

Turkey's bid for EU membership, contrasting views of public opinion, and vote choice.

Evidence from the 2005 German federal election

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Abstract

This paper examines the effects of attitudes toward Turkey's entry into the European Union on vote choice in the 2005 federal election in Germany. Building on prior research, the paper contrasts the elitist and the policy voting view of public opinion. The evidence shows that citizens' opinions about Turkey's accession to the European Union do not merely reflect group-memberships and political predispositions. They also play a role in influencing voting behaviour with support of Turkey's entry raising the likelihood to vote for the SPD or the Greens while reducing the probability to cast a vote for right-wing parties, the CDU/CSU and the FDP. Finally, low educated voters are disproportionately susceptible to rely on their attitudes toward enlarging the European Union to contain Turkey. In sum, the evidence contradicts the elitist view and lends support the policy voting view implying that there is an electoral incentive for political elites to respond to public opinion on the Turkey issue.

Keywords: Turkey's bid for EU membership; European Union; voting behaviour, issue voting; Germany.

1. Introduction¹

On 3 October 2005, the European Union (EU) started accession negotiations with Turkey. This decision was made after fierce controversies among political elites in the European Union. It was also at odds with public opinion as only a bare third of the European citizens supports the inclusion of Turkey into the European Union, while a majority rejecting it (European Commission 2005a: 159). At least some politicians appear to have deliberately decided to ignore public opinion on this issue as they regarded public opinion as fickle and unreliable. As German chancellor Gerhard Schröder put it: “Such historic decisions cannot be made dependent on the whims of changing polls or referendums” (Spiegel Online 2005). Thus, Schröder assumed public opinion to be moody and malleable so that it was not reasonable to pay attention to it when making important decisions. In this line of reasoning that fits nicely with the realist account of international relations (e.g. Lippmann 1922; Almond 1950; Waltz 1967: 14; Morgenthau 1978: 558) citizens do not hold strong preferences on the EU enlargement issue, but follow elite decisions when forming attitudes toward this issue. According to this account, the enlargement of the EU is by necessity an elite-driven project and it is not reasonable to complain about a democratic deficit in the institutional setup of the European Union (see e.g. Schmitter 2000; Lord/Beetham 2001; Moravcsik 2002) as voters do not satisfy basic requirements for influencing elite decisions at the EU level.

Though the elitist account of voter decision-making seems sound several findings raise serious doubts about its validity. As regards EU policies, in a considerable number of cases voters did not follow elites’ policy proposals when they were offered the opportunity to vote in referendums. For example, in 2000 the Danes rejected the introduction of the Euro in a national referendum, and the Irish voters approved the Nice Treaty only after it had been amended in response to its rejection in a prior Irish referendum. Likewise, on 29 May 2005 a

¹ I am grateful to the anonymous reviewers for their helpful comments and suggestions.

majority of Dutch and French voters refused to support the European Constitution as proposed by EU elites in national referendums. Moreover, Evans (1998, 1999a,b) showed that attitudes toward the EU have considerably affected vote choice in Great Britain. Finally, though for a long time issues from the foreign policy domain, which is akin to the EU domain in several respects, had been considered to be incapable of influencing voting behaviour more recent studies showed that in some elections attitudes toward foreign policy issues affected voting behaviour in several countries, including the United States and Germany (e.g. Aldrich et al. 1989; Rattinger 1990; Fuchs/Rohrschneider 2003; Schoen 2004; Campbell 2005; Pomper 2005). In light of these findings, it cannot be taken for granted that attitudes toward Turkey's entry into European Union have no impact on ordinary citizens' attitude formation and voting behaviour. Rather, it is a question that warrants empirical investigations.

Voters have several opportunities to cast votes which are possibly affected by attitudes toward Turkey's accession to the EU, including elections to the European Parliament (EP), referendums on EU policies, and national elections. The EP has not become a very powerful actor at the EU level yet, however, and national referendums are held rarely. In contrast, national governments that emerge from national elections are among the most powerful actors at the EU level as they designate the national representatives that participate in the EU Council of Ministers, which has to approve all EU laws. This paper thus examines the effects of attitudes toward Turkey's entry into EU in the 2005 German federal election. Building on competing views of public opinion on European issues the paper states rival hypotheses on the effects of attitudes toward the Turkey issue on vote choice. The hypotheses are then tested drawing on survey data from a random sample of Germans eligible to vote. The evidence suggests that in the 2005 federal election the Turkey issue did influence vote choice, implying that Chancellor Schröder was wrong. At the same time, it was those voters with low educational attainment who disproportionately relied on attitudes toward this issue when casting their votes. The paper concludes by discussing the implications of the results.

2. Contrasting views of public opinion on European integration and vote choice

In democratic theory elections are regarded as instruments of democracy which link citizens' policy preferences to policy behaviour of elected officials (e.g. Powell 2000). For this electoral connection to work several requirements have to be satisfied. For one thing, political elites have to be responsive to public preferences. Otherwise policy decisions might differ considerably from popular policy preferences (e.g. Page and Shapiro 1992; Jacobs and Page 2005). For another thing, citizens are required to cast prospective policy votes, i.e. they have to rely on attitudes toward controversial policy proposals when making up their minds. If prospective policy attitudes do not play a role in influencing vote choice the outcome of an election does not reflect popular policy preferences. As a result, even elites willing to be responsive could deviate considerably from public policy preferences when making policy decisions. Thus, policy voting is at the heart of the electoral connection between popular preferences and elite decisions (e.g. Adams and Merrill 2005; Alvarez et al. 2000).

Given the criteria voters have to satisfy to cast a policy vote (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960: 168-187), policy voting cannot be taken for granted. First of all, an issue voter cognizes a policy question and takes a stance on it. Then, she looks at the positions candidates or parties take on this issue. If she perceives no party positions at all or parties not to differ she will not rely on attitudes on this issue when making up her mind whom to vote for. If she discerns differences between parties or candidates, however, she can cast her vote in line with her issue preferences.² To qualify as pure issue voting, however, it does not suffice to vote in accordance with issue attitudes but the latter have to make a difference in choosing between parties or candidates. A voter who agrees with the party voted for in policy terms cannot be called an issue voter if she identifies with this party since party long-term attachments shape both issue attitudes and vote choice.

² This paper does not address the calculus of issue voting in more detail, i.e. it does not add to the debate about distance vs. directional models of issue voting (see e.g. Westholm 1997; Lewis & King 1999; Blais et al. 2001).

