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Veröffentlichungsversion / Published Version  
Arbeitspapier / working paper

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#### Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Finkel, S. E., & Schrott, P. (1993). *Campaign effects on voter choice in the German election of 1990*. (ZUMA-Arbeitsbericht, 1993/13). Mannheim: Zentrum für Umfragen, Methoden und Analysen -ZUMA-. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-70039>

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# **Campaign Effects on Voter Choice in the German Election of 1990**

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*Die Autoren danken Michael Meffert und Annette Hois für ihre hilfreiche  
Unterstützung bei diesem Projekt.*

**Mannheim  
September 1993**

**ZUMA-Arbeitsbericht Nr. 93/13**

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## Abstract

Using national survey panel data collected in Germany during the 1990 Bundestag election campaign, we develop a model to assess the effect of the campaign on individual votes and the election outcome.

We find that the dominant effects of the campaign on German voters, as in the Lazarsfeld et. al. studies from the 1940s and in more recent U.S. research, were the "reinforcement" of earlier preferences and the "activation" of latent vote dispositions based on fundamental individual attitudes such as party affiliation and left-right ideology.

At the same time, the analyses shows that the number of campaign converts, those who vote against their dispositions and prior preferences, was approximately 13% of the electorate. The vote division among these individuals was overwhelmingly pro-government, suggesting that the 1990 German campaign altered a sufficient number of votes to turn what was an even contest, based on the electorate's initial political dispositions, into a solid government coalition victory.

The results are discussed in terms of their theoretical as well as normative implications.

## Introduction

The question of how much influence the events and stimuli of political campaigns have on voter choice is of central importance to the study of electoral behavior. Theoretically, the examination of campaign effects can tell us much about the process of voter decision making; about the role of the mass media in shaping voter preferences; about how new information presented during campaigns is processed by voters; and whether the vote ultimately is determined by long-term values and attitudes or more ephemeral short-term factors (Converse 1962; 1966; Falter and Rattinger 1982; Zaller 1992). The assessment of campaign effects also has important implications for our normative evaluations of the political process, as many scholars assert that the information presented during contemporary, media-dominated campaigns is deceptive, simplistic, and all too effective in manipulating the electorate (cf. for example, Alger 1989; Patterson 1989). Further, knowledge of the influence of campaigns on voters has significant implications for the practical strategies of candidates and parties, for how they might allocate resources during campaigns and how they might craft and disseminate appeals to the electorate as a whole or to the groups thought vital for electoral success (Popkin 1992; McCubbins 1992).

Yet despite the evident importance of the topic, very little research exists that assesses explicitly the amount and types of campaign effects on voters. Since the publication of the seminal studies of the Columbia group in the 1940s and 50s (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet 1944; Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954), over twenty years elapsed before another study analyzing individual-level change over the full course of a campaign was produced (Mendelsohn and O'Keefe 1976; Patterson and McClure 1976; then Patterson 1980). Since that time, there have been numerous studies that attempt to assess campaign effects, either through analysis of indirect indicators such as the individual's self-reported "time of final decision" or exposure to campaign stimuli via the mass media (see the reviews, e.g. in Graber 1991 and 1993), through analysis of aggregate changes in public opinion over the course of a campaign (e.g. Farah and Klein 1989; Frankovic 1993), or through analysis of short-term changes in vote intentions or voters' evaluations of the candidates or parties in a given election (Bartels 1993; Markus and Converse 1979; Granberg and Holmberg 1988; Markus 1982; Schrott 1990a). While all of these studies are suggestive, none of the cross-sectional studies can show precisely how voter preferences may have changed over time, and none of the longitudinal studies span a long enough time frame to determine the "bottom line" influence of campaigns on individual vote choice as well.

In a recent paper, Finkel (1993) attempted to refocus scholarly attention on the overall effects of campaigns on the vote, and developed a model of campaign effects based on the "activation" process noted in the studies of the Columbia group (Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet 1944, 73-104; Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee 1954, 280-296). According to this model, the main effect of campaigns is to "activate," or make electorally-relevant, certain fundamental attitudes and values already in place at the outset of the contest. As Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1944, 83-84) state, "Campaigning for votes is not writing on a public tabula res; it is showing men and women that their votes are a normal and logical and more or less inevitable expression of tendencies with which each has already aligned himself." Using data from the 1980 presidential election, the only election year national panel study available in the U.S.

context, Finkel (1993) showed that a simple model of campaign activation based on an individual's race and pre-campaign levels of party identification and approval of the performance of the incumbent President could predict correctly the eventual votes of over 80% of the electorate. Changes in attitudes did take place during the campaign, but the effect of the changes was largely to strengthen the probability that individuals would vote in accordance with their initial dispositions. Moreover, the limited number of individuals whose votes were altered by the campaign tended to balance out in the aggregate, so that the activation model was able to predict the overall outcome of the election (and make out-of sample forecasts of the 1984 and 1988 elections) to within three percentage points of the actual results. The results suggest that campaigns serve mainly to bring votes in line with the electorate's underlying partisan loyalties and other political predispositions: instead of manipulating individuals and contributing to superficial vote choices, presidential campaigns seem to enhance the ability and the tendency of individuals to cast their votes on more meaningful grounds, or on what Gelman and King (1992, 20-32) describe as the electorate's "enlightened preferences."

In this paper, we formulate and test models of campaign effects based on political activation in an entirely different context: the elections to the German Bundestag held in December, 1990. We selected this country, and this particular election, for both theoretical and methodological reasons. First, the activation process, like other concepts in the empirical literature on electoral behavior (e.g., the "normal vote"), should not apply only to U.S. general elections at the presidential level. Indeed, if the process is one of general theoretical import, it should apply in a variety of electoral settings, although the particular variables used in the model may vary for different countries, election type, and the like. At the same time, the operation of the model may depend to some extent on reasonably well-developed campaign and media organizations, and on an electorate that at least has widespread access to campaign communications. On these grounds, Germany represents an ideal country in which to attempt a replication of the earlier U.S. findings, as its parliamentary, electoral and party systems are strikingly different from those in the United States, while its highly developed and increasingly diverse television and newspaper media outlets reach approximately 80% of the population on a daily basis (Schoenbach 1991).

Further, the activation model, which stresses predictable (if not 'minimal') changes in individual vote dispositions during campaigns, should be tested in elections where strong campaign effects are to be expected, or in settings where commentators, journalists, and academicians have noted large-scale shifts in the preferences or opinions of the public. The 1990 German election again is ideal in this respect. As the election campaign took place in the midst of the difficult and emotionally-charged process of reunification of the former West and East Germanies after the fall of the Berlin Wall in November 1989, widespread potential existed for volatile shifts in public opinion as the issue priorities, hopes, and fears of the electorate changed in response to ongoing events (Kaase 1992; Semetko and Schoenbach 1991). In addition, many analysts have noted that the opposition Social Democratic Party (SPD) and its chancellor candidate Oskar Lafontaine enjoyed a sizeable lead in many polls taken in the winter and spring of 1990 over the parties of the incumbent government coalition, the Christian Democratic Party/Christian Socialist Union (CDU/CSU), the party of chancellor Helmut Kohl, and the center-right Free Democratic Party (FDP). Since the

opposition parties (the SPD and the Greens) ultimately lost the election by a wide margin, it is clear that some aggregate shifts in the vote intentions of the German electorate took place during the 1990 campaign, and many have attributed at least some of these shifts to the campaign efforts of the contending parties, especially with respect to the "all-encompassing" issue of reunification (Kaase 1992; Kuechler 1991). As change in the electorate's vote intention is a common (though potentially misleading) indicator of a campaign's "effect," it would appear that the 1990 election represents a setting where a strong test of the activation model can be made.

