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Do Party Positions Affect the Public's Policy Preferences?*

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Abstract

The standard assumption of exogenous policy preferences implies that parties set their positions according to their voters' preferences. We investigate the reverse effect: Are the electorates' policy preferences responsive to party positions? In a representative German survey, we inform randomized treatment groups about the positions of political parties on two family policies, child care subsidy and universal student aid. In both experiments, results show that the treatment aligns the preferences of specific partisan groups with their preferred party's position on the policy under consideration, implying endogeneity of policy preferences. The information treatment also affects non-partisan swing voters.

Keywords: political parties, partisanship, survey experiment, information, endogenous preferences, voters, family policy

JEL classification: D72, D83, H52, J13, I28, P16

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1. Introduction

A standard assumption in the political economy literature is that the electorate's policy preferences are exogenous to the political process (e.g., Downs, 1957; Alesina, 1988; Besley and Coate, 1997; Lee et al., 2004). Consequently, political parties will in equilibrium choose policy positions that cater to their voters' preferences in order to win elections. Conversely, much less extensively studied theories of endogenous preferences suggest that institutions can shape public preferences (e.g., Bowles, 1998). While a substantial body of research has examined whether public policy preferences affect parties' positions (e.g., Levitt, 1996; Strömberg, 2004; Fujiwara, 2015), little is known about whether and how party positions shape public preferences. Empirical analysis of the causal effect of party positions on public preferences is challenging because natural experiments that induce exogenous variation in party positions are rare. Yet, a better understanding of the feedback between party positions and public policy preferences is relevant for policy as well as for modelling political behavior. This paper sheds light on the effects of party positions on the electorate's preferences by analyzing two specific family policies discussed in Germany: the child care subsidy *(Betreuungsgeld*) and universal student aid (*Elternunabhängiges BAföG*).

We conduct two survey experiments in a representative sample of the German voting-age population that includes an oversample of parents with school-aged children, an important special-interest group for family policies (N>4,000). For both policies, we inform a randomly selected treatment group about the positions of the six main parties before eliciting respondents' preferences towards the respective policy. The control group answers the same policy question without information on party positions. If the electorates' policy preferences were exogenously given, the experimental treatments should not affect respondents' stated policy preferences. If, however, political preferences are in fact endogenous to party positions, partisans' preferences should align more closely with their preferred party's position in the treatment group.

Our first analysis investigates preferences towards the child care subsidy. This controversially debated subsidy entitled parents who do not send their young children to publicly subsidized childcare facilities to receive a monthly payment of 150 Euro. In the control group, a majority of the German population opposes the child care subsidy (34 percent in favor, 56 percent opposed, 10 percent neither favor nor opposed). On average, providing information about current party positions does not significantly change public preferences towards the policy, which is not surprising because the treatment informs some partisans that their preferred party supports the policy and others that their preferred party opposes it.

Importantly, treatment effects vary strongly by individual partisanship. In the uninformed control group, a majority of supporters of the party which favors the child care subsidy actually *opposes* it (32 percent in favor, 58 percent opposed), which implies that party positions and uninformed partisans' preferences are largely misaligned on this policy. When provided with information about current party positions, these partisans are significantly more likely to support the policy (43 percent in favor, 47 percent opposed). Thus, the information treatment shifts these partisans' policy support and opposition by over 10 percentage points, overturning their majority against the child care subsidy by shifting their preferences towards their favored party's position. Analysis of the intensity of policy preferences indicates that the treatment shifts both weakly and strongly held preferences. We do not find significant treatment effects among partisans of other parties and non-partisans on this policy.

In our second analysis, we show that party positions also matter for preferences towards a proposal to reform federal student aid, a topic that was much less debated in public. According to the proposal, the status quo of needs-based student aid should be replaced by universal student aid for all students. Overall, the German public is divided on the proposal of universal student aid: in the control group, 48 percent are in favor and 45 percent opposed.

Again, while informing about current party positions does not change average public preferences towards universal student aid, there are effect heterogeneities with respect to the respondents' party affiliation. Among partisans of parties that oppose universal student aid, a slight majority in the uninformed control group *supports* the policy (51 percent in favor, 43 percent opposed). This again reveals fundamental misalignment between party positions and uninformed partisans' preferences. The information treatment significantly ($p<0.1$) shifts these partisans' preferences towards their parties' position, with 43 percent of them favoring the policy and 48 percent opposing it. In contrast, there is no significant treatment effect for respondents attached to parties that favor universal student aid.

Subgroup analyses reveal that providing information about party positions does not only affect preferences of partisans, but also of non-partisan swing voters. Specifically, swing voters – defined as respondents who regularly turn out to vote but do not identify as long-term supporters of any specific party – are more likely to support universal student aid in the treatment group than in the control group. We also investigate the prevalence of treatment effects in different sociodemographic subgroups of the affected partisan groups. While often shy of statistical power, this explorative analysis suggests, for instance, that parents show a particularly strong reaction to party-position information on universal student aid.

Overall, our results provide a proof of concept that the electorate's policy preferences can

be endogenous to party positions. Notably, these endogeneities seem not to be driven by the salience of the specific policy. While the child care subsidy was the subject of heated public and political debates, universal student aid received much less attention, possibly because the former but not the latter was actually implemented. Thus, the endogeneity of policy preferences is prevalent both for a relatively salient policy and for a policy that entered the public discourse less prominently. While our experiments on two policy initiatives do not allow us to draw general conclusions about the conditions under which party-position information does or does not affect partisans' preferences, it is interesting to note that treatment effects are apparent when the group of parties supporting or opposing the respective policy is rather homogeneous, but not when it includes parties from across the political spectrum. Party-position information may thus fail to align partisans with their preferred party's position if they learn that parties from the other side of the political spectrum take the same stance as their preferred party.

While differentiating the possible mechanisms that underlie our general finding is beyond the scope of our experimental design, two possible interpretations are the use of heuristics and the priming of identity. In the political science literature, a common explanation for endogenous voter preferences is the use of heuristics. Individuals who are largely uninformed about specific political issues (Bartels, 1996; Lau and Redlawsk, 2001) may rely on simple cues when forming opinions in order to minimize the cognitive costs of their preference formation process (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974). While one possible interpretation of our general finding is that some individuals use party positions as shortcuts to form policy preferences, other aspects such as effects on policies with high and low salience, effects in directly involved subgroups like parents, and effects on strongly as well as weakly held preferences are harder to reconcile with this interpretation. A possible alternative interpretation is that the information on party positions triggers respondents to adjust preferences to match their partisan identity (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000), although such an interpretation cannot account for the effects on non-partisans.

Our study contributes to several strands of existing research. It complements the economic literature that investigates the extent to which voter preferences are endogenous to political party positions.[1] Convincing causal evidence on this relationship is relatively scarce due to a lack of exogenous variation in party positions. Recently, Carlsson et al. (2018) examine public preferences towards signature policies of radical populist parties in Swedish municipality elections. Exploiting nonlinearities in council seat assignments, they provide evidence that

[1] Relatedly, research in economics and political science studies the determinants of citizens' voting behavior, as opposed to their policy preferences (e.g., DellaVigna et al., 2017; Healy et al., 2017).

increased representation of extreme parties decreases public support for their signature policies. We complement this analysis by conducting a direct test of the effects of party positions on public preferences in the context of family policies. While Carlsson et al. (2018) suggest higher politician turnover and negative media coverage as potential channels for their effects, our survey experiments explicitly show the effect of party positions on public preferences net of such mediating channels, and they indicate that the effect is at work beyond extreme parties.

Relatedly, several papers in political science have investigated how party positions, voting recommendations, or party representatives' policy positions affect political preferences and behavior (e.g., Campbell, 1980; Rahn, 1993; Lupia, 1994; Bartels, 1996; Lau and Redlawsk, 2001; Goren et al., 2009; Broockman and Butler, 2017). Closest to our paper, Samuels and Zucco (2014) provide experimental evidence that voters use party positions to form preferences towards certain "obscure" left-wing or right-wing policies in Brazil. We extend this small evidence base by investigating the causal effect of party-position information on public preferences towards family policy proposals in Germany. More generally, our paper relates to the descriptive literature that investigates the relationship between individuals' political ideology and preferences (e.g., Sears et al., 1980; Hasenfeld and Rafferty, 1989; Blekesaune and Quadagno, 2003). We complement these studies by establishing a causal link between information about parties' positions and policy preferences.

Methodologically, our paper contributes to the growing literature in economics that employs survey experiments to examine the effects of information provision on public preferences (e.g., Cruces et al., 2013; Kuziemko et al., 2015; Bursztyn, 2016; Grigorieff et al., 2016; Haaland and Roth, 2017; Lergetporer et al., 2018; Roth and Wohlfart, 2018). We extend this literature by showing that the effects of information treatments on public preferences are not limited to information about facts which underlie the respective policy itself (e.g., the effect of informing about current public spending levels on preferences for spending increases), but that they are also prevalent in the context of information about party positions.

The remainder of the paper is structured as follows. Section 2 provides background information on the investigated policies. Section 3 describes the opinion survey and the experimental design. Section 4 presents our main results. Section 5 analyses effect heterogeneities. Section 6 concludes.

2. Background Information

This section provides background on the two German family policy initiatives whose policy preferences we investigate in this paper, the child care subsidy and universal student aid.

2.1 Two Family Policies with Differing Public Salience

Our paper focuses on the child care subsidy and universal student aid, two family policies that offer universal financial support for their respective target group, irrespective of income. Before the national German elections in 2013, each party took a position on these two policy initiatives.[2] This allows us to use the same uniform information treatment for all respondents, irrespective of their state of residence. We expected that at least some partisans are uninformed about their party's position on the two policies, which constitutes a necessary condition for the information treatment to affect policy preferences (Samuels and Zucco, 2014). The significant information effects reported below suggest that the selected policies fulfil this criterion.

A crucial difference between the policies is that the child care subsidy was actually implemented, whereas universal student aid was discussed but never introduced. As a result, both policies differed greatly in their public visibility. While the introduction of the child care subsidy was accompanied by a controversial public debate, discussions of universal student aid have never taken center stage. Focusing on two policy initiatives with different public attention allows us to study whether endogeneity of public policy preferences hinges on the extent of public salience of the policy under consideration.

The difference in public attention is nicely illustrated by the relative search frequencies of the two policies on the internet. Appendix Figure A1 depicts the relative frequency of Google search requests in Germany from January to June 2015 (i.e., the half-year before the end of our survey's three-month field phase; see section 3.1). The figure clearly shows that the relative number of Google search requests for the child care subsidy ("*Betreuungsgeld*") dwarfed search requests for universal student aid ("*Elternunabhängiges BAföG*"). To put these numbers into perspective, the figure also shows searches for the German chancellor ("*Angela Merkel*"). As it turns out, search requests for the child care subsidy are comparable to, and sometimes exceed, searches for the chancellor, whereas searches for universal student aid were much lower throughout the entire period.

