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# Explaining Far-Right Electoral Successes in Germany

The Politicization of Immigration-Related Issues

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## 1. Introduction

Most explanations that have been advanced regarding the recent successes of far-right parties in Western Europe suggest that these parties should have also done well in Germany.<sup>1</sup> With a high per-capita income and a strong export-oriented economy, Germany has experienced large-scale immigration,<sup>2</sup> a shift toward postindustrial occupations, economic restructuring, unemployment, and social marginalization of the poorest strata. These socioeconomic developments have been accompanied by political responses which should also benefit the far right: political parties have lost credibility,<sup>3</sup> non-voting has increased,<sup>4</sup> and ecological parties have become established and have spurred environmental, feminist, and pro-immigrant policies.<sup>5</sup>

Yet far-right parties, including the Republikaner (REP), Deutsche Volkunion (DVU), and Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands (NPD), have been largely unsuccessful at the national level in Germany since the late 1960s. Even when their vote shares are combined, these parties have received only about 2 percent in Bundestag elections—not even close to the 4.3 percent attained by the NPD in the 1969 vote. This failure has occurred despite REP popularity as high as 6 to 8 percent among voters in national surveys during 1989/93. The far right's weak performance in German national politics is usually explained as the result of three factors: their failure to move beyond immigration issues, the adoption of their issues by established parties, and the sensitivity of German voters to the far

right's associations with neo-Nazism.<sup>6</sup> Thus, far-right parties failed in the December 1990 and October 1994 Bundestag elections because they relied too heavily on the asylum issue, which suddenly became less important in national politics after the unification process took center stage in 1990, and again after the constitutional amendment restricting asylum rights was passed in May 1993.

However, to say that far-right parties have failed in Germany is an overstatement. Indeed, such a claim distracts attention from the substantial and even sustained successes which these parties have had in some German regions. Far-right parties have gained about 10 percent of the vote in the last two elections in Baden-Württemberg, and their average vote shares in Bavaria, Bremen, Hamburg, and Schleswig-Holstein since the mid-1980s come close to the important 5 percent hurdle. Moreover, in April 1998, the DVU gained nearly 13 percent in Saxony-Anhalt. Meanwhile, in contrast, far-right parties consistently failed in all the other new eastern states and North-Rhine Westphalia, never reaching 2 percent in any state election before 1998; in four other western states, they have averaged about 2 percent or less since the mid-1980s. What accounts for these relative successes and failures? What do the regional German cases imply about broader theories of far-right success?

This article addresses these questions via comparisons among the sixteen German federal states. The analysis will focus on the ten states that constituted pre-unification West Germany, and Berlin, since virtually all far-right electoral successes have occurred there. Even though right-wing skinheads and neo-Nazi groups have been especially active in the east, until 1998 the far right received very few votes in the four eastern states outside Berlin. Inter-regional comparisons are especially useful given the disproportionate strength of the far right in a few German regions; for example, the REP have gained 40 to 50 percent of their votes in Bundestag elections from just two states, Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria.

The article argues that far-right successes have depended on unusual publicity concerning immigration-related issues, on which far-right parties enjoy advantages over the established parties. When electoral or legislative campaigns on immigration-related issues occur—initiated often by mainstream parties at the state level—these issues take on a higher public profile and become more important

for voters, leading many to turn toward the far right. This explanation accounts for the successes and failures of Germany's far right more accurately than many of the proffered socioeconomic and political explanations, which this article also evaluates.

## 2. Theories of Far-Right Party Success in Western Europe

Theories and explanations of the far right's recent success in Western Europe have focused largely on four kinds of socioeconomic developments and three kinds of political responses.<sup>7</sup> First, the postindustrialism theory holds that a shift from traditional manufacturing toward a high-technology service economy has broken down voters' traditional collective attachments, to churches and unions for example, and has led to an increase in issue voting.<sup>8</sup> Second, the anti-left-libertarianism theory posits that a postindustrial shift toward post-materialist values<sup>9</sup> has generated ecological or left-libertarian movements and parties, and also a corresponding anti-environmental, anti-feminist, right-authoritarian backlash benefiting the far right.<sup>10</sup>

The third theory maintains that material grievances—due to increased economic and social problems such as unemployment, poor housing, and crime—make voters feel anxious and threatened.<sup>11</sup> Voters' anxiety leads them to support far-right parties, which offer the apparent security of simple solutions for complex problems.<sup>12</sup> Finally, the fourth theory holds that non-European immigration to Western Europe is a prominent factor in many explanations of far-right party success.<sup>13</sup> Some have argued that immigrants have posed apparent threats to "modernization losers" in the industrial working class and the petty bourgeoisie, especially after the onset of mass unemployment in the 1970s increased the sense of competition for jobs and welfare-state spending.<sup>14</sup>

By contrast, political explanations of far-right successes have emphasized three kinds of responses on the part of established parties, voters, and the far right itself—responses which are substantially independent of, although affected by, the socioeconomic developments listed above. First, the issue-voting thesis claims that the per-

ceived failures of governing parties in specific policy areas, especially those related to immigration, have led some to protest by voting for the far right.<sup>15</sup> Second, the political-alienation thesis holds that a general loss of confidence in established parties and other political institutions leads to non-voting and protest voting for fringe parties, which are untarnished by involvement in government.<sup>16</sup> Third, the convergence explanation is that the major established parties have moved toward the center on matters of economic and social policy, thereby leaving space on the right for far-right parties to mobilize votes.<sup>17</sup>

The rest of this article evaluates how well these seven theoretical factors explain the successes and failures of far-right parties at the state level in Germany between 1986 and 1997; while these factors are often combined in the theoretical works cited above, the evidence for them will be analyzed separately here. The analysis proceeds in six stages. First, an examination of the relationship between far-right party success and a number of state-level variables for the 1986/97 period shows only limited support for socioeconomic theories (Section 3). While some socioeconomic factors may help to explain why certain groups—especially younger working-class males—vote for the far right, they contribute little to an explanation of why these parties succeed in some times and places but not in others. Second, an analysis of the national debate on the right to political asylum, public interest in the issue, and state-level election results demonstrates that the impact of the national debate—while playing a role in several far-right successes between 1991 and 1993—cannot explain most successes before and after that period (Section 4). Third, a brief survey of the issues which were salient during far-right successes, and a detailed look at a state-level case of far-right success and a case of far-right failure, lend support to the issue-voting thesis (Section 5). State-level publicity on asylum and immigration-related issues thus far has been the crucial factor in the success of far-right parties; when it has been present, they have done well, and when it has been absent, they have not. The fourth stage of analysis argues that the origins of anti-immigration politics are located in political processes rather than simply the pressures of immigration, and in state politics rather than mainly the federal level (Section 6). Fifth, the political-alienation and party-convergence

theses are shown to have little support at the state level (Section 7). The final part of the analysis considers the DVU's surprising success in the 1998 Saxony-Anhalt election, and evaluates both the issue-voting thesis developed up to this point and the prevalent claims that economic grievances and protest voting were responsible for the far right's success in this case (Section 8).

### 3. The Limits of Socioeconomic Theories

#### *Divergences in Far-Right-Party Success*

This section analyzes the forty-four state parliamentary elections held between 1986 and 1997.<sup>18</sup> The starting date of 1986 was chosen because far-right parties failed to gain 3 percent of the vote in any region during all the state parliamentary and Bundestag elections between 1970 and 1985.<sup>19</sup> The NPD dominated the spectrum of far-right electoral parties from the late 1960s until 1986, during which time that party—riven by infighting between nationalist conservatives and neo-Nazis—averaged about 1 percent of the vote or less.<sup>20</sup> The founding of the REP in 1983 created a new kind of far-right party, one which was somewhat more credible when it proclaimed its acceptance of democracy and which was somewhat more respectable because of its distance from neo-Nazism. The party also profited from the charismatic leadership of the former television journalist and former SS officer Franz Schönhuber (until 1994). The DVU began campaigning in some state elections in 1986/87 with strongly nationalist positions similar to the NPD's, but with an important advantage over the NPD and REP: large amounts of money, which had been amassed by the right-wing publisher Gerhard Frey during the 1970s and 1980s and has since been used for DVU campaigns.

Based on the average level of far-right support in the last three state elections through 1997, states can be divided into relative successes and failures. I define relative success as an average vote for the main far-right parties<sup>21</sup> totaling over 4 percent; six states met this criterion (see Table 1a). In four of these states, either the Republikaner or the DVU gained parliamentary representation with more than 5 percent of the vote, and in the other two, the far right came very close to the 5 percent mark—in Bavaria (October 1990) and

Table 1a Far-right party vote shares and selected data for German states, 1985-97<sup>22</sup>

| State  | Far-right<br>% of vote<br>(average %<br>for last<br>3**<br>elections) | Per-<br>capita<br>GDP<br>1991<br>(1000<br>DM) | White-<br>collar<br>workers<br>1990<br>(as % of<br>employed) | Church<br>member-<br>ship<br>1987<br>(as %<br>of pop.) | Post-<br>secondary<br>students<br>1990<br>(as % of<br>15-65<br>year-old<br>pop.) | Green<br>% of<br>vote<br>(peak<br>before<br>1992) |
|--|---|---|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Relative successes</b>                                |   |   |  |  |  |   |
| Baden-Württemberg  | 8.0   | 43.6  | 50.5   | 92.8   | 3.18   | 8.0   |
| Hamburg  | 5.4   | 67.5  | 63.9   | 65.8   | 5.40   | 10.4  |
| Bremen   | 5.1   | 50.8  | 58.0   | 77.1   | 4.58   | 11.4  |
| Berlin (West)  | 4.6   | 46.3  | 57.3   | 71.0   | 7.42   | 11.8  |
| Schleswig-Holstein                                       | 4.5   | 34.8  | 56.3   | 83.0   | 2.20   | 3.9   |
| Bavaria  | 4.1   | 41.8  | 47.5   | 94.9   | 3.22   | 7.5   |
| <i>Average (mean)<br/>of successes</i>                   | 5.3*  | 47.5  | 55.6   | 80.8   | 4.33   | 8.8   |
| <b>Relative failures</b>                                 |   |   |  |  |  |   |
| Rhineland-<br>Palatinate                                 | 2.2   | 35.1  | 48.8   | 95.0   | 2.82   | 6.5   |
| Saarland   | 1.9   | 35.0  | 49.2   | 96.7   | 3.21   | 2.9   |
| Lower Saxony   | 1.9   | 34.2  | 51.3   | 88.6   | 2.88   | 7.1   |
| Hessen   | 1.3   | 46.7  | 55.0   | 88.5   | 3.75   | 9.4   |
| North-Rhine<br>Westfalia                                 | 0.9   | 38.2  | 52.9   | 90.7   | 3.96   | 5.0   |
| <i>Average (mean)<br/>of western<br/>German failures</i> | 1.6   | 37.8  | 51.4   | 91.9   | 3.32   | 6.2   |
| Brandenburg  | 1.2   | 11.9  | n.a.   | n.a.   | 0.31   | n.a.  |
| Thuringia  | 1.2   | 10.1  | n.a.   | n.a.   | 0.79   | n.a.  |
| Mecklenburg-<br>West Pomerania                           | 1.1   | 10.7  | n.a.   | n.a.   | 1.02   | n.a.  |
| Saxony-Anhalt  | 1.1   | 11.5  | n.a.   | n.a.   | 1.09   | n.a.  |
| Saxony   | 1.0   | 11.0  | n.a.   | n.a.   | 1.72   | n.a.  |
| <i>Average (mean)<br/>of eastern<br/>German failures</i> | 1.1   | 11.0  | n.a.   | n.a.   | 0.99   | n.a.  |
| <i>Average (mean)<br/>of all failures</i>                | 1.3*  | 24.4  | n.a.   | n.a.   | 2.16   | n.a.  |
| GERMANY  | 2.8*  | 34.9  | n.a.   | n.a.   | 3.12   | n.a.  |

\* arithmetic means of the values for the states; other values in these rows are totals for the group of states indicated or all of Germany respectively.

