

How did Immigrant Voters Vote at the 2017 Bundestag Election? First Results from the Immigrant German Election Study (IMGES)

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This is the first brief from a series of outputs. Please follow the project on its project homepage at ResearchGate <https://www.researchgate.net/project/First-Migrant-Election-Study> and at <http://udue.de/migrantenwahlstudie/>

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Summary

- The Immigrant German Election Study 2017 is the first electoral study that allows precise estimates about the behaviour of Immigrant Voters at a German federal election. It is funded by the German Research Foundation. The Principal Investigators are Achim Goerres (University of Duisburg-Essen) and Dennis Spies (University of Cologne) with Sabrina J. Mayer as the project manager based in Duisburg. The field work was commissioned to infas Bonn.
- About 500 Germans from the former Soviet Union (1st and 2nd immigrant generation, abbrev. DRUS) and 500 Germans of Turkish descent (1st and 2nd generation, abbrev. DTUR) were randomly selected from all resident members of these groups in Germany by a multi-stage sampling procedure (random sample of local districts – random sample of residents – classification of residents according to their name and other information – screening interview – full interview). The face-to-face study was conducted directly after the federal election from 2nd of October until 3rd of December 2017.
- The estimates for actual turnout are 58 percent for Germans with a Soviet and 64 percent for Germans with a Turkish background, compared with 76.2 percent overall turnout. These considerably lower turnout rates in the two groups are typical of immigrant voter groups.
- The party-list vote was distributed as shown in this table.

	<i>CDU/CSU</i>	<i>SPD</i>	<i>LEFT</i>	<i>GREENS</i>	<i>FDP</i>	<i>AfD</i>	<i>Others</i>
<i>DRUS</i>	27	12	21	8	12	15	5
<i>DTUR</i>	20	35	16	13	4	0	12

- Compared to the overall results, DRUS were more leaning to the right with 27, 12 and 15 percent reporting to have voted for CDU/CSU, FDP and AfD respectively. Surprisingly, the Left is the second-biggest party in that group with 21 percent. Among the AfD voters, about one third had voted for the CDU/CSU in 2013 and one third had not voted at all.
- The DTUR voted more to the left with 35, 16 and 13 percent voting for the SPD, Left and Greens, compared to the overall results. Among the “other parties”, there was the Allianz Deutscher Demokraten (Alliance of German Democrats, ADD) that got 12 % of the votes from the DTUR in Northrhine-Westphalia.
- Among German-Turkish citizens, only a minority of 42 percent actually cast a vote. Among these dual citizens who actually voted, only 21 percent voted in favour of Erdogan’s constitutional reform, revealing a strong difference both in participation and content between the dual citizens and the overall referendum result reported for Turkish voters in Germany.
- Political participation of DTUR, online and offline, is considerably higher than political participation of DRUS. It is even higher (17 %) than the participation shares of Germans without migration background (7 %), especially for taking part in a street demonstration.
- DRUS expressed higher support for a strong leader whereas the statement “politicians only care about the rich and powerful” had stronger support of DTUR.
- About 66 percent of DTUR do **not** want Turkey to become a member of the European Union. This share is the highest for Kurds from Turkey (84 %).

- On average, Erdogan is evaluated by DTUR with -2.5 (on a scalometer ranging from -5 to +5), the evaluation is lower in the 1st immigrant generation than in the 2nd immigrant generation. DRUS evaluate Putin on average slightly positive (1.4). This average evaluation is higher than the evaluation for Angela Merkel. Respondents from the Ukraine evaluated Putin negatively (-0.2).
- Of the German candidates, DRUS evaluated Gauland (AfD) highest, but still negative. Notwithstanding his Turkish background, DTUR evaluate Özdemir (GREENS) the lowest (compared to DRUS and Germans without migration background).

1 General remarks

Two-step sampling procedure: Addresses acquired from 140 municipalities in Germany (selection probability proportional-to-size), onomastic classification of addresses, face-to-face interviews done by infas Bonn.

Survey time: October, 2 until December, 3.

All analyses were done for participants aged 18 and older.

All calculations are weighted (Design weight + post stratification weight for age, gender, federal state, and municipality size). Results for the general German population based on the German Longitudinal Election Study (GLES)¹ that was conducted in the same time period and allows for comparisons (also weighted).

2 Socio demographics

Table 1: Migration generations by group

Generation	DTUR	DRUS
	Column %	Column %
1 st	214	481
	49%	96%
2 nd	228	21
	52%	4%

Table 2: Religious denomination

Religious denomination	DTUR	DRUS
	Column %	Column %
None	19	19
Islam	50	0
Christian	11	79
Jewish	0	3
Alevis	19	0

¹ Post-Election Survey of the German Longitudinal Election Study, Survey time 25.9.-30.11.2017, Roßteutscher, Sigrid; Schmitt-Beck, Rüdiger; Schoen, Harald; Weißels, Bernhard; Wolf, Christof; Wagner, Aiko (2017): Post-election Cross Section (GLES 2017). GESIS Data Archive, Cologne. ZA6801 Data file Version 1.0.0, doi:10.4232/1.12954.