[2] In general, it is not self-evident that the different federal-state branches of a given party agree on a common position on a family policy, because family policies might vary across federal states. For the case of the two policies investigated here, however, party positions were internally consistent. We collected information on the different party positions from a commonly used voting advice application by the German Federal Agency for Political Education (called "Wahl-O-Mat"; see http://www.bpb.de/politik/wahlen/wahl-o-mat/), from the state parties' programs, and, where necessary, from direct inquiries to federal parties' bureaus.

2.2 Child Care Subsidy

The child care subsidy *(Betreuungsgeld*) was introduced Germany-wide in August 2013. The law entitled parents to receive a monthly payment of 150 Euro for each child in the second and third year of age if the respective child did not attend a publicly subsidized childcare program. Eligibility for the subsidy was independent of income. The subsidy was paid in addition to other family support programs. After our survey, the German Federal Constitutional Court abolished the existing policy in July 2015 because it interfered with the legislative autonomy of the federal states in the area of family policies that is guaranteed in the German constitution.

Proponents of the subsidy argue that the payments improve freedom of choice for young families between private childcare (including care by a stay-at-home parent) and public childcare programs. According to proponents, incentives for families are distorted by public financing of public childcare facilities, and the child care subsidy increases efficiency of family's choices and hence children's well-being (Fichtl et al., 2012).

Opponents primarily criticize that the policy would decrease public childcare enrollment rates among children from low socioeconomic backgrounds, as their parents have lower opportunity costs of parental childcare. At the same time, these children would likely benefit most from public childcare (e.g., Elango et al., 2015). Another point of criticism is that the policy caters to traditional gender roles by providing disincentives for young mothers to re-enter the labor market (Schuler-Harms, 2010).

The six major political parties in Germany, CDU/CSU (the federal Christian Democratic Union and its Bavarian sister party Christian Social Union), SPD (Social Democratic Party), Linke (Left Party), Grüne (Green Party), AfD (Alternative for Germany), and FDP (Free Democratic Party), adopted clear positions on the issue. While the major conservative party (CDU/CSU) was in favor of the policy, the more left-leaning parties Linke, Grüne, and SPD opposed the policy and demanded its abolishment. The right-wing AfD also opposed the child care subsidy. The liberal FDP was rather neutral.[3]

[3] Many major nationwide newspapers in Germany commented on the ongoing discussion among the different parties (see, for instance, Ulrike Meyer Timpe in *Die Zeit* Nr. 46/2007 http://www.zeit.de/2007/46/Argument-Kinderbetreuung [accessed 12 December 2018] or Rudzio Kolja in *Die Zeit* Nr. 32/2013 http://www.zeit.de/2013/32/sozialpolitik-betreuungsgeld [accessed 12 December 2018]). Interestingly, the German parliament had passed the child care subsidy in 2012 with the votes of delegates from CDU/CSU and FDP.

2.3 Universal Student Aid

Governmental financial support for university students is based on the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz*, commonly known as *BAföG*), which currently provides students from low-income households with direct transfers of up to 735 Euro a month. Half of the payment is a grant, and the other half is an interest-free loan. Eligibility and the amount paid depend on parental income, students' own income, their partners' income (if applicable), and the number of siblings.[4]

A proposal to extend this system to lump-sum payments for all students (regardless of individual financial need and family resources) was discussed as part of the campaign for the German federal election in 2013. According to proponents, this change in policy would reduce the administrative burden of student aid management, reduce uncertainty about available financial support for prospective students, and encourage university enrollment. Opponents emphasize increased fiscal costs and argue that a change to universal student aid would be highly regressive since a disproportionate share of university students is from high socioeconomic backgrounds.

In the political debate, the FDP, as well as Grüne and Linke, support the proposal, whereas CDU/CSU and the AfD oppose it. The SPD is relatively neutral. Although the parties disagree in their stance on the introduction of universal student aid, the reform proposal was not as controversially discussed in the public as the child care subsidy.[5]

3. Data and Empirical Strategy

This section describes the opinion survey, the design of the experiments, and the empirical model.

3.1 The Opinion Survey

We implemented our experiments in an opinion survey with 4,105 respondents that we conducted in Germany in 2015, the ifo Education Survey. The sample consists of a baseline sample (N=3,063) that is representative for the German voting-age population (18 years and older) and an oversample of parents with children aged between 6 and 15 years (N=1,042). The

[4] See https://www.bafög.de/de/bundesausbildungs--foerderungsgesetz---bafoeg-204.php [accessed 12 December 2018] for details.

[5] Media coverage was far less than for child care subsidy. Heike Schmoll's article in *FAZ* 2013 (http://www.faz.net/aktuell/politik/bundestagswahl/die-plaene-der-parteien/plaene-der-parteien-8-der-bund-soll-mitreden-und-zahlen-12538721.html [accessed 12 December 2018]) is one of the few contributions in major newspapers which address universal student aid.

oversample allows us to study preferences of those who are potentially affected by the reforms. The survey encompassed 33 questions related to educational topics as well as questions about respondents' sociodemographic characteristics.[6] Median completion time was 18 minutes. The sampling and polling were carried out by the survey company TNS Infratest (now called Kantar Public) between April and June 2015.

While rare in experimental analyses, survey representativeness constitutes a key requirement for studying determinants of the electorate's policy preferences (e.g., in the framework of median voter models). Since computerized surveys likely produce non-participation bias for people who are less familiar with digital technologies, TNS Infratest collected the data in two strata. First, persons who use the internet (80 percent) were drawn from an online panel and answered all questions autonomously on their devices. Second, persons who reported not to use the internet (20 percent) were surveyed at their homes by trained interviewers. These respondents were provided with a tablet computer for completing the survey. This mixed-mode design allows us to draw general conclusions for the German electorate.

All analyses presented in this paper use survey weights that were designed to match official statistics with respect to age, gender, parental status, school degree, federal state, and municipality size. In our main analysis, oversampled parents are weighted down accordingly to assure representativeness of the German electorate.

3.2 The Survey Experiments

Experimental Design

Our aim is to investigate whether information provision on competing party positions changes public support for the two family policies. In both experiments, we provide information to a randomly selected group of respondents before eliciting their preferences for the respective policy in the same way as in the uninformed control group. Our information treatments informed respondents about the official positions held by the six main German parties.

In our first experiment, we test the impact of information provision on preferences for the child care subsidy. The main question was worded as follows: "The government pays parents who do not enroll their children aged 2 to 3 years in a childcare facility, but instead provide private home care, a child care subsidy in addition to the child benefits. Do you favor or oppose

[6] The questions and wordings can be found at www.cesifo-group.de/ifo-bildungsbarometer.

that parents receive a child care subsidy in addition to the child benefits?"[7] Respondents were asked to select one of the following five answer categories: strongly favor, somewhat favor, neither favor nor oppose, somewhat oppose, strongly oppose.[8] In contrast to the uninformed control group, respondents in the information treatment group received the following information when stating their policy preferences: "CDU/CSU tend to favor the child care subsidy, SPD, Linke, Grüne, and AfD tend to oppose it, the FDP is rather neutral."

Our second experiment assesses the impact of party-position information on public preferences for universal student aid. The question was worded as follows: "*BAföG* is federal financial aid for students which is paid contingent on parents' income. Do you favor or oppose that all students should generally receive *BAföG* by the government irrespective of parents' income?" Respondents in the treatment group were additionally informed about the following party positions when stating their preferences for universal student aid: "Linke, Grüne, and FDP tend to favor paying *BAföG* irrespective of parents' income, CDU/CSU and AfD tend to oppose it, the position of the SPD is rather neutral."[9]

We list party positions on the whole spectrum of the political landscape rather than just providing information on the position of the party which the respondent supports. This practice follows previous studies that provided information on party positions (e.g. Cohen, 2003; Levendusky, 2010; Druckman et al., 2013; Samuels and Zucco, 2014). Since all treated respondents receive the exact same information, we can directly compare the effects of information provision across respondents with different party preferences. This design feature also allows us to elicit party preferences *after* respondents stated their policy preferences, which lowers the risk that stated policy preferences are influenced by priming party identities or by respondents' preferences for consistency (e.g., Falk and Zimmermann, 2013). One limitation of providing information on the whole spectrum of party positions is that we are not able to tell

[7] Child benefits (*Kindergeld*) refer to the financial support paid by the German government to parents. In 2015, the amount paid per child was 188 Euro for the first and second child, 194 Euro for the third child, and 219 Euro for the fourth child and any additional children.

[8] Appendix Table A1 presents the question wordings of the experiments in this paper, and Appendix Figure A2 provides screenshots of the survey questions as they appeared on respondents' devices. To prompt people to give a considered answer and to minimize the error of central tendency, the category "neither favor nor oppose" was placed below the other answer categories for both questions. We implemented a methodological experiment on another survey question (on granting teachers civil service protections) and found that the position of the neutral category does not change relative support and opposition towards the policy proposal (not shown).

[9] Like many other recent papers using survey experiments, our outcomes of interest are self- reported policy preferences (e.g., Cruces et al., 2013; Kuziemko et al. 2015; Karadja et al., 2017). Recent evidence corroborates the relevance of survey-based outcome measures since they closely correspond to actual political behavior, such as signing petitions or donating to charity (e.g., Haaland and Roth, 2017; Roth and Wohlfart, 2018; Alesina et al., 2018).

whether treatment effects stem from respondents who (i) adopt the position of the party they support or (ii) react to the other parties' positions (e.g., by taking the opposite stance from parties which they dislike). Additionally, respondents might respond to the distribution of parties across the spectrum, for example, by basing own policy preferences on the number of parties in support of a certain policy. While this paper presents the gross effects of all these possible mechanisms, disentangling these channels is an interesting avenue for future research.

Eliciting Partisanship for Political Parties

In eliciting party preferences, we focus on partisanship as a long-term tendency towards a certain party, rather than short-term voting intentions. In the context of investigating the endogeneity of policy preferences with respect to party positions, long-term party attachment is particularly relevant because it reflects fundamental political values instead of short-term considerations guiding intended voting behavior. Furthermore, combining information on long-term party attachment with information on voter participation allows us to identify swing voters, which are a particularly interesting focus group. The fact that treatment status does not predict long-term party preferences (results available upon request) underlines the validity of our measure of partisanship, which should not be influenced by information on the parties' positions on just two issues within the whole policy spectrum.[10]

Partisanship extends over a wide spectrum of political parties. In our sample, 31 percent of respondents identify as non-partisans. 23.0 percent state to generally support CDU/CSU, 21.3 percent support SPD, 8.6 percent Linke, 7.5 percent Grüne, and 4.4 percent AfD. Only 2.2 percent support FDP, and 1.7 percent support other parties.

