Terrorism and Voting: The Rise of Right-Wing Populism in Germany

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The Rise of Right-Wing Populism in Germany

Abstract

We document that right-wing terrorism leads to significant increases in the vote share for the right-wing, populist AfD (Alternative für Deutschland) party in Germany. To identify causal effects, we exploit quasi-random variation between successful and failed attacks across municipalities. Using the SOEP, a longitudinal panel of individuals, we find successful terror leads individuals to prefer the AfD and worry about migration. Political parties — the AfD in particular — adjust their messaging in election manifestos in response to terror. Overall, and in contrast to previous work, we find terrorism is consequential to the rise of right-wing populism in a Western, multi-party democratic system.

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1. Introduction

Right-wing populist movements present a threat to liberal democracies around the world (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2019). Whereas in the past, the threat was explicit — for example, through military rule, outright dictatorships, and fascist governments — today, it is more subtle, involving the gradual erosion of trust in democratic norms and institutions (Levitsky and Ziblatt 2019; Norris and Inglehart 2019). Nevertheless, right-wing movements are thriving: In Western societies, for example, the vote share for right-wing authoritarian populist parties in national elections more than doubled from some 5 percent in the 1960s to more than 12 percent in the 2010s (Norris and Inglehart 2019).

These developments have renewed academic interest to understand the causes of populism. A substantial literature has argued that the rise of right-wing populism in many countries can be attributed to such factors as economic insecurity and marginalization (Fetzer 2019; Guiso et al. 2017a, 2020; Bo' et al. 2023), globalization and migration shocks (Rodrik 2018; Dustmann, Vasiljeva, and Piil Damm 2019), cultural attitudes, identity, and education (Norris and Inglehart 2019; Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty 2021; Bonomi, Gennaioli, and Tabellini 2021) as well as shifts in party positions and changes in voter demographics and priorities (Danieli et al. 2022).[1] Surprisingly, although this literature has examined the role of cultural conflict in explaining the rise of populism, the role of political conflict, and in particular terrorism, has received less attention, especially in the context of advanced, multi-party Western democracies. Given that many right-wing authoritarian movements emphasize security against (actual or perceived) threats and play on the politics of fear (Norris and Inglehart 2019), the question arises as to whether acts of terror can actually shift the political landscape of a nation to the right: Can they, for example, mobilize voters, affect voter preferences and attitudes, and, ultimately, lead to differential voting behavior?

In this paper, we aim to answer these questions by identifying the causal impact of small, local terror attacks on the vote share for the right-wing, populist Alternative für Deutschland (henceforth AfD) party across German municipalities. We also provide an account as to *why* terror increases support for the far-right, highlighting the role of factors such as voter mobilization, shifts in voter preferences, and in the election campaigns of political parties. For identification, we rely on the success or failure of attacks.[2] A balance test along a wide range of municipality characteristics reveals no significant pre-attack differences in social, economic, demographic, geographic, or political covariates in municipalities hit with successful or failed attacks. What is more, we find no evidence that successful attacks, compared to failed attacks, led to differential changes in municipality *trends* pre- or post-attack. This lends credence to our

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1. Although economics-based accounts of populism prevail, Margalit (2019) argues that this literature overstates the role of economic factors in explaining populism's success.

2. In doing so, we follow Brodeur (2018) and Jones and Olken (2009): Brodeur (2018) exploits the success of attacks to identify employment effects in the USA while Jones and Olken (2009) use assassination attempts of political leaders to explain cross-country institutional change and conflict.

identifying assumption that, conditional on being attacked, the success of an attack is unrelated to municipality characteristics.[3]

We then compare the AfD vote share in Federal, European, and state elections between 2013 and 2021 in German municipalities targeted with successful and failed attacks since 2010.[4] Our baseline estimate suggests that the AfD experiences a 4.5 percentage point increase in state elections in municipalities hit with successful attacks, which represents an increase of some 25 percent relative to the sample mean. Our baseline estimate is robust to a wide range of specifications and samples, placebo tests, and alternative methods of statistical inference. We also find significant geographic spillovers: The AfD vote share in state elections in untargeted, neighboring municipalities also increases significantly, an effect that diminishes to zero with distance.

Our results are even more intriguing when one considers that nearly 75 percent of the attacks in our sample are both carried out by right-wing extremists and target foreigners, suggesting that the right-wing AfD benefits from right-wing attacks. To better understand why this is the case, the rest of our paper explores the mechanisms that drive our effects. In this respect, we report three main sets of results.

First, successful terror attacks lead to large, significant increases in voter turnout in state elections, in the order of some 14 percentage points. The AfD claims more than 35 percent of this mobilization, whereas the remaining 65 percent of the turnout effect is spread among other political parties.[5] This differential capture of voters translates into a significant realignment of vote shares. Whereas the AfD increases its vote share by some 4.5 percentage points, other (mainstream) parties, including the center-right Christian Democratic Union (CDU) that led the Federal government from 2005 to 2021, experience either no effects or much smaller gains.[6]

Second, the aggregate patterns in voting outcomes appear to be driven by changes in individual political attitudes and preferences. Using the restricted-use German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), we study the political preferences of the *same* person in time periods before and after an attack. We find that a person residing in a municipality hit with a successful attack identifies as more hard-right on the political spectrum and significantly prefers the AfD following an attack. They also report being increasingly worried about immigration and significantly more active in local politics. Interestingly, individual concerns about terrorism are not affected by successful attacks. Importantly, we find no significant differences in pre-attack social and economic characteristics or in political preferences between individuals residing in

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3. We also find no significant differences in attack characteristics, including attack motivation or weapon technologies, although, unsurprisingly, successful attacks are more deadly than failed attacks.

4. Our sample begins in 2010 because it is just a few years prior to the establishment of the AfD in 2013 and because Germany experienced a surge in terror attacks beginning in 2010.

5. These figures assume no voter migration and therefore represent an upper bound. As we explain later, we find evidence of voter migration. However, the magnitude of the relevant coefficients suggests that the baseline effect is explained equally by voter migration and political activation.

6. The Social Democratic Party (SPD), the main rival of the ruling CDU, experiences a 1.6 percentage point increase in response to terror, the only other party to increase its vote share. We report full results for the SPD and the CDU in Online Appendix L.

municipalities hit with successful or failed attacks. This confirms the view that successful attacks are politically impactful because they differentially affect voter preferences and not because they target different types of voters.

Using the SOEP, we document several heterogeneities in individual responses to successful terror. We find, for example, that individuals without pre-terror partisan affiliation are significantly more likely to prefer the AfD following a successful attack. In addition, we find that people that have prior political affiliation with the CDU, the ruling party from 2005 to 2021, the Left party, a traditional protest party, as well as Neo-Nazi fringe parties (the National Democratic Party and Die Republikaner), differentially prefer the AfD following successful attacks. These results indicate that voters migrate from across the political spectrum, including from two established parties, to the AfD. We also find that people who reported being politically inactive pre-attack go on to prefer the AfD significantly more following an attack, suggesting that terror leads to politically slanted mobilization. What is more, we find that individuals without university education prefer the AfD differentially more in response to terror compared to those with university education, results in line with what Norris and Inglehart (2019) term the "authoritarian reflex": the notion that groups in society who feel "left behind" by globalization may react defensively to shocks that undermine security — including terrorism — by adopting more extreme ideological positions.[7]

Finally, we study the response of political parties to acts of terror. To this purpose, we collect the main parties' election manifestos for every state election in our sample. We identify a number of trigger words related to crime, terror, and migration and measure the difference (for each party in each state election) between the number of trigger words it uses and the CDU in its 2009 Federal election manifesto.[8] We find that the state election manifestos of the AfD contain significantly more usage of words related to crime and immigrant naturalization and integration in states that experience the most violence, while terror receives no special mention at all. All other parties either display no significant shift in their language or shift in the opposite direction as the AfD. These results indicate a clear ideological divide in response to terror among the main political parties in Germany. They also underscore the relevance of state elections as the key political arena where political parties — or at least the AfD — campaign differentially in response to terror attacks.

Our paper contributes to a rich literature that documents the electoral consequences of terrorism. These papers, by and large, fall into three categories: The study of terrorism in Israel (Gould and Klor 2010; Berrebi and Klor 2008; Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014); in less stable, non-Western democracies (Rehman and Vanin 2017; Kibris 2011); or in cross-country settings which include a wide range of democracies (Jones and Olken 2009; Rees and Smith 2022;

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7. This particular result is also (partially) in line with Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty (2021) who document the gradual process of disconnection between the effects of both education and income on voting outcomes.

8. We choose the 2009 CDU manifesto because it was published four years prior to the establishment of the AfD and during a period in which Germany experienced virtually no terror attacks.

Larsen, Cutts, and Goodwin 2020; Gassebner, Jong-A-Pin, and Mierau 2008). The findings of these papers is mixed: Some find that incumbent politicians lose electoral support as a result of terror (Gassebner, Jong-A-Pin, and Mierau 2008) while others do not (Koch and Tkach 2012). Some find that terrorist attacks increase support for right-wing parties (Berrebi and Klor 2008; Getmansky and Zeitzoff 2014) and others find that right-wing parties shift to the left in response to terror (Gould and Klor 2010). Our point of departure from this literature is twofold. First, we examine the effect of terrorism on far-right voting in the context of an advanced, multi-party Western democracy.[9,10] Second, our analysis includes a full account of *why* terror influences political outcomes, a step not taken in most previous work. In this respect, we highlight the role of voter mobilization, shifting political attitudes, and media coverage.

Our paper also adds to the literature that explains the rise of populism.[11] Especially in recent years, this has been the subject of focus by economists who have highlighted the important role that economic factors play in explaining the rise of populist movements. These include the role of economic insecurity and distress (Guiso et al. 2020; Guiso et al. 2017b; Bo' et al. 2023; Dehdari 2021), globalization shocks (Rodrik 2018) and government austerity (Fetzer 2019). Scholars have increasingly paid attention to the importance of factors such as identity, education, and migration in generating a "cultural backlash" from which populist movements spring to power (Bonomi, Gennaioli, and Tabellini 2021; Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty 2021; Norris and Inglehart 2019). Although this literature has examined cultural conflicts, the role of violent conflict is surprisingly absent. We thus advance this literature by shedding light on the causal role of violence in explaining the rise of, or at least the added support for, right-wing populism.

The rest of the paper is organized as follows: Section 2 describes the institutional setting of our study, including details on terrorism in Germany, the establishment of the AfD, and the broader German political landscape. In Section 3, we discuss two main theoretical frameworks that link terrorist attacks to right-wing voting. In Section 4, we provide sources and other relevant details regarding our data. Section 5 discusses and evaluates our identification strategy. In Section 6, we present our baseline estimating equation and results, while in Sections 7 to 9 we present evidence on mechanisms that drive our effects. Finally, we conclude in Section 11.

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9. Although Israel has characteristics of a liberal democracy, scholars do not consider it comparable to Western liberal democracies for several reasons. These include security concerns — including the very high frequency of terrorist attacks (according to the GTD, all the countries in Western Europe combined experienced 3,891 terrorist attacks between 2000 and 2020 compared to 2,924 attacks only in Israel in that same period) — ethnic and religious divisions as well as territorial disputes (Dieckhoff 2016; Neuberger 1989). As such, some scholars refer to Israel as an "ethnic" democracy as distinct from liberal democracy (Smooha 1997).

10. To our knowledge, Baccini et al. (2021), Bali (2007) and Montalvo (2011) are the only other papers that examine the impact of terror on electoral outcomes in Western democracies. However, Baccini et al. (2021) do not find any effects and do not examine the question of right-wing populism. Bali (2007) and Montalvo (2011) both study the effect of the 2004 Madrid bombing on electoral outcomes in Spain. However, Bali (2007) does not benefit from exogenous variation and neither one examines right-wing voting.

11. See Guriev and Papaioannou (2022) for a synthesis of literature on the recent rise of populism.

2. Institutional Setting

2.1 Terrorism in Germany

Our data on terror attacks in Germany come from the Global Terror Database (GTD, 2018) collected by the University of Maryland, College Park.[12] These data indicate that there have been 232 attacks in Germany between 2010 and 2020. These attacks are geographically widespread, taking place in all 16 Federal states, and are mostly small and non-deadly. The average population of targeted municipalities is around 155,000 (compared to around 24,000 for non-targeted municipalities), and the attacks, on average, result in 1 injury and 0.2 casualties (see Table A.1 in the Online Appendix for further details).

The GTD codebook defines a terrorist attack, international or domestic, as "the threatened or actual use of illegal force and violence by a non-state actor to attain a political, economic, religious, or social goal through fear, coercion, or intimidation". It moreover explains that for an attack to be included in the GTD it must (i) be intentional; (ii) entail some level of violence or the threat of violence and (iii) be carried out by non-state actors (i.e., state sponsored terrorism is not included). In addition to those three criteria, the GTD explains that at least two of the following must also be satisfied for inclusion: the attack is (i) aimed at achieving a wider political, economic, religious or social goal; (ii) aimed at sending a political or economic message beyond just the victims involved; or (iii) must be conducted outside of the context of legitimate warfare.

A novel feature of this data is that it includes a variable that records whether an attack was successful. The code book to the GTD defines this variable as follows:

> Success of a terrorist strike is defined according to the tangible effects of the attack. Success is not judged in terms of the larger goals of the perpetrators. For example, a bomb that exploded in a building would be counted as a success even if it did not succeed in bringing the building down or inducing government repression.[13]

The GTD applies its definition of success to attacks that were actually executed. Plots or conspiracies that are *not* attempted are not included in the GTD. As the GTD code book explains, "for an event to be included in the GTD, the attackers must be "out of the door", en route to execute the attack. Planning, reconnaissance, and acquiring supplies do not meet this threshold." This alleviates an important endogeneity concern that attacks fail because of preemptive policing efforts.

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12. We describe these data further in the Supplemental Data Appendix and how we match them to German municipalities in Section 4.

13. An important exception are assassination attempts. As the GTD explains: "In order for an assassination to be successful, the target of the assassination must be killed. For example, even if an attack kills numerous people but not the target, it is an unsuccessful assassination." Because the success/failure of assassinations is defined differently to other types of attacks, we omit assassinations from our analysis. Table A.2 in the Online Appendix provides examples of attacks from our sample that illustrate what constitutes successful and failed attacks.

We provide detailed descriptive information on terrorist attacks in Germany in Online Appendix A. As shown in that table, of the 232 attacks in our sample, 86 percent succeeded and 14 percent failed. What is more, the majority of the attacks in our sample are carried out by right-wing extremists and target migrants.

2.2   The Alternative für Deutschland

Norris and Inglehart (2019) classify the Alternative for Germany (AfD) as "authoritarian-populist" on the basis of political party positions along three dimensions: authoritarian values (security against threats, loyalty to strong leader), populist rhetoric ("*we the people*") and conservative economic values (economic protectionism).

The AfD was established in 2013 as a single-issue party focused on the Euro crisis and the Greek bailout. The party quickly gathered public attention as it won 4.7 percent of the seats in parliament in the Federal elections later that same year and 7.1 percent of the European parliament elections in 2014 (Cantoni, Hagemeister, and Westcott 2019). Although established as a single-issue party, the AfD included many members that held hard-right, populist sentiments from its beginnings. Their voices eventually led the party to a turning point in 2015 when two of its members, Björn Höcke and Andreas Kalbitz, laid out the prominent "Erfurt Declaration" which founded the far-right faction of the AfD (*Der Flügel* or *The Wing*) (Cantoni, Hagemeister, and Westcott 2019). This document described the AfD as a "resistance movement against the further erosion of the identity of Germany" and, since then, the party, especially its far-right faction, has been increasingly characterized by racist, Islamophobic, xenophobic and anti-Semitic rhetoric, including downplaying Nazi crimes.[14] One of its former members was also arrested as part of a 2022 attempt to overthrow the German government, execute the chancellor, and restore Germany's imperial Reich.[15] Nonetheless, support for the party has only increased. After its hard right turn in 2015, the party won as much as 16 percent of the vote in state elections. In 2017, the AfD was represented in the federal parliament for the first time and it continues to enjoy representation across various levels of government across the country. Figure B.1 in Online Appendix B shows the average vote share for the AfD between 2013 and 2021 across all elections. As shown, its average vote share has increased from less than 5 percent in 2013 to close to 16 percent in 2021 and it has fared significantly better in state elections than in Federal elections as shown in Figure B.2 in Online Appendix B.

2.3   The German Political Landscape

The AfD is situated on the far-right of the political spectrum in German politics. In addition to the AfD, this spectrum consists of five other established parties.

The two dominant parties are the center-right CDU, which led the German government

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14. See this news piece for further details. Accessed 4 April 2023.
15. See this story for further details. Accessed 4 April 2023.

between 2005 and 2021, and the left-leaning social democrats, the SPD. The other main party right of center in German politics is the economically liberal FDP. The left end of the political spectrum is populated by two parties, aside from the SPD: *Die Grünen* (the Greens) and the socialist *Die Linke* (the Left party). The Greens have their roots in the post-materialist movements of the 1970s and emphasize environmental sustainability and women's rights (Probst 2013). The Left party, on the other hand, is the successor of the East German Communist Party, which had ruled the German Democratic Republic (GDR) until its dissolution in 1990.

The German political landscape now comprises six major parties, as shown in Figure 1, where they are plotted according to a left-right score according to data collected by the Manifesto Project (Lehmann et al. 2022). As shown, the AfD is clearly the far-right party.

3. Theoretical Motivation

Economists have relied on the theoretical framework of electoral accountability from the political economy literature to guide their analysis of the relationship between terrorism and electoral outcomes (Baccini et al. 2021). In this section, we highlight two theories that help explain why successful terrorist attacks increase support for far-right groups. The first offers insight into how terrorism shifts individual attitudes towards more populist positions. The second highlights issue salience — specifically internal security — as a reason why right-wing populist parties appeal more to voters after experiencing terrorist attacks.

First, acts of terror can lead to significant changes in individual attitudes and preferences. Norris and Inglehart (2019) argue that people, when triggered by existential threats — including terror attacks — ,react by adopting an *authoritarian reflex* to cope with change. Specifically, a group of people whose values are threatened by social, cultural and economic change exhibit defensive reactions in response to terror by hardening their viewpoints, adopting more extreme ideological positions and identifying themselves as victims and blaming others for actual or perceived social problems. Our results indicate that individuals who experience a successful attack identify more as hard-right on the left-right ideological spectrum; prefer the AfD significantly more; and worry more about issues like migration. One reason, therefore, why successful terrorist attacks increase support for right-wing populist parties is because they encourage the authoritarian reflex.

Second, a theory of policy voting might also explain the patterns generated in our data (Gould and Klor 2010; Kiewiet 1981). According to this theory, political parties gain additional support when the issues they prioritize become salient to voters. In the case of a right-wing populist party, such a theory posits that terrorist attacks increase the tendency of voters to support them because such attacks bring attention to security concerns which right-wing parties prioritize more than left-wing parties (Gould and Klor 2010). In our setting, we observe that the AfD prioritizes security (and to a lesser extent immigration) more than other parties in the German political landscape and responds to terrorism by using differentially more use of key

words related crime in its election manifestos. It seems plausible, then, that another reason why successful terror attacks — regardless of the perpetrators and victims involved — increase support for the AfD is because they highlight security concerns among voters.

4. Data

The primary unit of observation in our study is the German municipality which we observe in different election years. In this section, we describe the main variables used in our analysis. The Supplemental Data Appendix contains further details.

Terror attacks: We collect information on terror attacks in Germany between 2010 and 2020 from the Global Terror Database (GTD, 2020) maintained by the University of Maryland, College Park. This is an open source database that documents information on terror attacks from around the world from 1970 to the present day. In the Supplemental Data Appendix, we provide additional details as to how the GTD collects these data as well as the criteria they employ to determine what events are included in the Database.

The GTD includes longitude and latitude coordinates of the city in which each attack took place which we use to map each attack onto a German municipality.[16] This enables us to map the 232 attacks in our sample onto 124 unique municipalities. According to the GTD, over 50 percent of these attacks are motivated by right-wing causes.

Of the 124 municipalities targeted with an attack between 2010 and 2020, 33 were targeted more than once. We thus define a municipality as being hit with a successful attack if, at any point since 2010, it was hit with a successful attack, even if before or after that particular attack it was hit with a failed attack. A municipality is marked as being targeted with a failed attack if, at any point since 2010, it was targeted with one or more failed attacks but never with a successful attack. In our baseline analysis, the date of the first failed or first successful attack is the reference point from which we determine whether an election was pre- or post-attack. According to the GTD, 75 percent of these first attacks are carried out by right-wing extremists and 75 percent target foreigners.

Election data: In our analysis, we study election outcomes across the three most prominent elections in Germany: Federal elections; European Parliament elections; and elections across the 16 Federal states, the *Bundesländer*, that determine representation at the state level.

We obtain municipality level election results for the 2013, 2017 and 2021 Federal Elections and the 2014 and 2019 European Parliament elections in Germany from the Federal Returning Officer (*i.e., the Bundeswahlleiter*).[17] We obtain municipality election results for

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16. In the case of Berlin, we do not rely on these coordinates as they always point to central Berlin. Instead, we rely on the description of the attack in order to locate in which of the 12 municipal districts, *Stadtbezirke*, of Berlin the attack is located.

17. These data can be accessed here: https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/en/. Accessed 14 December 2022

state elections that took place between 2013 and 2021 from the Regional Data Bank service of the German Federal Government.[18] In all our analyses, we leverage information on the *second* vote (i.e., *Zweitstimme*), which is the voters choice of political party, as opposed to the first vote (i.e., *Erststimme*) which is the voter's direct choice of candidate. This is to avoid confounding our analyses with candidate-specific effects.

Municipality characteristics: We check for balance along a wide range of covariates in municipalities hit with successful or failed attacks. Information on all municipality characteristics are taken from the Regional Data Bank service of the German Federal Government whose source is provided in Footnote 18.

SOEP Survey Data: The Germany Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP) is one of the largest and longest-running multidisciplinary household surveys worldwide. Every year since 1984, approximately 30,000 people in 15,000 households are interviewed for the SOEP. The SOEP contains survey questions on a wide range of social, political, demographic and economic issues. Crucially, the SOEP is a panel that tracks individuals and households over time. This enables us to study the political preferences and attitudes of the *same person* before and after experiencing a terror attack. We obtained access to the restricted-use SOEP data with municipality identifiers in order to link our data on successful/failed attacks to this survey data. The Supplemental Data Appendix contains further details on the exact formulation of the questions used in the SOEP and how we used them in our analysis.[19]

Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ): The FAZ is a prominent newspaper in Germany that enjoys some of the highest nationwide circulation. We obtain its newspaper data in order to test whether successful attacks receive differential coverage compared to failed attacks. Specifically, for each of the attacks in our sample, we obtain all news stories that mention the city of the attack on the particular day of the attack and for the 10 days that follow the attack. This provides us with a database of some 105,000 unique news stories.[20] We employ three criteria to match stories to attacks: a neural-network based classification model trained on Austrian terror data and its coverage; matching based on key words; and, as a final step, we manually checked all remaining stories to rule out false positives.[21] In the end, we are left with around 350 stories.

LexisNexis: We use LexisNexis in order to collect news stories from national, regional and local publishers across Germany. This provides us with a sample of some 80,000 stories.

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18. Specifically, these data were taken from *the Statistische Ämter Des Bundes und Der Länder)* which can be accessed here: https://www.regionalstatistik.de/genesis/online/. Accessed 14 December 2022

19. We are thankful to the German Institute for Economic Research (the DIW) in Berlin for making our visit to the SOEP Data Center possible.

20. We thank the FAZ-Foundation for its financial support in helping us to procure these data.

21. Further details on the methods used to match stories to attacks can be found in the Supplementary Data Appendix.

For each of the the attacks in our sample, we match them to stories from the LexisNexis data using the same three criteria we used for the FAZ data. Moreover, we identify all news stories from *local and regional* sources and exclude stories from national publishers. This leaves us with a sample of around 4,500 stories.

5. Identification

Our identification strategy relies on the assumption that the success of an attack is orthogonal to municipality characteristics. In this section, we test this assumption in two ways. First, we test for pre-attack balance across a wide range of social, economic, political and demographic characteristics in municipalities hit with successful attacks compared to those hit with failed attack. Second, we test for differences in trends in those same characteristics in municipalities hit with successful and failed attacks. In both tests, we find no systematic relationship between the success of an attack and the characteristics of the targeted municipality, highlighting the random nature of an attacks success.

