**Online Appendix 1: The Politbarometer questions to identify party supporters**

The original formulation of the survey questions in German:

1. In Deutschland neigen viele Leute längere Zeit einer bestimmten politischen Partei zu, obwohl sie auch ab und zu eine andere Partei wählen. Wie ist das bei Ihnen: Neigen Sie - ganz allgemein gesprochen - einer bestimmten Partei zu?
2. Falls die/der Befragte einer Partei zuneigt

Wie stark oder wie schwach neigen Sie - alles zusammengenommen - dieser Partei zu? ...

0 TNZ
1 Sehr stark,
2 ziemlich stark,
3 mäßig,
4 ziemlich schwach,
5 sehr schwach?
9 KA

Translation by the author:

1. In Germany many people tend to support a specific political party over a longer period of time, even if they sometimes also vote for another party. How is that for you? Do you – speaking generally – tend towards a specific political party?
2. In case the respondent does tend to favor a political party:

All things considered, how strongly or weakly do you tend to favor this party?...

0 – TNZ

1 – Very strongly

2 – Rather strongly

3 – Moderately

4 – Rather weakly

5 – Very weakly

9 – Don’t know

**Online Appendix 2: Structure of the stacked dataset illustrating two hypothetical policy issues**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Case** | **Policy Issue** | **General public support** | **Political party** | **Party position** | **Government party** |
| 1 | 1 | .6 | SDP | Favour | 1 |
| 2 | 1 | .6 | CDU/CSU | Against | 0 |
| 3 | 1 | .6 | FPD | Against | 0 |
| 4 | 1 | .6 | Greens | Favour | 1 |
| 5 | 1 | .6 | Linke | Neutral | 0 |
| 6 | 2 | .2 | SDP | Against | 0 |
| 7 | 2 | .2 | CDU/CSU | Favour | 1 |
| 8 | 2 | .2 | FPD | Favour | 1 |
| 9 | 2 | .2 | Greens | Against | 0 |
| 10 | 2 | .2 | Linke | Against | 0 |

**Online Appendix 3: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting whether a party was in favour of a policy issue**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Effect** | **Model 1** | **Model 2** | **Model 3** | **Model 4** | **Model 5** |
| Supporter preferences | 4.55\*\*\*(0.88) | 4.54\*\*\*(0.89) | 0.28(1.92) | 7.76\*\*\*(1.45) | 6.90\*(3.09) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Nicheness |  | 3.23\* | -0.72 | 3.83\* | 3.15 |
|  |  | (1.50) | (2.23) | (1.60) | (2.72) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Supporter preferences\* Nicheness |  |  | 7.60\*(3.23) |  | 1.23(3.96) |
| Government party |  | 0.58(0.54) | 0.48(0.54) | 3.38\*\*\*(0.92) | 3.22\*\*(1.04) |
| Supporter preferences\* Government Party |  |  |  | -5.57\*\*\*(1.46) | -5.31\*\*(1.68) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Controls** |  |  |  |  |  |
| Party (ref: SPD) |  |  |  |  |  |
| CDU/CSU | -0.07 | -1.21+ | -1.17 | -1.27+ | -1.27+ |
|  | (0.48) | (0.73) | (0.73) | (0.74) | (0.74) |
| FDP | -0.44 | -0.38 | -0.33 | 0.33 | 0.31 |
|  | (1.15) | (1.17) | (1.16) | (1.33) | (1.32) |
| Grüne | 0.43 | -0.42 | -0.41 | 0.22 | 0.19 |
|  | (1.24) | (1.28) | (1.28) | (1.47) | (1.47) |
| Linke | 0.15 | -0.58 | -0.66 | -0.11 | -0.15 |
|  | (1.21) | (1.25) | (1.25) | (1.43) | (1.42) |
| Party size | 0.01 | 0.03 | 0.03 | 0.06 | 0.05 |
|  | (0.04) | (0.04) | (0.05) | (0.05) | (0.05) |
| Media Salience | -0.09 | -0.08 | -0.05 | -0.05 | -0.05 |
|  | (0.39) | (0.38) | (0.38) | (0.41) | (0.41) |
| Constant | -2.87+ | -4.66\* | -2.46 | -7.71\*\* | -7.18\* |
|  | (1.57) | (1.88) | (2.07) | (2.36) | (2.87) |
| Coalition fixed-effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Policy-level random intercepts | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Number of Cases | 334 | 334 | 334 | 334 | 334 |
| AIC | 416 | 414 | 411 | 399 | 401 |
| BIC | 465 | 472 | 472 | 460 | 466 |