Do voters rely on attitudes toward Turkey's bid for EU membership when making up their minds? This issue belongs to the European integration domain. Previous research has shown that voters do not entirely rely on elite cues when forming attitudes toward issues relating to European integration. Rather, they are capable of forming attitudes by employing other strategies, e.g. by asking whether they benefit from or are hurt by specific European policies (e.g. Hooghe and Marks 2005). For example, perceived democratic performance, nationalism, and perceived cultural threats have been shown to shape attitudes toward European integration (e.g. McLaren 2002; Rohrschneider 2002; Hooghe and Marks 2004, 2005). Thus, citizens are able to rely on genuine European attitudes when making up their minds in the polling booth, thereby providing an incentive for political elites to consider public opinion when making decisions on EU issues (e.g. Carrubba 2001). Some studies suggest that European issues do indeed play a role in shaping vote choice in national elections (e.g. Evans 1998, 1999a,b; Gabel 2000; Pappi/Thurner 2000; Tilman 2004; see Carrubba/Timpone 2005).³

The Turkey issue, however, differs from many other issues referring to European integration in that it probably is more easily understood by ordinary citizens, resulting from its very nature. Turkey's accession to the European Union might have both tangible and symbolic consequences for Western European citizens (see Sears et al. 1979, 1980; Carmines and Stimson 1980). As Turkey is a large and populous country with a rather low standard of living as compared to other EU member states Germans, like other West Europeans, may fear that after Turkey's entry they will have to pay for economic development in Turkey, that the comparatively low wages in Turkey will endanger job security in Western Europe or Turks will move to wealthier EU member states. Moreover, Turkey would be the first Muslim country in the European Union, so that West Europeans may regard its entry to EU as an

³ Unfortunately, many of these studies are suggestive rather than conclusive as they do not control for powerful predictors of vote choice like party identification, so that they suffer from misspecification presumably resulting in overestimating the effect of attitudes toward European integration on voting behaviour (but see Evans 1998, 1999a,b).

attack on their way of life and their culture, thereby invoking xenophobic stereotypes. In effect, voters are likely to have less difficulty in forming genuine attitudes toward Turkey's entry than toward other issues from the European integration domain. So they are likely to be prepared to cast a Turkey issue vote.

Voters can rely on attitudes toward Turkey's bid for membership when choosing between parties only if they perceive parties to differ on this issue. As a post-election survey shows, in 2005 Germans did discern considerable policy differences between parties. An overwhelming majority perceived the Social Democrats and the Greens to support Turkey's accession to the European Union. In line with the parties' actual policies of rejecting the idea of making Turkey a full member state and calling for a "privileged partnership", 80 percent of the German electorate considered CDU/CSU to oppose Turkey's entry into EU while a majority ascribed this stance to the FDP. As regards the Leftist party's stance, Germans were quite unsure. Finally, right-wing parties were perceived to oppose the idea of enlarging the European Union to include Turkey (Kühnel et al. 2006: 107-110). As a consequence, the policy voting argument claims that the supporters of Turkey's entry are disproportionately to vote for the SPD or the Greens and to refuse to vote for the CDU/CSU, the FDP or right-wing parties; in contrast, attitudes toward the Turkey issue should not affect voting for the Leftist Party.

The above description of the Turkey issue also suggests that voters differ in their inclination to rely on attitudes toward this issue when casting their votes. Those voters who feel most heavily affected by Turkey's EU accession should be most strongly affected by opinions about this issue. As regards economic self-interest, not well-educated voters are disproportionately likely to cast a Turkey vote as they may suppose that particularly their jobs will be at risk; likewise, workers and unemployed voters are economically quite vulnerable and thus may be also quite likely to cast a Turkey vote. Turning to cultural stakes, voters who would regard Turkey's EU entry as an attack on their cultural identity are anticipated to vote

in line with their attitudes toward Turkey's EU entry. As practising Christians may feel offended by the inclusion of a Muslim country in EU these voters are expected to particularly rely on attitudes toward Turkey's entry when casting their votes. Furthermore, rightist citizens are sceptic of foreigners and may thus be disproportionately inclined to vote in line with their attitudes toward the Turkey issue. In contrast, political sophistication should not exhibit sizable conditioning effects. As Turkey's entry is an easy-to-comprehend issue, political sophistication is not likely to increase the probability of forming genuine attitudes toward it, so that the conditioning effect should be considerably attenuated as compared to hard, technical issues.

This policy voting model is clearly at odds with the permissive consensus view prevailing in the literature on public opinion about European integration for a long time. According to this view, as issues surrounding European policy are technical in nature and remote to citizens' daily lives most voters are rather ill-informed about and disinterested in the European Union (e.g. Inglehart 1970; Lindberg/Scheingold 1971). As a consequence, most citizens are likely to hold not strong preferences about European policies. Rather, they look for cues from political elites to adopt policy positions (e.g. Campbell et al. 1960; Brady and Sniderman 1985; Popkin 1994; Sniderman 1993; Lupia and McCubbins 1998). Relying on these strategies allows voters to make sense of politics but as they derive issue preferences from party identification or other cues issue attitudes cannot exhibit an independent effect on vote choice if these factors are controlled for (e.g. Brody and Page 1972; Page and Brody 1972; Miller and Shanks 1996). Only a few politically sophisticated voters are likely to form genuine attitudes toward this domain. Consequently, elites have a small, if any, incentive to respond to popular opinion on EU issues. In light of this prevailing elitist view, it comes as no surprise that EP elections are fought over national, rather than European, issues (e.g. van der Eijk and Franklin 1991, 1996a, 1996b; but see Blondel et al. 1998).

According to this elitist model, among ordinary citizens attitudes toward enlarging the EU to include Turkey should exhibit no effects on vote choice. Only a small number of political sophisticates possess genuine attitudes toward the Turkey issue and may thus rely on them in the polling booth. As a consequence, political sophistication should exhibit sizable conditioning effects. Several arguments lend some credence to this hypothesis, to which Chancellor Schröder and other elites appear to have subscribed. Though German parties differed on this issue they did not campaign heavily on it. For example, in the TV debate between candidates for chancellor only two percent of the debate time was dedicated to this issue (Medientenor 2005: 2). Furthermore, previous studies found no evidence for effects of attitudes toward Turkey's accession on vote choice in British elections (e.g. Norris/Wlezien 2005). Likewise, only a tiny portion of the voters in the Dutch and French referendums on the European Constitution referred to Turkey's entry to the EU when asked for the reasons why they had voted the way they had (Eurobarometer 2005b,c).

In sum, as regards the effect of attitudes toward the Turkey issue on voting behaviour in the 2005 German federal election the elitist and the policy voting view lead to contrasting expectations. The former suggests that attitudes toward Turkey's bid for EU membership to be virtually without any effect on vote choice as they merely reflect the voters' group-memberships and deep-seated party loyalties. In contrast, the policy voting view claims that attitudes toward the EU issue are formed independently of pre-existing attachments and affect voting behaviour, with voters who are particularly (subjectively) affected by EU enlargement being disproportionately likely to rely on opinions about this policy.

