Do Online Voter Guides Empower Citizens? Evidence from a Field Experiment with Digital Trace Data*

Online Appendices

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Appendix A Information on the Survey and Tracking Data

Sampling

The survey was administered by YouGov. Surveys run by YouGov combine purposive sampling with a multi-stage sample-matching and weighting procedure (Rivers, 2006). First, a target population is defined, which is the German online population for the data at hand. Based on information from high-quality studies on demographic population marginals (i.e. gender, age and educational attainment), a sampling frame is defined. For the panel, data on marginals from Best for Planning (2017) were used, who conducted 30,000 face-to-face interviews to evaluate the German online population. A stratified sample is drawn from this frame and matched as closely as possible to YouGov’s longstanding panel (with over a million members).

The resulting target sample constitutes a representative set of respondents in terms of traditional sampling theory. However, respondents might be hard to contact because they either have never reported their contact details or do not agree to the terms of the survey. Hence, multi-stage matching is applied, combining the representative target sample with YouGov’s longstanding panel of reliable respondents. From this panel, a sample of individuals is selected that matches as closely as possible the distribution of the target sample and has opted in to provide website visit data (see below). Through this procedure, YouGov guarantees not only a minimum of 1,000 respondents in the survey, but also the inclusion of hard-to-reach population subgroups.

Survey design and fielding

All data was gathered by YouGov from July 1 to December 9, 2017. The panel was made up of five waves. Figure A1 provides a conceptual overview of the panel’s timeline. The encouragement to use the VAA was randomly assigned in Wave 3, which was in the field between September 4 and September 13, 2017. The Wahl-O-Mat went online on August 30, 2017, i.e. shortly before the encouragement wave was launched. Wave 4 was in the field between September 18 and September 24, 2017 (just before the election took place). Wave 5 was in the field between September 25 and October 4, 2017 (just after the election took place).

The survey covered a wide range of topics such as people’s political preferences, their general attitudes towards politics, opinions on particular parties, what people think of the election campaign (the federal elections were held on September 24, 2017), and evaluated respondents’ political knowledge on several dimensions. It also included questions on media usage, social networks (online and offline) and involvement in popular social media services such as Facebook and Twitter. The follow-up surveys to the kick-off in July 2017 were rather short (about five to ten minutes completion time on average). Retention is reported in Table A1. Over the five waves, up to 20% respondents were lost, but about 89% took part again in the final wave.

Passive metering technology

Wakoopa, the tracking software used by YouGov in this study, runs in the background of panelists’ devices and collects anonymized visit data. There are no technological limits to the types of websites that can be included in the data. Moreover, the software tracks web traffic (passwords and financial transactions are ignored) for all browsers installed on a user’s computer. The technology does not slow
the performance of users’ computers and is transparent about the data that is being sent: Panelists can see a list of the last several captured URLs and can also pause tracking for 15 minutes. Of course, they can also uninstall the software at any time. YouGov encourages its panelists to install the software on as many devices as possible, including laptops, mobile phones, and tablets. The capabilities for mobile tracking are somewhat more limited for privacy reasons, but data on domain-level visits and app use are collected.

Panelists are recruited from YouGov’s traditional participant pool via incentives. The company reports fairly strong incentives: 4,000 “points” for signing up and downloading the Wakoopa software—roughly 8 times the number offered for a typical survey—and 1,000 additional points every month. Participants in online surveys can redeem these points for clothing, prepaid gift cards, and other merchandise. One consequence of this recruitment strategy is that YouGov Pulse users are a subset of the overall panel, making sampling somewhat more challenging.

