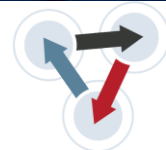




# The Political Context of Regions and Residential Mobility: Understanding the Political Motivations Behind Migration Intentions and Behavior

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# Geographic Polarization by Residential Mobility

## 1. Political preferences of residents

- Residents have political preferences toward their neighbors and favor places where the residents share the same partisanship or ideological beliefs (Gimpel, Hui 2015, Hui 2013)
- Compete with other location preferences (Cho et al. 2013; Gimpel, Hui 2017; Hui 2013) and have an indirect and unconscious effect on migration decisions (Gimpel, Hui 2017; Martin, Webster 2020)

## 2. Political mismatch between individuals and context

- Political mismatch has negative effects on satisfaction (Gimpel, Hui 2018; Hui 2013, Lütjen, Matschoß 2015), social relationships (Chopik and Motyl 2016), and sense of belonging (Motyl 2014)

## 3. Transfer of political preferences into actual migration behavior

- People move to regions that do match their political beliefs (Cho et al. 2013; Hui 2013; Lütjen, Matschoß 2015; McDonald 2011; Motyl et al. 2014)
- People also move to politically incongruent regions (Carlson, Gimpel 2019, Cho et al. 2019, Mummolo, Nall 2019)

# What we don't know and what I want to know

## Research gap:

- Mixed empirical evidence on how political aspects of the region shape migration decisions.
- Rare studies on other social contexts and political systems (Chan and Kawalerowicz 2022; Gallego et al. 2016; Lee et al. 2018; Lueders 2023; Maxwell 2019; Pickard et al. 2022; Shuttleworth et al. 2021).
- Political context of a region as a push factor is overlooked, despite a few exceptions (Lütjen and Matschoß 2015; Motyl et al. 2014; Pickard et al. 2022).

## Research question:

- Is the political context of regions a push factor in Germany and its multi-party system, and does it influence the moving intention and actual moving behavior, especially for voter groups that live in politically incongruent regions?

# Affective Polarization and the political context of a region

## Concept

Difference between sympathy towards one's own party and its supporters (in-group) and antipathy, rejection and hostility towards the opposing party and its members (out-group) (Iyengar, Sood, and Lelkes 2012; Iyengar and Westwood 2015)

## Consequences

- Negative and biased perceptions of opposing parties and their supporters
- Stereotyping and attribution of bad personality traits
- Low trust and discriminatory behavior

**Germany** is known as a democracy with low and decreasing affective polarization, but the subnational variation should not be underestimated

## Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1: Voters intend to move away if they live in regions with a high political incompatibility.

Hypothesis 2: Voters actually move away from a region if the political incompatibility in their region is high.

# Data and Measurements

Combining individual survey data from the SOEP (Goebel et al. 2019) and the GLES (2019, 2022) with regional data from the BBSR (BBSR 2022)

NUTS 3 level regions as geographical unit (counties like “Kreise” and “kreisfreie Städte”)

**Outcome I:** Moving intention, dummy coded (2014, 2019)

**Outcome II:** Moving behavior after the federal elections 2013 and 2017 (2014-2017, 2018-2021), dummy coded

**Individual level:** Voter groups based on the voting behavior in the federal election 2013 & 2017, dummy coded

Control variables: a) Individual, b) socio-economic, and c) household characteristics

**Regional level:** 2 indices of hostility as regional political context (federal election 2013, 2017)

1. regional **hostility** of a voter group **towards** left-wing and right-wing parties

2. regional **hostility** of a party **by** left-wing and right-wing voter groups

Control variables: a) regional properties, b) labor market, c) housing market, c) public services

# Indices of regional hostility towards and by others

## Construction in two steps:

1. Obtaining the mean values of each voter group with regard to their rejection of each party using GLES (2019, 2022) “Scalometer of parties”
2. Weighting the mean values of the voter groups with the regional election results of the party groups using BBSR (2022)

## Example 1. index: regional hostility towards other parties

$$\begin{aligned} \text{SPD voters dislike} &= ((\text{SPD voters dislike Green party} + \text{SPD voters dislike Left party}) / 2) \\ \text{left-wing parties} &* ((\text{regional elections results Green party} + \text{regional elections results Left party}) / 100) \end{aligned}$$

