

**Do Bigger Political Parties Suffer from Low Turnout  
in General and State Elections in Germany**

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Michael Kunert ([Michael.Kunert@infratest-dimap.de](mailto:Michael.Kunert@infratest-dimap.de))

Infratest dimap – Gesellschaft für Trend- und Wahlforschung mbH

Moosdorfstraße 7-9, 12435 Berlin

## 0. Introduction:

Since many years you can hear and read sentences like the following in Germany:

*Spiegel Online 2006<sup>i</sup>: "At IEast one effect of low turnout failed to appear: Extreme political parties did not profit by voters staying at home – otherwise a typical consequence."*

*Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung<sup>ii</sup>: "In general a high turnout leads to big difficulties for smaller political parties, to reach the minimum quorum."*

*Stephan Haselberger, Tagesspiegel<sup>iii</sup>: "Right extremists could profit ... from a low turnout, which benefits the small political parties in general."*

*Matthias Horn<sup>v</sup>: "... Analysing other elections, it's known, that a lower turnout first derogates the big parties and here especially the SPD."*

*Jutta Oerding, Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung<sup>v</sup>: "... Both politicians are sorry about the low turnout 'The big parties always suffer from it.' "*

*Martin Knobbe et al.<sup>vi</sup>: "...Pollsters say, the lower the turnout, the easier the NPD (extreme right wing party) could achieve seats in the parliament."*

Of course you could extent this list. I would like to condense these statements into a hypothesis which is more precise and could be inspected. Our starting-hypothesis is

H0: "Big political parties suffer from low turnout and the small ones profit from it".
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We will take a look, whether it is only a not applicable platitude or whether the numbers say that it's a statement with real substance. During the session we get a deeper understanding and this will result in several reformulations of the above statement. I want to stress the following point: In this session we will NOT discuss any sociological theory for this (causal) relation. We do not concern ourselves with H0 because of it's theoretical background but because of it's practical relevance in public election reporting!

The present paper is divided into the following steps:

- 1. Short overview about the political landscape in Germany after 1949**
- 2. Interrelationship between turnout and party fractions**  
**observing different elections or different regions**
- 3. Interrelationship between  $\Delta$ turnout/  $\Delta$ party fractions**  
**observing one fixed election and different regions**
- 4. Interrelationship between  $\Delta$ turnout/  $\Delta$ party fractions**  
**observing different electiondays and fixed regions**
- 5. Interrelationship between  $\Delta$ turnout and  $\Delta$  party fractions**  
**observing Bundestagswahlen in the states**
- 6. Interrelationship between  $\Delta$ turnout and  $\Delta$  party fractions**  
**observing state elections in the states**
- 7. Conclusions**
- 8. Appendix**

### **1. Short overview about the political landscape in Germany after 1949**

The political landscape in Germany after World War II can be divided into different phases. With a voter turnout of 78.5% ten political parties achieved seats in the first Bundestag in the year 1949. The SPD (Socialdemocrats) und CDU/CSU (Christian democratic union and Christian social union) got 29.2% and 31% respectively; together they received 60.2% of the valid votes. This first nationwide election (in the Eastern part of Germany, there were no free elections at that time) was followed by a period of concentration which found it's culmination point in the year 1972. With a turnout of 91.1% of the eligible voters the SPD collected 45.8% and the Christian democrats 44.9% that is 90.7% for the two big parties which had emerged into real catch all parties! The liberals (FDP) achieved 8.4% of the valid votes and a residual of 0.9% remained for all other political parties together. Until 1980 this so called 2 ½ party-

system remained widely unchanged. Since then we witness a period of ongoing fragmentation. For example in last nationwide general election (Bundestagswahl 2005) 77.7% of all eligible voters used their right to cast their ballots and besides the three parties SPD, CDU/CSU and FDP two more parties (the Greens and the postcommunist party Linke.PDS) moved into the Bundestag. The two big parties SPD and CDU/CSU got 69.4% of the valid votes which is much less than 30 years ago.

<b>Table 1: Bundestagswahl</b>	<b>1949</b>	<b>1972</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>2005 West</b>	<b>2005 Total</b>
<b>Turnout</b>	78,5%	91,1%	88,6%	78,5%	77,7%
<b>SPD+CDU/CSU</b>	60,2%	90,7%	87,4%	72,9%	69,4%
SPD	29,2%	45,8%	42,9%	35,2%	34,2%
CDU/CSU	31,0%	44,9%	44,5%	37,7%	35,2%
FDP	11,9%	8,4%	10,6%	10,2%	9,8%
Grüne	-	-	1,5%	8,6%	8,1%
Linke.PDS	-	-		4,8%	8,7%
Andere	27,8%	0,9%	0,5%	3,5%	3,9%

In the following pages we look at the Western and Eastern part of Germany separately and classify the political parties in a different way: In West-Germany SPD and CDU/CSU are considered as big parties, FDP, Greens and Linke.PDS as small parties and all others as very small. In contrast in the Eastern part of the Federal Republic the Linke.PDS is classified as a big party too<sup>1</sup> The following analysis is based on official election results<sup>2</sup>.

## **2. Interrelationship between turnout and party fractions**

### **observing different elections or different regions**

In Germany nationwide elections are the Bundestagswahl (every 4 years) and since 1979 the election of the European Parliament (every 5 Years). Besides there are state

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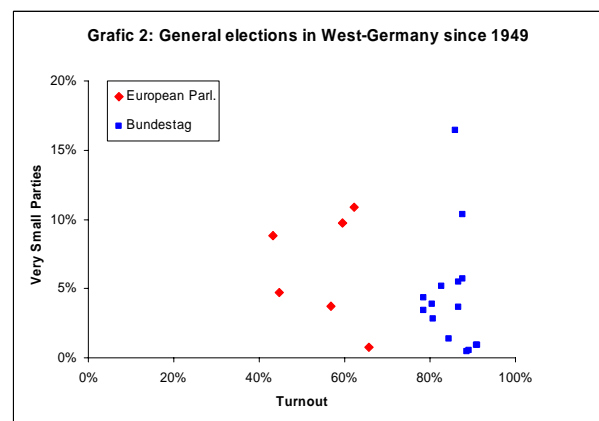
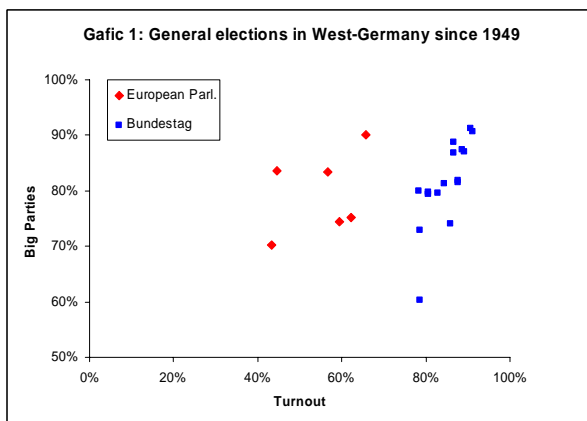
<sup>1</sup> In general Berlin is excluded from most analyses, as we do not classify Berlin as West nor East.

elections (actually 16 states constitute Germany) and local elections. First we take a look at the nationwide elections in Germany after World War II. The electiondays are the cases and we calculate the correlation between the turnout and the fractions of the partyclasses big, small and very small. For historical reasons and because of the different definitions, we calculate the coefficients for West and East separately.

