Which German Voters Discriminate Against Minority Candidates?

Evidence from Experimental and Election Data

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Abstract

Immigrant-origin minorities are under-represented in many democratic legislatures. This paper evaluates the direct effects of voter discrimination on the electoral performance of minority political candidates in Germany. Using evidence from both a survey experiment and actual election data, the paper tests two mechanisms of discrimination—negative attitudes toward minority groups and assumptions about candidate ideology—and shows that neither results in a substantial penalty for the small numbers of minority candidates who actually compete for office. Minority candidates typically run for political parties that discriminating voters would not have supported in any case.

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Introduction²

There is now extensive evidence on the breadth and depth of negative attitudes toward immigrant-origin minorities in Western Europe (e.g. Adida, Laitin and Valfort 2010; Hangartner and Hainmueller 2011; Pettigrew 1998; Sides and Citrin 2007). Scholars have debated the sources of these attitudes, in particular the importance of perceived economic or cultural threats (Hainmueller and Hiscox 2009; Scheve and Slaughter 2001; Sniderman, Hagendoorn and Prior 2004). Much less is known, however, about the ways in which these attitudes affect political outcomes such as elections and public policy.

This paper examines how voter discrimination affects the electoral performance of immigrant-origin political candidates. Evidence from a survey experiment shows that German voters, particularly those who feel threatened by immigrants and Muslims, are less supportive of otherwise identical candidates with Turkish rather than German names. However, discrimination is observed mostly among supporters of parties of the Right. The small numbers of minority group members who stand for office tend to run on the Left. The fact that discriminatory voters are found mainly on the Right, and minority candidates mainly on the Left, limits the direct effects of discrimination.

Survey experiments have great advantages for identifying causal effects, but doubts are often raised over the external validity of the findings (Gaines, Kuklinski and

² The author will make replication data for the 2005 and 2009 German federal elections available on the Harvard IQSS Dataverse Network within three months of publication of the article. The survey experimental data may be obtained from the GESIS-Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences. The author will make available R code for replicating the analysis of both datasets on the same dataverse.
Quirke 2007). This paper provides an example of how evidence from a survey experiment can be combined with observational data—an approach that is remarkably rare in the existing literature.\(^3\) Analysis of vote shares from German elections in 2005 and 2009 provides little evidence that immigrant-origin candidates incur a penalty at the polls. Bringing together the two kinds of data calls attention to the ways in which the effects of the experimental treatment may be mediated by voter characteristics and the context of party competition. The findings suggest a more nuanced view of the political effects of discrimination than might be inferred from the evidence of public hostility towards immigrant-origin minorities. Discrimination serves as a constraint, but does not entirely determine the electoral prospects of political candidates from minority groups.

The next section of the paper reviews theories and evidence on candidate identity and voter discrimination. I then describe the research site, data and methods. Findings from the survey experiment and from the analysis of election data are presented in separate sections. I discuss the implications of the findings for further research, drawing on secondary sources to consider how voter discrimination may indirectly constrain the representation of minority groups. The final section concludes.

**Candidate identity and voter discrimination**

Members of ethnic, racial and religious minorities, as well as women, are under-represented in many democratic legislatures, compared to the size of these groups in the relevant populations (Bird, Saalfeld and Wüst 2011; Krook and O’Brien 2010). A number of explanations have been proposed to account for this fact, including voter

\(^3\) For an exception, see Philpot and Walton 2007.
discrimination, barriers within political parties, a lack of resources for potential candidates and the incentives established by voting rules (Lawless and Fox 2010; Norris 2004; Sigelman, et al. 1995). In this paper I focus on the impact of voter discrimination, defined as differential treatment of otherwise similar individuals depending on the social categories with which they are associated.

Existing research has focused on two psychological mechanisms of discrimination against women and minority candidates. The first of the proposed mechanisms is that voter attitudes toward particular candidates are influenced by broader negative views of minority groups. For example, Terkildsen (1993) finds that white voters with negative views of African Americans evaluate African American candidates less favorably than similar White candidates. Greenwald, et al. (2009) report that implicit measures of preference for White over Black Americans predicted candidate choice in the 2008 election. Benson, Merolla and Geer (2011) find evidence of bias against political candidates belonging to religious minorities in the U.S.A., though not against female or African American candidates. In all of these studies, otherwise identical candidates are less likely to receive voter support when negative group attitudes are activated.

The other commonly proposed psychological explanation for discrimination against women and minority candidates is that voters use identity cues to infer the ideological position of the candidate. Voters may penalize candidates who are assumed to be further from their own ideological positions. McDermott (1997) argues that, even accounting for partisanship, women are expected to be more liberal than men, and finds that female Democratic candidates fare better among liberal voters and worse among conservatives than their male peers (see also Huddy and Terkildsen 1993). Washington
(2006: 975) suggests the belief that Black Democratic candidates are “far more liberal than their non-Black counterparts” motivates both liberals and conservatives to participate, leading to higher turnout in elections featuring Black Democratic candidates (but see also Gay 2001). Kam (2007) finds that implicit measures of attitudes toward Hispanics predict white support for Hispanic political candidates, but only in the absence of information on party affiliation. Even if assumptions about candidate ideology are not inherently negative, they can still lead to discrimination. Stereotypes about ideology may be inaccurate in the aggregate, and should not be assumed to apply in any given case.