**Collection of social media data**

Using an approved Facebook web application, we asked respondents if they would be willing to share information about their Facebook activity. We requested several data fields available to app developers, including public profile information, Timeline posts, and page likes. Respondents were given the opportunity to log into their Facebook account after a survey prompt, and if they did so they were asked what specific pieces of information they were willing to share. They could choose to share all of the information, selectively approve only some information, or share nothing. No data on News Feed content or subjects’ friends was shared with researchers. We additionally used an approved Twitter app that, again with subjects’ permission, collected publicly available information from their Twitter profiles. After collecting participants’ Twitter IDs, we collected their own tweets for the duration of
the project. We also periodically collect the list of friends and followers of participants’ Twitter accounts.

**Privacy and ethical considerations of data**

Combining survey data and digital trace data of the same respondents has substantive merits to understand the effects of online exposure on people’s attitudes and behavior. However, it entails challenging tasks for protecting the privacy of the respondents and raises ethical questions, as users may not be aware of how their data are being used. Even with the consent of the participants, it still could be problematic because the account names and meta-information of their social media accounts can be identifiable and linked to their survey responses (Stier et al., 2019). Thus, it is important to communicate these concerns as clearly as possible when collecting data (Menchen-Trevino, 2013). In every step of data collection, we informed participants about the scope of data collection, data management, confidentiality, and research purpose. We have an explicit and informed consent from the people whose data are collected.

Regarding the web-tracking data, YouGov received the consent from the panel that their social media data can be linked to other survey items they have participated. They highlighted that participants have complete control over which data they share for research purposes. Participants can choose which information they want to share, pause the tracking app when they want, and withdraw their consent anytime. After data collection, YouGov removed any personally identifying information (PII) and sensitive data (e.g., financial transaction) and stripped-out geocoding information that is too specific before delivering the data to researchers. The deliverables are de-identified and anonymized and fully comply with the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) requirements.

Social media data were collected after getting additional informed consent during the survey. All collected social media data are stored in a separate secure location and can be linked with the survey data only through a key-matching information that is separately stored. These data will be deleted upon the completion of the project.
Appendix B  Supporting Tables and Figures

**Figure B1**: Summary of Wahl-O-Mat top matches of parties with voters. Distribution of recommended parties by pre-treatment party preferences.

![Graph showing distribution of recommended parties by pre-treatment party preferences.](image)

**Figure B2**: Summary of Wahl-O-Mat bottom matches of parties with voters. Distribution of least-recommended parties by pre-treatment party preferences.

![Graph showing distribution of least-recommended parties by pre-treatment party preferences.](image)
**Table B1:** First-stage effects of VAA encouragement and covariates on VAA usage

|                               | Wahlomat Use          |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------|
| (Intercept)                   | −0.031 (0.132)        |
| Gender                        | −0.001 (0.031)        |
| Age                           | 0.001 (0.001)         |
| Education                     | 0.050 (0.021)*        |
| Household Income              | −0.001 (0.005)        |
| Political Interest            | 0.022 (0.015)         |
| Left-Right Ideology           | 0.003 (0.007)         |
| Wahlomat Encouragement        | 0.355 (0.031)***      |

|               | Wahlomat Use |                   |
|---------------|--------------|-------------------|
|     R²        | 0.129        |                   |
| Num. obs.     | 979          |                   |
| RMSE          | 0.469        |                   |

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

**Table B2:** Effect of VAA usage/encouragement on turnout.

|                     | Observed       | ITT               | CACE             |
|---------------------|----------------|-------------------|------------------|
| Intercept           | 0.545 (0.071)***| 0.555 (0.072)***  | 0.555 (0.086)*** |
| Gender              | 0.005 (0.017)  | 0.006 (0.017)     | 0.006 (0.018)    |
| Age                 | 0.002 (0.001)**| 0.002 (0.001)**   | 0.002 (0.001)**  |
| Education           | 0.018 (0.111)  | 0.021 (0.111)     | 0.021 (0.114)    |
| Household Income    | 0.000 (0.003)  | −0.000 (0.003)    | −0.000 (0.003)   |
| Political Interest  | 0.064 (0.008)***| 0.065 (0.009)***  | 0.065 (0.011)*** |
| Left-Right Ideology | −0.007 (0.004) | −0.007 (0.004)    | −0.007 (0.004)   |
| Wahlomat Use        | 0.048 (0.016)**|                   | −0.009 (0.048)   |
| Wahlomat Encouragement | −0.003 (0.017) |                 |                   |

|               | Observed | ITT | CACE |
|---------------|----------|-----|------|
|     R²        | 0.089    | 0.081 | 0.078 |
| Num. obs.     | 979      | 979  | 979  |
| RMSE          | 0.256    | 0.258 | 0.258 |