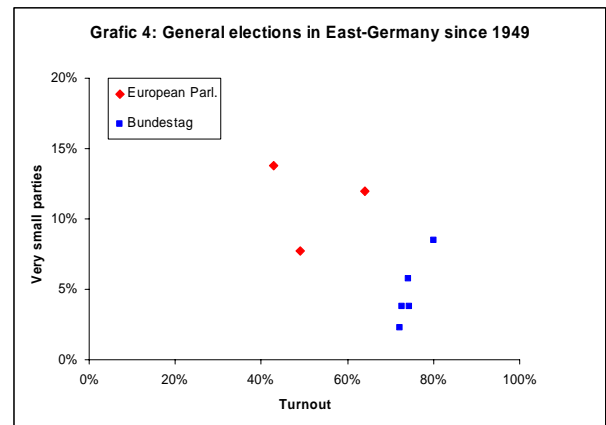
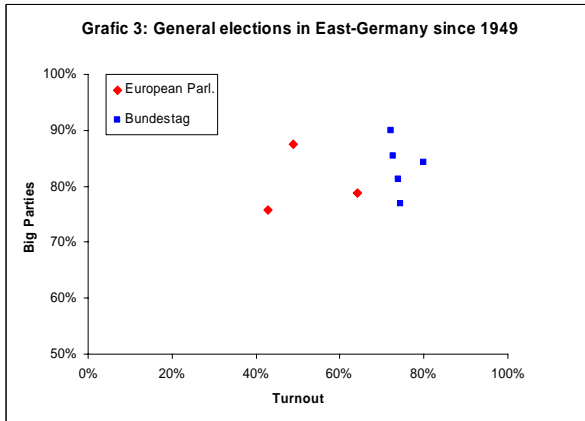
<b>Table 2:</b>	West-	East-
General elections in Germany	Germany	Germany
Number of elections	22	8
Pearsons correlation coefficient: party fraction with turnout		
Big parties	0,33	0,24
Small parties	-0,36	0,32
Very small parties	-0,14	-0,64

<b>Table 3:</b>	West-Germany		East-Germany	
General elections in Germany				
	Bundestag	Europ. Parl.	Bundestag	Europ. Parl.
Number of elections	16	6	5	3
Mean values in %				
Turnout	<b>84,9%</b>	<b>55,3%</b>	<b>74,6%</b>	<b>52,0%</b>
Big parties	81,4%	79,5%	83,6%	80,7%
Small parties	12,8%	14,1%	11,6%	8,2%
Very small parties	5,8%	6,4%	<b>4,8%</b>	<b>11,1%</b>

The following scatterplots show the basic datapairs:



<sup>2</sup> We use the votes which determine the number of seats in the parliaments, mostly it's the "Zweitstimme".



Indeed we find positive correlation coefficients for the big parties. However the kind of election (Bundestag or European Parliament) has a very strong impact and overlays the interrelationship. Thus it is useful to calculate separate coefficients for Bundestagswahl und European elections:

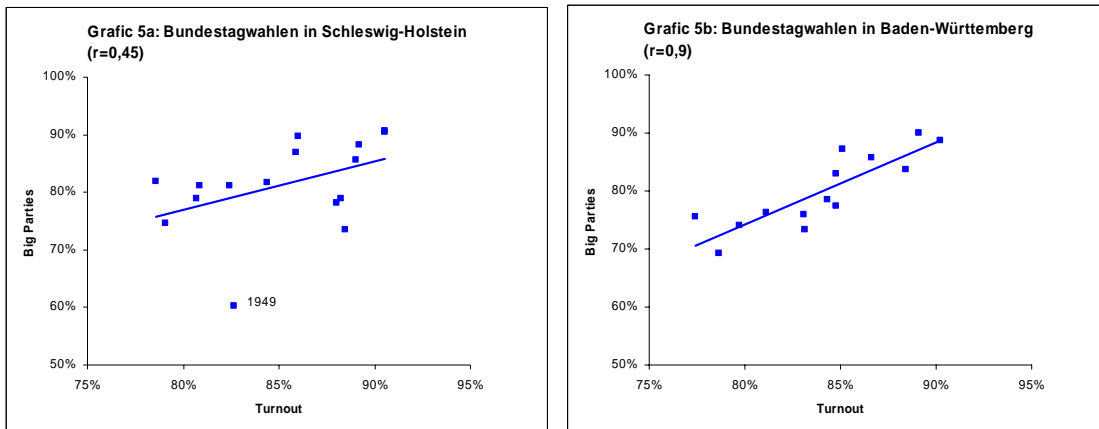
Table 4: General elections in Germany	West-Germany		East-Germany	
	Bundestag	Europ. Parl.	Bundestag	Europ. Parl.
Number of elections	16	6	5	3
Pearsons correlation coefficient: party fraction with turnout				
Big parties	0,76	0,38	-0,20	0,01
Small parties	-0,72	-0,54	-0,25	0,03
Very small parties	-0,36	-0,16	0,92	-0,05

Again we see a strong correlation<sup>3</sup> for Bundestagswahlen in West-Germany, a low correlation for the EP in West-Germany, no correlation for the EP in East-Germany and a negative correlation for the Bundestagswahl in East-Germany<sup>4</sup>. Of course the number of cases is very low even for the Bundestagswahl in West-Germany. Therefore we observe the datapairs turnout and party fraction for each of the 10 Western states. The

<sup>3</sup> The fitting regression line has a high slope. The fraction of big parties rises by 1.35% points if the turnover rises by 1% point. An illustrating example: 60 of 100 eligible voters give their ballots a big party and 15 vote another political party and at least 25 persons are non voters. That is a turnover of 75% and 80% of the casted votes account for other political parties. Now 10 non voters change to a big party. Thus we have a fraction of  $(60+10)/(75+10)=82,5\%$  for the big parties, that is a slope of 0.24 and that is far off from 1.35! Hence there is no way to explain the observed effect by deviant voting behaviour of the additional voters!

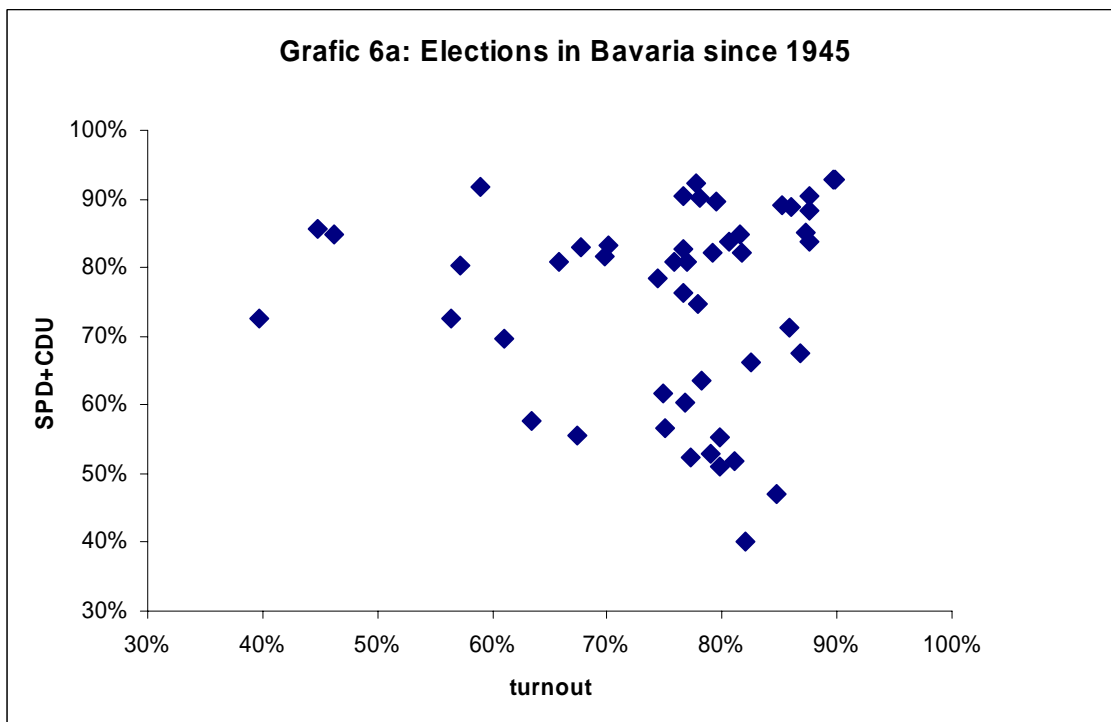
<sup>4</sup> The value would be even lower if you would define only SPD + CDU/CSU as big party in East-Germany (-0.38 against -0.20).

coefficients are between 0.45 (Schleswig-Holstein) and 0.9<sup>5</sup> (Baden-Württemberg) and the slope of the regression line is between 0.85 and 1.53.