+ p<0.10, \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

**Online Appendix 4: Predicted probability of a position in favour of a policy issue for government parties and opposition parties (left axis) and the distribution of cases (right axis), based on the proportion of party supporters in favour of the issue**

****

***Figure note: The black solid line indicates the predictions for government parties and the red dashed line for opposition parties (left axis) with 95% confidence intervals, based on Model 5 in Appendix 3. The shaded grey area indicates the distribution of the cases (as a percentage of the total N) across public support (right axis).***

**Online Appendix 5: Exploring issue-characteristics**

This appendix explores the conjecture that niche parties may not generally side more with their supporters than more mainstream parties, but only do so on the policy issues they own (Giger & Lefkofridi, 2014; Klüver & Spoon, 2016). The argument has so far been tested in terms of the attention that niche parties paid to issue dimensions like the environment or immigration (Giger & Lefkofridi, 2014; Klüver & Spoon, 2016). Applying issue-ownership to specific policy issues is not straightforward. In order to establish issue ownership, the section below relied on data from the Comparative Manifestos Project (Volkens et al., 2017). Firstly each specific policy issue was tied to a policy dimension (see Appendix 7). Secondly the topics of quasi sentences in the manifestos of the political parties that were dedicated to the same policy dimension were calculated (see table 5.2). A party’s ownership of an issue is then defined as the share of sentences in the manifesto that were dedicated to the general dimension at the time of the statement by the political party (Klüver & Spoon, 2016). Since manifestos are only written before elections, the ‘ownership’ score of a single manifesto was applied from one year before the election for which the manifesto was written to one year before the next election. The one year period is chosen because it is the period during which the manifesto was written.

Table 5.1 then reports on models that investigate whether niche parties’ positions are more related to those of their supporters on issues they own. Model 1 demonstrates that the three way interaction (outlining whether the effect of being a more niche party on the effect of public opinion depends on the extent to which the party owns an issue) is not strong nor significant. Importantly and against the expectations, Model 2 shows the same for the effect on the relation between (niche) party positions and the preferences of supporters. Moreover, Models 3 and 4 show the same results but with congruence (whether a majority of the public (Model 3) or a party’s supporters (Model 4) are on the same side of a policy issue. Here the effect of owning an issue does not affect (neither strongly nor significantly) the likelihood that a niche party’s position is congruent with those of its supporters – again disconfirming the expectation. Of course, this is a very tentative test and future studies could more systematically assess the ownership op specific policy issues by political parties and the consequences it has for the public - party position linkage.

**Table 5.1: Multilevel logistic models exploring Issue-Ownership. Models 1 and 2 predict a party’s position and models 3 and 4 whether a party’s position was congruent with public (3) or supporters’ (4) preferences. Tests of issue ownership theory marked in bold.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Model:** | **(1)** | **(2)** | **(3)** | **(4)** |
| **Dependent Variable:** | **Party position**  | **Party position**  | **Congruence public** | **Congruence supporters** |
| Public support | 0.76 |  |  |  |
|  | (3.41) |  |  |  |
| Nicheness | -0.88 | 0.19 | 0.54 | 0.94 |
|  | (3.36) | (3.91) | (1.67) | (1.85) |
| Ownership | 0.17 | 0.17 | -0.14 | -0.14 |
|  | (0.32) | (0.37) | (0.10) | (0.11) |
| Public support\*Nicheness | 4.42 |  |  |  |
|  | (5.77) |  |  |  |
| Public support\*Ownership | -0.49 |  |  |  |
|  | (0.55) |  |  |  |
| Nicheness\*Ownership | 0.01 | -0.18 | **0.20** | **0.19** |
|  | (0.54) | (0.62) | **(0.18)** | **(0.19)** |
| Public support\*Nicheness\* Ownership | **0.38(0.91)** |  |  |  |
| Supporter preferences |  | 3.92 |  |  |
|  |  | (3.94) |  |  |
| Supporter preferences\*Nicheness |  | 2.14(6.48) |  |  |
| Supporter preferences\*Ownership |  | -0.61(0.63) |  |  |
| Supporter preferences\* Nicheness\*Ownership  |  | **0.91(1.04)** |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Controls** |  |  |  |  |
| Party (ref: SPD) |  |  |  |  |
| CDU/CSU | -0.91 | -1.08 | -1.15+ | -0.68 |
|  | (0.66) | (0.73) | (0.66) | (0.69) |
| FDP | -0.58 | -0.49 | -1.80+ | -2.57\* |
|  | (1.04) | (1.19) | (1.09) | (1.24) |
| Gruene | -0.59 | -0.58 | -0.97 | -1.28 |
|  | (1.14) | (1.32) | (1.20) | (1.40) |
| Linke | -0.65 | -0.87 | -0.72 | -2.15 |
|  | (1.10) | (1.28) | (1.19) | (1.34) |
| Party size | 0.01 | 0.02 | -0.03 | -0.06 |
|  | (0.04) | (0.05) | (0.04) | (0.05) |
| Media salience | 0.19 | -0.03 | -0.44 | -0.59 |
|  | (0.34) | (0.39) | (0.35) | (0.38) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | -1.35 | -3.02 | 1.96 | 3.20+ |
|  | (2.39) | (2.73) | (1.76) | (1.93) |
| Coalition fixed-effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Issue random-intercepts | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Number of Cases | 334 | 334 | 334 | 334 |
| AIC | 456 | 413 | 454 | 416 |
| BIC | 529 | 486 | 511 | 474 |

