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Voting Strategically in Two-Vote Elections

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Voters do not always cast a vote for their most preferred candidate or party. They sometimes vote for their second, third, or even fourth option to increase the probability of affecting the final electoral result. We thus assume that voters are instrumental in the sense that they care about the outcome of the election. Most of the literature on strategic voting is focused on single-member-district (SMD) elections (plurality or majority rule) (e.g., Abramson et al. 2010, this vol.; Alvarez and Nagler 2000; Blais and Nadeau 1996; Blais et al. 2001, 2011, this vol.; Daoust, this vol.; Franklin, Niemi, and Whitten 1994). Under this electoral system, voters have strong incentives to desert their first preference if it has little chance of winning the election in their district—that is, if it is not viable. This in turn reduces the number of parties running in the election.

Recently, some studies have pointed out the existence of similar and alternative forms of strategic voting under proportional representation (PR) (e.g., Bargsted and Kedar 2009; Duch, May, and Armstrong 2010; Lago, this vol.; Lebon et al., this vol.; Meffert and Gschwend 2010; Verthé and Beyens, this vol.). However, relatively little is known about strategic voting under two-vote electoral systems such as the German mixed-member system (an exception is Plescia, this vol.). While chapter 1 develops an encompassing theoretical approach to potential strategies in mixed-member elections, we are not aware of any study giving a comprehensive and simultaneous empirical account of the different strategies voters could adopt. To fill this gap, we use unique data from surveys that were specifi-

cally designed to study these strategic votes and were conducted during the 2013 German federal election and the 2013 Bavarian and Lower Saxon regional elections.

Previous Work on Strategic Voting in Two-Vote Elections

We define as strategic voters' decisions to vote for a party (or the candidate of a party) that is not their most preferred party to affect the outcome of the election (Blais et al. 2001). Typically, this situation occurs when the party is not viable, meaning that it has little chance of winning a seat. A sincere vote (a vote for the preferred party) is not necessarily devoid of strategic considerations, since voters may vote for their preferred parties partly because they perceive that party as viable (Abramson et al. 2010; Aldrich, Blais, and Stephenson, this vol.). Nonsincere votes are not necessarily strategic. Voters can decide to support the second or third option for reasons that have nothing to do with their willingness to affect the electoral outcome (for example, by mistake; Lau et al. 2014). However, this chapter is confined to situations where strategic considerations lead voters to support a party that is not their preferred option.

Consequently, we adopt a definition of strategic voting that differs slightly from the one used in chapter 1. That chapter considers as strategic any vote that is based on a combination of preferences and expectations about the possible outcome of the election. From that perspective, a vote for a preferred party based at least partly on the perception that the party is viable is deemed strategic. In contrast, we focus on "pure" strategic voting—that is, where strategic considerations are decisive and lead voters to desert their preferred option.

Mixed-member electoral systems are an interesting testing ground for the analysis of strategic voting since they entail two electoral tiers with two different electoral rules. They thus create two sets of incentives for voters. This chapter analyzes German federal and regional elections (in Bavaria and Lower Saxony) for which this electoral system is used. Voters cast a vote for a candidate in a local constituency under an SMD plurality system. They cast another vote for one of the closed party-lists in a multimember constituency under a closed-list PR system (except in Bavaria's regional election, where the party list is open). In this PR tier, the total number of seats that a party gets depends on the number of list votes received, with the proviso that a party needs to get at least 5% of the party-list vote (or at least three constituency seats in the case of the federal election) to be

eligible for PR seats (for federal electoral rules, see Mader 2014; Saalfeld 2005; for Lower Saxony, see Meyer and Müller-Rommel 2013; for Bavaria, see Schultze).

Most of the literature on strategic voting in the context of a mixed-member electoral system in Germany (and in other countries using the same system) has primarily focused on ticket-splitting (i.e., not voting for the same party in the two electoral tiers) based on either aggregate (Bawn 1999; Cox 1997; Roberts 1988) or survey data (Gschwend 2007; Karp et al. 2002; Pappi and Thurner 2002; Plescia 2016). These studies show that the closer the race in a district between the candidates engaged in the SMD system, the bigger the difference of votes parties receive in the two electoral tiers. These studies explain this pattern by strategic voting: voters in close SMD contests do not vote for the same party as in the PR tier to oppose their least favorite candidate among those that have some chance of winning (Bawn 1999; Moser and Scheiner 2005, 2009). Further, Gschwend, Johnston, and Pattie (2003) reveal that, in Germany, the two biggest parties—the Christian Democrats (Christlich Demokratische Union/Christlich-Soziale Union [CDU/CSU]) and the Social Democrats (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands [SPD])—are the main beneficiaries of ticket-splitting in the SMD tier because supporters of smaller parties of the same bloc (right and left, respectively) act strategically. In the same vein, Gschwend and Pappi (2004) demonstrate that the clarity of coalition alternatives or ideological blocs significantly increases the share of ticket-splitting in the country.

With survey data, Herrmann and Pappi (2008), Gschwend (2007), Karp et al. (2002), and Pappi and Thurner (2002) show that at least some ticket-splitters can be labeled strategic voters as they desert the candidate of their most preferred party in the SMD tier if this candidate has little chance of winning. Gschwend (2007) and Shikano, Herrmann, and Thurner (2009) also find that some voters engage in coalition insurance voting. In particular, supporters of the CDU/CSU sometimes vote for the junior coalition partner (Freie Demokratische Partei [FDP]) as they fear this small party might not receive enough votes to pass the 5% threshold. Finally, Karp (2006) finds evidence supporting the idea that ticket-splitting and strategic voting are more frequent among highly knowledgeable voters.

However, Jesse (1988) and Schoen (1999) show that a substantial amount of split tickets in Germany do not fulfill basic criteria of rationality and cannot be characterized as strategic. In fact, these authors find that between 13% and 21% of split tickets are "strategically wrong"—that is, voters chose a candidate of a small party in the SMD tier and voted for a

large party in the PR tier. This proportion may even be larger in New Zealand, where ticket-splitting is more frequent (Karp et al. 2002).

The literature thus usually studies strategic voting in two-vote elections through the lens of ticket-splitting. But a substantial proportion of split-ticket voting is not driven by strategic considerations. Many split-ticket voters actually have strong preferences for a candidate who is not from their preferred party in their local constituency. Then, they sometimes cast a sincere split-ticket vote as they vote for their preferred candidate in the SMD tier and for their preferred party in the PR tier (Plescia 2016, this vol.; Riera and Bol 2017). Furthermore, in theory, a straight ticket vote can be strategic. Imagine the case of supporters of a small party that has no chance of winning either in the SMD or in the PR tier. These voters might desert their most preferred party in both instances and cast two votes for the same viable party. If this were the case, focusing exclusively on ticket-splitting would underestimate strategic voting. In this chapter, we examine strategic voting independently from ticket-splitting. However, we also evaluate the extent to which the two are related.

