013.

The basic assumption of this paper is however that by disregarding potentially deeper frictions within the East and within the West the traditional approach (based on the comparison of East and West) does not lend itself to test hypotheses concerning the similarities and differences between both parts of the country. By comparing and explaining (or: trying to explain) on the federal state level selected outcomes of the parliamentary elections for the 18th Bundestag in 2013, the paper wants to overcome several of the East-West comparisons' downsides. Whereas this perspective is anything but new to electoral research, it is uncommon among those who predominantly deal with East-West disparities. It intends to satisfactorily answer the question, whether the key separating line in the 2013 voting behaviour coincided with the former inner-German border, indicating a continuing contrast between the electorate from the old and the new Länder, or whether disparities are not conceived adequately in terms of an East-West divide.

Among the variety of voting indicators, such as volatility, the extent of swing and split voting and so on, the analysis will be premised on rather modest variables: the voter turnout and the election results of several parties (CDU/CSU, SPD, Die Linke, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, FDP, NPD). As the study will focus on the aggregate, not the individual data level, it cannot – and in fact does not intend to – elucidate why and how the voters in the East and in the West made up their minds, but rather to which extent and why the election results varied between the Bundesländer and whether these frictions conformed with the former inner-German border.

After outlining prevailing notions on East and West German voting peculiarities, the paper highlights three far reaching pitfalls that go hand in hand with the social scientific comparison of East and West Germany. As most studies dealing with regional variation in voting bear on such a contrast, this methodical critique is a matter of evaluating the significance and quality of the current state of knowledge. The paper then presents own results. By applying hierarchical cluster analyses that draw a distinction between “high” and “low-level states” (and thus constitute two clusters throughout) it is shown that on the one hand in most cases the East-West dichotomy does not apply. On the other hand it cannot be denied that, in fact, some ponderous aspects speak against a complete disappearance of all differences between the old and the new Länder. The last paragraph deals with an attempt to expound the regional variation described in the paragraph before, resorting to approaches of cleavage and economic voting theory. Whereas a large share of variation can indeed be attributed to a combination of both approaches, the East remains terra incognita to a substantial degree.

2) WHAT DO WE (THINK WE) KNOW ABOUT EAST AND WEST GERMAN VOTING BEHAVIOUR?

Throughout the past 25 years each and every German election – on the state, federal or European level – has provoked both national and international electoral research to have a close comparative look at the status quo of the East and West German electorate’s political preferences – predominantly on an individual data level. In the course of years this has lead to a vast – and still increasing – stack of literature dedicated to the dissection and explanation of commonalities and differences in voting behaviour in Germany.² Manifold differences of results and interpretations notwithstanding (as, for instance, to longitudinal trends: convergence versus divergence, or to the relevant causes), a broad consensus on four facts has emerged:

1) Taking into account the vote shares of organizations at the left and right fringe of the political spectrum, the East is regarded to vote significantly more radical than the West.³ Calling into mind that most extremist parties gain from political, economic, and social discontent, this Eastern peculiarity is not so much an anomaly but rather a pathology of the democratic process, driven by political discontent and signalling a high affinity for protest voting. However, whereas the results of the far left in the guise of Die Linke speak for themselves, closer inspection reveals that on the federal level a marked East German

preference for right-wing extremist parties became apparent for the first time as recently as 1998: In 1990 and 1994 the far right performed better in the West than in the East, as measured by the results of NPD, REP, and DVU. What is more, in its simplicity the assertion of a “radical right East” does not apply to other election types without further ado, because, since 1990, parties of that kind commemorated seven entries into East German state parliaments and five entries into West German parliaments.⁴

2) An East German peculiarity inextricably linked with the first one is the electorate’s disposition to left voting, as measured by the differing results of the party formerly known as Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus (PDS) and Linkspartei.PDS, respectively that in 2007 merged with Arbeit und Soziale Gerechtigkeit – Die Wahlalternative (WASG) to form Die Linke. Unlike the Social Democrats, this party performs significantly and constantly better in the East than in the West since Germany’s reunification,⁵ giving rise to the term of a “Red East”⁶.

Table 1: East and West German Voting: Federal Elections since 1990

| | 1990 | 1994 | 1998 | 2002 | 2005 | 2009 | 2013 |
|--|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Electoral Performance of PDS/Linkspartei.PDS/Die Linke (in %) | | | | | | | |
| East | 11.1 | 19.8 | 21.6 | 16.9 | 25.3 | 28.5 | 22.7 |
| West | 0.3 | 0.9 | 1.2 | 1.1 | 4.9 | 8.3 | 5.6 |
| Electoral Performance of right-wing extremist parties (in %) | | | | | | | |
| East | 1.6 ^a | 1.3 ^b | 5.0 ^c | 1.7 ^a | 4.2 ^a | 3.5 ^c | 2.9 ^a |
| West | 2.6 ^a | 2.0 ^b | 2.8 ^c | 0.9 ^a | 1.7 ^a | 1.7 ^c | 1.2 ^a |
| Volatility (Pedersen Index) | | | | | | | |
| East | --- | 15.9 | 11.6 | 10.7 | 12.3 | 12.4 | 15.7 |
| West | --- | 5.6 | 6.4 | 6.5 | 7.0 | 13.7 | 15.5 |
| Turnout (in %) | | | | | | | |
| East | 74.5 | 72.6 | 80.0 | 72.8 | 74.3 | 64.7 | 67.6 |
| West | 78.6 | 80.5 | 82.8 | 80.6 | 78.5 | 72.2 | 72.4 |

Source: official electoral statistics.

^a REP, NPD; ^b REP; ^c REP, NPD, DVU.

3) Furthermore, electoral behaviour in the neue Länder is considered to be less predictable: With the exception of 2009, when for the first time volatility in the alte Länder exceeded that in the neue Länder, East Germans turned out to be consistently more erratic than their neighbours in the West – sometimes to a larger (e.g. 1994), sometimes to a smaller degree (e.g. 2013).⁷ Yet, the assertion of a volatile East cannot be generalized, as the European elections illustrate: In 1999, 2009 and 2014 volatility in the West outvalued volatility in the East. Moreover, as the trend in the West has been towards soaring volatility in federal elections for some time now, it approaches the East slowly but surely.

4) Finally, the abstention rate is considered to be consistently higher in the East than in the West – not only with respect to federal, but also to local, state and European elections; this in turn is usually attributed to a widespread disenchantment with political parties.⁸ Like most peculiarities, this one does not equally hold true for other elections that have taken place in Germany since 1990, as, for example, in the 1994 and 1998 elections for the European Parliament the East outperformed the West.⁹

3) PITFALLS OF THE EAST-WEST COMPARISON

The bulk of knowledge we have acquired about East and West German peculiarities is based on a comparison of both parts of the country. When it comes to sub-national heterogeneity, the vast majority of studies focused (and still focuses) on them:¹⁰ alte Länder on the one side, neue Länder on the other. And this goes hand in hand with three shortcomings:

First: The contrast is grounded in and virtually unthinkable without the assumption of two homogeneous regions as to voting behaviour. They are, therefore, regarded as the most essential units of analysis. This premise, however, can only be maintained if frictions in voting patterns within the East and within the West turn out to be smaller than between these areas, which in turn would presuppose an interregional (East and West) and an intraregional (the states within both parts of the country) comparison.

The second downside: By taking for granted a homogeneous East and West, the paired comparison is incapable of identifying regional variation. Instead of asking for the quality and quantity of geographic gaps in voting behaviour, the majority of electoral research confines itself to the plain yes-no-question, whether there is a disparity between the old and the new Länder, and thereby unwittingly conceals diversity within both parts of the country. That in turn boosts the risk of overlooking trends that might seriously impinge on the democratic process – such as a regional leap or drop in electoral abstention or geographically limited gains of extremist parties.

Third: There are hardly any transparent or objective benchmarks that could determine the relevance of East-West disparities. Hence, electoral research usually cedes the answer to questions like the following to the individual: Are turnout gaps of about four percent points between East and West (like in 2013) relevant or not? Does a difference of two percent in the FDP's result in 2005 signal a deep divide or unity? Whereas it is no big deal to determine, if East and West have grown together as to certain characteristics, it provides a serious challenge to decide on whether both parts of the country form a unified whole or not.

Electoral research has, however, taken a few actions to overcome this deficit, with Falter's and Arzheimer's modification of the Pedersen Index being the most important one.¹¹ By adding the East-West differences of all election results (comprising the abstention rates) and then dividing it by two, it ranges between 0 (no East-West differences) and 100 (exclusive East and West parties). Albeit both authors do not put forward a rigorous benchmark that could provide a basis for a decision on the East-West divide, the fifty-percent point would be reasonable, for values above 50 percent would point towards regionalisation. Nonetheless, the index is still subject to the first two shortcomings.

Another – plainer – measure proposed by regional electoral research to detect regionalisation is the deviation of several state election outcomes from the whole-nation or East/West German mean.¹² If, for instance, the Christian Democrats' result in Saxony and the Social Democrats' result in Brandenburg deviate by approximately 15 and 25 percent from the mean in the East, this indicates two things: Both results are regionalised, with the SPD's result being even more regionalised than that of the CDU. Yet, this measure does not offer a reasonable decision criterion neither. To cut it short: This critique also pertains to the most recent advance in this field – Niedermayer's application of the variation coefficient.¹³

The measures designed by electoral research specify the degree of regionalisation. At the same time they offer no criterion that answers the question, whether there is an East-West divide or not – probably because this would require a calibration of measures including qualitative anchor points. The risk of getting one's fingers burnt is high due to the subjectivity and vulnerability of such decisions. If, however, one looks for a satisfying answer, whether there is an East-West gap in voting behaviour, he can neither stop at a contrast of East and West nor rely on measures of regionalisation.

4) SUB-NATIONAL VOTING PATTERNS: THE 2013 FEDERAL ELECTION

As argued above, this study aims at a sub-national analysis of voting behaviour in 2013. Its point of origin is the question: Did the regional differences coincide with the East-West line? Hence, beginning with the turnout and continuing with the parties' results, hierarchic cluster analyses were carried out with each dependent variable. By grouping high-level and low-level states and thus creating data-dependent boundaries, it was simple to figure out whether these lines coincided with the former inner-German border.

