

MONITOR

WAHL- UND SOZIALFORSCHUNG

Electorate Survey prior to the Federal Elections in 2021

Results of a Representative Survey on Political Views

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- › Only one in four respondents intending to vote can imagine voting for only one party. The exception is the AfD, where this figure is one in two respondents. All others have a secondary voting preference.
- › Problem-solving, policy positions, assertiveness, and candidates are important voting motives for all voters. Social orientation and climate protection are considered less important among FDP and AfD supporters.
- › The CDU is very frequently associated with the terms stability, conservative, consistency, orderly rule, security, and prosperity, while Die Grünen are connected with the term sustainable and less frequently with modern, cosmopolitan, curious, and tolerant.
- › Almost all supporters adopt a balanced centre position in relation to climate, immigration and tax-related policy. The greatest differences are found between AfD supporters on the one side and supporters of Die Grünen and Die Linke on the other.

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Introduction

The fundamental structures and views of eligible voters were investigated in an extensive study. The focus of this study did not lie on current changes in public opinion; the regular surveys by the Forschungsgruppe Wahlen, Infratest dimap, or the Allensbach Institute are pertinent to this end, for example. Instead, this study examined the different forms of party affiliation and how these are constituted.

Besides studies on lifestyles¹ and regional differences², we therefore investigated party affiliation, political views, the political landscape for selected topics, and the importance of political terms.

Party Proximity

In addition to classic party affiliation, the study covered voter proximity to, and rejection of, parties. In this context, the respondents were asked to state for each of the parties currently represented in the Bundestag whether they strongly like, somewhat like, somewhat reject, or strongly reject the party, or if they are indifferent towards the party. The CDU and Die Grünen are particularly popular, while the AfD is particularly unpopular. The greatest indifference is expressed for the FDP.

13 percent strongly like and 31 percent somewhat like the **CDU**. Altogether, 44 percent therefore indicate that they like the CDU. A good quarter express indifference towards the CDU. Rejection of the CDU is relatively low. Only 11 or 16 percent strongly or somewhat reject the CDU respectively.

Proximity to the sister party in Bavaria is rather lower. 9 percent strongly like and another 21 percent somewhat like the **CSU**. Conversely, indifference is higher than is the case for the CDU. A third of respondents are indifferent towards the CSU. The CSU is strongly rejected by 16 percent and somewhat rejected by 17 percent. However, since voting for the CSU is only possible in Bavaria, the CSU cannot be experienced on the ground in the rest of Germany. As a result, the values for the CSU are not directly comparable with the other parties.

Similarly to the CSU, almost one in ten say they strongly like the **SPD**. Another 32 percent like the party somewhat. On the whole, 41 percent like the SPD to some degree; this means they achieve a proximity value comparable to the CDU. 31 percent express indifference towards the SPD. Moreover, 11 percent strongly reject the social democrats and another 14 percent somewhat reject the party.

Almost one in five strongly like **Die Grünen**, while another 31 percent like them somewhat. Altogether, one in two therefore like Die Grünen either strongly or somewhat. Indifference towards Die Grünen is relatively low at 20 percent. Rejection is at a level similar to the CDU and SPD. 16 percent strongly reject and another 11 percent somewhat reject Die Grünen.

The **FDP** has considerably lower popularity figures. Only 3 percent strongly like the FDP; 17 percent like the party somewhat. 37 percent say they are indifferent towards the liberals. This is the highest value for all parties. Rejection is likewise higher than for the CDU/CSU, SPD, and Die Grünen. The FDP is strongly rejected by 20 percent and somewhat rejected by another 20 percent, corresponding to a 40-percent rejection value.

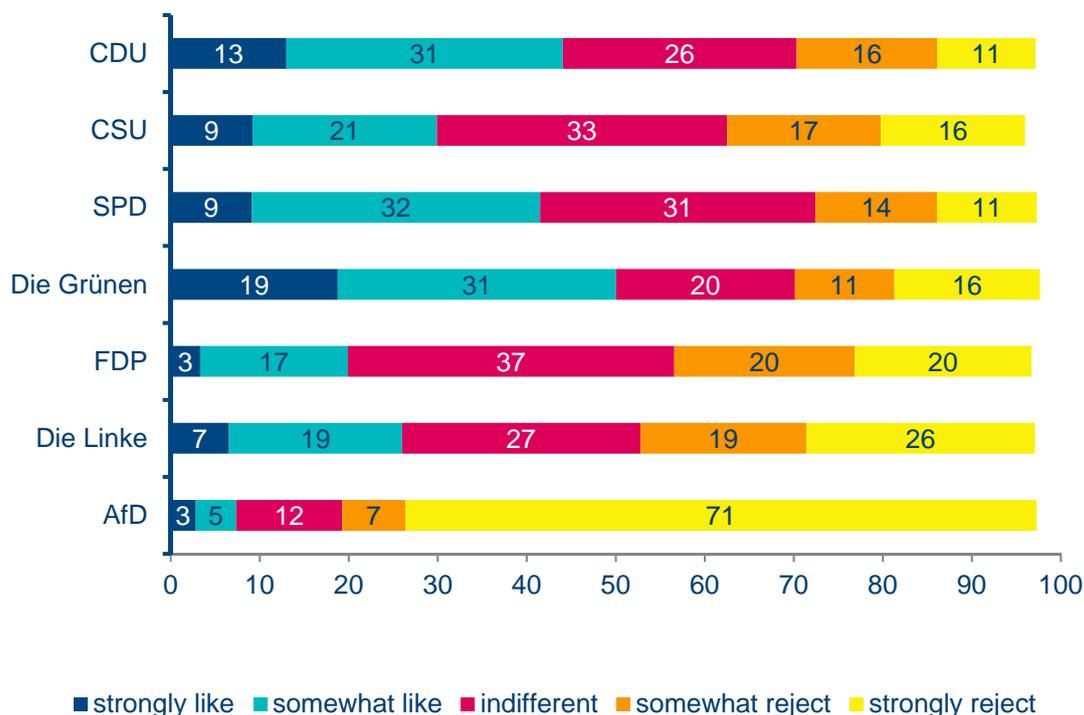
Die Linke is rather more popular than the FDP. 7 percent strongly like and 19 percent somewhat like Die Linke. Indifference towards Die Linke is expressed by a good quarter of respondents. Rejection is somewhat higher than for the FDP. 19 percent somewhat reject Die Linke and another 26 percent strongly reject the party. In total, 45 percent of respondents therefore reject Die Linke.

The lowest popularity is observed for the **AfD**. Only 3 percent strongly like the AfD and 5 percent like the party somewhat. Thus, the total popularity of the party lies in the single-digit range at 8 percent. This is the poorest value recorded for all parties examined. At the same time, the lowest number of people are also indifferent towards the AfD at 12 percent. Instead, the party is (strongly) rejected by the vast majority. 7 percent reject the AfD somewhat and 71 percent strongly reject the party. This is by far the highest level of rejection for all parties examined.

Figure 1:

Party Proximity and Rejection

Some people like one party strongly or somewhat, while they reject other parties strongly or somewhat. They are also indifferent to some parties. What is the case for you? What do you think about ...?



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "don't know/no answer."

When considering proximity to the parties according to voting groups (based on the question of hypothetical federal elections next Sunday – referred to here as the "Sunday question"), three points immediately stand out:

1. The shares of people who like a party are highest among the respective voting group for that party.
2. In some cases, there are also considerable shares of people for the other groups of voters who like a party, even if they would not currently vote for them. A high potential to switch therefore exists between groups of voters.
3. The AfD is the only party that is popular only among its own group of voters.

Less surprisingly, the **CDU** has the highest popularity among CDU/CSU voters, followed by the CSU, and then, with a clear gap, Die Grünen. Least popular among CDU/CSU voters are Die Linke and the AfD. 82 percent of the CDU/CSU voters say they like the CDU. In the case of the **CSU**, this figure is somewhat lower among the CDU/CSU voters compared to the sister party, at 62 percent. Moreover, 37 percent of the CDU/CSU voters state that they like the SPD and another 41 percent like Die Grünen. In addition, a good quarter of the CDU/CSU voters like the FDP. Only one in ten CDU/CSU voters like Die Linke, however, and only 4 percent of the CDU/CSU voters express sympathy for the AfD.

A similar picture can be seen for the **SPD** voters. The majority express proximity to the SPD, at 82 percent. At the same time, 39 percent of the SPD voters are sympathetic to the CDU and 22 percent to the CSU. Die Grünen are popular among more than half of the SPD voters, at 57 percent. At 17 percent, the FDP fares significantly worse. 29 percent of the SPD voters like Die Linke. By contrast, only 2 percent of the SPD voters have sympathy for the AfD.

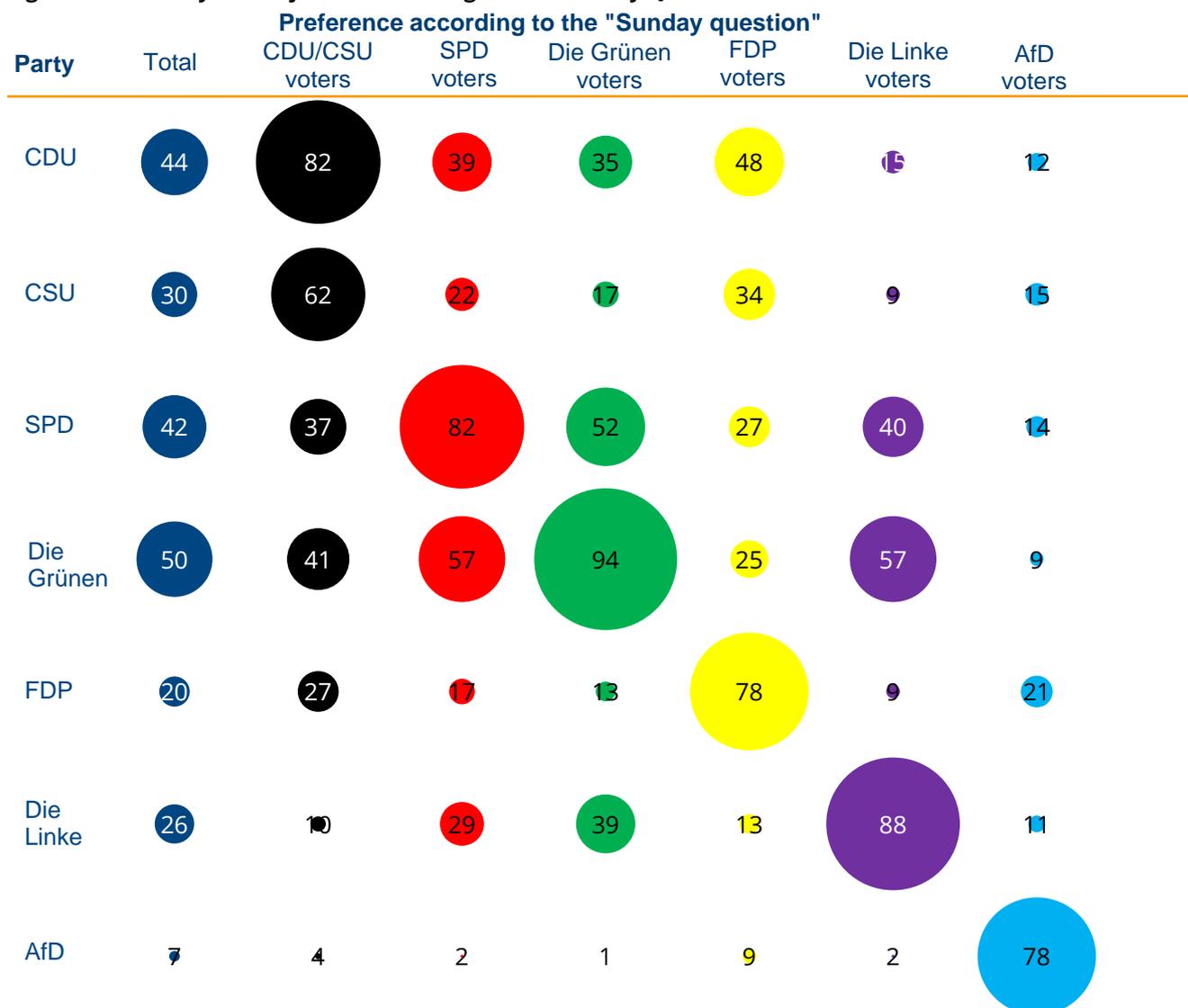
Voters of **Die Grünen** demonstrate the strongest conviction for their party among all the groups examined. 94 percent of Die Grünen voters like Die Grünen. 35 percent express sympathy for the CDU and 17 percent like the CSU. Conversely, the SPD is popular among a good half of Die Grünen voters. Sympathy for the FDP is expressed by only 13 percent of Die Grünen voters, while Die Linke enjoys a considerable degree of sympathy at 39 percent. However, only 1 percent of Die Grünen voters like the AfD.

FDP voters likewise have greatest sympathy for their own party. Nevertheless, at 78 percent, there are fewer FDP voters who like their own party than for most other groups of voters. The CDU holds second place among the FDP voters. Almost one in two FDP voters like the CDU, while 34 percent like the CSU. Another 27 percent express sympathy for the SPD and 25 percent for Die Grünen. Only 13 percent of the FDP voters like Die Linke. At 9 percent, the AfD again ranks in last place for the FDP voters, albeit at a slightly higher level than in the other groups of voters.

88 percent of **Die Linke** voters indicate sympathy for Die Linke. Only 15 percent like the CDU and only 9 percent the CSU. By contrast, 40 percent of Die Linke voters like the SPD. Considerable sympathy is expressed for Die Grünen at 57 percent. The FDP is less popular; only 9 percent of Die Linke voters like the FDP. The AfD has the lowest popularity among Die Linke voters at 2 percent.

The low popularity values for all other parties are striking among the **AfD** voters. 78 percent of the AfD voters like the AfD. All other parties enjoy only little sympathy. 12 percent of the AfD voters like the CDU and 15 percent the CSU. Towards the SPD, 14 percent express sympathy, while 9 percent like Die Grünen. However, the FDP is popular among 21 percent of the AfD voters; this is the best figure after the AfD. Conversely, only 11 percent of the AfD voters like Die Linke.

Figure 2: Proximity and Rejection according to the "Sunday Question"



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.

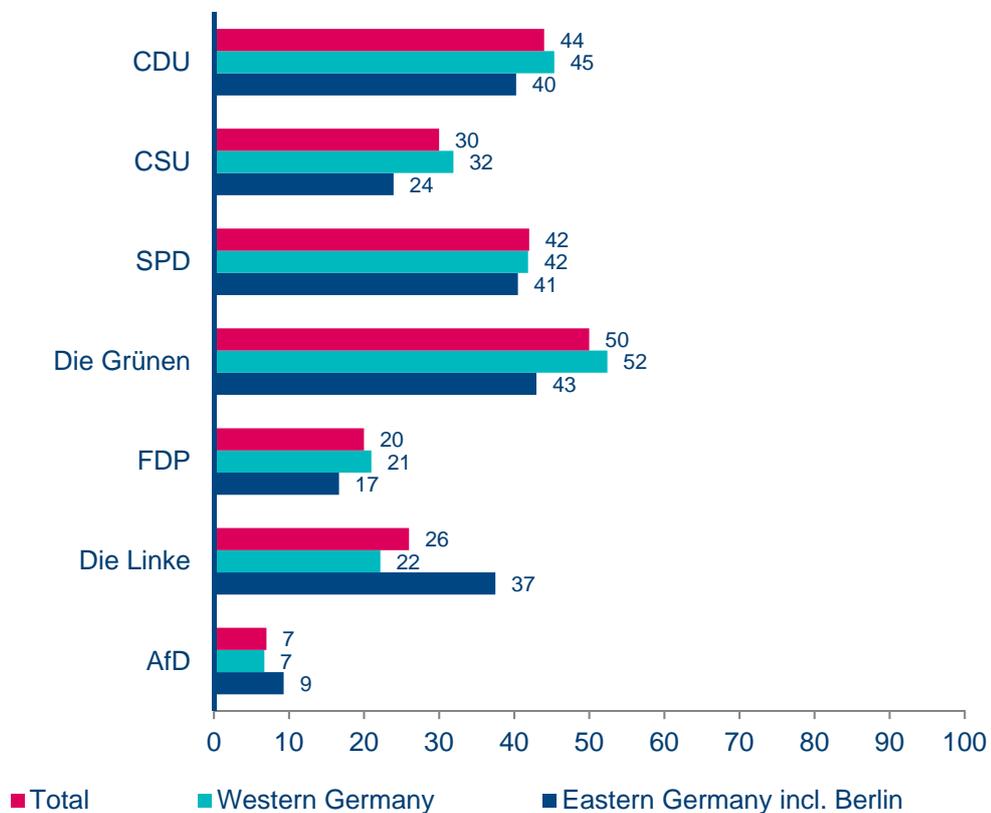
Question: "Some people like one party strongly or somewhat, while they reject other parties strongly or somewhat. They are also indifferent to some parties. What is the case for you? What do you think about the CDU/CSU/SPD/Die Grünen/FDP/Die Linke/AfD?" Answer categories: "strongly like", "somewhat like", "indifferent", "somewhat reject", "strongly reject."

The popularity of the parties sometimes varies between eastern and western Germany. The CDU and CSU are both somewhat more popular in the western German federal states than in the eastern German states. Die Grünen also enjoy more sympathy in western Germany than in eastern Germany. The situation is completely reversed for Die Linke, which is more popular in the eastern German federal states than in western Germany. The SPD, FDP, and AfD are similarly popular or unpopular in eastern and western Germany.

Figure 3:

Party Proximity and Rejection

Some people like one party strongly or somewhat, while they reject other parties strongly or somewhat. They are also indifferent to some parties. What is the case for you? What do you think about ...? (Answers "strongly like" and "somewhat like")



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.

Answer categories: "strongly like", "somewhat like", "indifferent", "somewhat reject", "strongly reject."

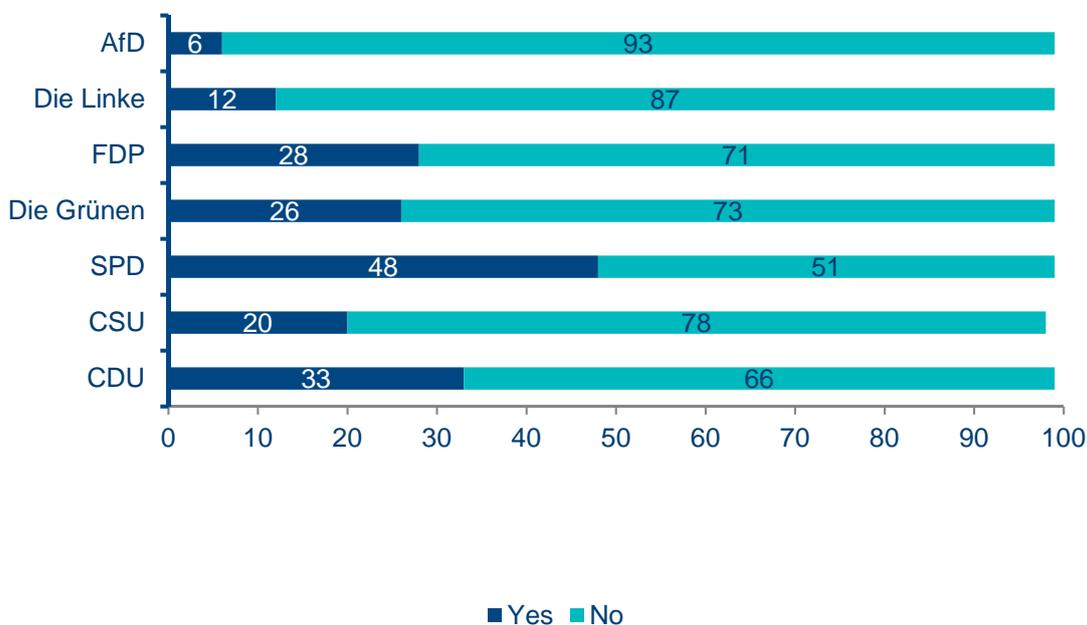
All respondents who said, for one party, that they reject the party or are indifferent towards it were then asked whether they once had a more positive view of that party. This share is highest among those who reject the SPD or are indifferent towards this party, and is lowest for the AfD.

A third of those who did not say that they like the CDU once had a more positive view of the CDU. The same goes for a fifth of those who do not like the CSU. For the SPD, almost half of those who now reject or are indifferent towards the party say they once had a more positive view of the social democrats. The SPD has evidently lost former supporters. In the case of Die Grünen, a good quarter say the same, and 28 percent for the FDP. The shares are lowest for Die Linke at 12 percent and the AfD at 6 percent. In other words, the highly pronounced rejection of the AfD is not due to the loss of former supporters and therefore reflects the more persistent unpopularity of the party.

Figure 4: Parties of Previous Proximity (only respondents who reject the party or are indifferent towards it)

Party Proximity and Rejection

How was it in the past? Did you once have a more positive view of [...]?



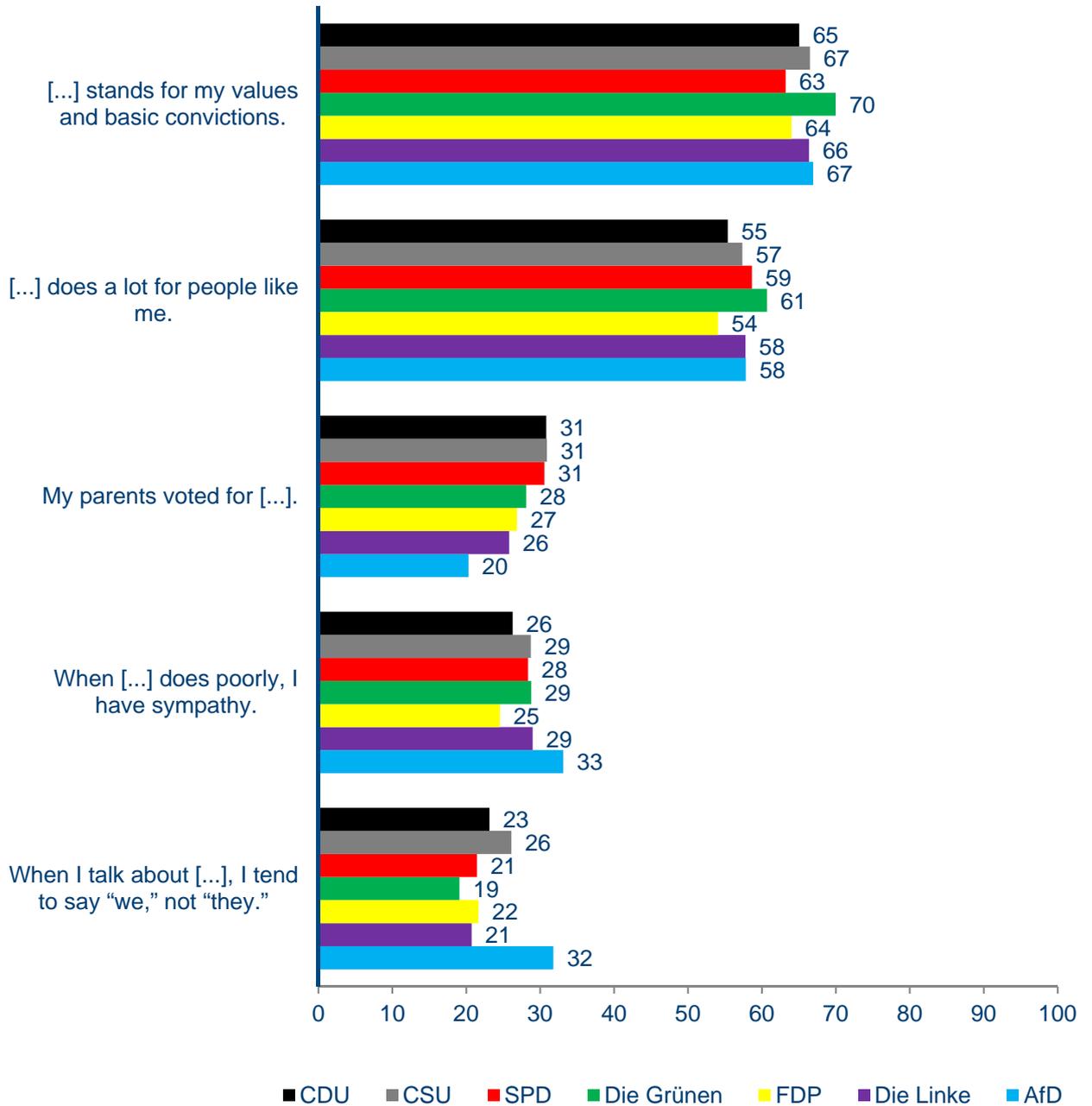
Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "don't know/no answer."