\*\* in eastern states, based on the two state elections held since unification



**Table 1b** Far-right party vote shares and selected data for German states, 1985-97 (con'd)<sup>23</sup>

| State  | Far-right<br>% of vote<br>(average %<br>for last<br>3**<br>elections) | Unem-<br>ployment<br>rate<br>1992<br>(% of<br>workforce) | Housing<br>shortage<br>(-) or<br>surplus<br>(+) 1990<br>(as % of<br>private<br>house-<br>holds) | Crime<br>rate<br>1993<br>(crimes<br>per<br>100<br>residents) | Non-<br>Germans<br>1992<br>(as % of<br>pop.) | Immi-<br>gration<br>rate<br>1982-92<br>(increase<br>as % of<br>earlier<br>foreign<br>pop.) |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Relative successes</b>                                |   |  |   |  |  |  |
| Baden-Württemberg  | 8.0   | 4.4  | -8.06   | 6.10   | 11.7   | 29.5   |
| Hamburg  | 5.4   | 7.9  | -9.42   | 16.84  | 13.9   | 36.4   |
| Bremen   | 5.1   | 10.7   | -3.90   | 16.11  | 11.0   | 46.4   |
| Berlin (West)***   | 4.6   | 11.1   | -8.43   | 16.33  | 11.0   | 38.7   |
| Schleswig-Holstein                                       | 4.5   | 7.2  | -2.08   | 10.15  | 4.7  | 33.2   |
| Bavaria  | 4.1   | 4.9  | -3.44   | 5.69   | 8.4  | 39.8   |
| <i>Average (mean)<br/>of successes</i>                   | 5.3*  | 7.7  | -5.89   | 11.87  | 10.1   | 37.3   |
| <b>Relative failures</b>                                 |   |  |   |  |  |  |
| Rhineland-<br>Palatinate                                 | 2.2   | 5.7  | -2.06   | 6.09   | 6.7  | 51.5   |
| Saarland   | 1.9   | 9.0  | -9.70   | 6.27   | 6.3  | 48.3   |
| Lower Saxony   | 1.9   | 8.1  | -5.18   | 8.58   | 5.4  | 41.7   |
| Hessen   | 1.3   | 5.5  | -5.02   | 8.35   | 12.6   | 34.9   |
| North-Rhine<br>Westfalia                                 | 0.9   | 8.0  | -4.06   | 7.79   | 10.2   | 25.5   |
| <i>Average (mean)<br/>of western<br/>German failures</i> | 1.6   | 7.3  | -5.20   | 7.42   | 8.2  | 40.4   |
| Brandenburg  | 1.2   | 14.8   | +3.15   | 12.90  | 0.6  | 100.7  |
| Thuringia  | 1.2   | 15.4   | +4.73   | 6.32   | 0.7  | -21.0  |
| Mecklenburg-<br>West Pomerania                           | 1.1   | 16.8   | -0.09   | 13.79  | 1.0  | 71.8   |
| Saxony-Anhalt  | 1.1   | 15.3   | +4.44   | 10.80  | 1.0  | 16.9   |
| Saxony   | 1.0   | 13.6   | +8.18   | 7.64   | 1.0  | -32.6  |
| <i>Average (mean)<br/>of eastern<br/>German failures</i> | 1.1   | 15.2   | +4.08   | 10.29  | 0.9  | 27.2   |
| <i>Average (mean)<br/>of all failures</i>                | 1.3*  | 11.2   | -0.56   | 8.85   | 4.6  | 33.8   |
| GERMANY  | 2.8*  | 8.4  | -2.87   | 8.34   | 7.9  | 33.7   |

\* arithmetic means of the values for the states; other values in these rows are totals for the group of states indicated or all of Germany respectively.

\*\* for eastern states, based only on the two state elections held since unification

\*\*\* crime rate and non-German share are for unified Berlin.

Hamburg (September 1993, September 1997). In half of the relatively successful states—West Berlin,<sup>24</sup> Schleswig-Holstein, and Bremen—the far right's last election result has been significantly lower than the early 1990s peak, but in Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, and Hamburg, the drop has been slight so far. Moreover, in all the "relatively successful" cases except for West Berlin, the last state election has seen far-right results above 3 percent.

The second group consists of the relative failures for the far right. However, because of the political and societal cleavages created first by the Cold War division of Germany and then by the unification process, I have divided the second group into western and eastern failure states. In the western failure states, the far right has been failing since the late 1980s, under a variety of conditions which are, according to most of the socioeconomic theories, more favorable to them than in the east. In these failure cases, the REP, DVU, and NPD together averaged about 2 percent of the vote or less. However, in three of the western cases, the far right has enjoyed brief, mild success: in the Saar, the Republikaner reached 3.3 percent (January 1990), in Lower Saxony 3.7 percent (March 1994), and in Rheinland-Palatinate 3.5 percent (March 1996). In the other two western failures (Hessen and North-Rhine Westphalia), the far right has failed to come anywhere close to the 5 percent threshold in state elections—even though in Hessen, the far right had dramatic success in some municipalities in the 1989 and 1993 local elections, including 6.6 and 12.9 percent in Frankfurt.

### *The Situation in the East*

The quite different socioeconomic and political conditions in the eastern states have produced a paradoxical combination of high levels of anti-foreigner violence and low levels of far-right voting, at least until 1998. During the period of economic and political dislocation after unification, the eastern states gained new party systems and also a disproportionate share of unified Germany's right-wing skinheads. The latter have attacked immigrant workers from Africa and Vietnam as well as the asylum seekers who came from many countries in the 1990s. For example, over 500 arson attacks against foreigners were carried out in the east during 1991 and 1992, slightly over half of the national total for that period<sup>25</sup>; since then, officially recorded attacks have continued at relatively high levels in

some eastern areas, especially in Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-West Pomerania. Yet, between 1990 and 1994, during the first ten state elections, the far-right parties consistently gained only about 1 percent of the vote, although their membership levels indicate an approximately average organizational strength for Germany.<sup>26</sup> Nonetheless, in April 1998 the eastern state of Saxony-Anhalt broke with this trend, when its voters gave 12.9 percent of their votes to the DVU. (For the purposes of the analysis in Sections 3-7, I will treat the eastern states as the cases of far-right failure which they were until 1998.)

### *Postindustrialism and Individualization*

Do differing levels of postindustrialism explain the relative successes and failures of far-right parties? To test the postindustrialism thesis, I analyze three indicators of a wealthy society with a service-oriented economy and weak social ties: gross domestic product per capita, white-collar workers as a share of the workforce, and the share of the population with no religious affiliation (Table 1a). Two initial findings are clear. First, one sees some differences in the averages for these variables for the group of states that experienced relative successes and the group of states with relative failures. Second, the importance of this finding is undermined by the existence of substantial exceptions and overlaps between the groups. The cases of success are very diverse, as they include two southern states with average incomes and high church membership rates (Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria), three northern city-states with very high incomes and relatively few church members (Berlin, Bremen, and Hamburg), and one rather poor, rural northern state (Schleswig-Holstein). The group of western failures is also heterogeneous, including relatively high-income, urbanized industrial states (Hessen and North-Rhine Westphalia) as well as low-income rural states (Lower Saxony and Rhineland-Palatinate). Moreover, church membership is much lower in the eastern states than in the west, yet before 1998 the far right had failed utterly in the east. Finally, socioeconomic development does not help to explain why the far right has experienced brief successes in the Saar, Lower Saxony, and Rhineland-Palatinate—regions closely resembling the other failure cases in terms of income, occupational structure, and religious affiliation.

Moreover, although the association with per-capita income is strongest, there are serious problems with interpreting this correlation as support for the postindustrialism thesis. The major far-right success occurred in a state (Baden-Württemberg) in which per-capita income is not far above the western German average, while a major failure (North-Rhine Westphalia) occurred in a state not far below the mean. More importantly, evidence points away from all the possible mechanisms by which economic development might improve the far right's chances. Occupational structures vary relatively little, and affiliation in churches or labor-unions contribute less to the explanation than initial impressions suggest.

Across election districts within states, there is an inverse correlation between affiliations to traditional organizations and far-right voting; those attached to churches and unions are less likely to vote for the far right. Strong attachment to religion, as reflected in weekly church attendance, seems to strongly "immunize" individual voters against far-right voting, but weaker religious attachments<sup>27</sup> do not immunize much. Because the strongly immunized group comprises only about 15 percent of the population, the overall effect of church-related immunization on the composition of the far right's electorate is minor; in one set of surveys, 65 percent of voters attend church occasionally or once a year, and the REP received a similar proportion (69 percent) of its votes from this group.<sup>28</sup> Moreover, religious attachments do not help explain differences between the states. The failure states of North-Rhine Westphalia and Rheinland-Palatinate have about the same shares of weekly churchgoers (about 15 percent) and of those who seldom or never attend church (about 40 percent) as does Baden-Württemberg.<sup>29</sup> The effects of union membership are similarly small and unrelated to state-level differences in far-right voting.<sup>30</sup> This evidence suggests that while postindustrialism may lay the basis for far-right successes, it is not a sufficient condition for them. A population may be wealthy and lack traditional attachments, yet not give the far right significant shares of the vote.