The literature on strategic voting in two-vote elections typically focuses on one single type of strategic voting—either the desertion of a nonviable candidate in the SMD tier or the desertion of a senior coalition partner to save a junior coalition partner in the PR tier. Building on the theoretical framework sketched out in chapter 1, which relates strategic voting to voters' preferences and perceptions of election outcomes, we provide a comprehensive and simultaneous empirical account of the different strategies voters can adopt in two-vote elections. In addition, we examine the possibility that voters strategically defect from their favorite party in the PR tier if this party is not viable, thereby introducing a third variety of PR strategic voting that very much resembles strategic voting in SMD elections. We then evaluate how these three strategies relate to each other and whether they differ in terms of determinants.

Three Types of Strategic Voting in Two-Vote Elections

In two-vote elections, a variety of types of strategic voting can be theoretically identified. In this chapter, we focus on the three that we assume to be the most frequent. The first concerns the vote in the SMD tier and directly relates to the idea developed by Duverger (1951) and Cox (1997): under plurality rule, supporters of a small party have incentives to desert the candidate of this party to maximize the chances of influencing the electoral

outcome. (This type of strategic voting is very common in first-past-the-post systems; see Aldrich, Blais, and Stephenson, this vol.; Blais et al., this vol.) The rationale is that voters anticipate that some candidates have no chance of being elected and instead vote in favor of the candidate of their most preferred party among those perceived as viable.

In line with most of the literature on strategic voting in plurality systems (Abramson et al., this vol.; Blais et al., this vol.; Daoust, this vol.; Lago, this vol.), we account only for considerations located at the district level when we analyze the SMD vote. For example, we ignore potential considerations regarding which party will form the government. This choice is particularly appropriate for a study focused on Germany, as the vote in the SMD tier does not have any impact on the partisan composition of the parliament and the government. The PR tier fully compensates for potential distortions between votes and seats brought about by the SMD tier.

Under plurality rule, each constituency has at most two viable candidates (Cox 1997). The intuition is that voting for a candidate who comes third or lower in terms of (perceived) chances is a wasted vote. This candidate never stands a chance of being elected. Yet a single vote could make a difference between the top two contenders. All voters should thus vote for their most preferred candidate between these two to maximize the chances of affecting the electoral outcome. We call this strategy strategic local desertion.

The other two types of strategic voting in two-vote elections apply to the vote in the PR tier (see also the description of strategic voting in PR systems in Aldrich, Blais, and Stephenson, this vol.). The first is similar to local strategic desertion: voters may be reluctant to waste their votes on a party that is very unlikely to obtain enough votes to gain at least one seat in this electoral tier. The rationale is that a wasted vote has no impact on the electoral outcome. In other words, even in the PR tier, voters have incentives to desert their most preferred party if it is not viable. We call this strategic list desertion.

The potential number of viable parties in the PR tier is rather large, especially in Germany, where numerous seats are allocated through these districts. However, some small parties still do not receive enough votes to gain even one seat. In Germany, the minimum number of votes a party must receive to be included in the allocation of seats in the PR tier is easy to identify: a party must obtain at least 5% of the votes nationwide to enter parliament.[1] So strategic list desertion entails voters thinking that their most preferred party will receive less than this threshold. In many PR countries, a small district magnitude creates "natural thresholds" (Lijphart

1994). However, this is not the case in Germany, as seats are allocated based on national vote shares in a single nationwide district (598 seats).

The second type of strategic voting in the PR tier is more complex. It starts with several assumptions, partly confirmed by the analysis of the Israeli case by Blais et al. (2006): (1) voters anticipate that the government that is going to be formed after the election is likely to be a coalition government, (2) voters care about which parties will be part of this coalition, and (3) they know which parties are potential coalition partners of the most preferred party. If these assumptions are true, and if uncertainty exists about whether the partners of the most preferred party will obtain enough votes to gain at least one seat in parliament (in Germany, this concerns the 5% threshold), voters have incentives to cast a vote for these partners. The rationale is that the votes for these partners will be wasted if they do not obtain enough votes to gain at least one seat in parliament. By voting for a partner party, voters increase the likelihood that the coalition will win a majority of seats and form the government. We call this strategic coalition insurance voting. Although this possibility may seem very unlikely at first glance given the number of conditions required for it to occur, several studies show that coalition insurance voting is rather common in democracies with stable coalitions and a threshold (Gschwend 2007; Pappi and Thurner 2002; Shikano, Herrmann, and Thurner 2009). In Germany, this type of strategic voting is well known, even in the mass media, where it is usually referred to as *Leihstimme* (borrowed or leased vote).

This chapter shows that all three forms of strategic voting occur in mixed-member systems. This implies that different strategies can be used with regard to each of the two votes in varying combinations. In consequence, strategic voting can take different forms, of which split-ticket voting is only one. In addition, mixed-member systems, with their two votes, open up the option to vote strategically at a comparatively low cost at the local SMD level since there is a second PR vote. We should therefore observe a higher proportion of strategic local candidate votes than strategic list votes.

Furthermore, several individual determinants have been shown to be associated with the probability of casting a strategic vote in the literature. Most important, Blais (2002) and Gschwend (2007) find that as the strength of voters' preference for a party increases, the likelihood that they will vote strategically decreases. Consistent with the discussion in Aldrich, Blais, and Stephenson (this vol.), when the intensity of voters' preference for a party is high, they are more reluctant to desert this party for another one, even for strategic reasons.

Indeed, we show that the strength of party preference is negatively associated with the probability to engage in strategic local and list desertion (following our definition). However, we also see that this effect of the intensity of preference is smaller regarding coalition insurance voting. When voters desert the senior coalition partner for the junior coalition partner to save it from falling below the representation threshold, they do not have to accept that their preferred party (i.e., the senior coalition partner) will lose. To the contrary, if the overall coalition wins, the voter's most preferred party will dominate the government.