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05
Table B3: Effect of VAA usage/encouragement on switched vote choice.

|                        | Observed     | ITT          | CACE         |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Intercept              | 0.315 (0.113)** | 0.305 (0.114)** | 0.303 (0.111)** |
| Gender                 | 0.089 (0.027)** | 0.088 (0.027)** | 0.088 (0.027)** |
| Age                    | −0.004 (0.001)*** | −0.004 (0.001)*** | −0.004 (0.001)*** |
| Education              | −0.005 (0.018) | −0.006 (0.018) | −0.009 (0.018) |
| Household Income       | −0.001 (0.004) | −0.001 (0.004) | −0.001 (0.004) |
| Political Interest     | −0.000 (0.014) | 0.000 (0.014)  | −0.000 (0.014) |
| Left-Right Ideology    | −0.005 (0.006) | −0.005 (0.006) | −0.006 (0.006) |
| Wahlomat Use           | −0.004 (0.026) | 0.017 (0.026)  | 0.047 (0.073)  |
| Wahlomat Encouragement |              |              |              |

|                        |              |              |              |
| R²                     | 0.037        | 0.037        | 0.033        |
| Num. obs.              | 923          | 923          | 923          |
| RMSE                   | 0.388        | 0.388        | 0.389        |

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

Table B4: Effect of VAA usage/encouragement on issue knowledge.

|                        | Observed     | ITT          | CACE         |
|------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Intercept              | 0.587 (0.022)** | 0.582 (0.022)** | 0.583 (0.022)** |
| Gender                 | −0.020 (0.005)*** | −0.020 (0.005)*** | −0.020 (0.005)*** |
| Age                    | −0.000 (0.000) | −0.000 (0.000) | −0.000 (0.000) |
| Education              | 0.018 (0.003)*** | 0.018 (0.003)*** | 0.016 (0.003)*** |
| Household Income       | 0.001 (0.001) | 0.001 (0.001) | 0.001 (0.001) |
| Political Interest     | 0.016 (0.003)*** | 0.016 (0.003)*** | 0.015 (0.003)*** |
| Left-Right Ideology    | −0.006 (0.001)*** | −0.006 (0.001)*** | −0.006 (0.001)*** |
| Wahlomat Use           | 0.015 (0.005)** | 0.013 (0.005)** | 0.036 (0.014)*  |
| Wahlomat Encouragement |              |              |              |

|                        |              |              |              |
| R²                     | 0.129        | 0.127        | 0.113        |
| Num. obs.              | 979          | 979          | 979          |
| RMSE                   | 0.078        | 0.078        | 0.079        |

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05
Table B5: Effect of VAA usage/encouragement on news consumption (news urls visited).

|                     | Observed     | ITT          | CACE         |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Intercept           | 0.291 (0.602)| 0.500 (0.615)| 0.508 (0.630)|
| Gender              | -0.420 (0.142)** | -0.428 (0.144)** | -0.435 (0.146)** |
| Age                 | 0.002 (0.005) | 0.005 (0.005) | 0.007 (0.005) |
| Education           | 0.072 (0.097) | 0.103 (0.099) | 0.111 (0.100) |
| Household Income    | 0.026 (0.022) | 0.015 (0.022) | 0.012 (0.023) |
| Political Interest  | 0.269 (0.072)*** | 0.271 (0.073)*** | 0.279 (0.071)*** |
| Left-Right Ideology | 0.035 (0.032) | 0.040 (0.033) | 0.043 (0.034) |
| Wahlomat Use        | 0.643 (0.137)*** | -0.157 (0.142) | -0.440 (0.412) |
| Wahlomat Encouragement |            |              |              |
| R²                  | 0.082        | 0.055        | 0.000        |
| Num. obs.           | 712          | 712          | 712          |
| RMSE                | 1.811        | 1.838        | 1.890        |