Table 2: Election outcome of the German federal election 2013 (in %)

| State | Turnout | CDU/CSU | SPD | Linke | NPD | FDP | B'90/Grüne |
|-------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|-------------------|
| Baden-Wuerttemberg | 74.3 | 45.7 | 20.6 | 4.8 | 1.0 | 6.2 | 11.0 |
| Bavaria | 70.0 | 49.3 | 20.0 | 3.8 | 0.9 | 5.1 | 8.4 |
| Berlin | 72.5 | 28.5 | 24.6 | 18.5 | 1.5 | 3.6 | 12.3 |
| Brandenburg | 68.4 | 34.8 | 23.1 | 22.4 | 2.6 | 2.5 | 4.7 |
| Bremen | 68.8 | 29.3 | 35.6 | 10.1 | 1.1 | 3.4 | 12.1 |
| Hamburg | 70.3 | 32.1 | 32.4 | 8.8 | 0.6 | 4.8 | 12.7 |
| Hesse | 73.2 | 39.2 | 28.8 | 6.0 | 1.1 | 5.6 | 9.9 |
| Lower Saxony | 73.4 | 41.1 | 33.1 | 5.0 | 0.8 | 4.2 | 8.8 |
| Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania | 65.3 | 42.5 | 17.8 | 21.5 | 2.7 | 2.2 | 4.3 |
| North Rhine-Westphalia | 72.5 | 39.8 | 31.9 | 6.1 | 1.0 | 5.2 | 8.0 |
| Rhineland Palatinate | 72.8 | 43.3 | 27.5 | 5.4 | 1.1 | 5.5 | 7.6 |
| Saarland | 72.5 | 37.8 | 31.0 | 10.0 | 1.7 | 3.8 | 5.7 |
| Saxony | 69.5 | 42.6 | 14.6 | 20.0 | 3.3 | 3.1 | 4.9 |
| Saxony-Anhalt | 62.1 | 41.2 | 18.2 | 23.9 | 2.2 | 2.6 | 4.0 |
| Schleswig-Holstein | 73.1 | 39.2 | 31.5 | 5.2 | 0.7 | 5.6 | 9.4 |
| Thuringia | 68.2 | 38.8 | 16.2 | 23.4 | 3.2 | 2.6 | 4.9 |

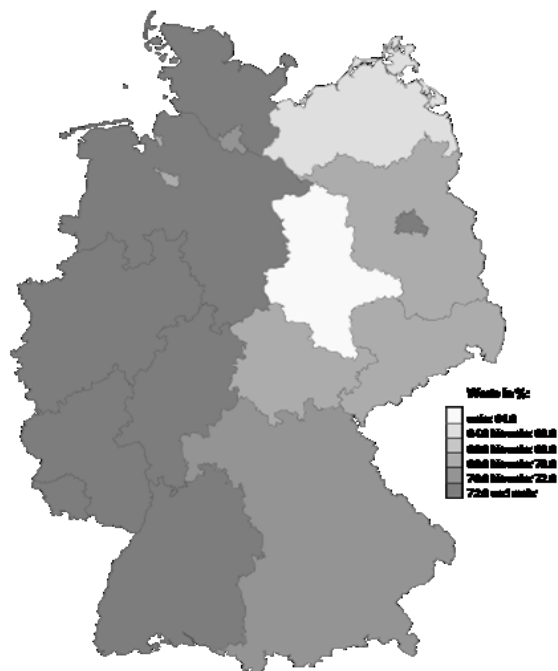
Source: official electoral statistics.

Both table 2 and figure 1 reveal that, on the whole, turnout was anything but enormously regionalised in 2013: Differences amounted to no more than twelve percentage points, with Saxony-Anhalt (62.1 percent) constituting the lower and Baden-Wuerttemberg (74.3 percent) the upper end of this scale. Both states were no exceptions, since all extreme cases were Western (upper end) and Eastern (lower end), respectively. Nonetheless, the table also reveals that – first –, there are outliers, namely Bremen that exhibits a lower turnout than Saxony, and that – second – East Germany exhibited a little more heterogeneity than West Germany: In 2013 Saxonians, Thuringians and Brandenburgians were slightly more prone to make use of their right to vote than other East Germans.

The two-cluster solution of a hierarchic cluster analysis¹⁴, leading to a split-up of states with a high and a low turnout, showed no clear-cut East-West divide. Instead, all East-German states (excluding Berlin) plus Bremen, Hamburg and Bavaria are to be found in the low-level group, whereas the rest of the states constituted the high-level group. What is more, as the dendrogram (fig. 2) brings out, the two-cluster solution is not artificially constructed, but reflects the given dispersion of data. This pattern in turn makes a case for regional diversity beyond the often postulated East-West divide – bearing in mind that, of course, the overall differences are limited. Due to this and the homogeneity within both clusters, we would presumably not opt for an alternative solution, e.g. one with three clusters. Anyhow, it

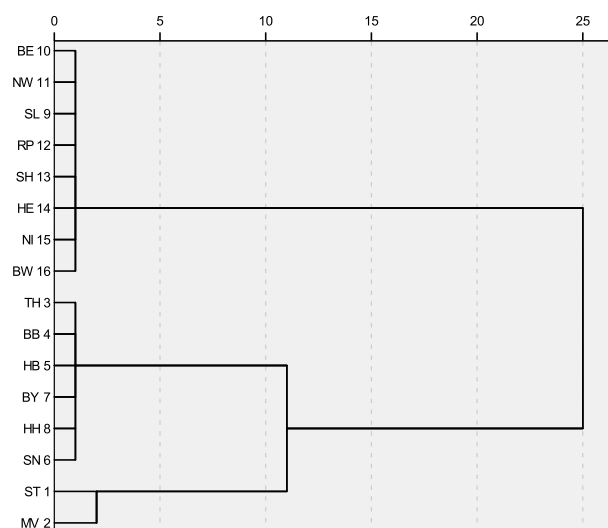
would not turn the findings upside down, but merely isolate Saxony-Anhalt and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania with their exceptionally low turnout levels from other low-turnout states.

Figure 1: Voter turnout (map)



Source: The Federal Returning Officer.

Figure 2: Voter turnout (dendrogram)

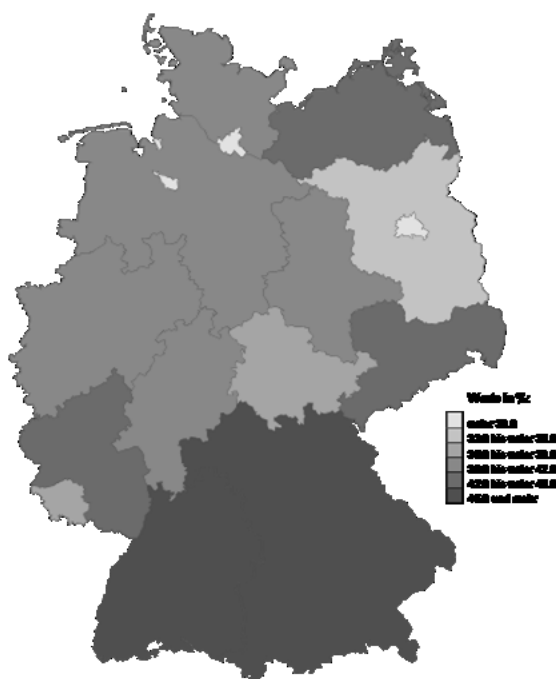


Source: own illustration.

What promptly leaps to the eye if one looks at the electoral map of the Christian Democrats, is the relatively high degree of heterogeneity: Unsurprisingly, the Union received its best result in one of the traditionally conservative heartlands – Bavaria –, where approximately

one in two voted for the Christlich-Soziale Union (49.3 percent), led by its undisputed chairman and figurehead Horst Seehofer. The federal capital was in a sharp contrast to this result: The CDU received no more than 28.5 percent in Berlin. Thus, the states diverged to a relatively high degree. However, unlike the regional turnout levels, the results of the Union do not create uniform groups at the top and at the bottom: East and West states are to be found at both ends of the scale. Thus, there cannot be a plain divide along the former inner-German border.

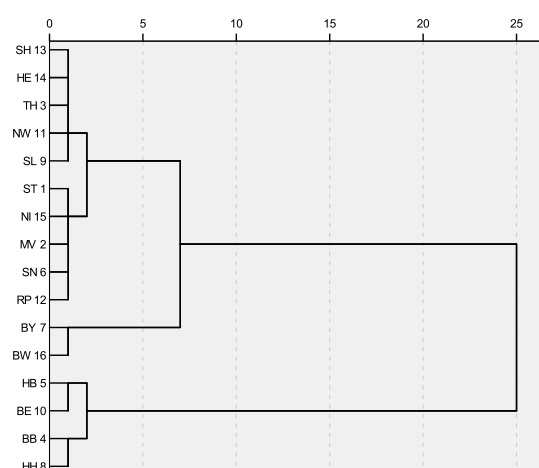
Figure 3: The CDU/CSU's results (map)



Source: The Federal Returning Officer.

The hierarchic cluster analysis confirmed this first impression: It did not separate East from West but all three city states plus Brandenburg from the rest of the Länder, where the Union achieved several successes. Provided that the solution with three clusters is taken as a basis (what would not be completely unreasonable, but unusual, given the regional differences), it would have only additionally separated Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg with outstanding vote shares from the residual above-average states. This solution thus does not challenge the evidence that there is no gap between East and West. Rather, some north-south and city state-area state contrast seem to overlap. Admittedly, Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Vorpommern do not fit this idea completely as the Christian Democrats performed outstandingly at the Baltic Sea, but miserably in Brandenburg. Nonetheless, it is hard to perceive a distinct East-West dichotomy.