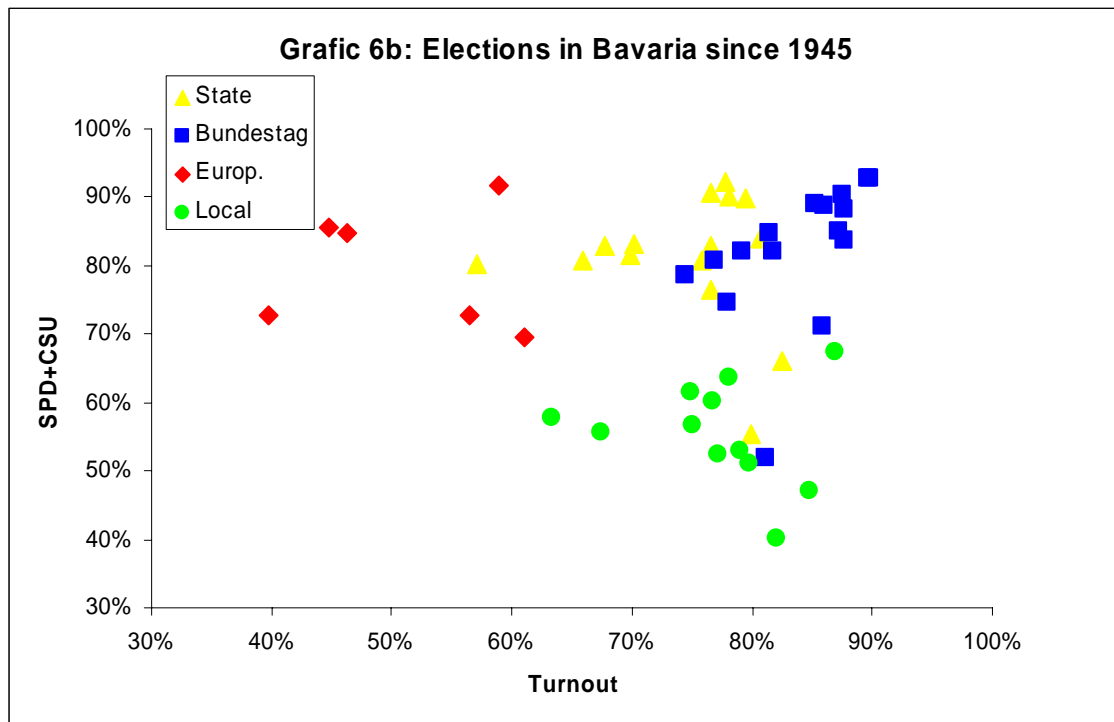
That is: the positive correlation between turnout and the performance of the big parties in the West is verified on the level of Federal states for the Bundestagswahl.

Now we focus on one single state e. g. Bavaria



The scatterplot exemplarily splits into four clusters for the different types of elections!

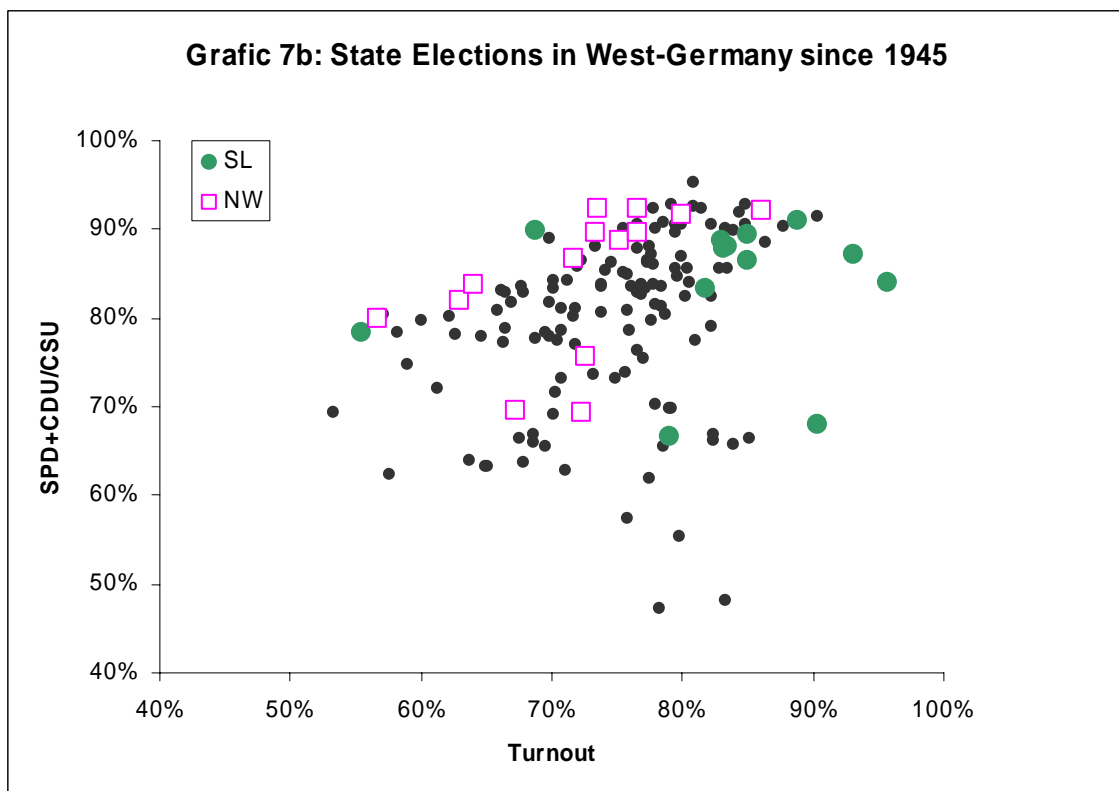
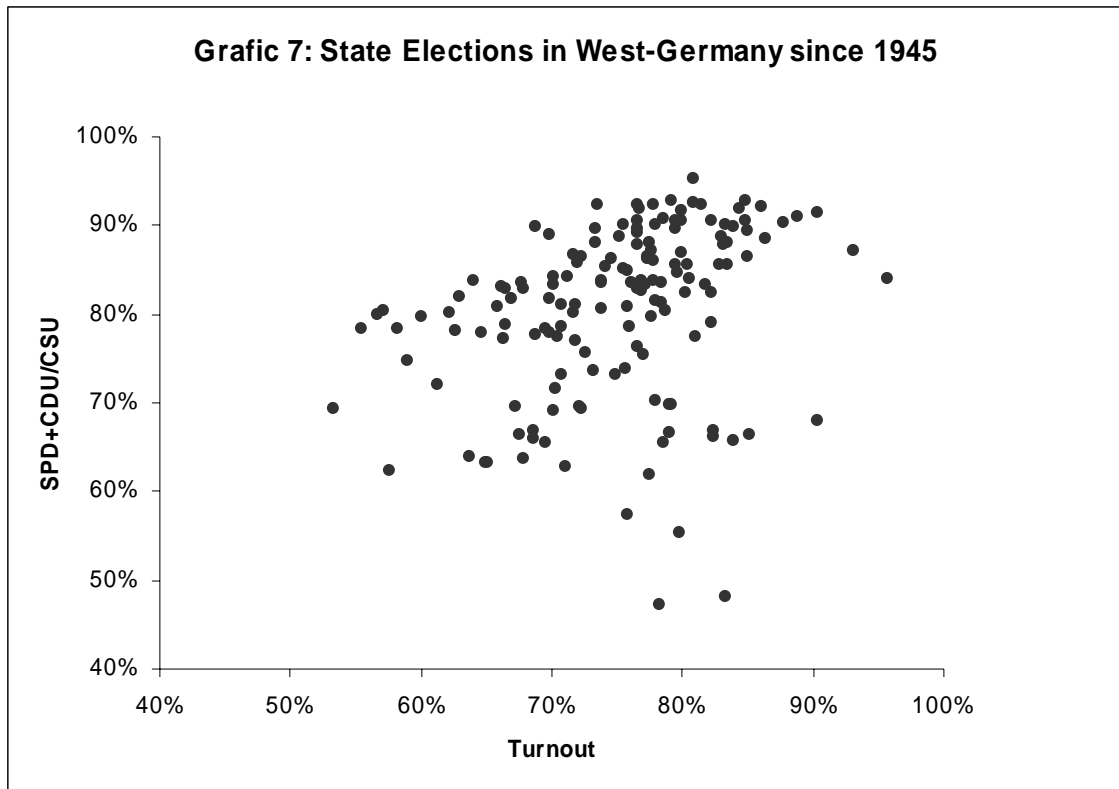
<sup>5</sup> Generally I don't report significance tests as we calculate the coefficients in the universe instead of a sample. Nevertheless if you would calculate it here, 8 of 10 coefficients would be significant higher than 0 on a 95% level.