Although conceptually distinct, in fact these two mechanisms may interact. For example, Berinsky and Mendelberg (2005) find that a socially acceptable stereotype (Jews are liberal) is linked in voters’ minds to an unacceptable stereotype (Jews are shady). References to the unacceptable stereotype—even if voters reject it—can affect vote intentions by activating the assumption that Jewish candidates are liberal.

Much of the research on the psychological mechanisms of voter discrimination relies on experiments in which subjects are presented with information on hypothetical candidates. This approach allows the manipulation of a small number of candidate attributes—such as ethnicity or gender—in a controlled environment. But the artificial context also raises concerns over external validity. We might expect different responses to similar treatments in the real world, where more is at stake, where exposure to the treatment of interest may be repeated and where many sources of information compete for voters’ limited attention (Gaines, Kuklinski and Quirke 2007). In addition, there is a particular reason to suspect that the two mechanisms described above will have limited direct effects on election outcomes. The key outcome is the behavior of potential
supporters of minority candidates. But candidate identity is not the only factor that determines the potential for support. Attitudes toward minority groups and ideological preferences vary significantly across the supporters of different political parties.

In Germany, as in most European countries, negative views of immigrant-origin minority groups are more common among those on the right of the political spectrum (Alba, Schmidt and Wasmer 2003; Hainmueller and Hiscox 2009). Most of the research on minority candidates has been conducted in the U.S.A., where two parties compete for the support of the median voter, but in other electoral systems it may be easier for minority candidates to avoid relying upon the support of hostile voters. Under proportional representation, small parties can appeal to narrow segments of the electorate while still hoping to win seats and even a place in a coalition government. If negative attitudes are more common on the right but minority candidates run mainly on the left, the set of potential supporters will contain few people with negative views of minority groups. The effect of assumptions about candidate ideology may also be limited by the fact that voters typically have information not only on candidate identity but also on party affiliation (Koch 2000; Sanbonmatsu and Dolan 2009). This is certainly true in the voting booth, since candidate name is displayed next to party on the ballot. Minority candidates who run for parties of the Right, but are assumed to have Leftist ideological preferences, can be expected to suffer at the polls. The impact of presumptions of Leftist ideology should be much smaller for candidates who run on the Left, however.4

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4 Minority voters are another source of support for minority candidates (Maxwell 2012). The limitations on the effects of voter discrimination identified here imply that minority candidates can win support even in areas with few such voters.
Up to this point I have focused on the direct effects of voter discrimination, once a minority candidate’s name is on the ballot. It is important to note that discrimination can also have indirect effects. Lawless and Fox (2010) find that expectations of voter discrimination make women less likely to run for office. Anzia and Berry (2011) and Fulton (2011) argue that the women who do run for office are of significantly higher quality, since they believe they will have to meet higher standards in order to compete. This paper focuses on assessing direct effects of voter discrimination in Germany, but in the penultimate section I return to the question of possible indirect effects.

**Research site, data and methods**

The site of this study is Germany, where, according to official records, residents with a recent family history of immigration make up over 19% of the population (Statistisches Bundesamt 2011: 32). Half of these people are now German citizens, entitled to vote or stand for elected office. Immigrant-origin citizens are more likely to support parties of the Left than are indigenous Germans, though significant numbers do favor parties of the Right (Bird, Saalfeld and Wüst 2011: 91). Immigrant-origin minorities are under-represented in legislatures at the local, state and federal levels. Wüst (2011: 253) notes that in 2008 only 12 of the 614 members of the Bundestag had a migrant background.

There is ample evidence of negative attitudes toward immigrant-origin groups in Germany. In a recent survey, 30% of Turkish-origin residents, and 21% of those with roots in the former Yugoslavia, reported having suffered discrimination within the past year (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights 2009: 37). Opinion surveys show that large numbers of indigenous Germans hold negative views of minority groups,
including Muslims, Turks, people from Southern and Eastern Europe, non-Whites and Jews (Alba, Schmidt and Wasmer 2003; Heitmeyer 2012). In this paper I refer to members of these stigmatized segments of the population as minority group members.

Although still under-represented, minority politicians are becoming part of the German political scene. At the time of writing, two of the country’s leading political parties are chaired by Germans with immigrant origins. Minority candidates typically run for parties of the Left, especially the Green party, the ‘Left Party’ and the Social Democratic Party (SPD). Minority candidates are found predominantly in cities with high shares of supporters of these parties and with relatively large minority populations (Schönwälder and Kofri 2010; Wüst 2011).

To evaluate barriers to minority political representation in Germany, this paper draws on two sources of data with distinct and complementary strengths. A survey experiment conducted shortly after the 2009 German federal election asked respondents to evaluate otherwise identical candidates with Turkish vs. German names. The controlled environment of the survey allows precise manipulation of relevant information, while holding other factors constant. The experiment was conducted online from a pool of eligible German voters. Participants were randomly assigned to be given

5 Cem Özdemir, born in Germany to Turkish parents, is co-chairman of the Green party. And Philipp Rösler, adopted from Vietnam by German parents, is chairman of the Free Democratic Party (FDP) and vice-chancellor of Germany.