## Example 2. index: regional hostility by other voters

$$\begin{aligned} \text{SPD party is} &= ((\text{Green voters dislike SPD party} + \text{Left voters dislike SPD party}) / 2) \\ \text{disliked by} &* ((\text{regional elections results Green party} + \text{regional elections results Left party}) / 100) \\ \text{left-wing voters} & \end{aligned}$$

# Methods

Linear multi-level analyses

2 models are conducted for each outcome variable

- Influence of the 2 regional hostility indices in separate models
- Repeated for each voter group

Models include interactions between the voter group and the indices of regional hostility, to capture the political compatibility between voters and their region

- Random slope is included for the variable at the first level of interaction

# Table 1: Moving intention and behavior of SPD voters

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficient, clustered for counties, (robust standard error in parentheses), \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ ; \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ ; \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , unweighted;  
Source: SOEP (v38), BBSR (2022), GLES (2019, 2022)

	Model 1a Intention		Model 1b Behavior		Model 2a Intention		Model 2b Behavior	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Individual level								
SPD voter	-0.197 **	(0.069)	-0.050 *	(0.024)	-0.161 **	(0.057)	-0.025	(0.022)
Regional level								
SPD dislikes left parties	-0.051 *	(0.025)	-0.009	(0.008)				
SPD dislikes right parties	-0.034 **	(0.012)	-0.006	(0.004)				
SPD disliked by left voters					-0.050	(0.032)	-0.018	(0.01)
SPD disliked by right voters					-0.040 *	(0.017)	-0.008	(0.005)
<b>Voter x disliked party group</b>								
SPD x left parties	0.047	(0.025)	0.011	(0.008)				
SPD x right parties	0.036 **	(0.013)	0.011 *	(0.005)				
<b>Voter x disliked by voter group</b>								
SPD x left voters					0.045	(0.026)	0.005	(0.008)
SPD x right voters					0.037 **	(0.014)	0.007	(0.005)
Individual level								
Regional level	YES		YES		YES		YES	
Year	YES		YES		YES		YES	
Constant	0.499 ***	(0.142)	0.121 *	(0.049)	0.457 ***	(0.141)	0.115 *	(0.049)
ICC	0.010	(0.002)	0.004	(0.001)	0.010		0.004	
Log pseudolikelihood	-14104.315		17225.959		-14105.590		17225.062	
N (obs)	28,034		28,337		28,034		28,337	
N (counties)	392		392		392		392	



# Table 2: Moving intention and behavior of Green voters

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficient, clustered for counties, (robust standard error in parentheses), \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ ; \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ ; \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , unweighted;  
Source: SOEP (v38), BBSR (2022), GLES (2019, 2022)

	Model 3a Intention		Model 3b Behavior		Model 4a Intention		Model 4b Behavior	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Individual level								
Green voter	-0.317	(0.176)	-0.082	(0.046)	-0.422 *	(0.165)	-0.076	(0.046)
Regional level								
Greens dislikes left parties	0.060	(0.032)	-0.009	(0.009)				
Greens dislikes right parties	0.014	(0.019)	-0.005	(0.004)				
Greens disliked by left voters					0.078 *	(0.034)	-0.008	(0.01)
Greens disliked by right voters					0.034	(0.025)	-0.006	(0.006)
<b>Voter x disliked party group</b>								
Green x left parties	0.092 *	(0.046)	0.032 *	(0.013)				
Green x right parties	0.053 *	(0.027)	0.008	(0.007)				
<b>Voter x disliked by voter group</b>								
Green x left voters					0.103 **	(0.039)	0.031 **	(0.012)
Green x right voters					0.085 **	(0.031)	0.008	(0.009)
Individual level								
Regional level	YES		YES		YES		YES	
Year	YES		YES		YES		YES	
Constant	0.155	(0.189)	0.131 *	(0.054)	0.052	(0.204)	0.129 *	(0.056)
ICC	0.009	(0.002)	0.003	(0.001)	0.009		0.003	
Log pseudolikelihood	-14075.773		17226.769		-14073.677		17227.561	
N (observations)	28,034		28,337		28,034		28,337	
N (counties)	392		392		392		392	

