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Political Research Quarterly published online 26 November 2013

DOI: 10.1177/1065912913511863

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Political Research Quarterly
201X, Vol XX(X) 1–12
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DOI: 10.1177/1065912913511863
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Alex Street¹

Abstract

Immigrant-origin minorities are underrepresented 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 in Germany typically run for political parties that discriminating voters would not have supported in any case.

Keywords

minority representation, discrimination, elections

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; Hainmueller and Hangartner 2013; Sides and Citrin 2007). Scholars have debated the sources of these attitudes, in particular the importance of perceived economic or cultural threats (e.g., Dancygier and Donnelly 2013; Sniderman, Hagendoorn, and Prior 2004). Much less is known, however, about the ways in which these attitudes influence 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 identical candidates with Turkish rather than German names. However, discrimination is observed mostly among supporters of parties of the Right. In Germany, 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 on the Left, limits the direct effects of discrimination.

Survey experiments have clear advantages for identifying causal effects, but doubts are often raised over the external validity of the findings (Gaines, Kuklinski, and Quirk 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 (but see Philpot and Walton 2007). A parallel 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 candidate identity may be mediated by voter characteristics and the context of party competition. Substantively, the findings help to explain why some members of stigmatized minority groups win representation, even in contexts with high levels of voter prejudice. The results suggest a more nuanced view of the political effects of discrimination than might be inferred from the alarming evidence of public hostility toward immigrant-origin minorities in Western Europe. 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 future research, drawing on secondary sources to consider how voter discrimination may indirectly constrain the representation of minority groups. The final section concludes.

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Candidate Identity and Voter Discrimination

Members of ethnic, racial, and religious minorities, as well as women, are underrepresented in many democratic legislatures, compared to the size of these groups in the relevant populations (Bird, Saalfeld, and Wüst 2011; Bloemraad and Schönwälder 2013; Krook and O'Brien 2010). A number of explanations have been proposed to account for this fact, including voter discrimination, barriers within political parties, 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 revealed two main 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 certain social 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 United States, though not against female or African American candidates. In all 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 nonblack 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 (Dolan 2010).

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 voter 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 Quirk 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 many 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 prior research on minority candidates has been conducted in the USA, 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 on potentially 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.

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 higher quality, since they believe they will have to meet higher standards in order to compete. These findings suggest that the political implications of identities such as gender or ethnicity depend, in part, on the ways in which group members respond to public perceptions of what it means to have a particular identity. The meaning of identity markers is not fixed (Brubaker 2002). This paper focuses on assessing the direct effects of voter discrimination, but in the penultimate section, I return to the question of indirect effects.

Research Site, Data and Method

The site of this study is Germany, where, according to official records, residents with a recent family history of immigration make up over 19 percent 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 underrepresented 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 percent of Turkish-origin residents, and 21 percent 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 many Germans hold negative views of minority groups such as Muslims, Turks, and nonwhites (Alba, Schmidt, and Wasmer 2003; Heitmeyer 2012). In this paper, I refer to these stigmatized segments of the population as minority groups. Although still underrepresented, minority politicians are becoming part of the German political scene. Germans with immigrant origins have recently served as leaders of major political parties.¹ 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 mainly in cities with high shares of supporters of these parties and with relatively large minority populations (Schönwälder, Sinanoglu, and Volkert 2013; 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 versus German names. The controlled environment of the survey allows the manipulation of candidate names while holding other factors constant. The experiment was conducted online from a pool of eligible German voters.² Participants were randomly assigned to be given 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 forty years old, married with two children, that she or he worked for the civil service, had been a member of a political party for fifteen 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 outcome of interest (with "I could very well imagine" and "I could well imagine" voting for the candidate coded 1, and "I could not really imagine" and "I certainly couldn't imagine" coded as 0).

Further information on participants in the experiment is available from a survey that they completed two weeks earlier, shortly after the 2009 federal elections. The survey data provide 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 distributions of key demographic variables, as well as ideology and negative views of minorities, are approximately balanced across treatment groups.³

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 identified candidates with minority names in the 2005 and 2009 elections to the German *Bundestag*. Using candidate names is not the best way to estimate the total number of minority candidates, since some people with an immigrant background change their names, for example, after marriage to a German spouse (Bloemraad and Schönwälder 2013). But the name-based approach is appropriate for assessing voter discrimination, since the name is the information most readily

available to voters. 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 the Middle East, the Balkans, Asia, and Africa (details on procedures used to identify minority names, and lists of candidates, can be found in the appendix, which is in the electronic version of the paper at <http://prq.sagepub.com>). The number of migrants from these regions who have now become German citizens, and could thus provide a basis of support for minority candidates, is very low, ranging from around 0.3 percent of the total population in Eastern Germany to 3 percent in Berlin and Hamburg.⁴ Scholars have shown that in multi-ethnic societies, voters use ethnicity to infer which political parties are likely to represent their interests (Birner 2007; Chandra 2004; Maxwell 2012). In Germany, however, the number of co-ethnics available to vote for minority candidates is so small that election outcomes are typically decided by indigenous Germans.