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

Table B6: Effect of VAA usage/encouragement on 1+ political posts on facebook.

|                     | Observed     | ITT          | CACE         |
|---------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Intercept           | 0.028 (0.114) | 0.017 (0.116) | 0.020 (0.122) |
| Gender              | -0.032 (0.027) | -0.032 (0.027) | -0.032 (0.027) |
| Age                 | 0.002 (0.001)* | 0.002 (0.001)* | 0.002 (0.001)* |
| Education           | -0.035 (0.018) | -0.033 (0.019) | -0.037 (0.019) |
| Household Income    | 0.006 (0.004) | 0.007 (0.004) | 0.006 (0.004) |
| Political Interest  | 0.038 (0.014)*** | 0.040 (0.014)*** | 0.038 (0.014)*** |
| Left-Right Ideology | -0.011 (0.006) | -0.011 (0.006) | -0.011 (0.008) |
| Wahlomat Use        | 0.052 (0.026)* |              | 0.089 (0.072) |
| Wahlomat Encouragement |            | 0.033 (0.027) |              |
| R²                  | 0.058        | 0.054        | 0.055        |
| Num. obs.           | 549          | 549          | 549          |
| RMSE                | 0.303        | 0.304        | 0.303        |

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05
Figure B3: Descriptive statistics of outcome variables, by subgroup. Means reported.
Figure B4: Descriptive statistics of outcome variables, by subgroup. Means reported.
Figure B5: Descriptive statistics of outcome variables, by subgroup. Means reported.
Figure B6: Descriptive statistics of outcome variables, by subgroup. Means reported.
Table B7: Effect of VAA usage/encouragement on 1+ political tweets on twitter.

|                      | Observed  | ITT        | CACE       |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Intercept            | -0.195 (0.369) | -0.154 (0.389) | -0.170 (0.356) |
| Gender               | 0.105 (0.107)  | 0.084 (0.106)  | 0.098 (0.103)  |
| Age                  | 0.006 (0.003)  | 0.006 (0.004)  | 0.006 (0.003)  |
| Education            | -0.063 (0.060) | -0.052 (0.060) | -0.060 (0.060) |
| Household Income     | 0.006 (0.015)  | 0.007 (0.016)  | 0.006 (0.017)  |
| Political Interest   | 0.042 (0.047)  | 0.045 (0.047)  | 0.043 (0.038)  |
| Left-Right Ideology  | -0.000 (0.021) | -0.004 (0.021) | -0.001 (0.024) |
| Wahlomat Use         | 0.125 (0.098)  |           | 0.088 (0.265)  |
| Wahlomat Encouragement|           |            | 0.034 (0.102)  |

R²                      | 0.083 | 0.066 | 0.081 |
Num. obs.               | 92    | 92    | 92    |
RMSE                    | 0.451 | 0.455 | 0.452 |

***p < 0.001, **p < 0.01, *p < 0.05

Figure B7: Effects of VAA use on self-reported turnout, change in vote choice, and knowledge on parties’ issue positions. Respondents with missing tracking data and reported VAA use (n = 147) excluded from the analysis.
Figure B8: Effects of VAA use on alternative outcomes. Observed = VAA users vs. VAA non-users, ITT = Intent-to-Treat, CACE = Complier Average Causal Effect.
**Figure B9:** Effects of VAA use on civic knowledge, candidate recognition, and event knowledge. Observed = VAA users vs. VAA non-users, ITT = Intent-to-Treat, CACE = Complier Average Causal Effect.