Figure 4: The CDU/CSU's results (dendrogram)

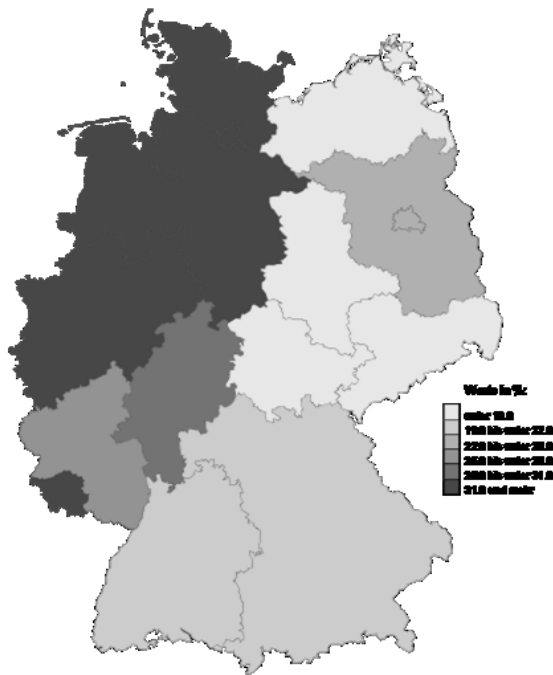


Source: own illustration.

The same holds true for the Social Democrats' election outcome on the state level, even though at first sight the electoral map might suggest an East-West divide. However, it does not correspond the boundary between old and new Länder, but lies to the west of it: In 2013 the SPD had to accept results in Bavaria (20.0 percent) and Baden-Wuerttemberg (20.6 percent) similar to the ones in most Eastern states (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania: 17.8 percent; Saxony: 14.6 percent; Saxony-Anhalt: 18.2 percent; Thuringia: 16.2 percent) – with the prominent exception of the “red state” Brandenburg 23.1 percent). The range between the states “at the top” and “at the bottom” turned out to be similar to the one regarding the Union vote shares: More than 20 percentage points gaped between the extreme cases Bremen (35.6 percent) and Saxony (14.6 percent).

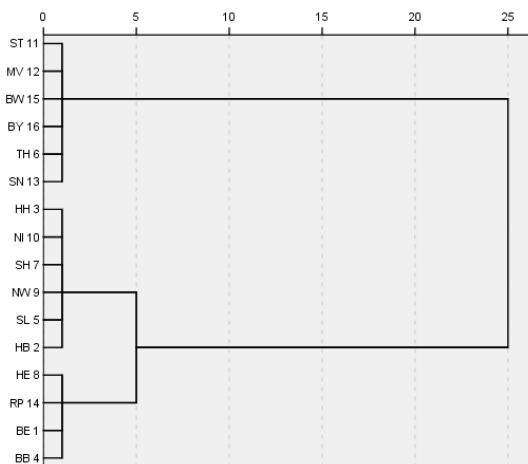
If one were to draw a boundary between the typical social democratic heart- and wastelands based on a cluster analysis she would separate Germany's East (excluding Brandenburg) plus its South (Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg) from the residual country. In almost all of the old Länder and in Brandenburg, the Social Democrats were more successful than in the East and the South. Even if one looked for a more fine-grained aggregation distinguishing between states with low, medium and high SPD vote shares, the cluster analysis would have opened a category for the states where the Social Democrats performed outstandingly. Thus, it would mark out Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate, Berlin and Brandenburg as mediocre regions and Hamburg, Bremen, Lower Saxony, Schleswig-Holstein, Saarland and North Rhine-Westphalia as the true social democratic core areas. The characterisation of Germany's South and – for the most part – East as some sort of “SPD hostile” area remains unaffected by this.

Figure 5: The SPD's results (map)



Source: The Federal Returning Officer.

Figure 6: The SPD's results (dendrogram)



Source: own illustration.

A clear-cut East-West divide qualifies the election results of Die Linke as a special case. It is particularly striking that all new Länder are to be found at the top of the ranking list (with results close to or above 20 percent), all old Länder at the bottom of it (with ten percent or less). Saxony-Anhalt (23.9 percent) and Bavaria (3.8 percent) constitute the sharpest contrast. The analysis on the state level hence confirms electoral research's findings that the post-communists owe their successes to the East (including Berlin), not the West – a distribution so unambiguous that unsurprisingly it was confirmed by a structure recognising procedure.

Due to the homogeneity of both areas it did not make any sense to go beyond two clusters, as the dendrogram suggests.

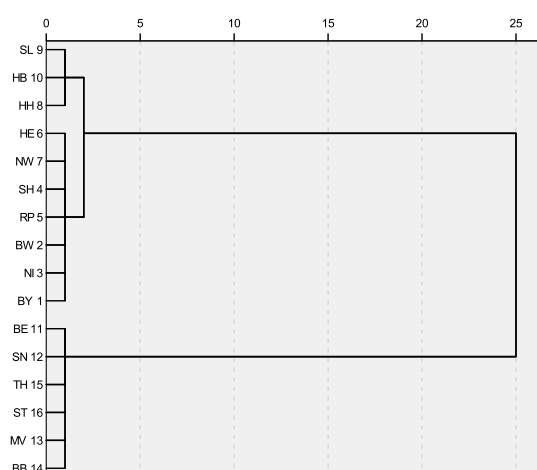
Figure 7: The Linke's results (map)



Source: The Federal Returning Officer.

The finding obtained is in full agreement with evidence found by previous electoral research. However, as distinguished from the latter, the former is not based on the tacit assumption of two homogeneous electorates. The sub-national comparison made it explicit and tested it. To anticipate the further results: In this respect the pattern of Die Linke resembles that of the NPD, which performed significantly better in the East than in the West (in a geographical sense), too. The striking difference between both parties is Berlin, where Die Linke received a vastly better result than the NPD. Therefore, apparently voting for the radical left followed the East-West logic to a subtly lesser extent than voting for the radical right, considering the status of Berlin as a special case (neither clearly Eastern nor Western in a historical perspective).

Figure 8: The Linke's results (dendrogram)



Source: own illustration.

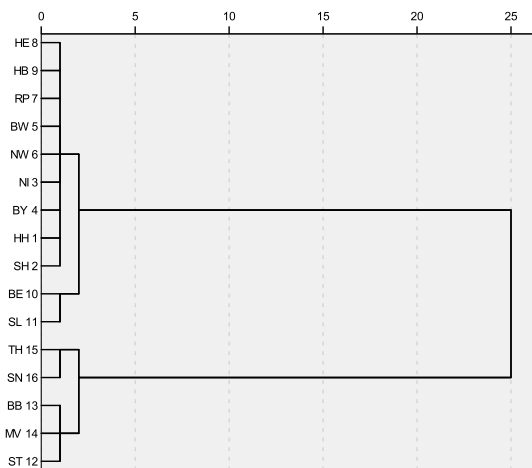
The 2013 federal election validated both radical parties' thicker roots in the East as well as noteworthy discrepancies, for Die Linke outperformed the NPD not only in Berlin, but in all states by a factor of 4.2 (Bavaria) to 14.7 (Hamburg). Thus, if one speaks of a radical East, she clearly misses the point – at least with reference to the extreme right. The far right was indeed stronger in the East than in the West. Still, it was not strong at all.¹⁵ Its best (Saxony: 3.3 percent) and its worst result (Hamburg: 0.6 percent) did not diverge significantly, indicating the party's weakness throughout Germany.

Figure 9: The NPD' results (map)



Source: netz-gegen-nazis.de.

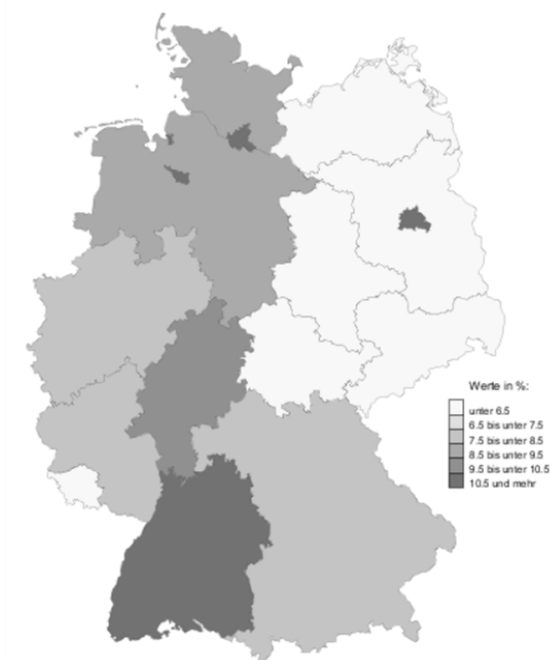
Figure 10: The NPD' results (dendrogram)



Source: own illustration.

A first glance at figure 11 might create the impression that voting for the Greens followed the same regional pattern as voting for Die Linke and the NPD. However, unlike the radical left party, the sub-national results of Bündnis 90/Die Grünen diverge to a considerably lesser extent, with Saxony-Anhalt (4.0 percent) and the city state Hamburg (12.7 percent) representing the Greens' heart- and wastelands.

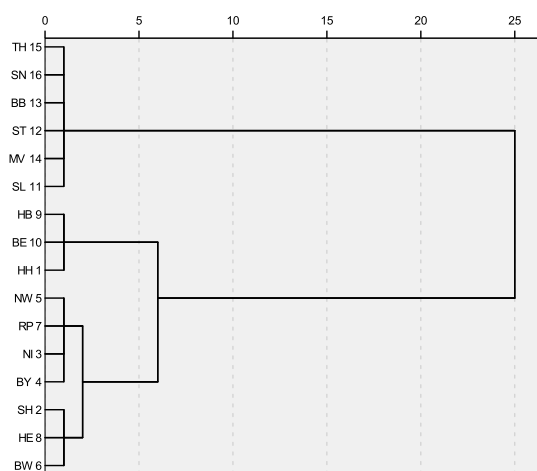
Figure 11: Bündnis 90/Die Grünen's results (map)



Source: The Federal Returning Officer.

Besides, despite its losses after a support peak in 2011 due to the Fukushima nuclear disaster and unlike the radical right party, the Greens are still a far cry away from political irrelevance. Although the party collapsed in each and every single state (compared to 2009), its worst result still exceeded the best of the NPD. Finally, the electoral map of the Greens does not follow a strict East-West divide. A cluster analysis implicating a separation of rather strong from weak states leads to one group consisting of all East German Länder (excluding Berlin) plus Saarland, and one group consisting of all other Länder. Thus, even though there is strong indication of an East-West divide at first glance, the below-average results of the Greens in the smallest area state speak against it. As the dendrogram concomitant with the cluster analysis makes a case for two state groups, other solutions are negligible. If, however, one was interested in the Greens' strongholds, their modestly convinced and averse territories, she would have to accept the three-cluster solution, marking out all three city states as the party's most reliable areas. Yet, due to the homogeneity of the two clusters, this solution does not suggest itself.