6 The data are from the German Longitudinal Election Study, conducted by Prof. Dr. Hans Rattinger (University of Mannheim), Prof. Dr. Sigrid Roßteutscher (University of Frankfurt), Prof. Dr. Rüdiger Schmitt-Beck (University of Mannheim), and PD Dr.
information on one of four hypothetical candidates: Anna Kramer, Andreas Kramer, Ayla Celik or Ali Celik. The first two are typical German names, respectively female and male, and the latter two names are typically Turkish. All survey respondents were told that the candidate was 40 years old, married with two children, that she or he worked for the civil service, had been a member of a political party for 15 years and for the past three years had represented that party in the regional parliament. Respondents were asked: “Could you imagine voting for [candidate name], if [she/he] were to run in your district?” The percentage willing to support each candidate is the main outcome of interest.7

Additional information on participants in the experiment is available from a survey that they had completed around two weeks earlier.8 The survey provides information on voting behavior and ideology, as well as measures of negative views of minority groups in Germany. The fact that this survey was conducted before the experiment means that responses were not affected by the experimental treatments. The

Bernhard Weßels (Wissenschaftszentrum Berlin für Sozialforschung), together with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Wahlforschung and the GESIS Leibniz-Institut für Sozialwissenschaften. GESIS is responsible for data preparation and documentation and provides the data. These institutes and individuals are not responsible for the analysis or interpretation of the data. The data with the survey experiment (component X/8, online-tracking VII, post-election and experiment) are available for academic research from the GESIS-Leibniz institute for the social sciences.

7 I code “I could very well imagine” and “I could well imagine” voting for the candidate as 1, and “I could not really imagine” and “I certainly couldn’t imagine” as 0.

8 The prior survey was completed shortly after the Federal election in September 2009.
distributions of key demographic variables, as well as ideology and negative views of minorities, are approximately balanced across treatment groups.\footnote{Age, education and region are similarly distributed across treatment groups, as is general satisfaction with democracy. Women express higher levels of support for hypothetical candidates, but models with interaction terms show that this is true regardless of candidate minority status and sex. None of the substantive results change when a control is included to account for higher levels of support among women voters.}

In order to evaluate discrimination against minority candidates in actual election data I use a statistical test that, like the survey experiment, relies on variation in candidate names. I identify candidates with minority names in the two most recent elections to the German Bundestag.\footnote{Data on candidate names and election districts are from the German federal election supervisor (Bundeswahlleiter). The data are not available for earlier elections, but it appears there were very few minority candidates in those years (see Wüst 2011).} I include not only candidates with Turkish names but also those from other groups that, according to existing research, are viewed negatively by many Germans. These include candidate names suggesting origins in predominantly Muslim countries, in the Balkans, in Asia and in Africa. Lists of candidates identified as having minority names can be found in the appendix (tables A1 and A2).

It is not sufficient simply to compare the vote shares of candidates with minority names to the vote shares of non-minority candidates, however. This is because there are systematic differences between the political parties and districts that nominate minority candidates, and those that do not. These differences are correlated with the level of support for such candidates, and so would confound a naïve estimate of the impact of
minority candidate name on election results. In order to overcome this problem I use a
double comparison, over time and within districts. I focus on new candidates in the 2009
federal election.\(^{11}\) The vote share of each new candidate is compared to the vote share of
the candidate for the same party in the same district in 2005. The level of analysis is
therefore the district-party unit. For example, I compare the vote share of Hüseyin
Aydin, a Left party candidate in the Duisburg II district in 2009, with the vote share of
Brigitte Diesterhöft, the Left party candidate in Duisburg II in 2005. Finally, I compare
the average change, between these two elections, in district-party units where a minority
candidate replaced a non-minority candidate, against the average change in districts
where neither candidate had a minority name.\(^ {12}\)

More formally, I begin with a model in which the vote share of the candidate for a
given party in a given district in time period \(t\) is predicted as:

\[
vote_t = \text{district} + \text{party}_t + \text{minority}_t + \epsilon_t,\tag{1}\]

\(^{11}\) ‘New’ candidates did not run in the same district and for the same party in the prior
election. It is necessary to focus on new candidates in order to identify the effect of
changing from indigenous to minority. An advantage of this approach is that it controls
for a key indicator of candidate quality by removing all incumbents from the analysis.

\(^{12}\) The complete lists show 2062 district candidates in 2005, and 2195 in 2009 (in each
year another 1500 candidates ran only on party lists). After excluding 31 districts whose
borders were changed between elections, I identify 1004 new candidates in 2009.
where $vote_t$ is the vote share of the district-party unit in period $t$, $district$ captures district-specific features that do not vary over time, $party_t$ is a vector that captures the average support for each political party in period $t$, $minority_t$ is an indicator that the candidate in period $t$ had a minority name, and $\epsilon_t$ is the error term. With two time periods, we can control for time-invariant district features by subtracting the prediction for period one from that for period two, leaving the first-difference equation:

$$\Delta vote = \Delta party + \Delta minority + \Delta \epsilon,$$

where $\Delta vote$ is the change in the vote share of the district-party unit between the two elections, $\Delta party$ is the change in the average level of support for each party, $\Delta minority$ is the change in the indicator of minority status, and $\Delta \epsilon$ the change in the error term. The impact on the vote share of a given party in a given district changing from a candidate with an indigenous name to a candidate with a minority name can be estimated by the coefficient on the $\Delta minority$ term.