+ p<0.10, \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

Table 5.2. Additive policy scale dimensions from the CMP categories

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | CMP categories |
| **Names** | **CMP Left** | **CMP Right** |
| Education spending  | 506 Educational Provision Expansion: Positive  | 507 Education Expenditure Limitation: Positive |
| Environmental Protection | 501 Environmental Protection: Positive + 416 Anti-Growth Economy: Positive | 410 Productivity: Positive |
| Foreign Alliances | 101 Foreign Special Relationships: Positive | 102: Foreign Special Relationships: Negative |
| Free Market Economy | 403 Market Regulation: Positive + 412 Controlled Economy: Positive + 413 Nationalisation: Positive + 415 Marxist Analysis: Positive | 401 Free Enterprise: Positive +402 Incentives: Positive |
| Internationalism  | 107 Internationalism: Positive  | 109 Internationalism: Negative |
| Justice and Freedom | 201 Freedom and human rights: positive + 202 Democracy: positive | 605 Law and order: positive |
| Macroeconomic | 409 Keynesian Demand Management: Positive | 414 Economic Orthodoxy: Positive  |
| Militarism  | 105 Military: Negative  | 104 Military: Positive |
| Multiculturalism  | 607 Multiculturalism: Positive  | 608 Multiculturalism: Negative  |
| Target groups | 705 Underprivileged minority groups/positive | 704 Middle-class and professional groups/positive |
| Traditional Morality | 604 Traditional Morality: Negative | 603 Traditional Morality:  |
| Welfare State | 504 Welfare State Expansion: Positive | 505 Welfare State Limitation: Positive  |
| Labour groups | 701 Labour groups: Positive | 702 Labour groups: Negative |
| Political system | 301 Decentralisation | 302 Centralisation |
| European Union | 108 European Community/Union: Positive | 110 European Community/Union: Negative |
| Constitutionalism | 204 Constitutionalism: Negative | 203 Constitutionalism: Positive |
| National way of life | 602 National Way of Life: Negative | 601 National Way of Life: Positive |
| General left right scale | 103 Anti-Imperialism: Anti-Colonialism + 105 Military: Negative +106 Peace: Positive +107 Internationalism: Positive +202 Democracy: Positive +403 Market Regulation: Positive +404 Economic Planning: Positive +406 Protectionism: Positive +412 Controlled Economy: Positive +413 Nationalisation: Positive +504 Welfare State Expansion: Positive +506 Education Expansion: Positive +701 Labour Groups: Positive | 104 Military: Positive +201 Freedom and Human Rights: Positive +203 Constitutionalism: Positive +305 Political Authority: Positive + 401 Free Enterprise: Positive +402 Incentives: Positive +407 Protectionism: Negative + 414 Economic Orthodoxy: Positive +505 Welfare State Limitation: Positive +601 National Way of Life: Positive +603 Traditional Morality: Positive +05 Law and Order: Positive +606 Social Harmony: Positive |

The second part of this Appendix explores whether the link between political parties and the positions of the general public and their supporters is affected by the media salience of a policy issue. There is some evidence that policy outputs are more aligned with public preferences on issues that attract media attention (e.g. Lax & Phillips, 2012). The argument is usually that the actions of politicians are more scrutinized on such issues which should increase the electoral costs of ignoring public opinion (Erikson et al., 1995). Moreover, politicians may be more aware of public preferences as a result of media attention.