Finally, the 1990 German electoral data that we analyze here has two methodological or design features that will enable us to estimate more exactly the full range of campaign effects on individual voters. The most intense phase of party advertising, media reporting and discussion, and campaign activity takes place during the so-called "hot phase" of German campaigns, usually three to six weeks before an election, depending on agreements reached between the major parties (Schoenbach 1991, 69). Fortunately, the 1990 data contains interviews conducted with a national sample in June 1990, well before the "hot phase" began, with another wave of interviews conducted during the hot phase between October and November; consequently any shifts found in public opinion will likely represent almost the full extent of change produced by the campaign during its most intense phases. This contrasts with the earlier analysis of the United States, where the campaign-period changes were limited because of data constraints to the period between June to September. Also unlike the 1980 NES panel study in the United States, the German data contain the standard "vote intention" question measured at each panel wave, so that changes in the preferences of the electorate, and the relationship of those changes to the processes outlined in the activation model, can be tested much more completely than was possible in the U.S. analysis.

Our goals in the paper are as follows. First, we seek to assess the amount and types of campaign effects in the German election of 1990, and compare the results where appropriate to those obtained in the United States. Second, we seek to elaborate on several aspects of campaign effects that were inadequately explored using the U.S. data. As just noted, the relationship between individuals' political predispositions, vote intentions, and campaign-period change needs to be further clarified, and indeed we hope to show that these relationships hold the key to understanding the nature and extent of campaign effects in contemporary electorates. In addition, we need to identify the individuals who were influenced by the campaign to alter their voting behavior, not simply to assess their numbers, but also to assess their interest and attentiveness to the campaign, and their other political and attitudinal characteristics. The results of these analysis will shed light on the long-standing controversy surrounding the political competence of the so-called "floating voters," and on the influence of the media and other factors in promoting vote stability and change (Converse 1962; Norpoth and Baker 1980; Zaller 1992).

### **Campaign Effects in Germany: Models, Hypotheses, and Data**

Although panel data exist with at least three waves of interviews for every Bundestag election over the last thirty years (except 1980), there has been a conspicuous lack of

research in Germany that addresses explicitly the effect of the campaign on individual vote choice (Kaase 1986; Schoenbach 1991). As Schoenbach (1991, 77) notes, most campaign-related research in the Federal Republic focuses on such indirect effects on individual votes as the development of candidate images (e.g., Kepplinger, Dahlem and Brosius 1993; Schrott, 1990b; Schulz and Kindelman 1993), changes in issue awareness or general political knowledge (e.g., Semetko and Schoenbach 1991; 1983), changes in issue salience or the public's issue agenda (Kepplinger and Brosius 1990), or changes in the so-called "opinion climate" of the campaign, whereby individuals come to expect that one party coalition or the other will win a given election (e.g. Noelle-Neumann 1983). And although analyses of German campaigns and the mass media are increasing at a relatively rapid rate, there is still no evidence in the literature regarding the overall changes in individual-level voting preferences from the beginning to the end of a campaign.<sup>1</sup>

Despite the absence of direct guidance from previous research on campaign effects, we can draw on the voluminous general literature on German electoral behavior to begin to formulate and test models of campaign-period political activation. While the "predispositions" activated in the early Columbia studies were the political tendencies of the demographic groups to which the respondent belonged or identified, recent research in both the U.S. and the Federal Republic indicates that group categorizations are declining in importance as predictors of the vote, especially when basic political attitudes are controlled (Gibowski and Kaase 1991; Abramson, Aldrich and Rhode 1990).<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, several possible bases of activation can be found in the German literature.

First, as in the U.S., the individual's pre-campaign party identification is likely to be a powerful attitude whose effects may be activated during the campaign, as this factor is theorized to represent a summary of the voters' long-term political predispositions (Campbell, et. al. 1960). While scholars initially expressed considerable doubt regarding the applicability of the concept of party identification to the German context, by the early 1980s consensus seemed to emerge that there was "more room and functional necessity for partisan attachments in the Ann Arbor sense of the concept than used to be the case...(Falter and Rattinger 1982: 68; Baker et al. 1981; Norpoth 1978). And despite recent evidence of a decline in party identification in the Federal Republic (Dalton 1989), party-line voting, as well as the comparative salience of parties on the political landscape, nevertheless remain high in Germany, and higher than in the United States (Klingemann and Wattenberg 1993; Richardson 1991). Another long-term political predisposition whose effects may be activated as the campaign unfolds is the individual's self-identification on a left-right scale, as this attitude has long been hypothesized to capture the general issue or ideological orientation of voters in Germany, independent of attachments to specific political parties (e.g., Fuchs and Kuehnel 1990).

Attitudes regarding the state of the national economy and the overall performance of the incumbent administration, or variables related to the "retrospective" model of the vote (Fiorina 1981), have also appeared recently in the German electoral literature, and should also be included in activation models of the vote (Kirchgaessner 1989; Norpoth and Yantek 1983). Indeed, these variables, often measured before the intense phases of political campaigns begin, have enjoyed much success at aggregate-level

prediction of electoral outcomes over time (Lewis-Beck 1989), thus supporting the hypothesis that the campaign may serve to activate their effects at the individual level (Finkel 1993; Markus 1988).

Finally, we include overall evaluations about the two chancellor candidates in our model as well. While previous research suggests that candidate evaluations are not as important in the German electoral context as in the United States (Klingemann and Wattenberg 1993; Falter and Rattinger 1982), it is nevertheless the case that individuals may develop fairly strong attitudes about the candidates before the "hot phase" of the campaign begins, especially as in 1990 when one candidate is the incumbent chancellor and the other a relatively well known political figure. The inclusion of candidate evaluations over time is also critical to estimate campaign-period vote conversion, since these evaluations are the factors that may be most likely to change during a campaign, and are those which advertising and other campaign efforts are often designed to influence (Radunski 1980; Schulz and Kindelman 1993; Semetko and Schoenbach 1991). To the extent that campaign-period vote conversion takes place, it is therefore likely to be attributable to changes in candidate evaluations over the course of the contest.