3. Data and methodology

The analysis of the effects of attitudes toward the Turkey issue on voting behaviour in the 2005 German federal election draws on data from a survey conducted from August 8th to

September 18th 2005. Respondents for this rolling cross-section survey were selected from the population eligible to vote using RDD as adapted to German conditions (Häder & Gabler 1998) and were interviewed using CATI (for details see Schmitt-Beck et al. 2006).⁴

Respondents were asked about attitudes toward political parties, leading politicians, political issues of the day and voting behaviour. To measure what they think about the idea of Turkey joining EU respondents were asked to tell whether Turkey should never become an EU member state or whether Turkey should become member of EU as soon as possible.

Respondents could indicate their opinion using an eleven point scale. Unfortunately, the data set does not contain any information about how respondents perceive parties' positions on the Turkey issue so that I cannot analyse specific models of issue voting like the distance model. The dependent variable is vote intention with six categories (SPD, CDU/CSU, Greens, FDP, Leftist Party, and right-wing parties).

The analysis proceeds in three steps. It starts by examining the effect of the traditional partisan cleavages on attitudes toward the Turkey issue as the latter can exhibit an independent effect on vote choice only if they are not a mere reflection of the voters' position in the traditional partisan conflict. According to the elitist account, SPD and Greens identifiers should support Turkey's EU entry while adherents of the CDU/CSU, the FDP and right-wing parties should oppose it. Moreover, as party competition in Germany is rooted in social cleavages (Lipset and Rokkan 1967; Pappi 2002), workers, the unemployed and union members, who form the social base of the SPD, should support Turkey's EU entry if they follow their party's lead. In contrast, being a practising Christian is anticipated to exhibit the opposite effect since these citizens are likely to support the CDU/CSU. Finally, left-right ideology should shape attitudes toward Turkey's bid for membership, with leftists being disproportionately likely to support enlarging the EU to include Turkey. In contrast, the policy

⁴ The data set is available from the Central Archive at the University of Cologne under filing number 4302. Of course, neither the Central archive nor the principal investigators bear any responsibility for the analyses reported in this article.

voting model claims that when forming attitudes toward the Turkey issue many German voters do not entirely rely on elite cues, so that a voter's position in the existing cleavage structure should not determine his opinion about the Turkey issue. What is more, some citizens may be at odds with the elites they traditionally support. For instance, workers and low-skilled persons who form the core of the SPD's social base may oppose Turkey's EU entry and thus may vote against the Social Democrats.

Second, the analysis examines the effects of attitudes toward the Turkey issue on vote choice. To rule out spurious correlations several control variables are included. To begin with, socio-demographic variables are controlled for: gender, region, age, education, employment status, union membership, religious denomination, and church attendance. Furthermore, relatively stable political predispositions are included: political ideology and party identification. As scholars have shown that candidate attitudes play a major role in explaining vote choice and that individual politicians may give cues I include attitudes toward leading politicians of SPD, CDU/CSU, Greens, FDP, and Leftist Party, as well. Additional control variables are: retrospective evaluations of incumbent performance, respondents' retrospective evaluations of their finances and of national economic conditions, opinions about valence issues using an index,⁵ and attitudes toward the future of the welfare state, an issue that was at the centre of the 2005 campaign. By including this multitude of variables which electoral research has demonstrated to affect voting behaviour in Germany (see Falter & Schoen 2005), the analysis is likely to give a valid estimate of the influence of attitudes toward the Turkey issue on vote choice rather than an overestimate.

Finally, the analysis examines individual-level differences in Turkey issue voting among German voters. To test the elitist notion of issue voting I study the effects of political sophistication on how strongly attitudes toward the Turkey issue affect vote choice. As previous research is not conclusive about measuring political sophistication (see e.g. Zaller

⁵ Unlike many previous studies this analysis does not rely on the „most important problem“ question that has been shown to be problematic (Wlezien 2005).

1992; Pattie and Johnston 2001), a summary measure is employed that combines interest in politics and political knowledge. The notion of economically vulnerable voters being disproportionately susceptible to Turkey issue voting is examined by analysing whether being a worker, being unemployed, or being low educated increases the impact of attitudes toward the Turkey issue on vote choice. Finally, to examine the notion of cultural stakes and nationalistic sentiments increasing Turkey issue voting I study if being a regular churchgoer and rating oneself at the right end of the left-right scale increases the likelihood of Turkey issue voting (see for details appendix).

4. Results

Germans are rather sceptical of Turkey's EU entry. When asked to indicate their opinions about Turkey's EU entry on a scale ranging from 0 to 1, with higher values indicating stronger support, Germans on average give a 0.3. What is more, almost one in three respondents choose a '0' indicating that s/he wants Turkey never to become a full member of EU. At the high end of the scale, i.e. in the camp of enthusiastic supporters of Turkey's EU entry, less than five percent of respondents are located (not shown in tables).

Do attitudes toward Turkey's bid for full EU membership simply reflect voters' positions in the traditional political configuration as the elitist view claims? The results of an ordinal logistic regression reported in Table 1 contradict, rather than support, this expectation resulting from the elitist model. To be sure, political predispositions somewhat affect attitudes toward the Turkey issue. As anticipated, identifying with SPD or the Greens increases the likelihood to support a soon entry of Turkey into EU, while adherents of the CDU/CSU, the FDP and – particularly – other parties are considerably less enthusiastic than supporters of the SPD and the Greens. It also comes as no surprise to find persons calling themselves rightist being considerably more likely to oppose Turkey's entry than leftist citizens. As the summary

statistics at the bottom of Table 1 indicate, however, these effects are tiny. Moreover, religious denomination, church attendance, and union membership do not exhibit any effect. What is more, several social characteristics exhibit effects that contradict the elitist view. Being unemployed and being a worker considerably decreases, rather than increases, the likelihood of supporting Turkey's bid for full membership. In sum, attitudes toward the Turkey issue do not simply reflect voters' positions in the traditional political configuration as the elitist view claims. The evidence rather supports the policy voting model. Thus, the Turkey issue may have an independent impact on voting behaviour.