### *Postmaterialism and Left-Libertarian Politics*

Perhaps postindustrialism causes far-right successes through a different mechanism: by giving rise to left-libertarian movements which trigger a far-right backlash in the population. Table 1a shows two

indicators of left-libertarianism: the proportion of post-secondary students (1990) and the largest green party electoral success in the state before 1992.<sup>31</sup> Students in universities and other institutions of post-secondary education are frequent participants in ecological or feminist protests<sup>32</sup>; green parties are a good indicator of left-libertarian politics because they depend on voters with post-materialist values and also help to promote left-libertarian issues through parliamentary initiatives, government participation, and support for protests.<sup>33</sup> The differences between the groups of far-right successes and failures on these factors show a slight correlation, but there are also major overlaps between the groups and differences within them. For example, green parties did much better in Hessen than in Schleswig-Holstein, but the far right's relative performance has been reversed in these two outlying cases. The group of successes contains three (largely rural) states with below-average student shares, and three (highly urban) states which score very high on that variable. The far right's stronghold in Baden-Württemberg is unexceptional on both these variables. Nor does the green vote share in the previous or current election correlate with far-right votes across election districts within states, for example in West Berlin (1989), Schleswig-Holstein (1992), and Baden-Württemberg (1992).<sup>34</sup>

### *Objective Economic and Social Problems*

If developments associated with prosperity cannot explain far-right successes in Germany, then perhaps the downside of economic development can. Compared with other voters, far-right voters are much more likely to be "modernization losers": young males with low incomes and little education who hold manual jobs or apprenticeships.<sup>35</sup> Those groups are most strongly affected by structural unemployment and economic uncertainty, and most likely to see themselves in competition with foreigners for scarce resources, such as jobs.

Yet at the state level, indicators of material grievances—such as high unemployment and crime rates or housing shortages—are at most weakly related to far-right success (see Table 1b). In western Germany, the groups of success and failure cases include states at the extremes in terms of unemployment and housing-market conditions. Crime shows more of a relationship with the far-right vote,

and this factor might help explain the otherwise deviant Schleswig-Holstein and Hessen cases. However, Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, key states for far-right parties, are strong counterexamples; there, low crime rates (and high church membership rates) go together with relatively high far-right voting. Moreover, while the housing surpluses in the eastern states might help explain the far right's failures there, the coexistence of those failures with high crime rates and extremely high unemployment in the east shows that the latter factors have at most limited effects on far-right chances.<sup>36</sup> Analyses at the level of election districts also fail to show a correlation of the far right's vote with unemployment, population density, or high rents.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, real economic problems do not seem to translate directly into far-right voting. Moreover, a subjective sense of anxiety or pessimism about the future also does not seem to generate support for the far right. Indeed, since 1986, one important indicator—general economic pessimism—has actually been inversely related to far-right success. Surprisingly, the REP and DVU have performed better when the public's economic expectations have been optimistic. Between January 1988 and September 1990 (a period characterized by economic optimism), these parties did well in four out of six state elections, as well as in the 1989 European Parliamentary election. Conversely, between January 1986 and December 1987, and again between late 1990 and late 1992 (two periods in which the electorate was economically pessimistic), the far right performed well in only five out of thirteen state elections.<sup>38</sup>

### *Immigration*

In order to gauge the possible influence of immigration on far-right success, I have examined data on foreign residents—mostly guest workers from southern and south-eastern Europe—in terms of both their share of the population and their rate of absolute increase since the early 1980s (Table 1b). The results show a weak relationship between immigrant shares and far-right success in western Germany (see Table 1b). Although the average foreign share for the group of states with relative successes (10.1 percent) is higher than for the group with relative failures in western Germany (8.2 percent), there are major exceptions. Schleswig-Holstein has a very low

foreign population share, while Hessen and North-Rhine Westphalia are well above average on this factor. The picture within states is also mixed; while in Baden-Württemberg and Schleswig-Holstein the far-right vote was correlated strongly with the distribution of non-German and Muslim populations, there was no such correlation in West Berlin.<sup>39</sup> By contrast, changes in foreign populations during the late 1980s and early 1990s show no relationship to far-right success, a fact which is underscored if the eastern states are included in the analysis.

If we examine asylum seekers specifically rather than all foreigners, we find even less of a relationship with far-right successes. Asylum seekers have been present in all the German states in rough proportion to their total populations because of redistributions arranged by the Federal Agency for Refugees,<sup>40</sup> and hence their presence cannot explain differences in far-right successes across states. Indeed, asylum seekers made up only a small share of the foreign population in Germany, but negative political attention since the mid-1980s focused on them rather than on guest workers or ethnic German resettlers.

### *Summary*

The socioeconomic theses receive only limited support from this analysis.<sup>41</sup> Some state cases conform well to the expected pattern: in the three northern city-states and Rheinland-Palatinate, at least eight of the ten causal factors vary in the manner expected. But other cases, including the most important ones for the far right, confound the socioeconomic analysis. In Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, and Schleswig-Holstein, most of the indicators point away from far-right success and very few point toward it, while in Hessen most of the indicators would not predict the state-level failure of the far right. The socioeconomic factors fail utterly to account for the far-right successes in regional elections in the two populous southern states which have been the most important bases of the far right in national elections. At the same time, other cases—such as Lower Saxony, North-Rhine Westphalia, the Saar, and the five eastern states—do not support most of the socioeconomic theses, and the factors these cases support differ from state to state.

#### **4. The National Debate on the Right to Asylum**

A primary political explanation of far-right successes and failures in Germany has been the rise and fall of the asylum issue.<sup>42</sup> According to this argument, the established parties made the asylum issue highly visible at the same time that they appeared unable to resolve it. Partly as a result, about three-fourths of the population came to regard most asylum seekers as economic refugees who were abusing Article 16, and the asylum right as one of the most important political problems from 1991 to 1993.<sup>43</sup> When the issue had a high public profile, some of these voters turned to the REP or DVU, which had made asylum and foreigners their main campaign themes.

This is a plausible explanation. In Germany as in most European Union countries, large minorities or majorities are at least mildly hostile toward foreigners and favor more restrictive government policies toward them.<sup>44</sup> By raising the issue in national debates, politicians increase its importance in elections, and thus aid parties whose public positions are closer to the large block of voters who find government immigration policies too liberal. Therefore, the debates on asylum policies formed an aspect of the far right's "political opportunity structure"<sup>45</sup> which is sufficiently variable, influential, and long-lived to potentially account for the many far-right electoral successes and failures. Already in the early 1980s, conservative politicians critical of generous asylum rights achieved legislation which placed restrictions on asylum seekers and thereby attempted to deter "economic refugees." The restrictions included requiring asylum seekers to live in hostels, barring them from employment, granting them social-assistance payments in kind rather than cash, and requiring visas for entry from certain countries.<sup>46</sup> Beginning in 1986, demands grew for the more far-reaching step of amending Article 16 in order to restrict rights of judicial review for many asylum seekers; in May 1993, Article 16a of the Basic Law finally passed. During the 1991/93 campaign for the amendment, the percentage of western Germans who viewed asylum seekers and other foreigners as one of the two most important problems remained very high. This proportion varied between 40 and 80 percent, and it rose and fell slightly after the national asylum debate rose and fell.<sup>47</sup> Among REP voters in 1993, the most commonly mentioned problem concerned asylum seekers



and foreigners (57 percent of REP voters); these voters were even more preoccupied with these issues than was the average voter in this survey.<sup>48</sup>

Those who argue that the asylum issue affected far-right voting have focused on the national level of this controversy.<sup>49</sup> But anti-asylum politics originated mostly at the state and local levels rather than among national politicians. In the long run, the national asylum debate was strongly shaped by what the CSU in Bavaria and the CDU in Baden-Württemberg perceived to be their electoral needs. They sought to retain absolute majorities in state parliaments by holding onto right-wing voters. Hence, beginning in the early 1980s, these parties used the asylum issue in their states and repeatedly sparked campaigns for asylum restrictions at the federal level (typically through Bundesrat initiatives).<sup>50</sup> In the short term, state election results (West Berlin, January 1989; Bremen, September 1991; Baden-Württemberg and Schleswig-Holstein, April 1992) and local mobilizations with national resonance (the anti-foreigner riots at Hoyerswerda, September 1991, and at Rostock, August 1992) strengthened the anti-asylum position of the southern states in the national asylum debate.

It is thus useful to distinguish between two different, though possibly complementary, arguments. One holds that the asylum debate among national politicians influenced state-level election results, perhaps with state election campaigns as an intervening variable. The alternative view, which receives support in Sections 5 and 6, is that state politics generated national campaigns for asylum restrictions—and these campaigns in turn influenced both state election results and the national political debate.

An examination of national daily newspaper coverage<sup>51</sup> and far-right results in state elections between 1986 and 1997 shows that the national asylum debate is only somewhat useful for explaining far-right successes and failures in the states. The national asylum debate was relatively strong during Autumn 1986, Spring 1989, Autumn 1990, Autumn 1991, Spring 1992, and between Fall 1992 and late Spring 1993.<sup>52</sup> The prominence of the national debate on asylum can explain some important successes which were not adequately accounted for by socioeconomic variables—Bavaria in 1986, Baden-Württemberg and Schleswig-Holstein in 1992—and the lulls in the

debate can help explain the failure of the far right in Hessen in 1987, 1991, and 1995. Indeed, when the asylum issue was being debated and the issue was salient for a large share of the West German public, the far right did well (obtaining 3.5 percent or more of the vote) in five out of six elections; the only failure was Hamburg in 1986, before the Republikaner or DVU began campaigning there.

But this analysis also shows that the presence of a national debate on asylum was not necessary for most far-right successes. During periods in which the asylum issue did not have national prominence, the far right still succeeded about one-third of the time, in thirteen out of thirty-six state elections.<sup>53</sup> Six of these elections were held before the major asylum debates of 1991/93 (Bremen, Baden-Württemberg, Berlin, the Saar, and Bavaria). The other seven elections occurred after the constitutional amendment passed, and four of them were held in states where the far right had done well before 1991 (in all the above-named states but the Saar). In the remainder of the article, I will argue that state-level election campaigns on immigration-related issues account for these cases of far-right success more reliably than other political phenomena such as mainstream party convergence or political alienation.