All respondents who stated that they like a party were then asked for possible reasons for their party sympathy. For all parties, the statement that the respective party stands for their own values and basic convictions is predominant. This is expressed most frequently by sympathisers of Die Grünen (70 percent) and least frequently by SPD supporters (63 percent). Second place goes to the statement: "The [party] does a lot for people like me." Between 61 percent (Die Grünen) and 54 percent (FDP) agree with this. Considerably fewer respondents state that their parents had voted for the respective party. In each case, 31 percent of the supporters of the CDU, CSU, and SPD say that their parents had voted for the respective party. For the AfD, 20 percent say this. Since the AfD has not yet existed for very long, the respondents here presumably do not refer to the time of their childhood and youth, but to the most recent voting behaviour of their parents. 25 percent of FDP supporters and 33 percent of AfD supporters say they have sympathy for when the respective party does poorly. Moreover, at 32 percent, those who like the AfD more frequently agree with the statement "When I talk about the [party], I tend to say 'we,' not 'they'" than others. Supporters of Die Grünen least frequently agree with this statement, at 19 percent.

Figure 5: Reasons for Party Proximity (only respondents who like the party)

Party Proximity: Motives

I will now read to you a number of statements about [...]. Please tell me whether or not you agree for each of them. (Answer “agree”)



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.
 Answer categories: “agree”, “disagree.”

Reasons for Voting Behaviour

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung wanted to know what is important to people when they decide to vote for a party. Problem-solving is the most frequently mentioned reason. For 94 percent of respondents, it is important or very important that the party they vote for solves political problems. Here only minimal differences can be observed across the groups of voters for the different parties.

The second most frequently mentioned reason is the policy positions of the parties. 92 percent consider it important or very important that they are convinced by the policy positions of a party. Here, too, only very minor differences exist between the groups of voters.

At 91 percent, it is similarly important to people that a party they vote for is socially oriented. In this case, more noticeable differences can be seen between the groups of voters. Voters of Die Linke (98 percent), Die Grünen (97 percent), and the SPD (96 percent) emphasise the importance of a social orientation. The importance of a social orientation is somewhat lower, but still high for the voters of CDU/CSU, at 92 percent. The social component is considerably less important for the voters of the AfD (82 percent) and the FDP (77 percent). But also in these two groups of voters, a clear majority considers it important that a party is socially oriented.

89 percent of voters express a desire for assertiveness on the part of the party they vote for. Here the differences between the groups of voters are small. Assertiveness is least important to the voters of Die Linke (87 percent), and most important to CDU and AfD voters (93 percent in each case).

For 88 percent of voters, compelling candidates are very important or important. There are likewise rather small differences between the groups of voters in this aspect. Voters of the FDP consider the candidates least important (85 percent), while CDU/CSU voters consider them most important (93 percent).

In terms of importance, the candidates are followed directly by climate protection. 87 percent expect a commitment to climate protection from a party they vote for. As anticipated, clear differences often exist between the groups of voters. Climate protection is most important to voters of Die Grünen. 99 percent expect this from a party they vote for. However, 95 percent of Die Linke voters, 90 percent of the SPD voters, and 88 percent of the CDU/CSU voters also wish a party to be committed to climate protection. These shares are lower among the voter groups for the FDP and AfD. Nonetheless, climate protection is an issue important to the majority in these cases, too. 72 percent of the FDP voters and 62 percent of the AfD voters expect a party to commit to climate protection.

The unity of a party is considered important or very important by three quarters of the voters. Here, too, there are differences between the groups of voters. Voters of the CDU/CSU (84 percent) and the SPD (83 percent) attach particular importance to unity. Likewise, 79 percent of the AfD voters would like a party to appear united. At 76 percent, party unity is considered somewhat less important to the FDP voters. Party unity is least important to voters of Die Linke (71 percent) and Die Grünen (69 percent), but is still desired by a clear majority.

Feeling a connection to a party only plays a role for around two thirds. It is particularly important for voters of the SPD (74 percent) and CDU/CSU (72 percent) to feel connected to a party. Connection is somewhat less important to the voters of Die Grünen (69 percent), the AfD (68 percent), and Die Linke (65 percent). Connection to a party is least important for FDP voters (58 percent).

61 percent of voters would like a party they vote for to pursue its concerns without compromise. This share is particularly high among the voters of the AfD, at 81 percent. For the voters of the CDU/CSU, SPD, FDP, and Die Linke, the value fluctuates only slightly between 66 and 63 percent. At 49 percent, the voters of Die Grünen indicate the lowest value by far for the unwillingness to compromise. This does not suggest a strong distribution of fundamentalist positions among Die Grünen voters.

60 percent of the voters express the desire that a party should fundamentally change Germany. Here, too, the agreement among the AfD voters is the highest (73 percent), closely followed by the voters of Die Linke (71 percent). The voters of the SPD (62 percent), Die Grünen (60 percent), and CDU/CSU (58 percent) consider fundamental change less important. The least agreement is found among the voters of the FDP (55 percent).

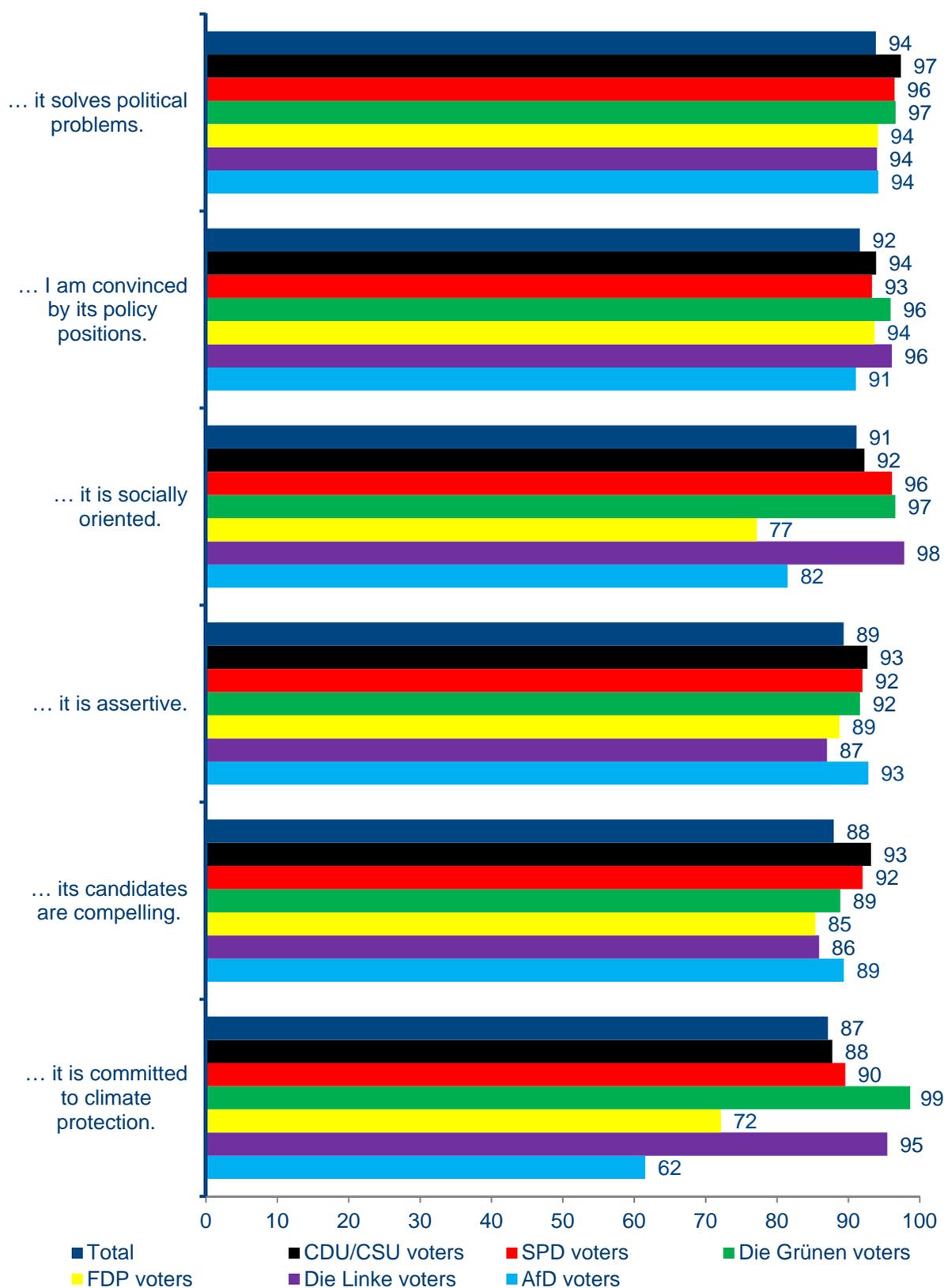
The conservative orientation of a party lies in second to last place. Only 36 percent consider it important or very important that a party they vote for is conservative. The voters of the AfD assign the greatest importance to this attribute (62 percent), followed by the CDU/CSU voters (54 percent). Among the FDP voters, 43 percent state it is important that a party is conservative. 30 percent of the SPD voters say the same. The lowest importance of a conservative profile is observed among the voters of Die Linke (21 percent) and Die Grünen (15 percent).

A Christian orientation of the party takes last place. Only 30 percent would like a party to have a Christian orientation. Among the voters of the CDU/CSU, the value is highest at 50 percent. At the same time, the Christian orientation also takes last place for this group of voters. 32 percent of the AfD voters state the importance of a Christian orientation, followed by the voters of the FDP (28 percent), and SPD (27 percent). A Christian orientation is least important to the voters of Die Grünen (17 percent) and Die Linke (11 percent).

Figure 6: Expectations on the Chosen Party according to the "Sunday Question"

Expectations on Parties

When I vote for a party, for me it is important that ... (Answers "very important" and "important")



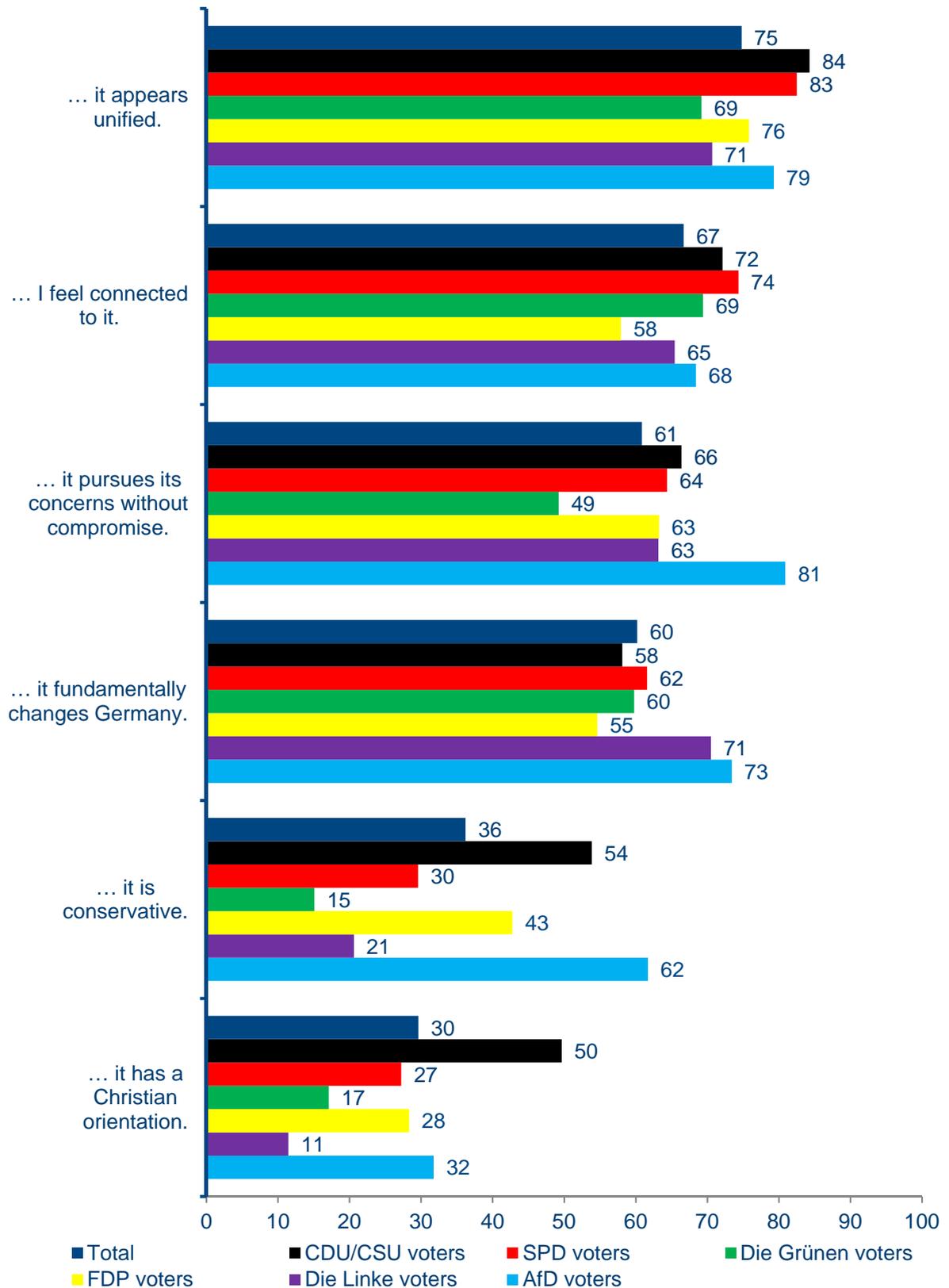
Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.

Answer categories: "very important", "important", "less important", "unimportant."

Figure 7: Expectations on the Chosen Party according to the "Sunday Question"

Expectations on Parties

When I vote for a party, for me it is important that ... (Answers "very important" and "important")



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.

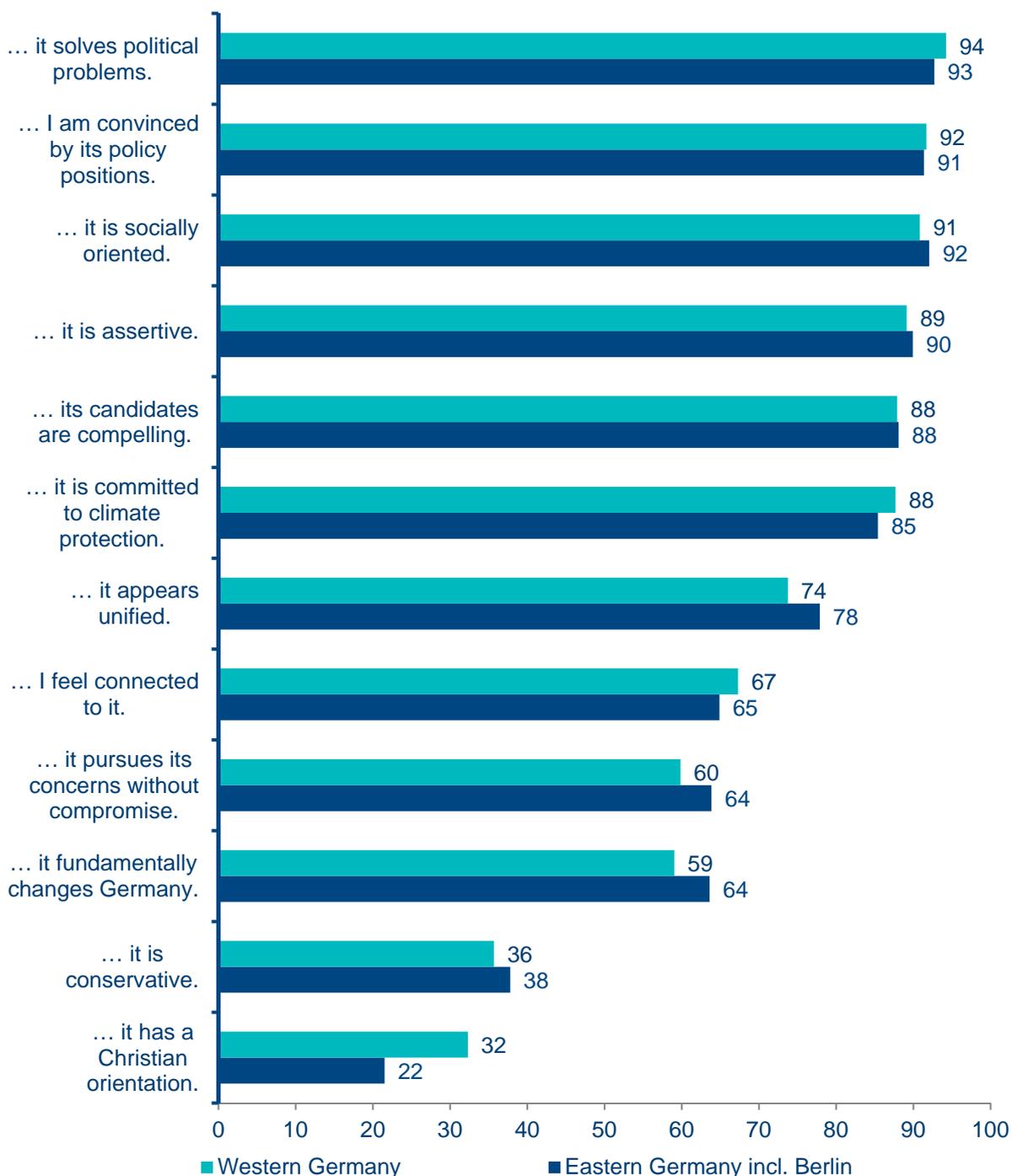
Answer categories: "very important", "important", "less important", "unimportant."

Only very slight differences in the expectations on parties exist between eastern and western Germany. In eastern Germany, somewhat more people consider it important that a party pursues its concerns without compromise than in the western German federal states (64:59 percent). Conversely, it is more important to western Germans than eastern Germans that a party has a Christian orientation (32:22 percent).

Figure 8: Expectations on the Chosen Party in Eastern and Western Germany

Expectations on Parties

When I vote for a party, for me it is important that ... (Answers "very important" and "important")



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.

Answer categories: "very important", "important", "less important", "unimportant."

One or two differences clearly exist between the federal states. Overall, however, many similarities can be seen.

Among the eastern German federal states, it is striking that voters in Saxony place particular importance on a party solving political problems (96 percent). However, over 90 percent of the voters in all the other eastern German states consider problem-solving by a party to be important or very important. In the western German states, problem-solving plays a major role above all for people in Rhineland-Palatinate and Lower Saxony (97 percent in each case). Nonetheless, the share of people who say it is important that a party solves political problems also lies between 93 and 95 percent in the other western German states.

Likewise, the policy positions are more important to the people in Saxony than those in the other eastern German federal states. 95 percent of the respondents in Saxony say it is important or very important that they are convinced by the policy positions of a party. In the other eastern German federal states, this figure is 90 to 91 percent. In the western German federal states, the shares of people for whom the policy positions are important typically lie between 91 and 94 percent. Only Schleswig-Holstein (81 percent) and Bremen (71 percent) have lower figures in this respect.

A social orientation of a party is primarily important to people in Thuringia (96 percent) and Saxony (94 percent). However, 90 or 91 percent of the voters in the other eastern German states also say they believe it is important that a party is socially oriented. In most western German states, the shares likewise range from 91 to 94 percent, which means social orientation also plays a major role here. The social orientation is somewhat less important to the respondents in Hamburg (88 percent), Schleswig-Holstein (83 percent), and Bremen (81 percent).

Once again, an above-average share of the respondents in Thuringia (94 percent) and Saxony (92 percent) expect a party to be assertive. Hardly any difference can be seen between the states in western Germany. Only in Schleswig-Holstein is somewhat less importance attached to assertiveness (84 percent) than in other federal states.

People in all eastern German states want the candidates of a party to be compelling to a similar extent. In western German states, those in Hamburg (94 percent) put considerable emphasis on compelling candidates, while the respondents in Bremen (79 percent) and Schleswig-Holstein (77 percent) say less frequently than average that the candidates are important to them.

In the eastern German federal states, a commitment to climate protection receives somewhat more support in Berlin (90 percent). Bremen (97 percent) and Hamburg (93 percent) stand out in the western German states. However, a very large majority of 83 to 89 percent also consider a party's commitment to climate protection important in all the other federal states.

Party unity is considered important more frequently than average in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (85 percent), Thuringia (83 percent), Brandenburg (83 percent), Bremen (81 percent), and Saxony (80 percent). The unity of a party is less important than average for people in Berlin (66 percent), Hamburg (66 percent), Hesse (69 percent), and Schleswig-Holstein (70 percent).

Only minor differences exist in eastern Germany for connection with a party. In Saxony-Anhalt (62 percent), somewhat fewer people say it is important to feel connected to a party than on average. In western Germany, the respondents in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein (both 63 percent) attach less importance to connection with a party than people in North Rhine-Westphalia (71 percent) and Hesse (69 percent).

In eastern Germany, it is more important to those in Thuringia (71 percent) and Saxony (67) than average that a party pursues its concerns without compromise. In western Germany, the respondents in Bremen (75 percent) and Saarland (67 percent) attach more importance than average to a party's unwillingness to compromise. By contrast, unwillingness to compromise is less important than average in Hesse (54 percent).