5.1 Testing for Balance

We begin our analysis by defining the variable $SUCCESS_i$. It is coded as one if municipality i was hit at least once with a successful attack since 2010 and zero if it was hit with at least one failed attack (and no successful attack) in that same time period; the variable is undefined for municipalities that did not experience any attacks. We then regress a range of municipality characteristics measured in the *year immediately prior to the attack*, $X_{i,t=t_{ATTACK}-1}$, on the success variable as shown in the following estimating equation:[22]

$$X_{i,t=t_{ATTACK}-1} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SUCCESS_i + \epsilon_i \tag{1}$$

Our strategy is validated if our estimate for β_1 is indistinguishable from zero. We present our findings in Columns 1 and 2 of Panel A of Table 1. As shown, there are no differences between municipalities targeted with successful and failed attacks. This pattern holds for a wide range of socio-economic characteristics and underscores the random nature attack success.[23]

Importantly, success is uncorrelated with a number of key socio-economic variables which may act as confounders. For example, the 2015 Syrian refugee crisis in Germany sparked a wave of discontent in the country and it could be that the number of refugees in a municipality has a direct influence on both the likelihood of an attacks success and support for the radical right. As shown in Table 1, however, success is uncorrelated to refugee inflows, both in total

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22. The only exception is the number of days between an election and an attack, for which we include all time periods both before and after the attack. We should also note that for socio-economic variables, the period $t-1$ refers to the year immediately prior to the attack. For political/election variables, the period $t-1$ refers to the election immediately prior to the attack.

23. We also find no difference in the size or presence of the police force. However, these data are only available as of 2019 for a select number of municipalities. For this reason, we do not include these measures in our analysis.

and specifically from Syria. Another potential concern relates to the geographical location of attacks. Support for the far-right has traditionally been stronger in former East Germany and around a third of the attacks in our sample take place there, leaving open the possibility that characteristics specific to East Germany drive both right-wing voting and successful terror. The results in Table 1, however, make clear that success does not exhibit geographical selection. Finally, we find that success is uncorrelated with political characteristics, including the size of the eligible voting population, voter turnout and, crucially, the vote share of the AfD as well as the vote share for Hitler's NSDAP party in 1933, the last democratic election of interwar Germany. This suggests that, in the absence of terror attacks, support for right-wing populism is not a pre-existing characteristic of municipalities targeted with successful attacks.

The differences between municipalities targeted with successful and failed attacks, presented in Table 1, stand in sharp contrast to those between municipalities targeted with attacks and those untargeted. This is demonstrated in Online Appendix C where we document systematic differences between targeted and untargeted municipalities. What is more, we find that these differences hold for municipalities targeted with *both* successful and failed attacks, suggesting that the municipalities hit with failed attacks are not just a random subset of untargeted German municipalities.[24]

In Panel B, we compare observable characteristics of all the attacks in our sample.[25] As shown, there is little distinguishable difference in weapon technologies or attack motivations, further underscoring the quasi-random nature of an attacks success.[26][27]

5.2 Testing for Differential Trends

We next test for differential trends. To this purpose, for each municipality characteristic, X_i (which we standardize), we estimate the parameters of the following econometric specification:

$$X_i = \sum_{j=-4,j\neq-1}^{3} \beta_j(SUCCESS_i \times D_j^t) + \delta_i + \alpha_j + \epsilon_i \tag{2}$$

24. Because municipalities hit with failed attacks demonstrate selection compared to untargeted municipalities, later in the paper we investigate whether failed attacks generate their own political effects.

25. We study patterns for all 232 attacks to (1) increase the sample size of this analysis and (2) establish the more general conclusion that successful and failed attacks resemble each other. Repeating this analysis using only the first attack in the 124 unique municipalities that experience an attack produces similar results.

26. We present balance results for the three most common weapon types used in attacks: explosives (which include incendiary devices), firearms and melee (hand) weapons.

27. Of course, there still may be *unobservable* differences that determine whether an attack succeeds or not — for instance, the quality of weapons used or the strength of the organization behind the attack. Regardless, however, of *why* an attack might fail or succeed, the evidence in this and in the previous subsection demonstrates that success is *not* selected with respect to a wide range of observable municipality characteristics, neither in levels nor in trends. What is more, in Figure D.2 of the Online Appendix, we generate two separate event studies to identify the effect of terror on the AfD, separately for successful and failed attacks. To identify the models, we rely on variation in the attack timing rather than between success sand failed attacks. As shown, the effects are clearly driven by municipalities targeted by successful attacks, suggesting that potentially unobservable differences between success and failed attacks are not driving our results.

The specification include municipality fixed effects, δ_i, as well as time period fixed effects, α_j. $SUCCESS_i$ is defined as before and is now interacted with a time period dummies which run from four years prior to an attack until 3 years after an attack. The omitted category is $j = -1$, the year immediately prior to the attack. Our estimation command — `xtevent` developed by Freyaldenhoven et al. (2021) — accounts for staggered treatment and uses the interaction weighted estimator proposed by Sun and Abraham (2021) which is suitable in setting with heterogeneous effects.

We present results for a subset of the most relevant municipality characteristics in Figure 2 and present event studies for all covariates in Figure D.1 in the Online Appendix. Figure 2 indicates there are no pre-trends in any of the covariates measured: None of the pre-period coefficients are individually (or jointly) distinguishable from zero. Moreover, the p-value for the specification test whether the pre-period coefficients follow a linear trend is always > 0.10, and none of the characteristics display significant post-attack effects. Together, the results in this and in the previous subsection confirm that the success of an attack is unrelated to municipality characteristics, neither in levels nor in trends.

We next estimate the same model but use the AfD vote share as the outcome. The results are shown in Figure 3. Again, none of the pre-period coefficients are individually distinguishable from zero and the p-value for joint significance of all the pre-period coefficients is 0.15. The p-value for the specification test whether the pre-period coefficients follow a linear trend is 0.46. By contrast to the other municipality socio-economic characteristics, however, there is a clear increase in the vote share for the AfD following an attack. The coefficients are much larger and are estimated with precision in three of the four cases (the coefficient at $t = 1$ is marginally insignificant with a p-value of 0.107). Together, the results in this section confirm that the success of an attack is unrelated to municipality characteristics, neither in levels nor in trends.

Figure 3 pools Federal, European and State elections together.[28] In the next section, we investigate which elections drive our results.

6. Terror and the AfD

6.1 Baseline Model

We model the AfD vote share in municipality i, in election e, in time period t as follows:

$$AfD_{i,e,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \left[SUCCESS_i \times POST_{i,e,t} \times ELECTION_e \right] + \zeta \mathbf{X_{i,e,t}} + \lambda_{ie} + \lambda_{te} + \epsilon_{i,t} \quad (3)$$

As before, $SUCCESS_i$ is one if a municipality experienced one or more successful attacks and it is zero if it experienced one or more failed attacks (and no successful attacks). To isolate

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28. Unfortunately, we are unable to estimate such an event study separately by election type because there are not a sufficient number of elections of each type to do so.

the effect of a terror attack on an election result, we interact the indicator $SUCCESS_i$ with an indicator $POST_{i,e,t}$ that is 0 for all elections e in years t that were held prior to the *first* attack in municipality i and 1 for all elections that were held after the first attack and with a categorical variable, $ELECTION_e$ that indicates a Federal, European Parliament or state election. The vector $\mathbf{X_{i,e,t}}$ includes all lower order terms of the triple interaction, but we omit the term $SUCCESS_i \times POST_{i,e,t}$ so that the coefficient of interest, β_1, is interpreted as the total marginal effect of a successful attack, compared to failed attacks, before and after a given attack.

Because we study Federal, European and state elections in the same model, we include election-type by municipality fixed effects, λ_{ie}, to filter out potentially confounding effects specific to each municipality that might vary across different election types. We also include election-type by year fixed effects, λ_{te}, to capture unobserved time-specific election-varying heterogeneities. We cluster the standard errors, $\epsilon_{i,t}$, at the municipality level.[29]

6.2 Baseline Results

We report the results in Table 2. In Column 1, we run the baseline model and find that the AfD vote share increases by some 4.6 percentage points in state elections, a 26 percent increase relative to the sample mean. In Columns 2 to 9, we undertake a number of robustness exercises which we describe in turn.

In Column 2, we include the interaction between an East/West Germany indicator and year dummies so as to control for any time varying factors specific to East/West Germany that might influence both the number of attacks and the rise of the AfD. This is especially important when one considers that the AfD has stronger support in former East Germany. In Column 3 we omit Berlin, a city-state that experienced some 25 percent of the attacks in the sample and which, in some ways, acts as an outlier. In Column 4, we interact an indicator for whether a municipality is classified as an urban district, a *kreisfreie Stadt*, with year dummies so as to control for potentially confounding effects of dense urban centers. In Column 5, we control for the weapon used in the attack and in Column 6, we include the number of days between a given election and the date of the first attack so as to account for the wide variation in an attack's timing relative to an election. In Column 7, we omit the 33 municipalities that experienced more than one attack and in Column 8, we omit those attacks that were part of a larger, coordinated attack and thus had greater likelihood of success.[30][31] Finally, in Column 9, we include all municipality

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29. The inclusion of λ_{ie} and λ_{te} isolates each election type-year-municipality in our pooled dataset. This produces coefficients that are quantitatively very similar (identical in most cases) to those generated when examining Federal, European and State elections separately in a model with year and municipality fixed effects. Studying all three election types in the same model but with λ_{ie} and λ_{te} fixed effects has the benefit of examining outcomes separately while increasing power from a pooled dataset. Nonetheless, we report the results when examining Federal, European and State elections separately in Online Appendix E.

30. The GTD counts a coordinated terror attack as successful even if one of its constituent attacks succeeded and the others failed.

31. These two are especially important checks when one considers that municipalities targeted with successful attacks receive more attempts, on average, than municipalities hit with failed attacks. These result confirm that what drives our result is successful terror attacks, and not more attack attempts.

characteristics presented in Panel A of Table 1 as controls (except for political characteristics). Specifically, for each municipality, we measure the *pre-attack* mean of each characteristic and interact this measure with year dummies, thus allowing municipality characteristics other than terror to differentially affect the AfD vote share post-attack.

Across all these specifications and samples, we find consistent patterns: successful terror attacks lead to differential increases for the AfD in state elections. The coefficient of interest is stable across all columns and is precisely estimated. By contrast, we see no clear patterns for Federal or European Parliament elections. The coefficients are smaller, are not distinguishable from zero and display no clear sign. However, as we demonstrate in Section 10, successful terror attacks that receive high media coverage also have large, positive (and significant) effects on the AfD vote share in Federal elections.

A key institutional feature of Germany that helps explain why our effects are more pronounced at the state level compared to the Federal level is the distribution of power among Federal and state governments. Concerning terrorism, there are two policy areas where states play a larger role than the Federal government. The first is internal security which, according to Article 30 of the German constitution, is primarily organized and executed at the level of the federal state (Riedl 2018; Schnöckel 2018).[32] The second area is the issue of immigration and refugee settlement which, as we show later, terror increases worries about. Although asylum seekers are distributed across the Federal states according to formula, their distribution *within* states is a discretionary matter for states to determine.[33] Our results suggest, therefore, that at least a subset of voters is aware of the distribution of competencies between federal and state governments concerning internal security and asylum and vote accordingly in response to terror. They also suggest that the AfD makes certain issues more salient at the state level compared to the Federal level.

There are two pieces of direct evidence that support these views. First, we conducted an online survey using Prolific with 500 participants across two waves. In this survey, we asked participants which level of governance was responsible for (a) internal security and policing and (b) the distribution of asylum seekers across cities within a Federal state. The responses were overwhelmingly convincing: Nearly 80 percent of participants indicated that Federal states were responsible for matters of internal security while 65 percent indicated that Federal states were responsible for the distribution of asylum seekers within a state. What is particularly striking is that only 60 percent, across both waves, could correctly identify the head of state in Germany.[34] This indicates that voters, regardless of their general political knowledge, are aware of the distribution of competencies between federal and state governments concerning internal

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32. This institutional feature of Germany is reflected in public expenditures on internal security: they are significantly higher at the state level (€14.619 billion in 2011) than they are at the federal level (€3.343 Billion in 2011) (Riedl 2018).

33. See this page of The Federal Office for Migration and Refugees for additional details. Accessed 4 April 2023

34. In Germany, the head of state is the President who has mostly ceremonial duties, whereas the Chancellor is the head of government with executive power. People who are less politically informed tend to conflate these offices.

security and asylum. The results of this survey, as well as details as to how it was conducted, are reported in Online Appendix F.

Second, we analyze the table of contents for all the election manifestos for the AfD in state and Federal elections and generate a distribution of topics and their ordering in the table of contents. The idea is that topics that appear earlier in the election manifesto (i.e., topic #1 in the table of contents) are the main campaign issues whereas those that appear later are of less importance. These results are reported in Online Appendix G. As shown, the AfD discusses internal security (and to a lesser extent, migration) more prominently in its state election manifestos compared to its Federal election documents. This is especially true for states that experience above median number of attacks. In section 9, we also present evidence that the AfD highlights security and migration issues *differentially* more than other parties in its state manifestos in response to terror.

Taken together, these results suggest that voters are cognizant that state governments are the relevant level of governance with regard to internal security and asylum policy and that the AfD campaigns these issues more prominently in state elections.[35]

6.3 Additional Robustness

In Online Appendix H, we report results from four additional sets of robustness exercises which are briefly described in this section.

First, there is a growing literature addressing issues related to panel estimation with two-way fixed effects and staggered treatment. Because our setting involves a staggered, binary treatment variable, we carry out our baseline estimation using an alternative estimator from this literature proposed by Borusyak, Jaravel, and Spiess (2021). As shown in Appendix H.1, there is little difference to our main result when using this alternative estimator.

Second, in Online Appendix H.2, we repeat the baseline analysis using a "rolling window" approach in order to incorporate a larger number of attacks into the analysis. For the 91 municipalities that received one attack, the coding of the variables $SUCCESS$ and $POST$ remains unchanged. However, instead of dropping the 33 municipalities that received more than one attack as we did in Column 7 of Table 2, we now create a "rolling window" of time around each municipality-attack, where each window is defined as the period of time between an election, an attack and the next election.[36] $SUCCESS$ is now coded according to the attack in the window and $POST$ is coded for each election in the window depending on whether the election was before or after the attack. The results are reported in Table H.2 and produce very similar results to those generated using the first attack only, alleviating concerns that municipalities hit with multiple attacks adversely affect our results. As mentioned in the Online

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35. In line with these findings, our results (presented later in the paper) indicate that terror has a large, significant effect on voter turnout in state elections. By contrast, turnout in Federal and European elections is completely unaffected by terror, suggesting that terror has a *mobilizing* effect in state elections which benefits the AfD.

36. In practice, the "pre" and "post" periods in each window can include more than one election. This is the case if there are no attacks between elections.

Appendix, however, this approach has the disadvantage of making interpretation more difficult because of overlapping time-periods: the "post" period of one attack in a given municipality is the "pre" period for the subsequent attack. For this reason, we use only the first attack in our baseline analysis.

Third, given the relatively small size of our sample — 124 municipalities of which 11 are in the control group — we present our baseline result with alternative inference methods in Online Appendix H.3.[37] These include a permutation exercise in which the variable success is randomly permuted in order to generate a null distribution from which to estimate a $p-$value as well as wild cluster bootstrapping (Cameron, Gelbach, and Miller 2008). As shown, our baseline result is robust to alternative inference.

Fourth, we run our baseline model 124 times, each time omitting one municipality from the analysis to ensure that no outliers drive our result. As shown in Figure H.1 of Online Appendix H.4, the results are stable to this robustness exercise.

6.4   *Effects of Successful and Failed Terror Attacks*

Our baseline estimate identifies the effect of successful terror attacks *relative* to failed attacks. One may wonder, however, whether terror attacks, regardless of success, have an overall *level* effect on voting outcomes when compared to untargeted municipalities.[38] We address this question in this subsection by undertaking two exercises: First, we conduct a propensity score matching exercise in order to identify a control group from the sample of untargeted municipalities which we use in order to separately compare successful and failed attacks. Second, we examine the time-varying effects of *only* successful or failed attacks, relying on variation in attack timing to identify effects. In both exercises, we find that what drives our results are successful attacks.

6.4.1.   *Propensity Matching*

First, we identify, for each successfully targeted municipality, its nearest neighbors on the basis of propensity scores from the sample of untargeted municipalities using all the municipality covariates presented in our balance table.[39] We then use these matched municipalities, which we refer to as *placebo fail*, to run a number of additional tests presented in Table 3.

In Columns 1 and 2 we check for balance between successfully targeted municipalities and placebo fail municipalities (Column 1) and failed municipalities compared to placebo fail

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37. In addition to alternative inference, we undertake two additional exercises to address the small size of the control group. The first of these is the rolling window approach described above which increases the number of control municipalities to 20. Second, as described in the next subsection, we employ a propensity score matching method to increase the size of the control group to over 200 municipalities.

38. This is especially true when one considers that municipalities targeted with both successful *and* failed attacks are systematically different along a wide-range of socio-economic characteristics compared to untargeted municipalities, as demonstrated in Online Appendix C.

39. Online Appendix I contains further details regarding the propensity score matching.

(Column 2) using the 1933 NSDAP vote share as a measure of a municipalities pre-existing disposition toward right-wing populism (Cantoni, Hagemeister, and Westcott 2019). As shown, there is no distinguishable difference in the NSDAP vote share between these municipalities, suggesting that the matching procedure performed well.

Next, we run our baseline analysis using the AfD vote share as the outcome. In Column 3, we estimate our baseline model in a sample that uses only successful targeted municipalities and untargeted municipalities matched via propensity scores (i.e., placebo fail). As shown, the coefficient is very similar to our baseline estimate, even as the size of the control group expands considerably to include just over 100 municipalities. In Column 4, we compare outcomes in municipalities that actually experienced failed attacks compared to placebo failed municipalities. As shown, the coefficient on state elections is negative and indistinguishable from zero. These results suggest that failed attacks do not generate their own effects and that our baseline is, in fact, driven by the success of terror attacks.

6.4.2. Staggered Treatment

As a second strategy, we estimate two event studies in order to separately identify the time-varying effect of successful and failed attacks on the AfD vote share. In Figure D.2 in the Online Appendix, we present these results. In panel (a), we examine only municipalities targeted with successful attacks whereas in panel (b), we examine only municipalities hit with failed attacks. To identify effects, we rely on variation in the timing of an attack (i.e, comparing municipalities hit with successful (failed) attacks early in the sample to those hit with successful (failed) attacks later in the sample). As shown, neither figure shows evidence of pre-trends. But positive, precisely estimated effects only appear in the sample of municipalities hit with successful attacks; the post-treatment coefficients for the sample of failed municipalities are not distinguishable from zero. This again confirms the view that our results are driven by successful attacks.

6.5 Attack Type Heterogeneity

Given that terrorism is not a uniform phenomenon (Kis-Katos, Liebert, and Schulze 2014), we examine whether our baseline estimates display heterogeneous effects according to the motives of the attacker. In Figure 5, we estimate our baseline model in samples split by right-wing causes — all right-wing attacks and right-wing Neo-Nazi attacks — as well as on a sample of attacks that target foreigners. We also estimate the baseline effect on the sample of attacks that are non-right wing, including left-wing attacks and Islamist attacks. As shown, we find that the baseline attack is driven almost entirely by right-wing attacks and by attacks that target foreigners. This suggests that the AfD benefits from acts of terror which, by and large, are

motivated by right-wing causes.[40]

6.6 Geographic Spillovers

In Online Appendix K, we present evidence to suggest that successful terror has significant geographical spillover effects. Specifically, we investigate the impact of successful terror for municipalities within a radius of up to 80 kilometers from an attack. As shown, the coefficient of interest is around 50 percent smaller than the baseline and precisely estimated for the majority of municipalities located between 25 and 75 kilometers from an attack. For municipalities located 80 kilometers away, the effect diminishes to zero.

7.   Terrorism and Turnout

We begin our investigation of channels by studying the effect of terror on voter turnout and on the vote share for other parties.[41] We estimate the same model presented in equation 3 and present the results for the triple interaction for state elections in Figure 4.[42]

In Panel (a), we study the effect of terror on turnout as measured by the number of votes cast per eligible voter in a municipality. The coefficient in the first bar suggests that, following a successful attack, the number of eligible voters who participate in state elections increase by some 15 percentage points ($\beta = 0.1469$, $p-$value $= 0.000$), a 22 percent increase relative to the sample mean of turnout in state elections. Given that the eligible voting population does not differ between municipalities hit with successful or failed attacks (see Table 1), this result underscores the impact of successful terror on voter mobilization and not on the size of the voting population. In the remaining bars, we study how these voters are distributed among the various parties in German politics. These coefficients thus measure the share of voters, and not the share of the vote, claimed by each party. As shown, the AfD captures captures fully a third of the increases in voter turnout, some 5 percentage points out of the 16 ($\beta = 0.0537$, $p-$value $= 0.000$). With the exception of the FDP, which captures none of the increases in turnout, the other major parties in the German political landscape claim between 2 and 4 points of the 15 point increase.

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40. One concern is that these effects might not cleanly identify the motive of an attack because municipalities that received more than one attack might have experienced attacks with mixed motivations — say, a right-wing attack followed by a left-wing attack — making it difficult to identify the role of attack motive on the AfD vote share. To alleviate this concern, we re-generate Figure 5 in a sample of municipalities that were attacked only once, enabling us to cleanly identify effects according to motives. The revised plot is shown in Figure J.1 of Online Appendix J. As shown, right-wing attacks have an even larger effect in the sample of municipalities targeted with only one attack, reinforcing the view that right-wing terror has the strongest impact on the AfD vote share.

41. Though election data is available for years prior to 2013, we limit our sample to elections that took place as of 2013 so as to compare the effects of terror on turnout and other parties vote shares once the AfD had entered the political landscape in Germany.

42. Like the baseline results, the coefficients for Federal and European elections are much smaller, are not significant and display no clear patterns when studying turnout.

In Panel (b) of Figure 4, we examine the extent to which these changes in turnout affect each party's performance as measured by the share of the vote they win. The AfD bar repeats the baseline effect while the remaining bars show the results for other parties. Aside from the SPD, which experiences a 1.6 percentage point increase in state elections as a result of terror, no other major party in Germany experiences a significant increase in vote shares in response to terror attacks.[43]

8. Terrorism and Political Attitudes

In this section, we examine the extent to which successful terror affects the political attitudes and preferences of individuals. To do so, we use data from the German Socio-Economic Panel (SOEP), a panel of individuals and households observed over time. The advantage of a longitudinal study like this is that it enables us to study the political attitudes and preferences of the *same person* before and after an attack. We obtained access to the restricted-use SOEP data with municipality identifiers in order to link our data on successful/failed attacks to this survey data. We first establish that individuals residing in municipalities targeted with success and failed attacks are statistically indistinguishable. We then present evidence that suggests our AfD results are driven by voters migrating from across the political spectrum to the AfD as well as by the political activation of previously inactive persons. Finally, we demonstrate that our results display significant heterogeneous effects according to education and, to a lesser extent, gender and age. This particular result is in line with recent scholarship that documents demographic factors that make individuals most prone to populist rhetoric and authoritarian values.

8.1 Balance in the SOEP

We begin by checking for balance across a range of pre-attack individual characteristics between people who live in municipalities that experience successful or failed attacks. For each person, we regress different individual characteristics on the variable, $SUCCESS_i$, defined as before. We present the results in Online Appendix M. As shown, there are very little distinguishable differences in socio-economic characteristics between people living in municipalities hit with successful or failed attacks. Moreover, we document no differences in people's pre-attack political attitudes and preferences. This increases our confidence that successful acts of terror lead to differences in voting outcomes because they affect political preferences and not because they target different types of people. Moreover, people do not report moving after experiencing a successful attack, suggesting that successful terror does not lead to geographical sorting.

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43. The SPD result also appears somewhat robust: specifically, six of the 9 specifications in Table 2 return positive and significant results for the vote share of the SPD in state elections. However, the absolute magnitude of the coefficient is smaller for the SPD compared to the AfD. Given the sample mean for the SPD in state elections is larger for the SPD than it is for the AfD, the SPD effect is even smaller relative to the sample mean (8 percent increase relative to the sample mean compared to a 25 percent increase for the AfD). Nonetheless, this positive effect for the SPD might help explain some of the voter migration results which we present later in the paper.