Strategic Voting in Two-Vote Elections: Empirical Perspectives

Data and Operationalization

To study strategic voting, we use four original pre- and postelection panel surveys conducted in 2013 in two German regions via the Making Electoral Democracy Work project (Blais et al. 2017). The elections covered are the regional election in Lower Saxony (January), the regional election in Bavaria (September), and the German federal election in both regions (September, one week after the Bavarian regional election). The surveys are online quota-based surveys that guarantee a balanced and diverse sample regarding age, gender, education, and geographical area. As far as we can tell, these are the first surveys conducted in Germany that include all the questions needed to identify strategic voters (party preferences, vote choice, and perceptions of the likely outcome of the election at both the district and the national or regional level).

In Lower Saxony, we use different samples for the regional and federal elections. In each case, we contacted about 1,000 persons. In Bavaria, we use a single sample of around 4,000 persons for the two elections. In both regions, the pre-election survey lasted around 20 minutes and was conducted within the two weeks preceding the elections. The postelection surveys lasted around 10 minutes and were conducted during the week following the election. We use the postelection questionnaire to measure vote choice and the pre-election questionnaire to measure party preferences and the likely (perceived) outcome (at both the local and national or regional level).

Strategic voting can be measured directly or indirectly (Blais, Young, and Turcotte 2005). We adopt a direct approach—that is, we lay out the

conditions that must be met for a vote to be construed as strategic. We operationalize these conditions with the questions included in the Making Electoral Democracy Work surveys.

The first step is to establish the most preferred party of each of the respondents.[2] Party preferences are measured in the pre-election survey through a simple and direct question asking respondents to rate each of the parties on a 0–10 scale, where 0 means that the person does not like the party at all and 10 means that the person likes it a lot. The preferred party is simply the party that has the highest rating.

The main problem with this approach is the presence of ties. In our case, about 24% of respondents give the highest rating to two or more parties.[3] We adopt the approach followed by Blais and Gschwend (2010) and use the party identification question to break ties. This decreases the share of respondents with tied party list preferences to a bit more than 16%. Remaining ties in preferences for individual candidates were broken whenever respondents indicated that they liked a candidate in the SMD tier.[4] About 29% of respondents reported having a preference for a local constituency candidate, and among those, the share of voters with a congruent list and candidate preference was particularly high among supporters of the two large parties (CDU/CSU and SPD)—around 90%. In the case of small-party supporters (Greens, Left, FDP, Pirates, AfD, Free Voters), the share of congruent supporters ranges from 49% (Left) to 67% (Free Voters). This leaves us with 8% of ties in preferences for local candidates. Whenever one of these tied respondents votes for one of the tied most liked parties or candidates, we assume that the party or candidate is her sincere and therefore nonstrategic choice.

Appendixes A and B to this chapter reveal the distribution of party preferences in our four surveys crossed with the two reported votes.[5] Unsurprisingly, the great majority of people vote for their preferred party in both the SMD and PR tiers. Quite a substantial minority do, however, vote for a different party, especially in the SMD tier and especially among supporters of small parties.

The fact that quite a few people do not vote for their preferred party suggests the presence of strategic voting. A total of about 17% of respondents cast nonsincere votes in the PR tier, while about 15% did so in the SMD tier. However, a nonsincere vote is a necessary but not sufficient condition to classify a vote as strategic. We also need to consider voters' perceptions of the likely outcome of the election before we can assess whether this behavior is strategic.

Strategic Local Desertion

A strategic local desertion is a vote in the SMD tier cast for the candidate of the party voters prefer among those that are perceived as viable by supporters of parties with little chance of winning in their constituency. Because each SMD has at most two viable candidates, two conditions must thus be fulfilled for a local desertion to be construed as strategic: (1) the preferred candidate must be perceived as not among the top two contenders in the constituency and (2) respondents must vote for the candidate of the party they prefer among those top two contenders. We establish the respondents' perceived viable top contenders based on responses to questions about the chances (on a 0–10 scale) of the candidate of each party winning in the constituency. The two candidates with the highest ratings are considered viable; others are considered nonviable.[6]

Table 8.1 shows the proportion of voters who find themselves in a strategic local desertion situation—that is, they believe that the candidate of their preferred party is not among the top two candidates. On average, 12% of all respondents satisfy this condition, although the proportion varies slightly from one election to the other. Table A8.3 shows that at least 40% of the small parties' supporters perceive their party as nonviable in the SMD tier, while no more than 7% of large parties' supporters feel the same way.

Table 8.1 shows that on average, 4% of the respondents can be considered strategic local deserters because they are in a strategic local desertion situation and cast a vote for the candidate of their most preferred party between the top two contenders in their constituency. This share varies across elections, reaching its lowest score in the Bavarian regional election (3%) and its highest score in the Lower Saxon national election (6%).

TABLE 8.1. Strategic Local Desertion

	Bavaria		Lower Saxony		
	Regional	National	Regional	National	Mean
Voters in a Strategic Local Desertion Situation	9.9%	12.4%	10.1%	15.4%	12.0%
Strategic Local Deserters	2.7%	4.3%	3.5%	6.1%	4.2%
Strategic Local Deserters (among Voters in a Strategic Local Desertion Situation)	27.0%	34.9%	34.7%	39.8%	34.1%
N	3,462	3,122	595	588	

At first glance, these rates seem relatively low. However, they are calculated on the basis of all respondents, many of whom have no reason to cast strategic local desertion votes since they perceive the candidate of their preferred party as viable. The percentages are considerably higher if we consider only those voters who faced the decision to vote sincerely or strategically in the SMD tier (that is, voters for whom the candidate of their preferred party is not one of the top two contenders). As the bottom row of table 8.1 shows, on average 34% of the voters facing a strategic dilemma cast a strategic local desertion vote.

Table A8.4 shows the rate of strategic local desertion votes by party. While virtually none of the supporters of the two large parties cast strategic local desertion votes, between 8% and 51% of the small-party supporters do so. Furthermore, (the few) large-party supporters who (in most cases erroneously) believe that the candidate of their most preferred party is not viable seldom desert their party. By contrast, those voters in a strategic situation who prefer a small party cast a strategic vote in large proportions.

Strategic List Desertion and Coalition Insurance Voting

A strategic vote in the PR tier can take the form of either a strategic desertion from a small party that is considered to have little chance of crossing the 5% threshold or a coalition insurance vote if large-party supporters are uncertain about whether a small prospective coalition partner will gain 5% of the votes.

In each of the two regional elections, two parties were at risk of falling below the 5% threshold and are therefore potential victims of strategic list desertion. In Lower Saxony, it was uncertain whether FDP and the Left—both present in the outgoing parliament—would pass the hurdle, while the Free Voters had virtually no chance. In Bavaria, only the FDP was in a critical position with regard to the 5% threshold. The Left never stood a chance in the region, and the Free Voters were almost certain to pass the 5% threshold.