This double comparison—within districts over time, and across districts—controls for stable differences between districts, and including the party variables also controls for broad trends in party support. In addition to studying cases where a non-minority candidate in 2005 was replaced by a minority candidate in 2009, I use the same approach to study cases where a minority candidate in 2005 was replaced by a non-minority candidate in 2009. Although the method is the same, if minority candidates incur a penalty we would expect a positive score, with support for the non-minority candidate in 2009 rebounding after a low vote for the minority candidate in 2005.
Finally, note that voters in German federal elections cast two votes, for the candidate in each of 300 districts and for party lists. The winner of the ‘first’ or candidate vote is elected to parliament, but in most districts only candidates of the two largest parties (the SPD and the CDU/CSU) are viable. Nonetheless, substantial numbers of voters support candidates from smaller parties (typically between 30% and 40% of the electorate; see Cox 1997). The ‘second’ or party votes are actually more important, since the share of seats allocated to each party is based on the share of second votes received across the country. In this paper I report candidate vote shares as well as the share of the vote for the parties that the candidates aspired to represent.

Findings from the survey experiment

The percentage of respondents who said they could imagine voting for each of the four candidates is presented in Figure 1. The male German-named candidate (Andreas Kramer) received more support than either the male or the female Turkish-named candidate (Ali and Ayla Celik). In each case the difference in means is significant at conventional levels ($p < 0.05$).\textsuperscript{13} The female German-named candidate (Anna Kramer) received slightly less support than the German-named male, though the difference is not significant ($p = 0.56$). Overall, 58% of survey participants said they could imagine

\textsuperscript{13} All $p$-values are for two-tailed tests. The findings reported here do not use weights created to approximate the distributions of age, gender and education in the population of eligible voters. The results are similar when weights are applied, but rather than rely on these extrapolations, I prefer to compare the findings directly to real-world election data.
supporting the Turkish-named candidates, compared to 66% for the candidates with German names (this difference is significant at $p = 0.02$).

[ Figure 1 about here ]

The effect of the Turkish name treatment varied across survey participants. Nearly half of the participants had previously agreed with the statement: “The many Muslims here sometimes make me feel like a stranger in my own country.” Among those who disagreed with this statement, there was no difference in the proportion willing to support candidates with German and Turkish names: 69% in each case. However, only 50% of those who said they felt threatened by the Muslim minority could imagine voting for a candidate with a Turkish name (the difference, compared to the non-threatened voters presented with a Turkish-named candidate, is significant at $p < 0.01$). Very similar results are obtained using other measures of attitudes toward minorities. Significant discrimination against candidates with Turkish names is observed only among those who agreed that “There are too many immigrants in Germany,” or that “Muslims should be banned from migrating to Germany.”

Negative attitudes toward immigrant-origin minorities are more common among supporters of parties of the Right. For example, 52% of CDU/CSU supporters agreed

\[14\] Scholars have found that some survey respondents are reluctant to express negative attitudes toward minority groups, and have proposed ‘unobtrusive’ alternatives such the list experiment or implicit association tests (e.g. Benson, Merolla and Geer 2011; Kam 2007). In Germany, social desirability does not prevent large numbers from expressing negative views of immigrant-origin minorities (see Alba, Schmidt and Wasmer 2003). It may be that the political climate is not as restrictive of such attitudes as it is in the U.S.A..
that “There are too many foreigners in Germany,” compared to just 19% of Green party supporters. These differences correspond to cross-party variation in levels of support for minority candidates. Figure 2 plots the percentage willing to support a German-named candidate, minus the percentage willing to support a Turkish-named candidate, among sub-sets of survey participants identified by party preference and attitudes toward minorities. A negative score on this variable implies less support for the Turkish-named candidate; vertical lines show 95% confidence intervals. Here the measure of group attitudes is feeling threatened by Muslims in Germany, though other measures give very similar results. The figure shows that non-threatened supporters of parties of the Left tend, if anything, to be more supportive of candidates with Turkish names. Among Green party voters the bonus for Turkish-named over German-named candidates is significantly greater than zero at $p < 0.08$. Among those threatened by minorities, only voters for the CDU/CSU express significantly less support for Turkish-named candidates.

However, the distribution of voters with negative views of minorities is not the only possible explanation for the cross-party variation displayed in Figure 2. It is also possible that supporters of the CDU/CSU are less willing to support candidates with Turkish names because they assume these candidates would run on the Left. The survey did not provide respondents with information on the party for which the hypothetical candidate was running. Instead, survey respondents were asked to guess the party, based

\[ \text{Figure 2 about here} \]

\footnote{15 Party preference is measured with questions on how survey participants voted, or would have voted, in the recent federal election.}
on the descriptions they had been given. Some survey participants used the Turkish name as a signal of party affiliation. Those presented with German-named candidates were equally likely to guess that the candidate would run for a party of the Left or for a party of the Right. Among those presented with a Turkish-named candidate, the guesses were 70% Left and 30% Right. Unsurprisingly, voters who placed themselves and the hypothetical candidates on opposite sides of the Left-Right divide were much less likely to voice their support: 48% said they could imagine voting for a candidate on the other side, and 76% for a candidate on “their” side (the difference is significant at $p < 0.01$).

In order to test whether group attitudes lead to discrimination against minority candidates, even after accounting for assumptions about candidate ideology, I present mean levels of support among sub-sets of survey participants defined by partisanship, group attitudes, and assumed candidate party. It is not feasible to present all of the combinations of these variables, so I construct dichotomous measures. I compare voters on the Left with those on Right, and voters who expect the candidate to run on the Left vs. on the Right. I also compare those who feel threatened by Muslim immigrants against those who do not feel this way (again, other measures of group attitudes yield very similar results). Grouping survey respondents by these variables yields eight sub-

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16 An alternative would have been to manipulate party affiliation. However, that would have two disadvantages. It would have meant less realism, since it is well known that minority candidates tend to run on the Left. It would also have increased the number of treatments, requiring a prohibitively large sample size or crowding out other tests.