Partisans of the different parties differ substantially in their sociodemographic characteristics. Table 1 provides descriptive results from a multinomial logit regression of partisanship on sociodemographic characteristics. It is reassuring that stylized facts about partisans are replicated in our data. For instance, respondents with higher income are more likely to support the conservative party CDU/CSU or the liberal party FDP, and are less likely to sympathize with the left party Linke. Respondents with low educational attainment are more likely to support SPD and less likely to support Grüne, and respondents living in East Germany are more likely to support Linke and less likely to support SPD and Grüne.

[10] The fact that the treatment does not predict stated party preferences also suggests that experimenter demand effects are not important in our setting. Consistently, Mummolo and Peterson (2019) show that experimenter demand effects are likely absent in survey experiments, and de Quidt et al. (2018) show that they hardly affect results of experiments on economic preferences.

3.3 The Econometric Model

We estimate the effects of the experimental information treatment on policy preferences with the following regression model:

$$y_i = \alpha_0 + \alpha_1 T_i + \delta' X_i + \varepsilon_i \quad (1)$$

where y_i is the outcome variable of interest for respondent i, T_i indicates whether respondent i received the information treatment, X_i is a vector of control variables, and ε_i is an error term. Throughout the paper, we measure the outcome variable both as the probability to support and the probability to oppose the respective policy, but we also analyze effects on each of the five underlying answer categories separately to investigate preference intensity. Since ε_i is uncorrelated with treatment status through randomization, the parameter α_1 provides an unbiased estimate of the causal treatment effect of information provision even without including further covariates. However, since the inclusion of covariates can increase the precision of estimates, we show results both with and without covariates in our main analyses.

Since we expect the information treatment to operate through respondents' party preferences, we are particularly interested in heterogeneous treatment effects by partisanship. In our preferred specification, we group individuals into four categories according to their partisanship: non-partisans, supporters of parties that favor the respective policy, supporters of parties that are neutral towards the policy, and supporters of parties that oppose the policy. Hence, we additionally employ the following regression model:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 T_i + \beta_2 \textstyle\sum_j P_i^j + \beta_3 \left(T_i \textstyle\sum_j P_i^j\right) + \delta' X_i + \eta_i \qquad with\ j \in \{f, n, o\} \quad (2)$$

where P_i^f equals 1 if respondent i supports a party that favors the respective policy (0 otherwise), P_i^n refers to supporters of parties that are neutral towards the policy, and P_i^o to supporters of parties that oppose the policy. The information treatment effect for the baseline group of respondents without long-term party preference is given by β_1. The coefficients β_3 yield the additional effect on those who support a party that favors, is neutral towards, or opposes the policy, respectively. In additional analyses, we also show disaggregated results for partisans of each of the six major parties.

3.4 Test of Randomization

To check whether randomization in our two experiments successfully balanced respondents' observable characteristics C_i between control and treatment groups, we estimate the following model for each covariate and both experiments:

$$C_i = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 T_i + \xi_i \quad (3)$$

Table 2 reports the γ_1 coefficients from these regressions along with the corresponding means of the covariates. Sociodemographic characteristics are well balanced across experimental groups: There are small but significant differences (p<0.1) in only 3 out of 64 pairwise comparisons. Thus, the share of significant differences does not exceed the share that would be expected by pure chance. In addition, regressing treatment status simultaneously on all covariates, partisanship, and an indicator for item non-response yields p-values for joint significance of 0.478 in the child care subsidy experiment and 0.140 in the universal student aid experiment.

While item non-response is very low at around one percent, there is a statistically significant difference in non-response between treatment and control group in the experiment on child care subsidy (see bottom part of Table 2). In order to rule out that non-random item non-response drives our results, we run the following bounding exercise: For the 13 respondents (3 in the control group and 10 in the treatment group) who did not state their preferences, we assign policy preferences that deviate as much as possible from the position of their preferred party. While this imputation makes it less likely to detect treatment effects, it leaves our qualitative results unchanged (results available upon request).[11]

4. Party-Position Information and Public Policy Preferences: Main Results

This section presents our main results on how the experimental provision of information about the positions of political parties affects the public's policy preferences for the child care subsidy and for universal student aid.

4.1 Treatment Effects on Policy Preferences for Child Care Subsidy

We start our analysis by investigating whether the information treatment changes average public support for the child care subsidy across all respondents. The top panel of Table 3 depicts the results from regressions based on equation (1), investigating both support for and opposition

[11] We ran the bounding exercise twice: While partisans who did not provide an answer were always assigned the preference furthest away from their favored party's position, non-partisans were first assigned answer category "strongly favor" and then "strongly oppose". Note that no partisan of parties with a neutral position skipped this question.

against the child care subsidy.[12] Odd-numbered columns present estimates without controls, even-numbered columns include a rich set of sociodemographic control variables.[13]

The results indicate that a majority of respondents in the control group (56 percent) opposes the child care subsidy (see control mean). Only a minority (34 percent) supports it. The remainder is neither in favor nor opposed. As the small and insignificant coefficients on the treatment indicator show, the provision of information about the different parties' positions does not affect average support for, or opposition against, the child care subsidy. This average null effect is not surprising, given that some respondents learn that their preferred party supports the policy, whereas other respondents learn that their preferred party opposes it.

Since we are primarily interested in whether partisans align their policy preferences with their preferred party's position, we next investigate preferences by partisanship. Figure 1 illustrates our main results on preferences for the child care subsidy. In the uninformed control group, the majority of partisans of the party which favors the child care subsidy actually *opposes* the policy (32 percent in favor, 58 percent opposed). Thus, partisans' uninformed preferences for the child care subsidy do not reflect their favored parties' position. Interestingly, these shares are statistically indistinguishable from partisans of parties which oppose the policy (31 percent in favor, 63 percent opposed). By contrast, non-partisans' preferences are significantly more favorable towards the child care subsidy (40 percent in favor, 47 percent opposed).

Importantly, respondents' reactions to the information treatment depend on partisanship. Table 4 presents estimates of heterogeneous treatment effects with respect to respondents' partisanship based on equation (2). There are no significant treatment effects on policy preferences of respondents who support parties that oppose or are neutral to the child care subsidy and of non-partisans.

In contrast, the information treatment significantly shifts preferences of partisans of the party that favors the child care subsidy, aligning their preferences more closely with their preferred party's position (see also Figure 1). Among this group, the treatment increases support for the policy from 32 percent to 43 percent and turns a majority opposing the policy (58 percent opposed) into a minority (47 percent remain opposed). Both the increase in support by 10.2 percentage points and the decrease in opposition by 10.9 percentage points are statistically and

[12] We use linear probability models throughout the paper. (Ordered) probit models lead to the same qualitative results (available upon request).

[13] The controls are essentially those listed in Table 2; see notes to Table 3 for details. The slightly reduced number of observations in the specifications with controls is due to item non-response on control variables; imputing missing observations on the control variables and running the model with control variables for the full sample provides qualitatively identical results (available upon request).

quantitatively significant.[14] Thus, these partisans' preferences are endogenous with respect to their preferred party's position.

The party-position information does not only affect weakly held preferences, but also strongly held preferences. The coefficients on the interaction term between the treatment indicator and partisans of the party that favors the policy in Appendix Table A2 shows that the treatment effects reported in Table 4 stem from shifts both in strongly held preferences (columns 1 and 5) and weakly held preferences (column 2).[15]

4.2 Treatment Effects on Policy Preferences for Universal Student Aid

The bottom panel of Table 3 reports results from estimating equation (1) for the experiment on universal student aid. Overall, the German public is divided on the issue of whether student aid should be paid independently of parental income (48 percent in favor, 45 opposed, remainder neither in favor nor opposed). Again, the information treatment has no average effect on the preferences of the public as a whole.

In the uninformed control group, partisan preferences again do not align well with their preferred party's position (Figure 2). The shares of respondents supporting universal student aid are statistically indistinguishable between partisans of parties favoring the policy (52 percent in favor, 43 percent opposed) and partisans of parties opposing the policy (51 percent favor, 43 percent opposed). At the same time, non-partisans are significantly (p<0.1) less likely to support the proposal (43 percent in favor, 46 percent opposed).[16]

Estimates of heterogeneous treatment effects by partisanship in Table 5 again indicate that partisans are susceptible to the information treatment. While a narrow majority of partisans whose parties oppose universal student aid *supports* this policy in the control group, this support decreases significantly (p<0.1) to 43 percent when information about the parties' positions is

[14] Since we test for treatment effects in four subgroups (partisans of parties favoring, opposing, and neutral to the policy, as well as non-partisans), false positives due to multiple hypothesis testing are a potential concern (e.g., List et al., 2019). The most conservative correction to account for multiplicity is to multiply the unadjusted p-values with the number of hypotheses tested (Bonferroni, 1935). The p-value of the Wald test for treatment effects for partisans of parties that favor the policy is p=0.004 in the preferred specification of column 2 of Table 4. That is, the treatment coefficient remains significant (p<0.02) after correcting for the four hypotheses tested.

[15] Eichenberger and Serna (1996) argue that information can alter voting behavior by changing the distribution of voters' assessments of a given policy, even if information does not affect the mean assessment. We do not find evidence for such an effect in our data: The variance of policy preferences (on a five-point scale) among partisans of the party that favors the child care subsidy does not differ significantly between the control group and the treatment group (p=0.64, unweighted F test for homogeneity in variances).

[16] Previous evidence showed positive associations between party positions and partisans' preferences towards classic redistributive policies (e.g., Kuziemko et al., 2015). The lack of such associations for the child care subsidy and universal student aid is consistent with the notion that party positions are less salient in the domain of the family policies investigated here.

provided (see also Figure 2).[17] Similarly, information provision aligns the preferences of partisans of parties that favor universal student aid more closely to their preferred parties' position, but this effect is not statistically significant at conventional levels.

Interestingly, in this case also policy preferences of non-partisans are affected by the information provision. Among those respondents who indicate that they do not lean towards a particular political party in the long term, providing information about the different parties' positions on the policy significantly decreases opposition from 46 percent to 38 percent ($p<0.05$) and increases support from 43 percent to 47 percent.

The bottom panel of Appendix Table A2 presents treatment effect estimates on each of the five answer categories. In this case, the treatment primarily affects weak preferences among partisans of parties that oppose universal student aid.

4.3 Discussion

We designed our experiments to test the basic question of whether the public's preferences towards certain policies can be endogenous to the position that their preferred political party takes on these policies. As such, our result that some partisan groups significantly change their policy preferences in response to party-position information provides proof of concept that party positions can indeed be important for shaping public preferences.

At the same time, our results also show that the relevance of this mechanism is not universal in all partisan groups.[18] While the experimental design is not rich enough to provide general answers as to when party positions do and do not have significant effects, the results provide some indications that may warrant further analysis in future research aimed at going beyond proof of concept into investigating cognitive and behavioral mechanisms of voters more closely.