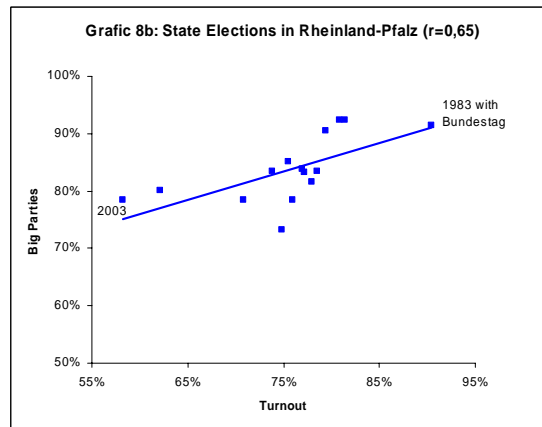
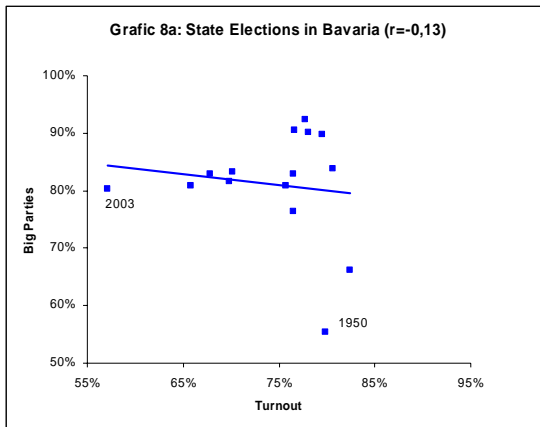
The graphics and tables presented so far document that it is very reasonable to distinguish these elections strictly! Indeed this is one important result of the paper: You should never use Statement H0 across different types of elections! Therefore we reformulate our statement in

H1: "After eliminating the effect of different elections (types of election), big parties suffer from low turnout and the small ones profit from it".

Besides the dimension "election day" there is another dimension, which could be varied systematically. Below we vary regions and election days for one kind of election: the state-elections. The following graphic 7 shows the data pairs turnout and party fraction for the two big parties for all state elections since 1945 in the "old" states Schleswig-Holstein, Hamburg, Niedersachsen, Bremen, Nordrhein-Westfalen, Hessen, Rheinland-Pfalz, Baden-Württemberg, Bayern und Saarland. Analysing the scatterplot in detail, the results for single states do not disperse at random but have special attributes: For example the big parties traditionally get high quotes in NW = Nordrhein-Westfalen. On the other hand in SL = Saarland you get mostly a very high turnout.



Examining the scatterplots separately for each state results in correlation coefficients between -0.13 und +0.65.



These pictures suggest that the political history in the states leads to special effects and you shouldn't mix these in one analysis.

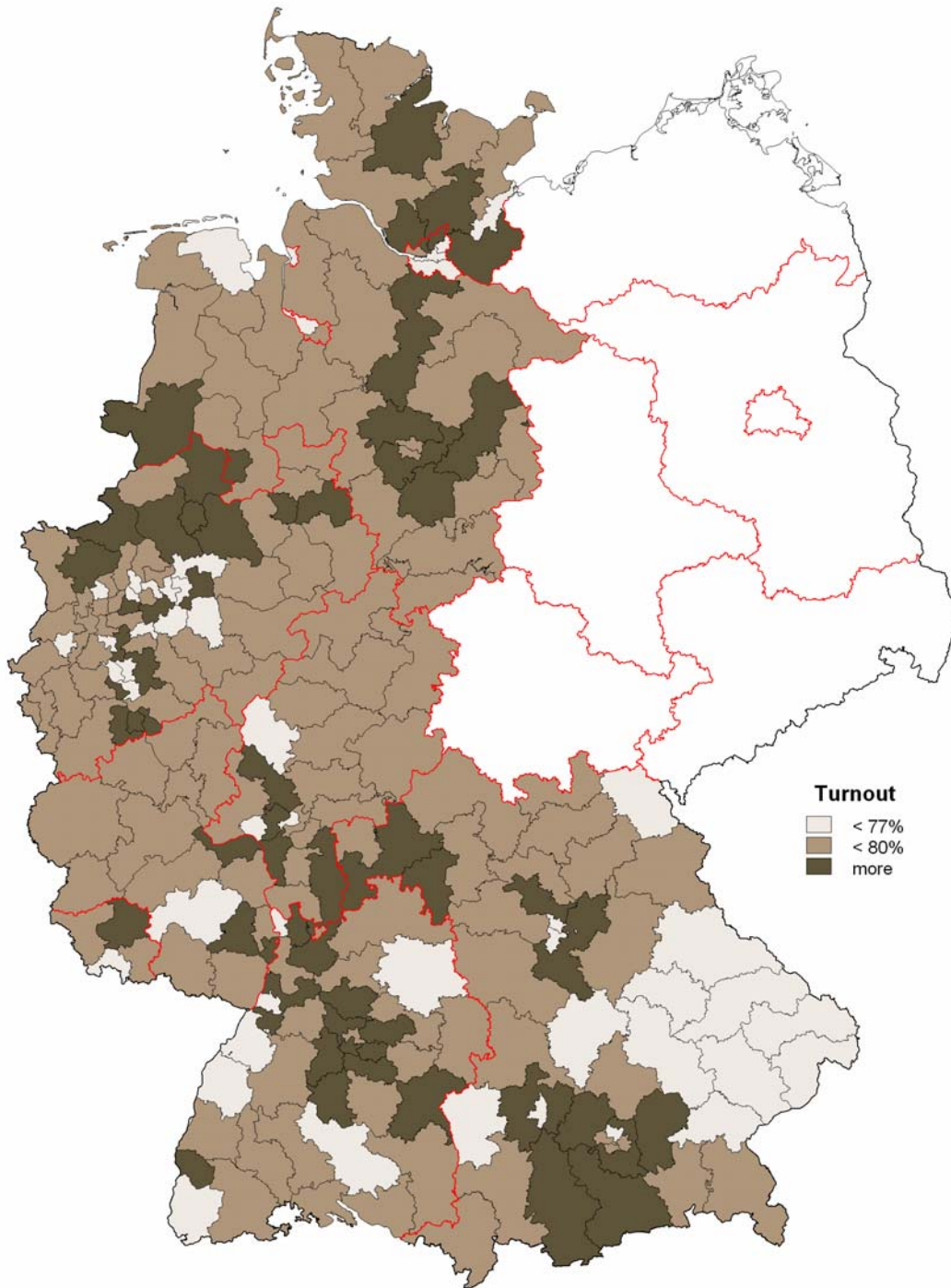
Another possibility to vary regions is to take the constituencies as cases. This is done for the Bundestagswahl 2005 and the 299 constituencies:

<b>Table 5:</b>	Low turnout	Medium turnout	High turnout
West-Germany	70,8% - 77,0%	77,0% - 80,0%	80,0% - 83,5%
Number of constituencies	51	125	58
Mean turnout	75,1%	78,5%	81,3%
Mean fractions in %			
Big parties (SPD+CDU/CSU)	72,5%	73,5%	71,9%
Small parties (FDP+Grüne+Linke.PDS)	23,5%	23,0%	25,1%
Very small parties	4,0%	3,5%	3,0%

<b>Table 6:</b>	Low turnout	Medium turnout	High turnout
East-Germany without constituency 160	68,7% - 72,0%	72,0% - 76,0%	76,0% - 79,6%
Number of constituencies	17	24	11
Mean turnout	71,0%	74,7%	77,1%
Mean fractions in %			
Big parties (SPD+CDU/CSU+PDS)	84,6%	81,3%	78,0%
Small parties (FDP+Grüne)	11,2%	12,6%	14,7%
Very small parties	4,2%	6,1%	7,4%