- Table 1 about here –

The effect of attitudes toward the Turkey issue on voting behaviour was examined by regressing vote choice opinions about Turkey's EU entry using multinomial logistic regression. To rule out spurious correlations I added a multitude of control variables including socio-demographics, political predispositions, candidate evaluations, perceptions of the economy, opinions about incumbent performance, and attitudes toward several issues. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 2.⁶

The control variables differ in their capability of influencing vote choice considerably. To begin with, socio-demographics and group-memberships affect vote choice only weakly. This finding is not surprising since the effects of these remote factors are usually mediated by political attitudes. Still, being self-employed and being a civil servant has a considerable effect on vote choice. Left-right ideology exhibits the expected effects as persons at the right end of the left-right dimension are disproportionately likely to vote for the CDU/CSU or

⁶ The marginal distribution of vote choice in the data set used in this analysis differs somewhat from the actual outcome of the 2005 federal election. Thus, one may suspect the results concerning effects of issue attitudes on vote choice presented in this paper to be biased. However, additional analyses using weights to adjust the marginal distribution to the actual outcome yield the same substantive results, so that the findings presented below appear to be valid.

right-wing parties whereas being at the left end of this scale renders a vote for the Leftist Party considerably more likely. As party identification theory predicts, party attachments affect vote choice very strongly: Identifying with a party increases the probability to cast a vote for this party considerably.⁷ Evaluations of top candidates, particularly of Chancellor Schröder, opinions about incumbent performance play a role in voters' decision-making as do evaluations of party competence. Attitudes toward the welfare state also affect voting behaviour though their effects are rather limited. Finally, evaluations of economic conditions do not add very much to explanations of voting behaviour, regardless of whether individual or national conditions are referred to.

- Table 2 about here -

Having controlled for this multitude of variables, attitudes toward Turkey's entry into EU still exhibit a statistically significant effect on voting behaviour ($\chi^2 = 31.76$, $p = 0.0000$). As the results shown in Table 2 indicate, opinions about this issue have a particularly strong impact on the choice between right-wing parties and the Greens, with opponents of Turkey's entry being disproportionately likely to cast a rightist vote ($b = -5.84$; $p = 0.000$).⁸ What is more, right-wing parties benefit from opposition to this proposal also when voters are to choose between them and the SPD, the CDU/CSU and the Leftist Party.⁹ The effects of attitudes toward the Turkey issue are not limited to choices that include right-wing parties, however. Rather, supporting Turkey's bid for full membership increases the probability of choosing the

⁷ For statistical reasons, identifications with the FDP, the Leftist Party and right-wing parties are not included. As this omission may raise doubts about the validity of the findings presented below, additional analyses were conducted showing that including additional party identification variables does not alter the substantive findings.

⁸ In multinomial regression models the coefficients are choice-specific. In Table 2, all coefficients indicate the effect of an independent variable on the choice between the SPD and the party indicated in the respective column header. To calculate the effect of an independent variable on the choice between two parties not including the SPD requires subtracting the respective logit coefficients. For example, the effect of attitudes toward Turkey's bid for full membership on the choice between right-wing parties and the Greens is $b = -4.44 - 1.40 = -5.84$.

⁹ The coefficients for the CDU/CSU and the Leftist Party are $b = -2.80$ ($p = 0.026$) and $b = -3.95$ ($p = 0.002$), respectively.

Greens rather than the SPD, the CDU/CSU ($b = 3.04$; $p = 0.000$), the FDP ($b = 3.28$; $p = 0.000$) and even the Leftist party ($b = 1.89$; $p = 0.004$). At the same time, support for this proposal also raises the likelihood of casting a vote for the SPD rather than for the CDU/CSU and the FDP.

To examine the effects of attitudes toward the Turkey issue on vote choice in more detail, I calculated the expected probabilities of casting a vote for particular party depending on attitudes about Turkey's accession to the European Union while all other variables were set to their mode, median and mean, respectively. As among party identifiers this issue, like other issues, did not affect vote choice strongly, in Figure 1 the predicted probabilities for independents are shown.

These results suggest that the effects of attitudes toward the Turkey issue are quite sizable. While just one of ten independents who reject the idea of including Turkey in EU vote for the SPD, four of ten supporting this idea cast a SPD vote. The pattern for the Greens parallels the results for the SPD somewhat as moving from the lower to the higher end of the Turkey issue scale increases the likelihood of casting a Green vote from one to about percent. Conversely, support for Turkey's entry into the EU decreases the likelihood to vote for the major opposition party, the CDU/CSU from almost 60 percent to roughly 40 percent. Support of the Turkey proposal also exhibits a negative, albeit small, effect on voting for the CDU/CSU's would be coalition partner, the FDP. Considerably stronger is the negative effect on voting for right-wing parties as the likelihood of casting a right-wing vote drops precipitously from 20 percent to just one percent when moving from maximal opposition to Turkey's EU entry to maximal support. In contrast, the Leftist vote is only affected minimally by attitudes toward the Turkey issue.

- Figure 1 about here -

In summary, the results clearly show that attitudes toward Turkey's accession to the European Union have a considerable impact on voting behaviour even if socio-demographic characteristics, political predispositions, opinions about political leaders and political issues are controlled for. The effects confirm the expectations also when it comes to the direction as parties that push Turkey's EU entry, i.e. the SPD and the Greens, benefit from support of this proposal while parties opposing it, right-wing parties and the CDU/CSU in particular, do considerably better among voters who oppose Turkey's bid for membership than among those who support it. Thus, the empirical findings clearly contradict the elitist view and lend support to the policy voting model by suggesting that voters are capable of relying on attitudes toward Turkey's entry into the EU when making up their minds.

The elitist and the policy voting model also differ in their predictions of which voters are particularly likely to cast a Turkey vote. To examine if opinions about this issue are particularly influential in shaping voting behaviour in certain subsections of the electorate multiplicative terms were added to the multinomial logistic model reported in Table 2. For example, to study whether regular churchgoers are disproportionately inclined to rely on attitudes toward Turkey's entry a churchgoer-by-issue attitude interaction term was included. Given this interaction term, the coefficient for attitudes toward Turkey's entry captures the effect of opinions about this issue among non-churchgoers. To obtain the effect of issue attitudes among regular churchgoers the main issue effect and the coefficient for the multiplicative term are added. If the coefficient for the latter term turns out to be statistically significant this indicates that regularly attending church conditions the effect of attitudes toward Turkey on vote choice. The nature of the conditioning effect depends on the signs of the multiplicative term and the main Turkey term. If both have the same sign it will be concluded that being a regular churchgoer renders attitudes toward Turkey's entry more

influential. By the same token, opposite signs indicate that regularly attending church decreases the effect of opinions about this issue on vote choice (Jaccard 2001).¹⁰

Looking at Table 3, it is evident that the empirical evidence does not support the expectation that politically sophisticated respondents rely on attitudes toward Turkey's entry into the European Union when casting their votes more heavily than the rest of the electorate. To be sure, some effects of issue attitudes pass conventional thresholds of statistical significance among political sophisticates but not in the rest of the electorate. For instance, support for Turkey's EU entry increases the likelihood of voting for the Greens rather than for the SPD, the CDU/CSU, the FDP, and right-wing parties only among political sophisticates. These single findings notwithstanding, among political sophisticates attitudes toward the Turkey issue are not a significant predictor of vote choice ($\chi^2 = 18.22$; $p = 0.0513$). In sum, the analysis suggests that political sophisticates do not differ from the rest of the electorate when it comes to casting a Turkey vote nor do they rely on attitudes toward the Turkey issue at all. Thus, the findings do not lend convincing support to the elitist view but rather reject it.