First, our results suggest that the effect of party positions on public policy preferences does not hinge on the policy's salience. We find significant treatment effects of party-position information both in the rather salient policy topic of the child care subsidy which was subject to heated and highly visible public debates and in the less salient policy topic of universal student aid that had limited public visibility.

[17] While the treatment effect of a 7 percentage-point decrease in policy support for these partisans is quantitatively significant, the power of our statistical tests is limited: Given the *p*-value of the corresponding coefficient in column 2 of Table 5 ($p=0.098$), the significance of this effect is not robust to Bonferroni-type adjustment for multiple hypothesis testing.

[18] In fact, in a related analysis we do not find significant effects of party-position information on preferences for abolishing the constitutional prohibition for the federal government to interfere in states' education policies (*Kooperationsverbot*; results available upon request).

Second, it is unsurprising that partisans of parties that are neutral towards the respective policy are not significantly affected by being informed about party positions. These partisans effectively learn that their preferred party does not take a strong stance on the policy.

Third, our experiments provide evidence that party-position information can align partisans' preferences to their preferred party's position if the respective party takes a clear stance for or against the policy under consideration. This result speaks to the literature on political polarization (e.g., Druckman et al., 2013) by showing that information about party positions can increase polarization in the electorates' policy preferences. Thus, they provide a complementary explanation for why voters become more polarized with increased availability of information (e.g., Ortoleva and Snowberg, 2015).

At the same time, the reason why we find effects for partisans of policy-favoring but not policy-opposing parties in the first experiment, and vice versa (at least in terms of statistical significance) in the second experiment, is less clear. One possible interpretation relates to the homogeneity of the respective party groups about which respondents are informed. In the first experiment, only one party favors the policy. By contrast, the group of parties opposing it is very heterogeneous, including parties both from the left and the right side of the political spectrum. Conversely, the group of parties favoring the policy in the second experiment is very heterogeneous, including both left-wing parties and the right-of-center liberal party, whereas two right-of-center parties oppose the policy. Thus, being informed about parties' positions may fail to align partisans' preferences with their preferred party's position if they learn that parties on the other side of the political spectrum take the same position on the policy under consideration.[19] While this is one possible interpretation, degrees of freedom in comparing two separate experiments do not allow for a solid test of this proposition, and alternative interpretations are certainly possible. For example, the extent to which partisans align their preferences with their parties' positions may ultimately be policy-specific, suggesting the usefulness of future analyses beyond the two family policies studied here.

Fourth, in a similar way non-partisans may in fact be affected by party-position information even though they do not have a long-term tendency to follow one specific party. Learning how different political parties – both ones they may like and ones they may dislike – stand towards the policy may be relevant for their preference formation process, as well. In particular, the

[19] The same type of reasoning may in fact explain why, although treatment effects go in the same direction for partisans of the two policy-opposing parties in the second experiment, they are much larger and reach statistical significance only for AfD partisans (see Appendix Table A3 for disaggregated results for each of the six major parties). If partisans of the center-right CDU/CSU dislike the fact that the far-right AfD takes the same position, they may be less triggered to change their preferences to align with their preferred party.

group of non-partisans combines two distinct subgroups: on the one hand, swing voters who show political interest but are not bound to one party; and on the other hand, people with limited interest in politics and voting in general. We turn to this distinction next.

5. Heterogeneous Treatment Effects

This section tests for heterogeneities in treatment effects, focusing on swing voters among the non-partisans and on different sociodemographic subgroups among partisans.

5.1 Swing Voters: Effect Heterogeneity by Voting Behavior among Non-Partisans

Results in the previous section showed that non-partisans' preferences towards the child care subsidy are unaffected by the information treatment, whereas the treatment does affect their preferences towards universal student aid. Hence, also non-partisans' preferences can be endogenous with respect to party positions. To provide a more detailed analysis of non-partisans, we examine effect heterogeneities with respect to their voting behavior. A virtue of measuring partisanship as long-term party attachment is that it allows us to identify a highly relevant subgroup of the electorate: swing voters. We define swing voters as individuals who (i) do not have a long-term tendency towards any particular party *and* (ii) regularly turn out to vote. Among non-partisans, 52 percent report to vote regularly.[20]

We restrict our sample to non-partisans and estimate regression models similar to equation (2), but interact the treatment dummy with an indicator for regular voting. This allows us to estimate treatment effect heterogeneities between swing voters and non-partisans who usually do not vote.

Table 6 reports heterogeneous treatment effects on preferences towards the child care subsidy (upper panel) and universal student aid (lower panel). Non-partisans who do not vote regularly are significantly less likely to support child care subsidy if they are informed about the parties' positions. The treatment effect for swing voters is insignificant.

In the experiment on universal student aid, by contrast, the overall treatment effect of non-partisans is driven by swing voters. While non-partisans who vote infrequently do not exhibit significant treatment effects, the treatment significantly increases swing voters' support by 10 percentage points and decreases opposition by a similar amount.

[20] We use the following question to elicit voting frequency: "Do you usually vote in federal and state elections (including postal voting)? I vote…" The answer categories were: always, mostly, sometimes, rarely, and never. We define regular voters as those who either "always" or "mostly" turn out to vote. Among all respondents, 79 percent vote regularly. Among partisans, the share is 90 percent.

This analysis shows that information about party positions can impact policy preferences of swing voters, a highly relevant group within the political process. While it is likely that the effects of party positions on partisans' policy preferences reported in the previous section are due to partisans actively aligning their preferences with their favored party's position, the channel through which non-partisans incorporate party positions in their preferences is less clear. For instance, it might be that these respondents orient themselves towards the positions of the governing parties (CDU/CSU and SPD) or towards the positions of the majorities of parties. In any case, our results highlight the policy relevance of party positions, since they not only influence partisans but also persons without long-term party attachment.

5.2 Effect Heterogeneities by Sociodemographic Characteristics

Our main results show that the effects of party positions vary with respondents' partisanship. In this section, we investigate the extent to which treatment effects are prevalent in different sociodemographic subgroups. For this explorative analysis, we focus on partisan groups that have been identified as susceptible to the information treatments in Section 4 – i.e., partisans of the party that favors the child care subsidy and partisans of parties that oppose universal student aid. We concentrate on the following sociodemographic characteristics: gender, age, income, employment status, educational attainment, parental status, and importance of education policy for the personal voting decision.[21] For each characteristic, we divide our sample into two subgroups and estimate regression models based on equation (1).

Tables 7 and 8 report results on preferences towards the child care subsidy and universal student aid, respectively. The first column presents the coefficient for the whole sample of respondents who support a party that favors the child care subsidy respectively opposes universal student aid. The subsequent columns show the coefficients for the respective subgroups.

Table 7 shows that the positive effect of party position information on support for the child care subsidy captures statistical significance in eight out of 14 subgroups: females, respondents above median age, respondents below median income, non-working respondents, respondents without high school degree, respondents without children aged below 19 years, and respondents who do and do not state that education policy is important for their voting decision. In the remaining subsamples, the coefficients are statistically insignificant, although with one

[21] To obtain reasonable statistical power, we focus on characteristics where there are at least 100 observations both in the treatment group and in the control group.

exception (actively employed) they all point in the same direction. Across the different subgroups, the coefficient of interest ranges from -0.011 to 0.185.

In addition to this subsample analysis, we also estimated triple interaction models using the whole sample of partisans of the party that favors the child care subsidy. This allows us to test whether heterogeneous treatment effects across sociodemographic subgroups are statistically significant. Except for employment status, where treatment effects differ significantly between working and non-working respondents ($p<0.05$), effect heterogeneities across subgroups do not capture statistical significance (results available upon request).

Table 8 depicts the results on support for universal student aid. We find significant negative treatment effects for respondents below median age, respondents above median income, working respondents, those without a high school degree, parents with children aged below 19 years, and respondents for whom education policy is not important for their voting decision. Again, coefficients exhibit a wide range from -0.033 to -0.143, although all point in the same direction. The triple interaction models reveal no statistically significant effect heterogeneities across sociodemographic subgroups (results available upon request).

This heterogeneity analysis yields some noteworthy patterns. Most intriguingly, it shows that even parents – i.e., those who are directly affected by the reform – decrease their support for universal student aid in response to information on party positions. It is important to note, however, that these results need to be interpreted with caution because the relatively small sample sizes in the subgroups imply that not all quantitatively sizeable effects can be detected with sufficient precision.

6. Conclusion

An extensive body of research investigates the causal link from public policy preferences to party positions, suggesting that political parties adapt their policy positions to exogenous voter preferences in order to maximize vote shares. By contrast, little is known about the reverse relationship, namely the extent to which voters' preferences are amenable to party positions. In this paper, we devise two survey experiments among a representative sample of the German voting-age population with more than 4,000 respondents to shed light on the causal effect of party positions on the electorates' policy preferences.

Our results suggest that voters' preferences can be endogenous with respect to party positions. In our first experiment, information about party positions on the child care subsidy induces partisans of the policy-favoring party to align their preferences more closely with their preferred party. In our second experiment on preferences for universal student aid, the treatment

aligns preferences of partisans of policy-opposing parties more closely with their preferred parties' position. Information effects are also prevalent among swing voters – non-partisans who regularly turn out to vote – and among various sociodemographic subgroups.

The result that policy preferences are not exogenous to the political process is consistent with survey responses on the importance of party positions as a source of information. In a separate survey, we asked another representative sample of voting-age Germans to rate the importance of different sources of information for forming their policy preferences.[22] About one third (32 percent) considers "positions of the political parties" important. Notably, even 23 percent of non-partisan respondents perceive party positions important, corroborating our significant findings for non-partisans. While other opinion-formation aspects, such as own experience, expert opinions, or news reports, are rated as even more important for forming policy preferences, party positions are particularly important from a policy perspective because they are within the immediate action space of policy makers.

Survey experiments are certainly subject to some artificiality, but they provide the rare opportunity to isolate the causal net effect of party positions on the public's policy preferences in a representative sample. Furthermore, several pieces of evidence underline the relevance of survey experiments for our understanding of political decision processes in the field. First, Barabas and Jerit (2010) show that the information effects in their survey experiment are also found, with somewhat smaller magnitude, in a natural experiment based on exposure to news covering the same information. Second, it has been shown that survey responses are good proxies for actual (voting) behavior (e.g., Kemp, 2002; Falk et al., 2016) and are important for shaping public policy (e.g., Engelhardt and Wagener, 2014). Consistently, Blinder and Krueger (2004) argue that the fact that politicians spend large amounts of resources on assessing public opinion shows the relevance of opinion surveys for the political process.