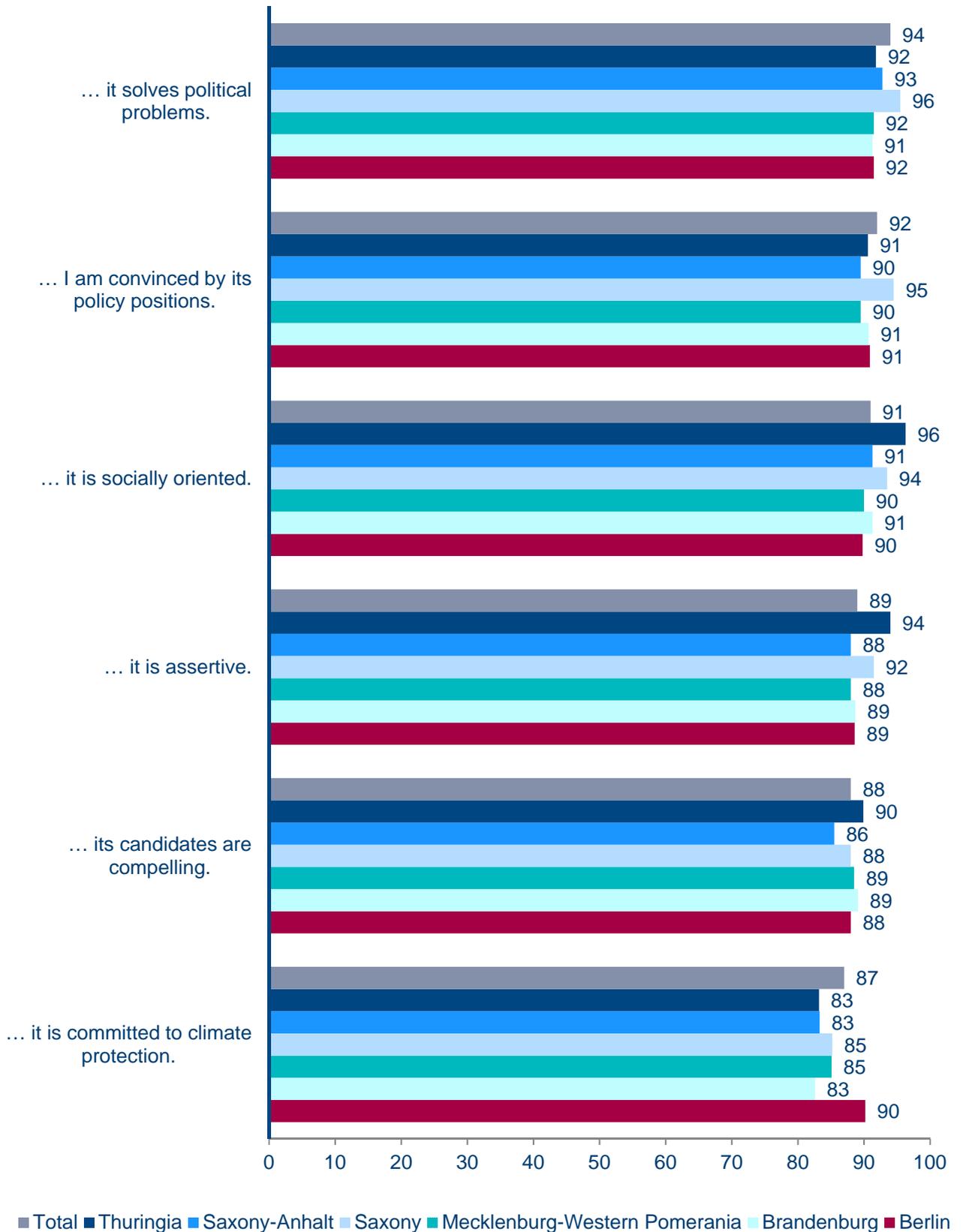
Only slight differences exist between the eastern German federal states in terms of the expectation that a party should fundamentally change Germany. Between 61 percent (Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania) and 65 percent (Saxony) of the voters would like a party to fundamentally change Germany. In western Germany, the differences between the states are considerably larger. In Saarland (70 percent), the highest proportion of people express the wish that a party should fundamentally change Germany. This wish is expressed least frequently in Bremen (47 percent) and Hamburg (55 percent).

An above-average share of people in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (44 percent) would like a party to be conservative. In western German states, deviations from the national average tend to run in the other direction. The desire for a conservative party is below average in Bremen (19 percent) and Hamburg (29 percent). The highest importance of a conservative profile in western Germany is found in Bavaria, at 40 percent.

A Christian party orientation is expected less frequently than the average in all eastern German states (30 percent). People in Brandenburg (18 percent) and Berlin (19 percent) indicate the lowest importance for a party to have a Christian orientation. In the other eastern German federal states, the share is between 22 and 24 percent. The differences are somewhat greater in the western German states. In Rhineland-Palatinate (37 percent) and Bavaria (35 percent), a Christian orientation is important to an above-average proportion of people. A Christian orientation has less importance in Hamburg (24 percent).

Figure 9: Expectations on the Chosen Party in the Eastern German Federal States
Voting Reasons in the Federal States

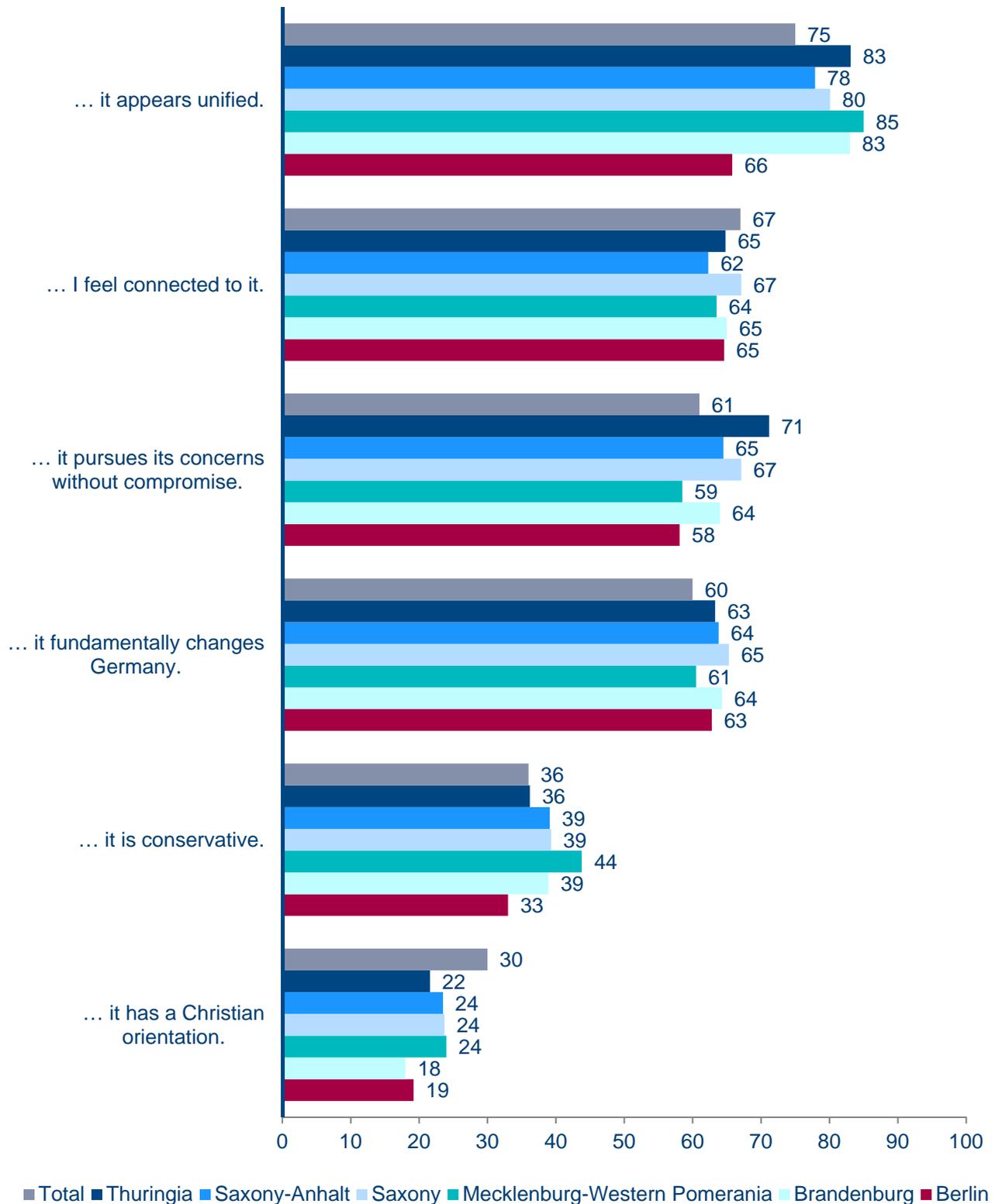
When deciding to vote for a party, for me it is important that ...



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.
 Answer categories: "very important", "important", "less important", "unimportant."

Figure 10: Expectations on the Chosen Party in the Eastern German Federal States
Voting Reasons in the Federal States

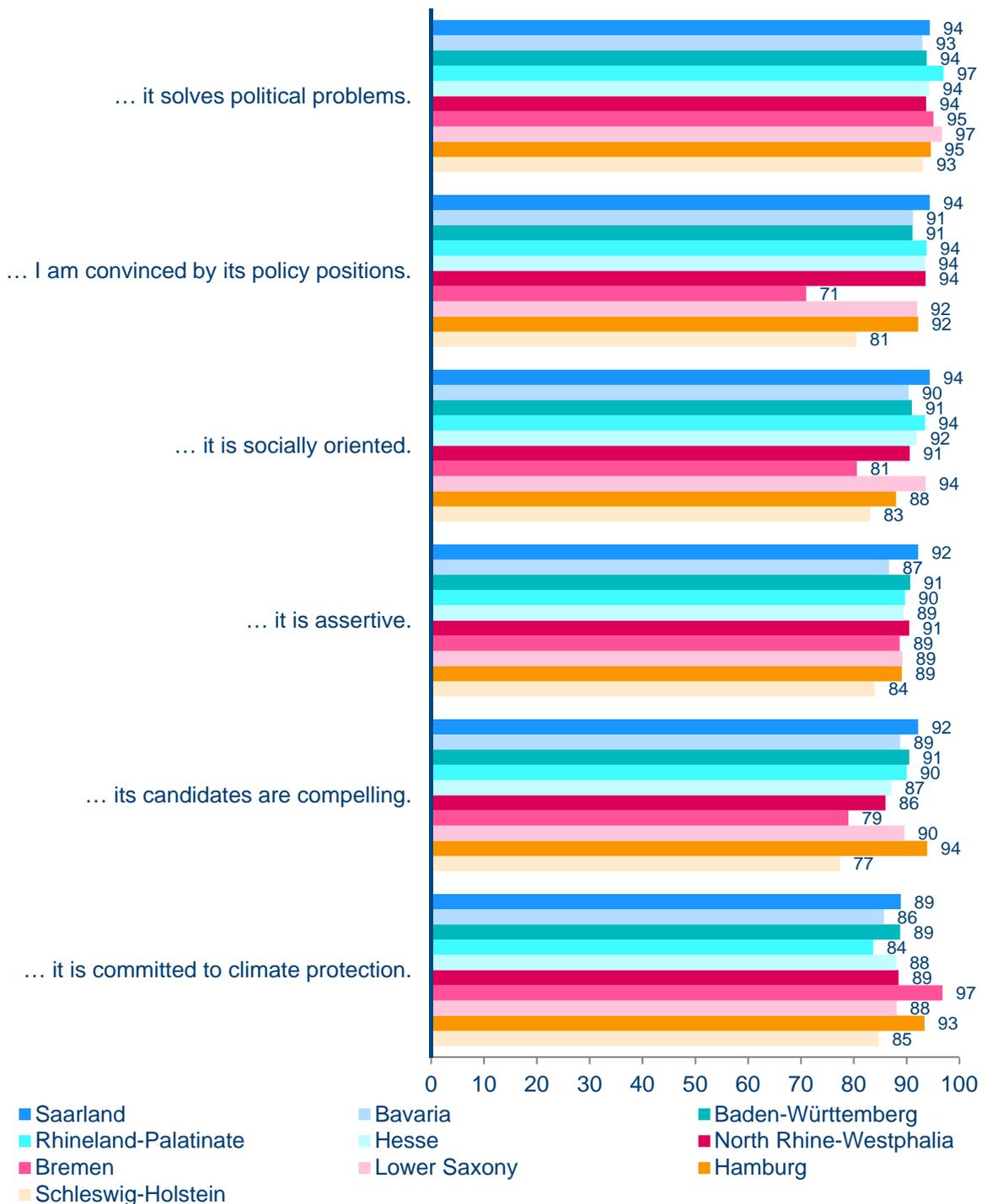
When deciding to vote for a party, for me it is important that ...



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.
 Answer categories: "very important", "important", "less important", "unimportant."

Figure 11: Expectations on the Chosen Party in the Western German Federal States
Voting Reasons in the Federal States

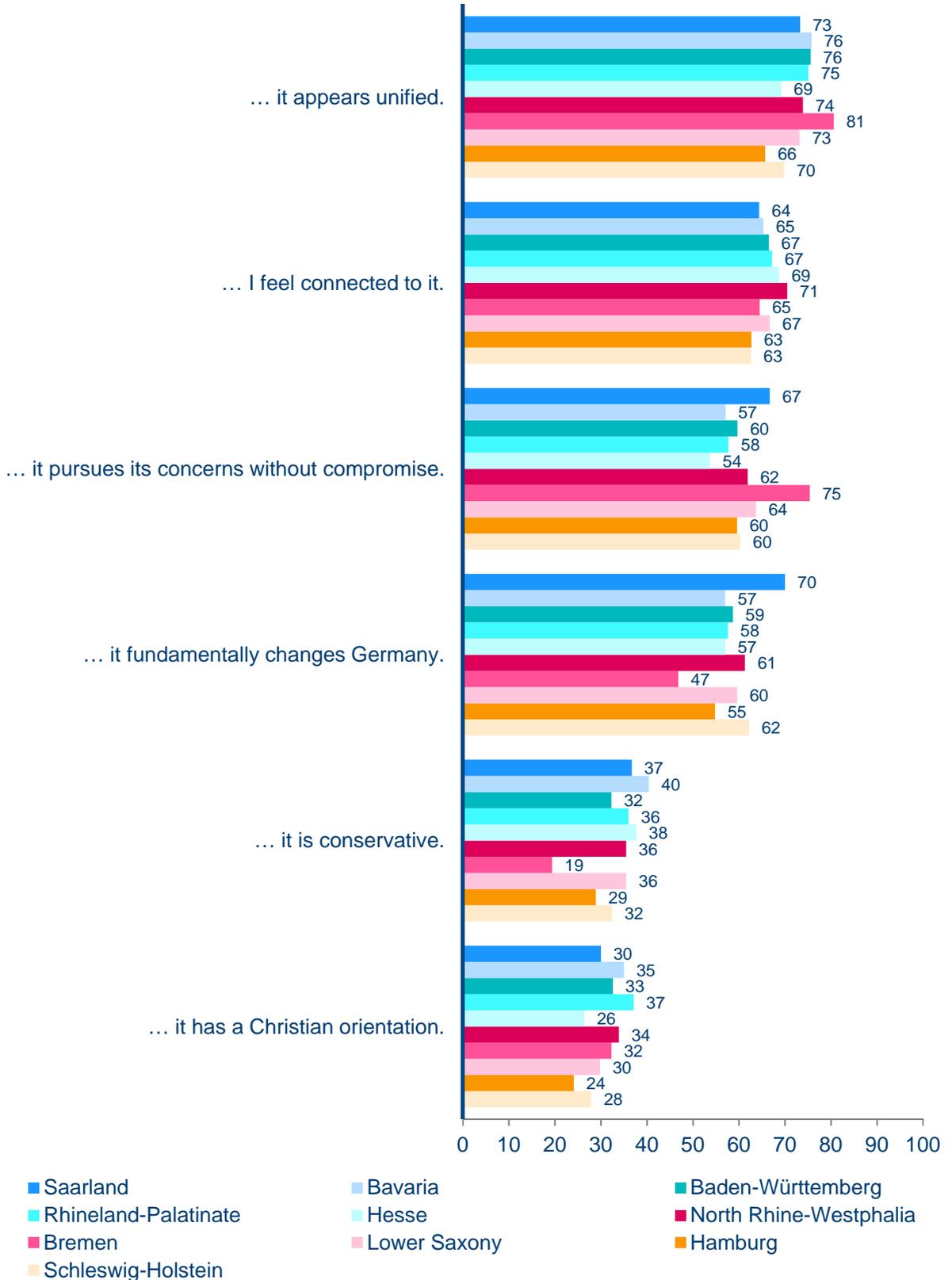
When deciding to vote for a party, for me it is important that ...



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.
 Answer categories: "very important", "important", "less important", "unimportant."

Figure 12: Expectations on the Chosen Party in the Western German Federal States
Voting Reasons in the Federal States

When deciding to vote for a party, for me it is important that ...



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.
 Answer categories: "very important", "important", "less important", "unimportant."

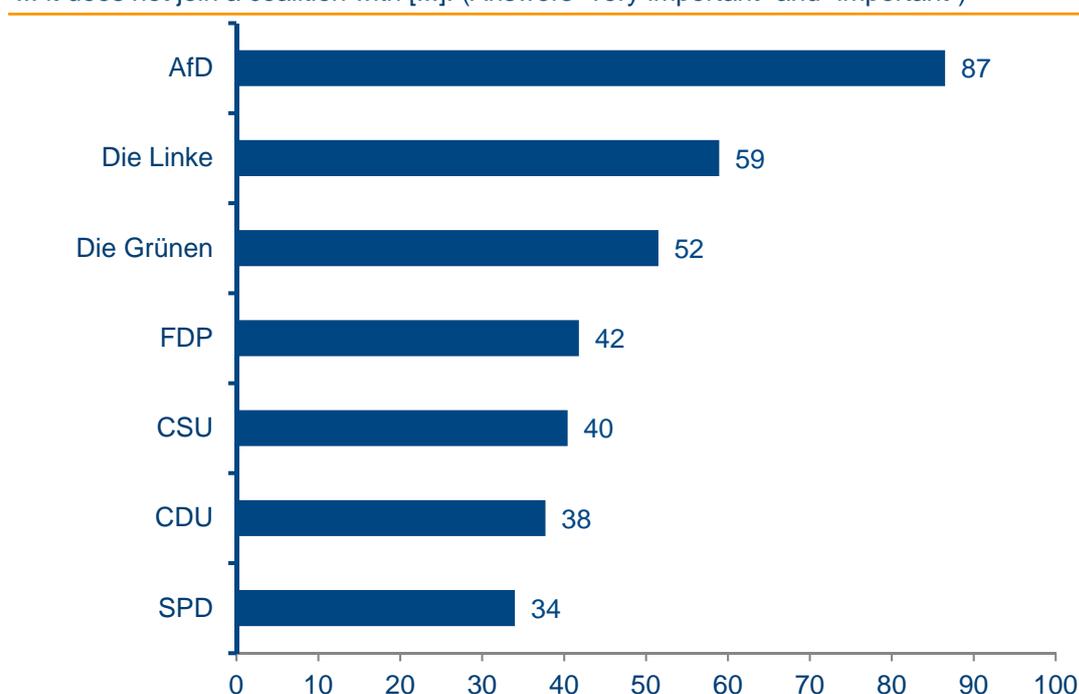
Support for various coalition options is often surveyed prior to state and federal elections. However, we wanted to know whether there are parties with whom voters would rule out coalitions. For this reason, everyone who stated that they somewhat or strongly reject a party were then asked if it is important to them that a party they vote for does not join a coalition with that party. This is particularly important to the respondents who reject the AfD. 87 percent of those who reject the AfD expect a party they vote for not to join a coalition with the AfD. This is the highest value by far. Likewise, 59 percent of those who reject Die Linke would not like their preferred party to enter into a coalition with Die Linke. A similar picture can be seen for those who oppose Die Grünen (52 percent). 40 percent of the people who reject the CSU would not like a coalition with the CSU. This figure is similarly high for those who reject the CDU. Of this group, 38 percent would not like a party they vote for to join a coalition with the CDU. This proportion is lowest for those people who oppose the SPD. 34 percent of the respondents who reject the SPD would not like their chosen party to enter into a coalition with the SPD.

Figure 13: Expectations on the Chosen Party to Rule out a Coalition (Respondents who Reject the Respective Party)

Expectations on Parties

When I vote for a party, for me it is important that ...

... it does not join a coalition with [...]. (Answers "very important" and "important")



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.

Answer categories: "very important", "important", "less important", "unimportant."

Government Action and Public Opinion

By law, members of parliament are only obliged to follow their conscience. However, demands are often expressed particularly by populist parties that members of parliament should reflect the opinion of citizens, although this implicitly assumes that a “single” public opinion exists. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung therefore wanted to know how people stand on this matter. Should the government stick to planned policies, even if the majority of citizens are opposed? Overall, only around a quarter of the respondents completely or somewhat agree with this proposition. A third are undecided and answer with “partly agree/partly disagree.” 39 percent completely or somewhat disagree. In other words, a relative majority believe that the government should not pursue planned policies if the majority of citizens are opposed.

Here clear differences can be seen in the different voter groups. Support for policy planning independent of the majority opinion is highest for the CDU/CSU voters. 35 percent of the CDU/CSU voters agree completely or somewhat. Support is somewhat lower among the SPD voters. 30 percent of the SPD voters agree that the government should stick to unpopular policies. Even less agreement is observed among the voters of the FDP (26 percent) and Die Grünen (23 percent). Agreement with this proposition is lowest among the voters of Die Linke (20 percent) and the AfD (21 percent). However, differences also exist between these two groups. While 35 percent of Die Linke voters are undecided and 34 percent do not agree, only 17 percent of the AfD voters are undecided. Instead, 63 percent disagree with the idea that the government should continue to pursue unpopular policies. This is by far the highest level of rejection for all groups of voters.

Figure 14: Government Action and Public Opinion

Government Action and Public Opinion

To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The government should stick to planned policies, even if the majority of citizens are opposed?



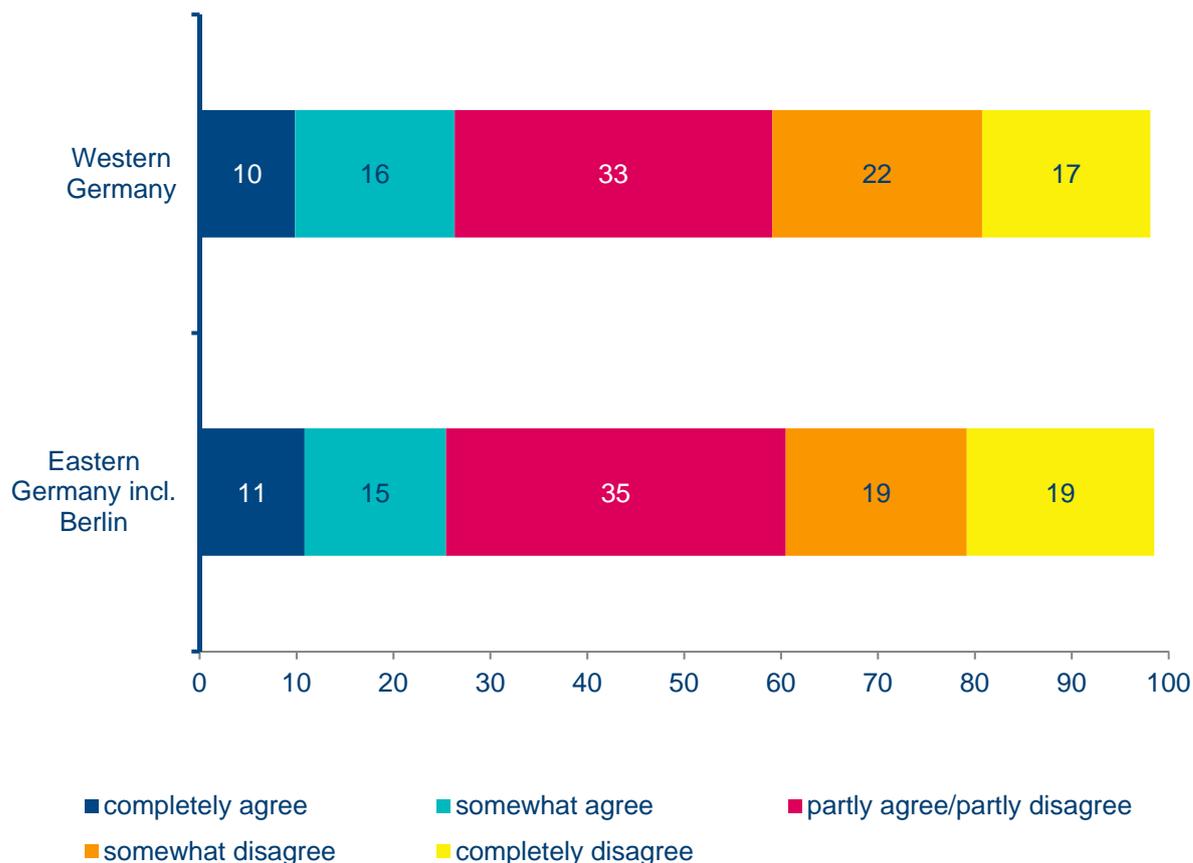
Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: “don’t know/no answer.”