## **5. Immigration Politics in the States**

### *Baden-Württemberg*

The dramatic 1992 and 1996 successes of the Republikaner in Baden-Württemberg were preceded, as in Bavaria, by a decade of repeated political mobilization against foreigners. Already in 1988, at a time of little national interest in asylum, anti-asylum politics in the state led to a total of 3.1 percent of the vote for the main far-right parties. The issue was politicized first by the state-level CDU (in the 1980 election and in later years), and then by the NPD and REP (from 1988 onward). In the 1980 state election campaign, the Baden-Württemberg government led by Lothar Späth (CDU) permitted incoming Ethiopian asylum seekers to be crowded into Stuttgart and the community of Leinfelden, and used the press attention on the circumstances to blame the SPD-FDP federal government for permitting too many refugees to enter the country.<sup>54</sup> Despite the major

publicity, the issue did not register with many voters that year; only 4 percent of them considered asylum rights to be the most important issue facing the state (fifth out of five issues in the survey), and the NPD gained only 0.2 percent of the vote.<sup>55</sup> Nonetheless, the CDU in this state, with an absolute majority in parliament until 1992, pursued a distinctively restrictive policy toward asylum seekers throughout the 1980s. The party introduced work bans, cut welfare payments, required residence in group shelters, and pushed in the Bundesrat for similar legislation for all of West Germany.<sup>56</sup>

In the March 1988 elections, two years after the first mild REP success in Bavaria (3 percent), the asylum issue again gained some importance in Baden-Württemberg. In the election campaign itself, the issue was introduced largely by the NPD ("Germany for the Germans"), which capitalized on the heightened profile of the asylum issue in late 1987 and outscored the REP by 2.1 percent to 1 percent. The Republikaner concentrated more on reunification than on "foreigners," but the latter issue was more interesting to voters; 30 percent of voters (and 40 percent of CDU and FDP supporters) considered "limiting the number of foreigners" to be important. Far-right voters linked their votes to the foreigners issue. While the combined vote of all small far-right parties totaled 4.5 percent in this election, the only issue on which more than 2 percent of the voters found a far-right party to be the most competent party was "limiting the number of foreigners" (6 percent of all voters).<sup>57</sup>

The April 1992 elections in Baden-Württemberg—in which the REP obtained 10.9 percent of the vote—were preceded by a similar pattern of anti-foreigner campaigning benefiting the far right; this time, however, the campaigning was more intense and the far-right enjoyed a great success. During this election campaign, both the Republikaner and CDU in the state made asylum the top issue; moreover, this election occurred during a fairly heated period of the national asylum debate. Baden-Württemberg voters as a whole named asylum/foreigners (43 percent) and housing (26 percent) as their main concerns, and even higher shares of REP voters (75 percent and 32 percent respectively) named these issues as top concerns.<sup>58</sup> Republikaner voters, most of whom came from the CDU's electorate, were especially dissatisfied with "asylum abuse" and the housing market. Across Germany, housing issues were often linked explicitly or

implicitly to asylum seekers, since government efforts to house them in hostels, private apartments, or hotels were highly publicized in tabloid newspapers and weekly news magazines. Voters in Baden-Württemberg were unhappy about the asylum issue specifically, rather than being generally alienated from the established parties on a wide range of issues; about 20 percent said that none of those parties was competent on asylum policy, while only 10 to 13 percent said this about five other issues on which they were queried.<sup>59</sup>

Finally, the pattern was repeated in March 1996, when the REP's surprising success in this state (9 percent) followed a campaign by the SPD's Prime-Minister candidate Dieter Spöri in which he demanded limitations on ethnic German resettlers.<sup>60</sup> Non-Germans and asylum comprised the third most important issue for all voters, and the second most important issue for REP voters, behind only the dominant issue of unemployment.<sup>61</sup>

### *Hessen*

Hessen, like Berlin, was a site of strong anti-immigration mobilization in the 1980s, but the major parties in Hessen have so far avoided major successes by the far right in *Landtag* elections. In 1980, Frankfurt mayor Walter Wallmann (CDU) ran a strongly anti-foreigner local election campaign. Relatively large numbers of asylum seekers entered Hessen through the Frankfurt airport during a surge in applications during 1980, and Wallmann responded by moving groups of Ethiopian and Afghani asylum seekers from Hessen to Bavaria as part of a conflict with the SPD-led federal government. The asylum issue again played a role in Wallman's successful mayoral campaign in 1985.<sup>62</sup>

Immigration issues have remained at the local level in Hessen, however, largely because the timing of state elections has been unfavorable to these issues. The April 1987 election occurred during a major lull in the national asylum debate, and consequently neither the REP nor the NPD fielded large numbers of candidates. In the January 1991 state election, the asylum issue ranked eighth in an open-ended survey question about the most important political problems, reflecting the national preoccupation with unification and the Gulf War at this time; the REP gained only 1.7 percent of the vote.<sup>63</sup> In 1995, two years after the constitutional amendment passed,

only 8 percent of Hessen voters considered asylum an important issue, and the REP vote share stagnated at 2 percent.<sup>64</sup>

Conditions were more favorable for the far right in Hessen's local elections, which occurred at times when national debates on asylum issues were strong. In 1989 and 1993, this combination led to dramatic successes for the NPD, which had unusually strong organizations in the state.<sup>65</sup> In March 1989—two months after the Republikaner's surprise Berlin success (7.5 percent) and during a peak in the national asylum debate—the NPD gained 3.1 percent in Hessen's larger cities, and a shocking 6.6 percent in Frankfurt; the Hessen CDU's tradition of anti-foreigner politics at the local level did not immunize it against large losses to the far right in this election. Exactly four years later, local elections were held again, this time a few months after the height of the national debate on Article 16. In this election, the REP led the far right to a total of 10.6 percent in Hessen's larger cities, 9 percent in the counties, and 13 to 15 percent in Frankfurt, Wiesbaden, and Offenbach; the SPD suffered large losses.<sup>66</sup>

#### *A Brief Survey of Other Far-Right Successes*<sup>67</sup>

A brief survey of some other state-level far-right successes suggests a strong correlation between such successes and the use of immigration-related issues in campaigns. In the immediate wake of a perceived national-level asylum crisis in Summer 1986, the REP had its first modest success (3 percent) in the Bavarian election of October 1986.<sup>68</sup> However, when the five following state election campaigns did not focus on immigration issues, the far right failed to win even 1 percent of the vote in them.

In September 1987, however, the Bremen election initiated a brief period in which far-right parties managed to create their own publicity while promoting the anti-immigration cause. The *Liste D* (which later became the DVU) gained 3.4 percent of the vote in Bremen that year, and its 5.4 percent in the Bremerhaven electoral district allowed the party to enter the Bremen city-state parliament. The DVU's success depended on spending more on campaign advertising than the two major parties combined, and using the advertising to spread a blatantly anti-foreigner message.<sup>69</sup> Next, in January 1989, soon after the 1988 Baden-Württemberg election discussed above, the REP had

its first major success: returns of 7.5 percent in West Berlin. In this campaign, the party benefited from free publicity in the news media because of an unsuccessful court challenge (against a strongly anti-foreigner television ad used by the REPs) and a left-wing counter-demonstration at which protesters clashed with police.<sup>70</sup>

In the following year, the established parties went on the offensive with regards to immigration-related issues. In the Saar's January 1990 election, the REP gained 3.3 percent of the vote by capitalizing on a confusing variety of immigration issues made salient with the help of Minister-President Lafontaine (SPD), who called for limits on the influx of resettlers and eastern Germans.<sup>71</sup> Later that year, the REP nearly won parliamentary seats in Bavaria (with 4.9 percent of the vote) after the CSU had run a strong campaign for asylum restrictions, which included the introduction of Bundesrat legislation earlier in the year; moreover, the REP had made competition from foreigners for jobs and housing its main issue in the campaign.<sup>72</sup> During the rest of 1990 and through mid-1991, however, the asylum issue lost ground to unification-related issues nationally and in most states, and far-right parties gained 2 percent or less in ten other state elections; the only exception was the REP's 3.1 percent in Berlin (December 1990), which faintly echoed the party's strong showing less than two years earlier.

From mid-1991 through 1995, the correlation between the national asylum issue and far-right successes was strong. The far right did very well (7.5 percent to 11 percent of the vote) in all four state elections which were held during the national debate on amending Article 16, even though in each case the established party in government tried to preempt the far right by taking a strongly anti-asylum stance: the SPD in Bremen (September 1991), Schleswig-Holstein (April 1992), and Hamburg (September 1993), and the CDU in Baden-Württemberg (April 1992). After the passage of the constitutional amendment to Article 16 in May 1993, the asylum issue declined and it has remained unimportant for voters on the national level and in most states. For the first few years after the amendment passed, the far right did poorly, getting less than 3 percent of the vote in ten of the next twelve elections through the end of 1995; the only bright spots for the far right were mild successes in Lower Saxony (3.9 percent in March 1994) and again in Bavaria (4 percent in September 1994).

But as the importance of immigration-related issues rose again, so did the fortunes of the far-right parties. In the months before three state-level elections in March 1996, many federal and state politicians spoke out in favor of limiting the influx of refugees and ethnic German resettlers.<sup>73</sup> In those elections, the far-right parties then enjoyed mild or strong successes, including 3.9 percent in Rheinland-Palatinate, where they had been unsuccessful since the 1960s, and 9.1 percent in Baden-Württemberg (only a small drop since the previous high in 1992). Finally, the far right's combined 6.8 percent of the vote in Hamburg (September 1997) followed a campaign by federal SPD leader Gerhard Schröder and Hamburg Mayor Hennig Voscherau (SPD) in favor of deporting "criminal foreigners";<sup>74</sup> the far right narrowly missed gaining parliamentary representation because the vote was divided between the DVU and REP.