On the other hand and applied to political parties, media salience should make it harder for parties to hide or blur unpopular positions (Rovny, 2012). Similarly to how government parties may be more pressured into voicing unpopular policy decisions (Green-Pedersen & Mortensen, 2010), media attention for an issue may reduce the opportunities for hiding an unpopular position.

Table 5.3 shows that the latter of these two arguments bears out in the data. Both the effects of public opinion (Model 1) and of supporter preferences (Model 2) on party positions are weakened on salient issues. However, the interaction effect between media salience and supporter preferences is only significant at the 10% level in Model 2 and not at all for models predicting congruence in Models 3 and 4, even if they are in the same general direction. Taken together, the models provide some (but not strong) evidence for the conclusion that political parties – at least when it comes to the positions they take in the media – take less popular positions on salient issues. The fact that party positions are also measured through the media *and* the fact that missing party positions mainly occurred on non-salient issues means that these results may be dependent on the method used here – even if the support for blurring behavior (Rovny, 2012) is interesting in its own right.

**Table 5.3: Multilevel logistic models exploring media salience. Models 1 and 2 predict a party’s position and models 3 and 4 whether a party’s position was congruent with public (3) or supporters’ (4) preferences. Effects of media salience highlighted in bold.**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| Dependent variable | **Party position** | **Party position** | **Congruence Public** | **Congruence Supporters** |
| Public support | 2.71\*\*\* |  |  |  |
|  | (0.64) |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Media salience | 3.71\*\* | 2.49+ | **-0.43** | **-0.58** |
|  | (1.40) | (1.39) | **(0.34)** | **(0.36)** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Public support\*Media salience | **-4.75\*\*(1.78)** |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Supporter preferences |  | 4.99\*\*\*(0.93) |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Supporter preferences\*Media salience |  | **-3.47+(1.80)** |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Nicheness | 2.74\* | 3.07\* | 1.34 | 1.38 |
|  | (1.36) | (1.48) | (1.36) | (1.49) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| (Continued) Model | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| Dependent variable | **Party position** | **Party position** | **Congruence Public** | **Congruence Supporters** |
| Party in government | 0.50 | 0.60 | -1.28\* | -1.66\*\* |
|  | (0.50) | (0.53) | (0.54) | (0.64) |
| **Controls**Party (Ref: SPD) |  |  |  |  |
| CDU/CSU | -1.09+ | -1.20+ | -1.13+ | -0.56 |
|  | (0.66) | (0.72) | (0.66) | (0.70) |
| FDP | -0.58 | -0.54 | -1.43 | -2.09+ |
|  | (1.02) | (1.17) | (1.11) | (1.27) |
| Gruene | -0.45 | -0.48 | -0.66 | -0.83 |
|  | (1.11) | (1.27) | (1.21) | (1.42) |
| Linke | -0.58 | -0.69 | -0.31 | -1.58 |
|  | (1.08) | (1.25) | (1.20) | (1.36) |
|  | (0.68) | (0.76) | (0.69) | (0.76) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Party size | 0.01 | 0.02 | -0.00 | -0.04 |
|  | (0.04) | (0.04) | (0.04) | (0.05) |
| Constant | -3.28\* | -4.76\* | 0.83 | 2.11 |
|  | (1.57) | (1.87) | (1.64) | (1.81) |
| Coalition fixed-effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Issue level random-intercepts | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Number of Cases | 334 | 334 | 334 | 334 |
| AIC | 451 | 413 | 448 | 408 |
| BIC | 508 | 474 | 501 | 462 |