By contrast, no notable differences are observable between eastern and western Germany. There are differences only in the range of 1 to 3 percentage points. This is within the margin of error of the survey.

Figure 15: Government Action and Public Opinion

Government Action and Public Opinion

To what extent do you agree with the following statements: The government should stick to planned policies, even if the majority of citizens are opposed?



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "don't know/no answer."

Political Issues

Three political issues were included in the survey, which can be used to structure the political landscape:

1. a socio-economic issue,
2. an immigration-related issue,
3. an ecological issue.

Taxes and Social Welfare Benefits

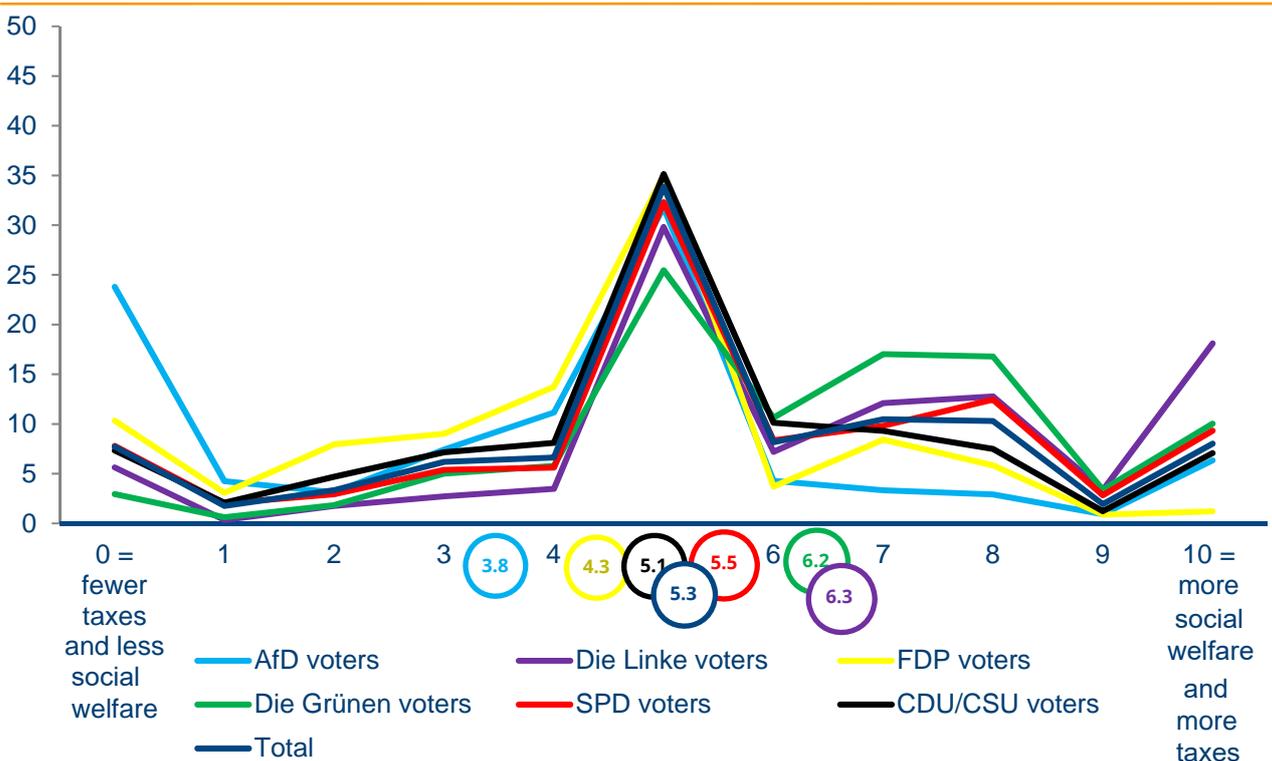
For the socio-economic issue, the respondents were asked to position themselves on a scale of 0 to 10, whereby 0 means “fewer taxes and contributions, even at the cost of fewer social welfare benefits” and 10 means “more social welfare benefits, event at the cost of more taxes and contributions.”

The distribution over the full scale reveals similarities as well as differences between the groups of voters. What they all have in common is a concentration around the medium scale value of 5. A relative majority of all voters therefore position themselves exactly in the middle. This is also reflected by the total average value for all respondents of 5.3. The voters of the CDU/CSU scarcely differ from the total distribution. Accordingly, their average value also lies very close to the total population, at 5.1. The SPD voters likewise hardly differ from the total population; their average value is 5.5. On the other hand, the voters of Die Grünen demonstrate a stronger tendency in the overall distribution towards “more social welfare benefits, even at the cost of more taxes and contributions.” This is also indicated by an average value of 6.2. The exact reverse can be seen for the FDP voters. They have a somewhat higher tendency towards fewer taxes and fewer social welfare benefits. The average value for the FDP voters is therefore 4.3. Unsurprisingly, the voters of Die Linke have a stronger tendency towards a larger social welfare state and more taxes. Particularly in the extreme position of scale value 10, they have a considerably higher share than all other voter groups. Their average value lies at 6.3. By contrast, the AfD voters are the group of voters that tends most strongly towards the position of fewer taxes and a smaller social welfare state. In this group, a high share of over 20 percent hold the extreme position of scale value 0. Their average value of 3.8 has an even stronger tendency towards tax reductions than is the case for the FDP voters.

Figure 16: Social Welfare Benefits according to the “Sunday Question”

Taxes and Social Welfare Benefits

Some want fewer taxes and contributions, even at the cost of fewer social welfare benefits. Others want more social welfare benefits, even at the cost of more taxes and contributions. What is your preference?



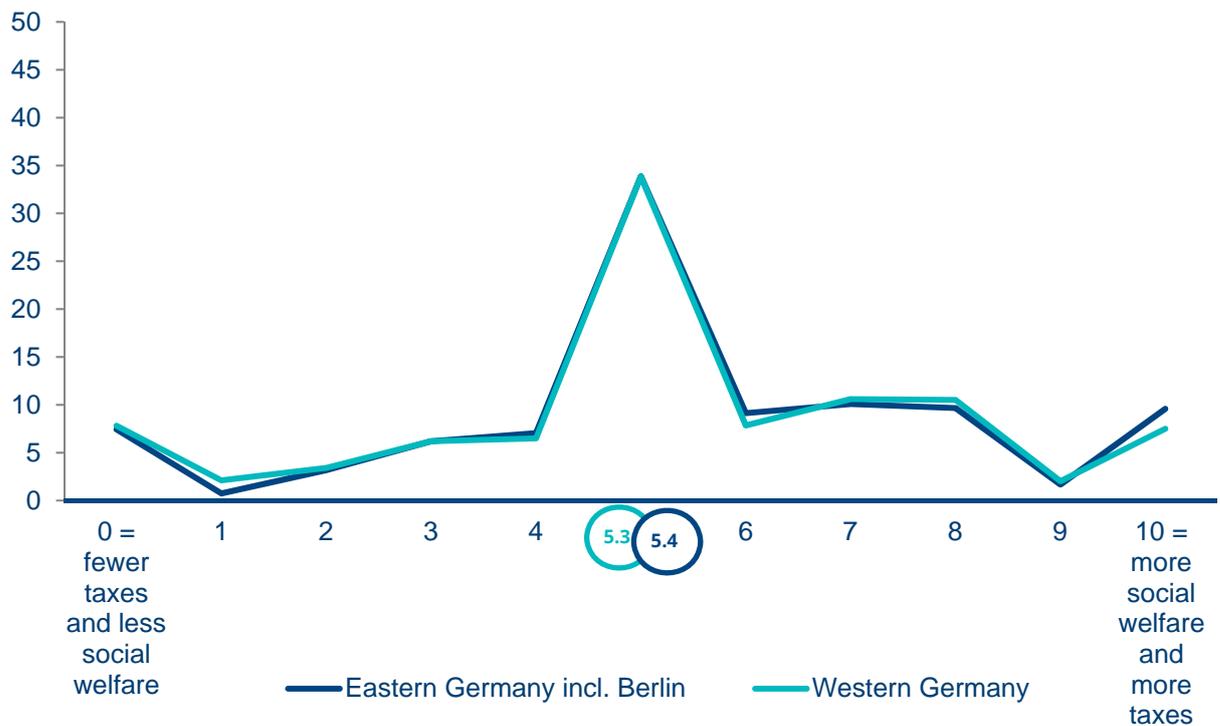
Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: “don’t know/no answer.”

Eastern and western Germany differ only minimally from each other. The overall distributions are almost identical and the average values are also very close at 5.4 and 5.3.

Figure 17: Social Welfare Benefits in Eastern and Western Germany

Taxes and Social Welfare Benefits

Some want fewer taxes and contributions, even at the cost of fewer social welfare benefits. Others want more social welfare benefits, even at the cost of more taxes and contributions. What is your preference?



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "don't know/no answer."

When considering the federal states, rather minor differences exist between eastern German federal states. People in Berlin tend more strongly towards more taxes and more social welfare. This tendency is also present in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, albeit to a less pronounced extent. In the western German states, the respondents in Hamburg, Bremen³, and Saarland have a slightly stronger preference for higher taxes and more social welfare benefits. Otherwise, the overall distributions are surprisingly consistent between the western German federal states.

Figure 18: Social Welfare Benefits in the Eastern German Federal States

Taxes in Eastern Germany

Some want fewer taxes and contributions, even at the cost of fewer social welfare benefits. Others want more social welfare benefits, even at the cost of more taxes and contributions. What is your preference?

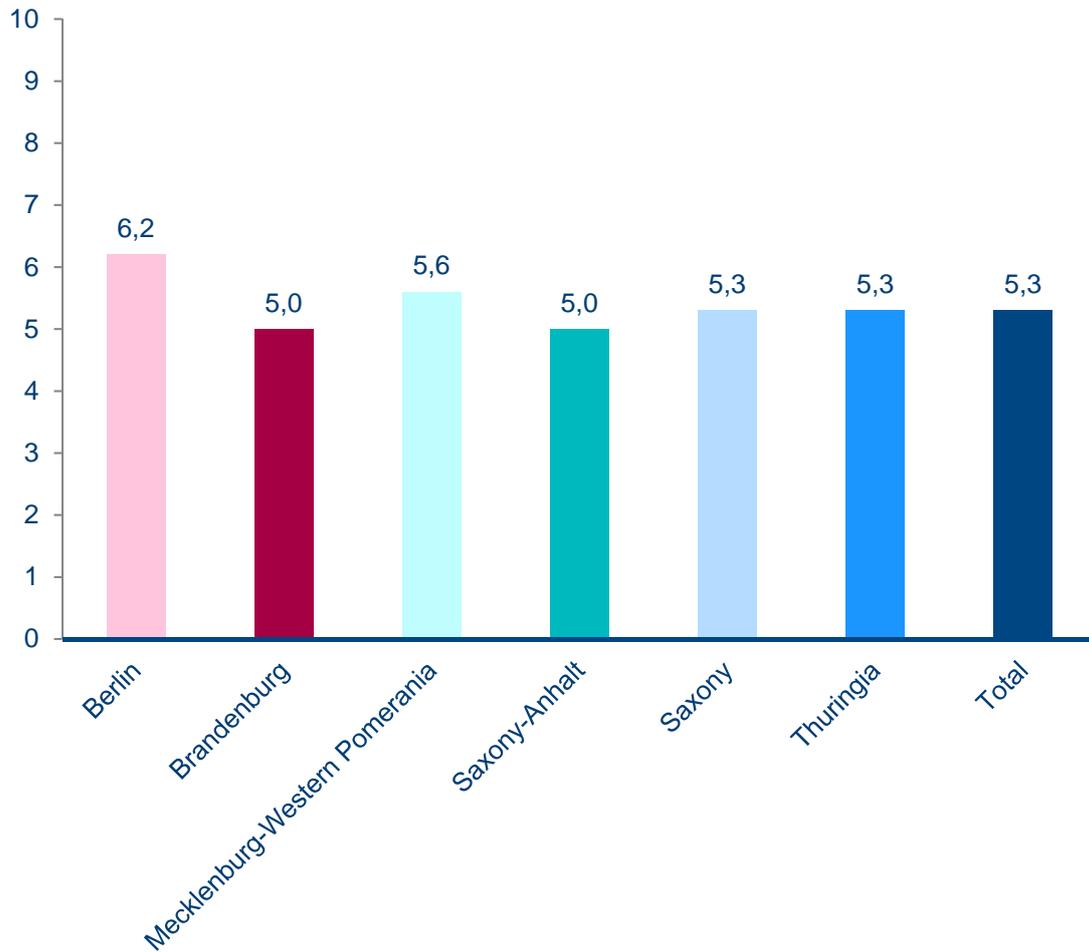


Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "don't know/no answer."

Figure 19: Social Welfare Benefits in the Eastern German Federal States

Taxes in Eastern Germany: Average Values

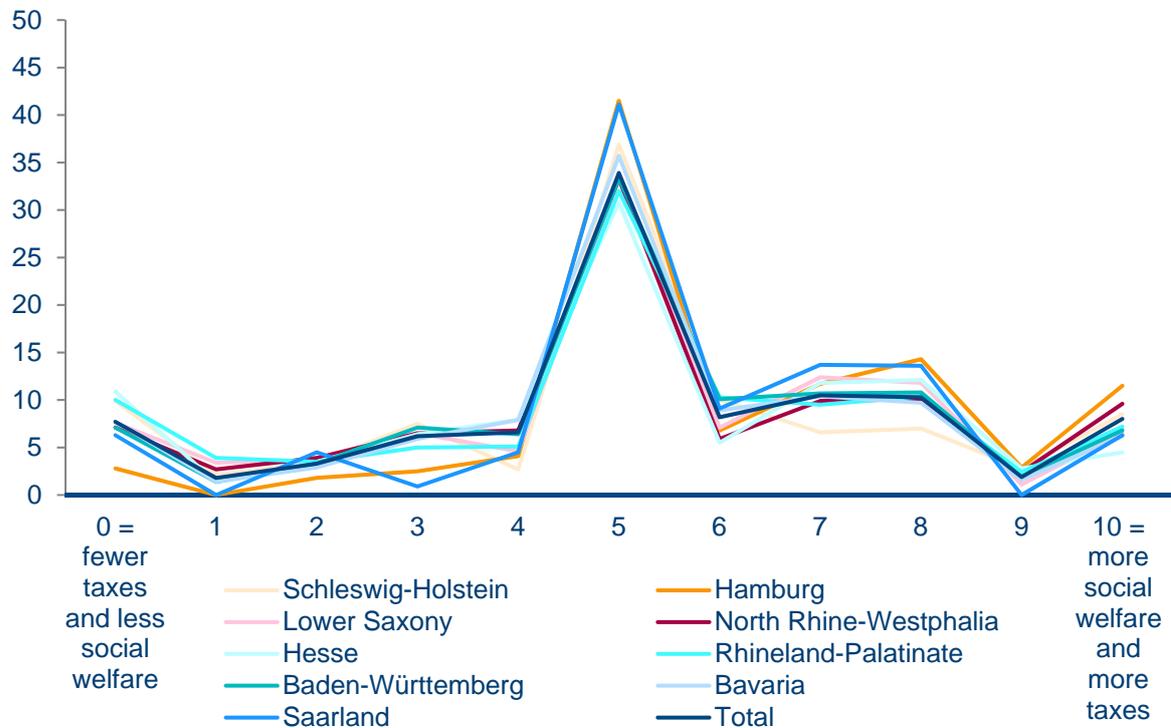
Some want fewer taxes and contributions, even at the cost of fewer social welfare benefits. Others want more social welfare benefits, even at the cost of more taxes and contributions. What is your preference?



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020.

**Figure 20: Social Welfare Benefits in the Western German Federal States
 Taxes in Western Germany**

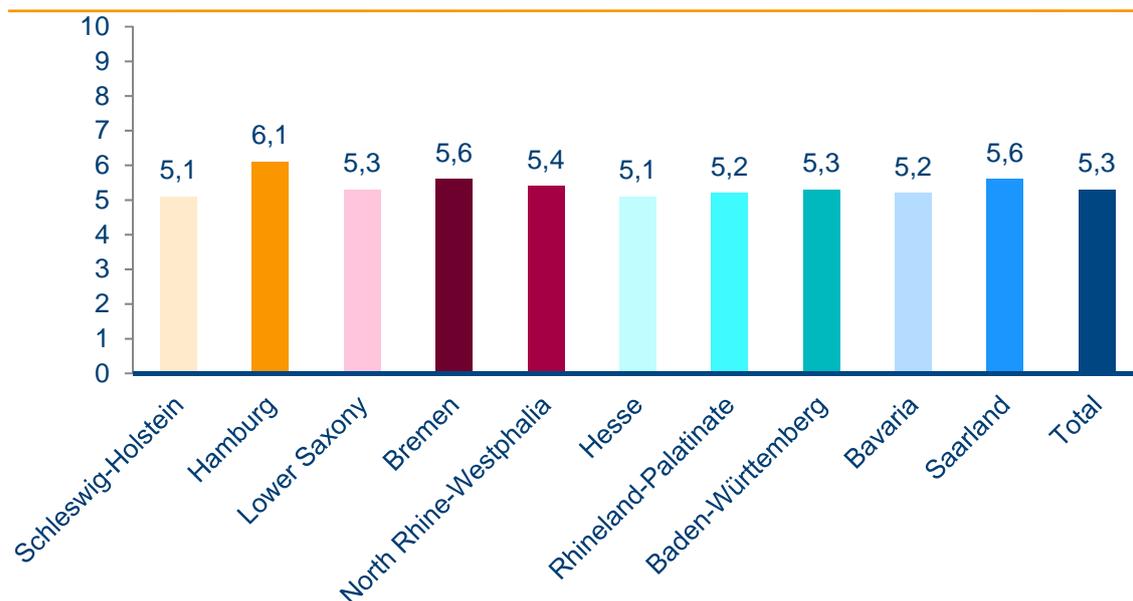
Some want fewer taxes and contributions, even at the cost of fewer social welfare benefits. Others want more social welfare benefits, even at the cost of more taxes and contributions. What is your



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "don't know/no answer."

**Figure 21: Social Welfare Benefits in the Western German Federal States
 Taxes in Western Germany: Average Values**

Some want fewer taxes and contributions, even at the cost of fewer social welfare benefits. Others want more social welfare benefits, even at the cost of more taxes and contributions.



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020.

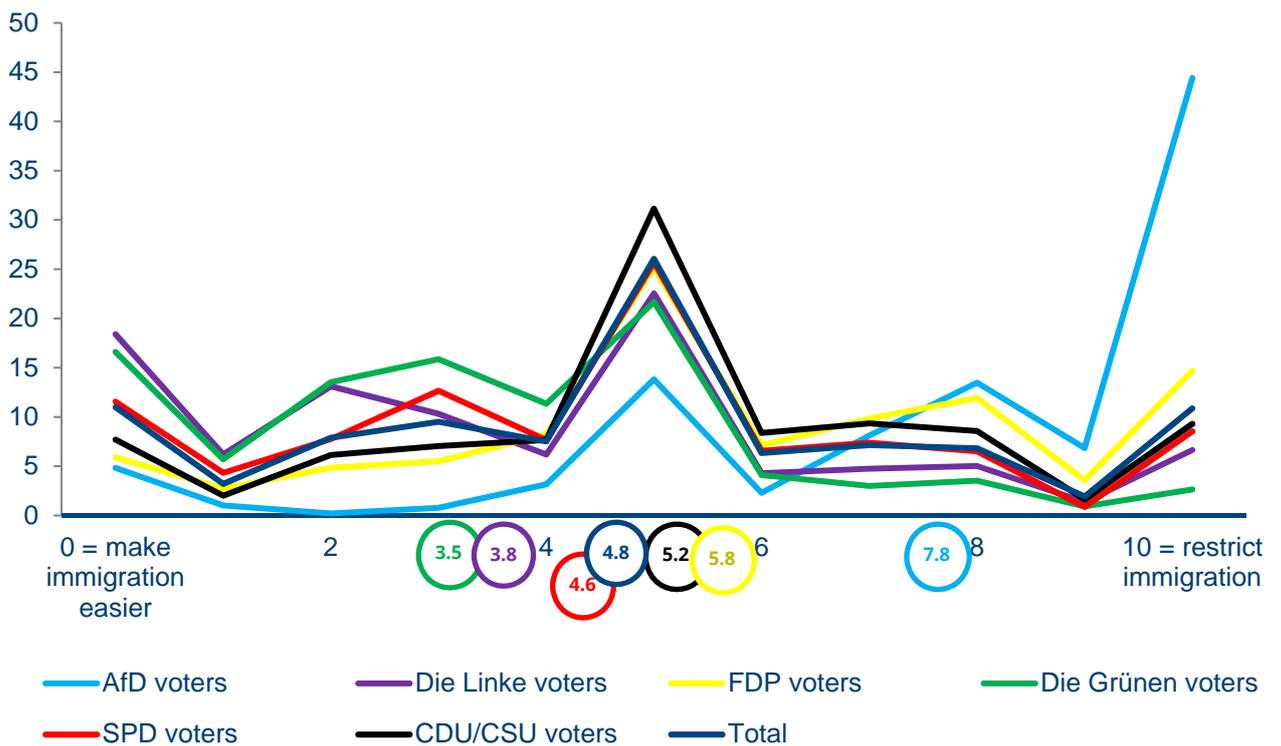
Immigration

The immigration-related issue was surveyed on a scale of 0 “it should be easier for foreigners to immigrate” to 10 “it should be more difficult for foreigners to immigrate.” Overall, the German electorate also holds a relatively central position here, with an average value of 4.8. At the same time, clear differences exist between the groups of voters. The voters of Die Grünen (3.5) and Die Linke (3.8) have a stronger tendency towards “easier immigration,” while the voters of the CDU/CSU (5.2) are more centrally positioned. Conversely, the FDP supporters (5.8) are slightly on the side of “restrict immigration” on average. The voters of the AfD are most striking. They express by far the strongest tendency towards restricting the immigration of foreigners. This is not only reflected in an average value of 7.8, but also by the fact that the scale value of 10 is chosen by a very high share of these voters of around 45 percent. Moreover, all scale values between 0 and 4 are only chosen by a very low share of the AfD voters. AfD voters consequently share a negative view of immigration.

Figure 22: Immigration according to the “Sunday Question”

Immigration

Some want to make it easier for foreigners to immigrate, others want to restrict the immigration of foreigners. What is your preference?