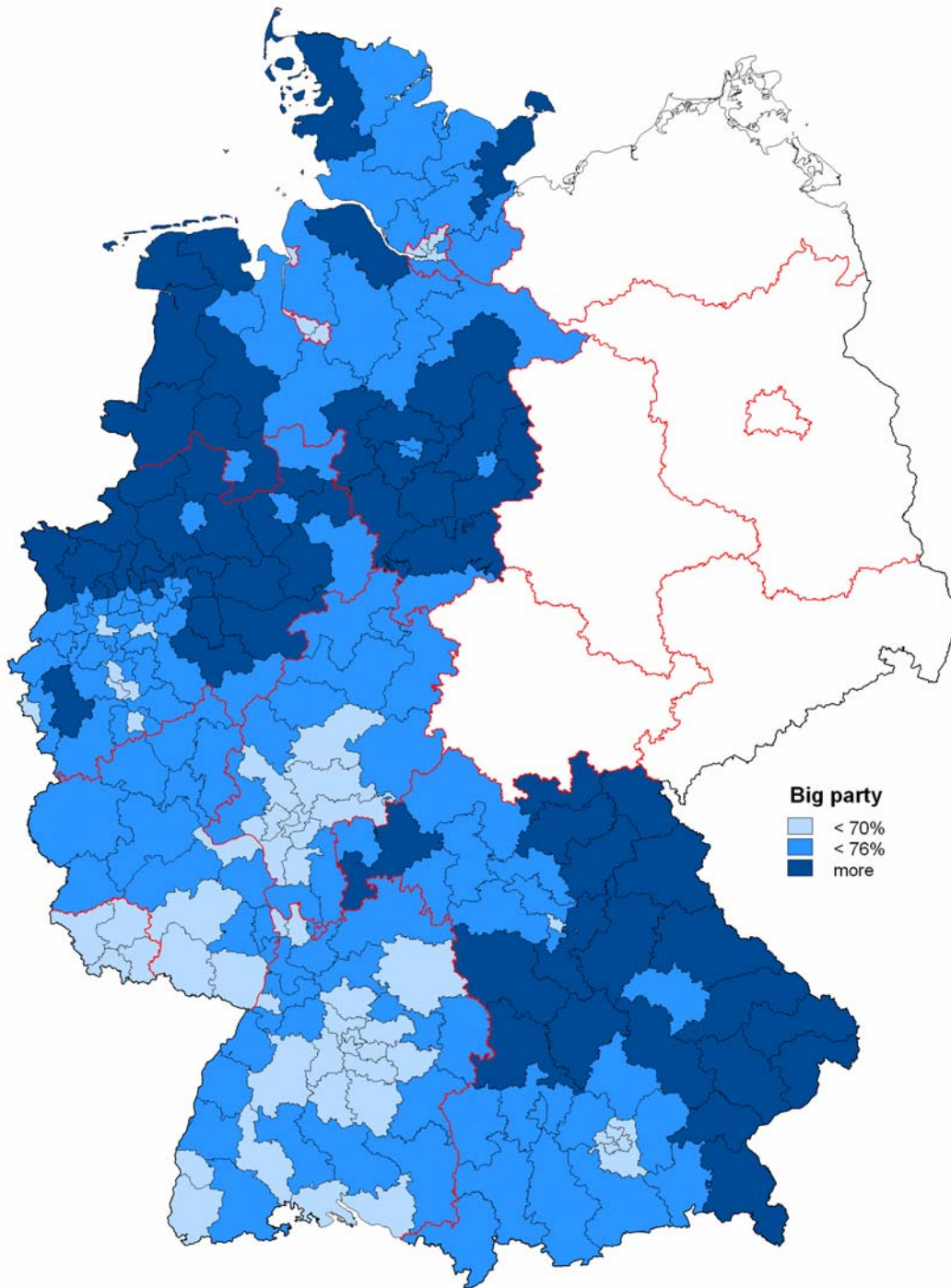
<b>Table 7:</b>	West-	East-
Bundestag 2005	Germany	Germany
Number of constituencies	234	52
Pearsons correlation coefficient:		
party fraction with turnout		
Big parties	-0,07	-0,74
Small parties	0,15	0,60
Very small parties	-0,32	0,56

The correlations look very different in West and East and contradicts hypothesis H1 for the Bundestagswahl 2005! The following maps give a deeper look for the West. All constituencies have about the same number of eligible voters. Thus small constituencies (small area) have a higher population density and large constituencies are rural districts. Looking at the first map you can recognize some cities like Hamburg, Bremen, Frankfurt, Munich which have lower turnout-values than the constituencies near by. However e. g. the turnout in the rural Eastern part of Bavaria is on a low level too.



Software: EasyMap v.8.0 / Lutum + Tappert DV-Beratung GmbH, Bonn

Looking at the second map you can detect some cities with low fractions for the bigger parties. However there are rural areas (e. g. in the East of Bavaria) with high values for the big parties too. In total you cannot see any correlation between the two maps.



Software: EasyMap v.8.0 / Lutum + Tappert DV-Beratung GmbH, Bonn

Again there are historical conditions, which are very unequal in different regions! Hence varying the turnout by observing different regions or different types of elections always results in a mix of effects! Looking back to our introductory statements of newsmen,

politicians and pollsters their explanatory notes were given interpreting an actual election result! The winner of an election is a political party which could increase the fraction of casted votes, the looser gets a smaller fraction. Here especially the differences to last comparable election are the interesting objects of evaluation. One easy and effective way to succeed in eliminating the strong effects of regions and election types to use these changes in turnout and party fractions. This method gives you the added value, that general trends in the long run do not influence our analysis<sup>6</sup>. Against this background we reformulate the hypothesis again:

H2: "After eliminating the effect of different regions and elections (types of elections), big parties suffer from decreasing turnout and the small ones profit from it".

I want to mention that until now time wasn't considered but from now on the time scale comes into account!<sup>7</sup>

### **3. Interrelationship between $\Delta$ turnout/ $\Delta$ party fractions**

#### **observing one fixed election and different regions**

In the following analysis again the constituencies are our basic entities. But now we look at the changes in the turnout and the changes in voting behaviour from general election 2002 to 2005. The results are shown in the following table:

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<sup>6</sup> This method gives you another advantage: Since 1945 structural changes took place: e. g. German reunification in 1990, or changes in electoral law. One example of changing electoral law is the state election in Niedersachsen. Until 1986 every person had one vote and since 1990 every one has two votes. In our calculations we use the party fractions of the second votes although knowing, that in West-Germany nearly always the big parties get more first votes than second votes. So by law you change the level for the big parties for the whole future. Using the differences the influence of this structural change is limited to one data pair (1990 – 1986)!

<sup>7</sup> Calculating differences is a usual approach in time series analysis to get stationary data.

<b>Table 8:</b> West-Germany	Changes in turnout in %-points		
	Strong decrease -6,2% to -3,0%	Medium decrease -3,0% to -1,5%	Low decrease -1,5% to -0,2%
Number of constituencies	47	126	61
Mean changes in turnout	-3,8%	-2,1%	-1,1%
Mean changes in party fractions in % points:			
Big parties (SPD+CDU/CSU)	-9,1%	-5,5%	-6,4%
Small parties (FDP+Grüne+Linke.PDS)	7,3%	5,1%	5,9%
Very small parties	1,7%	0,4%	0,5%

<b>Table 9:</b> East-Germany without constituency 160	Changes in turnout in %-points		
	Low increase -0,1% to +0,5%	Medium increase +0,5% to +2,5%	Strong increase +2,5% to +4,1%
Number of constituencies	8	35	9
Mean changes in turnout	0,3%	1,5%	3,1%
Mean changes in party fractions in % Points:			
Big parties (SPD+CDU/CSU+PDS)	-3,5%	-3,8%	-4,9%
Small parties (FDP+Grüne)	1,8%	2,0%	2,2%
Very small parties	1,7%	1,9%	2,7%

<b>Table 10:</b> Bundestag 2005 versus 2002	West- Germany	East- Germany
Number of constituencies	234	52
Pearson's correlation coefficient:		
$\Delta$ party fraction with $\Delta$ turnout		
Big parties	0,36	-0,35
Small parties	-0,22	0,18
Very small parties	-0,55	0,42

The situation is very different in West and East! While the West-data fits hypothesis H2, you would have to negate it for the East. This is a result for the changes from 2002 to 2005 in the constituencies. Separating the categories into single parties we get:

<b>Table 11:</b> Bundestag 2005 versus 2002	West- Germany	East- Germany
Pearsons correlation coefficient:		
$\Delta$ party fraction with $\Delta$ turnout		
SPD	-0,64	0,17
CDU/CSU	0,68	-0,51
Green party	-0,43	-0,43
FDP	-0,46	0,29
Linke.PDS	0,34	0,05
REP	-0,52	-0,14
NPD	-0,41	0,33
Others	-0,36	0,31

Again the results for West and East are contradictory! There are positive correlations between changes in turnout and changes in the fraction of big parties in West-Germany and negative in East-Germany. However you should keep in mind that this is a result for one special<sup>8</sup>!