8.2 Terrorism and Individual Political Attitudes

For each person, p, residing in municipality i surveyed in year t, we estimate the parameters of the following model:

$$y_{p,i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \left[SUCCESS_i \times POST_{i,t} \right] + \delta_p + \alpha_t + \epsilon_{m,t} \tag{4}$$

Where y captures responses to different survey questions. Success is 1 or 0 if an individual resides in a municipality that experiences a successful (1) or failed (0) attack. The variable $POST_{i,t}$ is now defined as 0 for all interviews that occurred prior to an attack and 1 for all interviews that occurred after an attack. Crucially, the model includes person fixed effects, δ_p, as well as year fixed effects α_t. Because treatment still varies at the level of the municipality, we cluster our standard errors at that level, denoted by $\epsilon_{m,t}$.

Table 4 presents our findings. The coefficients in Columns 1 and 2 indicate that, after successful attacks, individuals not only identify as more right-wing on a left-right political ideology scale but as more hard-right. This ideological shift is also reflected in the partisan preferences individuals hold. In Columns 3 to 5, for example, we find that successful attacks lead people to identify more with the AfD, less with the CDU (though not quantitatively significant) and significantly more with the SPD, results that are directly in line with our aggregate results on vote shares. Although the coefficient for the SPD is larger than that of the AfD, the effect relative to the sample mean is much larger for the AfD than it is for the SPD, again in line with our baseline findings. Interestingly, the coefficient in Column 6 suggests that, following a successful attack, individuals participate significantly more in politics *at the local level*, patterns consistent with our findings that suggest terror matters primarily for state elections.

In Columns 7 and 8 we investigate the differential effects of terror on different social attitudes. In Columns 7, for example, we find that terror significantly increases people's worries about immigration to Germany. By contrast, in Column 9 we find that successful terror has no effects on people's concerns about terrorism. While these results are interesting in their own right, they are broadly consistent with how both the news media and the AfD respond, in terms of the language they employ in their reporting and election documents, respectively (described in subsequent sections).

8.3 Heterogeneous Effects: Voter Migration and Political Activation

To what extent are these changes in political attitudes driven by voter migration — that is, committed partisans of one party leaving to support the AfD — and to what extent are they reflective of the political mobilization of politically inactive people who turn out to support the AfD? To investigate these questions, we test for heterogeneous effects along two dimensions: partisanship and political activity. Specifically, we estimate the parameters of the following two estimating equations:

$$\text{Prefer AfD}_{p,i,t} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 \left[SUCCESS_i \times POST_{i,t} \times PARTISAN_p \right] + \zeta \mathbf{X_{p,i,t}} + \delta_p + \alpha_t + \epsilon_{m,t} \quad (5)$$

$$\text{Prefer AfD}_{p,i,t} = \gamma_0 + \gamma_1 \left[SUCCESS_i \times POST_{i,t} \times ACTIVE_p \right] + \zeta \mathbf{X_{p,i,t}} + \delta_p + \alpha_t + \epsilon_{m,t} \quad (6)$$

In both models, the outcome is an indicator that is 1 if the preferred political party of person p in municipality i in time period t is the AfD and zero otherwise.

In equation 5, we identify the effects of terror on a persons likelihood to prefer the AfD for people with and without partisan commitments. The variable $PARTISAN_p$ is thus defined as 1 if, in all the surveys *prior* to an attack, a person prefers a particular party (i.e. the person is a committed partisan). It is zero if, in the surveys preceding an attack, an individual states more than one party as their preferred political party. For each major party, we thus identify its pre-terror committed partisans and investigate whether successful terror leads them to migrate from their preferred party to the AfD.

In equation 6, we investigate whether successful terror has differential effects for people who are politically active compared to those who are inactive. The variable $ACTIVE_p$ is thus defined as 1 if an individual reports participating in local politics frequently in all the surveys that *precede* an attack. It is defined as zero for individuals who, pre-attack, report their participation in local politics as seldom or never. Both estimating equations include all lower order terms, $\mathbf{X_{p,i,t}}$, and all other terms are defined as before.[44]

We present our results in Table 5. In Columns 1 to 6, we find that, across the board, people who are *not* politically committed to a certain party all tend to prefer the AfD more after experiencing a successful attack. Moreover, people committed to the SPD (the main rival to the CDU), the FDP and the Greens show no increased preference for the AfD in response to terror, suggesting that voters do not migrate from these parties to the AfD. By contrast, people who are committed to the CDU prior to an attack display significant preference for the AfD after experiencing a successful attack, suggesting that voter migration from the the main ruling party to the AfD does, in fact, drive some of our results. Similar patterns are found for the Left party (Column 4): in fact, the coefficient is larger for committed partisans than it is for uncommitted partisans, suggesting that acts of terror lead to significant voter migration from the Left party to the AfD. Interestingly, we find some migration away from Germany's ultra-right parties into the AfD. Specifically, in Column 6, we find that individuals who, pre-attack, identify with parties such as the Neo-Nazi National Democratic Party (NPD) of Germany or the anti-immigration *Die Republikaner* respond to terror by preferring the AfD. This suggests that voters from across the entire political spectrum respond to terror by shifting their preference to the AfD.

In Column 7, we present our estimate of γ_1 from equation 6. The coefficients indicate that politically inactive individuals significantly prefer the AfD following a successful attack

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44. In both equations, we omit $SUCCESS_i \times POST_{i,t}$ such that the triple interaction can be interpreted as total marginal effects and not differences.

whereas the opposite is true (though not statistically significant) for politically active people, suggesting that the political activation effects of terror have a partisan slant. Together, these results suggest that the strong demand for the AfD in response to terror appears to be driven both by voter migration from across the entire political spectrum as well as by the political activation of previously inactive people.

8.4 Heterogeneous Effects: Cultural Conflict

We investigate whether terror attacks exhibit heterogeneous effects on political attitudes along relevant dimensions of political conflict, including education, income and employment, gender and age. Specifically, we study three outcomes from the SOEP: whether a person prefers the AfD; whether they prefer the SPD; and whether they participate in local politics. For each outcome, we estimate β_1 from equation 4 in samples split by the relevant dimension of political conflict and plot the corresponding coefficients in Figure 6. We also estimate a model that includes a triple interaction, $SUCCESS_i \times POST_{i,t} \times COVARIATE_p$ (lower order terms included as well), and plot the coefficient on the triple interaction in order to understand whether the coefficients in the split samples are significantly different from one another.

We document clear heterogeneous effects along one dimension: education. Individuals without university education respond differentially to successful terror by preferring the AfD more; they show no increased preference for the SPD. For those with university education, the opposite is true: they differentially support the SPD in response to terror without showing any changes in preference for the AfD. In both cases, the differences between university and non-university educated are quantitatively significant. Interestingly, we also find that education helps drive our results on political participation. While individuals with and without education respond to terror by participating significantly more in local politics, the effect is significantly larger for higher-educated people. These patterns appear consistent with what Norris and Inglehart (2019) term the "authoritarian reflex": the notion that groups in society who feel "left behind" by globalization react defensively to shocks that undermine security — including terrorism — by adopting more extreme ideological positions. They are also consistent (at least partially) with Gethin, Martínez-Toledano, and Piketty (2021) who document the gradual process of disconnection between the effects of both education and income on voting outcomes.

8.5 Timing of the Effect

In Online Appendix N, we examine how people's political preferences change over time in response to successful terror. To this purpose, we run an event-study regression in which a person's preference for the AfD is used as the outcome. As shown, there are no pre-trends, suggesting that prior to an attack, AfD preferences are not increasing among people residing in successfully targeted municipalities. Following an attack, however, we observe clear, positive increases preferences for the AfD for people who experienced a successful attack compared to

those who experienced a failed one.

9. Terrorism and Political Parties

We conclude our analysis by examining the language employed by political parties in their election manifestos in state elections in response to terror. We thus collect the election manifestos (i.e. the *Wahlprogramm*) of all political parties in state elections from 2013 to 2021 and we also collect the 2009 Federal election manifesto of the CDU which we use as a reference to compare shifts in language.[45] We digitize the text of all such manifestos in order to identify the number of trigger words per 10,000 words related to topics such as migration, terrorism and crime.[46] For each party, p, we calculate the difference in the number of trigger words per 10,000 words, ΔTW, between party p's state election manifesto in year t and the 2009 CDU Federal election manifesto. We use this difference as the outcome of interest in the following estimating equation:

$$
\begin{aligned}
\Delta TW_{p_t - CDU_{2009}} = \pi_0 + \pi_1 SUCCESS_{s,t-1} + \pi_2 Party_p + \\
\pi_3 \left(SUCCESS_{s,t-1} \times Party_p \right) + \alpha_t + \zeta_s + \epsilon_{s,t}
\end{aligned}
\tag{7}
$$

In this model, $SUCCESS_{s,t-1}$ measures the total number of successful attacks in federal state s in the year prior to a state election in year t. The parameter π_1 thus captures the effect of terrorism at the state level on the number of trigger words a given party uses in comparison to the 2009 CDU. The model includes a dummy, $Party_p$, that is 1 for political party p and 0 for all other parties. The coefficient π_2 thus captures the *level* difference in trigger words used between the various parties and the 2009 CDU *regardless* of violence at the state level. The coefficient of interest, therefore, is π_3. It captures, for each party, the additional effect on the number of trigger words used in its election manifestos at the state level as a result of terrorism. The model also includes year fixed effects, α_t, state fixed effects, ζ_s and its standard errors are clustered at the level of the state.[47]

Of course, a state level analysis in a setting such as ours suffers from two important limitations: first, analysis across the 16 German Federal states offers more limited cross sectional variation. Second, aggregating (successful) attacks to the state level means that we lose our sharp identifying variation between successful and failed attacks. As such, we interpret these findings with caution. Nonetheless, a state level analysis offers insights into how political parties respond to terror. Moreover, the results are broadly in line with the rest of the analysis that exploits much richer variation at the municipal and individual level.

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45. We collect the election manifestos from the non-profit organization *Abgeordnetenwatch* (Delegate Watch) which can be found here: https://www.abgeordnetenwatch.de/. In the few instances that *Abgeordnetenwatch* does not have a particular manifesto, we obtain it directly from the party's website.

46. We choose these trigger words on the basis of work by Detering (2019) who studies the rhetoric of the parliamentary right in Germany.

47. Because there are only 16 Federal states, we estimate the standard errors using nonparametric bootstrapping.

We report our results in Figure 7. Each patch reports our result for π_3 which we estimate for each party in samples split by trigger word.[48] The patches are colored according to the sign of the coefficient (negative red, positive blue) and shaded according to precision (lightest 90 percent, darkest 99 percent). The patterns are clear. In response to terror at the state level, the AfD uses differentially more trigger words related to issues like crime, immigrant naturalization and integration. All other parties either do not respond or respond in the exact opposite direction as the AfD, using less trigger words on these same subjects. Interestingly, the word terror receives no special mention, neither by the AfD nor by other parties. These results point to a clear ideological divide in the response to terror among the main political parties in Germany. They also highlight the relevance of state elections as the key political arena where political parties — or at least the AfD — campaign differentially in response to terror attacks.

10.   Terrorism and Media

Another channel through which successful terror might affect both voting outcomes and political preferences is media reporting which makes successful attacks salient to voters. In Online Appendix P, we support this claim with evidence. First we document the extent to which successful attacks receive differential media coverage compared to failed attacks and second, we investigate the impact of highly-covered attacks on the AfD vote share. We find that, among regional and local publishers of newspapers, successful attacks receive differentially more news coverage than failed attacks (but are not more likely to receive coverage) and that the tone and content of this coverage is significantly different: stories that cover successful attacks have worse sentiment scores and use differentially more key words related to Islam and terrorism. We find no such patterns when examining news stories from a prominent national publisher. We also find that those attacks that receive the most media coverage have nearly double the effect on the AfD vote share in state elections and a positive and significant effect on the AfD vote share in Federal elections as well, underscoring the role of media in driving our results.[49]

11.   Conclusion

Exploiting quasi-random variation in the success of terror attacks across German municipalities, we shed light on the extent to which local acts of terrorism influence the political landscape of a country. The picture that emerges is that terror has significant effects on political attitudes, preferences, and outcomes: following successful terror attacks, the vote share of the right-wing, populist Alternative für Deutschland (AfD) party, a relative newcomer to German politics, increases by some 4.5 percentage points in state elections. This effect is driven both by the mobilization of previously politically inactive individuals and by voters migrating from two

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48. Specifically, for *n* parties and *m* trigger words, we run $n \times m$ regressions.

49. As we mention in Appendix P, this latter result ought to be interpreted with some caution as highly-covered attacks may be systematically different in observable (or non-observable) characteristics to non-highly-covered attacks.

mainstream parties to the AfD. Correspondingly, people's social attitudes shift to considerably more populist positions in response to successful acts of terror: people are increasingly worried about migration and are more likely to participate in local politics. For its part, the AfD campaigns differentially in response to terror at the state level compared to other parties. Together, our results provide first evidence that acts of terror can lead to a broad shift in the political landscape of a nation by mobilizing voters, shifting their preferences, and realigning the messaging of political parties in their campaign documents.

One striking feature of our results is that a right-wing, populist party like the AfD benefits from acts of terror which, by and large, were carried out by perpetrators motivated by right-wing extremist causes, including Neo-Nazi attacks, and who, by and large, targeted foreigners. This appears to be the result of the ability of the AfD to use acts of terror to support its own narrative. That the AfD speaks more about crime, integration, and immigrant naturalization rather than terrorism in response to successful attacks speaks to this point. Additionally, we found that news stories that cover successful attacks use significantly different vocabulary, highlighting such issues as terrorism and Islam and using fewer words related to right-wing populism. This result is particularly noteworthy when one considers that the (observable) characteristics of successful and failed attacks are indistinguishable. It also points to the influential role of the media in shaping human perceptions as well as political and social attitudes, preferences, and behaviors.

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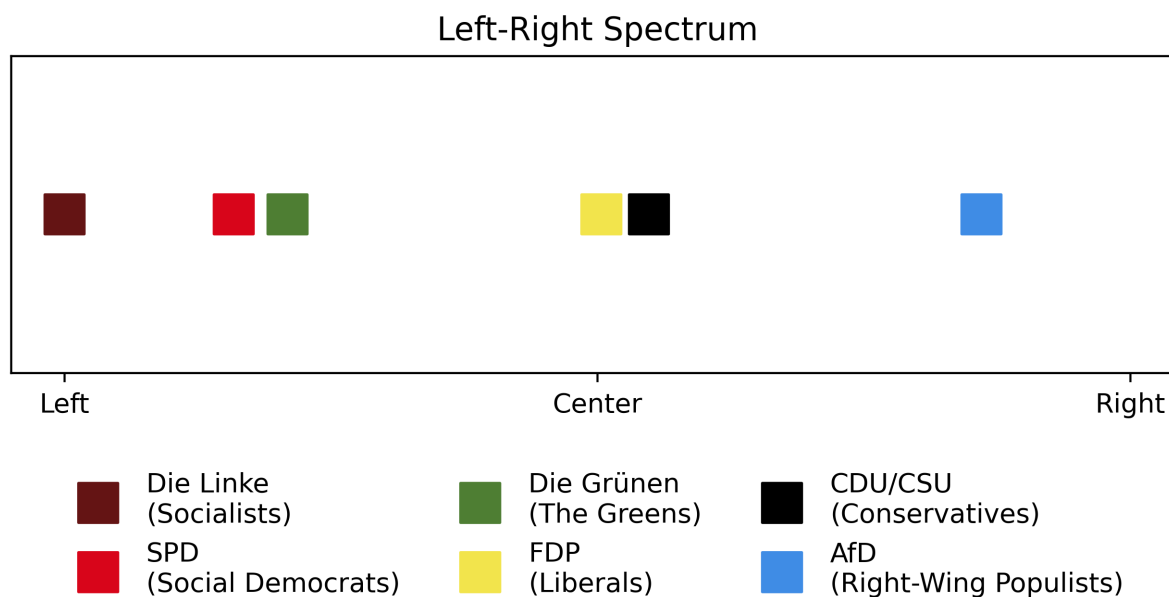
12. Figures

Figure 1
The Political Spectrum in Germany

Note: This figure shows the six major political parties in Germany according to their positions on a left-right policy scale using data from election manifestos from Lehmann et al. (2022). The dimensions used to map a party on the left-right scale include, among others, the extent to which a party favors traditional moral values; a party's preference for rigorous law enforcement; the degree to which a party upholds a positive memory of its nations history. For a complete list of considered dimensions, see the code-book offered by Lehmann et al. (2022).
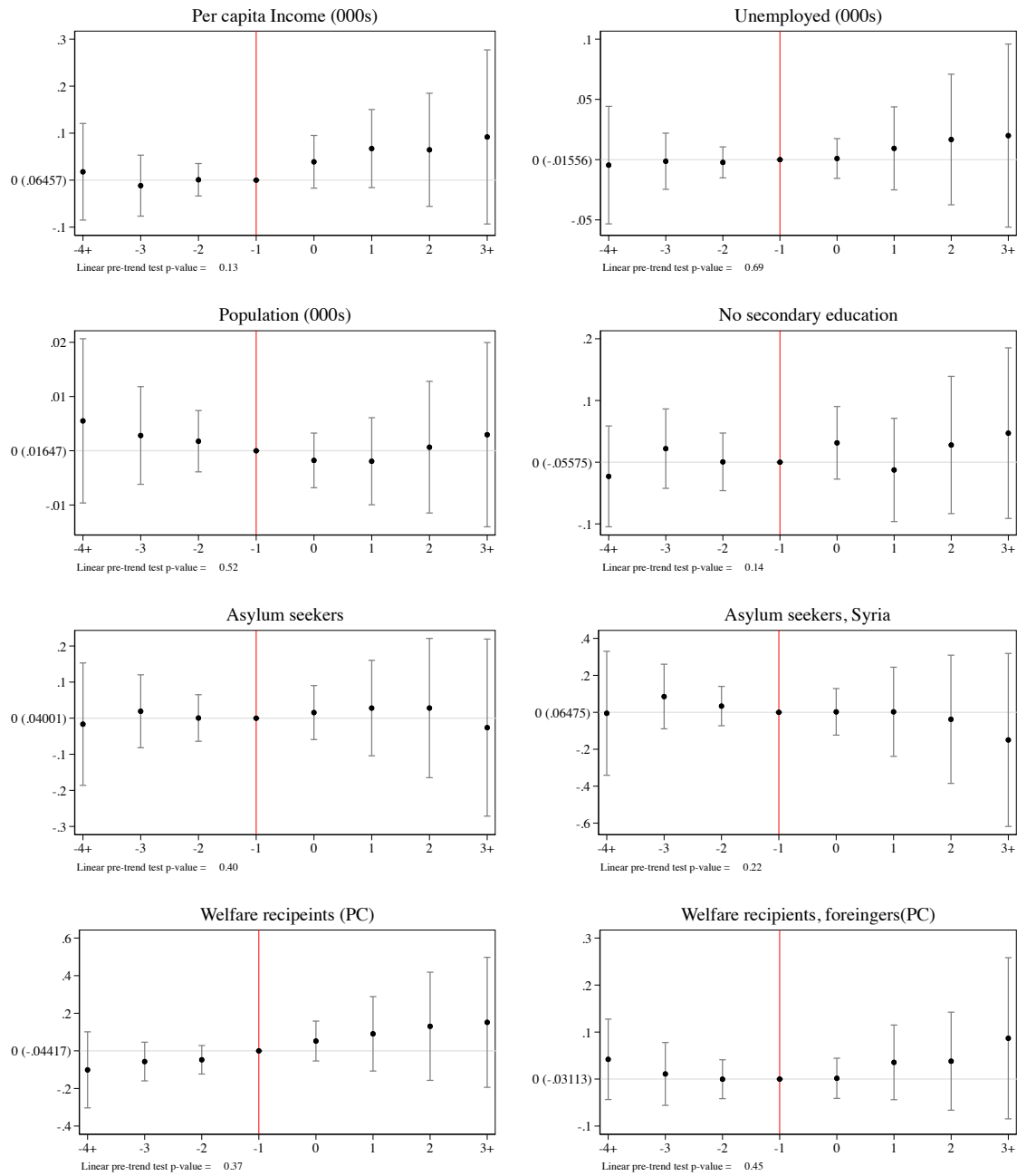
Figure 2

Trends in Socio-Economic Characteristics Successful v. Failed Municipalities

Note: This figure plots event study estimates (specifically, β_j from model 2) for various socio-economic characteristics of municipalities targeted with successful v. failed terror attacks. The outcomes have all been standardized. The regressions include municipality and time period fixed effects and are estimated using the interaction weighted estimator proposed by Sun and Abraham (2021). Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and confidence intervals are drawn at 95%. The numbers in parentheses at $y = 0$ are the mean of the dependent variable at $t = -1$.
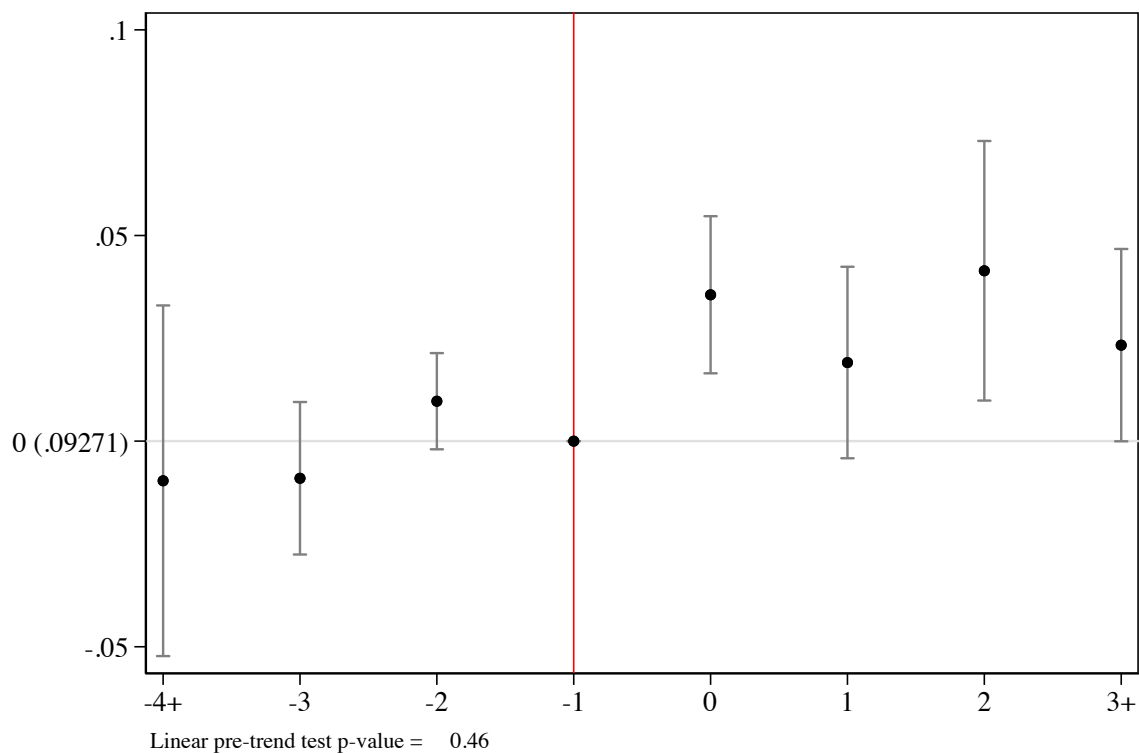
Figure 3
Trends in AfD Vote Share in Successful v. Failed Municipalities

Note: This figure plots event study estimates (specifically, β_j from model 2) for the AfD vote share in municipalities targeted with successful v. failed terror attacks. The regression includes municipality and time period fixed effects and is estimated using the interaction weighted estimator proposed by Sun and Abraham (2021). Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and confidence intervals are drawn at 95%. The p-value of joint significance of all pre-period coefficients is 0.15 and the p-value for the specification test whether the pre-period coefficients follow a linear trend is 0.46. The number in parentheses at $y = 0$ is the mean of the dependent variable at $t = -1$.