While our experimental design allows us to ascertain the baseline impact of party-position information on public policy preferences, it does not allow for a clean identification of the specific cognitive or behavioral mechanisms that give rise to the effect. One possibility is that uninformed voters may use party positions as heuristics to reduce the costs of preference

[22] The question was included in the ifo Education Survey 2017 and was worded as follows: "How important are the following aspects for forming your opinion on education policy issues?" For each potential source of information, respondents were asked to rate importance on a five-point scale from very important to very unimportant. The information sources (and their corresponding shares of respondents stating "very important" or "somewhat important") were: discussions with acquaintances (60 percent), experience from own school days (67 percent), experience from own children or grandchildren (69 percent), expert opinions (52 percent), positions of the political parties (32 percent), news reports (51 percent), gut instinct (54 percent), and other aspects (16 percent). Note that the ifo Education Survey 2017 did not comprise experiments on party positions.

formation (Tversky and Kahneman, 1974). While such an interpretation could account for some of our results, other aspects are harder to reconcile with a heuristics interpretation. In particular, people should be more likely to use heuristics when they have no information and only weak preferences on an issue. However, we find significant treatment effects (i) for two policies which differ in their salience in the public debate, (ii) among parents (who are presumably better informed about the issues), and (iii) on strong as well as weak preferences. An alternative possible interpretation is that being informed about party positions primes respondents with their partisan identity and thus triggers the urge to adjust preferences to match this identity (Akerlof and Kranton, 2000). Again, while such an interpretation could account for some aspects of our results, it cannot account for the fact that we also find effects on non-partisans. We consider deeper analysis of the mechanisms underlying the endogeneity of policy preferences to party positions an important direction for future research.

Irrespective of whether these or other potential mechanisms drive our results, our findings have implications for economic and political theory. The common assumption of the exogeneity of public policy preferences does not hold for the policies studied here. Therefore, our results call for a more extensive consideration of potential endogeneities of preferences in the political economy literature.

Our results also have implications for policy making and politics. Since broad public support is often decisive for successful policy implementation, the mere communication of party positions (even without putting forward any substantive arguments) can be important for the political feasibility of reform proposals. While our research does not inform about the welfare implications of this result, it shows that communicating party positions can affect public opinion.

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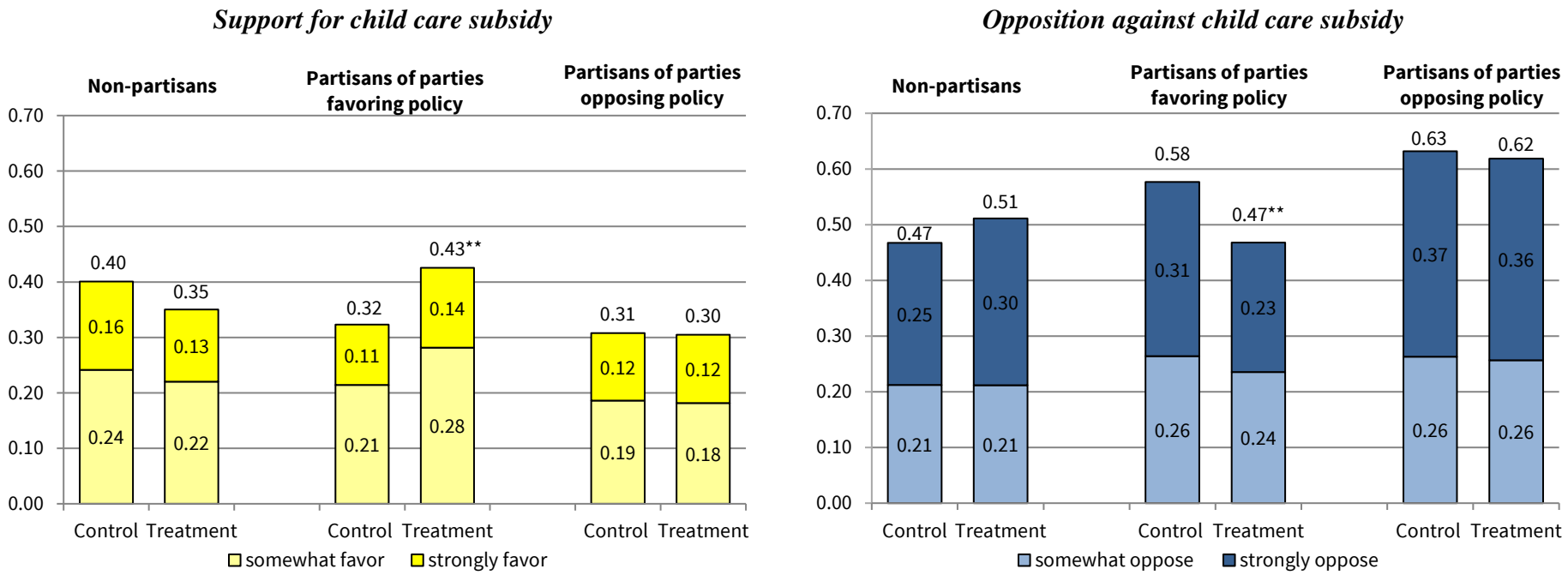
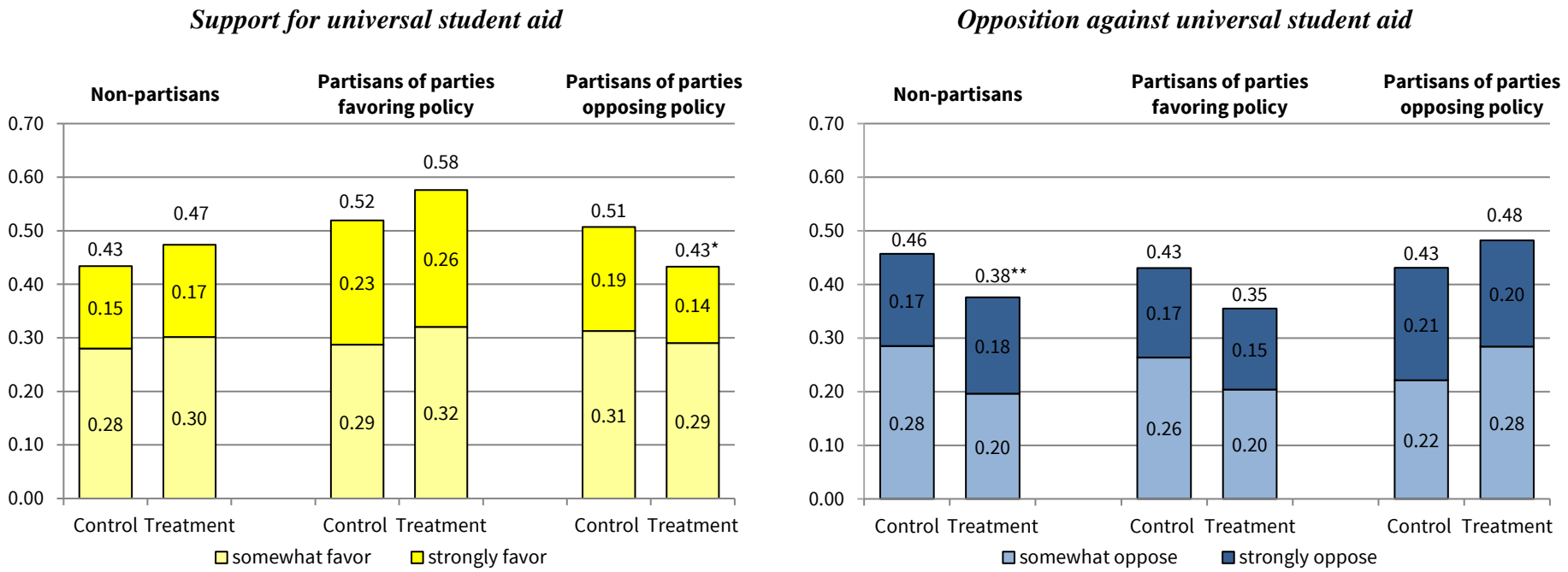
Figure 1: Effects of party-position information treatment on preferences for child care subsidy by partisanship



Wording of question: Control group: "The government pays parents who do not enroll their children aged 2 to 3 years in a childcare facility, but instead provide private home care, a child care subsidy in addition to the child benefits. Do you favor or oppose that parents receive a child care subsidy in addition to the child benefits?" Treatment: Same wording as control group, with the following information included between the two sentences: "CDU/CSU tend to favor the child care subsidy, SPD, Linke, Grüne, and AfD tend to oppose it, the FDP is rather neutral." ** indicates significance of difference from respective control group at $p<0.05$. See Table 4 for details and for results on partisans of parties neutral towards the policy. Data source: ifo Education Survey 2015.

Figure 2: Effects of party-position information treatment on preferences for universal student aid by partisanship



Wording of question: Control group: "*BAföG* is federal financial aid for students which is paid contingent on parents' income. Do you favor or oppose that all students should generally receive *BAföG* by the government irrespective of parents' income?" Treatment: Same wording as control group, with the following information included between the two sentences: "Linke, Grüne, and FDP tend to favor paying *BAföG* irrespective of parents' income, CDU/CSU and AfD tend to oppose it, the position of the SPD is rather neutral." ** (*) indicates significance of difference from respective control group at $p<0.05$ ($p<0.10$). See Table 5 for details and for results on partisans of parties neutral towards the policy. Data source: ifo Education Survey 2015.

Table 1: Who supports which party? Descriptive evidence

	CDU/CSU (1)	SPD (2)	Grüne (3)	Linke (4)	FDP (5)	AfD (6)	Non-partisan (7)
Highest educational attainment (baseline: no/basic degree)							
Middle school degree	0.014	-0.065**	0.038**	0.006	0.007	-0.010	0.024
	(0.023)	*(0.022)*	*(0.013)*	*(0.016)*	*(0.007)*	*(0.013)*	*(0.025)*
University entrance degree	-0.012	-0.070**	0.071**	0.024	0.025*	-0.006	-0.017
	(0.025)	*(0.025)*	*(0.015)*	*(0.021)*	*(0.010)*	*(0.015)*	*(0.027)*
Age (baseline: age 18-35)							
Age 36-65	0.019	-0.022	0.015	0.007	-0.011	-0.009	-0.011
	(0.036)	*(0.040)*	*(0.023)*	*(0.027)*	*(0.015)*	*(0.020)*	*(0.040)*
Age above 65	0.122*	0.006	-0.022	-0.033	0.015	-0.027	-0.077
	(0.050)	*(0.053)*	*(0.030)*	*(0.031)*	*(0.020)*	*(0.022)*	*(0.052)*
Monthly household income/1000	0.014*	-0.007	-0.001	-0.015*	0.005*	-0.006	0.010
	(0.007)	*(0.007)*	*(0.004)*	*(0.006)*	*(0.002)*	*(0.003)*	*(0.009)*
Female	-0.013	-0.019	0.005	-0.008	0.003	-0.039**	0.082**
	(0.020)	*(0.021)*	*(0.013)*	*(0.013)*	*(0.006)*	*(0.010)*	*(0.021)*
Born in Germany	-0.023	-0.067	0.055**	-0.060	0.016*	0.037**	0.023
	(0.044)	*(0.050)*	*(0.013)*	*(0.049)*	*(0.007)*	*(0.009)*	*(0.041)*
Lives with partner	0.008	-0.022	0.008	-0.001	-0.013	0.018	-0.010
	(0.022)	*(0.022)*	*(0.014)*	*(0.013)*	*(0.009)*	*(0.011)*	*(0.024)*
Lives in West Germany	0.045*	0.081**	0.042**	-0.113**	0.003	-0.020	-0.042
	(0.020)	*(0.020)*	*(0.013)*	*(0.021)*	*(0.008)*	*(0.012)*	*(0.025)*
City size ≥ 100,000	-0.070**	0.066**	0.031*	0.004	0.005	0.014	-0.053**
	(0.019)	*(0.020)*	*(0.014)*	*(0.012)*	*(0.007)*	*(0.009)*	*(0.020)*
Parent status (baseline: no children)							
At least one child below 18	0.009	0.040	-0.040*	-0.004	0.000	0.020	-0.018
	(0.027)	*(0.025)*	*(0.017)*	*(0.016)*	*(0.007)*	*(0.017)*	*(0.028)*