**Figure B10:** Effects of VAA use on knowledge on parties’ issue positions, separated by item. Observed = VAA users vs. VAA non-users, ITT = Intent-to-Treat, CACE = Complier Average Causal Effect.
**Figure B11**: CACE effects of VAA use on self-reported turnout, change in vote choice, and knowledge on parties' issue positions, by age groups.

**Figure B12**: CACE effects of VAA use on self-reported turnout, change in vote choice, and knowledge on parties' issue positions, by education.

**Figure B13**: CACE effects of VAA use on self-reported turnout, change in vote choice, and knowledge on parties' issue positions, by gender.
**Figure B14:** CACE effects of VAA use on self-reported turnout, change in vote choice, and knowledge on parties’ issue positions, by political ideology.

**Figure B15:** CACE effects of VAA use on self-reported turnout, change in vote choice, and knowledge on parties’ issue positions, by political interest.

**Figure B16:** CACE effects of VAA use on self-reported turnout, change in vote choice, and knowledge on parties’ issue positions, by civic knowledge.
**Figure B17**: CACE effects of VAA use on self-reported turnout, change in vote choice, and knowledge on parties’ issue positions, by candidate recognition.

**Figure B18**: CACE effects of VAA use on self-reported turnout, change in vote choice, and knowledge on parties’ issue positions, by pre-treatment party preference.
| Outlet                | URL                                                                 |
|----------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BpB                  | https://www.wahl-o-mat.de/bundestagswahl2017/                        |
| Bild                 | http://www.bild.de/politik/inland/bundestagswahl2017/wahl-o-mat-zur-bundestagswahl-startet-am-30-august-53033038.bild.html |
| FAZ                  | http://event.faz.net/wom/wahloomat-btw/                             |
| Focus                | http://www.focus.de/politik/deutschland/bundestagswahl_2017/          |
| Freenet              | https://www.freenet.de/nachrichten/wahloomat/index.html              |
| Handelsblatt         | http://www.handelsblatt.com/politik/deutschland/bundestagswahl/interaktiv/wahloomat_bundestagswahl/ |
| infranken.de         | http://www.infranken.de/regional/bundestagswahl/wahl-o-mat/          |
| Koeln.de             | http://www.koeln.de/apps/wahloomat/                                 |
| Kölner Stadtanzeiger | http://wahl-o-mat.ksta.de/                                           |
| Medienhaus Nord      | https://www.svz.de/deutschland-welt/bundestagswahl/machen-sie-den-test-welche-partei-passt-zu-ihrn-id17687051.html |
| Mindener Tageblatt   | http://www.mt.de/lokales/landtagswahl_2017/wahl_o_mat               |
| Mittelbayerische     | http://wahl-o-mat.mittelbayerische.de/                              |
| Mitteldeutsche Zeitung | http://www.mz-web.de/politik/bundestagswahl/wahl-o-mat-2017-welche-partei-passt-zu-ihrn-finden-sie-es-heraus-28249176 |
| MSN                  | http://static-assets.rp-online.de/wahl-o-mat/                        |
| Nördlingen Zeitung   | http://www.noz.de/wahlomat                                          |
| Nürtinger Zeitung    | http://wahlomat.pz-news.de/                                         |
| Saarbrücker Zeitung  | http://wahlomat.saarbruecker-zeitung.de/                             |
| Spiegel              | http://wahlomat.spiegel.de/2017/bundw/                               |
| Stern                | http://www.stern.de/politik/deutschland/der-wahl-o-mat-2017-und-andere-entscheidungshelfer-im-ueberblick-6703528.html |
| Süddeutsche         | http://wahlomat.sueddeutsche.de/                                    |
| T-Online             | http://www.t-online.de/nachrichten/deutschland/bundestagswahl/id_81858872/bundestagswahl-2017-mit-dem-wahl-o-mat-die-passende-partei-finden.html |
| Tagesschau           | http://wahl-o-mat.tagesschau.de/                                    |
| Tagesspiegel         | https://service[tagesspiegel.de/wahl-o-mat/bundestagswahl2017/       |
| Volksstimme          | https://www.volksstimme.de/dossiers/wahlen/wahloomat                 |
| Wahlomat             | http://wahlomat.sueddeutsche.de/                                    |
| Welt                 | https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article-167387539/Bundestagswahl-Welche-Partei-passt-am-besten-zu-ihrn.html |
| Wirtschaftswoche     | http://www.wiwo.de/politik/deutschland/bundestagswahl/wahl-o-mat-zur-bundestagswahl-2017-welche-partei-passt-zu-ihrn-20134634.html |
| ZDF                  | http://module.zdf.de/Wahl-O-Mat/2017/bundw/                          |
| Zeit                 | http://www.zeit.de/wahloomat/bundestagswahl                         |
Appendix C  Wahl-O-Mat screenshots