Figure 12: Bündnis 90/Die Grünen's results (dendrogram)

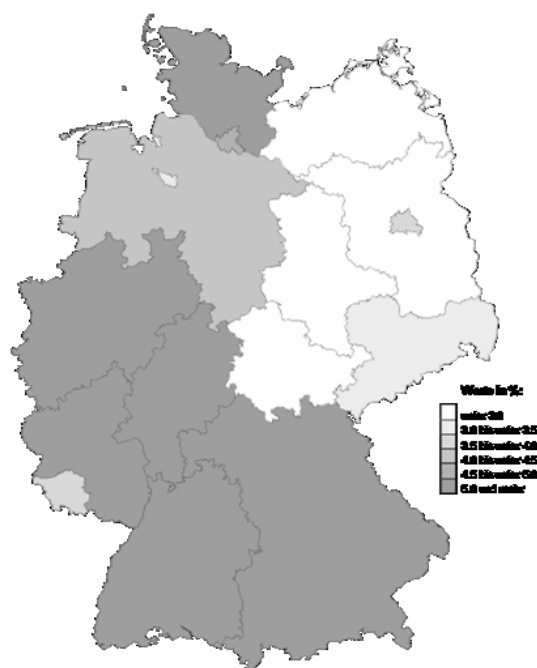


Source: own illustration.

The regional results of the Liberals, who suffered a historical setback in 2013, as they fell short of the five-percent threshold for the first time, lacked a clear-cut East-West divide either. Indeed, all East German states are to be found at the end of a ranking list, but this should not mislead into concluding that the dividing line between the more and less liberally affected parts of the electorate went along the former inner-German border. All in all, the 16 Länder appeared to be close together as to liberal voting, with Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (2.2 percent) and Baden-Wuerttemberg (6.2 percent) being the extremes. The regional electoral results thus varied to a relatively small extent. This was accounted for by

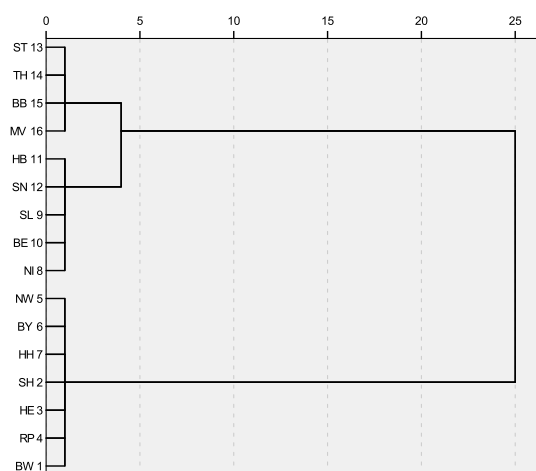
the devastating defeat the Liberals had to face. Probably a better overall result would have led to a surge in regional discrepancies. Despite the general homogeneity, it is not impossible to identify shades of grey. The cluster analysis pointed to a regional antagonism between East Germany, Bremen, Lower Saxony as well as Saarland on the one side and the residual country on the other. In view of the marginal regional differences and the homogeneity of both clusters alternative solutions are omitted.

Figure 13: The FDP's results (map)



Source: The Federal Returning Officer.

Figure 14: The FDP's results (dendrogram)



Source: own illustration.

At the end of the day, what do these findings tell us? First of all: In 2013 a clear-cut East-West divide only pertained to the election results of Die Linke and the NPD – with the difference that the former performed significantly and consistently better than the latter. This holds true particularly for Berlin, a stronghold of Die Linke. Paradoxically, both parties' regional outcomes speak for an East that is both redder and browner than the West, with the red elements clearly outweighing the brown ones. Anyhow, all other parties' results and the turnout revealed no such distinct East-West pattern. The dividing lines went right through East and West Germany.

But – second – that is only half the story, because all analyses provided evidence of the fact that the Eastern states constituted one voting entity in 2013 as they were to be found in the same clusters. The exception that confirmed the rule was Brandenburg which – due to its below-average results of the CDU and the above-average results of the SPD – can be characterised as a dark red state in the red East.

Third, even though apparently the new Länder were grouped together throughout, their cluster was often augmented by some of the old Länder, indicating that voting behaviour typical for Germany's East was – for whatever reasons – characteristic for some of the western states, too. However, the clusters varied in size and composition depending on the variable just in question.

Fourth, every cluster analysis provided evidence that voting in Germany was not subject to regional diversity in a strict sense. Rather, the election outcomes made a case for sub-national opposites, as the two-cluster solution always appeared to be the most reasonable solution. However, it always produced differently composed clusters. These dichotomies overlapped each other, but only two out of seven matched the East-West boundary.

5) CAUSES OF REGIONAL VARIATION

While electoral research has arrived at a broad consensus on the fact that voting behaviour in East and West is subject to various influences, there exists disagreement over the question whether these differences are only gradual or categorical, i.e. whether one and the same factor leads to completely different outcomes¹⁶ in the old and new Länder or whether its impact is regionally biased, exerting a strong impact in the West, but only a moderate or weak one in the East (or vice versa). Due to this uncertainty it was advisable to generate explanatory models independently of a fragile assumption about the effects and interactions of factors. Above, the models were intended to explain the cluster membership of the Bundesländer, i.e.

answer the question, why some of the states revealed a high or a low turnout or election result. The data hence were examined by means of Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA). It is capable of testing both complex interactions between independent variables (multicausality) and multiple conjunctural causation (equifinality) without presupposing large data sets. It has the further advantage that it determines relationships in terms of necessity and sufficiency based on set-theoretic connections between the dependent variable (“outcome”) and the independent variables (“conditions”). Finally, the corresponding parameters of fit provide an informative measure of the extent to which the data fit the statements of necessity and sufficiency (“consistency”) and of the empirical relevance of an explanatory path (“coverage”).¹⁷ In order to generate parsimonious and plausible solution terms, simplifying assumptions about logical remainders (logical configurations that have not occurred) were admitted to QCA’s minimization process, which has been carried out by Tosmana.¹⁸

For an adequate explanatory model it seemed important to choose factors that demonstrably exert a strong influence on voting behaviour in Germany and vary significantly in strength from one region to another. That is why there was no way around the micro- and macro-sociological approaches initially shaped by the Columbia School¹⁹ and Cleavage Theory²⁰. Two factors appeared particularly promising: “the class cleavage, which tends to set the social democratic SPD apart from the CDU/CSU and FDP as bourgeois parties, and the religious cleavage setting the Christian democratic CDU/CSU apart from SPD and FDP as secular parties”²¹ – the decline of the working and the old middle class in the past decades notwithstanding.²² Accordingly, the higher the share of Catholics and Protestants in a state, the higher the turnout and the more successful should the Christian Democrats be, while leftist parties – SPD, Die Linke, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen – presumably would enjoy more popularity among predominantly non-religious states.²³ As to class voting, the more a region’s population is characterised by unionised blue-collar workers, the higher the turnout and the vote shares of SPD, Die Linke, and the Union (a German peculiarity) and the lower that of the FDP and the Greens – parties that are typically more popular among the middle class and the self-employed.²⁴

A socio-structural factor that has not been at the centre of the aforementioned theories but compels more and more of electoral research’s attention is unemployment. Hypotheses including this factor work – as do those concerning social cleavages – on the assumption that individuals faced with the same social situation tend to evolve similar needs and interests.²⁵ Consequently, driven by discontent with democracy and the own economic situation, by a lack of political interest and a weak sense of duty to vote, unemployed people are more

disinclined to go to the polls.²⁶ Consequently, a rise in regional employment usually leads to a surge in the electoral turnout.²⁷ What is more, incorporating theorems of economic voting theory²⁸, the unemployed were hypothesized to incline towards SPD, Die Linke, and Bündnis 90/Die Grünen instead of CDU/CSU and FDP, as the former are either generally believed to attach greater importance to the problem of unemployment and because of an anti-incumbency effect that punishes the governing parties. Following this, regions with high unemployment rates were assumed to exhibit high vote shares in favour of leftist parties as well as low vote shares in favour of rightist parties. Since in this – and only this – respect the far-right NPD resembles a leftist party, it was assumed to profit from high unemployment rates as well.

Table 3: Configuration table (without outcome)

| EW | WORKER | UNION | CATH | PROT | UNEMPL | CASE |
|-----------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------------|
| 0 | 2 (37.4) | 0 (10.0) | 0 (4.2) | 0 (20.2) | 2 (10.3) | ST |
| 0 | 1 (25.6) | 0 (8.5) | 0 (3.7) | 0 (23.1) | 2 (10.4) | MV |
| 0 | 2 (37.1) | 0 (7.7/10.2) | 0 (8.8/3.3) | 0 (31.6/27.4) | 1 (7.6/8.8) | TH SN |
| 0 | 1 (32.4) | 0 (10.1) | 0 (3.7) | 0 (25.3) | 1 (9.2) | BB |
| 1 | 1 (27.1) | 0 (12.6) | 0 (12.0) | 1 (49.7) | 2 (10.7) | HB |
| 1 | 1 (31.6/27.1) | 0 (10.8/9.8) | 1 (63.6/40.8) | 0 (23.6/38.6) | 0 (3.6/4.0) | BY BW |
| 1 | 0 (16.9) | 0 (11.4) | 0 (11.7) | 0 (41.1) | 1 (7.3) | HH |
| 2 | 0 (22.5) | 0 (8.6) | 0 (7.1) | 0 (31.0) | 2 (11.3) | BE |
| 1 | 1 (26.7/31.7) | 0 (12.3/14.0) | 1 (45.8/48.8) | 0 (31.7/34.2) | 1 (8.2/5.2) | NW RP |
| 1 | 0 (22.4) | 1 (17.0) | 1 (67.5) | 0 (20.4) | 1 (7.1) | SL |
| 1 | 0 (19.8) | 0 (11.8) | 0 (3.9) | 1 (64.6) | 1 (6.5) | SH |
| 1 | 0 (21.7) | 0 (11.1) | 1 (27.5) | 1 (46.4) | 1 (5.7) | HE |
| 1 | 1 (27.8) | 0 (13.3) | 0 (16.5) | 1 (57.1) | 1 (6.3) | NI |

Source: own compilation on the basis of Bundesagentur für Arbeit (UNEMPL: unemployment rate in 2013; thresholds: 5 and 10 percent) and Politbarometer 2013 (WORKER: share of blue-collar workers [“Arbeiter” and “Facharbeiter”], thresholds: 25 and 35 percent; UNION: share of trade union members, threshold: 15 percent; CATH: share of Catholics, threshold: 20 percent; PROT: share of Protestants, threshold: 45 percent); EW: 0=East, 1=West, 2=Berlin.