3 The Electoral Behaviour of Germans with Migration Background

3.1 Turnout

Official turnout at the German federal election 2017 was 76.2 percent. Reported turnout in the GLES for All Germans was 88 percent, i.e. 12 percentage points above the official turnout share. We control for this discrepancy induced by over-reporting by weighing our estimates with a correctional factor (76.2/88) for estimates of actual turnout.

Table 3: Reported and actual turnout

<i>Estimates for</i>	DTUR					DRUS	
	<i>Cell%</i>	All	1 st Gen	2 nd Gen	Alevis	Kurds	All others of Turkish descent
<i>Reported turnout</i>	74	73	74	76	73	73	67
<i>Actual turnout</i>	64	63	64	66	63	63	58

Table 4: Reported turnout by identification

<i>Reported turnout</i>	DTUR	DRUS
<i>Identification: feels more...</i>	<i>Cell %</i>	
<i>...as German</i>	79	72
<i>...both identities</i>	69	69
<i>...as Turk/Kurd/Russian/Russian German.</i>	69	56

Table 5: Reported turnout by experienced group-based discrimination

	DTUR		DRUS	
	Experienced group-based discrimination			
	no	yes	no	yes
<i>Reported turnout</i>	<i>Cell %</i>			
	73	76	68	61

3.2 Vote Choice

Effects of social desirability can not only be observed for turnout but also for reported vote choice, especially for parties at the extreme points of the political spectrum. The right-wing populist party AfD gained 12.6 percent at the federal election, but only 10 percent in the GLES reported voting for the AfD. Different from turnout, we do not differentiate between actual and reported behavior as the underlying assumption, party-specific over-/ and underreporting work similarly for immigrant voters and native voters, seems less plausible. Therefore, we can assume that the vote share for the AfD in our study is a conservative estimate for the true value in these groups.

Table 6: Second vote share by group

	DTUR			DRUS			NATIVES	
Second vote share 2017	All	1st Gen	2nd Gen	Alevis	Kurds	All others of Turkish descent	All	GLES
CDU/CSU	20	27	14	13	30	20	27	30
SPD	35	29	40	41	9	36	12	20
LEFT	16	23	11	22	37	12	21	11
GREENS	13	10	15	20	7	12	8	13
FDP	4	3	6	1	3	6	12	12
AfD	0	0	0	0	0	0	15	10
Others	12	8	15	3	14	14	5	4
n	275	126	149	58	31	207	301	

GLES= All respondents, regardless of migration background, aged 18 years and older; Column %

3.3 Vote Choice of Dual Citizens in Germany and Country-of-Origin

Table 7: Second vote share for German citizens only and dual citizens

	DTUR		DRUS		
Second vote share 2017	Only German citizens	Dual citizens	Only German citizens	Dual citizens, Russia	Dual citizens, Other country
CDU/CSU	24	2	26	24	43
SPD	32	43	11	14	15
LEFT	14	28	23	16	17
GREENS	14	10	9	6	6
FDP	5	2	13	10	8
AfD	0	0	14	23	6
Others	12	13	4	7	4
n	233	55	217	64	30

Column %

Table 8: Vote choice in country-of-origin of dual citizens, column percentages

Vote choice in country-of-origin	DTUR			DRUS	
	All dual citizens	Dual citizens, 1 st generation	Dual citizens, 2 nd generation	Dual citizens, Russia	Dual citizens, Other country
Governing party	16	3	29	39	-
Other party	72	82	62	11	-
Abstain	12	15	9	50	81
n	69	34	35	77	43

Question text: „Which party would you vote for in <<country-of-origin>> if there would be an election next week?“ Due to low case numbers, vote choice – other than abstain – not included for dual citizens from other countries.

3.4 Turkish Constitutional Referendum on 16 April 2017

In total, 51 percent of voters voted in favour of the constitutional referendum. Of Turkish citizens living in Germany (Turkish citizenship only as well as dual citizenship), about 63 percent were in favour of the referendum.