It is not sufficient simply to compare the vote shares of candidates with minority names to the vote shares of non-minority candidates. This is because there are systematic differences between the political parties and districts that nominate minority candidates and those that do not. These differences may be correlated with the level of support for such candidates, which would confound a naïve estimate of the impact of minority candidate name on election results. To overcome this problem, I use a double comparison, over time and within districts. I focus on new candidates in the 2009 federal election. “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 the background of the candidate. One advantage of this approach is that it controls for a key indicator of candidate quality by excluding incumbent representatives.

I compare the 2009 vote share of each new candidate 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. I focus on cases in which district and party are held constant, but different candidates were fielded in each election. For example, I compare the vote share of Hüseyin Aydın, 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 nonminority candidate, against the average change in districts where neither candidate had a minority name. This method controls for district-specific variables that do not change over time and also allows controls for broad temporal changes such as swings in support for the major political parties. To

control for factors that change over time within districts, and may relate to support for minority candidates, I also include two variables at the district level. First, I include a measure of the size of the foreign population, the best available proxy for immigration to a particular district. Second, I include a measure of the district unemployment rate on the grounds that an increase in unemployment might spur hostility toward immigrant-origin minorities. 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:

$$vote_t = district + party\ mean_t + minority_t + foreign_t + unemployment_t + \epsilon_t, \quad (1)$$

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, $party\ mean_t$ is a vector that captures the nationwide average support for each political party in period t , $minority_t$ is an indicator that the candidate in period t had a minority name, $foreign_t$ is the percentage of foreign residents in the district population in period t , $unemployment_t$ is the unemployment rate in the district at the beginning of the year in which the election was held, and ϵ_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:

$$vote = \Delta party\ mean + \Delta minority + \Delta foreign + \Delta unemployment + \epsilon, \quad (2)$$

where $\Delta vote$ is the change in the vote share of the district-party unit between the two elections, $\Delta party\ mean$ is the change in the average level of support for each party, $\Delta minority$ is the change in the indicator of minority status, $\Delta foreign$ is the change in the size of the district's foreign population, $\Delta unemployment$ is the change in the district unemployment rate, and $\Delta \epsilon$ is the change in the error term. The impact on the vote share of changing from a candidate with an indigenous name to a candidate with a minority name is 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 $party\ mean$ variable also controls for broad trends in party support. For example, between 2005 and 2009, the SPD lost around 11 percent of the national vote share, with the gains going mainly to smaller parties. Such effects must be separated from the impact of any individual candidate. In addition to studying cases where a nonminority candidate in 2005 was replaced by a minority candidate in 2009, I use the same approach to study cases where a minority candidate

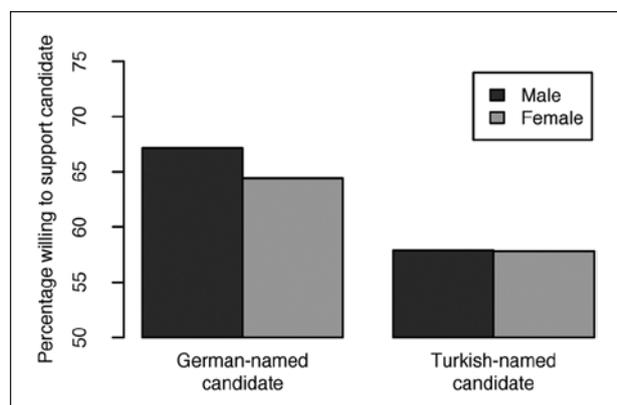


Figure 1. Support for candidates with German and Turkish names.