Prior to the configurational analysis all factors had to be transformed into nominal or ordinal scale of measurement. Since nothing spoke for qualitatively justifiable class boundaries and Tosmana offers an automatic class formation on basis of clustering, the only decision to be made referred to the number of classes. In most cases the distribution of data gave point to dichotomization – with the exception of the working-class size and the unemployment rate. Because of both variables’ broader distribution a more fine-grained classification (three classes) seemed sound. The fruit of this transformation process can be seen in table 3.

Necessary factors provide the general set-up for further causal connections: It does not make sense to check to see if a certain case has the sufficient conditions for an outcome, when it already misses the necessary preconditions. That is why it is indispensable to look at the latter before scrutinizing the former.

Table 4: Necessary conditions and parameters of fit

| | Consistency | Coverage | Trivialness |
|---|--------------|--------------|-------------|
| EW(1) ← High Turnout | 1.000 | .727 | .375 |
| - ← High CDU/CSU Results | - | - | - |
| - ← High SPD Results | - | - | - |
| EW(0,2)* | 1.000 | 1.000 | .000 |
| CATH(0)* | 1.000 | .600 | .400 |
| PROT(0) ← High Linke Results | 1.000 | .333 | .600 |
| EW(1)* | 1.000 | .700 | .333 |
| UNION(0) ← High FDP Results | 1.000 | .467 | .889 |
| EW(1,2)* | 1.000 | .909 | .167 |
| UNION(0) ← High B'90/Die Grünen Results | 1.000 | .667 | .833 |
| CATH(0)* | 1.000 | .500 | .455 |
| PROT(0)* | 1.000 | .417 | .636 |
| EW(1)* | 1.000 | 1.000 | .000 |
| UNION(0)* | 1.000 | .333 | .909 |
| UNEMPL(1,2)* | 1.000 | .357 | .818 |
| WORKER(1,2) ← High NPD Results | 1.000 | .455 | .545 |

Source: own calculations; non-trivial conditions ($T \leq .500$) **bold**.

A sine qua non for states to reveal a high turnout was the non-membership in the group of the new Länder, as the configuration table indicates. Although this finding unmistakably emphasizes prior research stating that sizeable turnout rates in the West correspond higher levels of party identification, of candidate preferences and of problem-solving competences attributed to political parties, all of which correlate with greater familiarity with the democratic process,²⁹ this cannot explain why the abstention rate was not low in all of the old Länder. A look at the QCA results gets things straight:³⁰ Conducive to a high turnout in the Western Bundesländer was either (I) Catholicism or (II) a small working class or (III) a low unemployment rate in combination with Protestantism, which conforms with previous electoral research.

The latter path speaks for a positive effect of Protestantism on voting, but only as long as unemployment rates do not sky-rocket and thereby quash this correlation. However, the consistency value of all three paths tells us that neither Catholicism nor a weak working class lead to high turnout automatically. There is one inconsistent case each: Bavaria, that revealed a high abstention rate despite its character of a Catholic stronghold, and Hamburg, where the

virtual nonexistence of a working class was not reflected in a high turnout level. Whereas the former widely corroborates Pappi and Shikano's "Bavaria-is-different-hypothesis"³¹, the latter proposes a conundrum.

Table 5: Explanation model voter turnout

| Causal Path | Consistency | Raw Coverage | Unique Coverage | Cases |
|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------|-------------------------|
| CATH(1) | .857 | .625 | .375 | BW, NW, RP, SL, HE (BY) |
| WORKER(0) | .800 | .500 | .125 | BE, SL, SH, HE (HH) |
| PROT(1) * UNEMPL(0,1) | 1.000 | .375 | .125 | SH, HE, NI |

Source: own calculations.

The next set of QCAs evaluated the effects of socio-structural factors on the parties' electoral outcomes, beginning with the Christian Democrats. Whereas high CDU/CSU results obviously lack necessary conditions, they can be traced back to no less than four sufficient configurations: The Union achieved electoral victories in states that were (I) predominantly Catholic or (II) working-class dominated or (III) predominantly Protestant and blessed with low unemployment rates, or (IV) characterised by a moderate working class, the lack of Protestantism and of large-scale unemployment. Several aspects of these paths deserve mention:

First, whereas it comes as no surprise that Angela Merkel's party performed faultlessly in the Catholic heartlands, it is noteworthy that it did so in states with a rather solid working class (Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia) either. This result is clearly inconsistent with electoral sociology holding that Eastern blue-collar voters converged those in the West long since: Ever since the late 1990s their majority preferred the SPD (as distinguished from the first post-unification years when the CDU attracted the bulk of the Eastern working class' votes³²).³³ The argument that in 2013 the Union obviously performed better among the working class than any other party (38 percent) is implausible as it did so among all other occupational groups.³⁴ The size of the working class therefore cannot explain successes in these three East German states.

Second, CDU/CSU performed satisfactorily in Schleswig-Holstein, Hesse and Lower Saxony because of the same combination of factors that brought about high turnout levels in these states (Protestantism and low to medium unemployment), making a strong case for confessional/cleavage and economic voting.

Third, as with the three Eastern states' causal path that for Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania seems to be a methodical artefact: We have no reason to assume that a moderate amount of blue-collar voters in combination with a high unemployment rate and a lack of Protestant voters laid the ground for an electoral victory. All of this leads to the conclusion that only the confessional cleavage bore some electoral relevance for CDU/CSU. As it was restricted to the old Länder, the high results in the East must remain unexplained for now (greyed out in table 6).

Table 6: Explanation model CDU/CSU

| Causal Path | Consistency | Raw Coverage | Unique Coverage | Cases |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| CATH(1) | 1.000 | .500 | .417 | BY, BW, NW, RP, SL, HE |
| WORKER(2) | 1.000 | .250 | .250 | ST, TH, SN |
| PROT(1) * UNEMPL(1) | 1.000 | .250 | .167 | SH, HE, NI |
| WORKER(1) * PROT(0) * UNEMPL(2) | 1.000 | .084 | .084 | MV |

Source: own calculations.

Causal models turn out to be more straightforward when social democratic voting is at issue: The configuration table reports no necessary conditions for SPD strongholds. Instead, QCA presents two alternative paths sufficient for a relatively good result: (I) at least a slightly increased unemployment rate in the West or (II) a middle-sized working class and a medium level of unemployment. The first path supports the economic voting model in one of the two following ways: It either speaks for the fact that the SPD as a leftist party was believed to devote more attention to combating unemployment than the bourgeois coalition government or for widespread anti-incumbency voting by means of which the disaffected punish the grand coalition. However, as the Social Democrats had been in the opposition from 2009 until 2013 we have no chance to attribute the regional variances to one of the two mechanisms with certainty. That this effect occurred exclusively in the West suggests that anti-incumbency voting is still more popular here, whereas the Eastern electorate continues to stay away from polls or vote for the Post-Communists when discontented with government.³⁵

The second path presented by QCA is less convincing. Accordingly, the high vote shares in Brandenburg, Rhineland Palatinate, North Rhine-Westphalia, and Lower Saxony were accounted for by moderate unemployment and workers' rates. Yet, this would make sense only if the SPD succeeded in states with spreading unemployment and/or a strong working class, too, which was not the case as all other East German Länder demonstrated.

The remarkably scant unique coverage (the proportion of cases that is explicable by merely one term) of .100 signals that Brandenburg is the only case that goes back to this questionable path. Considering this value and the theoretical dubiousness of this second explanatory approach, it seems to be nothing more than a methodical artefact (greyed out in table 7). Once more, it appears to be impossible to attribute a party's election result to socio-structural variables; once more this is the case in the East.

Table 7: Explanation model SPD

| Causal Path | Consistency | Raw Coverage | Unique Coverage | Cases |
|--------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| EW(1,2) * UNEMPL(1,2) | 1.000 | .900 | .600 | BE, RP, NW, NI, HE, SH, HH, SL, HB |
| WORKER(1) * UNEMPL(1) | 1.000 | .400 | .100 | BB, RP, NW, NI |

Source: own calculations.

We saw that in Germany's party landscape Die Linke occupies a special position – in the first place because it is the only major party whose voting pattern follows a clear-cut East-West logic. Yet, the party's exceptional position is justified by a second feature, namely: the number of necessary preconditions and the theoretical fit of the solution terms. According to the configuration table the non-membership in the group of the old Länder, the absence of a strong Catholic and of a Protestant (i.e. Christian) background were all necessary for an outstanding election result in 2013. For two reasons these findings are consistent with theoretical predictions: first, people residing in a non-post-communist region and religious people are generally unlikely to vote for a socialist party; second, both variables matter in size: If, for instance, irreligious voters generally favoured Die Linke, but were negligible compared to the group of religious people, their votes would not decide the regional electoral outcomes.

Although both factors – communist past and feeble Christian roots – are historically closely related to each other, because the GDR's nomenclature successfully subverted the already weak ties between church and society in Germany's East over years, we have grounds to believe that each of them exerts an influence independently of the other. However, the measure of trivialness that matches the number of Protestant states with all states that repulsed Die Linke discloses that this factor might not be as relevant as theory suggests: The absence of a Protestant background is necessary indeed, but virtually omnipresent and thus close to irrelevance, too.