A more systematic examination<sup>75</sup> of the links between campaigns, voter opinion, and election results also strongly supports the immigration issue-voting thesis. In sixteen elections for which I have analyzed the content of state campaigns, the connection is strong: the twelve cases in which immigration issues were politicized experienced far-right successes, while four elections without such politicization brought failure for the far right. Furthermore, data on issue salience supports the view that far-right voters became especially concerned with the immigration issues raised in the campaigns. Of twenty-five elections for which information on issue salience is available, the relationship with this variable is very strong; eighteen out of nineteen elections during which immigration issues ranked among voters' top four concerns resulted in far-right successes;<sup>76</sup> five out of six elections with low salience for these issues led to far-right failures.<sup>77</sup> The same process also accounts for the REP failures in the 1990 and 1994 Bundestag elections, at which times the asylum issue had dropped dramatically out of national campaigns and out of voters' awareness. Similarly, the REP success in the May 1989 European Parliament elections (71 percent) came at a time when their surprising gains in the West Berlin election had spurred a CDU-CSU campaign to limit asylum rights.<sup>78</sup>

Finally, the issue-voting thesis is also supported by Jürgen Falter's findings about REP voters in 1993. Asylum seekers and foreigners were identified as problems by 57 percent of REP voters, making this their top concern, compared with 36 percent of all voters. More-

over, REP voters were much more likely than other voters to harbor right-wing views on foreigners, asylum seekers, nationalism, the Nazi dictatorship, and Jews.<sup>79</sup>

## **6. The Political Origins of Anti-Immigration Politics**

What are the origins of the politicization of immigration issues in state elections? First, while the presence of relatively large numbers of guest workers and asylum seekers may have been a necessary precursor to this politicization, it was clearly not solely responsible for it (see Section 3). Many states with large numbers of immigrants have had few or no far-right successes. To some extent, however, the location of the asylum issue's emergence reflects short-term differences in the locations of asylum seekers. Authorities in Frankfurt and West Berlin spoke out publicly for restricting the right to asylum in the early and mid-1980s, a period in which these cities had large influxes of asylum seekers via the Frankfurt airport and East Berlin respectively. Typically, several months passed before the new arrivals were redistributed to other states. Similarly, authorities in Bremen in the 1980s pursued liberal policies which attracted a disproportionate number of asylum seekers; this situation in turn encouraged the DVU to campaign against foreigners in 1987, which helped generate a policy backlash by the SPD in 1991.<sup>80</sup>

The construction of immigration issues has also depended on political interventions. At times, the ways in which state authorities distributed asylum seekers to local governments generated opposition from municipalities, citizens groups, and skinheads, resulting in publicity beneficial to the far-right parties. For example, asylum seekers were moved into the eastern states in 1991, where they were especially prone to attacks by right-wing skinheads; the publicity resulting from these attacks helped fuel the national asylum debate.<sup>81</sup>

Second, the politicization of immigration issues in election campaigns was often carried out jointly by mainstream politicians at the state and federal levels; on many occasions however the initiative came from the states. In some states, the far right had its biggest successes during or soon after peaks in the national asylum debate (e.g. Bremen, September 1991 and Baden-Württemberg, April 1992), and the national debate at times encouraged state-level asylum debates



(e.g. Schleswig-Holstein, April 1992). However, state-level campaigns on asylum helped lead to far-right successes even when national anti-asylum campaigns were weak (e.g. Bremen, Baden-Württemberg, and West Berlin in 1987-89).

Third, the main parties of government (CDU, CSU, and SPD) usually have been the most important forces in the politicization of immigration issues in election campaigns; this holds in eight out of eleven cases of far-right success for which I have adequate information on the content of campaigns. Much more than the far right, the established parties have the capacity to gain publicity for immigration issues, especially through free coverage in the mass media, and to legitimate these issues for voters. However, in several elections, far-right parties succeeded even when established parties did not publicize these issues. The experience of these exceptional elections suggests that certain resources can help the far right to overcome their disadvantages in such cases: 1) a history of state-level immigrant and immigration policies or policy initiatives which were either exceptionally restrictive (Baden-Württemberg 1988, Berlin 1989) or exceptionally liberal (Bremen 1987), and were promoted and implemented by state governments in ways that attracted press attention; 2) free publicity for the far right due to conflicts between them and their opponents during the election campaign (Berlin 1989); and, 3) massive far-right spending on advertising (Bremen 1987).

Fourth, although the Article 16 amendment dominated immigration politics for many years, its 1993 passage has opened political space for other immigration-related issues that benefit the far right. In the last few years, the SPD in the states of Baden-Württemberg and Hamburg, as well as nationally (as represented by Gerhard Schröder, who was the presumed candidate for Chancellor at the time), have called for restrictions on ethnic resettlers and the deportation of non-German criminals. The beneficiary in the 1996-97 state elections was, as before, the far right.

## **7. Weak Support for Other Political Explanations**

### *Political Alienation*

Compared with the strong influence of immigration issues, several other political factors contribute little to explaining far-right success.

General political alienation, as far as this can be measured at the state level, does not seem to have played a large role in the far right's successes there. The level of alienation from established parties (reflected in the percentage responding that no established party is competent to deal with the problems facing the state), seldom reached 20 percent and varied little across the states. Moreover, this expression of distrust was usually issue-specific. Negative assessments of the competence of established parties across a wide range of issues by at least 20 percent of respondents were rare; in the one such case I identified (Hamburg 1991), the far right received only 1.9 percent of the vote.<sup>82</sup>

Furthermore, voters who are asked open-ended questions have expressed much more interest in social and economic policy areas such as asylum and unemployment than in political problems such as corruption. Even among REP voters, only 13 percent gave responses classified under "frustration with political parties" (*Parteienverdruss*) in 1993, making it their fourth most important concern, behind asylum/foreigners (57 percent), unemployment (40 percent), and economic policy (14 percent). REP voters were somewhat more alienated than the average voter (only 6 percent of whom gave responses classified under "frustration"), suggesting that political alienation played some role in the REP vote.<sup>83</sup> However, general alienation was obviously less important to REP voters than dissatisfaction about specific policy issues.

Finally, the argument that alienation is responsible for right-wing success is supported by one state-level indicator—long-term incumbency—but only to some extent. Of the five states where one party has named the Minister President for more than the last twenty years, the far right has been relatively successful in four; they failed, however, in North-Rhine Westphalia, where the SPD has governed since 1966. Moreover, in two other states where the far right has enjoyed relative success on average, the government changed hands not long before the first far-right success (eight years before the Berlin 1989 election, and four years before the Schleswig-Holstein election in 1992). Thus, a long period of one-party dominance is an important contributing cause, but it is neither necessary nor sufficient. Moreover, the above discussions strongly suggest that the mechanism through which long-term incumbency operates is not mainly political

alienation. Rather, parties which govern for such long periods are more likely to be held responsible for perceived policy failures, notably in the area of asylum and other immigration-related policies.

### *Major Party Convergence*

The failure of the conservative *Wende* promised by the CDU/CSU in 1982 motivated activists from the conservative parties to found and join the REP, lending some support to the party-convergence thesis.<sup>84</sup> However, the established parties' shift toward the main issues of the far right was not responsible for the REP and DVU gains among voters in state elections. Convergence on foreign policy concerning the East Bloc did occur after the Kohl government was created in 1982, but the far right did not benefit much from this; in all its successes before 1990, even in Bavaria, issues of immigration and housing were more important to the voters.

Convergence between the parties' positions on immigration issues has not spurred far-right success, either. Indeed, the opposite has been the case: when the parties have become more polarized on immigration issues, this has encouraged rather than prevented far-right success. Although they have often tried, both the CDU/CSU and the SPD have not been able to retain or absorb potential anti-immigration votes by taking strong anti-immigration stands in election campaigns (e.g. the Saar 1990, Bremen 1991, Baden-Württemberg and Schleswig-Holstein 1992, Hamburg 1997).

Over the last two decades, beginning around 1980, party-system polarization on immigration has helped more than hindered the far right. The preemptive efforts of some conservative governments were as unsuccessful as the expressly liberal policies of Bremen. What has caused voters to desert the established parties for the far right is a sense that the parties are responsible for failed policies regardless of the positions politicians express in election campaigns or the actions they take in office during the months prior to elections. The arrival of large numbers of asylum seekers, resettlers, and other immigrants through 1993 was seen as a policy failure, even though there was little the federal or state governments could do to prevent it. The conservative governments of Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria (and to some extent West Berlin) pursued restrictive policies toward foreigners and campaigned for restrictive federal leg-

isolation long before a major far-right threat emerged in these states in the late 1980s. But political polarization without credible policy alternatives merely made the issue prominent, thus giving the REP and DVU chances to exploit it.

In support of the convergence argument, Zimmermann and Saalfeld have argued that far-right success in postwar Germany has depended on the presence of a conservative party in government.<sup>85</sup> When in office, the established center-right parties are presumably less able to integrate their right-wing activists and voters, who are apt to be disappointed that the conservatives pursue policies which are more moderate than their party programs. While the presence of the CDU and CSU in the Kohl-led federal governments since 1982 may have made it more difficult for those parties to integrate the REP and DVU at the state level, this cannot explain why the SPD had similar difficulties holding onto its voters in Bremen, Hamburg, and Schleswig-Holstein, where at least as many far-right voters came from the SPD as from the CDU.

Furthermore, far-right successes were actually more common (and equally large on average) in elections held under SPD-controlled state governments as they were when the conservatives were in power. From 1986 to 1997, the far right succeeded in eleven out of twenty-one elections in which the conservatives were not in office, and in eight out of twenty-three elections where the CDU or CSU was in government.<sup>86</sup> The far right benefited from dissatisfaction with SPD-led governments as well as with conservative-led governments, a finding which can be explained in terms of the immigration-issue argument. Because state governments are responsible for many immigration policies (and the SPD was drawn into bargaining with the governing parties over Article 16 nationally), most voters came to see all governmental parties as responsible for perceived problems surrounding immigration, and as equally incapable of solving them.

## **8. Saxony-Anhalt 1998: Protest Voting or Another Case of Issue-Voting?**

The DVU's 12.9 percent of the vote in Saxony-Anhalt created a sensation in April 1998. After the DVU gained an electoral share larger

than that of any far-right party since 1951,<sup>87</sup> the state SPD was forced to choose between a grand coalition with the CDU and a minority government tolerated by the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS)<sup>88</sup>—a dilemma which greatly complicated the national SPD's strategy for the September 1998 Bundestag elections. When state SPD leader Reinhard Höppner chose to form a minority government, the national SPD became subject to harsh criticism for its tolerant policy toward the PDS in the east. Moreover, the unexpected Saxony-Anhalt election result seemed to foreshadow similar developments in the other eastern states; in a poll taken soon after this election, the far-right parties attracted 4 percent support among eastern Germans.<sup>89</sup> The dominant explanation of the DVU's success was that this was a protest vote against all the established parties by eastern Germans who were frustrated with a variety of problems, especially unemployment.<sup>90</sup> The thrust of this analysis was that these voters are not committed right-wing radicals, but could be won back by the established parties.