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 ($p < .05$).

in 2005 was replaced by a nonminority candidate in 2009. Although the method is the same, if minority candidates incur a penalty, we would expect a *positive* effect, with support for the nonminority 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 299 districts and for party lists. The winner of the “first vote” for candidates is elected to parliament, but in most districts only candidates for 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 percent and 40 percent of the electorate; see Cox 1997). The “second vote,” for a party list, is 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, respectively). In each case, the difference in means is statistically significant ($p < .05$; all p values are for two-tailed tests).⁵ The female German-named candidate (Anna Kramer) received slightly less support than the German-named male, though the difference is not

significant ($p = .56$). Overall, 58 percent of survey participants said they could imagine supporting the Turkish-named candidates, compared with 66 percent for the candidates with German names (this difference is significant at $p = .02$).

The effect of the Turkish name treatment varied across survey respondents. Nearly half of survey 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 percent in each case. However, only 50 percent of those who said they felt threatened by the Muslim minority could imagine voting for a candidate with a Turkish name (the difference, compared with the non-threatened voters presented with a Turkish-named candidate, is significant at $p < .01$). 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 percent of CDU/CSU supporters agreed that “There are too many foreigners in Germany,” compared with just 19 percent of Green party supporters (party preference is measured with questions on how survey participants voted, or would have voted, in the 2009 election). These differences correspond to variation in 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, in subsets of survey participants identified by party preference and attitudes toward minorities. A negative score implies less support for the Turkish-named candidate; vertical lines show 95 percent confidence intervals. Here, the measure of group attitudes is feeling threatened by Muslims in Germany, though other measures yield very similar results. The figure shows that nonthreatened 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 $p < .08$. 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

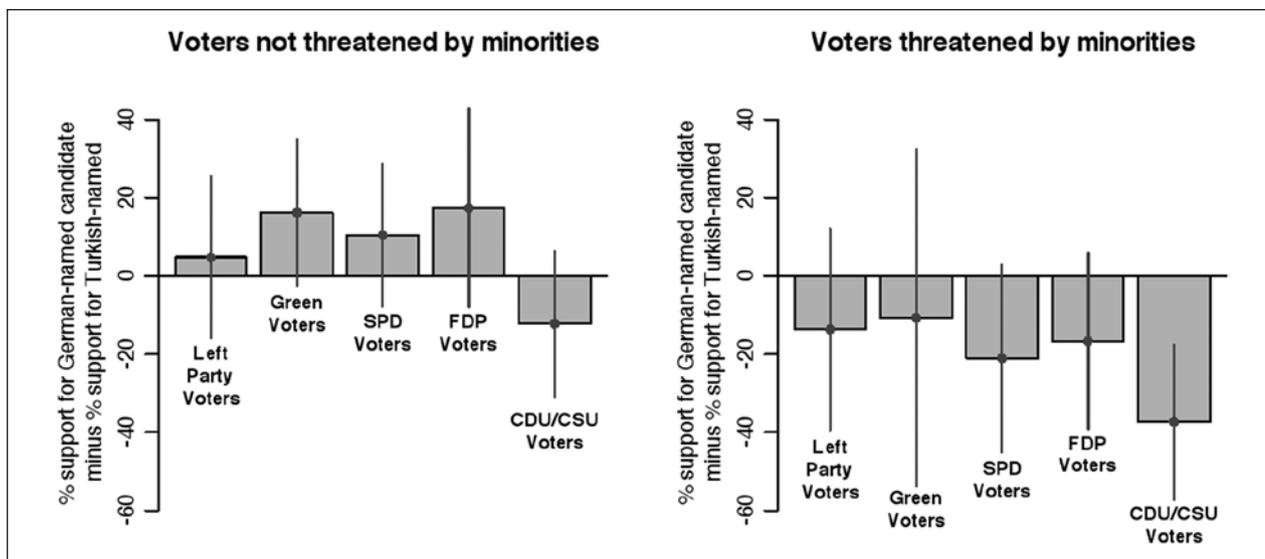


Figure 2. Differences in support for candidates with Turkish and German names, by party preference and views of immigrant minorities.

Note. The outcome 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 pane on the left is for voters who did not agree with the statement: "The many Muslims here sometimes make me feel like a stranger in my own country." The pane on the right shows the responses of voters who agreed with this statement. Survey respondents are grouped by party choice in the 2009 federal election. The vertical lines through each bar show 95 percent confidence intervals.

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 on the descriptions they had been given.⁶ 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 percent Left and 30 percent 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 percent said they could imagine voting for a candidate on the other side and 76 percent for a candidate on "their" side (the difference is significant at $p < .01$).

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 subsets of survey participants defined by partisanship, group attitudes, and assumed candidate party. It is not feasible to present all 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 versus on the Right.⁷ 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 subsets. For instance, the first subset 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 versus German names.