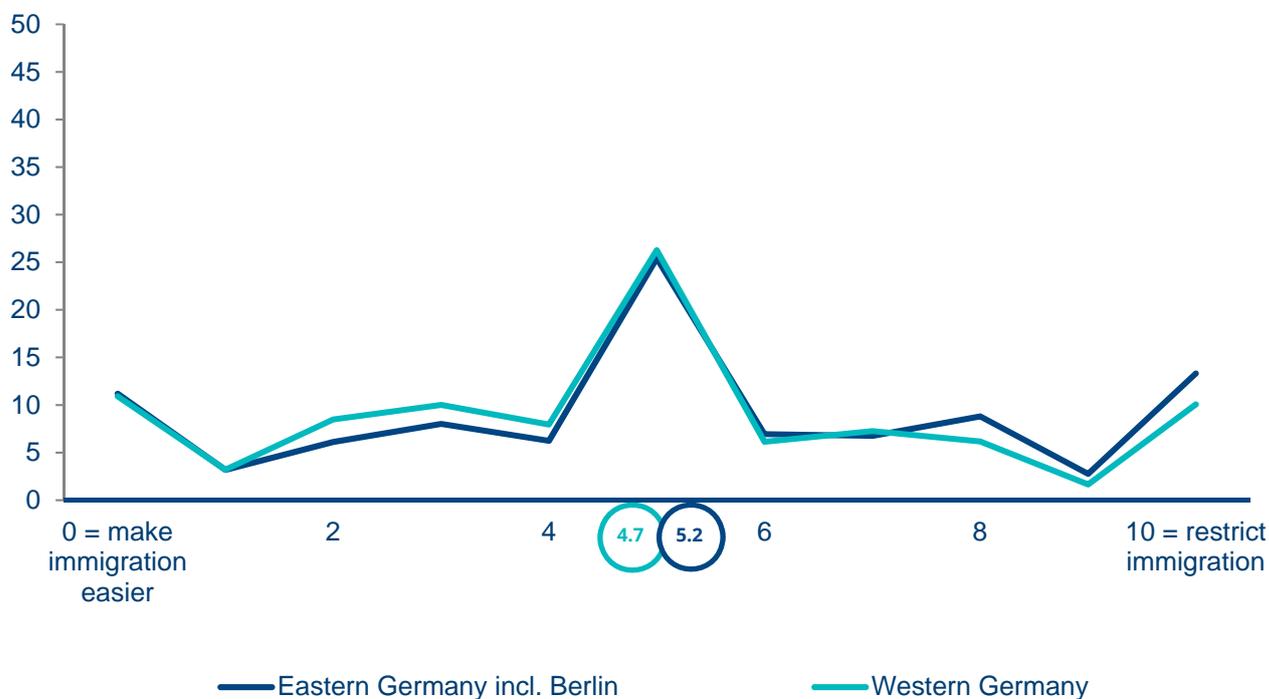
Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: “don’t know/no answer.”

On the other hand, the differences between eastern and western Germany are not too large. In eastern Germany, the respondents position themselves just right of the middle with an average value of 5.2 and in western Germany just left of the middle with 4.7. In terms of the overall distribution, a slightly more negative attitude towards immigration can also be seen in eastern Germany.

Figure 23: Immigration in Eastern and Western Germany

Immigration

Some want to make it easier for foreigners to immigrate, others want to restrict the immigration of foreigners. What is your preference?



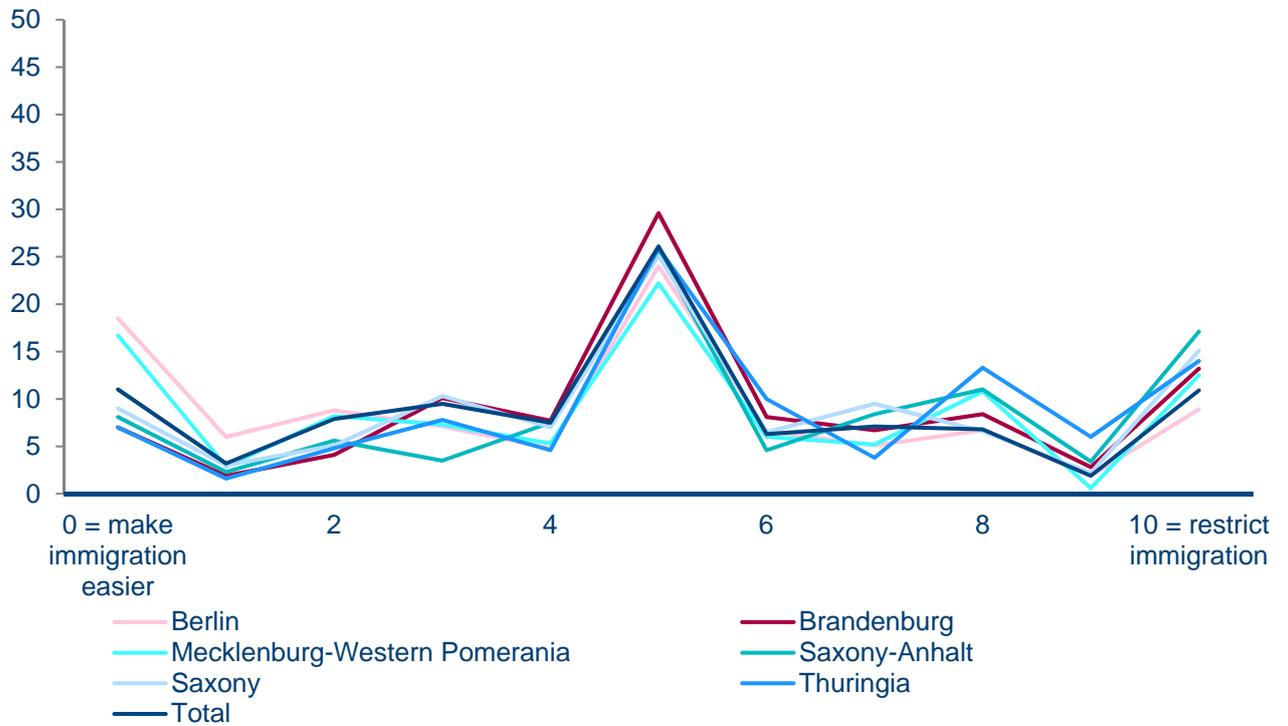
Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "don't know/no answer."

The average value does not lie on the negative side of the scale in any of the western German federal states, while the majority of eastern German federal states have a negative view of immigration on average. A comparison of the eastern German federal states shows a more positive value for immigration on the scale in Berlin (4.3) and Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania (4.7), while the respondents in Thuringia (5.8) and Saxony-Anhalt (5.7) have the most restrictive view. Saxony (5.3) and Brandenburg (5.4) lie in between, but also have a higher (i.e. more negative) average value than the national average. Certain differences likewise exist between the western German federal states. The federal states of Hamburg (3.9), Bremen (3.9), and Saarland (4.2) position themselves further left on the scale for the immigration question than the other federal states. The highest average values are found in Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria. With an average value of 5.0 in both cases, the respondents in southern Germany position themselves exactly in the middle of the scale.

Figure 24: Immigration in the Eastern German Federal States

Immigration in Eastern Germany

Some want to make it easier for foreigners to immigrate, others want to restrict the immigration of foreigners. What is your preference?

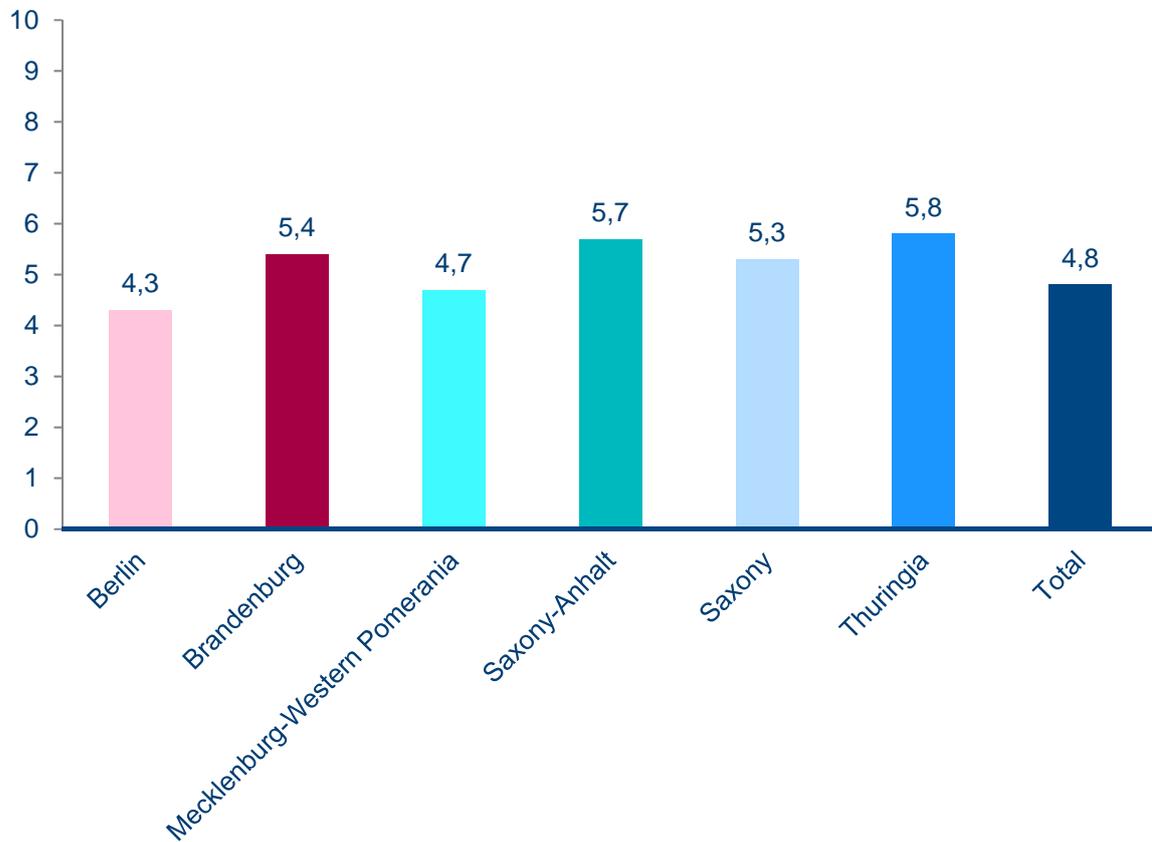


Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "don't know/no answer."

Figure 25: Immigration in the Eastern German Federal States

Immigration in Eastern Germany: Average Values

Some want to make it easier for foreigners to immigrate, others want to restrict the immigration of foreigners. What is your preference?

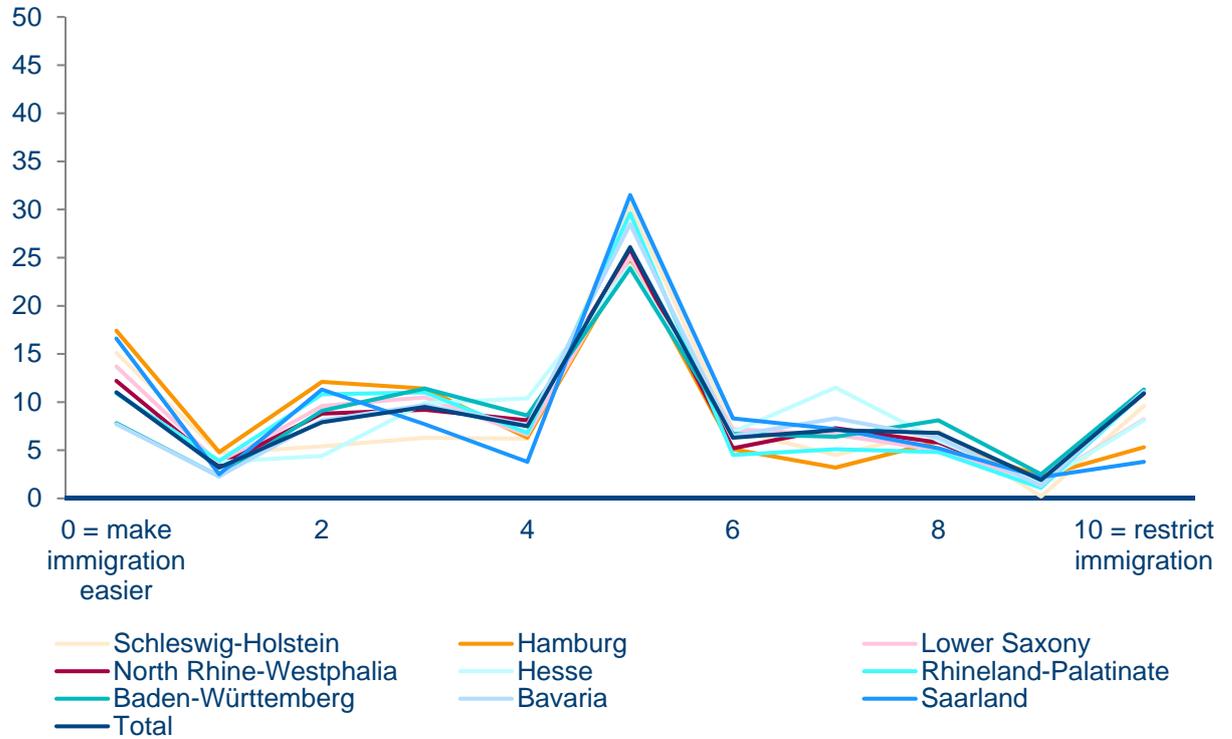


Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020.

Figure 26: Immigration in the Western German Federal States

Immigration in Western Germany

Some want to make it easier for foreigners to immigrate, others want to restrict the immigration of foreigners. What is your preference?

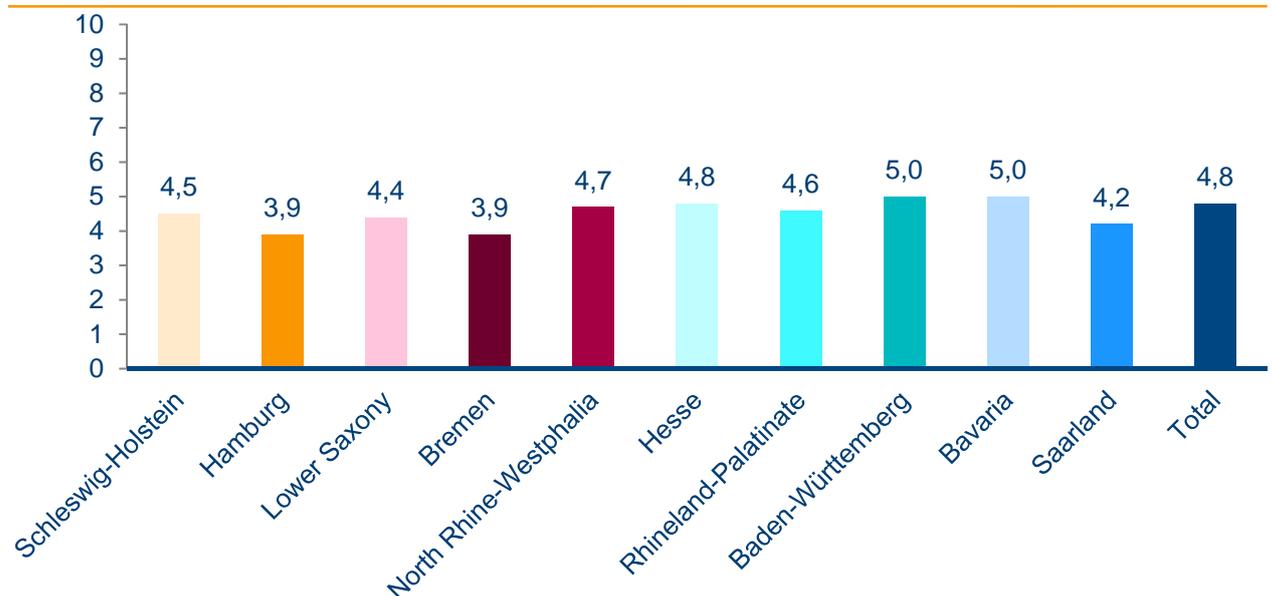


Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "don't know/no answer."

Figure 27: Immigration in the Western German Federal States

Immigration in Western Germany: Average Values

Some want to make it easier for foreigners to immigrate, others want to restrict the immigration of foreigners. What is your preference?



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020.

Climate versus Economic Growth

The ecological issue was likewise surveyed based on a scale of 0 to 10. In this question, 0 corresponds to “prioritise fighting climate change, even at the cost of economic growth” and 10 means “prioritise economic growth, even at the cost of fighting climate change”. With an average value of 3.7, the electorate tends to favour prioritising climate protection over economic growth. A rather high proportion of respondents (20 percent) even answer with the extreme scale value of 0.

The voters of Die Grünen show the clearest preference for climate protection over economic growth, with an average value of 2.3. The voters of Die Linke (2.6) also indicate clear support for prioritising climate protection. For both groups of voters, this preference is also reflected by the high proportion of respondents who choose the extreme scale value of 0 – more than 30 percent of the voters of both Die Grünen and Die Linke. Middle values are given by a rather low proportion of Die Grünen voters in particular and all values between 6 and 10 are seldom stated by these voters.

With an average value of 3.5, the voters of the SPD lie close to the overall average. Although the voters of the CDU/CSU (4.3) are on the right side of the overall average, their average value is still left of the middle of the scale. In other words, the CDU/CSU voters likewise demonstrate a slight tendency to prioritise climate protection over the economy. The middle values of the scale are highly pronounced among the CDU/CSU voters on the whole. A relative majority of the CDU/CSU voters therefore support a balance between climate protection and economic growth.

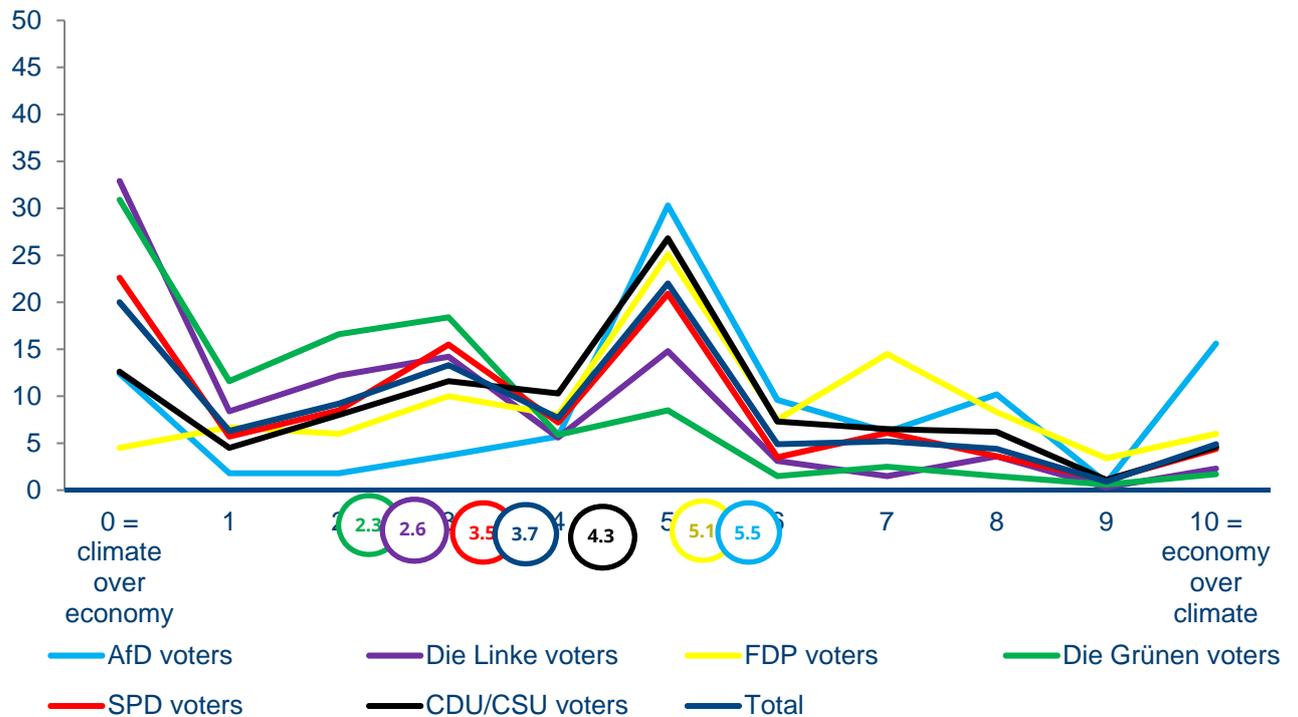
Likewise, the voters of the FDP (5.1) adopt a central position. However, in their case, unlike the CDU/CSU voters, there is a certain clustering of positions to the right of the middle of the scale. This area represents a preference to prioritise the economy over climate protection.

Similarly, the voters of the AfD (5.5) have an average value very close to the middle of the scale and thus prefer a balance between climate protection and economic growth. Indeed, the distribution across the entire scale also shows a very high positioning in the middle values. At the same time, the extreme scale value of 10 is also very strongly pronounced. There are consequently more people among the voters of the AfD who would prioritise the economy over climate protection than in all other groups of voters.

Figure 28: Climate according to the “Sunday Question”

Climate versus Economy

Some think that fighting climate change should be prioritised, even at the cost of economic growth. Others think that economic growth should be prioritised, even at the cost of fighting climate change. What is your preference?



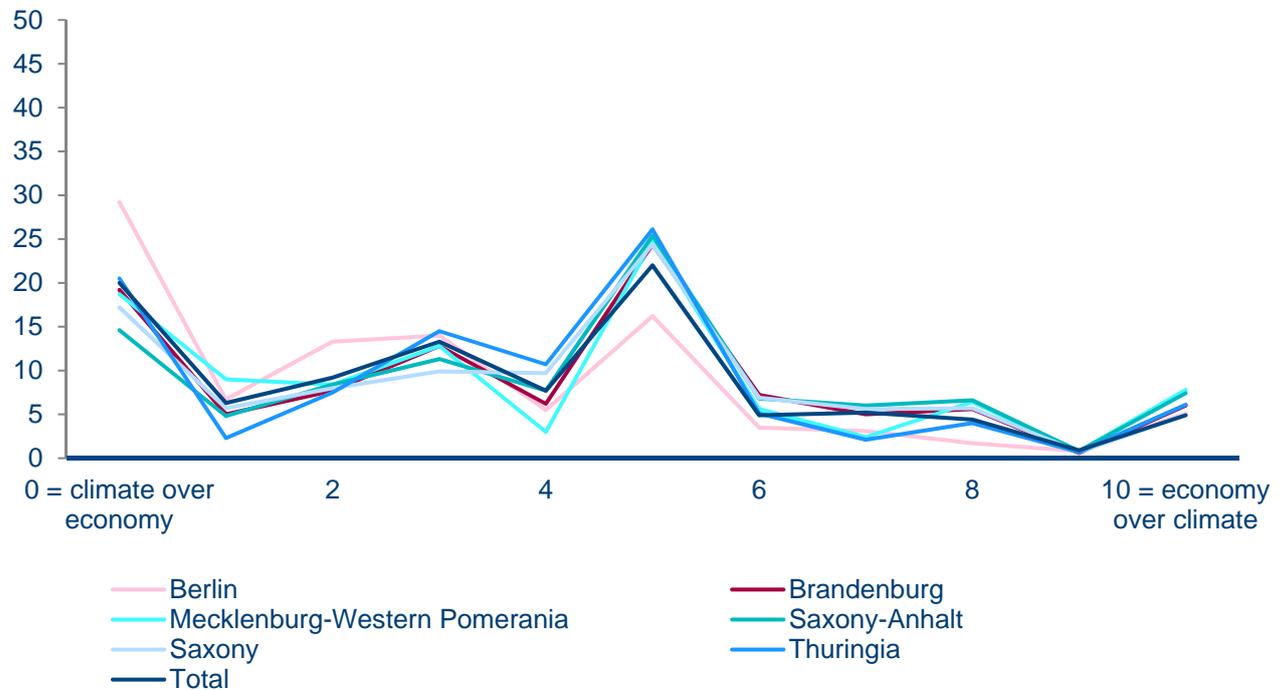
Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: “don’t know/no answer.”

No difference is evident between eastern and western Germany in connection with the question on climate protection. The respondents in eastern Germany position themselves in the middle at 3.8, and those in western Germany at 3.7. The distribution across the entire scale reveals clusters at the middle of the scale, at the extreme value of 0, and just to the left of the average at 3. Overall, a tendency therefore exists in both eastern and western Germany to prioritise climate protection or at least grant it the same importance as economic growth.

Figure 30: Climate in the Eastern German Federal States

Climate in Eastern Germany

Some think that fighting climate change should be prioritised, even at the cost of economic growth. Others think that economic growth should be prioritised, even at the cost of fighting climate change. What is your preference?