I think that the latter conclusion is correct, even though the premise is largely incorrect. That is, far-right voters are fickle, but not because they vote out of general or economic protest. Rather, the DVU's success in Saxony-Anhalt, as in previous cases, was due largely to issue voting which depended on extraordinary publicity for immigration-related issues. In future elections, the mainstream parties might win back the DVU's voters in Saxony-Anhalt (and voters like them in the other eastern states) if the far right fails to receive or generate publicity for its issues. Three considerations support this interpretation. First, in this election, the DVU's advertising campaign was massive and took the other parties by surprise. The DVU spent 3 million DM—more than the SPD (1.5 million DM) and CDU (1 million DM) combined—largely on 20,000 posters and 1.2 million pieces of direct mail;<sup>91</sup> this was a near-replica of its successful strategy in Bremen eleven years earlier. The electorate responded to this advertising; most DVU voters decided to vote for the party only in the last few weeks of the campaign.<sup>92</sup> However, because of the costs involved, it will be difficult for any far-right party to replicate that aspect of the campaign in many other state elections or in a federal campaign.

Second, a vital ingredient in the DVU's success in Saxony-Anhalt was the anti-immigration content of its campaign. DVU campaign posters used slogans such as "Out with the foreign bandits" and "Jobs

for Germans first," and the party called for protecting kindergarten and school classes from "over-foreignization."<sup>93</sup> Thus, the DVU skillfully spruced up its traditional attacks on immigrants by combining them with the recently popular (and more respectable) issues of unemployment and crime. The DVU's frequently used slogan, and the one most often quoted in western German press accounts, was "This time, make it a protest vote." But in the context of the party's other slogans, it is likely that "protest" did not mean a general protest against the established parties or against employment policies. Rather, the slogan referred to the party's call for a protest against specific policies and a protest in favor of a vague ethno-nationalist alternative. In this case, the specific policies opposed are what many voters perceive as overly liberal immigration policies combined with inadequate crime and employment policies. This interpretation is given further support by a national survey taken after the Saxony-Anhalt election, in which 64 percent of those sympathizing with the DVU and REP said that most DVU voters support that party because they agree with its demands, not purely out of protest.<sup>94</sup>

Third, data from opinion polls also supports the thesis that DVU voters were motivated by issues related to immigration, rather than by concern with unemployment or out of a more general protest. Although DVU voters (95 percent of them) most often named unemployment as an important issue, this does not distinguish them from other voters, 93 percent of whom also called this issue important.<sup>95</sup> Dissatisfaction with the government's economic policies seems to be part of a popular consensus in Saxony-Anhalt rather than a factor which motivates some people to vote for the far right. True, the DVU's voters are disproportionately younger, male, and working class—the groups hit most directly by the region's structural unemployment; economic conditions may be an underlying or necessary condition of their votes for the far right. But the majority of even these groups did not vote for the DVU in the 1998 Saxony-Anhalt election, and few of them voted for the far right in the 1994 state election. Why did a large share of them—about 30 percent of those under thirty years old—do so this time?

Examining how voters assess the parties' abilities to deal with important problems provides some answers. In this regard, the main issue for DVU voters in Saxony-Anhalt evidently was crime, not

unemployment; 11 percent of voters thought the DVU was the most competent party on crime, while only 5 percent thought of this party as most capable of dealing with unemployment and creating jobs.<sup>96</sup> Crime and internal security comprised the second-most important issue on the voters' minds during the campaign; 19 percent named crime, violence, or drugs as an important issue even before the DVU launched its campaign, which included an emphasis on crime by foreigners; only 27 percent of respondents thought the state government performed well on this issue.<sup>97</sup>

While few voters found the issues of foreigners or asylum seekers important in this election, it is possible that terms like "criminal" are in the process of becoming a way to refer to immigrants, especially after the conflation of crime and immigration by Schroeder and Voscherau in the 1997 Hamburg campaign. Such a use is not original; already in 1989, the Republikaner's inflammatory television advertisement in West Berlin visually associated foreigners with left-wing rioting in Kreuzberg.

In short, the far right's success in this election depended once more on unusual publicity, generated this time by the DVU's remarkable advertising budget. The nature of this party's campaign and the opinion polls show that publicizing issues related to immigration remains the most important route for the far right to win unusually large support. At the same time, the concerns that can motivate far-right voting seem to be shifting and certainly have become broader than the narrow issue of restricting asylum influxes that underpinned the far right's popularity in the early 1990s. Already in 1996, the Baden-Württemberg election had shown that campaigns against ethnic German resettlers could benefit the far right. The shift in issues useful to the far-right is shown even more clearly in the 1998 Saxony-Anhalt case, in which the DVU mixed appeals on unemployment, immigration, and crime, and therefore succeeded in an election which even for its own supporters was dominated by the unemployment issue.

## 9. Conclusions

Socioeconomic factors may help explain why certain groups vote for far-right parties or why these parties have become more successful

since the 1980s in many West European countries. However, they can help explain far-right successes and failures at the state level only to a limited degree. The states in which far-right parties have experienced the most success are socioeconomically diverse; they include wealthy, "postindustrialized" urban states, the relatively rural southern states, and a relatively poor and rural northern state. Moreover, none of the variables derived from the socioeconomic hypotheses correlate strongly with the far-right vote across states. While per-capita income bears some relationship to election outcomes, none of the likely causal mechanisms (occupational structures, church attendance, green party share, post-secondary student share) sufficiently links prosperity to far-right voting. Unemployment and crime are somewhat related to far-right successes in the former West Germany, but these factors do not explain such successes in the southern states, or the far right's general failure in the east; furthermore, subjective economic pessimism at the national level actually has been inversely related with far-right successes over time. While the far right tends to do better in states and election districts with higher shares of foreign immigrants, there are many exceptions to this pattern, including Bavaria, North-Rhine Westfalia, Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Hessen, and most recently Saxony-Anhalt.

Several other political explanations, based on political alienation or party convergence, also find little support. Far-right voters in German state elections have been motivated by particular issues rather than dissatisfaction with established parties in general. The polarization of the main parties on the far-right parties' main issues has actually helped the latter by raising the prominence of those issues, rather than hurting them by absorbing their voters.

By contrast, the key ingredient for state-level far-right success in Germany has been high levels of publicity for immigration-related issues in state election campaigns. So far, these issues have concerned immigrants' entry into the country, deportation, policing, jobs, and housing. Publicity on these issues is sufficient for far-right success for several closely related reasons: 1) it raises the profile of immigration-related issues for voters; 2) a large share of German voters normally favor more restrictive policies toward immigrants than those pursued by government; and, 3) the far-right parties are the only parties with a reputation for consistently anti-immigrant positions. The process of



publicizing immigration-related issues explains far-right successes and failures more readily than socioeconomic variables, inasmuch as it accounts for such troublesome cases as the far-right parties' successes in the southern states and Schleswig-Holstein, and their failures in North-Rhine Westfalia, Hessen, and until recently all the eastern states. Finally, the issue-voting theory accounts more reliably for the surprising results in Saxony-Anhalt in 1998 than the often-cited theories of material grievances and political alienation.

The introduction of ethnic resettlers and "criminal foreigners" as issues in recent years shows the robustness of anti-immigrant politics. Far-right successes, however, could probably be limited if the mainstream parties resolved not to publicize and legitimize the anti-immigrant cause. As this article goes to press (early August 1998), the CSU's use of a range of immigration issues in the Bavarian state election and the Bundestag election in September 1998 have led both the Union and the SPD to raise these issues in their Bundestag campaigns. But so far, the CDU and SPD have avoided making these into major issues, and only 16 percent of voters find foreigners to be an important problem, the same level as in 1994.<sup>98</sup> If the major parties keep immigration issues out of their Bundestag campaigns and other election campaigns, far-right parties would be constrained. Their success would then depend on their ability to generate free publicity in the news media and on the money that the DVU's financier Frey is willing and able to commit to that party's advertising budget. Additional constraints could be posed if local authorities limit the far right's access to voter lists (on which the DVU's direct-mail campaigning depend) or if the federal government, Bundestag parties, and courts decide to curb the far right through the regulation of campaign finance and spending.

## Notes

I would like to thank Martin Schain and Aristide Zolberg for the opportunity to present the first outlines of this article at the seminar on Xenophobic Movements in a Unifying Europe which they organized at the International Center for Migration, Ethnicity, and Citizenship and which was sponsored by the United States Institute of Peace, in September 1997; a different version of this article will appear in *Radical-Right Parties in Western Europe* edited by Schain and Zolberg (in preparation). I would also like to thank for their helpful advice and objections those who commented on the paper at that seminar and at the Council for European Studies Conference, Baltimore, Maryland, in February 1998, especially Christopher Husbands, Andy Markovits, Michael Minkenberg, Ted Perlmutter, Martin Schain, Jack Veugelers, and Aristide Zolberg. This article has also benefitted from comments by two anonymous reviewers for *German Politics and Society*, and the tireless efforts of the journal's editors. Needless to say, the faults that remain are my responsibility alone. Finally, I would also like to thank Thomas Poguntke for valuable tips on data sources, the librarians who made my job much easier (especially at the Free University of Berlin, ZI 6, and the American Institute of Contemporary German Studies in Washington, D.C.), and the Research Foundation of the City University of New York, which provided funds for research in Germany through Grant Number 668538.

1. "Germany" here refers to West Germany before unification in 1990 and unified Germany thereafter.
2. "Immigration," "immigrant," and "foreigner" will be used here as general terms referring to all non-Germans living in Germany, including especially "guest workers" and asylum seekers. Despite official intentions, both guest workers and asylum seekers have become long-term residents of Germany, as well as the targets of political backlashes that sometimes do not distinguish between them.
3. Hans-Georg Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism in Western Europe* (New York, 1994).
4. Russell Dalton, *Citizen Politics in Western Democracies*, 2nd ed. (Chatham, N.J., 1996).
5. Herbert Kitschelt, *The Logics of Party Formation: Ecological Politics in Belgium and West Germany* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1989); Eva Kolinsky (ed.), *The Greens in West Germany: Organisation and Policy Making* (New York, 1989).
6. Herbert Kitschelt (with Andrew J. McGann), *The Radical Right in Western Europe: A Comparative Analysis* (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1995); Ruud Koopmans and Hanspeter Kriesi, *Citizenship, National Identity, and the Mobilization of the Extreme Right: A Comparison of France, Germany, the Netherlands, and Sweden* (Science Center Berlin, Working Paper FS III 97-101, March 1997); Hans-Georg Betz, "Why is there no Right in Germany?" paper presented at the German Studies Association Annual Conference, Bethesda, Maryland, September 1997.
7. For a review, see Roger Karapin, "Radical-Right and Neo-Fascist Political Parties in Western Europe," *Comparative Politics* 30, 2 (January 1998): 313-34. Omitted here are two further explanations: that the parties represent a revival of fascist organizations and ideas, and that success depends on internal features of the parties, notably organizational unity and the adoption of an optimal program of neo-liberal economic positions and socially conservative stances. For the former, see Geoffrey Harris, *The Dark Side of Europe: The Extreme Right Today* (Savage, Md., 1990); Jaroslav Kreja, "Neo-Fascism: West and East," in Luciano Cheles,