17 I combine measures of ideology (a Left-Right scale) and party identification, because each variable has many missing variables, respectively 10% and 32% of the total.
sets. For instance, the first sub-set is made up of survey respondents who lean Left, do not feel threatened, and assume the candidate would run on the Left. Within each group I calculate the difference in support for candidates with Turkish vs. German names.

The results of these comparisons are reported in Figure 3. The height of each bar shows the difference in the percentage of respondents willing to support a German-named candidate, minus the percentage willing to support a Turkish-named candidate. As before, vertical lines through each bar show 95% confidence intervals. The figure also shows the sample sizes used to calculate the differences in means.

[ Figure 3 about here ]

The two panels on the left of Figure 3 show that non-threatened voters express equal levels of support for German and Turkish-named political candidates, after accounting for whether these candidates are assuming to be running on the Left or the Right. For example, 80% of Left-leaning voters who are not threatened by minorities and who guess that a German-named candidate is running for a party of the Left would be willing to support such a person. And 81% of similar voters would be willing to support a Turkish-named candidate about whom the same assumption is made. The difference of +1% for the Turkish-named candidate is the first result in the top-left panel of Figure 3. The two panels on the right of Figure 3 suggest that threatened voters who make the same assumptions about German and Turkish-named political candidates are less willing to support the latter. However, the only case in which this makes a large and statistically significant difference is among Right-leaning voters who feel threatened by minorities and who assume that the hypothetical candidate would run on the Left. 51% of such
voters say they could imagine supporting the hypothetical German-named candidate, compared to just 25% of those presented with a Turkish-named candidate.

Figure 3 provides evidence, then, that negative group attitudes have an additional impact on discriminatory voting, even after accounting for assumptions about candidate ideology. The results presented in Figures 2 and 3 reveal that minority candidates would receive significantly less support among voters who support parties of the Right. These voters both assume that minority candidates would run for a party of the Left and allow negative group attitudes to influence their voting intentions.

**Findings from election data**

The observational data yield 18 cases in which the new candidate in 2009 had a minority name while his or her predecessor had a German (or other European) name, and 14 cases in which a non-minority candidate in 2009 replaced a minority candidate in 2005. Two thirds of the minority candidates ran either for the Greens or the Left party; none were competing on behalf of the CDU or the CSU. Data on electoral districts show that minority candidates ran in districts with higher than average shares of foreign residents: 12% of the local population, compared to an average of 8% in districts with only non-minority candidates (the difference is significant at \( p = 0.01 \)). The number of naturalized citizens is arguably more relevant than the number of foreign residents, since new citizens might be expected to form a natural constituency for minority candidates. Although the official data on electoral districts do not provide information on the numbers of naturalized citizens, foreign residents and naturalized citizens tend to live in
the same areas. Analysis of census data reveals a correlation of 0.68 between the share of foreigners in the population and the share of naturalized citizens, in 32 German regions.\textsuperscript{18}

The data on vote shares reveal that some minority candidates attracted substantial numbers of supporters. The highest vote share for a minority candidate was 30%, in both 2005 and 2009. The Turkish-origin candidate Cem Özdemir received the highest share of first votes for \textit{any} of the 198 new Green party candidates in 2009. Nonetheless, Mr. Özdemir fell slightly short of winning the district.\textsuperscript{19} Turning to the multivariate analysis, Figure 4 shows estimates of the effect of minority name on vote share.\textsuperscript{20} The figure shows point estimates from models that control for trends in party support, with lines showing 95% confidence intervals; standard errors are clustered by party. The upper two estimates in Figure 4 are for district-party units that fielded a minority candidate in 2009 but not in 2005. In these cases, if minority candidates incurred an electoral penalty, we would expect to see a negative effect. The data provide no support for this prediction. The lower two estimates in Figure 4 are for district-party units with a minority candidate in 2005 but not in 2009. If minority candidates incurred a penalty, we would expect to see a positive effect on the 2009 vote share. There is some evidence of a modest boost to the candidate vote share (the ‘first’ vote). The estimated difference is an additional 1.2

\textsuperscript{18} See pages 36-43 of \textit{Statistisches Bundesamt} 2011.

\textsuperscript{19} Although Mr. Özdemir did not run for office in this district in 2005, he has a higher profile than many ‘new’ candidates, having previously held a seat in the Bundestag. The results of my analysis are the same when Mr. Özdemir and Omid Nouripour, another minority candidate in 2009 with prior experience in the Bundestag, are excluded.

\textsuperscript{20} Table A3, in the appendix, provides details of the statistical models.
percentage points of the vote; the coefficient is significantly greater than zero at $p = 0.03$. But there is no evidence that non-minority candidates in the 2009 election who succeeded minority candidates in 2005 secured more votes for their party (the ‘second’ vote).21

[ Figure 4 about here ]

Overall, the evidence summarized in Figure 4 provides little support for the prediction that minority candidates received significantly fewer voters than other candidates. Only one of the four estimates is significantly different from zero, and the estimated effect is small. Table A4, in the appendix, provides results of an identical analysis for minority candidates with Turkish names. The results are very similar, though the sample is even smaller (a total of 14 Turkish-named candidates).