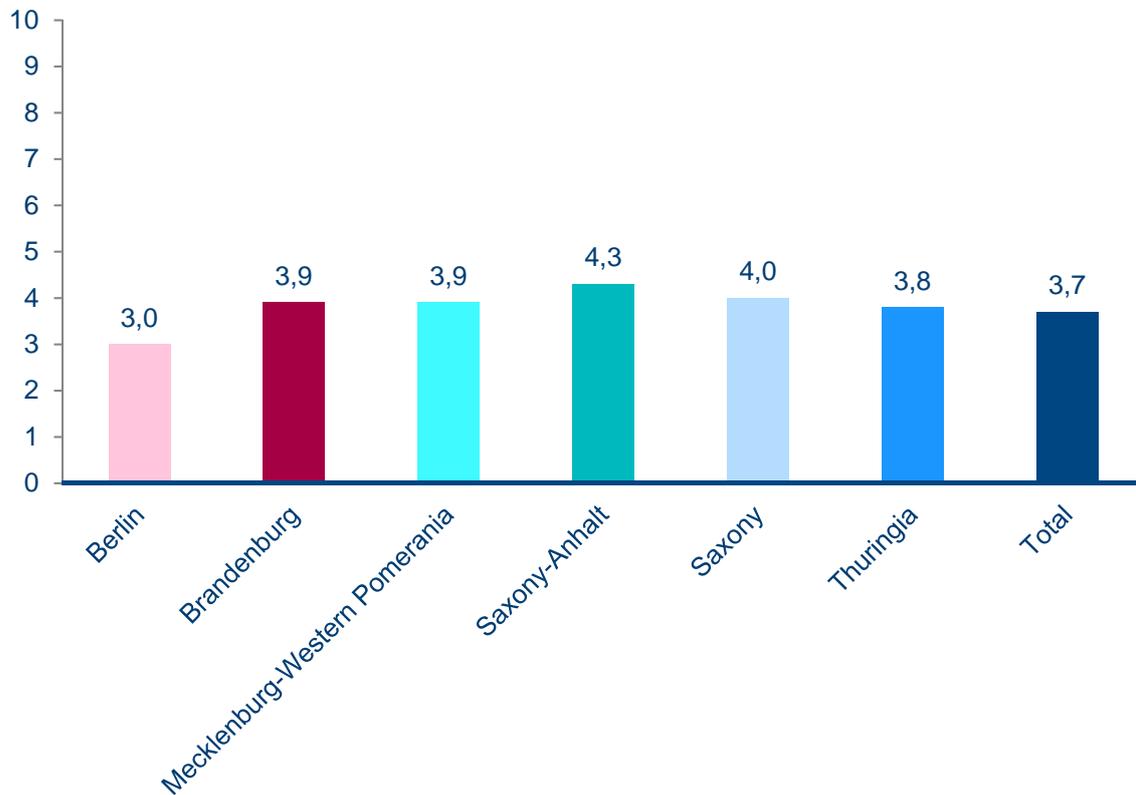


Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "don't know/no answer."

Figure 31: Climate in the Eastern German Federal States

Climate in Eastern Germany: Average Values

Some think that fighting climate change should be prioritised, even at the cost of economic growth. Others think that economic growth should be prioritised, even at the cost of fighting climate change. What is your preference?

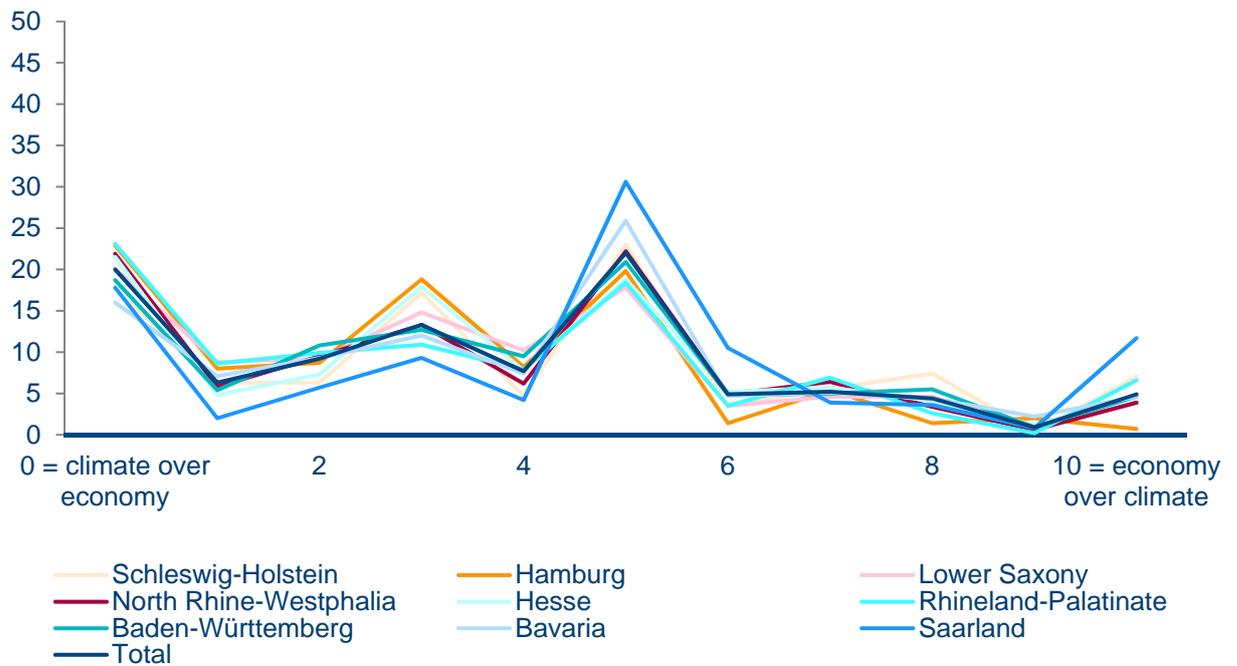


Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020.

Figure 32: Climate in the Western German Federal States

Climate in Western Germany

Some think that fighting climate change should be prioritised, even at the cost of economic growth. Others think that economic growth should be prioritised, even at the cost of fighting climate change. What is your preference?

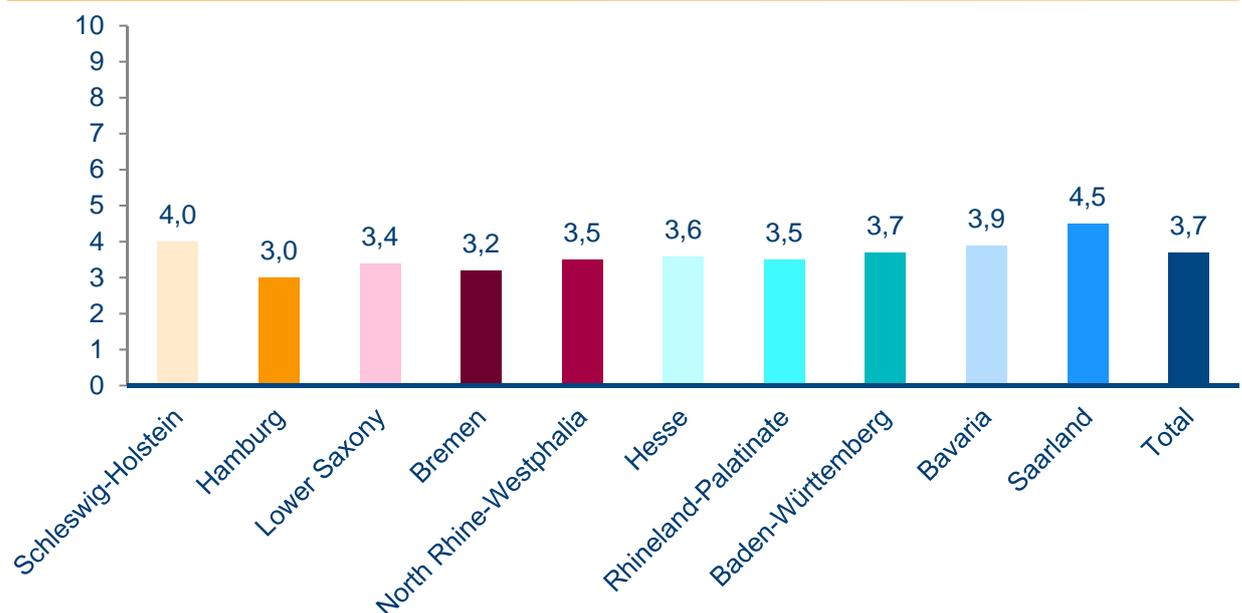


Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "don't know/no answer."

Figure 33: Climate in the Western German Federal States

Climate in Western Germany: Average Values

Some think that fighting climate change should be prioritised, even at the cost of economic growth. Others think that economic growth should be prioritised, even at the cost of fighting climate change. What is your preference?



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020.

Issues of Public Discourse

The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung investigated two issues of public discourse more closely. Both issues stem from a qualitative preliminary study (Neu 2021). On the one hand, a number of respondents complained that politicians do not deal with the concerns of the citizens. On the other hand, fears of insufficient financial provision in old age were mentioned repeatedly without solicitation, i.e. without a specific question on the part of the interviewer. Here the results of the representative survey indicate an above-average frustration with politicians among the voters of the AfD and Die Linke, while the voters of the CDU/CSU and Die Grünen were least frustrated with politicians. Likewise regarding retirement provision, the voters of the AfD in particular have a pessimistic outlook for the future, while the voters of Die Grünen consider their old age provision hopeless less frequently.

49 percent and hence almost half of the respondents agree with the statement: "politicians say one thing or something else depending on what suits them at the time." Agreement with this statement is particularly high among the AfD voters. 70 percent of the AfD voters say that politicians change what they say according to what is expedient. Above-average agreement is also expressed by the voters of the FDP (56 percent) and Die Linke (55 percent). The voters of the SPD (45 percent), CDU/CSU (44 percent), and Die Grünen (40 percent) agree slightly below average.

Moreover, 38 percent of the voters say that the members of parliament are hardly interested in the problems of those who vote for them. Once again, more AfD voters agree with this statement than on average. Two thirds of the AfD voters deny members of parliament are interested in their voters. Below-average agreement with this statement is expressed by the voters of the CDU/CSU (33 percent) and Die Grünen (28 percent). All other groups of voters scarcely differ from the average for all voters.

At 37 percent, a similarly high level of agreement is expressed for the statement: "ordinary people almost never benefit from anything that happens in politics." Here, too, the voters of the AfD agree more frequently than average, at 56 percent. Likewise, the voters of Die Linke believe more often than average that ordinary people almost never benefit from politics (45 percent). Conversely, the voters of the CDU/CSU (31 percent) and Die Grünen (30 percent) agree with this statement less frequently than average. The voters of the SPD and FDP lie approximately at the average.

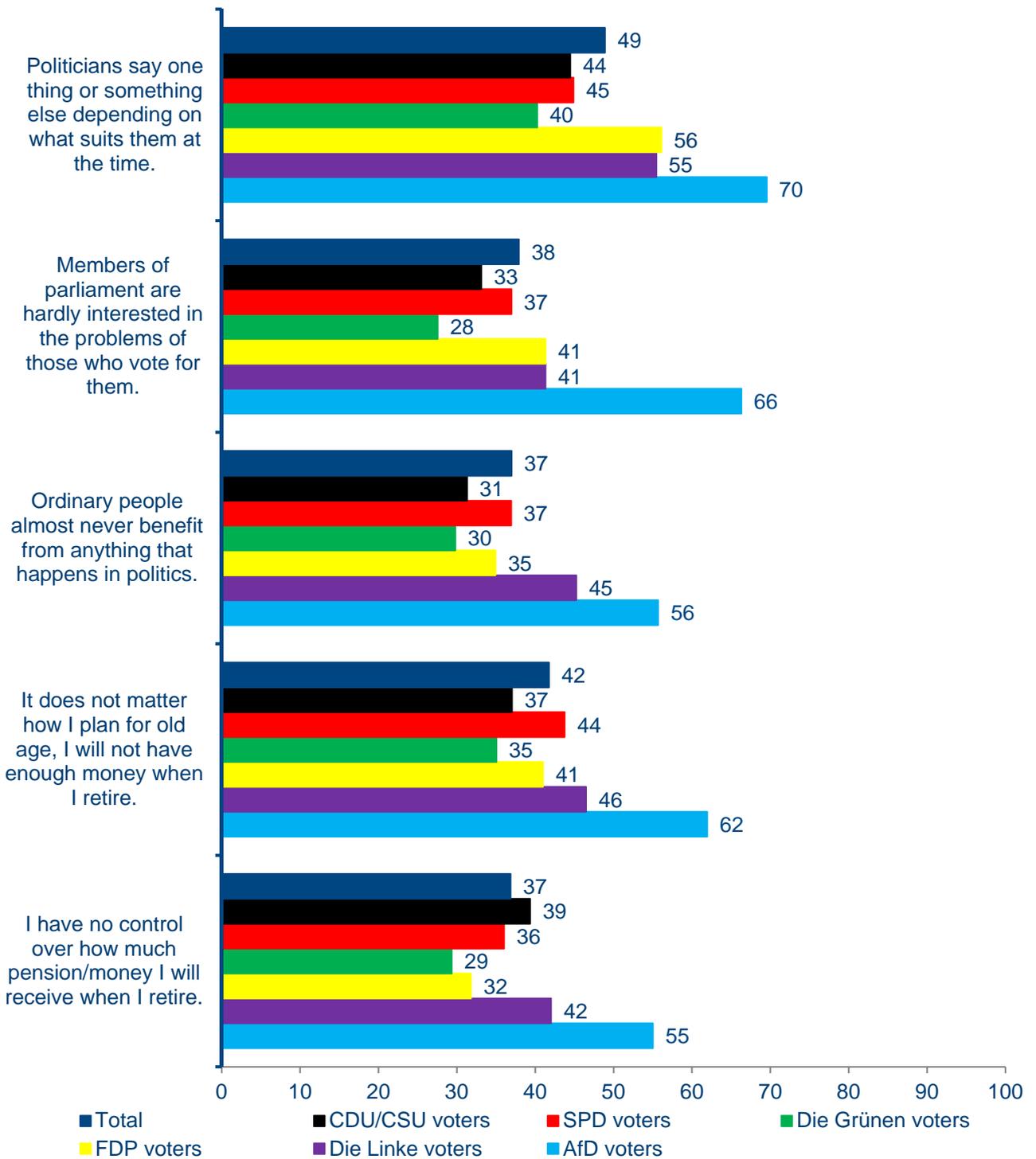
Only respondents who do not yet receive an old age pension or reduced earnings capacity pension were surveyed on the two statements regarding old age provision. 42 percent agree with the statement: "it does not matter how I plan for old age; I will not have enough money when I retire." Once again, the AfD voters (62 percent) agree more frequently than average. The voters of the CDU/CSU and Die Grünen believe less frequently than the average that they are unable to make sufficient provisions for their own retirement. All other groups of voters deviate only marginally from the average.

A similar picture can be seen for the second statement on old age provision: "I have no control over how much pension/money I will receive when I retire." 37 percent of the respondents who do not yet receive a pension agree here. More than half of the AfD voters (55 percent) say they have no control over their old age pension. The voters of Die Linke (42 percent) also agree with this statement slightly more frequently than average. By contrast, this view is less prevalent than average among the voters of the FDP (32 percent) and Die Grünen (29 percent). The voters of the CDU/CSU and the SPD agree in line with the average that they have no control over their old age pension.

Figure 34: Issues of Public Discourse

Issues of Public Discourse

Now I would like to present you with a number of statements regarding politics, the state, and society that can often be heard in public discourse. Please tell me how strongly you agree with each of these statements. (Answers “completely agree” and “somewhat agree”)



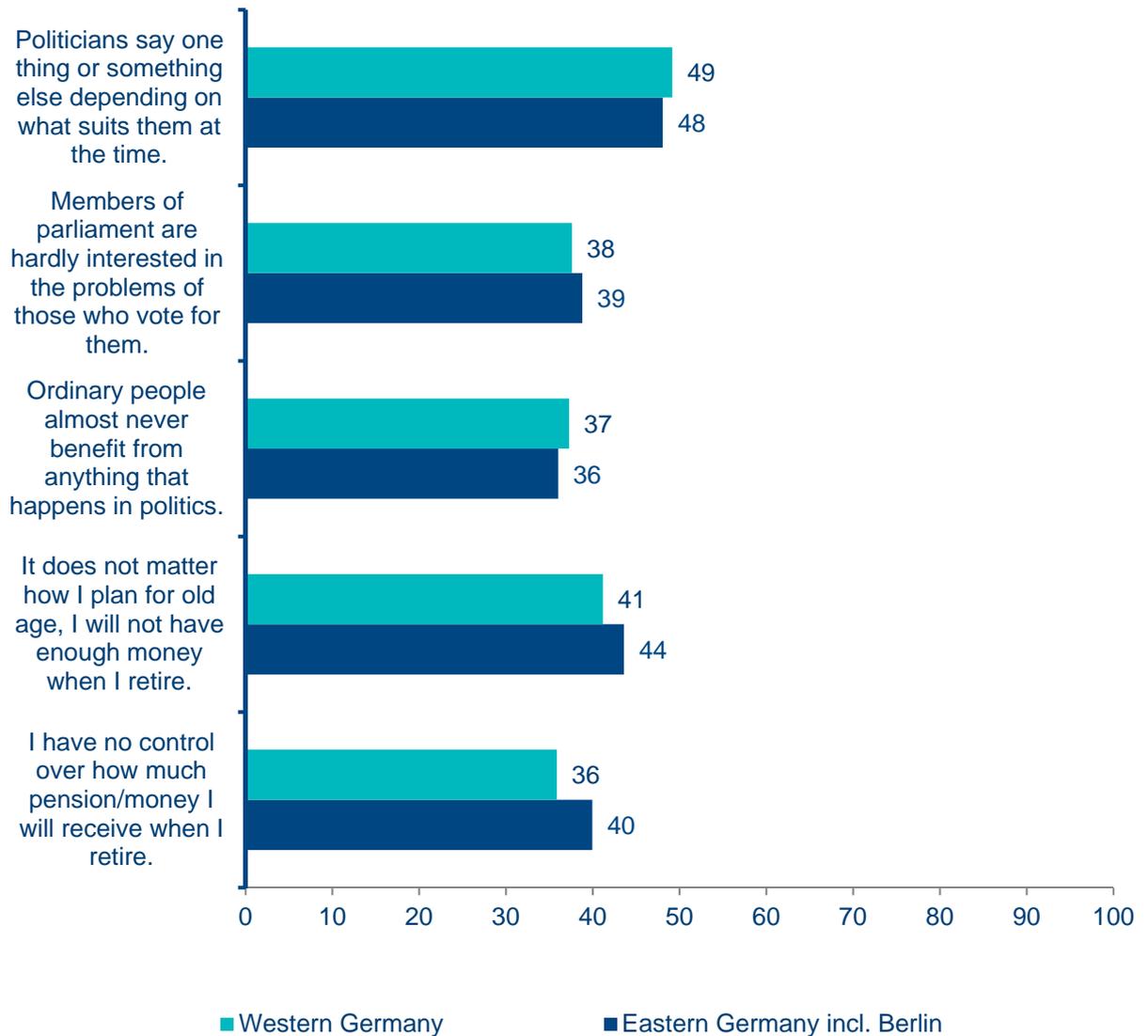
Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.
 Answer categories: “completely agree”, “somewhat agree”, “partly agree/partly disagree”, “somewhat disagree”, “completely disagree.”

For all the statements, only very slight differences exist between eastern and western Germany. The differences are so negligible that they do not merit further interpretation.

Figure 35: Issues of Public Discourse

Issues of Public Discourse

Now I would like to present you with a number of statements regarding politics, the state, and society that can often be heard in public discourse. Please tell me how strongly you agree with each of these statements. (Answers “completely agree” and “somewhat agree”)



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.

Answer categories: “completely agree”, “somewhat agree”, “partly agree/partly disagree”, “somewhat disagree”, “completely disagree.”

Perception of Political Terms

After we first investigated the associations of different political terms in a qualitative survey,⁴ we asked in this survey which party is associated with each term. The terms of the qualitative and quantitative surveys are not identical in every case. Moreover, the terms were expanded considerably in the representative survey. Due to the wide range of terms, we opted for a split-half approach. Each half of the respondents received a different half of the terms; this means that the case numbers for individual entries are halved. One half of the terms were considered by 4,030 respondents and the other half by 4,012. All terms were surveyed for all parties represented in the Bundestag.

More than half of the respondents associate the **CDU** with the words stability, conservative, consistency, orderly rule, security, and prosperity. The CDU receives mentions between 46 and 30 percent for civil, down-to-earth, reliability, attached to their home region, predictability, realistic, middle class, balance, and cosmopolitan. The respondents associate the terms pragmatic, equalising, tolerant, sustainable, alleviation, bold, modern, and wishy-washy with the CDU at a rate below 30 percent. All other terms are mentioned at rates in the single digits.

Since the **CSU** can only be elected in Bavaria but was assessed by all respondents, the values are not comparable with the mentions for other parties. At the same time, it was not possible to conduct the survey for the CDU/CSU together as it comprises two parties. For the CSU, the term conservative receives the most frequent number of mentions at 39 percent, followed by patriotic at 36 percent. Down-to-earth is also associated particularly frequently with the CSU, at 23 percent. The CSU receive double-digit results between 20 and 10 percent for the terms consistency, security, civil, prosperity, stability, orderly rule, reliability, middle class, predictability, realistic, balance, and pragmatic.

Interesting differences exist between the supporters of the CDU and CSU in the association of terms (no graphical representation). For the supporters of the CDU/CSU, primarily the CDU stands for orderly rule, security, stability, consistency, and reliability. These attributes are ascribed to the CDU by over 70 percent of the CDU/CSU supporters. A different picture can be seen for the CSU. This party receives its highest values from the CDU/CSU voters for the terms attached to their home region (42 percent), conservative (37 percent), down-to-earth (34 percent), security (32 percent), and consistency (31 percent). Therefore, the sister parties have a heterogeneous profile among their groups of voters.

The situation is different for the **SPD**. The SPD receives the most frequent mentions by around one third of the respondents for the terms civil, middle class, and equalising. The terms balance, tolerant, alleviation, orderly rule, realistic, cosmopolitan, down-to-earth, stability, security, and reliability are associated with the social democrats by 29-20 percent of the respondents.

Among the voters of the social democrats (no graphical representation), the SPD evidently has competition for many terms; the CDU and Die Grünen are also frequently associated strongly with the relevant terms. With 61 percent of the mentions, the terms equalising and tolerant are associated most frequently with the SPD. Between 50 to 60 percent connect the terms realistic, civil, stability, orderly rule, cosmopolitan, balance, reliability, down-to-earth, security, and alleviation with the SPD. The supporters of the SPD associate the terms stability and security just as frequently for the SPD and the CDU. The CDU is mentioned considerably more frequently for the terms prosperity and consistency. Conversely, Die Grünen are associated with the terms sustainable, modern, and curious more frequently by the SPD voters than the SPD.

A completely different picture can be seen for **Die Grünen**. Unsurprisingly, 53 percent associate the term sustainable with Die Grünen. This is their highest value by far. The terms modern, cosmopolitan, curious, tolerant, and bold follow with mentions between 39 and 31 percent. Mentions in the double-digit range are recorded for the terms realistic, equalising, balance, reliability, down-to-earth, civil, orderly rule, predictability, wishy-washy, chaos, conflict, pragmatic, and consistency.