(a) Turnout: Votes per Eligible Voters

(b) Vote Shares: Votes per Votes Cast
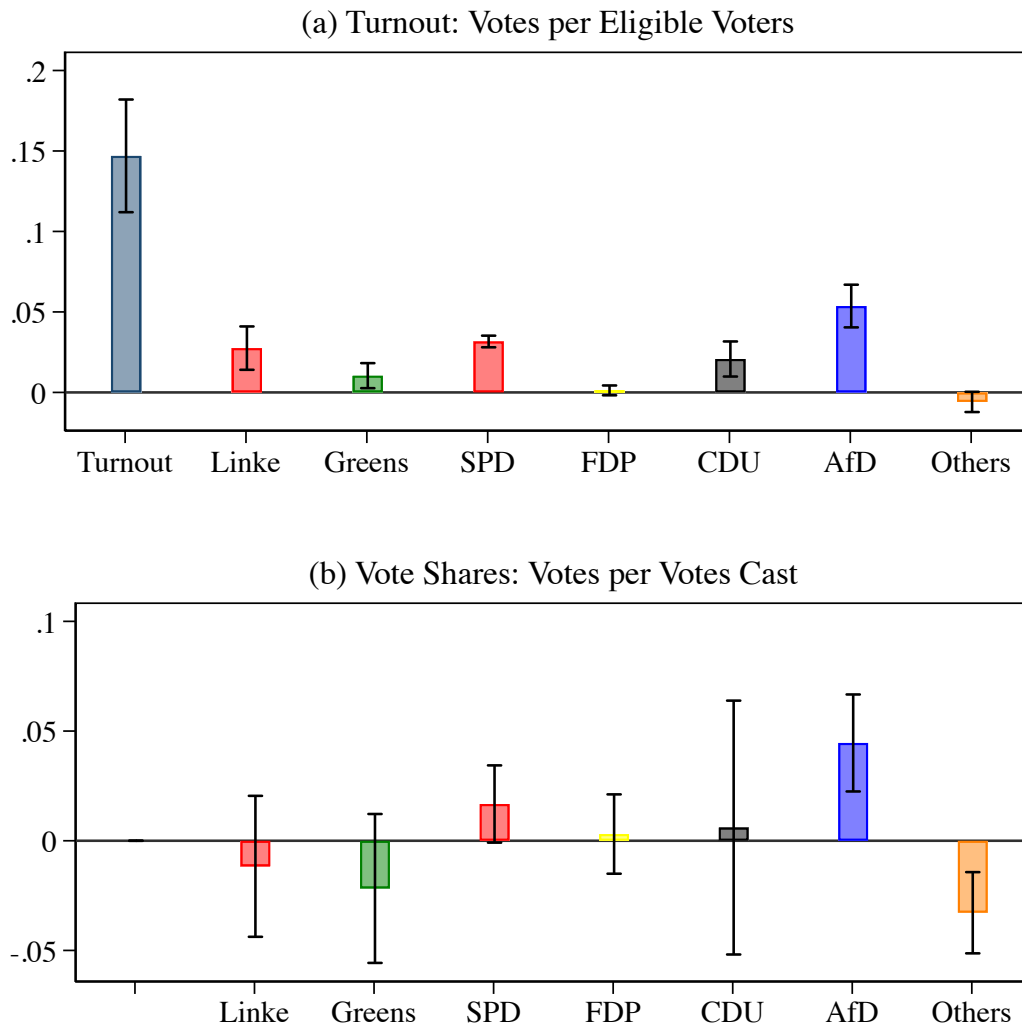
Figure 4
Terror, Turnout and Other Parties

Note: In Panel (a), we run our baseline regression specification using voter turnout, as measured by the number of votes cast per eligible voter, as the main outcome variable. We first study overall municipality turnout and then party-specific turnout as labeled along the x−axis. In Panel (b), we run the baseline when using party-specific vote shares as the outcome, again as labeled along the x−axis. For each regression, we report only the coefficient on the triple interaction between $SUCCESS$, $POST$ and $STATE\ ELECTIONS$. All regressions include election-type by municipality fixed effects, election-type by year fixed effects, and all lower order interactions. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and confidence intervals are drawn at 95%.

Success x Post x State Election, by Attack Type
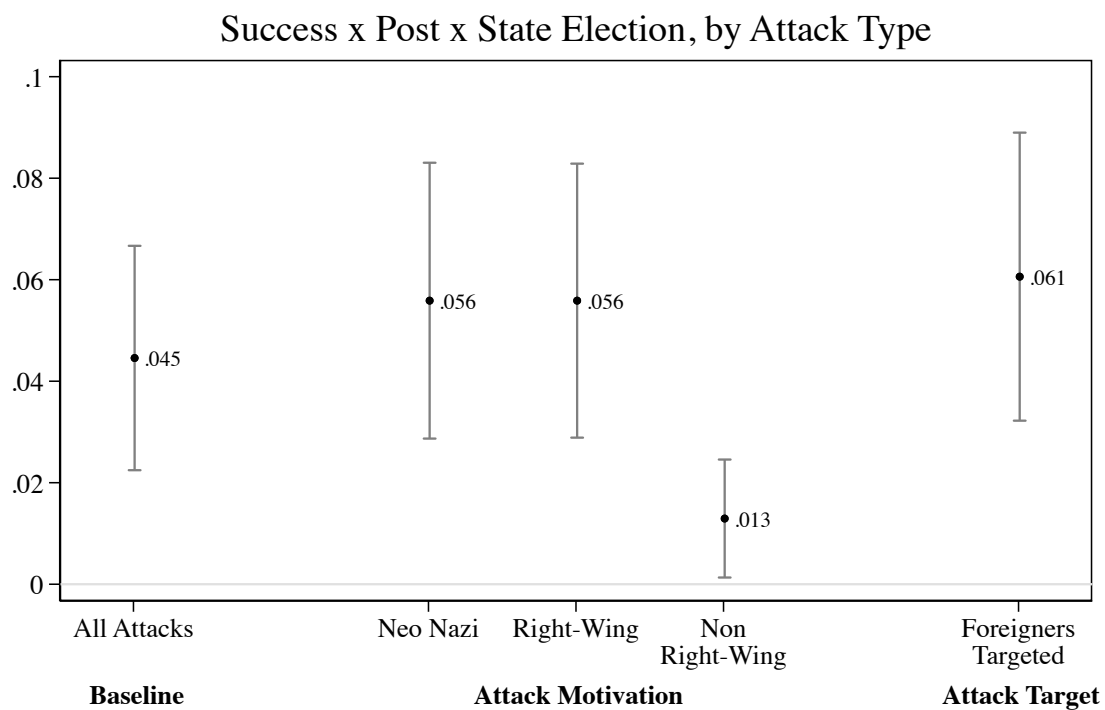
Figure 5
Heterogeneous effects according to attack type or target

Note: In this figure, we plot β_1 from our baseline estimating model as specified in equation 3 but in samples split by attack type or attack target. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and confidence intervals are drawn at 95%. Magnitude of the coefficients are noted next to each point estimate.
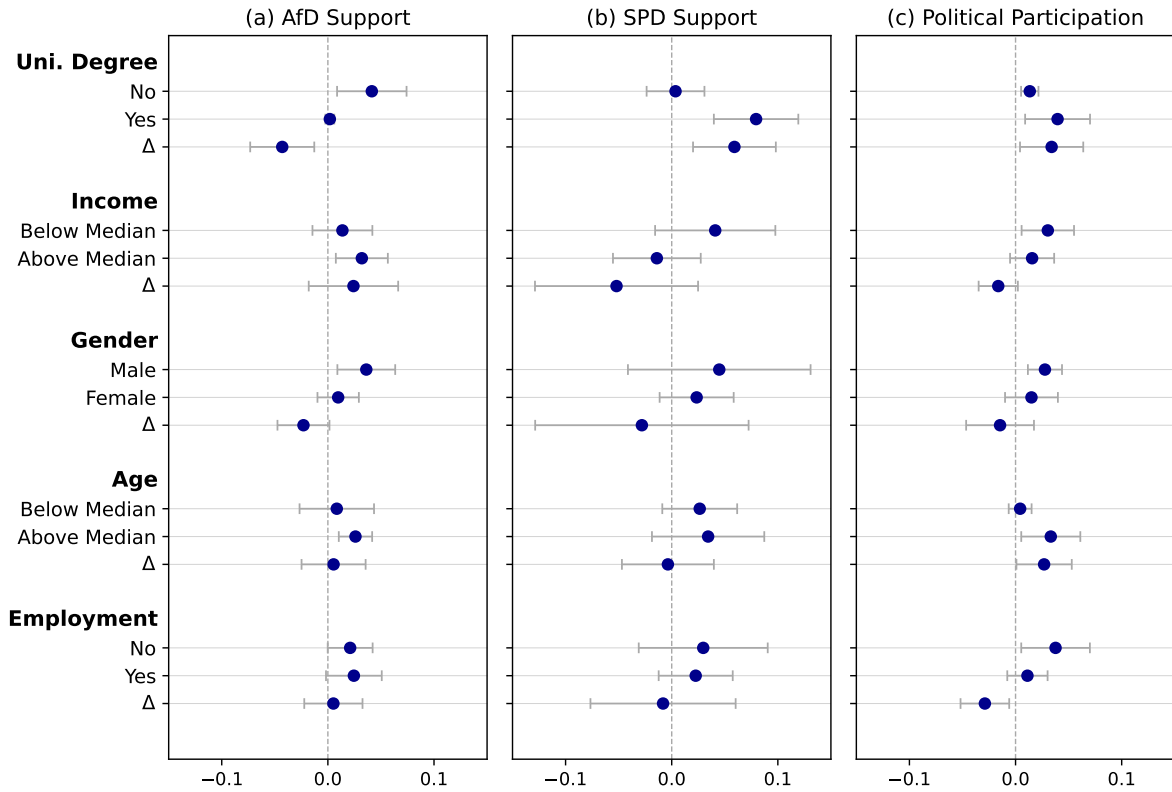
Figure 6
Political attitudes in samples split by various socio-economic variables

Note: The outcome in each panel is an indicator that is 1 if people prefer the AfD, the SPD or participate more in local politics, respectively, and 0 otherwise. For each outcome, we estimate the coefficient on $SUCCESS_i \times POST_{i,t}$ in samples split by the relevant covariates as labeled. Δ is the coefficient on the triple interaction when the outcome is regressed on $SUCCESS_i \times POST_{i,t} \times COVARIATE_p$. This model includes all lower order terms as well as person fixed effects and year fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and confidence intervals are drawn at 95%.

	Linke	Grünen	SPD	FDP	CDU/CSU	AfD
Attack	-0.106 (0.076)	-0.082 (0.024)	0.095 (0.103)	-0.111 (0.059)	-0.1 (0.116)	0.306 (0.191)
Naturalization	-0.092 (0.062)	-0.055 (0.041)	-0.138 (0.023)	0.048 (0.041)	-0.109 (0.022)	0.332 (0.104)
Integration	-0.049 (0.061)	-0.128 (0.054)	-0.012 (0.167)	-0.052 (0.075)	-0.011 (0.036)	0.263 (0.059)
Criminal (adj)	-0.115 (0.033)	-0.147 (0.031)	-0.066 (0.033)	-0.009 (0.054)	0.012 (0.033)	0.295 (0.032)
Crime	-0.037 (0.11)	-0.026 (0.06)	0.049 (0.033)	-0.052 (0.081)	-0.052 (0.098)	0.092 (0.031)
Asylum	-0.03 (0.036)	-0.065 (0.051)	-0.047 (0.062)	-0.023 (0.045)	-0.086 (0.094)	0.196 (0.21)
Terror	-0.043 (0.132)	-0.001 (0.046)	0.068 (0.091)	-0.019 (0.048)	0.076 (0.074)	-0.098 (0.098)

Figure 7

Trigger words used by different parties in different states compared to 2009 CDU

Note: This figure plots π_3 from estimating equation 7: It measures the differences in each trigger word used by each party in its state level election manifesto in states with more or less acts of terror relative to the 2009 CDU Federal election manifesto. Colored patches indicate statistical significance for positive (red) and negative (blue) effects: lightest shade indicates precision at the 90 percent level and darkest shade indicates 99 percent significance.

13. Tables

Table 1

Characteristics in Successful v. Failed Municipalities and Attacks

Variable	(1) $\bar{Y}_0$	(2) $\bar{Y}_1$	(3) $\hat{\beta}$	(4) p-value $H_0 : \beta = 0$	(5) N
Panel A: Municipality Characteristics					
Economic:					
Per capita Income (000s)	16.63	17.49	0.86	0.50	114
Unemployed (000s)	7.66	6.07	-1.59	0.56	114
Employed (000s)	63.14	52.53	-10.61	0.65	114
Tax revenue (PC)	2.68	2.76	0.08	0.82	114
Demographic:					
Population (000s)	183.26	153.39	-29.87	0.59	124
Average age	44.42	45.10	0.68	0.44	118
Share men	0.49	0.49	-0.00	0.51	124
In-migration (PC)	0.07	0.06	-0.00	0.81	124
Out-migration (PC)	0.06	0.06	-0.00	0.50	124
Asylum seekers (000s)	4.56	4.46	-0.11	0.95	111
Asylum seekers, Syria (000s)	0.92	1.03	0.12	0.80	109
Education:					
University eligible	1002.60	942.58	-60.02	0.79	113
No secondary education	188.20	164.48	-23.72	0.55	113
Geographic:					
Surface area (km^2)	107.19	106.19	-1.00	0.96	124
Forest area (km^2)	27.88	20.80	-7.08	0.35	116
Agricultural area (km^2)	33.13	39.28	6.15	0.52	116
East Germany	0.45	0.35	-0.10	0.53	124
Social Assistance:					
Welfare recipeints (PC)	1.05	0.12	-0.93	0.34	113
Welfare recipients, foreingers (PC)	0.00	0.00	-0.00	0.66	113
Road Accidents:					
Traffic accidents	865.73	765.15	-100.58	0.72	124
Deadly accidents	2.39	3.24	0.85	0.30	124
Tourism:					
Number of hotels	41.27	41.07	-0.20	0.99	118
Tourists (000s)	752.93	954.65	201.72	0.62	109
Health:					
Number of hospitals	6.63	6.39	-0.24	0.88	113
Hospitals beds (000s)	2.06	1.86	-0.20	0.62	113
Political:					
AfD Vote Share	0.09	0.09	0.00	0.69	199
1933 NSDAP Vote Share	0.42	0.40	-0.01	0.51	199
Eligibe voters (000s)	108.51	104.71	-3.79	0.92	203
Turnout	0.53	0.53	0.01	0.91	205
Days b/w Attack and Election	124.34	125.89	1.55	0.99	916
Panel B: Attack Characteristics					
Weapon Type:					
Explosives	0.81	0.76	-0.05	0.49	232
Firearms	0.03	0.07	0.04	0.28	232
Melee	0.06	0.09	0.03	0.56	232
Casualties:					
Killed	0.03	0.23	0.20	0.03	232
Wounded	0.03	1.09	1.05	0.00	231
Motivation:					
Right-Wing	0.55	0.65	0.10	0.33	211
Neo-Nazi	0.48	0.54	0.06	0.54	211
Left-Wing	0.21	0.22	0.01	0.87	211
Islamist	0.21	0.10	-0.11	0.17	211

Notes: This table reports regression coefficients (column 3) and corresponding $p-$values (column 4) when various municipality or attack characteristics are regressed against the variable *SUCCESS* which is one if a municipality experienced a successful terror attack anytime after 2010 and 0 if it experienced a failed attack but not a successful attack in that same time period. Panel A compares characteristics in municipalities targeted with successful v. failed attacks in the year (or election, in the case of political variables) immediately prior to the attack. Panel B compares the cross-sectional characteristics of successful and failed attacks. The variable *SUCCESS* in panel B is thus 1 for successful attacks and 0 for failed attacks.

Table 2
Terror Attacks and AfD Vote Share

	Outcome: AfD Vote Share								
	(1) Baseline Model	(2) East × Year	(3) Omit Berlin	(4) Urban × Year	(5) Weapon × Year	(6) Attack Timing	(7) Omit Mulitple	(8) Omit Coordinated	(9) All Controls
Success × Post × Federal	0.0005	0.0225	0.0071	-0.0068	-0.0066	0.0005	0.0050	0.0030	0.0194
	(0.0199)	(0.0145)	(0.0213)	(0.0169)	(0.0207)	(0.0199)	(0.0218)	(0.0200)	(0.0179)
Success × Post × European	-0.0116	0.0209	-0.0102	-0.0165	-0.0107	-0.0116	-0.0113	-0.0104	0.0023
	(0.0252)	(0.0172)	(0.0291)	(0.0209)	(0.0265)	(0.0252)	(0.0289)	(0.0254)	(0.0207)
Success × Post × State	0.0446***	0.0416***	0.0493***	0.0543***	0.0424***	0.0497***	0.0587***	0.0472***	0.0334***
	(0.0112)	(0.0129)	(0.0120)	(0.0099)	(0.0100)	(0.0134)	(0.0151)	(0.0136)	(0.0127)
N	734	734	664	734	723	734	534	664	542
Clusters	124	124	114	124	123	124	91	112	94
$\bar{Y}_{State}$	.17	.17	.19	.17	.18	.17	.19	.17	.18
$[S.D]$	[.1]	[.1]	[.1]	[.1]	[.1]	[.1]	[.11]	[.1]	[.1]

Notes: The dependent variable is the vote share for the Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) party at the municipality level. Success is one if a municipality experienced a successful terror attack anytime after 2010 and 0 if it experienced a failed attack but not a successful attack in that same time period. Post is 1 if the first attack in a municipality occurred prior to an election and zero if it occurred after an election. Column 2 includes an indicator that is 1 if a municipality is located in East Germany and zero otherwise interacted with year dummies. In Column 3 we omit 10 of the 12 municipal districts, *Stadtbezirke*, of Berlin targeted with attacks. In Column 4 we include an indicator for whether a municipality is an urban district interacted with year dummies and in Column 5 we interact the weapon used in the attack with year dummies. In Column 6 we control for the number of days between an attack and an election. In Column 7 we omit those municipalities targeted with more than one attack. In Column 8, we omit those municipalities that experienced coordinated attack with multiple attacks on the same day. In Column 9 we include mean values of all pre-attack municipality covariates presented in Table 1 interacted with year dummies. All regressions include election-type by municipality fixed effects, election-type by year fixed effects, and all lower order interactions. Standard errors (shown in parentheses) are clustered at the municipality level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 3
Effects of Successful and Failed Attacks

	1933 NSDAP Vote Share		AfD Vote Share	
	(1) Success v. Placebo Fail	(2) Failed v. Placebo Fail	(3) Success v. Placebo Fail	(4) Failed v. Placebo Fail
Success	-0.0103 (0.0146)			
Failed		-0.0065 (0.0230)		
Success × Post × Federal			0.0085 (0.0094)	
Success × Post × European			-0.0126 (0.0155)	
Success × Post × State			0.0299** (0.0132)	
Failed × Post × Federal				0.0001 (0.0205)
Failed × Post × European				-0.0002 (0.0309)
Failed × Post × State				-0.0169 (0.0198)
N	216	115	1,280	675
Clusters	216	115	216	115
$\bar{Y}$	.42	.42	.17	.18
$[S.D]$	[.11]	[.1]	[.093]	[.078]

Notes: The dependent variable in columns 1 and 2 is the 1933 NSDAP vote share and, in columns 3 and 4, it is the vote share for the Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) party at the municipality level. The variable success is one if a municipality experienced a successful terror attack anytime after 2010 while the variable Failed is one if a municipality experienced a failed terror attack in that same time period. The counterfactual municipalities in this table are all derived via propensity score matching. Both Success and Failed are thus coded as 0 for municipalities that did not experience any terrorist attacks but that, on the basis of propensity score matching, resembled municipalities that experienced a successful attack (i.e. placebo fail). Post is 1 if the attack in a municipality occurred prior to an election and zero if it occurred after an election. The regressions in columns 3 and 4 include election-type by municipality fixed effects, election-type by year fixed effects, and all lower order interactions. Standard errors (shown in parentheses) are clustered at the municipality level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 4

Terrorism and Individual Political Attitudes and Preferences using SOEP

	(1) Identify Right-Wing	(2) Identify Hard-Right	(3) Prefer AfD	(4) Prefer CDU	(5) Prefer SPD	(6) Participate Local Politcs	(7) Worried Immigration	(8) Worried Terrorism
				Dependent Variable: Individual Attitudes and Prefereces				
Success × Post	0.0652*** (0.0206)	0.0438** (0.0179)	0.0234** (0.0104)	-0.00693 (0.0185)	0.0314* (0.0178)	0.0205*** (0.00693)	0.0361*** (0.0174)	0.00204 (0.0261)
N	4,572	4,572	13,279	13,279	13,279	14,298	29,610	9,587
Clusters	87	87	89	89	89	95	95	88
People in Sample	2,286	2,286	2,401	2,401	2,401	3,715	4,102	2,682
$\bar{Y}$	0.176	0.0956	0.0297	0.318	0.307	0.0254	0.289	0.84
$[S.D]$	[0.381]	[0.294]	[0.170]	[0.466]	[0.461]	[0.157]	[0.453]	[0.367]

Notes: The dependent variable is the attitude of a given person in a given municipality toward various political and social topics as measured in the SOEP survey. Success is one if a person's municipality experienced a successful terror attack anytime after 2010 and 0 if it experienced a failed attack. Post is 1 if the attack occurred prior to the individual being surveyed and zero if it occurred after the survey. All regressions include person fixed effects and year fixed effects. Standard errors (shown in parentheses) are clustered at the municipality level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Table 5

Political Commitment, Political Activation and the AfD using SOEP

	Dependent Variable: Individual Prefer's AfD						
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
	CDU	SPD	FDP	Linke	Greens	Ultra Right	Politically Active
Success × Post × Non-partisan	0.0253*	0.0281***	0.0230**	0.0230**	0.0257**	0.0219**	
	(0.0145)	(0.00895)	(0.0109)	(0.0110)	(0.0125)	(0.0106)	
Success × Post × Partisan	0.0166***	0.0109	0.0715	0.0381**	0.00806	0.267**	
	(0.00475)	(0.0262)	(0.0525)	(0.0188)	(0.00623)	(0.125)	
Success × Post × Inactive							0.0259**
							(0.0115)
Success × Post × Active							-0.0116
							(0.00868)
N	9,089	9,089	9,089	9,089	9,089	9,089	9,162
Clusters	76	76	76	76	76	76	76
People in Sample	1,591	1,591	1,591	1,591	1,591	1,591	1,647

Notes: The dependent variable is an indicator that is 1 if a person's preferred party is the AfD and zero otherwise as measured in the SOEP survey. Success is one if a person's municipality experienced a successful terror attack anytime after 2010 and 0 if it experienced a failed attack. Post is 1 if the attack occurred prior to the individual being surveyed and zero if it occurred after the survey. Partisan is a dummy that is 1 if a person's preferred political party pre-attack is always as stated in the column header. It is zero (i.e., non-partisan) if a person states more than one party as their preference in the pre-attack surveys. Active is an indicator that is 1 if a person participates in local politics on a regular basis pre-attack. It is zero (i.e., inactive) if a person seldomly or never participates in local politics pre-attack. All regressions include person fixed effects and year fixed effects. Standard errors (shown in parentheses) are clustered at the municipality level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

Online Appendix for Paper:
Terrorism and Voting:
The Rise of Right-Wing Populism in Germany

Table of Contents

A. Terrorism in Germany

Table A.1 provides detailed statistics related to the targets, weapons and attack types used in each of the 232 attacks in Germany between 2010 and 2020 while Figure A.1 illustrates the frequency and intensity—in terms of deaths and injuries—of these attacks.

As shown in Table A.1, the overall success rate of attacks in Germany stands at 86 percent. The majority of attacks are facility or infrastructure attacks. They constitute 62 percent of all attacks and have a very high success rate of 94 percent. The next most common type of attack is armed assault. These make up 21 percent of all attacks and have a success rate of around 80 percent. The next most common attack type are bombings and explosions; they make up 10 percent of the attacks but have a success rate of just 54 percent, the lowest among all attack types. Fifty percent of the attacks target private citizens and their property.