Discussion

The evidence from the survey experiment and from actual election data tells a consistent story. Negative attitudes toward minority groups limit the number of voters willing to support minority political candidates, but are most influential among people who support parties of the Right. The small numbers of minority group members who actually run for office tend do so with parties of the Left. As a result, the few minority candidates who run for office receive as many votes as comparable German-named candidates.

One limitation of the paper is the small number of minority candidates in the observational data, which limits the statistical power of the analysis. Note, however, that

21 Difference-in-differences models do not control for differential trends across districts. However, relevant demographic factors, including the local population of naturalized citizens, are very slow to change.
the null findings are not merely due to wide confidence intervals. The point estimates are all close to zero. One contribution of this paper is to develop a method for estimating the effects of voter discrimination in real-world election data that can be applied in the future, as minority candidates continue to enter German politics, and also in other contexts of under-representation. Using candidate names is not the best way to estimate the total number of minority candidates, since some candidates with an immigrant background are likely to have changed their names, for example after marriage to a German-named spouse. But the name-based approach is appropriate for assessing voter discrimination, since the name is the information most readily available to voters.

Another possible limitation of the paper is that candidates and political parties may be expected to anticipate voter discrimination, and only the ‘best’ minority candidates will run for office. This could bias downward the estimates of the impact of discrimination in the observational data, though not in the survey. However, it would only be possible for the ‘best’ minority candidates to reduce the impact of discrimination if voters are well-informed about the qualities of the candidates. There is a wealth of evidence, from Germany and elsewhere, showing that many voters enter the polling booth with little knowledge of candidates, making it plausible that discrimination would have observable effects (Lupia and McCubbins 1998; Gabriel, Weßels and Falter 2009).

It should be stressed that the paper’s findings on the limited direct impact of voter discrimination in today’s Germany do not imply that discrimination has no effects. This paper has not addressed discrimination within political parties or in other organizations that prepare people for political candidacy. Even focusing on voter discrimination, the paper’s findings are consistent with the presence of indirect effects. Evidence from
secondary sources in Germany suggests that both candidates and parties see the likelihood of voter discrimination as a constraint. For example, the Turkish-origin politician Ekin Deligöz has been quoted as saying that other members of her party (the Greens) initially had reservations about her candidacy. “There were people who said: not with a migrant name” (quoted in Jenkner 2007). In the Green party, she was able to overcome this concern and has been a member of the Bundestag since 1997. Conversely, Bülent Arslan, a Turkish-origin candidate who campaigned for the CDU, has said that he was not able to overcome resistance within the party, and as a result received a low position on the party list (Jenkner 2007; see also Kiyak 2007).

The assumption that minority group members have Leftist ideological preferences may make it especially difficult for such people to succeed within parties on the Right. One might expect minority candidates to try and mitigate these problems by making special efforts to show that they hold mainstream positions, at least relative to their parties. Again, secondary sources provide suggestive evidence for this prediction. Minority candidates in Germany stress the need to avoid being pigeonholed as representing only the interests of minority group members (Nergiz 2011: 44-45). One of the most prominent immigrant-origin politicians in Germany, Cem Özdemir, published a book shortly after entering parliament with the title “I am a Native.” Further research in this area should address the constraints imposed by discrimination, and should take seriously the possibility that minority candidates develop strategies to make the best of the hostile political climate in which they find themselves.

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22 The full German title is *Ich bin Inländer: Ein anatolischer Schwabe im Bundestag.*
**Conclusion**

One contribution of this paper is methodological. The paper demonstrates the value of bringing together experimental research designed to identify the psychological mechanisms that underpin voter behavior, and real-world tests of the conditions under which these mechanisms actually affect political outcomes. Findings from a survey experiment that manipulated candidate names were compared to findings from controlled comparisons of the number of votes cast for real-world candidates with typically German and minority names. Bringing together experimental and observational data focuses attention on the factors that mediate treatment effects in the real world. I have shown that we need to know which voters discriminate against minority candidates, in order to assess how the electoral performance of minority candidates is affected by discrimination.

Another contribution of the paper is to provide a more nuanced view of the political effects of negative attitudes toward minorities. Evidence of widespread hostility toward immigrant-origin minorities in Europe could be taken to imply that voter discrimination will exclude the members of these groups from positions of political power. In practice, minority candidates typically run for political parties that discriminating voters would not have supported in any case. The German case suggests that systems of proportional representation create niches within which limited numbers of minority candidates can do relatively well. However, the paper also shows that a large segment of the German population would be unwilling to support minority candidates. In order to rise to positions of greater power, minority politicians must appeal to a broad constituency. If voter discrimination persists, even if concentrated in certain sectors of the electorate, important barriers to minority representation will remain.
References


Figure 1. Support for candidates with German and Turkish names

Note: The dependent variable is the proportion of respondents willing to support political candidates with male or female German or Turkish names. Candidates with Turkish names, of both genders, receive significantly less support than the male candidate with a German name ($p < 0.05$).
Figure 2. Differences in support for candidates with Turkish and German names, by party preference and views of immigrant minorities

Note: The dependent variable is the difference in the percentage of experimental subjects willing to support otherwise identical candidates with Turkish rather than German names. A negative score indicates that voters are less willing to support Turkish-named candidates. The panel on the left is for voters who do not agree with the statement: “The many Muslims here sometimes make me feel like a stranger in my own country.” The panel on the right shows the responses of voters who agree with this statement. Survey respondents are grouped by party choice in the 2009 federal election (the second vote). The vertical lines through each bar show 95% confidence intervals.
Figure 3. Impact of group attitudes on discrimination, controlling for voter partisanship and guesses of candidate party