Table 9: Voting behaviour at the Turkish constitutional referendum

	Dual citizens (actual voters)	Only German citizens (hypothetical voters at ref.)	1 st Gen	2 nd Gen	Alevis	Kurds	All others of Turkish descent
In favour of (evet)	22	16	12	21	3	12	22
Against (hayır)	78	84	88	79	97	88	78
n	27	317	168	176	73	46	236

Dual citizens and German citizens only are grouped together for results in column 3

3.5 Patterns in Political Participation

Table 10: Political participation by groups

Mode of participation	DTUR			DRUS	NATIVES
	All	1 st Gen	2 nd Gen	All	GLES
Offline					
Contacted a politician	9	7	11	6	-
Worked in a political party	6	8	3	2	-
Donated money to a political party or group	5	8	3	3	4
Worked for an organisation or association	11	12	11	9	-
Collected signatures for a petition	18	14	20	10	17
Took part in a demonstration	17	21	13	4	7
Online					
Submitted posts on social media	17	13	21	6	5
Commented on political articles and posts	11	11	11	6	6

Question text: „If you think back over the last twelve months, did you do any of the following to exercise political influence and to assert your point of view?“ GLES: only respondents without migration background

4 Attitudes about Political Elites

Table 11: Preference for strong leader by groups

<i>Strong leader</i>	DTUR			DRUS		NATIVES
	All	1 st Gen	2 nd Gen	All	GLES	
<i>Does not apply at all</i>	30	33	27	31	38	
<i>Does rather not apply</i>	29	25	33	17	28	
<i>Partly/partly</i>	34	27	40	31	32	
<i>Does rather apply</i>	15	13	16	18	13	
<i>Does fully apply</i>	9	8	10	12	5	

Question text: "Having a strong leader in government is good for Germany even if the leader bends the rules to get things done." Column%; GLES: without respondents with migration background

Table 12: Disappointment with elites by groups

<i>Politicians only care about rich and powerful</i>	DTUR			DRUS		NATIVE
	All	1 st Gen	2 nd Gen	All	GLES	
<i>Does not apply at all</i>	4	4	3	7	5	
<i>Does rather not apply</i>	19	16	22	23	24	
<i>Partly/partly</i>	34	27	40	31	32	
<i>Does rather apply</i>	29	33	25	23	24	
<i>Does fully apply</i>	15	20	10	16	15	

Question text: "Most politicians care only about the interests of the rich and powerful."; Column%; GLES: without respondents with migration background

5 Attitudes towards Homeland Issues and Candidates

5.1 Attitudes towards the Russia-Crimea Conflict

Table 13: Attitudes towards the Russia-Crimea conflict

<i>Attitude towards the Russia-Crimea conflict</i>	DRUS		Origin	
	All	Russia	Ukraine	All other countries
<i>Support the actions of the Russian government</i>	60	71	30	62
<i>Oppose the actions of the Russian government</i>	40	29	70	38
<i>n</i>	412	145	61	204

5.2 Attitudes towards Turkey's EU Membership

Table 14: Attitudes towards Turkey's EU membership

	EU membership		DTUR			
	All	1 st Gen	2 nd Gen	Alevis	Kurds	All others of Turkish descent
Turkey should become a member of the EU	34	35	32	39	16	35
Turkey should not become a member of the EU	66	65	68	61	84	65

5.3 Evaluation of Leaders in Country-of-Origin

Table 15: Evaluation Erdogan

Candidate evaluation	DTUR					
	All	1 st Gen	2 nd Gen	Alevis	Kurds	All others of Turkish descent
Erdogan	-2.5	-2.9	-2.1	-4.3	-3.7	-1.9

Question text: „Please tell me what you think about some leading politicians. Please use the scale from +5 to -5 again. +5 means that you have a very positive opinion of the politician; -5 means that you have a very negative opinion of the politician.”

Table 16: Evaluation Putin

Candidate evaluation	DRUS			
	All	Russian descent	Ukrainian descent	Other country
Putin	1.4	1.7	-0.2	1.6

Question text: „Please tell me what you think about some leading politicians. Please use the scale from +5 to -5 again. +5 means that you have a very positive opinion of the politician; -5 means that you have a very negative opinion of the politician.”

6 Evaluations of German Candidates

Table 17: Candidate evaluations by groups

Candidate evaluation	DTUR						DRUS	NATIVES
	All	1 st Gen	2 nd Gen	Alevis	Kurds	All others of Turkish des.	All	GLES
Merkel (CDU)	1.6	2.1	1.0	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.1	1.6
Schulz (SPD)	0.6	0.8	0.4	1.7	0.9	0.3	0.3	0.5
Özdemir (GREENS)	0.2	0.8	-0.3	2.0	2.0	-0.4	-0.1	0.9
Gauland (AfD)	-3.8	-3.5	-4.1	-3.7	-3.1	-3.9	-1.6	-3.3

Question text: „Please tell me what you think about some leading politicians. Please use the scale from +5 to -5 again. +5 means that you have a very positive opinion of the politician; -5 means that you have a very negative opinion of the politician“, GLES: Candidate evaluations for Germans without migration background.