- Ronnie Ferguson, and Michalina Vaughan (eds.), *The Far Right in Western and Eastern Europe*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1995), pp. 1-12; for the latter, see Thomas Assheuer and Hans Sarkowicz, *Rechtsradikale in Deutschland: Die alte und die neue Rechte*, 2nd ed. (Munich, 1992); Kitschelt, *The Radical Right* (see note 6 above). Analysts of the far-right successes in Germany since 1986 have mainly relied on the postindustrialism, material-grievance, political-alienation, and party-convergence arguments described below; see especially the works cited below by Glotz (note 8), Falter (note 8), Leggewie (note 11), and Stöss (note 12).
8. Peter Glotz, *Die deutsche Rechte: eine Streitschrift* (Stuttgart, 1989); Ursula Feist, "Rechtsruck in Baden-Württemberg und Schleswig-Holstein," in Karl Starzacher et al. (eds.), *Protestwähler und Wahlverweigerer* (Cologne, 1992), pp. 40-57; Jürgen Falter (with Markus Klein), *Wer wählt rechts?* (Munich, 1994); Hans-Georg Betz, "The New Politics of Resentment: Radical Right-Wing Populist Parties in Western Europe," *Comparative Politics* 25, 4 (July 1993): 413-28.
  9. Ronald Inglehart, *The Silent Revolution: Changing Values and Political Styles Among Western Publics* (Princeton, N.J., 1977) and *Culture Shift in Advanced Industrial Society* (Princeton, N.J., 1990).
  10. Michael Minkenberg, "The New Right in Germany," *European Journal of Political Research* 22 (July 1992): 55-81; *The New Right in Comparative Perspective: The USA and Germany* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Western Societies Program, Cornell University, Occasional Paper No. 32, 1993); "What's Left of the Right?" in David P. Conradt et al. (eds.), *Germany's New Politics* (Tempe, Ariz, 1995); Paul A. Taggart, *The New Populism and the New Politics: New Protest Parties in Sweden in Comparative Perspective* (New York, 1996); Piero Ignazi, *New Challenges: Post-Materialism and the Extreme Right* (Madrid: Juan March Institute, Working Paper 91, 1996); Dieter Oberndörfer, Gerd Mielke, and Ulrich Eith, "Die These vom Denkkettelvotum greift viel zu kurz," in *idem.* (eds.), *Die Bundesrepublik im Umbruch* (Freiburg, 1992), pp. 112-22.
  11. Claus Leggewie, *Die Republikaner: Ein Phantom nimmt Gestalt an*, rev. ed. (Berlin, 1990); Wesley Chapin, "Explaining the Electoral Success of the New Right: The German Case," *West European Politics* 20, 2 (April 1997): 53-72; see also Falter; Glotz; Feist (all in note 8 above); Oberndörfer, Mielke, and Eith (note 10 above).
  12. Erwin Scheuch and Hans Klingemann, "Theorie des Rechtsradikalismus in westlichen Industriegesellschaften," *Hamburger Jahrbuch für Wirtschafts- und Gesellschaftspolitik* 12 (1967): 11-29; Richard Stöss, *Politics Against Democracy: Right-Wing Extremism in West Germany* (New York, 1991); Glotz (see note 8 above).
  13. Paul Hainsworth, "Introduction," in *idem.* (ed.), *The Extreme Right in Europe and the USA* (New York, 1992), pp. 1-28; Leonard Weinberg, "Introduction," in Peter H. Merkl and Weinberg (eds.), *Encounters with the Contemporary Radical Right* (Boulder, Colo., 1993), pp. 1-15; Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism*; Kitschelt, *The Radical Right* (see note 6 above).
  14. Hans-Georg Betz, "Politics of Resentment: Right-Wing Radicalism in West Germany," *Comparative Politics*, 23 (October 1990): 45-60; see also Glotz; Falter (note 8 above).
  15. Klaus Erdmenger, "Rep-Wählen als rationaler Protest," in Hans-Georg Wehling (ed.), *Wahlverhalten* (Stuttgart, 1991), pp. 242-53; Dieter Roth, "Volkparteien in Crisis? The Electoral Success of the Extreme Right in Context: The Case of Baden-Württemberg," *German Politics* 2, 1 (April 1993): 1-20; Christopher Husbands, "The Other Face of 1992: The Extreme-Right Explosion in Western

- Europe," *Parliamentary Affairs* 45, 3 (July 1992): 267-84; Falter (see note 8 above); Chapin (see note 1 above).
16. Stöss, *Politics* (see note 12); Peter Fysh and Jim Wolfreys "Le Pen, the National Front and the Extreme Right in France," *Parliamentary Affairs* 45, 3 (July 1992): 309-26; Betz, *Radical Right-Wing Populism* (see note 3 above); Falter (see note 8), p. 119f.
  17. Richard Stöss, *Die Republikaner: Woher sie kommen, was sie wollen, wer sie wählt, was zu tun ist* (Cologne, 1990); Kitschelt, *The Radical Right* (see note 8 above); Glotz (see note 8 above).
  18. I have examined elections for state parliaments rather than Bundestag or European Parliamentary elections because the former show much more variance in the far-right vote across states; moreover, these election results directly affect the far right's chances of participating in government. State parliamentary elections occur at least every four to five years in each German state, on a staggered schedule which means that most years have one or more elections. For further details of the 1986-97 data analysis, see my "Far-Right Parties and the Construction of Immigration Issues in Germany," paper presented at the panel "The Rise and Impact of the Xenophobic Right" at the Council for European Studies Conference, Baltimore, Maryland, 26-28 February 1998.
  19. The end of this period was determined by the date when this data analysis was performed, December 1997.
  20. Assheuer and Sarcowicz (see note 7 above), pp. 22-24.
  21. These were the REP, DVU, NPD, and the Hamburger Liste für Ausländerstopp, which split off from the NPD in 1982; each of these parties was the largest in at least one state election in this period and gained at least 0.5 percent of the vote in that election. The Ökologische Partei Deutschlands was omitted because its program is not clearly radically right-wing. For the eastern states, only data on the largest far-right party in each election is included.
  22. Sources for Table 1a: Far-right vote shares taken from official election results as reported in reports by Infas and Forschungsgruppe Wahlen; per-capita GDP from *Statistisches Jahrbuch Deutscher Gemeinden* (1992), pp. 490-91, 496-97; white-collar worker shares from *ibid.*, pp. 484-85; church membership from *ibid.*, pp. 482-83; post-secondary students from *ibid.*, pp. 486-87, 494-95; green vote shares from Gerhard A. Ritter and Merith Niehuss, *Wahlen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Bundestags- und Landtagswahlen, 1946-1987* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 1987), pp. 130-48; official election results as reported in reports by Infas and Forschungsgruppe Wahlen.
  23. Sources for Table 1b: Far-right vote shares from official election results as reported in reports by Infas and Forschungsgruppe Wahlen; unemployment rates from "Arbeitsstatistik 1992-Jahreszahlen," *Amtliche Nachrichten der Bundesanstalt für Arbeit*, pp. 45, 47, 259-60; housing surpluses and shortages calculated from *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1992*, pp. 69, 258; crime rates from "Die Kriminalität in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," *Bulletin*, 30 May 1994, 439; non-German shares from Bundesforschungsanstalt für Landeskunde und Raumordnung, *Laufende Raumbewachung: Aktuelle Daten zur Entwicklung der Städte, Kreise, und Gemeinden, 1992-93* (Bonn: *idem.*, 1995), pp. 31-32; immigration rates (for the eastern states, from 1989-1992) calculated from Emil Hübner and H.-H. Rohlfis, *Jahrbuch der Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1984* (n.p.: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag), p. 113; *Statistisches Jahrbuch für die*

- Bundesrepublik Deutschland 1994*, p. 72; *Statistisches Jahrbuch Deutscher Gemeinden (1992)*, pp. 492-93.
24. In this section I will treat West Berlin as a case separate from Berlin, since the two entities differ in average socioeconomic conditions, for obvious reasons, and in average far-right share, given the Republikaner's major success in West Berlin before unification.
  25. Bundesministerium des Innern, *Verfassungsschutzbericht* (Bonn, 1991), p. 76; Partei des demokratischen Sozialismus, ed. *Neofaschistischer und rassistischer Terror 1992: Von der Bundesregierung herausgegebenen Zahlen und ihre Bewertung*, (Bonn, 1993); author's calculations.
  26. *Verfassungsschutzbericht Land Brandenburg* (Potsdam, 1994), p. 51; *Verfassungsschutzbericht 1994 des Landes Mecklenburg-Vorpommern* (Schwerin: Innenministerium Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, 1994), p. 33; *Verfassungsschutzbericht 1992/1993* (Magdeburg: Ministerium des Innern des Landes Sachsen-Anhalt, 1993), p. 25; *Verfassungsschutzbericht 1993 Freistaat Thüringen* (Erfurt: Thüringer Innenministerium, 1993), p. 25.
  27. These are represented by occasional or annual churchgoing.
  28. Falter (see note 8 above), pp. 99-103.
  29. Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Wahl in Nordrhein-Westfalen* (Mannheim, 1995), p. 22; *Wahl in Baden-Württemberg* (Mannheim, 1996), p. 24; *Wahl in Rheinland-Pfalz* (Mannheim, 1996).
  30. Falter (see note 8 above), pp. 99-103; Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Wahl in Berlin* (Mannheim, 1995); *Wahl in Bremen* (Mannheim, 1995); *Wahl in Nordrhein-Westfalen* (Mannheim, 1995); *Wahl in Schleswig-Holstein* (Mannheim, 1996); *Wahl in Baden-Württemberg* (Mannheim, 1996); *Wahl in Rheinland-Pfalz* (Mannheim, 1996).
  31. An alternative indicator, the presence or absence of green participation in government, apparently would not help explain far-right successes. For example, such participation preceded far-right failures in Hessen (1987) and Berlin (1990), as well as successes in Lower Saxony (1994) and Hamburg (1997).
  32. Karl-Werner Brand, Detlef Büsser, and Dieter Rucht, *Aufbruch in eine andere Gesellschaft: Neue soziale Bewegungen in der Bundesrepublik*, 2nd ed. (Frankfurt, 1986), pp. 102-03, 136-37, 179-82, 217-19; Rob Burns and Wilfried van der Will, *Protest and Democracy in West Germany* (New York, 1988).
  33. Franz Urban Pappi, "Die Anhänger der neuen sozialen Bewegungen im Parteiensystem der Bundesrepublik Deutschland," in Roland Roth and Dieter Rucht (eds.), *Neue Soziale Bewegungen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, 2nd ed. (Bonn, 1991), pp. 452-68, here 463-66; Herbert Kitschelt, *Logics* (see note 5 above), pp. 226-48.
  34. Falter (see note 8 above), pp. 47-59.
  35. *Ibid.*, pp. 154-55; Glotz (see note 8 above), pp. 51-53.
  36. Chapin found a strong correlation between the number of foreigners investigated as criminal suspects and the far-right vote (see note 11 above, p. 66), but this kind of crime data is likely to over-report crime by foreigners. Since it is quite possible that crimes by foreigners are over-reported at a higher rate in states in which the government has taken an anti-foreigner stance, Chapin's results may have indirectly traced the effects of the anti-immigration campaigns described in Sections 5 and 6 below.
  37. Falter (see note 8 above), pp. 47-59.