Note: The dependent variable is the difference in the percentage of experimental subjects willing to support identical candidates with Turkish vs. German names. Vertical lines through each bar show 95% confidence intervals. Survey respondents are distinguished by their party preference, whether they feel threatened by minorities, and whether they guess that the hypothetical candidate would run for a party of the Left or of the Right.
Figure 4. Difference in performance of minority candidates, compared to predecessor in the same district

Note: The dependent variable is 2009 vote share minus 2005 vote share, from models controlling for district fixed effects and changes in mean support for political parties between the two elections. The figure shows point estimates and 95% confidence intervals, with standard errors clustered by party. First vote refers to candidate vote, and second vote refers to party vote. If minority candidates in 2009 performed worse than their non-minority predecessors in 2005, the upper two point estimates should be significantly below zero. If non-minority candidates in 2009 out-performed their 2005 predecessors, we would expect the lower two point estimates to be significantly greater than zero.
Table A1. Minority candidates in 2009 and their predecessors, for the same party and in the same district, in 2005.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District (state), party</th>
<th>2005 candidate</th>
<th>2009 candidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duisburg II (NRW), Left</td>
<td>Diesterhöft, Brigitte M.</td>
<td>Aydin, Hüseyin Kenan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bochum I (NRW), Left</td>
<td>Orlowski, Anna-Lena</td>
<td>Dağdalen, Sevim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lichtenberg (Berlin), FDP</td>
<td>Schwabe, Holger</td>
<td>El-Hussein, Hanaa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schwalm-Eder (Hesses), Green</td>
<td>Häusling, Hermann</td>
<td>Eroğlu, Engin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>München Nord (Bavaria), BuSo</td>
<td>Fimmen, Klaus</td>
<td>Faku, David</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lahn-Dill (Hesse), Left</td>
<td>Kaufhold-Hausotter, J.</td>
<td>Göktas, Nerman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Märkisch-Oderland (Bra.), SPD</td>
<td>Bierwirth, Petra</td>
<td>Gujjula, Ravindra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emsbüttel (Ham.), SPD</td>
<td>Annen, Niels</td>
<td>Ilkhanipour, Danial</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuwied (RP) Left</td>
<td>Winkelmeier, Gert</td>
<td>Kanmaz, Olcay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>München Land (Bavaria), SPD</td>
<td>Schily, Otto</td>
<td>Lenz-Aktas, Ingrid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamm-Unna II (NRW), Green</td>
<td>Nadolski-Voigt, Jochen</td>
<td>Mork, Adrian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oberhausen-Wesel (NRW), Left</td>
<td>Paasch, Dirk</td>
<td>Movassat, Niema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamburg-Mitte (Ham.), Green</td>
<td>Sager, Krista</td>
<td>Müller, Farid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duisburg I (NRW), Left</td>
<td>Laakmann, Helmut</td>
<td>Mulia, Marc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamburg-Nord (Ham.), Left</td>
<td>Wefing, Antje</td>
<td>Niazi-Shahabi, Vera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frankfurt II (Hesse), Green</td>
<td>Fischer, Joseph</td>
<td>Nouripour, Omid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stuttgart I (BW), Green</td>
<td>Siller, Peter-Stefan</td>
<td>Özdemir, Cem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamm-Unna II (NRW), Left</td>
<td>Gabriel, Udo</td>
<td>Sengül, Alisan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Names of minority candidates are italicized. State abbreviations are: Bra = Brandenburg, BW = Baden-Württemberg, Ham. = Hamburg, NRW = North Rhine-Westfalia, RP = Rheinland-Palatinate.
Table A2. Minority candidates in 2005 and their successors, for the same party and in the same district, in 2009.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>District (state), party</th>
<th>2005 candidate</th>
<th>2009 candidate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Neukölln (Berlin), Left</td>
<td>Baba, Evrim</td>
<td>Lehnert, Ruben</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greifswald-Demmin (MV), SPD</td>
<td>Bosback-Askri, Ute</td>
<td>Freika, Katharina</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Krefeld II – Wesel II (NRW), Left</td>
<td>Dağdalen, Sevim</td>
<td>Klinger, Wolfgang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingolstadt (Bavaria), FDP</td>
<td>Kalouti, Alexander</td>
<td>Schmidt, Franz</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calw (BW), SPD</td>
<td>Gradistanac, Renate</td>
<td>Esken, Saskia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friedrichshain (Berlin), SPD</td>
<td>iyidirli, Ahmet</td>
<td>Böhning, Björn-Lars</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soest (NRW), FDP</td>
<td>Madjlessi, Dr. Forusan</td>
<td>Frigger, Urs-Fabian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamburg-Mitte (Ham.), Left</td>
<td>Masudi, Zaman</td>
<td>Bischoff, Joachim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essen II (NRW), Green</td>
<td>Mostofizadeh, Mehrdad</td>
<td>Hegener, Ute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bottrop III (NRW), FDP</td>
<td>Nazaradeh, Dr. Fridun</td>
<td>Liebehenz, Marc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goslar-Northeim (NI), Green</td>
<td>Ngo, Phu-Hai</td>
<td>Cramon-Taubadel, V.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hochtaunus (Hesse), Green</td>
<td>Nouripour, Omid</td>
<td>Diessner, Norman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rosenheim (Bavaria), Green</td>
<td>Oyan, Adil</td>
<td>Rutz, Anna</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recklinghausen I (NRW), Green</td>
<td>Toprak, Ali Ertan</td>