#### 4. Interrelationship between $\Delta$ turnout/ $\Delta$ party fractions

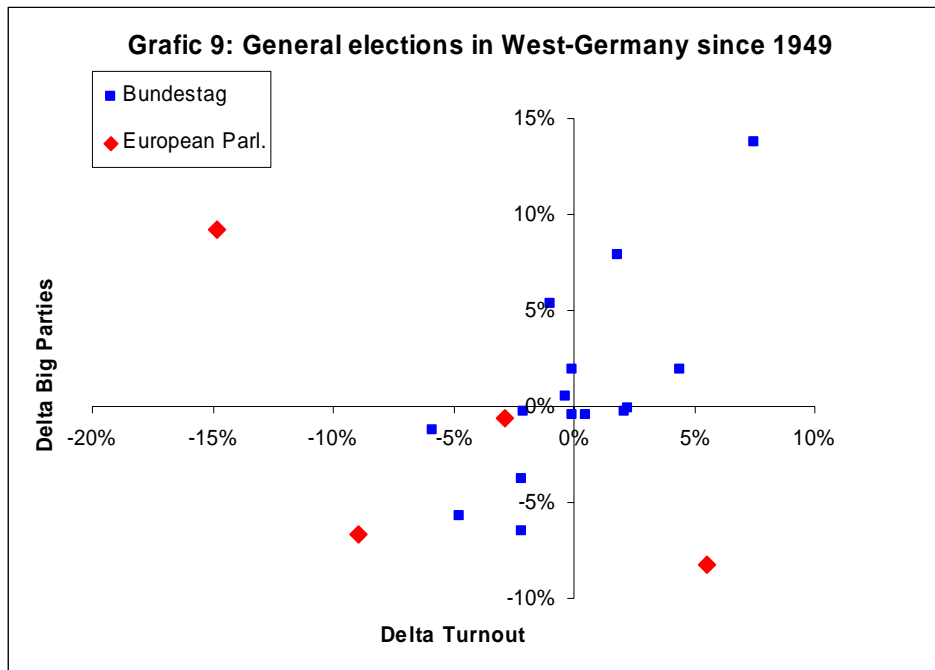
##### observing different electiondays and fixed regions

We just analysed one fixed election, now we want to observe the trend over the years. In the following analyses we want to test H2 once more, but now our basic entities are the changes from one election day to the next. In West-Germany there have been 16 Bundestagswahlen since 1949 and therefore we work with 15 changes. In East-Germany there have been 5 election days (since 1990) and this yields to 4 pairs of differences. Looking at the changes of voting behaviour largely protects you against pseudo-correlations, which base on two independent main trends<sup>9</sup>. If there is a causal relationship between turnout and special party fractions, than you should observe correlations between the changes from election to election.

Table 12:	Bundestagswahl		European Parl.	
	West	East	West	East
Number of election-pairs	15	4	5	2
Pearsons correlation coefficient:				
$\Delta$ party fraction with $\Delta$ turnout				
Big parties	0,73	-0,53	-0,71	
Small parties	-0,28	-0,03	0,46	
Very small parties	-0,73	1,00	0,83	
SPD	0,35	-0,25	-0,07	
CDU/CSU	0,50	-0,95	-0,82	
Linkspartei.PDS	-0,49	0,42		
Grüne	0,43	-0,04	0,36	

<sup>8</sup> Comparing the coefficients in West-Germany for big parties (0.36), the basic coefficients for SPD(-0,64) and CDU/CSU (0,68) look quite strange. But remember: The correlation coefficients are not additive! Here the regional variation of CDU/CSU is much higher than the variation of the SPD.

<sup>9</sup> Imagine there are two constant general trends: voter turnout is decreasing over the years and the catch all parties lose votes on the long run. This would result in positive correlations between the fraction of turnout and fraction of catch all parties. However looking at the changes in the fractions, then the described trends will **not** lead to any correlations! More details are found in the appendix.

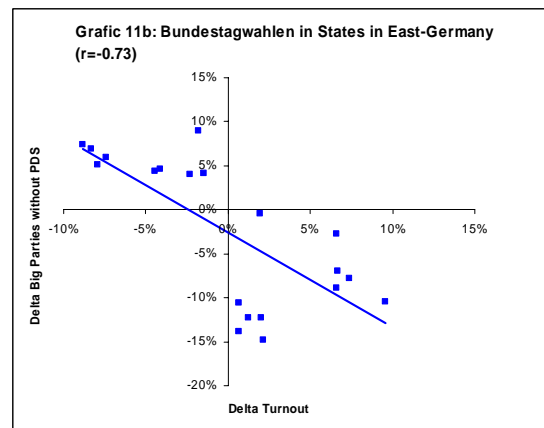
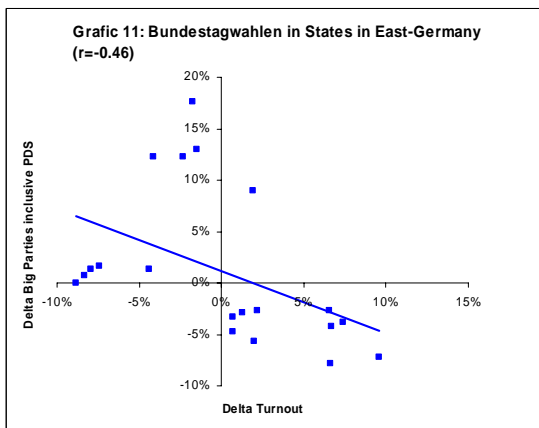
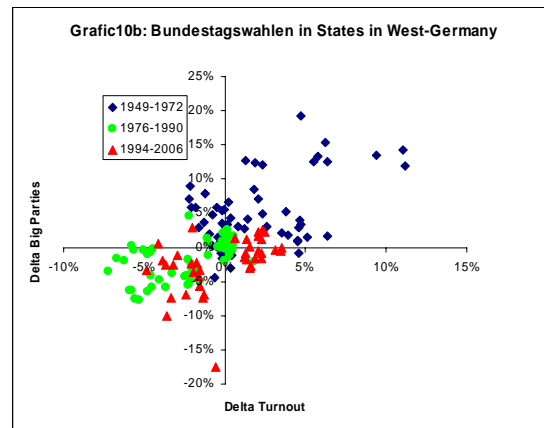
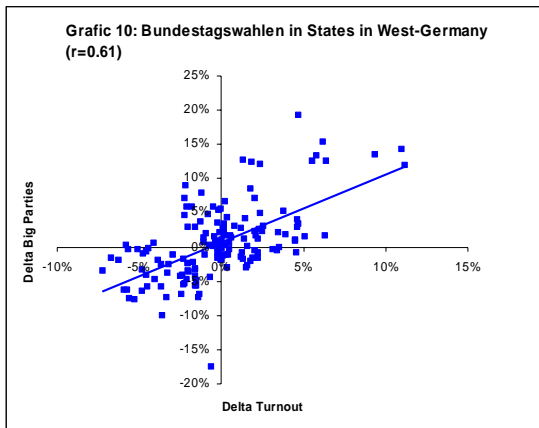


Again the interrelations are completely different in West and East! While in West-Germany there is a very strong positive correlation between changes in the turnout and changes in the party fractions of the big parties, it's strongly negative in the East!

Indeed if you drop the first (very special) data case (1953 – 1949) the correlation-coefficient declines from 0.73 to 0.53, but nevertheless it does not change the substance of the correlation. Looking at the very small parties, the differences between West and East could hardly be stronger (-0.73 versus 1.0). Of course the table suffers from the low numbers of cases! Eliminating the main effects of regions by using the changes we now analyse the dataset of all results of Bundestagswahlen in the Western and Eastern states<sup>10</sup>.