Panel A in Figure A.1 demonstrates that, with the exception of 2013, attacks occur in Germany in every year, though there is great variation across years with 2015 experiencing many attacks and 2010 and 2012 experiencing relatively few attacks. In Panel B we see that most attacks involve very little deaths and injuries.
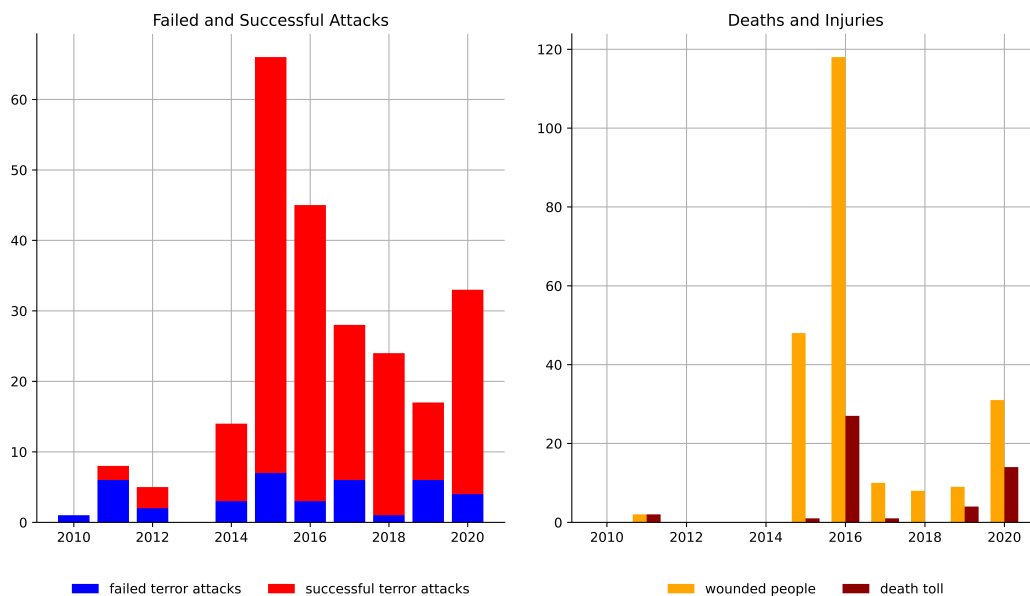

Figure A.1
Frequency and intensity of attacks

Table A.2 provides examples of attacks from our sample that helps illustrate how success and defined are according to attack type.

Table A.1
Terrorism summary statistics for Germany (2010 - 2020)

	Observations	Percentage	Attack success	If success (mean)	
				Wounded	Killed
Attack Type					
Armed Assault	48	0.21	0.79	2.32	0.87
Bombing/Explosion	24	0.10	0.54	1.54	0.08
Facility/Infrastructure Attack	143	0.62	0.94	0.24	0.00
Hijacking	1	0.00	1.00	0.00	1.00
Hostage Taking Barricade Incident	1	0.00	1.00	4.00	0.00
Unarmed Assault	13	0.06	0.77	7.44	1.20
Unknown	2	0.01	1.00	2.50	0.00
Target Type					
Business	26	0.11	0.92	1.54	0.50
Educational Institution	1	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Government Diplomatic	9	0.04	0.89	0.00	0.00
Government General	20	0.09	0.75	0.20	0.07
Journalists & Media	2	0.01	1.00	2.00	0.00
Military	2	0.01	1.00	1.00	1.00
Police	10	0.04	0.90	0.22	0.11
Private Citizens & Property	116	0.50	0.87	1.65	0.30
Religious Figures/Institutions	22	0.09	0.86	0.16	0.05
Telecommunication	2	0.01	1.00	0.00	0.00
Transportation	20	0.09	0.75	0.00	0.00
Utilities	1	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Violent Political Party	1	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00
Weapon Type					
Explosives/Incendiary	178	0.77	0.85	0.48	0.02
Firearms	15	0.06	0.93	3.00	1.79
Melee	20	0.09	0.90	2.18	0.39
Other	2	0.01	0.50	1.00	0.00
Sabotage Equipment	3	0.01	1.00	0.00	0.00
Unknown	8	0.03	1.00	0.62	0.00
Vehicle	6	0.03	0.67	14.50	3.00
Attack Motivation					
Islamist	24	0.10	0.75	5.67	1.17
Left-wing	44	0.19	0.86	0.05	0.00
Others	27	0.12	0.93	0.20	0.04
Right-wing	116	0.50	0.87	0.70	0.13
Unknown	21	0.09	0.86	2.06	0.67
Total Attacks	232		0.86	1.09	0.23

Table A.2
Examples of Successful and Failed Attacks

Attack Type	N	Definition	Examples	
			Success	Failure
Armed Assault	48	An armed assault is determined to be successful if the assault takes place and if a target is hit (including people and/or property). Unsuccessful armed assaults are those in which the perpetrators attack and do not hit the target. An armed assault is also unsuccessful if the perpetrators are apprehended on their way to commit the assault. To make this determination, however, there must be information to indicate that an actual assault was imminent.	201509070062: Assailants set fire to a refugee shelter in Rottenburg town, Baden-Wurttemberg state, Germany. Five civilians were injured in the attack. No group claimed responsibility for the incident.	201910040009: An assailant armed with a knife attempted to enter a synagogue in Berlin city, Berlin, Germany. Security guards apprehended and injured the assailant and there were no other reported casualties in the attack. An Anti-Semitic extremist claimed responsibility for the incident and shouted "F*** Israel" during the attack.
Bombing/ Explosion	24	A bombing is successful if the bomb or explosive device detonates. Bombings are considered unsuccessful if they do not detonate. The success or failure of the bombing is not based on whether it hit the intended target.	201607240002: An assailant detonated an explosive device outside a music festival in Ansbach, Bavaria, Germany. The assailant was killed and at least 15 people were injured in the blast. The assailant, identified as Muhammad Daleel, had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) also claimed responsibility for the incident; however, Daleel's connection to ISIL could not be confirmed.	201212100015: Assailants planted an explosive device at the main railway station in Bonn city, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. The device ignited but failed to detonate; it was later defused by experts. No group claimed responsibility for the incident; however, sources attributed the attack to Muslim extremists.
Hijacking	1	A hijacking is successful if the hijackers assume control of the vehicle at any point, whereas a hijacking is unsuccessful if the hijackers fail to assume control of the vehicle. The success or failure of the hijacking is not based on whether the vehicle reached the intended destination of the hijackers.	201612190003: An assailant hijacked a truck and later killed the driver in northwest Berlin, Germany. This was one of two attacks carried out on the same day; in a later event, the assailant drove the hijacked vehicle into a market, killing and injuring a number of people. The assailant, identified as Anis Amri, had pledged allegiance to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). In addition, ISIL claimed responsibility for the incident; however, the assailant's connection to the group could not be confirmed. Amri was killed several days later by police officers in Milan, Italy.	-
Hostage Taking (Barricade Incident)	1	A barricade incident is successful if the hostage takers assume control of the individuals at any point, whereas a barricade incident is unsuccessful if the hostage takers fail to assume control of the individuals.	201810150005: An assailant set fire to a McDonald's restaurant in the main railway station in Cologne, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. The assailant then went into an adjacent pharmacy, took a civilian hostage, and covered them in petrol. Police were able to free the hostage on site. Four people, including the assailant, were injured during the attack. An unaffiliated individual claimed responsibility for the incident and "demanded to be allowed to leave Germany for Islamic State in Syria."	-
Facility/ Infrastructure Attack	143	A facility attack is determined to be successful if the facility is damaged. If the facility has not been damaged, then the attack is unsuccessful.	201508240130: Assailants set fire to a planned asylum accommodation center in Weissach im Tal, Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany. There were no reported casualties in the attack. No group claimed responsibility for the incident.	201503230050: An assailant threw an incendiary device that landed near Paul-Loebe-Haus and failed to ignite in Tiergarten neighborhood, Berlin, Germany. Ralph K., a member of the German Resistance Movement, claimed responsibility for the incident and expressed anti-immigrant sentiments.
Unarmed Assault	13	An unarmed assault is determined to be successful there is a victim that who has been injured. Unarmed assaults that are unsuccessful are those in which the perpetrators do not injure anyone. An unarmed assault is also unsuccessful if the perpetrators are apprehended when on their way to commit the assault. To make this determination, however, there must be information to indicate that an assault was imminent.	201510310057: Assailants armed with baseball bats attacked Syrian refugees in Magdeburg, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany. Three refugees were injured in the attack. No group claimed responsibility for the attack.	201901010051: An assailant attempted to drive his vehicle into a pedestrian in Bottrop, North Rhine-Westphalia, Germany. There were no reported casualties in the attack. This was one of three related attacks in the area on this date. An Anti-Immigrant extremist, identified as Andreas N., claimed responsibility for the incidents and told police that he intended to target foreigners in the attacks.

Note: This table provides the definitions (Column 3) of each attack type (Column 1) from our sample, as stated in the Global Terrorism Database (GTD). Columns 4 and 5 include summaries from the GTD of successful and failed attacks for each attack type in our sample. "-" indicates that our sample does not include a corresponding attack. Note that our sample includes two attacks whose attack type label is "Unknown". The table does not include these two attacks.

B.   The AfD in Germany

In this Online Appendix, we present descriptive statistics that show the AfD's rapid rise in German politics since its inception in 2013. Figure B.1 plots the average vote share for the AfD party across all elections since its establishment in 2013. As shown, the AfD has experienced a marked increase in the years since it was founded in every election, increasing its average vote share from less than 5 percent to some 15 percent.
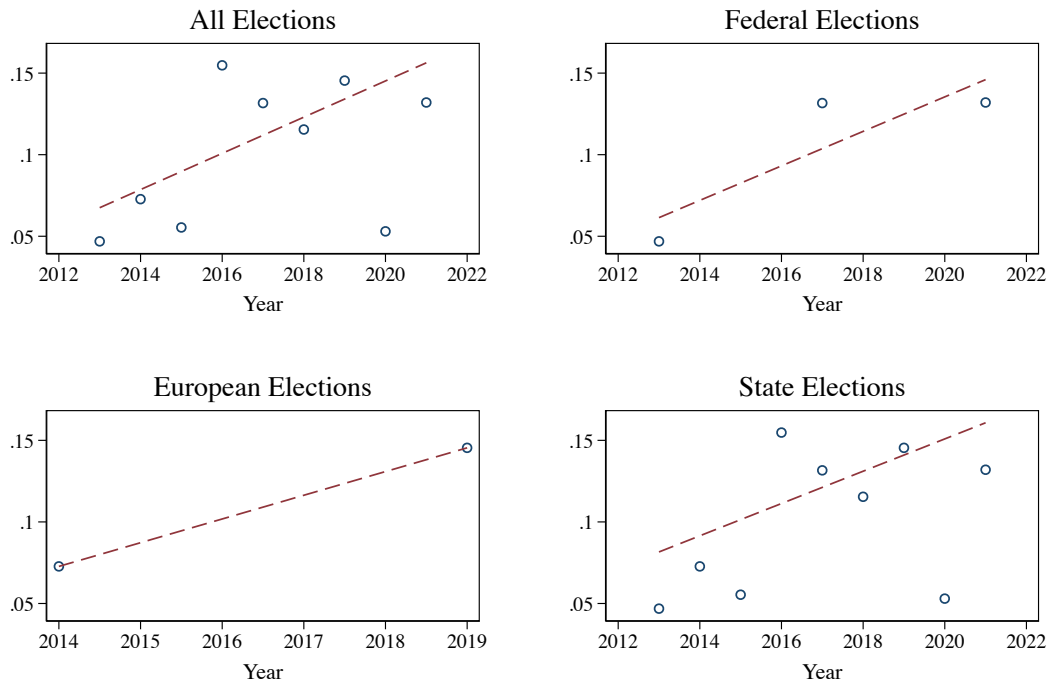
Figure B.1
Average AfD Vote Share Across All Elections in Germany

Figure B.2 overlays the distribution of the AfD vote share across German municipalities targeted with terror attacks for both Federal and state elections. As shown, the AfD has performed better in state elections compared to Federal ones. A t-test of equality of means reveals that the AfD vote share is 3.1 points higher in state elections than in Federal elections (p−value of 0.002).

Figure B.2

Distribution of AfD Vote Share in Federal and State Elections in Targeted Municipalities

C.   Targeted v. Untargeted Municipalities

In our main paper, we established that the success or failure of an attack is unrelated to municipality characteristics. In th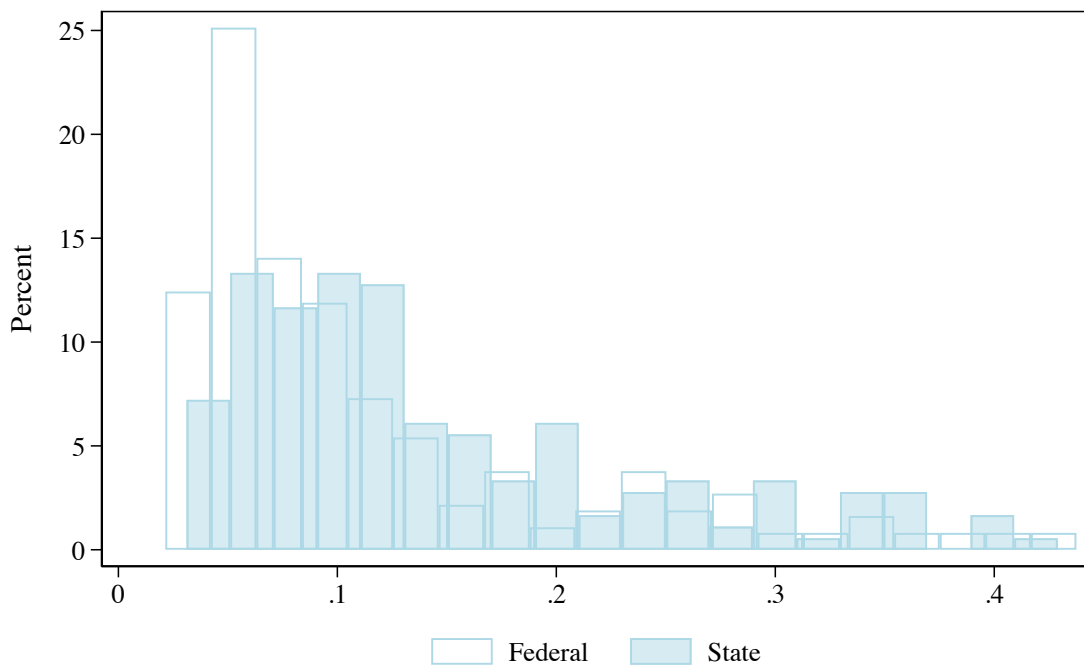is Online Appendix, we demonstrate that municipalities targeted with attacks are not just a random subset drawn from the universe of municipalities in Germany. This is shown in Figure C.1. In Panel (b), for example, we see that targeted municipalities are systematically different to untargeted ones while in Panels (c) and (d), respectively, we see that these differences hold for municipalities targeted with *both* successful and failed attacks. In Panel (a), however, we see no differences in characteristics between municipalities that experienced successful attacks compared to those that experienced failed attacks.
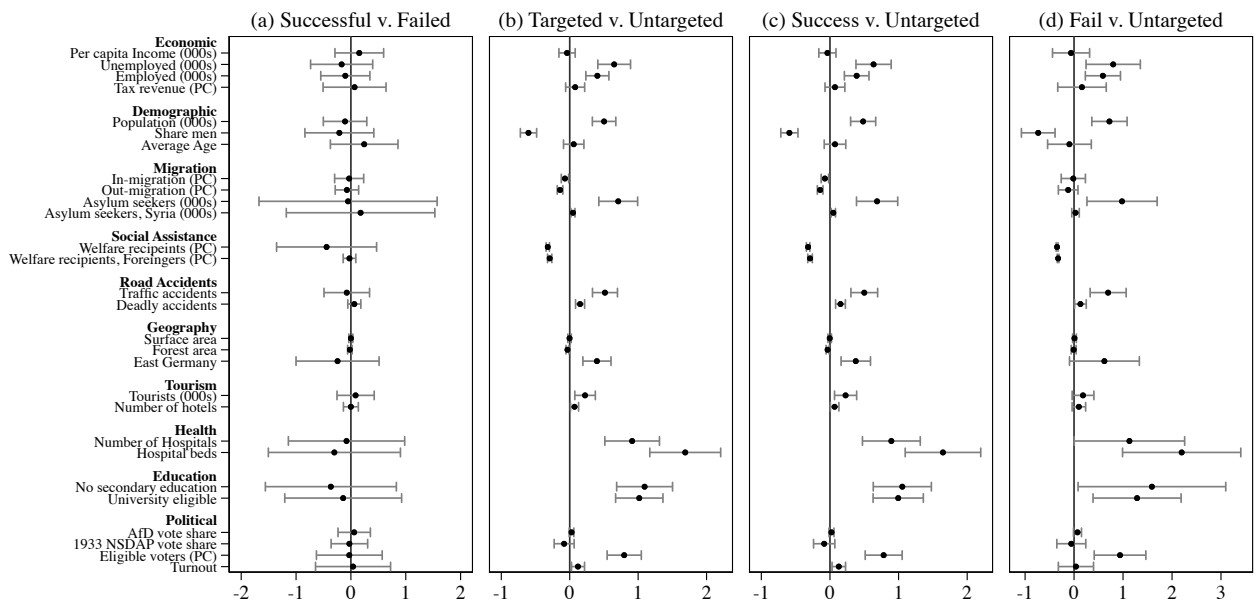
Figure C.1
Characteristics in Targeted and Untargeted Municipalities

Note: This figure presents regression coefficients from balance tests that compare characteristics for different types of municipalities. In Panel (a) successfully targeted municipalities are compared to those hit with failed attacks. In panels (b) to (d), untargeted municipalities are compared, respectively, to: targeted (i.e., successful and failed attacks) municipalities; successfully targeted municipalities; and failed municipalities. All outcomes are standardized.

D. Terrorism and Differential Trends

D.1 Terrorism and Municipality Characteristics

In this Online Appendix, we present event studies for each municipality characteristic, X_i, presented in our balance table from the main paper (except for geographical characteristics). Specifically, for each municipality characteristic, X_i (which we standardize), we estimate the parameters of the following econometric specification:

$$X_i = \sum_{j=-4, j \neq -1}^{3} \beta_j (SUCCESS_i \times D_j^t) + \delta_i + \alpha_j + \epsilon_i \tag{8}$$

The specification include municipality fixed effects, δ_i, as well as time period fixed effects, α_j. $SUCCESS_i$ is defined as before and is now interacted with a time period dummies which run from four years prior to an attack until 3 years after an attack. The omitted category is $j = -1$, the year immediately prior to the attack. Our estimation command — `xtevent` developed by Freyaldenhoven et al. (2021) — accounts for staggered treatment and uses the interaction weighted estimator proposed by Sun and Abraham (2021) which is suitable in setting with heterogeneous effects.

The results are shown in Figure D.1. As shown, successful terror does not have a significant effect on any of the socio-economic variables in our study. What is more, there is very little evidence of pre-trends, indicating that successful terror is not selected with respect to a wide range of socio-economic characteristics.
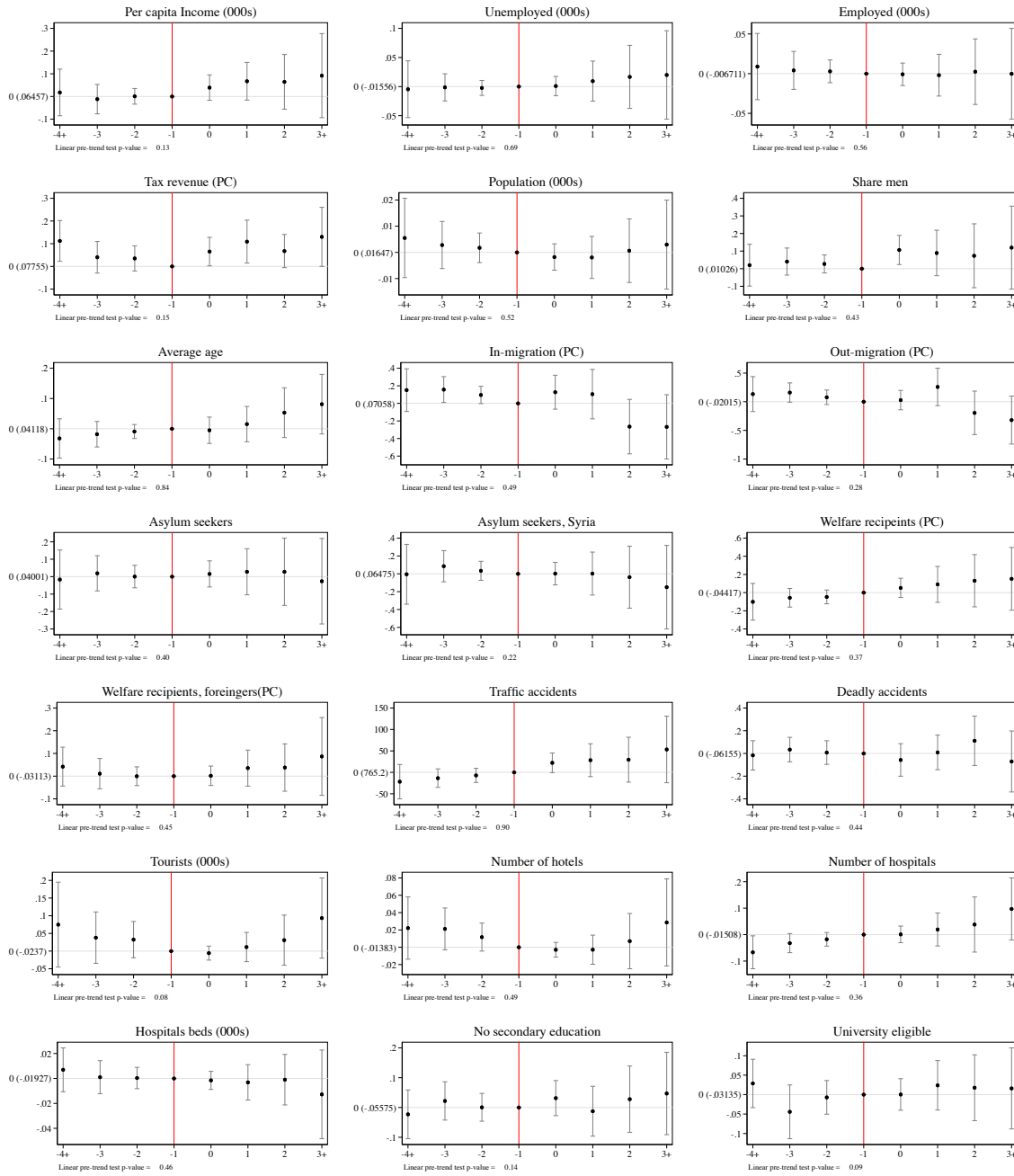
Figure D.1

Trends in Socio-Economic Characteristics Successful v. Failed Municipalities

Note: This figure plots event study estimates (specifically, β_j from model 8) for various socio-economic characteristics of municipalities targeted with successful v. failed terror attacks. The outcomes have all been standardized. The regressions include municipality and time period fixed effects and are estimated using the interaction weighted estimator proposed by Sun and Abraham (2021). Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and confidence intervals are drawn at 95%. The numbers in parentheses at $y = 0$ are the mean of the dependent variable at $t = -1$.

D.2 Successful and Failed Terror and AfD Vote Share

We next present two event studies, both shown in Figure D.2 and both estimated using the specification of model 8. In panel (a), we examine only municipalities targeted with successful attacks whereas in panel (b), we examine only municipalities hit with failed attacks. To identify effects, we rely on variation in the timing of an attack (i.e, comparing municipalities hit with successful (failed) attacks early in the sample to those hit with successful (failed) attacks later in the sample). As shown, neither figure shows evidence of pre-trends and positive, precisely estimated effects only appear in the sample of municipalities hit with successful attacks. While the post-treatment coefficients for failed attacks are positive, they are not distinguishable from zero. This confirms that our effects are driven primarily by successful attacks and not by failed attacks.
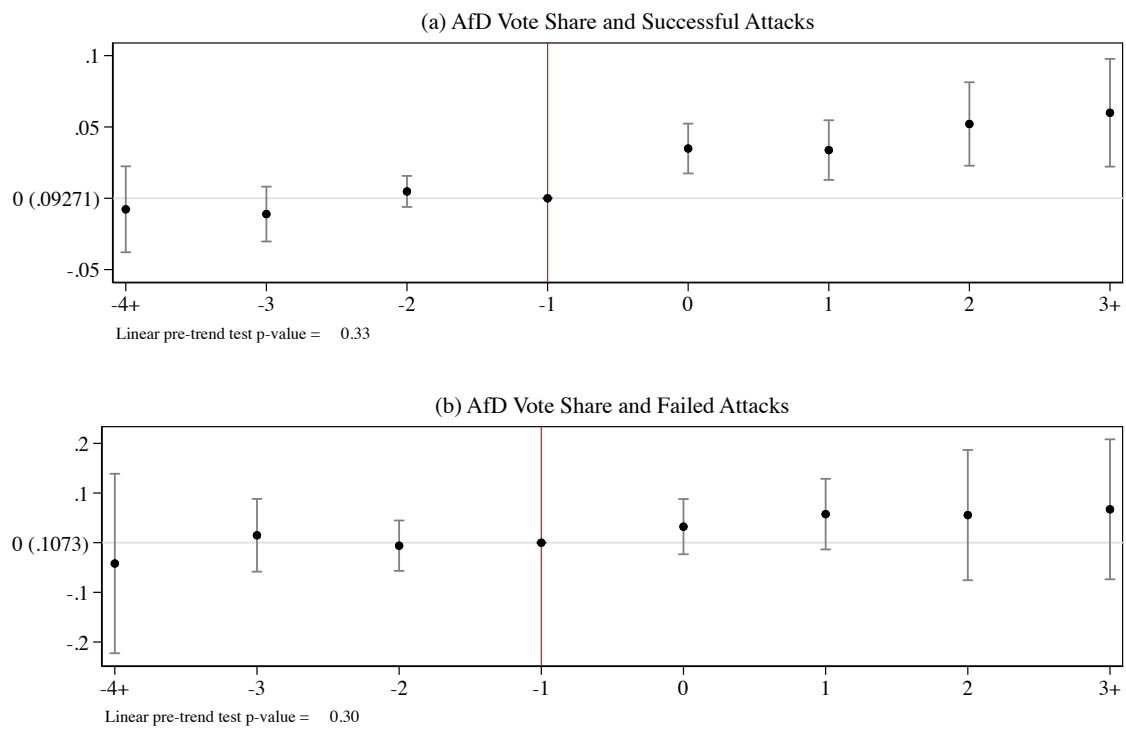
Figure D.2

Trends in AfD Vote Share for Successful and Failed Attacks

Note: This figure plots event study estimates (specifically, β_j from model 2) for the AfD vote share in municipalities targeted with successful terror attacks (panel (a)) and failed terror attacks (panel (b)), relying on variation in the timing of an attack to identify effects. The regressions include municipality and time period fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and confidence intervals are drawn at 95%. The p-value of joint significance of all pre-period coefficients is 0.13 and 0.57 for panels (a) and (b), respectively. The numbers in parentheses at $y = 0$ are the mean of the dependent variable at $t = -1$.