The federal election also applies a 5% threshold, but at the national level. Therefore, small parties had very different prospects. Although the Left was not viable at the regional level in Bavaria and possibly in Lower Saxony, its supporters could be nearly certain that the party would enter the federal parliament as a consequence of its strong standing in eastern Germany. By contrast, the Free Voters, however strong in Bavaria, stood no chance of entering the federal parliament. Finally, the FDP occupied an uncertain position.

The first necessary condition for a strategic list desertion is that respondents believe that their preferred party is unlikely to cross the 5% hurdle in the PR tier. We use respondents' evaluations of their preferred party's chances to gain representation in parliament. The relevant question uses a scale ranging from 0 (no chance at all) to 10 (certain to win). This question was not asked for parties that were certain to pass the threshold (CDU, CSU, SPD, and the Greens), since we assume that the supporters of these four parties cannot be strategic list deserters. Altogether, an average of 83% of our respondents prefer one of these four parties, and we are thus interested in the other 17%. We interpret those who say that the chances that their preferred party obtaining at least 5% of the votes are between 0 and 5 on the 11-point scale as "pessimists" and thus as willing to consider strategic list desertion. To classify a vote as strategic list desertion, pessimist respondents have to cast their vote in the PR tier for the party they prefer most among the large parties that are certain to gain parliamentary representation (CDU, CSU, SPD, the Greens) or any other party that they consider likely to gain a seat in parliament.

Among all respondents, on average 5% believe that their party has little chance of reaching the 5% threshold (see table 8.2). When we only look at the supporters of the small parties that were not certain to win representation, the share of pessimists goes up to 44%, on average. It is lowest in the Bavarian regional election (22%) and tops 50% in both the Bavarian national and the Lower Saxon regional elections.

The strategic list desertion rate (an average of 2%) is much lower than strategic local desertion. The share of voters who desert their preferred party in the PR tier because the party is not viable rises to 33% when we

TABLE 8.2. Strategic List Desertion

	Bavaria		Lower Saxony		
	Regional	National	Regional	National	Mean
Voters in a Strategic List Desertion Situation	2.7%	7.0%	4.0%	6.4%	5.0%
Voters in a Strategic List Desertion Situation (among Small-Party Supporters)	22.2%	52.0%	57.0%	44.1%	43.8%
Strategic List Deserters	0.7%	1.7%	1.4%	3.0%	1.7%
Strategic List Deserters (among Voters in a Strategic List Desertion Situation)	25.9%	24.6%	34.0%	47.0%	32.9%
N	3,462	3,122	595	588	

consider only voters who are pessimistic about the chances of their party gaining representation in parliament (that is, those who are in a strategic list desertion situation). It is lowest in Bavaria (about 25%) and reaches 47% in Lower Saxony's federal election.

When we look at strategic list deserters by party (see appendix, table A8.5), we observe that on average 14% of small-party supporters strategically abandon their most preferred party in the PR tier. This share is considerably higher among pessimistic small-party supporters. Close to one-third of those voters who believe that their most preferred small party has little chance of crossing the 5% hurdle strategically desert this party.

We now turn to coalition insurance voting. A coalition insurance vote is cast when a supporter of a large party deserts it in the PR tier to support a junior coalition partner that is perceived at risk of not crossing the 5% threshold. This time, we thus concentrate on voters who prefer a large party (CDU/CSU, SPD) and check whether they believe that the junior coalition partner is at risk of falling below the 5% threshold. To do so, we use the question measuring the chances of a party entering parliament. We operationalize uncertainty as an evaluation of the coalition partner's chances ranging from 2 to 8 points on the 11-point scale. Since there is no rating for the chances of the Greens entering parliament, we look only at CDU/CSU supporters and their propensity to support the FDP (in all elections). Since the coalition signals of the Free Voters to the SPD before the Bavarian regional election were at best unclear, we assume that SPD supporters had no incentive for a coalition insurance vote in this instance.

At first glance, coalition insurance voting seems rare. On average, it concerns only about 3% of all our respondents (see table 8.3). However, remarkable differences occur between elections that provided voters with quite contrasting incentives with regard to strategic coalition voting. While the polls saw the FDP at risk during the whole year under consideration, the signal sent by parties concerning coalition insurance voting differed drastically in these three elections. First, during the Lower Saxon regional election campaign, the governing CDU emphasized its close connection to its junior coalition partner. Furthermore, leaders did not actively oppose the possibility that their supporters would cast a coalition insurance vote, and some individual candidates even encouraged supporters to do so. Second, the Bavarian Christian Democrats campaigned for an absolute majority (which they ultimately received) and did not even signal that they might form a coalition with the FDP. During the federal campaign, although the FDP leaders called on CDU supporters to vote for the FDP in the PR tier, all the candidates and leaders of the senior coalition

partner clearly opposed this call. The appeal for coalition insurance voting therefore was much stronger in the Lower Saxon regional election than in other elections. The FDP's borrowed votes campaign proved successful for the party, which attracted a considerable number of strategic coalition insurance votes (7%), a proportion much higher than in the other surveys (between 1% and 3%). And the difference is even more impressive when we look only at CDU supporters in Lower Saxony: the rate of coalition insurance voters drops from 13% in the regional election to only 5% in the national survey. These results confirm Gschwend and Pappi's (2004) as well as Merolla's (2009) finding that the decision to vote strategically is strongly affected by the messages conveyed by the parties and their elites during the campaign.