<sup>10</sup> The state Berlin is excluded from the analysis.

## 5. Interrelationship between $\Delta$ turnout and $\Delta$ party fraction observing Bundestagswahlen in the states



Again we observe a positive correlation for the Bundestagswahlen in the 10 Western states in Germany between changes in turnout and changes in party fraction of big parties ( $r=0.61$ ). And again we have a negative correlation in the Eastern states ( $-0.46$ ). This difference is NOT based on the different definition of big parties as graphic 11b shows very explicit ( $r=-0.73$ )! Comparing West and East you should keep in mind the different time periods: In the East Bundestagswahlen began in 1990.

Now we turn to other elections instead of nationwide Bundestagswahlen. Local elections are not suitable for our analysis, because of very special local conditions. Furthermore quite often voting for a political party in a local election is combined with other elections especially direct voting of persons like mayors. Therefore we focus on state elections.

## 6. Interrelationship between $\Delta$ turnout and $\Delta$ party fraction

### observing state elections in the states

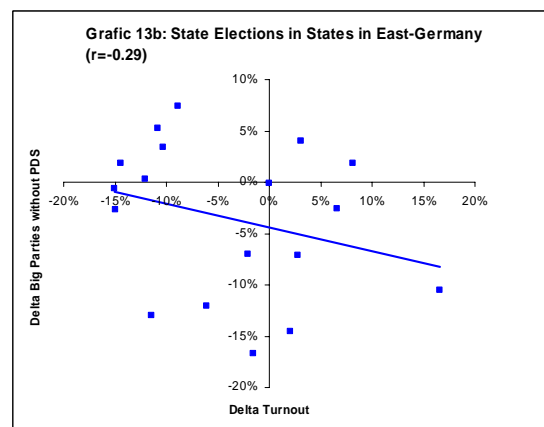
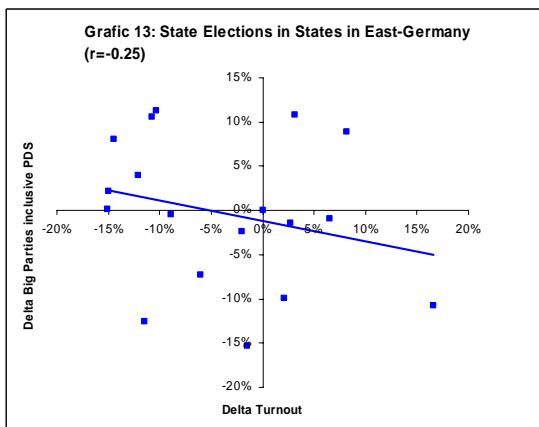
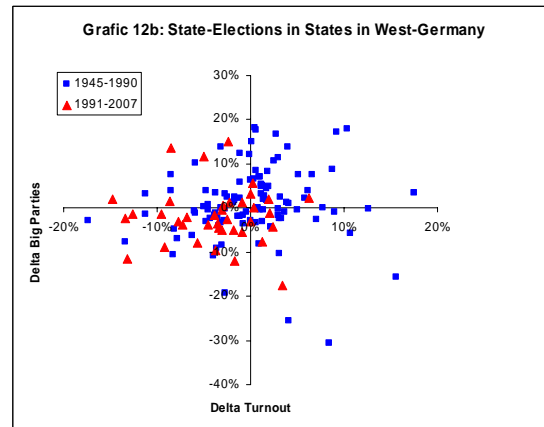
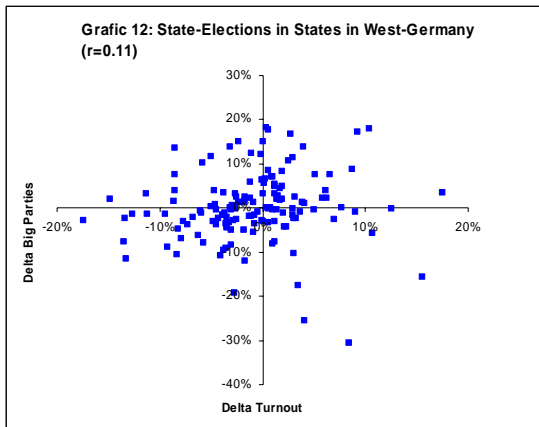
The underlying regions are the states of the federal republic, which are very different in their party political history. By this approach we test H2 not for one special party constellation but for a mixture of very different constellations. Again by analysing the changes, we eliminate the distracting effects of different levels and trends.

<b>Table 13:</b>	West-	East-
State elections	Germany	Germany
No of pairs of state-elections	143	18
Pearsons correlation coefficient:		
$\Delta$ party fraction with $\Delta$ turnout		
Big parties	0,11	-0,25
Small parties	-0,26	-0,06
Very small parties	0,03	0,51

<b>Table 14:</b>	West-	East-
State elections	Germany	Germany
Pearsons correlation coefficient:		
$\Delta$ party fraction with $\Delta$ turnout		
SPD	0,03	0,20
CDU/CSU	0,11	-0,49
Green party	0,00	-0,12
FDP	-0,24	-0,01
Linke.PDS	-0,31	0,00

<b>Table 15:</b>	West-Germany			
State elections				
Time period	1945 -	1973 -	1981 -	1991 -
	2005	2005	2005	2005
No of pairs of state-elections	143	84	64	38
Pearsons correlation coefficient:				
$\Delta$ party fraction with $\Delta$ turnout				
Big parties	0,11	0,15	0,13	-0,03
Small parties	-0,26	-0,16	-0,30	-0,16
Very small parties	0,03	0,00	0,14	0,25

Table 13 to 15 are the main results of this paper. The number of data-cases is sufficient! In East-Germany the correlations between changes in turnout and changes in big parties is a little negative!



Furthermore these correlations change on the time scale. If you analyse only the last 38 state elections in the West, then you find no correlations ( $r=-0.03$ ) between changes in turnout and changes in fractions of the big parties. Looking at correlations within single states, you would find changing algebraic signs for the coefficients even in the Western states!

## 7. Conclusions

We started with  $H_0$  "Big political parties suffer from low turnout and the small ones profit from it". We analysed it, because it is very common place in Germany. As voting behaviour depends on traditional characteristics in regions and since different elections and types of elections have very special peculiarities, the hypothesis could not be adequate in this general form. Thus we stated that you have to consider the strong effects of regions and of types of elections. This means especially, that it is not ad-

equate to use the lower turnout in elections of the European Parliament in comparison to the Bundestagswahl as argument for bad numbers for the bigger parties! Further more it is not adequate to use the lower turnout in one state election (e. g. Bavaria) in comparison to another state election (e. g. North-Rhine-Westphalia) as argument for low results for the bigger parties.

Analysing Bundestagswahlen, state elections and European elections in West-Germany and East-Germany separately we found strong correlations for the Bundestagswahlen in West-Germany between turnout and the success of the big parties (SPD +CDU/CSU). However there are only slight correlations for the election of the EP in West-Germany and for the state elections in the Western states. In East-Germany there are mostly negative correlations between turnout and party fraction of big parties<sup>11</sup>. As free elections didn't take place until 1989 in East-Germany, you compare West and East for different time periods! Indeed, if you look at the 5 Bundestagswahlen since 1990 the coefficient  $r$  goes down from 0.76 to 0.48. But this is done only on a very small database of 5 cases. Hence so far our analysis is limited by the low numbers of cases! Further more the analysis is susceptible to trends in turnout and party fractions on the long-run. As most of the journalists and politicians use the above arguments on a short term basis that is - analysing differences from one election day to the next election day - this can be crucial. One easy and effective way to handle these problems is analysing the changes in turnout and the changes in party fractions. There with we tested our new hypothesis H2 "After eliminating the effect of different regions and elections (types of elections), big parties suffer from decreasing turnout and the small ones profit from it". This approach is more appropriate especially if you keep in mind that you don't want to see quasi-correlations but you presume a causal relationship. Analysing the correlations of changes in turnout and changes in the fraction of big parties again we find relevant positive correlations for the Bundestagswahlen in the

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<sup>11</sup> This is valid for SPD+CDU as well as for SPD+CDU+PDS.

pool of the ten Western states! However there is only a very low correlation for state elections and it disappears completely if you limit the analysis to the years after 1990. In the Eastern part of Germany there are no or negative correlations. This gives you a statistical argument that a change in voter turnout in general should yield to a change in performance of the big parties in a Bundestagswahl in West-Germany in comparison to the preceding Bundestagswahl. But you are not sure, that it is argument is applicable for one special election e. g. the actual election! For all other kinds of elections (state und EP) and for the East of Germany the above argument is not valid. Of course even there from time to time it might be correct, that big parties suffer from low or decreasing turnout but it is no general rule and must be based on additional arguments. I hope that this paper helps that this simple argumentation disappears from public discussion on the long-run.