E. Baseline Estimates by Election Type

In this Online Appendix, we present the results of our baseline analysis when separating the AfD vote share in Federal, European and State elections. As such, we estimate a model in which the coefficient of interest is $SUCCESS \times POST$ and which includes municipality and year fixed effects. The results are shown in Table E.1. As shown, they are virtually identical to studying the three election types in a single model but with additional fixed effects (municipality $\times$ election type and year $\times$ election type).

Table E.1
Baseline Estimates by Election Type

	(1) Baseline Model	(2) East × Year	(3) Omit Berlin	(4) Urban × Year	(5) Weapon × Year	(6) Attack Timing	(7) Omit Mulitple	(8) Omit Coordinated	(9) All Controls
				Outcome: AfD Vote Share					
Panel A. State Elections									
Success × Post	0.0446***	0.0416***	0.0493***	0.0574***	0.0460***	0.0497***	0.0587***	0.0472***	0.0945***
	(0.0114)	(0.0133)	(0.0124)	(0.0115)	(0.0126)	(0.0138)	(0.0156)	(0.0140)	(0.0133)
N	118	118	98	118	110	118	82	108	92
Clusters	59	59	49	59	55	59	41	54	46
$\bar{Y}$	.17	.17	.19	.17	.18	.17	.19	.17	.19
Panel B. Federal Elections									
Success × Post	0.000536	0.0225	0.00707	-0.00679	-0.00664	0.000536	0.00500	0.00303	0.0176
	(0.0198)	(0.0144)	(0.0212)	(0.0168)	(0.0206)	(0.0198)	(0.0216)	(0.0199)	(0.0182)
N	370	370	340	370	367	370	272	334	282
Clusters	124	124	114	124	123	124	91	112	94
$\bar{Y}$	.12	.12	.12	.12	.12	.12	.12	.12	.11
Panel C. European Elections									
Success × Post	-0.0116	0.0209	-0.0102	-0.0159	-0.0102	-0.0116	-0.0113	-0.0104	0.00732
	(0.0251)	(0.0171)	(0.0289)	(0.0213)	(0.0269)	(0.0251)	(0.0287)	(0.0253)	(0.0197)
N	246	246	226	246	244	246	180	222	188
Clusters	123	123	113	123	122	123	90	111	94
$\bar{Y}$	.11	.11	.11	.11	.11	.11	.11	.11	.1

Notes: This table reports the coefficient of $SUCCESS \times POST$ separately for State, Federal and European elections. See notes of Table 2 for details on what each specification includes. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

F.   Prolific Survey: Voters' Knowledge of the German Political System

F.1   *Main Survey Results*

We find that successful terror differentially increases the AfD vote share in *state* elections. In Section 6.2, we argue that this is attributable to voter awareness of the differing competencies between state and federal governments regarding internal security and migration. To examine this hypothesis, we conducted two surveys via the *Prolific* platform. The first survey focused on internal security, while the second one explored public knowledge on migration. For both surveys we gathered responses from 250 participants, totaling 500 responses.

These surveys contained two central questions that validated our hypothesis regarding public knowledge of governmental powers. The first asked participants which level of government is responsible for internal security and policing within Germany. The second asked participants which level of government was responsible for the geographic distribution of asylum seekers among cities and counties. The results are shown in Figure F.1. As shown, nearly 80 and 65 percent, respectively, correctly identified *state* governments as the correct institution for managing internal security and asylum. What is particularly striking is that just 60 percent of participants across both waves could correctly identify the head of state in Germany. This indicates that voters, regardless of their general political knowledge, are aware of the distribution of competencies between federal and state governments concerning internal security and asylum.
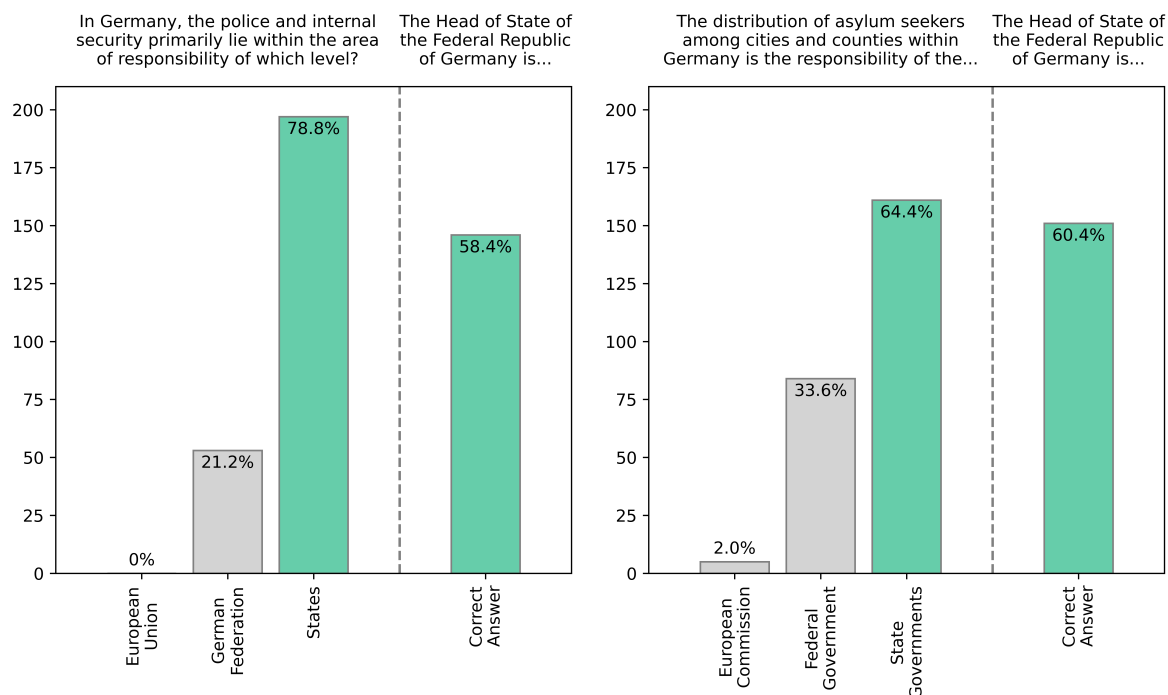
Figure F.1
Survey Key Results

Note: This figure displays the responses to the central questions from the surveys. The left panel reveals that 78.8% of respondents correctly identified state governments as primarily responsible for internal security matters in Germany, while 21.2% mistakenly believed this fell under the federal government's obligation. Notably, only 58.4% of respondents could accurately identify the German head of state. The right panel presents analogous findings regarding the assignment of responsibility for the geographic distribution of asylum seekers within German counties and cities. In this case, 64.4% correctly attributed this responsibility to state governments, while only 60.4%could name the head of state.

F.2   Details on Survey Construction and Execution

Participant selection was based on nationality, as only German citizens can vote in federal elections. Despite this criterion, the survey respondents demonstrated a wide range of demographics, as depicted in Figure F.3. For instance, participants' ages ranged from 18 to 71 years. Additionally, the majority of respondents were White (approximately 90%), lived in various countries, and had diverse educational backgrounds (with about 50% holding a university degree). Roughly 6% were unemployed, and about a third of the respondents were female.

The surveys comprised various questions aimed at assessing the respondents' knowledge on the political issues of internal security and migration. Table F.1 provides a summary of these questions, including their English translations (Column 2), the type of question (Column 3), and the range of possible answers (Column 4). It is important to note that the order of the answers was randomized to enhance the reliability of the results. Notably, questions 2 and 8 were crucial for validating our hypothesis regarding public knowledge of governmental powers. As discussed above, a majority of participants could correctly identify state governments as responsible for internal security and asylum, more than could identify the head of state in Germany. Moreover, compared to other questions, the respondents' knowledge of the distribution of powers between different levels of government was notably high, as indicated by the green shaded areas in Figure

F.2, representing the proportion of correct answers for each question.

Besides randomizing the answer choices, we also conduct a sanity check to ensure the reliability of the responses. This check is based on two key factors: first, the majority of respondents completed both surveys (242 out of 258 distinct participants); second, questions related to demographic information and political preferences (Questions 10 to 15) were asked separately in each survey. Accordingly, by comparing a participant's answers to identical questions in both surveys, we can evaluate the responses' reliability. This approach leads us to conclude that approximately 84% of the responses are reliable. Furthermore, the inconsistencies among the remaining 16% of responses were not systematic, with typically only one out of the six questions showing a variation. This pattern further enhances confidence in the survey's results.
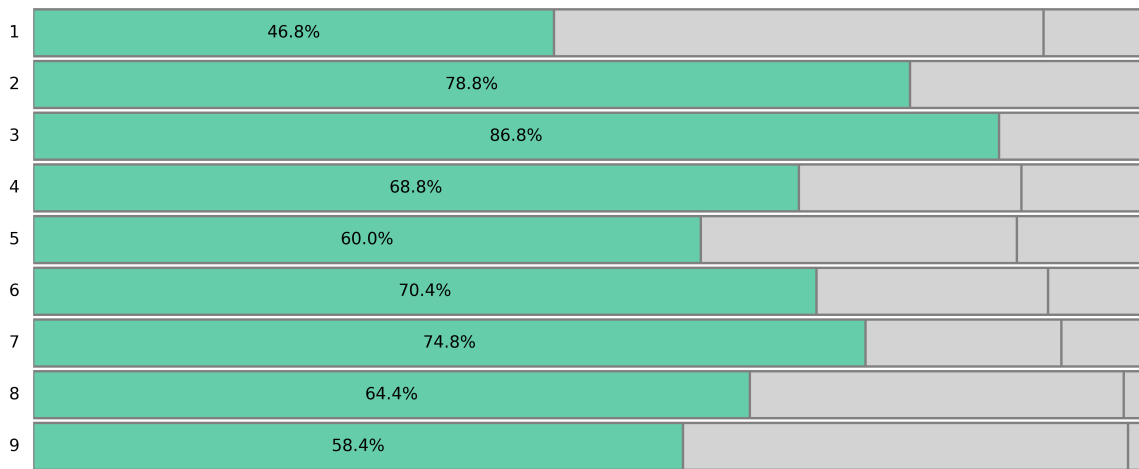

Figure F.2
All Survey Results

Note: This figure displays the distribution of answers for Questions 1-9, as detailed in Table F.1. The numbers along the left edge match the question numbers in Table F.1. The green shaded areas indicate the share of correct answers, while the gray shaded areas emphasize the fraction of incorrect answers.

Table F.1
Survey Questions

No.	Question/Statement	Type	Answers
Internal Security			
1	Trust in the police among the German population compared to other countries is...	MC	particularly high; particularly low; approximately equal
2	In Germany, the police and internal security primarily lie within the area of responsibility of which level?	MC	European Union; Federal government; State government(s)
3	The vast majority of German police officers are civil servants.	MC	True; False
4	The total number of police officers in state police forces compared to the Federal police force is...	MC	Higher; lower; approximately equal
Migration			
5	Compared to the EU average, the proportion of people in Germany who were born in another country is...	MC	Higher; lower; approximately equal
6	The unemployment rate of people without German citizenship living in Germany is higher than that of people with German citizenship . . .	MC	Higher; lower; approximately equal
7	The proportion of people with a migration background in western German states (including Berlin) is higher than in eastern German states . . .	MC	Higher; lower; approximately equal
8	The distribution of asylum seekers among cities and counties within Germany is the responsibility of the...	MC	European Commission; Federal government; State government(s)
Consistency Check			
9	The Head of State of the Federal Republic of Germany is	MC	Angela Merkel; Joachim Gauck; Frank-Walter Steinmeier; Olaf Scholz
Demographics & Preferences			
10	What is your nationality?	MC	German; Other
11	In which Federal state do you live?	DD	16 choices given the 16 German Federal states
12	Which political party can you identify with the most?	DD	Die Linke; Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht (BSW); Bündnis 90/Die Grünen; SPD; FDP; CDU; AfD
13	Which political party can you identify with the least?	DD	Die Linke; Bündnis Sahra Wagenknecht (BSW); Bündnis 90/Die Grünen; SPD; FDP; CDU; AfD
14	What is your highest level of education?	MC	Hauptschule; Realschule; Abitur; currently in school; high school dropout
15	You have a university degree?	MC	True; False

Notes: This table summarizes the questions asked in the two surveys conducted. Column 1 states the survey topic (Internal Security or Migration) and assigns a number to each question. Moreover, note that the questions and statements from the sections *Consistency Check* and *Demographics & Preferences* were included in each survey separately. Column 2 provides the English translations of the survey questions, while Column 3 specifies the question type, whether Multiple-Choice (MC) or Dropdown menu (DD). Column 4 details the range of possible answers available to the respondents.
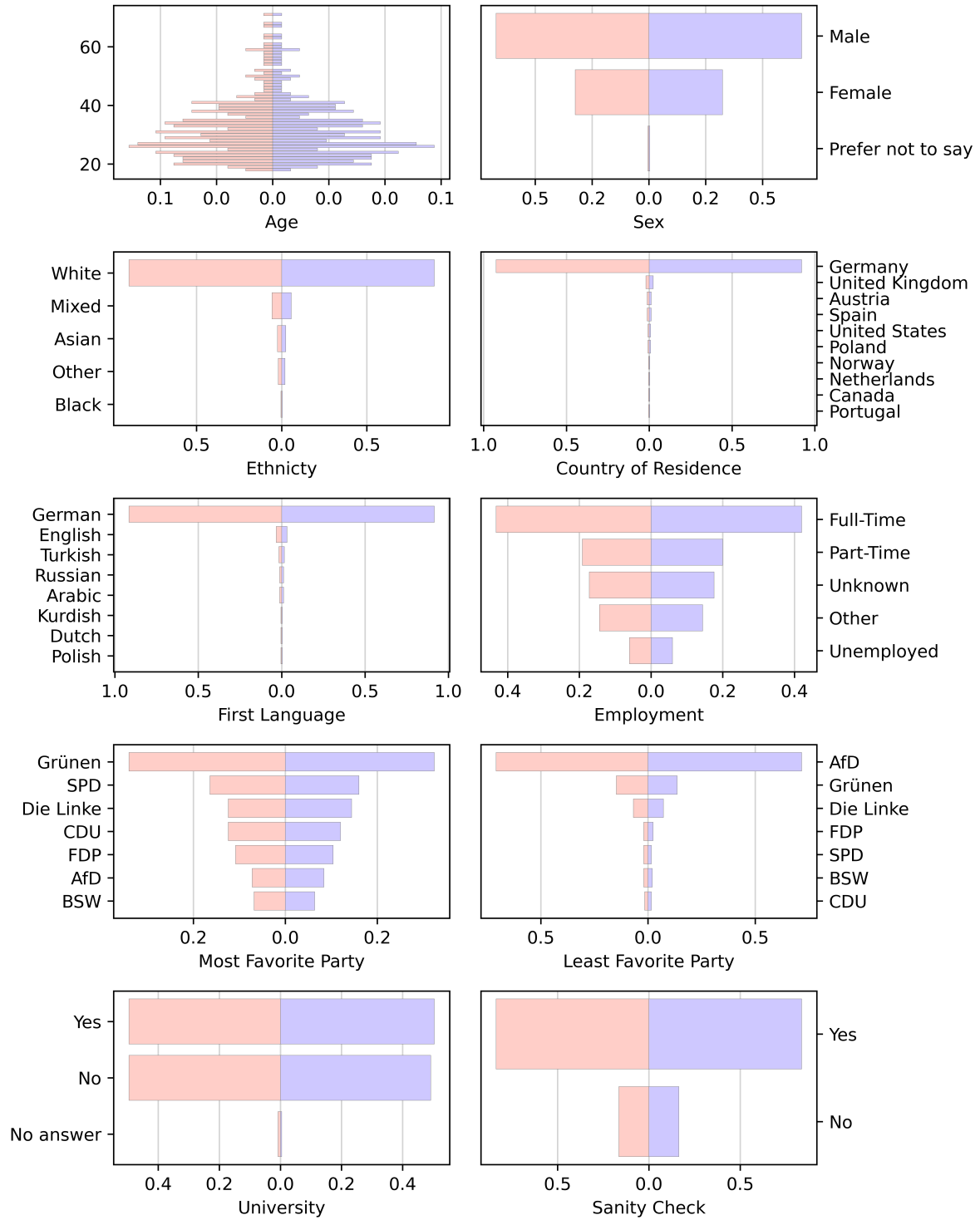
Figure F.3
Demographics of Respondents

Note: This figure offers a view into the distribution of demographic information and political preferences among the survey participants. The data were either sourced directly from Prolific or collected through the surveys. Each panel depicts a distinct variable. Given that we conducted two separate surveys, the distributions for both are showcased. Red bars correspond to the survey focused on internal security matters, whereas blue bars represent participants from the survey concerning migration issues. For example, in the internal security survey, 19.2% of respondents were part-time workers, compared to an exact 20% in the migration survey.

G.   AfD Election Manifestos

We find that successful terror differentially increases the AfD vote share in *state* elections. In Section 6.2, we argue that this is attributable to voter awareness of the differing competencies between state and federal governments (discussed in Online Appendix F) and because the AfD campaigns issues differently at the state level compared to the Federal level To examine this latter hypothesis, we digitize the table of contents for all the election manifestos for the AfD in state and Federal elections and generate a distribution of topics and their ordering in the table of contents. For state elections, we also distinguish manifestos in states with above and below median attacks. The idea is that topics that appear earlier in the election manifesto (i.e., topic #1 in the table of contents) are more important whereas those that appear later are of less importance.

These results are reported in Figure G.1. As shown, the AfD discusses internal security more prominently in its state election manifestos compared to its Federal election documents. This is especially true in those states that experience the most terror attacks. Similar patterns, though less striking, appear for migration, suggesting that the AfD does campaign these two issues differently at the state level compared to the Federal level.

Panel A: Internal Security & Police
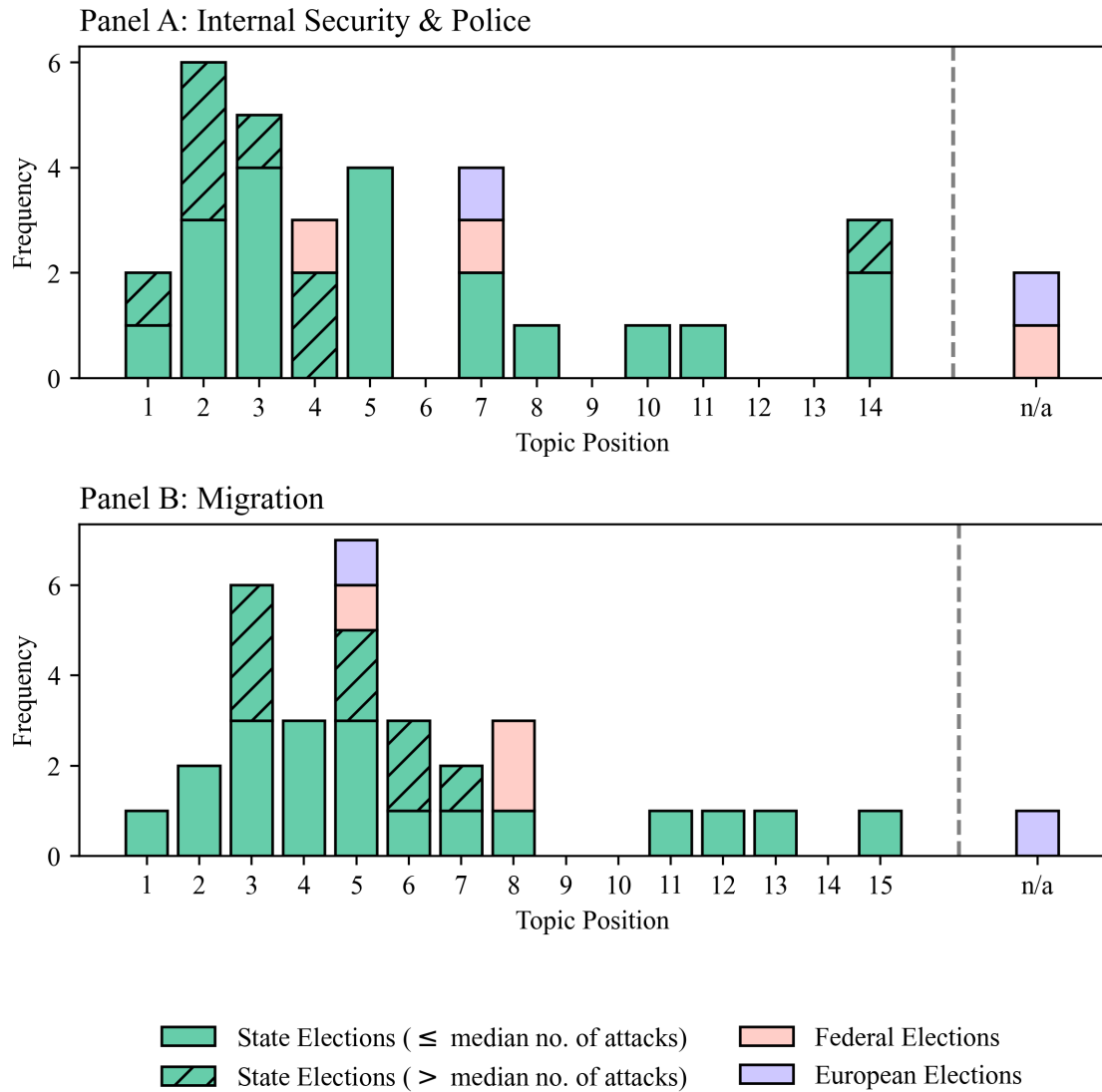

Panel B: Migration

Figure G.1

Distribution of Topics within Federal and State Election Manifestos of the AfD

Note: This Figure plots the distribution of topics, as they appear in the table of contents, in the AfD election manifestos for state and Federal elections from 2013 until 2021.

H.   Additional Robustness

In this Online Appendix we present our baseline results using estimators that are robust to two-way fixed effects with staggered treatment. We also present our baseline estimate using a rolling window approach to incorporate a larger number of attacks into the analysis and not just the first attack in a given municipality. Finally, we demonstrate that our baseline estimation is robust to two alternative methods of statistical inference.

H.1   Heterogeneity Robust DiD with Staggered Treatment

In recent years, there has been a fast growing literature addressing the issues related to difference-in-differences estimations using two-way fixed effects (TWFE), in particular when treatment effects are heterogeneous and/or when treatment is staggered (De Chaisemartin and D'Haultfoeuille 2022; De Chaisemartin and d'Haultfoeuille 2020; Goodman-Bacon 2021; Borusyak, Jaravel, and Spiess 2021).