Combining Different Types of Strategic Votes

On average, 9% of all voters engage in strategic voting in at least one of the three ways (see table 8.4). The least frequent type is strategic list desertion (1% on average), while the most frequent is strategic local desertion (4% on average) when we consider respondents who cast only one strategic vote. On average, 1% of all voters cast two strategic votes, a possibility that is not often mentioned in the literature. About 43% of those who desert their most preferred list because they perceive it as nonviable in the PR tier also desert their favorite candidate in the SMD tier. Conversely, only 16% of those who cast strategic local desertion votes also cast a strategic list desertion votes.[7]

TABLE 8.3. Coalition Insurance Voting

	Bavaria		Lower Saxony		
	Regional	National	Regional	National	Mean
Voters in a Coalition Insurance Voting Situation	49.4%	50.1%	37.8%	36.9%	43.6%
Coalition Insurance Voters	1.5%	3.1%	6.5%	2.0%	3.3%
Coalition Insurance Voters (among CDU/CSU supporters)	2.5%	5.1%	13.1%	4.5%	6.3%
Coalition Insurance Voters (among Voters in a Coalition Insurance Voting Situation)	3.1%	6.1%	17.2%	5.5%	8.0%
N	3,462	3,122	595	588	

Strategic Voting and Ticket-Splitting

Another question that we can address with our data is the relationship between strategic voting and ticket-splitting (i.e., voting for two different parties in the SMD and PR tiers). On average, more than one-fifth (23%) of all our respondents are split-ticket voters. But how much of this split-ticket voting can be traced back to strategic considerations? It cannot be a majority, since only 7% of votes are strategic. In fact, in our sample, only 26% of split-ticket votes can be considered strategic (see table 8.5). Not surprisingly, the share of strategic voting is much lower among straight-ticket voters (3%). Another way to look at these data is to say that only two-thirds of strategic voters are split-ticket voters. The bottom line, however, is that many split-ticket votes are not strategic, while a substantial proportion of straight tickets are. It is thus possible to cast a straight ticket for strategic reasons. This is the case, for example, if respondents hold a preference for a small party and its candidate that they perceive to be chanceless in both the SMD and PR tiers. These numbers underline the need to clearly distinguish ticket-splitting and strategic voting.

Determinants of Strategic Voting in Two-Vote Elections

We now turn to the analysis of the individual determinants of strategic voting. We run logit models predicting the probability of casting at least one of the three types of strategic votes and then each of them separately on the entire four-election sample that we weight to correct for the oversampling of Bavarian voters. In each case, we include only respondents who were potential strategic voters. For example, while predicting strategic local desertion, we include only respondents whose preferred party is not viable

TABLE 8.4. Combinations of Strategic Voting

	Bavaria		Lower Saxony		
	Regional	National	Regional	National	Mean
All Strategic Voters	4.7%	8.3%	10.9%	10.1%	8.5%
Strategic Local Deserters Only	2.4%	3.5%	3.0%	5.0%	3.5%
Strategic List Deserters Only	0.4%	0.9%	0.8%	1.9%	1.0%
Coalition Insurance Voters Only	1.5%	3.1%	6.5%	2.0%	3.3%
Strategic Local and List Deserters	0.3%	0.8%	0.5%	1.1%	0.7%
N	3,462	3,122	595	588	

in their district. If their preferred party is viable, it is impossible for them to cast a strategic vote (according to our definition).

Our key independent variable is the strength of the respondent's preference for a party. Our expectation is that the greater this preference, the less likely the respondent is to cast a strategic vote. Respondents who really like a party might feel reluctant to vote for another party, even for strategic reasons. This variable is constructed by taking the difference between the rating voters give their most preferred party and the rating given to the second-most-preferred party, rescaled from 0 to 1. We use this relative indicator instead of the absolute rating of the most preferred party to account for the possibility that some voters give very high or very low ratings to all parties.

We also include the respondent's knowledge of politics as a covariate.

TABLE 8.5. Split-Ticket and Strategic Voting

	Straight-Ticket Voting	Split-Ticket Voting	*Total*
Bavarian Regional Election			
No Strategic Voting	77.4%	18.0%	95.4%
Strategic Voting	2.3%	2.3%	4.7%
Total	79.7%	20.3%	100.0%
N	2,665	797	3,462
Bavarian National Election			
No Strategic Voting	77.4%	14.4%	91.7%
Strategic Voting	2.8%	5.5%	8.3%
Total	80.1%	19.9%	100.0%
N	2,415	707	3,122
Lower Saxon Regional Election			
No Strategic Voting	71.2%	18.0%	89.1%
Strategic Voting	1.8%	9.1%	10.9%
Total	72.9%	27.1%	100.0%
N	405	190	595
Lower Saxon National Election			
No Strategic Voting	73.5%	16.4%	89.9%
Strategic Voting	3.0%	7.1%	10.1%
Total	76.5%	23.5%	100.0%
N	430	158	588
Mean			
No Strategic Voting	74.9%	16.7%	91.5%
Strategic Voting	2.5%	6.0%	8.5%
Total	77.3%	22.7%	100.0%
N	5,915	1,852	7,767

Our intuition is that political knowledge increases the probability that the respondent will cast a strategic vote. Some level of political knowledge is required to evaluate and reflect on the parties' chances of winning (Blais and Turgeon 2004). Black (1978) and Alvarez, Boehmke, and Nagler (2006) find that political knowledge is positively associated with the probability of casting a strategic vote. This variable is measured with the use of eight questions for which respondents had to match leaders and slogans to parties. Five of these questions were asked in the preelection questionnaire, while three were asked in the postelection survey. We add up the number of correct answers to create an indicator of political knowledge that we rescale from 0 to 1. As an alternative measure of political knowledge, we also include a dummy that indicates whether or not the respondent holds a university degree. In addition, we include a series of control variables. First, we control for whether respondents voted strategically with their other votes (PR vote in the case of SMD vote, and vice versa). Second, we control for age and gender and include election dummies.

Table 8.6 shows the results of these analyses. Model 1 estimates the individual determinants of all possible strategies for all our respondents concerned with at least one possible form of strategic voting. As expected, the greater the strength of party preference, the lower the probability that the voter will cast a strategic vote. Also as expected, the higher the level of formal education, the higher the probability of casting a strategic vote. Both effects are statistically significant at a level of $p < 0.01$

Models 2–4 look at each of the three possible strategies individually. These models reveal that the impact of party preference is similar for all types of strategic voting. Turning to the impact of political knowledge, we find that it does not always have the expected effect on the probability of casting a strategic vote. While the effect is positive and statistically significant at a level of $p < 0.1$ for strategic local desertion and the strategic list desertion, it is null for the coalition insurance vote. The empirical evidence therefore only mildly confirms our expectations, a finding that is in line with other studies that find no relationship between political knowledge and the propensity of casting a strategic vote (Blais and Gschwend 2010; Duch and Palmer 2002). A university degree, which is also an indicator of a respondent's cognitive abilities, has a positive and statistically significant effect (at a level of $p < 0.01$) on the probability of casting a strategic local desertion vote or a coalition insurance vote.

Conclusion

This chapter focuses on strategic voting in two -vote elections. Relying on survey data from three German elections held in 2013, we find that on average about 9% of voters cast at least one strategic vote. Only a minority of voters confront a strategic situation, since most voters prefer parties that have good chances of winning in both tiers and are not in coalition with junior partners that might fall below the 5% threshold. Although we are looking only at pure strategic voting, many more voters are at least partly strategic, even though they end up supporting their preferred option.