<td>Schnittke, Monya</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note:* Names of minority candidates are italicized. State abbreviations are: BW = Baden-Württemberg, Ham. = Hamburg, MV = Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, NI = Lower Saxony, NRW = North Rhine-Westfalia.
Table A3. First-difference model of changes in vote shares by district and party, from 2005 to 2009, with a focus on minority candidates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 1: first vote</th>
<th>Model 2: second vote</th>
<th>Model 3: first vote</th>
<th>Model 4: second vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change in minority indicator</td>
<td>-0.24</td>
<td>0.24</td>
<td>1.16</td>
<td>0.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.49)</td>
<td>(0.4)</td>
<td>(0.53)</td>
<td>(0.45)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in CDU/CSU vote</td>
<td>-1.34</td>
<td>-0.73</td>
<td>-1.34</td>
<td>-0.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.2)</td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
<td>(0.19)</td>
<td>(0.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in BüSo vote</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.85</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.55)</td>
<td>(0.45)</td>
<td>(0.55)</td>
<td>(0.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in FDP vote</td>
<td>5.82</td>
<td>5.31</td>
<td>5.83</td>
<td>5.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.25)</td>
<td>(0.21)</td>
<td>(0.24)</td>
<td>(0.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Green vote</td>
<td>5.01</td>
<td>3.17</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.25)</td>
<td>(0.2)</td>
<td>(0.24)</td>
<td>(0.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Left party vote</td>
<td>4.58</td>
<td>4.12</td>
<td>4.57</td>
<td>4.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.25)</td>
<td>(0.2)</td>
<td>(0.24)</td>
<td>(0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in NPD vote</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>0.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.25)</td>
<td>(0.2)</td>
<td>(0.24)</td>
<td>(0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in SPD vote</td>
<td>-9.87</td>
<td>-10.37</td>
<td>-9.72</td>
<td>-10.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(0.3)</td>
<td>(0.24)</td>
<td>(0.28)</td>
<td>(0.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of observations</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>992</td>
<td>988</td>
<td>988</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$R^2$</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The dependent variable in all models is the change in the vote share (which could range from -100 to +100) for the 2009 candidate in a given district and for a given party, compared to his or her 2005 predecessor for the same party in the same district. Standard errors, in parentheses, are clustered by party. Model 1 includes districts with minority candidates in 2009 but not in 2005, and with non-minority candidates in both elections, and shows estimates for the ‘first’ or candidate votes. Model 2 is for the same sub-set of districts, and shows estimates for ‘second’ or party votes. Model 3 includes districts with minority candidates in 2005 but not in 2009, and with non-minority candidates in both elections, and shows estimates for the ‘first’ or candidate votes. Model 4 is for the same sub-set of districts as in Model 3, but the focus is now on the ‘second’ or party vote.
Table A4. First-difference model of changes in vote shares by district and party, from 2005 to 2009, with a focus on Turkish-named candidates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Model 5: first vote</th>
<th>Model 6: second vote</th>
<th>Model 7: first vote</th>
<th>Model 8: second vote</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change in Turkish indicator</td>
<td>0.95 (0.64)</td>
<td>0.65 (0.53)</td>
<td>2 (0.74)</td>
<td>-0.2 (0.63)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in CDU/CSU vote</td>
<td>-1.34 (0.2)</td>
<td>-0.73 (0.17)</td>
<td>-1.34 (0.2)</td>
<td>-0.73 (0.17)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in BüSo vote</td>
<td>1.5 (0.56)</td>
<td>0.87 (0.46)</td>
<td>1.5 (0.54)</td>
<td>0.87 (0.46)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in FDP vote</td>
<td>5.84 (0.25)</td>
<td>5.32 (0.21)</td>
<td>5.84 (0.24)</td>
<td>5.32 (0.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Green vote</td>
<td>4.99 (0.25)</td>
<td>3.16 (0.2)</td>
<td>4.95 (0.24)</td>
<td>3.19 (0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Left party vote</td>
<td>4.54 (0.25)</td>
<td>4.1 (0.2)</td>
<td>4.56 (0.24)</td>
<td>4.13 (0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in NPD vote</td>
<td>1.4 (0.25)</td>
<td>0.69 (0.2)</td>
<td>1.4 (0.24)</td>
<td>0.69 (0.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in SPD vote</td>
<td>-9.76 (0.29)</td>
<td>-10.36 (0.24)</td>
<td>-9.73 (0.28)</td>
<td>-10.47 (0.24)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of observations</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>984</td>
<td>981</td>
<td>981</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R²</td>
<td>0.82</td>
<td>0.87</td>
<td>0.83</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: The dependent variable in all models is the change in the vote share (which could range from -100 to +100) for the 2009 candidate in a given district and for a given party, compared to his or her 2005 predecessor for the same party in the same district. Standard errors, in parentheses, are clustered by party. Model 1 includes districts with Turkish-named candidates in 2009 but not in 2005, and with non-Turkish candidates in both elections, and shows estimates for the ‘first’ or candidate votes. Model 2 is for the same districts, for ‘second’ or party votes. Model 3 includes districts with Turkish-named candidates in 2005 but not in 2009, and with non-Turkish candidates in both elections, and shows estimates for the ‘first’ or candidate votes. Again, Model 4 is for the same sub-set of districts as in Model 3, but the focus is now on the ‘second’ or party vote.