Among their own voters (no graphical representation), Die Grünen are primarily associated with sustainability (88 percent) and modern (80 percent). 76 percent say Die Grünen are cosmopolitan and a further 74 percent describe their party as tolerant. The terms curious, bold, and realistic attain values between 65 and 53 percent. By contrast, voters of Die Grünen associate the CDU with the terms conservative, stability, consistency, security, orderly rule, and prosperity with values between 72 and 56 percent. Among voters of Die Grünen, a negative image of the AfD (fear, division, chaos, and conflict) is particularly pronounced.

With 25 percent of the responses, the **FDP** has the image of middle class in particular. 20 percent associate the term wishy-washy with the liberals. The terms prosperity, civil, tolerant, and pragmatic receive mentions in the double-digit range.

From the perspective of the FDP voters (no graphical representation), the FDP is realistic (54 percent). Half of the FDP supporters mention the terms middle class, prosperity, and modern. The CDU/CSU receive more than half of the mentions for the terms stability, security, consistency, orderly rule, conservative, and civil.

Die Linke only receives mentions under 20 percent; the strongest – at 18 percent – is attained for the term tolerant. The terms cosmopolitan, chaos, conflict, bold, curious, alleviation, division, wishy-washy, and equalising are likewise mentioned by double-digit percentages.

Among the voters of Die Linke (no graphical representation), Die Linke is primarily considered tolerant (64 percent) and cosmopolitan (60 percent). The party has mentions above 40 percent for the terms realistic, bold, reliability, equalising, down-to-earth, curious, and alleviation.

The **AFD** deviates most clearly in its image from all other parties. The terms fear (59 percent), chaos (56 percent), and division (54 percent) are attached to the AfD. The term conflict follows at 44 percent, and 23 percent associate the party with wishy-washy. The party receives double-digit mentions for attached to their home region, predictability, bold, and conservative.

For the image perception of the AfD among the party's voters, the most frequent mentions are observed for the terms attached to their home region (71 percent) and bold (69 percent). Around half of the AfD voters ascribe the terms security and down-to-earth to the AfD. The terms realistic, civil, and conservative receive mentions under 50 and above 40 percent. While all other voters strongly associate the term chaos with the AfD, this term is linked to Die Grünen, Die Linke, and the CDU among the AfD voters. For the term fear, the AfD voters name Die Grünen and the CDU. The mistrust regarding other parties is also reflected in the fact that frequently no party is assigned to a term. In particular, this is the case for the term orderly rule and reliability, whereby 41 or 38 percent respectively state no party.

With 25 percent of the mentions, the term reliability is associated with **no party** more frequently than average. Likewise, around one fifth of the respondents are unable to link curious, orderly rule, alleviation, and modern to any party.

Strikingly, parties only rarely receive mentions above 50 percent, which can be interpreted as a rather consistent party image among the electorate. The CDU receives values above 50 percent for the terms stability, conservative, consistency, orderly rule, security, and prosperity. For Die Grünen, the term sustainable is particularly strongly attached to the party at 53 percent. In the case of the AfD, negative images achieve over 50 percent of the mentions: fear, chaos, and division.

Moreover, each party evidently has a very specific image profile. Already during the in-depth interviews, it became clear that the SPD is strongly associated with the term civil. Although the CDU lies ahead of the SPD for this term, this represents a very strong image for the SPD in addition to middle class. The values for Die Grünen with the terms sustainable, modern, cosmopolitan, curious,

tolerant, and bold are in many cases considerably ahead of those for all other parties. Conversely, the FDP and Die Linke have a rather diffuse image profile in which both positive as well as negative associations can be seen. On the other hand, the AfD is the party that is particularly strongly associated with negative terms outside its own group of voters.

Figure 36: Assigned Party Attributes

Terms

Which party or parties do you associate with the following terms?



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.

Figure 37: Assigned Party Attributes

Terms

Which party or parties do you associate with the following terms?



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.

In addition, we asked how different terms correspond to the respondents themselves. When describing themselves, almost all terms enjoy a very high personal rating for the respondents. Only two terms receive mentions under 50 percent; 39 percent of the respondents feel that the term prosperity corresponds to themselves and 29 percent for conservative.

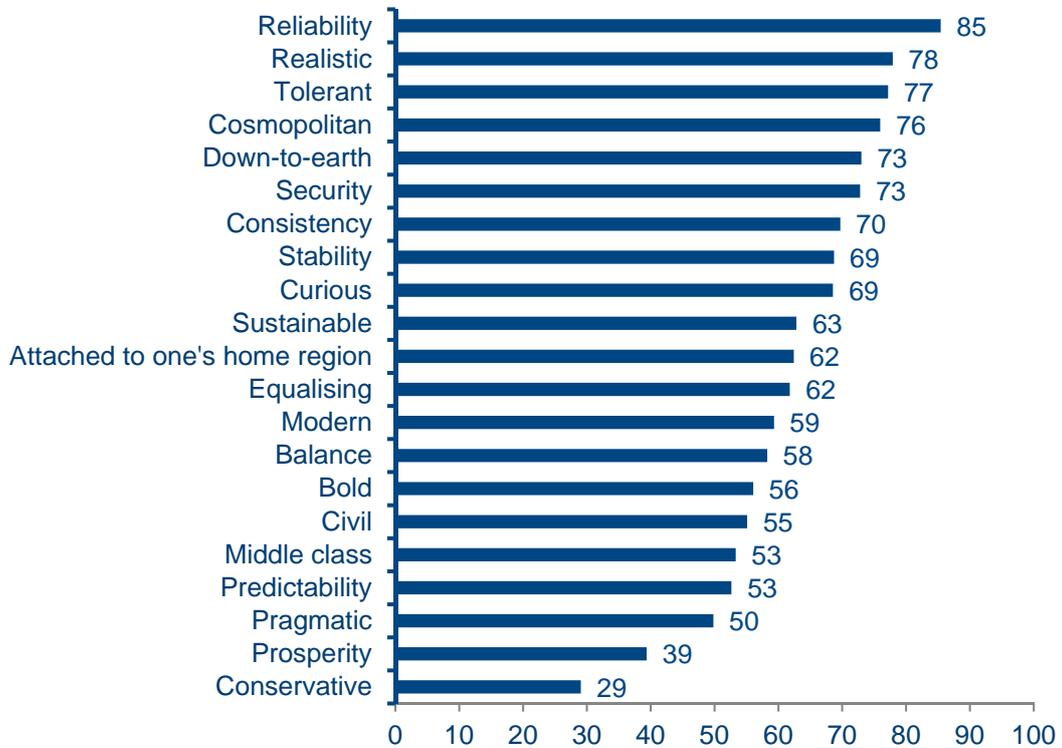
At 85 percent, the term reliability has the highest number of mentions. The terms realistic, tolerant, cosmopolitan, down-to-earth, security, and consistency are named with a frequency between 70 and 78 percent. The terms stability, curious, sustainable, attached to their home region, and equalising follow with under 70 and above 60 percent. In turn, these are followed by modern, balance, bold, civil, middle class, predictability, and pragmatic with mentions between 50 and 59 percent.

The differences between the voters of the parties are also small. For this reason, only the more pronounced variations are presented here. The voters of Die Linke and Die Grünen find the term security fitting considerably less frequently. This is likewise the case for the term down-to-earth for these groups of voters. The voters of Die Linke and Die Grünen name consistency more rarely than other groups of voters. The voters of the AfD state less frequently that the term tolerant corresponds to themselves. In the case of stability, it is primarily the voters of Die Linke who perceive the term as less fitting. The supporters of the AfD say they are cosmopolitan particularly rarely. Attached to their home region has particularly low resonance among the voters of Die Grünen, followed likewise by strong reticence among the voters of Die Linke and the FDP. The voters of Die Grünen and Die Linke believe the term civil suits them especially infrequently. The voters of the FDP and the AfD are considerably more reticent for the term sustainable. The supporters of Die Linke, Die Grünen, and the SPD more rarely say the term middle class corresponds to themselves. Balance is used more rarely as a self-described attribute for the voters of the FDP. The voters of Die Linke, Die Grünen, and the SPD tend not to associate prosperity with themselves. The greatest spread between the voters of the parties can be seen for conservative. While it is accepted among the AfD and CDU/CSU voters (albeit at a low level compared to the other terms), it is mentioned less often by the FDP voters and only marginal shares of the SPD, Die Grünen, and Die Linke voters consider the term suitable for themselves.

Figure 38: Self-Description

Self-Description

To what extent do you agree that these terms suit you? (Answers “very strongly” and “strongly”)

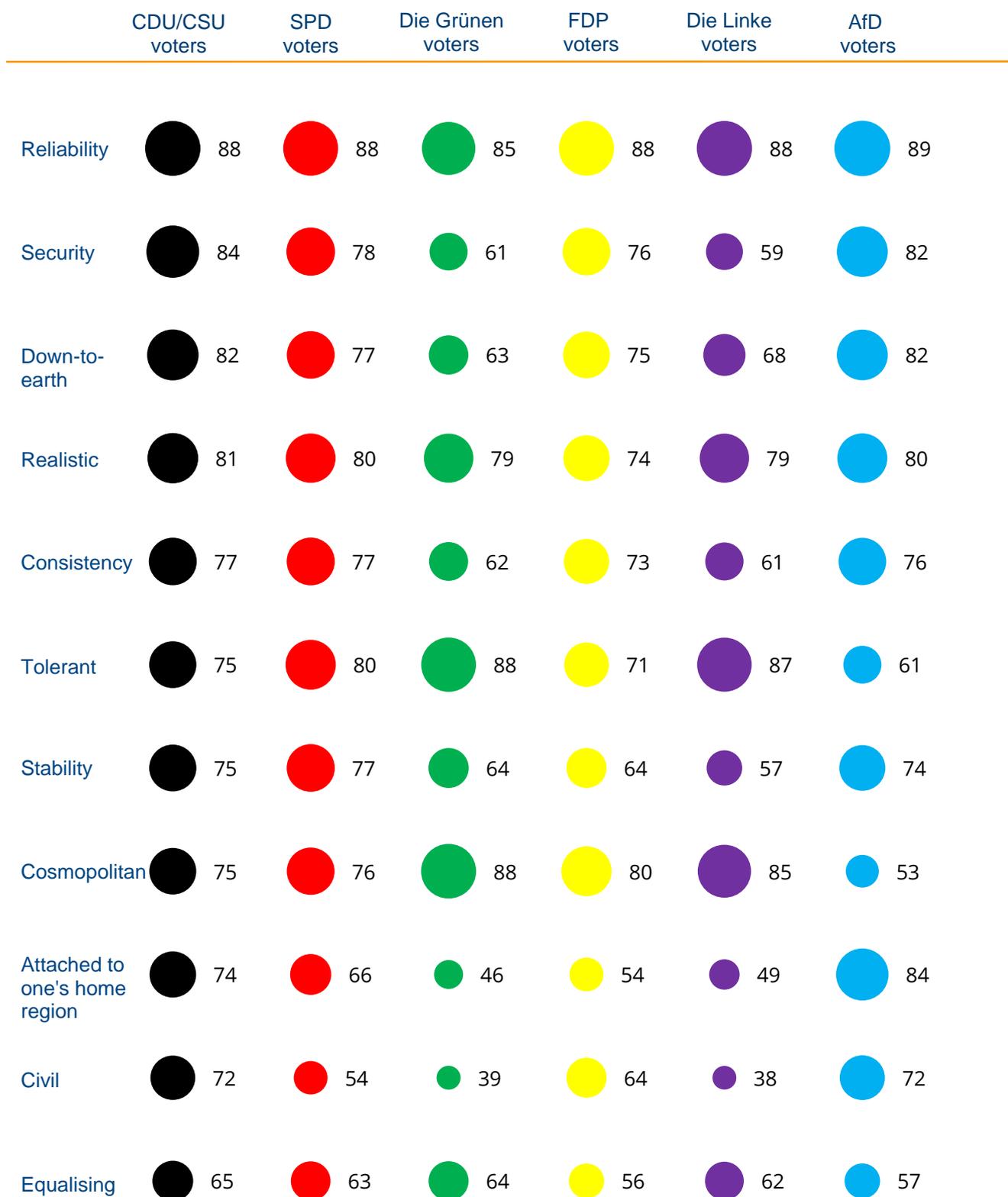


Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.
Answer categories: “very strongly”, “strongly”, “partly”, “less strongly”, “not at all.”

Figure 39: Self-Description

Self-Description

To what extent do you agree that these terms suit you? (Answers “very strongly” and “strongly”)



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.
Answer categories: “very strongly”, “strongly”, “partly”, “less strongly”, “not at all.”

Figure 40: Self-Description

Self-Description

To what extent do you agree that these terms suit you? (Answers “very strongly” and “strongly”)



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.
 Answer categories: “very strongly”, “strongly”, “partly”, “less strongly”, “not at all.”

Political Interest

Interest in politics is generally highly pronounced. 18 percent of the voters are very strongly interested in politics and another 35 percent are strongly interested. Overall, more than half of the voters are therefore (very) strongly interested in politics. Around a quarter say they are partly interested and partly not interested. Only a small minority, 13 or 6 percent respectively, are less strongly interested or not at all interested in politics.

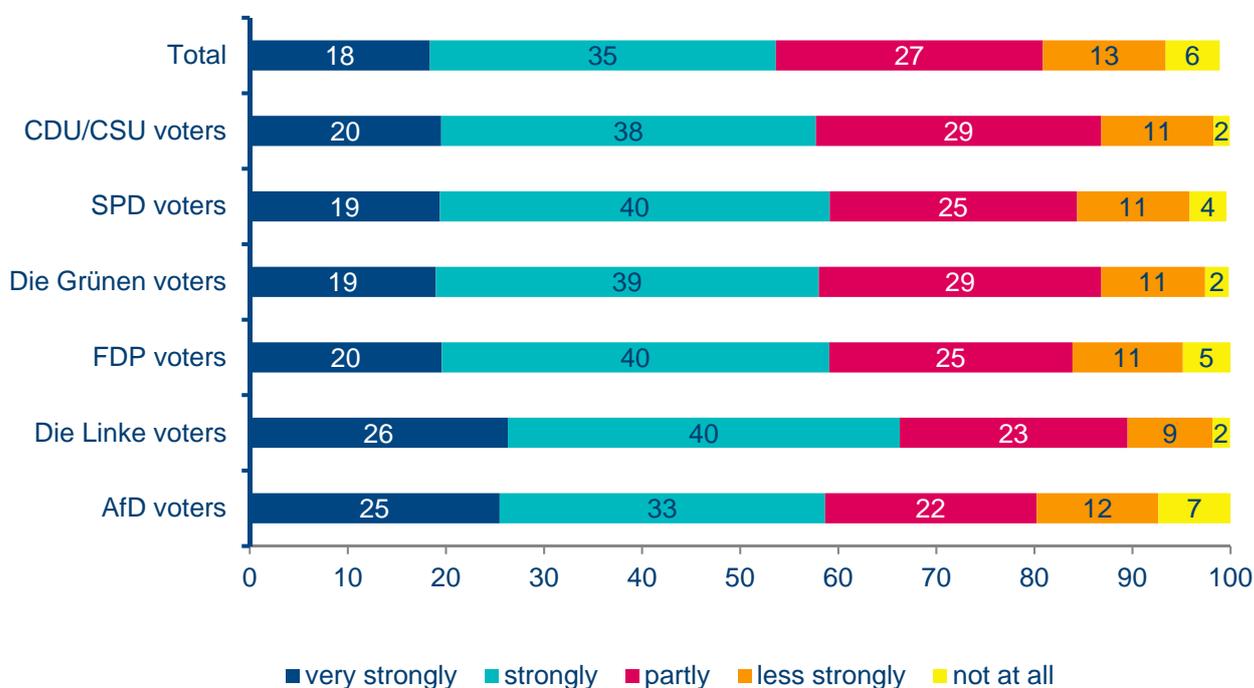
Hardly any differences in political interest can be observed between the groups of voters. Only the voters of Die Linke generally have a higher level of political interest. Two thirds of Die Linke voters are very strongly or strongly interested in politics. Among the voters of the AfD, very strong interest in politics is somewhat less prevalent at 25 percent, but combined with strong interest there is no noteworthy difference with the other groups of voters.

At the same time, all groups of voters have a slightly higher level of political interest than the total population of the voters. This is due to the respondents who stated they would not vote, would submit an invalid vote, would not know who to vote for, or preferred not to answer (no graphical representation). In this group, political interest is substantially lower than the average. Among non-voters or those who would submit an invalid vote, only 18 percent say they are very strongly or strongly interested in politics. Among those who do not know who to vote for or chose not to answer, 33 percent are (very) strongly interested in politics.

Figure 41: Political Interest

Political Interest

Now in very general terms ... How strongly are you interested in politics?



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "don't know/no answer."

No notable differences in political interest are observable between eastern and western Germany. The percentage differences only range from 1 to 3 percentage points and therefore within the margin of error of the survey.

Figure 42: Political Interest

Political Interest

Now in very general terms ... How strongly are you interested in politics?



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: “don’t know/no answer.”

Voter Landscape

A study published at the beginning of 2021 (Neu 2021) presented an approach to measure potential voters. Two questions were combined to this end. On the one hand, respondents were asked which party they would vote for if federal elections were held next Sunday (referred to here as the “Sunday question”). On the other hand, those who named a party were then asked whether they could also imagine voting for another party. We asked these questions once again in this broad study of the electorate.

Respondents who named the same party in both questions appear to have a stronger connection to this party than other voters. This alone is presumably not sufficient to call this group loyal voters. Those who state two parties in both questions are considered more volatile, since they have two voting options at a minimum.⁵ Qualitative studies have also determined that additional parties are also included in the voting decision and that the voting biography has also given rise to very different preferences in certain life phases. Therefore, this approach merely constitutes an approximation of the complex reality.

Let us begin with the “Sunday question”. Over 8,000 interviews were conducted in the period from July to December 2020. Due to the long survey period, the data cannot be compared with data collected on a monthly basis – as is the case with the Forschungsgruppe Wahlen and Infratest dimap, for example (see The study). The focus here is on long-term developments in the party landscape, not short-term changes in voting intention. When considering the voter mobility analyses by Infratest dimap in the long-term trend, switching activity has increased between the CDU/CSU and Die Grünen. However, a high willingness to switch votes has already existed between the FDP and SPD for some time, and likewise between the SPD and Die Grünen.

We shall start with the results of the “Sunday question”, which asked which party respondents would vote for if federal elections were held next Sunday. No distinction is generally made between primary and secondary votes in telephone surveys. In our survey, the CDU achieves 28 percent and the CSU 7 percent. The SPD would receive 17 percent of the vote, Die Grünen 25 percent, the FDP 5 percent, Die Linke 10 percent, and the AfD 7 percent. The electorate differs in this respect between the western and eastern federal states. While there are scarcely any differences in voting preference for the CDU, SPD, and FDP, the voting block is 10 percentage points larger for Die Grünen in the western federal states than in the eastern federal states (28:18 percent). Die Linke continues to have substantially above-average support in the eastern states (19 percent), while the party only reaches 6 percent in the western states. Hence, Die Linke has the greatest imbalance of all parties between eastern and western Germany. The AfD likewise has greater support in the eastern states (9 percent) than in the western states (6 percent). The 2 percent mentions for the CSU could be due to respondents having different primary and secondary residences or to the CSU having supporters in the eastern states even if the party cannot be elected there. Due to the strong media presence of the CSU in Berlin, some respondents may not be aware that it is only possible to vote for the CSU in Bavaria.

Besides this question, we were once again interested in how the overlapping party preferences affect the fluid market for voters. In addition to the Sunday question, we therefore asked whether respondents could also imagine voting for another party. With the combination of both questions it is possible to draw conclusions on the potential of parties. As a result of the high volatility, considerable and sometimes even higher shares of voters exist for the SPD, FDP, and Die Linke who have a secondary preference for these parties. For instance, the SPD could mobilise a further 18 percent of the voters with a valid answer to the Sunday question, the FDP 8 percent, and Die Linke also 8 percent. The CDU/CSU has an additional voter potential of 17 percent and Die Grünen 18 percent. The additional voter potential only exists to a marginal extent for the AfD, at 2 percent.

In view of how these voter potentials are distributed in terms of party politics, it is noteworthy that the established political camps (such as red-green, i.e. SPD-Die Grünen, or black-yellow, i.e. CDU/CSU-FDP) exist, but political camps for overlapping preferences are also strongly pronounced.

Only a minority of those who stated a party preference have no secondary preference. In other words, all groups of voters (except those of the AfD) comprise around three quarters swing voters. 27 percent of CDU/CSU, 23 percent of SPD, 24 percent of Die Grünen, 28 percent of FDP and 25 percent of Die Linke voters have only one voting preference. 45 percent of the AfD supporters do not state another party in addition to the AfD.

Around a fifth of the **CDU/CSU** voters could imagine voting for the SPD or Die Grünen respectively. Another 13 percent have a secondary preference for the FDP. Other parties do not play a role among the CDU/CSU voters. In the eastern states, there is a somewhat greater tendency among the CDU/CSU supporters to vote for the SPD and a lower tendency to vote for Die Grünen.

36 percent of the **SPD** voters state Die Grünen as their secondary preference, followed by 24 percent who would vote for the CDU/CSU. Die Linke could mobilise 10 percent of the SPD voters. In the western states, the secondary voting preferences among the SPD supporters shift in favour of Die Grünen and at the cost of Die Linke.

In the case of **Die Grünen** voters, one in three could imagine voting for the SPD. Around one fifth of the voters have a secondary preference in favour of the CDU/CSU or Die Linke. In the western states, there is a higher secondary preference for the CDU/CSU and a small tendency to switch over to Die Linke.

Among the **FDP** voters, 40 percent could imagine voting for the CDU/CSU. Voting for Die Grünen is conceivable for a further 11 percent. In the case of the FDP, there are hardly any differences in secondary preferences between the western and eastern federal states.

The greatest potential to switch exists among **Die Linke** supporters in favour of Die Grünen. 34 percent of Die Linke voters would consider voting for Die Grünen. Another 21 percent could vote for the SPD. In the eastern states, Die Linke could lose substantially more voters to the SPD; in the western states, a disproportionately higher willingness to switch exists with respect to Die Grünen.

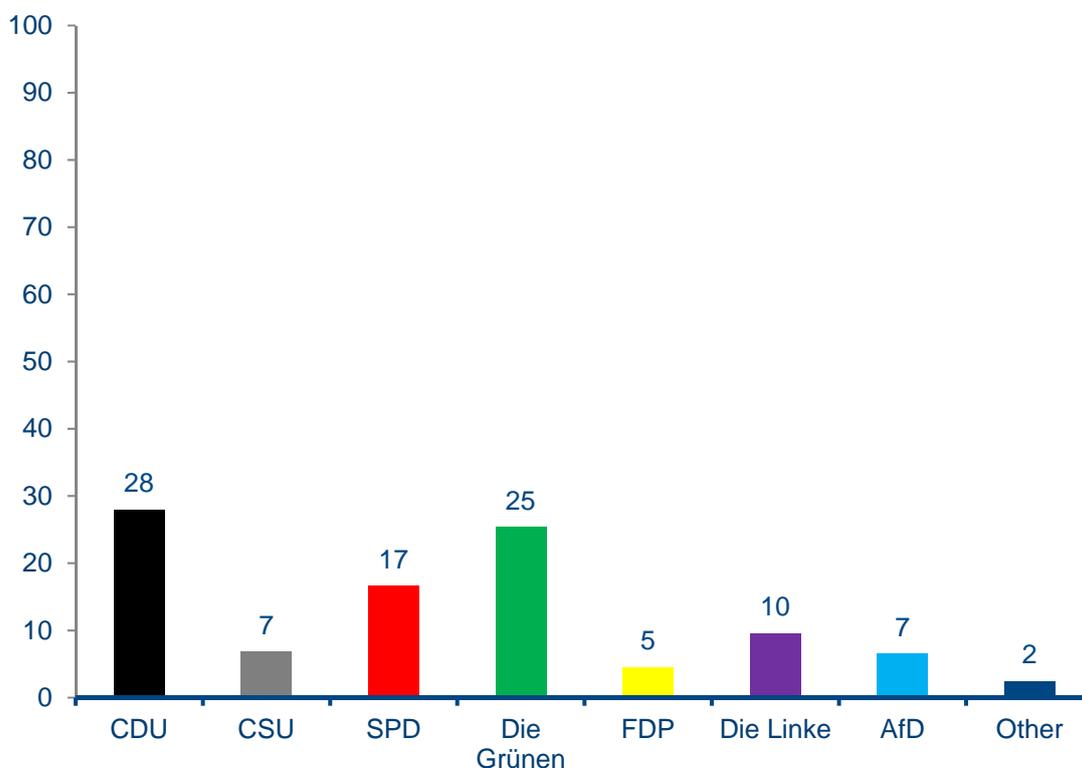
About a fifth of **AfD** supporters could also imagine voting for the CDU/CSU. Another 12 percent would consider voting for the FDP. The potential of swing voters is smaller in the eastern states than in the western states. The secondary preference in favour of the CDU is higher.