+ p<0.10, \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

**Appendix 6: Robustness Checks**

**Table 6.1: Multilevel Logistic models predicting congruence between a party’s position and the preferences of the general public (models 1 and 2) and between a party’s position and the preferences of its supporters (models 3 and 4)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Model | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| Dependent variable | **Congruence party public** | **Congruence party public** | **Congruence party supporter** | **Congruence party supporter** |
| Nicheness | 1.70 | 1.34 | 2.07 | 1.38 |
|  | (1.34) | (1.36) | (1.48) | (1.49) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Party in government |  | -1.28\* |  | -1.66\*\* |
|  |  | (0.54) |  | (0.64) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| **Controls**Party (ref: SPD) |  |  |  |  |
| CDU/CSU | -1.20+ | -1.13+ | -0.72 | -0.56 |
|  | (0.65) | (0.66) | (0.69) | (0.70) |
| FDP | -1.78 | -1.43 | -2.60\* | -2.09+ |
|  | (1.08) | (1.11) | (1.24) | (1.27) |
| Gruene | -0.96 | -0.66 | -1.33 | -0.83 |
|  | (1.19) | (1.21) | (1.39) | (1.42) |
| Linke | -0.67 | -0.31 | -2.14 | -1.58 |
|  | (1.17) | (1.20) | (1.34) | (1.36) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Party size | -0.02 | -0.00 | -0.06 | -0.04 |
|  | (0.04) | (0.04) | (0.05) | (0.05) |
| Media salience | -0.45 | -0.43 | -0.60 | -0.58 |
|  | (0.34) | (0.34) | (0.37) | (0.36) |
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Constant | 1.06 | 0.83 | 2.38 | 2.11 |
|  | (1.61) | (1.64) | (1.79) | (1.81) |
| Coalition fixed-effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Issue level random intercepts | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Number of Cases | 334 | 334 | 334 | 334 |
| AIC | 452 | 448 | 414 | 408 |
| BIC | 501 | 501 | 464 | 462 |

+ p<0.10, \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

**Table 6.2: Multilevel logistic regression models predicting whether a party is in favour of a policy issue, excluding one political party at a time. Based on Model 5 from Table 2.**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **Model** | **Excluding SPD** | **Excluding CDUCSU** | **Excluding FDP** | **Excluding Grüne** | **Excluding Linke** |
| Public support | -2.35 | 2.88 | 4.11 | 3.06 | 2.66 |
|  | (3.66) | (3.02) | (2.87) | (2.74) | (2.52) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Nicheness | -0.29 | -0.04 | 1.83 | 3.12 | 3.54 |
|  | (3.51) | (3.75) | (2.51) | (2.94) | (2.50) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Public support\*Nicheness | 8.67(5.29) | 3.65(4.41) | 0.51(3.83) | 1.68(4.04) | 1.47(3.62) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Government party | 1.98\* | 3.49\*\* | 2.57\*\* | 2.67\* | 2.28\*\* |
|  | (0.88) | (1.24) | (0.95) | (1.06) | (0.87) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Public support\*Government party | -2.64+(1.41) | -5.27\*\*(1.95) | -4.52\*\*(1.58) | -4.12\*\*(1.51) | -3.74\*\*(1.43) |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Controls**Party (ref: SPD1) |  |  |  |  |  |
| CDU/CSU |  |  | -0.66 | -0.89 | -1.68\* |
|  |  |  | (0.72) | (0.70) | (0.73) |
| FDP | 1.66 | -1.57 |  | -0.72 | 0.65 |
|  | (1.85) | (1.48) |  | (1.18) | (1.18) |
| Grüne | 1.47 | -0.71 | -0.72 |  | 0.40 |
|  | (1.88) | (1.53) | (1.33) |  | (1.26) |
| Linke | 1.25 | -0.93 | -0.72 | -1.03 |  |
|  | (1.95) | (1.51) | (1.28) | (1.39) |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Party size | 0.03 | -0.01 | -0.00 | -0.01 | 0.07 |
|  | (0.07) | (0.06) | (0.05) | (0.05) | (0.05) |
| Media salience | -0.23 | 0.58 | 0.35 | -0.09 | 0.04 |
|  | (0.38) | (0.55) | (0.42) | (0.37) | (0.39) |
| Constant | -3.49 | -2.07 | -3.14 | -3.51 | -5.59\* |
|  | (3.17) | (3.24) | (2.50) | (2.29) | (2.45) |
| Coalition fixed-effects | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Issue level random-intercepts | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Number of Cases | 253 | 256 | 268 | 264 | 295 |
| AIC | 337 | 331 | 366 | 358 | 400 |
| BIC | 390 | 388 | 424 | 412 | 459 |