The results of these comparisons are presented 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 percent confidence intervals. The figure also shows the sample sizes used to calculate the differences in means.

The two panes on the left of Figure 3 (A and C) show that nonthreatened voters express equal levels of support for German and Turkish-named political candidates, after accounting for whether these candidates are assumed to be running on the Left or the Right. For example, 80 percent 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 percent of similar voters would be willing to support a Turkish-named candidate

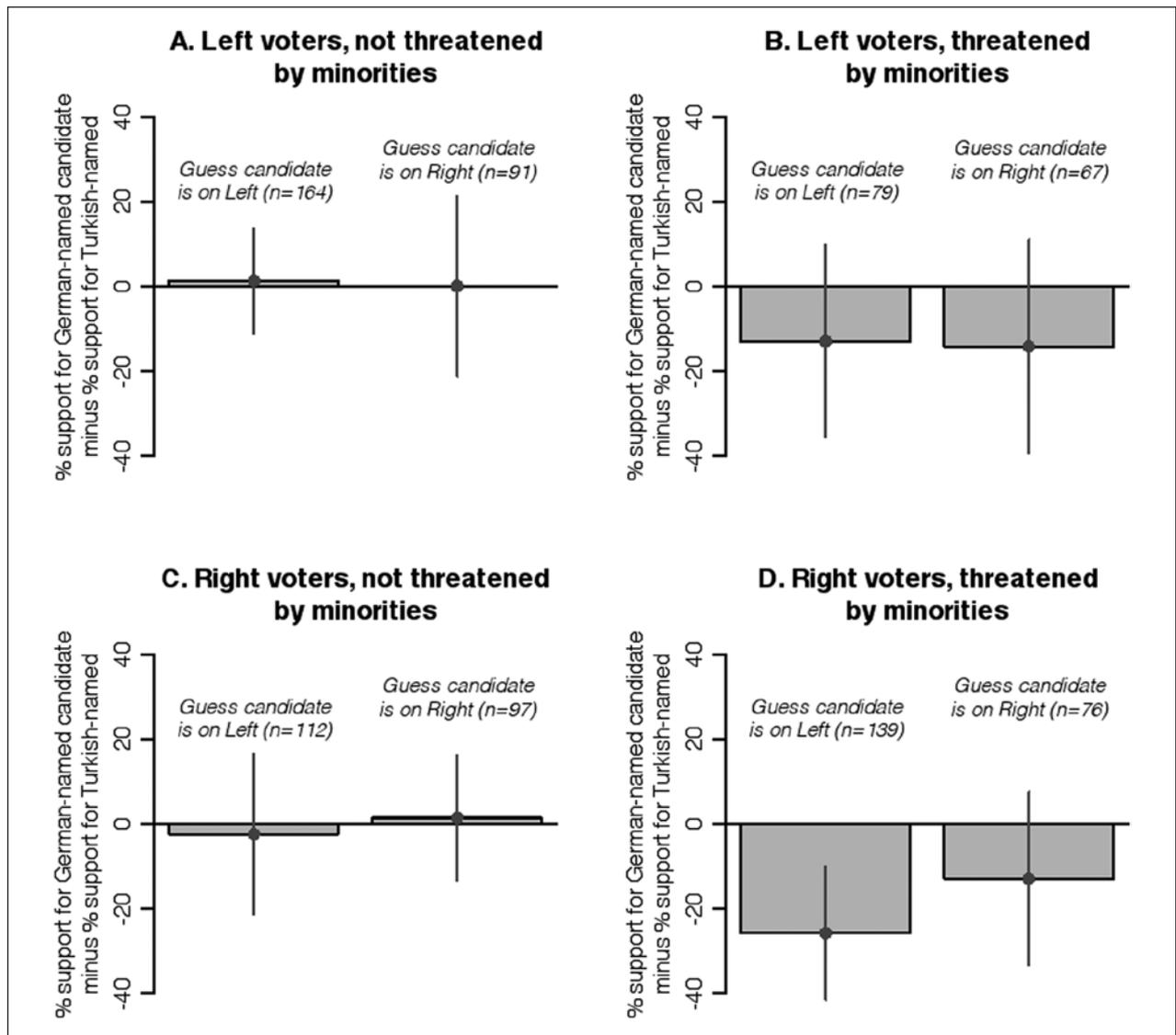


Figure 3. Impact of group attitudes on discrimination, controlling for voter partisanship, and guesses of candidate party.