# Table 3: Moving intention and behavior of Left voters

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficient, clustered for counties, (robust standard error in parentheses), \*\*\* p ≤ 0.001; \*\* p ≤ 0.01; \* p ≤ 0.05, unweighted;  
Source: SOEP (v38), BBSR (2022), GLES (2019, 2022)

	Model 5a Intention		Model 5b Behavior		Model 6a Intention		Model 6b Behavior	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
<b>Individual level</b>								
Left voter	-0.383 **	(0.125)	-0.067	(0.054)	-0.342 *	(0.135)	-0.082	(0.061)
<b>Regional level</b>								
Left dislikes left parties	0.026	(0.023)	0.029 **	(0.009)				
Left dislikes right parties	0.000	(0.016)	0.014 **	(0.005)				
Left disliked by left voters					0.033	(0.018)	0.018 **	(0.006)
Left disliked by right voters					0.011	(0.015)	0.009 *	(0.005)
<b>Voter x disliked party group</b>								
Left x left parties	0.125 ***	(0.031)	0.024	(0.018)				
Left x right parties	0.060 **	(0.022)	0.008	(0.008)				
<b>Voter x disliked by voter group</b>								
Left x left voters					0.086 ***	(0.024)	0.019	(0.015)
Left x right voters					0.060 *	(0.026)	0.012	(0.010)
<b>Individual level</b>								
Individual level	YES		YES		YES		YES	
<b>Regional level</b>								
Regional level	YES		YES		YES		YES	
<b>Year</b>								
Year	YES		YES		YES		YES	
Constant	0.315	(0.162)	-0.007	(0.053)	0.235	(0.168)	0.023	(0.052)
ICC	0.010	(0.002)	0.004	(0.001)	0.010		0.004	
Log pseudolikelihood	-14074.150		17249.466		-14075.190		17248.091	
N (observations)	28,034		28,337		28,034		28,337	
N (counties)	392		392		392		392	

# Table 4: Moving intention and behavior of Union voters

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficient, clustered for counties, (robust standard error in parentheses), \*\*\* p ≤ 0.001; \*\* p ≤ 0.01; \* p ≤ 0.05, unweighted;  
Source: SOEP (v38), BBSR (2022), GLES (2019, 2022)

	Model 7a Intention		Model 7b Behavior		Model 8a Intention		Model 8b Behavior	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
<b>Individual level</b>								
Union voter	-0.075 *	(0.037)	-0.011	(0.017)	-0.060	(0.038)	-0.019	(0.017)
<b>Regional level</b>								
Union dislikes left parties	0.011	(0.013)	0.008	(0.005)				
Union dislikes right parties	0.007	(0.014)	0.012 **	(0.005)				
Union disliked by left voters					0.002	(0.013)	0.007	(0.005)
Union disliked by right voters					0.005	(0.02)	0.016 *	(0.006)
<b>Voter x disliked party group</b>								
Union x left parties	0.013	(0.01)	0.002	(0.005)				
Union x right parties	0.003	(0.01)	0.007	(0.004)				
<b>Voter x disliked by voter group</b>								
Union x left voters					0.010	(0.012)	0.005	(0.006)
Union x right voters					-0.001	(0.012)	0.010 *	(0.005)
Individual level	YES		YES		YES		YES	
Regional level	YES		YES		YES		YES	
Year	YES		YES		YES		YES	
Constant	0.350 ***	(0.109)	0.095 *	(0.04)	0.323 **	(0.108)	0.086 *	(0.04)
ICC	0.010	(0.002)	0.003	(0.001)	0.159		0.003	
Log pseudolikelihood	-14085.277		17231.057		-14086.707		17231.130	
N (observations)	28,034		28,337		28,034		28,337	
N (counties)	392		392		392		392	