- Table 3 about here -

As regards the policy voting model, the evidence is somewhat more encouraging. To be sure, the analysis does not support the expectation that regular churchgoers and persons holding rightist views rely heavily on attitudes toward the Turkey issue. Neither does being a worker nor being unemployed condition the effect of opinions about Turkey's entry into the EU.¹¹ In contrast, low educational attainment renders opinions about Turkey's entry into EU more

¹⁰ Including multiplicative terms is likely to raise collinearity problems. However, as in an additional analysis VIF scores did not exceed conventional thresholds collinearity is not a problem in this model.

¹¹ As with political sophistication, some effects are statistically significant in one group but not in the other one though the difference in effects does not overcome conventional thresholds of statistical significance.

powerful predictors of vote choice.¹² To illustrate the effect of low education, predicted probabilities of voting for a particular party depending on issue attitudes and educational attainment were calculated. These probabilities are summarized in Figure 2. Obviously, the slopes in the upper panel of figure 2 are much steeper than in the lower panel. For example, when support for Turkey's entry into EU increases from its minimum to its maximum the likelihood to vote for CDU/CSU drops from roughly 55 percent to less than 20 percent among low educated persons but to almost 40 percent among other persons. At the same time, support for the idea of enlarging the European Union to contain Turkey raises the likelihood to cast a SPD vote much stronger among low educated persons than in the rest of the electorate.

- Figure 2 about here -

Thus, the empirical evidence suggests that low educational attainment raises the effect of attitudes toward the enlargement issue on vote choice. This finding is in line with the notion that (perceived) economic vulnerability plays a role in conditioning effects of opinions about Turkey's entry into EU since including the large and comparatively poor Turkish people in the EU may put at risk particularly jobs of low educated in Germany. However, at this point the analysis is not conclusive, as educational attainment is also correlated with value orientations, so that the results may be interpreted as indicating that value orientations contribute to conditioning the extent of issue voting. Be that as it may, the evidence does not support the elitist view claiming that political sophistication significantly increases the impact of issue orientations on vote choice. Rather, it lends support to the policy voting model

¹² In contrast, a high education-by-attitudes toward Turkey's entry interaction does not pass conventional threshold of significance ($\chi^2 = 8.66$, $p = 0.12$) and, what is more, high education tends to decrease effects of EU attitudes.

claiming that those voters who are particularly (subjectively) affected by the Turkey issue rely most heavily on attitudes toward it when making up their minds.

5. Conclusion

The task of this paper was to examine if attitudes toward Turkey's entry into the European Union affected vote choice in the 2005 federal election in Germany. From prior research, the paper derived contrasting views of public opinion on European policies that lead to competing expectations about the effect of attitudes toward the Turkey issue on vote choice. The elitist view suggests that when forming attitudes toward the Turkey issue voters adopt elite positions so that opinions about Turkey's bid for membership should not play a role in influencing vote choice as a whole. Moreover, political sophistication should make a difference in the effect of issue attitudes on voting behaviour. In contrast, the policy voting view claims that voters' attitudes toward the Turkey issue do not merely reflect their positions in the traditional party competition. Moreover, attitudes toward Turkey's entry into the EU should affect vote choice, and those voters most intensely affected by this policy should rely most heavily on attitudes toward Turkey's bid for membership when casting a vote in a national election. The evidence showed that citizens' opinions about Turkey's accession to the European Union are somewhat affected but by no means determined by group-memberships and long-term political predispositions. Moreover, opinions about the Turkey issue indeed play role in influencing voting behaviour with support of a soon entry of Turkey in the European Union raising the likelihood to vote for the SPD or the Greens while reducing the probability to cast a vote for right-wing parties, the CDU/CSU and the FDP. Finally, the evidence rejected the notion of political sophisticates being particularly inclined to rely on attitudes toward the Turkey issue. Rather, low educated voters are disproportionately susceptible to rely on their attitudes toward enlarging the European Union to include Turkey. This finding suggests that (perceived)

economic vulnerability plays a role in conditioning the extent to which opinions about the Turkey issue affect vote choice.

The evidence thus does not support the elitist view while it buttresses the policy voting model. By implication, the analysis defies Chancellor Schröder and other elite actors regarding public opinion on the issue of enlarging the European Union to include Turkey as fickle and unreliable and thus without any effect on electoral behaviour. In line with the liberal view of international relations, the analysis thus suggests that voters give political elites an incentive to respond to public opinion on the Turkey issue when making decisions at the EU level.

Thus, German voters meet several requirements for an electoral connection between public preferences and elite decision-making to exist as regards this issue. As Chancellor Schröder's statement indicates, however, this does not imply that elite actors actually respond to voters' preferences.

The findings of this analysis also have important implications for political competition in Germany. Given its electoral impact, the Turkey issue provides incentives to politicians for strategic agenda-setting. As a large majority of the German electorate rejects Turkey joining the EU, parties promoting this policy may attempt to downplay this issue, while parties rejecting Turkey's entry have an incentive to follow opposite strategies. Since the accession negotiations with Turkey are likely to be a key issue in EU politics for several years, downplaying this issue may be more difficult than highlighting it. As a result, the Turkey issue is likely to be a salient issue in several years to come. One may even speculate that in Germany a durable issue cleavage may evolve, somewhat resembling the British EU issue cleavage (see Evans 1999b). The evidence also shows that the Turkey issue cuts across traditional alignments based on social groups. In particular, groups traditionally aligned with the SPD appear to be inclined to respond to this issue by casting votes for parties other than the SPD. If this issue continues to play a role in electoral politics it probably will lead voters to deviate from their traditional partisan loyalties in the polling booth or will even weaken

these attachments. As a consequence, this issue may further erode the traditional alignments based on social groups that lent stability to electoral politics in Germany.

That said, I recognize, of course, the limitations of this analysis. Though it shows that traditional cleavages and party attachments play only a minor role in shaping individual perceptions of the Turkey issue, the analysis does not address the factors that actually affect these attitudes. As a consequence, it cannot determine to what extent attitudes toward Turkey's entry are influenced by territorial attachments, by attitudes toward immigration, Turks, or foreigners, or by perceived economic and political consequences of Turkey joining the EU. This shortcoming is particularly serious as the substantive interpretation of the electoral effects of this issue depends on the sources of attitudes toward Turkey's entry. If the latter, for example, reflect xenophobic sentiments they will be interpreted not in the same way as if they are driven by perceived consequences of Turkey's accession on the security in the Middle East. Future research thus should address this issue. Moreover, the present analysis is also limited in that it deals with only one country, though the Turkey issue might play a role in influencing vote choice in different countries, thereby potentially constituting a genuine EU issue cleavage among EU citizens. Future research thus should widen the scope of analysis. By doing this, it could also investigate the interplay of the political setting, political communications and voting behaviour that is crucial to our understanding of the dynamics of Turkey issue voting.