Due to the different sizes of the groups of voters, the secondary preferences would have different impacts on the election results if they were to come into full effect. For example, if the CDU/CSU were able to win over a fifth of Die Grünen supporters, they could improve their election result by 5 percentage points. If the CDU/CSU could convince a fifth of the AfD supporters, their election result would improve by 1.4 percentage points.

Figure 43: Voting Intention (Survey Period: 8 July to 30 December 2020)

Sunday Question

If federal elections were held next Sunday, which party would you vote for?
(For the secondary vote)

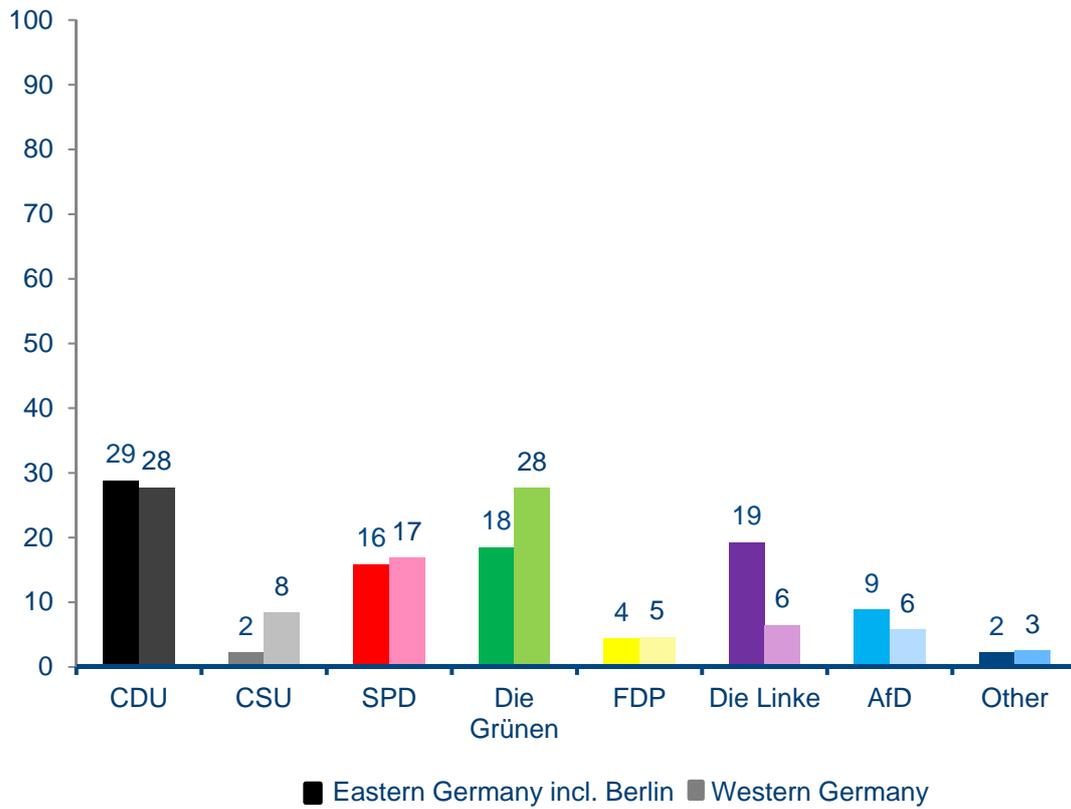


Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "would not vote/invalid vote", "don't know/no answer."

Figure 44: Voting Intention (Survey Period: 8 July to 30 December 2020)

"Sunday Question"

If federal elections were held next Sunday, which party would you vote for?
(For the secondary vote)



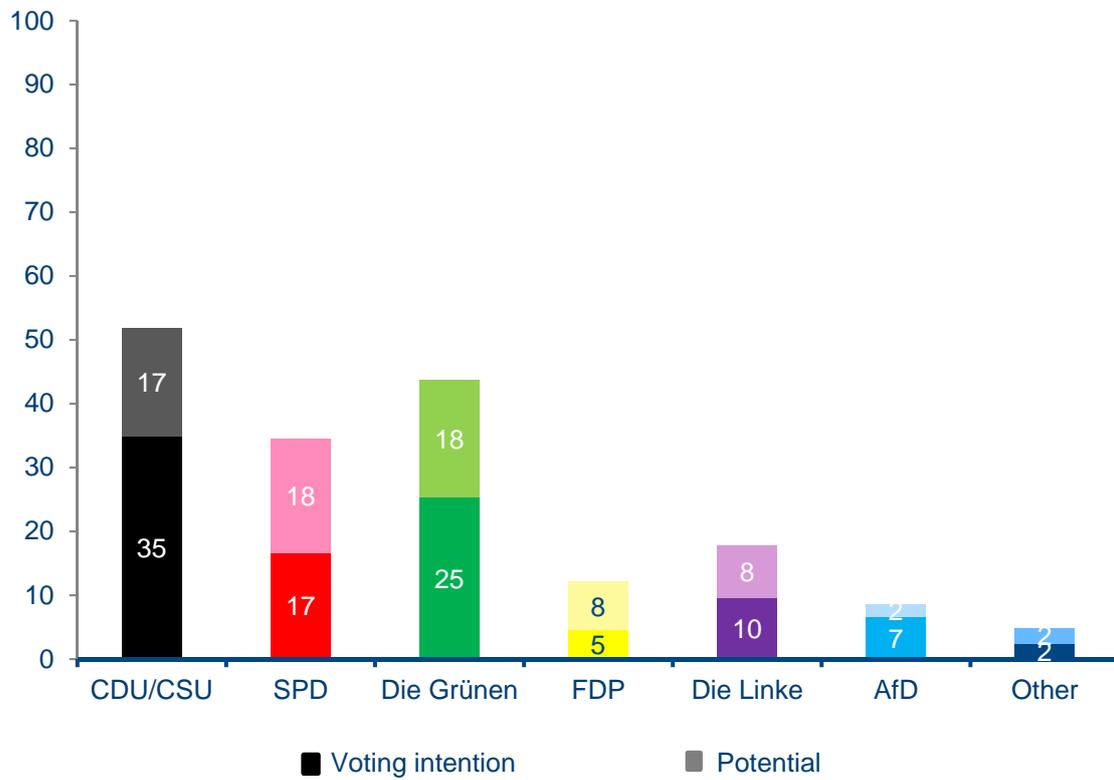
Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "would not vote/invalid vote", "don't know/no answer."

Figure 45: Political Sentiment

"Sunday Question" and Alternative Voting Intention

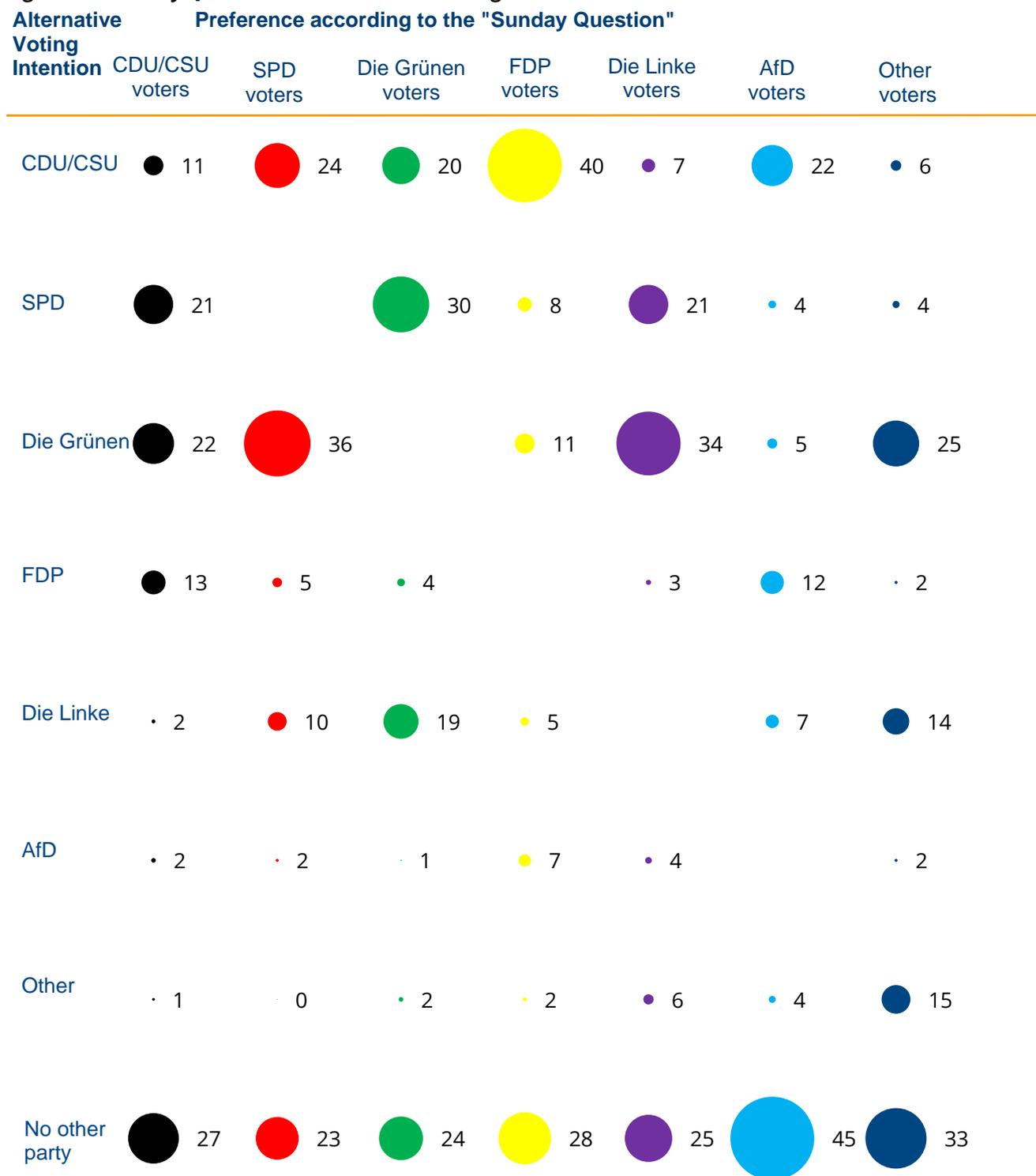
If federal elections were held next Sunday, which party would you vote for?
(For the secondary vote)

And could you imagine also voting for another party? If yes, which party?



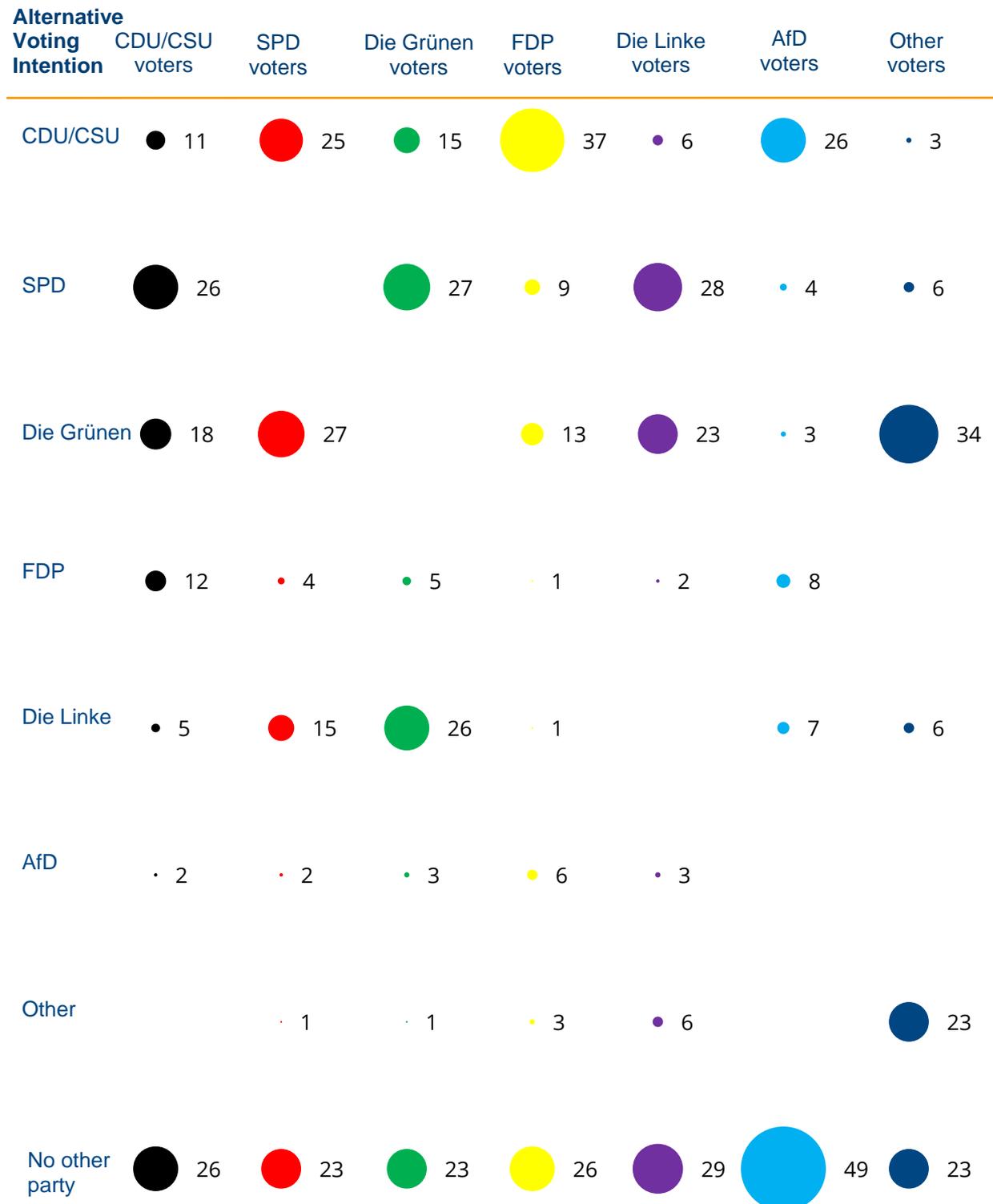
Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent. Missing values out of 100 percent: "would not vote/invalid vote", "don't know/no answer."

Figure 46: "Sunday Question" and Alternative Voting Intention



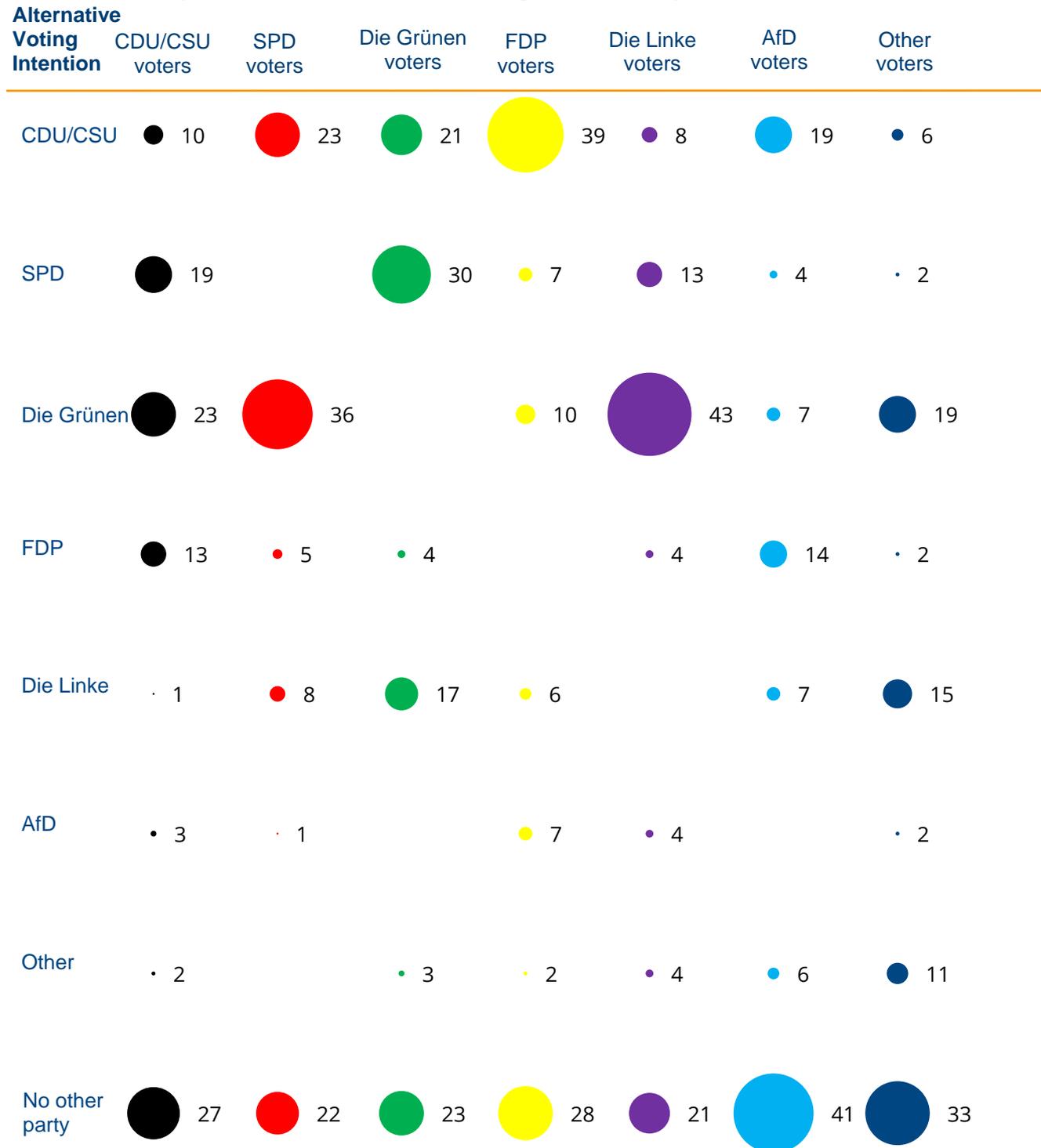
Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.

Figure 47: "Sunday Question" and Alternative Voting Intention in Eastern Germany
 Eastern Germany Preference according to the "Sunday Question"



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.

Figure 48: "Sunday Question" and Alternative Voting Intention in Western Germany
Western Germany
Alternative Voting Intention



Source: Survey 1018 by Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V., 2020. Values in percent.

The Study

In connection with the “Electorate survey” project, the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung investigates the general political attitudes in German society and analyses the attitudes of people towards the parties. The aim is to examine the longer-term loyalty and aversion towards parties, beyond the short-term effects of current issues and staffing developments.⁶

A representative, standardised telephone survey was therefore conducted with 8,042 interviews in total, which covered a broad range of topics in relation to political parties (Survey 1018 of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung).⁷ An extended period of time is necessary to survey such a large number of people – in this case from 8 July to 30 December 2020. For this reason, the survey does not record short-term, highly fluctuating views but fundamental attitudes that are stable over the long run and less dependent on developments in daily political affairs. The survey was carried out by USUMA GmbH on behalf of the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. USUMA is one of Germany’s leading independent opinion research institutes. Its customers include the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) and social science research. USUMA stands for “independent service institute for surveys, methods, and analyses” (in German: “Unabhängige Serviceeinrichtung für Umfragen, Methoden und Analysen”) and has been operating as a registered market and social research institute in accordance with recognised scientific practices since 1990. It is based in Berlin.⁸

The questionnaire was created by the Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung. The Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung also conducted the analysis of the raw data.

The survey was conducted by telephone using the dual-frame approach. 40 percent of the interviews were carried out via mobile telephony and 60 percent via the landline network. The sample was chosen at random from the ADM selection framework for landline and mobile telephony samples. A drawn telephone number was called up to ten times if contact was not initially successful to ensure that people who are difficult to reach were also included in the survey.

In each of the 401 districts and free cities, at least 15 people were questioned; there were individual exceptions in which this case number could not be completely reached.⁹ This makes regionalised analyses possible (see also Pokorny 2021). In addition, a total of 2,067 interviews were conducted in eastern Germany so that sufficient cases were available for analysis considering eastern and western Germany separately.

The data was weighted according to socio-structural criteria. Moreover, the overrepresentation of certain districts and the slight underrepresentation of eastern Germany resulting from the sample were offset by weighting.¹⁰ Analysis was exclusively based on weighted data. The survey is representative for the German electorate aged 18 years and above.

Unless otherwise indicated, Berlin is considered part of eastern Germany in all analyses that differentiate between eastern and western Germany.

Literature

Neu, Viola, 2021: Des Wählers Herz. Emotionale Parteienbewertung aus repräsentativen und qualitativen Umfragen. Berlin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

Pokorny, Sabine, 2021: Regionale Vielfalten vor der Bundestagswahl 2021. Ergebnisse einer repräsentativen Umfrage. Berlin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

Roose, Jochen, 2021: Lebensstilvielfalten vor der Bundestagswahl 2021. Eine repräsentative Umfrage zu Lebensstilen und Wahlverhalten. Berlin: Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung e.V.

Appendix: Parties in Germany

CDU/CSU	Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union	center-right
SPD	Social Democratic Party Germany	center-left
Bündnis 90/Die Grünen (Grüne)	Federation 90/The Greens	center-left
FDP	Liberal Democratic Party	center-right
Die Linke	The Left	far-left
AfD	Alternative for Germany	far-right

¹ Roose (2021).

² Pokorny (2021).

³ Only the average value is shown for Bremen. Due to the somewhat lower number of cases in Bremen, an overall distribution across all ten scale values seems inappropriate.

⁴ Neu (2021).

⁵ We will examine the question of voter potentials in a further publication.

⁶ See also Pokorny (2021) and Roose (2021) in addition to this project.

⁷ In addition, qualitative studies were conducted that are not included in this analysis. For instance, see Neu (2021). In the methodical explanations for the study, identical wording is used with other publications from this project, however this is not indicated with the use of quotation marks.

⁸ <https://www.usuma.com/>

⁹ Wolfsburg: 14, Oldenburg: 14, Ammerland: 13, Friesland: 13, Wittmund: 14, Bremerhaven: 14, Birkenfeld: 14, Eifelkreis Bitburg-Prüm: 13, Kaiserslautern: 14, Zweibrücken: 14, Aschaffenburg: 14, Mittenberg: 14.

¹⁰ A “political” weighting according to party preferences was not implemented. For this reason, the results in particular for preferences in hypothetical federal elections next Sunday (the “Sunday question”) may differ from the results of other surveys. Deviations may also arise as a result of the fact that this survey was conducted with more respondents than is typical of surveys on political sentiment. This also results in an extended survey period, which in turn may lead to differences compared to surveys conducted over very short timeframes.

Imprint

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