Figure C19: Wahl-O-Mat application: start screen

Figure C20: Wahl-O-Mat application: example item
Figure C21: Wahl-O-Mat application: selection of parties for comparison

Figure C22: Wahl-O-Mat application: example result
**Figure C23:** Wahl-O-Mat application: party positions explained

**Begründungen der Parteien**

Vergleichen Sie Ihre Antworten mit denen der Parteien. Viele Parteien haben Ihre Antworten zu den Thesen begründet. Sie können diese ein- oder ausblenden.

1/38 **Bundeswehr im Inneren**

Bei der Terrorismusbekämpfung soll die Bundeswehr im Inland eingesetzt werden dürfen.

**Ihre Position**

**CDU/CSU**

**Begründung der Partei:**

„Bei der Abwehr eines besonders schweren Terrorangriffs kann die Polizei an die Grenzen ihrer Möglichkeiten kommen. In besonderen Gefährdungslagen werden wir daher die Bundeswehr unter Führung der Polizei unterstützend zum Einsatz bringen. Solche Einsätze unter Leitung der Polizei müssen regelmäßig geübt werden. Dabei wollen wir zunächst den bestehenden Rechtsrahmen ausschöpfen.“

**SPD**

**Begründung der Partei:**

„Eine Militarisierung der öffentlichen Sicherheit lehnen wir ab. Mit uns wird es
**Figure C24:** Wahl-O-Mat application: party positions listed