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Appendix: Coding of variables

Gender: 0 = male, 1 = female

Age: in years

Region: 0 = West Germany, 1 = East Germany.

Low education: 1 = no/primary education, 0: otherwise.

High education: 1 = secondary school, 0: otherwise.

Worker: 1 = worker, 0 = otherwise.

Employee: 1 = employee, 0 = otherwise.

Self-employed: 1 = self-employed, 0 = otherwise.

Civil servant: 1 = civil servant, 0 = otherwise.

Union membership: 1 = union member, 0: otherwise.

Catholic: 1 = catholic, 0 = otherwise.

Protestant: 1= protestant, 0 = otherwise.

Churchgoer: 1 = Catholics or protestants who attend church (almost) every Sunday, 0 = otherwise.

Ideology: “People often use the terms ‘left’ and ‘right’ in politics. Using this scale from 1 to 11, where would you place yourself, if 1 stands for left and 11 stands for right?” Range rescaled to 0 – 1.

Party identification: “In the Federal Republic, many people lean towards a political party for an extended period of time although they vote for a different party now and then. Do you – generally speaking – lean towards a political party? And if so: Which party?” Dummy variables were created for identification with SPD, CDU/CSU, FDP, Greens, Leftist Party and other parties (reference category: independents)

Candidate evaluations: "Generally speaking, what is your opinion about the candidates?"

Please use this scale from -5 to +5. -5 means that you have a very poor opinion about a party, +5 means that you have a very good opinion about a party." Range rescaled to 0 – 1.

Personal economic conditions: "Over the last one or two years have your personal economic circumstances gotten much better, somewhat better, not changed, somewhat worse or much worse?" rescaled to 0 (= much worse) – 1 (= much better).

National economic conditions: "Over the last one or two years have the national economic conditions gotten much better, somewhat better, not changed, somewhat worse or much worse?" rescaled to 0 (= much worse) – 1 (= much better).

Incumbent performance: "I am entirely dissatisfied with the performance of the red-green federal government." Five-point scale ranging from 0 (strongly agree) – 1 (strongly disagree).

Party competence: Concerning three policy domains, respondents were asked for the most competent party (unemployment, making society more family-friendly, education) and for the importance of the respective issues. Then, I calculated a summary score for each party by summing up the number of issues a party was named as weighted by importance weights. The metric variable is coded 0 (= party was not named) – 1 (= respondent perceived the issues as equally important and named three times the respective party).

Welfare state: 0 = strongly in favour of cutbacks in welfare expenditures; 1 = strongly in favour of increase of welfare expenditures (eleven-point scale).

Turkey: 0 = never become a member state of the EU, 1 = as soon as possible member state.

Interest in politics: 0 = not at all, 1: very interested (five-point scale).

Political knowledge: "Do you happen to which party holds the majority in the Bundesrat: SPD-led states, CDU/CSU-led states, or has no party a majority in the Bundesrat?" 0 = wrong answer, don't know, 1 = correct answer.

Political sophistication = (interest in politics + political knowledge)/2.

Rightist views: 0 = 0 to 7 on a 0-10 left-right scale, 1 = 8 through 10 on a 0-10 left-right scale.

Table 1: Explaining attitudes toward Turkey's entry into the European Union by group membership, ideology, and party identification (ordered logit model)

	Attitudes toward Turkey's entry into the EU
Worker	-.57** (.21)
Employee	.04 (.12)
Civil servant	.02 (.17)
Self-employed	.05 (.16)
Unemployed	-.58* (.23)
Union member	.10 (.14)
Catholic	-.02 (.13)
Protestant	.06 (.13)
Churchgoer	.06 (.18)
Political ideology	-.93*** (.24)
Party identification	
- SPD	.41** (.15)
- CDU/CSU	-.36* (.14)
- Greens	1.08*** (.18)
- FDP	-.42 (.25)
- Leftist Party	.19 (.31)
- other party	-1.49** (.50)
Cut - Point 1	-1.32 (.21)
Cut - Point 2	-1.07 (.21)
Cut - Point 3	-.51 (.20)
Cut -Point 4	-.12 (.20)
Cut - Point 5	.47 (.20)
Cut - Point 6	1.11 (.21)
Cut - Point 7	1.58 (.21)
Cut - Point 8	2.17 (.22)
Cut - Point 9	2.58 (.23)
Cut - Point 10	3.00 (.24)
-2 LL	4398.9
$\Delta\chi^2$	126.4
Adj. Pseudo R ²	.02
N	2089

Entries are unstandardized coefficients. Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

Table 2: Explaining vote choice in the 2005 German federal election (multinomial logistic regression)

Vote (ref.: SPD)	CDU/CSU	Greens	FDP	Leftist Party	Right-wing parties
Gender (ref.: male)	-.78* (.34)	-.38 (.33)	-.60 (.42)	-.18 (.34)	-.91* (.42)
Age	-.01 (.01)	-.02 (.01)	.01 (.01)	.02 (.01)	-.01 (.02)
Region (ref.: West)	-.22 (.37)	.25 (.39)	-.05 (.41)	.41 (.37)	-.26 (.58)
Education					
- low	.00 (.41)	.25 (.57)	-.94 (.55)	.39 (.41)	.17 (.52)
- high	.28 (.38)	.50 (.40)	.60 (.41)	.09 (.39)	-.59 (.59)
Worker	-.18 (.71)	-.43 (.51)	.71 (.78)	-.37 (.54)	.92 (.79)
Employee	.64 (.37)	-.28 (.40)	.39 (.46)	-.78 (.47)	1.51** (.54)
Civil servant	2.16* (.85)	1.26* (.62)	1.01 (.84)	1.83* (.78)	3.47** (1.34)
Self-employed	2.64*** (.55)	.94 (.69)	2.38*** (.59)	.80 (.63)	2.21* (.88)
Unemployed	-.49 (.66)	1.34 (.72)	-1.08 (1.72)	1.51** (.56)	.28 (1.06)
Union member	-.47 (.56)	-.36 (.40)	-.37 (.62)	-.07 (.42)	-.40 (.68)
Catholic	-.94* (.46)	-.59 (.53)	-.67 (.52)	-.86 (.51)	-.50 (.62)
Protestant	-.22 (.37)	.48 (.39)	-.47 (.44)	-.54 (.36)	.50 (.48)
Churchgoer	1.65* (.70)	1.99** (.57)	1.08 (.83)	.35 (.75)	2.78* (1.10)
Ideology	1.89* (.73)	-.79 (.90)	.50 (.91)	-1.46* (.63)	1.72* (.70)
Party identification					
- SPD	-3.08*** (.49)	-1.80*** (.41)	-2.29*** (.58)	-1.48*** (.36)	-2.82*** (.68)
- CDU/CSU	2.66*** (.47)	-1.07 (.80)	.89 (.55)	-.09 (.70)	.09 (.80)
- Greens	-.88 (.76)	3.20*** (.45)	-1.08 (1.22)	-.23 (.73)	-1.95 (1.28)
Candidate evaluations					
- Schröder	-6.18*** (1.11)	-2.99** (.99)	-7.39*** (1.17)	-5.50*** (.97)	-6.44*** (1.13)
- Merkel	6.47*** (.96)	-.02 (.71)	3.95*** (.96)	.34 (.78)	1.93* (.94)
- Fischer	-.44 (.69)	3.50*** (.87)	-.65 (.80)	-.42 (.64)	.84 (1.00)
- Westerwelle	1.27 (.74)	.22 (.69)	5.78*** (.95)	-1.62* (.81)	.01 (.97)
- Lafontaine	-.24 (.65)	-.28 (.63)	-1.16 (.70)	5.90*** (.72)	.78 (.86)
Ind. economic conditions	-.58 (.66)	.57 (.75)	.34 (.75)	-.99 (.77)	.27 (.83)
Nat. economic conditions	1.39 (.78)	-1.34 (.77)	.85 (.94)	1.45 (.84)	-.07 (1.11)
Incumbent performance	.86 (.89)	2.02** (.78)	1.49 (1.03)	2.29** (.77)	4.03*** (1.09)
SPD	-1.68*	.35	-1.68*	-1.27	-2.99**