+ p<0.10, \* p<0.05, \*\* p<0.01, \*\*\* p<0.001

1In Model 1 (which excludes SPD), the reference category is CDU/CSU

**Appendix 7: Overview of policy issues**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Policy Issue** | **Policy Scale** | **Public sup-port (%)** | **Don’t knows (%)** | **Majority of party's supporters on other side than the public** |
| Making Hartz IV receivers do "generally useful work" more strongly than before1 | WelfareState | 81% | 4% |  |
| Cutting government expenditure on welfare | WelfareState | 31% | 4% | FDP |
| Cutting government expenditure on healthcare | WelfareState | 15% | 2% | SPD |
| Cutting government expenditure on traffic and street construction | Free Market Economy | 35% | 2% |  |
| Cutting government expenditure on defense | Militarism | 85% | 3% | CDU/CSU |
| Cutting government expenditure on childcare | WelfareState | 6% | 2% |  |
| Cutting government expenditure on pensions | WelfareState | 8% | 1% |  |
| Cutting government expenditure on family promotion/support | WelfareState | 14% | 2% | SPD |
| Introducing a tax on buying and selling securities ("Wertpapieren") | Free Market Economy | 82% | 7% |  |
| Reversing the raise of the VAT level | Free Market Economy | 78% | 6% | SPD |
| Abolishing the rule that allows people who self-report their tax evasion to only pay back the evaded taxes without additional penalties | Free Market Economy | 60% | 3% |  |
| Only returning soldiers from Afghanistan later than 20112 | Militarism | 79% | 5% |  |
| Government intervention in levels of wages of managers3 | Free Market Economy | 69% | 3% | CDU/CSU |
| Providing a government loan of 50 million Euros to Quelle (a company)4 | Free Market Economy | 19% | 5% |  |
| Extending the duration of the military deployment in Afghanistan2 | Militarism | 40% | 3% | CDU/CSU, Grüne |
| Increasing the number of German soldiers in Afganistan | Militarism | 38% | 57% |  |
| There are different rules for cancelling long term rental contracts for those to rent a property and those who own it. The term for cancellation is three months for renters, but depends on the duration of the contract for owners. The proposal is to equalise these terms. | Free Market Economy | 50% | 9% | CDU/CSU, Linke |
| Selling a part of fully state owned Deutsche Bahn (the national railway company) | Free Market Economy | 36% | 10% |  |
| Ensuring that pensioners who have paid into the pension system for an extensive period of time receive a pension that is above the poverty line | WelfareState | 86% | 3% | SPD |
| Give financial support (from the state) to Opel (car manufacturer) | Free Market Economy | 43% | 6% |  |
| Giving out consumer coupons ("Konsumgutscheine") to all citizens5.  | Macroeconomy | 17% | 3% |  |
| Lowering taxes for private persons | Macroeconomy | 83% | 4% |  |
| Giving financial support to individual companies that get into trouble | Free Market Economy | 59% | 7% |  |
| Providing stronger tax reliefs for companies | Free Market Economy | 67% | 7% |  |
| Introducing a wealth tax for the wealthy | Targetgroups | 68% | 5% |  |
| Reintroducing the tax return for commuters from the first-kilometer6 | Free Market Economy | 88% | 3% |  |
| Also employing German soldiers in parts of Afghanistan with more conflict | Militarism | 17% | 4% |  |
| Chaning the consitution to allow the military to assist the police in cases where the there threats are of such a nature that the policy alone cannot deal with them | Militarism | 71% | 4% | CDU/CSU, Grüne |
| Raising the unemployment benefits II ("Arbeitslosengeldes II") in the Hartz-IV regulation | WelfareState | 81% | 8% |  |
| Introduction of a minimum wage for people delivering mail | Free Market Economy | 87% | 5% |  |
| Introducing state-controlled electricity prizes | Free Market Economy | 66% | 5% |  |
| Stopping all nuclear power plants by 2021 | Environmental Protection | 47% | 7% | CDU/CSU, FDP |
| Storing fingerprints of all German citizens and making them available to the police | Justice and Freedom | 62% | 2% | Grüne |
| Increasing taxation on flying | Environmental Protection | 60% | 4% |  |
| Raising the level of obligatory contributions to health insurance to match health care expenditure | WelfareState | 17% | 2% |  |
| Banning computer games that celebrate violence ("gewaltverherrlichenden") in response to the school shooting in Emsdetten | Justice and Freedom | 72% | 2% |  |
| During times of peace the army is only allowed to operate on German territory in case of disasters: allowing the army to assist the police also when there are no disasters | Militarism | 71% | 3% | Grüne |
| In the construction sector the minimum wage is set as the lowest wage level of the collective labour agreement to protect workers from cheaper foreign labour. Expanding this provision to all sectors of the economy | Free Market Economy | 67% | 6% |  |
| Raising income taxes on very high incomes | Targetgroups | 72% | 3% |  |
| Abolishing a number of tax returns to introduce a flat-rate income tax | Targetgroups | 45% | 37% | FDP |
| Unemployed spouses receive health insurance through their partner. Introducing a contribution to health insure for the unemployed spouses of high income employees | WelfareState | 76% | 4% |  |
| Additional compensation payments for working nights, Sundays and holidays are not taxed. Limiting the extent to which this is the case. | Free Market Economy | 34% | 3% |  |
| Reducing the subsidies on coal | Free Market Economy | 76% | 14% |  |
| Raising the VAT-level | Free Market Economy | 23% | 2% |  |
| Allowing the taking of DNA not just in case of severe crimes and sexual assaults, but also for less severe offences | Justice and Freedom | 73% | 4% | Grüne |
| Making it obligatory for parliamentarians (in the Bundestag) to report income from external sources to the chair of the parliament | Justice and Freedom | 81% | 3% |  |
| Banning paternity tests without permission from the mother | Justice and Freedom | 24% | 6% |  |
| After a road-toll for trucks, introducing a road-toll for cars | Environmental Protection | 57% | 5% |  |
| Introducing a limited ban of Diesel-cars and trucks without air filters from inner-cities with air pollution | Environmental Protection | 64% | 3% |  |
| Creating a new health insurance where all people, including the self-employed and civil servants, pay a certain percentage of their income (including interest and income from renting) as health insurance | WelfareState | 62% | 27% | CDU/CSU, FDP |