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Table 1 (continued)

	CDU/CSU (1)	SPD (2)	Grüne (3)	Linke (4)	FDP (5)	AfD (6)	Non-partisan (7)
All children older than 18	-0.004	0.053*	-0.017	0.037*	0.010	0.000	-0.068*
	(0.025)	*(0.024)*	*(0.018)*	*(0.017)*	*(0.008)*	*(0.012)*	*(0.028)*
At least one parent with university degree	0.002	-0.038	0.041**	0.010	0.001	0.008	-0.041
	(0.020)	*(0.020)*	*(0.014)*	*(0.014)*	*(0.008)*	*(0.014)*	*(0.021)*
Labor market participation (baseline: full-time employed)							
Part-time employed	-0.037	-0.014	0.010	-0.012	-0.001	0.026	0.014
	(0.024)	*(0.031)*	*(0.016)*	*(0.018)*	*(0.012)*	*(0.019)*	*(0.027)*
Self-employed	-0.065	-0.023	0.010	0.013	0.026	-0.006	0.045
	(0.033)	*(0.036)*	*(0.022)*	*(0.027)*	*(0.017)*	*(0.013)*	*(0.038)*
Unemployed	-0.091*	-0.008	-0.003	0.068	-0.019*	0.057	-0.017
	(0.042)	*(0.047)*	*(0.023)*	*(0.041)*	*(0.009)*	*(0.038)*	*(0.040)*
Housewife/husband	0.025	-0.065*	0.028	-0.021	-0.003	0.008	-0.013
	(0.042)	*(0.033)*	*(0.023)*	*(0.022)*	*(0.013)*	*(0.017)*	*(0.033)*
Retired or ill	0.019	0.016	0.006	-0.009	-0.007	0.007	-0.025
	(0.030)	*(0.030)*	*(0.021)*	*(0.019)*	*(0.008)*	*(0.012)*	*(0.030)*
Student, apprentice, in training	-0.081	-0.012	0.031	-0.052*	0.003	-0.005	0.025
	(0.058)	*(0.065)*	*(0.038)*	*(0.026)*	*(0.022)*	*(0.030)*	*(0.065)*
Works in education sector	0.001	-0.027	0.018	-0.018	-0.007	0.009	0.014
	(0.030)	*(0.028)*	*(0.023)*	*(0.016)*	*(0.008)*	*(0.020)*	*(0.034)*
Votes regularly	0.141**	0.114**	0.037*	0.065**	0.011	0.038**	-0.414**
	(0.019)	*(0.021)*	*(0.015)*	*(0.012)*	*(0.008)*	*(0.009)*	*(0.027)*
Education important for voting decision	-0.001	0.069**	0.030	0.000	-0.004	-0.006	-0.088**
	(0.021)	*(0.021)*	*(0.013)*	*(0.014)*	*(0.008)*	*(0.011)*	*(0.023)*
Percent of respondents belonging to category	22.95	21.33	7.48	8.55	2.22	4.40	31.40

Notes: Multinomial logit estimation, average marginal effects. Dependent variable: stated partisanship on an eight-point scale with parties indicated in column headers, plus the category "other party" (omitted in table). Data source: ifo Education Survey 2015. Regression weighted by survey weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10.

Table 2: Summary statistics and balancing tests

	Child care subsidy			Universal student aid		
	Control mean	Treatment mean	Difference	Control mean	Treatment mean	Difference
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Highest educational attainment						
No degree/basic school degree	0.405	0.390	-0.015	0.387	0.408	0.021
Middle school degree	0.289	0.315	0.026	0.300	0.303	0.003
University entrance degree	0.306	0.295	-0.011	0.313	0.288	-0.025
Age	50.212	50.550	0.338	49.683	51.064	1.381
Monthly household income	2248	2263	14.451	2225	2286	60.796
Woman	0.519	0.511	-0.007	0.519	0.511	-0.009
Born in Germany	0.939	0.951	0.013	0.934	0.956	0.022**
Lives with partner	0.610	0.600	-0.010	0.604	0.606	0.002
Lives in West Germany	0.801	0.795	-0.007	0.804	0.793	-0.011
City size ≥ 100,000	0.308	0.321	0.014	0.322	0.307	-0.015
Parent Status						
No children	0.317	0.325	0.009	0.331	0.310	-0.021
Children of age <= 18	0.293	0.298	0.005	0.280	0.311	0.031*
Children of age > 18	0.391	0.377	-0.014	0.389	0.379	-0.010
At least one parent with university degree	0.274	0.269	-0.005	0.261	0.283	0.022
Labor market participation						
Full-time employed	0.336	0.388	0.052**	0.371	0.351	-0.020
Part-time employed	0.125	0.128	0.003	0.119	0.134	0.015
Self-employed	0.034	0.045	0.011	0.036	0.043	0.007
Unemployed	0.056	0.046	-0.010	0.052	0.050	-0.002
Housewife/husband	0.073	0.062	-0.011	0.063	0.072	0.009
Retired or ill	0.306	0.282	-0.025	0.295	0.293	-0.002

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Table 2 (continued)

	Child care subsidy			Universal student aid		
	Control mean	Treatment mean	Difference	Control mean	Treatment mean	Difference
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
Student, apprentice, in training	0.070	0.049	-0.021	0.064	0.056	-0.008
Working in education	0.108	0.107	-0.001	0.111	0.104	-0.006
Elections						
Votes regularly	0.787	0.784	-0.003	0.784	0.788	0.004
Importance education for voting decision	0.731	0.721	-0.009	0.725	0.727	0.002
Partisanship						
CDU/CSU	0.233	0.226	-0.006	0.217	0.242	0.025
SPD	0.218	0.209	-0.009	0.212	0.215	0.003
Grüne	0.070	0.080	0.010	0.079	0.070	-0.009
Linke	0.090	0.080	-0.010	0.086	0.085	-0.001
FDP	0.025	0.020	-0.005	0.022	0.023	0.001
AfD	0.039	0.049	0.010	0.047	0.041	-0.005
No partisanship	0.307	0.321	0.013	0.325	0.303	-0.021
Item non-response	0.002	0.011	0.009**	0.007	0.011	0.003
Observations	2,072	2,033		2,027	2,078	

Notes: Weighted group means. Difference: difference in means between the control group and the respective treatment group. Significance levels of the difference stem from linear regressions of the background variables on the respective treatment dummy. Data source: ifo Education Survey 2015. Regressions weighted by survey weights. Significance levels: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10.

Table 3: Average treatment effects of party-position information on policy preferences

	Support		Opposition	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Experiment 1: Preferences for child care subsidy				
Treatment	0.004	0.010	-0.009	-0.019
	(0.021)	*(0.020)*	*(0.022)*	*(0.021)*
Covariates	No	Yes	No	Yes
Control mean	0.340	0.340	0.561	0.561
Observations	4092	3908	4092	3908
R^2	0.000	0.061	0.000	0.074
Experiment 2: Preferences for universal student aid				
Treatment	-0.001	-0.003	-0.032	-0.030
	(0.022)	*(0.022)*	*(0.021)*	*(0.021)*
Covariates	No	Yes	No	Yes
Control mean	0.475	0.475	0.451	0.451
Observations	4,083	3,907	4,083	3,907
R^2	0.000	0.040	0.001	0.037

Notes: OLS regressions. Treatment: Information on party positions. Control: No information. Dependent variable: (1)-(2): Dummy variable (1="strongly favor" or "somewhat favor" the respective policy, 0 else); (3)-(4): Dummy variable (1="strongly oppose" or "somewhat oppose" the respective policy, 0 else). Control mean: mean of the dummy variable for the control group. Covariates include: age, gender, born in Germany, living with partner, education, employment status, working in education sector, parent status, household income, West Germany, living in large city, parental education level. Data source: ifo Education Survey 2015. Regressions weighted by survey weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10.

Table 4: Partisan-specific treatment effects of party-position information on preferences for child care subsidy

	Support for child care subsidy		Opposition against child care subsidy	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment (Non-partisan)	-0.050	-0.051	0.044	0.049
	(0.039)	*(0.038)*	*(0.039)*	*(0.038)*
Treatment x Party favors	0.153***	0.171***	-0.153***	-0.177***
	(0.057)	*(0.056)*	*(0.058)*	*(0.057)*
Treatment x Party neutral	-0.118	-0.128	0.106	0.108
	(0.126)	*(0.126)*	*(0.130)*	*(0.135)*
Treatment x Party opposes	0.048	0.056	-0.057	-0.077
	(0.050)	*(0.049)*	*(0.051)*	*(0.050)*
Party favors	-0.078*	-0.059	0.109***	0.091**
	(0.040)	*(0.041)*	*(0.041)*	*(0.041)*
Party neutral	-0.020	0.066	0.134	0.047
	(0.100)	*(0.103)*	*(0.101)*	*(0.107)*
Party opposes	-0.093***	-0.068**	0.165***	0.146***
	(0.036)	*(0.035)*	*(0.035)*	*(0.034)*
Covariates	No	Yes	No	Yes
Control mean	0.401	0.401	0.467	0.467
Observations	3,993	3,830	3,993	3,830
R^2	0.009	0.071	0.020	0.089
Wald tests: H_0 = no treatment effect for partisans of				
favoring parties	0.102**	0.120***	-0.109**	-0.128***
neutral parties	-0.168	-0.179	0.150	0.157
opposing parties	-0.003	0.005	-0.013	-0.029

Notes: OLS regressions. Treatment: Information on party positions. Control: No information. Dependent variable: (1)-(2): Dummy variable (1="strongly favor" or "somewhat favor" child care subsidy, 0 else); (3)-(4): Dummy variable (1="strongly oppose" or "somewhat oppose" child care subsidy, 0 else). Party favors (neutral, opposes): respondent supports party that favors (is neutral towards, opposes) child care subsidy. Residual category: non-partisans (respondents without long-term party partisanship). Control mean: mean of the dummy variable for the control group. Covariates include: age, gender, born in Germany, living with partner, education, employment status, working in education sector, parent status, household income, West Germany, living in large city, parental education level. Data source: ifo Education Survey 2015. Regressions weighted by survey weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10.