In our setting, the issue of a staggered, binary treatment takes on relevance. Because different municipalities are hit with attacks at different points in time, our baseline estimate may, in fact, be the result of "forbidden comparisons" (De Chaisemartin and D'Haultfoeuille 2022; Borusyak, Jaravel, and Spiess 2021), whereby groups that are treated early are compared to those that are treated later but receive different weights which might affect of overall estimate.[50] In particular, those municipalities hit with attacks very early may receive negative weights compared to those who were attacked later. To the extent that the short- and long-run effects of terror are different, this may give rise to a biased estimator as more weight is given to the short-run effects of terror and a negative weight assigned to its long run effects.

This literature has not only identified the nature of the problem, but has also developed a range of heterogeneity-robust DID estimators (for a summary, see De Chaisemartin and D'Haultfoeuille (2022)). In this Online Appendix, we repeat our baseline model using one of these alternative estimators, `did_imputation`, put forward by Borusyak, Jaravel, and Spiess (2021). This estimator estimates the effects of a binary treatment with staggered rollout allowing for arbitrary heterogeneity and dynamics of causal effects in manner that is more efficient to those proposed by other researchers.[51]

Our results are shown in Table H.1. In Column 1, we report our baseline estimate as a marginal effect (rather than a total marginal effect) so as to make estimation with `did_imputation` comparable. As shown, successful attacks increase the AfD vote share by some 6 points in state elections compared to European elections. In Column 2, we report the results when using `did_imputation`. As explained in Borusyak, Jaravel, and Spiess (2021), this estimation is carried out in three steps. First, municipality and year fixed effects are fitted on a model that uses only untreated observations (i.e. those that were hit with failed attacks or successfully attacked municipalities prior to the attack). Second, these estimations are used to predict the untreated *potential outcomes* for treated units, including imputing non-treated potential outcomes where necessary. This enables the command to estimate the treatment effect $\tau = Y_{it,observed} - Y_{it,potential}$. Finally, the command calculates a weighted average of these

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50. Goodman-Bacon (2021) provides an exposition of the various comparisons that make up an overall difference-in-difference estimator when treatment is staggered while Borusyak and Jaravel (2017) provide an intuitive explanation of "forbidden" comparisons or extrapolations involved in such cases.

51. The only difference is that using this alternative command, we report the marginal effect of successful terror on state elections compared to European elections rather than the *total* marginal effect of successful terror on state elections.

different treatment effects with weights corresponding to the estimation target.[52]

As shown, the differences, both in magnitude and precision, between Columns 1 and 2 are small and, if anything, the effect size using a heterogeneity robust DiD estimator is larger. This increases confidence that our baseline estimation using linear difference-in-difference is, in fact, unbiased.

Table H.1
Heterogeneity Robust DiD Estimation

	Coefficient on Success × Post × State Election	
	(1) Baseline	(2) DiD Imputation
β	0.0562** (0.0282)	
τ		0.0938*** (0.0022)
N	734	623
Estimator	reghdfe	DID imputation

Notes: This table reports the coefficient of $SUCCESS \times POST \times STATE$ in a model that includes municipality and year fixed effects as well as municipality-by-election-type fixed effects. In Column 1, the coefficient, β, is estimated via using `reghdfe`. In Column 2, the coefficient, τ, is estimated using using the imputation estimator of Borusyak, Jaravel, and Spiess (2021). In both models, we report the marginal effect of successful terror on state elections relative to European elections. . * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

H.2   Rolling Window Approach

In our baseline analysis, we use the first attack in a given municipality as a reference from which we determine the variables $SUCCESS$ and $POST$. In this Online Appendix, we reproduce Table 2, our baseline results, using a larger number of attacks in the sample and not just the first attack. For the 91 municipalities that received only one attack, the coding of $SUCCESS$ and $POST$ remain unchanged. For the 33 municipalities that received more than one attack, however, we now create a "rolling window" of time around each municipality-attack (or groups of attacks if there are no elections between them). $SUCCESS$ is now coded according to the attack in the window and $POST$ is coded for each election in the window depending on whether the election was before or after the attack.This analysis has the disadvantage, however, of making interpretation more complicated because of overlapping time-periods: the "post" period of one attack in a given municipality is the "pre" period for the subsequent attack in that same municipality. For this reason, we use only the first attack in our baseline analysis.

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52. With municipality fixed effects included in the model, imputation is not possible for units treated in all periods in the sample; this is the case for 63 municipality-years in our sample and this explains the difference in observations between Columns 1 and 2 of Table H.1.

Nevertheless, we present the results using a rolling window approach in Table H.2 and, as shown, the results are rather similar to our baseline, alleviating concerns that municipalities hit with multiple attacks adversely affect our results.

Table H.2
Terror Attacks and AfD Vote Share Using a Rolling Window

	(1) Baseline	(2) East × Year	(3) Omit Berlin	(4) Urban × Year	(5) Weapon × Year	(6) Attack Timing	(7) Omit Multiple Hits	(8) Omit Coordinated Hits	(9) All controls
Success × Post × Federal	0.0019	0.0106	0.0118	-0.0053	-0.0031	0.0054	0.0050	0.0039	0.0122
	(0.0159)	(0.0126)	(0.0181)	(0.0139)	(0.0167)	(0.0162)	(0.0218)	(0.0163)	(0.0173)
Success × Post × European	-0.0111	0.0044	-0.0089	-0.0178	-0.0098	-0.0086	-0.0113	-0.0095	0.0093
	(0.0217)	(0.0159)	(0.0292)	(0.0183)	(0.0230)	(0.0219)	(0.0289)	(0.0220)	(0.0205)
Success × Post × State	0.0379***	0.0355***	0.0477***	0.0440***	0.0361***	0.0480***	0.0587***	0.0388***	0.0533***
	(0.0090)	(0.0102)	(0.0096)	(0.0109)	(0.0090)	(0.0098)	(0.0151)	(0.0093)	(0.0125)
N	787	787	693	787	776	787	534	711	549
Clusters	124	124	114	124	123	124	91	112	92
$\bar{Y}_{State}$	.16	.16	.18	.16	.17	.16	.19	.16	.18
$[S.D]$	[.099]	[.099]	[.1]	[.099]	[.1]	[.099]	[.11]	[.1]	[.1]

Notes: See notes of Table 2. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

H.3 Alternative Inference

Our estimating sample involves 124 unique municipalities of which around 15 percent experienced a failed attack. Given this relatively small sample, we present our baseline estimate using alternative methods of statistical inference. Our results are shown in Table H.3. The table reports $\hat{\beta}$, the coefficient on the triple interaction for state elections from our baseline model. It then presents $p-$values from three different methods of inference: First, $p-$values based on analytically derived standard errors using clustered standard errors (as in our baseline approach). Second, $p-$values calculated using wild cluster bootstrapping as suggested by Cameron, Gelbach, and Miller (2008) and implemented via their `boottest` command in Stata with 10,000 replications. Third, $p-$values are estimated from permutation tests using Monte Carlo simulations with 10,000 permutations of the variable success in order to generate placebo coefficients and a null distribution from which to estimate the $p-$value. As shown, across all three methods of inference, the baseline estimate of successful terror is significantly distinguishable from zero.

Table H.3
Alternative inference

	(1)
β	0.0446
N	734
Clusters	124
p-values:	
1. Analytical	.0001
2. Wild Cluster Bootstrap	.0042
3. Permutation Based	.0000

Notes: 1. $p-$values are based on analytically derived standard errors using Stata's `vce(cluster)` command. 2. $p-$values are calculated as the two-tailed symmetric $p-$value using wild cluster bootstrapping following Cameron, Gelbach, and Miller (2008) and implemented via their `boottest` command in Stata with 10,000 replications. 3. $p-$values are calculated as two-tailed symmetric $p-$value based on 10,000 permutation placebo coefficients resulting from permuting success using Stata's `permute` command.

H.4 Dropping one Municipality at a Time

In this robustness exercise, we run our baseline model 124 times, each time omitting one municipality from the analysis so as to ensure no one municipality is adversely affecting our results. As shown in Figure H.1, the results are stable to this robustness check.
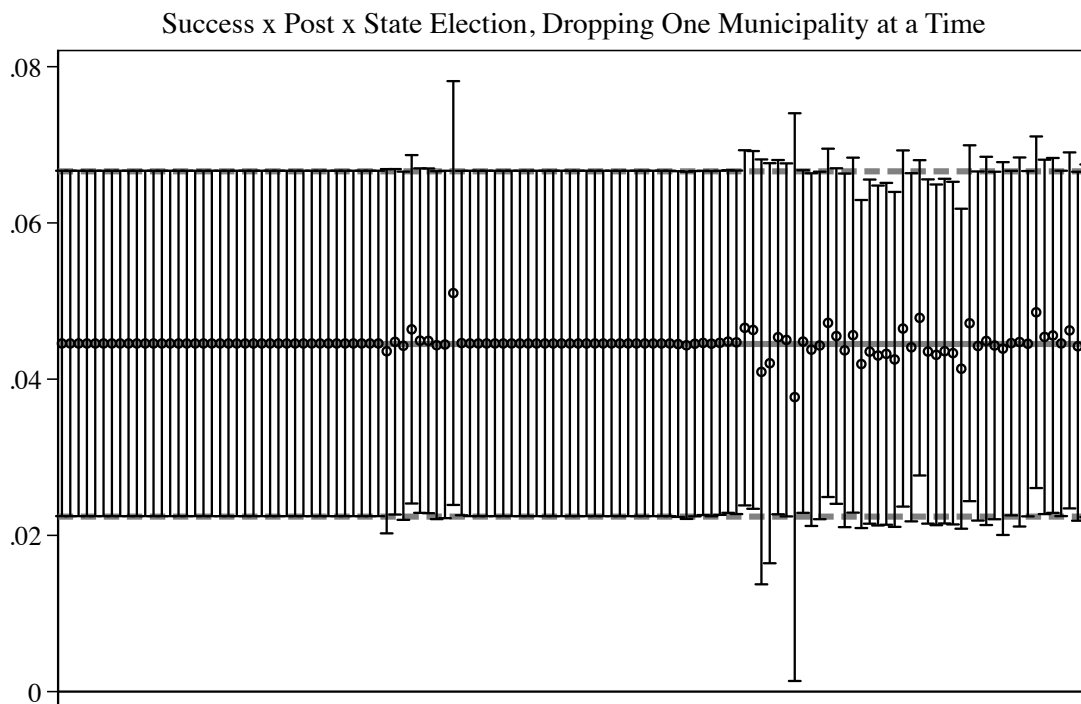
Figure H.1
Baseline model for $SUCCESS \times POST \times STATE$

Note: This Figure plots β_1 from our baseline estimating model 124 times, each time when a different municipality is dropped from the sample. The thick horizontal gray line is the baseline coefficient, with corresponding confidence intervals shown in thick dashed gray lines.

I.   Propensity Score Matching

In this Online Appendix, we present details concerning our propensity score matching which we use to generate a counterfactual set of "placebo fail" municipalities. As mentioned in the main text, we use all the municipality covariates presented in our balance table in order to match untargeted counties to successfully targeted ones on the basis of propensity scores. We use nearest neighbor matching in order to identify each successfully targeted municipalities two nearest neighbors. We generate our propensity scores from the following probit regression, the results of which are presented in Table I.1

$$Pr(SUCCESS_i|X) = \Phi(\gamma_0 + \gamma X_i) \tag{9}$$

Table I.1
Propensity Score Matching Results

	(1) PrTr=1
placebo_attack	
Per capita Income (000s)	1.2821***
	(0.0459)
Employed (000s)	0.9879
	(0.0154)
Unemployed (000s)	1.1048**
	(0.0349)
Tax revenue (pc)	0.3591***
	(0.0495)
Population (000s)	0.9998
	(0.0067)
Average age	1.0340*
	(0.0176)
Share men	0.0000***
	(0.0000)
In-migration (Log)	1.4896*
	(0.2714)
Out-migration (Log)	1.1064
	(0.2079)
Asylum seekers	1.0001
	(0.0000)
Asylum seekers Syria	0.9999
	(0.0001)
University eligible	0.9999
	(0.0001)
No secondary education	0.9988*
	(0.0006)
Welfare recipeints (pc)	1.1774
	(0.1072)
Welfare recipients (foreingers),(pc)	0.0000
	(0.0001)
Traffic accidents	1.0010**
	(0.0003)
Deadly accidents	1.0249
	(0.0177)
Surface area (km^2)	0.9908**
	(0.0032)
Agricultural area (km^2)	1.0079*
	(0.0039)
Forest area (ha)	1.0087*
	(0.0037)
Number of hotels	0.9865***
	(0.0033)
Tourists (000s)	1.0005*
	(0.0002)
Number of hospitals	0.9774
	(0.0118)
Hospitals beds	1.2222**
	(0.0805)
East Germany	1.6322***
	(0.1515)
N	19,635

Notes: See notes of Table 2. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

J. Attack Heterogeneity Using Only First Attacks

In our main paper, we demonstrated that successful terror has the largest effects on state elections when those attacks are motivated by right-wing extremists. In this Online Appendix we reproduce Figure 5 using only the first attacks in a given municipality. The reason is that municipalities that received more than one attack might complicate the interpretation of Figure 5: A municipality, for example, targeted with several attacks of mixed motivations — say, a right-wing attack followed by a left-wing attack — would make it difficult to cleanly identify the effect of an attack's motive on the AfD vote share. To alleviate this concern, we re-generate Figure 5 in a sample of municipalities that were attacked only once (i.e. dropping the 33 municipalities hit more than once), enabling us to cleanly identify effects according to motives. The revised plot is shown in Figure J.1. As shown, the baseline effect in this sample is about 25 percent smaller than the overall baseline (.0477 v. .0625). However, in this sample, the baseline effect is amplified for right-wing attacks.[53] This confirms that right-wing terror has the strongest impacts on the AfD vote share.
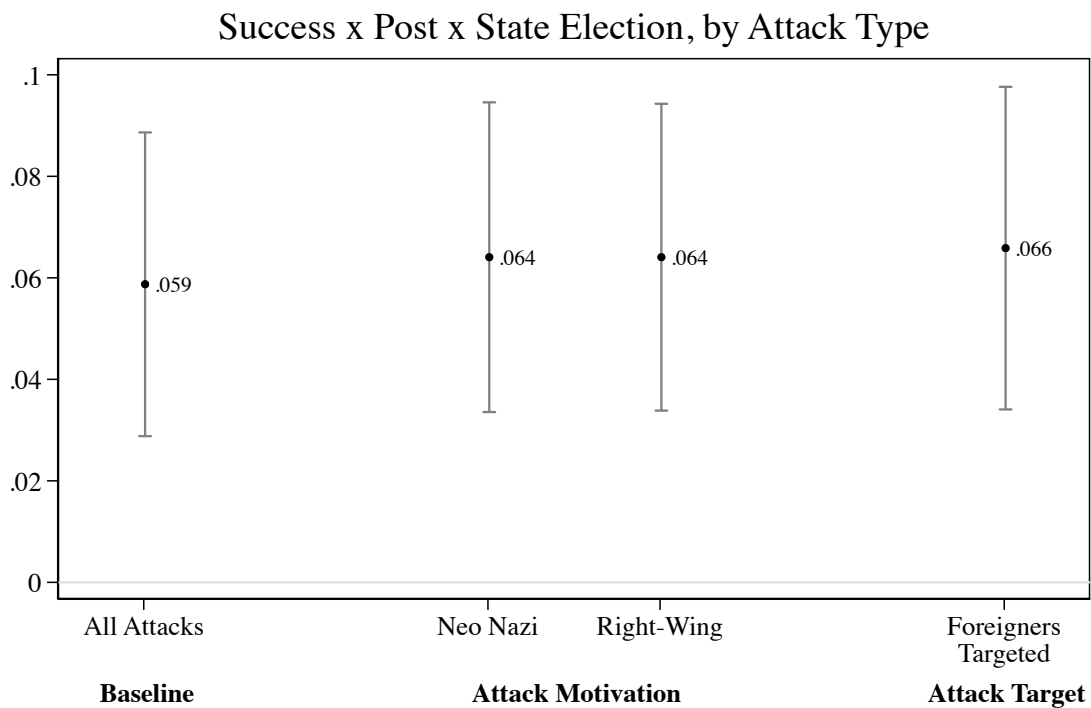

Figure J.1
Heterogeneous effects according to attack type or target

Note: This Figure plots β_1 from our baseline estimating model in samples split by attack type or attack target. All samples omit the 33 municipalities targeted by more than 1 terror attack. Confidence intervals are drawn at 95 percent.

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53. There are not even a sufficient number of non-right wing attacks in this sample to estimate an effect.

K.   Geographic Spillovers

In Figure K.1 we investigate spillover effects. Specifically, we code untargeted municipalities within a radius of up to 80 kilometers of targeted municipalities as either success or failed depending on their distance to the nearest successful or failed attack. We then re-run our baseline estimating equation in samples of municipalities according to their distance to an actual attack and plot the coefficient of interest for state elections. Distance 0 shows our baseline effect and the coefficients for all other municipalities are plotted according to their distance to the targeted municipality (so, for example, the coefficient at 35 km is the effect for all municipalites located 35 km away from successful or failed attacks and not the difference in the effect between municipalities located 30km and 35 km away). As shown, there are clear, local spillover effects: the coefficient is around 50 percent smaller than the baseline but statistically significant for municipalities located between 25 and 50 kilometers from an attack. The qualitative effects persist beyond 50 kilometers, but are even smaller and are mostly indistinguishable from zero. For municipalities located 80 kilometers away, the effect diminishes to zero.
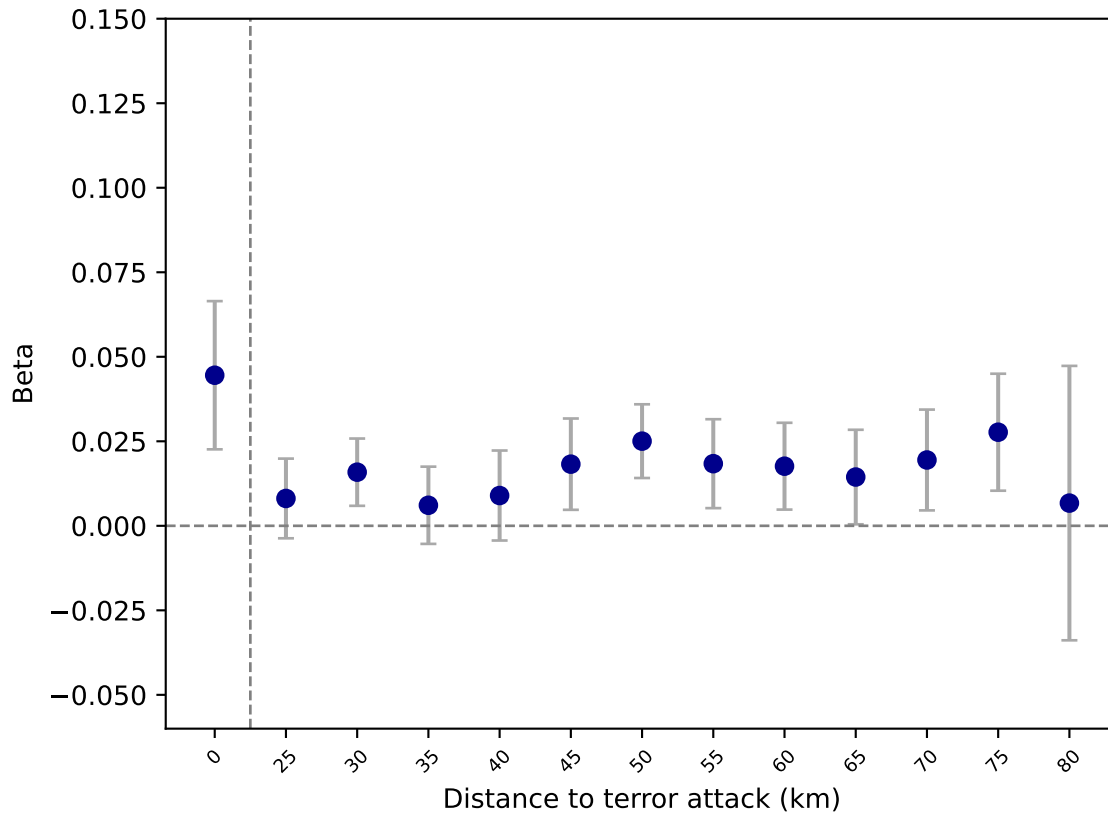
Figure K.1
Geographic Spillovers of Successful Terror

Note: This figure plots the coefficient on $SUCCESS \times POST \times STATE$ from our baseline estimating equation for all municipalities in Germany as a function of total distance to a successful or failed attack. Untargeted municipalities are coded as having either a successful or failed attack according to their distance to the nearest successful or failed attack. The regressions all include municipality and year fixed effects as well as municipality by election-type fixed effects and include all lower order terms. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and confidence intervals are drawn at 95%

L. Terror and Vote Share for SPD and CDU

In this Online Appendix, we present our full baseline results using the vote share for the SPD and the CDU as the outcome. As shown in Table L.1, terror does lead to positive and significant increases for the SPD at the state level though the results are not nearly as large (relative to the mean) or as strong (losing precision in three of the nine specifications) as the baseline effects of terror on the AfD. By contrast, terror appears to have little to no relationship for the vote share of the CDU. At the Federal and European level, there is a weak negative effect of terror on the vote share for the CDU, but at the state level there are no clear or consistent patterns.