Thus, we propose the following model to test the extent of campaign activation and conversion in the 1990 election:

$$V = a + b_1PID + b_2\Delta PID + b_3IDEO + b_4\Delta IDEO + b_5PERF + b_6\Delta PERF + b_7ECON + b_8\Delta ECON + b_9CAND + b_{10}\Delta CAND + e$$

where

V = the individual's vote in 1990

PID = party identification in June 1990

$\Delta$ PID = change in party identification, June-November 1990

IDEO = left-right ideological self-placement, June 1990

$\Delta$ IDEO = change in ideological self-placement, June-November 1990

PERF = performance of the incumbent administration

$\Delta$ PERF = change in performance of the incumbent administration

ECON = perception of state of national economy, June 1990

$\Delta$ ECON = change in perception of state of national economy, June-November 1990

CAND = difference in evaluation of chancellor candidates, June 1990

$\Delta$ CAND = change in evaluation of chancellor candidates, June-November 1990

a = constant

e = error term

$b_1$  to  $b_{10}$  = regression weights linking variables to the vote

Before outlining our specific hypotheses and the links between the model and previous models of campaign effects, one difficult problem in testing the model in the German context needs further discussion. Since (western) Germany had four major parties represented in the Bundestag at the time of the campaign (the CDU/CSU, FDP, SPD and the GREENS),<sup>3</sup> one possible way of measuring campaign effects would focus on the actual party vote as the dependent variable V in the model above. We examine the parties separately in some analyses below, but for the basic tests of the activation model, we chose instead to group the four parties into two coalitional groups, the



incumbent government coalition of the Christian Democratic Party/Christian Socialist Union and Free Democratic Party, and the prospective opposition coalition of the Social Democratic Party and the GREENS. While a change in preference or predicted vote from, for example, the GREENS to the SPD, or from the FDP to the CDU, can of course be viewed as a "campaign effect," we believe that this type of conversion is much less meaningful than changes that cross prospective coalitional lines, and hence can change the parties that will head the government for the next several years. Further, the activation model contains several "referendum" variables that theoretically should predict the respondent's likelihood of affirming or rejecting the incumbent administration, with the choice of which government or opposition party to support being less relevant. The same logic holds regarding attitudes towards the two chancellor candidates. Finally, specifying what we call a "bloc vote" for the dependent variable has some methodological advantages, as a two- category dependent variable vastly simplifies the estimation and interpretation of the either linear probability or logistic regression models.

## Hypotheses

As can be seen, the model to be estimated contains measures of each of the variables in June 1990, well before the "hot phase" of the campaign began, as well as the change in the variables that took place between June and October/November, when the next wave of interviews was conducted. With such a model, we can assess the extent to which the vote can be predicted from pre-campaign values of variables that are "activated" during the contest, or whether campaign-period changes are more powerful determinant of the individual's December choice. Specifically, if the activation model holds, the following hypotheses should be confirmed:

- 1) At the individual level, pre-campaign (or "pre-hot phase") political attitudes ultimately predict the vote.
- 2) Changes in political attitudes during the campaign should reinforce the pre-campaign vote predictions, and lead few voters to choose a different candidate than would be predicted on the basis of no campaign change whatsoever.
- 3) The pre-campaign individual level vote predictions should also produce an accurate forecast of the electoral outcome, since there is no reason to expect the net effect of campaign conversions to favor one party coalition or the other.

The model as specified above allows for the potential influence of both pre-campaign attitudes and campaign-period attitude change on the individual vote. Yet campaign effects traditionally have been associated with changes in the electorate's stated vote intentions over time, or with discrepancies between individuals' vote intentions at some point in the campaign and their eventual votes. To the extent that vote intentions are stable, or the vote agrees with earlier vote intentions, then the campaign is said to have "reinforced" the individuals' prior preferences; if not, then widespread "conversion" of preferences took place as individuals shifted party or candidate allegiance during the campaign. Indeed, one popular claim regarding the increased electoral effects of contemporary political campaigns is that reinforcement has

declined substantially, as individuals no longer enter campaigns with fixed preferences that remain stable over the course of the contest (e.g. Dalton 1989; Salmore and Salmore 1989).

We investigate the amount of reinforcement in the 1990 German context below; more importantly, we assess the relationship between vote intentions and campaign-period political activation in detail. As outlined in Lazarsfeld, et. al. (1944, 1954) and elaborated in Finkel (1993), the extent to which reinforcement of vote intentions takes place during political campaigns should depend directly on the consistency between individual preferences and the predispositions contained in the activation model. As Berelson, Lazarsfeld and McPhee assert (1954, 282): "if...we compare those who have the "proper" vote intention with those who, in the early stages of the campaign, intend to vote against the prevailing trend, then we find that the deviants have a tendency to return to the fold on election day...[w]e can say that the proper vote intention is stronger and more durable than the deviant one."

This notion of political "reactivation" during campaigns leads to the following hypothesis:

4) Individuals whose preferences and pre-campaign political dispositions are consistent should be highly likely to vote in line with their earlier preferences, while individuals whose preferences and dispositions are incongruent should be much more likely to vote against their initial preferences.

This hypothesis simply asserts that reinforcement of earlier preferences should be higher for those individuals whose stated vote intention and "predisposed" vote are in accord than for individuals whose June preferences and predispositions are inconsistent. Extended to the aggregate level, it indicates that changes between the aggregate distribution of initial vote intentions and the actual vote should be the predictable result of this reactivation process.

Finally, we can utilize the German data to determine the kinds of individuals likely to vote in accordance with their earlier preferences and predispositions, and the kinds of individuals most likely to convert during the campaign. The characteristics of campaign converts long have interested researchers, beginning at least with Lazarsfeld et. al.'s (1944, 69) and Converse's (1962) depiction of such voters as having "weak predispositions," low levels of political interest and knowledge, and low levels of exposure to campaign communications. More recently, Zaller (1989; 1992) has proposed a complex set of relationships between political awareness, campaign exposure and vote conversion (or defection from partisan predispositions) depending on the intensity of the election. "High intensity" races, such as U.S. Presidential and, we argue, German Bundestag, elections, should produce more polarization in individual partisan and candidate attitudes, as the "sheer volume of communication" and the "balanced communication flow" in these types of campaigns leads individuals to accept on average a larger amount of messages that are consistent with their prior dispositions (Zaller 1992, 250-251; see also hypothesis 2 above). This process, moreover, is greatest among those with the most interest and exposure to the stimuli of the campaign itself, and hence attitude change in the opposite direction of one's political dispositions sufficiently large to produce voter conversion should occur, if at

all, among the less interested and less involved.<sup>4</sup> Specifically, we propose the following hypothesis:

5) Individuals who vote against their earlier preferences and predispositions should have a) weaker initial predispositions, b) greater attitude change during the campaign away from their initial predispositions, and c) lower levels of political interest and exposure to campaign communications through the mass media.

## Data

The data used to test these hypotheses is the 1990 national panel study of then-West Germany conducted by the Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, together with Professors Max Kaase (Mannheim), Hans Dieter Klingemann (Berlin), Manfred Kuechler (New York), Franz Urban Pappi (Mannheim) and Holli Semetko (Michigan). The data were prepared and made publicly available by the Zentralarchiv fuer Empirische Sozialforschung at the Universitaet zu Koeln. The analyses are limited to the 799 voters for the four major parties as measured in the last (December) wave of the panel who were also interviewed in the June and October/November waves.<sup>5</sup> The proportion of respondents voting for each party matches well with the proportions of the four-party vote each party received in the December elections (again, including only the western portions of the newly- unified country, and excluding West Berlin):<sup>6</sup>

Christian Democratic Party/ Christian Socialist Union	44.2%	(official result: 46.3%)
Free Democratic Party:	10.1%	(official result: 11.1%)
Social Democratic Party:	40.3%	(official result: 37.8%)
Greens:	5.4%	(official result: 4.8%) <sup>7</sup>

Although the sample slightly underrepresents eventual voters for the incumbent coalition (CDU/CSU and FDP), our analyses indicated that weighting the data to match the official returns made little difference in our conclusions. The main effect of the weighting process was to increase somewhat the "predisposed" vote for the incumbent coalition, but the same amount and patterns of campaign- period change were observed.