| Wahl-O-Mat® Bundestagswahl 2017                      | CDU | CSU | SPD | DFLINK | Grüne |
|------------------------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|--------|-------|
| Vergleich der Positionen                              |     |     |     |        |       |
| 1. Bei der Terrorismusbekämpfung soll die Bundeswehr im Inland eingesetzt werden dürfen. | ✓   |   |   | ✓      | ✓     |
| 2. Dieselkraftstoff für Peter soll höher besteuert werden. | ✓   |   |   | ✓      | ✓     |
| 3. Für die Aufnahme von neuen Asylsuchenden soll eine jährliche Obergrenze gelten. |   |   |   | ✓      | ✓     |
| 4. Der Ausbau erneuerbarer Energien soll vom Bund dauerhaft finanziell gefördert werden. | ✓   |   | ✓   | ✓      | ✓     |
| 5. Der Bund soll mehr Mittel für den sozialen Wohnungsbau bereitstellen. | ✓   | ✓  | ✓  | ✓      | ✓     |
| 6. BASG soll generell unabhängig vom Einkommen der Eltern gezahlt werden. | ✓   |   |   | ✓      | ✓     |
| 7. Die Videoüberwachung im öffentlichen Raum soll ausgeweitet werden. | ✓   | ✓  |   | ✓      | ✓     |
| 8. Deutschland soll einem Schuldenschnitt für Griechenland zustimmen. |   |   | ✓  | ✓      | ✓     |
| 9. Generelles Tempolimit auf Autobahn. |   | ✓  |   | ✓      | ✓     |
| 10. Die Verteidigungsausgaben Deutschlands sollen erhöht werden. | ✓   |   |   | ✓      | ✓     |
| 11. Betreiber von Internetseiten sollen gesetzlich dazu verpflichtet sein, Falschinformationen ("Fake News") zu löschen, auf die sie hingewiesen wurden. | ✓   | ✓  |   | ✓      | ✓     |
| 12. Ökologische Landwirtschaft soll stärker gefördert werden als konventionelle Landwirtschaft. |   |   | ✓  | ✓      | ✓     |
| 13. Kindergeld soll nur an deutsche Familien auszahl. |   |   | ✓  | ✓      | ✓     |
| 14. Arbeitserträge sollen weiterhin ohne Angebe von Gründen befristet sein dürfen. | ✓   |   |   | ✓      | ✓     |
| 15. Kinder sollen gegen ansteckende Krankheiten geimpft werden müssen. | ✓   | ✓  |   | ✓      | ✓     |
| 16. Alle Banken sollen verstaatlicht werden. |   | ✓  |   | ✓      | ✓     |
| 17. Der Völkermord an den europäischen Juden soll weiterhin zentraler Bestandteil der deutschen Erinnerungskultur sein. | ✓   | ✓  | ✓  | ✓      | ✓     |
| 18. Haushaltsüberschüsse sollen überwiegend zum Abbau von Staatsschulden verwendet werden. |   |   |   | ✓      | ✓     |
| 19. Die Gesamtarbeit der Nützlinge in den landwirtschaftlichen Betrieben einer Gemeinde soll begrünzt werden können. |   |   |   | ✓      | ✓     |
| 20. In Deutschland soll auch zukünftig Braunkohle abgebaut werden dürfen. |   |   | ✓  | ✓      | ✓     |
Appendix D  Questionnaire items

**Figure D1:** Request for Wahl-O-Mat use (encouragement); wave 3

[Translated] In the next survey, we would like to ask you some questions on positions of parties as well as your own attitudes towards certain political topics. For this purpose, we would like to ask you to use the voting advice application “Wahl-O-Mat”, offered by the Federal Agency for Civic Education [Bundeszentrale für Politische Bildung] at www.wahl-o-mat.de until the next wave. Would you be willing to use this tool until the next survey, which will take place in about two weeks?

Please note: If you agree, we would remind you of using the tool by e-mail before the next survey starts. In compensation of your consent, you would be reimbursed with 50 YouGov points.

- Yes, I am willing to use the Wahl-O-Mat until the next survey, and I have not used it so far.
- Yes, I am willing to use the Wahl-O-Mat until the next survey, and I have already used it.
- No, I am not willing to use the Wahl-O-Mat
Figure D2: Reported Wahl-O-Mat use (encouragement group); wave 4

[Translated] In the last survey, you agreed to use the voting guide tool “Wahl-O-Mat”. Did you have the opportunity to use the “Wahl-O-Mat”?

- Yes, I did use the Wahl-O-Mat.
- No, I did not use the Wahl-O-Mat.

Figure D3: Reported Wahl-O-Mat use (control group); wave 4

[Translated] As of late the voting guide tool “Wahl-O-Mat” is available online, which can be used to compare own preferences with parties’ positions on various issues. What about you: Did you have the opportunity to use the “Wahl-O-Mat” yet?

- Yes, I did use the Wahl-O-Mat.
- No, I did not use the Wahl-O-Mat.
**Figure D4:** Reported Wahl-O-Mat advice (encouragement group); wave 4

We also asked you to write down the overlap rates with the parties after using the Wahl-O-Mat. We now ask you to tell us these overlap rates!

- ...  
  - I do not have these numbers.  
  - I do not want to share these numbers.
**Figure D5:** Reported Wahl-O-Mat advice (control group); wave 4

Can you still remember with which of the following parties you had the highest overlap on the presented issues according to the Wahl-O-Mat evaluation?