38. Institut für angewandte Sozialforschung [hereafter Infas], *Baden-Württemberg 1992* (Bonn, 1992), p. 42; Manfred Kuechler, "Germans and 'Others': Racism, Xenophobia, or 'Legitimate Conservatism'?" *German Politics* 3, 1 (April 1994): 47-74, here 71.
39. Falter (see note 8 above), pp. 47-59.
40. Ursula Münch, *Asylpolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Entwicklung und Alternativen* (Opladen, 1992), pp. 65-66.
41. Statistical correlation analysis is made difficult by the small number of cases and the discontinuity between the eastern and western states. If only the western states are included, none of the variables in Tables 1a-1b are significantly related at the .05 level, since major outliers—Baden-Württemberg, Schleswig-Holstein, Hessen, and North-Rhine Westphalia—substantially weaken the correlations.
42. Dietrich Thränhardt, "The Political Uses of Xenophobia in England, France, and Germany," *Party Politics* 1, 3 (July 1995), 323-45; Thomas Saalfeld, "Xenophobic Political Movements in Germany, 1949-94," paper prepared for presentation at the Annual Meeting of the American Sociological Association, Los Angeles, August 1994; Kitschelt, *The Radical Right* (see note 6 above); Minkenberg, "What's Left" (see note 10 above); Chapin (see note 1 above); Roth (see note 15).
43. Kuechler (see note 36 above), p. 58.
44. Jens Alber, "Zur Erklärung fremdenfeindlicher Gewalt in Deutschland," in Ekkehard Mochmann and Uta Gerhardt, eds., *Gewalt in Deutschland: Soziale Befunde und Deutungslinien* (Munich, 1995), pp. 39-77, here pp. 70-74; Kuechler (see note 36 above), p. 64.
45. Peter Eisinger, "The Conditions of Protest Behavior in American Cities," *American Political Science Review* 67 (1973): 11-28; Sidney Tarrow, *Power in Movement: Social Movements, and Contentious Politics*, 2nd ed. (New York, 1998), pp. 71-90.
46. Münch (see note 38 above), pp. 83-86, 95-97.
47. Kuechler (see note 36 above), p. 54; Ruud Koopmans, "Explaining the Rise of Racist and Extreme-Right Violence in Western Europe," *European Journal of Political Research* 30 (December 1996): 185-216, here 205.
48. Of all voters, 36 percent named this complex of issues as most important (Falter [see note 8 above], p. 108).
49. For example, Chapin (see note 11 above), p. 63.
50. Karl-Heinz Meier-Braun, *Das Asylanten-Problem* (Frankfurt, 1980), pp. 53-88; Münch (see note 38 above), pp. 73-74, 78-81, 88-91, 102-03.
51. To indicate the asylum debate, I measured politicians' statements on the asylum issue by using keyword searches to count all articles in *die tageszeitung* which mentioned asylum, the Basic Law, and at least one of the political parties with national parliamentary representation; this rough measure produces periods of debate and non-debate very similar to those described in secondary sources; see Ted Perlmutter, "The Political Asylum Debates in Germany, 1978-92: Polarizing Politics in a Moderate System?", ms., April 1996, pp. 8-22; Münch (see note 38 above), pp. 72-126.
52. These debate peaks were defined by a minimum of fifteen articles per month in *die tageszeitung*, the peaks during 1991-1993 were much larger than the others, ranging from about thirty to one hundred articles per month.
53. Success in a particular state election was defined as a minimum of 2.5 percent of the vote, since this formed a natural breaking point within the data. I considered an election to be within a period of high issue salience if the asylum debate had

- been strong (see text above) within the past six months and any available survey evidence showed that at least 40 percent of voters named asylum or foreigners in response to an open-ended question; survey data were taken from Kuechler 1994 and Forschungsgruppe Wahlen state election reports. One election (Lower Saxony 1994) was difficult to classify and was omitted from this analysis.
54. *Der Spiegel*, 18 February 1980.
  55. Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Wahl in Baden-Württemberg* (Mannheim, 1980), p. 39.
  56. Meier-Braun, *Asylanten*, pp. 53-104.
  57. Infas, *Baden-Württemberg 1988*, pp. 11-12, 70, 121.
  58. Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Wahl in Baden-Württemberg* (Mannheim, 1992), p. 46.
  59. Infas, *Baden-Württemberg 1992*, p. 77.
  60. *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26 March 1996.
  61. Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Wahl in Baden-Württemberg* (Mannheim, 1996), p. 45.
  62. Perlmutter, (see note 49 above), p. 10; Meier-Braun, "Einwanderungsland Europa," in Manfred Zuleeg (ed.), *Ausländerrecht und Ausländerpolitik in Europa* (Baden-Baden, 1987), pp. 37-68, here 61.
  63. Infas, *Hessen 1991*, p. 61.
  64. Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Wahl in Hessen* (Mannheim, 1995), p. 43.
  65. Stöss, *Die Republikaner* (see note 17 above), p. 54.
  66. Hessisches Statistisches Landesamt, *Die Kommunalwahlen am 7 März 1993* (Wiesbaden: *idem.*, 1993), p. 12.
  67. Space limits prevent discussing more than two cases in detail here; for other cases, see Roger Karapin, "Far-Right Parties and the Construction of Immigration Issues in Germany," in Martin Schain and Aristide Zolberg, eds., *Radical-Right Parties in Western Europe* (book in preparation; chapter available from author).
  68. Perlmutter (see note 49 above), pp. 11-15.
  69. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 8 September 1987.
  70. Stöss, *Die Republikaner* (note 17 above), pp. 41-42; Infas, *Berlin 1989*, p. 11.
  71. *die tageszeitung*, 30 January 1990.
  72. Münch (see note 38 above), p. 114; Infas, *Bayern 1990*, p. 8.
  73. *die tageszeitung*, 25 January 1996, 1 March 1996; *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, 26 March 1996.
  74. *Berliner Zeitung*, 11 August, 20 September 1997.
  75. The analyses reported in this paragraph are based on data reported in the state election studies of the Forschungsgruppe Wahlen and Infas; since those reports do not include the relevant data in many cases, not all forty-four elections are analyzed here.
  76. The exception was North-Rhine Westphalia in 1995, where in one survey asylum/foreigners was tied for third place at 10 percent, behind unemployment (63 percent) and environmental protection (19 percent); Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Wahl in Nordrhein-Westfalen* (Mannheim, 1995), p. 43.
  77. In the one case with a far-right success despite immigration issues which were not salient (Berlin, December 1990), the REP had only a borderline success (3.1 percent), compared with the 7.5 percent they gained only 22 months earlier. The REP may have escaped more complete failure in 1990 because of the relatively short period since their spectacular 1989 campaign and the massive press coverage of their surprising success at that time.
  78. *die tageszeitung*, February-May 1989.
  79. Falter (see note 8 above), pp. 108, 110-53.

80. Ralf H. Borttscheller, "Probleme der Zuwanderung am Beispiel Bremens," *Aus Parlament und Zeitgeschichte* 44-45 (25 October 1996): 25-38, here 25-29.
81. Patrick Ireland, "Socialism, Unification Policy, and the Rise of Racism in Eastern Germany," *International Migration Review* 31 (Fall 1997): 541-68, here 555-57; Ruud Koopmans, "The Career of a Political Conflict: The Asylum Issue in Germany," paper presented at the conference on Inclusion and Exclusion, New School for Social Research, June 1997, Figures 7-8.
82. Infas, *Hamburg 1991*, p. 68.
83. Falter (see note 8 above), p. 108.
84. Stöss, (see note 16), pp. 198, 201-02.
85. Ekkart Zimmermann and Thomas Saalfeld, "The Three Waves of West German Right-Wing Extremism," in Peter H. Merkl and Leon Weinberg (eds.), *Encounters with the Contemporary Radical Right* (Boulder, Colo., 1993), pp. 50-74, here 69.
86. As above, success was defined as 2.5 percent or above. In its eight successes under conservative governments (in Baden-Württemberg, Bavaria, and Berlin), the far right averaged 5.8 percent, while it averaged 5.1 percent of the vote in its ten successes under SPD-led governments (in Bremen, Berlin, the Saar, Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, and Lower Saxony). Overall, the far right averaged 2.7 percent when conservatives were in office, and 3.3 percent when they were not.
87. Zimmermann and Saalfeld (see note 83 above), p. 59.
88. The latter form of government was to consist of SPD ministers chosen by an SPD Minister President elected with the help of the PDS in the state parliament.
89. *Berliner Zeitung*, 9 May 1998.
90. Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Wahl in Sachsen-Anhalt* (Mannheim, 1998), p. 55; Dieter Roth and Thomas Emmert, "Jung, männlich und ohne Ideologie," *Die Zeit*, 29 April 1998, p. 3; *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 28 April 1998.
91. *Berliner Zeitung*, 20 April 1998.
92. Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Wahl in Sachsen-Anhalt* (Mannheim, 1998), p. 56.
93. *Berliner Zeitung*, 8 April 1998; *Die Zeit*, 29 April 1998.
94. *Berliner Zeitung*, 9 May 1998.
95. Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Wahl in Sachsen-Anhalt* (Mannheim, 1998), p. 38.
96. *Ibid.*, pp. 40, 55.
97. Infratest survey, second wave, reported in *Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk*, 12 March 1998, online edition.
98. *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 23 May 1998, online edition; Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Bundestagswahl 1994*, p. 50; Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, *Politbarometer*, July 1998, p. 2.