

Supplementary material to “Denominational Conflicts and Party Breakthrough: The Negative Case of the All-German People’s Party”

This supplementary material seeks to provide additional information on the collection and types of data used to test the observable implications of competing explanations for each step of the causal chain and the inferences I derived from this data.

Project overview

Empirically, this article tests the role of strategic choices relative to structural and institutional factors when explaining (the lack of) party breakthrough. It relies on the case of the failed party breakthrough of the All-German People’s Party in the 1953 German election. Details on the case selection are provided in the main manuscript.

The article tests two competing arguments. In the manuscript, I develop the first argument from the political opportunity structure (POS) literature, and this argument is as follows: *If established parties fail to address important grievances in a political system with a high level of institutional permissiveness, we would expect to see party breakthrough.* I develop the second argument from the literature on new parties and issue entrepreneurs, and this argument is: *If a new or minor party fails to address the available electorate before established parties do, party breakthrough is unlikely.* The causal chain to be tested is summarized in Figure 1 of the manuscript, and results are summarized via an event history map in Figure 2.

Overall, this article uses three types of data: (1) survey results from 1950 to 1953, (2) archival material, and (3) secondary sources in the form of books and articles from political scientists, political historians, and church historians.

Data overview

As specified in the main text, the POS argument assumes that new or previously minor parties would use the political opportunities available to them. If these parties fail to break through, this should happen as a result of unfavorable political opportunities. This would be the result of (changes in) public opinion and established parties' platform and/or (changes in) the institutional environment (e.g. through an electoral reform). In contrast, *the strategic choice argument* would be supported if public opinion and established parties' platform provided the GVP with a sufficiently large group of voters to break through given the institutional context but the party failed to appeal to this electorate due to its choices over, for example, its political coalitions, the timing of party formation, or organization building.

The data has been selected to comprehensively test these competing arguments.

As outlined in Section IV, I trace the development of public grievances, including the size of opposing groups and the importance voters attribute to relevant issues, by using the few surveys that are available from 1950 to 1953. I complemented this with archival sources and historical accounts. Aggregated survey results have been retrieved from the following publications:

- Merritt, Richard L., and Donald James Puchala (1968) *Western European Perspectives on International Affairs; Public Opinion Studies and Evaluations*. New York: Praeger.
- Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth, and Erich P. Neumann (1975) *Jahrbuch Der Öffentlichen Meinung, 1947-1955*. Third edition. Allensbach am Bodensee: Verlag für Demoskopie.

Moreover, a survey from July/August 1953 was available via GESIS.

- Reigrotzki, Erich (2015) Bundesstudie 1953. GESIS Datenarchiv, Köln. ZA0145
Datenfile Version 2.0.0, doi:10.4232/1.11992.

To trace the development of established parties' platforms and key actors' decision-making, I relied on archival material and secondary sources. Archival material included Heinemann's and other key actors' notes and correspondence, minutes of party and cabinet meetings, as well as campaign and press material.

I began by establishing a timeline of key events by drawing on secondary sources. Klein (2005) and Müller (1990), in particular, provide a very thick description of the GVP's development that relied heavily on collections held at the Archive for Social Democracy (*Archiv der sozialen Demokratie*, AdsD) and different church archives. They included, among others, Gustav Heinemann's personal collection at the AdsD, and Klein (2005) and Müller (1990) cite and/or paraphrase archival material at length. This material entered the analysis at this stage and allowed constructing, together with additional secondary sources, a detailed account around the formation and actions of the NG and the GVP.

Questions, however, remained, in particular regarding the period between Heinemann's announced resignation in August 1950 and the formation of the NG in November 1951. I was puzzled why the resignation of a leading Protestant from the Adenauer cabinet at a time of heightened inter-denominational tensions did not result in a party split or more pronounced exodus of Protestant CDU elites. I wanted to understand better to what extent the political fragmentation of Protestants and Catholics was a real possibility after Heinemann's resignation.

I thus complemented the data above with my own archival research in 2020. I collected data at the Archive for Christian Democratic Policy (*Archiv für Christlich-Demokratische Politik*, ACDP) in Sankt Augustin, the Federal Archive (*Bundesarchiv*, BA) in Koblenz, and the

Foundation Federal Chancellor Adenauer House (*Stiftung Bundeskanzler-Adenauer-Haus*, StBKAH) in Rhöndorf. I entered the field with a set of targeted questions based on prior research, including: Following Heinemann's departure, did CDU leaders discuss the risk of Protestants breaking away and joining a 'Protestant' party? What was the role of the EAK in the conflict with Heinemann and the GVP? Why was there no exodus of CDU Protestants to the new or other parties? I consulted online and hardcopy inventories of the archival collections of relevant organizations (e.g. CDU federal party, EAK) and individuals (e.g. Adenauer, Ehlers, Kaiser). I double-checked my selection of archival files through communication with the respective archivists. In this correspondence, I did not specify the arguments that I sought to test to avoid selection bias but instead focused on the specific questions I hoped to find answers on through the archival research. Finally, the BA and ACDP made additional archival material available online. In particular, the BA's documents on the time between Heinemann's announced resignation on August 31, 1950 and the end of 1950 were relevant. These documents can be accessed here: https://www.bundesarchiv.de/cocoon/barch/0001/k/k1950k/kap1_4/index.html (accessed on August 24, 2021). I collected individual documents from the identified list of archival files in a master spreadsheet, including archive, signature, and keywords for a better and systematic analysis at different stages of the project. When analyzing the material, I noted an overlap between the material Müller (1990) cites from the AdsD and the letters I found by Heinemann in the ACDP and BA. I selected documents for inclusion in the manuscript based on their relevance to test the POS against the strategic choice argument. The insights generated through the archival research were included in the timeline of key events.

In a final step, I complemented this timeline and embedded it within the broader historical context through an additional survey of secondary sources on topics, events, and individuals I felt I needed more contextual information on. Since the GVP has attracted very little research

in political science, I turned toward the work by historians. When using the work by historians, I followed the recent suggestions by Møller (2020), namely using classic as well as recently conducted studies, branching out into political and ecclesiastic history, and providing explicit page numbers when using accounts of specific events and developments as evidence. Overall, the collected evidence was deemed to be sufficiently detailed and comprehensive to test the observable implications of the two competing accounts. I thus decided against a separate visit to the AdsD.