Note. The outcome variable is the difference in the percentage of experimental subjects willing to support identical candidates with Turkish versus German names. Vertical lines through each bar show 95 percent confidence intervals. Survey respondents are distinguished by partisanship, 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.

about whom the same assumption is made. The difference of +1 percent for the Turkish-named candidate is the first result in Panel A. The two panes on the right of Figure 3 (B and D) 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. In all, 51 percent of such voters say they could imagine supporting the hypothetical German-named

candidate, compared to just 25 percent 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. Significant numbers of voters on the Right both assume that minority candidates would run for a party of the Left *and* allow negative group attitudes to influence their voting intentions. The other estimates for “threatened” voters are all negative but are not significantly different from zero. A larger sample size might have produced significant findings; this is an area

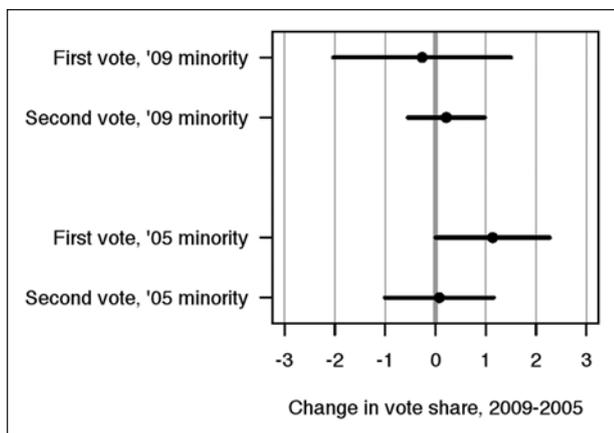


Figure 4. Difference in performance of minority candidates, compared to predecessor in the same district.

Note. The dependent variable is 2009 vote share minus 2005 vote share, from models controlling for district fixed effects, changes in mean support for political parties between the two elections, and changes in the local foreign population and unemployment rate. The figure shows point estimates and 95 percent 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 nonminority predecessors in 2005, the upper two point estimates should be significantly below zero. If nonminority candidates in 2009 outperformed their minority predecessors in 2005, we would expect the lower two point estimates to be significantly greater than zero.

in which more research is warranted. Nonetheless, the key finding is that minority candidates receive significantly less support among voters who favor parties of the Right.

Findings from Election Data

The observational data yield eighteen 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 fourteen cases in which a nonminority 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. Minority candidates ran in districts with higher-than-average shares of foreign residents: 12 percent of the local population, compared with an average of 8 percent in districts with only nonminority candidates (the difference is significant at $p = .01$). 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 .68 between the share of foreigners and the

share of naturalized citizens, in thirty-two German regions (see Statistisches Bundesamt 2011, 36–43).

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 percent, in both 2005 and 2009. The Turkish-origin candidate Cem Özdemir received the highest share of “first” votes for *any* of the 198 new Green party candidates in 2009. Nonetheless, Mr. Özdemir fell slightly short of winning the district.⁸ Turning to the multivariate analysis, Figure 4 shows estimates of the effect of minority name on vote share (Table A3, in the online appendix, provides details of the statistical models). The figure shows point estimates from models that control for district-level features and trends in party support, as well as for changes in the size of the local foreign population and the unemployment rate. Horizontal lines show 95 percent confidence intervals. Standard errors are clustered by party, to allow for different error structures across parties that attract varying levels of support (similar results are obtained with clustering at the district-party level).

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 1.1 percentage points of the vote; the coefficient is significantly greater than zero at $p < .06$. But there is no evidence that nonminority candidates in the 2009 election who succeeded minority candidates in 2005 secured more votes for their party (the “second” vote).

Overall, the evidence summarized in Figure 4 provides little support for the prediction that minority group members received significantly fewer voters than other candidates. One of the four results is marginally significant, but the estimated effect is small. Table A4, in the online appendix, provides results of an identical analysis for minority candidates with Turkish names. The results are similar, though the sample is even smaller (fourteen Turkish-named candidates). The observational data from German elections do not fully rule out the possibility that voter discrimination hurts minority candidates. It is possible that some prejudiced voters withhold their support but that this effect is offset by higher levels of support from minority co-ethnics. This seems unlikely for several reasons. First, it is unlikely that the effects would happen to cancel out in both 2005 and 2009 and for both the “candidate” and “party” votes, given that each of these results

involved differing vote shares. Second, the survey data discussed in the paper suggest that minority candidates do not incur a significant penalty among voters on the Left. Finally, as noted above, the number of co-ethnics eligible to vote in Germany is small.