As expected, the post-communist party proved to be successful in post-communist and in non-Protestant Länder with a comparatively large amount of unemployment.³⁶ This is not a matter of course, as the long debate on the Post-Communists' story of success in the new Länder shows. It was suspected to be either a consequence of the communist legacy in political culture or of the socio-economic development after reunification which parts of the society perceived as devastating. QCA provides evidence that it is the post-communist atmosphere that the party depends on: Here, large support among leftist voters is a factor Die Linke can still build on, giving it a significant advantage over other parties of this spectrum.³⁷ One quarter-century after reunification it can still profit from meagre party identification – enhancing the electorate's sensitivity for current political trends – and from the anchorage of socialist and egalitarian values.³⁸ The alternative path, suggesting that the party prevailed in predominantly non-Protestant areas affected by leaping unemployment rates, also confirms recent findings of electoral research.³⁹ Considering the necessity of widespread general areligiosity (not of non-Protestantism) for a solid election result in a state, it is no oversimplification to attribute the post-communists' successes in Berlin, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, and Saxony-Anhalt exclusively to a disturbing dissemination of joblessness which, as previously mentioned, would not have played the same role for the party without prevalent atheism in these regions. Overall, Die Linke illustrates how influences quoted by electoral sociology, economic voting theory and value research can constitute an interplay of forces that in sum elucidates regional electoral differences. The state-church cleavage turned out to be necessary, economic voting and persisting socialist values sufficient.

Table 8: Explanation model Die Linke

| Causal Path | Consistency | Raw Coverage | Unique Coverage | Cases |
|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| EW(0) | 1.000 | .833 | .500 | SN, TH, MV, BB, ST |
| UNEMPL(2) * PROT(0) | 1.000 | .500 | .167 | BE, MV, ST |

Source: own calculations.

Liberal “successes” in the states were preceded by two necessary factors: The first one is the membership in the cluster of the old Länder, indicating the relevance of party identification, grown cleavages and traditional voterships – features that cannot be found to the same extent in the East. This condition is more convincing than the second one: the absence of strong trade union ties. Although theoretically justifiable and necessary, the measure of trivialness

signals that low levels of union membership were virtually irrelevant in 2013 as they were to be found in almost all states – not only on those with positive FDP results.

According to the QCA, the liberals attracted a great number of votes in Bavaria and Baden-Wuerttemberg because of economic prosperity which is indicative of the plausibility of economic voting models: Regions which are not afflicted with massive joblessness are not likely to punish the governing parties at the polls. As to Hamburg, Hesse, and Schleswig-Holstein, the liberals' modest successes are indirectly traced back to the shape of the regional working environment and economy: Accordingly, the lack of a vibrant industrial working class (scant blue-collar voters' rate and weak union ties) in combination with a mediocre unemployment rate was conducive to the liberals' relatively good results.⁴⁰

As can be seen from table 9 the third solution term holds that the FDP achieved modest successes because of moderate unemployment rates and a moderate number of blue-collar voters in the West. This is a plausible theoretical approach for there are no cases in which the liberals failed despite low unemployment rates and the lack of a strong working class. Hence, the party's modest results were accounted for by low *or* moderate unemployment rates in combination with a small *or* a medium-sized working class in the West – with the prominent exception of Lower Saxony, where the liberals received a setback although socio-structural and economic parameters were in favour of them. Nevertheless, all of the liberals' higher-than-average results are traceable to a combination of economic and socio-structural determinants.

Table 9: Explanation model FDP

| Causal Path | Consistency | Raw Coverage | Unique Coverage | Cases |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|----------------|
| UNEMPL(0) | 1.000 | .286 | .286 | BY, BW |
| UNEMPL(1)* WORKER(0)* UNION(0) | 1.000 | .429 | .429 | HH, HE, SH |
| EW(1) WORKER(1)* UNEMPL(1) | .666 | .286 | .286 | NW, RP (NI) |

Source: own calculations.

The second youngest party in Germany's political landscape is Bündnis 90/Die Grünen. Unlike the other parties, it did not emerge from frozen social cleavages from the 19th century or from communist rule, but rather from the "silent revolution"⁴¹ depicting the shift from materialist to post-materialist values in Western societies in the 20th century. That is

assumedly the reason why QCA unearthed no comprehensible solution term that sheds light on the regionally varying election outcomes of the Greens. It is noteworthy that the same factors that proved to be necessary for a relatively high FDP result turned out to be of importance for the Greens, too. Yet, only the non-membership in the group of the new Länder stands up to scrutiny: It is non-trivial in a set-theoretic sense and consistent with prior research holding that the Greens have a hard furrow to plough in the East for they cannot build on a broad post-materialist basis, let alone a grown core constituency. That is why every now and then electoral research refers to this part of the country as a liberal and green “diaspora”⁴². The lack of deep-rooted labour unions in turn proved to be of relevance neither from a set-theoretic nor from a theoretical point of view, first of all because the party underperformed among trade union members in 2013.⁴³

As to sufficient conditions, QCA attributed the green successes either to Berlin’s special status (being neither clearly Eastern nor Western) or to low union density in the old Länder. Both explanations are unsatisfying: Apparently, the first term is tailor-made for Berlin (and thus neither generalizable nor theoretically conclusive), the second one does not hold water. Sociological and economic voting approaches are, according to that, stretched to their limits when it comes to the Greens’ election outcomes. That is why table 10 does not display the aforementioned causal terms. Instead, the analysis drew on sociodemographic variables electoral research generally assumes to be decisive for the Greens: age and education.⁴⁴ It yielded a somewhat surprising, perfect correlation between age and success: Consequently, in 2013 the green strongholds were completely congruent with the cluster of “young” states (in terms of the populations’ mean ages), indicating an ongoing age effect – not only at the polls, but also on the regional level.

Table 10: Explanation model Bündnis 90/Die Grünen

| Causal Path | Consistency | Raw Coverage | Unique Coverage | Cases |
|-------------|-------------|--------------|-----------------|--|
| AGE(0) | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | HB, NI, HH, BY, NW, RP, SH, HE, BW, BE |

Source: own calculations on basis of the Federal Bureau of Statistics (mean ages in the “young cluster”: BE: 42.8; BW: 43.2; BY: 43.4; HB: 44.0; HE: 43.7; HH: 42.4; NI: 44.2; NW: 43.9; RP: 44.4; SH: 44.8; mean ages in the “old cluster”: BB: 46.6; MV: 46.3; SL: 46.0; SN: 46.6; ST: 47.3; TH: 46.7).

The federal election in 2013 (and the preceding state elections) demonstrated that Germany’s largest right-wing extremist organization is down for the count. Still, the NPD shows signs of

life in the East. The prerequisites for this are multifaceted *prima facie*: areligiosity, socialist legacy, low union density, moderate to high unemployment rates, and a middle-sized working-class at least. Yet, looked at more closely, some aspects of this array of necessities turn out to be either peculiar to East Germany and therefore redundant – weak ties to the Catholic and the Protestant church, the wider spread of joblessness, a larger working class –, whereas others are apparently trivial to a high degree and hence bear no close examination – low union density, high unemployment, a larger working class. Cutting out the set-theoretically questionable and redundant factors the membership in the group of the new Länder remains the only tenable *conditio sine qua non* for an NPD “success”. In addition to that, it is also a sufficient factor (the only one) that brings a higher result for the far right into being. That the party has not sunk into complete insignificance in the East hence speaks for a slightly higher protest potential called forth by the hardships of political, economic, and social transformation.⁴⁵

Table 11: Explanation model NPD

| Causal Path | Consistency | Raw Coverage | Unique Coverage | Cases |
|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|------------------------|--------------------|
| EW(1) | 1.000 | 1.000 | 1.000 | BB, MV, SN, ST, TH |

Source: own calculations.

6) CONCLUSION

Over the past 25 years relatively little effort has been expended on the analysis of sub-national voting patterns in Germany – as distinguished from paired comparisons of the Eastern and the Western electorate. The latter approach, however, makes it difficult to spot regional variation within both parts of the country and to decide on whether gaps in voting behaviour have to be considered as relevant or not. It was therefore the purpose of this study to delve into the regionalisation of electoral behaviour on the Bundesländer level. The point of departure was the question, whether the key differences in the election outcome (turnout, results of CDU/CSU, SPD, Die Linke, FDP, Bündnis 90/Die Grünen, NPD) coincided with the East-West line in the 2013 federal election.

By means of cluster analyses that grouped the Länder according to high and low results it was demonstrated that in the majority of cases the most striking disparities did not conform to the former inner-German border, with the prominent exceptions of the parties

from the political fringe. In order to explain the most extensive regional gaps in voting behaviour the analysis – conducted with QCA – made recourse to cleavage and economic voting theory. Accordingly, the part of the country a state belongs to – East or West – still continues to exert profound influence: It was necessary (and relevant) for five out of seven election outcomes and part of four sufficient solution terms (out of 13). In its relevance it was surpassed only by the unemployment rate which played a role in seven out of 13 explanatory paths. Thus, the findings raise the intriguing hypothesis that approaches drawing on socio-structural factors alone are unlikely to satisfactorily explain regional variation in electoral behaviour. In most cases, it was the combination of social and economic factors (i.e. unemployment) that determined the results, making a case for an interplay of cleavage and economic voting theory. Accordingly, the bourgeois parties profited from economic prosperity and prevailing class cleavages in a region, whereas the leftist parties owed their successes to rampant unemployment rates in some areas as well as (at least Die Linke) to the socialist legacy in the East and to the confessional cleavage. On a very small scale the NPD profited from the disenchantment of a few in the East, the Greens turned out to be the odd one out, for their results could not be traced back to one of the included factors. That its triumphal march in the past decades has been yielded by the post-materialist value change finds its expression in the fact that regional electoral variation was affiliated to differences in age.

The combination of factors was stretched to its limits not only by the Green party, but also by the East: The CDU's victories in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, Saxony, Saxony-Anhalt, and Thuringia as well as the passable performance of the SPD in Brandenburg remain unexplained for now. This is not to say that in East Germany Catholics and Protestants do not favour the Christian Democrats (they do) or that blue-collar workers oppose Social Democracy (they do not), but that these groups were not decisive on a regional level. The CDU enjoyed success despite the small number of Christians and considerable unemployment rates; and so did the SPD in Brandenburg despite the rivalling Post-Communists. The new Länder did not differ significantly in any of the considered factors. Hence, cleavage theory fell short of illuminating why the Social Democrats won the election in Brandenburg, whereas the Christian Democrats succeeded in the other Eastern states.