| Lowering the contributions to health insure and letting people pay a part of treatment costs directly | WelfareState | 29% | 4% |  |
| Prosecuting illegal work ("Schwarzarbeit") in private homes including babysitting and cleaning | Justice and Freedom | 30% | 2% |  |
| Founding elite-universities | Education spending | 38% | 8% |  |
| Abolishing one holiday | Macroeconomy | 38% | 3% |  |
| Raising the contribution of those without children to the care-insurance (Pflegeversicherung) by up to 9 euros a month to compensate those with children (in line with a judgement of the constitutional court)7 | WelfareState | 57% | 3% |  |
| Abolishing the subsidies for buying a house (Eigenheimzulage) | Macroeconomy | 26% | 6% |  |
| Reducing the tax return for commuters by car, so that they are only compensated from travel above 21 kilometers | Macroeconomy | 28% | 3% |  |
| Cutting government expenditure on policies to (re)educate employees ('Umschulungsmassahmen') | Free Market Economy | 49% | 4% | CDU/CSU |
| Reducing subsidies on coal | Free Market Economy | 73% | 17% |  |
| Letting only employees pay for the cost of health insurance instead of splitting the cost between employers and employees | WelfareState | 17% | 3% |  |
| Removing dental care from the obligatory health insurance and instead making employees take out an obligatory private insure for dental care | WelfareState | 23% | 2% |  |
| Making people pay a 15 euro contribution when visiting a doctor | WelfareState | 21% | 3% |  |
| Making patients pay 10% of all health care costs themselves to a maximum of 2% of their total annual income | WelfareState | 29% | 4% |  |
| Replacing the income-adjusted contribution for obligatory health insurance to a flat rate with tax measures to compensate low-income groups | WelfareState | 66% | 31% |  |
| Abolishing a number of tax returns (for home owners, commuters and others) to lower taxation rates | Free Market Economy | 60% | 11% |  |
| Loosening regulations against the dismissal of employees for small companies | Free Market Economy | 50% | 10% |  |
| Forcing companies that fail to provide education placements to pay an education-tax if there is a shortage of such placements8 | Free Market Economy | 58% | 4% | CDU/CSU |
| Treating people with children more favourably than people without children for the pension-insurance | Free Market Economy | 58% | 3% |  |
| Raising the tobacco tax to increase the price of a pack of cigarettes by 1 euro | Free Market Economy | 63% | 3% |  |
| Lowering unemployment benefits to motivate receivers of the benefits to take lower paying jobs | WelfareState | 64% | 5% | SPD |
| Not raising pensions for one year to solve financial problems in the pension system | Macroeconomy | 53% | 5% |  |
| Not raising pensions for one year to solve financial problems in the pension system (next year) | Macroeconomy | 41% | 4% | Grüne |
| Increasing the contribution to pensions for employers and employees | Free Market Economy | 24% | 6% |  |
| State involvement to address rising price levels as a result of the introduction of the Euro9 | Free Market Economy | 57% | 2% |  |
| Temporarily increasing taxes to compensate flood-damages10 | Macroeconomy | 26% | 4% |  |
| Should the tax reform for 2003 be postponed by one year to pay for the flood damages?10 | Macroeconomy | 73% | 12% |  |
| Raising the retirement age to 67 | Macroeconomy | 7% | 1% |  |
| Paying a .5 Mark deposit ("Pfand") on all drink packaging | Environmental Protection | 67% | 3% |  |
| Changing argicultural policy to put more emphasis on natural argicultural constructions and specie-specific animal keeping | Environmental Protection | 95% | 3% |  |
| Stronger state involvement against the abuse of social benefits | Justice and Freedom | 97% | 4% |  |
| Abolishing military constricption and introducing a professional army instead | Militarism | 51% | 4% |  |
| The introduction of a limited work permit ("Green Card") for foreign workers in the IT sector | Multiculturalism | 43% | 4% | Grüne |
| Banning the extreme-right NPD party | Justice and Freedom | 76% | 6% |  |
| Introducing stricter legislation to fight right-wing radicalism | Justice and Freedom | 67% | 4% | Grüne |
| Spending additional income from selling mobile phone frequencies (100 billion D-Mark) on reducing public debt | Macroeconomy | 59% | 6% |  |
| Making registered partnerships between same-sex partners legally equivalent to marriage | Traditional Morality | 54% | 5% |  |
| Treating same-sex couples with a registered partnership like married couples regarding income taxes | Traditional Morality | 62% | 6% | CDU/CSU |
| Making it easier for foreign workers that are in demand to enter Germany | Multiculturalism | 69% | 4% |  |
| Abolishing the environmental tax (Ökosteuer) to reduce gasoline prices | Environmental Protection | 69% | 9% | Grüne |
| The introduction of an energy tax on all energy types finance a decrease in the cost of wages | Environmental Protection | 30% | 5% | Grüne |
| Raising the inheritance tax | Targetgroups | 30% | 9% |  |
| Re-introduction of the wealth-tax | Targetgroups | 51% | 7% | CDU/CSU, FDP |
| Only increasing pensions to correct for inflation | Macroeconomy | 39% | 8% | FDP, Grüne |
| Obliging all employees to pay into a private pension fund in addition to the existing pension insurance ("Rentenversicherung") | Macroeconomy | 0,53 | 5% |  |
| Allowing children of foreigners who have lived in Germany for an extended period of time to get the German nationality upon birth and choosing which nationality they want to keep at age 23 | Multiculturalism | 62% | 3% |  |
| Allowing women to serve in the army ("Bundeswehr") | Militarism | 68% | 3% |  |
| Financially contributing to post-war reconstruction in Kosovo | Internationalism | 69% | 3% |  |
| Abolishing the law that regulates shop opening times  | Free Market Economy | 60% | 2% |  |
| Allowing shops to open on Sundays | Free Market Economy | 48% | 2% | Grüne |
| To increase the price of gasoline to 5 D-mark per liter over the next 10 years | Environmental Protection | 12% | 2% | Grüne |
| Baning double citizenship (of two countries) | Multiculturalism | 38% | 9% | FDP, Grüne |
| Building a holocaust memorial in Berlin | Internationalism | 51% | 7% |  |