The most prevalent type of strategic vote is strategic local desertion

TABLE 8.6. Individual Determinants of Strategic Voting

	All Strategies	Strategic Local Desertion	Strategic List Desertion	Coalition Insurance Vote
	b/se	b/se	b/se	b/se
Strength Party Preference	−2.203***	−1.088*	−2.042*	−1.702***
	(0.37)	(0.60)	(1.12)	(0.56)
Political Knowledge	0.340	0.680*	1.112**	−0.211
	(0.22)	(0.35)	(0.56)	(0.35)
University Degree (0/1)	0.502***	0.646***	−0.509	0.569***
	(0.10)	(0.17)	(0.35)	(0.16)
Age	0.009**	0.003	0.012	0.019***
	(0.00)	(0.01)	(0.01)	(0.01)
Gender (0 = male / 1 = female)	−0.126	−0.249	0.383	−0.085
	(0.10)	(0.16)	(0.28)	(0.16)
Bavarian Regional Election (0/1)	−0.948***	−0.420	−0.823*	−0.595*
	(0.17)	(0.27)	(0.46)	(0.34)
Bavarian National Election (0/1)	−0.528***	−0.208	−1.139***	0.073
	(0.16)	(0.26)	(0.41)	(0.32)
Lower Saxon Regional Election (0/1)	0.427*	0.230	−0.063	1.245***
	(0.22)	(0.39)	(0.64)	(0.38)
Strategic List Desertion (0/1)		1.823***		
		(0.31)		
Coalition Insurance Vote (0/1)		./.[a]		
		(.)		
Strategic Local Desertion (0/1)			1.910***	./.[a]
			(0.31)	(.)
Constant	−1.625***	−0.915*	−1.770**	−3.284***
	(0.32)	(0.51)	(0.80)	(0.55)
N	4,582	1,041	479	3,357
p	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Pseudo R^2	0.0488	0.0771	0.157	0.0628

[a] omitted due to collinearity.

Note: * $p < 0.10$; ** $p < 0.05$; *** $p < 0.01$.

(4%, compared to 2–3% for strategic list desertion and coalition insurance voting). We also find that strategic voting is only weakly related to ticket-splitting. Only two-thirds of all strategic voters are split-ticket voters, while the remainder are straight-ticket voters—that is, they desert their preferred party in both the SMD and PR tiers.

Although small, these proportions should be interpreted in the light of our measurement. The conditions we use to establish each of the three sorts of strategic voting are rather restrictive. Using a very similar measurement, Blais et al. (2009) find around 3% and 5% of strategic voting in national elections in Canada and the United Kingdom, although these two countries use an SMD plurality system that is supposed to give strong incentives for this behavior.

In a second step, we analyze the determinants of strategic voting in two-vote elections. We find that partisan strength has a negative effect on the probability of casting a strategic vote, regardless of its type. Partisans are reluctant to vote for another party, even if doing so is in their best strategic interest. Finally, our analysis also demonstrates that political knowledge has a positive effect on the probability of casting a strategic vote with the exception of the coalition insurance vote. In Germany at least, even voters with low levels of political knowledge seem to understand the logic behind this particular type of strategic vote.

APPENDIX A

TABLE A8.1. Party Preference and Vote in the SMD Tier, by Party

	CDU/ CSU	SPD	Greens	Left	FDP	Pirates	AfD	Free Voters
Bavarian Regional Election								
CDU/CSU	91.7%	2.8%	0.6%	0.1%	1.2%	0.2%	./.	3.4%
SPD	5.0%	87.5%	2.8%	1.2%	0.2%	0.0%	./.	3.4%
Greens	4.0%	29.9%	60.6%	0.5%	0.0%	1.1%	./.	3.8%
Left	5.2%	26.4%	3.4%	60.2%	0.0%	0.9%	./.	4.0%
FDP	32.9%	6.3%	1.6%	0.0%	49.6%	3.9%	./.	5.6%
Pirates	16.9%	12.8%	3.8%	3.3%	2.0%	56.4%	./.	4.8%
Free Voters	11.5%	14.7%	2.0%	1.8%	1.2%	1.3%	./.	67.5%
Total	58.7%	20.9%	7.0%	2.2%	1.9%	1.8%	./.	7.6%
N	1,480	638	219	84	76	64	./.	238
Bavarian National Election								
CDU/CSU	92.0%	3.1%	0.7%	0.4%	1.6%	0.4%	0.5%	1.8%
SPD	4.6%	89.0%	3.8%	1.3%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.3%
Greens	3.9%	37.0%	56.8%	0.3%	0.3%	0.8%	0.5%	0.6%
Left	2.2%	24.4%	2.8%	64.7%	0.0%	0.0%	4.0%	3.2%
FDP	36.1%	6.1%	0.0%	0.0%	53.0%	4.7%	0.0%	2.5%
Pirates	11.1%	10.2%	3.2%	3.4%	1.7%	61.5%	4.3%	6.0%
AfD	26.6%	7.6%	0.8%	2.2%	1.7%	1.0%	54.8%	5.7%
Free Voters	23.9%	23.4%	4.1%	1.2%	3.5%	0.5%	6.0%	33.9%
Total	55.3%	24.4%	7.0%	3.1%	2.3%	1.7%	2.9%	3.3%
N	1,587	791	223	117	83	69	132	120
Lower Saxon Regional Election								
CDU/CSU	90.2%	6.6%	1.0%	0.1%	1.5%	0.6%	./.	./.
SPD	4.9%	87.4%	5.0%	1.0%	0.7%	1.1%	./.	./.
Greens	8.3%	38.7%	47.8%	2.8%	0.9%	1.4%	./.	./.
Left	0.0%	33.7%	3.5%	59.5%	0.0%	3.4%	./.	./.
FDP	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	./.	./.
Pirates	17.6%	28.3%	5.3%	0.0%	0.0%	48.8%	./.	./.
Total	42.0%	40.5%	8.9%	3.0%	2.7%	2.9%	./.	./.
N	172	261	80	29	13	40	./.	./.
Lower Saxon National Election								
CDU/CSU	93.1%	4.1%	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%	0.0%	1.5%	0.0%
SPD	6.5%	83.5%	5.0%	2.1%	0.8%	0.4%	1.4%	0.3%
Greens	2.8%	52.7%	40.8%	1.8%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%	0.0%
Left	4.2%	35.8%	8.9%	48.5%	0.0%	0.0%	2.5%	0.0%
FDP	77.7%	0.0%	9.5%	0.0%	12.8%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Pirates	29.0%	7.5%	0.0%	8.3%	0.0%	48.3%	6.9%	0.0%
AfD	22.5%	19.5%	0.0%	3.0%	3.0%	7.4%	44.7%	0.0%
Free Voters	31.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	68.9%
Total	44.2%	38.1%	6.5%	4.5%	1.4%	1.7%	3.1%	0.4%
N	193	245	42	47	8	15	34	4

Note: The percentages add up to 100% horizontally. In the first column, the first line indicates that 91.7% of voters who prefer the CSU in the Bavarian regional election vote for that party.