On election day Infratest dimap produces a matrix for voter flows which is based on individual data about the actual and the last voting behaviour. By these means you can answer the question whether one party of interest loses a disproportionately high fraction of cast votes to the non voters. However even the voter flow analysis is a description and no causal argument.

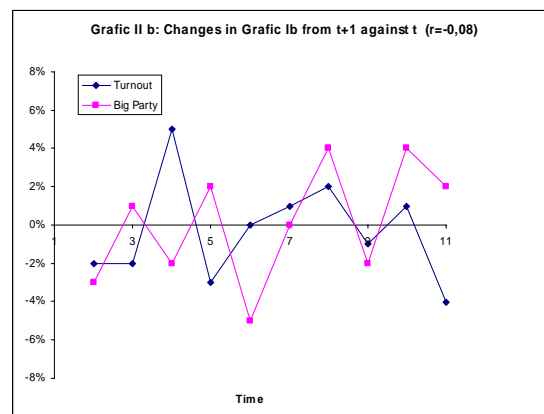
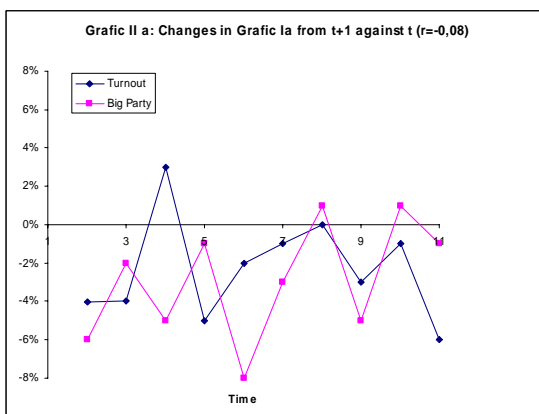
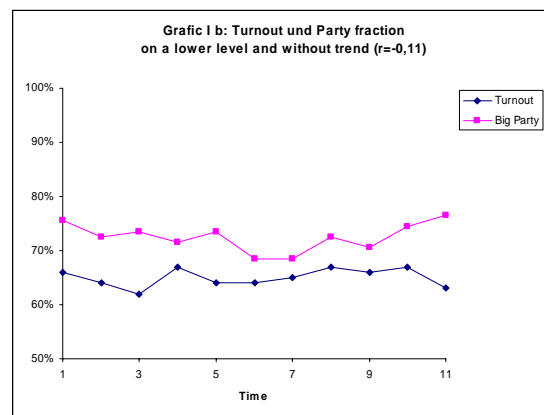
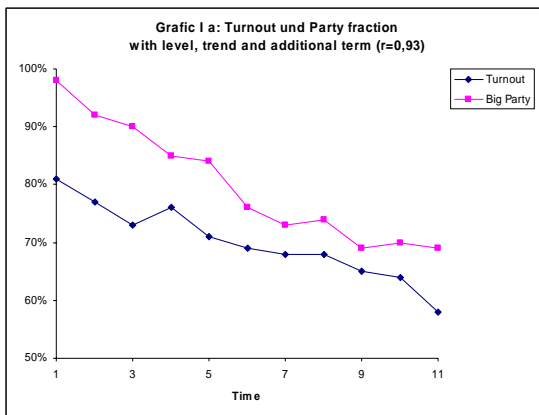
It remains the interesting question on scenarios and the view on causation: "What would have been the result of the election, if 500.000 actual non voters would have cast their ballots?" There is no hope to find a simple answer based on the fact that a party is a bigger or a smaller one!

Michael Kunert, Infratest dimap

## 8. Appendix

In the following example the dataseries for turnout and party fraction are decomposed in three parts: a level, a constant trend and an additional term.

Time	Turnout					Party fraction				
	Level	Trend	Add. term	Sum	Diff	Level	Trend	Add. term	Sum	Diff
1	70%	10,0%	1%	81,0%		80%	15,0%	3%	98,0%	
2	70%	8,0%	-1%	77,0%	-4,0%	80%	12,0%	0%	92,0%	-6,0%
3	70%	6,0%	-3%	73,0%	-4,0%	80%	9,0%	1%	90,0%	-2,0%
4	70%	4,0%	2%	76,0%	3,0%	80%	6,0%	-1%	85,0%	-5,0%
5	70%	2,0%	-1%	71,0%	-5,0%	80%	3,0%	1%	84,0%	-1,0%
6	70%	0,0%	-1%	69,0%	-2,0%	80%	0,0%	-4%	76,0%	-8,0%
7	70%	-2,0%	0%	68,0%	-1,0%	80%	-3,0%	-4%	73,0%	-3,0%
8	70%	-4,0%	2%	68,0%	0,0%	80%	-6,0%	0%	74,0%	1,0%
9	70%	-6,0%	1%	65,0%	-3,0%	80%	-9,0%	-2%	69,0%	-5,0%
10	70%	-8,0%	2%	64,0%	-1,0%	80%	-12,0%	2%	70,0%	1,0%
11	70%	-10,0%	-2%	58,0%	-6,0%	80%	-15,0%	4%	69,0%	-1,0%



Correlation coefficients are generally independent from a constant level. Additional the differences of time series are independent from a constant trend.

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<sup>i</sup> Spiegel Online – 27. März 2006, 15:35,  
URL:<http://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/0,1518,408117,00.html>[14.8.2007]  
„... Zumindest ein Effekt der niedrigen Wahlbeteiligung blieb aus: Extreme Parteien profitierten nicht davon, dass die Wähler zu Hause blieben – eine sonst typische Folge.“

<sup>ii</sup> Wolfgang Sander: Bundeszentrale für politische Bildung, Grafstat – Unterrichtsmaterial Europa M 09.21 Wahlprognosen: wichtige Faktoren und Gesichtspunkte, Kapitel 8 Wahlbeteiligung, [http://www.bpb.de/popup/popup\\_grafstat.html?url\\_guid=CYI382](http://www.bpb.de/popup/popup_grafstat.html?url_guid=CYI382) [14.8.2007] „Eine hohe Wahlbeteiligung führt in der Regel dazu, dass kleinere Parteien, ..., große Schwierigkeiten haben, das Mindestquorum zu erreichen.“

<sup>iii</sup> Stephan Haselberger, Tagesspiegel online 8.9.2006, Angst vor NPD-Erfolg im Nordosten, <http://www.tagesspiegel.de/politik/art771,1985559> [14.8.2007] „Die Rechtsextremen könnten ... von einer niedrigen Wahlbeteiligung profitieren, die kleine Parteien in der Regel begünstigt.“

<sup>iv</sup> Matthias Horn, 31.3.2006, url: <http://www.spd-sandhausen.de/presse/bericht/?id=195>, [3.7.2007]“... Von den Wahlanalysen anderer Wahlen ist bekannt, dass eine niedrige Wahlbeteiligung eher den großen Parteien schadet und hierbei besonders der SPD.“

<sup>v</sup> Jutta Oerding, Stimmenpatt in der Region, Hannoversche Allgemeine Zeitung vom 12.9.2006 auf S. 20. „... Emil Brockstedt, Chef der Regions-CDU, schließt sich Onaschs Meinung an. Beide bedauern die geringe Wahlbeteiligung: ‚Das schadet immer den großen Parteien.‘ “

<sup>vi</sup> Martin Knobbe und Gerald Drissner, NPD „Krankhafte Keime“, Artikel im Stern Heft 37, 2006: „...Meinungsforscher sagen, je niedriger die Wahlbeteiligung sei, desto leichter käme die NPD in den Landtag. ...“