The independent variables represent standard measures of these concepts in German electoral research. The exact question wordings in German and their English translations can be seen in the Appendix. All variables were scaled so that positive values are pro-incumbent and negative values pro-opposition, with '0' being the theoretical neutral point on the scale. Missing values were recorded to '0'. Party identification (PID) was measured on a -5 to +5 scale by multiplying the individual's identification with government parties (+1) or opposition parties (-1) by self-reported strength of identification (from '1' for very weak to '5' for very strong). Those who

identified with none of the four major parties or had no party identification were coded as '0.' Left-Right ideological identification (IDEO) was also measured on a -5 (left) to +5 (right) scale. Perceptions of the state of the national economy (ECON) was measured on a scale from -2, for those who believed the current state of the economy was very bad, to +2 for those who believed it to be very good. Evaluations of incumbent performance (PERF) was measured on a -5 to +5 scale, with individuals at -5 being those who were "completely dissatisfied" with the CDU/CDU/FDP government, and individuals at +5 being those who were "completely satisfied." Evaluations of the two chancellor candidates (CAND) were measured on a thermometer-type scale where respondents who "thought very badly" of each candidate were coded as -5 and respondents who "thought very much" of each candidate were coded as +5. The variable used in the analysis is the difference in respondents' ratings of Helmut Kohl and Oskar Lafontaine with positive values to +10 for individuals who rate Kohl highly and Lafontaine negatively, and negative values to -10 for individuals with extremely pro-Lafontaine evaluations relative to Kohl.

## Results

### Activation Effects in the 1990 Campaign

Table 1 shows the results of the general activation model estimating the effects on the vote of party identification, ideological self-placement, perceptions of government performance, evaluations of the state of the national economy, and the difference in respondents' evaluation of the two chancellor candidates. June values for all variables were included in the model, as were the changes in each variable between June and the time of the third wave of interviews in October-November. We estimated the model through the generalized least squares procedure developed by Goldberger for models with dichotomous dependent variables (Aldrich and Nelson 1984). The unstandardized coefficients can be interpreted directly as changes in the probability of voting for the parties in the government coalition, given a one-unit change in each independent variable. Further, the net impact or effect of each variable on the level of the dependent variable, or the aggregate outcome of the election, can be calculated as the unstandardized coefficient multiplied by the mean of the given independent variable (Achen 1982, 71-73; Denk and Finkel 1992).<sup>8</sup>

- Table 1 about here -

As can be seen from examination of the means of the independent variable (column 1 in the table), the June levels of the factors in the activation model showed an electorate whose political dispositions were somewhat divided: party identification was slightly pro-opposition on average, as were the net evaluations of the two chancellor candidates, while the distribution of ideological self-placement slightly favored the incumbent parties, and perceptions of the government's performance and the state of the national economy favored the incumbents fairly strongly. The table also indicates that attitude change over the course of the campaign tended to favor the incumbent party coalition, as the mean level of the net candidate evaluation, government performance, and party identification all shifted in a net positive

direction, while average levels of ideological identification and perceptions of the economy were essentially unchanged. These results confirm the findings of previous research suggesting that the German electorate became favorable towards incumbent performance (especially regarding the re-unification issue) and towards the incumbent chancellor relative to his opponent by the end of the campaign (Kuechler 1991; Schulz and Kindelman 1993).

But what were the relative effects of these initial political dispositions and their changes over time, and what do the findings suggest about activation and conversion during the campaign? The table offers much support for the activation model, with several interesting qualifications. At the individual level, support for the activation model is seen from the strong effects of June party identification, which has by far the strongest influence on the eventual December vote, and the statistically significant effects of two other June variables, ideological identification and net candidate evaluations. June evaluations of government performance and the state of the national economy had negligible effects on either individual vote probabilities or the aggregate vote distribution. The overall predictive power of the activation model can be assessed by setting all change-score variables to zero, i.e., by assuming that no campaign-period change in individual attitudes occurred at all, and generating a June predicted vote for each individual from the relevant coefficients in Table 1.<sup>9</sup> This procedure resulted in a correct prediction for 84% of the sample, confirming the first hypothesis above, and indicating that for the overwhelming majority of German voters, the campaign's ultimate effect was to activate the "pre-hot phase" values of the variables in the model. The figure is identical to that found previously in the U.S. context (Finkel 1993, 11), suggesting that the activation process operates similarly at the individual level in contemporary elections in the two countries.

At the same time, Table 1 shows that campaign-period changes in party identification, ideology and net candidate evaluations all were significant influences on the vote, with changes in party identification and candidate evaluations having the strongest effects, after June party identification, of all variables in the model. This indicates that the campaign did influence individual vote probabilities as these variables changed (largely in the government's favor) from June to December. But the ultimate amount of campaign-period conversion of individual votes was limited, as the changes in attitudes during the campaign reinforced most individuals' prior vote tendencies.<sup>10</sup> So while the unstandardized coefficients from the change-score variables of Table 1 show the potential for large-scale conversion away from the individual's predisposed coalition group, these kinds of effects were not widespread in the 1990 election.

This process can be seen more directly in Table 2, which shows the effects of the initial levels of net candidate evaluations, party identification, and left-right self-placement, the three June variables with significant direct effects on the vote, on their October/November levels. We include several additional control variables in these analyses of campaign period change: education (measured on a five point scale by the respondent's highest degree); political interest (on a three-point scale); and two media variables measuring how often respondents watch television news and how often they read a national newspaper, with each variable multiplied by the degree of interest respondent reports in the political portion of the reports. The television variable is on

a 0 to 40 scale, and the newspaper variable on a scale from 0 to 35. The exact question wordings of these variables also can be found in the Appendix.

- Table 2 about here -

The table shows that net October/November candidate evaluations are a function of the initial level of this variable in June, as well as of June levels of party identification and left- right ideology. This indicates that as individuals were more pro- government in party identification and ideology, their candidate evaluations during the campaign were more likely to change in the government's favor. Similar patterns are seen for the other two dependent variables: as individuals' political dispositions favor the government (or the opposition), attitude change tends to occur in a similarly pro- government or pro-opposition direction. The effects of the control variables are largely irrelevant in each model, suggesting that the media, education and political interest do not directly structure changes in these attitudes over time.<sup>11</sup> This pattern of attitude change being structured by initial dispositions, and therefore limiting campaign-period vote conversion, confirms hypothesis 2 above. It is also similar to the results found in the U.S. context (Finkel 1993, 11), and suggests that the "high intensity" context of both U.S. presidential and German Bundestag campaigns produces similar patterns of attitude polarization over time (cf. Zaller 1992).