Table L.1
Terror Attacks and SPD and CDU Vote Share

	(1) Baseline Model	(2) East × Year	(3) Omit Berlin	(4) Urban × Year	(5) Weapon × Year	(6) Attack Timing	(7) Omit Mulitple	(8) Omit Coordinated	(9) All Controls
Panel A. SPD Vote Share									
Success × Post × Federal	-0.000524	0.00462	0.00358	-0.00732	-0.00816	-0.000524	-0.00211	-0.00123	0.0111
	(0.0146)	(0.0102)	(0.0155)	(0.0117)	(0.0135)	(0.0146)	(0.0155)	(0.0145)	(0.0142)
Success × Post × European	0.00701	0.0198	0.0124	0.00368	0.00921	0.00701	0.00962	0.00777	0.00586
	(0.0139)	(0.0131)	(0.0149)	(0.0145)	(0.0144)	(0.0139)	(0.0163)	(0.0140)	(0.0140)
Success × Post × State	0.0167*	0.0106	0.0207**	0.00657	0.00712	0.0244***	0.0284***	0.0201**	0.0341***
	(0.00889)	(0.0128)	(0.00893)	(0.0196)	(0.0165)	(0.00889)	(0.00492)	(0.00789)	(0.0112)
$\bar{Y}_{Pre}$	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.20	0.21	0.21	0.21
[$S.D.$]	[0.11]	[0.11]	[0.12]	[0.11]	[0.11]	[0.11]	[0.12]	[0.11]	[0.12]
Panel B. CDU Vote Share									
Success × Post × Federal	-0.0363*	-0.0469***	-0.0351*	-0.0314*	-0.0264	-0.0363*	-0.0381*	-0.0370*	-0.0409**
	(0.0189)	(0.0179)	(0.0206)	(0.0184)	(0.0176)	(0.0189)	(0.0210)	(0.0191)	(0.0198)
Success × Post × European	-0.0211**	-0.0290**	-0.0198*	-0.0198*	-0.0237**	-0.0211**	-0.0259**	-0.0224**	-0.0170
	(0.00986)	(0.0145)	(0.0111)	(0.0111)	(0.0100)	(0.00986)	(0.0112)	(0.00996)	(0.0113)
Success × Post × State	0.00601	-0.000414	0.00638	0.0140	0.0135	-0.00869	-0.0417***	-0.00282	-0.0190
	(0.0292)	(0.0248)	(0.0304)	(0.0376)	(0.0393)	(0.0270)	(0.00977)	(0.0264)	(0.0120)
$\bar{Y}_{Pre}$	0.30	0.30	0.31	0.30	0.30	0.30	0.31	0.29	0.31
[$S.D.$]	[0.11]	[0.11]	[0.10]	[0.11]	[0.11]	[0.11]	[0.10]	[0.11]	[0.10]
N	776	776	706	776	761	776	568	702	582
Clusters	124	124	114	124	123	124	91	112	94

Notes: The dependent variable is the vote share for the Alternative for Deutschland (AfD) party at the municipality level. Success is one if a municipality experienced a successful terror attack anytime after 2010 and 0 if it experienced a failed attack but not a successful attack in that same time period. Post is 1 if the first attack in a municipality occurred prior to an election and zero if it occurred after an election. Column 2 includes an indicator that is 1 if a municipality is located in East Germany and zero otherwise interacted with year dummies. In Column 3 we omit 10 of the 12 municipal districts, *Stadtbezirke*, of Berlin targeted with attacks. In Column 4 we include an indicator for whether a municipality is an urban district interacted with year dummies and in Column 5 we interact the weapon used in the attack with year dummies. In Column 6 we control for the number of days between an attack and an election. In Column 7 we omit those municipalities targeted with more than one attack. In Column 8, we omit those municipalities that experienced coordinated attack with multiple attacks on the same day. In Column 9 we include mean values of all pre-attack municipality covariates presented in Table 1 interacted with year dummies. All regressions include election-type by municipality fixed effects, election-type by year fixed effects, and all lower order interactions. Standard errors (shown in parentheses) are clustered at the municipality level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

M.   Additional SOEP Results

M.1   Balance in the SOEP

In this Online Appendix, we test for balance across a range of pre-attack individual characteristics between people who live in municipalities that experience successful or failed attacks. For each person, we regress different individual characteristics on the variable, $SUCCESS_i$, defined as before. We present the results in Figure M.1. As shown, there are very little distinguishable differences in socio-economic characteristics between people living in municipalities hit with successful or failed attacks.[54] Moreover, we document no differences in people's pre-attack political attitudes and preferences. This increases our confidence that successful acts of terror lead to differences in voting outcomes because they affect political preferences and not because they target different types of people. Moreover, people do not report moving after experiencing a successful attack, suggesting that successful terror does not lead to geographical sorting.
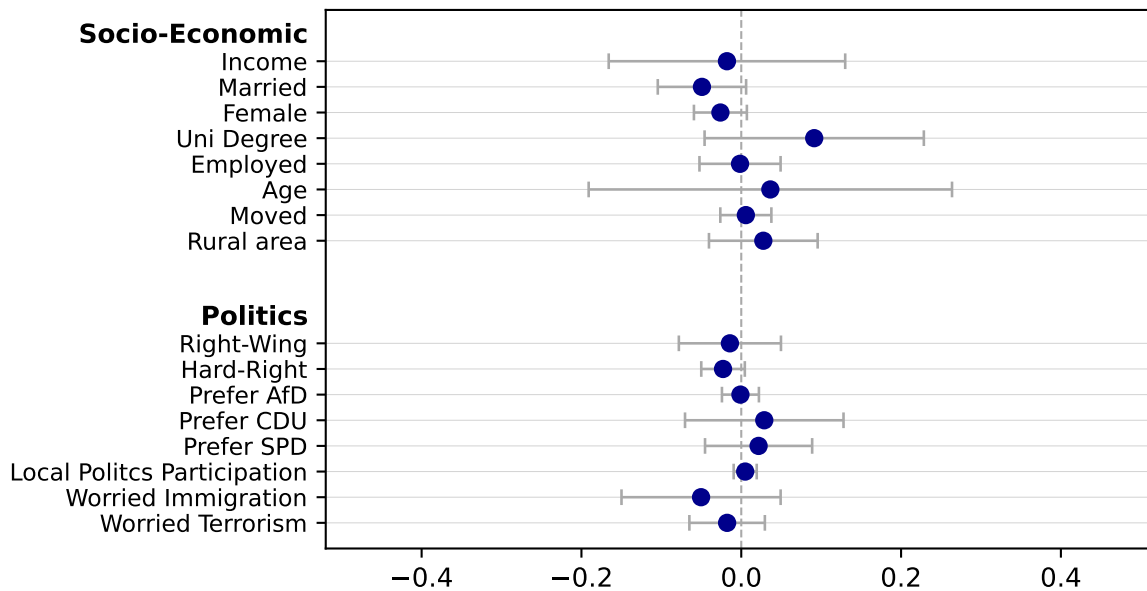

Figure M.1

Individual characteristics of people in successful v. failed municipalities

Note: This figure plots the differences in individual characteristics for people residing in municipalities that experienced successful attacks compared to those that experienced failed attacks. Specifically, it plots β from the following regression: $X_{p,t<t_{Attack}} = \beta_0 + \beta_1 SUCCESS_i + \epsilon_i$ where $X_{p,t<t_{Attack}}$ is a person p's characteristic measured in the pre-terror time period. The only exceptions are (a) gender (the variable *Female*) which is regressed in the cross-section and (b) the variable *Moved* (which is 1 if a person reports moving after a terror attack and zero otherwise) for which we use the whole sample period. For time invariant characteristics (a person's sex or whether they moved residence) we measure the covariate in the year immediately before the attack. The regression that uses the dummy variable "moved" also uses all time periods in the sample in order to test whether individuals in successful or failed municipalities move differentially post-attack. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and confidence intervals are drawn at 95%.

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54. The only significant difference is marital status which has a coefficient with a p-value of 0.0823. Controlling for this one factor in the analysis does not make any difference to our results.

M.2 *Political Preferences in the SOEP*

In Table M.1, we test the impact on terror on political preferences, reporting all the main parties in the political spectrum in Germany as well as support for ultra-right wing parties. The outcome is one is a person reports prefering a given party (indicated on the column) and zero if not.

Table M.1

Terrorism and Individual Political Preferences using SOEP

	Dependent Variable: Individual Political Prefereces						
	(1) AfD	(2) CDU	(3) SPD	(4) Greens	(5) FDP	(6) Linke	(7) Ultra-Right
Success × Post	0.0234** (0.0104)	-0.00693 (0.0185)	0.0314* (0.0178)	-0.0293* (0.0154)	0.000214 (0.00604)	0.000105 (0.0190)	-0.00874** (0.00362)
N	13,279	13,279	13,279	13,279	13,279	13,279	13,279
Number of Clusters	89	89	89	89	89	89	89
People in Sample	2,401	2,401	2,401	2,401	2,401	2,401	2,401
$\bar{Y}$	0.0297	0.318	0.307	0.195	0.0327	0.0826	0.0064
[*S.D*]	[0.17]	[0.47]	[0.46]	[0.40]	[0.18]	[0.28]	[0.08]

Notes: The dependent variable is the attitude of a given person in a given municipality toward various political parties as measured in the SOEP survey. Success is one if a person's municipality experienced a successful terror attack anytime after 2010 and 0 if it experienced a failed attack. Post is 1 if the attack occurred prior to the individual being surveyed and zero if it occurred after the survey. All regressions include person fixed effects and year fixed effects. Standard errors (shown in parentheses) are clustered at the municipality level. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

N.   SOEP Event Study: Preferences for the AfD

Using the SOEP, we are also able to examine how people's political preferences change in response to successful terror over time. To this purpose, we run an event-study regression in which a person's preference for the AfD is used as the outcome. The results are shown in Figure N.1. As shown, there are no pre-trends, suggesting that prior to an attack, people do not display increasing preferences for the AfD in successfully targeted municipalities. By contrast, we observe clear, positive effects following an attack.
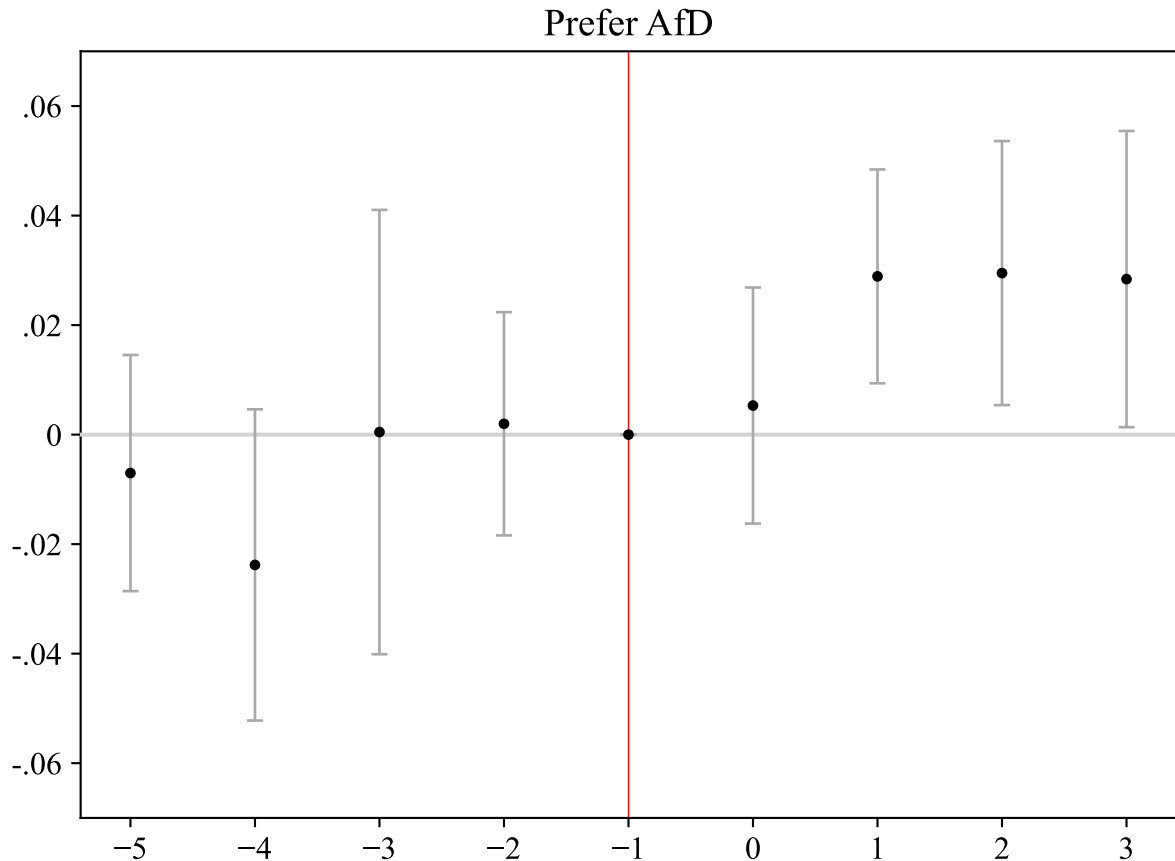
Prefer AfD

Figure N.1
Successful v. Failed Terror and Preferences for the AfD

Note: This figure plots the coefficient on *SUCCESS* when it is interacted with time period dummies and regressed against an indicator that is 1 if a person reports preference for the AfD and zero otherwise. Responses are grouped into two year bins. Confidence intervals drawn at 95 percent and standard errors are clustered at the level of the municipality.

As another test, we estimate event study coefficients using SOEP data using only individuals residing in municipalities that experienced successful attacks and rely on variation in the timing of an attack to identify effects (i.e, comparing people hit with successful attacks early in the sample to those hit with successful attacks later in the sample). Three of the five post-treatment coefficients are distinguishable from zero at the 90 or 95 percent level. Importantly, the *p*-value for a specification test that the pre-period coefficients follow a linear trend is .35,

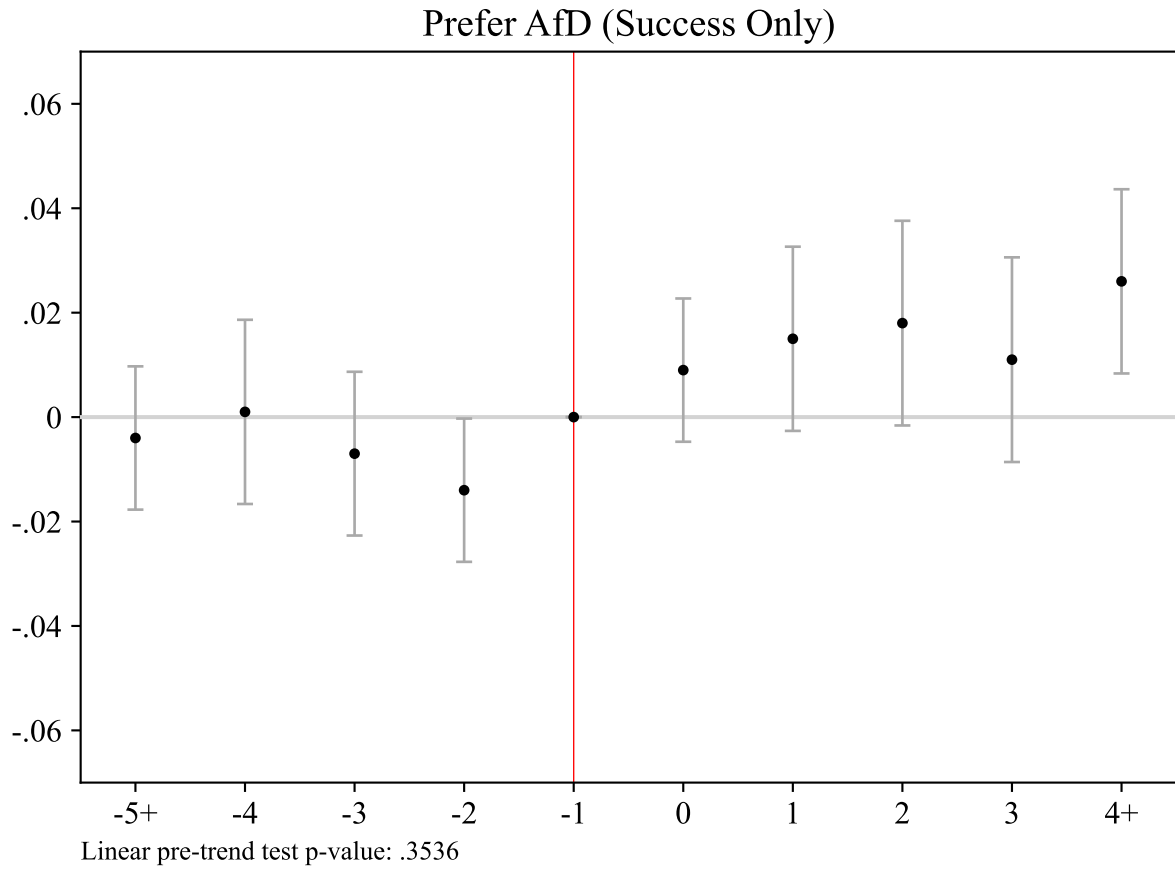suggesting no pre-trends. This confirms our effects are driven by successful attacks.[55]

Prefer AfD (Success Only)

Linear pre-trend test p-value: .3536

Figure N.2
Successful Terror and Preferences for the AfD

Note: This figure plots event study estimates of a person's preference for the AfD for those people residing only in municipalities targeted with successful terror attacks, relying on variation in attack timing to identify effects. The regression includes individual and time period fixed effects. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality and confidence intervals are drawn at 95%.

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55. Of course, analyses that do not rely on a pure control group must be interpreted with some caution. This is because, for instance, the size and composition of the control group changes (i.e., as in Callaway and Sant'Anna (2021) who use not-yet-treated cohorts as the control group) or because coefficients are estimated by using just the last treated cohort as the control group (i.e., as in Sun and Abraham (2021)). We use the estimator from Sun and Abraham (2021) to conduct this exercise. Importantly, we observe similar patterns when we use a "pure" control group (shown above in Figure N.1), increasing confidence that successful terror has a significant impact on political preferences.

O. Terror and Social Media Posts

In this Online Appendix we examine whether successful terror leads to differential social media activity. To conduct this exercise, we rely on data from Müller and Schwarz (2021) who collect data on the number of AfD Facebook page users per population at the county level. We therefore assign municipalities hit with successful and failed attacks the outcome of their associated county. In order to estimate the parameter on the variable $SUCCESS$, the model omits municipality fixed effects and includes, instead, federal state × year fixed effects. As shown in Table O.1, successful attacks leads to differentially more AfD Facebook users.

Table O.1
Social Media and Successful Terror

	(1) AfD Users
Success	0.255**
	(0.106)
N	10,101
Clusters	64

Notes: The outcome variable is the number of AfD Facebook users per 1,000 population. The model includes federal state × year fixed effects so that we can estiamte the parameter on $SUCCESS$. Standard errors are clustered at the municipality level. $^{*}\ p < 0.1$, $^{**}\ p < 0.05$, $^{***}\ p < 0.01$

P. Terrorism and Media

Following Taylor and Thompson (1982), we argue that successful terror attacks are made salient in the media because they (a) attract differential attention compared to failed attacks and (b) disproportionately affect subsequent voting decisions because of that attention. In this section, we support these claims with evidence first by documenting the extent to which successful attacks receive differential media coverage compared to failed attacks and second by investigating the impact of highly-covered attacks on the AfD vote share.

P.1 Differential Media Coverage of Successful and Failed Attacks

To test whether successful attacks receive more media coverage than failed attacks, we collect news stories from two sources: the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ), a prominent national publisher in Germany, and LexisNexis which collects stories from a range of publishers and which includes regional and local news reports.[56] For each terror attack in our sample, we first aggregate the number of stories that cover it in order to understand whether successful attacks are (a) more *likely* to receive coverage and/or (b) whether they receive greater *quantity* of coverage than failed attacks. Then, for each story that is linked to a terror attack in our sample, we analyze the extent to which success influences the *tone* of coverage, as measured by sentiment scores, and the *content* of coverage, as measured by the frequency of key words. Our results are presented in Table P.1. In Columns 1 and 2, the unit of observation is the terror attack. In Columns 3 to 9, the unit of observation is the news story. Because we aim at estimating the difference in media coverage between successful and failed attacks — and not between successful and failed attacks before and after an election — we drop municipality and year fixed effects and replace them with state × year fixed effects so that we can estimate the parameter of interest.

   In Panel A, we present results from regional and local news reports collected from LexisNexis. In Column 1 we find that successful attacks are no more *likely* than failed attacks to receive coverage. However, in Column 2 we find that successful attacks, on average, receive differentially *more* coverage: compared the failed attacks, successful attacks receive around 8 more news reports among regional and local news sources (a 73 percent increase relative to the sample mean of 11 stories per attack). The results in Columns 1 and 2 thus suggest that successful attacks are salient in the news media because they are covered more intensively and not because failed attacks fail to receive coverage, results that are directly in line with Brodeur (2018). In Columns 3 and 4, we find that news stories that cover successful attacks have worse sentiments, both in the story title (though not quantitatively significant) and body, suggesting that success not only influences the quantity of coverage but the *tone* of coverage. Finally, we investigate the extent to which successful terror attacks influence the *content* of news reports as measured by the frequency of key words. Stories that cover successful attacks speak significantly less about right-wing populism and crime but significantly more about Islam, a result that is particularly noteworthy given that the majority of the attacks in our sample are motivated by right-wing causes and are targeted against migrants. We also find that news coverage at the sub-national level uses words related to terrorism significantly more in response to successful attacks. This suggests that local and regional media coverage differentially label successful attacks as terrorist events and differentially highlight Islam when describing them.

   The patterns for national coverage are different. As shown in Columns 1 and 2 of Panel

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56. LexisNexis also includes stories from national outlets but we omit these so that our LexisNexis measures only local and regional coverage.

B, successful attacks do not enjoy greater coverage at the national level, nor is the sentiment of a story (Columns 3 and 4) affected by an attacks success. National stories that cover successful attacks, compared to national stories that cover failed attacks, do, however, appear to highlight issues related to Islam and downplay crime, just like news coverage at the local and regional level. On the whole, however, not only do the attacks in our sample receive less coverage at the national level compared to the local level, successful attacks are no more salient than failed attacks in national reporting. Together, these results suggest that the regional and local news media play an important role in making successful attacks, and certain topics used to describe those attacks, salient.[57]

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57. In Online Appendix O we also test for differential coverage of successful attacks using Facebook data. Drawing on data from Müller and Schwarz (2021), we find that successful attacks lead to differentially more AfD Facebook users. We should also mention here that the readership of the FAZ may not be the ideal population for this empirical test as the FAZ draws better educated readers than average.

Media Coverage of Successful Terror Attacks

	Articles		Sentiment		Topics				
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)
	Found	Count	Title	Body	Right-wing Populism	Migration	Crime	Islam	Terror
Panel A: LexisNexis									
Success	.0756	8.246**	-.0339	-.0321**	-.3467***	-.1185	-.8085***	.6186***	.1895***
	(.1754)	(4.015)	(.0232)	(.0145)	(.091)	(.0995)	(.1641)	(.0818)	(.0684)
State × Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Publisher FE			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	232	232	4,683	4,683	4,683	4,683	4,683	4,683	4,683
Clusters	124	124	1,303	1,303	1,303	1,303	1,303	1,303	1,303
$\bar{Y}$	0.642	11.125	-0.091	-0.114	0.544	0.440	1.162	0.314	0.607
Panel B: FAZ									
Success	.0241	-.017	-.0251	.0338	-.2848	.1211	-.4963*	.3178***	.1145
	(.1531)	(.3378)	(.042)	(.029)	(.212)	(.0963)	(.2774)	(.1052)	(.1023)
State × Year FE	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
N	186	186	338	338	338	338	338	338	338
$\bar{Y}$	0.457	0.828	-0.053	-0.105	0.715	0.576	1.229	0.298	0.515
Unit of Observation	Attack		Story						

Notes: Panel A presents results when using regional and local news sources collected via LexisNexis. Panel B presents the same results but using national news stories collected from the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung (FAZ). In Columns 1 and 2 the individual terror attack is the unit of observation. In Columns 3 to 9, the news story is the observation. In both cases, Success is an indicator that is 1 for successful terror attacks (or stories that cover successful attacks) and 0 for failed attacks (or stories that cover failed attacks). Standard errors are shown in parentheses. In Panel A, they are clustered at the municipality level in Columns 1 and 2 and at the municipality × publisher level in Columns 3 to 9. In Panel B, robust standard errors are reported. * $p < 0.1$, ** $p < 0.05$, *** $p < 0.01$

P.2   High-Coverage Attacks and AfD Vote Share

We now examine how media coverage affects our baseline results. To conduct this test, we repeat our baseline analysis in samples split by the amount of media coverage that terrorist attacks receive. The results are presented in Figure P.1. In Panel (a), we repeat our baseline analysis. Panel (b) shows the same parameters but in a sample of municipalities whose terror attacks (successful and failed) received more than the 75th percentile of news coverage. There are two noteworthy conclusions: first, the baseline effect on state elections nearly doubles, in line with the view that greater media coverage of successful attacks leads to stronger political effects. Second, there is now a positive, significant effect for Federal elections. The point estimate on Federal elections is around 4 percentage points which represents a 35 percent increase relative to the sample mean, very similar to our baseline effects for state elections. By contrast, in the sample of municipalities hit with low-coverage attacks, shown in Panel (c), the Federal election effect vanishes while the coefficient on state elections decreases by around 50 percent but remains statistically significant. Together, these results are consistent with previous research that demonstrates the important role of media coverage in shaping political outcomes (Gentzkow and Shapiro 2006; Gentzkow, Shapiro, and Sinkinson 2011; Strömberg 2004). They are also in line with scholarship that illustrates the impact of media attention in amplifying terror's effects on educational and economic outcomes (Alfano and Görlach 2022; Brodeur 2018). Of course, these results should be interpreted with some caution because of reverse causality. It could be, for example, that highly-covered attacks are more deadly or more emotionally triggering for voters and this is the reason why they (a) receive more coverage and (b) drive up the AfD vote share significantly more.
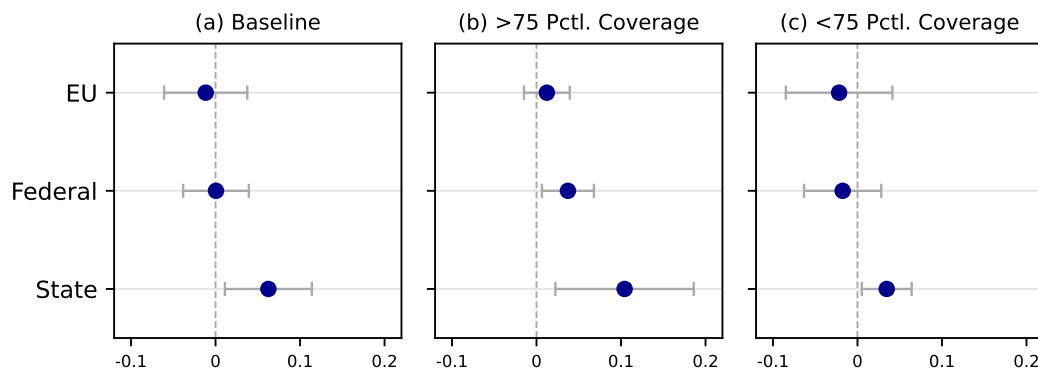

Figure P.1

Baseline Effects of Terror on AfD Vote Share in Samples Split by Media Coverage

Note: Panel (a) presents our baseline estimate for $SUCCESS \times POST$ for European, Federal and State elections, respectively. Panels (b) and (c) reports the same coefficient but for samples split by the amount of media coverage attacks receive. Panel (b) is the sample of municipalities hit with terror attacks that receive more than 75th percentile news coverage while Panel (c) includes the sample of municipalities targeted with attacks that receive less than the 75th percentile of coverage.