Table 5: Partisan-specific treatment effects of party-position information on preferences for universal student aid

	Support for universal student aid		Opposition against universal student aid	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Treatment (Non-partisan)	0.040	0.032	-0.081**	-0.075*
	(0.039)	*(0.038)*	*(0.038)*	*(0.038)*
Treatment x Party favors	0.017	0.021	0.005	0.005
	(0.063)	*(0.062)*	*(0.061)*	*(0.060)*
Treatment x Party neutral	-0.055	-0.043	0.042	0.038
	(0.062)	*(0.062)*	*(0.061)*	*(0.063)*
Treatment x Party opposes	-0.114**	-0.099*	0.132**	0.121**
	(0.056)	*(0.056)*	*(0.055)*	*(0.056)*
Party favors	0.085*	0.078*	-0.026	-0.028
	(0.045)	*(0.045)*	*(0.045)*	*(0.045)*
Party neutral	0.040	0.072	0.026	-0.001
	(0.044)	*(0.045)*	*(0.044)*	*(0.045)*
Party opposes	0.073*	0.086**	-0.026	-0.042
	(0.040)	*(0.040)*	*(0.040)*	*(0.040)*
Covariates	No	Yes	No	Yes
Control mean	0.434	0.434	0.457	0.457
Observations	3,987	3,829	3,987	3,829
R^2	0.007	0.047	0.007	0.043
Wald tests: H_0 = no treatment effect for partisans of				
favoring parties	0.057	0.053	-0.076	-0.070
neutral parties	-0.016	-0.011	-0.038	-0.037
opposing parties	-0.074*	-0.067*	0.051	0.046

Notes: OLS regressions. Treatment: Information on party positions. Control: No information. Dependent variable: (1)-(2): Dummy variable (1="strongly favor" or "somewhat favor" universal student aid, 0 else); (3)-(4): Dummy variable (1="strongly oppose" or "somewhat oppose" universal student aid, 0 else). Party favors (neutral, opposes): respondent supports party that favors (is neutral towards, opposes) universal student aid. Residual category: non-partisans (respondents without long-term party partisanship). Control mean: mean of the dummy variable for the control group. Covariates include: age, gender, born in Germany, living with partner, education, employment status, working in education sector, parent status, household income, West Germany, living in large city, parental education level. Data source: ifo Education Survey 2015. Regressions weighted by survey weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10.

Table 6: Heterogeneous treatment effects among non-partisans by voting behavior: Swing voters

	Support		Opposition	
	(1)		(2)	
Experiment 1: Preferences for child care subsidy				
Treatment	-0.141**	*(0.056)*	0.163***	*(0.056)*
Treatment x regular voter	0.159**	*(0.074)*	-0.196***	*(0.073)*
Regular voter	-0.087	*(0.055)*	0.122**	*(0.051)*
Observations	1,254		1,254	
R^2	0.095		0.113	
Wald test: H_0 = no treatment effect for regular voters	0.018		-0.032	
Experiment 2: Preferences for universal student aid				
Treatment	-0.050	*(0.054)*	-0.042	*(0.053)*
Treatment x regular voter	0.154**	*(0.074)*	-0.060	*(0.075)*
Regular voter	-0.003	*(0.055)*	0.026	*(0.055)*
Observations	1,254		1,254	
R^2	0.079		0.052	
Wald test: H_0 = no treatment effect for regular voters	0.104**		-0.102**	

Notes: OLS regressions. Sample: non-partisans (respondents without long-term party partisanship). Treatment: Information on party positions. Control: No information. Dependent variable: (1): Dummy variable (1="strongly favor" or "somewhat favor" the respective policy, 0 else); (2): Dummy variable (1="strongly oppose" or "somewhat oppose" the respective policy, 0 else). Covariates included: age, gender, born in Germany, living with partner, education, employment status, working in education sector, parent status, household income, West Germany, living in large city, parental education level. Data source: ifo Education Survey 2015. Regressions weighted by survey weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10.

Table 7: Heterogeneous treatment effects among partisans of parties favoring child care subsidy by sociodemographic subgroups

	All	Gender		Age		Income	
		Male	Female	Below median	Above median	Below median	Above median
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Treatment	0.103**	0.023	0.185***	0.035	0.133**	0.132**	0.078
	(0.040)	*(0.055)*	*(0.055)*	*(0.059)*	*(0.052)*	*(0.058)*	*(0.053)*
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.323	0.353	0.285	0.324	0.322	0.290	0.325
Observations	850	411	439	431	419	361	489
R^2	0.069	0.099	0.116	0.127	0.093	0.129	0.088

	Employment status		High school degree		Child below 19		Educ. policy import. for vote	
	Not Active	Active	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Treatment	0.174***	-0.011	0.109**	0.080	0.123**	0.055	0.175**	0.089*
	(0.061)	*(0.051)*	*(0.049)*	*(0.065)*	(0.052)	(0.054)	*(0.072)*	*(0.047)*
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.297	0.355	0.346	0.256	0.291	0.372	0.262	0.343
Observations	322	528	579	271	407	426	186	664
R^2	0.178	0.064	0.069	0.214	0.120	0.102	0.226	0.063

Notes: OLS regressions. Sample: respondents who support a party that favors child care subsidy. Treatment: Information on party positions. Control: No information. Dependent variable: Dummy variable (1="strongly favor" or "somewhat favor" child care subsidy, 0 else). Control mean: mean of the dummy variable for the control group. Covariates include: age, gender, born in Germany, living with partner, education, employment status, working in education sector, parent status, household income, West Germany, living in large city, parental education level. Data source: ifo Education Survey 2015. Regressions weighted by survey weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10.

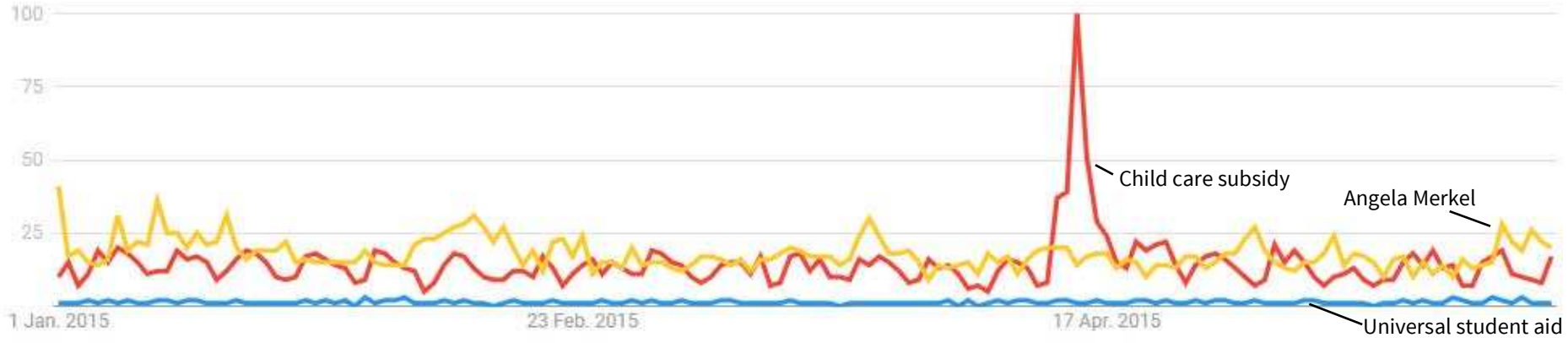
Table 8: Heterogeneous treatment effects among partisans of parties opposing universal student aid by sociodemographic subgroups

	All	Gender		Age		Income	
		Male	Female	Below median	Above median	Below median	Above median
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
Treatment	-0.070*	-0.051	-0.043	-0.100*	-0.033	-0.055	-0.093*
	(0.039)	*(0.051)*	*(0.055)*	*(0.057)*	*(0.050)*	*(0.058)*	*(0.050)*
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.507	0.486	0.527	0.615	0.424	0.483	0.529
Observations	1,055	527	528	547	508	456	599
R^2	0.070	0.121	0.095	0.115	0.034	0.091	0.104

	Employment status		High school degree		Child below 19		Educ. policy import. for vote	
	Not Active	Active	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes
	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)	(12)	(13)	(14)	(15)
Treatment	-0.050	-0.082*	-0.093**	-0.039	-0.041	-0.100**	-0.143*	-0.063
	(0.060)	*(0.048)*	*(0.045)*	*(0.060)*	*(0.052)*	*(0.047)*	*(0.074)*	*(0.043)*
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control mean	0.430	0.587	0.537	0.437	0.445	0.637	0.479	0.516
Observations	386	669	719	336	487	549	225	829
R^2	0.049	0.102	0.082	0.166	0.066	0.097	0.197	0.093

Notes: OLS regressions. Sample: Respondents who support a party that opposes universal student aid. Treatment: Information on party positions. Control: No information. Dependent variable: Dummy variable (1="strongly favor" or "somewhat favor" universal student aid, 0 else). Control mean: mean of the dummy variable for the control group. Covariates include: age, gender, born in Germany, living with partner, education, employment status, working in education sector, parent status, household income, West Germany, living in large city, parental education level. Data source: ifo Education Survey 2015. Regressions weighted by survey weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10.