TABLE A8.2. Party Preference and Vote in the PR Tier, by Party

	CDU/ CSU	SPD	Greens	Left	FDP	Pirates	AfD	Free Voters
Bavarian Regional Election								
CDU/CSU	86.8%	3.8%	1.2%	0.2%	2.4%	0.2%	./.	5.4%
SPD	3.4%	85.5%	4.9%	1.2%	0.5%	1.2%	./.	3.2%
Greens	5.6%	22.4%	63.7%	0.8%	0.9%	1.4%	./.	5.4%
Left	7.3%	24.3%	2.2%	59.3%	1.5%	0.9%	./.	4.3%
FDP	18.3%	6.4%	1.5%	0.0%	69.4%	1.3%	./.	3.0%
Pirates	14.0%	11.1%	2.7%	2.1%	2.7%	54.5%	./.	12.9%
Free Voters	12.0%	15.2%	2.0%	1.6%	2.7%	2.5%	./.	63.9%
Total	51.2%	22.1%	9.2%	2.3%	3.5%	2.1%	./.	9.6%
N	1,498	818	355	111	203	96	./.	381
Bavarian National Election								
CDU/CSU	88.4%	2.3%	1.0%	0.7%	4.7%	0.4%	1.5%	1.1%
SPD	3.9%	87.6%	4.6%	1.4%	0.5%	0.5%	1.4%	0.2%
Greens	4.6%	13.0%	78.2%	1.6%	1.0%	0.0%	1.3%	0.3%
Left	3.9%	14.4%	2.3%	75.8%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	0.0%
FDP	14.5%	3.5%	0.0%	0.0%	80.5%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%
Pirates	4.8%	4.1%	0.0%	11.8%	1.7%	69.4%	6.5%	1.7%
AfD	6.3%	4.0%	0.0%	2.2%	0.0%	2.1%	83.2%	2.3%
Free Voters	18.5%	19.9%	3.4%	2.1%	4.1%	0.6%	9.0%	42.3%
Total	51.2%	20.9%	8.9%	4.0%	5.3%	2.0%	4.5%	3.1%
N	1,391	671	277	155	202	83	225	118
Lower Saxon Regional Election								
CDU/CSU	76.6%	4.4%	2.2%	0.0%	16.4%	0.4%	./.	./.
SPD	4.9%	82.4%	7.8%	1.0%	3.6%	0.4%	./.	./.
Greens	7.8%	15.0%	71.5%	1.8%	1.9%	1.9%	./.	./.
Left	0.0%	18.6%	17.5%	63.8%	0.0%	0.0%	./.	./.
FDP	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	0.0%	./.	./.
Pirates	9.7%	37.1%	3.5%	3.3%	0.0%	46.4%	./.	./.
Total	36.9%	33.4%	14.0%	3.2%	10.2%	2.2%	./.	./.
N	135	191	142	34	50	43	./.	./.
Lower Saxon National Election								
CDU/CSU	91.5%	2.3%	0.0%	0.3%	5.4%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%
SPD	5.5%	85.5%	3.7%	1.3%	1.7%	0.4%	1.9%	0.0%
Greens	2.8%	16.3%	74.0%	4.1%	0.0%	0.0%	1.7%	1.1%
Left	8.4%	16.2%	8.7%	61.7%	0.0%	0.0%	5.0%	0.0%
FDP	13.9%	0.0%	9.5%	0.0%	76.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Pirates	11.7%	29.9%	8.0%	12.5%	0.0%	31.1%	6.9%	0.0%
AfD	20.1%	12.9%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	4.5%	62.5%	0.0%
Free Voters	0.0%	62.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	37.8%
Total	91.5%	2.3%	0.0%	0.3%	5.4%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%
N	168	216	53	58	20	15	53	5

Note: The percentages add up horizontally. In the first column, the first line indicates that 86.8% of voters who prefer the CSU in the Bavarian regional election vote for that party.

TABLE A8.3. Voters in a Strategic Local Desertion Situation, by Party

CDU/CSU	SPD	Greens	Left	FDP	Pirates	AfD	Free Voters	*Total*
Bavarian Regional Election								
0.6%	6.9%	40.9%	58.5%	55.6%	48.7%	./.	25.1%	9.9%
N 9	35	124	60	45	41	./.	51	365
Bavarian National Election								
0.3%	5.1%	47.7%	67.3%	56.3%	58.1%	45.3%	45.8%	12.4%
N 4	26	120	70	36	36	48	61	401
Lower Saxon Regional Election								
3.8%	3.2%	34.4%	70.8%	100.0%	36.2%	./.	./.	10.1%
N 6	6	32	20	4	12	./.	./.	80
Lower Saxon National Election								
1.9%	2.9%	51.1%	62.7%	51.1%	72.3%	56.7%	100.0%	15.4%
N 3	5	29	39	4	12	15	4	111
Mean								
1.7%	4.5%	43.5%	64.8%	65.8%	53.8%	51.0%	57.0%	12.0%