All in all, the sub-national analysis provides support for the idea that 25 years after reunification voting in Germany is not necessarily a matter of East versus West anymore, but of regional complexity.⁴⁶ As to most parties the regionalisation of voting behaviour remained on a high level between 2009 and 2013, regional voting in favour of Die Linke and the liberals even soared. But one way or the other, although the East-West comparison might

reflect the propensity to frame discussions in contrasts, dichotomies and the like, apparently it is incapable of identifying sub-national heterogeneity. Future research may explore its evolution as well as its causes and political implications.

¹ Jeffrey Kopstein/Daniel Ziblatt (2006): Honecker's Revenge. The Enduring Legacy of German Unification in the 2005 Election, in: *German Politics and Society* 24 (1), p. 134-147 (p. 139).

² Roland Abold/Markus Steinbrecher (2007): „Wir wollen sein ein einzig Volk von Brüdern!“ Die innere Einheit und das politische Verhalten der Deutschen, in: Hans Rattinger/Oscar W. Gabriel/Jürgen W. Falter (Ed.), *Der gesamtdeutsche Wähler. Stabilität und Wandel des Wählerverhaltens im wiedervereinigten Deutschland*, Baden-Baden, p. 141-166; Kai Arzheimer (2005): Das Wahlverhalten. Besonderheiten in Ostdeutschland als Modell künftiger gesamtdeutscher Entwicklungen, in: Hannes Bahrman/Christoph Links (Ed.), *Am Ziel vorbei. Die Deutsche Einheit – eine Zwischenbilanz*, Berlin, p. 60-74; Ursula Birsl/Peter Lösche (1998): Parteien in West- und Ostdeutschland: Der gar nicht so feine Unterschied, in: *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* 29 (1), p. 7-24; Russell J. Dalton/Willy Jou (2010): Is There a Single German Party System?, in: *German Politics and Society* 28 (2), p. 34-52; Martin Elff/Sigrid Roßteutscher (2011): Stability or Decline? Class, Religion and the Vote in Germany, in: *German Politics* 20 (1), p. 107-127; Ulrich Eith (2000): New Patterns in the East? Differences in Voting Behaviour and Consequences for Party Politics in Germany, in: *German Politics and Society* 18 (3), p. 119-136; Hanna Kaspar/Jürgen W. Falter (2009): Angenähert oder ausdifferenziert? Das Wahlverhalten in Ost- und Westdeutschland bei der Bundestagswahl 2005, in: Oscar W. Gabriel/Bernhard Weßels/Jürgen W. Falter (Ed.), *Wahlen und Wähler. Analysen aus Anlass der Bundestagswahl 2005*, Wiesbaden, p. 202-227; Kopstein/Ziblatt: Honecker's Revenge; Robert Rohrschneider/Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck/Franziska Jung: Vereint, und doch immer noch verschieden: ost- und westdeutsche Wähler bei der Bundestagswahl 2009 im Vergleich, in: Bernhard Weßels/Harald Schoen/Oscar W. Gabriel (Ed.), *Wahlen und Wähler. Analysen aus Anlass der Bundestagswahl 2009*, Wiesbaden, p. 360-379; Harald Schoen/Roland Abold (2006): Zwei Wählerschaften in einem Land? Wahlverhalten im vereinigten Deutschland, in: Jürgen W. Falter/Oscar W. Gabriel/Hans Rattinger/Harald Schoen (Ed.), *Sind wir ein Volk? Ost- und Westdeutschland im Vergleich*, München, p. 128-157; Harald Schoen/Christian Zettl (2010): Alte Allianzen, neue Bündnisse oder alles im Fluss? Gesellschaftliche Konfliktlinien und Wahlverhalten im vereinten Deutschland, in: Eckhard Jesse/Roland Sturm (Ed.), *Bilanz der Bundestagswahl 2009. Voraussetzungen, Ergebnisse, Folgen*, München, p. 117-134.

³ Kai Arzheimer (2007): Wahl extremer Parteien, in: Rattinger/Gabriel/Falter (Ed.), *Der gesamtdeutsche Wähler*, p. 67-86 (p. 70); Eckhard Jesse (2003): Abschneiden der PDS und der Rechtsparteien bei der Bundestagswahl 2002, in *Zeitschrift für Politik* 50 (1), p.17-36; Harald Schoen/Siegfried Bühler (2006): Feinde im Inneren. Politischer Extremismus im vereinigten Deutschland, in: Falter/Gabriel/Rattinger/Schoen (Ed.), *Sind wir ein Volk?*, p. 188-211.

⁴ Hendrik Träger (2015): Ein Vierteljahrhundert Wahlen in Ost und West (1990 bis 2014): regionale Unterschiede und Gemeinsamkeiten, in: *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* 46 (1), p. 57-81 (p. 70).

⁵ Kai Arzheimer/Jürgen W. Falter (2005): „Goodbye Lenin?“ Bundes- und Landtagswahlen seit 1990: Eine Ost-West-Perspektive, in: Jürgen W. Falter/Oscar W. Gabriel/Bernhard Weßels (Ed.), *Wahlen und Wähler. Analysen aus Anlass der Bundestagswahl 2002*, Wiesbaden, p. 244-283 (p. 259); Kai Arzheimer/Jürgen W. Falter (2013): Versöhnen statt spalten? Das Ergebnis der Bundestagswahl 2009 und die Rolle der PDS/Linkspartei in Ost-West-Perspektive, in: Weßels/Schoen/Gabriel (Ed.), *Wahlen und Wähler 2009*, p. 118-150; Eckhard Jesse (2009): Bundestags-, Landtags- und Europawahlen in den neuen Bundesländern seit 1990, in: *Deutschland-Archiv* 42 (6), p. 965-972 (p. 970); Kaspar/Falter: Angenähert oder ausdifferenziert?, p. 207-209; Jürgen P. Lang (2010): Akzeptanz trotz extremistischer Tendenzen? Wahlerfolge, Wahlkampf und Politik der Linken, in: Jesse/Sturm (Ed.), *Bilanz der Bundestagswahl 2009*, p. 257-278; Träger: Ein Vierteljahrhundert Wahlen in Ost und West, p. 68-70.

⁶ Kai Arzheimer/Jürgen W. Falter (2002): Ist der Osten wirklich rot? Das Wahlverhalten bei der Bundestagswahl 2002 in Ost-West-Perspektive, in: *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 52 (49-50), p. 27-35; Oscar W. Gabriel (2011): Der rote Osten: Ist Ostdeutschland politisch ganz anders?, in: Evelyn Bytzek/Sigrid Roßteutscher (Ed.), *Der unbekannte Wähler. Mythen und Fakten über das Wahlverhalten der Deutschen*, Frankfurt a. M./New York, p. 157-176; Inka Jörs (2003): East Germany: another party landscape, in: *German Politics* 12 (1), p. 135-158 (p. 137).

⁷ David P. Conradt (2010): The Shrinking Elephants. The 2009 Election and the Changing Party System, in: *German Politics and Society* 28 (3), p. 25-47 (p. 31-32); Gabriel: Der rote Osten, p. 163; Stefan Merz/Jürgen Hofrichter (2013): Wähler auf der Flucht: die Wählerwanderung zur Bundestagswahl 2009, in: Weßels/Schoen/Gabriel (Ed.), *Wahlen und Wähler 2009*, p. 97-117 (p. 101-102); Hans Rattinger (2007): Wechselwähler 1990 bis 2002, in: Rattinger/Gabriel/Falter (Ed.), *Der gesamtdeutsche Wähler*, p.37-66; Schoen/Abold: Zwei Wählerschaften in einem Land, p. 144-147; Träger: Ein Vierteljahrhundert Wahlen in Ost

und West, p. 71-73; Cornelia Weins (1999): The East German Vote in the 1998 General Election, in: *German Politics* 8 (2), p. 48-71 (p. 50-52).

⁸ Arzheimer: Das Wahlverhalten, p. 65; Arzheimer/Falter: „Goodbye Lenin?“, p. 256; Rolf Becker (2004): Political Efficacy and Voter Turnout in East and West Germany, in: *German Politics* 13 (2), p. 317-340; Gabriel: Der rote Osten, p. 160; Eckhard Jesse (2004): Die Landtagswahlen in den neuen Bundesländern 1990 bis 2004, in: *Deutschland-Archiv* 37 (6), p. 952-963 (p. 958); Patrick Lamers/Sigrid Roßteutscher: Die Wahlbeteiligung, in: Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck/Hans Rattinger/Sigrid Roßteutscher/Bernhard Weßels/Christof Wolf (Ed.), *Zwischen Fragmentierung und Konzentration: Die Bundestagswahl 2013*, Baden-Baden, p. 119-132 (p. 119-124); Träger: Ein Vierteljahrhundert Wahlen in Ost und West, p. 60-63; Kerstin Völkl (2009): Reine Landtagswahlen oder regionale Bundestagswahlen? Eine Untersuchung des Abstimmungsverhaltens bei Landtagswahlen 1990-2006, Baden-Baden, p. 124.

⁹ Träger: Ein Vierteljahrhundert Wahlen in Ost und West, p. 60-62.

¹⁰ Considerable exceptions are Tilo Görl (1999): Regionalisierung des Wählerverhaltens in den neuen Bundesländern, Potsdam; Jörs: East Germany; Oskar Niedermayer (2012): Regionalisierung des Wahlverhaltens und des Parteiensystems auf der Bundesebene 1949 bis 2009, in: Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck (Ed.), *Wählen in Deutschland*, Baden-Baden, p. 134-156; Träger: Ein Vierteljahrhundert Wahlen in Ost und West; Thomas Saalfeld (2004): Party Identification in the Social Bases of Voting Behaviour in the 2002 Bundestag Election, in: *German Politics* 13 (2), p. 170-200; Bernhard Weßels/Aiko Wagner (2011): Regionale Differenzierung des Wahlverhaltens, in: Hans Rattinger/Sigrid Roßteutscher/Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck/Bernhard Weßels (Ed.), *Zwischen Langeweile und Extremen. Die Bundestagswahl 2009*, Baden-Baden, p. 119-129.

¹¹ Most recent: Arzheimer/Falter: Versöhnen statt spalten?, p. 119-120.

¹² Tilo Görl (2001): Regionalisierung der politischen Landschaft in den neuen Bundesländern am Beispiel der Landtagswahlen 1999 in Brandenburg, Thüringen und Sachsen, in: *Zeitschrift für Parlamentsfragen* 32 (1), p. 94-123.