- ...  
- I cannot remember anymore.
[Translated] Now for some politically contested issues. What do you think, which parties agree with the following statements, i.e. support the corresponding statement in the campaign? Please select the respective parties!

- The expansion of renewable energies should be permanently subsidized by the federal state.
- Internet platform providers should be obliged by law to delete false information (“Fake News”) which they are made aware of.
- There should be a yearly upper limit for accepted news asylum seekers.
- All citizens should be under statutory health insurance.
- Acquiring owner-occupied property should be tax-free up to a certain extent.
- Diesel fuel for cars should be taxed higher.
Figure D7: Reported turnout at election; wave 5

Did you vote at the Federal election on September 24?

- Yes, I voted on Sunday.
- Yes, I had previously voted by mail or at the polling station
- I planned to vote, but I did not.
- No, I was not entitled to vote.
- No, I did not vote.

[Translated] Did you vote at the Federal election on September 24?
Figure D8: Vote intention; waves 3 and 4

[Translated] You have two votes at the federal election in September 2017. The first is for a candidate in your constituency, the second for a party. What will you choose on the ballot

- ...
- I don’t know yet.
Figure D9: Political interest; waves 1, 3, and 4

[Translated] How interested are you in politics in general

- not at all
- not very
- moderately
- strongly
- very strongly
- don’t know
**Figure D10:** Political ideology; wave 1

**Figure D11:** Likelihood to vote; waves 3 and 4

[Translated] In politics, people often speak of “left” and “right”. Where would you place yourself on a scale from 0 to 10?

- left
- ...
- right
- don’t know

[Translated] Many people participate in elections. Some do not manage to cast a vote or do not participate for other reasons. On a scale from 1 to 10, how likely is it that you will participate at the federal election on September 24?

- Certainly not
- ...
- Certainly yes
- Don’t know
**Figure D12:** Political efficacy; waves 3 and 4

| Statement                                                                 | Stimme überhaupt nicht zu | Stimme eher nicht zu | Teils/teils | Stimme eher zu | Stimme voll und ganz zu | Weiß nicht |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------|-------------------------|------------|
| Die Politiker kümmern sich darum, was Leute wie ich denken.              | 0                         | 0                    | 0           | 0              | 0                       | 0          |
| Ich kenne mich in der Politik im Allgemeinen sehr gut aus.               | 0                         | 0                    | 0           | 0              | 0                       | 0          |
| Die Parteien wollen nur die Stimmen der Wähler, ihre Ansichten interessieren sie nicht. | 0                         | 0                    | 0           | 0              | 0                       | 0          |
| Politische Fragen sind für mich oft schwer zu verstehen.                 | 0                         | 0                    | 0           | 0              | 0                       | 0          |
| Ich bin über das politische Tagesgeschehen sehr gut informiert.          | 0                         | 0                    | 0           | 0              | 0                       | 0          |
| Die heutigen Probleme sind so kompliziert, dass die Politik sie nicht mehr lösen kann. | 0                         | 0                    | 0           | 0              | 0                       | 0          |

[Translated] To what extent do you agree with the following statements?

- Politicians care about what the people think.
- I am generally very well informed about politics.
- Parties only want to get people’s votes; they don’t care about their opinion.
- It is often difficult for me to understand political questions.
- I am generally very well informed about daily political events.
- The problems are so complex today that politics cannot solve them anymore.
Figure D13: Vote certainty; waves 3 and 4

[Translated] How certain are you regarding your decision whom to vote for with your second vote?

- Very uncertain
- ...
- Very certain
- Don’t know
Figure D14: Party scalometers; waves 3 and 4

[Translated] Generally, what do you think of the individual political parties? Please use the scale from -5 to +5!

- Nothing at all
- ...  
- Very much
- Don't know
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