competence	(.68)	(.61)	(.81)	(.67)	(.92)
CDU/CSU	3.73***	2.91***	1.97**	1.32	-1.36
competence	(.62)	(.74)	(.71)	(.79)	(.99)
Greens	.49	4.66***	-1.90	.93	-2.43
competence	(1.24)	(1.33)	(1.65)	(1.47)	(1.64)
FDP	1.43	-1.02	4.14***	-.20	-.94
competence	(1.07)	(2.44)	(.99)	(1.95)	(2.53)
Leftist Party	-1.90	-1.51	.73	3.67***	-.18
competence	(2.34)	(1.66)	(1.26)	(.92)	(1.26)
Welfare state	-.71	.43	-1.52*	.80	-.62
	(.59)	(.77)	(.66)	(.66)	(.84)
Turkey's entry	-1.64**	1.40**	-1.88**	-.49	-4.44***
	(.55)	(.53)	(.70)	(.51)	(1.25)
Constant	-.90	-4.50**	-1.55	-1.56	-.01
	(1.46)	(1.49)	(1.46)	(1.36)	(1.53)
-2 LL	2809.5				
$\Delta\chi^2$	2022.8				
Adj. Pseudo-R ²	.66				
N	2089				

Entries are unstandardized logit coefficients. Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$. Hausman test of IIA supports H_0 .

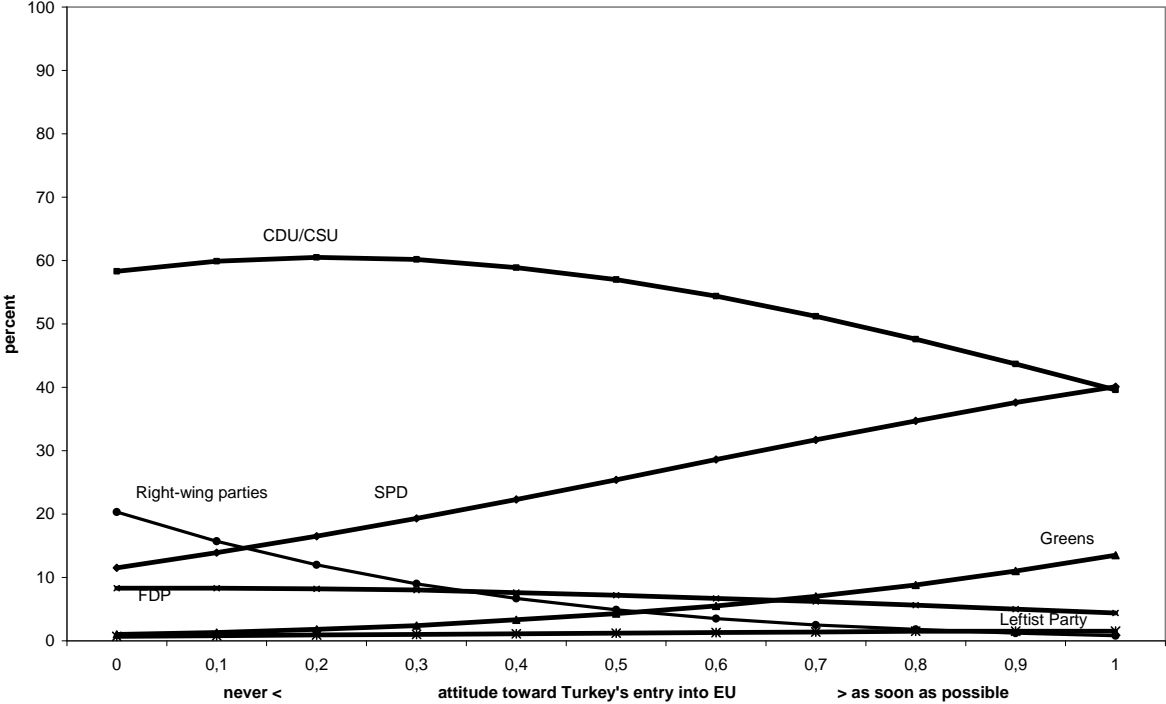
Table 3: Effects of mediating variables on the impact of attitudes toward Turkey's entry into EU on vote choice in the 2005 German federal election (multinomial logistic regression)

Reference: SPD	CDU/CSU	Greens	FDP	Leftist Party	Right-wing parties	χ^2 (interaction)
Turkey's entry	-.16 (1.35)	-.52 (1.62)	-.13 (1.78)	.27 (1.56)	-.29 (2.59)	
Turkey × sophistication	-1.52 (1.73)	3.05 (2.01)	-1.16 (2.14)	.63 (2.01)	-1.92 (3.33)	4.58
Turkey × low education	-2.47* (1.15)	-.09 (1.37)	-6.97** (2.47)	-2.20* (1.11)	-7.92** (2.50)	19.66**
Turkey × worker/unemp.	-1.66 (1.75)	-.36 (1.27)	-2.04 (2.56)	-.83 (1.07)	3.13 (2.78)	3.34
Turkey × churchgoer	-3.27 (2.36)	.73 (1.83)	-2.83 (2.90)	-2.57 (2.12)	-4.64 (3.22)	3.57
Turkey × extreme right	2.56 (1.44)	-3.90 (2.66)	3.16 (1.72)	-1.29 (1.85)	-8.60 (7.14)	9.17
-2 LL	2809.5					
$\Delta\chi^2$	2047.6					
Adj. Pseudo- R ²	.66					
N	2089					
Turkey +	-2.62	-.61	-7.11*	-1.93	-8.21**	
Turkey × low education	(1.41)	(1.58)	(2.76)	(1.74)	(3.14)	

N = 2089. Entries are unstandardized logit coefficients. Numbers in parentheses are robust standard errors. * $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$, *** $p < 0.001$.