¹³ Niedermayer: Regionalisierung des Wahlverhaltens und des Parteiensystems, p. 135.

¹⁴ Ward method (squared Euclidian distance).

¹⁵ Jesse: Bundestags-, Landtags- und Europawahlen in den neuen Bundesländern seit 1990, p. 498.

¹⁶ Robert Rohrschneider/Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck/Franziska Jung (2012): Short-term factors versus long-term values. Explaining the 2009 election results, in: *Electoral Studies* 31 (1), p. 20-34.

¹⁷ Carsten Q. Schneider/Claudius Wagemann (2012): *Set-Theoretic Methods for the Social Sciences. A Guide to Qualitative Comparative Analysis*, New York.

¹⁸ Lasse Cronqvist (2011): *Tosmana: Tool for Small-N Analysis [Computer Programme]*, Version 1.3.2.0. Trier: University of Trier.

¹⁹ Paul Lazarsfeld/Bernard Berelson/Hazel Gaudet (1968): *The People's Choice. How the Voter Makes up his Mind in a Presidential Campaign*, 3rd ed., New York/London; Bernard Berelson/Paul Lazarsfeld/William N. McPhee (1954): *Voting. A Study of Opinion Formation in a Presidential Campaign*, Chicago.

²⁰ Seymour M. Lipset/Stein Rokkan (1967): Cleavage Structures, Party Systems, and Voter Alignments. An Introduction, in: Seymour M. Lipset/Stein Rokkan (Ed.), *Party Systems and Voter Alignments: Cross-National Perspectives*, New York/London, p. 1-64.

²¹ Saalfeld: Party Identification in the Social Bases of Voting Behaviour in the 2002 Bundestag Election, p. 174.

²² Harald Schoen (2005): Soziologische Ansätze in der empirischen Wahlforschung, in: Jürgen W. Falter/Harald Schoen (Ed.), *Handbuch Wahlforschung*, Wiesbaden, p. 135-186 (p. 159-160).

²³ Claudio Caballero (2005): Nichtwahl, in: Jürgen W. Falter/Harald Schoen (Ed.), *Handbuch Wahlforschung*, Wiesbaden, p. 329-365 (p. 355-356); Dalton/Jou: Is There a Single German Party System?, p. 41-44; Elff/Roßteutscher: Stability or Decline?, p. 115-118; Kaspar/Falter: Angenähert oder ausdifferenziert?, p. 216-220; Saalfeld: Party Identification in the Social Bases of Voting Behaviour in the 2002 Bundestag Election, p. 183-185; Schoen: Soziologische Ansätze in der empirischen Wahlforschung, p. 173-181; Weins: The East German Vote in the 1998 General Election, p. 54-57; Schoen/Zettl: Alte Allianzen, neue Bündnisse oder alles im Fluss?, p. 124-128.

²⁴ Caballero: Nichtwahl, p. 355-356; Dalton/Jou: Is There a Single German Party System?, p. 38-41; Elff/Roßteutscher: Stability or Decline?; Lamers/Roßteutscher: Die Wahlbeteiligung, p. 127; Saalfeld: Party Identification in the Social Bases of Voting Behaviour in the 2002 Bundestag Election, p. 115-118; Schoen: Soziologische Ansätze in der empirischen Wahlforschung, p. 159-173; Weins: The East German Vote in the 1998 General Election, p. 57-58; Bernhard Weßels (2014): Wahlverhalten sozialer Gruppen, in: Schmitt-Beck/Rattinger/Roßteutscher/Weßels/Wolf (Ed.), *Zwischen Fragmentierung und Konzentration*, p. 187-202 (p. 193-194).

²⁵ Lazarsfeld/Berelson/Gaudet: *The People's Choice*, p. 148.

²⁶ Klaus Armingeon (1994): Gründe und Folgen geringer Wahlbeteiligung, in: *Kölner Zeitschrift für Soziologie und Sozialpsychologie* 46 (1), p. 43-64; Thorsten Faas (2007): Arbeitslosigkeit und Wählerverhalten, in: Rattinger/Gabriel/Falter (Ed.), *Der gesamtdeutsche Wähler*, p. 211-234 (p. 222-223); Thomas Kleinhenz (1995):

Die Nichtwähler. Ursachen der sinkenden Wahlbeteiligung in Deutschland, Opladen, p. 26; Thorsten Faas (2007): Arbeitslosigkeit und Wählerverhalten, in: Rattinger/Gabriel/Falter (Ed.), Der gesamtdeutsche Wähler, p. 211-234 (p. 222-223).

²⁷ Armin Schäfer (2011): Der Nichtwähler als Durchschnittsbürger. Ist die sinkende Wahlbeteiligung eine Gefahr für die Demokratie?, in: Bytzek/Roßteutscher (Ed.), Der unbekannte Wähler, p. 133-154 (p.140); Armin Schäfer/Sigrid Roßteutscher (2015): Räumliche Unterschiede der Wahlbeteiligung bei der Bundestagswahl 2013: Die soziale Topografie der Nichtwahl, in: Karl-Rudolf Korte (Ed.), Die Bundestagswahl 2013. Analysen der Wahl-, Parteien-, Kommunikations- und Regierungsforschung, Wiesbaden, p. 99-118 (p. 109).

²⁸ Faas: Arbeitslosigkeit und Wählerverhalten, p. 223-229; Michael S. Lewis-Beck/Martin Paldam (2000): Economic Voting. An Introduction, in: Electoral Studies 19 (2/3), p. 113-121.

²⁹ Rolf Becker (2002): Voter Participation in the 1998 Bundestag Elections: A Theoretical Modification and Empirical Application of Downs' Theory of Voter Participation, in: German Politics, 11 (2), pp.39-87; Kerstin Völkl (2007): Nichtwahl – die Alternative für parteilich Ungebundene am Wahltag?, in: Rattinger/Gabriel/Falter (Ed.), Der gesamtdeutsche Wähler, p. 15-36 (p. 26-28).

³⁰ QCA presented several models of which the one described seemed the most plausible: OW(2)+KATH(1)+OW(1)UNEMPL(1);OW(2)+UNEMPL(0)+OW(1)UNEMPL(1);KATH(1)+WORKER(0)+OW(1)UNEMPL(1);KATH(1)+WORKER(0)+UNEMPL(1)PROT(1);WORKER(0)+UNEMPL(0)+OW(1)UNEMPL(1).

³¹ Franz U. Pappi/Susumo Shikano (2001): Personalisierung der Politik in Mehrparteiensystemen am Beispiel deutscher Bundestagswahlen seit 1989, in: Politische Vierteljahresschrift 42 (3), p. 355-387; Weßels/Wagner: Regionale Differenzierung des Wahlverhaltens, p.120-122.

³² Russell J. Dalton/Wilhelm Bürklin (1995): The Two German Electorates: The Social Bases of the Vote in 1990 and 1994, in: German Politics and Society 13 (1), p. 75-99; Dalton/Jou: Is There a Single German Party System?, p. 38-41.

³³ Elff/Roßteutscher: Stability or Decline?, p. Dalton/Jou: Is There a Single German Party System?, p. 43; Weins: The East German Vote in the 1998 General Election, p. 55; Schoen/Zettl: Alte Allianzen, neue Bündnisse oder alles im Fluss?, p. 128; Weßels: Wahlverhalten sozialer Gruppen, p. 194.

³⁴ Forschungsgruppe Wahlen (2013): Bundestagswahl. Eine Analyse der Wahl vom 22. September 2013, Mannheim, p. 46-48; Eckhard Jesse (2014): Wer wählte wie? Eine Analyse der Bundestagswahl 2013, in: Eckhard Jesse/Roland Sturm (Ed.), Bilanz der Bundestagswahl 2013. Voraussetzungen, Ergebnisse, Folgen, Baden-Baden, p. 23-56 (p.48-50).

³⁵ Rohrschneider/Schmitt-Beck/Jung: Vereint, und doch immer noch verschieden, p. 371.

³⁶ Besides, QCA presented another solution, that differed from the first only in the second path: OW(0)+WORKER(0)UNEMPL(2). Because of the theoretical implausibility and the low unique coverage of this solution's second path (containing only Berlin), this term was omitted.

³⁷ Arzheimer/Falter: Versöhnen statt spalten?, p. 143; Weßels: Wahlverhalten sozialer Gruppen, p. 196-199.

³⁸ Kai Arzheimer/Tatjana Rudi (2007): Wertorientierungen und ideologische Einstellungen, in: Rattinger/Gabriel/W. Falter (Ed.), Der gesamtdeutsche Wähler, p. 167-187.

³⁹ Thorsten Faas (2010): Arbeitslosigkeit und Wählerverhalten. Direkte und indirekte Wirkungen auf Wahlbeteiligung und Parteipräferenzen in Ost- und Westdeutschland, Baden-Baden, p. 475; Weßels: Wahlverhalten sozialer Gruppen, p. 196-199.

⁴⁰ According to an alternative solution term the successes in the three states was accounted for by a small working class, weak union ties, and the membership in the West: WORKER(0)EW(1)UNION(0). The presented term is, however, theoretically more plausible.

⁴¹ Ronald Inglehart (1977): The Silent Revolution. Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics, Princeton.

⁴² Träger: Ein Vierteljahrhundert Wahlen in Ost und West, p. 66.

⁴³ Weßels: Wahlverhalten sozialer Gruppen, p. 196-197.

⁴⁴ Jesse: Wer wählte wie?, p. 46; Weßels: Wahlverhalten sozialer Gruppen, p. 196-197.

⁴⁵ Gabriel: Der rote Osten, p. 162; Eckhard Jesse (2010): Ist die extremistische NPD dauerhaft gescheitert? Politik, Wahlkampf, Wahlergebnisse, Folgen, in: Eckhard Jesse/Roland Sturm (Ed.), Bilanz der Bundestagswahl 2009, p. 279-304 (p. 302).

⁴⁶ Niedermayer: Regionalisierung des Wahlverhaltens und des Parteiensystems; Träger: Ein Vierteljahrhundert Wahlen in Ost und West; Weßels/Wagner: Regionale Differenzierung des Wahlverhaltens.