At the aggregate level, however, the results of Table 1 suggest that the campaign had a more important electoral impact. At the outset of the campaign, the model predicted a roughly 50-50 split in the aggregate vote between the government and opposition coalitions, as the advantages the incumbent coalition enjoyed from the electorate's ideological dispositions, perceptions of government performance and state of the national economy (as seen by the positive mean values and "impact" of these variables in Table 1) were offset by advantages to the opposition (negative means and impact) from the distribution of party identification and candidate evaluations. By the end of the campaign, the net effect of the pro-government changes in public opinion regarding the two chancellor candidates and party identification resulted in a 2.2 percentage point shift in the government coalitions's aggregate vote.<sup>12</sup> This figure is within the plus or minus 3-4 percentage point net campaign effect found in previous research, although in this case the "real-world" effect was much greater than any found in prior analyses. From the activation model's perspective, the 1990 German campaign altered a sufficient number of votes to turn what was an even contest, based on the electorate's June political dispositions, into a solid government coalition victory. In this sense the campaign's impact, however modest at the individual level, nevertheless had very large political consequences.

### **Activation and the 'Reinforcement' of Vote Intentions**

The activation model provides relatively accurate predictions of the vote at the individual, and with the qualification just noted, at the aggregate level as well. We show in this section the relationship between the activation model and more traditional measures of "campaign effects," i.e., the extent of reinforcement and change in individuals' stated vote preferences over time.

As noted above, several analysts have reported relatively large aggregate shifts in the German electorate's vote intentions during the campaign, as the late 1989-early 1990 lead seen in most surveys for chancellor candidate Oskar Lafontaine and the opposition SPD and GREEN parties dissipated in the summer and fall (Kaase 1992; Kuechler 1991). Yet examination of aggregate trends in vote intention tells us little about the extent of reinforcement in an election, other than setting an upper bound on the amount of reinforcement that is mathematically possible, given the marginal distributions of the electorate's stated preferences over time. Individual-level analysis is necessary to determine how much change actually takes place during a campaign, and we present the relevant evidence regarding reinforcement in the 1990 campaign below. We present the results for each of the four major parties in Table 3, and then present the extent to which individuals voted for either of the two parties in the coalition for which they had expressed support earlier in the campaign.

The first two columns of Table 3 display the level of support that each of the four major parties enjoyed in the June wave of interviews, as well as the percentage of respondents in each party group that eventually voted for that party in December. The data confirms the finding of a spring lead for the SPD and the GREENS, as support for the two opposition parties totals 50.1%, with 44.4% expressing support for the CDU/CSU or the FDP, the two parties in the government coalition, and the remainder undecided. As the actual reported vote for the two government parties in December, shown in the last column of the table, was 54.3%, compared to 45.7% for the opposition, it is clear that some changes in preferences took place during the course of the campaign.

- Table 3 about here -

Yet the table also shows that the rate of reinforcement of prior party preferences was relatively high. In the second column of the table, it can be seen that the extent of reinforcement for the two major parties was approximately 74% for the SPD and 85% for the CDU, while June supporters of the two minor parties remained loyal approximately 58% of the time. In sum, almost three-fourths (72.7%) of the electorate voted for the party for whom they had expressed support in June, and this total represents approximately 77% of those who expressed support for any party in June (i.e., excluding June undecided voters). The rate of reinforcement is even higher if the respective parties that make up the "government" and "opposition" are grouped together in the analyses. The third column of table 1 shows the extent of this "bloc reinforcement" (Granberg and Holmberg 1988, ch. 8) in 1990, and the results are illuminating. Bloc reinforcement takes place at almost identical, and extremely high, rates for the FDP and the GREENS, indicating that approximately 85% of all individuals who support these smaller parties in June will vote either for that party or for the major party that will lead it in a governing coalition. The extent of bloc reinforcement for the two major parties is also higher than the "pure" reinforcement reported in the second column of the table, but the number of major party supporters who ultimately vote for the minor party in the prospective coalition is much more limited. In all, approximately 81% of the total sample, and 85% of those who supported any party in June, voted either for the party they supported in June or for its prospective coalition partner.

Given that the June levels of support for the two minor parties, as well as their levels of both "pure" and "bloc" reinforcement, are all nearly identical, the same patterns of reinforcement and change (though not the same absolute levels) are seen if the parties are treated separately or in coalitional groups. Table 4 summarizes the relationship between June vote intentions and the December vote, and here the extent of bloc reinforcement, as well as the amount and partisan direction of campaign-period change in preferences, can be seen.

The cross-tabulation of vote intentions and behavior shows an interesting pattern of apparent campaign effects. On the one hand, as noted above, 81% of all respondents remained loyal to their June coalitional preferences when they cast their December ballots. On the other hand, the difference between the rates of reinforcement for the government versus the opposition coalition bloc provides suggestive evidence that the CDU/CSU-FDP coalition ran a better campaign, as nearly 21% of June supporters of the opposition decided to vote for one of the parties in the government coalition by December. By contrast, the opposition attracted only 8% of those originally intending to vote for either of two government parties. Examination of self-reported vote intentions during the campaign, then, suggests that more sizeable campaign effects took place than we found in the analyses of campaign-period activation.

- Table 4 about here -

We hypothesized above, however, that the activation process itself has a powerful influence on the extent of campaign-period reinforcement and change in voter preferences. If this is correct, then individuals who "converted" in Table 4 from one party to another should be those whose initial preferences and predispositions were incongruent; as the campaign "reactivated" their earlier dispositions, their eventual vote would be different than their initial preferences. At the same time, individuals whose initial preferences and predispositions were congruent would vote for the same party or coalitional group as they stated at the outset of the campaign. We present the results of these analysis in Table 5, and the findings show more clearly exactly how the 1990 campaign affected individual voters and worked to the net advantage of the parties in the government coalition.

Table 5 contains the summary of reinforcement, activation, and conversion effects in the 1990 election. We used the "predicted" vote for each respondent from the June values of the variables in the model of Table 1 to estimate the extent of campaign-period activation. The table's first rows contains respondents whose expressed vote intention in June was consistent with their "predicted vote," the second row contains respondents whose expressed vote intention was inconsistent with their "predicted vote," and the third row contains voters who were undecided in June.

- Table 5 about here -

The table shows first, that the extent of campaign-period "reinforcement" of prior preferences depends directly on whether those preferences are consistent or inconsistent with individuals' June dispositions or "predicted vote." When vote intentions and dispositions are congruent, then reinforcement occurs at close to a 90% rate, as can be seen in the top left cell of the table. When vote intentions and



dispositions are incongruent, reinforcement occurs for just over half of these respondents. These figures are again nearly identical to those reported in the U.S. context (Finkel 1993, 15), suggesting that the interaction between stated preferences and political predispositions is a powerful general determinant of campaign-period reinforcement.

This finding indicates that one effect of political campaigns is to "reactivate" the latent vote tendencies of about half of all individuals whose initial preferences and predispositions are inconsistent. In this election, the proportion of such inconsistent voters was only about 6% of the entire sample, yet a full 90% of this group were predicted voters for the government coalition. The campaign resulted in about half of these respondents voting against their earlier stated preference for the opposition, as their predispositions were drawn out over the course of the contest. Thus some of the movement in the electorate from June to December was the predictable effect of campaign-period reactivation.