1. Hartz IV is a program offering unemployment benefits. The issue concerns the extent to which receivers of the benefits are required to do ‘voluntary’ work for society in return for receiving the benefits.
2. In 2010 the Bundestag had given a mandate for the deployment of German troops in Afghanistan until the end of February 2011. The issue is about whether the mandate should be extended until after 2011.
3. In response to the economic crisis the issue is about whether the government should limit the wages and the development of wages earned by managers.
4. Quelle, the mail order branch of Arcandor (a German company) found itself on the brink of bankruptcy in during the financial crisis. The issue is about whether the German government should provide Quelle with loans to make it solvent again and avoid bankruptcy.
5. Konsumgutscheine are coupons provided by the state that citizens can spend on consumer goods, with the idea of increasing consumer spending to boost the economy. The issue is whether the German government should provide such coupons.
6. German commuters could deduct the costs of commuting to work, but only for part of the total distance. The issue is about reintroducing the tax-deduction of commuting costs from the first kilometer.
7. The Constitutional Court ruled that the fact that people without children were treated more favorably than people with children by the existing regulations about the obligatory care-insurance. The issue is about raising contributions by those without children by 9 euros a month to offset this.
8. The issue is about ensuring that there are enough places that enable students pursuing practical education programs to gain work experience.
9. The issue is about hikes in the prices of goods that (allegedly) resulted from the introduction of the Euro – and whether the government should intervene of offset the increased prices.
10. Parts of Southern Germany (especially Bavaria) suffered severe damages due to a large flood. The issue is about a temporary tax increase to pay for a compensation scheme.