# Table 5: Moving intention and behavior of FDP voters

	Model 9a		Model 9b		Model 10a		Model 10b	
	Intention		Behavior		Intention		Behavior	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
Individual level								
FDP voter	-0.002	(0.31)	0.041	(0.084)	-0.034	(0.048)	0.003	(0.015)
Regional level								
FDP dislikes left parties	-0.004	(0.017)	0.018 ***	(0.005)				
FDP dislikes right parties	-0.027	(0.018)	0.017 ***	(0.005)				
FDP disliked by left voters					0.043	(0.026)	-0.007	(0.008)
FDP disliked by right voters					0.048	(0.037)	-0.018	(0.011)
<b>Voter x disliked party group</b>								
FDP x left parties	0.030	(0.056)	-0.011	(0.018)				
FDP x right parties	-0.020	(0.054)	-0.005	(0.013)				
<b>Voter x disliked by voter group</b>								
FDP x left voters					0.035 *	(0.014)	-0.005	(0.005)
FDP x right voters					-0.019	(0.015)	0.003	(0.005)
Individual level	YES		YES		YES		YES	
Regional level	YES		YES		YES		YES	
Year	YES		YES		YES		YES	
Constant	0.433 **	(0.139)	-0.010	(0.05)	-0.019	(0.269)	0.209 *	(0.086)
ICC	0.010	(0.002)	0.004	(0.001)	0.010		0.004	
Log pseudolikelihood	-14103.708		17224.866		-14104.829		17223.120	
N (observations)	28,034		28,337		28,034		28,337	
N (counties)	392		392		392		392	

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficient, clustered for counties, (robust standard error in parentheses), \*\*\*  $p \leq 0.001$ ; \*\*  $p \leq 0.01$ ; \*  $p \leq 0.05$ , unweighted;  
Source: SOEP (v38), BBSR (2022), GLES (2019, 2022)

# Table 6: Moving intention and behavior of AfD voters

Note: Unstandardized regression coefficient, clustered for counties, (robust standard error in parentheses), \*\*\* p ≤ 0.001; \*\* p ≤ 0.01; \* p ≤ 0.05, unweighted;  
Source: SOEP (v38), BBSR (2022), GLES (2019, 2022)

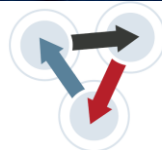
	Model 11a		Model 11b		Model 12a		Model 12b	
	Intention		Behavior		Intention		Behavior	
	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.	Coef.	S.E.
<b>Individual level</b>								
AfD voter	-0.131	(0.103)	-0.008	(0.023)	0.098	(0.128)	0.017	(0.026)
<b>Regional level</b>								
AfD dislikes left parties	0.029 *	(0.012)	-0.006 *	(0.003)				
AfD dislikes right parties	0.011	(0.012)	-0.011 ***	(0.003)				
AfD disliked by left voters					0.022 *	(0.01)	-0.004	(0.002)
AfD disliked by right voters					0.003	(0.009)	-0.006 *	(0.002)
<b>Voter x disliked party group</b>								
AfD x left parties	0.011	(0.022)	0.007	(0.005)				
AfD x right parties	0.043	(0.023)	-0.004	(0.005)				
<b>Voter x disliked by voter group</b>								
AfD x left voters					-0.012	(0.018)	0.002	(0.002)
AfD x right voters					-0.008	(0.02)	-0.006	(0.005)
Individual level	YES		YES		YES		YES	
Regional level	YES		YES		YES		YES	
Year	YES		YES		YES		YES	
Constant	0.207	(0.14)	0.155 ***	(0.043)	0.265 *	(0.127)	0.118 **	(0.042)
ICC	0.010	(0.002)	0.004	(0.001)	0.010		0.004	
Log pseudolikelihood	-14101.042		17224.155		-14102.498		17221.295	
N (observations)	28,034		28,337		28,034		28,337	
N (counties)	392		392		392		392	

# Conclusion

- The political context and hostility of a region is a push factor and influences the intention and actual migration behavior of voters
- Each voter group has its own migration profile
  - the political context of a region is more important for left-wing than for right-wing voter groups
- It is difficult to estimate whether the political context of a region leads to a geographic sorting of voter groups
  - The impact of the political context on the intention to move away and the actual moving behavior is rather low
  - The translation of intention into actual behavior is an exception

**Thank you very much for your attention!**

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