Another predictable campaign effect seen from the table is the relatively high rate of campaign activation for undecided voters, as approximately 70% of these respondents ultimately cast votes in line with their June dispositions. While the number of undecided voters in June was also only about 6% of the electorate, these voters again were disproportionately pro-government in their predispositions. Examination of the "predicted vote" for the undecided respondents showed that 70% were predicted government voters, and the activation process resulted in most of these individuals voting in line with their predispositions.

Taken together, the reinforcement and activation processes can account for approximately 87% of all voters in the 1990 election, an extremely high figure that approximates that found in the U.S. election of 1980. Further, in this election the individuals who were "activated" and "reactivated" tended to have political predispositions that favored the government coalition, and to that extent some of the movement between the electorate's June vote intentions and its eventual vote was the predictable result of these processes. But the fact that most votes can be predicted through the reinforcement and activation processes should not obscure the fact that a significant proportion of individuals nevertheless voted against their prior preferences and their "predisposed" vote. Table 5 shows that the proportion of these pure campaign-period converts was just over 13% of the electorate (cells d and f in the table). These voters were those who the campaign affected in unpredictable ways, and again, the make-up of these voters was largely pro-government: out of the 105 individuals who voted against their prior preferences and predispositions, 68 (or 64.8%) voted for one of the parties in the government coalition.

Another way of interpreting this finding is that the parties in the government coalition were able to retain the support of individuals whose preferences and predispositions pointed to a government vote, while the opposition was able to do so to a lesser extent. In fact, the rate of reinforcement for individuals whose June preferences and predispositions were pro-government was 92%, compared to only 82% for individuals whose June preferences and predispositions pointed to an opposition vote. One of the major "unpredictable" effects of a campaign, then, is the extent to which each party coalition can obtain the support of individuals who, through both their expressed

preferences and predispositions, should support them. In this election, the government was able to do so to a greater extent than the opposition, and this resulted in a net "unpredictable" effect of 4% in favor of the government coalition.<sup>13</sup>

### Who Converts During Campaigns?

We have shown that the proportion of the electorate whose vote choice changed unpredictably over the course of the campaign was approximately 13%. Unlike the findings from the 1980 U.S. elections, however, these voters did not cast their ballots evenly for the two party coalitions, and hence it could be said that vote conversion during the 1990 German campaign held the key to the aggregate outcome of the election. Given that these "floating voters" have disproportionate influence on the election results, it is critical to understand how vote conversions come about, and what kinds of voters are most likely to convert during campaigns. Table 6 presents the means of a series of theoretically relevant variables for individuals who "converted" during the campaign and individuals who voted in line with their prior preferences and political dispositions.

- Table 6 about here -

More precisely, the table divides the sample first into individuals who voted for the government coalition and those who voted for the opposition. Within each of these voter groups, the sample is divided further between the "converts," those who voted against their prior preferences and predispositions (cells d and f in Table 5) and the "stable voters," whose June preferences and dispositions were congruent with the eventual vote (cells a and c in Table 5). The pattern of results is clear. Among eventual government voters, the converts showed initial dispositions in favor of the opposition, though their dispositions were relatively weaker in magnitude than the stable voters.<sup>14</sup> The converts also showed larger amounts of pro-government change in party identification, candidate evaluations and ideological self- placement, and lower levels of campaign media exposure, education and political interest than "consistent voters." The same patterns held for eventual opposition voters, though for this group the "converts" showed greater pro-opposition campaign-period attitude change than those whose votes were consistent. The results confirm the analyses of Lazarsfeld, et. al. (1944; 1948), as well as the more recent discussions in Zaller (1992) of partisan defections in presidential elections: defection away from individuals' predisposed vote is found more commonly among those with lower levels of media exposure and political interest. Further, the converts begin the campaign with weaker predispositions and show much higher levels of change on the attitudes most crucial to the vote. So while the electorate as a whole seems to react to the campaign in predictable ways based on their initial dispositions and prior preferences, a small minority of relatively weakly predisposed and politically less informed voters do not. In the 1990 German election, these voters were swayed disproportionately during the campaign towards the incumbent parties, thus securing a continuation of the CDU/CSU/FDP government.

## Conclusion

Our aims in this paper were to describe the amount and types of campaign effects in the German election of 1990, as well as to test some more general hypotheses regarding the effects of campaigns on individual vote choice and electoral outcomes. We formulated a relatively simple activation model to capture the effects of "pre-hot phase" variables and campaign-period attitude change on the vote, and found that June levels of party identification, ideological self-placement, and net evaluations of the two chancellor candidates predicted accurately the eventual votes of 84% of the German electorate. Attitude change that did occur over the course of the campaign tended to reinforce individuals' initial vote dispositions, and hence campaign-period conversion was limited. However, the conversions for the most part favored the incumbent parties, and therefore the net result of campaign-period changes was to turn a very close election into a solid victory for the CDU/CSU/FDP coalition. To this extent, the 1990 campaign had significant consequences for the aggregate outcome of the election.

More generally, the results have important implications for analyses of campaign effects. By replicating in many ways the results of previous analyses of U.S. elections, the results indicate that activation and reinforcement in general remain the dominant effects of contemporary national political campaigns. At the outset of the campaign, individuals have relatively fixed vote dispositions based on a small number of theoretically-relevant variables, and these dispositions are drawn out, or "activated" over the course of the contest. Individuals take in new information but generally assimilate or accept this information selectively, so that attitude change during campaigns generally strengthens the probability of voting for one's "predisposed" party or candidate. Further, these pre-campaign vote dispositions interact with individuals' stated preferences during the campaign in predictable ways. If stated preferences and dispositions are congruent, the individual vote is nearly always consistent with these tendencies. On the other hand, if preferences and dispositions are incongruent, about half of all voters resolve this inconsistency in favor of their prior dispositions and about half stick with their prior vote intentions. The number of campaign converts, those who vote against their dispositions and prior preferences, is a small but potentially significant 10-15% of the electorate.

The results suggest, then, that campaigns have a mixture of "predictable" and "unpredictable" effects on the electorate. Reinforcement, activation, and "reactivation" of the predispositions of individuals with "deviant" vote intentions are all predictable results of the high intensity yet relatively balanced information flow that occurs during Bundestag and U.S. presidential campaigns. Yet in both contexts, about one in eight voters reacted to the campaign in ways that were essentially unpredictable from both their dispositions and prior preferences. In close elections, these voters hold the key to the aggregate outcome, and while it is unlikely that an overwhelming majority of this group will vote in favor of one party or another, successful campaign efforts can (and do) capture the support up to two-thirds of the converts, for a net effect of 3-4 percentage points.