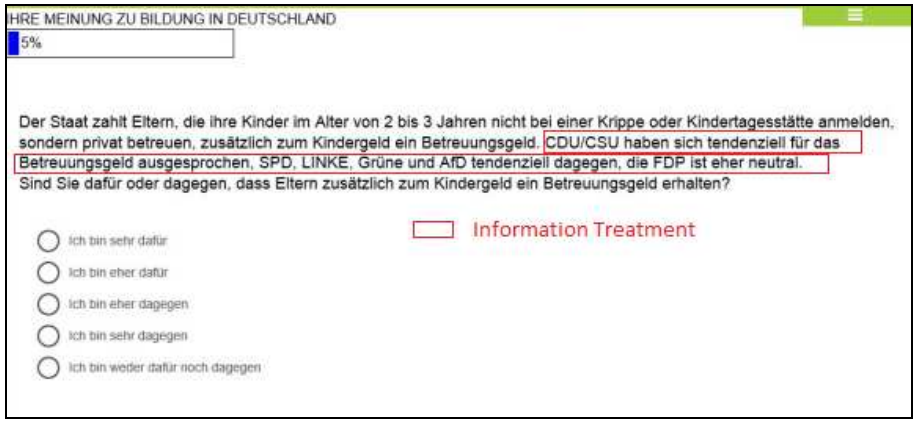
Figure A1: Google search requests for child care subsidy, universal student aid, and the German chancellor, first half-year 2015



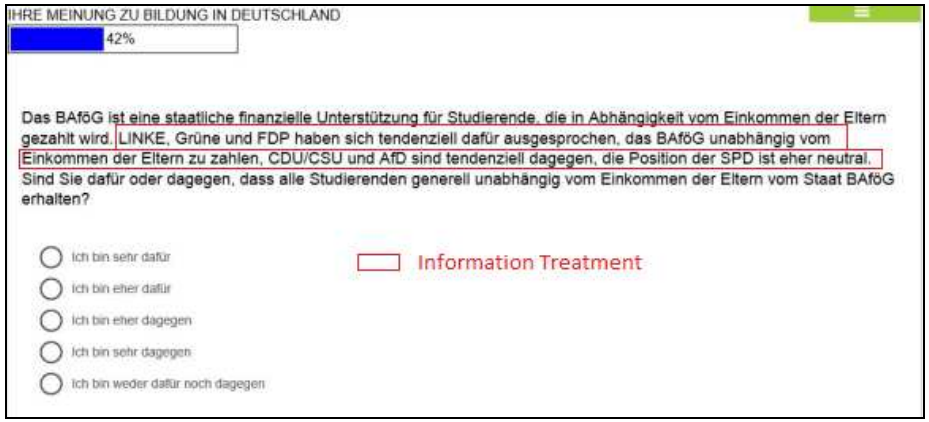
Notes: Google search requests for child care subsidy ("*Betreuungsgeld*" in red), universal student aid ("*Elternunabhängiges BAföG*" in blue), and the German chancellor ("*Angela Merkel*" in yellow) in Germany from January to June 2015. Frequencies depicted relative to the highest number of search requests (i.e., child care subsidy on 14 April 2015). The spike in search requests for child care subsidy coincides with the start of the lawsuit at the Federal Constitutional Court. Source: Google Trends (www.google.com/trends [accessed 12 December 2018]).

Figure A2: Screenshots of the survey questions

Child care subsidy



Universal student aid



Notes: Screen of respondents in the treatment group depicted. Information treatment is highlighted in red (survey respondents did not see red markings). Respondents in the control group saw a similar screen but without the respective information treatment.

Table A1: Wording of the survey questions

No.	Subgroup	Wording of question	Type of question
Experiment 1: Preferences for child care subsidy			
04	Control	The government pays parents who do not enroll their children aged 2 to 3 years in a childcare facility, but instead provide private home care, a child care subsidy in addition to the child benefits. Do you favor or oppose that parents receive a child care subsidy in addition to the child benefits?	Closed-ended with 5 answer categories: - Strongly favor - Somewhat favor - Neither favor nor oppose - Somewhat oppose - Strongly oppose
	Treatment	The government pays parents who do not enroll their children aged 2 to 3 years in a childcare facility, but instead provide private home care, a child care subsidy in addition to the child benefits. CDU/CSU tend to favor the child care subsidy, SPD, Linke, Grüne, and AfD tend to oppose it, the FDP is rather neutral. Do you favor or oppose that parents receive a child care subsidy in addition to the child benefits?	
Experiment 2: Preferences for universal student aid			
28	Control	*BAföG* is federal financial aid for students which is paid contingent on parents' income. Do you favor or oppose that all students should generally receive *BAföG* by the government irrespective of parents' income?	Closed-ended with 5 answer categories: - Strongly favor - Somewhat favor - Neither favor nor oppose - Somewhat oppose - Strongly oppose
	Treatment	*BAföG* is federal financial aid for students which is paid contingent on parents' income. Linke, Grüne, and FDP tend to favor paying *BAföG* irrespective of parents' income, CDU/CSU and AfD tend to oppose it, the position of the SPD is rather neutral. Do you favor or oppose that all students should generally receive *BAföG* by the government irrespective of parents' income?	
Elicitation of Partisanship			
17*	All	Many people in Germany lean towards a particular political party in the long term, even if they occasionally also vote for another party. With which party do you sympathize in general?	Open-ended: - CDU/CSU - SPD - Grüne - Linke - FDP - AfD - Another party, namely… - None

Notes: Translation from the German original. No.: number of question in the ifo Education Survey 2015. Subgroup: specific control or treatment group that received the respective question. * This question was posed as the 17th question of the block on sociodemographic characteristics at the very end of the survey.

Table A2: Partisan-specific treatment effects: All answer categories

	Strongly favor (1)	Somewhat favor (2)	Neither favor nor oppose (3)	Somewhat oppose (4)	Strongly oppose (5)
Experiment 1: Preferences for child care subsidy					
Treatment (Non-partisan)	-0.035 (*0.029*)	-0.016 (*0.035*)	0.002 (*0.027*)	-0.004 (*0.031*)	0.053* (*0.031*)
Treatment x Party favors	0.086** (*0.040*)	0.085* (*0.051*)	0.006 (*0.041*)	-0.019 (*0.049*)	-0.158*** (*0.050*)
Treatment x Party neutral	-0.023 (*0.085*)	-0.105 (*0.106*)	0.019 (*0.047*)	0.128 (*0.149*)	-0.020 (*0.133*)
Treatment x Party opposes	0.048 (*0.036*)	0.008 (*0.044*)	0.021 (*0.033*)	-0.009 (*0.044*)	-0.068 (*0.043*)
Party favors	-0.037 (*0.030*)	-0.022 (*0.036*)	-0.032 (*0.031*)	0.056 (*0.036*)	0.035 (*0.038*)
Party neutral	0.046 (*0.069*)	0.019 (*0.089*)	-0.112*** (*0.028*)	0.025 (*0.114*)	0.021 (*0.095*)
Party opposes	-0.026 (*0.028*)	-0.042 (*0.032*)	-0.078*** (*0.021*)	0.055* (*0.029*)	0.092*** (*0.028*)
Control mean	0.160	0.241	0.132	0.212	0.255
Experiment 2: Preferences for universal student aid					
Treatment (Non-partisan)	0.016 (*0.030*)	0.016 (*0.036*)	0.043* (*0.025*)	-0.081** (*0.033*)	0.007 (*0.029*)
Treatment x Party favors	0.011 (*0.054*)	0.010 (*0.056*)	-0.026 (*0.037*)	0.027 (*0.054*)	-0.022 (*0.045*)
Treatment x Party neutral	-0.037 (*0.047*)	-0.006 (*0.057*)	0.005 (*0.035*)	0.033 (*0.054*)	0.005 (*0.050*)
Treatment x Party opposes	-0.056 (*0.042*)	-0.043 (*0.052*)	-0.022 (*0.034*)	0.144*** (*0.048*)	-0.023 (*0.045*)
Party favors	0.082** (*0.038*)	-0.004 (*0.040*)	-0.050** (*0.024*)	-0.017 (*0.042*)	-0.012 (*0.032*)
Party neutral	0.021 (*0.036*)	0.051 (*0.042*)	-0.071*** (*0.021*)	-0.015 (*0.041*)	0.014 (*0.033*)
Party opposes	0.040 (*0.031*)	0.046 (*0.038*)	-0.045** (*0.022*)	-0.076** (*0.035*)	0.034 (*0.032*)
Control mean	0.154	0.280	0.109	0.285	0.172
Covariates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Notes: OLS regressions. Treatment: Information on party positions. Control: No information. Dependent variable: Dummy variables (1=answer category given in respective table header, 0 else). Party favors (neutral, opposes): respondent supports party that favors (is neutral towards, opposes) the respective policy. Residual category: non-partisans (respondents without long-term party partisanship). Control mean: mean of the dummy variable for the control group. Covariates include: age, gender, born in Germany, living with partner, education, employment status, working in education sector, parent status, household income, West Germany, living in large city, parental education level. Data source: ifo Education Survey 2015. Regressions weighted by survey weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10.

Table A3: Heterogeneous treatment effects by party-specific partisanship

	Support		Opposition	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
Experiment 1: Preferences for child care subsidy				
Treatment (Non-partisan)	-0.037 (*0.037*)	-0.038 (*0.037*)	0.045 (*0.038*)	0.048 (*0.037*)
Treatment x CDU/CSU	0.139** (*0.056*)	0.158*** (*0.056*)	-0.154*** (*0.057*)	-0.177*** (*0.057*)
Treatment x SPD	0.071 (*0.059*)	0.080 (*0.058*)	-0.077 (*0.061*)	-0.102* (*0.061*)
Treatment x Grüne	-0.001 (*0.085*)	0.009 (*0.081*)	-0.065 (*0.090*)	-0.085 (*0.085*)
Treatment x Linke	-0.062 (*0.076*)	-0.042 (*0.073*)	0.042 (*0.078*)	0.018 (*0.073*)
Treatment x FDP	-0.131 (*0.126*)	-0.141 (*0.125*)	0.105 (*0.130*)	0.109 (*0.134*)
Treatment x AfD	0.097 (*0.110*)	0.087 (*0.110*)	-0.138 (*0.110*)	-0.123 (*0.110*)
Control mean	0.401	0.401	0.467	0.467
Experiment 2: Preferences for universal student aid				
Treatment (Non-partisan)	0.035 (*0.038*)	0.023 (*0.037*)	-0.073** (*0.037*)	-0.062* (*0.037*)
Treatment x CDU/CSU	-0.093 (*0.058*)	-0.072 (*0.058*)	0.098* (*0.057*)	0.080 (*0.058*)
Treatment x SPD	-0.051 (*0.061*)	-0.034 (*0.062*)	0.035 (*0.061*)	0.025 (*0.062*)
Treatment x Grüne	0.103 (*0.089*)	0.115 (*0.088*)	-0.101 (*0.083*)	-0.113 (*0.080*)
Treatment x Linke	-0.039 (*0.076*)	-0.036 (*0.075*)	0.053 (*0.075*)	0.057 (*0.074*)
Treatment x FDP	-0.007 (*0.148*)	-0.012 (*0.148*)	0.095 (*0.148*)	0.105 (*0.148*)
Treatment x AfD	-0.208** (*0.106*)	-0.206** (*0.103*)	0.285*** (*0.106*)	0.278*** (*0.103*)
Control mean	0.434	0.434	0.457	0.457
Covariates	No	Yes	No	Yes

Notes: OLS regressions. Treatment: Information on party positions. Control: No information. Dependent variable: (1)-(2): Dummy variable (1="strongly favor" or "somewhat favor" the respective policy, 0 else); (3)-(4): Dummy variable (1="strongly oppose" or "somewhat oppose" the respective policy, 0 else). Control mean: mean of the dummy variable for the control group. Covariates included: age, gender, born in Germany, living with partner, education, employment status, working in education sector, parent status, household income, West Germany, living in large city, parental education level. Data source: ifo Education Survey 2015. Regressions weighted by survey weights. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Significance levels: *** p<0.01, ** p<0.05, * p<0.10.