The coefficients for the control variables (reported in Table 2) and the linear terms of the moderating variables are not reported for the sake of clarity and brevity.

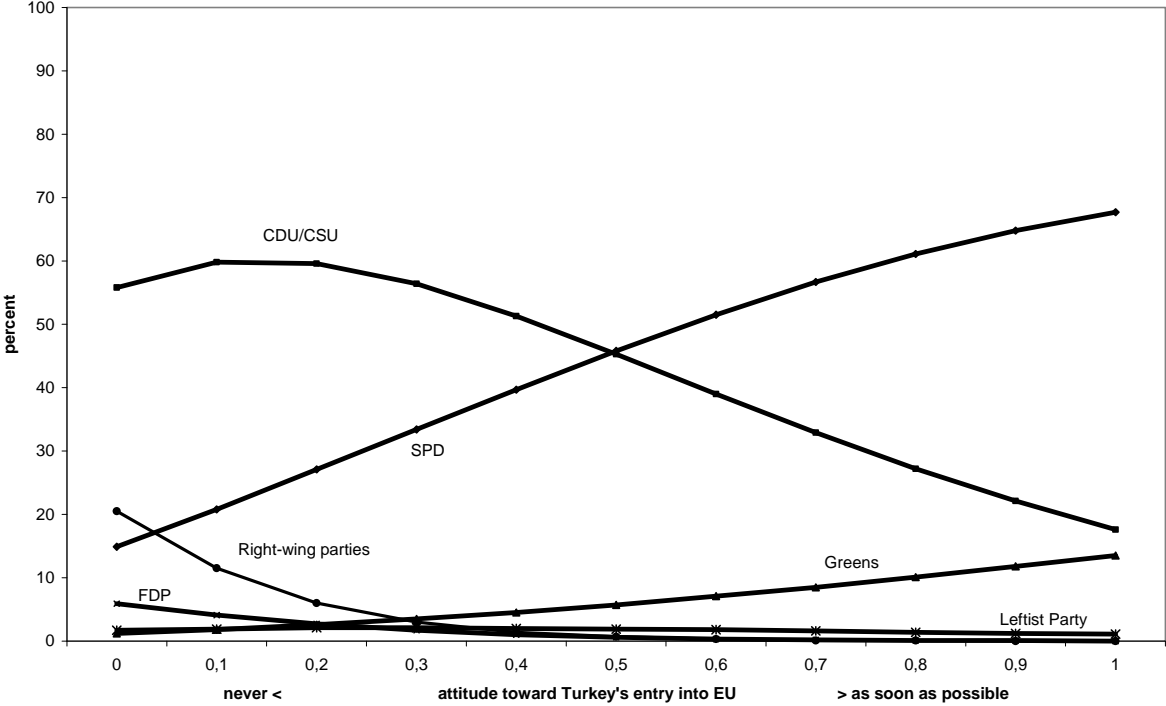
Figure 1: Predicted probabilities (in percent) of voting for SPD, CDU/CSU, Greens, FDP, Leftist Party or right-wing parties, depending attitudes toward Turkey's entry into EU among independents



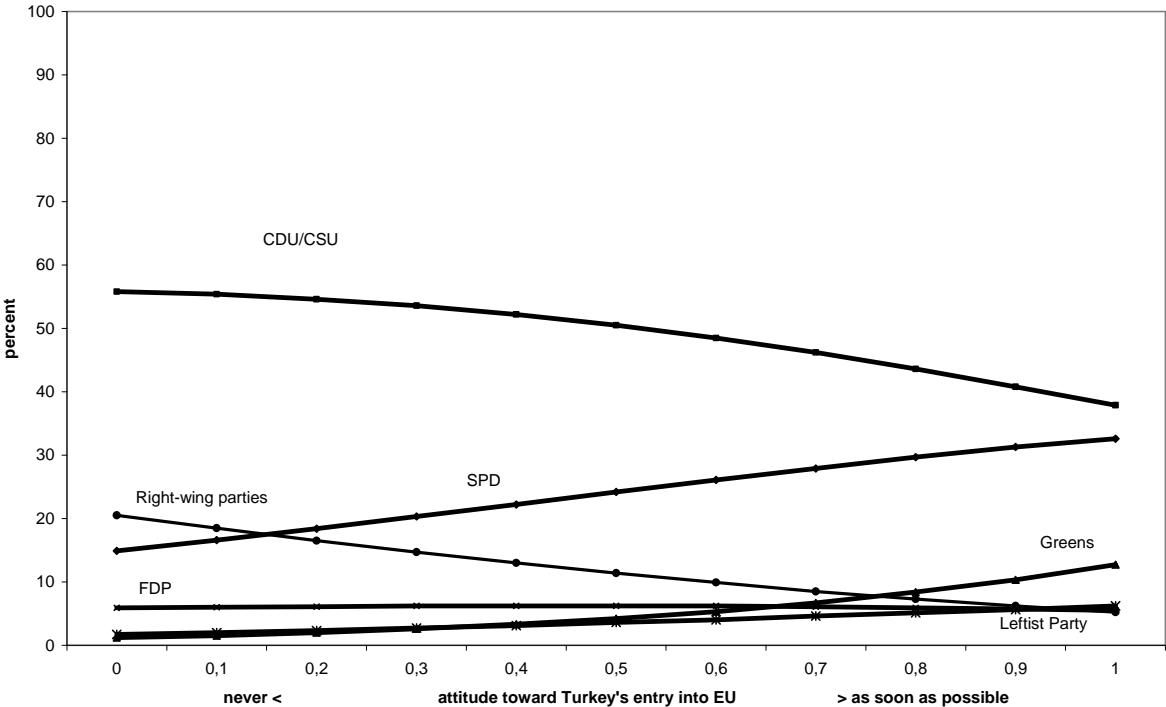
Note: All other variables included in the model (see table 2) are set to their mean, median and mode, respectively.

Figure 2: Predicted probabilities (in percent) of voting for SPD, CDU/CSU, Greens, FDP, Leftist Party or other parties, depending on the level of education and attitudes toward Turkey's entry into EU (independents)

a) Low educational attainment



b) Higher educational attainment



Note: All other variables included in the model (see Table 2) are set to their mean, median, or mode.