From a normative perspective, the implications of these analyses are also mixed. The fact that political campaigns do not alter the vote tendencies of large numbers of

individuals fosters stability in the electoral process, while the presence of some campaign-period converts allows for a certain degree of "adaptability" and "flexibility" in the process as well (Berelson et. al. 1954; Granberg and Holmberg 1988). Moreover, the fact that exposure to the mass media and general interest in the campaign tends to promote vote stability is, perhaps, welcome refutation of the fear of many that the media, or politicians' use of the media during campaigns, have vast impact on the volatility of contemporary electorates. However, the characteristics of the converts are not so heartening, since the data here indicate that the party switchers during the 1990 campaign share many of the same qualities -- lower levels of education, interest, and media exposure -- bemoaned by analysts at least since the 1940s (Lazarsfeld, et. al. 1944, 69). And in this election, when the predispositions of the public at the outset predicted a close outcome, Converse's claim (1962, 578) that it is "the least informed members with the electorate who seem to hold the critical 'balance of power' through campaign-period shifts in the vote was once again confirmed.

## Footnotes

<sup>1</sup> Some research does exist that analyzes short-term changes in voter preferences at the individual (Schmitt-Beck and Schrott, forthcoming; Schrott 1990a) and aggregate levels (Brosius and Kepplinger 1992), but no studies of which we are aware report the overall effect of the campaign on the vote.

<sup>2</sup> Our empirical analyses also confirm that such traditionally important demographic factors as religion, church attendance, age and education are statistically insignificant predictors of the 1990 German vote, once the political attitudes described below are entered in the model.

<sup>3</sup> Strictly speaking, the CDU and CSU are separate parties, but it is customary to treat them as one, since the CDU does not compete in the state of Bavaria and the CSU does not compete in the rest of the country.

<sup>4</sup> Norpoth and Baker (1980) confirm the "floating voter" hypothesis in German elections by showing that lower levels of media exposure are associated with changes in individual vote choice between elections. Our analysis examines similar processes within campaigns.

<sup>5</sup> We follow previous analyses and analyze only the so-called "Zweitstimme," or the Second Vote, which is the individual's party preference in a particular election. The German electoral system also contains a district-level candidate vote, but the zweistimme determines the proportional allocation of seats in the Bundestag.

<sup>6</sup> The official vote returns for both West and East Germany may be found in Forschungsgruppe Wahlen (1990, 8).

<sup>7</sup> This result for the Greens meant that, according to the rules of the German electoral system, they did not clear the requisite 5% hurdle to receive seats in the Bundestag.

<sup>8</sup> As in Finkel (1993), these "impact analyses" produce the net effect of the independent variables on the level of the dependent variable compared to a hypothetical "neutral" electorate; i.e., if all individuals were at '0' on the particular independent variable. In the case of the change scores, this means that the "impact" of the variables is how much the actual change exhibited over time in the sample contributed to the net aggregate outcome, in comparison to a hypothetical electorate which would have shown no campaign period changes whatsoever.

<sup>9</sup> This procedure actually generates a predicted vote probability for each individual, and those with scores greater than .5 were predicted to vote for the government coalition, and those with scores less than .5 were predicted to vote for the opposition.

<sup>10</sup> A predicted vote probability was calculated for each individual from the full equation of Table 1, including all change-score variables. The correlation between the pre and post campaign probability estimates was .9.

<sup>11</sup> Interestingly, further analyses suggests that there may be interaction effects between the media variables and June levels of party identification, ideology and candidate evaluations, such that the June variables influence attitude change to a greater extent among highly attentive than among inattentive respondents. This pattern would confirm Zaller's (1992) findings of greater polarization of partisan attitudes among more aware individuals during U.S. campaigns. Unfortunately, the high multicollinearity between the interaction terms necessary to test these hypotheses leads to difficulties in the estimation of the model and some uninterpretable results.

<sup>12</sup> The full model's GLS coefficients produce an estimated vote for the government parties of 52.7%, of which 2.2 percentage points are directly attributable to campaign-period attitudinal changes. The actual vote for the government parties was 54.3%, and thus it is possible that the 1.6 percentage point difference between the predicted and actual votes is also the result of unspecified campaign factors, bringing the total "campaign effect" to 3.8%. It is also possible, however, that the difference arises from the weighting process associated with GLS estimation, which may induce some slight mathematical discrepancies in accounting for the mean of the dependent variable from the levels of the independent variable multiplied by their respective unstandardized coefficients, i.e., in the equation  $\bar{y} = \sum(b_j \cdot \bar{x}_j)$ .

<sup>13</sup> Since these 105 voters represented 13.2% of the total sample, and the government received 64.8% of their votes, the percentage of pro-government converts in the total sample was 8.6% (.648\*13.2), and the percentage of pro-opposition converts in the total sample was 4.6% (.352\*13.2), the net effect in favor of the government was exactly 4%. Individuals in cell e of the table, whose June preferences were reinforced at the ballot box despite being against their prior dispositions, voted disproportionately in favor of the opposition, and this explains why the total net campaign effect from all individuals who voted against their June dispositions (reported above in the discussion of Tables 1 and 2) was only 2.2% in favor of the government.

<sup>14</sup> The "strength of initial dispositions" variable was created by folding the June predicted probability of voting for the incumbent coalition around .5, so that values that were either very large (i.e., pro-government) or very small (i.e., pro-opposition) become large values on the strength variable, and values close to .5 on either side become small values on the strength variable.

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**TABLE 1**  
**REGRESSION MODELS PREDICTING 1990 VOTE CHOICE FROM**  
**JUNE ATTITUDES AND JUNE-OCTOBER/NOVEMBER ATTITUDE**  
**CHANGE**

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>b</u>	<u>Beta</u>	<u>Impact</u> <u>(b*Mean)</u>
June PID	-.17	.091* (.003)	.62	-.015
ΔPID	.19	.050* (.001)	.22	.010
June IDEO	.11	.007* (.002)	.03	.001
ΔIDEO	-.01	.007* (.002)	.03	.000
June ECON	.97	.008 (.008)	.01	.008
ΔECON	.00	.002 (.007)	.00	.000
June PERF	1.24	.002 (.004)	.01	.002
ΔPERF	.45	.000 (.003)	.00	.000
June CAND	-.30	.006* (.002)	.06	-.002
ΔCAND	1.16	.010* (.002)	.07	.012
Constant		.510		
Adjusted R-Squared		.54		

Estimated Vote for Government Parties, Full Model	52.7%
Estimated Net Effect of Campaign-Period Attitude Change	2.2%
Percent Correctly Predicted, No Campaign-Period Attitude Change:	84%

Coefficients are generalized least-squared estimates. Standard errors in parentheses. Dependent variable is coded 1 for Government Coalition voters, 0 for Opposition voters. Starred coefficients significant at .05 level, two-tailed. Number of cases is 799.

Source: Wahlstudie 1990 Panel, Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, Mannheim, Germany.

**TABLE 2**  
**REGRESSION MODELS PREDICTING OCTOBER/NOVEMBER**  
**CANDIDATE EVALUATIONS, PARTY IDENTIFICATION**  
**AND LEFT-RIGHT IDEOLOGY**

	<u>October/November:</u>		
	<u>CANDIDATE</u> <u>EVALUATIONS</u>	<u>PARTY</u> <u>IDENT.</u>	<u>LEFT-RIGHT</u> <u>IDEOLOGY</u>
June Candidate Evaluations	.53* (.03) .54	.10* (.02) .15	.05* (.02) .13
June Party Identification	.35* (.05) .24	.65* (.03) .64	.12* (.03) .19
June Left-Right Ideology	.18* (.08) .07	.14* (.05) .08	.39* (.04) .36
Education	-.34* (.11) -.08	-.08 (.06) -.03	-.06 (.06) -.04
Political Interest	.18 (.12) .04	.11 (.07) .04	-.02 (.06) -.01
Television Viewing	.02 (.02) .03	-.01 (.01) -.01	.00 (.01) .02
Newspaper Reading	.00 (.02) .00	.01 (.01) .02	.01 (.01) .03
Adjusted R-Squared	.61	.65	.36

Unstandardized coefficients; standard errors in parentheses; standardized coefficients italicized.