Discussion

The findings from the survey experiment and from election data tell 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 favor parties of the Right. The small numbers of minority group members who actually run for office tend to do so with parties of the Left. As a result, the few minority candidates who run for office receive as many votes as German-named candidates in comparable settings.

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 the null findings are not merely due to wide confidence intervals. The point estimates are all close to zero. The analysis is especially limited with respect to minority candidates who run for parties of the Right. The results from the survey suggest that if minority candidates were able to convince voters that they truly held right-of-center views, then they might not suffer a penalty. Such candidates are rare, however. The absence of such candidates from the observational analysis of election results suggests that this is an area in which it is too early to draw strong conclusions, at least in the German case.

This paper does not exclude the possibility that candidates and political parties anticipate voter discrimination so that only the “best” minority candidates (are allowed to) 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 (Gabriel, Weßels, and Falter 2009; Lupia and McCubbins 1998).

It should be stressed that the paper’s findings on the limited direct impact of voter discrimination in contemporary 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 some support 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 minority politicians in Germany, Cem Özdemir, published a book shortly after entering parliament titled “I am a Native: An Anatolian Schwabian in the Bundestag.”

Together with the findings presented in this paper, the secondary data provide suggestive evidence on the strategies that minority candidates pursue to limit the effects of voter discrimination. As such, this paper complements recent scholarship on ethnic voting (e.g., Birnir 2007; Chandra 2004). In particular, the paper addresses the constraints imposed by discrimination in contexts where the number of co-ethnics is too small to provide a voter base for political candidates. Future research should take seriously the possibility that minority candidates develop strategies to make the best of hostile public opinion climates.

Conclusion

This 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. This method for estimating the effects of voter discrimination in real-world election data can be applied in the future, as

minority candidates continue to enter German politics, and also in other contexts of underrepresentation. Bringing together experimental and observational data also has substantive implications. The combination of the two methods 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.

The substantive 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 excludes the members of these groups from positions of political power. This would call into question whether European democracies are open to the participation of all their members, with troubling implications for the civic health of these countries as the size of minority populations continue to grow. In fact, however, the barriers to participation are more subtle. 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. 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 equal representation will remain.

Author's Note

Replication data for the 2005 and 2009 German federal elections will be made available on the Harvard IQSS Dataverse Network within three months of publication. The survey experimental data may be obtained from the GESIS-Leibniz Institute for the Social Sciences. R code for replicating the analysis of both datasets will be made available on the same dataverse.

Acknowledgments

I thank panelists at the 2011 Council for European Studies and the 2011 American Political Science Association annual meetings, and the participants in the European University Institute political behavior workshop. I am grateful to Rahsaan Maxwell and Jennifer Miller-González for help coding candidate names and to Taeku Lee, Inés Levin, Philipp Rehm, Karen Schönwälder, and Inés Valdez as well as three anonymous reviewers for helpful comments. Any remaining errors are my own.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Funding

The author(s) received no financial support for the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. Cem Özdemir, born in Germany to Turkish parents, is cochairman of the Green party. Philipp Rösler, adopted from Vietnam by German parents, served as chairman of the Free Democratic Party (FDP) and was the vice-chancellor of Germany from 2011 to 2013.
2. 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. 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.
3. Age, education, and region (East/West) are similarly distributed across treatment groups, as is general satisfaction with democracy. Women show higher levels of support for hypothetical candidates, but models with interaction terms reveal that this is true regardless of candidate minority status and gender. None of the substantive results change when a control is included to account for higher support among women voters.
4. These figures were calculated by the author from the 2007 German micro-census. Similarly, in the survey, only 3 percent of respondents were born abroad, a sample too small to allow separate analysis. Excluding these respondents does not affect the results.
5. 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 the weights, I prefer to compare the findings directly to real-world election data.
6. An alternative would have been to manipulate party affiliation. However, that would have two disadvantages. It would have meant less realism, since at least some voters know that minority candidates tend to run on the Left. It would also have increased the number of treatments, requiring a very large sample size or crowding out other tests. Future research could include manipulations of both candidate origins and party.
7. The survey includes measures of party preference in the 2009 election, and ideology (a Left-Right scale). Each variable has many missing variables, 32 percent and 10 percent, respectively, of the total. In order to avoid dropping respondents from the analysis, I combined the two measures, coding first by party preference and then, for those with no score on this variable, by whether the survey

respondent placed herself on the Left or the Right. Similar results are obtained using either measure on its own.

8. 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.

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