TABLE A8.4. Strategic Local Desertion by Party

	CDU/ CSU	SPD	Greens	Left	FDP	Pirates	AfD	Free Voters	*Total*
Bavarian Regional Election									
Strategic Local Deserters	0.1%	0.3%	12.6%	12.1%	23.8%	10.6%	./.	7.6%	2.9%
Strategic Local Deserters (among Voters in a Strategic Local Desertion Situation)	11.4%	4.8%	30.9%	20.6%	42.8%	21.8%	./.	30.3%	26.2%
N	1,536	493	303	102	84	82	./.	199	2,799
Bavarian National Election									
Strategic Local Deserters	0.1%	0.5%	21.8%	18.5%	29.1%	9.3%	14.1%	19.2%	4.7%
Strategic Local Deserters (among Voters in a Strategic Local Desertion Situation)	25.0%	10.5%	45.7%	27.5%	51.6%	16.0%	31.2%	41.9%	36.2%
N	1,440	493	250	105	65	62	111	134	2,660
Lower Saxon Regional Election									
Strategic Local Deserters	0.0%	1.6%	13.7%	26.7%	0.0%	20.3%	./.	./.	4.0%
Strategic Local Deserters (among Voters in a Strategic Local Desertion Situation)	0.0%	50.0%	39.7%	37.7%	0.0%	56.2%	./.	./.	33.1
N	150	169	95	27	4	35	./.	./.	595
Lower Saxon National Election									
Strategic Local Deserters	0.0%	0.0%	25.0%	25.9%	51.1%	19.7%	19.0%	0.0%	6.7%
Strategic Local Deserters (among Voters in a Strategic Local Desertion Situation)	0.0%	0.0%	49.0%	41.3%	100.0%	27.2%	33.5%	0.0%	39.5%
N	141	173	55	56	8	17	26	4	480
Mean									
Strategic Local Deserters	0.1%	0.6%	18.3%	20.8%	26.0%	15.0%	16.6%	8.9	4.5%
Strategic Local Deserters (among Voters in a Strategic Local Desertion Situation)	9.1%	16.3%	41.3%	31.8%	48.6%	30.3%	32.4%	24.1%	33.8%

TABLE A8.5. Strategic List Desertion, by Party

	Left	FDP	Pirates	AfD	Free Voters	*Total*
Bavarian Regional Election						
Strategic List Deserters (among Small-Party Supporters)	14.8%	6.9%	9.3%	./.	0.0%	5.8%
Strategic List Deserters (among Voters in a Strategic List Desertion Situation)	27.9%	39.8%	17.9%	./.	0.0%	25.3%
N	102	84	82	./.	199	467
Bavarian national election						
Strategic List Deserters (among Small-Party Supporters)	3.6%	12.1%	8.8%	7.3%	25.0%	12.8%
Strategic List Deserters (among Voters in a Strategic List Desertion Situation)	13.5%	24.7%	11.3%	16.2%	39.6%	25.0%
N	105	65	62	111	134	477
Lower Saxony regional election						
Strategic List Deserters (among Small-Party Supporters)	13.2%	0.0%	22.1%	./.	./.	15.4%
Strategic List Deserters (among Voters in a Strategic List Desertion Situation)	24.7%	0.0%	37.9%	./.	./.	28.0%
N	27	4	35	./.	./.	66
Lower Saxony national election						
Strategic List Deserters (among Small-Party Supporters)	11.2%	9.5%	42.1%	22.9%	62.2%	20.4%
Strategic List Deserters (among Voters in a Strategic List Desertion Situation)	43.9%	100%	42.1%	50.7%	76.7%	48.9%
N	56	8	17	26	4	111
Mean						
Strategic List Deserters (among Small-Party Supporters)	10.7%	7.1%	20.6%	15.0%	20.3%	14.2%
Strategic List Deserters (among Voters in a Strategic List Desertion Situation)	27.5%	41.1%	27.3%	30.2%	27.9%	32.0%

APPENDIX B: WORDING OF SURVEY QUESTIONS

Party Rating

Q17: Please rate each of the following political parties on a scale from 0 [really dislike party] to 10 [really like the party]: [Party]

Party Leader Rating

Q19: Please rate each of the following candidates on a scale from 0 [really dislike party leader] to 10 [really like party leader]: [Party Leader]

Rating of Party's Chance to Cross 5% Threshold

Q23: How likely is each of the following parties to gain enough votes to get into parliament on a scale from 0 [very unlikely] to 10 [very likely]: [Party]

Rating of Party's Chance to Win Local Constituency Race

Q27: Please rate the chances of each party winning the seat in your local district on a scale from 0 [very unlikely] to 10 [very likely]: [Party]

Vote Choice

PQ6: Which party's candidate did you vote for?
PQ7: Which party list did you vote for?

Political Knowledge

All elections:

Q10: Below there are pictures of various political candidates. Please match the candidates that you know with their party: [Party]

Federal Election, Lower Saxony and Bavaria

PQ14A: Can you indicate which party is associated with the following slogan: Together successful?

PQ14B: Can you indicate which party is associated with the following slogan: The WE matters?
PQ14C: Can you indicate which party is associated with the following slogan: Only with us?

Regional Election, Bavaria

PQ14A: Can you indicate which party is associated with the following slogan: And you?
PQ14B: Can you indicate which party is associated with the following slogan: . . . keep(s) promises.
PQ14C: Can you indicate which party is associated with the following slogan: BAVARIA.

Regional Election, Lower Saxony

PQ14A: Can you indicate which party is associated with the following slogan: Tackle things. Do it better?
PQ14B: Can you indicate which party is associated with the following slogan: This is how we do it?
PQ14C: Can you indicate which party is associated with the following slogan: This is a good idea?

NOTES

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1. Germany has another representation threshold—a requirement that a party obtain at least three SMD seats. Since 1994, no party that has fallen below the 5% threshold has obtained three SMD seats or more. This chapter thus does not consider this second representation threshold.

2. In this chapter, we focus mostly on party preferences. Voters sometimes have candidate preferences that are so strong that they are willing to desert the most preferred party to support their favorite candidate (Plescia, this vol.).

3. Throughout the chapter, we confine ourselves to respondents who reported having voted for one of the parties included in our surveys: CDU/CSU, SPD, Greens (Bündnis 90/Die Grünen [GRÜNE]), Left (Die Linke [DIE LINKE]), Free Democrats (FDP), Pirates (Piratenpartei Deutschland [PIRATEN]), Alternative for Germany (Alternative für Deutschland [AfD]), and Free Voters (Freie Wähler [FREIE WÄHLER]). These parties combined to receive more than 97% of the vote in each of the four elections. We also exclude abstainers.

4. For the exact wording of this and all other questions, see appendix B to this chapter.

5. All analyses reported in this chapter are weighted according to the vote in the PR tier and are standardized across samples to 1,000 standard units. This helps us to calculate more precise estimates of the number of strategic voters. In the tables, we also report the initial *N* of every sample.

6. There can be more than two candidates if there are ties for first or second place. In the case of ties, we consider all candidates, regardless of whether they are tied for first or second place.

7. None of our respondents combined a strategic local desertion vote with a coalition insurance vote, a finding that results from our definition of the coalition insurance strategy. Those who are susceptible to engage in a coalition insurance vote have a first preference for either the CDU or CSU and are likely to consider these parties one of the top two contenders in the constituency (at least in the two regions from which we draw our sample).

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