Starred coefficients significant at .05 level, two-tailed. Number of Cases for all models is 799.

**TABLE 3**  
**VOTE BY JUNE VOTE INTENTION, ALL MAJOR PARTIES**

Party	June Supporters (%)	Percent Voting with Party	Percent Voting with Party or Coalition Partner	Percent December Vote
CDU/CSU	39.4%	85.1%	93.0%	44.2%
FDP	5.0%	57.5%	85.0%	10.1%
SPD	46.1%	73.7%	78.6%	40.3%
Greens	3.9%	58.1%	87.1%	5.4%

Number of Cases is 799, Voters for Four Major Parties.

Note: June Support column does not total 100% due to undecided voters.

**TABLE 4**  
**GOVERNMENT/OPPOSITION VOTE BY JUNE VOTE INTENTION**

		<u>June Intention</u>			Total
		Opposition	Undecided	Government	
<u>Vote</u>	Opposition	79.3%	45.5%	7.9%	45.7%
	<u>Government</u>	<u>20.8%</u>	<u>54.5%</u>	<u>92.1%</u>	54.3%
	Total	50.1%	5.5%	44.4%	

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**TABLE 5**  
**REINFORCEMENT, ACTIVATION AND**  
**CONVERSION EFFECTS IN 1990**

	<u>Actual Vote</u>	
Count	Consistent with	Inconsistent with
Row Percent	<u>June Dispositions</u>	<u>June Dispositions</u>
Total Percent		
<u>June Vote Intention:</u>		
Consistent with Dispositions	620 87.2% 77.6% (Reinforcement: A)	91 12.8% 11.4% (Conversion: D)
Inconsistent with Dispositions	20 45.5% 2.5% (Re-activation: B)	24 54.5% 3.0% (Reinforcement: E)
Undecided	30 68.2% 3.8% (Activation: C)	14 31.8% 1.8% (Conversion: F)

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**TABLE 6**  
**COMPARISONS OF STABLE VOTERS WITH CAMPAIGN-PERIOD**  
**CONVERTS**

<u>Variable</u>	<u>Government Voters</u>			<u>Opposition Voters</u>		
	Stable	Converts	T Value	Stable	Converts	T Value
Initial Dispositions	.84	.21	29.7*	.17	.74	25.6*
Strength of Initial Disp.	.34	.29	2.1*	.33	.23	4.7*
ΔCandidate Evaluations	.78	3.35	5.6*	1.24	-.41	2.8*
ΔParty Identification	-.01	1.90	6.9*	.36	-1.41	5.0*
ΔLeft-Right Ideology	-.07	.60	2.8*	.02	-.65	1.9+
Education	2.73	2.34	2.8*	2.74	2.32	2.0*
Political Interest	2.38	1.88	3.4*	2.42	1.89	2.5*
Television Viewing	27.1	24.8	2.0*	26.3	23.9	1.7+
Newspaper Reading	6.99	4.96	2.3*	6.32	5.19	1.1
Number of Cases	(343)	(68)		(305)	(37)	

Starred T-values significant at .05 level, two-tailed.  
T-values with plus sign significant at .10 level, two-tailed.

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## Appendix

### Variables Used in the Analyses: German Questions and English Translations

#### Party Identification

"Viele Leute in der Bundesrepublik neigen 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? Wenn ja, welcher?"

"Many people in the Federal Republic of Germany lean toward a particular political party for a long time, although they may occasionally vote for a different party. How about you - Do you generally lean toward a particular party? If so, which one?"

#### Strength of Party Identification (asked for those who identify with a party only)

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

"How strongly or weakly do you lean toward this party?"

#### Left-Right Ideology

"Es gibt eine Reihe von Begriffen, die man immer wieder hört, wenn von den politischen Parteien die Rede ist, z.B. "links " und "rechts". Bitte zeichnen Sie auf dieser Vorlage ein, wo Sie sich selbst einstufen würden."

"There are a range of notions that are always heard of when political parties are being discussed, such as "left" and "right". Please indicate where you would place yourself on the following scale? (asked after respondents classify each of the political parties and candidates).

#### Perceived State of the Economy

"Wie beurteilen Sie ganz allgemein die heutige wirtschaftliche Lage in der Bundesrepublik? Ist sie sehr gut, gut, teils gut/teils schlecht, schlecht oder sehr schlecht?"

"How would you evaluate in general the present state of the economy of the Federal Republic? Is it very good, good, partly good/partly bad, bad, or very bad?"

#### Government Performance

"Sind Sie mit dem, was die jetzige CDU/CSU/FDP-Regierung in Bonn geleistet hat eher zufrieden oder eher unzufrieden? "

"Would you say that you are generally satisfied or generally dissatisfied with the performance of the incumbent CDU/CSU/FDP-Government in Bonn?"

#### Candidate Evaluations

"Was halten Sie von Helmut Kohl?"

"Was halten Sie von Oskar Lafontaine?"

"What do you think of Helmut Kohl?"

"What do you think of Oskar Lafontaine?"

#### Vote Intention

"Wenn am nächsten Sonntag Bundestagswahl wäre, welche Partei würden Sie wählen?"

"If there was a national parliamentary election held (Bundestagswahl) next sunday, which party would you vote for?"

#### Television Viewing

"An wievielen Tagen in der vergangenen Woche haben Sie Nachrichten im Fernsehen gesehen?"

"Haben Sie sich für Meldungen über Politik in den Fernsehnachrichten sehr stark, stark, etwas, kaum oder gar nicht interessiert?"

"How many days did you watch the news on television during the last week?"

"Did you take a very strong, strong, little or no interest in political coverage on the news?"

#### Newspaper Reading

"An wievielen Tagen in der vergangenen Woche haben Sie eine überregionale Tageszeitung gelesen, wie z.B. die Frankfurter Allgemeine (FAZ), Die Welt, Süddeutsche, taz, Frankfurter Rundschau, aber BILD-Zeitung nicht eingeschlossen?"

"Haben Sie sich dabei für den politischen Teil der Tageszeitung sehr stark, stark, etwas, kaum oder gar nicht interessiert?"

"How often did you read a regional newspapers like the Frankfurter Allgemeine (FAZ), Die Welt, Süddeutsche, taz, Frankfurter Rundschau, except for the Bild-Zeitung during last week?"

"Did you take a very strong, strong, little or no interest in the political coverage in the newspaper?"

#### Education

"Welchen Schulabschluss haben Sie?"

"What kind of degree do you have?"

#### Political Interest

"Einmal ganz allgemein gesprochen - interessieren Sie sich für Politik?"

"Generally speaking, how interested are you in politics?"

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